

Nicolás Maduro vs. Juan Guaidó

Venezuela's dual recognition paradox

***Assessing legitimation strategies and the external
dimension of political legitimacy***

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Introduction

During Hugo Chávez' presidency, Venezuela saw a transformation towards "Bolivarian Socialism of the 21st Century", a political project aimed at converting Venezuela to a socialist society by 2019. As the Venezuelan population expressed aversion against this project, Chávez compensated his political setbacks by radically centralizing his power through the Enabling Law and Constitutional Amendment in 2009, abolishing the term limit of a president. This centralized state power and demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the judiciary and legislative bodies of government, particularly the Supreme Tribunal of Justice and the National Assembly (Pismataro et al, 2016, p. 77; García-Gaudilla & Hurtado, 2000, p. 26). With Chávez's death in 2013, Venezuela had become a state wherein the boundaries between the man, government and state were erased, and the political project had turned into "Everything with Chávez, nothing with Chávez" (Pismataro et al, 2016, p. 79). The presidential election between Nicolás Maduro and Henrique Capriles on 14th of April 2013 was therefore met with a wave of critique, seen that Maduro, also referred to as Chávez' 'political heir', won by a margin of only 1.6% (Watts, 2013). The opposition demanded an audit on the total results and revolts by the Venezuelan population became heated and even turned violent. It was the outcome of a long time of questioning the Venezuelan electoral processes (Pismataro et al, 2016, pp. 101-102).

The increasing distrust in the electoral process and political regime led to the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD), a coalition of the most important opposition parties, including the Primero Justicia (PJ), Acción Democrática (AD) and Voluntad Popular (VP). In 2015 it came out as the winner in all except five states, winning 112 out of 167 seats in the National Assembly, two-third of the total amount of seats. This, in theory, would allow the opposition to enjoy a qualified majority in Parliament and, according to the Venezuelan Constitution, would empower them to exercise a series of political powers, including the modification of laws and the initiative to call for a National Constituent Assembly to do so (Sánchez Urribarí, 2016, pp. 366, 375-376). However, after losing control over the legislative power, the Maduro regime has shown a profound resistance towards any political initiative of the Assembly through the Supreme Tribunal of Justice. The Tribunal functions as an actor with a loyalty

veto right towards the regime, as it practically does not have any *de facto* judicial independence. It is, therefore, unimaginable that its vote would not be in favour of the regime's stance. Although it seemed like a new political equilibrium with the majority presence of the opposition in the National Assembly, the regime governed by blocking the maximal legislative entity in every way possible through evidently politicized actions of the Tribunal (Sánchez-Urribarí, 2016, pp. 376-378).

The opposition has ever since been dedicated to remove Maduro from power (Sánchez Urribarí, 2016, pp. 376-378). This came to a culmination point on January 23rd 2019, when, after Maduro's inauguration speech, Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly, declared himself to the legitimate *ad interim* president of Venezuela. His self-proclamation was the result of the continuous social unrest and contested elections of May 2018, through which Maduro was re-elected. With a voter turnout of only 46.01%, Maduro was victorious with 67.7% of the votes (BBC Mundo, 2018). The elections were condemned internationally and Maduro was alleged of vote buying and electoral fraud, with the United States (US) and Canada, as well as intergovernmental organizations such as the European Union (EU) and the Lima Group deeming the elections as illegitimate (BBC Mundo, 2018; Council of the EU, 2018a; Council of the EU, 2018b; Charner, 2018).

The international response towards Guaidó's self-proclamation was immense, as over 50 states reacted by recognizing Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate president, versus more than 20 countries that vocally supported Maduro. Intergovernmental organizations such as the Lima Group, EU and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) also got involved. How is it possible that a person who is not elected through presidential elections is considered the legitimate presidential authority of a country? In what ways are Guaidó and Maduro claiming their legitimacy as Venezuelan President? And how do the external actors legitimize their recognition of either one of the two of 'being more legitimate than the other'? The argument here is that this sort of 'dual recognition paradox' signifies a critical juncture in our understanding of political legitimacy, and a reconsideration of its dimensions is necessary. The main research question which will be answered is therefore: *To what extent can the dual recognition paradox in Venezuela be considered a shift within the external dimension of political legitimacy?*

This central question will be disentangled through various chapters. The first chapter will establish and critically look at the main debates surrounding political legitimacy, elaborating on the dimensions of legitimacy and establishing its main criteria within the current academic debate. Suggesting that not only should there be more focus on the legitimacy of a ruler, as well as the legitimation strategies that rulers use in order to self-legitimize towards both internal and external audiences. Including the multidimensional criteria of legitimacy, the second chapter will suggest Hölbig's (2011) model as the most comprehensive analytical framework to understand the dynamics of political legitimacy. Looking not only at the internal ('inside-in') and external ('inside-out') legitimation strategies, the argument is that the dimension of the external response towards these strategies ('outside-in') is missing. The third chapter will analyse the ways in which the first two, the internal and external legitimation strategies, were conducted by Guaidó and Maduro in four of their speeches throughout January 2019. The methodological approach is a discourse analysis, with a methodological framework based on the categories for deconstructing political discourse and legitimation, as provided by van Leeuwen (2007) and Reyes (2011). Focussing on the 'outside-in' dimension and using the same methodological framework, political statements and media outings will be used to analyse the international response towards these legitimations in the subsequent chapter. The conclusion will then provide an answer to the research question and make a few recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1 – The dimensions and criteria of political legitimacy

This chapter will disentangle the main debates surrounding political legitimacy, in order to provide insights into the broad scope of its interpretations and dimensions. The first part will focus on the external dimension of legitimacy, distinguishing between mutual recognition of sovereignty and the formal ratification of the constitution as criteria for legitimacy. The second part will elaborate on the internal dimension of legitimacy, by distinguishing three ideal sub-types of legitimate order and focussing on four legitimacy criteria within the legal-rational order. Arguing that the role of the ruler in ‘measuring legitimacy’ has been under-highlighted, Hölbigs’ (2011) model on legitimation strategies will be explained, as it takes into account both internal and external legitimation strategies of political leaders as well as the legitimacy criteria.

The external dimension of political legitimacy

Mutual recognition

Our current world of states is shaped according to the recognition of juridically independent territorial entities and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states, also referred to as the ‘conventional perception of state sovereignty’, *juridical statehood* or *international legal* or *Westphalian sovereignty* (Jackson & Rosberg, 1982; Eriksen, 2006; Krasner, 2004, pp. 88). The basic elements of a sovereign state are (1) a geographically identifiable territory and (2) a population that lives within the territory (Bouchard, 2011; Vincent, 2002). The content and limits of sovereignty have always been contested through, for example, interventions under the condition of the *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P) (e.g. US intervention in Iraq, NATO intervention in Libya). The US War on Drugs in Colombia and the War on Terrorism have also triggered the critical thinking towards the power-relations and hierarchy of the Westphalian state-system, serving to legitimate interventions in Iran and Afghanistan (Chandler, 2006; Hurd, 1999). However, the principle of mutual recognition of state entities by other states means that a state can only completely lose its legitimacy (or ‘collapse’, when thinking about the academic debate on state-building) when this international recognition is revoked, something

which has not happened yet.¹ Even if a state's domestic sovereignty or internal legitimacy has faltered, its juridical statehood is still perceived as a constant once a state is legally and mutually recognized by other states.

Constitutional legitimacy

Other than the mutual recognition of sovereignty between states, the constitutional legitimacy a state embodies is another factor of the external dimension of political legitimacy. By problematizing the legitimacy of the US Constitution, Fallon (2004) argues that its legitimacy depends on social acceptance of the Constitution, where it, although minimally, has to be recognized as morally legitimate by virtue of its existence rather than the legality of its formal ratification. This demonstrates its interpretative nature and openness for contestation. Further, like the legal legitimacy of the Constitution, the legal legitimacy of the decision-making and policy-making based on it (also relating to judicial legitimacy with the practices of courts and other legal institutions) arise from this sociological acceptance. Constitutional legitimacy is herein understood as being a legal document and the foundations of the rule-of-law within the territory of a sovereign state, wherein its interpretation(s) may help determine the state's actions and consequently, its social acceptance. The social acceptance of its existence is therefore more important than its actual ratification (Fallon, 2004, pp. 1792-1793).

The argument here is that legitimacy does connect to sovereignty, in the sense that even though a state can be sovereign by the formal ratification of its Constitution (constitutional legitimacy) and recognition of other states (mutual recognition), the behaviour of the state polity can still be perceived as illegitimate. This regards legitimacy's internal dimension and is what the next section will elaborate on.

