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# **Telesur – “Tele-Chávez” or the public service of Latin America? A case study**

Paper of 15 hp c-level

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## **Abstract**

By using a quantitative content analysis, this thesis examines how the Latin American television channel Telesur was established, and the character of Telesur's programme listings and news broadcasts. The thesis also examines how Telesur's agenda to promote pan-Latin American integration, is visible in the material broadcasted.

The theories used are the media dependency theory, framing of news, news bias and media globalization and regionalization.

The media development and current situation in Latin America and Venezuela is described. The results show that Telesur came into existence in a polarized mass media and political climate, as part of the communicational strategy of the Chávez government to promote the "21st century socialism". The news broadcasts are not directly related to the Telesur agenda. The news does not differ much from other international news broadcasts in aspects of length, tempo and topics. The broadcasts lack economical segments but empathizes political segments. The geographical representation is to a great part concentrated to and around Venezuela. In the programme listings, the aim of being an educative and news providing television channel is clearly visible, as the channel provides a great part of news and documentaries.

**Key words:** Telesur, Latin America, Venezuela, transnational television, NWICO, news, journalism, Hugo Chávez, public service.

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# 1. Introduction

Initiated by the Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, the two year old Telesur television channel is today a media venture in partnership between Latin American nations. To its founders, Telesur is an effort to increase pan-Latin American integration and a counterweight to the Western media hegemony and imperialism.

Creating an independent, alternative television channel, which promotes pan-Latin American integration, is indeed a deserving initiative. The channel Telesur has been the target of ovations as well as criticism from the political blocs. It claims to be independent – even though funded and founded by the governments of Latin America; and with an agenda similar to the one of Hugo Chávez, with critics naming it “tele-Chávez”.

Could a governmentally founded Latin American television channel be an independent alternative to the commercial channels? And is there such a thing as a Latin American perspective and news evaluation – an option to the western news hegemony?

Commercial television in Latin America is mostly known for its soap operas, its gaiety and commercialism. Governmental television is known to be propagandistic, slow and boring. Could the idea of Telesur provide a third alternative to the Latin American television viewers?

Examining the channel’s news broadcasts, supplemented by an analysis of the chart, the idea is to get an insight easy to grasp as well as a broader understanding of the material broadcasted by Telesur.

## ***1.1 Purpose of study***

This thesis aims to make a case study of Telesur, in order to examine how their objectives are reflected in news broadcasts and charts. It will examine in which context Telesur came into existence. It will try to examine if the criticism of politization is justified, which would be a common scenario for non-commercial television channels in Latin America.

The underlying purpose, and the reason why this thesis examines Telesur, is the question of how non-commercial mass media in Latin America could, and should, function; as a real mean of public service media.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

1. *How was Telesur established?*
2. *What characterizes the news broadcasts regarding content, range and depth?*
3. *What characterizes Telesur in terms of programme listings?*

## **1.3 Disposition**

Firstly, this thesis will provide a historic background of Latin America and Venezuela, the thoughts and events that have affected the left-wings of Latin America today. The thesis will take a closer look at Venezuela with Hugo Chávez and his politics as main character, and describe mass media in Latin America and in Venezuela specifically. Secondly, a description of the theoretical framework of this paper and the methods and materials are accounted for. In the final part, results, discussion and conclusions will take place.

## **2. Latin American history**

Just by taking a closer look on the Bolivarian Revolution, The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as well as the creating of Telesur, you soon realize that it is impossible to understand what is happening in Venezuela today without some knowledge of Latin American and Venezuelan history. This brief overview of historical events and episodes are put together to create an understanding of the time and atmosphere in which Telesur comes into existence.

August 8, 1498, four men from a tribe called the Caribs discovered Christopher Columbus on his third voyage to “the New World”, approaching the coast of Venezuela (Levin, 2007). During the 1500s, slaves were brought from Africa to work in mines and on plantations, a heritage well seen in today’s Venezuela in the mix of races and culture. The separation of people that corresponded with race and class became important during Venezuela’s wars of independence (Chasteen, 2003; Levin, 2007).

The Venezuelan independence movement, after a number of early uprisings, set off properly in 1810. It was the first of its kind in Latin America, and one of its lead figures was the 28 years old Simon Bolívar (Chasteen, 2003; Levin, 2007).

Simon Bolívar was born on July 24, 1783, in Caracas, son of a farm owner. He established Venezuela's Third Republic in 1819. Bolívar went on and fought for freedom in other South American countries, and united them briefly into *Gran Colombia* (consisting of Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and the north of Chile). At the end of 1822, Bolívar controlled the entire northern South America. In 1824, he liberated two more countries, and the country of Bolivia even took his name<sup>1</sup> (Chasteen, 2003; Gott 2005). Bolívar's dream was to unite Las Americas from Mexico to Argentina, but he failed. Venezuela, under the leadership of José Antonio Pérez, was the first country to secede from *Gran Colombia*. Bolívar died 1830, and is today, almost considered a saint. He is called *El Libertador*, and one of his greatest followers is Hugo Chávez (Levin, 2007; Gott, 2005).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the depression in the U.S. caused the countries in Latin America to start industrializing (Chasteen, 2003). With the industrializing, the Latin American middle class started to become nationalistic. Several countries stopped importing and put up barriers towards rich western countries. At the same time, the countries in Latin America were urbanizing rapidly, causing shanty towns to grow around the cities (Chasteen, 2003).

When the Second World War was over, Europe, with the help of the U.S. started regaining strength and the industries in Latin America were outmaneuvered. The poverty and the shanty towns made people look for a solution and populist parties promised better conditions for the working class (Chasteen, 2003).

In Cuba, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara started their revolution in the 1950s, in the middle of the cold war. The U.S. was paranoid in its hunt for communism and started to intervene; even staging military coups and creating dictatorships (Chasteen, 2003).

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<sup>1</sup> In ten years, he had fought some 300 battles and covered over 20,000 miles on horseback.



In the 1970s and 80s, the dictatorships started crumbling down, mainly because of their own economic mistakes. In the 1990s, countries started free trade deals, low tax barriers and re-privatizing the companies that were nationalized by the nationalists. The free trade deal encouraged foreign investors to invest in Latin America but the *International Monetary Fund*, IMF, who helped the neo-liberalists to get out of the huge debts they had gotten in the 1980s, also demanded fewer expenses for social service and welfare, causing huge gaps between the different classes in society (Chasteen, 2003).

Today, in many countries like Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, socialist or leftist governments are being elected, indicating that the population of Latin America is not pleased with the neo-liberalism and is once again searching for a better solution. Venezuela is one of the leading countries promoting this *21st century socialism* (Chasteen, 2003, Cañizález, 2007).

### 3. Venezuela in specific

In order to understand the role of Venezuela in modern politics – as well as its leaders – the country's identity as the fifth largest oil producer of the world is crucial. 90 percent of the foreign export and 75 percent of the government's income are based on oil money (McCaughan, 2004).

The oil was discovered in the 1920s, changing the economic and social development radically. The strong currency, *Bolívar*, raised the prices of nationally produced goods, and reduced the price on imports – leading to a reliance on imported goods seen even today. During the Punto Fijo-years<sup>2</sup> 1958-1998, the oil of Venezuela produced a wealth equivalent to 20 Marshall Plans. The economy was kept vivid due to the high price of oil during the 1970s, and as the price of oil fell in the 1980s, so did the value of the *Bolívar* – and the economy started coming apart. Between 1984 and 1995, poverty rate jumped from 36 percent to 66 percent (Levin, 2007: McCaughan, 2004).

Corruption was widely spread, and in 1998 *Transparency International* identified Venezuela as one of the ten most corrupt countries in the world<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The term is further explained in chapter 3 Venezuela in specific.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.transparency.org/>

When Chávez took office, the price of oil was still low. After the election of Chávez in 1998, foreign investors pulled 1.7 billion U.S dollars out of the country, and in one year 600.000 jobs got lost (Levin 2007).

Today, oil money helps finance Chávez's many programs, "misiones", for the poor: education, health care among others. Chávez provides Cuba with oil almost half the world price at a rate of 53,000 barrels a day (in 2005) in exchange for Cuban doctors and teachers (Levin, 2007; Gott, 2005). In 1995, the top 10 percent of the population received half the national income, while 40 percent lived in 'critical poverty'. 80 percent earned the minimum wage or under (Gott, 2005).

After Venezuela became independent in 1819, 22 of its first thirty presidents were generals. Since then until 2004, Venezuela had over a hundred changes of government and 25 constitutions (McCaughan, 2004).

One of the two major parties, *Acción Democrática* (AD), was established in 1941. The second, *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* (COPEI), was also formed during the 40s. During the 1960s, presidents were elected democratically in Venezuela. However, in 1958, AD together with COPEI and *Unión Republicana Democrática* (URD) signed the Punto Fijo Pact meaning that COPEI and AD passed power and turns of governing between them, making the two-party system an actual one-party system (McCaughan, 2004; Levin, 2007; Gott, 2005).

In February 1989, after a heavily deteriorated economic situation due to inflation and falling oil prices, the worst riots in the history of Venezuela began, referred to as the *Caracazo*. The riots started in Guarenas, a town close to Caracas, when the busfare had doubled over night. From Guaranas the violence escalated and for two days Caracas was a scene of violence and chaos (McCaughan, 2004; Levin, 2007; Gott 2005).

The Punto Fijo-system lasted until 1998, when Chávez was elected president (McCaughan, 2004; Levin, 2007; Gott 2005).

### 3.1 The Hugo Chávez era

*“He is, for one thing, a man about whom it seems impossible to be neutral”*

Judith Levin, *Hugo Chavez*

*“The Venezuelan poor were tired of listening to promises, tired of World Bank economics. Hunger had made them feverish. They wanted something different, even if it was slightly peppery. They got Hugo Chávez. A country virtually unknown to most of the world began to be viewed as a role model”*

Tariq Ali, *Pirates of the Caribbean*

*“Venezuelans saw Chávez as a punisher of the ills of the past, and a leader of the nation with traditional, Latin American populist message’, says Luis Leon, director of polling company Datanálisis. ‘But, gradually, after he was elected, Chávez turned out to be something else. He really thinks he is a revolutionary, he has never believed in the democratic system, he simply used it to give apparent legitimacy to his ideas’”*

Andrew Webb-Vidal, in *Financial Times*, 12 April, 2002

Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías was born on July 28, 1954, in the low and flat region of cattle, cowboys and rebels called *Los Llanos*. His parents were elementary school teachers, and raised in a house without electricity or running water, Hugo had a simple childhood of hard work and little money (McCaughan, 2004; Levin, 2007).

Like the majority of the Venezuelans, Chávez is of mixed racial origins. Great sources of inspiration for Hugo Chávez are Simon Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez (Bolívar’s revolutionary teacher), Ezequiel Zamora (leader of the peasants against the oligarchy in the Federal wars of the 1840s), and Chávez rebellious great grandfather Pedro Perez Delgado, a guerilla chief who fought with Zamora (Gott, 2005).

Chávez graduated from the Venezuelan Academy of Military Sciences in Caracas in 1975. As the economy of Venezuela deteriorated, Chávez and some friends of his travelled to Samán del Guëre, and at the site of a tree where Bolívar is said to have rested, they swore a version of the oath Bolívar had sworn in Rome in 1805, promising to free the people.

Together they founded a new organization, Revolutionary Movement -200 (Levin, 2007).

Three years after the Caracazo in 1989, Chávez and his co-conspirators set up the coup d'état on February 4<sup>th</sup> in 1992. However, the coup failed, as the coup-makers did not manage to hold key positions in Caracas. At 9:00, Chávez surrendered, but persuaded the authorities that he would be allowed to speak on TV “to avoid bloodshed”, and performed a speech during a minute which made him remembered for years (McCaughan, 2004; Levin, 2007; Gott 2005).

Released from prison in 1994, Chávez began to reorganize, forming *Movimiento Quinta Republica – MVR*. Chávez offered three main points to his voters:

- the end of puntofijismo
- the end of political corruption
- the end of poverty in Venezuela

With the largest margin in Venezuelan history, 56.2 percent of the vote, Chávez was elected president on December 6 in 1998 (Levin, 2007; Ali, 2006).

On February 2 1999, Hugo Chávez took office.

*“The changes in the constitution, as well as many of Chávez’s actions after that (and the behaviour of the Constitutional Assembly), led Chávez’s critics to question whether the process was democratic at all or whether Chávez was gradually turning into a particular charismatic caudillo<sup>4</sup> of the sort that Venezuela knows so well”*

Judith Levin, *Hugo Chávez*

Chávez launched his plan Bolívar 2000, giving the military a role that had nothing to do with weapons, but help building roads, conduct mass vaccinations and help during the mudslides of the mountain Ávila in 1999 (Gott, 2005).

Chávez rewrote the constitution by two national referendums – one to create a national constitutional assembly, the second to rewrite the constitution, which passed overwhelmingly by 71.78 percent (though 55.63 percent of the population did not vote at all). The new constitution changed, among other things, the name of Venezuela to the

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<sup>4</sup> Caudillo equals strong man, or dictator, explained in chapter 2 Latin American history

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the rights of Venezuela's indigenous people, and prohibited privatization of oil companies owned by the state (Gott, 2005).

In July 2000, Chávez was reelected on the terms of the new constitution.

According to Chávez himself, as reproduced by Levin, the goals of Bolivarianism are the following:

1. Venezuela will have complete sovereignty and not give in to international, imperialistic forces.
2. Popular votes and referenda will assure the political participation of Venezuela's people (hence creating a constitution that allows for presidential recalls).
3. Economic self-sufficiency. Chávez wants more of Venezuela's food and consumer goods to be produced within the country.
4. Support for patriotic service.
5. Fair and equitable distribution of Venezuela's oil revenue.
6. Elimination of corruption.
7. Elimination of *puntofijismo*<sup>5</sup>.

