

Authoritarianism both in Turkey and Venezuela

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a system of a government which allows every citizen to vote and elect its governmental officials. However, elections are not the only part of being a democratic country; more is needed for a country to be called a democratic country. Although several indexes are published by international institutions according to their own various definitions, democracy is generally measured by credible international institutions on five categories: electoral process, executive-legislative relations (functioning of government), political culture (corruptions, lack of press freedom), judiciary and public-government relations (Eckhardt, 1991).

While democracy is a popular form of government in the contemporary world, there are still some authoritarian or semi-democratic (hybrid regimes) countries in the world. (Ekman, 2009) In comparison to democracy, authoritarianism is a form of government characterized by a strong central power and limited representation for citizens. A pioneer of the study of authoritarian systems of government, Luan J. Linz, examines authoritarian regimes in four characteristics: Political pluralism, legitimacy, social mobilization and shifted executive power (Francisco & A., 2001).

Authoritarian regimes and the democratization process has attracted political scientist scholars for decades. After the democratization process began in the world, scholars shifted their studies to how authoritarian governments develop into democratic ones. However, numerous democratic countries have begun to turn towards authoritarianism. There can be many reasons behind this transition such as the economy,

politics, and religiosity. So, what are the dynamics beyond this tendency of authoritativeness then?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy and Authoritarianism

Turning back to authoritarianism needs reasons. Because as mentioned above, authoritarianism means that there are limited rights for the public. The first important factor is finding the basics of authoritarianism. This will give me extensive research to provide support for my hypothesis. Then, I will separately focus on Turkey's politics and economy and Venezuela's politics and economy.

First, research shows that authoritarianism is correlated with conservatism, militarism, nationalism, and religiosity(Adorno, 1982). According to William Eckhardt (Eckhardt, 1991), Lentz's studies show that conservatives do not like change in any way. A summary of all his study shows that "The conservative was more conventional, religious, moralistic, capitalistic, militaristic, nationalistic, admittedly racially prejudiced, and presumably sexist."(Eckhardt, 1991, p. 100) Eckhardt's unifying article on this subject shows that not only Lentz but also numerous scholars have researched this field and got similar results. Eckhardt demonstrates that the essential elements of authoritarianism are conservatism, militarism, nationalism, and religiosity. It is necessary to take these dimensions into consideration.

Secondly, candidate preference, party preference, national and foreign policy orientation and political behaviors are also important factors for authoritarianism. David J. Hanson examines these factors in his article (Hanson, 1975) as a variable in political

science studies. Even though Eckardt and former scholars have established links between conservatism and authoritarianism, Hanson(1975) believes there is more to authoritarianism than conservatism. Hanson suggests that socioeconomic status of the public, family traditions in countries, and social pressures also contribute to authoritarianism.

Along with researching the democratization process and dimensions of democratic and autocratic regimes, scientists also study a country's stability. One of the scholars who studies the transition from authoritarianism to democracy is Myron Weiner. His research is a valuable reference in the field. For example, Weiner (1987) gathered practically every democratic theorist's ideas in his article to show the transition of countries to democracy. His main questions are "What coalitions against authoritarian rulers are most likely to succeed? Is popular support sufficient or is it also necessary to win over sections of the military and if so how is that to be done?" (Weiner, 1987, p. 861). He answers these questions focusing on some countries which are still authoritarian. He also gives examples from countries which are in the transition process. Despite all, many countries go back to the process of democratization. Weiner and authors like him have not realized this backward direction. Even so, the opposite direction of the process can be helpful to understand the dimensions of the backward direction.

Turkey's Politics Position

To understand Turkey's political climate, harmony of Islam and democracy must be considered. Although approximately Turkey's whole population is Muslim, Turkey has

a secular constitution, unlike other secular countries which are ruled under **sharia** (Guercio, 2017).