The internal dimension: Weber's three sub-types of legitimate order

Whereas the external dimension of legitimacy within the academic debate is perceived as a constant, the extensive body of academic literature on the internal dimension of legitimacy puts emphasis on legitimacy being a *process of legitimation*

¹ For additional sources on state-building with a focus on 'what is the state' and 'where is the state', the works of Midgal (1988), Sharma & Gupta (2009) and Das & Poole (2004) are recommended.

and a continuous variable, rather than a static given (Andersen, 2012; Bekkers et al, 2016; Call, 2011; Cohen & Toland, 1988; Gerschewski, 2013; Gilley, 2006b; Hurd, 1999; Peter, 2015; Von Haldenwang, 2010). Max Weber's (1978) speech in 1919, *Politics as a Vocation*, wherein he distinguishes three 'ideal sub-types of legitimate order, is an extremely influential work within the academic debate on legitimacy. These are: (1) the traditional order; (2) the charismatic order and the (3) legal-rational order. The first two, according to Weber, are unstable forms of legitimate order, which will eventually evolve into the legal-rational order, which is based on the rule-of-law, or the set of laws in which a government and society exist (Márquez, 2016, p. 24). As this threefold typology of legitimate order has been extremely influential within the academic literature on political legitimacy and can therefore not be ignored within this thesis, the following sections will elaborate on them.

Legal-rational order

Within the International Relations literature, perceptions on legitimacy are primarily based on the Weberian notion of a legal-rational state as the 'ideal type of authority structure' (Andersen, 2012, p. 208; Bekkers et al, 2016, p. 39). The elements intrinsic to the legal-rational notion of political legitimacy can be distinguished from the literature as constituting four different criteria of legitimacy. The first criterium of legitimacy is the *legal validity or lawfulness* of the acquisition and exercise of power of the state polity (Beetham, 2011; Bouchard, 2011; Cohen & Toland, 1988; Dahl, 1977; Bekkers et al, 2016; Fallon, 2004; Fukuyama, 2004; Kurtenbach, 2011; Armstrong & Farrell, 2005; Gilley, 2006a; Gilley, 2006b; Vincent, 2002; Hurd, 1999; Weber, 1978). The second legitimacy criterium entails the (*moral*) *justifiability* of the legal rules, or the perception that the state polity's actions are *rightful*, meaning that the population within the state's borders accept the right of the state polity to govern because it reflects society's beliefs and values (Beetham, 2011; Bekkers et al, 2016; Armstrong & Farrell, 2005; Beetham, 1993; Dogan, 1992; Gilley, 2006a; Gilley, 2006b; Goldstone, 2008; Fallon, 2004; Peter, 2015; Weatherford, 1993; Kailitz, 2013). The third legitimacy criterium regards the *performance* of the state polity, meaning that it is viewed as being *effective* in carrying out its functions in accordance with the population's values about basic needs. This has also been referred to as *output legitimacy* (Bekkers et al, 2016; Beetham, 2011; Call, 2011; Cohen, Brown & Organski, 1981; Lipset, 1959; Easton, 1965; Gilley, 2006a; Goldstone, 2008; Von

Haldenwang, 2016; Weatherford, 1992; Eckstein, 1973; Rothstein, 2009). The fourth legitimacy criterium is the consequence of these previously mentioned criteria, as there will be evidence of *consent or popular support* through the population's behaviour (Beetham, 1993; Beetham, 2011; Bouchard, 2011; Call, 2011; Cohen & Toland, 1988; Andersen, 2012; Armstrong & Farrell, 2005; Bekkers et al, 2016; Gerschewski, 2013; Gilley, 2006a).

What these four legitimacy criteria demonstrate is that legitimacy is the situation in which both the rulers as well as the ruled are convinced that the division of power - and therefore rules and regulations as issued by the government - is right (Cohen & Toland, 1988, p. 23). Modern legitimacy theory assumes that order is possible because of a somewhat balanced or even equal power-relationship between the state polity and the population. It presupposes that the actions of the person(s) in positions of political leadership and administration, such as policy-making and public administration, have a certain output, that will achieve social acceptance of the government by the population within its territory (Rothstein, 2009, p. 325; Easton, 1965, p. 282; Booth & Seligson, 2009, p. 1; Márquez, 2016, p. 24). Legitimacy herein is the power base for authority.

Traditional & charismatic order

The notion of the Weberian traditional legitimate order is more focussed on the political philosophy spectrum. Whereas Plato reasoned that justice bears on the problem of legitimacy, Aristotle emphasized the distinction between monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. It was Locke who, in his analysis on the nature of government, displaced the focus from this divine right to the consent of the people as being the source of legitimacy and power (Dogan, 1992 p. 116; Eckstein, 1965). Within the traditional order, the 'naturalness of an institution' is understood as, for example, the divine right of a king or hereditary rule and the leader's commands and wishes are obeyed not on the basis of rational calculation, but "simply because that is what has always been done" (Márquez, 2006, p. 24; Allahar, 2001, p. 4).

Charismatic leaders, according to Weber, are obeyed because it is the duty of their followers to obey them and "because charismatic leaders have a greater hold on their followers than non-charismatic leaders, their charismatically oriented followers seem

not to mind if they bend or break the rules” (Allahar, 2001, pp. 1, 4-5; Weber, 1978, pp. 241-242). Charismatic leadership therefore is the most unpredictable sub-type of authority and legitimate order. Rejecting the applicability of charismatic leadership to our current world, Dogan argues that “it would be a serious mistake to confuse such an engineered idolatry with genuine charismatic leadership” (Dogan, 1992, p. 118). However, within studies on populism or revolutionary leaders, both important towards the regional context of Latin America, charismatic leadership matters in understanding how, for example, revolutionaries like Fidel Castro managed to spark a revolution.

Even though not specifically used within this thesis, the concept of *monopoly on violence* is necessary to mention too, as it is especially important in the Latin American context. It derives from Weber’s definition of a state as the actor “that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 21). The state herein claims authority by being the only entity possessing the *legitimate* use of force. Or, when it does share its authority with non-state actors or groups, it is expected to do so on its own terms (Kenny & Serrano, 2013, p. 218). However, according to Kaldor (2013), transnational reforms such as neoliberalism and growing economic interdependence between states have decreased the state’s role in Latin America, providing “an environment for growing criminalization and the creation of networks of corruption, black marketeers, arms and drug traffickers etc.”, leading to a decentralization of violence (Kaldor, 2013, pp. 86, 185).

Measuring legitimacy

Because of the complexity of its dimensions and characteristics, the concept of political legitimacy is difficult to operationalize. By using indicators such as freedom of expression, fair elections and military interventions in the political arena (Dogan 1992), citizens’ attitudes and/or behaviour and opinions (Gilley, 2006a; von Haldenwang, 2016), the ‘degree of popular consent’ (Call, 2011), or the vaguely conceptualized “diffuse support of the regime” (Easton, 1965; Gerschewski, 2013), public opinion surveys have been used in order to ‘measure’ legitimacy. The issue with using survey data in order to measure legitimacy is, however, that when a person states that he or she has little confidence in a political institution, this does not

necessarily mean that there is lack of political legitimacy. It may just mean that there is some scepticism towards the current majority within the government or dislike of the main leader (Rothstein, 2009, p. 319). It is therefore “crucial to assess the dialogical character of legitimation from both sides: rulers *and* ruled” (von Haldenwang, 2016, p. 27).

Focussing more on the role of the ruler per regime-type, Kailitz (2013) argues that there are only two “strong” ways rulers can justify why people should obey. These are either a God-given natural, historical or religious right or purpose to rule, found only in a communist ideocracy or traditional monarchy. These, according to Kailitz, are also the only political regimes which require legitimation of the actual ruler(s) ‘by a dignified source outside the political regime’, which not even personalist autocracies, wherein the power is completely centralized by the ruler and there are neither “institutional or traditional boundaries to the ruler’s will”, need (Kailitz, 2013, p. 49). The other ‘strong’ pattern on legitimation is by procedures guaranteeing that the people have the power to select and control the rulers themselves, found only within a liberal democracy (Kailitz, 2013, pp. 41-45, 53). As Table 1. demonstrates, Kailitz’ concludes that the fairness of elections is irrelevant in all regime types except for liberal democracy, as well as the possible role of external sources [actors] contesting them (Kailitz, 2013, p. 46). However, as the situation in Venezuela shows, the legitimacy of the ruler can change because of external recognition other than communist ideocracy or monarchy and regardless of certain electoral results.

