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„Narrating Autocracy: Political Discourse in Latin America's Pink Tide “

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the autocratization of the Pink Tide in Latin America between 1999-2017, focusing on the presidencies of Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Rafael Correa (Ecuador) and Evo Morales (Bolivia). The study explores the role of discourse—specifically, that of legitimization narratives—in authoritarian consolidations. It hypothesizes that legitimization narratives underpin the evolution of the Pink Tide governments and seeks to understand how legitimization is discursively constructed and upheld throughout autocratization. The thesis first appraises relevant literature on legitimization, autocratization and the Pink Tide. Subsequently, it offers the theory of *legitimology*—a hybrid of management legitimization theory and narratology—to analyze Pink Tide legitimization narratives. Third, it develops the methodology of a *structured, focused narrative analysis* to guide the empirical research. Fourth, it conducts an empirical study on legitimization narratives in the aforementioned presidencies, outlining their respective narratives, positioning and storylines. Finally, the study summarizes main findings and concludes that autocratization emerges as the empirical result of a series of complex, reciprocal legitimization interactions. The thesis proposes a novel theoretical model to conceptualize legitimization cycles and points to future research prospects.

KEYWORDS

Pink Tide, Latin America, Authoritarianism, Autocratization, Democratization, Discourse, Narrative, Legitimation

ABSTRACT

Diese Arbeit untersucht die Autokratisierung der "Pink Tide" in Lateinamerika zwischen 1999 und 2017 mit den Präsidentschaften von Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Rafael Correa (Ecuador) und Evo Morales (Bolivien). Die Studie untersucht die Rolle des Diskurses - insbesondere der Legitimationsnarrative - in autoritären Konsolidierungen. Die Arbeit fragt wie Legitimation während ihrer autoritären Konsolidierung diskursiv konstruiert und aufrechterhalten wird. Die Studie bietet die Theorie der *Legitimology* - eine Mischung aus Management-Legitimationstheorie und Narratologie - zur Analyse von Pink-Tide-Legitimationsnarrativen und entwickelt die Methodik einer strukturierten, fokussierten narrativen Analyse, um die empirische Forschung zu leiten. Die empirische Studie umreißt die Erzählungen, Positionierungen und Handlungsstränge in den oben genannten Präsidentschaften. Schließlich fasst die Studie die wichtigsten Ergebnisse zusammen und kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die Autokratisierung als empirisches Ergebnis einer Reihe komplexer, wechselseitiger Legitimationswechselwirkungen auftritt. Die Arbeit schlägt ein neuartiges theoretisches Modell vor, um Legitimationszyklen zu konzipieren und weist auf zukünftige Forschungsperspektiven hin.

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Introduction

The early 2000s witnessed a wave of social movements throughout Latin America that brought a flow of Leftist regimes into power. From Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega and El Salvador's Mauricio Funes, to Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and Argentina's Cristina Kirchner, the dubbed *Pink Tide* colored the continent with promises of democratic innovation and social egalitarianism. Chávez's summon for a new *Bolivarianism* to radically oppose the failed policies of neoliberalism, unbolted the dams of Latin American politics to a stream of traditionally marginalized groups. Beckoning regional recognition and replication, the Tide percolated into Bolivia, boasting of the country's first indigenous president, Evo Morales; Ecuador followed suit under Rafael Correa, who laid the grounds for what has been called "the winning decade" of economic modernization.

Yet the promising social democracies and economic reformulations of the Pink Tide's early years devolved. Amongst other forces, the belated impact of the 2008 financial crisis hit Latin America, washing away much of the wealth formerly amassed by commodity exports. Instead, it ebbed in public disillusionment, austerity measures that cut celebrated social programs, and most notably, increasingly autocratized forms of governance. Against a backdrop of governmental affronts to the media, subjection of opposition groups and constitutional reforms abolishing presidential term limits, the Pink Tide today beckons an analysis of such transformation of regime identity. Until presently, scholars have limited their attention to the structural causes of the rise of the "New Left"—focusing predominantly on the financial crisis—its governing properties, and its populist inclinations (Castañeda, 2009; Webber, 2017; Pérez-Liñan, 2015). Surprisingly, however, such analyses have remained detached from the broader framework of autocratization-democratization theories, thus not only overlooking a number of explanatory elements—such as political discourse—but also neglecting the profound implications of the phenomenon on transitology and autocratization studies.

This study embarks from the recognition of such a gap. It acknowledges that a number of elements contribute to and reflect autocratization: coups, illegal constitutional reform and media repression are amongst the tools of such Latin American *plebiscitarian hegemonies* (Mazzuca, 2013). Importantly, they are "legitimized by popular vote but with a highly skewed electoral playing field,

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crippled mechanisms of horizontal accountability, and intolerance toward the opposition” (Pérez-Liñán, 2015: 116). Their main innovation is, thus, the re-fabrication of Latin American political systems through ballots and not bullets; legitimacy and strategies of legitimation are at the core such reforms.

The study departs from this starting point and poses the following question:

What makes possible the autocratization of Latin America’s Pink Tide?

This research will focus on the role of discourse in authoritarian consolidations—specifically, that of legitimation narratives. The study operates from the assumption that legitimation underpins the establishment and evolution of regimes; it seeks to understand how legitimation is discursively constructed and upheld throughout the Pink Tide’s autocratization. It posits a theory of *legitimology* to test the hypothesis that discourse—specifically the legitimation narrative—serves as a complementary explanation for regime autocratization. In this respect, the research aims to further the literature on transitology by introducing a discursive frame for regime transformation.

The thesis will be organized into five sections. First, it will review existent literature on the Pink Tide, autocratization and legitimation. Second, it will offer the theory of *legitimology*—a hybrid of management legitimation theory and narratology—to analyze Pink Tide legitimation narratives. Third, it will adapt Alexander George’s model of a structured, focused comparison and develop the methodology of a *structured, focused narrative analysis* to guide the empirical research (George, 1979). Fourth, it will offer an empirical study on legitimation narratives in the presidencies of Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Rafael Correa (Ecuador) and Evo Morales (Bolivia), upon which the theoretical framework is applied. Each country will be introduced by an overview of its structural autocratization in order to contextualize the discourse. To conclude, the study will summarize main findings, propose a theoretical model to conceptualize legitimation cycles, and point to future research directions.

Chapter I: Literature Review

This section will briefly review the dominant literature of the Pink Tide, autocratization and legitimization.

The Pink Tide

As the Pink Tide traversed the Latin American continent at the turn of the 21st century, so too, did a range of scholarly dialogue on the phenomenon.

Scholars concede that the failures of neoliberalism to promote growth in Latin America led to a general disillusionment towards related political systems, which buttressed the swell of the Pink Tide (Castañeda and Morales, 2008; Stolowicz, 2010; Lievesley and Ludlam, 2009). “While no consensus exists as to their policy and institutional parameters, most analysts agree that Latin America’s new reform governments are characterized by a democratic deepening that recalibrates the state–society compact, offers more extensive and generous social provision, and involves more inclusive government promotion of exports and growth” (Rojas, 2017: 71).

Economically-driven arguments of the Pink Tide’s rise point to minimal charges to tax regimes and royalty rates on commodities, which allowed for the governments to incur tremendous revenue in state treasuries (Webber, 2014). Moreover, domestic economies experienced targeted distribution through social welfare and cash-transfer programs, alongside falling unemployment and poverty rates (ibid: p.2).

The role of civil society and previously-marginalized social groups is also underscored by many who contend that the regimes of the Pink Tide were founded on “a set of political aspirations centered on ‘reclaiming’ the authority of the state to oversee the construction of a new social consensus and approach to welfare...responsive to social need and citizenship demands” (Grugel and Ruggirozzi, 2012). In this respect, Rojas notes that “it was the mobilizations and rebellions of popular sectors against the social exclusion wrought by market orthodoxy that propelled [the leaders] to power and constituted their core base of support...that the Pink Tide governments’ primary concern [thus] was securing the backing of these popular layers” (Rojas, 2017: 76).

Apart from referencing the delayed impact of the 2008 financial crisis, surprisingly little attention is allotted to the decline of the regimes of this period and their general authoritarian consolidation. Perhaps this is due to the relative ‘freshness’ of the phenomenon, in both political and academic senses, yet it is nonetheless worth notice. As one of the few, Rojas argues that the slump was underpinned by a failure to introduce structural reform, leading to further dependence on primary and extractive goods, and increased levels of inequality: “Ironically, the very marginality of Pink Tide constituents—on whom they rely and whose welfare they are committed to—undercut reformers’ ability to press further and deeper and transform their countries’ economic growth strategies” (Rojas, 2017: 71). As national economies plunged, austerity programs became the norm, followed quickly by the mass disillusionment of the very groups that had been pivotal in bringing the presidents to power. Hellinger comments on the instances of tarnishing practices at the state level, which only exacerbated such devolution: though the participatory democracies were “founded on high ideals, they were corrupted by the realities of power” and a number of corruption scandals, leading to the gradual loss of support amongst initial electoral bases and the enforcement of more populist forms of governance (Hellinger, 2011: 398). Corrales’ and Penfold’s seminal study of Venezuela is one of the few rigorous accounts of Hugo Chávez’s consolidation of power against this backdrop (Corrales and Penfold, 2010).

Carlos de la Torre views the Pink Tide through the frame of populism. He accounts the rebirth of radical populism in Latin America as a moment of the political *extraordinary*, in which “the citizenry, overflowing the formal borders of institutionalized politics, reflectively aims at the modification of the central political, symbolic, and constitutional principles” through the conjoining figure of the populist leader (de la Torre, 2016: 121). Torre explains that some leaders, like Chávez and Correa, claimed to speak for a homogenous people; Morales, on the other hand, was not permitted by his constituencies to claim a unified people. The personalistic rules of the former set the limits for popular autonomy in their respective countries, while the potency of social and indigenous groups in the latter case constrained the executive to a certain extent.

De la Torre and Conaghan discuss the use of the *permanent campaign*—the “seamless joining of the techniques of political campaigning with the act of governing” to sustain an elected official’s popularity—in the context of the presidencies of the Andean region. They underscore that electoral

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validation is a linchpin of their transformative governments (Conaghan, de la Torre, 2008: 267). Similarly, David Landau expands on the notion that there exists an affinity between populism and electoral events, focusing on constitutions: constitutional change serves as “a paradigmatic way to deconstruct the existing institutional order” (Landau, 2018: 523).

The former authors invariably view the Pink Tide through the lens of populism or 21st century socialism, which, though fundamental to understanding the nature of the plebiscitarian presidencies, fall short in systematically breaking down the path towards autocratization. What is more, analyses through the frame of populism largely ignore the evolution of the various regimes and the subtle differences therein, instead treating them as cookie-cutter cases of political Manicheanism. Finally, few scholars have treated the Pink Tide as a case study of authoritarianism, relying instead on single-country analyses.

Theorizing Regime Transitions

Understanding the autocratization of the Pink Tide necessitates its contextualization within the scholarly dialogue of the post-Cold War period.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the international system boasted of the feat of democracy. Samuel Huntington’s seminal text on the third wave of democratization pointed to the inordinate expansion of democracies in the wake of the Soviet collapse and the rapid proliferation of elections (Huntington, 1991). Scholars of the transition paradigm followed suit, suggesting the genesis of a new period in which regime transitions would by and large consist of moves away from autocracies (Carothers, 2002; Levitsky and Way, 2015;). Accordingly, the primary focus of the period was on benchmarks for democratic consolidation and democratization routes (Boix, 2003; Dahl, 2003; Przeworski, 2000; Tsebelis, 2002).

Yet as the democratic model diffused throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America and dozens of countries transitioned into electoral democracies to form part of the Third Wave, other less democratic governments benefited from the new titular claims to power—this, in turn, provoked a conceptual shift in transitology towards research on autocracies and autocratization paths. This new phase has focused on the dominant features of autocratic consolidation, stability and breakdown, in addition to typologies of autocratic regimes.

In this vein, radical regime changes have been qualified as democratic breakdowns (Maeda, 2010) and (re)autocratization (Merkel 2010), while regimes that have failed to follow the traditional logic of democratization have undergone processes of democratic erosion (Bermeo, 2016), hybridization (Erdman, 2011) and democratic backsliding (Aleman and Yang, 2011). Linz and Stepan's model of *extended transition* introduces categories of non-democratic governance and duly stresses the analytical imperative of considering manifold, and possibly concurrent, transitions (Linz and Stepan, 1996).

Eichhorn notes various conditions for re-autocratization, including a low human development index, excessive deviations from average growth and perceptions of bad governance (Eichhorn, 2016). Research on autocratic consolidation mechanisms reveals the operationalization of certain tools, such as legitimacy creation (Gilley, 2009), electoral contestation and manipulation (Schedler, 2006), and opposition management/repression (Bellin, 2004; Lust-Okar, 2005).

Other scholars comment on the flexible nature of non-democratic regimes, noting that they possess modes of adaptation and alert-mechanisms (Schedler, 2006). Brooker builds upon this perspective, noting a “degree of evolutionary adaptation” in non-democratic regimes (Brooker, 2009: 274).

Comparable to criticisms of democratization, the aforementioned literature fails to consider values and demands as explanatory mechanisms for autocratization. In other words, they exclude research on certain indicators of autocratization, including the ideas and principles that complement procedures and institutions (Riley, 1992; Gandhi & Lust-Okar, 2009; Simon, 1995). Moreover, the transitology literature does not do justice to the role of language and communications—on the part of official figures, the media and the public— in the process of authoritarian consolidation.

Legitimacy & Legitimation

If language offers grounds for analyses of autocratization, it plays a fundamental role in legitimation processes and inquiries thereof. A range of scholarly discussion highlights the role and value of legitimacy and its strategic construction in governance (Hyde, 1983; Przeworski, 1991; Easton, 1975; Gerschewski, 2013). Legitimacy is associated to be at the core of survival

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across a spectrum of regime types. Indeed, Dogan notes that “even the most tyrannical rulers try to justify their reign” (Dogan, 1992: 116). While the legitimacy of democracies is founded largely on *inputs*, such as shared notions of political representation and lasting electoral processes (Easton, 1975), the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes is arguably based on *outputs*, such as economic performance (Huntington, 1991). Hybrid regimes—such as those of the Pink Tide— combine democratic and autocratic measures and legitimate their rule through a mix of repressive and democratic patterns in the form of rhetorical claims (e.g. propaganda) and specific actions (institutional reform, citizen mobilization, redistribution of resources) (Mazepus et al, 2016).

Scholars have sought to refine measurements for state legitimacy. Beetham outlines three dimensions of political legitimacy—the legality of the state, the moral justification of the state and the consent enjoyed by the state (Beetham, 1991). Bollen and Lennox specify substantive or effect indicators, in addition to constitutive or cause indicators (Bollen and Lennox, 1991). Gilley builds upon this conceptualization, defining it as follows:

“A state is more legitimate the more that its citizens treat it as holding and exercising power rightfully, meaning in a manner that is consistent with rules and laws (legality), that is morally justified (justification), and to which they have actively consented (consent)” (Gilley, 2012).

Certain indicators can be extracted from this definition: Legality (perceived respect for human rights and confidence in the judicial system), Justification (confidence in civil service, how democratically the country is governed), Security Legitimacy (repression of political opposition), Acts of Consent (voting turnout and taxes as percentage of central government revenues), and Political Legitimacy (measure of exclusion of political actors) (Gilley, 2006). As per Gilley, legality, justification and security legitimacy tend to outweigh other indicators in the majority of cases and studies.

Max Weber’s seminal definition of rule further inculcates the value of legitimation in understanding patterns and archetypes of domination. He defines rule (*Herrschaft*) as “the situation in which the manifested will (command) of the ruler or rulers is meant to influence the conduct of one or more others (the ruled) and actually does influence it in such a way that their conduct to a socially relevant degree occurs as if the ruled had made the content of the command the maxim of their conduct for its very own sake” (Weber 1978: 946). Three claims to legitimacy are at the core

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of three types of social order, according to Weber: *traditional rule* legitimates itself from “the sanctity of immemorial traditions” (ibid: 215), *legal-rational rule* from the system of formal rules, and *charismatic rule* from the foundation of a ruler’s extraordinary personal traits. These forms are organized around quotidian and extraordinary needs: while bureaucracies (legal-rational rule) and patrimonies (traditional rule) are “structures of everyday life,” charismatic rulers are driven by the need to satisfy “extraordinary needs, i.e., those which *go beyond* the sphere of everyday economic routines [*ökonomischen Alltags*]” (ibid). Charisma “denotes a quality of a personality, deemed to be out of the ordinary [*außeralltätlich*]...by virtue of which that personality is adjudged to possess supernatural powers or characteristics...as a leader” (ibid: 140). Charismatic rule is of particular relevance to understanding the personalistic rule and claims to power of the Pink Tide’s leaders: Correa, Chávez and Morales appeal to their citizenry to endow them with the power to modify “the central political, symbolic, and constitutional principles” during extraordinary politics that “overflow the formal borders of institutionalized politics” (Kalyvas: 6-7).

Scholars expand on the Weberian triad in appraising a range of legitimation instruments. Centering on those who study non-democracies, this review notes Holme’s incorporation of eudemonic legitimacy, which is gained through the supply of material affluence (Holmes, 1997). Rigby presents the idea of goal-rational legitimacy (end justifies the means) in his analysis of the Soviet regime’s bases of legitimation. Others discuss similar phenomena as performance legitimation (Gill, 2011), allocative legitimacy (Schlumberger & Bank, 2001) and performative legitimacy (Burnell, 2006).

The role of political myth is also closely tied to arrangements of power and legitimation. Petersson notes that “it is in the best interest of political leaders to present themselves as those who most faithfully epitomize the myths and most successfully act to uphold them” (Petersson, 2017). Similarly, Edelman observes three master myths— ‘omnipresent enemy, valiant leader, people behind the leader’— commonly found in their discourse (Edelman, 1977).

Schlumberger and Bank link political communication and legitimacy through what they call *discourse legitimacy*: it underscores the power of storytelling by gifted charismatic leaders (Schlumberger & Bank, 2001). Given the importance that scholars have placed on the role of political myth and discourse, it is noteworthy that little attention has been given to legitimation

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narratives within autocratizing, hybrid regimes, such as those of the Pink Tide. Mazepus et al begin to address this gap in their preliminary analysis of legitimation strategies of Russia, Venezuela and Seychelles (Mazepus et al, 2016). Yet there is much left to explore. Specifically, this review notes the need for more comprehensive and rigorous analyses of legitimation narratives and patterns both in autocratizing regimes, generally, and in the Latin American context, specifically.