In December 2001, three years after Chávez taking office, the opposition stressed high crime figures and stagnant poverty rates. The Chávez defenders stressed the cancelled school fees, allowing 600,000 more children to go to school, reduction in infant mortality and the lessened unemployment (McCaughan, 2004).

In the shortest coup d'état in history, Chávez was removed from office for two days in April 2002 (Levin 2007). A few generals ordered the arrest of Chávez, and he was taken to a military base. As the news spread, the poor in the *ranchas* (shanty towns) around Caracas poured into the streets and marched towards the presidential palace *Miraflores*. The combination of a popular upsurge and the soldiers' disloyalty with the coup-makers saw the return of Chávez (Ali, 2006, Gott 2005).

The television had a crucial role in the coup. *The Economist* reported that the wealthy businessmen behind the private media stations in Venezuela, Gustavo Cisneros of

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<sup>5</sup> The *puntofijismo* is explained in chapter 3 Venezuela in specific.

Venevisión, Alberto Ravell of Globovisión, Marcel Granier of RCTV among others, had promised to support the coup-makers. Even though Chávez had not resigned, some television news said so, screening “Chávez resigned, democracy restored”. Later that same day, Isais Rodríguez, chief legal officer of the government, announced on television that Chávez had not yet resigned while the Fedecameras<sup>6</sup> leader Pedro Carmona was sworn in as interim president also showed on television. However, Carmona, who had not been elected, appeared as a caudillo<sup>7</sup>, and the new government was only recognized by USA and El Salvador. And by April 13, Chávez supporters poured into the streets and the guard retook the presidential palace (Ali, 2006; McCaughan, 2004; Levin, 2007). The private television channels refused to film the crowds coming down from the hills, but aired cartoons and old movies throughout the day (Gott, 2005).

By 3:45 a.m. Sunday April 14, Chávez was returned to Miraflores.

In August 2004, the opposition called for a recall referendum to overthrow Chávez, but he won the elections once again with 59,25 percent of the votes (Gott, 2005).

Chávez’s confrontational discourse with the U.S, the close relation to Fidel Castro’s Cuba and international initiatives like *la Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas* (ALBA), *el Banco del Sur*, and the television channel Telesur, are parts of Chávez international agenda. *The 21st century socialism* of Hugo Chávez may be an ambitious project, however González Urrutia stresses the possibility of these actions being contradictory to the democratic form of government (Natanson, 2005). In December 2007, a second referendum for changes in the constitution was held, where Chávez proposed six hours working day, but also more power directed under him. Only this time, Chávez lost an election for the first time (49.3 percent versus 50.7 percent).

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<sup>6</sup> Fedecamaras is the Venezuelan employers’ federation.

<sup>7</sup> Caudillo equals strong man or dictator, explained in chapter 2 Latin American history

## **4 Mass media in Latin America**

### ***4.1 Latin American press in a historical perspective***

In the beginning, inspired by European (particularly French) press-traditions, Latin American television and newspapers chose “journalism of opinion” as their press model. The mission of the press was to “support candidates rather than turning a profit or delivering ‘objective’ news” (Waisbord, 2000). Journalism was seen upon as a political and cultural tribune and was used to support political parties<sup>8</sup> rather than being a “neutral witness to history” (Waisbord, 2000).

In the post-Second World War period, the partisan press slowly started to fade out in favor for a press model developed in the USA – a journalistic tradition independent from party and government influences with objective reporting and commercial success as main goals. Partisan independence was then to guide modern newspapers, which expressed the emergence of an urban middle class (Curran & Park 2000, Waisbord 2000).

The U.S. press model was more visible in the rhetoric of publishers than in actual content. The necessary developments that took place in the United States had not occurred in Latin America. According to several analysts, cited in Waisbord (2000), the simultaneous growth of an urban middle class was essential, and in Latin America the numbers of readers were limited. There were not enough advertisers, and the nationalization of huge companies in the 1940s and 1950s, such as oil, water, telephone, electricity, made the state the main advertiser. This caused the power balance between media and political forces to survive almost intact. The state also controlled the issuing of permits to import machinery, forgive debts and declare tax exemption and could manipulate those in order to support or destroy a newspaper. The newspapers continued to court the state, rather than the market, to survive. Cooperation and mutual advantages were typical (Curran & Park, 2000).

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<sup>8</sup> “In the nineteenth century, twenty presidents had been newspaper owners, publishers, or editors.” (Waisbord, 2000)

The politicized culture combined with cycles of military governments from the 1930s onward did not provide a hospitable environment for nonpartisan journalism. By the mid-1970s, all South American countries, with the exception of Colombia and Venezuela, were under military dictatorships (Curran & Park, 2000). If trying to maintain an objective reporting, civilian and military government closed down media firms, censored newsrooms and tortured, imprisoned and killed critical journalists. Many newspapers took cautious positions and supported coups and military regimes, justifying it with having the “national interest” in mind.<sup>9</sup>

## ***4.2 Media in Latin America today***

In Latin America, there is a television in almost every house from shanty towns to posh neighbourhoods. In Mexico for example, 50-75 percent list television as their principal source of political information (Curran & Park, 2000). The most important medium of communication is television.

Statistics from the World Bank and the UN indicates an average in the Latin American region of 71 newspapers per 1.000 people, 413 radio receivers per 1.000 people, 269 television set per 1.000 people, 20 cable subscribers per 1.000 people and 35,7 Internet users per 1.000 people (ranges from 2002). Though, while analyzing the access to television, the rate should be quadrupled as the average inhabitants per household are four persons (Guzmán, 2005). Hence, the coverage of television is almost total (when referring to terrestrial television) in Latin America, though the coverage is generally lower in Central America, Bolivia and Peru.

According to the most recent ratings of the regarded Freedom House, there are 17 countries in the Americas that are considered free (49 %), 14 countries as partly free (40 %), and 3 countries as not free (11%), regarding freedom of press. The three American countries lacking freedom of press are Haiti, Cuba and Venezuela.

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<sup>9</sup> Waisbord (2000) mentions, among others, the support of the coup in Chile 1973, the military regime in Argentina that came to power in 1976, and Brazilian dailies that applauded the military intervention that dethroned João Goulart in 1964.



Waisbord (2000) argues that the absence of efforts to incorporate different voices in media in Latin America is alarming. He also claims that governments continue to use more or less subtle threats against news organizations and journalists who cross boundaries of expected behavior. Intertwined government-media relations continue to set boundaries on critical reporting (Curran & Park, 2000) and government officials can reward loyal reporters with exclusive information and influence the news agenda through news frames and information leaks. National states are the licensing authority of national television and radio channels, therefore national states still largely determine who has control over television and radio. In addition, they have a range of informal ways of influencing the media, from information management to the provision of loans (Curran & Park, 2000).

The increased concentration of news organization together with the rough market has made it even more difficult for small- or medium sized newspapers, relatively autonomous from the market, to survive. A number of companies in Latin America have created hegemonic positions, in particular Televisa, based in Mexico, and Globo, based in Brazil. The Cisneros Group, based in Venezuela, also plays a significant role both in Latin America and in the USA.

With the Herfindahl index, the market concentration in Latin American Television in Argentina is rated 2.475, Venezuela 3.800, and Mexico 5.672. The Herfindahl index rates from zero to 10.000: the indices represent the sum of the squares of the market shares of each company; higher scores indicate more concentration.

This hegemony is threatened mainly from the USA. In 1996, 6 percent of the total audiovisual imports to Latin America came from within the Latin American region (the same amount that was imported from Europe, mostly from Spain and Portugal) and 86 percent came from the USA. Five companies accounted for 94 percent of programmes exported; Televisa, Globo, Venevisión, RCTV and Spain's RTVE (Chalaby 2005, chapter 9). The companies exported 50 percent within the region, 23 percent to the USA, 9 percent to Europe and 18 percent to the rest of the world. *Telenovelas*, soap-operas in Spanish, is Latin Americas major export genre. In 1998, only 30 percent of the television programmes aired in Latin America originated from the continent. Even the news about Latin America, largely comes from sources originating from the Western hemisphere (Burch, 2006)

Daniel C. Hallin (Curran & Myung-Jin Park, 2000) has studied the media situation in Mexico. Like many other Latin American countries, the Mexican newspapers are read only by the middle or upper class, while television is the main industry. Yet television is the least open of Mexico's media (Curran & Myung-Jin Park 2000). Televisa has cooperated with the government, which is especially visible during election campaigns.<sup>10</sup> According to Hallin, the politician culture also shows in Televisa's news presentation:

*Officials, and particularly the president, are treated with extreme deference, with reporters summarizing their words and the anchor praising their wisdom in frequent unlabelled commentaries. Negative news – about unemployment, corruption, disasters – was kept to a minimum. Ordinary citizens, meanwhile, traditionally appeared in the news in subservient roles, most of the time to receive clientelist benefits from political patrons.*

### **4.3 Venezuelan mass media**

According to Utrikespolitiska Institutets *Landguiden*, in Venezuela the number of television sets per 1.000 people are 186 (2003). Though, while analyzing the access to television, the rate should be quadrupled as the average inhabitants per household are four persons (Guzmán, 2005). In Venezuela, 98 percent of the population has access to television (in 2001), which can be compared to the fact that 95 percent has access to a refrigerator (Guzmán, 2005). In 2005, 600,000 of the 4.5 million televisions were connected to a cable network (Buxton 2007).

Television and radio reaches a greater part of the population than the newspapers and magazines, in Venezuela as well as Latin America in general.

According to studies (cited in Wilpert, 2007) only about five TV stations, a handful of radio stations, and a few newspapers are viewed, listened to, or read by most Venezuelans. *Radio Caracas de Televisión*, RCTV, was the most popular and one of the most anti-Chávez TV stations, but is now only viewable on cable (Wilpert, 2007). It is owned by one of the

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<sup>10</sup> According to Hallin, (p.99) in the 1988s election, Televisa devoted more than 80 percent of its election coverage to the ruling party. In 1994 the coverage of the opposition grew substantially, still the stories of the ruling party's campaign were "full of color and enthusiasm, while those on the opposition were at best colorless."

country's richest families, the Phelps family, which also owns soap and food production and construction companies. The second largest, *Venevisión*, is owned by Gustavo Cisneros, a Cuban-Venezuelan media mogul, one of the world's richest men; owning about 70 media outlets in 39 countries. The channel was as anti-Chávez as RCTV (or even more) until June 2004 when Chávez and Cisneros agreed to a media cease-fire (Wilpert, 2007). There's also *Televen*, *Globovisión*, and the governmental *Venezolana de Televisión* (VTV).

VTV has been a state channel for most of Venezuela's democratic history. It is not a public service channel as is the case with their European counterparts, that tend to be more independent of the government. Most of VTV's programme listings are quite political, with many pro-government public service announcements and political talk shows in which government representatives or supporters predominate (Wilpert, 2007).

*Televen* is one of the country's newer channels, broadcasting since 1988, and is slightly more neutral.

*Globovisión* is a 24-hour news and opinion channel, founded in 1994 by some of Venezuela's upper crust. The channel only covers three major cities, but is very important politically. It is as opposition-oriented as a television station could be, broadcasting anti-government opinions and analysis 24 hours a day (Wilpert, 2007, Cañizález, 2007).

95% of all media outlets (TV, radio, and print) are privately owned and a majority of these are more sympathetic with the opposition than with Chavez and his government (Wilpert, 2007). However the two television stations with the largest national reach are governmental friendly channels; TVes and VTV. The private domestic stations have a far more limited range, since they broadcast mainly in bigger cities (Wilpert, 2007). In Venezuela there are more than 40 private television stations and 128 cable channels operating (Najjar, 2007). Though, by 2007 over 700 community-based media was formed by government financial support (Buxton 2007).

## 4.2.1 Chávez' media policies

*“Our presence in mass media is crucial to the development of the Revolution”*

Hugo Chávez

Chávez made his first cadena<sup>11</sup> by the coup in 1992, which made him famous.

Morales and Pereira (2003) identify the President himself as the only important spokesperson for the sitting government, which is in part an historic tendency named *Presidencialismo Comunicativo* (communicative presidency) of the president communicating directly with his citizens.

Chávez is not the first president to have a communicational strategy. Since 1935, mechanisms of communication have been established in Venezuela. Carlos Andres Pérez, during his second mandatory (1989-1993), internationalized the governmental news agency *Venpres*, with the idea of associating all the governmental news agencies in Latin America. The project did not survive the destitution of Pérez in 1993.

According to Gustavo Hernández, director of Instituto de Investigaciones de la Comunicación (ININCO) in Caracas, there has been a change in mass media during the Chávez years (Morales & Pereira, 2003), including the redesign of the governmental news agency, now named *Agencia Bolivariana de Noticias* (ABN), Telesur, and other initiatives like ALBA (Cañizález & Lugo).

In practice, there were two strategies during the years 1999-2002: the successful radio and television show “Aló Presidente”, and the cadenas in radio and television. Between 2/2-1999 and 24/2 2002, Chávez used the cadenas 377 times, in total 311 hours of broadcast. Adding the 100 shows of “Aló Presidente” during this same period, approximately 300 hrs, Chávez used 611 hrs of broadcast during his first three years as president (Morales & Pereira, 2003: Cañizález & Lugo).