Table 1. Patterns of legitimation in political regime types

Legitimation of actual ruler(s)	By a dignified source outside the political regime	By selection and control of an institution that protects the popular will	By procedures to select and control the ruler directly by the people			
			Multiparty legislative elections	Multi-candidate election of ruler	Fairness of elections	Executive constraints
Liberal democracy	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Electoral autocracy	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Communist ideocracy	<i>Yes (communist purpose)</i>	<i>Yes (communist elite)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
One-party autocracy	<i>No (not ideocratic)</i>	<i>Yes (party)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Monarchy	<i>Yes (monarchic origin)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Military regime	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes (military)</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Personalist autocracy	<i>Maybe, but not established (not monarchic)</i>	<i>No (neither party nor military)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>

Source: Kailitz, 2013, pp. 45.

Arguing that in a context of growing interdependence between nation-states the international dimension of legitimacy has been neglected unfairly, Table 2. Demonstrates Hölbig's (2011) extension of Beetham's (1991, 2001) multidimensional understanding of legitimacy and its criteria by connecting them to *internal* and *external legitimation strategies*. The term 'legitimation strategy' herein follows Putnam's (1993) concept of 'two-level games' in international negotiation regimes, as it assumes that external legitimacy at the international level can also be leveraged internally for legitimacy and vice versa. Although the importance of the international dimension of legitimacy is included within this argument, Hölbig does argue that the term 'strategy' should not be understood as 'clearly identifiable actors at work', but rather as "discursive strategies, the success of which, in terms of the power and their validity, is expressed in how widespread they are in domestic and international discourses" (Hölbig, 2011, p. 48). However, in order to understand the dual recognition paradox in Venezuela shows, a greater focus on the ruler, as well as the response to his or her legitimation strategies, is necessary.

Table 2. Analytical framework: internal and external legitimation strategies

Legitimacy criteria	Internal legitimation strategy	External legitimation strategy
Legality	Constitutional revisions, adaptation of laws	Memberships in international organizations with binding force (WTO, UN Human Rights convention; active participation in the (re)formulation of international rules and norms
Authority	Principle of popular sovereignty qualified by political ideology, scientific doctrine, religion, tradition, natural law etc.	International cooperation combined with maintenance of national sovereignty: efforts to improve the international response to specific political ideologies
Consent	Mobilization of domestic consent (ideological mobilization of the masses; consultative, participatory mechanisms; elections, etc.) prevention of active dissent.	Mobilization of external recognition by the international community, 'alliance partners', neighbouring states in the region; rejection of international criticism.
Performance	Emphasis on social justice, harmony, and common interest; avoidance of manifest forms of exclusive privilege (corruption)	(selective) involvement in the global economy, advocacy of 'harmonious', 'balanced' international development.

Source: Hölbig (2011), based on Beetham (1991, 2001).

Final remarks

Within modern legitimacy theory, political legitimacy is perceived to be as either (a) absolute because of sovereignty, considering the state in its entirety rather than focussing on the role of the ruler, (b) dynamic with regards to the dialogical relationship between ruler and ruled. Although the internal power-relations between society and the person or persons in leadership places depending on the regime-type have been studied, the focus has been more on measuring legitimacy from the perspective of the 'ruled' than the possible legitimation strategies the leadership can have. As the dual recognition paradox in Venezuela demonstrates that a certain shift in legitimacy can take place when a leader is recognized by external actors, this means that the external dimension of political legitimacy is more dynamic than the more static and state-centred, rather than ruler-centred, constitutional legitimacy and mutual recognition. As Hölbig argues, the legitimacy criteria of Weber's legal-rational order can be used by a state's leadership to self-legitimize. However, the consequence of these legitimation strategies has not been included in Hölbig's framework. The next chapter will therefore provide a new methodological framework through which the legitimation strategies of Maduro and Guaidó are deconstructed and subsequently the external response to these strategies can be analysed.

Chapter 2 – A methodological framework for analysing political discourse

Building on Hölbig's (2011) analytical model on internal and external legitimation strategies, this chapter will elaborate on the methodological framework of this thesis. Analysing not only the 'inside-in' (internal) and 'inside-out' (external) legitimation strategies, dimensions of the external response towards these strategies ('outside-in') will be added too. The first section will explain how the analysis of the legitimation strategies and international response will be conducted through van Leeuwen's (2007) four categories of legitimation. These will be extended by Reyes' categories for analysing political discourse, incorporating them into one cohesive methodological framework. The last part will explain the methodological limitations.

Deconstructing political discourse: methodology

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the selected methodology, as it is used to analyse discourse practices to the decode language-power relationships, within, for example, political discourse, a genre that involves public speeches of political actors through which they demonstrate their political agenda. It can be understood as a form of soft (symbolic) power in which the audience is persuaded that the politicians' goals are their own goals as well (Reyes, 2011, pp. 864-865). The CDA will be conducted by using Van Leeuwen's (2007) operationalization of the ways in which discourses construct legitimation for social practices in public communication, as well as everyday interaction through four key categories of legitimation. These are: 1) *authorization*, referring to the authority of tradition, custom or law, and of persons in whom a certain institutional authority is vested; 2) *moral evaluation*, referencing to certain value systems; 3) *rationalization*, referencing to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action and a certain social knowledge which endows the speaker with cognitive validity and 4) *mythopoesis*, in which legitimation is conveyed by constructing narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions (positive narrative) and punish non-legitimate actions (negative narrative) (van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 91).

Some of these categories are extended with sub-categories, but only the sub-categories of authorization will be specifically used, as they directly tie in with the criteria of legitimacy. This decision is made based on the limited scope of this thesis, as in order to answer the research question it is not necessary to deconstruct every sentence within the transcribed speeches and political statements by external actors. As Van Leeuwen's framework is of a very general nature, three of Reyes' (2011) categories will be allied with the four abovementioned categories, as these specifically focus on political discourse and directly tie in with the legitimacy criteria as explained by Hölbig (2011). These sub-categories are explained in the next section.

The (sub)categories and methodological framework

Within the authorization category, van Leeuwen distinguishes between *personal authority*, a "legitimate authority [...] vested in a person because of their status or role in a particular institution" and *expert authority*, mentioning credentials by which "legitimacy is provided by expertise rather than status" (van Leeuwen, 2007, pp. 94-95). *Role model authority* means that the example of the role model or opinion leader is followed by the people because their beliefs or behaviour are enough to legitimize their actions. *Impersonal authority* refers to the authority of laws, rules and regulations rather than personal authority legitimation and directly relates to the legitimacy criteria of legality. The last two authorities van Leeuwen distinguished are the *authority of tradition*, wherein the implicit or explicit answer to the 'why' questions is 'because this is what we always do or have done' and *authority of conformity* answers the 'why' questions with 'because it's what everybody else does' van Leeuwen, 2007, pp. 95-97). Authorization is therefore directly linked with legality and authority as the legitimacy criteria.

In order to put more focus towards the political discourse debate, van Leeuwen's four categories are extended by adding Reyes' (2011) strategies of legitimation of political discourse (Reyes, 2011, p. 781). As the authorization category of van Leeuwen already very clearly relates to political discourse strategies, this category does not need any addition. With *moral evaluation*, Reyes' category of 'legitimation through emotions' is added, as the 'us' versus 'them' construction aligns with the moral values as presented by the 'legitiminator' and these constructions of moral evaluation can

carry a highly emotive aspect. This category of legitimation therefore directly ties in with the *performance* legitimacy criteria, also taken literally, as in “performance through symbols”. As explained by van Leeuwen (2007): “though language plays the central role in legitimation, some forms of legitimation can also be expressed visually, or even musically and therefore [...] moral evaluations can be connoted visually or represented by visual symbols” (van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 107). According to Reyes, legitimation through rationality “is enacted when political actors present the legitimization process as a process where decisions have been made after a heeded, evaluated and thoughtful procedure” (Reyes, 2011, p. 786). A certain ‘truth’ is established, rationalized by “this is just the way that things are”, relating to authority as a legitimacy criteria as the truth is presented as a certain scientific doctrine or natural law (see Table 2). Added to the mythopoesis category is Reyes’ legitimation by constructing a *hypothetical future*, which, according to Reyes is used “to pose a threat in the future that requires strategy displayed in political discourse power, addressing the future by employing as conditional sentences” (Reyes, 2011, p. 786). This construction of a hypothetical future through certain narratives ties in with the legitimacy criteria of consent, as it claims the other to be illegitimate in order to avoid active dissent and support for the one doing the legitimation himself. It will, therefore, be added to the mythopoesis category of legitimation. Although active mobilization may not be the primary objective, it is a way to mobilize recognition. All these abovementioned categories of legitimation will form the methodological framework of this thesis and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Methodological framework

Categories of legitimation	Internal & external legitimation strategies	External responses to legitimation strategies	Legitimacy criteria
Authorization	The authority of tradition, custom or law (impersonal), and of persons in whom a certain institutional authority is vested (personal)	The authority of law (impersonal), and of persons in whom a certain institutional authority is vested (personal)	Legality Authority
Moral evaluation	References to certain value systems (principles, ideology) by installing fear of ‘the other’ and the use of symbolism	References to certain value systems (principles, ideology)	Performance Authority
Mythopoesis	Constructing narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions (positive narrative) and punish non-legitimate actions (negative narrative). A hypothetical future with certain positive and/or negative outcomes	Constructing a hypothetical future with either positive (legitimate) or negative (illegitimate) consequences	Consent
Rationalization	The goals and uses of institutionalized social action and a certain social knowledge which endows the speaker with cognitive validity: establishing a truth	Establishing an inherent truth to certain decisions	Authority

Source: own elaboration, based on Hölbig (2011), van Leeuwen (2007) and Reyes (2011).

