

**THE “BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION” OF VENEZUELA  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF POST-COMMUNISM  
AND POST-DEMOCRACY (1998-2019)**

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**Abstract**

The main objective of this article is to analyze the so-called Bolivarian Revolution registered in Venezuela (1998-2018) in the framework of post-communism and post-democracy. In this case, we estimate that its evaluation is fundamental since it was the first experiment in Latin American revolutionary rupture that had the overcoming of capitalism as its goal, carried out after the break up of the Soviet bloc and the splitting of the bipolar world that came from the Cold War. From the point of view of the categories and traditional concepts, the evaluation of the process initiated by Hugo Chávez may be of significant importance, since the peculiarity of this experience has shown that categories such as democracy, dictatorship, revolution, and totalitarianism have been insufficient for a clear understanding of the social, political and cultural phenomenon that occurred in Venezuela. With the aim of achieving an interpretation that can contribute to the clarification of this process, in this paper we will first expose the appreciations and concepts referring to post-communism and post-democracy, taking into account various points of view and theoretical approaches, to then analyze the most important historical facts linked to the Chavez revolution and the internal transformations experienced in this process to finally establish a balance of this experience after twenty years.

**Key words:** *post-communism, competitive authoritarianism, post-democracy, revolution*

**Introduction**

When the fall of the Berlin Wall occurred on November 9 1989, a new stage in the history of the West associated with an overcoming of communism had apparently begun, in view of the failure of the implantation of the Marxist utopia in the case of the countries that experienced what in general terms was called “real socialism”. However, although in some countries ‘post-communism’ meant the exit of communism to enter into capitalism, in other nations the reverse process took place: leaving capitalism to enter into experiences associated with the construction of a new utopia, the idea of revolution, class struggle and to achieve the welfare of the poor and needy. But in this last modality, the abandonment of the approaches coming from Marxism-Leninism is observed, to be inspired by other elements linked to regional historical processes, nationalism and populism. This was the case of the revolution initiated in Venezuela by the commander Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, who after

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carrying out an attempted coup against the democratically elected government on February 4 1992, succeeded in obtaining power through the electoral process six years later (December 6 1998).

This circumstance generates an unprecedented fact, at least in the political history of Latin America: the record of the first revolutionary process in the historical coordinates framed in post-communism, post-democracy and post-modernity, understood as the latter, as a process in which a situation of disappointment with respect to political approaches, the ideologies and transforming processes are recorded, as the French philosopher Jean François Lyotard points out in his famous book, *The post-modern condition*. We point out this last aspect since, in contrast, while many Western countries initiate a process of revision and questioning of political doctrines and ideologies (many of them linked to Marxism), in Venezuela, from the Bolivarian Revolution there is a rehabilitation of political actions, social and economic policies apparently overcome, that will even lead to an ideological and doctrinal re-discussion that leads to the formulation of what Hugo Chávez called “Socialism of the 21st century”.

This process became a form of what the American political scientist Steven Levitsky called “competitive authoritarianism”, to derive in a “hegemonic authoritarianism”, leading in turn, as it happens in the current circumstances, in a totalitarian regime that has adopted the forms of “Chinese social control” and whose state apparatus is in a situation of “liquefaction”.

#### **Between post-communism and post-democracy: definitions and concepts**

For the purposes of this approach, it is worth explaining that the terms post-democracy and post-communism will work in a complementary manner because of the interrelationships that are recorded when placing them in the experience of Hugo Chávez’s revolution.

The concept of post-communism presents a series of difficulties, since its elaboration is still in the process of discussion, and also since it is related to the historical and social changes that arose at the end of the 1980’s and still has ramifications in the present.

In response to the previous idea, we observe that, in relation to post-communism as seen by Europe (for example, placing ourselves in Romania), the researcher Silvia Marcu, based on the views of Charles King defines post-communism as “the political regime that follows the communist, where the institutions of communism prevail over those of a liberal-type capitalist democracy” (Marcu, 2004: 115). In other words, although it tries to overcome the communist regime, Marcu points to post-communism as a kind of “political syndrome” derived from the inheritance of a totalitarian tradition with the survival of elements of concentration of political power typical of communist regimes, thus making the transition process difficult.

On the other hand, from a Latin American perspective, the Venezuelan sociologist and political scientist Carlos Raúl Hernández, at the beginning of the process initiated by Hugo Chávez Frías, interpreted post-communism as a way of confronting and fighting democratically constituted societies in the West before the

fall of communism in the Soviet bloc and the consequent intellectual defeat that such a situation implied, reformulating the idea of revolution.

