

REPRESSION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POVERTY MANAGEMENT: THE BOLIVARIAN NATIONAL GUARD BETWEEN PROTEST SUPPRESSION AND CONTROL OF THE INFORMAL ECONOMY UNDER CONDITIONS OF MASS UNEMPLOYMENT (2014–2026)

Martina Cvijanović 

American University, Washington College of Law
Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America
E-mail: mc5648@american.edu

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Abstract: Between 2014 and 2026 Venezuela combined the deepest peacetime economic collapse in the modern history of the Western Hemisphere with one of its most intensive deployments of state coercion: income poverty reached 73.2% of households and informality approximately half of all employment (UCAB, 2025), while a United Nations fact-finding mission documented security-force conduct amounting, in its assessment, to crimes against humanity — with the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) responsible for the largest number of politically motivated detentions and for indiscriminate firing on protesters across the 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2024 protest cycles (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; OHCHR, 2025). The aim of this review article is to synthesize the fragmented scholarship on Venezuelan coercion, poverty, and informality into a single analytical account of the GNB's role. The research applies a structured review methodology: a corpus of 53 peer-reviewed studies published 2019–2026, assembled through systematic database searches and verified item by item, is coded by the state function each study documents, and triangulated against United Nations, survey, and observatory sources. The original contribution of the article is the concept of coercive poverty governance and its operationalization as a three-function typology of GNB activity — protest suppression, regulation of the informal survival economy, and enforcement of extractive rents — which reorganizes a literature conventionally split between “repression” and “informality” studies into a single governance logic. Key findings: the reviewed literature's center of gravity shifts after 2019 from protest suppression toward economic and extractive coercion, tracking the regime's own reallocation of the GNB; repression functions not as a response to poverty's disorders but as the principal instrument by which an insolvent state manages a population it can no longer pay; and lethal escalation produced exit rather than voice — mass emigration of 7.9 million — consistent with cross-national repression theory (Congressional Research Service, 2025; Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021; Weitzman & Huss, 2024). The typology is transferable to other cases where security forces govern survival economies under fiscal collapse.

Keywords: *Venezuela, Bolivarian National Guard, repression, informal economy, poverty, protest, unemployment, coercive poverty governance.*

INTRODUCTION

Two statistical series, read together, define the problem of this article. The first is economic: by 2024, 73.2% of Venezuelan households lived in income poverty, 36.5% in extreme poverty, and 56.5% in multidimensional poverty; the Gini coefficient had risen from 40.7 in 2014 to 53.9; the poorest decile of the population subsisted on 12.50 US dollars per month against 633.72 for the richest; and only 49.1% of the employed held formal jobs, leaving approximately half of the workforce in informality (UCAB, 2025). The national economy had lost more than 80% of its GDP between 2013 and 2020 — half of it already by 2018 — and 7.9 million people, more than a quarter of the population, had left the country (Congressional Research Service, 2025; Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019). The second series is coercive: the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela investigated 223 cases and reviewed 2,891 more, documenting 413 killings in 140 reviewed operations of the Operación Liberación del Pueblo alone, attributing 59% of documented security-force killings to the FAES special police forces, and concluding that there were reasonable grounds to believe crimes against humanity had been committed (UN Human Rights Council, 2020). By 2023, deaths from police intervention still numbered 953 in a single year (OVV, 2023), and in December 2025 the same UN mission named the Bolivarian National Guard specifically: responsible for the highest number of politically motivated detentions in 2019–2020 and for indiscriminate firing at vital body areas in the protest cycles of 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2024 (OHCHR, 2025).

The conventional reading treats these two series as cause and consequence: poverty generates protest and crime, and the state represses both. This review argues that the Venezuelan record of 2014–2026 supports a different and analytically more productive

reading, in which coercion is not the state's response to poverty but its principal instrument for governing it. A state that cannot pay wages, sustain food distribution, or police its economy through law and taxation has one remaining administrative capacity — organized force — and the trajectory of the GNB across the period shows that capacity being systematically redeployed from the containment of political dissent toward the daily regulation of the survival economy: checkpoints on food and fuel logistics, control of street commerce and smuggling routes, garrisoning of mining zones, and administration of subsidized distribution (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Rosales, 2019; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021; UN Human Rights Council, 2020). The scholarship documenting these practices is rich but fragmented: repression studies, policing studies, informality studies, and civil-military studies have each captured a facet without an integrating frame (Tremaria, 2022; Antillano et al., 2020; Vargas Falla & Valencia, 2019; Duarte Villa, 2022). Providing that frame is the task of this review.

The article addresses three research questions, formulated as reviewable hypotheses. The first hypothesis (H1) holds that GNB repressive activity in 2014–2026 is functionally tripartite — protest suppression, regulation of the informal economy, and enforcement of extractive rents — and that the literature's center of gravity shifted from the first function toward the second and third as mass protest declined after 2019. The second hypothesis (H2) holds that repression substituted for welfare: as fiscal capacity for redistribution collapsed, coercive regulation of survival activity became the regime's principal mode of poverty management, so that the poor encountered the state primarily as a checkpoint rather than as a provider. The third hypothesis (H3) holds that the repression–dissent relationship followed the sequence that cross-national theory predicts for high-intensity repression: backlash first, then demobilization through exit, with mass emigration absorbing

the discontent that protest could no longer express (Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021; Jiménez, 2023; Weitzman & Huss, 2024).

The original contribution of this article lies in the concept of coercive poverty governance (CPG) and its operationalization as a three-function typology of GNB activity, together with the first systematically coded review corpus of the 2019–2026 scholarship on Venezuelan coercion and informality, whose coding demonstrates quantitatively that the literature documents protest suppression more densely than both economic-coercion functions combined, even as those functions dominate the Guard's actual activity. Unlike prior work, which analyzes repression and informality in separate literatures, the CPG framework treats protest suppression, informal-economy regulation, and extraction enforcement as three faces of a single governance logic — the administration of an impoverished population by force in lieu of welfare — and codes the existing scholarship accordingly, making both the framework and the corpus available for comparative application to cases such as Nicaragua, Myanmar, or Zimbabwe.

The article proceeds in six parts. The literature review organizes the relevant scholarship into four bodies and the methodology section specifies the review protocol, the corpus, and the construction of the typology. The research results section presents the coded corpus and the typology with its documentary anchors. Four analytical sections then develop the argument: the first traces the protest-suppression function across the 2014–2024 cycles; the second analyzes the regulation of the informal economy; the third examines extraction enforcement and the welfare-substitution logic that unifies the three functions; the fourth places the Venezuelan case in comparative and theoretical perspective. The conclusion returns to the hypotheses, states limitations, and draws implications for research and policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Four bodies of scholarship bear on the problem, and their mutual isolation is the review's point of departure.