Units of analysis

The units of analysis for assessing the internal and external legitimation strategies are Guaidó’s inauguration speech as president of the National Assembly on January 5, 2019, Maduro’s presidential inauguration speech on January 10, 2019, the speech in which Guaidó declares himself interim president of Venezuela on January 23rd and Maduro’s speech later that day from the balcony of the presidential palace in Miraflores. These speeches have been selected because they closely follow up on one another and from January 23, 2019 and onwards, the international community became involved in recognizing either one of them.

The second analysis chapter will use this same analytical framework to analyse responses to Guaidó and Maduro’s legitimation strategies. The focus here is on the ways in which the other states and international and intergovernmental organizations use certain words to ascribe legitimacy to one of the two. The units of analysis will be both public statements on government and international organizations’ websites and

Tweets from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from the countries recognizing either Guaidó or Maduro as the legitimate power, recognizing the National Assembly as the legitimate authority or specifically vocalize neutrality on the matter. For this analysis, a total of 113 political or diplomatic statements by foreign states, ten intergovernmental organizations, and four international organizations were analysed.

Methodological limitations

A few methodological limitations should be pointed out. First of all, even though my Spanish language proficiency is fluent, transcribing the speeches and, thereafter, translating them to English for the matter of writing this thesis leaves space for interpretation. Discourse analyses, however, are always open for interpretation, but the translation factor strengthens this. Also, because of word limitations of the thesis, not all political statements could be fully mentioned. Selection bias is therefore a risk, but for the analytical categories as provided by van Leeuwen & Reyes, the most relevant quotes and statements have been analysed in order to strengthen the central argument, keeping the research question in mind.

Chapter 3 - Assessing internal & external legitimation strategies

Following Hölbig's (2011) model on internal and external legitimation strategies, this chapter will analyse the ways in which Nicolás Maduro and Juan Guaidó legitimize themselves. It will do so by looking at how they conduct their legitimation strategies throughout their political speeches, by using the categories of legitimation presented in Table 3. As the next chapter will focus on the part of the international response and recognition of Maduro and Guaidó, this chapter will lay the groundwork by first looking at how they address their own legitimacy and/or each other's illegitimacy towards internal and external audiences. The first section will describe the context of the four speeches, after which two speeches of Guaidó and two of Maduro's speeches will be analysed. The final section of this chapter will draw a brief comparison between the two.

The context and audiences

The first speeches to be analysed are those of Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly. The first speech was given on January 5, 2019, when Guaidó spoke in the room of the National Assembly, as its newly elected president. He herein refers to the 'cessation of the usurpation' that will occur on January 10th 2019, as elections of the 20th of May, 2018, had been declared as illegitimate by organizations such as the EU and the Lima Group and references to Maduro as the 'usurper' had been made by the opposition-led Congress before. He addresses the audience as being the National Assembly, the international community, and the Venezuelan people or *compatriots*, whether outside or within Venezuela's borders, referring to the great numbers of Venezuelans that have left Venezuela due to several reasons. He stipulates that he wants to thank that audience for his recognition and closes his speech with directly addressing Maduro, emphasizing that neither he nor the Assembly will swear him in as the legitimate president (VPItv, 2019a). The other selected speech was given at a public square on the 23rd of January, 2019, wherein Guaidó proclaims himself to be the legitimate interim president of Venezuela and calls for the Venezuelan population to take the streets and protest against the Maduro regime (VPItv, 2019b).

The first selected speech of Maduro is his speech after being inaugurated as Venezuela's president for 2019-2025 in front of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice on January the 10th. Starting off with welcoming his fellow colleagues and presidents of the National Constituent Assembly, the Supreme Tribunal and Republican Moral Advisory and Electoral Power, the national Ombudsman and ministers, Maduro pays special attention to address the presence of the Minister of Defence, admiral for strategic operations, commanders of the Venezuelan army, military aviation, national guard, the national Bolivarian militia and national armed forces. He continues with welcoming the present "legitimate and constitutional" governors and mayors of Venezuela. These are the internal actors he specifically pays attention to, before addressing and emphasizing the presence of a wide array of ambassadors and delegates representing over 94 countries and welcoming the presidents and prominent members of international organizations like UNASUR, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the African Union, Arab League, the United Nations (UN), other NGOs and social movements and then again, political parties and parliamentarians from all over the world (Sucreranda Hugo Chávez Venezuela, 2019). Although he addresses the Venezuelan population throughout his speech, he does not take the time to welcome them as part of the Venezuelan audience, unlike in his speech from the presidential palace in Miraflores on January 23rd, in he encourages the Venezuelan population to not align themselves with Guaidó's self-proclamation (Luigino Bracci Roa, 2019).

Juan Guaidó

Authorization

On January 23rd, Guaidó holds up a booklet representing the Venezuelan Constitution at various moments, referring specifically to Articles 231, 333 and 350 of the Constitution. Article 233 entails the conditions under which the President's mandate can be revoked, one of them being the "abandonment of the function, as declared by the National Assembly". When this occurs before the President takes possession of his function, the President of the National Assembly will be the one in charge until new elections are being held (CNE, 1999a). Article 333 entails that the Constitution will not lose its validity by noncompliance through acts of force or any other medium (CNE, 1999b). In case this happens, all civilians, invested with authority or not, will have to work together to re-establish its effective validity. Article

350 states that “the people of Venezuela, [...] will disavow whichever regime, legislation or authority that opposes the values, principles and democratic guarantees or undermines human rights” (CNE, 1999c; VPItv, 2019b). This directly ties into van Leeuwen’s (2007) sub-category of *impersonal authority*, which consists of laws, rules and regulations.

“Today, brothers and sisters, I will take the step with you”, was one of the sentences prior to Guaidó’s self-proclamation as Venezuela’s interim president [“in charge”] on January 23rd. In the main part of his speech, proclaiming himself interim president Venezuela, he states that in his “function as President of the National Assembly, summoning the articles of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, our entire performance based on our Constitution, before the Almighty God, respecting my deputy colleagues and members of unity, I swear, formally assuming the national executive competencies as President in charge of Venezuela” (VPItv, 2019b). Using personal authority as his legitimation, he refers to his instituted responsibility as the Assembly’s President, in accordance with the Constitution, although the backing of the Venezuelan people is necessary for its success. The Venezuelan people are therefore the ones who will have to put the legitimacy on him by acknowledging him as not only the president of the National Assembly, but also the interim president of Venezuela.

Moral evaluation

Throughout both speeches, Guaidó puts a lot of emphasis on the morals and value systems of the Venezuelan people. In his speech on the 5th of January, he refers to a long list of people who have been silenced by the Maduro regime, and refers directly to the Venezuelan mothers who “are saying goodbye to their children” due to the Maduro regime. He also points out factors the Venezuelan population should fear about the current regime in place and emphasizes the Maduro regime of corruption, stealing of Venezuela’s natural resources, taking away the opportunities for the people, failing to provide security for them and with this he is constructing an elaborate negative narrative regarding the regime. He delegitimizes Maduro as the usurper and his regime by accusing them of the “dismantling of the state and the rule of law” and betraying not only the Venezuelan people, “but also the flags of social justice, inclusion, equality and against corruption, along with those who have come to

power". He also accuses the [Maduro] regime of "playing with time and with half-truths to show its creditors and moneylenders that it wants to find a solution to the crisis [...] while they align with irregular groups that have crossed our border [...] violating our sovereignty" (VPItv, 2019a). Moral evaluation here is conducted by pointing out the immorality or lack of values of the current regime, installing fear about 'what's to come' if the immoral regime stays in power.