Muslim countries are disadvantaged across all democracies and democratization process (Fish, 2002). However, some scholars have been opposed to this idea. According to Steven M. Fish's hypothesis (2002), "Muslim countries are democratic underachievers" (p.4) Many definitions of democracy can be practiced. However, there is no specific limit to measure democracy in the world. As we discussed before, reliable institutions have some measurements for democracy. According to scholars who believe that Muslim countries cannot pursue democratic achievement, these measurements are judiciary, economic development, free-fair election, freedom for press etc. Over a hundred years ago, Montesquieu, political philosopher, discussed Islam and democratization. Some scholars, like Samuel Huntington (1996) have maintained Montesquieu's ideas about Islam and democracy. Montesquieu discussed that while Christianity presents its own justice, Islam only speaks with its sword (Secondat Charles de, 1748). Fish (2002) has found out that Muslim countries are not good at the democratic process and their judicial status lacks the ability of democratization. With his empirical test, he argues that "Muslim countries are markedly more authoritarian than non-Muslim societies." (Fish, 2002, p. 37)

If so, what are the conditions for democracy in Turkey? Murat Somer (Somer, 2007) demonstrates the differences between Islam and modernization. To understand Turkey's political position today, consulting Turkey's history is essential (Guercio, 2017). Turkey's conflict today happened after the Ottoman Empire collapsed when the republic of Turkey was founded. In 1928, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk had introduced a new system to

the Turkish people. This system is called secularism which is known as laicism in Turkey(Cumhuriyet, 2016). This regime was unfamiliar for the Turkish people because they were governed by Sharia during the Ottoman Empire's time. Secularism was not familiar for the Turkish. However, Ataturk and his followers implemented a new regime to the new Turkey. Although almost 100 years later, secularism has still created conflict for Turkish people.

This research demonstrates that while some scholars claim the presence of conservatism creates negative effects on countries en route of democratization, other scholars believe that Muslim countries have barely any chance to continue their existence under a democratic regime. Scholars who, study democracy, democratization and Turkey, claim that laicism is fundamental of democracy(Sağlar, 2016).

Venezuela Economy and Politics

To understand Venezuela's democratic position, the relationship between economic development and democracy must be considered because the relationship between economic development and democratic improvement is seen as always correlated. Numerous political scientists claim that increasing economic power will lead the countries into a more democratic position. In this case, we can say that capitalism promotes democracy and vice-a-versa (Crisp, 1998). A large part of researches about democracy, focuses on effect of economy of democracy, indicate irrefutable evidence(L. Rivera-Batiz, 2002).

If so, what are the economic conditions for democracy in Venezuela? Venezuela indicated its economic liberalization between 1989 and 1998 (John, 2005). At the beginning of the 1980s, Venezuela experienced magnificent growth economically in Latin America. Under the leadership of Carlos Andres Perez, Venezuela launched liberalization reforms in 1989 (John, 2005). These reforms caused increased inflation and unemployment. Because of these factors, the public took to the streets to protest Perez and his economic reforms. This liberalization period not only effected Venezuela's economy but also created uncertainty and political tension. In this regard, corruption and differences of distribution of income increased. Venezuela experienced these reforms until "the emergence of Hugo Chavez as a president in 1998" (John, 2005, p. 111)

In 1993, Perez was discharged for using public funds. After Perez, Rafael Caldera was elected as president. In order to gain the support of the poor public, Caldera released Hugo Chavez, the socialist leader of Venezuela from a prison. With this new situation, Venezuela's journey towards authoritarianism had begun.

President Chavez had made programs aimed at helping the poor public. Under favor of his socialist policies, he earned public trust, especially poor people's trust (V. B. Thomas, 2013). In his period, he focused on exporting petrol. While the price of petrol increased, Venezuela's economy got better(John, 2005; Kaya, 2014). However, there was a problem. Chavez did not use this economic development for permanent policies. On the contrary, he took advantage of this process for his populist discourse. He used this income to build structures, such as hospitals and roads (Selçuk, 2016). In the beginning these policies pleased the public. However, these programs caused Venezuela

to high inflations (Dođaner, 2017). The high inflation impoverished Venezuela. The current state of impoverishment has caused Venezuela to proceed towards authoritarianism (“How Chávez and Maduro have impoverished Venezuela - Free exchange,” 2017).

HYPOTHESIS

All articles, news and real-world examples (political and economic positions in the countries) lead me to discuss dimensions of authoritativeness. According to my research, I have two arguments. The first is that while the authoritativeness of Venezuela relies on an economic basis, the authoritativeness of Turkey relies on a political basis. My second argument is that leaders tend to be authoritarian as they change core-peripheral parts of society by way of their political and economic actions.

DATA and METHOD

I think the best way to apply this research would be by a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Some documents which are taken from newspapers, articles and social media (especially because Twitter is used by the Turkish public to reach actual news) will be used in this research. With second-hand sources, I will apply my observation. I believe this qualitative method will give me more information.