The first body documents protest and its suppression. The Venezuelan protest cycles of 2014, 2017, and 2019 have been analyzed as episodes in an autocratization process in which repression and opposition strategy interact dynamically: interview-based research spanning 129 elite respondents finds a curvilinear relationship in which intermediate repression stimulates formal opposition coordination while extreme repression fragments it (Jiménez, 2023). Computational analysis of 60,036 tweets from the 2017 cycle shows opinion radicalizing in direct response to overt repression and the government's refusal to negotiate (Morselli et al., 2021). The macropolitical setting — a dual-power confrontation, hyperinflation, and the loss of half of GDP in five years — is documented in the country-report literature (Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019), while the constitutional and participatory background of polarization is established in the scholarship on Bolivarian participatory institutions and their decay into exclusion (García-Guadilla & Mallen, 2019; Buxton, 2020). The regime-survival literature explains why escalation was chosen: function fusion — the military in the economy, civilians in coercion, foreign advisors in intelligence — gave the incumbent coalition both the means and the stakes to repress rather than negotiate (Corrales, 2020; Duarte Villa, 2022; Fonseca et al., 2020). The UN documentary record supplies the casualty arithmetic that the academic literature builds on: 36 protester killings investigated in depth, thousands of politically motivated detentions, and the GNB's named responsibility across four protest cycles (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; OHCHR, 2025).

The second body documents the militarization and lethalization of policing. Its periodization is now standard: from the carceral punitivism of the late Chávez years, through the militarized raids of the Operación Liberación del Pueblo from 2015, to the systematic killing associated with the FAES from 2017 — by which point state security forces accounted for over 20% of all violent deaths in the country (Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021). The counter-reform that produced this trajectory has been decomposed into three mechanisms — politicization, militarization, and informalization of policing — each deepening with autocratization (Tremaria, 2022). The punitive turn's political sociology is documented from both directions: crime-victim populism propelled punitive demand after 2013 (Samet, 2019), and the urban poor themselves often support punitive policing as a substitute for absent protection — the “dilemma of substitution” documented in comparative urban research (Tiscornia & Pérez Bentancur, 2024). The violence's geography is quantified at municipality level: Caracas reached 75 homicides per 100,000 in 2015, with neighborhood-level variation explained by the failed incorporation of popular sectors (Antillano et al., 2020), and homicide concentration along the drug-trafficking corridor is causally tied to the displacement of Colombian counternarcotics enforcement (Kronick, 2020). The racial and class targeting of lethal policing — extrajudicial killings concentrated in poor barrios and disproportionately striking Afro-descendant Venezuelans — has entered the transitional-justice literature (Moya Sánchez, 2026), and ethnographies of barrio life under militarized raids document the everyday repertoires — shoutings, scoldings, gossip, whispers — by which mothers negotiate both gangs and security forces (Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024; Zubillaga et al., 2019). By 2023 the observatory record still counted 953 deaths from police intervention among 6,973 violent deaths (OVV, 2023).

The third body concerns the informal economy and the state's relationship to it. The structural side is established: sanctions and state counter-strategies informalized and partially criminalized the Venezuelan economy across hydrocarbons, agriculture, manufacturing, and mining, with de facto dollarization, barter, and direct military intervention in critical sectors (Bull & Rosales, 2020); the mining turn converted the state itself into a radical rentier managing gold, cryptocurrency, and collateralized commodities through armed actors (Rosales, 2019); and the insurgent-governance literature documents the ELN's parallel state in the border economy (Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025). The welfare side is quantified by survey research: 80% household food insecurity in the ENCOVI round analyzed in the public-health literature, with the militarily administered CLAP food boxes reaching most recipients only occasionally (Doocy et al., 2019); the 2024 round documents the terminal distribution — 73.2% income poverty, informality at approximately half of employment, and a Gini of 53.9 (UCAB, 2025). The comparative literature on informality's policing supplies the conceptual vocabulary: street vending as the most accessible occupation of the urban poor, governed in practice by quiet encroachment and contested state regulation of public space (Vargas Falla & Valencia, 2019), and pandemic-era evidence that poverty mechanically reduces compliance capacity — poorer regions could not afford to obey lockdowns (Bargain & Aminjonov, 2021). The human-capital exodus that both feeds and drains the informal economy is documented in the migration literature (Garcia Zea, 2020; Weitzman & Huss, 2024), and the infrastructure collapse that frames all survival activity in the governance literature on the electricity sector (León-Vielma, Ramos-Real & Hernández Hernández, 2022; Aray & Vera, 2024; Monaldi et al., 2021; Rodríguez, 2022).

The fourth body is theoretical and comparative. The repression–dissent nexus is

anchored experimentally: street-level police repression produces backlash — reduced support for police and increased dissent — across all demographics in a nationally representative survey experiment (Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021). The militarization of law enforcement has a regional typology built on three decades of Latin American constabularization (Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021), its institutional pathology is causally documented in the torture practices of militarized Mexican policing (Magaloni & Rodriguez, 2020), and its trust consequences in the region-wide policing literature (Malone & Dammert, 2021). Digital repression scholarship establishes that connectivity enables targeted rather than indiscriminate violence (Gohdes, 2020; Feldstein, 2019), which the disinformation and cognitive-domain literatures extend to the informational battlefield on which protest and repression are narrated (Bilić, 2025; Pantić, 2025; Perez, 2024). The civil–military frame completes the theory: sanctions strengthen militaries inside targeted regimes (Kiyani et al., 2025), domestic military missions erode democratic control across Latin America (Jenne & Martínez, 2022), the petro-state's authoritarian turn after the 2014 oil shock has a comparative anatomy (Burgess & Corrales, 2024), external patrons complicate but do not determine the coercive equation (Gratius, 2022; Palestini et al., 2025), repressive regimes extend their reach transnationally as their diasporas grow (Dukalskis et al., 2022; Dukalskis et al., 2024; Lemon & Antonov, 2020), migration itself becomes a policy instrument (Vardanian, 2026), and the comparative benchmarks of civilian control and professionalization measure the distance the Venezuelan configuration has traveled (Angelov, 2025; Saar, 2025). The legal grey zone of irregular coercive actors — *colectivos* performing state functions without state accountability — is mapped by analogy in the literature on private and proxy military actors (Claes, 2025; Ellner, 2023; Polga-Hecimovich, 2019; Polga-Hecimovich, 2022).

What none of these bodies provides is integration. Repression studies treat the GNB as a protest-control force; informality studies treat the state as an absent or predatory regulator; civil–military studies treat the military's economic roles as corruption or coup-proofing. Each captures a function; none names the logic that unifies them. That logic — the governance of poverty by coercion in lieu of welfare — is what the CPG framework articulates and what the coded corpus demonstrates.

Research Methodology

The research applies a structured review methodology organized in three components.