During the period 1999-2007, 1.513 cadenas was registred – 890 hours, 29 minutes and 44 seconds of transmission. In other words – during his first eight years in office, Chávez spoke 31 days, 2 hours, 29 minutes and 44 seconds – counting just the cadenas (Cañizález, 2007).

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<sup>11</sup> Explained in chapter 3.3.5 The coup d'état contra Chávez, 2002

The coup in 2002 was a turning point in the history of Venezuelan mass media. As the private media allied themselves with the opposition both during the coup and the general strike in December 2002, the government turned towards alternative media (Cañizález & Lugo). According to Pasquali (2007), the government is now, step by step, taking over all the mediatic power, creating a mediatic hegemony. One way of cutting off information, was when in January 2007 all the press offices of the government – at the ministries and at the police forces – were shut down, leaving only the presidential one at Miraflores and MINCI – *Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación y Información*. Pasquali does not believe there is going to be a complete elimination of free information, but a slower, guerilla-tactic step by step-reduction of freedom of press. At the same time, the governmental channels of mass media will increase.

The last three years, the Venezuelan government has created new television channels, such as *Vive*, *Asamblea Nacional TV*, *Ávila TV* and *Telesur*. There's also a trend towards self-censorship and less criticism amidst the private television channels, such as *Televen* and *Venevisión*. Venezuelan media has moved towards greater polarization, and independent sources of information are rare (Landguiden).

The *National Plan for Telecommunication, Information and Postal service* (eds.), is the government's media strategy from 2007 to 2013. The plan addresses telecommunication as a tool to “socialize the awareness” and contribute to the political, social, cultural, territorial and economical development of the country. It also states that in order to build a new, socialistic road, the old capitalist outline must be destroyed. The plan includes both the development for public service, a better range of Internet and mobile phones in the country and new media laws.

According to the Constitution, Venezuela possesses freedom of press. However, since 2004 and 2005 new laws regulate certain demands of the content of mass media, and acts of disinformation, slander or contempt regarding officials are punished severely (Landguiden). According to *el código penal* (the penalty code), by publishing insults of the president, you are sentenced to 40 months in prison, for insults of other civil servants, 20 months, and 15 days for defamation (MINCI, 23 May 2005).

Another law, *Ley Restorte* (*Ley de Responsabilidad Social en Radio y Televisión* - Law on Social Responsibility on Radio and Television, eds.) is referred to as *Ley Morzada* – “The Gag Law”, giving the state the power of interrupting any kind of transmission (Comunica 2005). The law has been criticized for undermining the freedom of press, and after it was announced, 50 percent of the television programs was taken off the air (Pasquali, 2007).

Venezuela is also facing problems of auto censorship in the media. The president has already chosen not to renew the licence of a critical channel, and in a speech held before the referendum in 2007, Chávez threatened to close down other critical channels or even throw CNN España out of the country<sup>12</sup>.

There are still problems with violence against journalists in Venezuela, as in the rest of Latin America. In 2004 there were 305 reported cases of violence, mostly intimidation (22%) but also 43 cases (14%) of reported censorship and one murder. When intimidation occurred, one third of the cases were executed from the state (Correa, 2005).

#### **4.2.2 The closing of RCTV**

*“There is no longer a television program with national coverage that openly criticizes or questions the Government’s actions. The disappearance of this open signal implies a complete change in how Venezuelans, particularly the poorer segment, watches television”*

Andrés Cansales, Reporters without Borders’ correspondent in Venezuela (Ruiz, 2007)

According to Ruiz as well as Cañizalez, until the coup d’état in 2002, Chávez did not have a clear communication policy. However, as television played an important role in the coup, and many media channels openly supported the coup, the government started putting together a media policy.

May 27 2007, the government did not renew *Radio Caracas Televisions* (RCTV) license. RCTV is the oldest channel of Venezuela, broadcasting for over 50 years, and had the highest audience ratings of the terrestrial TV channels (Cañizález, 2007). With RCTV now broadcasting by satellite, Globovisión only reaching a limited part of the Venezuelan

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<sup>12</sup> In a speech by Hugo Chávez 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 2007

audience and the new softer approach toward the government of Televen and Venevisión, there is today “no media with national coverage that reaches the lower income segment that is critical of the Government” (Ruiz, 2007; Cañizález, 2007).

According to Cañizález, the closing of RCTV should not be seen as an isolated occurrence, but as one of many actions in the construction of information hegemony, launched by the Chávez administration (Cañizález, 2007). Andres Izarra, formerly the Government’s Communication and Information Minister and today president of Telesur, early in 2007 said that the president has been referring to seven strategic points, and that the non-renewal of the RCTV concession was part of this. He also referred to a developed plan that “should entail State communicational and information hegemony”<sup>13</sup>

At the same occasion as the decision about RCTV, the government announced a reduction in terms of the time of licences. Earlier, the licences ran for 20 years. Today, they run for 5 years, which contribute to self-censorship of the media.

To Cañizález, this signifies a dangerous step back from the plurality of information. To others, RCTV supporting the overthrow of a democratically elected president was reason enough not to renew the RCTV’s licence. McCaughan (2004) even calls Chávez a “hyperdemocrat”, as Chávez allowed the private media to keep clamouring the removal of Venezuelan democratic representants.

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<sup>13</sup> In an interview with Andres Izarra in El Nacional, January 8, 2007

## 5 Theoretical framework

### 5.1 Mass medial regionalization and globalization

*“The rise of transnational television lies at the heart of the current regional and global reshaping of media industries and cultures”*

Jean K. Chalaby, *Transnational television worldwide*

Hjarvard (2003) describes the importance of mass media to globalization in three ways; “as channels of communication, as messengers bringing knowledge to the world, and as facilitators of a new social infrastructure”. Media today has the same role natural and physical infrastructure had earlier. And to get through this global media system to the social reality, *it is crucial to be visible*. Hjarvard argues that the media as well are independent messengers, producing their own messages<sup>14</sup>.

According to McQuail, mass media is not only affected by globalization, however is also part of it. McQuail argues that television probably is the most potent influence in the media globalization process, a process caused by technological (cable, satellites) and economical achievements (McQuail, 2000). However, despite the attractions of the global mass media flow, language differences still present a real barrier (Biltereyst 1992, cited in McQuail, 2000), and the geocultural region plays an important role in the globalization of mass media. What is said to be a process of globalization, very often turns out to be one of regionalization, as media markets are local by definition, and because of barriers like culture and language. Latin America, as well as the Middle East, is in comparison a culturally and linguistically homogenous region (Chalaby 2005), which could contribute to the success of regional channels, like al-Jazeera or Telesur.

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<sup>14</sup> See further under *Framing*



## **5.2 Transnational television and news**

News, as a product, became commoditized early by the international news agencies that rose in the twentieth century, due to new technology, and stimulated by war, trade, imperialism and industrial expansion (Boyd-Barett, 1980; 2001; Boyd-Barett and Rantanen, 1998, cited in McQuail, 2000). News in television can consist of the same pictures worldwide, added with words in any language, or any “angle”. The news agencies were, and still are, dominantly European and American, and the flow of mass media from the developed world to the less developed world was seen as both good for its recipients and good for combating socialism. The media was not exactly propagandistic, however did represent “western values”. According to Tunstall and Machin, there is a virtual “world news duopoly” controlled by the US Associated Press and the British Reuters (1999:77, cited in McQuail, 2000). And, according to McQuail, even though the global media culture seems value-free, it does carry with it values of capitalism, individualism and consumerism (McQuail, 2000).

## **5.3 International media dependency**

*“What determines and influences our consciousness; how we think, behave and act? The spirit of the age? How should that be defined? The pressures and processes of everyday life as experienced within the specific social structures of a dominant counter-revolutionary state and its allies are the answer by this author.”*

Tariq Ali, *Pirates of the Caribbean*

Dependency theorists stress the importance of some self-sufficiency in the realm of information, ideas and culture. Galtung (1965) explains it by a centre-periphery model, according to which the nations of the world can be classified as central and dominant actors, or peripheral and dependent ones. Galtung shows that there is only a limited flow between the peripheral countries, even though there are regional and language-based patterns of exchange (in McQuail, 2000).

The dependency theory is strongly connected to the thesis of “cultural imperialism”, or “media imperialism”. Both imply an attempt to dominate the “cultural space” of others, in

terms of political as well as cultural content. It is an unequal relationship in terms of power. In the case of Latin America, during the 1960s and 1970s, there was certainly an American imperialist project, according to Dorfman and Mattelart (1975, cited in McQuail, 2000).

According to the media imperialist thesis, there are four effects of globalization:

- Global media promotes relations of dependency rather than economic growth
- The imbalance in the flow of mass media content undermines cultural autonomy or holds back its development
- The unequal relationship in the flow of news increases the relative global power of large and wealthy news-producing countries and hinders the growth of an appropriate national identity and self-image.
- Global media flows give rise to a state of cultural homogenization or synchronization, leading to a dominant form of culture that has no specific connection with real experience for most people.

(McQuail, 2000)

One of the media dependency theorists is Tariq Ali, member of the advisory committee of Telesur. He argues that the numerous 24-hour news channels that dominate the world we live in are all part of the same Empire, all except two: al-Jazeera and Telesur.

The others, owned by a handful of “global tycoons”, are viewed by Ali rather promoting regime change than freedom of speech (Ali, 2006). To Ali, the coverage of the Venezuelan coup d’état, exemplifies it:

*“The temporary overthrow of an elected President was so loudly cheered by the politicians and media watchdogs that one might have been forgiven for imagining that we were back in the times of colonial suppressions of native uprisings. Virtually the same commentary appeared in most of the mainstream press and TV channels. (...) The most sophisticated media technology is now put in service of the primitive and simplistic needs of the system, delivering whatever is required, including coups d’état and scabrous replacements for elected presidents.”*

### 5.3.1 The UNESCO-initiative and Proyecto Ratelve

A debate about the imbalance in the flow of mass media rose in the 1970s. Media-dependent countries attempted to use *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Educational Organization* (UNESCO) to make a *New World Information and Communication Order* (NWICO) (McQuail, 2000, and Carlsson, 2003). 1978, UNESCO, on the behalf of the Third World countries, attempted to introduce a declaration of a number of principles for the behavior of international media.

This occurred in a time of cold war, post colonialism, and internationalization of the world. There was a western hegemony in terms of political and military power, however also a one way flow of information. Two main paradigms dominated the visions of development: modernization and dependency, and mass media had a central role in both.

UNESCO, an international scene of politics of international aid and having a normative role, was the given arena. The Third World demanded a new world order of information, consisting of “the four Ds”:

- *Democratization* of the flow of information between countries,
- *Decolonization* – cultural identity, independence, self-determination,
- *Demonopolization*, restrictions of the transnational communication companies’ activities
- *Development*, regional cooperation, education, development of infrastructures (Carlsson 2003)

The MacBride commission report, finished in 1980, led to the MacBride declaration. However, questions about development and aid got the upper hand, and because of the free-market media and the western countries opposing the declaration and the British and American withdrawal from UNESCO, the declaration failed. By the general conference in 1989, the free flow information was reestablished (Carlsson 2003, McQuail, 2000).

Two of the NWICO-spokesmen were the Venezuelan investigators Antonio Pasquali and Elizabeth Safar. Together with a group of investigators, they founded *Proyecto Ratelve – El proyecto de Radiodifusión educativa pública* (The public educative radiofusional project) (Comunica, 2005), because of the growing conscious of the situation of the government

administrated channels, and the need to democratize media in Latin America in the 1970s. Elizabeth Safar describes *Rateve* as a diagnosis of the Venezuelan media, as well as a suggestion for how public service could work in the country. In the document *tercer polo radiotelevisivo*, it is proposed that media should not be dependent of the market, nor the government (Calderón, 2005). At that time, the Venezuelan media was stringly dominated by private media, and the idea was to offer a complementary program listing to create a democratic, pluralistic public service, with a total coverage of the Venezuelan audience. When presented, *proyecto Rateve* was severely critized by the private media. The Venezuelan government buried the project, not daring to challenge the private media. By doing so, *proyecto Rateve* failed the same way as the MacBride Declaration.

Safar as well as Pasquali expresses deep concerns of what is happening with the freedom of expression today in Venezuela. Earlier, the private media was the greater danger to freedom of press (as seen when turning down the *Proyecto Rateve*). Today, it is the governmental tendency towards a mediatic hegemony that provides the danger, rather than the private media (Pasquali, 2007)<sup>15</sup>.

Today, Carlsson (2003) argues, the one way flow is even stronger. The market is dominated by some tens companies, many of them originated in the United States (Chalaby, 2005). The amount of information is many times over what it was, mainly due to development of technology, making the division between rural and urban even bigger. Any kinds of traces from the UNESCO-initiative are hard to find in the Third World today (Carlsson, 2003). To Elizabeth Safar, Venezuela today consists of private and governmental media, instead of private media and public service (as was the idea of *Rateve*). Safar argues that the lack of public service is not total – for example, only in Mexico, there are more than 1500 non-commercial radio channels. What is lacking is structure, and co-operation.

Hjarvard on the other hand, does not look at the development in the same way. Even though there is a capitalist market striving for rationalization, at the same time there is a tendency “towards pluralism and openness in the current global media system” (Hjarvard, 2003).

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<sup>15</sup> See further in chapter 4.2.1 Chávez’ media policies

## 5.4 News bias and the framing of news

The *agenda-setting* theory was created by the media-scientists Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw (1972). They noticed the following phenomenon:

*“The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its reader what to think about”* (cited in Nord & Strömbäck, 2004).

