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Anti-imperialism movements in governments of Latin America and the Insecurity Consequences

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Abstract

In the twenty first century the Pink Tide arrived in Latin America with left wing governments who claimed to be socialists. Research has shown that there were two types of socialism in the region, one globalized and the other anti-globalization. The latter better portrayed as socialists’ populists are the focus of this work. This study aims to find how the actions taken by the socialist populist governments disregarded democracy and shows how because on this; the security of the nations has deteriorated. Grounded on existing work of the current left wing in the region, the question is: How have the socialist-populist regimes who were situated in governments of Latin American countries, during the beginning of the twenty first century, contributed in the increased deterioration of human security of their nations and region during their term and post term years? Based on the review of the concentration of power, nationalization policies and media activism actions that Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua have imposed I show the deterioration of Human Security inside each case. The results indicate that because of the actions taken against democracy, the human security has decreased posing a threat in each country and the region.

Keywords

Socialism, Populism, Latin America, Insecurity, Power Concentration, Media Activism, Nationalization, Human Security.

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2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.

3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague 10 May 2019

Daniela Santamaria
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I am appreciative of my friends and family who helped me throughout this entire process. I would like to especially thank my mother Carmen, who gave me the opportunity to pursue my dreams and always pushes me to become a better person in every single aspect. I am grateful for José, who helped me through the hardest moments in these two years. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor PhDr. Vít Stritecký M.Phil. for his guidance and support in my time writing this thesis.
Diploma thesis project

Anti-imperialism movement in governments of Latin America and the insecurity consequences

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**Introduction to the topic**

Latin America has been a region which has have different types of regimes that influenced the decision and actions of future ones. After the dictatorships that shook the region, democracy came as the savior, with the neoliberal ideal of economy, but needless to mention it failed, and brought discontent to the countries. Therefore, since early 2000’s a ‘new’ wave of regime arose in the region that is better known as the “Pink Tide”. The countries belonging to this new wave are known to be from the left, and it has invaded almost all the countries in the region in the last two decades. After few years under their rule, positive changes where seen, as rising growth rates, and improvement of social conditions, which paved the way to acquire popular support in their countries.\(^1\) The positive outcomes of the leftist governments did not last long, and soon they spiraled into economic and political crises in the region, showing the flaws on their government policies, and actions taken during, at least, the last decade. These new crises that arose have brought new levels of insecurity to the region, that has been visible in different aspects, such as Human Rights violations or increased criminal levels, but not all countries have contributed to it in a similar way.

In order to clarify that, this thesis will be based on the fact that the region did not suffer from one left resurgence, but instead there are two types of lefts, which I find relevant to distinguish one from another. As some scholars note, the first one is categorized as a “modern, open-minded, reformist, and internationalist” which has come to learn from the mistakes done by the left-wing past.\(^2\) The second one is created out of the Latin American most common tradition: populism, and it is based on nationalist ideas, is strident and close-minded, and needless to mention has not learned from the past,\(^3\) and inhibits itself to respond to modernizing influences. Or in other words, these countries opted for one of two choices, a globalized social democracy or the anti-globalization alternative.\(^4\) The focus of this thesis will be based on the latter type of left-wing, since these are the countries that have been found as the most ‘leftists’ in the region, and the

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3. Ibid.
consequences to their nations have been perceived as the worst ones in the Pink Tide era.

Focusing on the political and social relevance for this topic, is important to note that the region is not, or has not been, relevant for the political community because there have been more ‘relevant’ problems in the world, like the war against terror, with a big potential threat to the West. Although Latin America could be considered as ‘West’ due to its location, and obvious influence from the American (western) culture, it has certainly not maintained its alignment with the western ideals since early 2000’s, and the international community has not shown any concern regarding this change. The region has been pacific in comparison of other regions of the world, but the insecurity levels have increased, and the ‘left-wing anti-globalization’ governments in power did nothing but incentive the growth of it. The issues arise by this have influenced to stir the security issue inside the nations, and also created a spillover effect in neighboring countries based on the migration and instability. In the academic sphere, since the successes were not entirely considered until they started to become stronger, there is not much study focusing on what these states did that contributed to the insecurity of the region. There are articles and studies done on the changes that the region was seeing when the left-wing was starting to take place, and some also focus on the actions taken in the different states whether they are ‘globalized’ or ‘anti-globalization’, but the intention of this work is to focus on the second trend of left-wing and discover how factors relevant for their rulings actually became tools to help the growth of insecurity in the region on the long run.

Research target, research question

The target of this thesis is to explain how the different factors that the populist left governments used to perpetrate their mandates, have actually also been factors that ended up contributing to an increasement of the region’s insecurity. Therefore, the research question is as follows: How have the anti-globalization regimes who were situated in governments of Latin American countries, contributed in the increased insecurity of the region during their term, and post term, years?
Literature review


Munck (2009) focuses on Cardoso’s work and views of Latin America and the pursuit of different paths presented towards the left movements. He clarifies that there are three different ones, which vary from the countries who seek a ‘survival strategy’, those who pursue a ‘globalized social democracy’ and those who rather an ‘anti-globalization’ alternative. The first one’s lack resources so are urged to find ways to obtain traditional products, the second ones have greater economy autonomy and can pursue participation in the global market, and the third group have global value commodity and a not a good relationship with the global capitalist economy. The anti-globalization option is articulated by Venezuela, and supported by Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Argentina.


Castañeda (2006) also recognizes that Latin America has two lefts in the region, one that is more open minded, which learned from the past and improved itself, and the other one, that raised from populism, and does not acknowledge the failures of the past. He makes reference to corruption, and that this issue has been present in the region even with the neoliberal democracies that were in power before. Claims that this populist left is less responsive to modernizing influences, and that their relations with US is not one they worry about. Ensured that there is a huge disregard for democracy and the rule of law, also, that populist lefts have been chaotic for Latin America and that we should not assume that it is going to be different this time. We should worry that this populist left-wing threatens the previous stablished democratic rule and respect for human rights.


Mendes (2018) indicates that at first the Pink Tide showed growth rates picked up and social conditions improved, but that it did not last long and that it would enter in a spiral of economic and political crises. He states that the changes done to the productive structure of economies, the new matrix of social policies and the political strategies implemented allowed these governments to maintain their power. But in early and mid
2010s they found themselves in a debilitated position and these processes was no longer operative, and the regimes took austerity measures were needed.

**Cardoso, Fernando. New Paths: Globalization in Historical Perspective. Instituto Fernando Enrique Cardoso: Sao Paulo. 11 August 2009**

Cardoso (2009) claims that the populist despised representative democracy and promoted redistribution of resources. These populist government give voice to anti-American and anti-globalization rhetoric, and that these are countries that possess commodity of high global values, like oil & gas, but do not have other resources that are needed to take globalizing leaps. These countries are exemplified by Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela.


Rochlin (2007) assures that in Bolivia there is a rejection of neoliberalism, the rebuke of the USA and the political assertion of the democratic majority, which is a phenomenon that has appear in a regional level. Ecuador and Venezuela are the also clear examples of this democratic, populist and revolutionary wave in Latin America. They use nationalization policies as a result of the failed US economic and political leadership, especially pointing out the failure of the neoliberal model.


Kitzberger (2012) focuses in the existence of media activism on the leftist governments in Latin America. Considering distinctions, he clarifies that there is an existence of two lefts in the region “populist” and “nonpopulist”. On the populist end is possible to see the rise in media-government conflict and oppositional polarization. There are “media wars” that are fought in public. Mostly seen in the character of the heads of governments of Chávez, Morales, Kirchner and Correa, which go against the western standard of press freedom. In the populist outsider path, the absence of a credible politico-electoral alternative placed the media at the forefront of opposition. Oppositional voices and impulses in society tend to gravitate toward the media
because they tend to be highly dependent on the media for their electoral performance.

**Conceptual and theoretical framework, research hypotheses**

Pink Tide refers to the continental movement that has invade Latin America as the “countries elected presidents running on platforms allegedly antithetical on neoliberalism”.\(^5\) Meaning that the new wave of “Left-leaning Latin American governments capitalize…to implement economic planning initiatives and novel welfare policies”. \(^6\) Meaning that a change, from a neoliberal policy was taking place in the region, as a sign of discontent of the failure of the globalized model. This change was done towards a left-wing end, with socialist ideals.

The left-wing in Latin America, for the purpose of this research, will be based on Castañeda’s (2009) definition: ‘is the current of thought, politics, and policy that stresses social improvements over macroeconomic orthodoxy, egalitarian distribution of wealth over its creation, sovereignty over international cooperation.’\(^7\) But mostly focusing on the second type of left-wing that he introduces as the *populists left*, he refers to them as ‘always authoritarian in one fashion or another, much more interested in policy as an instrument for attaining and conserving power than in power as a tool for making policy, and nationalize large sectors of the country’s economy…they need money to give away but did not like taxes’.\(^8\)

At this point is relevant to clearly note the different types of lefts present in Latin America, and this is better explained by Munck (2009), in which he distinguishes, based on Cardoso’s works, that there are three paths for Latin American countries, but they are still somehow dependent of globalization. Therefore, mentions the three different paths, first, the countries that are lacking in resources (Central America, Uruguay and Paraguay) recur to a ‘survival strategy’, this is one extreme. Second, countries with diversified economy (Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Colombia and Peru) pursue a ‘globalized social democracy’, this is the other extreme. And Third, in the middle there are countries that possesses a global-value commodity

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
such as oil or gas (Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia). This last one is seen as the ‘anti-globalization’ choice, because they have “an intermediary degree of autonomy and an ambiguous relationship with the global capitalist economy, criticizing it while still relying on it”.

Globalization as mentioned by Cardoso (2009) ‘is nothing more than an unfolding capitalist system in today’s historical conditions’ in which to a point create a dependence in the underdeveloped countries. But it also ‘represents an extension to the planetary scale of the financial links and the rapid diffusion of new productive techniques that create the so-called knowledge economy’.

I believe that the Neo-classical realist theory by Gideon Rose is best to pursue the investigation for this thesis topic. Since Neoclassical realists assumes that “states respond to the uncertainties of international anarchy by seeking to control and shape their external environment”. Also, because domestic politics and conditions of states has to be taken into account while analyzing drivers of their behavior, and not just systemic factors, this allows to explain irrational behavior. This points out the relevance that domestic factors, such as the nature of political regime, nature of political system, decision making process, values and culture matter and influence the state behavior.

The thesis will seek to discover whether the disregard for democracy, the concentration of power, the use of nationalization policies and the media activism used by the populist end of the left-wing governments in Latin America have contributed to the increasement of the regional insecurity. The latter being the dependent variable and the former ones being the independent variables. With this I will try to find recurrent patterns that can be used to establish a relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable.

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10 Ibid
12 Ibid.
14 Suslov, Dmitry. Understanding International Relations Theory. Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, HSE. Video. N.d. https://www.coursera.org/lecture/international-relations-theory/neoclassical-realism-JQxMD
The hypothesis here would be that there is a relationship between the increase in regional insecurity and the disregard for democracy, concentration of power, nationalization policies and media activism, that the populist left governments have in Latin America.

**Empirical data and analytical technique**

Regarding the methodology of investigation, I will be using qualitative method of single case studies. In which I will base my study in the independent variables inside each case study to be able to create a relation with each one to the dependent variable. With this method I intend to show how the factors occurred inside the countries and find a link with the increase in insecurity of the region.

The cases that I will be focusing on will be the ones that correspond to the populist left-wing, or the ‘anti-globalization’ countries in Latin America that have arose with the Pink Tide since mid-2000’s, except for one who shifted in the late 1990’s: Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. As stated above the independent variables are: Disregard for democracy, Concentration of Power, Nationalization Policies and Media Activism. The Dependent Variable is: increased insecurity in the region.

The data needed for this research will be obtained from academic papers, articles, newspapers, public interviews, videos and statistics of international organizations. The main source of these will be accessed through electronic data base. The dates for the data gathering would go specifically from 2006-present, and in the case of Venezuela since 1998.

**Planned thesis outline**

- Introduction
- Conceptual/theoretical framework
- Methods
- Venezuela (Case Study 1)
- Bolivia (Case Study 2)
- Ecuador (Case Study 3)
- Nicaragua (Case Study 4)
- Conclusions
- Bibliography

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**Introduction**

Latin America has been a region which has had different types of regimes in recent times, and they have influenced the decision and actions of future ones. After the dictatorships that shook the region, democracy came as the savior, with the neoliberal ideal of economy, but needless to mention it failed, and brought discontent to the countries. Therefore, since early 2000’s a ‘new’ wave of regimes arose in the region that is better known as the “Pink Tide”. The governments of the countries belonging to this new wave are known to be from the left, better noted as socialists, and it has invaded almost all the region in the last two decades. After few years under their rule, positive changes were seen, as rising growth rates, and improvement of social conditions, which paved the way to acquire popular support of the leaders in their countries (Loureiro, 2018). But the positive outcomes of the leftist governments did not last long, and soon they spiraled into economic and political crises, showing the flaws on their government policies, and actions taken during, at least, the last decade. These new crises that arose have brought new levels of insecurity to the region, that has been visible in different aspects, such as Human Rights violations or increased criminal levels but not all countries have contributed to it in a similar way.

In order to clarify the role of these governments in the insecurity is important to know that the region did not suffer from one left resurgence, but instead there are two types of lefts, which I find relevant to distinguish one from another. As some scholars note, the first one is categorized as a “modern, open-minded, reformist, and internationalist” which has come to learn from the mistakes done by the left-wing past (Castañeda, 2006). Meanwhile, the second one is created out of the Latin American most common tradition: populism, and it is based on nationalist ideas, is strident and close-minded, and needless to mention has not learned from the past (Castañeda, 2006), and inhibits itself to respond to modernizing influences. Or in other words, these countries opted for one of two choices, a globalized social democracy or the anti-globalization alternative (Munck, 2009). This study will seek to focus on the latter type of left-wing, since these are the countries that have been found as the most ‘leftists’ in the region or better described as the socialists populists, and the consequences to their nations have been perceived as the worst ones in the Pink Tide era.
In order to find the results of the anti-globalization leftist governments I will be focusing in four main cases that represent the socialist populist governments: Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. More specifically, I will be looking into actions taken, that diminished democracy, by the presidents that represent the left governments, Hugo Chávez from 1999 to 2013 and Nicolás Maduro since 2013, Evo Morales since 2006, Rafael Correa from 2007 to 2017, and Daniel Ortega since 2006, respectively for each case study. It is important to keep in mind that Rafael Correa is the only one who represents the socialist’s populists that is no longer in power. As noted by Gill (2018) these leaders are the ones who have made participatory democratic reforms, socialist policies especially in the economic field, and the ones who have the most rejecting attitude towards the U.S. hegemony. Therefore, I will seek to show how democracy was under attack by these regimes focusing on the concentration of power, nationalization policies and media activism actions they used. After that, I will demonstrate how the disregard for democracy contributed to the increasing levels of insecurity, focusing on the Human Security inside the countries and the region.

Focusing on the political, social and security relevance for this topic, is important to note that the region is not, or has not been, relevant for the political community because there have been more ‘relevant’ problems in the world, like the war against terror, with a big potential threat to the West. Although Latin America could be considered as ‘West’ due to its location, and obvious influence from the American (western) culture, it has certainly not maintained its alignment with the western ideals since early 2000’s, and the international community has not shown any concern regarding this change. The region has been pacific in comparison to other regions of the world, but the insecurity levels have recently increased, and the ‘left-wing and anti-globalization’ governments in power did nothing but incentive the growth of it. The issues that have aroused by this have influenced in the deterioration of human security inside the nations, and also created a spillover effect in neighboring countries based on the migration and instability. In the academic sphere, since the successes were not entirely considered until they started to become stronger, there is not much studies focusing on what these states did that contributed to the insecurity of their nations and the region. There are articles and studies done on the changes that the region was seeing when the left-wing was starting to take place, and some also focus on the actions taken in the different states whether they are ‘globalized’ or ‘anti-globalization’, but the
intention of this work is to focus on the second trend of left-wing and discover how factors relevant for their rulings actually became tools to help the growth of insecurity in the region on the long run.

For this reason, the objective of this investigation will be to show how the regimes of the case studies used different factors to perpetrate their mandate, and then how in reality they have been contributing to the increase in insecurity inside their nations. Therefore, the research question is as follows: How have the socialist-populist, anti-globalization regimes who were situated in governments of Latin American countries, during the beginning of the twenty-first century, contributed to the increased deterioration of human security of their nations and region during their term, and post-term, years? In order to answer this question, I will first look into each case study and describe how the governments acted to achieve a concentration of power, the nationalization policies they pursued and their actions in media and media activism, all of which have diminished democracy. Then later, I will point out how these actions have influenced in the insecurity inside the countries, focusing on the Human Security aspects.