Secondly, I will gather a few indexes together to demonstrate how Turkey and Venezuela are en route to authoritarianism. This quantitative method will assist me in

seeing the big picture of this project. Using the two different types of research methods will allow my study to be more diverse.

FINDINGS

VENEZUELA

When Venezuela's legendary leader Hugo Chavez took over Venezuela's administration, the Venezuelan people had great hope and trust. Left-wing leader Chavez's discourse was full of hope. He promised the public they would all build Venezuela's future together. At the time, Venezuela's economy with the rising oil prices was getting better and things had started to go well for Chavez. Chavez, who increased his credibility in the eyes of voters, did not invest money for the permanent things for Venezuela. He invested money to increase the public's satisfaction by building hospitals, roads and such things which are taken care of by the public. At the end, he preferred to use his voters' support to create an authoritarian government.

Under Chavez's administration, unemployment rates halved, gross domestic product(GDP) increased and the poverty level decreased (Central Bank of Venezuela, n.d.). These improvements made him a more beloved person in the eyes of the public.

Chavez was so much-loved by the public. He still remained in power during the protests against Venezuela's state oil company. These strikes caused the country's GDP to fall by 27% and caused serious economic disorder by losing \$13.3 billion in the oil industry (Jones, 2007). Because of the economic strikes, Venezuela's currency devaluated. Thus, the welfare of the public started to deteriorate. Chavez did not invest

the profit of state oil company to sustain oil production; instead he used the profit to good account to maintain his populism. Thanks to his populist discourse, it made him a charismatic leader. However, at the same time, his policies brought economic crises upon Venezuela. After all of these economic crises, political crises arose which sent Venezuela into authoritativeness (Doğaner, 2017)

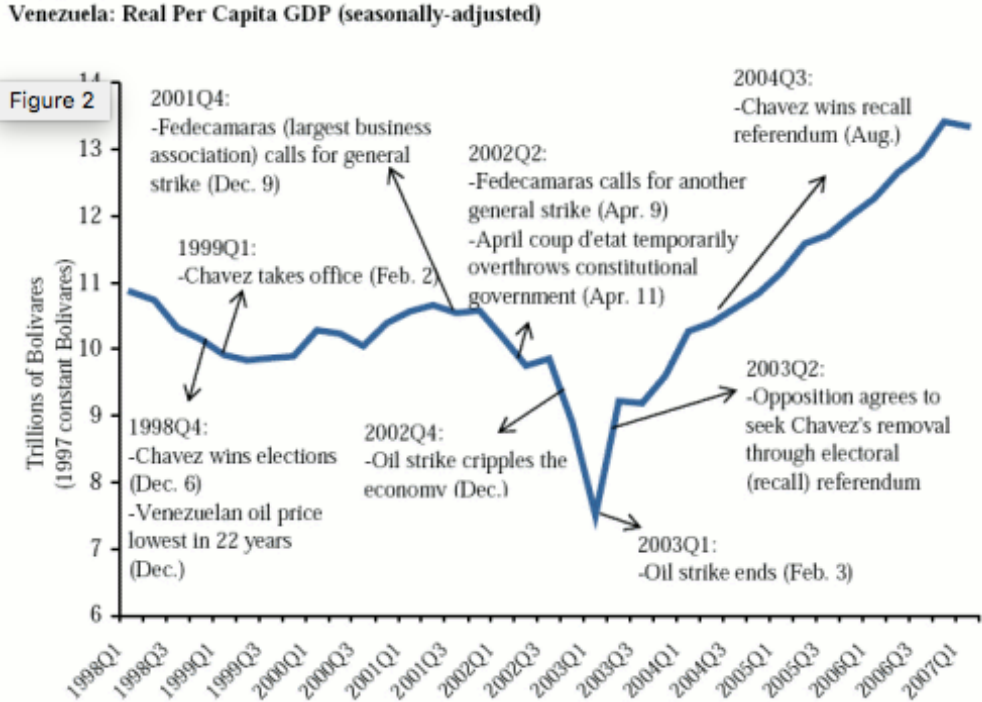
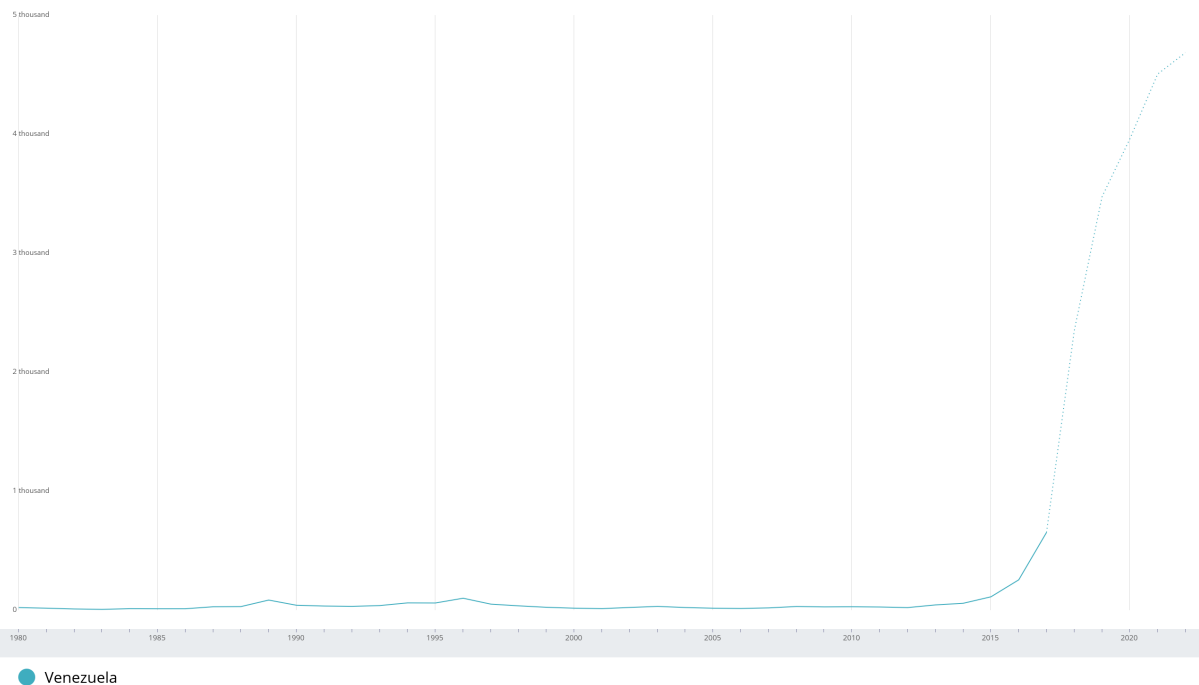


