US and Venezuelan Presidential Masculinities in the First Decade of the 'War on Terror'

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Publications & Conference Papers

Parts of this thesis will be published in a forthcoming edition of the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* under the title 'Avant-Garde Militarism and a Post-hip-hop President: Obama's Presidential Masculinity in Images'. Other parts of this thesis were published in online media and presented at the following conferences:

- 'Chávez Was the Essence of A Military Man', New Matilda, 13 March 2013

- 'From Effective to Desperate: Hugo Chávez's Shifting Subaltern Hypermasculinity From Bush to Obama in the "War on Terror"'
  Oceanic Conference on International Studies, Sydney July 2012

- 'Presidential Masculinity & the "War on Terror" – Bush, Obama and a Venezuelan Caudillo'
  International Studies Association (ISA), San Diego April 2012

- 'Obama Kills Osama: Militarised Masculinities and the Pervasiveness of "Striking Back"'
  Theorising Crisis: Feminist Perspectives, UNSW, Sydney December 2011

- 'Presidential Masculinity In Images – a Comparative Analysis of Bush, Obama and Chávez'
  Cultural Studies Association of Australasia Annual Conference, Byron Bay December 2010

- 'Mapping Fundamentalist Hypermasculine Politics on the Global Stage'
  Tenth Essex Conference in Critical Political Theory, Essex June 2010

- 'Using Mutual Hypermasculinity as a Framework for Understanding Global Politics: Hugo Chávez Versus George W. Bush'
  UYSD Transcultural Mappings Conference, Sydney April 2010

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Abstract

This thesis is situated in the transdisciplinary field of feminist global politics, which explores the toxic and mutually constitutive relationship between war, militarism and masculinities. In particular, I examine this relationship in the political sphere through a new theoretical lens: the construction, performance and embodiment of presidential masculinities. The thesis concludes that presidential masculinities function as 'militarising manoeuvres' (Enloe 2000) that can propel, legitimate, rebrand or even camouflage militarism and thus warrant new modes of feminist attention. I use the presidential masculinities of George. W. Bush, Barack Obama and Hugo Chávez to investigate US-Venezuelan relations, geopolitics and militarism in the first eleven years of the 'War on Terror' (hereafter 'WOT') (2001-2012). My overarching research questions are: How have US presidential masculinities and the 'WOT' shaped Chávez's presidential masculinity and politics? What does this tell us about the relationship between presidential masculinities, their role in global politics and their relationship to militarism? Unlike most scholarship in the field, I use both the concepts of *hegemonic masculinity* and *hypermasculinity* to inform my theoretical framework. Methodologically, I employ multimodal discursive research methods to analyse presidential rhetoric, policy, performance and visual discourse in both traditional and non-traditional ways.

Through a relational approach to US-Venezuelan masculinities, this thesis shifts the focus of the 'WOT' to the Latin American region and describes the new forms of militarisation the 'WOT' made possible in Venezuela. I argue that Chávez embodied and performed a 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity under Bush but renegotiated his presidential masculinity when Obama was elected to the White House. Chávez was forced to depersonalise and deracialise his anti-imperial rhetoric and presidential masculinity to accommodate the new globally popular and black president of the 'white empire'. Thus, this thesis further cements feminist claims that masculinities shape global politics and vice versa. I also offer original research on the ever-changing relationship between militarism, masculinities and war in the USA, with a specific focus on the post-Bush, post-9/11 period during Obama's first presidential term. While Bush embodied a traditional and highly militarised Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity, Obama performs a contemporary, hybrid presidential masculinity that is demilitarised and characterised by a post-hip-hop, ghetto-style cool. Despite such contrasting masculinity politics, Obama has further

institutionalised Bush's 'WOT' both at home and abroad, camouflaging ongoing US militarism via his unique presidential masculinity. I argue that Obama has recast US presidential and hegemonic masculinities in contradictory and harmful ways. The key contribution of this thesis, then, is revealing new understandings of the masculinisation and militarisation of politics in the Americas during the 'WOT'.

Introduction

Militarised Masculinity and a Gold Gun

Parks and Recreation is a US (United States) mockumentary style comedy television show that tracks the lives of a small group of parks department employees in the fictional, small mid-west town of Pawnee in Indiana. The main protagonists are a nerdy, liberal-leaning, mid-level public servant called Leslie Knope and her anti-government, Republican-voting, 'American' everyman boss, Ron Swanson. Leslie loves her job, is a stickler for the rules and believes in government making a difference. Ron is the opposite of all these things. He loves hunting and woodwork, hates his two ex-wives and sports a manly moustache. His character has significantly contributed to the show's wider success and he has developed a cult following on the internet. Other characters include Leslie's overconfident but incompetent right hand man Tom Haverford, unenthusiastic college intern April Ludgate and sassy department employee Donna Meagle. Tom is a cocky American of South Asian origin who has changed his name from Darwish Sabir Ismael Gani so he can pursue his entrepreneurial American dreams. April is half Puerto-Rican and has a complete disinterest in, and open sarcasm towards, her job and colleagues. Ron promotes her as his assistant after he recognises this. Donna is a middle-aged African-American woman who loves her Mercedes Benz and dating. She is confident and capable at her job in the parks department.

In the second season of *Parks and Recreation*, which aired from September 2009 to May 2010, an episode entitled 'Sister City' tells the story of a Venezuelan delegation of Parks and Recreation Department employees visiting Pawnee. In preparation for the visit, Leslie warns her team that Venezuela is a poor country and that the delegation will not be accustomed to the 'wealth and flash' of Central Indiana. However after the delegation arrives, all dressed in military uniform, it is clear that Leslie is mistaken. The cultural clashes between the two 'sister cities' begin. They mistake Tom for a servant boy and question Leslie about which women are sexually 'available' to them. They all favour the voluptuous Donna. In the opening scene, Leslie also confirms with April that she can speak Spanish. April responds dryly in Spanish telling Leslie she buries herself in her work because she is unhappy in her personal life. The scene then cuts to April stating in a deadpan tone that 'My mum is Puerto-Rican, that is why I am so lively and colourful'.

In a meet and greet, the two cities exchange gifts and Raúl, the leader of the Venezuelan delegation, presents Leslie with a gold plated gun, a replica of the weapon used by Hugo

Chávez in the 1992 'socialist revolution'.[1] In turn, Leslie presents Raúl with a bottle of high fructose corn syrup from Pawnee's Sweetum's factory. Raúl mocks the present and points out that his other sister city in North Korea is 'far nicer'. Later, Raúl laughs at Leslie's admission that her team is trying to raise $35,000 to transform a pit into a park. He brags about Venezuela's oil money and expresses disgust when they visit Pawnee's finest park. They question why the trees are so small, to which Leslie replies: size does not matter. Raúl says definitively: 'Yes it does, our trees are huge!' Leslie becomes increasingly annoyed at Raúl's condescending attitude but she persists and takes him to a town meeting to show him 'democracy in action'. After citizens stupidly and rudely question Leslie, Raúl queries where the armed guards are to take away the annoying protestors. Leslie righteously states that in a 'true democracy' citizen input is valued. A citizen in the background then immediately yells to Leslie: 'These pretzels suck!' Raúl comments: 'We live like kings in Venezuela and answer to nobody'. He says if people act like this in Venezuela they are sent to jail without trail. Finally, Leslie loses her cool. She ridicules their medals and uniforms and says they all want to marry Hugo Chávez. Raúl demands Leslie not disrespect Chávez but she refuses to comply and the delegation storms off. Leslie turns to the camera and screams: 'They started it!'

After the incident at the town hall meeting, Leslie decides to apologise. She admits that 'Yesterday I was tough and direct and today I have to be charming. Basically yesterday, I was Hillary Clinton and today I'm Bill'. Raúl accepts Leslie's apology and smugly offers a check for $35,000 to transform the pit into a park. Leslie begrudgingly accepts and is urged on by Raúl to say *¡Viva Venezuela! ¡Viva Chávez!* (Long Live Venezuela, Long Live Chávez) on camera. Leslie reluctantly complies. Then in the background Raúl is seen addressing the camera. Leslie asks April to translate and she reveals that Raúl is discussing his 'Committee to Humiliate and Shame America'. Leslie confronts Raúl about this and he unashamedly responds: 'Yes, it is Hugo Chávez's passion project'. He then suggests that Leslie name the park after Chávez with a big fountain of his head spitting water at everyone. Leslie is furious, tears up the cheque and shouts *¡Viva America!* The Venezuelan delegation storms out and Raúl declares Pawnee is no longer their sister city.

[1] Chávez staged an unsuccessful military coup in 1992 before his more legitimate entry into Venezuelan politics as a presidential candidate in the 1998 election. He went on to win this and four subsequent elections. I discuss the 1992 failed coup in detail shortly.

Meanwhile throughout the episode, good-looking Venezuelan intern, Johnny, has fallen in love with April, who has convinced him she is feared and powerful. Johnny declares he will kill April's boyfriend and that she will live like a princess if she runs away with him. April refuses. Raúl also mistakes one of Leslie's jokes as a sexual advance and flatly responds: 'I see what you are getting at. But no thank you. I am still primarily interested in the large black woman'. The episode ends when Leslie and Tom receive a video call from April and Donna who are having a great time holidaying at Johnny's Venezuelan palace, while armed guards in military uniform look on in the background.

'Sister City' clearly satirises US-Venezuelan relations and both deploys and inverts stereotypes from the two countries to do so. These stereotypes are inherently gendered and racialised. For example, senior members of the Venezuelan delegation fulfil the stereotype of the macho Latin American male by not taking Leslie seriously and assuming all women are provided for their sexual needs. Johnny the intern is also so consumed with his lust for April, he believes everything she says. His highly sexualised Latin American masculinity compromises his rational thought. Tom's mistaken-servant identity, and his willingness to go along with it due to cash tips, highlights the racialised class politics apparent in both Venezuela and the USA. Similarly, April's character inverts US stereotypes of Latino Americans as 'lively and colourful' and the Venezuelan delegation's sexual preference for Donna, as opposed to the more 'traditionally' beautiful and feminine (read: blonde and blue-eyed) Leslie inverts the USA's highly racialised beauty norms. Leslie's ignorance about Venezuela and annoyance with the delegation's arrogance also reflects global perceptions of US citizens as less educated about anything and everything beyond their borders. Her blind faith in 'US democracy' is also ridiculed. Likewise, Raúl's dismissal of 'democracy in action' and his declaration that Venezuela jails anyone and everyone for infringements as diverse as overcooking chicken or not turning up to the dentist satirises the US Government and media's exaggerated descriptions of Venezuela as a dictatorship under Chávez. The constant reference to 'armed guards' also alludes to the militarised politics of Venezuela but occludes the USA's own enthusiasm and dependence for such politics. The admission by Raúl that Chávez's passion project is to humiliate and shame America also mocks his infamous anti-American rhetoric on the global stage. Raúl's admission that their sister city in North Korea is 'far nicer' than Pawnee similarly satirises the ridiculous sparring between Venezuela and the USA.

However, one of the more revealing moments in the episode, and of US-Venezuelan relations more generally, is Ron Swanson's response to the gold gun the Venezuelan delegation offers as a diplomatic gift. At the meet and greet, Ron, in typical fashion, avoids any interaction with the Venezuelans and hides in his office. He bluntly says to the camera: 'Politically, no. I don't support Chávez. I despise him and everything that he does. On the other hand this is a pretty sweet ass gun'. He then joyously poses with the gold gun. The gold gun gains prime position in Ron's office and appears there in future episodes. The gold gun represents the masculinised and militarised politics that have characterised US-Venezuelan relations since Chávez's election in 1998. Ron, much like George W. Bush, is a caricature of traditional white Anglo-American masculinity and despite the clear political differences between Ron, Bush and his 'socialist' Venezuelan counterparts, respect for militarised masculinity, as symbolised in the gold gun, is mutual.

Research Field, Questions and Significance

This thesis is primarily interested in this mutual respect of militarised masculinity and how it has shaped US-Venezuelan relations under Chávez, Bush and Barack Obama in the 'War on Terror' (hereafter 'WOT').[2] The thesis is grounded in the field of feminist global politics that explores how masculinities shape global politics and vice versa, in particular the toxic and mutually constitutive relationship between war, militarism and masculinities (Enloe 1993, 2004, 2007; Eichler 2012; Higate 2003; Hooper 2001; Hutchings 2008b; Whitworth 2008). This thesis draws on this work and contributes to the field by investigating this relationship in the political sphere in detail. In particular, I investigate this relationship through a new theoretical lens: the construction, performance and embodiment of presidential masculinities.

I argue that using presidential masculinities as a descriptive and analytical category encourages a more nuanced engagement with the changing relationship between militarism, war, and leadership in the political sphere. Presidential masculinities help us understand the broader militarisation and masculinisation of political offices that feminists identify, as well as the renegotiations of masculinities that occur in war. As a concept, presidential masculinity focuses attention on these processes as embodied in one of the most prominent, symbolic, meticulously constructed and scrutinised 'masculinities' of a nation. As Suzanne Daughton comments in relation to the USA: 'the president is the

[2] Cynthia Enloe insists and I agree, that quote marks should be used when referring to the 'WOT' because otherwise, 'it is like rolling out a canon for militarism' (2012a). This thesis follows this convention.

national patriarch: the paradigmatic American man' (1994, p. 114). This thesis thus uses presidential masculinities as the starting point and conceptual framework to investigate US-Venezuelan relations, geopolitics and militarism in the last eleven years of the 'WOT' (2001-2012).

My overarching research questions are: How have US presidential masculinities and the 'WOT' shaped Chávez's presidential masculinity and politics? What does this tell us about the relationship between presidential masculinities, their role in global politics and their relationship to militarism? My supplementary research questions further indicate the analytical concerns motivating the research: What are the individual presidential masculinities of Chávez, Bush and Obama? How do they compare and contrast? What is the nature of the relationship between them? What function do presidential masculinities serve? What is the relationship between presidential masculinities and militarism? What role does race play in presidential masculinities? What does Obama's presidential masculinity mean for US hegemonic masculinities and militarism?

This thesis centres on the 'WOT' because as eminent feminist global politics scholar, Cynthia Enloe, observed in April 2012 this global war has allowed and legitimated new forms of militarisation in many countries.[3] This thesis investigates the new forms of militarisation made possible in Venezuela via the 'WOT' and further exposes the link between militarism, masculinities and war in the USA. It is important to investigate how the 'WOT' characterises geopolitics in regions that are not directly involved, as well as processes of militarisation in the non-Anglo-American world more broadly. My thesis offers an analysis of both. My research also addresses the gap in the literature on non-Anglophone masculinities, presidential or otherwise, and shifts the focus to Latin America, which has been neglected by feminists in the field.[4] Through a relational focus on Venezuelan and US presidential masculinities, this thesis also contributes to breaking down monolithic categorisations of Latin American masculinities and machismo that pervade the existing literature on masculinities and gender regarding the region. I also add to the almost non-

[3] For example, Bejing uses 'WOT' discourses against Uyghurs in China and Moscow employs the same discourses against Chechens in Russia (Enloe 2012a).
[4] Throughout the thesis, I use the term Latin America because it describes the entire Spanish, Portuguese and French speaking region of Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Geographically, Venezuela is on the Caribbean coast of South America but geopolitically, especially in the context of its relations with the USA, is part of Latin America.

existent scholarship on Venezuelan masculinities, given that to date only one study exists (Ferrándiz 2003).

I elected to focus on Venezuela because Hugo Chávez, Venezuela's president from 1998 to his recent death in February 2013, was an intriguing and notably gendered, racialised and militarised political figure.[5] He provides an ideal case study of why gender and race matter when analysing global politics. I elaborate on why shortly. Moreover, Chávez's relationship with US Presidents Bush and Obama, and their respective masculinities, offers an interesting case study to explore key themes of concern in the feminist global politics field. The role of North/South geopolitics and race in global masculinity politics and militarism is of particular interest. Bush keenly embodied a conservative Anglo-American militarised masculinity, shared by many of his presidential predecessors, whereas Obama embodied and complicated US, presidential and African-American masculinities instantly on his election to the White House. Chávez's response to both presidents can tell us more about the gendered, racialised and militarised aspects of US-Venezuelan relations.

More broadly, my research aims to encourage more nuanced understandings of political leadership as well as to challenge and to expose the vicious, yet precarious, reliance on militarised masculinities in the political sphere. As influential scholars in the field Laura Sjoberg and Ann Tickner asserted in their 2011 book *Feminism and International Relations: Conversations About the Past, Present and Future*, feminist focus on masculinities is warranted because it aims to 'understand men and masculinity well enough to know how to emancipate women and femininity from their dominance' and to demonstrate that masculinity politics oppress men and women alike (2011, p. 227). My research is motivated by the same aims.

Theoretically, my thesis contributes to the field through an extrapolation of Raewyn Connell's (1995) multiple masculinities framework, in particular hegemonic masculinity. By using Chávez's presidential masculinity as a starting point, this thesis investigates the *hierarchical relationship* between masculinities that Connell, and numerous feminists in the field, argue is crucial to understanding masculinities (Hooper 2001; Hutchings 2008a & 2008b). I explore how subordinated presidential masculinities on the global stage depend on, interact with and differentiate themselves from hegemonic presidential masculinities.

[5] The research for this thesis was completed before Chávez's death; hence I refer to his passing and the legacy he has left in Venezuela in detail in the conclusion.

This relational approach leads me to question how Chávez's performances and embodiment of masculinity relates to US hegemonic and/or presidential masculinities and how national and regional tropes of masculinity relate to the cultural worlds they are performed in. We can learn more about hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities using such an approach. Indeed, if we take Connell's *plural* and *relational* understanding of masculinities seriously, as this thesis does, then an analysis of the hierarchical masculinity politics of *and between* North and Latin America is long overdue. This thesis offers such an analysis by incorporating the North's historically hegemonic feminisation of Latin America into the discussion on masculinities. Or more specifically, North America's 'hegemonic tropicalization' of Latin America whereby the region, its people and leaders were characterised by negative traits, images and values in ways that evoke the West's orientalisation of the East (Aparicio & Silverman 1997). This 'hegemonic tropicalization' is as equally gendered and racialised as its orientalist counterpart and heavily 'circulates and exploits gender-based myths and stereotypes about Latin American and Latino/a sexuality' in literature and popular media (Aparicio and Silverman 1997, p. 10). The above *Parks and Recreation* episode is evidence of this. Put simply, my research illustrates the same processes in geopolitics.

Furthermore, investigating contemporary US hegemonic masculinities and their relationship to militarism remains a common objective in the field and this thesis offers original research in this area, especially in relation to current US President Obama. As an African-American man, Obama does not embody American masculinity in the same way as *any* previous US president.[6] His arrival to the White House recast US presidential and hegemonic masculinities in contradictory but significant ways. This thesis argues that Obama constructs and performs a hybrid presidential masculinity that is contemporary, demilitarised and profoundly racialised in both surprising and harmful ways. This presidential masculinity and the avant-garde militarism that accompanies it stands in stark contrast to Bush's presidential masculinity and stealthily camouflages, even reinvigorates, ongoing US militarism across the globe. Indeed, Obama was awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, despite sharing many of his predecessor's policies, including the further institutionalisation of the 'WOT' at both home and abroad. Thus Obama's 'softer, more

[6] Although Obama is officially mixed race, he keenly identifies himself as an African-American (Obama 2004; 2006). Indeed, Obama represents what many have called the 'browning' of the USA as well as the complex history of the country's racialisation, which has long been one of hybridity. Throughout this thesis, I, like most scholars in critical race studies, refer to Obama as an African-American and/or black man but note here the complexities of Obama's racialised status.

inclusive presidential masculinity' that scholars like Landreau (2011, p. 3) have identified yet perhaps underexamined, is worthy of feminist attention.

Obama's convincing 2012 election victory over Republican Mitt Romney further demonstrates this. His contemporary presidential masculinity, of which his defense of women's rights and the US middle class is key, triumphed repeatedly over Romney's conservative, even sexist and racist, American values and his stiff, upper class millionaire, Mormon masculinity. This thesis focuses feminist attention on Obama and concludes that his hybrid presidential masculinity may very well be a more sophisticated deployment and embodiment of US hegemonic masculinity in the 21st century. This complicates and to some degree contradicts feminist claims that 'US militarization has meant a new mobilization of historically embedded colonial practices and rhetorics of male superiority and white supremacy; of female vulnerability, inadequacy, and inferiority; and of the subjugation of oppressed masculinities of men of color' (Mohanty, Riley & Pratt 2008, p. 3). As Fahey puts it,

> the way to the White House, or any office or position of power, for women, gay men, or anyone characterised as inadequately masculine in behavior or political stance is impeded by the hegemonic masculinity deeply embedded in language and American cultural understandings, including those of national identity and the American place in a world gender order. (Fahey 2007, p. 146)

Thus, this thesis explores the changing racialised and gendered nature of US militarism and masculinities in detail and takes both into account when heeding Bonnie Mann's call for feminists to ask 'what other manhood, what other womanhood, is to take [the] place of American national manhood in post 9/11 United States? How shall it announce itself? What Stories must it tell?' (2008, p. 194). Focusing feminist attention on Obama's presidential masculinity in the post 9-11, post-Bush era after more than a decade of the 'WOT' is one way to heed this call. Nevertheless, this thesis only partially opens up the conversation to the shifting scope of US, and perhaps global, hegemonic masculinities in relation to Obama. Further research needs to be done. Similarly, Obama's ongoing pursuit of the 'WOT' needs to be monitored by feminists, in particular the implications of drone warfare for masculinities, militarism and warfare. After exiting office, what legacy will Obama's presidential masculinity have on US politics, masculinities and militarism? This is an avenue for further research.

In this thesis, I re-introduce the under-utilised concept of hypermasculinity to the field (Nandy 1988; Ling 2001). This concept is closely related to hegemonic masculinity and in a simplistic sense refers to the exaggeration of certain masculine traits, usually those that relate to militarised understandings of masculinity. It provides a useful framework for understanding contemporary global politics because it explains how and why certain constructions of masculinity and femininity are used to propel and legitimate the gendered, racialised and militarised politics that traverse spatial, structural, temporal, social, cultural and ideological divides to shape our world. The concept is also steeped in colonial politics and histories, which are key to feminist understandings of nternational relations. Despite this usefulness, feminists have not used hypermasculinity widely in their work, instead favouring the concept of hegemonic masculinity. My thesis bridges this gap by using both concepts to inform my theoretical framework. Drawing on Lily Ling's expansion of the concept (1999; 2000; 2001), a key argument in this thesis is that Chávez performed and embodied a 21st Century subaltern hypermasculinity on the global stage. In particular, I argue that Chávez's presidential masculinity was categorised by a subaltern hypermasculinity that developed in *reaction* to US imperialism and militarism as well as the traditionally whiter Venezuelan elite.[7] At this point, it is important to offer a comprehensive background on Chávez.

Why Hugo Chávez?

In 1977, then unknown military officer Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías founded a leftist revolutionary cell within the Venezuelan armed forces called the *Ejército de Liberación del pueblo de Venezuela* or ELPV (Venezuelan People's Liberation Army). By 1982 the ELPV had evolved into a wider revolutionary movement entitled the *Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200* or MBR-200 (The Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200). At the time, corruption in the military and collusion with political classes radicalised many lower ranking military officers like Chávez. The movement was based on the political philosophies of three famous Venezuelan historical figures: Simón Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez and Ezequiel Zamora. Bolívar is a key figure in Latin America's liberation from the Spanish. Rodríguez was Bolívar's mentor and tutor and was exiled to Europe after a

[7] The concept 'subaltern' was originally a British military term for anyone of low rank but was developed by Antonio Gramsci to identify the general condition of sociopolitical subordination. The concept is highly influential in postcolonial, feminist and Latin American studies and during the 1980s was developed by scholars in India to categorise subordination based on class, caste, age, gender, race and office (Allatson 2007, p. 218). In this thesis I use this understanding of subalternity in a similar way: as a shorthand for Chávez's sociopolitical subordination on a global scale in the context of Venezuela's position in global history, geopolitics and state hierarchies.

failed coup against the Spanish Crown in 1797. Zamora was a soldier, liberal and leader of the federalists in Venezuela's civil war of the late 1850s and early 1860s against the conservative landowning classes. Thus from the very beginning, Chávez modelled his political identity and platforms around these three figures, in particular Bolívar.[8] Many of Chávez's supporters even view him as the 'second Bolívar' (Zúquete 2008, p. 91). The radicalisation of lower-ranking military officers continued into the late 1980s when Carlos Andrés Pérez campaigned for president using a populist anti-neoliberal platform, personally slandering the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in the lead up to the election. However, only weeks after his election victory in February 1989 Pérez accepted an IMF loan and its attendant neoliberal austerity measures. Widespread popular protests across the country ensued and Pérez declared a state of emergency, using the Venezuelan National Guard to crush the protest, killing hundreds. The event became known as the *Caracazo* and motivated Chávez and his revolutionary movement to act. In 1992, they did.

On February 14 1992, now Lieutenant Colonel, Chávez led the MBR-200 in a military coup against Pérez. The coup failed but Chávez was given the opportunity to address the nation on national television. Dressed in his military uniform, complete with his soon-to-be iconic paratrooper red beret, Chávez took responsibility for the coup, called on his comrades to surrender and informed the Venezuelan people that they had failed, but only *por ahora* (for now). In 'Sister City', the episode of *Parks and Recreation* discussed above, the Venezuelan delegation all wore Chávez's signature red berets. Chávez was sent to prison but became an instant political hero. His *por ahora* speech endeared him to the Venezuelan *pueblo* (masses). During Chávez's first year in jail, Peréz survived another, bloodier coup, but by August 1993 he was impeached by Congress for corruption and his political career was over. In 1994, Rafael Caldera became the new Venezuelan president and he kept his election pledge to release Chávez from prison along with other co-conspirators involved in the 1992 coup. Caldera's pledge demonstrated the enigma that developed around Chávez since the 1992 coup. As Fernando Coronil summarises, Chávez had 'become a popular hero overnight. A man of humble social origins and darker-skinned than most high-ranking military officers, Chávez was seen as a man of the people, the embodiment of the patriotic leader committed to fulfilling the populist promise of national sovereignty and social equity' (1997, p. 379).

[8] See Chasteen's contribution to *Heroes & Hero Cults in Latin America* (2006) entitled 'Simón Bolívar Man and Myth' for an excellent overview of the importance of Bolívar to Venezuelan and Latin American history.

On his release from prison Chávez cemented his popularity by touring the country and neighbouring Latin American region, including Cuba, gaining support for his Bolivarian movement along the way. By 1998, Chávez's popularity and political potential were clear. The MBR-200 evolved into a political party and Chávez became its candidate in the impending presidential election. Venezuela's poorer masses and disenchanted middle-class overwhelmingly supported Chávez, who like them, was a man of mixed African, indigenous and white descent. The country's largely white elites could not capitalise on this mixed-race identity in the political realm. Chávez, on the other hand, could. He openly celebrated his racial identity with such statements as 'I feel the Caribbean stirring within me, because I am Indian, mixed with African, with a touch of white thrown in' (Guevara 2005, p. 15) and 'We carry Africa inside us, Africa is part of us, Latin Caribbean America cannot be understood without Africa and the sacrifice of Africa, and the grandeur of Africa, brother continent, brother people' (Chávez 2006). The visceral classist and racist reaction of Venezuelan elites to Chávez's political rise also reaffirmed the *pueblo's* support for Chávez. As Heiber Barreto Sánchez noted in 2002: 'when the opposition calls Chávez "Indian, monkey and thick lipped" they forget that they are describing the majority of Venezuelans' (as cited in Salas 2005, p. 82). The combination of such racialised class politics and Chávez's populist anti-neoliberal and anti-imperialist political platform ensured his political success. He legitimately and significantly won the 1998 presidential election with 56 per cent of the vote, beating a Harvard-educated economist and a former Beauty Queen. The 'turn to the left' in Venezuela and Latin America had begun.

In the following years, Chávez's increasingly ideologically driven, and putatively socialist 'Bolivarian Revolution' polarised the country, politicised the military, albeit in an untraditional way, and both strengthened and weakened different parts of Venezuela's democracy. The extent of the polarisation became clear in April 2002 when sections of the military and opposition staged a military coup against Chávez and Pedro Carmona; the president of the most powerful Chamber of Commerce in the country quickly became the interim president. However, after three days of widespread popular protest, including some deaths, Chávez triumphantly returned to office. Later in 2004, Chávez survived a more legitimate challenge to his leadership when opposition forces secured the required signatures for a recall referendum.[9] It went ahead in August and Chávez won convincingly with 59 per cent of the vote. Two years later, in December 2006, Chávez's anti-imperial

[9] Under the new Bolivarian constitution that Chávez himself installed, a recall referendum could be held if 20 per cent of the electorate signed a petition against the president.

politics and persona had radicalised further and he was elected president for a third time with a barnstorming 63 per cent of the vote. As Moisés Naím noted:

> In contrast to other politicians, Chávez constantly caters to the emotional needs of a deeply demoralized nation. He does so with a folksy but very effective rhetoric that features an incongruous mixture of Bolivarian sound-bites, Christianity, collectivist utopianism, baseball, and indigenous cosmogony, peppered with diatribes against oligarchy, neoliberalism, foreign conspiracies, and globalization. (2001, p. 27)

Similarly, José Pedro Zúquete described Chávez's leadership as a form of 'missionary politics' whereby a charismatic leader 'leads a chosen people gathered into a moral community struggling against all-powerful and consipirational enemies, and engage[s them] in a mission toward redemption and salvation' (2008, p. 92). I agree with this characterisation but in this thesis focus on the gendered, racialised and militarised nature of Chávez's leadership and 'missionary politics'. I argue that key to Chávez's political popularity was his notably gendered and increasingly racialised *caudillo* presidential masculinity. *Caudillo* roughly translates as a charismatic strongman or leader who has paramilitary and political connections. Culturally, it has some negative connotations and conjures up images of a paternalistic Latin American cowboy or general on horseback who takes care of his own and enjoys sexual prowess with women. Importantly, the *caudillo* descriptor is often associated with an authoritarian military political figure in the English-speaking world, but this is not a nuanced understanding of the cultural and social implications of the term. Instead, *caudillo* has a complex history rooted in the continent's colonial struggles. It originally described the men who led armies against Spanish troops in the wars of independence in the early to mid 1800s (Brunk & Fallow, 2006, p.5). Interestingly, it is often claimed that Chávez himself is the great-grandson of a revolutionary *caudillo (*Sylvia & Danopoulos 2003, p. 65). Chávez embraced and manipulated this macho rebel image on the world stage, infusing it with an anti-imperial righteousness modeled on the original and definitive *caudillo* in Venezuela history – 'The Liberator' Simón Bolívar. Apart from his role in liberating Colombia and Venezuela from Spanish rule, the history books tell stories of Bolívar's rebellions, small and large, such as his refusal to kiss the Pope's sandal and his outward disrespect to Spanish royals (Chasteen 2006, p. 23). This is powerful symbolism that Chávez manipulated for his own political benefit. His masculinity politics were deeply entwined with both *caudillismo* and the cult of Bolívar. As

John Chasteen asserts, like Bolívar in Venezuela, 'founding fathers everywhere have become the center of state-sponsored great man cults' (2006, p. 22).

Indeed, Chávez imitated Bolívar's *caudillo* image, directing his anti-imperial opposition towards local white elites and their complicity and cooperation with the empire of contemporary times, his Northern-American neighbour, the USA. For example, when the opposition publicly labelled him and his followers 'rabble' – a common and derogratory racial description of the browner *pueblo* in Venezuela and across Latin America – he proudly answered: 'Yes, we are the same rabble that followed Bolívar' (Salas 2005, p. 86). In February 2013, Chávez died of cancer and as in life, views on his death were polarising. There was an outpouring of grief but also celebrations both within and outside Venezuela. I return to Chávez's death to conclude this thesis but as noted above, it is clear that Chávez was an intriguing and notably gendered, racialised and militarised political figure. Hence this thesis uses Chávez as a centrepiece to demonstrate why gender and race matter when analysing global politics.

Chapter Outline and Key Arguments

Chapter 1 situates my research in the feminist global politics field. I explore the emergence of the 'man question' in feminist global politics, tracking developments in the field including the more explicit focus on masculinities after the popularisation of the concept hegemonic masculinity in the mid-nineties. I review feminists' successful adaption of the concept to deconstruct mainstream International Relations epistemologies, ontologies and theories, including their damning critique of the supposed natural relationship between states, war and human nature. Significant literature on militarised masculinities emerged from this critique and I outline this scholarship in both the feminist global politics and masculinity studies fields. I also outline the concept of hypermasculinity in more depth before introducing the concept of presidential masculinities and how it frames my thesis. I then turn to a more empirical discussion of the 'man question' in the 'WOT', dealing with Bush and Anglo-American masculinities, Obama and African-American masculinities, and Chávez and Latin American masculinities.

In **Chapter 2,** I describe the epistemological views that underpin my research and outline my methodology including a detailed discussion of my primary method: multimodal critical discourse analysis. I elaborate on the epistemological, ontological and methodological tensions that have arisen between feminist global politics and mainstream International

Relations; outlining the two distinctive feminist International Relations (FIR) methodologies I have drawn on throughout my research (Ackerly & True 2006; Tickner 2005b). I contextualise my research in these disciplinary debates and methodological practices, discussing the dilemmas of 'researching up' and blurring the comparative studies/International Relations divide. In the second half of the chapter, I introduce critical discourse analysis (CDA) as my chosen method of discourse analysis and explain how I have combined it with multimodal approaches to execute my research, through analysing both written language and other texts and modes of communication. I explain the two key steps in my multimodal CDA method in detail: a quantitative and qualitative image analysis of online presidential photo galleries and a discursive analysis of each president's 'frontstage politics' (Wodak 2009), that is, each president's 'doing' of politics via rhetoric, policy, media and political performance. I demonstrate that analysing images and 'frontstage politics' captures the complex bodily and political practices that a traditional discursive analysis of language cannot. This approach offers a more holistic approach to investigating presidential masculinities and allows me to answer my research questions more comprehensively. Thus, my thesis offers an original approach to researching masculinities, highlighting the importance of the visual and embodied aspects of masculinity, which have sometimes been neglected by scholars in the field.[10]

Chapters 3 through to 6 are my findings chapters. **Chapter 3** illustrates how presidential masculinity is discursively and visually produced in the official online photo galleries of Bush, Chávez and Obama. I describe, compare and contrast how each president's masculinity is embodied, performed and constructed. I argue that Bush's visual discourse reflects and reinscribes his conservative, patriotic and conventionally militarised presidential masculinity. In contrast, I demonstrate that Obama's presidential masculinity is far more contemporary, notably demilitarised and profoundly racialised. He embodies an urbane, ghetto-cool, post-hip-hop presidential masculinity that is politically powerful. Chávez's visual discourse, however, constructs a populist *caudillo* presidential masculinity that emphasised Chávez's paternalism and righteous anti-imperial rebellion both at home and abroad. In my discussion, I outline both the quantitative and qualitative findings of my image analysis through a thematic focus on militarism, presidential families and presidential

[10] While this thesis offers numerous insights into the masculinisation and militarisation of US-Venezuelan politics and relations, I acknowledge that my analytical focus on elite levels through discursive, albeit multimodal, methods indicates that more ethnographic research on Venezuelan militarism and militarisation processes in particular, is crucial. Moreover, research on Venezuelan women and the femininities Chávez's Bolivarian militarism depended on is an important feminist research imperative.

embodiment. I explore how all three relate to the individual presidential masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama and begin exploring how these individual presidential masculinities shape their respective politics.

After introducing the individual presidential masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama in Chapter 3, Chapters 4 and 5 move on to an exploration of the relationship between Chávez's presidential masculinity and his US counterparts over the last decade. At the crux of **Chapter 4** is a gendered analysis of the volatile relationship between Bush and Chávez from 2001 to 2008. I argue that US-Venezuelan relations during this period were shaped heavily by both presidents' masculinity politics and became steeped in the politics and discourses of the 'WOT'. I identify the emergence (1998-2003), consolidation (2004-2006) and further radicalisation (2006-2008) of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity in three sections. In sketching out these developments, I offer a close analysis of Chávez's increasingly racialised anti-imperial rhetoric from 2001 to 2008. I also argue that Bush's conventional militarised presidential masculinity embodied traditional US hegemonic approaches to the Latin American region that further provoked and propped up Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity. In fact, Chávez's consolidation and radicalisation of his *caudillo* presidential masculinity occurred in conjunction with and *reaction to* Bush's pursuit of the 'WOT', so much that Chávez began to embody and perform a type of 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity.

In **Chapter 5** I extend this analysis, exploring how Chávez renegotiated his presidential masculinity after Obama arrived in the White House. I examine the early and erratic renegotiations of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity and discuss how, by the end of 2009 and throughout 2010, Chávez stabilised his rhetoric and renegotiated his presidential masculinity to accommodate the new globally popular and black president of the US empire. I demonstrate that Chávez depersonalised and de-racialised his anti-imperial rhetoric, performing a more polite and opportunistic *caudillo* presidential masculinity on the global stage. He redirected his rhetoric away from the US president towards more nebulous (and recognisably white) imperial enemies – the US right, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Following this, Chávez considerably subdued his subaltern hypermasculinity under Obama, focusing his rhetoric and *caudillo* presidential masculinity less and less on the 'WOT'. Instead, Chávez turned to other contemporary global political events, in particular the Arab Spring, to bolster his masculinity. I argue that Chávez's focus on the Arab Spring allowed him to maintain his subaltern hypermasculinity

on the global stage, but it also led to a more desperate manifestation of that masculinity. To conclude the chapter, I discuss the May 2011 assassination of Osama bin Laden, analysing how this symbolic end to the 'WOT' signalled how much Chávez had renegotiated his presidential masculinity under Obama. Chávez said nothing, at the very point Obama most publicly militarised his presidential masculinity and engaged in a hypermasculine hegemonic act. In Chapter 6, I analyse how this pivotal event reveals the contradictions in both Chávez and Obama's presidential masculinities. In summary, both chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that presidential masculinities play a role in global politics and remodel themselves over time in line with global political shifts and in relation to other presidential masculinities – two key arguments in this thesis.

In **Chapter 6**, I shift my focus to look more broadly at the implications of my findings and how presidential masculinities function as 'militarising manoeuvres' that can propel, legitimate, rebrand or even camouflage militarism (Enloe 2000). I compare and contrast the differing militarising manoeuvres deployed by and embodied in Chávez and Obama's presidential masculinities. This part of the thesis focuses more heavily on Chávez and Obama due to the existing literature on Bush's now well-known and researched masculinity politics and militarism. I argue that Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity played a role in militarising Venzuelan politics and society, functioning to propel, even *celebrate* militarism. I identify the importance of Chávez's threat exaggeration politics (Chenoy 2004) and his unique logic of masculinist protection (Young 2003) in legitimating this militarisation process. I also identify their role in Chávez's telling and embodiment of *his* US-Venezuelan quasi-war story (Hunt & Rygiel 2008). In direct contrast, Obama's contemporary, demilitarised, post-hip-hop presidential masculinity functions to rebrand, obscure and camouflage ongoing US militarism and the further institutionalisation of the 'WOT'. I identify Obama's embodiment and manipulation of the myth of American Exceptionalism and 'defensive violence' (Messerschmidt 2010) as key to this militarising manoeuvre.[11]

[11] Put simply, American Exceptionalism is an ideology that believes the USA is exceptional and has a god-given destiny to lead the world in its own image. It reflects the 'idea that the USA is unique among geopolitical states, not only in terms of its political institutions and ideals but also in terms of purported national character and geographical location. When invoked, American Exceptionalism often suggests that the USA's national success and unparalleled civilizational capacity have arisen on home-grown terms by virtue of the country's worldly place, and its particular origins, history, religious makeup and institutionalized belief in democratic processes, economic freedoms and individual self fashioning' (Allatson 2007, p. 18). American Exceptionalism has also encouraged the shorthand use of America to describe the US, which 'occludes the long history of Latin American uses of *América* when referring to their continental location and identity' (Allatson 2007, p. 18). In a

Thus, this thesis concludes that different presidential masculinities with their varying cultural, political and historical contexts employ different militarising manoeuvres. As president of the world's remaining superpower, Obama has to camouflage or at least obscure US hegemonic and imperial militarism whereas Chávez the *caudillo* had more freedom to flaunt his own brand of militarism. Nonetheless, both are militarising manoeuvres that deserve feminist attention. Additionally, I argue that hybrid/contradictory presidential masculinities, as seen in Chávez and Obama, have particularly good camouflage and militarising manoevure potential.

The *Parks and Recreation* 'Sister City' episode both demonstrates and mocks how analysts typically understand US-Venezuelan relations. In a more serious way, this thesis aims to do the same, providing a detailed and nuanced analysis of US-Venezuelan relations that forefronts and highlights the gendered, racialised and militarised dimensions of global politics. By focusing feminist attention on Chávez's rise, reign and now legacy, as well as Bush and Obama's to the North, through the lens of presidential masculinities, this thesis makes further sense of militarism, masculinity and the 'WOT' in a region not directly, but inevitably involved, over the last 11 years.

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departure from standard practice in International Relations, this thesis avoids using the term 'America' to describe the US in recognition of the semantic struggle over the term. When I do use 'American' to describe US citizens I use quote marks as a reminder of this semantic struggle. This aligns with the transnational turn in Latino/Latin American/Transamerican and the New American studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s. For a summary of this turn and the semantic struggles over the term America/*América* see Allatson (2007, pp. 18-23). It is noteworthy that some of the scholarship quoted in the thesis, as well as Bush and Obama's own rhetoric, often refers to the USA as 'America'.

Chapter 1: The Man Question in Feminist Global Politics and the 'War on Terror'

The Man Question in Feminist Global Politics

Cynthia Enloe's early work provided a springboard for scholars to make 'feminist sense' of global politics. She offered the first comprehensive examination of women's experiences, demonstrating the gendered nature of world politics in her groundbreaking book *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1989). Enloe reinvigorated the traditional feminist motto that the personal is political and declared that the personal was also international and the international personal. In examining women's lives, Enloe operationalised an ontological revisionism that 'peeled back the masculinist surface of world politics to reveal its more complex gendered (and racialised) dynamics' (Youngs 2004, p. 78). She demonstrated how women were inextricably entwined in global political affairs, rhetoric, institutions and events. She identified how the sexual health of Filipino prostitutes working around US military bases became a US national security issue (1989, pp. 84-91), and how the everyday role of a diplomat's wife and the traditional nuclear family propped up diplomatic relations between countries (1989, pp. 95-100). She also alluded to the intersectionality of race and gender in shaping global politics by chronicling certain historical events in world affairs. For example, she discussed how a 'gentleman's agreement' between the US and British Governments and military officials prevented white British women marrying their African-American soldier boyfriends in World War II (1989, pp. 67-71).

Following Enloe, feminists employed traditional International Relations ontological approaches of examining concepts such as the state, sovereignty, citizenship, diplomacy, war, violence and security from a radically new post-positivist epistemological standpoint that relied on a social-constructivist understanding of gender (See Enloe 1993; Grant & Newland 1991; Peterson 1992; Peterson & Runyan 1993; Pettman 1996; Steans 1998; Sylvester 1994; Tickner 1992). A more definitive field of feminist International Relations/global politics began to emerge. Although feminists did not immediately or significantly focus their attention on the politics of masculinities in this field, masculinities did become a long running implicit theme in the literature. For example, despite Enloe's claims that 'she did not see men' for many years (2008, p. 204) her writings on nationalism indicate otherwise. For Enloe, nationalism 'sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope' (1989, p. 44). Enloe also argued that it

was important to examine the politics of masculinities in different countries (1989, p. 13); investigate how masculinity was manipulated in international politics; and expose how certain ideas (such as civilisation and security) were masculinised, giving them a dangerous potency in government relations (1989, p. 200). She even highlighted how US foreign policy was supported by 'pillars of masculinity, pillars that were never subjected to political scrutiny' (1989, p. 12) and spoke about 'patriarchal ideas of masculinity', which were theoretically and conceptually similar to what later became popularised as hegemonic masculinity by Connell in the influential book *Masculinities* (1995).

Thus, in the mid-1990s, after the ensuing popularisation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity in many areas of gender studies, the focus on masculinities in feminist global politics became more explicit. Feminists in the field saw global politics as one of the primary sites for the production of masculinities and logically, following this, hegemonic masculinity became theoretically important to their work (Hooper 1998; 2001). Connell even identified this trend by noting how masculinities, as explored in men's studies, became quickly relevant to other fields such as international diplomacy and power relations (2003, p. 261). She cited feminist work on masculinities in the late 1990s as a prime example, noting the importance of the book *The 'Man' Question in International Relations* (Parpart & Zalewski 1998). This book, along with its sequel, *Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender and Violence in International Relations* (Parpart & Zalewski 2008), includes a significant portion of the existing feminist scholarship on masculinities and largely motivated this doctoral research. This chapter situates my research in this and other relevant literature.

The first half of this literature review introduces the theoretical framework of my research, in particular the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and hypermasculinity. I discuss how and why feminists have adopted these concepts and situate my research in contrast to such work. I then discuss feminist work on militarised masculinities in detail, and propose the concept of presidential masculinities.[12] In the second half of the chapter, I discuss the

[12] Whilst many presidents and heads of state are female, my analysis of presidential masculinities does not necessarily sideline them. As Enloe pointed out 'when a woman is let in by the men who control the political elite it usually is precisely because that woman has learned the lessons of masculinized political behavior well enough not to threaten male political privilege. Indeed she may even entrench that privilege' (1989, pp. 6-7). Sex, like race, does impact the performance of masculinity in office but we can still learn about the relationship between masculinity, militarism and leadership regardless of the actual sex/gender of presidents and foreign ministers as Enloe's above quote indicates. Moreover, it is outside the scope of this thesis to explore the complexities

existing literature relevant to my research on Bush, Obama, Chávez and Anglo-American, African-American and Latin American masculinities.

Hegemonic Masculinities

Connell's masculinities framework, particularly the concept of hegemonic masculinity, is very attractive to feminists because it rests on a historical and fluid understanding of masculinities, which allows them to track how masculinist power structures are maintained, reinvented and legitimated over time in local, national and global contexts. This aligns with Connell's understanding of masculinities, which I employ in this thesis, as 'configurations of practice structured by gender relations. They are inherently historical; and their making and remaking is a political process affecting the balance of interests in society and the direction of social change' (1995, p. 44). In addition, I utilise Charlotte Hooper's definition of hegemonic masculinity in my research because it accounts for a fluid understanding of the concept. I elaborate on this shortly. For Hooper, hegemonic masculinity is 'a vehicle for keeping the associations between masculinity and power alive under changing circumstances. Hegemonic masculinity gets transformed, through constant challenges and struggles, to resemble whatever traits happen to be most strategically useful for the getting and keeping of power' (2001, p. 61).

I also draw on Connell and James Messerschmidt's (2005) reformulation of hegemonic masculinity. In response to prolific debates about the concept, Connell and Messerschmidt reformulated the concept in four areas but maintained its original theoretical contribution around the plurality and hierarchy of masculinities (2005, p. 846). First, they argued for a more complex model of gender hierarchy that emphasised women's agency and the historical interaction between femininities and masculinities in shaping gender relations (2005, pp. 846-848). Second, they lamented that hegemonic masculinity had sometimes been treated as a fixed set of character types (2005, p. 847). Third, they emphasised the importance of embodiment in constructing masculinities and noted that followers and critics alike had neglected this. Consequently, a more specific treatment of embodiment, particularly in the contexts of privilege and power, was put forward as a third area of reformulation (2005, p. 829). This is particularly relevant to my research, which places a heavy focus on the embodied aspects of presidential

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around female heads of state but this is an avenue for further research. For example, the gendered politics around US Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton in my analysis could be expanded. For a good overview of the issues around women in politics in the US context see Cox, Han & Heldman (2007).

masculinities. I elaborate on this in the methodology chapter. Fourth, Connell and Messerschmidt advocated for a more explicit geographical understanding of hegemonic masculinities. They identified how hegemonic masculinities could be constructed, and therefore should be analysed, at differing and interdependent local, regional and global levels. For example, local masculinities were constructed in schools and families, regional masculinities via national cultures and histories, and global masculinities through transnational events, institutions and practices (2005, p. 849). This fourth reformulation recalled Connell's earlier concerns that a strong trend to research masculinities in their localised forms had led to a problematic 'ethnographic moment' in the field. Connell argued that

> what happens in localities is affected by the history of whole countries, but what happens in countries is affected by the history of the whole world. Locally situated lives are now (indeed, have long been) powerfully influenced by geopolitical struggles, global markets, multinational corporations, labour migration, transnational media. It is time for this fundamental fact to be built into our analysis of men and masculinities. (1998, pp. 6-7)

My focus on presidential masculinities and their relationship to global politics incorporates such an analysis. This follows much of the feminist work in the field, given that the 'emergence of the man question' in feminist global politics in the late 1990s largely coincided with Connell's calls to globalise masculinity studies.

Nonetheless, despite Connell and Messerschmidt's reformulations of hegemonic masculinity and the uptake of the concept in various fields (such as sports studies, criminology, health and feminist global politics) its theoretical merits have still been fiercely debated. A key critique is that hegemonic masculinity compounds men's personal practices with the structural, ideological, discursive, cultural and embodied effects of gender differentiation. This has lead to what Christine Beasley calls 'slippage' and the inconsistent conceptual and theoretical use of hegemonic masculinity (2008). For Beasley, hegemonic masculinity is interchangeably used to describe a political mechanism for patriarchal legitimation, socially dominant types of men and/or versions of manhood. It is also an empirical reference to actual groups of men and can 'slip' further to resemble a simple list of generalised personality traits (2008, p. 89).

In response to, and building on, Beasley's criticisms Messerschmidt has further clarified the concept of hegemonic masculinity and developed a theory around 'dominant' and 'dominating' masculinities. For Messerschmidt '"dominant" masculinities refer to the most powerful or the most widespread types in a specific social setting; [and] "dominating" masculinities involved commanding and controlling specific interactions and exercising power and control over people and events – "calling the shots" and "running the show"' (2012, p. 72). Messerschmidt argues that these masculinities have been wrongly equated with hegemonic masculinity (2010, p. 160) as they 'fail culturally to legitimate patriarchal relations' (Messerschmidt 2012, p. 73). Messerschmidt thus takes issue with the appropriation of the concept and argues forcefully that 'it is essential that gender scholars distinguish masculinities that legitimate a hierarchical relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity (hegemonic), from those that do not (dominate and dominant). This distinction enables the recognition of various toxic non-hegemonic masculinities, as well as those that are merely dominate/dominant' (2010, p. 161).[13]

Messerschmidt's work has implications for my research. In this thesis I conclude that Obama's contemporary, demilitarised and post-hip-hop presidential masculinity potentially engenders new modes of US hegemonic masculinities whereas Messerschmidt might argue that it only represents a new 'dominant' or 'dominating' masculinity. That is, in the post-9/11, post-Bush era demilitarised presidential masculinities are now more powerful and/or celebrated than militarised ones and Obama's global political power and the masculinity associated with it allows him to 'call the shots' and 'run the show'. However, Messerschmidt defines dominant masculinities as those that are the most powerful *or* widespread but these are two very different things. For example, Obama's demilitarised presidential masculinity is now more powerful and celebrated – an 'influential manliness' (Messerschmidt 2012, pg. 64) – but demilitarised masculinities across the US have not necessarily become more *widespread or common*. Moreover, it is unclear whether Obama's presidential masculinity would be categorised as a 'dominating' masculinity simply because of his global political power or by virtue of his now more celebrated 'dominant' masculinity. Does power to 'call the shots' logically follow from achieving a more socially celebrated masculinity?

[13] For a detailed discussion of Messerschmidt's concerns around the appropriation of hegemonic masculinity and the 'slippage' that has occured in various fields see his recent article for the influential journal *Men and Masculinities* entitled 'Engendering Gendered Knowledge: Assessing the Academic Appropriationg of Hegemonic Masculinity' (2012).