The analysis that follows is structured with the theoretical framework and two main sections. The theoretical framework will address the literature review of the topic, deepen in to the description of the approach of the study and present the theories and concepts used throughout this work. In the first section, I will look into the factors that permitted a disregard of democracy in the socialist populist countries. I will be giving each case study a chapter that will allow to deepen into the actions taken to acquire a power concentration, the implementation of nationalization policies and the media activism of each country. In Chapter 2, I will review the case of Venezuela, which is the first one who turned to a socialist populist regime with Hugo Chávez in 1999. At the same time, this country is the one that has been under this regime the longest, having more viewable changes. Chapter 3 will focus on Bolivia, who obtained the anti-imperialist regime with Evo Morales, who also brought focus to the large groups of indigenous people of the nation, giving them a better stance in the nation. Similarly, Chapter 4 will take into account the successes occurred in Ecuador under the ‘Revolución Ciudadana’ of Rafael Correa, who accompanied by the populism his ‘charisma’ created managed to sustain an authoritarian attitude while in power. Lastly in
this section, Chapter 5 will explore the actions taken in Nicaragua, under the rule of Daniel Ortega, who was elected first after the military dictatorship, but did not reobtained power until 2006. This last one having important changes and successes in the last year.

In the second section I will be showing how there was a security deterioration in the cases, based on the changes done to the previously revised factors. In Chapter 6 I will show how insecurity has increased inside each of the case studies, focusing on human security components. Through this chapter I will point out the changes that these countries had regarding human security during at least the last decade. With this I will try to show the connection between the increasement of insecurity with the disregard of democracy that the countries had. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the principal findings, it will look into the connection between the new levels of insecurity in the countries, and the spillover effects it may have, with the actions taken by the socialist populist governments in previous years. I will focus on human security and its response to the manipulation of factors manipulated by the leaders of the case studies.
1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Literature Review

There are several studies that have addressed the new socialist wave that invaded Latin America during the Twenty First Century. In them, different views on how this has happened, and how there is differences between them are distinguished. This wave is better known as the Pink Tide, and the term refers to the countries who “elected presidents running on platforms allegedly antithetical on neoliberalism” (Laureiro, 2018). It showed that the region was shifting towards the left, with socialist ideals. According to Castañeda (2009), the left-wing that invaded Latin America can be defined as “the current of thought, politics, and policy that stresses social improvements over macroeconomic orthodoxy, egalitarian distribution of wealth over its creation, sovereignty over international cooperation”. This gets complemented by Rochlin, who assures that there is a “rejection of neoliberalism, the rebuke of the United States and the political assertion of the democratic majority” (Rochlin, 2017), and this is something that has been perceived in the region in general and not only in one country. As a result, Mendes indicates that at first the “Pink Tide showed growth rates [that] picked up and social conditions improved” but then claimed that “it did not last long and that it would enter into a spiral of economic and political crisis” (Mendes, 2018). Showing that the system was doomed to fail, once again, in the region, but now it is important to acknowledge that this new wave came with different components, that changed between countries.

In order to recognize these different factors, we have to look into the different categories that have been pointed out by authors, regarding the Pink Tide in the region. For Munck (2009), who parts from Cardoso’s work, there is three different left movements in the region, there is the ones who seek a ‘survival strategy’, those who pursue a ‘globalized social democracy’ and those who prefer a ‘anti-globalization alternative’. On the other hand, we can find that Castañeda (2006) and Kitzberger (2012) argue that there are two types of leftist movements in the region. For instance, Castañeda (2006) claims that from the two lefts there is one who is more open minded, which learned from the past and improved itself, whereas, the other has raised from populism and does not acknowledge the failures from the past. There is a similar distinction done by Kitzberger (2012), who claims that “the differences have been
reduced to dichotomies such as ‘populist’ versus ‘nonpopulist’, ‘authoritarian’ versus ‘democratic’ and ‘archaic’ versus ‘modern’ lefts”. As Castañeda (2006) mentioned in his work, populist lefts have been chaotic for Latin America and we should not assume that it is going to be different this time. Accordingly, most of the authors here have in common the same examples of countries that fit into the different categories. For purposes of the topic of the thesis, we will be referencing to the ‘anti-globalization alternative’ of Munck (2009), and the populist lefts proposed by Castañeda (2006) and Kitzberger (2012).

On these types of left of the region we can see recurring countries. In the case of Munck (2009), the ‘anti-globalization’ option is represented by Venezuela and supported by Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and even Argentina, which are countries that have a global value commodity but not a good relationship with the global capitalist economy. This is similarly found in Cardoso’s (2009) work, where he states that the populist left governments are exemplified by Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela; and he also clarifies that they possess commodities of high global values, like oil and gas. The same countries are referred by Rochlin (2007), as he clarifies that Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela are “clear example of this democratic, populist and revolutionary wave in Latin America”. Although Kitzberger (2012) focuses on a media activism approach of study towards the region, he clarifies that “on the populist end is possible to see the rise in media-government conflict and oppositional polarization” and that this is something that can be mostly seen in how heads of state behave, referring to the governments of Chávez, Morales, Correa and Kirchner.

As for what distinguishes this branch of populist left in the region, from the other left, can be found in the authors work as well. Castañeda (2006), claims that this left is less responsive to modernizing influences, and that they do not worry for their relations with the US. At the same time, Rochlin (2007) points out that the branch use nationalization policies as a result of the failed US economic and political leadership. It can be inferred that both authors are referencing how the populist left have seen the failures of the neoliberal model all over. Cardoso (2009) also agrees with this, since he mentions that these populist governments “give voice to anti-American and anti-globalization rhetoric”. Meanwhile, Mendes (2018) states that at first, the changes done to the productive structure of economies, the new matrix of social policies and the
political strategies they implemented allowed them to maintain power, but that mid 2010’s they found themselves in a debilitated position, their processes were no longer operative and they took very needed austerity measures. On the other hand, Castañeda (2006) assures that “there is a huge disregard for democracy and the rule of law”; while Cardoso (2009) claims that the populist left despised representative democracy and promoted redistribution of resources. Finally, Kitzberger (2012) implies that in the populist left governments “the absence of a credible politico-electoral alternative placed the media at the forefront of opposition”. Making it one of the targeted focus of the populist left regimes in Latin America.

1.2 Framework

In the previous century Latin America, as other regions of the world, started to become influenced by the leftist wing of politics, socialism. The uprising of the new path of the leftist wing in the late 1950s and early 1960s had visible trades like “corruption, submission to Moscow, accommodation with sitting governments, and assimilation by local power elites” (Castañeda, 2006). All of these factors and the threat that communism posed to the region, and to the United States, allowed the leftist governments to become discredited and rejected. As a response, and prevention of further penetration of leftist governments, many of the Latin American countries fell into military dictatorships. The power was obtained through a coup d’état, which was seen as a measure to avoid socialist governments in the countries, most of these were supported by the US. Once in power, the dictatorships persecuted socialist sympathizers at first, torturing and killing them, but later turned into a more brutal government system that seek to retain, torture and kill people who opposed the regime, represented any threats to it, and showed lack of approval towards it. This brought the levels of security inside the countries to an even new low. From this it can be inferred that because of the socialist wave that was taking place during the 1950’s and 1960’s in Latin America, in which democracy was already being disregarded, and the threat it represented to their countries and the region, that the 1970’s and 1980’s were followed and marked by the brutality of the military dictatorships. As better pointed out by Valencia and Marín (2016), the dictatorships were originated because of the political reactions that political parties, the military and the society had towards the situation that they were previously
facing, which was one with high levels of violence, ungovernability and political instability.

It is necessary to understand what is meant when referring to the left-wing in Latin America. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the definition will be based on one done by Castañeda (2006), which defines this wing as “the current of thought, politics, and policy that stresses social improvements over macroeconomic orthodoxy, egalitarian distribution of wealth over its creation, sovereignty over international cooperation”. In his work, he also points out that these left-wing regimes are “always authoritarian in one fashion or another, much more interested in policy as an instrument for attaining and conserving power than in power as a tool for making policy and nationalize large sectors of the country’s economy” (Castañeda, 2006).

Recently Latin America passed a new wave of socialism, which could be categorized in different levels between the countries. This twenty first century wave is better known as the Pink Tide. The term refers to the continental movement that invaded Latin America as the “countries elected presidents running on platforms allegedly antithetical on neoliberalism”, (Loureiro, 2018). The shift showed, once again, that the changes, from a neoliberal policy were taking place in the region, as a sign of discontent of the failure of the globalized model. As mentioned above, there are different levels in which the lefts present in Latin America can be categorized, and this is better explained by Munck (2009), who distinguishes, based on Cardoso’s work, that there are three paths that Latin American countries took, while they still are dependent of globalization. Firstly, the countries that lack resources (Central America, Uruguay and Paraguay) who recur to a ‘survival strategy’, one extreme. Secondly, countries with diversified economy (Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Colombia and Peru) who pursue a ‘globalized social democracy’, the other extreme. And Thirdly, in the middle there are countries that possess a global-value commodity such as oil or gas (Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia). Another separation of the third category from the rest can be seen in Gill’s (2018) work, he points out that some of the presidents in Latin America “became the most vocal critics of the U.S. imperialism and neoliberal economic policies” both in rhetoric and policy. Gill distinguishes the leaders of the countries he refers, and they are Chávez, Morales, Correa and Ortega, which represent Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua respectively. At the same time, he clarifies that these four leaders are needed
to be understood as the far left in Latin America (Gill, 2018). Meaning that the Pink Tide was based on two different types of lefts, both following the socialist path, but one had updated it’s critical thinking, while the other one followed the Cuban path. This is better explained by Castañeda (2006), who clarifies that of the two types of leftist movements in Latin America, one is modern, internationalist and has an open mind, while the other one is populist, nationalist and close minded. The second one has not learned from the mistakes of the previous decade’s socialism, and its better known as the populists left.

It is important to know that populism is not a tool employed on a specific political wing or regime, instead it can be found in every part and level of politics. For the purpose of this study is relevant to include that populism has played a huge role in the origin of the leftist wing in the region. Since populism is easily found in Latin America, it is hard to ignore the fact that it is usually close to power. Therefore, it will be easy to distinguish that populism has been also part of the Pink Tide, and that it was employed as a tool to obtain and maintain power.

Is safe to assume that in actuality a military coup d’état won’t be the main result of the threat, but instead a new deterioration of security can be perceived. Meaning that a failure of the socialist movement in the region was seen as imminent. Societies that are involved in these socialist regimes seek democracy. As stated above, the previous waves of left-wing regimes in Latin America have been disastrous, therefore, it is safe to assume that the cases, which represent the populist left, will follow a similar path this time too. This is better interpreted by Castañeda (2006), who mentions that, as in the past, the ruling of these regimens leads to inflation, bigger levels of poverty and inequality, all of this while in a constant confrontation with the U.S. The biggest issue here, is that the high levels of disregard of democracy that these regimes implement in their countries, will take away the progress that the region has managed to obtain towards a more democratic system and with this they also undermine human rights. Throughout this thesis, I will intend to point out how the changes towards a socialist regime have been taking place in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, while showing the disregard of democracy that each of them have perpetrated. Then, because of this deterioration of democracy, how there has been a simultaneous deterioration of security, in the countries and the region.
This thesis will be following the Human Security concept first presented by the UNPD in the Human Development Report of 1994. This branch of security differs from the state-centric view of security since the main object of study is the people and the global community (Bodin and Đorđević, 2018). Since the theory is ‘people centered’ and the main factors which it covers are economic, political, environmental, health and personal or group security, this theory will allow a better construction of the premises intended to be shown throughout the thesis. As better put by UNPD (1994), human security is “freedom from fear and freedom from want” of the individuals. This theory fits with the investigation and analysis for the proposed topic, the case studies, and it can also be considered a “contemporary contribution to the improvement of the concept of international security” (Bodin, 2018). At the same time, it is important to note that human security is directly connected to human development, meaning that the existence of the former depends on the everyday situations of the society, the satisfaction of basic needs and the guarantee of an adequate development of the individual inside the society (Ariza, 2011). Therefore, we need to make a distinction between ‘national security’ and ‘human security’, especially since in Latin America national security was used to sustain civil security in the past, which recurred to violent methods, mostly used during the military dictatorships that disappeared, imprisoned and killed thousands (Bonner, 2008).

Considering that the countries used in this study are representatives of third world countries, or usually categorized as developing countries, it is important to keep in mind that the situation in which they have been, or are, present a different standing. The current state of politics in the region, especially the debate between a democratic and iron fist politics (Bonner, 2008), shows the relevance of analyzing the states and their political regimes. This new concept, and the continues changes it has undergone, has raised questions regarding the role of the state when it comes to security (MacFarlane and Khong, 2006). For this reason, Human Security plays a huge role in the investigation of security in the cases, because it will allow me to see the connection of actions of the socialist governments and the problems it has with the security. The Human Security theory allows us to detect the causes of insecurity inside the analyzed states (Bodin, 2018). But beyond this, the theory is not about minimizing or attacking the role of the state, instead what it seeks is to ensure that the state protect their citizens (MacFarlane and Khong, 2006). But the problem becomes bigger when the perpetrator
of this insecurity is the government, or that its actions are the ones directly increasing the insecurity of the individuals in their state.

According to Bodin (2018), one of the main factors used to study the situation of human security is based on the peoples’ perception of their security. For this reason, I believe that the concept will allow me to deepen the investigation of insecurity in the four case studies chosen for the analysis. Since the situation in the cases has been changing in the years of the socialist populist governments, we could see whether the security demands of the individuals are being addressed by the state or not. This points out the relevance that domestic factors, such as the nature of political regime, nature of political system, decision making process, values and culture, matter and influence the state behavior. Based on all of this, I believe that the Human Security theory will allow to take a deeper view of the changes that the socialist governments in the case studies have been perpetrating, while keeping in mind how this was reflected in their security.

As for the methodology used to fulfill the purposes of this thesis, I will be using a qualitative method of single case studies. The human security theory created a redefinition of security from ‘a threat between countries’ to ‘a threat within countries’, which perfectly aligns with the context of Latin America (Bonner, 2008), and for this reason I believe that this methodology seems as the best suited for the study. With this method I intend to show how the Disregard for democracy occurred in the cases; Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua; through an analysis of the following factors: Concentration of Power, Nationalization Policies and Media Activism; the intention is to show how these factors influenced the insecurity inside them and then followed with the increasement of insecurity of the region. The factors chosen to study represent some of those who are inside human security and will allow to see better the effects they have over the insecurity of the countries analyzed here.

Throughout each of the cases I seek to point out and analyze how the presidents of the selected countries have acquired a Concentration of Power in the executive branch. For this, I will be reviewing some of the actions and steps they took to sustain the power without holding a governmental “checks and balances”. According to Gerring, Maguire and Jaeger (2018), a “power concentration is achieved when a single individual or ruling group makes all important policy decisions in a polity”. Therefore, I seek to see how the Executive power obtained and used the power to its benefit, and more likely
perpetration in power. I will be looking into the changes they made from their campaign speeches and promises, to the manipulation and control of the other branches of power in the nation. At the same time, I will be reviewing how, through this concentration of power, they have persecuted opposition, and prepared the ground for the ruling party to continue its victory in the country’s ‘democratic’ decisions. Throughout the analysis of each case, the abuse of power would be noted, and portrayed as part of the role that the leaders take once they have assured their power in office.

The **Nationalization Policies** usually refer to the transfer from private own companies to a public one. But for this thesis, I will be referring to the ‘resource nationalism’ definition presented by Arbatli (2017), which explains that it is “the complete set of strategies that a host state uses to increase control over its resource wealth at the expense of foreign participation and investment”. Nevertheless, the nationalizations will not be only focused on natural resources, but instead will find the scope and length that the governments of these nations went to take over the other interests of foreign or private actors. Many of the strategies employed by the cases go beyond the expropriation of companies, instead they seemed to be using the tributary law and other types of consensus to promote this actions and search for a beneficial outcome for the country’s economy. In each case, I will focus on how each First Mandatary has undertaken the different nationalization policies in their countries, based on their needs and opportunities, and how many of the outcomes have turned up.

Since media has been one of the principal targets of these populist socialist governments, is important to take into account the significant role that **Media Activism** played in their political sphere. According to Bennett (2017), Media Activism “suggests a focus on how activists use media and communication strategies to advance various causes”. Therefore, is relevant to review how the populist socialist governments have used media activism to promote their ideals and impose their will over the society, while threatening the democratic rights with it. Freedom of expression and the attacks to different media outlets were only a part of these regime’s involvement in this field. They also chose to expand the governmental outlets in order to access more of the civil society and continue feeding the populism it needed to survive. As noted by Kitzberger (2012), there have been media wars fought in public, which show the stand that these governments have against the west and the press freedom. In the further investigation of
the cases I will be reviewing how the Presidents of the selected countries have manipulated the communications in their nations, whether by taking control of their outlets and using them for a constant campaigning, or their actions towards the privately-owned media and suppression of freedom of speech.

The cases in which the thesis will be focusing on will be the ones that correspond to the populist left-wing, or the ‘anti-globalization’ countries in Latin America that have arose with the Pink Tide since mid-2000’s, with the exception of one who shifted in the late 1990’s, and those cases are: Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. As stated above, what it would be looked in the cases is how each country pursued a Disregard for democracy through the application of Concentration of Power, Nationalization Policies and Media Activism, to further understand how this allowed insecurity to grow inside and outside them.
2. Section I: Disregard of Democracy

2.1 Venezuela

Venezuela a resource rich country, with huge oil deposits, is one of the Latin American countries that has been under constant changes in the last couple decades. In 1998 Hugo Chávez, with the socialist party (Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela), won elections with the promise of a new and different government. This new form of governance was based on, as stated by Romero and Benayas (2018), economic policy based on statism, populist social measures, the will to impose a hegemonic project and to prevent democratic alterability, seeking to maintain himself in power. The country which was previously known for the great democratic accomplishments it acquired in the previous decades, before Chávez election, had a new regime that was willing to change that. As soon as the years under the new government started to pass by, the socialist model was being set in motion, usually portrayed as a revolution for their own citizens, better known as ‘La Revolución Bolivariana’, Bolivarian Revolution in English. There is a clear distinction between what the country was before Chávez, and what it is now. For Naím and Toro (2017), Venezuela was a press free, open political system that although it was a developing country, was way ahead of other poor countries by any possible measure, but now it seems it has become one of the most impoverished nation of the region. The only plausible explanation is the ideology that the government followed since 1999, one of socialism, and to be more specific, populist socialism. Venezuela was one of the first countries in the region to fall under the Pink Tide, and with its extreme leftist ideology.

