

Debunking r/socialism Megathread on Venezuela

Introduction:

I've recently been working on another post to refute lies about Venezuela by this type of users, but for now, I wanted to speak particularly about this post, as it is more specific and (I suppose) more broadly shared by the users of this type of communities that have interest in the "Venezuelan situation". To put some context, the thread consists of the author putting an affirmation, and then putting some sources on why that affirmation is wrong.

Given the half-truths and the brutal dishonesty of the arguments presented in that mega-thread, this is a rebuttal of it. I recommend that before you read this rebuttal, you read the mentioned mega-thread first, to make sure that the arguments I'm responding to are not misrepresented and to comprehend what I'm responding to in this post.

(Mega-thread [HERE](#))

Without further clarifications, all sources, studies, news and articles are hyperlinked within this post to further revision.

1.) "The US has nothing to do with Venezuela's downfall!"

The arguments of the user to say the opposite are are:

State Department leaked document on the US goals for Venezuela. "Fundamental interest in Venezuela; (1) That Venezuela continue to supply a significant portion of our petroleum imports....

Western NGOs funneling financial aid to oppositional uprising, with docs from WikiLeaks.

This is extremely important. Venezuela's undoing may be due to the falling of oil prices, but not completely. The US has been pouring \$49 million dollars into the opposition for its government to oust Maduro.. This is not just the undoing of the government. This has loads of US infiltration, with a purpose stated from the State department. More docs concerning Western NGOs.

Rebuttal: Starting with polls, [A 2016 survey asked Venezuelans living in urban areas which entity was responsible for the crisis](#), 56% blamed Chavismo or their presidents, (Chávez, 25%; Maduro 19%; Chavismo 15%), while others blamed the opposition (10%), entrepreneurs (4%) and the United States (2%).

Given that the military is partly in charge of food distribution, they have continuously trafficked with food, often even doubling its price for the sake of more profit for them and *stealing* food for themselves.

Hugo Chavez economic model for Venezuela, while giving temporal achievements on health, poverty and inequality, Chavez model of financing this was unable to keep its achievements, and to overall, being completely unsustainable by itself, as it is illustrated in the "Análisis de la sostenibilidad del modelo económico venezolano: chavismo, petróleo y distribución de la renta" published in the Iberoamerican Journal of Development Studies:

"The Caribbean nation's development model, based on the redistribution of oil revenues, is premised on the on the redistribution of oil revenues, is based on the premise of combining economic of combining economic returns and social development, channeling the former towards the latter. the former towards the latter. Although, in the first years of Chavez's Chavez's first years in office, an attempt was made to diversify the productive and exporting and exporting, so as not to fall into the same vicious circle as the developmentalism of the sixties and seventies. developmentalism of the sixties and seventies, this scheme has not been has not been redefined and, in fact, in many aspects, it has worsened the in many respects the grip of crude oil prices.

The model of socialism of the 21st century advocated by Chavismo is still trapped in the same dilemma as many of the countries of the region and the net countries of the region and of the purely extractivist states. It possesses a resource wealth, but neither other forms of development, such as the Cepalino development (1950s, 1960s and 1970s) or the IMF-sponsored economic liberalization economic liberalization under the tutelage of the IMF at the end of the century, nor the current policies policies have not been able to break this high dependence.

In addition, the social spending drive of Venezuelan governments in recent decades has been unable to build a solid structure of administration or institutions similar to the European welfare state, which would allow for the structuring of a sufficiently consistent network so as not to be subject to sporadic programs or measures whose budgets are limited to state oil revenues."

By the year 2017, Venezuela only produced 30% of our food according to FAO. (More of this national production downfall in the second rebuttal)

In the study of "Populism, 21st-century socialism and corruption in Venezuela" (PDF here) it is concluded that:

"In Venezuela, the combination of a discourse and a populist way of doing politics, a charismatic legacy and an anti-liberal socialist ideology has destroyed all institutional accountability mechanisms to power in the country. This has resulted in an expansion of corruption in the state apparatus that has transformed the military elite and civil revolutionary groups into criminal mafias that take advantage of their privileges to commit all kinds of crimes, including transnational organized crime."

Military officials engage in drug trafficking in Venezuela

In the [World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2014 Report \(PDF here\)](#), one year after Chavez death, Venezuela has one of the lowest rankings, as pointed out in page 53:

“At 99th, Venezuela is the weakest performer among all indexed countries, showing downward trends in performance across many areas since last year. The country is ranked last in government accountability, owing to an increased concentration of executive power and a debilitated system of checks and balances. Corruption is commonplace (ranking 90th overall and last in the region); administrative agencies justice system, although relatively accessible, loses positions on the back of increased political interference. Crime and violence are also areas of concern, as are the violations of fundamental rights, in particular, freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to privacy. Venezuela’s strongest scores are in the areas of religious freedom, accessibility of the civil courts, and protection of labor rights.”

(similar results have been made in the following reports)

In an [article](#) by the [International Consortium of Investigative Journalist](#), it is explain how ‘[boligarchs](#)’, have extracted **BILLIONS** of dollars from public funds to private accounts:

*“A cache of secret bank reports, obtained by BuzzFeed News and shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, shows how **boligarchs moved vast sums of dollars in public money out of Venezuela, including money intended for housing and other basic services**, even as the country’s economy was collapsing. The cache, known as the FinCEN Files, includes more than 2,100 suspicious activity reports filed by banks to a U.S. Treasury Department agency known as the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. “*

[Here, another article on how Venezuela's ‘Bolibourgeoisie’ profits from the crisis.](#)

Here, [an article investigates on the right to food under Chavez's Venezuela](#), and establish that:

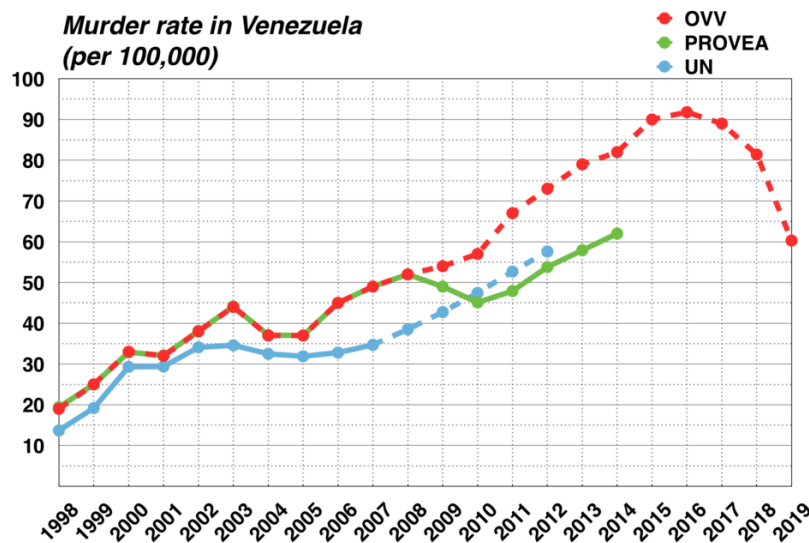
*“Although Chavez respected Venezuelans' right to food, **he failed to protect it**. In the short term, he fulfilled the right to food by establishing state-run stores where food was sold cheaply, and by imposing price controls. At the same time, **he reduced the food supply** by undermining property rights, expropriating large-scale ranches as well as wholesale and retail distributors. Violations of civil and political rights made it difficult for Chavez's critics to oppose his food policies. **By the time Chavez died food shortages were extremely severe.**”*

