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## *How does Freedom House's Turkish Classification Reflect the Truth? A Critical Analysis\**

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*Abstract: In the last quarter of the 20th century, authoritarian administrations in many countries of the world collapsed. Democracy's becoming a global value and increasing democratization efforts made many issues related to democracy a subject of discussion. Particularly the fact that every country began to defend democratic values and made effort to appear to have a situated democracy made it significant to determine the level of democracy. Within this framework it is significant to develop objective criteria in determining levels of democracy, making measurements over those criteria and assess the change.*

*Freedom house (FH) index is frequently used as reference since it makes measurements at international scale and offers the chance of comparison. In Freedom house, 2017 index, the level of democracy in Turkey fell down from the status of "partially free" to the status of "non-free" country. And it lists Turkey among 197 countries as 163th country following such countries as Serbia, Macedonia, Malaysia, Tanzania, Mexico, Ecuador, Tunisia, Maldives. And according to The Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) index and POLITY index rating and graduation of Turkey is similar as well.*

*If Turkey follows Serbia, Macedonia, Malaysia, Tanzania, Mexico, Ecuador, Tunisia, Maldives, this brings about certain questions. These particularly include the following questions: What do these ratings of Freedom house or other similar institutions mean indeed? How was Turkey determined to be non-free? How does Freedom House's Turkish Classification Reflect the Truth? What are variables or criteria of democracy quality? Are there any criteria other than objective criteria in rating?*

*About Turkey In the West, a negative image has been tried to be constructed in recent years. In this process, politicians as well as public producers and media, international organizations such as Freedom House, NGOs took place. In addition, local collaborators such as the PKK and the PKO were included in this process. The common goal of all of them is to make Turkey unable to get out of the role of slaughter by weakening Turkey, which is trying to disrupt the games. The most important rhetoric, which gives political status to a state on a global scale and intervenes with other means in the context of the concept of the Fourth Generation war, is undoubtedly the "democratic departure", "limitation of freedoms" and "non-democratic". At the beginning of the organization is the Freedom Hous.*

\* "This article is an enlarged and originally updated statement that Gülise Gökce was presented by the West East Institute under the title "Level of Democracy in Turkey" at the International Congress in Budapest in 2014."

*In this context, this study discusses measurement of democracy and democracy quality. In this regard the macro models used frequently particularly including Freedom house are compared. Most of the models are a product of western culture and for this reason they are more suitable for determining levels of western democracies. Whereas it is considered that these models are not much suitable for some countries including our country. If this consideration is valid, then it is necessary to design a new democracy index for our country; to clarify, it is necessary to develop a new method of measuring democracy quality. For this purpose, first of all it is necessary to explain the definition and understanding of democracy which is the basis for the measurement because classifying to what degree a country is democratic or not is closely related to how democracy is conceptualized. The existing models are suitable for describing the different between democracy and autocracy but they are not considered to be sufficiently detailed and comprehensive with respect to revealing the differences between the peculiar conditions of each country and the democracy quality. And this is originated from the fact that those models are based on minimal democracy understanding. Nevertheless democracy measurement concept has to act on the basis of a broader and more comprehensive democracy perspective and understanding.*

*This article is particularly to discuss Freedom House's existing democracy measurement models on the basis of a more comprehensive understanding of democracy and to assess the same for Turkey.*

**Keywords:** *democracy, freedom, management, Turkey, analysis.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In these days the argument that Turkey has a “non-free” (Freedom House, 2017) or “defected democracy having the risk of transforming into hybrid regime” (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010; Kemahlioğlu and Keyman, 2011:4) is made.

Although Dahl laid the ground of measurement of democracy level in 1970's, attempts to create typology for the purpose of detecting quality of democracy coincide with post-“third wave” period in democratization (Hungtion, 1991). And the current process is conceptualized as the “fourth wave” (McFaul, 2002). Many concepts or models related to measurement of democracy level and quality belong to 80's and 90's (similarly Özalp, 2008:132; Köktaş, 2002:118). The following three concepts among many existing models or approaches come to the forefront. The first one of these is the concept of Freedom House which measures political rights and civil freedoms rather than measuring democracy in its real meaning but the use of which is the most common. And the second one is The Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) democracy index which began to be created in recent years. And the third one is Polity-Projeckt. All these three models want to measure many democracies for a long time. Freedom House model represents the model which received highest number of references and which was referred most frequently. The other two developed as complementary in the discussion related to the Freedom House model (for detailed information related to the issue see Campbell and Barth, 2009:210). And for this reason these two models are not mentioned much and the concept of Freedom House was focused on.

