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## **SECURITY SECTORS OF VENEZUELA**

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**Abstract:**

Taking into consideration the crisis that Venezuela is passing at this time, I considered the opportunity to analyze what could be the factors that occurred the pithiest for the failure of this state. I write this essay for the purpose of understanding in which sectors of security, this state is a failed state. The importance of this paper for the field of international relations consists in the method I use in this approach. Based on Barry Buzan's vision over the concept of security and securitization, I will try to analyze each security sector by taking a close look on what is happening in this state and, judging by the way these sectors intertwine each other.

*Key words: words: security sector; military; economy; state; power; politics; United States of America*

Keeping in mind that security is a politics that should not be concentrated only on the military sector, it has a particular nature that allows it to cover a wide range of issues, it can be applied to five essential sectors of the state. These would be the social sector, the economic sector, the environmental sector, the political sector and last but not least, the military sector that is also considered the traditional sector for the operationalization of this concept.<sup>1</sup> I will analyze the way security works in the other four sectors of a state the is passing through a very vulnerable period in its history due to factors that could more or less be influenced by the political decisions of the leaders.

This way of thinking by dividing the security concept into sectors to make it easier to analyze the situation of a state, became more and more popular especially during the Cold War that nowadays is a normal and quite necessary thing to specify whether you are referring to the economic security sector for example or to the social security sector when making an affirmation or debating about it. To be easier to define each sector, we can look at the types of interaction, for example in the military sector the interactions of forceful coercion but also the two levels that concern security, the offensive and defensive and the perception of these levels of the degree of arming of other states. In the political sector it refers to recognition of the governing authority by the ideology that offers them the legitimacy. In the economic sector the main relation refers to trade and finance and access to goods that offer the state a certain level of welfare that translates into power for that state. The social sector refers to interactions from which results collective identity, creating

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security - A New Framework for Analysis*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

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the necessary conditions or the evolution of cultural patterns, language and even religion. And the last one is the environmental sector that regards the interactions between human beings and nature, the maintenance of the ecosystem in normal parameters constitutes the support for all forms of life.<sup>2</sup> Now that there is a clear definition of what each security sector means, I will draw my attention on the security and stability of these sectors in the state of Venezuela with the purpose of finding the main reason why this state has failed in governing.

### **1. The Political Sector**

First of all, I will start by looking at the political level to see if the condition of recognition of the legitimate regime and its representatives is respected, and if the population is represented by the political elite. Judging by the actual situation in Venezuela, there are huge tensions in what regards representation of the people's interest that have to be spoken and heard. As the situation is very insecure, any time there can be "born" new leaders from the will of reestablishing the equilibrium, as it happened in what regards the appearance on the political stage of the new figure Juan Guaidó. He is a supporter of the United States and has very close ties to the American decision makers, fact that gave him the courage and support needed to declare himself rightful president of Venezuela after a conversation with the United States vice-president, Mike Pence that promised him the support in what regards this decision.

Juan Guaidó argues publicly that the elections that took place in May were illegal and that makes Nicolas Maduro an illegitimate president of Venezuela. Even though this new character is very promising in its speeches and visions for the future of Venezuela, it has very little support from the population and this is a legitimacy problem even though it has all the support from United States, around 81% of the Venezuelans did not hear about him before the date of 23 January when he declared himself president.<sup>3</sup> Looking at what a secure political sector should be like, I can confirm that the situation in Venezuela is not any close to what the definition of security refers to. Illegitimacy is the word that describes the best the alternating power process that is taking place at the political level of the Venezuelan state. The ideology that is promoted by one or another temporary political figure is not in relation with what the population believes and not even the cleavages formed do not represent the categories existing at the level of the civil society. From here come most of the problems that emerge into crisis and attempts of coup d'état, destabilizing the initial equilibrium of any sovereign state apart from its predominant ideology.

### **2. The Military Sector**

The next sector I will be referring to is the military sector, being considered the field charged with providing traditional security. In this regard, there are two fields, the defensive and the offensive that concern the security status of a state from the military point of view. The measures taken in this field during the Nicolás Maduro administration regard more the intervention of the military forces in the internal affairs of the state in relation directly with the population. Venezuela doesn't have problems with the neighbors or other foreign actors bigger than the problems it has in the domestic field. One measure that was criticized at the international level is the "Plan Patria Segura" that presupposed the

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<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde. 1998. *Security - A New Framework for Analysis*. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Croce, Celina della. 2019. *People Dispatch*. March 1. Accessed June 1, 2019.

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presence of 21,000 soldiers on the streets of Venezuela. Maduro, president of this state, made massive changes regarding the administrative sphere and that means promoting around 200 military cadres in offices as generals.

Corruption also made its way through the and in some cases, militaries have betrayed their vow by creating ties with the drug mafia on the territory of this state instead of fighting it in purpose creating a safe environment for the citizens. Maduro`s initiative of militarizing the county has its origins in a historical fact that the previous leader, Hugo Chávez came from the ranks of generals. However, all the effort put into creating security is for nothing if we look at the statistics showing the murder rate that during a year did not changed at all. Behind all the numbers, one thing is for sure, the fact that using coercive force doesn`t help diminish the insecurity in a territory, it only creates more terror and the will of the population to leave the country is more and more present. Also the military forces are the once that in time of shortages, they command on how the very few of the food resources left are distributed and to who, this being a very big problem taking into account the need of the population for self-governing.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. The Economic Sector**

