

Chapter 77

Analysis of the dynamics of the political conflict in the protest "Toma de Venezuela"

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the dynamics of political conflict that occurred during the 2016 Toma de Venezuela protest. This was a series of protests led by the political opposition demanding free and fair elections, and an end to the government of President Nicolás Maduro and his party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). Despite the intensity of the protests, the government managed to maintain power and the opposition's demands were not met. The methodology used for the analysis is descriptive-documentary, using premises elaborated by Doug McAdam, Sidney

Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. The strategic interaction between the participating actors in the conflict situation is established through the Hawk-Dove Game theory. This theory is based on the idea that each party has two options: adopting an aggressive or a peaceful stance, where the results will depend on the choices of both parties and their consequences. In conclusion, it is highlighted that the Toma de Venezuela has been a reminder of the widespread discontent with the government and the country's economic crisis, generating continuous political tension in the following years. This study allows for a better understanding of the dynamics of political conflicts and negotiation and resistance processes in contexts of restricted and polarized democracies.

Keywords: Venezuela, political crisis, game theory, hawk–dove game.

1 INTRODUCTION

The political crisis in Venezuela is a conflictive fabric where the question arises from the premise of how the Caribbean country got to that point, equivalent to countries affected by wars such as Syria, Sudan and Yemen? A key lies in the strategies that the government and the opposition have applied, thus, with the death of Chávez, a new stage in Venezuelan politics arose and, after the victory of the opposition in the 2015 parliamentary elections, an emerging relationship forces that have exacerbated the political, economic and social crisis.

In this way, the topic becomes relevant, because its crisis illustrates the value of democracy and the different nuances of the social and political behavior of the forces that interact in the aforementioned phenomenon. For this reason, the intention of the study is framed in the analogy with the Hawk-Dove model of game theory, since it allows the demonstration of two positions that must be avoided or reduced, since, otherwise, they can generate a spiral of violence or anti-political from which it is difficult to get out, where Venezuela is a clear example of this (Abramson, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of the present investigation is an attempt to try to understand and explain the nature of the current Venezuelan Government; The modern governance paradigm advocates for a democratic behavior of political actors and game theories allow to

better visualize when an actor is playing in favor of their own interests and to the detriment of the collectives, or when they are betting on zero-sum results and he does not play for win-win results.

That said, this article begins with a review of the theoretical framework of game theory and the hawk-dove dilemma raised by John Maynard Smith, thus contextualizing the political situation in Venezuela, which has experienced an escalation of the conflict since the death of Hugo Chavez. Finally, under the aforementioned paradigm, the Venezuelan situation is analyzed through the classification of the actors and an analysis of the strength of each one of them.

The Venezuelan situation, by the end of 2016, was at a critical point within a critical context that presented several edges; the political authors, weeks before, called for a large mobilization that would provoke strong intimidation in the national government of Nicolás Maduro, this concentration was called, by its organizers, as "Take of Venezuela", which had the purpose of protesting against the constitutional rupture that the decision of the National Electoral Council (CNE) represented and prevented the referendum against the president from taking place that year (Reichenbach, 2016).

In this sense, the call of the opposition leadership with the massive support of the citizens, who had created high expectations with a change in the political and economic leadership, brought with it hundreds of thousands who came out to protest, leaving a balance of one dead (police official) and several injured (BBC Mundo, 2016); This action was the last known of the Unity Table (MUD) before its disintegration. Likewise, another important aspect was the 2016 national strike called by the MUD for the end of October, to which the different economic sectors of the country strongly affected by the economic, political and social situation were called. This strike was considered a sign of rejection of the national government, and its satisfactory compliance added more strength to the opposition that visualized the cessation of the government of Nicolás Maduro. On the part of the ruling party, it was conceived as another example of the economic war that the economic sectors have waged against the country for years (Portal Misión Verdad, 2016).

Regarding the atmosphere prior to the march on November 3, it must be taken into account, on the part of the ruling party, that they had the confidence of being an institution elected by democratic means, in such a way that their actions were within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic, in preserving democracy and subverting order; This did not represent an attack against Chavismo per se, but an attack against the Magna Carta and the democratic system.