Democracy measurement models are closely related to democracy understanding or definition. However there has not been a definition about the concept of democracy acceptable to everybody yet. There are numerous trials of definition about definition of democracy. And these trials of definition compete with one another (Schmidt, 2001). At that point, those trials of definition are generally discussed by being placed in two main groups. The first one of these is democracy in its narrow meaning or in the minimalist meaning and understanding of democracy in its broad meaning and in the maximalist meaning. In the narrow understanding of democracy, democracy is an instrument providing protection of freedom rights of individuals. And through free and just elections interests are expressed owing to determining the political elite and separating them. In this context, narrow understanding of democracy is named as “election democracy” as well. Classical representatives of narrow understanding of democracy are Locke (2004 and 2007 [1689]), Mill (1991[1861]) and Tocqueville (1968 [1835]). This model finds its elite development in Weber (1987 [1921]) and pluralism development in Dahl (1956). And Schumpeter's model is the most definite example of this (1976). Up to date Dahl'a Poliyarchy concept has made up theoretical and empiric basis of

democracy measurements. Dahl's democracy understanding preserves its nature of being reference model to Freedom House index which is most frequently used today. For this reason here Dahl's democracy understanding is given.

## II. DAHL'S POLYARCHY CONCEPT AND DEMOCRACY MEASUREMENT MODELS

According to Dahl, first of all the following basic conditions related to each other should realize for a democracy. These are: Competition for political authorities and a sufficient field providing political participation of all citizens (1956:5). In other words, representation and participation are the most basic components of democracy for Dahl.

It is specified that the models of measuring democracy based on Dahl's democracy understanding are suitable for separating democratic and authoritarian management forms from one another first of all whereas it is not convenient to separate modern liberal democracies from other types of democracy (Campbell and Barth, 2009:214; Merkel, et. al. 2003:32). According to Pickel and Pickel (2006:30), Dahl's model only contains political conditions and it does not deal with social and economic fields. Furthermore upon transition of the world from bipolar system to single polar system many authoritarian regimes transited to democratic system. However it is a reality that those countries have not completed the process of transition to democracy yet and different new democratic structures within this process. Models based on narrow democracy understanding have been insufficient to explain these structures and even the structures which appear to be democracy namely which fulfill the criteria of democracy formally but far from the meaning and context of democracy. The models developed in recent years aim at remedying this defect.

## III. ADVANCE MODEL AIMING AT MEASURING DEMOCRACY QUALITY

One of those models is the embedded democracy model developed by Merkel, Puhle, Croissant, Eicher and Thiery (2003). This model is based on contemporary liberal democracy understanding. Merkel conceptualizes democracy on the basis of system theory as a complex structure composed of interlocked partial regimes and institutional arrangements. If partial regimes operate as supporting one another, democracy gains a functional quality. In the case one of these does not operate namely fulfill its function or one lacks within the system, the system does not operate or fails. And partial regimes, a democratic election regime, political participation rights regime, civil freedoms regime are institutional guarantee of power control and de facto and de jure guaranteeing the effective administration powers of representatives elected democratically (Merkel, et. al., 2003:48 et.al.; cf. Özalp, 2009:138-9). Briefly Merkel understands democracy as a structure composed of norms and institutions and built on vertical, horizontal and transversal structure of political administration.

There are many further models in addition to Merkel's model. These particularly include Landman's (2008) model, "Demokratimatrix" developed by Lauth, Bertelsmann Transformation index developed on the basis of Merkel's embedded democracy and defected democracy model, "Democracy Ranking" developed by scientists from Austria-Hungary (Campbell and Sükösd, 2002; Campbell and Pölbauer, 2009.), "Índice de Desarrollo Democrático de América Latina (IDD-Lat)" / "Demokratieindex Lateinamerika" (O'Donnell, 1994) and "Demokratiebarometer" (Bühlmann, Merkel, Müller, Giebler, Wessels, 2011) etc. Those models claim to be more explanatory and covering in terms of development level and methods. However some of those models (e.g. "Democracy Ranking" and "Democratic-barometer") either analyze the countries classified by Freedom House as "free" or "partially free" or aim at revealing the characteristics that differentiate the countries counted among full democracies among one another. For this reason here the variables or measurement criteria shall be considered as necessary but the models shall not be discussed in detail.