In his speech on January 23rd he uses the same strategy, referring to the (unbeatable) "hope" and "sadness" of the Venezuelan people, determined to "reach their objectives" of "retrieving the hugs within the family because our people will return". He focuses on "elements that cannot be bought nor robbed: like respect, family, admiration for our people, honour" and "another additional factor: the unity of all parties". He specifically accuses the PRSC 'disguised as magistrates' of 'ordaining forgiveness [humanitarian aid] unconstitutional', "which is like saying that love is unconditional" (VPItv, 2019b). A lot of emotive aspects are herein used to delegitimize, or even 'villainize' the Maduro regime.

Using moral evaluation to legitimize himself is done in his speech on January 5th, in which he stipulates that he comes from a modest background, growing up in La Guaira, meaning that he is also 'a survivor of the robbing of the productive capacity of Venezuela by corruptive forces and hyperinflation' (VPItv, 2019a). Stipulating having the same upbringing and background as the Venezuelan working class, Guaidó legitimizes himself as 'one of the Venezuelan people', sharing the same moral values.

Mythopoesis

In his seven proposals presented in his speech of January 5th, Guaidó states that the elections of the 20th of May are illegitimate and not recognized. This, according to Guaidó, means that the function of the Venezuelan presidency is taken by an usurper and that the National Assembly, as a consequence to this usurpation, assumes power as the only legitimate power, elected by the Venezuelan people and representing them towards the international community. He proposes to therefore create a transitional organ to 'restitute the constitutional order'. Regarding the role of the National Assembly in this process, he argues that "today [...] you are part of

the Venezuela that aspires liberty, progress, justice, security and opportunities” and that it has the responsibility of “fulfilling the yearning of all Venezuelans”. In the same speech he turns to the international community present in the room, although it is unclear who precisely, “Here is the international community that recognizes this parliament [...] Our gratitude regarding democracy. The rule of law. And human rights”. He then follows by turning specifically to Russia and China, stating that “there is a government that does comply with agreements. That does respect the law” (VPItv, 2019a). His legitimation strategy shifts from internal to external legitimation and a negative narrative regarding the illegitimacy of the current regime is constructed, as well as a hypothetical positive narrative that if the National Assembly would be able to fulfil its role as the legitimate power, it would lead to more compliance and adherence to human rights. As he addresses the international community, and specifically Russia and China, he is actively looking for their recognition and consent as Venezuela’s legitimate leader.

In the same speech, Guaidó also constructs a positive narrative regarding the ‘fight against the regime’, with examples such as the civil disobedience with not voting in the May 20th, 2018 elections and openly calling out “all civilians who feel like this misery is not the only way of living”. This positive narrative is even stronger in his speech on January 23rd, when he consistently refers to “the certainty of change”, and “victory” of the Venezuelan people if they would take to the streets and support him. He also specifically addresses the soldiers of the national armed forces in his call for action in “our road to liberty”. This, alongside his call for the Venezuelan people to “accompany the national parliament to achieve change in Venezuela”, is a direct call for mobilization and consent of the Venezuelan people (VPItv, 2019b).

Conclusion

Guaidó makes extensive use of the legality legitimacy criteria to self-legitimize, as demonstrated by his extensive references to Articles 233, 333 and 250 of the Venezuelan Constitution. Article 233 especially, because its impersonal authority would mean that Guaidó, as president of the National Assembly, would be the one in charge in Venezuela until new elections are being held, therefore bestowing the personal authority as interim president of Venezuela upon him. However, for the actual personal authority of being Venezuela’s legitimate president, he does need the

legitimation of the Venezuelan people, the international community and the national armed forces. That is why both of them are obvious audiences of his speeches. His speeches also have a highly emotive character, by portraying the Maduro regime as immoral. Actively looking for both internal and external recognition, he constructs the narrative of a “fight against the regime”. His call for the Venezuelan people to “accompany the national parliament to achieve change in Venezuela” is directly addressing mobilization and consent (VPItv, 2019b). The lack of the use of rationalization as legitimation strategy could possibly be explained by his lack of foundation of legitimacy by not having been elected in presidential elections, or because of the fact he does not focus on Venezuela’s history and traditions as a way to legitimize himself. Because according to his narratives change is necessary, there is also no point in emphasizing certain things as “just the way they are”.

Nicolás Maduro

Authorization

In his January 10th speech, Maduro specifically refers to Article 231 of the Venezuelan Constitution. He even reads it out loud from a small blue booklet: “Article 231: the elected candidate will take the possession of the position as the President of the Republic on January 10th of the first year of his Constitutional term, by an oath in front of the National Assembly [...] If, for whichever intervening motive, the President of the Republic cannot take possession before the National Assembly, he will do so in front of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice”. He continues with: “Well, here I am. I have complied with the Constitution and here is my oath [shows blue folder]” (Sucreranda, 2019). Here Maduro legitimizes himself through by extensive references to Article 231 in the Venezuelan Constitution (impersonal authority) and his compliance with the Constitution legitimates his position as the Venezuela’s president (personal authority).

In his January 10th speech, Maduro states that Venezuela is a profoundly democratic country, because it has had 25 elections within 19 years on all levels and that he “would like to know in which country in the world 25 elections have taken place in the past 19 years”. He then follows with an elaboration on the five different consecutive elections that had taken place “in the past 16 months”, emphasizing Venezuela’s democratic character and defending his legitimacy as Venezuela’s president. On

January 23rd, he poses the rhetorical question: “who picked the governors who have the legitimate control over the country? The people, in legitimate, transparent and free elections on the 15th of October” (Sucreranda, 2019; Bracci Roa, 2019).

In referring to the *golpistas*, the ones who try to attempt to gain power through “extra-constitutional ways”, multiple times, he de-legitimizes the legality of the opposition because of its US support (Sucreranda, 2019; Bracci Roa, 2019). In his January 10th speech he even directly accuses the US of threatening opposing presidential candidates but that he, against Javier Bertucci, and in a free and democratic way in which both candidates campaigned throughout the entire country, still won 67.8% of the votes in the presidential election of May 20th 2018. By elaborating even further on the great amount of elections that have taken place in Venezuela, he underscores this argument, emphasizing the legality of his presidency by the election results.

Also, in both speeches, Maduro strongly emphasizes Venezuela’s ‘liberation history’ led by the liberator Simón Bolívar and how his own authority was invested in him by Hugo Chávez. He stipulates multiple times that the revolution of the *libertadores* should not be in vain and how Venezuela is still continuing in its fight against new threats to it, such as American imperialism. In this sense legitimation by Maduro is more focussed on the *role model authority* and the *authority of tradition*, wherein the revolutionary character of the *libertadores* is emphasized and Maduro’s strength was bestowed upon him by Chávez, the role model figure of Venezuela. The presidential sash, shown by Maduro during his January 10th speech, and according to him, handed to him by Chávez himself, emphasizes the authority of the role model. Showing the key to Bolívar’s sacrophage, Maduro legitimates himself through the authority of tradition, as in: the revolutionary character of Venezuela. These symbolisms will be elaborated on thoroughly in the following section.

Moral evaluation

The use of “we” or “us” “as the Venezuelan people” [including himself] is used way less frequently by Maduro. Like Guaidó, Maduro does, however, emphasize his background in the ‘working class of Venezuela’ in his January 10th speech, presenting himself as being “this modest worker Nicolás Maduro Moro”, coming from the neighbourhoods of Carácas, the school of the union of the working class and with

the “conductors of the metros of Carácas”. “I am not a mogul, I have not studied at Harvard, nor the school of the Americas [...] with gorillas, *golpistas*, dictators, autocrats, the oligarchy”, he states (Sucreranda, 2019). In legitimizing his authority and establishing his common interests with the Venezuelan people, he puts himself in the shoes of a working class man and strongly opposes the American imperialist threat, underscoring him sharing the same moral values of the Venezuelan people. This is not categorized as *expert authority*, as he does not specifically point out his credentials or status as Venezuela’s president and therefore placing himself above the people, but is rather interpreted as an attempt to ‘be closer to the people’. That is why it is considered a moral evaluation rather than authorization.

In his welcome statement on January, Maduro states that over “94 countries are present here today. Countries that respect Venezuela. That respect the sovereignty of its population. Who respect and love our country”. He adds that “we [the Venezuelan people] have the help of the conscious people of the world” (Sucreranda, 2019). His statements here have a more ideologically-directed argumentation, with the principles of sovereignty and love and respect for Venezuela as the main moral values or absolute principles external actors should have as well. Another crucial factor in Maduro’s speeches is his reference to the US as being irresponsible, extremist, imperialist *golpistas*, trying to ‘dominate Venezuela’ with their allies, such as the ‘fascist right-wing’. He, therefore, announces in his speech on January 23rd, and seemingly signs the exact paper that he is talking about, that he is “signing a diplomatic note, giving the diplomatic and consular personnel of the United States 72 hours to leave the country, in the name of the Venezuelan people” (Bracci Roa, 2019). The ‘interventionist ideology of intolerance’ of the US is a red thread through his speeches. So, Maduro attempts to derive legitimacy from the dynamics of the internal legitimation and external strategy focus on political ideology of nationalism and anti-imperialism. There is a strong “us” [the revolutionary Venezuelans] versus “them” [the imperialist *gringos*] sentiment, emphasizing the immorality of the US versus the moral values and principles of Venezuela. This ties in with the legitimacy criterium of authority.