Other example of this lack of effectiveness within the Bolivarian state is its complete failure on dealing with crime (Especially under the administration of Chavez):

[Three phases of homicidal violence in Venezuela](#)

[Intentional homicides \(per 100.000 people\) Venezuela – World Bank](#)

Venezuela's astonishing rate of kidnapping



Basically, and in an attempt of stripping any responsibility from the government and its actions, the whole argument presented by the user is “The U.S. wants Venezuelan oil, and has been funding the opposition, therefore, the U.S. is responsible for the current crisis... duh”, this argument becomes baseless when faced with the fact of inherent instability of the “Chavista economic model”, the fact that our own military has contributed to the crisis by making products much more expensive or stealing it, the fact of how food production in Venezuela has literally gone down since Chavismo came into power, the fact of the high levels of corruption in the institutions of our country, the fact of the government’s complete failure in assessing crime, and many other topics that need to be touched.

To me, it is also surprising how the user doesn't mention economic sanctions at all in his post, as that will make a far more appealing (although equally misleading) argument, I have [another post discussing economic sanctions](#) and so I will not repeat myself here for the sake of not making this response too long.

For more resources, here:

[The devastating Venezuelan crisis By: Surgical Neurology International](#)

[The Reproduction and Crisis of Capitalism in Venezuela under Chavismo \(2016\)](#)

[Post-Chavez, Venezuela Enters a Downward Spiral \(2014\)](#)

[La Venezuela de Hugo Chávez: rentismo, populismo y democracia](#)

Two articles by Venezuelan economist Javier Corrales on Venezuela’s crisis:

[The House That Chavez Built](#)

[Don't Blame It On the Oil](#)

Venezuela drug case reveals 'rampant' culture of corruption in circles of power

Scandal of state-owned PDVAL of tons of rotten imported food

2.) "People are dying from food and medical shortages!"

The arguments of the user to say the opposite are are:

Since 2014, Venezuelan government has been finding medical and food supplies being hoarded and buried by privateers.

Medical supplies

Privateers hoarding food to sell at a higher profit in Columbia.

50 tons of food buried.

Opposition protesters burn 40 tons of food for poor families

Malnutrition trend in Venezuela from 1991-2015.

Rebuttal: This is perhaps the most baseless argument of the whole thread, as it is contradicted by almost all empirical data, starting with...

In the [2016 national survey of living conditions in Venezuela](#) (ENCOVI in spanish) by the Venezuelan observatory of health, concludes that, between other things, **93,3% of Venezuelan households don't have enough to buy food.**

Here, [an empirical study on Venezuela's food crisis and food security](#), explains, between other things:

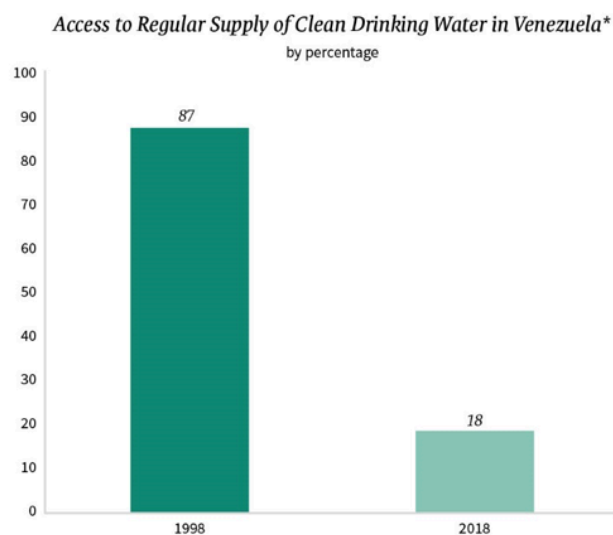
- *Venezuela's ongoing crisis has caused declines in food security and nutrition status.*
- *The majority of households cannot afford food, reduce meal size and report weight loss.*
- *Acute malnutrition prevalence surpasses thresholds for declaring an emergency in most states.*
- *Both pediatric hospital admissions and deaths from malnutrition are increasing.*
- *A humanitarian response is urgently needed to prevent further deterioration.*

*In the most recent national survey, **80% of households were food insecure** and most households receiving government food assistance **reported only occasional receipt**. Prevalence of **acute malnutrition among children under five increased** in vulnerable communities across many states, **surpassing serious or critical thresholds** in multiple states."*

Here, [an article investigates on the right to food under Chavez's Venezuela](#), and establish that:

*“Although Chavez respected Venezuelans' right to food, **he failed to protect it**. In the short term, he fulfilled the right to food by establishing state-run stores where food was sold cheaply, and by imposing price controls. At the same time, **he reduced the food supply** by undermining property rights, expropriating large-scale ranches as well as wholesale and retail distributors. Violations of civil and political rights made it difficult for Chavez's critics to oppose his food policies. **By the time Chavez died food shortages were extremely severe.**”*

Today Venezuela has a **severe water crisis**, [just 18% of Venezuelans have access to clean water](#), this has also impacted wastewater collection, sanitation, control over sewage, and farmer's access to water for irrigation.



*From Fundacion Agua Sin Frontera, Fundacion Aguaclara, Clima2, and Mesas Tecnicas de Agua

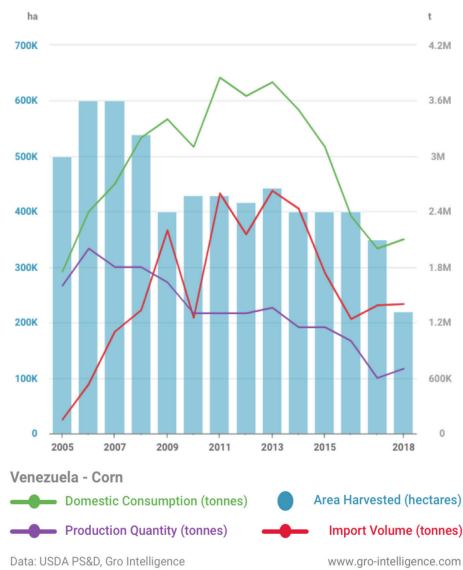
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([Here](#) for [CEPAZ 2018 national report on water in Venezuela](#)).

As I put it in the rebuttal of the first argument, [Venezuela's national food production have been falling steadily](#) since Chavismo took power, amid the extreme reliance on imports, the government's inability to buy more.