Figure 1; Source: Banco Central de Venezuela(BVC), Real Per Capita GDP of Venezuela, accessed November 2017

Chavez governed the country in such a way that even the world's largest oil reserves in his hands were not the solution to the economic crisis of Venezuela.

Inflation reached 180%; the prices of goods coming from abroad increased so much that it was possible to buy only two boxes of Nutella with minimum wage(BBC TURKCE, 2016).



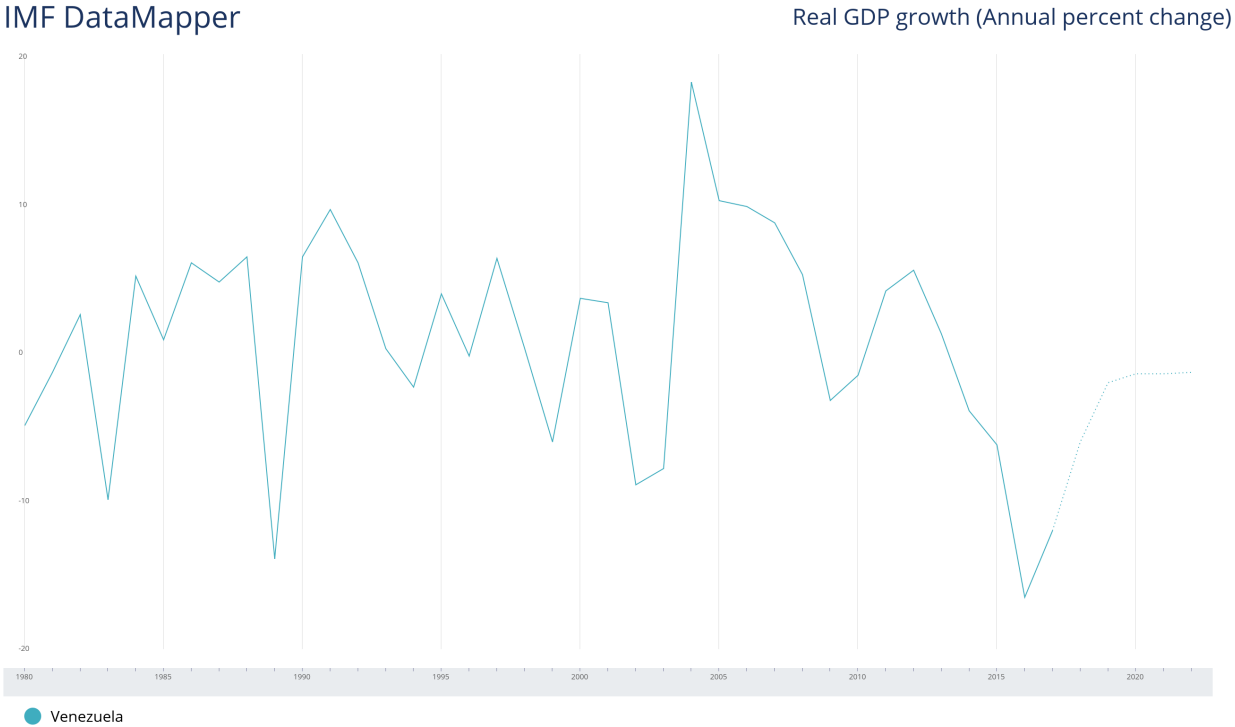
©IMF, 2017, Source: World Economic Outlook (October 2017)

Figure 2; Source: IMF, Inflation Rate, Average Consumer Prices of Venezuela,
Accessed November 2017

Chavez died on March 2013 at the age of 58. After Chavez died his previous vice president, Nicolas Maduro took over the government temporarily. He was elected as president April 2013. When Maduro came into power, he devalued Venezuela's currency. This situation increased the price of staple goods(Caracas, 2013).

In 2014, a huge economic decline took place in Venezuela. Venezuela had the world's highest inflation rate in 2015 (Flannery, 2015). The economic problems also increased the rate of crime and corruption. Venezuela encountered popular protests across the country, and the hundreds of protesters were killed in those protests between 2015 and 2017(Turkce, 2017).

In recent times of 2017, the protests have been arising all over Venezuela. Unemployment rate is under zero. Two-thirds of Venezuelan population do not want Maduro to lead the country anymore (Trombetta, 2017). However, desperate to leave his seat, Maduro used his authority until the last minute. The high court was appointed to terminate the powers of the parliament on March 29th, 2017. All the power was left to Maduro. It is understood that once in Venezuela, where the economic prosperity brought democracy, the authoritarianism is presently in power.



©IMF, 2017, Source: World Economic Outlook (October 2017)

Figure 3; Source: IMF, Real GDP Growth of Venezuela, Accessed November, 2017

TURKEY

Since its foundation as a republic in 1923, Turkey has protected its strong secular position(Çarkoğlu, 2006). Since 1923, secularism and Islam have been creating conflict in Turkey. One of the reasons of this conflict is a discussion of the democratization in Turkey (Guercio, 2017). Somer (2007) discusses that this rift occurs because of piety versus non-piety. Because while secular elites who have described themselves as Ataturkcu (followers of the Ataturk's ideas) protect Ataturk's secularist reform, the conservative mass believes that their right for freedom of religion has been usurped for years.

While this discussion was fiercely debated, Erdogan came into power during the 2002 election (Haberturk, 2002). The Turkish people believed that they would be more free and democratic like Venezuela's public when Chavez came into power. In the AKP's early years, the AKP portrayed itself as nationalist, conservative-democratic and liberalist. After the 2002 election in Turkey, the AKP (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) has never lost any elections.

There were suspicions about the AKP by secularist because its founders are Islamic-rooted. However, when the party corresponded with European Union (EU) membership in its first period, from 2002 to 2007, these suspicions was felt behind (Öniş, 2012). In 2002, AKP administration under Erdogan had begun to meet the EU's requirements for membership:

Membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and

respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. ("Copenhagen European Council - 21-22 June 1993," 1993)

This support of EU membership resulted to receive support from the oppositions because EU means modernization and democracy for Turkish people. However, as soon as AKP gets more power, it has started to ignore these criteria.