Hugo Chávez was loved by the people, therefore had a lot of popular support, which meant that many of its proposal and ideas were backed by the society. This only represented a bigger threat to democracy, especially because since 2005 he “openly endorse the idea of 21st Century Socialism, an initiative designed to combat capitalist production” (Gill, 2018). The way that populists act today has changed, Chávez came into power in a democratic way, but then pursued a dismantling of democratic norms and practices. According to Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016), this is one of the tactics that today’s populists use, instead of having sudden breaks with democracy, that can alert the civil society and the international system, they use ‘authoritarianization’. This
means, the dismantling of democracy from inside, and by different steps that seemed to be unperceivable by the society. President Hugo Chávez did not show any sign of slowing down with the Bolivarian Revolution. But then, a huge set back presented itself in June 2011, when he announced to the country that he had cancer and proceeded to rule the country as in secrecy (Mijares, 2017), most likely because he initiated treatment. The outlook was not positive for Chávez, and as his life seemed to come to an end, the Bolivarian Revolution was threatened to go down with him. As a populist, the figure of Chávez represented the so-called revolution, and for that reason it managed to continue its growth, without him as the leader the movement lacked social support.

Before President Chávez passed away in early 2013, he appointed his Vice-president, Nicolás Maduro, as his successor, in government and in the revolution. After the Hugo Chavez death was announced, Maduro managed to win elections and became president of the nation. He got re-elected in the last election which took place in May 2018, but this one is seen as a fraudulent election since the National Assembly, illegally elected and without power for electoral duties, called for elections. This is only a taste of what the new regime has done in order to be able to perpetrate power. A disregard for democracy has been happening for a while and in different aspects and fields inside this country. As mentioned before, in order to better explain how this occurred I will be focusing on the following factors: the concentration of power, nationalization policies and media activism, that took place in Venezuela since Chávez first became president.

Disregard of Democracy

According to Brewer-Carías (2010), Venezuela acquired an authoritarian government because of the systematic process the regime took of destroying the basic principles of democracy, including the institutions and the nation’s constitution. This comes as a different alternative to empowering an authoritarian regime, instead of using a military coup d’état, they dismantled the institutions from inside. This process to dismantle democracy is better seen as an approach used by “Post-Cold War populists” proposed by Kendall-Taylor and Frantz in 2016. Chávez belongs to this group, which Putin and Erdogan are also included, but the authors point out that these types of leaders enter the governments through democratic elections, but later they “harness widespread discontent to gradually undermine institutional constraints on their rule, marginalize the opposition, and erode civil society” (Kendal-Taylor and Frantz, 2016). Therefore, taking
a stand against democracy, but working against it from the inside. It is important to keep in mind that Hugo Chávez was, as pointed out by Gill (2018), the first political candidate of Latin America that was elected after running a campaign in which participatory democracy and anti-neoliberal ideas where the center of attention. Although, one of the biggest factors that had as a consequence the deterioration of democracy in the country was the centralization of power (Mijares, 2017), is important to also take into account other major factors that allowed said deterioration. Here, I will explore how the Concentration of power occurred, then how the nationalization policies took place, and finally how the media activism reached an anti-democratic point. All, in order to show how democracy has been undermined in Venezuela with the populist socialist movement that Chávez introduced.

### 2.1.1 Concentration of Power

In 1999 the country, with Chávez as a new president, acquired a new constitution, one that was undemocratically done, it happened with the “convening of an illegitimate, unconstitutional constituent assembly for constitutional review” (Brewer-Carías, 2010). Which not only imposed new election rules, without the participation of political forces, but also allowed one group to take over the government branches letting them impose their political projects throughout the country. In previous years, the country was known to have opposing parties that competed in elections and regularly alternated power in a peaceful way (Naím and Toro, 2018). This seemed to be the end of that, new rules have been imposed, and with that new powers were acquired by the government and the probability of letting go was low.

According to Kendall-Taylor & Frantz (2016), the acquisition of power was done by installing loyalists in key positions that managed power, especially in the judiciary and security services of the nation. There were other techniques that where employed to ensure a concentration of power, and a most clear one is the creation of Communal Councils and Communes that invaded the country. Here, the local citizens would be the ones, in theory, who would determine how to spend the government funding instead of the elites doing it (Gill, 2018). The intention was simple, give the people a voice and the choice to decide what was mostly needed in their areas, but instead these councils seemed to “favor the concentration of power in the executive” (Balderacchi, 2017). According to León (2013), these councils were participation instances that where
registered in the government with the end of accomplishing the goals of the twenty-first Socialism of Hugo Chávez. The Communal Councils allowed a continuation of the dismantling of the democratic institutions inside the country, the diminishing effect of separation of powers, and permitted a growth of government dominated social groups (Balderacchi, 2017). Here many other antidemocratic effects can be seen, like for example that these councils are prone to clientelism practices because of how dependent they are of the government, and its funding’s, to function. The system was so rigged into the control of these councils that the law stated that the Ministry of Popular Power could abstain itself of registration of a communal council when the objectives of said council are different to the ones for which it has been created (León, 2013), meaning that if the councils did not sought to support and establish a relation to socialism in the nation, they could not become recognized. According to Balderacchi (2017), in order to become a recognized council, the members had to present proofs of socialist commitment, including, but not only, the membership to the Venezuelan United Socialist Party.

Another example of how the deterioration of democracy occurred through the power centralization in Venezuela was seen in the politics that the country was imposing, with a more authoritarian vibe, that was only fed by the growing centralization that it continued to obtain. After 2011, when Chávez announced he had cancer, their decisions were seen as a sign that he would not survive long. For the presidential elections of December 2012, he organized his campaign earlier the year, to ensure his participation, fearing death would strike before the end of the year (Mijares, 2017). Chávez won elections, but never got the chance to be swear in power, in his last address to the nation, which was done through radio, he declared his delicate health state, and appointed Nicolas Maduro, his vice-president, as his successor within the Chavist movement (Mijares, 2017). This request not only signified that he trusted Maduro to continue following the Socialist path in the nation, but also encouraged his followers to trust him and allow him to continue with the Bolivarian Revolution. After his death was announced, the opposition felt there was a chance of changing the government, as new elections took place in 2013. Romero and Benayas (2018), mention that Maduro won elections by a small margin, and that opposition kept on denouncing a manipulation of electoral results in favor of the regime, but there was no changes or retractions on the results. The lack of reaction only allowed the government to continue
its concentration of power and showed the nation and the world that some of the most
democratic institutions were also aligned with the system, therefore non independent. A
new chance was seen when the opposition won the parliament in 2015, but not much later the government had stripped it from all of its powers (Naim and Toro, 2018), but that was not the end of the electoral authoritarianism that the government employed. In 2017 the opposition participated of elections, although they knew the huge disadvantage they were confronting, and the lack of impartiality that the electoral system had, as a result it only obtained 5 of 23 gubernations. Later, the opposition did not participate in Mayor elections of 2017, and especially not on the Presidential elections of 2018 which were called by the National Assembly (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente), which has no electoral competition under its power (Romero and Benayas, 2018). According to Mijares (2017), this type of authoritarianism allows the concentration of power, and offers a cover of electoral legitimacy, which provides stability. Of course, it is not surprising to see that opposition leaders and sympathizers have fled the country, and that there are over than 100 political prisoners situated in jails, and that torture reports are common in the country (Naím and Toro, 2018).

2.1.2 Nationalization Policies

As stated above, authoritarianism started to show its presence, and this not only meant in the electoral and political sphere, instead, it was also sensed in the policies it took. In 2001, the changes were started to be seen with a presidential decree of Land and Farming reform, that was passed without consultation or any debate, with which Chávez broke large commercial farms and give them over to peasant cooperatives (Naim and Toro, 2018). With the Land and Farming Law the state could easily occupy and expropriate private land, including rural lands, all of this while ignoring the condition they sustained, one of private property while making it impossible for owners to prove their legal ownership (Brewer-Carias, 2010). The biggest issue was that the cooperatives did not had the know-how that the former owners had, nor the skills for management and production. Soon after, the food production started to collapse, and later every sector was becoming affected by similar initiatives and policies that were out in practice (Naim and Toro, 2018). Chávez tactic was to take consolidating control over the national companies, and then the intention was to purchase the majority shares of the private companies, but instead it ended expropriating them (Berrios et A1, 2011).
The regime stablished laws that allowed them to carry this nationalization of companies out. A clear example is the “Law for the defense of persons in their access to goods and services” (Brewer-Carias, 2010), which contributed to the occupation of private property, being taken over by governmental authorities and usually without any possible compensation.

According to Naím and Toro (2018), similar processes and results were seen in the seizure of other companies, like with aluminum, mining, hotels and even airlines. This meant that the failure of management of these companies after they became nationalized have also followed a trend, in which it was hard to succeed, especially since the new managers did not had the know-how of the company. This process happened through the consensual acquisition of industries and services like the main electricity and telephone companies (Electricidad de Caracas C.A. and C.A. Teléfonos de Venezuela) (Brewer-Carias, 2010). Without doubt, the nationalization of these utilities had as consequences the “chronic water and electricity shortages and some of the slowest internet connection speeds in the world” (Naím and Toro, 2018). Although these processes were stipulated in the constitution, and for that reason allowed to occur, many of the expropriations of private assets took place with unconstitutional confiscations, showing how the law was benefiting the government and leaving aside whoever who was becoming affected by it. The legal framework that has been stablished in Venezuela implies the right of the affected company or individual, subject to the confiscations, to be compensated, but during the last decade in many cases the state had appropriated assets and rights without any compensation (Brewer-Carias, 2010). The seizure of companies expanded to the steel field, once again showed the poor management the government provided, it caused a production fall from “480,000 metric tons per month before nationalization, in 2008, to effectively nothing today” (Naím and Toro, 2018). This is sustained by Brewer-Carias (2010), which mentions that the Decree Law No. 6058 of April 30, 2008 had stablished that if no agreement for the change from private to state-owned companies took place by August 12 of 2008, then the republic would assume total control and management of them. The law was supposed to help ensure the continuation of the nationalization of industries in the country, as requested by the president.
As known the country is dependent of the oil they produce and export. The main oil company was national but operated in an autonomous way (Berrios et Al, 2011). This was not liked by the new president, therefore, instead of fomenting foreign investment in it, Chávez expropriated foreign owned ventures and gave them to political appointees (Naim & Toro, 2018), who again had no knowledge of the use and control of them, and then again, a failure followed. This is also portrayed by Brewer-Carias (2010), who mentions that there was a general trend of an economic policy that could be seen in the authoritarian government, in which its strategy was the progressive appropriation by the state of private industries and services. As mentioned here, this policy was not restricted to the oil companies that were functioning in the country but expanded itself to further fields. On the other hand, Berrios et Al. (2011), mention that the apparent situation, when he entered power, was one in which the government was not receiving significant benefits from the oil industry, therefore, Chávez saw as the best option to change the law to facilitate government income in the biggest industry of the country. This was only an excuse to pursue more of nationalization policies and campaigns, it was used in a way in which Chávez was linking this privatization and ‘lack’ of money in the country to the main reason of the levels of poverty found in it, which have continued to rise. In 2006 the process of state appropriation started in the oil industry through the gradual elimination or reduction of private capital in the oil industry activities (Brewer-Carias, 2010). A surprise for the government came when oil company workers realized that the techniques employed by the new regime were coming from an authoritarian disposition and decided to become whistle blowers. According to Naím and Toro (2018), because they realized of the authoritarian tendencies, these workers went on strike between 2002 and 2003 seeking a new presidential election, but Chávez responded by firing around half of the work force in the state oil company. For him, the fight with these striking workers was necessary to win in order to obtain the control over PDVSA (Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.), the oil and gas national company (Berrios et Al., 2011).

2.1.3 Media Activism

Media and communication played a significant role in the populist socialism that invaded Venezuela. As the neoliberalism that had previously been present in the nation seemed to have affected everything, a new intention to regulate communication was
starting to appear. For Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016) it was simple, they believed that the new socialist playbook included the neutralization of the media through buying it, legislating against it and by enforcing a censorship. As seen since the implementation of the laws, it is clear that the most important objective of this is regulation, and of course this is something that can be clearly seen in the Pink Tide of the region. Since Venezuela was one of the first ones to take this path, is easier to see how these actions have taken place. According to Gómez (2014), the entire process started with the 2000 Organic Law of Telecommunication (Ley Orgánica de Telecomunicaciones) and the 2004 Law on Social Responsibility in Radio and Television, better known as ‘Ley Resorte’ (Ley de Responsabilidad Social en Radio y Televisión). Under the Organic Law of Telecommunications there was the base for the creation of a universal service for television, therefore giving the opportunity to create the Universal Services Fund (Fondo de Servicio Universal), in order to subside costs (Gómez and Ramos, 2013). These laws were created under the Bolivarian Revolutionary Project of the government, in which some of the objectives are the control of content, mediatic democratization, with the fomentation of national production and community media (Gómez, 2014). As the years passed by and internet started to gain power and influence in the region, the government saw a potential of regulation there too. An attempt to accomplish this was done in 2005, when a Law of Online Resources was passed, but it wasn’t until November 2010 that it was finally adopted (Bolgov et Al, 2017). In the same year the National Assembly amended the ‘Ley Resorte’ in order to include electronic and social media to the regulation under it. Besides the regulation intended to be imposed in all the media of the country, the government intended to use it only to reap the benefits from it, leaving any opposition in a hard position when it came to elections and communication of messages.

One of the approaches that Chávez government took for exploiting media for its benefit happened through the use of Communitarian Media, according to Gómez and Ramos (2013), regulation through these communitarian channels was done by the Reglamento de Radiofusión Sonora Comunitaria (Rrdsc), which are special rules that needed to be imposed. Such regulation occurred in all aspects of the radio emissions, since the government controls the finances of said media, then it controls those who produce the programs, and of course the contents that are going to be transmitted. Since the use of Communitarian Media was started, and the dependency of them towards the
government was clear, new stations have been created. According to Gómez (2014), more than 300 radio stations and 14 television ones were created until 2014. When the technology and media started to merge in the internet and the social media, the government intended to obtain control over it, only to find out it was harder to do. This did not stop the regime to take action over it, therefore “more than a thousand sites were blocked by the government in the period from November 2013 to October 2014” (Bolgov et Al., 2017). After this, the government figured out that it can take advantage of social media and internet to distribute its own propaganda, ideas and reap from the benefits. It seemed to fail but before the parliamentary elections of 2015 the National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) had blocked many websites that contained political information, and later claimed, through Twitter, that such websites were blocked because they showed sensitive pictures (Bolgov et Al., 2017). Unfortunately, this did not come as a surprise, since in 2006 the case of RCTV occurred, in which the government did not renovated the required license to the channel because it claimed that it had a active participation in the 2002 attempt of coup d’état (Gómez, 2014), in 2010 the government forbidden RCTV to continue its transmission in paid television, forcing it to only use their international channel. With the spot open, it was only matter of time for the government to occupy this space, and this gave them another initiative, in which the regime could take over of the media channels to which have been denied their license due to unfollowing the laws. Here we can see a conception, made by Gómez and Ramos (2013), where a political etic status has been reached, one in which the center of the power is nationalist, anti-neoliberal and leftist. The changes in the media regulation, and how it has been taking place made this clear, the government wanted to control the media, from radio to internet, without leaving any possibility to its opponents, while making it clear for the citizens that consequences can fall upon anyone. In late 2015, when the opposition was defeated in the parliamentary election under electoral uncertainty, new anti-government protests started to take place. The inreasement of these protests seemed to be linked to the rising number of arrests of social media network users. But this was not new in the country since “more than eight people were arrested between August and October 2014” (Bolgov et Al., 2017), in which most of them remained detained without having a proper due process.

With new channels open because of the lack of renovation of licenses, and the introduction and ‘discovery’ of the impact of social media in their citizens, the
government started to take over them, to continue pursuing its socialists’ objectives. According to Gómez (2014), besides RCTV, Globovisión has open files with CONATEL because of breaking the law, especially since it did not broadcast national addresses in which the health of Chávez was being informed. Some radio stations suffered closure for similar conditions, leaving them open for the use of more community radios. Since these have a limited autonomy because of the governmental financing (Gómez and Ramos, 2013), they had to respond to the demands they were required to follow. The radios took a new direction and similar things happened with the newly available open channels, which were taken over by the government. The regime created a new channel which was full of national productions, culture and sports, but then continued to spread the Bolivarian Revolution ideals (Gómez, 2014). A similar path can be seen on internet and social media, where the government had created accounts in order to spread pro-government propaganda and information on Twitter (Bolgov et Al., 2017). This only occurred after President Maduro saw the huge influence the opposition obtained through the social media, since it was pretty much the only channel left that they could use. Social media campaigns intensified after this, and as a way to cope with the rising opposition the regime resorted to use bots in order to attack their opponents and more fake accounts to continue reaching its people (Bolgov et Al., 2017). The magnitude of control expanded and led CONATEL to block opposition websites without specific reasons.

