

**TRAJECTORIES OF POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY IN
THE GLOBAL SOUTH:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TURKEY AND BRAZIL**

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of
Master of Arts

in

Political Science and International Relations



July 2022

To my grandparents...



ABSTRACT

Trajectories of Populism and Democracy in the Global South: A Comparative Study of Turkey and Brazil

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**Master of Arts in Political Science and International Relations
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As the future of democracy is debated worldwide, this research offers a within-case process tracing technique and comparative case analysis for explaining how the current literature on democratic backsliding can address the trajectories of right-wing populist regimes in Turkey and Brazil. Both Turkey and Brazil are paradigmatic cases, shifting towards authoritarianism in the last decade and offer significant insights into the “democratic backsliding” literature for understanding the state-led abolition of horizontal institutions compared to the advanced democracies in the Global North. Selected case studies also represent the populists in power and different types of right-wing populism, such as Islamist populism in Turkey and pro-military populism in the left-wing political trajectory of Brazil. Both countries were recognized as electoral democracies in 2010 and are now seen in the top five autocratic countries of the world. However, Brazil is still categorized as a “democracy” although it is “electoral” and “flawed,” while Turkey is seen as an “electoral autocracy” or “hybrid regime” in internationally accepted democracy indices. Those indices show that there are authoritarian trends for both countries, but why Turkey and Brazil had variant degrees of authoritarian populist consolidation in the last decade despite their similarities on historical trajectories of coups, economic development and political instabilities in western-model driven democratization and modernization process? The study mainly argues that polarization and opposition to civil society and critical thinking pave the way for authoritarian populist consolidation both in Turkey and Brazil. However, institutional conditions in Turkey have been the harbingers of a greater move towards such a consolidation, thanks to 20 years of uninterrupted authoritarian populist control of the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, political economy and media.

Keywords: democracy, democratic backsliding, populism, authoritarian populism, consolidation, Turkey, Brazil

ÖZET

Küresel Güney Ülkelerinde Demokrasi ve Popülizm: Türkiye ve Brezilya Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma

Gülşen Doğan

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisansı

Temmuz 2022

Demokrasinin geleceği dünya çapında tartışılırken, bu araştırmada, Türkiye’deki ve Brezilya’daki sağcı popülist rejimler demokratik gerileme üzerine kurulu mevcut literatür ve vaka içi süreç izleme tekniği ve karşılaştırmalı vaka analizi üzerinden incelenecektir. Hem Türkiye hem de Brezilya, son on yılda otoriterliğe doğru kayan paradigmatik vakalardır. Küresel Kuzey ülkelerindeki gelişmiş demokrasilerle karşılaştırıldığında, Türkiye ve Brezilya örnekleri yatay kurumların devlet eliyle zayıflatılmasını anlamak için “demokratik gerileme” literatürüne önemli bakış açıları sunmaktadır. Bu iki vaka aynı zamanda iktidardaki popülist rejimlere örnek teşkil etmektedir. Türkiye (İslamcı milliyetçi popülizm) ve Brezilya (tarihsel olarak sol popülizmin iktidarda yer aldığı ancak şu an askeri rejim döneminin desteklendiği sağ-popülist iktidarın olduğu) farklı sağ popülizm türlerini temsil etmektedir. Her iki ülke de 2010 yılında seçim demokrasileri olarak tanımlanmıştır. Günümüzde ise, dünyanın ilk beş otoriter ülkeleri arasında görülmektedir. Ancak Brezilya her ne kadar “seçimsel” ve “kusurlu” olsa da hala demokrasi olarak sınıflandırılırken, Türkiye uluslararası kabul görmüş demokrasi endekslerinde “seçimsel otokrasi” veya “hibrit rejim” olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu endekslere göre her iki ülke demokrasisi de gerileme göstermektedir, ancak darbe deneyimleri, ekonomik kalkınma ve batı modeli güdümlü demokratikleşme ve modernleşme sürecindeki siyasi istikrarsızlıkları açısından benzerlikleri olan Türkiye ve Brezilya’da, neden son on yılda farklı seviyelerde otoriter popülist bir konsolidasyon söz konusudur? Çalışma temel olarak; kutuplaşmanın ve sivil topluma ve eleştirel düşünceye olan muhalefetin hem Türkiye’de hem de Brezilya’da otoriter popülist konsolidasyonun önünü açtığını savunmaktadır. Ancak; Türkiye’deki kurumsal koşullar, yasama, yargı, bürokrasi, politik ekonomi ve medya üzerindeki 20 yıllık kesintisiz otoriter popülist kontrol sayesinde, böyle bir konsolidasyona doğru daha büyük bir hareketin habercisi olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: demokrasi, demokratik gerileme, popülizm, otoriter konsolidasyon, Türkiye, Brezilya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful for the generosity of my thesis committee. I am particularly thankful to my advisors, Prof. Dr. Şuhnaz Yılmaz and Prof. Dr. Ziya Öniş for their invaluable feedback on this thesis. They were always there to answer my questions whenever I needed help, especially during the difficult pandemic experience. I look forward to following their example and paying it forward to the next generation of graduate students.

My professors at Boğaziçi University introduced me to academic research while I was in college. So, I am deeply grateful for them. I want to thank particularly Prof. Dr. Mine Eder for her continuous guidance and feedback on my academic journey and specifically for this thesis. Several other professors were also crucial in the development of this thesis. Dr. Berk Esen (Sabancı University, Turkey), Prof. Dr. Carlos Milani (Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil), Prof. Dr. Jennifer McCoy (Georgia State University, United States), Dr. Karabekir Akkoyunlu (University of London, United Kingdom), Dr. Orçun Selçuk (Luther College, United States) and Prof. Dr. Yaprak Gürsoy (London School of Economics and Political Science- LSE, United Kingdom) provided invaluable comments on earlier versions of this thesis. I owe a debt of thanks for their support and feedback.

Arguments in the thesis have also received significant feedback at the following international conferences:

- Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), 79th Annual Conference;
- University of Vienna, 6th Navigating Knowledge Landscapes' Annual Conference "How do democracies die";
- 29th Annual Illinois State University Conference for Students of Political Science 2022;
- Aalborg University, Conference of the "Internationalization of populism: populism beyond the nation state?";
- Young Scholars Initiative on Populism (OPUS), Brown Bag Lunches Events.

Hence, I also want to thank the organizers of those conferences and their invitation for letting me present my research.

I am also thankful for the support and guidance of my friends at Istanbul Political Research Institute) as I already had incredibly supportive advisors already before graduate school. Specifically, I would like to thank Seren Selvin Korkmaz for her guidance.

Besides, I am equally thankful to the administrative staff of Koç University Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities for their help during my master's study. Finally, I am grateful for the generous financial support I have received throughout my master's studies from TÜBİTAK (the Scientific and Technological Research Council).

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ABBREVIATIONS

AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party in Turkey)
ANAP	Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party in Turkey)
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party in Turkey)
CPI	Consumer Price Inflation
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists, an American independent non-profit, and non-governmental organization in New York City
CSOs	Civil Society Groups
DEVA	Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi (Democracy and Progress Party in Turkey)
DHME	Developmental Hierarchical Market Economy
DP	Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party in Turkey)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FP	Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party in Turkey)
GDP	Gross domestic product
GP	Gelecek Partisi (The Future Party in Turkey)
HDP	Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party in Turkey)
HSK	Hakimler ve Savcılar Kurulu (Council of Judges and Prosecutors in Turkey)
IDEA	Global State of Democracy
İYİP	İyi Parti (Good Party in Turkey)
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement party)
MGH	Milli Görüş Hareketi (National Outlook Movement in Turkey)
MHP	Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party in Turkey)
MNP	Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party in Turkey)
MÜSİAD	Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association)
ÖSYM	Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Sistemi (Higher Education Foundations Examination in Turkey)
OWSD	Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World
PL	Partido Liberal (The Liberal Party in Brazil)
PSD	Partido Social Democrático (Social Democratic Progress Party in Brazil)
PSDB	Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (Party of Brazilian Social Democracy)
PSL	Partido Social Liberal (Social Liberal Party in Brazil)
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (The Workers' Party in Brazil)
RJU	Regime Jurídico Único (Single Juridical Regime in Brazil)
RP	Refah Partisi (Welfare Party in Turkey)
RTÜK	Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu (Radio and Television Supreme Council in Turkey)
SP	Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party in Turkey)

TÜSİAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği (Turkish Industry and Business Association)
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy
YSK	Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (Supreme Election Council in Turkey)



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Question

This thesis questions *why Turkey and Brazil had variant degrees of authoritarian populist consolidation in the last decade despite their similarities on historical trajectories of coups, economic development and political instabilities in western-model driven democratization and modernization process?*

The thesis does not aim to provide an explanation on *why* democratic backsliding is happening in Turkey and Brazil because it is challenging to show causally what triggers these processes. However, the thesis shows that there are serious similarities in *how* part for countries all around the world. Nonetheless, those countries differ in their degree, intensification and the extent of democratic backsliding and authoritarian populist consolidation. As a result, the thesis asks *why* question to show this difference in the cases of Turkey and Brazil.

Both countries have authoritarian trends, but Turkey is more in the direction of a fully authoritarian populist consolidation. Therefore, the thesis aims to question:

- *what are the institutional and ideological conditions that have allowed the current regime in Turkey to manage a greater move towards consolidating authoritarian populist rule?*
- *are there similar conditions and mechanisms present in Brazil to allow an authoritarian populist to consolidate power, and if not, what prevents Brazil from authoritarian populist consolidation?*
- *and why it led to the protection of Brazilian democracy at least as an “electoral democracy” while Turkey became an “electoral autocracy in the last decade?*

These are the puzzles that the present thesis seeks to examine based on the scholarship concerning the global backlash against democratic rule and institutions (Kurlantzick,

2013; Diamond, 2015; Bermeo, 2016; Mechkova et al., 2017, Levitsky et al., 2018, Lührmann et al., 2019). One of the key points about authoritarian populist regimes is that authoritarianism is not fully consolidated. Therefore, the thesis considers Turkey and Brazil on the path to authoritarian populist consolidation. It aims to study the extent of this consolidation and trace the processes of democratic backsliding and detect if any of the elements of resilience is present in the Brazilian case.

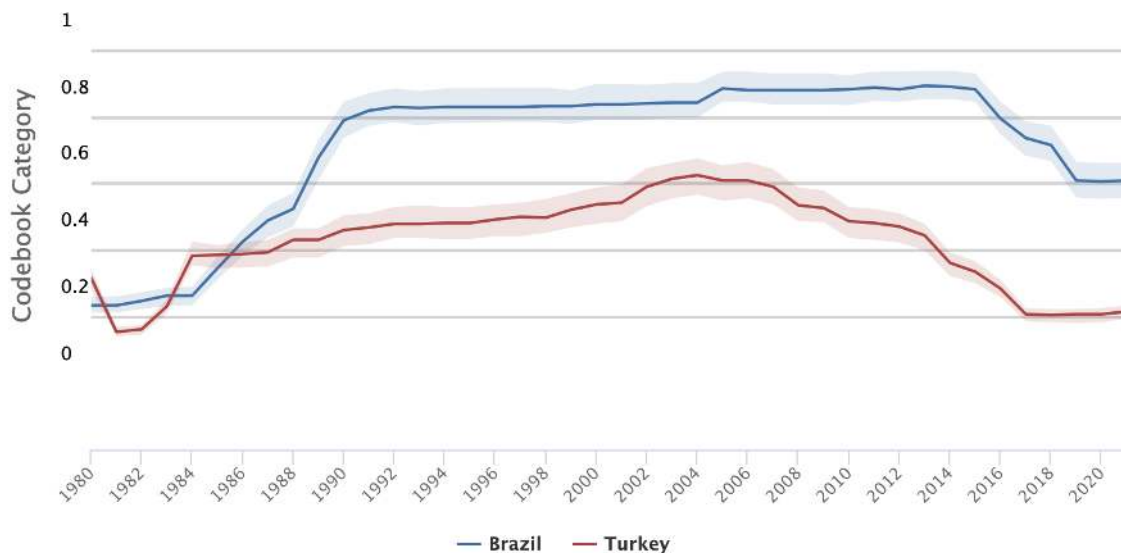
Turkey and Brazil have never been fully functioning constitutional democracies especially considering the multiple military interruptions and oscillations between democracy and authoritarianism. Historically, Turkey's last coup regime ended with the 1983 elections and the current constitution was enacted in 1982 while Brazilian current democracy era started with the promulgation of the current constitution in 1988.

In the current context, Brazil and Turkey are cited as countries of democratic backsliding in the Global State of Democracy Indices by IDEA¹. It demonstrates that Turkey and Brazil are among the top 5 democracies with the greatest declines in the last decade (IDEA 2021, p. 6). Turkey lost its *electoral democracy* position in the course of the last decade and is now classified as an *electoral autocracy*. In comparison, Brazil is still considered as an *electoral democracy* but faces challenges under the presidency of Bolsonaro. Similarly, Turkey was listed as *partly free* in the Freedom House report in 2016. However, the country became *not free* as of 2021. Comparingly, Brazil is still a *free* country. Democracy Index of the Economist is another significant data source for tracing Turkey and Brazil's changing status and scores in the last decade. Accordingly, Turkey is named as a *hybrid regime* while Brazil is a *flawed democracy*. Turkey's democracy score has declined by 1.25 while Brazil has only lost 0.2 in the last ten years (The Economist Democracy Index, 2021).

Finally, the two countries are also listed among the top five “autocratizing nations” in the V-Dem 2022 Democracy Report². It measures the quality of elections, civil society, freedom of expression and media, checks on the incumbent and the rule of law. In a decade, it shows that the change in the liberal democracy index score for Turkey is 0.29 while Brazilian score change is very close to Turkey with 0.28. Therefore, V-Dem data shows that Turkey and Brazil are among the countries where the difference between 2010 and 2020 is quite high.

Beginning with 2010, V-Dem data shows a statistically significant decline in liberal democracy scores for Turkey and change of status from *electoral democracy* to *electoral autocracy* as of 2014. As a result, Turkey is a critical case study for scholars studying democratic backsliding (Aydın-Düzgit and Keyman, 2012; Bechev, 2014; Esen et al., 2016; Somer, 2016).

Figure 1: Liberal Democracy Index for Turkey and Brazil, 1980-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Liberal democracy variable of V-Dem focuses on the constitutional protection of “civil liberties, rule of law, independent judiciary, and checks and balances over the executive power” (Musgrave, 2021). Figure 1 illustrates the liberal democracy index for Turkey and

Brazil between 1980 and the present time. 1980s were significant for both countries because they started their democratization process respectively in 1983 and 1985. It shows that Brazilian liberal democracy score increased more than Turkey after the end of Brazilian military rule in 1985. The highest liberal democracy point of Turkey was between 2003 and 2004 but has continuously declined in the following years. Particularly, Turkey's rate for the last few years declined even to the same levels as the 1980 military regime. Therefore, Turkey is experiencing a democratic breakdown and a transition from a *semi-democratic political system of military-bureaucratic tutelage* to *authoritarianism with a hegemonic party and charismatic-populist leadership* because of the recent backsliding process in institutional checks over the executive power (Somer, 2016).

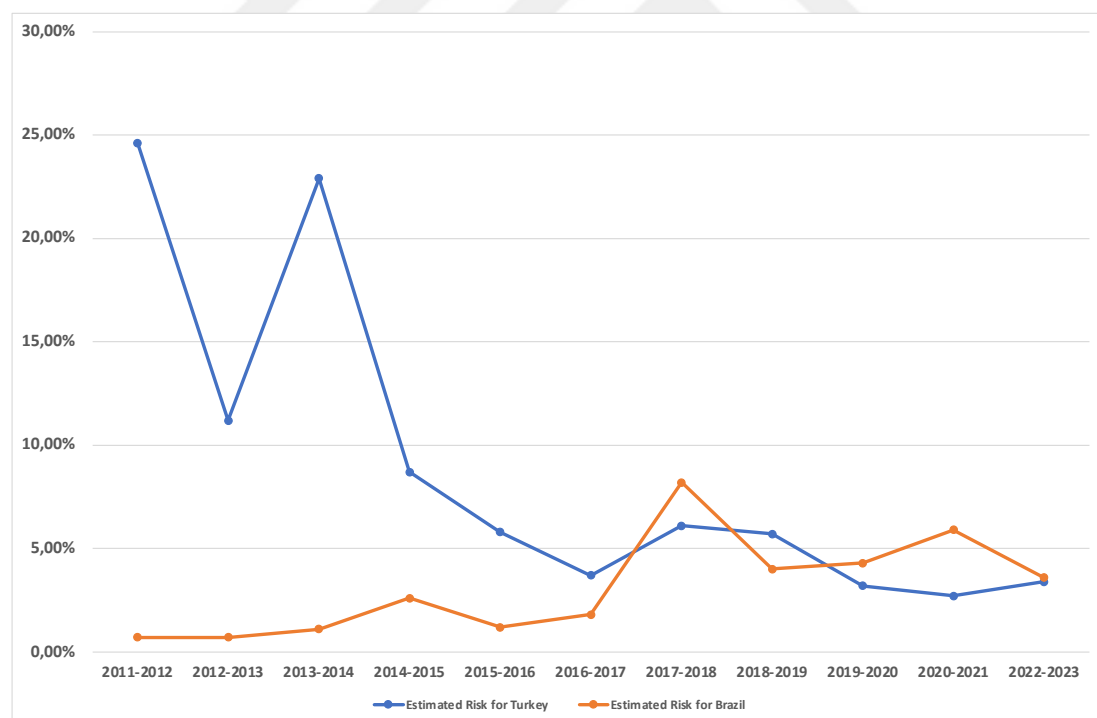
On the other hand, Brazil had the highest scores in the initial years of Lula (between 2003 and 2007), but later experienced declines in its liberal democracy scores. Specifically, Brazilian liberal democracy index started to decline in 2015. This clearly shows that Brazilian autocratization did not start under the presidency of Bolsonaro. Impeachment of Rousseff, Lava Jato scandal and conservative president Temer's government paved the way for the rise of right-wing populism and Bolsonaro. Economic crisis coupled with corruption scandals sharply decreased Brazilians' trust in government and democracy, causing to extreme polarization and rising violent crime and physical insecurity. In response, Bolsonaro promised to restore, and therefore built his campaign on the issues of tackling corruption, crime and defending Brazil from a supposed communist threat.

In the current context, Bolsonaro administration therefore poses a threat to Brazilian democracy. Mainly, antagonism to non-partisan media and government-led dissemination of false news are the crucial threats (Hellmeier et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic also intensified the socio-economic inequalities³ because Bolsonaro undermined the

adverse effect of the virus and thereby remained late for taking necessary policies like lockdown measures⁴.

Such results show that Brazil is among the top five declining democracies like Turkey. However, Turkey has experienced democratic erosion longer than Brazil. Compared to Turkey's uninterrupted 20 years of authoritarian populist government (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Justice and Development Party in Turkey), Brazil has been experiencing an imminent threat of an authoritarian populist regime since 2018. Therefore, Brazil is experiencing authoritarian populist rule for a shorter time, and has a higher social organization legacy on behalf of the strong civil society organizations and political institutions.

Figure 2: Yearly Risk Estimates for Turkey and Brazil, 2011-2023



Source: Compiled from data on *V-Forecast: Predicting Adverse Regime Transitions*, https://www.v-dem.net/vforecast_dash

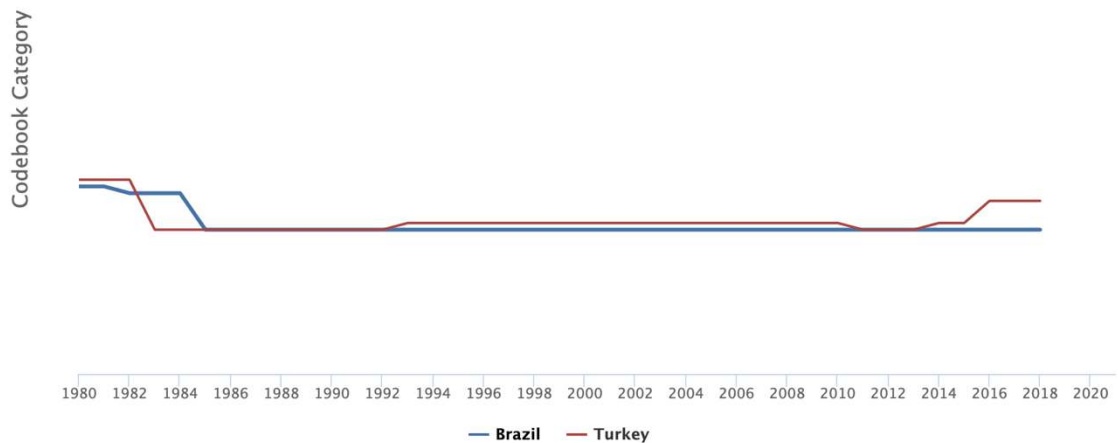
V-Dem makes predictions on the risk of adverse regime transitions from *liberal democracy*, *electoral democracy*, *electoral autocracy* and *closed autocracy* during the two years. Figure 2 shows that, in the last decade, Turkey's electoral democracy status worsened with high percentages until 2016 when the regime gradually started to

consolidate and remained stable in later years. After its successes in 2009 local election and 2010 referendum, AKP won its third consecutive victory in the 2011 general elections with 49.8% as the highest percentage AKP obtained before 2018 constitutional change to form the majority government. Despite resilient authoritarian conditions however, Turkey's estimated risk of reversibility from its *electoral autocracy* status to *closed autocracy* is low today. From 2011-2012 period to 2022-2023, Turkey's estimated risk of reversibility declined from 24,6% to 3.4%. This result shows a consolidated authoritarian rule in Turkey which is not expected to change in near future.

On the other hand, Brazilian estimated risk of adverse regime transition to autocracy increased in 2015 when impeachment of Dilma Rousseff was the main agenda in the Brazilian politics. Estimated risk only reached a peak in 2017-2018 period when Bolsonaro emerged to run in the elections and became the president in an economically difficult and socio-culturally polarized environment. In the current context however, estimated risk declined for Brazil from 8.2% in 2017-2018 to 3.6% in 2022-2023. Therefore, Brazil is not expected to become an *electoral autocracy*. This result can be associated with the high expectation of Lula's victory in October elections.

Furthermore, Figure 3 shows V-Dem's data on institutionalized autocracy variable for Turkey and Brazil. It is another significant data to see different trajectories for the two countries. Accordingly, Brazilian institutionalized autocracy score has not changed over the years (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Institutionalized Autocracy in Turkey and Brazil, 1980-2020



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Closed autocracies are defined as regimes where an individual or group have unconstrained executive power (V-Dem Democracy Report, 2022). Autocracy consolidation happens if competitive political participation is sharply restricted, and power is exercised with few institutional constraints. Clearly, Turkey has less institutional constraints on its authoritarian consolidation. Turkey's line differed from Brazil in 2013 with an increasing trend towards a closed autocracy, which we can associate with the consolidated process of authoritarianism. However, Brazilian score did not change over the years. It remained 0 since 1985 when military rule ended.

In comparison, Turkey's score became 0 in 1983 with the elections and the end of coup regime. After 1993, the institutionalized autocracy score increased for Turkey because of a covert coup to prevent a peace settlement for the Kurdish problem. Between 2011 and 2013, Turkey's institutionalized score became 0 again probably because of the constitutional referendum in 2010. However, Gezi Park protests and the government's management of the political crisis in 2013 increased the institutionalized autocracy score for Turkey. It increased further until 2016 when the coup attempts further consolidated the executive aggrandizement in Turkey. These results also have important similarities with the qualitative findings of the thesis which are detailed in Chapter 4. Overall, those

different results point out that democracy in Turkey and Brazil has been lately challenged. However, Brazil shows a better picture while comparing democratic backsliding in the two cases.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this thesis is to analyze the simultaneous but divergent process of the authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil from a comparative case study perspective. The thesis problematizes the arguments of the existing theory on democratic backsliding, authoritarianism and populism and aims to step it further. Countering this authoritarian populist threat needs an understanding of this phenomenon. Hence, the thesis attempts to provide an in-depth analysis of Brazil and Turkey to study the research questions highlighted in the first section and place these cases on the global democratic backsliding literature.

Considerably less work has been done on the process of democratic erosion and the varieties of populism in the contemporary Global South. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to this line of research. Authoritarianism has always been a phenomenon in the countries of Global South. However, the extent of democratic decline in hybrid regimes diverges for such countries in the current context. The thesis does not use the Global South in a geographical definition but refers to the economically developing countries compared to advanced economies in the Global North (European countries). The United Nations' Finance Center for South-South Cooperation does not list Turkey as a Global South country although it is a Global South country in the list of the programme unit of UNESCO, OWSD (Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World)⁵. Literature has numerous definitions for the "Global South". It has usually been used for the economically underdeveloped countries, unstable democracies, not yet industrialized

and colonized countries by the Global North (Western countries). Based on such an understanding, we can cite Turkey and Brazil as Global South countries. The former escaped from a complete colonization from the European countries thanks to the Independence War when the Ottoman territories were to be partitioned among Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Russia after the WWI. Brazil was however a colonized country by the Portuguese between 1500 and 1815. Economically, both countries are emerging economies considering that the World Bank classifies them as upper-middle income countries based on their per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product)⁶. Therefore, this study aims to propose additional explanations to the existing democracy and democratic backsliding literature with a concentration on the paradigmatic cases of Turkey and Brazil.

The novelty of this research is also seen in presenting the characteristics of an authoritarian populist consolidation by explaining the importance of macro and micro pillars in and beyond the political system and electoral arena. Furthermore, it supports that non-institutional consolidation works in combination with the institutional consolidation process. Therefore, the significance of this thesis lies in exploring this linkage, which aims to add new insights to the existing literature.