Ragnar Waldahl (1993) argues (cited in Nord & Strömbäck, 2004) that media also has got the power to show you what *not* to think *anything* about, to make a subject invisible. In the society of today it is practically impossible to be heard or acknowledged without the participation of media. If the media chooses to neglect a subject or a person, they will become more or less invisible to the public.

The theory on framing is a development of the agenda-setting theory. It focuses on the way media chooses to present different aspects of reality and how these presentations affect the way the public experiences the reality.

Framing consists of two ideas; firstly, it is the way news are created and put into context by the journalists, structured in a way that is familiar and widely accepted.

Secondly, it is the process when the public's frame of reference is affected by the image of reality that the journalists are presenting. It can be looked upon as a tool kit provided to the audience to process the information. Research shows that the less interested and informed a person is, the more he accepts the image of reality the media presents to him (Hjarvard, 2001, Nord & Strömbäck, 2004).

Objectivity is one of the most central concepts in journalism. Objectivity includes adopting a position of neutrality towards the object of reporting, not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias, and keeping to accuracy and other truth criteria; such as relevance and completeness. Different points of view should be treated as of equal standing and relevance; by allowing equal space or time for alternative perspectives. Information should be balanced and impartial, reported in a non-sensational, unbiased way (McQuail, 2000).

According to McQuail (2000), typical examples of news 'bias' can be:

- Media news over-represents the social 'top' and official voices in its sources.
- News attention is differentially bestowed on members of political and social elites.
- News reflects the values and power distribution of a male-dominated society
- Women have tended to appear in stereotyped occupational and domestic roles and are generally more passive and in the background.

Bias can distort reality; creating the image of a passive citizen and stereotype women or differentially favouring a particular political party or philosophy.

Most public service broadcasting carries an agenda and can be bias when following it. We define public service as pluralistic; with main objective to provide information to the public; freestanding from political influences and the market.

## **5.5 The theory of news value**

In the theory of *the structure of foreign news*, Galtung and Ruge (1965) claim that a remote and low rank country only makes it through to broadcast or to the printers if the news are:

1. Easily capturing your attention, like disasters or crime. This creates an image of a dangerous place where accidents occur suddenly and without warning.
2. Simple. This leads to generalization and bias that people are un-civilized.
3. Expected. A coup d'état in Latin America confirms your prejudices. This makes the nation seem unchangeable.
4. Negative.

All together this creates the image Latin Americans get from watching news about themselves made in the Western hemisphere by the United States or Spain (Galtung, Ruge, 1965).

## **5.6 De-westernizing Media Studies**

According to the authors of *De-westernizing media studies* (Curran & Park, 2000), many of the theories used in the west finds limited support when applied to media systems in other parts of the world. In many parts of the world the national political authority still intervene with media systems through direct and indirect means, and globalization does little to help

freedom, media diversity and social emancipation to spread. In many countries, like in Latin America, the market is part of the system of power and uses their power to silence the press.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of a one-way flow of communication from the West was challenged by “reverse colonization,” (as cited in Curran & Park, 2000) for example the Mexicanization of southern California<sup>16</sup>. The media imperialism theory also underestimates the local resistance to American domination. Research show that the population prefer locally made programs (cited in Curran & Park, 2000); political resistance, with a number of states supporting local media production through subsidies, investment quotas, import and ownership restrictions (cited in Curran & Park, 2000); and cultural resistance, rooted in tenacious local traditions and social networks. Defenders respond that media activity may be multidirectional but it is still very unequal. Though there is global cultural diversity, the different media cultures are still driven by different hegemonies.

Sinclair (Chalaby 2005, chapter 9) argues that audiences prefer programme listings that is close or proximate to their own culture and that “Latin America has developed its own television programme listings production and distribution structures, and genres that are popular at local, national and regional levels”. The elites are the ones who subscribe to satellite and cable with shows from the US, and relatively few viewers have the full range of choice. This helps creating segregated media consumption. Joseph Straubhaar (cited in Chalaby 2005, chapter 9) claims that there is a class factor in the preference for television programme listings which derives from one’s own language and culture:

*New research seems to point to a greater traditionalism and loyalty to national and local cultures by lower or popular classes, who show the strongest tendency to seek greater cultural proximity in television programs and other cultural products.”*

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<sup>16</sup> The Latin American audiovisual space includes not only Latin America but also North America and Iberian Europe. It is both hemispheric and transatlantic. “...with its over 35 million ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latinos’ it is actually the fifth-largest, and the wealthiest, domestic television market in the Spanish-speaking world” (Chalaby 2005, chapter 9).

## 6 Methods and material

In order to answer the question of the establishment of Telesur, historical documents and official information has been used. The sources used are mainly papers and news articles from MINCI, *Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Comunicación y Información*.

Telesur was contacted several times but would not provide material to answer the question. They did not want to give interviews nor answer how many employees and correspondents the company has, their budget, if more countries were to join in 2008, or other questions. When making complementary interviews with Luisa Torrealba and Elizabeth Safar at ININCO, they stressed that it is getting harder and harder to get information from governmental sources. Facts that could seem innocent, like the number of viewers, are considered corporate secrets.

The method used to answer question two and three is the quantitative analysis of content, a method that can claim some measure of scientific reliability since it can be replicated by different people and still get the same findings. Content analysis is held to be reliable and reproducible (McQuail, 2000). It is a method often used in television analyses, suggested by Stig Hjarvard in *Internationale TV-nyheder* (1995) and used in studies like *Svenskt TV-utbud 1996*, a studie of Swedish television in 1996.

The first quantitative analysis (research question two) examines the Telesur chart, using the chart during one coherent week. The chart as well as the daily broadcasts were provided by Telesur's official homepage, <http://www.telesurtv.net>, and consisted of the programme listings from 10<sup>th</sup> of December to 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2007, 130 programmes in total.

The second quantitative analysis (research question three) consists of the daily news broadcast, analyzing a total number of 197 news segments. The broadcasts chosen are the *Noticieros Meridianos* (midday news broadcast) at seven different occasions; 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 12<sup>th</sup> of November, 19<sup>th</sup> of November and 26<sup>th</sup> of November (all in 2007). As the casts are spread over seven weeks they form a synthetical week, which according to Östbye (2003) is the model preferable.

The methods are further explained in chapter 6.3 and 6.4.



## **6.1 Shortcomings of methods**

There are two principal factors limiting the results of a quantitative analysis of content. Firstly, the analysis is limited to the characteristics measurable in quantities. Secondly, the result is completely dependent on the variables chosen – by deciding the code book; one will decide what will be measurable and what not. There are a number of difficulties stipulating the variables; hence they have to be clearly demarcated and at the same time cover the whole material (Hjarvard, 1995). In Appendix I and II follows an explanation regarding the variables used.

Language barriers were also a problem to take in concern. However, since the analysis excludes linguistic approaches, and by considering the possible linguistic shortcomings while developing the methods used, the thesis manage to avoid linguistic related problems. Since television is a combination of image and sound; one has to take the visual part of the message seriously; yet due to the limited size of the thesis this is not possible (Östbye, 2003).

Claes de Vreese (cited in Hjarvard 2001) stresses that a quantitative approach can be insufficient, and that understanding the national institutional, political and social context, and the national norms and roles of journalism in which news is produced, is equally important. Thus, this essay assigns significant space in order to attend to the history of Venezuela and Latin America.

## **6.2 Reliability**

By having two persons decoding the same broadcast and chart, comparing the results, observing the inclarities, discussing and adjusting the code book again to make the directions unambiguos, the reliability of this study is confirmed (Östbye, 2003).

### 6.3 Quantitative analysis, chart

By making an over-all analysis of the chart, the thesis hopes to complement the quantitative analysis of the news broadcast. The news broadcast is only a part of the programmes displayed on Telesur; hence the chart analysis will answer to which programmes and what genres Telesur has chosen to represent their agenda. The analysis will also examine in which countries the material is produced and what these variables could help determine in the question regarding Telesur's agenda - pan-Latin American integration and anti-imperialism.

The period for the chart analysis is one week, 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2007. There are always difficulties when choosing time period, since the aim is avoiding grander events or special time periods that can affect the chart. However, there was no evidence of such affection, noticeable in the analysis.

The Telesur weekly chart consists of between 25 and 30 programmes. Some of the programmes are every-day shows, like sports and news. Some are all-embracing headlines that contain different programmes, like *Cubanos en primer Plano* (Cubans at the front page) that contains a different music documentary every time it is shown. When looking at the following week, 18-25 December, the same all-embracing headlines keep occurring, naturally with a different content. A small number of new programmes occur. There seem to be different theme shows every week, the week analysed *A Latina* (towards the Latin American) – reportages by Tatto Contiza, the following week *Visión Sur* (Vision South) – News co-produced with Argentinian Canal 7.

The method, while developed, has been inspired by *Svensket teventbud 1996* (Hillve & Majanen, 1997). Definitions of the variables used follows in Appendix II.

The results will be accounted for both in percentage of time and in percentage of total number of programmes.

## **6.4 Quantitative analysis of content; segments of news broadcast:**

The code book is influenced by Hjarvard's (1995) analyses of international television news broadcasts, and by his classifications and delimitations concerning variables and variable values. As Hjarvard, this thesis divides the variable *topics* in two: the first variable consisting of fewer values, the second of more. In the case of *topics*, Golding and Elliotts' method of quantitative analysis of content also influenced the code book (1979, cited in Hjarvard, 1995), given account and explanations here below.

As Hjarvard, this thesis aims to elucidate the following aspects:

1. The composition of news segments regarding content.
  2. The geographical representation of news segments.
  3. The division between regional, domestic and international segments.
  4. The composition of segments regarding topics and their geographical origin.
- (Hjarvard, 1995)

Adding more variables to the code book, this thesis also aims to examine:

1. In what ways the presidents of Telesur's founding nations are portrayed
2. The occurrence of segments that are clearly pro pan-Latin American integration and/or against imperialism.
3. The presence of background and analyses regarding the segments of a program and their momentum.

This chapter explains the structure of the variables used, with the intention of making the study possible to repeat. The chapter does not claim to give a complete account of the decisions taken when performing the analysis; but implies some of the problems faced in the process of decisiontaking.

The variable *topic* presupposes the value considered to be centered in the segment. Even though one segment might stress both natural resources and indigenous people, it will be

categorized as the variable *natural resources* in cases where the resources constitute the actual news.

For example, when the Kazakhstan minister meets with the Iranian minister to talk about oil in the Caspian Sea, the topic is to be considered *natural resources* and not *international politics*.

The topic has to be as precise as possible; in order to prevent every discussion between states to end up in *international politics*.

The *generalizing topics* helps to summon the preciser topics into more general categories, as done in *Svensket TV-utbud* (1996).

*The visibility of the agenda of Telesur* – pro-regionalizing and anti-imperialism, is believed to be clear in the news broadcast. The agenda must be the supreme message in the segment, or specifically mentioned, in order to be counted as a segment that is in fact pro-regionalizing or anti-imperialistic.

Hjarvard (1995) differs between the geographical origin of the image showed and the geographical origin of the subject. In this thesis, those cases where the two differs, the geographical origin of the image will be superior; the country where an action takes place will be *main country*. When President Chávez goes to France to meet with Nicolas Sarkozy to talk about the guerillas hostages in Colombia, the feature is shot in France which makes France the main country. By settling the main country of the segment, the thesis will answer if the broadcasts are geographically balanced. This will also answer whether or not Latin America largely dominates the broadcasts.

Due to shortcomings in only evaluating the *main country*, *secondary country* is also specified. The secondary country is not visible in all segments but can be used in the frequent occasions where two countries occurs; negotiating, trading or disagreeing. A country like Cuba, often occurring as *secondary country* while cooperating with Venezuela, will be visible when summoning the results; since both *main* and *secondary country* will be accounted for. When more than three Latin American countries are involved will be specified as *Latin America*.

*Main character*, *perception of main character* and *Chávez* are three variables that hopefully will determine the extension of presence of the presidents of Telesur's founding nations and how

they are perceived. The hypothesis, and also a common belief is that the founding governments of Telesur use their own creation to broadcast propaganda, and that this portrays itself in the level of attention given to their presidents. In order to be specified as being a *main character* the president must be the main speaker.

The variable simply called *Chávez* is a safety variable in order to make sure all segments where Telesur's main funder is visible, although not as main character, will be accounted for. *Division of actor* and *gender* will display whether or not Telesur is making an effort towards being a none-bias channel for, hence *with*, the citizens of Latin America. An actor who gets to express himself and not be passive is superior. By measuring the *time* and *type of segment* occurring, the presence of background and analysis in the news segments and their momentum will be noticed.

## 7 Results

### 7.1 How was Telesur established?

In a media venture in partnership, Venezuela, together with Cuba, Argentina and Uruguay launched Telesur for the first time on 24th of July 2005 - the anniversary of the birth of Simón Bolívar (Calderón, 2005). The channel claims to be the first multi-state public-service channel in the world (Burch 2007). It started broadcasting on a limited schedule, and began full-time broadcasts on 31<sup>st</sup> of October that same year (Najjar, 2007).

*“The awakening of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean will make the liberation of this continent possible, as the awakening of the people of the world will make the salvation of the world possible, because the path of capitalism, of neoliberalism, is the path of destruction of life on earth, The moment to change the history has come”*

Hugo Chávez on the purpose of Telesur, 24th of July, 2005

Telesur was brought to records on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2005, announced in *Gazeta Oficial de La Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela, decreto 337088* (The Official Gazette of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).