As can be observed, at first sight post-communism is conceived as a stage of overcoming communism, regardless of the obstacles and the prevalence of authoritarian elements in order to enter into capitalism and inaugurate democratic experiences. Contrarily, in the Latin American case post-communism will mean the revival of revolutionary processes (structured from the Russian revolution to the fragmentation of the Soviet bloc) but with new components, and the replacement of Marxist-Leninist ideology by combined forms of populism and socialism to face capitalism. Inclusively, starting from a more global vision, Latin American post-communism will operate as the historical convergence of the different thesis on the revolutionary struggle elaborated between the sixties and seventies (of the 20th century) from Latin America, and the new situation produced by the fall of the Soviet bloc. To these processes we must add the appearance of the Sao Paulo Forum, all this in the framework of the globalization process and the consolidation of the free market system.

In this sense, and insisting on the idea initially provided by Hernández, post-communism is described as a movement characterized by rehabilitating social transformation, revolutionary practice, the fight against capital and the implementation of a justice system that would put an end to differences of social classes, but without taking into account the fundamental premises of Marxism, which would be replaced by what Raúl Hernández calls post-communist elements related to the proposals of Latin American political groups. On this last point, the approaches of the Zapatista Movement in Mexico, the Workers' and Indigenous Movements of Bolivia (under the leadership of Evo Morales), the Colombian Guerrilla Movement (FARC and ELN), and the Sao Paulo Forum are the areas where reformulation stands out using the new approach and initiatives of the Latin American left.

In an attempt to define post-communism in relation to the emergence of Chávez's revolution, the aforementioned researcher Hernández (2001) points out the following:

*The Bolivarian movement is a post-communist attempt of nationalist and socialist facets, oriented to support the mobilization of popular sectors against minorities with the intention of deepening the control of the levers of power that still remain in the hands of civil society (civil society, education, unions, church), neutralize and dissect the parties politicians, to "ideologically" control the armed forces (Hernández, 2001: 161).*

To this first conceptualization we must add the considerations about post-democracy, since it is part of the process of the Bolivarian revolution in terms of its theoretical and doctrinal components: in fact, post-democracy and post-communism are complementary elements, at least in the Venezuelan case.

On this last assessment it should be noted that with the advent of post-communism three scenarios can be registered: a- To leave communism to enter forms of representative democracy in an incipient capitalist development framework (which is the case of central European countries); b-To remain within the framework of communism (at least from the doctrinal point of view, preserving the structures of the communist party, which would be the situation of North Korea), but allowing the

establishment of capitalist structures (as in the circumstance presented by China); c-Implement revolutionary actions (under the seizure of power by violent or democratic ways) to get out of capitalism through socialist and populist actions, and replace the paths of representative democracy, with regressive post-democratic forms (which in the case of Venezuela were established in what was denominated as “participative and protagonist democracy” led by a leader).

In reference to this aspect, the British sociologist Colin Crouch points out that these post-democratic processes are the product of the disregard registered “in modern societies” with respect to the mechanisms linked to the tradition of representative democracy. This circumstance is recorded when experiences appear that show characteristics associated with pre-democratic political structures in a contradictory manner under the aegis of charismatic leaders, and where the values of equality and participation through the mechanism of suffrage and the election of representatives in congress are questioned.

In this order of ideas, Crouch points out that when registering the advent of a post-democratic experience, one can observe the restoration of forms of leadership prior to the democratic stage: in other words, if in the first pre-democratic phase messianic leaders, forms of leadership and the concentration of power existed, these were progressively overcome with the structuring of a design associated with the logic of Western democracies. At a later post-democratic stage, it could register the restoration of the old components of the pre-democratic form that would have supposedly been overcome (Crouch, 2004: 35-36). In this way, post-democracy is equivalent to forms of regression, to authoritarian structures, and to the loss of the freedoms obtained in the democratic stage.

From Crouch’s previous ideas regarding the Bolivarian revolution, the Argentine ideologist Norberto Ceresole was one of those who theorized and structured a doctrinal base that proposed the substitution of traditional democracy for a new project that he called post-democratic. This project advocated the construction of a participatory and protagonist democracy in which there was a direct relationship between the leader and the people (understood as the legitimate bearer of national sovereignty). At the same time, the only additional element of mediation between the people and the leader would be the army conceived by the people, to configure what Ceresole called the “leader-army-people axis”.