Maduro makes extensive use of symbolism throughout his inauguration speech. He does so by referring to national symbols, such as the tricoloured presidential sash

with the “tricolour of the liberator Simón Bolívar” and a golden key around his neck. The sash, according to Maduro himself, was left to him by commander Hugo Chávez, and the key is the key to what he refers to as ‘Bolívar’s sarcophagus’ [grave]. Representing the Constitution, he holds a little booklet in his hand during his January 10th speech, as well as a blue folder containing his oath. Maduro’s speeches, in comparison with Guaidó’s discourses, have a higher performative character. This is in line with the performance legitimacy criterium, wherein the symbols are directly used to refer to common values and ideology (nationalism in this case).

Mythopoesis

As mentioned in the authorization part, the narratives that Maduro construct revolve around the history of Venezuela. However, in his January 10th speech, he does not emphasize the need for a revolution within Venezuela. The active mobilization angle of the Venezuelan people is only present in his speech on January 23rd, wherein Maduro declares that “we will develop an ensemble of permanent mobilization of the people”, attempting to prevent active dissent of the population because of Guaidó’s earlier speech (Bracci Roa, 2019). In his January 10th speech he does, however, present the diplomatic initiative that should bring Latin American and Caribbean countries closer together through the role of the (ALBA), with the goal of “stopping the madness”, constructing a hypothetical future in which US imperialism will prevail (Sucreranda, 2019).

Rationalization

In his January 10th inauguration speech, Maduro proclaims that “We are a true, profound and popular democracy. A democracy of the working class, the humble, the workers. We are a true, true, democracy of the people. Not a democracy of the elites, moguls or millionaires [...] And I, Nicolás Maduro Moro, am a profound democratic president” (Sucreranda, 2019). His discourse of truth is here constructed on the rationalization of him as Venezuela’s president, because Venezuela is a ‘true democracy’. Later on in his speech he continues with: “They paint a reality of Venezuela, about who we are. There is a true Venezuela. Profound. Which lives in peace. Which lives in happiness. Which lives in construction” (Sucreranda, 2019). He reiterates this point of a ‘true Venezuela’ in his January 23rd speech, in which he proclaims that “it is important to multiply the truth. [That] we came from the

streets, from the profound [lower] people, and at this presidential palace we arrived 20 years ago with the votes of the people [...] and the votes of the people are the only ones that elect a constitutional president in Venezuela". He also proclaims that "and therefore, in our 20 years of revolution, we know how to ascend our obstacles [...] with the best consciousness and commitment" (Bracci Roa, 2019). Here again, he uses rationalization to legitimize his presidency 'because there is a true Venezuela, and the truth is that the people have elected him to be their president', and that that is just the way things are.

Final remarks

By reading Article 231 of the Venezuelan Constitution out loud during his inauguration ceremony, Maduro publicly establishes the legality of his presidency in front of both Venezuelan and foreign audiences. He does make use of role model and authority by tradition, as he elaborates on Venezuela's revolutionary history of *liberadores* [liberators] and makes extensive references to Chávez and how Maduro 'inherited his strength'. His January 10th speech has a particular performative character in which he uses national symbols to emphasize Venezuelan nationalism and anti-imperialism. He uses moral evaluation by pointing out he is 'a man of the working class' as well and therefore understands the wants and needs of the population, as well as emphasizing the importance of the principle of sovereignty extensively. His focus on a hypothetical future is lower than Guaidó's, although he does make use of rationalization. This makes sense, seen that for Maduro, his legitimacy derives from the results of the 2018 presidential elections and no external interference should deem him illegitimate because of it.

Chapter 4 – The dual recognition paradox: assessing the external response

Extending Holbig's model with the dimension of international [external] response, this chapter will analyse the international response towards Juan Guaidó's self-proclamation as Venezuela's legitimate president as of January 23rd and onwards, as it demonstrates the dynamic of the legitimation strategies and the external dimension of legitimacy *an sich*. It will do so by analysing the ways in which Guaidó, the National Assembly or Maduro are being recognized and legitimated by external states and international and intergovernmental organizations. For this analysis, a total of 113 political or diplomatic statements by foreign states, ten intergovernmental organizations, and four international organizations were analysed by using the same methodological framework as the previous chapter. Providing an indication on the division of recognition, Figure 1. shows the states who recognized either Maduro or Guaidó, or were vocal about their neutrality, up until February 6, 2019. Unlike the previous chapter, this chapter will not separate sections between Guaidó and Maduro, as references to the (il)legitimacy of either one of them are present within the same statements and a comparison can be drawn immediately. The final remarks at the end of this chapter will summarize the findings.

Analysis

Authorization

In a press release on January 4, 2019, the Lima Group, consisting of the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Saint Lucia, published a statement “in the face of the beginning of the illegitimate second term of Nicolás Maduro’s regime in Venezuela on the 10th of January, 2019”, not recognizing the legitimacy of Maduro’s new presidential regime (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Argentina, 2019). The declaration recognized the National Assembly as the legitimately and democratically elected constitutional institution in Venezuela and urged Maduro to temporarily delegate “the powers of the executive branch” to them. It also underscored the importance of “respecting the integrity, autonomy and independence of the Venezuelan Supreme Tribunal of Justice, legitimately convened in accordance with the Venezuelan Constitution for the full force of the rule of law” and condemned the “interruption of the constitutional order and rule of Venezuela” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Argentina, 2019). This was supported by the statement of the Council of the European Union (EU) on January the 23rd, calling for the need for “an immediate political process leading to free and credible elections, in conformity with the Constitutional order”, declaring its full support to the National Assembly “as the democratically elected institution whose powers need to be restored and respected” (Council of the European Union, 2019a). In a press release on January 26th, the EU’s High Representative declared that the EU “reiterates that the presidential elections last May in Venezuela were neither free, fair, nor credible, lacking democratic legitimacy” and reiterated that the National Assembly was the “democratic legitimate body of Venezuela”. It called for “the holding of free, transparent and credible presidential elections in accordance with internationally democratic standards and the Venezuelan constitutional order” and in case this announcement would remain absent, the EU would take further actions “including the recognition of the country’s leadership in line with article 233 of the Venezuelan constitution” (Council of the European Union, 2019b). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution entails that the president of the National Assembly will be the one in charge until new elections are being held. Consequently, on February 4th, a diplomatic statement published by 19 out of 28 EU Member States published a diplomatic statement, stating that “in

accordance with the provisions of the Venezuelan Constitution, they acknowledge and support Mr. Juan Guaidó, President of the democratically elected National Assembly, as President ad interim of Venezuela, in order for him to call for free, fair and democratic presidential elections” (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2019). Recognizing Guaidó by the Council of the EU did not occur straight away, but in three stages, wherein the presidential elections of May 20, 2018 were first (1) deemed illegitimate, and a call for new elections was issued to Maduro on behalf of all 28 EU Member States, but because this did not happen (2) the National Assembly was recognized as the democratically elected institution by references to Article 233 (impersonal authority) with Juan Guaidó as its president, and (3) through the legitimation by using Article 233 eventually the recognized and legitimated interim President of Venezuela (personal authority).

The Permanent Council of the OAS underwent a similar process. At its special meeting held on January 10, 2019, approved a resolution with regards to the situation in Venezuela. With 19 votes in favour, 6 against and 8 abstentions, the resolution reaffirmed the democratic rights of the peoples of the Americas according to Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, meaning the right to democracy for peoples of the Americas and the obligation of their governments to promote and defend it (U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, 2019b; Organization of American States, 2001). The Resolution underscored the “constitutional authority of the democratically elected National Assembly”, emphasizing the impersonal authority of the National Assembly because of its democratic and constitutional nature. Subsequently, on January 24th, 16 of the OAS delegations ratified the “constitutional authority of the democratically elected National Assembly” and recognized and expressed their full support to its President, Juan Guaidó “who assumed the role of interim President of the Republic of Venezuela, in accordance with Venezuelan constitutional norms and due to the illegitimacy of the Nicolás Maduro regime” (U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, 2019b). The OAS herein also emphasized the need for free, fair, transparent elections, reaffirmed the illegitimacy of the 2018 presidential elections and strongly called for respect for “the jurisdiction and rights of the National Assembly legislators as well as the rights of all, to exercise, without limitations, the duties legitimately entrusted to them by the people of Venezuela” (U.S. Mission to the Organization of

American States, 2019b). Impersonal authority is again imposed in the National Assembly specifically, because it 'is their jurisdiction to decide' and the personal authority as the actual legitimate Venezuelan president only was placed on Guaidó later on.