The first component is corpus assembly. Peer-reviewed studies published between January 2019 and 2026 were identified through systematic searches of Crossref, publisher databases (ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, SAGE, Cambridge, Wiley, MDPI), and Google Scholar, using combinations of the search families “Venezuela” with repression, protest, National Guard, policing, FAES, OLP, *colectivos*, informality, poverty, unemployment, street vending, smuggling, and mining, together with theoretical searches on repression–dissent, police militarization, and poverty governance. Inclusion required publication in a peer-reviewed journal in 2019 or later, verifiable bibliographic identity (every item's DOI resolved and its metadata confirmed against the Crossref registry during assembly), and substantive bearing on at least one of the three candidate functions. The final corpus comprises 53 peer-reviewed studies; 7 institutional sources — the UN Fact-Finding Mission's report and subsequent findings (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; OHCHR, 2025), the ENCOVI 2024 survey (UCAB, 2025), the Venezuelan Violence Observatory's annual report (OVV, 2023), two US Congressional Research Service products (Seelke et al., 2022;

Congressional Research Service, 2025), and the Wilson Center's bilateral study (Fonseca et al., 2020) — provide the quantitative and documentary anchors that peer review alone cannot supply for an ongoing authoritarian case.

The second component is coding. Each peer-reviewed study was coded by the author for its primary documented function — F1 (protest suppression and political repression), F2 (regulation of the informal survival economy), F3 (enforcement of extractive rents and strategic logistics) — or for the residual categories of context (economic and social conditions) and theory (comparative and conceptual work not centered on Venezuela). Coding was performed on titles, abstracts, and full texts where accessible; each study received one primary code, and the coding table underlying the counts reported in the results section is reproducible from the bibliography. The coding is a single-author classification and is presented as such; its function is organizational rather than inferential, and the review's claims rest on the documented content of the studies, not on the counts.

The third component is the construction of the typology. The three functions were derived abductively: an initial reading of the documentary record — above all the UN mission's findings on the GNB's roles (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; OHCHR, 2025) and the political-economy literature on militarized sectors (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Rosales, 2019) — generated candidate functions, which were then tested against the corpus for coverage (does every documented GNB activity fall under a function?) and distinctness (does each function have distinct targets, mechanisms, and beneficiaries?). The resulting typology is presented in the results section as a function–target–mechanism–beneficiary matrix with documentary anchors for every cell. The review follows the design tradition of structured analytical instruments developed in the author's previous work on

composite indices, but deliberately stops short of quantification: a review article's contribution is the organization of evidence, and the typology's cells are filled with citations, not scores.

The conceptual placement of coercive poverty governance among neighboring concepts should be specified before the results, because the term is chosen against alternatives that each capture part of the phenomenon. The necropolitics of policing names the lethal edge of the system but not its regulatory body — most checkpoint encounters kill no one and govern everything (Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021; Moya Sánchez, 2026). Punitive populism names the demand side but not the administrative logic — the CLAP box and the mining garrison are not punishments (Samet, 2019; Tiscornia & Pérez Bentancur, 2024). Function fusion names the institutional blurring but not its object — it describes who does what, not what is being governed (Corrales, 2020). Radical rentierism names the extractive adaptation but not its coercive administration (Rosales, 2019). CPG is defined to sit at the intersection: it takes from the policing literature the coercive instrument, from the informality literature the governed object — the survival economy of the poor — and from the rentier literature the beneficiary structure, and it asserts that in the Venezuelan configuration these are one system, not three. The definition is deliberately restrictive: CPG obtains only where coercion is the primary instrument of poverty administration, not merely one instrument among several — a threshold that distinguishes the Venezuelan case from ordinary punitive management of marginality in functioning states (Vargas Falla & Valencia, 2019; Magaloni & Rodríguez, 2020; Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021).

Three limitations of design are acknowledged at the outset. The corpus is bounded by the 2019 publication threshold, which excludes foundational pre-2019 Venezuelan scholarship except as it is carried forward in

the reviewed studies. The coding is single-author and unblinded. And the subject is a moving target: the 2024 post-electoral cycle and the UN mission's 2025 findings arrived during the review's assembly, and events after mid-2026 necessarily fall outside it.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The review generated three blocks of results: the structure of the corpus, the typology with its documentary anchors, and the temporal findings that bear on the hypotheses.

The corpus structure is as follows. Of the 53 peer-reviewed studies, 14 were coded to F1 (protest suppression and political repression), 6 to F2 (regulation of the informal survival economy), 3 to F3 (extraction enforcement and strategic logistics), 10 to context (economic collapse, poverty, migration, infrastructure), and 20 to theory and comparison (repression theory, militarized policing, authoritarian cooperation, civil–military benchmarks). Within the corpus, 45 studies (85%) were published in Scopus-indexed journals of political science, area studies, economics, criminology, or public health; the remainder appear in specialized defense-studies outlets and one newer interdisciplinary journal. The coding's first result is therefore an

imbalance: among Venezuela-centered empirical studies, protest suppression is documented more densely than informal-economy regulation and extraction enforcement combined (14 versus 9 studies), and more than four times as densely as extraction enforcement alone — despite the documentary record showing the latter functions to be the Guard's daily occupation. This imbalance is itself evidence for the review's motivating claim that the scholarship's protest-centric lens underweights the economic faces of coercion, and it defines the research agenda stated in the conclusion. The temporal distribution of the Venezuela-centered studies tracks the phenomenon: studies whose empirical center of gravity is the 2014–2019 protest cycles dominate the 2019–2021 publication years (Jiménez, 2023; Morselli et al., 2021; Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021), while studies published from 2022 onward increasingly center on economic coercion, militarized extraction, border governance, and the everyday policing of survival (Tremaria, 2022; Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024; Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025; Moya Sánchez, 2026; Burgess & Corrales, 2024). This publication-side shift mirrors the documentary record of the GNB's own reallocation and constitutes the corpus-level evidence for H1.

PRIMARY CODE	STUD- IES	SHARE	REPRESENTATIVE WORKS
F1 PROTEST SUP- PRESSION / POLITI- CAL REPRESSION	14	26%	(Jiménez, 2023; Morselli et al., 2021; Tremaria, 2022; Moya Sánchez, 2026)
F2 INFORMAL-ECON- OMY REGULATION	6	11%	(Bull & Rosales, 2020; Vargas Falla & Valencia, 2019; Doocy et al., 2019)
F3 EXTRACTION EN- FORCEMENT	3	6%	(Rosales, 2019; Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025; Kronick, 2020)
CONTEXT (ECON- OMY, POVERTY, MI- GRATION)	10	19%	(Monaldi et al., 2021; Weitzman & Huss, 2024; Aray & Vera, 2024)
THEORY / COMPARA- TIVE	20	38%	(Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021; Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021; Kiyani et al., 2025)

Table 1. Structure of the reviewed corpus (52 peer-reviewed studies, 2019–2026; author's coding)
Source: author's coding of the review corpus; each study assigned one primary code.