Chávez, in his announcement, publicized that the channel would incorporate material from public channels in Argentina, Brasil and Venezuela, to show the social reality of Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **The Telesur agenda**

Telesur is a pan-Latin American channel, based in Caracas, Venezuela, created to provide an alternative to the main private television channels such as CNN Español, which are often based in the Western hemisphere (Buxton 2007). The channel hopes to encourage regional integration, and set another news agenda than the one of Washington Consensus and the US foreign policy in the region (Burch 2007). The vice president of Telesur, Yuri Pimentel, assured that “the Latin American countries are engaging in a war, a war to liberate us from the American hegemony that is controlling the grander global information companies” (MINCI 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2007).

Telesur is making the most of the pan-Latin Americanism. Its slogan “*Nuestro Norte es el Sur*” (Our North is the South, eds.) suggests a broader identity, which does not take in consideration the national borders once established by the Spanish.

Their agenda; anti-imperialism, pro-pan American integration and the aim to break the hegemony of the west, is visible in their motto:

*” Vernos es conocernos, reconocernos es respetarnos, respetarnos es aprender a querernos, querernos es el primer paso para integrarnos”*

(“To see ourselves is to get to know ourselves, to acknowledge ourselves is to respect ourselves, respect ourselves is to learn to like ourselves, to like ourselves is the first step towards integrating ourselves”, eds.)

*”The goal of Telesur is to develop and implement a hemispheric televised communications strategy, of world wide reach, to promote and consolidate the progression of change and regional integration, as a tool in the battle of ideas against the hegemonic process of globalization (...) From the North they see us in black and white – mostly in black: we only appear in the news when a calamity occurs – and in reality, we are a continent in Technicolor”*

Aram Aharonian, general director of Telesur

According to its founders, Telesur is the answer to the necessity of integrating the people of Latin America, and to create a south-south axis to produce an independent mass media and put an end to the tendentious flow of information from the north (Calderón, 2005). All the shows are supposed to be produced by Latin Americans, with the exception of some contemporary independent films dubbed Nojolivud (No Hollywood) (Daniels, 2005). According to Aharonian, only 21 of the 646 documentaries produced in Latin America 2004 was exhibited, as the producers lack buyers; hence Telesur would be the opportunity waited for (MINCI, 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2005).

### **Terms of ownership**

The Telesur initiative came from Hugo Chávez. The channel set up as an independent enterprise, though its shareholders are Latin American nations. Venezuela holds a 41 percent share in the channel; Argentina 20 percent; Cuba 19 percent; Uruguay 10 percent. Bolivia joined in 19th of April, 2006, today holding a 5 percent share. Ecuador and Nicaragua also supports the channel (MINCI, 2007).

Brazil is already giving some support (they are planning on launching their own Latin America-wide initiative, *TV Brasil Internacional*) (Dos Reis, 2005).

Other Latin American countries, like Peru and Colombia, who at first had a positive approach towards Telesur, now have reversed. Peru due to tensions between their president and Hugo Chávez, Colombia due to a one hour interview with the FARC leader Manuel Marulanda broadcasted by Telesur (Cañizález & Lugo).

### **Economy and structure**

The inicial 3 million dollars was financed by the Venezuelan government. The budget to cover the first years of broadcasting was amount to 10 million dollars, all paid by the Venezuelan government by way of *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.* (PDVSA), the Venezuelan state oil company. Even though Venezuela is the principal funder, the other member countries are part in the editorial orientation and the strategies of Telesur (Cañizález & Lugo).

The budget was invested in technology and correspondents in Caracas, La Paz, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Havana, Los Angeles, Mexico City and Washington<sup>17</sup> (MINCI, 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2005). Telesur has 160 employees (Cañizález & Lugo). In February 2007, Telesur estimated to increase the number of Latin American correspondents from 10 to 15.

A few days before launching Telesur, the channels president Andrés Izarra, at the time still the Communication and Information Minister in the Chávez government, stressed that Telesur “aspires to be the voice of the ones who has not been listened to in years, and who has not had access to the mass media” (MINCI 21<sup>th</sup> of July, 2005) Even though Izzara denounced his ministry within days, it damaged the confidence for Telesur as being a truly independent channel (Cañizález & Lugo).

The general director of Telesur is also a former journalist, an Uruguyan named Aram Aharonian. Telesur has an Advisory Committee, consisting of leftist intellectual heavyweights: Ernesto Cardenal, Danny Glover, Ignacio Ramonet, Saul Landau, Eduardo Galeano, Tariq Ali, Richard Stallman and Nobel Prize Winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. This committee can be seen as a mean to assure the independence of the channel. To Ignacio Ramonet, member of the Telesur Advisory Committee, Telesur is “a decisive arm in the battle of information... The associate countries of Telesur are trying to propose another way of giving information to the world” (MINCI 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2007). However, the composition of members in the committee implicates the political tendencies of Telesur (Cañizález & Lugo).

In September 2006, Izarra announced plans for a Telesur news agency, to brake to “information monopoly” of Reuters and Associated Press (MINCI 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2006) Telesur also signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with al-Jazeera, agreeing to share information and technology (Burch, 2007: MINCI 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2007).

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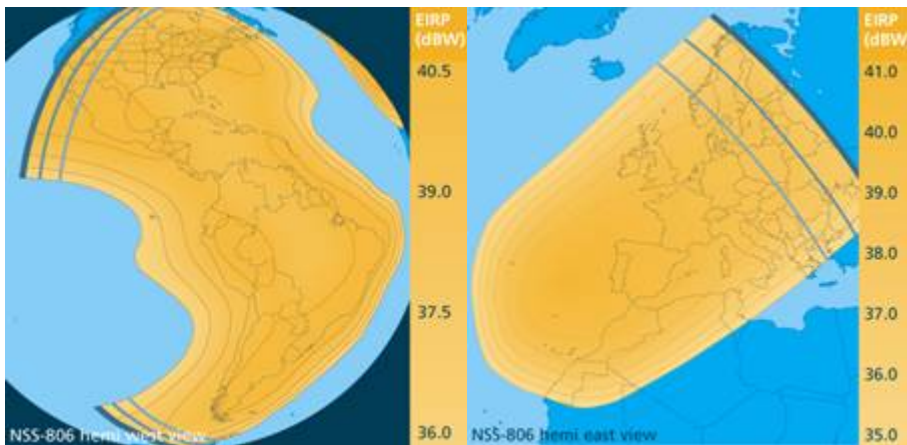
<sup>17</sup> In October that same year, Telesur had Luz de Petri, Mario Giordano and Paloma García in Argentina; Freddy Morales in Bolivia; Claudia Paiva in Brazil; Freddy Muñoz y Wladimir Carrillo in Colombia; and Rolando Segura in Cuba (MINCI 22<sup>th</sup> of October 2005)



## Viewers

Telesur broadcasts are cost-free via satellite, to be able to reach as many as possible (MINCI 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2005). They broadcast 24 hours in Latin America over a DirecTV satellite frequency - owned by the Cicneros (Comunica 2005). In 2007, the board of Telesur announced plans to start transmissions to Europe, and two of their satellites there are already in function. Telesur is also hoping to be able to place correspondents in London and Madrid (Burch, 2007; MINCI, 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2007).

In December 2006, the government announced that they were going to buy *Canal Metropolitano de Televisión* (CMT), another television channel in Venezuela, to convert its licence to the licence of Telesur, making Telesur a terrestrial television (MINCI 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2007), announced in *Gazeta Oficial de La Republica Bolivariana de Venezuela 31 julio 2007, decreto 355901*. Izarra has stated, that “as a terrestrial TV channel in Venezuela we reach 30 percent of the national territory and potentially 7 million people” (MINCI, 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2007).



**Figure 1:** Coverage of Telesur in the Americas (left) and Europe (right). From <http://www.TelesurTV.net/secciones/cobertura/index.php>

Izarra estimates that Telesur in 2007 “has a potential audience of 65 million viewers in Latin America in over-the-air broadcasting, and another 5.5 million through cable broadcast around the world” (Burch, 2006).

## Opinions on Telesur

*“Some news always upsets some people. We’ll just have to put up with that and always defend our independence – which does not mean we’ll be neutral. Independence, yes. But neutrality, never.”*

Telesur news director Jorge Botero

The supporters of Telesur call it a new kind of channel, bringing pluralism to the commercialized international television. The critics call it an ideological tool to export the Venezuelan revolution, which with its agenda will not bring pluralism to the international television viewers.

Before even launched, the channel was being attacked in Washington as a vehicle for anti-US propaganda, with the House of Representatives voting to enable the US to broadcast its own signals into Venezuela in retaliation. The channel has not been immune to criticism in Latin America either, with some dubbing it "Telechavez" (Daniels, 2005). Carlos Gúzman of ININCO refers to Telesur as “a machinery to reproduce the ideology of the Venezuelan government” (Comunica, 2005).

Burch stresses that there is no coincidence the birth of Telesur is occurring now, being a child of its time and another step in Chávez politics towards increased regional integration and a new agenda and socialism. It occurs also to the backdrop of the renewal of the 1970s debate about the New World Information and Communication Order, NWICO<sup>18</sup>, as an alternative to CNN and BBC (Burch 2007, Cañizález and Lugo).

ALBA, *Área de libre Comercio de las Américas* (ALCA) and *The Caribbean Community and Common Market* (CARICOM) are all initiatives to integrate *las Americas*<sup>19</sup>. However, to fit a political project like the one of the Bolivarianism of the 21st century, these dimensions are not enough. The means of communication are, in another way, able to set a cultural and informal agenda. In this context, Telesur started its broadcasts, as the first public

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<sup>18</sup> NWICO is further explained in chapter 5.3.1 The UNESCO-initiative and Proyecto Ratelvé.

<sup>19</sup> *Las Americas* is further explained in chapter 2 Latin American history.

multinational Latin American channel (Calderón, 2005). González Urrutia (2006) describes Telesur as a part of the second phase of the foreign politics of Chávez.

Telesur, as a project, exists in the cleavage between being an intergrational channel, promoting integration and regional culturization, and at the same time being a political channel, promoting what its creators hope to be a geopolitical integration and counteract the western medial hegemony (Cañizález and Lugo).

To Antonio Pasquali, the creator of ININCO and *Proyecto Ratelve*, Telesur is a good idea that turned bad. He describes the project as important from a conceptual point of view, but Telesur only fulfills the pluralism, tolerance and independence that suit the Venezuelan government, making it an ideological caricature of the ideas of the NWICO (Cañizález & Lugo).

To Elizabeth Safar, Telesur is nothing but a propagandistic media of Chávez and the Bolivarian project. The conceptual idea is what Safar and the others hoped to create already in the 70s. But in the hands of the government, Telesur is anything but pluralistic. As the channel is bias, they tell only one side of the truth, losing credibility.

## **7.2 What characterizes Telesur in terms of programme listings?**

The Telesur chart is clearly affected by the aims of education and news provision. A huge part of the chart is news and sports, which often together form a full hour. As for the news, to complement the traditional news broadcasts, like *Noticias del SUR* and *Telesur Noticias*, Telesur offers various deepening news broadcasts, like *Realidades* and *Síntesis Latinamericana*, where the most important news of the week are dealt with. For example, one episode of *Realidades* shows the topics anti-aids campaigns in Cuba, child labour in Peru and mercy killing in Mexico. This way Telesur provides two kinds of news broadcasts for the viewers, one lighter, shorter version, and one full depth version.

Another major part of the chart consists of documentaries. For example, Telesur has a serie called *Somos*; a documetary serie consisting of 35 programs, supposed to shred light on the

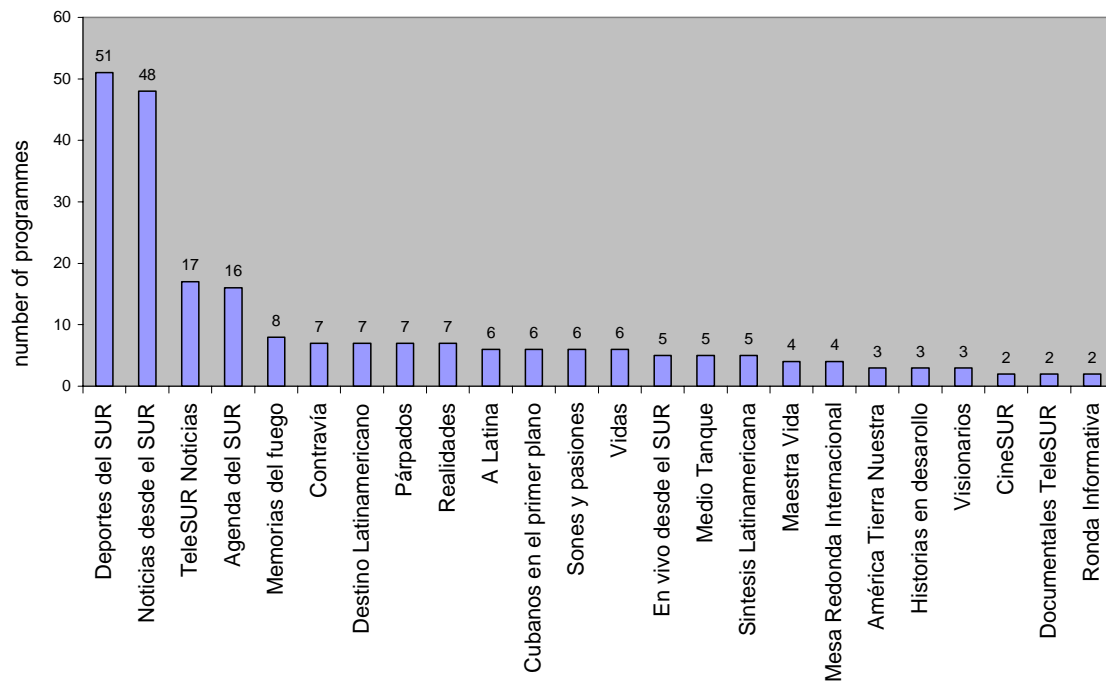
different indigenous populations in Venezuela, their culture, histories and societies. The serie *Contravía* focuses on problems related to the guerilla violence in Colombia.