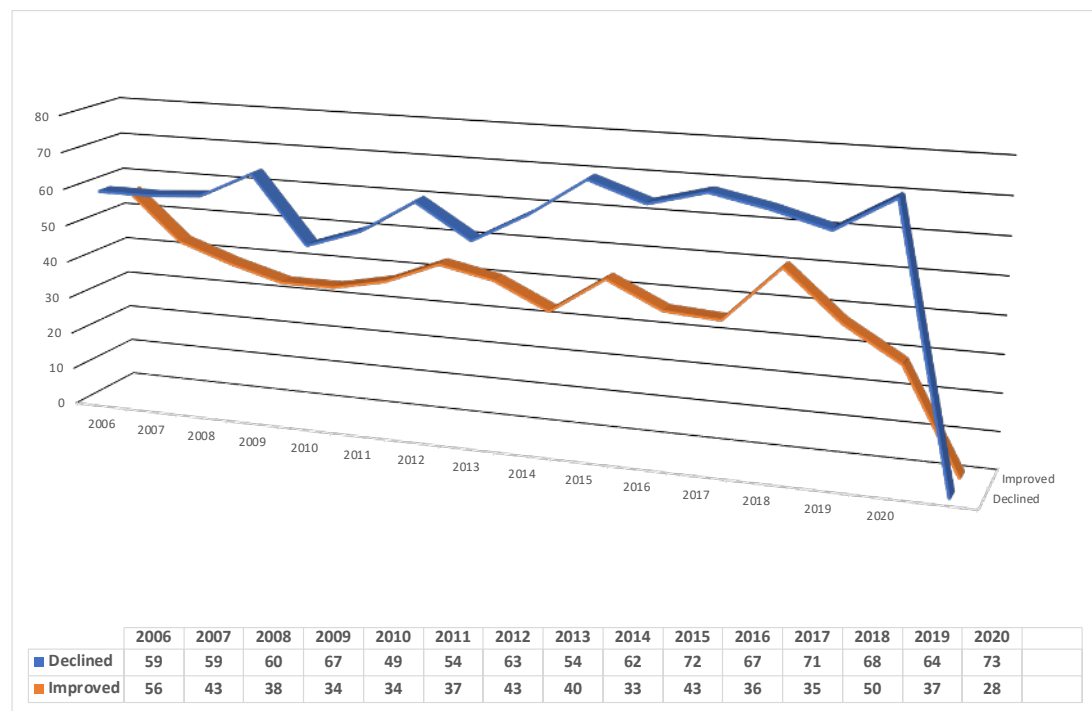
Consequently, the thesis aims to analyze if and how the different contexts of these countries highlight different degrees of democratic backsliding and authoritarian populist consolidation.

1.3 Global Trends in Democratic Backsliding

The 2020 Report on the Global Satisfaction with Democracy shows that democracy is globally declining. In the mid-1990s, data demonstrates a declining trend for satisfaction with the performance of democracies. Such legitimacy crisis adversely affects

democracies. Freedom House reports have also showed a gradual declining process for political rights and civil liberties levels in the world for the last 15 years⁷. They define the current situation as “democracy under siege”⁸ because more democracies are losing against the authoritarian forces, highlighting the striking imbalance between the countries with aggregate score declines and those with gains since 2006 (See Figure 4).

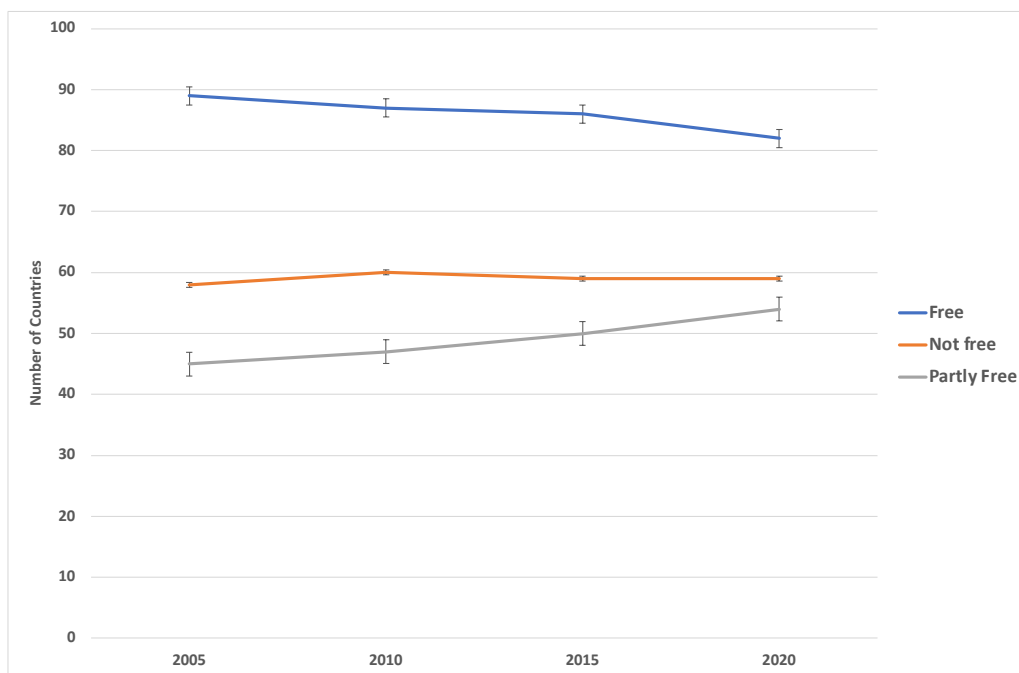
Figure 4: Democracy Gap, 2006-2020



Source: Compiled from Freedom House Countries and Territories Data, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf

Figure 5 also shows that the number of countries labeled as “free” has its lowest number when the democratic backsliding started globally, and the third-wave democracy trend is reversed. In contrast, the number of “not free” and “partly free” countries reached alarming numbers since 2006.

Figure 5: Freedom in the World, 2006-2020



Source: Created based on Freedom House Countries and Territories Data from, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf

Such results drawn from Freedom House data show that the debate around democracy and the crisis of democracy has truth in it.

Likewise, recent scholarship (Kurlantzick, 2013; Diamond, 2015; Van Kessel 2015; Bermeo, 2016; Judis, 2016; Müller, 2017; Finchelstein, 2017; Mechkova et al., 2017; Mudde et al., 2017; Mouffe, 2018; Levitsky et al., 2018; Lührmann et al., 2019; Pappas, 2019) agrees that there is a global crisis over democratic rule and questions why there are so many democracies declining at the same time?

Huntington introduced the concept of “third-wave” democratization which started with Carnation Revolutions in 1974 in Portugal and Spain. In 2006, the number of democracies increased globally and reached to 86 (Diamond, 2020). At that time, 46 countries were ruled democratically, consisting mainly of the Western liberal democracies⁹. On the other hand, the new “democracies” mainly were illiberal and named as “competitive authoritarian” regimes.

Considering Fukuyama's famous argument that democracy is the end of history, scholars suppose that there was a golden age of democracy at a time but now it is under threat. Nonetheless, *was liberalism indeed unchallenged and in which period of the past could we talk about a complete "representation of all people" and the absence of authoritarianism or populism?* Considering Fukuyama's end of history discourse, one might expect the golden age of "liberal capitalist democracy" after defeating all other political systems like communism. Nevertheless, dictatorships have always been present in many countries, and the political representation of women and racial segregation are still problematic (Laruelle, 2022, p. 11). Notably, we witness destructive ethnic and religion-based wars, and pandemics like AIDS in the 1990s and the recent COVID-19. They reflect the deep discrimination of the minority groups and large-scale corruption scandals. These examples are incomplete but provides testimony for the fact that democracy has always been challenged and it is not the "end of history". Instead, it is a permanent process because democracy is never fully achieved. Hence, discussions around the current status of democracy in the world should suppose that progression in democracy is not a linear process, but a process experienced differently by different countries. Democracies can also be fragile and have average or high-level performance based on a country's characteristics. Therefore, countries must continuously strengthen their democracies.

Future trajectory of global democracy is under threat because of the increasing number of countries with democratic backsliding. Linz and Stepan define democratic consolidation as the one where democracy is "the only game in town" because the actors internalize the established norms of democracy and its institutions (Linz and Stepan, 1996, p. 15). Based on the V-Dem results, democracy is not the only game in town any more for both autocratizing and autocratized countries. Accordingly, the share of world

population living in autocracies increased in the last decade from 49% to 70%¹⁰. The “share of world population living in autocratizing countries” also increased from 36% to 5%¹¹. Consequently, the thesis discusses Turkey and Brazil and situates authoritarian populism based on the current wave of democratic backsliding on a global scale.

1.4 Research Design

1.4.1 The Principal Case Studies

Turkey and Brazil reflect the global trend of authoritarian populism. Therefore, Turkey and Brazil are only the two cases from a broader but varying degrees of authoritarian populist examples in the world: López Obrador (Mexico), Nayib Bukele (El Salvador), Donald Trump (United States), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), Jarosław Kaczyński (Poland), and Narendra Modi (India). Today, scholarly literature acknowledges the erosion in democracy and its values around the world (Levitksy and Ziblatt, 2018). Nonetheless, such erosion differs in degree and across regions and countries (Coppedge et al., 2020; Repucci, 2020). Notwithstanding the predominance of such authoritarian populist regimes globally, they take many different forms, and consequently, different institutions create different typologies. Accordingly, the thesis looks at Turkey and Brazil from a comparative perspective which experience different degrees of democratic backsliding and focuses on the institutional and ideological dimensions of the extent of this consolidation.

A vital part of the qualitative research design of this study was the selection of cases. Case selection is based on the most similar systems design and Mill’s method of difference because the cases differ in dependent variable. Such a comparative method continues to be highly used in the field of comparative politics because the cases are usually national political systems (Clark et al., 2013, p. 39; Lijphart, 1971, p. 685). It also helps explain

the differences that large-n quantitative analyses cannot explain (Schmidt et al., 2018). At the same time, the small-n comparison will help test and generalize cross-case insights and observe variables that are not possible with single case studies.

This thesis analyzes the cases of Turkey and Brazil because they can be shown as examples of democratic backsliding (The V-Dem, 2022). In the last decade, Brazilian authoritarianism experienced a “civil coup” by the “judiciary, parliament, and media” while Turkey transitioned to an “authoritarian presidential system” with the “suspension of the rule of law” (Bekmen et al., 2022, p. 2). They are similar considering their historical trajectories of coups, economic development and western model led democratization and modernization process. Accordingly, the two countries have never been fully consolidated liberal democracies because of the existing tutelary democratic elements. Turkey was directly ruled by military in 1960-61 and 1980-1982. Similarly, Brazil was directly ruled by military longer (between 1964 and 1984). Additionally, they had modernization initiatives at the beginning of the 20th century and experienced extensive reform programs under the leadership of Atatürk in Turkey and Vargas in Brazil. Based on their economic trajectories, they were upper middle-income economies, adopted ISI models, experienced economic challenges, and pursued the policy of financial inclusion to obtain the consent of the lower classes for their regime’s survival. Business-government relations also relies on nepotism and clientelism and therefore caused corruption problems in Turkey and Brazil. Furthermore, the 1980s witnessed political instability. Democratization process only started with the new constitutions in 1982 in Turkey and in 1985 in Brazil. This period also witnessed various initiatives for democratization initiatives in the two countries in terms of the activities of civil society organizations. Yet, they did not experience the triumph of western liberal democracy. As

a result, despite such similarities, the thesis questions how come they had divergent trajectories in patterns of the degree of authoritarian populist consolidation (See Table 1).

Table 1: Similarities and Differences Between Turkey and Brazil

Indicators	Turkey	Brazil
Region	Eastern Europe, Central Asia	Latin America, Caribbean
Population (as of December 2021)	84.6 million	212.6 million
Urban Population	76.1%	87.1%
Historical Legacy	Independence War	Colonialism
Form of Government	Presidentialism	Presidentialism
UN Education Index	0.731	0.694
Mode of Government	Unitary State	Federalism
Foreign Policy Approach	Regional Stability and A Balanced Relationship with the West and Russia-China Axis	Western Alignment vs. Sovereign and Autonomous Brazil in a multipolar world order
Turn of the 20 th century*	Sustained relationship with the EU and reforms for EU membership and privatization	Economic reforms, order, and progress
Membership in International Organizations	NATO, The Council of Europe, Organization of Islamic Cooperation	NAFTA, Mercosur, BRICS
Income Group (2021)	Upper Middle	Upper Middle
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (2021, US dollars)	\$ 9.406	\$ 7.741
Major Economic Model in 2000s	Neoliberal populism	Pink Tide, leftist economic policy
Human Development Index (2019)	0.820	0.765
Gini Index (2019)	41.9	53.4
Poverty (Percentage of population living on less than \$3.20 a day at 2011 international prices)	2.2%	9.1%
Corruption Perceptions Index (2021)	38	38
Type of Populism	Anti-establishment and cultural populism in line of religion	Left-wing socio-economic populism and far right populism
Direct Military Rule	Longest one between 1980 and 1983	Longest one between 1964 and 1985
Socio-economic cleavages	Ethnic and religion based	Race and class based
Freedom House Score (2021a, 2021c)	32	74
V-Dem Liberal Democracy Score (2021)	Electoral Autocracy, 0.11 (Score)	Electoral Democracy, 0.51 (Score)

Sources:

*Akkoyunlu, Karabekir, 2018, "The Civil Service in Brazil and Turkey: A Comparative Study", *Flacso Brasil*, p.16; Statista, *GDP Per Capita in Turkey* (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263599/gross-domestic-product-gdp-per-capita-in-Turkey/>) & GDP Per Capita in Brazil (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263774/gross-domestic-product-gdp-per-capita-in-brazil/>); Human Development Index (<https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>); Corruption Perceptions Index (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>); Gini Index (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>); Freedom House, Turkey (<https://freedomhouse.org/country/Turkey/freedom-world/2021>) & Brazil (<https://freedomhouse.org/country/brazil/freedom-world/2021>); V-Dem, Democracy Report 2022, (https://v-dem.net/media/publications/dr_2022.pdf); Statista. *Total Population in*

Turkey (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263753/total-population-of-Turkey/>) & *Total Population in Brazil* (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/263763/total-population-of-brazil/>)

Turkey and Brazil pursued a developmental path in the first place, but they gradually progressed to a different point. If one thinks democratic backsliding as a gradual, stage-by-stage process, Turkey and Brazil are today experiencing the process of institutional collapse incrementally. However, Bolsonaro needs re-election for consolidating his authoritarian populist power. This thesis argues that experiences of populism in Turkey and Brazil are different because of their purpose and strength (Kaltwasser, 2012). It is more relevant to claim that the authoritarian populist regime in Brazil is “dominant” rather than “hegemonic” compared to the case of Turkey. Nonetheless, Brazilian authoritarian populism can become hegemonic if the current regime wins the upcoming election. Every authoritarian scheme relies on a second term to consolidate democratic erosion in stages. Bolsonaro has already attempted to encourage coups, weakened the control bodies like the judiciary and mobilized his troops after a defeat in the elections.

Turkey and Brazil can be compared to each other because they are also large and diversified middle-income countries and has a large public sector. At the same time, they are critical regional powers and have undertaken the negotiator role for regional politics. Brazil played a role in forming a bridge between North and South (especially under Lula’s presidency), while Turkey is seen as a “bridge between the East and the West” (Radeljić, 2021). However, the international context for these two countries is different. The EU anchor serves as the external authority for democracy in Turkey. In comparison, Brazil is geographically close to the US and has been a Western-friendly country among BRICS countries. Brazil’s ties to the US are quite different from Turkey-US ties. Since the 18th century, the US has a significant influence over Brazilian foreign policy and leads to the

questions of “why Brazil is so American?”¹². In the interwar period, the US aimed to pursue its economic interests in Brazil through “Brazilians’ exposure to American culture”¹³. As a response to this historical trajectory, left-wing populist president, Lula pursued a different policy approach and aimed for autonomous foreign policy from the US influence through diversification¹⁴. Lately, Brazil’s ties with the US weakened with the presidency of Biden. Current president, Bolsonaro had rather good relations with populist US president Trump. Nonetheless, the US still considers its relations with Brazil as a “partnership that is rooted in a shared commitment to expand economic growth and prosperity; promote international peace, security, and respect for human rights; and strengthen defense and security cooperation”¹⁵. In comparison, Turkey is a security and critical regional partner for the US as a NATO ally¹⁶.

According to the Gini Index, both countries are also unequal societies of the world as the middle-income developing economies. In both countries, political institutions have also been challenged to protect the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. In that sense, it has been evident that there has always been an oscillation between democracy and authoritarianism in Brazil and Turkey. Additionally, the role of the state is unquestionable in both countries. Still, they have different democratization trajectories that made Brazil an *electoral democracy* this last decade, while Turkey has become an *electoral autocracy*. Turkey and Brazil are critical case study examples because they are also different from the cases which the democratic backsliding theory initially emerged (Geddes, 2003, p. 132). More specifically, much attention has been paid to defining the democratic backsliding and populism itself and defining its general characteristics in the Global North (Kumral, 2022). Scholarship examines how populist governments can bring the end of democracy in a comparative framework. They are questioning the playbook of the elected populists in different countries and how they have built authoritarian governments

by using the tools of democracy. However, the main emphasis is on the right-wing populism in Europe and left-wing populism in Latin America (Taggart, 1996; Hawkins, 2009; Kaltwasser, 2012; Mudde, 2013; Frajman, 2014; Moffitt, 2017; De La Torre, 2017; Katsambekis et al., 2018; Tepe et al., 2022). Similarly, studies on European right-wing populist cases are used to analyze other cases and causing development of “circular arguments” (Tepe et al., 2022, p. 2). However, authoritarian populism in weakly institutionalized democracies needs a different explanation from the cultural backlash and the economic grievances theories for advanced democracies because experiences of authoritarian populism are highly diverse. Advanced democracies are more resilient to the prospective adverse effects of populism because their democracy is much more internalized and institutionalized (Kaltwasser, 2012). Therefore, there is a lack of scholarly attention to cross-regional research (Kaltwasser, 2012) in the literature on populism and its relationship with authoritarianism. In comparison, this thesis studies populism in the context of two influential regional powers: Turkey, and Brazil located in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the research area that studies paradigmatic cases from the underrepresented regions in the current literature to understand the relationship between populism and democratic backsliding. It also studies the populist cases in power compared to the studies focusing on the populists in opposition (Aytaç et al., 2021, p. 23).

Although democracies have varying degrees of backsliding, we cannot also study such a global phenomenon in isolation as there are similarities in some ways but differences in mode of operation. Therefore, Turkey and Brazil do not find themselves isolated from the political shocks of such trends. Turkey and Brazil are different from the traditional electoral authoritarian cases of totalitarian Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, the closed

authoritarian regime of China, and the authoritarian regime of the Islamic Republic in Iran (Bentham, 1991; Gilley, 2009; von Soest and Grauvogel, 2017). They also have specific characteristics that separate them from their equivalents in the Global North and South, given their specific social, political, economic, and historical contexts. They have not experienced the triumph of western liberal democracy like the ones in the Global North. In comparative terms, advanced democracies have more resilient political and legal institutions, established business sectors, and civil society organizations. Due to existing economic and structural resources, the opposition is more systematized in such countries. Therefore, tilting the playing field is more difficult in advanced democracies compared to Turkey and Brazil.

Consequently, Turkey and Brazil cases present significant insights into the “democratic backsliding” literature as they are iconic cases in the state-led abolition of horizontal institutions (Svolik, 2014; Miller, 2021). They are hybrid regimes because there are still some democratic institutions that prolong the authoritarian regime's survival. Despite such extensive theories on hybrid regimes, it is still challenging to reach a consensus over them. Some studies differentiate between authoritarian, hybrid, and democracy regime types. In such studies, hybrid political systems are called “grey zones” (Diamond, 2002), “ambiguous regimes” (Diamond, 2002), “competitive authoritarianism” (Levitsky et al., 2002), “electoral authoritarian” (Schedler, 2006), “hybrid regimes” (Levitsky et al., 2010), “democratic backsliding” (Bermeo 2016), “de-democratization” (Bogaards, 2018), “populist authoritarianism” (Sadurski, 2019), “autocratization” (Kalberer, 2021), and democratic regression (Edgell et al., 2021).

Turkey and Brazil have been compared in the scholarly literature concentrating on their “political and economic crises”, “foreign policy challenges”, “anti-government protests”,

“corruption”, and “concerns of democratic backsliding”(Akkoyunlu, 2021c). However, long-term comparison can uncover much about Turkey and Brazil to trace the gradual process of democratic backsliding in the last decade from a comprehensive approach, focusing on both the institutional and ideological dimensions. Additionally, while the existing literature centered on the reasons behind democratic transitions and breakdowns, consolidation remains unsettled and is still debated. Populism literature relies mostly on country-specific single case studies for Turkey and Brazil while cross-region comparisons are limited. Journalistic explanations, scholarship and reports compare populism in those countries but none of them systematically and comprehensively makes a comparison. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to this research area on the authoritarian populist consolidation with a solid conceptual and theoretical foundation.

1.4.2 Theoretical Approach

The recent resurgence of authoritarianism and democratic backsliding in the world needs a reexamination of democratic transition and regime consolidation theories. In the literature, democratic backsliding refers to a “process” different from established authoritarianism. It is an “intra-regime, incremental change, and incremental within-regime change” (Waldner et al., 2018, p. 95). In this sense, democratic backsliding refers to weakening democratic qualities and governance. Elections become less competitive, while participation is limited. However, accountability is restricted through weakening the political responsibility and punishment systems. Such actions are not openly taken, and thereby making the backsliding process gradual and difficult to oppose.

Accordingly, the thesis refers to the theoretical debates on democratic backsliding and new styles of authoritarianism which are different from the ruptures in democracies with the coup d'états. This phenomenon has taken place as “stage-by-stage” and can be seen

as a “process,” not as a “rupture.” Generally, the literature emphasizes the changing power balances that benefit the governments in a political environment where coups are no longer anticipated, and partisan networks strengthen the incumbents (Aleman et al., 2011; Erdmann, 2011; Finkel et al., 2012; Slater, 2013; Ahmed, 2014; Svolik, 2014; Bermeo, 2016). Subsequently, the elected leaders are today the main actors behind democratic backsliding compared to military generals of the past. Therefore, the backsliding process is gradual and often not predictable (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018).

Since democratic backsliding means a gradual process of autocratization, it is the opposite of democratization because of the erosion in democratic characteristics of a political organization. Instead, it is complementary to the rise authoritarian populism (Brown, 2022) because the definition with authoritarian populism lies in the intersection of the literature on democratic backsliding and populism. Therefore, one has to look at both simultaneously. By authoritarian populism, the thesis refers to the right-wing populism but attempts to differentiate the study from the cases in Western Europe. Hence, right-wing populism and authoritarian populism are used interchangeably in the thesis.

In the first two decades of the 21st century, the wave of “authoritarian populism” emerged based on the executive-based power centralization of the elected governments and leaders, weakening of institutions like judiciary, criticism of the democratic principle of separation of powers. This approach also drew a distinction between the pure/moral nation and degenerate/non-national elite to provoke political-social-emotional polarization and marginalization. Therefore, it has relied on a homogeneous society and anti-pluralism.

Authoritarian populism was firstly developed by Stuart Hall to describe Thatcherian right-wing policies to solve the political and economic crisis in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s (Scoones et al., 2021). Accordingly, authoritarian populism (Hall, 1978; 1985)

refers to a democratic erosion where regular elections take place but liberal democratic principles like pluralism are undermined by the anti-elite populists who seek to centralize authority. As Hall stated, the main features of authoritarian populism include

- a change of direction towards a strong and interventionist state,
- a favoring of law and order in society and an anti-elite movement,
- a call for a populist unity between the people and the power bloc, and
- the adoption of nationalism (Scoones et al., 2021).

Hall's arguments refer to Poulantzas's arguments on "authoritarian statism". However, it is a distinct form of the capitalist state (Akgemci, 2022, p.40). Authoritarian statism focuses on the capitalist state's totalitarian influence in every aspect of the society. Instead, Hall concentrated on "authoritarian populism" to understand "how popular consent is constructed" (p. 40). In this respect, authoritarian populism is a tool of linking authoritarian qualities with populist mobilization "from below" to shift the management style to a more repressive direction, while maintaining the appearance of a democratic rule. This framework depends on a government which is free from any institutional barriers like bureaucracy, has a charismatic leader cult and nostalgia like "making Brazil great again"¹⁷ or "neo-Ottomanist" approach in Turkey (Ghulyan, 2019).

Consequently, democratic practices like elections continue as the source of legitimacy but autocratic strategies are favored to consolidate the power. Consolidation of authoritarian populist power mainly relies on an inseparable relationship between the leader, political party, and the state. Authoritarian populist discourse especially emphasizes the "survival of the state" against internal and external enemies. Such regimes also concentrate their power on the executive, control the institutions of the state, censor the media and use the state to create a partisan group. They often use stigmatization

strategies to show the opposition as "traitors." Governments may also use bureaucracy as an instrument for punishment to restrain the opposition in and beyond the political and electoral system. At the same time, controlling media is a crucial element in consolidating their power with the help of pro-government business elites in a clientelist relationship. This strategy is primarily used to silence the opposition and create consensus around authoritarian populist rule.

1.4.3 Methodological Approach

This thesis employs a qualitative approach using the within-case process tracing technique and comparative case analysis methods. It will not test hypotheses derived from theories but aims to refine the existing theory and inform the empirical applications. Qualitative studies involve standardized data collection and analysis, which allows a systemic comparison among the cases (George et al., 2005, pp. 67-69). Accordingly, this thesis obtained qualitative information from official statements, news articles, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental reports, journalistic and scholarly explanations of democratic backsliding processes at the macro and micro-level. Hence, the thesis traces the consolidation process both at the systemic and societal levels. Secondary sources are important in showing different views and empirical frameworks in the literature while the journalistic and political accounts offer a detailed understanding of the selected cases. Existing quantitative data is also utilized for democracy indicators in the form of the official statistics, and other sources of numerical information. Documents in the form of annual reports, nationally representative survey data, policies and speeches are utilized and reviewed to gain a deep understanding of the factors behind the authoritarian drift in Turkey and Brazil. To trace daily political discussions for the

past and present, the thesis also uses newspapers and other printed and online media at the level of national and international.

The case study method allows studying a few cases for a specific timeline to explain a phenomenon (Geddes, 2003, p. 117). It is a widely used method to study research questions of ‘why’ or ‘how’ (Yin, 2018, p. 33). Additionally, when it comes to investigating a political process, the qualitative case study method is advantageous in identifying multiple aspects of the consolidation process (George et al., 2005, p. 115).

The in-depth analysis of the case studies permits studying the details that the current theories often ignore (Geddes, 2003, p. 129). Such a method also explains how a phenomenon can be generalized across many cases of a similar research area (George and Bennett, 2005; Levy, 2008; Gerring, 2007). In this way, the research contributes to validate proposed theories (Lijphart, 1971, p. 691; George and Bennett, 2005, pp. 4-5).

As a result, such reasoning for using the qualitative case study methods is closely linked with this thesis. The case study method has higher levels of conceptual validity because it can identify factors to represent the theoretical concepts and conduct contextual comparisons by studying analytically the equivalent phenomena in different contexts (George and Bennett, 2005, p. 19; Geddes, 2003, p. 132). These advantages for using the case study method are reflected in this thesis. The detailed analysis of the cases also reveals the reflection of authoritarian populist regimes’ two key consolidation strategies (institutional and ideological) that are logically deduced from the authoritarian populist theories and can be comparatively analyzed. Consequently, this thesis takes Turkey and Brazil’s current national political systems as the unit of analysis to compare their institutional and ideological characteristics while committing theoretical parsimony.