The typology is the review's organizing result. Coercive poverty governance denotes the administration of an impoverished population primarily through organized force in lieu of welfare, and its three functions differ systematically in target, mechanism, and beneficiary. Function F1, protest suppression, targets politically mobilized citizens; its mechanisms are crowd-control deployment, indiscriminate and targeted munitions use, mass detention, and exemplary prosecution; its documented executor set centers on the GNB — named by the UN mission as responsible for the highest number of politically motivated detentions in 2019–2020 and for indiscriminate firing at vital body areas across the 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2024 cycles — flanked by the FAES and by colectivos operating in the legal shadow (OHCHR, 2025; UN Human Rights Council, 2020; García-Guadilla & Mallen, 2019; Ellner, 2023). Its beneficiary is the incumbent coalition's hold on office (Corrales, 2020; Jiménez, 2023). Function F2, informal-economy regulation, targets the survival activity of the poor — street commerce, smuggling of price-controlled goods, currency exchange, transport

of food and fuel; its mechanisms are the checkpoint, the confiscation, the extortion of passage, the licensing of tolerated illegality, and the militarized administration of subsidized distribution through the CLAP system; its documented executors are the GNB's territorial deployment and allied state and para-state actors (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Doocy et al., 2019; UN Human Rights Council, 2020; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021). Its beneficiaries are dual: the regime, which converts scarcity into dependence and surveillance, and the enforcing units themselves, for which regulation is a rent (Rosales, 2019; Corrales, 2020). Function F3, extraction enforcement, targets the strategic-commodity economy — the Orinoco Mining Arc, fuel logistics, border corridors; its mechanisms are garrisoning, convoy control, concession protection, and coexistence or contestation with armed non-state governors including the ELN; its beneficiaries are the military institution and the regime's hard-currency lifeline (Rosales, 2019; Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025; Kronick, 2020; Bull & Rosales, 2020). Table 2 presents the matrix with its anchors.

DIMENSION	F1 PROTEST SUPPRESSION	F2 INFORMAL-ECONOMY REGULATION	F3 EXTRACTION ENFORCEMENT
TARGET	mobilized citizens, opposition	survival economy of the poor	strategic commodities, borders
MECHANISMS	crowd control, munitions, mass detention	checkpoints, confiscation, extortion, CLAP administration	garrisons, convoys, concession protection
DOCUMENTED SCALE	36 protester killings investigated; detentions in thousands; four cycles	~half of employment informal; 80% food insecurity; CLAP irregular	Mining Arc; ELN parallel state; trafficking-corridor violence
PRINCIPAL ANCHORS	(UN Human Rights Council, 2020; OHCHR, 2025; Jiménez, 2023)	(UCAB, 2025; Doocy et al., 2019; Bull & Rosales, 2020)	(Rosales, 2019; Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025; Kronick, 2020)
BENEFICIARY	incumbent's office	regime dependence + unit rents	institution's revenue + regime lifeline

Table 2. The coercive poverty governance (CPG) typology of GNB activity, 2014–2026
Source: author's synthesis of the reviewed corpus; every cell anchored to the cited sources.

The temporal findings complete the results. On H1, the documentary sequence is consistent across sources: the GNB's mass crowd-control deployments peak in 2014, 2017, and 2019, with a coda in 2024 (OHCHR, 2025; UN Human Rights Council, 2020; Morselli et al., 2021); large-scale protest recedes after 2019 as emigration accelerates (Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Weitzman & Huss, 2024); and the post-2019 scholarship and reporting increasingly document the Guard's economic functions — checkpoints, distribution, mining, borders (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Rosales, 2019; Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025). On H2, the welfare and coercion series move in opposite directions across the period: the state's distributive capacity collapses — 80% food insecurity, CLAP boxes arriving only occasionally, the minimum-wage economy replaced by a 12.50-dollar bottom decile (Doocy et al., 2019; UCAB, 2025) — while the coercive apparatus expands its economic jurisdiction, from price enforcement to full sectoral administration (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021). On H3, the sequence matches the theoretical prediction: repression radicalized opinion during the 2017 cycle (Morselli et al., 2021), fragmented opposition coordination at its extreme (Jiménez, 2023), and was followed not by sustained mobilization but by exit at demographic scale — 3 million emigrants already by 2018, 7.9 million by 2025 (Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Congressional Research Service, 2025; Weitzman & Huss, 2024) — while security-force lethality shifted from protest sites to barrios, where over 20% of violent deaths came from state forces after 2017 and 953 deaths from police intervention were still recorded in 2023 (Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021; OVV, 2023).

A final result concerns what the corpus does not contain, because the absences define the field's frontier. No reviewed study measures checkpoint density, confiscation volumes, or the revenue flows of coercive regulation — the F2 function's core

quantities — and none estimates the GNB's economic footprint directly; the closest approximations are sectoral (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Rosales, 2019) or survey-based at the household end (UCAB, 2025; Doocy et al., 2019). No reviewed study establishes the Guard's order of battle, territorial deployment, or personnel economics for the review period; the institutional record supplies fragments (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; Seelke et al., 2022), but the organizational analysis that exists for comparable gendarmeries elsewhere (Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021; Jenne & Martínez, 2022) has no Venezuelan equivalent. And no quantitative study connects the three functions — testing, for instance, whether units rotate between protest control and economic enforcement, or whether checkpoint rents co-vary with repression intensity. These gaps are not incidental: they are the measurement shadow of an authoritarian state that publishes nothing and of a scholarship whose access ended with the field conditions the crisis destroyed (Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024; Garcia Zea, 2020). The review's coded map of what exists is therefore simultaneously a map of what is missing, and the research agenda in the conclusion is built directly on it.

THE PROTEST-SUPPRESSION FUNCTION: FOUR CYCLES AND THE ECONOMY OF EXEMPLARY VIOLENCE

The GNB's protest-control record across 2014–2024 is the best-documented face of Venezuelan coercion, and the review's contribution is to read it as one function within a larger governance logic rather than as the whole of it.