Literature Review Closing

In closing, this review highlights a number of scholarly gaps in existent research. On the one hand, it reveals an overwhelming prevalence of economics-driven arguments to explain the swell of the Pink Tide and its ebb into more precarious conditions. The dialogue has largely focused on the role of austerity policies and structural adjustments that led to crises of representation within the Pink Tide yet goes no further in analyzing the regime's response to, or (de)construction of, legitimation. On the other hand, research has fallen short in analyzing other explanatory or structuring elements, such as legitimation narratives, to explain the metamorphosis of the Pink Tide's regimes into increasingly authoritarian ways. This leaves researchers with a number of analytical fissures, which potentiate a diversified understanding of autocratization processes.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

This section develops the theoretical framework for the study. It departs from a narrative theory of positioning, followed by a management theory of organization legitimacy. The section then offers a theory of *legitimology* to provide the conceptual tools for the empirical analysis and frames it within the structuration debate.

Narrative Analysis: Positioning Theory

Scholars in the fields of political science, communications and management have supported a discursive and political understanding of the construction of reality (Frost, 1985; Putnam, 1983). Accordingly, increased attention has been devoted to the role of narratives and narratology, as the study of understanding meanings that social actors attribute to experience (Mumby, 1987; Clair, 2014; Allen, 1996). Clair maintains that “narratives serve many purposes: to entertain, to educate, to persuade, to provide catharsis and aesthetic resolution, to create community and simultaneously to ostracize, to oppress, and yet to offer resistance, to heal, to emancipate, and to grant future possibilities” (Clair, 2014: 10-11). Thus, applications of narratology are not mere thought experiments detached from the enterprise of regime transition and its study. Rather, narratology offers a cogent base for analyses of power construction, consolidation and loss.

As a branch of narrative analysis that emerged originally in psychology, Harré and Moghaddam’s *positioning theory* offers a “study of the way rights and duties are taken up and laid down, ascribed and appropriated, refused and defended in the fine grain of the encounters of daily lives” (Harré & Moghaddam, 2011, p. 132).

Harré observes that *who* can “perform which actions and so contribute this or that act to the episode structure as a whole, depends on subtly varying presuppositions, as to rights of access to the local repertoire of acceptable conduct...and as to the distribution of duties to perform the necessary actions” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003: 4). Harré notes that it is “possible to generalize the concept in studies of discursive interactions between larger units than one-on-one conversations. Institutions and even nations can be positioned in that rights and duties to perform certain categories of speech acts are restricted [or expanded] by the conventions of interaction” (ibid: 5). Thus, positioning theory may be used to study the way these rights and duties are constructed,

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imputed and justified by political actors, groups or states, offering a fruitful starting point for the examination of the Pink Tide's discourse.

Positioning is instantiated through discourse—accordingly, rights and duties exist in a discursive domain. Such discursive development is reinforced by a symbiotic relationship between the individual and the collective. Harré developed a heuristic triangle to depict the discursive symbiosis (Figure 1). It focuses on three components of language and their dynamic relationship: *speech acts*, *positions* and *storylines* (ibid: 6).

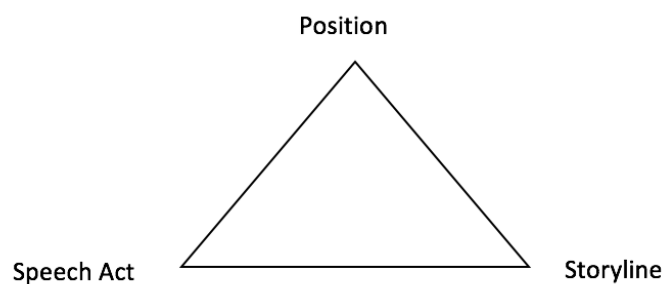


Figure 1: Harré's Heuristic Triangle

Speech acts are actions latent with social significance, who surface and transform throughout a social episode. “Every socially significant action, intended movement, or speech must be interpreted as an act, a socially meaningful and significant performance” (ibid). Speech acts are ascribed by the self and other actors with a range of attributes.

A speech act that refers to a figure or an action with a certain qualification, constitutes a specific *position* for the social actors. Language and discourse “either limit or expand what social actors are able to do within a particular context” (Langdon, 2016: 25). Overall, the general set of duties and rights allotted through positioning determines the consequent scope of speech or action.

The third element in the heuristic triangle is the *storyline*. Recognizing that “episodes do not unfold in any random way [but rather] tend to follow already established patterns of development,” Harré explains that storylines constitute normative patterns (ibid). The latter, in turn, may be expressed in clusters of narrative convention—revealing overarching socio-cultural constructs about concepts, people and actions— due to their relative stability and gradual shift over time.

In this context, Harré breaks down positions into three modes. *First-order positioning* refers to

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“the way persons locate themselves and others within an essentially moral space by using categories and storylines”—in other words, how speech acts assign duties and rights to actors (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999: 20). The moral high ground technique is especially evident in national-level or cultural-level positioning in the form of larger scale discourse.

Resistance to positions and repositions constitute *second-order positioning*: “to engage in repositioning oneself or others is to claim a right or a duty to adjust what an actor has taken to be the first order positioning that is dominating the unfolding of events” (ibid). This re-allocation of rights and duties may also be understood as *metapositioning*.

Presumptive or indirect positioning reflects a mechanism for constructive intervention, in which “attributions of mental, characterological, or moral traits [are invoked] to position someone, favorably or unfavorably, with respect to oneself and one’s interests, or the interests of one’s own group” (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003: 6). This may be manifested as *malevolent positioning* to the extent that an attribution is transformed to an actual revocation of particular rights or duties.

In general, positioning is relational: in positioning somebody or something in a particular way, somebody or something else is positioned relative to that person or object. They may be executed deliberately (i.e. apartheid laws of former South African regime) or without explicit intentions (i.e. distinguished spheres between men and women in medieval Western Europe).

Overall:

“A position is linked to the kinds of acts that a person in that position can be seen or heard to perform with any given symbolic device. Both are linked to the storyline, the conventional narrative, that the people so positioned are in process of living out. [This process is underpinned by] systems of belief that fix shared presuppositions and are shared or contested regarding the unfolding storyline (ibid: 8-9).”

Positioning theory thus offers a cogent base for narrative analysis, to be elaborated in later sections.

Legitimation in Management Theory

Management theory of legitimation offers a fruitful point of transition to understand how narratives contribute to the justification of authority. Mark Suchman’s theoretical synthesis of organizational legitimacy not only reflects political theory’s dual-conditioning of legitimacy— whereby the governing and the governed mutually reinforce each other— but also offers specific typologies

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and strategies that an institution may pursue in creating, maintaining and repairing legitimacy (Suchman, 1995).

Suchman agrees with the traditional understanding of political legitimacy, arguing that it is objectively in existence, on the one hand, and socially constructed, on the other: “Legitimacy is a generalized perception of assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995: 574).

Suchman deconstructs organizational legitimacy into three types— *pragmatic*, *moral* and *cognitive*— which rest upon varying behavioral dynamics. *Pragmatic legitimacy* relies on “self-interested calculations of an organization’s most immediate audiences,” often involving exchanges between the institution and its target audience in the form of support for expected value, influence and dispositional attributions (ibid: 578). *Moral legitimacy* reflects “a positive normative evaluation of the organization and its activities” and takes consequential (evaluation of outputs and consequences), procedural (evaluation of techniques and procedures) and structural-personal (evaluation of categories, structures and managers) forms. Finally, *cognitive legitimacy* establishes the *comprehensibility* of organizational activity according to cultural models and incorporates a *taken-for-granted* quality through which the existence of the organization is rendered as a given. He separates these archetypes according to their temporal texture of legitimation: episodic or transitory, continual or long-lasting (Table 1).

Table 1: Suchman's Typology of Legitimation

	Actions	Essences	
Episodic	Exchange	Disposition	Pragmatic Legitimacy
Continual	Influence	Interest Character	
Episodic	Consequential	Personal	Moral Legitimacy
Continual	Procedural	Structural	
Episodic	Comprehensibility		Cognitive Legitimacy
	Predictability	Plausibility	
Continual	Taken-for-Grantedness		
	Inevitability	Permanence	

Source: Suchman, 1995

Suchman's principle of *institutional entrepreneurship* offers an analytical tool to understand *legitimacy-creation* strategies— of use when analyzing organizations, or regimes, in transformation (Suchman, 1995: 598). He delineates that “innovators who depart substantially from prior practice must often intervene preemptively in the cultural environment in order to develop bases of support specifically tailored to their distinctive needs” (ibid). The political “entrepreneurs” of the Pink Tide forged such manipulation of the environment to actively create new explanations of their social reality in their original claims to presidency and throughout their governance. In such institutional entrepreneurship, pragmatic legitimacy takes the form of product advertising and strategic communications to convey demands to participate and underscore constituent sway— all of which are underpinned by subsidiary actors (i.e. the collective mobilization of marginalized groups). Establishing new foundations of moral legitimacy takes the form of performing technical success that inspires ‘collective evangelism.’ Collective action is at the crux of cognitive legitimacy in its popularizing and standardizing functions. The former invokes the promotion of “comprehensibility by explicating new cultural foundations” (i.e. lobbying, sponsorship, advertising); the latter regards the promotion of “taken-for-grantedness by encouraging isomorphism” (i.e. remake others in own image through modeling, coercion, regulation) (ibid: 593).

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Suchman outlines strategies for *legitimacy-maintenance*, dividing them into perceptual and protective clusters. The perception of future changes arguably enhances organizational ability and flexibility to react and adapt to emerging challenges (ibid: 595). Protective strategies involve the conversion of legitimacy from episodic to continual forms through 1) constructing communication links with surroundings to stockpile goodwill 2) policing internal operations *and* 3) prioritizing subtle legitimation efforts instead of highly-visible techniques (ibid: 596).

Suchman's strategies for *legitimacy-repair* are oriented towards moments of crisis, in which "a reactive response to an unforeseen crisis of meaning...impairs management's ability to maneuver...and severs them from previously reliable external allies" (ibid: 597). Such crises may lead to a *retraction cascade* of diminishing support. Three broad strategies are offered: 1) Present normalizing accounts that separate the threat from general evaluations of the organization as a whole (i.e. denials, excuses, justifications, explanations) 2) Restructure to re-legitimate (i.e. monitors/watchdogs, dissociation, executive replacement) *and* 3) Avoid Panic (i.e. patience and restraint). These strategies will be particularly useful in assessing moments of electoral defeat during Pink Tide presidencies.

Legitimology

Based on the outlined concepts of narrative positioning and management legitimation, this section proposes a theory of *Legitimology* [Legitimation + Narratology] to understand legitimation narratives and discursive strategies of the Pink Tide.

Legitimology understands narrative positioning as constitutive of the *power of the interlocutor* (the actor operationalizing a narrative for positioning purposes) and legitimation theory as constitutive of the *power of the word* (how the narrative and positions are legitimated).

Adapting Harré's heuristic triangle, the *triangle of legitimacy* offers a map to understand how relational meanings may be derived from speech actions, which form part of a broader normative pattern of development (Figure 2). Its goal is to understand what leaders narrate, the rights and duties that such discursive actions denote, and the broader narratives that emerge therein. Filtering

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the narratives into pragmatic, moral and cognitive dimensions clarifies how they claim authorization to do so.

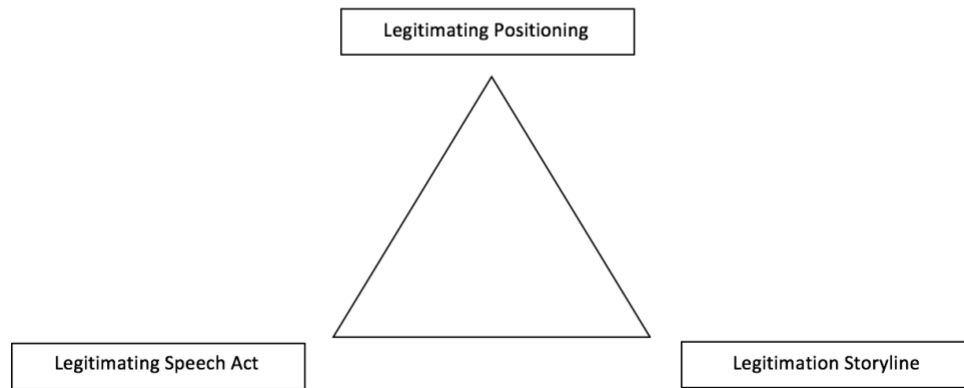


Figure 2: Triangle of Legitimology

The positioning triangle of legitimology can be entered empirically at any one of its vertices (speech act, positioning, storyline). Each storyline is embedded with positions that relate the figures invoked in a definite way with (un)shared presuppositions thereof. A position may be established through *first-order positioning* (locating self and other, self and system), *second-order positioning* (resisting positioning and/or re-positioning) and *indirect positioning* (malevolent constructive intervention). A *legitimation narrative* may then be extracted and understood through pragmatic, moral and cognitive dimensions, as per Suchman's typology.

Taking the storyline as an illustrating starting point, it is possible to then derive tentative meanings for speech actions. A simplified example may help explain. For instance, if the storyline unfolding is "Ruler and Ruled," the one positioned as "ruler" has a right to issue orders and the other positioned as "ruled" has a duty to follow the "ruler's" directive. If the "ruler" positions a subcategory of the "ruled" (opposition group) as ill-informed, out of touch or even illegal, the attributions of the speech act thus translate to a denial of the group's right to protest or act within their interests (indirect positioning). Moreover, it becomes evident that such legitimization narrative is discursively constructed within the dimension of moral legitimization, specifically through a consequential frame.

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Furthermore, legitimology offers the possibility of measuring narrative legitimacy in broad qualitative terms. It proposes two filters: *Nature* of narrative and *persistence* of narrative. *Nature* is understood through Gilley's previously-mentioned indicators of *legality*, *justification* and *consent*, whereby the first two are dominant in evaluations. *Persistence* may be understood as the duration and/or dominance of one narrative relative to others.

Tracing narratives overtime allows for the development of a normative pattern from episodic instances. This evolving approach will ground the study's analysis of the Pink Tide: the speech acts, positions and storylines instantiated by presidential discourse facilitate an understanding of the framing of actors and situations in the evolution of the respective regimes, and an appreciation for how such legitimating narratives are used to reify, normalize or demonize certain policies or figures in the process of autocratization.

Legitimology within the 'Agent-Structure' Debate

This paper positions legitimology and legitimation narratives within the structuration debate salient in constructivist literature. As Adler specifies, the agent-structure debate centers on the nature of international reality and, more precisely, "whether what exists in IR, and the explanation for it, should revolve around actors, structures, or both" (Adler, 2012: 129). A number of scholars have elaborated on this debate.

Wendt builds off of Giddens' *duality of structure* to argued that 'as social structures are ontologically dependent upon and therefore constituted by the practices and self-understandings of agents, the causal powers and interests of those agents, in their own turn, are constituted and therefore explained by structures' (Wendt, 1987: 359; Giddens, 1979). Moreover, he reformulated Hollis and Smith's level-of-analysis argument— by which the state of affairs or IR may be explained through a system-to-unit or unit-to-system analysis— to ask, "what constitutes the properties of actors in the first place" (Hollis and Smith, 1996: 111, 113).

Margaret Archer offers a morphogenetic approach in response to the agent-structure debate, as follows:

"Action, of course, is ceaseless and essential both to the continuation and further elaboration of the system, but subsequent interaction will be different from earlier action

because it is conditioned by the structural consequences of that prior action. Hence, the morphogenetic perspective is not only dualistic but sequential, dealing in endless cycles of structural conditioning/social interaction/structural elaboration— thus unravelling the dialectical interplay between structure and action” (Archer, 1985:61).

Morphogenetic cycles are analytically fleshed out through intervals. As Archer explains, “structure logically pre-dates the action(s) which transform it; and that structural elaboration logically post-dates those actions...This represents the bedrock of an understanding of systemic properties, of *structuring* over time, which enables explanations of specific forms of structural elaboration to be advanced” (Archer, 1985: 72).

Carlnaes builds upon Archer’s morphogenetic approach, adding a temporal dimension to the debate: he argues that there is a “co-determinative process of *change* over time, involving the capacity for strategic and tactical action on the part of significant actors cognizant of the potentiality of structures not only to constrain policy but also to provide opportunities for evolutionary action” (Carlnaes, 1992). Accordingly, actors succeed or fail depending on their ability to influence discursive stasis and change.

Against this backdrop, the legitimization narrative offers a point of analytical penetration to the agent-structure debate. Not only does discourse serve as a functional property of both dimensions, but it also continuously constrains or enables a contextually defined structure affected by human agency. This case study will explore the dynamic between the legitimization narrative (presidential agency) and autocratization (regime structure).

Chapter III: Methodology

The research will apply the proposed theory of legitimacy to detect, outline and explain the legitimization narratives of the Pink Tide in its process of autocratization.

Structured-Focused Narrative Analysis

George's *structured, focused case comparison* serves as the methodological fabric for the empirical research. Noteworthy is George's emphasis that case studies can be helpful in developing "typological theories" or generalizations on "the variety of different causal patterns that can occur for the phenomena in question [and] the conditions under which each distinctive type of causal patterns occurs" (George, 1979). Given that quantitative research is not the most natural of options to trace discursive positioning and narratives— and their formulation and interaction thereof in autocratization processes— George's qualitative research stands as a more fitting methodological choice. Yet in order to study the triangle of legitimacy empirically, George's methodology is amended. Key narratives of legitimacy are focused into three legitimization dimensions (pragmatic, moral, cognitive). This method may thus be labelled a *structured, focused narrative analysis*.

A structured, focused narrative analysis is a small-n comparison. The study will compare three presidents of the period: Hugo Chávez of Venezuela (presidency from 1999-2013, yet the analysis will focus on the period between 1999-2009), Rafael Correa of Ecuador (presidency from 2007-2017) and Evo Morales of Bolivia (presidency from 2006-present, yet the analysis will focus on the period between 2006-2017). The selection of these three figures is based on the following criteria:

- 1) Original candidate of the Pink Tide. In other words, not an inheritor of an incumbent (i.e. post-Chávez Venezuela under Nicolás Maduro).
- 2) Presidency by Election
- 3) Minimum of two-termed presidency
- 4) Low Democratic Index as per The Economist's 2016 Intelligence Unit Democracy Index. The three countries were listed in the bottom 25% of 24 countries [Ecuador: 19, Bolivia: 20, Venezuela: 22]

As this research seeks to grasp the construction of “autocratizing” discourse by the governing, sources include presidential statements, press interventions and interviews.