Furthermore Campbell and Barth (2009:211-5) discuss many of those models comprehensively and as a result they develop "Democracy Ranging" model (2004: 22-23). Democracy Ranging model is based on the following criteria. These are: Rule of law, Competition, Participation, Horizontal accountability, Vertical accountability, Responsibility, Freedom and rights, Political equality.

Another model resembling this is “Democratic-barometer”. It is specified that democracy contains three basic principles including “freedom”, “equality” and “control” providing balance between the two and “control” dimension among these is the most basic element discriminating democracy from other authoritarian regimes (Bühlmann et. al., 2011:4). Nine functions are produced from these dimensions and it is assumed that the degree of responding these functions and quality of democracy are closely correlated.

1. Freedom dimension: includes functions of individual freedoms, rule of law [equality before the law and quality of justice], public freedoms [freedom of association and freedom of expression].
2. Controls dimension: includes functions of competition, violence control, ability of government.
3. Equality dimension: includes functions of transparency, participation, representation.

Those criteria have been developed rather to detect structural differences among all full democracies and strengths and weaknesses thereof.

And in the countries which try to place their democracies via democratization first of all political and economic stability, administrative capacity, efficiency trade policy, political and social integration dimensions should be included in the measurement in addition to the principles of rule of law, political and individual freedoms, participation, competition. Because these are basic components of democracy (Calaminus, 2007:93).

#### IV. THE PROBLEM OF LEVEL AND QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY

In general reports prepared and published annually in all over the world by Freedom House in order to have knowledge and opinion about the levels of democracy in countries in the world. These reports reflect arguments related to the situation a year before. Freedom House classifies countries as free, partially free and non-free. A scale varying from 1 to 7 is used for assessing the criteria used for making basis for this classification. Accordingly any country receiving points from 1.0 to 2.5 is defined as free, any country receiving points from 3.0 to 5.5 is defined as partially free and any country receiving points from 5.5 to 7.0 is defined as a non-free country. Those points are composed of the mean of the points received separately from the indicators used with regard to civil and political rights.

Civil rights cover the following questions collected under four main titles:

1. Freedom of expression and belief: Does media and broadcast life have freedom from censorship? Are there freedom of expression in religious terms in private and public sphere and free religious institutions?
2. Institutional and organizational rights: Is there freedom of association, meeting and demonstration? Are political parties, NGOs free? Are there free enterprise, free commercial unions and collective bargaining?
3. Rule of law and human rights: Is the jurisdiction independent? Does the law dominate civil and penal events? Does equality of citizens before the law dominate? Does the police dominate civil authority? Is there any protection from torture, arbitrary arrest etc.? Is there corruption? Are arbitrariness and disobeying rules in state administration in question?
4. Personal autonomy and economic rights: Is there personal autonomy, does the state control travel, selection of residence place or job? Are property rights under guarantee, do citizens have the right to establish private enterprise? Is there equality of opportunity? Is there gender equality, freedom to select spouse?

And political rights cover questions related to free and just election: Has the president of the state or government been elected through a free and just election? Have the representatives in legislation been elected through a free and just election? Is there a just election law, equality of opportunity in election competition, were the votes counted correctly? Was reflection of electorate preferences to creation of power guaranteed? Is there a multi-party election system that citizens can freely participate? Is there an opposition that really has the chance to come to the power through election? Are the people free from domination of

political, religious, economic etc. structures and/or persons (sect leader, mafia leader etc.)? is there informal consensus in cultural, ethnic, religious and other minority groups' determining their future at an acceptable scale, administering themselves, in autonomy or participation in the decision making process?

These questions are answered by experts selected for each country. The expert gives raw points for the questions.

Looking through ranking and grading of Freedom House for Turkey from the past to the present; it is a partially free country from 1972 to 1974, a free country from 1974 to 1980, a partially free country from 1980 to 2000, and similarly a partially free country between 2000-2012. And in the 2017 freedom map published by Freedom House recently, namely in early May 2014, Turkey is in the position of a non-free country (Freedom House's web address, <http://freedomhouse.org>). The outlook also remained unchanged in 2017. Let us underline immediately: Turkey was degraded to the status of non-free country from partially free status under the title of press freedom. And under the title of freedom in the world, appearance of Turkey continues to be partially free.