The AKP's foundation promotion increased its vote percentage in the 2007 elections. Thanks to this success, the AKP took more seats for its deputy ("SABAH - 23 Temmuz 2007, Pazartesi - 2002-2007 karşılaştırması," 2007). Therefore, due to the AKP's deputy numerical supremacy in parliament, AKP members elected Abdullah Gül as president.(Öniş, 2012). Turkey's political concerns started on this date once again because Gul's wife wears an Islamic-type headscarf which is seen as opposition to Ataturk's secular reforms by Ataturkçuler (Somer, 2007). For this reason, his election to the presidency by the AKP started the strain between the AKP government and the secularists(Rabasa, Larrabee, & National Defense Research Institute (U.S.), 2008).

Women who wear headscarves were unable to enroll in universities, to work any jobs and to be in any other kinds of public areas because there was a ban. Erdogan assigned a new chairman to the YÖK (council of higher education). With the change in the chairmanship of the Higher Education Council in 2007, the entrance of students was opened to the universities to who wear headscarves,. The order of the unbanned law was sent to the rectors of universities by the new president of the YÖK. The removal of the

headscarf ban for public personnel came into force in 2013. Restrictive provisions were removed with the amendment made in article 5 of the dress code (Aljazeera Turk, 2013). These changes allowed Erdogan to get more votes from the Islamic community.

Until the constitutional referendum in 2010, the AKP survived several purported coup attempts and the peril of closure. Because the AKP felt threatened, it prepared a constitutional reform package to limit the power of tutelary and to restructure the high judiciary system (Arsu, Sebnem; Bilefsky, 2010). While these amendments limit the tutelage, Erdogan got more power once again (Hakyemez, 2010).

While Erdogan had become stronger, the strength of traditional veto players had diminished with the successful constitutional amendments in 2010. Later on, after the constitutional amends, Erdogan abandoned liberalization. Instead, he gradually focused on monopolizing his power in Turkey. So, in the Turkish national elections, the AKP became Turkey's predominant party in 2011 (Gumuscu, 2013).

In this process, the Gülen movement (Cemaat) had always been a supporter of the AKP; however, the relationship of AKP and Cemaat suddenly ended. Gulen Movement is known as an Islamic-social movement (BBC News, 2016). The movement has been supported by various social groups both inside and outside of Turkey for its contribution to education, introduction to the Turkish cultures, religious dialogue and struggles with poverty; it has been criticized as being a danger to secularism. The Cemaat is also criticized in order to become self-interested in political and economic power ("Islam, Nurculuk ve Fethullah Gulen Hareketi," 2009). At one point, Erdogan was getting all his support from Gulen, but disagreement emerged between Erdogan and Gulen. Therefore,

this relationship came to an end for many reasons. The first problem is known as the MIT (Turkish National Intelligence Organization) crisis. One of the prosecutors of Turkey summoned Hakan Fidan, Head of MIT, to testify as a part of an investigation into PKK (Kurdish Workers Party, known as a terrorist group in Turkey). Further, Erdogan gave an order to close prep schools, which almost all of them were known as Gulen's school, that prepared the students for the general university exam. The war between Erdogan and Gulen started after that day (Akyol, 2014). In the end, on July 15th, 2016, Turkey was confronted with a military coup attempt. It was claimed that the movement behind the coup was the Gulen movement (Kasapoglu, 2016).

The public went out to the streets to protect democracy, or so it seemed. At first, some citizens thought that they would honestly protect democracy; however, the majority shouted out "I am going to die for Erdogan." Erdogan gave a direction to the public to protect their country. He mentioned that if someone dies for their country, they will be "Şehit" (according to Islam, Şehit people will go directly to Heaven). He took advantage of the majority to protect his position. This was the next to last attack to take Turkey towards authoritarianism.

Although he declared a state of emergency for a period of three months after the coup attempt, this declaration is still in force. With this declaration, Erdogan rules Turkey by decree. The government closed down 3 news agencies, 16 television stations, 23 radio stations, 45 newspapers, 15 magazines and 29 publishers. Thousands of people have been arrested as coup suspects and this has been continuing ("The Government's Deepening Assault on Critical Journalism | HRW," 2016). This failed attempt has given

Erdogan what he wanted. He also rewrote the Turkish constitution via referendum in 2017. This is the last attack up against democracy. The Turkish Parliamentary system has been changed to the presidential system("Anayasa deęişikliği ve Başkanlık sistemi maddeleri nelerdir? -," 2017). Although the AKP and Erdogan have emphasized that these amendments will create democratic stabilization in the country, the amendments show that Erdogan will have all power in his hand.