Thus, I argue that more detailed theorisation between these two types of masculinities, not just their distinction from hegemonic masculinities, is needed. However, intervening in this 'slippage' debate is not a key concern of this thesis. This research project is firmly situated in the feminist global politics field and is more directly concerned with militarised masculinities and how they relate to hegemonic masculinity. I, along with the feminist scholarship reviewed and quoted throughout the thesis argue that militarised masculinities in their varied forms are often hegemonic because they legitimate unequal gender relations via the subordination of women, femininities and non-militarised masculinities. Put simply, militarism relies heavily on patriarchal social relations, so militarised masculinities are natural contenders for hegemonic masculinities in various localities and regions. In fact, feminists argue that militarised masculinities play a key role in constructing and maintaining more generic hierarchies between masculinities, that in turn not only legitimate patriarchal social relations but war and violence across the globe. The latter is of utmost concern in the field and this thesis. I outline this literature in detail in the next section, illustrating how feminists in the field have adopted and utilised the concept of hegemonic masculinity. My research follows this lead and Messerschmidt's acknowledgement that no scholar has a monopoly on the 'correct' use of any concept (2012, p. 63). Thus, I maintain my argument that Obama's contemporary, demilitarised and post-hip-hop presidential masculinity potentially engenders new modes of US hegemonic masculinities, not just dominant or dominating ones, because it simultaneously camouflages, legitimates and propels US imperial militarism and for feminists this also means the legitimation of patriarchal social relations.

Furthermore, in light of the debate around 'slippage' other scholars such as Jeff Hearn have argued for a shift from the term hegemonic masculinity to 'the hegemony of men' so the complexity of simultaneously classifying hegemonic masculinity as a social category, practice, type and/or individual/collective agent can be avoided (2004, p. 49). Likewise, Kimberly Hutchings, a feminist global politics scholar, has suggested that 'the notion of hegemonic masculinity needs to be rethought in terms not of the hegemony of a specific type of masculinity, but rather of the hegemony of masculinity – an empty signifier that can be resignified in ways that are infinitely diverse' (2008b, p. 401). This recalls Hooper's more fluid definition of hegemonic masculinity.

Another common critique is that Connell uses a simplified, or as some argue, flawed interpretation of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Critics problematise how

hegemonic masculinity does not include any discussion on the actual formation of a historic bloc in which hegemonic and non-hegemonic/subaltern forces converge to realise hegemony. For example, Demetrakis Demetriou (2001) argues that Connell's multiple masculinities framework is dualistic; an unnecessary distinction is made between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and the reciprocal appropriation of diverse masculinities is not clearly theorised.[14] Instead, Demetriou proposes the concept of a hybrid masculine bloc where the dialectical pragmatism of hegemonic, subordinated and marginalised masculinities functions to reproduce patriarchy. He uses Stuart Hall's understanding of a historic bloc as a strategic alliance of diverse groups, which is distinct from a homogenous ruling class, and Homi Bhabha's emphasis on how historic blocs are formed through 'negotiation rather than negation' (2001, p. 348), to persuasively illustrate his critique. He also borrows heavily from Bhabha to reconceive the term 'hybridization' as a strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy because it, along with the constant appropriation of diverse elements of various masculinities, renders 'the hegemonic bloc capable of reconfiguring itself and adapting to the specificities of new historical conjunctures' (2001, p. 348).[15]

Once again this aligns with Hooper's fluid definition of hegemonic masculinity and Hutching's suggestion that theorists should focus on the hegemony of masculinity as an empty signifier as opposed to a specific hegemonic masculinity per se. In fact, feminist global politics scholars have largely understood and used hegemonic masculinity in a way that recalls Demetriou's hybrid masculine bloc. For them, appropriation and hybridisation are part of the general mechanics of hegemonic masculinity and indeed gender more generally. As Hooper notes, 'the characteristics of subordinate masculinities can be plundered to reinvigorate hegemonic masculinity, while previously hegemonic characteristics can be dropped or devalued' (2001, p. 61). I deploy this understanding of hegemonic masculinity throughout the thesis. For example, in Chapters 5 and 6, I demonstrate how Obama reconfigured US presidential and militarised masculinities in the post 9-11, post-Bush period through the diverse and notably racialised appropriation

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[14] Demetriou praises the concept of 'authorisation', which Connell uses to explain how hegemonic masculinity sometimes authorises some elements of subordinated or marginalised masculinities but he laments that it was not further developed (2001, p. 346).

[15] There are fierce debates on the concept of hybridity in cultural studies because cultures, or in this case, masculinities, are not ever seen as homogenous entities. They are always and already hybrids of different cultures, contexts and histories. My research takes this critical understanding of hybridity into account. For an overview of the debate see Chapter 4 of Chris Barker's *Making Sense of Cultural Studies: Central Problems and Critical Debates* (2002).

of various subordinated masculinities. I argue that Obama constructs, embodies and performs a very powerful hybrid presidential masculinity.

Furthermore, I agree with Hutchings that feminists utilise hegemonic masculinity because it 'allows an account of the mutually constitutive link between masculinity and international politics, which operates at two levels' (2008a, pp. 27-28). First, it allows feminists to analyse how the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity change in accordance with international political events, such as war. Second, it permits explanation of how those characteristics are reproduced in international actors and then legitimated by a hierarchy of masculinities (Hutchings 2008a, p. 28). My research follows this framework, analysing how characteristics of presidential masculinities (whether hegemonic or not) have changed in accordance with the 'WOT' and how characteristics reproduced and embodied by Bush, Chávez and Obama are legitimated by different hierarchies of masculinities.

More broadly, feminists have deployed the concept of hegemonic masculinity to critique and deconstruct mainstream International Relations epistemologies, theories and ontologies. This is arguably one of the most important goals of the field. Feminists problematised the discipline's lack of epistemological reflexion and its continued use of discredited positivist methodological approaches, emphasising that the mainstream International Relations discipline – like its research content – is deeply masculinised. For example, in the early literature Ann Ticker argues that realist International Relations theory represents a deeply masculinist understanding of international politics where the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are projected onto the behaviour of states in the international arena (1992, p. 6).[16] For feminists, global politics and the scholarly establishment that investigated it was an actual site for the representation, production and legitimation of hegemonic masculinities (Ackerly, Stern & True 2006; Blanchard 2003; Hooper 2001; Parpart & Zalewski 2008; Sylvester 1994, 2002; Youngs 2004; Zalewski 2006). A good example is Ashworth and Swatuk who argued that 'the division of orthodox IR into two different masculine camps [Realism and Liberal Internationalism] has led to a competition between two aspiring hegemonic masculinities over which is

[16] Also see: Smith (1998), who highlights a link between traditional International Relations scholars, masculinity, knowledge claims and the 'real world'; Ashworth & Swatuk (1998), who identify the fear of emasculation in traditional International Relations theories which has been continually propagated through debates between the two most influential theories – realism and liberal internationalism; and Hutchings (2008a), who discusses the legitimising function of masculinity discourses within current International Relations theories and how they create 'cognitive short cuts'.

more masculine (real and objective) and which should be regarded as inferior and feminine (subjective and normative)' (1998, p. 76).

In addition to using hegemonic masculinity to critique the International Relations discipline, feminists have adapted and elaborated Connell's multiple masculinities framework to identify past and current hegemonic masculinities in the context of global geopolitical events such as the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the first Iraq War, 9/11 and the current 'WOT' (Jeffords 1989; Messerschmidt 2010; Niva 1998; Youngs 2006). They have also employed the framework to identify and elucidate the inherent and dangerous relationship between masculinities and militarism. This is the most important aspect of the literature for my research. Feminists have thus assessed the insidious effects of this relationship on diverse political phenomenon such as citizenship, nationalism, state-making, war and foreign policy. I turn my attention to this literature on militarised masculinities shortly but first I want to introduce the concept of hypermasculinity more concretely.

Hypermasculinity

Hypermasculinity, in a simplistic sense, refers to the exaggeration of certain masculine traits, usually those that relate to militarised understandings of masculinity. For example, Weber notes that the shift from masculinity to hypermasculinity indicates 'an over-saturation of the signs of the masculine' (as cited in Ling 2001, p. 1089). Others theorise hypermasculinity as 'a reactionary stance. It arises when agents of hegemonic masculinity feel threatened or undermined, thereby needing to inflate, exaggerate, or otherwise distort their traditional masculinity' (Agathangelou & Ling 2004, p. 519). It can also be defined as 'the sensationalistic endorsement of elements of masculinity, such as rigid gender roles, vengeful and militarized reactions and obsession with order, power and control' (Nayak 2006, p. 43). Importantly, hypermasculinity 'affects actual lives and bodies all too intimately' and plays a key role in 'constructing identities and scripts in world affairs' (Ling 2001, p. 1089 & 1090). As a result, it has the ability to 'destabilize the world into ever greater, more expansive spirals of attack and counterattack' (Ling 2001, p. 1091), as exemplified by the ongoing cycles of militarism across the globe. In this way, the concept of hypermasculinity offers an additional theoretical lens to view militarism and presidential masculinities. Presidents *are* influential identities in world affairs, narrate many 'scripts' and have the ability to 'affect', not to mention end, many lives.

Furthermore, the concept of hypermasculinity is steeped in colonial history and politics and this aligns with the postcolonial feminist frameworks guiding this research, in particular the emphasis on race and gender. The concept was first coined by Indian psychologist and social theorist Ashis Nandy who was attempting to diagnose the bold and vehement nationalist wars being fought by 'native' men against their European colonisers in the post WWII era (Gouda 1999). Put simply, colonised men's hypermasculinity was a *reaction* to the emasculation they experienced under colonialism. However, in an ongoing imperialistic world, hypermasculinity does not remain a thing of the past. Influential postcolonial feminist Lily Ling has demonstrated this by building on Ashis Nandy's concept to argue that a 'global hypermasculinity' shapes global politics. For Ling global hypermasculinity 'inflates competition, aggression, and violence as attributes of masculinity; it also naturalizes passivity, exploitation, and abuse as conditions of femininity' (2002, pp. 18-19). Global hypermasculinity also 'builds on a colonial legacy of racialised, sexualised production and consumption, now billed as "modernity", "wealth", "mobility", "technological sophistication", and "internationalization"' (Ling 1999, p. 285).

Ling (2000) labels Imperial Japan in the 1930s and 1940s and Francis Fukuyama's controversial gender politics as classic examples of hypermasculinity. She demonstrates that Fukuyama's grave concern that western militaries are being feminised and thus endangering national security works to reinforce rigid gender roles and strictly militarised assumptions about global politics. These militarised assumptions are largely reflective of mainstream realist IR theory, which, as already highlighted, has been identified by feminists as hypermasculine in and of itself (Ashworth & Swatuk 1998; Tickner 1992). In relation to imperial Japan, Ling argues that the atomic bombs that ended WWII were the devastating consequence of the mutual hypermasculinity of both Japan and the West (Ling 2000). Likewise in the 1970s Américo Paredes argued that Mexican forms of hypermasculinity emerged in the 1930s and 1940s as 'a nationalist response to the hypermasculine model emanating from the USA' as well as the legacies of the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 (Allatson 2007, p. 147). Ling has also extended the mutual hypermasculinity analogy to more recent global geopolitics, arguing, along with fellow feminist scholar Anna Agathangelou, that the USA's 'WOT' and Al Qaeda's 'Jihad' are mirror strategies of hypermasculine imperial politics that fuel and legitimate the racialised and gendered violence rampant in the post 9/11 world (2004). Put simply, Ling and Agathangelou theorise how *pairs* of opposing political powers are contingent on each other's hypermasculine performances, rhetoric and policies. This framework of mutual

hypermasculinity and its role in perpetuating militarism is an important and valuable critique, which I return to later.

As noted in my introduction, the concept of hypermasculinity provides a useful framework for understanding contemporary global politics. Despite this usefulness, feminist scholars have not used hypermasculinity widely in their work, instead favouring Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity (1995). My thesis bridges this gap by using both concepts to inform my theoretical framework. It is not surprising that a less Eurocentric concept like hypermasculinity has been more theoretically valuable than hegemonic masculinity in analysing non Anglo-American masculinities. However, in the Latin American context, other nuances need to be taken into account. For example, while many critics regard the concept of hypermasculinity as equivalent to machismo, the latter has a less significant relationship with militarised understandings of masculinity and is more often a synonym for sexism. Moreover, the concept's entry into the English vernacular is complex and controversial. I elaborate on this in the second half of the chapter when I discuss Latin American masculinities. More generally, hypermasculinity emphasises the hierarchical relationship between masculinities that Connell asserts as fundamental in her framework. In particular, it attests to how militarised understandings of masculinity are often positioned at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities, or used to ascend that hierarchy. I now turn to a detailed discussion of militarised masculinities.

Militarised Masculinities

Mainstream International Relations scholarship, particularly realist work, has long advocated the mutually constitutive relationship between men and war as an inevitability of human nature. A key feminist aim has been to question this assumption and many feminists have done so using Connell's masculinities framework and the concept of 'militarised masculinity'. For feminists, war is heavily gendered and 'war making has long been a way of defining and demonstrating a range of stereotypically masculinist traits' (Pettman 1998, p. 174). Likewise, 'war plays a special role in anchoring the concept of masculinity, providing a fixed reference point for any negotiation or renegotiation of what masculinity or, in particular, hegemonic masculinity may mean' (Hutchings 2008b, p. 390). In fact, feminists have argued that the relationship between masculinity and war is not only toxic but mutually constitutive. It dangerously allows, even causes or encourages, the horrific reality of war to be viewed as 'both intelligible and acceptable as a social practice and institution' (Hutchings 2008b, p. 389). Cohn and Enloe identify this

'normalisation of war' in relation to the 'WOT' when they emphasise that the possibility that military violence may not have been the most appropriate response to 9/11 was never questioned, imagined or discussed; instead it was seen by most as the most obvious, normal and expected response (2003).[17] This would suggest inaction was equated to passivity, a trait traditionally ascribed to women, and in a sexualised sense, 9/11 positioned the USA as the penetrated male. Cohn articulates the extent of this expectation to 'strike back' and its connection to hegemonic masculinity: 'one reason it's so hard politically to even examine the assumption that "striking back" is the best option, is that ideas about masculinity are so intricately and invisibly interwoven with ideas about national security. So-called realist strategic dictums for state behavior sound a lot like dictums for hegemonic masculinity' (2003, p. 1204).

These realist strategic dictums are inextricably tied to the state's monopoly on violence via the military. Thus, feminists research the military extensively because for them the ideology of militarism and the socio-political process of militarisation play a fundamental role in institutionalising the link between masculinity and war. Militaries themselves are institutions of hegemonic masculinity (Kronsnell 2005).[18] As Enloe argues 'militarism legitimizes masculinized men as protectors, actors, as rational strategists, while it places feminized people in the role of the emotionally informed, physically weak, and only parochially aware protected' (2004, p. 154). Thus, the ideology of militarism and the process of militarisation are inherently gendered, and more specifically heavily masculinised. Following this, feminists rely on the concept of militarised masculinity 'to challenge us to think about how masculinities and men *become* militarized, about the ways in which masculinity and military *become* linked, rather than to assume and accept that men are essentially militaristic' (Eichler 2012, p. 7, original emphasis).

A significant area of feminist global politics scholarship is thus dedicated to providing a taxonomy of the plural, contradictory and precarious nature of militarised masculinities.

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[17] Judith Butler (2004) also wrote powerfully about this, but not from an explicit gender perspective. Butler argued that the grief that followed violent acts such as 9/11 could be used politically for reasons other than a cry for war. Simply, mourning could be used as a social resource.

[18] Like Enloe, I understand militarisation as a socio-political process where the 'roots of militarism are driven deep down into the soil of a society', and see 'militarism as an ideology that privileges militaristic beliefs such as: the armed force is the ultimate resolver of tensions; human nature is prone to conflict; having enemies is a natural condition; hierarchical relations produce effective action; states without militaries are naïve, scarely modern and barely legitimate; in times of crisis those who are feminine need armed protection and men who refuse to engage in armed violent action are jeopardizing their own status as manly men' (2004, pp. 219-220).

Feminists have gone beyond soldiers and argued that multiple masculinities are needed for militarisation. Put bluntly, you need politicians to create wars, scientists to develop weapons, and soldiers to fire them (Enloe 1993, p. 98).[19] My analysis is firmly situated in this field but I aim to research the relationship between militarism, masculinity and war in a somewhat under-researched area: masculinities in the political sphere. In particular, the embodiment, performance and construction of presidential masculinities. Among other things, presidents are the ultimate leaders of militaries and decision makers in war. I introduce the concept of presidential masculinities in detail shortly.

Feminists have demonstrated how the gendered nature of other political phenomena such as citizenship, nationalism, security, and the state itself, feeds directly into upholding the mutually constitutive relationship between war and masculinities. Since the 1980s they have articulated the gendered nature of citizenship by elucidating how it is both militarised and masculinised (Elshtain 1987; Pateman 1988; Steans 1998) and how until recently 'the socially constructed link of the military with men and the socially constructed exclusion of women from the military's defining work (combat) [was] at the core of gendering international affairs' (Murphy 1998, p. 94). Similarly, Maya Eichler asserts that 'militarized masculinity is part of the foundation of the contemporary international system. Therefore an analysis of miltiarized masculinity enhances our understanding of how states and the international state system operate, and the potential for their transformation' (2012, p. 7).

[19] Early work includes Jan Jindy Pettman's chapter on 'Men, Masculinities and War' in *Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics* (1996); Carol Cohn's (1987) work on the world of American nuclear defence intellectuals (almost exclusively men) in the midst of the Cold War arms race and its exploration of civilian and scientific militarised masculinities; and Craig Murphy's taxonomical explanation of the multiple masculinities that fuel international politics and propel the logic of international gender inequality in his article 'Six Masculine Roles in International Relations and Their Interconnection: A Personal Investigation' (1998). More recent contributions include Frank Barrett's (2001) study of the US Navy where he identifies multiple hegemonic masculinities that correlate to different jobs in the Navy and in turn create an insidious gendered pecking order; Paul Higate's *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State* (2003); Krosnell's (2005) feminist standpoint research on women's experiences in the Swedish military and the related masculinity politics; Sandra Whitworth's (2008) revealing study of US soldiers and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); Daniel Conway's (2008) research on masculinities and the politics of conscription in apartheid South Africa; Claire Duncanson's (2009) examination of British peacekeeper masculinities in Bosnia in the 1990s and Enloe's investigation of female American soldiers in both the first Gulf War (1993, Chapter 7) and the 'WOT' (2007, Chapter 5) where she asks feminist questions about feminisation, torture and militarised masculinity. Since 2011, Eric Blanchard (2011) has explored the technoscience question, drones and the implications for US militarised masculinity; Maya Eichler (2012) has published significant work on the militarisation of men in post-communist Russia and Aaron Belkin (2012) has explored military masculinity and the American Empire over the last century. The December 2012 issue of the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* also offers a special edition on masculinity and violence including a conversation between Belkin and notable masculinities scholar Terrell Carver on militarised masculinity and the erasure of violence (Belkin & Carver 2012).

This more critical understanding of the international state system has allowed feminists to strategically deconstruct and redefine the concept of security by asking the seemingly obvious question – whose security? For feminists, the focus on national security, defined in militaristic ways, undermines the security of ordinary people, especially women and children, so they define security in multidimensional terms – as not just the absence of war, but the absence of all forms of violence, including physical, structural and ecological violence (Tickner 1997). Through this approach they have clearly shown how 'in international political crises and war, socially constructed distinctions between genders and different social groups are often accentuated through appeals to unity in defense of national security' (Niva 1998, p. 114) and that acts done in the name of national security (read: in the name of protecting our women and children) actually contribute to the very (in)security of women and children.[20]

In fact, such tropes of national security and 'protection' are closely related to militarised masculinity and the state more generally. Feminists have been extremely critical of this notion of protection and demonstrated that the state is a masculinist project (Steans 1998). For example, Peterson (1992) argues that states providing security for women, and I would add men, is akin to a protection racket. States engage in behaviour that endangers their citizens, and then ask for obedience in return for protecting them against the same dangers. Similarly, Iris Marion Young (2003) identifies how states employ a 'logic of masculinist protection' to elevate themselves to the role of protector from an outside enemy rendering the rest of the population in a position of grateful dependency. This 'logic of masculinist protection' cleverly rejects masculinity as dominance and instead employs a courageous, self-sacrificing, virtuous, responsible, man-as-protector framework (p.4). I draw on Young's logic of masculinist protection throughout the thesis, identifying how Chávez and Obama employ their own unique logics of masculinist protection.

Moreover, feminists have built on Enloe's mantra that nationalism sprung from masculinised memory, humiliation and hope (1989, p. 44) to demonstrate that while the nation is a feminised entity, nationalism, like the state itself, is a masculinist project that is highly sexualised (McClintock 1997; Nagel 1998; Yuval-Davis 1997). Feminists developed important concepts such as the sexualised enemy, which indiscriminately labels enemy women as immoral whores and emasculates enemy men as either asexual, queer or

[20] For an excellent overview of how feminists have overturned the concept of security see Blanchard (2003).

hypersexual rapists. For example, 'the West' has long labelled Asian men as effeminate and queer and in return white women have been positioned as unnaturally promiscuous by 'the East' (Bulbeck 1998). In contrast, men who belong to the nation are brave admirable heroes charged with the noble job of protecting their fellow female citizens. In turn, women are charged with symbolising the nation's honour, nurturing its traditions and culture, and, most importantly, reproducing its future generations. These constructions tend to develop into icons of patriotic manhood and exalted motherhood, which reinforce the feminised and familial heteronormative embodiment of the nation (Nagel 1998). The high prevalence of rape in war is also tied to these constructions and imaginings of the nation.[21]

Jasbir Puar (2007) has also described how the emerging homonationalism of states, whereby states now evaluate their worth in relation to their treatment of homosexuals, simultaneously reinforces racialised and nationalised normative forms of gayness and queerness. Such gendered and sexualised imaginings of the nation and citizenship are inextricably tied to militarised masculinities and tropes of protection. As Eichler elegantly summarises: 'the basic claims states make – to sovereignty, protection and security, the monopoly over the legitimate means of violence – are intrinsically tied up with particular gender relations and notions of masculinity and femininity…a notion of militarized masculinity centrally underpins state sovereignty and the state's coercive power' (2012 p. 6). Often, presidents are the ones making such claims on behalf of the state, and to a degree, presidents even embody the state. Thus, presidential masculinities and their relationship to militarised masculinities are an important area for feminist research, which I now elaborate on.

Introducing Presidential Masculinities

This thesis contributes to the literature outlined above by introducing the concept of presidential masculinities more concretely and initiating a discussion on what role they play in global politics. I argue that using presidential masculinities as a descriptive and analytical category encourages a more nuanced engagement with the changing relationship between militarism, war, and leadership in the political sphere. It helps us understand the broader militarisation of political offices that Enloe (2004) speaks of and the renegotiations of masculinities in war – in this case the 'WOT' – that Hutchings (2008b) highlights. This is important because 'whether the process of militarisation is stalled, reversed, or propelled

[21] For an overview of sexual violence in war and the diverse gendered, militarised and political explanations for it see Donna Pankhurst (2010).

forward in any society is determined by the political processes that bolster certain notions of masculinity and certain presumptions about femininity' (Enloe 2004, p. 218). As a concept, presidential masculinity focuses attention on these processes as embodied in one of the most prominent, symbolic, meticulously constructed and scrutinised 'masculinities' of a nation. Presidential masculinities therefore tell us a lot about a society's gender orders and its processes of de/re-militarisation. Moreover, in the USA, the president is 'almost always the most significant human protagonist' in the myth of American Exceptionalism (Landreau 2011, p.4) and this myth is deeply entangled in US militarism. Thus, a focus on any US president's construction and performance of masculinity, as well as his embodiment and/or telling of the myth of American Exceptionalism, is essential.

Theoretically, I do not view presidential masculinities as synonymous with hegemonic masculinities but they are related. Presidential masculinities are not automatic contenders for hegemonic masculinity just because of the institutional or even hegemonic power they hold. As Eichler notes, 'association with hegemonic notions of masculinity often brings social and political advantages. Thus an examination of how notions of militarised masculinity achieve or lose hegemony is important for understanding gendered social and political power' (2012, p. 8). This thesis uses a focus on presidential masculinities to investigate the gendered social and political power operating in US-Venezuelan relations in the first decade of the 'WOT'. I am also interested in investigating how US presidential masculinities have been renegotiated throughout the 'WOT'. After 9/11 the US presidency was further militarised, in a very conventional way under Bush and now, as I elucidate throughout the thesis, in an avant-garde fashion under Obama.

While I am proposing the concept of presidential masculinities, it is important to note that to date feminists have thoroughly researched the militarisation and masculinisation of political offices, particularly in the USA. For example in the late 1990s Shawn and Trevor Parry Giles identified a link between hegemonic masculinity, the military and the presidency, asserting that 'the military and specifically combat (as only recently and partially opened to women) is central to the hegemonic masculinity that symbolically defines the American male and is of great importance for the cultural image of a successful presidential candidate' (1996, p. 344). Similarly, as Eichler asserts, Enloe in her early writings urged feminists 'to inquire into how much of the appearance of manliness that leaders seek is achieved through association with the military or war' (2012, p. 36). Moreover, Enloe has demonstrated how the militarisation of the US presidency 'is a

profoundly gendered distortion that shrinks the meaning of governance and gives a presidential officeholder and "his" strategists a constant incentive to feature military solutions above more subtle, prolonged, complex sorts of solutions' (2004, p. 154).

The militarisation of political offices and leaders also facilitates the effective use of feminisation and hypermasculinisation as strategies in electoral politics and campaigning. As Anna Fahey's analysis of the feminisation of John Kerry in the 2004 US presidential campaign revealed, 'the way to the White House, or any office or position of power, for women, gay men, or anyone characterised as inadequately masculine in behavior or political stance is impeded by the hegemonic masculinity deeply embedded in language and American cultural understandings, including those of national identity and the American place in a world gender order' (2007, p. 146). John Landreau (2011) has concurred with this analysis, demonstrating how both Bush and Obama's national security rhetoric and policy are oriented by the same logic of US masculinity and myth of American Exceptionalism that have long propelled US militarism. Nonetheless with the exception of Landreau, none of these scholars have framed their discussion as an analysis of presidential masculinities. Landreau does not define the concept but uses it as a descriptive category in passing. My research aims to build on this literature to further elucidate the gendered mechanics behind the militarisation and masculinisation of political offices, as well as the militarism and militarisation in and of the USA and Venezuela more broadly.

In summary, I use the four concepts of hegemonic masculinity, hypermasculinity, militarised masculinities and presidential masculinities in this research. The concept of militarised masculinities is the most important. I have developed the concept of presidential masculinities more so as a descriptive category to allow and encourage a focus on the relationship between militarism, war and masculinity in the political sphere. This thesis is primarily concerned with how militarised masculinities or those that promote and legitimate militarism are embodied in and performed by presidents. Whether or not these militarised and/or presidential masculinities achieve hegemony is a secondary but still important concern. However, theoretically it is important to note that presidential, militarised and/or hyper-masculinities are not synonymous with hegemonic masculinities. Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity remains key to this research because it conceptualises how hierarchies between masculinities – including presidential masculinities – are developed, policed and maintained.

Moreover, like hegemonic masculinity the concept of hypermasculinity is closely related to militarised masculinities. Hypermasculinity is a reactionary masculinity that exaggerates certain masculine traits, usually those that relate to militarised masculinities. Thus, hypermasculine forms of masculinity, which are more often than not hypermilitarised ones, can be contenders for hegemonic masculinities in different locales and times. However, more often than not, hypermasculinities are also contenders for subordinated masculinities. In fact the hypermasculinisation and/or feminisation of certain masculinities is key to the policing of masculinities. Thus, using the concepts of hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinity together is productive, particularly in this research project where I use hypermasculinity to highlight the importance of race and colonial histories in shaping gender relations and presidential masculinities. This becomes clear in chapter 4 and 5 where I detail how Chávez's hypermasculine caudillo presidential masculinity emerges in reaction to US hegemony and militarism and how Bush, and to a smaller extent Obama, attempt to both feminise and hypermasculinise Chávez.

The Man Question in the USA, Venezuela and the 'War on Terror'

George. W Bush and Anglo-American Masculinities

An obvious thematic concern of the feminist global politics literature is to identify past and present hegemonic masculinities. This proceeds from masculinity studies, where it was generally agreed that:

> By the end of the nineteenth century a clear and distinct, definitively heterosexual, Anglo-American model of manhood had crystallized, emerging through industrialization, bureaucratization, medical classification, British 'public schools' (which actually are top private schools) and their U.S. counterparts, and imperialism, and that model has survived, with modifications, as the manly ideal throughout most of the twentieth century. (Hooper 2001, p. 67)

Feminists have thus largely focused on theorising Anglo-American hegemonic masculinities in recent modern history. For example, Hooper identifies four different models or ideal types of western masculinity: the Greek citizen-warrior; the patriarchal Judeo-Christian; the honour-patronage aristocratic model; and the protestant bourgeois rationalist (1998, p. 33). Hooper's analysis draws on similar ideal types foreshadowed in Jean Bethke Elshtain's *Women and War* (1987), which looked at the origin and influence of such ideal types in western political thought and philosophy. In fact, the extant literature is heavily skewed to

analysing Anglo-American figures and events, particularly US presidents in the context of wars such as the Vietnam War, the end of the Cold War, the first Gulf War and, more recently, 9/11 and the ensuing 'WOT'.[22] The increasing focus on masculinities in feminist global politics in the mid to late 1990s also coincided with the USA's new solitary superpower status in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This, combined with the dominance of North-American scholars in the field, led to an inevitable focus on Anglo-American 'hegemonic' masculinities.

For example, in the late 1990s Steve Niva (1998) explored how a new 'tough but tender' US masculinity emerged at end of the Cold War, combining military toughness and aggressiveness with a moral tenderness and compassion. Niva argued that this 'tough but tender' US masculinity first materialised in the 1990-91 Gulf War when the USA declared itself the arbiter of international law and order, and claimed to act on behalf of the world community and universal values by 'rescuing' Kuwait from the clutches of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. This new world masculinity was also inextricably linked to military losses and humiliations in the Vietnam War, which had deeply affected US nationalism and masculinities since the 1960s. Niva suggests that the USA redeemed its masculinist power through the creation of this new tough but tender masculinity, which was demonstrably superior in its rationality, morality and technological ability to others such as the hypermacho and uncivilised (read: Arab) masculinity of Saddam Hussein.

Similarly, masculinities scholar James Messerschmidt theorised how Bush Senior constructed a particular hegemonic masculinity to legitimate US involvement in the first Gulf War. He argues that Bush Senior constructed a *'heroic rescuer'* hegemonic masculinity that positioned him as a civilised, gentlemanly and compassionate president who pursued

[22] For example see Jeffords (1989) and Weber (1999) for research on the Vietnam War's impact US masculinities; Enloe (1993) for US sexual politics at the end of the Cold War; Niva (1998) on the first Gulf War; Leatherman (2005) on the 2003 US invasion of Iraq; Nayak (2006) on US State identity after 9/11 and Mann on (2008) manhood, sexuality, and the post 9/11 US nation. Ferguson and Marso's *W Stands for Women* (2007) also offers various contributions on how Bush's presidency complicated a new form of US gender politics whilst others have explored the masculinities of particular politicians. For example, Fahey (2007) identifies the emasculation of John Kerry in the 2004 presidential race; Messer (2007) explores the masculinity of Californian Governer Arnold Schwarzenegger; and Cooper (2009) debates whether Obama is America's first unisex president. Parpart and Zalweski's *Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender and Violence in International Relations* (2008) also includes US-focused studies as well as more diverse research on masculinities in South Africa, Kosovo, India and Zimbabwe. One non-US centric exception is Eichler's book *Militarising Men: Gender, Conscription and War in Post-Soviet Russia* (2012), which investigates, in part, the shift from Boris Yelstin to Alexander Putin and the accompanying resurgence of militarised masculinity in this elite, presidential sphere. I discuss this literature throughout the chapter.

all diplomatic avenues before being 'forced' into the war in Iraq (2010, pp. 50-55). This recalls Niva's discussion of a tough but tender new world US masculinity. Messerschmidt goes on to demonstrate that Bush Senior's 'heroic rescuer' hegemonic masculinity camouflaged a 'contradictory, behind-the-scenes, global dominate masculinity' (2010, p. 63) that employed 'hard diplomacy', evident in the rejection of peace proposals initiated by Saddam Hussein and other attempts to avoid war (2010, p. 78). Put more simply, Bush Senior's heroic rescuer hegemonic masculinity camouflaged his actual 'exclusive commitment to military force' (2010, p. 79) and the 'primary *covert and private* reasons to deploy US troops in Iraq', which had more to do with Iraq's growing regional influence and US access to Middle East oil supplies (2010, p. 69, original emphasis). Thus, militarised masculinity isn't always presented as such. I reflect on this throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter 6.

Other theorists also examined Anglo-American hegemonic masculinities from a political economy viewpoint in the late 1990s. Once again, this correlated with the end of the Cold War and supposed 'triumph' of free-market capitalism over socialism. For example, Hooper identified a 'gradual softening of hegemonic masculinities in the West' in the late 20th century, arguing that globalisation and the decline in military conscription had distanced hegemonic masculinity from militarised norms in some ways (2001, p. 156). In her book *Manly States* (2008) Hooper examined both the role of the IR discipline and globalisation in constructing and sustaining Anglo-American hegemonic masculinities. As part of her analysis she offered a textual reading of *The Economist* and its complicity in constructing business/finance Anglo-American masculinities that were elitist, heterosexist and imperialistic. Building on Hooper's work, Terrell Carver argued that the western masculinities of 'warrior protector' and 'rational-bureaucratic man' are now 'readily recognizable as the masculinities of contemporary globalisation' and have even made a successful merger (2008, p. 71). Similarly, Connell (1998) proposed the notion of a 'transnational business masculinity' (TBM) steeped in neoliberal capitalist discourses, practices and structures and argued that it was the new contender for a global hegemonic masculinity. Connell also asserted that militarised masculinities were a possible challenger to TBM but were a fading threat since the fall of the Soviet Union. I disagree with this analysis and instead argue that militarised masculinities have survived, even flourished in various political spheres in the post Cold War unipolar world. Russia's Alexander Putin is a clear example. Furthermore, Connell's identification of TBM as the 'reasonably clear hegemon' (1998, p. 17) is problematic because it draws attention away from the pervasive

relationship between militarism and masculinities (as well as militarism and transnational capitalism) that feminists – and this thesis – are concerned with. I elaborate on this critique further in Chapters 3 and 6 when discussing Obama's avant-garde militarism and the camouflage potential of his post-hip-hop presidential masculinity.[23]

It is worthwhile to contextualise Connell, and even Hooper's work to a lesser degree, in the late 1990s when neoliberal globalisation was normalised and the post-Cold War, newly unipolar world did offer some hope and change from the overtly militarised arms race of the previous decades. Nonetheless, the momentous events of 9/11 shifted global politics yet again and the ensuing 'WOT' ensured militarised masculinities came back into vogue. As feminists Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart flagged in *Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender and Violence in International Relations*, a deadly mix of fear, humiliation, and wounded masculine pride characterises the post 9/11 world (2008, p. 1). Or as Mann put it, after 9/11 the Bush Administration and entire US nation embarked on a project of 'manning up' (2008, p. 179) to combat the equally problematic militant, fundamentalist Islamic masculinities emerging with the resurgence of al Qaeda. Such masculinised and miltiarised humiliation/manning up did not bode well for global peace as illustrated by the aforementioned feminist scholarship on the dangerously gendered nature of the state, citizenship, nationalism and war. Feminist critiques of the gendered, racialised and sexualized aspects of the 'WOT' followed and were prolific.[24] A significant amount of this literature analysed the 'WOT' through a focus on masculinities, in particular President George W. Bush's embodiment and performance of US hegemonic and militarised masculinities during the war. I now turn to this literature.

Politically, Bush's pre-emptive national security doctrine and foreign policy epitomised the traits of contemporary western hegemonic masculinity: independence, risk-taking,

[23] A close analysis of the economic dimensions of hegemonic and presidential masculinities is outside the scope of this thesis but is a worthy avenue for further research. Investigating what 'presidential' means in relation to global politics, leadership and arenas other than war is important. However this thesis is primarily concerned with the relationship between war, masculinity and militarism in relation to presidents during the WOT both within the US and beyond its borders to a region and country not directly involved in the War – Latin America and Venezuela.

[24] I refer to a significant amount of this literature throughout the thesis but for various overviews and edited collections see Young's 'Feminist International Relations in the Age of the War on Terror' (2006), Eisenstein's *Sexual Decoys: Gender, Race and War in Imperial Democracy* (2007), Jasbir Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007), Mohanty, Riley & Pratt's *Feminism and War: Confronting U.S. Imperialism* (2008), Hunt & Rygiel's *(En)Gendering the 'War on Terror': War Stories and Camouflage Politics* (2008) and Bhattacharyya's *Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the 'War on Terror'* (2008).

aggression, heterosexuality and rationality (Barrett 2001, p. 79). Bush pursued an 'aggressive heterosexual patriotism' (Puar & Rai as cited in Feffer 2007) and his disregard for the United Nations (UN) was essentially a clear display of hegemonic masculinity. It placed the UN in a subordinated, feminised and irrelevant position (Leatherman 2005, p. 103). Bush also drew on a US frontier/rancher/Texan cowboy image to bolster his masculinity and further militarise the US presidency. He repeatedly declared himself a 'war president' and performed as an 'American everyman' (Gutterman & Regan 2007). Similarly, Feffer argues that Bush, in particular through his 2003 'Mission Accomplished Speech' on board the USS Abraham Lincoln, successfully and simultaneously constructed the president as both a commander-in-chief and ordinary soldier (2007, p. 88).[25] In fact, Enloe asserts that it is alarming how someone like Bush so easily managed to infuse his presidential authority with a militarised masculinity, convincing many US citizens (predominantly men) that he was a natural fit for the supreme commander-in-chief, despite all evidence to the contrary. Less than forty years earlier, Bush had exercised his class privilege to avoid military service in Vietnam by accelerating through the long waiting list to join the Texas National Guard, and then never turned up anyway (Enloe 2004, p. 152). This attests to the validity of feminist concerns about the pervasiveness and value of militarised masculinity in political culture.

In addition to drawing on traditional notions of militarised masculinity, Bush invoked gendered tropes of protection to legitimate his 'WOT'. Bush's post 9/11 security state drew on a 'logic of masculinist protection' (Young 2003, p. 2) that simultaneously camouflaged and legitimated his militarised masculinity. As Messerschmidt (2010) demonstrates, Bush constructed a global *'heroic succourer'* (rescue *and* protection) masculinity to camouflage his more traditionally dominating behind-the-scenes masculinity that involved, like his father, a dedicated commitment to military force and disregard for international law. Moreover, Bush's infamous 'you're either with us or against us' civilisational/freedom rhetoric became central to these gendered and racialised tropes of protection. Bush 'fashioned himself as the hegemonic masculine protector of the "good, freedom-loving", and "civilised" people of the world from "uncivilised" terrorist emissaries of "evil" who "hate freedom"' (Messerschmidt 2010, p. 96).

[25] There are various feminist analyses of Bush's 2003 Mission Accomplished speech and I refer to several of them, and offer my own, in this thesis.

Moving away from analyses that employed the concept of hegemonic masculinity, other feminist work has effectively employed the concept of hypermasculinity to illustrate the gendered, racialised and sexualised aspects of the 'WOT' and Bush's accompanying hypermasculinity. I argue that the concept of hypermasculinity more accurately describes Bush's 'WOT' than do discussions that employ the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Bush's *reaction* to 9/11 was a hypermasculine one. The US state and, by implication, its masculinity, had been threatened, penetrated and undermined. In response Bush hypermasculinised US military power and pursued vengeance via the 'WOT'. Nayak (2006) argues that 9/11 caused a major US identity crisis that was/is being redeemed through the hypermasculine orientalist project of the 'WOT'. For Nayak, this project 'institutionalizes gendered and racialized violence through the infantilization, demonization, dehumanization and sexual commodification of the other' (2006, p. 42). Similarly, Ling and Agathangelou (2004) highlight that *both* sides of the 'WOT' (Bush and bin Laden) were engaged in mutual hypermasculine politics that justified global militarisation for their own needs. For Bush it was US national security and for bin Laden it was Islamic honor (2004, p. 523). In both cases, the fates of rival masculinities were at stake.[26]

Bush's eight-year hypermasculine 'WOT' was nonetheless plagued with controversies: the weapons of mass destruction fiasco; the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay torture scandals; the Administration's inability to capture bin Laden; and the continuing military quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan. All seriously delegitimised Bush's hypermasculine (*read:* hyper-militarised) presidential masculinity. The USA arguably lost the 'WOT' under Bush's 'command', and like his ironically pre-emptive 2003 'Mission Accomplished' speech, Bush's militarised masculinity could be seen for the farce it was. As Richard Goldstein asserted in 2008, it was clear that the Bush Administration had 'left a bitter taste in the mouth of machismo' (2008, p. 52), and I would add, traditional modes of US militarised masculinity. A post-9/11, post-Bush USA warranted a new type of presidential, militarised and hegemonic masculinity, one that Obama delivered.

Barack Obama and African-American Masculinities

> Obama's masculinities [are] full of essential contradictions. Obama is both a black and a white man, but also neither completely. He is both feminized and masculinized in the media. He plays the part of both the nerd and athlete, guy next

[26] Goldstein's 2003 article 'Neo-Macho men' in *The Nation* also analysed the backlash against the Bush Administration in relation to hypermasculinity and the invasion of Iraq in the context of recent US pop culture.

> door and Harvard elite. He has shown Zen-like calm but also his relentless attack mode. He is aware of his self-construction but maintains a refreshing authenticity. He is familiarly presidential but refreshing and new. (Shaw and Watson 2011, p. 134)

Obama single-handedly complicated the entire range of US masculinities when he was elected to the White House in 2008. As Shaw and Watson assert, 'Obama's identity influences and potentially changes our conceptions of the black [and white] male, men in general, the office of the presidency, fatherhood, the middle-aged body, and the professional male body, among other aspects of masculine identity' (2011, p. 135). Early scholarship that attempted to track these changes emerged quickly in the critical race and African-American studies field.[27] This was mirrored by similar developments in the political science and sociology fields where a focus on the gendered and racialised politics of the presidential primaries, Obama's early rhetoric and the broader 2008 presidential campaign developed. Heated debates around Obama's 'post-racial' politics and rhetoric became central in this literature.[28] A range of scholars, including many in mainstream IR, have also published analyses of Obama's first presidential term, in particular his ongoing pursuit of the 'WOT'.[29] This literature is peppered throughout my thesis but here I want to focus on literature that examines how Obama complicates US masculinities.

In *Black Masculinity and Sexual Politics*, African-American studies scholar Anthony Lemelle Jr briefly argues that Obama's complication of US masculinities was evidence of a nuanced shift in the deployment of hegemonic masculinities (2010, p.114). Others have hypothesised, more simply and equally briefly, that Obama's arrival led to new patterns of masculinity emerging from the White House (Messerschmidt 2010, p. 173; Cooper 2009, Shaw & Watson 2011). Throughout this thesis I argue that Obama has indeed forged new

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[27] See Cooper's 'Our First Unisex President?: Black Masculinity and Obama's Feminine Side' (2009) Lemelle Jr's *Black Masculinity & Sexual Politics* (2010), Mark Anthony Neal's keynote address to the American Masculinity Studies Association entitled 'The Making of "New" Black Men' (2010), and Shaw & Watson's 'Obama's Masculinities: A Landscape of Essential Contradictions' (2011).
[28] See various contributions in Harris, Moffitt & Squires' *The Obama Effect: Multidisciplinary Renderings of the 2008 Campaign* (2010), the June 2009 Special Issue of the *Journal of African-American Studies*, the Spring 2009 special issue of the *Du Bois Review*, Eisenstein's *The Audacity of Races and Genders: A Personal and Global Story of the Obama Election* (2009), Goldstein's contribution 'The Redeemer: Barack Obama' in *The Contenders* (2008), Kellner's 'Barack Obama and Celebrity Spectacle' (2009), and Jeffries' review of several books in the field entitled '"Obama Studies" In Its Infancy: Books on Obama, Race, and the 2008 Presidential Election'(2010) .
[29] See the 2011 special edition of *International Affairs* (Vol. 87) and for a more critical approach see the 2011 special edition of *International Politics* (Vol. 48).

patterns of masculinity from the White House and in some ways for the better. First, and perhaps most importantly, Obama's election disrupted universal norms of white male leadership (Puwar 2004). However, this was not achieved without difficulty. Indeed, many scholars lament his embrace of a post-racial masculinity and in turn avoidance, even downplaying, of the everyday institutionalised racism that shapes US society (Shaw & Watson 2011; Thompson Ford 2009; Gavrilos 2010; Jeffries 2010; Silverstein 2011).

Second, Obama's identity is closely tied to his role as a loving father and husband, which opens up more contemporary constructions of US presidential and African-American masculinities. Obama's mid-2012 support for gay marriage even signalled potential for a progressive masculinity. Both distance Obama from long held social and cultural constructions of African-American men as hypersexualised, hypercriminalised and hypermasculinised in US society. As Michael P. Jeffries surmised in his review of various books on Obama and the 2008 presidential election, Obama effectively utilised the old tropes of Black US celebrity – coolness, charisma, sex appeal and rhetorical ability – like Sidney Poitier and Denzel Washington before him, to navigate 'the complex terrain of black sexual iconography without being read as a stereotypical Black male predator' (2010, p. 406).

Third, Obama has somewhat demilitarised the office of the presidency. I argue throughout the thesis that the racialisation of Obama's contemporary presidential masculinity functions to distance him from the threatening angry black man stereotype still prevalent in US culture and politics. Obama has acknowledged his own self-conscious attempts to avoid the angry black man stereotype in his famous autobiographies (2004, 2006) and I argue that this has also infiltrated his larger political discourse and presidential masculinity. As Shaw and Watson note, 'Obama [has] aggressively, and shrewdly cultivated the image that he [is] a safe, reliable, even-tempered African-American man who gave middle America (read: white America) no reason to fear' (2011, p. 137). Or as Jeffries states more crudely, 'Obama's greatest superpower is that he can sweet talk the public into forgetting he is black' (2010, p. 406).

Moreover, Obama 'does not meet the model of an African-American warrior. He is not a rock; he is a thinking reed' (Goldstein 2008, p. 79). Early in his first administration Obama

was even painted by the media as a 'reluctant warrior' (McMurtie 2010).[30] Thus, Obama isn't traditionally macho but instead draws on a post-hip-hop, authentic yet mellow, type of masculinity, which is 'animated, rather than alienated, preppy rather than felonious, butch but not bitchifying' (Goldstein 2008, p. 52). Bakari Kitwana (2003) coined the term 'the hip-hop generation' for those born between 1965 and 1984 who grew up in the post-civil rights era, and Patricia Hill Collins notes that this generation 'lived the shift' from colour-conscious racism (segregation) to colour-blind racism (2006, p. 3). As part of this shift, the mass media 'created a seemingly authentic Black American culture that glamorized poverty, drugs, violence and hypersexuality', identifying and rendering the 'hip-hop generation' simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible (Collins 2006, p. 4). The corporatisation and depoliticisation of hip-hop from its progressive roots was complicit in this shift. It is in this sense that I argue Obama is post-hip-hop. He transcends these categorisations and has made hip-hop rethink masculinity (Tesfamariam 2012). Obama is the 'new black' that can be associated with an ivy league education and 'jazz, soul food and Kwanzaa' as opposed to hip-hop's 'gangbangers, crack addicts, and panhandlers' (Thompson Ford 2009, p. 46).

In fact, Obama was a super-celebrity who 'represented a cool, hip, black urban masculinity, in tune with popular culture, breaking with the tough father and defender masculinity typical of most previous presidential candidates, especially Republicans' (Kellner 2009, p. 729). Similarly, The Crunk Feminist Collective note that Beyónce, Jay-Z and Baby Blu are the

> Obamas of the Hip Hop Generation, a comparison that is no less compelling given President Obama's public admission of Jay-Z fandom, Jay-Z's claims that the multi-racial fan base of Hip-Hop made an Obama presidency possible, Beyónce's performance at the inaugural ball, and her partnership with Michelle Obama's childhood obesity campaign. (2012)

This celebrity partnership has continued throughout Obama's presidency: during his 2012 campaign Obama held a fundraiser at Jay-Z's New York Club and after victory Beyónce sang the national anthem at the 2013 inauguration.

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[30] This of course changed when Obama successfully 'commanded' the assassination of bin Laden in May 2011. I address this shift in the latter half of my thesis.

Obama's post-hip-hop masculinity also recalls Lemelle Jr's (2010) description of the president as a mix of white professoriate mannerisms and ghetto-style cool. Moreover, Cooper (2009) argued that Obama could indeed 'afford' to act more feminine because he is black. As influential US feminist Gloria Steinem (2008) pointed out in a *New York Times* op-ed piece, race was somewhat of an advantage for Obama because 'racism [had] stereotyped Black men as more "masculine" for so long that some white men find their presence to be masculinity-affirming (as long as there aren't too many of them)'. Put another way, while Obama transcends mainstream hip-hop's construction and promotion of African-American men as hypersexual violent criminals, he retains and embodies African-American maleness and ghetto-cool as well as its aura of protest masculinity.[31] Obama's presidential masculinity is *post-hip-hop* in the same way that it is *post*-Bush militarised masculinity. This hybrid masculinity has been politically valuable for Obama. My thesis offers a feminist analysis of this development, including its impact on the shifting scope of hegemonic masculinity. As the epigraph to this section highlights, Obama's presidential masculinity is contradictory and, I argue, remains dangerously militarised in different and subtle ways. A key argument in this thesis is that despite Obama's positive complication of US masculinities, he has *rebranded* US presidential, militarised and hegemonic masculinities in new and insidious ways that camouflage ongoing US militarism.

Hugo Chávez and Latin American (?) Masculinities

> What it means to be a man in Latin America can often best be appreciated in relationship to hegemonic masculinities in the region. The dominant male ideological expressions of these hegemonic masculinities – for instance, homophobia, machismo, and misogyny – are not simply individual expressions of interpersonal relations in families and households but also pertain to the very foundations of gender inequalities within these societies *and internationally*. (Gutmann 2003, p. 3, my emphasis)

My research addresses a gap in the literature on non-Anglophone masculinities, presidential or otherwise, and shifts the focus to a new geopolitical region – Latin America – which has been neglected by feminists in the global politics field. Overall, studies of non-western masculinities in the developing world are rare (Morrell & Swart 2005). This extends to Latin

[31] See Kitwana (2003), Brown (2005) and Peoples (2008) for discussions of the depoliticisation of hip-hop and its roots in/potential as a protest masculinity.

American masculinities where a niche but small field of scholarship only emerged in the late 1990s. As Alfredo Mirandé asserted in his 2001 contribution to *The Masculinities Reader*, 'And Ar'n't I a Man?: Toward a Chicano/Latino Men's Studies': 'despite increased interest in men's studies, the topic of Chicano/Latino masculinities remains neglected and virtually unexplored both within the so called new men's studies and feminist scholarship' (2001, p. 341). Similarly, in 2003 in the introduction to the edited collection of the only book of its kind in the field, *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America*, Matthew Gutmann noted that 'the impetus for this book on men and masculinities in Latin America derives from a recognition that we know too little about men-as-men in this part of the world' (2003, p. 1). In the same book, Mara Viveros Vigoya noted that existing scholarship on masculinities in the region had principally been carried out by sociologists, anthropologists and social psychologists (2003, p. 29). This again points to the neglect of the region by feminist global politics scholars.