Freedom House has classified Turkey in the category of partially free for a long time. It changed this classification for the first time in 2013. Freedom House's degradation of the status of Turkey in the category of press freedom led to strict discussions in Turkish public opinion. While the government wing reacts this strictly, opposition and anti-government structures supported Freedom House. From this perspective, it is considered it will be useful to emphasize here how to read and assess Freedom House's report in scientific terms.

When Freedom House's method and approach is subjected to an analytic assessment; it is possible to detect the following issues:

1) Freedom House moves from variables based on expert opinion rather than objective data or the findings of fields researches with representative nature. Since categorization process is not freed from personal values in such an approach, reliability of data in scientific terms is problematic and vulnerable to questioning (Calaminus, 2007:94).

2) Freedom House uses concepts of freedom and democracy synonymously. Kekic states that freedom is a significant component of democracy but political rights and civil rights are not sufficient for determining the level and particularly quality of democracy (2007:1-2). According to Calaminus, "it does not mean that freedom equals to democracy and democracy equals to law and constitutional state" (2007:94). Nevertheless law and constitution is the basic condition of processing of a democratic system. This most basic issue is not included in the concept of Freedom House.

3) It is emphasized that Freedom House uses a concept too much built on freedom. Accordingly, the higher freedom assessment of a country is the higher the chance of that country to have high quality of democracy. Muchness of freedom democracy is equivalent to highness of its quality. Undoubtedly this inference is incomplete and false. From this perspective, the criteria used by Freedom House are convenient for detecting whether any political system is democracy or autocracy. Nevertheless it is not much convenient for measuring the level and quality of democracy (Campbell and Barth, 2009:221; Calaminus, 2007).

4) Freedom House's freedom assessments generally realize in parallel to American foreign policy (see Campbell and Barth, 2009:217-8).

To summarize; these issues indicate that it is necessary to approach carefully to the inferences of Freedom House regarding democracy level and quality of countries. The manner of Freedom House to position Turkey from the first report to date in terms of freedom supports this perception as well. In freedom map of Freedom House Turkey is in a position of a partially free country from 1972 to 1974, free country from 1974 to 1980 and continuously partially free country from 1980 to 2013. Comparing the freedom map of Turkey between 1974 -1980 to the current status, it is a reality that Turkey is in much better a position with respect to both press freedom and civil freedom. This is reflected in post-2002 reports of Freedom House as well.

A coup d'état was made in 1980 in Turkey and freedom was suspended. Within this period of time Turkey is in the limit of non-free with a point of 5.5. Similarly it rises to the limit of 5.5 from 1994 to 1996 again. And its point decreased to 4.5 again from 1999 to 2002. Its point decreased to 3 from 2005 to 2012 and a further regression is in question after 2012. Turkey is in the world freedom map appears in a very low order right nor at the moment.

Turkey is shown in the status of fully free till 1980. And now it appears as a “partially free” and “non-free” country. Here we will not discuss the political events and unrests experienced by Turkey after 1970 individually. However it is necessary to state that ideological fights between political groups in Turkey were very intense in this period and five thousand persons lost their lives in those fights. Interestingly, Turkey was in the status of a free country in this period. And in 2013, Turkey was removed from appearance of partially free country to the appearance of non-free country in the category of press freedom. Today, the table has not changed. This really indicates a paradoxical situation and leads to emergence of many problems. Among these, the first one to recall is the question of to what degree is assessment and ranking of Freedom House objective and reflects the reality.

In this regard Calaminus's arguments are striking. Calaminus emphasizes that Freedom House's grading and ranking is not much detailed and usually reflects personal feelings and there are factors that affect and shade the results (2007:93-94).

We do not mean on the basis of this argument that Turkey is or needs to be in the category of full democracies. What we mean that it is necessary to read Freedom House's report carefully. So, what is the status of democracy and particularly press freedom in Turkey?

This question is tried to be answered in general terms moving from results of certain field researches performed in previous years (Kemahlioğlu and Keyman, 2011; Gökce, 2012 and 2013; TİAV, 2013). The data and findings of these researches are given briefly under the main categories considered to be based on in order to measure democracy level.