Furthermore, “the process-tracing method traces and compares the sequences of events and enables structured comparisons” (Erdem, 2011, p. 24). Making only discourse and

actor-based evaluations without process tracing may lead to incomplete and misleading analyses. However, politics relies on a multidimensional and multi-actor equation considering the system dynamics and intra-party balances. When these are taken into account, the conclusions can change. The process-tracing method will be therefore helpful to explain the links between the institutional and ideological factors and the processes of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. In our case studies, process tracing provides a way to identify and assess the key drivers behind democratic backsliding.

It is challenging to systematically study the process of democratic backsliding because it comes not as a rupture but a gradual, stage-by-stage dynamic process (Bermeo, 2016; Luo and Przeworski, 2019; Chiopris et al., 2021). Approximately 72% of the current democratic backsliding are led by the popularly elected officials in democratic elections compared to the first and second democracy reverse waves where democratic backsliding emerged as an illegal power grab by a coup, non-democratic constitutions and dissolving the parliament. However, 40% of the current authoritarian regimes do not change the formal rules (Lührmann et al., 2019, p. 21). This process can also be considered as an “incremental autocratization” because of the regime uncertainty, i.e., the absence of a clear breakdown in democracy (McCoy and Somer, 2016; Lührmann, et al., 2019; Pelke, 2021). Still, conceptualizing this process and tracing its origins in Turkey and Brazil is vital for the debates around the future of democracy in their domestic settings and respective regions and the world.

In this context, the primary goal is to analyze how changes occur in cases by focusing on the relationship between agents and structures. Local and international document analysis of indices, policies, and procedures also supplements process tracing because they

provide new understandings into how different regime mechanisms influence the consolidation process of authoritarian populist rule.

The thesis analyses the evolution of the democratic backsliding process in Brazil and Turkey by focusing on the last decade. From a methodological perspective, this also means authoritarian populism can be noticed by tracing the changes in democratic processes and relations in the long term rather than a concentration in a particular event or moment in time (Akkoyunlu et al., 2021b). Additionally, the thesis uses quantitative indices¹⁸ to supplement the qualitative analysis and measure the level of democracy and regime performance in Turkey and Brazil:

- Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) Country Reports for 2022
- Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Research Report on Populist Parties in Contemporary Europe
- CIVICUS Report on the State of Civil Society 2022
- Corruption Perceptions Index for 2021
- European Commission Report on Turkey for 2020
- Freedom House Country Reports for 2021
- Gini Index
- Human Development Index
- IDEA, Global State of Democracy Report for 2021
- Istanbul Economy Research Group's Turkey Report for 2021
- LAPOP Report on the Pulse of Democracy for 2021
- Media Ownership Report for 2021
- Polity IV Country Report for 2010
- Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) for 2020
- Statista data for GDP Per Capita and population
- The Economist's Democracy Index for 2021
- The Global Expression Report for 2021
- Turkuazlab Survey on the dimensions of polarization in Turkey in 2020
- V-Dem Democracy Report for 2021 and 2022
- V-Dem Report about the effects of pandemic on democratic backsliding
- Wilson Center Study by *the History and Public Policy Program* on the relationship between populism and democracy
- World Inequality Report for 2022
- World Press Freedom Index for 2022

Such data vary in their notions of democracy and freedom, and case studies methods. For example, institutional definitions of democracy focus on the elections to analyze the backsliding. On the other hand, maximalist definitions emphasize civil liberties apart from the elections to study the backsliding cases where public support for democratic institutions is weakened at the expense of executive aggrandizement. The thesis identifies current regimes of Turkey and Brazil as authoritarian populists by compiling such measurement indices and focusing on the maximalist democracy definitions. However, data from these indexes are contextualized in each case to qualitatively explain how authoritarian populist regimes in Turkey and Brazil attempt to consolidate their power and differ in their degree of the authoritarian populist consolidation. In addition to qualitative analysis, such quantitative indices therefore leverage the potential for drawing descriptive inferences and provide an additional layer for better understanding the variations in the consolidation of authoritarian populism. Evidence from quantitative data can be significant in identifying how the democratic backsliding process occurs in formal political and electoral settings and informal societal settings (Kubik 2009). In practice, access to political rights such as voting does not mean access to quality political, economic, and social rights.

Consequently, this research employs a comparative case study in Brazil and Turkey, concentrating on a macro-sociological, economic, and political analysis of their democratic backsliding in the last decade. It refers to an emergent global phenomenon and its power dynamics in the cases of Turkey and Brazil.

1.5 The Principal Argument

During the democratic backsliding process, we witness excessive increases in executive power. To some extent, free and fair competitive multiparty elections can exist in such regimes to let the regime remain a hybrid one. However, the electoral playing field will still be uneven. Based on these framework, Bermeo's (2016) 'executive aggrandizement' argument is used in this thesis to explain the gradual process of the authoritarian populist establishment in Turkey and Brazil. This gradual step-by-step process disguises the anti-democratic legal changes (Devinney et al., 2020; Rode et al., 2015) while picturing the authoritarians as the true representatives of democracy. In that sense, they are framed as "legalistic autocrats" (Scheppele, 2018) who systematically weaken checks and balances on the executive power to use the law for their own interests (Müller, 2014; Scheppele, 2018).

The thesis argues that there is limited comparative scholarly work on this process of executive aggrandizement in the Global South. Therefore, this thesis traces the path towards the consolidation process of authoritarian populist rule in Turkey and Brazil through the extent of executive aggrandizement in and beyond the political arena and electoral system. It observes the institutional and ideological conditions as the independent variables for authoritarian populist consolidation.

This thesis attempts to synthesize the practical and theoretical approaches for questioning the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. In this sense, this study makes a real-world relevance and a scientific contribution to the scholarship. The thesis departs from conventional disciplinary approaches by deploying a cross-cultural materialist and political take on democratic backsliding and addressing a comparative question in weakly institutionalized democracies. The aim is to look for within-case

evidence with process tracing, which allows to “check for spuriousness and permit causal inference” based on the two cases (George et al., 2005, p. 226). This method is used to acquire and evaluate data to understand changes, similarities, and reasons behind Turkey and Brazil's different authoritarian populist trajectories.

There are many other variables that the thesis briefly highlights like the role of charismatic leadership, form of government (federalism, unitary state, etc.) and external factors (foreign policy, pandemic, etc.) to explain the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation. Firstly, literature talks about the relationship between charismatic leadership and authoritarian populism (Munro-Kua, 1996). Accordingly, charismatic leadership could gain more support for authoritarian populist rule (Pappas, 2016), through appealing to the followers (Subedi et al., 2021), especially within socio-economically polarized societies (Stefanel et al., 2017). Studies also emphasize the role of charismatic leaders in party institutionalization (Favero, 2022) and political transformation (Di Piramo, 2009). Secondly, federalism and authoritarian populism could co-exist while the former could limit the consolidation of the latter and provide a check over it (Vieira, 2021). For example, American federalism provides a guarantee for freedoms and strengthens the checks and balances between the executive, legislature and judiciary (Järvinemi, 2017). Nonetheless, in other cases like Russia, federal structure could support the authoritarian populist forces because of the weak civic culture and the absence of a democratic political culture which pushed regional elites more in favor of authoritarianism rather than democracy (Ross, 2005).

Thirdly, aggressive foreign policy with security reasons or anti-foreign powers discourse could be used as a tool by the authoritarian populists to shift the attention away from domestic problems and legitimize the constraints on political and civil liberties. For example, foreign policy has a significant influence over the domestic politics of Turkey.

Especially, the recent military invasions into Iraq and Syria are the testimony of this interpretation considering that these invasions have mobilized domestic support in favor of the government. Particularly, geography matters for the different trajectories in domestic conditions of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. Volatile geography in Turkey brings the security challenges into the mainstream agenda and paves the way for legitimizing the authoritarian populist rule.

Therefore, external factors, charismatic leadership and form of government are also relevant and have significant explanatory powers to understand the democratic backsliding process and compare the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in the cases of Turkey and Brazil. However, this study zooms on the variables listed in Figure 6 as the most crucial explanatory variables that are already used in the studies for democratic backsliding. The thesis does not aim to offer a new model but for a systematic comparison.

Figure 6: Conceptual Framework

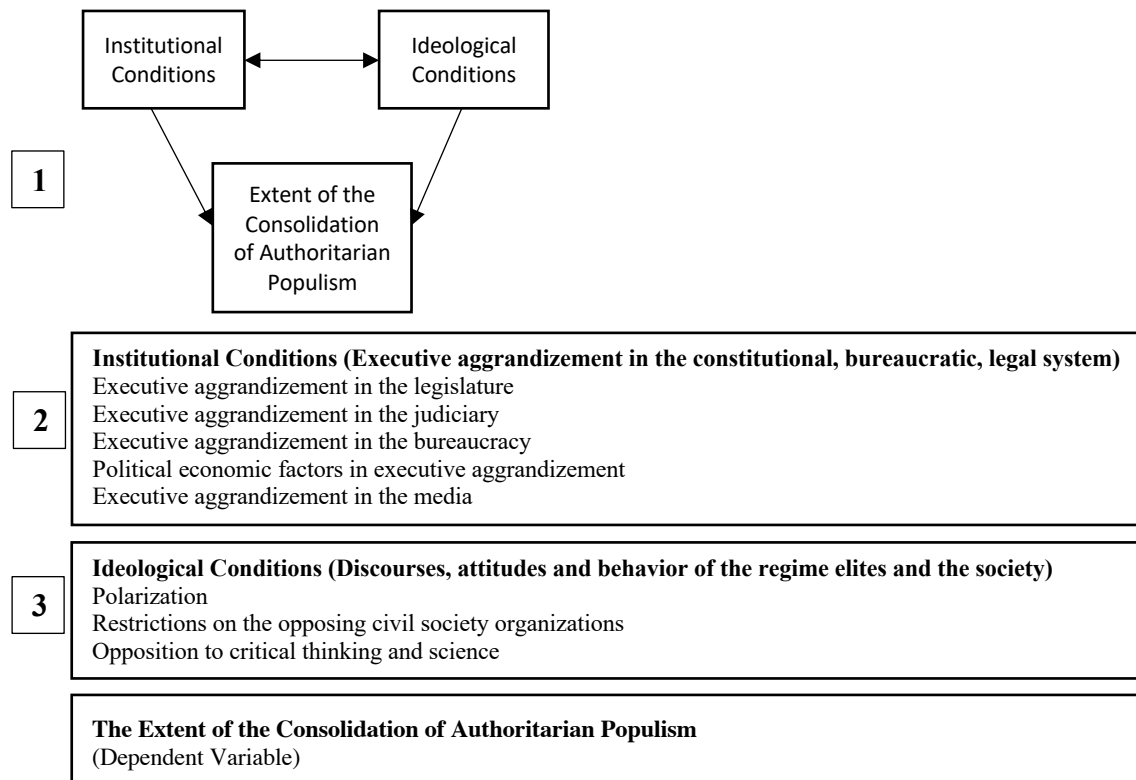


Figure 6 shows that:

- (1) The extent of the authoritarian populist consolidation can be traced through the examination of executive aggrandizement in the institutional and ideological levels.
- (2) Executive aggrandizement in the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, media and its political economic factors explain the institutional conditions for authoritarian populist consolidation.
- (3) Polarization, restrictions on the opposing civil society organizations, and opposition to critical thinking and the authoritarian populist policies towards science explain the ideological conditions for authoritarian populist consolidation.

Firstly, the institutional dimension in Figure 6 refers to the executive aggrandizement in four institutions (parliament, courts, bureaucracy, media) and political economy of authoritarian populism. Such political institutions embody the political order. Therefore, authoritarian populists oppose such institutions because they represent the elite power (Plattner, 2010; Huber et al., 2017). They can check the authoritarian populist's power considering that

- the legislative can impeach presidents and reverse presidential vetoes,
- the judicial can prevent implementation of unconstitutional laws,
- bureaucrats can limit the functioning of the government,
- media can reveal misconduct of politicians,
- and political economy aspect can show the different configurations of power between state and business and the clientelist and patronage-based relationships with pro-government business groups.

Since authoritarian populists pursue reelection, these institutions become threats for their power. On the other hand, such institutions allow the executive to control the political opposition (Brownlee, 2007; Gandhi, 2008). This undermines the separation of powers and prevents government branches from checking one another. At the same time, society could not hold officials accountable for their actions.

This thesis provides an X-ray of the executive aggrandizement over the political institutions that provide vertical and horizontal accountability and thereby the collapse of the separation of powers. Horizontal accountability relies on the accountability of the politicians not only to the voters but also to other institutions like the judiciary, media and the legislature (Diamond et al., 2004, p. 25). In vertical accountability, citizens get informed of the political actions and decide whether to punish or reward the politicians in the elections (p. 25). Therefore, political competition and participation are important for vertical accountability (p. 25). However, authoritarian powers systematically tilt the playing field by disproportionately using the media, accessing campaign funds, controlling the bureaucracy and courts to weaken the opposition.

The ideological dimensions also trace the role of polarization, the regime's opposition to critical thinking, and its relations with the civil society. They create a belief system and collective identity to legitimize the existing rule (von Soest and Grauvogel, 2017, p. 290). They also establish a shared understanding of facts and concentrate on civil society, information space, university freedom and disinformation in their polarized political environments. In this context, "fake news" intensifies political polarization and undermines the rational and critical thinking which are critical pillars of democracy.

Secondly, the dependent variable of the conceptual framework is the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation, referring to the prospect of regime survival. The critical issue is the degree that the authoritarian populist regime faces a significant risk of reversibility. Therefore, the thesis focuses on the path towards the authoritarian populist consolidation process in the cases of Turkey and Brazil, because the resilience of authoritarian populism increases with its consolidation.

The thesis agrees that authoritarian populist consolidation is a gradual process managed by the elected authoritarian populists to remain in power (Göbel, 2011, p. 182). Therefore,

authoritarian populist consolidation is established if prospects for a regime change are constantly negative for the short and medium terms (Ambrosio, 2014, p. 473). With authoritarian populist consolidation, the thesis does not refer to a “completed process” but to the key dynamics happening in *the process of change* towards a more established authoritarian populism. Authoritarian populist consolidation is thus a process for the regime’s survival.

The thesis argues that regime survival depends on institutional and ideological components because of the need for systemic and societal level consolidation to recognize that the preferable type of political regime is authoritarian populism. In this process, democratic institutions and the opposition are weakened. At the same time, the public learns to live with the regime and normalize the anti-democratic processes. Theoretically, the thesis supplements the definition of Loewenstein:

“By these terms we understand any governmental structure in which the principle of the separation and mutual control of the different agencies of government is replaced by a concentration of supreme power in the hands of one man or a group of men who are uncontrolled by a free and unrestricted public opinion, and who wield an absolute power over the executive, legislative, and usually also the judicial branches of government.” (Loewenstein, 1935, pp. 571-72).

Consequently, based on the existing hypotheses and theories, this study can be considered as applied science studies because it aims to interpret and apply the “generalization” to “specific cases” (Kubát et al., 2020, p. 6). Existing theories explain democratic backsliding with a focus on individuals, financial conditions, international dynamics and political culture and institutions. However, these general theory families have not created testable propositions to explain the idiosyncratic outcomes of democratic backsliding, specific to countries’ regimes. In response, this thesis pursues a synthetic method focusing

on political struggles in institutional and ideological dimensions for the cases of Turkey and Brazil.

1.6 Contributions to the Scholarly Literature

The thesis fills an important gap in the comparative politics literature by offering a thorough, up-to-date, empirically supported, and theoretically grounded account of the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. Democratic backsliding is still an evolving process in the world. Hence, this study is timely and relevant. Its arguments would have implications for understanding authoritarian stability and consolidation. Although this study explains comparatively the path towards a consolidation process of the authoritarian populist regimes in Turkey and Brazil, there is not a thorough explanation of the future of such regimes. Turkey's regime may be more consolidated towards an authoritarian direction. Brazilian democracy may also become fragile with the re-election of the current regime in 2022 elections. Therefore, this research creates a foundation for future research and provides policymakers and scholars with a detailed analysis of the examined countries' domestic trends between 2010 and 2022.

Comparingly, this study contributes to the research in understanding the fragility and resilience in authoritarian populist regimes by examining the extent of the executive power. Additionally, it offers plenty of evidence and insights for the authoritarian populist transformation in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. It is also helpful to understand the domestic trends in Turkey and Brazil and compare them within the global trend of democratic backsliding. Hence, this research's interests lie in providing an image of the current global crisis of democratic backsliding in the cases of Turkey and Brazil.

1.7 Structure of the Study

After this introductory chapter, the second chapter uncovers the theoretical debates on democratic backsliding, its relationship with populism and the “new styles of authoritarianism” compared to the ruptures in democracies with the coup d’états. Explaining this process is essential to grasp its implications in the cases of Turkey and Brazil. After this conceptual and theoretical section, the third chapter historically examines the democratic backsliding processes to see the similarities and differences in Turkey and Brazil between the post-1980s period and 2010. It focuses on the institutional and ideological foundations behind the different democratic backsliding trajectories of the two countries. The fourth chapter involves the key arguments and analysis. It empirically shows and compares the path of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil based on a stage by stage approach for the post-2010 period. This chapter provides a comparative picture of these cases to develop an understanding of the extent of consolidation process of authoritarian populism. It concludes that Turkey and Brazil have embraced different institutional paths since the 1980s and experienced different trajectories in the last decade. This has contributed considerably to the development of different challenges and political developments for the two countries. The chapter combines the findings from each empirical chapter on institutional and ideological factors of the consolidation process and then summarizes the generalized insights. Finally, the fifth and last chapter provides a conclusion and discusses the theoretical implications and limitations of this thesis. It also speculates on the future research area and political trajectories of democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil. It discusses the implications of authoritarian populism and the robustness of democracy in other countries. Such regimes do not want to leave the office even if they lose power.

Accordingly, the final chapter also raises the particular challenges that authoritarian populism faces in the near future to question the future trajectory of Turkey and Brazil.



CHAPTER 2:

DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING AND POPULISM: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This thesis aims to contribute to the literature on democratic backsliding. It considers democratic backsliding as the reversal of a democratic trajectory towards de-democratization and the declining quality of democratic governance. Declining quality refers to the decline in the “competitive electoral procedures, civil and political liberties, government accountability” (Waldner et al., 2018). The executive is the leading force of this backsliding because democratic institutions like the courts do not constrain them. In the end, backsliding process can lead to closed autocracy (Lührmann et al., 2019). Such regimes can be called as hybrid regimes. If a hybrid regime is institutionalized, it is consolidated and resilient to the opposition forces. They are not regimes in transition from one regime to another. Instead, they are a unique regime type (Bogaards, 2002, p. 415). Recently, scholars have been discussing and writing about a democratic decline in the last two decades (Diamond 2002, 2010; Kapstein et al., 2008) because the number of democracies is not increasing since 2006 (Diamond, 2014), and the number of declining democracies has outnumbered the number of democracies (Repucci, 2020). On the other hand, some believe that democratic decline has always been the case because third-wave scholars believed in an unrealistic illusion of a linear democratization path from autocracy to democracy (Bayraktar, 2018). However, such countries never embraced democracy. The democratization wave emerged in the 1990s because of the relative weakness of the autocrats who have recently returned to power (Levitsky et al., 2015; Carothers 2002). Lately, scholarship focuses on three sorts of questions to explain the democratic backsliding: why democracies are declining today with the rule of right-wing populism,

how right-wing populists are threatening democracy, and what are the chances that such regimes will survive? Both “how” and “why” questions are interlinked and refer to the democratic decline not by coups like in the past, but by elected officials (Maeda, 2010; Svolik, 2015; Bermeo, 2016; Lührmann et al., 2019; Miller, 2021). Those regimes restructure the democratic institutions and change the liberal-democratic laws. They also claim to be the supporters of democracy as being the true representatives of the people. This understanding resembles anti-liberal Schmittian democracy (Schmitt, 1986). However, it is both a top-down and a bottom-up process because of the role of populist voters and the elites of such populist parties in this process. Recently, the last question has also been a growing debate and emphasized the strategies and the resilience of the opposition against such regimes.

To contribute to the mainstream literature (Ginsburg et al., 2018; Levitsky et al., 2018; Lieberman et al., 2019; Edgell et al., 2021), the thesis aims to provide a broad analysis of the process of democratic backsliding in the cases of Turkey and Brazil and question “how” and “why” Turkey’s and Brazil’s democracies have been declining in the last decade by the right-wing populism and “what” are the strategies of those authoritarian populist regimes to consolidate their rule.

Such questions rely on an empirical puzzle at a case-specific level. They focus on both condition-centered and outcome-centered research. They are also highly relevant in contemporary global politics with the rise of authoritarian electoral regimes and their attempts for legitimation. They imply the historical background and refer to the future trajectories of the authoritarian populist rule in Turkey and Brazil. Furthermore, they help to delve into the agency and structure-based factors to explain the authoritarian transformation in the last decade, focusing on the extent of the executive aggrandizement in and beyond the political arena and electoral system (See Figure 6).

Consequently, the chapter is organized as follows to theoretically understand the current authoritarian populist process. Firstly, it presents an overview of the definitions of democracy, democratic backsliding, and populism. Secondly, it discusses the current debates on democratic backsliding and populism literature. This overview is also followed by an assessment of the significant impact of such literature on explaining the path towards a consolidation process of authoritarian populist rule in Turkey and Brazil.

2.1 Defining Democracy

Sudden events like the coups would cause democratic backsliding in the past. However, it recently transformed into a gradual process through the executive aggrandizement. Accordingly, the elected executive gradually increases its control over democratic institutions and eventually weaken the separation of powers (Bermeo, 2016). Therefore, one of the challenges that democratic backsliding poses is that the line between democracy and authoritarianism is very fluid and be exploited by the current authoritarian populist leaders and parties. Consequently, democratic backsliding is a growing literature, but there is little consensus to explain the recent examples of the democratic backsliding process in different contexts. Such divergence arises from variations in the “measurement of democratic backsliding and the underlying conceptualization of democracy” (Jee et al., 2022). Therefore, an accurate assessment of democratic backsliding would not be possible without clearly plotting out various definitions of democracy.

Ideally, democracy guarantees equality and basic freedoms, peaceful dialogue for resolving conflicts and respecting differences (Beetham, et al., 2008, p.17) based on a democratic rule of law (O'Donnell, 2004). Subsequently, scholarly literature can be divided into two major understandings of democracy: minimalist and maximalist. The

former approach relies on a procedural or minimalist definition of democracy and focuses on free and fair elections for representation (Schumpeter, 1942; Przeworski et al., 2000).

Schumpeter defines democracy as follows:

“The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.”
(Schumpeter, 2008, pp. 250, 269; Kleinfeld, 2017, p. 1367).

Today, electoral democracies rely on this procedural definition because:

“Electoral democracy is a...suffrage” (Diamond, 1999, p. 10)

However, the latter approach adds the “thick” components to the definition of democracy and emphasizes the importance of civil and political liberties which they call as polyarchy (Dahl, 1973), social democracy (Rawls, 1971), deliberative democracy (Bessette, 1980; Habermas, 1996), strong democracy (Barber, 1984), participatory democracy (Pateman, 2012).

Dahl defines his ideal type of democracy as polyarchy because an ideal democracy cannot be achieved in the political reality. For Dahl, an ideal democracy is a process. He adds the following dimensions to the minimalist democracy criteria of “elected officials, free, fair, frequent elections, and inclusive citizenship:

- freedom of expression,
- alternative sources of information,
- and associational autonomy or freedom of assembly” (Pietsch, 2014).

Compared to this procedural democracy understanding, others focus on the “substantive democracy” and the importance of the public reasoning and discussion (Held, 1996; Rawls, 1997; Kaldor et al., 1997; Sen, 2003). Likewise, Bessette (1980), Barber (1984), Habermas (1990) and Pateman (2012) highlight the vital importance of negotiations and deliberations of the people beyond the elections. Schmitter and Karl (1970) also point to

the illiberal democracies where elections do not help establishing a fully consolidated democracy.

Democracy is therefore a multidimensional and continuous variable that causes scholars to make subjective evaluations to define the countries as democracies (Diamond, 2015). Definition and conceptualization of democracy is important because authoritarian populists' claims may be supported through such definitions. For example, based on Dahl's model, appointing the loyalists to the government agencies, weakening civil society, ruling with presidential decrees can be seen as indicators of democratic backsliding (Bayraktar, 2018). Additionally, Linz and Stepan argue that there is no democracy if the elected executives violate the rules of the constitutional rights of individuals and minorities (Linz and Stepan, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, if it is defined through the competition in elections, there needs to be clearly defined and universally accepted boundaries for such a competition (Diamond, 1990, p. 49). At the same time, conflicts may be present in democracies, but they must be solved, and a consensus could emerge at the end (p. 49). Additionally, democracy definition may emphasize the accountability of representatives because of their actions (Diamond, 1990, p. 49). However, there also needs to be effective governance to respond to competing group interests and demands which could cause trading democracy for governance (Lu et al., 2021, p.117). From such perspectives, the legitimacy of the democratic order is questioned. Consequently, this thesis adopts the maximalist definition of democracy in tracing the trajectories of authoritarian populist regimes in Turkey and Brazil.

2.2 *Defining Authoritarianism*

Linz (1970) defined authoritarianism based on his experiences in Franco-ruled Spain as the regimes between totalitarianism and democracy, with a focus on the existence of

ideology for regime legitimation, degree of pluralism and mobilization. He says that authoritarian regimes are:

“Political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive or intensive political mobilization.” (Linz, 1970: p. 255).

Linz’s approach influenced the scholarly works but being criticized at the same time because of the absence of a coherent systematization (Brooker, 2000; Merkel, 2010; Kneuer, 2016). O’Donnell also proposed a different definition focusing on variation of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes where bureaucracies play a critical role in the regime. This approach has been widely used for Latin American cases but had limitations to explain the highly modernized, but personalist rules like Chile (Remmer, 1989). Overall, such approaches lack institutional dimensions (Perlmutter, 1981).

Recently, different concepts emerged to define the authoritarian regimes with façade-like democratic institutions and procedures (Collier et al., 1997; Schedler, 2002; Levitsky et al., 2002) and new typologies are formed for quantitative studies by Geddes, Hadenius, Teorell, Magaloni, Chu and Min. However, as opposed to theories on democracy, there are rare general theories on autocracy or dictatorship in the literature. Therefore, it has been a conceptual challenge for scholars to classify the current democratic backsliding process because authoritarian regimes are not the same. There are differences among their legitimation process and strategies (von Soest and Grauvogel, 2017, p. 291).

2.3 *The Process of Democratic Backsliding*

Democratic backsliding is called as autocratization, referring to the opposite of democratization (Bermeo, 2016; Lührmann et al., 2019; Cassani, 2014). In autocratized regimes, incumbent:

“...holds elections and tolerate some pluralism and interparty competition but violate democratic norms so severely and systematically that it makes no sense to call them democracies” (Schedler, 2002, p. 36).