Media in Venezuela played a key role for the government in order to achieve a bigger influence on what is seen and heard. At the beginning it seemed like its mail goal was to regulate, but later we saw the greed of becoming the one who decides what the citizens can or should watch. The strategy it took came slowly, but with firm steps, and reached a point in which it was not possible to turn back. For Kendall-Taylor and Frantz (2016), with this strategy is hard to realize when the break with democracy occurs, therefore, it poses one of the most significant threats to the democracy of the country, and the region.
2.2 Bolivia

Bolivia another Latin American country, resource rich, that felt in the populist trend of the Twenty-first Century that invaded the region. In 2005, Evo Morales, who was the leader of the coca leaf growers from Cochabamba (Stippel and Serrano, 2018), and his political party Movement Towards Socialism, or ‘MAS’ for its name in Spanish, were elected as the new ruling party of the nation. In 2006 Morales took over the presidency and became the first indigenous person in becoming president of Bolivia. Similarly, as the rest of the cases taken into consideration for this thesis, he acquired power with an anti-neoliberal campaign. MAS under Morales had an anti-imperialist discourse, based on the hard action that the previous governments, and the United States, had in the “criminalization period of the coca growers in the Chapare region” (Artaraz, 2012). The new ideology in power had in mind similar paths as its counterparts in Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua.

The MAS political party and the new president continued to obtain a high appreciation and approval from the citizens, this mostly occur because of the strong coalition in which the party was founded. The MAS was a union of three peasant unions, at first, and later expanded itself to include social movements, including indigenous, miners, middle class, and workers movements (Driscoll, 2017). Although democracy was the mean from which Morales came to power, once in power a disregard for it was showed, it was more disguised since he brought with him the incentive of unity in the country, putting a side racism and the diminishing of the indigenous people. Some mechanisms seemed to work different, and nationalization policies seemed to recur to different paths, but they continued to follow the same outline of populist socialism.

The government was following an anti-neoliberalism, anti-imperialism path that lead it to persecute foreign institutions out of the country, or to stay with strong impositions. A socialist discourse was the one who gave Morales the voice and Presidency, and it showed it proudness of it. A clear sign, and stand, that Bolivia showed to the world, was when the Pope Francis I visited the country in July of 2015, where the first mandatary gifted the Pope a crucifix made with the communist symbols (Alberti, 2016). Such gift, can be also seen as a clear message to the world of what Bolivia seeks, it seems that socialism, as a new and ‘improved’ version of it did not
make it to the nation, instead, it showed how the President felt about the communist regimes, with a sympathy towards them, and more likely showing the will to pursue that in the nation.

Throughout this section, I am going to review how the Bolivian government under Evo Morales leadership worked since its installment in the diminishing of the democracy of the country. Therefore, I will seek to see how the factors studied in this thesis, power concentration, nationalization policies and media activism, contributed to the increment of a disregard of democracy in the nation. I will intend to describe how these came to occur in Bolivia with President Morales in power and how these factors have become the tools to diminish democracy.

**Disregard of Democracy**

Although the current President of Bolivia, Evo Morales, was democratically elected for three consecutive terms, the new constitution of the country, redacted under his first mandate, forbids the unlimited continuous reelection. In an intention to wave this, President Morales and his dominant party MAS, initiated a constitutional referendum that would allow them to ratify modifications to their 2009 constitution, in order to allow Morales to run again for office (Driscoll, 2017). The election took place in 2016, were the country voted against the constitutional change, voicing their opposition towards Morales as a presidential candidate in 2019. According to Alberti (2016), a new period of presidency under Morales rule would mean, for him and his supporters, a continuation of the process of change in the nation, but in reality, this is proof that the government seeks to stay in power forever. On one hand, the main issue for the government, is to figure out how Morales could participate of the 2019 elections, without violating the constitutional law. On the other hand, citizens of Bolivia worry how the president could ignore the will of the people, who democratically rejected his candidacy, and run for office once again. By doing so, he will be stomping on the democracy that has being left in the country, showing the reality of an authoritarian regime.

The intention to wave the desire of the majority of the Bolivian citizens accompanies the years of nationalization policies that the regime took towards international corporations. These policies have deferred from the ones taken by
government that follow the same ideology but have created a similar impact on the long
run. At first, the Bolivian government under Morales, seemed to be succeeding with
their changes and inclusions, but with time, things showed the true about how the
government was operating. Repression and voiced threats appeared soon into the
picture, directed to protesters, opposition and media outlets. With an anti-neoliberal
discourse, it came as no surprise that he mentioned that Foreign NGO’s would be
expulsed from the country (Alberti, 2016). Although, at first the government seemed to
foment democracy, when the government saw it necessary, they decided to take
advantage of all these and used it to benefit the regime and the power circles.

2.2.1 Concentration of Power

Under the first mandate of Evo Morales, a new constitution was drafted and
approved by the nation through elections. When Morales was promoting the new
constitution, the voters choose to support it since it promised a “more inclusive,
participatory, direct, and representative democracy” (Tockman, 2017). At the same
time, the Constitution of 2009 also permits the autonomous government of indigenous
nations within the country’s borders (Artaraz, 2012). This was the first time that
indigenous people of the nation were treated as equals and marked an end to the
unappreciation of this groups in the political sphere. Participation was also extended to
participatory mechanisms, like the National Coordination for Change (CONALCAM),
and other communitarian spaces (Barderacchi, 2017). Although the new constitution
included new benefits and roles for the indigenous communities, there was a downside.
As much as this new constitution allowed communitarian spaces for the indigenous
governments to make decisions, it mostly puts limits to its role (Tockman, 2017). Many
other changes were implemented with the constitution, but it is mostly seen as a
“vaccine against liberalism, privatization, and the pillage of natural resources” (Artaraz,
2012). This show the clear stand the government was taking, one against neoliberalism.

Although democracy shows in the constitution, it looks at it from three dimensions
that are better presented by Tockman (2017), which are representative, participatory and
communitarian. The communitarian representation had a bigger role in the country and
seemed to contribute representative democracy. But as these came with strings attached,
they appear to be more a façade. After years of Evo Morales in power, the democracy in
Bolivia shows a complicated scene, it is mostly marked by the lack of real political
options that can actually compete with the ruling party (Alberti, 2016). The lack of political opposition comes from the fact that the ruling party seemed to scare them away. It is not surprising that many of the opposition leaders have fled the country, to neighboring ones or the US, in many cases claiming they were subjects of political harassment (Driscoll, 2017). Without a proper opponent in any elections, and the strong support the MAS and Morales had, it was easy for them to sustain power.

In October of 2015 Evo Morales became the First president with the longest and continuous mandate in the country. He rose to power in the 2005 elections and until October Twenty-first of 2015 he had been ruling the country for nine years, eight months and twenty-six days (Alberti, 2016). Now, in 2019, we are in the last year of his current presidency, having almost thirteen years as President of Bolivia. A new question arises, would this be the last year of him running this country? If Morales and his political party MAS respect the democratic wishes of the country, he will not even present himself as a candidate for this year’s elections, but there are doubts that this will occur. His hunger for power, shared by his party which holds majority of powers in the state, has led them to seek ways in which they can sustain power. Since the concentration of power has been set in the Presidents hands and has notoriously increased since he entered power (Alberti, 2016), it comes as no surprise the attempts it has made to stay in this power position. A clear example was the intended constitutional change that was subjected to elections in 2016, which failed to pass. But as Driscoll (2017) recalls, the MAS government has claimed that in order to fulfill a transformation of the country into a Plurinational Bolivian State could only happen with Morales in power. Therefore, we can see that the MAS government has seen itself in a position in which they sought to retain the power in a political terrain that has diverse and conflictive interactions, for this reason, they seek to centralize their power and strengthen their political party forces (Tockman, 2017).

There is a disagreement on whether there is a separation of powers between the executive, the legislature, judiciary and electoral court. Driscoll (2017) points out that there is a believe that the government is using a strategy to concentrate and consolidate power in its entirety. Of course, this is not surprising, considering that it follows the same patterns seen in the populist socialists of the region. This belief is shared with Alberti (2016), who specifies that Morales has centralized the political power in the
executive power, making it the main institution for decision making in the country and in the political party. The President’s attitude has showed the autonomy in which he makes the decisions for the government to implement, this has showed the executive power has become more powerful than any other. An example of this is the actions and critics that Morales has made towards the judicial power. He made decision to pardon 2000 people who were arrested for minor crime, and to those whose trials were on hold (Alberti, 2016). This not only interfered with the judge’s actions and decisions but denoted the huge power concentration that now the executive controlled. Similarly, Morales has acted above the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral, TSE), he campaigned for the ‘Yes’ in the referendum that was going to take place on 2016, while on government inaugurations and events (Alberti, 2016). It seemed to show the lack of power the TSE had over him, and the lack of sanction it can impose over the executive. This only let the opposition, and international community, about the impartiality the TSE could hold on this and future elections.

2.2.2 Nationalization Policies

Before Morales got elected as the new president in 2005, massive mobilizations occurred, requesting the government to nationalize the gas industry, which was blamed of causing decades of poverty and exploitation in the Bolivian citizens (Berrios et Al., 2011). Once in power, in an attempt to address poverty reduction and an economic growth of the nation Morales sought to implement a program of resource nationalism (Tockman, 2017). The nationalization changes that Morales wanted to implement showed the intention of the government of turning away from the neoliberal economic policies that was following before (Wolff, 2017). As a difference of other populist socialist nationalization policies, the plan of the MAS government did not include the expropriation of companies or privat assets. According to Berrios et Al. (2011), Morales plan to nationalize the hydrocarbons industry focused on the purchase of shares, the majority, of the multinational firms that worked in the country, and at the same time, increase their taxes. What the government did not take into account was the lack of economic resources it had, which followed with the incompetence to but the majority of shares in the natural resources’ companies. It seemed like the only path it could take was the increase of the taxes, which seemed simple, but in reality, created a huge impact in the country. In an attempt to continue with this taxation policy, Morales
forced the companies to sign the new contracts in which the new taxes and royalties were stipulated (Berrios et Al., 2011). Of course, the government managed to obtain majority of shares in some of the natural resources’ companies in the country, but, as Berrios et Al. (2011) note, the taxes have been the tool implemented by the country to fight the struggles against the corporations. For the Morales government one fact has been clear, because of the complex landscape of social and political forces on the country, and the position they hold in the global economy, it was hard not to base an economic plan in the extraction of natural resources that the nation holds (Tockman, 2017).

In the 2009 constitution of Bolivia, indicates that it reserves the control of the “non-renewable resources to the central government, including where such resources underlie Indigenous territory” (Tockman, 2017). It declared that all of these natural resources were the property of the Bolivian people, having the government as its administrator. It showed that the government seeks to prioritize the common wellbeing instead of the benefit of a particular sector. This was also seen in the actions, above mentioned, of regulating the activities of transnational corporations, since they seek to ensure the benefits of the economic growth and to assure that all level of society can benefit from them (Artaraz, 2012). Although, Morales and the MAS government did not managed to nationalize the majority of the hydrocarbon companies, the taxes and royalties they introduced to said companies have resulted in an increase of around ten times in the government revenues, based in those between 2002 and 2007 (Berrios et Al., 2011). But although these was intended by the government, and it seemed to work for a long period of time since it acquired a growth in the nations GDP, in recent years the reality showed something different.

By the end of 2016, La Paz and El Alto were victim of droughts and water shortages that were occasioned by the mismanagement of the city’s aquifers, which were run by the state agency EPSAS (Driscoll, 2017). This event showed that the aquifers were not only mismanaged a little, but instead showed the lack of knowledge with which the government was managing them, threatening the well-being of the citizens. A similar success occurred when the government decided to expand the oil exploration and exploitation in the Community Land of Origin or TCO for its name in Spanish. The Takovo Mora people started to mobilize in order to prevent the entry of
the Bolivian Fiscal Oilfields, or YPFB in Spanish, to their territory (Alberti, 2016). The government failed to respond to the request of the people, and also rejected the chance of submitting it for election, since according to the constitution these wells did not belong to the indigenous people of the territory, but instead it belonged to everyone, and the government could use them as better fitted for them. Consequences of the perforation of these wells could affect many communities, but the government did not show any respect or concern for that (Alberti, 2016).

Another important factor that needs to be mentioned here is the nationalization of the fight against drug trafficking in Bolivia, also perpetrated by Morales. The fight against drug trafficking before Morales was being done in alliance of the US office USAID and the DEA. With the anti-imperialist speech and actions that Morales entered power, it came with no shock its lack of appreciation of these offices operating in the nation, the new President complained that the US was using these offices in an attempt to destabilize his government (Wolff, 2017). Since Morales came with a background of cocalero farmer before he became part of politics and the President, he knew the importance of the coca leaf for a certain group of farmers. In the 2009 constitution, the coca leaf became protected, and he started a new policy against drugs with the slogan ‘coca yes, cocaine no’ (Stippel and Serrano, 2018). Therefore, the counter narcotics strategy that has being taking place in the country was replaced by a new legislation of the coca leaf with an emphasis on the cooperative coca crop reduction (Wolff, 2017). As stated by Stippel and Serrano (2018), the president wanted to get rid of the policies applied from outside since in order to tackle drug production the measures had to be based on the culture, target drug-trafficking and create prevention methodology. But the results were not beneficial for either side, the cocaleros farmers felt that the new laws imposed by the government were not delivering what was promised during campaigns, and in the eyes of the international sphere, Bolivia seemed to have failed in the development and execution of an appropriate and significant national anti-drugs control plan (Stippel and Serrano, 2018). This shows that nationalization policies can extend to other factors that create big impact in the countries, here the turn away from the neoliberalism, and the dislike towards imperialism, led the country head of state to make decisions that have showed a decrease of action. Drug-trafficking has continued to occur in the nation and seems that the policies inserted by the government haven’t created a favorable impact in reducing them.
2.2.3 Media Activism

When Evo Morales entered the government in 2006, he brought with him a mediatic identity, which presented an alternative to the already existent ones. With a fresh new air, new media, such as communitarian, indigenous, syndical and farmers one’s were created (Gómez and Ramos, 2014). This gave a bigger role to these communities in the media, since they could address what was of relevance to their audiences. This implementation was accompanied by the Service Provision of Telecommunications in Rural Areas of the National Territory Law (Gómez and Ramos, 2014). The radios created under this law had a public status therefore, they did not have to follow the private telecommunications rules. Since the audience of each station is different, each one has its own style, it goes from personal messages, announcements of the unions or communities, to the broadcast of national music, including indigenous ones, in some cases the radios are broadcasted in the communities language, like Quechua (Artz, 2016). According to Gómez and Ramos (2014), since 2010, and thanks to the sanction to the law, the State became the one who controlled the contents emitted by any type of media, with the main intention of avoiding the publication of racist or discriminatory ideas. If a media outlet decided to go against this law, it could have economic sanctions, and also it can be subjected to suspension of their working license. This controlled from the government came with a price, since the government had control over the broadcast of certain media stations, then their ideals and propaganda were the ones who reached most of the people, especially those who live in rural areas.

Scandals surrounding the government and corruption started to appear, which seemed to have a huge impact on the acceptance that the population had of Morales. In an attempt to contain this, and any future attempts to undermine the government legitimacy the regime decided to initiate a clamp down of freedom of press (Driscoll, 2017). Soon protests started to outbreak, coming from different society groups, many which included the indigenous movements. Soon enough, the relationship Morales had with this groups left in public eye the lack of tolerance towards these protests. This intolerance extended itself to the press and social media (Alberti, 2016), especially to those who have pronounced themselves against the government or their actions. Apparently, the intolerance did not come only from the President, but instead it replicated itself in the ruling political party, the MAS. According to Driscoll (2017), one of the MAS leaders pointed out that there “are two paths: you are either anti-imperialist,
anti-colonial, and anti-neoliberal, or you are with the imperialists, you are with the colonialists”. As the government grants the broadcasting licenses to the communities, media has started to be more cautious with their statements. At the same time, community radios are highly dependent on the government, since it provides with loans for their creation and equipment, and trains the reporters of the stations (Artz, 2016). This creates a bias in the station, its members feel obliged to broadcast what is permitted by the government, otherwise they can lose funding, and licenses. Gumucio (2012) writes that the community radios in the country “rebroadcast programming from the state-run stations”. The government has used these community stations to its advantage, and although the radios promote cultural and educational content, they are mostly used to spread the ideology of the government. Of course, the government used other media outlets, such as social media. A clear example of this is the campaign that underwent on social media with the #21DiaDeLaMentira, meaning February 21st the day of lies, referencing the loss of the referendum which was claimed to be a conspiracy created by the opposition and the Unites States to prevent another reelection of Evo Morales (Driscoll, 2017).