Two years later in the *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya (2005) assessed and lamented the existing but still small literature on masculinities in the region. They summarised that studies on Latin American masculinities, unlike in the West, had been largely initiated by feminists and seen as an integral component of gender studies (p. 114); had retained a heavy focus on class, neglecting the importance of ethnicity and race (p. 114 & 121); and were most prominent in public health debates through the 'masculinity as a risk factor' approach, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS (p. 115).[32] More generally and importantly, they asserted that some existing studies had oversimplified various masculinities into regional stereotypes and that machismo had become a ubiquitous bellweather term to characterise the region and its associated masculinities (p. 123). This was especially problematic in relation to research conducted outside the region. Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya agreed that

> It goes without saying that sweeping generalizations about 'Latin American men' or 'Latin American machismo' – stereotypes, as often as not, grounded in the colonial imaginary and European notions of modernity – are encountered far more in studies written by scholars writing outside Latin American than in research performed by those writing from within the region. (2005, pp. 123-124)

[32] Roger Lancaster's early 1990s study of machismo in Nicaragua in *Life is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and the Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua* (1992) is a notable exception. The 2011 edited volume *Men and Masculinities Around The World: Transforming Men's Practices* (Ruspini, Hearn, Pease & Pringle 2011) also includes chapters on Colombian and Mexican masculinities.

My research heeds this warning and rejects the broader categorisation of Latin American masculinities in favour of a discussion of Venezuelan masculinities, or at the very least, one particular example of Venezuelan masculinity as embodied by Chávez. My research thus attempts to break down in a small way the monolithic representations of Latin American masculinities in the field. I also contribute to the almost non-existent field of work on Venezuelan masculinities, where to date only one study exists in English: Francisco Ferrándiz's work on Venezuelan *malandros* (street-smart thug) masculinity in *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America* (2003). In this study Ferrándiz investigates the supposedly delinquent masculinities of *barrio* (shanty-town) men in Caracas who have experienced a lifetime of gendered and class-based discrimination from police and wider society. He argues that 'men from the popular urban sectors in Venezuela are often depicted as savages, barabarians, and parasites, people who are predisposed to random violence owing to little more than their "lack of character"' (2003, p. 116). As a result many urban *barrio* dwelling men are trapped in and by a 'wounded *malandros* masculinity' that does not always portray them or their masculinity truthfully (pp.117-118). To demonstrate this, Ferrándiz tracks one man's masculinity vis-a-vis his life story and spiritual redemption.

At first glance, Ferrándiz's study seems tangential to my research. However, it is important to note that the *barrio malandros* men Ferrándiz discusses are very much part of the *pueblo* that Chávez claimed to originate from and represent. Indeed, they are the typical Chavista demographic. Moreover, like the *malandros* in the *barrios*, Chávez as a lower class, notably browner, military officer shared their experiences of discrimination based on race, class and gender. As Craske points out gender and sexuality are heavily racialised in Latin America as a result of colonisation and this is clearly evident in Venezuelan masculinity politics (2003, p. 200). In fact, through Chávez's coup plotter/coup victim narrative and his anti-imperial rhetoric, Chávez embraced the 'wounded masculinity' that Ferrándiz speaks of while also drawing on a strong man *caudillo* image to counter/seek redemption from it. As noted in the introduction, *caudillismo* was central to Chávez's as well as Venezuela's broader masculinity politics.

Lastly, it is important to *critically* discuss machismo in relation to masculinity politics in the region, and in the context of my research, relate it to hypermasculinity. As with hypermasculinity, machismo describes an excessive masculinity that emphasises masculine

pride, sexual aggressiveness, virility and violence.[33] Such an excessive masculinity is found throughout all cultures as highlighted in the epigraph above, but as Gutmann points out, 'machismo has been associated with negative character traits not among men in general, but specifically among Mexican, Mexican American, and Latin American men' (1996, p. 227). Even critical deployments of machismo can be 'implicitly racist as they target the cultural lacks of "tropical others"' (Bustos-Aguilar as cited in Allatson 2007, p. 147). In this way, machismo is part of the orientalist/tropicalisation project whereby equally sexist Anglo-American masculinities attempted to hypermasculinise and delegitimise Latin American masculinities in contrast to their own. This recalls the hypermasculinisation, hypersexualisation and hypercriminalisation of African-American men in the USA and obscures the USA's own transformation 'into a land whose citizens flaunt in abundance the very worst traits that stereotypes through the years [were] imputed to Latin Americans' (Pike 1992, p. xvii).

Moreover, like hypermasculinity, machismo is steeped in colonial politics and its *reactionary* character is largely seen as a product of the interplay between Mediterranean culture, Spanish Catholicism and indigenous/African economic oppression (Connell 1995, p. 198; see also Stevens 1973, p. 58). In the case of Chicano machismo, Ann Castillo also argues that the legacies of both Spanish and North-American colonisation are responsible for machismo (Allatson 2007, p. 147). It is also intimately tied to constructions of femininity in the region as governed by *marianismo*. *Marianismo* constructs a cult of femininity around the Virgin Mary that dichotomises and sanctifies 'Latin Women' as holy virgin mothers who are either morally and spiritually superior to men, or temptress Eve-like whores (Stevens 1973, p. 62; Craske 2003, p. 215). In contrast, Lancaster argues that machismo, like hegemonic masculinity, is more about the relationship between men than male-female power relations (Allatson 2007, p. 146).

While both machismo and *marianismo* are problematic conceptualisations, Craske asserts that they still have some cultural weight in Latin American societies and that while 'these bi-polar conceptions do not describe reality, they offer an understanding of the parameters

[33] Stevens identifies seven deadly sins of machismo: pride/arrogance, insistence on own way, wrath as violence, lust/sexual aggressiveness, manliness, potency and fertility (1973, p. 59). Likewise, Craske asserts that 'machismo endorses aggressive behaviour including heavy drinking, and violent behaviour when protecting 'honor', stresses fecundity and assumes a male breadwinning role' (2003, p. 215).

within which people can negotiate their own gender positions' (2003, p. 202). Thus, Chávez's presidential masculinity did draw on/sit somewhere in between machismo and *marianismo*. However, Craske goes on to state that 'in contemporary Latin America, extreme manifestations of either machismo or *marianismo* are no longer considered positive attributes' (2003, p. 202) and I argue throughout the thesis that Chávez's somewhat contradictory/hybrid presidential masculinity upheld this reading.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have situated my research in the sub-field of feminist global politics that focuses on masculinities, in particular militarised masculinities. Additionally, I have demonstrated the originality and contribution of my research through its focus on militiarised masculinities in the political sphere, as proposed through the concept of presidential masculinities. As the second part of the chapter demonstrates, my research also contributes to the rapidly emerging literature on Obama's masculinity as well as the almost non-existent scholarship on Venezuelan masculinities. I now turn to a discussion of my methodology where I outline further claims for originality in relation to the visual and embodied analyses of masculinities my research offers.

Chapter 2 Methodological Debates, Reflections and Approaches

Epistemological Debates: What's in a name? The Feminist IR/Global Politics Dilemma

Feminists have long had significant ontological concerns about what constitutes their topic of study in International Relations (IR). They have argued persuasively that the label of IR limits the 'what' of world politics to relations between states. As Tickner has observed, many feminists prefer to label themselves world politics scholars as they are interested in much more than relations between states (2005a, p. 2173). Similarly, V. Spike Peterson and Ann Sisson Runyan argue that feminists should situate themselves in global politics, given that the term 'international' only explains part of the global context in which they are immersed. It is also made up of trans-, sub- and supra-national processes (1993, p. 3).

The ontological concerns of many feminists have also led to broader epistemological questions in the field, which are closely linked to the wider debate between positivist social science approaches and the post-positivist turn. Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater (2009) highlight that the historical context of the IR discipline has contributed to an even fiercer debate in the field because the discipline, particularly in Anglophone North America, has vehemently maintained and defended its positivist roots. It has also rejected post-structuralist insights on knowledge and power. Feminists have been at the forefront of these debates, critiquing the discipline for its lack of epistemological reflection as well as its refusal to engage with the growing field of feminist scholarship. This has led to what Marysia Zalewski calls a particular dilemma for feminists, for while feminist research

> implicitly and explicitly works to destabilize the epistemological, ontological, and methodological master-narratives of the discipline, there is a simultaneous draw towards the traditional measures of legitimacy and authority, and the rewards of offering a convincing and acceptable defense of feminist methodologies that the powerful disciplinary questions demand. (2006, p. 44)

This dilemma has led many feminists to concentrate their efforts on tracking how feminist theorising has been relegated to the 'margins' of the mainstream discipline (Steans 2003), is 'not at home in IR' despite years of scholarly contribution (Runyan 2002), or even remains, simultaneously, within, invisible to and beyond the mainstream (Peterson 2004).[34] Tickner, one of the pioneers in the field, has been prolific in her critiques of the discipline, outlining feminist methodological contributions to the field (Tickner 2005a, 2005b; Tickner 2006) and engaging in debates with mainstream scholars (Fukuyama 1998; Keohane 1989; Keohane 1998; Tickner 1997; 1999). Tickner argues, quite simply, that feminists conducted research outside positivist social scientific frameworks and the epistemological boundaries of IR because they could not get answers to the research questions they were asking when using such frameworks. Of course this is closely related to ontological differences and the 'what' that makes up world politics. As she points out: 'in contrast to an ontology that depicts states as individualistic autonomous actors – an ontology typical of conventional social science perspectives on IR and of liberal thinking more generally – feminist ontologies are based on social relations that are constituted by historically unequal political, economic, and social structures' (2005b, p. 6).

Thus, feminists do analyse traditional IR ontologies – such as the state, sovereignty, citizenship, security, militarism, globalisation and nationalism – but the epistemology underlying their research allows them to examine these concepts from a radically different viewpoint. It exposes the hegemonic forms of these institutions and discourses as well as of International Relations scholarship itself (Ackerly, Stern & True 2006). This practice of exposing hegemonic institutions and discourses has been the hallmark of feminist efforts to reveal the masculinist bias of the discipline's orthodox theories, particularly realism and its accompanying epistemological views, ontological limitations and problematic methodologies. This is important to reiterate because the gendered competition over objectivity and rationality is deeply embedded in broader debates about science and knowledge, which feminists have long discussed and discredited (Haraway 1988, 1991; Harding 1986, 1991). As Tickner asserts, 'what makes feminist research unique, however, is a distinctive methodological perspective that fundamentally challenges the often unseen androcentric or masculine biases in the way that knowledge has traditionally been constructed in all disciplines' (2005b, p. 3). Hence, feminists have

[34] It should be acknowledged that other critical IR theories such as constructionist, neo-marxist, post-colonial and post-modern approaches are also marginalised by mainstream IR (Peterson 2004) and possibly face the same 'dilemma' Zalewski speaks of, albeit to a lesser and varying extent, but their attention to gender is also wanting.

called for inclusion in the discipline based on methodological as opposed to normative grounds (Weldon 2006) and demanded a deep ontological revisionism that exposes 'malestream' (mainstream) analyses as ontologically and epistemologically narrow and superficial (Youngs 2004).

Cynthia Weber (1994) goes further by coining a type of gendered methodological hierarchy in her critique of Robert Keohane's *Millennium* essay, 'International Relations Theory: Contributions of a Feminist Standpoint' (1989). She argues that Keohane's text is an example of male paranoia that classifies feminist standpoint theorists as good girls, feminist empiricists as little girls, and feminist postmodernists – the most threatening to mainstream IR – as bad girls (1994). Similarly, Zalewski (2006) critiques Keohane's patronising pleas for feminists to use traditional IR methodologies. She extends her critique of Keohane to the discipline as a whole, complaining of a 'feminist groundhog day' whereby mainstream IR will always label feminist research questions and methodologies inferior (Zalewski 2006, p. 48). For her, this disapproval combined with the discipline's reluctance, even refusal, to engage in contemporary poststructuralist concerns about epistemology provides good reason to dismiss their problematisation of feminist methodologies altogether (Zalewski 2006).

Returning to the feminist 'dilemma' in IR, Zalewski concludes that IR feminists should dismiss mainstream IR because if they aim to be successful in terms of the discipline's expectations and epistemological conventions, they have undoubtedly failed the feminist fairy tale they set out to achieve. Previously, in the same spirit, Runyan called for IR feminists to 'leave their IR home' where they were never actually 'at home' (2002, p. 367). Bina D'Costa and Katrina Lee-Koo have also happily suggested that critical feminist IR scholars should celebrate their exile on the margins of IR. For them, the borderlands of such a discipline are where you 'can provide a fresh perspective and provoke the critical distance that is necessary for feminist IR scholars to engage both the tradition of IR and the global politics extending beyond its boundaries' (D'Costa & Lee-Koo 2009, p. 11).

This thesis claims inclusion in the discipline based on methodological grounds but also happily sits on its borderlands. Such a feminist epistemology is appropriate for my research because while I analyse some of the traditional ontologies of IR, such as foreign policy and militarism, I do so from a radically different viewpoint – presidential masculinities. My research is also a normative project. I aim to expose the hegemonic

and masculinist discourses, practices, policies and institutions that presidential masculinities reproduce and camouflage. Moreover, I employ critical discursive methods that were largely borne out of the post-positivist turn in which feminist epistemology is embedded. However, before I discuss methods, I want to move the discussion from epistemology to methodology and outline two distinct methodological approaches that have been put forward as typical of feminist global politics practitioners. I then contextualise my research project in relation to these methodological practices, discussing the dilemmas of 'researching up' and blurring the comparative studies/International Relations divide. Lastly, I introduce my primary method – multimodal critical discourse analysis – outlining both my image and 'fronstage politics' analysis in detail.

Methodological Reflections: Is There a Distinct Feminist IR Methodology?

In her 2005 article 'What is your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions', Tickner argued that while there is no single feminist research method, four methodological guidelines do inform feminist research perspectives (2005b). Tickner proposed that these guidelines were not necessarily exclusive to feminist IR scholars but she relies solely on their scholarship to illustrate her argument. The four guidelines she proposes are: 'a deep concern with which research questions get asked and why; the goal of designing research that is useful to women (and also to men) in that it is less biased and more universal than conventional research; the centrality of the questions of reflexivity and the subjectivity of the researcher; and a commitment to knowledge as emancipatory' (Tickner 2005b, p. 4). As Tickner acknowledges, these guidelines reflect the prolific feminist insights into methodology and epistemology that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[35]

Many of the key theorists and debates discussed so far were brought together in the book *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* (Ackerly, Stern & True 2006). In the last chapter of the book, 'Studying the Struggles and Wishes of the Age: Feminist Theoretical Methodology and Feminist Theoretical Methods', Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True propose a distinctive feminist International Relations methodology. In contrast to Tickner's approach of outlining feminist guidelines in response to mainstream criticism,

[35] See Fonow & Cook (1991) and Reinharz & Davidman (1992) for examples. For a summary of issues in and aspects unique to feminist methodology see Naples (2003, 2007); Harding & Noberg (2005). For an impressive overview of developments in the field since their famous 1991 book, see Fonow & Cook's *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research* (2005).

Ackerly and True expand on well known critical IR theorists Linklater and Cox's methodologies to outline a feminist theoretical method (2006, p. 255). They argue that like critical IR theory, feminist IR aims to 'generate a theory of International Relations that not merely describes and explains global politics but that contributes to the transformation of global politics through its own theoretical practice' (2006, p. 243). The key scholarly and methodological practices that contribute to this goal are: sociological analysis that appreciates multiple dynamics of exclusion (p. 251); normative inquiry that forefronts gender in power relations (p. 252); and practical reflection that evaluates the usefulness of any research to real-world feminist struggles and activism (pp. 253-254).

Furthermore, similar to Tickner's four methodological guidelines, Ackerly and True identify four shared practices of a feminist IR 'theoretical method' that encourages researchers to be self conscious about their ontological and epistemological choices. These are: sceptical scrutiny; inclusionary inquiry; explicitly choosing a deliberative moment; and conceptualising the field as a collective (Ackerly & True 2006, p. 244). 'Sceptical scrutiny' mirrors Tickner's first guideline over feminist's 'deep concern' with research design and the actual research questions that get asked: 'feminist scholarship subjects all aspects of empirical inquiry and theoretical conclusions to *sceptical scrutiny* so that individual research designs do not neglect crucial questions' (Ackerly & True 2006, p. 257). 'Inclusionary inquiry' also closely reflects Tickner's second guideline regarding designing research that is useful for women and men. However, Ackerly and True put it more theoretically, discussing the exclusionary effects of epistemology and how feminists need to be inclusive in their research inquiries and be attentive to the marginalised. This relates back to their broader methodological practice of sociological analysis and appreciating multiple dynamics of exclusion, including those that come about when doing research.

Tickner's guidelines on researcher self-reflexivity and commitment to knowledge as emancipatory are implicit in all four of Ackerly and True's theoretical methods but more so in the latter two. In identifying deliberative moments and conceptualising the feminist field as a collective, Ackerly and True maintain that scholars in this area deliberate and self-reflect on decisions regarding research questions, methods, data, timing and even publication. In this process they engage with the field of feminist IR from *different* perspectives, acknowledging theoretical and empirical issues in the field but maintaining a commitment to critique mainstream IR both from within and beyond the margins (2006,

p.258). The transformative, normative and collective aspect of feminist IR, as well as critical IR more generally, mirrors Tickner's commitment to emancipatory research. In fact, Ackerly and True acknowledge that the practices they outline 'may seem to use the professional tools of all good scholars, and not merely the tools of IR feminists' (2006, p. 260). However they argue, and I agree, that it is still useful to outline specific theoretical methods and offer them to critical IR theorists as a way to practice their methodology and situate their research as contributing to IR and feminist scholarship.

My research is an example of this as I have employed and reflected on Tickner's guidelines and Ackerly and True's practices in developing and doing my research. Put simply, I developed my research question based on my deep concern with the militarisation of political offices and the problematic gender politics it represents and reproduces. This reflects my commitment to a normative inquiry into gender and power whereas my intersectional focus on other dynamics of exclusion, in particular race, reflects the sociological analysis/inclusionary inquiry driving my research. I have also deliberated and reflected on my research questions, methods and data considerably from multiple disciplinary perspectives. This will be illustrated throughout the thesis, in particular, in my later discussion of method where I draw from various approaches and develop my own unique method of multimodal CDA. My case study approach to investigating presidential masculinities also reflects this. Many feminist global politics scholars take this approach. As Enloe states:

> because the international is always locally grounded, comparative cross-national research and investigations of international political processes will always feed each other. This is one of the reasons that the feminist-informed students of international politics intentionally blur the lines…between the academic fields of comparative politics and International Relations. None of us can be specialists on the politics of masculinized privilege or transformations of femininities in the world's almost two hundred independent states and scores-more ethnic communities. Thus, we need each other. (2008, p. 459)

By investigating and comparing both US and Venezuelan presidential masculinities I contribute to the collective field of feminist IR and research on masculinities in at least two of the world's two hundred states. I also move beyond the cross-national and international political processes Enloe speaks of to concentrate on presidential

masculinities in the global, transnational and intermestic arenas at a specific historical time. Thus, methodologically and theoretically, I aim to further blur and even defy the lines between comparative politics and International Relations by employing an anti-area studies approach (Morris-Suzuki 2000). Anti-area studies aims to re-spatialise area studies and acknowledge that global political processes and phenomena transcend conventionally defined 'areas' (read: nation states). A key aim of this field is to 'use knowledge of a variety of places and a variety of disciplinary approaches in order to elucidate problems which cross boundaries. In doing this, it accepts the need to draw its own maps' (Morris-Suzuki 2000, p. 22). In my research I am drawing my own map of 'WOT' geopolitics in a region that was not directly involved but inevitably shaped by the war and investigating the 'problem' of militarised masculinity in the political sphere that indeed does 'cross boundaries'. Moreover, I am using a transdisciplinary approach that includes sociological and cultural studies theories and methods to research this problem. Lastly, like other feminist scholarship on militarised masculinity, my research aims to deconstruct the problematic processes and politics of militarised masculinities for emancipatory purposes. In my conclusion, I reflect on the practical implications of my research in real-world feminist struggles and activism as per Ackerly and True's methodological practice.

Researching 'Up': Methodological Limitations and Options

My research requires access to elite men, which is not easily negotiable and is a clear case of researching up. I am interested in researching up because elites are far from the 'usual objects of anthropological scrutiny' (Puwar 2004, p. 35). They

> have considerable constitutional, legal and cultural resources that enable them to deflect or channel any research in which they are the object of enquiry…The classroom or 'street corner society' can be observed in minute detail, but the same cannot be said about the interactional exchanges in the cabinet office. (Fitz and Haplin in Puwar 1997, Section 5.2)

Researching up contrasts with most sociological and feminist research that usually examines the dynamics of power by 'gazing down at working-class and racialised groups' (Puwar 2004, p. 34). The constant gaze on marginalised groups is problematic, although from a research perspective it can be more practical and viable. In contrast, researching up limits the methodological options open to the researcher. Participant observation or

an ethnographic study of the cabinet office Fitz and Haplin speak of, let alone elite political figures like Chávez, Bush and Obama, is in most cases difficult.[36] Furthermore, this limited access to elites and the tendency to gaze down in social science and humanities research can lead to significant research gaps in varying disciplinary fields. For example, studies primarily concerned with embodiment and social interaction focus on bodies that are

> subjected to violence, repression, suppression and exploitation, with little consideration of the bodies that wield violence, and enact repression, suppression and exploitation. We need to consider not only so-called 'marked' bodies – female, homosexual, disabled, infertile, working class – but also the 'unmarked' bodies that function to define others as 'different' – male, heterosexual, able, fertile, middle class and so on. (Mackie & Stevens 2009, pp. 263-264)

In my research, I focus heavily on elite male bodies, which are both 'marked' and 'unmarked'. For example, while Bush epitomises an 'unmarked' body, Chávez and Obama's bodies are unusual hybrids. They are both 'marked' in relation to race, but less so in other ways. For example, as discussed in the last chapter, Obama is an ivy-league educated upper class 'American'.

The tendency to 'gaze down' is also prominent in the masculinity studies field. In the 1990s key figures in the field called for long overdue studies of ruling class masculinities (Donaldson 1993) and lamented how masculinities have overwhelmingly been studied in their localised forms through ethnographic means.[37] As discussed earlier in the thesis, in the late 1990s Connell problematised this 'ethnographic moment' in the field and attempted to globalise masculinities studies. Coincidentally, this shift from studying localised masculinities to their more global forms inevitably leads to a focus on elite masculinities and a shift away from ethnography as the most common and practical methodological choice. Despite these calls, studies of elite masculinities are still rare but some researchers have resolved the access problem by employing alternative methods, most notably – discourse analysis and life histories. For example, Connell pointed out

[36] I discuss how ethnographic methods could be used to research presidential masculinities but are unfortunately outside the scope of this particular research project in the next section.

[37] Donaldson & Poynting have since attempted to fill this gap with their book *Ruling Class Men: Money, Sex, Power* (2006). However, their analysis focuses more heavily on ruling class capitalists than political leaders so there is still a significant gap that my research can fill.

that although global transnational business masculinity was 'not readily available for ethnographic study…we can get some clues to its character from its reflections in management literature, business journalism, and corporate self-promotion, and from studies of local business elites' (1998, p. 16; also see Hooper 2001). As illustrated in Chapter 1, feminist scholars have also effectively used discursive approaches to investigate hegemonic and other masculinities in the field.

In summary, discursive approaches ameliorate some of the methodological limitations of 'researching up'. Moreover, they are grounded in post-positivist epistemologies that inform feminist methodologies as they aim to deconstruct power. They also contribute to an 'understanding [of] how our lives are governed not primarily by individuals but more powerfully by institutions, conceptual schemes, and their "texts", which are seemingly far removed from our everyday lives' (Harding & Norberg 2005, p. 2011). Accordingly, I selected discursive methods as the most appropriate way to research presidential masculinities, which can also be seen as institutions, conceptual schemes, performances and texts.

Arriving At My Own Method: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA draws heavily on a broad church of critical social theories – the Frankfurt School, Neomarxism and Poststructuralism – and aligns well with the feminist methodology underpinning my research (Lee & Otsuji 2009). As Thao and Quynh Lé comment, Foucault has a special place in CDA because his conceptions of power and governmentality link directly to the commitment of any discourse analyst to unmask or deconstruct discourses as 'regimes of truths' (2009, p. 6). Gramsci's concept of hegemony is also commonly used in CDA approaches (Van Dijk 2001). This correlates nicely with my theoretical use of Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity that is similarily indebted to Gramscian modes of thinking. CDA also 'mediates linguistic practices with the broader historical, social and cultural frame of activities, practices and ideologies' (Lee & Otsuji 2009, p. 67). This emphasis on context fits well with my research.

More broadly CDA 'is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (Van Dijk 2001, p. 352). According to key figures in the field, Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, there are eight

principles of CDA: it addresses social problems; sees power relations as discursive; believes discourse constitutes society and culture; is a form of social action; does ideological work and is historical; maintains that the link between text and society is mediated; and lastly is both an interpretive and explanatory practice (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, pp. 271-280). Likewise, Alison Lee and Emi Otsuji identify five key characteristics of CDA that offer a comprehensive definition of the method. They state:

> First, CDA is problem-orientated, in that its objective is to address political and social concerns. Second, it provides an explanatory paradigm for the analysis of discourse by associating the micro level of text/discourse with the macro level of society and institutions. Third, it is concerned with power and ideologies underlining text, discursive and social practices. Fourth, it considers the effects of discourse and aims to remedy and transform problematic discursive and social practices. Fifth, and finally, as we have already noted, CDA takes an interdisciplinary approach towards discourse (Lee & Otsuji 2009, p. 67).

I use this definition of CDA in my research but also draw on Wodak's well-known historical-discourse approach in CDA (2001). In particular, I draw on her later expansion and combination of her discourse-historical approach with Michelle Lazar's (2005a, 2005b) feminist CDA as a methodological model (Wodak 2008). However, following the recent shift away from mono-modal understandings of discourse, I combine these more traditional CDA methods with a multimodal approach to researching presidential masculinities because '*all* social semiotic systems allow us to negotiate social and power relationships' (Machin 2007, p. xii, my emphasis). While most CDA theorists overwhelmingly focus on how written or spoken language is operationalised in discourse, I believe other 'texts', such as images, are just as crucial. As Theo Van Leeuwen's work in multimodal discourse studies highlights, CDA needs to broaden its scope from written, verbal discourses and texts, to include images and non-verbal texts because they also shape, complicate and change meaning (2004, p. 15). Put simply, multimodal approaches can and should broaden CDA's scope and potential (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 14).

Furthermore, Lazar argues that a multimodal view of discourse contributes to a more holistic feminist critique (2005b, p. 5). She proposes this as part of a distinctively feminist CDA in her book *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in*

Discourse (2005). Lazar argues that although CDA has an acknowledged debt to feminist theory and is a 'progressive' project, there is a need to develop a distinctive feminist articulation of CDA to bring gender to the forefront of discursive analyses. Lazar acknowledges the intersectionality of gender with race, sexuality, and class but maintains that gender works in subtle ways in contemporary discourse and thus deserves feminist attention. She proposes five principles of feminist CDA. First, she sees *feminist analytical resistance* as integral to prioritising critiques of discourses that sustain the patriarchal social order (2005b, p. 5). Second, feminist CDA rests on the assumption that *gender is an ideological structure* that is hegemonic and largely achieves normalcy and naturalness through discursive and consensual means (2005b, pp. 6-7), hence the importance of examining these practices discursively. Third, she acknowledges the *complexity of gender and power relations* ensuring that poststructuralist insights on power, difference and diversity between women (and women and men) remain central to the practice of feminist CDA. For Lazar, feminist CDA should be comparativist as opposed to universalising (2005b, p. 11). Fourth, Lazar expresses a commitment to the *(de)construction of gender in discourse* which incorporates a constitutive understanding of discourse and pays special attention to two relationships. Namely, the discursive constructions of doing/performing gender and/or being a man or women in different spaces and times, and how the dynamics between different masculinities work to oppress women (Lazar 2005b, p. 12). This principle is particularly relevant to my research and I discuss it further below. Fifth, Lazar argues feminist CDA must incorporate c*ritical reflexivity as praxis* reflecting the feminist postpostivist epistemology it is steeped in (2005b, p. 14).

Lazar's feminist CDA approach is attractive. Her interdisciplinary and critical approach to gender performativity and the multimodality of discourse is of particular theoretical and methodological value. However, I am confident the feminist epistemology underpinning my research will lead me to practice CDA in the manner Lazar has elucidated. Wodak raises several issues in her critique and reworking of Lazar's feminist CDA with her own well-known discourse-historical approach in 'Controversial issues in Feminist CDA' (2008). Wodak argues that the isolation of gender as the most important variable in any discursive analysis is worrying (2008, p. 193). For her, the relevance or emphasis on a particular identity indicator whether it be race, class, geography or class should be context-dependent and not derived from some kind of theoretical commitment to one particular identity by the researcher, however critical this commitment is. She argues that

this approach risks reductionism. While I argue that Lazar's approach potentially allows or encourages intersectional analyses, Wodak's point has validity for my own research. My theoretical framework clearly forefronts gender but its intersectionality with race and geopolitical position are also a primary concern.

Another form of feminist discourse analysis that is distinctive from Lazar and Wodak's approaches is feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) (Baxter 2003). In outlining FPDA, Baxter comments that the two most likely comparisons to FPDA are conversation analysis and CDA but she asserts her disinterest in setting up a rival paradigm and offers FPDA as a supplementary mode of discourse analysis (2003, p. 3). Baxter elaborates at greater depth on the tension between the emancipatory project of feminism and the deconstructive purpose of post-structuralism, and concludes that there is a 'productive contradiction' between the two. After addressing this theoretical dilemma, she outlines her FPDA methodology, which has three key practices: self-reflexivity; a deconstructionist approach; and finding a feminist focus. These practices run parallel to many of the principles and characteristics of CDA and feminist CDA outlined above. Thus while Baxter's theoretical discussion is beneficial, methodologically speaking, she does not offer any additional insights for my research. I believe you can utilise post-structuralist insights and concepts, both theoretically and methodologically, as in Lazar and Wodak's approaches, without naming one's approach as such. Similarly, Naples argues that her materialist feminist standpoint approach to discourse analysis utilises post-structuralist insights whilst rejecting the dichotomous distinction between modernist Marxist and post-modern Foucauldian approaches which for her are highly problematic and unproductive for feminists (2003, p. 6).

In light of these debates amongst feminists and multimodal/CDA scholars, I propose and utilise my own multimodal CDA method in this research project. There are two key parts to my multimodal CDA: a multimodal analysis of Bush's, Chávez's and Obama's official visual discourses, drawing from Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen's Hallidayan-inspired grammar of visual design (2006), and an analysis of each president's 'frontstage doing of politics' as outlined in Wodak's book *The Discourse of Politics in Action: Politics as Usual* (2009). The first privileges the importance of visual discourse and the latter the performance and language of politics. I see both as integral to the construction, performance and embodiment of presidential masculinities. Using both methods together offers a comprehensive, original and multimodal way to analyse presidential masculinities.

Method Part 1: Analysing Visual Discourses

> Pictures are one of the most important ways of communicating and are the basis on which a number of people form their opinions of the president…they [the US public] don't always read the story, but they always see the pictures.
>
> - US President Reagan's Assistant Press Secretary Mark Weinberg (Squiers 1990, p. 124)

> There is often the sense that images are dangerous and seductive. (Featherstone 2010, p. 193)

> Photographs can be as convincing and as deceptive as realist claims to objectivity. (Bleiker 2012, p. 6)

I am particularly interested in images because, like language, they play a key role in shaping our understanding of the world and what is represented as normal, real and true. As Machin points out, 'the use of visual signs is not neutral but is about defining social reality' (2007, p. xiv). Moreover, as highlighted in the epigraphs above, images not only define social reality but do so seductively and convincingly. They are incredibly influential: as former US President Reagan once commented, there is a 'tyranny of the visual' (Squiers 1990, p. 122). This 'tyranny' has increased with the growth and fusion of politics, multimedia and the Internet. Online presidential photo galleries epitomise this and offer a valuable data set of how governments want us to see our presidents. These official images are also disseminated widely by the mass media, rendering them even more salient. These sets of images can be seen as factual evidence, documentation or records of reality, but more importantly as evidence of the maker's *intended re-constructed* reality (Jewitt & Van Leeuwen 2001, pp. 4-5). Thus, they are inherently political and can be viewed as visual discourses.[38] As Ashley Parker notes, the role of the White House photographer is half

[38] I have elected to use the term visual discourse to describe Bush, Chávez and Obama's image galleries because I believe they present a particular set of images or visuality that follow particular rules and conventions, producing and circulating particular meanings about leadership, presidential masculinity and the institutions behind them. This follows Rose who notes that 'it is possible to think of visuality as a sort of discourse too. A specific visuality will make certain things visible in particular ways, and other things unseeable, for example, and subjects will be produced and act within that field of vision' (2007, p. 143). I elected to describe Bush, Obama and Chávez's images as visual discourses as opposed to a particular visuality or visual culture due to the transdisciplinary audience this thesis aims to speak to. For a detailed discussion of visual culture, visuality and visual methodologies that speaks directly to the discipline of Cultural Studies see Gillian Rose's *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (2007).

historian and half propagandist (2010). Their job is to shoot flattering photographs of the president and 'no matter how problematic a government policy might be, it can be given an upbeat spin by an attractive visual that show[s] a beaming, likable president' (Squiers 1990, p. 125). In relation to militarised masculinites, Terrell Carver also reminds us that the 'stereotypical version of militarized masculinities "approved for release" [for example via presidential visual discourses] either erases real violence altogether or tames and sanitizes it through symbolism' (Belkin & Carver 2012, p. 561).

Moreover, images are 'complex reflections of a relationship between maker and subject in which both play roles in shaping their character and content' (Collier 2001, p. 35). This means the official visual discourses of presidents offer insights into both government constructions of presidents and the presidents themselves and by extrapolation, their masculinities. As feminist geographers Lorraine Dowler and Joanne Sharp point out, bodies are 'sites of performance in their own right' and are not just 'surfaces for discursive inscription' (2001, p. 169). Thus, analysing images offers a productive approach to researching presidential embodiment – a crucial part of masculinity and political performance more broadly. Images capture the complex bodily practices that a traditional discursive analysis of language cannot.

Furthermore, official images are even more influential because they are often republished without acknowledgement of their official status by the mass media. This compromises the independence of reporting given that official images intentionally aim to represent their governments and presidents in inevitably positive ways. Media networks and publications run government *produced and approved* images (as well as videos) instead of obtaining their own, more critical or less flattering coverage. This dangerously 'supplants' the media (Parker 2010). As Nancy Schola, a technology blog editor, warns in relation to the USA: 'it is a little disconcerting to think we're going to have these tools that are so powerful in the hands of the people who also happened to be the most powerful in the country' (as cited in Parker 2010). However, this is not a new strategy. Squiers notes that the Reagan Administration 'became infatuated with its own ability to orchestrate news photographs that could often be counted on to function as public relations rather than reportage' (1990, p. 127). All three official presidential visual discourses analysed in this thesis function in this way but the Obama Administration seems to be perfecting this strategy. For example, the current White House official photographer Pete Souza even acknowledges the strategic release of photos after specific events so that media outlets can 'see the photo

instantaneously' (White House 2010).[39] The now famous image of Obama and his cabinet in the Situation Room watching Operation Neptune Spear (the assassination of bin Laden) in real time is a good example of this. The widespread and rapid dissemination of this official, seemingly apolitical and indeed flattering image of Obama, in lieu of a grimmer image that evidenced bin Laden's death (not to mention the illegality of it) is highly problematic. I elaborate on this example in the next chapter.

In consideration of the influence of official images and their ability to convey presidential embodiment, masculinity and political performance in nuanced ways, I elected to do a multimodal analysis of the three official online photo galleries of Bush, Obama and Chávez. I selected 262 photos from the archived President Bush White House website that cover his entire presidential term from 2001 to 2009.[40] I selected photos from the six most prominently featured photo essays on the website entitled: 'The Bush Record', 'White House at Work', 'War on Terror', 'Life in the White House', 'The Travelling White House', and 'Entertaining at the White House'. These albums are discursively and visually valuable because they are the intended and archived photo record of the Bush presidency. The second data set is 258 photos from the current White House website photo galleries that document the Obama presidency.[41] I selected photos from each monthly 'Photo of the day' album for 2010 (for example January Photo of the day, February Photo of the day) and one album titled 'The First Year 2009'.[42] This latter album is a particularly rich source of data and is comparable to 'The Bush Record' photo essay because it shows how those involved in shaping Obama's presidential discourse wanted his first year to be remembered and instilled in imagery. This process is occurring on a smaller scale in the selection of photos of the day for the monthly albums. This

[39] In the same official interview Souza attempts to downplay the approval process that images go through and instead champions the transparency of the Obama administration. According to Souza, the White House Photo Editor makes the initial selection, which he sometimes refines, and then they show them to the White House Deputy Press Secretary who 'just takes a quick look' (White House 2010).

[40] See http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/president/gallery/photoessay/index.html. All images of Bush and Obama in this thesis are reproduced in line with US federal copyright legislation as per http://www.usa.gov/copyright.shtml. All Bush's images are by official White House Photographer Paul Morse except images 5, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 47 which are attributed to Eric Draper and image 6 which is attributed to Tina Hager. All Obama's images are by official White House photographer Pete Souza except image 21 which is attributed to Samantha Appelton, and image 30 which is attributed to Chuck Kennedy.

[41] See http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/april-2011-photo-day.

[42] 'The First Year 2009' contains 82 photos, all selected by the official White House photographer, Pete Souza.

intentional representation of certain historical periods, whether it be a year or a day, aligns well with my content analysis approach, which I discuss shortly.

The third data set is 248 photos from Hugo Chávez's Flickr account titled *Chávezcandanga's* photostream.[43] Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application. Chávez's account is directly comparable to the Bush and Obama galleries because it is the official photo archive of the Venezuelan President. For this third data set I selected photos from over 100 different albums documenting the timeframe between May and December 2010. At the time of collection, these were the only photos available. It is worth noting that the title of Chávez's photostream, like the images themselves, promote his anti-imperial *caudillo* presidential masculinity because in Venezuela, *candanga* is a synonym of *candela* or *fuego,* meaning the fire within, or to metaphorically start a fire. *Candanga* also refers to the feeling of stirring or energising something and in many parts of Latin America means 'fighter'. Thus Chávez's aptly named Twitter and Flickr accounts do recall and promote his *caudillo* image, or what others have described as combative men of strong character (Uricoechean 2010).

In my multimodal image analysis, I use both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method mirrors a content analysis approach and aims to describe the 'field of visual representation' over individual images (Bell 2001, p. 227). For example, I count how often military personnel appear in each gallery and which background settings appear most frequently. This allows the identification of similarities, differences and patterns amongst the three galleries. As Bell contends, content analysis can answer questions about the salience of media content including agenda setting, bias and historical changes in representation (2001, p. 14). Moreover, isolating individual images from a series without extensive contextualisation is problematic for visual analysis (Collier 2001; Jewitt & Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 4). Thus, a quantitative content analysis is a comprehensive way of contextualising a series of images or describing a field of visual representation before embarking on an in-depth qualitative analysis of individual or smaller groupings of images. My quantitative analysis follows this approach, setting a solid foundation for my qualitative analysis, which is more reminiscent of sociological, media, and cultural studies approaches. These disciplines have a 'long tradition of

[43] See http://www.flickr.com/photos/Chávezcandanga/. All images of Chávez are reproduced in accordance with Creative Commons licence as per http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/. All Chávez's images are by *Prensa Presidencial*/*Prensa Miraflores* (Presidential Press/Miraflores Press) except image 46, which is attributed to Francisco Batista/*Prensa Miraflores*.

examining the ideological nature of visual representations especially race (Hall, Said, hooks), gender and war' (Machin 2007, p. xiv) and assume that 'in practice, it is seldom, if ever, possible to separate the cultures of everyday life from practices of representation, visual or otherwise' (Lister & Wells 2001, p. 61).

The coding categories used in the quantitative analysis are grounded in the broader multimodal approach of the thesis, in particular, Kress and Van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design (2006) and Van Leeuwen's adaption of social actor theory as a systematic socio-semantic analytical framework (2008, 2009). I have not replicated these Hallidayian inspired social semiotic approaches in detail but have used their 'tool kit' for analysing images to develop my coding categories. For example, I developed coding categories around the representation and frequency of social actors and the particular photographic conventions of the images. Asking what and how social actors are represented raises questions about social agency and power; what the actual job of a president entails (or more specifically which parts of the job are most often represented or emphasised); and how a president should look and act. Apart from the president, I highlight who else is deemed important enough to appear and play a role in visual presidential discourse. Put more simply, I asked questions such as: What social actors are represented in the images and how often? How are these social actors represented through their clothing, gestures, poses and props? What event is being documented and what is the president doing? What can photographic conventions and style (for example, the colour range used in the images and the viewer gaze, camera angle and depth of field employed) tell us about presidential masculinities? These are all key parts of what Kress and Van Leeuwen call their visual 'grammar' but are also important long held analytical categories for sociologists and cultural/media studies scholars engaged in visual analysis.

That said, I am not fully embracing Kress and Van Leeuwen's semiotic multimodal approach in my transdisciplinary research project. Carey Jewitt and Rumiko Oyama see Kress and Van Leeuwen's 'grammar of visual design' as essentially descriptive. It uses complex linguistic, even pedantic, terminology and overall cannot 'on its own, offer all that is needed for the sociological interpretation of images' (2001, p. 154). As an alternative, Jewitt and Oyama propose combining Kress and Van Leeuwen's grammar of visual design with sociological theory to more adequately describe visual discourses. I replicate this approach in my analysis. Similarly, cultural studies textual analyses offer further advantages because they are 'interested in the cultural and political implications

of representations, not only in how meaning is constructed' (Hartley 2002, p. 227). Kress and Van Leeuwen's work, as well as much of the multimodal field, focuses heavily on the mechanics of how meaning is constructed. This reflects the field's strong roots in semiotics and is less appropriate for my research.[44] I have operationalised a more transdisciplinary approach to my image analysis incorporating both sociological theory and cultural studies methods. This approach helps me best interrogate the three visual discourses and answer my research questions on how presidential masculinity is constructed and performed in each.

To this end, I draw on Hooper's textual analysis of *The Economist* in her book *Manly States* (2001) as a methodological guide for the qualitative step of my image analysis. Hooper's work is highly relevant to my research both methodologically and theoretically. In *Manly States* she demonstrates that '*The Economist* is itself a prime site where the interpretive wars and symbolic struggles involved in the jostling for position between would-be hegemonic masculinities is played out' (2001, p. 195). I argue that the official visual discourses of Bush, Chávez and Obama function in a similar way – as prime sites for the construction, reproduction and performance of presidential masculinities as well as the competitions and relations between them. Hooper's textual analysis is a multimodal approach but she relies more heavily on cultural studies concepts such as intertextuality, symbolic meaning and metaphorical associations to describe her methodological practice. She uses these concepts to examine *The Economist's* written text, graphs, images, drawings, layout, house style and advertising to identify the gendered meanings encoded in the magazine, in particular the signifiers of a late 20th century elitist, heterosexist, imperial, Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity (2001, p. 147).

For Hooper, intertextuality is 'the process by which meanings are circulated between texts through the use of various visual and literary codes and conventions' (2001, p. 122). More simply, it is how texts (including images) have links to other texts in the past and present (Wodak 2009, p. 39). Intertextuality is commonly employed in many types of discourse analysis including CDA. My image analysis does the same. I accept Hooper's assumption that 'meanings cannot be gleaned by examining a text in isolation. They can be understood only in the context of both the immediate intertextuality of media images

[44] See Jewitt's *Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (2009) for an overview of the field and evidence of the influence of semiotics.

and symbolic meanings and the wider cultural context or intertext' (Hooper 2001, p. 123). For example, I identify and discuss the visual intertexts between Bolívar, Ernesto Che Guevara and Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity, Bush and the Star Spangled Banner, and Obama and JFK in my findings. Hooper explicitly looks at the intertext between International Relations theory, hegemonic masculinity, discourses of globalisation and *The Economist*, whereas I explore the intertext of presidential masculinity, US/Venezuelan culture and relations, and the first decade of the 'WOT'.

Similar to intertextuality is interdiscursivity. Interdiscursivity is how different topic-oriented discourses relate to other discourses in various ways (Wodak 2009, p.40). Indeed, the three visual discourses of each president have clear but varying interdiscursive relationships with discourses around war, family, national historical figures, revolution, veterans, democracy and capitalism. Bush's images have a very clear interdiscursivity with US military discourses. While the quantitative content analysis draws attention to this and other key interdiscursive relationships in my data, it is useful, conceptually, to think about the broader interdiscursivity and intertextuality of presidential masculinity and global politics as portrayed in the three sets of images. Iconographic symbolism and metaphors are central to creating links between texts and the notions of intertextuality and interdiscursivity more generally. Iconographic symbolism refers to how images or texts themselves have evolved over time to represent or symbolise particular ideas or concepts in a definitive way (Machin 2007, p. 39). For example, the colour red may symbolise left-wing politics, ideologies and revolutions whereas the iconography of the Oval Office symbolises the US presidency and more subtlely US hegemony. Similarly, metaphorical associations are 'a shorthand way of making (ideologically laden) common sense' (Fiske in Hooper 2001, p. 138) particularly when it come to visual metaphors. As Hartley points out 'visual metaphors abound in cinema and TV, especially in the way that concrete visualisations stand for abstract ideas: there are both novel and clichéd ways to convey "normality", "threat", "the city", "prostitution", "the bad guy"' (Hartley 2002, p. 144). Both iconographic symbolism and visual metaphors are cultivated and manipulated in different ways in each president's visual discourse and I identify and analyse them appropriately.

Method Part 2: Analysing 'Frontstage' Politics

> Politics has become as much about the show as the showman, and it seemed entirely possible that a candidate could prevail in the end not because he had survived a rigorous vetting…but because he and his stage hands had put on a fabulous production. (Frank Bruni in Nelson 2006, p. 3)

> Modern day political leaders must hone their self-promotion, likeability and leadership attributes while at the same time trying not to seem pretenders and dissemblers…it poses an almost impossible paradox. We detest fakers and phoniness, yet yearn for Academy Award Oscar winning political performances. (Cronin 2008, p. 459)

In the second part of my multimodal CDA analysis I maintain a focus on the performance, embodiment and 'doing of politics' as opposed to just the language of politics (Doty 1996; Fairclough 2000; Hajer 2005; Lazar 2005a, 2005b; Nelson 2006; Wodak 2009). Drawing on Wodak's approach in *The Discourse of Politics in Action: Politics as Usual* (2009), I analyse Bush's, Chávez's and Obama's 'frontstage doing of politics'. That is, I analyse each president's rhetoric, policy and performances in the public realm or what others have named the political 'stage'. For example, Wodak draws on Erving Goffman's notion of frontstage/backstage to distinguish between performances where an audience is present or absent. She argues that researchers can access the frontstage of politics through an analysis of parliamentary debates and official speeches but backstage politics, where actual negotiations and the 'real' lives of politicians occur, is more difficult to access and analyse. Similar to Wodak's notion of 'frontstage politics', Thomas Cronin argues that politicians need acting skills because political leadership is part theatre and that overall politics is 'full of stage-managed appearances' (2008, p. 462). For example, he cites US State of the Union Addresses as 'prime-time choregographed political theatre' (2008, p. 468). Presidential debates are another example. Such political choreography is symptomatic of Wodak's 'frontstage' because a large audience is assured.

Wodak identifies six different dimensions of contemporary politics: the 'frontstage' performance and 'doing of politics'; the 'backstage' lives of politicians and negotiations; the constructed personalities of politicians; the mass production of both politics and politicians by the media; the fictionalisation and often idealisation of politics by popular

culture (for example The West Wing); and lastly participation in politics as mediated by power, ideology and gatekeeping (2009, p. 24). I draw on Wodak's framework by analysing the performance, doing and language of politics as well as the media's complicity in it but I do not employ her more ethnographic methods that look at the backstage lives and negotiations of politicians. As noted previously, gaining access to complete ethnographic studies of elites and 'backstage politics' is difficult. While Wodak achieved some access to the 'backstage' through shadowing, interviewing and tape recording one European Union parliamentarian on one particular day she acknowledges that this type of ethnographic case study can only allow limited generalisations. The same approach is difficult, if not impossible, to replicate for more powerful and heavily guarded politicians such as presidents. Nonetheless, here it is important to note that presidents do not operate in a vacuum and another possible and important approach to researching presidential masculinities is through participant observation and or interviews with advisers involved in constructing presidential front-stage performances. Research that could interrogate how different advisers from the military, government, business elite and from within political parties themselves influenced presidential decisions and performances could provide invaluable insight into presidential masculinities. In particular, whether presidents privilege and/or dismiss certain advice and thus certain worldviews and in turn masculinities would be telling. Such an approach is outside the scope of this particular research project but is an avenue for future research.[45]

Despite the acknowledged limitations in my research I argue that the frontstage of politics, like official visual discourses, offers powerful insights into how governments want us to see our leaders and thus hegemonic discourses and representations. These are important. Moreover, though a conscious focus on each president's performances and/or 'doing of politics' I can explore how these are 'highly context dependent, influenced by national traditions and political systems, the habitus of politicians, the modes of performances, the many embodied personality features, organizational structures and antagonistic political interests' (Wodak 2009, p. 27). This widens the scope of my discursive analysis. For example, in analysing Chávez's rhetoric as well as performances on the global stage, I can analyse diplomatic exchanges, incidents and events as opposed

[45] Throughout the thesis, I also incorporate various observations and anecdotes from my time in Venezuela during June and July 2011. Overall, this is a discursive research project so such anecdotes are not meant as data; rather they offer further support for my key findings. For example, I recount conversations and observations of places, events, people and propaganda to further support my arguments and contextualise Chávez's 'Bolivarian' Venezuela. I also spent time in the US in March-April 2012 but did complete official fieldwork for this research project.

to just speeches. This approach allows me to include rich and diverse data on the doing and performance of politics, such as Chávez's offer of aid to the USA after Hurricane Katrina; jokes made amongst Latin American leaders at the expense of Bush at regional summits; and the dynamics around the handshake between Obama and Chávez at their first meeting.

This approach offers a different way of analysing US and Venezuelan relations, and the presidential masculinities involved, than a traditional analysis of written or spoken texts. I can analyse how foreign policy and US-Venezuelan relations are performed by and embodied in their presidents and their actions. As Deborah Dixon and Sallie Marston note bodies are sites of symbolic and material geopolitical tensions (2011) and this is especially the case for presidential bodies. This follows Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) understanding of discourse as performative and the embodied acts of institutions. It also recalls Lazar's fourth principle of feminist CDA which privileges an ethnomethodological-based concept of 'doing gender' and a political take on Butler's postmodern concept of 'gender performativity' (2005b, pp. 12-13). This political take on gender performativity is particularly attractive to me and aligns well with Wodak's notion of 'doing politics' on the frontstage. Clearly, there are some crossovers between multimodal and performative approaches to discourse.[46]

Furthermore, my focus on presidential bodies sheds further light on how identities of peoples, states and regions – including presidents – are constructed through hegemonic discourses and representational practices that depend on binaries such as north/south, developed/underdeveloped, first world/third world, modern/traditional, advanced industrialised/less developed (Doty 1996, p.2). This focus also aligns with my interest and emphasis on the *relationship between* presidential masculinities. In some ways, I build on Roxanne Doty's approach to analysing the historical encounters between the Anglo-European world and imperialised countries by looking at the 'imperial encounters'

[46] Butler's notion of performativity is not apolitical (1990; 1993) but this thesis takes a more literal view of Bush's, Obama's and Chávez's 'performances' in terms of the 'doing of politics' and the *intentional* construction, performance and embodiment of presidential masculinity. In Butler's work, bodies perform gender in unconscious routine ways as shaped by historical discursive practices largely outside their control (1993, p. 187). Bush, Obama and Chávez of course perform gender in unconscious reiterative ways that reproduce and legitimate particular identities, discourses and power relationships in line with this more post-modern understanding of performativity but due to the nature of this particular research and the CDA methodology employed, Lazar and Wodak's understanding of performance, embodiment and the 'doing of politics' is preferred.

between the US and Venezuela in the 'WOT'. I analyse these encounters in relation to the presidential masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama and their accompanying 'frontstage politics'. This is appropriate because like the 'imperial encounters' Doty speaks of, US-Venezuelan relations and presidential masculinities are 'imbued with unquestioned presumptions about freedom, democracy and self determination and the identities entitled to enjoy these things' (Doty 1996, p. 3).