Table 2 provides an overview of the structure and focus of the analysis. Four research tasks are outlined, the first three of which are related to the identification of legitimization narratives under three dimensions (moral, pragmatic, cognitive) and their evolution throughout the presidencies of the respective leaders. They ask 1. What kinds of narrative positions and storylines were constituted by presidential speech acts? 2. How was (pragmatic, moral, cognitive) legitimacy established and how did its narratives evolve? *And* 3. How does the evolution of legitimization narratives reflect the process of structural autocratization?

For pragmatic legitimization narratives, the focus is on exchange, influence and dispositional attribution frames. Moral legitimization narratives focus on consequential, procedural, structural and personal frames of legitimacy. Cognitive legitimization narratives center on taken-for-grantedness and comprehensibility frames, including sovereignty, order and national identity.

The fourth research task traces the broad legitimization narratives of the Pink Tide, considering the pragmatic, moral and cognitive dimensions established in the initial phases of the research. It asks **1.** Are there general positions/narratives presented across the Pink Tide? **2.** Do legitimization narratives diverge or converge across the Pink Tide presidencies— if so, how? **3.** Do strategies of legitimization vary within and amongst the Pink Tide countries in the process of autocratization, irrespective of their narratives? **4.** How is structural autocratization reflected discursively?

Underpinning this structured, focused narrative analysis is the method of *abduction*. Abduction offers an alternative to the theoretical divide between deduction and induction, and has been applied by scholars, including Wendt, Ruggie, Shapiro, and Finnemore (Wendt, 1987, 351-352; Ruggie 1998a, 880 and 1998b, 94; Wendt 1999, 63; Finnemore 2003, 14). Following Finnemore’s justification for the use of abduction:

“Deductively derived hypotheses shape the initial design of the inquiry but quickly prove insufficient to explain events. Consequently, deductive arguments [are supplemented] with inductively derived insights, moving back and forth between the two to produce an account that will be verisimilar and believable to others looking over the same events” (Finnemore 2003: 14).

Thus, abduction is a form interrogative reasoning that dialectically marries deduction and induction through ‘the successive adjusting of a conjectured ordering scheme to the available facts’ (Ruggie 1998, 94). It ultimately leads to narrative explanations, of particular relevance to the case study at hand (Halas 2015: 707).

The time horizon throughout this abductive approach to the structured, focused narrative comparison will facilitate an analysis of official discourse as it has evolved from inauguration to re-election in an increasingly un-democratic form. It will be anchored in critical junctures of autocratization within the respective countries (i.e. constitutional restructuring, abolishment of presidential term limits) to better manage the research. Overall, this method will buttress the research’s aim to grasp the discursive evolution of legitimation and its hypothesized relation to autocratization.

Table 2: Structured, Focused, Narrative Analysis

Research Tasks	Focus	Structure	Timeline
Identify and Trace Evolution of Pragmatic Legitimation Narratives	• Exchange • Influence • Dispositional Attributions	1. What kinds of Narrative Positions & Storylines were constituted by Presidential Speech Acts? 2. How was pragmatic legitimacy established, and how did its narrative evolve? 3. How does the evolution of narrative legitimacy and legitimation reflect autocratization?	• Venezuela: 1999-2009 • Bolivia: 2006-2017 • Ecuador: 2007-2017
Identify and Trace Evolution of Moral Legitimation Narratives	• Consequential • Procedural • Structural • Personal	1. What kinds of Narrative Positions & Storylines were constituted by Presidential Speech Acts? 2. How was moral legitimacy established, and how did its narratives evolve? 3. How does the evolution of narrative legitimacy and legitimation reflect autocratization?	• Venezuela: 1999-2009 • Bolivia: 2006-2017 • Ecuador: 2007-2017
Identify and Trace Evolution of Cognitive Legitimation Narratives	• Taken-for-grantedness • Comprehensibility -	1. What kinds of Narrative Positions & Storylines were constituted by Presidential Speech Acts? 2. How was cognitive legitimacy established, and how did its narratives evolve? 3. How does the evolution of narrative legitimacy and legitimation reflect autocratization?	• Venezuela: 1999-2009 • Bolivia: 2006-2017 • Ecuador: 2007-2017
Trace Broad Legitimation Narratives of Pink Tide	• Pragmatic • Moral • Cognitive	1. Are there general positioning/narratives presented across the PT? 2. Do narratives of legitimation diverge/converge, and if so, how? 3. How does the evolution of narrative legitimacy and legitimation reflect autocratization?	• Venezuela: 1999-2009 • Bolivia: 2006-2017 • Ecuador: 2007-2017

Chapter IV: Empirical Study

Autocratization in Venezuela: 1999-2009

Venezuela is a paradigmatic case of the progressive autocratization of democratically-elected presidents. Under Hugo Chávez, the country that formerly boasted the third-oldest democracy in the non-advanced industrial world (1959-to 1990s), incrementally collapsed.¹ Venezuela is of particular importance in studies of the Pink Tide in view of its sheer size— as the largest amongst authoritarian regimes in the region— given Chávez’s exertion of unprecedented influence over other Andean countries in the proliferation of his *bolivarianismo*, and in light of the acute transformation that the country has undergone compared to any other hybrid authoritarian regime of the Tide.²

Although the process of autocratization is far from linear, a general trajectory can be discerned in terms of structural developments in Venezuela from 1999 to 2009. This account draws on Corrales’ and Penfold’s seminal analysis, which outlines the country’s transformation based on elite intentions (preferences and misreading thereof), political opportunities (economic resources and weak institutions) and the deployment of state strategies (polarization, clientelism, impunity and political persecution) (Corrales and Penfold, 2010). It traces a general pattern of **1)** constitutional restructuring and enhancement of presidential powers, **2)** reconfiguration of the state-society relationship, *and* **3)** hyper-presidentialism— all through rapid-fire electoral events. Chávez’s main innovation was his appeal to constituent power and his ability to refabricate the political system using ballots and not bullets.

Hugo Chávez emerged against the backdrop of the withering *puntofijista* system, which had been dominated by its founding parties, Acción Democrática and COPEI (Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente), since 1958.³ The latter had presided over Venezuela’s economic “lost decades” (1980s and 1990s), which saw poverty unfurl, alongside plunging oil prices. The decentralization reforms of 1989 paved the way for a political opening that gave rise to new

¹ Third-oldest after Costa Rica and Colombia.

² For more on Bolivarianism, see: Carlos de la Torre (2017) *Hugo Chávez and the diffusion of Bolivarianism*, Democratization, 24:7,1271-1288 and Angosto-Ferrández, Luis Fernando. *Venezuela Reframed: Bolivarianism, Indigenous Peoples and Socialisms of the Twenty-first Century*. London: Zed Books, 2015.

³ The *Puntofijo* Pact was signed in 1958 by Acción Democrática, COPEI and Unión Republicana Democrática to set the terms of democratic political competition following President’s Marcos Pérez Jiménez’s dictatorship.

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movements and new parties, such as *la Causa-R* and Chávez's own *Movimiento Quinta República*.⁴ In a socio-economic environment characterized by a GDP-per-capita decline to the level of the 1950s and burgeoning moderate to extreme poverty rates, Chávez heralded promises to overturn *puntofijismo*, and planted himself as the one outsider capable of doing so. He was swiftly elected in 1999.⁵

1) Constitutional Restructuring and Enhancement of Presidential Powers

After his electoral victory, Chávez quickly signed a presidential decree calling for a consultative referendum to elect delegates to a national Constituent Assembly (CA)—a novel tool to bypass a congress in which he held only 20% of the 60% required minimum in order to reform a constitutional article. The Supreme Court suspended congress as the CA—which Chávez managed to dominate through an act of wile institutional manipulation—rewrote the constitution in less than three months. It found its popular support through the first referendum in Venezuelan history.⁶

With its expansion of executive powers in relation to other government branches, Venezuela's 1999 constitution "remains the most presidential constitution in Latin America" (Corrales and Penfold, 2010: 19). The presidential term was extended from five to six years, the Senate was eliminated, public financing for political parties was prohibited, and finally, the president was allotted absolute discretion over promotions in the armed forces, alongside the right to call referenda without any sort of congressional approval. What is more, the Assembly shut down and replaced existing state institutions, revoked power from an opposition-held congress, and strategically, obtained control of the electoral monitoring body, Consejo Nacional Electoral (CNE).

⁴ The latter later became the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (PSUV).

⁵ Chávez won 56.2% of the vote, equating roughly to 3, 673, 685 Venezuelans (Acosta, 2006).

⁶ As Corrales and Penfold note, "the presidential commission designed an electoral rule for selecting delegates (a plurality system with different district sizes at the state level), together with a well-thought-out nomination strategy that ensured that no more candidates from his coalition would be nominated per district than were seats under competition, which was a way to avoid wasted votes" (Corrales and Penfold: 18).

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All in all, the “constitution-making process played a key role in sweeping away the remnants of the old order” in Venezuela (Landau: 529). Its swift erosion of organisms reflected a dual consolidation of power and abrasion of accountability.

Throughout these first two phases of constitutional restructuring and enhancement of presidential powers, Venezuela also witnessed an intensification of democratic participation through the mechanisms of the popular referendum and consultative assemblies.

2) Reconfiguration of State-Society Relationship: Polarization and Subsidization

The early 2000s were marked by protests, marches and defections in the wake of a number of executive decisions, including: Chávez’s obtainment of enabling powers to rule by decree on a plurality of issues, a proposition to change the education law allotting formidable sway of the government to dictate hiring processes and curriculum-design, state takeover of the oil industry, and the presidential approval of 49 laws that had not been consulted with any social or business organization.

On April 11, 2002, over one million people marched to the president’s palace. Chaos quickly escalated to violence, and Chávez found himself suddenly deposed by Pedro Carmona of the Business Chambers Federation for roughly 48 hours before being reinstated by the army. These “coups”— against the institutions of checks and balances, against Chávez, and against Carmona— “bolstered the presidency and the military...polarization actually sharpened [as] *chavistas* became more hateful of the opposition...Chávez never again sought reconciliation, calculating that provoking the opposition to irrational acts can actually bolster the president’s popularity” (ibid: 22-23). 2002 marked the first significant crisis under the new government, reflected in the drop of democratic and institutional quality of governance (Figure 3). What is more, the 2004 opposition-invoked referendum— subsequently won by Chávez through a combination of institutional manipulation and clientelism— only further silenced the opposition. The state-society relationship became one of increased polarization.

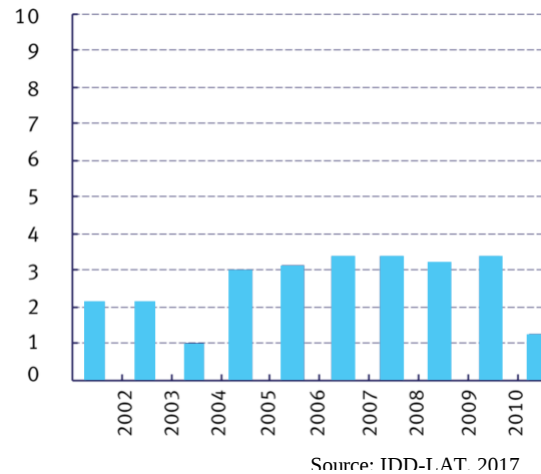


Figure 3: Venezuelan Institutional Quality and Political Efficiency

Extensive social subsidization also formed part of the fabric of this redesign in the state-society contract. In the period after the 2002 coup, Chávez pumped money from oil revenues into a series of social programs known as *misiones* (‘missions to save the people’). “The scope and depth of these programs provided a sense of social inclusion, which symbolically contrasted with the last two decades of the *puntofijista* regime and first years of *chavismo*” (Corrales and Penfold, 2010: 26). The gargantuan expansion of public-social expenditure supported the elections of *chavista* governors and mayors, and duly spurred Chávez’s own popularity— and to the surprise of the opposition, his success in the 2004 recall referendum to impeach him from the office of the presidency. In 2007, Chávez reformed and renamed his political party: *La Quinta República* (The Fifth Republic) became the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela* (United Socialist Party of Venezuela). These indicators may explain the relative increase of democratic satisfaction during the post-2002 period (Figure 4).

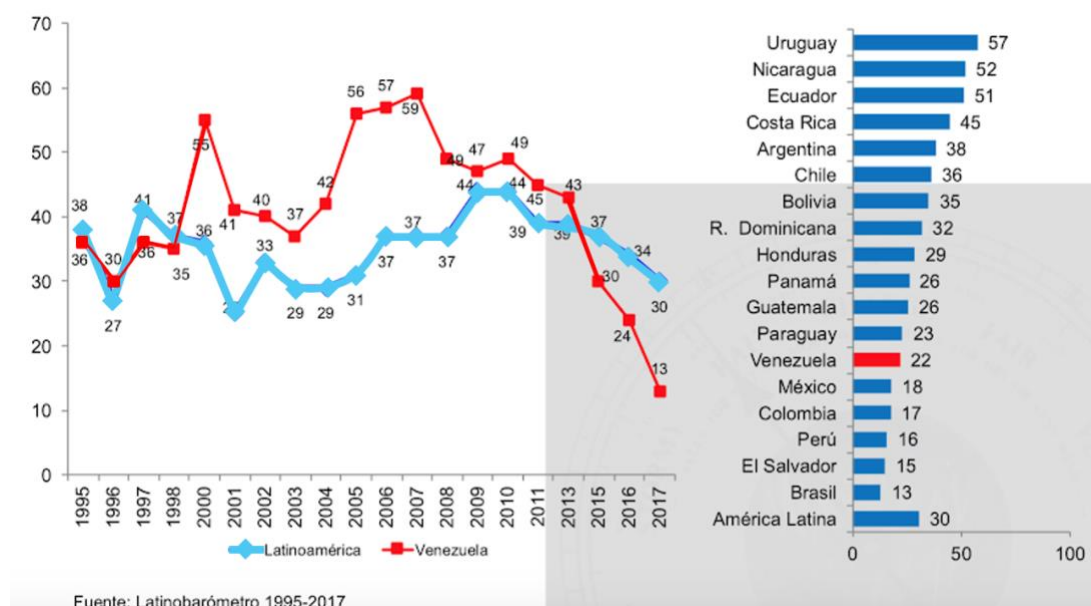


Figure 4: Democratic Satisfaction in Venezuela, 1995-2017

3) Hyper-presidentialism

Yet as the first decade of the millennium neared its end, Chávez's autocratizing trajectory entered a new phase through open political persecution, alongside even greater economic production. In the latter regard, the government's capacity to generate policies that assured economic efficiency increased four-fold (IDD-LAT, 2016). Meanwhile, the government published the names of voters that had signed the recall referendum in what became known as *lista Tascón* (Tascón's list), coercing citizens to remove their signatures or face the consequences of job termination. He shut down the oldest privately-owned TV channel (RCTV) in the wake of the nationalization of the telecommunications and electricity sectors. In his first electoral defeat ever in 2007, he responded by producing a list of over 400 citizens that were prohibited from running in the 2008 elections.⁷

⁷ Previously, Chávez held a constitutional referendum (2006), which arguably encouraged the general discontent leading to the 2007 defeat. The former advanced five "axles" (*ejes*) towards a more radical stage of socialism: they included enabling laws, ideological guidelines for employment and communal assemblies to bypass remaining formal mechanisms at the local level.

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2009 marks the most significant push towards autocratization in Venezuela's modern history. The year witnessed the persecution of elected officials, such as Manuel Rosales— former presidential candidate and mayor forced to exile— and the enactment of electoral laws that would allow gerrymandering. The most dramatic change came in the form of the 2009 referendum to abolish term limits for the president and *all* office-holders; this marked a herculean push towards autocratization in Venezuela. Not only did it remove a final check to power, but it also changed PSUV dynamics, with party members focusing more on their own careers and blindly supporting the president. With challenges to the president effectively obliterated, the constitutional amendment “succeeded in converting Venezuela into the most hyper-presidential hybrid political system in the region” (Corrales and Penfold, 2010: 39).

All in all, Venezuela's structural autocratization under Chávez developed through various stages and mechanisms. Projects of constitutional changes were concurrent with the consolidation of incumbent power, the abrasion of separation of powers, the subversion of protection for opposition groups, and ultimately, the overall erosion of democratic legitimacy. What is more, lavish social spending launched in the context of eroding institutions neutralized the roles of the political elite and turned them into pawns of the regime, further exacerbating any mechanisms for horizontal or vertical accountability.

Legitimation Narratives in Venezuela: 1999-2009

“Cuando los nietos de nuestros hijos estudien la Historia de Venezuela tendrán que detenerse, sin duda, en estos años finales del siglo XX, en estas sesiones del Congreso, en ese juramento, en las elecciones que pasaron, en la decisión de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, en la posición que cada quién asuma.”

-Discurso de la toma de posesión de la presidencia
2 de febrero de 1999, Caracas, Venezuela

“When the grandchildren of our children study the history of Venezuela, they will have to detain themselves, without a doubt, at these last years of the 20th century, at these Congressional sessions, at this inauguration, at the foregone elections, at the decision of the Supreme Court, at the position that each individual assumes.”

- Presidential Inauguration Speech
February 2, 1999, Caracas, Venezuela

Hugo Chávez’s words directed at the future ring poignantly today, regardless of one’s political inclinations. He intended them to mark the celebration of a new era that, in his logic, would break from the economic and moral shackles of neoliberalism, and give birth to a plebiscitary reign embodied by a reinvigorated electorate. Though— or perhaps precisely because— posterity has proven him otherwise, it is worth understanding how he legitimated what became a radical form governance.

Overview

This chapter reviews Venezuela’s legitimacy between 1999 and 2009. It analyzes over 300 pages of 25 speeches in the form of presidential addresses, press interventions and radio programs, extracted from the online database of *Instituto de Altos Estudios del Pensamiento del Comandante Supremo Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías*.⁸ The speech acts are anchored around the structural changes discussed in the previous section. Implementing the theory of legitimacy, it firstly traces the evolution of six sub-narratives through its constituent storylines, positioning and corresponding legitimation dimensions. It then offers a master narrative of legitimation. Table 3 at the end of the chapter summarizes the discussed.

⁸ <http://www.todochavez.gob.ve>

1) Electoral Victory Narratives during the Phase of Constitutional Restructuring and Enhancement of Presidential Powers: 1999-2001

The first phase of the Chávez presidency is characterized by discourse of the old and the new Venezuela through the following overarching narrative: “*Chávez, the outsider, will resurrect Venezuela and its institutions from the moribund neoliberal system, in the name of Bolivarianism.*” It percolates into the sub-narratives of *Opposition, Institutions, Venezuelans, Self, Country*, and *International Community* through the subtle evolution of constituent storylines. Following is a discussion of the evolution of each sub-narrative through an exploration of its storylines, positions and underlying legitimization dimensions.