As a response to the media actions, which communicated of irregularities in the government and left in open eye the maladministration’s and corruption it has committed, the MAS and the President Morales have lashed out to journalists accusing them of publishing false information and spreading rumors (Driscoll, 2017). The main target, logically, included the private media, since they did not adjust to the element that the government wanted to be transmitted to the citizens. As Gumucio (2012) states, for the government of Bolivia, the private media manipulates the information, they sought to distort it, with the intention of created an environment of instability. The actions coming from the President continued to scale from saying the media was spreading fake news, to threats against media organizations. According to Driscoll (2017), one of the president’s ministers, Juan Quintana, referred to the news media as a ‘cartel of lies’, which made the organizations and their journalists the targets of the government, and their sympathizers ire. The attack to media did not stand only to national ones, in an instance, the Communications Minister, Amanda Dávila, accused the news channel, CNN, of censoring statements of President Morales in a Mercosur meeting, as a response CNN stated that they cut the questions asked by one of its correspondents that lead the Bolivian President to abruptly end the interview (Gumucio, 2012). The lack of
tolerance against the media than came from the government showed that they were becoming the targets of harassments, censorship and that were becoming repressed. All of it was better shown by Driscoll (2017), who shows that between “January and June of 2016, a total of 40 members of the press reported receiving threats, aggressions or being physically detained in their line of work”. This only showed how fast and violently the attacks against freedom of expression have been growing in the country.
2.3 Ecuador

Ecuador can be found in the same category as the rest of the case studies chosen for this thesis, but there is one difference with this one, the populist socialist president that initiated the changes against imperialism and neo-liberalism is no longer in power. Although Venezuela had a similar path of transition, from Chávez to Maduro, this occurred because the former passed away because of cancer. In comparison, Ecuador’s former President Correa did not run for the 2017 elections, instead Lenin Moreno, his ex-vice-president, took the lead of the party and landed in office. At first, it seemed that the action that Correa took about not presenting himself for elections was showing a respect for the Constitution, rewritten under his mandate, which specifies the President can only become reelected once. But as an attempt to maintain power, Correa, and his Political Movement: Alianza País, choose who would become his successor.

Rafael Correa, as his counterparts in Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua, obtained the presidency in 2006, after winning the democratic elections. His discourse followed the same anti-imperialist path and wanted to help the poor masses of the country. While in power he got reelected twice, the first one occurred right after the new Constitution was approved, in 2009 and the next one in 2013. During his time as the President of Ecuador, changes have been seen by the citizens and the international community. At first, in the country it seemed to take a path towards growth and social aid, but with the time passing, the corruption perpetrated coming to light, the autocratic attitude of the President, and his hunger for power drove many of his sympathizers away. The downside was that he continued to have a huge group of followers, and new conflicts between citizens were appearing because of the different ideologies or levels of acceptance.

Regarding freedom of expression and media outlets, the government showed its stance early on. As a socialist government, it depicted the freedom of press, and democracy allowed this. Correa took different tools and steps to control this and reduce its impact in society. With the time passing it was hard to ignore that “the government became by far the largest source of advertising revenue, deployed selectively to starve critical media of resources” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018).
In what follows, I will be looking into the factors proposed for the thesis, Power Concentration, Nationalization Policies and Media Activism, that the government of Correa took, to demonstrate how a Disregard for Democracy was being perpetrated throughout his rule.

**Disregard for Democracy**

As other populist socialists in Latin America, Correa found that the best way to pursue his plan to change policies and focus on socialism, was through the manipulation of power. During the decade of presidency, better addressed by him as “la década ganada” or the won decade, different steps were taken that affected the democratic system that the country was still trying to consolidate. From a full concentration of power, the uneven ground for political opposition, the intolerance for freedom of speech and media attacks, to the policies that pushed foreign investors and powerful countries to make deals with Ecuador, the consequences can become tangible.

For the government was easy to diminish democracy, its main way of doing it was by transforming the social power it had into institutionalized power (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). For Correa, democracy was a social justice, but he did not tolerate what he called the ‘bourgeois’ freedom of the press, or an independent civil society that usually accompanied it (De La Torre, 2014).

### 2.3.1 Concentration of Power

After Correa became president, the changes perpetrated to help him consolidate power started to be underway. The Executive managed to consolidate his power, now the “legislature and the judiciary are subordinated to the presidency eroding checks and balances” (De La Torre, 2014). This showed the dangerous political arena that the country was in, the concentration of power was visible in every branch. A new constitution was drafted and approved in 2008, the Montecristi Constitution, which gave the president bigger roles and power over the other branches. At the same time, said constitution stipulated that whoever is President can only run once for reelection, to avoid the perpetration in power. But in 2015, the National Assembly, dominated by the Alianza País representatives, made an amendment to allow indefinite reelection to all of the public officials (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). This step was mostly seen as a response to
allow Correa to run for the 2017 presidential elections, but at the same time it allowed his representatives in the different levels of power to continue in power, making it similar to a one-party rule. It came as no surprise such change, especially since this was a trend that was taking place in the region as well, with socialist governments facing new elections, but more prominent on those who belong to the populist socialism.

During the ten years that Correa was president of the nation elections occurred quite often. According to Sanchez-Sibony (2018), these elections were unfair because the electoral reforms were written by the ruling part, and the fact that the Consejo Nacional Electoral, CNE, the electoral management body, was politically captured by the First Mandatary. This did not stop many of the international observers, who have claimed that the elections during this period were fair and did not show an attempt of fraud (Sanchez-Sibony, 2017), but there is knowledge that there has been a manipulation of them before they even took place. Democracy in the country is perceived as the right to vote, and that it does not go further than that. Many believe that “Participation under Correa is reduced to voting in elections. After the people vote, the role of the leader is to design policies on behalf of the poor but without seeking their engagement” (De La Torre, 2014). Thanks to the Código de la Democracia (Democracy Code) that was implemented in 2009, the electoral field was prejudiced. This code “allowed serving government officials to run for office without stepping down from their posts” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2017), this not only gave them a bigger media coverage but also they could use the public resources as campaigning, which came as a huge advantage compared to the opposition. Because of the Democracy Code Correa and his movement officials could have a constant campaign, which kept on feeding the populism. This lead to cause an upset in the opposition and civil society, many of whom saw the 2013 elections like “playing a soccer match in a tilted field and with a referee purchased by the other team” (De La Torre and Ortiz, 2015). The biggest issue, and probably red flag that the president was taking most of the power and messing with democracy could be that the CNE president had a previous relation with Correa and the government. As Basabe-Serrano and Matinez (2014) note, because of the continuous doubt of impartiality coming from the CNE, the electoral results were commonly questioned. This has made the citizens to wonder whether the only democratic participation that they have is corrupted by the hunger of power coming from the government, or whether the results are real. This is a question that is not easy to answer,
especially since Correa has had high levels of approval throughout his presidency. Although with years they decreased, he managed to create a big loyalist group, that can refute a doubt of fraud in elections.

The president put under his grip the legislative and judicial powers, making obvious the power concentration and the manipulation that he could have over them. With this grip, he eliminated the ‘checks and balances’ from the democracy of Ecuador. It began with the 2008 Montecristi Constitution, which grants the President a role of co-legislator, and with that the new imbalance between the branches started (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). As starter, he attacked the legislative power, he “shutter the delegitimized legislative body and replace it with a constituent assembly” (De La Torre, 2014). Showing that instead of seeking to ally with candidates or representatives outside of his party, he chose to dismiss it and create a new one that would serve him as expected. According to Sanchez-Sibony (2018), the president also managed to reduce the legislative power by abusing of presidential decrees. The Alianza País representatives in the legislative power seemed to not comply to Correa’s impositions, he recurred to threats of ‘muerte cruzada’, ‘mutual death’, in order to bully his movement members into submission (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). Correa seemed to be using the legislative power to its own benefit, ignoring the preferences of the citizens. When the legislative seemed to try to ack on its own, and go against the decisions the president sought, he recurred to blackmail with a especial tool. The ‘muerte cruzada’ was added in the constitution, which allows the executive power to grant prerogative to dissolve the legislative and executive powers and force new elections (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). A similar thing occurred with the Judicial power.

The Tribunal Supremo (Supreme Court) was dismantled for the lack of proficiency it provided. Instead, the president replaced most of its judges with one who maintained connections to Alianza País (Vera and Llanos-Escobar, 2016). The change in the New Supreme Court came from the government who “removed over 1500 judges and court officials after disciplinary proceedings, poor evaluations and forced retirements” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018), and he obviously filled all of these position with those who he could trust would do as he wished, loyalists. This change gave the president the opportunity to have a direct influence in the judicial system, which was abused by the executive to restrain society of their democratic rights. As Vera and Llanos-Escobar
show, the judicial power has been in constant use of the executive power, in order to reprehend political opposition. Such actions could be seen on the president’s reaction to public protests, social movements and different activists. For Sanchez-Sibony (2018), the government manipulations of the legal penal code used towards silencing public protests were constantly denounced by opponents of the regime. The problem was that Correa’s government had conflicts with almost all of the organized groups that the civil society of Ecuador had, it included teachers, students, indigenous organization and public employees, but he claimed they did not represent the society, instead, they represented small and privileged groups that seek to weaken the state (De La Torre, 2014). Since the beginning of his presidency Correa has been involved in a conflict with social movements. According to De La Torre and Ortiz (2015), the main reason for the president’s conflict with the principal indigenous organization, CONAIE, were based on disagreements on mineral extractions. With the time passing many of sympathizers started to show an unappreciation from some actions and comments from Correa. Those expressions came to light or were one publicly, which only triggered new judicial processes, those were seen with more frequency, mostly used as a tool to show his power and to teach lessons, and that showed a similar pattern throughout the years (Vera, 2016). Many of the said cases were denounced through social media, or the weekly addresses called ‘Sabatinas’ because they occurred on Saturday mornings.

2.3.2 Nationalization Policies

Ecuador is an Oil rich country that had for years been the host of many transnational companies that extracted the nation’s oil. Although many of the nationalization of these companies have been done in previous governments, the socialist government sought to obtain a bigger role on the oil field. Therefore, in July 2010, with the new Hydrocarbon law coming into effect the “state acquired ownership of the oil industry and forced private companies to operate as service providers or leave the country” (Flores-Macias, 2012). The law was dictated to benefit the country, especially since the price of the barrel of oil increased around 81 percent from the beginning of Correa’s first mandate to 2013 (Sanchez-Sibony, 2017), having immense amounts of revenue from it. This gave the opportunity to the government to have a bigger power decision on oil extraction and exportations, while providing it with the

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15 This social media and weekly addresses will be further talked about below on the Media Activism
biggest earnings per barrel. As stated by Flores-Macías (2012), the entire goal of this law application was that the state would be the owner of all the oil production, and that it will be commercialized by the state-owned oil company ‘PetroEcuador’. In the cases in which the companies left the country because of the new hydrocarbons law, the government took over their oil pits and things that would allow them to continue the oil extraction and exportation. Expropriations did not really occur in the country, but as Berrios et Al (2011) point out, the state did take over a petroleum company without any compensation and justified its actions by arguing that the company had violated the contract. The exception case of this was the French company Perenco, whose assets were seized and transferred to PetroEcuador and PetroAmazonas\(^\text{16}\) in 2009 (Flores-Macías, 2012), both of which belonged to the state. The companies that decided to stay and work as service providers had contracts in which it was specified that 25 percent of their revenues will go to the state, the fluctuation of the oil prices were not to be taken into account (Flores-Macías, 2012).

Another way that Correa used to control the economy of the country was through taxes. According to Bowen (2015), in 2012 the tax burden rose to 15.3 percent, and although most of this comes from direct taxes, new restrictive ones were imposed such as the capital export tax, or Impuesto de Salida de Divisas. The export tax did not allow the citizens to take out of the country more than three basic salaries together, if the amount transported was above this sum, the carrier would have to pay taxes. At the same time, most of these taxes were aimed to the ‘rich’ people of the nation. Bowen (2015) clarifies that by 2012, the taxes were the main contributors to the governments revenue, sitting above oil, which is one of the main resources in Ecuador, which not only sustained high prices during that period, but the government control of the oil industry was becoming bigger. Of course, the most notable changes in taxes focused on a nationalization view is the one implemented to the oil companies. According to Flores-Macías (2012), Correa also raised the taxes to these companies, they already payed 50 percent on the excess of revenues, this amount was increased to 70 percent in October of 2007. It is important to note, that other fields have been subject of nationalization from taxes and laws. An example is the importation taxes and ‘salvaguardias’ or safeguard law. With these laws, the government sought to avoid the

\(^{16}\) PetroAmazonas was later unified to PetroEcuador.
movement of dollars towards the outside of the country while protecting the national production (Vera, 2016). The effects not only consisted in the decrease of importations, but also increased the prices for the consumers, forcing them to seek other options to the affected products, many of which did not existed in national production, or now portrayed a huge price. These safeguards impacted the small businesses and entrepreneurship, making it more expensive to acquire necessary tool not produced in Ecuador. According to Vera (2016), many sectors, for example construction and automobile ones have been the ones who have suffered the most, many closed down. Such nationalization laws have also affected the negotiations with external actors, since the commercial restriction was so hard in Ecuador, the probability of commercial treaties was low.

As seen above, the oil sector was not the only target of Correa’s nationalizations, instead it also reached for other companies. We can find that “Correa significantly increased state ownership in the energy sector” (Flores-Macías, 2012). The energy sector in Ecuador mostly relies in hydroelectric industries, a few of which were done and managed by foreign companies. Flores-Macías (2012) mentions that four of the expropriated projects were conducted by Odebrecht, the Brazilian company who was later accused of corruption related to their projects in many Latin American countries.

2.3.3 Media Activism

The media played a huge role during Correa’s presidency, although he showed a dislike towards the free press, and whoever voiced his dislike towards the government, he managed to use the media sources to its best advantage. As De La Torre (2014) puts it, Correa was “in a war against the privately-owned media”. These attacks started to show a little after his mandate started, but it was until later that a new law was passed. The Communications Law was instated and referred to the freedom of expression as the “search, reception, exchange, production and dissemination of truthful, verified, opportune, contextualized and plural information” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). This created a new sense around the media, one in which they needed to censor themselves, before the government could attack them for airing something that could be categorized as untruthful. As noted by De La Torre (2014), Correa and his government did not see any danger in censorship and the state regulation in the media. With the new law in function, and the high dislike of the president towards the freedom of press, the
regulation became stricter. Vera (2016) indicates that through the new laws and the administrative regulation of communication, the government had intimidated and censored almost all communication media. According to Sanchez-Sibony (2018), one of the biggest actions that showed the aggressive repression of mass media was the closure of TV and radio stations, in 2011 alone, more than twenty media outlets were closed.

After years of having a hate speech towards the privately-owned media, usually accompanied by labels such as ‘corrupt’ and ‘delinquent’ media, the government started to take further actions to contain or seize it. According to Sanchez-Sibony (2018), towards the end of 2010, the police raided a magazine, La Vanguardia, and confiscated material. Similarly, other media outlets became confiscated, such as Diario El Telégrafo, a print media which passed to government hands and aimed to reach working classes with the government’s information (De la Torre and Ortiz, 2015). It was a huge step for the government, since it did not hold many media outlets, the sanctions and confiscations opened the door to acquire this and fight against the corrupted private media. In his work, Sanchez-Sibony (2018) explains that when Correa first became president, the government only had one mass media outlet, ‘Radio Nacional’ or National Radio, but six years after he ruled the country the government had sixteen outlets. Those included newspapers, TV channels and radio stations. Such outlets, and the huge growth of the government’s media was justified by “the argument that the government needed to inform the citizenry directly” (De La Torre and Ortiz, 2015). Although Correa disliked the media, he also understood the importance of it to reach the population and condensate a media hegemony under his power. On the newly owned media of the government, and thanks to the new communication laws, there was information from the government that was mandatory to transmit in these outlets. A clear example are the mandatory ‘Cadenas Nacionales’ or National Addresses, which where mandatory interruptions in every channel, whether TV or Radio, to air the government broadcast (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). As in Venezuela, the airing of these national addressed became overused. According to the constitution, the addressed need to be informative to the nation, but they did not stick to that, instead they were filled with political preaching’s, attempting to appraise the government above everything, and discredit everything else (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). In infinite cases these interruptions were done in order to correct the lies that have been aired by other media outlets, in order to keep the civil society informed with the government’s truth. It came as no
surprise the overflow and frequency of these addresses, from “2007 to 2012, the government aired 1365 mandatory broadcasts that lasted for 11,793 minutes” (De La Torre and Ortiz, 2015), showing the power it had over media. As mentioned above, Correa recognized the importance of the media to create a strong alliance between him and his followers, for him “the media had an immense power to shape opinion and to gather votes” (De La Torre and Ortiz, 2015). Therefore, he needed to fight against the corruption in the private press, the attempts to undermine the government, all while promoting his ideals, projects and sense of unity behind him.