#### 1st Criteria: Individual Freedoms

Right to physical integrity: The state has been perceived for a long time as sacred, immune and uncriticizable in Turkey. In this context state is prior and significant rather than the society. However this perception has changed much in recent years. The perception that “the state exists for society” both in the level of administration and society started to become common (TİAV, 2013). Although the Constitution has not been amended, arrangements for the rights of the individual to speak his/her own language, living his/her own culture, learn his/her own language at schools were realized.

- Lack of state intervention: Here it is in question whether the state makes oppression on who will live how. As it is the case in all democratic countries, no oppression of the state in Turkey is in question. However “peer pressure” may be in question.

- Respect to differences within the society: Differences with the society are accepted. However it is a reality that the same approach to each group is not in question with the society. Despite all these issues, it is not possible that people are excluded and oppressed due to their preferences, ethnical and religious identities. In general the proportion of those who say that they would not accept those not resembling them as neighbors is not higher than 15%. Women have not been represented exactly in political and economic field yet as a group. Equality between men and women do not go beyond the rhetoric both in public sphere and in private sphere.

Right to self-determination: it is not possible yet for groups different due to ethnical, religious, lingual difference to make their own decisions independently from the center. Localization policies and tendency have increased in recent years. Religiously different groups have freedom of praying and their temples are under protection. They do not have the means for training in religious issues and training reverends.

- Right to acquire property: Each local and foreign individual and religious communities are entitled to acquire property through legal arrangements.

- Right to Travel, Reside: Each individual may reside in any city, do any work and travel and migrate freely.

Freedom of Association: Individuals have the right of association in foundations, societies and trade unions to the benefit of the society or in order to realize their professional objectives or protect their professional interests. However looking through from the perspective of sanction powers, it appears that their potential to have effect on political decision making mechanism is limited.

#### 2nd Criteria: Rule of law and Quality of Justice

One of the most significant components of democracy is that the state is a constitutional state and has adopted the principle of rule of law.

-Equality before the law: everybody is equal before the law. However it is not possible to say that this realizes exactly in practice. The citizens think that law does not distribute justice (Gökce, 2013; TİAV, 2013). Trust to the law has suffered from erosion in recent days. And the basic reason for this is the perception that law has been politicized.

-Independence and objectivity of the judiciary: one of the issues discussed for a long time in Turkey is the issue of independence and objectivity of the judiciary. The perception that judges decide as state oriented rather than citizen oriented and act under the effect of the army has been common for a long time. And now the claim that they are under the influence of a particular religious group is common. According to some people, political power fictionalize this in order to influence judges and this is not real and according to others judges are not really independent and objective. This division has reflected to the society as well. The society has been divided into two in this regard.

- Judicial objectivity and Confidence in the judiciary: The perception that judges are not objective, they do not decide objectively, that public servants, politicians, businessmen are protected is very common within the society. For this reason confidence in the judiciary is below the average (see TİAV, 2013; Gökce, 2013).

- Confidence in the police: The confidence level of the police has decreased considerably after the FETÖ's coup attempt of July 15th.

#### 3rd Criteria: Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech is one of the cornerstones of democracy. The right of individuals to express their ideas and opinions in every environment without being afraid is undoubtedly one of the most significant rights. And the indicator of plurality is the fact that freedom of speech is valid in practice.

Freedom of press: There is a lively discussion in Turkey in terms of freedom of media. According to some people, media is free; and according to others it is not free. This issue is somewhat related to political position as well. Those who support the political power think that media is free. And those who oppose the political power think that media personnel is not free. According to those in the group opposing the government, the media institutions and media personnel who do not support the political power are suppressed and they are punished by means of economic instruments or dismissals. And according to Freedom House report, press sector has been controlled by the government in recent days, Prime Minister Erdoğan curses the journalists who do not share conservative values all the time. And media bosses dismiss those journalists since they are afraid of indignation of the government.

Freedom House's basic assumption that "the government controls the press" is not definitely correct in this form. Looking through the general structure of the press in Turkey, it is apparent that there is multivocality. If we take the government as the central point of the analysis it is possible to classify the structure of the existing press as: (i) those close to the power; (ii) those