The majority of my data is drawn from traditional sources such as official presidential speeches, government media releases, radio announcements, departmental reports, policy documents and even official government social media such as presidential tweets. In the case of Chávez, I also collected some data from his weekly television show *Aló Presidente*. I limited my data collection to speeches, performances and events that focused on US/Venezuelan foreign policy, the 'WOT', and those that occurred on the global stage or were explicitly or implicitly directed at a global audience. These include addresses to the United Nations (UN) and other international summits such as Chávez's speech to the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit and Obama's acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize (both in December 2009).

In addition to analysing official government discourse, I collected and analysed media discourse that covers US-Venezuelan relations, the 'WOT', and the respective foreign policies and leadership styles of the three presidents. Following Wodak (2009), I see an interdependent, almost symbiotic relationship between politics and the media (p. 3) whereby the media constructs and reinforces myths about 'doing politics' (p.26). It is therefore important to include media discourse in my multimodal CDA. Wodak even alludes to the gendered aspects of the relationship between the media and politics, arguing that media discourse functions to reassure 'the public of the rational and good intentions underlying political decisions; which in turn should convey feelings of security and of being protected…in sum of being able to trust wise *men* to make adequate decisions' (2009, p. 26, my emphasis). I illustrate this further in my findings. Moreover, Wodak sees a new way of 'doing politics' emerging in conjunction with the rise of new social media. She argues that boundaries are blurred and 'infotainment' and 'politicotainment' have become common (2009, p.193). Much of the data I analyse in this thesis reflects this trend. For example, the visual discourses of Bush, Chávez and Obama are most definitely 'politicotainment', as were Bush's 'Mission Accomplished' speech, Obama's 'cool' campaign performances and Chávez's defiant and lively

performances on the global stage. In addition, Obama's Facebook updates and Chávez's tweets are a new model for presidents communicating directly with their citizens and supporters and this type of data has been included in my analysis. Indeed, social media is an emerging technology and site for analysis for other and future presidential masculinities.

Due to the wide scope of my multimodal CDA, I have also focused on mainstream Venezuelan and US print media as well as some television interviews. For example, I collected articles from the two most influential papers in the USA, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, as well as other print media and networks such *The Baltimore Sun*, *LA Times*, *The Nation*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Fox News* and *CNN*. In Venezuela, I collected data from government-sponsored media such as the national radio broadcaster and Chávez's own television show as well as other media sources that were both sympathetic and antagonistic to Chávez. For example, I collected articles from *Venezuelanalysis*, an online independent news website with links to both Venezuelan and US non-government organisations. It is notably sympathetic to Chávez and the 'Bolivarian Revolution'. In turn, I collected articles from opposition print media such as daily paper *El Universal* which is available in both Spanish and English. Not surprisingly, almost all media on Chávez is heavily polarised. I reflected on this throughout my data collection and analysis. To further counter this heavy polarisation, particularly in US and Venezuelan media sources, I collected data from print media across the globe as well as other media networks such as Reuters, Agence France Press, AAP, Al Jazeera, Bloomberg and Dow Jones Newswires via Factiva. For example, *The Guardian* from the UK was a somewhat more objective source, while *The Latin American Herald Tribune* offered a regional, although English-speaking, perspective. Other data was drawn from English-speaking print media from countries as diverse as China, Canada, Pakistan, Ireland, Australia and Russia. These offered a diversity of perspectives. NGOs such as *Human Rights Watch* and *War Resisters International* as well as more contemporary and non-traditional news organisations such as *Wikileaks* offered alternative and revealing sources of data at different moments in the research process.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed the epistemological, ontological and methodological tensions that have arisen between feminist global politics and mainstream IR. Through this discussion, I claimed inclusion in IR on methodological grounds but also maintained that I

happily sit on its borderlands because my research is firmly rooted in post-positivist frameworks and is guided by distinctive feminist IR methodological practices (Ackerly & True 2006; Tickner 2005b). As part of the post-positivist epistemology underpinning my research I have intentionally blurred the comparative studies/International Relations divide and combined methods from various disciplines to formulate my own unique and transdisciplinary methodology. For example, I selected CDA as the most appropriate form of discourse analysis for my research but combined it with multimodal approaches to better answer my research questions. I illustrated how analysing images and the 'frontstage doing of politics' offers a more holistic approach to investigating presidential masculinities. More broadly, I have demonstrated how my multimodal CDA offers an original approach to researching masculinities, highlighting the importance of the visual and embodied aspects of masculinity, which have sometimes been neglected by scholars in the field.

Chapter 3 Bush's, Chávez's and Obama's Presidential Masculinities in Images

Introducing the Unique Presidential Masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama

Bush's presidential masculinity was conservative, patriotic and militarised in very conventional ways. The team behind Bush 'made presidential manliness central to its mission and image' (Nelson 2006, p. 5) and his visual discourse reflects this. Bush is most often photographed at military events above all others and military personnel are the most frequently featured social actors outnumbering others such as advisors and members of congress. They appear in over one-fifth of the images I analysed and always in a conventional way that emphasises the military and president's defining role – active service in and commanding of the 'WOT'. In addition to the conventional militarism portrayed in Bush's images, his visual discourse is steeped in the traditional iconography of US leadership. The US flag appears in almost a quarter of Bush's photos and props such as military hardware, microphones and podiums reflect Bush's formal, militarised and patriotic presidential masculinity. He is photographed making formal speeches, shaking hands with soldiers, visiting foreign countries and formally entertaining dignitaries. Official events, not everyday life in the White House, are documented.

Similarly, Bush is almost always photographed from a distance in a ceremonial fashion ensuring that his occupancy of the office of the presidency is positioned as paramount. I coded the images for 'depth of field', which depicts different social distances, and therefore different social relations between the social actors photographed and those viewing them. As Kress and Van Leeuwen assert, 'images allow us to imaginarily come as close to public figures as if they were our friends and neighbours – or to look at people like ourselves as strangers, "others"' (2006, p. 126). I used the categories of intimate, personal, social and public distance to code the images, identifying the prevalence of very short (intimate) to very long (public) depths of field. Bush is overwhelmingly photographed from a social and public distance and very rarely from an intimate one. This long depth of field connotes a level of detachment that could imply respect for a public figure but also underlines a more hierarchical impersonal relationship between the president and his public.

Image 1: Bush's Conventional, Militarised and Patriotic Presidential Masculinity

First Lady Laura Bush also features heavily in Bush's images, almost always standing loyally by her husband's side performing what Germaine Greer (1995, p. 22) calls the 'decorative servitude' of a first lady. She is photographed reading to children, accompanying her husband on foreign travel and decorating the White House Christmas tree. She embodies a traditional femininity that emphasises the role of wife and mother and in these images she symbolises this on a national scale. As Enloe (2000, 2004, 2007) notes, feminists must pay attention to the constructions of femininity that are complicit in, or required of, militarism and this is also the case in this investigation of presidential masculinities. Laura Bush's femininity as constructed in Bush's visual discourse reflects and reinscribes his conservative presidential masculinity that promotes militarism and heteronormativity alongside the grand tradition of US patriotism. Michelle Obama, on the other hand, performs a different type of 'decorative servitude' and this in turn complements a different type of presidential masculinity. I elaborate on this contrast later in the chapter.

In his visual discourse, Obama embodies a much more contemporary and notably demilitarised presidential masculinity. In stark contrast to Bush, military personnel appear in only eight per cent of Obama's images and when they do appear it is in an unconventional, even avant-garde, way that stealthily distances the everyday reality of the military's work – war.[47] The most frequently featured social actor is First Lady Michelle and

[47] I describe Obama's militarism as avant-garde throughout the thesis and by using this term I am referring to the new, offbeat, unfamiliar, innovatory and unconventional way militarism is stealthily constructed by and embodied in Obama.

the images provide an intimate profile of Obama's family life, including romantic moments with Michelle and practical jokes with his daughters Sasha and Malia. Other commonly featured social actors are US citizens and Obama's governance team of advisors, public servants, and members of cabinet/congress. Obama is also most commonly photographed in the White House and Oval Office, partaking in everyday events and official business. By comparison, Bush was most commonly photographed at military events. The presence of these different social actors and background settings sends different messages about the president's job, his approach to governance, and in turn his presidential masculinity. Overall, Obama is constructed as the leader of a modern governance team as opposed to a sole commander-in-chief.

Image 2: Obama's Contemporary, Hip and Family Oriented Presidential Masculinity

Moreover, Obama's visual discourse is candid, documenting everyday life in the White House in an intimate manner. The images are more artistically interesting and are less constrained by official frames. The photographer, Pete Souza, shadows the president everywhere he goes and appears to be very much a part of Oval Office 'office politics'. This is clear from the many personalised accounts and gossip Souza relays in his photo captions. Following this more intimate and candid photographic style, Obama is captured from a far

more intimate and personal distance than Bush is.[48] This aligns with Obama's more contemporary presidential masculinity and the viewer is encouraged to view him in both his public and private roles as the president, a family man and a fellow everyday citizen. Later in the chapter, I argue that this reflects recent social trends where masculinity is no longer at odds with the private sphere, domesticity or fatherhood and is expected to be well rounded, intimate and approachable. Reflecting this, Obama is constructed as an average, everyday 'American' in the images through his family life, eating habits and African-American gestures. He is photographed in diners and burger joints; captured playing basketball; and snapped fist-bumping soldiers and factory workers. This normalisation of Obama – a black, Ivy League educated upper class professional – is noteworthy and discussed throughout the chapter.

Like Bush, Chávez's images emphasised his public persona and official presidential role. The images strongly conveyed Chávez's populist *caudillo* presidential masculinity, emphasising his old-fashioned paternalism at home and his 'man of the left' performances on the global stage. He was visually presented as the father of the nation and the 'Bolivarian Revolution'. For example, he was photographed attending graduation ceremonies, touring milk factories, launching housing projects, and most symbolically, attending one woman's ultrasound. He was photographed from the closest distance of all three presidents and more often appeared in the community, on public streets and at rallies than in the Miraflores Palace (20 versus 17 per cent).[49] Such background settings and the shorter, more personal depth of field reinforced Chávez's image as 'the people's president' and connote a level of access and populism that the US presidential visual discourses do

[48] Obama is most commonly photographed from a social depth of field (43 per cent), followed by personal (28 per cent), public (17 per cent) and intimate (12 per cent). Similarly, Bush is most commonly photographed from a social depth of field (40 per cent) but much more from a public depth of field (38 per cent) and considerably less from a personal (17 per cent) and intimate (5 per cent) depth of field. I also coded the images for viewer gaze and camera angle in addition to depth of field and identified similar trends across all three data sets. For example, Bush, Chávez and Obama were overwhelmingly photographed in a way that ensured an anonymous viewer gaze (Bush - 96 per cent, Chávez - 97 per cent and Obama - 99 per cent). Thus, the presidents were presented as the subject of our gaze and object of our scrutiny; we are invisible onlookers (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 119). Likewise, all three presidents were photographed most often at eye level (Bush 76 per cent, Chávez 70 per cent, Obama 59 per cent) ensuring a camera angle of equality in contrast to photographing social actors from a low or high camera angle, which awards different degrees of power. The consistency of these photographic styles across the three data sets is not surprising given the nature of political representation in democratic systems. Presidents are accountable and electorally dependent on their citizens who are of course the primary audience for their visual discourses.

[49] Chávez is most commonly photographed from a personal depth of field (37 per cent), followed by social (28 per cent), intimate (22 per cent) and a paltry public (13 per cent) depth of field.

not. Likewise, citizens, in particular Chavistas, are the most commonly featured social actors in the images, appearing over one quarter of the time – the highest frequency of any type of social actor appearing across all three data sets. Chavistas are shown in large red masses admiring, applauding and cheering Chávez. He was often photographed from behind or from the side in such images. These camera angles emphasised the immensity of the crowd and the mass admiration for Chávez as President. Several photos of Chávez show him being swamped by supporters during public rallies and he was almost always waving or reaching out to them. Such images emphasises Chávez's revolutionary populism, his prioritisation of the *pueblo* in his political discourse, and more broadly, his *caudillo* presidential masculinity.

Image 3: The People's President

Image 4: Mass 'Chavista' Admiration For Chávez

In fact, the presence of citizens in presidential visual discourses functions to legitimate presidential authority and show support for their political platforms (Shepherd 2008, p. 217). Across the three data sets different types of citizens are consistently represented admiring their president, in turn reinforcing and legitimating Bush's, Chávez's and Obama's unique presidential masculinities. In contrast to Chávez, admiration for Bush is considerably militarised and portrayed conservatively via applause at official functions and autograph signings. In turn, admiration for Obama is captured candidly and creatively, which indicates the cult-like celebrity status of the current US president. For example, whereas sailors who are obviously listening to President Bush admire him from a distance, diverse groups of civilians such as factory workers, middle-aged women and children are captured in close focus trying to get their own happy snap of Obama in diverse settings. I elaborate on these differences in presidential admiration and thus also presidential masculinities in more detail shortly.

Following Chavistas, Chávez was most commonly photographed with foreign leaders and dignitaries.[50] In fact, his colourful and controversial globe-trotting with former and current US adversaries, such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, were routinely portrayed in his images. Other 'controversial' friends with whom Chávez was photographed include Cuba's Rául Castro, Libya's Mohammad Gaddafi, Syria's Bashar Al Assad, Russia's Alexander Putin and Dimitry Medvedev, the Belarussian and Ukrainian presidents, and various delegations from China.[51] He was commonly photographed attending diplomatic meetings and ceremonies at Miraflores Palace with these leaders (13 per cent of the time) and with many of his regional counterparts.[52] Thus, visually, Chávez's discourse promoted and publicised his pursuit of a multipolar world and controversial anti-imperial presence on the global diplomatic stage.

In relation to photographic style, Chávez's images reflect the official documentary style of Bush but are less contrived and slightly more amateur. Chávez is mainly photographed going about his business and there are fewer constructed photo-ops than in the US presidential images. The high presence of anonymous social actors and unclear background settings indicate this. Nevertheless, while Chávez's images are not particularly well shot, they are saturated in colour. The bright bold colours of the Venezuelan flag – red, yellow and royal blue – appear in 42 per cent of the photos and red saturates more than half of all photos (57 per cent). Red is strongly associated with left-wing ideologies and this symbolism explains the omnipresence of the colour in Chávez's visual discourse. As Van Leeuwen states 'in politics [red] is the colour of socialism, communism and revolution' (2011, p. 15). The use of red cements Chávez's political discourse in this socialist 'revolutionary' tradition, while the use of the national Venezuelan colours reinforces his patriotism, and by extension his masculinity. Chávez's patriotism and anti-imperial politics are also conveyed visually through the repeated use of a portrait of Latin American liberator Bolívar as a prop, along with background and visual cues to famous Latin American

[50] Military personnel and anonymous social actors also appear at the same rate as foreign leaders (14 per cent of the time). I discuss both shortly. Also in contrast to Bush and Obama, Chávez is divorced so a Venezuelan first lady is notably absent from his visual discourse.
[51] Despite Chávez's admiration for Fidel Castro, he does not appear in the images; this reflects Castro's health and inactivity in official affairs. However, there is one image of Chávez proudly showing a photo of himself and Fidel to journalists at an international media conference.
[52] For example, he is photographed with Brazil's Lula da Silva, Ecuador's Rafael Correa, former and current Argentinean Presidents Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández (husband and wife), Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and his neighbouring counterparts from Suriname and Guyana. His close ally Bolivian President Evo Morales is absent from the selected image data set but not his visual discourse overall.

revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara. I discuss these visual intertexts between Bolívar, Che and Chávez, and a similar one between John. F Kennedy (JFK) and Obama later in the chapter.[53]

While Chávez's presidential masculinity is militarised, it is not as purposely framed this way in his images. Like Obama, he attends military events only four per cent of the time and although military personnel do appear fairly commonly (14 per cent of the time), other social actors are equally if not more prominent. I now turn to discuss the type of militarism conveyed in each visual discourse and elaborate on Chávez's particular mix of civilian-military unity.

Different Presidents, Different Styles of Militarism

The frequency of military personnel in each data set is telling about the degree and type of militarised presidential masculinity that Bush, Chávez and Obama embody. Overall, Bush is the most militarised. Military personnel appear the most often in his images, and are represented in a conventional way with a focus on the 'WOT'. In fact, Bush's visual discourse ensures that 'male control of military power works as a central component for American concepts of masculinity' (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles 1996, p. 344) and by extension his own presidential masculinity. For example, Bush is photographed shaking hands with soldiers in full combat gear in Iraq and accompanying soldiers in military training exercises with tanks in the background. A whole photo essay is dedicated to the 'WOT' and includes several highly militarised albums such as: 'The Events of September 11 2001', 'Saluting Service', 'Response to Terrorism', 'Efforts in the War in Iraq', 'For Those Who Serve' and 'Giving Support to our Military'.[54] However, the now famous image of Bush's 2003 'Mission Accomplished' speech is notably absent from his visual discourse. This absence reiterates the political power images hold and the constructed nature of

[53] Bush uses a similar colour scheme to Chávez, with heavy use of primary and US national colours, albeit much less saturated. Interestingly, red is used sparingly despite being the official colour of the Republican Party whereas dark and light blues are prominent. Obama's images are even less saturated than Bush's, with more subtle, muted, and transparent colours. This signifies a more sophisticated modern look, once again aligning with Obama's contemporary presidential masculinity (Machin 2007).

[54] Bush's photo captions are also highly militarised. One typical example reads 'Family members of Air Force personnel place their hands over their hearts at Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska, Feb. 16, 2002. "I'm honored to be in a place where people understand the need for sacrifice and patriotism," said the President. "And I've come to Alaska to let you know that I'm proud of our United States military; that when I sent you into action, I knew you would not let this nation down"'(See http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/president/forthosewhoserve/06.html).

official visual discourses. Governments tell *their* versions of stories via images, reconstructing reality and presidents as they see fit.[55]

Image 5: Bush's Conventional Militarism

Furthermore, Bush appears alone with the military in almost half (40 per cent) of the photos that feature military personnel. Visually, this cements him as the *sole* commander-in-chief. In contrast, both Chávez and Obama are photographed far more often with military personnel *and* other social actors. Chávez appears alone with the military less than a quarter of the time and Obama less than one-fifth of the time. Bush's images also reinscribe militaristic values of hierarchy because he is almost always photographed addressing soldiers from either an elevated position or standing in clear focus in front of or amongst large groups of soldiers. However, he is also photographed cheerfully hugging and posing with soldiers and there are many images of military personnel admiring the president. From happy snaps of soldiers admiring their commander-in-chief in Baghdad to sailors and

[55] Another notable event missing from Bush's visual discourse is Hurricane Katrina. Bush is photographed visiting Florida after Hurricanes Charley and Frances in September 2004 but the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the associated political fallout are avoided completely.

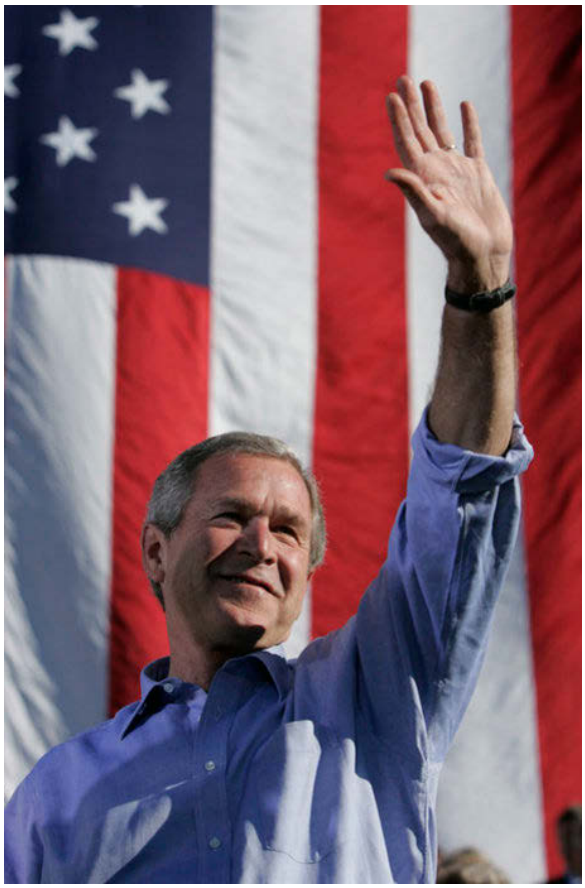
veterans applauding him at home, the message is that ordinary 'Americans' happily support and admire the deeply militarised masculinity of the Bush presidency. Moreover, the US flag is a common prop in such images. Admiration for Bush is not only militarised but tantamount to love for one's country. This further reinforces Bush's traditional patriotic presidential masculinity.


Images 6-7: Military Hierarchy and Admiration For Bush


Images 8-9: Military Admiration and Patriotism

Indeed, there is a strong visual intertext between the US flag, the military and Bush in his images. As noted above, the US flag appears in almost a quarter of the photos and is almost always the most salient part of the image, forming the entire background in some images. Moreover, the flag saturates images of seemingly innocuous political issues such as retirement, in which the militaristic slogan 'Taking Charge' appears to militarise the issue. There is also a whole album dedicated to 'Standing for the Flag' in Bush's visual discourse. The caption of the opening image epitomises the importance of the flag in both US patriotism and militarism, which are not only synonymous with each other but also Bush's presidential masculinity. It reads:

For more than two centuries our flag has been a symbol of hope in the face of danger and strength in times of peace. Now, as the country stares down a new peril, Americans are flying the banner proudly, heeding its call for unity. America protects the freedom our flag represents by displaying it in many ways, at our homes, as ribbons and pins, in our actions and as photographs as is displayed here. One day after terrorists used commercial airplanes to destroy the World Trade Center Towers and attack the Pentagon, firefighters take a moment to unfurl the flag over the scarred stone as inspiration for fellow rescue workers searching through the debris (September 12).[56]



Images 10-11: Bush, The Star Spangled Banner and Militarising Retirement

In addition to retirement, Bush's athleticism, wardrobe and controversial, born-again Christianity are militarised. Bush's 'unbending, paternalistic religious convictions have informed his foreign and domestic policy agendas, as has been widely noted' (Nelson 2006, p. 8). He is photographed jogging with an Iraqi veteran and praying faithfully with

[56] To view see http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/president/american-flag/index.html. In contrast to Bush's overt patriotism, the flag appears in 13 per cent of Obama's photos but it is never the most salient feature. It usually only appears in the background of settings like the Oval Office, as exemplified in Image 24.

soldiers before a thanksgiving meal in a mess hall somewhere on the 'WOT' frontline.[57] Bush wears military apparel at times, whereas Obama avoids such clothing completely. For example, one of the few close ups of Bush is an image of him looking authoritative, dressed in a khaki military jacket on which 'George. W Bush Commander-in-Chief' is prominently embroidered. Other images show Bush in more informal military garb like the parachute jacket with the imprint 'ARMY' worn by the jogging veteran below. Such images normalise Bush as an average 'American' who supports the army. These quasi-military outfits reinforce Bush's image as the war president and promote the conventional patriotic militarism on which his visual discourse rests.

Images 12-13: Bush's Athleticism and Militarised Christianity

While Chávez's presidential masculinity was also militarised, it is not as purposely framed this way as in Bush's visual discourse. This is despite Chávez's long history as a career military man and his penchant for wearing military garb. The presence of military personnel seems to be either accidental or overly ceremonial, usually when Chávez is hosting foreign leaders. In 60 per cent of the photos in which the military appear, they are not the focus of the photograph and/or only appear in the background. This perhaps reflects the amateur photographic style of Chávez's visual discourse. But it also points towards the

[57] Presidential masculinity, regardless of its national context, does not escape the trope of sporting success bolstering masculinity and its metaphorical associations with war and nationalism. Sports, like war, have always been 'a site for the demonstration and proof of manhood' (Kimmel 2000, p. xiii) and work 'to reproduce and express hegemonic masculinity through their emphasis on physical strength, power and control' (Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles 1996, p. 344). Interestingly, the sporting trope is constructed differently in each visual discourse, reflecting each president's masculinity. I note this throughout the chapter.

unconventional militarisation of Venezuelan society under Chávez: that is, the military's increasing everyday involvement in domestic civilian politics and social programs as opposed to its traditional role in national security and active service in conflict. This unconventional militarisation of Venezuelan society is the practical manifestation of Chávez's long-held ideologies around civilian-military unity and his positioning of the military as a 'revolutionary' institution.

Image 14: Chávez's Overtly Ceremonial Militarism

As I noted in the introduction, since the 1970s and for the overwhelming majority of his military career, Chávez founded various revolutionary movements within the military, including the MNB-200 which led the 1992 failed coup attempt and was refashioned, along with Chávez's Bolivarian political philosophies, into a political party and movement during his early political rise in the mid-to-late 1990s. After over 14 years in power since his first election in 1998, they formed the basis of Chávez's 'Bolivarian Revolution' and dominated Venezuelan politics. For Chávez, the military was key to the success of the 'Bolivarian Revolution': this institution was to be integrated as much as possible into civilian life and vice versa. Chávez often quoted the Maoist proverb that 'people are to the military as water is to fish' when speaking about civilian-military unity and vehemently argued that separating the two, particularly in Latin America, has allowed the military to

repress their own people more readily (Wilpert 2006, p. 50). In Chávez's own words military-civilian unity is not about fascism as understood in relation to Hitler or Mussolini; rather 'the idea is to return the military to their basic social function, so that both as citizens and as an institution, they can be incorporated into the democratic development projects of the country' (Chávez in Gott 2000, p. 225). Chávez's Plan Bolívar 2000 attempted to do just this. It was one of the first 'Bolivarian Revolution' *missions* (social projects) and saw the military follow the Cuban model where they became involved in social service activities as diverse as infrastructure construction, health care, education, unemployment prevention, food distribution and disaster relief (Trinkunas 2002). These activities are documented in Chávez's visual discourse and reflect the seemingly innocent and incidental involvement of military personnel in everyday Venezuelan politics. Images 15 and 16 below are typical examples showing military personnel in the background at a national community-banking scheme launch and visit to a natural disaster area.[58]

Chávez himself contrasted his own civilian-orientated militarism with Bush's more conventional hegemonic approach in his speech to the 2006 World Social Forum. After demanding the USA cease aggression against Iraq and lamenting Bush's delayed response to Hurricane Katrina, Chávez said:

> Finally, after I don't know how many days, Mister Danger sent troops to New Orleans, and I saw on television, like we have seen the faces of US soldiers in the streets of Baghdad or Faluya: looks of fear; that is, a combination of fear with aggression. How different is the face of a US soldier pulling a child out of floodwaters to save her life. That is what the US troops should be dedicated to…attacking the poverty and misery growing in that country! (Chávez 2006)

[58] The involvement of the military in domestic Venezuelan politics has been controversial for many and like most of the commentary on Venezuela, arguments for and against Chávez's civilian-military unity are polarised along ideological lines. Chávez's opponents have argued that civilian-military unity undoubtedly militarises society whereas his supporters have pointed towards the corruption and collusion of military and political elites prior to Chávez's arrival in 1998. Critics argue the 1999 constitution reduced civilian oversight of the military, allowing Chávez to promote his supporters, whilst supporters argue it implemented long-needed reforms such as granting voting rights to military personnel. I elaborate on these debates in Chapter 6 but it is important to note that this thesis primarily looks at the role presidential masculinities play in global politics and the militarisation of national security and foreign policy, rather than domestic militarisation. For further domestic and ideologically varied commentary on military-civilian unity in Venezuela see Harnecker (2003), Trinkunis (2002), Sylvia & Danopoulos (2003, pp.72-73) and Wilpert (2006, pp. 49-53).

Images 15-16: Civilian-Military Unity

Thus, Chávez's counter-hegemonic and 'revolutionary' militarism complicates, possibly even legitimates, the militarised masculinity constructed in his images. However, as elucidated in Chapter 1, all types of militarism require feminist interrogation and Chávez's 'revolutionary' militarism does not differ greatly from Bush's hegemonic militarism. They both glorify militarised masculinity and share the same aesthetics, as evidenced in the above images. Nonetheless, the background presence and cultural context of military personnel in Chávez's images does contrast with the calculated and conventional militarisation of Bush's visual discourse. Almost all of Bush's photos with the military are staged with the intention of representing Bush's role as commander-in-chief, as a privileged and natural part of the presidential job. As noted in the literature review, the militarisation of the US presidency indirectly legitimates war and violence, 'shrinks the meaning of governance' and limits policy options to militaristic solutions (Enloe 2004, p. 154). Bush clearly prioritised militaristic solutions and policies throughout his two administrations but the same cannot be so easily said about Chávez, at least in the domestic sphere. His supporters and sympathisers argue that he engaged in more prolonged, complex sorts of solutions in many policy areas, even with the military's involvement, such as Plan Bolívar 2000. Moreover, Chávez's unconventional militarisation of Venezuelan society, largely through the military's heightened involvement in domestic social programs, did not serve the purpose of legitimating a global war. Bush's militarised presidency, on the other hand, did. For almost all of Bush's presidency the USA was at war and this is duly reflected in the images.

Nevertheless, while Chávez's unconventional militarisation in the domestic sphere had less global impact than the calculated militarisation of the office of the presidency in the world's hegemon, Chávez's militarisation of Venezuelan foreign policy did. Under Chávez,

Venezuela made significant weapons purchases and developed increasingly close ties with Iran, Russia, Ukraine, China, Libya and Syria. Chávez conveniently ignored the dubious human rights records of these states and instead championed their anti-US credentials. This became particularly apparent in 2011, when Chávez maintained support for Colonel Gaddafi and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in the face of mass protests against their leadership. I discuss this development and the hypocrisy of Chávez's supposedly counter-hegemonic and anti-imperial militarism/subaltern hypermasculinity in detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Image 17: Obama – a Military Advisor, Friend and Equal

While Bush overtly militarised the US presidency, Obama performs a demilitarised presidential masculinity that contrasts with many of his presidential predecessors and the long-held cultural norms around the US presidency. Obama's visual discourse mirrors this trend. Visually, Obama promotes and embodies a more contemporary presidential masculinity that easily combines his public and private roles and emphasises consultation over traditionally autocratic and militarised leadership norms. Military personnel appear rarely (8 per cent of the time) and when they do it is in a notably unconventional, avant-garde way. Obama is photographed with soldiers only four times in the whole data set. Overall, he is promoted as an equal, a friend, or at best an advisor to military personnel as

opposed to their commander. One image captures Obama chatting to soldiers in a circle in a relaxed, informal and democratic manner; his leadership is akin to a football coach giving his team a pep talk. Another shows the presidential couple socialising with military families at Christmas in Hawaii. The military personnel themselves are in the background and a young girl and boy's photo opportunity with Michelle draws your eye. Military families, not everyday soldiers and their everyday jobs, are emphasised.

Image 18: Happy Military Families

Similarly, the one time Obama is photographed elevated above a large military crowd giving a formal speech it is to the elite of the military – West Point cadets – in an educational, not active service setting. In another, young fresh-faced soldiers are photographed in a pleasant courtyard listening to Obama who is all but obscured in the image. The camera focuses in on a young soldier with glasses who does not embody the patriotic warrior masculinity usually associated with the US military and often represented in Bush's images. The caption cites the location as Fort Bliss in Texas but this traditional military setting actually evokes a university quad where 'Professor' Obama offers some wisdom. The contrast between Bush and Obama's versions of militarised masculinity is epitomised in images 19 and 20 on the following page.

Images 19-20: (De-)Militarised Masculinity in Obama's Visual Discourse (above); Bush's Patriotic Warriors (right)

Again, in direct contrast to Bush no military hardware is featured in Obama's images and soldiers never carry weapons. The only military personnel photographed holding a gun in the Obama data set is a marine guard on the South Lawn of the White House as the Ghanaian ambassador's car passes by. This signals diplomatic ceremony, not militarised masculinity. First Lady Michelle also appears more often with the military than Laura Bush did, feminising the military to some extent. For example, while Bush poses formally in front of US Coast Guard infrastructure and weapons, in image 21 on the following page Michelle is photographed dressed glamorously in silver christening a new vessel with a bottle of champagne. Sharply dressed sailors stand by her side. Obama is nowhere in sight. Such avant-garde militarism distances, even camouflages the everyday work of the military – war and violence – from the Office of the Presidency and in turn Obama's presidential masculinity.

Images 21-22: Obama's Avant-Garde Militarism Versus Bush's Conventional Militarism

Propping up this avant-garde militarism further is the visual construction of Obama as the leader of a modern governance team as opposed to a single commander-in-chief. His presidential masculinity rests on a more holistic and transparent notion of governance – an important move away from militarised and clandestine understandings of leadership. Obama's governance team (advisors, public servants, and members of cabinet/congress) appear in just under half of his visual discourse (43 per cent) whereas Bush's governance team appeared in less than one-sixth of his images. In particular, advisors, members of congress and the vice president appear much more commonly in Obama's images than in Bush's visual discourse.[59] Obama's governance team is photographed advising, governing and consulting the president who is almost always the central focus of the photo, indicating his seniority and leadership position.


Images 23-24: Obama's Governance Team in Action

We are also encouraged to see these social actors as everyday people enjoying yet being productive at their important jobs. Images 25 and 26 over the page illustrate a strong camaraderie amongst Obama, his cabinet and advisors. There is a light-heartedness and sense of humour to Obama's images, which contributes to the normalisation of Obama as an average 'American' guy. Such camaraderie also reiterates the flexible and contemporary public and private worlds of work and play in Obama's visual discourse and distances the more traditional, ceremonial and hierarchical representations of the office of the president endemic to Bush's visual discourse. This is also epitomised in image 27 where Obama is photographed playing basketball with his fellow congressmen. The message is clear: Obama not only leads his modern governance team but can also shoot hoops with them. While Goldstein calls Obama a 'jock who doesn't have to set up a photo-op to sink a

[59] For example, Vice President Joe Biden appears six times more often in Obama's images than former Vice President Dick Cheney who served under Bush. Interestingly, the Venezuelan vice president and Chávez's fellow members of the national legislature appear even less in his images.

basket' (2008, p. 52) such official images indicate the White House recognises the political value in doing so anyway.[60]

Images 25-27: Obama's Governance Team At Work and Play

[60] Both US presidents are also photographed at baseball games and in one other sport. Bush is photographed trying his hand at cricket with Pakistani youth and Obama is *naturally* captured throwing a football to an aide in the Oval Office. Again, the contrast is clear: Bush's athleticism is staged and militarised (Pakistan is automatically associated with the 'WOT'), whereas Obama's is candid and representive of an everyday African-American sporting masculinity. Chávez's athleticism is constructed through his love of baseball. He is photographed attending, opening and playing baseball matches, Venezuela's national sport, throughout his images. There is even a whole album dedicated to a baseball match that Chávez participates in. He is dressed in professional baseball get-up in Venezuela's national colours and is photographed athletically batting, running, fielding and pitching in the album. This, like Bush's jog with an Iraqi veteran and Obama's friendly basketball game with fellow congressmen, functions to bolster the president's athleticism and in turn masculinity.

Interestingly, four images of Obama and his governance team in the iconic White House Situation Room construct a qualified national security and intelligence cabinet led by Obama, who always sits at the head of the table, making competent, balanced and only absolutely necessary, military decisions on behalf of the nation. These images function to highlight the transparency of the Obama Administration while also distancing the administration from the lies that emerged, possibly from the same room, during the weapons of mass destruction fiasco under Bush. This transparency and governance, even in the highly militarised Situation Room, is another part of Obama's avant-garde militarism. It recalls Landreau's discussion of Obama's 'rhetorical strategy' of describing 'serious decision-making' and 'consultation with experts' to legitimate his escalation of war and perform a benevolent paternalistic, protective presidential masculinity (2011, p. 7). It is clear from Obama's images that this 'rhetorical strategy' is also a visual one, as the official White House photographer Pete Souza attests:

> This administration has gone to great lengths to provide a lot more transparency. The fact that a lot of these behind the scenes photographs are being released to the public now as opposed to 20 years from now is extraordinary. I mean it's never really happened before and that's a decision the administration made from almost day one. (White House 2010).

Image 28: Qualified and Transparent Governance in The Situation Room

It is also noteworthy that Obama is photographed from behind in two out of the four Situation Room images because 'to expose one's back to someone is also to make oneself vulnerable, and this implies a measure of trust, despite the abandonment the gesture also signifies' (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 138). Thus, capturing Obama from behind plays into his contemporary presidential masculinity that allows for some vulnerability and relies less on hierarchical militarised leadership norms that emphasise complete control. For me, the camera angle also conveys leadership and moving forward *with* Obama in a nuanced way. Viewers are encouraged to see things from the president's perspective.

As flagged in Chapter 1, Obama's avant-garde militarism could be seen as a product of the 'gradual softening of hegemonic masculinities in the West' whereby the decline in military conscription and globalisation has distanced hegemonic masculinity from militarised norms (Hooper 2001, p. 156). That softening reflected changes in business and managerial strategies, which began to 'emphasize the formerly feminine qualities of flexibility, interpersonal skills and team working' (Connell in Hooper 2001, p. 156). This softening could partly explain the emphasis on consultation, teamwork and governance in Obama's visual discourse as well as the emphasis on Obama's flexibility and comfort in his private and public role as family man and president. However, I also argue Obama's embodiment of a more demilitarised and contemporary presidential masculinity is profoundly racialised, distancing the president from 'angry black man' and other negative African-American stereotypes. For example, an aggressive militarised presidential masculinity may have evoked tropes of militant and radical black masculinities as embodied in Malcolm X and this was too politically risky for Obama. Obama's avant-garde militarism clearly recalls descriptions of Obama's masculinity, discussed earlier in the thesis, as post-hip-hop and authentic yet mellow (Goldstein 2008, p. 52); and as a mix of white professor and ghetto-style cool (Lemelle Jr 2010, p. 114). This undergirds the focus in his images on a safe, reliable and even-tempered modern governance team *led* by Obama, as opposed to a gung-ho aggressive militarised masculinity *commanded* by Obama. Chávez and Bush are very rarely photographed with their governance teams behind them; instead their personalised leadership is promoted much more heavily. Clearly, the intersection of race and gender shapes how all three visually construct their presidential masculinities.

In addition to the racialised aspects of Obama's avant-garde militarism, the increasing unpopularity and illegitimacy of militarised masculinity in the post-9/11, post-Bush period also partially explains Obama's demilitarised presidential masculinity and visual discourse.

In 2008 when Obama was elected, the USA was losing the 'WOT' and being the commander-in-chief of a losing war is never a political or discursive asset. However, as I have argued elsewhere, in May 2011 Obama successfully 'commanded' the assassination of bin Laden and re-militarised his presidential masculinity in lieu of this symbolic end to the 'WOT' (Cannen 2011). Mann (2008) identified a process of 'manning up' after 9/11 and I propose that a similar process occurred after Obama 'commanded' the killing of bin Laden. This offers an interesting juxtaposition to the broader de-militarisation in Obama's visual discourse, which I identify here.[61] Nonetheless, the now famous image of Obama and the national security team in the Situation Room nervously watching the mission against bin Laden unfold does offer further evidence for key arguments made here.[62] First, official images are incredibly influential and are often republished, somewhat uncritically, by the media. Second, the style and content of the image reflects the avant-garde militarism and emphasis on holistic and transparent notions of governance, which I have argued, are key to Obama's contemporary presidential masculinity.

Presidential Families and the 'Decorative Servitude' of First Ladies

Historically and across the globe, first ladies have been central to presidential politics and publicity, but as Greer states, this is especially the case in the US where 'the image of a desirable, adoring wife reflects glamour back upon the president; her attractiveness increases his media visibility' (1995, p. 21). For Greer, first ladies are 'virtuoso housekeepers' who 'lead the appreciation of the audience for his [the president's] every word and action'; reassure us of the president's active heterosexuality and her own devotion to their children, be a conspicuous example of housewife consumerism, and overall perform a kind of *decorative servitude* on behalf of the president (1995, p. 22, my emphasis). These roles are deeply implicated in heteronormative middle-class constructions of US presidential masculinity. Both Laura Bush and Michelle Obama are photographed doing the classic 'virtuoso housekeeper' and 'decorative servitude' duties Greer speaks of: entertaining the wives of foreign dignitaries; visiting schools; contributing to public health campaigns; doing charity work; and accompanying their husbands on foreign travel.

[61] Unfortunately, the image analysis data set for Obama is only drawn from his first two years in office (at the time this was the only available data) and does not cover the May 2011 period. Extending my image analysis to compare and contrast Obama's militarised masculinity before and after bin Laden's assassination is an avenue for potential further research.
[62] To view the image, go to the whole album dedicated to the event entitled 'May 1, 2011' at the White House website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/may-1-2011.

Images 29-30: First Ladies Laura and Michelle as 'Virtuoso Housekeepers'

Conversely, in keeping with Obama's more contemporary masculinity, Michelle is also photographed pushing the boundaries of the virtuoso housekeeper role – a move that gained criticism during the 2008 presidential campaign and in early 2011 but is perhaps less controversial when presented visually in a subtle way once in office. For example, there was a media furore over Michelle's comment that she was proud of her country for the first time when Obama was elected in 2008, and in January 2011, on the back of the publication of *The Obamas*, Michelle complained to Gayle King in a widely publicised CBS interview that she was tired of people portraying her as 'some kind of angry black woman' (Associated Press 2012a). Despite, or because of, such controversy Shaw and Watson assert that Obama's extraordinary wife adds texture to his masculinity (2011, p. 148). Obama himself even acknowledges that his wife is the real star of the family (Beaumont, Gillum & Hurst 2012). Her appearance at the 2013 'Oscars' evidences this star power and perhaps points toward a new role for US first ladies more broadly. Cottle describes Michelle's 'tough broad narrative' and 'un-Stepford stump style' in these terms: 'the sarcasm, the candor, the compulsion to ignore the cardinal rule of political wifedom by portraying her husband as something less than God-made flesh – thrills even as it unnerves, prompting eyebrow-arching and hand-wringing over how sassy is too sassy' (2008, p. 23).

Michelle's 'sassiness' is represented subtly in Obama's visual discourse but as Cottle argues further, this 'sassiness' is balanced cleverly by Michelle's very firm focus on her family, so as not to alienate more traditional voters (2008, p. 24). Clearly, the Obama media machine understands Greer's claim that 'any indication that her [the first lady's] husband and family are not in themselves sufficient to absorb all her energies is disadvantageous to her husband's prospects' (1995, p. 22). This is an indication that, Cottle goes on to argue,

Hillary Clinton fatally failed to recognise (2008).[63] First ladies must 'maintain a high profile without threatening to eclipse or overwhelm her husband' (Greer 1995, p. 22). Hence, my argument that Obama's contemporary presidential masculinity still rests on traditional heteronormative assumptions of the nuclear family. Michelle's performance of the sassy but old-fashioned, fully committed mother is a good match for the ghetto-style white professor cool, but ultimately centre-right politics, of Obama (Lemelle Jr 2010).

Images 31-32: Michelle's Subtle Sassiness and Committed Motherhood

[63] Cottle's article itself was titled 'Wife Lessons – Why Michelle Obama is no Hillary Clinton' and was published alongside Ben Kirchner's portrait of 'Michelle Obama as Jackie Kennedy', three months before Obama had even won the Democrat Party presidential nomination. Clearly, both Cottle and Kirchner glimpsed the impending iconic status and political value of an extraordinary yet traditional wife like Michelle.

Moreover, together as a sassy presidential couple 'the Obamas perform marriage and domesticity with a hint of sexuality, so that Barack Obama does not come across as emasculated by marriage, a familiar trope in white middle-class America' (Shaw & Watson 2011, p. 149).[64] His loving marriage to a 'strong black woman' also ensures the usual tropes of black male hypersexuality, as promoted and celebrated in mainstream hip-hop, are eloquently sidelined. Images of a *bulging* Obama whispering to a giggling Michelle draped in her husband's tuxedo jacket, as secret service agents try to look elsewhere, exemplify this, as does the image of Obama singing passionately into Michelle's ear as the couple dance at one of the many White House balls. A directly comparable image in Bush's visual discourse (pictured on the following page) shows George and Laura dancing formally on top of a rug brandishing the presidential seal. They appear as figurines on top of a wedding cake faithfully representing the heteronormative embodiment of the nation. Bush also gives someone in the audience the thumbs up; his attention is on others and his job, not his wife. The contrast between the two couples and presidential masculinities is clear. Obama easily blurs and combines his public role as president and private roles as husband and father, whereas Bush's public persona and the office of the president is paramount. George and Laura are always photographed in a ceremonial and distant way, showing a stoic presidential couple going through the motions at official functions.

Image 33: A Hint of Sexuality

[64] Michelle is also more often photographed with Obama alone – as a presidential couple – than the Bushes (16 versus 9 per cent).

Images 34-35: A Post-hip-hop Presidential Dance (above); A Stoic Presidential Dance (right)

Although Chávez was married twice, had four children and had a well-known affair before his political rise in the 1990s, he was single for the majority of his presidency (since 2000) and was the first Venezuelan president to be so. Thus, a first lady is notably absent from his visual discourse and in contrast to his northern counterparts, particularly Obama, Chávez's personal life and family play an almost non-existent role, especially in my data set. This is partly due to the differing cultural expectations of politicians in the two countries: 'in Venezuela, as in most Latin American nations (and unlike the United States), the private lives of politicians are regarded as being their own affair as long as they maintain the appearance of respectability' (Coronil 1997, p. 335). Nonetheless, nearing the end of my data set (late 2010), two of Chávez's daughters begin to appear more often, arguably as replacement first lady figures. His eldest daughter accompanies him on diplomatic visits and his younger daughter accompanies him at baseball games, on the presidential aircraft and in one instance at a formal military celebration. These are all roles a first lady would usually perform, and historically did in Venezuelan politics. In 2011, Chávez's two daughters and grandchildren began to play an increasingly significant role in his visual discourse. They were photographed much more often with the president, particularly during Chávez's health scare from mid-2011 onwards. Clearly, Chávez recognised the value in promoting 'a presidential family' and parading his daughters as first lady figures. Both moves quelled rumours about his love life and and perhaps softened his masculinity by reminding Venezuelans of his personal role as a father. However, rumours persisted that

Chávez was a womaniser and these were not necessarily detrimental to the president. They enhanced his *caudillo* image.[65]

Images 36-37: Chávez's Daughters as Replacement First Lady Figures

Bush's daughters are featured even less, in only two photos. His daughter Barbara is photographed with Laura Bush during a visit to a refugee camp in Thailand and after his farewell address to the nation he is photographed hugging both daughters from a distance. Bush and Chávez may be presented as paternal figures but are not constructed as *active* fathers. On the contrary, Obama's images resurrect the role of the nuclear family in US presidential discourse. While this may be due to the young age of his daughters, it is undeniable that the fascination with his family is closely entwined with his popularity and political value. As Shaw and Watson note 'Obama's family life – including the presence of his two daughters, Sasha and Malia – makes him a more well-rounded man, bolstering his likability and authenticity' (2011, p. 146). This became even clearer during the 2012 presidential campaign when official photos such as Obama's 'date night with Michelle' were shared on social media sites including Obama's Facebook account. An official photo of Obama proudly watching Michelle's address at the Democratic Party Convention with his two daughters, snugly at home in the White House, was also disseminated widely by the media. Michelle also shared previously unseen personal family photos on the social media website Pinterest during the campaign.

[65] Coronil notes that previous Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez had a mistress who was known as the 'second lady' and intentionally cultivated his image as a womaniser to reinforce his prestige as a man of action (1997, p. 335). The same could be said of Chávez.


Images 38-39: Obama as a Loving and Active Father

In the images I analysed, Sasha and Malia appear in Obama's photos at almost the same rate as the military and are usually photographed hugging or joking around with their dad. Affection between them is commonly captured. Obama is conscientiously represented as an active and loving father despite his busy presidential schedule. He even manages to do both simultaneously, as highlighted in image 38 above where he hugs Malia while waiting for a call on the attempted Christmas Day terrorist attack in December 2009. There is even an official image of Obama and his two daughters displayed in the president's personal photo collection on the mantelpiece in the Oval Office. This personification of Obama as a loving father modernises his presidential masculinity in an attractive and authentic way. In western society in the 21st Century, fathers are not just expected to be breadwinners – 'involved, emotionally engaged, diaper-changing father-hood is fashionable' (Singleton & Maher 2004, p. 236). As Lazar proposes, the 'culture of daddyhood' and the popularisation of paternal identity has become part of a hybrid politically correct masculinity that is modern, progressive and 'gets the best of both worlds with little significant cost to men' (2005a, p. 160). Obama both benefits from and promotes this type of hybrid politically-correct daddyhood masculinity. Moreover, Obama's engaged, fashionable fatherhood contrasts with Chávez's, and to a lesser degree Bush's, national scale paternalism. Such old-fashioned paternalism and the presidential masculinity it inspires is less authentic, awkward and arguably, quite invasive as epitomised in image 40 of Chávez on the following page.

Image 40: Chávez's Invasive National-Scale Paternalism

Furthermore, Obama's mother-in-law Marian Robinson lives in the White House and acts as a surrogate parent to Sasha and Malia. As a result, she also appears in photographs of the presidential family. For example, image 41 on the next page shows the presidential family enjoying a private dinner in Russia and typifies the humorous affection between Sasha and Obama, which is a running theme in the visual discourse. The fact that private family dinners and moments of candid affection are even included in the official visual discourse of the president is telling. It is hard to imagine a photo of Bush's immediate family casually chatting over a meal but this seems natural for the Obamas.

Apart from presidential daughters and granddaughters, the appearance of youth, children and babies seems to be mandatory across all three presidential discourses. In fact, as a combined category it is incredibly consistent: they appear in 14 per cent of photos across each data set. However, more babies appear in Chávez's photos and he is almost always holding a 'Chavista' baby in a tight embrace. In comparison, there is only one picture of Bush holding a baby and the caption indicates it was taken following his remarks about stem cell research, which he had banned at the very start of his presidency. Continuing Obama's emphasis on his family, the only photo of him with a baby is with his niece Savita. There is powerful symbolism happening here and the varying political issues that align with the appearance of children, youth or babies in each data set is quite telling of each president's masculinity and style of paternalism. Bush's is conservative, Obama's is

contemporary, multicultural and fashionably familial, while Chávez's is on a grand revolutionary scale.

Image 41: Presidential Family Dinner Time in Russia

However, the Obamas' familial heteronormative narrative, as constructed in the images, is also tied up in a discourse of black middle-class respectability politics, despite Obama's best efforts to downplay race (in a political sense) and perform a post-racial presidential masculinity. As Gavrilos highlights, 'The American Dream narrative of Obama's victory masked the ongoing structural and institutional obstacles to success that remain for people of color' (2010, p. 5). Likewise, Neal asserts that 'the current crisis of black masculinity is largely premised on perceived fissures between the omnipresent figures of respectability that Obama and the first family cut and the reality of how Black life is lived and experienced on a day-to-day basis' (2010). Such respectability politics prop up the perilous reasoning that 'if they [African-Americans] would stop engaging in crime, go to school, and "act white" like a Barack Obama does, they would be as successful as he is' (Lemelle Jr 2010, p. 193). Obama's own investment in black middle class respectability politics emerged in his 2008 Fathers Day speech that lamented the absence of fathers in African-American communities (Neal 2010). Cooper argues that this speech gave Obama an opportunity to promote his 'safe black man' image, one manifestation of the 'bipolar black

masculinity problem' in US society which promotes an 'assimilationist good black man' versus 'race affirming bad black man' dichotomy (2009: 633). Shaw and Watson argue that Obama has promoted this safe black man image throughout his political rise and this strategy could be seen as both progressively post-racial and/or a rejection of a specific black masculinity (2011).