On Saturday and Sunday nights, Telesur shows a movie – all produced in Latin America and broadcasted under the title *Cine Sur*.

The documentaries and news programmes vary in quality. The feeling of educational channel (like the Swedish educational channel *Utbildningsradion*, UR) is lingering; showing long interviews, longer parts with music or dancing, mysterious puppet shows and sometimes alternative documentaries failing in sound and picture quality.

All the programmes examined are explained shortly in Appendix II.

### 7.2.1 The programmes of Telesur:

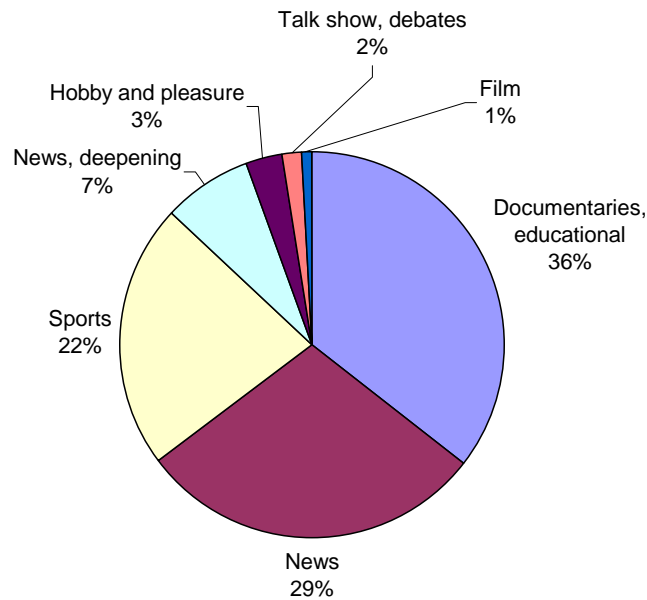


**Figure 2.** The different programmes occurring in the week chosen, 10-17 December 2007. (Number of programmes, n=230)

*Deportes del SUR* (*Sports from the south*) (22 percent), *Noticias desde el SUR* (*News from the south*) (22 percent) and *Telesur Noticias* (*Telesur's news*) (7 percent) together reach 50 percent of the total number of programmes showed in the week, These three programs are definitely the heavy-weights in the Telesur chart. When time is taken in consideration, the three

programmes together gathers 68,5 of the 156 hours (44%) and the two news broadcasts gather 42,5 hours (33%).

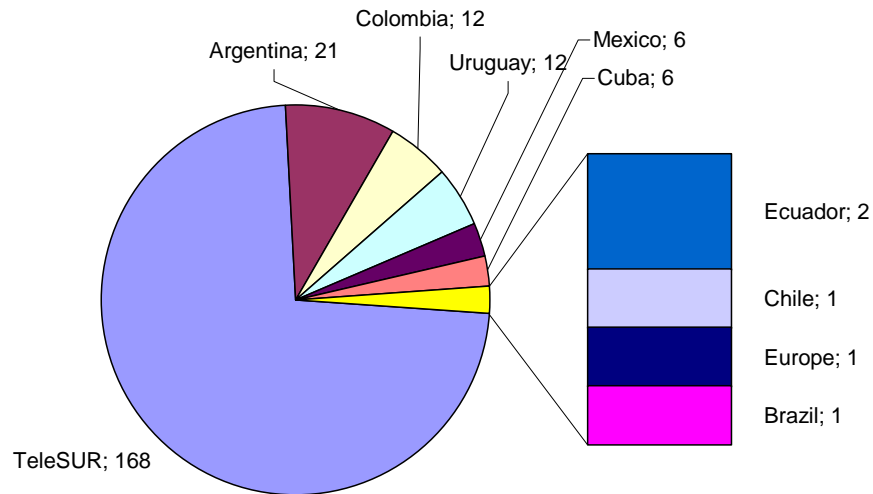
### 7.2.2 The programmes divided into genres:



**Figure 3.** The programmes divided into genres (in percentage of the total number of programmes n=230)

Telesurs educative character shows clearly. There were neither children programmes nor soap operas. The only programmes in the genre *Hobby and pleasure* was *Destino Latinamericano* (*Destination Latin America*) which is a traveling show, displaying different parts of Latin America. The only talk show was *Mesa Redonda Internacional* (*Round table international*) which is debates and opinions around a round table in Havana. The movies showed were *El entusiasmo* (*the enthusiasm*) made in Chile in 1998, and *El viaje hacia del mar* (*the trip to the ocean*) made in Uruguay in 2003. The regular news broadcasts and deepening ones, reaches approximately 45 hours (36 percent). *Documentaries and educational shows* are dominating in hours with approximately 62 hours.

### 7.2.3 The geographical representation of programme listings:



**Figure 4.** The producer countries of the different programmes. (In number of the total number of programmes. N=230)

The mayor part, *Telesur*, consists of the different news, sports or discussion programmes that are produced through out the continent. The studios are in Caracas, Venezuela, but the different segments in the broadcasts are produced throughout the continent, which makes it difficult to name one country of origin. As for the others, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil are three traditionally big producers of television in Latin America. This tendency is visible in Figure 4 above, with the exeption of Brazil, which can be due to the language. Though it has to be pointed out, during this whole week, many Latin American countries are not represented at all as producers.

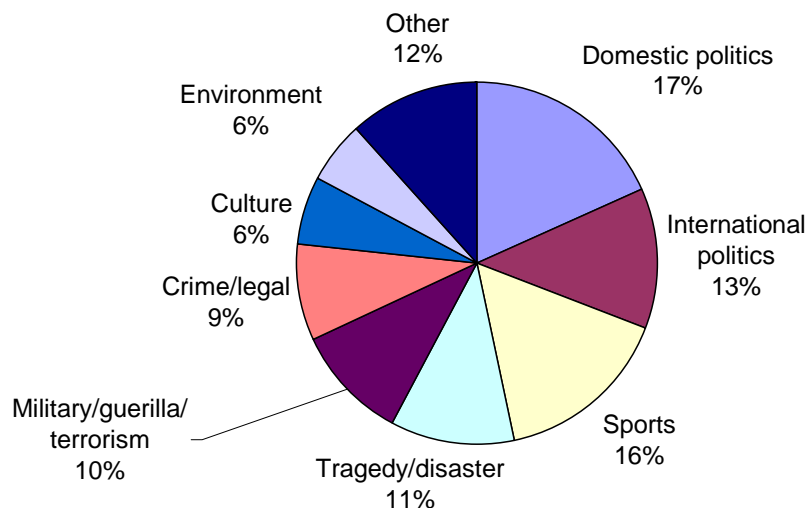
### 7.3 What characterizes the news broadcasts?

The Telesur midday broadcast starts with a medley consisting of frames from today's mayor topics. The medley's purpose is to provoke attention. Since the midday broadcast is one hour long, news and sports included, this also can function as a teaser to keep the viewers the full hour. The midday broadcast consists of a 20 minute Latin American part with

regional and domestic news. It is followed by a break where instead of showing commercial commercials some of the upcoming programs are shown, and commercials for the new Venezuelan currency, *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.* (PDVSA) or campaigns for alphabetization. After the break comes the international part of the broadcast, approximately 10-15 minutes. After another non-commercial commercial break, some ten minutes of sport news are casted, sometimes cultural news and occasionally news in short – rubricated “Avanza” (Advancement), before the broadcast is finished.

The news broadcast should not be viewed without considering the rest of the chart. Programs like *Realidades* and *Síntesis*<sup>20</sup> definitely tries to present news in a deeper way, and should be seen as a complement to the news broadcasts.

### 7.3.1 The composition of news segments regarding content:



**Figure 5.** The various themes of the news segments (in percentage of the total news broadcasts n=197).

In this figure, ten smaller categories have been summoned into the larger category “other” (12%) to make the figure more readable. The categories are employment, economy, health, industry, human rights (2% each) and science, education, indigenous, housing and migration (1% each).

<sup>20</sup> The chart is described in chapter 8.2 Question 3: What characterizes Telesur in terms of programme listings?

The expectations were that the agenda of Telesur<sup>21</sup> would show more clearly in the topics chosen in the news cast. Topics like health, human rights, indigenous, housing and education are nearly invisible while topics like domestic and international politics and sports stand for almost half the features.

The Telesur news is in general very similar to commercial and traditional news broadcasts with the exception of lack of economic news, which only attains 2 percent. Topics that never even occurred during the casts analyzed are religion/philosophy, and features about private matters like sex, family and divorces.

When put together into more generalizing topics, economics are 2 percent, nature/disaster 17 percent and social issues 5 percent. “Soft” news, mainly sports, is 21 percent. The two topics named *politics* (36%) and *international politics* (15%) are main themes in more than half of the number of segments (51%). For example, there is one feature about the suggested leader for the socialist party in El Salvador and one feature from a syndicalism party gathering in Paraguay. In a news segment from Bolivia (November 26<sup>th</sup>), Morales opposition is featured as being violent. Two segment in favor of the new constitution are sent, and also one longer interview with one representative in favor of the new constitution (who is asked what the opposition thinks about this proposal), The same goes for the demonstrations in Venezuela before the referendum, which is only described from the governmental side (the “S”-side).

Another segment is of the referendum in Venezuela, featuring a meeting of the “sí”-side, and no contra-representative gets to comment the referendum. This feature is followed by a segment showing how shanty-town inhabitants outside Caracas gets new houses by the government, a development said to be reinforced by the new constitution if passed. The following week, under the jingle “*reforma constitucional*” (Constitutional Reform) there is a feature about a factory worker who is now working six hours instead of eight, how much he enjoys spending more time with his family, and how many workers who can get a job with this new reform<sup>22</sup>. There is also a feature from a *comedor social* in Buenos Aires, a place in the

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<sup>21</sup> Pro pan-Latin American integration and anti-imperialism

<sup>22</sup> The six-hours-workday is one of the suggestions in Chávez new constitution.



shanty towns where the population can get food for free. This was started by Nestor Kirschner<sup>23</sup> four years ago, and is something that Chávez also is starting in Venezuela.

### 7.3.2 The geographical representation of news segments:

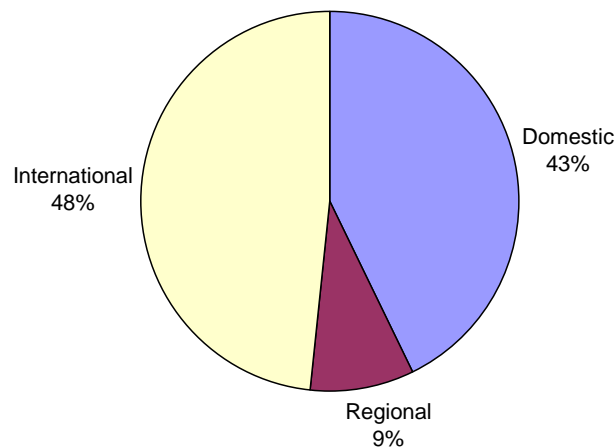


**Figure 6.** The coverage of Latin American countries, main country and second country accounted for (the origin of segments; in number of segments of the total regional and domestic news broadcast n=204)

<sup>23</sup> Nestor Kirchner is the former president of Argentina

The map shows when the countries occur both as main and secondary country. In 73 segments there was no secondary country, but only a main country. The country best covered is by far Venezuela (24%). Countries never even covered during the period analyzed are Belize, French Guyana, Guyana, Honduras, Panama and Surinam. Apart from those exceptions there is good continental coverage. There is a tendency towards more extensive coverage of the Venezuelan neighbors (geographically and ideologically). Colombia (12%) is Venezuela's closest neighbor while Bolivia (11%) and Cuba (6%) are ideologically close.

### 7.3.3 The division between regional, domestic and international segment:



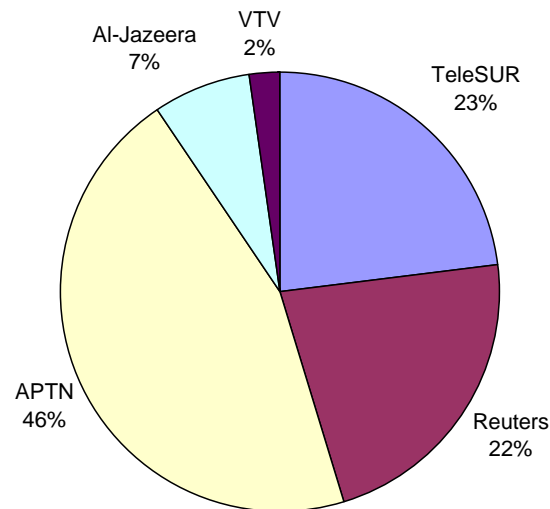
**Figure 7.** The division between regional, domestic and international news segments (in percentage of the total news broadcast n=197).

In total, 52 percent of the Telesur news features are about Latin America – regional as well as domestic. To have an agenda of implementing regionalization, 9 percent of regional features should be considered low. In the international news, the continent best covered is by far Asia (48 %), followed by Europe (34 %).