The following security sector I will be referring to is the economic sector. This field refers to the all the links this state has with international trade markets even if it`s a major importer or exporter, it refers also to the power of production in terms of means and workforce that bring wealth and prosperity to the state as a whole, establishing a status of the state among the international hierarchy, which means power in the international system. In what regards Venezuela, the problems of the economic sector have their roots in the political one. Because of extremely bad governing of Nicolas Maduro at the macroeconomic level, most problems occurred from the lack of transparency and from here, the country`s woes extended very fast affecting also the other sectors of the state`s security causing big vulnerabilities. From the statistics the International Monetary Fund have taken into account in what regards the economic situation of this country results that the economic power of this state has shrunk with 18% only during last year. It is also known that between 2013 and 2017, Venezuela`s economy has contracted over one-third, according to the information owned by the International Monetary Fund. There has been a massive migration from Venezuela since 2015, three million people have left the country, resources like water and electricity are extremely limited, the medical system can no longer be considered in usable standards and, of course, malnutrition is a national problem. For this, the first to be accused at the international level was Nicolas Maduro that blames the United States for dragging the country into an economic war against them.<sup>5</sup>

The main and most important reason why the relation between United States and Venezuela is so tense is the oil possessed by the Venezuelan state and the defectors maned these resources are used in the first place in relation with the United States and in the second place in relation with the population on this filed state. As if the this situation wasn`t enough, the United States announced through the Treasury Department that there could be a series of sanctions applied to Venezuela`s state-owned company in what regards the export of diluents to the international shippers. The purpose of this measure is to limit

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<sup>4</sup> Ventura, Marcel. 2014. Venezuela`s Agony: Weak President, Strong Generals, Riots and Cocaine. April 14. Accessed June 1, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Sabga, Patricia. 2019. What brought Venezuela's economy to ruin? February 1. Accessed June 7, 2019.

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president Nicolas Maduro's access to profit from the oil resources the state possess.<sup>6</sup> This would be the brief exposure of the economic status of this degrading state in the context of analyzing the state's economy as a separated sector when talking about security. Therefore, from the perspective of economic security, Venezuela is not a secure state, its economic vulnerabilities regard in the first place the lack of stable relations with other international trade markets for oil industry raw materials and in the second place, the threat of imperialistic extension for the United States that keep interfering in Venezuela's affairs.

### **4. The Social Security Sector**

All the radical changes these people go through has had a big and negative impact on many aspects of their lives. At the level of the civil society, the people suffer and endure major repercussions in their everyday life. Social security presupposes a safe environment, far from threats that could disturb the equilibrium on which is based the evolution of the society that means creating and maintaining the collective identity of a people, evolution of cultural patterns and, the main element that constitutes a nation, language. In what regards the social security sector, Venezuela's problems have reached a new level of insecurity, meaning people are desperate from the lack of medicine, disease are spreading rapidly and causes mass migration towards neighbour countries. As the statistics show, 90% of the country's population lives below the line of poverty and most of the families can't ensure basic food needs.

To better describe de dramatic situation of these people, Secretary General of the Organization of American States made an affirmation that compares the situation in Syria with Venezuela. Because of the spread malnutrition, newborns in Venezuela are less likely to survive than the ones in Syria. In what regards security, Venezuela is in the first place in the hierarchy of the countries with the highest crime rate in the world, more than 73 Venezuelans die each day violently.<sup>7</sup> Form living in such in such miserable conditions and concentrating on the daily worries of how to survive, politics and their will of changing something at the institutional level is quite far from their daily thoughts. Somehow, some directions are distinguishable when it comes to political manifestations of the existing societal cleavages, the institutionalization of the civil society did not work as expected in the case of this state. Formations of different orientations almost arrived on the point of stating a civil war instead of gathering against the abusive measures of the state counting on a common collective interest that they could have built as a nation.<sup>8</sup>

I can conclude from here that the civil society has its own guilt in the emerging tensions that are now at the political level judging from their lack or participation at the political level, not being, in my opinion, aware of their power of influence over the political sphere. Returning to the importance of the social security sector, for the reasons debated above, the Venezuelan state has a very unstable internal situation with threats that come from inside, from the civil society level that has a very high risk of starting a civil war at any time, but not against the state, but against each other.

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<sup>6</sup> Rampton, Roberta. 2019. U.S. tightens Venezuela oil sanctions, indicates more actions to come. June 7. Accessed June 9, 2019.

<sup>7</sup>Quick facts: Venezuela's humanitarian crisis. April 10. Accessed June 9, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> García-Guadilla, María Pilar. 2004. "THE MULTIPLES FACES OF VENEZUELAN CIVIL SOCIETY: POLITIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRATIZATION." Research paper, Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## 5. The Environmental Sector

The last but not least of the five security sectors I used for analyzing the situation Venezuela is passing, is the one referring to the environmental problems. A report published by The World Bank speaks about the problems that Venezuela is facing in this sector. One main problem is deforestation that if it isn't stopped or at least decreased it can cause extended damage to the biosphere, one other major problem that Venezuela has to deal with is the lack of water supply taking into account the high level of industrialization of the country, running water is a necessity for ensuring a decent living standard for the population. Due to the big number of rare species of tropical plants and animals, Venezuela has to take a series of measures to protect their habitats in order to create a safe environment<sup>9</sup> and to remove any type of vulnerability even in this sector, only this way it will be ensure security in all security sectors.

## Conclusions

Through the course of this paper I have analyzed the particularities and importance of the of the security sectors of Venezuela, by understanding the main most pregnant problems of this state and the way its decision makers think and directions chosen, its foreign relations with major powers like the United States, its position on the international arena, and most importantly, analyzing the state of Venezuela. Being a particular type of state, due to its geostrategic positioning, leaders and societal cleavages, the perspective from which I choose to analyze this state helped me understand the importance of operationalization of the subject in purpose of obtaining the best results for the analysis.

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