This has brought a substantial decrease in the consumption of food products:

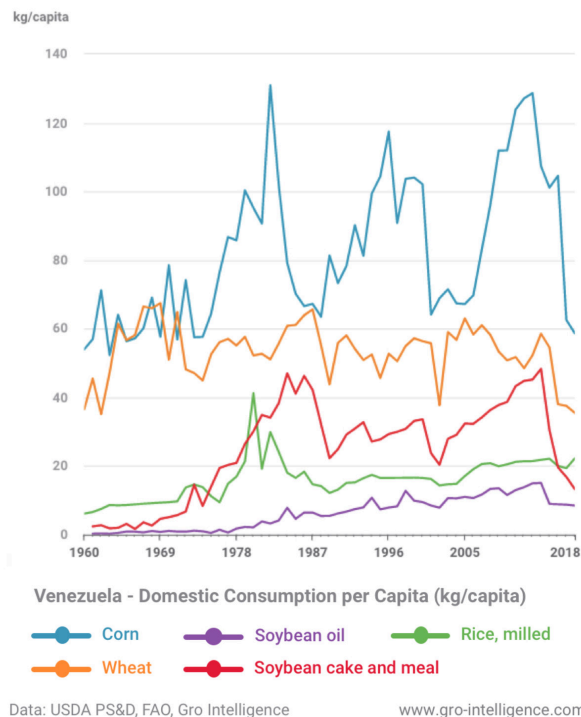
Corn Production, Consumption, and Imports Have Declined In Venezuela



Venezuela's Rice Production Has Declined Sharply



Venezuela's Domestic Consumption In Decline



According to the Venezuelan Observatory of Violence, there has been a spike in suicides amid the socioeconomic crisis in Venezuela:

In Venezuela, between 1936-2014, was characterized by relatively low suicide rates. However, since 2015 and, at least until 2018, according to the results of this research,

there has been an increasing trend that has brought the figure closer to the world average, and even if that propensity continues, it could exceed it, because the rate doubled in that period and at most it could have tripled.

Our conclusion is that in the country, suicide rate registered between 2017-2018 have never seen before in the 80 years of statistical records of this cause of death.

PROSTITUTION OF CHILDREN is now a very real concern because of the difficulty of acquiring basic necessities (2017).

The Venezuelan observatory of health says that, in 2015, food in 2016, 93,3% of homes don't have enough money to pay for food.

In 2016, 87% of Venezuelans were consuming less due to the shortages (with a scarcity rate of 50% to 80%), and in 2017, 83% of Venezuelans were living in poverty, 93% could no longer afford food and that one million Venezuelan school children did not attend classes "due to hunger and a lack of public services".

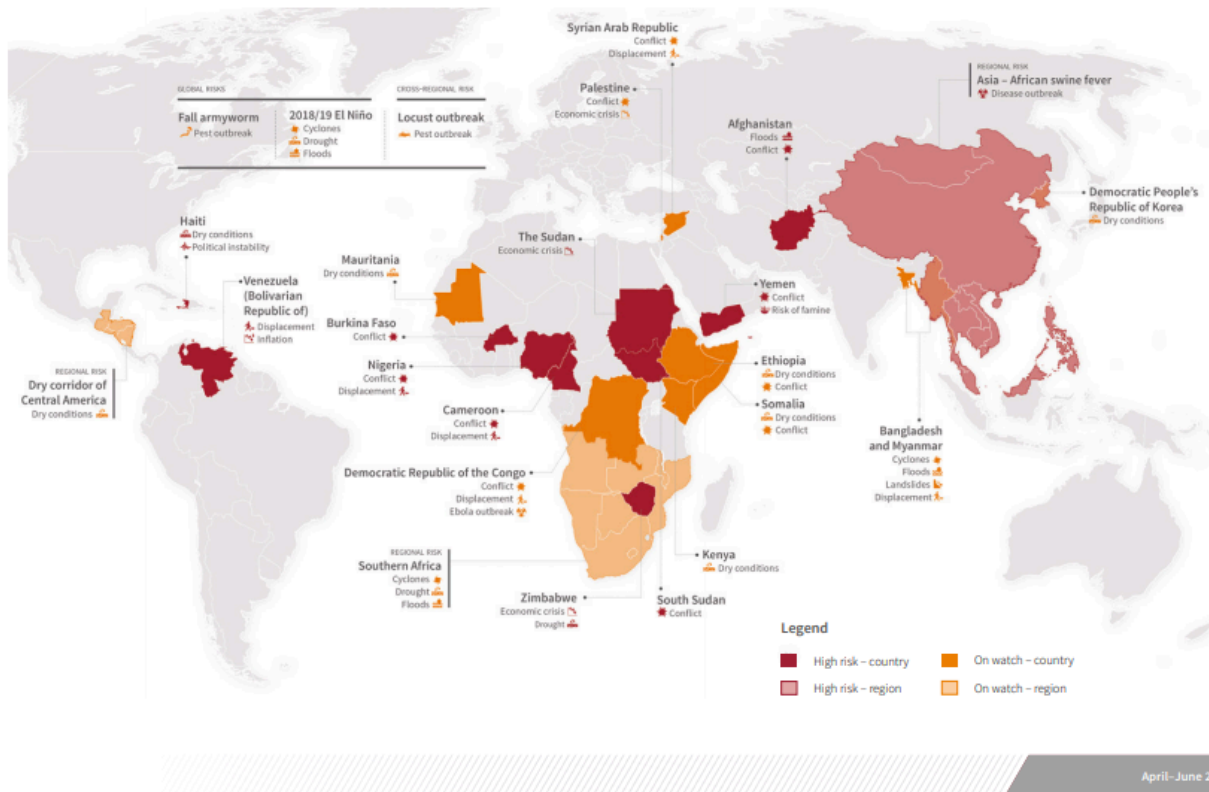
In 2019 "Early Warning Early Action report on food security and agriculture" By FAO, which is an analysis of major disaster risks to food security and agriculture, one of the countries presented at risk is (for the surprise of nobody) Venezuela, Some of the remarks by the report are:

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) is experiencing a severe and protracted economic crisis. The country has been facing hyperinflation since November 2016, and according to the International Monetary Fund, the gross domestic product is projected to decline further in 2019, bringing the cumulative decline since 2013 to over 50 percent. This is mainly driven by plummeting oil production and worsening conditions in the non-oil sector. A collapse in salaries and in the value of the local currency, shortages of food, medicine and basic supplies, the deterioration of health services, education and infrastructure, as well as international sanctions, are heavily affecting the country's population of 30 million.

The prevalence of undernourishment is increasing. The percentage of undernourished people in the country has triplicated – from 3.6 percent in 2013 to 11.7 percent in 2017 (nearly 3.7 million people).

The situation in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) is resulting in a region-wide migration crisis, with an estimated 3.4 million people that have fled to other countries, mainly in South America and the Caribbean. Colombia, which is both a transit and destination country for Venezuelans crossing the border, hosts the highest number of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, with over 1 million people, followed by Peru (506 000), Chile (288 000), Ecuador (221 000), Argentina (130 000) and Brazil (96 000).

Global risk map: April–June 2019



In the [2018 Global Report on Food Crises](#) by the United Nations World Food Programme, Venezuela is once again a topic of, to say the least, great concern. As it is put in page 171 of the full document ([HERE](#)):

“The economic and political situation in Venezuela deteriorated in 2017, hindering the provision of basic services and severely affecting food security and healthcare. The high risk of default on foreign debt, the political deadlock and insecurity are likely to continue to drive displacement and increase food and health needs in 2018. The current difficulties in repaying the debt may prompt tighter economic sanctions and lead to a full default, which would cause the economy to collapse. Economic challenges are likely to continue to limit the government’s capacity to provide basic services.”

