

Venezuela: Was Another World Possible?

Global Research News Hour Summer Series 1

By [Julia Buxton](#) and [Michael Welch](#)

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Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#), [World](#)

Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#),
[History](#), [Oil and Energy](#), [Politics](#), [US NATO](#)
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“What we’re seeing is a reversal, complete erosion, of all of the gains that were made during this phase in the mid 2000s. Poverty is up, inequality is up, and these are for me extremely serious concerns which are simply not being addressed by the government’s economic policy.”

-Julia Buxton (Oct. 1, 2017)

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This week, we present special programming as part of the Global Research News Hour’s 2018 summer series.

Venezuela, once a beacon for democratic and social transformation for Latin American countries, and an inspiration for much of the progressive Left abroad, is now struggling under an unprecedented economic and political crisis.

Over the course of President Hugo Chavez’s first decade in power, Venezuela saw households in poverty reduced by 39 per cent and those in extreme poverty down by more than half. Enrollment in higher education had doubled. Real social spending per person had more than tripled. [1]

A recent survey however, put together by three universities, found 87 per cent of Venezuelan households to be living in poverty, a 38 per cent increase since 2014. In 2017, 64 per cent of Venezuelans had lost about 11 kg of weight due to hunger. The homicide rate in Venezuela increased by 345 per cent in 2017 over 1998. One in five Venezuelans in 2017 were the victim of some crime with 65 per cent preferring not to report to authorities out of distrust of the authorities. Six out of ten people between the ages of 18 and 24 no longer have access to higher education, and 38 per cent of children under 17 have stopped attending school citing problems with transportation, blackouts, and lack of food. [2]

Political chaos sweeping the country both from within and abroad has been taking its toll. Protests against Maduro’s government sprang up in 2017. Foreign powers have [rejected the results](#) of the last presidential election as fraudulent, with the [US and Canada imposing additional sanctions](#). [3]

To be certain, low oil commodity prices [which were the object of manipulation], Venezuela

has been very dependent on its oil exports, is a big part of the problem. There has also been long-standing animosity toward the independence displayed by the Chavistas, in opposition to America's military and economic hegemony of the South American continent.

But to dwell on these factors alone do a disservice to other problematic dynamics in play. For example, the failure to address legacies of corruption and social violence, ideological tensions between state and worker management, and those between the civilian and military elements of the ruling PSUV (Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela) and government.

As Venezuela under newly re-elected President Nicolas Maduro struggles with this crisis, we present a rigorous dissection of the events there in the last two decades and explore the prospects for the country moving ahead.

Professor Julia Buxton has made Venezuela the particular focus of her research. In a keynote address delivered in Winnipeg on October 1 2017, the academic plows past the ideological rhetoric, and provides insights into the human experience of the changes brought about under Chavez, and unaddressed oversights which contributed to the turmoil of today. This speech was presented as part of the University of Manitoba based Geopolitical Economy Research Group's [Revolutions Conference](#).

Audio provided by videographer [Paul S Graham](#).

Julia Buxton is Professor of Comparative Politics at Central European University's School of Public Policy, and Senior Research Associate at the [Global Drug Policy Observatory, Swansea University](#). A specialist on Latin America and an expert on Venezuela, receiving her PhD from the London School of Economics, Buxton has thematic expertise on democratisation and transition processes, post conflict recovery, and conflict analysis, including conflict sensitive design and policy implementation, as well as gender and gender sensitive design. She has authored numerous books and articles on Venezuela in the Chavez period and on Latin America in general.

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The [Global Research News Hour](#) airs every Friday at 1pm CT on [CKUW 95.9FM](#) in Winnipeg. The programme is also podcast at [globalresearch.ca](#) . Excerpts of the show have begun airing on [Rabble Radio](#) and appear as podcasts at [rabble.ca](#).

Community Radio Stations carrying the Global Research News Hour:

CHLY 101.7fm in Nanaimo, B.C - Thursdays at 1pm PT

Boston College Radio [WZBC 90.3FM NEWTONS](#) during the Truth and Justice Radio Programming slot - Sundays at 7am ET.

[Port Perry Radio](#) in Port Perry, Ontario -1 Thursdays at 1pm ET

[Burnaby Radio Station CJSF out of Simon Fraser University](#). 90.1FM to most of Greater Vancouver, from Langley to Point Grey and from the North Shore to the US Border.

It is also available on 93.9 FM cable in the communities of SFU, Burnaby, New Westminister, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Surrey and Delta, in British Columbia, Canada. – Tune in at its new time – Wednesdays at 4pm PT.

Radio station [CFUV 101.9FM](#) based at the University of Victoria airs the Global Research News Hour every Sunday from 7 to 8am PT.

[CORTES COMMUNITY RADIO CKTZ 89.5](#) out of Manson’s Landing, B.C airs the show Tuesday mornings at 10am Pacific time.

[Cowichan Valley Community Radio CICV 98.7 FM](#) serving the [Cowichan Lake](#) area of Vancouver Island, BC airs the program Thursdays at 6am pacific time.

Campus and community radio [CFMH 107.3fm](#) in Saint John, N.B. airs the Global Research News Hour Fridays at 10am.

Caper Radio CJBW 107.3FM in Sydney, [Cape Breton](#), Nova Scotia airs the Global Research News Hour starting Wednesday Morning from 8:00 to 9:00am. Find more details at www.caperradio.ca

RIOT RADIO, the visual radio station based out of [Durham College](#) in Oshawa, Ontario has begun airing the Global Research News Hour on an occasional basis. Tune in at dcstudentsinc.ca/services/riot-radio/

Radio Fanshawe: [Fanshawe’s 106.9 The X \(CIXX-FM\)](#) out of London, Ontario airs the Global Research News Hour Sundays at 6am with an encore at 4pm.

Los Angeles, California based Thepowerofvoices.com airs the Global Research News Hour every Monday from 6-7pm Pacific time.

Notes:

1. <http://cepr.net/press-center/press-releases/report-examines-economy-and-social-indicators-during-the-chavez-decade-in-venezuela>
2. <http://elucabista.com/2018/02/21/resultados-encovi-2017-radiografia-la-crisis-venezolana/>
3. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-venezuela-politics-rights/venezuela-systematically-abused-foes-in-2017-protests-rights-groups-idUSKBN1DT0J4?feedType=RSS&>

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