Opposition, Institutions, Country

In the pre- and post-election period, Chávez paints Venezuela as a moribund state with festering institutions and members. He characterizes the old *Punto Fijista* politicians, its institutions and the general state of the country as “dead and unjust.” In the build-up to the 2009 constitutional referendum, the biblical language of resuscitation morphs into a more functionalist language. Chávez moves away from characterizing the **opposition** as the moribund neoliberal system and its moribund members, to discourse directed specifically at Congress and regional governors, and the guilt and responsibility they bear towards Venezuela.

For example, Chávez demands **Congress** to “intensely collaborate with the National Constituent Assembly...declare a national emergency, and revise and evaluate constituent powers,” amongst other measures. Through moral legitimization frames, he accuses the group of facilitating “the neoliberal catastrophe” that ailed the country for four decades and warns them not to make the “same mistakes of those who inhabited this house for 40 years and to whom it no longer belongs—this must be remembered. This house is the seat of the National Constituent Assembly.” With malevolent, indirect positioning, he also speaks to the governors throughout Venezuela that could potentially halt the rebirth of the country: “There are mayors who believe that they own sovereignty.” He pits the plurality of the domestic governances against the concept of a democratic consensus and goes so far as to match it against the very sovereignty of the country.

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Procedurally, he allots the groups the responsibility to embrace their ordained techniques and procedures. Consequentially, he demands that they produce the socially-valued outputs as so forth phrased in his discourse. This moral legitimation frame also overlaps with pragmatic legitimation: Congress is instrumentally evaluated based on its support (or lack thereof) for the new constitution and the new mechanisms in place to facilitate the popular referendum— *exchange* is at the core of the Congress-Chávez power-dependence relation.

In the aftermath of the referendum and period of enhancement of presidential powers, he congratulates Congress for “accepting the truth” of the Venezuelan vote. He repositions the **institutions** from moribund, to resurrected: “It is a resurrection of democracy for Venezuelan political institutions, which “have a strong moral and social burden... they are going to give democratic channels to [Venezuela].” The Bolivarian rebirth also implicates the narrative of the **country**. Its storyline evolves from moribund, to a state of motion: *in crisis*. He repositions the country’s embrace of Bolivarianism as a concept *and* an act of breaking with the past— out of the “terrible labyrinth” in which Venezuela finds itself. He justifies a concurrent Enabling Act as “a restoration of guarantees,” given the country’s “[in]capacity to regulate crises.” Such claims of crisis and emergency, arguably, lay the grounds for greater enhancement of presidential powers and further reform moving forward.

Venezuelans

The narrative of **Venezuelans** follows a similar evolution. In the months prior to and after his election victory, Chávez invokes Venezuelans through the storyline of *el pueblo* (the people). In his inaugural speech, Chávez addresses the “Bolivarian people of Venezuela,” praising the act of voting as a convocation of national sovereignty: “Blessed is the citizen who, under the coat of arms of his command, summons the national sovereignty to exercise his absolute will.” Through first-order positioning, he locates himself and the Venezuelan people as a foil to the *Puntofijo* system, the international system and Latin America. The storyline of such positioning renders the rights of the Venezuelan people as the priority within this landscape of change.

The storyline of *el pueblo* develops through a consequential frame (moral dimension). In such an ambiguous setting in which the consequences of the election (i.e. social-economic policies)—

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apart from the victory— have not been established, morally-prescribed normative evaluations may suffice. He speaks of *el pueblo* as “the only sovereign of the Venezuelan territory...*not* the President of the Republic, nor the Congress, nor the Supreme Court.” Through cognitive frames of popularization and standardization, Chávez invokes a number of national parades so that all may “engage in a process of collective social healing.”

The speech acts constitute a dual first-order positioning in which Chávez sets himself as a part *of* the people, as well as *apart* from the Venezuelan people. Consequently, he claims the right to speak and act in their name, but also acknowledges that they constitute their own force and possess their own agency irrespective of the President or any other institution.

In the build-up to and aftermath of his constitutional referendum, Chávez legitimizes the people as an “outcome” of the norms and values established in the new Constitution (moral/consequential dimension). He repositions Venezuelans from *El Pueblo* to *The Moral Electorate*, thus allotting a functional right and duty to the people. The newly-ordained moral force is the electoral voice: “it has been converted into the manager, the promoter, the comptroller, the evaluator of the electoral processes and their results.” By invoking socially-valued techniques and procedures to empower the group— including plebiscites, referenda, and popular assemblies— Chávez renders them a structurally and discursively competent force (moral/structural dimension). As the “protagonist of the Bolivarian conception of democracy,” *The Moral Electorate* is the linchpin to a range of structural changes.

Self

Chávez’s personal legitimacy (moral legitimation) is an underlying component throughout the narratives. Yet it is not through the traditional understanding of overt charismatic rule. He positions himself as an outsider of *Punto Fijismo*, thus capable of reinventing the system. In his first years, Chávez actually steers away from explicitly laying a dominant claim over the people, the government, or the country.

This is illustrated in the many instances in which he plainly states that he has no personal interest in power, that he is not central to the project of national rebirth and would willingly give up the presidency within a year if the nation’s crisis were to be resolved. He goes so far as to say that

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what he “least cares about is his personal destiny.” He repeatedly claims that “he has completed his duty [of constitutional restructuring] and it is now up to the rest to fulfill theirs.”

The use of second-order and indirect positioning renders the focus of the dominant narratives on other actors and storylines (i.e. *el pueblo*, *the moral electorate*, *congress*), seemingly removing the charismatic figure of Chávez from the epicenter of the process.

Yet the extensive discourse of selflessness inherently redirects attention to his persona. Similarly, the increased use of the 1st person perspective in the form of self-references, frequent remarks of personal accomplishments, extensive use of personal anecdotes, and spontaneous invocations of friends or acquaintances, suggests a subtle personal legitimization strategy. This is increasingly present in the aftermath of the referendum and period of enhancement of presidential powers. Nevertheless, the dynamics between Chávez’s charisma and institutionalization still operate in separate domains at this point of his presidency.

International Community

The narrative of the international community in the first years of power consolidation is not as dominant. It focuses mostly on the promotion of comprehensibility of the Bolivarian project on the international stage (cognitive dimension): “I have tried to explain our truth to them [foreign leaders].” Chávez adopts a rather collaborative disposition towards the international community, designating them as *a Global Ally*: he speaks warmly of presidential tours, visits with heads of states and foreign investors. Moreover, he comments on the acceleration of regional integration through existing structures like MERCOSUR and the Andean Community— of note due to the dramatic change in rhetoric that they will be afforded later in the presidency.

2) Reconfiguring State-Society: Polarization and Subsidization

Overview: This phase of the Chávez presidency is characterized by discourse of radicalization, followed by moderation. Although deposing President Chávez for just two days, the 2002 coup marks a radical shift in the president’s language. The overarching narrative is: “*Chávez, the solely legitimate ruler, will lead Venezuela and its invincible institutions in the battle against Fascist*

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terrorists, and in the name of true Venezuelans.” The brief crisis pushes the discourse into a new, more brazen direction, underpinned by cognitive legitimation. The former percolates predominantly into the positioning strategies towards and the sub-narratives of *Country* and *Opposition*. Post-crisis discourse on subsidization signals an attempt to save face and rebuild legitimacy. The dominant narrative then is of re-legitimization through a primarily pragmatic legitimation frame: “*Chávez, the re-legitimized producer of policy and wealth, looks after the historically excluded electorate.*”

Polarization: Country, Opposition, Self

The narrative of the **Country** evolves from the storyline of *Crisis*, to that of *Battle* in the wake of the coup. Chávez adopts an aggressive tone, qualifying Bolivarianism in battle terms— such as *combat, offensive, plan of attack*— that are increasingly invoked in the name of the constituency. The following extract reveals the frequency of use and nature of such language:⁹

“Ahora, nuestro plan de ataque está anunciado: Vamos al ataque. Aquellos que quieran *defenderse* en esas posiciones, que se *defiendan*, pero el ataque va en firme, en todas direcciones, en todas las direcciones de aproximación. Hoy estamos anunciando un ataque.”

“Now, our plan of attack is announced: We are going to attack. Those who want to *defend themselves* in those positions, may they *defend themselves*, but the attack is going strong, in all directions, in all forthcoming directions. Today we are announcing an attack.”

Chávez also includes the pronounced role of the armed forces in the **Battle** storyline. He repositions (second-order) the role of the armed forces as a civil-military union: “Those two elements that in the end are the same, just the same: the people and the military, the people and the Armed Forces.” Furthermore, he does not shy away from publicly recognizing their growing presence across civilian spheres: “they are deployed all over the country, in the schools, in the voting centers, everything is in place.”

The narrative of **Self** evolves in this period from the selfless *Enabler* storyline, to that of *Solely Legitimate* governor in the aftermath of the coup. Chávez locates himself within the country’s

⁹ The word *attack* is underlined, while the related term *self-defense* and *to defend* are italicized.

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Battle storyline (first-order positioning) and makes continuous references to the constitutionality of his role: “solely legitimate ruler,” “ruler legitimated by the people,” “constitutional ruler.”

Similarly, Chávez pushes the **Opposition** narrative from the storylines of *Punto Fijistas* and *Congress*, to that of *Traitors* and *Terrorists*. Private companies, in particular those in the telecommunications industry, are the primary target. He describes their practices as “business and media egoism.” Chávez, for example, makes repeated comparisons of the private media company, RCTV, to Goebbels, the chief propagandist of the Nazi regime. Through harsh indirect positioning, he qualifies the opposition as “self-interested Fascists that carry the devil inside... those who walk blinded in a crazy plan, a diabolical plan, an irrational plan, who need an exorcism.” In the wake of the 2004 recall referendum, he speaks of the “supervisory role” that all Venezuelans should play in light of such propaganda, shouting out “*ojo pelado!*”¹⁰

Subsidization: Saving Face

The discourse on subsidization after the crisis signals an attempt to save face and rebuild legitimacy. The dominant storyline shifts occur in the narratives of **Venezuelans** and **Self**. The discourse of re-legitimization is told primarily through a pragmatic frame. The overarching narrative is “*Chávez, the re-legitimized producer, looks after the historically excluded electorate.*”

Venezuelans and Self

Chávez briefly incorporates the storyline of *The Excluded Electorate* in the narrative of **Venezuelans**. These are the people who were denied social, economic, and political voices for decades by the neoliberal system. Their repositioning (second-order) allots such group—presumably Chávez supporters—with imminent influence (pragmatic dimension). Chávez is signaling through his discourse that he is responsive to larger interests and intends to incorporate the constituents into his structures.

The narrative of **Self** is fundamental to the pragmatic legitimation strategy: the storyline evolves from *Solely Legitimate*, to *Re-Legitimized Producer*. Through classic first-order positioning, Chávez establishes himself within an environment of successes: from victory in the 2004

¹⁰ A typical Venezuelan expression for warning and cautioning somebody.

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referendum, to the launch of the *misiones*, the speeches of the 2005-2007 period are overwhelmingly rooted in frames of consequential legitimation.

During the course of two- to three-hour speeches, Chávez runs through the statistics of health plans, sports plans, justice plans, social plans, the creation of the Sole Social Fund and the People's Bank, and the number of barrels of oil produced in each petroleum-producing region of the country, amongst others.¹¹

The language is self-congratulatory, expressing the instrumental legitimation so characteristic of techniques of exchange and the creation of dispositional attributions. Yet this is only to the extent that Chávez speaks in the first-person plural: 'we' is at the core of such discourse. The buoyant, forward-looking narrative of Chávez, *the producer*, hovers over the darker, violent narratives of the period of polarization.

Overall, this phase reveals a frequent and naturalized use of brazen language, narratives and actors. This suggests a banalization and standardization of aggression as a tactic of legitimation on the part of the executive, which despite rebuilding some legitimacy in the subsidization phase, nonetheless sets the ground for the aforementioned public persecutions (i.e. *Lista Tascón*) and the final phase of hyper-presidentialism.

3) Hyper-presidentialism

Overview: 2009 marks the second radical shift in narrative and positioning. In the wake of the 2007 referendum loss to the opposition and the approval of the 2009 constitution, Chávez's discourse radicalizes across nearly all sub-narratives. Cognitive legitimation is utilized as the dominant frame. The overarching narrative is "*I [Chávez] am the irreplaceable executive and thinker of 21st-century socialism in Latin America.*"

The legitimology of this phase is by and large radical and absolutist. The narrative of the **opposition** is dominated by storylines of *Oligarchs*, *Fascists* and *Terrorists*. Chávez now openly

¹¹ The online database of *El Instituto* shows roughly 300 links to speech acts dedicated to such plans.

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endorses aggression towards the opposition: "We are on alert...I guarantee to Venezuelans that any attempt to ignore the results of the will of the people will be neutralized and worse, much worse, for those who try to do so." Emboldened by yet another popular referendum, the narrative of **institutions** evolves to the storyline of *Invincibility*. Chávez makes repeated claims of their inviolability: "here is a legitimately-constituted government, here is our Constitution, the most legitimate of our entire history— it is loved by the people, discussed by the people and approved by the people." As to these people, the narrative of **Venezuelans** evolves from the *Excluded Electorate*, once again to *The Truth*.

Such all-encompassing language finds its most dramatic transformation in the narratives of **Country** and **Self**. For the first time, Chávez openly states his socialist agenda through the storyline of *Red Venezuela*:

"I want to now ratify my commitment to Venezuelan socialism, and I want to invite you all to redouble the march in the construction of true socialism, of socialist revolution, of socialist democracy."

"¡Caracas roja rojita!" (Red Caracas Red!)

He crafts the storyline of *Red Venezuela* through a religious language of liberation and personal anecdotes that shadow biblical allegories:

"Christianity is eminently socialist, so no one should, no Christian, no Catholic should be alarmed. I remember His Holiness John Paul II, who from time to time lashed out at capitalism, at neoliberalism, at the savagery of that system that is threatening the world—it is threatening the world."

"Venezuela has been liberated...it is on the Socialist path."

"Comrades, friends, compatriots, I may have made many mistakes and I made them, I will try to minimize them in the future, but I say it with an open heart like the savannah that saw me born. Three thousand days later, Venezuela is liberated! We are not anybody's colony, Venezuela is liberated."

The narrative of **Self** fittingly falls within this story. In stark contrast to the discourse of selflessness characteristic of his first years in office, this period witnesses a personalization of constitutional changes that will imminently convert Venezuela into an electoral autocracy. The narrative of **Self**

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evolves to that of *Yo* (“I”) through an overwhelming use of first-person perspective, first-order positioning and personal legitimacy (moral frame):

"Of course! *I* orient, *I* urge, *I* catalyze, *I* call!"

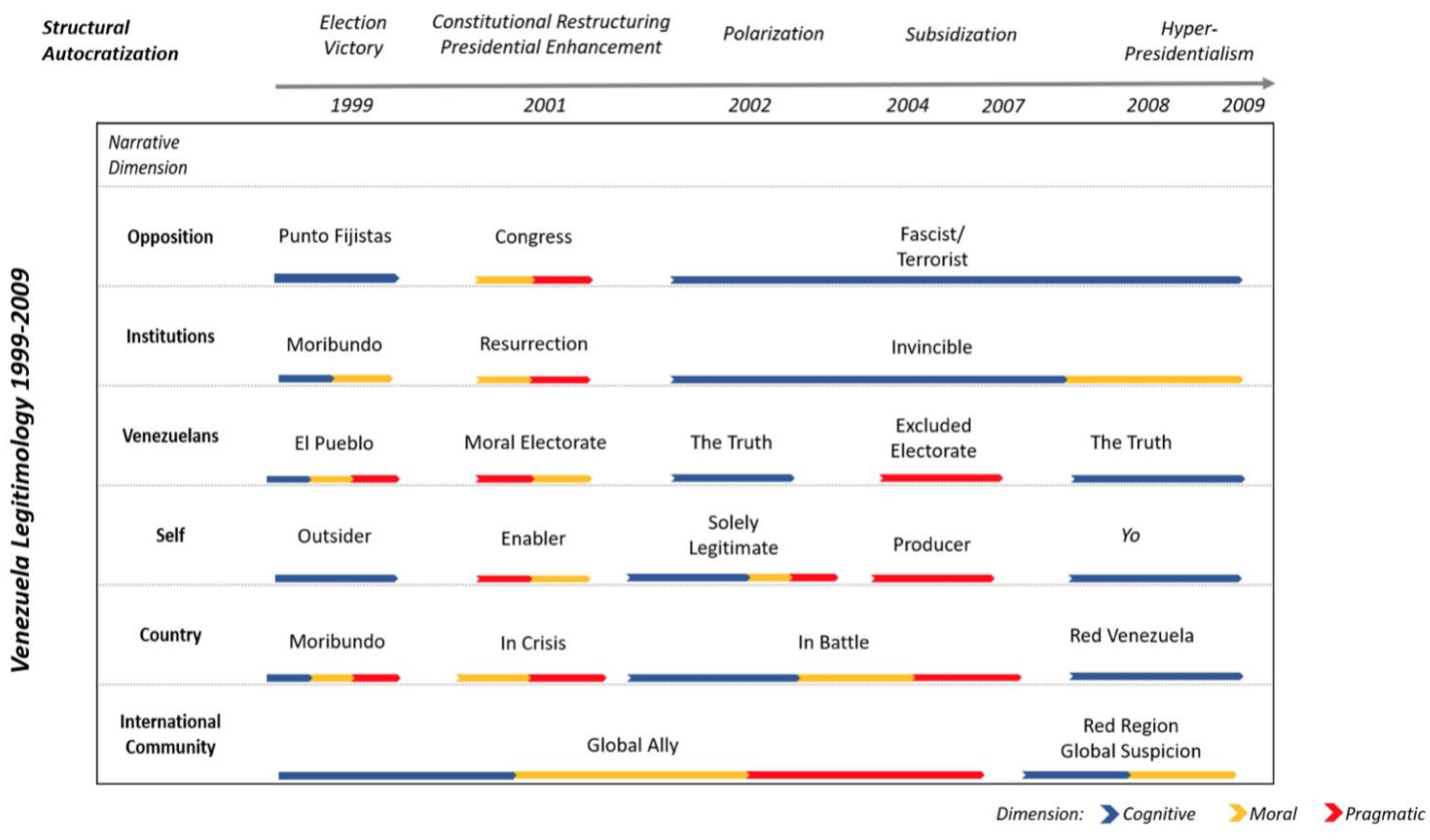
Unlike previous periods, personal charisma no longer operates in dimensions separate from the institutions. They are now one. In the wake of the 2009 victory, Chávez remarks:

"Today my political destiny is being decided. My political destiny is being decided today and that, for me as a human being, as a soldier of this struggle, is important. It is important, and I ask God that the whole process ends well. May the will of the Venezuelan people be imposed, and that is very important, that we all respect the sovereign will of our people, that no one starts to invent, to invent as they have already invented, and have attacked and have tried to fill us with violence and terror. Not on *my* account."