I think the point made here is more than clear concerning the situation of food and medicine in Venezuela (And this not even assessing other issues like [poverty](#), [power blackouts](#), [kidnappings](#), [hyper inflation](#), [a useless minimum wage](#), [education](#), etc..., topics deserve its own exposition). The minimization or outright denial of the crisis is a typical fallacy from defenders of Chavismo, and the argument that the user makes serves, at best, to move away the responsibility of the government into other actors, not as a valuable argument against the existence of a severe crisis as he presents it.

For now (and for the sake of simplicity) more sources are here below for further revision:

[Venezuela's humanitarian crisis, resurgence of vector-borne diseases, and implications for spillover in the region](#) By The Lancet (2019)

[Infant mortality in Venezuela has soared during crisis, UN says](#)

[Nearly a quarter of Venezuelans need aid: internal UN report](#)

[Doctors say Venezuela's healthcare its collapsed \(2013\)](#)

[Inside a mental hospital in Venezuela, shortages of food and medicine torment psychiatric patients. \(2016\)](#)

[Child imprisonment under Maduro, with the increase of political prisoners \(2018\)](#)

Suicides Surge in a Hopeless Venezuela (2018)

In Venezuela, doctor flees after being accused of terrorism amid fever outbreak (2014)

Doctors at the University Hospital of Caracas suspend surgeries due to lack of supplies (2014)

Executive Director of the Venezuelan Association of Clinics and Hospitals, Cristino García is concerned about the situation in the medical sector, where there is an absolute lack of 109 essential products to attend patients. (2014)

Venezuelans facing 'unprecedented challenges,' many need aid - internal U.N. report

Without dollars to import medicines, Venezuela's health in intensive therapy (2014)

The Collapse of Chávezcare (2015)

According to FAO, Venezuela has become one of the countries with the highest number of undernourishment in the region (3.7 million, 11.7% of its population), along with Haiti (5 million, 45.7% of its population) and Mexico (4.8 million, 3.8% of its population)

[South America hosts the majority of the undernourished due to the decline of food security in Venezuela, says new UN report.](#)

[Venezuela situation by the UNHCR](#)

3.) "They are killing their people!"

The arguments of the user to say the opposite are are:

Most comprehensive tracking chart from American journalist Michael Prysner: showing opposition is responsible for most deaths.

Racially motivated attack from opposition

Infograph on deaths

Rebuttal: Let's talk about something called “**police brutality**”, and the use of lethal force...

According to the [monitor of the use of lethal force in Latin America](#), in 2017, there have been more civilian deaths at the hands of law enforcement agents in Venezuela than there are in Brazil, which has a population seven times greater, it has the biggest number of civilians killed by public security agents on duty by firing a firearm per 100,000 inhabitants and the biggest Number of civilians killed by public security officers on duty by firing a firearm per 1,000 public security officers. This means that **over a quarter of homicides committed in Venezuela are carried out by the state.**

COMPARISON OF INDICATORS BY COUNTRY (2017)

■ The boxes shaded in gray indicate that the source of the information is the press, while the blank boxes correspond to official information. Indicators that come from different types of sources should not be compared.

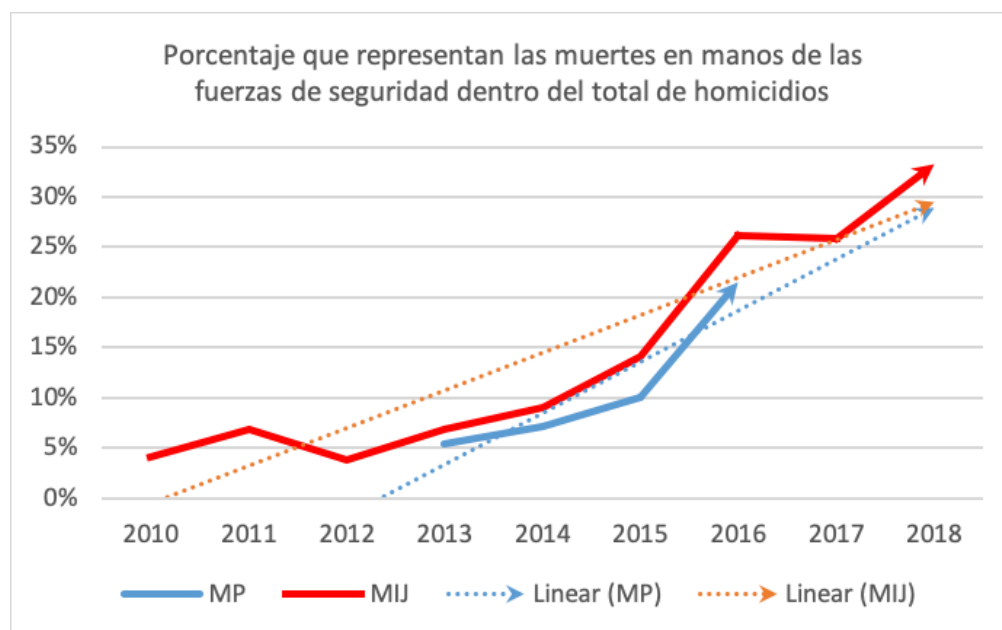
INDICADORES	BRASIL	COLOMBIA	EL SALVADOR	MÉXICO	VENEZUELA
I-1 CIVILES MUERTOS (CM)	4670	169	407	371	4998
I-2 CM POR 100.000 HAB.	2,3	0,3	6,18	0,3	15,9
I-3 CM POR 1.000 AGENTES	7,8	0,4	9,9	0,7	28,6
I-4 CM POR 1.000 DETENCIONES	-	0,7	9,78	-	-
I-5 CM POR 1.000 ARMAS INCAUTADAS	39,3	7,1	154,2	-	-
I-6 AGENTES MUERTOS (AM)	81	143	4	251	57
I-7 AM POR 1.000 AGENTES	0,1	0,3	0,1	0,5	0,3
A-1 % HOMICIDIOS POR INTERVENCIÓN ESTADO	7,3	1,5	10,3	1,2	25,8
A-2 RAZÓN ENTRE CM Y AM	57,7	1,2	101,8	4,6*	26,3*
A-3 ÍNDICE LETALIDAD CIVILES	-	-	-	4,6	16,3
A-4 RAZÓN DE LETALIDADES	-	-	-	10	5,7
A-5 MEDIA DE CIVILES MUERTOS POR INCIDENTE	-	-	-	2,5	1,5

Civilian deaths per 100,000 individuals (2017)

2.3  Brazil

0.3  Colombia

By the year 2016, killings by state forces made up to more than 25% of the total homicides committed in Venezuela.



“Percentage of death by security forces within the total number of homicides, 2010 – 2018”

In 2018, the Government registered 5,287 killings, purportedly for “resistance to authority,” during such operations. Between 1 January and 19 May this year, another 1,569 people were killed, according to Government figures. Other sources suggest the figures may be much higher.

Convicted criminals are among the special police in Venezuela

We have to add up the brutality of “security” departments such as the FAES.

In the argument presented by the user of the mega-thread, he puts exclusively the events of the massive amount protests occurred in Venezuela from the time lapse of 2013 – present, it is hard to know of what protest of what year is he talking to, as two of his three sources doesn't even have a date (this and this), but even talking only about them, he doesn't tell you the whole story either.