The four cycles differ instructively. The 2014 La Salida wave was met with a mixed apparatus — GNB crowd control, politicized criminal prosecution, and colectivo violence in the interstices — and its suppression consolidated the counter-reform mechanisms

that the policing literature identifies: politicization of command, militarization of tactics, and informalization through irregular auxiliaries (Tremaria, 2022; García-Guadilla & Malen, 2019). The 2017 cycle, triggered by the Constituent Assembly's convocation, was longer, deadlier, and informationally saturated: computational evidence shows repression itself radicalizing opinion in real time as negotiations were refused (Morselli et al., 2021), and the UN record documents the GNB firing indiscriminately at vital body areas (OHCHR, 2025). The 2019 cycle unfolded under dual power, with the Guard's loyalty itself the strategic prize — the failed April uprising demonstrated both the opposition's theory that the coercive apparatus could be split and the regime's success in surveilling and purging it, a success the civil-military literature attributes to counterintelligence saturation and economic co-optation of the officer corps (Corrales, 2020; Duarte Villa, 2022; Fonseca et al., 2020; Polga-Hecimovich, 2019). The 2024 post-electoral cycle, documented in the mission's later findings, reproduced the repertoire against a demobilized society: rapid mass detention — the operativo tun tun of door-to-door arrests — substituting for sustained street confrontation (OHCHR, 2025; Polga-Hecimovich, 2022; Ellner, 2023).

Across the cycles, the economics of exemplary violence are visible in the targeting pattern. Lethality concentrated not on the marches of the middle-class east of Caracas but on the barrios — the OLP raids from 2015 and the FAES operations from 2017 killed overwhelmingly poor, disproportionately Afro-descendant young men, 413 documented killings in 140 reviewed OLP operations and 59% of documented security-force killings attributable to FAES (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; Moya Sánchez, 2026; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021). The necropolitics literature reads this concentration correctly as a class phenomenon: the same population that the regime claims as its social

base is the population it kills, because exemplary violence in the barrio polices the boundary between tolerated survival crime and political disloyalty (Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021; Antillano et al., 2020; Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024). The punitive turn's demand side complicates any simple repression narrative — crime-victim populism and the urban poor's own support for punitive policing, documented comparatively, gave *mano dura* a genuine constituency (Samet, 2019; Tiscornia & Pérez Bentancur, 2024) — which is precisely why the CPG frame matters: the same Guard that shoots protesters also mans the checkpoint that a barrio resident must negotiate to move food, and the population's relationship to it is correspondingly compound (Malone & Dammert, 2021; Zubillaga et al., 2019).

The institutional identity of the executor matters for the function's analysis, and the review corpus allows it to be specified. The GNB is constitutionally a component of the armed forces with a public-order mandate — a *gendarmerie* — and this hybrid identity is precisely what made it the load-bearing instrument of all four cycles: unlike the civilian police, it deploys at scale with military discipline, logistics, and legal cover; unlike the army, it is trained, equipped, and doctrinally authorized for use against citizens (Tremaria, 2022; Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021; Jenne & Martínez, 2022). The comparative constabularization literature shows this hybrid to be the modal instrument of Latin American coercion, and shows also its ratchet property: functions assigned to gendarmes in an emergency remain with them after it (Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021; Magaloni & Rodriguez, 2020). The Venezuelan variant added two aggravations documented across the corpus. The first is politicization of command: the officer corps' promotion and retention were tied to demonstrated loyalty, dissolving the professional buffer that elsewhere moderates street-level violence (Polga-Hecimovich, 2019; Duarte Villa, 2022; Saar, 2025). The

second is the irregular auxiliary: colectivos operating alongside and through the Guard's deployments gave the state a deniable escalation instrument whose legal status is as unclassifiable as that of the proxy forces the international-law literature examines — armed, state-aligned, and formally absent from any chain of command that accountability could reach (García-Guadilla & Mallen, 2019; Ellner, 2023; Claes, 2025; UN Human Rights Council, 2020). The counterintelligence layer completed the configuration: an apparatus that surveilled its own personnel as intensively as the opposition, with the documented external assistance analyzed in the author's companion study of the Caracas–Havana axis, ensured that the coercive instrument itself could not defect — the condition demonstrated negatively by the failed April 2019 uprising (Fonseca et al., 2020; Corrales, 2020; Duarte Villa, 2022).

The function's informational envelope completes it. Protest suppression in Venezuela was narrated as counter-terrorism against economic sabotage, a framing sustained by state media dominance and by the disinformation techniques whose network mechanics are now formally modeled (Bilić, 2025; Pantić, 2025); connectivity cut both ways, enabling documentation of abuses and simultaneously the targeted repression that digital visibility permits (Gohdes, 2020; Feldstein, 2019; Perez, 2024). The comparative literature's warning applies fully: militarized law enforcement, once constabularized, resists demobilization — three decades of Latin American evidence show soldiers assigned to policing tasks staying there (Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021), with institutionalized brutality as the stable equilibrium where procedural protections are weak (Magaloni & Rodríguez, 2020; Jenne & Martínez, 2022). The GNB entered 2014 as a gendarmerie with a constitutional public-order mandate; it exited the decade as the armature of all three CPG functions, and the protest-suppression function — episodic, visible, internationally

condemned — was never more than its most photographed assignment (OHCHR, 2025; Tremaria, 2022).

THE INFORMAL-ECONOMY FUNCTION: CHECKPOINTS, CLAP, AND THE REGULATION OF SURVIVAL

The second function is the review's center of gravity, because it is where the poverty-management logic operates daily and where the literature is most fragmented.

The material setting must be stated first. By 2024, formal employment covered 49.1% of the employed; the bottom decile lived on 12.50 dollars per month; 73.2% of households were income-poor (UCAB, 2025). Food insecurity had reached 80% of households in the survey round analyzed in the public-health literature, and the state's flagship response — the CLAP subsidized food box, administered through militarily supervised distribution — arrived for most recipients only occasionally (Doocy et al., 2019). Hyperinflation and collapse had informalized the economy from both ends: sanctions and state counter-strategies pushed formal sectors into shadow operation, dollarization and barter replaced the wage economy, and survival activity — street vending, small-scale smuggling of price-controlled goods, informal transport, artisanal mining — became the majority economic experience (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Rodríguez, 2022; Monaldi et al., 2021; Kingsbury, 2020). In such an economy, the classic instruments of economic governance — taxation, licensing, labor inspection — lose their object; what remains governable is movement and access, and movement and access are governed by the checkpoint (Bull & Rosales, 2020; UN Human Rights Council, 2020).

The checkpoint is the elementary institution of the second function, and the reviewed literature allows its political economy to be specified. For the state, the checkpoint converts scarcity into control: where goods are

scarce and their movement conditionally illegal — price-controlled food, subsidized fuel, foreign currency — every transporter is a violator in principle, and enforcement discretion becomes a general instrument of dependence (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021). For the enforcing unit, the same discretion is a rent: passage is sold, confiscation is redistribution to the confiscator, and the literature on the informalization of policing documents the resulting continuum from enforcement to extortion (Tremaria, 2022; Rosales, 2019). For the poor, the checkpoint is the state's principal face: the comparative informality literature shows street vendors and informal workers negotiating access to economic space with street-level agents everywhere (Vargas Falla & Valencia, 2019), but the Venezuelan configuration is distinctive in that the negotiating counterpart is a military body and the negotiated good is subsistence itself (UCAB, 2025; Doocy et al., 2019). The pandemic interlude demonstrated the mechanism in its purest form: lockdown enforcement assigned to the GNB and police criminalized mobility exactly where poverty made compliance impossible — the cross-national evidence that poorer populations cannot afford to stay home (Bargain & Aminjonov, 2021) — so that quarantine became, in practice, a general license for movement regulation of the poor (Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021; OVV, 2023).

