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**‘Oil that Harvests Culture’: State, Oil and Culture in Petrosocialism  
(Venezuela, 2007-2013)**

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Thesis submitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Policy and Management

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I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own. I do not grant the University Librarian permission to copy this thesis in whole or in part without further reference to the author.

Penelope Plaza-Azuaje

## Abstract

This thesis develops a story about Venezuela as an oil state and the way it deploys its policies to instrumentalise culture and urban space. It examines the way the Petrostate is imagined in speeches, how it manifests physically in space and how it is discursively constructed in adverts. By engaging with the work of Henri Lefebvre, Bob Jessop and George Yúdice this thesis sets out to challenge the disciplinary compartmentalisation of the analysis of the material and cultural effects of oil to demonstrate that within the extractive logic of the Petrostate and the oil industry, territory, oil, and culture become indivisible. Mainly, it explores how the material and immaterial flows of oil traverse space, bureaucratic power, and culture. This thesis is particularly concerned with investigating the discursive and institutional mechanisms that enabled the Venezuelan state-owned oil company PDVSA to expand its dominant space over Caracas to effectively reframe the city as an urban oil field.

The thesis develops through four interconnected arguments. It examines the representations of space produced by Petrosocialism through the creation of the new policy instruments of the Socialist State Space. This process opened an institutional and legal breach that enabled PDVSA, the state-owned oil company, to enact the Oil Social District as a parallel State Space. Consequently, PDVSA's definition of its corporate headquarters as a centre of oil extraction conceptualises Caracas as an oil field absorbed by the Oil Social District to enable PDVSA La Estancia (the cultural and social arm of PDVSA) to override municipal authority and embark on an ambitious program of public art restoration and urban regeneration. PDVSA La Estancia's actions in the city are justified by its use of farming language that discursively melds oil and culture in a symbiotic and cyclical relationship to define their work as 'oil that harvests culture'. Moreover, the advertising campaign 'we transform oil into a renewable resource for you' is used by PDVSA La Estancia to render oil and culture as equivalent, conceiving culture as 'renewable oil' as if culture could accumulate in the subsoil waiting to be extracted, exploited and processed like a mineral resource. An original contribution of this thesis is to build on Yúdice's expediency of culture as a resource to propose the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, in which culture is inextricable from land, akin to 'renewable oil' and tightly controlled by the Petrostate.

## Introduction

On a routine trip to the nearest PDV petrol station in Caracas, whilst waiting for the tank to fill (at ₡0,08 per litre Venezuela has the cheapest fuel in the world) I looked up to the fuel dispenser and was surprised to see that instead of the usual boring advert for lubricants or motor oil, the dispenser featured the nineteenth century white filigree gazebo of El Calvario park. Upon closer observation, looming over the scene appeared a Gulliver-like version of an oil worker. I got off my car to take a photograph, and noticed that the other dispenser had another similar advert with another giant oil worker grazing the multicolour ceramic mural of Avenida Libertador (Illustration 1).

The presence of the giant oil workers in the images signalled that something new was at play in the manner in which the oil company has been extending its dominion over the city and its cultural symbols. Within contemporary scholarly work on the politics of culture of Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution (Kozak Rovero 2014; Kozak Rovero 2015; Silva-Ferrer 2014), little attention has been paid to PDVSA's recent interventions in the city, which this thesis regards as a clear sign of the increasing power Hugo Chávez had granted to the national oil company. Amid the myriad of recent publications on the cultural representations of oil capitalism in pop culture, literature and the visual arts (Barrett & Worden 2014; LeMenager 2014; Lord 2014), far less attention has been paid to the spatial dimension of the material cultural effects of oil, both as a mineral and as a flow of energy and wealth. Furthermore, recent cultural studies of oil have been predominantly focused on European and North American oil producing countries, with little focus on the Global South or OPEC countries more specifically. This thesis sets out to challenge the disciplinary compartmentalisation of the analysis of the material and cultural effects of oil. Tim Mitchell's *Carbon Democracy* (2011) marks the point of departure of this thesis's approach to look beyond the attention confined to the allocation of oil money to examine the processes through which oil flows are converted into political and cultural power (Mitchell 2011, pp.5–6). The particular case of the Venezuelan Petrostate in the era of Petrosocialism serves to develop a reconsideration of the premises behind the cultural analyses of oil. Historically, the formation of modern statecraft and society in Venezuela has been inextricable from the oil industry; therefore the influence of oil cannot be confined to a set of tropes or circumscribed to punctual interventions of private oil enterprises in the public sphere.



Illustration 1. PDV Petrol Station in Chacao, Caracas. Photo by Penelope Plaza, 2014

Hugo Chávez altered the relationship between PDVSA and the state by making the state-owned oil company subservient to his political project of Petrosocialism, further coalescing oil, state, territory and culture. This thesis examines how in a Petrostate, oil traverses space, bureaucratic power and culture.

To develop these themes, this introductory chapter is divided into three parts. The first part sketches the contextual information of this study, situating it within debates around the pervasive presence of oil in the formation of the modern state in Venezuela and the shift in the relationship between state, territory and oil brought by Hugo Chavez's Petrosocialism. The second part presents the theoretical premises that inform this thesis and identifies the key themes that will be developed throughout this investigation. Finally, the third part presents the chapter outline, providing an introduction to the discussions and main arguments developed in this thesis.

### *Narratives of the Venezuelan Petrostate: From Sowing Oil to the New Magical State*

It wasn't until the rise of the oil industry in early twentieth century that Venezuela acquired the economic and political resources to consolidate a modern state with a centralised bureaucracy, but due to the strong legacy of colonial rule, it dealt with the oil industry in archaic terms. Decisions were based on the traditions inherited from the colony as the emerging nation declared itself the heir of the property rights of the Spanish Crown over vacant lands and ownership over all mines (Pérez Schael 1993, p.39). The property derived from the principle that what belonged to no one belonged to the King, so after gaining independence from the Spanish Crown, the King was substituted by the new republic (Pérez Schael 1993, p.39). Ergo, the wealth extracted directly from the subsoil as rent from the mines became an affirmation of national sovereignty since the rent sanctioned the recognition of the Nation's authority as analogous to the King's. Consequently, Venezuela did not become a rentier state with the rise of the oil industry, it was born a rentier state from the moment it became a republic. As the concept of sovereignty was built around the notion of property, the rent annulled oil's materiality as a mineral. Furthermore, since Venezuela did not have the resources or the capacity to exploit nor produce oil products, revenue came in the form of concessions and royalties. By losing its mineral quality, oil was reduced to the 'fetish' of rent money that flowed from the soil directly to the state's coffers; oil mattered as money and not as a complex technological reality (Pérez Schael 1993, p.94). Hence, for the Venezuelan state the only matter to resolve was how and where to distribute the rent money and to whom, not how to 'produce' it.

The state rather than symbolise national glory, came to be viewed as an enormous distributive apparatus of oil rent money whose power was increasingly hollowed out by a breach between authority and territory. With the exploitation of oil Venezuela inaugurated its modern history as a Petrostate, ‘one whose capacity to create consensus and enforce collective decisions rested largely on the fate of the international oil market’ (Karl 1997, p.91). A Petrostate is a particular form of the rentier state, in which the majority of the state’s revenue comes from abroad through oil exports. The concept of ‘rentier state’ was coined by Iranian economist Hossein Mahdavy (Beblawi & Luciani 1987, p.9) to refer to states whose main source of income comes from external resources. Rentier states can be traced back to the seventeenth century Spanish Empire and its exploitation of the Americas’ vast mineral resources.

Venezuela’s identity as a nation is closely entangled with oil; as the Petrostate engaged with the oil industry Venezuelan society learned to see itself as an oil nation and to regard the state as the single representative of a population unified by oil (Coronil 1997, p.84). Moreover, the oil industry in Venezuela exercised a pervasive influence on the formation of political and social values, promoting and influencing the emergence of a political and social order based on the entrepreneurial corporate model of the oil industry (Tinker Salas 2014, pp.12–13). Moreover, Fernando Coronil’s seminal study *The Magical State: Nature, Money and Modernity in Venezuela* (1997) argues that the Venezuelan state exercised its monopoly over the oil rent dramaturgically, enacting collective fantasies of progress by way of spectacular projects of development and infrastructure to seize its subjects through the power of marvel rather than with the power of reason: ‘the state seizes its subjects by inducing a condition or state being receptive to its illusions –a magical state’ (1997, p.5). In a country where the state had historically been very weak, the expansion of the oil industry promoted the concentration of power in the presidency, as the embodiment of the ‘magical’ powers of oil; the Magical State is personified as a magnanimous sorcerer in the figure of the president. As oil wealth increased, so did the State’s capacity to construct itself as a national institution by expanding the range of its dominion over society with material ‘illusions’ of progress through massive works of infrastructure and a vertiginous process of urbanisation achieved in just a few decades. The flows of oil rent money concentrated in Caracas, the capital city, the centre of modern practices that would not distribute evenly to all sectors of Venezuelan society as oil created an ‘inflated’ economy that fostered an illusion of progress and modernity promoted by the state.

Illusions of progress notwithstanding, the intellectual class attributed an ephemeral quality to oil because unlike agriculture, wealth relied on rent money and not on produce (Pérez Schael 1993,

p.95). Novelist, essayist and politician Arturo Uslar Pietri coined the slogan ‘to sow the oil’ in a newspaper article published in 1936; he used farming language as a didactic trope to explain how the oil windfall should be invested by making a direct reference to the land where riches were extracted from, and not to oil as an ephemeral source of wealth and dependency. Uslar Pietri was an advocate of taking advantage of the knowledge, technology and financial power of foreign oil corporations because he saw great benefits in keeping the country open to foreign capital, and using oil capital to invest in economic and social development (Uzcátegui 2010, pp.37–38). Uslar Pietri’s slogan ‘to sow the oil’ is at the centre of enduring conflicting views around oil in Venezuela. Behind the belief that oil can be ‘sown’ there is a lingering nostalgia about a lost ideal agrarian past that created a tension of simultaneous embrace and demonization of the ‘magical’ powers of oil, as it has created prosperity and extreme poverty in the same measure. Nonetheless, the slogan became the guiding principle of economic policy of subsequent governments (Coronil 1997, p.134). Uslar Pietri would revisit the slogan in public debates throughout the twentieth century to lament that oil had yet to be sown (Pérez Schael 1993, pp.199–205).

After the crash in oil prices of the 1980s and 1990s sowing oil had become ever more unfeasible. Yet, Hugo Chávez revived the use of the slogan to frame the activities of the oil industry under his regime. The historical persistence of sowing oil as a guiding principle is conveyed in Petrosocialism and carried through the state-owned oil company PDVSA. Chávez baptised his third presidential term (2007-2013) as the new era with the expansion of the Bolivarian Revolution towards Socialism, as the only alternative for transcending capitalism. He assured that his socialist project was unique because it was ‘different to the Scientific Socialism that Karl Marx had originally envisioned’ because he was building a Bolivarian, Venezuelan, and oil based *socialismo petrolero*, in other words, Petrosocialism. Petrosocialism broadly defines Hugo Chávez’s political and economic project, in which the oil rent is funnelled into the construction of the Socialist State. In the midst of an unprecedented steep rise in oil prices, Chávez launched the Sowing Oil Plan, a 25 year national oil policy that formed the foundation for the advancement of Petrosocialism and the transition towards the Socialist State, which forms the context of this thesis investigation. Chávez and PDVSA sought to prove that Petrosocialism would succeed in sowing oil where previous regimes had failed.

Venezuelan historian Margarita Lopez-Maya characterises Chávez’s presidencies as the ‘new debut of the magical state’ (2007; Coronil 2011), identifying close similarities between Chávez’ government and the first presidency of Carlos Andres Pérez in the centralisation of power and

the use of the oil rent to completely transform the state (López-Maya 2007). This thesis engages with Coronil and López-Maya to define the Chávez regime as the New Magical State: beyond a dramaturgical exercise of the monopoly over the oil rent, the close control over PDVSA enabled him to summon all the bureaucratic powers of the State in his persona. But as will be made clear throughout this thesis, by delegating to PDVSA many of the functions of the government, he paved the way for the Venezuelan oil company to exercise power as a parallel state and consolidate its own State Space to absorb the material space of the city, conceptualised as an oil field.

The above discussion lays out the backdrop of the topics this thesis investigates. The spatial dimension of the entanglement between the oil industry, bureaucratic power, the city and culture under Petrosocialism have not been sufficiently explored. This thesis aims to address this gap by examining how the relationship between the Petrostate, the state-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.*, and culture play out in space, focusing primarily on the work of PDVSA *La Estancia* -the social and cultural arm of the state owned oil company- and the construction of cultural representations of Petrosocialism in the city of Caracas. It also examines the use of farming language by Hugo Chávez's and PDVSA to refer to the activities of the oil industry (such as the national Sowing Oil Plan), and in particular to the activities of PDVSA *La Estancia*, to suggest a natural renewable cycle of 'sowing oil' and 'harvesting culture' that informs the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit. Having laid out the historical context of the research, this introductory chapter now turns to present the theoretical premises of the thesis.

### *Interfaces of State Space, Bureaucratic Power and Culture as a Resource*

Three theoretical premises guide this thesis: State Space, Bureaucratic Power and Culture as a Resource. The first premise draws on Brenner and Elden's reading of Lefebvre as a theorist of State Space as territory. State Space is understood as land and as a political form of space which is historically specific, produced by and associated with the modern state, understandable 'only through its relation to the state and processes of statecraft'; accordingly, there can be no state without territory and no territory without a state (Brenner & Elden 2009, pp.362–363). Brenner and Elden's reading of Lefebvre will be useful for this thesis as it provides a way to go beyond simplistic perceptions of territory by understanding that any State Space, and by extension, any 'territorially configured social space' is the consequence of specific historical forms of economic and political interventions of the state. This thesis engages critically with a diverse mix of documents and topics, it utilises David Harvey's (Harvey 2006a, pp.281–284)

matrix of categories of space as a taxonomy to locate the spatiotemporal category of each document (defined and described in detail in chapter one) in order to disentangle the spatial and discursive mechanisms that constitute the spatial policies informed by Petrosocialism. Therefore, Caracas is defined as the Absolute-Material Space that delimits the geographical boundaries of the city and this thesis. The policy instruments of territorial and public administration, understood as legal entities of space, encompass the Absolute-Representations of Space shaped by the discourses of Petrosocialism. The Law of Hydrocarbons and its Oil Social Districts are regarded as oil-industry-based conceptualisations that function as Relative-Representations of Space, fixed in time but mutable in terms of the 'areas of influence' of the centres of extraction of hydrocarbons. The Relative-Space of Representation category is useful to locate the space represented in the adverts of PDVSA La Estancia's campaign 'We transform oil into a renewable resource for you'. In the adverts, space is fixed in time but made mutable in perception and meaning by how it is framed by the oil industry. Finally, the public art and public spaces restored by PDVSA La Estancia in Caracas are located in a Relative-Material Space as they serve as markers of the oil company's appropriation of the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas, simultaneously located in two superimposed State Spaces.

The second premise is Bureaucratic Power. Bob Jessop posits that the state does not exercise power, as the power of the state is 'always conditional and relational' it is defined as an institutional ensemble (Jessop 1990, p.367). Similarly, Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (2008, p.10) coincide with Jessop in arguing that the state does not and cannot exercise power; it can only do so through the complex network of organisations, institutions and apparatuses that compose it (2008, pp.55–56). By the same token, Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce affirm that the state 'rather than a site from which this form of power originates or at which it terminates' is the site where bureaucratic power congregates (Joyce & Bennett 2010, p.2). Hence, when referring to the power of the state, it is more accurate to talk about bureaucratic power instead of state power. This thesis adopts Bennett and Joyce's perspective of the state as the site where bureaucratic power congregates to explore the contradictory process of transition towards the Socialist State, as it entailed the concurrent fragmentation of the existing state apparatus and centralisation of bureaucratic power in the figure of President Hugo Chávez. The adoption of the bureaucratic power perspective also allows this thesis to integrate the idea of the state as an 'institution of territorial governance with vast powers over the material wellbeing of its people' (Mukerji 2010, p.82) since the modern state is the only agent with the capacity to manage territory on a large scale (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.20). This thesis explores bureaucratic power as it derives from, and is subject to, the dominion over State Space as Territory, a crucial notion in a Petrostate as its

political and economic power originates from the ownership of the subsoil and the monopoly over the oil rent.

The third premise defines the original contribution of this thesis, the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, which expands on George Yúdice's expediency of culture as a resource. Yúdice's proposition is that culture has acquired to an extent the same status as natural resources as it is close to impossible to find public statements that do not instrumentalise art and culture, whether to improve social conditions or to foster economic growth (Yúdice 2003, pp.10–11). Through an exploration of the relationship between culture, management and power (Bauman 2004; McGuigan 2003; O'Brien 2014) this thesis engages with PDVSA La Estancia's use of farming language and discursive fabrications to coalesce culture and oil ('oil that harvests culture') to argue that for an oil company it is close to impossible not to turn to culture as a mineral resource, in which culture becomes akin to 'renewable oil'. Given that in practice, cultural policy is the bureaucratic medium for the instrumentalisation of culture as a resource (Miller & Yúdice 2002, p.1), this thesis also engages with Jeremy Ahearne's category of implicit cultural policy (2009, p.141) to demonstrate PDVSA La Estancia's use of the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons as a parallel instrument of cultural policy.

The three theoretical premises described above coalesce into a conceptual lens through the substantive chapters of this thesis, which enables to transcend the pitfalls of a compartmentalised analysis of the spatial and cultural dimension of oil, as this thesis sets out to demonstrate that within a Petrostate, oil inevitably intersects and interweaves State Space, Bureaucratic Power and Culture as a Resource. State Space (Territory) condenses the notion of land and political space of statecraft, land being crucial to a Petrostate since the subsoil contains the deposits of crude oil that forms the basis of its financial and political power. Hence, the Bureaucratic Power of the Petrostate and its institutional apparatus relies and depends on the oil wealth extracted from the subsoil. Therefore, the manner in which the Petrostate conceives and manages culture as a resource is framed within the extractive logic of oil, where culture is tantamount to oil as a resource entangled with State Space.

In this regard, the discussion developed in this thesis contributes to current debates and recent scholarly work on the cultural dimension of oil, particularly within the emerging field of Energy Humanities. Thus, by building on the relationship between culture, management and power, this thesis particular tripartite theoretical lens provides the ideal framework to scrutinise how cultural policy and management function in the particular context of the oil industry by addressing the relationship between the Petrostate, oil wealth and culture in the development of Petrosocialism

in Venezuela. Looking at the relationship between oil wealth, the Petrostate and culture through this particular lens encourages the advancement of an innovative way of understanding the spatial and cultural dimensions of oil, and how a certain form of understanding culture is privileged by the national oil industry and to what effect it constructs a parallel notion of cultural policy making and management.

Hence, this thesis will also draw on historical studies on the cultural legacy of oil in Venezuela to provide a discussion on the interconnections between culture, cultural policy and bureaucratic power in the Venezuelan Petrostate. Venezuelan Marxist anthropologist and former oil camp dweller Rodolfo Quintero's influential essay of 1968 *The Culture of Oil: essay on the life styles of social groups in Venezuela* (2011) (*La cultura del petróleo: ensayo sobre estilos de vida de grupos sociales en Venezuela*), was the first to explore the 'culture of oil' in Venezuela. He defined the 'culture of oil' as a culture of conquest, a foreign force with its own technology, instruments, inventions, equipment as well as non-material devices such as language, art and science that obliterates local cultures. This thesis revisits Quintero's contention that the 'culture of oil' is sterile, incapable of creating art, science or any form of intellectual or cultural production. Also relevant for this thesis are Maria Sol Pérez Schael's study *Petróleo, Cultura y Poder en Venezuela* (1993) which examines the influence of the cultural understanding of oil as a demonic force in shaping twentieth century statecraft, Fernando Coronil's seminal work *The Magical State: Nature, Money and Modernity in Venezuela* (1997) which accounts the ways in which the state's monopoly over the oil economy endowed it with the 'magical powers' to transform the nation, and Miguel Tinker Salas' *The Enduring Legacy: Oil and Society in Venezuela* (2009) that explores the oil camps of transnational companies as cultural laboratories that promoted forms of citizenship and ways of life related to the global oil industry.

In summary, this thesis is concerned with investigating the discursive and institutional mechanisms that enabled the state-owned oil company to constitute a parallel State Space to extend its dominance over the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas, to effectively reframe the city as an oil field by discursively construing a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit that ties culture to the land, where the 'sowing' of oil can 'harvest' culture. It is also concerned with the intrinsic contradictions within the model of Petrosocialism that informs the paradoxical discursive notion of 'renewable oil' as an illusion of the New Magical State.

## *Chapter outline*

To address the debates discussed above, this thesis is comprised of a brief historical overview, six substantive chapters and a conclusion. The historical overview provides essential contextual information in regards to Hugo Chavez presidencies and his Bolivarian Revolution, the shift of role of PDVSA under his government as well as institutional reforms and the governance structure of Caracas (e.g. concerning the governance structure in Caracas. Further details on these developments and the manner in which they inform this research will be described in detail throughout the substantive chapters.

Chapter one provides a review of the relevant literature that forms the theoretical premises of this thesis, divided into four parts. Part one explores Henri Lefebvre's and David Harvey's theorisation on space, to develop a discussion on the production of space and State Space in order to focus on Lefebvre as a theorist of State Space as territory. Part two develops a discussion on state theory and bureaucratic power, to focus in particular on rentier state theory in order to define the particular characteristics of the Petrostate. Part three reviews key literature from the field of urban sociology to differentiate the terms city and urban, and their relationship with space and culture, to understand the effects of oil capitalism in the production of urban society and culture in the context of the Venezuelan Petrostate. Finally, it reviews relevant literature on the cultural dimension of oil, as well as the role of oil in and within culture, to examine the spatial and cultural representations of Petrosocialism in Caracas.

Chapter two provides a discussion of the research design, methodology and ethical considerations of this thesis. The chapter defines the boundaries of the research to three specific settings: political, geographical and institutional. The political setting is defined by Hugo Chavez's second and third presidential terms, in which he launched his model of Petrosocialism and the transition towards the Socialist State. The geographical context is the city of Caracas, capital of Venezuela and seat of government, a city with long standing discrepancies between its legal institutional framework and its territorial organisation. The institutional setting is PDVSA La Estancia, the social and cultural arm of the state-owned oil company PDVSA, self-defined as an 'an oasis of culture and knowledge'. It was chosen as a case study representative of the fragmented institutional landscape brought by Hugo Chávez' transition to the Socialist State as well as a unique example of a public cultural institution directly owned, managed and funded by a state-owned oil company. This thesis adopts a case study approach; PDVSA La Estancia is used as a gateway to explore Petrosocialism from a spatial and cultural perspective. The case

study is not concerned with PDVSA La Estancia's internal bureaucracy, its processes of decision making, the logistics of the day to day management of public art and public spaces or its nationwide programme of cultural events, it is particularly concerned with investigating the ideological and institutional circumstances that enabled it to exert authority over the restored public art and public spaces in Caracas. The multidisciplinary nature of this thesis required a mix of documentary sources such as documentary research and elite interviews as data, and Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Semiotics as methodological approaches. The chapter also describes the process of carrying out the research; it highlights the unanticipated ethical challenges faced whilst doing fieldwork in Caracas by engaging in a detailed discussion on the ethics of doing fieldwork in contexts suffering from extreme political polarisation and urban violence.

Having laid out the literature review and the methodology, the thesis develops through four substantive chapters. Chapter three begins with a historical account of the Venezuelan nation state in the context of postcolonial state formation in Latin America. It then develops a discussion on the emergence of the modern Venezuelan Petrostate coeval with the arrival of the oil industry and corporate practices of foreign oil corporations to illustrate how the Petrostate approached oil predominantly as rent money and not as a modern technological reality, which marked the emergence of what Fernando Coronil has termed the Magical State. The chapter builds on Coronil to characterise Hugo Chávez as the embodiment of the New Magical State and PDVSA as the engine of his revolution. Finally, the chapter provides a discussion on the historical context of the intersections between oil and culture in Venezuela, focusing in particular on the enduring persistence of the 'sowing oil' slogan as a driver of policy making.

Chapter four examines the entanglements between Hugo Chávez's discourse and the creation of new spatial strategies for the Socialist State Space, in the terms defined by Brenner & Elden as the mobilisation of bureaucratic power to reorganise sociospatial relations. Discourses, according to Fairclough, can exert power because they are regulated, institutionalised and linked to action. In the case of Chávez, his discursive exercise of power changed reality through his embodiment of the New Magical State, which allowed him to condense the bureaucratic powers of the state in his persona. This chapter investigates the Absolute-Representation of Space produced by the discourse of Petrosocialism; it argues that Chávez's embodiment of the New Magical State is the lynchpin to his ability to exert Bureaucratic Power through discourse. The oil windfall that characterised the period that concerns this thesis (2007-2013), provided Chávez with the resources to completely reform the institutional apparatus and create new policy instruments of

territorial administration that conceptualise the Socialist State Space. Through the analysis of the development of policy instruments created to dismantle the existing spatial strategies of the state to lay the foundations of the Socialist State Space. The process of dismantlement of the existing institutional apparatus of city governance challenges notions of state space and modernity; this chapter demonstrates that the Oil Social Districts, outlined by the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, constitute in practice PDVSA's parallel State Space, extended over non-oil extraction areas like Caracas. It also demonstrates how the process of the abrogation and substitution of the existing legal framework of political-administrative territorial management was fraught with inconsistencies that created a legal vacuum that diminished State Space authority and thus enabled PDVSA La Estancia to use the Social Oil Districts defined by the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons to override municipal authority.

Building on the previous discussion, chapter five traces the entanglement between Chávez's discourse on oil and the speeches of the president of PDVSA Rafael Ramírez, it then proceeds to examine elites' perspectives on the relationship between oil, the state and city planning which frames their opinions on the role of the oil industry in urban development, and in particular of PDVSA La Estancia. Building on this discussion it proceeds to analyse the speeches of the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia to trace the discursive use of culture that frames the actions of the institution in the city, which the chapter argues are based on construing the city as an oil field whilst using farming language to conceptualise a symbiotic and cyclical relationship between oil, land, and culture by stating that PDVSA La Estancia is 'oil that harvests culture'. As a self-defined instrument of the Sowing Oil Plan, the act of sowing oil to harvest culture is presented as another illusion of the New Magical State: oil ceases to be finite when it is sown to bear the fruits of culture. This chapter examines how these discursive constructions enabled PDVSA La Estancia to interpret and enact the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, a legal instrument limited to matters of extraction and commercialisation of oil, as a parallel policy instrument of territory and an implicit cultural policy. The work of PDVSA La Estancia provides evidence that the Oil Social Districts, conceptualised in the Law of Hydrocarbons, are used to supersede the authority of the existing State Space conceptualised in the abrogated policy instruments on territorial and urban administration. One of the key arguments of this thesis is that the dismantlement of the existing state apparatus created the circumstances that enabled PDVSA La Estancia to interpret Article 5 of the Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy, and in consequence, construct representational spaces for a petrosocialist notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, as evidenced by the adverts analysed in chapter six.

Subsequently, chapter six explores the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit advanced through PDVSA's State Space, looking in particular at the advertisement campaign launched by PDVSA La Estancia in 2013 titled 'We transform oil into a renewable resource for you' through the semiotic lens of Charles Peirce semiosis and Roland Barthes' Mythologies. The analysis of the visual and verbal elements draws on George Yúdice's expediency of culture as a resource to argue that PDVSA La Estancia discursively renders oil and culture equivalent by construing culture-as-mineral-deposit, as if culture could be extracted, exploited and processed like oil. It evokes a farming cycle that on one hand responds to the discursive strand of 'renewable oil' oil and on the other, provides a novel dramaturgical act for the New Magical State: culture as renewable oil is tied back to the land. Hence, culture-as-mineral-deposit is inextricable from State Space, specifically from the Oil Social District as PDVSA's parallel State Space. If culture can be 'harvested' from the subsoil, then the Petrostate can claim complete ownership and tight control over culture as a 'renewable resource' as established by the Law of Hydrocarbons. The chapter also illustrates how PDVSA La Estancia used the inclusion of a giant oil worker as a visual strategy to take possession of the public art and public spaces it restored. The chapter argues that the giant oil worker is an indexical sign of the oil industry, their inclusion and interaction with the urban spaces depicted point to a re-signification of the city as an oil field, a clear attempt at naturalising a direct and somewhat mechanistic relationship between oil, city and culture. The giant oil workers function as a visual metaphor of the Oil Social District, PDVSA's State Space. One of the challenges of this thesis is to demonstrate that within the extractive logic of the oil industry, territory and culture become indivisible.

Finally, the conclusion returns to the discussions developed in the individual chapters and locates them within the thesis research questions, its main arguments and the current Venezuelan context. It summarises that in a Petrostate, oil ties bureaucratic power and culture to the land and its mineral-rich subsoil. It also makes wider points in regards to the oil company's corporate ownership and authority over city space, bolstered by its possession of vast financial resources and the fragmentation of the bureaucratic structure of the state's apparatus. In the particular case of PDVSA LA Estancia, the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit that informs their actions in the city is personified by the giant oil workers in the adverts to negate the original cultural process that created the public art, for they were produced by a state that was considered by Hugo Chávez as bourgeois, capitalist and counter-revolutionary.

This thesis opens with a concise overview of the political and economic context that frames this investigation.

## Brief Historical Context: PDVSA, Hugo Chávez and Petrosocialism

This chapter provides a brief but comprehensive overview of the political and economic context that frames this thesis. The chapter is organised chronologically, it begins with the creation of PDVSA with the nationalisation of the oil industry in the 1970s, its subsequent growth as an oil conglomerate up to its role in advancing Hugo Chavez's model of Petrosocialism, it then provides an account of the rise of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela's politics, from his election as President of Venezuela in 1998 to his death in 2013, after winning the re-election for a fourth presidential term.

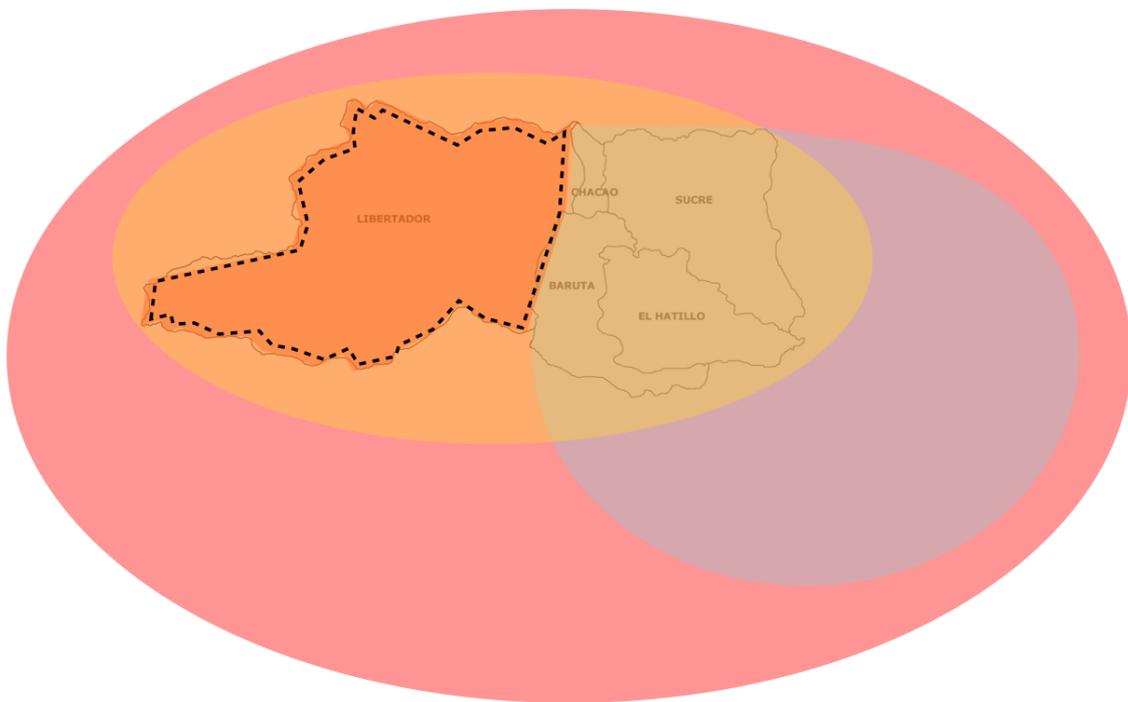
The state-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima* (PDVSA) was created by decree in 1975, to take over the functions and operations of the *Corporación Venezolana de Petróleo* (Venezuelan Corporation of Oil). President Carlos Andres Perez nationalised the oil industry in 1976, just one year after the promulgation of a new law that reserved to the state the industry and commerce of hydrocarbons, and the expropriation of the iron and steel industries (Bye 1979, p.57). But the nationalisation law was fraught with legal loopholes that still allowed foreign companies to operate in the country, and in the following years did little to alter PDVSA's corporate culture "that projected the firm as an international oil conglomerate operating in Venezuela" (Tinker Salas 2015, p.148). Nonetheless, after the nationalisation of the oil industry, PDVSA's corporate efficiency differentiated it from the rest of the public sector. Its managers, executives and workforce at large had worked for the international oil corporations, adopting their corporate culture and technocratic practices (Tinker Salas 2009; Wainberg 2004, p.4). By late 1980s and early 1990s, PDVSA's management pursued to transform the state-owned oil company into an international conglomerate but it wasn't until Rafael Caldera's second presidency (1994-1999) that the state-owned oil company consolidated its investment program called *Apertura Petrolera* (Oil Opening) for reopening the industry to foreign capital investment and increasing productive capacity, in contradiction of OPEC's policy of maintaining oil prices by limiting production. By exerting control over the main source of the state's income, PDVSA counted with a larger budget than the government, making it almost completely independent from the state that owned it, operating like a 'prosperous first world company in an impoverished third-world nation' (Maass 2009, p.202).

PDVSA's *Apertura Petrolera* became one of the key campaign issues of the 1998 presidential race (Wainberg 2004, p.6), among its most staunch critics was Lieutenant Coronel Hugo Chávez. Chávez was imprisoned after the failed coup d'état he led against president Carlos Andrés Pérez

on 4 February 1992; he was given a presidential pardon in 1994 by President Rafael Caldera which allowed him to launch his political career to run for the 1998 presidential elections as an outsider with his own party *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200* MBR-200 (Coronil 2000, p.36). Chávez criticised PDVSA for functioning like a ‘state within the state’ (Giussepe Ávalo 2014, p.26; Párraga 2010, p.29); he won the presidential election by a landslide, which marked the beginning of a shift in the relationship between the state and PDVSA.

One of the key promises of the presidential campaign was to reform the constitution through the creation of a Constitutional Assembly, which was approved by popular vote in April 1999. A second election, in July 1999, selected the individual delegates who would draft the new constitution. On August 1999, the Constitutional Assembly voted to grant itself the powers to abolish government institutions. A constitutional referendum on December 1999 approved with a wide margin the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (CRBV) which came into effect in 2000 (Tinker Salas 2015, p.137), it is the first constitution approved by popular referendum in the history of Venezuela. It displaced the Constitution of 1961 and inaugurated the era baptised by Chávez as the Fifth Republic. Among the innovations of the C RBV are the change of the name of the country from Republic of Venezuela to Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the extension of the presidential term from five to six years allowing for consecutive re-elections, and the reform of the structure of the government that established a decentralised government and granted greater powers to the legislative branch (King 2013, p.379), such as the reform of the institutional structure of the capital city, Caracas, which defines de geographical setting of this investigation.

The existing legal and institutional framework of Caracas suffered from weaknesses and deficiencies inherited from previous governments that the reforms in the constitution and the later actions of Chavez’s government did not remedy; on the contrary they were magnified since four different spheres of government coexist and clash within Caracas: national government, Miranda State, Metropolitan District, Capital District (Delfino 2001, p.40), the Chief of Government of the Capital District and the five municipalities of Libertador, Chacao, Baruta, El Hatillo and Sucre (see Diagram 1). This fragmented and dispersed institutional landscape is the context of the extension of PDVSA’s Oil Social District over the Metropolitan District, which allowed PDVSA La Estancia to displace the authority of municipalities.



- Borders of Municipalities
- Chief of Government of the Capital District
- Capital District
- Miranda State
- Metropolitan Mayor
- Metropolitan Oil Social District

Diagram 1. Caracas current overlap of governance structures

With a new constitution in place, a “mega-election” for every elected official in the country was held in July 2000, in which Chavez won the re-election for a second term by a large margin. His re-election was followed by reforms in social policy, development models and most importantly, oil policies (Parker 2006, p.64) that “sought to complete the nationalization of the oil industry” by closing the legal loopholes created by the 1976 law, and exert complete control over PDVSA (Tinker Salas 2015, p.149). The economic policies of the first two years of Chávez’s presidency focused on increasing oil revenue, strengthening Venezuela’s position inside OPEC, re-establishing state control over PDVSA and reinstating the policy-making role of the Ministry of Energy and Mines (Parker 2006, p.64; Wainberg 2004, p.6). In November 2001 a new Organic Law of Hydrocarbons was promulgated that reduced taxes, increased royalties, and ‘mandated state possession of a majority of stocks in all mixed companies engaged in primary activity in the oil industry’ (Parker 2006, p.65), strongly rejected by PDVSA’s top management. The events of 2002 (short lived coup d’état against Chávez in April and a national oil strike/lockout organised by the opposition, described in more detail in chapter three) were a turning point in Chávez politics, marking the radicalisation of his Bolivarian revolution to embark the nation on a transition towards Socialism (Coronil 2011, p.13).

In 2005 he launched the *Plan Siembra Petrolera* (Sowing Oil Plan), a 25 year national plan and oil policy that formed the foundation for the advancement of Petrosocialism to lay the foundations for the transition towards the Socialist State. Chávez further altered the institutional channels of the flow of the rent from PDVSA to the state: instead of transferring oil money to the government to be redistributed to the ministries that oversaw social programs, PDVSA was put in charge of new government programs (Maass 2009, pp.202, 215) effectively establishing PDVSA as the key player in advancing Chávez’s nationalist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist model. Chávez, aware of the diminished capacity of the public sector, believed that ‘an oil company would succeed where government ministries might not’ (Maass 2009, p.215).

The re-election of Hugo Chávez for a third term in 2006 revealed the degree of radicalisation of his policies with the creation of the single government party United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and the launch of the National Project Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan 2007-2013 (PPS) along with the Five Motors of the Revolution (Diagram 2). In early 2007 he declared that he was building the Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2007b), a Bolivarian socialism supported by the oil rent, a *socialismo petrolero*, in other words, Petrosocialism. Petrosocialism broadly defines a political and economic model in which the flow of the oil rent is channelled into the construction of a Socialist State and a new socialist society. The transition to the Socialist State

was outlined in the First Socialist Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Nation 2007-2013, which included a five steps strategy named the Five Motors of the Bolivarian Revolution, to create the Venezuelan socialist model. Of particular interest for this thesis will be the Fourth Motor, the development of the New Geometry of Power proposed as a way to re-distribute political, social, economic and military powers over the space of the country according to the new socialist order (Chávez 2007c, p.67). PDVSA expanded its functions to non-oil-industry areas to comply with its new socialist sense by creating seven new subsidiaries whose services ranged from food distribution to building social housing (Párraga 2010, pp.26–29). In practice, ministries that had traditionally been in charge of social spending were replaced by PDVSA (Corrales & Penfold 2011, p.84).

Hugo Chávez put forward in 2007 a referendum to amend the CRBV, coinciding with the launch of Petrosocialism. The amendment was conceived as an instrument for the dismantlement of the ‘constitutional and legal superstructure’ that had sustained the capitalist mode of production, in order to embark on the construction of a socialist society for the twenty-first century. Although the reform lost the referendum vote, the legal foundations for the Socialist State had already been laid out by the National Assembly in clear breach of the CRBV, with the sanction in 2006 of the *Ley de Consejos Comunales* (Law of Communal Councils), reformed and elevated to the status of Organic Law in 2009 (Brewer Carías 2011, p.127). In December 2010, a month before the newly elected National Assembly took power with a larger representation of the opposition, a number of organic laws were swiftly sanctioned (Brewer Carías 2011, p.128) to establish the legal framework of the Socialist State.

The lack of a coherent governance structure for Caracas described earlier was compounded by the transition towards the Socialist State, entrenched by the journey from bill to legal vacuum of the Organic Law for the Planning and Management of the Organisation of Territory LOPGOT, created in 2005 to substitute the laws of Organic Law for the Organisation of Territory of 1983 and the Organic Law of Urban Planning of 1987, the key spatial policy instruments that shaped urban planning and management in Caracas, and the country at large. This process will be examined in detail in chapter four (see Diagram 2).

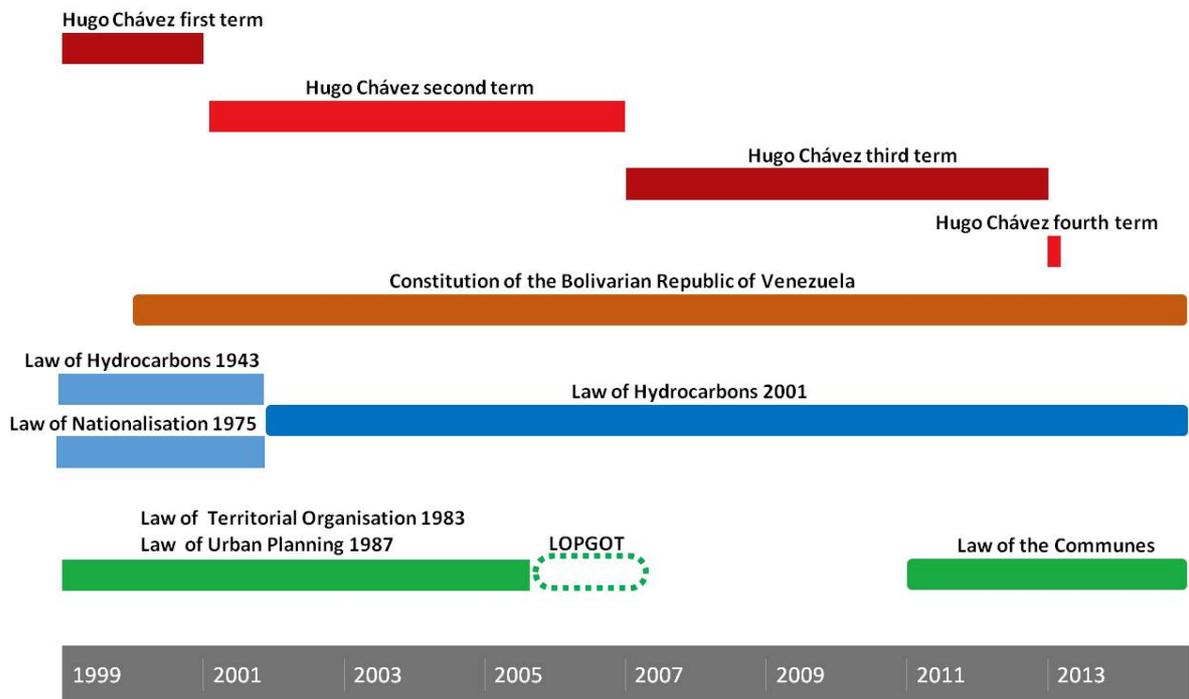


Diagram 2. Timeline of key policy instruments that concern this thesis

Chávez went for a fourth re-election in the presidential campaign of 2012. Despite strong speculations around his poor health (he had been diagnosed with Cancer in 2011) he pushed an aggressive campaign to defeat by a slim margin the opposition leader Henrique Capriles Radonsky. But Chávez was not able to attend his inauguration in January 2013, as he was still recovering from cancer surgery in Cuba. The unexpected death of Hugo Chávez in March 2013 left the transition towards the Socialist State Space incomplete and orphaned of its leader and mastermind. The Vice President Nicolás Maduro became interim president until the new presidential elections held in April 2013. The PSUV unanimously appointed Maduro as their presidential candidate, who won with an even narrower margin to opposition leader Capriles Radonsky.

This brief account provides concise and comprehensive contextual information crucial to understand the historical, political and institutional framework of this investigation. The following chapter opens the substantive material of this thesis with a review of the relevant literature that forms the theoretical premises of the research.

## Chapter one: State Space, Bureaucratic Power, City and Culture

Oil has clout as the carrier of progress and political power in Venezuela, a country where the emergence of the modern state became inextricable from the arrival of the oil industry. Oil, understood primarily as wealth that flows like manna from heaven to the state's coffers rather than a concrete technological reality, made the state more powerful as it exercised a monopoly over the oil rent. The windfall of rent money triggered the rapid urbanisation, mass education, industrialisation, arts institutions and large scale works of infrastructure. Nonetheless, the spatial dimensions of the entanglements between oil, state and culture in Venezuela have been understudied. This chapter establishes the three theoretical premises of the thesis: State Space, Bureaucratic Power, and Culture as a Resource.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part provides a discussion on Lefebvre's triad of space and David Harvey's matrix of spatiotemporality followed by a review of Neil Brenner and Steve Elden's reading of Lefebvre as a theorist of State Space as territory. The second part develops a review of the literature on state theory, focusing primarily on bureaucratic power and rentier state theory to define the particular characteristics of the oil rentier state, the Petrostate. Subsequently, part three builds on the discussion on State Space and oil rentier state to examine the intersections between the literatures on city, culture and oil. Finally, part four reviews the literature on culture as well recent texts from the emerging field of Energy Humanities that address the cultural dimension of oil, which provide the theoretical foundations to characterise the notion of culture construed within Petrosocialism as culture-as-mineral-deposit.

### *Space*

With the emergence of modern science, mathematicians and philosophers monopolised the conceptualisation of space as an abstract 'mental thing' divorced from reality and social life (Lefebvre 1991, pp.1–7). This mental space created an abyss between the 'space of the philosophers and the space of people who deal with material things' (Lefebvre 1991, pp.4–6). Mental space became the site of theoretical practice and the reference point of knowledge, space viewed as a neutral container of social relations completely detached from social practices. Alternatively, Lefebvre proposed that space has an active role in knowledge and in action, defining space as a concrete abstraction that involves mental abstraction and physical materiality; space becomes a concrete reality *through* and *in* social practices.

Lefebvre's thinking on space must be put into the historical context of 1960-70s France and the efforts of the French State to reform the practice of urban planning to develop alternatives to post-war functionalism. French planning institutions engaged in a process of institutionalisation of critique. The introduction of new procedures for the participation of inhabitants politicised its operations and stimulated the emergence of critical urban research, including Marxist research (Stanek 2011, p.ix). Lefebvre's critique engaged not just with philosophy, but with sociology, architecture and urbanism; the development of his theory of the production of space is an extension of his philosophical thinking and his involvement in empirical studies for several French institutions as well as his close relationship with French architectural culture which included intense exchanges with planners, urbanists and architects (Stanek 2011, pp.vii–ix).

Through these cross disciplinary engagements Lefebvre developed a qualitative approach focused on space as a lived experience, opposed to the abstract space of state planning and post-war functionalist urbanism; he shifted the focus from things *in* space to the actual processes of its production, the multiple social practices that produce it and the political character of the process of the production of space (Stanek 2011, p.ix; Lefebvre 1991, p.37; Elden 2004, p.189). For Lefebvre, production carries a wider meaning than the mere economic production of things, the term involves the production of society, knowledge and institutions (Elden 2004, p.184).

Rather than disregarding notions of temporality and history by privileging space, Lefebvre advanced the idea that space and time appear and manifest as different but are indivisible (Elden 2004, pp.185–186). Every society (or Mode of Production in Lefebvre's terms) has historically produced its own particular space. Capital and space are social processes since space is the 'general form of social practice in capitalist modernities' (Stanek 2011, p.xiii). Space is a social relationship, inherent to relationships of property and bound to the forces of production (Lefebvre 1991, p.85). The representations of the relations of production that contain within them power relations also occur in space, in the form of monuments, buildings and works of art (Lefebvre 1991, pp.31–33).

Lefebvre proposed a conceptual triad of interconnected realms for understanding space as a social product conformed by Spatial Practice, Representations of Space, and Representational Spaces. Spatial Practice (perceived space) embodies the associations and interactions between daily life (human actions) and urban reality. It is revealed and deciphered through the routes, networks and flows that tie and connect the places of private life, work and leisure; this is an impersonal space comprised of the flows of money, transportation, commodities, labour, etc. (Lefebvre 1991, p.38). A Spatial Practice entails cohesiveness but not necessarily a logical

coherence. Representations of Space (conceived space) tend towards a system of intellectually worked verbal signs that belong to the domain of planners, urbanists, politicians, scientists, and technocrats (Lefebvre 1991, pp.38–39). It is the Cartesian realm of maps, models, plans, blueprints and designs which are formed historically, and informed by the knowledge and ideologies that exert a dominant force in the production of space in any society.

Representational Spaces (lived space) or the experienced space, is the space of human subjectivity superimposed to physical space through the use of symbols and images that have their point of origin in history. It is the dominated space that ‘imagination seeks to change and appropriate’ producing symbolic works (Lefebvre 1991, p.39,41-42). These three categories are not hierarchically ordered as they remain in a state of continuous dialectical tension; they contribute to the production of space in different ways according to the society -Mode of Production- and historical period (Lefebvre 1991, p.46).

The transition from one mode of production to another results in contradictions within the social relations which inevitably transforms and revolutionises space, resulting in the production of a new space (Lefebvre 1991, p.46). Space as a ‘concrete abstraction’ brings together physical, mental and social constructions which become material reality through human practice. David Harvey draws on Lefebvre to regard space as ‘an active moment within the social process’ (2006b, p.77) since capitalism has a very close relation to daily life, which cannot be seen as separate from the circulation of capital. If capital produces space in its own image, and urbanisation is the physical framework for capital accumulation, then the study of the evolution of a particular city can provide a better understanding of the urban processes of capitalism (2006b, pp.80–101).

Harvey identifies three ways in which space can be understood: Absolute Space, Relative Space, and Relational Space (2006a, p.272). Absolute Space is the space of Newton and Descartes, usually represented as a pre-existing grid independent of time and matter, it is fixed and measurable. As such, it is devoid of contradictions, uncertainties, ambiguities, open to human calculation. In geometric terms, it is the space of Euclid, the space of engineering practices and cartography. Socially, it is the space of private property and territorial boundaries such as administrative units, cities and states.

Relative Space is the space of Non-Euclidean geometries and Einstein. Relative space is twofold: it has multiple geometries whose measurements depend on the frame of reference of the observer as Relative Space is impossible to understand without time. Rather than speaking of

space and time as separate, it requires speaking of space-time or spatiotemporality. In Relative Space, time is fixed whilst space is mutable according to certain observable rules. This is the space of the study of the flows of commodities, money, people, energy, etc. Each 'flow' or spatiotemporality demands a different framework of understanding, whilst their comparisons can reveal issues of political choice as well (Harvey 2006a, p.273).

Relational Space is closely associated with Leibniz. This notion of space proposes that space cannot be isolated from the processes that define it; the relational aspect means that 'processes do not occur *in* space but define their own spatial frame' (Harvey 2006a, p.273). Measurement and calculability become problematic in Relational Space but Harvey challenges the assumption that space-time can only exist if it can be quantified because there are processes within the social, cultural, political and mental dimension that, whilst elusive, can only be approached from a relational notion of space.

Harvey argues that space is not just absolute, relative, or relational. He concurs with Lefebvre in that space can only be construed through human practices; hence it can become one, two or all categories at once depending on the circumstances. Harvey developed a three by three matrix that intersects his and Lefebvre's categories of space in Table 1:

	Material space (experienced space)	Representations of space (conceptualised space)	Spaces of representation (lived space)
Absolute space	Walls, bridges, doors, stairways, floors, ceilings, streets, buildings, cities, mountains, continents, bodies of water, territorial markers, physical boundaries and barriers, gated communities...	Cadastral and administrative maps; Euclidean geometry; landscape description; metaphors of confinement, open space, location, placement and positionality; (command and control relatively easy) – <i>Newton and Descartes</i>	Feelings of contentment around the hearth; sense of security or incarceration from enclosure; sense of power from ownership, command and domination over space; fear of others ‘beyond the pale’
Relative space (time)	Circulation and flows of energy, water, air, commodities, peoples, information, money, capital; accelerations and diminutions in the friction of distance	Thematic and topological maps (e.g. London tube system); non-Euclidean geometries and topology; perspectival drawings; metaphors of situated knowledges, of motion, mobility, displacement, acceleration, time space compression and distantiation; (command and control difficult requiring sophisticated techniques) <i>Einstein and Riemann</i>	Anxiety at not getting to class on time; thrill of moving into the unknown; frustration in a traffic jam; tensions or exhilarations of time-space compression, of speed, of motion
Relational space (time)	Electromagnetic energy flows and fields; social relations; rental and economic potential surfaces; pollution concentrations; energy potentials; sounds, odours and sensations wafted on the breeze	Surrealism; existentialism; psycho-geographies; cyberspace; metaphors of internalization of forces and powers (command and control extremely difficult – chaos theory, dialectics, internal relations, quantum mathematics) – <i>Leibniz</i> , <i>Whitehead, Deleuze</i> , <i>Benjamin</i>	Visions, fantasies, desires, frustrations, memories, dreams, phantasms, psychic states (e.g. agoraphobia, vertigo, claustrophobia)

Table 1 (Harvey 2006a, p.282)

Although Harvey acknowledges that the matrix has its limitations (2006a, pp.281–284), it is confined in the absolute space of the chart whilst engaging in a representational practice, the cross-relations between the categories and the diverse combinations that arise in their intersections enables the analysis of complex scenarios where the use of one simple set of categories would not be sufficient. Harvey’s matrix of spatiotemporality underpins the approach of this thesis, as it enables to break apart and characterise the entangled spatial dimensions of the topics that are the subject of analysis to reveal the spatial intersections between oil, the city, policy instruments and the work of PDVSA La Estancia in Caracas, as displayed in Table 2.