Another tool that was abused by Correa was the ‘Sabatinas’, which are weekly addresses that took place every Saturday for two to three hours, and every week it took place in different cities and towns of the country. According to Besabe-Serrano and Martínez (2014), this Sabatinas were not only filled with constant un-prestigious campaigns against people or institutions, but also closed the opportunity to argumentative communication, restricting a critic debate. These addresses were not only known by its presentation of the government’s achievements and successes, but it also was filled with a Presidential Bullying towards opposition members, privately-owned media and towards whoever voiced their discontent with the government and had reached the president. In these Sabatinas, many “photographs of individual journalists critical of the government were shown and TV viewers were urged not to forget their faces” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). This showed how the President was willing to use media to attack everything that he disliked about society. According to Besabe-Serrano (2014) the government recurred to the Sabatinas to perpetrate an aggression towards the people who publicly criticize the government or have a negative opinion of it. Every Saturday most of the people in Ecuador were watching or listening to these addresses, especially those who could only access the public TV signal, which required the channels to transmit it, therefore, such discourse was easily impregnated in the low and middle classes of the country. The Sabatinas have an authoritarian air behind it, with its hate discourse whether targeted to media, the oligarchy or the imperialism, Correa only showed his opinions, and did not allowed anything to be said against him. In many occasions the President could be seen breaking newspapers belonging to the privately-owned media because they were spreading fake news and were ‘corrupted media’. The management of these media outlets and addresses showed that the “Correa’s government crafted a media-based presidency, undergirded by a sophisticated and
relentless advertising campaign” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). Social media was part of his tools to reach the people and persecute people, Twitter was mostly used by Correa, and it seemed that had many people in this media to look after what people was tweeting about.

Besides the calling out towards the media, these outlets were used to promote the governmental projects, and to raise the voice to injustices. An example is the mediatic campaign against Chevron, the oil company was accused of damaging the environment and soil if the Amazon. The name of the campaign was ‘La mano negra de Chevron’, or the Black hand of Chevron, and its aim was to pressure the trial that was introduced into The Haya court by the company, which blames the State of Ecuador for the missing cleaning up needed in their former fields (Basabe-Serrano and Martínez, 2014). The campaign also wanted to help persuade the company to comply to the resolution its Judiciary system has reached. As part of this promotion, Correa had many famous people go to the amazon and portray them with their black hands, after touching the water, land, etc, to show the contamination that Chevron had done in the amazon, and how this has affected the wildlife, and the people who live nearby.

The National Assembly, who was dominated by Correa, allowed in 2013 the implementation of a new law which created a board that was supposed to monitor and regulate the contents in the media (De La Torre, 2014). This new monitoring body was named Supercom (Superintendencia de Comunicación), which since its creation has fined many media channels for broadcasting corruption scandals and delegitimizing the government with it, and for fomenting social agitation in the country (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). It was presented as a necessary step to assure that the private media would deliver the real information to the citizens. At the same time, the new law prohibited ‘media lynching’, which meant “the publication of material intended to reduce someone’s credibility and prestige” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). Which not only conditioned the media on reproducing information but allowed whoever was affected by such news to take legal actions based on defamation. Most of the legal actions undertaken because of misinformation of the media and defamation were taken by Correa. An example of this, and of the abuse of power perpetrated during his presidency, was the close down of the Pachamama Foundation, which was an environmental foundation called mother earth in Quichua. According to Besabe-Serrano
(2014), in 2013 the Pachamama Foundation was revoked its judiciary persona because it did not comply to the objectives for which it was created, when in reality it was because it opposed the government and sought claim law suits in the Amazon. Another case was one that involved an Editor and Three members of the newspaper El Universo, who after being called out in the governmental media outlets, were prosecuted and sentenced because of defamation, as the punishment they had to serve three years and the newspaper received a fine of $40 million (De La Torre, 2014). By 2013, the country has been the witness to the “second greatest descent in press freedom in the world” (Sanchez-Sibony, 2018). For this reason, it was no surprise that the media environment under Correa’s presidency was depicted as hostile and repressive towards freedom of expression.
2.4 Nicaragua

Nicaragua is a Central America country, usually portrayed as one of the poorest ones in the region. Democracy has been part of the country in recent history, after the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in the 1970’s was brought down by the Sandinista guerrilla, in which Ortega was a member of (BBC, 2018), the ‘new’ democratic system became implemented. Daniel Ortega became president of the nation for the first time in 1984 but was later replaced by other candidates in democratic elections. According to Brockett (2017), the 1990 elections that kicked Ortega out of power after his first presidency denoted the democratic improvements of the country. Later on, in 2006, after many effects seen by the society from the neoliberalism policies, Ortega won elections, starting a second term as president (BBC, 2016). Daniel Ortega has become the head of his political party ‘Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional’ or the Sandinista Front of National Liberation, better known as the FSLN, and with it they have managed to rule the country focusing on their goals.

In the 2011 presidential elections, the new decision of the government to sustain power were seen and with that the true face of the populist socialism of the nation came to light. Although, most of his policies are targeting the poverty in the country, which tries to reduce it and promote a better living in the nation, many have seen how the shift of politics has affected the country. The Ortega government has targeted poverty and has managed to reduce the levels of poverty and extreme poverty with the social programs implemented by the Sandinista government (Pérez-Baltodano, 2012). But the sustainability of such programs was not possible with the country’s economy. Since Nicaragua followed the steps of Venezuela, and sustained close relations with the Venezuelan presidents, Ortega claimed that the Nicaraguan economy would have collapsed if they couldn’t obtain the Venezuelan oil that was given by the latter (Pérez-Baltodano, 2012). The closeness between these two nations is seen as dangerous, especially for Nicaragua, since they both share ideology, it is easy to see how it has started to follow the similar authoritarian rule as Venezuela, seeking to perpetrate in power even though the constitution prohibits it.

Since last year, in 18 April, the civilian uprising started to take place in the country, they were demanding the outing of Daniel Ortega as their president. According to Feliciano (2019), most of the people in the protests are university students, and as a
result they have been the victims of the governmental repressions towards these displays. Students, civilians and journalists have been targets of the government, who does not allow the uprisings against them. Many journalists have recurred to exile, in order to avoid punishment by the government which has also showed a dislike towards the media. The government has grown repressive towards the anti-government demonstrations and the members of independent press (Paris, 2019). In the first week of protests one journalist got murdered, his name was Ángel Gahona, who has impacted the media environment and showed the lack of protection they have (Feliciano, 2019). The acts in retaliation taken by the government raised a concern in the international community, with the increasing number of political arrests, injured and deaths in the protests. For these reasons, many of their opposers have categorized the last year of the Ortega presidency as a bloody dictatorship (Feliciano, 2019). The fear that this ‘dictatorship’ continues has been of big concern to the opposition, since they believe that Ortega is preparing Murillo, his wife and vice-president, to run for presidency in future elections.

For the purposes of this thesis, in order to see the Disregard of Democracy in the government of Nicaragua I will be focusing in the factors that have been previously proposed. Those are Power Concentration, Nationalization Policies and Media Activism, which will be further looked into below.

**Disregard for Democracy**

The deterioration of democracy inside Nicaragua has been seen advancing since Ortega took back power in 2006. Although at first, he failed to change the constitution to allow his candidacy in the 2011 elections, he managed to reach the Supreme Court and the Supreme Electoral Council, to use his influence and change this (Pérez-Baltodano, 2012). Similarly, there has been a “gradual erosion of democratic institutions, as President Daniel Ortega has consolidated power under the executive branch amid a growing lack of transparency” (Thale, 2016). Showing a pattern that the FSLN government was following in order to diminish any institution that could prevent them to sustain the power in the country. Pérez-Baltodano (2012) points out that another way in which the strong concentration of power was seen in the preference of Ortega to name the members of his cabinet without following the law. Completely ignoring the role of the National Assembly and overstepping in their power of decision in the nation.
As Brockett (2017) puts it “The quality of Nicaraguan democracy has declined steadily since Ortega’s comeback”. This is a view that is also shared by Oppenheimer (2017), who states that there is no question, whatsoever, that democracy in Nicaragua has been eroding under Ortega.

### 2.4.1 Concentration of Power

According to the country’s constitution, the 2006 election of Ortega as president would have come as his second and last presidency. According to Pérez-Baltodano (2012), the Nicaraguan constitution specifies that in order to become candidates to presidency and vice-presidency the candidates could not be exercising these roles during the period prior to elections and during elections, it also forbids to run as a candidate to whomever has already served two presidential terms. Therefore, the constitution completely limited the plans Ortega had to sustain power since he already served two terms as president and was still President when the new process was called, but it did not stop him. As we are aware, he is still president to this day and has obtained his extra terms via ‘democratic’ elections. In order to do this, Ortega forced a change in the constitution in order to be able to perpetrate himself and his party in power. To be able to make the required changes Ortega recurred to the Supreme Court of the country. The Supreme Court was mostly constituted by FSLN members; therefore, it was easy for Ortega to have the constitution changed, the court declared as inapplicable the statutes in the constitution that restricted Ortega to run for president again (Martínez and Ruiz, 2014). Thanks to this, Daniel Ortega was able to run for the presidential elections in 2011, and again in 2016, showing the lack of care towards the constitution and the will of the people who already voiced their indignation towards these changes. As pointed out by Pérez-Baltodano (2012), during the period in which Ortega was working on making the changes for his candidacy, it was revealed the tendency that the President was having, one of which sought to become the regulator of the institutions and power of the state, avoiding that they follow the independency that was stipulated in the constitution. Another thing that the Ortega regime was aiming in the 2011 elections was to obtain a majority in the legislation because he needed at least 60 percent of the seats there in order to be able to approve the constitution amendments (Brockett, 2017), which will give him obsolete power and the chance to continue ruling the country for indefinite time. It came as no surprise when the results for the legislative elections
showed that 91 of the 93 seats of the National Assembly were going to be occupied by FSLN candidates (Martínez and Ruiz, 2014), giving Ortega an absolute majority there.

Ortega was taking a new approach to win elections, which have gone beyond the changes in the constitution. Many have argued that he has prosecuted the main leaders of the opposition and forced them to leave the country, leaving as his principal opponents less powerful, known, opposers. With the majority on his favor Ortega seemed to seek every possibility to diminish the chances of losing any power to the opposition, so much that he went against the two rounds of presidential elections, in which out of the first round two candidates with highest votes have to contend on a second voting to define the winner. But with the majority of the National Assembly, Ortega introduced a legal change in the constitution in 2014, that not only allowed indefinite reelections, but also stipulated that the new president would win in the first round of elections (Martínez and Ruiz, 2014). With new elections taking place in 2016, new steps that diminished the truth of elections were taken, like the fact that the government announced that they will not be allowing international observers to monitor the future elections (Thale, 2016), making the concern of the chances of fraud grow bigger in the opposition and the international community. Another act that brought big concern to the opposition regarding the concentration of power, and the perpetration of the Ortega family in it, was the announcement of having Rosario Murillo, Ortega’s wife, as his Vice-president in the last elections (Thale, 2016). This noted that Murillo was being placed as his likely successor in case Ortega could not continue with the power, whether in the current presidency or in future ones. In these elections the Ortega-Murillo duo won, giving him his fourth term as President of Nicaragua, but the irregularities of the elections perturbed the opposition. As noted above and pointed out by the BBC (2016), in the 2016 presidential elections the “international observers were not allowed to monitor the vote”, an act that only fed the doubts of electoral fraud in the opposition. Unfortunately, the sensation of continuous fraud remained with the municipal elections, in which the FSLN, with Ortega still as its head, fraudulently won 140 of the 155 disputed municipalities, but this did not seem to shock the international community (Oppenheimer, 2017). Most of the focus its targeted to Venezuela and Nicaragua becomes ignored, but similar things are occurring there now. With the municipalities won in 2017 Ortega rules almost all the country, meaning that he can
control every portion of it, how rules apply and how to change them, mostly for the party’s benefit.

But the concentration of power did not only consist in the meddling of elections and control of the other powers. Ortega managed to take over the National Police, the armed forces and created the Councils of Civilian Power, or Consejo del Poder Ciudadano. According to Pérez-Baltodano (2012), until 2011, the National Police and the Army had been independent of the political ruling on turn, but Ortega was willing to change that. At first, the role of the police was directed to protect the civil society and had rules that restricted their commanders to stay in power for a long period of time. When Ortega started to take over this institution this changed, the commanders was renewed in power going against the rules, and then a lack of protection of the people who was actively protesting with the government opposition was seen (Thale, 2016). This not only noted the new dependency of the force to the government, but also noted the high levels of corruption it had acquired. In many cases, according to Thale (2016), the police acted with brutality towards demonstrators that rejected the government’s actions. Regarding the Councils of Civilian Power, these were created with the intention to become a state power in which the community was able to decide which projects were needed in their area. In theory, these councils were created to be a system of state regulation conformed by the citizens willing to participate, but in reality, they became a tool to establish a politicized party control in different areas in order to benefit the ruling party (Martínez and Ruiz, 2014). For this reason, is easy to see that these councils have become FSLN affiliated. These councils allowed a bigger control and contributed to the populist ideal of Ortega because they controlled the antipoverty programs that the government was implementing (Thale, 2016). With this power, the people in the communities, especially those who were poor, had to rely on the councils in order to benefit of the programs, showing the big influence the councils have. Therefore, it is easy to see that these served to control the society that needs such programs, and the government assures their support for power.

2.4.2 Nationalization Policies

The government under the ruling of President Ortega has seemed to be favoring a pro-market structure regarding its policies, but at the same time many of these were centered in statism. Focusing on the pro-market measures the government took, we can
see that it pursued free-trade agreements with neighboring countries, helping to alleviate the government’s deficit (Flores-Macías, 2012). But on the other hand, Ortega still sustained nationalist policies to a certain degree. One of the biggest actions seen towards a nationalization action has been the increased tax burden (Flores-Macías, 2012). Although nationalization actions, such as companies’ expropriations, have not really occurred under the FSLN ruling, Ortega did put a stop to any type of privatization in the country. But the government took actions that affected foreign investment in different areas. An example of this are the changes made to the Non-Governmental Organizations outside funding procedures. In 2015, the government came up with the initiative of blocking direct funding from international sources directed to NGO’s, the new procedure was that these funding’s would be channeled through the state and its institutions (Thale, 2016). Such actions interfered with the funding’s for these organizations, impeding them to perform their jobs in the country. According to Thale (2016), many of these NGO’s have been accused, by the government, to be affiliated to the opposition, therefore, they have been facing money laundering and subversion claims, with the attempt of diminish their role and reduce their support to the opposition. Also, Ortega had increased the taxes to corporations, forcing them to give 1 percent of their gross sales to the government, at the same time, increased taxes to bank deposits, gains and loans (Flores-Macías, 2012).

2.4.3 Media Activism

Just as other populist socialist governments in the region, Nicaragua has voiced the dislike towards the privately-owned media inside the country. The actions towards the media have been increasing in the last couple of years, in which we have seen the media environment to become prosecuted. The transparency of the country has been affected because of the lack of protections towards the journalist workforce, which have become the center of attention of threats coming from the President and his ruling party (Thale, 2016). The government actions towards the media had been in many cases brutal and noted that “the small independent press in the country is coming under harsh attack” (Kahn, 2018). One of the biggest issues has been seen in the protests, in which many journalists have attended in order to cover them and inform the civil society and the international community of the successes of them. In such protests, government sympathizers have also targeted the media and its journalists. As Kahn (2018) details in
his article, there is a video in which a journalist was reporting the first day of marches in April 2018, when a bunch of Ortega supporters started violently attacking protesters, while the report was occurring the journalist whose last name is López got attacked from behind. The attempts to contain and to a certain degree bully the media did not stopped after actions in the protests were taken. Because of the numerous threats from the government, and the suppression of the independent press, the editor of ‘Confidencial’, a news organization, fled the country and remains in exile in Costa Rica (Paris, 2019). The case of the ‘Confidencial’ editor has of course not been the only one seen in the country. According to Romero (2019), at least 70 journalists have chosen to live in exile since the press crisis exploded in April of 2018. Many of these reporters worked at production stations in the capital city, but because the government knows the locations of these offices, the reporters try to work in the offices as little as possible, fearing retribution (Kahn, 2018). The decision taken by these journalists denotes the high reprisals that have been taken place in the country, at the same time, it shows how most of them fear becoming victims of different attacks.

The harassment that many of the media outlets have suffered lately by the government have been recently highly criticized by international organizations. These critics came after media attacks such as torching a radio station, cutting non-governmental broadcastings and the theft of equipment form these channels (Kahn, 2018), have taken place. The concerns raised by the international community, now replicating the concerns inside Nicaragua regarding the freedom of press, have not created any impact on the government, who has continued its constant attacks towards it. According to Paris (2019), the Ortega government has raided two news organizations, including the ‘Confidencial’ offices in the capital. Actions which only fed to the fear of further repression towards its editor, who seeks freedom to continue the independent journalism he pursued. The Network called 100% Noticias, or 100% News, was also victim of the government repressions. At first, it had a neutral point in the country, but the government did not like that either and requested them to lower the intensity of their news, when the warning did not work, Ortega decided to censor its airing for six days (Kahn, 2018). The problem was that the government did not realized the impact the network had in their civil society. With the censorship of the network, many of the citizens felt censored by the government too, and when it returned to the air it acquired more visitors to its website (Kahn, 2018). The Network soon enough became
the banner of the free press repression in the country. In this year, the 100% Noticias network was also victim of the media attacks. The government shut down the TV station and arrested two of their main journalists under the charges of inciting terrorism (Paris, 2019). But the arrests are not the only direct punishment for reporters, many of their other reporters have “been beaten by pro-Ortega supporters” (Kahn, 2018), and media resources, such as cameras have been stolen.