Consequently, the defense of the status quo of the ruling party served to argue that the opposition irresponsibly wanted to lead the country into a confrontational scenario (Portal Telesur, 2016). This is important because it meant that the ruling party was not willing to give in to the opposition's non-peaceful path and, if they incited violence, would be forced to respond with violence.

2 THE APPLICATION OF GAME THEORY

In general terms, game theory consists of studying situations of conflict and cooperation that are called games, where rational subjects (players) interact, and behaviors and predictable results are analyzed, through individual decisions. o agreements between players; if it is individual, it is not played cooperatively and, if agreed, it is played cooperatively (Pérez et al., 2004). Game theory is considered to represent important analytical material used in rational choice, thus, more than a theory (it lacks hypotheses), it is an approach or a way of conceiving a certain social reality (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2009). This, in short, consists of carrying out an exercise using specific rules, actors, strategies, punishments and rewards to analyze or predict the behavior of certain actors in particular contexts.

The Hawk-Dove model originated with John Maynard Smith, who used game theory to explain the behavior of some species of the animal kingdom that escalate in conflict, but when they come into physical contact, one of the animals gives in and leaves the fight. (Abramson, 2006). Applied to human reality, the appreciation of the hawk and the dove is simplified because, when it is used to explain social conflicts, two species are not used (both contenders are of the human species), in addition, the dove can also climb, bluff or bluff; neither is the prize for the fight food, territory or control of the females, and there is not necessarily a physical fight where someone gets hurt.

The most important thing for the development of this research is the relevance of the hawk-dove theory as a way of understanding politics with the defense of democracy, in this sense, the hawk-dove analogy could be called in the different manifestations of both actors , Government and opposition, in terms of a duty to be, in the way of doing politics defending and preserving democracy, with a review of the behavior of both actors within the framework of the principles framed in the Constitution and the pertinent international instruments of the context (Requí, 2006).

Such principles establish that a) victory or appeal to the detriment of the other should not be achieved, but strategies should be oriented towards mutual benefit; b) concessions or offers should be proposed rather than demanded; c) interests should be explored and flexibility open; d) action must be clear and transparent; e) accept unilateral losses as a way of reaching agreements; f) if it has to be yielded, it is given in accordance with the principles, not by the pressures or arbitrary wills of the other (Requí, 2006).

In politics or any other field, it is not difficult to label certain human attitudes as hawk or dove, in fact, it is possible to take it to another example if you like: two drivers in their cars driving face to face on the same road, each driver has the option to continue or detour. A hawk driver will naturally drive and not back off the road, while a pigeon driver, as the distance shortens, will increase his desire to back off; the hawk driver is intrepid, reckless and reckless (greedy for the resource), while the dove driver is prudent (he puts the resource before his own integrity) (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2009).

Hence, it is made clear that the hawk-dove theory can serve to better explain and understand power relations in a certain case, such as Venezuela, but it must be reiterated that it does not mean that hawk and

dove are models to be applied in the Rather, the idea is to identify and correct or prevent such types of behavior in politics.

Finally, when referring to the term political conflict, the approaches of Tilly et al. (2004), who understand it as an episodic, public and collective interaction between the creators of claims and their objects, when at least one government is a claimant, an object of claims or a part of the claims, if carried out, it will affect the interests of one of the plaintiffs. For this reason, the episodic is non-continuous and excludes votes or elections where the rallies can serve, later, for a political conflict; The public, for its part, does not take into account what happens in churches or companies, and the figure, the Government, either as an object, as a claimant or mediated. The political conflict or contention can take the form of contingent or transgressive development through collective actions and social mobilizations that are related to the political context that encourage or discourage them, so it corresponds, in this research, to identify the type of political conflict that occurs in Venezuela according to the approaches of Tilly et al (2004).

3 CONTEXT OF THE MOBILIZATION “TOMA DE VENEZUELA”

The Venezuelan situation, by the end of 2016, was at a critical point within a critical context that presented several edges; the political authors, weeks before, called for a large mobilization that would cause strong intimidation in the national government of Nicolás Maduro, this concentration was called by its conveners as "Take of Venezuela", which had the purpose of protesting against the rupture that represented the CNE's decision and prevented the referendum against the president from taking place that year (Reichenbach, 2016).