Toxic and expired chemicals gases were used in 2014 containing cyanide as a form of protest-control, some poor neighborhoods like Petare in western Caracas, residents that had benefited from such government programs, joined protests against inflation, high murder rates and shortages, videos of the para-military “colectivos” shooting at protesters, etc...

Even if we (absent of any rationality) assume that *every single death* in the protests from 2013 to 2017 was the fault protesters/opposition, the number deaths will still be **minuscule** compared to the number of deaths perpetuated by state-owned “security” forces JUST within the year of 2017, and remember, this ignoring the violence perpetuated in the previous 5 years, the number of people killed by the state-endorsed “Colectivos”, police negligence, drug-trade, the already mentioned food traffic performed by the military, and others.

(As a clarification, it is not argued that the death caused directly by protesters is somehow irrelevant, much less justifiable, as indeed some of the protest involved an abhorrent amount of brutality.)

More sources, here below:

[The on-going slaughter: police violence in Venezuela](#)

[Use of public force and the right to life in Venezuela](#)

[How Brutal Are Venezuelan Police Forces?](#)

[The devolution of state power: “The colectivos” \(2018\)](#)

[Panoramic view of the police system in Venezuela \(2000-2018\) Technical Report](#)

[Elite police force spreads terror in the barrios of Venezuela](#)

[In Venezuela, Police Kill Someone Every 1.5 Hours](#)

[Racism and State Violence in Venezuela](#)

[Necropolitics: the exercise of uncontrolled power in Venezuela](#)

[Punished for Protesting](#)

[In Venezuela, Protesters Point to Their Scars](#)

4.) "The people want Maduro out! He is creating a dictatorship through his Assembly!" (which really doesn't make any sense... Why would you get 545 new politicians in a new legislative body to create a dictatorship?)

The arguments of the user to say the opposite are are:

Recent poll from the most respected and neutral polling organization shows 87% of Venezuelans reject the demonstrations against the government.

The NA wasn't disbanded; they are held in contempt until the opposition complies with the rulings that 3 opposition lawmakers could not be sworn in due to electoral fraud. If the NA complies then it would be reversed, they won't because this is exactly what the imperialists need after a horrible setback in the OAS.

"On Tuesday, Chavistas took to the streets of Caracas en masse following an attempt to bring impeachment proceedings against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro by the opposition-held legislature... Chavistas expressed their rejection of the over 53 thousand fraudulent signatures collected by the opposition earlier this year as part of the initial request to begin the recall referendum process against Maduro. They also denounced the right-wing's refusal to sit down for Vatican-mediated dialogue with the government despite having demanded the inclusion of the Pope in the first place."

Pictures on more pro-government rallies

Rebuttal: In 2013, the rates of approval for Maduro were in 40% and 50% (very hardly a consensus among the public), popularity partially because of Chavez endorsement.

In 2014, it was at 24% (with 85% of Venezuelans claiming that the economic situation in Venezuela was bad) and "Datanálisis" confirmed 66% of Venezuelans didn't want Maduro to finish his 6 year term of presidency.

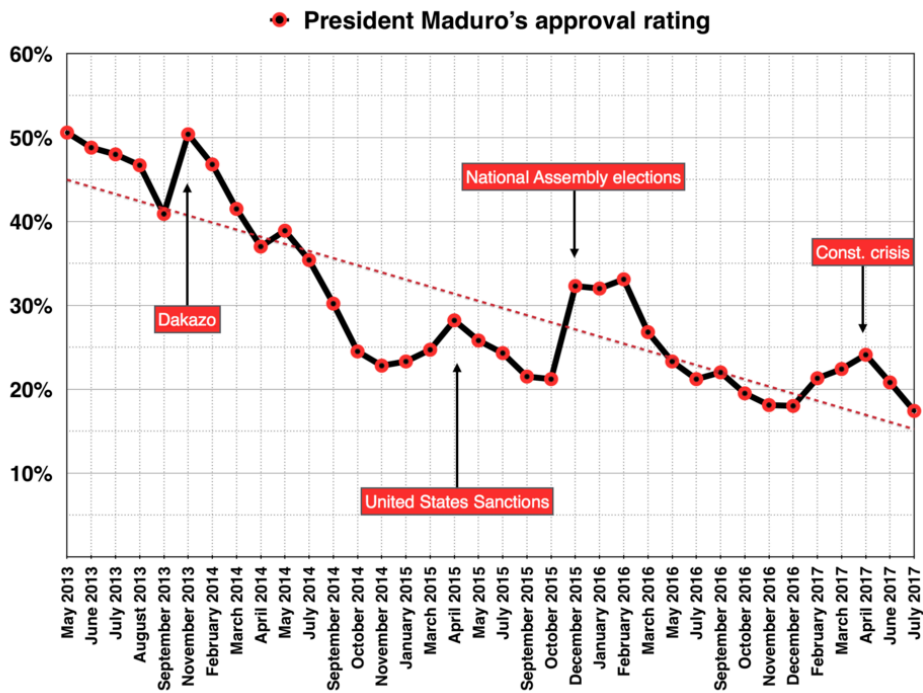
In 2016, a poll found that 61,4% Venezuelans see that Maduro has transformed into a **dictator**.

(Citing this poll again from the first rebuttal, as it is relevant for the topic of public opinion) A 2016 survey asked Venezuelans living in urban areas which entity was responsible for the crisis, 56% blamed Chavismo or their presidents, (Chávez, 25%; Maduro 19%; Chavismo 15%), while others blamed the opposition (10%), entrepreneurs (4%) and the United States (2%, quite ironic).

In 2018, according to the polls of "meganálisis", they found out that 84,6% of Venezuelans encusted **want Maduro and his government out of power**.

And for 2019, Nicolas Maduro popularity has been on a *historic low*, **with an approval rate of just 14%**, and an approval rate to Juan Guaido of 66%. [\(1\)](#)

88% want that Maduro leave NOW

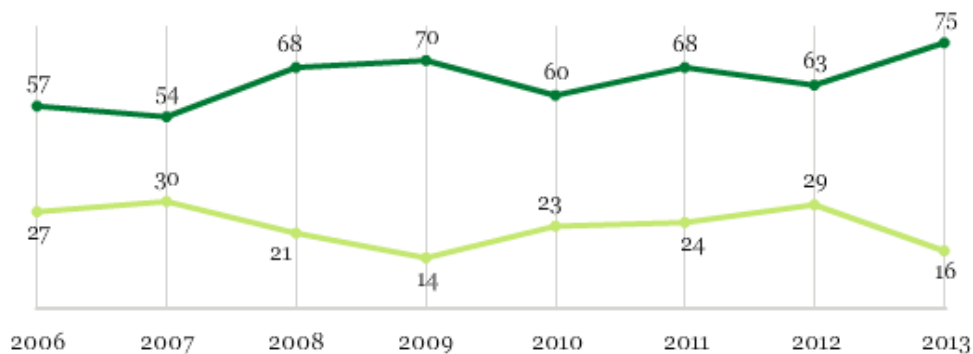


In a 2014 poll by Gallup, 72% of Venezuelans believe that corruption is widespread, 56% don't have trust in the government and 53% say that the political situation is "not stable at all".