Similarly to Ecuador and Bolivia, Nicaragua has implemented the community media outlets. In the country, this type of media was used to encourage mass participation, usually from the working class (Artz, 2016), and aimed to support the government. Such media outlets were promoted and sustained with the idea of giving a voice to the communities, in order for them to control what is aired, based on the interests and needs of their citizens. These media stations were funded by the government, and although in their creation it was stipulated that they could organize and control their own communication, media and forge their cultural norms, they became limited to the will and needs of the government (Artz, 2016). New radio stations were created and aired, many of which have been controlled by the youth and women in the country. These radios are usually used by the government to air their propaganda, reach the poor communities and assure that their message is coming across as intended. With this they intend to sustain the support they have in these areas and at the same time they attempt to avoid the uprisings that could be caused by other independent media. Nowadays, most of the news outlets available in Nicaragua are controlled by Ortega and its government, having his family and close supporters as their administrators (Kahn, 2018).
3. Section II: Deterioration of Security

3.1 Deterioration of Security

Previously I briefly presented how the disregard for democracy was taking place in the case studies used in this thesis (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua). In this chapter, I intend to show how what was explained above impacted in the security field of the same cases. Parting from this, I attempt to show the connection between the disregard of democracy with a deterioration of security that has affected not only these countries, but also the region. As the cases constitute the socialist populist wing of leftists’ governments in Latin America, we are making the assumption that this wing has directly influenced in a deterioration of democracy, which directly affects the deterioration of security. Meaning that to a bigger deterioration of democracy there would be a bigger deterioration of security. Throughout this part of the thesis, I will be focusing in human security, based on academic papers information, newspapers articles and data from polls focused on security and threat perceptions. Human security, for the purpose of this study, will be understood as the security containing two main aspects: first, it will seek the safety from chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression; and second, to protect from hurtful disruptions in daily life, at homes, jobs and communities (UNPD, 1994). More clearly specified, the Human Security looks into the economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security aspects of the countries. The changes in the perceptions of security, usually accompanied by known information, have been apparent in the countries in the last decade. This follows the traditional view in which violence and crime are usually perceived as consequences of disorders, anomalies and instability that poses a huge threat to democracy, rule of law and development (Schultze-Kraft et Al., 2018).

According to Brysk et Al (2013), security allows to create a collective expectation of safety, and this permits a survival, development and social interaction. The Latin American region has been usually seen as an insecure one regarding the levels of violence that could be seen in it. Although inequality continues to threat the democracies in the region, the preoccupation of the levels of corruption, violence and insecurity are not far behind (RFS, 2015). One of the biggest threats that the region, and especially the cases identified here, has not been able to tackle is populism. With the
fragile democratic regimes that have been present in these cases, the presidentialism model has posed a threat to its democratic development. According to the Latinobarómetro Report of 2018, the Presidential elections in the region have stopped working as a vitality injection of democracy. It can be inferred that in the countries in which democracy has been undermined, and the electoral system seems threatened or controlled by the executive power, the elections do not necessarily represent democracy anymore, mostly because of the lack of confidence of the results and transparency of them, as well as corruption. The tendency to sustain power indefinitely is an example of the security threat these regimes can impose (RFS, 2015). The regional levels of insecurity have raised, even though in some of the countries in seemed to have a positive change. Unfortunately, the levels of homicides, violent crimes such as armed robberies and assault are highly elevated in the region, even when compared to other developing regions (Schultze-Kraft et Al., 2018).

Focusing briefly in the populist socialist governments we can see, according to the data collected in 2007 and 2017 by Latinobarómetro, an increment of the insecurity perception in most of them. Based on this data, we realize that the percentage of people in Venezuela that worry about becoming victims of a crime with violence has increased from 37,1% in 2007, to 58,0% in 2017. Similar patterns have followed Bolivia and Ecuador, in which the former increased from 35,0% in 2007 to 39,5% in 2017; and the latter from 42,2% in 2007 to 45,7% in 2017. The biggest change can be seen in Venezuela, likely based on the outcomes of the socialist government in this nation and also probably because of the longer duration it has. On the other hand, we can find that Nicaragua, the fourth case study, actually managed to decrease its levels of insecurity in the same period. According to the Latinobarómetro data, in 2007 the percentage of people worrying of becoming victims of a violent crime in Nicaragua was of 33,7%, and this decreased to 24,5% in 2017. In this case is important to note that the situation in 2017 and 2018 changed drastically with the civilian uprisings that began in April of the latter. Nicaragua could show a bigger change in this perception based on the successes that have been taking place for over a year now. With that said, some of the changes influenced by the uprisings and the government repression in Nicaragua can already be seen in the Larinobarómetro Report of 2018. The most relevant one is the percentage of people who supported the government, which changed from 67% in 2017 to a 23% in 2018. From those who disapprove of the government 77% support democracy.
According to the report, Venezuela has a similar effect, those who support democracy disapprove the government, the report claims that it seems that there is a demand for democracy. A demand that seems to be showing in Nicaragua too.

The data above is to show how in the last decade, there has been changes in the perceptions of security in the cases. It has been put together as a group in order to visualize the changes as a cluster, to point out how these populist socialist countries have changed in perception of security when seeing them together. In what follows I will be focusing in the insecurity changes of each of the countries, in order to see how these processes have affected each one of them, and probably the region. The analysis below will help us see the changes in security occasioned by the regimes.

### 3.1.1 Venezuela

The consequences of the socialist regime that has been ruling in Venezuela are perceivable by the entire world now. It has brought new attention to the country and the region, showing the repression, lack of resources and desperation seen in many of its fleeing civilians. Security levels inside the country have been changing, many people feel insecure, but they are not only basing this in the crime levels. According to Téllez (2018), the increasing insecurity is one of the principal reasons for which the people are fleeing the country. Before going into the huge wave of emigration that has been coming from Venezuela, I would first refer to the other factor of Human Security inside the country. Changes in such factors are mostly the ones who have prompted the citizens to decide to leave the country in hope of a better living. An act that had also affected in the security of other countries, principally Colombia and Brazil, since they are the bordering countries of Venezuela. Based on the reformist policies that the government has implemented, and the oil crises that affected the oil dependent country, we have been able to see the deterioration of some aspects of the Human Security inside the country. The mostly noted have been the lack of access to food, health and the higher levels of violence. Besides this, we have seen a brutal response from the government towards the civilian uprisings, the opposition and other actors.

Millions of Venezuelans have been fleeing the country because the imminent economic and political crises that they face (El Universo, 2018). But, as mentioned above the violence has also increased in the last decades, making their people more
anxious of become a victim. According to Téllez (2018), in 1997 Venezuela had 19 homicides for every 100 thousand habitants, and in 2011 the number increased to 67. Meanwhile, as a comparison, Téllez shows that the data in Colombia, during the same years had a different result, in 1997 it had 63 homicides per 100 thousand habitants, while in 2011 it reduced to 32. It is an important comparison to make since Colombia has been recognized as one of the most dangerous countries in the region because of the Guerrillas and the drug trafficking problems it has faced. Here we can see how in the 2011 data, Venezuela has more than double of the homicides than Colombia, just assuring that the levels of violence in the nation have raised. According to Antillano (2016), there is a consistent raise of homicides even though there has been an improvement in the social conditions, therefore he assumes that to a lower poverty and exclusion in the country, there has been a bigger level of violence. This can be given because most of the people are concentrating in the cities, the bigger the cities are, the more inequality you can see in its surroundings. Therefore, it is no surprise that the levels of violence in these cities has increased. A comparison between Medellín, Colombia, and Caracas, Venezuela, has been made by Telléz (2018), in which the former registered 400 homicides per 100 thousand habitants in 1991, while the latter had 28 in the same period. Which once again showed how insecure was Colombia when compared to Venezuela, but in 2012 this changed, as Telléz (2018) indicates, Medellin had 49.1 homicides per 100 thousand habitants, while Caracas had 118.9 of them. Nowadays neighboring countries that used to be seen as dangerous represent a better option to the Venezuelans, mostly because of the low levels of violence it managed to sustain in the last decades.

The levels of insecurity can also be seen in different aspects, an example if the perception of threat of becoming a delinquent victim. According to Rodríguez and Quinde (2016), in 2015 67% of university students stated that they are worried of being attack or robbed with weapons, many of whom felt that worry grow in the last year. The problem is that the media outlets have also been informing of the attacks, and the number of incidents portrayed by the news have increased, setting the population into a new perception of the insecurity. Levels of inequality in the country could be seen when percentages are taken apart, which can help understand the raise of insecurity. As Antillano (2016) states, the levels of unemployment have decreased around 50% in the last decade, but the young unemployment had always stayed above 20%. With this data,
we can see that most of the politics of inclusion have benefited the older groups of society, while undermined the younger ones. Because of the lack of work in the younger population, and the promise of prosperous life and a sustainable income have made many of them to recur to delinquency. It seems that no one in the country was saved from robberies, it could happen anywhere, the street, the beach, the market, even at the hospitals, and people have to recur to new expenses to ensure their safety like the armoring of cars (El Universo, 2018). Many of the robberies are done by young people, who feel impeded to acquire the economic advantages it was promised while growing up. Many of these young delinquents believe that the best way to acquire the promised goods are through robberies or kidnappings (Antillano, 2016). This is the only way in which they can sustain themselves and acquired some goods that represent a good lifestyle. Since the inflation continued to affect the country, this group of citizens felt specially affected, without a job or money to acquire the basic food, they recurred to a fast solution that would help them subsist.

Focusing on other parts of the Human Security in Venezuela, we have seen that lack of access to food, care items and to some degree even to the health system. The people in the country seem to have been living under the anxiety of not having food and medicines (El Universo, 2018), both of which they desperately need. According to Cardona (2017), thanks to a study made by Cáritas Venezuela in the last trimester of 2016, they found that around 53% of the kids in Venezuela are in risk of malnutrition or are already malnourished, 10% were at risk of going into a grave state. The youngest population is the mostly affected by the lack of food and nutrients that they need to develop. The study to which Cardona (2017) refers also states that 17% of the kids that were studied belong to the group of 0-6 months old of age, which meant that their lack of nutrition is directly linked to the malnutrition of the mothers. Most recently, the Latinobarómetro (2018), showed that 62% of the citizens of Venezuela have declared that they do not have enough food. This meant not only that they could not access the food in the markets and stores, because of the inflation and the lack of money, but also that the government could not provide the basic food that the population needed to subsist. According to Cardona (2017), the basic food basket in January of 2017 reached the price of 544,99,70 bolívares, the Venezuelan currency, which meant that it had increased 482% when compared to its price in January 2016. As mentioned above, the lack of income has also affected the food intake of the people. The long lines many have
to make to be able to acquire a couple of items that cannot provide enough nutrients to survive continue to grow their pain. Food insecurity has affected everyone, in the older population can be seen in the fast weight loss because of the lack of nutrients. In the cases in which they cannot access the small amounts of foods, or because of desperation, many, around 17% of the people, have recurred to go through the trash from restaurants (Cardona, 2017). Most of the things that the people eat are not nutrient sufficient, the bodies are suffering the consequences of that. Others have started consuming food that are not apt for humans, like the sour yucca, which contains high concentrations of cyanide and acetone making it a threat to life if consumed (Cardona, 2017), but it’s a risk many consciously take, while others acquire it because of the low price it has. The lack of food is affected because of the lack of production that the country can sustain. According to Cardona (2017), The meat needed for the Venezuelans are not provided by the farmers, many blame the guerrillas for stealing their cows, but the government, and the lack of foreign investment, have impacted hugely in this field as well as vegetable farms. The farming costs of vegetables nowadays is around twenty times more expensive than in 2015 (Cardona, 2017), money that is impossible to obtain by the farmers.

Based on the continuously rising levels of Human Security in the country, many of their citizens have decided to flee the country. Some waves of migration can be seen in the country, being the ongoing one the most devastating for the country and its citizens. According to Salazar (2017), the first wave of emigration occurred between 1999 and 2003, which also was the first years of presidency of Hugo Chávez and consisted mostly of the country’s bourgeoisie. Then between 2004 and 2009 a second wave struck that was influenced by the high levels of economy, and the people that left corresponded to qualified professionals. Finally, the third and ongoing wave started in 2010. The last one is caused mostly because of the low income, the fracture in the country’s economy, corruption and the insecurity factors explained above. As Salazar (2017) points out, this wave is composed by young and old people from all classes. The magnitude of this migration has grown in the last year and based on the UN data of September 2018, more than 2,6 million of people have recently left Venezuela (El Universo, 2018). Insecurity also accompanies the people who go through this emigration, since many of them lack the money to obtain transportation tickets, they recur to walking to their intended destinations. Because of the huge injection of emigrants from Venezuela in countries
like Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, xenophobia has increased. Because of the lack of money, they have when leaving their country, and the complications they find to earn some more money, many recur to sleep in the floors of bus stations and parks (Semana, November 2018). According to Semana (October, 2018), many of the Venezuelan people who try to sell stuff in the bus stops have heard that they are called ‘lazy’, with many of the people in Colombia telling them to go back to their country and asking not to do what they did in Venezuela. This is mostly perceived by the people in Colombia because even though many of the people who enter the country from Venezuela are honorable and hardworking, but there are also many who are delinquents. Since the emigration from Venezuela started to grow towards Colombia, there has been a confirmation of the increasement of robberies and other delinquent actions that have been perpetrated of nationals of the former (Semana, November 2018). It seems like the countries that are receiving the people from the Venezuelan migration started to fear for the effects it can bring to their own countries. According to the Colombian newspaper Semana (October 2018), the xenophobic episodes seem to grow when the native population sees the basic services being given to the foreign population. This goes beyond support with food and health services, which have continued to raise especially in the cities of Colombia near the border with Venezuela and costs millions to the former. It also involves education spaces and job opportunities as well, in here some feel threatened because in many cases the foreigners who are adequately prepared for the jobs work for less pay. In Colombia and Ecuador, when things seem to go wrong there is a tendency to blame the immigrants, who are blamed for bringing the levels of delinquency to a new high.

### 3.1.2 Bolivia

In the case of Bolivia insecurity can be also seen in the threat perception of the citizens and their fear of being a victim of a violent crime. According to Villa (2012), just between 2011 and 2012 a big growth in the perception of insecurity was registered, in the former year the perception was of 57% and in the latter, reached 67%. This insecurity not only depended on the perception of levels of delinquency that the civil society perceived in their cities, but it also reflected a lack of confidence in the security institutions. In 2017 in polls done by the UN, around 68% of the Bolivian population does not trust the police for their protection (Lara, 2017). The increasing levels of
insecurity can be directed to the inefficiency of the police, and judiciary system in the country. Both systems are highly controlled by the government, which means that at the same time many of the population doesn’t have a confidence in it when it comes to security measures. According to Rocabado (2012), in Bolivia, the justice and the police have showed their weaknesses that have permitted impunity, insecurity and lack of trust between the people. This opens the question whether the Armed Forces could or should have a more active role in the security of the civil society. At the same time, is important to note that much of the growing insecurity of the country is given because of the higher levels of drug trafficking it acquired in the last years. Apparently around 50% of the coca leave that is produced in the country is not being controlled by the government, and as a consequence this portion ends up becoming part of the production of cocaine (Lara, 2017). Needless to say, the lack of the government control in the coca leaf production has allowed the movement of drug cartels in the country, invading towns and prompting them to obey or become victims.

As we saw above, in the last couple of years the percentage of people who worried about becoming victims of violent crime while in their everyday activities reached a 39.5% (Latinobarómetro, 2017). This is also sustained by studies done by the UN, in which they found that one in every three citizens have declared that one of their family members have become victims of robberies or other type of assault in the past year (Lara, 2017). Therefore, the perception of insecurity in their cities and neighborhoods has been increasing, with many believing that this is a threat that would not be reduced any time soon. It appears that the new uncertainty regarding security is given because of the new organized crime and the transnational dynamics it now has (Charca et Al., 2015). Besides the notably increase of the levels of delinquency in the country, the people have been able to realize that the way the delinquents operate have also changed. Nowadays, they are more fearless and tend to go further for the assaults, at the same time they seem to have an easier access to acquire a sophisticate armament (Lara, 2017). At the same time, new modalities of crime have been perceived between the population, such as express kidnappings (Villa, 2012). Meaning that now the population worries more about the chances of becoming victims of delinquent acts that they did not feared before. In 2010, 4 out of 10 homes registered as have being victims of crimes (Rocabado, 2012), many of which became victims of similar crimes for a second time. The challenge to combat the new delinquency becomes affected because bands that
perpetrate such acts continue to show and recruit young people. On top of this, these groups have an easy access to weapons and munitions (Rocabado, 2012). Much of the times the most affected people by violence belong to the lower income classes. As Lara (2017) states, the growth of the organized crime and the international criminal bands in the country are given because of the close relation they maintain with the increased levels of drug trafficking in Bolivia.