The narrative of **Self** also facilitates the evolution of the narrative of **International Community**. The storylines of the latter evolve from the international community as a *global ally* and legitimizer, to that of *Global Suspicion*: of “capitalists and imperialists who halt the path towards socialism.” What is more, Chávez reintroduces regional integration as a foil to *Global Suspicion* through the storyline of *Red Region*: integration will occur not through the former mechanisms of organizations like MERCOSUR, but rather through his newly-created, *Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America* (ALBA). He fervently pushes for Ecuador’s and Bolivia’s membership in this period. Notably, he openly embraces Cuba’s leader, Fidel Castro, during this period whereas before he had maintained a more distant discourse: “This victory is yours, too, Fidel. It belongs to the Cuban people and to all the peoples of Latin America, of our America.”

Table 3 below visualizes such narrative evolution, in addition to its legitimization frames.

Table 3: Legitimology of Venezuela



Autocratization in Ecuador: 2007-2017

Ecuador's process of autocratization follows a similar pattern to Venezuela's: 1) constitutional restructuring and enhancement of presidential powers, 2) reconfiguration of the state-society relationship and 3) hyper-technocraticism. Phase 3 reveals a slight alteration from the previous case, explained by Correa's technocratic style of governance, which concentrates power in the hands of experts at the sake of the constituency's participation. Participation is reduced to voting in elections; thereafter, Correa and his closed group of experts, design policies in the name of, but without the input of, the electorate.

Between 1997 and 2007, Ecuador had survived eleven presidencies and seven impeachments. Popular unrest with the traditional politicians and the *partidocracia* ('partycracy') had reached an acme in the 2006 elections for the office of the president. Rafael Correa emerged against the backdrop of the hyper-destabilized political system in Ecuador. Boasting a PhD in economics and experience as minister of economy, Correa swiftly rose to power at the young age of 43.

Proclaiming himself as the leader of the *Citizen's Revolution*, Correa promised a radical, participatory model of deliberative democracy. As an anti-party leader, Correa built the movement, *Alianza PAÍS* (AP). His anti-neoliberal platform promoted a post-structural adjustment variety of capitalism, in which the state plays the dominant role "in reducing social inequalities, controlling natural resources, and guarding against market insecurities" (Levitsky and Roberts, 2011). Through the National Secretary of Planning and Development (SENDPLADES), Correa sought to lead the country towards *sumak kawsay*, or "living well" in Kichwa, a variety of the Quechuan language.¹²

1) Constitutional Restructuring and Enhancement of Presidential Powers

Three months after his electoral victory, Correa campaigned for a referendum to call for a national Constituent Assembly (April 2007), for which he claimed an overwhelming success. This occurred against the backdrop of congressional recess, prior to which Correa fired 57 members. Following, he commanded another victory as *Alianza PAIS* gained a majority in the CA (September 2007), after which they approved the new constitution in the town of Montecristi (September 2008). The

¹² *Sumak Kawsay* is understood as "the harmony between community and cosmos." SENDPLADES, *Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir 2009-2013*.

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Montecristi Constitution is one of the most extensive in the world, consisting of 494 articles. Its novelties include: the extension of consecutive four-year presidential terms from one to two, the expansion of socio-economic projects for the lower class and indigenous groups, ecological protection clauses and greater control of the executive over the central bank and army. In April 2009, Correa was swiftly elected for a second term.

2) Reconfiguration of the State-Society Relationship

As in the case of Venezuela, this phase of Correa's presidency is characterized by mass subsidization and social polarization. The Montecristi Constitution created the National Decentralized Participatory Planning System (Article 279), with SENPLADES functioning as its Secretariat; it is the primary mechanism through which Correa sought to execute socio-economic reform, laying out the *2009-2013* and *2013-2017 National Plan for Good Living*. The post-neoliberal technocrats of SENPLADES— academics, unorthodox economists, postcolonial theorists— sought to rebuild state-society relations away from special interest or corporatist groups, and instead towards *sumak kawsay*. *Good Living*, as described by SENPLADES Secretary, Fander Falconí, is achieved through equity, the cultural revolution, territory and urban revolution, the agrarian revolution, the knowledge revolution, and excellence, “which is a principle and guiding spirit of our socialism, by which we will create efficient foundations to change power structures” (ibid).

Indeed, Correa's decade in power witnessed the radical revocation of neoliberal policies, as social expenditure nearly doubled from 2006 (5%) to 2011 (9.85%) and the minimum wage jumped to \$240 per month (from \$170). According to the report “Social Panorama of Latin America 2012,” published by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2012a), Ecuador is the country that reduced inequalities the most in Latin America between 2007 and 2011 (by 8%). What is more, the *bono de desarrollo humano* cash-transfer program doubled its recipients to two million Ecuadorian citizens.

Yet in leading the country towards *sumak kawsay*, Correa also undermined autonomous participation and dismantled institutions. What is more, he demonized the private media, social movements, civil society, environmental and indigenous groups, and even factions of the Left. All civil society organizations were required to register with the government and were forbidden from

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participating in political processes. Correa shut down the private station, *Tele Amazonas*, in 2009 and transferred management of bilingual education away from indigenous organizations to the Ministry of Education. Clashes with the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE)— Ecuador’s primary indigenous organization— became commonplace after disagreements over mineral extraction.

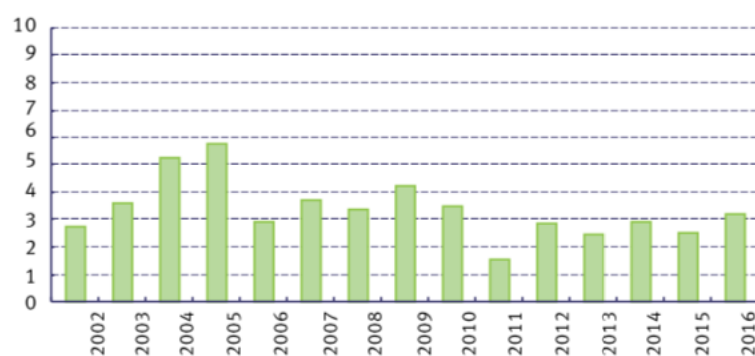
September 30, 2010 marks a pivotal moment in Correa’s reconfiguration of the state-society relationship: as the National Police protested over a new law that would undercut benefits and wage increases, an array of varying groups, including students, teachers and indigenous representatives, joined the strike. After losing patience in attempts to appease an ever more restless uprising, Correa provoked the police, who forcibly detained him in the hospital until the evening. Correa characterized the uprising as an attempted coup d’état, which he heroically survived. Like the 2002 coup in Venezuela, the event bolstered the president’s popularity, while concurrently pushing him into an even more irreconcilable position towards the opposition.

By May 2011, Correa sought a second constitutional referendum to reform the judiciary and grant greater executive power in its deliberations. In February of 2012, Correa upped discriminatory legalism to attack the privately-owned newspaper, *El Universo*, for defamation, sentencing the publisher to prison for three years. Similarly, he convicted investigative journalists for publishing the book, *The Big Brother*, which detailed corruption practices of Correa’s older sibling.¹³ By 2013, Correa passed a communications law that only hardened such discriminatory legalism.

The polarization reached a new height in 2012 with CONAIE protests against water and land policies, and in August of 2013, with the Yasuni National Park scandal. Correa scrapped plans to protect the biodiversity hotspot against oil drilling, leading to intense protests by environmental and indigenous groups.

Figure 5 below captures the fluctuations in institutional quality and political efficiency, largely reflective of the aforementioned dynamics.

¹³ Correa eventually issued them a pardon but only after public convictions.



Source: IDD-LAT, 2017

Figure 5: Ecuadorian Institutional Quality and Political Efficiency

3) Hyper-Technocraticism

Correa's decade in office not only concentrated power in his own hands, but also in the hands of the technocrats executing his policies. Together, they dismantled institutions, undermined autonomous citizenship and participation. Correa's government of experts claimed to "enact policies on behalf of the nation as a whole, particularly the poor, but [did] not involve the subaltern's organizations in the discussion and planning of the new nation" (de la Torre, 2014: 463). Unlike Chávez's Bolivarian Circles, Correa failed to implement local-level participatory mechanisms. What is more, Correa leapfrogged any obligation to appease social movements: taking advantage of CONAIE's crisis in the early 2000s, he focused on socio-economic redistribution instead.¹⁴

In 2015, the national legislature approved a constitutional amendment that removed term limits for public officials in the 2021 elections. The amendment militarized the state by allowing armed forces to patrol public areas and appropriated communications as a public service. That same year, Correa suffered a drop in popularity ratings, further reinforced by the 2015 plunge of oil exports and concurrent rise in taxes.

Conveniently, the 2015 constitutional amendment includes a clause restricting Correa from running in the 2017 elections but allowing him to re-run in the 2021 elections. Correa's former vice-president, Lenín Moreno, will ride out the financial hardship as he holds the office of the

¹⁴ CONAIE and its political party, Pachakutik, had participated in a failed coup in 2000, and came to be considered part of the *partidocracia*.

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presidency from 2017 on— and presumably keeps the presidential seat warm until Correa's expected run in 2021.

It should be noted that Ecuador has not reached a level of autocracy comparable to Venezuela in 2009. While Venezuela today stands as a full-scale autocracy, Ecuador is an intermediate case. That it follows a similar trajectory, however, makes a definite case for the future analysis of Correa's political reverberations.

Legitimation Narratives in Ecuador: 2007-2017

This chapter reviews Ecuador's legitimology between 2007 and 2017. It analyzes over 300 pages of 25 speeches in the form of presidential addresses and press interventions extracted from the Republic of Ecuador's website and other open sources. The speech acts are anchored around the structural changes discussed in the previous section. Implementing the theory of legitimology, it firstly traces the evolution of six sub-narratives through its constituent storylines, positions and corresponding legitimization dimensions. Secondly, it offers a master narrative of legitimization. Table 4 at the end of the chapter summarizes the discussed.

1) Narratives during the Phase of Constitutional Restructuring and Enhancement of Presidential Powers: 2007-2009

Overview: The first phase of the Correa presidency is characterized by discourse of the old and the new Ecuador through the following overarching narrative: "*The corrupt partidocracia of the past sold our homeland to neo-imperialist powers.*" It percolates into the sub-narratives of *Opposition, Institutions, Ecuadorians, Self, Country, and International Community* through the subtle evolution of constituent storylines. Following is a discussion of the evolution of each sub-narrative through an exploration of its storylines, positions, and underlying legitimization dimensions.

Opposition, Institutions, Country, Ecuadorians, Self

In the pre- and post-election period, Correa paints Ecuador as a *sequestered* state. He characterizes its institutions and the country as “sold to the bankers and technocrats of the *Asamblea del '98*” (Assembly of '98).¹⁵ Like Chávez, the language of this initial period is bold, even messianic, and largely underpinned by moral cognitive legitimation dimensions and indirect positioning. Correa embodies the **opposition** in the character of the *Asamblea*. It is elites and “*pelucones*,” who like the Venezuelan *Puntofijistas*, molded “a clay democracy” and propped the perverse **institutions** of a nefarious neoliberal system.¹⁶

“The Assembly of '98, attending to the interests of bankers and capital, hid in its belly the most criminal of actions against the people, which led to the great robbery, the legal assault of the resources of hundreds of thousands of compatriots who trusted in the bank and in the corrupt, insensitive and soulless bankers.”

In this vein, Correa paints the **country** as “sequestered” and “sold.” In the build-up to the 2007 constitutional referendum, Correa claims:

“The previous constitution caused a long and sad night full of abuses, exploitation, theft and obsequious delivery of our resources, of our sovereignty. This sovereignty was submitted to stateless interests, to the stateless interests that have plundered us and fleeced us without any contemplation.”

Through first-order positioning, Correa sets Ecuador within the landscape of the '98 system. He uses the word *volver* and *devolver* (to return from, give back to) with high frequency: “give back the word and agency to those who should be its owners, protagonists, and beneficiaries of public politics.” Correa thereby imputes **Ecuadorians** with the rights and duties to emerge from their *Forgotten* status and form part of the Citizen’s Revolution as *The Returning Electorate*. In the wake of his 2009 re-election, he claims preferential treatment for the poor, the young and the ancestral peoples of Ecuador— repositioning (second order) their status in the broader project to promote comprehensibility for a new political paradigm (cognitive frame).

What is more, economic language, in particular the word *deuda* (debt), dominates the sub-narrative of the **country** of his early years. For example, during his 2009 re-election, Correa celebrates that

¹⁵ The 1998 Assembly wrote the ninth Ecuadorian constitution under the government of Fabián Alarcón, following a coup d’état against Abdalá Bucaram.

¹⁶ *Pelucones* translates to “wig-bearers,” connoting aristocratic and elite lifestyles.

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“the Homeland is reborn from the mercantilist chaos. It had been snatched from the privatizing bazaar.” He frames the failures of past governments and his own electoral accomplishments within such financial terms. This is perhaps natural given the president’s background in economics. The sophistication of the language, however, is noteworthy given his claim to speak to a largely uneducated electorate. On the one hand, it suggests an appreciation for the general public’s discontent with the country’s public finances since the ’98 Assembly. On the other hand, it signals an awareness of the diversity in the audience, perhaps even suggesting a preference for the highly-educated “new technocrats” of his government.

Regarding the sub-narrative of **self**, Correa positions himself in distant language. He largely removes the first-person perspective from his discourse of change in what can be understood as the storyline of *The Outsider*. Analogous to the initial years of Chávez, the storyline is underpinned largely by cognitive legitimation dimensions and seeks to position the comprehensibility of the new political figure within the landscape of change. Through first-order positioning, he situates himself as part of a whole, referencing himself in the plural: “Our concept of development forces us to recognize, understand and value each other, in order to enable self-realization and the construction of a shared future.”¹⁷ Nonetheless, continuous references to January 15, 2007 (his own election) as the milestone for change suggest a subtle personal legitimation strategy. Like Chávez, Correa refrains from explicitly laying a claim over the people, the government, or the country. The use of second-order and indirect positioning renders the focus of the dominant narratives on other actors and storylines (i.e. *Asamblea del ’98, the returning electorate*), seemingly removing the charismatic figure of Correa from the epicenter of the process, and instead repositioning him as an *Enabler*.

International Community

Unlike Chávez, the narrative of the international community is dominant at the very start Correa’s consolidation of power. He focuses mostly on the promotion of comprehensibility of the Ecuadorian project (cognitive frame) on the regional, Andean stage, alongside the antagonism of the Washington Consensus, as the main agent of imperialism. Developing the storyline of *Nuestra America*, Correa repositions Ecuador and the Latin American region (second-order):

¹⁷ Underlined words signal first-person plural.

“Let us honor the sacrifice of the heroes and liberators...so that Latin America becomes an example before the world of a Great Sustainable Nation of Sister Republics, for our own good, and as an example for all humanity.”

The president forcefully advocates a new conception of development and regional financial integration “to forever break with external mandates, with that wicked Washington Consensus, with economic systems that only generated more misery and inequality.” He repeatedly claims that “as free men of Latin America, we will defeat the agents of imperialism.” The storyline of *Nuestra America* lends itself to Ecuador’s preparation to join ALBA as a full member state.

2) Reconfiguring State-Society: Polarization and Subsidization

Overview:

This phase of the Correa presidency is characterized by discourse of radicalization. Like the 2002 coup against Chávez, the 30th September, 2010 coup (30-S) against Correa marks a radicalization of the presidential discourse. The overarching narrative is: “*I, as the representation of the homeland, will lead Ecuador and its people on the revolutionary path against all traitors.*” The brief crisis pushes the discourse into a new, more brazen direction, underpinned by cognitive legitimation. The former percolates predominantly into the positioning strategies towards and the sub-narratives of *Opposition*, *Self*, *Institutions* and *Ecuadorians*.

Opposition, Self

The 30-S coup served as a tipping point to Correa’s largely academic and composed rhetoric. The storyline of the **Opposition** evolves from *Asamblea ’98*, to *Traitors* in the wake of Correa’s first major crisis.

Perched at the window of the building nearest to a crowd of over two thousand police officers, Correa sought to pacify the protestors and establish order: “When I arrived at the presidency, you were all paid miserable salaries, you slept on bare mattresses thrown on the floor.” With such claims, Correa attempts to highlight the alleged positive changes the country has undergone thanks to his work and implies that they should be grateful to him. He positions the National Police as dissident by connoting that the public force cannot protest against authority, qualifying it as a humiliation for the country (indirect positioning):

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“What a shame that the bastions of the homeland are behaving this way...fight for things that are worth fighting for, wear the homeland on your chest, see how much misery exists!”

After a number of futile attempts to calm the protesting crowd, Correa loses patience, along with his temper. Tearing off his shirt, he invokes the impossibility of rebelling against his presidency (cognitive legitimation/taken-for-grantedness) and cries out:

“Gentlemen, if you want to kill the President, here he is. Kill him if you have the strength. Kill him if you have dignity, rather than hiding like cowards in the crowd!”

“If you want to destroy the homeland, *here* it is...Destroy it! But this president will not take a step back. Long live the homeland!”

His declaration to the people on October 1 maintained the previous day’s fierceness:

“How the hell is it that police officers are behaving in this way?!”

“The great fault lies in the conspirators, the traitors, of always...those who cannot achieve anything at the polls.”

Against the backdrop of these statements, Correa’s narrative of **Self** radicalizes from the storyline of *Enabler*, to the that of *Yo*— the solely legitimate ruler. In provoking the national police to kill him, he equates the homeland to his persona. Dissenters against the Correa presidency, therefore, become dissenters of the homeland itself.