Therefore, elected authoritarians keep democratic institutions and the multiparty elections as part of the representative democracy but conceal their authoritarian rule (Diamond, 2002, p. 24). They also limit electoral competitiveness and allow for minimal political pluralism (von Soest et al., 2017, p. 292).

Specifically, the thesis adopts Bermeo (2006)’s definition of democratic backsliding. She emphasizes the state’s role in the process of weakening the democratic institutions and argues that democratic backsliding is legitimized through elections, legislatures and courts (Bermeo, 2016, p. 15). This understanding is in line with the maximalist definition of democracy that the thesis adopts. Similarly, Turkey and Brazil are paradigmatic cases for tracing this state-led erosion of democracy and incremental change of democratic backsliding process rather than a rupture.

Historically, many authoritarian countries have gone through a transitional process for democratic progress since the “third-wave democratization” in the post-Cold War period (Huntington, 1970). Although such a process is still ongoing for some countries, others have left the democratization process and entered into an authoritarian path. Accordingly, Huntington (1970) described three waves of democratization: i) first wave of democratization in today’s advanced democracies between 1828 and 1926 which faced a reverse wave between 1922 and 1945 because of the fascist backlash, ii) second wave of democratization began in the post-WWII era between 1945 and 1960 but faced a reverse wave between 1960 and 1974 because of the rising military tutelage, and iii) the third wave of democratization started in 1974 but faced recent reverse waves in Ecuador, Venezuela, Hungary, Turkey, Poland, Brazil (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019). Arab

Springs were expected to be the fourth wave democracy, but it did not happen because of the failure of such protests in the Middle Eastern dictatorial regimes. However, the latest protests in Hong Kong, Belarus, Chile, Iran, Thai, Myanmar, the U.S (George Floyd protests) and the weakening electoral power of the right-wing populist parties in the West have motivated the global democracy movements in the name of human rights, freedom and democracy.

Third-wave democracies adopted regular, competitive, and multi-party elections. Nevertheless, they often manipulated the elections, repressed the opposition systematically, and failed to meet horizontal accountability. Traditionally, this is applicable for “democracy” while not enough for “liberal democracy” because the latter emphasizes the importance of “independent institutions to protect fundamental human rights” like freedom of speech (Mudde et al., 2017).

Liberalism emerged with the “Enlightenment struggle for the recognition of the rights of individuals” (Scheppelle, 2018, p. 558-9). Therefore, liberal democracy suggests keeping the representatives accountable for their political decisions and guarantees all people's dignity, respect, protection, and liberty through institutional channels (p. 558). In this context, the current regimes are “illiberal democracies” with competitive elections but undermine the rule of law (Diamond et al., 2004, p. 23). Hence, third-wave democracies have been characterized as “hybrid” because of their failure in strengthening the liberal part of democracy and adopting democratic and authoritarian practices at the same time (Cassani, 2014, p. 550).

Since it is a dynamic process, democratization has always been incomplete and had the danger of de-democratization (Tilly, 2007, p. xi). Therefore, there is no perfect democracy (Dahl, 1973). In the beginning, transitioned regimes become “electoral democracies” and pursue not to turn back to their previous authoritarian rule but aim to become a liberal

democracy by establishing free and pluralistic systems. On the other hand, transitioned regimes remain in a grey zone as they are neither authoritarian nor advanced democracies. In the meantime, existing liberal democracies also work for being fully-fledged consolidated democracies (Schedler, 1998, p. 96-9).

Some consider the term, *consolidation*, to have no analytic utility because it is an open-ended concept (Schedler, 1998, pp. 91-107). Still, other scholars like Schmitter (1986), O'Donnell (1994), Linz and Stephan (1996) and Diamond (1999) identified three characteristics to become a fully functioning consolidated democracy: institutional (e.g. independent constitutional order), behavioral (e.g. rule of law) and cultural (active civil society and participation) (Diamond, 1999, p. 20; Linz and Stephan, 1996, pp. 5-6). Some scholars have also attempted to link the international relations studies on democracy with the ones in comparative politics (Kant, 1795; Schmitter, 1996; Whitehead, 2001), while others with empirical concerns tested the most common assumptions in such theoretical studies. For example, Przeworski et. al. (2000) distinguished the consolidated and unconsolidated democracies by questioning the elements that help endurance of a democracy. Generally, results showed that democracies endure more, depending on the extent of their institutionalization and familiarity with the democratic rules and norms.

Considering the unconsolidated democracies, Linz coined the term, "authoritarian regimes" in 1964 and placed them between democracy and totalitarianism. He argued that such regimes mobilize masses with apolitical sentiments rather than exclusive ideology (Linz, 2000). Some studies differentiate the boundaries between authoritarian, hybrid, and democracy regime types (Puhle, 2005) while the typology-based studies examine the factors for the end of authoritarian regimes and the beginning of the democratization process. At the same time, Geddes et al. (2014) classify dictatorships as personalist, monarchic, dominant-party, and military while Diamond (2002) define them as electoral,

competitive, hegemonic electoral, and closed (Frantz, 2018, p. 88). However, such studies show that there is no linear transition model going from authoritarianism to democracy. Literature also uses different adjectives to define the recent authoritarian regime types although such differences limits differentiation among the cases. Accordingly, hybrid political systems are called grey zones (Diamond, 2002; Mufti, 2018), mixed regimes (Cassani, 2014; Riaz, 2019), defective democracies (Bogaards, 2009), competitive authoritarian (Levitsky et al., 2002; Guachalla et al., 2021), new authoritarianism (Somer, 2016), electoral authoritarian (Schedler, 2006); semi-democracy (Linz et al., 1995); semi-authoritarianism (Ottaway, 2003); delegative democracy (O'Donnell, 1994); illiberal democracy (Zakaria, 1997). Those regimes are hybrid because they have both democratic and authoritarian practices. The executive violates the democratic principles to abuse the state power, use a disproportionate media coverage and limit the opposition's actions (Levitsky et al., 2002, p. 53-5). However, elections are held regularly and relatively competitive with the participation of different political candidates (Levitsky et al., 2002, p. 55; Guachalla et al., 2021, p. 65). Additionally, there may be a tutelary interference in these hybrid regimes (Gilbert et al., 2011, p. 284; Dahl, 1989, p. 57). By nature, tutelage contrasts with the democratic view that citizens could understand and defend their interests. Therefore, unelected guardians (e.g. armed forces, courts, bureaucracy) act to protect the interests of the society over the incumbent. Lastly, hybrid regimes never become autocracies at full scale because of the existing opposition (Guachalla et al., 2021, p. 65). However, authoritarian resilience depends on the weak and divided opposition (p. 74). At the same time, such regimes should assure the support of political elites, security forces, and civil society to remain in power (p. 74).

Despite such extensive theories on hybrid regimes, it is still challenging to reach a consensus for scholars over what hybrid regimes are. Likewise, theoretical challenges

exist despite a rich and diverse literature on democratic backsliding. Theoretical debates mainly focus “on the causes of democratic transitions, breakdowns, authoritarian resilience and democratic consolidation” but they have not yet reached a consensus (Waldner et al., 2018). On the other hand, Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) argue that conceptual usage of democratic backsliding could cause conceptual stretching if it is used for authoritarian countries. Their argument suggests that authoritarian countries cannot experience “deeper dictatorship” but a different form of authoritarianism rather than going back to their previous status (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019, p. 1099). Consequently, they suggest using the concept of autocratization (p. 1099). Such literature has created new debates and showed that hybrid regimes, that emerged after the end of the Cold War period, are not sub-types of democracy, but multi-dimensional models (Bogaards, 2009; Gilbert et al., 2011).

Accordingly, this thesis considers how the existing theories might be used to explain the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. Similarly, both countries are in the middle of closed authoritarianism and liberal democracy and experiencing democratic backsliding (Morse, 2011, p. 164). Therefore, the thesis aims to contribute to this line of literature on “democratic backsliding” (Diamond, 2002; Levistky et al., 2002; Shedler, 2002; Howard et al., 2006; Birch, 2011; Simpser, 2013; Norris, 2015, 2017; James et al., 2020).

Generally, literature is divided across the institutional, socio-economic, international and actor-based theoretical perspectives to explain the democratic backsliding. Firstly, scholars argue that some institutional settings could trigger a transition to the authoritarian rule: presidentialism (Linz, 1990; Maeda, 2010), party-system fractionalization in presidential systems (Maxwell et al., 1999; Powell, 2009), majoritarian representation (Reynolds, 2011), absence of autonomous judiciary (Gibler and Randazzo, 2011;

Blauberger and Kelemen, 2017; Bermeo, 2016), fewer restraints on the incumbent (Kapstein et al., 2008), non-consociational institutions in heterogeneous societies (Lijphart, 1977), unstable party systems (Lust et al., 2017); low trust in institutions (Akkerman, Andrej and Bram 2017).

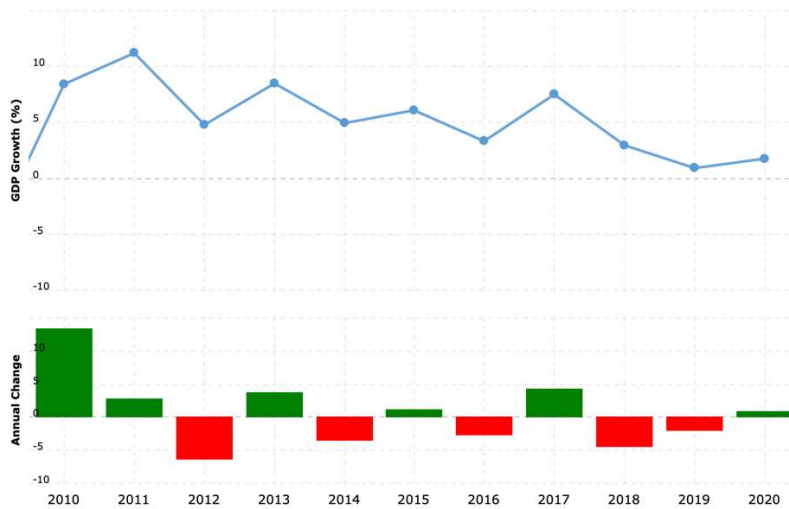
If the people are concerned about a democratic and socio-economic decline, they tend to vote for populist parties (Steenvoorden and Hartevelt, 2018; Bowler et al., 2017). Meanwhile, institutions may not avoid backsliding if societal groups, parliamentarians, judiciaries and independent agencies prefer authoritarianism and shape the institutions accordingly (Waldner et al., 2018, p. 100). This approach is weak to explain the current trajectory of populism and democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil. Contrary to such institutionalist arguments, Turkey was a parliamentary democracy before the democratic backsliding. Thanks to the EU accession process, there was also relatively an independent judiciary, which emphasized judicial reforms. Additionally, comprehensive reforms undertaken after the democratization process in 1984 did not stop Brazil from entering into an authoritarian path today.

Secondly, scholars argue the following socio-economic factors may cause democratic backsliding: low income (Przeworski et al., 1997; Boix et al., 2003; Kapstein et al., 2008), low economic growth (Maeda, 2010), high economic inequality (Acemoglu et al., 2005; Kapstein et al., 2008), oil income (Ross, 2001; Haber et al., 2011), gender inequality (Fish, 2002), absence of civic culture (Inglehart et al., 2005), ethnic divisions (Bates, 1974, Rabushka et al., 1972), polarization (Haggard et al., 2021; Svolik, 2019); inequality (Aleman et al., 2011). This literature is closely linked with populism literature which also highlights the importance of economic anxiety and discontent because of the rising income inequality, low wages, job insecurities in the growing backlash against globalization and the emergence of populism (Ignazi, 2003; Kriesi et al. 2008; Spruyt et

al., 2016; Guiso et al. 2017; Rooduijn et al., 2017; Rodrik 2018; van Hauwaert et al., 2018; Rico et al., 2019). Scholars emphasizing cultural and socio-psychological factors also link their studies to the traditional values of the past generation, the illiterate and male voters in the West (Spruyt et al., 2016; Rico et al., 2017; Rooduijn et al., 2017; van Hauwaert et al., 2018; Inglehart et al., 2019).

Studies show that voters evaluate politicians based on performance (Lenz, 2009; Singer 2018). Such factors are also related to the performance legitimacy of the regime (Haggard et al., 2021). For example, a low level of economic growth makes the incumbent more vulnerable to “exogenous threats” (Maeda, 2010) while oil income decreases the regime’s accountability because of decreasing its dependency on taxation (Ross, 2001). Additionally, elites tend to oppose the redistributive policies through democratic channels in countries with high inequality (Acemoglu et al., 2005). To apply this second approach into the case studies, both Turkey and Brazil had favorable socio-economic factors when falling into authoritarianism. However, research shows that inequality does not play a critical role in recent democratic backsliding cases (Waldner et al., 2018, p. 107). Furthermore, studies on rentier states fail to show the difference between oil rents’ role on democratic transition and backsliding (Smith, 2017; Waldner et al., 2018). It is also a question mark whether political culture cause democratic backsliding on its own (Waldner et al., 2018). Moreover, it is challenging to reach generalized conclusions because the studies rely on many intervening variables (Waldner et al., 2018, p. 103).

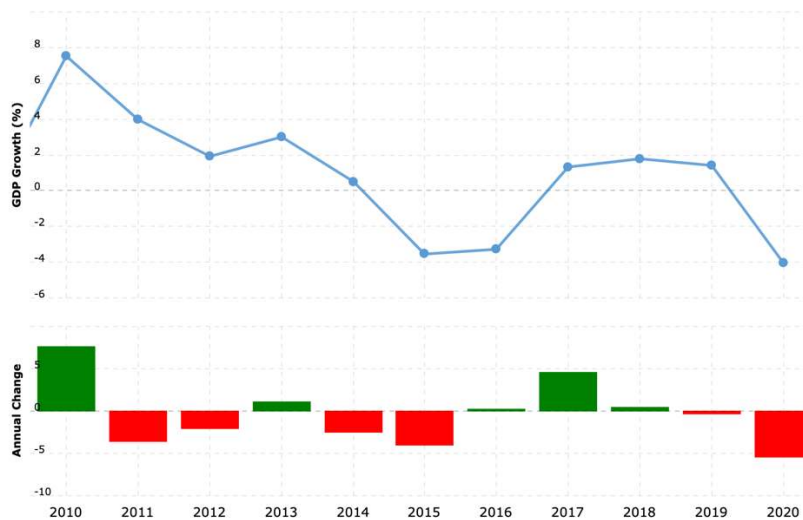
Figure 7: GDP Growth Rate in Turkey (2010-2020)



Source: World Bank. GDP Growth Rate, Turkey. Retrieved on Feb. 10, 2022, from, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TUR/Turkey/gdp-growth-rate>

When the democratic backsliding started in 2010 with a constitutional referendum, the GDP growth rate was annually 8.43% in Turkey (see Figure 7). In Brazil, the GDP growth rate was also 1.78 % annually when Bolsonaro became the President (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: GDP Growth Rate in Brazil (2010-2020)



Source: World Bank. GDP Growth Rate, Brazil. Retrieved on Feb. 10, 2022, from, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TUR/Turkey/gdp-growth-rate>

Thirdly, scholars also argue that low level of Western leverage and relationships (Levitsky et al., 2002, 2010), dependence on foreign aid (Acemoglu et al., 2005; Djankov et al., 2008), membership in international institutions (Levitz and Pop-Eleches, 2010), the

increasing influence of autocracies like China and Russia (Diamond, 2015), international monitoring of elections (Hyde, 2007), international environment (Hyde, 2020), threats to credible international election monitoring (Kelley, 2012) may cause democratic backsliding. It is challenging to reach generalizable arguments about international factors because the influence of international factors may also vary from one country to another (Waldner et al., 2018, p. 106). International factors play a critical role if studied in relation to domestic factors (p. 106). For example, Western leverage was much more visible in the initial years of AKP, considering its geographical closeness to the West and the critical membership in international institutions like the NATO and Council of Europe. EU accession process also paved the way for democratic reforms, starting with the incumbency of the current regime in 2002. Still, Turkey could not escape from sliding into the authoritarian path.

Fourthly, the actor-based approach focuses on political actors (Linz, 1978; Capoccia, 2005; Lührmann, 2021; Haggard et al., 2021) and the authoritarian leaders' commitment to radical policies in place of the democratic principles (Mainwaring et al., 2013). Authoritarian leaders mobilize the groups with grievances to rise to power. Their ideological affiliation can make leaders unsympathetic to democracy (Wellhofer, 2003; Fukuyama, 2006). Additionally, scholars study the role of the actors in third-wave transitions based on leaders' attributes (Linz, 1978) and "strategic decision-making and interaction of groups in the government and the opposition" (O'Donnell et al., 1986; Capoccia, 2005). However, such accounts lack structural dimensions like political institutions and culture which could affect the actor-based approach in explaining democratic backsliding (Waldner et al., 2018, p. 97). Notably, political institutions may affect the vertical and horizontal accountability, government performance by avoiding political deadlock and thereby providing justification for anti-democratic actions (p. 99).

For example, if institutions do not pressure authoritarian leaders, democratic backsliding is unescapable (Fish, 2001; Van de Walle, 2003). Alternatively, the cultural transitions from the secular and democratic values in modern societies (Inglehart et al., 2005), and the struggle between pro-democratic citizens and anti-democratic elites (Berman, 1997) may affect democratic backsliding.

Consequently, the leader factor is important to explain the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. However, such a process is multidimensional. On its own, the four-fold approach could not fully explain the recent authoritarian populist consolidation process in Turkey and Brazil. Still, adopting a shared analytical framework is important which the thesis pursues with a comprehensive approach.

2.4 Relationship Between Democratic Backsliding and Populism

Democratic backsliding literature can be linked with populism studies (Ágh, 2019; McMath, 2008). Therefore, this section discusses how populism can turn into authoritarianism and in the end undermine democracies. When coupled with democratic backsliding, populism helps explain actions taken by the current incumbents of Turkey and Brazil to remain in power because populism provides ideological justification for democratic backsliding. Populism embraces the democratic notion of the representation of the people, but its authoritarian core emerges with the demand for a strong leadership and rejection of the rule of law. Hence, authoritarianism becomes a defining component of populism. Authoritarian aspect of the populism is manifested in the hierarchical conception of power and the centralization of power at the hands of the government. For the populists, democratic institutions restrain executive power excessively and prevent the state's ability to act on behalf of the people. Therefore, populist understanding

becomes a challenge to the liberal democratic governance because once authoritarian populists become the incumbent, they pursue executive aggrandizement and undermine checks and balances (Carrión, 2022), curtail political and civil liberties (Houle and Kenny, 2018) and change the rules of the game (Carrión, 2022; Liddiard, 2019).

Populists is a threat from the perspective of liberal democracy because the latter relies on popular sovereignty, pluralism and independent institutions to protect the fundamental rights of all citizens (Casal et al., 2021, p. 39). Populists support the unconstrained popular sovereignty and oppose the democratic value of pluralism (Meyer, 2022, p. 7) because pluralism means recognizing different groups in the society. Populism therefore believes in a society with homogenous people (p. 7). Populists tend to divide the society between “us” and “them” and demonize the opposition (Barr, 2009, p. 39; Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 195). Populists claim that the opposition does not belong to the people. Müller identifies this understanding as “populism is not ‘we are the 99%’; it is: ‘we are the 100%’” (Müller, 2015, p. 85). For example, populists see the opposition as the “enemy” and the corrupt elites who cannot fulfill the demands of the pure people and therefore disregard their opinion. For example, in Brazil, Bolsonaro criticized *petistas*, PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores, The Workers' Party in Brazil) as “the corrupt elites” and put them responsible for the economic difficulties, corruption and spreading the “communist” ideology to weaken the traditional family values (Akgemci, 2022, p.43). He said:

“It’s us and PT: It’s the Brazil green and yellow, and them, representing Cuban and Venezuelan government, with their red flag. Let’s change Brazil!” (p.43)

In Turkey, the opposition parties are also called as enemies:

“It is not possible for us to consider the HDP as a legitimate political actor. CHP is also siding with the enemies of Turkey, including terrorist organizations. What they are doing can never be called opposition. It can only be called ignominiousness”¹⁹.

To understand the move and the process towards authoritarian populism in Turkey and Brazil, it is thus relevant to outline the literature on populism because the respective regimes are populists as they are experiencing autocratization (Meyer, 2022; Kyle et al., 2018).

2.4.1 *Populism Studies*

Scholarly interest on populism firstly emerged in the 1950s to analyze the 1930s' ideological and populist movements of Perón in Argentina, Vargas in Brazil, and Cárdenas in Mexico (Grigera, 2017, pp. 442, 443). Since the 1990s, populism has significantly grown in Latin America and Europe. In particular, the 2008 crisis was a critical juncture for Europe and caused a populist backlash from “losers” of the globalization with the claims on anti-immigration and economic difficulties (Scrinzi, 2017; Teperoglou and Tsatsanis, 2011; Jasiewicz, 2008; Ost, 2018; Börzel and Risse, 2018; Hunger et al., 2021). The second wave on populist studies was therefore centered on the neoliberal populism of the 1990s (p. 442). In the 2000s, studies' focus shifted to the “Pink Tide of governments”.

Today, research on populism is widespread across several disciplines. However, there is no systematic outline of this massive research field which causes the emergence of a divided field (Hunger et al., 2021, p. 2; Stavrakakis et al., 2017; Mudde et al., 2017, p. 17). Therefore, populism is considered vague and “refers in different contexts to a bewildering variety of phenomena” (Canovan, 1981, p. 3). Methodologically, populism studies are also analyzed in qualitative and quantitative methods (Hunger et al., 2021, p. 3). Those studying the cases in Global South mainly use qualitative methods, while others studying Western countries and radical-right wing populism tend to use quantitative methods. However, such different approaches obstruct reaching generalizable findings

for populism. As a result, scholars cannot reach a consensus on the concept of populism (Ionescu et al., 1969; Taggart, 2000). In line with that, this section contains a selection of scholarly literature that reflects all these significant aspects of populism.

Accordingly, populism studies can be divided into four realms based on the populism definitions. Firstly, many scholars tend to define it as “a thin-centered ideology” (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017; Zaslove et al., 2021; Ignazi 2003; Betz and Immerfall 1998; Hainsworth 2000; Stanley, 2008; Hawkins et al., 2019; Müller, 2015; Aslanidis, 2016; Hawkins et al., 2019; Bonikowski et al., 2019; Rooduijn, 2019; Barr, 2009). Populism has “a specific set of ideas”, and differs from the “classical ideologies such as fascism and liberalism, because it has a limited programmatic scope”. (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 1669). Populism is not considered as a regime type like democracy and authoritarianism but studied as a “host ideology” (Art, 2020, p. 10). Some scholars therefore focus on the relationship between populism and its host ideologies (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 17; Rooduijn, 2019, p. 365–7). The thesis also relies on this ideational approach because it allows comparing two regionally distant cases of populism (Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 196) with different host ideologies: Islamist populism in Turkey and pro-military right-wing populism in Brazil as a country with historical left-wing political trajectory.

This ideational approach contributed to unifying the research field on populism (Hunger et al., 2021, p. 3). In relation to Mudde’s populism definition (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 1669), it is also defined as (Hunger et al., 2022) a “communication phenomenon” (de Vreese et al., 2018), “discursive frame” (Aslanidis, 2016), “framing device” (Bonikowski et al., 2019), “worldview” (Hawkins, 2009), and “communication style” (Brubaker, 2017).

However, the regional focus of this approach only covers the European countries. Methodologically, they study right-wing populist parties, party manifestos and party ideologies (Buzalka, 2018; Afonso, 2015). Populism is studied based on the ideas of personalist leaders, political parties and social movements and therefore it enables scholars to study populism at the demand side: “role of populist ideas in electoral behavior” (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 1671). Mudde and Kaltwasser argue that populism separates society into two moral camps: the pure, homogeneous people and the corrupt, betrayal elites (Mudde, 2004, p. 543; Mudde et al., 2013, p. 150; Mudde et al., 2017, p. 6). Based on this approach, populists consider politics as the “expression of the general will of the people” (Mudde et al., 2017, p. 6). Müller argues that the people consist of “all members of the polity”, the “common people” or the “excluded”, the “forgotten” and the “nation” in a “cultural” sense (Müller, 2015, p. 81). However, he admits that despite such understandings, populists consider “only a part of the people” as “the people” (p. 81). Hence, populism is considered anti-pluralist. This approach defines populism as a discourse, an ideology, a worldview that could change a political system to either democracy or authoritarianism. However, the extent of populist influence relies on the political power of populist forces and the type of political system.

Secondly, populism is considered as a social discourse (Laclau, 2005; Mouffe, 2018; Stavrakakis et al., 2017; Palonen, 2018; de La Torre 2017; Panizza, 2005; Knott, 2016; Hawkins et al., 2019; Devinney et al., 2020; Eklund, 2021; Katsambekis et al., 2018). This normative approach mainly focuses on the antagonism between “us” and “them” and the constitution of social identities at the political movements. Methodologically, scholars have a textual focus. They believe that the left-populist movement can initiate emancipatory politics and mobilize the excluded groups. In this context, there is an antagonism between the two groups because of the unsatisfied demands of the one group

against the enemy. Considering that populism in power has an organizational, mobilizational and clientelist relationship with its voter base, analyzing the discursive strategies may underestimate the influence of such factors in Turkey.

Thirdly, populism is considered as a political performance (Mazzoleni, 2008; Moffitt, 2017; Weyland, 2001; Barr, 2009; Urbaniti, 2019; Aiolfi, 2022; Malová and Dolný, 2016). Methodological focus is on the leaders' political styles, demeanor, accents, ways of speaking, dressing, etc. Therefore, such scholars take visual discourse seriously. They focus on populist leadership and actions and rely mostly on the unorganized support base. Their regional focus is Latin America, Europe and Oceania. Compared to the first two types of populism understandings, this leader-centered approach focuses more on the direct relationship between the leaders and the supporters in elections, rallies, media, and opinion polls. Therefore, it is not ideology-oriented compared to the first two ideational approaches. Rather, scholars highlight authoritarian tendencies in populist leaders and how they exercise power in a pragmatic way (Germani, 1978; Taggart, 2000). Populists see the fulfilment of the common will with the guidance of a charismatic leader. With successful election performances, the charismatic leaders take control over the key positions of the state and emerge as the single leaders of the ruling party and the government. They show themselves as "outsiders" to the political system to gain the support of the voters who feel isolated from the existing politicians and the parties (Weyland, 2009, p. 38). Those charismatic populist leaders pursue to rule with the duty to transform the nation in an opportunistic and rationalist manner (Weyland, 2021; Germani, 1978; Taggart, 2000; Barr, 2009). Those approaches have the analytical leverage in studying authoritarian populist leaders in Turkey and Brazil and help to theorize leader polarizations. However, despite such charismatic leaders' role in

populism, established and institutionalized parties are also significant in the emergence and consolidation process of authoritarian populism as in the case of Turkey.