in a sworn battle with the power; (iii) those who are in fight for survival with the power; and (iv) another group distant to the power (Bayramoğlu, 2014): As indicated by this classification as well, press is never under the control of the government in Turkey and there is plurality exactly. Those media groups are usually a “party” under the rhetoric of objectivity and they aim at obtaining power in political area and creating effectiveness politically and economically ignoring all functions. In other words, the media attributes itself the role of political actor of first degree rather than the fourth power role defined for it. To express more clearly, the media is made an instrument by the media bosses and employees in order to make oppression on the government, provide economic privilege, open new areas for its own supporters etc. If media groups declare this purpose clearly, there will be no problem. But it is problematic if they do this on behalf of people and in the name of objectivity. This is missed out by external observers and persons who are full of anger against Prime Minister Erdoğan. If you do not see this or ignore this, you will reach false conclusions. And for this reason, the claim that the media is not free is not very realistic. It is possible to see this in scientific studies related to news analyses of the media as well. Media bodies are free to select any of the issues whether in the agenda or not and fictionalize and present them from any perspective (see TIAV, 2014). Nobody asks “why do you apply such a theming strategy or makes oppression. RTÜK fails to fulfill its function in this regard exactly. In many European countries in the full democracy category, media institutions continuously cause scientific research all the time and reflect research results to their broadcasting policies. Furthermore you come across employees and directors with any idea in all media institutions. And in Turkey, you cannot find anybody who does not think as themselves in any media body. Each media body is almost single voiced in it. And this is not related to the government. In this regard it is not correct that the government restricts freedom of press and controls the press. In this context Freedom House transfers the criticisms of dominant countries of the world toward Turkey to the field of freedom and institutionalizes the same. Obviously, the manner of assessment of Turkey by Freedom House is far from objectivity and has a political function.

-Media offer: Each political, ethnic, religious etc. group has its own media. It has the right and freedom of watching any information and program. There are more than 50 TV channels broadcasting in Turkish at national and regional level. Similarly there are approximately 15 newspapers having reader mass of more than 250.000. In addition to this, there is accessibility to international channels including BBC, CNNInt.

-Social media: Use of social media in Turkey is quite common. There was a problem about accessibility for some time in the past. Twitter was closed to access for a definite period of time a short while before this through court decision. Similarly YouTube was closed to access as well. Particularly Twitter was made by a particular group a means of degradation of the Prime Minister. When Twitter management did not agree to close the relevant web pages, accessibility to Twitter was prevented completely through court decision. After a definite period of time, it was made available for access again with the decision of the Constitutional Court. It is not possible to deem and assess the campaign executed against the Prime Minister via Twitter within the scope of freedom of speech.

#### 4th Criteria: Competition

Political equality and competition is widely used as the indication of whether a system is democratic or not. Political system has been freed from external effects and there was no problem with election of legislation and execution.

In the election process, particularly those political parties which receive votes more than a particular point have the opportunity to compete equally. Because only parties which received votes higher than 7% in the previous election receive subvention in Turkey. This subvention increases in proportion to the votes received. From this perspective, strong political parties become more advantageous since membership to political parties with material support is not common. And the parties having votes lower than 7% are disadvantageous. It is possible to interpret this as “there is no just competition environment in the elections” or exactly contrarily as “there is just competition environment in the elections”. The clear thing is that political parties which are not strong and fail to pass a definite vote proportion do not have the opportunity to compete equally in material terms before everything else. There is no legal arrangement and transparency about financing of elections. Although

this issue comes to the agenda frequently in EU progress reports, no political party has an attempt in this regard yet. And this is what is surprising.

Closing political parties were made more difficult through legal arrangements performed. The obstacles before political organization of ethnic, religious groups and affecting public policies have been removed in great deal.

Each political party may enter in election and change of power through elections have been legally guaranteed. Counting of votes is performed mostly fast and correctly. In general everybody votes freely and without being exposed to any influence.

Nobody has control on the elected excluding political party leaders and if they are not included in any religious or separatist political movement.

There is problem in the law of political parties. Everybody has the right to be a candidate from any political party on paper. But the case is a bit different in practice. Many political parties fail to make pre-election in provinces or regions and determine their candidates from the center.

Each group cannot find the right to be represented in the parliament due to election threshold. The election threshold is 10%. And this is a great obstacle before entry of many groups in the parliament.

#### 5th Criteria: Political and Economic Stability

Existence of political and economic stability in any country, autonomy of the central bank, lack of crisis discourse, inflation being under control, failure of politics to intervene in economy provides creation of perception that there is stability in the economic system of the country. Perception of stability shall affect positively both the relation and confidence between people and facilitate collaboration of the country with the global system (Gökce, 2012; Gökce/Gökce, 2017).

Researches performed suggest that perception of political and economic stability is stronger than it was before 2000.