The Constitution of this axis implied that the people would not have to deposit their sovereignty in the traditional political parties, sheltered under the structure of representative democracy, but that the people could directly exercise their quota of sovereignty through the mechanisms of representative and protagonist democracy.

Regarding the categorization of the post-democratic experience within the framework of the Bolivarian revolution, as well as the detection of its origins, the researcher Guillermo Boscán Carrasquero interprets Ceresole’s statements in the following manner:

*In order to carry out this categorization of the Venezuelan model as post-democratic, it resorts to look for the distinguishing characteristics of our independence models in front of the models established by the English and French revolutions of the 18th century. Thus we can find the precedents in national and popular movements, such as the Argentine Peronism that always governed within the*

*democratic channel, but with the permanent need for the participation of dignified citizens and a nationalized and industrialized army* (Boscán, 2010: 63).

At this point, and based on an analysis for the understanding of Hugo Chávez's revolution (understood as a post-democratic historical experience in the framework of post-communism), we will introduce the proposal on competitive authoritarianism, since we estimate that what has been created in Venezuela since 1999 is a hybrid regime that will move from a "democratic-representative" structure, to a structure with characteristics of "competitive authoritarianism", then evolving to a "hegemonic authoritarianism", and finally reaching a situation of totalitarianism.

In this sense, for the understanding of the concept of competitive authoritarianism, we start with Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way who define it with the following characteristics: a-Elections strongly contested and competitive, abuses of power by the state, lack of transparency and manipulation by the autocrat; b-Presence of a legislative branch that tends to be relatively weak, although it can sometimes become a focal point of opposition activity; c-Subordination of the judicial branch, through persecution, bribery, and extortion; d-Certain tolerance with the independent press as long as it does not jeopardize its legitimacy and political control. Otherwise, bribery, selective advertising, manipulation of debts and taxes, and the promotion of internal conflict are encouraged (Levitsky and Way, 2002).

### **The Bolivarian Revolution in the framework of post-communism: stages**

The Bolivarian Revolution has a particularity that differentiates it from other Latin American revolutionary processes, such as the Cuban revolution, or the Sandinista revolution, as it has been established by electoral means. However, the rise of Commander Hugo Chávez and the MBR 200 (Bolivian Revolutionary Movement 200) had a military style that was characterized in the failed coup attempt carried out on February 4th, 1992. From that warlike action, Chávez and his movement initiated the progression process until power was obtained by means of free and democratic elections which took place on the 6th of December 1998.

In order to evaluate this experience, we will then establish the following division in stages, in order to specify the evolution of the aforementioned revolutionary process, from a competitive form of authoritarianism, to reaching its current phase in which the configuration of an autocracy is consolidated since the advent of Nicolás Maduro Moros, after the death of Chávez Frías on March 5, 2013. In this sense, we can establish the following timelines:

1-The first stage that we will call "Transition from Representative Democracy to Competitive Authoritarianism (1999 to 2013)" has its beginning in 1999, being characterized precisely by the changes of forms of political organization and the exercise of strictly democratic court powers to forms of competitive authoritarianism. It should be noted that, at the beginning of the revolutionary process, there were democratic features expressed with the holding of elections, freedom of the press and the existence of political parties, in addition to the relative independence of public powers.

However, from the very beginning, authoritarian elements began to appear in the leadership of Hugo Chávez Frías, such as discretionary control of the legislative and

judiciary powers, the creation of shock forces known as the “Bolivarian Circles”, the harassment of the media and the progressive elaboration of an increasingly aggressive discourse by the first president of the republic.

At the same time, the authoritarian strategy will take shape through the implementation of a National Constituent Assembly for the revocation of the Constitution of 1961 and its replacement by a new constitution enacted for the year 1999, adapted to the needs of the revolutionary government.

At this point, it is important to briefly note that the Constitution of 1999 is the most important documentary evidence of that phase since it proposes from the legal point of view the substitution of representative democracy for participatory and protagonist democracy, as stated in the preamble of the aforementioned fundamental law: “Establish a democratic, participatory and protagonist, multi-ethnic and multicultural society in a federal, decentralized justice system” (Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic, 2000: 5-6).

The aforementioned reference reveals the post-democratic nature of that constitution, and at the same time accounts for the ideological profile and political intentions of the Bolivarian revolution in terms of the intention of replacing the representative democracy that had been established since 1961. At the same time, with the approach of participatory and protagonist democracy, we observe the link with post-communist content introduced in the proposals on post-democracy raised by Norberto Ceresole.