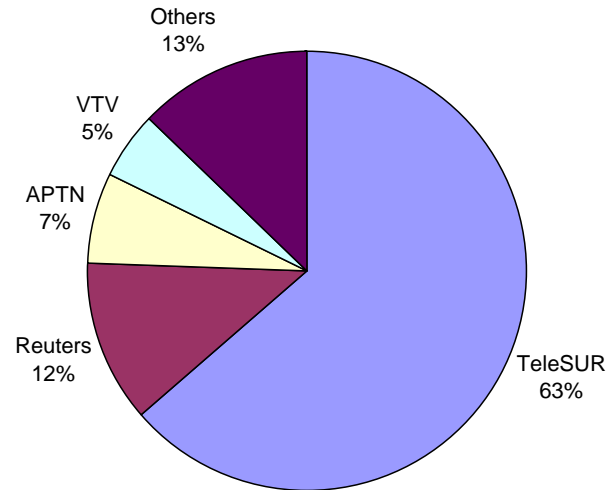
### 7.3.4 The composition of segments regarding topics and their geographical origin:

There is minor difference in the composition of segments regarding topics in international versus regional-domestic news. In the regional-domestic news, *nature and disaster* occupies 21 percent; while 13 percent in the international news. *International politics* holds one fourth (25%) of the international news; while 5 percent of the regional-domestic news. Social issues are not covered in the international news; however receives 9 percent of the regional and domestic news.

Telesur only produced 23 percent of its international news. The rest is material coming from mainly APTN (46 %), and Reuters (22 %), Al-jazeera (7 %) and VTV (2 %).



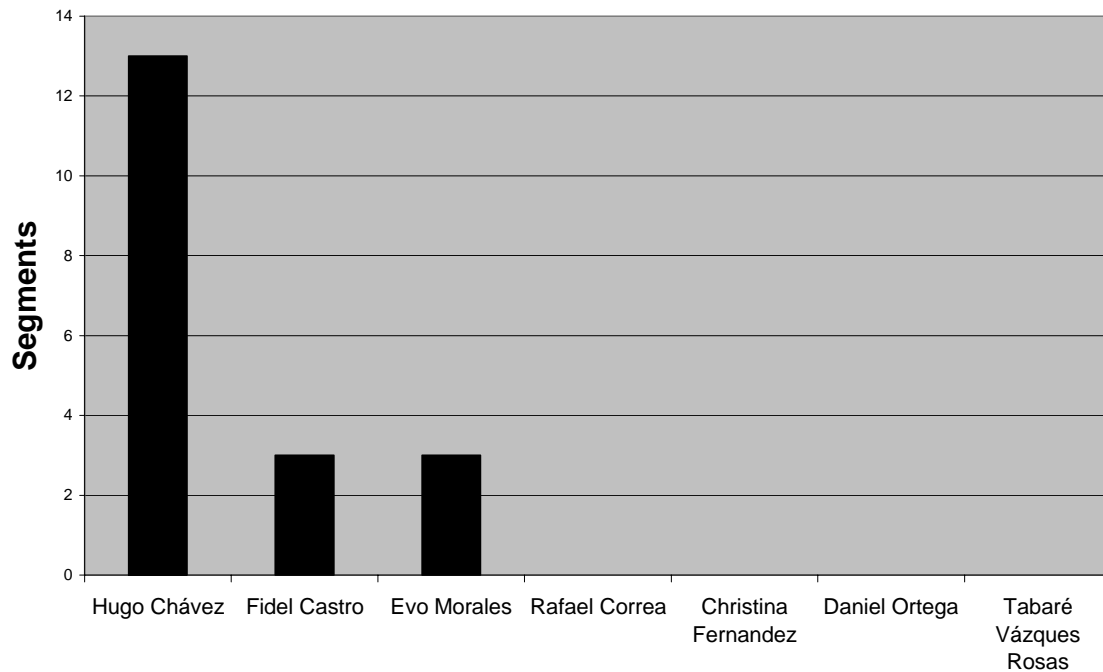
**Figure 8.** The usage of bureau material in the international news (in percentage of the total international news segments n=95)



**Figure 9.** The usage of bureau material versus Telesur's own material (in percentage of the total regional and domestic segments n=102)

The Latin American news, domestic as well as regional, are mainly produced by Telesur (63 percent). *Others* are Canal 4, TV6, Cubavision, TVB, CNN, Canal Institucional, Canal Justicial, Guatevisión och Canal 7; most of these sources are other governmental Latin American channels. In this period Telesur never uses material from any of the other big Venezuelan news channels like *Globovision* or *Venevision*, but from *VTV* (the governmental channel).

### 7.3.5 The presence of the presidents of Telesur's founding nations:



**Figure 10.** The presence of the presidents of Telesur's founding nations as main actor (in number of segments n=197)

Our hypothesis was that the founding, and funding, governments of Telesur would use their own creation to broadcast propaganda and that this would portray itself in the attention given to their presidents. However as the main actor, not Kirschner, Correa, Vasquez Rosas nor Ortega appears in a feature even once. Chávez puts the others in shade by far, appearing as main actor in thirteen features. However, 13 features out of 197 is not that extraordinary, Chávez being an important as well as controversial character in Latin American politics. In total, Chávez is visible in 23 segments, although only main character in 13 of them.

One segment (October 29<sup>th</sup>) is about how Chávez was shown with a sign saying "*Quien lo mató?*" (Who killed him?) in CNN, an act which ended up as an accusation of exhortation. Chávez is given the opportunity to comment, while CNN does not get the chance to answer.

In all three segments where Cuba is main country, Fidel Castro is main character. In the broadcast of 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, there is a segment from the elections at Cuba. There is another segment where they are quoting Fidel Castro, supporting the suggestion that rich countries

should pay more for oil than the poor countries. They show the face of Fidel Castro while the quotation shows in front of him. This is called “*reflexiones de Fidel Castro*” (Reflections of Fidel Castro). Another feature is about Fidel Castro writing an article saying that the king of Spain and Europe is criticizing Hugo Chávez wrongfully.

### **7.3.6 The representation of gender and social background in the segments:**

When measuring the use of sources, men were over-represented in 78 percent of the segments, while women were over-represented in only 9 percent. In 13 percent of the segments there were as many men as women. Elite sources were also over-represented as sources. In 55 percent of the segments there were mainly or only elite sources, in comparison to 29 percent of the segments, where most of the sources used were citizens. In 4 percent of the segments, both elite and citizen sources were used.

### **7.3.7 The occurrence of segments that are clearly pro pan-Latin American integration and/or against imperialism:**

One hypothesis convicted in this study, is that the Telesur agenda – pro-regionalizing and anti-imperial, would show clearly in the news features. However, the segments concretely treating regionalization or anti-imperialism were only two. This must be considered a very low number.

### **7.3.8 The presence of background and analysis in the news segments and their momentum:**

The expectations were that the news in Telesur would be longer, fuller and have background and analysis in order to fully explain the circumstances in Latin American politics; so that parts of the population with little interest would understand and get involved. This proved to be false, since there are only seven segments longer than three minutes. 50 percent of the segments are less than one minute. Only ten segments include background and/or analysis. One of them is a longer segment, almost 12 minutes (November 5<sup>th</sup>), from the elections in Guatemala.

The analysis treats every feature introduced by the host as an independent segment, even though the pattern is, which has to be pointed out, that many shorter segments often are combined to show a greater picture of the subject cased. Hence, very few of the segments gave background or a broader analysis to the topic, however together they usually managed to give greater understanding of the topic.

## 8 Conclusion and discussion

The Telesur news broadcasts were more traditional than expected, considering length, background and momentum. Few backgrounds were given, however many segments together often formed a greater whole of the topic cased. Few broadcasts have chosen to present a different topic; there were no news about human rights, indigenous people or racism; but short, concise news focusing on subjects like politics, crime or disasters. The tendency of traditional news value is stronger in the international news segments, which could be due to a greater usage of news bureau material. In order to present a different agenda in their news broadcasts, Telesur needs to individualize and choose a different news value.

The Telesur agenda is not visible in the news segments. However, the political sector is main topic in the major part of the segments analyzed (51%), which could be an indicator of Telesur stressing the political sphere rather than the economical one, as economics has a very small share of the topics cased (2%).

The presidents of the Telesur nations were in many cases not visible at all. Chávez is the most visible one, as the main actor in just 13 out of 197 segments, the Telesur news can not be said to promote this group of presidents.

Geographically, Telesur has a wide spread of news in Latin America, though the tendency is a concentration of news around Venezuela's geographical and ideological neighbours.

Telesur still feels like a Venezuelan television channel, and more news segments need to be produced in other parts of Latin America. Fewer domestic (43 percent) and more regional news segments (9 percent) could make the pro-integration agenda more visible.

The Telesur chart is interesting, offering an alternative schedule of programs. Not a single *telenovela* is shown. Instead, Telesur focuses on news and documentaries, giving the channel a truly educative, news-providing profile.

Geographically, all except one program in the Telesur chart was produced in Latin America during the time analyzed – a very high rate. Waisbord (2000) argues that the absence of efforts to incorporate different voices in media in Latin America is alarming. Providing a platform for the independent film and documentary producers of Latin America, Telesur

does serve a purpose, trying to break the dependency of foreign material, the limited flow between peripheral countries (as described by Galtung and Ruge in chapter 5.3) and the one way flow of information.

One theory which was taken into consideration when watching Telesur was the theory of framing and agenda-setting. After analyzing both the news broadcasts and the programme listing of Telesur, the bias of the channel became obvious to the writers of this thesis. With the news attention directed towards official voices in its sources, typically male-dominated values (politics, military, sports) and few female sources, Telesur proved to be biased (definition made by McQuail, chapter 5.4) according to the quantitative analysis of the news segments.

Something not visible in the quantitative analysis, but worth emphasizing, is the leftist view of the topics. The impression received by the authors, although not proved by in the quantitative analysis, is that the news often is described from a partial view. Telesur fails to be independent and non-biased, for example in the segment about “the reflexions of Fidel Castro”, or implying that the new houses constructed in the shanty towns of Venezuela will multiply if Chávez new constitution is passed in the referendum. The lack of objectivity, which according to McQuail is to consider as “one of the most central concepts in journalism”, is even recognized by the channel itself (by the news director Jorge Botero, see chapter 7.1).

The impression is also that the chart is clearly affected by the Telesur agenda. There is hardly a programme *not* touching anti-imperialism or pro-pan American integration in one way or another, if only implying it.

Telesur is just one part of the media policy of the sitting government in Venezuela. Telesur's agenda, as well as Chávez's, rises from two important Latin American ideas – one is the ideal of pan-Latin Americanism, a heritage from the days of independence and Simon Bolívar's *Gran Colombia*. The second, anti-imperialistic idea is more of a reaction to the 20<sup>th</sup> century's U.S. domination, and a wish to liberate the continent from every kind of dependency – mediatic, economic and political. Telesur can, applying the media dependency theory and the theory of framing, be seen as a mean to break the media dependency and the domination of the northern hemisphere in the realm of transnational television. Applying Hjarvard's (2003)



view on mass medial regionalization and globalization, Telesur is a way to frame the ideas of the “21st century socialism” on a pan-Latin American basis – what could possibly be better in a time when visibility for political actors is crucial, than to create your own television channel?

Telesur is vulnerable, depending economically on oil money from just one country. Any kind of changes, in oil prices or form of government in Venezuela, will present a major threat to the survival of the channel. Another problem, related to the credibility of the channel, is the fact that two leading countries behind Telesur, Cuba and Venezuela are the ones getting the poorest rating of press freedom of all Latin American countries according to Freedom House.

The process of globalization can be said to help as well as overturn Telesur. The channel does have a potential audience, the one of Latin America, which is linguistically and culturally quite homogeneous. In that sense, the case of Telesur shows up to be one of regionalization of media, in a time of globalization, as suggested by Chalaby.

However, Telesur does have other obstacles to work against, and one of them is technology. While the world is said to be smaller today, due to the technological landwinnings, in the case of Telesur and its audience the segregation of the technological development and its remaining barriers are obvious.

Telesur has the major shortcoming of broadcasting over satellite. The only terrestrial coverage they have is Venezuela. The terrestrial coverage probably stands in front of a broadening, but even if Telesur today has the potential audience of 65 million households in Latin America (Brazil not accounted for due to language), this audience can hardly be considered the audience Telesur is interested in reaching. The Latin Americans with cable subscription is probably not the segment of the population who has “not been listened to”, which is the segment Telesur is said to want to attract.

Throughout the history of mass media in Latin America, the governmental channels have functioned as a mere tool of propaganda and not as a public service channel. Telesur is therefore not an exception. Private channels have traditionally also been tools of political forces, often controlled by the government by taxes, licenses and threats. In 2002, the

powerful commercial media, when trying to overthrow Chávez, made him realize the need of a stronger media policy – of which Telesur is part.

Latin America lacks the traditions that have helped develop public service media in Western Europe and is heading for a struggle when trying to create a none-bias pan-Latin American television channel.

How could Telesur function as a public service channel? The authors of this thesis agree with Elizabeth Safar and Antonio Pasquali that Telesur would have to become truly independent. To Safar, to gain credibility Telesur must 1) be autonomous, 2) have a universal coverage, 3) be democratic, and represent everybody, which has to be reflected in the material broadcasted. To Pasquali, the project Telesur can only be developed “in a democratic-pluralist environment, where a public radio-television service can be radically free of governmental ties, so it can become a third communicational pole capable of guaranteeing the Venezuelan people an alternative to the double pressure generated by the commercial media and government propaganda” (cited in Analítica Venezuela, 2005).

It is unfortunate that Telesur combines anti-imperialism and integration in its agenda. By implying that the channel is anti-imperialistic, many of the potential viewers will not watch Telesur. This means that the goal of integration will be lost, or at least just cover a certain part of the population of Latin America.