Fourthly, populism is studied in relation to democracy (Canovan, 1981; Ardit, 2004; Panizza, 2005; Berrios et al., 2011; Levitsky et al., 2013; Bray, 2015; Aslanidis, 2016; Saffon et al., 2017; Barros, 2020). Methodological focus is primarily on political theory while there is no clear regional focus in such studies.

Consequently, four approaches emphasize different aspects of populism. Recent years witnessed the rise of right-wing populist movements in many regions around the world thanks to the strong electoral support (Mudde, 2013; Chase-Dunn et al., 2019; Fraser, 2021; Kumral, 2022). However, right-wing populism has mostly been studied in Europe and the US (Kumral, 2022). This bias on the Western cases causes the emphasis on the role of neoliberal globalization, income inequality and the alienation of the working class from the center parties in explaining how the right-wing populist movements emerged (Mian et al., 2014; Judis, 2016; Hobolt et al., 2016; Rodrik, 2018; Scoones et al., 2021; Fraser, 2021; Kumral, 2022). In addition to such economic explanations, studies emphasize the cultural sentiments and anti-pluralism against political opposition and ethnic, racial and religious minority identities (Rodrik, 2018; Chase-Dunn et al., 2019; Inglehart et al., 2019; Kumral, 2022). However, right-wing populist movements emerged during the economic growth in the emerging economies of the Global South (Kumral, 2022, p. 2). Therefore, studies on the Global South could offer insights into different socio-cultural and economic contexts because neoliberal globalization and inequalities have different impacts on the emergence of right-wing populist movements in the Global North and the Global South (Kumral, 2022). As a contribution to this literature, this thesis compares the right-wing populism and authoritarianism in two different regions: Brazil in Latin America and Turkey in Eastern Europe. Comparing different regions and

ideological forms of populism is important to reach more reliable conclusions in such literature (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 17–8). This framework also allows us to understand the extent of the consolidation of authoritarian populism and connect it with the literature on the relationship between democratic backsliding and right-wing populism. Therefore, the thesis embraces a comparative methodological approach and studies the Latin American and European region in the cases of Turkey and Brazil. Such a strategy also helps us refine the prevailing accounts about the relationship between democratic backsliding and the rise of right-wing populism (Kumral, 2022).

Specifically, the thesis uses the concept of “authoritarian populism” to study the consolidation process of current regimes in Turkey and Brazil (Hall, 1978; Jessop et al., 1984). Based on the literature on populism, the thesis considers “authoritarian populism” a degraded version of democracy that embraces the idea of regular elections but opposes the liberal dimension of democracy (Finchelstein, 2014; Pappas, 2019; Kornai, 2016). Authoritarian populists attempt to demolish the system of checks and balances and disrespect political pluralism apart from their populist traits of the presence of a charismatic leader and an extensive constituency (Ádám, 2018, p. 7). However, populists in power always face confrontations although they aim to win the struggle against the anti-populists thanks to their public support and coalitions with the business, bureaucracy, civil society, judiciary, parliamentarians, and the military. In that case, they pursue consolidating their regime to stay in power. As a result, this creates a power asymmetry between the excessive power of the executive and the opposition, thereby causes democratic backsliding, or in the most extreme scenario, a regime change. Based on this framework, the next chapters trace the historical background behind democratization in Turkey and Brazil and the democratic backsliding in the last decade.

CHAPTER 3:

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN TURKEY AND BRAZIL

From a comparative perspective, this chapter aims to propose institutional and ideological factors to explain historical trajectories of democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil because the starting point of such process was different for both countries. Accordingly, the chapter is divided into three sections to discuss the institutional and ideological foundations that led to a path towards democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade (Table 2). Finally, the last section of the chapter reviews and compares the nature and the historical dynamics of democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil.

Table 2: Historical Comparison Between Turkey and Brazil

Institutional Foundations	Turkey	Brazil
Political System	• Parliamentary democracy and unitary state (1923-2018) • Presidential system with lower checks and balances (2018-present)	• Presidentialism with stronger check and balances • Federalism with strong power of states
Influence of Military as the Traditional Source of Authoritarianism in the Legislature, Judiciary and Bureaucracy	• Oscillations of democracy and authoritarianism because of military interruptions (1960, 1980 coups, 1971 and 1997 military memoranda, 2007 e-memorandum, 2016 coup attempt) • Indirect and continuous influence of the military in the legislature and bureaucracy	• Oscillations of democracy and authoritarianism because of military interruptions (1964-1985) • Direct influence of military and end of the military role in the politics in the post 1984 politics (till the rise of ex-military officer Bolsonaro)
Economic Development Trajectories and Neo-patrimonial Network Built Between Government, NGOs, Media and Business Groups	• Prolonged ISI, • Strong commitment to neoliberal reforms after the ISI crisis (1980s) • High profile corruption • Weak power of labor unions (the second worst minimum wage in the world)	• Prolonged ISI, • Liberal developmentalism after the ISI crisis (1990s) and weak commitment to neoliberal rules • Welfare state and social assistance policies (Bolsa Familia) • High profile corruption scandals • Strong power of labor unions but low wages (the third worst minimum wage in the world)
Ideological Foundations	Turkey	Brazil
Major Nature of Cleavages	• Left vs. Right • Secularism vs. Political Islam • Ethnicity (Kurds vs. Turks)	• Left vs. Right • Persistent inequality ▪ Increasing rural-urban inequality and violence in urban slums and rural areas

		▪ Regional inequalities between the North and the South ▪ Racial (Afro Brazilians vs. Whites)
Ideological Spectrums	• Center-right and conservative party trajectory • Being ruled by an authoritarian populist rule for over 20 years--undisrupted authoritarian populist rule	• Stronger leftist trajectory--Leftist populist governments of the PT strengthened democratic institutions

A comparative historical perspective is important to analyze the effect of history, culture, institutions, economy, rules, and state structures on the relationship between agency and the structures and the future course of events shaping the path dependence at critical juncture points. Therefore, this chapter provides an overview of the historical background of the institutional and ideological foundations of democratic backsliding process in Turkey and Brazil before analyzing the last decade in Chapter 4. The aim is to see the similarities and differences in the two countries' authoritarian populist drifts, with a focus on the post-1980 period.

3.1 Institutional Foundations of Democratic Backsliding

This section examines the historical foundations of institutional conditions for democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil with a focus on the post-1980 period. It highlights political system, the role of military, and economic development in historical trajectories of Turkey and Brazil that led to a path towards democratic backsliding.

Even prior to the 1980 period, the two countries had similar political reform plans. Turkey and Brazil took modernization initiatives at the beginning of the 20th century (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 16). The emphasis on the concept, *progress*, was of vital importance for both countries although they failed in completing a Western-model modernization process. During the late years of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey (1879-1923) and the First Brazilian Republic (1889-1930), the two countries had lack of resources and expertise (p. 17). Therefore, they primarily relied on the non-programmatic reforms on the state

institutions (p. 17). Only under the leadership of Atatürk in Turkey and Vargas in Brazil, they managed to launch extensive reform programs (p. 17). Next sections compare Turkey and Brazil with a concentration on their political, economic and ideological trajectories after such reform initiatives in the early 20th century.

3.1.1 Political System

From a historical perspective, political system can be compared in four dimensions for Turkey and Brazil: form of government, power of the independent institutions over the executive control, party institutionalization and constitutional amendments.

Firstly, Brazil has presidential system and federalism with stronger checks and balances and power of states. Compared to Brazil, Turkey is a unitary state and had parliamentary democracy since 1923. However, after 2016 coup attempt, Turkey adopted presidential system with lower checks and balances.

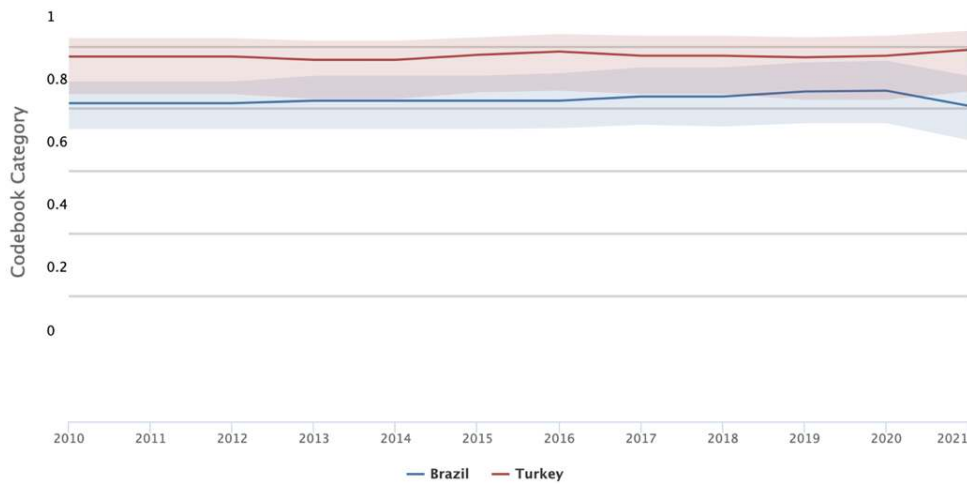
Secondly, existence of relatively independent institutions for checks and balances helps the resilience of Brazilian democracy today. For example, Bolsonaro targets the Supreme Court in his campaigns and accuses judges based on their ideological and partisan behavior²⁰. However, independence of Brazilian high court officials limits President Bolsonaro in terms of the rule of law compared to the Constitutional Court in Turkey. Therefore, Brazil has relatively independent control mechanisms like the judiciary, the media and civil society organizations. For example, the interim government of Temer governed the country for 180 days during President Rousseff's trials. They firstly connected the Ministry of Women, Equality, and Human Rights (whose powers were expanded during Rousseff's term) to the Ministry of Justice. They also opposed abortion and gave the management of the Ministry of Science and Technology to an Evangelist. At the same time, first steps were taken to deepen austerity policies and suspend social

programs. However, protests overturned such decisions. Another example is the Brazilian Supreme Court's dismissal of the Parliament speaker Eduardo Cunha who played a leading role in the overthrow of President Rousseff. Cunha was a conservative politician and accused of transferring millions of money to secret bank accounts in Switzerland and hindering the investigations against him.

Existence of independent media has also played a role in the historical foundations of a resistant democracy in Brazil. For example, Temer's Minister of Planning, Romero Jucá, was under the investigation because of a leaked recording of high-ranking anti-PT politicians. His remarks against the Lava Jato investigation published in the country's largest non-PT supporter newspaper, *Folha de S. Paulo*. During that time, another recording was broadcast on the country's largest television channel, *O Globo*. In that recording, Fabiano Silvera, whom Temer appointed as a minister for transparency and anti-corruption, advises the head of the Senate on how to break away from the Petrobras investigation. As a result, pressured by the release of the recordings, the Temer government was forced to dismiss both Jucá and Silvera after the protests because such incidences questioned the legitimacy of the interim government.

Thirdly, Brazil has a fragmented party system which weakens an institutionalized and organized party network behind an authoritarian populist rule. In this sense, the Brazilian regime is based on a leader cult like *Bolsanorismo* or *Lulismo* as political movements, independent from a political party. Nonetheless, the leftist populist party, the PT, has rather a stronger party network in Brazil and managed to create a party ideology as *petismo*. V-Dem data also confirms higher party institutionalization in Turkey.

Figure 9: Party Institutionalization in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

V-Dem data defines party institutionalization based on the level and depth of organization, relationship with the civil society, party cadres, supporters and coherence of party ideology. Accordingly, Figure 9 shows a linear change for party institutionalization in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. However, Turkey has a higher score on party institutionalization while Brazilian score declined further in the last few years. Hence, the current authoritarian populism in Brazil is better grasped by the notion of a “leader cult” rather than a “movement”. From a comparative perspective, Turkey’s current authoritarian populist trajectory does not solely focus on a leader cult compared to the mainstream literature. AKP emerged from the cadres of moderate Islam and had already a strong party organization. This political party institutionalization behind the AKP incumbent paved the way for constitutional amendments and democratic backsliding in Turkey. Historically therefore, the current regime in Turkey relies on a political tradition. For example, in the 1980s, ANAP (Anavatan Partisi, Motherland Party) opened the way for Islamist political parties to gain seats in the parliament, empowered Islamist organizations through certain economic privileges and legitimized the “presence of Islam in daily life” (Kütükoğlu, 2021). Economically, extracting

revenues, bribes, and government contracts were used to obtain the support of business and cultural/religious elites and created the path towards neoliberal statism in the 1980s in Turkey.

Fourthly, in the post-2016 period, constitutional amendments reinforced the executive control over the political institutions. For example, such changes caused a comprehensive rearrangement of the judiciary because they provided the parliament and the president extensive control over the structure of the Constitutional Court (Musil, 2021). Back in 2010, AKP proposed a referendum to change the constitution to avoid parliamentary stalemates in the future for the election of the president (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 248; Musil, 2021, p. 17). Thanks to the constitutional achievements in the referendum, presidents would be elected by popular vote. The governing party also got the power to restructure the judiciary and weaken the judicial power at the expense of the legislative and executive (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 249). In 2016, the coup attempt caused the declaration of the state of emergency rule and increased executive aggrandizement further because it was renewed five times and Turkey was ruled only by decree at this time. To obtain support for the constitutional amendments, AKP formed new coalitions with the far-right nationalist party, MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Nationalist Movement Party in Turkey) and the Gülenists' rival religious order, Naqshbandi Sufis (Çakır, 2014; Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 255). As a result, with the 2017 Constitutional Referendum, Turkey "transitioned from parliamentary to the presidential system" (Borsuk et al., 2022). Amendments in the laws introduced extensive institutional changes. Authoritarianism was visible in the suppression of protests, oppression of protesters and journalists, weakening role of the parliament and judiciary over the executive.

3.1.2 Influence of Military as the Traditional Source of Authoritarianism in the Legislature, Judiciary and Bureaucracy

Turkey and Brazil had oscillations of democracy and authoritarianism in their political trajectories because of military interruptions. Brazil experienced direct military rule. However, military influence ended after democratization process in 1984. Currently, armed forces increased their influence in the politics thanks to the presidency of ex-military officer, Bolsonaro who appointed military personnel to various bureaucracy and political positions. In comparison, Turkey had indirect and continuous influence of the military despite having short-term military interruptions in its political history.

Prior to the 1980s

In 1950, the first free, fair, and multiparty elections were held in Turkey. The populist DP (Demokrat Parti, Democrat Party in Turkey) became the incumbent whose members were the former members of CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Republican People's Party in Turkey). DP won three consecutive elections and formed majoritarian governments (Hale, 1994, pp. 88–89). There was an economic growth during the first years of the DP. However, it waned in 1955 because the Marshal aid was already running out. Some claimed that this stems from DP's policies of cronyism and nepotism as they distributed the resources to their supporters with the aim of only winning the next elections (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 334–35). However, DP said to respond to the people's demands by initiating compulsory religion classes in public schools, closing the secular Republican village institutes (Köy Enstitüleri), changing the language of Turkish call-to-prayer into Arabic, censoring the press, forming a patriotic front to restrain further the opposition (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 338–39). Meanwhile, the secular military-bureaucracy circle considered such actions as a threat against the Republic's founding principles (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 338–39). As a result, the first military intervention of Turkey ended the DP government in

1960 because the military considered that it would be less likely to overthrow DP in the next elections. Military acted by a secularist reaction against the right-wing and conservative DP.

After the military intervention, general elections took place in 1961 as promised by the military. The new government established a progressive and liberal constitution as it put institutional checks over the elected incumbent and assured proportional representation to create an opportunity for the parties to cooperate and negotiate to win a governing majority in the parliament (Lewis, 2007, p. 17; Kalaycıoğlu, 2005, p. 94; Zürcher, 1994, pp. 259-70).

The post-1960 period paved the way for social movements and left-wing activism in Turkey and gave voice to people coming from different political spectrums. Nonetheless, this period created political instability because of the military tutelage and the emergence of coalition governments with the new constitution, rising street clashes between different ideological groups, and external pressures. Firstly, military tutelage continued in Turkey (Somer, 2016, p. 4; Howard, 2016). The new constitution allowed the establishment of a bicameral legislative system with a parliament and a senate (Hale, 1994, p. 137). The Senate clearly showed the military's tutelary position in politics although it was closed after the 1980 coup and had limited power by not having the vote of confidence in calling interpellation (pp. 137-8). The Senate's members were mainly appointed by the President, and they were mainly the former military generals (pp. 137-38). Therefore, the military continued to stay in politics after the 1961 general elections.

Secondly, nationalist and right-wing factions also emerged at this period to oppose such "secular" policies and the "communist threat". This intensified the political instability. Gradually, conservatism became more hostile with street clashes between the armed factions of rightists and leftists. Such right-wing reaction was also materialized in the

formation of political parties. For example, grey-wolves (Bozkurtlar) emerged as an alt-right nationalist movement, formed against the leftists on the streets under the leadership of a former military officer, Alparslan Türkeş, who had played a role in the 1960 coup (Elçi, 2014, p. 57). In the 1970s, an Islamist party, MNP (Milli Nizam Partisi, National Order Party in Turkey), was also formed based on the criticisms of the Republic, its founding principles, military, and secularism (Ahmad, 1993). As a result, the 1960 coup further deepened the conservative opposition to the top-down modernization. In 1971, a military memorandum was issued to form an “apolitical” government in the face of ideological, radical, and revolutionary terror ruling the streets because the polarized and short-lived coalition governments could not stop the “terror”.

Thirdly, the global political environment also increased the challenges in domestic politics considering the oil crisis in 1973, which further increased inflation and put double pressure on the economy during the post-Cyprus operation. However, the “apolitical government” could not help solving the political and financial crisis, which led to the 1980 coup and opened a new chapter in Turkey's political history.

In the meantime, direct military rule started in Brazil in 1964 and lasted until 1985. Only in 1974, Brazil took the first steps to democratize and liberalize during the military-led authoritarian regime because the Geisel government endorsed open elections. Opposition candidates took this opportunity to campaign on television, radio and newspapers. As a result, military-supported candidates lost the elections. In 1984, a political mobilization started in Brazil for the direct election of a democratic president. Consequently, democratization process only started with the indirect elections in 1985 in Brazil. Electoral assembly chose Neves as the president of Brazil.

Compared to the weakening power of the military in the Brazilian politics with the end of direct military rule, the post 1980 period in Turkey witnessed undemocratic arrests of

many people and tortures while newspapers were closed, and civil societies and trade unions were oppressed. Military directly ruled Turkey only for three years. General elections were held in 1983 and the new constitution came into force earlier than Brazil in 1982. Compared to 1961 Constitution, 1982 constitution was stricter in terms of the civil liberties and allowed the military to play an arbitrator role in the politics (Hale, 1994, p. 256; Özbudun and Yazıcı, 2004, pp. 35-37).

The Post-1980 Period

In 1988, the promulgation of the new Brazilian democratic constitution included critical chapters over the welfare state, social development, and equality compared to Turkey's neoliberal economic development trajectory. Post-military rule and democratization process also allowed Brazilian leftist political formations to expand the voter base and eventually secure the presidency and seats in the parliament in 2002. In comparison, leftist political organizations are weakened in the post-1980 period of Turkey. Coming to 1990, democratic transition was accomplished in Brazil as Collor de Mello became the first directly elected democratic president. Particularly, with the presidency of Cardoso, Brazilian democracy began to stabilize its democracy and economics in the late 1990s. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed various initiatives for democratization in Turkey and Brazil. Gradually, the activities of civil society organizations (Bianchi, 1977), and the number of media channels increased. However, both countries have never been fully consolidated liberal democracies because of the existing tutelary democratic elements (Sarfati, 2017, p. 398).

Compared to Brazil, Turkey also experienced two military interruptions in the 2000s while the 1980s created a new era for Brazil focusing on democratization, democratic constitution, social development and justice (Weyland, 1997). Accordingly, Turkey's current authoritarian populism is unique because such regimes usually attempt to pursue

authoritarian politics in their initial years. However, the authoritarian populist party, AKP in Turkey emerged as a pluralist, democratic, neoliberal party in the first years of its incumbency (Musil, 2021, p. 3). Domestic politics also allowed AKP to underline the importance of democratization at the expense of the military's control in the political arena. However, the 2007 elections were a critical juncture for the AKP regime and Turkey's current authoritarian populist trajectory. In 2007, the military gave an e-memorandum after the presidential candidacy of Abdullah Gül, who was among the four leading founders of AKP. After this military threat, AKP won the snap elections for a second term in 2007 and further consolidated its political power to challenge the military (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 248).

In the meantime, AKP escaped from the Constitutional Court's closure cases for its anti-secular policies in 2008 (Musil, 2021, p. 17). As a result, AKP allied with the religious Gülenist movement to purge the secular nationalist cadres in the police, media, military, bureaucracy, and civil society. AKP had connections with this movement, as it owned various schools, businesses, and media organizations in Turkey and worldwide (Fitzgerald, 2017). This connection paved the way for AKP to use Gülenists' cadres to increase executive aggrandizement over economy, media, bureaucracy, police force, and the judiciary (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 247). With this policy, Gülenists became the new officers in the purged positions (Akkoyunlu, 2021, p. 249; Bekmen et al., 2014, pp. 68). Such purges also allowed the incumbent to put the military under control, but they weakened civil rights and liberal democratic reforms at the same time.

Thanks to the coalition with the religious Gülenist network, Turkey's current regime infiltrated the "state bureaucracy against the military-bureaucratic establishment" (Musil, 2021). They started Ergenekon and Balyoz investigations over the alleged coup attempts (Musil, 2021). This was also the starting point for democratic backsliding, considering

the massive purges against the opposing bureaucrats in the judiciary and military as of 2008. Journalists, academics, and military officers were put on trial in this period.

However, the coalition between AKP and the Gülenists ended because of the increasing rivalry and got further tense with a Gülenist-led criminal investigation against AKP officials and its close circle in 2013 (p. 255). Gülenists are accused of forming a “parallel state” and penetrating into the key institutions like police, bureaucracy and the judiciary. As a result, AKP suppressed the case and rapidly purged the Gülenists from the state institutions, especially after the failed coup attempt by the Gülenist military officers in July 2016 (p. 255). This was a watershed moment for the civilian political control over the military in Turkey (Rebecca Schiff, 2012; Haugom, 2019; Pope, 2017).

Consequently, democracy has been interrupted several times in Turkey and Brazil by coups during the 20th century. Civil-military relations have always been problematic due to the political desires of the military in both countries. From a comparative perspective, Brazil experienced direct military rule in 1964 to overthrow the President, João Goulart (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 17). However, Turkey's armed forces had rather a guardianship role. They indirectly continued to influence politics through the constitutional changes, made after the short-term military interventions in 1960, 1971, and 1980 (p. 17). Apart from 2016 failed coup attempt, Turkey had also three failed coup attempts in 1962 and 1963, one indirect military intervention in 1997, and one military memorandum in 2007. The coups in 1960 and 1980 promised return to democracy once the order in the economy, internal security and politics is guaranteed by the military. Accordingly, military transferred power to the civilian politicians and held elections in short periods. As to Turkey's shorter cycles of military interventions, Brazil witnessed longer years of direct military rule (Harig, 2021). Nonetheless, compared to Brazil, military continued its role

in the politics of Turkey (Demirel, 2005; Huntington, 2009). Civilian control over the military has been weak and fragile until 2009 in Turkey.

Military was the key factor in democratic backsliding of Turkey because of its continuous influence in the aftermath of coups. Only after the resilience against the coup attempt in 2016, military's role over the politics started to decline and further increased the executive aggrandizement in Turkey. Such continuity of indirect military control in Turkey stemmed from the military's active role in international military affairs, existing sizeable army and the budget in Turkey because of the geographically conflictual regional politics compared to peaceful regional environment in Brazil. Even after the failed coup attempt in 2016, militarism has continued in Turkey through political discourse and military operations within the country and cross-border.

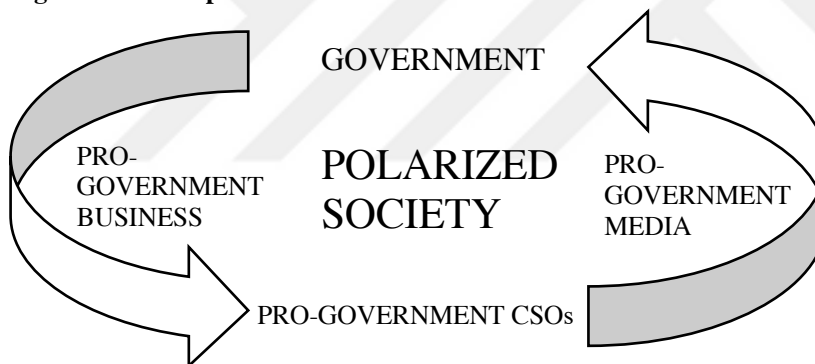
In comparison, despite the recent increases in military personnel in the current Brazilian politics, there was no challenge to the civilian control from the military after 1985 democratization process because the 1988 constitution limited the military's influence over the Brazilian politics. Nonetheless, military has recently been more active under the leadership of Bolsonaro because he does not have political party affiliation and legislative support behind his rule, and therefore mainly relies on the military. From 1985 to 2010, changing political, economic, and international conditions managed to restrict military's influence in the Brazilian politics (Akkoyunlu, et al., 2021b, p. 9). However, with the declining power of the left, military started to play an active role in the Brazilian politics. Current authoritarian populist leader, Bolsonaro, also emerged with an anti-leftwing discourse and became the right-wing populist president after the 2018 elections (p. 9; Fishman, 2018). Bolsonaro pursued a far-right populist campaign. He had military office background, serving as an army captain during the Brazilian military dictatorship and, therefore, a supporter of that period between 1964 and 1985. The fourth chapter will focus

more on this currently increasing role of the military and its implications in the Brazilian politics. As the last dimension of the institutional condition, the next section compares the economic development trajectories in Turkey and Brazil from a historical perspective.

3.1.3 *Economic Development Trajectories and Neo-patrimonial Network Between Government, Media, Civil Society Organizations and Business Groups*

Authoritarian populist governments monopolize access to state resources and therefore establish a neo-patrimonial network by supplying pro-government business and civil society organizations with attractive development projects (Esen et al., 2021; Yilmaz and Bashirov, 2018). Figure 10 shows an understanding of quadripartite dependency which creates a division and causes disinformation in the polarized societies.

Figure 10: Conceptual Framework



Previous scholarship discusses the “participatory disinformation”²¹. It showed that elites mobilize and organize the public and echo the misinformation back to the public by bolstering a frame to interpret the political events and building a sense of collective grievance (Starbird, 2022). In response, public also echo and reiterate the frame. In addition, civil society organizations and pro-government business-led media join this collective formation. Government supporters in social media is another group in generating and echoing the misinformation and polarized discourse. Chapter 4 focuses on this political economy aspect of democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. This section attempts to explain it from a historical perspective.