	Material space (experienced space)	Representations of space (conceptualised space)	Spaces of representation (lived space)
Absolute space	Caracas	Policy instruments of territorial and public administration –legal entity of space- informed by the discourses of Petrosocialism and the transition towards the Socialist State. (Bureaucratic Power)	
Relative space (time)	Public Art and Public Spaces intervened by PDVSA La Estancia, located in two superimposed State Space(s).	Law of Hydrocarbons and Oil Social Districts. (The New Magical State)	The space represented in the adverts of the “We transform oil...” campaign by PDVSA La Estancia. (Culture-as-mineral-deposit)
Relational space (time)			

Table 2

The analysis unfolds through chapters four, five and six following the matrix to guide the arguments. Caracas is the Absolute-Material Space that defines the geographical boundaries of the city and this thesis. Absolute-Representations of Space is the space of the policy instruments of territorial and public administration –the legal entities of space- that are shaped by the discourses of Petrosocialism, exerting a dominant force in the production of space in the transition towards the Socialist State. Chapter four examines how the policy instruments conceptualise the political and administrative boundaries of State Space authority as a manifestation of the fragmentation of Bureaucratic Power between Hugo Chávez and PDVSA.

The public art and public spaces restored by PDVSA La Estancia in Caracas are located in a Relative-Material Space as they serve as markers of the territorial appropriation of Caracas's Absolute-Material Space by the oil company, which as chapter five and six argue, speaks of a dual occupation as the physical entities of the art works and public spaces that end up located simultaneously in two superimposed State Spaces.

Relative-Representation of Space is the space of the Law of Hydrocarbons and Oil Social Districts as oil-industry-based conceptualisation of space, fixed in time but mutable in terms of the 'areas of influence' of the centres of oil extraction. Chapters five and six investigate how, aided by the bureaucratic power of the New Magical State, the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas is conceptualised by the oil company as part of the Oil Social Districts by construing the headquarters of PDVSA as a centre of oil extraction and distribution of the rent, in which the city becomes an extension of the oil field.

The Relative-Spaces of Representation locates the space represented in the adverts of PDVSA La Estancia's campaign 'We transform oil into a renewable resource for you'. The adverts function as containers of a 'lived space' that synthesises absolute and relative spaces. In the adverts, space is fixed in time but made mutable in perception and meaning framed by the oil industry. Chapters five and six examine how the human subjectivity of the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia is superimposed to the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas, visually and verbally re-imagined and re-presented as an oil field that produces 'renewable oil', or what this thesis proposes as the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit.

Overall, the scope of this thesis is circumscribed to the intersections between Harvey's Absolute and Relative Space and Lefebvre's triad of Material Space, Representations of Space and Spaces of Representation. Throughout the thesis it becomes clear that the state's spatial machinations of Petrosocialism are 'hidden' in the Absolute-Representations of Space of policy instruments, and most importantly, concealed in the Relative-Spaces of Representation of the adverts. The following section provides a review of Lefebvre's ideas on the relation between State and space, and Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden's reading of Lefebvre as a theorist of State Space as territory.

### *State Space as Territory*

Just as Lefebvre construed space as a 'concrete abstraction', the state too is a concrete abstraction (Elden 2004, p.189). Lefebvre's notion of 'abstract space' defines a 'socio-spatial organisation that is at once produced and regulated by the modern state' (Brenner & Elden 2009,

p.358). Lefebvre argues that abstract space is political, its production entails 'new ways of envisioning, conceiving, and representing the spaces within which everyday life, capital accumulation, and state action are to unfold' (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.359) and is inherently geographically expansive. As the State 'engenders social relations in space' (Lefebvre 2003, pp.225–226) abstract space becomes political; political because it is both the product of conflicting social practices and the instrument of struggles and conflicts with the State imposing its own rationality to the chaotic relationships between social groups. Political, economic and social hierarchies are represented spatially. The space created, meant to be political and regulatory, is both 'bureaucratizing' and 'bureaucratized' (Lefebvre 2003, pp.243–245) to perpetuate and reproduce relations of domination in three dimensions: ideological (social), practical (instruments of action), and tactical-strategic (the subordination of a territory's resources).

Lefebvre identifies three moments in the relation between Space and the State. First, the production of a physical space, the national territory, a space that can be 'mapped, modified, transformed by the networks, circuits and flows that are established with it' (Lefebvre 2003, p.224) such as transportation, infrastructure, commerce, etc. At the centre of the physical space of the State lies the city, the material space where human and political actions manifest. Secondly, the production of a social space, which constitutes the state itself, every institution possessing 'an "appropriate" space' constructed under a minimum of consensus around 'an (artificial) edifice of hierarchically ordered institutions, of laws and conventions upheld by "values" that are communicated through the national language' (Lefebvre 2003, pp.224–225). Third, being a social space, the state also composes a mental space that 'includes the representations of the State that people construct' which is not to be confused with social or physical space (Lefebvre 2003, p.225).

One of the foundations of Lefebvre's theorisation of the state and the relation between state and space is the State Mode of Production (SMP) which comprehends the historical central role of the state in the survival and perpetuation of capitalism (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.359). The State Mode of Production develops spatial strategies to make capital accumulation and commoditisation possible. The State intervenes through 'diverse organisations and institutions devoted to the management and production of space' (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.227). The state is both the agent and the guiding hand of the production of space; organised through rationality it appears homogenous and monotonous allowing the State to intervene and introduce its presence, control and surveillance throughout its physical space: 'Is not the secret of the State,

hidden because it is so obvious, to be found in space?’ (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.228) since only the State has the capacity to manage space on a ‘grand scale’. In countries where the State took control of energy production, the State continued to install a dominant space ‘extending the space demarcated by motorways, canals, and railroads’ (Lefebvre 2003, pp.237–238); by controlling energy production the State also controls the production of political space.

Although Lefebvre did not explicitly theorise about territory, Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Brenner & Elden 2009) offer a reading of Lefebvre as a theorist of the state-space-territory dimension, or more specifically, of State Space as territory. Their point of departure is John Agnew’s challenge to social scientists to overcome three unquestioned geographical assumptions of the ‘territorial trap’ (Agnew 1994, p.59): states understood as entities of fixed sovereign space, domestic and international realms are neatly separated, and the state as ‘container’ of society. Simplistic conceptions of territory, such as defining the state as a fixed entity bound to a timeless territorial form put serious intellectual constraints in developing a spatial analysis of the state by assuming its territory as a ‘self-evident’ pre-existing dimension (Agnew 2010, p.779; Brenner & Elden 2009, p.356). For Brenner and Elden, the insights of Lefebvre on territory overcome Agnew’s ‘territorial trap’, by drawing on three conceptual points of State Space as territory: the production of territory, state territorial strategies and the territory effect (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.353).

Brenner and Elden trace Lefebvre’s notion of territory to a key passage in *The Production of Space* (1991) that refers to the semantic, historical and substantive relation between ‘*le terroir et le territoire*’ (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.361), terms that share a common etymology that could be more appropriately translated into English as ‘land-as-soil and land-as-territory’ which highlights that land does not merely refer to agriculture but also to the resources of the subsoil, and most importantly, to ‘the articulation between the nation-state and its territory’ (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.362). For Lefebvre, territory and state are mutually constitutive; his notion of State Space functions as a synonym of territory, that this thesis adopts (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.365). State Space is understood as land and as a historically specific ‘political *form* of space produced by and associated with the modern state’ understandable ‘only through its relation to the state and processes of statecraft’; therefore there can be no state without territory and no territory without a state (Brenner & Elden 2009, pp.362–363). Territory is continually produced and reproduced by state actions, but at the same time, it shapes and conditions the operations and territorial strategies of the state (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.367). It will become clear throughout this thesis that state, space and territory are historically intertwined evidenced in the relationship between

oil, land and the bureaucratic power of the Venezuelan Petrostate, particularly in regards to the production of the Socialist State Space under the premises of Chavez's New Geometry of Power examined in chapter four.

Agnew argued that territory is often taken for granted as a pre-given dimension. This is due to the 'territory effect', the third conceptual point of Lefebvre's State Space as territory. The territory effect naturalises and masks the spatial interventions that are mobilised through interventions of the state (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.373). This naturalisation allows the state to represent its political manipulation of space as either a purely technical intervention or as pre-existing features of the physical realm. It is the state that represents the complexities of 'social spaces of modern capitalism as if they were transparent, self-evident and pre-given' (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.372). Brenner and Elden's reading of Lefebvre is useful for this thesis as it provides a way to go beyond simplistic perceptions of territory by understanding that any State Space, and by extension, any 'territorially configured social space' is the consequence of specific historical forms of economic and political interventions of the state.

State Space strategies, according to Lefebvre's analysis on the politics of space discussed previously, encompass two meanings. First, the struggle and confrontational interaction between the state's -and capital- attempt to mould space into a rationally manageable abstract entity and the concurrent attempt of social forces to defend, produce and extend spaces for everyday life. Second, the notion of a 'spatial policy' that characterises comprehensive national state systems of spatial management developed by modern capitalist urbanisation (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.367). Furthermore, Brenner and Elden suggest that Lefebvre's analysis of the politics of space focuses not just on state's spatial strategies, but particularly, on State Space strategies: powerful instruments for the mobilisation of state power to reorganise 'socio-spatial relations' (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.368).

The above discussion serves to establish one of the theoretical frameworks of this thesis: State Space. David Harvey's matrix is helpful as it provides the means to develop a taxonomy of the spatiotemporal categories of each of the documents this thesis will engage with, as laid out in Table 1, in order to deploy Brenner and Elden's reading of Lefebvre as a theorist of State Space as territory. Chapters four and five argue that PDVSA has constructed a parallel State Space that absorbed the Material Space of the city into the Oil Social Districts by construing the city as an oil field, visually represented in the adverts examined in chapter six, where giant oil workers serve to naturalise the territory effect of PDVSA's parallel State Space.

One of the key points of this thesis is to examine the intersections of spatial policies of the transition towards the Socialist State and the oil industry's extension of its dominant space during Hugo Chávez second and third presidential terms. The following section engages with theories on state formation and bureaucracy, to define the manner in which the Venezuelan Petrostate and PDVSA exercise their power as parallel State Space(s).

### *Bureaucratic Power*

Before the nineteenth century the promulgation of laws, the economy, and assistance for the needy had little to do with the State; it only became the predominant form to refer to sovereign authority in the latter half of the eighteenth century as it developed into an impersonal and distinct political organisation in charge of the welfare of the people and military defence within a clearly defined territory (Miller & Rose 2008, pp.55–56; Jessop 1990, pp.347–348). The State as a modern idea involved the distinction between ruler and state apparatus, the State from then on coming to signify the whole of society. For Hobbes, sovereignty lied exclusively on the State, not on the people, and although he defined the State as an impersonal agent, he also affirmed that the State must be represented by a man or an assembly of men whose actions can then be attributed to the State (Walter 2008, p.97). By the nineteenth century the State had evolved from limited and centralised apparatuses to an ensemble of 'institutions and procedures of rule over a national territory' (Miller & Rose 2008, p.56). The nineteenth century marked the emergence of modern nation states in Latin America after the struggles to gain independence from Spanish colonial rule. The emergence of the modern state in Venezuela is explored in chapter three as an early twentieth century phenomenon heavily indebted to the arrival of the oil industry (Tinker Salas 2014, p.19), a process in which foreign oil companies and Venezuelan statecraft became inextricable.

Marxists have traditionally condemned the state as an instrument of domination by a powerful class (Dunleavy & O'Leary 1987, p.6). Karl Marx defined the state as an 'economic and political instrument of the dominant class' simultaneously autonomous from the social relations of production and parasitically dependent on them, directly involved in the 'creation and regulation of productive forces' (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.10). This definition has been expanded by Bob Jessop (1990, p.8) who affirms that to develop a definition of the state it is essential to take into account the complexity of the articulations between state and non-state institutions 'in the overall reproduction of capital accumulation and political domination'. Stressing that the state

should be treated as a set of institutions that cannot exercise power, Jessop proposes a definition of the state that encompasses both ‘state discourse and state institutions’:

‘The core of the state apparatus comprises a distinct ensemble of institutions and organizations whose socially accepted function is to define and enforce collectively binding decisions on the members of a society in the name of their common interest or general will. This broad “cluster” definition identifies the state in terms of its generic features as a specific form of macro-political organization with a specific type of political orientation; it also establishes clear links between the state and political sphere and, indeed, the wider society.’ (Jessop 1990, pp.341–342)

With this definition he aims to emphasise the contradictions in political discourse inherent to any study of the state. He clarifies that the state cannot simply be ‘equated with government, law, bureaucracy, a coercive apparatus or another political institution’ just as forms of political organisation on the macro level cannot be regarded as state-like, considering that fixed national boundaries, that is the territory, do not necessarily determine the emergence of state projects (Jessop 1990, p.341). Concerning the idea that the state should be regarded as an ensemble of institutions, Patrick Dunleavy (1987, p.10) proposes two broad categories to define the state: Functional and Organisational. The Functional category, prominent in Marxist approaches to the state, has two strands. One, the state is identified with a range of institutions located outside of the public realm in which any sort of organisation whose objectives overlap with functions of the state become part of the state. Two, the state is defined by its consequences through institutions and patterns of behaviours that stabilise society through social cohesion or social order, thus extending the kind of institutions that can be regarded as part of the state.

The Organisational strategy views the state as an ensemble of institutions. The modern state is a particular type of government conformed as a separate set of institutions, with supreme power and sovereignty over its territory and all the individuals within it, clearly differentiated from society creating distinct public and private realms. The state is the authority of law, formulated by state bureaucrats and backed by its monopoly of force, with the capacity of financing its activities through the taxation of its citizens. Dunleavy warns that the set of characteristics of the Organisational definition cannot be applied to all modern countries equally, because modern state structures have evolved and developed differently in different societies influenced by their particular historical circumstances. This applies to modern statecraft in Venezuela, which suffers from the diminished capacity that characterises most rentier states whose main income comes from oil extraction with very little taxation. To further develop the set of ideas useful for this

thesis to characterise the State as an ensemble of institutions, further theorists are needed: Michel Foucault, Peter Miller, Nikolas Rose, Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce.

Michel Foucault rejects any attempt to develop a general theory of the state as he believed that the state is neither a universal nor an autonomous source of power but a 'mythical abstraction' granted a place within the field of government (Jessop 2007, p.36). Foucault developed an alternative analytic of political power called Governmentality, a new term he derived from a play on the word government. Governmentality focuses on the rationalities that determine practices of government, bringing attention to the mechanisms used to 'know and govern the wealth, health and happiness of populations' (Miller & Rose 2008, p.54; Walter 2008, p.98). State formation from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onwards has been characterised by the 'governmentalization' of the state (Foucault 1991; Joyce & Bennett 2010; Miller & Rose 2008; Walter 2008), a process that refers to the complex clustering of power systems at the level of the state; it is a process that the state may drive but often it neither controls nor authors it. This form of power is linked to the proliferation of a wide range of apparatuses related to government, the means to practice it and the nature of those over whom power is exercised.

In this line of thought, Jessop posits that the state does not exercise power, it is an institutional ensemble as the power of the state is 'always conditional and relational' (Jessop 1990, p.367). The scope of power rests on 'the action, reaction and interaction of specific social forces' situated inside and beyond of the institutional ensemble as 'it is not the state which acts: it is always specific sets of politicians and state officials located in specific parts of the state system' (Jessop 1990, p.367). Similarly, Miller & Rose (2008, p.10) coincide with Jessop in arguing that the state does not and cannot exercise power; it can only do so through the complex network of organisations, institutions and apparatuses that compose it (2008, pp.55–56). By the same token, Bennet and Joyce affirm that the state 'rather than a site from which this form of power originates or at which it terminates' is the site where bureaucratic power congregates (Joyce & Bennett 2010, p.2). Bureaucratic forms of organisation and the powers they summon and elaborate take form in many fields, from business to the military; these powers then travel to and from the state, clustering, then redeployed and multiplied. Therefore, when referring to the power of the state, it is more accurate to talk about Bureaucratic Power instead of state power.

Institutions, procedures, strategies and tactics allow the state to exercise power over the population through a bureaucratic apparatus. Lefebvre (2009, p.12) is critical of this perspective, claiming that it dilutes the concept of power, scattering it in every place and in every single form of subordination, neglecting that the 'real' seat of power lies in the state, in its institutions and

constitutions. Nonetheless, the scattering and dilution of state power is one of the topics this thesis engages with.

To further elaborate on the mechanisms that explain the simultaneous process of fragmentation and centralisation of bureaucratic power of the state, with the consolidation of PDVSA as a parallel state apparatus with its own Parallel State Space examined in chapter four, this thesis also engages with the notions of governance conceptualised by R.A.W. Rhodes (2003) and the Shadow State as defined by Jennifer Wolch (1990).

The concept of Governance is useful to understand the fragmentation of the bureaucratic power of the state explored in this thesis. R.A.W. Rhodes' conceptualisation of different modes of governance and the ideas of hollowing out the state are useful to understand the process of fragmentation and erosion of the bureaucratic power of the Venezuelan Petrostate during the transition towards the Socialist State advanced by Hugo Chávez.

For Rhodes, Governance is not to be used as a synonym for government, instead governance 'signifies a change in the meaning of government, referring to a *new* process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed' (Rhodes 2003, p.46). Rhodes identifies six different uses of governance: as the minimal state, as corporate governance, as 'The New Public Management, as 'good governance', as socio-cybernetic system, and as self-organizing networks (Rhodes 2003, pp.46–47).

Governance as the minimal state refers to the redefinition of the 'extent and form of public intervention and the use of markets or quasi-markets to deliver "public" services' in which the size of government is reduced by 'privatization and cuts in the civil service' (Rhodes 2003, p.47). 48) Governance as corporate governance defines 'the system by which organizations are directed and controlled' mainly concerned with giving comprehensive direction to the enterprise, by controlling the executive actions of management and complying with expectations of accountability and regulation by the interests that lay outside the boundaries of the corporation (Rhodes 2003, p.48). 48) Governance as 'The New Public Management (NMT) follows from corporate governance in which government is 'steering' action (policy decisions) by structuring the market to take over 'rowing' functions (delivery of services) (Rhodes 2003, p.48). Good Governance is a term advanced by the World Bank to shape its lending policies to Third World countries which merges 'the new public management with advocacy to liberal democracy' (Rhodes 2003, pp.49–50). Governance as socio-cybernetic system refers to a 'centre-less society' with a polycentric state in which government is no longer the single sovereign authority. The

boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors are blurred by interdependence and shared goals among the social-political-administrative actors in which none holds the monopoly over expertise of information. Here, 'governance is the result of interactive social-political forms of governing' (Rhodes 2003, pp.50–51). In Governance as self-organising networks, governance is about managing networks. The term network is used to describe the "several interdependent actors involved in delivering services' (Rhodes 2003, p.51) in which public, private and voluntary organisations interact to deliver public services. Networks are self-organising, autonomous and self-governing; they resist steering to develop their own policies. In this sense, says Rhodes, they are an alternative to market and hierarchies (Rhodes 2003, pp.51–52).

Rhodes synthesises that the meaning of Governance 'refers to self-organizing, interorganizational networks', a definition that incorporates elements of all the uses enumerated above, with the predominance of the minimal state, socio-cybernetic system and self-organising networks. He lists four shared characteristics of governance: interdependence between organisations, continuing interactions between network members, game-like interactions rooted in trust and regulated by the rules of the game agreed by the participants, a significant degree of autonomy from the state (Rhodes 2003, p.53). The state becomes a collection of inter-organisational networks made up of governmental and societal actors with no sovereign actor able to steer or regulate them (Rhodes 2003, p.57). In summary, Governance blurs the distinction between state and civil society.

Rhodes developed his definitions of governance to explain the reforms and changes to British government since the 1980s, which he summarised as 'hollowing out the state' (2003, p.53). Hollowing out the state is characterised by the downsize and fragmentation of the public sector through the 'loss of function by central and local government departments to alternative delivery systems' (Rhodes 2003, pp.53–54). The process of hollowing out leads to fragmentation which diminishes the state's capacity to steer and erodes accountability, in which ultimately the central state loses its grip on the rest of its institutional and bureaucratic apparatus.

In the same vein of characterising the reforms and fragmentation of the state and governance, Wolch focuses on the voluntary sector to identify the rise of the Shadow State, defined as

'a para-state apparatus comprised of multiple voluntary sector organisations, administered outside of traditional democratic politics and charged with major collective service responsibilities previously shouldered by the public sector, yet remaining within the purvey of state control' (Wolch 1990, p.xvi).

As a para-state apparatus the Shadow State undertakes many of the functions of the welfare state, in activities that though not formally part of the state, are 'enabled, regulated, and subsidised' by the state (Wolch 1990, p.41). Wolch traces the transformation of the voluntary sector into a Shadow State apparatus to transformations and changes in the welfare state, made possible 'because of the long-standing institutional interdependence of voluntary organisations and the state, which both enables and constrains voluntary action' (Wolch 1990, p.15). As state funding had become increasingly important for voluntary organisations, so did the degree of penetration of the state into the organisation, management and goals of voluntary group organisation (Wolch 1990, p.15); and as the Shadow State grows, says Wolch, it will develop two 'contradictory faces: One represents increased state penetration of many aspects of daily life; the other represents a revitalized democracy in state affairs' (Wolch 1990, p.4). Whilst Rhodes used the notion of 'hollowing out the state' to describe the changes in British government due to privatisation and its loss of functions to European institutions and Wolch looked in particular at voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States, in the case of Venezuela, and more specifically the case of the shift in the relationship between the Petrostate and PDVSA enforced by Hugo Chavez, the processes of 'hollowing out of the state' and the 'shadow state' coalesced in the transfer to PDVSA of many of the new government programs and many functions of the state such as the provision of social housing, food distribution, and urban regeneration in which PDVSA effectively became a parallel state.

What is useful about this discussion is that by viewing the state as a site where Bureaucratic Power congregates, it provides the ideal framework to understand the process of simultaneous fragmentation of the state apparatus with the consolidation of PDVSA as a parallel state and the centralisation of bureaucratic power in the sole figure of president Hugo Chávez who, as chapter three establishes, exercised Bureaucratic Power dramaturgically as the New Magical State, drawing on the definition coined by Fernando Coronil.

The adoption of the Bureaucratic Power perspective allows this thesis to integrate the idea of the state as an 'institution of territorial governance with vast powers over the material wellbeing of its people' (Mukerji 2010, p.82). The modern state is the only agent with the capacity to manage society and territory on a large scale (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.20). According to Lefebvre, only the state possesses exceptional capacities to funnel long term and large scale investments in the built environment as well as the sovereign capability to regulate and plan the uses of such investments (Lefebvre et al. 2009, p.20). Hence, State Space encompasses far more than territory (Lefebvre et al. 2009, pp.20–21; Lefebvre 2003) given that State Spatial Strategies also shape how

industrial development, land use, energy production, transportation and communication reproduce inside and beyond the territory. The Bureaucratic Power perspective is particularly useful for this thesis, as it will be instrumental in understanding how oil wealth permeates all instances of the state, and how the fragmentation of the state apparatus carried out by Hugo Chávez serves to explore how the interfaces between oil, space and culture manifest within a Petrostate. This chapter now turns to explore rentier state theory in order to develop a characterisation of the Bureaucratic Power of the Venezuelan Petrostate.

### *Petrostate: Rentier State Theory*

The first studies aimed at theorising the impact of externally generated revenues from the exploitation of crude oil on statecraft were mostly focused on oil-exporting countries in the Middle East. The concept of ‘rentier state’ was coined by Iranian economist Hossein Mahdavy (Beblawi 1987, p.51) to refer to states whose main source of income relies on external rent. Rentier states can be traced back to the seventeenth century Spanish Empire and the exploitation of the vast mineral resources found in the Americas.

Nineteenth century economist David Ricardo is credited with introducing the term rent and developing the first comprehensive analysis of resource rent. Resource rent should not be confused with contract rent. The term resource rent was originally related to the use of land and agricultural production, a renewable but scarce resource. The variations of yield of different lands would determine the potential of resource rent for each. Rent, as defined by Ricardo, is the compensation paid by the farmer to the owner of the land for the use of the original and indestructible properties of the soil (Ricardo n.d., para.2.2). The payment of rent is also determined by, and varied according to, the investments made in infrastructure by the landlord.

Ricardo extended this principle to the rent of stone quarries and coal mines, in which the compensation is paid to the value of the stone or coal removed from the soil with no connection with the ‘original and indestructible powers of the land’ (Ricardo n.d., para.2.2). From quarries and coal mines this has been extended to oil, gas, diamonds and other mineral resources extracted from the subsoil. In sum, resource rent in Ricardian terms refers to the economic return accumulated for its use in production and the payment to landlords for the right to access and exploit these resources. Thad Dunning in his book *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes* speaks of oil rents in Ricardian terms, defined as ‘the economic return to natural resource extraction that exceeds labor and other production costs as well as transport

costs and some “normal” return to capital’ (2008, p.39), accrued by the state as landlord in exchange to access to resources in the subsoil.

The term rentier state defines a particular relationship between the state and the economy. The rise of the Age of Oil by late-nineteenth century reshaped the landscape of the global economy, with new world powers emerging in the course of the twentieth century. Vladimir Lenin addressed rentier states in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* published in 1917. Lenin regarded the rentier state as the decay of imperialist capitalism in a world ‘divided into a handful of usurer states and a vast majority of debtor states’ (1978, p.95). The rentier states he referred to were Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and the United States, all industrial states that had become creditor countries who by way of granting loans to politically dependent countries, or former colonies, had deepened their dependency by turning them into debtor states. For Lenin, the rentier state is a ‘state of parasitic, decaying capitalism, and this circumstance cannot fail to influence all the socio-political conditions of the countries concerned’ (1978, p.96). Nonetheless, the essence of a rentier state according to economist Giacomo Luciani lies on the ‘origin of state revenue, not necessarily in its rent-like character’ (1987, p.13). But to focus exclusively on the state as independent from the economy is not only restrictive but reveals little about the economy producing the state’s income.

Rentier states share three distinctive features: rent predominates as a source of income but it’s not the only one, the origin of the rent is external, and the majority of the population is the beneficiary of the distribution of the rent generated by a minority engaged in its production (Beblawi & Luciani 1987, p.12). For this reason, it is more accurate to speak of a ‘rentier economy’ in which rent plays a major role in the economy, determining that a rentier economy is more likely to generate a rentier state, both inextricably connected to the emergence of a rentier mentality that shapes politics and development policies (Beblawi & Luciani 1987, p.12).

The Petrostate is a particular form of rentier state, in which the majority of the state’s revenue comes as oil rent money through exports of oil. Oil rents ‘have a strong and decisive influence on the nature of the state’ (Luciani 1987, p.68), for this reason it is important to look closely at the nature and origin of the state’s income:

‘It is oil exports that play an essential role in this respect even more than oil production per se: the state in a country in which a lot of oil is produced but none exported may or may not be called rentier, but does not appear to be essentially different from any other state whose income depend on domestic sources. (...) If oil is mostly exported and the

income of the state is mostly linked to the exportation of oil, then that state is freed from its domestic economic base and sustained by the economic base of the countries which are importing its oil.' (Luciani 1987, p.69)

Luciani introduces two categories of state based on the origin of its revenues: Esoteric States, mostly based on domestic revenue and taxation and Exoteric States, whose revenue mostly originates from abroad. He develops a parallel categorisation based on the predominant function the state plays in regards to its revenues: Allocation State and Production State. Luciani clarifies that all states perform some form of allocation, the difference is that in the Production State the allocations are limited by the extent in which the domestic economy 'provides the income which is needed to do so' whereas the Allocation State predominantly distributes 'the income that it receives from the rest of the world' (Luciani 1987, p.70). A Production State is correlated to an Esoteric State, whilst the Allocation State is predominantly an Exoteric State. Drawing on these definitions, the Petrostate is a predominantly exoteric allocative state in which 'revenue derives predominantly (more than 40 per cent) from oil or other foreign sources and whose expenditure is a substantial share of GDP' (Luciani 1987, p.70). What is important about this literature is that it establishes the characteristics of the rentier state, especially of oil rentier states like Venezuela, primordial to understand the effects of oil rentierism on statecraft. A rentier economy not only determines the emergence of a rentier state, but also shapes its politics, policy making and the relationship between the state and society. From this point onwards this chapter will refer exclusively to the Petrostate, the particular type of rentier state that concerns this thesis.

A Petrostate predominantly spends and does not tax, commonly seen as benefitting everyone. Its expenditures, however, are unevenly distributed and irrelevant for political life as there is no incentive to reform political institutions because the abundance of rent money allows to increase public expenditure to ward off political conflicts (Luciani 1987, pp.7, 70). Furthermore, expenditure policies tend to favour the elites, leaving little room for the interests of under-represented sectors (Luciani 1987, p.76) since oil revenues act as a buffer against political risks by keeping taxation low and using patronage to buy consensus (Weyland 2009, p.161). This allows political leaders to avoid being 'forced to diffuse political power through representative and democratic institutions' (Dunning 2008, p.53) since the collection of oil rents does not require representative pacts between state and citizens.

The main priority of a Petrostate is to extract 'the maximum potential revenue from the rest of the world' (Luciani 1987, p.71). The predominantly distributive nature of the Petrostate is considered a fundamental factor in the tendency towards authoritarianism among most oil

producing countries. However, scholars like Thad Dunning (2008) and Tim Mitchell (2011) challenge the direct correlation between oil and non-democratic governments, but as Terry Lynn Karl (1997), Peter Maas (2009) and Michael Ross (2012) describe, Petrostates do tend to suffer from diminished state capacity specially during times of oil booms.

Dunning's *Crude Democracy: Natural Resource Wealth and Political Regimes* zooms in on the negative relationship between oil rents and taxation. He argues that the tendency towards authoritarianism or democracy, or the overall economic orientation of a government (whether liberal or interventionist) is independent from the factors that foster the emergence of a Petrostate (2008, p.37). The key to decipher the commonalities of Petrostates lie in the 'presence of rent-producing natural resources' which shape the fiscal foundation of the state in similar ways across a very diverse set of countries (2008, p.37). To explain the political effects of oil rents, Dunning establishes a conceptual simplification of the relationship the Petrostate establishes with oil rents: 'it is therefore useful to think of rents as flowing more or less like "manna from heaven" into the fiscal coffers of the state, even though this is a radical simplification of the actual process by which the state captures rents' (2008, p.45). Mitchell's *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* provides a historical account of the process through which the global networks of the carbon industry in the nineteenth century fostered what has been called the Age of Empire and the Age of Democratisation, and how the rise of coal created democracy in some regions and colonial domination in others (2011, p.18). The development of the oil industry, built over the assembly of flows of steam and carbon deepened this difference. Therefore, Mitchell argues that the relationship between the Petrostate and oil rents is far more complex, the attention cannot be restricted to the flow of oil money but has to expand to include the process of the production and distribution of oil in both domestic and global networks since the political effects of oil are the outcome of 'particular ways of engineering political relations out of flows of money' (2011, p.5). Oil rents tend to displace other sources of income as the foundation of public finance, not only because they represent an 'externally generated windfall' but also because the revenue generated from oil is less costly and complex than taxation (Dunning 2008, pp.45–46), abundant rents diminish the need to tax citizens, and where taxation is present it tends to be lower. The oil industry becomes the predominant fiscal basis of the Petrostate for both developed and underdeveloped countries (Dunning 2008, p.49), magnified by the boom and bust cycles of the oil market (Karl 1997, pp.44–52) which alter fiscal and bureaucratic structures.

An account of the political effects of oil is not complete without addressing how the boom and bust cycles of the global oil market influence and thwart state policy making, particularly in

Venezuela (Karl 1997, pp.5–9). Up until the 1950s it was believed that oil wealth was exceptionally beneficial, that it would provide oil producing countries with the necessary revenues to invest in development (Ross 2012, p.2,6). However, the international supply of oil was controlled by the global oil corporations called the Seven Sisters: Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now BP); Gulf Oil, Standard Oil of California (now Chevron), Texaco (later merged with Chevron); Royal Dutch Shell; Standard Oil of New Jersey (Esso/Exxon) and Standard Oil Company of New York (Mobil now part of ExxonMobil). By the 1960s and 1970s most oil producing countries in the Global South embarked on a wave of nationalisation of their oil industries, setting up their own state-owned oil companies; this period also saw the rise of the Organisation of Petroleum Producing Countries, OPEC. OPEC radically transformed the international oil markets and the scale and volatility of oil revenues from then onwards, creating a number of political, economic and social distortions (Ross 2012, p.7) that triggered the emergence of a new phenomenon: the oil curse.

The peculiar properties of oil rents and its effects on the politics and economy of a Petrostate are the cornerstone of the oil curse (Ross 2012, p.5). The oil curse determines that economies dependent on natural resource extraction are far more likely to endure chronic political and economic distortions (Corrales & Penfold 2011, p.71; Ross 2012, p.12). This is due to the nature of oil rents: ‘the revenues it bestows on governments are unusually large, do not come from taxes, fluctuate unpredictably, and can be easily hidden’ (Ross 2012, p.6). Javier Corrales and Michael Penfold’s study *Dragon in the Tropics: Hugo Chávez and the Political Economy of Revolution in Venezuela* addresses the political legacy of Hugo Chávez to re-examine the oil curse, claiming that a direct correlation between fluctuating oil prices and diminished state capacity is an oversimplification because ‘the impact of oil in economics and politics often depend on institutional factors’ (2011, p.72). They expand on the oil curse to propose the ‘institutional resource curse’ to describe that oil flows through, and interacts with, a series of pre-existing institutional configurations that shape the effects of oil at times of boom or bust (Corrales & Penfold 2011, pp.72–75). Whether a resource curse materialises is dependent on the interactions between the existing institutional apparatus and oil rents. Therefore, they argue that the rise of Hugo Chávez to power and his Bolivarian Revolution can only be understood by addressing the institutional resource curse perspective (2011, p.72): ‘it was not the price of oil alone that helped the regime consolidate power; it was the institutional changes that were made prior to the oil boom together with the oil boom that did the trick’ (Corrales & Penfold 2011, p.90), changes such as the expansion of PDVSA’s scope of activities to non-oil related areas and the reform of the Law of Hydrocarbons.

Hugo Chávez' Petrosocialism was the higher stage of his anti-neoliberal political platform, putting in place social policies 'that clearly contradicted neoliberal orthodoxy' (Parker 2006, p.70). It is important at this point to clarify the intersection between oil capitalism and Neoliberalism, to address the contradictions inherent to Petrosocialism that this thesis examines. Tim Mitchell argues that oil not only played a key role in shaping the global economy but 'it also shaped the project that would challenge it, and later provide a rival method of governing democratic politics: the "market" of neoliberalism' (2011, p.141). Mitchell, drawing on Lippman, argues that neoliberalism was envisioned by Hayek 'as an alternative project to defeat the threat of the left and of populist democracy' (2011, p.141). David Harvey defines Neoliberalism as 'the elevation of market-based principles and techniques of evaluation to the level of state-endorsed norms' in which the role of the state is to provide the appropriate institutional frameworks to liberate entrepreneurial freedoms, free markets and free trade; the authority of the state relies heavily on economics (Harvey 2005, pp.2, 6–7). Nonetheless, says Harvey, neoliberal theory dictates that the State should not venture and its interventions on markets should be kept to a minimum since the State cannot 'possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit' (Harvey 2005, p.7). As neoliberal theorists are suspicious of democracy, they tend to 'favour governance by experts and elites' preferring governments by executive order over 'democratic and parliamentary decision making' (Harvey 2005, p.66). Thus, marking a shift from government as 'state power on its own' to governance as 'a broader configuration of state and key elements of civil society' (Harvey 2005, p.77).

Conversely, Colin Crouch's book *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism* argues that the financial collapse of 2008-2009 that involved the world's leading banks challenged the idea that the free market provides the best means to satisfy human aspirations over the state and politics (2011, p.vii). Crouch also disputes the claim that neoliberalism is devoted to the free market by affirming that, in practice, it commits to 'the dominance of public life by the giant corporation' (2011, p.viii); he further elaborates that the political conflicts that stem from the confrontations between the state and the market mask the existence of this 'third force' which is 'more potent than either and transforms the workings of both'. Although the Petrostate of the Chávez era can hardly be characterised as neoliberal, Harvey's statement that the boundaries between state and corporate power have become very porous can certainly be applied here (Harvey 2005, pp.77–78). This theorisation is helpful to highlight the discrepancy between Hugo Chávez's anti-neoliberal politics and the role of PDVSA. Whilst he publicly criticised PDVSA's corporate

practices, he discursively re-framed PDVSA as a ‘socialist company’ at the service of his revolution, and once the oil company was regarded as ‘revolutionary’ he surrendered many of the bureaucratic powers of the state to the national oil corporation. Hugo Chávez, aware of the many deficiencies and diminished capacity of the Petrostate, believed that ‘an oil company would succeed where government ministries might not’ (Maass 2009, p.215).

What is particularly useful about the literature on oil rentier states is that it lays out a direct relationship between flows of oil rent, the Petrostate and the institutional apparatus. Chapter four examines how the oil boom that characterised the period that concerns this thesis (2007-2013) provided Hugo Chávez with the wealth to reform the existing institutional apparatus to create new policy instruments of territorial administration that conceptualise the Socialist State Space whilst giving more power over the public sphere to PDVSA.

### *City, Culture and Oil*

The aim of this section is to develop a categorisation to differentiate the terms city and urban, and their relationship with space and culture, looking into key literature from the fields of urban sociology and geography. For the purpose of this thesis it is important to understand the mechanisms and the processes under which cities have emerged, as well as the role oil wealth and power have played in urban development and the production of urban society and culture in contemporary Venezuela.

The most evident transformations brought by oil capital in oil producing countries like Venezuela are reflected in the building of large infrastructures and negotiations between states and oil corporations to secure revenue and capital accumulation. As oil flows it converts into ‘energy, profits and political power’ (Mitchell 2011, p.6). Oil wealth affects the social order in very tangible ways through the radical transformation of the built environment. In understanding the relationship between oil and the state, its material effects need to be addressed in order to understand the changes in society. The city is the centre of the material effects and the physical space of the State, it is the material space where human and political actions manifest (Lefebvre 2003, pp.252–253).

It wasn’t until the Industrial Revolution that the city began to be considered a unique form of social life; it is for this reason that urban studies is a fairly recent discipline when compared to the ancient history of the city (Sennett 1969, p.3). For Marx & Engels what separates the urban from the rural is the division and specialisation of physical and spiritual labour. They equated the

change from rural to urban with a shift from barbarity to civilization; a shift that remained constant in the history of civilization (Marx & Engels 1974, p.55). Rural and urban are also differentiated in terms of the source of wealth: land property for the former whilst for the latter, capital developed independently from territorial property based only on labour and economic exchange. Moreover, the city is above all the domain of intellectual labour, from there all matters are governed, economic and ideological power emanates, and the moral and religious fate of the nation is decided. The city is also where large crowds gather, it is a place of pleasure and satisfaction of needs; it is also the domain where a materialistic interdependence is developed constrained to alienated labour, inciting to consumption through the multiplication of products (Marx & Engels 1974, p.56; Remy & Voye 1976, pp.245–251). The division of labour modified the social organisation of the city creating a new class structure; the bourgeoisie born in the city, separate from the proletariat comprised of workers, guilds, and plebes. The internal differentiation of the bourgeoisie determined, in turn, the differentiation and hierarchy between cities and the prevalence of all cities over the countryside.

Urban Sociology emerged as a sub-discipline of Sociology in the twentieth century, with an interest in studying the city and its relationship with society and inequality, the nature of urbanism as well as the role of the state in urban development and the distribution of urban resources (Stevenson 2013, pp.9–10). Early urban sociologists were mainly concerned with formulating an all-encompassing theory that could explain all cities, regardless of their histories, geographies and cultures (Stevenson 2013, p.10). These overarching concepts and theories were drawn mainly from the study of Western cities, specifically those of the Global North.

The Chicago School of Urban Sociology was a major influence in urban studies for most of the twentieth century. Preoccupied with developing a coherent conceptualisation of the city and urban life, The Chicago School defined the city as a biological entity that ‘adapted systematically and predictably in response to changes in population, demography and the physical environment’ (Stevenson 2013, p.11). It believed that urbanisation as well as technological, social and cultural processes were inseparable from modernisation; it was also concerned with the ‘subjective factors’ that determined city morphology such as the location of particular ethnic groups in certain neighbourhoods, studying residents’ personal tastes and social status, the way urban space reflected the residents’ characteristics of its inhabitants, or caused or amplified social problems such as violence and crime. The Chicago School believed that empirical research was crucial to understand the city and urban culture, establishing both the conceptual parameters and methodological approach that would greatly influence urban research over the twentieth century

(Stevenson 2013, p.12). According to The Chicago School the only function of the state was to support 'social and urban needs', but it never questioned its role in the processes of urbanisation and urbanism (Stevenson 2013, p.11).

The dominance of The Chicago School was challenged in the 1970s by Marxists, who criticised its inability to predict and explain the urban unrests and social crises of the 1960s. Marxists viewed the city as a site of conflict, they affirmed that capital shaped the spatial structures of cities and was the fundamental cause of social inequality; they emphasised the role of capital accumulation and class struggle in the process of urbanisation and the allocation of urban resources (Stevenson 2013, pp.12–13; Stevenson 2003, pp.35–36). The Marxist perspective marked the emergence of a new urban sociology dominated by two approaches: one conceptualised the city as 'a system comprised of interdependent networks and components' and a 'localization of social forces', whilst the other asserted that capitalism 'created cities that are sites of inequality and function to protect capitalism, private property and the accumulation of wealth' (Stevenson 2013, pp.10–13). These two approaches were divided along national lines. On one side, French Marxists were concerned with 'how space is used in the process of social reproduction' and the city as the site of social segregation and inequitable distribution of urban resources. On the other side were American urban studies, concerned with studying cities as channels for the circulation of capital and labour discipline.

This thesis will follow the Marxist approach to urban studies which focuses on the way power, politics and economics manifest in the city as well as on the role global processes and the state play in supporting capitalism through the management of urban populations and urban space (Stevenson 2013, p.13). Under the influence of French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, Marxist urban sociologists distinguished between the 'economically determined organisation of urban space' and urbanism 'as a cultural form of collective self-expression' (Zukin 2006, p.105). They also viewed the city as a site of conflict where capital shapes the spatial structures of cities (Stevenson 2013, pp.12–13; Stevenson 2003, pp.35–36). Henri Lefebvre divided the history of cities into three consecutive eras: the agrarian era, the industrial era, and the urban era (Lefebvre 1976, p.65). The urban era had just begun, as it was waiting to be explored and constructed, manifested in the process of city dispersion encompassing social practices, symbols, and works of culture. Therefore, urban societies were still in the process of formation. This understanding veers the discussion towards an 'epistemology of the urban' that functions as a wider theoretical framework to study the process of total urbanisation of modern societies (Stanek 2011, p.xiii).

Lefebvre observed that the world was headed towards complete urbanisation, a process deeply enmeshed with the survival of capitalism (Stevenson 2013, p.15; Lefebvre 1991, p.4). As the capitalist industrial economy grows, the city physically extends its boundaries disseminating its 'urban fabric' through the materialisation of suburbs, industrial complexes, satellite cities; this process of *urbanisation* gradually absorbed or colonised the countryside and its agrarian mode of production: 'a vacation home, a highway, a supermarket in the countryside are all part of the urban fabric' (Lefebvre 1991, p.4). For Lefebvre the city designates a concrete and clearly defined *object*, a built entity, however diffuse its boundaries might be, whilst *urban* is an abstract concept, a social practice inherent to the capitalist mode of production emancipated from the materiality of the city and a carrier of modernity and culture (Lefebvre 1976, p.68). The urban then is both spatial and temporal: it extends through space and develops over time. In this sense, Manuel Castells affirms that no urban world exists outside of modern capitalism, defining urbanism as the culture of the city of 'industrial capitalism and the capitalist state' (Stevenson 2013, p.14; Zukin 2006, p.105). Along the same lines, geographer David Harvey distinguishes between 'the city as built form' and the urban 'as a way of life', concurring with Lefebvre's definitions. Harvey views cities as 'landscapes of power' (Zukin 2006, pp.105–106) in which capital has the power to make and remake the urban, opening paths for uneven or contradictory development across cities and across the globe.

The theorisation on the city and the urban are helpful for this thesis; the term urban will be used to refer to the social, political and cultural practices of industrialised capitalist societies; the urban understood as the immaterial carrier of modernity and culture. City will be used to refer to the built form (buildings, infrastructure, roads, networks, etc.) and the geographical expansion it occupies, where urban societies settle and conglomerate. The term 'urban space' will be used to categorise specific and clearly delineated areas of congruence between urban and city, of which public space will be a sub-category. The Material Space of the city is where the New Magical State mobilises its Bureaucratic Power to re-organise and regulate the political, economic and cultural relations of Venezuelan society in order to build the Socialist State Space.

Whilst Lefebvre and Harvey defined the urban as the carrier of the modern ways of life and culture shaped by capitalism, Sharon Zukin defines culture as the 'habits carried through space and time, refined through the interaction with church and state, and asserted as a means of differentiation and independence' (1995, p.263). She also argues that culture is 'what cities do best' (1995, p.264) as it also refers to the idea of a collective urban lifestyle, a meaningful if somewhat 'conflictual source of representation' that encompasses a diverse range of ethnicities,

lifestyles and images. The city is where cultural industries are located, where artists and performers produce their work, but most importantly, as a built form it contains a visual repertoire that becomes a public language that makes visible the implicit values of a particular group (Zukin 1995, p.264). How a city looks and feels is the reflection of the uses of aesthetic power and concepts of order and disorder used to dictate what and who should be visible and where.

For Zukin, culture can be understood as the legitimate ways in which a particular group creates its own niche in society, encompassing habits carried through time and space, distilled through interactions with the state (1995, p.263). Culture can also function as an instrument of spatial and social stratification in which every space of the city caters its visual consumption to a specific constituency (Zukin 1995, p.36). Urban space is produced in synergy with 'capital investment and cultural meaning' (Zukin 1995, pp.23–24), elites reconfigure urban space imposing their point of view; any change in the reorganisation of urban space manifests in changes of the visual representation of the city. For this reason, says Zukin, it is imprecise to talk about urban culture as universal and homogeneous, rather one should ask 'which culture?', which cities?' (1995, p.264).

The combination of 'traditional economic factors of land, labor and capital' (Zukin 1995, p.7) determine the built environment of the city as well as the manipulation of the symbolic language of exclusion and belonging where culture is often turned into 'a set of marketable images' (Zukin 1995, p.265). This commoditisation of culture functions as a symbolic economy, a feature common to all cities, consisting of 'a continual production of symbols and spaces that frames and gives meaning to ethnic competition, racial change and environmental renewal and decay' (1995, p.265). However, in the symbolic economy the identities of places tend to be established by their visual delights, unifying the 'material practices of finance, labor, art, performance, and design' (Zukin 1995, p.9). Culture also functions as an instrument of control, determining through images, memories and symbols, who belongs to certain places of the city and who doesn't (Zukin 1995, p.1). Elites view culture as an instrument to 'restore civility', they devise cultural strategies, magnifying the cultural role of urban institutions to 'reconstruct the meaning of urban spaces to give the appearance of a common public culture'; public culture is defined by Zukin as the process of negotiation of images that are commonly accepted by large groups of people in which public space plays a fundamental role, as it is the place where strangers come together and where the boundaries of urban society are negotiated (1995, pp.10, 270).

In this line of thought, Deborah Stevenson notes that beyond the issue of ownership, public space should be understood as any ‘shared urban space’, whether publicly or privately owned, where large groups of people congregate for a wide range of purposes and where daily encounters with difference takes place (2013, pp.52–53). The creation of a public culture requires the manipulation of public space for certain kinds of expected social interactions and creates a particular visual representation of the city (Zukin 1995, p.24). This creates tensions around cultural politics and the occupation of the city, contradicting the spirit of public culture and evidencing the difficulty of conceiving culture as both an elite resource and a democratic good (Zukin 1995, p.270). Culture then has an intrinsic political value and can be used to serve political purposes.

To set up a theoretical framework for this thesis that articulates the intersection between oil, city and culture, the following section provides a discussion on the relevant literature on the intersections between oil, culture and cities in Venezuela, as well as the recent literature from the emerging field of energy humanities on the cultural dimension of oil.

### *Oil In and Within Culture*

This section aims to develop the theoretical premises to examine the relationship between culture and oil to examine the spatial and cultural representations of Petrosocialism in Caracas. A point of departure is the recently published *Oil Culture* edited by Ross Barrett and Daniel Worden (2014). The book explores the presence of oil *in* culture, how oil works *within* culture, and how oil has shaped how we imagine contemporary life. It examines a particular model of culture that designates ‘a dynamic field of representations and symbolic practices that have infused, affirmed, and sustained the material armatures of the oil economy’ and ‘the particular modes of everyday life that have developed around oil use in North America and Europe since the nineteenth century (and have since become global)’ (Barrett & Worden 2014, p.xxiv). The book is regarded by its editors as a contribution towards legitimising the field of ‘oil studies’ within the discipline of cultural studies. They note the absence of literature that ‘addresses oil as a cultural material in everyday experience and aesthetics’ (Barrett & Worden 2014, p.xx). They set to explore the connections between ‘oil capitalism and cultural representation’ drawing on Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* as a theoretical model, to argue that the global oil economy is a spectacular system:

‘As a material whose utility is largely realized through its own destruction, oil requires creative accounts of its worth that depart from its physical form. As a substance that can (at least initially) be extracted without much work, moreover, oil encourages fetishistic representations of its value as magical property detached from labor.’ (Barrett & Worden 2014, p.xxiv)

The majority of the essays in the book focus on the multiple meanings of oil within the cultural imagination of the United States, with some essays examining the cultural dimensions of oil in Europe and other Petrostates such as Canada, Mexico and Niger. Barrett and Worden speak, for example, of a number of literary texts in the United States addressing the cultural and social effects of oil (Barrett & Worden 2014, p.xxi), and hint that this may be the case in the rest of the world. Actually, in countries like Venezuela there exists a rich production of literary texts that document and portray how oil was intertwined with the presence of foreign dominant forces such as international oil corporations, viewed as mechanisms of domination that threatened national culture and that reshaped economic, social and cultural landscapes. In Venezuela, oil not only became the main mode of production and subsistence, it shaped statecraft and society formation and influenced every aspect of national life. Since early twentieth century, right at the start of its own era of oil, many texts emerged to account and explain the direct social and cultural effects of the oil industry in Venezuela.

The emergence of scholarly work exploring the cultural dimensions of oil capitalism in the humanities and in fields such as geography and environmental history between 1990 and 2000s coincided with the crises of the oil economy of late twentieth century, which generated new interests in understanding how oil became the world’s dominant energy commodity in order to develop critical analysis of the symbolic and cultural forms of oil capitalism (Barrett & Worden 2014, p.xxi; LeMenager 2014; Szeman 2013a; Szeman 2013b; Lord 2014).

Overall, the literature that assesses the effects of oil on modern social life and thought, or that analyses oil beyond the realms of politics, economics, technology and energy is a fairly recent development in academic fields. Frederick Buell’s essay *A Short History of Oil Cultures* (2014) is helpful for this thesis because it develops an approach towards the theorisation of the connection between oil and culture, exploring the close relationship between the development of energy industries and the cultural and social transformations of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Buell conceptualises history as a succession of systems of energy, comprised by economic, technological, environmental and socio-cultural relationships. He argues that oil has become essential to every single aspect of contemporary life, it underlies ‘material and symbolic

cultures' that partially determines 'cultural production and reproduction' (2014, p.70).

Nonetheless, he notes that a gap remains in the conceptual response to the relationship between oil and culture.

Buell's approach towards the cultural effects of oil coincides with Mitchell (2011) in first addressing the mechanics of the development of the coal industry in the nineteenth century. Coal capitalism ended humanity's primary dependence on biological energy systems such as wood and water, and inaugurated the era of fossil energies. This new era freed the factory from the constraints of organic resources and geography, as 'factories no longer had to be placed on one of the rapidly dwindling number of sites on the banks of usable rivers but could be put anywhere' (Buell 2014, p.73), marking a radical shift in the discourse around nature and machinery. Coal-based mechanical power brought with it the promise of never ending progress, which inaugurated a double-edged discourse of the effects of fossil energies, oil particularly (Buell 2014). The consolidation of global oil capitalism in the twentieth century inaugurated a 'new cultural regime' in which modernity engendered extreme exuberance and catastrophe (Buell 2014, p.82). Oil's exuberance manifested as modernisation, progress, economic growth, technological development, imperial expansion, rapid urbanisation, sanitation, and consumerism. Its inseparable catastrophic side manifests as environmental disasters, air pollution, grim working conditions in the oil fields, colonial domination, economic crises caused by the cycles of boom and bust of oil prices, rural to urban massive migrations, and destructive war machinery (tanks, airplanes, trucks, submarines). The consolidation of global oil capitalism is closely related to the rise of modernist culture, oil exerts a significant but seldom acknowledged influence on art and popular culture.