Bolivia has been a big producer of the coca leave throughout history, it represents their culture and identity. With Morales on power, and the expulsion of the US to combat drug trafficking, drug cartels have appeared, mostly because of the inefficiency that the government has to control them or shut them down. The country does not only work as a transitional territory, but it also works as a producer of coca and cocaine since it is easy to acquire the chemicals needed to its production (Charca et Al., 2015). Actions towards the fight against drug trafficking have been in the bigger portion unfruitful. Although the seizures made by the national police of cocaine hydrochloride have increased in more than a 100%, doubling from the ones made before, the levels of production of this product could have also doubled in the same period of time (Lara, 2017). Given the fact that the police have managed to seize these quantities of the base needed to create cocaine represents that the drug trafficking business has done nothing but grow in the country in the last decade. The low prices the production has in Bolivia, between five and ten times lower than in other countries, makes it a perfect destination for the drug cartels, allowing them to produce more at lower prices (Charca et Al., 2015). With the Morales government decision of nationalizing the fight against drug trafficking it seemed to open the doors to his country to some of the most famous drug cartels. A failure to respond to the increasing crime and delinquency can be seen in the administration who has been in power for over a decade now. It has showed the lack of preoccupation, commitment and real functionality of a governmental policy that tackles drug trafficking and delinquency (Lara, 2017). The government has failed to recognize the increase involvement of criminal bands derived from the drug cartels (Charca et Al., 2015), it seemed an attempt to calm the society but they are aware that many of the deaths and threats are done in small communities were the connections to drugs are high. It appears that there has been an attempt to normalize the presence of violence in the everyday life of the Bolivians, but in reality, it only shows the lack of response and
action that the government can provide, leaving their citizens vulnerable to delinquency and drug related attacks.

3.1.3 Ecuador

In Ecuador, the levels of insecurity from the people would vary from certain places of the country or the cities to others. In actuality this has changed, and the levels of perception of insecurity has seemed to have increased in the last years. It is important to remember that in actuality Ecuador’s President is not Rafael Correa, who is the one that injected the socialist populist ideology in the government from 2006 until 2017. Even though he is not in power anymore, much of the consequences, in security, have been results of his policies and actions during his 10-year mandate. According to Parrini (2017), the worst threat is the crime that can be found in the streets of Quito, the capital, it can occur at any time of the day, and the delinquents seek anything they can get their hands on. Based on a poll it was found that in 2008, 12,70% of people have been victims of robberies, whether by force or without it, this number increased to 17,26% in 2011 (Chávez et Al., 2013). The cities are becoming less insecure for its citizens, making them more anxious of becoming a possible victim. Many public places like parks, bus stops, markets and even the public transportation have become dangerous for its users (Molina-Coloma et Al., 2015). Because of the 2016 earthquake that hit the coast of Ecuador and had hundreds of death and thousands of structural losses, people have moved to bigger cities to start again because of the insecurity they felt of reconstructing their lives in the same place. Accompanied by the internal movement, the wave of Venezuelan emigration was arriving to the country, they were also setting in big cities, and because of the crisis they faced sometimes remained in groups in parks and bus stations. New levels of delinquency started to show and as a xenophobic result many of the immigrants were mistreated and blamed for it. At the same time, conflicts with the drug trafficking of the Colombian guerrillas have resulted in threats to the security of the Ecuadorian citizens.

Based on the Citizen Security diagnose of Ecuador made on 2016, robberies have the first position of the delinquency levels of occurrence with a 58% of occurrence (Díaz, 2017). There have been new modalities of assaults, like the express kidnapping, and the robberies to people who are leaving banks or ATM’s in the touristic areas of the
cities (Parrini, 2017). Without taking into account the regular robberies that occur in the country, these have made the civil society to become more scared of the people that surround them in any given place. According to Molina-Coloma et Al. (2015), between 2012 and 2013 the most frequent offenses or crimes committed were robbery to people, houses, vehicles, murders, homicides and rape. Based on this many of the people in Ecuador believe that the biggest problem of the country, during the same period, was the insecurity the people faced. The perception of insecurity in the country reached 38% in 2016, and in the most feared crime appear the robberies with fire arms or knives (Díaz, 2017). In actuality, the delinquents have become more brutal, maybe can be seen as less human, because they are willing to harm their victims more easily in order to obtain money, phones or jewelry in the streets. The frequency in which the citizens worry of becoming a victim of a violent crime increased to 45.7% in 2017 (Latinobarómetro, 2017). Similarly, based on national polls, around 55% of the population feel insecure while performing their everyday activities and 51% have acknowledge that they have been victims of robberies or crimes (Parrini, 2017). This data shows that there has been a growing concern towards the insecurity in the population.

Focusing a little more on the threats that seemed to be posed by foreign actors, such as guerrillas or immigrants, the levels of insecurity have raised. On one hand, we have the insecurity threat coming from armed groups in the neighboring country. Following a violent attack to a police office in one of the north provinces of Ecuador, three members of ‘El Comercio’, a known newspaper, were kidnapped in the area by dissidents of the former FARC of Colombia. The team was in the area to cover the recent violence that was growing in the border, most of which have been linked to the guerrilla dissident group Oliver Sinisterra (BBC, 2018). This group seemed to have kidnapped the team of journalists in order to obtain a leverage of negotiations with the Ecuadorian government. Because of the terrorist attacks perpetrated with explosives by the group, some of their members have been captured by the Ecuadorian government. The journalist group was intended to be exchanged for three of the dissident members that have been detained, but then the group also demanded a halt in the cooperation between Colombia and Ecuador in the fight against drug trafficking (España et Al., 2018). The nationality of the leader of the dissident group is Ecuadorian, but its activities used to take place in Colombia. This incident came to light so fast that had
masses marching to demand government action, but at the end the three members were murdered by the group (BBC, 2018). Other kidnappings have occurred before and after this one, but the case of the three journalists was the one that was more publicly seen and that touched most of the Ecuadorians. It opened the eyes to the problems with drug trafficking in the northern border, that then had connections to lower level crimes in the country.

On the other hand, the country has become one of the transit or destination countries for the fleeing Venezuelans. Compared to the levels of insecurity in Venezuela, Ecuador does not seem a bad option for those who intend to start a new life. According to Salazar (2017), Ecuador has become an interest country for migrants because the use of the US dollar as their national currency and also because the laws for migrants have become less strict. The problem is that the situation in Ecuador is not good either. There is a really low generation of new job posts because of the low foreign investment and the laws imposed by the previous socialist government (Salazar, 2017). Between the most affected by this are the younger workers, who have to compete for jobs with Venezuelans who have migrated. In many cases, the lack of jobs is being blamed on the foreign group because they work for less than the minimum wage. Many of the migrants looking for jobs without success have also recurred to delinquency, making the dislike towards them grow in xenophobia. There have been robberies, attacks and murders in which the delinquents have been from Venezuela, making the Ecuadorian citizens more skeptics and precautious towards them. Meanwhile, some of the Venezuelans who have found jobs have been victims of abuse, like working more than the 8 hours, or being pay less than what it was promised, but they do not file law suits or complains because most of them are in the country illegally and prefer to let it go than being deported (Salazar, 2017).

3.1.4 Nicaragua

Lastly, Nicaragua has ranked in the lowest levels of insecurity and crime in the region, this was rare in the central American region, since these countries tend to count as a few of the most violent ones. With the successes of April of 2018, this perception changed, it rapidly raised and as managed to create anxiety and fear in the country. Crime has not only increased in the streets and accompanies as anxiety in the everyday
life of the Nicaraguans, but it has also been perpetrated by the government. Since the beginning of the protests against the government until July of the same year there have been around 300 people who have died in them, mostly by the brutal response from the government (Feingold, 2018). As a way to diminish the impact of these deaths and the brutality of the police and pro-government protesters, the government has not acknowledged all of the deaths. Reprisals go beyond this, in some cases retirees have been the victims of the brutal response, in which many young groups of the Sandinistas had to participate, many of which rebelled against the government and became victims of it too. Meanwhile, in other cases workers have been dismissed from their jobs because of the expression of dislike towards the government. As Salinas (2018) explains, some of the specialists of a Hospital in León have been fired because they have voiced their dislike to the hard actions taken by the government towards the protesters, they just got fired for political reasons. Which not only shows the power the president holds in every field in the country, but also the lack of interest the government has to sustain the rights of the people to work and obtain a secure income.

Besides of the insecurity they face when it comes to protests, the new levels of crimes, specifically in Managua, the capital, have put the residents under distress. According to Inestroza and Arcia (2019), after the political crisis exploded in the protests, the country became completely insecure and the new faces of delinquency are the ‘parapolicías’. The parapolicías are recognized by their military training, the knowledge of weapons and are usually committing crimes in motorcycles, now they see delinquency as normal and a method to survive (Inestroza and Arcia, 2019). Many of the groups that are recurring to violence and robberies have identified themselves as part of the government of Ortega, either as supporters or as sent by him to control the cities (Misión Verdad, 2018). Kidnappings and murders started to occur more frequently, and the brutality towards the protesters was being called out by the international community. The insecurity perception in the nation has escalated, in many instances the violence has been transmitted in social media in order to call for attention to the international community.

Ortega and his wife and vice-president have not renounced to their power and they seemed to not give up the power they have contained. The national police that was once independent from the government, today does nothing more than follow their
commands, ignoring their vow to protect the people. Instead they are the ones who have attacked many in the protests. At the same time, the perception of insecurity in different points of the city is given because of the lack of police vigilance in the areas (Inestroza and Arcia, 2019). Armed robberies are occurring in the light of day, in concurred locations and no one does anything about it. As a precaution, many of the commercials that operate in the prone to crime area have decided to start closing their doors earlier. In some neighborhoods the delinquents start to appear at 5pm, therefore the commercials start to close at 4pm (Inestroza and Arcia, 2019). It shows that workers prefer to sustain their lives, health and protection rather than having a slight risk of becoming victims of armed crime. On top of this, in the last year 38% of the population declared that they did not have sufficient food to subsist (Latinobarómetro, 2018). This could mean that besides the levels of violence, a food shortage or distribution has been occurring, damaging the population in their nutrition and basic needs.

Because of these reasons and the high levels of insecurity in the country, many of the Nicaraguans have recur to fleeing the country. According to Feingold (2018), by august of 2018 around 200 people are seeking aisle in Costa Rica per day. Since the beginning of the protests, until this data was showed, only four months have passed, in that period of time the security of the country has become so low that many sought to leave it. The migration of the country, as well as the Venezuelan one, seemed to have come to stay, since there is no sign of slowing down (Latinobarómetro, 2018).
4. Conclusion

In the analysis above I deepened into the theoretical framework which allowed me to describe the human security theory used throughout the thesis, the factors analyzed, and other concepts used throughout this work. In the first section, I reviewed the factors that permitted a disregard of democracy in the socialist populist countries. Each case study was separated by a chapter that allowed me to distinguish the actions that are usually taken to acquire a power concentration, the implementation of nationalization policies and the media activism of each country. In Chapter 2, I explained the case of Venezuela, the country that has been under socialist populist control for twenty years now. I presented how the power concentration, nationalization policies and media activism were mostly perpetrated by Chávez and now it is sustained by Maduro. Chapter 3 focused on Bolivia, with Evo Morales, who besides allowing the indigenous people in the country to have a more relevant role in politics, also rejected any foreign help in the fight against drug trafficking. Similarly, Chapter 4 reviewed the successes occurred in Ecuador under the ‘Revolución Ciudadana’ of Rafael Correa, who besides the huge concentration of power, managed to repress freedom of speech of opposition while increased the media activism of him and his ruling party. Chapter 5 explored the actions taken in Nicaragua, with Daniel Ortega, who at first seemed to have a different direction than the other cases but showed that in the last year the power concentration was exploited to keep power. In the second section I presented how a security deterioration the occurred in the cases, based on the previously revised factors. In Chapter 6 I showed how insecurity has increased inside each of the case studies, focusing on human security components. Through this chapter I pointed out the major changes in human security that were results of the actions taken during the socialist populist governments. With this I intended to show the connection between the increaseamet of insecurity with the disregard of democracy that the countries had.

What has been done throughout this study was to show the connection that the socialist populist governments in Latin America have with the increaseamet of insecurity inside their countries and at some degree in the region. Given the fact that in the region, during the last decade, insecurity was set to be the number one preoccupation of the population, it seemed to be the effects of the new economic model that was applied, one who rejected neo-liberalism (Focás, 2015). Therefore, based on
the factors that diminished democracy, that were analyzed in the case studies, I came to the conclusion that the actions of the socialist populist regimes impacted in the human security of their countries in the following ways.

Since I previously addressed how concentration of power was perpetrated in the countries used as case studies, is easy to understand that executive branch would do its best to maintain the power in their nations. The population of the nations have seen themselves affected by this specially since there have been manipulation in the electoral system, that is no longer independent. Many of the citizens feel that in recent cases the elections could have been fixed or manipulated to benefit the ruling party and give even more power to the presidents. As mentioned before, elections do not longer inject a trust in democracy in these countries and is mostly given because of how they perceive them to not be the will of the people. Unfortunately, when there is so much concentration of power in the executive branch, I found that they could also control the police and armed forces to its benefit which can sometimes mean that the civil society can be the ‘enemy’ and must be neutralized. A clear case of this can be seen in the government responses to the civil uprising, protests and marches that have occurred in recent years. Especially those who seek the outing of the presidents, or who protested against the manipulation of the electoral system.

When it comes to nationalization policies, the lack of foreign investment has impacted in the economy of the countries, reducing the job opportunities inside them. At the same time, as a consequence of the lack of jobs in the cases, many of its citizens have recurred to robberies and crime to acquire an income that would allow them to survive or live as what the socialist governments promised them while growing up. The group that has been mostly affected by this is the young adults, who have grown up under the promises of glory, development and stable economy; the same group that now struggles to find a secure job, and the money they make barely pays for the basic needs because of the high levels of inflation. The citizens have also become vulnerable when basic goods like energy and water could not be provided, many of which stopped working for the mismanagement that the governments had of the companies. At the same time, when policies to control drug trafficking were nationalized, because of a rejection of the foreign support and supposed manipulation, they brought with them a mismanagement of drug cartels, production and circulation. Some of the countries
worked as transition countries, others were used to production of cocaine, because of the diminution of control. This created drug villages, and attracted foreign drug cartels, making the area of their concentration insecure to drug related crime, which also arose the insecurity levels, and made the population rely on these cartels for their protection and economic income. At the same time, put at risk the lives of police officials, and other citizens that were close to the areas of risk.

Focusing on media activism, I presented how the governments managed to control many of the media sources to make sure their messages were distributed through the civil society. The freedom of press and expression was reduced significantly in all the cases, the independent media was the most affected one, having its reporters persecuted, harassed, threaten and forced to leave the country to avoid harm. This also became a problem to the common citizen, since the freedom of expression could be repressed to anyone who did not supported the government and voiced it dislikes. Such actions also managed to become part of the people whether they were pro or against the government, creating a rivalry between citizens. At the same time, it is believed that the credibility of a media outlet plays a relevant role in the confidence of the audience (Focás, 2015). For this reason, many of the presidents have disregarded many of the scandalous news regarding corruption, violence and deaths occasioned by the government. In other cases, the media is accused of showing a fake reality of the countries, in order to create a discomfort in the citizens and turn them against the government. Many say that the perception of insecurity has arose because the media sources have increased their news regarding crime, deaths and robberies. To this, I realized that media covers a certain portion of this news, and that the increasement of this news actually signify an increasement of the victims of this types of crimes in the countries. Similarly, when more news of captures of criminal bands occur does not necessarily means that the police or armed forces have become more efficient, but instead than more bands are working in the countries, of which just a few are caught.

In conclusion, with this study I sought to answer the question posed, How have the socialist-populist, anti-globalization regimes who were situated in government of Latin American countries, during the beginning of the twenty first century, contributed in the increased deterioration of human security in their nations and region during their term, and post term, years? To answer this, I looked into the four case studies that represent
this branch of socialism in Latin America, and those were Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. In each case factors belonging to human security were analyzed, those were concentration of power, nationalization policies and media activism with the goal of showing the disregard for democracy that the regimes had. Then I focused on the insecurity effects these factors had inside the nations, and how in a certain level this insecurity had spillover to other nations in the region.

I conclude that because of the change of economic policy, and ideology that took over the cases analyzed, the insecurity of the nations and region has increased. Therefore, the way in which these governments contributed to the increased deterioration of insecurity was through the manipulation and deterioration of democracy that they perpetrated in the previous years. I found that human security in the countries has a lot to do with the quality of democracy said country has. This is better described by Lara (2017), who claims that countries who seem autocratic or dictatorial have higher levels of violence and criminality than those who have a more developed democracy. Therefore, when these countries turned to the socialist policies was not necessarily when violence started to grow, instead poverty was reduced. The problem of insecurity started to increase when these governments started to dismantle democracy form the inside, by eliminating the independency that the other power had and by controlling every policy and action to follow the path that the ruling party needed. When the center of power controlled the nation, a lack of efficiency was seen on the other branches, making them un-trustful to the civil society. Meanwhile, the civil society was overlooked, and the effects have impacted mostly the younger generations, who now live with a fear of not obtaining a secure job that provides enough for them to have the life the socialist populist governments promised to them. Other effects are seen in the immigration groups that are moving around the region, especially coming from Venezuela, who already do not have sufficient money to travel, but also have become victims of work abuse, and some who have recurred to delinquency. Impacting not only in the insecurity levels of the host countries, but also creating a bigger xenophobia towards them. Human Security has been directly affected by the actions taken by the socialist populist governments in the first decades of the twenty first century.

The effects described here are just a scope of the reality the countries are facing, therefore, investigations regarding this topic can be done in deeper levels. A
recommendation for future studies would be that the insecurity effects of this wing of governments can be looked under each of the human security components, to find a deeper connection between each one of them and the actions of socialism populism in Latin America.
Bibliography