Turkey's economy is still under control. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s 2017 data, Turkey is an emerging market (IMF, 2017b). As it is reported by World Bank Statistics and IMF's Statistics, Turkey has the world's 17th largest nominal GDP(IMF, 2017a; World Bank, 2016). Whereas Venezuela's inflation rate, after 2013, has been increasing restrain, Turkey's inflation rate is stable. It can be seen on the figure 5. As it is seen on the figure 6, although both countries have economic fluctuations, Turkey's Real GDP growth has never experienced trough, like what Venezuela experienced on 2016. These statistics demonstrate Turkey is not en route of authoritarianism as a result of economic crisis.

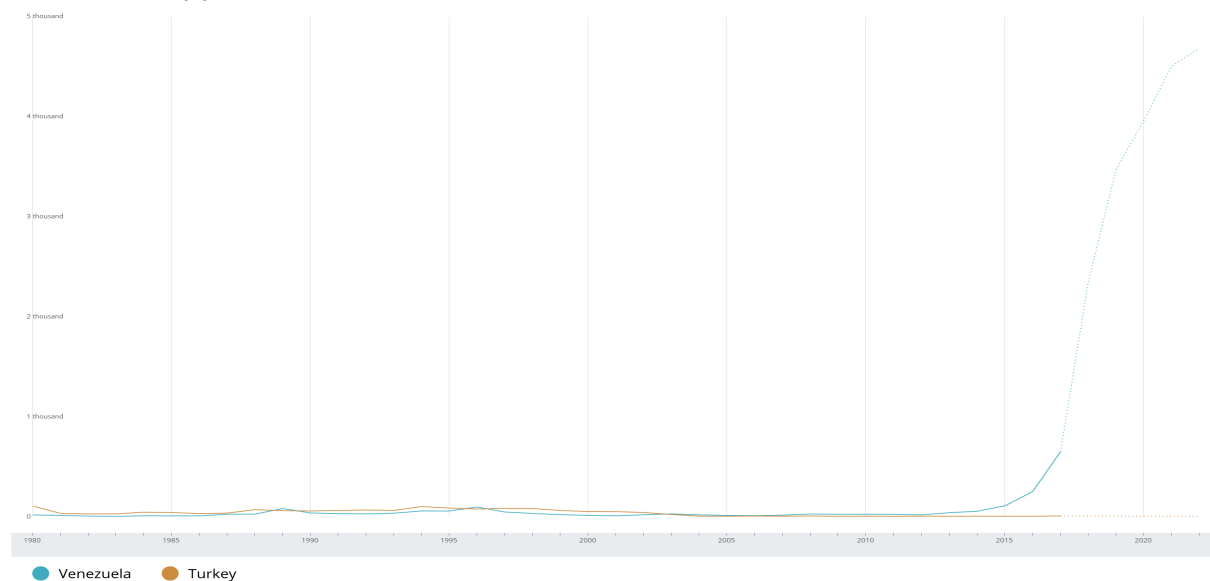
Gross domestic product 2016

Ranking	Economy	(millions of US dollars)
1	United States	18,569,100
2	China	11,199,145
3	Japan	4,939,384
4	Germany	3,466,757
5	United Kingdom	2,618,886
6	France	2,465,454
7	India	2,263,523
8	Italy	1,849,970
9	Brazil	1,796,187
10	Canada	1,529,760
11	Korea, Rep.	1,411,246
12	Russian Federation	1,283,162 ^a
13	Spain	1,232,088
14	Australia	1,204,616
15	Mexico	1,045,998
16	Indonesia	932,259
17	Turkey	857,749

Figure 4; Source: World Bank, GDP's of countries, Accessed November 2017

IMF DataMapper

Inflation rate, average consumer prices (Annual percent change)



©IMF, 2017, Source: World Economic Outlook (October 2017)

Figure 5; Source: IMF, Inflation Rate, Average Consumer Prices of Turkey and Venezuela, Accessed, November 2017

