

STUDENTS / UNIVERSITIES

ASLIHAN ACUN – HACETTEPE UNI.
MEHMET YAŞAR ALTUNDAĞ – BOĞAZIÇI UNI.
AHMET TUNÇ – BİLKENT UNI.

SUPERVISOR(S)

ÖZGE KEMAHLIOĞLU

ABSTRACT



In broad terms, this project aims to answer the question “Under what conditions would incumbents want to control the media to influence prospective campaigns?” In narrow terms, we looked at how the ownership of media and state-media relations changed after Chavez came to power in Venezuela in 1999. By analyzing the news from newspapers between 1999-2019, we found that starting from the early days of Chavez in office, the government have been repressing the media verbally, used its constitutional power and later changed the ownership of the media outlets in order to eliminate the opposition from the media outlets and increase its propaganda for further success in the elections.

OBJECTIVES

- Under what conditions would incumbents want to control the media to influence prospective campaigns (future-oriented projects).
- We are looking at the motives behind the media repression in Venezuela after Chavez came to power in 1999.

PROJECT DETAILS

- **Methodology:** Using LexisNexis database, we made newspaper analysis of the news from 1999 to 2019. We made the search using the keywords “Venezuela”, “media”, “press”, “El Nacional”, “El Universal” and “TV station”.
- We looked at state-media relations, use of legal powers of government for media repression and change of media ownership in these news.
- **Periods:**
 - 1999 - 2005
 - 2006 - 2012
 - 2013 - Today



• First Period

- Chavez came to power in 1999.
- Verbal assaults on the media outlets began as early as 1999.
- New constitution required the media to produce “timely, truthful and objective” news.
- Following mass protests, coup brought down Chavez for 2 days. Restoration of Chavez rule increased repression on anti-Chavez media.
- Media outlets and media figures faced investigations and arrests.

• Second Period

- Verbal accusations to Radio Caracas TV, the biggest opposition to Chavez government, started in the beginning of 2007 by Chavez. Later, in May Chavez did not renew the licence of the broadcast and shut it down.
- In 2009, new media laws were passed which increased repression on many journals, newspapers and TV channels.
- Globovision, the only major opposition media group remaining, was put on trial and fined. Its editor in-chief was also attacked by unknown groups.
- Apart from repression on media, Chavez intensified to create its pro-government\ alternative media through funding them and opening new journalist schools.

• Third Period

- After Chavez’s death, Maduro won the elections in 2013 and became head of state.
- Globovision, the last television station to broadcast anti-government editorials, had to be sold in 2013 after the owners complained of mounting government fines and political harassment. The new owners are business people with ties to Maduro.
- In 2014, the largest newspaper El Universal had to be sold to a government friendly owner group.
- Newspapers try to continue to publish in digital form despite limited electricity. But the main internet supplier CANTV blocked these digital websites and social media accounts of newspapers.

CONCLUSIONS

- Media repression was used as
 - a tool to eliminate the opposition of media outlets,
 - to increase government’s propaganda fur further success in the elections,
 - to legitimize the ongoing «revolution».
- In the absence of effective political opposition, media played a big role along with some other groups such as trade unions and the Catholic church.
- Weakening of political opposition increased the role of media opposition, which led to further repression.
- Level of media repression increased over time.

REFERENCES

- <http://www.lexisnexus.com/hottopics/Inacademic/>