

**Stiven Tremaria Adan**

*Policing, public security governance and statebuilding in Bolivarian Venezuela*

In the scope of the transformation process of the Venezuelan political system from a liberal representative to a participatory democracy as a cornerstone of the 21st Century Socialism project, the governments of Hugo Chávez (1999-2013) and Nicolás Maduro (2013-today) have implemented a comprehensive reform of the state institutional framework and a reorientation of the principles guiding the delivery of public services. Among other institutional redesigns, a broad restructuring of the police system has been carried out since 2006, driven mainly towards an overall reorganization of the functional structure of the law enforcement agencies nationwide and a reorientation of the public security policy and of the patterns for police service delivery.

Under the assumption that policing is within the realm of power relations inherent to each political regime, and therefore coupled with a certain statebuilding project propelled by the ruling elites, this dissertation research is aimed to determine to what extent a correlation between the patterns of political governmentality and the process of state reform set in motion by the Chávez and Maduro administrations is mirrored in the restructuring process of the Venezuelan police apparatus. Critical elements relating to the competencies and exclusive powers attributed to the police for exercising social control on the population and organizing public life, the underlying rationale of the citizen security policies, and the strategies for police service delivery will be analyzed in depth. A deep characterization of the newly designed law enforcement system will help to illustrate the kind of institutions of social control that the current political project aims to build, and what are the patterns on policing adopted by the Venezuelan developing democracy.

This dissertation research will depart from Michel Foucault's theoretical contributions (1978, 1980) regarding the governmentality theory, which refers to the practices, rationalities, and techniques of power through which the state exercises control over the population. Likewise, it is also based on a transversal approach under which political governance and policing devices will be intertwined with the process of building a participatory democracy model (Bachrach and Botwinick 1992). The research will be conducted through qualitative methods of data collection, such as documentary and discourse analysis, participant observation and interviewing, as well as will also include an empirical-based micro-level analysis through fieldwork.