Institutions, Ecuadorians

The sub-narratives of **Institutions** and **Ecuadorians** align with the *Revolutionary* storyline. Although Correa outlines the 5 Revolutionary *Ejes* (axles) for Ecuador’s institutions and citizens at the approval of the 2008 Constitution, it gains discursive dominance in the wake of the 30-S incident. The narratives evolve from pragmatic-moral dimensions, towards the more abstract cognitive frame, in order to buttress the stark positioning against the *Traitor* storyline. Frequent references to the process of revolution and its actors characterize the discourse. They are linked to the persisting storyline of *In-Revolution* established in the previous phase’s sub-narrative of **Country**.

International Community

The sub-narrative of the International Community established at the start of the presidency persists throughout this second phase. In this respect, the *Traitors* align with international “conspirators” seeking to destabilize the New Left of Latin America.

3) Hyper-technocraticism

Overview: Post-2010 narratives remain largely consistent with the radicalization of the previous phase. The sub-narrative of the **Opposition** features most pronouncedly, undergoing a minor storyline shift, yet nonetheless dominating the presidential speech acts. In this regard, the phase is largely narrated through second-order positioning and framed through cognitive-moral dimensions. Noteworthy is the shift towards pragmatic legitimization storylines in the wake of what can be understood as a second crisis in the form of the 2015 economic depression and constitutional reform. Like Chávez’ post-crisis discourse on subsidization, it signals a final attempt to save face and rebuild legitimacy. The overarching narrative of the period is “*I [Correa] am the law and the truth, the author of Ecuador’s winning decade.*”

Opposition, Self

Correa’s main targets are the private press, indigenous groups, and environmentalists, all of which he positions (indirect) as *Deceivers* and *Infantilists*. 30-S serves as a discursive anchor throughout the phase. The 2011 referendum that reformed the judiciary, for example, reverts back to the bloody day: “The media tries to deny what happened on September 30th. What’s more, they try to blame the victim, the president! But today, they do not even publish a story about that.”

The discursive attacks on the press become more forceful in the events leading to and after the 2013 Communications Law:

“To the press: I know that you are all very aware of what you’re doing, of the manipulation in which you’re partaking.”

“There has been talk of dictatorship, and again they are right, because in Ecuador there is a government— possessing impressive democratic legitimacy— that has had to face the dictatorship of the media.”

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“Does the right to freedom of expression have supremacy over other rights, or does it reflect only the hegemony of the capital that is behind businesses dedicated to communications?”

Correa turns the frequent criticism of his own government (i.e. dictatorship that curtails the freedom of expression) on its head and redirects it towards the accusers, the victims themselves. He insults the group as *deceivers* that fool the country into regressive practices and repeatedly demands that “One must be intolerant towards lies. One must know how to get angry!” His attacks on the *infantile ecologists* are no different. In defense of the Yasuni-ITT initiative and mining reforms that led to CONAIE and other indigenous group protests, Correa characterizes them as follows:

“All these children ecologists, the extremist groups, the Pachakutik, the Quishpe... They are those that I qualify as caviar environmentalists, the cocktail environmentalists, who go on screaming in meetings.”

“We all know that the only ecological thing the Yasunidos have done has been to recycle the Democratic People’s Movement, because they are one and the same.”

He uses his dominion over the electoral system to intimidate the opposition, while justifying his own policies:

“If you have so much support, then gather the signatures, why do not you gather them? I am not afraid of the polls... we will defeat you again because people trust us... Collect the signatures, gentlemen. See you at the polls!”

In his final declaration as President, Correa spares some words for the opposition:

“I would have liked to send a greeting to our opponents whose constructive criticism would have helped us overcome errors and improve management. Unfortunately, instead of a reasonable opposition, we have always had ferocious enemies, opposed to everything all the time, who have thrown many stones but have been unable to propose any ideas.”

Correa’s narrative of the **Opposition** closely molds that of **Self**. He assumes any acts or words of protest against the government as attacks on his persona, pushing the discourse towards an increasingly personal nature:

“Today we face an orchestrated campaign even against my personal life. I do not like to say these things but I’m not going to let them play with my integrity and deceive the Ecuadorian people.”

Moreover, in his persecution of private media companies and journalists, he proclaims that it is his “absolute personal responsibility” to carry out criminal prosecutions for those involved. Similarly, he speaks of himself in the third person— calling further attention to his persona—when justifying

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his communications reforms: “Correa does not dominate justice. Correa possesses reason and the truth.”

For a moment, he even seems to acknowledge the anti-democratic nature of the 2015 constitutional change: “I acknowledge that the indefinite re-election amendment hurts the mission of many...”

Yet this is only an attempt to overturn the accusation and reorient it through pragmatic legitimization: “But it is clear that it extends rights and does not restrict any... The amendments only increase rights, make us more efficient, and in no way imply reforms to the state.”

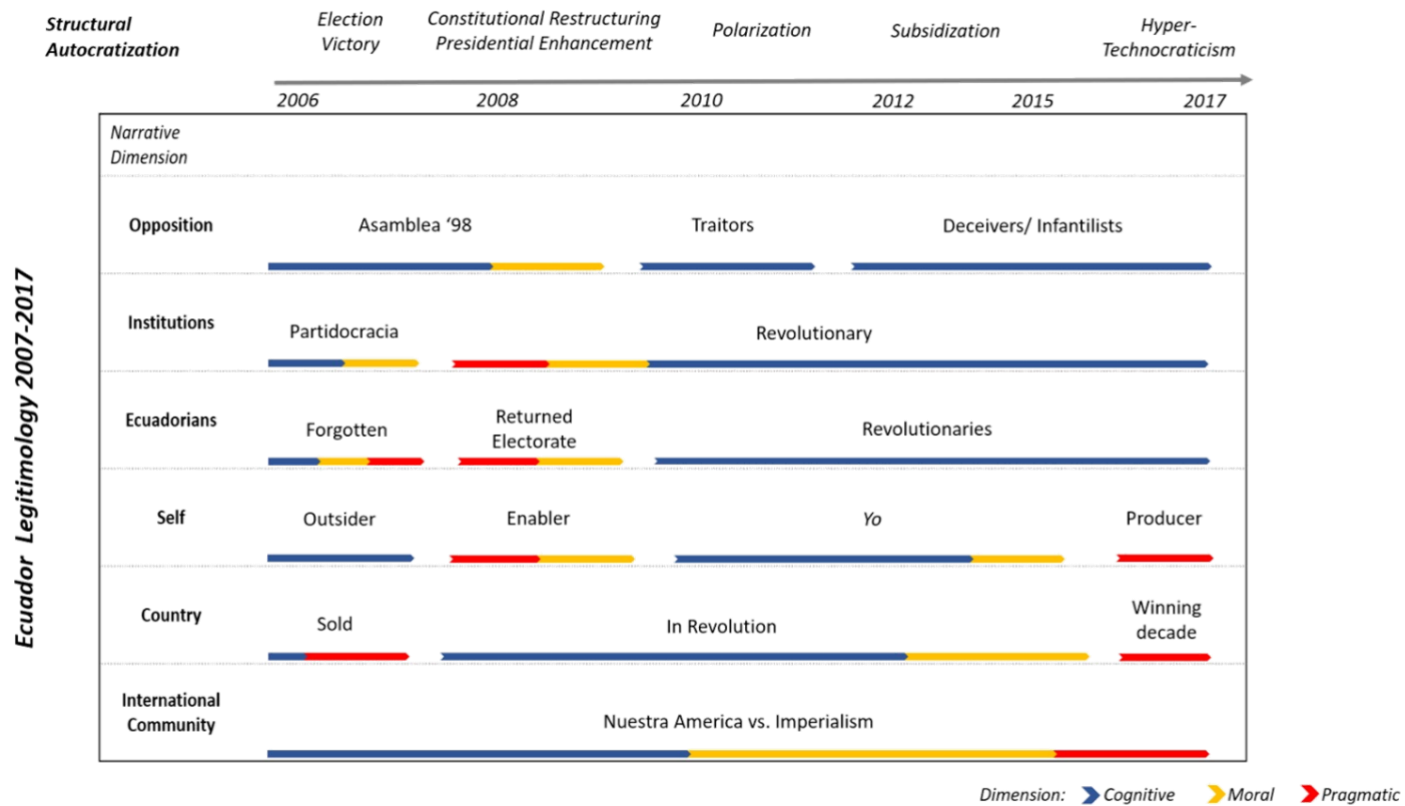
In the wake of the 2015 crisis, which witnessed the constitutional referendum, alongside a slew of corruption allegations and the financial depression, Correa seeks to rebuild legitimacy, characterizing the **country** as “having won” and lived through “the winning decade” of socio-economic progress. During the 481st year commemoration of Quito, which occurred shortly after the 2015 referendum, Correa dedicates 25 minutes to announce social projects that *will* be launched (at an unspecified date) and review countless government statistics showing positive improvements in the GDP, corruption rates, and education and health standards. Invocations of the international community only serve to pragmatically legitimize the “newfound” status of the country as the center of sustainable development.¹⁸ Even his final words to the people of Ecuador in Kichwa serve as a last appeal to pragmatic legitimization towards the indigenous he so often insulted:

“Iskun wata kipa, Ecuadorka shikanmi. Iskun wata kipa, Ecuadorka mushukyashkami. Ari, kunanka Ecuadorka shikanmi.”

“After nine years, Ecuador is different. After nine years, Ecuador has modernized. Yes, now it's a different Ecuador.”

Table 4 below visualizes such narrative evolution, in addition to its legitimization frames.

¹⁸ For example, Correa repeatedly states that Quito will host a number of international conferences on environmentalism and sustainable development in the years to come.

Table 4: Legitimology of Ecuador

Autocratization in Bolivia: 2006-2017

As an intermediate case of an autocratic, hybrid regime, Bolivia's autocratization follows a similar trajectory to that of its Pink Tide siblings: 1) constitutional restructuring and enhancement of presidential powers, 2) reconfiguration of the state-society relationship *and* 3) hyper-presidentialism. Phase 3 reveals a slight alteration from Chávez's push towards overt hyper-presidentialism or Correa's thrust towards hyper-technocraticism. This is explained by Bolivia's tradition of communitarian-style politics underpinned by strong social movements. Unlike the previous cases, in which consistent plebiscitary consultations issue a blank check for hegemony, and in which social or opposition movements are largely powerless in the face of hyper-presidential governments, Morales is more limited by the constituent social movement, *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS)— at least during his initial years in power.

MAS exerted a sway in Bolivian politics long before the election of Evo Morales, finding its roots in the National Revolution of April 1952.¹⁹ As a conglomerate of autonomous movements—including *campesinos* (farmers), the landless movement, women's groups, and lowland indigenous groups— MAS coordinated the selection of Morales as their leader in the wake of Bolivia's Water War (2000) and Gas War (2003), in order to oust the governments of Presidents Quiroga and Sánchez de Lozada. MAS "was able to join up the dots of individual protest movements and to produce an ideology with a broad political appeal, combining a well-honed resort to nationalism with a new blend of indigenous politics" (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2009:7). Thus, unlike Venezuela's and Ecuador's top-down approach towards the plebiscitary, MAS' electoral base was active, diverse and engaged— angered by the commodity privatization schemes and institutional racism against indigenous groups of the governments of the '80s and '90s. Morales, a *cocalero* (coca producer), intense activist and member of the Aymara people, became the country's first indigenous President on January 22, 2006.

¹⁹ In 1952, mineworkers, other sectors of the workforce and disgruntled sectors of the middle-class took up arms against the elite-based system of governance that preceded the revolution (Crabtree and Chaplin).

1) Constitutional Restructuring and Enhancement of Presidential Powers

Under the guiding maxim of *Communitarian Socialism*, Morales called a Constituent Assembly just a few months after his inauguration (2 July 2006-14 December 2007) and emerged victorious in the constitutional referendum (7 December 2008). Unlike Venezuela and Ecuador, who held successful referenda in just a matter of months, Bolivia already faced intense polarization during this period, witnessing violent confrontations between pro-government and opposition groups, thus hampering a quick overturn of the previous constitution. To rub salt in an old wound, this all occurred against the backdrop of deteriorating relations with the US, whose development agency, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was accused of conspiring against Morales in a domestic coup.

Nonetheless, February 7, 2009 gave birth to the new Constitution. It introduced presidential re-election, established a mixed economy, appropriated natural resources under the sole administration of the state, and reclaimed the pluri-nationality of the Bolivian state.

2) Reconfiguration of the State-Society Relationship: Communitarianism, Subsidization, Polarization

Morales' reconfiguration of the state-society relationship is underpinned by the new constitution's concept of pluri-nationalism and communitarianism. It labels "Bolivia as a Unitary Social State of Pluri-National Communitarian Law, founded on political, economic, juridical, cultural and linguistic pluralism" (Constitution of Bolivia, 2009). Notably, it enshrines the environmentally-friendly philosophy of *el buen vivir* (the good living), to promise the safeguard of *Pachamama* (Aymara for "Mother Earth") and indigenous autonomy. As such, Morales' reconfiguration was less a complete transformation of Bolivian society as it existed, as much as a recognition of a nation that boasted an overwhelmingly indigenous population, but which had historically sidelined the groups. In this respect, Morales highlighted the Bolivian "base" (*el basismo*). He invoked neighborhood associations (*juntas vecinales*), *campesino* unions, indigenous forums, and other communitarian forms of politics to emphasize the role of popular-sector movements.

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In terms of economic plans, Morales implemented many cash-transfer programs for the poor and expands indigenous groups' access to education and financial resources. Bolivia's economy grew 5,5% in 2014, 4,9% in 2015, and 4,3% in 2016 alone. What is more, its poverty rate decreased by a third during the commodities boom (Vargas and Garriga, 2015). Yet like Chávez and Correa, he fell short in re-founding the neoliberal economic order. On May 1, 2006, for example, he announced the nationalization of all hydrocarbon resources in Bolivia. In reality, this implied the continued use of existing contracts with private companies, only with increased state control of oil and gas resources. A slew of corruption scandals characterized by nepotism— where government contracts were offered to foreign firms and domestic “friends” of Evo— closely trailed along the more positive economic indications.

Owners of large estates in the eastern lowlands viewed the 2008 Agrarian Reform Initiative to reclaim lands for the poor as a threat. On September 11, 2008, they rebelled against the central government, attacked pro-MAS indigenous groups in Pando, and brought the country to the edge of civil war. Analogous to the attempted coups in Venezuela and Ecuador, the quelling of what became known as the ‘Pando Massacre’ eventually bolstered the president's support. Even UNASUR and neighboring countries condemned the attack and expressed their full support for Morales' government.

Unlike Chávez, who dictated complete sway over his respective movement and party, Morales has been limited by MAS in some occasions. The December 2010 announcement of plans to remove state gasoline subsidies, for example, led to sharp price increases. The latter provoked street protests, known as *El Gazolinazo*, that were expertly organized by Bolivia's largest trade union organization, Bolivian Workers' Center. The threat of manifestations past the new year forced Morales to rescind his proposal.

Despite the Morales-MAS dynamic, which sometimes complicates, and other times facilitates presidential concentration of power, Bolivian society has nonetheless undergone polarization under the Morales administration.

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The 2011-2012 Territory and National Park (TIPNIS) scandal saw Morales escape La Paz in the wake of surging manifestations towards the presidential house. The marchers protested against the government-proposed highway that would cut through the homelands of the Chimán, Yuracaré and Mojeño-Trinitario indigenous peoples— a clear violation of the 2009 Constitution protecting *Pachamama*. The government initially responded through the legislation of two contradicting laws: *Law 180*, which enacted the untouchability of the territory, and *Law 222*, which enacted prior consultation with indigenous groups. Ultimately, it disregarded both. The Morales government constructed the highway, authorized contracts with Brazilian companies, and effectively cut the TIPNIS territory in half. The presidential act caused an uproar amongst environmentalists, indigenous groups, and even factions of MAS; its repercussions are still felt today.

Regarding the media, the Morales government has also seen growing polarization. Though “partly-free,” as per Freedom House’s rankings, the Bolivian press has faced worsening conditions under the presidency:

“Lawsuits and verbal harassment by Evo and officials are commonplace, public advertising contracts are disproportionately awarded to government-friendly outlets, which have become more prevalent due to media acquisitions by businesspersons aligned with Morales. Recent years have seen a number of politicized dismissals and resignations of prominent journalists who reported critically on the government” (Freedom House, 2017).

The media polarization reached a new height in July 2011, when Morales signed a telecommunications law requiring that state-run media control 33 percent of all broadcast licenses. Similarly, he created the General Directorate of Social Networks under the Ministry of Communications to censure social media political content. What is more, Morales passed the *Adaptation for Broadcast Operators Law*, extending TV and radio broadcasting licenses until 2019, and creating the possibility of automatic renewal for another 15 years if broadcasters comply with government-imposed content requirements.

Under Morales, the judiciary has also largely deteriorated. It has become the weakest branch of Bolivia’s government, facing accusations of corruption, inaccessibility, and overall incompetence. Citing harassment on the part of the presidential branch, all but one of the Supreme Court’s magistrates resigned in 2007. The crisis left a judicial vacuum for over 4 years, facilitating further

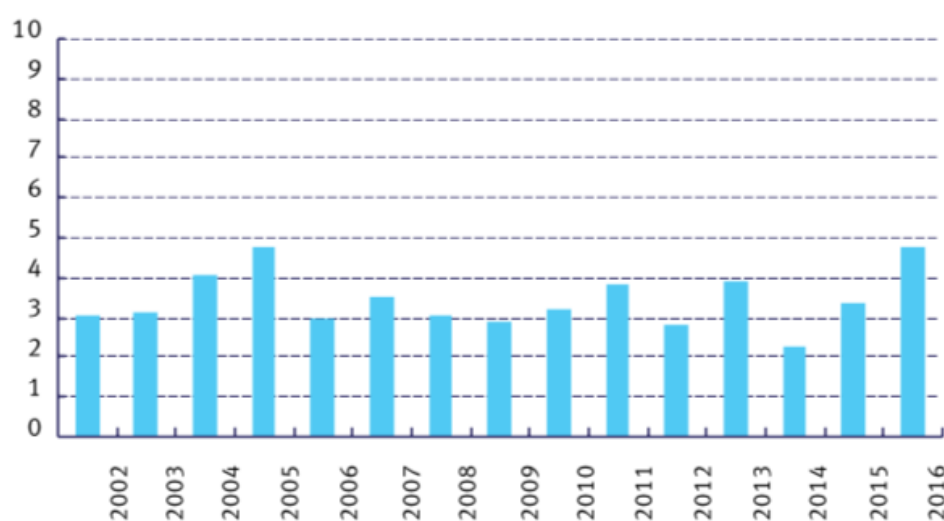
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executive enhancement. MAS presided over the 2011 election of Supreme Court magistrates, for example, which saw 2/3 of Morales' candidates find their way to the highest seats of the law.