#### 6th Criteria: Violence Control

Validity of the principle of separation of powers in a country and relation between jurisdiction and execution in this context is extremely significant in terms of democracy quality in that country. Since the power will accumulate in a single hand in countries which lack separation of powers, it is not possible to talk about democracy in those countries. There is principle of separation of powers in Turkey. But the relation between jurisdiction and execution is a bit stressful. Particularly veto of legal arrangements of the execution toward jurisdiction by the upper court led to corruption in the balance of relations.

#### 7th Criteria: Governmental and Implementation Capacity

The period of the governments to remain in power, stability of the government, support of people to the government, capacity of governments to have its decisions applied, protests against the governments, intervention of other powers (army, judiciary etc.) to the works of the government are significant in terms of quality of democracy. The government is stable in Turkey (Gökce/Gökce, 2015 and 2017). The government makes elections in time. Support of people to the government is higher than average (TİAV, 2013). The government is extremely influential. It is observed that there was an increase in the protests against the government in 2013 though little; but this is not of size which threatens legitimacy and existence of the government.

#### 8th Criteria: Participation

Right of electing and being elected, influence to political decisions, membership in civil institutions, participating in protests, types of membership and participation in political parties and institutions make up basic components of democracy. Right of electing and being elected is a right legally recognized for all citizens older than 20. Each individual may be a member of civil professional institutions, trade unions, institutions with political purposes. Since exercise of right to participate is related

to political consciousness level, it began to become common recently. The feeling of being able to influence on political decisions owing to participation is not very strong yet (Gökce, 2013; Gökce/Gökce, 2017).

#### 9th Criteria: Transparency

Here issues including the right of gaining information, lack of corruption, transparency about financing political parties, accountability, openness of communication, taking decisions through discussions etc. are in question. Although significant progresses are taken in Turkey in this regard, it is observed that there are certain deficiencies and malfunctions in practice as well.

#### 10th Criteria: Representation

Undertaking top level tasks by women, minorities, disadvantaged groups in political, bureaucratic and economic life, position of women in the parliament and politics is in question here. Turkey is yet far from desired status in these issues.

### V. CONCLUSION

It is observed that political power, political parties, NGOs and similar institutions have significant efforts for increasing quality of democracy in Turkey legal arrangements are performed by the political power in this regard, but these have not been reflected to practice yet. The law system does not have trust of the citizen. Women do not have sufficient representation both in social life and in political and bureaucratic life. Although citizen oriented understanding becomes common, stability and order may predominate freedom from time to time. Participation has become common recently. Transparency and accountability is not at the desired point yet.

Placement of democracy in a country are not related to merely rules and laws undoubtedly. Development of democracy is closely related to political culture of the society as well. Political culture is not yet at desired level in terms of equality, representation and freedoms.

As a result; although principles of democracy in Turkey have not been realized yet in practice, level and quality of democracy in Turkey is much better than many of European Union member countries. According to Freedom House, it is specified that there is a serious improvement in Turkey in recent years with respect to minority rights and individual freedoms. Minority rights appear to exist in many countries in the category of full democracy. In practice there are exclusions, oppression for regression. However for some reason point of Turkey in these issues is shown to regress. And the picture with regard to freedom of press is not as claimed by Freedom House. Turkey is much freer than many countries with respect to freedom of press. In the light of the above explanations, it is not acceptable that Freedom House defines Turkey as an authoritarian democracy and turn status of Turkey from “partially free” to “non-free country”. Because here intuitive and personal views played a role rather than objective criteria. And from this perspective, the problem with basing on this report in the discussions carried on about Turkey and potential sanctions in dominant countries of the world, but similarly taking this report as data in domestic political discussions in Turkey arises automatically.

Finally: It is possible to say that the level of democracy in Turkey is somewhat far from countries in the category of full democracies but over the countries in the category of failed democracies as explained generally above. In other words Turkey is positioned in the middle of the two categories. In this context it is not possible to agree with classification of the level of democracy in Turkey by Kemahlioğlu and Keyman here as defected and having the risk of being transformed into a hybrid regime. There are problems in the field of basic components of democracy in Turkey. These problems are particularly related to society dimension. Serious developments have been experienced in this field as well compared to the past. In the end this is a process. And Turkey is willing and determinant about rising the quality of democracy, namely strengthening and deepening its democracy. And this is the significant point.

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