Accordingly, Turkey and Brazil experienced prolonged ISI model. However, the paths of the two countries mainly diverged after the 1980s. Turkey adopted free-market economics after the 1980 coup, when center-right incumbents initiated all-inclusive privatization plans in the public sector. Therefore, Turkey embraced a strong commitment to neoliberal reforms after the ISI crisis in the 1980s. In comparison, Brazil pursued a liberal developmental model after the ISI crisis in the 1990s. Brazil had a weaker commitment to neoliberal rules and adopted welfare state policies and social assistance programs like Bolsa Familia. In economic terms, import substitution industrialization was prevalent in Brazil with the state-led business groups as they were supported by the state bank. After the 1990s, macroeconomic stability policy is adopted and continued during Lula's presidency together with the social policies thanks to the commodity boom in the early 2000s. After the Brazilian economic recession in 2013 protests, Temer government embraced a neoliberal political agenda.

In the 1980s, Turkey and Brazil had both chronic inflation problem and adopted macro-economic stabilization, trade liberalization, and privatization to obtain loans from the IMF (Akkoyunlu et al., 2021b, p. 19). However, the influence of civil society over politics created a different trajectory for Brazil. Opposition to President Cardoso's neoliberal policies and reforms were led by the labor unions, which were also supported by the Congress and the bureaucracy (p. 20). The election of Lula in 2002 as the President in Brazil was clearly a manifestation of the increasing role of welfare politics and the state's role in the economy (p. 21). Brazil only turned to the market-driven policies in the last term of the PT government under the leadership of Dilma Rousseff, which continued with the Presidency of Michel Temer.

Historically speaking, the PT and AKP became the incumbent in 2002 thanks to their strong election campaign on fighting corruption, promise of economic growth, social

justice and political stability. Similarly, socialist dimension of the left-wing populism in Brazil and Islamism in right-wing populism in Turkey pushed the PT and AKP to get on well with the skeptical middle and upper classes and the global public. Hence, they tried to show those groups that they support neoliberal order and democracy. As a result, their policies were successful, and the PT became “pink left” alternative for Brazil²². AKP’s Turkey was also a model of “moderate Islam” for establishing democracy in the Middle East²³.

Thanks to the global economic growth before the 2008 crisis, the PT and AKP policies brought an economic growth with increasing foreign investment and trade in Brazil and Turkey. This result both benefited the business groups and the poorer segments of the society with policies on a controlled inflation and redistribution. The 2008 crisis did not also much affect the economies in Turkey and Brazil compared to other Western economies because Turkey and Brazil diversified their trade relations in the emerging multipolar order. China’s desire to expand into Western Asia and Europe has also provided an economic opportunity for Turkey and Brazil²⁴. As a result, economic growth increased the voter support in the elections while the political stability provided a good domestic context to focus on their relations with other countries in the international arena. From a comparative perspective however, effective and widespread patronage network in Turkey relies more on the neoliberal paradigm as it transferred the social responsibilities of the state to foundations, communities, parties, and family. In comparison, the left-wing populist administration in Brazil distributed social benefits through state institutions in a very transparent way and only according to the need. These practices, which are highly different from Turkey, have made significant contributions to procedural democracy, transparency, social state structure, and Brazil’s fight against discrimination. However, this approach has primarily created a less solid mass support behind the left-wing

populist, PT in Brazil. Additionally, the transportation, education, and health investments that the PT-led Brazilian rule neglected were the success story of the authoritarian populist government in Turkey. This left a lasting impact on the voters. Investments in transportation, education, and health strengthened the legitimacy of the authoritarian populist rule among its grassroots in Turkey compared to the existence of the concurrent socio-economic inequalities and government inefficiency in Brazil today.

Consequently, economic development trajectory for Turkey and Brazil differed as the leftist populist regime led to a liberal developmental path in Brazil (Ban, 2012). In comparison, Turkey had more of a center-right, mildly populist, and reformist path.

3.2 *Ideological Foundations of Democratic Backsliding*

This section examines the historical foundations to explain how cleavages and ideological spectrums are mobilized for democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade, which the Chapter 4 explains in detail. Turkey has leftist and rightist ideological cleavages in the 1960s and 70s while the 1980s political environment created new fault lines as i) secularists and political Islamists and ii) ethnic based identity cleavages as Kurds and Turks. Similar to Turkey, Brazil has also left-right identity cleavages. In comparison, persistent socio-economic inequality in Brazil is the major nature of cleavages today. Inequality and violence in urban slums and rural areas also intersect with regional inequalities between the North and the South and racial inequalities between Afro Brazilians and Whites.

3.2.1 *Major Nature of Cleavages*

Authoritarian populism tends to create an environment that makes the audience obtain the false narratives like voter fraud²⁵ or the pandemic and produce and resonate those

narratives back. In this sense, a top-down and a bottom-up process makes polarization and propaganda resilient.

Polarization is highly intensified through the lines of education, economic class, and religion in Brazil. For example, social polarization is prominent in terms of the states' infrastructural capacity, peoples' income and educational inequality in the society. In comparison, Turkey constructs "politics as an antagonistic struggle between the people and their internal and external enemies" (Funke et al., 2020). Citizens in Turkey became particularly polarized because of the divisions between the pro-government loyal followers and the "others". Below, major cleavages are discussed to understand polarization and identity politics in Turkey and Brazil from a historical perspective.

Turkey

Apart from the right-left divisions, the 1990s created new problems in Turkey's national security perception: the Kurdish problem and political Islam (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 246). In 1996, RP (Refah Partisi, Welfare Party in Turkey) became the first Islamist party to form a coalition government in Turkey (p. 246). Secular military and bureaucratic institutions considered it as a threat to the secularism and Turkey's pro-Western direction (p. 246). Such institutions historically placed themselves as the "guardians" of the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic, Kemalism (Heper, 1996; Musil, 2021, p. 13). Secular elites' claims were not unique to the 1990s and early 2000s. The root of this Westernizing and secular ideology goes back to the Turkish War of Independence (Musil, 2021, p. 13). Turkey became a Republic in 1923 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk with the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate (Zürcher, 2017, p. 177). In such a conservative and sultanate-ruled society, secularism was a challenge, and the idea of citizenship was less familiar. Consequently, a top-down modernization process took place by the Republic's founder elites to institutionalize the Republican regime in Turkey

(Zürcher, 2017; Kalaycıoğlu, 1994; Köker, 1995; Ahmad, 1993; Yılmaz, 1997; Keyder, 1987; Lewis, 2002; Heper, 2000; Çavdar, 2004).

The Republic had a socio-cultural division even in its early years because of the heritage of the Ottoman Empire: on the one hand, ruling elites at the center and on the other hand, traditionalist-religious periphery (Mardin, 1973). Republican elites were the leaders of the top-down modernization program, which isolated the conservative masses in the periphery. Secular elites of military, civilian bureaucracy and the private sector were seen as different from the “people” because the former was Western-oriented (Göle, 1997). Accordingly, political parties have generally adopted one side of this historical center-periphery cleavage (Aytaç et al., 2021, p. 27).

Because of the Independence War, Turkey was ruled under a single-party government, CHP. Democratization process could only start in 1946 by the founder party, CHP, based on secular and Republican ideals. However, such ideals were challenged in the 1970s by the conservative Islamist movement called, MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi, National Outlook Movement in Turkey) (Oran and Akkoyunlu, 2019, pp. 11-18). The MGH is represented by many political parties, such as RP (Howard, 2006). RP was the political party of the Islamist groups. It left the government after the military memorandum in 1997 and was banned from politics by the decision of the Constitutional Court (Akkoyunlu, 2021, p. 246; Musil, 2021, p. 14). RP was considered a threat to the “secular state establishment” (Musil, 2021, p. 13) while it had an institutionalized perception of Milli Görüş (National Outlook) (Musil, 2021, p. 2). Their popular catchphrase, the Just Order (Adil Düzen), supported an independent foreign policy and Muslim unity against US-led capitalism and imperialism (p. 13). Rather than materialism, RP was a firm believer in Islamic spirituality, not democracy (p. 14). Compared to this ideology, a new

faction emerged within the cadres of FP (Fazilet Partisi, Virtue Party in Turkey). FP was established after RP's dissolution and therefore had the same cadres as RP (p. 14).

In the early 2000s, Turkey's political agenda changed from the secularism and security debates to the corruption scandals, chronic financial problems and the paralyzed political environment with the military tutelage (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 246; Bekmen, 2014, pp. 55–56; Lewis, 2007, pp. 25–26). Democratization and the European Union membership also became the top priorities of the politics and the society (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 246).

In such a political environment, the new faction within the FP was formed into a new party named AKP and emerged as an alternative option for the voters who favored new faces and a political change. AKP's cadres consist of the younger Islamist politicians of the forbidden RP (p. 246; Musil, 2021, p. 2). In this context, AKP was an ideational moderation of the RP, considering that it showed Islam as a “language of political pluralism” and did not consider “globalization” as Western imperialism like RP (Musil, 2021, p. 2, 15).

In their first term, AKP also drew attention to the importance of the language right of the ethnic minority, Kurds. Therefore, it allowed Kurdish broadcasting in state-led media and the establishment of private language instruction in Kurdish (p. 16). There was a coalition government in Turkey during the 2001 economic crisis, consisting of secular, nationalist, and conservative parties (Kumral, 2022, p. 19). AKP supported the idea that the existing political parties could not solve the economic crisis of rising inflation and foreign debt. Once in power, AKP would rule the country into a progressive and developmental economic model and work for the “Great Turkey”, “justice”, “sustainable development” and in the end, Turkey would be a leading economic and world power (p. 19). Secular elites of the military and judiciary had a significant role over the executive at that time and resisted AKP's consolidation process of power (p. 27). Somer (2016) describes this

as an “old authoritarianism” because governing institutions had a top-down control power to modernize the society (Somer, 2016, p. 4). In response, AKP blamed the elites of such institutions for being against the people’s demands (Aytaç et al., 2021, p. 27). For example, in a speech, the President of Turkey blamed the opposition for being coup-oriented and undermining the electoral democracy and the people’s demands:

“He says that he hopes that my fate will be the fate of Menderes. You immoral, hear me out: We set off by wearing our shroud. We are not afraid of death. You are the one who is looking for a hole to escape when death is even mentioned. So, now, are you satisfied with the fate of Menderes? Because you were the ones who prepared that fate”²⁶.

AKP frequently underlined the importance of the ballot box to solve the problems of the people as the non-elected elites in these institutions restricted the incumbent’s ability (p. 27). Consequently, AKP appealed to the voters because of being a new party and its populist claims for solving the problems of the people, especially the religious masses who were disregarded by the established order (Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu 2009). In 2002, AKP established a single-party government.

Similar to such changing dynamics and alliances in the domestic politics in Turkey, new leaders and dynamics emerged in the international arena. AKP embraced the public's support for the EU accession in the early 2000s (Akkoyunlu, 2021a, p. 247; Erdemli, 2003, p. 4-5). This has also made AKP a credible political and trading partner in the global arena, which was beneficial for the degraded economy in Turkey (p. 247). After strengthening executive power in domestic politics, Turkey started to pursue a multilateral and autonomous foreign policy in international politics (p. 249). It was coupled with the global dynamics like the internal problems in the EU, economic crisis in 2008 and US's withdrawal from the international intervention under the presidency of Obama (p. 249, 254). This created a strained relationship between Turkey, the US, and

Europe (p. 254). Hence, apart from the continuing relationship with the democracy-ruled Western allies, AKP built relationships with authoritarian regimes in Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Russia and restarted diplomatic relations with Armenia (p. 249). Such soft power-based foreign policy paved the way for Turkey to win a “rotating seat on the United Nations Security Council” in 2009 (p. 249). At the same time, Turkey became the “Muslim voice” in the international area, while the Islamist nature of the party became more visible in the crises with Israel in the 2009 Davos meeting, Syria in 2011, and protests for Uyghur Turks in China (p. 250).

During its incumbency, AKP embraced the conservative social and education policies, the vision of a neo-Ottomanist Middle Eastern foreign policy, built mosques, and used the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) as a religious-nationalist agenda of the party (p. 255). As a result, AKP's previous inclusionary-populist liberal democratic discourse and reforms in the early 2000s were replaced by an exclusionary populist discourse of Sunni Turkish identity in its later years (Musil, 2021, p. 2, 3). Such policies gradually caused a homogeneous discourse and a growing prejudice towards pluralism and created tensions (p. 252; Musil, 2021, p. 3) with secular Turks, non-Turkish citizens (Kurds), and non-Sunni citizens (Alevites).

Brazil

Brazilian political history has more experiences with populism compared to Turkey. The first Brazilian populist era started with the economic crisis in the 1930s after a coup d'état on the República Velha (Grigera, 2017, p. 449). The legitimation was to democratize the state by letting the masses enter the political arena by recognizing their citizenship through labor rights (p. 449). This populist rule ended in 1964, but in the first years, under the rulership of Vargas, top-down democratization and modernization reforms took place because the state was positioned as a negotiator between capital and labor relations

(Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p. 204). Brazil also adopted two constitutions during the period of Vargas: “Weimar-inspired Constitution of 1934 and Polish-inspired text, for the Brazilian New Republic (Estado Novo)” (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 17). With those reforms, Vargas was trying to consolidate his power in contrast to the influential provincial oligarchy (p. 17).

Another populist rule started with the PT’s rulership and leadership of Lula in 2002 (p. 449). Some scholars point out that Lula's populist discourse did not include a “polarizing anti-elite, anti-globalization, anti-American populist discourse”. Therefore, it is difficult to define him as a leftist neo-populist (p. 450). Others describe him as populist because of his charismatic leadership appeal to the people, electoral clientelism, and the existence of decisive state intervention. PT had also a non-elite discourse which promised redistributive policies and opposed corruption (Wiltse, 2013, p. 313).

Historically, Brazil is one of the colonized countries in the world and has race-based diversities. This trajectory created a path towards socio-economic inequalities and elites' significant role in the Brazilian politics (Lustig et al., 2013; Schneider, 2015). However, the presidency of Lula between 2003 and 2010 prospered Brazil and was thereby a turning point in Brazilian economic growth with higher wages and poverty reduction. It led to “economic growth with low inflation, high minimum wages, better living standards for people from lower strata, and poverty reduction” (Yarar, 2019). This inclusionary populist growth created a social democratic model in Brazil.

Nonetheless, the initial years after the ratification of the constitution did not lead to effective social welfare policies because of the neoliberal agenda. Cardoso, Minister of Economy in 1994 and later the President in 1995, introduced the “Real Plan” to end inflation and poverty after the neoliberal reforms in Brazil. His policies created an opportunity for the left-wing populist president, Lula to continue macroeconomic

discipline and social welfare provisions. Therefore, Brazilian democracy concentrated on the social development policies at this period (Santos, 2013).

Similar to Latin American countries, Brazil had financial problems after the adaptation of neoliberal reforms. High inflation adversely affected the poor people which was minimized with the Real Plan during the ministry of Cardoso in 1994. Cardoso's presidency also created macroeconomic stabilization in Brazil in 1995 (Pereira, 2017). Consequently, income inequality gradually started to decline in Cardoso's presidency which continued with the Lula's presidency thanks to the cash transfers and social welfare provisions. Lula committed to neoliberal strategies and the agreements with the IMF and therefore implemented moderate-left policies. Lula's presidency was also a turning point because he was the first president coming from a lower stratum of socio-economic background (Wiltse, 2013, p. 313). Therefore, Lula had a direct relationship with lower socio-economic classes.

Lula's discourse on diminishing poverty and inequality did not isolate the business interests but promised the continuity for a market economy model and neoliberalism (p. 449). Still, in the 2006 elections, his electoral base moved closer to the "poor" (p. 450). PT's redistributive democracy were the "triad of Bolsa Família, crédito consignado (consumer credit), university quotas and increases in the minimum wage" (p. 451). Such policies were plausible during the period of an economic growth and the commodity boom in Brazil. Thanks to the increase in primary products between 2000 and 2012, Brazilian economy became part of the world market, while taxes on exports increased (p. 448, 451).

In this context, Lula's presidency was critical for Brazilian democratic consolidation and inclusionary politics with social citizenship through redistributive democracy. With the conditional cash transfers under the Bolsa Familia were significant²⁷, the PT government

demobilized the social movements in Brazil. Those being active in the social movements became the new state officials while the government and the trade unions had united over similar economic interests (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 450). Therefore, Lula's presidency was framed as “kidnapping of social movements by the states” (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 450). Consequently, the PT government was a solution to the problems of neoliberalism and political representation problems of the masses (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 451).

For the 2010 presidential elections, Lula could not run for the third term considering the constitutional rules (Eralp, 2019). Hence, he supported his Chief of Staff, Dilma Rousseff, as the PT's candidate (Eralp, 2019). Rousseff adopted Lula's major policies, however, at the micro level, social protests were prevalent because of the economic slowdown between 2011 and 2014. Brazilian economic prosperity began to slow down between 2011 and 2014 because of the increasing rate of dollar. As a result, protests erupted in 2013 and 2015 and formed a coalition against the PT for anti-corruption and neoliberal agenda with the support of external forces like the United States (Pereira, 2017; Santos and Guarnieri, 2016). PT's victory in 2002 elections came with the increasing anti-corruption campaigns which decreased the support for the established parties. In its later years, PT did not escape from this Brazilian trap and involved in the corruption scandals. For example, in 2005, top members of the PT have been accused of paying monthly bribes to other political parties in exchange of their votes for the government's legislative projects (the Mensalão scandal). Likewise, the Lava Jato was another corruption scandal that the PT got involved. In the end, it caused the impeachment of President Rousseff, and the beginning of the interim presidency of Michel Temer, who was a supporter of neoliberal policies but not approved by the voters because of his involvement in the corruption investigations, and the disqualification policies of Lula.

During the PT government, problems emerged mainly with increasing economic depression, violence in urban areas, and the corruption investigations on the government (Operation Car Wash/Operação Lava Jato) (Akkoyunlu et al., 2021b, p. 9). As a result, in 2016, the Senate impeached Rousseff due to corruption charges. Michel Temer was appointed as the new president whose approval rate was very low. In 2018, Lula was going to run for the elections but prevented through legal charges against him. PT government ended with the impeachment of Rousseff in 2016 in a period when the opportunity of the commodity boom was ending, transportation protests were happening, and anti-PT organizations were emerging (Akkoyunlu et al., 2021b, p. 7). Such incidences showed that the alignment in the interests of the PT with the trade unions and unrepresented masses were also weakening (Akkoyunlu, 2018, p. 451).

Consequently, based on the historical trajectory on the ideological conditions, this section focused on the major nature of cleavages in Turkey and Brazil. Brazil has economic inequality between North-South regions. However, there is no militant separatism compared to Turkey's South-East where terrorist organization, PKK claims a Kurdish ethnicity-based separation and a state formation. Hence, security threat is often used by the authoritarian populist parties in Turkey for consolidation attempts. In addition, Turkey has a historical secularism-conservative division. Secular military and bureaucracy elites' role in power-sharing with the elected government created a path dependency for authoritarianism in Turkey. Historically, Turkey has witnessed party closure cases against the Islamist parties and later for AKP. Such parties were seen as a threat against the Republican state ideals. In response, AKP used seculars' judgements as a tool in the elections as a populist party like the previous conservative parties that appealed to the voters' socio economic, cultural and religious identities and criticized the secular elites. Headscarf problem was another fault line for AKP to be used in the elections to show the

secular elites as “corrupted” who were disregarding and suppressing the “people”s interests. Therefore, perhaps unintentionally, secular elites contributed to an impetus for the consolidation of the party’s electorate and its authoritarian populist power.

3.2.2 *Ideological Spectrums*

Currently, Turkey and Brazil are the leading countries of authoritarianism in the world (V-Dem Democracy Report, 2022). Existing regimes came to power through elections but have aimed at weakening the institutional checks and balances over the executive and therefore caused erosion in the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. However, Turkey is being ruled by an authoritarian populist rule for over 20 years, while Brazil has been experiencing such an imminent threat against democracy since 2018. Therefore, Brazil is experiencing authoritarian populism for a shorter time. Time dimension favors the authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey because institutional and ideological dimensions are used and manipulated to guarantee the repeated electoral triumph in this process. Hence, historical background behind this study argues that the authoritarian drift in Turkey is relatively much prominent than in Brazil thanks to the uninterrupted authoritarian populist rule. Turkey's ruling party is also the longest-ruling populist party in Europe (Kubát et al., 2020, p. 12). This is not surprising as voters’ advocate for Turkey’s current incumbent is much more solid considering the duration of the authoritarian populist rule.

Historically speaking, Turkey gradually adopted an authoritarian populist regime model to sideline the liberal and democratic mechanisms over the executive power. Nonetheless, AKP pursued liberal reforms and sustained economic growth in its initial years of the government in Turkey despite the challenging times like the 2008 global economic crisis and the 2011 Arab Spring. The lessening interest of the US in the Middle East politics

also pushed Turkey to embrace an authoritarian path in domestic politics because of such changing international dynamics. Hence, the short-term domestically and globally driven policies have become prevalent for such regimes to fulfill the demands of their electorate and legitimize their policies.

In reality, Brazil was already being ruled by a populist government before the current regime and had a populist trajectory in its political history. However, the leftist populist governments of the PT strengthened democratic institutions in the same period AKP's incumbency started in Turkey. PT was caught by its own control mechanisms after it got involved in corruption scandals and gradually lost its grassroots support and was overthrown by its political rivals. Hence, the leftist populist government did not attempt to dismantle democratic control mechanisms over the incumbent in Brazil. For example, in 2014, the right-wing populist government in Turkey prepared an internet censorship law. In the meantime, the Petrobras corruption investigation was just beginning in Brazil, and the PT government was enacting a pioneering law (Marc Civil da Internet) that protected citizens' digital access and privacy rights against the state. Therefore, populism can be either "a threat to or a corrective for democracy" (Casal et al., 2021, p. 38; Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 185). Right-wing populism is often attributed to the cause of the recent authoritarian upsurge in the world and considered as a "shadow of modern representative democracy", a "danger to democracy" (Müller, 2017, p. 11; Urbinati, 2019, p. 215), while left-wing populism is seen as a "reaction to neoliberalism" (Mouffe, 2018, p. 5). By nature, the right- and left-wing populism have different characteristics (Hartwell et al., 2021). Thus, it is important to explain such differences considering that this thesis compares only the cases of right-wing populism in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. Accordingly, there are exclusionary and inclusionary types of populism (Mudde et al., 2013, p. 158-9; Mudde et al., 2018, p. 1670; Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 198). We can compare

inclusionary and exclusionary populism on three levels: symbolic, political and economic (Selçuk, 2019).

At the symbolic level, inclusionary populism could use religious, nationalist, or ethnic symbols to define the in-group while the exclusionary populism defines the out-group and the enemies of the *people* like the immigrants and minorities. In the end, this understanding could create polarization in the society because populism can be both inclusionary and exclusionary towards different groups. While populists can be inclusionary by including the members of the in-group, they could exclude the members of the out-group and thereby becoming exclusionary.

At the political level, inclusionary populists increase the frequency of elections and referendums to rewrite the constitution with popular participation. However, the exclusionary populists more tend to concentrate power at the executive level and weaken the checks and balances through criminalizing the opposition, attacking against the media, judiciary and civil society.

At the economic level, left-wing populists tend to redistribute the rents (Germani, 1978). Left-wing populist discourse relies on establishing economic measures to support the disadvantaged socio-economic groups, and increasing their political representation in cultural, ethnic, and religious lines. In comparison, the exclusionary populists more prone to partisan distribution of jobs, benefits, and regime corruption.

In the literature, inclusionary populism is associated with democratic revolutions in hybrid regimes (Laclau, 2005; Brubaker, 2017; Bozóki et al., 2016). Therefore, left-wing populism is not considered authoritarian like their right-wing counterparts although it could also lead to executive aggrandizement once the inclusionary populists came to power like in the case of Obrador in Mexico (Sánchez-Talanquer et al., 2021).

Differences between right and left-wing populism is important because Turkey and Brazil have different historical trajectory for such politics. For example, return of Lula as the presidential candidate in October elections makes leftist political trajectory as a balancing factor for the future of Brazilian democracy. However, center-right legacy is most prevalent in Turkey while the left is weak considering the influence of labor unions and civil society in the current political environment.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed authoritarian populist path through the critical juncture points in Turkey and Brazil because there was great unrest among the public over the established politicians and the parties before such regimes dominated the political arena. Therefore, it was essential to compare the two countries from a historical perspective before focusing on the last decade.

Institutionally, Turkey and Brazil experienced oscillations of democracy and authoritarianism because of military interruptions. Brazil had direct influence of military, although it ended with the post 1984 politics until the rise of ex-military officer Bolsonaro who increased the number of officials in political positions. On the other hand, Turkey was ruled for fewer years by the military and had indirect but continuous military influence over the politics until 2016 coup attempt. This left an authoritarian-led political tradition over the politics because militarism has continued in Turkey through political discourse and military operations within the country and cross-border. In comparison, despite currently increasing military influence in the politics, there was no particular challenge to the civilian politics in Brazil after 1985 democratization process because of the limitations in the constitution. Secondly, political system is compared in four dimensions for Turkey and Brazil. Specifically, Turkey was ruled by a parliamentary

democracy and unitary state until 2018 whereas presidential system has been adopted with lower checks and balances. Party institutionalization and this new system paved the way for constitutional amendments to consolidate the governing party rule. However, Brazilian presidentialism and federalism provided stronger check and balances and independent institutions over the executive control. Thirdly, despite the prolonged ISI models in Turkey and Brazil, Turkey adopted neoliberal reforms more firmly after the 1980s. Brazil embraced liberal developmentalism in the 1990s with an emphasis on welfare state model and social assistance policies thanks to the stronger power of labor unions.

Ideologically, the thesis compared the two countries based on their nature of cleavages and the role of leftist political trajectory. Accordingly, Brazil has persistent socio-economic cleavages based on racial and regional inequalities. However, Turkey has incompatible cleavages between the secularism and political Islam and ethnic Kurds and Turks. Currently, migration flows also created antagonism towards the refugees. Such ideological environment intensifies the authoritarian populist rule in both countries. Lastly, Turkey and Brazil have different left and right ideological trajectories which affected their different path in democratic backsliding. Namely, Turkey has center-right and conservative party trajectory and has been ruled by authoritarian populism for over 20 years while Brazil has a stronger left-wing trajectory with active labor unions and civil society organizations. Brazil is experiencing an imminent threat against democracy since 2018.