The first publications to assess oil in cultural terms in Venezuela were produced by Venezuelan Marxist anthropologist (and former oil camp dweller) Rodolfo Quintero, who published a series of works exclusively devoted to analyse the pervasive social and cultural effects of oil, most of it written around the period leading up to the oil boom and the nationalisation of the oil industry in the 1970s: the seminal *La cultura del petróleo* (1968), *Antropología del petróleo* (1972), *La cultura nacional y popular: ensayo antropológico sobre aspectos de la dependencia cultural en Venezuela* (1972), and *El petróleo y nuestra sociedad* (1975). Quintero's first work, *La cultura del petróleo* (1968) is particularly relevant for this thesis, explored in depth in chapter three. This thesis also builds on two notable contributions by Venezuelan scholars. One is Fernando Coronil's seminal work *The Magical State: Nature, Money and Modernity in Venezuela* (1997) which accounts the ways in which the state's monopoly over the oil economy allowed it to enact collective fantasies of progress by way of

spectacular projects, becoming the single agent endowed with the ‘magical powers’ to transform the nation. The other is Miguel Tinker Salas’ *The Enduring Legacy: Oil and Society in Venezuela* (2009) which explores the oil camps of transnational companies as cultural laboratories that promoted forms of citizenship and ways of life related to the global oil industry.

A number of studies on the effects of oil in Venezuela have been published on the aftermath of the 1980s oil crash, but most notably in recent years, prompted by Hugo Chávez’s entrenchment of the country’s dependency on oil. Among these texts the most relevant for this thesis is María Sol Pérez Schael’s study *Petróleo, Cultura y Poder en Venezuela* (1993) which examines how the cultural understanding of oil as a demonic and predatory force has shaped twentieth century statecraft. This thesis is mainly concerned with addressing the spatial dimension of the intersection between oil and culture, which leads to another key question which is to investigate the particular notion of culture conceptualised by the Venezuelan oil company within the strategies of the Sowing Oil Plan, that underpin Petrosocialism (examined in chapters five and six) defined as a national program based on ‘elevated cultural concepts’ (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.416) as well as their use of farming language to refer to the relationship it constructs between oil and culture. The next section provides a discussion of the literature on culture and cultural policy relevant for this discussion on the intersections between oil and culture, drawing primarily on the work of Zygmunt Bauman, Jeremy Ahearne and George Yúdice’s culture as a resource, to define this thesis proposition of the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit construed by the state-owned oil company within the context of Petrosocialism.

#### *Culture as a Resource in Petrosocialism: Culture-as-mineral-deposit*

The term culture, according to Zygmunt Bauman, originates from farming concepts such as cultivation, husbandry and breeding, ‘all meaning improvement’; culture is seen ‘through the eyes of the “farmers of the human-growing fields”– the managers’ (2004, pp.63–64).

Metaphorically what the farmer does with the seed, culture does to the ‘incipient human beings by education and training’ (2004, p.63). This evokes the Victorian period’s understanding of culture as ‘the moral betterment and spiritual development’ achieved through the contemplation of the best of human creations, where aesthetics articulated differences between what is high culture and what is not (O’Brien 2014, p.2; Miller & Yúdice 2002, p.1). However, by mid-twentieth century, an anthropological register was connected to culture (Miller & Yúdice 2002, p.1), in which culture is about the ‘artefacts and activities associated with a given community’s ‘way of life’ (O’Brien 2014, p.2). Bauman argues that the notion of management has been

endemic to the concept of culture from the beginning, implying an acceptance of an asymmetrical social relation: ‘the split between acting and bearing the impact of action, between the managers and the managed, the knowing and the ignorant, the refined and the crude’ (Bauman 2004, p.64). Furthermore, the relationship between managers and managed is inevitably agonistic and conflictive in which two sides seeking opposite purposes cohabit in a constant mode of conflict (Bauman 2004, p.64). Adorno acknowledged that conflict was inevitable, because managers and managed need each other: ‘culture suffers damage when it is planned and administrated; if it is left to itself, however, everything cultural threatens not only to lose the possibility of effect, but its very existence as well’ (Bauman 2004, p.64). O’Brien (2014, pp.9–10) further elaborates that there is a very material historical relationship between management and culture when considering state formation and particularly state bureaucracy as the actions of the state shape the understanding of culture, and that those aspects of the cultural that appear as natural, fixed and unchanging social facts are subject to governmental structures.

In this sense, Tony Bennett’s discussion about the relationship between culture and power is relevant, as he draws attention to the institutional circumstances that interpret and regulate culture. Bennett conceptualises culture as ‘a particular field of government’ (McGuigan 2003, p.29), the term government encompassing all power/knowledge relations in society. Hence, culture can be treated as a ‘historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations of government’ which seeks to transform particular forms of thought and conduct of populations, through instruments of control and power such as ‘the social body of forms, techniques, and regimes of aesthetic and intellectual culture’ (McGuigan 2003, p.30). Culture cannot escape from power manipulations or public controversy (McGuigan 2003, p.25). The grip of politics over culture tends to be greater where the state plays a significant role in its regulation, as is the case of the dominance of the Venezuelan Petrostate, particularly under Petrosocialism, in the manner in which the cultural arm of PDVSA frames culture within the extractive logic of the oil industry.

George Yúdice’s *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (2003) reveals and explains the utilisation of culture as a resource in the context of neoliberalism and globalisation as an instrument to aid social and economic development. Culture has acquired to an extent the same status as natural resources as a consequence of the process of globalisation which has accelerated the transformation of all realms of modern life into a resource (Yúdice 2003, pp.9, 28). Concurring with Bauman, he asserts that in both cultural and natural resources ‘management is the name of the game’ (Yúdice 2003, p.2). He argues that the use of culture as a resource is not a perversion or a reduction of its symbolic dimension, on the contrary, the expediency of culture

as a resource is a feature of contemporary life; its transformation into a resource is traced to a performative force, a style of social relations generated by diverse organised relations between state institutions and society such as schools, universities, mass media, markets, and so on (Yúdice 2003, pp. 47, 60–61). Drawing on Judith Butler, Yúdice characterises performativity ‘as an act that ‘produces which it names’ revealing the power of discourse to produce realities through repetition (Yúdice 2003, p.47,58), focused in particular on the institutional preconditions and processes by which culture and its effects are produced.

The expedience or convenience of culture as a resource allows its use for economic, social and political purposes. Yúdice affirms that nowadays it is impossible not to turn to culture as a resource as it is congruent to the way we now understand nature, affecting the way culture is viewed and produced. The issue here is then, with what intentions and to what purposes culture is ‘exploited’ noting that it is currently close to impossible to find public statements that do not instrumentalise art and culture to improve social conditions or to foster economic growth (Yúdice 2003, pp.10–11). Powerful institutions like the European Union, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have begun to understand culture as a ‘crucial sphere of investment’ meaning that culture is therefore treated like any resource as James D. Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, affirmed in his keynote address at the conference Culture Counts: Financing, Resources, and the Economics of Culture in Sustainable Development in 1999: ‘Physical and expressive culture is an undervalued resource in developing countries. It can earn income, through tourism, crafts, and other cultural enterprises’ (Yúdice 2003, p.13). This has marked a turn to culture as the prime instrument for investing in civil society as culture would not be funded unless it provides an indirect form of return in the form of ‘fiscal incentives, institutional marketing or publicity value, and the conversion of nonmarket activity to market activity’ (Yúdice 2003, pp.14–15) given that ‘cultural institutions and funders are increasingly turning to the measurement of utility because there is no other accepted legitimation for social investment’ (Yúdice 2003, p.16).

Yúdice’s discussion frames one of the approaches of this thesis to the work of PDVSA La Estancia, which has privileged direct access to the oil rent to be a founder of culture, it needs no negotiations with the government or follow any other agenda than its own, and as this thesis demonstrates, it can even surpass in financial and political power the jurisdictions of other public institutions whose functions overlap with their cultural work over the city. Thus, whilst the term expediency refers to the merely politic in regards to self-interest, Yúdice’s performative understanding of the expediency of culture ‘focuses on the strategies implied in any invocation

of culture, any invention of tradition, in relation to some purpose or goal' which is what makes possible to invoke culture as a resource 'for determining the value of an action' (2003, p.38). For Yúdice, the expediency of culture as a resource has become, in practice, the only surviving definition (2003, p.279) in which cultural policy becomes the institutional medium for its invocation.

Cultural policy is defined by Miller & Yúdice as the 'the institutional supports that channel both aesthetic creativity and collective ways of life', functioning as a bridge between the anthropological and aesthetic understandings of culture (2002, p.1). As such, cultural policy is in essence bureaucratic. McGuigan revisits Raymond Williams' categorisations of cultural policy as 'display' developed in 1984 (Ahearne 2009, p.145), expanding them to draw a distinction between cultural policy as display characterised by 'the instrumentalization of cultural resources for economic and political purposes' and cultural policy proper which 'attends to the proper object of cultural policy' (Ahearne 2009, p.145). Jeremy Ahearne defines cultural policy as not just a 'predefined object for cultural history, but also a particular "lens" through which cultural history more generally can be approached' (2009, p.142). He distinguishes between two broad categories of cultural policy: explicit cultural policy and implicit cultural policy (Ahearne 2009, p.141). Explicit cultural policy is 'any cultural policy that a government labels as such'; they often work on a definition of culture in terms of the consecrated arts. On the other hand, Implicit cultural policy is 'any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides (or on that of its adversary)', which implies the unintended cultural side effects of different kinds of policy or government actions that are not labelled as 'cultural' (Ahearne 2009, pp.143–144). Hence, Implicit cultural policy is not constrained to the governmental sphere; the actions of transnational commercial organisations have had significant influence on shaping cultural practices as it also entails the notion of 'soft power' (Ahearne 2009, p.144). Implicit cultural policy may be the most influential and important form of cultural policy especially when wielded by powerful transnational commercial organisations such as oil conglomerates whose 'policies' are not as susceptible to government control (Ahearne 2009, p.146). In this sense, this thesis will explore in chapter five that implicit cultural policy can be found in the most unlikely places, such as the Venezuelan Organic Law of Hydrocarbons interpreted and implemented as such by PDVSA La Estancia.

The above discussion underpins this thesis investigation of the notion of culture as a resource within Petrosocialism, as it is exercised in particular by the Venezuelan state-owned oil company. This thesis will argue that PDVSA's use of farming language discursively equates culture to

‘renewable oil’, as if it was a mineral deposit that can be mined, extracted and exploited. Yúdice’s culture as resource provides the theoretical foundation to characterise PDVSA’s notion of culture as culture-as-mineral-deposit. This thesis proposes that culture-as-mineral-deposit is, like the subsoil, the exclusive property of the Petrostate, as it belongs to the realm of PDVSA’s State Space but unlike oil, culture is not finite, it can be renewed, reconverted, and transformed. Chapters five and six argue that by framing its actions under the Sowing Oil Plan and the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons PDVSA La Estancia construes a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, as if culture could accumulate like a mineral and be industrially extracted from the soil like oil. Whilst Hugo Chávez established his political platform as an alternative to neoliberalism, oil capitalism provided the financial resources to advance and implement Petrosocialism. The use of culture-as-mineral-deposit is not oriented towards financial profit or the conventional model of promotion of modernity and progress, rather it is exploited to perpetuate the oil rentier model, to provide the illusion of inexhaustible oil through two discursive constructions: ‘oil that harvests culture’ (chapter five) and culture as ‘renewable oil’ (chapter six).

The state-owned oil company PDVSA conceives culture as ‘high elevated art’, understanding culture as a medium and an instrument to transcend the ills of capitalism. This thesis is not concerned with engaging with the history of cultural policies of the Venezuelan Petrostate, it is particularly interested in deciphering the discursive and institutional mechanisms that enabled the oil company to interpret and enact the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons -which is in principle a legal instrument limited to matters of fossil fuels extraction and commercialisation- as a parallel policy instrument of territory and culture. A key question for this thesis is to explore the institutional circumstances that enabled the social and cultural arm of PDVSA to supersede the authority of local government to stretch its scope of action to public art and public space, informed by the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit. The theoretical challenge of this thesis is to demonstrate that within the extractive logic of the oil industry, oil, territory and culture become inextricable from each other.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter outlined the three theoretical premises that guide this thesis’ investigation. First, Brenner and Elden’s State Space as Territory serves to characterise the Oil Social District as PDVSA’s State Space in chapter four, which provides the foundation to examine the discursive mechanisms used by PDVSA La Estancia to implement the Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy in chapter five. With this purpose, Harvey’s triad of spatiotemporality underpins

the approach of chapters four, five and six, as it enables to identify each particular spatiotemporal dimension of the four inter-related sets of documents this thesis examines: policy instruments; public speeches of Hugo Chávez, the President of PDVSA and the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia; elite interviews; and the 23 adverts of PDVSA La Estancia's campaign 'We transform oil into a renewable resource for you'. Secondly, this thesis adopts Bennett and Joyce's perspective of the state as the site where bureaucratic power congregates, useful to understand the process of simultaneous fragmentation of the state apparatus and centralisation of Bureaucratic Power in the sole figure of Hugo Chávez in the transition towards the Socialist State. Finally, this thesis expands George Yúdice's notion of 'culture as a resource' by interrogating the intersections between the state-owned oil company, culture and urban space, to propose the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, mobilised through the material space of the city reframed as an oil field whilst conceptualising a symbiotic and cyclical relationship between oil, land, and culture.

Having laid out the theoretical foundations of this thesis, the following chapter discusses research methodologies and ethical considerations. Chapter two outlines the methodological approaches and the process of carrying out fieldwork and research in Caracas in the aftermath of violent nationwide student protests. The chapter introduces the case study of PDVSA La Estancia by describing the geographical, political and institutional contexts of this research, as well as providing a discussion on the ethical challenges of doing fieldwork in a setting fraught with political polarisation and conflict. Finally, the chapter describes the mix of methodologies used: Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Semiotics.

## Chapter two: Fieldwork, Ethics and Data Collection in a Politically Polarised Petrostate

This thesis examines the spatial dimension of the relationship between the Petrostate, oil wealth, and culture in the era of Petrosocialism in Venezuela by looking at the overlaps and intersections between the discursive narratives of Petrosocialism of the state-owned oil company and Hugo Chávez to construct new spatial strategies that inform the notion of culture in the construction of the Socialist State in Venezuela. It also examines how this process manifests in the erosion of the institutional apparatus that enabled PDVSA La Estancia to supersede local government authority as well as re-imagine and repossess the material space of the city as an oil field, construing a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit. The analysis draws on three theoretical premises:

State Space

Bureaucratic Power

The Expediency of Culture as a Resource- *culture-as-mineral-deposit*

The main question that guides this thesis is: How does the relationship between the state, oil wealth, and culture play out in urban space in Petrosocialism? The investigation is guided by four further questions:

What are the representations of space produced by the discourses of Petrosocialism?

Do the Oil Social Districts constitute PDVSA's State Space?

Is there a Petrosocialist vision of the city?

What notion of culture is being produced by Petrosocialism?

PDVSA La Estancia's interventions in Caracas are used as a case study that serves as a gateway to examine the intersections between State Space, Bureaucratic Power and culture under Petrosocialism, as exercised by the Venezuelan state-owned oil company PDVSA. Located at the intersection of state space, bureaucratic power, and culture, this project collected four different sets of sources: interviews, public speeches, policy instruments, images and advertisements. The scope and focus of the research required a mix of qualitative methodological approaches: Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Semiotics. In the following section I will elaborate on the research approach chosen for this research project, the rationale, and how they intersect and interact in revealing the relationship between space, state, city and culture under Petrosocialism.

## *Research Settings*

This research is delimited by three specific settings. First, the political setting is Hugo Chávez's third and fourth presidential terms that saw the launch of Petrosocialism and the transition towards the Socialist State. Second, the geographical setting is Caracas, the capital city of Venezuela and the location of the institutions of central government. Finally, the institutional setting is PDVSA La Estancia, the social and cultural arm of the state-owned oil company PDVSA.

### *Political Setting: Petrosocialism and the Transition Towards the Socialist State*

President Hugo Chávez announced in 2007 that he was building the Socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2007b), a Bolivarian socialism supported by the oil rent, a *socialismo petrolero*, in other words, Petrosocialism. Petrosocialism broadly defines a political and economic model in which the flow of the oil rent is channelled into the construction of a Socialist State and a new socialist society. It was guided by the Sowing Oil Plan, a 25 year national oil policy launched in 2005 that forms the foundation for the advancement of Petrosocialism. Chapter three explores how the state-owned oil company PDVSA effectively became the 'engine of revolutionary change' (Maass 2009, pp.202, 215) along with the launch of the Five Motors of the Revolution, which marked the transition towards the Socialist State with the aim of transforming Venezuela into an 'a world power of oil energy' (Chávez 2008, p.7). This thesis is concerned with the fourth motor: The New Geometry of Power, manifested in the reorganisation of national territory which implied the dismantlement of the existing institutional apparatus of the 'counter revolutionary State' (Chávez 2007d). The weakening of the existing institutional framework created the circumstances that enabled PDVSA La Estancia to embark on an ambitious program of public art restoration and urban regeneration, justified by its institutional social and cultural mission and its interpretation of Article 5 of the Law of Hydrocarbons as implicit cultural policy. The work of PDVSA La Estancia cannot be fully understood without addressing the transformation taking place in the dimension of State Space in the creation of the Representations of Space of the Socialist State conceptualised in the new policy instruments, explored in detail in chapters four and five.

The geographical context of this research is the city of Caracas. Although Caracas is the capital of Venezuela and the seat of government, there exists long standing discrepancies in the relationship between its legal institutional framework and its territorial organisation. According to leading Venezuelan urbanist Maria de los Angeles Delfino (2001, p.36) the legal political framework of the capital city is complex, disperse and vague, she defines Caracas as a city with a structural deficiency in institutional organisation. The Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 1999 (CRBV) stipulated the creation and definition of 18 new juridical political-territorial entities such as the Metropolitan District and the substitution of the Federal District by the Capital District. The Metropolitan District was subsequently outlined by the Law of the Metropolitan District of Caracas (LEDIMCA), which encompasses the geographical space of the valley of Caracas including the Capital District, with a Metropolitan Mayor as its elected authority. Nonetheless, the CRBV did not define explicitly the political boundaries of the capital of the Republic, whether the space of the Capital District occupied the valley of Caracas, if it was limited to the colonial grid of the historical quarter or by the boundaries of the former Federal District (Delfino 2001, p.81). Still, for ten years the Capital District only existed on paper (Delfino 2001, p.42); it wasn't until 2009 that the Special Law for the Organisation and Regime of the Capital District was created and put into effect (Gobierno del Distrito Capital n.d.). That same year Hugo Chávez created the Chief of Government of the Capital District named directly by the President, whose legislative functions are carried through the National Assembly. This undermined the authority of the Metropolitan Mayor (elected by popular vote) since the entity's function is to coordinate the five municipalities that comprise Caracas. The Chief of Government of the Capital District governs primarily over Libertador Municipality (which also has its own Mayor, currently a member of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela PSUV), the largest and most populated municipality of Caracas whilst the Metropolitan District maintained its role of coordinator between the other four municipalities. But in practice the Chief of Government of the Capital District took over the headquarters of the Metropolitan District and many of its functions, effectively limiting the Metropolitan Mayor (at the time Antonio Ledezma, a member of the opposition) to oversee the four municipalities with elected opposition authorities. The main mission of the Chief of Government of the Capital District is to guarantee that local development plans are aligned with Hugo Chávez's National Development Plan for the Nation. In 2010 Hugo Chávez created the Ministry of the State for the Revolutionary Transformation of the Greater Caracas (absorbed in 2014 by the Presidential Commission for

the Revolutionary Transformation of the Greater Caracas), with jurisdiction over the Capital District, the Metropolitan District and part of Miranda State. These entities are part of the set of policies of the transition towards the Socialist State. Chapter four provides a detailed chronological account and analysis of the policy instruments created to dismantle the existing institutional apparatus of urban governance to pave the way for the Socialist State.

*Institutional Setting: PDVSA and PDVSA La Estancia*

The state-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima* (PDVSA) was created by decree in 1975, taking over the functions and operations of the existing *Corporación Venezolana de Petróleo* (Venezuelan Corporation of Oil). In 1976 president Carlos Andres Pérez nationalised the oil industry, just one year after the promulgation of the new law that reserved to the state the industry and commerce of hydrocarbons (Bye 1979, p.57). In the years after the nationalisation of the oil industry, PDVSA's corporate efficiency differentiated it from the rest of the public sector. Its managers, executives and workforce at large had worked for the international oil corporations, adopting their corporate culture and technocratic practices (Tinker Salas 2009; Wainberg 2004, p.4). By late 1980s and early 1990s, PDVSA's management pursued to transform the state-owned oil company into an international conglomerate but it wasn't until Rafael Caldera's second presidency (1994-1999) that the state-owned oil company consolidated its investment program called *Apertura Petrolera* (Oil Opening) for reopening the industry to foreign capital investment and increasing productive capacity, in contradiction of OPEC's policy of maintaining oil prices by limiting production. By exerting control over the main source of the state's income, PDVSA counted with a larger budget than the government, making it almost completely independent from the state that owned it, operating like a 'prosperous first world company in an impoverished third-world nation' (Maass 2009, p.202).

Hugo Chávez criticised PDVSA for functioning like a 'state within the state' (Giussepe Ávalo 2014, p.26; Párraga 2010, p.29); his presidential election in 1998 marked the beginning of a shift in the relationship between the state and PDVSA. He altered the institutional channels of the flow of the rent from PDVSA to the state: instead of transferring oil money to the government to be redistributed to the ministries that oversaw social programs, PDVSA was put in charge of new government programs (Maass 2009, pp.202, 215) effectively establishing PDVSA as the key player in advancing Hugo Chávez's nationalist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist model of Petrosocialism.

After the events of 2002-2003 (failed coup d'état and national oil strike) explored in chapter three, Hugo Chávez announced the rise of a 'new PDVSA' ideologically aligned with the Bolivarian Revolution. Coinciding with the launch of the Sowing Oil Plan 2005-2030, the *Centro de Arte La Estancia*, regarded as an elitist institution by the revolution, reopened its doors in 2005 as PDVSA La Estancia, the social and cultural arm of PDVSA. PDVSA La Estancia dates back to 1993, when the chief executive of Biserca Bienes y Servicios C.A., a branch of PDVSA, created the *Centro de Arte La Estancia*, a cultural centre for the arts and industrial design following the advice of experts from the Galería de Arte Nacional and the artist-designer Miguel Arroyo (Sato Kotani 2015). The cultural activities were accompanied by a program of community outreach, included in PDVSA's strategies of corporate social responsibility (Grauer 2015). With the exception of private corporate events, *Centro de Arte La Estancia* was open to the public, free of charge (Sato Kotani 2015).

PDVSA La Estancia takes its name from its main building, the eighteenth century colonial house of the Hacienda Estancia La Floresta, a former coffee and sugarcane plantation that was privately urbanised in the 1940s and 1950s to become the upper middle-class neighbourhood of La Floresta. Only the house and its adjacent gardens survived. By the 1950s and 1960s La Estancia was surrounded by middle and upper middle class neighbourhoods and modern office buildings such as the headquarters of Mobil and the United States Embassy. The hacienda house and gardens were purchased by PDVSA in the 1980s with the purpose of demolishing it in order to relocate its headquarters into a new purpose built high rise office complex (Grauer 2015). A new subsidiary was created for exclusive administrative purposes, with the land of La Estancia as its only asset; the project for the new headquarters did not materialise, and the company had to decide what to do with the hacienda (Grauer 2015). In 1990 La Estancia was declared a National Historic Monument; PDVSA took on the restoration and refurbishment of the house to adapt its use as private venue for corporate events and accommodation for V.I.P. guests.

PDVSA La Estancia describes itself as 'an oasis of culture and knowledge' (PDVSA La Estancia n.d.) for 'the appreciation, restoration, promotion and dissemination of the historical and artistic heritage of the country' (PDVSA La Estancia n.d.) guided by three lines of action: social, cultural and heritage. The organisation has become a reference within the country for the scope and quality of their work and modern aesthetics of the spaces and architecture they have intervened. Chapter four argues that these works were able to take place because the institutional and bureaucratic framework of city governance was weakened by a simultaneous process of fragmentation and centralisation of bureaucratic power. Based on the case study approach, this

thesis focuses exclusively on PDVSA La Estancia's heritage line of action, which encompasses public art and public spaces (PDVSA La Estancia n.d.), the majority located in Caracas. This also determines Caracas as the Material Space that frames the thesis and the research's fieldwork. The following section addresses the research design of this thesis.

### *Research Design: Case Study Approach*

The case study approach was selected because it provides a concrete historical frame and focal point from where to draw broader conclusions on the relationship between the state, oil wealth, space and culture in Venezuela. This project adopts the definition developed by John Gerring in which a 'case study may be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases' (2007, p.20). Archetypal case studies within the social sciences encompass social and political units such as cities, regions, communities, social groups and families, or particular institutions such as corporations, political parties, or interest groups (Gerring 2007, p.19). A case is always singular because it 'embodies the unit of concern in the central inference' (Gerring 2007, p.26). The main questions in defining a case study are the number of cases studied and how comprehensively they are studied.

In general 'case studies tend to be holistic rather than deal with "isolated factors"' with a tendency to emphasise the detailed workings of the relationships and social processes, rather than to restrict attention to the outcomes of these (Denscombe 2007, p.36). Attention is paid to the processes to explain why certain outcomes might happen than just find out what the outcomes are. The case study approach is aligned with 'the study of processes and relationships within a setting' (Denscombe 2007, p.38). One of the advantages of the case study approach is that it both allows and encourages the use of multiple research methods and the use of a variety of sources and evidence in order to capture the complexity of the reality or event under scrutiny (Denscombe 2007, pp.37, 45; Gerring 2007, p.27). The distinguishing features of the case study approach are its dependence 'on evidence drawn from a single case and its attempt, at the same time, to illuminate features of a broader set of cases' and that qualitative analysis comprises the primary methodology (Gerring 2007, pp.29, 34).

The case study approach does have its weaknesses, it is vulnerable to criticism in terms of 'the credibility of generalisations made from its findings' and is often perceived as lacking the degree of rigour in producing hard data since this approach focuses 'on processes rather than on

measurable end products' (Denscombe 2007, p.45), giving more weight to qualitative data and interpretative methods than to quantitative data and statistics. Case studies may also prove difficult in defining their boundaries and determine the scope of sources of data to collect.

Acknowledging the impossibility to study the city of Caracas as a whole, or of studying every single public space or cultural infrastructure built between 2007 and 2013, the case study approach provides a concrete historical frame and focal point from where to draw broader conclusions on the relationship between the state, oil wealth, space and culture in Venezuela.

PDVSA La Estancia is useful as a case study, used as a gateway to explore Petrosocialism from a spatial and cultural perspective. PDVSA La Estancia is a unique example of a cultural institution created, managed and funded by a state-owned oil company. The scope of this thesis does not encompass the study of PDVSA La Estancia's internal bureaucracy, its processes of decision making, the logistics of the day to day management of public art and public spaces or its nationwide programme of cultural events. This thesis is particularly concerned with the observation of the ideological and institutional circumstances that enabled PDVSA La Estancia to exert authority over the restored public art and spaces in Caracas, superseding the jurisdiction of municipalities whilst effectively functioning as a parallel entity of government. This requires a series of within-case observations, such as public speeches, policy instruments and advertisements. The primary focus and interest are the actions of PDVSA La Estancia in Caracas's material space, and the institutional circumstances that allows it to define itself as 'oil that harvests culture' and appropriate the spaces of the city to advance a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit.

#### *Case Study Selection: PDVSA La Estancia*

Considering that the aim of this research project is to explore and reveal the mechanisms through which the State and oil wealth have shaped culture and urban space in Caracas between 2007 and 2013, PDVSA La Estancia, was selected as a case study for having the following characteristics:

- It's currently one the most important cultural institutions in Venezuela, with a national scope and reach.
- It is directly owned, managed and funded by Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA), the state-owned oil company.

- The majority of PDVSA La Estancia's interventions, as well as its main headquarter, are located in Caracas.
- PDVSA La Estancia is part of a national oil corporation that has pledged ideological and political allegiance to Hugo Chávez, the Bolivarian Revolution and is a key instrument in the advancement of Petrosocialism.
- Beyond its regular program of cultural events, between 2007 and 2013 PDVSA La Estancia embarked on an ambitious plan of public art restoration and urban regeneration of non-oil-industry related spaces and infrastructures.
- The social and cultural program of PDVSA La Estancia is part of PDVSA's Sowing Oil Plan and is governed by the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons.

PDVSA La Estancia is representative of the new institutional landscape brought by Hugo Chávez' radicalisation of the Bolivarian Revolution in 2007 to lead the country towards a transition to the Socialist State, an event that will be explained in depth in chapter four. The following section provides a detailed account of the difficult social and political context that framed the fieldwork and data collection and the ethical challenges and considerations it raised.

### *The Ethics of Doing Fieldwork in the Midst of Extreme Political Polarisation*

My fieldwork in Caracas took place between June 2nd and July 17th 2014 in the immediate aftermath of nationwide student protests against the government. The process of data gathering and collection was completed between August 2014 and September 2015 in the UK. The political and social circumstances in Venezuela meant that issues of risk and safety had to be taken into serious consideration, particularly for interviewing elites. The political and social turmoil informed and shaped the approach towards data collection, and raised unanticipated ethical concerns. This section outlines the political and social context that framed the fieldwork.

The unexpected passing of Hugo Chávez in March 2013, briefly after being re-elected for a fourth term in office, required a swift call for another presidential election in April 2013, won by Nicolás Maduro by a slim margin –Maduro was handpicked by Chávez to assume as acting president before departing to Cuba for cancer treatment (Weyland 2013, p.22). Maduro took over a country with diminishing public finances due to declining oil prices, rampant corruption, high inflation, shortages of basic goods and services, and a rapid increase in violent crime rates (Lugo-Ocando et al. 2015, p.3782). The continued deterioration climaxed and conflict ensued in February 2014 when students and other sectors of the population initiated nationwide street

protests against the government (Lugo-Ocando et al. 2015, p.3783), which involved direct and violent confrontations between students and military forces, barricades blocking access to neighbourhoods and central areas (named *guarimbas* by the government) and multitudinous marches. Protests did not subside until May 2014, following strong and violent repression from the government, but skirmishes were still scattered around Caracas by the time I arrived. This challenged personal mobility and safety around the city, and that of potential interviewees, meaning that time and locations for meetings had to be carefully planned and chosen.

Nonetheless, safety and risk issues were not limited to physical harm or freedom of movement, issues related to fear of persecution and censorship of common citizens also emerged. In the midst of the violence and chaos in which the country was submerged during the protests against the government, the figure of the *patriota cooperante* emerged as an effective instrument of the state to suppress dissident voices. It is a legacy of the Law for the National System of Intelligence and Counterintelligence of 2008, widely opposed and vetoed by Hugo Chávez himself, which contemplated forcing all citizens to be informants (Medina 2015). Latent ever since, it rose to prominence in 2014 as an effective instrument of repression during the protests. Considered ‘guarantors of the socialist revolution’, the entity of the *patriota cooperante* protects the identity of anonymous informers who incriminate citizens suspected of committing counterrevolutionary acts through anonymous phone calls made to the Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN), which then follows through with arrests (Anon 2014). Although it is an entity created outside of the Constitution and the Organic Law against Organized Crime and Funding of Terrorism, the anonymous accusations are validated as legitimate testimonies for prosecution and imprisonment by the General Prosecutor of the Republic and the Courts of Justice, without further proof of evidence, in violation of the rights to due process and a fair trial (Amnistía Internacional 2015a; Amnistía Internacional 2015b). The public and arbitrary arrests of citizens during the protests (Hernández 2015) based on anonymous accusations of *patriotas cooperantes* was still in place at the time of doing fieldwork further entrenched a sense of fear and self-censorship across wide sectors of Venezuelan society.

Doing research in this context raised unanticipated ethical challenges related to safety, risk and access. According to the Economic and Social Research Council Framework for Research Ethics (2015, pp.8–10) the ethical issues involved in doing research in Venezuela are:

- Potentially sensitive topics in terms of political behaviour (elites interviewed fall into this category).

- Risk to the safety of the researcher, for example researchers working outside the UK in their own community.
- Research undertaken outside of the UK where there may be issues of political sensitivities.

Unanticipated ethical issues arose in the process of data gathering through interviewing elites. The information solicited from interviewees was circumscribed to expert opinions on matters related to the case study, urban governance and the role of oil wealth in the urban development of Caracas. Interviews were a particularly difficult challenge in the context of extreme political turmoil. On one side, securing appointments with government officials was fraught with non-responsiveness or last minute cancellations. On the other, elites not aligned with the Bolivarian revolution who agreed to be interviewed were in many cases hesitant in expressing critical opinions of the government and signing written forms of consent. The political circumstances were in such turmoil and so polarised that traceable consent was impossible to obtain from most interviewees.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather reflective views and professional opinions of elites in relation to the case study and its cultural and political circumstances, but this proved to be a particularly difficult challenge in the context of extreme political polarisation. Some interviewees showed extreme self-awareness and self-censorship as they elaborated their answers. Although they had agreed to the interview on the ground that they considered the questions pertinent and of their interest and were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, some became fearful of the future repercussions of their critical opinions of the government or of a written consent potentially traceable back to them. This fear did not derive from any sense of mistrust towards me as a researcher, nor due to unsafe conditions as all interviewees chose the location and time considered the safest and most convenient. To minimise risks to the interviewees, oral consent was adopted over written consent, because it was less likely to be traceable.

The intention of the interviews was that no politically sensitive information would be elicited from the questions, such as the interviewees' political leanings, personal opinions about the revolution, or any personal information (age, address, phone numbers, etc). This research did not collect any type of personal data from the interviewees as defined by the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (ESRC 2015, p.43). The aim was to gather their expert assessment of the influence of oil on urban development, the current state of affairs in urban governance and the role of the city in the wider context of the Bolivarian revolution. Participants welcomed the

opportunity to share their expert opinions and experience, without having to refer to explicit issues of partisan politics.

Nonetheless, as I have explained earlier, the political circumstances were in such turmoil that traceable consent was almost impossible to obtain. Due to the fear of persecution, and also the way the government had used signatures collected for the presidential referendum to identify citizens who opposed the regime to fire, persecute, deny benefits and discriminate, the majority of the participants refused to sign any kind of form. Pushing or enforcing the consent form would have worked in detriment to the collaborative ethos of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. It was also important to reassure the interviewees that their consent would not be traceable in any way. Although participants are guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality under ESRC guidelines, the trust in the UK system is not transferable to Venezuela, as the Venezuelan government is known to engage in breaching the privacy of its citizens, especially those identified as opposition, regardless of the legal framework that forbids breaches of privacy.

Most interviewees preferred to answer by email, but were still reluctant or hesitant to sign, scan and send a written consent form, so the actual act of sending back their answers is interpreted as consent without putting themselves in the position of signing a document they felt might carry adverse repercussions in the future, or at least whilst the Bolivarian Revolution remains in power. The ESRC Framework for Research Ethics does contemplate that, in the case of elite interviews:

‘it is often argued that formal written consent is not necessary because by consenting to see the researcher, the participant is in fact giving consent. However, all such participants should receive an initial letter giving the name and status of the researcher carrying out the study, a brief rationale of the study including its purpose and value and why the individual is being invited to take part. The person interviewed should be aware what will happen to any findings, whether the data will be shared with others, and whether he/she will be identified.’ (Economic & Social Research Council 2015, p. 42)

The same criteria would apply to the written answers by email, by replying with the answers to the questions, the participant is giving consent. This research fully adhered to these guidelines. The interviewees received an initial letter via email which identified me as a researcher directly responsible of the study, with a brief explanation of the research project and its aims, and why the contacted individual was considered to be invited to take part. Participants were informed that findings would be disseminated in the form of papers published in journals, that their

contributions would inform the thinking of the research, that the data would be protected with no intention of sharing the data with third parties or to be used in a subsequent study.

Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity; their identities would not be traceable by any means pertaining to this research. It also stated explicitly that they could refuse to participate at all and decline to answer particular questions, or withdraw from the interview at any point. With this purpose, to do no harm and to avoid any potential risks to participants, those who agreed to be interviewed in person or via Skype provided fully informed oral consent.

Interviews were taped on the phone, whilst in Caracas I took the precaution of not carrying an obvious tape recorder as it would not raise any suspicions that I was carrying anything more than music or photos in my mobile when I passed the security controls in the airport. Taped interviews over Skype were immediately downloaded at my home PC and then uploaded to a personal password-protected online drive. In regards to the public speeches and TV broadcasts of elites collected for this research, they are of public domain, therefore they are not considered personal data (ESRC 2015, p.12) and thus do not entail ethical issues.

Doing fieldwork in areas in conflict not only poses particular challenges to the process of data collection, but raises difficult ethical questions when collecting data through interviewing individuals. Seeking consent, an integral element of conducting ethical research, can be difficult if it is perceived by the participants as a potential risk to their personal integrity. The researcher has to be aware of the social and political context affecting both the research and the participants at the moment of the fieldwork and in the future; this is an ethical issue:

‘Further, in view of the militarization of daily life and widespread surveillance in most conflict zones, researchers must be cautious that the interview process does not jeopardise the respondents’ security.’ (Dixit 2012, p.133)

The particular context of fear of persecution fostered by the government and the reluctance from participants to sign any type of formal consent has a strong precedent in the use of the signatures collected for the presidential referendum by the government to persecute citizens who opposed it, collated and published in a website in 2005:

‘Chavista legislator Luis Tascón revealed the existence of a list of over 3 million Venezuelans who signed petitions in 2003 and 2004 calling for a referendum on Chávez’s tenure. Tascón published the list on his website prior to the August 2004 referendum. Venezuelans have complained of having been persecuted for daring to associate with the opposition by signing a petition.’ (Noriega 2006, p.5)

In 2006 the list resurfaced as an electronic software in a CD called *Batalla de Santa Inés Maisanta* containing the data of more than 12 million registered Venezuelan voters, including addresses, whether the person had signed the petition for the referendum, and even coded political affinities and electoral participation (Noriega 2006, p.6). The list has had long lasting effects which cannot be underestimated particularly in terms of breaching the rights of speaking freely about political opinions and affiliations:

‘The importance of these practices, particularly for expressing a political opinion or exercising an essential political right, should not be underestimated. Given the overwhelming role of PDVSA (Venezuela’s state-owned oil enterprise), which accounts for roughly one-third of the GDP and almost half of Venezuela’s fiscal income, and the role of the government in the economy more generally—public spending is equal to almost one-fourth of the nation’s GDP—government jobs and contracts are in many cases vital for an individual’s economic well-being. The threat of losing a government post sends a powerful message that not only threatens a citizen’s right to cast a secret ballot but to exercise other constitutional rights in opposition to the government.’  
(Noriega 2006, p.6)

This research had to take this circumstance into consideration, a circumstance that still endures under President Nicolás Maduro, as the opposition has initiated the process for a new recall referendum. For this reason, fully informed oral consent was considered the most appropriate approach to safeguard the identities and the personal integrity of all the participants who feel under greater threat since their condition as elites makes them easier to trace. This approach is backed up by the vast majority of literature on conducting academic research, which prioritises informed consent obtained in a manner suitable to the context:

‘Informed consent is an integral component of conducting research. It helps in acknowledging the autonomy of the interviewees and underscores respect for confidentiality and privacy. Informed consent should be based on the customs and norms of the local culture. The researcher must acquire official or verbal informed consent (depending on the local context) of the individual prior to the interview.’ (Dixit 2012, p. 133)

In terms of the challenges of conducting fieldwork in the aftermath of the student protests of February-May 2014, I could not have foreseen the particular ethical dilemmas I faced:

‘Can we know the risks we face, now or in the future?’ Mary Douglas asks in *Risk and Culture* (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982, 1). Her answer is no, since we can never know all risks at all times’ (Sascha Helbardt et al 2010, p. 352)

Nevertheless, informed consent was obtained following the ESRC guidelines and fieldwork was guided by the literature on methodological approaches to working in conflict zones in order to be able to conduct fieldwork and the collection of data necessary for this thesis.

Furthermore, to protect the identities of my interviewees, I am not able to disclose and describe my position in relation to my research participants and the research settings of this thesis. Good academic practice requires that researchers acknowledge who they are and disclose themselves to reveal and understand how it shapes and influences the research. As a Venezuelan national, with family and an established professional network in the country, I face the same safety issues and risks of persecution of my participants, given the polarised and repressive political climate described earlier. The ethical issues I faced and the political environment that framed and informed this thesis makes it imperative that I, as the researcher, do not reveal my position in relation to my research subject, my participants, and the research context. To fully comply with the ethics that binds this research I cannot engage in a detailed reflective discussion of my positionality because it would put participants in danger of political persecution (and by extension my family and myself) as it could make it easier for all to be identified. Having established the severe constraints on of my positionality, this chapter now turns to describe the process of data collection.

### *Data Collection*

The sources collected for this research consist of four different sets of samples: interviews, speeches, policy instruments and adverts. They will be outlined in detail in the following sections. The inventory of the data gathered for this research is as follows:

Interviews: 16

Political speeches: 42

Hugo Chávez, delivered between 2005 and 2007: 6

Hugo Chávez TV broadcasts: 2

Rafael Ramírez, President of PDVSA and Minister of Oil and Energy, delivered between 2004 and 2014: 14

Beatrice Sanso de Ramírez, General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia, delivered between 2005 and 2015: 20

Policy instruments: 19

Pamphletary publications: 1

Adverts: 23

A detailed list of the documents is available in appendix one. This project applied a mix of qualitative methods to gather the data that informs the analysis. The methodological approaches to data collection employed in this project include semi-structured non-standardised interviews to elites and documentary research.

### *Elite Interviews*

I conducted semi-structured non-standardised interviews, chosen as the most appropriate approach for this project and a method in which the context of the interview is an equally important part of the process (May 2011, p.135). Semi-structured interviews allow interviewees 'to answer more on their own terms' (May 2011, p.135) whilst providing parameters for comparison, as each interview will vary in the degree and quality of information generated. This type of interview was considered the most useful to capture points of view, factual knowledge and expertise from elites contained in oral histories pertaining to the case study, which may have not been recorded in any other type of medium or document.

The scope of information needed for this project, in regards to the institutional framework of urban governance required interviewing elites. William Harvey argues that across the social sciences there is no wide agreement on the definition of the term 'elite' (Harvey 2011, p.432). This project adopts the definition of elites as 'those who hold important social networks, social capital and strategic positions within social structures because they are better able to exert influence' whose power is relational -their elite status can change over time- and is 'geographically specific with people holding elite status in some, but not all locations' (Harvey 2011, p.433). The participants in my research are civil servants, academic researchers, architects and intellectuals who hold, or have held in the past, positions of power in their respective fields and who have influence in the public sphere. The characteristics of the interview sample will be outlined in the following section.

William Harvey stresses the importance of gaining the trust of the interviewees in order to be able to gather truthful data, and to be as transparent as possible providing the interviewee with as much information as possible such as who the interviewer is, the nature of the research, how the data will be used and how the identity of the interviewee will be protected (2011, p.434).

Although it is important to appear as impartial and neutral as possible, a degree of bias was inevitable not only because I would be approaching the interview with a plan of what would be discussed but also because as a researcher I carry a critical point of view, taking in consideration the context of extreme political polarisation.

To increase the likeliness of a reply to invitations to government officials, I used using revolutionary jargon in my communications or pursue access through acquaintances; all attempts proved unsuccessful except in one instance. The General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia is the only Bolivarian government elite who agreed to an interview. I was not able to interview other key personnel of PDVSA La Estancia, such as the Manager of Heritage, as I was told that the General Manager is the gatekeeper and the sole voice of the institution. Considering the circumstances of limited access, the interview sample then focused on scholars, architects, and intellectuals located outside of the Bolivarian government's circle and ideology, as individuals who predominantly identify themselves as opposition.

The sets of questions were organised thematically to adapt the questionnaire to each interviewee's main area of expertise. Interviews were carried out face-to-face in Caracas whenever possible, or by video conference and email depending on the interviewee's preference or convenience. The questions focused on gathering information about the role of the city in the political project of Hugo Chávez, the institutional apparatus of urban governance, and the influence of oil wealth in the urban development of Caracas in the context of the Bolivarian Revolution.

All potential interviewees were first contacted by email, provided with a detailed explanation of the general aspect of the research, the research's purpose, and what their participation entailed. Interviewees were given the option to be recorded in audio or answering the questions by email. They were provided volition, meaning they could withdraw or cancel altogether the interview if they felt compelled to do so. Interviewees who preferred to respond by email were given the freedom to take as much time as they saw fit to elaborate their answers, they usually requested to be allowed between three to six weeks to reply. All interviewees took part freely, without coercion, providing written or oral consent where appropriate. Meetings were organised according to the interviewees' wishes, offering three modes of contact: one to one in person, one to one via Skype, or via email.

The interviews consisted of a set of 7 open-ended questions that enquire on the relationship between the state, oil wealth, urban space, and PDVSA La Estancia, organised around three

main themes outlined below (the original set of questions and replies in Spanish are collated in appendix two):

## 1. The state and urban development

### 1.a. How important is the role of the State in the configuration of the city of Caracas?

The aim of this question is to explore how interviewees perceive the scope of influence of the state in the urban development of Caracas.

### 1.b. What fundamental difference do you identify between the current State's urban management in comparison with the previous oil boom?

This question asks for interviewees to characterise the urban management policies and performance of the Bolivarian government, which has enjoyed an oil windfall, compared to the oil-boom and post-oil boom period between 1970s and 1998 (period against which Chávez differentiated his revolution). The interviewees used a series of different adjectives and phrases to diagnose the performance of the Bolivarian state in urban planning, in comparison with the pre-Chávez era.

### 1.c. What is the institutional platform that supports and/or promotes the transformations or urban renovations in Caracas?

The Bolivarian government has undertaken massive changes in the structure of the state and local government; institutions and policy instruments have been eliminated and new ones created in the process of the transition towards the Socialist State. This question aims to gather insights into how the interviewees judge the current bureaucratic and institutional landscape of Caracas, and also how they perceive the effects of these transformations on urban development.

## 2. The City and the Bolivarian Revolution

### 2.a. What is the role of the city and urban space in the political project of the Bolivarian Revolution?

This question aims to explore how the interviewees perceive the role the city and urban matters play within the discourse and political project of Hugo Chávez and his Bolivarian Revolution.

2.b. What differentiates PDVSA La Estancia from other institutions with competencies over the urban development of Caracas?

This question aims to explore if the interviewees view PDVSA La Estancia as a legitimate body in urban management, and what differentiates it from other instances of local government who oversee the urban planning and management of Caracas.

3. Oil and urban space

3a. Is it possible to call Caracas an 'oil city'?

Historically, the moments of the greatest transformations of Caracas and the undertaking of massive works of infrastructure have coincided with periods of oil boom. Considering the power and influence of the Venezuelan Petrostate, this question aims to explore if interviewees consider if the capital city, the site of central government and where oil revenue circulates -but is not produced-, could be labelled as an 'oil city', a term borrowed from the work of Venezuelan Marxist anthropologist Rodolfo Quintero (2011).

3b. What new relationship should be established between oil wealth and the city, considering the experiences of the past?

The presidency of Hugo Chávez enjoyed one of the largest oil windfalls in the history of Venezuela. Considering that the urban infrastructure in Venezuela is still deemed deficient to the current needs, and with international oil prices on the decline, the question explores what new relationship the interviewed elites believe should be formed between oil wealth (and by extension the Petrostate) and the city.

From an initial sample of 50 contacts that included Bolivarian and opposition government and intellectual elites, 20 replied and agreed to meet (only two were aligned with the Bolivarian revolution), two cancelled at the last minute, one never replied after agreeing to answering the questions via email, resulting in a final sample of 17 interviews. The criteria and characteristics of the interview sample is outlined in the next section.

#### *Interview sample*

As mentioned above, there are 17 interviews in total. All interviewees are 40 years old and over, as one of the main objectives of the interviews was to gather information from

professional elites who had lived through the process of the emergence and establishment of the Bolivarian Revolution.

All interviewees were anonymised by substituting their names with an acronym containing a letter and a number. The following chart provides the characteristics of the interview sample:

	Acronym	Occupation
1	O1	[REDACTED]
2	O2	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
3	A1	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
4	J1	[REDACTED]
5	A2	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
6	A3	[REDACTED]
7	R1	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
8	R2	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
9	A4	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
10	A5	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
11	P2	[REDACTED]
12	O3	[REDACTED]
13	W1	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
14	A6	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
15	R3	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
16	R4	[REDACTED]
17	A7	[REDACTED]



word processors and computers can also be considered documents (May 2011, pp.194–195).

Documents are therefore defined as the physical embodiment of text, where the containment of the text is the primary purpose; what purpose is behind the production of any document lies in its authorship, which can only be established through empirical research (Scott 1990, p.13). The authorship, referring to the origin of the document, is determined on whether there is a separation between personal and public spheres, and within the public, a separation between private bureaucracies and the State (Scott 1990, p.14). The largest type of documents available to the social researcher are those produced by local and national government authorities, although most tend to have limited access (Scott 1990, p.16).

The separation between public and private spheres determines the level of access to the documents to people other than their authors. Scott developed four categories of documents based on their degree of accessibility (Scott 1990, p.14):

- Closed documents are available exclusively to a small circle comprised by those who produced it and their bureaucratic superiors.
- Restricted documents are made accessible for specific purposes under certain conditions and are usually closed to outside access.
- Open-archival documents are stored in a purpose built facility or storage space for open access to all.
- Open-published documents are printed for open circulation accessible to all who can afford them if it is a commercial publication or can be obtained in a library (to this I would add documents printed digitally, available to all who have access to an internet connection and can download them from the websites where they are stored).

In addition to their accessibility, documents can also be grouped into more categories: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary; and Unsolicited and Solicited (May 2011, p.196). Primary documents are written or collected by those who witnessed the events described and tend to be regarded as a more 'accurate' account whilst Secondary documents refer to those written after the event, in which the author did not personally witness what is described. These documents need to be placed in their social and historical context to counteract any discrepancies or inaccuracies in their production. Tertiary sources comprise indexes, abstracts and other bibliographies that facilitate the location of other sources (May 2011, p.196). Solicited and Unsolicited sources refer respectively to whether the document was produced with the aim of research or for personal use,

which raises the question of the audience to which the documents was initially addressed to (May 2011, pp.197–198).

The documents relevant to this thesis are primary and secondary, open-archival and open-access. It was important for this project to ascertain accessibility to official documents, considering the lack of access to government authorities. Fortunately, all branches of the Venezuelan government provide open-published access to official documents through each institution's official website. With the exception of legal instruments, the personal authorship of many official documents clearly identifies personal authorship, naming the public official responsible for drafting it, such as late president Hugo Chávez Frías, the President of PDVSA and the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia.

The range of documents relevant for this research encompass political speeches, transcripts of televised speeches, legal instruments and official gazettes, national development plans, as well as visual materials such as photographs and adverts. The use of a diverse range of documents proved valuable in identifying common discursive strands. This thesis assumes that documents are never neutral, as they tend to both reflect and construct 'social reality and versions of events' (May 2011, p.199). In this sense, the contents of the texts and the relationship they aim to establish with their audience are fundamental, taking into consideration that researchers become part of the audience as soon as they engage with any document (Scott 1990, p.34).

Scott identifies three stages as the text travels from the author to its audience: intended content, received content and internal meaning. The intended content of a text is the meaning the author intended to produce whilst the received content is the meaning the audience constructs upon receiving the text (Scott 1990, p.34). The internal meaning mediates between the intended and received meanings, it is the transient and ephemeral that is the focus of semioticians and content analysts. How a text is interpreted is dependent on the context of its production and its effects: 'the reading of a text is validated by relating it to the intentions of the author, and by taking account of the fact that its "objective meaning" goes beyond these intentions, and also by relating the text to its audience' (Scott 1990, p.34). The researcher can at most produce an analysis that provides a set of possible interpretations of the inferred internal meaning of the text by its audience (Scott 1990, p.34). This thesis deals with the intended content and how it informs policy of territorial governance and the understanding of culture in Petrosocialism. It also aims to reveal common narratives and inconsistencies in their discourse. For this reason this research looks at three dimensions of the same phenomenon (State Space, Bureaucratic Power and Culture as a Resource), to elucidate how the intended meaning manifests in State Space to

trace the discourses that run across political speeches, policy instruments, and urban and cultural projects.

### *Analysis Methods*

This thesis is concerned with identifying a limited set of discursive narratives as they unfold in a multiplicity of texts (written, oral, and visual) using Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Semiotics. A detailed account of the analysis methods used is described in detail in this section; the findings from these documents and analysis are thoroughly examined in chapters four, five and six.

#### *Critical Discourse Analysis*

Critical Discourse Analysis is interested in the way in which language and discourse are used to achieve social goals and the part this use plays in social maintenance and change. In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) the assumption is that ideas and practices that constitute such discourses transmit, produce and reproduce power, but also undermine and expose the fragility of power. CDA is not an analysis of discourse as a text but the analysis of the 'relations between discourse and other elements of the social process' as well as the internal relations of discourse (Fairclough 2010, p.4,10). CDA does include the systematic analysis of texts, but it is not just descriptive, it is also normative; the analysis of these complex relations 'cuts across conventional boundaries between disciplines' making CDA a trans-disciplinary form of analysis. CDA is also relational and dialectical, its primary focus is on discourse as a complex set of social relations, which can be also 'layered' including relations between relations (Fairclough 2010, p.3) such as the dialectical relations between discourse and power (Fairclough 2010, p.8).