However, said point was nothing more than the result of a conflict situation that had been escalating since the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013; the Venezuelan caudillo who had come to power for the first time in 1999, stood for re-election in October 2012 for a third consecutive term, an election that he would win despite his delicate state of health caused by the cancer that affected him, medical situation that would precipitate his death five months later. Chávez would be succeeded by his vice president, Nicolás Maduro, who would have to face new elections, a process riddled with irregularities that would end up giving him victory with a tight margin of less than 1% over the opposition candidate, Henrique Capriles.

From that moment on, the political situation in Venezuela went from a tense calm to an escalation of the conflict that would continue, incessantly, until 2016. In October 2016, a national strike was called by the MUD, to which the different economic sectors of the country affected by the economic, political and social situation. This strike was considered a sign of rejection of the national government, and its satisfactory compliance added more strength to the opposition that visualized the cessation of the government of Nicolás Maduro; by the ruling party was conceived as another example of the economic war that the economic sectors have waged against the country for years (Portal Misión Verdad, 2016).

In this order of ideas, the different actors, in all conflict situations, intervene and have different levels of leadership; Among those who have played a leading role in this crisis, Nicolás Maduro, President of the Republic, stands out, whose trigger was the defeat of the parliamentary elections in 2015, which has led to the design of authoritarian strategies (abuse of power), but based on political dialogue, with the purpose of delaying time and diminishing the protests, likewise, with the media, he makes his followers believe a state of normality and tranquility that does not really exist, for which reason he seeks to preserve power and prevent the recall referendum, as well as the march to Miraflores, for which they used dissuasive methods and intimidation; His role, along with that of his closest political circle, was to resist the latent situation of conflict that was intended to remove him from power.

Thus, Henry Ramos Allup (general secretary of Acción Democrática [AD] and president of the National Assembly) played a leading role, as he supported the actions of activating a political trial by declaring the abandonment of office, and requested a dialogue as long as it was fulfilled. with some fundamental conditions, within the framework of political change for the country, in a transition to democracy and in restitution of the constitutional thread. The trigger for him has been his own arrival at the presidency of the National Assembly, which automatically placed him as the counterpart of Nicolás Maduro. On the other hand, it was also Ramos Allup who declared the suspension of the march on November 3, which was definitely not going to take place, this brought him conflicts with the most radical wing of the opposition.

In this way, Leopoldo López (leader of the popular will) had a limited role because he was in the Ramo Verde military prison, however, he continued to be an important figure within the political scene of the country and the leadership within the party he formed, Voluntad Popular, with a radical position before Maduro. López came from leading a political movement called "La Salida", to remove Maduro from power, thus, his radical position in the face of the conflict caused a distance with other members of the opposition. In this sense, during the 2016 situation, he maintained his same position, as did María Corina Machado; since the 2013 elections, he has been more in favor of the non-electoral fight to get out of Maduro, however, at the beginning of 2014, he voluntarily turned himself in to the state authorities, a significant fact for the Venezuelan opposition.

Consequently, the defense of the status quo of the ruling party served to argue that the opposition irresponsibly wanted to lead the country into a confrontational scenario (Portal Telesur, 2016). This is important because it meant that the ruling party was not willing to give in to the non-peaceful path of the opposition and, if they incited violence, they would be forced to respond with violence.

For this reason, the protests of previous years, specifically those of 2014, gave an account of the firm position of the Government in terms of not giving in to any type of threat from the opposition. Representatives of the ruling party, with a really tough position, such as Diosdado Cabello, assured that the opposition march was not going to reach Miraflores because the ruling party would take to the streets to

defend their president (Peña, 2016). For this political leader, who many believe is the power behind the power, the right-the opposition-is desperate and seeks to attack the people without caring about anything (Peña, 2016). Thus, the ruling party abrogated not only legality, but the well-being of the people and declared that it would do everything possible to defend it. Therefore, it cannot be overlooked that the ruling party had the loyalty of the country's armed forces that were at the disposal of the President of the Republic to repress opposition protests.