The Crunk Feminist Collective has also cleverly highlighted how both the Obamas and the first family of Hip Hop – Jay-Z, Beyoncé and Baby Blue – are the markers for the traditional but problematic elitist nuclear family narrative in African-American respectability politics. Such politics are closely intertwined with the 'American Dream' narrative. For them 'Hip Hop Generation Black folks still have a deep love affair with respectability politics or this notion that obtaining/creating a traditional nuclear family makes us grown up, middle class, and 'fit' to participate in the larger body politic, American dream and all' (2012). The Obamas are the ultimate example of fulfilling this 'American Dream'. They not only fit into the larger body politic but lead and symbolise it – they are the first family of the nation, and the first African-American one at that. Following this familial heteronormative black middle class narrative, the Obamas are photographed eating dinner, visiting museums and most notably praying and singing, respectfully, at church. In contrast, Obama's less than respectable habit of smoking is omitted from the images.[66] Such omissions reinforce black respectability politics and in the case of the church-going images, minimise speculation over Obama's continuously questioned Christianity. While both Bush and Obama are photographed in churches on official presidential business, Bush is never photographed attending Church in his personal time. Clearly, it wasn't necessary for Bush's already well-known religious convictions to be represented visually in his images, but this was not the case for Obama.

[66] Reportedly, Obama was a smoker until March 2010 and in his own words, still occasionally falls off the wagon (Associated Press Washington 2011), yet no images in the data set that cover this period feature Obama smoking.

Images 42-43: The Obamas, Religion and Black Middle-Class Respectability Politics

Presidential Embodiment: Clothing, Gestures, Pose and Props

Fairclough states that successful political leadership 'communicative styles' are firmly rooted in language, but also:

> …other aspects of the complex bodily performance that constitutes political style (gestures, facial expressions, how people hold themselves and move, dress and hairstyle, and so forth). A successful leader's communicative style is not simply what makes him attractive to voters in a general way, it conveys certain values which can powerfully enhance the political message. (2000, p. 4)

Similarly, presidential offices like 'capitalism, the military, and the nation depend heavily on corporeality in order to function effectively' (Reeser 2010, p. 91). What presidential bodies do, how they are clothed, the poses and gestures they make, as well as the props they use, inform this corporeality and are thus important in shaping the presidential masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama. Their bodies are sites of culturally inscribed and disputed meanings, experiences and feelings (Fonow & Cook 2005, p. 2216). This section offers an analysis of Bush's, Obama's and Chávez's presidential embodiment as constructed in their visual discourses. As noted in the methodology chapter, images offer a better option

for researching presidential embodiment than traditional discursive analyses by contributing to a multimodal approach for researching presidential masculinities. To begin, I look at clothes because they convey and embed particular political standpoints (Lee 2008, p. 513). I then explore the typical poses and gestures of each president, highlighting the cultural meanings and capital they reveal and in turn the types of masculinity they uphold.

As Yoon-Jung Lee asserts, 'The man's suit, a symbol of bureaucracy and industrial capitalism, has long been considered the official "uniform" of men in the political world' (2008, p. 512). The suit has become globally associated with political power in tandem with the globalisation of western political and economic ideas (Lee 2008, p. 512). As Connell argues, when 'particular institutions become dominant in world society, the patterns of masculinity embedded in them may become global standards. Masculine dress is an interesting indicator: almost every political leader in the world now wears the uniform of the Western-business executive' (1998, p. 11). All three visual discourses attest to this. Bush, Chávez and Obama all wear suits. The US presidents, in particular, wear a suit as their uniform. Obama wears a suit 84 per cent of time and Bush 76 per cent of the time, both most often with a tie some shade of blue. In contrast, Chávez wears a suit rarely, usually only when meeting foreign leaders or at selected ceremonial events. When he does wear a suit, he is almost always sporting a red tie or a presidential sash branding the national Venezuelan colours. The latter could be seen as embarrassingly over-ceremonial in the US context but reflects Chávez's patriotic populism. Overall, US presidential dress is standard across Bush and Obama's visual discourses. In addition to suits, both presidents wear casual inoffensive clothing such as fawn coloured chinos and shirts, as well as tuxedos for formal events and when appropriate, sporting gear.[67]

[67] It is worth noting that one image in Obama's visual discourse captures a member of a Saudi delegation looking up at the presidential seal on the Oval Office ceiling, as Obama and the Saudi King talk to the press. This image is uncharacteristic of Obama's visual discourse in two ways. First, the camera focuses on the individual military personnel in the frame, completely obscuring the foreign leader Obama is meeting. All other photos of Obama and foreign leaders show the president in deep attentive conversation with his fellow heads of state. It is possible that Obama's media team wanted to avoid an image of Obama standing happily with a foreign leader in Islamic dress. As noted in the main text, Obama's nationality and religion are the subject of much debate in the US and his visual discourse is seemingly sensitive to this.

Image 44: Chávez's Quasi-Military Uniform

Chávez's favoured presidential uniform was a less formal red shirt and khaki (or sometimes navy blue) military-style jacket as seen above in image 44. Chávez wears this quasi-military uniform almost half of the time (48 per cent), often complete with military boots and his infamous red beret that channels Che Guevera and recalls his legendary *Por ahora* speech in 1992. As Zúquete notes Chávez's military uniform and trademark red beret symbolised 'a break from the corrupt past and hope in a new dawn' (2008, p. 110) so its common appearance in Chávez's images is strategic. Moreover, Harold Trinkunas states that 'Chávez has made his experiences as a military officer and a coup leader integral to his image as a politician' (2002, p. 65) and this extends to his attire. Despite being a civilian since 1994, Chávez wore official military apparel seven per cent of the time in his images, reinforcing his anti-imperial militarism and *caudillo* presidential masculinity. As Ruth Rubenstein asserts 'the choice of a [military] uniform is designed to impress both his followers and his antagonists. To his followers the uniform represents the "cause". It signifies single-mindedness, discipline and restraint. To his detractors, the uniform is intended to denote a superior commitment to the collectivity, to the society' (2001, p. 70). Chávez's military dress did just this. It assured Chavistas of his anti-authority credentials, despite the office he held, and signalled his anti-imperial stance to his antagonists.

Furthermore, the 'frequent use of military uniforms in public ceremonies belies the civilian nature of the post of commander-in-chief in a democratic regime and calls into question the source of authority over the armed forces' (Betancourt in Trinkunas 2002, p. 65). Quasi-military outfits like those worn by Chávez, and to a lesser degree Bush, normalise the relationship between leadership, authority, governance and militarism. Chávez achieved this normalisation seamlessly as many Venezuelans, mainly those sympathetic to the president, referred to him as *Mi comandante* (my commander). This became clear during my fieldwork in Venezuela in mid-2011. I asked one taxi driver if he liked Chávez and he enthusiastically replied that of course he did: Chávez was '*Mi comandante!*' He also epitomised Chávez's rhetoric exclaiming that *Americanos* (North Americans) should go home! At the time, Chávez had just returned from Cuba after cancer treatment and the slogans 'Long Live Commander Chávez!' and 'The Commander Has Returned, the Commander Has returned!' were commonly chanted on the street and disseminated by the state media.[68] Some parts of the opposition (offensively) nicknamed the president *Mico mandante* (Monkey-in-charge) in response to Chávez's monicker of *Mi comandante* (Salas 2005, p. 84). This sadly recalls the visceral racialisation of politics in Venezuela under Chávez, and in Latin America more generally, given the term monkey is used to abuse black, indigenous and browner people of 'colour'.

In addition to his quasi-military uniforms, Chávez literally embodied his nationalist pride through his second favoured outfit: a very bright Olympian-style tracksuit in the pattern of the Venezuelan flag (see image 3 on page 74 and image 15 on page 84 for examples). Chávez wore this tracksuit more often than a suit and appeared conscious of the symbolism and class distinctions that the suit represents. His tracksuit sends a more appropriate 'I am one of you' message that is typical of Chávez's political discourse. It also stands in stark contrast to the values Rubinstein argues are conveyed by the 'somber suit', which 'denotes holding back personal feelings, or self-restraint, and focusing energy on achieving organisational goals' (2001, p. 74). This was not something Chávez was trying to achieve. Moreover, Lee argues that parliamentarians who wear casual dress provide a stark visual

[68] Whilst images from this period were not included in my data set, I have observed that since Chávez's cancer scare the president increasingly wore his quasi-military uniform and red beret. Such clothing represents toughness and strength, potentially assuaging fears that the *Comandante* was sick, weak and even dying. An album dedicated to his 'exercise routine' showing a physically active and strong Chávez appeared to have a similar aim. Like the contrast between Obama's pre- and post-bin Laden assassination images, further research could be done on how Chávez's cancer scare altered how his presidential masculinity was constructed in his visual discourse. Indeed, for many months in 2012 and 2013 before his death he was notably absent from all media.

contrast to the 'pretentious suit' and the supposedly 'prestigious' lawmakers who wear them, suggesting an intimacy with the populace and new understanding of parliament as open and straightforward (2008, p. 520). Chávez's casual dress functioned in this way.

Like clothing, gestures and pose are key to embodiment and convey certain values, identities and cultural capital. Generally, cultural capital is valuable for politicians but not often possessed by them. In this section, I argue that Obama is unique in this sense as he embodies a very powerful type of post-hip-hop cultural capital that is central to his contemporary, urbane presidential masculinity. I elaborate on this shortly but first I explore how all three presidents use gestures that are both masculinised and recognisably presidential. Overall all three presidents are overwhelmingly photographed simply standing, sitting or walking and using no notable gestures, that is, their hands are simply by their side or outside of the frame. This aligns with Kless and Adler's assessment that low gesture is a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (as cited in Gordon & Labotka 2009, p. 63). Similarly, the presidents mirror each other in their gestures: they shake hands, wave and embrace citizens lightly with their arms extending around shoulders and/or hands gently patting backs. This last type of physical contact is 'a gesture meant to reassure and also to demonstrate authority – it is highly reminiscent of a fatherly pat' (Shepherd 2008, p. 217). Bush, Obama and Chávez all use this 'paternalistic gesture', in particular towards elderly citizens. However, on closer analysis, the three president's individual masculinities are apparent in their gesturing towards the elderly. For example, Bush's traditional masculinity is reiterated by his stereotypical photo-op with elderly citizens in a senior's centre whereas Obama's more contemporary masculinity is captured creatively as a French WWII veteran in a wheelchair laughs as he clasps Obama's hand. Obama's stretched out hand is captured but his body and face are obscured in the photo. In an even starker contrast, Chávez is photographed intimately cupping an elderly woman's chin during his tour of Ecuador. This symbolises his *international* commitment to the *pueblo* and the regional, if not global, reach of his paternalism.

Images 45-46: Chávez's Animated Gestures

Apart from the more generic presidential gestures and poses, Chávez is more animated than Bush and Obama. He often points his finger to make an authoritative point when talking and his supporters also commonly pump their fists in the air – a metaphorical reference to revolution and 'power to the people'. Low gesture is not necessarily a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity in non-Anglo contexts. Chávez is also photographed marching – blurring his military credentials and presidential role. In contrast to Chávez, Bush's poses and gestures give a very bureaucratic portrayal. Bush is commonly photographed formally sitting at the Oval Office desk reading and giving speeches with his hands sternly holding the edges of the podium – a classic authoritative and presidential pose. Of the three presidents, Bush places his hand on his heart the most, thus demonstrating his unwavering patriotism. A diverse range of social actors are featured doing the same patriotic gesture throughout his images. On the contrary, Chávez and Obama employed this gesture only once in the images I analysed. Bush occasionally gives the more suburban and outdated 'white father knows best' thumbs up. In direct contrast, Obama hi-fives and fist bumps people – a more youthful gesture rooted in African-American culture with undeniable street credibility.


Images 47-48: Bush's Formal Poses and Patriotic Gestures

In fact, in 2008 during the presidential primaries Obama caused a stir by fist bumping future First Lady Michelle in his acceptance speech. In *The Washington Post* blogger Ta-Nehisi Coates commented that the gesture thrilled African-Americans who until now had not used the gesture when climbing the corporate or political ladder because of fears of looking too black. He claimed that Obama 'is past that…he wears his cultural blackness all over the place' (Argetsinger & Roberts 2008).[69] During the primaries, Obama also used hip-hop icon Jay-Z's 'Get that Dirt Off Your Shoulder' gesture when dismissing Hillary Clinton's criticisms in a speech. After he was elected president, he did the inaugural presidential dance with Michelle to the tune of Beyoncé singing a version of Etta James's 'At Last'. On the campaign trail in 2012, he sang Al Green's 'Lets Stay Together' at a New York fundraiser in Harlem and 'slow jammed the news' (a style of rhythm and blues spoken word singing) on Jimmy Fallon's late night television show. Following these post-hip-hop presidential masculinity-making moments, Obama's visual discourse captures the president in many varied, relaxed and even traditionally non-presidential poses. For example, when standing, Obama's hands are often casually in his pockets; when sitting he is commonly leaning back in his chair, stretching his arms or even nonchalantly perching his feet on the Oval Office desk. Image 24 on page 89 even captures Obama sitting on the Oval Office desk. In another photo, Obama tosses a football to himself while sitting in the presidential chair. Such poses could be deemed offensive to some Americans or as desacralising the office of the presidency, but Obama and his team have calculated otherwise. Such relaxed, youthful and urbane poses are the bodily practices of a post-hip-hop president.

Images 49-50: Obama's Post-hip-hop Poses and Gestures

[69]Moreover, Jill Rosen of *The Baltimore Sun* said the gesture 'punctuated the occasion with ethnic style [a questionable characterisation] and inherent coolness' and quoted a 'hard-core critic' of Obama who even found the gesture surprisingly genuine and 'an unequivocal display of black cultural literacy' (2008).

Images 51-52: Obama as an Average 'American' Everyman

Obama's gestures and eating habits also keep it 'real and proper' and 'street and decent' (Alford Young Jr 2011). The president fist bumps soldiers and factory workers, throws snowballs at his chief of staff, high fives a young student during a school visit, gets lunch from local sub-shops and Chinese markets, takes foreign leaders such as Russian President Dimitry Medvedev to burger joints and joins in victory celebrations with highschool footballers by pumping his fists in the air. While not in my data set, other official images have even captured Obama chest bumping US naval graduates and fist bumping a White House cleaner.[70] This latter image was shared by many users on Facebook (both in and outside the USA) attesting to the global popularity and power of Obama's post-hip-hop cultural capital. In contrast to these more light-hearted gestures, Obama is also photographed with his hands on his head thinking intently in several photos. These photos counterbalance the more jocular and candid style of his visual discourse that aims to normalise Obama as an everyday 'American' guy and remind us that Obama is a responsible leader and decision maker who takes governing seriously.

Like his post-hip-hop embodiment, presidential admiration for Obama is captured candidly and genuinely in his images conveying the cult-like status of the president. For example, women on the set of day time television show 'The View' and workers at the Ford car plant are photographed enamoured with their president and vying for their own happy snap. Children are also captured climbing trees and perching themselves on fences as they try to get a glimpse of Obama playing golf on his weekend break. There is also one image that shows carved Halloween pumpkins depicting Obama's face. Admiration for Obama also

[70] View the chest bump image at http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/08/04/happy-birthday-president-obama?utm_source=080412&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=daily and the fist bump with the cleaner at http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/10/01/barack-obama-fist-bumps-picture_n_1928838.html.

extends abroad; one image from Ghana captures hotel workers frantically waving to the president as he makes his way to a motorcade. Image 54 of the Ford workers on the following page is an especially powerful one that highlights both Obama's post-hip-hop embodiment and the presidential admiration for it. It shows an anonymous African-American arm reaching out from the crowd to fist bump Obama and the president happily returns the favour while others laugh and take pictures of the exchange. This is a very contemporary and powerful way to communicate admiration for Obama because it signals his cult-like status while reiterating his 'American' everyman persona.

Image 53: Keeping It Real - Fist Bumping Soliders

Nonetheless, despite Obama's post-hip-hop embodiment and the heartfelt admiration for it, his identity, rhetoric and politics are largely post-racial. I return to this interesting contradiction later in the thesis when I argue that the seductiveness of Obama's post-hip-hop cultural capital coupled with the avant-garde militarism promoted in his visual discourse dangerously obscures the reality of ongoing US militarism and foreign policy. After all, Obama has continued and further institutionalised Bush's controversial 'WOT' despite his rhetoric and masculinity shifting towards a more demilitarised, soft power approach.

Image 54: Presidential Admiration for Post-hip-hop Obama

Image 55: Obama the Celebrity President

Image 56: Obama's Young Admirers

Lastly, I want to mention props in relation to presidential embodiment. Van Leeuwen talks about grab-and-grin photographs in the media 'where people hold objects that index their identity' (2011, p. 19). Thus, like clothing, gestures and poses, props can index presidential masculinities. For example, the use of the national flag, military hardware, and podiums in Bush's images indexes his conservative, militarised and patriotic presidential masculinity. The world maps and books by Lenin index Chávez's anti-imperial 'global man of the left' presidential masculinity. In contrast, the lack of props in Obama's images indexes his more contemporary presidential masculinity and interpersonal relations with others. His own post-hip-hop embodiment is also forefronted. Similar to props, there are notable visual intertexts in the three data sets that similarly index each president's masculinity in nuanced and interesting ways. As noted above, Bush's images include a strong visual intertext between his masculinity, the US flag and the military. Likewise, the Venezuelan national flag is plastered throughout Chávez's visual discourse, assuring us of the former president's dedicated patriotism. Propping up this part of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity is the notable intertext between his leadership, the Latin American liberator Bolívar, and the iconic Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara. This is not surprising because Chávez

centred much of his political discourse around Bolívar, who is regarded by Venezuelans as a 'secular saint' – a 'George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Jesus Christ all rolled into one' (Jones 2008, p. 40). Thus, the same colourful, almost cartoon like portrait of this 'secular saint' dressed in grand military clothing saturated in the bright, bold colours of the Venezuelan national flag is an ever-present prop in, and background to, Chávez's photos. Similarly, a mural of Che Guevara shadows Chávez in image 58 over the page where supporters at a street rally surround him. Such images encode Chávez as the modern day reincarnation of revolutionary *caudillos* like Bolívar and Che, blurring admiration for these figures and Chávez. Moreover, in image 57 below Chávez holds a pocket-size copy of the Bolivarian Constitution and the symbolism is clear: *caudillo*s like Chávez and Bolívar overshadow the constitution and thus, metaphorically, domestic Venezuelan politics.

Image 57: Chávez-Bolívar Visual Intertext

In addition to street art, Chávez's red beret channels Che Guevara throughout his visual discourse and image 59 on the following page posits Chávez *as* iconic as Che. The t-shirt on the notably attractive woman has an imprint of Chávez's face, similar to those marketed and produced around Che. In fact, in Chávez's images, young attractive women were often photographed emotionally star struck by Chávez. Such intense feminised admiration further reinforced his *caudillo* presidential masculinity.

Images 58-59: Chávez-Che Guevara Visual Intertext


Images 60-61: Feminised Admiration For Chávez

Similar to Chávez, there is a visual intertext in Obama's images that relates to iconic historical figures in the US context, namely another iconic president and his own glamorous family – JFK. In US popular and political culture 'Kennedy occupies a space in the liberal imagination that makes him unavoidable in presidential politics' (Spicer 2010, p. 203). The Kennedy mystique is something many Democratic Party politicians have drawn on but Obama's ability as a younger president with his own glamourous wife and young children allows him to do so more authentically. The Obamas, like the Kennedys, are the 21st century version of US political royalty. Indeed, his images share some subtle iconography with JFK's visual discourse.[71] For example, Kennedy was photographed in the same intimate and candid way as Obama, and his wife Jackie Kennedy appeared often. As noted above, Jackie Kennedy is revered as *the* iconic US First Lady and Michelle is seen widely as her rightful and only successor. Similarly, Obama has been put forward, even by JFK's own daughter Caroline, as 'A President like my Father' and the 'political heir to the

[71] To view go to http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/Media-Gallery.aspx

Kennedy legacy' (Spicer 2010, p. 191). This legacy is subtly conveyed in Obama's visual discourse, but also directly referenced. For example, Obama and Senator Ted Kennedy are photographed walking in the White House gardens and Caroline Kennedy is photographed 'stopping by to see the President' in the Oval Office. Official White House photographer Pete Souza sums up the visual intertext between JFK and Obama nicely in this caption:

> To appreciate this photograph, one must know the iconic photograph by Stanley Tretick of John Kennedy Jr. crawling out from the trap door of this same desk while his father, President Kennedy, worked at the desk. Caroline Kennedy had stopped by to see President Obama, and when she mentioned that he was using the same desk as her father, the president immediately remembered the Tretick picture and tried to open the trap door. It was locked and no one had a key.[72]


Images 62-63: Obama-Kennedy Visual Intertext

Perhaps image 64 of Sasha attempting to play a practical joke on her father, in the same office, will become just as iconic. Only time will tell if Kennedy now shares with, or is even replaced by, Obama as the occupier of that special place in the liberal imagination Spicer speaks of yet his visual discourse seems to be pre-empting that outcome.

[72] To view go to http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/first-year

Image 64: Future US Political Royalty?

Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced the individual presidential masculinities of Bush, Obama and Chávez through an analysis of their official visual discourses. I identified Bush's presidential masculinity as conservative, militarised and patriotic; Obama's as contemporary, demilitarised and characterised by a post-hip-hop ghetto-style cool; and Chávez's as populist, revolutionary and patriotic. Now, I redirect the focus of the thesis in two ways. First, I shift my discursive analysis from images to each president's 'frontstage politics' – their rhetoric, performances and policies on the global stage. Second I move from individual presidential masculinities to the *relationship between* presidential masculinities. In particular, I track how Chávez's presidential masculinity has developed in relation to his US counterparts and their pursuit of the 'WOT'. Logically then, the next chapter turns my attention to the relationship between Chávez's presidential masculinity and Bush's two terms as US President from 2001 to 2008.

Chapter 4 Chávez Versus Bush

Hypermasculinising US-Venezuelan Relations: Chávez and the 'War on Terror'

As noted in Chapter 1, the concept of hypermasculinity is steeped in colonial politics and is naturally *reactionary*. Originally, Nandy used the concept to diagnose the bold and vehement nationalist movements being fought by 'native' men against European colonisers in the post WWII era (Gouda 1999). More recently, postcolonial feminist Lily Ling updated the concept to talk about 'subaltern hypermasculinity'. For Ling, 'subaltern hypermasculinity' relates more generally to global histories of white imperialism than specific incidences of colonialism. It 'stems from a longstanding objection by subaltern males, specifically Asian-Americans, of their de-sexualization by western culture' (Ling 2000, p. 279). For example, Ling cites Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of the 1930s and 1940s as a classic case of subaltern hypermasculinity. In this chapter, I apply and extend Ling's concept of subaltern hypermasculinity to my case study. I propose that Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity reflected and reinscribed a type of Latin American 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity *reacting* to recent and contemporary (white) imperialism in the region and across the globe. This is theoretically important because in direct comparison to the de-sexualisation of Asians, Latin Americans have been hyper-sexualised by western culture through the essentialising discourse of machismo and the hegemonic tropicalisation of Latin America by the North. Thus, an exploration of Chávez's particular embodiment of 21st century Latin American subaltern hypermasculinity can offer new theoretical insights into the concept.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that despite the hypersexualisation of Latin American males through the discourse of machismo, the region itself, like Asia, has historically been feminised by US foreign policy, national security discourses and mass popular culture (Muñoz-Pogassian 2008). As Betilde Muñoz-Pogassian notes:

> During the late 18th and 19th century, the American discourse portrayed Latin American nations as exotic, submissive, infantile, and needing guidance. The US understanding of Latin America evolved as part of a history of American hegemony in which there was a presupposed American superiority and domination, opposed to the subordination of the 'sister nations'. Cultural constructions of the feminine

and masculine are analogous to this relationship of superiority and domination. (2008, p. 711)

The following analysis illustrates that Bush's rhetoric towards Chávez in the 21st century followed a similar pattern. However, Chávez's hypermasculinity clearly complicated this feminisation. This recalls Cynthia Weber's analysis of US-Cuban relations in *Faking It: U.S. Hegemony in a 'Post-Phallic' Era* (1999). Weber explores how Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution hypermasculinised US-Cuban relations and geopolitics. She argues that pre-Castro Cuba was a feminised country that mirrored and reassured US hegemonic masculinity. The USA, like a good father/big brother figure, had helped the small Caribbean country gain independence. Castro was even briefly idealised in the US media as one of Latin America's stereotypical bearded fanatics/*caudillo* strong-men/Brando-Zapata and man on horseback types (Gosse as cited in Weber 1999, p. 12-13).[73] Vice President Nixon himself surmised that Castro had 'those indefinable qualities which make him a leader of men' and 'because he has the power to lead…we have no choice but at least to try to *orient* him in the right direction' (as cited in Weber, p. 13, original emphasis). However, Castro quickly rejected any US *orientation* or seduction/wooing in the words of Weber and in the face of such hypermasculinity, Cuba's femininisation was no longer sustainable (p. 14).[74] Castro's revolution thus 'upturned the hegemonic power of (masculine, white) Uncle Sam' and as a result US foreign policy sought consistently to re-hegemonise itself by emasculating Cuba and Castro through hypermasculine tactics such as cutting off (assassinations), penetration (invasions), and withdrawal (embargoes). Despite such tactics, to this day 'Uncle Sam has remained unsuccessful in dethroning Castro Rex and taking feminised Cuba to bed, so to speak. [In this way], Cuba mirrors for the United States a sense of national castration' (Ling 2001, p. 1090).

In my work, I similarly argue that Chávez's 'Bolivarian Revolution' and *caudillo* presidential masculinity, at times, upturned the hegemonic power of masculine, white 'Texan' Bush, a more contemporary iteration of Uncle Sam. As noted in the introduction, until Chávez's election in 1998, Venezuela had been a feminised client state of the USA that gladly provided cheap oil to its Northern hegemonic neighbour. Similarly, like Castro, Chávez arrived with olive fatigues and in the place of a beard, a red beret that similarly signalled

[73] 'Brando-Zapata type' refers to a 1952 Hollywood movie *¡Viva Zapata!* featuring Marlo Brando as Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata who is presented as an incorruptible rebel leader.
[74] See Weber (1999, pp.19-23) for a discussion of the US feminisation of Cuba as a 'playground of pleasures' from the late 19th century.

his *caudillo* hypermasculinity. As I illustrate in the following discussion, Chávez hypermasculinised US-Venezuelan relations just as Castro hypermasculinised US-Cuban relations. In his own way, Chávez outwardly rejected the US's historical feminisation of his country with a mix of Bolivarian anti-imperial, anti-US rhetoric and his own hypermasculine tactics, many of which I detail in the following two chapters. In response, since the late 1990s US foreign policy towards Venezuela has sought to re-hegemonise itself and at times resorted to typically hegemonic tactics. The most notable example was the USA's indirect funding and support of the 2002 military coup against Chávez, which I discuss in detail shortly. However, Bush did not rely on hypermasculine tactics to re-hegemonise the USA against Chávez. This is partly due to petro-politics. The USA and Venezuela have a significant trade in oil, amongst other goods, and an embargo on either side would have seriously disadvantaged both countries and presidents. Moreover, while Cuba was crucial to Cold War geopolitics, Venezuela is on the distant periphery of the 'WOT'. Weber wrote before 9/11; after it, Latin America fell off the US foreign policy radar and Bush's hypermasculine tactics were reserved for the more definitive centre of the 'WOT' – Iraq, Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and bin Laden.[75] Nonetheless, as Weber notes, the US's assertion of its global hegemonic masculinity in the Caribbean (and I would add more broadly Latin America) often parallels its non-Caribbean concerns (1999, p. 5). My research attests to this, demonstrating how 'WOT' geopolitics came to shape US-Venezuelan relations.

Furthermore, in contrast to Weber's analysis that focuses on *US* hypermasculine tactics in the Caribbean during the Cold War, here I am interested in exploring and elucidating Chávez's subaltern hypermasculine tactics as deployed via his *caudillo* presidential masculinity during the 'WOT'. I argue that Chávez hypermasculinised US-Venezuelan relations through his loud espousal of anti-US rhetoric on the global stage and intentionally embedded his *caudillo* presidential masculinity in 'WOT' geopolitics. In doing so, he both modernised and racialised his anti-imperial rhetoric. Moreover, in the context of global opposition to the 'WOT' and Bush's increasingly laughable image on the global stage,

[75] Indeed, Ling, along with fellow postcolonial feminist scholar Anna Agathangelou, have shown that America's 'WOT' and Al Qaeda's 'jihad' actually reflect mirror strategies of hypermasculine politics that fuel, propel and legitimate racialised and gendered violence across the globe (2004). They compare the speeches of Bin Laden and Bush to illustrate these mirror strategies, identifying how both employ the Manichean logic of either you are with us (good) or against us (evil). Put simply, they look at how *pairs* of opposing political powers are contingent on each other's hypermasculine performances, rhetoric and policies. For example, Bush's 'WOT' and Bin Laden's 'jihad' both justify global militarisation and insecurity.

Chávez effectively constructed Bush and the USA as an evil imperial enemy. This allowed Chávez to perform an authentic subaltern hypermasculinity. In response, Bush's Administration engaged in long-practiced hegemonic tactics that aimed to discredit Chávez as a somewhat crazed authoritarian dictator who supported terrorism and weakened democracy. The same two 'WOT' discourses were used by Chávez to hypermasculinise US-Venezuelan relations and secure his domestic political success. In fact, Bush's hegemonic tactics and Chávez's hypermasculine ones functioned in many ways to shore up domestic electoral support: Chávez for his 'Bolivarian Revolution' and Bush for his hypermasculine security state and broader Middle-Eastern foreign policy.

The increasingly intermestic (a synthesis of international and domestic politics) nature of such hypermasculine politics is noteworthy. For example, Chávez employed hypermasculine tactics against Bush in the global arena but retained a degree of righteous rebellion and paternalistic, protector masculinity at home. This combination recalls Young's 'logic of masculinist protection' (2003). As outlined in Chapter 1, Young identified the US under Bush as a new kind of 'security state' that constituted itself in relation to an outside enemy (2003, p. 8) and in turn presented itself and its *leaders* as the necessary masculine protector of their citizens. This 'logic of masculinist protection' rejects masculinity as dominance and instead cleverly employs a courageous, self-sacrificing, virtuous, responsible, man-as-protector framework (p.4). Here, I argue that Chávez constructed his own version of a Venezuelan security state by performing and embodying his own unique logic of masculinist protection via his *caudillo* presidential masculinity. His subaltern opposition to the 'WOT' and US empire was key to this. As a consequence, Chávez considerably masculinised and militarised Venezuelan national security and politics. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 6.

1998-2003 From Clinton to Bush: Chávez's *Caudillo* Presidential Masculinity Emerges

In 1998, Chávez was elected on an overtly nationalist anti-corruption and anti-poverty platform that capitalised on his righteous rebel and coup plotter image. He convincingly portrayed himself as an anti-establishment political figure. Opposition to neoliberal economic policies was central to Chávez's nationalist anti-establishment platform and some anti-US sentiment logically accompanied this. Indeed, anti-US sentiment came to the forefront of the 1998 presidential election campaign in April 1998 when Bill Clinton's Administration denied Chávez a visa to enter the USA. They cited his previous coup

activities as the reason for the rejection. Chávez successfully turned the visa denial into political leverage, joking on national television that he already had a *Visa* (credit card) and that he didn't need a US one to be president of Venezuela (Debusmann 2009). On a more serious note, a Caracas US embassy report to Washington stated that Chávez 'perfunctorily expressed' his respect for the USA and his wishes for good relations with the country but firmly asserted that he would not permit US interference in Venezuelan politics (American Embassy Caracas 1998). Thus, from the very beginning of Chávez's political career, nationalist anti-US sentiments proved politically valuable for the *caudillo*. However, during the first few years of his presidency, Chávez emphasised his nationalist as opposed to anti-US credentials and even met with President Clinton in 1999. In the same trip, he addressed the UN and met with representatives from the US Chamber of Commerce. These actions and his UN address reflected Chávez's political platform, which at the time, centred on an informed critique of neoliberal capitalism, an unapologetic commitment to South-South relations, advocacy for a multipolar world, polite calls for reform of the UN Security Council, and the promotion of participatory democracy over representative systems. For example, in his September UN address he called for a 'healthy coexistence between the state and the market' and assured the world of Venezuela's democratic credentials, noting that 'in Venezuela there was respect, is respect and will continue to be respect for a democratic process which emanates from the will of the people…last December there were elections in Venezuela…we won the elections with 60 per cent of the popular vote' (United Nations 1999, p. 2). Chávez also called for 'justice for the peoples of the third world, for equality and human development' and appealed 'for the integration of peoples and for peace' (United Nations 1999, p. 3). Chávez reiterated these concerns in his rhetoric and actions the following year. He raised similar themes in his two addresses to the UN calling for the 'structural transformation of the United Nations' and the 'reactivation of South-South dialogue' as well as a 'franker dialogue' between the North and South (United Nations 2000a, 2000b).

In August 2000, Chávez put his rhetoric into practice, defying US opposition to his tour of *all* Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member countries, including Iraq. Chávez participated in the trip in his capacity as the OPEC president but Washington was unimpressed, mainly because Chávez became the first head of state to meet Saddam Hussein since the 1991 Gulf War. The USA claimed the visit would violate UN political sanctions. One Department of State official pre-empted the Bush Administration's impending strategy to discredit Chávez's democratic credentials by commenting, 'it's a

rather dubious distinction to be the first democratically-elected head of state to meet with the dictator of Iraq' (BBC News 2000). In response, Chávez travelled overland, instead of flying, to meet Hussein, avoiding any violation of UN sanctions and calmly defended Venezuela's sovereign right to make decisions in its own interest. He passively asked 'what can I do if they [the US Americans] get upset?' (BBC News 2000; Knowles 2000). A few months later in October, Chávez welcomed Fidel Castro on an official visit to Venezuela and signed a deal that would give Cuba cheap access to oil. Again, Washington was not impressed but relations remained amicable. After Bush's election in December 2000, Chávez congratulated the president-to-be and extended his hand to the new government, assuring all that relations with the USA would remain normal (CNN 2000).

However, after Bush's inauguration in January 2001 the new president signalled a hardened stance to the Latin American region. Bush appointed Reagan-era diplomats into key State Department positions and embraced the Pentagon's definition of Chávez as a dangerous 'radical populist' (Livingstone 2009). For example, Bush appointed hardliner Otto Reich as assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs even though the senate refused to approve his nomination (Latin Finance 2003). By April at the Free Trade Areas of Americas (FTAA) Summit in Quebec, Chávez began living up to his radical populist name. At the summit he critiqued the neo-liberal policies an FTAA would promote and voiced his opposition to a democratic clause in the agreement. He criticised representative democracy and stated his preference for participatory democracy. More generally he called for Latin American integration as opposed to a free trade agreement (Lee 2001). In May, again in defiance of Washington, Chávez visited Iran on OPEC business and controversial Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. By August, he was again welcoming Fidel Castro to Caracas. Just before this visit, Chávez ordered the US military mission in Caracas to vacate its office space (Clement 2005). A month later came 9/11, complicating US-Venezuelan geopolitics.

On the global stage in the wake of 9/11 Chávez's rhetoric was calm but firm. In his UN address in November 2001 he rationalised that you couldn't fight terror with more terror (United Nations 2001, p. 23). He was restrained in his critique of the US response to 9/11, but condemned terrorism and demanded respect for international law and human rights. He even went so far as to say 'no one should understand Venezuela's words to be a condemnation of anything or anyone' (United Nations 2001, p. 24). Nevertheless, Chávez was more provocative in criticising the US in a domestic context. On his weekly television show *Alo Presidente* (Hello President) he held up pictures of Afghani children killed by US

bombings and called on the USA to stop 'the slaughter of innocents' (Wilson 2001). This was arguably when Chávez first performed his *caudillo* presidential masculinity, invoking a balanced mix of righteous rebellion and caring paternalism. In response Bush temporarily recalled the US ambassador from Venezuela, a typically hegemonic retort.

Not long after in April 2002, the Bush Administration indirectly supported and funded a military coup against Chávez aimed at ousting him from the presidency.[76] The Bush Administration's disapproval of and aggression against Chávez was clear. The US quickly recognised the interim President, Pedro Carmona, the president of the most powerful Chamber of Commerce in the country, and legitimated the coup in the process. However, the US stood alone. The Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Commonwealth countries, and all states of the EU (except Spain) condemned the coup and did not recognise Carmona as president (Golinger 2008, p. 13). This international condemnation of the coup, along with Chávez's networks in the military and his widespread popular support, returned Chávez to the presidential office a short two days after the coup had been initiated. These events exposed the hypocrisy and long history of US 'democracy promotion' and intervention in the region.[77] It also validated and bolstered Chávez's anti-US rhetoric: Chávez could now legitimately present himself as a victim of US meddling and intervention. Ironically, Chávez was now a coup plotter but also a coup victim. Such a contradiction aligned perfectly with Chávez's emerging subaltern hypermasculinity.

However, perhaps partly because the extent of US involvement in the coup was not yet known, Chávez veered away from directly accusing the USA. Instead, as evidenced in his 2002 address to the UN, he began to associate the coup with the USA's own 'WOT' and democracy promotion discourses. He labelled the coup plotters terrorists who had an

[76] The history of US intervention in domestic Latin American politics does not inspire great faith in US claims that the government was not involved, especially when a significant amount of evidence points to the contrary. For comprehensive overviews see Golinger (2007, 2008) and Livingstone (2009). Clement (2005) also provides a detailed account of the significant funding of opposition groups via the US government funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED) since 2001. For example, in 2001 Venezuela became the highest funded country in the region, after being the sixth highest funded, out of ten, only a year before (Clement 2005, p. 69).

[77] Democracy promotion became part of US foreign policy in the late 1980s with the rise of neoliberalism. Rhetoric around democracy promotion gained resurgence under the Bush Administration after 9/11 and has since played a key role in the 'WOT'. Put simply, democracy promotion 'was and continues to be grounded in the [USA's] ideological zeal for democratic governance as an essential and indispensable element of free markets and regional security in a post-cold-war order' (Clement 2005, p. 62).

'alliance with privileged sectors' and overturned a legitimate democratic government (United Nations 2002). Chávez's approach was seemingly an attempt to rebuff the rhetoric of senior Bush Administration officials that Chávez had undermined democracy and polarised Venezuelan society to the extent that he was responsible for the coup. Before the coup Secretary of State Colin Powell had begun casting suspicions over Chávez's democratic credentials (Jones 2008, pp. 311-312). Afterwards, Secretary of State official, Lino Guttiérraz, ironically and astoundingly demanded Chávez himself be responsible for re-establishing democracy in the country (Pérez 2006). Similarly, Condoleezza Rice chimed in stating that Chávez 'must right his own ship, which has been moving, frankly, in the wrong direction for a long time' (Livingstone 2009, p. 138). Such hypocritical and patronising comments from Washington are symptomatic of the USA's historical feminisation and hegemonic tropicalisation of the Latin American region and its leaders.

As for President Bush himself, whenever directly asked about Chávez, he would either allude to Chávez's supposed erosion of democratic institutions or outright state that Chávez did not honour the tenets of democracy. Just prior to the 2002 coup he said the USA was 'watching the situation very carefully. This man was elected by the people. We respect democracy in our country, and we hope that he respects those institutions, the democratic institutions within his country' (Bush 2001, p. 446). Post coup, when directly asked why his administration was slow to condemn the coup and how that squared with his 'WOT' rhetoric, Bush just talked about the turmoil on the streets during the coup and that it was 'very important for him [Chávez] to embrace those institutions which are fundamental to democracy'. He added the patronising 'if there's lessons to be learned, it's important that he learn them' (Bush 2002, p. 627). Again, this father-like chastising of another head of state has gendered connotations. As Rosenberg suggests 'women, non-white races, and tropical countries often received the same kinds of symbolic characterizations from white male policymakers: emotional, irrational, irresponsibe, unbusinesslike, unstable, and childlike' (as cited Muñoz-Pogassian 2008, p. 712). Bush was indeed characterising Chávez along these lines and inadvertently legitimating Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity in the process.

Such rhetoric continued throughout 2002, as did increased US financial support for the Venezuelan opposition during the oil strike that gripped the country from December. Opposition forces including the business federation, Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA or Venezuelan National Oil) upper management and opposition trade unions had called the

oil strike to protest Chávez's encroaching nationalisation of the oil company. The strike clearly focused Chávez's attention on domestic politics as the coalition of opposition forces demanded his resignation and pressured for early presidential elections, a call the White House backed (Livingstone 2009; Tarver & Frederick 2005). The strike caused massive food and oil shortages, almost shutting down the Venezuelan economy. In January 2003 Chávez took dramatic action. He ordered the military to take back PDVSA infrastructure and this eventually resolved the strike.

Shortly after the strike, the USA invaded Iraq. This gave Chávez an opportunity to reinvigorate his anti-US and anti-imperial rhetoric on the global stage. One of the first instances of such rhetoric was in April 2003 when Chávez asserted that 'Iraqi oil should be handled by the Iraqi people…Otherwise it would be going back 200 years, and I don't want to think that the new century is beginning with *colonialism*' (Olmos 2003, my emphasis). Chávez also pointed out that the USA had invaded Iraq without UN backing. After long calling for reforms of the UN security council, he now questioned what the whole corrupted global governance system was even for, stating that the UN had been effectively de-activated (Reuters 2003). He also condemned the bombing of Iraqi cities full of civilians. In doing so, Chávez righteously invoked his own militarised masculinity, stating 'I'm a soldier and there are rules of war' (Reuters 2003). Chávez constructed himself as a righteous and legitimate critic of US militarism because he himself knew all about militarism. However, unlike his North American counterparts, Chávez's militarism was innocent of imperialism and respected global governance institutions. Historically Chávez may have been a coup plotter but ironically he was also a coup victim. This allowed Chávez to effectively perform his *caudillo* presidential masculinity: he was a victim of US imperialism but also a righteous rebel speaking out against it. At this point Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity emerged in a more concrete fashion.

From late 2003, Chávez consolidated his *caudillo* masculinity by further entrenching his rhetoric in the discourses of the 'WOT'. Ellner concurs with my analysis, noting that Chávez harshened his rhetoric towards the USA in 2003 and began using 'imperialism' to describe the role of Washington in global politics (2008, p. 199). Such rhetoric and Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity manifested in effective subaltern hypermasculine performances on the global stage. Chávez's refusal to meet with the Iraqi delegation at the September 2003 OPEC meeting is perhaps the first example of this. Chávez claimed the delegation was sent by a country under foreign occupation and the Venezuelan oil minister

couched Chávez's refusal in international law. He highlighted that the delegation represented a government that the UN did not officially recognise (Oster Dow Jones Select 2003). However, by December 2003 Chávez's attention turned once again to domestic politics as the opposition began collecting signatures for a recall referendum on his presidency. Under the new Bolivarian constitution if 20 per cent of the electorate signed a petition against the president, a recall referendum could be held. This legitimate challenge to Chávez's leadership played a role in the consolidation and radicalisation of his *caudillo* presidential masculinity over the next few years, especially throughout 2004 as the recall referendum, that Chávez eventually won, was set for August.

2004-2006 Chávez Consolidates and Radicalises his *Caudillo* Presidential Masculinity

In early 2004, Chávez consolidated his *caudillo* presidential masculinity by increasingly targeting Bush in a more personal manner and publicly accusing the US of involvement in the 2002 coup. Throughout 2004, domestically, Chávez also aggressively pushed his anti-imperial message by tying it to the impending August recall referendum on his leadership. Conveniently for Chávez, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide had just been ousted from office in a military coup and so Chávez effectively conflated the two issues in his rhetoric. In February at a public rally of Chavistas, Chávez called Bush an asshole who had heeded advice from 'imperialist aides' to support the 2002 coup against him and said he would never quit office like Aristide – 'Venezuela is not Haiti and Chávez is not Aristide' (Markey 2004). In the speech, he also accused the USA of conspiring to overthrow him, asserting that 'the CIA has been telling Mr Bush that Venezuela is like Haiti, that Chávez has lost public support and the army is ready to overthrow him, and the damn fool believed it' (Collier 2004). He declared Bolivarian Venezuela says no to 'Yankee interventionism' and 'Mr Bush and his invader, imperialist and colonialist government' (Collier 2004).[78] In April, during a speech to celebrate the anniversary of the failed 2002 coup, he directly accused the Bush Administration of making the decision to overthrow his government. Military officials backed Chávez's comments, citing evidence that US airplanes had flown over Venezuela's largest military base, Fort Tiuna, during the coup. The USA denied such allegations (Associated Press 2004). Chávez also took the step of personally blaming Bush for deaths in Iraq – 'who is to blame for the violence that has been unleashed in Iraq in the

[78] These were irresponsible comments by Chávez that exacerbated tensions between opposition protestors and Chavistas. In early 2004, both groups had been involved in numerous violent protests over the electoral council's decision to either reject or accept the opposition's referendum signatures.

last year? Is it Saddam Hussein? Is it those who they call Islamic fundamentalists? No, the blame for all those deaths has a name: George W. Bush' (Associated Press 2004). In May, Chávez continued his personal attacks on Bush and the focus on Iraq, claiming Bush's 'imperialist policies' in Iraq had caused the spike in world oil prices (EEF News Service 2004).

The recall referendum also provided opportunities for Chávez to perform his *caudillo* presidential masculinity on the global stage. In Mexico in May, Chávez declared he would defend Venezuela's 'sovereignty against the empire' in response to comments by the Assistant US Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere about the referendum's verification processes. He also rhetorically asked the Mexican audience 'who gave the United States a whistle to be the world's referee?' (Agence France-Presse 2004). In July, Chávez persisted with his personal attacks on Bush, calling him a meddling 'Emperor of Evil' who had no right to call for transparency in Venezuela's recall referendum when he himself had won fraudulent elections in the USA (Reuters 2004). In August, Chávez won the referendum convincingly with 59 per cent of the vote and the OAS and the Carter Center verified the results. Chávez was once again legitimately and democratically installed as President. Shortly after in November 2004, so too was Bush.

Chávez began 2005 with a fiery speech to supporters in Caracas on 23 January where he espoused his commitment to defend Venezuela's sovereignty after '50 years of US pillaging and domination'. He accused Bush of trying to oust him several times, and bet his US counterpart that he would be in power longer (BBC Monitoring Americas 2005). In this speech, Chávez also began sexualising his rhetoric towards incoming US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Chávez repeated comments he had made in 2004 that Rice was illiterate and ignorant of Latin American and global political issues. Then he declared he had been informed Rice dreams about him. He asked the crowd if he should propose to Rice to which they enthusiastically screamed 'No!' Chávez responded:

> Do not let anyone steal your future away, boys and girls! The future is yours! As Ernesto 'Che' Guevara used to say, the present is for fighting and the future is ours. That is why I say I cannot marry Condoleezza, because I am much too busy. *She will have to search for other options and forget about me a bit.* Perhaps Ali Rodríguez is available [newly appointed Foreign Minister], Juan Barreto [Caracas Mayor] is single – let someone else make that *sacrifice* for the fatherland. I would

> do anything but that! Please! Do not make me do it! (BBC Monitoring Americas 2005, my emphasis)

This is highly gendered rhetoric that positions the *female* US Secretary of State as sexually desperate. Chávez's insinuations that Rice was sexually attracted to, and fantasised about him in her dreams, propped up an important part of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity – the supposed sought after sexuality of a man in power. His public rejection of Rice's completely hypothetical advances over the next few years functioned further to do so and revealed Chávez's problematic hypermasculine politics. As Nayak (2006) points out hypermasculinity includes the sensationalistic endorsement of certain aspects of traditional masculinity such as rigid gender roles. Chávez's sexualised rhetoric towards Rice is indicative of this. A year later in a television appearance in February 2006, Chávez blew kisses to the camera as he threatened, 'I sting those who rattle me, don't mess with me Condoleezza…take your kiss Condoleezza' (Espin 2006). Such a hypermasculine threat, one with even rape connotations, feminised Rice as a passive recipient of undoubtedly unwanted sexual advances. Then on Valentines Day in 2007, Chávez declared he missed Rice's insults: 'It has been days since she has given me any attention. How are you, Condoleezza? (Newsmax 2007).

In a March 2007 interview, popular North American journalist Barbara Walters asked Chávez what purpose such insults served. He rebuffed claims that he said Rice was illiterate and sexually frustrated. However, he did acknowledge he had made jokes about her and once said 'she was dreaming of me because she kept mentioning me all of the time' but that he respected her as a 'lady' (ABC News: Nightline 2007). He went on to claim that he also respected the US president 'as a human being' but that both Bush and Rice were killing people, bombing cities in Afghanistan and Iraq, and were even doing harm in their own country (ABC News: Nightline 2007). In this interview, Chávez also told Walters that he wished he could be in love but that wasn't possible when leading the country. He also confessed his presidency meant he had to abandon his children. Such comments reinforced Chávez as a *caudillo* who has fathered children, and clearly has sexual needs, but sacrifices them to lead his country and the all-important 'Bolivarian Revolution'. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, this national-scale paternalism and all-encompassing commitment to leadership and the fight against imperialism is also emphasised in Chávez's visual discourse.

Days after Chávez's fiery speech in Caracas, Chávez gave the closing speech at the World Social Forum in Brazil. This speech is significant because it demonstrated a considerable radicalisation of Chávez's ideology since the early days of his presidency. For example, in his first UN address in 1999, Chávez talked about reviewing economic and political models and a 'healthy coexistence between the state and the market' (United Nations 1999). In contrast in 2005, Chávez declared capitalism should be replaced with socialism, spoke of neoliberal imperialism and labelled the Washington consensus 'neocolonialism dressed as a thesis' (Chávez 2005, p. 12 & 17). He admitted he had been a Maoist since he was young and that all revolutionaries must identify their friends and enemies (p.5). He then alluded to these enemies as the 'empires of the North', 'the imperialist threats of North America' and 'Mr Bush's killer bombs' (p. 7-8). Importantly, he also began racialising his anti-imperial rhetoric, stating that 'one day the rottenness within North American imperialism will bring the whole thing down and the great people of Martin Luther King will walk out free' (p. 13). In February, he radicalised his attacks accusing Washington of plots to kill him. He said, 'If I am assassinated there is only on person responsible, the president of the United States' (BBC News 2006). I argue that Chávez's exaggeration of potential assassination plots against him became an effective subaltern hypermasculine tactic. It garnered sympathy but also buttressed his anti-imperial rhetoric as brave and stubborn – this *caudillo* would not stand down even in the face of threats to his own life.

Throughout 2005, Chávez also employed Bush's infamous 'WOT' rhetoric against him. In January, he called Washington and its allies around the world the axis of evil: 'The axis of evil is Washington and its allies around the world, which go about threatening, invading and murdering. We [Chávez and Bolivian President Evo Morales] are forming the axis of good' (FOX News 2009). As in the case of Bush and Bin Laden's mutual hypermasculine politics, Chávez happily employed the Manichean logic of good and evil, as did newly appointed Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice. In January 2005 in a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Rice said Venezuela belonged to the Latin American equivalent of the axis of evil, along with Cuba of course (Golinger 2007, p. vii). Bush's former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Otto Reich, also published an article in the April 2005 *National Review* entitled 'Latin America's Terrible Two: Fidel Castro and Hugo Chávez Constitute an Axis of Evil'. Castro and Chávez appeared on the cover of the magazine, both in their iconic military greens, simultaneously signalling and delegitimising their hypermasculinity. In 2006, 2009 and 2010 *The Wall*

Street Journal also published articles continually declaring the danger of 'The Tehran-Caracas Axis' (Noriega 2010; O'Grady 2006; Stephens 2009). This worked to conflate Chávez's hypermasculinity with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Islamic (read: terrorist) hypermasculinity. As the tagline for the December 2009 article noted: 'Ahmadinejad and Chávez: new evidence of a radioactive relationship' (Stephens 2009). In June 2005, after the USA rejected an extradition request for former CIA agent and suspected terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, Chávez said the Bush Administration 'conceals and protect international terrorism' and threatened to suspend all diplomatic relations with Washington (Briscoe 2005).[79] By August a US religious broadcaster had called for Chávez's assassination and Chávez repeated statements that Bush would be responsible if something happened to him: 'he would be the murderer' (Montreal Gazette 2005). Chávez raised the issue in his September UN address, talking about US imperial interventionism and violations of sovereignty, concluding that there was a 'permanent threat from the empires and its allies, they even call for the assassination of a president' (United Nations 2005).