Discourse cannot be defined as a separate entity nor as mere expression of social practice, it can only be understood 'by analysing sets of relations', as discourse 'brings into the complex relations which constitute social life: meaning, making meaning' (Fairclough 2010, p.3). Discourse can also be defined 'as the flow of knowledge' through history, a flow that 'determines individual and collective doing and/or formative action that shapes society, thus exercising power' (Jager 2011, p.34). Discourses can exert power because they are regulated, institutionalised and linked to action; as the world is construed discursively, whether these construes exercise 'socially constructive effects' is dependent on power relations (Fairclough 2010, pp.4–5). Although power and discourse can be identified as different moments of the social process they are entangled as

‘power is partly discourse, and discourse is partly power’ (Fairclough 2010, p.3); discourses condense and simplify the complexities of power relations.

Power relations bring questions of ideology, understanding ideology as meaning in the service of power and domination (Thompson 1984, p.132) as forms of representations of the world that ‘may be operationalised in ways of acting and interacting’ that contribute in the establishment and perpetuation of unequal relations of power (Fairclough 2010, p.8). The power of discourses is linked to different mechanisms of power and institutions, as discourses both shape societal reality and are a reflection of reality. Hence, discourses can be defined as material realities, they shape reality through ‘intervening active subjects in their societal contexts as (co-)producers and (co-)agents of discourses’ (Jager 2011, p.36). These active interventions also construe discourses as ‘societal means of production’:

‘discourses exercise power. They are themselves a power factor by being apt to induce behaviour and (other) discourses. Thus, they contribute to the structuring of the power relations in a society’ (Jager 2011, p.37)

The character of Bureaucratic Power, exercised by individuals in control of the state apparatus, is partially discursive. Critical Discourse Analysis, in the context of this thesis, is concerned with the analysis of the production of reality performed by discourse, conveyed by active people (Jager 2011, p.36). In this vein, discourses are also regarded as a means for the production of the Socialist State, PDVSA’s State Space and the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit.

Siegfried Jager (2011, p.47) proposes eight topics to identify the structure of discourses. *Discourse strands* are flows of discourse that concentrate on a common topic, each discourse strand can also contain a number of sub-topics that could be summarised into groups of subtopics. *Discourse fragments* are texts or parts of a text that covers a certain theme, discourse fragments can combine to form a discourse strand. *Entanglements of discourse strands* occur when a text can make references into several discourse strands: ‘in a text various discourse fragments can be contained, these emerge in general and entangled form’ (Jager 2011, p.47). The overall societal discourse in its entanglement and complexity take into consideration that societies are not homogeneous, therefore, the several discourse strands that flow from the general societal discourse are ‘in a state of complex entanglement’; but it also begs to pay attention to the fact that ‘the overall discourse of a society is a partial discourse of a (naturally heterogeneous) global discourse’ (Jager 2011, p.50). *Discursive events* and *discursive context* refer only to events that can be politically emphasised to be considered discursive events (Jager 2011, p.48). *Discourse planes* refer to the

societal locations (media, science, business, everyday life, politics, etc.) from which ‘speaking happens’ since according to Jäger ‘discourse strands operate on various discursive planes’ (Jäger 2011, p.49). It needs to bear into consideration that all discourse planes are closely entangled. *Discourse position* refers to the specific ideological location of the individual or medium. *History, present and future of discourse strands* establishes that all discourses and discourse strands ‘have a history, a present and a future’; therefore it is necessary to consider the longer timeframes of discursive processes to determine their ‘genealogy’. This sort of endeavour is extremely ambitious as it would entail the undertaking of a large amount of strands of single projects, but such a scale falls outside of the scope of this thesis as it does not encompass the history of the discourse strands that will be identified in the analysis nor the overall entanglements with other societal discourses.

The analysis is confined to the topics and time frame previously described and examined in depth in chapter three. Part of the analysis of texts will draw on a selective use of J.L. Austin’s speech-act theory, looking in particular at performative utterances. For Austin, all sentences form a class of utterances, each class defined grammatically. He contrasted constative and performative utterances, but he ultimately argued in his 1958 paper ‘Performatif-Constatif’ that there is no precise distinction between performative and constative utterances reducing all statements to performatives. However, Jacobsen (1971, p.357) argues that Austin’s relativism was produced by basing the distinction on a purely verbal and grammatical criterion. For Jacobsen, a performative utterance is:

‘inseparably connected with the fact that an act is either performed explicitly by a person, as e.g. ‘I promise you’, or by a group of persons authorized to act as one person, as e.g. ‘You are requested to shut the door’, where the request has to be issued either by one person or by a group of persons (officials), who have the authority to make requests concerning the regulations governing the public behavior’ (1971, p.359)

Jacobsen proposes that although it is true that an act is always performed by a person it does not necessarily follow that a person performs an act by what that person says, in saying something it only follows that the person performs the act of saying:

‘the fact that an act belongs to somebody, to a person, it becomes clear that the performative utterance being a specific act does belong specifically to the person uttering it, whereas the constative statements do not belong especially to any person, even though both types of utterance viewed as speech acts are acts. Hence without any preceding

procedure the performative utterances are non-transferable and the constatives are transferable.’

A constative is transferable because they refer to more general statements. For example in the statement ‘I am Venezuelan’ the ‘I’ is transferable to any person the description applies to. A constative utterance is, simply defined, a statement whilst a performative utterance is a non-transferable ‘speech act which does not merely describe something but enacts it’ (Cuddon 2013, p.525), it has some degree of inherent agency. The issue of a person or group of persons with the authority to influence or govern public behaviour, and the non-transferability of their performative utterances will be key to the analysis of the public speeches of Hugo Chávez, the President of PDVSA and the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia to examine how their discourse exerts power over shaping State Space and culture. The thesis adopts this approach in chapters four and five to identify the performative utterances that indicate the will and the power to enact a new reality under Petrosocialism.

Jager proposes an analytical guideline to follow for the critical analysis of discourses. His guideline is designed to cater to the specific problems of media analysis (Jager 2011, p.54); although the speeches that are the subject of this section are in written text form, their main medium of diffusion or publication was mass media: television broadcasts, a personal blog of the institution’s key authority, or the institution’s official website. For the purpose of this thesis, Jager’s guideline has been adapted in the following form:

1. General characterisation of the speaker and speeches
2. Overview of textual material
  - List of speeches selected and criteria for selection
  - Identification of thematic areas or discursive strands, as well as possible discourse strand entanglements
3. Analysis of relevant discourse fragments
  - Institutional framework/context
  - Justification for the selection of fragments (text queries/relevance of context)
  - Performatives utterances
4. Ideological statements based on contents
  - What understanding of the relationship between oil and the state do the speeches and interviews convey?

- What understanding of the relationship between oil and urban space do the speeches convey?
- What understanding of the relationship between culture and Petro-socialism do the speeches and interviews convey?

Summary: main statements, localisation of the speeches in the discourse strand, and its relation with the theoretical frames of this project: Bureaucratic Power, State Space and Culture-as-mineral-deposit.

In sum, Critical Discourse Analysis of public speeches of government officials and interviews of elites will be used to elucidate the discursive strands that run across the collective meanings and ideologies that inform the conceptualisation of space, which manifests in the social practices of Bureaucratic Power that shape the formation of PDVSA's State Space and the Absolute and Relative Representations of Space. These discourse strands also inform the Relative Spaces of Representation enacted in the adverts, made evident in chapter six through the use of Visual Semiotics.

### *Visual Semiotics*

This section describes the two approaches to visual semiotics this thesis deploys to analyse the 23 adverts that compose the campaign '*Transformamos el petróleo en un recurso renovable para ti?*': Charles S. Peirce's semiosis and Roland Barthes' Mythologies.

Semiotics, simply defined, is the study of signs (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.320). Signs always represent something; they are in place of something else, the object, to create meaning. A sign does not function as a sign until it is taken as sign of that object. For a sign to exist it must be interpreted; the interpretation of signs is what allows us to know the world. Whilst General Semiotics studies 'sign systems, and communicative processes in general' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.298), the specific contexts in which signs are used is the focus of Applied Semiotics, of which Visual Semiotics is a branch. Visual Semiotics do not necessarily encompass all non-verbal communication, geometry, writing, or any manifestation we could label as 'visually communicated signs'; the topics covered by Visual Semiotics are pictures, drawings, paintings, photographs, films, posters, diagrams, logograms, and maps (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.298).

Words do not depend on images to be understood, but the meaning of an image can change depending on the words that accompany it. However, pictures 'are superior to verbal

communication when spatial configurations have to be represented' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.300). In visual semiotics 'that which "stands to somebody for something in some respect"' is the image (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.301). The processing of information also differs between words and pictures, as we are able to process more visual than verbal information; nonetheless, there is a complementary relationship between verbal and visual data in their 'semiotic potential':

'The superiority of pictures as a medium for the representation of the visible and imaginable world is counterbalanced by the superiority of language for representing the invisible world of sounds, smells, tastes, temperature, or logical relations.' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.300)

The meaning of an image can be transformed by the verbal comments attached to it, just as the meaning of verbal communication can be changed, enhanced or obscured by an image. Signs represent something; they are in place of something else called the object. There are three correlative elements that must be contemplated: the sign, its referential object and its meaning, which constitute the 'triadic model of the sign' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.301) such as the model of Semiosis proposed by Charles S. Peirce.

#### *Charles S. Peirce's Semiosis*

Charles S. Peirce's Semiosis is based on a triadic model, in which the sign is the unity composed by the object (what is represented), the representamen (how it is represented), and the interpretant (how it is interpreted), 'to qualify as sign, all three elements are essential' (Chandler 2007, p.29). The process of Semiosis is produced by the interaction between representamen, object and interpretant. The representamen (similar to Saussure's signifier) is considered by Peirce as a semiotic 'first' associated with a semiotic 'second', the object that is being represented by the sign: 'the object of the visual sign is something once seen, experienced, or imagined'; the association between sign and object lead to a semiotic 'third', the interpretant (similar to Saussure's signified) which is the 'mental or behavioural interpretation of the sign' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.302). The representamen mediates between the object and the interpretant; it is, in a sense, the lens through which we view the object. The interpretant must not to be confused with the interpreter; the interpretant is produced by the relation between the object and the sign. The interpretant of a visual sign is the idea, action, or reaction that is evoked by the sign (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.302).

This thesis uses Peirce's approach for its contextuality, his semiosis takes into account the context in which signs are produced and interpreted, defining the sign by its effect on the interpretant:

'Reading pictures is a semiotic process (a process of semiosis). Images are signs that do not only have meanings but also create meanings. The meanings they have are related to the objects of the visual signs; the meaning they create to their interpretants.' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.312)

The three elements are necessary for Semiosis to take place. The representamen, the object and the interpretant are functional, rather than ontological terms for Peirce; he was interested not on what signs are but on what they do as signs to establish the point of view for interpretation. Peirce does not 'postulate the existence of the object, the object could be fictitious'; in this sense, the distinction between object and interpretant is 'not one between something material and something mental' since the three elements of the visual sign can be 'mental as well as material' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.302). It is a matter of sequence in the semiotic process. In sum, the representamen is the form the sign takes, which can be mental or material; the object is that to which the representamen refers, and the interpretant is the sense made of the sign in the process of signification. For the remaining of this thesis, and for ease of understanding, Peirce's representamen will be referred to as 'sign-vehicle'.

Peirce developed a sophisticated sub-classification of signs. This thesis utilises his most fundamental sign triad: icon, index and symbol, a classification based on the relation of the sign-vehicle with the interpretant. A sign is an icon when it 'is similar to its object' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.302), it physically resembles or imitate the object; however, an icon does not 'necessarily refer to real objects', if it does, it is an index. A sign is an index when it has an existential relation with the object, when it is affected by the object, 'they are connected with their objects by a natural cause or a spatial or temporal contiguity' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.303), indexes always reference their object. Photographs are considered both iconic and indexical signs:

'Passport photos are indexical signs; they serve to identify their owners. In fact, all photos are indices, because one of the characteristics of some indices is that they are connected with their objects by a natural cause or a spatial or temporal contiguity. Photographs, despite their similarity with their objects, are indexical signs for two reasons: first, they are produced by the physical cause of a light ray projection on a film;

second, they serve to identify the object which they depict. The indexicality of the photo does not exclude or contradict its iconicity; the latter is included in the former.’ (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.303)

A sign is a symbol when the relationship is arbitrary or strictly conventional, meaning that this relationship has been ‘agreed’ upon and learned; for example, language in general is symbolic, and so are numbers, national flags or traffic lights. A symbol is not a physical entity, is a concept, a general rule; a symbol is made up of icons and indexes, all indexes have iconic aspects, the icon being the simplest sign unit.

In the context of this thesis, chapter six approaches PDVSA La Estancia’s adverts as fully formed signs, dissected to its smallest units of meaning using Peirce’s triadic model. The point of departure for the semiotic analysis is a material sign-vehicle: the advert. The analysis will focus on what are considered the two main features of the composition in terms of meaning: the photographic image and the verbal text. The photographic image depicts the interaction of two fundamental features: a giant oil worker and the material space of the city. The verbal text communicates the message conveyed (the interpretant) by this visual interaction. The advert, as a sign unit, will be analysed as a composite of the city space, the giant oil worker, and the verbal text. The analysis of the visual elements of the PDVSA La Estancia adverts provide the means to determine what it is exactly that is being represented, and what is the effect, or intended interpretant of the campaign.

#### *Roland Barthes Mythologies*

To further explore the signification of the PDVSA La Estancia adverts, the visual semiotic analysis of the adverts also draws on Barthes’ theory of Myths. Roland Barthes was a pioneer in the semiotic study of images, with works focused on photography such as *The Photographic Message* (1961) and *The Rhetoric of the Image* (1964). This section focuses on *Mythologies* (1957), an earlier and still influential work that developed his theory of the myth through the analysis of French adverts.

For Barthes, Myth is a type of speech, ‘a system of communication, that it is a message’, it is not a concept or an idea, it is a concrete entity, a form, a ‘mode of signification’ defined not by its literal sense but by its intention than (1993, pp.109, 124); in his sense, myth is a type of speech ‘chosen by history: it cannot possibly evolve from the “nature” of things’ (Barthes 1993, p.110). For Barthes, everything can be a myth as long as ‘it is conveyed by a discourse’, it is not confined

to the written word or oral, all visual representation mediums such as cinema, photography, reporting, and advertising can serve as a vehicle for mythical speech:

‘we are no longer dealing here with a theoretical mode of representation: we are dealing with *this* particular image, which is given for *this* particular signification. Mythical speech is made of a material which has *already* been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them whilst discounting their substance’ (Barthes 1993, p.110)

Barthes proposed Myth as a semiological system, as ‘one fragment of this vast science of signs which Saussure postulated some forty years ago under the name *semiology*’ (1993, p.111).

Mythology is part of semiology, as a formal science, and of ideology, as an historical science. Mythology derives from Saussure’s signifier (carrier of meaning), signified (mental concept of the meaning) and sign (associative total of signifier and signified); for Barthes there are functional implications between the three, there is no arbitrariness, on the plane of myth the signifier is the form, the signified is the concept, and the sign is the signification (Barthes 1993, p.114). The signifier ‘already postulates a reading’, a signification is already built and the meaning complete, when the signifier becomes form ‘the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains’ (Barthes 1993, p.117). Mythical signification is always motivated; it is never arbitrary as ‘there is no myth without motivated form’ (Barthes 1993, p.126). Signification always contains some analogy, it ‘plays on the analogy between meaning and form’, an analogy that is supplied to the form by history (Barthes 1993, p.126).

The concept it’s not an abstract element, through it ‘a new history is implanted in the myth’ and the mythical concept is supposed to be appropriated (Barthes 1993, p.119). The concept can take a myriad of forms, making the concept poorer than Saussure’s signifier as it ‘does nothing but re-present itself’ (Barthes 1993, p.120) but this multiplication is what allows the myth to be deciphered: ‘it is the insistence of a kind of behavior which reveals its intention’ (Barthes 1993, p.120). The signification or the association of the form and the concept is the myth itself: ‘*myth hides nothing*: its function is to distort, not to make disappear’ (Barthes 1993, p.121). Furthermore, the presence of the form is spatial, ‘the elements of the form are related as to place and proximity’, whilst the concept appears in a more abstract manner as ‘hazy’ knowledge it is united to the myth by a relation of deformation as in myth the concept distorts the meaning by, for example, depriving it from its history (Barthes 1993, p.122).

Myth does not hide, lie, confess or flaunt, it distorts, it is an inflexion of the concept, and through this inflexion rather than revealing or dissolving it, naturalises it: 'we reach the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature' (Barthes 1993, p.129). Therefore myth is read as a reason, never as a motive, it aims to cause an immediate impression 'experienced as innocent speech not because its intentions are hidden –if they were hidden they would not be efficacious- but because they are naturalized' as factual (Barthes 1993, pp.130–131). This factualness characterises myth as 'depoliticized speech' (political understood in its deeper meaning as the power humans have in making their own world); by transforming history into nature contingency appears eternal, things lose their historical quality and their memory: 'Myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it things lose the memory that they once were made' (Barthes 1993, p.142).

The context in which myth flourishes is that of the capitalist bourgeois society (Barthes 1993, pp.137–138), for in bourgeois culture according to Barthes 'there is neither proletarian culture nor proletarian morality, there is no proletarian art; ideologically, all that is not bourgeois is obliged to borrow from the bourgeoisie' (1993, p.139). Therefore revolutionary language is not mythical because by definition, revolution excludes myth for it is meant to reveal 'the political load of the world', the revolution aims to make the world and be absorbed in the making of the world; it is political in all its senses, unlike myth which 'is initially political and finally natural' (Barthes 1993, pp.143–146). Barthes's Myth provides the analytical framework to characterise the language of the verbal text of the adverts as mythical speech. The text is dissected in chapter six to argue that the adverts' construction of mythical speech is abolishing the history of the public art and public spaces depicted, whilst aiming to naturalise the giant oil workers as agents of what is in essence a paradoxical proposition: the transformation of oil into a 'renewable resource'. Chapter six demonstrates that the myth of 'renewable oil' coalesces oil, culture and the city into one entity through the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, proposed by this thesis as an extension of George Yudice's expediency of culture as a resource (2003).

In sum, Peirce's Semiosis is to be used to focus on the analysis of the visual component of the advert and the verbal text, Barthes' semiotics will be integrated into the analysis of the verbal text to demonstrate the discursive construction of the myth of 'renewable oil' within the adverts which informs the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit.

## *Summary*

This chapter presented an overview of the research design, data collection, analysis methods and ethical challenges of this thesis. It described how the research design is informed by the case study approach, which provides the advantage of providing a concrete focal point to draw broader conclusions on the relationship between the state, oil wealth, space and culture in Venezuela. The focus on PDVSA La Estancia as a case study functions as a gateway to explore Petrosocialism from a spatial and cultural perspective. It also developed a detailed description of the geographical, political and institutional settings of the research, as well as a detailed account of the context under which the fieldwork was conducted. The political setting proved particularly challenging, raising unanticipated ethical considerations, especially in the process of collecting data through semi-structured interviews to elites in the midst of social turmoil and extreme political polarisation. The chapter then proceeded to describe the two methods of data collection employed: semi-structured interviews and documentary research. The data is analysed using a mix of two qualitative methodological approaches, Critical Discourse Analysis and Visual Semiotics, employed to explore the discursive relations between State Space, Bureaucratic Power and culture to examine the notions of PDVSA's State Space (chapter four), the myth 'renewable oil' (chapters five and six) and the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit (chapter six).

Chapter one laid out the theoretical foundations of this thesis through a review of the relevant literature pertaining to space, rentier state theory, city and culture. The following chapter opens the substantive material of this thesis. Chapter three reviews the formation of the modern state in Venezuela. It was shaped in the twentieth century by the emergence of the oil industry and the establishment of foreign oil corporations, transforming itself into what Fernando Coronil (1997) has defined as the Magical State personified as a magnanimous sorcerer in the figure of the president, able to enact illusions of instantaneous modernity and progress through spectacular projects of infrastructure. The chapter establishes how oil became akin to modernity and culture in Venezuela, mediating the relationship between citizens and the state, and how in the wake of an oil crash, the rise of Hugo Chávez to power coincided with a steep rise in oil prices that allowed him to embody a New Magical State that concentrates the Bureaucratic Powers of the state in his persona, and in the process transformed the state-owned oil company PDVSA into the engine of revolutionary change, and an instrument of Petrosocialism, in order to build the Socialist State.

## Chapter three: from Rentier Republic to the New Magical State

The consolidation of state formation, modernisation and oil production in Venezuela as well as the state's modernising efforts were concentrated on the main urban centres, predominantly in the capital, broadly remaining the domain of elites. The transformation of the built environment through strategies of modernisation did not cascade into all sectors of Venezuelan society, oil created an inflated economy that fostered an illusion of progress and modernity promoted from the state, manifested more clearly in Caracas' rapid urbanisation.

Oil, the state and modernisation are interdependent phenomena in Venezuela, but tend to be predominantly studied within the disciplines of economy and politics; when reference is made to culture or urban development they are regarded as direct investment of the oil wealth made available by the state to private enterprise and altruistic elites. Up until late 1980s Venezuela was considered an exceptional case in the region, regarded as the most stable democracy and the most developed and wealthiest country in Latin America, all thanks to its oil industry. To unpack the intersections between oil and culture in Venezuela it is crucial to understand them as inseparable from the oil-based bureaucratic power of the state and its role in shaping territory and urban space. One of the key topics this thesis examines is the implications for culture and urban space in the era of Petrosocialism.

This chapter develops in three parts. Part one contextualises state formation in Venezuela within the postcolonial process of the emergence of the Latin American nation states in the nineteenth and twentieth century. It also addresses the enduring contradictions generated by a process of modernisation led by elites that came accompanied by the perpetuation of the colonial structure that preserved their economic and political power. Part two explores the formation of the Venezuelan Petrostate from the period of post-independence to the arrival of the oil industry, and the emergence of what Venezuelan anthropologist Fernando Coronil has defined as the Magical State. Finally, part three provides a discussion about the historical context of the intersections between oil and culture in Venezuela, exploring in particular the slogan 'sowing oil', coined by Arturo Uslar Pietri in 1936, which runs across historical narratives around oil wealth.

### *Post-colonial Bureaucratisation and Modernity in Latin America*

Latin American Spanish colonies achieved independence in the nineteenth century, much earlier than many colonies in the global peripheries. According to Heinz Sonntag (1990, p.405),

these newly emerging republics adopted the institutions and constitutions of the most advanced models of Capitalist State in Europe. Intellectuals and elites involved in shaping the new nations imported European ideas and transplanted them in order to shape new state structures modelled after the European experience. He affirms the path towards the consolidation of such young states was difficult because the recently independent nations lacked the internal socio-economic foundations that characterised the development of capitalist states in Europe. Latin American nations inherited rigid class structures and institutionalised relations of domination from the colonial period, as well as heavily dependent economies (Silva Michelena 1971, p.389) as the colonies were not seen as potential markets but merely as sources of wealth extraction.

Colonial production was exclusively export oriented; raw materials such as silver, gold, coal and a variety of agricultural goods were shipped directly to the metropolis, and any surplus 'if not conspicuously consumed, was reinvested in activities related to the export economy' (Silva Michelena 1971, p.389). The colonial policies of Spain were designed to consolidate its monopoly over trade across the continent, secure dependence on the metropolis, and keep a tight grip on political rule by preventing its colonies from developing any national identity or independent trade. Spain implemented the policy of exclusively appointing Spaniards to the higher ranks in political positions, leaving the minor political offices of the city open to *criollos* (Spaniards born in America); this policy effectively prevented *criollos* from influencing local politics or developing associations of their own for centuries (Silva Michelena 1971, p.390).

However, these continental policies did not mean that their effects were even among the colonies or that it prevented them from developing economically and politically. On the contrary, major differences emerged depending on the 'natural and labour resources' available in each colony (Silva Michelena 1971, p.390). Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia, who had gold and silver mines and a large indigenous labour force available, developed first; these colonies became 'the political centres of the overseas territories' (Silva Michelena 1971, p.390). The rest of the colonies devoted to the exploitation of 'exotic' tropical products, developed an economy of *haciendas* (plantations). The predominance of the hacienda economy in most colonies has been interpreted as the implementation of a feudal mode of production and social organisation, which Michelena affirms is a misconception, considering the situation of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It is more accurate to describe the modes of production in Spanish America as heterogeneous, where a diverse set of relations of feudal and mercantile production coexisted, with one key feature in common: the overexploitation of the labour force (Silva Michelena 1971, p.390). The emphasis on satisfying the needs of the metropolis over the internal needs of the

colonies fostered the formation of a particular racial class structure concentrated in regional enclaves that had more contact with the metropolis than with each other.

The solidity social, political and economic structure of the colonies began to weaken in the nineteenth century due to a concurrence of internal and external factors. Internally, increasing tensions between *criollo* landowners and Spanish merchants, the ambitions of *mestizos* and frequent revolts by Indians and slaves marked the progressive dissolution of the colonial structure (Silva Michelena 1971, p.391). Externally, British and Dutch contraband and piracy undermined Spanish control over its colonies, crippled by Napoleon's occupation of Spain. This environment made *criollos* all the more receptive to the ideas that had emerged from American Independence and the French Revolution, which helped launch the wars of independence.

Although the wars resulted in the political independence of the Latin American nations from Spain (Brazil's independence from Portugal and its postcolonial statehood followed a very different path), these wars were not catalysts for the development of an internal centralised bureaucracy. Whilst war has been considered the key mechanism of bureaucratic centralisation in Europe, it was not the only way:

‘Depending on contexts, war can even hinder bureaucratization. Indeed, various other factors are more important than war, including elite ideologies, administrative models, religious doctrines, and elite politics. For states in developing countries that were once colonies, a long-standing debate continues between those who attribute the presence or absence of centralized bureaucracies to colonialism and those who offer alternative explanations.’ (Vu 2010, pp.151–152)

The wars of independence in Latin America were too short and isolated to have any cumulative impact on bureaucratisation (Vu 2010, pp.153–154). Another obstacle was Latin America's vast territory that made bureaucratisation beyond the main cities extremely costly for their poor and dependent economies. For the emerging nations, state building could not derive solely from territorial control and bureaucracy; ideas of administration, rights and rituals of rule played a much more important role (Vu 2010, p.165). Nonetheless, the post-colonial period was predominantly defined by the pursuit of modernity with the adoption of modern political and economic techniques. But the modernity experienced in Latin America was peculiar, as it combined both ‘novel discourses’ as well as ‘inherited structures’ from the colonial rule (Roldán Vera & Caruso 2007, pp.13–14). Vera and Caruso highlight the role of Liberalism in Latin American nation-building, elites attributed its set of ideas with the ‘capacity to generate change,

to bring about positive improvement in a society that was trying hard to “catch up” with the times’ (Roldán Vera & Caruso 2007, pp.9–10). The need to ‘catch up’ with the times is a theme that would run across national state projects in twentieth century, particularly in Venezuela, a predominantly agrarian country that upon the discovery of oil fields and the development of the oil industry at the turn of the century, had access to an unprecedented source of wealth which determined its swift transformation into an oil rentier economy and an ever more powerful state. But it also created an ambivalent relationship with oil, regarded as a carrier of modernity and predator of national sovereignty and cultures. This section sketches the historical context of post-independence state formation in Venezuela in relation to the Latin American region, as they share a common colonial past but with divergent paths among its emergent nations.

The process of nation-building and state formation across Latin America developed unevenly, according to the peculiarities of each former colony. Those countries that inherited a consolidated political and economic colonial structure found them difficult to overcome, the colonies that had the most prosperous societies and the most integrated state-church apparatus ‘were not the first to consolidate post-colonial state power’ (Topik 2002, p.112). The path towards statehood for colonial viceroalties like Mexico and Peru faced more obstacles than minor colonies such as Venezuela, not only because of their consolidated colonial apparatus, but more importantly for their relationship with the world economy that determined that ‘state capacity were built from without, slowly reaching into the interior, helping to build a nation as well as a polity’ (Sonntag 1990, p.405).

The development of an effective bureaucratic apparatus would be crucial to the rest of the continent as ‘modern centralized bureaucracy is perhaps the most important institution in the structure of any state’ (Vu 2010, pp.151–152). But it can hardly be said that Latin American states had achieved complete control over their territories; the history of late nineteenth up until mid-twentieth century accounts for the prevalence of *caudillismo*, a system in which regional charismatic strongmen used their own armed militias to overthrow government and take over power, this severely undermined the constitution of state power, as was the case of Venezuela.

Modern institutions struggled to take root in Latin America because they were incompatible with the colonial legacy, which generated a pessimistic view among elites on whether modernity could find fertile ground (Ortiz 2002, pp.252–253). Renato Ortiz (2002) and Tomás Straka (2006) address this incompatibility by speaking of a ‘modern tradition’ in Latin America. For Ortiz, tradition ‘is everything that is inserted in daily culture’ (2002, p.258), a concept that is accepting of modernity no longer seen as a radical exclusion of the past, just as tradition and past are no

longer identified with the exclusion of the new. Similarly, Venezuelan historian Tomás Straka speaks of a *modernidad criolla* that emerged around the eighteenth century along with the consolidation of the *criollo* elite, among which the ideas of the Enlightenment circulated. *Criollos* thought of themselves as Europeans, they sought to be acknowledged as ‘second Europeans’ building a Young Europe in America (Straka 2006, p.23) rather than ‘second-class Europeans’. *Modernidad criolla* was Eurocentric; its discourse shaped by the European project of modernity. The national project put forward by the *criollos* also implied the incorporation of their non-western subordinates -blacks, Indians and *mestizos*, regarded as barbaric enemies of civilisation- and the rest of the territory to their own modern logic and order (Straka 2006, p.39). Changes came in modern form -as in ‘icons of progress’- but would transform neither institutions nor society so as not to challenge the colonial foundations of the political and economic power of *criollo* elites (Straka 2006, p.17). Modernity was conceived as the final stage in the transit towards complete westernisation (Straka 2006). According to Straka, the national modern project of the *criollos* was defined by the following three characteristics:

‘first, it is a continuity of the conqueror in its imposition of Western order on the New World; second, through the incorporation of subordinates into their logic, subordinates are creolized which in the course of the following two centuries would produce enough hybridizations for something completely new to emerge (...), and third, it is intertwined with all European and that, since the eighteenth century, is the modern corollary, in consequence its tradition, in always to assume the novelties coming from Europe, it is enforced: it turns into the tradition of modernity.’ (Straka 2006)

The contradictions between *modernidad criolla* and the processes of modernisation are noted by Nestor García Canclini (1989b, p.42), he argues that whilst the ‘second Europeans’ of the nineteenth century and the new economic and political elites of the twentieth century wished to modernise their nations based on the European modern project, the discrepancies between modernity and modernisation were instrumental in preserving their status as dominant classes. The oligarchies of the turn of the century did not constitute States, they brought order to some areas of society, which created uneven and fragmentary development (García Canclini 1989b). By late twentieth century Latin America had become a continent where ‘traditions have not yet disappeared and modernity has not completely arrived’ (García Canclini 1989b, p.1). In the particular case of Venezuela, it wasn’t until the rise of the oil industry in early twentieth century that Venezuela acquired the economic and political resources to consolidate as a modern state with a centralised bureaucracy.

The manner in which Venezuela dealt with the rise of the oil industry is tantamount to how it dealt with modernity (Pérez Schael 1993, p.39). Venezuela confronted modernity and the oil industry in archaic terms; instead of devising new legal frameworks, decisions were based on the traditions inherited from Spanish colonial rule. The emerging Venezuelan state declared itself the heir of the rights of the Spanish Crown: ecclesiastic patronage, property over vacant lands and ownership over all mines (Pérez Schael 1993, p.39); the property of the Sovereign derived from the principle that what belonged to no one must belong to the King. After independence, the King was substituted by the new republic that inherited all his rights, according to the terms sanctioned by Simón Bolívar in his 1829 Quito Decree -which validated the *Ordenanzas de la Nueva España* (Ordinances of New Spain) of 1783- until new mining laws were created.

However, the subsequent codes of mining and the new constitutions created up until 1936 maintained in essence the same principle established by Simón Bolívar (Pérez Schael 1993, p.40). The wealth extracted directly from the subsoil in the form of rent from the mines became an affirmation of sovereignty as the rent sanctioned the recognition of the Nation's authority analogous to the King's. The difference is that the Nation does not have the personal incarnation of majesty of a king, it acts through the state as a mediator between national sovereignty and citizens (Pérez Schael 1993, p.40). The principle of sovereignty is manifested exclusively in the power to grant property rights and administer the rent.

Thus, Venezuela did not become a rentier state with the rise of the oil industry, it was born a rentier state from the moment it became a republic: 'rentierism does not derive from petroleum, on the contrary, the traditional legislation of mining was the instrument used to codify the specificity and complexity of oil, until it was converted into a prisoner of the rent' (Pérez Schael 1993, p.41). As the concept of sovereignty was built around the notion of property, the rent annulled oil's materiality as a mineral. Furthermore, since Venezuela did not have the resources or the capacity to exploit nor produce oil products, revenue would come in the form of concessions and royalties. By losing its mineral quality oil would be reduced to the 'fetish' of rent money that flows from the soil directly to the state's coffers: oil mattered as money and not as a complex technological reality (Pérez Schael 1993, p.94). The intellectual class attributed an ephemeral quality to oil because unlike agriculture, the wealth produced relied on money and not on the 'material'; the discussions around oil were centred on issues of sovereignty and how to position oneself in regards to the territory oil wealth was extracted from: a nationalist or a traitor

(Pérez Schael 1993, p.95). Hence, for the Venezuelan state, the only matter to resolve was where, how and to who distribute the rent money, not to 'produce' the material.

What is helpful about the discussion above is that it sets off the background to examine PDVSA La Estancia's adoption of farming language to refer to oil and culture, by stating that the institution is 'oil that harvests culture' (see chapter five). By discursively equating oil with agriculture there is a metaphorical attempt to provide the same permanent and cyclical attributes of farming to oil extraction, to take it back to nature and create the illusion that oil is inexhaustible (chapter five). On the other hand, culture is equated to oil as a mineral deposit and as the 'fruit' of 'sowing oil', through the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit oil regains the material quality it lost by been regarded as abstract flows of rent money (chapter six). This thesis builds on the above discussion to expand on George Yudice's expediency of culture as a resource to define PDVSA La Estancia's conceptualisation and instrumentalisation of culture-as-mineral-deposit, in which the oil company turns to culture as a mineral resource, in literal and metaphorical terms. The following section provides a detailed discussion of the relationship between oil, culture and modernity in Venezuela, informed by the enduring narrative of 'sowing oil', a slogan coined by Venezuelan intellectual Arturo Uslar Pietri in 1936, that colludes farming and mining language to indicate how oil wealth should be invested.

### *Sowing Oil: Modernity and Culture in Venezuela*

This section opens with García-Canclini's assessment that culture in Latin America is no longer the exclusive realm of the *letrados* (intellectual urban elites); culture concerns economists, sociologists, workers unions and social movements but it continues to be subservient to development and modernisation (1989c, pp.83–84). The unsatisfactory advancement of contemporary economic models in the region had forced states to rethink culture as a key element in articulating private and public interests in order to create less unequal societies. However, relating back to the discussion in the previous section, culture in Latin America is still broadly understood in terms of two opposite but inseparable forces: tradition and modernity. This opposition determines the role and sphere of influence of the state and the private sector over national, and to an extent, regional cultural policies.

Throughout nineteenth century fine arts and literature had played a crucial role in the development of the national identity of Latin American nations through forms of 'official' culture sanctioned by the state to develop a 'common symbolic universe' (Varela 2001, p.26). In

the first half of the twentieth century states became paternalistic by assuming the role of the main provider for society. Many cultural institutions, national museums, orchestras, theatres and archives were created and funded by the state. This steady process saw its first crisis in the 1980s, when the region suffered political and economic collapses.

The economic miracle produced by the military regimes of Argentina and Chile and the oil boom of the 1970s enjoyed by Mexico and Venezuela, accelerated the continent's transformation from agrarian to heavily urbanised societies; mass migration from the countryside to the main cities deepened social inequalities: high levels of mass unemployment, the growth of an informal economy, homelessness, squatting, starvation, urban violence, police repression and the increase of repressive surveillance as well as the 'bunkerization' of the upper classes (Yúdice et al. 1992, p.viii). The rapid process of development and industrialisation led by the state and driven by deep foreign debt came to a halt in early 1980s when Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela declared default that brought subsequent interventions by the IMF and the World Bank. The implementation of neoliberal economic reforms came accompanied by inflation and even hyperinflation, hyper-urbanisation, privatisation, social unrest and increased emigration.

The first casualty of these economic shocks was the cultural sector; severe cuts in budgets or outright elimination of programs or institutions left arts organisations, accustomed to state financial support, to compete for funding from the private sector (Martín-Barbero 2000, pp.36–37; Varela 2001, p.28). The fall of dictatorial regimes and the increased liberalisation of trade in the 1990s did not bring the expected economic growth and reduction of social inequalities; the region's development was very uneven, with some nations able to stabilise their economies through industrialisation and foreign investment, like Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, whilst others like Venezuela, had deteriorated as oil prices failed to recover (Varela 2001, p.28). This affected investment in culture. Countries where the economy thrived saw the emergence of large numbers of private cultural entrepreneurs whilst in those that did not, the cultural sector largely depended on government support. However, due to the deep economic crisis brought by the neoliberal reforms, government funding was mostly available to 'official' culture, leaving most cultural organisations to fend for alternative sources of funding (Varela 2001, p.28). Given that there is a strong belief in Latin America that it is the state's exclusive responsibility to protect and administer all forms of cultural traditions and heritage (García Canclini 1989c, p.87; García Canclini 1989a, pp.182–183), cultural modernity is predominantly the realm of private enterprise. Tradition and heritage grant the state symbolic legitimacy as the representative of national history, whilst cultural modernity, largely the realm of elites, grants private enterprises a

symbolic image of philanthropy and social solidarity. Traditions have been regarded by the elites as an obstacle to development and modernisation (García Canclini 1989c, pp.85–86), hence the resulting artificial separation of culture between the state and the private sector, and the difficulty of extending state support towards non-traditional cultural manifestations and technological innovation. Although the elitist conception of culture has been expanded to include traditional cultural productions such as indigenous crafts, dances, and literature, it has been extremely difficult for the state to include modernity and innovation into its areas of competence.

Nonetheless, this separation between cultural tradition and modernity has not been so marked in Venezuela. The Venezuelan Petrostate and foreign oil corporations have been patrons of culture, traditions and modernity. But as the Bolivarian Revolution sought to construct a narrower definition of culture, it privileged tradition and folklore over cultural modernity, regarded by the revolution as foreign and elitist (Kozak Rovero 2015, p.47). This thesis argues that PDVSA effectively bridges the separation of culture between state and private sector through PDVSA LA Estancia's work. The remaining paragraphs of this chapter explore the intersections between oil and culture in Venezuela by engaging in a critical discussion of Venezuelan anthropologist Rodolfo Quintero's seminal text from 1968, *The Culture of Oil: essay on the life styles of social groups in Venezuela*, the first of its nature to address oil in cultural terms.

Venezuela's identity as a nation is closely entangled with oil; as the Petrostate engaged with modernity and its power increased, Venezuelan society learned to see itself as an oil nation and to view the state as the single representative of a population unified by oil (Coronil 1997, p.84). Caracas swiftly became the showcase of the state's achievements of progress and modernity. When foreign oil companies began to establish in Venezuela in early twentieth century, the material effects of oil wealth were not felt immediately on the areas surrounding oil drills and refineries, they materialised first in the remote oil camps and fenced residential quarters built by foreign oil corporations, as enclaves of modernity frequently surrounded by poverty (González Casas & Marín Castañeda 2003, p.381). The iron fences built to isolate the oil camps allowed poor neighbouring communities to peek into the cultural modernity brought by foreign capital: technology, urban planning, architecture, corporate culture and lifestyle.

Rodolfo Quintero (2011), a Venezuelan Marxist anthropologist and former oil camp dweller wrote in 1968 an essay titled *La cultura del petróleo: ensayo sobre estilos de vida de grupos sociales en Venezuela* (*The Culture of Oil: essay on the life styles of social groups in Venezuela*), recently reedited by the Venezuelan Central Bank. Quintero defined the 'culture of oil' as a culture of conquest, a foreign force with its own its own technology, instruments, inventions, equipment as

well as non-material devices such as language, art and science that create social and psychological effects wherever it establishes; he claimed it deteriorated local cultures (2011, pp.19–20).

Quintero works with a very narrow definition of national culture as that which is rooted in the Indigenous.

According to Quintero, the way of life of the culture of oil is characterised by the exploitation of national oil wealth by monopolistic foreign companies. Venezuela, an underdeveloped country, was at a disadvantage in the face of the powerful colonising forces of North American oil corporations. He viewed the arrival of oil as a second wave of colonisation, the oil tower substituted the wooden plough brought by the Spanish conquest (2011, p.24); he demonises the United States, oil wealth, rapid urbanisation and bureaucratic and technological progress as predators and destroyers of national culture. Quintero divided the contemporary history of Venezuela into two main periods: a pre-oil era and the culture of oil era (2011, p.25), materialised in new urban developments: the oil camp and the oil city.

The oil camps built by foreign oil corporations such as Creole, Shell and Mobil transferred modern capitalist ways of building and living to Venezuela. The construction of oil camps next to small towns and villages in the interior lands of Venezuela profoundly changed their economic, cultural and social landscapes. The oil camp disturbed the life of the human groups of surrounding local communities. He characterises the oil camp as a ‘colonial institution’ (2011, p.26) governed by a foreign company located in a remote foreign metropolis; he views the oil camp as an instrument of foreign capitalists to create and maintain a rigid class structure of exploiters and exploited hierarchically sustained by managers and administrators. The oil camp’s accumulation of capital, workforce and land overpowered the much weaker regional economies, many communities abandoned agriculture altogether to become a reserve of low skilled work force economically dependent on the oil camp (Quintero 2011, p.26).

With the oil camps, a new social organisation emerged comprised of capitalist bureaucrats - foreigners and nationals- who became the representatives of the ‘culture of oil’. Venezuelan born and raised oil bureaucrats are labelled by Quintero as ‘Shell Men’ or ‘Creole Men’ (2011, p.40) who are anti-national men who live by and for the oil companies, who think and live like foreigners with the habits, customs and the consumption of products brought from the United States. These assimilated ‘Shell Men’ and ‘Creole Men’ considered the lifestyle copied from the United States an expression of progress and modernity, viewing themselves as culturally superior to the locals and their ‘primitive’ ways (Quintero 2011, p.40). But Venezuela was not particularly more backward or advanced than other countries in the region, what Quintero highlights is an

enduring narrative that has shaped the discourse about Venezuela's backwardness in the 'pre-oil era' in comparison to the sleek modernity displayed by the oil camp (Tinker Salas 2014, p.64).

Since the oil camp remained a self-contained entity of the modernity of oil capitalism, oil cities developed around their fringes, some emerging anew whilst others grew out of small villages. In contrast to the oil camp, an oil city was improvised and monotonous, it lacked public services and institutions that fostered an active urban life (Quintero 2011, pp.46–48, 55). Neither national nor regional governments invested on their infrastructure even though the 1961 census revealed that approximately a quarter of the national population lived in these oil cities (Quintero 2011, p.51); improvements such as paved streets, churches and schools were built by the foreign oil companies. For these reason, Quintero argued, an oil city could not produce art, science or any form of intellectual culture as all that prevailed was the business and the culture of oil (2011, p.55). This notion is relevant for this thesis, because whilst Quintero refers to the pre-nationalisation oil industry, he regards the 'culture of oil' and the spaces it produces as sterile, incapable of art, science or any form of intellectual or cultural production. Chapters five and six examine how within the logic of Petrosocialism, PDVSA La Estancia is challenging this notion, by conceptualising the material space of the city as an oil field and discursively construing what this thesis proposes as the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, which expands on Yúdice's expediency of culture as a resource (2003). Therefore the Relative Spaces of Representation of the oil city visually re-produced in the adverts combined with PDVSA La Estancia's discursive construction of 'oil that harvests culture' overcome Quintero's contention against the oil city.

The new Constitution of 1961, drafted three years after the overthrow of dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez, changed the clauses of oil concessions; new ones needed the authorisation of both chambers of Congress whilst existing ones had to be handed over to the government. Foreign oil corporations decided to reduce investment, retreat from the oil camps, and repatriate many of their executives which were ominous for the formerly prosperous oil-camp dependent oil cities. The gradual disappearance of the oil camps in the 1960s signified the deterioration of the livelihood of its inhabitants, who had accommodated their economic activities around the necessities of the foreign employees living at the camps.

Quintero's ideas reflect not just his ideological and political stance in the face of the development of the oil industry, but also a mindset shared by intellectuals throughout the twentieth century. Oil, beyond a source of energy or wealth, had become the 'symbol of a culture' that views oil as a demonic force (Pérez Schael 1993, p.9). During the first half of the twentieth century Uslar Pietri, Romulo Betancourt and other representatives of the state

explained the reality of oil by oscillating between two paradigms: neo-colonial imperialist domination and nationalism (Pérez Schael 1993, p.143). The modernity brought by oil was viewed under a moral light that construed oil as the destructive agent of nature and culture. In Venezuelan literary fiction, such as the novel *Mene*, the 'end of oil' is regarded as a happy ending for it allowed the 'blonde man' to leave and waters to be pure again (Pérez Schael 1993, p.147). And here lies another paradigm: a lingering nostalgia about a lost ideal agrarian past that created a discursive tension of simultaneously embracing and demonising oil's 'modernising magic powers', as it has created prosperity and poverty in the same degree. The two main figures in the construction of a public discourse around oil in the twentieth century are Arturo Uslar Pietri (1926-2001) and Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo (1903-1979), who represent antagonistic forms of understanding the relationship between oil, the state and development. Arturo Uslar Pietri coined the phrase 'sowing oil' (1936); it headlined the title of a newspaper article published in 1936. Uslar Pietri defended the idea of taking advantage of the knowledge, technology and financial power of foreign oil corporations, he saw great benefits in keeping the country open to foreign capital and to use this capital to invest in development and industrialisation, which is what he meant by 'sowing oil' (Uzcátegui 2010, pp.37–38). In contrast, Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonso, a staunch nationalist and the founding father of OPEC, advocated for the state's absolute sovereignty over its oil reserves since he regarded oil as the 'devil's excrement' (2011).

The Bolivarian Revolution has celebrated Uslar Pietri and appropriated his phrase for, among other things, its use of farming language. PDVSA's *Plan Siembra Petrolera* –Sowing Oil Plan– is a direct reference to Uslar Pietri, but as it will become clear throughout this thesis, there is a conceptual and symbolic contradiction in using it to name Hugo Chávez's nationalist and anti-imperialist development plan of PDVSA (Uzcátegui 2010, p.38). Uslar Pietri's phrase 'sowing oil' is at the centre of enduring conflicting views around oil, he used agrarian language as a didactic device to explain how oil should be invested, making direct reference to the land from where riches are extracted and not to oil as an immaterial and ephemeral source of wealth. Uslar Pietri would revisit and replay this phrase in public debate throughout the twentieth century in 1936, 1945, 1961, 1980, 1983, and 1990, claiming every time that oil had yet to be sown (Pérez Schael 1993, pp.199–205), proving that sowing oil had become an unachievable utopia. As the substantive chapters of this thesis illustrate, the use of farming language by Hugo Chávez's and PDVSA to refer to the activities of the oil industry (such as the national Sowing Oil Plan) underpins the enduring myth that oil can be 'sowed', suggesting a natural renewable farming cycle of sowing and harvesting the subsoil for oil, which informs the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit (Yúdice 2003) construed by PDVSA La Estancia discussed in detail in chapters

four and five. Chapter five demonstrates that PDVSA La Estancia seeks to prove that they have succeeded in sowing the oil where previous regimes had failed. Their General Manager's discourse defines their work as a 'way of sowing oil' thus achieving the 'utopia of the possible' presenting Petrosocialism as a utopian project that is making 'renewable oil' a 'reality'. Chapter six will expand on this discussion through a semiotic analysis of the adverts that construe culture as 'renewable oil'.

Caracas' infrastructures, in particular the public art and public spaces that concern this thesis, are a reflection of the state's material power, oil being crucial to the consolidation of such power. The influence of oil wealth in the consolidation of the state and urban modernisation in Venezuela is not just an outcome of capital investment. Changes in the *Ley de Hidrocarburos* (Law of Hydrocarbons) made by President Medina Angarita in 1943 consolidated the state as the owner of the subsoil as well as protector of the nation's oil and established that ten per cent of all oil extracted had to be refined locally. This required oil corporations to build refineries and undertake a massive transfer of technology and bureaucratic workforce, which made it necessary to set up corporate headquarters (Vicente 2003, p.394). Foreign oil companies such as Creole Petroleum Corporation, Royal Dutch Shell, Mobil and Atlantic settled their headquarters in Caracas, rather than by the centres of oil exploitation in the provinces. Creole's buildings were located in the neighbourhood of La Candelaria, an eastern extension of the colonial quarter to the east of the city centre. Shell built headquarters in San Bernardino, a recently built modern neighbourhood adjacent to La Candelaria designed by the French urbanist Maurice Rotival.

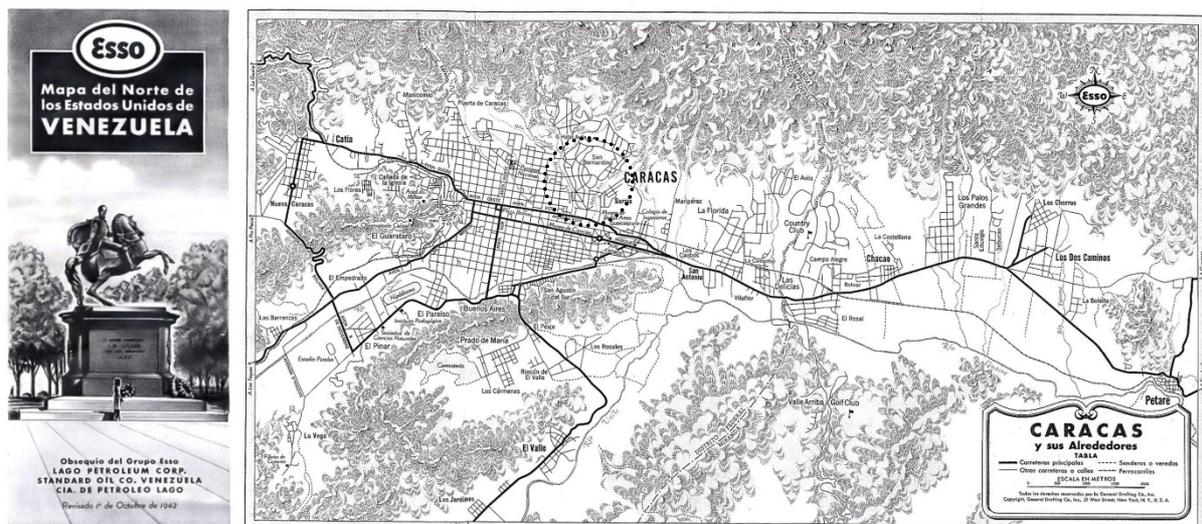


Illustration 2. ESSO map of Caracas, 1942. Dashed circle indicates the 'Oil District'

The settlement of foreign and local oil enterprises consolidated these neighbourhoods as an Oil District (now contained within Libertador municipality), from where modern practices in urban planning and architecture would spread to the rest of the city, and the country (Vicente 2003, pp.397–398). By the 1990s, the Oil District (Illustration 2) had transformed into the nation's political and financial centre. Currently, Libertador municipality concentrates many public buildings such as the headquarters of PDVSA, the Central Bank of Venezuela, the Federal Legislative Palace (National Assembly), the National Archives, many ministries, as well as notable modern buildings such as Parque Central Complex (which up until 2003 were the tallest skyscrapers in Latin America), the corporate towers of Mercantil Bank and BBVA Provincial Bank, and the ill fated Tower of David. Whilst the state used the oil riches to remodel itself as a modern institution, the modernisation of the urban landscape was, to great extent, the consequence of the settlement of oil corporations.

The emergence of an oil district in the capital, and the modern practices foreign corporations brought with them cannot be regarded as the exclusive consequence of flows of oil capital within the country. Tim Mitchell explains in *Carbon Democracy* that any study of oil has to address the 'process through which oil is produced and distributed' and not be restricted as the sole effect of oil money and 'its corrupting powers' (2011, p.5). The most evident transformations brought by oil capital to oil producing countries manifest in the building of infrastructures and negotiations between states and corporations to secure revenue and capital accumulation. As this thesis has explained, these negotiations generated particular 'ways of engineering political relations out of flows of money' in Venezuela, the cornerstone for the transformation of oil into 'large and unaccountable government incomes' (Mitchell, p. 5). As oil flows it is converted into 'energy, profits and political power' (Mitchell 2011, p.6).

Oil, seen predominantly in Venezuela as a flow of rent money disregards its material dimension as a substance extracted from the subsoil that requires massive financial investment in infrastructure and technology to be produced, transformed and commercialised. But this material substance also possesses an immaterial dimension, granting great political and financial powers to whoever has dominion over it. How these powers are exercised by the Venezuelan Petrostate will be the centre of the discussion of the next section.