A statement on the website of *Al-Manara*, a Hezbollah-owned TV-station strongly condemned the "coup against the legal authority in Venezuela", expressing support for Maduro (Middle East Monitor, 2019). Russia also emphasized Maduro's legitimacy by claiming that "failing to remove Nicolás Maduro, including physically, the extremist opponents of the legitimate government of Venezuela have opted for a highly confrontation scenario", urging "the sober-minded Venezuelan politicians standing in opposition to Nicolás Maduro's legitimate government not to become pawns in other players' chess game" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2019). Cuba's foreign Ministry also expressed "its unwavering solidarity" to the Maduro regime (Vasilyeva, 2019). However, expressing *why* authority is placed on Maduro was only explained by a few. For example, South-African ambassador Jerry Matjila, during the UNSC Meeting on Venezuela, stated that "in any country it is the political parties which choose the provisions on which to conduct elections" and that in Venezuela this had been no different during the 2018 presidential elections, which were in accordance with the Agreement of Electoral Guarantees that was signed by all political parties shortly before the elections and overseen by Venezuela's National Electoral Council. Only on that basis did South African President Cyril Rampaphosa congratulate Maduro on his second term as a president. Ambassador Matjila also emphasized his concerns over the circumvention of "the country's constitutional mechanisms which concerns its elections" by the recognition of Guaidó as interim president. Maduro is the legitimately elected president of Venezuela because of its accordance with international laws and therefore *impersonal* authority of these laws bestows *personal* authority on him as the only legitimate president (Department of International Relations and Cooperation: Republic of South Africa, 2019). The only mention of *role model* authority was done by Vietnamese National Assembly Chairwoman Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, when she welcomed Diosdado Cabello on September 30th 2019, stating that under Maduro's leadership, the "fraternal Venezuelan people will successfully realise late President Hugo Chávez's last wishes, overcome challenges and carry the country forward"

(VNA, 2019). Maduro here is authorized as the legitimate president because he carries on the legacy of his predecessor Chávez.

Abstaining entirely from taking a side and putting authorization on either Guaidó, the National Assembly or Maduro, was for example the government of Nepal, stating that “The people of Venezuela have the ultimate authority to take decision on the country’s political and constitutional course”, referring to this process being “free from external interferences” (Government of Nepal, 2019). As well as New Zealand’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Winston Peters, stating that “it’s not New Zealand’s practice to make statements recognizing governments”, although he also expressed his concerns about the 2018 elections (Roy, 2019).

Moral evaluation

Vocalising neutrality, CARICOM emphasizes the principles of “non-interference and non-intervention, respect for sovereignty, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for human rights and democracy”, calling on external forces to “refrain from doing anything to destabilize the situation” (CARICOM Caribbean Community, 2019). The principle of non-interference and upholding national sovereignty, independence and stability were also emphasized by China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying, when addressing the situation in Venezuela on January 24th. Alongside CARICOM and China, the principles of the UN’s non-interference and non-intervention were also mentioned in statements by the governments of, Nepal, Namibia, Malaysia, India, Angola, Belize and the SADC. This moral evaluation, however, is not placed on Guaidó directly, de-legitimizing him for reasons of failing to meet these principles, etc. Instead, it is directed to the countries recognizing him, referring to possible interference with anti-imperialist sentiment and against internationally recognized principles.

Statements of the OAS, EU Member States and the government of Iceland, Jamaica and Japan refer to the need for new “free”, “fair”, “transparent”, “credible”, “legitimate” and “democratic” [presidential] elections. This argument is reiterated by Australia’s statement on Venezuela, calling for “a transition to democracy in Venezuela” (Australian Government: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019). The OAS reaffirmed the illegitimacy of the 20 May elections “because they lacked the

necessary guarantees to be a free, fair, transparent, legitimate and credible process, failing to meet the minimally accepted international standards” (U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, 2019b). Legitimate elections with international standards are portrayed as the essential democratic value a state needs, which according to the countries recognizing Guaidó or the National Assembly as the legitimate authority in Venezuela, is missing under the Maduro regime.

Mythopoesis

The construction of a hypothetical future and positive or negative narratives throughout the political statements seem to be focussed on either the negative effects of external interference, considered illegitimate. Stating that Guaidó’s recognition by external actors is a “deliberate and obviously well-orchestrated creation of dual power as an alternative decision-making centre in Venezuela”, the Russian statement points out the conditional sentences that ‘it will’: (1) deepen the social divide in Venezuela; (2) aggravate street protests, (3) dramatically destabilize the Venezuelan political community, and (4) further escalate the conflict. Foreign interference and incitement “has nothing in common with a democratic process” and Guaidó’s recognition by external actors is, therefore, a direct path towards lawlessness, violence, chaos and erosion of Venezuelan statehood. Emphasizing this threat even more, Washington’s actions are herein regarded as “yet another demonstration of its total disregard for the norms and principles of international law and an attempt to pose as the self-imposed master of another nation’s future” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2019). Namibia’s Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah underscored this statement, by claiming that the concerns over the political developments in Venezuela “are arising from the unwarranted interference in the domestic affairs of Venezuela by foreign powers” (Tjitemisa, 2019).

Building on this negative narrative regarding external interference, Grenada’s Prime Minister Dr Keith Mitchell warned about the divide between the US taking one side and China and Russia taking another side, and that if “either side provides military and other forms of support, without serious mediation, we can see it engulfing the region and all of us will pay a heavy price” (Jamaica Observer, 2019b). Chadian opposition politician Saleh Kebzabo even states that “this is an excuse for the

powerful countries, but they have their own interests at heart” (Hermann, 2019). Again, the negative narrative here is not directed towards Guaidó specifically, but the states within the international community thinking about possible interference. The political ‘divide’ between the US on one side, and Russia and China on the other regarding the situation in Venezuela is thereby again narrated as troublesome, not necessarily the recognition of either Maduro or Guaidó as a presidential figure.

CARICOM, with the exception of Jamaica, vocalised its neutrality on the matter, stipulating its concerns of the “increasing volatility of the situation [...] which could lead to further violence, confrontation, breakdown of law and order and greater suffering for the people of the country”. It also raised concerns about the “far-reaching negative consequences for the wider region”, in case the “already explosive situation” would be destabilized if “external forces” would get involved (CARICOM, 2019). Its emphasis on the region turning into a war zone if having intervention of other states outside the region, also specifically addressed in Antigua & Barbuda’s and Granada’s statements, makes sense, considering the affects an escalating situation would have on regional states (Jamaica Observer, 2019a; Jamaica Observer, 2019).

Supporting Guaidó, the OAS states that a “restoration of representative democracy in Venezuela through a peaceful and orderly process”, which will “achieve stability and prosperity for all Venezuelans”, will happen if led by the National Assembly and Guaidó as Venezuela’s interim President (U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, 2019b). The diplomatic statement given by 19 out of 28 of the EU member states on February 4 emphasizes that because Maduro has not set in motion the electoral process they called for, Guaidó is recognized as “President ad interim of Venezuela, in order for him to call for free, fair and democratic presidential elections” (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2019). Like the OAS statement, the positive narrative constructed here is that recognizing Guaidó as the ‘democratically elected leader’ and interim president of Venezuela will lead to the positive consequence of new free and legitimate elections. By repeating the illegitimacy of the 2018 elections, the states recognizing Guaidó construct a negative narrative regarding Maduro. None of the states supporting Maduro, however, mentions his actual position as president directly, except for Turkey’s Erdogan, stating that Maduro

will prevail “if he continues to stand strong in the path he believes in” (Vasilyeva, 2019).

Rationalization

The OAS resolution of January 10th is the only statement which specifically stipulates a “consideration” that the 2019-2025 presidential period in Venezuela from the 10th of January onwards was the result of an illegitimate electoral process, and therefore underscored the “constitutional authority of the democratically elected National Assembly” (U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, 2019a). “On June 5, 2018, the OAS General Assembly passed a resolution stating that the May 20, 2018 presidential election – the basis for the sham inauguration today – failed to comply (even minimally) with international standards, and therefore lacked basic legitimacy. We here all know it was an undemocratic sham by any standard”. The statement in recognizing the National Assembly as the constitutional authority and hereby acknowledging its legitimacy is based on the rationalization as of why the May 20, 2018 elections were not legitimate. The illegitimate outcome of the 2018 elections is portrayed as an actual truth, because ‘we all here know it’ to be (U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, 2019a). Other than that, the discursive construct of rationalization does not seem to be present within the political statements.