In this sense, one of the fundamental lines is related to the elimination of both the parties (as elements of mediation), as well as the institutions of the previous representative democracy, and the establishment of the leader-army-people axis. Some of these proposals will be included in the “Bolivarian Constitution”, through the establishment of mechanisms aimed at promoting protagonism and the participation of the people in the exercise of their sovereignty in the political sphere (Constitution of the Bolivian Republic, 2000: 62-63), as established in Title III, Chapter IV “On political rights and popular referendum”.

To be more precise, the project of “participatory democracy” as a post-democratic modality, is specified in Article 62 whose text points out the necessary participation of the people in “public management” as the only alternative to achieve “protagonism”, which in turn guarantees development of both the individual and the collective, at the same time the State should guarantee the methods of participation.\* For this purpose, and in order to guarantee the aforementioned forms of protagonism, the mechanisms contemplated in the constitutional articles were the following: a- Public office elections; b- The referendum; c- The popular consultation; d- The revocation of the mandate; e- Legislative, constitutional and constituent initiatives; f- The opening of a town hall; and g- The assembly of citizens.

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\* Article 62. All citizens have the right to participate freely in public affairs, directly or through their elected representatives. The participation of the people in the formation, execution and control of public management is the necessary means to achieve the leading role that guarantees their complete development, both individually and collectively. It is the obligation of the State and the duty of society to facilitate the generation of the most favorable conditions for its practice (Cf. Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, p. 58-59).



These means are those contemplated by the constitutional letter for the exercise of popular sovereignty from the political point of view according to Article 70. In this sense -according to the participatory and “protagonist” practices -, the “open chapter” and the “assembly of citizens” become important, since from the judicial point of view, the decisions taken by these two organizational entities with constitutional rank would have a binding character.

At this point, and insisting on the thesis of Ceresole referring to post-democracy and the impersonation of political parties as fundamental forms of previous representative democracy, the aforementioned articles of the Constitution of 1999 that seek the incorporation of participatory and protagonistic democracy will have their effective concretion with the creation of “The Bolivarian Circles” having as legal basis the articles of the Constitution of the year 1999.\* Within the framework of this pro-government initiative, whose main creator was President Chávez himself and according to the official version, the “Círculos” were conceived as the basic organizational system of the town in order to stimulate the participation of the different sectors of society in the process of the “Bolivarian Revolution”, but in the long run they will become groups of paramilitaries in government service, with a structure similar to the Cuban CDRs (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution).

2-The second stage called “From Competitive Authoritarianism to Hegemonic Authoritarianism” (2013 to 2017) begins with the death of Hugo Chávez on March 5th, 2013 resulting in the holding of elections by the government for the formation of a second National Constituent Assembly on July 30, 2017.

Upon the death of the leader of the revolution, presidential elections are called on Sunday April 14, 2013 to elect the successor of Hugo Chávez Frías. Nicolás Maduro participates on behalf of the government (which included the United Socialist Party of Venezuela and the so-called Patriotic Pole) and Henrique Capriles for the opposition (representing the Democratic Unity) with Nicolás Maduro winning with 7,587,579 votes (50.61%), against 7,363,980 (49.20%) votes obtained by Henrique Capriles. In this second phase, the political dynamic is adjusted to the final parameters of a Competitive Authoritarianism, but little by little it loses strength, until it adopts the elements of a hegemonic authoritarianism.

During this stage, among other facts, there is a marked idealization of the National Armed Forces in addition to their participation in activities related to the political parties associated with the government, a significant increase in the repression of the public forces especially against the opposition, including the use of firearms and the appearance of the so-called “Collectives” which are groups of armed irregulars who use motorcycles as a means of transport and are dedicated to intimidating and repressing the opposition population.

On the other hand, during this second period is when the historic popular mobilizations of 2014 generated by the precarious economic situation, crime and personal insecurity, had its formal start with the call of opposition leaders Antonio

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\* One of the articles that serves as support for the Bolivarian Circles is No. 62 which promotes *the participation of the people in the formation, execution and control of public management*. It also establishes that it is ... *the obligation of the State and duty of society to facilitate the generation of the most favorable conditions for its practice*.

Ledesma, María Corina Machado and Leopoldo López on February 12th, 2014 with the important participation of the student movement. Finally, after several days, the protest culminated with a total of 43 dead, more than 400 injured and an approximate number of more than 1800 detained. As a result of the protests, the opposition leader of the “Voluntad Popular” party, Leopoldo López, is arrested and tried.