A no less important element is that Jorge Rodríguez, another of the strong men of the current government, when he was acting as mayor of the Libertador de Caracas municipality, issued a decree declaring said municipality a zone free of fascism and, since then, has not The opposition was able to march in that area of the capital, which is where the Miraflores palace is located (Rodríguez, 2016). So that the opposition limited itself to protesting to the east of Caracas and trying to do it to the west represented a challenge and a provocation to the forces of the ruling party.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE VENEZUELAN POLITICAL CONFLICT UNDER THE GAME THEORY HALCÓN PALOMA

In order to carry out the pertinent analysis of the case of Venezuela, game theory is used as a point of view of this multidimensional conflict that has been part of the thematic agenda of the region, based on conflicts of interest and the consequences derived from the growing diaspora. . In this order of ideas, a 'game' is a situation "in which the players (participants) make strategic decisions, that is, decisions that consider the actions and responses of others" (Restrepo, 2009, p. 159).

In this way, the result of the specific situation depends closely on the consequential sum of the decisions made by the individuals who are part of that fact; however, some are constituted from roles and others from the strategies exercised by one of the parties involved. As the final basis of the game in question, the performance and quality of the actions taken by the participants are taken, in which process there may be levels of responsibility and implicit conflicts of interest in decision-making (Restrepo, 2009).

In the specific case of the hawk-dove game, the hawks would be represented by the individuals or entities that always carry out attack actions aggressively, in order to injure or neutralize their prey, while the doves appear as the participants that they are based on prudence to avoid receiving the least possible damage; In these cases, it should be noted that there may be conflicts between entities belonging to one of the two categories.

For example, if a hawk and a dove meet, the former will tend to attack and the latter to leave, within which the hawk implicitly wins. Secondly, between two pigeons there are usually no confrontations, because both tend to withdraw, so the element for which the conflict begins is obtained by the one that visualizes it in the first place. Thirdly, if two hawks meet, there is a high probability of a confrontation, where there is a cost to pay (injuries, for example) and whoever wins the confrontation (whose nature

varies), keeps the resource in question (Portal El Sieve, 2011). In this sense, a matrix is presented below that allows the actors involved in this sociopolitical phenomenon to be located, to then apply the principle of the game and hawk-dove and understand the fact from this space of enunciation.

Figure 1. Collective Actors



In the first place, there are a series of collective political actors that are based on the need to maintain the status quo in Venezuela (for example, the Government), while another sector aspires to radical changes in politics that, by the year 2016, would have been marked by 17 years of the movement promoted by Hugo Chávez and continued by Nicolás Maduro, under a socialist line, controversial and questioned by the nature of its processes, specifically, in the mandate of the successor, Maduro. On the other hand, the opposition has maintained protest processes on behalf of civil society dissatisfied with the different social problems that have worsened in recent years..

Figura 1. Individual actors



In a second term, some of the main social actors in terms of political representation in this contest are presented, in which case, Nicolás Maduro and the former Spanish president, Zapatero (to give an example), who choose to lead processes whose purpose is that of maintaining the status quo in the country, in the face of Venezuelan opposition politicians, whether they belong to the MUD or individuals (such as the case of María Corina Machado), who request support from international and institutional actors to reach a peaceful solution where the maintenance of Maduro in power would be non-negotiable. However, a somewhat more impartial or diplomatic arbitration is presented, where the figure of the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis, stands out, who chooses to promote dialogue and negotiation as the figure that would avoid bloodshed in Venezuela.