Chávez's rhetoric had become increasingly hyperbolic but he cleverly matched this rhetoric with paternalistic gestures towards the USA – in particular its poor African-American and Latino citizens. During his trips to the UN in 2005 and 2006, Chávez visited predominantly African-American New York neighbourhoods such as the Bronx and Harlem to promote his 'heating oil for the poor program'.[80] In 2006, Chávez extended the program to eighteen states and highlighted in his speech that indigenous Alaskans (who were present at the event in traditional dress) were amongst those to benefit (James 2006). Also in 2006, Chávez voiced outright that the Bush Administration abused 'blacks and Latinos' (Palast 2006b). Chávez extended his paternalism to the USA in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, offering aid to an embarrassed Bush who rejected the offer. Shortly after, in his 2005 UN address Chávez questioned the Bush Administration's ability to protect its citizens, citing the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina as evidence (United Nations 2005). This statement had clear racial undertones but in an interview Chávez was more explicit:

> Racism is very characteristic of imperialism. Racism is very characteristic of capitalism [sic]. Katrina is – indeed, has a lot to do with racism – no doubt about it.

[79] Carriles is accused of bombing a Cuban plane in 1976 and escaped a Venezuelan prison in 1985.

[80] Citgo, an oil company controlled by the Venezuelan Government offered discounted heating to low-income residents after requests from Democrat representatives. The program continued until 2011.

> Hate against me has a lot to do with racism. Because of my big mouth, because of my curly hair. And I'm so proud to have this mouth and this hair, because it's African. So we need a new morality, a new ethic at this point. And from my Christian point of view, we need a revolution of the ethic. And in the political and economic fields we need to take back the flag of socialism, in my view – in order to be able to defeat – with the will of the people, with the participation of the people – to beat those ominous phenomenon such as racism. (Democracy Now! 2005)

In his 2006 address to the IV World Social Forum in Caracas, Chávez was again more explicit: 'We have to remember the tragedy of Katrina and the national movement of indignation that emerged upon seeing millions of citizens abandoned by their government, left to their own luck, especially the poor, the black, the Latinos, well everyone' (Chávez 2006). Such statements epitomise Chávez's racialised anti-imperial discourse while his oil for the poor program and offers for assistance in the wake of Katrina show Chávez's attempt to export his racialised paternalism to the empire itself. This *caudillo* stood up to the empire and claimed he could provide for its neglected poor. Such gestures and rhetoric constructed Chávez as a rebel and a provider and protector. He was a coup plotter but could not be dismissed as an irresponsible macho military man because he was also an innocent coup victim. Thus, Chávez embodied his own unique logic of subaltern masculinist protection, assuming a benign, self-sacrificing and gallant masculinity as opposed to a dominative one assumed by much feminist theory (Young 2003, p. 4). He empowered his paternalistic protector framework with a racialised, subaltern coup victim narrative.

Moreover, as demonstrated above, Chávez effectively constructed Bush as an enemy who was even plotting to assassinate him, thus demonstrating how subordinated and non-hegemonic masculinities depend on the same tactics as hegemonic masculinities in their deployment of threat exaggeration and enemy construction politics. Both Bush Senior and Bush Junior's hegemonic masculinities were dependent on constructing racialised and gendered villains and victims, including such *masculinised* toxic terrorist villains as Saddam Hussein and an array of feminised/infantalised victims (Messerschmidt 2010). Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity depended on constructing racialised and gendered villains in the same way. He proposed that the Venezuelan state or even more abstractly the *pueblo* needed protection from such villains. In particular, Chávez's subaltern *caudillo* presidential masculinity depended on constructing Bush as the ultimate toxic and *white imperial* (as opposed to terrorist) villain. In response to hegemonic tactics, Chávez was employing his

own subaltern hypermasculine tactics. He successfully positioned the notably browner Venezuelan *pueblo* and poor across the globe as *Bush's* victims in need of *his* protection. In turn, this legitimated and bolstered Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity and allowed him, like Bush had done in the USA, to considerably miltiarise and masculinise Venezuelan national security.

2005-2006 Bush Mirrors and Provokes Chávez's Rhetoric

Throughout 2005 and 2006, the Bush Administration systematically attempted to discredit Chávez by accusing him of weakening Venezuela's democracy, supporting terrorism and endangering the Latin American region. Chávez's hypermasculine politics and Bush's corresponding hegemonic tactics were thus heavily characterised by the more definitive mutual hypermasculine politics of their time – the 'WOT' – in particular the closely linked discourse of US democracy promotion. However, 'WOT' discourses played out differently in US-Venezuelan geopolitics. US democracy promotion in Latin America had a hypocritical history, even more so in Venezuela in the aftermath of the 2002 coup. Despite this, in March 2005 Rice denied Chávez's 'ludicrous' claims that the USA was involved in the 2002 coup and stated the USA did not want bad relations with Venezuela (Dow Jones International News 2005a). However in her confirmation in January, Rice declared to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Venezuela belonged to the Latin American equivalent of the axis of evil: Chávez was a 'democratically elected leader who governs in an illiberal way' and Venezuela was 'a negative force in the region' (Hudson 2005). Rice added: 'We can work with others to expose that and to say to President Chávez this kind of behaviour is really not acceptable in this Hemisphere that is trying to make its way toward a stable democratic future' (Golinger 2008, p. 49). In February 2007, Rice told the same committee that she believed Chávez was 'really destroying his own country, economically and politically' and she wanted to talk 'about American defense of democracy, not [have] a rhetorical contest with the president of Venezuela' (Dow Jones International News 2007b).

President Bush himself pursued the same line talking about his 'concerns with people eroding democratic institutions' after being asked about Castro, Chávez and Morales (Bush 2005, p. 1652). When asked specifically about meeting Chávez at the 2005 Summit of Americas, Bush assured the media pack that he would be polite and that he judges leaders on their willingness to protect institutions that encourage viable democratic societies (Bush 2005, p. 1652). He then went on to talk about free press, worship, and independent judiciaries. In line with the strategy to label Chávez a dictator, Bush also stated that it was

important to have democratic institutions so 'a single person cannot become the ruler of all people' (Bush 2005, p. 1652). The same year, the CIA Director publicly stated that Venezuela was a 'flashpoint country' in the region (Goss 2005) and Bush met NGO *Súmate* Director Maria Corina Machado, a key player in the 2002 coup and 2003 referendum against Chávez, in the White House (Ellner 2008, p. 200; Golinger 2008, p. 85).[81]

In 2006, Bush continued casting suspicion over Chávez's democratic credentials. He said he judged Chávez by 'his honouring of the institutions that make democracy sound in Venezuela' and that 'it's very important for leaders throughout the hemisphere, whether they agree with America or not, to honor the tenets of democracy. And to the extent he [Chávez] doesn't do that, then I believe he should be subject to criticism' (Bush 2006, pp. 592-593). Once again, Bush was chastising Chávez as an irresponsible child-like leader. In August 2006, Bush was more direct, commenting that Chávez was 'undermining democracy' (Sweig 2006). Earlier in February 2006 US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld compared Chávez to Hitler in a statement to the National Press Club stating, 'we've got Chávez in Venezuela with a lot of oil money. He's a person who was elected legally, just as Adolf Hitler was elected legally, and then consolidated power, and now is of course working closely with Fidel Castro and Mr Morales [Bolivian president] and others. It concerns me' (Golinger 2008, p. 63).

Following this, a March US National Security Strategy report stated that 'in Venezuela, a demagogue awash in oil money is undermining democracy and seeking to destabilize the region' (Palast 2006a, Para. 10). It was clear that Washington's strategy was to discredit Chávez as a populist authoritarian at best, and at worst an evil, possibly crazy, dictator. For example in 2005, a US Government commissioned report by a right-wing think tank titled 'What to do about Venezuela?' claimed that Chávez was mentally unstable, and *The New York Times* published a psychological profile of Chávez stating he showed remarkable similarities to Saddam Hussein (Golinger 2008, p. 53). Again this reflects the USA's feminisation of Latin American leaders and countries as irresponsible, emotional, unstable and child-like, yet it also deploys the discourse of machismo to mark their masculinity as excessive and illegitimate. This approach camouflages the equally oppressive gender relations of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity, which Bush so keenly embodied.

[81] Machado signed the Carmona decree in the April 2002 coup and the NGO *Súmate* received extensive US government funding to become the principal organising vehicle for the opposition referendum in 2004 (Clement 2005).

However, again Chávez turned these hegemonic tactics against his North American neighbour, sporadically questioning Bush's mental health and alcoholism and even comparing him to Hitler during a rally in February 2005. According to the unreliable Fox News, Chávez said that 'I think Hitler would be like a suckling baby next to George W. Bush' (FOX News 2009). This attempted conflation of Bush as a toxic villain in the same league as Hitler indicates the hyperbole involved in hypermasculine politics.

In contrast to such hyperbole, Bush also pursued diplomatic means of discrediting and disempowering Chávez in the region. In fact, Washington's ongoing concern for Chávez's influence in the Latin American region became a recurring theme in the relationship. In 2005, Bush officially requested support and cooperation from other Latin American countries to help isolate Chávez (Tarver & Frederick 2005, p. 158). Rice repeated this call to Latin American leaders in February 2006 to the Foreign Relations Committee. For Rice, Venezuela was 'one of the biggest problems in the region' and its ties to Cuba were 'particularly dangerous' to democracy (Espin 2006). This focus on democracy was also clear at the 2005 OAS November summit where Rice proposed a clause to 'overcome threats to democracies' in the region (Dow Jones International News 2005b). This clause was rejected by OAS states and was viewed largely as targeting Venezuela. Also in 2005 the USA 'opposed Venezuela's bid for a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council by actively campaigning in favor of Guatemala' (Ellner 2008, p. 201) and took Venezuela off the State Department list of its 'allies in the war on drugs' (NoticiasFinancieras 2005).[82] Caribbean Commonwealth countries also received a very strongly worded letter from the US State Department in 2005 warning them against entering into potentially beneficial oil agreements. The letter highlighted Chávez's supposed undemocratic tendencies and 'accused him of destabilizing neighbouring countries by supporting radical groups' (Sanders 2007, p. 468).

This bully diplomacy is clearly hypocritical and camouflages the USA's own significant trade in oil with Venezuela. The USA is and has long been Venezuela's most important trading partner. Chávez even sells more oil to the USA compared to previous Venezuelan governments (Golinger 2007). In 2011, Venezuela shipped at least half of its oil to the USA making it one of the top four suppliers to the empire (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

[82] A month earlier Chávez had halted Venezuelan cooperation with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, accusing it of espionage and drug trafficking (NoticiasFinancieras 2005).

2012).[83] Moreover, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative, since 2000 exports and imports of US goods to Venezuela have steadily increased by 122.5 and 131.9 per cent respectively (2012). As Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines Ralph Gonsalves observed in 2007, Bush and Chávez were 'Men quarrelling, but men trading' (Sanders 2007). Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity may pivot on his vehement opposition to global capitalism and US imperialism but he happily plays capitalist-style petro-politics on the world stage and continues to sell oil to the empire he condemns.[84] During my time in Venezuela, critics highlighted this hypocrisy by noting the irony that Chávez's oil could be fuelling the very US military action in the 'WOT' that he condemned. Thus, while Chávez was committed to diversifying the market for Venezuelan oil, he never seriously jeopardised trade with the USA. For example, in February 2007, Chávez publicly taunted that the US could stop buying Venezuelan oil if it really wanted to and that it wasn't his fault 'Americans' were such big consumers (Reuters News 2007b). This rhetoric camouflages Chávez's need for the US market to fund his 'Bolivarian Revolution' but also points towards the USA's refusal to take any concrete action. As Wikileaks revealed, during this period the Venezuelan economy was in disarray and Chávez's government was desperate to partner with foreign companies to improve oil infrastructure and output (Carroll 2010). Thus, if the USA did place an embargo on Venezuela, Chávez would be in deep economic and political strife. Thus, the ongoing oil trade between the USA and Venezuela indicates that both Chávez's hypermasculine politics and Bush's hegemonic tactics were largely performative. Moreover, it reveals the extent of the masculinisation of political offices in both countries. Both presidents inflated competition and aggression rather than acknowledge any type of pragmatic cooperation and trade, or even worse – interdependence.[85]

[83] More broadly, the USA accounts for almost half of Venezuela's total export market (42 per cent) and a quarter of its import market (24.2 per cent) (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs 2012).
[84] For example, Chávez has been very active in raising the price of oil in his capacity as the leader of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), an undeniably capitalist approach. He has also used Venezuela's oil reserves as a foreign policy bargaining tool (Sylvia & Danopoulos 2003, p. 70). Others, including Venezuelan left-wing political factions that were originally aligned with Chávez, have criticised him for his rightist, even neoliberal, economic policies and decisions such as the devaluation of the Bolívar in 2002 (Sylvia & Danopoulos 2003, p. 63 and 70). Chávez again devalued the Bolívar in 2010 (Lyons 2010).
[85] At the same time, the Venezuelan economy has become more dependent on oil despite 'socialist' claims of increasing food sovereignty (Carroll 2012a). According to Ellsworth and Chinea, oil accounted for 96 per cent of export earnings in 2012 compared to about 80 per cent 10 years ago (2012).

Accusations of Chávez supporting 'radical groups' and 'destablising the region' revealed another layer of US rhetoric: constructing Chávez as a terrorist sympathiser. The Bush Adminstration attempted to represent Chávez's diplomatic dealings with and visits to 'rogue states' such as Iran, Iraq and Libya, as proof that he supported and was even involved in terrorism. Moreover, the administration constantly alleged that Chávez was involved and even financially supported the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), both left wing guerrilla movements in Colombia (Sylvia & Danopoulos 2003, p. 71). Indicative of the administration's attempts to paint Chávez as a terrorist was the July 2006 House of Representatives Subcommittee hearing, provocatively named 'Venezuela: Terrorism hub of South America?' (Golinger 2008, pp. 64-65). At this hearing, the Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Frank Urbancic, listed Chávez's alleged links to FARC and ELN as well as Islamic radicals, Iraqi insurgents and Hezbollah. He concluded that 'Unfortunately today in Venezuela we see a *regime* that is increasingly out of step with the world…In sum, in the international community's fight against terrorism, Venezuela is a liability' (as cited in Livingstone 2009, p. 142, my emphasis).[86] The State Department's 2006 annual country report on terrorism also labelled Venezuela 'not fully cooperative in US counter-terrorism efforts' and asserted that Chávez had 'persisted in public criticism of U.S. counterterrorism efforts, deepened Venezuelan relationships with Iran and Cuba, and was unwilling to prevent Venezuelan territory from being used as a safe haven by the FARC and ELN' (US Department of State 2006).

However, it only offered hearsay as evidence, quoting Chávez's 'ideological sympathy for FARC and ELN', and acknowledged that 'it remained unclear to what extent the Venezuelan Government provided material support to Colombian terrorists' (US Department of State 2006, Chapter 2: Western Hemisphere Overview). The USA gave Venezuela this designation in the following two years with similar qualifications, indicating their insistence on conflating and discrediting Chávez with and through 'WOT' discourses. Feminists Hunt and Rygiel argue that Bush's generic 'WOT' allowed the construction of an amorphous enemy (2008, p. 17) and it is clear Chávez became part of this. Bush needed as many toxic terrorist villains as he could get and Chávez was the best candidate in the Latin American region.

[86] Government representatives including Bush and Obama themselves as well as many sections of the media often refer to Chávez's *regime* as opposed to Chávez's leadership, government or administration. This obscures his repeated and legitimate success at the ballot box and invokes images of illegimate and authoritarian dictatorships.

2006-2008 Chávez's Further Radicalisation

Chávez responded to the State Department's designation in his January 2006 VI World Social Forum speech in Caracas. His speech closely recalled his address in Brazil the year before. He condemned the US empire as 'the most perverse, murderous, genocidal, and immoral that this planet has known in 100 centuries', continued to allege US involvement in the 2002 coup and consistently racialised his message (Chávez 2006). In 2006 he also coined the term 'socialism or death' and called Bush 'the worst terrorist in the world', dubbing him 'Mr Danger' – a literary reference to a despicable foreigner in the well-known Venezuelan novel *Doña Bárbara*.[87] Chávez asserted:

> The Roman Empire admitted to being an empire, but Mr Danger talks of democracy, he talks of human rights; the Roman Empire didn't talk about human rights, it was an empire…Ah, but no! This one talks of human rights, and now we have just been informed that they want to include Venezuela on their annual list of countries that support terrorism. (Chávez 2006)

The crowd booed in support and Chávez went on to highlight the hypocrisy of 'Mr Danger's' talk of human rights, torture at Guantanamo Bay, secret CIA jails and the 'genocide' in Iraq. He also condemned the empire's labelling of himself and Fidel Castro as the 'crazy left' in contrast to 'statesmen' like Brazilian President Lula da Silva.[88] Perhaps Chávez had sniffed out the degrading gender politics of this himself, rejecting the joint feminisation and hypermasculinisation of himself and Castro as irrational, outdated, macho leaders in contrast to rational contemporary statesmen like Lula. Regardless, this speech signalled a further radicalisation of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity because even though it was directed at a domestic audience, in the coming year Chávez would increasingly focus on Iraq in his rhetoric and direct his aggression even more personally towards Bush. In April 2006 on *Alo Presidente*, Chávez called Bush stupid, a murderer, a drunk, a donkey, a liar, an assassin, a psychologically ill man and someone who was committing genocide. In the same TV appearance Chávez challenged Bush's masculinity by declaring him a coward: 'You're a coward. Why don't you go to Iraq and command your army? It's so easy to command an army from afar. If you ever come up with the crazy idea of invading Venezuela, I'll be waiting for you in this savannah Mr Danger' (Aoctavio 2006).

[87] For a detailed overview of the literary relevance of 'Mr Danger' and the novel *Doñá Bárbara* see Greg Grandin's 'The Rebel and Mr. Danger: Is Bush's Nightmare Venezuela's Salvation?' (2006).
[88] Brazilian President Lula da Silva is affectionally known as Lula so is referred to in this shorthand going forward.

Chávez also rather colourfully called on Bush to 'Look what's happening in Iraq…You are killing children who aren't responsible for your illnesses, your complexes, man...The soldiers in Iraq aren't murderers, you are the murderer, coward' (Aoctavio 2006). Five months later in his UN address, Chávez famously branded Bush the devil, a world dictator and a Yankee imperialist. Chávez delivered his more radicalised anti-imperial rhetoric to a global audience in this speech and condemned US hegemony and the UN's complicity in it. He declared that 'the devil came here yesterday, right here. It still smells of sulphur today. Yesterday on this rostrum the President of the United States, whom I refer to as the Devil, talked as if he owned the world. It would be appropriate to have a psychiatrist analyse yesterday's address by the President of the United States' (United Nations 2006, p. 10). He also criticised the USA's strange elite democracy that was 'imposed by bombs, bombardments and invasion' and declared the USA had double standards when it came to terrorism, specifically stating they deployed a 'completely cynical discourse' (United Nations 2006, pp. 10-12). He labelled the CIA terrorists and accused Bush of racism, stating that wherever Bush looked he saw 'extremists, and when he looks at your colour, my brother [referring to Bolivian President Evo Morales], he thinks, "You are an extremist"…The imperialists see extremists everywhere' (United Nations 2006, p. 10).

Although Chávez attracted some criticism for the speech and weeks later lost the bid for one of the non-permanent Latin American seats on the UN Security Council, it also became clear that he could gain political traction and popularity from performing his *caudillo* presidential masculinity on the global stage. UN delegates cheered for over four minutes after his speech and officials had to halt the applause (Jones 2008, p. 16). Media across the globe also covered the speech extensively and there was sympathy for Chávez's insults. This can be partly explained by Bush's increasingly laughable image internationally but also by the increasing popularity of Chávez's subaltern-informed policy decisions on the global stage. For example, in mid-2006 he earned praise from the Middle East by recalling his ambassador from Israel over the bombing of Lebanon (Khatib 2006). In fact, during Bush's second term Chávez began performing a notably more pro-Arab subaltern hypermasculinity; I discuss how this continued under Obama in the next chapter. Chávez himself said he didn't plan the devil speech but just followed his heart in the moment and admitted 'it's possible that it's one of my defects' (Reuters News 2006). Nevertheless, in December after winning a convincing 63 per cent of the vote in his third presidential

election, Chávez used the devil rhetoric once again: 'It's another defeat for the devil who tries to dominate the world' (BBC News 2006).[89]

The sparring between Chávez and Bush over the next two years mirrored the previous six. Bush emulated Chávez's paternalistic talk in January 2007, stating in an interview that 'I'm concerned about the Venezuelan people, and I'm worried about the diminution of democratic institutions' (Reuters News 2007a). Meanwhile in the lead up to Bush's trip to the region in March, Chávez criticised the visit as an attempt to divide Latin America and isolate his government: 'the South American people will give a welcome to the *little gentleman* form the North, the king of invaders, the king of Liars' (The Irish Examiner 2007, my emphasis). Chávez also embarked on his own five nation visit of the region and stated in Haiti that things weren't personal between him and 'gringo' Bush, but as the US president he represented 'the cruelest, most terrible, most cynical, most murderous empire that has existed in all of history' (Dow Jones International News 2007a). In 2007, Chávez also paid off Venezuela's debts to the World Bank five years ahead of schedule and pledged he would defend his country's economic sovereignty by cutting ties with the IMF and the World Bank (Parra-Bernal 2007; Sanders 2007). This reiterated the profitability of Chávez's petro-politics and his ability to match his subaltern rhetoric with action.

Chávez continued this trend, pursuing a more multipolar world with some controversial policy decisions. For example, in early 2008, Chávez twice sided with Russia on the international stage by refusing to recognise the independence of Kosovo from Serbia and becoming the second country in the world to back Russian recognition of the Georgian regions. He also sought closer relations with China. In his September visit to the country he declared himself a Maoist. Commenting on his absence from the UN's annual general assembly meeting he said 'It's much more important to be in Beijing than in New York' (*The Wall Street Journal* 2008). He also made the statement that 'China is showing the world that it isn't necessary to harm anyone to be a great power. They are soldiers of peace' (*The Wall Street Journal* 2008). Chávez conveniently ignored China's dubious human rights record. Earlier in September, relations with the Bush Administration also reached their final low when Chávez expelled the US ambassador in solidarity with Bolivian President

[89] Telling, from this election, was the extent Chávez's anti-imperial rhetoric had pervaded the Venezuelan domestic political context, as the opposition's campaign slogan was '*¡Ni el imperio, ni el barbudo!'* which translates as 'Neither the [U.S.] empire, nor the [Cuban] bearded one'. In combination with the slogan, the opposition criticised Chávez's petro-paternalism, questioning why Venezuela would even be supplying a wealthy country like the USA with subsidised oil (Oppenheimer 2006).

Morales (Dow Jones 2008). Both believed the USA was supporting the Bolivian opposition. Bush expelled Venezuela's ambassador in response and this was seemingly the final confrontation between the Texan cowboy and the Venezuelan *caudillo*. In October in the wake of the global financial crisis and Bush's heavy state intervention into private banks, Chávez mocked the US president as a comrade who was 'more left than him now' (Reuters News 2008a). However, more serious aggression waned with the knowledge that Bush's time in office was coming to an end. This was clear in a December meeting of Latin American leaders in Brazil where jokes were made at Bush's expense over the recent-shoe throwing incident in Iraq. Brazilian President Lula warned the leaders not to take off their shoes and threatened to throw a shoe at Chávez if he spoke over the allotted time (Reuters News 2008b). This joke neatly upturns the usual gendered patronisation of the region by Bush. Moreover, in November Obama was elected and US-Latin American relations were set for change that perhaps everyone, even the *caudillo* Chávez, could believe in.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that Chávez successfully consolidated and radicalised his *caudillo* presidential masculinity under Bush in reaction to the US president's gung-ho pursuit of the 'WOT'. Chávez steeped his anti-imperial rhetoric in 'WOT' discourses both radicalising and racialising his presidential masculinity and opposition to the US empire. After the US-backed 2002 coup against his leadership, Chávez began effectively performing and embodying a 21st century Latin American subaltern hypermasculinity on the global stage. In a mutually constitutive-type relationship, Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity seemed to outsmart the Bush Adminstration's long-practiced hegemonic tactics and attempts to feminise the Venezuelan leader as irresponsible, crazy and undemocratic. Chávez learnt that his *caudillo* presidential masculinity, of which his racialised anti-imperial rhetoric and subaltern hypermasculinity were key, was politically fruitful. This presidential masculinity popularised Chávez as an authentic subaltern figure and leader of the new 'Latin American Left' across the globe. It also played a key part in ensuring his electoral invincibility and charisma at home where he secured re-election twice in 2004 and 2006. During the 2006 election, Chávez alluded to this hypermasculine invincibility when he declined to take part in a debate with challenger Manuel Rosales: 'an eagle does not hunt flies' (Carroll 2012b).

However in 2009, the head of the US empire would no longer be white, nor vehemently despised across the globe, and this would have serious repercussions for both Chávez's

invincibility and his *caudillo* presidential masculinity. Put crudely, Chávez could not effectively spout his racialised anti-imperial rhetoric and perform his subaltern hypermasculinity on the global stage when the new president of the white US empire was, at least symbolically, a subaltern himself. As a black president, Obama complicated US masculinities and the office of the US presidency. This in turn recast the *caudillo* presidential masculinity of Chávez. Chávez had to adapt. In subsequent years, he did so with mixed success, expressing a more desperate 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity. Chapter 5 tracks this renegotiation.

Chapter 5 Chávez Versus Obama

The *Caudillo* Welcomes 'JFK in Sepia'

Following Hooper's (1998; 2001) mantra that masculinities shape international politics and that international politics shape masculinities, the relationship between US-Venezuelan presidential masculinities changed when Obama arrived in the White House. As I noted in Chapter 1, Obama's election single-handedly complicated US masculinities and the office of the president. Obama embodied a 'post-identity-politics global fusion' where he was 'black and white, foreign and domestic, third and first worlds, poverty and privilege, prejudice and opportunity, ignorance and education and most of all, fulfilment – Yes! We Can!' (Silverstein 2011, p. 209). This post-identity-politics global fusion was deeply problematic for Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity and any subaltern hypermasculine performances aimed at the USA on the global stage. Effectively, Obama offered 'a global makeover for Brand America's tainted face' (Parameswaran 2009, p. 195) and renewed US leadership 'in the spirit of partner and exemplar rather than patron and patriarch' (Ivie & Giner 2009, p. 290). He inscribed a 'democratic inflection' to the myth of American Exceptionalism and global leadership (Ivie & Giner 2009). As then Libyan President Gaddafi noted in his 2009 UN address, everyone was 'happy to welcome a son of Africa as US president' (United Nations 2009, p. 21). Similar sentiments were felt across Latin America.[90]

Obama was also making a pragmatic and conscious effort to distance himself and the USA from the now deeply unpopular 'WOT' – a war that Chávez's effective performance of his *caudillo* presidential masculinity depended on. For example, shortly after Obama's infamous June 2009 Cairo Speech, aimed at appeasing the Muslim world, Obama declared that the USA was no longer engaged in a 'WOT' but a 'War Against Al Qaeda'. When he received the Nobel Peace Prize in late 2009 he talked passively about being

[90] The 2010 *Latinobarómetro* survey on Latin Americans' attitudes to the USA indicated that over 71 per cent of respondents had a favourable view of Obama, support that was largely unchanged from 2009 (Hellinger 2011, p. 59). In contrast, Chávez was viewed favourably by only 33 per cent of Latin Americans surveyed (Hellinger 2011). Bush never enjoyed high approval ratings from the continent. As Cynthia McClintock summarised in 2009: 'In *Latinobarómetro* surveys between 2000 and 2005, approval ratings of the United States fell by more than 20 points in Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, and Bolivia; more than 30 points in Mexico and Uruguay; and more than 40 points in Argentina, Paraguay, and Venezuela. In the 2006 *Latinobarómetro* survey, President George Bush was among the hemisphere's most unpopular leaders, tied with Hugo Chávez and scoring just a tad better than Fidel Castro…In general, the administration was considered hypocritical – not playing by the rules that it wanted others to follow – and President Bush was perceived as arrogant and incompetent' (2009, p. 1).

involved in wars not of his choosing, wars that he inherited and was going to great lengths to end and wind down (Obama 2009). In his 2010 and 2011 State of the Union addresses, he focused on domestic politics and only briefly mentioned foreign policy despite the USA's involvement in ongoing wars (Obama 2010; 2011a). Throughout 2011, he repeatedly used the poetic metaphor of 'The tide of war is receding' (Obama 2011b; 2011c). Thus, rhetorically, at least some of the time, Obama was performing a demilitarised presidential masculinity that contrasted with many of his predecessors and the long-held cultural norms around a US president. In the post-Bush era, the US empire and the 'WOT' ironically, and more insidiously, had a new, globally popular and multicultural face in Obama. As Hureaux provocatively claimed almost a year before Obama's inauguration, 'what better gift to the empire than JFK in sepia? ... what better figure to have out there, than one to restore the faith in the imperial project, than someone with a black face?' (cited in Street 2009, p. 123).

In this way, Obama immediately challenged and disempowered Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity, racialised anti-imperial rhetoric and ability to perform an effective 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity on the global stage. Not surprisingly then, Chávez quickly and significantly shifted his rhetoric on the eve of the 2008 US presidential election. He expressed willingness to talk to Obama. He said he didn't expect Obama to be a revolutionary or a socialist but hoped he would live up to the world's expectations. He went as far as saying that the USA could be a world power instead of an empire (Radio Nacional de Venezuela 2008). Then immediately after Obama's election, the Venezuelan Government officially congratulated the new president, noting the 'historic election of an African-American' and expressing its determination to normalise US-Venezuelan relations (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the United States 2008). Chávez himself, who until then had been calling Obama 'the black man', urged the newly elected president to remain committed to his African roots and implied that the USA now had a 'true leader' in contrast to former President Bush (Bolivarian News Agency 2008).[91]

[91] Chávez didn't seem to mind that this 'true leader' had dubbed him a demagogue during the presidential primaries only months prior. During the Democrat primaries in 2007, Obama pledged that he would meet with 'out-of-favour' leaders like Chávez but he also repeated Bush's rhetoric in May 2008. He called the Venezuelan president a demagogue with a 'predictable yet perilous mix of anti-America rhetoric, authoritarian government and check book diplomacy' and acknowledged that Chávez had filled a vacuum left in the Americas by the USA since its preoccupation with the 'WOT' (Tampa Bay Times 2008). Cleverly, Chávez attributed such harsh criticism to the Republican-leaning Cuban exile lobby, 'writing it off as the influence of South Florida on US presidential elections' (Weisbrot 2009).

Chávez's racialised anti-imperial condemnation of the USA was now replaced with racialised flattery, further illustrating how deeply entwined Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity had become with the construction of Bush as the embodiment of the evil white empire. However such racialised flattery would not last long. Chávez the *caudillo* could not successfully accommodate a JFK in sepia so he began renegotiating his presidential masculinity in early 2009 as Obama's inauguration drew closer.

2009 Early Renegotiations: The Erratic *Caudillo*

In early 2009, Chávez's rhetoric on Obama was erratic and indicated the early and shaky stages of Chávez's renegotiation of his *caudillo* presidential masculinity. This was partly attributable to Obama's January interview to Spanish language television network Univisíon where he stated that Chávez had 'interrupted progress in the region' and that Venezuela was 'exporting terrorist activities or supporting malicious entities like FARC' (Forero 2009). Chávez was not impressed but responded carefully to Obama's comments. He said there was still time for Obama to change his views and that if he respected Venezuela he would get a respectful reply (Presidential Press 2009b). At the time, Brazilian President Lula was visiting Caracas and stated that Chávez should meet Obama because he was not 'just any president', the fact 'that a black man has been elected president of the United States is an extraordinary gesture…Obama should transform that gesture of the US people into a gesture for Latin America…respecting our sovereignty and an equitable coexistence' (EEF News Service 2009). This reflected the cult-like status of Obama's global popularity. Chávez replied that he had not lost all hope even though Obama had been talking like Bush (EEF News Service 2009). This was a stark contrast to Chávez's fiery rhetoric of only a few months prior.

Nonetheless, Chávez also made statements such as 'Look what he has started saying, what's next for us? We'll keep fighting imperialism whether the chief of the empire is black or white' (Reuters News 2009b) and 'no one should say that I threw the first stone at Obama. He threw it at me' (Forero 2009). In the same week, Chávez accused Obama of meddling in the upcoming referendum over presidential term limits but also took care to distance the new president from the 'empire'. He declared that Obama had to follow a 'script from the Pentagon' otherwise he would be killed like JFK and Martin Luther King (Agence France-Presse 2009a; Forero 2009). He also assured Venezuelans that 'the real imperial power lies' with the Pentagon (Suggett 2009c). Such rhetoric signalled the beginning of Chávez's strategy to construct a new enemy in the Pentagon and CIA.

Days later on the eve of Obama's presidential inauguration, Chávez said the region didn't 'hold any illusions' about change under the new president because 'this is the North American Empire we're talking about' (Agence France-Presse 2009d). However, quickly after the inauguration Obama called for the closure of Guantanamo Bay and took steps to prohibit torture. Chávez cautiously applauded these policy moves. He welcomed the 'good intentions' of the president, acknowledging things had changed and that the USA might even 'allow governments to deviate from its own imperial position'. According to Chávez we all had 'to wait calmly for the US and the new Obama Administration' (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Press Office 2009). Furthermore, Chávez continued distancing Obama from the US empire by questioning whether the 'immense power in his hands' might prove useless for changing the 'system' (Chávez 2009). He even quoted Lula as saying on his recent visit: 'Chávez we need to speak with Obama before the machinery traps him' (Chávez 2009b). By early February Chávez was expressing hope that Venezuela could restore relations with the USA to at least former Clinton Administration levels but that the USA had to respect Venezuela and all Latin American countries (Presidential Press 2009d). In mid-February Chávez won the referendum on presidential term limits and US State Department officials seemed to take up Chávez's notion of respect, commenting that democratic principles had been upheld in the referendum despite some reports about intimidation of the opposition (de Cordoba 2009). This suggested a shift from the usual patronising Bush Administration rhetoric on Venezuelan elections. US-Venezuelan relations seemed set to improve.

However, in late February the US State Department released their annual human rights reports in which concerns were raised over the politicisation of the judiciary and harassment of both the political opposition and media in Venezuela.[92] In response, Chávez said Obama and Hillary Clinton should acknowledge human rights violations in

[92] Venezuela, like all countries, does have human rights issues. For example the 2012 Human Rights Watch Venezuela report cited issues with: judicial independence; legislating by decree; freedom of media; the prosecution of government critics; prison conditions; police abuse; human rights defenders and labour rights (Human Rights Watch 2012). However, in line with Chávez's critique the same report also listed a comprehensive list of human rights issues in the USA. These included: the death penalty and extreme criminal punishments; prison conditions; racial disparities in the criminal justice system; non-citizen's rights; labour rights; health policy; women's and girls rights; disability rights; sexual orientation and gender rights and various issues with counterterrorism including ongoing torture and the use of drones in the 'WOT' (Human Rights Watch 2012). These serious human rights issues in the USA have a global impact. It is outside the scope of this thesis to enter into a detailed debate on human rights matters in Venezuela and the USA or Chávez's and Obama's culpability for them, but the issues themselves should be noted. In Chapter 6, I discuss Chávez's weakening of democracy via his miltiarisation of Venezuelan politics and society in more detail, which indirectly raises the question of human rights violations.

their own country and voiced his indifference to meeting Obama at the impending OAS summit in Trinidad and Tobago. In Chávez's own words, he 'couldn't care less if he [Obama] is there or not' and he was going to 'defend the integration of the Caribbean and Latin America and demand that the empire Obama leads lift its blockade of Cuba, abide by UN resolutions and condemn Israel' (Agence France-Presse 2009c). Yet in the lead up to the summit, Chávez gave Lula the go-ahead to discuss Venezuela with Obama on his upcoming visit to Washington and by late March Chávez had held a meeting with a member of US Congress at Miraflores Palace.[93] After the meeting, the embassy released a statement quoting Chávez as saying it had been 'positive and constructive' (Presidential Press 2009a). Likewise the congressman commented:

> As President Obama has said, it is very important to have dialogue. I know the Obama Administration wants to improve our relations, not just with Venezuela, but with all countries, because his goal, as is my goal and President Chávez's and also Foreign Minister Maduro's, is to have a world in peace, a world without poverty, a world where the human rights of each woman, each man and each child are respected. (Presidential Press 2009a)

Despite the meeting, days later Chávez called Obama ignorant twice – on his weekly television show and during an interview with AlJazeera. Chávez positioned his comments as a response to Obama's January *Univisíon* interview: 'he goes and accuses me of exporting terrorism: the least I can say is that he's a poor ignoramus; he should read and study a little to understand reality…my what ignorance; the real obstacle to development in Latin America has been the empire that you today preside over' (James 2009b). This delayed response to Obama's comments and the fact that Chávez made them in a domestic context and to a network more sympathetic to his anti-US rhetoric is telling. Chávez seemed to be clutching at straws for some anti-Obama rhetoric and was being selective about where he aired it. He also reiterated the 'Obama started it first' logic: 'they keep pointing to me as the bad boy, as the one who attacks…Who started the attack first? Obama' (James 2009b). Chávez was clearly conscious of Obama's global popularity and wanted to avoid the perception that he was resorting to macho tactics. His description of Obama as 'presiding over' the empire and comments that Obama was receiving bad advice from the same advisors who had worked for Bush also indicated a

[93] Chávez told Lula Venezuela was willing for talks with the USA that were based on respect but reiterated that he didn't have much hope of the US Government changing (James 2009a).

different approach (Associated Press Newswires 2009). Chávez was attempting to downplay Obama's agency and responsibility in some ways.

Thus in the first half of 2009 Chávez was careful to maintain his willingness to renew relations with the USA but at the same time he espoused more polite anti-imperial rhetoric. For example, after commenting that Obama presided over the empire, he referred to the empire as 'it', again distancing it from the office of the US president. He stated 'It has dropped atomic bombs on innocent cities, it has bombarded, invaded and killed whomever it pleases' (Suggett 2009a). Unlike under Bush, Chávez did not personify Obama as the empire's killer, bomber and invader. By early April Chávez toned down his rhetoric further, expressing his intentions to 'press the reset button' on US-Venezuelan relations and bring them back to a 'rational level' (Jones 2009). He stated that 'rapprochement, even a possible dialogue' was possible and 'the day will arrive when we are friends with the United States' (Suggett 2009f). Days later he commended Obama's nuclear disarmament pledge; he was now willing to shake Obama's hand and 'tell him to come over to this side, with those of us who truly want a world of peace, who truly love humanity' (Suggett 2009f).

Just over a week later, Chávez and Obama met at the OAS summit. Chávez refrained from hypermasculine displays but retained his subaltern *caudillo* credentials by giving Obama a famous left-wing book about the invasion and colonisation of the Latin American continent – *The Open Veins of Latin America* – by Eduardo Galeano. The two presidents shook hands and Chávez told Obama 'I want to be your friend' (Nejamkis 2009). He also told reporters that 'Obama was an intelligent man, different from the previous one' (Nejamkis 2009). Apparently Chávez didn't have the 'slightest doubt' that relations would improve under the new president (Reuters News 2009a). Chávez also spoke with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about the normalisation of relations and at the end of the summit named a new ambassador to Washington (Venezuelanalysis 2009). Obama was similarly gracious, telling reporters that although Chávez's rhetoric had been a 'source of concern', 'the test for all of us is not simply words, but also deeds' (Barrionuevo & Stolberg 2009). As Weisbrot notes, Obama also 'made some unprecedented statements for a US president, admitting that "at times we sought to dictate our terms"'(2011, p. 63). After centuries of patronising US 'knows best' discourse, this was a significant and positive development. Obama maintained the goodwill in his

farewell to the Venezuelan president when he joked that Chávez was like Oprah Winfrey because sales of *The Open Veins of Latin America* had soared online.

Despite Chávez's previous indifference to meeting Obama, the Venezuelan Government and Chávez keenly publicised his exchanges with the US president. The government released two successive media releases with photos of the two presidents smiling and shaking hands. The second media release boasted of a 'second meeting' with Obama, when in reality the presidents only had two brief exchanges (Presidential Press 2009c), which Chávez ensured were captured on camera. As Hillary Clinton joked days later in a press conference Chávez is 'very adept at knowing where the cameras are' (*The Guardian* 2009). Furthermore, after Chávez's return to Caracas he boasted that he had spoken with Obama 'several times'; that the US Government had made an unthinkable 'u-turn' under Obama's leadership; and that Venezuela could move forward with better relations with the USA based on respect for dignity, sovereignty and self-determination (Agencia Bolivariana de Noticias (ABN) 2009). Chávez seemed to be following the global (and Venezuelan) mood on Obama, even using their exchanges to boost his own credibility and popularity. This was a complete turnaround from his vilification of Bush. Lula was right: Obama was 'not just any president' and Chávez understood this. He adapted his *caudillo* presidential masculinity appropriately and reined in his racialised anti-imperial rhetoric and subaltern hypermasculinity.

In comparison, during the last OAS summit in Argentina in 2009 protestors greeted Bush while Chávez fumed about the evil US empire. The headlines around the summit indicated the significance of Obama's global popularity and the change in not only Chávez's attitude to the USA but also regional ones. Reuters published 'Obama Cool Meets Chávez Mania At Americas Summit' (Markey 2009), *The London Financial Times* read 'Obama Declares a New Day for Latin America' (Dombey 2009) and *The New York Times* bragged 'Hemisphere Leaders Signal Fresh Start With US' (Barrionuevo & Stolberg 2009). *The Wall Street Journal* published an opinion piece entitled 'Why Obama Shook Chávez's Hand' and highlighted 'the tangible benefits' Obama's popularity could reap compared to the damage done over the last eight years (Rubin 2009). In contrast, Fox News took a more negative stance with its story 'Handshake With Obama Belies Chávez's Contempt For America' (FOX News 2009). This reflected the uproar amongst influential conservative ideologues in the USA over Obama's handshake with Chávez. For example, in media appearances Republican Newt Gingrich warned that Obama's

handshake dangerously legitimated Chávez, while former Vice President Dick Cheney said the encounter set the wrong standard (Holland 2009). Otto Reich warned that the handshake represented a seal of approval from the USA and that Chávez would undoubtedly use it for his own propaganda (FOX News 2009).

Gingrich's, Reich's and Cheney's comments attempted to paint Obama's pragmatism as weak, conciliatory and naïve (traits traditionally constructed as feminine) and encouraged a more hardline, aggressive and competitive stance, reflective of the usual realist and hegemonic behavioural expectations of a US president in Latin America. Obama's dismissal of these critics demonstrated the significant (but momentary) shift from this approach and his predecessor.[94] In his dismissal, Obama had noted Venezuela's tiny defence budget, stating that 'It's unlikely that as a consequence of me shaking hands or having a polite conversation with Mr. Chávez that we are endangering the strategic interests of the United States' (Venezuelanalysis 2009). He also took care to highlight Venezuela's ownership of oil company Citgo, and added: 'you would be hard pressed to paint a scenario in which US interests would be damaged as a consequence of us having a more constructive relationship with Venezuela' (Venezuelanalysis 2009). In late April, Hillary Clinton reiterated Washington's new rhetoric that isolating Chávez had not worked and they needed to look at other options (Suggett 2009b).

Throughout mid-2009 then, tensions between the USA and Venezuela, or at least between Chávez and Obama, continued to ease. In early June, Chávez acknowledged Obama's Cairo speech to the Muslim world and commended his call to rid the world of nuclear weapons (Radio Nacional de Venezuela 2009). In late June, ambassadors were restored to both Washington and Caracas. In July, after the military ousting of leftist Honduras President Manuel Zelaya, Chávez alluded to US involvement in the coup but asserted that Obama might not be involved: 'The Honduran Army wouldn't have gone forward without the approval of the State Department. I don't think they told Obama, but there's an empire behind Obama' (Miller Llana 2009).

Nevetheless, by late July tensions escalated in the region over a pending US-Colombian defence cooperation agreement that would give the USA access to seven Colombian military bases. Chávez called the plan a form of 'new aggression against us [Venezuela]'

[94] In the next chapter, I demonstrate that Obama further institutionalised both Bush's foreign policy in the 'WOT' and his approach to the Latin American region.

and threatened to break diplomatic ties with Colombia (Romero 2009). In August, after the agreement was signed, Chávez hardened his rhetoric by accusing the USA of encircling Venezuela, which was 'number one' on their target list, warning that if the USA did attack 'a great anti-imperialistic movement would rise up on these lands' (Agence France-Presse 2009b). He also asserted that despite hating war, Venezuela had to prepare for it, and he would buy extra Russian tanks if need be to defend his socialist revolution (Carroll & MacAskill 2009). Such militarised rhetoric points towards the importance of constructing an enemy and exaggerating the threat they pose in hypermasculine politics. I discuss Chávez's penchant for and mastery of such politics in the next chapter.

Chávez also toughened his rhetoric on the recent coup and subsequent elections in Honduras, patronising Obama as a 'young man, full of good intentions' who was 'lost in the clouds', needed 'to study a bit more' and was 'entering a terrible labyrinth' (Agence France-Presse 2009b). He politely declared: 'Obama, we are not asking you to intervene in Honduras. To the contrary, we are asking that the empire removes its hand from Honduras and that the empire removes its claws from Latin America' (Agence France-Presse 2009b). The US-Colombian defence cooperation agreement gave Chávez an opportunity to legitimately re-introduce his anti-imperial rhetoric, albeit in a less racialised form. It enabled Chávez to perform his subaltern hypermasculinity on the global stage at least momentarily. It helped that Chávez's moderate and influential neighbours, most notably Brazil, were also unimpressed with the development. Later in November, the region's annoyance with the USA worsened when it recognised the elections in Honduras despite them being carried out under military rule. The USA under Obama's lead seemed to be up to its old regional tricks. As a result Chávez continued to subdue his subaltern hypermasculinity but maintained his righteous *caudillo* rebellion by downplaying Obama's responsibility in *knowingly* leading the US empire. While Bush had been the devil, Obama could be constructed as a mere pawn in the bigger evil imperial game. Thus, in late 2009 Chávez began more successfully renegotiating his presidential masculinity. He was more strategically erratic in his 'frontstage politics' towards Obama and performed a more opportunistic *caudillo* presidential masculinity.

2010 Will The Real Obama Please Stand Up? The Opportunistic *Caudillo*

In his UN address in September 2009, Chávez began consolidating a more opportunistic brand of his *caudillo* presidential masculinity. Chávez said the smell of sulphur had gone

and had been replaced with hope. He called Obama an intelligent man and favourably compared him to JFK; he hoped God would protect him from the same bullets that killed Kennedy (United Nations 2009, p 3). He also encouraged Obama to move from words to action on climate change and invited him over to 'the side of socialism' and the 'axis of evil' to build a global economy that truly serves human beings (United Nations 2009, p. 7-8). Yet Chávez was also politely critical, questioning whether there were two Obamas throughout his speech. He asked if there was the one who spoke peacefully here at the UN yesterday or another 'double' who established military bases in Colombia, allowed US military involvement in the Honduras coup and continued the embargo on Cuba (United Nations 2009, pp. 4-6). In a press conference after the speech, Chávez insisted that he did not want to attack Obama personally or call him a fake. But it was clear this *caudillo* was leaving himself room to move (MacFarquhar 2009).

Chávez also used the global platform of the UN to continue demonising the Pentagon and right-wing political forces in the USA. For Chávez, they were the real instruments of empire that were advising, using and even dictating to Obama. He assured everyone that 'the Pentagon is the imperial cave. They do not want Obama. They do not want change. They want to dominate the world with their military bases, with all their threats, their bombs their soldiers and bases' (United Nations 2009, p. 4). Days after his UN speech Chávez used similar rhetoric in an interview to the liberal US political magazine *The Nation*. He encouraged Obama not to repeat what the Pentagon says or listen to Bush's former 'war-maker' advisors. He heralded Obama as an 'opportunity' for change and keenly kept race in the equation by accusing the US right-wing of hating Obama because he is black (Grandin 2009). Yet Chávez also claimed that Obama was full of contradictions and that US policy towards Venezuela had worsened under Obama, citing the seven Colombian military bases as his proof. Thus, Chávez's rhetoric on Obama had become more strategically erratic. While Chávez continued to downplay Obama's responsibility and highlighted the power of the Pentagon, he also raised suspicion about Obama's motives. For example, after Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in October, Chávez wrote in his weekly column that Obama had done nothing beyond wishful thinking to win the prize. For Chávez 'the jury put store on his hope for a nuclear-arms-free world, forgetting his role in perpetuating his battalions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and his decision to install new military bases in Colombia' (Reuters 2009).

Thus, by the end of 2009 Chávez was regaining his subaltern hypermasculinity and bringing the focus back to the 'WOT', something he had mostly avoided in the first year of Obama's Administration. In December Chávez consolidated this approach, voicing his polite but critical attacks on Obama at another important global political event – the UN Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in Denmark. Chávez declared that Obama should return his Nobel Peace Prize: 'I think Obama has not arrived. He received the Nobel Peace Prize the same day he sent 30,000 more soldiers to kill innocents in Afghanistan!' (Chávez 2009a). After Obama's speech at Copenhagen Chávez also said the smell of sulphur had returned to the world (Sicuranza 2009). In late December, Chávez reasoned that we had all witnessed Obama falling apart in 2009 and that there had never really been much hope of change (James 2009c). Then in a new year's address, Chávez concluded that the Obama 'illusion' was over (Cawthorne 2009). Chávez had hardened his rhetoric on Obama, politely conveying his disappointment that the 'young intelligent black man' had not done better. Chávez was attempting to sideline Obama from the US empire and thus distance his anti-imperialism and *caudillo* presidential masculinity from the globally popular black US president.

As part of this strategy, Chávez recalibrated his subaltern hypermasculinity around more classic and de-racialised anti-imperial themes in late 2009 and throughout 2010. This allowed him to shift his focus from the US president and his role in the 'WOT' to other contemporary global political issues, such as climate change, the global financial crisis, the Israel-Palestine conflict, Latin American unity and South-South relations. For example, in his Copenhagen speech, Chávez positioned the climate change debate as a battle between the poor South and the rich capitalist North who choose to bail out banks, instead of the climate, in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis (Chávez 2009a). Chávez also demanded that China should not cut emissions at the same rate as the USA and spoke of imperial military bases, the imperial dictatorship, and the North American Empire. He attributed the destructive system of capitalism as a key cause of climate change (Chávez 2009a).

Chávez was also more vocal on the Israel-Palestine conflict. In May, Chávez condemned Israel's 'brutal' actions in the Gaza flotilla incident. In June, when Syrian President Bashar al-Assad visited Caracas he described Israel as a 'genocidal state' that acted as an assassin for the USA and would one day be 'put into its place' (Reuters 2010b). Al-Assad applauded Chávez and painted a favourable picture of his pro-Arab subaltern

hypermasculinity: '[Chávez] has revealed an image of Venezuela in resistance, creating a place for Venezuela on the international map. He has been on the side of just causes both in Latin America, in our region in the Middle East and in the whole world' (Reuters 2010b).