Similarly, prosecutorial independence is weak, with enforcement tending to focus on opposition members and former presidents: according to a report by the Bolivian rights organization, New Democracy, there were 75 cases of politically-motivated judicial cases in the first six months of 2016 alone (Nueva Democracia).

Weak judicial independence only sours Morales' political legitimacy in the wake of endemic corruption. Corruption, especially in economic sectors, extractive industries, and law-enforcement bodies, is an undercurrent throughout the ups and downs of Morales' presidency. The latest scandal occurred in February 2015, when over 210 million bolivianos (\$30.6 million) were diverted from *The Indigenous Fund*—a government-led organization dedicated to providing aid for indigenous groups—to support political campaigns. The revelation that Morales' former girlfriend, Gabriela Zapata, had secured half a billion dollars in governmental contracts for a Chinese firm that employed her, and spoke of a supposed son that Evo fathered, only rubbed salt into the wound.

Figure 6 captures such oscillations in terms of institutional quality and political efficiency in Bolivia.



Source: IDD-LAT, 2017

Figure 6: Bolivian Institutional Quality and Political Efficiency

3) Hyper-Presidentialism

Between 2015 and 2016, Morales pushed for a fundamental change to the constitution: the abolishment of presidential terms. He called a referendum in February 2016, which he lost by a small margin (51% NO, 49% YES). Despite the referendum results, MAS asked the Plurinational Constitutional Court to rescind the legal limits bound in the constitution. On November 28th, 2017, the court struck down the term limits, paving the way for Morales' fourth term (to begin in 2019) and possible extension long after.

It should be noted that the role of the opposition is very limited in Bolivia. There are virtually no tested opposition politicians that “stand a chance against Mr. Morales’ power and charisma... [Bolivia has] perhaps the weakest opposition in Latin America” (Casey, 2018). Coupled with Morales’ constitutional wiles, the lack of any formidable resistance to the president only further inculcates the hyper-presidential form of governance.

Though the repercussions in terms of democratic erosion will reveal themselves in the 2019 elections, Morales’ abolishment of term limits marks a clear push towards hyper-presidentialism to the likes of the other autocratizing regimes of the Pink Tide.

Legitimation Narratives in Bolivia: 2006-2017

This section reviews Bolivia’s legitimology between 2006 and 2017. It analyzes roughly 350 pages of 30 speech acts in the form of presidential addresses and press interventions extracted from the Republic of Bolivia’s website and other open sources. The speech acts are anchored around the structural changes discussed in the previous section. Implementing the theory of legitimology, it firstly traces the evolution of six sub-narratives through its constituent storylines, positioning and corresponding legitimation dimensions. Secondly, it offers a master narrative of legitimation. Table 5 summarizes the discussed.

1) Constitutional Restructuring and Enhancement of Presidential Powers

Overview: The first phase of the Morales presidency is characterized by discourse of the old and the new Bolivia through the following overarching narrative: “*Morales, the outsider, will liberate the indigenous from 500 years of repression under the colonial state, in the name of Revolution.*” It percolates into the sub-narratives of *Opposition, Institutions, Indigenous, Self, Country, and International Community* through the subtle evolution of constituent storylines. Following is a discussion of the evolution of each sub-narrative through an exploration of its storylines, positions and underlying legitimization dimensions.

Institutions, Country, Opposition, Indigenous

In the pre- and post-election period, Morales paints Bolivia as a colonized state with usurped institutions and political actors. He characterizes the **institutions** and the **country** as “sold to” and “colonized by” an **opposition** of external powers and 21st century *latifundistas* (‘landowners’). Morales closely relates the sub-narratives of **country** and **indigenous** (Bolivians) to the extent that both have endured “the permanent struggle against colonialism, against neoliberalism and fundamentally against imperialism.” He asks:

“How do we look for mechanisms that allow us to repair the damage of 500 years of looting?”

“Historically, we have been marginalized, humiliated, hated, despised, condemned to extinction. That is our story. Our peoples have never been recognized as human beings, though we are the absolute owners of this noble land, of its natural resources.”

In this respect the storylines of *colonized* and *el pueblo* feature prominently throughout the discourse of Morales’ initial years. The indigenous character of *el pueblo* cannot be overstated. Unlike Chávez and Correa, whose rhetoric focuses on class-exclusion and economics, Morales speaks exclusively to his “sisters and brothers, the Aymaras, the Quechuas, the Mojeños.”

Through first-order positioning, he locates himself and the indigenous Bolivians as a foil to the colonialist and neo-colonialist state, the international system and Latin America. Notably, his discursive approach towards such **opposition** in this phase is reconciliatory:

“We have been in submission, now we are looking for how to solve this historical problem, not with revenge...we are not spiteful. We respect, we very much admire all sectors, whether professionals or non-professionals, intellectuals and non-intellectuals,

entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. Thank you very much, I am proud of them— of our middle class, intellectuals, professionals, even businesses— but I also invite them to be proud of the indigenous peoples who are the moral reserve of humanity.”

The storyline of such positioning renders the rights of the indigenous people as the priority within this landscape of change. The storyline of *el pueblo* develops through a consequential frame of legitimacy. In such an ambiguous setting in which the consequences of the election— apart from the victory— have not been established, morally-prescribed normative evaluations are particularly powerful. He speaks of *el pueblo* as the comprehensive, unspiteful indigenous peoples of the Americas, who “are obliged to understand each other, in order to change this way of discriminating against one another... [and gather] the strength to bend the hand of the empire.” Through cognitive legitimization techniques of popularization and standardization, Morales invokes an indigenous past of Bolivia to be rewritten in this new era:

“We can continue talking about our history, we can continue to remember how our ancestors fought: Túpac Katari who restored the Tahuantinsuyo, Simón Bolívar who fought for that great homeland, Che Guevara who fought for a new world in equality. It is a truth that hurts but we will not continue to cry for these 500 years. We are no longer in that era, we are in a time of triumph, of joy, of celebration. That is why I think it is important to change our history, change our Bolivia, our Latin America.”

In the build-up and aftermath to the Constituent Assembly, Morales legitimizes the people as an “outcome” of the norms and values established in the new Constitution (moral/consequential frame). He repositions the **indigenous** from *El Pueblo* to *The Moral Electorate*, thus allotting a functional right and duty to the people:

“It is not only the responsibility of Evo Morales, it is the responsibility of *all* of us Bolivians.”

“Though many thousands, millions of Aymaras, of Quechua, of Guarani participated in the struggle for independence, they did not participate in the founding of Bolivia. The participation of the original indigenous peoples in the founding of Bolivia in the year 1825 was marginalized, and for that reason, the original indigenous peoples claim to re-found Bolivia through this Constituent Assembly.”

The newly-ordained moral force is the electoral voice. The storyline of the *Moral Electorate* is especially powerful in the post-Constitutional Assembly period and during the 2008 recall referendum, which questioned the legitimacy of Morales’ rule. His victory only boosted popularity and allotted him and his base greater legitimacy: Morales underscored that the referendum is

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evidence of the new political space created since his assumption of power, in which Bolivians can choose their leaders and even recall them from power. “Today, the Bolivian public has expressed through its vote its will to consolidate this process of change... This mandate of the Bolivarian public shall be respected, applied to different levels, sectors and regions of the Bolivia so Bolivia will change, and ensure dignity for all Bolivians.” By invoking socially-valued techniques and procedures to empower the group— including referenda and popular consultations— Morales renders them a structurally and discursively competent force. *The Moral Electorate* is the linchpin to a range of structural changes.

Similarly, Morales allots functional rights and duties to the **country** and its **institutions** during this period of *decolonization*: “The time has truly come...to decolonize the state, to de-neoliberalize the Bolivian people...this will be an important task for all of us.” Procedurally, he allots the group the responsibility to embrace their ordained techniques and procedures: “As Parliament, you have an enormous responsibility, as Parliament you have a task to fulfill the clamorous request of the Bolivian people...a re-founding of Bolivia that is demanded by the indigenous brothers of the whole country, the popular movement, all sectors.” Consequentially, he demands that they produce the socially-valued outputs as so forth phrased in his discourse. The moral legitimation frame also overlaps with pragmatic legitimation: Congress is instrumentally evaluated based on its support (or lack thereof) for the new constitution, and the law for the Autonomous Referendum— *exchange* is at the core of their relation.

Self

Morales’ personal legitimacy (moral legitimation) is an underlying component throughout the narratives. Yet it is not through the traditional understanding of overt charismatic rule. He positions himself as an outsider of neocolonialism, thus capable of reinventing the system as an *Enabler*. Like Chávez, Morales actually steers away from explicitly laying a dominant claim over the people, the government, or the country during his first years.

The speech acts constitute a dual first-order positioning in which Morales sets himself as a part *of* the people— a fellow Aymara, *cocalero*, member of this historically repressed group— as well as *apart* from them. In his inaugural speech, he portends: “I also want to tell you, with much respect

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for our original authorities and our organizations, to control me, you, sisters and brothers...to correct me permanently.” Similarly, he clarifies “your task is also to subordinate *me* to the Constituent Assembly, to the constituents.” Consequently, Morales claims the right to speak and act in their name, but also acknowledges that they constitute their own force and possess their own agency irrespective of the President or any other institution. This edifying discourse reflects the intimate relationship between social movements in Bolivia and their leaders. Notably, its dynamics will alter as Morales pushes towards an increasingly hyper-presidential form of governance.

The use of second-order and indirect positioning renders the focus of the dominant narratives on other actors and storylines (i.e. *el pueblo*, *colonialists*), seemingly removing the figure of Morales from the epicenter of the process. The dynamics between Morales’ charisma and institutionalization still operate in separate domains at this point of his presidency.

International Community, Opposition

The narrative of the international community in the first years of power consolidation is closely tied to that of **Self**. It focuses on the international community as a *Global Ally* through the promotion of comprehensibility of the Bolivian project (cognitive frame) on an international stage: “We would like to resolve these issues, not only with the participation of Bolivians, but also with international cooperation. Solutions, not for Evo...I am not asking for the participation of the international community for Evo, but for the Bolivian people.” During his inaugural address, he speaks directly to international organizations, highlighting the honesty of his government and emphasizing the “zero nepotism, zero corruption” motto of his new cabinet (moral frame). He even thanks the Queen of Spain for having received him a few months earlier in Madrid.

Yet the narrative quickly realigns to that of the **Opposition** in the wake of the recall referendum, its associated separatist movements and the Pando Massacre. The storyline evolves from *colonialists*, to *separatists*. Evo qualifies the regions of Santa Cruz, Beni and Pando as *separatists* calling for *illegal* and *unconstitutional* referenda. They are pinned against the new constitution as “those groups that still represent the traitors, the neoliberals, who try to stop this revolutionary process...all to defend its political power and economic power of *latifundismo*.”

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The sub-narrative of the **international community** follows closely, as the separatists are linked to the US government. The storyline evolves from *Global Ally*, to *Empire*. In his expulsion of US Ambassador Philip Goldberg, Morales underscores the American's "expertise in advancing separatist conflicts, from Bosnia in the '90s, to Bolivia today," and invokes the Bolivian spirit of resistance that has allowed the country "to identify, resist and defeat the external agent of American imperialism" thus far (cognitive frame).

2) Reconfiguring State-Society: Polarization and Subsidization

Overview: This phase of the Morales presidency is characterized by polarization with touches of moderation through subsidization discourse. Like the 2002 coup against Chávez and the 2010 coup against Correa, the Pando Massacre and TIPNIS scandals mark a shift in the Morales' discourse. Yet social movements' close relationship to this governments initially constrains the executive authority, pushing antagonistic discourse towards other targets— the media features most prominently in this respect. The overarching narrative is: "*Our country and people are in permanent resistance: against mediatic deception and the North American Imperialist.*" The subsidization discourse serves as a counterbalance to this more aggressive language.

Opposition, Indigenous

Though the alleged coup in the form of the Pando Massacre pushed the narrative into a new direction with the shift towards *Separatists*, the TIPNIS and *Gazolinazo* scandals altered the discourse in a more brazen manner. On the one hand, the storyline of the **Opposition** evolves to harsh attacks on the media as *Deceivers*. Though it is the **Indigenous** in the form of the *Moral Electorate* that is largely enacting the pushback towards his infrastructure and gas policies, Evo is careful not to attack them directly at this phase of his presidency— using the media as a proxy. Instead, he positions them as a *Constraining Electorate*, executing its functional task towards Bolivia (moral/structural frame), while securing influence at the national level (pragmatic frame). Speaking alongside President Chávez and Raul Castro after an ALBA meeting in Cuba, for example, Morales denounces the media as "diverting from the truth." Chávez adds that "those foreign mercenaries... we have also faced them here 100 times, and not to speak of Cuba. It is the same battle. We will defeat them! Viva Bolivia, Viva Evo!"

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Between 2011 and 2015, Morales chooses the media as its main discursive target (indirect positioning), using structural and cognitive legitimation dimensions to position them in contrast to the very democracy of the country. During a press intervention in Cochabamba in January 2012, he affirmed the necessity to "decolonize and democratize" communications and emphasized the importance of the free dissemination of State rules through the private media. Similarly, in June 2014, he corrected the common view of media independence, arguing:

“We cannot be so ingenuous in saying that there is an independent media. To say so, is to make a big mistake. We ask that the media be impartial...yet on the basis of lies, they attack Evo, the government. That is an independent media? Let us be *responsible*. From the moment they declare themselves to be independent, they are denying the truth.”

Though Morales claims to “respect the people’s voice,” he does not shy from such accusations.

Institutions, Country

Morales’ discourse towards **Institutions** also assumes a more assertive voice during this period. He attacks the judiciary, demanding “we want new members in our judicial branch that will serve justice.” He also praises the greater role of the military in civilian concerns:

“The commanders of the Armed Forces, from the moment we arrived at the Palace, have already gone down in history. A commander asked me, ‘Tell us which trade union leaders we should coordinate to defend the unity of the Homeland?’ There will not be, sisters and brothers, nor four prefects, nor four civics, who can dismember Bolivia, as four horses dismembered Tupac Katari.”

Morales positions the institutions ‘*In resistance*’ against such forces that seek to butcher the Bolivian revolution.

Similarly, Morales characterizes the **Country** as *In Resistance* through the dimension of pragmatic legitimation. In a number of speeches throughout the period, he first attacks the media but then offers extensive accounts of socio-economic growth since the start of his presidency, ranging from reports of employment and registered coop increases, to the success of the Juancito Pinto bonus plan and the construction of education buildings. The following excerpts ascertain the detail of such accounts:

“The public sector rose to 101 million dollars. The private sector also rose to one million 185 thousand. But the difference, *compañeras y compañeros*, brothers and sisters of Bolivia, is in socio-economic investment. Prior, it was 393 million dollars. It now stands at 1,260 million dollars.”

What is more, he makes repeated reference to his *Agenda Patriótica* (The Patriotic Agenda) and reminds the Bolivian public of his electoral victories:

“The president won three times at the polls, the first time with 53.74 percent in 2005, the second with 64.22 percent in 2009 and the third with 61.36 percent in 2014. He also came out graceful a mandate recall referendum with 67.43 percent in 2008.”

International Community, Self

The discourse towards the international community retains its assertive tone of *Empire*, becoming more and more aggressive, and signaling the inconceivability of supporting such powers (cognitive frame). In the wake of the 2013 Aerial Block after Morales was accused of carrying international whistleblower, Edward Snowden, he retorted:

“El pueblo will continue fighting against the threats of the North American empire. I want to tell some countries in Europe that they must liberate themselves from the North American empire. I cannot understand how some countries are loyal, obedient servants to the North American empire.”

What is more, he enters a new realm of personalization of the presidency. For example, he repositions his persona in claims to Bolivia’s institutions (moral/structural frame): “*I have asked for your participation...I hope you do not disappoint me, I expect a lot from you.*” Similarly, he claims that the political issue of the TIPNIS “is a flag to attack Evo...it is not a true vindication.” This narrative is to reach its acme in the following phase.

3) Hyper-presidentialism

Overview: Narratives between 2015 and 2017 undergo general extremification, especially those of *Opposition*, *Indigenous*, and *Self*, against the backdrop of the 2016 Referendum loss to abolish term limits. The sub-narrative of the *Opposition* features most pronouncedly, undergoing the storyline shift between *deceivers* and *traitor*. In this regard, the phase is largely narrated through second-order positioning and legitimated by cognitive-moral dimensions. The overarching narrative of the period is “*I [Evo] am the author of Bolivia’s liberation and leader against the permanent imperialism of North America.*”

Opposition, Self, International Community, Country

Correa's main targets are the private press, indigenous groups that do not support him entirely on environmental issues and the Right— all of which he positions as *Traitors*. In the aftermath of the 2016 Referendum loss, Morales' narrative extremifies and discursive attacks on the press become more forceful. During a press conference at Palacio Quemado, he blames the results of the referendum on uncontrollable social media networks:

"The central issue is the dirty war on social networks, so many lies, and people who get away with anonymity. How will we get rid of that racism on social media, which provoked such results?"

The extremification only heightens throughout the Gabriela Zapata scandal:

"They play a game of words, a game of lies. They are part of a media mafia."

Morales throws accusations of obstruction of justice and conspiracy at a number of publications and individual journalists. Most notably, he demonizes CNN as a representative of US imperialism. CNN's Humberto Vacaflor is accused of obstructing the investigation against Zapata. Fernando del Rincón, another CNN journalist, is accused of human smuggling in the form of Evo's alleged son: "He had to appear at this call of the Attorney General, because if he has not presented himself, he is a confessed criminal." For months, Evo directs his anger towards CNN's Ismael Cala, denouncing him as a "Cuban worm" and accusing him of having traveled to Bolivia to "bother and conspire against his Government" in the wake of the corruption and personal scandals.

Morales also attacks indigenous groups and environmentalists that no longer align with his politics. Like Correa, he insults the group as *deceivers* or *traitors* that fool the country into regressive practices. After revoking TIPNIS' status of inviolability, Morales stands before the nation with a marker in hand and, on an enlarged map, outlines the highway that will finally be constructed through the indigenous' territory. He alienates its defenders, calling them *TIPNIS*tas (a condescending use of the diminutive form): "these *TIPNIS*tas, they talk about knowing...about protecting...they know *nothing*."