Figure 2. Falcon Actors

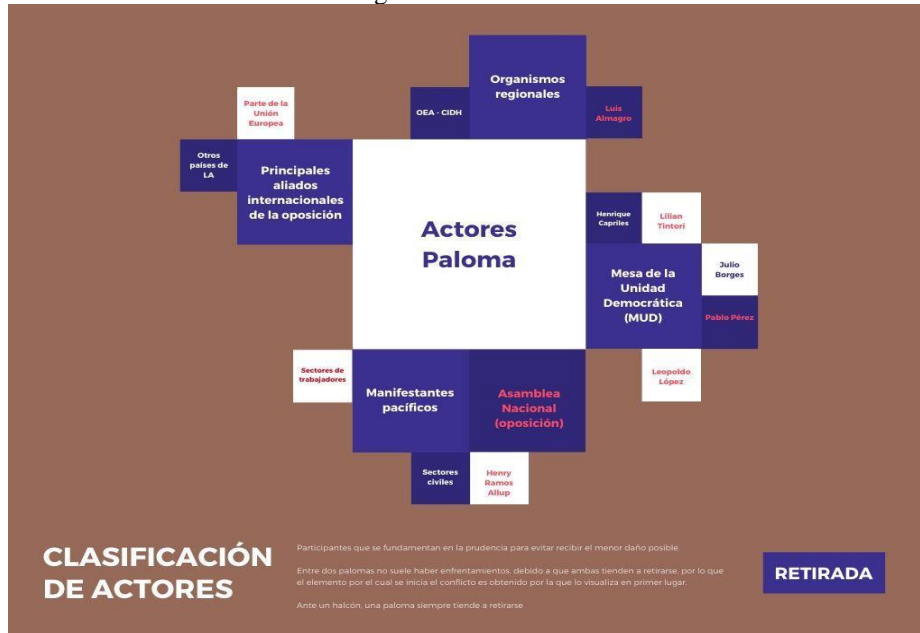


Regarding the hawk actors, seen individually, it is possible to highlight that the fact that this group belongs to the faction of the Venezuelan government headed by Nicolás Maduro predominates, at whose disposal are the state security agencies, some political parties, other organizations such as the Ombudsman and the Local Supply and Production Committee (CLAP) as a mechanism to restrict the population from the supply of basic subsistence foods at regulated prices (based on high inflation and scarcity for 2016).

Regarding the opposition, the main hawk-type leadership is represented by María Corina Machado, leader of the center-right Vente Venezuela political party (unlike the social democratic opposition), who would support a potential foreign intervention as a way out of the crisis it is going through. the country, by placing Nicolás Maduro as a usurper of power in said country.

Secondly, the United States of America stands out, the main world power that has applied numerous sanctions to the Government of Venezuela in response to, among many issues, the repression of civil society and the economic crisis in the face of which, in his opinion, measures are taken.

Figure 3. Dove actors



In another order of ideas, there are the dove actors characterized by more peaceful actions or withdrawal, where in the case of the Government of Venezuela its main international allies and the media stand out as mechanisms of disinformation and distortion of reality in these contexts. of civil protest.

However, this typology is dominated by the opposition sector, where the MUD, the main partisan coalition antagonistic to the Government, has been characterized by promoting peaceful protest as a mechanism to pressure the Government and a hesitant attitude regarding the taking of military actions by of other countries as a way out of the crisis.

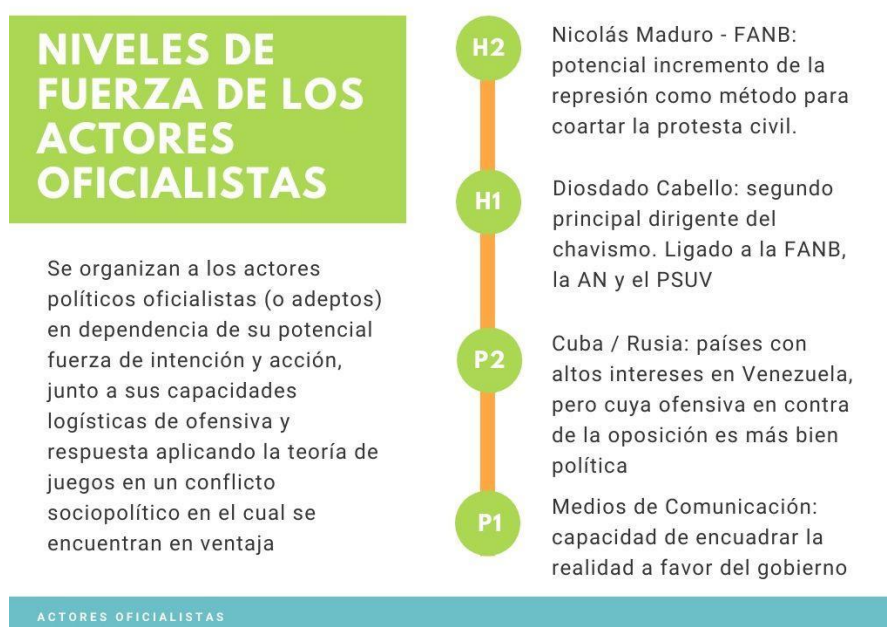
Figure 4. Strength levels of opposing actors