Perceived Corruption in Government Soars

Is corruption widespread throughout the government in Venezuela, or not?

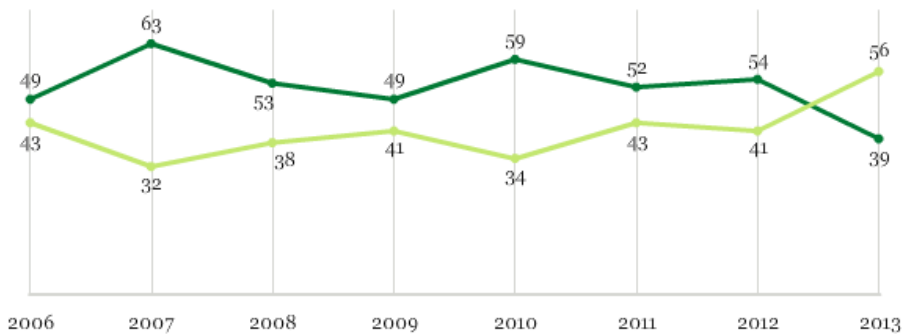
■ % Yes ■ % No



Confidence in Government Hits Low

In Venezuela, do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about national government?

■ % Yes ■ % No

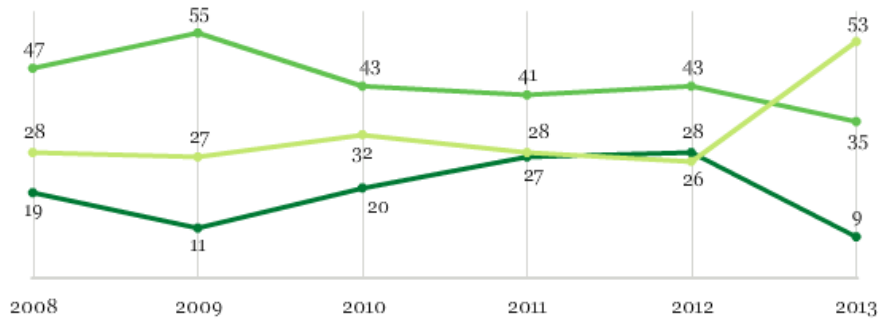


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Perceptions of Political Stability Drop in Venezuela

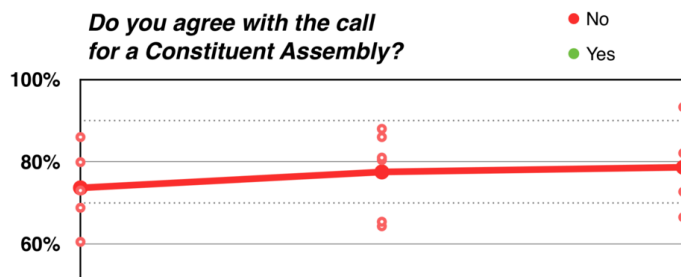
How stable is the political situation in Venezuela nowadays? Would you say it is very stable, somewhat stable, or not stable at all?

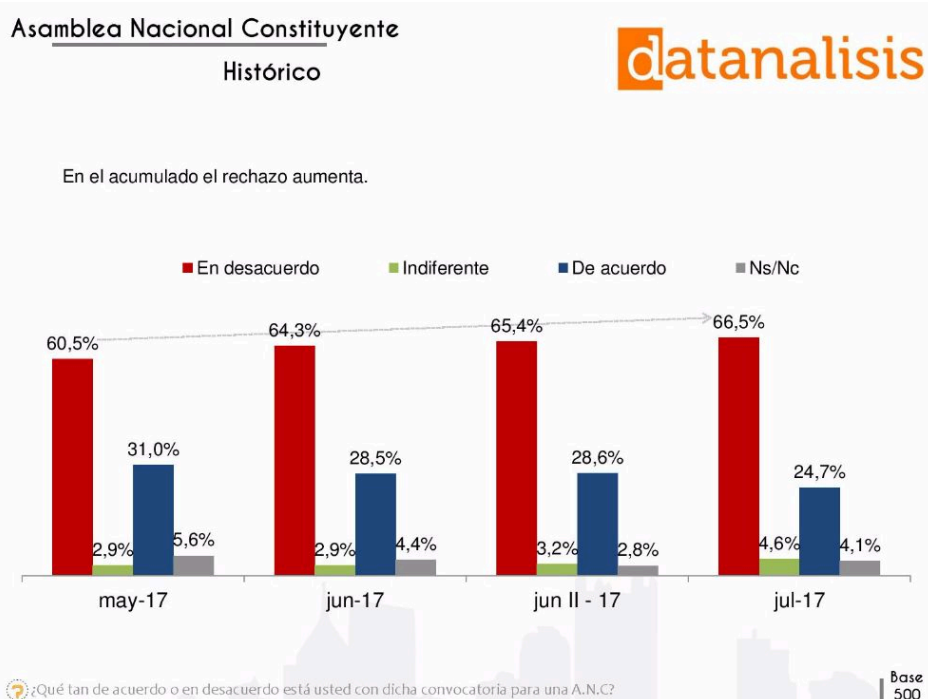
■ % Very stable ■ % Somewhat stable ■ % Not stable at all



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This on-going low popularity is not only visible when we focus on candidates like Maduro, but in recent relevant policy proposals by PSUV such as the 2017 constituent assembly election, [on which the vast majority of Venezuelans disapprove by at least 60%](#).





Perhaps comparable with the denial of the crisis by the author of the mega-thread, the argument that the Venezuelan public somehow still approve its government its nothing but a laughable delusion. Considering the material conditions of the country by itself, it is

absolutely nonsensical to somehow believe that public support for a candidate or a government will be even remotely positive in the face of such a disaster.

OF COURSE there are pro-government rallies/groups, but that alone doesn't tell us anything about *how much* public support a candidate or a policy has nation-wide, to put an analogy, it will be like someone was arguing that because there are pro-Trump rallies/events, then the *majority* of Americans support Donald Trump?, no, absolutely not (in fact, the reality is the opposite).

5.) "They tampered with the votes"

The arguments of the user to say the opposite are are:

The CEO himself literally says in the video that it is nearly impossible to falsify information, and if there is tampering, it would be obvious. If it's coming from the CEO's mouth, and then he is the only one saying this, then it's obvious something is a miss when he says the government "miscalculated" its numbers.

Venezuelan election authority calling for an immediate investigatory audit.

US trade unionist acting as international observers claims "Mass Media Lies on Venezuela (newly elected) Assembly".

Rebuttal: For everyone who doesn't know who is "the CEO" that he is talking to, after the results of the 2017 Constituent Assembly, Smartmatic (the company that provides the voting machines for Venezuelan elections), stated that, without a doubt, the results were manipulated:

"Based on the robustness of our system, we know, without any doubt, that the turn out of the recent election for a National Constituent Assembly was manipulated. It is important to highlight that similar manipulations are made in manual elections in many countries, but because of the lack of electronic security and auditing safeguards, they go unnoticed."

(...)

An audit would allow everyone to know the exact participation. We estimate the difference between the actual participation and the one announced by authorities is at least one million votes. It is important to point out that this would not have occurred if the auditors of all political parties had been present at the different stages of the election."

(In 2018, Smartmatic ceased operations within Venezuela.)