On the other hand, and in causal relation to the series of protests that occurred during the first half of that year, the cycle of the second “oil boom” begins to close, which was characterized by high incomes with no prior antecedents in the economic history of Venezuela- initiated during the year 2003 and ending just in 2014. It should be noted that the populist model established by Hugo Chávez had its basis of support precisely in the use of high income in dollars, which served to finance social programs for strictly electoral and populist purposes.

However, until that moment, the government with Nicolás Maduro Moros as president was still in the electoral issue, within the parameters associated with “Competitive Authoritarianism”, in which, despite the lack of transparency and the discretionary use of the power to manipulate electoral processes, there was a possibility of obtaining certain management positions in the state apparatus through suffrage, and that is what happened in the elections of December 2015.

In this regard, on December 6 of that year, the votes were taken to elect the representatives to the National Assembly for the 2016-2021 parliamentary term, which were won by the opposition, organized under the coalition called the Democratic Unity Table (MUD), obtaining 7,728,025 votes (112 seats) against the government that achieved 5,625,248 million votes (55 seats).

These elections are going to mark the last milestone of the dynamics linked to the stage of the aforementioned “Competitive Authoritarianism”, from then on, to enter into a political logic that will lead to more autocratic, totalitarian and restrictive forms, which will be evident in the following facts: a-Hindrance of a recall referendum to the government of Nicolás Maduro to be held in December 2017, proposed by the opposition National Assembly; b- Attempt by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (controlled by the Maduro government), to disqualify the National Assembly accusing the legislature of disrespect by means of sentence n° 156 issued on March 20, 2017; c-Repression of the protests of the population of Venezuela with a balance of more than 163 deaths, and 5,051 arbitrary detentions; e- Illegal convocation, by the government, for the election of representatives to a new National Constituent Assembly, held on July 30, 2017.

3-The third stage called “From Hegemonic Authoritarianism to Totalitarianism” (2017 to the present) will have as one of its fundamental characteristics the development of a deep economic crisis which has its conjunctural cause, according to the researcher John Magdaleno, in the “severe fall in imports [...] that contributes to the reduction of aggregate supply; an increase in scarcity, with variable cycles that impact on various items (among which are products of first necessity); [and] a fiscal deficit estimated between 20% and 25% (Magdaleno, 2018: 155). This crisis will increase scarcity, hyperinflation and public debt to levels never recorded in the contemporary history of Venezuela.



In addition to this, it will add an increase in the poverty rate by 87%, a decrease in access to education by the population ages 2 to 24 years by 78%, a decrease of 11.4 kg in weight per person, an increase of up to 68% in sectors of the Venezuelan population that do not have medical attention, and an increase in homicides towards the end of 2017 at a rate of 89 murders per 100,000 inhabitants (Magdaleno, 2018: 155-156).

In this socio-economic context, which will lead to a decline in the popularity of the revolutionary process and Maduro's leadership, there will be a closing of democratic areas and an increase in repression. This circumstance will lead to a clear situation of "hegemonic authoritarianism" in the process of transition towards a totalitarian phase, in which forms of social control are beginning to be registered by the Venezuelan government linked to the social control system used by the governments of both Cuba and China.

It should be noted that these systems of repression used in Venezuela, receive very important support and in many cases they have even delegated their functions to the dictatorial Cuban Castro government. The role played by Cuba in terms of social control and intelligence, geo-strategic support and counselling, espionage and propaganda has been widely disseminated and recognized throughout the Venezuelan revolutionary process, as well as the presence of the Cuban G2 (Cuba's Intelligence Service); just to give a figure, it is estimated to have a presence of more than 24,000 Cuban spies in Venezuelan territory.

On the other hand, since 2008 with Chavez as the head of power, the Chinese government through its technological companies has participated in the construction mechanisms of social control. In that year Chávez contacted the company ZTE (Zhong Xing Telecommunications Equipment Company Limited) in order to strengthen the citizen identification system. This company is the one that has collaborated in the creation, at the beginning of 2016 and under the mandate of Maduro, of the so-called "Carnet de la Patria", a system of identification "parallel" to the official one but with a QR code, which records citizen information including their participation in the electoral processes or their inclusion in a popular aid program. At the same time it gives access to various social benefit bonds, subsidies, CLAP (Local Supply and Production Committees) scholarships, possibility of accessing rationed gasoline, etc. This mechanism is both an instrument of control and of social exclusion, since, on the one hand, it conditions everyone who needs help to comply with the regime and thus alleviate their needs and, on the other hand, discriminates against those who do not need to be registered because they do not have access to social benefits.