Regarding the potential level of strength of the political actors in question, it is necessary to highlight its relevance when situating, in a practical way, the coalition between these two sectors of Venezuelan politics (and allies to each side), before what stands out, in the case of the opposition, to the United States as an actor with greater strength and scope in a practical context, but diminished by the controversy of a military action before a Government than other countries with a similar degree of power (China and Russia) approve. Given this, the main actions of this party have been economic and commercial sanctions against this country; In the internal case of Venezuela, as another hawk actor points out, María Corina Machado, who, in a hypothetical situation in which she was the leader with the greatest legitimacy and followers, would opt for an indefinite strike as a mechanism of local pressure on the Maduro government.

In the case of the dove actors, with less capacity for action, international organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations Organization (UN) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) stand out, which have legal mechanisms have been used to reduce pressure on the Venezuelan government and have opted for dialogue actions to reduce the tension between both parties. Finally, and with actions of controversial effectiveness, the MUD stands out, on issues such as peaceful and focused protest, and its repeated processes of dialogue with the Government.

Figure 5. Levels of force of the pro-government actors

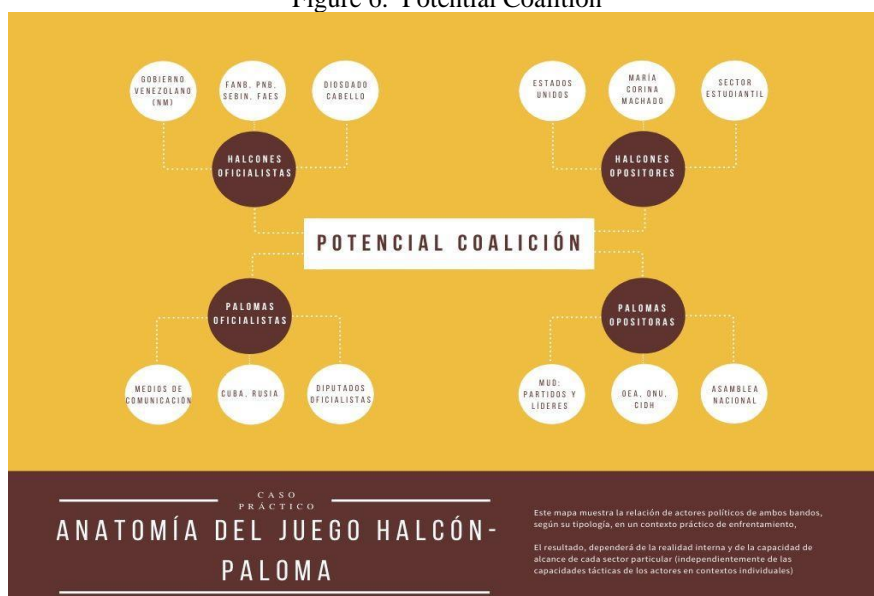


With respect to the pro-government actors, the most powerful stands out the coalition of Nicolás Maduro with the Armed Forces, a component that responds to their political, economic and ideological interests and has the ability to easily disperse protests, by continually acquiring weapons and material for repression. Secondly, as another hawk-type actor, Diosdado Cabello is presented, second in charge of

Chavismo, who has multiple sanctions from the international community for his alleged links to drug trafficking. This actor has a broad offensive scope at the internal level, by legitimizing the repression, the holding of opposition political prisoners and students, and the delegitimization of opposition political leaders.

Secondly, as dove actors, there are countries with interests in Venezuela, mainly Cuba and Russia, which, although they show a clear position of support for this South American country, do not exercise direct actions to maintain the status quo, but rather implicit from the commercial relations of Nicolás Maduro with him. In turn, the media add to this equation, those that frame reality in a way favorable to the Government of Venezuela, either from the omission of content concerning the protests or from the exaltation of facts relevant to the ruling party.