Similarly in November 2009 when the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, visited Venezuela, Palestine's Foreign Minister referred to Chávez as 'an international symbol, and a decisive voice of the oppressed in the face of injustice and tyranny' (Suggett 2009d). During the visit, Chávez praised Palestinians for fighting against the 'Yankee Empire' and 'genocidal state of Israel' (Suggett 2009e). Chávez developed a more pro-Arab subaltern hypermasculinity under Obama. This is partly attributable to Venezuela's increasingly close relations with 'pariah states' (and their accompanying pariah presidents) in Iran, Libya and Syria from the mid to late-2000s. However, it also reflects Chávez's strategy to distance his anti-imperialism from the 'WOT'. In 2011, the Arab Spring provided a further opportunity for Chávez to manage this distancing. I discuss this in detail shortly.

In early 2010 Chávez spearheaded the agreement by Latin American and Caribbean nations to set up a new regional body that stood in contrast to the OAS and did not permit the USA or Canada as members. Chávez was designated the first interim president and in July hosted the inaugural summit of the body *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños* (CELAC or Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) in Caracas. At the summit he pushed for Latin American integration and unity both politically and economically. His agenda was to 'leave behind this terrible period of impositions by the government of the United States, impositions made many times through the OAS, that have condemned the majority of our people to misery, backwardness, dependence and under development…Only united will Latin Americans be completely independent' (Suggett 2010a).

Chávez was possibly alluding to the OAS's March 2010 report on human rights in the region, which Hillary Clinton had applauded for finally criticising Caracas and Chávez's 'attack on democracy' (Thai News Service 2010). During her trip to the region the same month, Clinton made patronising comments that the USA hoped Venezuela would look further to its South, namely to Brazil and Chile, for models of successful (read: appropriately rational and statesmen-like) countries (Weisbrot 2010). Later in July, during

a visit to Europe she criticised Venezuela's leaders for silencing independent voices and closing in on civic organisations and society (Suggett 2010a). Clinton's rhetoric gave Chávez the opportunity to sideline Obama by redirecting his aggression once again at the USA's female Secretary of State. While Chávez didn't sexualise his rhetoric towards Clinton as he had done with Rice, he did racialise it. In March 2010 during her trip to the region, Chávez dubbed Hillary Clinton a blonde Condoleezza who 'comes to Brazil to provoke us, to try and divide us from our brothers' (Reuters 2010a). Later that year, Chávez demanded that Clinton resign in the wake of the Wikileaks saga, reminding everyone that her signature appeared on the released cables (Keating 2010). He also used this opportunity to racialise his rhetoric, declaring that 'Mrs Clinton thinks she is superior to Obama. Since she is white, she thinks she is superior to the black guy' (Keating 2010).

In addition to targeting Clinton, Chávez remained strategically erratic on Obama. In an interview with a Russian journalist in October 2010 (which was later aired on Venezuelan state-run television), Chávez said the US empire's aggression against Latin America had worsened under Obama. He repeated his accusation that there were two Obamas: one who promised respect for sovereignty and another who presided over the US empire. Yet Chávez also added that 'the empire continues its course in spite of Obama' (El Universal 2010) and in November Chávez even invited Obama to visit Venezuela. The invite was in response to a joke Obama had apparently made on Air Force One about redirecting a flight to Caracas. Chávez said: 'Obama I hope you land in Maiquetía [Caracas Airport] some day. We would welcome you. We would sit, talk and eat socialist arepas; I would take you to the streets of Caracas. I'm sure that the people would greet you with affection' (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Press Office 2010). Chávez warned Obama to ignore the lies about Venezuela being a threat and asked him to 'make a new world…where all of us can live in peace' and suggested Obama honour the promises he had made to US citizens. He invited Obama to play baseball: 'I'm sure you're a bad batter, just like Fidel Castro' (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Press Office 2010). This was a cheeky public diminishment of Obama's sporting ability (read: masculinity).

Nevertheless, a day after Chávez invited Obama to Caracas he also held a special parliamentary session entitled 'Act in Defence of National Sovereignty' to oppose a conference that was sponsored and attended by a very small amount of US Republican congress members and right-wing Latin American figures in Washington. Chávez

deplored the conference's title 'Danger in the Andes: Threats to Democracy, Human Rights and Inter-American Security', as an 'act of imperialist aggression' and called on the parliament to pass laws preventing the 'Yankee financing' of opposition groups and NGOs in Venezuela (Suggett 2010c). Chávez was clearly grasping at any event, even insignificant non-government ones, to fire up his anti-imperialist rhetoric. Luckily, the military clash between North and South Korea the same month gave him an opportunity to embrace his subaltern hypermasculinity and directly target the Pentagon and US right-wing. For example, Chávez talked abstractly of 'political plans' to provoke incidents in the region so that the 'imperialist military hegemony' would continue. He also read the following statement on television:

> It is essential for peace-loving countries to denounce the premeditated action coming from far right-wing groups in the US. These groups make use of important institutions of the country such as the Pentagon, the Department of State and the CIA in order to generate outbreaks of instability across the planet as part of the need to maintain a well-oiled US industrial and military complex. (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States 2010)

By December, tensions between the USA and Venezuela escalated briefly when Chávez revoked the USA's choice of ambassador (Larry Palmer) and dared the USA to expel his ambassador to Washington (Bernardo Álvarez Herrera). He challenged the USA to break off diplomatic ties if they didn't like it. Less than 24 hours later, the USA obliged on the ambassador front.[95] However, days after the USA revoked Herrera's visa, tensions settled when Clinton and Chávez shook hands at the inauguration of Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff. As with his Obama meeting in April 2009, Chávez and the Venezuelan Government were keen to publicise the handshake and impromptu conversation, despite Chávez's call for Clinton's resignation only weeks earlier. Moreover, Chávez publicly suggested other candidates for ambassador including Noam Chomsky but the State Department remained firm, stating that despite Chávez's suggestions the USA was not looking for another ambassador (Reardon 2011a; Reuters 2011). The post remains unfilled to this day and Herrera is now Venezuela's Ambassador to Spain. Thus, the USA

[95] Tensions had been simmering since mid-2010 when it was revealed that Palmer had made comments about Venezuelan Government ties to Colombian rebels and Venezuelan military morale and equipment problems (Associated Press 2010). This was a sensitive issue for Chávez as a military man. While Palmer's comments were not meant for the public, Chávez continuously called for Washington to appoint someone else.

had seemingly outmanoeuvred Chávez in this diplomatic spat but apart from the lack of official ambassadors in each country, relations were much the same as they had been throughout 2009. In fact, this minor diplomatic hiccup was symptomatic of US-Venezuelan relations under Obama and of the accompanying renegotiations of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity. Both sides had been erratic, polite yet petty and overwhelmingly opportunistic. In 2011, this would change. The Arab Spring would be in full swing and this would give Chávez new anti-imperial material to play with and pariah friends to defend. Moreover, the events in the Arab world would give Chávez an opportunity to renegotiate his *caudillo* presidential masculinity in a more radical, yet arguably desperate, direction.

2011 Later Renegotiations: The Arab Spring and the Pariah's *Caudillo*

In December 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi**,** a young, rural, poor and frustrated Tunisian street vendor self-immolated in an act of protest against the government corruption and harassment that he had recently faced. This act sparked massive protests across the country. Less than a month later, the corrupt authoritarian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, who had been in power for over 20 years, fled the country. The almost immediate success of the Tunisian protests led to a wave of similar demonstrations across the Middle East and North Africa. Demonstrations occurred in Yemen, Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Djibouti and Israeli/Palestinian border areas. Arabs and North Africans, in particular the region's significant and disenchanted population of youth, called for an end to the government corruption, authoritarianism, abuse and poverty that had shaped their lives. They demanded democratic political change and the ousting of regimes that historically, in some cases, had been backed by the USA. Varying degrees of political change and violence ensued. By February, governments had been overthrown in Egypt and Yemen and by August the same occurred in Libya. To this day, Syria remains locked in civil war. The events became known as the Arab Spring.

In this section, I explore how these momentous events in the Middle East and North Africa played an increasingly important role in Chávez's anti-imperial rhetoric and *caudillo* presidential masculinity. I argue that throughout 2011, Chávez attempted to re-authenticate his subaltern hypermasculinity by re-directing his anti-imperial rhetoric towards the Arab Spring and away from the 'WOT'. While Chávez had long promoted his anti-Israel views, the Arab Spring and ensuing western interventions, most notably in

Libya, gave Chávez a good opportunity to revive his anti-imperial rhetoric and further advance a type of pro-Arab subaltern hypermasculinity. This shift signalled a more distinct renegotiation of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity away from Obama, the US empire and the 'WOT'. As illustrated throughout my image analysis, Chávez maintained close relationships with Libyan President Gaddafi and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. All three had bonded over their joint disdain for the USA, shared socialist ideology and supposed 'revolutionary' opposition to imperialism.[96]Gaddafi himself embodied a similar, although less legitimate, subaltern hypermasculinity to Chávez.[97] Thus, Chávez was sensitive to any attacks on his allies and as the Arab Spring played out Chávez performed an increasingly desperate and problematic subaltern hypermasculinity. He maintained his support for Gaddafi and al-Assad in the face of violence against citizens, exposing the hypocrisy of his anti-imperial rhetoric and *caudillo* logic of masculinist protection. Chávez became somewhat of a pariah's *caudillo*, undermining his own democratic credentials in the process, not to mention the democratic rights of the poor notably browner masses in Libya and Syria that he once claimed to support. This had serious implications for Chávez's presidential masculinity and I discuss these shortly but first I detail some of Chávez's more disturbing rhetoric on the Arab Spring.

At the beginning of 2011, Chávez directed his attention to events in Egypt. In January, he categorised the initial quashing of the protests as an attempt by North American imperialism and its allies to divide the Arab world (Pearson 2011d). Chávez expressed solidarity with the Arab world and insisted on respect for Egyptian and Tunisian sovereignty while commenting that the Venezuelan Government 'desires peace and we'll be with you, Arabic brothers' (Pearson 2011a). He condemned the historic role of the USA in Egypt as 'shameful' and highlighted the hypocrisy of US support and then abandonment of strongmen like Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and former Tunisian President Ben Ali (Cawthorne 2011). He even summoned his previous 'devil' rhetoric: 'See how the United States, after using such-and-such a president for years, as soon as he hits a crisis, they abandon him. That's how the devil plays' (Cawthorne 2011).

[96] During the 'WOT', Syria was an ally of sorts to the USA, largely because al-Assad led a secularist government, however the president remained critical of the USA.
[97] Over the years, Gaddafi had become a pariah on the international stage due to his alleged involvement in various acts of terrorism, most notably the Lockerbie bombing in Scotland in 1988.

Chávez repeatedly compared the US-led interventions in Libya and Syria to the military coup against him in 2002, arguing that the media and the USA were distorting the situation to justify intervention like they had done to him (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States 2011; Shoichet 2011; Venezuelanalysis 2011a). He told reporters: 'I don't know why, but the things that have happened and are happening there remind me of Hugo Chávez on April 11' (Selfa 2011). Chávez's conflation of the interventions in the Middle East with previous and hypothetical future interventions in Venezuela, is one of the more irresponsible examples of Chávez's threat exaggeration politics, which I outline in more detail in Chapter 6. As part of this strategy, Chávez rallied by Gaddafi, refusing to condemn the Libyan leader because 'I'd be a coward to condemn someone who has been my friend' (Toothaker 2011). He drew parallels between himself and the Libyan colonel by declaring that the Venezuelan media had accused him of murdering his own people in 2002 (Pearson 2011b). Chávez was referring to a very different set of events in which military snipers supposedly shot opposition protestors. However, these allegations were proved to be false; Chavistas were also killed and evidence mounted that the snipers were from opposition not military ranks. The debate around the 2002 coup continues to this day but regardless 'the popular uprisings in the Middle East have more in common with the mass resistance that defeated the 2002 coup than with the coup itself' (Selfa 2011), a fact Chávez seemed to intentionally ignore.

Furthermore, when a British diplomat aired suspicions that Gaddafi had fled to Venezuela, Chávez denied the claims. He acknowledged that he had spoken with Gaddafi who assured him he would not go into exile. Chávez said, 'don't believe that Gadhafi is going into exile in Venezuela or Nicaragua. No way. If the Yankees and their allies invade Libya, I'm sure that Gadhafi would die standing up…but I warn the world about the consequences of a war' (Associated Press 2011a). Chávez was defending Gaddafi's will (and by implication his masculinity) to fight to the end. In April, Chávez also personally defended Syrian President al-Assad, claiming that he was not an extremist but a doctor educated in London (Venezuelanalysis 2011a). By May, Chávez asserted via twitter that his 'brother' al-Assad and Syria were 'victim[s] of a fascist attack' (Agence France-Presse 2011a). Chávez's passionate defence of his pariah friends was becoming a key part of his subaltern hypermasculinity.

Not long afterwards, Chávez proposed an international peace commission to resolve the conflict in Libya and promoted the commission as a solution emanating from the global South. The idea for the commission was rejected by the US State Department but there were reports that both the Arab League and Gaddafi himself were seriously considering the commission. However, by late March it was clear the situation in Libya had become violent when the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) bombing began. Chávez denounced this approach and reiterated his newly fashioned anti-imperial rhetoric on the global stage during a visit to Uruguay: 'the empire says that to save the people, they have to bomb it. Humanitarian bombings! A capitalist crisis, increased hunger, of food prices, of oil, the world is in trouble' (Radio Nacional de Venezuela 2011).

Chávez's promotion of a peaceful, non-military solution to the situation in Libya on the global stage offers an interesting juxtaposition to his celebration of militarism and threat exaggeration politics at home. I pick up on this contradiction in the next chapter but note here Chávez's construction of NATO as a new enemy to domestic Venezuelan audiences in mid-2011. Chávez condemned NATO and warned that NATO could intervene anywhere, and even 'recognise a transition council in Plaza Altamira [a rich suburb in Caracas]' (Venezuelanalysis.com 2011). In May, he further conflated NATO's actions in Libya with a potential ousting of his own government: 'we have some crazy people thinking here in Venezuela that Chávez will end just like Gaddafi, and that NATO will come to "save us". What madness! This democratic revolution will not be brought down by *them*' (Correo Del Orinoco 2011, my emphasis).

In August, Chávez read a letter from Gaddafi on national television that echoed his NATO enemy construction. Gaddafi said the NATO intervention was the sabotaging of 'a south-south space that brings together Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia' (Venezuelanalysis 2011b). In addition to targeting NATO, Chávez continued to attack the 'right-wing' in the USA but did not address Obama directly. At the start of the crisis in Libya he tweeted: 'Let's go, [Venezuelan] Foreign Minister Nicolás, give another lesson to the far right Yankee supporters! Long live Libya and its independence! Gaddafi is facing a civil war!' (El Universal 2011). Tellingly, while Chávez refrained from attacking Obama, he did criticise the 'sad role' the US president was playing in the events while his government was already involved in five wars (Devereux & Cancel 2011, my emphasis). He did however equate the 'lies' being spun in Libya to the 'lies of the "WOT"':

> Those who immediately condemn Libya don't talk about the bombing of the states of Israel on Fallujah, and the thousands and thousands of deaths including children, women and whole families. They are quiet about the bombing and massacres in Iraq, in Afghanistan, so they don't have the right to condemn anyone…We condemn violence, imperialism and interventionism. (Pearson 2011b)

On Syria Chávez argued the USA was using anti-government protests as an excuse to attack the country. In March, he proclaimed that it was a new strategy of the USA to ferment violent protests in countries and then when governments took action the USA turned to the UN to initiate military actions (The Pak Banker 2011). He also alluded to the new strategy of 'colonial powers' to renew their control over countries like Syria and their rich natural resources (Pearson 2011b, 2011d). Chávez took a similar petro-politics line on Libya: 'What the Yankee empires and the European powers…want is Libya's oil' (Associated Press 2011b). Later in October, Chávez revived his Bolivarian anti-imperial rhetoric by comparing the events in Syria to the genocide of indigenous people under Spanish colonialism (Correo Del Orinoco 2011). In December, the Venezuelan Government categorically condemned what they deemed 'terrorist attacks' in Syria. One government statement read: 'the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as an expression of his commitment to the right of all peoples to self-determination and independence and rejecting colonialism and war, ratifies his support for President Bashar al-Assad' (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the United States 2011).

Chávez's defense of Gaddafi and al-Assad indicated his embrace and performance of a more dangerous and desperate 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity. Chávez only supported people power and 'revolutions' when it was politically and personally beneficial and pursued in conjunction with the state. This renders his *caudillo* presidential masculinity and racialised anti-imperial rhetoric deeply problematic. It also raises questions about why Chávez would undermine his own democratic and increasingly pro-Arab subaltern credentials by defending despotic leaders instead of supporting those participating in the populist uprisings themselves. While Chávez may have allied himself with Gaddafi and al-Assad (like many who were now cheering for their demise), he was a vastly different political figure.[98] He was a democratically elected

[98] As Di Rocco (2011) points out, 'in recent years, all the European leaders made a visit to Gaddafi's tent, in immoral pursuit of signature on rich contracts for their national companies'. In April 2009

leader and never turned the military on his own people in the dramatic fashion that was now being witnessed in Libya and Syria. Had Chávez made a serious political misjudgment in supporting Gaddafi and al-Assad? Did he not foresee the impact such rhetoric would have on his credibility as a hero of the international left?[99] Did Chávez's *caudillo* image and hypermasculinity prevent him from retracting his support, a potential sign of weakness? Would his masculinity be questioned if he admitted his alliance with the two-countries had been wrong? Was his support for his pariah friends providing tacit evidence for right-wing critics' long held claims that he was in fact a crazy dictator himself? Had Chávez's radicalisation under Bush completely obscured his initially pragmatic critique of unipolar US power, global governance institutions and neoliberal capitalism? Did he really believe in the possibility that NATO would invade Caracas and dispose of him? Had Chávez foolishly 'started seeing imperialist fingerprints everywhere he looked?' (Di Ricco 2011).

These are valid questions and the answer to them, to some degree, is yes. However, the reasons behind Chávez's support of Gaddafi and al-Assad can be attributed more banally to geopolitics. While many people across the globe enjoy and admire Chávez's open critique of the USA, he is nonetheless the head of a petro-state who plays his own version of realpolitik within the global capitalist system and has a state-centred vision of revolution and political change (Selfa 2011). As Hellinger argues, 'Bolivarian ideals may be consonant with the protagonistic democracy proclaimed in the Venezuelan constitution, but the realpolitik of Venezuelan diplomacy sometimes is not' (2011, p. 60). This, along with Chávez's recent support for authoritarian leaders in the Middle East, explains the now palpable split between the Latin American continent's last decade of 'revolutionary' leaders and the grassroots leftist social movements that initially supported them (Di Rocco 2011).[100] Much of the discussion throughout this thesis points to this split and the unfortunate reality of Chávez's 'Bolivarian' realpolitik. For example, in Chapter 4, I illustrated the performative and superficial nature of Chávez's anti-imperial rhetoric and subaltern hypermasculinity by

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Hillary Clinton also welcomed Gaddafi's son, Mutassim Gaddafi, to Washington in his role as Libyan National Security Advisor.

[99] It is important to note that like Chávez, some leftists have been critical of intervention and defended certain Arab leaders as moderate secularists, unlike the Islamists who have replaced them.

[100] Like Chávez, leaders of other South American countries, most notably Ecuador, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua threw their support behind Gaddafi. Latin American powerhouse Brazil, not surprisingly considering its aspirations to be a key player on the global stage, refrained from intervening in the debate, joining western powers in advocating for a UN Security Council solution (Di Ricco 2011).

highlighting Chávez's ongoing and significant trade with the very empire he abhorred. As Carroll concludes:

> Venezuela's revolution has no gulags, no torture chambers, but in wasted potential lies tragedy. Here was a sublimely gifted politician with empathy for the poor and the power of Croesus – and the result, fiasco. Neither side likes to acknowledge it but the revolution is in many ways a continuum of oil-fuelled populism dating back half a century, notably that of the giddy, spendthrift 1974-79 administration of Carlos Andres Pérez, the mercurial president Chávez tried to overthrow in 1992. The difference is Chávez had even more money, more power, more showmanship. (2012a)

Additionally, Chávez's support for Gaddafi and al-Assad has gendered explanations. In *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link* (2007), Enloe recounts the story of Vietnam War whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg who argued in 2004 that one of the reasons President Johnson had refused to back down from his failing Vietnam-War policy in the 1970s was quite simply his fear of being seen as unmanly (2007, p.48). In this way, ideas about masculinity and femininity guide decisions about national security and foreign policy (Enloe 2007, p. 47). Decisions by leaders and senior government officials can be affected by fear of appearing too feminine or not masculine enough (Enloe 2007, p. 48). Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity had become so steeped in his anti-imperial and multipolar world rhetoric that backing down from supporting leaders who shared his views and subaltern hypermasculinity would have been difficult. In fact, Hellinger (2011) argues that Chávez's affinity with leaders such as Gaddafi and Iran's Ahmadinejad was tied to the considerable impact Argentine nationalist and Peronist Norbeto Ceresole had on his worldview. According to Hellinger, Chávez wholeheartedly embraced Ceresole's view that 'US unilateralism is the greatest threat to world peace and to the exercise of sovereignty in Latin America' (2011, p. 49). Thus, loyalty to the anti-imperial cause became deeply entwined with his presidential masculinity and any diversion from it would entail admitting prior misjudgment of not only al-Assad and Gaddafi's revolutionary credentials, but dismissal of his own staunchly held worldviews. This would have a negative impact on the anti-imperial cause as well as Chávez's perceived ability to make rational, serious and sophisticated (read: masculinised) national security decisions (Enloe 2007, p. 51). It would be a sign of his weakness.

Furthermore, Chávez's support of Gaddafi and al-Assad is symptomatic of the contradictions within subaltern hypermasculinity. Hypermasculinity emerged in reaction to the similarly hypermasculine acts of colonialism and imperialism, yet both forms of hypermasculinity have ultimately pursued the same project and solution to their ills: the western paradigm of state-making. As Nandy argued, hypermasculinity incurred an 'undeveloped heart' that promised liberation, almost always via violent war, but ultimately led to 'wholesale westernisation' (read: statemaking) (1988, pp. 32-33). In this sense, as Ling eloquently argues, hypermasculinity corrodes both ways and has an 'empty potency' (2001, p. 1090). Chávez's increasingly desperate manifestation of a 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity defined in relation to the Arab Spring epitomises the empty potency Ling speaks of.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Chávez promoted a peaceful solution to the escalating violence in Libya, which indicates that in some ways he departed from the traditional militarised masculinity Enloe identifies as being so destructive. She notes that masculinisation is fuelled by feminisation and that consequently different groups and people ensure they 'speak publicly about the values of strength, and decisive threatening action; they will make clear that they are personally always ready to wield military might; they might even cast doubt on the manliness of those who are criticizing military solutions' (2007, p. 52). Taking this into account, Chávez's promotion of a non-military solution to Libya could be seen as a promising development. However, I argue that Chávez very much participated in this masculinisation of national security rhetoric on a domestic level. His suggestion of a peace commission on the *global* stage was more about reinforcing his subaltern image to sympathetic audiences around the world and an attempt to pursue a more multipolar solution to the crisis. I explore this contradiction within Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity in the next chapter where I highlight the hybridity in both Obama's and Chávez's masculinities. I demonstrate that such hybridity is very useful in legitimating militarism.

Obama 'Kills' bin Laden and the Silent *Caudillo*

The Arab Spring gave Chávez an opportunity to reinstate his subaltern hypermasculinity on the global stage while distancing his anti-imperialism from Obama and the 'WOT'. This became particularly evident in May 2011 when the US Government, under Obama's command, assassinated bin Laden, and thus seemed to offer a symbolic end to the 'WOT'. In response to such an imperial hypermasculine act, one would have expected

Chávez to reinvigorate his anti-US rhetoric and criticise Obama. With this assassination, Obama almost immediately embraced a more militarised 'empire-like' presidential masculinity and this seemed an opportune time for Chávez to intervene, but he did not. He said nothing. In place of Chávez's unusual silence, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry released a press statement questioning whether bin Laden's death was actually true, highlighting quite rightly that bin Laden had once been trained and armed by US intelligence agencies. It also pointed out the illegality of the operation and reiterated Chávez's 2001 warning that terrorism could not be fought with more terror (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the United States 2011). The only other comments on bin Laden's death were made by Vice President Elias Jaua who condemned the celebrations of death in the USA and argued that the US Government had an official strategy of assassination: 'crime and murder have become something natural…for the empire, there is no other alternative' (Romero 2011). There was no mention of Obama. In contrast when Gaddafi was killed a few months later in October 2011, Chávez labelled the assassination an 'outrage'. He said 'we shall remember Gaddafi our whole lives as a great fighter, revolutionary and a martyr' (Agence France-Presse 2011b).

Chávez's silence on bin Laden's assassination was intriguing because by 2011 it was clear that Obama was pursuing the same foreign policy in Latin America that Bush had. After pledging to recast relations with the region at the Summit of Americas in April 2009, Obama not only crushed hopes in the region for change but further entrenched the USA's paternalistic, militarised and hegemonic policy towards the region. In fact, 'Obama's diplomacy toward the region differs from his stance with other regions, including a distinct *paternalism* and a failure to address global issues' (Bitar as cited in LAP Editorial Collective 2011, p. 26, my emphasis). For example, Obama supported the military coup against left-wing Honduras President Manuel Zelaya; continued an aggressive policy against Cuba by maintaining the embargo; lavished praise, weapons and military bases on Colombia despite ongoing human rights abuses; relied on military responses to the 'war on drugs' thereby fuelling the ongoing military-industrial complex's profitable role in the 'war'; intervened in the 2011 Haitian presidential election via the OAS; and failed to respect democratic institutions in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador (Weisbrot, 2011; LAP Editorial Collective, 2011). Gandásegui Jr asserts that under Obama 'Latin America has practically been erased from the map in the White House' and that his administration 'tried without success to disguise US military initiatives and the neoconservative milieu inherited from George. W. Bush without changing any of the government's strategic

goals' (2011, p. 109). For the USA, relations with Latin America were business as usual, and this raises further questions about why Chávez switched his attention to the Arab Spring, risked his international reputation and became somewhat of a pariah's *caudillo*.

Conclusion

Chávez's silence on bin Laden's assassination demonstrates two key arguments in this chapter. First, Obama's arrival forced Chávez to renegotiate his *caudillo* presidential masculinity. This reiterates my argument that relationships between presidential masculinities are in some ways mutually constitutive. It also confirms broader feminist claims that masculinities are adaptable and change over time in line with global political events (Hooper 2001). Chávez's rhetoric, while remaining anti-imperial and anti-capitalist, was not as fiery as it had been when directed at Bush. Quite simply, Chávez de-racialised his anti-imperialism and re-fashioned his *caudillo* presidential masculinity in a more polite way. Instead of attacking Obama as the embodiment of the US empire he constructed a more amorphous and recognisably *white* enemy in the CIA, the Pentagon, the State Department and US right-wing forces. This allowed Chávez to maintain some of his *racialised* rhetoric. Second, in the wake of Obama's global cult-like popularity and rebranding of the 'WOT', Chávez relied less on the discourses of the war and more on contemporary political events, both domestic and global, in his opposition to imperialism. In the context of the Arab Spring, he repositioned and rebranded his anti-imperial rhetoric and *caudillo* presidential masculinity around the reliable subaltern themes of imperial interventionism and violations of sovereignty. However, as outlined above Chávez's repositioning and contradictory support of Gaddafi and al-Assad exposed the emptiness of his anti-imperial rhetoric and increasingly desperate manifestation of 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity.

Moreover, Chávez's silence on bin Laden's assassination and unambiguous re-negotiation of his *caudillo* presidential masculinity aroused my feminist curiosity about the pervasiveness and potential hegemonic power of Obama's post-hip-hop presidential masculinity. Even Chávez the *caudillo* did not stand up to JFK in sepia. Then, just a few months later Obama was complicit in Gaddafi's death. As Lynch says, Obama's 'intervention (authorised by the United Nations) in a Muslim state [Libya], ending in the extra-judicial execution (not authorised by the UN) of its bizarre "brother leader", would have been unthinkable in 2008' (Lynch 2012, p. 1104). However, in 2011 this seemed part and parcel of Obama's presidency, adding new irony to Gaddafi's statement to the

UN only three years earlier that 'we would be content if Obama could remain President of the United States of America forever...He is completely different from any American President that we have seen' (United Nations 2009, p. 21). Gaddafi was wrong. Obama is not different from former US presidents including his immediate predecessor. Feminist questions about Obama thus needed to be asked. Did Obama's post-hip-hop presidential masculinity offer a more nuanced deployment of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity and the familiar foreign policy that accompanied it? Is this why Obama caused so many problems for Chávez? I now address these questions and explore the relationship between presidential masculinities and militarism in the next and final chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 6 Presidential Masculinities as Militarising Manoeuvres

Bernazzoli and Flint point out that 'militarism is generally viewed by social scientists as an ideology that takes root in a society via a process of perpetually preparing for war, reshaping cultural values, and reorientating the society's collective worldview' (2009, pp. 399-400). Presidents play a key role in this process. Thus, in this chapter, I analyse and build on the findings outlined in Chapters 3 through 5 to discuss the relationship between presidential masculinities and militarism. I argue that presidential masculinities function as 'militarising manoeuvres' that propel, legitimate, rebrand and/or camouflage militarism (Enloe 2000). As Enloe argues 'whether the process of militarisation is stalled, reversed, or propelled forward in any society is determined by the political processes that bolster certain notions of masculinity and certain presumptions about femininity' (Enloe 2004, p. 218). As a concept, presidential masculinity focuses attention on these processes as embodied in one of the most prominent, symbolic, meticulously constructed and scrutinised 'masculinities' of a nation-state. I thus compare and contrast the militarising manoeuvres deployed by and embodied in Chávez's and Obama's presidential masculinities in detail in this chapter.

I argue that Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity functioned to revive and legitimate the militarisation of Venezuelan national security, politics and society. My analysis shows that Chávez relied on particular notions of masculinity, most notably his 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity, to propel militarism and even *celebrate* it. In direct contrast, Obama's post-hip-hop presidential masculinity functions to rebrand, obscure and camouflage ongoing US militarism. In particular, Obama's presidential masculinity obscures the further institutionalisation of the 'WOT' both globally and domestically. Thus, different presidential masculinities in varying cultural, political and historical contexts employ distinct militarising manoeuvres. As president of the world's only remaining superpower, Obama has to camouflage or at least obscure the USA's hegemonic and imperial militarism whereas Chávez the *caudillo* has more freedom to flaunt his own national Bolivarian 'revolutionary' brand of militarism. Nonetheless, both are militarising manoeuvres that deserve feminist attention.

By analysing presidential masculinities as militarising manoeuvres, I draw on and speak back to Hunt and Rygiel's camouflage politics approach as outlined in *(En)Gendering the 'War on Terror'? War Stories and Camouflage Politics* (2008). This book is a collection of feminist counter-narratives about the 'WOT' that interrogate the official 'war stories' told by governments and the media about the war. For Hunt and Rygiel, these counter-narratives serve two functions: they reveal the 'masculinized, militarized, racialized, sexualized, and classed dynamics through which the war operates' (2008, p. 3); and they expose the real but complex and contradictory agendas behind the war. As they put it, 'the political purpose of official war stories is to *camouflage* the interests, agendas, policies, and politics that underpin the war in order to legitimize and gain consent for the "War on Terror"' (2008, p. 4, original emphasis). For example, Jasmin Zine (2008) interrogates the US Government's most peddled war story, at least under Bush, of the need to rescue oppressed Muslim women from barbaric Islamic fundamentalist men. She exposes the centrality of certain constructions of femininity and masculinity to war stories as well as their function to camouflage the real interests behind the war – US imperial interests. This accords with Hunt and Rygiel's framework, which argues that camouflage politics legitimate and gain consent for war, or as I see it, militarism more broadly. Hence, camouflage politics can entail militarising manoeuvres in and of themselves. In my work, I build on this framework by exposing the centrality of certain constructions of presidential masculinity in US and Venezuelan war stories. In this way, this chapter takes up Hunt and Rygiel's explicit call to feminists to investigate other official war stories and camouflaged politics (2008, p.17).

Hunt and Rygiel also identify the productive, not just discursive, 'political work that war stories do' and build on David Campbell's theorising of foreign policy texts as *scripting* – not just analysing – political realities (2008, p. 5). I see presidents and their masculinities as foreign policy texts in the same way. In fact, presidents are often the main narrators of 'official war stories' and can embody these stories and therefore the militarism associated with them. For example, in the USA, the president is 'almost always the most significant human protagonist' in the myth of American Exceptionalism (Landreau 2011, p. 4) and American Exceptionalism is constantly invoked to legitimate US foreign policy and unilateral action across the globe. In this chapter, I discuss how Obama manipulates his own myth of American Exceptionalism via his presidential masculinity.

Additionally, I argue that hybrid/contradictory presidential masculinities – typified in Chávez and Obama – have particularly good camouflage and militarising manoevure potential. As the findings in the previous chapters indicate, Chávez constructed and performed a *caudillo* presidential masculinity that pivoted on a contradictory rebel coup plotter/authentic coup victim narrative. *The Guardian* Latin American Correspondent Rory Carroll has drawn attention to this: 'there is a duality to Chávez: he is a hybrid: a democrat and autocrat, a progressive and a bully. His "Bolivarian Revolution"…has embodied these contradictions' (2012a). I argue that Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity also embodied such contradictions. This hybridity helped legitimate Chávez's militaristic politics but also allowed him to retain an authentic and righteous subaltern anti-imperial image. Similarly, Obama's hybrid presidential masculinity, which is full of contradictions (Shaw and Watson 2011) and embodies a 'post-identity-politics global fusion' (Silverstein 2011, p. 209), has been key to successfully camouflaging US militarism during his presidency. As Enloe warns, militarising manoeuvres can look more like dances than struggles (2000, p. 10). I argue that Obama's hybrid presidential masculinity works in this way and has reinvigorated US militarism. In fact, it signals a new and more nuanced deployment and embodiment of US hegemonic masculinity (Lemelle Jr 2010).

I begin this chapter by offering a more empirical discussion of Chávez's militarisation of Venezuelan national security and politics and the role played by Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity in this process. I identify Chávez's militarisation of Venezuelan national security via weapons purchases and his subtler militarisation of domestic Venezuelan political life. For example, Chávez revamped Venezuela's conscription laws, applying them to women for the first time, created a significant military reserve force and introduced compulsory 'pre-military instruction' in secondary education.[101] In the second half of the chapter, I turn my attention to Obama's militarising manoeuvres. I detail his further institutionalisation of the 'WOT' and the role of his contemporary, post-hip-hop presidential masculinity in camouflaging such policy moves.

[101] In my discussion of these developments I incorporate some anecdotes and observations from the time I spent in Venezuela in June-July 2011. However it should be noted that an ethnographic analysis of everyday militarisation in Venezuela is outside the scope of this thesis.

Chávez's *Caudillo* Presidential Masculinity: Celebrating and Globalising Militarism

Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity embodied and narrated a certain quasi-war story about Venezuelan politics and US-Venezuelan relations. As Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrated, Chávez tirelessly constructed the USA as an enemy of the Venezuelan state and an imperial threat to the world. More recently, Chávez attempted to conflate western intervention in the Arab Spring and the establishment of US military bases in Colombia with the threat of a potential, even impending US invasion of Venezuela. The 2002 coup against Chávez's leadership further legitimated this quasi-war story and enabled him to militarise Venezuelan society on the basis of such exaggerated threats. As Enloe notes, core beliefs of militarism include promoting the assumption that having enemies is a natural condition (2004, p. 19) and the idea that the world is a dangerous place that must be approached with militaristic attitudes (2007, p. 4).[102] Similarly, other feminists, like Anuradha Chenoy, have identified the masculinity politics involved in constructing enemies in non Anglo-American settings such as South Asia. Chenoy (2004) speaks of 'muscular discourse' that homogenises politics and constructs 'others' as enemies. She argues that each country has its own version of muscular discourse, which develops into 'militarist nationalism' and is profoundly masculinised. Chenoy's 'militarist nationalism' reflects Young's 'security state' discussed earlier in the thesis. For Chenoy, 'militarist nationalism makes war and decision making into a *boys* club at times of both conflict and *peace*, especially because nations are kept at a "high alert" and made to feel insecure with *exaggerated threat* perceptions' (2004, p. 32, my emphasis). This recalls Enloe's assertion that the 'militarization of global affairs is likely to be propelled forward by masculinization' (2007, p. 51). Chávez's exaggerated rhetoric about threats of US invasions, interventions and even assassinations are an accurate example of Chenoy's 'militarist nationalism' in practice and the militarisation/masculinisation of Venezuelan politics and global affairs that Enloe speaks of. Effectively, Chávez has put Venezuelans on 'high alert' under his leadership.

Furthermore, Enloe assures us that most militarisation happens in peacetime (2004, p. 220) and

[102] Interestingly, whilst Chávez peddles danger, threats and militaristic attitudes in his own backyard, he argues for peaceful solutions in Libya and Syria. Such contradiction is part of his hybrid presidential masculinity.

> is occurring when any part of society becomes controlled by or dependent on the military or military values. Virtually anything can be militarized…[but] each one of these processes involves the transformation of meanings and relationships. Rarely does the transformation happen without the use of public power and authority. (Enloe 1993, p. 100)

In line with Enloe's analysis, Chávez used his public power and authority – as performed by and embodied in his *caudillo* presidential masculinity – to ensure that different parts of society were dependent on and/or controlled by the military. Chávez's populist petro-politics and 'Bolivarian Revolution' funded extensive social welfare, healthcare and education programs but also funded significant weapons purchases. In the early and mid-2000s, Chávez sought out close relations with Russia and nationalistic President Vladimir Putin who shared his disdain for the USA and, in the end, similar masculinity politics. As Eichler notes in her research of Russian militarised masculinities, Putin's agenda centred on strengthening the state through a renewed emphasis on militarised patriotism (2011, p. 135). The resurgence of the Russian arms industry is inextricably linked to this agenda, and Venezuela offered a convenient new market. In June 2006 the US State Department banned all military equipment sales to the country because Chávez was 'not fully cooperating in the War on Terror' (Golinger 2010a). Under the ban, the USA even refused to sell replacement parts to Venezuela for its aging US-made F-16 jet fighters (Katz 2006, p. 6). As a result, a billion-dollar weapons trade emerged between Russia and Venezuela. This weapons trade played a role in the globalisation of militarism.

At the time of Chávez's radicalisation from 2005 to 2007 Venezuela made significant weapons purchases from Russia. Chávez spent an estimated $4.4 billion on Russian-made weapons including Sukhoi jet fighters, helicopters and a cache of 100,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles (Medetsky 2010). In 2007, Chávez purchased five thousand sniper rifles from Russia. Defence analysts observed that such rifles were not appropriate for conventional military use, they were more suited to guerrilla warfare (Chivers 2007). The Russians have also conducted military training exercises in Venezuela. In September 2008, two Russian Bombers, the heaviest combat aircraft in the world, flew to Venezuela for a training mission. Later in November, Russia deployed its Northern Fleet to Venezuela for joint naval exercises (Petrou 2008). Chávez was particularly excited about the Bomber's visit: 'I'm going to take the controls of one of these monsters' (Petrou 2008).

The familiar militarised masculinity politics of domination and mastery of machinery are clearly at play here.

In the post-Bush era, Chávez has continued spending billions on both Russian and Chinese-made weapons. In April 2010 Putin (then Russian Prime Minister) visited Venezuela and granted Venezuela a $2.2 billion loan that Chávez would use to purchase up to $5 billion worth of Russian-made weapons including missiles, jets and tanks to build air defence systems (AlJazeera 2009; Medetsky 2010). Chávez invoked the supposedly looming threat of invasion when commenting on the deal: 'with these rockets it's going to be very difficult for foreign planes to come and bomb us' (AlJazeera 2009). Putin also had his say: 'Questions that the strengthening of the defensive capacity of small states may be a threat to someone, I think, are inaccurate…If the United States doesn't want to supply weapons to other countries, such as Venezuela, it's good for us. Let them go on with this. "Nature abhors a vacuum" is what we say in Russia' (Medetsky 2010).

In line with Putin's sentiment, Russia and China have continued to sell weapons to Chávez. In March 2010 China delivered the first six of forty K8 fighter planes to Caracas. On the delivery Chávez said Venezuela was merely improving its aerial defense system and combat capacity 'in order to protect our entire territory'. He added 'the US empire wanted to leave us unarmed…China appeared and offered to help us with our defense system' (Golinger 2010b). In August 2011, Chávez met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergery Lavrov to discuss a further four billion dollar Russian loan to improve Venezuela's 'air, land and sea defence capabilities' (Reardon 2011b). In June 2012, Chávez announced that Venezuela had begun assembling Kalashnikov assault rifles and producing grenades, ammunition and surveillance drones. The new Venezuelan Kalashnikov assembly factory will have the capacity to produce 25,000 rifles per year.

On this latest development Chávez assured the world that 'We do not have any intentions of attacking anybody…these projects are for defence, for peace' (Associated Press 2012b). Such Orwellian speak epitomises how threat exaggeration politics and enemy construction, as peddled by leaders like Chávez, legitimates and propels militarisation. As Chenoy reminds us, threat exaggeration is crucial to militant nationalism because it is a call to arms (2004, p. 34). As the logic goes, if there is a threat then we must prepare (read: militarise) for it. Similarly, Ling and Agathangelou (2004) have demonstrated how hypermasculine

politics legitimate and propel daily and global militarisation. Likewise, Enloe has shown that the globalisation of militarisation, via the global arms industry, is often supported in the name and pursuit of national as opposed to international security (2007, p. 39). Similarly, Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity rationalised the significant and unnecessary weapons purchases he made by claiming Venezuela needs to defend itself from a very unlikely US invasion, or from more generic 'foreign threats'. As he said in 2007, he did not expect a US invasion but 'We need to get ready. There is a saying that reads, "If you want peace, just get ready for war"'(ABC News: Nightline 2007). Chávez clearly subscribed to the ideology of militarism that believes states without militaries are naïve, scarcely modern and barely legitimate (Enloe 2004, p. 219). He was also aware that the economy is one way through which the military 'achieves ascendancy within the state' (Bernazzoli & Flint 2009, p. 399).

Furthermore, domestically Chávez empowered his logic of masculinist protection in a nuanced and racialised way. In a complication of Young's *outside* enemy claim, Chávez constructed the largely white Venezuelan elite as an *internal* yet equally imperialistic enemy of everyday Venezuelans and the Bolivarian Republic. After the involvement of many of the country's elites in the 2002 coup, Chávez legitimately and convincingly framed them as an actual threat to the state. The largely white elites were no longer just an everyday political opposition but instead were lackeys of US imperialism. This construction of the opposition was key to several of Chávez's electoral successes and continued to play a definitive role in his rhetoric until his death. In mid-2011, commenting on the upcoming 2012 presidential election Chávez identified the opposition as the 'sub-imperial rightwing' who 'keep repeating that I don't even have anything, that my illness is just a show, a strategy mounted by Chávez and Fidel Castro…I will be the candidate for 2012 and I will win' (Boothroyd 2011). In July 2012, Chávez also declared that if he lost the upcoming 2012 presidential election Capriles would end his social programs and as a result Venezuela would face a civil war (Xinhua 2012). Such militaristic and Manichean rhetoric was typical of Chávez's *caudillo* logic of masculinist protection, which exaggerates the threat (civil war) yet promises paternalistic protection (social programs). As Enloe notes 'one of the most powerful ideas that has made the militarization of national security seem "natural" (i.e. not worthy questioning) is the notion that there is an allegedly "natural" relationship between the protected and the protector' (Enloe, 2007, p. 60). Chávez mastered the construction of this 'natural' relationship between him and the *pueblo* in

contradistinction to the Venezuelan opposition, thus allowing him to pursue the militarisation of Venezuelan national security and politics.

Chávez's 'readiness for war' via his weapons purchases has of course attracted criticism from the USA.[103] In 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that Chávez's deals with Russia could encourage an arms race across Latin America (Medetsky 2010). Some sections of the US media sensationalised the issue. A 2005 *Miami Herald* front page headline on Venezuela's arms purchases from Russia read 'Chávez Arming to Attack the United States' (Golinger 2008, p. 121). Since 2005 various State Department representatives have pointed out that Chávez's purchases could cause instability in the region and are not consistent with Venezuela's 'legitimate' defence needs (Chivers 2007). Similarly, a US diplomatic cable revealed by Wikileaks pointed out that most defence analysts believe Russia only sold weapons to Chávez so that officials on both sides could profit via 'skimming money off the top' and that many of the weapons, including the Su30MK2 jet fighter-bombers, were not suitable for the Venezuelan defence forces (Wikileaks 2010). The use and discovery of Russian-made weapons including grenades in recent prison riots in Venezuela also points towards corruption (Ellner 2011). I regard Chávez's public claims and assurances that Venezuela was merely 'modernising' its defence forces as a militarising manoeuvre that attempted to camouflage corruption. At the same time it illustrated Chávez's deep commitment to militarism.

Moreover, while the USA is rather hypocritically concerned that Chávez's arms might be migrating into the hands of groups like FARC, from a feminist perspective the influx of weapons into a highly polarised society like Venezuela and its citizens' everyday lives is of utmost concern. During my time in Venezuela in June-July 2011 I saw military personnel armed with AK47s 'guarding' places as diverse as malls, town squares and bus terminals. The physical presence of military personnel and weapons in everyday life is symptomatic of a broader militarisation of society, a process Chávez has pursued via other means as well.[104]

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[103] It is worth noting the hypocrisy of US criticism of Venezuela's arms spending: in comparison to Chávez the USA spends astronomically more on military expenditure but their reaction is typical of their hegemonic status in the region.

[104] It is difficult to make concrete causal links between the militarisation of Venezuelan society under Chávez and the increased homicide rate under his leadership. However, it is important to note this violent trend and its probable links to the arms trade. Since 1999, Venezuela's homicide rate has steadily and significantly increased from approximately 29 to 48 murders per 100,000 people. For comparison, the rate in 1999 was approximately 29 deaths per 100,000. Globally the average is 6.9 per 100,000 (BBC 2012; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2011, p. 56). An increase in drug trafficking and violent crime and a culture of impunity, police corruption and lawlessness have

For example in 2005, Chávez launched *Misión Miranda* to create his own personal military reserve force – the Bolivarian National Militia (MNB) (Morsbach 2006). According to the government the MNB are simply a group of civilians who are trained by the military so that they can 'actively participate in national defense', 'maintain public order', 'develop the nation' and 'establish links between the public and the FANB' [the Venezuelan armed forces] (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States 2007).[105] In April 2010, Chávez celebrated the eighth anniversary of his return to power after the 2002 US-backed coup by swearing in 35,000 new militia to the MNB (Janicke 2010). In Chávez's usual dramatic style, he led them in an oath as he unsheathed a sword that belonged to Bolívar and then cheered as the uniformed militia marched through the streets of Caracas (The Economist 2011). The creation and public memorialisation of the MNB represents a clear militarisation of Venezuelan society and is in many ways the practical manfiestation of Chávez's civil-military union ideology. At the swearing-in-ceremony, Chávez himself asserted that 'The militia is the people and the people are the militia, the armed people and the armed forces are one' (Janicke 2010). However, what is most disturbing from a feminist perspective is that this armed group of potentially up to two million civilians or one in five Venezuelan adults was directly under Chávez's command, not the Department of Defence, and can be mobilised in 'states of exception' (Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United States 2007; Morsbach 2006; Wilpert 2006, p. 51).[106] Chávez employed his hypermasculine, threat exaggeration politics to rationalise the need for this civilian militia needed in case of a US invasion (Wilpert 2006, p. 51). For example, in 2010, Chávez coined the anniversary the 'Day of the Bolivarian Militias, the Armed People and the April Revolution' and hyperbolically condemned the Venezuelan oligarchy's cooperation in the fascist, imperialist Yankee coup (Janicke 2010). High ranking military generals also stated that Venezuela needs the military reserve because if the USA attacks,

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all been attributed as factors in the rise. Whether or not increased gun ownership is a factor is unknown. However, in 2009 Chávez's government proposed a ban on limiting the number of bullets citizens could purchase and in 2012, in the lead up to the presidential election, which was characterised heavily by the 'security' issue, the government banned private citizens from purchasing guns (BBC 2012; Morgan 2009). This points towards some links between increased violence and the influx of weapons under Chávez's leadership.

[105] In reality, the MNB does participate in such activities but mainly patrols streets, addresses violent crime, keeps protestors in check and is sometimes deployed to powerplants and food distribution centres throughout the country (Stratfor Global Intelligence 2010). They have also occupied a landed estate and started community projects in a rural area previously famous for training Colombian paramilitaries (Pearson 2011e).

[106] According to *The Economist* 'officials claim that the militias total 125,000, and that the goal is to reach 2 million [but] sceptics put the number trained so far at under 25,000' (2011).

the country would need civilians to fight a guerrilla war like in Iraq against the 'Yankee forces' (Morsbach 2006).

In the same year that Chávez created the MNB, he militarised the Venezuelan education system by introducing compulsory pre-military instruction for students in their last two years of secondary schooling (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2008). Venezuelan Human Rights organisation *Provea* unsuccessfully challenged the law in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, which was stacked with Chávez's allies in 2004, said that pre-military instruction was an '*essential* part of the development of the students of the Republic, within the conception of the present state' and that an effective military contributes to the defence of individual and human rights (War Resisters International 2006, my emphasis). The claim that military education is 'essential' to its young citizens and the state is an indicator that militarism is becoming normalised in Venezuelan society.

In October 2009 the government passed a law demanding that all citizens who failed to register with the military would be either subject to fines, restricted from university and/or government jobs, and denied government financial assistance. This was an obvious militarisation of Venezuelans' everyday lives, in particular Venezuelan women who for the first time were now obliged to complete military service. As War Resisters International noted, while the new law 'is presented to the public as a victory of women's liberation, it introduces a range of new duties for women, such as – in theory – obligatory military service, and – in practice – the obligation to register with the military authorities and carry military documentation. It is in fact a militarisation of women's lives' (2009). In October 2010 the government did remove the penalties for not registering with the military because they contravened the 1999 constitution. But conscription as enshrined in law remains in Venezuela (Suggett 2010b). In fact conscription has been enshrined in Venezuelan law since 1978 but it has rarely been enforced (War Resisters International 2009). Nonetheless, Chávez's 2009 changes to the 1978 law did militarise Venezuelan society in new and subtle ways. The 2009 law extends conscription not only to women but also to men and women up to the age of 60 (previously it was 50); it ensures military documentation is more important in everyday life; and it allows space for additional laws or regulations to be made, 'leaving the door wide open to increased military control' (War Resisters International 2009).

Additionally, Chávez more broadly militarised Venezuelan society and politics by memorialising war through military parades and anniversary celebrations. In the Russian context, Eichler (2011) talks about how memorialising war and fallen soldiers contributes to the remilitarisation of society. I argue that Chávez took a similar approach in Venezuela.[107] Chávez's obsession with Bolívar and his memorialisation of the independence wars took many shapes. He commemorated these events with military parades but also via more banal militarising manoeuvres, such as renaming Venezuelan oil fields after battles of independence. Enloe has shown that feminists must pay attention to this type of banal militarisation of society because it normalises militarism (2000, 2004, 2007). Personifying his militarisation of Venezuelan society, Chávez also memorialised his failed 1992 coup and the defeat of the 2002 coup against him with military parades, as noted above in relation to the MNB. As Human Rights Watch notes the short-lived 2002 coup disrupted Venezuelan democracy for less than two days but has haunted politics in the country ever since (2008, p. 1). In 2012 Chávez celebrated the 20-year anniversary of the 1992 coup with a military parade and dismissed the 'bourgeoise' opposition who claimed the parade was unconstitutional. Photos of the parade and other political rallies show images of children dressed in khaki and red berets – Chávez's signature coup plotter outfit.[108] This indicates the highly personified memorialisation of Venezuelan politics and militarism around Chávez himself. Chávez took great care to glorify himself as the ultimate citizen-soldier-leader in his rhetoric, visual discourse and political ceremonies.