Now, lets take a look at statistical studies of Venezuelan elections...

The first [study published in 2014 provides a comprehensive forensic analysis of the Venezuelan national electoral processes](#) held during the period of 1998 and 2012. The study concludes that:

*"In summary, we have found **anomalous statistical patterns consistent with hypothetical electoral fraud** in the 2004 recall referendum and in all elections and referendums held between 2006 and 2012. While this does not mean that we provide conclusive evidence of fraud, specifically result determining fraud, **this raises serious doubts about the impartiality of the current electoral authority and supports allegations of fraud reported by important sectors of Venezuelan society**".*

And they add at the end:

*"Taking into account the **multiple irregularities in the Venezuelan vote**, which are difficult to quantify even though they are detected by different electoral forensic tools, and the possible strategic growth of the pro-Chávez census that we have commented on, **we think that Mr. Carter may be wrong**".*

The second [study on the manipulation of votes from 21 elections in various countries \(including Venezuela\)](#), finds and concludes the following:

*"Our analysis of 21 national elections in 10 countries shows **significant statistical irregularities in Venezuela 2006-2013, Russia 2007-2012 and, to a lesser extent, Russia 2003 and Uganda 2011. Voter manipulation could be a determining factor in the results of the 2013 Venezuelan presidential elections, in particular**".*

(For who doesn't know, Nicolas Maduro won this election by a [margin of nearly 1%](#))

In an academic paper on the Journal of Democracy called ["The Authoritarian Resurgence: Autocratic Legalism in Venezuela"](#), professor and scholar on political science Javier Corrales explains that:

*"During Chávez's presidency, **Venezuela became the paradigmatic Latin American case of competitive authoritarianism**. The ruling party, known since 2007 as the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), competes in elections against a legal multiparty opposition, as one would expect in a democracy. At the same time, **the PSUV helps the executive branch to weaken checks and balances, treat the opposition unfavorably, and reduce the autonomy of civil society**. Over the years, **the regime's autocratic practices have become more pronounced**."*

Another important point of analysis in Venezuela's autocratic turn is through electoral irregularities. Irregularities are normal in any election, but in the case of chavismo, these irregularities helped to favor the dominance of PSUV.

In the [appendix of "Electoral Irregularities A Typology Based on Venezuela under Chavismo"](#), and the [study of "Democratic backsliding through electoral irregularities: The case of Venezuela"](#), made by the same scholar (Javier Corrales), it is presented and examined a wide appendix of 117 irregularities across the Chavista era from 1999 to 2018 (starting from page number 8), the research concluded that:

"Chavismo showered Venezuela with a long list of electoral irregularities. The process of tarnishing the electoral system was gradual, but steady. Once a legacy irregularity was introduced, it was never corrected. By the time Chávez died in 2013, the system was thus plagued with substantial legacy and election-specific irregularities.

Maduro has far surpassed Chávez in terms of number, frequency, and severity of irregularities. However, he did not start from a blank slate. Instead, he inherited from Chávez a system flooded with irregularities, which his administration did not correct, including 7 legacy irregularities. Maduro has merely compounded the problems inherited—increasing the number of legacy effects and creating more severe forms of election specific irregularities. Maduro has made an unreliable electoral system even more biased toward the ruling party.

	Chávez	Maduro
Period	1999-2013	2013-2018
Years in office	14	5
Total electoral irregularities	56	61
Comprised of:		
Legacy irregularities	33	34
Election-specific irregularities	24	27
Average no. of irregularities per year	4.0	12.2
Average no. of irregularities per electoral event	3.29	7.63

(...)

The opposition is usually too weak to react, so irregularities are difficult to stop, and the opposition plays along. In a competitive context, the scope of irregularities increases, even if the state still offers concessions to the opposition. The effect is to divide the opposition on whether to abstain or play along, while persuading incumbent sup-porters that the ruling party is democratic."

For putting examples of this, this is a table of 6 irregularities that happened in the 2013 presidential election:

17	17.4.13	Presidential	<p>57. Resignation skipped. Maduro should have resigned as "presidente encargado." The constitution mandates that all public officials who are running for election (but not for re-election) resign. L</p> <p>58. Defense minister Diego Molero declared full support for Maduro's candidacy. The constitution expects the military establishment to be neutral. L, IS2</p> <p>59. The opposition discovered a member of the ruling party had the passwords to the voting machines. While this alone did not constitute a security breach capable of tampering with the vote tally, it could be used to tamper with the functioning of machines (turning them on and off arbitrarily), causing delays in in opposition zones (Nagel 2013). IS4</p> <p>60. <i>El Nacional</i> revealed how PDVSA had been supporting elections, not just financially, but also operationally. Accordingly, employees are notified that they will serve as "patrulleros." For the 2010 elections, patrulleros were instructed to: 1) work with local PSUV coordinators in designated municipalities to monitor the voting attendance; 2) provide snacks for PSUV activists, witnesses, and table members; 3) pay motorcycle drivers to carry out "tug operations" ("operación remolque" (Rivera and Zerpa 2013). IS1, IS2</p> <p>61. The voting registry was not changed from the one used in October, disenfranchising newly eligible voters. The opposition claimed that more than 600,000 deceased people are listed on the voting registry. IS11</p> <p>62. According to the opposition, 535 voting machines that did not work (affecting 189,982 votes)</p>
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In a 2019 **report by the International Commission of Jurists** (an international Swiss human rights non-governmental organization) concluded that the constituent assembly, beyond being unconstitutional or not, its a servile body design to do the desire of who's in the executive power:

“...the unchecked single-party National Constituent Assembly, created by the government of Nicolás Maduro, has frequently violated the Constitution of Venezuela established by former President Hugo Chávez. Beyond being unconstitutional, the real danger of the National Constituent Assembly is that it is a servile body, designed to cater to the desires of whoever holds executive power. The National Constituent Assembly has destroyed the fundamental pillars of the rule of law, including the separation of powers, citizen control over the public administration and political power, the independence of the Judicial Branch, and respect for human rights and democracy.”

Now, to initiate this section, according to the [2019 report of electoral integrity](#) worldwide made by the election integrity protect (an index designed to allow researchers to gauge the perceived quality of elections worldwide, and made by a wide list of scholars). They make an accumulative study that cover all national presidential and parliamentary elections from July 1, 2012 to December 31, 2018.