Figure 6. Potential Coalition



However, in a hypothetically applicable context, the main actors in the political contest are presented separated by typology. It starts from the premise that the conflict in Venezuela occurs internally, although it may have consequences in the international arena, this implies a clear advantage for the ruling party, which has State finances, the power of the Armed Forces and the bureaucratic apparatus of the country under its management, as potential mechanisms of coercion and dependence of civil society on the Government (for example, CLAP, a public policy to supply food to the most disadvantaged families). Although the United States is a country with great influence in world politics, foreign military intervention as a way out of the crisis has been seriously discussed, based on the participation of this country in conflicts in the Middle East and the opposing pressure by other powers like Russia and China. Thus, the scope of this country would have been limited in a practical context, beyond the economic sanctions against Venezuelan official supporters, and to any natural and legal person that carries out economic transactions related to them.

According to the Venezuelan opposition, there is a clear conflict of interest, where a radical segment is headed by María Corina Machado, compared to a more cautious or pacifist sector, the MUD, which would have lost legitimacy in contexts of protests after which it tends to engage in dialogue processes with the ruling party. Repeatedly, this has been questioned by María Corina and put into practice by the other part of the opposition, as a safe-conduct endorsed by 'neutral' actors such as the Holy See represented by Pope Francis, to set a clear example in the matter.

5 CONCLUSION

The political crisis in Venezuela is shown as a situation of escalation of conflict where the parties have opted for a strategy of radicalization, going from recognizing the other as a legitimate political opponent to using physical violence as a means to achieve their objectives. Added to this context is the intervention of other international actors who have failed to help find a negotiated solution to the crisis.

Regarding the atmosphere prior to the march on November 3, it must be taken into account, on the part of the ruling party, that they had the confidence of being an institution elected by democratic means, in such a way that their actions were within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic. For Ayala (2010), despite the fact that there is a generous constitutional framework that guarantees and supports the right to protest in Venezuela, in practice, there are several restrictions, including a triangle of power (Public Ministry, criminal courts and security forces). which is used to intimidate those who intend to exercise their right to demonstrate. Thus, thanks to legal reforms, such as the Penal Code, penalization and criminal prosecution have been facilitated.

External participation by the IACHR, such as the International Criminal Court, is crucial to determine a possible violation of rights that have been violated for many years in Venezuelan territory; however, the applicability of the reports issued by these bodies could become inapplicable and ineffective, due to the fact that there is an evident lack of commitment of the country with the norms of International Law.

Game theory consists of studying situations of conflict and cooperation, which are called games, where rational subjects (players) interact, and behaviors and predictable results are analyzed through individual decisions or agreements between players. . In the specific case of the hawk-dove game, the hawks would be represented by the individuals or entities that always carry out attack actions aggressively, in order to injure or neutralize their prey, while the doves appear as the participants that They are based on prudence to avoid receiving as little damage as possible.

In the case that pertains to the present work, the presence of hawk actors seen individually can be noted, where the membership of this group predominates the faction of the Venezuelan Government headed by Nicolás Maduro, at whose disposal are the State security agencies , some political parties, other organizations such as the Ombudsman and CLAP. Secondly, on the opposition side, the United States of

America stands out, the main world power that has applied numerous sanctions to the Government of Venezuela.

As for the dove actors, in the case of the Government of Venezuela, their main international allies and the media stand out, despite this, this typology is dominated by the opposition sector, where the MUD has been characterized by promoting peaceful protest as a mechanism to put pressure on the Government and a hesitant attitude regarding the taking of military actions by other countries as a way out of the crisis.

The government of Nicolás Maduro is still in office despite discontent and international pressure, due to the fact that it has a greater tactical capacity at the internal level (where the game is presented), whose hawks are stronger than those of the opposition. Likewise, at the international level, they have the support of two economic powers that limit the scope of the United States in its actions and limit them merely to economic sanctions or the freezing of assets linked to Chavismo in said country.

Given this, from a tactical and operational point of view, there is evidence of a highly strategic and effective capacity on the part of the Venezuelan Government, regardless of the nature of its actions, since, by managing to maintain the status quo, it remains in power, silencing increasingly to opposition political actors.

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