The labor-market context gives the function its scale. Mass unemployment in the Venezuelan collapse took the form less of registered joblessness than of the evaporation of formal employment itself: by the 2024 survey round, only 49.1% of the employed held formal positions, public-sector wages had collapsed into symbolic amounts, and the modal economic actor was an informal self-provisioner — vendor, reseller, transporter, remittance recipient — whose entire working day consisted of legally ambiguous activity (UCAB, 2025; Bull & Rosales, 2020). The comparative literature establishes what this

implies for coercive governance: informality on this scale converts the whole population into potential violators, so that enforcement ceases to be about compliance and becomes a system of tolerated illegality administered through discretion (Vargas Falla & Valencia, 2019; Tremaria, 2022). The emigration of the skilled deepened the structure from both ends — draining the formal economy's remaining human capital while creating the remittance flows that now sustain informal consumption (Garcia Zea, 2020; Weitzman & Huss, 2024) — and the age structure of exit left behind a population disproportionately composed of the dependent and the immobile, precisely the demographic least capable of contesting checkpoint governance and most dependent on the state's conditional distribution (Weitzman & Huss, 2024; UCAB, 2025; Doocy et al., 2019). Unemployment and informality, in the CPG reading, are therefore not the background of repression but its enabling condition: a formally employed society meets the state through the wage and the tax; an informalized one meets it through the checkpoint (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Bargain & Aminjonov, 2021).

CLAP administration is the function's distributive face and its surveillance face simultaneously. A household dependent on an occasional, militarily supervised food box linked to political identity instruments is a household whose subsistence is legible and conditional (Doocy et al., 2019; Feldstein, 2019; Seelke et al., 2022); the function-fusion literature correctly reads such distribution as coercion's complement rather than welfare's remnant — the same apparatus that withholds passage at the checkpoint grants the box, and both acts teach the same lesson about the source of survival (Corrales, 2020; Ellner, 2023). The gendered ethnography of the barrios shows who absorbs this regime: mothers, managing armed actors of every uniform through the everyday repertoires that the ethnographic literature documents, in neighborhoods where the state arrives as

raid, checkpoint, or box and in no other form (Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024; Zubillaga et al., 2019; Antillano et al., 2020). The distributive statistics close the account: a Gini risen from 40.7 to 53.9 across the decade of coercive management (UCAB, 2025) is the quantitative record of a system that governed poverty without reducing it — and had no design intention of reducing it, since dependence, not development, was the governing objective (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Burgess & Corrales, 2024).

EXTRACTION ENFORCEMENT AND THE WELFARE-SUBSTITUTION LOGIC: WHY COERCION BECAME THE STATE'S LAST ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

The third function operates furthest from the cameras and closest to the regime's fiscal core, and its analysis completes the CPG framework by revealing the logic that unifies all three functions.

Extraction enforcement is documented across three theaters. In the Orinoco Mining Arc, the radical-rentier turn placed gold, coltan, and diamond extraction under a governance mix of military garrisons, licensed concessionaires, and armed informal actors, with the armed forces institutionally embedded in the revenue chain (Rosales, 2019; Bull & Rosales, 2020). On the western border, the ELN's parallel state — taxation, adjudication, social regulation across the Colombia–Venezuela borderland — coexists and contests with state forces in a relationship the insurgent-governance literature characterizes as capture rather than absence (Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025), while the trafficking corridor's homicide economics demonstrate what commodity flows do to local violence when enforcement is partial and participatory (Kronick, 2020). And in fuel logistics, the collapse of refining — analyzed in the author's companion study of the Paraguaná complex — made gasoline itself a rationed, convoyed,

checkpoint-governed commodity, administered by the same Guard that polices its smuggling (Congressional Research Service, 2025; Bull & Rosales, 2020; Aray & Vera, 2024; León-Vielma et al., 2022).

The welfare-substitution logic emerges when the three functions are read fiscally. A petro-state's social contract is distributive: legitimacy is purchased with rent (Buxton, 2020; Monaldi et al., 2021). The 2014 price collapse and the subsequent production collapse — an economy 80% smaller, oil output a fraction of its counterfactual (Congressional Research Service, 2025; Aray & Vera, 2024; Rodríguez, 2022) — destroyed the purchasing side of that contract; sanctions after 2017 deepened the fiscal hole by approximately 6.2 billion dollars annually while strengthening, as the cross-national evidence predicts, the military's position inside the regime (Rodríguez, 2022; Kiyani et al., 2025). What remained to the state was its organization of force, and the CPG typology describes the redeployment of that remaining asset across the three governance problems an insolvent autocracy faces: dissent (F1), the ungoverned survival economy (F2), and the residual revenue base (F3) (Corrales, 2020; Burgess & Corrales, 2024; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021). Repression, in this reading, is not the state's response to poverty's disorders; it is the form that administration itself takes when the fiscal state dies and the coercive state survives it — the checkpoint replacing the ministry, the garrison replacing the concession authority, the raid replacing the police service, the box replacing the wage (Bull & Rosales, 2020; UN Human Rights Council, 2020; Doocy et al., 2019).

The violence data localize the third function's costs with precision. The trafficking-corridor evidence shows homicides rising disproportionately along the Venezuelan route after enforcement displaced flows from Colombia — a quasi-experimental demonstration that commodity rents plus partial, participatory enforcement produce violence

rather than order (Kronick, 2020). The borderland evidence shows the ELN evolving from insurgent guest to governing syndicate, taxing, adjudicating, and recruiting on Venezuelan territory in a relationship with state forces that oscillates between collusion and contestation (Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025). The mining-zone evidence shows the armed forces embedded in the gold chain as protector, licenser, and beneficiary (Rosales, 2019; Bull & Rosales, 2020). Across the three theaters, the common pattern is enforcement as market participation: the state's coercive organs do not stand outside the extractive economy applying law to it — they operate inside it as its most heavily armed firms, and the observatory data's most anomalous category — 58.3% of violent deaths classified merely as “under investigation,” against a 10% international norm — is the statistical shadow of exactly this participatory enforcement, deaths that no institution has an interest in classifying (OVV, 2023; Antillano et al., 2020; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021).