Final remarks

The EU reasons that, because Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution states that the president of the National Assembly will be the one in charge until new elections are being held, the personal authority of Venezuela’s interim president lies with Guaidó, because of the impersonal authority of the Constitution. Legality or the lawfulness of Guaidó as the interim president is hereby based on the Venezuelan Constitution. However, the actors recognizing the National Assembly with Guaidó as its President do use impersonal authority to legitimize their recognition, but do not bestow personal authority in Guaidó as Venezuela’s actual legitimate interim president. The OAS, for example, does this through its reference to Article I of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, referring to the right to democracy of the peoples of the Americas, but does not recognize Guaidó as Venezuela’s president.

There is a clear divide between Guaidó's and Maduro's supporters. Whereas the moral evaluation of Guaidó's supporters is based on democratic values, anti-imperialism is the ideological sentiment of the actors recognizing Maduro or expressing neutrality. This occurs either by constructing a hypothetical future in which external interference is a great threat, or by referencing to non-interference and non-intervention as general principles of the UN Charter. The illegality of foreign states recognizing Guaidó is portrayed as illegitimate, as it goes against these principles. The actors recognizing Maduro herein make use of the construct of a hypothetical future with a negative narrative, by portraying the recognition of Guaidó as a 'path to chaos' (Russia) and his self-proclamation as a *coup d'état* against the Maduro regime (Iran and Equatorial Guinea) and a moral evaluation by referring to principles being violated. The lawfulness of Maduro's presidency was only elaborated on by ambassador Matjila of South Africa when he argued that the 2018 elections were in accordance on the Agreement of Electoral Guarantees and overseen by Venezuela's National Electoral Council (Department of International Relations and Cooperation: Republic of South Africa, 2019). Although these arguments are more directed towards the actors recognizing Guaidó rather than specifically legitimizing Maduro as the legitimate president of Venezuela, the references to the UN Charter principles of non-interference and non-intervention, in relation an emphasis on US imperialism, do demonstrate that sovereignty is regarded as an absolute and therefore Maduro's legitimacy as Venezuela's president as well.

Rationalization is used very little and only by the actors recognizing the National Assembly as the legitimate authority. By claiming the May 20, 2018 elections to be illegitimate and substantiating this argument to only a certain degree of explanation as of 'why', rationalization is used to explain the illegitimacy of Maduro rather than putting legitimacy on Guaidó. While legality is not necessarily a legitimacy criteria adhered to Maduro and authority is more indirectly placed on him by the use of more ideological references and the UN Charter principles, authority and legality are the most used legitimacy criteria when it comes to Guaidó, although these are bestowed on him as the president of the National Assembly rather than the *ad interim* President of Venezuela.

Conclusion

With Chávez's death and the contested 2018 elections, the political turmoil and discontent in Venezuela came to a culmination point on January 23rd, 2019, when Juan Guaidó declared himself interim President of Venezuela. The international response was massive, with states and organizations getting involved in either the recognition of the Maduro regime, Guaidó as the interim president or expressing their neutrality on the matter. The states of Abkhazia, Sahrawi Republic and South Ossetia, not recognized as official states by the UN, were specifically welcomed by Maduro in his January 10th speech and publicly declared their support to him (Gaete, 2019). Old rivalries seemed to live up within the UNSC, with one the one hand China and Russia vetoing the US draft resolution regarding the situation in Venezuela and on the other hand, the Russian draft resolution, only voted in favour by China, Russia, Equatorial Guinea and South Africa, as well as Russia being very vocal regarding the inappropriate meddling of the US in Venezuela's affairs (What's in Blue, 2019). Regional intergovernmental organizations became more divided as well, as seven of the twelve member states of UNASUR, an organization to foster regional development and cooperation in South America, and created by amongst others Hugo Chávez during the Pink Tide, decided to suspend their membership for at least a year in April 2018 and signed the Santiago Declaration, creating PROSUR, a regional organization with the exact same mission (AS/COA, 2019). Even Hamas and Hezbollah got involved in expressing concerns about the situation.

Looking at the legitimization strategies of Guaidó, the legality legitimacy criteria has been used extensively by him and the states recognizing him, specifically by referring to Article 231 of the Venezuelan Constitution. Democratic values and the lack of those under the Maduro regime are at the core of Guaidó's legitimization strategy, which is also the line of reasoning of the states and organizations recognizing him as Venezuela's legitimate president. The 'neutral camp' voices the illegitimacy of the 2018 elections as well, but remains with the stance that Guaidó is the legitimate president of the National Assembly, not Venezuela in its entirety. Guaidó in his speeches, addresses the international community generated recognition and, therefore, mobilizes consent for his presidency of Venezuela, legitimated by constructing the positive narrative of legitimate elections if they do so and negative

narratives if the Maduro regime remains in power. And this external legitimization strategy worked, as over 50 states and the EU and Lima Group have indeed recognised him. Using an extensive amount of emotive references throughout his speeches by installing fear of the Maduro regime, especially in his January 5th speech and his call for action of the Venezuelan people on January 23rd does demonstrate Guaidó's need for consent of the Venezuelan people, as well as the military. This is specifically demonstrated by his direct call for their consent to be Venezuela's president, as he does not have the foundation of being elected through presidential elections. It, therefore, also makes sense that Guaidó is the only one referring to the humanitarian crisis, by addressing the Venezuelans outside the borders as well, and pointing out the importance of cooperation with external actors on the matter.

Maduro, on the other hand, has the advantage of being the elected president through the 2018 elections, contested or not. Even though he refers to Article 233 to claim his legitimacy, the states recognising him made no specific references to the Venezuelan Constitution and legality is not the most important legitimacy criteria. These same states do make references to the UN Charter, underscoring the principles of non-intervention and sovereignty (self-determination), which is also a principle Maduro refers to extensively throughout his speeches and can also be found in the statements of the actors expressing neutrality. The analysis has also shown the use of symbols and emphasis on Venezuela's national history throughout Maduro's speeches, emphasizing the more ideological arguments of nationalism and anti-imperialism as basis for his legitimacy. The states recognizing him as Venezuela's president underline this ideology as well. By also addressing the different sections of the military and national guard throughout both his speeches, he also emphasizes his continuous control over the state's security apparatus. Whereas the "us" versus "them" of Guaidó's speeches refers to the Venezuelan people versus the Maduro regime, Maduro refers to "true Venezuela" and the "conscious people" (other states sharing the same ideology and values) versus imperialism, specifically the US. This line of argumentation is also found throughout the statements of the states recognizing him, such as Russia and to a certain extent China.

This thesis has shown that the political situation in Venezuela, the 'dual recognition paradox', has heightened the complexity and dynamicity of political legitimacy. It has done so by arguing that the external dimension of legitimacy is more dynamic than just the static principle of sovereignty, wherein a shift from only considering the state in its entirety to a greater focus on the role of the ruler is necessary. The importance of this shift is demonstrated by the fact that the internal and external legitimation strategies within Juan Guaidó's and Nicolás Maduro's January 2019 speeches worked, as their strategies align with the external responses to them, resulting in the dual recognition paradox. Other conclusions are the fact that Maduro did not have to rely as much on the legality legitimacy criteria as Guaidó, underscoring the importance of election results for legitimation. The usage of performance and authority based on tradition and nationalist sentiment by Maduro versus the focus on democratic values and active search for both internal and external consent and recognition by Guaidó underscore this conclusion as well.

Throughout 2019, Guaidó has lost his momentum, as less and less people went out to the streets to protest because of an even more deteriorating crisis situation and the continuous support of Maduro by the military. This not only supports the argument that electoral victory matters for presidential legitimacy and legitimation strategies, but also highlights the importance of military support as a determinant for political legitimacy. Studying Guaidó through the framework of revolutionary theory, as well as a focus on charismatic leadership, may be angles that will shed light on how this can have come about. Due to both the limited scope of this thesis, as well as the issue of insecurity within Venezuela, measuring the internal response to the legitimation strategies has not been included, but when the situation eases, a research as such may provide insight to the *internal response* to legitimation strategies.

Guaidó went on a tour through Europe in the second half of 2019, wherein he met with various political leaders. The strategic objective of this tour, however, remains unclear. January 2020 saw a re-election of Guaidó as the president of the National Assembly, with the Maduro regime blocking the National Assembly members from entering the building and inaugurating Luis Parra. Instead of things calming down, the circumstances under the dual recognition paradox in Venezuela are an even further deteriorating economic situation and humanitarian crisis.

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