### **Balance of the Post-Communist Revolution and conclusions**

Before establishing a balance and pointing out some brief conclusions regarding the data and information aforementioned, it is important to point out that while this research work is being carried out, an important social mobilization process has taken place, under the leadership of the current President of the National Assembly Juan Guaidó (from the "Popular Will" party), who on January 23 of this year 2019, was sworn in at a Citizen Council held in Caracas, as President in charge of the Bolivarian

Republic of Venezuela. For this purpose, article 233 of the Constitution has been used, in which it is stated that, faced with an absence of power in the Head of State, the President of the Congress must assume the presidency of the Government and call elections. The use of this article of the constitution is based on the fact that the election held last May, 2018, in which Nicolás Maduro was re-elected for another presidential term of six years, was declared illegal.

In this framework, the Venezuelan opposition led by Juan Guaidó has the support of a large sector of Venezuelan society, in addition to the support of the international community with the United States, Canada, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina among other countries of the American continent, and several nations of the European Union such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Spain. Starting from this situation whose process is ongoing, in any case a balance can be established on what has been the revolutionary experience frame worked in the styles of post-communism and post-democracy.

Under this framework, one of the most important characteristics that we can register in this last stage of the Bolivarian revolution is that, despite the consolidation of a totalitarian government, the country has not been stabilized. In its logic, this contradictory situation can be summarized in a dilemma in which, although Maduro's government has social control of the population, however, it does not get control of certain parts of the Venezuelan territory. On this point, researcher Ysrael Camero points out that Venezuela: "... it is the only case of totalitarianism that has weakened the State. This implies that power operates under two levels simultaneously, concentrated in some areas, liquefied in others" (Ysrael Camero, 2019. 2a2.2-2.2)

This circumstance is observed in the presence of the ELN (Army of National Liberation of Colombia) in areas of southern Venezuela, where they control productive areas of the mining arc rich in gold, diamonds, coltan and oil (states of Bolívar and Amazonas). The same situation is registered in the control exercised by drug trafficking in the Venezuelan coastal areas, or the presence of factors linked to Islamic terrorism on the island of Margarita.

The problem described above leads us to conclude provisionally, that the post-democratic revolutionary process, as has been proposed in Venezuela, has led to a weakening of the State apparatus, or a liquefaction of administrative power and government control.

Second, if we consider the "Bolivarian Revolution" as the first revolution initiated in Latin America after the fall of communism, we believe that although there has been an intention to change, it has operated predominantly in formal and discursive aspects. The socialist revolutions pursue the transformation of reality to advance to new stages of welfare, justice and substantive benefits for the majority, although in practice they never achieve their objectives. Therefore, the underlying problems that have plagued Venezuelan society in the years prior to the arrival of Hugo Chávez to power, not only have not been resolved, but have become more acute, leading to an increase in the indexes of poverty, marginality, external debt, corruption, dependence on oil income, delivery of wealth to international capital and the lowering of the Venezuelan's standard of living in general.

On the other hand, regarding the course of the process and its characteristics, we observe that the “Bolivarian Revolution” can be interpreted as a historical moment in which there has been a new concentration of power, (this time with greater features of militarism, improvisation and empiricism) at the same time that it marks forms of regression to circumstances, procedures, political modalities and organizational structures prior to the democratic stage inaugurated in 1958. Therefore, the experience promoted by Chávez could be associated with pre-modern elements, that is, pre-democratic, even when the electoral variable has been a frequent practice but distorted by the regime that, although they had emerged from elections, appears as authoritarian and caudillistic, with a notorious populist personalism.

Finally, it is worth pointing out a final component that may mark an important difference with other revolutionary processes, such as the structuring of a narco-state with the presence of a group of criminals, drug traffickers and smugglers in government positions. This situation led Evan Ellis, a professor at the Institute of Strategic Studies of the Army War College in the United States, to point out that what was happening in Venezuela was not “... a matter of politics or international relations, but an insertion of large-scale organized crime: A group of criminals has taken control of the State and assaulted its treasury. The underlying problem is that there is no international legal mechanism or a model of regional cooperation that allows rescuing a State in these circumstances without violating its sovereignty” (Romero-Castillo: 2017).

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