The arrangement's internal beneficiaries explain its stability. Every function generates rents for its executors — passage fees at checkpoints, protection income in the Mining Arc, distribution control in CLAP — so the apparatus polices a system it profits from, the configuration the civil–military literature identifies as the deepest obstacle to any negotiated transition: an officer corps whose income depends on the governance functions a transition would abolish (Rosales, 2019; Corrales, 2020; Duarte Villa, 2022; Jenne & Martínez, 2022). External patronage lowered the arrangement's costs at the margin — intelligence support, diplomatic cover, sanctioned-trade channels (Fonseca et al., 2020; Gratius, 2022; Palestini et al., 2025) — but the reviewed literature is consistent that the system's core is domestic and fiscal, not geopolitical (Burgess & Corrales, 2024; Corrales, 2020). The benchmark comparisons measure the distance traveled: against the professionalization and civilian-control trajectories

documented even in difficult post-communist and Latin American cases (Angelov, 2025; Saar, 2025; Jenne & Martínez, 2022), the Venezuelan configuration fused military institution, economic administration, and irregular coercion into a single apparatus whose legal accountability is as thin as that of the proxy actors the international-law literature struggles to classify (Claes, 2025; Moya Sánchez, 2026).

EXIT OVER VOICE: THE REPRESSION–DISSENT SEQUENCE AND THE COMPARATIVE MEANING OF THE VENEZUELAN CASE

The theoretical yield of the review lies in what the Venezuelan sequence does to the repression–dissent literature, and in what the CPG concept offers comparative research.

The sequence ran in three phases, each documented in the corpus. Backlash came first, exactly as the experimental literature predicts: repression of the 2014 and 2017 cycles radicalized opinion, broadened participation, and internationalized the conflict — the real-time radicalization visible in the 60,036-tweet corpus of 2017 (Morselli et al., 2021; Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021). Fragmentation came second: at extreme repression, formal opposition coordination broke down, as the curvilinear model derived from 129 elite interviews specifies, with leaders exiled, imprisoned, or barred (Jiménez, 2023; Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019). Exit came third and at demographic scale: 3 million by 2018, 7.9 million by 2025 — the largest displacement in the hemisphere's history, absorbing the discontent that protest could no longer carry (Pantoulas & McCoy, 2019; Congressional Research Service, 2025; Weitzman & Huss, 2024). The exit valve served the regime doubly, exporting opposition and importing remittances, and the strategic literature's finding that migration flows are now managed as policy instruments applies with full force to a state that periodically modulates its own

outflow (Vardanjan, 2026; Dukalskis et al., 2024). The corollary — a diaspora of eight million as the new terrain of contention — connects the case to the transnational-repression research program, whose data show authoritarian crackdowns extending abroad as domestic control consolidates (Dukalskis et al., 2022; Dukalskis et al., 2024; Lemon & Antonov, 2020).

The trust economics of the sequence deserve statement, because they explain the regime's residual social base as more than fear. The comparative policing literature documents that public trust in Latin American police tracks perceived results as much as procedures, and that the region's publics — including its poor — often prefer effective coercion to ineffective legality (Malone & Dammert, 2021; Tiscornia & Pérez Bentancur, 2024). Venezuelan punitive populism drew on the same demand: the punitive turn was propelled by crime-victim politics that crossed the polarization divide (Samet, 2019), and the *barrio's* relationship to the Guard is correspondingly compound — the same institution that raids also mediates, the checkpoint that extorts also protects passage, and the mothers whose repertoires the ethnographic literature documents negotiate with it as with any armed power, gang or state (Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024; Zubillaga et al., 2019; Antillano et al., 2020). The CPG frame accommodates this compound relationship without romanticizing it: a governance system built on discretion generates clients as well as victims — often the same households in different months — and this clientelization of coercion, rather than ideological loyalty, is the micro-foundation of the system's persistence in the *barrios* that once constituted Chavismo's base (Corrales, 2020; Tiscornia & Pérez Bentancur, 2024; Doocy et al., 2019).

For the repression–dissent literature, the Venezuelan record suggests a specification. The backlash effect is real but bounded by the alternative outlets available to the repressed: where exit is feasible at scale, high-

intensity repression produces emigration rather than either sustained mobilization or stable acquiescence — an equilibrium the standard dyadic models, built on protest-versus-repression event data, do not capture (Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021; Gohdes, 2020; Weitzman & Huss, 2024). The CPG frame adds the governance dimension: repression that manages the survival economy (F2) suppresses mobilization capacity upstream of any protest event, because a population negotiating daily subsistence at checkpoints has neither the time, the resources, nor the legal exposure tolerance for sustained collective action — poverty governance as prevention, not response (Bull & Rosales, 2020; Bargain & Aminjonov, 2021; Tiscornia & Pérez Bentancur, 2024). This is the mechanism that the protest-centric literature, focused on F1, systematically underweights, and it is why the reviewed corpus's own drift from F1 to F2/F3 after 2019 should be read not as the phenomenon fading but as scholarship following the function migration of the apparatus itself (Tremaria, 2022; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021; Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024).

Comparatively, the CPG typology travels. Its scope conditions are three: fiscal collapse that destroys distributive capacity, a coercive apparatus that survives the collapse institutionally, and a survival economy large enough to constitute the population's principal economic experience. Nicaragua after 2018, Zimbabwe across its hyperinflations, and Myanmar after the 2021 coup approximate the configuration in different mixes, and the typology's function–target–mechanism–beneficiary matrix provides the instrument for coding them (Flores-Macías & Zarkin, 2021; Magaloni & Rodríguez, 2020; Kiyani et al., 2025). The Venezuelan case's distinctive contribution to that comparative program is its demonstration of the terminal state: a decade in, the three functions have fused into a self-financing coercive administration whose demobilized society registers 26.8 violent deaths per 100,000 with 953 police-

intervention deaths in a single year (OVV, 2023), 73.2% poverty (UCAB, 2025), and a UN finding of crimes against humanity naming the National Guard (OHCHR, 2025) — stability, of a kind, purchased at the price the title of this article names: repression as the management of poverty, because nothing else remained with which to manage it.

CONCLUSION

The review set out to synthesize the 2019–2026 scholarship on Venezuelan coercion, poverty, and informality into a single account of the Bolivarian National Guard's role, and to test three hypotheses against the assembled corpus.

The first hypothesis, that GNB activity in 2014–2026 is functionally tripartite and that the literature's center of gravity shifted from protest suppression toward economic and extractive coercion after 2019, is confirmed by the corpus with one specification. The coding distributes the Venezuela-centered studies across all three functions (14 F1, 6 F2, 3 F3) — establishing the tripartite structure while revealing that scholarship documents the economic functions far more thinly than the political one — the documentary record assigns the Guard named responsibility in each (OHCHR, 2025; UN Human Rights Council, 2020; Bull & Rosales, 2020; Rosales, 2019), and the publication-year drift of the scholarship tracks the apparatus's own reallocation as mass protest gave way to checkpoint governance (Tremaria, 2022; Zubillaga & Hanson, 2024; Mantilla & Feldmann, 2025).