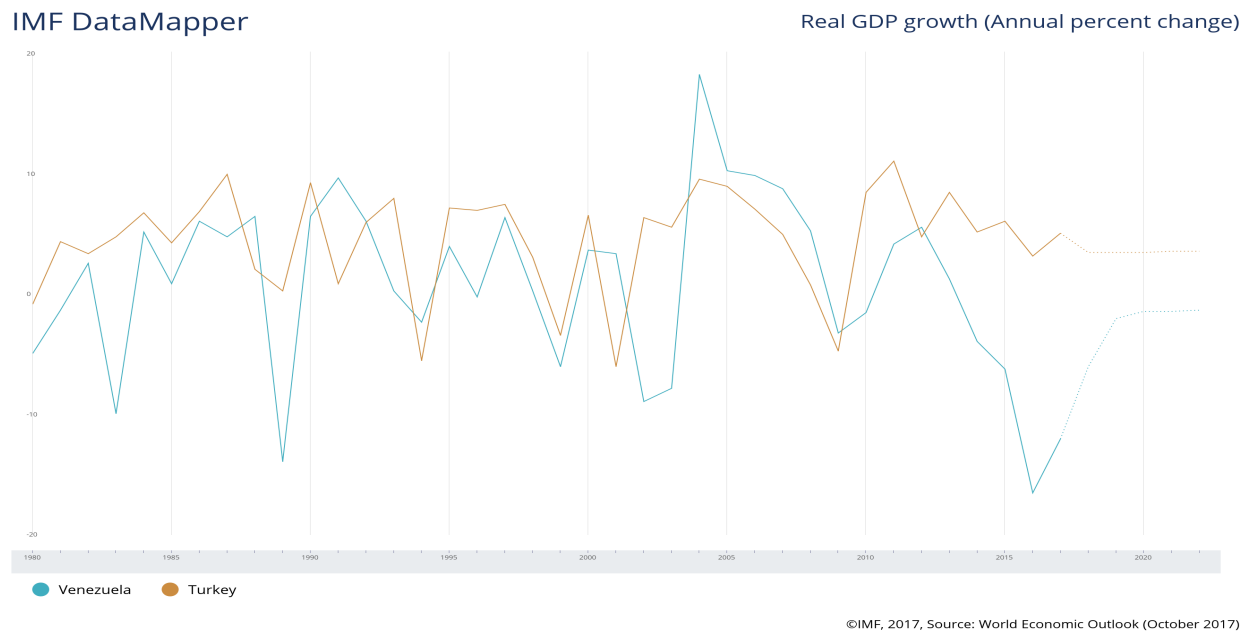


Figure 6; Source: IMF, Real GDP Growth of Venezuela and Turkey, Accessed, November 2017

DISCUSSION

Democratization is a challenging process for countries. Even if a powerful democratic country demands to maintain its democratic position, it is necessary to make a progression every time. However, leaders are so desperate to leave their seats. As I argue in my second argument, leaders tend to be authoritarian as they change core-peripheral parts of society by way of their political and economic actions.

Chavez, Modura, and Erdogan are representatives of this argument. For example, Whenever Erdogan realized he had more power, he rewrote the Turkey's constitution to change the parliamentary system to the presidential system in 2017 through a

referendum. He got all his power depending on core-peripheral parts of society. He received 51% of the vote as yes to change the Turkish Constitution (NTV, 2017). Like Erdoğan, when Chavez had the power he also rewrote the constitution of Venezuela. In 2000, Chavez got all the power and diminished parliament. Although the military attempted the coup, they failed in 2002. There were so many supporters of Chavez in that time(Canache, 2012). Because of his popularity, he was elected as president getting 58% of the public vote. He did anything for the public to maintain his popularity. However, this situation did not prevent Venezuela not to lead into crisis. It shows that Chavez also took advantages of peripheral parts of society.

Another main point of the article is what the dynamics of authoritarianism in both countries is. These findings and articles demonstrate that both Venezuela and Turkey are on their way to authoritarian regimes. There are many ways to diverge from democracy. Political and economic policies can count one of them. Whereas Venezuela took steps to become an authoritarian country by using economic policies, Turkey's steps were on political policies. When statistics, taken from reliable institutions and information are taken from articles and newspapers are put together, they stand behind my hypothesis.

In conclusion, although both countries have free elections, their policies do not support democracy anymore. However, the Venezuelan and Turkish masses still support democracy. The public of both countries are not the supporters of the authoritative regime. It is ambiguous how the support of democracy by the public will affect the countries. The returning back to democracy will not be easy for the countries, if they persist on their current policies.

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