## *The Magical State: Oil, Land and the Illusion of Modernity*

Venezuelan statecraft is inextricable from the development of the oil industry. The establishment of international oil corporations enabled the state to expand its jurisdiction beyond the private sector by creating a permanent dominance over the public sector comparable in the region only to Cuba (Karl 1997, p.90). The first oil wells were drilled in early 1910s during the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez, whose regime granted concessions to foreign corporations to explore, extract, refine and commercialise Venezuelan oil (Sullivan 1992, p.259). Within a decade, Venezuela's economy had transformed from agricultural production by private enterprise to oil exploitation by foreign oil corporations, with the state acting as landlord. Oil became the vehicle for modernisation and industrialisation (Coronil 1997, p.4; Bye 1979, p.59). By 1929 the country was the largest oil producer in the world (Bye 1979, p.59).

The sudden wealth produced by oil exploitation in early twentieth century internally divided Venezuela into two bodies (Almandoz Marte 2000; Coronil 1997). For Arturo Uslar Pietri these two separate but symbiotic bodies were the Nation and the State: 'the State owns the oil wealth and becomes immensely rich, whilst the nation remains poor and backward' (Almandoz Marte 2000, p.204). For Fernando Coronil these two bodies were 'a political body made up of its citizens and a natural body made up of its rich subsoil' (1997, p.4). The State found in the concentration of oil wealth the instrument to affirm its authority, and though growing separate from the nation, the state materialised as the sole mediator between the political body of the nation and the natural body of oil, granting itself the power to transform the country into a modern nation by manufacturing ambitious projects of infrastructure conceived as 'collective fantasies of progress' (Coronil 1997, p.5).

As the Petrostate consolidated its authority became entangled with oil, its monopoly over the nation's oil wealth transformed the state into the 'single agent endowed with the magical power to remake the nation' (Coronil 1997, p.4). Fernando Coronil's book *The Magical State: Nature, Money and Modernity in Venezuela* argues that the Venezuelan state exercised this monopoly dramaturgically, enacting collective fantasies of progress by way of spectacular projects of development and infrastructure to seize its subjects through the power of marvel rather than with the power of reason: 'the state seizes its subjects by inducing a condition or state being receptive to its illusions –a magical state' (1997, p.5). Coronil acknowledged that the Magical State (Coronil 2011) was inspired by the work of playwright and critic José Ignacio Cabrujas. In an interview for the magazine *Estado y Reforma* (1987), a tri-monthly publication of the

Presidential Commission for the Reform of the State COPRE, Cabrujas defined the Venezuelan state as a *Estado de disimulo* (state of dissimulation). The *caudillo* decides what the state should be and what the law is transforming the state into a 'legal trick' that justifies the whims, arbitrariness and other forms of *me da la gana* ('to do as I please'). Cabrujas affirmed that in a provisional nation with precarious institutions, this is the way the Venezuelan state has behaved. In a country where the state had been very weak, the expansion of the oil industry promoted the concentration of power in the presidency as the embodiment of the 'magical' powers of oil. The Magical State then, is personified as a magnanimous sorcerer in the figure of the president. Prior to the industrialised exploitation of oil, the state in Venezuela remained an unfinished project that lacked a 'national army or an effective bureaucracy' with 'partial dominion over the nation's territory and sway over its citizens' (Coronil 1997, p.76). As oil wealth increased, so did the State's capacity to construct itself as a national institution, able to expand the range of its dominion over society through material signs of progress: massive works of infrastructure and the vertiginous modernisation of cities in just a few decades. Oil wealth made possible the illusion that modernisation could be achieved almost overnight (Coronil 1997, p.68). Coronil's notion of The Magical State will be useful for this thesis because it expands on Marxist analysis of Latin America often centred on the relationship between labour and capital, which tend to overlook the role of land, which encompasses all the powers of nature (Coronil 2011, p.4). For Coronil 'land is the foundation of both the Venezuelan state and Venezuelan society' (Coronil 2011, p.5). Therefore, the state's dominion over the nation's land and subsoil is not limited to the availability of resources, the exploitation of land and subsoil means power over the extraction and circulation of wealth because power over the land equates to power over oil, as both a natural resource and a political tool. Chapter four revisits Coronil's Magical State to explore the contradiction of Chávez's ambition to transform Venezuela into a Socialist State almost overnight whilst maintaining the 'illusions' of oil of the prior capitalist Magical State.

After the 1920s, oil policies became even more favourable. Venezuela became extremely attractive for foreign capital because it had one of the most liberal oil policies in Latin America (González Casas & Marín Castañeda 2003), which translated into a significant increase in the investment on infrastructure, urban development and architecture in the process transplanting the model of capitalist urban life. Whilst, as discussed previously, the republic was born a rentier state, with the exploitation of oil Venezuela inaugurated its modern history as a Petrostate, 'one whose capacity to create consensus and enforce collective decisions rested largely on the fate of the international oil market as well as on its ability to tax foreign firms and distribute its gains' (Karl 1997, p.91). The Venezuelan Petrostate rather than symbolise national glory came to be

viewed mainly as an ‘enormous distributive apparatus’ of oil rent, a father state that provides but whose power is hollowed out by a gap between authority and territory. This set in motion what Terry Lynn Karl calls in his study *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Boom and Petrostates* a historical cycle of widespread ‘political rent-seeking behaviour’ manifested in the centralisation of authority in the executive (particularly in the presidency) and the continuous search for increased oil revenues through a deepening of oil dependence combined with the emergence of new demands to the state to amend the resulting imbalances (1997, p.91). Juan Vicente Gomez’s death in 1935 put an end to 27 years of dictatorship and consolidated ‘the final breakthrough of capitalism as the dominant mode of production’ (Bye 1979, p.63). The dominance of foreign capital fostered the emergence and growth of a ‘petty bourgeoisie’ long before the working class became relevant in numbers or an organised workforce. In addition, oil production initiated a process of fast urbanisation accompanied by the deterioration of much of the agricultural sector.

For a country that had been in chronic debt and lacked basic infrastructure such as a national road network and systems of communications, oil wealth suddenly made possible lavish and monumental works of infrastructure (Coronil 1997, p.76). This encouraged massive migrations from rural areas to the cities searching for employment (Bye 1979, p.63). In 1958, the overthrow of Marcos Pérez Jimenez’s dictatorship marked the beginning of the democratic era, government and private sectors were concerned with investing the oil wealth in developing domestic industrialisation, in other words, they were concerned with ‘sowing oil’.

The institutionalised access to oil wealth created mechanisms to avoid conflicts and placate demands from heterogeneous sectors through public spending financed directly by the oil rent, without being forced to make compromises, affecting negatively certain interests or having to raise domestic taxes (Karl 1997, p.111). By mid-twentieth century, broad popular sectors increasingly advocated for the nationalisation of the oil industry. In 1960, Venezuela, along with oil producing countries Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and Iran, set up the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC):

‘For Venezuela, where a revolution had overthrown the military government and brought an elected government to power, the aim was to imitate the collective arrangement among US states for restricting production, in order to negotiate an increased share of oil revenues and conserve supplies, and thus to allow an orderly process of economic growth and avoid a premature depletion of reserves.’ (Mitchell 2011, p.167)

The belief that only the state could distribute the nation's oil wealth, and that such distributive capacity had to rise above partisan conflict was cemented in the new Constitution of 1961, which reaffirmed state intervention and turned the president into a 'supreme political arbiter' with very few mechanisms for accountability (Karl 1997, p.105). Venezuela gave absolute freedom to foreign capital transactions, but this began to change in the 1970s. In 1973, the outbreak of another Arab-Israeli war and the oil embargo enacted by Arab oil-producing countries generated a steep rise in the price of fuel, which significantly increased Venezuela's oil revenues. This windfall prompted President Carlos Andrés Pérez, elected in late 1973 with wide popular support, to promise that the increased financial power of the state would allow Venezuela to become a developed country in just a few years. The unprecedented oil bonanza of 1973-1978 presented Pérez with once in a lifetime opportunity to completely restructure the country, but also generated deep contradictions that would prove everlasting.

The political rent seeking behaviour explained earlier defined the actions of Pérez's government. His presidency was highly personalist, he isolated himself from criticism by ruling by decree, further concentrating bureaucratic power on the presidency; he used Bolivarian symbols to present him as the only leader capable to seize the unique opportunity brought by the oil boom: 'Many citizens and much of the press viewed Pérez's success as the nation's success and his hopes as the nation's hopes' (Karl 1997, pp.122–130). Pérez launched with little public debate *La Gran Venezuela* (The Great Venezuela), an ambitious national development plan; at the centre The Great Venezuela was the expansion and nationalisation of all basic industries: aluminium, steel and particularly oil (Karl 1997, p.124). The state-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela Sociedad Anónima* (PDVSA) was created by decree in 1975, to take over the functions and operations of *Corporación Venezolana de Petróleo* (Venezuelan Corporation of Oil). In 1976 Pérez nationalised the oil industry, just one year after the promulgation of a new law that reserved to the state the industry and commerce of hydrocarbons, and the expropriation of the iron and steel industries (Bye 1979, p.57). The next section provides a historical account of the relationship of PDVSA with the state in the years following the nationalisation of the oil industry, leading up to the changes brought by the rise to power of Hugo Chávez, in which the state-owned oil company became the key instrument for the consolidation of the Socialist State.

In the years after the nationalisation of the oil industry, PDVSA projected an image of high efficiency that differentiated it from the rest of the public sector. Its managers, executives and workforce had been educated by the international oil corporations in their corporate culture and technocratic practices (Tinker Salas 2009; Wainberg 2004, p.4). It was largely assumed that the oil policies established in the aftermath of the nationalisation were aligned with national interests. Political parties (including parties of the Left) and most importantly Congress 'lost interest in oil as a topic for debate and as a central feature of their programs' (Parker 2006, p.62). This allowed the directors of PDVSA to keep the oil company's policies on the margins of public debate. They pursued a policy of insulation from government interference on the grounds that they were serving public interest by protecting the state owned oil company from the endemic clientelist practices of public administration to preserve it 'as an efficient modern corporation' (Parker 2006, p.63). This meant that the national executive, and particularly the Ministry of Energy and Mines, progressively relinquished their capacity to enforce policies, ending up as a 'mere rubber stamp' for the decisions of PDVSA (Parker 2006, p.62).

Venezuela's oil based prosperity came to a halt in 1983 with the devaluation of the national currency and the fall in oil prices, which initiated a downward spiral of economic stagnation, increase of foreign debt and inflation, with the subsequent deterioration of quality of life and impoverishment of large sectors of the population (Salamanca 1994, p.11). By late 1980s and early 1990s, PDVSA's management pursued to transform the state-owned oil company into an international conglomerate. The second presidency of Carlos Andrés Pérez was marked by economic, social and political turmoil. On 16 February 1989, with barely a month in office, Pérez announced an IMF-backed programme of macroeconomic adjustments, which most notably included a 100 per cent increase in the price of gasoline enforced over the weekend of 25 and 26 February (López-Maya 2003, p.120). Students were massively opposed to Pérez's 'neo-liberal package'. A revolt known as the *Caracazo* that started as a student protest against the increase of transport fares and of price increases in general, was soon joined by working class sectors; the protests turned into a country-wide popular revolt that only subsided by way of brutal repression by the military and the National Guard (López-Maya 2003, p.129). The *Caracazo*, an event without precedents in Venezuela's contemporary history, intensified the economic and social crisis but did not deter Pérez from pushing forward the neoliberal reforms. A political crisis unfolded in February 1992, when a small group of the army, with the support of

leftist civilian groups, staged a failed coup d'état led by the then Lieutenant-Coronel Hugo Chávez Frías (Coronil 2000, p.37). A second failed coup d'état attempt took place in November led by officers from the Navy and the Air Forces. Although Pérez's presidency survived both coups, it did not survive the deterioration of his public image and political leadership; he was impeached by Congress in 1993 and put under house arrest by the Supreme Court (Salamanca 1994, p.12).

The cycle of boom and bust in oil prices paired with deep economic and political crises meant that by early 1990s PDVSA lacked 'sufficient capital to develop their country's oil and gas reserve base and the associated infrastructure, much less fund increasingly urgent economic development needs' (Wainberg 2004, p.4). Notwithstanding these crises, PDVSA continued to push for internationalisation. Once PDVSA sought to establish itself as an international oil corporation it assumed the fiscal behaviours of any large private enterprise: it developed a policy of restricting the industry's information available to the public, their profits abroad were not repatriated thus contributing nothing to the state's coffers, it lobbied for tax reductions and limited fiscal obligations towards the state resulting in a legislative reform in 1993 that reduced PDVSA's tax burden (Parker 2006, pp.63–64).

It wasn't until Rafael Caldera's second presidency (1994-1999) that PDVSA consolidated its plan to reopen the industry to foreign capital and increase productive capacity through the investment program of *Apertura Petrolera* (Oil Opening) that ran in contradiction of OPEC's policy of maintaining oil prices by limiting production. The unexpected collapse of the commercial banking sector in 1994 required massive bailouts from the government that further deteriorated the socioeconomic landscape (Urbaneja 2013, p.343). Caldera's government relied on the oil rent to counterbalance the high cost of the bailouts, rooted in the belief that the oil industry alone was sufficient to reactivate the economy. He implemented in early 1996 the *Agenda Venezuela*, a set of economic measures that closely resembled the much criticised neoliberal reforms of Carlos Andres Pérez (Urbaneja 2013, p.345). By late 1990s PDVSA's management was accused of contributing to the state's financial crisis by decreasing its fiscal contributions over the previous twenty years (Parker 2006, p.63).

PDVSA's corporate strategies were implemented without any major public debate. They were widely criticised by local political figures associated with leftist parties such as La Causa R and a few organisations and associations linked to the oil industry, whose nationalism protested the *Apertura Petrolera* for offering foreign investors favourable conditions at the expense of state revenues but most importantly, for breaking with OPEC (Parker 2006, p.63; Urbaneja 2013,

p.353). PDVSA was also criticised for being far less efficient than its well polished image suggested; international business statistics set PDVSA's productivity far below other oil giants like Texaco, Exxon, Shell and BP-Amoco (Parker 2006, p.64). Among the most salient critical voices was former coup plotter and future president Hugo Chávez.

Hugo Chávez, imprisoned after the failed coup d'état of 4 February 1992, was given a presidential pardon in 1994 which allowed him to launch his political career to run for the 1998 presidential elections with his own party *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200* (MBR-200) (Coronil 2000, p.36). Founded in 1983, the MBR-200 was a fusion of the military with groups of the radical left that up to that moment had been working in clandestinely (Silva-Ferrer 2014, p.77). Chávez campaigned as an outsider, on an anti-establishment platform tapping into the widespread public rejection of *Puntofijismo*, the old political system. *Puntofijismo* refers to the Pact of Punto Fijo signed by the three main political parties Acción Democrática, Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente COPEI and Unión Republicana Democrática URD on the aftermath of the ousting of the dictatorship in 1958 which created a bi-partisan system where Acción Democrática and COPEI alternated power for decades to come. Chávez's presidential campaign promised to put a halt to *Puntofijismo* through a peaceful revolution that would radically change the political landscape of Venezuela (Coronil 2000, p.34).

PDVSA's *Apertura Petrolera* was one of the key campaign issues of the presidential race (Wainberg 2004, p.6). By exerting control over the main source of the state's income, PDVSA counted with a budget much larger than the government's making it almost completely independent from the state that owned it, operating like a 'prosperous first world company in an impoverished third-world nation' (Maass 2009, p.202). Chávez criticised PDVSA for functioning as a 'state within the state' (Giussepe Ávalo 2014, p.26; Párraga 2010, p.29) that contravened OPEC policies and contributed to the downfall of oil prices; by 1998 Venezuelan crude oil had reached the unprecedented low of USD 7.35 per barrel (Wainberg 2004, p.6).

Hugo Chávez won the presidency by a landslide on a political platform outlined as an alternative to neoliberalism (Silva-Ferrer 2014; Urbaneja 2013, p.362; Parker 2006, p.64). His presidential election marked the beginning of a shift in the relationship between PDVSA and the State, he implemented reforms in the areas of social policy, development models and most importantly, oil policies (Parker 2006, p.64). Venezuelan historian Margarita López-Maya characterises Chávez presidencies as the 'new debut of the magical state' (2007; Coronil 2011), she identifies close similarities between Chávez's government and the first presidency of Carlos Andres Pérez in the centralisation of power and the use of the oil rent to transform the state: 'the Magical state

seems to be taking possession one again of the body of the nation' (2007). Chapter four argues that Chávez went further; he came summon all the bureaucratic powers of the state to embody a New Magical State in his persona. Chávez's government is better understood by viewing it in relation to Juan Vicente Gómez, Marcos Pérez Jiménez and particularly Carlos Andres Pérez (Coronil 2011, p.3). Chávez, just as presidents before him, promised to use the oil rent to bring wellbeing and prosperity to the Venezuelan people (Coronil 2000, p.40) but in the context of hegemonic neoliberal globalisation he proposed a different model for modernity and development, bidding to completely refashion the country into a Socialist State (Coronil 2011, p.9). The economic policies of the first two years of Chávez's presidency focused on increasing oil revenue, strengthening Venezuela's position inside OPEC, re-establishing state control over PDVSA and reinstating the policy making role of the Ministry of Energy and Mines (Parker 2006, p.64; Wainberg 2004, p.6). Conflict with PDVSA soon ensued. Between 1999 and 2000 Chávez appointed successive presidents challenging PDVSA's 'meritocracy' which did little to change the company's corporate behaviour (Wainberg 2004, p.6; Parker 2006, p.65). In November 2001 a new Organic Law of Hydrocarbons was promulgated that reduced taxes, increased royalties, and 'mandated state possession of a majority of stocks in all mixed companies engaged in primary activity in the oil industry' (Parker 2006, p.65), which was strongly rejected by PDVSA's top management.

Conflict soon evolved into direct confrontation between the oil company and the president. PDVSA's executives organized as *Gente del Petroleo* (People of Oil) joined forces with the opposition to overthrow Chávez, to take part in the one day general strike organized by FEDECAMARAS (Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce) and CTIV (Confederation of Workers of Venezuela) in December 10 2001, which set the stage for the short lived coup d'état against Chávez in April 2002. The confrontation continued in December 2002 when a majority of PDVSA's employees joined the *Paro Petrolero* (oil strike) which put the oil company to a standstill for 65 days (Parker 2006, p.65; Wainberg 2004, p.6). Once the government regained control of the oil company, Chávez dismissed eighteen thousand managers and engineers (Parker 2006, p.65; Wainberg 2004, p.7; Maass 2009, p.202). Reforms to PDVSA were implemented swiftly and with ease.

The overhaul of PDVSA's staff by Chávez meant that he could count with more loyal civil servants, which included naming his close ally Rafael Ramírez as its president, and his spouse, Beatrice Sansó de Ramírez as the General Manager of Centro de Arte La Estancia (now PDVSA La Estancia). He also increased the revenues to the state from 40 per cent to two thirds, and

most importantly he shifted the institutional channels of the flow of the rent from PDVSA to the state: instead of transferring oil money to the government to be redistributed to the ministries that oversaw social programs PDVSA was put in charge of the new government programs, effectively transforming the oil company into the ‘engine of revolutionary change’ (Maass 2009, pp.202, 215). Chávez, aware of the diminished capacity of the public sector, believed that ‘an oil company would succeed where government ministries might not’ (Maass 2009, p.215). In this sense, PDVSA went from being completely independent from the state to effectively becoming a ‘parallel state’. The events of 2002 marked a turning point in Chávez politics, marking the radicalisation of his Bolivarian revolution to embark the nation on a transition towards Socialism (Coronil 2011, p.13). In 2005 he launched the *Plan Siembra Petrolera* (Sowing Oil Plan), named in honour of Uslar Pietri, a 25 year national plan and oil policy that forms the foundation for the advancement of Petrosocialism to lay the foundations for the transition towards the Socialist State.

Chávez declared his third presidential term as the beginning of a new era, the era of the expansion of the Bolivarian Revolution towards Socialism, the only alternative for transcending capitalism: ‘The people voted for the way of socialism and it is socialism that the people want, what the fatherland needs’ (Chávez 2007c, p.63). He emphasised the uniqueness of his socialist project in an *Aló Presidente* in July (programa #288, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2007) broadcasted from the Orinoco Oil Belt, where he affirmed that he was building a socialist model different to the ‘Scientific Socialism’ that Karl Marx had originally envisioned, he was building a *socialismo petrolero*: Petrosocialism. Petrosocialism defines Hugo Chávez’s political and economic project, in which the oil rent is invested in the dismantlement of capitalism for the construction of the Venezuelan Socialist State. Bernard Mommer, Vice-Minister of Hydrocarbons and also former Director of PDVSA UK and Venezuela representative at OPEC was present in the broadcast; he affirmed on national TV that oil was a very favourable condition and a blessing for socialism because it provided the resources for an easier and accelerated advancement of the project (Chávez 2007b).

PDVSA has been a key player in Hugo Chávez’s nationalist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist Petrosocialism. Rafael Ramírez, PDVSA’s president until his demotion in 2014 by President Nicolás Maduro, occupied simultaneously the posts of president of the state-owned oil company, Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Vice-President of Territorial Development of the Republic and President of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela PSUV (Párraga 2010, p.122; Colgan 2013, pp.205–206). Ramírez was put in charge of PDVSA’s new ‘social sense’ (Párraga 2010,

pp.24–26), to expand the oil company's functions beyond its core commercial mission of generating maximum oil revenue to the state:

'Ramírez explicitly stated, and Chávez agreed, that PDVSA employees owe political allegiance to the Bolivarian Revolution, and that they should vote for Chávez or leave their jobs. PDVSA was delisted from the New York Stock Exchange, so its accounting practices no longer needed to comply with international standards for transparency. Most importantly, the company's revenue and assets became freely accessible to the government, which uses them for expenditure programs, including the misiones bolivarianas. In 2005, the transfers from PDVSA to the misiones were almost seven trillion bolivars (\$3.2 trillion), more than twice the financial contributions from the central government itself.' (Colgan 2013, p.206)

In order to fulfil PDVSA's new socialist sense, seven subsidiaries were created by Hugo Chávez mandate. The principal one, PDVSA Agrícola (PDVSA Agricultural) was created to literally 'sow the oil'; PDVAL (PDVSA Foods) distributes food staples but unlike the state-funded popular food markets Mercal it was aimed directly at the middle classes; PDVSA Servicios developed in partnership with the Belarusian oil company, it absorbed the seismic analyses previously commissioned to private contractors; PDVSA Industrial manufactures oil and non-oil related equipment; PDVSA Naval was created to expand the company's fleet; PDVSA Gas Comunal to supply domestic gas; and PDVSA Urban Development took over some of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Housing and Habitat (Párraga 2010, pp.26–29). The new relationship between PDVSA and the government was summarised in the slogan 'PDVSA now belongs to all' to reflect the direct channelling of the oil rent into social investment (Corrales & Penfold 2011, p.83). In practice, ministries that had traditionally been in charge of social spending were replaced by PDVSA (Corrales & Penfold 2011, p.84). Beyond a dramaturgical exercise of bureaucratic power, the control over PDVSA enabled Chávez to summon all the Bureaucratic Powers of the State in his persona, but as will be made clear in chapter four and five, by delegating to PDVSA many functions of the government, he paved the way for the Venezuelan oil company to exercise power as a parallel state. Chapters four and five examine how, by consolidating as a parallel State Space, it absorbed the material space of the city by conceptualising it as an oil field.

The Sowing Oil Plan uses farming language to designate a new mode of oil policy management as the following quote can attest: '[Sowing Oil Plan] speaks of the fertilisation of new productive operations; the gestation of operative plants in different fields of the economy', ideas are 'seeds'

that grow into a 'harvest' of concrete results (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.416). The aims of the Sowing Oil Plan are organised in two 'branches': the socio-economic branch and the socio-cultural branch. The most relevant materialisation of the socio-economic branch is the Oil Social District defined as:

'units of territorial management, of productive and ecological character, where engineering functions take place and studies on industrial development and projects implementation are conducted, with the purpose of consolidating strategies that in the process of exploration, production, refinement and commercialisation of oil and gas, enable the joint effort of PDVSA staff and the local population to guarantee endogenous development to eradicate poverty. The Oil Social Districts operate in areas near the great developments of extractive activity of hydrocarbons' (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.419).

The Oil Social Districts encompass a broad range of economic activities unrelated to the oil and gas industry, such as the production of rice, plantain, cattle, dairy, as well as other services such as health care and schools for indigenous populations. The plans of the Oil Social Districts are coordinated with regional and local governments: governorships, municipalities, parish councils and communal councils (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.420). The socio-cultural branch operates through PDVSA La Estancia, defined as an 'organism' that operates as the social and cultural arm of PDVSA (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.417). PDVSA La Estancia is a management unit ascribed to the *Corporación Venezolana de Petróleo*. Its objectives are to 'support programs of social development, strengthen the cultural identity of Venezuelans, promote and disseminate the historic and artistic heritage of the country, including the restoration of the fundamental works that conform that heritage' (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.425). These objectives have translated into a nation-wide program of recreational activities for the public based on 'elevated cultural concepts', the restoration of public art in Caracas as well as works of urban regeneration, including the transformation of former foreign oil companies' headquarters into cultural centres in Maracaibo and Paraguaná. All these works are a direct investment of the oil rent, of 'sowing oil' to achieve the 'democratisation of cultural goods' (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.426). PDVSA La Estancia characterises its headquarters in Caracas, located in a restored colonial hacienda, as an 'oasis of culture, peace and harmony' (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.426). This underpins PDVSA La Estancia's statement of 'oil that harvests culture' which informs the implementation of the Law of Hydrocarbons as implicit cultural policy (Ahearne 2009) examined in chapter five, and the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit that expands on Yudice's expediency of culture as a resource, explored in chapter six. Chapter four expands on Coronil's Magical State to define

Hugo Chávez's use of the oil windfall and centralisation of Bureaucratic Power to embody a New Magical State in his persona; with the later absence of Chávez it is left to PDVSA La Estancia the ability to enact the power of marvel through works of public art restoration and urban regeneration in the material space of the city.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has traced state formation in Venezuela back to the postcolonial emergence of Latin American nations; it explained how the process of independence and construction of bureaucratic structures was fraught with contradictions, such as the enduring rigid social structure inherited from the colony that perpetuated the social and political power of elites was at odds with the project of national modernisation. It also explained how Venezuela did not become a rentier state with the rise of the oil industry in early twentieth century, but was born a rentier state from the moment it became a republic by adopting the mining codes inherited from Spanish Crown. It also provided a historical review of the political and cultural effects of the arrival of the oil industry in Venezuela, how the way the country dealt with the oil industry was akin to how it dealt with modernity manifested in the use of archaic bureaucratic instruments combined with the state's technological and financial incapacity; state sovereignty was built around the notion of property and control over oil rent money. Oil lost its mineral quality, as it was understood predominantly as wealth that flowed from the soil directly to the state's coffers and not as a complex technological reality.

The chapter also established that Venezuela's identity is entangled with oil; Venezuelan society learned to see itself as an oil nation with the state as the single representative of a nation unified by oil (Coronil 1997, p.84). Coronil defines the manner in which the state exercised its monopoly over oil wealth as the Magical State, a dramaturgical exercise of bureaucratic power through the power of marvel of massive infrastructure projects rather than with the power of reason (1997, p.5). Building on Coronil, the chapter characterised Hugo Chávez' exercise of bureaucratic power as the New Magical State that channels the oil wealth to transform the country into a socialist society within a few years, using Petrosocialism as the foundation to build the Socialist State. Furthermore, the chapter also established how Chávez transformed PDVSA into the engine of revolutionary change, delegating many non-oil related functions and social programs to the state-owned oil company, in the process consolidating as a parallel State Space, which as chapters four and five demonstrate, absorbed the material space of the city into the Oil Social District through the work of PDVSA La Estancia, enabled by the institutional fractures created

by the transition towards the Socialist State. This sets the background of this thesis investigation of the effects of Petrosocialism on culture and urban space, as the interfaces between oil and culture are inextricable from the bureaucratic power of the New Magical State and its role in shaping.

Having laid out the historical background and cultural underpinnings of the relationship between oil and the state, chapter four examines the Absolute-Representations of Space produced by the discourse of Petrosocialism through the creation of the policy instruments of the Socialist State Space, which opened an institutional and legal breach that enabled PDVSA to enact the Oil Social District as a parallel State Space. Chapter four sets the scene to grasp the inherent conceptual contradictions of Petrosocialism and the distortions of the institutional apparatus of urban governance fostered by Chavez's surrender of bureaucratic power to PDVSA. It also provides the basis to understand the diverse discursive mechanisms utilised by PDVSA La Estancia to re-present and re-imagine the material space of the city as an oil field, claiming that they are 'harvesting' culture from the 'sowing' of oil by construing a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit that ties culture to the land and to the extractive logic of the Petrostate.

## Chapter four: Fault Lines of Bureaucratic Power and Parallel State Spaces

Hugo Chávez was the leader and central figure of the Bolivarian revolution from his rise to power in 1999 until his death in March 2013, after winning re-election for a fourth term in December 2012. Petrosocialism was his personal project, penned by his own hand, a point he emphasised to the National Assembly in 2007 (Lopez-Maya 2013, p.102). Chávez embodied the New Magical State, discussed in chapter three, as he condensed the magical bureaucratic powers of oil in his persona to completely refashion the country under his alternative model guided by the dyad Petrosocialism-Socialist State using oil wealth once again as the vehicle for transforming the nation.

This chapter explores entanglements between Hugo Chávez's discourse and the new spatial strategies for the Socialist State Space, in the terms defined by Brenner & Elden as the mobilisation of state power to reorganise sociospatial relations. In so doing, it regards policy instruments as containers of Absolute-Representations of Space, legal entities of space that conceptualise the administrative boundaries of State Space. This chapter asks: what are the representations of space produced by the discourse of Petrosocialism? A study of the legal instruments for the management of territory and national plans will help elucidate what kind of spatiality is was conceived in Petrosocialism, which created a particular institutional resource curse (Corrales & Penfold 2011) that further entrenched the diminished state capacity that enabled PDVSA to construct a parallel State Space. This chapter sets the scene to grasp the inherent conceptual contradictions within Petrosocialism and the distortions of the institutional apparatus of urban governance fostered by Chavez's surrender of bureaucratic power to PDVSA. It also provides the basis to understand the diverse institutional and discursive mechanisms utilised by PDVSA La Estancia appropriate and re-imagine the material space of the city as an oil field within the jurisdiction of the Oil Social District, claiming that they are 'harvesting' culture from the 'sowing' of oil by construing a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit that ties culture to the land and to the extractive logic of the Petrostate.

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, it develops the Critical Discourse Analysis of a selection of public speeches of Hugo Chávez that, as described in the preceding chapter, were delivered between 2005 and 2007, the period where he gave form to Petrosocialism, a model that binds the oil industry with socialism. Furthermore, it demonstrates that although one of the key premises of his project was the establishment of a 'new geometry of power', the policy instruments created do not represent space geometrically but conceptualise it in political and

administrative terms to define the boundaries of State Space authority. Secondly, it contrasts Chávez's discourse with the expert opinions and perspectives of elites in regards to the state, its relationship with urban development and the institutional context of urban governance. Finally, the chapter is concerned with tracing the process of the abrogation and substitution of the existing legal framework of political-administrative territorial management, fraught with inconsistencies that created a vacuum that diminished State Space authority, enabling PDVSA La Estancia to claim that the Social Oil Districts defined by the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons superseded regional and municipal authority. It takes a chronological approach to describe how Chávez's discourse informed the creation and implementation of new spatial strategies outlined in the new policy instruments created between 2005 and 2010; it examines how land was considered crucial for the establishment of the Socialist State, guided by the principle of Chávez's New Geometry of Power, it required the dismantlement of the institutional apparatus through the abrogation and creation of policy instruments to reconfigure the national territory.

### *Contradictions in Hugo Chávez's Discursive Construction of Petrosocialism*

As previously discussed in chapter two, discourses can exert power because they are regulated, institutionalised and linked to action. In the case of Hugo Chávez his discursive exercise of bureaucratic power was manifested in changes to reality through his embodiment of the New Magical State. The oil windfall that characterised the period that frames this thesis (2007-2013) provided Chávez with the resources to reform the institutional apparatus and to create new policy instruments that conceptualise the Socialist State Space. Considering the prolific quantity of political speeches and public broadcasts delivered by Chávez during his three presidencies, which would have made the selection of public speeches extremely laborious and time consuming, for the aims of this thesis, the selection is based on the collection of speeches included in the online archive of the former President of PDVSA, Rafael Ramírez, selected as the most relevant discursive events in matters of national oil policy. The New Magical State frames the discursive plane from which Chávez spoke, the power of his performative utterances to enact a new reality manifested in the creation of new policy instruments, is echoed in the speeches of the leaders of PDVSA and PDVSA La Estancia, examined in chapter five, and novel visual representations of Petrosocialism in urban space, explored in chapter six.

The speeches analysed in this section were delivered during a period of steady rise in oil prices - they reached the USD100 per barrel in 2008 but began a steady decline in 2013 to reach values below USD40 per barrel in early 2016 (OPEC 2016).

To select the discourse fragments relevant for analysis in Hugo Chávez’s speeches, a word frequency query found that the five most frequently used 1000 words are:

- Venezuela 189
- Presidente [President] 179
- Petróleo [Oil] 146
- Desarrollo [Development] 110
- Palabras [Words] 109

Discarding the common words *Venezuela*, *Presidente* and *Palabras*, oil and development are the two most recurrent terms in the six speeches. Far behind, the terms *socialismo* and *socialista* are referenced 19 and 9 times respectively. To explore which kind of relationship between oil and socialism is inferred within Chávez’s speeches search queries of the terms *socialista*, *socialismo* and *petróleo* were used to identify and extract the key passages collated in Table 7.

The word *socialista* (socialist) appears only in two of the five speeches:

Name	References	Coverage
Palabras del Presidente de la República, Comandante Hugo Chávez, 2007	8	0.08%
Palabras del Jefe de Estado en la presentación del “Plan Siembra Petrolera”, 2005	1	0.01%

Table 4

The word *socialismo* is referenced in three of his speeches, most mentions were concentrated in his presidential inauguration speech of January 2007:

Name	References	Coverage
Palabras del Presidente de la República, Comandante Hugo Chávez, 2007	16	0.15%
Discurso del Presidente Hugo Chávez en la Sesión de Apertura de la 3era Cumbre de la OPEP, 2007	1	0.03%
2005_Palabras del Jefe de Estado en la presentación del “Plan Siembra Petrolera”, 2005	2	0.02%

Table 5

Meanwhile, the word *petróleo* features in every speech but most predominantly in the speech delivered at the 141st Extraordinary Meeting of OPEC (2007) mentioned 57 times, followed by the speech for the presentation of the Sowing Oil Plan (2005) mentioned 43 times. In the

remaining speeches, the term is mentioned 19 times (IV Summit of Petrocaribe and 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of OPEC), to 5 and 3 (Inauguration Speech in 2007 and the LXI ONU General Assembly, respectively):

Name	References	Coverage
Palabras del Presidente Chávez en la Instalación de la 141 <sup>a</sup> Reunión Extraordinaria de la OPEP, 2006	57	0.53%
Palabras del Jefe de Estado en la presentación del “Plan Siembra Petrolera”, 2005	43	0.41%
Discurso del Presidente Hugo Chávez en la Sesión de Apertura de la 3era Cumbre de la OPEP, 2007	19	0.41%
Palabras del Presidente Hugo Chávez Frías en la inauguración de la IV Cumbre de Petrocaribe, 2007	19	0.17%
Palabras del Presidente de la República, Comandante Hugo Chávez, 2007	5	0.04%
Hugo Chávez LXI Asamblea General de la ONU, 2007	3	0.05%

Table 6

Relevant discourse fragments were extracted from the speeches by cross referencing the three terms *socialista*, *socialismo*, and *petróleo*, collated in Table 7:

Key passages	Speech Title	Date / Context
<p>He said, like saying farewell at his over 90 years of age: ‘we could not or did not know how or did not want to <u>sow oil</u>’. I propose in honour to the spirit of that phrase and why not, to that of doctor Uslar Pietri and that of Juan Pérez Alfonzo and to all those that warned, wrote, said, fought and even died for oil sovereignty, that we call this 2005-2030 Plan, <u>Sowing Oil</u>.</p> <p>Then this Project is going to be, from today, one of the enclaves, of the levers to carry forward the socialist project, not to underpin the capitalist model of exploitation. That would be contrary to constitutional mandate and contrary to national interest, but nobody be scared by this, it is about equality and the economic, social, integral development of the country.</p>	<p>Extractos del discurso ofrecido por el Ciudadano Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, con motivo de la presentación de los Planes Estratégicos de Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA)</p>	<p>18 August 2005 Caracas, Hotel Caracas Hilton.  Presentation of the strategic plans of PDVSA, which included the <i>Plan Siembra Petrolera</i> (Sowing Oil Plan)</p>
<p>There never was one drop of oil for the people of Venezuela, oil was sucked by the creole</p>	<p>Palabras del Presidente Chávez en la Instalación de</p>	<p>1 June 2006 Caracas.</p>

<p>oligarchy and above all by the North-American empire. Oil now belongs to the Venezuelan people and oil will be for justice, for equality, for the development of our people, that is the truth.</p> <p>OPEC was born 45 years ago. OPEC was put to its knees. OPEC rose. OPEC will live with success forever. So be it. I formally declare this 141st Assembly of Ministers and Governors inaugurated.</p>	<p>la 141ª Reunión Extraordinaria de la Conferencia Ministerial de la Organización de Países Exportadores de Petróleo OPEP</p>	<p>141st Extraordinary meeting of the Ministerial Conference of OPEC</p>
<p>Nothing and nobody will divert us from the road towards Bolivarian socialism, Venezuelan socialism, our socialism.</p> <p>Second motor: the socialist constitutional reform, we are going towards the <u>Socialist</u> Republic of Venezuela and that requires a profound reform of the National Constitution, our Bolivarian Constitution.</p> <p>We have to go marching towards the formation of a Communal State and the oil Bourgeois State that still lives, that is still living and kicking, we have to dismantle it progressively whilst we are building the Communal State, the Socialist State, the Bolivarian State. A State that has the conditions and the capacity to drive a revolution. Almost all states were born to halt revolutions. What a challenge we have! To turn the oil counter revolutionary state into a revolutionary State.</p>	<p>Palabras del Presidente de la Republica Comandante Hugo Chávez</p>	<p>8 January 2007 Caracas.</p> <p>First public speech of 2007, on the inauguration of his third presidential period</p>

Table 7

The following statements were extracted from the discourse fragments for analysis, identifying the relevant performative utterances:

- A. I propose in honour of the spirit of that phrase and why not, to that of doctor Uslar and that of Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo and to all those that warned, wrote, said, fought and even died for the national oil sovereignty, that we call this Plan 2005-2030, Sowing Oil.
- B. This project will be, from today, one of the enclaves, of the levers to carry forward the socialist project, not to truss the capitalist model of exploitation.
- C. Now oil belongs to the Venezuelan people and oil will be for justice, for equality, for the development of our people, that is the truth.
- D. OPEC was born 45 years ago. OPEC was brought to its knees. OPEC rose. OPEC will live with success for ever. So be it.
- E. Nothing and nobody will divert us from the road towards the bolivarian socialism, the Venezuelan socialism, our socialism.
- F. we are headed towards the Socialist Republic of Venezuela.
- G. Towards the conformation of a communal State and the old bourgeois State that is still alive, alive and kicking, we have to dismount it progressively whilst we are building the communal State, the socialist State, the Bolivarian State. (...) Transform the old counter revolutionary State into a revolutionary State.

Chávez's performative utterances around oil are neither founded in fiction nor are they mere dramaturgical exercises of Bureaucratic Power. Petrosocialism relied on a certainty: Venezuela stands over the biggest proven oil reserves in the world, surpassing Saudi Arabia's (Rowling 2012) which led Chávez to assume that Venezuela would never run out oil, and would enjoy a never-ending supply of oil rent. In other words, the success of Petrosocialism relied on the success of global oil capitalism. This meant that the merger of oil rentierism and socialism of Petrosocialism could endure forever, fed by the illusion of never ending high oil revenues. This illusion is what informs the performative utterance in statement D: 'OPEC will live with success for ever. So be it'. The *so be it* transforms an expression of hope into truth, and thus Chávez reaffirms his power as the leading figure of the revolution and of OPEC.

These certainties are reflected in Chávez's particular version of Petro-socialism: Venezuelan, Bolivarian, and oil-based. Statement A, *I propose [...] that we call this Plan 2005-2030 Sowing Oil*

*Plan*, is evidence of the power of Chávez's discourse, he is the sole authority who can verbalise the performative utterance that gives birth and names the strategy envisioned to govern the Venezuelan oil industry, and the country at large, for the following 25 years: the Sowing Oil Plan. It was also a way of affirming he would succeed in 'sowing oil' where previous leaders had failed. Chávez's use of farming language to underpin that oil would finally be 'sowed' highlights that his bureaucratic power as the New Magical State (Coronil 2011, p.4; López-Maya 2007; Joyce & Bennett 2010) was tied to the land and its subsoil, where all the powers of nature and its resources originate.

The purpose of the Sowing Oil Plan is cemented in the performative utterances in statements B, E, F and G. At the time these speeches were delivered, the Socialist State had yet to be realised, but it is verbalised as a present truth. He also consolidates the Sowing Oil Plan as the pillar of Petrosocialism, moulding the role PDVSA as the engine of revolutionary change (Maass 2009, p.202,2015): oil is put at the service of Socialism. He stresses the particular relationship his model established between oil, the state and the people in the performative utterance in statement C: 'oil now belongs to the Venezuelan people'. As discussed in chapter three, the Venezuelan Petrostate holds the monopoly over oil, and in turn, oil has mediated the relationship between society and the state. By embodying the New Magical State, Chávez was able to construct a direct relationship between oil and the people whilst exerting full control over the distribution of oil revenue. The reality of the statement is enacted by adding that 'oil will be for justice, for equality, for the development of our people' and if any doubts lingered in his audience, he closes by declaring that 'that is the truth'. Although Chávez's proposal to reform the Constitution was defeated in a referendum in 2007, he proceeded to carry out the proposed reforms by governing by decree to devise the policy instruments for the dismantlement of what he characterised as the 'counter revolutionary state'.

But Chávez's anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal model for the Socialist State would not cease to be an oil rentier state. Whilst he discursively called for the eradication of capitalism, in practice, he advocated for the longevity of OPEC and global oil capitalism. Given that the vast majority of state revenue comes from oil exports, it highlights the intrinsic contradiction of Petrosocialism, when Lenin himself had condemned the rentier state as a parasite of decadent capitalism, as discussed in chapter one (Lenin 1978, p.96). However, Chávez reconciled this incongruence when he affirmed that whilst in the past oil was used as a force of capitalist domination and plunder by oil corporations and a neoliberal PDVSA loyal to the empire (the

United States), in Petrosocialism oil would become a force of liberation, equality and development.

PDVSA's Sowing Oil Plan was devised as an alternative model to the neoliberal strategies of the 'old' PDVSA. The name uses farming language to underpin the idea that oil can be 'sowed' to suggest a natural renewable cycle of sowing and harvesting the subsoil for oil, which as will be discussed in chapter five and six, informs the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit advanced by PDVSA La Estancia. Thus, the advancement of Petrosocialism called for the dismantlement of the 'old' institutional structures to pave the way for the consolidation of the Socialist State.

Chávez did not envision a post-oil world, on the contrary, his model relied on the illusion of an inexhaustible supply of oil that assured the endurance of Petrosocialism and the Socialist State; a world in which OPEC would forever guarantee high oil prices and a continuous flow of oil rent to the state's coffers. For Chávez, oil rentierism was necessary for Socialism to be irreversible. The policies and strategies created for the advancement of Petrosocialism were based on unrealistic expectations of inexhaustible high oil revenues, expectations that began to collapse in 2013.

The following section explores the perceptions and opinions of elites in regards to Chávez's Bureaucratic Power and its relationship with urban development and the institutional apparatus of urban governance. The purpose is to contrast the Absolute-Representations of Space of the Socialist State informed by Chávez discourse with the abrogated Absolute-Representations of Space, based on the opinions and perceptions of expert elites interviewed, based on their sense of ownership and authority on matters related to urban development and the city. Their opinions elucidate, on one hand, the ability of Chávez's discourse to change reality in regards to State Space, and on the other, it substantiates the characterisation of Chávez as the embodiment of the New Magical State.

### *Elites' Perspectives on the Effect of Hugo Chávez's Bureaucratic Power on the City*

Whilst Chávez discursively summoned all the bureaucratic powers of the Petrostate as the embodiment of the New Magical State, the oil boom allowed him to entrench the fractures and erosion of the existing institutional apparatus to ease the dismantlement of the 'old' state and establish the new Socialist State. The pervasive influence of oil in all matters of national life was underlined by Corrales & Penfold (2011, pp.72–75) in chapter one, stressing that Hugo Chávez's regime can only be understood by engaging with how oil flows and interacts with pre-existing

institutional configurations through the institutional resource curse perspective. Along these lines, this section focuses on elites' responses in regards to the relationship between oil wealth and the institutional apparatus of urban governance. The aim is to explore how elites perceived Chávez's Bureaucratic Power as it manifested in the urban development and institutional apparatus that governs Caracas.

Elites compared Chávez's government's urban policies and performance in the investment of the oil windfall to the oil-boom and bust between 1970s and 1998. Between 2005 and 2012 Chávez made significant changes to the institutional structure of national, regional and local government: institutions and policy instruments were eliminated and new ones created in the transition towards the Socialist State. This reshuffle was perceived as deficient planning by elites. When asked what role the state plays in urban management, referring in particular to Caracas, the predominant response was to acknowledge the centrality of the state in all matters concerning city planning with statements such as:

'Everything. That is to say, the role of the state... the role of the state... No... the role of *this* State' (PDVSA La Estancia)

'Everything is done from the central state' (O2)

'A dominant state and therefore, determining (by action or by omission)' (R3)

'The role of the state has been fundamental' (R2)

'I would say all the importance, because it's a historical fact that there is a direct relationship between state and oil' (A1)

'The state has a fundamental role' (A5)

'The State, as the central axis of economic and political power, has configured in a determining manner all of the country' (W1)

'The state has had a very important role (...) It's a state of great works, and complete neglect of the small' (J1)

The interviewees assessed the role of the state from the scale of the city to reveal how they perceive the state at the scale of the nation. From the statements above three 'attributes' of the state can be identified, based on its perceived role or degree of influence in urban development collated in Table 8:

The state as a totality	In-capacity of the state	Oil determines the state
Everything ( <i>this</i> state)	Acts post-mortem	State is fundamental in oil cities
Central	Fractured	A direct relationship between state and oil
Dominant	Bad father	A crisis of oil is a crisis of the state
Determining		
Fundamental		
Directly and indirectly responsible		
Total concentration of power		
All the importance		
Central axis		
Very important		

Table 8

All interviewees regarded the state as a pervasive force that drives the policies of urban planning as well as urban development and infrastructure of the capital city, hinting at a very small participation of the private sector. The state is regarded as a dominant, fundamental and central force that determines the Absolute-Material Space of the city as well as its spatial practices. Most elites spoke of the state as a totality that governs every aspect of urban development. Only one made an exception, the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia emphasised *this* state, not *the* state. *This* state refers directly to PDVSA in its condition as a parallel state, which as this chapter argues in part three, also possesses its own State Space manifested in the Oil Social Districts defined by the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons.

However, whilst the state is perceived as a dominant force, in practice its dominance is undermined by its incapacity, as expressed by the statements grouped under ‘in-capacity of the state’ in Table 8. The state is characterised by A3 as a ‘fractured head’, its institutional fractures both caused and aggravated by oil wealth: ‘we are a society with a fractured head (...) because oil is there, because everything is built easily, we can do it easily, we don’t have to come together’. Oil wealth is perceived as a determining factor, establishing a direct relationship between the oil industry and the state (A1). The fundamental role played by the state in the urban development of the capital city is explained by characterising Caracas as the principal ‘oil city’ in Venezuela (R1). Finally, and more poignantly, a negative symbiotic relationship is described by drawing a parallel between the crises of oil prices in the global market and the crises of the State (W1). According to the rentier state theory discussed in chapter one, the abundance of oil wealth allows the Petrostate to develop predominantly expenditure policies as well as to disregard representative bargains. In practice this currently tends to favour the elites in government aligned with the Bolivarian revolution whilst leaving very little room for sectors that are under-represented or aligned with the revolution.

Hence, the current state of urban planning was characterised in negative terms as the following statements can attest:

- ‘There is no vision (...) they plan by helicopter’ (O2)
- ‘The consolidation of improvisation as method’ (R3)
- ‘Frank ineptitude in matters of public planning’ (R2)
- ‘Absolute absence of a notion of the concept of planning’ (R4)
- ‘Current urban planning has deeper characteristics in this sense [magic or mythic in Coronil’s or Torres terms, respectively], to the point that I would qualify it as spasmodic and delirious’ (R1)
- ‘There is none’ (A1)
- ‘Urban policy is an area where the current system shows absolute paralysis’ (A4)
- ‘Oil is being used to strengthen the centralist government’ (O3)
- ‘Interest in urban planning has diminished as more money has come into the country from the sale of oil’ (A5)
- ‘an anarchic management of public planning’ (W1)
- ‘I think that the vision of President Chávez is a vision, first, of rupture’ (A2)
- ‘acted without much planning’ (J1)
- ‘Evidently, there has to exist planning.(...) we are waging for a new scheme for the city’ (PDVSA La Estancia)

The statements are grouped in three common threads in table 9:

No Planning	Poor Planning	New vision of planning
No vision	Improvisation	A new scheme
Absolute absence	Ineptitude	Vision of rupture
None	Disconnected	
Absolute paralysis	Contradictory	
Without	Spasmodic	
	delirious	
	Centralist	
	Diminished	
	At least there is one	
	Fracture	
	Anarchic	
	Discretionarily	

Table 9

A third of the respondents qualified planning as non-existent in comparison to administrations prior to Chávez's government. The statements from which the above keywords are extracted are blunt, affirming there is an absolute lack of urban planning which is characterised as improvised, disorganised, haphazard and fraught with discretionary decisions that suggests a chaotic state of affairs in urban governance. Only two respondents, aligned with the revolution, characterised the Bolivarian government's urban management in positive terms, either as a 'new scheme' (PDVSA La Estancia) or 'a vision of rupture' (A2) that breaks away from the 'neoliberal' way government functioned prior to the arrival of Hugo Chávez. By 2014, the year these interviews were conducted, the transition towards the Socialist State was well under way, having been continued by Nicolás Maduro, Chávez's chosen successor. One of the major changes undertaken was the reconfiguration of the policies and institutional apparatus governing State Space, a process that generated contradictions and further fragmentation of the existing inefficient legal framework. This is the new scheme/vision of rupture PDVSA La Estancia and A2 refer to, but the effect of this new vision of rupture is seen by the rest of the respondents as working against the consolidation of any institutional apparatus. There is a consensus among the elites interviewed in characterising it as an ongoing process of fragmentation that further erodes urban governance. A thread runs through the interviews that describe the institutional structure as chaotic, labyrinthine and inefficient: 'Indecipherable labyrinth' (R3), 'the institutions are completely crumbled' (A3), 'Isolated and inefficient bodies' (R4), 'Institutional atomisation' (J1). The words used to describe the institutional apparatus indicate the difficulty to understand or visualise how the bureaucracy of the state, even at the scale of local government, currently functions. It is perceived as unreadable, to the point that some interviewees qualified it as practically non-existent: 'There is no institutional structure' (A3), 'if there is one, let me know' (A6). This perceived non-existence of any institutional structure is explained by the 'personal' character of government in Venezuela:

'The institutional chaos in which we are submerged is too difficult to map, but I think it's the first thing we need to highlight. It's not so much a product but a chaotic map, which makes it very difficult for the citizen to know what authority to go to, and the person ends up being the one that solves the problem. You access the person, not the institution.' (A1)

In other words, when the state's bureaucracy becomes unreadable, the relationship of common citizens with the state is 'personalised', meaning that by getting access to the particular person who holds the bureaucratic power they are able to bypass the inefficient and chaotic bureaucratic

labyrinth for a more expedite and direct solution to any problem. On a larger scale, this speaks of personalisation across all the institutional apparatus of the state, revealing that as Hugo Chávez concentrated the bureaucratic powers of the state in his persona, the bureaucratic structure was further fragmented as the ‘person’ in charge becomes more powerful than the structure they stand for.

The next section discusses how Chávez’s Bureaucratic Powers materialised in refashioning the state’s territorial strategies, in the terms defined by Brenner & Elden, as a means of devising new spatial policies to dismantle the existing institutional apparatus of urban governance through the creation of new legal instruments for the construction of a Socialist State Space.

### *Overlaps and Vacuums in the Production of the Socialist State Space*

Chávez had outlined in his First Socialist Plan 2007-2013 that the Five Motors of the Bolivarian Revolution contemplated the production of a New Geometry of Power that conceptualises the political and administrative boundaries of the Socialist State Space, in conflict with the existing institutional apparatus and the CRBV, creating fault lines within the bureaucratic structure that enabled PDVSA La Estancia to interpret and implement the Law of Hydrocarbons as a territorial policy and implicit cultural policy instrument.