Overall, despite all its flaws and shortcomings, democratic institutions and rules in Brazil have not disappeared yet. On the other hand, Turkey is much closer to becoming an insecure authoritarian country. This chapter showed how Turkey and Brazil have embraced different institutional paths and political developments since the

democratization process in the 1980s. Based on this historical framework, the next chapter includes the key arguments and analysis of the thesis. It compares the democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil, stage by stage for the post-2010 period, to understand the institutional and ideological factors of the path towards a consolidation process of authoritarian populism.



CHAPTER 4:

COMPARING INTENSIFICATION OF DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN TURKEY AND BRAZIL IN THE LAST DECADE

This chapter aims to provide a comparative picture of the relevance of the consolidation framework in the context of Turkey and Brazil to develop an understanding of the consolidation strategies in authoritarian populist regimes. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section gives a comparative overview of democratic backsliding in the two cases. The second section highlights a comparative analysis of institutional consolidation strategies for authoritarian populism in the two cases while the third section comparatively discusses consolidation process from ideological perspective. Lastly, the final part provides a summary of the comparative arguments. Overall, the chapter shows that the two selected comparable cases of this thesis are currently threatened by the authoritarian populists. Compared to Brazil however, under the uninterrupted authoritarian populist regime over 20 years, there has been more of a democratic decline in Turkey. Institutional and ideological dimensions are used and manipulated to guarantee the repeated electoral triumph in this process.

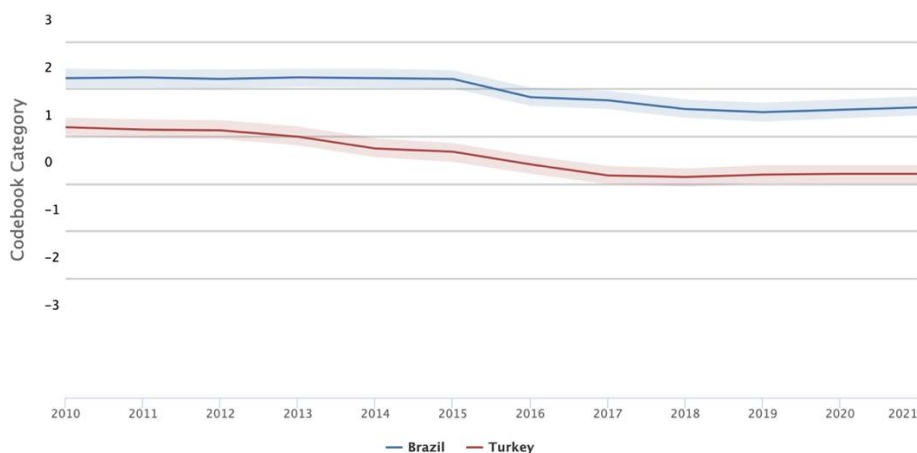
4.1 Introduction

Populism research has focused mainly on explaining the electoral success (Mudde, 2004; De la Torre, 2017; Doyle, 2011; Kaltwasser, 2014; Mounk, 2018) and political consequences of the increase in populist regimes based on democratic quality, backsliding and breakdown (Mudde, 2004; Laclau, 2005; Huber et al., 2016; Müller, 2015; Houle et al., 2018; Ruth, 2018; Funke et al., 2020). However, we have relatively less comparative research on the intensification of executive aggrandizement in the Global South countries.

Western Europe is the main focus of research area for explaining right-wing populism with a concentration on working-class demands and anti-immigrant attitudes (Afonso et al., 2018; Fenger 2018). Nevertheless, Western Europe provides cases where governing experience of the right-wing populists is largely limited to the parties as junior partners of the mainstream center-right parties (Afonso, et al., 2015; Röth et al., 2017). In comparison, Latin American and Eastern European cases offer populist governance in majority governments. Brazil and Turkey can be seen among such cases. Like its counterparts in Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland and Hungary), Turkey's authoritarian populist regime has right-wing and nationalist agenda while Brazil is a typical Latin American case with experiences of both left and right-wing populism.

Evidence for increasing democratic backsliding and executive aggrandizement in Turkey and Brazil is illustrated by the V-Dem data. For example, Figure 11 graphs the government accountability in the last decade. This aggregate data is created by the V-Dem by using its accountability measure based on vertical (ability of people to hold its government accountable through elections), horizontal (checks and balances between institutions) and diagonal (civil society and media activity) accountability variables.

Figure 11: V-Dem Accountability Index for Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021

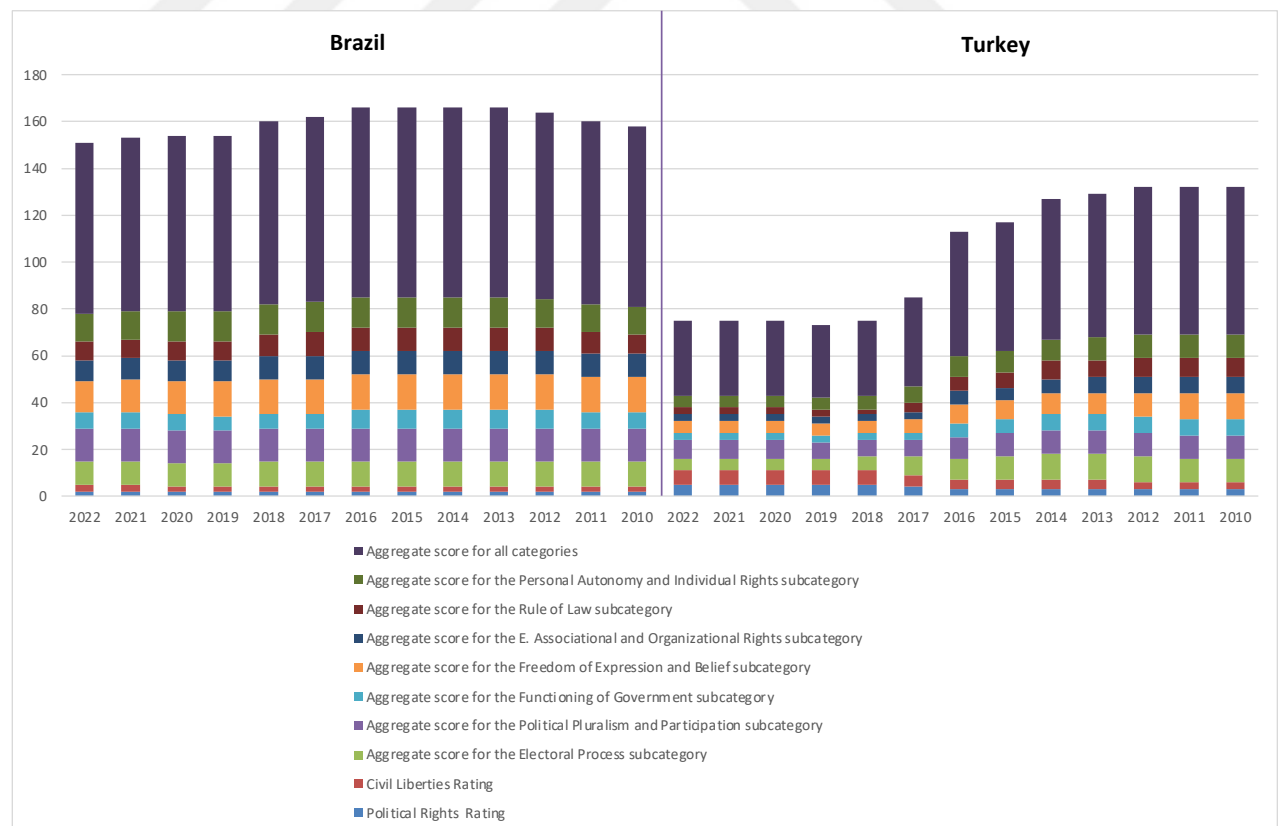


Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

V-Dem considers government accountability as the need for justification of the government actions and the restrictions on the political power of the government. Figure 11 shows that change in the government accountability scores has a decreasing trend for Turkey and Brazil in the last decade but relatively linear for Brazil between 2010 and 2015 and for Turkey between 2010 and 2014. Nevertheless, Brazil has a better performance in government accountability.

Further evidence can be compiled from Freedom House. Below, Freedom House data is compiled to compare the recent conditions for political freedom and civil liberties in Turkey and Brazil. From 2010 to the present time, Figure 12 shows relatively steady scores for Brazilian freedom and democracy. However, Turkey shows a clear decline in its aggregate scores for political rights and civil liberties in the last decade.

Figure 12: Freedom House Aggregate Category Scores for Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2022



Source: Compiled by the author from the Freedom House Data, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>

Before comparing the institutional and ideological process of the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil, this section provides a brief overview of such process. Below, the focus will be on each case separately and the section will conclude with an overall summary.

Brazil

Brazil is a federal republic with a presidential system. President is elected by popular vote for a four-year term and can run for a second consecutive term. Freedom House's latest report²⁸ shows that Brazil is still a "democracy" with its competitive elections, and the vibrant debates in the political arena despite a high polarized environment. However, the report demonstrates that democracy has also been threatened because of the existing attacks against the journalists and civil society activists, high rates of violent crime, economic exclusion of minorities, corruption over the years and the existing government's attacks against the democratic institutions like the Supreme Court and the Congress.

1988 constitution defined the current balance of power between the executive and the legislative, the conditions for referenda and popular initiatives and vetoes on the proposed and enacted legislation in the Congress (Polity IV Country Report, 2010). It has strengthened the power of Congress over the president in the case of budget planning, foreign debt deals, and drafting the legislation. The judiciary have also an administrative and financial autonomy from the executive. Nonetheless, the president could use "temporary measures" to bypass the power of the Congress like President Collor and President Cardoso did.

Before the rise of Bolsonaro, Brazil was going through political and economic crises since 2013. Protests in São Paulo grew as a reaction to Dilma Rousseff's government. Media covered the corruption judgements and targeted the PT. With Operation Car Wash,

impeachment process started and increased the anti-PT sentiments among the electorate.

Right-wing movement emerged at this period and supporting Bolsonaro became the rationale as he was an outsider and had military support behind him to solve the crises in Brazil.

Recently, COVID-19 caused adverse economic conditions for several people in Brazil. Congress started an inquiry about the federal government's mismanagement of the COVID-19 and found evidence of corruption in the purchase of vaccines. At the same time, current economic woes in Brazil continues to challenge Bolsonaro because of the global recession in the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Brazilian GDP declined 3.9%²⁹ and the regional, social and ethnic inequalities have deteriorated significantly in access to the health system. Bolsonaro government has also cut budgets for environmental policy. Meanwhile, Bolsonaro has persistently insulted the media and issued a decree to restrict social media platforms from removing harmful misinformation. Bolsonaro also proposed to make a constitutional amendment to change the country's electronic voting system into a paper-receipt system. Military also stated its support for such allegations³⁰. Additionally, recently made polls suggest that majority of the respondents "have no or little trust in the country's voting infrastructure"³¹. However, the lower-house representatives did not support that proposition although they were threatened with a military parade by Bolsonaro last year. Supreme Court also vetoed such proposal³².

Based on this recent political, economic and social environment, Brazil is listed in the top three democracies where citizens lose faith in democracy and are unsatisfied with the democratic system in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index. Indeed, Brazil is one of the countries with the lowest support for democracy in Latin America. LatinoBarometro's annual report in 2021³³ also shows that democracy support declined

in Brazil from 54% in 2010 to 40% in 2020³⁴. 81% of Brazilians in 2010 agreed that democracy has problems, but it is still the best form of government which declined to 69% in 2020. However, 53% of Brazilians say that they wouldn't care if an undemocratic government come to power if it solves the problems (Latinobarometro 2021). Such results explain why Brazilians supported an anti-establishment leader like Bolsonaro in 2018.

The Economist's Index links this declining democracy satisfaction with the unsustainable policies of the pink wave of social-democratic politicians in Latin America who promised to overcome the deep-rooted inequalities but failed because of the populist tradition of clientelism, unsuccessful management of street violence. In Brazil, Lula government benefited from the global commodities boom, foreign direct investment (FDI) while pursued the policies of diminishing poverty, inequality, public debt and inflation. Nonetheless, instability started with the financial crisis since 2014, and the Lava Jato ("car wash") corruption investigations³⁵. President Lula da Silva was put in jail because of such investigations and prevented from running in the 2018 elections. "Accordingly, Brazilian low credibility of the democratic institutions could stem from the corruption, urban poverty, and rising criminal violence in favelas and rural areas. Still, Table 3 and 4 show that, in 2010, Brazil had clearly a good record for its democratic system which could be linked with the successful presidency of Lula between 2003 and 2010.

The Index groups countries into "electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture" (The Economist, 2021). It ranks countries on a scale from 0 to 10 based on such five categories. Turkey and Brazil have declining scores for the last decade. However, Brazil (6.86) has still a higher score than Turkey (4.35) (See Table 3 and 4). They have the same score only for the category of political culture which measures the popular support for a democracy,

desire of a strong leader to bypass the parliament and elections, perceptions for a military rule and tradition of the separation of religion and state.

Table 3: Democracy Index 2021, Turkey and Brazil

Indicators	Turkey	Brazil
Overall Score	4.35	6.86
Rank	103	47
Electoral process and pluralism	3.50	9.58
Functioning of government	5.00	5.36
Political participation	5.56	6.11
Political culture	5.63	5.63
Civil liberties	2.06	7.65

Source: Economist Intelligence (EIU). Democracy Index 2021: The China Challenge.

Table 4: Change in the Democracy Index Scores for Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021

Years	Turkey	Brazil	World Average
2010	→ 5,73	↑ 7,12	→ 5,46
2011	→ 5,73	↑ 7,12	→ 5,49
2012	→ 5,76	↑ 7,12	→ 5,52
2013	→ 5,63	↑ 7,12	→ 5,53
2014	↓ 5,12	↑ 7,38	→ 5,55
2015	↓ 5,12	↑ 6,96	→ 5,55
2016	↓ 5,04	↑ 6,90	→ 5,52
2017	↓ 4,88	↑ 6,86	→ 5,48
2018	↓ 4,37	↑ 6,97	→ 5,48
2019	↓ 4,09	↑ 6,86	→ 5,44
2020	↓ 4,48	↑ 6,92	→ 5,37
2021	↓ 4,35	↑ 6,86	→ 5,28

Note: Arrows take the world average into consideration. Red Arrow signifies a “decline”, Yellow Arrow signifies “no considerable change”, Green Arrow signifies an “increase”.

Source: Economist Intelligence (EIU). Democracy Index 2021: The China Challenge.

The Economist Democracy Index defines Brazil as a “flawed democracy” while Turkey is defined as a “hybrid regime”. In general, Index considers flawed democracies as regimes that have “free and fair elections” but with problems in the “media freedom and governance”. They have an “underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation” (Davis-Castro, 2022). In comparison, hybrid regimes have irregularities in the elections which violates the principle of free and fair elections in a democracy. Governments restrict the opposition through limited presence in the media, and thereby disturbs the media freedom.

Turkey

V-Dem reports the beginning of democratic decline in Turkey as 2005. Gradual declines occurred in the following years and were followed by steep annual declines as of 2013 (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2018, p. 12). Turkey is also the third country with the dramatic decline in freedom according to Freedom House data³⁶.

For a general overview, Turkey has been the only Islamic country to manage a sustained transition from authoritarian regime to democracy, thanks to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's adherence to secular civil laws as the founder of the Republic of Turkey in the early 1920s and 1930s (Toros, 2010, p. 256). The successor governments failed in democratic consolidation in later years while the oscillations between democracy and authoritarianism were visible because of the military interruptions. Gradually, current government also left the democratic principles in favor of authoritarianism, synthesized with Islamic nationalist populism (Liu and Drzewieniecki, 2022, p. 314). Especially, the governing party consolidated its power around a polarized discourse and a newly emerged elite group (Islamic and nationalist political elite) while also centralizing political power through weakening democratic institutions (p. 314).

Historically speaking, Turkey was labeled as an electoral democracy between 2003 and 2013 (Yılmaz and Turner, 2019). However, the country moved toward an authoritarian direction in the later years. In the first term (2003-2007), AKP initiated democratic reforms while gradually abandoned liberal reforms and showed authoritarian characteristics in the second term (2007-2011) with the consolidation of the political power (Bakiner, 2017).

Specifically, after the government's measures against the supporters and activists of the Gezi demonstrations, Turkey was categorized as "new authoritarian" (Somer, 2016), "competitive authoritarian" (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016; Sarfati, 2017; Castaldo, 2018),

“electoral authoritarian” (Yılmaz and Bashirov, 2018; White and Herzog, 2016; Somer, 2017), and “dominant or hegemonic pragmatist” (Musil, 2015). Other scholars also argued that authoritarianism has been rapidly developing in Turkey (Yılmaz and Turner, 2019) as it was on the edge of becoming a fully authoritarian regime (Çalışkan, 2018). Today, electoral competition and political pluralism continues to be undermined in Turkey considering the unequal level of playing field.

In the current context, Turkey has a multiparty system and parties are represented in the parliament. Since 2002, Turkey³⁷ has been ruled by a right-wing populist regime although AKP passed liberal laws during its first term. Previously, prime minister was bound to the parliament for political support while the president and the judiciary were limiting the powers of the PM. Regardless of such a constitutional democracy with political parties, there was also an indirect influence of the military over the political system to secure the secularism and civic nationalism of the Republic. Currently, Turkey directly elects the president for up to two five-year terms. The president can run for the third term if the parliament calls for early elections. The number of parliamentarians in the unicameral assembly increased with the 2017 referendum. Particularly, constitutional changes made in 2017 concentrated power in the hands of the executive and eliminated checks and balances (Yılmaz et al., 2022). Currently, the president is the head of the executive and has the power to rule by decree. His party dominates the parliament and thereby having a control over the parliament.

Legal changes that increased the executive power remained still after the end of state of emergency (Freedom House, 2021b). The newly established presidential system removed the role of the prime minister while the president has become a dominant figure in the executive. According to the new system, president could restrict the legislative role of the

parliament through presidential decrees. Opposition party officers can be removed from office by a presidential decree or restricted through low budget support. Government could also threat the opposition media through physical assaults and fines while the judiciary can be exposed to the threats of being dismissed and therefore increasing the tendency for self-censorship of the media officers. European Commission's 2021 report on Turkey³⁸ shows the current weak power of the parliament to hold the government accountable.

In the current context, while authoritarian populist regime continues to dominate the politics in Turkey, opposition won major cities in the 2019 municipal elections. However, some HDP (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, Peoples' Democratic Party in Turkey) mayors were replaced by the "trustees" because of the terrorism related accusations. In recent years, appointment of a pro-government rector to Turkey's top-ranking Boğaziçi University also created criticisms on the violation of academic freedom and critical thinking. Additionally, Turkey was unilaterally withdrawn from the Istanbul Convention in 2021 which is an international treaty for preventing gender-based violence. This has drawn criticisms from both the local and international civil society actors and international institutions.

From a comparative perspective, the quality of Brazilian democracy has declined significantly during Bolsonaro's presidency. However, despite his anti-democratic attitudes, the existing checks and balances shows a democratic resiliency. For example, the Supreme Court has reversed the government decrees as they were unconstitutional while there are also strong opposition in the Congress and at the subnational level against the president's authoritarian actions. Compared to Brazil, consolidation of a more established authoritarian rule, conflictual foreign policy with the increasing tensions in

the neighboring countries and the economic vulnerability are at the forefront in the future politics of Turkey. Particularly, 2016 coup attempt accelerated Turkey's process of an authoritarian populist consolidation. In the 2018 general elections, a new presidential system is formed for a powerful executive system. Many executive orders restricting fundamental rights became law after ending the state of emergency rule in 2018.

This introductory section is followed by three parts. The first part discusses the institutional conditions for consolidation of authoritarian populism in Turkey and Brazil from a comparative perspective by looking at the political economy of authoritarian populism and executive aggrandizement in the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy and media. The second part identifies the ideological consolidation through polarization, civil society organizations, and erosion in critical thinking. Lastly, the final part provides an evaluation of the arguments presented in this chapter.

4.2 *Institutional Conditions*

Globally, institutions are manipulated in favor of the authoritarian populists to increase their executive authority. Hungary, Venezuela and Ecuador are significant examples for institutional arrangements like writing of new constitutions (Freeman, 2020). During the pandemic, Hungarian parliament authorized President Orban to rule by decree. During the pandemic, Polish governing party also used parliamentary majority to introduce surveillance and anti-terrorism laws and thereby violated the privacy of the citizens. Poland also exemplifies authoritarian practices like taking over independent institutions and forming new institutions led by pro-government officials. In India, Prime Minister is also the key decision maker. Cabinet ministers learn some policies from media or central diktat³⁹.

Similarly, there are significant examples in the world for executive aggrandizement in the judiciary. For example, a law was passed in Hungary to allow the incumbent to appoint judges without the consent of the opposition. Accordingly, in 2011, President Orbán increased the number of judges in the Supreme Court. Likewise, the governing party in Poland removed the need for judicial review for its policies and laws, passed in the incumbent majority-controlled parliament. Moreover, Morales in Bolivia and Hernández in Honduras appointed loyal judges. In response, they applied constitutional amendments and therefore did not oppose to those presidents to run in the next elections⁴⁰.

Concerning the executive control in media, Hungarian media laws increased state control over media networks and limited the independent media during the pandemic era⁴¹. Correspondingly, in Poland, state-owned firms provided funding for pro-government media networks during the COVID measures. In Guatemala, a journalist, who has written on corruption allegations, is arrested because of the charges on money laundering and blackmail⁴².

Furthermore, in Russia, opposition leaders are banned from running in the elections while, in Belarus and Venezuela, the governing party put pressure on the electoral officials to control vote processing and counting. Trump also attempted to control the US election by claiming mail-in votes not to be counted after the Election Day⁴³.

Similar to those institutional conditions in the world, Turkey's and Brazil's authoritarian populist regimes use institutional tactics to consolidate their power. Based on the historical background in Chapter 3, this section examines to what extent state institutions are politicized and weakened the level of playing field. It highlights the executive aggrandizement in the legislature to control the political opponents, and focuses on the manipulation of the judiciary, bureaucracy, political economy and media to understand

how the rules of the game are rewritten, the governments' discourses are propagandized and the relations between the pro-government business groups and the state has formed a patronage network.

4.2.1 Executive Aggrandizement in the Legislature

In authoritarian populist regimes, creation of a political party that supports the regime paves the way for their legitimation, lowers the risks of coups, and ensures regime's survival (Gandhi et al., 2008). Accordingly, this section discusses the extent of the executive aggrandizement in the parliament of Turkey and Brazil from a comparative perspective.

Turkey

10% threshold limits the number of political parties in Turkey to gain seats in the parliament and thereby avoiding the political pluralism. As an implication of this threshold, Turkey has currently four major parties. Firstly, CHP is the oldest political party, founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Secondly, AKP is the current incumbent with its Islamist orientation. Thirdly, MHP is the pro-nationalist party. Fourthly, HDP is the pro-Kurdish party. Recently, small parties also started to emerge. For example, in 2017, the İYİP (İyi Parti, Good Party in Turkey) is formed by those who left the MHP because of its alliance with AKP after 2016 coup attempt. İYİP criticizes the authoritarian rule of AKP compared to MHP and has a conservative, nationalist and secularist agenda.

With 2017 referendum, Turkey's parliamentary system changed to a presidential system. According to this new presidential system, president can dissolve the parliament, declare a state of emergency, veto laws and use presidential decrees for the issues outside the scope of the law. Despite such critical political power, president and the incumbent are no longer responsible in front of the parliament. President is elected for five years as the

head of the state, government and the ruling party. Hence, he/she is only accountable to the electorate, rather than the parliament. It is difficult for the parliament to hold the president responsible because 400 deputies out of 600 need to support the impeachment which is highly unlikely considering the current party distribution of representatives in the parliament of Turkey. Intra-party democracy does not also exist in Turkey because of the influence of party leaders on their parties' administration and candidate nominations. Apart from their political parties, deputies are not also freely expressing their views on critical decisions like the impeachment of a president.

New political system and the 10% threshold pushed parties to form alliances to gain seats in the parliament. In Turkey, inter-party communication is also very limited because of the weakening power of the parliament after the presidential system and the political polarization. In that sense, alliances are very significant for the future democracy of Turkey in reaction to the authoritarian populist bloc. Recently, MHP and AKP formed an alliance as *Cumhur İttifakı* (People's Alliance) and nationalism became more prominent with this electoral alliance. The opposition parties (CHP, İYİP and SP, *Saadet Partisi*, "Felicity Party") also came together under the name of *Millet İttifakı* (Nation Alliance) in opposition to the authoritarian populist rule in Turkey. In 2021, two more parties participated to the latter alliance: DEVA (*Demokrasi ve Atılım Partisi*, Democracy and Progress Party in Turkey) and the GP (*Gelecek Partisi*, The Future Party in Turkey) who were founded by the former AKP politicians and ministers. They came to the political stage in Turkey in 2020. While DEVA emphasizes liberalism, rule of law and good governance, GP has a more conservative agenda but embraces democracy and the rule of law. HDP has been marginalized because of its members' imprisonment in terrorism but indirectly supports the Nation Alliance.

Lastly, although elections are held regularly in Turkey, there have been irregularities in the recent elections because of the unequal media access for political parties, exploitation of state resources to support the government campaigns. For example, after the 2019 local elections, non-elected mayors took the mayorships from the elected mayors of HDP in the southeast region because of terrorism charges. YSK (Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, Supreme Election Council in Turkey) also cancelled mayorship of the elected mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu from the opposition bloc.

Brazil

From a comparative perspective, Brazil has a system of “coalition presidentialism” which pushes the president to gain the support of the Congress and seek for cooperation (BTI 2022, p. 14). This could either cause political consensus or corruption. For example, President Bolsonaro did not form a coalition in the fragmented Congress and rather chose his ministers from the large conservative agricultural, Evangelical Christian and public security groups in the parliament. Coalition with the Evangelicals provided Bolsonaro a considerable support and paved the way for building relations with the business elites. Therefore, there is no cooperation between the executive and parliament which is further solidified with the resignation of Bolsonaro from his political party, PSL (Partido Social Liberal, Social Liberal Party in Brazil) in November 2019. However, Bolsonaro joined the centre right PL (Partido Liberal, The Liberal Party in Brazil) in November 2021 to run in the next elections.

Coalition presidentialism also stems from Brazilian federal system which provides systemic veto points (Armijo et al., 2017, p. 233). Firstly, there is a federal system of government while the governmental powers are shared by the federal government, the states and the local authorities. Secondly, 1988 constitution emphasizes the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and the judicial power which are horizontally

divided at the federal level (Yılmaz et al., 2022). According to the Constitution, the president is accountable to the National Congress. Executive is also obliged to testify and answer written interrogatories in the parliament. Brazilian Congress does not have the power to approve the laws outside the scope of annual budgetary law. Therefore, the executive could block the passage of laws which are contrasting to its interests. The executive has also significant legislative power. For example, president has the right to legislation, veto, declare delegated legislations and provisional measures as laws.