In July 2011, Chávez held what some claimed was the largest military parade in Venezuela's history for the country's 200th anniversary of independence (Pearson 2011c). People who I spoke to at the time in Caracas informed me that while Venezuela often celebrated independence day celebrations with military parades, they had become highly personified around the president under Chávez. In fact, there was a lot of commotion leading up to the anniversary because Chávez had only just returned to Venezuela from Cuba where he had been receiving cancer treatment. On the day before the parade, I visited downtown Caracas where Chavistas were happily chanting: '*¡Palante commandante! – ¡volvio!, ¡volvio!'* (Upwards and onwards commander – he returned, he

[107] For a more general discussion of the glorification of soliders and combat and its relationship to militarism, see Bernazzoli & Flint (2009, pp. 400-401).
[108] See http://www.reuters.com/news/pictures/slideshow?articleId=USRTR2OBUP#a=21

returned!).[109] During the parade helicopters and fighter jets, spraying smoke in Venezuela's national colours, flew over the city. The military parade was also televised as a 'chain' whereby all channels are ordered by the government to show the program. During the broadcast there were recruitment advertisements for the National Guard with imagery of a much younger and healthier Chávez wearing his red beret, perched on a military tank. The parade featured many of the Russian and Chinese weapons Chávez had so enthusiastically purchased and the president even tweeted thanks to those countries during the celebrations. To Russia, Chávez tweeted 'Thanks to the Russian Government and its support, today we have a true Armed Forces. Armed Forces! How Moral! How Mystical! Congratulations!' (Chávezcandanga 2011b). To China he tweeted 'Thanks to the People's Republic of China for their invaluable support in keeping our Armed Forces well equipped and trained!' (Chávezcandanga 2011a). While at the parade Chávez made a speech surrounded by military generals, saluting and declaring 'what a sweeping patriotic passion! What a bicentennial celebration! Look at the people! Look at the Soldiers! Being a soldier of Simón Bolívar's people is a cause for pride! (Blough 2011).

Such comments and Chávez's insistence on public displays of militarism exemplify what Chenoy calls 'national chauvinism', whereby the negative aspects of nationalism are exaggerated by conflating manhood with combat and militarism. This goes hand in hand with militant nationalism and muscular discourse (2004, p. 35). Such public displays also indicate that Chávez was not necessarily interested in camouflaging his militarism but instead legitimating and celebrating it via his threat exaggeration masculinity politics. This celebration of militarism aligns with Chávez's subaltern hypermasculinity, which, despite its anti-imperial rhetoric, relied on overtly militarised understandings of masculinity. As Deborah Cowen, asserts militarism reproduces 'a liberal fantasy of peaceful politics, and a colonial geopolitical vision that refuses the violence of its own historical becoming' (2012). Chávez's subaltern hypermasculinity functioned in a similar way.

[109] *Palante* is a contraction of *Para adelante*, which means literally to go forward or get better so in this context means upwards and onwards.

Obama's Post-hip-hop Presidential Masculinity: Camouflaging Militarism and the Ongoing 'War on Terror'

> If Obama has been 'un-Bush', it resides in his more precise and targeted – but no more intentionally legal – prosecution of a renamed War on Terror, rather than its abandonment. What is remarkable, given the violence Obama has initiated against America's foes and its questionable international legality, is the persistence of the myth of Obama as some kind of lawyer-in-chief, persuaded more by the strictures of international law than by the effectiveness of unilateral military action. (Lynch 2012, p. 1103)

In the conclusion of *Hegemonic Masculinities and Camouflaged Politics: Unmasking the Bush Dynasty and Its War Against Iraq* (2010), James Messerschmidt expresses his hope that the USA's new president might promote an 'equality masculinity' and be the first 'peace president'. While Messerschmidt acknowledges Obama's foreign policy might not change significantly, he urges the new president to distance himself from the global 'WOT' (2010, p. 170-175). Moreover, he argues that based on the evidence so far Obama seemed to be assuming a similar heroic masculinity to that embodied by Bush Senior: 'Obama has discursively adopted the patriarchal position of a heroic masculine protector, instructing men, women, and children of the world to entrust their lives with him, in return for which he will *only by necessity* employ *defensive* violence to keep them safe from evil' (Messerschmidt, p. 170, original emphasis).

In this section, I argue that Obama's presidential masculinity does rely on this notion of defensive violence but in contrast to Messerschmidt I demonstrate that despite Obama's much-flouted credentials as a 'man of the law', he practices a very healthy disregard for international law in his pursuit of the 'WOT'. Obama's escalation of the 'WOT' in Afghanistan and Pakistan, his highly controversial use of drones and implementation of a 'kill *not* capture' policy, are clear evidence of this. In fact, I argue that Obama maintains the very same commitment to 'unilateral military force as the sole policy option for obtaining White House goals' as his predecessors (Messerschmidt 2010, p. 158). As Landreau (2011) eloquently demonstrates, Obama's national security rhetoric and policy is oriented by the long held logics of US masculinity and American Exceptionalism that propel US militarism both domestically and globally. Obama does 'perform a softer, more inclusive presidential masculinity in the area of global politics and terrorism', but fundamentally his foreign

policy and presidential masculinity are 'in a line of continuity with Bush' (Landreau 2011, pp. 4 & 2). However, as argued earlier in the thesis, as a black man, Obama does not embody US masculinity in the same way as previous US presidents. Instead he performs a unique presidential masculinity. Obama constructs and performs a hybrid presidential masculinity that is contemporary, urbane, demilitarised and characterised by a post-hip-hop ghetto-style cool. This presidential masculinity has successfully distinguished Obama from Bush and his accompanying gung-ho militarised masculinity, convincing many that Obama's policies are also different. This thesis argues to the contrary. Obama's presidential masculinity is superficially appealing and globally popular but it cleverly and dangerously camouflages ongoing US militarism. Obama's presidential masculinity thus functions as a miltiarising manoeuvre. It is complicit in promoting the 'lawyer-in-chief' myth alluded to in the vignette above and thus deserves feminist interrogation. Obama has largely continued Bush's 'WOT' and further institutionalised the government and military architecture around it both at home and abroad (De Genova 2010; Jackson 2011; Murray 2011; Parmar 2010, 2011).

At home, Obama re-appointed Bush militarists in key positions, most notably Robert Gates as Secretary of Defence, and normalised the national-surveillance state (Jack Balkin as cited in Murray 2011, p. 93). More broadly, he 'redefined the rule of law and how the three branches of government – executive, legislative and judicial – should function' (Murray 2011, p. 87). For example, in mid-2011, he reauthorised the unreformed Patriot Act, which as a candidate he had promised to overhaul because of civil liberty concerns (Murray 2011, pp. 89 & 91). On torture, Obama repeatedly invoked 'state secrets' to avoid releasing information in lawsuits and he blocked the release of memos detailing CIA black sites and interrogation practices (Murray 2011, p. 87). He continued the practice of 'rendition' (kidnapping terrorist suspects) and continues to detain many of them, without charge, in Guantanamo Bay (Parmar 2011). Obama even 'signed executive orders formalising Guantanamo's system of indefinite detention without charges or trail and cranked up military commissions' (Murray 2011, p. 92). The Obama Administration has also been vindictive in its response to whistleblowers, placing Bradley Manning, an alleged leaker, in solitary confinement, and is pursuing a grand jury trial against Wikileaks founder Julian Assange. Like Bush, Obama is undemocratically claiming 'executive privilege and state secrecy in defending the crime of an aggressive war' (Kroes 2012, p. 17)

Furthermore, Obama has defied the US constitution and the rights of US citizens themselves in the pursuit of his global 'WOT' (Murray 2011). Unlike any other president, Obama has endorsed the killing of US citizens outside war zones (Murray 2011, p. 88); challenges to his warrantless wiretapping of US citizens have been thrown out of court (Murray, 2011 p. 89); and under his administration, it is now legal for police to detain domestic terrorist suspects 'without informing them of their constitutional rights, including the right to remain silent and to have an attorney present during the interrogation' (Murray 2011, p. 92). Although Obama 'gave us every reason to think that he would…reject the impunity of Bush's imperial presidency', he has perpetuated and even expanded that approach (Murray 2011, pp. 85-6).

Abroad, Obama further institutionalised Bush's 'WOT'. Obama's foreign policy has been described as 'more a third Bush term than a revolution against it' (Lynch 2012, p. 1102) and a better executed and 'modified version of Bush's pre-emption doctrine' (Sanger 2012, p. 252). On Iraq, Obama maintained Bush's policy of training the Iraqi army and withdrawing as soon as practically possible (Parmar, 2010, p. 15). In December 2011, the last US troops did leave Iraq but ironically this was only because Iraqi politicians had refused immunity to any US troops after that date (Arango & Schmidt 2011). Until then, Obama had been negotiating to keep troops in Iraq into 2012 and there had been an assumption that the USA would maintain troops in Iraq for several more years (Martin 2011).

In Afghanistan, Obama repeated Bush's rhetoric of democracy promotion, and endorsed Hamid Karzai's 2009 re-election despite widespread corruption, electoral fraud, voter intimidation and very low voter turnout (Parmar 2010). He also chose to escalate the war in Afghanistan, committing 30,000 more troops to the country in December 2009. Ironically, Obama took this action shortly after he received the Nobel Peace Prize. When accepting the award in Norway, Obama acknowledged the controversy of a US president engaged in two wars being awarded the prize, but took care to point out that 'One of these wars is winding down. The other is a conflict that America did not seek' (Obama 2009). This last comment that the war in Afghanistan was one 'America did not seek' camouflages the fact that shortly after 9/11 the Taliban were willing to hand over bin

Laden to a neutral Islamic country for trial to avoid a US invasion (Messerschmidt 2010: 145-6).[110]

Although Obama may have inherited the war in Afghanistan it is still one he has continued, escalated and righteously defended. Obama is very adept at promoting the horrific reality of war as an acceptable policy that the USA, the 'benign' unipolar leader of the world, is forced to engage in and only does so in self-defence. This dangerous rationalisation is closely tied to the mutually constitutive relationship between masculinity and militarism discussed throughout the thesis. Obama's acceptance speech of the Nobel Peace Prize, ironically, promoted the necessity and thus acceptability of war in this way. He acknowledged that 'war promises human tragedy' but argued that its existence 'is a recognition of history, the imperfections of man and the limits of reason' (Obama 2009). He employed Orwellian double-speak such as 'the United States of America has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms' (Obama 2009). He offered US intervention in Germany, Korea and the Balkans as examples and concluded that 'yes, the instruments of war do have a role to play in preserving the peace' (Obama 2009). Obama also prophesised about countries adhering to international standards that govern war but simultaneously preserved Westphalian notions of absolute sovereignty: 'I – like any head of state – reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to *defend* my nation' (Obama 2009, my emphasis). The implication is that the USA and Obama as its president only use military force defensively and thus righteously.

Building on Young's (2003) logic of masculinist protection, Messerschmidt has theorised that such rhetoric is the promotion of 'defensive violence' (2010). Messerschmidt links 'defensive violence' to a hegemonic masculinity that adopts 'the patriarchal position of a heroic masculine protector, instructing men, women, and children of the world to entrust their lives with him, in return for which he will only by necessity employ *defensive violence* to keep them safe from evil' (2010, p.170, original emphasis). Obama deploys this strategy of defensive violence in his rhetoric and post-hip-hip presidential masculinity more broadly. It is misleading when Obama claims that the 'world rallied around America after the 9/11 attacks, and continues to support our efforts in Afghanistan,

[110] By October, after weeks of bombings and violence, the Taliban again agreed to negotiate to hand bin Laden over to the USA, if the USA would pause bombing. Bush declined to do so (Messerschmidt 2010, p. 145-6).

because of the horror of those senseless attacks and the recognized principle of *self defense'* (Obama 2009, my emphasis). This claim aids the misperception of Obama as a 'lawyer-in-chief' and camouflages his deployment of violence in offensive, even pre-emptive ways. Obama expanded his 'War Against Al Qaeda' into Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, largely through the use of highly contentious and illegal weapons – remotely controlled armed mini planes known as predator drones.

In fact, Obama used more predator drones in his first year of office than Bush did in his entire presidency. He more than doubled their use in 2010 and continued the trend in 2011 (McCrisken 2011). As MsCrisken argues, while the increasing reliance on drones from Bush to Obama can be partly explained by advances in technology, more is going on here. Under Obama, the CIA might not be in the 'detention and interrogation business but it has stepped up the business of killing suspected terrorists in targeted drone attacks, signalling that Obama prefers a kill-not-capture policy' (McCrisken 2011, pp. 793-4). This extrajudicial 'kill-not-capture' policy cements the US approach of dealing with terrorists through illegal acts of war and military force. This contrasts with other countries that, under international law, treated the London, Madrid and Bali terrorists as criminals (International Commission of Jurists as cited in Messerschmidt 2010, p. 171). Moreover, such a policy contradicts Obama's rhetoric of defensive violence and the avant-garde militarism constructed in his visual discourse and embodied in his post-hip-hop presidential masculinity. I argue that this contradiction has been intentional. Obama and the political machine behind him have taken great care to distance Obama from the gung-ho militarised masculinity of Bush while pursuing the same policies. This became clear in May 2011 when the USA, under Obama's command, assassinated bin Laden, and again in September 2011 when Obama became the first ever US president to kill a US citizen when drone strikes in Yemen killed three US citizens, including supposed Al-Qaeda commander Anwar al-Awlaki and his son (Editorial 2012).

Thus, despite Obama's rhetoric of hope, change and 'Yes We Can', revenge for the wounded masculine pride of the USA (Parpart & Zalweski 2008, p.1), as personified in the death of bin Laden, was sought from the very beginning of Obama's presidency. Obama had repeatedly vowed to kill bin Laden in his election campaign (Adams and Walsh 2011) and clearly the US Government would not rest until bin Laden 'had been smoked out of his cave', to use his predecessor's infamous phrase. In Obama's own words to the nation on the eve of 2 May 2011: 'shortly after taking office, I directed Leon

Panetta, the director of the CIA, to make the killing or capture of bin Laden, the top priority of our war against Al Qaeda' (2011b).[111] Such comments recall Cohn and Enloe's (2003) assertion that it was never questioned, imagined or even discussed that military violence might not have been the most appropriate response to 9/11, whether in September 2001 or almost a decade later in May 2011 when bin Laden was killed because 'ideas about masculinity are so intricately and invisibly interwoven with ideas about national security. So-called realist strategic dictums for state behavior sound a lot like dictums for hegemonic masculinity' (2003, p. 1204).

Perhaps this is why Obama shifted his rhetoric in the aftermath of bin Laden's assassination away from his previous, arguably more passive, rhetoric about the war and US foreign policy. For example, in his address to the nation on the 2 May Obama repeatedly used the first person to say 'I can report to the American people, I directed, I was briefed on, I met repeatedly with my national security team, I determined, today at my direction, I as commander-in-chief' (Obama 2011d). As it turns out, the mellow but authentic masculinity of post-hip-hop Obama could still be effectively militarised when strategically useful. Obama knew the political value in owning the commander-in-chief role at such a historic moment. Just as Bush's approval ratings increased after 9/11, so too did Obama's after 'he killed' Osama (Stevenson 2011). In fact, 'most Americans and many others regard his [bin Laden's] death as President Barack Obama's finest strategic moment' and it 'altered the perception, in some quarters, that Obama is soft and inexperienced' (Stevenson 2011: 11 & 17). I argue that the perception that Obama was soft and inexperienced or a 'lawyer-in-chief' type was aided by his performance and embodiment of his post-hip-hop presidential masculinity and avant-garde militarism. It helped obscure, even camouflage, how Obama was actually a 'coolly efficient terrorist killer' (Klaidman 2012) who despite his constitutional law background, happily continued and strengthened his predecessor's foreign policy.

Obama's pride in the assassination, the praise he received, and the disturbing images of US citizens celebrating after bin Laden's death, are further testament to the deadly mix of revenge and wounded masculine pride that characterised the post-9/11 world (Zalweski & Parpart 2008). They also typify the pervasive link between masculinity and militarism

[111]Arguably, this was a problematic and even naïve policy goal considering bin Laden had long been a symbolic figurehead of Al Qaeda and his death could become 'a tipping point in the evolution of jihadism as a global strategic phenomenon' (Inkster 2011, p.8).

that has penetrated the US presidency so successfully. As Australian Queen's Counsel and human rights advocate Geoffrey Robertson pointed out, although the 'kill not capture' (or even trial) of bin Laden was a perversion of justice, it was ironically 'a win-win situation for both Osama and Obama. The latter gets re-elected as president and the former gets his fast track to paradise' (ABC Online News 2011).

Furthermore, bin Laden's assassination highlights the obvious contradictions in Obama's lawyer-in-chief rhetoric about upholding America's own democratic principles in conducting the 'WOT', a position he constantly proposes to distinguish himself from Bush. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech Obama declared: 'I believe the United States of America must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war. That is what makes us different from those whom we fight. That is a source of our strength. That is why *I* prohibited torture. That is why *I* ordered the prison at Guantanamo Bay closed' (Obama 2009, my emphasis). Bin Laden's assassination demonstrates that part of what Obama means by pursuing war 'in another theatre' is covert military action and extrajudicial killings that contravene international law and the democratic principles the USA supposedly holds so dear, democratic principles that Obama tirelessly promotes. In fact, Obama has spouted the same rallying myths of love for and sanctity of country, sovereignty, compatriots, God, liberalism and democracy that Bush did (Sadiki 2011, also see Landreau 2011 and Ivie & Giner 2009).

As noted at the end of Chapter 5, Obama also replicated Bush's foreign policy in the Latin American region and this provided further evidence of Obama's hypocritical rhetoric and commitment to imperial militarism. As the *Latin American Perspectives* editorial team concluded in a special edition on Obama's continued pursuit of Bush policy in the region, Obama's 'recourse in Latin American policy echoes the Obama Administration's belief in the efficacy of military power in Afghanistan and reveals the limitations of its foreign policy vision' (LAP Editorial Collective 2011, p. 19). Obama's presidential masculinity functions to obscure and camouflage these limitations in his administration's foreign policy vision and practice. A key part of this camouflage has been Obama's effective embodiment of the myth of American Exceptionalism. As De Genova points out Obama reinvigorates the myth of American Exceptionalism because US citizens elected a *black* man to the *White House*. This allowed the USA to once again claim its exceptionalism from Europe, assert itself as an 'empire of liberty' and pursue a type of 'anti-colonial imperialism' (2010, pp. 619-620). The *Latin American Perspectives*

editorial team call for critical theory to challenge the 'cultural foundations of empire rooted in the hetero-patriarchal and racist European/Protestant ideals and sense of superiority that legitimated Manifest Destiny and the "white man's burden" echoed by Obama's Administration' (LAP Editorial Collective 2011, p. 22). This thesis offers a similar critique.

Obama: US Hegemonic Masculinity Reformed and Empowered?

> Hegmonic masculinity is constantly being challenged and reconstituted in struggles that involve the strategies of masculinization and feminization of peoples, groups, values, occupations, and practices…Changes in the gender order, including changes in the construction of masculinities, are often triggered by structural changes in society and form part of the political struggles over the direction of social change. Competing visions of masculinity then are mobilized simultaneously in the pursuit of different ends. The power of hegemonic masculinity appears to lie in part in its flexibility in comparison with the restricted and monological representation of subordinate masculinities. (Hooper 2001, p. 76)

It is apparent that the 'great illusion' that Obama would lead a clear break from reckless US foreign policy and 'wean itself from its infatuation with war' was gone after Obama's first year in office (Bacevich in *The Nation* 2010). This thesis argues that the 'great illusion' was and continues to be aided by Obama's construction, embodiment and performance of his more contemporary, demilitarised and post-hip-hop presidential masculinity. I acknowledge that in some ways, Obama's complication of US masculinities has been positive. For example, I argued in my image analysis that Obama's identity is closely tied to his role as a loving father and husband, a role that signals more contemporary constructions of US presidential and African-American masculinities. His recent support for gay marriage also signals potential for a progressive masculinity and he has most definitely disrupted US, and possibly universal, norms of white male leadership (Puwar 2004).

However, Obama's presidential masculinity also camouflages US militarism and politics in new and insidious ways. This points to a more problematic and grander shift in US hegemonic masculinities that overshadows the more benign or positive patterns of masculinities emerging from the White House. Obama's ability to challenge and transcend, yet reinforce, some of the binaries that have traditionally policed masculinities is evidence of this shift. For example: black/white, intellectual/athletic, feminised/hypermasculinised,

and white collar/blue collar. Thus, Obama's hybridity adds weight to feminist theoretical claims that masculinities are 'multiple, dynamic and contradictory, due to their being actively constructed – they are processes, not character types' (Duncanson 2009, p. 64). Obama's presidential masculinity also aligns with Hooper's (2001) definition of hegemonic masculinity as fluid and adaptable – 'the characteristics of subordinate masculinities can be plundered to reinvigorate hegemonic masculinity, while previously hegemonic characteristics can be dropped or devalued' (2001, p. 61). Obama's presidential masculinity does this in new, sophisticated and complex ways. Obama plunders certain characteristics of subordinated masculinities (such as cultural blackness and fatherhood) and devalues previously hegemonic characteristics (such as overtly militarised understandings of masculinity) to reinvigorate his own unique presidential masculinity and potentially engender new modes of US hegemonic masculinity. Accordingly, a key aim of this thesis is to open the discussion about what Obama means for the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its shifting scope.

I argued in Chapter 3 that Obama's avant-garde militarism may be symptomatic of the 'gradual softening of hegemonic masculinities in the West' Hooper (2001) identifies and/or the *merging* of 'warrior protector' and 'rational-bureaucratic man' masculinities Carver (2008) explores. However, I argue that this *softening* and *merging* of hegemonic masculinities only partly explains the emphasis on consultation and governance (as opposed to hierarchical, militarised leadership) in Obama's visual discourse, as well as his avant-garde militarism and broader rhetorical re-positioning and camouflaging of the 'WOT' by his post-hip-hop presidential masculinity. If 9/11 momentarily halted the 'softening' trend amongst Anglo-American masculinities and made space for Bush's hypermilitarised presidential masculinity, then Obama's arrival surely reinstated it. Bush's presidential masculinity, like that of Rambo, became 'more and more the cartoon image of a little boy's fantasy of manhood' (Boose 1993, p. 74) and ultimately lacked sophistication. In post-9/11, post-Bush America, Obama's more contemporary, and notably demilitarised, hybrid presidential masculinity was warranted and once again pointed towards the flexibility and ingenuity of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, Cerelia Athanassiou (2014) has shown that Obama draws on warrior and rational bureaucratic masculinities to embody a 'warrior decision maker' masculinity that promotes 'return to the rule of law' rhetoric while nonetheless pursuing masculinist foreign policy. However, as my findings illustrate, I argue that Obama's embodiment of a more holistic and consultative presidential masculinity, of which his avant-garde militarism is central, is

profoundly racialised. This differentiates Obama's presidential masculinity from that of Bush as well as from previous Democrat presidents who, like Obama, performed somewhat demilitarised presidential masculinities.

Here it is important to recall Shaw and Watson's characterisation that:

> Obama's masculinities [are] full of essential contradictions. Obama is both a black and a white man, but also neither completely. He is both feminized and masculinized in the media. He plays the part of both the nerd and athlete, guy next door and Harvard elite. He has shown Zen-like calm but also his relentless attack mode. He is aware of his self-construction but maintains a refreshing authenticity. He is familiarly presidential but refreshing and new. (2011, p. 134).

This argument is compelling. Here, however, I posit that Obama's hybrid presidential masculinity transcends, manipulates and benefits from this and other contradictions as well as from the usual binaries that police masculinities, in particular African-American masculinities. Obama plunders, slices and seizes different traits from subordinate and hegemonic masculinities to suit his needs. This avoids a direct confrontation with both. By 'keeping it both real and proper' Obama can 'stand squarely between the class divides [and I would argue many others] in black [and white] America' (Shaw & Watson 2011, p. 212). This renders Obama's politics and masculinity 'post' hip-hop in the sense that he has further *depoliticised* the hip-hop project – he embodies and promotes problematic post-racial politics while downplaying the institutionalised racism saturating everyday life in the USA. He even uses the 'generational and culturally relevant vehicle of hip-hop' that Peoples (2008) identifies, but only strategically and superficially. Obama's domestic and foreign policies, unlike some parts of his presidential masculinity and underground hip-hop, are far from progressive.

In this chapter, I set out to demonstrate that Obama's presidential masculinity does indeed represent a break with Bush's militarised presidential masculinity, even if his politics and rhetoric do not. Even after Bush's conventional militarised presidential masculinity had been delegitimised to the point of failure, realist dictums have shaped Obama's contradictory, but superficially appealing, post-hip-hop presidential masculinity. In this way, Obama presented challenges for not only Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity but also feminist theorising. In the post-Bush era, militarised

masculinity ironically and more insidiously has a new, ghetto-cool, globally popular and multicultural face in Obama. To feminists aware of the deeply problematic and mutually constitutive relationship between masculinity and militarism, and its role in imperial projects, Obama's glorification and reinvigoration of American Exceptionalism, and thus also US militarism across the globe, in new, refreshing and subtle ways, is deeply concerning. Obama's contemporary hybrid presidential masculinity and avant-garde militarism is part of this process and does more than signal new patterns of masculinity emerging from the White House. It offers a potentially more sophisticated deployment and embodiment of hegemonic masculinity. Obama may very well be a thinking reed and African-American warrior after all, indicating that African-American hegemonic masculinity may not be that different from Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity when occupying the White House. We must therefore pose alternative ways of seeing Obama; 'rather than pointing to a black man finally crossing a racial barrier, we can [and should] paint Obama as an extraordinarily gifted, once-in-a-lifetime politician' (Gavrilos 2010, p. 8). This enables us to more easily analyse how this extraordinary politician stealthily constructs both his presidential masculinity and the militarising manoeuvres it enables. Obama's successful camouflaging of ongoing US foreign policy through his construction of an avant-garde militarism and contemporary hybrid post-hip-hop presidential masculinity is deserving of what Enloe (2004) so aptly called feminist curiosity and attention, but clearly not a Nobel Peace Prize.

Conclusion

In 2012, Enloe asserted that 'there are several things fuelling militarization now. One is the model of a certain type of masculinity and holding up that kind of masculinity as the most modern, the most protective, the most technologically sophisticated, and or, even the most threatening' (Enloe 2012b, p. 9). In this chapter, I have demonstrated that presidential masculinities are one of the many masculinities that should be investigated to shed light on the process of militarisation and ideology of militarism. Presidential masculinities involve militarising manoeuvres. Moreover, different presidential masculinities present different models of masculinity that in turn fuel different types of militarism.

Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity presented itself as the most paternalistic, righteous and appropriately subaltern masculinity for fending of the threat of US imperialism and unilateralism. In turn, Chávez propelled and legitimated militarism in

Venezuela as well as globalising militarism to some extent via his trade in weapons. Chávez did offer, especially under Bush, a nuanced performance and deployment of a national, regional and global type of hegemonic subaltern masculinity. However, as I argued in Chapters 4 and 5, this *caudillo* presidential masculinity, and its ability to function as a militarising manoeuvre, is dependent in part on US presidential masculinities and thus precarious and unstable in some ways. His increasingly desperate manifestation of 21st century subaltern hypermasculinity and the contradictions it exposed after Obama's arrival to the White House revealed this precariousness.

On the other hand, Obama's hybrid presidential masculinity presents itself as the most modern, technologically sophisticated and appropriately democratic masculinity for leading the USA on its rightful and exceptional mission of leading (read: militarising) the world. Indeed, Obama's hybrid, somewhat demilitarised and post-hip-hop presidential masculinity offers a more nuanced deployment and embodiment of US and perhaps global hegemonic masculinity. Put another way, Obama's presidential masculinity has the ability to camouflage, or at least obscure, ongoing US imperial militarism. Obama's presidential masculinity can and has been one of many of his administration's sophisticated militarising manoeuvres.

Conclusion

As I finished this thesis in the early months of 2013, it was an eventful time in Venezuelan politics. In October 2012, a cancer-riddled Chávez faced the polls against a far more organised and united opposition under Henrique Capriles, a Venezuelan lawyer of the centre right. Despite Chávez's illness and an empowered opposition, Chávez was elected president for a fourth time with a slightly smaller but still persuasive 54 per cent of the vote, almost 11 per cent more than Capriles. After his election victory, Chávez returned to Cuba for his fourth emergency cancer operation but before departing he named then Vice President Nicolás Maduro as his successor. This was a move Chávez had previously avoided, signifying to many his deteriorating health, and perhaps even his impending death. As the weeks passed, rumours circulated about Chávez's health while he remained in Cuba. His presidential inauguration, originally set for January 10 2013, was postponed. By mid-February, the government broke its silence and released the first image of Chávez in more than two months: he was lying in a hospital bed smiling, with his daughters by his side. Three days later, Chávez returned to Venezuela and was immediately quarantined in a Caracas military hospital. Then on 5 March 2013, the government announced it was expelling two US Embassy officials and Maduro accused Venezuela's 'historic enemies' of deliberately causing Chávez's cancer.[112] Hours later Chávez died.

After a teary Maduro announced Chávez's death on state television, military chiefs pledged their loyalty to the vice president and announced special deployments of police and army personnel to guarantee the peace. In the week that followed, there were both intense outpourings of grief for the 'revolutionary' as well as public celebrations of the 'dictator's' passing. Chávez was as polarising in death as he was in life. After his funeral, which was attended by world leaders and left-wing celebrities alike, Maduro announced that Chávez's embalmed body would be eternally displayed in a glass tomb in a military museum near Miraflores presidential palace. It was clear that the government wanted to enshrine Chávez's status, both symbolically and physically, in Venezuelan politics and history in an iconic and militarised way. This, along with the political events that unfolded over the following month, in particular the presidential election between Capriles and Maduro, raise further feminist insights into Chávez's legacy, presidential masculinity and his militarisation of Venezuelan politics. Moreover, the presidential election campaign, results and fallout,

[112] Maduro even called for a scientific commission into how Venezuela's enemies conspired to harm the *Commandante's* health (ABC News 2013).

including the response of the White House, further support key arguments made in this thesis. The campaign was defined by Chávez's highly gendered, militarised and racialised anti-imperial rhetoric yet the results were surprisingly close. After fourteen years, the 'Bolivarian Revolution' and political power more broadly had become so highly personalised around the charismatic Chávez that even his named successor could only scrape through in the usually one-sided Venezuelan polls. While Chávez's legacy was crystal clear, Venezuela's political future was not. Ideologically polarised debates around Venezuelan democracy and electoral systems ensued with the White House joining opposition leader Capriles in calls for a recount. Maduro was not impressed despite his presidential inauguration going ahead in mid-April 2013. Thus, in the next few pages I offer a brief outline of these events and their relevance to my thesis before elaborating on the contribution of my research as a whole to to the feminist global politics field.

In the lead up to the April 14 election, polls had Maduro winning with a convincing margin, repeating Chávez's victory over Capriles from October 2012. Petty tactics defined the campaign. Both Capriles and Maduro traded insults and largely ignored meaningful policy debates. The campaign rhetoric illustrated that the visceral racialisation and masculinisation of Venezuelan politics that had began under Chávez would continue despite his death. Capriles called Maduro a lying 'bird brain' and 'great fool' who was pretending to be Chávez. In one speech he even called Maduro a 'boy' and often referred to him as 'that bus driver' (Hellinger & Gable 2013).[113] Opposition supporters also circulated an image of Maduro on Facebook comparing him to a downs-syndrome child using the highly racialised, outdated and offensive term mongoloid.[114] In return, Maduro nicknamed Capriles a capricious 'Prince of the Bourgeoisie' and used gendered and homophobic language to label the opposition leader a 'little princess' who did not have a wife. In a nod to *caudillismo*, Maduro assured Venezuelans 'I have my woman, I like women' (Robertson 2013a). During the campaign, Maduro referred constantly to himself as the 'son of Chávez' and claimed that the former president had visited him in a dream as a

[113] Maduro was a bus driver before he entered politics and rose to prominence as Foreign Minister and then Vice President under Chávez.
[114] The caption read: *'El, es un niño especial, esto es un mongólico'* (He is a special child, that is a mongoloid) and the image showed a photo of a smiling down-syndrome toddler sitting beside three unflattering pictures of Maduro. In all three Maduro has his eyes closed. In the first, he is eating a banana, in the second playing a bongo and in the third he sports a frayed straw hat with a small bird figurine perched on top of it.

bird. Maduro then took to whistling like a bird during his campaign speeches. Maduro also insinuated that Chávez had played a role in the appointment of a Latin American Pope.[115]

Shortly before Chávez's death, Venezuelan political commentator Andrés Cañizalez surmised that the government was intentionally converting Chávez into a godlike figure and myth with religious roots. According to Cañizalez there was 'a political strategy to keep alive this idea that Chávez is not just a political leader but he's the father of the country, he's a patriarch, he's a figure who protects us, who takes care of everything for us, something more than a president' (as cited in Neuman 2013). Maduro's campaign pursued this strategy further: Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity and militarism is thus deeply entwined in the all-encompassing, god-like notions of leadership, fatherhood, paternalism and protection that Maduro now relies on. This is ironic considering early in Chávez's political career, he denied any responsibility in the development of the 'myth of Chávez' and commented that 'it would be very sad and unfortunate that a process of change, a revolutionary process, would be dependent on a *caudillo*'. In 2003, Chávez reiterated these humble sentiments: 'this revolution does not belong to a man or to a *caudillo* [but] belongs to the Venezuelan people' (Zúquete 2008, p. 100-101 and p. 109). However, the April 14 presidential election results indicate otherwise.

Maduro won the election but with a margin of less than two per cent against a resurgent Capriles. This equated to an almost 11 per cent drop in support over a short six-month period. Maduro received only 50.8 per cent of the total vote and Capriles trailed closely behind him at 49 per cent.[116]Venezuela was now even more divided than it had been under Chávez. Capriles refused to concede defeat and demanded a recount, claiming election irregularities. In his victory speech, Maduro indicated he would accept an audit. On the evening of the election, Vicente Díaz, the only *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (National Electoral Council or CNE) considered sympathetic to the opposition also backed calls for a recount (Al Jazeera 2013). However, the following day CNE President, Tibisay Lucena, announced that a recount would not occur because the CNE had already automatically audited 54 per cent of the vote and not detected any discrepancies between the electronic and paper votes (Robertson 2013b).[117] Later that afternoon amidst opposition protests, the

[115] Argentinean Francis Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope on 13 March 2013. Although Argentinean, he is of Italian background.
[116] Voter turnout was only slightly less than the October 2012 election hovering at 10 per cent.
[117] While Diaz is considered sympathetic to the opposition, the four other CNE directors, including President Lucena are linked to the government with varying degrees of sympathy. Diaz did not

CNE confirmed Maduro as president, who was now reiterating his constitutional and legal victory. Latin American leaders and others across the globe, including the Russian, Indian, French, Spanish and Chinese heads of government, promptly congratulated Maduro and officially recognised the election results. UNASUR (The Union of South American Nations) and regional trade bloc MERCOSUR also recognised the election as fair and transparent. However, despite the official CNE confirmation, the White House and the OAS, which Chávez had sparred with over the years, joined Capriles in calling for a recount.

The day after CNE confirmed Maduro as president, eight Venezuelans (apparently Maduro supporters) were dead and 61 people had been injured in post-election violence (Hellinger & Gable 2013). Both Maduro and Capriles called for peace but also accused each other of inciting violence. In ongoing demands for a recount, Capriles claimed he won the election and labelled Maduro an illegitimate president.[118] In turn, Maduro accused Capriles of destabilising the country and attempting a coup against his legitimate government. He asserted that he would not let 'another April 11' happen, directly referencing the failed 2002 coup against Chávez (El Universal 2013). Maduro also claimed the government had evidence of US-led plots (Lopez 2013) and declared that he did not even care if the USA recognised him as president (Newton, Romo & Shoichet 2013).

In the meantime, the Venezuelan Supreme Court highlighted that the manual recount of all votes Capriles was requesting was not possible under the Venezuelan election system (Newton, Romo & Shoichet 2013). Other commentators also noted that a manual recount of paper votes could actually exacerbate the situation, easily opening up opportunities for election fraud (Hellinger & Gable 2013). Nevertheless, on Thursday 18 April, CNE announced that they would audit the remaining 46 per cent of votes to preserve harmony amongst Venezuelans and avoid further violence. Capriles immediately accepted the CNE decision and claimed the audit would reveal the elections were fraudulent, even though the

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attend the presidential confirmation ceremony but pro-Chávez media sources reported that he had publically stated that he had 'no doubts' about the accuracy of the election results as they were audited and checked with the appropriate witnesses present (Robertson 2013b; Hellinger & Gable 2013).

[118] Capriles also urged the government to open a dialogue with the opposition and cancelled an opposition demonstration set for Wednesday 17 April. He claimed his rivals were planning to infiltrate the demonstration and trigger violence. Maduro refused to permit the opposition demonstration, accusing the opposition of plotting to massacre their own people and then blame the government. He also accused the US embassy of fuelling opposition violence (Newton & Shoichet 2013).

CNE would not be manually recounting 100 per cent of votes as per their demands.[119] At the time of writing, the audit was under way. The audit will take approximately one month to complete but the CNE has reiterated it will not reverse Maduro's victory (Hellinger & Gable 2013). Maduro was thus inaugurated as Venezuelan president on Friday 19 April. Chávez's 'Bolivarian revolution', at least officially, is set to continue until 2019 under Maduro's six-year presidential term.[120]

At the presidential inauguration Maduro swore to both the Venezuelan people and *supreme commander* Chávez that he would respect the constitution and 'promote an independent, free and socialist nation for all' (Robertson 2013c). Chávez's daughter placed the presidential sash over him symbolising the paternalistic politics that had became the norm under Chávez. In his inauguration speech, Maduro echoed Chávez's racialised anti-imperial rhetoric, attacking the opposition's strategy of spreading xenophobia and noting that regardless of the widened CNE audit, the opposition had other 'plans' (Robertson 2013c). Such rhetoric indicates that Maduro will continue to align opposition forces with the US empire, identifying both as enemies and employing the same threat exaggeration politics Chávez perfected.

Here it is important to note that while the CNE, like most of Venezuela's public institutions, is affected by partisanship, the Venezuelan electoral system is one of the most advanced in the world and is not easily open to fraud. As the Carter Center points out, both the opposition and the government have won and lost elections using the system and Capriles unequivocally accepted the October 2012 election results (2102, p. 8).[121] Furthermore, in

[119] The opposition requested the original audit of 54 per cent of the votes, completed immediately after the election on 14 April as per normal procedure, be considered null and void and a manual *recount* of all votes proceed. However, the CNE only agreed to widen the audit, not recount, the remaining 46 per cent of votes.

[120] Regardless of the widened CNE audit outcome, it is likely that the opposition will pursue a recall referendum against Maduro's leadership to cut his term short, as it did unsucessfully against Chavez in 2004. This highly democratic mechanism in the Venezuelan constitution, that Chávez himself ushered in, is important to consider in the often ideologically polarised debates on Venezuelan democracy.

[121] Here it is worth quoting the Carter Centre's final report on the October 2012 election at length: 'The Venezuelan voting system is one of the most highly automated systems in the world – from candidate registration to biometric identification of voters at the voting tables to casting votes on touchscreen machines to electronic transmission of results to centralized tabulation of results, the process is digital. This system has been in place for the past five national votes, with one modification this year [2012] to the location of the fingerprint identification mechanism…Overall, the parties agreed the voting system performed satisfactorily on Oct. 7, 2012' (2012, p. 8). Nonetheless, both Chávez and Maduro mobilised state resources in their re-election campaigns and the Carter Center notes this and the CNE's silence on the issue as valid concerns (2012, p.4). I agree

democracies across the globe, elections won with narrow margins are the norm. For example, Obama won the November 2012 US election with a closely comparable 3 per cent lead over Romney. These election results were not questioned. Thus, the global response to the 2013 Venezuelan election, including the USA's refusal to officially recognise Maduro as the legitimate president, further supports arguments made in this thesis regarding the USA's hegemonic 'tropicalisation' of Venezuela and the hypocrisy behind US 'democracy promotion' discourses and policies. Both have played a key role in rationalising US militarism and the 'WOT'. As noted throughout the thesis, the USA happily supports election results regardless of fraud claims when it is in their political interest to do so.

In summary, while Chávez is dead and the future of his beloved 'Bolivarian Revolution' is unstable, Chávez's powerful legacy and influence on Venezuelan politics and institutions remain intact. Maduro's god-like portrayal of Chávez during the campaign and his militarised description of the former president as the 'supreme commander' in his inauguration speech clearly epitomises this. Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity and the militarisation of Venezuelan politics that accompanied it, looms over Venezuela's near and far political future. As Watts and Lopez assert:

> The military's position is likely to be crucial…in the longer term the security forces will play an important role, not just because of their arms but also because of their influence. Representatives of the armed forces have three seats in the cabinet, hold top office in almost half of the 23 provinces, and play a key role in the oil industry and in social programmes. (2013)

Moreover, Maduro himself has never been in the military and this could make him vulnerable to the manipulation of senior military figures, which as a group, became more powerful after Chávez's death (Romero 2013). It is also noteworthy that in the lead up to the October 2012 election, Chávez successfully used the military as a political wedge against Capriles and accused the opposition of attacking the armed forces through a 'divide and conquer' strategy. In response, Capriles assured Venezuelans that the army would be well equipped under his leadership. The military thus became key to even the opposition's

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but note that this does not equate to election fraud. At the time of writing, reports on the April 2013 election were not yet available.

electoral platform. In turn, Capriles's masculinity and patriotism could be easily questioned, a strategy Chávez pursued in July 2012:

> The bourgeoisie…are scared of us because of 4 February 1992 [Chávez's failed coup attempt]. The Bourgeois candidate sent a message to the armed forces, yet he doesn't have the faintest idea what a solider is…just a few weeks ago he [Capriles] was making fun of our submarines and saying why are we buying planes, and now…he's saying that he cares about the army being well equipped! (Pearson 2012)[122]

The campaign rhetoric of the October 2012 and April 2013 presidential elections thus indicate the extent and success of Chávez's militarisation and masculinisation of Venezuelan politics. Similarly, Obama's victory in the November 2012 US presidential election ensures the continuation of a contrasting militarisation and masculinisation of US and global politics. Obama was re-elected for a second presidential term, with a convincing, at least in the US context, 51.1 per cent of the vote. He beat his rival, Republican Mitt Romney, by almost 3 per cent and by a far more significant margin amongst female and minority voters. Obama's contemporary hybrid presidential masculinity clearly triumphed over Romney's conservative, upper class millionaire, Mormon masculinity. During the presidential campaign, Obama was successful in distinguishing his politics, as well as his contemporary, demilitarised and post-hip-hop presidential masculinity from Romney, as he had done with Bush. For example, during his acceptance of the Democrat presidential nomination in September 2012 Obama both emasculated and hypermasculinised Romney. He asserted that his opponent was 'new to foreign policy' and then chastised Romney for what might be deemed a kind of 'irrational militarism':

> My opponent said it was tragic to end the war in Iraq, and he won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And while my opponent would spend more money on military hardware that our Joint Chiefs don't even want, I'll use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work – rebuilding roads and bridges; schools and runways. After two

[122] Despite this and on a more positive note, Capriles later said he would shift Venezuela's foreign policy, halting arms purchases from Russia and rethinking relations with Iran. According to Capriles, Chávez has spent more than $14 billion on Russian arms purchases. He said: 'I am not going to buy more weapons. I think the policy has been mistaken' (Watts & Lopez 2012).

> wars that have cost us thousands of lives and over a trillion dollars, it's time to do some nation-building right here at home. (Obama 2012)

Nevertheless, at the end of the same speech Obama declared that 'so long as I'm commander-in-chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known' (Obama 2012). Obama's rhetoric, avant-garde militarism and contemporary hybrid post-hip-hop presidential masculinity, like his dismissal of Romney's 'irrational militarism', aims to tells us a different story. Feminists must be mindful of this. As Kroes notes:

> Currently, the American defense budget approaches the combined defense budgets of all other nations, friends and foes combined. US defense outlay now consumes roughly half of all federal discretionary dollars. The US now has between 700 and 1000 military bases all over the globe. It can project military power in ever-new technological ways. (Kroes 2012, paragraph 23)

This thesis has exposed such contradictions and the gendered and racialised politics behind them. The research began by exploring the toxic and mutually constitutive relationship between militarism and masculinity in the political sphere and proposed the concept of presidential masculinities to do so. Through a focus on the presidential masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama this thesis cements existing feminist claims that masculinities shape global politics and global politics shapes masculinities, and offers several original findings to the field. The feminist focus on masculinities and global politics is relatively new (twenty years old at best) and concrete research on masculinities in specific geopolitical contexts, shaped by international political events, is crucial in achieving a better understanding of contemporary forms of militarism, power and state relations in the world today. This thesis offers such an analysis through the investigation of the militarisation and masculinisation of politics in contemporary Venezuela in relation to the defining war of contemporary times – the 'WOT'. As noted early in the thesis, feminist research is needed on how the 'WOT' has militarised different geopolitical regions and the masculinities that belong to them in diverse ways. My focus on Venezuelan masculinities goes some way to achieving this and fills the significant gap on 'Latin American' masculinities, militarised or otherwise, in the feminist global politics field. Through my focus on Venezuela, I have identified the different strategies used in the processes of militarisation and masculinsation that in some ways reflect Anglo-American practices but in others are unique. I identified how Chávez consolidated and radicalised his *caudillo* presidential masculinity via the

'WOT' so that he could construct a legitimate and notably white imperial enemy in Bush. This reflects Bush's own construction of toxic terrorist hypermasculinised villains and enemies (Messerschmidt 2010). Moreover, Chávez's *caudillo* logic of masculinist protection (Young 2003) reflects Anglo-American masculinity politics, but his subaltern hypermasculine performances on the global stage are unique, and reflect Venezuela's current and historical position in global politics and history.

Nonetheless, I acknowledge that in my two particular case studies, the power of the military may be a crucial factor in the type of presidential masculinity being adopted. Presidential or prime ministerial masculinities may look very different in countries where the military is a less influential institution, for example in many Western European countries. This could limit how my research approach and findings could be applied or replicated in other contexts. However, if Obama can perform a demilitarised presidential masculinity in the US where the political culture is traditionally and overtly militarised then militarised presidential masculinities are possible in countries where militarised political cultures are far from the norm. This is an interesting direction for further research that I intend on pursuing in relation to the current Australian political context. In Australia recent prime ministers have adopted more militarised leadership models in relation to refugee politics including Julia Gillard, Australia's first female prime minister. Refugee politics have become the politics of border protection, a notably militarised discursive move, which in the Australian context also relates to WOT politics. Research on this process of militarisation and the prime ministerial masculinities involved, including Gillard's front stage performances could expand, reiterate or challenge some of the findings from this research project. Most notably, through a focus on Gillard this type of research could investigate if and how female politicians complicate the performance of masculinities on the political stage. I could also address some of the methodological issues discussed in Chapter 2 by incorporating ethnographic methods, including interviews with political advisers.

Through my investigation of Bush's, Chávez's and Obama's individual presidential masculinities as well as the relationship between them, I offered further evidence for the hierarchical, geographical and relational nature of masculinities understood in Connell and Messerschmidt's reworking of hegemonic masculinity (2005). This was most clearly illustrated in Chapter 5 where I demonstrated how Obama's arrival to the White House directly threatened the legitimacy of Chávez's *caudillo* presidential masculinity. Chávez's

subsequent renegotiation of his overtly racialised anti-imperial rhetoric and subaltern hypermasculine performances on the global stage points towards the vital importance of race in masculinity politics as well as the contradictions and 'empty potency' of subaltern hypermasculinity more broadly. Indeed, the relationship between US and Venezuelan presidential masculinities was oppositional in a performative sense but also interdependent, even cooperative, when it came to realpolitik. These findings point towards the precarious nature of presidential masculinities, giving feminists and other critics opportunities to expose the politics that such masculinities camouflage. My argument that presidential masculinities function as militarising maneouvres in Chapter 6 is an attempt to conceptualise this and provide practical outcomes for feminists in real-world struggles against both US and Venezuelan militarism.

Contrary to most literature in the field, I have used the concept of hypermasculinity in conjunction with hegemonic masculinity to broaden and enrich my theoretical framework. This aligns with the postcolonial frameworks underpinning the thesis and its central focus on race, gender and geopolitics. Attending to the importance of race in both Chávez's and Obama's hybrid presidential masculinities is useful for the field. Attending to race promotes a fluid understanding of hegemonic masculinity and its ability to plunder subordinate masculinities and thus reinvigorate hegemonic masculinity in nuanced and powerful ways. The thesis also highlights the visceral racialisation of Venezuelan class politics that occurred under Chávez and is set to continue under Maduro.

Methodologically, my research offers new ways to research masculinities through a multimodal critical discursive approach. While some scholars in the masculinity and feminist global politics field have researched masculinities through visual discourses, my systematic image analysis of online presidential photo galleries offers a model for further research. My emphasis on the embodied aspects of masculinity throughout the thesis also contrasts with more traditional discursive approaches in the field by revealing how US-Latin American gender and geopolitics are embedded in the presidential bodies of Bush, Chávez and Obama. This offers further evidence to theorising in the feminist geography field on the importance of corporealities and subjectivities as sites of material and symbolic geopolitical tensions (Dixon & Marston 2011).

Lastly, this thesis offers original contributions to the field in relation to US Presidents Bush and Obama. My image analysis findings in Chapter 3 focused on Bush's conservative

embodiment and performance of US hegemonic masculinities during the early and defining years of the 'WOT'. This research adds weight to existing feminist scholarship on Bush as discussed in Chapter 1. Similarly, in Chapter 4, I illustrated how Chávez's hypermasculinisation of US-Venezuelan relations frustrated Bush's global heroic succourer hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt 2010) and exposed the contradictions of his 'WOT' inspired 'democracy promotion'. In Chapter 5, I tracked the shift from Bush's presidential masculinity to that of Obama, and examined changing US presidential, hegemonic and militarised masculinities – a key area of concern in both the feminist global politics and masculinities studies fields. As Connell asserts, any theory of masculinity worth having must examine the changing structure of hegemonic masculinity in different situations (1995, p. 81). This thesis offers such an analysis in the post-9/11, post-Bush era of US masculinity. I argue that Obama's contemporary, demilitarised and post-hip-hop presidential masculinity potentially engenders new modes of US hegemonic masculinity and powerfully camouflages ongoing US militarism. In addition to the disjunctions between Obama's rhetoric and policies in the 'WOT', the avant-garde militarism constructed in his visual discourse offers concrete evidence for this claim. This is a valuable finding for the field and contributes to the emerging scholarship on Obama and debates around his foreign policy.

This thesis has investigated the gendered and racialised dimensions of Bush's, Chávez's and Obama's presidential masculinities to make further sense of militarism, masculinities and politics. The ultimate conclusions drawn from this thesis confirm Enloe's long held argument that a variety of masculinities are needed for militarisation. Almost 20 years ago, she proposed that investigating some or any of them can demonstrate their weaknesses and interdependencies (Enloe 1993, p. 55). My research on the presidential masculinities of Bush, Chávez and Obama has attempted to do just this. By exposing the weaknesses, contradictions and interdependencies in and between these three particular presidential masculinities, this thesis contributes to the feminist critique of the militarised and masculinised politics they represent and enable. In particular, it reveals new and contrasting understandings of the masculinisation and militarisation of politics in a region often neglected by the field and not usually associated with the 'WOT' – Latin America.

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