Language was an important element in the discursive construction and legitimisation of Hugo Chávez ideological and political project (Aponte Moreno 2008); he proclaimed in his televised re-election speech of December 2006 that:

‘Today is a point of departure, of ignition. Today begins a new epoch, a new era, within the national project of Bolivarian development summarised in four lines. The new epoch that begins today will have as its central idea and force the deepening, enlargement and expansion of the Bolivarian revolution, of the revolutionary democracy, in the life of Venezuela towards socialism’ (BBC Mundo 2006)

He declared that the expansion of the Bolivarian Revolution towards Socialism was the only alternative for transcending capitalism (Chávez 2007c, p.63). In January 2007 he resumed his weekly Sunday television show *Aló Presidente* (Chávez 2007a) to launch the Five Motors of the Bolivarian Revolution. He emphasised that his project was unique because he was building a socialist model different to the socialism of Marx, he was building Petrosocialism. Bernard Mommer, the Vice-Minister of Hydrocarbons affirmed that oil was a blessing for socialism

because it provided the resources that allowed an easy and swift advancement of the transition towards the Socialist State (Chávez 2007b). The transition was outlined in the First Socialist Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Nation 2007-2013, which included a five steps strategy to create the Venezuelan socialist model named the Five Motors of the Bolivarian Revolution. It is worth describing briefly the sequence proposed by Chávez for the ‘ignition’ of the Five Motors:

First Motor: *Ley Habilitante* (Enabling Law to give special powers to the President to legislate)

Second Motor: *Reforma Constitucional* (Reform of the 1999 Constitution, Socialist rule of law -the proposal lost the referendum vote in 2007)

Third Motor: *Educación “Moral y Luces”* (Lights and Morals Education, socialist values in national public education)

Fourth Motor: *Nueva Geometría del Poder* (New Geometry of Power, socialist reorganisation of national geopolitics, the re-distribution of political, economic, social and military power in the national territory)

Fifth Motor: *Explosión del poder comunal* (Explosion of Communal Power, the implementation and consolidation of the Communal State, socialist democracy).

The First Motor, the Enabling Law, was named ‘the law of laws’ that granted Hugo Chávez all the legislative powers to reform laws and create new ones. In other words, it is the law that allowed him to concentrate all the Bureaucratic Powers of the state. The First Motor needed to run in parallel with the Second Motor: the reform of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 1999 (CBRV) to expand control over the oil and gas industry to consolidate Chávez as the embodiment of the New Magical State, whilst insisting on creating an alternative model to reorganise the territory (Chávez 2007c, p.65). The Third Motor is a national plan of moral, political, economic, and social education. The Fourth Motor consists in the creation of the ‘New Geometry of Power’ (associated with the reform of the political territorial division in the Second Motor), proposed as a way to re-distribute political, social, economic and military powers over the space of the country according to the new socialist order (Chávez 2007c, p.67). Finally, the first four motors create the conditions for the ignition of the fifth: Communal Power. The climax of the sequence of ‘ignition’ is the establishment of the Socialist State, and with it the complete dismantlement of the existing institutional apparatus (Chávez 2007c, p.72).

It also involved the creation of a socialist model of federal territories and cities to transition towards the socialist city, a city where communal power would render parishes, councils, municipalities and its authorities obsolete (Chávez 2007c, p.69). Chávez affirmed that all these ideas occurred to him whilst flying over the countryside in a helicopter using binoculars to look below like a modernist town planner and wondering what could be done to develop the large expanses of uninhabited land which he saw as voids of bureaucratic power: ‘we have great uninhabited spaces where there is no state, where there is no law, and therefore there is no Republic’ (2007c, p.70).

This chapter is particularly concerned with the Fourth Motor: the development of the New Geometry of Power to eliminate what was regarded as gaps of State Space authority through the redistribution of power across the national territory. The term is an appropriation of Doreen Massey’s ‘power-geometry of time-space compression’, which concerns power differentials regarding who and who doesn’t control flow and mobility which reflects the unequal distribution of power in relation to time-space compression (Massey 1991, p.149; Massey 1994, p.150). The term time-space compression, first proposed by David Harvey to refer to the acceleration of technology, communications and economic activities that lead to the annihilation of spatial boundaries and distances is used by Massey to speak of ‘the geographical stretching of social relations, and to our experience of the world’ unevenly distributed under a predominantly westernised and colonised view (Massey 1994, p.147). Massey’s rhetoric was important for Hugo Chávez, her language was influential but it wasn’t applied in the terms she intended, as the following quote from Chávez inaugural speech of 8 January 2007 demonstrates:

‘The fourth: something that sounds a little technical, pardon me, the new geometry of power over the national map. The new geometry, you know that is has like three dimensions, the dimension in line, the distance; the dimension in extension of a territory and the volumetric dimension, the content, the volume. I want us to redesign the geometry of power in Venezuela. This will lead to depths. An example is how the Apure State is organised, this will take us to review organic laws such as the municipal councils, that remains intact and even more, it’s worse than before, Municipal Councils that do not have any power, that are the same old structures, the same old fourth republican State, the regions of the country, how to achieve a symmetrical application of political power, of economic, social, military power across the length and width of the whole territory’ (Chávez 2007d)

Although in this speech Chávez presents the notion of New Power Geometry in simplistic geometric terms, he acknowledged that the existing deficiencies of bureaucratic power over the territory could endanger the consolidation of the Socialist State, a crucial matter for the longevity of his political project. Lefebvre's notion of State Space elaborated by Brenner & Elden is useful to understand this. Territory is a political form of space shaped by historically specific forms of economic and political interventions of the state. Given that Chávez's ultimate purpose was to bring into being a future socialist society he set off to completely restructure the state apparatus, in the process demolishing the bureaucratic structures that were deemed an obstacle or unnecessary. A new Socialist State could not be consolidated unless it manifested as well as a Socialist State Space, crucial not only in terms of the Bureaucratic Power of the state but most importantly to secure control and authority over the subsoil from which oil wealth and the magical powers of the New Magical State originate.

The unexpected death of Hugo Chávez in 2013 left the transition towards the Socialist State Space incomplete and orphaned of its mastermind. The need to consolidate the Socialist State in the absence of Chávez prompted the publication of a posthumous compendium of Chávez's ideas on the New Geometry of Power. The book *Estado Comunal: La Nueva Geometría del Poder* (Comunal State: The New Geometry of Power) (2014), published by the National Assembly was written by Manuel Briceño Méndez, a representative of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela PSUV to the National Assembly and a member of the Permanent Commission of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change. The book is presented as a 'humble pedagogical contribution in the revolutionary debate' around the creation of the new Socialist State, an alternative to the destructive model of capitalism to enable the territorialisation of public policies necessary to achieve 'social collective wellbeing and supreme happiness' (2014, p.10). Most relevant for this thesis is that the book (Briceño Méndez 2014, p.11) outlines how Hugo Chávez ideas for the creation of a new socialist society were tied to the territory.

Therefore, rather than providing a critical discussion on the 'New Geometry of Power', the book primarily echoes the structure of Chávez's Second Socialist Plan for the Nation 2013-2019 (Maduro Moros 2013), which calls for the territorialisation of politics, in particular geographical spaces defined by the communities, which would then 'expand like a giant spider web, covering the whole territory' (Briceño Méndez 2014, p.12) through the complete disaggregation of the bureaucratic power into specific geographical areas of popular power to conform a 'socialist geographical space' with political, social, economic and historical dimensions (Briceño Méndez 2014, pp.13, 16, 26). The book does not provide a working definition of 'socialist geographical

space', it is used to broadly refer to the territorialisation of the public policies of the Socialist State, as a way of to consolidate a Socialist State Space.

However, the book makes no mentions of oil, and by that same token, of Petrosocialism, it only refers generally to 'natural resources' which can be read between the lines as an abandonment of Petrosocialism, and 'sowing oil' upon the death of Hugo Chávez. By 2014 the steep decline of global oil prices had reached historic lows, PDVSA had been showing severe deficiencies due to the overextension of its duties and lack of investment, which translated into a severe withdrawal of the oil wealth that formed the basis of Petrosocialism.

The next part of this chapter takes a chronological approach to examine the process of dismantlement and disaggregation of bureaucratic power as prescribed by the National Project Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan 2007-2013. It is particularly concerned with the process of abrogation of the existing legal instruments of territorial management and creation of the legal entities of the Socialist State Space. It demonstrates that the process was far from coherent as it was fraught with inconsistencies that further fragmented and eroded the already diminished state capacity in urban governance, particularly in Caracas. Although it did not translate into an actual transformation of the material space of the city, it had clear and palpable implications in generating an overlap of conflicting Absolute-Representations of Space confirming elites' perceptions of institutional chaos. This is important to the overall argument of this thesis, as the overlaps and discrepancies of Absolute-Representations of Space of the abrogated policy instruments, PDVSA's State Space and the Socialist State were instrumental in enabling PDVSA La Estancia to override the authority of municipalities by abiding to the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons. This allowed PDVSA La Estancia to appropriate the material space of the city re-conceptualised as an oil field, pertaining to the Oil Social Districts, made manifest physically in the city and discursively in the adverts through the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit that binds culture to the subsoil, conceived by the oil company as a material entity that accumulates in the subsoil, under the tight control of the Petrostate.

The re-election of Hugo Chávez's in 2006 marked a shift in his policies when he put forward the National Project Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan 2007-2013 (PPS) along with the Five Motors of the Revolution, discussed earlier. The PPS (Chávez 2008) is subdivided into six 'directives':

- I. New Socialist Ethic
- II. Supreme Social Happiness
- III. Protagonist and Revolutionary Democracy

#### IV. Socialist Productive Model

#### V. New National Geopolitics

#### VI. New International Geopolitics (Venezuela: New Energy World Power)

The PPS required the replacement of the existing institutional apparatus with the apparatus of the Socialist State. Of special interest for this chapter are directives IV, V and VI, for what they reveal about how the PPS conceptualised the relationship between territory, Petrosocialism and the consolidation of the Socialist State. Section IV establishes that the socialist model is founded on the state's total control over all productive activities considered strategic for the country's development, the oil industry in particular (Chávez 2008, p.43).

In this regard, section V diagnosed Venezuela's existing 'socio-territorial model' as the product of the dependency on oil exports managed through a formerly neoliberal PDVSA (Chávez 2008, p.57). The criticised 'socio-territorial model' manifested in cities concentrated along the central-northern coastal areas, deemed characteristic of an export-based economy which created a 'structural disarticulation' anchored in a deficient regional and national integration that prioritised connections between ports and centres of primary extraction and the main cities that consume the oil rent; cities that also concentrate large misery belts as well as unregulated human settlements that lack basic services (Chávez 2008, p.59). In other words, the PPS speaks of a system of oil cities in Quintero's terms, engendered by a national oil industry dominated by foreign corporations, and more recently, by a neoliberal PDVSA. To overcome these hindrances, the 'territorial structure' had to be modified (Chávez 2008, p.61). The guidelines of the PPS for the years 2007-2013 laid the foundations for the transition towards a Socialist State Space congruent with Petrosocialism.

Nonetheless, directive VI acknowledges the dependence of the socialist project on the oil rent. Whilst directive V denounced the pervasive influence of global oil capitalism and a rentier economy in the country's distorted 'socio-territorial model', directive VI affirms that oil would continue to have a significant influence on Venezuela's future, a country that could potentially become an energetic world power due to its vast reserves of crude oil. Moreover, it claims that in the face of a world hungry for fossil fuels, Venezuela should not refuse to produce it. Yet again this reveals Hugo Chávez unrealistic expectations for believing in an 'irreversible trend in the increase of oil prices' (Chávez 2008, p.77), discussed in part one. In this context it was the duty of PDVSA to maximise production and increase oil revenues to the state's coffers since, as this thesis argues, the development and longevity of Petrosocialism and the Socialist State were completely dependent on the global oil market and PDVSA's production capacity. It is evident

that Chávez's unrealistic reliance on an inexhaustible supply of oil with sustained high prices informed his discourse and policies. This also reveals an ambition to completely integrate a Socialist Venezuela into global oil capitalism in order to maximise oil revenues, which is in contradiction with his ambition to establish Petrosocialism as an alternative to capitalism and neoliberalism. It becomes clear that an essential contradiction runs through Petrosocialism: Chávez's goal to establish an alternative model to capitalism was heavily reliant on the success of the very model he proposed to eradicate.

However, it becomes coherent in terms of Chávez's exercise of Bureaucratic Power given that the New Magical State is by definition an oil rentier state, its powers and survival are reliant on the strength of a national oil industry reframed as revolutionary that provides the resources to consolidate the state's ownership and control over the territory, its subsoil and its natural resources. Chávez's discourse also aimed to re-frame the relationship between the state and its territory, but contrary to Lefebvre's conceptual point of the 'territory effect' (Brenner & Elden 2009, p.373) there was no attempt to mask or naturalise the spatial interventions of the state. Chávez was explicit in his ambition to dismantle existing political-administrative structures. The CBRV, the development plans for the nation and the new laws manifested Chávez's will to create a new Socialist State Space through an urban planning based on the New Geometry of Power with the creation of Federal Provinces, Functional Districts, Special Military Regions and Special Authorities to substitute the authority of municipalities, parishes and mayoralties. The modification the legal framework of territorial organisation under which regions, states, cities, municipalities and parishes are governed was far from smooth.

The fast pace of abrogation and creation of new laws created instability and the lack of continuity magnified existing deficiencies. The case of Caracas, whose fragmented legal and institutional framework already carried deficiencies inherited from previous governments serves to illustrate the discontinuities of the transition and the mechanisms that ultimately enabled PDVSA to use the Law of Hydrocarbons to supersede the legal authority of municipalities and in the process, be interpreted and implemented as an implicit cultural policy.

In order to unpack the web of strategies deployed by the New Magical State to dismantle and reform the institutional apparatus whilst creating new legal entities that conceptualise the Socialist State Space, a detailed chronological account is needed to trace the myriad of institutional changes brought by Chávez as he disassembled the bureaucratic power of the 'counter revolutionary state' at all scales, from the CRBV to municipal laws. To remain within

the scope of this thesis, the chronological account will focus primarily on Caracas, as it is where most of PDVSA La Estancia's interventions concentrate.

The CRBV was the first constitution approved by popular referendum in the history of Venezuela. It displaced the Constitution of 1961 and inaugurated the era baptised by Chávez as the Fifth Republic. Among the innovations of the CRBV are the change of the name of the country from Republic of Venezuela to Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the reform of the structure of the government that established a decentralised government and granted greater powers to the legislative branch (King 2013, p.379). And most relevant for this thesis, the CRBV also reformed the institutional structure of the capital city. The juridical framework of Caracas' territory has been fraught with weaknesses and dispersion in terms of the policies that define the Absolute-Material Space of the city, its administrative boundaries and bureaucratic structure (Delfino 2001, pp.36–40; Negrón 2001, p.11) which manifests in severe deficiencies in urban management, as each municipality works autonomously. However, the reforms in the constitution and the later actions of Chavez's government did not remedy these weaknesses; on the contrary they were magnified as the institutional and juridical dispersion were fertile ground to implement with ease the New Magical State's territorial strategies, as the later section of this chapter illustrates.

Article 18 ratified Caracas as the seat of national power and specified that a special law had to be created to 'establish the territorial and political unity of Caracas' (Asamblea Nacional Constituyente 1999). Article 16 of the CRBV substituted the Federal District with the Capital District, mainly circumscribed to the boundaries of Libertador Municipality. The Capital District is the only district in the country under a special regime, it is a special political-territorial entity that constituted the capital of the republic but has attributions similar to the other 23 states (Gobierno del Distrito Capital n.d.). The Capital District is the permanent seat of the Presidency, many ministries, the National Assembly, the Supreme Court, Comptroller General, as well as the Joint Command of the Armed Forces and the Marine, Air Forces and the Bolivarian National Guard.



Illustration 3. Map of the Metropolitan District. Source: <http://alcaldiametropolitana.gob.ve/portal/index.php>

Although the CRBV only mentions the creation of the Capital District, Article 18 was interpreted as the foundation to create the Metropolitan District of Caracas, put in effect in 2000 through a Special Law for the Regime of the Metropolitan District of Caracas LERDMC, legislated by the National Assembly (Delfino 2002, p.134). The LERDMC established that the Material Space of the Metropolitan District is composed by Libertador Municipality/Capital District and the municipalities of Chacao, Sucre, Baruta and El Hatillo (Asamblea Nacional de La República Bolivariana de Venezuela 2000). The Metropolitan District was defined as an entity that guarantees the territorial unity of Caracas, which is confusing because the law simultaneously establishes the preservation of the territorial integrity of Miranda State, which has sway over El Hatillo and Baruta (Delfino 2002, p.137). The Metropolitan District was given the same competencies as municipalities, that also overlap with the attributions and competencies of Miranda State, rendering municipalities redundant. Moreover, the law was perceived by municipal authorities as a threat to their autonomy (Delfino 2002, pp.135, 142). As a result of the LERDMC, four different spheres of government coexist and clash within the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas: national government, Miranda State, Metropolitan District and Capital District (Delfino 2001, p.40). This fragmented and dispersed institutional landscape is the context of the extension of PDVSA's State Space, the Oil Social District, over the Metropolitan District, which allowed PDVSA La Estancia to intervene in the restoration of public art and public spaces across the city, displacing the authority of municipalities.

Hugo Chávez put forward in 2007 a referendum for a reform of the CRBV, coinciding with the launch of Petrosocialism. The reform was conceived as an instrument for the dismantlement of the 'constitutional and legal superstructure' that had sustained the capitalist mode of production, in order to embark on the construction of a socialist society for the twenty-first century and the establishment of a New Geometry of Power. Although the reform lost the referendum vote, all the laws, decrees and policy instruments created right before and after Chavez's re-election in December 2006 conformed to the precepts of the repealed constitutional reform. Even more, the legal foundations for the Socialist State had already been laid out by the National Assembly in clear breach of the CRBV, with the sanction in 2006 of the *Ley de Consejos Comunales* (Law of Communal Councils), reformed and elevated to the status of Organic Law in 2009 (Brewer Carías 2011, p.127). In December 2010, a month before the newly elected National Assembly took power with a larger representation of the opposition, a number of organic laws were swiftly sanctioned (Brewer Carías 2011, p.128) to establish the legal framework of the Socialist State: Organic Law of the Popular Power of the Communes, Organic Law of the Communal Economic System, Organic Law of Public and Communal Planning, as well as reforms to the

Organic Law of Municipal Public Power and the Organic Law of Local Councils of Public Planning. These laws reorganised the bureaucratic structure of the state under the principles of Socialism to establish a communal economic system that contradicts, and runs in parallel to, the mixed economic structure and economic liberties established by the CRBV. The Commune, defined as an entity of direct popular sovereignty, is the backbone of the socialist order, meant to displace the municipality as the primary entity of territorial organisation (Brewer Carías 2011, p.129). Under this principle, municipalities are meant to surrender their power and authority to Communal Councils (Brewer Carías 2011, p.129).

The deficiency in coherent spatial policies for Caracas were compounded with the transition towards the Socialist State Space, evidenced by the journey from bill to legal vacuum of the Organic Law for the Planning and Management of the Organisation of Territory LOPGOT (Fig. 1). The LOPGOT created in 2005 abrogated the laws of Organic Law for the Organisation of Territory of 1983 and the Organic Law of Urban Planning of 1987, the key spatial policy instruments that shaped the role of institutions with competencies in urban planning and management in Caracas, and the country at large. The publication of the LOPGOT in the Official Gazette of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela included a *vacatio legis* of six months to come into effect in March 2006. In March 2006, a partial amendment to the law was published with another *vacatio legis* of six months that deferred its enactment to September 2006. The day the amendment was due to come into effect, a second amendment was published with another *vacatio legis* of six months with an specific date: 28 February 2007 (Brewer Carías 2007, p.2). In February 2007 it was repealed by the Organic Law for the Repeal of the Organic Law for the Planning and Management of Territory which consisted of only two articles. Article 1 repeals the law whilst article 2 states that the repeal would come into effect from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette. The announced publication on the Official Gazette never happened. The twice deferred LOPGOT of 2005 and the two partial amendments meant to substitute the law of 1983 never came into effect and remained in a suspended *vacatio legis* that left a vacuum in the regulation of territory and urban planning. It is in the breach left between the suspended *vacatio legis* that lingered from 2005 and the creation of the legal framework for the Communal State in 2010 that the interventions in the city by PDVSA La Estancia take place (Figure 2).

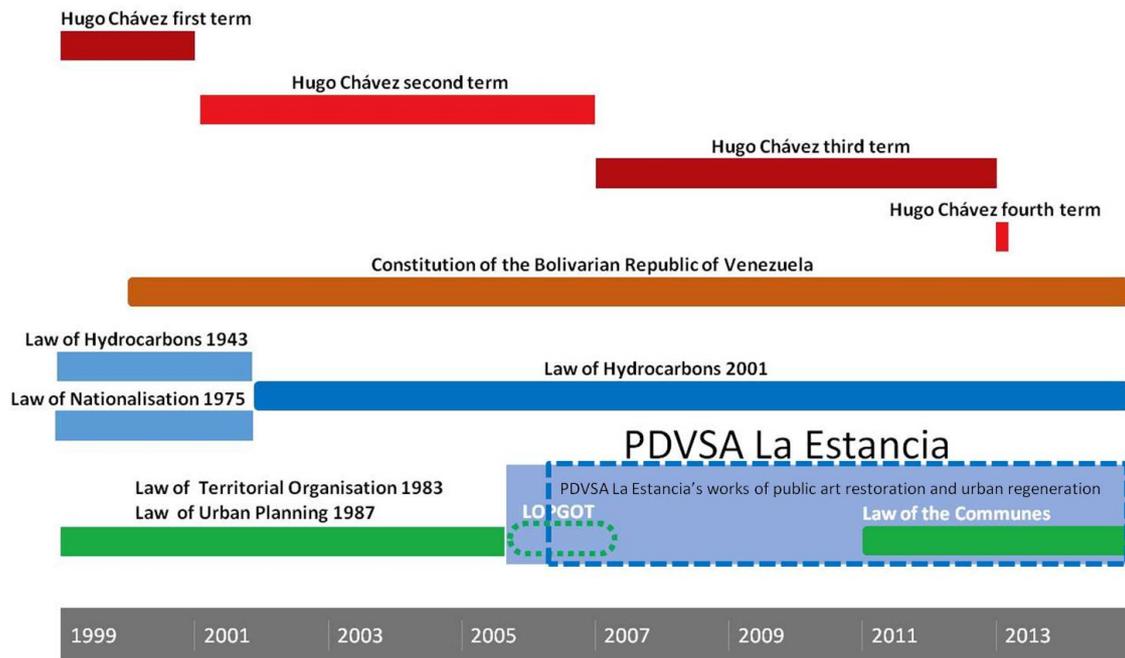
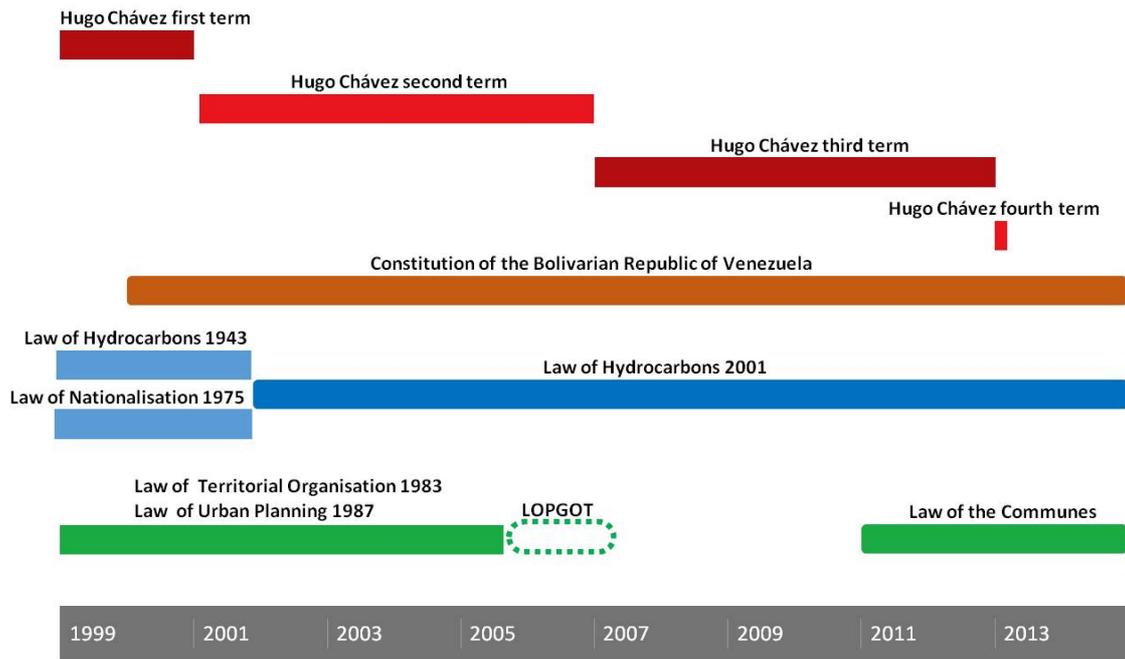


Diagram 3. PDVSA La Estancia's interventions located in the legal vacuum left by the LOGPOT

PDVSA La Estancia managed to override the unstable institutional dispersion described previously by abiding to the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, particularly Article 5, and the Oil Social Districts, further examined in chapter five. The Oil Social District is an entity of corporate management that establishes that communities surrounding oil fields must be benefitted by social programs and infrastructures funded and built by PDVSA. The Oil Social Districts cover most of the national territory. This thesis is particularly concerned with the Metropolitan Oil Social District that extends from central Guárico State in the south to the north to cover Aragua State, Miranda State and the Metropolitan District (Illustration 4).



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Illustration 4. PDVSA Social Oil Districts. Source: [http://www.pdvsa.com/PESP/Pages\\_pes/rolpdvsa/dtos\\_sociales.html](http://www.pdvsa.com/PESP/Pages_pes/rolpdvsa/dtos_sociales.html)

By definition, the Oil Social District should only cover areas of extraction and refinement of hydrocarbons. Caracas' subsoil does not contain crude oil reserves, nor has the city ever been a centre of oil crude extraction or refinement. Nonetheless, the Metropolitan Oil District covers Caracas because it is where the corporate headquarters of PDVSA are located. Thus, the headquarters of PDVSA are conceptualised as a centre of oil extraction and distribution of oil rent right in the midst of Libertador Municipality, effectively reframing the Absolute-Material

Space of Caracas as an oil field. The legal vacuum left by the transition towards the Socialist State Space also created the conditions to conceptualise and enact the Oil Social District as PDVSA's parallel State Space. This is what enabled PDVSA La Estancia to absorb Caracas in the 'areas of influence' of PDVSA and undertake its works of public art and public space restoration across the city.

### *Conclusion*

The discursive entanglements between Hugo Chávez's discourse and the creation of the new spatial strategies of the Socialist State Space are a mobilisation of his bureaucratic power to completely remodel sociospatial relations according to his political project. This chapter argued that the power of Chávez's discourse to translate into action originated on his embodiment of the New Magical State, which concentrated all the bureaucratic powers of the state in his persona. Furthermore, his model of Petrosocialism was informed by an unrealistic expectation of an inexhaustible supply of oil and high revenues that emphasised the contradiction of creating a Socialist State heavily dependent on the success of global oil capitalism since Chávez did not envision a post-oil future. The survival of the Socialist State became unequivocally dependent on a direct life line to global oil capitalism, the system he set out to challenge within Venezuela's borders when he outlined his political platform as an alternative to neoliberalism. Chávez's reliance on oil rentierism for the consolidation of the Socialist State revealed an essential contradiction that underpins Petrosocialism: its reliance on the success of the very economic model it was supposed to eradicate. Nonetheless, the contradiction gains coherence in terms of Chávez's exercise of Bureaucratic Power, given that only an oil rentier state can be a Magical State, and only oil could provide the resources needed to embark in the spatial strategies of the Socialist State to consolidate ownership and control over the territory, its subsoil and its natural resources. In this sense, territory is central to Petrosocialism. The chronological approach used to unpack the process of abrogation, creation and amendments of the legal instruments of territorial organisation guided by the premises of the New Geometry of Power, served to illustrate a process fraught with inconsistencies that entrenched diminished state capacity and created a chaotic bureaucratic landscape in urban governance, particularly in the case of Caracas.

The lack of coherence and inherent contradictions within Petrosocialism also points to the failure of the consolidation of the New Geometry of Power as a coherent spatial policy for the Socialist State. If, as Brenner and Elden have argued, territory and state are mutually constitutive, the later section of this chapter has shown that in the process of re-constituting the territory, it

created a void in spatial policies that destabilised the bureaucratic structure of the institutions that govern Caracas (as observed by elites), in order to reconstitute the state according to the ambition to create a new Socialist State. This is why territory was fundamental for Chávez's project, but in the process the spatial and territorial strategies of the Socialist State had to coexist with the structures it was meant to substitute.

In this context, the New Magical State's 'territory effect' failed to naturalise and mask its spatial interventions. The new spatial strategies were intended as an abrupt break and disruption of the institutional order inherited from previous regimes, to undermine and eventually completely substitute the existing legal apparatus. The vacuum left by the delay in pushing forward the new legal instruments, or Absolute-Representations of Space of the Socialist State, generated a chaotic bureaucratic landscape in which the only remaining stable legal framework and institution were PDVSA's. It is PDVSA, as a parallel State Space, that succeeds in the territory effect, not just by naturalising its sway over the city through the Oil Social District, but also by concealing it through the visual construction of the adverts analysed in chapter six, in which the giant oil worker becomes a naturalised sign of PDVSA's State Space.

This chapter contributes towards two of the main arguments of this thesis. First, it has shown the institutional circumstances that enabled the social and cultural arm of PDVSA, PDVSA La Estancia, to interpret and implement the Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit territorial and cultural policy instrument, with the Social Oil District functioning as PDVSA's State Space. Secondly, it has illustrated how the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas is conceptualised as an oil field, absorbed by the Metropolitan Oil Social District by construing the corporate headquarters of PDVSA as a centre of oil extractive activity which enables PDVSA La Estancia to supersede regional and municipal authority.

Chapter five expands on this discussion by looking in particular at the speeches of the former President of PDVSA Rafael Ramírez and the former General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia, Beatrice Sanso de Ramírez. The chapter explores the discursive strands that run through the state-owned oil company's narrative of its commitment with Petrosocialism, assuming the 'magical' power of marvel of the new Magical State confined to the realm of oil around the narratives of 'sowing oil' and 'renewable oil'. It will also examine how PDVSA La Estancia's management of city space compensates for the state's diminished capacity, and how through its direct access to the oil rent, it is able to extend its own dominant space over Caracas and the country at large, aided by the interpretation of Article 5 of the Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy.

## Chapter five: PDVSA La Estancia as an instrument of ‘Sowing Oil’ that ‘Harvests Culture’

‘Oil, to paraphrase the famed essayist Arturo Uslar Pietri, not only determined the character of the Venezuelan economy but also created a false image of the nation, a national consensus premised on the illusion of prosperity.’ (Tinker Salas 2009, p.6)

Hugo Chávez’s oil-driven restructure of the national territory is not without precedents in Venezuelan history. During the first half of the twentieth century, established foreign oil companies not only intervened in national politics, they also reorganised the territory, both in rural and urban areas, shaping the attitudes of subsequent generations towards the oil industry - whether national or foreign- as oil became akin to progress, development and the emerging modern nation (Tinker Salas 2014, p.18). It was in the context of the oil windfall brought by the concessions in the 1930s, and later by the oil boom that followed the nationalisation in the 1970s, that Arturo Uslar Pietri became an influential voice who asked the nation’s leaders and elites to sow the oil. Sowing oil, as chapter three argues, is central to enduring and conflicting views around oil in Venezuela (Pérez Alfonzo 2011; Pérez Schael 1993; Quintero 2011). Uslar Pietri’s used farming language as a didactic device to suggest the manner in which he believed oil should be invested, by making reference to the riches of the land rather than to oil as an immaterial and ephemeral source of wealth (Pérez Schael 1993, pp.199–205). In the aftermath of the collapse of oil prices in the 1980s and 1990s (period that led to the rise of Hugo Chávez), sowing oil had become an impossible utopia.

Nonetheless, Hugo Chávez’s adoption of Uslar Pietri’s slogan to baptise his national oil policy reveals a discursive construction used to present Petrosocialism as a strategy that succeeds in sowing oil. The Sowing Oil Plan was conceived as a long term strategy, but with the passing of Hugo Chávez in 2013, only PDVSA could exert the Bureaucratic Powers of the New Magical State, as this chapter demonstrates by looking into PDVSA La Estancia’s discursive narrative of achieving an ‘utopia of the possible’ and by the construction of the myth of ‘renewable oil’ explored in depth in chapter six. This chapter asks: is there a vision of the city in Petrosocialism, and who has the ‘magical’ Bureaucratic Powers to enact such a vision? Whilst Petrosocialism is the instrument to constitute the Socialist State Space, the disarticulated process described in chapter four enabled PDVSA to expand the Oil Social District as a dominant parallel State Space

that absorbed Caracas. If the city is the material space of the state's bureaucratic power, this chapter examines that PDVSA, as the engine of Petrosocialism, is exercising its power over Caracas by envisioning the city as a Petrosocialist urban oil field.

To answer these questions, this chapter examines the speeches of the president of PDVSA Rafael Ramírez to identify the entanglements with Hugo Chávez's discourse. Then it examines elites' perspectives on the relationship between oil, the state and city planning which frames their opinions on the role of PDVSA La Estancia. Through the analysis of the interviews four themes are identified: one, close relationship between oil wealth, PDVSA and the city; two, the vision of the city in Petrosocialism; three, Caracas as an oil city; and four, PDVSA La Estancia as an instrument of sowing oil that 'harvests' culture expediently, in the terms defined by Yúdice, that conceptualised culture-as-mineral-deposit. Finally, the chapter builds on the four themes by examining the speeches of the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia. This chapter draws on Zygmunt Bauman (2004) and Jeremy Ahearne (2009) to demonstrate how these discursive constructions, built on the stratum of the disjointed process to constitute the Socialist State Space examined in chapter four, enabled PDVSA La Estancia to interpret Article 5 of the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy. It traces the discursive use of culture by PDVSA La Estancia that frames the institution's actions as an 'utopia of the possible', based on construing the city as an oil field whilst conceptualising a symbiotic and cyclical relationship between oil, land, and culture condensed in the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit by stating that PDVSA La Estancia is 'oil that harvests culture'.

### *PDVSA as an Agent of Revolutionary Change*

Rafael Ramírez, president of PDVSA between 2004 and 2013, was one of Chávez's closest allies. Ramírez occupied simultaneously the posts of president of the state-owned oil company, Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Vice-President of Territorial Development of the Republic and President of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela PSUV (Párraga 2010, p.122; Colgan 2013, pp.205–206). Ramírez effectively had complete control over the national oil industry. He delineated PDVSA's socialist profile (Párraga 2010, pp.24–26) by expanding its functions beyond the core commercial mission of producing the maximum oil revenue to the state by channelling the investment of the oil rent into the construction of the Socialist State. This section uses Critical Discourse Analysis to trace the reverberations of Chávez's discourses in the speeches of Rafael Ramírez.

A word frequency query found that the five most frequently used words are:

PDVSA 734

Petróleo (Oil) 653

Petrolera 644

Nuestro/Nuestros 619/537

Nacional 471

Unsurprisingly, the most referenced terms are the company itself (PDVSA) and *Petróleo* (oil); the terms *nuestro/nuestros* (our/ours) and *nacional* (national) hint at a nationalistic discourse in regards to oil in tune with Hugo Chávez's rhetoric. In a similar manner to the analysis of Hugo Chávez's speeches in chapter four, to trace the discursive entanglements between oil and socialism, text queries were conducted with the terms *socialista*, *socialismo*, *petróleo*, adding in this instance *siembra petrolera* (sowing oil) to identify the discursive fragments that intersect oil, PDVSA's Sowing Oil Plan and Socialism. The word *socialismo* is referenced in five of his speeches, most mentions concentrated on his speech delivered to celebrate the centenary of the burst of the first oil field of Zumaque I:

Name	References	Coverage
Sesión Especial Con Motivo De La Conmemoración Del Centenario Del Inicio De La Actividad Comercial Petrolera En Venezuela, Con La Explotación Del Pozo Zumaque I, 2014	4	0.04%
Memoria y Cuenta de los Ministros de la Vicepresidencia del Área de Desarrollo Territorial, 2013	3	0.05%
Discurso del ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y presidente de PDVSA, Rafael Ramírez, en la presentación del Informe de Gestión Anual de PDVSA 2012	3	0.01%
PDVSA Fiel al Legado de Chávez. Discurso del Ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y Presidente de Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A., Rafael Ramírez, en la Jornada PDVSA Sector productivo nacional conexo, 2012	2	0.01%
Discurso de Rafael Ramírez, Presidente de PDVSA y Ministro de Energía y Petróleo, ante la Asamblea Nacional, 2005	1	0.01%

Table 10

The word *socialista* (socialist) appears only on three of the sixteen speeches; most notably it is mentioned twice in the speech delivered at the hearing of ministers for territorial development in 2013:

Name	References	Coverage
Memoria y Cuenta de los Ministros de la Vicepresidencia del Área de Desarrollo Territorial, 2013	2	0.03%
PDVSA Fiel al Legado de Chávez. Discurso del Ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y Presidente de Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A., Rafael Ramírez, en la Jornada PDVSA Sector productivo nacional conexo, 2012	1	0.01%
Sesión Especial Con Motivo De La Conmemoración Del Centenario Del Inicio De La Actividad Comercial Petrolera En Venezuela, Con La Explotación Del Pozo Zumaque I, 2014	2	0.02%

Table 11

The words *socialista* and *socialism* are absent from the speech delivered in August 2005 to launch the Sowing Oil Plan. It is mentioned only once, as can be seen in table 11, in the speech delivered to the National Assembly in May of that same year, right at the last line of the text, with no other references made. It is after 2012 that both terms appear in his speeches, but not as frequently considering the public commitment he made to Hugo Chávez's political project.

Relevant discourse fragments were selected from the speeches by cross referencing the terms oil, socialist and socialism, collated in Table 12:

Discourse Fragment	Speech title	year	context
It is a revolutionary policy because oil income is going to become and that is how it is established in our Plan of the Fatherland, the main lever to overcome the <u>oil</u> rentierist model, the main lever to create the material foundations for the construction of <u>socialism</u> in our country.	Discurso del ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y presidente de PDVSA, Rafael Ramírez, en la presentación del Informe de Gestión Anual de PDVSA 2012 Salón Simón Bolívar, Complejo Ministerio-Pdvsa	3 May 2013	Presentation of PDVSA Annual report
We intend to capture that vast oil rent so we can build an alternative model to the <u>oil</u> rentier	PDVSA FIEL AL LEGADO DE CHÁVEZ Discurso del Ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y Presidente de	16 May 2013	'PDVSA Loyal to the Legacy of Chávez', speech for the productive sectors of

model, a productive model that we have said, will be <u>socialist</u> .	Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A., Rafael Ramírez, en la Jornada PDVSA-Sector productivo nacional conexo. Maracaibo, Estado Zulia		PDVSA in Maracaibo
President Chávez, indisputable leader of our revolutionary process, has said it with clarity and courage, our revolution is profoundly <u>anti-imperialist</u> and <u>socialism</u> is the path of our salvation. It is the <u>socialist</u> fatherland or death.	Comparecencia de ministros para el desarrollo territorial	4 November 2013	Hearing of the Reports and Accounts of the Ministers of the Vicepresidency of Territorial Development
The <u>oil</u> rent must be an instrument for the construction of a new economic order, it must be an instrument for the construction of <u>socialism</u> .  The society dreamt by our Eternal Commander Hugo Chávez: ‘the <u>socialist</u> society’, is the best recognition we can make to the selfless, disinterested work, to the love of the humble, to the Fatherland of Commander Chávez.	Sesión especial con motivo de la conmemoración del centenario Del inicio de la actividad comercial petrolera en Venezuela, con la explotación del pozo Zumaque I, Maracaibo	5 August 2014	Special session in the Centenary of the beginnings of the commercial activity the oil industry with the exploitation of the Zumaque I oil well

Table 12

The following statements were extracted from the discourse fragments for analysis, identifying the relevant performative utterances:

- A. It is a revolutionary policy because that oil income is going to become and that is how it is established in our Plan of the Fatherland, the main lever to overcome the oil rentierist model, the main lever to create the material foundations for the construction of socialism in our country.
- B. President Chávez, indisputable leader of our revolutionary process, has said it with clarity and courage, our revolution is profoundly anti-imperialist and socialism is the path of our salvation. It is the socialist fatherland or death.
- C. The oil rent must be an instrument for the construction of a new economic order, it must be an instrument for the construction of socialism.
- D. The society our Eternal Commander Hugo Chávez dreamt: 'the socialist society'.

The performative utterance in statement A establishes PDVSA's new identity as a revolutionary institution. By defining the Sowing Oil Plan as a revolutionary policy, he mirrors Chávez's contention that the national oil policy laid the foundations for the advancement of Petrosocialism and the construction of the Socialist State. Here Ramírez declares that his Bureaucratic Power as president of the oil company, Minister of Oil and Energy and Vice-president of the ruling party, is subservient to Chávez. His discourse is able to exert power and contribute to construct the Socialist State because, as discussed in chapter two, it is institutionalised and linked to action. The Sowing Oil Plan's 25 years timeframe is an instrument put at the service of the power of the New Magical State embodied by Hugo Chávez, to contribute in the construction and perpetuation of Petrosocialism. Along these lines, echoes of Chávez's discourse on the Socialist State are found in statements B, C, D and E. Ramírez's performative utterances do not intend to describe reality, they describe the act of creation of a future that is built as it is verbalised, in which the oil rent is presented as the foundation to build the Socialist State and the future socialist society.

However, it is contradictory for the head of an international oil corporation to affirm that the path of salvation from oil rentierism and capitalism is found only in socialism as PDVSA's *raison d'être* is to produce the highest oil revenue to the state by taking part in the dynamics of global oil capitalism. There is a conceptual conflict in Ramírez's condemnation of capitalism: the oil rent that responds to the capitalist economic order is put at the service of creating an alternative economic model to capitalism, which is what Petrosocialism was meant to achieve. Overall,

Ramírez's performative utterances conceal that Venezuelan oil revenues are tied to global capitalism and are highly dependent on the fluctuations of the international oil markets. Nonetheless, the purpose of these speeches is to discursively establish PDVSA's identity as a revolutionary corporation even though in practice, for all matters concerned with the oil industry, it remained a capitalist oil corporation. As this thesis has already established, only the vast wealth produced by PDVSA could provide the necessary resources for the creation of the new socialist society dreamt by Hugo Chávez.

Hence, the relationship between oil and the state that the speeches convey reaffirms PDVSA's allegiance to Hugo Chávez. Whilst Chávez intention was to exert close control over PDVSA and the use of the oil rent, in practice, the oil company became a parallel state, with its own parallel State Space, as demonstrated in chapter four.

To summarise, Ramírez instrumentalises his bureaucratic power as the head of the national oil industry to contribute to Chávez's vision. His discourse is able to exert power and construct a new national reality because he is in complete control of the entity that extracts and commercialises oil as well as the bureaucratic entities that govern it. The wealth produced by PDVSA's participation in the global oil market is at the service of the New Magical State and Petrosocialism.

The following section examines elites' perspectives in regards to the influence oil wealth exerts on urban development and city planning by looking at the intersections between oil wealth, PDVSA, the state and city planning in relation to the work of PDVSA La Estancia.

### *Elites' Perspectives on PDVSA, Oil Wealth and the City*

It will become clear throughout this section, as in the previous chapter, that when elites speak of the relationship between oil and the city, it is used as a proxy for speaking about how the state deploys the oil rent in urban development. None of the interviewees suggested that Venezuela should cease to be an oil rentier state. On the contrary, elites believe that oil is, should and will be the main livelihood of the country, even in the midst of a dramatic downturn in global oil prices. Uslar Pietri's slogan 'sowing oil' underlines the way most elites envisioned how the relationship between oil wealth, PDVSA and the city should manifest:

'You know we always add to the spaces an oil element, because we all need to feel we are oil workers. That's the idea. There always will be an oil mural, an oil sculpture. The

only contact the common Venezuelan has with oil when they don't work for PDVSA, or if they don't live in an oil area, is the petrol station. We have to feel oil workers. This exists because PDVSA exists. That's the idea.' (PDVSA La Estancia)

'oil is not being used as a tool of transformation and future development' (O3)

'The city being the realm where the largest part of the population of the country is concentrated, it's in its facilities and public spaces where the conditions must be given so she can find the conditions that allow it to improve its quality of life, in particular the groups with lower incomes: education, health, mobility, are topics in which the income from oil should decidedly contribute in the action of the State, above all in moments of bonanza.' (R2)

'The relationship should be like a sponsor with social responsibility, independent from partisan interests, open to all social sectors without exclusion, detached from populism, detached from the oil aristocracy that had its quota of responsibility in determined moments.' (R4)

'The first consideration is to stop understanding the country as a 'rich country' when in reality it isn't. That would suppose the establishment of urban policies of greater rationality and realise efforts for the recovering of investments, greater budget autonomy for municipal authorities and cease the capricious spending of the resources derived from that understanding of "wealth"' (R1)

'oil must have a presence in every urban settlement so they won't be in the state of misery they are in, there should be a [PDVSA] La Estancia in Cabimas, Lagunillas, in Maturín oil camps, in Monagas.' (A1)

'If PDVSA has the money and can do it, it should pay its social responsibility quota like any company, why does it have to pay all its social responsibility in Caracas?' (A1)

'The 'oil wealth' is not wealth, but a great quantity of money available; as long as we don't understand that difference nothing can be done.' (A6)

'PDVSA La Estancia has contributed with this loss of focus that we have now with the oil industry... because, let's be clear, when I criticise all this with oil it's not that I'm saying... no, oil is great, that thing gives money! We have to live off it, we have to... We

should all have the fortune of living in an oil country, we should all know, let's say, more about oil and live more from oil' (A3)

'I think that if we don't take advantage of the oil wealth to turn the city around, we are simply wasting time and resources.' (J1)

A couple of elites were adamant on disproving that Venezuela is a rich country. They affirmed there needs to be a realisation that oil wealth does not make a country 'wealthy' (R1, A6). The abandonment of the belief of being a 'rich country' (which is a vestige of the oil boom era of the Great Venezuela of the 1970s) would end with capricious and wasteful spending and help establish rational investment and financial autonomy to local governments (R1, A6).

Nonetheless, the 'sowing oil' narrative runs through their statements as an unsatisfied demand to invest the oil rent in industrial and social development; it is a phrase that has endured in political discourse as well as in colloquial conversations.

Hugo Chávez's Sowing Oil Plan, as chapter four argued, appropriated Uslar Pietri's slogan but PDVSA La Estancia, rather than seeking to establish a new relationship between oil wealth, the state and the city is seeking to create a new direct relationship between citizens and oil by stating that 'we all need to feel oil workers'. Their reasoning is that, in Caracas and other major cities, the only contact the common citizen has with the oil industry is the petrol station in a detached and utilitarian relationship. Caracas is regarded as the city where this strategy is most needed, because it is where oil is less visible and where the citizen has had less evident, direct and close contact with the oil industry. They aim to change the mechanics and meaning of that relationship by adding 'oil elements' to the city through oil-inspired and oil-funded public art. And where such a literal oil elements cannot be added, PDVSA La Estancia resorts to visual constructions in adverts that turn cultural objects into 'oil elements' by digitally adding a giant oil worker to the images of public art and public spaces restored, as examined in chapter six.

According to the majority of elites interviewed, PDVSA should isolate itself from any political affiliations and stop functioning as parallel state as it had done under the regime of Hugo Chávez. In other words, elites regard PDVSA as a private transnational oil corporation that should invest its revenues as social corporate responsibility to all Venezuelan society because, as A1 asserts, poverty exists where the social investment from the oil company is absent.

Therefore, if PDVSA has the capacity and the resources to invest where the state seems unable to, it should do so nationwide and not just in Caracas. Moreover, elites want PDVSA to behave as the foreign oil corporations did during the first half of the twentieth century that invested in

the infrastructure the state was not capable to build. But this would entrench the circumstances that are currently allowing PDVSA to function as a parallel state whilst perpetuating the enduring myth of 'sowing oil'.

It was relevant for this thesis to ask elites if they thought of Caracas as an 'oil city', in the terms defined by anthropologist Rodolfo Quintero (2011) given that Caracas is being reconceptualised as an oil field by PDVSA. As the statements outlined below show, there was disagreement on whether to characterise Caracas as such:

'Without a doubt. *Was*. We are fighting for it to stop being that through the popular, national and revolutionary Sowing Oil Plan' (PDVSA La Estancia)

'An oil city is literally, in Venezuelan history, one that depends on the dynamic imposed by the exploration, extraction, processing, distribution and export of that natural resource. (...) But the concept is not literal, since it applies, like Quintero passed on to us, to the cities in which the economic benefits of the oil activity materialise, in all their phases. Therefore, Caracas is, since the first decade of the 20th century, an oil city.' (R4)

'Yes. The important infrastructure that exists in the city is nothing but the result of the centralisation of the resources derived from that industry' (R2)

'Certainly. The concentration of resources derived from oil income allow to name it that way' (R1)

'this city is the product of the dynamic and the synergy of the oil issue, of the rent, of oil extractivism' (A2)

'I would say absolutely yes. And unfortunately yes. (...) It is an oil city, and a city with a culture of oil, that exists in the state that it's in and in the citizen' (J1)

'it would be an incomprehensible reduction to say that Caracas is an oil city' (R3)

'To consider Caracas an oil city? Maybe it was, but it never had a face' (A1)

'From my particular point of view an 'Oil City' should be a city product of the important resources that oil generates and its good administration (...) Oslo could be an example of an 'Oil City' like Houston or Toronto. Not Caracas.' (A5)

'I don't know what that would mean; if it is for 'city of the automobile', yes, but it's not the only one in the planet' (A6)

'I'm afraid, in our imaginary, that category refers to another thing. I think of Houston, but not Caracas' (W1)

The disagreement stemmed from the attributes the interviewees believed constituted an oil city as such, since the centres of oil extraction and production are located in remote regions, and the oil-related infrastructures present in Caracas, besides the petrol station, are of a corporate nature. Caracas is not, and has never been, a site of oil extraction or refinement, but it is where resources and wealth concentrate and circulate (R1), materialised in works of infrastructure and architecture that the city would not have if it wasn't for the oil wealth (R2). Venezuela has been oil dependent since early twentieth century; the modern city in Venezuela is a by-product of the dynamics of the oil industry (A2). However, an oil city is predominantly characterised in negative terms by elites because they relate oil wealth to the institutional chaos the country is submerged in (J1). This negative perception contradicts the historical attribute of oil as the carrier of modernity and progress, as elites now believe that oil wealth is what undermines institutions, along the lines of the discussion developed in chapter one on how oil rents 'have a strong and decisive influence on the nature of the state' (Luciani 1987, p.68) specially at times of oil booms (Karl 1997; Maass 2009; Ross 2012) which alter fiscal and bureaucratic structures. This perception is substantiated by five of the interviewees who affirm that Caracas is not an oil city because unlike Houston (A5, W1) it is not directly involved in the extraction of oil (P2).

The only ambiguous answer was given by PDVSA La Estancia, saying that Caracas is 'without a doubt' an oil city, but that 'they' are working for it to stop being one. But PDVSA La Estancia contradicts itself when, as the next section illustrates, it declares that it is an instrument of the Sowing Oil Plan, and that the Law of Hydrocarbons grants it authority over Caracas by using the Oil Social District to supersede municipal authority. Thus, they effectively conceptualise the Absolute-Material Space of the city as an oil field.

According to Venezuelan anthropologist Rodolfo Quintero (2011) an oil city was deprived of institutions and did not produce any art or intellectual culture, in other words, a city of oil is not urban. However, although Caracas is being construed and managed as an oil field by PDVSA La Estancia, they challenge Quintero's notion by discursively defining itself as 'oil that harvests culture', coalescing oil and the urban as carriers of culture and modernity.

When asked about the role of the city within the Bolivarian Revolution in the era of Petrosocialism, elites coincided in regarding Hugo Chávez's discourse on the city as non-existent:

'None' (A5)

‘there is no vision of the city, well, it is changeable, it changed according to Chávez’s moods.’ (O2)

‘The “process” has two clear phases, made more evident every day: with HChF [Hugo Chávez Frias] and without HChF [Hugo Chávez Frias]. (...) a point of inflexion is the GMVV [Great Mission of Housing Venezuela] (beyond any criticism), when it was finally understood that the population is urban and so must be the discourse and the action’ (A6)

‘At the beginning, in the search of a ‘territorial equilibrium’ a strong anti-urban slant emerged. Subsequently, surely by effect of the electoral logic with more than 80% of people living in cities, the efforts of investment in social programs focused on cities’ (R1)

‘I don’t know if it’s a cause or consequence but the fact is that the political project of the Bolivarian Revolution is an anti-urban project, it’s at odds with the city and against the city’ (A3)

‘The city is a phenomenon that contradicts the ideology they profess’ (R3)

‘Maybe, there is no idea or project, beyond a mere enunciation of principles, about the “role” of the city. There is no plan. Just the disorganised practice of a polarised crowd’ (W1)

‘Anything I say here is mere speculation. I have not seen any document that speaks about that in particular’ (J1)

Elites affirmed that Chávez had no vision or plans for the city (A5, A4, W1, P2, J1), that it was absent from his discourse, a perception derived from the process described in chapter four, which manifested in a lack of coherent spatial policies and strategies of urban management. These statements are supported by J1, whose expertise on reporting on city issues lead him to affirm with absolute confidence that ‘I have not seen any document that speaks about that in particular’. Elites refer to the vacuum left by the dismantlement of the policy instruments and institutions and the slow and discontinuous transition towards the Socialist State Space, which most of the elites do not seem to endorse. Thus, they characterise Hugo Chávez’s political project as anti-urban (A3), claiming that the city and urban society contradict the ideology professed by the government (R3). Nonetheless, some elites (O2, A1, R1, A6) provided a nuanced view by clarifying that Chávez’s discourse on the city varied over his three presidencies. They explained that at the beginning he had a very strong slant against the city as he intended to

move people from the main cities into rural areas to achieve ‘territorial equilibrium’ according to the New Geometry of Power, explored in chapter four, which explains the initial lack of investment and neglect of cities, Caracas particularly. Chávez’s discourse shifted, influenced by electoral results that proved (R1, A6) he could no longer ignore that the vast majority of the Venezuelan population lives in the main cities.