The authors of this thesis question if there is such thing as pan-Latin Americanism, anchored in the population of *las Americas*. If not, there is a risk that the integration and regionalization will result in assimilation rather than integration. Is the price to pay for integration between the countries - segregation within the country?

When choosing Andrez Izarra as president for Telesur, at that time the Government's Communication and Information Minister, Telesur dug their own grave. Even though Izarra resigned from the post quickly, it sent a message to the public that this was yet another government channel, and the opposition was alert; in every negative news article ever written about Telesur, the fact that Izarra used to be one of the governments ministers is always mentioned.

The aims of the Chávez administration do not seem to stop at trying to provide a counterweight to the audience, but to drown their voices. Some incitements on the actual development of freedom of press in Venezuela today, received by the authors, are at least horrifying – the auto censure, the plans on a mediatic hegemony recognized even by Andres Izzara and the difficulty retrieving information. This tendency towards media hegemony can not be considered as anything but a step backwards in the development of mass media, in Venezuela and in Latin America. Another troubling issue is the polarization, in media as well as in the society. As for the media, the damage made by both private and governmental media, thriving on polarization and ignoring the dialogue, will take ages to repair.

Will Telesur contribute to a more plural international television? Taking the UNESCO-initiative in consideration and because of Telesur's unique nature in ownership, structure and agenda, the answer is yes. However; Telesur is only serving as, at the best, a complement to other channels, as it is not pluralistic in itself. Instead of playing an important role as the third alternative<sup>24</sup> - a real public service channel with the potential of offering qualitative journalism to a whole continent – Telesur will play a minor role, with a narrower audience, and an agenda limiting pluralism and truthful information.

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<sup>24</sup> Pasquali refers to the idea of a public service channel as the third alternative, challenging governmental as well as private media.

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# Appendix I, Code book regarding news segments

## 1- Segment [SEG]

001-999

## 2- Date of broadcast [DAT]

011- 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2007

012- 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2007

013- 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2007

014- 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2007

015- 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2007

016- 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2007

017- 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2007

## 3- Topic [TOP]

021- Domestic politics	Elections and referendums, political parties, politicians, political decisions and processes, sovereignty, constitutions; within a nation
022- International politics	Politics, diplomacy, negotiations, international decisions and processes, international cooperations or conflicts, sanctions, between various countries
023- Economy	Trade, import, export, economical agreements and cooperations (between or within nations), currencies, taxes, budget, markets, exchange
024- Industry and agriculture	Production, methods, agriculture, food, dairy
025- Technology/science	Science, work, processes and results
026- Military/guerilla/terrorism	Internal and international armed conflicts, national defence, guerilla warfare, terrorism, armament
027- Education	All levels of education, language
028- Culture	Art, mass culture, food, literature, music, tourism
029- Religion/philosophy	Ethics, religious and philosophical questions, traditions, feasts



030- Crime/legal	Law, jurisprudence, crime, kidnappings, penal code, penalty, trials, law enforcement, police
031- Sports	Results, practice, competition
032- Tragedy/disaster	Accidents and disasters, caused by man and/or by nature, rescue efforts
034- Indigenous population	Language, culture, traditions, rights and questions focusing on indigenous populations of Latin America
035- Natural resources/Environmental issues	Oil and other natural resources, sustainable development, pollutions, environmental issues
036- Work/employment/unemployment	Policies regarding the labour market, job opportunities, unemployment, the union
037- Private sphere	Peoples private sphere, sex, marriage, divorce, family, children
038- Living	Living, housing policy, city planning, homelessness, ownership
039- Migration	Emmigration, immigration, refugees, urbanization, racism
040- Health	Health, healthcare, elderly care, medicine, exercise and nutrition
041- Human rights	Fundamental human rights, in accordance with the UN Declaration of the Human Rights
042- Others	

#### **4, Generalizing topics, [GTO]**

- Domestic politics
- Crime/legal
- Military/guerilla/terrorism (051- Politics)
- Living
- Techics/science
- Health
- Migration

- Indigenous people (052- Social issues)
- Economics (053- Economics)
- Natural resources/environmental questions (054- Nature)
- Disasters
- International politics
- Human rights (055- International politics)
- Industry
- Agriculture
- Employment/unemployment/unions (056- Work and production)
- Religion
- Culture
- Private sphere (057- "Soft" news)

#### **5- The visibility of the agenda of Telesur [VIS]**

061- The segment focuses on anti-imperialism

062- The segment focuses on pan-Latin American integration

063- The segment focuses on both anti-imperialism and pan-Latin American integration

064- The segment focuses neither on anti-imperialism nor pan-Latin American integration

#### **6- Main country [MAC]**

- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 081- Argentina     | 093- Guyana    |
| 082- Belize        | 094- Honduras  |
| 083- Bolivia       | 095- Mexico    |
| 084- Brazil        | 096- Nicaragua |
| 085- Chile         | 097- Panama    |
| 086- Colombia      | 098- Paraguay  |
| 087- Costa Rica    | 099- Peru      |
| 088- Cuba          | 100- Surinam   |
| 089- Ecuador       | 101- Uruguay   |
| 090- El Salvador   | 102- Venezuela |
| 091- French Guyana |                |
| 092- Guatemala     |                |

103- Latin America

104- Africa

105- Asia

106- Caribbean

107- Europe

108- North America

109- Oceania

110- None/general

092- Guatemala

093- Guyana

094- Honduras

095- Mexico

096- Nicaragua

097- Panama

098- Paraguay

099- Peru

100- Surinam

101- Uruguay

102- Venezuela

### **7 – Secondary country [SEC]**

081- Argentina

082- Belize

083- Bolivia

084- Brazil

085- Chile

086- Colombia

087- Costa Rica

088- Cuba

089- Ecuador

090- El Salvador

091- French Guyana

103- Latin America

104- Africa

105- Asia

106- Caribbean

107- Europe

108- North America

109- Oceania

110- None/general

### **8- News origin [NEO]**

121- Domestic, Latin Amerika

The segment focuses on a Latin American country and its internal questions/problems/situations

122- Regional, Latin Amerika

The segment focuses on several or all Latin American countries, joined together in subject or in cooperation between countries

123- International

The segment focuses on a country outside Latin America or questions discussed on an international level or outside Latin America

### **9- Main character [MAINC]**

133- Hugo Chávez, Venezuela

134- Fidel Castro, Cuba

135- Evo Morales, Bolivia

136- Rafael Correa, Ecuador

137- Christina Fernandez de Kirschner, Argentina

138- Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua

139- Tabaré Vázquez Rosas, Uruguay

140 – Other main character

#### **10. Perception of main character [PERCH]**

141- Is portrayed positively

142- Is portrayed negatively

143- Is neutrally portrayed

144- Is not portrayed in the segment

#### **11. Chávez [CHA]**

151- Is visible in the segment

152- Is not visible in the segment

#### **12. Division of actors [DIVAC]**

161- A majority of citizens

A citizen is visible or expresses the opinion as a representative of the population

162- A majority of elite

An elite person is visible or expresses an opinion not as a citizen but as an expert, politician, sportsman or other elite character

163- Equal number elite/citizens

There are as many elites as citizens visible or speaking

164- Neither

The segment lacks visible actors

**13- Gender [GEN]**

171- A majority of women	The majority visible or expressing themselves are women
172- A majority of men	The majority visible or expressing themselves are men
173- Equal number men/women	There are as many men as women visible or speaking
174- Neither	The segment is without visible actors

## Continuation of Appendix I: Code book regarding form of the news segments

**21- Type of segment [TYS]**

201- News	The news is freestanding with neither background nor analysis
202- News + analysis	The news is complemented by an analysis
203- News + background	The news is complemented by an explanation of the background events
204- News + analysis+ background	The news is complemented by both analysis and explanation of background events
205- Analysis	The segment is an analysis of an already familiar phenomenon

**22- Introducing of segment [INTRO]**

211- Reading of telemessage	The host reads the news without further images or material
212- Reading of telemessage + images	The host or correspondence (on telephone) reads the news complemented by footage (voice-over)
213- Reportage with images	The segment is introduced by the host but is continuously freestanding with own footage and reporting
214- Studio analysis	The segment is discussed in the studio in the presence of guests

215 Reportage + studio analysis

The segment is freestanding but complemented by a studio analysis

**23- Time of segment [TIME]**

221- 0-1 minut

222- 1-2 minuter

223- 2-3 minuter

224- 3-4 minutes

225- 4 – 5 minutes

226- 5 minutes or more

**35 – Bureaus [BUR]**

800- Own, Telesur

801- Reuters

802- APTN

803- Al Jazeera

804- VTV

805- Others

## Appendix II, code book regarding chart

**31- Programme [PRO]**

001-999

**32- Day of broadcast [DAY]**

301- Monday 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

302- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

303- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

304- Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

305- Friday 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

306- Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

307- Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2007

**33- Group of programme listings [GROUP]**

311- A Latina

*Towards the Latin American* Reportages by Tatto Contiza  
concerning the construction of Latin America as a new region

that confronts the invasion of neo-liberalism

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 312- Agenda del SUR             | <i>The agenda of the south</i> Information and entertainment about the cultural, political and social reality in Latin America and the Caribbean                   |
| 313- América Tierra Nuestra     | <i>Our continent America</i> Display of cultural and social traditions, originated in Latin America  |
| 314- CineSUR                    | <i>MovieSouth</i> Documentaries and movies from Latin America  |
| 315- Contravía                  | <i>In the opposite direction</i> Documentaries   |
| 316- Cubanos en el primer plano | <i>Cubans at the front page</i> A serie of documentaries   |
| 317- Deportes del SUR           | <i>Sports from the South</i> Sports events, features, analysis etcetera  |
| 318- Desafíos                   | <i>Challenges</i> Series covering different aspects of Bolivia and Ecuador   |
| 319- Destino Latinamericano     | <i>Destination Latin America</i> Travel show in Latin America  |
| 320- Documentales Conac         | <i>Conac documentaries</i> Social and cultural documentaries produced by Villa del Cine, Venezuela   |
| 321- Documentales Telesur       | <i>Telesur documentaries</i> Documentaries   |
| 322- En vivo desde el SUR       | <i>Live from the south</i> Contexts, backgrounds and analyses to broaden the understanding of the three most important news events of the day.                     |
| 323- Historias en desarrollo    | <i>Histories in development</i> Different programmes of initiatives organized by workers, students, indigenous groups among others, to promote their human rights. |
| 324- Maestra Vida               | <i>Life of the masters</i> Portrays of Latin American famous personalities, their thoughts and actions.  |

325- Medio Tanque	<i>Half tank</i> Documentaries about “young” subjects, football, music or food culture
326- Memorias del fuego	<i>Memories from the fire</i> Documentaries from the most important movie festivals around the world defining the Latin American identity
327- Mesa Redonda Internacional	<i>Round table international</i> Debates and opinions around the round table in Havana.
328- Noticias desde el SUR	<i>News from the south</i> News broadcast
329- Párpados	<i>Moments</i> Interviews and portraits of Latin American cultural personalities
330- Realidades	<i>Realities</i> Surveys of the most prominent news of the week
331- Ronda Informativa	<i>The information round</i> News broadcast
332- Síntesis Latinamericana	<i>Latin American summary</i> The most prominent news themes of the week is summarized
333- Sones y pasiones	<i>Sons and passions</i> Educational/documentary, focused on music
334- Telesur Noticias	<i>News from Telesur</i> News broadcast
335- Vidas	<i>Lives</i> Personalities from Latin America, representing important values and thoughts for the region
336- Videoteca Contracorriente	<i>Videos against the current</i> Interviews produced in Cuba
337- Visión SUR	<i>Vision South</i> News co-produced with Argentinian Canal 7
338- Visionarios	<i>Visionaries</i> Documentaries about Latin American personalities



**34- Genre [GENRE]**

341- Film	Fictive story, freestanding
342- News	Daily news broadcast without further analysis
343- News, deepening	News broadcast that treat daily themes on a deeper level
344- Soap opera	Fictive story, part of a longer series
345- Documentary or educational broadcast	Feature based on reality and/or with educational purpose
346- Talk show, debates	Studio based show with interviews and debates
347- Sports	Sports events, features, analysis etcetera
348- Hobby and pleasure	Shows about recreational activities, like fishing, travelling or knitting
349- Children's programme	
350- Others	

**35- Duration [DUR]**

361- 30 minutes
362- 60 minutes
363- 90 minutes
364- 120 minutes

**36- Theme [THE]**

351- Politics, debate, international politics, crime/legal, military/guerilla
352- Culture, music, religion, science, traditions
353- Sports
354- Economy
355- News
356- Entertainment, travelling
357- Minorities
358- Fashion/beauty
359- Social issues, work (taking over a factory), education (fighting against privatization), migration
360- Nature, environment, resources

**37- Country [CON]**

081- Argentina
082- Belize
083- Bolivia
084- Brazil
085- Chile
086- Colombia

087- Costa Rica  
088- Cuba  
089- Ecuador  
090- El Salvador  
091- French Guyana  
092- Guatemala  
093- Guyana  
094- Honduras  
095- Mexico  
096- Nicaragua  
097- Panama  
098- Paraguay  
099- Peru  
100- Surinam  
101- Uruguay  
102- Venezuela

103- Latin America

104- Africa  
105- Asia  
106- Caribbean  
107- Europe  
108- North America  
109- Oceania

110- Telesur

Programmes like news and sports with studio in Caracas or Havana but with reportage from different parts of Latin America