The second hypothesis, that repression substituted for welfare as the state's principal instrument of poverty management, is confirmed in the review's terms. The welfare series and the coercion series move inversely across the period — distributive capacity collapsing to an occasional food box while coercive jurisdiction expanded to cover movement, commerce, distribution, and extraction

(Doocy et al., 2019; UCAB, 2025; Bull & Rosales, 2020; Hanson & Zubillaga, 2021) — and the beneficiary structure of the three functions shows the substitution to be self-financing rather than budgeted, which is why fiscal collapse deepened rather than constrained it (Rosales, 2019; Corrales, 2020; Kiyani et al., 2025).

The third hypothesis, that the repression–dissent relationship followed the backlash–fragmentation–exit sequence, is confirmed with a theoretical specification: the Venezuelan case demonstrates that where exit is available at scale, high-intensity repression resolves into emigration rather than sustained confrontation, and that economic coercion (F2) suppresses mobilization upstream of protest events — two mechanisms that the event-centric repression literature should incorporate (Morselli et al., 2021; Jiménez, 2023; Curtice & Behlendorf, 2021; Weitzman & Huss, 2024).

The principal original contribution of this article is the concept of coercive poverty governance and its three-function typology of GNB activity, together with the coded 52-study review corpus on which it rests. The concept reorganizes literatures that have analyzed repression, policing, and informality in isolation into a single governance logic — the administration of poverty by force in lieu of welfare — and the typology's function–target–mechanism–beneficiary matrix, anchored cell by cell to verified sources, is designed for comparative application beyond the Venezuelan case.

The limitations of the review are fourfold. First, the corpus is bounded at 2019 by design, so foundational earlier scholarship enters only as mediated by the reviewed studies. Second, the coding is single-author; intercoder validation is a task for subsequent work. Third, the review depends for its quantitative anchors on institutional sources — UN investigation, household survey, violence observatory — whose access constraints inside an authoritarian state are themselves part

of the phenomenon; their figures are estimates produced under adversity, not administrative statistics. Fourth, the subject remains in motion: the post-2024 repressive consolidation and the mission's 2025 findings arrived at the review's edge, and developments after mid-2026 fall outside it.

Future research should proceed on three lines: comparative application of the CPG typology to Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, and Myanmar, for which the matrix provides the coding instrument; quantitative work on the F2 function specifically — checkpoint density, confiscation values, CLAP conditionality — for which diaspora survey methods and satellite logistics data offer feasible measurement strategies where field access is barred; and integration of the exit-valve mechanism into formal repression–dissent models. For policy, the implications are sobering in both

directions. Sanctions and external pressure act on the fiscal state, but the CPG system is precisely what remains when the fiscal state is gone — and the cross-national evidence that sanctions strengthen coercive institutions inside targeted regimes applies to it directly (Kiyani et al., 2025; Rodríguez, 2022; Gratius, 2022). Any eventual transition, conversely, will inherit not merely an impoverished society but a coercive apparatus that has spent a decade as the economy's administrator and rentier — and the demobilization, vetting, and accountability literature that the UN record now feeds (OHCHR, 2025; Moya Sánchez, 2026; UN Human Rights Council, 2020) will find in the CPG typology a map of exactly which functions must be civilianized, and in what order, for poverty in Venezuela to be governed once again by something other than force.

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REPRESIJA KAO INSTRUMENT UPRAVLJANJA SIROMAŠTVOM: BOLIVARSKA NACIONALNA GARDA IZMEĐU SUZBIJANJA PROTESTA I KONTROLE NEFORMALNE EKONOMIJE U USLOVIMA MASOVNE NEZAPOSLENOSTI (2014–2026)

Martina Cvijanović

Američki univerzitet, Pravni fakultet Vašington koledž
Vašington, Distrikt Kolumbija, Sjedinjene Američke Države
E-pošta: mc5648@american.edu

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Sažetak: Između 2014. i 2026. godine Venecuela je kombinovala najdublji mirnodopski ekonomski kolaps u modernoj istoriji zapadne hemisfere sa jednim od najintenzivnijih raspoređivanja državne prinude: siromaštvo po dohotku dostiglo je 73,2% domaćinstava, a neformalnost približno polovinu ukupne zaposlenosti, dok je misija Ujedinjenih nacija za utvrđivanje činjenica dokumentovala postupanje snaga bezbjednosti koje, prema njenoj ocjeni, predstavlja zločine protiv čovječnosti — pri čemu je Bolivarska nacionalna garda (GNB) odgovorna za najveći broj politički motivisanih pritvaranja i za neselektivnu vatru na demonstrante kroz proteste cikluse 2014, 2017, 2019. i 2024. godine. Cilj ovog preglednog članka je da sintetizuje fragmentiranu naučnu literaturu o venecuelanskoj prinudi, siromaštvu i neformalnosti u jedinstven analitički prikaz uloge GNB. Istraživanje primjenjuje strukturiranu metodologiju pregleda: korpus od 52 recenzirane studije objavljene 2019–2026, sastavljen sistematskim pretragama baza i verifikovan stavku po stavku, kodiran je prema državnoj funkciji koju svaka studija dokumentuje i trianguliran sa izvorima Ujedinjenih nacija, anketnim i opservatorijskim izvorima. Originalni doprinos članka je koncept prinudnog upravljanja siromaštvom (coercive poverty governance) i njegova operacionalizacija kroz trofunkcionalnu tipologiju djelovanja GNB — suzbijanje protesta, regulacija neformalne ekonomije preživljavanja i sprovođenje ekstraktivnih renti — koja reorganizuje literaturu konvencionalno podijeljenu između studija „represije” i studija „neformalnosti” u jedinstvenu logiku upravljanja. Ključni nalazi: težište pregledane literature pomjera se poslije 2019. sa suzbijanja protesta ka ekonomskoj i ekstraktivnoj prinudi, prateći realokaciju same Garde; represija ne funkcioniše kao odgovor na neredi siromaštva, nego kao glavni instrument kojim insolventna država upravlja stanovništvom koje više ne može da plaća; a letalna eskalacija proizvela je izlazak umjesto glasa — masovnu emigraciju od 7,9 miliona ljudi — u skladu sa transnacionalnom teorijom represije. Tipologija je prenosiva na druge slučajeve u kojima snage bezbjednosti upravljaju ekonomijama preživljavanja u uslovima fiskalnog kolapsa.

Ključne riječi: *Venecuela, Bolivarska nacionalna garda, represija, neformalna ekonomija, siromaštvo, protesti, nezaposlenost, prinudno upravljanje siromaštvom.*