Subsequently, this led elites to perceive that Chávez began to view the city as an instrument of his bureaucratic power: ‘it is another instrument of the neo-populist exclusion, a medium to implant the model of domination’ (R4). The model of domination R4 refers to is the Socialist State, a project that generates uncertainty in terms of what the creation of socialist society and a socialist city means, considering the disjointed process described in chapter four. O2 made reference to a statement heard from the director of the Museum of Architecture (MUSARQ- created in 2006) about the uncertainty on what creating socialist cities entails: ‘we don’t know what a socialist city is but that’s where we are headed’. This uncertainty is answered by PDVSA La Estancia as the socialist city is not built ex novo but emerges as the restoration of the modern city as it stood during the past glories of the golden years of the Magical State and the oil booms, prior to the oil crash of the 1980s. PDVSA La Estancia is constructing a Petrosocialist vision of the city on the substratum of the Oil Social District, PDVSA’s State Space, which enables it to reframe the city as an oil field where the public art and public spaces serve as markers of the appropriation of the Relative-Material Space of the city, materialised in the Relative-Spaces of Representation of the adverts, which speaks of a twofold colonisation of the city by oil. Fixed in time but spatially mutable, the boundaries of the actions of PDVSA La Estancia expand as PDVSA’s State Space expands and consolidates. Consequently, the concrete material entities of the public art and public spaces are simultaneously located in two superimposed State Spaces: PDVSA’s and the Socialist State’s.

The contradiction identified above is made evident by the terms in which PDVSA La Estancia characterises itself. Table 13 contrasts the statements of the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia with the views expressed by the elites in regards to what differentiates PDVSA La Estancia from other institutions of urban management in Caracas:

PDVSA La Estancia	Interviewees
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>

Table 13

PDVSA La Estancia was emphatic in saying that what differentiates it from other entities of local government is that they are oil workers (*petroleros*). This is not an innocuous remark, *petrolero* in Venezuela carries professional prestige but also specific cultural, historical and social weight (Tinker Salas 2009) that locates them in a special hierarchical and social category within the government and Venezuelan society. *Petrolero* also means direct access to the oil rent which translates into economic and Bureaucratic Power. What differentiates PDVSA La Estancia, as A5 points out, is the access to the financial resources and professional capacity that central and local government lack. Similarly, the emergence of an entity like PDVSA La Estancia is part of a wider trend of parallel institutions created to compensate for the incapacity of the state. In this specific instance it compensates for the deficiencies of public entities of urban management: ‘institutions that are created ad hoc, that don’t depend on anyone and can do whatever they please, they can carry out work without consulting anyone’ (A3). Still, elites showed ambivalent opinions of PDVSA La Estancia. They praised the good quality of the works undertaken in the city whilst simultaneously acknowledging they are a product of the erosion of the institutional apparatus, seeing pernicious effects in the long term as PDVSA La Estancia successfully overrides the authority of municipalities. PDVSA La Estancia is perceived as an institutional deviation and a clear symptom of the expansion of PDVSA’s functions beyond its core role of producing oil revenue. To have PDVSA La Estancia directly carry out public works in the city in non-oil industry related infrastructure is considered incongruent with the oil company’s main mission, akin to PDVSA building social housing or distributing food; elites predominantly agreed that PDVSA should be a private capitalist enterprise focused solely on maximising oil rents.

Furthermore, PDVSA La Estancia stresses its superiority by adhering to the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, establishing that it supersedes other government entities such as municipalities adhered to the abrogated laws of territorial organisation and municipal laws:

‘we have functions that derive from what is established in the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, the other management entities of public space in Caracas have functions that derive from the laws of territorial decentralisation. That is to say, they are popularly elected organs and have competencies that derive from municipal laws, specific, and specific state laws, we don’t.’

Governorships, mayoralties and municipalities are governed by the abrogated Organic Law of Land Management of 1983, which had the same constitutional status as the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons. As described in detail in chapter four, the years of legal vacuum left between 2005 and 2010 enabled PDVSA to construct a parallel State Space through the Oil Social Districts, and for PDVSA La Estancia to instrumentalise the Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy by defining itself as ‘oil that harvests culture’ in which culture is conceived as a mineral deposit in Yúdice’s terms of the expediency of culture as a resource, within the extractive logic of the oil industry.

### *PDVSA La Estancia is ‘Another Form of Sowing Oil’*

This section examines the speeches of Beatrice Sansó, the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia, to trace the discursive use of culture that frames the institution’s conceptualisation of the city as an oil field and its use of language to define a relationship between oil, land, and culture in which PDVSA La Estancia becomes ‘oil that harvests culture’. This section investigates how this discursive construction enables PDVSA La Estancia to interpret the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy.

Venezuelan lawyer Beatrice Sansó de Ramírez occupied the post of General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia between 2005 and 2014, her discourse plane is defined as an elite with access to Bureaucratic Power within and outside the oil industry that establishes the non-transferability of her performative utterances. All of the speeches were delivered on the occasion of event openings or the inauguration of restored public art and public spaces, discursive events politically emphasised in Jager’s terms, according to the definitions discussed in chapter two.

A word frequency query of all speeches found that the five most frequently used words are:

Estancia 450

PDVSA 432

Caracas 326

Paraguaná 221

Maracaibo 202

Although PDVSA La Estancia has a national scope, its works and discourse concentrate on Caracas. The word *cultural* is the seventh most frequent term (172) whilst *cultura* (culture) is referenced 78 times. The equivalent terms of *petrolero*, *petroleros* and *petrolera* are referenced a total

of 132 times, whilst *petróleo* (oil) is referenced 51 times. Text search queries of *cultura*, *cultural*, *petróleo*, *petrolero*, *socialista*, *socialismo* and *siembra petrolera* were conducted to identify discourse fragments that intersect oil, culture and socialism, as well as the work of PDVSA La Estancia and the Sowing Oil Plan. This search led to the unexpected discovery of a statement that is repeated to the letter in different speeches delivered between 2007 and 2012: *utopía de lo posible* (utopia of the possible). The discourse fragments identified are collated in Table 14:

Key Passage	Speech title	year	context
<p>To the outside, we want people to go on the street and say ‘that was done by Centro de Arte La Estancia’, ‘La Estancia put its hand there’, so they identify through our work the social and cultural fruit of oil. That there is not one person that works for PDVSA, at the Ministry of Oil and Energy, in Cadafe or at Pequiven that does not know La Estancia. That there is not a person in Caracas, and in the interior of the country, that does not know La Estancia, that does not feel identified with it, because La Estancia is part of all of us.</p> <p>That is another way of <u>sowing oil</u></p> <p>PDVSA La Estancia is</p>	PDVSA La Estancia Arte para todos	2005	PDVSA La Estancia home webpage, accessed on 12/08/2015

<p>the social and cultural arm of Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., destined to the valuation, restoration, promotion and diffusion of the historic and artistic heritage of the country. Its actions are based on the principles of the <u>Sowing Oil Plan</u>.</p>			
<p>(...) we wish to project as a model of action that allows us to achieve by the year 2010, on the 19th April bicentenary, the goal of living in a beautiful Caracas, with all its spaces recovered, a <u>socialist city</u>, paradigm of the city of the 21st century.</p>	<p>Discurso con motivo de la develación del Abra Solar de Alejandro Otero</p>	<p>9 November 2007</p>	<p>Revealing of the restoration of the Abra Solar sculpture in Plaza Venezuela, Caracas.</p>
<p>the terrible pessimism of the impossible and we will substitute it for the <u>Utopia of the Possible</u>, ideal that inspires the daily actions of the Cultural Oasis of the capital.</p>	<p>Discurso con motivo de la develación del Abra Solar de Alejandro Otero</p>	<p>2007</p>	<p>Revealing of the restoration of the Abra Solar sculpture in Plaza Venezuela, Caracas.</p>
	<p>Discurso con motivo de la develación de la Fisicromía del maestro Carlos Cruz Diez</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>Revealing of Fisicromía by Carlos Cruz Diez</p>
<p>Paradigm of the <u>possible</u>, <u>utopia</u> of the desirable</p>	<p>Discurso con motivo de la inauguración de la exposición Mateo Manaure: el Hombre y el Artista</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>Opening of Mateo Manaure: the Man and the Artist, exhibition</p>
	<p>Inauguración de la Quinta versión de la Fuente de Plaza Venezuela</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>Opening of the Fifth</p>

<p>The Sowing Oil will find again the furrows to inseminate, achieving the <u>utopia of the possible</u></p> <p><u>Utopia of the Possible</u></p>	<p>Inauguración de la sede de PDVSA La Estancia Maracaibo</p> <p>PDVSA LA ESTANCIA: LA <u>UTOPIA</u> DE LO POSIBLE</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>Version of the Plaza Venezuela Fountain</p> <p>Opening of PDVSA La Estancia branch in Maracaibo</p>
<p>PDVSA-Centro de Arte La Estancia has given a radical turn to <u>cultural</u> management in regards to a practical and unique conception of our policies, according to <u>article 5 of the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons</u> and the Sowing Oil Plan</p>	<p>Discurso con motivo de la Inauguración de PDVSA La Estancia Paraguaná</p> <p>Inauguración de la Quinta versión de la Fuente de Plaza Venezuela</p>	<p>13 August 2008</p> <p>10 March 2009</p>	<p>Opening of the Paraguaná branch</p> <p>Opening of the fifth version of the Plaza Venezuela Fountain</p>
<p>Oil that harvests culture</p> <p>We keep finding for Sowing Oil, the furrows to inseminate it, and continue, inspiring the possible!</p>	<p>A year of labour PDVSA La Estancia</p> <p>Oil that harvests culture</p>	<p>5 February 2011</p>	<p>First anniversary of PDVSA La Estancia Maracaibo, opening of the exhibition titled ‘oil that harvests culture’ documenting the work of PDVSA La Estancia across Venezuela in 2010.</p>

Table 14

The following performative utterances have been extracted from the discourse fragments above:

- A. We want people to go on the street and say ‘that was done by Centro de Arte La Estancia’, ‘La Estancia put its hand there’, so they identify through our work the social and cultural fruit of oil
- B. That is another way of sowing oil
- C. PDVSA-Centro de Arte La Estancia has given a radical turn to cultural management in regards to a practical and unique conception of our policies, according to article 5 of the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons and the Sowing Oil Plan
- D. Oil that harvests culture
- E. Achieve by the year 2010, on the 19th April bicentenary, the goal of living in a beautiful Caracas, with all its spaces recovered, a socialist city, paradigm of the city of the 21st century
- F. Achieving the Utopia of the Possible
- G. instrument of Sowing Oil
- H. We keep finding for Sowing Oil, the furrows to inseminate it, and continue, inspiring the possible!

As this thesis has established, Caracas is the location of PDVSA’s headquarters and where most of its works of restoration have taken place. The recovery and beautification of Caracas aims to make it an example of what a future socialist city of the twenty first century would look like in Venezuela: ‘Caracas beautiful, with all its spaces recovered, a socialist city, paradigm of the city of the 21st century’. In practice, the emphasis is put on the restoration of public art and public spaces in Caracas rather than building anew. The focus on Caracas is intentional. The majority of the public art and public spaces restored are the legacy of the golden years of the Magical State, considered symbols of the modern oil nation, prior to the presidencies of Hugo Chávez. The socialist city, or more specifically, the petro-socialist city, manifests as the recovery of the city as it stood during the decades of the oil boom in contrast to the extreme deterioration the city fell under in the 1990s, exacerbated during the first five years of Chávez’s presidency. In this sense,

the performative utterance in statement A -‘that they identify the social and cultural fruit of oil through our work’- indicates a will to mediate people’s perception of oil through the actions of the institution and to repossess these symbols. But as the previous section argued, the socialist city is in essence an oil city and an oil field, owned, cared for and managed by PDVSA. The deteriorated city is equated to capitalist decay contributed to by a neoliberal PDVSA, whilst the phrase ‘Caracas beautiful’ discursively reframes the areas recovered by PDVSA La Estancia as the model of the future petro-socialist city as re-presented in the adverts.

Consequently, Sanso’s performative utterance that states that PDVSA La Estancia ‘has given a radical turn to cultural management’ accurately describes the way it functions as the cultural arm of the oil company, which differentiates it from any other national or local cultural institution in Venezuela. Its policies are aligned with the Sowing Oil Plan and the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, more specifically with Article 5 of the law. At this point it is worth quoting in full Article 5, included in Chapter II of the law titled ‘Of Activities Related to Hydrocarbons’:

Article 5: The activities regulated by this Law will be directed to promote the integral, organic and sustained development of the country, attending to the rational use of the resource and the preservation of the environment. With this end the strengthening of the national productive sector and the transformation in the country of the raw materials produced by the hydrocarbons will be promoted, as well as the incorporation of advanced technologies.

The revenues that originate from hydrocarbons received by the nation will foster health, education, the creation of funds for macroeconomic stabilisation and productive investment, to achieve an appropriate linkage between oil and the national economy, all according for the people’s wellbeing.

Article 5 does not make any explicit reference to culture or cultural activities or to social development, it’s the last line of the second paragraph ‘for the people’s wellbeing’ that is interpreted as such, by connecting the term wellbeing to the socio-cultural ‘branch’ of the Sowing Oil Plan, in which PDVSA La Estancia is the ‘organism’ that operates as the social and cultural arm of PDVSA (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.417). Therefore, PDVSA La Estancia instrumentalises Article 5 of the Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy in the terms defined by Jeremy Ahearne in chapter one. An implicit cultural policy is ‘any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides’ (Ahearne 2009, pp.143–144); this is the manner in which Article 5 is instrumentalised since according to the Sowing Oil

Plan, PDVSA La Estancia's objectives are to 'promote and disseminate the historic and artistic heritage of the country, including the restoration of the fundamental works that conform that heritage' (Rondón de Sansó 2008, p.425), all encompassed within the State Space that PDVSA presides.

Consequently, PDVSA La Estancia presents its actions as a form of sowing oil, bearing the 'social and cultural fruit of oil' through their work. They are aiming for a direct identification between people and PDVSA La Estancia, as well as a direct correlation between oil and culture. Even more so, beyond sowing oil, PDVSA La Estancia *is* oil that *harvests* culture, an entity that transforms a non-renewable natural resource into culture, materialised in their programme of events, public art restoration and urban regeneration projects. The continuous reference to Uslar Pietri's 'sowing oil' is used to claim, as in the performative utterance of statement H, that they are opening furrows to scatter and plant 'seeds of oil' that grow into possibilities, establishing that only through culture can oil be sown, relating culture back to the land. They discursively engage oil and culture in a symbiotic and cyclical farming relationship: PDVSA La Estancia is a form of sowing oil, and once sown, culture is 'harvested' and therefore the institution is 'oil that harvests culture'. Sansó's vision of culture, to paraphrase Bauman (2004, p.64), is seen through the eyes of the farmer-manager whose growing field is in this case the city as an oil field, and culture is 'extracted' as if it was a mineral deposit accumulated in the subsoil, the basis of this thesis proposition of the notion of culture-as-mineral deposit.

PDVSA La Estancia does not present utopia as an ideal unattainable world in the future. On the contrary, it is 'possible', attainable and realised in the present by 'sowing oil' and 'harvesting culture' through the works of restoration of public art and public spaces. The inspirational language presents the oil company as the producer of material spaces of an oil based utopia, a real utopia, as stated in the title of the speech delivered by Sansó on May 7 2012, 'PDVSA La Estancia: Utopia of the Possible' meaning that when they sow the oil they harvest it as culture, and once harvested, utopia becomes real.

### *Conclusion*

Petrosocialism emerged at a moment when oil prices were at an all time high, it is an oil boom phenomenon. PDVSA was central to guarantee the success of Petrosocialism which as chapter three argued, relied on the certainty that Venezuela sits over the biggest proven crude oil reserves in the world (Rowling 2012), which led Chávez to assume that Venezuela would enjoy a never-

ending supply of oil money. Hence, the success of Petrosocialism relied on the success of global oil capitalism. This contradiction runs across State Space and bureaucratic power particularly through the instrumentalisation of culture to construct the New Magical State's illusion of 'renewable oil'. The recurrent use of the phrase 'utopia of the possible' is grounded on this discursive construction. PDVSA La Estancia establishes itself as a national management entity bound to the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, which in their view prevails over regional and municipal laws, giving them the authority to govern over the space of Caracas, as it were a quasi-state authority. 2007 was also the year in which PDVSA La Estancia extended its scope of action beyond an arts centre, through its nationwide expansion establishing branches in Paraguana and Maracaibo, cultural programming across the country, and most notably by embarking on an ambitious programme of regeneration of public art and public spaces, effectively taking over the functions of local government institutions such as the *Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural* and municipalities, claiming ownership over Caracas.

As a self-defined instrument of the Sowing Oil Plan, the act of sowing oil to harvest culture is defined by this thesis as an illusion of the New Magical State: oil ceases to be finite when it is sown to bear the fruits of culture. Within this vision, the Material Space of the city is meant to be absorbed by the Oil Social District and populated by *petroleros* (oil workers), a message visually delivered by the adverts of the campaign 'we transform oil into a renewable resource for you' that feature idealised giant oil workers. Chapter six uses visual semiotics to examine how the verbal and visual language of PDVSA La Estancia's adverts depict Relative-Spaces of Representation of the Absolute-Material Space of the city as an oil field dominated by giant oil workers who are transforming oil into a 'renewable resource', which construes the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit.

## Chapter six: Relative-Spaces of Representation of Culture-as-mineral-deposit

There is a historical narrative in Venezuela that has regarded the arts, and by extension culture, as a resource to be exploited like oil. The most evident reference is a quote by Venezuelan visual artist and playwright César Rengifo:

‘We [artists] are like oil: a reserve; but in Venezuela we have yet to be put in motion’

Rengifo made headlines in 1973 when he made this statement in an interview to daily newspaper *El Nacional*. He asserted his value as an artist by saying that artists are like oil, a natural resource, to suggest that the Petrostate would invest in arts and in culture more generally, only if artists were viewed like a reserve of crude oil waiting to be extracted. Rengifo’s statement illustrates the clout oil carries in defining the relationship between the Petrostate and culture in Venezuela. This chapter examines the notion culture construed by Petrosocialism by examining the advertisement campaign launched by PDVSA La Estancia in 2013 titled *Transformamos el petróleo en un recurso renovable para ti* (we transform oil into a renewable resource for you) through the semiotic lens of Charles Peirce Semiosis and Roland Barthes’ Mythologies. It explores how the advertising campaign imagines the ‘utopia of the possible’ that renders oil and culture as equivalent by construing culture as a mineral, as if culture could be extracted, exploited and processed like oil.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part provides an overview and context of PDVSA’s advertising campaign, it also describes the visual and textual elements that compose the adverts. The second part develops a semiotic analysis of the visual element of the adverts, looking in particular at the public art depicted and the giant oil worker using Charles Peirce’s Semiosis. The third part continues the semiotic analysis by focusing on the verbal text of the campaign using Barthes’ theory of Mythical speech to elucidate the reality the phrase ‘We Transform oil into a renewable resource for you’ is creating and thus what notion of culture is mobilised by PDVSA La Estancia. Finally, the analysis of the visual and verbal elements draws on Yúdice and Bauman to look into the discursive construction of oil as a ‘renewable resource’, congruent with PDVSA La Estancia’s ‘utopia of the possible’ explored in chapter five, to examine how the adverts construe the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit.

## *Profile of the Campaign 'We Transform Oil Into A Renewable Resource For You'*

In 2005 PDVSA La Estancia embarked on an ambitious programme of public art restoration and urban regeneration, guided by the aims of the Sowing Oil Plan. In July 2014, after interviewing the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia at their main building in Caracas, the Department of Public Relations of PDVSA La Estancia provided a CD with a set of photographs of every public art and public space that had been restored by the institution up to that moment, such as Alejandro Otero's Abra Solar (Illustration 5), Jesus Soto's Esfera Caracas (Illustration 6), and Sabana Grande Boulevard (Illustration 7).

The set of photographs in the CD form the basis of the campaign; adding PDVSA La Estancia's logo to the photograph would not have sufficed to evidence the institution's direct involvement in restoring these locations to their original state. To evidence their direct role in the restoration, PDVSA La Estancia deployed visual and linguistic strategies, such as the inclusion of a giant oil worker and the verbal text 'we transform oil into a renewable resource for you' to make it clear to the viewer that it was the oil company, and not the institutions that had traditionally received funds from the oil company to carry out such works, like municipalities or the National Heritage Institute. The campaign consists of 23 posters that depict the public spaces and public art that have been restored by PDVSA La Estancia; each poster features a giant oil worker, clad in red gear, portrayed as if caught in the middle of a maintenance job, giving the finishing touches to the spaces they are working at. The adverts can be seen on most of the PDV petrol stations (owned by PDVSA), on PDVSA La Estancia's main headquarters in Caracas (Illustration 8), as well as on their Facebook page (PDVSA La Estancia 2013).

The visual element of the 23 adverts is a photographic image, composed by public art or architectural structure and the giant oil worker, complemented by the verbal text. The Relative-Spaces of Representations in the adverts present photographs digitally altered to include the giant oil worker. A sample of three of the adverts showing the Esfera Caracas (Illustration 9), the Abra Solar (Illustration 10) and Sabana Grande Boulevard (Illustration 11) is presented in the following pages (for the full set of adverts see Appendix three).

Illustration 5: Abra Solar. Photo courtesy of PDVSA La Estancia

Illustration 6: Esfera Caracas. Photo courtesy of PDVSA La Estancia

Illustration 7: Sowing Oil Square, Sabana Grande Boulevard. Photo courtesy of PDVSA La Estancia

Illustration 8. Adverts at PDVSA La Estancia offices in Caracas. Photo by Penelope Plaza, 2014

Illustration 9. Esfera Caracas Advert

Illustration 10. Abra Solar Advert

Illustration 11. Sowing Oil Square, Sabana Grande Boulevard Advert.

The adverts are grouped into the following categories: Public Art (18/23), Public Space (2/23), Playground (2/23), Sports Ground (1/23). The majority of the adverts feature Public Art; this is a key point showing not just the regeneration aspect but also the intention to create cultural, aesthetic and artistic associations with the oil company. Nineteen of the Material Spaces depicted are located in Caracas, three don't specify any particular location whilst only one is located in Zulia state (specifically in Maracaibo, although it is not identified specifically in the poster), the main oil producing region of Venezuela. The campaign highlights PDVSA La Estancia's investment in urban regeneration has taken place predominantly in Caracas. The public art works are identified by a label that contains the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and its location but excludes the year they were erected, listed below:

Plaza Venezuela, Santos Michelena, Caracas-Venezuela  
Abra Solar, Alejandro Otero, Caracas-Venezuela  
Esfera Caracas, Jesus Soto, Caracas-Venezuela  
Fisicromía, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Caracas-Venezuela  
Los Cerritos, Alejandro Otero, Mercedes Pardo, Caracas-Venezuela  
Pariata 1957, Omar Carreño, Caracas-Venezuela  
Uracoa, Mateo Manaure, Caracas-Venezuela  
Venezuela Ocho Estrellas, Ender Cepeda, Edo. Zulia, Venezuela

Since the labels do not indicate the date they were built, the adverts don't differentiate between 'Bulevar de Sabana Grande, Caracas-Venezuela' built in the 1970s from the restored structure of the 'Gazebo of El Calvario, Parque Ezequiel Zamora' that dates back to late nineteenth century. Playgrounds and sports grounds are not provided with any specific location; the sports grounds are simply labelled *canchas* (courts) without providing much more detail. Playgrounds are labelled Parques La Alquitrana (Tar Parks), suggesting that such parks have been built by PDVSA La Estancia all over the country. La Alquitrana is a feminised Spanish term for tar; PDVSA La Estancia's website explains that the circuit of La Alquitrana parks is named after Venezuela's first oil well that spurt crude oil in 1878, located in the Andean region of Táchira (PDVSA La Estancia n.d.). Overall, the adverts depict material spaces of leisure and cultural recreation: playgrounds (childhood), sports grounds (youth), public art and parks (families); all made possible by PDVSA La Estancia, by oil.

But these material spaces appear miniaturised by the presence of what is in effect the actual focal point of the campaign: the giant oil worker. The campaign was launched in early 2013. It was the year of Hugo Chávez' unexpected death, right at start of what would have been his fourth term

in office. As discussed in chapter four, he had outlined an ambitious presidential programme for the elections of 2012 with the objective to transform Venezuela into a world power of oil energy by expanding the extraction of Venezuela's vast reserves of hydrocarbons (Terán Mantovani 2014, p.161; Chávez 2012, pp.7, 27). Nonetheless, the majority of the public art and public spaces depicted in the adverts predate the arrival of Hugo Chávez to the presidency. They are symbols of the modern oil nation, built and erected during the golden years of the oil boom and the consolidation of the Magical State (1950s-1980s). The next section opens the visual semiotic analysis of the adverts, starting with Peirce's Semiosis followed by Barthes' Myth.

### *Visual Semiotics: Giant Oil Workers and the Myth of 'Renewable Oil'*

The set of professional photographs provided by the Department of Public Relations of PDVSA La Estancia are part of a larger set intended to be used as stock for promotional material. The photographs possess a postcard quality of the spaces that also identify Caracas as a modern metropolis. The material spaces are predominantly photographed at dusk, under dark blue skies, the night lights blurring the hustle and bustle of motorised traffic and people at rush hour. As argued earlier, the photographs by themselves would not evidence PDVSA La Estancia's direct involvement in restoring the depicted public spaces and public art to their original state. With a few exceptions that will be highlighted later in the chapter, the public art and public spaces restored by PDVSA La Estancia predate the arrival of Hugo Chávez to the presidency. The main focal point of the adverts is not the city itself but the giant oil worker, who signals the viewer to look at what she/he is working on: public art and public space restored by PDVSA La Estancia.

Each one of PDVSA La Estancia's adverts is a fully formed sign-vehicle in Peirce's terms. The two main features of the composition in terms of meaning are the photographic image and the verbal text. The photographic image depicts the interaction of two fundamental elements: a giant oil worker and the material space of the city. The verbal text communicates the message (the interpretant) of the visual interaction between giant oil worker and the city. The photographs used in the adverts are indexical because, according to Peirce, they have a similarity to their object, the actual material spaces of the city intervened by PDVSA La Estancia, and which are readily identifiable. The indexicality is emphasised by the label attached that identifies each place, or public art. Beyond the indexicality of the photograph, the density of meaning of the advert is brought by the inclusion of the giant oil worker through digital manipulation, who engages in a direct interaction with the public space/public art depicted. The original photographs were

altered to include this figure into the composition. This chapter examines the motives and meanings behind such strategy.

In Peirce's terms, the giant oil worker is both an iconic and indexical sign. Iconic for its similarity to an actual oil worker (a human-scale one, as actual giant oil workers do not exist) and indexical because of the existential relationship with the oil industry. The giant oil worker suggests the totality of the oil industry, mainly the extraction of crude oil. The oil workers are the main feature of the sign-vehicle, they appear in full working gear, clad in red from head to toe (red is the colour that identifies the Bolivarian revolution), with hard hats, protective overalls, boots, gloves, and wielding tools as if they were repairing or giving the final touches to the public art or public spaces. The predominant action in which they are engaged suggests the undertaking of heavy duty work, they are wielding tools such as pipe wrenches and protective gloves, directly manipulating the public art or architectural structures as if they were heavy machinery in a refinery, the actual natural environment of an oil worker, and not in the midst of the city.

Although they are of an unnatural monumental size, collectively the oil workers are portrayed as benevolent giants occupied with beautifying the city, as a naturalised and ubiquitous presence in a city visually miniaturised by their scale. All the adverts vividly capture the face of each giant oil worker, they are all easily identifiable. Their portraits are predominantly three-quarter or full body photographs, their monumentality emphasised by the low-angle shot, they do not gaze directly at the viewer; they are either focused on their duty or engaging with the miniaturised city inhabitants below them in a cordial manner.

In the pair of posters of Sabana Grande Boulevard (Illustrations 11 and 12), the giant oil workers are seen installing a canopy, in a space that has been aptly named Plaza Siembra Petrolera (Sowing Oil Square), they are presented as if they were turning the giant pipe of an oil drill into the ground. In the case of the adverts that depict public art, it loses the monumental scale through the interaction with the giant oil worker. Like the canopies, public art is handled as if it was heavy machinery in a refinery; the city spaces and public art celebrated by the adverts are miniaturised by the colossal scale of the giant oil worker. These spaces, although already completed and accomplished in reality, are shown as unfinished in the adverts as if the giant oil workers were caught in the midst of the active process of repairing them.

Illustration 12. Sowing Oil Square, Sabana Grande Boulevard Advert

Illustration 13. Sowing Oil Square, Sabana Grande Boulevard Advert

As Iconic-Indexical signs, the giant oil workers also function as visual-cultural ambassadors of PDVSA La Estancia. Instead of the *ejecutivo petrolero* (oil executive) the Petrosocialist and revolutionary PDVSA chose to be represented by the *obrero petrolero* (oil worker), the one who gets down and dirty to perform the extraction of crude oil from the subsoil. Overall, this strategy is a continuation of the legacy left by the foreign oil companies, like Shell and Creole, who inaugurated the use of Public Relations in Venezuela:

‘The departments of public relations of Creole and Shell in Venezuela had multiple functions: internally they promoted practices considered useful among foreign and Venezuelan employees, whilst externally they served as the public face of the company. These tasks were not mutually exclusive because these companies viewed employees as their ambassadors’ (Tinker Salas, 2009, p. 281, my translation)

If the giant oil workers are the visual and cultural ambassadors of the oil industry, then their inclusion and interaction with the public art and public spaces depicted point to a re-possession of the material space of the city, visually reconstructed as an oil field in a clear attempt at naturalising a direct and mechanistic relationship between oil, culture and the city. Hence, the giant oil workers also function as a visual metaphor of PDVSA’s State Space, in other words, the extractive logic of the oil industry is transferred to the city mediated by public space and public art. But as an artificially constructed image, the giant oil worker also offers a direct connection between the oil company and the viewer (and within the advert between the giant oil worker and city dwellers) suggesting a break with the historical social division between workers of the oil industry and the rest of the population, as Tinker Salas has argued:

‘Many directly employed or indirectly benefiting from the oil industry subsequently assumed key positions in Venezuelan society, government, commerce and industry. Their views reflected a series of self-sustaining myths about the oil industry and its importance to the nation and society. Paramount among these was the notion that for Venezuela the oil industry was the means to achieve modernity in all its forms. For those employed by the industry, these new modern traditions accentuated certain traits and behaviour patterns –discipline, efficiency, work ethic, meritocracy, and in some cases even bilingualism- that helped define the “collective consciousness” of the oil industry and distinguished those working in it from the rest of society.’ (Tinker Salas 2009, p.5)

But the symbolic break with the social hierarchy that used to distinguish those working for the oil industry with the rest of society is contradicted by the colossal scale of the giant oil workers

and their paternalistic demeanour towards the viewer. Oil is once again presented as the source of prosperity and the producer of culture through the labour of a 'workers elite'. To emphasise this, the campaign romanticises the harsh reality and 'dirtiness' of the work in the oil fields by offering a sanitised version of the oil worker and the working environment of the refinery as it is visually relocated into the midst of the city. The signification in the adverts is that PDVSA is the sole provider of prosperity and culture through the actions of PDVSA La Estancia, materialised in the beautiful restored public spaces and public art. The giant oil worker appears as a symbol of PDVSA's bureaucratic power and benevolence.

The relocation of the sanitised version of the giant oil worker turns the adverts into symbolic-signs (defined by Peirce as a relationship that has been 'agreed' upon and learned) of the Oil Social District as PDVSA's State Space, a symbolic-sign of the Material Space of the city colonised by oil and appropriated by PDVSA La Estancia. Furthermore, seen together, the 23 adverts (Illustration 11) as if they were a sequence, represent a cause and effect relation as 'sequences of pictures and films are more likely to represent cause-effect relations' (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.308). The actions of the giant oil workers as a collective of images represent a cause and effect relation of the impact of the work of PDVSA La Estancia on the city, which could not be entirely conveyed by just pairing the photograph of the restored space and the logo. In order to tell the story the adverts had to make it explicit to the viewer that the institution is behind it, that it was not the central government, not the municipality, not the Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural, but PDVSA, further emphasised by PDVSA La Estancia's General Manager performative utterance discussed in chapter five: 'We have to feel oil workers. This exists because PDVSA exists. That's the idea.' (Sanzo de Ramírez Interview 2014).

Illustration 14. The 23 adverts of the campaign 'We transform oil into a renewable resource for you'

Two types of cause and effect relations can be identified in the adverts: a natural one and an artificial one. The natural is that those spaces were in fact restored by PDVSA La Estancia by its self defined revolutionary oil workers, all directly funded by the oil rent. But the giant oil worker in the advert also serves to obscure the bureaucratic mechanisms and institutional structures needed for restorations of this scale to come to fruition, only the authorship of the oil company is acknowledged. Visually, it is not as simple as having a giant oil worker do the repairs, public works need sophisticated and complex sets of decisions and institutional arrangements to make them possible. However, there is some truth to this portrayed simplicity; the mechanisms discussed in chapter four that led to the progressive dismantlement of the existing institutional apparatus opened a breach that allowed PDVSA La Estancia to claim complete ownership of the public spaces and public art, without having to acknowledge the set of institutions and bureaucratic logistics that had to come together to make these works possible. The artificial cause and effect lies in claiming that through the actions depicted in the adverts they are transforming oil into a ‘renewable resource’. The term ‘renewable resource’ is used interchangeably by PDVSA to refer either to oil or culture. The magazine *Petróleo y Revolución* #14 (Oil and Revolution, May 2012), an internal publication produced and distributed by the Ministry of Popular Power of Oil and Mining, includes an article that reviews the work of PDVSA La Estancia titled ‘making our culture a renewable resource’.

According to Peirce, images ‘cannot express the ideas of possibility, necessity, obligation, or volition’ (Margolis & Pauwels 2011, p.309); whilst the visual elements of the adverts cannot tell us the motivations or subsequent effects of the giant oil workers’ engagements with the material space of the city, the verbal text aims to do just this, it provides the images with volition, it expresses the idea of possibility latent in the advert. It is the visualisation of the ‘utopia of the possible’ discussed in chapter five, the realised utopia of inexhaustible oil dreamt by Chávez, obtained by harvesting culture from sowing oil, constructed as an illusion of the New Magical State.

The verbal text that identifies the campaign suggests the correlation between the myth of ‘renewable oil’ put forward by the adverts and the instrumentalisation of culture-as-mineral-deposit. This chapter now turns to develop a semiotic analysis of the verbal text to identify the ‘mythical speech’ of the adverts, using Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies*. Barthes provides the analytical framework to decipher the type of reality that the language of the adverts aims to create, and hence what notion of culture is construed by PDVSA La Estancia. A Myth is a concrete type of speech, a ‘mode of signification’ defined not by its literal sense but by its

intention (Barthes 1993, p. 109-110, 124). Everything can be a myth as long as ‘it is conveyed by a discourse’ (Barthes 1993, p.109) since it is not confined to the written word or oral speech; hence, all mediums of visual representation are vehicles for mythical speech.

The verbal text of the advert: *Transformamos el petróleo en un recurso renovable para ti* (We transform oil into a renewable source for you), has also been used in press releases for cultural events organized by PDVSA La Estancia, from salsa concerts, music festival, art exhibitions to puppet shows; almost every press release in 2013 closes with it. It expresses eloquently the purpose of the campaign, this expressed purpose, or intention, reveals the verbal text as the construction of myth in Barthes’ terms. For Barthes there is nothing arbitrary in the functional implications between the three elements of the myth: on the plane of myth the signifier is the *form*, the signified is the *concept*, and the sign is the *signification* (Barthes 1993, p.114). The signifier ‘postulates a reading’, a *signification* is already built and the meaning complete when the signifier becomes *form* (Barthes 1993, p.117).

The myth is completed by the interaction between the verbal text and the visuals of the campaign. The campaign presents as fact that PDVSA La Estancia is transforming oil into a ‘renewable resource’ but it does not explain what this renewable resource is, rather it is suggested in the images of the oil workers ‘sowing oil’ in the city. The intention of the campaign was already suggested in chapter five through PDVSA La Estancia’s discursive construction of ‘oil that harvests culture’ in the city as the relationship it should to establish between oil and culture as an ‘utopia of the possible’, made more explicit by its General Manager as the following extract from the interview already discussed in chapter five, useful to bring back at this point:

‘You know we always add to the spaces an oil element, because we all need to feel we are *petroleros*. That’s the idea. There always will be an oil mural, an oil sculpture. The only contact the common Venezuelan has with oil when they don’t work for PDVSA, or if they don’t live in an oil area above all, is the petrol station. We have to feel *petroleros*. This exists because PDVSA exists. That’s the idea.’ (Sanso de Ramirez 2014)

The emphasis on ‘we have to feel oil workers’ depoliticises the campaign. ‘*Petroleros*’ (oil workers) as an identity is less controversial and divisive than ‘socialist’ in a nation that, as Coronil (1997) has determined, is unified by oil but is currently suffering from extreme political polarisation. This confirms the campaign as mythical depoliticised speech in Barthes’ terms. The adverts of the campaign locate all public art, sports grounds and public spaces in the same present temporality, in the same quality of newness. The temporality of the adverts speaks of a history-

less present. This is emphasised by the absence of the date the art works and spaces were created/installed/built in the label that identifies them. The Abra Solar, the Esfera Caracas, The Fisicromía, Pariata 1957, Los Cerritos, Gazebo de El Calvario, Sabana Grande Boulevard, and Plaza Venezuela are all products of the demonised ‘counter revolutionary state’, they are the legacy of the golden era of the Magical State, stripped in the adverts of their political and cultural history. The campaign proposes an abolition of history; it appropriates ‘high art’, public spaces and heritage for the oil industry rather than for the Bolivarian revolution.

The verbal text presents as fact that PDVSA La Estancia is ‘transforming oil into a renewable resource’. Although it does not make explicit what the renewable resource is, it is shown in the images of the giant oil workers busy ‘harvesting’ public art. The renewable resource is culture. The myth of transforming oil into a ‘renewable resource’ is emphasised in the colouring and layout of the typography. The words of the verbal text are given two different colour combinations, white and red, or black and red. The same three words are always highlighted in red and bold in every single advert:

Transformamos el **PETRÓLEO**  
en un recurso **RENOVABLE PARA TI**

We transform **OIL**

into a resource **RENEWABLE FOR YOU**

The implied ‘*nosotros*’ (we) in the plural of *Transformamos* (we transform) in the verbal text is the voice of the institution represented by the collective of giant oil workers depicted in the adverts (Illustration 13), who function as the visual and cultural ambassadors of PDVSA La Estancia. *Petróleo* (oil) is not only highlighted, but appears in a larger size, singled out visually. In the typographic layout, the left hand side half of the text is written in lowercase letters whilst the right hand side half dominates the composition with words in capital letters and highlighted in bold red: **OIL RENEWABLE FOR YOU**. The key message of the campaign is contained in the right hand side half. The position of *Petróleo* (oil) and *renovable* (renewable) in the layout of the text puts *Petróleo* right on top of *renovable*, which visually suggests them to be read together as *petróleo renovable* (renewable oil):

**PETRÓLEO**  
**RENOVABLE**

The next words in the text highlighted in bold red lead to the intended audience of the campaign, the *FOR YOU*:



The last word highlighted in red bold typeface is *ti* (you). It's made renewable *for you*. The 'for you' aims to create identification, a sense of closeness between the institution and the viewer by addressing the viewer directly. The audience to which the YOU is addressed to is the potential users of the spaces, the dwellers of the cities these structures are located in, but given the national scope of the campaign, it implies the population of Venezuela at large, in other words, all citizens of the Petrostate who share the national identity of oil and are the subjects of the New Magical State.

The meaning of oil and renewable put together is incongruent, it is paradoxical because oil is a non-renewable natural resource, and it is finite. But the paradox implied here is not literal. The paired words suggest that PDVSA La Estancia is claiming that a never ending supply of oil is made possible as PDVSA succeeds in realising the 'utopia of the possible' by 'magically' transforming oil into a renewable resource. Admittedly, oil is made renewable metaphorically by investing the oil rent in culture, in other words by sowing oil in the restoration and renewal of public art and public spaces undertaken by PDVSA La Estancia as a harvest of culture. If oil is made renewable by investing in culture then culture is like renewable oil: oil, culture and the Material Space of the city are conflated into one entity. Thus, PDVSA La Estancia disputes Rodolfo Quintero's assertion that an 'oil city' does not produce art, science or any form of intellectual culture when the inert and money-driven 'culture of oil' prevails (Quintero 2011, p.55) by coalescing oil, culture and the material space of the city, making an expedient use of culture as a mineral resource in Yúdice's terms.

### *Oil, City and Culture: Culture-as-mineral-deposit*

As discussed earlier, most of what is celebrated by the adverts dates back to the golden era of the oil-driven development of the 1940s-1980s: Plaza Venezuela Fountain, Abra Solar, Fisicromía, Pariata 57, Los Cerritos, Esfera Caracas, Sabana Grande Boulevard. Oil is presented as the source of enduring prosperity. The adverts as a group are the material form of the sign. Barthes' concept, unlike Saussure's signifier, can take a variety of forms because it only represents itself. It is this multiplication of the verbal text and giant oil workers what allows to

decipher the myth through the repetition of the idea of the transformation of oil into a 'renewable resource'. The concept relies on understanding culture as crude oil, as an expedient natural resource or a mineral deposit that accumulates in the subsoil that can be transformed and renewed. Oil then becomes a double-sided cultural entity invoked as a singular force capable of producing palpable cultural effects and producer of culture when sown, but also a cultural product itself. If culture is a mineral deposit extracted from the subsoil of the nation, then culture and the discursive and political wealth produced by culture-as-mineral-deposit can be, like the subsoil, the exclusive property of the Petrostate.

The signification, or the association between the form and the concept, is the myth itself. The myth presented by the adverts is oil made renewable by investing in culture; therefore culture becomes analogous to renewable oil. Culture, oil, and the city are coalesced into one entity through the myth of renewable oil. The myth comes into fruition through the performative force of the New Magical State (Coronil 1997; López-Maya 2007), the magical powers of oil are embodied in this particular instance by PDVSA's giant oil workers, not by the deceased Hugo Chávez. The myth of 'renewable oil' also serves to calm anxieties about the end of oil reserves and high oil prices which endanger Petrosocialism, the survival of the Socialist State and the construction of the 'utopia of the possible', discussed in chapter five. PDVSA La Estancia makes possible the impossible, as chapter five has argued, of realising the 'utopia of the possible' by transforming oil into a renewable resource. Oil and culture are rendered as equivalent when culture is turned into a mineral, as if culture was a physical material that could be industrially extracted, exploited, processed, measured and commercialised. Moreover, 'renewable oil' attaches to culture conflicting notions of resource: resource as nature and resource as deposits extracted from the subsoil that yield wealth.

For Yúdice, 'the notion of culture as a resource is the only surviving definition' (2003, p.279). The expediency of culture as a resource allows its use for economic, social and political purposes within institutional contexts such as PDVSA and PDVSA La Estancia. To paraphrase Yúdice, it is close to impossible for the state-owned oil company not to view culture as a mineral resource. Hence, PDVSA La Estancia's discursive construction of culture as 'culture-as-mineral-deposit', which is this thesis contribution to the literature on culture. Whilst Yúdice (2003) looks at performativity in grassroots movements of Latin America as a resistance to neoliberal strategies, in this case it is the 'anti-neoliberal' giant oil workers of Petrosocialism that are being called to perform culture.

In the Petrosocialist notion of culture as culture-as-mineral-deposit, culture is discursively bound to the subsoil, so that it becomes the exclusive property of the Petrostate and belongs to the realm of PDVSA's State Space. In this context, the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit can be regarded as more than a mere discursive construction. The implications is that by tying culture to the land, it constructs culture as a material entity that accumulates in the subsoil, ready to be extracted, processed, weighed, measured under the tight control of the Petrostate. Therefore, modern and abstract manifestations of culture such as the ones depicted in the adverts can only be quantified as valuable if they are transformed into oil machinery, rather than as symbols of the abstract notions of civilisation and progress. Then, for culture to fit this rhetoric, it has to be defined in narrower terms.

PDVSA La Estancia's instrumentalisation of culture-as-mineral-deposit is not oriented towards the conventional model of development discussed by Yúdice, rather it is 'sown' and 'harvested' for political aims. PDVSA La Estancia, as discussed in the two preceding chapters, conceives culture as a medium and an instrument to transcend the ills of capitalism and urban living. Under Petrosocialism culture is not required to provide financial returns, as the Petrostate's distributive expenditure policies do not require financial accountability or representative bargains. Culture-as-mineral-deposit condenses the materiality lost by oil when it was reduced to the fetish of rent money (Pérez Schael 1993, p.94) becoming inextricable from land. The use of culture-as-mineral-deposit becomes the fuel to extend the life of the illusions of the New Magical State beyond the physical death of Chávez.

### *Conclusion*

The whole campaign or the image per se can be interpreted as a symbol (through the oil worker) of the Oil Social District, PDVSA's State Space. PDVSA La Estancia is a national management entity of PDVSA; its jurisdiction and cultural policy are founded on the Law of Hydrocarbons. Caracas, as already discussed in chapter four, is covered by the Metropolitan Oil District, spanning across the Metropolitan District. There are no oil fields or refineries in Caracas, or the Metropolitan area at large, but it is where the main headquarters of PDVSA are located. PDVSA's building in the neighbourhood of La Campiña is then considered a site of 'oil extraction', the Metropolitan District then determining its sphere of influence, which justifies PDVSA La Estancia's interventions in Caracas depicted in the adverts.

The spaces in the adverts are, in Peircean terms, tokens of the cultural effects of oil that could be expanded to other regions covered by the Oil Social Districts. The material space of the city is envisioned as an oil field, where giant oil workers are seen repairing or installing architectural or sculptural structures. They give a face, or rather a collective face, to the oil industry as their colossal figures subliminally communicate that urban spaces, and the city at large, are contained within PDVSA's State Space.

PDVSA La Estancia devised the visual strategy of the giant oil worker to establish their ownership over the Absolute-Material Space of the city. The giant oil worker functions as an indexical sign of the oil industry, their inclusion and interaction with the Relative-Material Spaces depicted in the adverts visually reframes them as oil fields in a clear attempt at naturalising a direct and mechanistic relationship between oil, urban space and culture, functioning also as a visual metaphor of PDVSA's State Space. The adverts visualise the performance of sowing oil and harvesting culture, using the giant oil worker as the personification of Bauman's 'manager-farmer'; the labour of the giant oil workers transform oil into a 'renewable resource' as the new illusion of the New Magical State, congruent with PDVSA La Estancia's 'utopia of the possible' that uses culture expediently, in Yúdice's terms, to conceptualise it as culture-as-mineral-deposit.

This chapter has argued that PDVSA La Estancia discursively renders oil and culture equivalent by construing culture-as-mineral-deposit, as if culture could be extracted, exploited and processed like oil. This evokes a farming cycle that on one hand, responds to the discursive strand of 'renewable oil' and, on the other, provides a new illusion, a novel dramaturgical act for the New Magical State: culture as renewable oil is tied back to the land. Hence, culture-as-mineral-deposit is inextricable from State Space (specifically from the Oil Social District as PDVSA's parallel State Space), from territory. If culture is 'harvested' from the subsoil, then the Petrostate can claim complete ownership and tight control over culture as a 'renewable resource' as established by the Law of Hydrocarbons.

This is the context of the naturalisation of the giant oil worker metaphorically harvesting culture, acting outside of its natural environment, the refinery and oil fields; stripped of the dirtiness of directly handling oil they appear more analogous to gardeners than actual oil workers. And although the colossal scale is intended to provide them with a mythical aura, they are at the same time put in a subservient position to the viewer. The giant oil worker performs the material quality oil lost when it was reduced to rent money (Pérez Schael 1993, p.94). This performativity

is also made possible by a State Space in flux, in transition toward the Socialist State; hence, culture as mineral resource becomes inextricable from State Space.

The myth of 'renewable oil' also serves the purpose of calming anxieties about the end of oil, which endangers the survival of Petrosocialism. The term 'renewable resource' is used interchangeably to refer either to oil or culture. In the specific context of the campaign, the verbal text suggests that oil is being transformed into culture, inferring that culture is *the* 'renewable resource', naturalising as truth that PDVSA La Estancia is making possible the utopia of inexhaustible oil.

## **Conclusion: The Untenable Sowing of Oil**

‘oil is great, that thing gives money! We have to live off it, we have to... We should all have the fortune of living in an oil country’ (Interview, A3)

For a nation whose identity is entangled with oil and with an economy that is almost entirely dependent on oil, even in the midst of the current debacle in oil prices, oil remains the only plausible path towards development. The memory of the glories of the Magical State and the oil boom lurks behind the spectacular modernism of the 1950s and the rapid urbanisation and modernisation with the most enviable cultural infrastructure and architecture in the region from the 1960s and 1970s. After the crash in oil prices of the 1980s and 1990s, the coincidental rise to power of Hugo Chávez in 1998 and the steep rise in oil prices marked a shift in the history of the Venezuelan Petrostate. The oil windfall allowed Chávez to embark on an ambitious plan of transforming the country through Petrosocialism, which turned the now revolutionary PDVSA into the key instrument for building an alternative model of development to capitalism and neoliberalism. But, as this thesis has explored, the legislative gymnastics that the Chávez regime engaged in enabled the state-owned oil company to gain more power and to expand its dominion across non-oil related city spaces and over cultural objects.

This thesis employed critical theories of the state (Joyce & Bennett 2010; Coronil 1997; Dunleavy & O’Leary 1987; Jessop 1990; Beblawi & Luciani 1987; Miller & Rose 2008), space (Brenner & Elden 2009; Harvey 2006a; Lefebvre et al. 2009; Lefebvre 1991; Lefebvre 2003; Stanek 2011) and culture (Ahearne 2009; Bauman 2004; McGuigan 2003; O’Brien 2014; Stevenson 2003; Yúdice 2003; Zukin 1995) to investigate how Petrosocialism, the transition towards the Socialist State and the dismantlement of the institutional apparatus of urban governance in Venezuela enabled PDVSA La Estancia to appropriate the city’s urban spaces to instrumentalise the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons as an implicit cultural policy as well as to invoke the expediency of culture as a resource (Yúdice 2003) by what this thesis has proposed as the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit within the logic of Petrosocialism.

To this end, this thesis engaged with a mix of methodological approaches to address the scope and focus of these processes. To explore the intersections of State Space, Bureaucratic Power and Culture, the research collected four different sets of sources, relying predominantly on documentary research: interviews, public speeches, policy instruments and advertisements that were analysed through the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2004; Fairclough

2010; Jager 2011) and Visual Semiotics, using in particular Charles Peirce's Semiosis and Roland Barthes' Mythologies. The main challenge this thesis faced to investigate these questions had to do with access to government officials and PDVSA La Estancia bureaucrats, explained in detail in chapter two in the section devoted to the unexpected ethical issues that arose during the fieldwork in Caracas. However, it is crucial to clarify that the conclusions this investigation has arrived to would remain the same even if the whole of PDVSA La Estancia staff and government officials had been interviewed. The thesis adopted a case study approach to PDVSA La Estancia's interventions in Caracas as a gateway to explore Petrosocialism, and the Petrostate at large, from a spatial and cultural perspective. More broadly, the thesis was concerned with exploring the interfaces between the politics of space and politics of culture within a Petrostate. The main question that this thesis set out to investigate was how the relationship between the state, oil wealth, and culture played out in space in Petrosocialism. The investigation was guided by four further questions:

What are the Representations of Space produced by the discourses of Petrosocialism?

Do the Oil Social Districts constitute in practice PDVSA's State Space?

Is there a vision of the city in Petrosocialism?

What notion of culture is being produced by Petrosocialism?

This concluding chapter begins by addressing the discrepancies and contradictions that have underpinned this thesis throughout. It then revisits the research questions that guided the thesis' investigation to provide a synthesis of the core arguments, as well as the contributions to the literature developed in the substantive chapters. It closes with the emerging research agenda that this thesis taps into as well as some concluding observations about the current Venezuelan context.