Morales' narrative of the **Opposition** closely molds that of **Self**. He increasingly assumes acts of protest or critical publications as attacks on his persona, pushing the discourse towards an

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increasingly personal nature. Like his Pink Tide siblings in their later years in office, Morales shifts the storyline of **Self** towards *Yo*, notable given his initial discourse of obedience and service to the many social groups over which he is now leapfrogging and accusing. Interestingly, he nonetheless attempts to maintain some distance between his agency and the actions of the executive. The following declaration in the aftermath of the referendum loss summarizes this dynamic of indirect personalization:

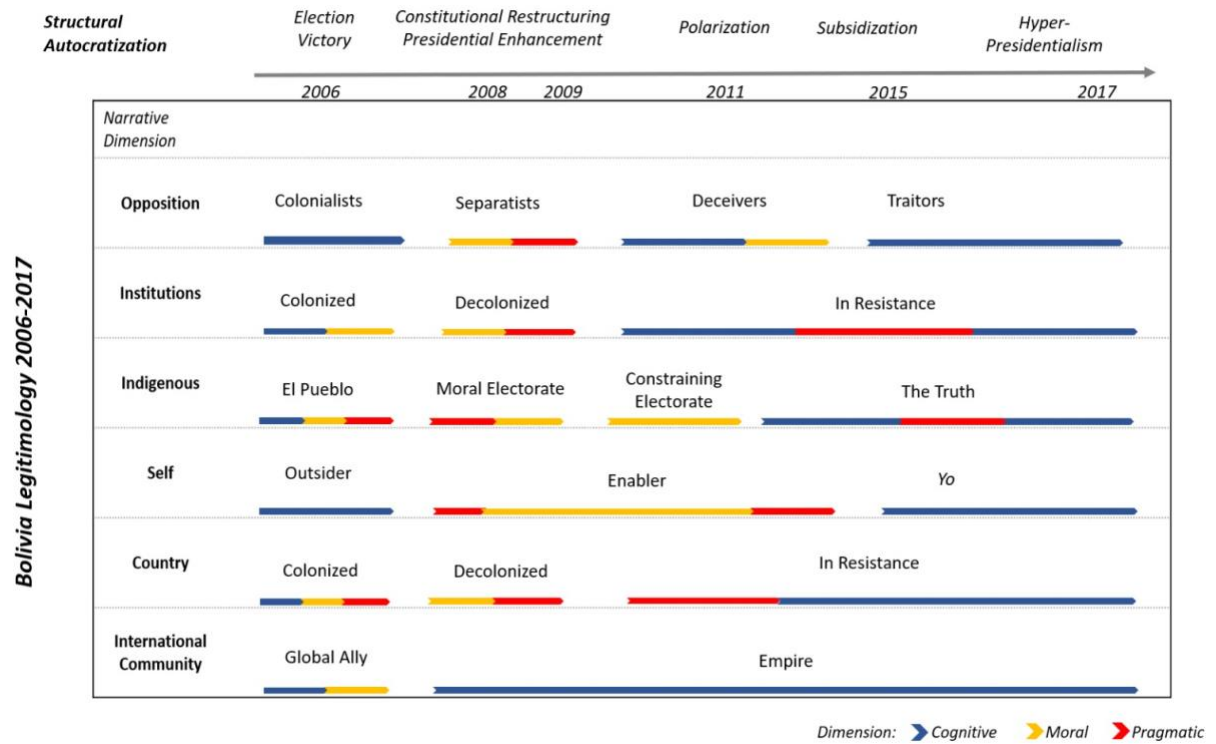
“Evo has never sought this task. This ask has sought *me*— from my years as director of the syndicate, to my role as president.”

Throughout the speech acts of the period, Morales repeatedly retraces the history of his rise to power, underscoring his humble roots and general humility throughout his political ascendance. He even emphasizes a lack of desire for positions that simply came his way— leaving him with no choice but to accept them. In this respect, Morales’ narrative of **Self** implies an awareness of accountability for his actions, alongside a desire to position himself as the leader of Bolivia’s resistance. The storyline of **Indigenous** accordingly evolves from *The Constraining Electorate*, to *Truth*, emphasizing the Bolivian people as the only group that should benefit from his revolution of decolonization (cognitive legitimation/taken-for-grantedness). Similarly, though the narrative of the **international community** persists through storyline of *Empire*, it also extremifies through indirect positioning and cognitive legitimation. In his final words after the referendum loss, Morales forcefully pronounces:

“Pueblo versus empire, empire versus pueblo. This is internal and external political aggression. I will not allow it.”

Table 5 below visualizes the narrative evolution, in addition to its legitimation frames.

Table 5: Legitimology of Bolivia



Chapter V: Conclusion

Results

This thesis has analyzed the legitimization narratives of the three Andean presidents of Latin America's Pink Tide. Implementing the theory of legitimology, it firstly traced the evolution of six sub-narratives per country through their constituent storylines, positioning mechanisms and corresponding legitimization dimensions. Subsequently, it offered a master narrative (Phase 3 of Hyper-Presidentialism) for each country, reiterated as follows:

- Venezuela: *"I, Hugo Chávez, president-elect of Venezuela, am the irreplaceable executive and thinker of 21st socialism in Latin America."*
- Ecuador: *"I, Correa, am the law and the truth, the author of Ecuador's winning decade."*
- Bolivia: *"I, Evo, am the author of Bolivia's liberation and leader against the permanent imperialism of North America."*

The narrative analysis offered the first step in the study's abductive approach. Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia vary in terms of their degrees of autocratization. While Venezuela exhibits the highest degree of autocratization and undergoes the most profound change in narrative, this is likely due to its "pioneering" role in terms of the broader Pink Tide movement—Ecuador and Bolivia emerge in the Pink Tide waters at the endpoint of Venezuela's push towards hyper-presidentialism. Nonetheless, Chávez, Correa and Morales execute a noticeable pattern in their forms of discursive engagement, irrespective of when or where they come into power.

The evolution of each country's narratives reveals a general discursive *extremification*. In all three cases, the sub-narratives become more acute across the time horizon: they evolve from a broad anti-neoliberal systemic stance, to functional electoral-based positioning, to pugnacious, individualistic and personalistic language. The narratives extremify either through *alignment* with structural changes (narrative stasis) or through narrative *switches* (narrative morphogenesis) in the form of cognitive legitimization and indirect positioning.

The following Pink Tide-level narrative analysis explains such dynamics.

Phase 1

In the first phase of constitutional restructuring and enhancement of presidential powers, the Pink Tide narratives are fundamental to building state legitimacy. At this stage of institutional and political entrepreneurship, moral and cognitive narratives of legitimation are most forceful in creating new norms and codes of governance. In the absence of concrete policy outputs, discourse is pivotal to the fabrication of a new institutional and political culture. Due to the nature and scope of change, Chávez, Correa and Morales must *tell* the story of change. The popularization and standardization of new models of governance and a new political culture of participation are advanced through protracted speeches— the majority between 2 to 4 hours— in addition to television and radio broadcasts.

Recruiting an environment that enacts the Bolivarian change is at the heart of executing a successful project of institutionalization. Continuous references to particular Bolivarian, or indigenous heroes and their past, highlight the repositioning of the Andean countries' histories as a discursive mechanism for institutional manipulation. The leaders' continuous calls for rallies and parades commemorating that rewritten history further signal the use of moral legitimation frames: whether they actually occur or not, the massive numbers invoked in the speeches present a proselytization of a new morality.

Such collective evangelism, with its maximal discursive reinforcement, not only builds a support base whose conceptions of morality will guide the terms of subsequent moral debates, but also bridges the discourse into the cognitive realm. Popularization— or promotion of comprehensibility by explaining new cultural formulations— is reinforced through the presidents' continuous articulation of stories, history “lessons” and personal anecdotes that illustrate the desired reality *away* from a moribund past. Standardization— or the promotion of taken-for-grantedness by encouraging isomorphism— is reinforced by the evolution of the narrative into a more functionalist realm (i.e. *The Moral/Constraining Electorate*, *The Enabler*). The success of institutionalization depends on these new sets of legitimated actors that de-legitimate the previous institutional forms.

Phase 2

During the second phase of reconfiguring the state-society relationship, the countries of the Pink Tide experience exogenous crises in the form of alleged coup d'états, which challenge their legitimacy and provoke the repair, or maintenance, of narrative legitimation. This maintenance is executed primarily through pragmatic legitimation and first-order positioning.

Yet overall, there is an extremification of the narrative in the longer-term, especially in the dominant narratives of **Opposition** and **Self**. The latter become increasingly prosecutorial through indirect positioning and cognitive legitimation. Rather than offering normalizing accounts of occurrences, their discourse turns to more absolutist tendencies. The extremification is further evidenced through the narrative *nature* (legality and justification claims dominate over others) and narrative *persistence* (dominance of cognitive legitimation, dominance of **Opposition/Self** narratives). Rather than restructuring the accounts, the Pink Tide presidents tend to reinforce the polarizing narratives. To the extent that they may offer calming accounts, it is only through the denial of the very occurrences and creation of alternate stories.

Phase 3

During the third phase of **hyper-presidentialism**, the narratives become more radical, more absolutist, more ideological and individualized through the aforementioned narrative *switches* in storylines (i.e. towards those of *Yo*, *Truth*, etc). The evolution is propelled predominantly through indirect positioning and cognitive legitimation. The extremification is further evidenced through the narrative *nature* (legality and justification claims dominate over others) and narrative *persistence* (dominance of cognitive legitimation, dominance of **Opposition/Self** narratives).

Contribution

The process of abduction has facilitated the analysis of Pink Tide narratives and storylines through the interplay of deductively and inductively derived insights. Executed through the application of legitimology, the narrative analysis has revealed a general discursive pattern underpinned by narrative extremification. Abductive reasoning will offer an additional analytical thrust to understand how such narratives induce a broader framework of legitimation for the Pink Tide.

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Narrative legitimation alone cannot explain the authoritarian consolidation of the Pink Tide. Returning to the crux of the research question— what explains the autocratization of the Pink Tide— requires the contextualization of the narratives within overall Pink Tide legitimation. Accordingly, this thesis builds off structuration theory to offer a cyclical, dynamic model that explains the autocratization of Latin America's Pink Tide through the prism of legitimation.

The *Legitimation Cycle of Autocratization* positions three factors of legitimation in the governments of the Pink Tide: Electoral Legitimation, Subsidization Legitimation and Narrative Legitimation.

Electoral Legitimation operates on the level of the state. It concretizes state behavior and Pink Tide reforms through official electoral channels, including elections, referenda and popular consultations, amongst others. Electoral legitimation may be positioned within the Weberian *Traditional or Legal-Rational Rule*.

Subsidization Legitimation operates on the level of society. It finances the vast socio-economic programs characteristic of the Pink Tide governments. It also acts as a corrective mechanism in the form of a balancing loop, in which subsidization may serve to counterbalance negative electoral outcomes, drops in legitimacy or popularity, etc. Subsidization legitimation may be positioned within the Weberian *Legal-Rational Rule*.

Narrative Legitimation operates on the level of the individual. It reinforces the autocratizing loop either through *narrative stasis* (discursive continuity) or *narrative morphogenesis* (cyclical discursive transformation). Narrative stasis functions through a *feedback* mechanism, which reproduces previous narratives and/or discourse of electoral/subsidization legitimation. Alternatively, narrative morphogenesis functions through a *feedforward* mechanism, which transforms and extremifies the narrative predominantly through indirect positioning and cognitive legitimation, as per legitimology. Narrative legitimation forms part of the Weberian *Charismatic Rule*, linked to the language and style of the presidential speech acts.

Given the interactive dynamic of the factors within the presidential cycle, this model highlights their constitutive, or co-determinate, nature. Together, they condition and structure authoritarian consolidation through their respective functions, levels and mechanisms. Figure 7 visualizes this structuration in the form of a reinforcing legitimization loop.

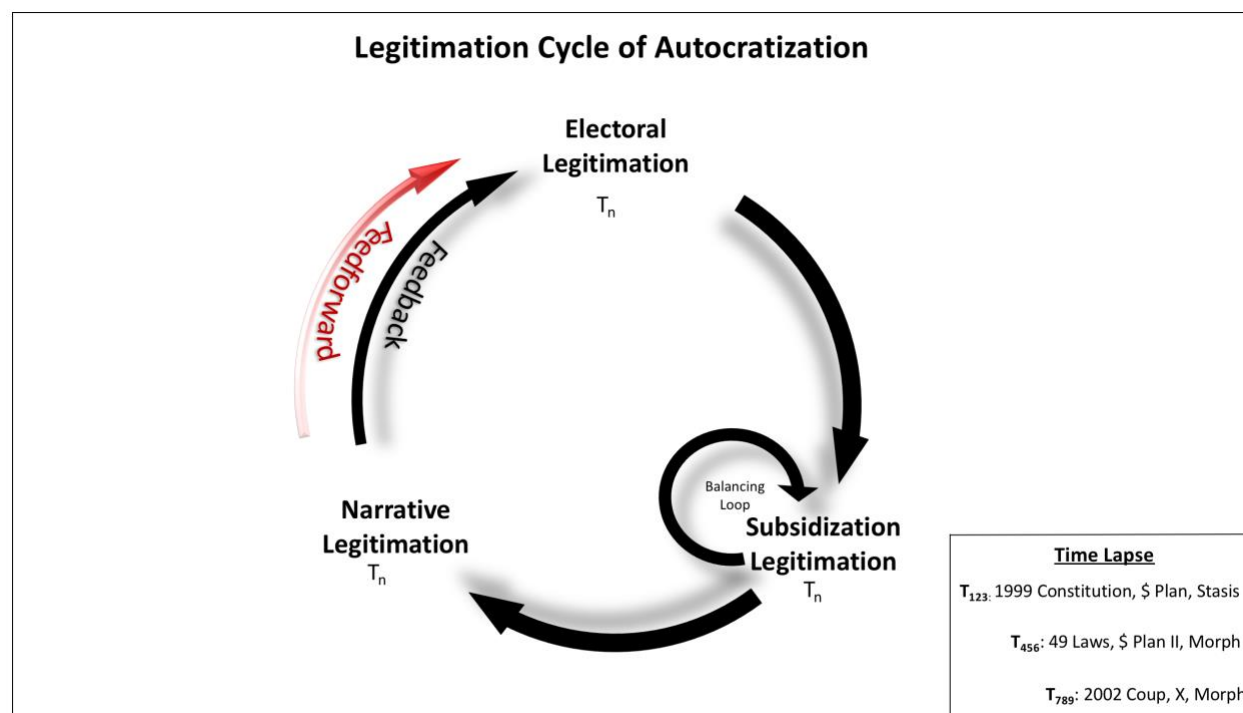


Figure 7: Legitimation Cycle of Autocratization

A presidential term may be run chronologically through the legitimization cycle, applying the time-lapse visualized in the model, to grasp how the legitimization factors interact with and structure one another to consolidate authority i.e. 1999 Constitution (Electoral Legitimation), Economic Plan (Subsidization Legitimation), Narrative Stasis or Morphogenesis (Narrative Legitimation). In order to explain an action at point T_n , the dynamic model necessitates the consideration not only of its underlying structures, but also previous speech acts. This allows for the inclusion of both structural/narrative *effects* and structural/narrative *antecedents* in the analysis.

Some outcomes are a consequence of negative feedback. Others, however, reveal feedforward processes. This innovative response is of particular relevance for narrative legitimization. Building on Cerny's 'structured fields of action' (Cerny, 1990), these *structured fields of discourse* available

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to a president in the legitimization cycle may at once constrain, but also facilitate opportunities for further power consolidation.

Narratives become intertwined with and embedded in their structural legitimization (electoral/subsidization) and structural consequences (regime autocratization). Together, they constitute future speech acts and structural changes.

Overall, the feedback loop attests to an ontological awareness of a continuous speech act-regime structure interaction. The structuration model speaks to Carlnaes' notion of the dynamic as a "dialectical process which not only serves to provide both continuity and change to social systems, but also can be penetrated analytically as a consequence of its essentially sequential thrust in societal transformation." Thus, autocratization emerges as the empirical result of a series of complex, reciprocal legitimization interactions, which involve changes in both domestic conditions and the discursive rules justifying and governing the regime.

Further Research

This research aims to further the literature on transitology by introducing a discursive frame for regime transformation. In this respect, it offers a theory of *legitimology* to trace and analyze narrative legitimization. Moreover, it positions narrative legitimization within a novel model to understand the constitutive dynamic between factors of legitimization in regime autocratization. In this respect, the research also seeks to expand the literature on structuration by incorporating the speech act into the agent-structure debate. The strengths of the aforementioned theoretical and methodological proposals lie in their exhaustive nature. Analyzing narrative legitimization through the theory of *legitimology* and applying the *legitimation cycle of autocratization* to cases of authoritarian consolidation offer a truer image of the intricate and determinative empirical machinery and processes preceding and proceeding structural change. With that said, the benefit of such approach is also a cost, as it necessitates assiduous research given the cyclical and co-constitutive nature of the dynamic, and the tedious nature of narrative analyses.

A number of future research paths may build upon this project. First, the application of legitimology and the legitimization cycle to other cases of autocratization—both within and outside

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the region— would provide a more robust claim to the theoretical propositions, while revealing potential differences or gaps specific to other temporal and geographic spaces. Second, processes of democratization could also be analyzed through the lens of legitimology, expanding the theoretical application to other regime transitions. This would be particularly relevant to understanding how narratives of legitimation evolve in democratizing versus autocratizing contexts. Third, in terms of the narrative perspective, a number of other voices could be included in analyses of speech acts; this could range from other government officials and opposition leaders, to the international community and domestic-international media. An analysis of legitimation narratives by other discursive agents would provide a broader and more profound understanding of the legitimation cycle. Finally, an analysis of the resonance of such legitimation narratives— amongst the aforementioned actors, for example— is a natural continuation of legitimation inquiries. In this vein, linkages between domestic legitimation narratives and discourse of the international community/media could be explored, tracing if and how they penetrate their respective domains.

Final Remarks

Language is the house of being.
-Martin Heidegger

Heidegger's lionized pronouncement testifies to the constitutive nature of language. In offering meaning, language actualizes essence— the *being*. Yet it is also transformative; its concepts can *become*. Language is thus an outcome, as well as a means of conceptual and material actualization. Power and authority, and claims thereto, are a natural consequence.

The autocratizing trend of the Pink Tide emerges not only as an example of such discursive power, but also as an entreaty of its risk. Narrating autocracy is as much a political pursuit on the part of its leaders, as it is an epistemological project for those seeking to grasp the nature and techniques of its governance. Unraveling its locution marks a step towards exposing its battered pattern of rule, and perhaps even excluding it from the future of the Andean region and its people.

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Fassrainer

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

-Victoria Fassrainer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Fassrainer', with a stylized, flowing script.