

Photo Essay

Manifestations of Sovereignty in Venezuela and the Spirit of Bolivarian Revolution

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On December 8, 2012, in the last speech of the late Comandante Hugo Chávez, the issue of Venezuelan sovereignty reached its climax with the succinct phrase – ‘Today we have Homeland! (*Patria*)’. Currently, Venezuela is going through a large-scale political conflict, trying to make sense of a pressing economic and humanitarian crisis. The so-called Bolivarian Revolution that began in 1999 as a project of revolutionary and anti-imperialist democracy, plays out today at an unprecedented geopolitical scale, increasingly appearing in international media, a media that distorts the many points of tension between the war and the resistance that Venezuelans experience in their daily lives. The slogan ‘We have Homeland! (*Patria*)’ has become the center of discord, splitting this nation: while some defend Venezuelan nationalist socialism, others oppose the system that has ‘ruined’ the country’s economy.

This photographic essay, produced between 2012 and 2016, as a part of the author’s ethnographic work on geographies and socialist societies in Venezuela, shows the complex ways in which the discourse of national and territorial sovereignty materializes in the state, in the body, in the ways of life, in the city, in the neighborhoods and in the deserts of the Venezuelan socialist regime that faces neoliberal globalization.

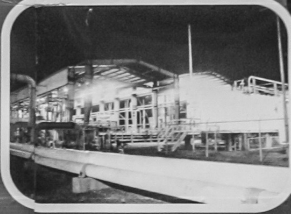
Living between the borders of two economies articulated by the state, one socialist and the other capitalist, renders the Venezuelan spirit a subject that is both challenging and contradictory, something that manifests itself in Bolivarianism, the cult of Chávez, the attachment to consumer goods, the ‘escape’ from the system (even in the Caribbean Sea) and the anguish over the economic and political confinement of lives.





Entry of Bolivarian peasants to Caracas

Consolidamos la Plena Soberanía Petrolera



Rif: J-00123072-6



Gobierno Bolivariano
de Venezuela

Ministerio del Poder Popular
para la Energía y Petróleo



**Oil sovereignty is the bulwark of the Bolivarian Revolution promoted by
Commander Hugo Chávez**



Poor neighborhoods in the mountains of Caracas



A fisherman lives the last years of his life with the hope that the Bolivarian Revolution will provide a better future for his grandchildren; on his shirt you can read 'My heart is Chávez'



**This young peasant receives socialist indoctrination in the afternoons,
his idol is Comandante Hugo Chávez**



A young man from the Warao ethnic group in a peripheral community, his shirt says 'Indigenous socialist warrior to the attack'



A communal council meets to defend the Bolivarian Revolution during the presidential campaign of Nicolás Maduro



A worker banner celebrating the socialist housing plans promoted by the Bolivarian Revolution



The United Socialist Party of Venezuela identifies the popular territories of Caracas with placards stating ‘We are those of Chávez’



Socialist housing project for the middle classes of Caracas



**Commercial activity in Caracas destroyed by brutal inflation caused by
socialist economic policies**



Rising inflation has caused people to go out with bundles of the highest currency denomination



**Many Venezuelans have been forced to cross the Colombian border
due to economic crisis**



A young man sails to the high seas as a 'momentary escape' from the Venezuelan crisis



The renovated Plaza Caracas with the bust of Simón Bolívar, the sustenance of the Bolivarian Revolution

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