### *Discrepancies and Contradictions*

As the introduction and chapter two described, even though Chávez championed an anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal agenda, the shift in the relationship between the state and the state-owned oil company brought by Petrosocialism blurred the boundaries between state and corporate power (Crouch 2011; Harvey 2005). Once PDVSA was reframed as a revolutionary oil

company at the service of Petrosocialism, Chávez surrendered many of the bureaucratic powers of the state to the state-owned oil company. This was one of the major contradictions identified by this thesis, examined more clearly in chapter five through the analysis of the speeches of former President of PDVSA Rafael Ramírez, who declared that the bureaucratic power of the oil company was subservient to the construction of the Socialist State and the eradication of oil rentierism. It is paradoxical for the president of an oil company to publicly denounce oil capitalism and argue for the end of oil rentierism. Nonetheless, the real purpose was to establish PDVSA's public identity as a revolutionary corporation even though, in practice, it had to preserve the capitalist practices of any oil corporation but whose active engagement in the global oil market is at the service of the New Magical State and Petrosocialism.

Another contradiction centres on PDVSA La Estancia's slogan 'utopia of the possible'. The term utopia refers to an ideal state or place where everything is perfect, an impossible place because its perfection cannot be realised. Whilst utopia speaks of an unattainable perfection, the word 'possible' speaks of what is able to be done or achieved, it is grounded on reality. Chapter five clarified that the reiteration of the slogan word by word in several speeches was an unexpected finding. This thesis did not examine the historical and political underpinnings of the slogan of 'utopia of the possible' or analysed it in philosophical or linguistic terms. It engaged with it exclusively in relation to the manner in which PDVSA La Estancia constructed its institutional public image and effects on urban space. The slogan can be paraphrased as the perfection of what can be done, or what is already done. Chapter five demonstrated that PDVSA La Estancia does not present utopia as an ideal unattainable oil-based world in the future, it is made possible by perfecting what already exists. As a self-defined instrument of the Sowing Oil Plan, the 'utopia of the possible' encloses the resuscitation of the 'sowing oil' slogan. PDVSA La Estancia's beautification of the city is discursively presented as a possible utopia, attainable and realised in the present by 'sowing oil' and 'harvesting culture' in the works of restoration across the city. As with any utopian project, PDVSA La Estancia constructed its own utopian inhabitants embodied by the giant oil workers of the adverts examined in chapter six. This thesis also demonstrated that the metaphorical act of sowing oil to harvest culture enacted by the giant oil workers is another illusion of the New Magical State: oil ceases to be finite when it is sown to bear the fruits of culture.

*Revisiting the key questions: Representations of Space in Petrosocialism, PDVSA's State Space, 'Oil that harvests culture' and the expediency of culture-as-mineral-deposit*

*What are the Representations of Space produced by the discourses of Petrosocialism?*

To examine the manner in which the transition towards the Socialist State Space took form, this thesis first examined Chávez's use of the oil industry and his exercise of bureaucratic power. Petrosocialism was heavily dependent on the longevity of OPEC and the continued growth of global oil capitalism. Therefore, the entrenchment of oil rentierism was necessary to guarantee the irreversibility of Socialism; Chávez's territorial policies were designed on the premise of inexhaustible highly priced oil. The thesis demonstrated that an essential contradiction runs through Petrosocialism: Chávez's goal to establish an alternative model to capitalism was actually heavily reliant on the success of global oil capitalism, the very model he proposed to eradicate. But in terms of Chávez's exercise of Bureaucratic Power it gained some coherence given that only an oil rentier state could produce a New Magical State; its powers and longevity were heavily dependent on a 'revolutionary' PDVSA that provided the necessary resources to consolidate the Socialist State.

This thesis drew on Fernando Coronil's *The Magical State* (1997) and Margarita López-Maya (2007) to characterise Hugo Chávez as the New Magical State. On one hand, Coronil's notion of *The Magical State* acknowledges land as 'the foundation of both the Venezuelan state and Venezuelan society' (Coronil 2011, pp.4–5) in which land equates to wealth extracted from its oil-rich subsoil. On the other hand, Coronil (1997, p.5) argued that the Petrostate's ownership of the subsoil and its monopoly over oil wealth is exercised dramaturgically: the expansion of the oil industry promoted the concentration of power in the presidency as the embodiment of the 'magical' powers of oil to transform the country. Hence, the Magical State is personified as a magnanimous sorcerer in the sole figure of the president. This thesis argued that the oil windfall and the reforms of the state apparatus enabled Hugo Chávez to summon all the bureaucratic powers of the state to embody a New Magical State in his persona to transform the country into a Socialist State (Coronil 2011, p.9). It also argued that despite Chávez's anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal rhetoric, the Venezuelan Socialist State could never cease to be an oil rentier state. This thesis also found that Chávez did not envision a post-oil world.

Chapters four and five examined the Representations of Space produced by the discourses of Petrosocialism through the creation of the new policy instruments of the Socialist State, and whether this process aided PDVSA in constituting a parallel State Space. Hugo Chávez launched

Petrosocialism as an economic a political model to use the vast financial resources generated by the oil boom to build a future socialist society governed by a Socialist State. Still, a new Socialist State could not be consolidated unless it consolidated a Socialist State Space (Brenner & Elden 2009), crucial not only in terms of the deployment of Bureaucratic Power but most importantly to secure control and authority over the soil from where oil wealth and the powers of the New Magical State originate. Once this thesis defined Hugo Chávez's exercise of Bureaucratic Power as the New Magical State, it then engaged in exploring the territorial strategies for the Socialist State Space. It adopted the definition of State Space as a historically specific political form of space, continually produced and reproduced by state actions, understandable only through the processes of statecraft and its relation to the state (Brenner & Elden 2009). The CRBV, the development plans for the nation and the new laws manifested Chávez's will to create a new Socialist State Space through urban planning based on the New Geometry of Power. To this end, he set off to completely restructure the state apparatus, proceeding to dismantle the bureaucratic structures that were deemed an obstacle or unnecessary. Chapter four took a chronological approach to trace in detail the process of abrogation of existing laws and creation of the new legal instruments for the transition towards the Socialist State. What this thesis revealed was that Petrosocialism failed to produce coherent Representations of Space. Although the New Geometry of Power was proposed as the guiding principle for the creation of the spatial policies of the Socialist State, in practice, the government proved to be inefficient in clearly delineating a cohesive conceptual framework to constitute a Socialist State Space. Moreover, despite the influence of Doreen Massey's language, this thesis revealed that the New Geometry of Power was explained in extremely simplistic geometric terms by Hugo Chávez. In practice, in lieu of a cohesive territorial strategy, PDVSA was able to exercise and impose the Oil Social District outlined by the Law of Hydrocarbons as a parallel State Space, to extend its dominant space beyond the spatial enclaves of the oil industry.

*Do the Oil Social Districts constitute in practice PDVSA's State Space?*

The deficiency in the development of coherent spatial policies, such as the specific case of the city of Caracas, were compounded by the chequered transition towards the Socialist State Space, evidenced by the journey from bill to indefinite legal vacuum of the Organic Law for the Planning and Management of the Organisation of Territory LOPGOT. The fast pace of abrogation, creation and non-enactment of the LOPGOT, as well the creation of new laws for the Socialist State that contravened the CRBV created what elites defined as a chaotic

institutional landscape. The case of Caracas, whose fragmented legal and institutional framework of urban governance already carried deficiencies inherited from previous governments served to illustrate the discontinuities of the transition and the mechanisms that ultimately enabled PDVSA to use the Law of Hydrocarbons to supersede the legal authority of municipalities, and in the process, be interpreted and implemented as an implicit cultural policy.

Through this account, this thesis demonstrated that the discontinuous process of dismantlement of the existing state apparatus created a breach in the legal framework of territory between 2005 and the creation of the legal framework for the Communal State in 2010 that enabled PDVSA LA Estancia to override the unstable institutional circumstances by abiding to the Organic Law of Hydrocarbons, particularly to Article 5 and the Oil Social Districts. The vacuum left by the transition towards the Socialist State Space created the conditions to conceptualise and enact the Oil Social District as PDVSA's State Space. Since PDVSA had been effectively functioning as a parallel state, this confirmed Brenner & Elden's contention that there is no state without territory and no territory without a state. The fault lines created by the conflicting coexistence of two models of State Space, identified by elites in chapter five, left a vacuum of bureaucratic power that enabled PDVSA to extend its own State Space, encompassed by the Oil Social District, over the Material Space of Caracas through the interventions of PDVSA LA Estancia. This thesis focused particularly on the Metropolitan Oil Social District, but before progressing further with the analysis it had to state the obvious: Caracas is not, and has never been, a site of oil extraction and refining; there are no crude oil deposits in its subsoil. Nonetheless, The Metropolitan Oil District covers Caracas because that is where the corporate headquarters of PDVSA are located. Thus, chapter four argued that as the headquarters of PDVSA were conceptualised as a centre of oil rent extraction and distribution, right in the midst of Libertador Municipality, Caracas was then absorbed into of the 'areas of influence' of PDVSA's State Space.

PDVSA's parallel State Space raised broader issues on the oil company's corporate ownership and authority over the material space of the city. As the producer of the oil rent PDVSA controls the main income of the state; its vast financial resources and managerial efficiency both challenged and diminished the authority of municipalities and regional governments that still abide to the abrogated laws of territorial organisation and urban planning of 1983 and 1987, respectively. That being the case, in Petrosocialism PDVSA has come full circle to the manner in which it related to the state during the time of *Apertura Petrolera*, almost completely independent and unaccountable to the state, as it behaved like any private corporation whilst possessing a larger budget than the government (Maass 2009). It also created an ambivalent relationship with

PDVSA La Estancia's actions in the city. Chapter five showed that whilst elites affirmed that PDVSA La Estancia contributed to the erosion of the institutional apparatus they simultaneously welcomed its managerial efficiency in delivering aesthetically pleasing spaces. This thesis drew on the theoretical premise of State Space to demonstrate how the construction of the Socialist State Space and the discursive interpretation of the Law of Hydrocarbons as implicit cultural policy by PDVSA La Estancia colluded to enable the oil company to constitute its own State Space and extend its dominant space over the Absolute-Material Space of Caracas.

*Is there a vision of the city in Petrosocialism?*

Having established the above, the thesis was also concerned with investigating what type of city was envisioned to emerge in Petrosocialism. This research found gaps and discrepancies in regards to this question when it compared and contrasted elite interviews responses with the Critical Discourse Analysis of the speeches of Hugo Chávez in chapter four. First, this thesis identified a gap in Chávez's discourse in regards to the role the city played in his political project. Elites identified a complete absence of the city from Chávez's discourse during his first term, affirming he had no plans or visions for the city as there was a lack of state policies and severe deficiencies in strategies of urban management. One interviewee in particular, with expertise on public space issues and mobility asserted with absolute confidence that the revolution had not produced any document that spoke about cities. However, as chapter four states, this thesis argued that the gap perceived by the elites is a symptom of the vacuum left by the dismantlement and abrogation of the policy instruments and institutions inherited from the 'counter revolutionary state' and the slow and discontinuous transition towards the Socialist State. The discontinuous process of abrogation and creation of what this thesis defined as spatial policies generated fault lines in the bureaucratic apparatus of city management in Caracas, as well as a chasm between the Absolute-Representations of Space sanctioned by the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the new policy instruments of the Socialist State.

Given this chasm, it was then primordial for this thesis to revisit Rodolfo Quintero's conception of the 'oil city' as an institutionally deprived and culturally sterile city, as it also contradicts Zukin's (1995) proposition that culture is what cities do best, suggesting that the business of oil overrides their capacity for cultural production. To explore what vision of the city was being conceived in the era of Petrosocialism, elites were asked if they would characterise Caracas as an oil city. Caracas, as the capital of the country and seat of government, is where the flows of oil money concentrate, circulate, and manifest as works of urban and cultural infrastructure. Whilst

elites' statements generally suggested that Caracas could be characterised as an oil city, they predominantly described an oil city in negative terms, claiming that the country's oil wealth has induced the institutional chaos as elites believe that oil rentierism hinders institutions, alters fiscal and bureaucratic structures and diminishes the capacity of the state in concordance with the literature on rentier states (Beblawi & Luciani 1987; Corrales & Penfold 2011; Karl 1997; Maass 2009; Mitchell 2011; Ross 2012), which contradicts the historical attribute of oil as a carrier of progress and modernity (Coronil 1997; Pérez Schael 1993; Tinker Salas 2009).

PDVSA La Estancia provided an ambiguous statement saying that Caracas is 'without a doubt' an oil city but that 'they' are working for it to stop being one as the restoration of city spaces and public art beautification would transform Caracas into a 'socialist city, paradigm of the twenty first century'. Here lies one of the key topics identified by this thesis. By initially defining Caracas as an oil city in Quintero's terms, PDVSA La Estancia is disregarding the city's cultural production, urban infrastructure and institutions (however deficient they might be). According to PDVSA La Estancia's discourse, Caracas would stop being an oil city once they transform it into a socialist city. But this socialist city, or rather the petro-socialist city is an appropriation; the work of PDVSA La Estancia is fundamentally a large scale restoration of the public art and spaces that predate the arrival of Hugo Chávez to their original condition as they stood during the golden years of the oil bonanza, prior to the oil crash of the 1980s. Even more, PDVSA La Estancia is effectively conceptualising the Absolute-Material Space of the city as an oil field, as the adverts analysed in chapter six visually demonstrated, whilst it declares that as an instrument of the Sowing Oil Plan the Law of Hydrocarbons grants it authority over Caracas by using the Oil Social District (PDVSA's State Space) to supersede municipal authority. In summary, PDVSA La Estancia is constructing a Petrosocialist vision of the city through the Oil Social District which enables it to reframe the city as an oil field, in which public art and public spaces serve as 'territorial' markers of the appropriation of the Relative-Material Space of the city, materialised in the Relative-Spaces of Representation of the adverts, which speaks of a twofold colonisation of the city by oil.

*What notion of culture is being produced by Petrosocialism?*

Having argued that in Petrosocialism, the city is reconceptualised as an oil field, chapters five and six explored what notion of culture is being produced by Petrosocialism. This thesis revisited Rodolfo Quintero's text, in light of the Critical Discourse Analysis of the speeches of the General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia and the semiotic analysis of the advertising campaign

‘we transform oil into a renewable resource for you’. Drawing on an exploration of the relationship between culture, management, power and the city (Ahearne 2009; Bauman 2004; McGuigan 2003; O’Brien 2014; Stevenson 2003; Yúdice 2003; Zukin 1995) it argued that PDVSA La Estancia is challenging Quintero’s notion of the ‘culture of oil’ as sterile and incapable of arts and intellectual productions by constructing a notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit. Chapters five and six demonstrated how PDVSA La Estancia conflates farming and mining language to perpetuate the oil rentier model in order to provide an illusion of ‘renewable oil’ in which PDVSA La Estancia’s interventions in the city are presented as a form of sowing oil that ‘harvests’ culture.

The thesis expands on Yúdice’s (2003) expediency culture as a resource to define PDVSA La Estancia’s instrumentalisation of culture within the logic of the oil industry and the Petrostate as culture-as-mineral-deposit. Yúdice’s performative understanding of the expediency of culture as a resource focuses on the uses of culture in relation to a goal that determines its value (2003, p.38). PDVSA La Estancia presents its works of restoration in the city as a form of sowing oil that bears the ‘social and cultural fruit of oil’ to construct a direct correlation between oil and culture. Also, it defines itself as an entity of ‘oil that harvests culture’, an entity that transforms oil, a non-renewable natural resource, into culture as *the* renewable resource, materialised in public art restoration and urban regeneration projects. Chapter five argued that PDVSA La Estancia General Manager’s vision of culture is seen through the eyes of the farmer-manager (Bauman 2004) whose growing field is in this particular case, the material space of Caracas conceptualised as an oil field. PDVSA La Estancia’s advertising campaign ‘we transform oil into a renewable resource for you’ renders oil and culture as equivalent, as if culture could be extracted, exploited and processed like oil. PDVSA La Estancia’s slogan ‘oil that harvests culture’ actually means that it engages in the harvest of pre-existing cultural objects.

This thesis established that their work on the Heritage branch has predominantly consisted in the regeneration and restoration of existing city spaces and public art. In this sense, their harvest is not a process of creation, it is collecting what has already been grown, gathering together what previous governments have built with the investment of the oil rent. This is one of the motivations behind the myth (Barthes 1993) constructed by the visual constructions and verbal text of the adverts. The adverts allow them to claim the benefit of having restored them, when in reality what they have done can be regarded as maintenance. Thus, the adverts negate the original cultural process that created the public art, for they were produced by a state that was considered by Hugo Chávez as bourgeois, capitalist and counter-revolutionary. PDVSA celebrates the

extinction of the cultural actions of the past. Moreover, the illusion of the New Magical State is that oil has been sown, and grown into cultural objects that can be harvested. But, once again, sowing and harvesting allude to a creative process, not maintenance. Therefore, the giant oil workers are not interacting with cultural objects; they are portrayed manipulating the public art and public spaces as if they were heavy machinery in a refinery or an oil drill. The giant oil workers are engaged in a mechanical process of maintenance of 'oil equipment'. Therefore, in Petrosocialism, they are only valuable as oil machinery.

Chapter six used Barthes' theory of myth to establish how the concept in the adverts relies on understanding culture as crude oil, as an expedient natural resource, a mineral that accumulates in the subsoil that upon extraction yields political and social benefits but that, unlike oil, can be transformed and renewed. Oil then becomes a double-sided cultural entity; it is invoked as a singular force capable of producing palpable cultural effects when sown but also a cultural product by itself. If culture is a mineral extracted from the subsoil of the nation then culture and the discursive and political wealth produced by culture-as-mineral-deposit is, like the subsoil, the exclusive property of the Petrostate.

Moreover, PDVSA La Estancia's adverts only show the exuberant side of oil (Buell 2014). The sanitised and impeccable giant oil worker erases any trace of pollution and dirt and conceals the catastrophic side of oil extraction by discursively and visually colluding oil and culture as a renewable resource. Although this thesis established that PDVSA La Estancia disputed Quintero's contention that oil cities do not produce culture, by construing the notion of culture-as-mineral-deposit, it constrains culture to the boundaries and history of the Venezuelan territory, to those cultural expressions tied to the land: traditional culture and folklore. Hence, it negates any manifestations of modern and contemporary culture that have come about by the circulation of flows of people, money, ideas, media and influences from the world at large. For these to find their place within the logic of Petrosocialism, they have to be reframed as oil machinery and emptied of their history and meaning, as is the case of the public art 'celebrated' by the adverts.

This thesis argued that culture-as-mineral-deposit is more than a discursive construction. The implication is that by tying culture to the land, it constructs culture as a material entity that accumulates in the subsoil, ready to be extracted, processed, weighed, and measured under the tight control of the Petrostate. Therefore, modern and abstract manifestations of culture such as the ones depicted in the adverts can only be quantified as valuable if they are transformed into

oil machinery, rather than as symbols of the abstract notions of civilisation and progress. Moreover, culture-as-mineral-deposit condenses the materiality lost by oil when it was reduced to the fetish of rent money (Coronil 1997; Mitchell 2011; Pérez Schael 1993) becoming inextricable from land, and by that same token, from PDVSA's State Space. Culture-as-mineral-deposit is invoked by PDVSA La Estancia as fuel to extend the illusions of the New Magical State beyond the physical death of Chávez. Then, for culture to fit this rhetoric, it has to be defined in narrower terms, as that which is exclusively Venezuelan as well as the exclusive property of the Petrostate.

### *Looking Forward: Oil as Cultural Culprit*

This research addressed a gap in the study of the spatial and cultural dimensions of oil rentierism, looking in particular at the city as the site of the material manifestations of the bureaucratic power of the Venezuelan Petrostate. In this sense, this thesis tapped into emerging lines of enquiry that focus on the material politics and visual cultures of oil, which calls for a trans-disciplinary approach into new ways of engaging in a mix of cultural critique and resistance of the effects of oil capitalism on the unequal access to public space, mobility, public art and cultural infrastructure at large in oil dependent nations. In a Petrostate, oil binds bureaucratic power and culture to the land and its mineral-rich subsoil. This thesis posits that the challenge to overcome oil rentierism and oil's centrality to modern life is above all cultural. Imre Zseman has aptly diagnosed that as a society 'we are incapable of imagining a world without oil' (Barrett & Worden 2014, p.XX).

This thesis contributes to the emerging field of Energy Humanities, particularly on what has been defined as Petrocultures, a transnational and multidisciplinary approach that examines the social and cultural implications of oil, and energy more broadly, on individuals, communities, and societies around the world today. This thesis opens opportunities to interrogate the cultural and urban effects of the Petrostate, along two lines of enquiry. The first would expand on oil as a 'utopia of the possible' in relation to Coronil's notion of the Magical State in order to problematise the 'oil city'. In Coronil's study Venezuela functioned as an exemplary case of a dysfunctional post-colonial Petrostate that attributes 'magical' powers to oil, as a promise of development and wealth accumulated in the subsoil that can be transformed into material signs of modernity made manifest in urban space above ground, whilst failing to achieve comprehensive technological and cultural modernisation. As this thesis has suggested that oil is not immune to tropes of magic and utopia, it begs to question whether every Petrostate is prone

to become a Magical State, and if so, would it manifest in producing 'oil cities'. The Petrostate inhabits the interstice between the vast oil wealth stored below ground and the signs of modernity materialised above ground. A cross-national comparative 'petrocultural study' of the urban effects of oil in countries that discovered oil around the 1960s, at the dawn of the 1970s oil boom, like Nigeria (1956), Norway (1963), and Scotland (1969) would be useful to discover commonalities and disparities on the effects of oil wealth on the urban form and the emergence of oil cities.

The second line of enquiry would expand on this thesis proposition of the expediency of culture-as-mineral-deposit beyond the realm of the oil industry and the Petrostate to explore how it is received and contested at the scale of creative practice. In other words, it would build on the findings of this thesis to shift the focus towards cultural forms of critique and creative resistance to the power of the Petrostate and the oil industry on the instrumentalisation of public art and the resulting inequalities of access to public space, mobility, and culture more broadly. The research would adopt a transnational perspective to explore the subversive work of visual artists and architects that engage in tactical performative actions in urban space to interrogate the material politics, visual cultures and aestheticisation of oil dependency, and the oil industry at large, in Europe and the Americas.

Venezuela is currently embroiled in a downward spiral of economic stagnation, scarcity of basic goods and medicines, extreme violence and political conflict caused by the steep decline in global oil prices compounded by government mismanagement and corruption. The crash of oil prices laid bare the deficiencies in state capacity that for years the constant influx of high oil revenues was able to mask. Yet, Venezuela does not cease to be a rentier state as power continues to be tied to the subsoil (State Space) and its mineral resources; the recent concessions given by the Maduro government to exploit the mineral resources of the Amazon basin is an attempt to find an alternative that emulates the wealth extracted from oil as a way of extending the illusions of the New Magical State beyond the physical death of Chávez. The historical cyclic revival of Usler Pietri's slogan 'sowing oil' is a clear sign of the nations' incapacity of imagining itself as anything other than a Petrostate. Not even Hugo Chávez, who championed an anti-capitalism and anti-neoliberalism agenda, was able to wean his ideals from oil.

The illusions of the New Magical State are increasingly becoming untenable amidst the current crisis of the oil market. The 'utopia of the possible' as presented in discourse and images by

PDVSA Las Estancia, negates the existence of poverty, crime, scarcity and political polarisation. The utopian space of oil materialised by PDVSA becomes perverse not for what it shows but by what and who it conceals. The adverts show an imaginary of prosperity that is in stark contrast to the deterioration that is currently sweeping the country. Amid a nation that cannot imagine itself as anything other than a Petrostate, in a car-centric city the petrol station emerges as a beacon of the oil industry to highlight the centrality of oil in contemporary cultural production. The petrol station, as the General Manager of PDVSA said in chapter five, is usually the only direct contact common people have with oil if they don't work for an oil company or live near remote sites of oil extraction. Crude oil is not visible in the experience of the everyday; it is concealed and contained inside pipelines, barrels, and tanks. But oil is the culprit hiding behind modern cultural production, from vinyl records to fashion, it continues to flow and inform our imagination. Only by engaging with oil as a cultural material can our incapacity to envision a non-dystopian post-oil world can be understood and overcome.

## Appendix one: Speeches

### *President Hugo Chávez Frías*

1. Chávez, Hugo. 2005. *Extractos del discurso ofrecido por el Ciudadano Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, con motivo de la presentación de los Planes Estratégicos de Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA)*, 18 August, Hotel Caracas Hilton, Caracas, in <http://rafaelramirez.desarrollo.org.ve/> (Accessed on 12/08/2015).
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Key passages	Speech Title	Date	Context
Sabemos y conocemos aquella frase de un venezolano insigne, yo lo respeto mucho y lo respetaré mientras viva, el doctor Arturo Uslar Pietri. En aquel Editorial de por allá en 1936, si mal no recuerdo, decía Uslar –recordémoslo- “hay que sembrar el petróleo”. Y Uslar, el mismo pero anciano ya, terminando el siglo, estaba yo en prisión cuando recuerdo haber leído uno de sus escritos, de sus tantos escritos. El dijo, como despidiéndose ya a sus 90 y tantos años: “no pudimos o no supimos o no quisimos sembrar el petróleo”. Propongo en honor al espíritu de aquella frase y por qué	Extractos del discurso ofrecido por el Ciudadano Presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, con motivo de la presentación de los Planes Estratégicos de Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA)	18 August 2005 Caracas, Hotel Caracas Hilton	Presentation of the strategic plans of PDVSA, which included the <i>Plan Siembra Petrolera</i> (Sowing Oil Plan)

<p>no, al del doctor Uslar y al de Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo y al de todos los que alertaron, escribieron, dijeron, lucharon y hasta murieron por la soberanía petrolera nacional, que llamemos a este Plan 2005-2030, Siembra Petrolera.</p> <p>Entonces este proyecto va a ser, a partir de hoy, uno de los enclaves, de las palancas para llevar adelante el proyecto socialista, no para apuntalar el modelo capitalista de explotación. Eso sería contrario al mandato constitucional y contrario al interés nacional, pero que nadie se asuste por esto, se trata de la igualdad y el desarrollo económico, social, integral del país.</p>			
<p>Nunca hubo una gota de petróleo para el pueblo de Venezuela, el petróleo se lo chupó la oligarquía criolla y sobre todo el imperio norteamericano. Ahora el petróleo es del pueblo venezolano y el petróleo será para la justicia, para la igualdad, para el desarrollo de nuestro pueblo, esa sí es la verdad.</p> <p>La OPEP nació hace 45 años. La OPEP fue puesta de rodillas. La OPEP se levantó. La OPEP vivirá con éxito para siempre. Que así sea. Declaro formalmente inaugurada esta 141ª Asamblea de Ministros y Gobernadores.</p>	<p>Palabras del Presidente Chávez en la Instalación de la 141ª Reunión Extraordinaria de la Conferencia Ministerial de la Organización de Países Exportadores de Petróleo OPEP</p>	<p>1 June 2006 Caracas</p>	<p>141st Extraordinary meeting of the Ministerial Conference of OPEC</p>
<p>Nada ni nadie podrá desviarnos del camino hacia el socialismo bolivariano, el socialismo venezolano, nuestro socialismo.</p> <p>Vamos a darle duro estos 15 años que vienen, rumbo al Bicentenario de Carabobo, Proyecto Nacional Simón Bolívar, socialismo bolivariano.</p> <p>Segundo motor: la reforma socialista constitucional, vamos rumbo a la República Socialista de Venezuela y para eso se requiere una profunda reforma de la Constitución Nacional, de nuestra Constitución Bolivariana.</p> <p>El cuarto: algo que suena un poco técnico, ustedes me perdonan, la nueva geometría del poder sobre el mapa nacional. La nueva geometría, ustedes saben que tiene como tres dimensiones, la dimensión en línea, la distancia; la dimensión en</p>	<p>Palabras del Presidente de la Republica Comandante Hugo Chávez</p>	<p>8 January 2007 Caracas</p>	<p>First public speech of 2007, on the inauguration of his third presidential period</p>

<p>extensión de un territorio y la dimensión volumétrica, el contenido, el volumen. Quiero que nosotros rediseñemos la geometría del poder en Venezuela. Esto va a llevar a profundidades. Un ejemplo es cómo está organizado el Estado Apure, esto nos va a llevar a revisar leyes orgánicas como la de los concejos municipales, eso está intacto y yo diría más, está peor que antes, Concejos Municipales que no tienen ningún poder, que son las mismas viejas estructuras, es el mismo viejo Estado cuarto republicano, las regiones del país, cómo lograr una relación simétrica o una aplicación simétrica del poder político, del poder económico, social, militar a lo largo y ancho de todo el territorio.</p> <p>Y el quinto: creo que el quinto motor debe ser el más poderoso, la explosión revolucionaria del poder comunal, los Consejos Comunales, pero los consejos comunales en este año debemos trascender ahora lo local y debemos ir creando por ley en primer lugar, una especie de confederación regional, local, nacional de Consejos Comunales. Tenemos que ir marchando hacia la conformación de un Estado comunal y el viejo Estado burgués que todavía vive, que está vivo y coleando, tenemos que irlo desmontando progresivamente mientras vamos levantando al Estado comunal, el Estado socialista, el Estado bolivariano. Un Estado que esté en condiciones y en capacidad de conducir una revolución. Casi todos los estados nacieron para detener revoluciones. ¡Vaya qué reto el nuestro! Convertir al viejo Estado contra revolucionario en un Estado revolucionario,</p>			
<p>El oro negro se está haciendo cada vez más transparente y si el petróleo se está convirtiendo en instrumento de liberación,</p>	<p>Palabras del Presidente Hugo Chávez Frías en la inauguración de la IV Cumbre de Petrocaribe</p>	<p>21 December 2007 Cienfuegos, Cuba</p>	<p>Inauguration of the IV Summit of PetroCaribe</p>

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Key Passage	Speech title	year	context
Es un plan no sólo de PDVSA. Es un plan, como lo señaló el Presidente, para un ciclo: del 2005 al 2030. Se le ha llamado Plan Siembra Petrolera en honor al doctor Arturo Uslar Pietri. Estamos trabajando para que ahora sí sea posible hacerse una real siembra del petróleo.	Palabras del Ministro Rafael Ramírez en la presentación del Plan Siembra Petrolera	19 August 2005	Extractos de la Conferencia Planes Estratégicos de PDVSA, presentados por el Ministro de Energía y Petróleo y Presidente de PDVSA, Rafael Ramírez Carreño Caracas, Hotel Caracas Hilton, 19 de agosto de 2005
es una política revolucionaria porque ese ingreso petrolero se va a convertir ahora y así está plasmado en nuestro Plan de la Patria, en la principal palanca para superar el modelo rentista petrolero, la principal palanca para crear las bases materiales para la	Discurso del ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y presidente de PDVSA, Rafael Ramírez, en la presentación del Informe de Gestión Anual de PDVSA 2012 Salón Simón Bolívar, Complejo Ministerio-Pdvsa	3 May 2013	Presentation of PDVSA Annual report

<p>construcción del socialismo en nuestro país.</p> <p>El tema petrolero es tan importante para la nación que todos los sectores, los privados, los públicos, los opinadores tienen que verlo desde una situación de equilibrio, como una oportunidad extraordinaria de ir a construir un modelo alternativo que tampoco ocultamos, que es el socialismo que está plasmado en el Plan de la Patria.</p>			
<p>nosotros pretendemos que esa inmensa renta petrolera se capte para que podamos construir un modelo alternativo al modelo rentista petrolero, un modelo productivo que hemos dicho, será socialista. Nosotros vamos a utilizar la renta petrolera para expandir todas nuestras capacidades industriales y todas nuestras fuerzas productivas.</p>	<p>PDVSA FIEL AL LEGADO DE CHÁVEZ Discurso del Ministro del Poder Popular de Petróleo y Minería y Presidente de Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A., Rafael Ramírez, en la Jornada PDVSA-Sector productivo nacional conexo. Maracaibo, estado Zulia</p>	<p>16 May 2013</p>	<p>“PDVSA is Loyal to Chávez’s Legacy”, speech for the productive sectors of PDVSA in Maracaibo</p>
<p>El Presidente Chávez, líder indiscutible de nuestro proceso revolucionario, lo ha dicho con claridad y valentía, nuestra revolución es profundamente antiimperialista y el socialismo la vía de nuestra salvación. Es la patria socialista o la muerte.</p> <p>Para nadie es un secreto que en nuestro Gobierno Bolivariano tenemos la firme convicción de que la única posibilidad de resolver los agobiantes problemas económicos, sociales y políticos que aquejan a la humanidad se encuentran en el socialismo. El sistema capitalista ha demostrado su fracaso histórico, ha conducido a millones de seres humanos a la miseria, al hambre y a la violencia.</p> <p>Así trabajamos, sobre la posibilidad cierta de construir una sociedad de</p>	<p>Comparecencia de ministros para el desarrollo territorial</p>	<p>4 November 2013</p>	<p>Presentation of the Memory and Accounts Memoria y Cuenta of the Ministers of the Vicepresidency of the Area of Territorial Development</p>

<p>hombres libres y justos, construir el socialismo. Patria Socialista o Muerte. Venceremos. Muchas gracias compañeros diputados.</p>			
<p>la renta petrolera debe ser un instrumento para la construcción de un nuevo orden económico, debe ser un instrumento para la construcción del socialismo.</p> <p>Estamos en el marco de una guerra económica, son propias de la contradicción que surge del esfuerzo por construir el socialismo en permanente lucha con los valores y categorías del capitalismo atrasado y dependiente del modelo rentista que todavía sobrevive en nuestro país.</p> <p>Tenemos ahora la inmensa tarea de utilizar la renta petrolera como un instrumento para la superación del modelo rentista petrolero, que se ha desarrollado en estos 100 años de historia; apoyar la expansión de nuestras fuerzas productivas, todas nuestras capacidades internas; seguir elevando las posibilidades sociales, educativas y de trabajo de nuestro pueblo para que se incorporen a las tareas de la producción, el trabajo por toda la sociedad, por la Patria toda y por el socialismo.</p> <p>la sociedad que soñara nuestro Comandante Eterno Hugo Chávez: “la sociedad socialista”; es el mejor reconocimiento que podemos hacer al trabajo abnegado, desinteresado, al amor por los humildes, a la Patria del Comandante Chávez.</p>	<p>Sesión especial con motivo de la conmemoración del centenario Del inicio de la actividad comercial petrolera en Venezuela, con la explotación del pozo Zumaque I, Maracaibo</p>	<p>5 August 2014</p>	<p>Centenary of the exploitation of the oil well Zumaque I</p>

*Beatrice Sansó de Ramírez, General Manager of PDVSA La Estancia*

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Key Passage	Speech title	year	context
<p>El Centro de Arte La Estancia cumple funciones de índole cultural y social. Estas son manifestaciones que no pueden ser separadas porque la cultura forma parte de la sociedad. A partir de este principio, trabajamos desde dos perspectivas, una de La Estancia hacia adentro y otra de La Estancia hacia fuera.</p> <p>Hacia afuera, queremos que la gente vaya por la calle y diga “eso lo hizo el Centro de Arte La Estancia”, “ahí puso la mano La Estancia”, que identifiquen el fruto social y cultural del petróleo a través de nuestra obra. Que no haya una sola persona que trabaje en PDVSA, en el Ministerio de Energía y Petróleo, en Cadafe o en Pequiven que no conozca La Estancia. Que no haya una persona en Caracas, y luego en el interior del país, que no conozca a La Estancia, que no se sienta identificado con ella, porque La Estancia es parte de todos nosotros.</p> <p>“Esa es otra forma de sembrar el petróleo”, recalcó.</p> <p>PDVSA La Estancia es el brazo social y cultural de Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., destinado a la valoración, restauración, promoción y difusión del acervo histórico y artístico del país. Sus acciones se fundamentan en los principios del Plan Siembra Petrolera.</p>	PDVSA La Estancia Arte para todos	2005 Caracas	PDVSA La Estancia webpage, accessed on 12/08/2015

(...) deseamos proyectar como modelo de acción que nos permita alcanzar para el año 2010, en el Bicentenario del 19 de abril, la meta de vivir en una Caracas bella, con todos sus espacios recuperados, una ciudad socialista, paradigma de la urbe del siglo 21.	Discurso con motivo de la develación del Abra Solar de Alejandro Otero	9 November 2007 Caracas	The reveal of the restoration of the <i>Abra Solar</i> sculpture in Plaza Venezuela, Caracas.
PDVSA-Centro de Arte La Estancia ha dado un vuelco radical a la gestión cultural en cuanto a la definición de una concepción práctica y propia de nuestras políticas, de acuerdo con el artículo 5 de la Ley Orgánica de Hidrocarburos y el Plan Siembra Petrolera	Discurso con motivo de la Inauguración de PDVSA La Estancia Paraguana  Inauguración de la Quinta versión de la Fuente de Plaza Venezuela	13 August 2008 Paraguana  10 March 2009 Caracas	Opening of the Paraguana branch  Opening of the the fifth version of the Plaza Venezuela Fountain
“el terrible pesimismo de lo imposible y lo sustituiremos por la Utopía de lo Posible, ideal que inspira el diario quehacer en el Oasis Cultural capitalino”  “la oportunidad hoy más que nunca de serlo, paradigma de lo posible, utopía de lo deseable.”  un espacio para la danza, para niños grandes y pequeños, donde la Siembra Petrolera encontrará otra vez surcos para inseminarse, logrando la utopía de lo posible.  utopía de lo posible	Discurso con motivo de la develación del Abra Solar de Alejandro Otero  Discurso con motivo de la develación de la Fisicromía del maestro Carlos Cruz Diez  Discurso con motivo de la inauguración de la exposición Mateo Manure: el Hombre y el Artista Inauguración de la Quinta versión de la Fuente de Plaza Venezuela  Inauguración de la sede de PDVSA La Estancia Maracaibo  PDVSA LA ESTANCIA: LA UTOPIA DE LO POSIBLE	2007  2008  2008 2009  2010  2012	Revealing of the restoration of the restoration of Abra Solar Revealing of the restoration of Cruz Diez’s Fisicromía  Revealing of the restoration of Mateo Manure exhibition Inauguration of the fifth version of Plaza Venezuela Fountain  Opening of the new headquarters in Maracaibo
El ente cultural que recibimos en el año 2005 se caracterizaba por una visión reduccionista y fragmentaria de la cultura, divorciada de las circunstancias políticas, económicas y sociales del país	Discurso con motivo de la Inauguración de PDVSA La Estancia Paraguaná  Inauguración de la Quinta versión de la Fuente de Plaza Venezuela	2008  2009	Opening of the Paraguaná branch (2008), and opening of the fifth version of the Plaza Venezuela Fountain.
Vengamos a la Plaza, e incentivemos en los niños el sentimiento de la pertenencia, el viaje a	Inauguración de la Quinta versión de la Fuente de Plaza Venezuela	2009	Opening of the fifth version of the Plaza Venezuela fountain

nuestra semilla, alejándolos del llamado “mall”, del “Fast food”, del “autoautismo” generado por la televisión, el celular, los aparatos electrónicos y el consumismo, apartándolos de la cultura de la dominación. Traigámoslos a la Plaza, que vengan con nosotros a una patinata y a recibir en conjunto todos el Año Nuevo.			
<p>Petróleo que cosecha cultura</p> <p>Por eso, nos sentimos contentos, aunque no satisfechos, porque muchas son aún las ideas, los proyectos y los sueños. ¡Seguimos pues encontrando para la Siembra Petrolera, los surcos para insemínarla, y continuar, inspirando lo posible!</p>	A un año de labor PDVSA La Estancia Petróleo que cosecha cultura	5 February 2011	First anniversary of PDVSA La Estancia Maracaibo, opening of the exhibition titled “petróleo que cosecha cultura” (oil that sows culture)- a collective of photographs that document the work of PDVSA La Estancia across Venezuela during 2010.
PDVSA LA ESTANCIA, instrumento de la Siembra Petrolera	Palabras como oradora de orden en la Sesión Solemne del Concejo Municipal del Municipio Carirubana, Estado Falcón	2012	Speaker for the solemn sesión of the Municipal Council of Carirubana Municipality, Falcon State
La construcción de parques infantiles La Alquitrana en nuestras zonas populares, porque nuestros niños y niñas deben saberse petroleros, en remembranza del primer pozo explotado comercialmente en nuestro país	PDVSA LA ESTANCIA: LA UTOPIA DE LO POSIBLE	2012	



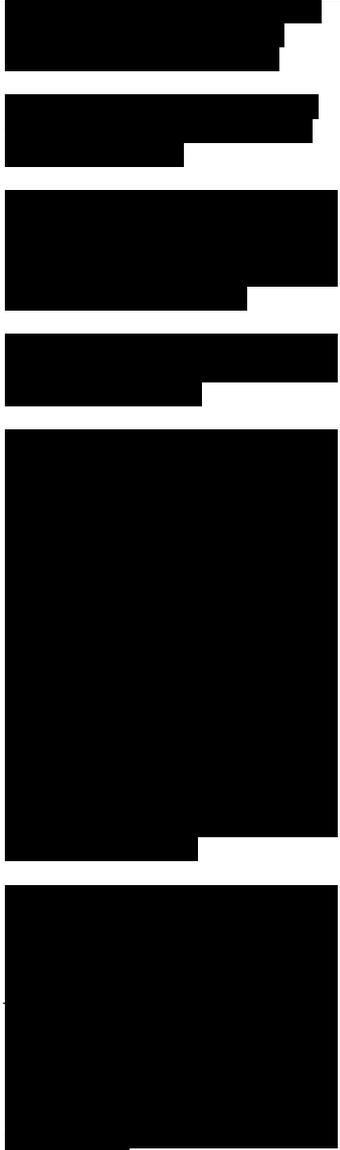
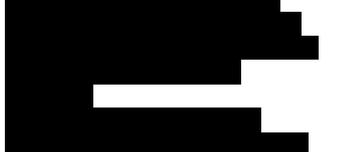
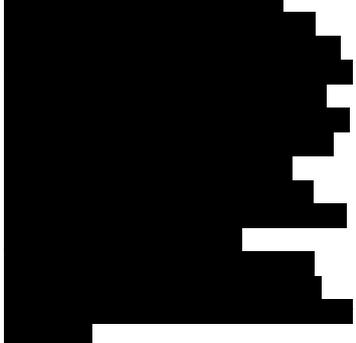
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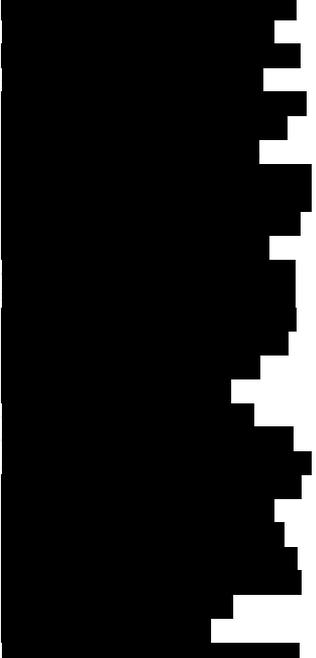
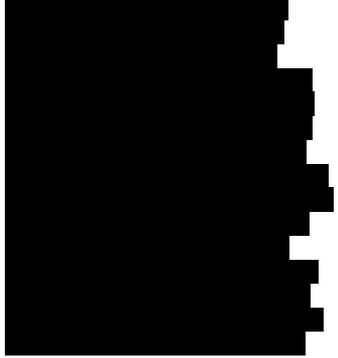
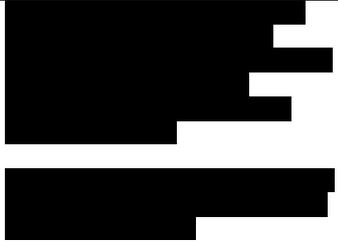
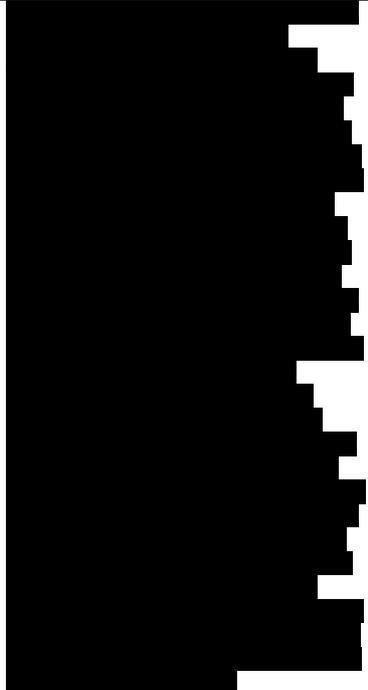
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## Appendix three: Adverts

## Appendix four: Ethics Approval



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<http://www.city.ac.uk/arts-social-sciences/sociology>

Date 23 May 2016

To whom it may concern:

**Principal Investigator: Penelope Plaza-Azuaje**

**Project Title:** *State, Oil and Culture: Urban Cultural Policy-Making and the Construction of Public Space in Caracas, from Venezuela Saudita to Venezuela Bolivariana(1974-2012)*

**Supervisors:** Dave O'Brien  
**Degree:** PhD  
**Start Date:** 5 May 2014  
**End Date:** 30 November 2014  
**Approval Date:** 2 July 2014

This is to confirm that the research proposal detailed above was granted formal approval by the MCCI Committee. CCI projects now fall under the remit of the Sociology Research Ethics Committee.

**Additionally, project amendments submitted on 16 May 2016 have been approved by the Sociology Research Ethics Committee.**

Please note the following:

### **Project amendments**

You will need to submit an Amendments Form to the Deputy Chair of the Sociology Research Ethics Committee ([diana.yeh@city.ac.uk](mailto:diana.yeh@city.ac.uk)) if you wish to make any of the following changes to your research:

- (a) recruit a new category of participants;
- (b) change, or add to, the research method employed;
- (c) collect additional types of data;
- (d) change the researchers involved in the project.

### **Adverse events**

You will need to submit an Adverse Events Form to the Deputy Chair of the Sociology Research Ethics Committee ([diana.yeh@city.ac.uk](mailto:diana.yeh@city.ac.uk)), copied to the Secretary of Senate Research Ethics Committee ([Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk](mailto:Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk)), in the event of any of the following:

- (a) adverse events;
- (b) breaches of confidentiality;
- (c) safeguarding issues relating to children and vulnerable adults;
- (d) incidents that affect the personal safety of a participant or researcher.

Issues (a) and (b) should be reported as soon as possible and no later than 5 days after the event. Issues (c) and (d) should be reported immediately. Where appropriate, the researcher should also report adverse events to other relevant institutions, such as the police or social services.

Should you have any further queries relating to this matter, then please do not hesitate to contact me. On behalf of the Sociology Research Ethics Committee, I hope that the project meets with success.

Kind regards

*Diana Yeh*

Dr Diana Yeh  
Deputy Chair of the Sociology Research Ethics Subcommittee  
Department of Sociology  
City University London  
Email: [diana.yeh@city.ac.uk](mailto:diana.yeh@city.ac.uk)

## Appendix five: Sample of Participant Information Letter and Consent Form



**CITY UNIVERSITY  
LONDON**

### **Documento de información para el participante**

Proyecto de investigación: **State, Oil and Culture: Cultural Policy and Public Space in Caracas** (Estado, cultura y petróleo: políticas culturales y espacio público en Caracas)

Me gustaría invitarle a participar en un estudio de investigación. Antes de decidir si desea participar es importante que entienda por qué la investigación se está haciendo y lo que implicaría para usted. Por favor tómese el tiempo para leer cuidadosamente la siguiente información, puede discutirlo con otras personas, si así lo desea. No dude en preguntar si hay algo que no está claro o si desea obtener más información.

#### **¿Cuál es el propósito de este estudio?**

Este proyecto de investigación explorará la relación entre el estado, el petróleo, la cultura y espacio urbano en Venezuela, concentrándose principalmente en la ciudad de Caracas como caso de estudio. El espacio del Estado abarca mucho más que el territorio nacional, está constituido por un conjunto diverso de elementos, en un amplio rango de escalas, desde lo micro hasta lo global. El enfoque para el desarrollo de estos argumentos serán cómo estos elementos han dado forma a la relación del estado con la cultura, cómo la riqueza petrolera da forma a esta relación y cómo esto se manifiesta en el espacio urbano de la ciudad de Caracas.

#### **¿Por qué se solicita mi participación?**

Para este estudio se han escogido personas clave en altos cargos con poder de decisión en las políticas públicas urbanas y culturales que tienen incidencia directa en la ciudad de Caracas.

#### **¿Tengo que participar?**

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria, podrá retirarse en cualquier momento o etapa, negarse a responder preguntas que considere muy personales o invasivas sin repercusión alguna

Es su decisión el querer participar o no. Si decide participar, se le solicitará que firme la planilla de consentimiento, y cuenta con la libertad de retirarse en cualquier momento y sin tener que dar explicaciones.

#### **¿Qué pasará si participo?**

- Usted será entrevistado por la investigadora

- Se estipula que la entrevista tenga una duración máxima de 90 minutos
- Se estipula un solo encuentro con la investigadora, se acordará una segunda entrevista en caso que sea considerado necesario por ambas partes.
- Previo a la entrevista se entregará el presente documento de instrucciones al participante y la planilla de consentimiento para ser firmadas, en caso de aceptar. La metodología de la entrevista será estructurada y no estandarizada, grabada en audio.
- La entrevista tendrá lugar en el lugar de conveniencia escogido por el entrevistado o la entrevistada.

### **¿Qué debo hacer?**

La investigadora le formulará preguntas a las que usted podrá responder de la manera que considere más pertinente.

### **¿Cuáles son las desventajas y riesgos de participar?**

Ninguno.

### **¿Cuáles son los beneficios de participar?**

Contribuir al conocimiento de la realidad cultural y urbana de Venezuela, con valiosa información que no se encuentra debidamente documentada y que permitirá compartir este conocimiento en una plataforma internacional.

### **¿Qué pasará si el estudio se suspende?**

En estos casos, toda información recolectada y data personal sera resguardada por la Universidad.

### **¿Mi participación se mantendrá confidencial?**

- Sólo la investigadora, su supervisor y el comité de ética de City University London tendrán acceso a la información recopilada en este estudio, y será destruida luego de tres años.
- La información personal recopilada y los archivos de audio de las entrevistas serán de uso exclusivo para este estudio y estará resguardada por el Data Protection Act Data archiving/sharing

### **¿Qué pasará con los resultados del estudio de investigación?**

Los resultados de este estudio serán analizados como parte de la tesis doctoral de la investigadora, pudiendo ser incluidos en artículos académicos a ser publicados en revistas arbitradas de prestigio internacional. Si así lo desea y lo comunica, el participante tendrá derecho a recibir copias de los documentos y publicaciones derivados de este estudio. Para este fin, el participante deberá facilitar una dirección de correo electrónico.

### **¿Qué pasará si no quiero seguir formando parte del estudio?**

Usted posee toda la libertad de retirarse del estudio sin tener que dar ninguna explicación.

### **¿Y si tengo algún problema?**

Puede contactar a la investigadora al 04166204588 o al correo electrónico penelope.plaza-azuaje.1@city.ac.uk.

Si usted tiene cualquier problema, preocupaciones o preguntas sobre este estudio, puede hablar con un miembro del equipo de investigación. Si siguen insatisfecho y desea quejarse formalmente, puede hacerlo a través del procedimiento de quejas de la Universidad. Para quejarse sobre el estudio, puede comunicarse al teléfono +0044(0)20 7040 3040. Usted puede solicitar hablar con el Secretario del Comité de Ética de Investigación del Senado e informarles que el nombre del proyecto es: State, Oil and Culture: Cultural Policy and Public Space in Caracas

También puede escribir a:  
Anna Ramberg  
Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee  
Research Office, E214  
City University London  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB  
Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk

City University London posee pólizas de seguros que se aplican a este estudio. Si usted siente que ha sido lastimado o herido por participar en este estudio usted puede ser elegible para reclamar una indemnización. Esto no afecta sus derechos legales a pedir compensación. Si usted ha sido perjudicado debido a la negligencia de alguien, entonces es probable que tenga motivos para la acción legal.

**Quién ha autorizado este estudio?**

Este estudio ha sido aprobado por el Comité de Ética en Investigación (Research Ethics Committee) de la City University London.

**Para mayor información**

Supervisor:

Dave O'Brien  
Dave.Obrien.1@city.ac.uk  
Lecturer in Cultural and Creative Industries  
The Department of Culture and Creative Industries  
School of Arts and Social Sciences  
City University London

**Gracias por su tiempo y su disposición para leer este documento.**



## Planilla de consentimiento

Proyecto de investigación:

**State, Oil and Culture: Cultural Policy and Public Space in Caracas** (Estado, cultura y petróleo: políticas culturales y espacio público en Caracas)

1.	<p>Estoy de acuerdo en participar en el proyecto de investigación de City University London especificado anteriormente. Me han explicado el proyecto, he leído la planilla de información al participante, la que podré conservar para mis archivos.</p> <p>Comprendo que este estudio implicará:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ser entrevistada/entrevistado por la investigadora.</li><li>• Permitir que la entrevista sea grabada en audio.</li><li>• Ofrecer mi disponibilidad en caso que se requiera una segunda entrevista.</li></ul>	
2.	<p>Esta información será archivada y procesada con los siguientes propósitos:</p> <p>Comprendo que cualquier información que yo provea será confidencial, y ninguna información que pueda llevar a la identificación de cualquier individuo será revelada en ningún reporte del proyecto, o a terceras partes. Ningún dato de información personal será publicado. Los datos de información personal no serán compartidos con ninguna organización.</p> <p>Comprendo que he autorizado que mi nombre, mi cargo o el nombre de mi lugar de trabajo sea usado en el reporte final del proyecto, y en futuras publicaciones.</p>	
3.	<p>Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria, que puedo decidir no participar parcial o totalmente en el proyecto, y que me puedo retirar en cualquier etapa del proyecto sin penalización o desventaja alguna.</p>	



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