From this study, Venezuela had one of the worst ranking in the Americas:

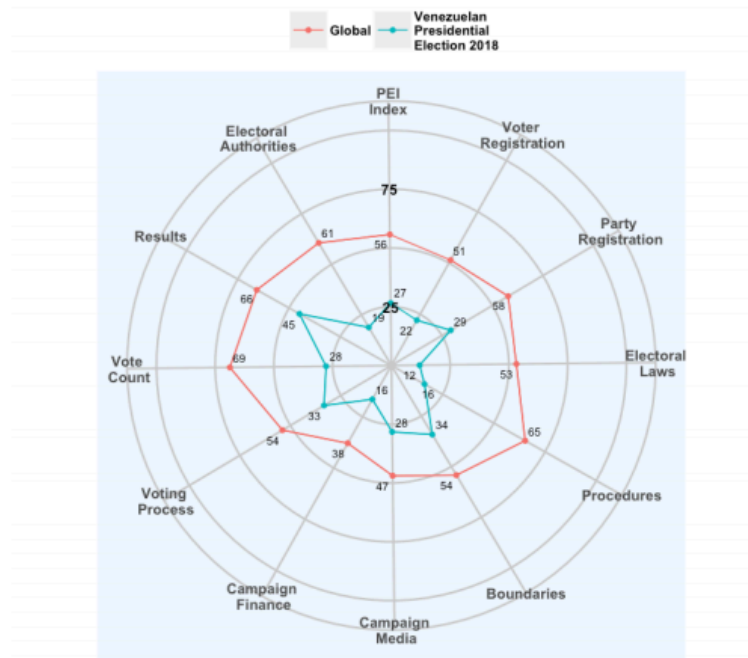
FIGURE 2: THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY INDEX BY COUNTRY AND REGION

N&W Europe	Americas	C&E Europe	Asia-Pacific	MENA	Africa						
Denmark	86	Costa Rica	79	Estonia	79	New Zealand	75	Israel	74	Cape Verde	71
Finland	85	Uruguay	75	Lithuania	78	Korea, Rep.	73	Tunisia	68	Senegal	70
Norway	83	Canada	75	Slovenia	77	Taiwan	73	Oman	61	Ghana	65
Sweden	83	Chile	71	Czech Rep	76	Australia	70	Morocco	57	Mauritius	64
Iceland	82	Jamaica	67	Slovak Rep	74	Japan	68	Kuwait	54	South Africa	63
Germany	81	Barbados	65	Poland	74	Bhutan	66	Jordan	49	Lesotho	62
Netherlands	80	Argentina	65	Latvia	73	Tonga	64	Iran	49	Namibia	60
Switzerland	79	Brazil	64	Croatia	65	Timor-Leste	64	Total	48	Botswana	58
Austria	77	Peru	62	Georgia	58	Mongolia	64	Algeria	43	Rwanda	58
Luxembourg	76	Grenada	61	Bulgaria	58	Vanuatu	62	Lebanon	42	Ivory Coast	56
France	75	US	61	Moldova	56	Micronesia	59	Bahrain	40	Liberia	54
Portugal	75	Panama	61	Romania	55	India	59	Egypt	40	Guinea-Bissau	54
Ireland	73	Mexico	61	Armenia	55	Solomon Isl.	57	Iraq	38	Nigeria	53
Belgium	71	Colombia	60	Hungary	54	Indonesia	57	Syria	34	Burkina Faso	53
Cyprus	69	Bolivia	56	Albania	54	Nepal	56			Sierra Leone	53
Spain	69	Bahamas	54	Kyrgyzstan	53	Fiji	55			CAR	53
Italy	68	El Salvador	54	Montenegro	52	Myanmar	54			Sao Tome Pr.	52
Greece	66	Belize	53	Ukraine	51	Samoa	53			Niger	52
UK	66	Guyana	53	Serbia	49	Singapore	53			Gambia	50
Malta	65	Suriname	51	Macedonia	48	Maldives	52			Malawi	48
Turkey	45	Ecuador	50	Russia	47	Sri Lanka	52			Comoros	45
		Paraguay	50	Bosnia Herz.	46	Philippines	51			Zambia	45
		Guatemala	48	Kazakhstan	45	Thailand	51			Tanzania	44
		Antigua Bar	48	Belarus	40	Laos	48			Sudan	43
		Dom. Rep	44	Uzbekistan	38	Pakistan	47			Senegal	43
		Venezuela	41	Azerbaijan	36	Bangladesh	38			Kenya	43
		Honduras	37	Turkmenistan	36	Malaysia	35			Mali	43
		Nicaragua	36	Tajikistan	35	Papua NG	34			Guinea	42
		Haiti	32			Afghanistan	34			Madagascar	42
						Vietnam	34			Swaziland	42
						Cambodia	30			Cameroon	40
										Angola	39
										Mauritania	38
										Zimbabwe	38
										Togo	38
										Uganda	37
										Mozambique	35
										Djibouti	31
										Chad	31
										Gabon	30
										Congo, Rep.	29
										Burundi	24
										Eq. Guinea	24
										Ethiopia	24
Total	74	Total	56	Total	56	Total	54	Total	48	Total	46

Note: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index summary scale ranges from 0-100. The [PEI country-level](#) mean scores cover national elections held 2012-2018.

Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey, country-level (PEI 7.0)

FIGURE 8. VENEZUELA'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PEI SUBDIMENSIONS



Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey, election-level

Venezuelan elections today cannot be considered neither truthful nor free, as for example, workers of state-run entities were threatened with being fired as well if they or their employees refused to vote in the 2017 constituent assembly election (1) (2).

As a type of “closing statement”, many pro-government individuals often cite the [words spoken](#) by Jimmy Carter (founder of the Carter Center) about the Venezuelan electoral system (I’m actually surprised that the user of the mega-thread hasn’t used this is his argument at all), a phrase commonly used by government officials and international supporters of the Bolivarian revolution:

*“the 92 elections we have monitored, I would say that **the electoral process in Venezuela is the best in the world**”.*

However, this argument is, at best, a misleading cherry-picking fallacy, as it forgets what Jimmy Carter [later said](#):

*“In 2012, I applauded the use of Venezuela’s electronic voting machines as exemplary in the world,” said former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.
“Since then, Nicolas Maduro has misused this characterization suggesting the validation of the electoral system as a whole and of subsequent elections*

*that The Carter Center did not observe. In fact, **The Carter Center and many others have routinely expressed concern about government interference in the recent electoral processes.** The Carter Center has not officially observed elections in Venezuela since 2004".*

Final conclusions:

As argued in this whole post, the author's attempt to explain the "Venezuelan realities" into what I suppose it is considered an "authoritative source" of information within this community about the subject is, at best, misleading. The childish dishonesty and lies of users like u/bayarea415 (the author of the thread and that has a youtube channel) is astonishing to the point of disgust for me as a Venezuelan, especially concerning with the denial (or minimization) of medical shortages and hunger within the Venezuela, the cherry picking of polls for public opinion and the absolute nonexistence of a mention to police brutality in Venezuela (a situation far worse than the U.S) within the section of "killing their on people". In short, the threads arguments are as compelling as arguments from anti-vaxxers. There's a second part of this thread that the user published a year after he published the first one, but is more or less a repetition of the same fallacies, maybe another day I'll make a response to it...

This type of content is, sadly, the symptom of a larger disease, many left-leaning content and figures have downplayed, minimize, or even denied whats happening in Venezuela, and ignorantly have called for "solidarity for the Bolivarian revolution", commonly in the context of defending the murderers that today sit in power within the Miraflores Palace.

It is rare (in my limited experience) to see leftist content actually analyzing what's happening in Venezuela, or even condemning for the state's brutal acts (police brutality and killings for example), but thankfully, this delusion is not present in all leftist sources, as for example, Socialist International have condemned the acts of police violence endorse by the government, "VenezuelanVoices" is a left-leaning opposition website which that have can stand against the government's acts and imperialism, SocialistWorker have actually acknowledged whats happening in Venezuela and it usually presents well sourced articles on the matter.

That's all I wanted to say, goodbye.