In this sense, federalism can discourage democratic backsliding because state governments have robust control over key government functions, the judiciary and election administration. For instance, the federal mismanagement of the pandemic was taken control by the state level functioning in Brazil. This is expected because, over the years, the role of states and municipalities increased to provide welfare policies (Abrucio, 2005; Arretche, 2012; Franzese, 2010).

Considering the coalition presidentialism, Brazilian federal governance is fragmented, competitive and fragile in cooperation (Grin and Abrucio, 2017; Armijo et al., 2017). After democratization in the 1980s, Brazilian federalism transformed through the increasing political, administrative, and financial independence of states and municipalities. Currently, Bolsonaro is trying to create a dual federalism, like the US. Accordingly, the pandemic crisis caused clashes between the federal government, states and municipalities. As a result, intergovernmental incoordination increased with the independence of sub-national governments for the provision of benefits. However, this policy could create inequality across sub-national governments. Dualist federalism could cause autocratic concentration of decisions and therefore avoid dialogue and negotiation between the federal and sub-national governments. For example, governors of the Amazon region are excluded from the governance structure during the presidency of

Bolsonaro⁴⁴. Based on this framework, decentralization is a challenge for an authoritarian populist to consolidate power in Brazil (Grumbach and Michener, 2022). This also explains inequality and decentralized accountability in Brazilian federal government compared to centralized unitary state in Turkey (Armijo et al., 2017, p. 153).

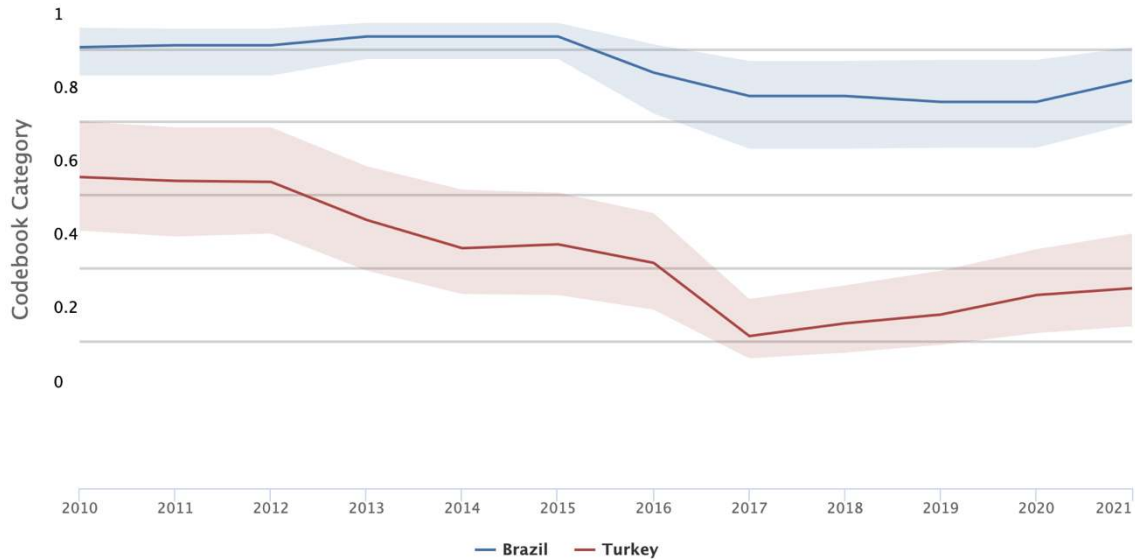
Coalition presidentialism also stems from the system of open-list proportional representation. Many candidates from multiple parties run for federal deputies in a statewide electoral district (p. 232). They run against the other candidates from other parties and their own parties at the same time. As a result, many weak political parties gain seats in the Congress (p. 233). In this system, deputies promote a bill and try to establish a larger and heterogeneous coalition in the name of the president to pass a new law through “political pork” to federal deputies (p. 233). The number of parties in this coalition increases the governance costs, ideological differences “between them, and the disproportionality of their representation in the executive branch vis-à-vis their share of legislative seats” (p. 233). Therefore, this increases the political clientelism and corruption. As can be seen, Brazilian electoral system relies more on high number of opposition parties compared to Turkey. Party switching is also common but makes the electoral coalitions much more fragile in Brazil.

In the Lower House of the National Congress, there are currently 30 parties. PT is the strongest party with its 56 seats out of 513 while the right-wing conservative PSL is represented with 52 deputies. Bolsonaro was the member of the PSL in 2018 elections, however, resigned in 2019. Center party, MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, Brazilian Democratic Movement party), has 34 seats while another center party, PSDB (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira, Party of Brazilian Social Democracy), has 29 seats. In 2018 elections, center parties and the PT lost mandates but they are still

represented with a considerable number of deputies. In the Senate, there is also a divisive distribution of seats with 23 different parties and 81 senators. Center parties are the majority with 12 seats for MDB and 9 seats for PSDB while there are 7 senators from PSD (Partido Social Democrático, Social Democratic Progress Party in Brazil) and 6 senators from the PT.

Accordingly, party system becomes highly fragmented, clientelist and unstable in Brazil with the political polarization. In the Congress, heterogeneous coalitions became the norm from 2003 onwards. In the last decade, polarization increased further with the weakening power of the established parties. Such an environment creates parties with weak organization. As a result, individuals tend to draw more reaction than the parties in the elections.

Figure 13: Legislative Constraints on the Executive in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

From a comparative perspective, Figure 13 illustrates the extent of the legislature's power to investigate, question and exercise control over the executive. It shows worse performance for Turkey. According to this data, legislature power weakened especially

after the constitutional changes and the state of emergency decrees after 2016 coup attempt.

Consequently, extent of the executive aggrandizement in the legislature is much higher in Turkey compared to Brazil because of the existing political pluralism and relatively free and fair playing field in the latter case. Compared to Turkey, personalized politics in authoritarian populist rule is more prevalent in Brazil because of the loose party organization. This may stem from populists' tendency to favor personalistic leadership over organized parties in Latin America where populism relies on leadership rather than an ideology or a program (Weyland, 2021, p. 50). As a result, Brazilian populism revolves around a charismatic leader as the embodiment of *volonté générale* (people's will) which is different from organized party consolidation in Turkey.

The two countries' paths especially diverge because of their different forms of government. Brazil is ruled by a federative presidential system with 26 states and the federal district. Turkey's centralized and unitary state power is much stronger and more effective with its newly established "Turkish type" presidential system. Power is concentrated at the hands of the president through the amendments in the rules of the democratic system, restrictions of the power of democratic institutions like parliament, parties, judiciary and through silencing the opposition channels in media, civil society and political parties. Furthermore, absence of a national election threshold and weak party discipline challenge the Brazilian parties to form a majoritarian rule in a bicameral system.

4.2.2 *Executive Aggrandizement in the Judiciary*

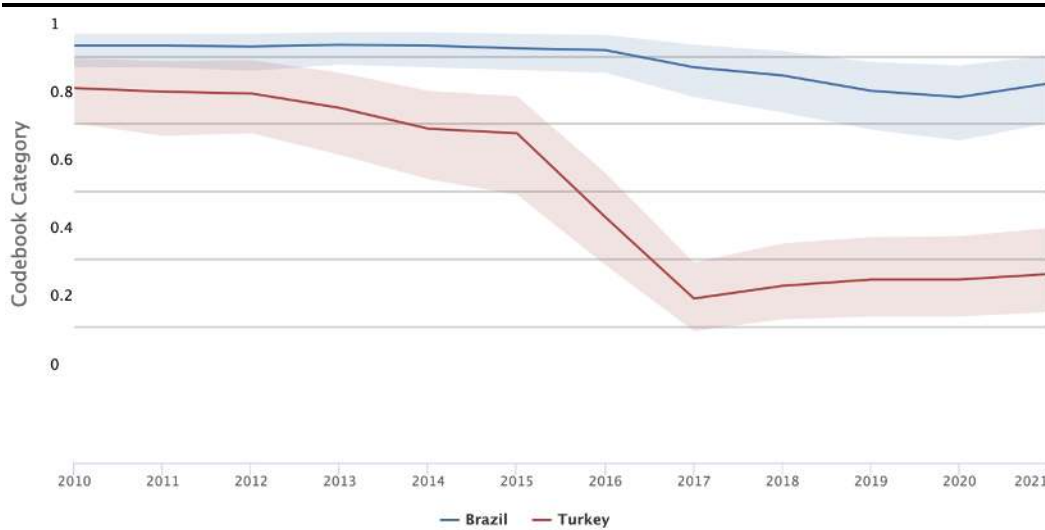
Judicial independence is another significant indicator for tracing the extent of the executive aggrandizement and authoritarian populist consolidation in a country because

judicial independence provides a court to decide without any government interference or negative consequences like dismissals (Verner, 1984; Baum, 2003). Accordingly, scholarly literature discusses the role of courts in relation to democratic backsliding and revitalizing the constitutional democracy. Below, Turkey and Brazil are compared for the extent of judicial independence to trace the executive aggrandizement in the judiciary because courts can be critical accountability mechanisms to check the governmental policies in healthy democracies.

In Turkey, constitutional changes have adversely affected the judicial independence as the executive aggrandizement increased over the judiciary with the appointments of the members of HSK (Hakimler ve Savcılar Kurulu, Council of Judges and Prosecutors in Turkey). This is a legal institution responsible of the appointment, promotion, transfer, and performance assessment of the judiciaries. Currently, the president can appoint 12 judges out of 15 for the Constitutional Court, and 6 members out of 13 for HSK. Therefore, executive has a crucial influence over the judiciary through such appointments. However, the appointment of a partisan member for the Constitutional Court has a detrimental effect on the Court's autonomy. In the new system, judges self-censor their decisions considering that they could be dismissed if ruled against the government's expectations. Violations of rights to due process and long pretrial detention also weaken the independence of the judiciary.

Accordingly, Figure 14 shows to what extent the government respect the constitution and comply with the judiciary's decisions, and to what extent the judiciary acts independently. Although Brazilian score slightly declined and shows a similar trend over the years, Turkey had particularly a sharp declining trend between 2015 and 2017. Hence, Turkey's performance has an overall decline in the last decade.

Figure 14: Judicial Constraints on the Executive Index



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

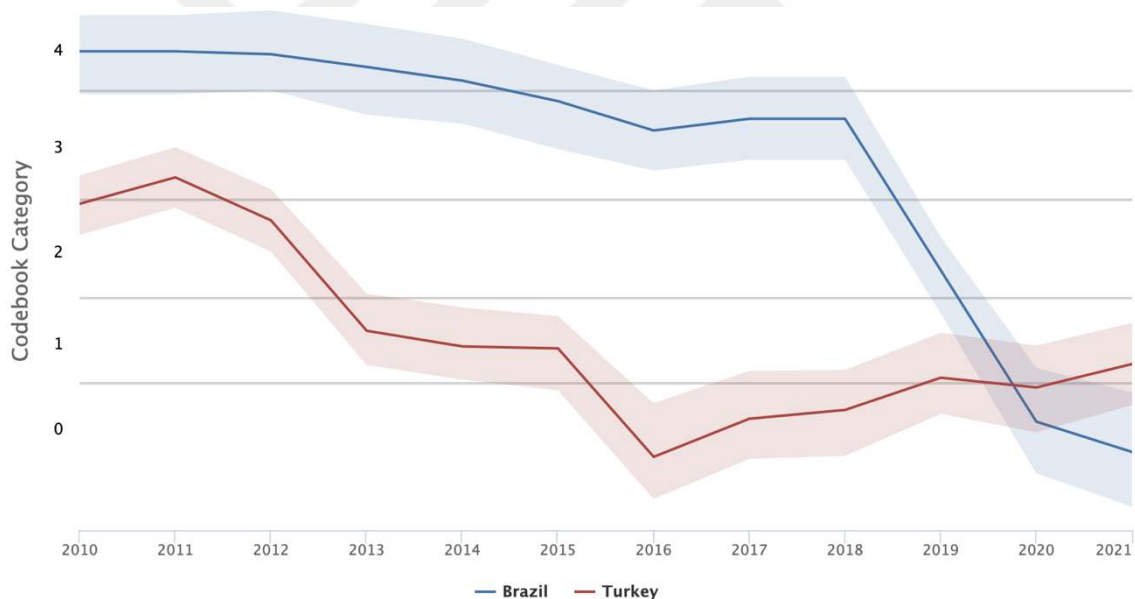
In Brazil, judiciary is fundamentally independent from government intervention and has the power of judicial review. The Supreme Court has also the power to abolish laws if they violate the constitution. Therefore, the judiciary is authorized to assess the constitutionality of the government's actions and laws.

Brazil has rather a class-biased judiciary considering that the credibility of the judiciary is shaken after the impeachment of the left-wing President Dilma Rousseff. For example, judiciary did not start the impeachment process for the right-wing president Temer despite corruption allegations.

The current president Bolsonaro is not in good terms with the judges who were appointed by the previous presidents. The former judge of the Operation Car Wash, Sérgio Moro, served as the Justice Minister during Bolsonaro's term although, in 2020, it was proven that he had used illegal methods in the Operation Car Wash. Bolsonaro especially asked Sergio Moro to join his cabinet to leverage his support base in his election campaign in 2018. This was also a manifestation of his anti-corruption and anti-PT discourse. Later, Moro resigned from the cabinet. However, Bolsonaro expected him to control the Supreme Control in favor of his decisions.

Bolsonaro constantly criticizes the judiciary and the Supreme Court because of their alleged ideological and partisan behavior. For example, in April 2020, Supreme Court affirmed the authority of the states and municipalities to take measures against the pandemic while it also pushed the government to publish figures on pandemic cases and deaths and take actions to protect indigenous people from COVID-19. In response, Bolsonaro made public speeches to call the police not to follow the orders of the Supreme Court. Bolsonaro also supported for a military intervention and a shutdown of the Supreme Court and identified the opposition as “extremists” and “terrorists” because he claimed that they are politicized and work against the President.

Figure 15: Government Attacks on Judiciary in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



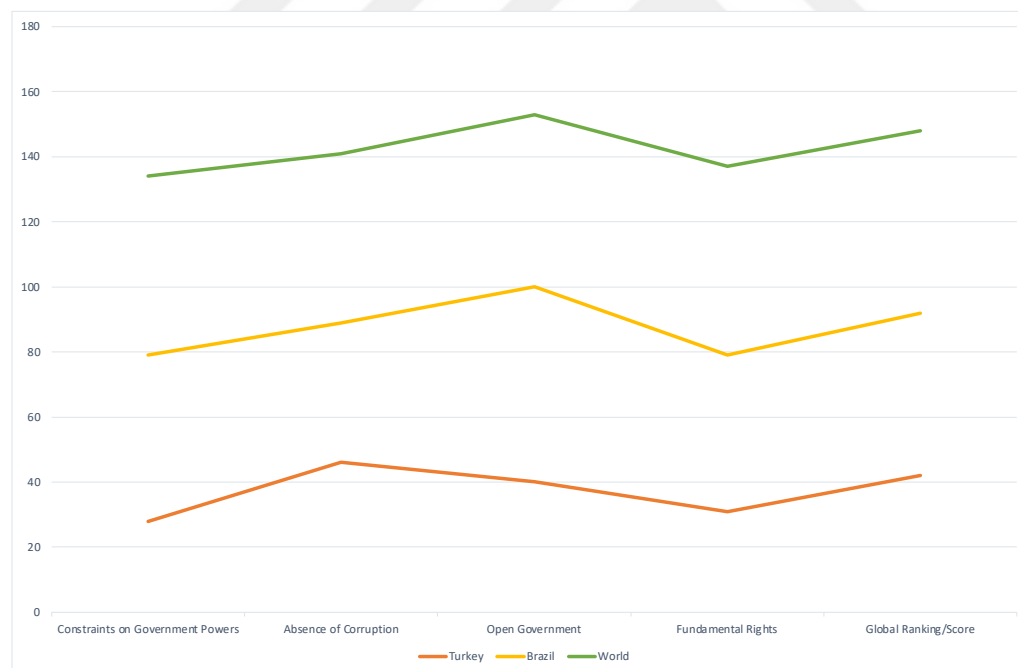
Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Accordingly, Figure 15 shows the attacks on the judiciary's integrity in Turkey and Brazil. Attacks are common in Turkey and carried out regularly. Particularly, Turkey had the lowest score in 2016. This is the time when many judges were dismissed after the post-coup attempt. In comparison, Brazil has a dramatic decline starting from 2018 with the beginning of Bolsonaro's presidency. During that time, Brazilian line is also positioned

below Turkey. Hence, there are also violations of the judiciary's integrity in Brazil despite the constitutionally proven independence of the judiciary.

Based on this framework, Rule of Law Index offers another significant data for Turkey and Brazil. Below, Figure 16 shows the scores for five factors: government accountability, corruption, open government, fundamental rights and civil justice (Yılmaz et al., 2022). It displays that both countries have weaker adherence to rule of law compared to the global average of 0.56. Nonetheless, adherence to the rule of law is much stronger in Brazil with an overall score of 0.5. Brazil also performs much better than the global average in informing the citizens about their basic laws and legal rights and protecting the freedoms of opinion and speech, assembly and association.

Figure 16: Rule of Law Index Results for Turkey and Brazil, 2021



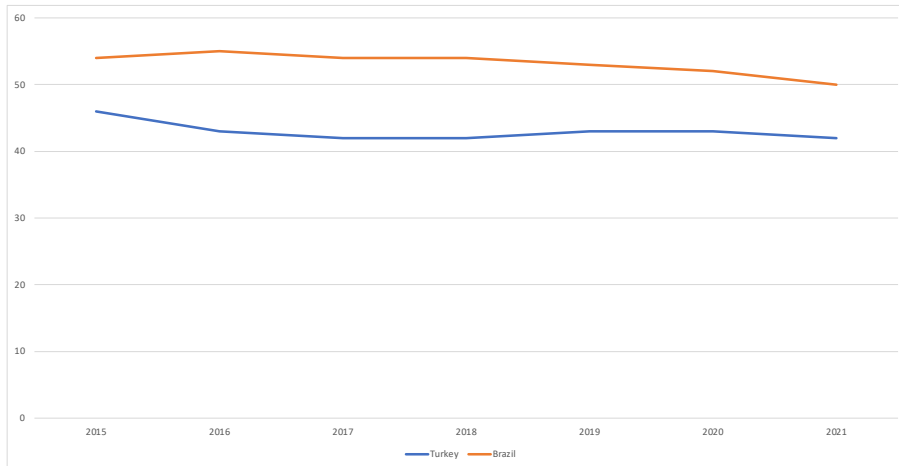
Note: World Justice Project Rule of Law Index scores based on the adherence to rule of law which range from 0 (weaker) to 1 (stronger). It measures eight factors in 139 countries: constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, criminal justice.

Source: World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2021, <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2021/>

According to the Rule of Law Index, Turkey has weaker performance on the government's subject to the law and limitation by the legislature, judiciary, non-

governmental agencies and independent auditing compared to Brazil. Turkey also performs worse than the countries in the Eastern European and Central Asian region with a score of 0.42. In comparison, Brazil's adherence to such indicators is only weaker than the global average of 0.55 and Latin American regional average of 0.53.

Figure 17: Variation in Overall Rule of Law Score for Turkey and Brazil, 2015 - 2021



Source: Compiled from data on World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, 2021, <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2021/>

Figure 17 shows the overall change in rule of law scores for Brazil and Turkey. Since the Index has only data starting from 2015, the variation in scores is compared between 2015 and 2021. Accordingly, Turkey's and Brazil's adherence to rule of law declined from 2015 to 2021. However, Brazil has a stronger performance with the score of 0.50.

Below, Table 5 and 6 also demonstrate the declining trend for constraints on the government power for Turkey (from 0.37 to 0.28) and Brazil (from 0.61 to 0.51) in the last decade.

Table 5: Variation in Rule of Law Scores for Turkey, 2015 - 2021

Indicators	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Constraints on Government Powers	0.37	0.32	0.30	0.30	0.29	0.30	0.28
Absence of Corruption	0.49	0.48	0.50	0.50	0.48	0.47	0.46
Open Government	0.45	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.40
Fundamental Rights	0.36	0.34	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.31

Data Source: World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2021, <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2021/>

Table 6: Variation in Rule of Law Scores for Brazil, 2015 - 2021

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Indicators	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Constraints on Government Powers	0.61	0.61	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.53	0.51
Absence of Corruption	0.46	0.45	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	0.43
Open Government	0.56	0.62	0.61	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.60
Fundamental Rights	0.61	0.61	0.57	0.57	0.55	0.51	0.48

Data Source: World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2021, <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/2021/>

Accordingly, Turkey's scores for the analyzed "factors (constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights)" declined from 2015 to 2021 (Scoones et al., 2021). Interestingly however, Brazilian adherence to fundamental rights decreased sharply from 0.61 to 0.48. Brazil had only higher scores for open government with a 4-point increase from 2015 to 2021.

Consequently, authoritarian populist regimes tend to change the constitution and laws to eliminate any barriers to their power after winning the elections. At the same time, those regimes want to guarantee that loyalists are placed in critical offices of the political arena and the electoral system to consolidate their power. It is highly likely to see partisans as the judges or bureaucrats in the courts, NGOs and governmental positions because technocratic expertise may provide a significant institutional support base and political autonomy for authoritarian populist forces. For example, 20-year-long rule paved the way for the governing party in Turkey to make constitutional amendments. However, it has adversely affected the judicial independence because it increased the executive aggrandizement over the judiciary with the appointments of loyal judges to the key positions. In comparison, the executive aggrandizement in the judiciary is weaker under the Bolsonaro administration because Bolsonaro could not manage to change the high-ranking judges during his shorter period of presidency. The Supreme Court has remained autonomous during a period when Bolsonaro criticized the role of the Court and threatened the judges in public rallies. In the current context, time dimension is therefore

significant to compare the extent of the authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. Brazilian presidents' executive power is also much more limited by the judiciary because presidents have decree powers, but they are temporarily passed as laws and subject to review by the judiciary (Pereira et al., 2008). These protect the structural independence of the judiciary in Brazil and therefore judiciary is more independent although it is exploited, "inefficient, and often subject to intimidation and other external influences in rural areas" (Freedom House, 2021c). In rural areas, Brazilian fragmented party system especially causes the continuation of patronage-linked corruption because strategic posts are given to small parties by the government to gain their support in the parliament. Regionally, the Northern and Northeastern states rely on clientelist and patronage-based services in Brazil. Therefore, remote states and some favelas have weak judiciary, and they are mostly controlled by a violent police force.

4.2.3 *Executive Aggrandizement in the Bureaucracy*

Bureaucratic independence and the role of bureaucracy in executive aggrandizement are another significant indicator for tracing the extent of the authoritarian populist consolidation in a country. Firstly, bureaucrats and officials in political institutions have close connections with the political actors. They can be considered either as politically neutral actors, guided by elected representatives through monitoring, censoring, and bureaucratic selection or as a politicized group with links to parties. Such close relationships between the governing party and the bureaucrats are not unexpected because bureaucrats are usually granted with future political careers in exchange for political engagement.

Secondly, effective control and organization of society is significant to consolidate authoritarian power. However, it relies on the effective institutional capacity of the

regime. Bureaucracy is the key for what Mann (1984) calls “infrastructural power”.

Considering that authoritarianism is sustainable if the state effectively rewards the loyalists and punishes the opponents (Slater et al., 2011), bureaucratic power is important for authoritarians to fulfill the demands of the loyalists. If bureaucracy is weak, it is difficult for authoritarian populist consolidation because they would have less “organizational resources and coercive capacity” to consolidate their power (Levitsky et al., 2020, p. 58) and satisfy their followers.

In case of weak bureaucratic power, authoritarian populists work with the military (Hunter et al., 2021). However, populism literature does not pay much attention to the relationship between military, populism and authoritarianism. For example, President of El Salvador, Bukele use military to occupy the Congress for his authoritarian leanings. Similarly, military’s emergence as a key political actor under the Bolsonaro government is worth mentioning for understanding the recent democratic backsliding in Brazil. In comparison, Turkey’s civil control over the military with the post 2016 coup attempt created an opportunity for the governing party to transform traditional authoritarian tutelage of the military to a civil-led authoritarian power of the elected officials.

Political parties and the judiciary could show resilience against authoritarian populists. In such cases, alliance with the military could pave the way for an authoritarian populist to consolidate power and legitimize rule under the backing of the military as a nationalist force (Hunter et al., 2021, p. 341). Likewise, military officers provide a technocratic power and logistical capacity for an authoritarian leader like Bolsonaro who does not have an institutional support base. Accordingly, based on the historical trajectory of military as a traditional authoritarian tutelage in Turkey and Brazil in Chapter 3, this section

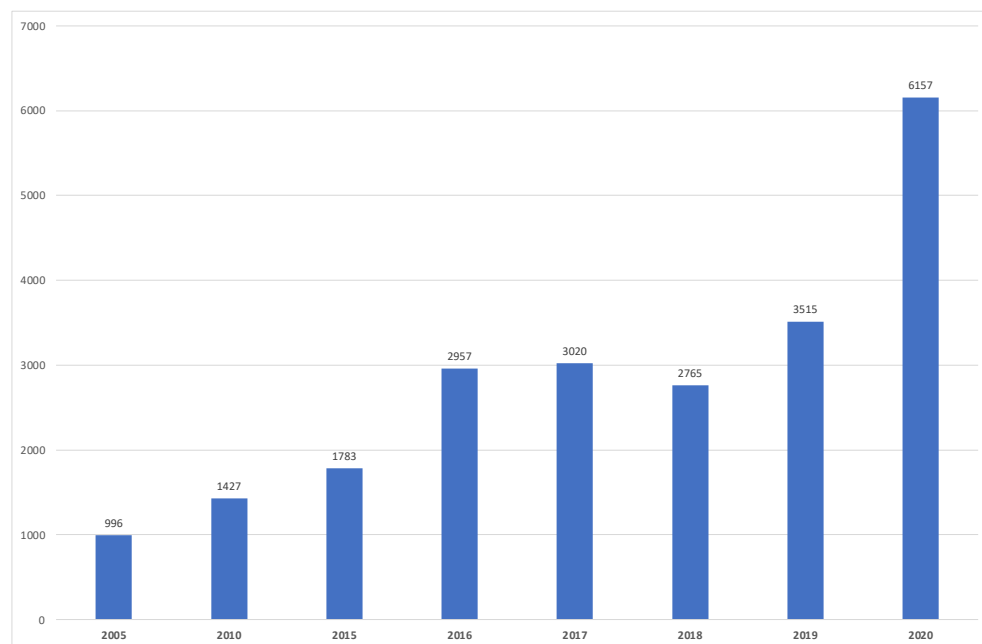
compares the two cases for the extent of executive aggrandizement in bureaucracy with a focus on the last decade.

Turkey and Brazil can be compared in terms of the privatization of bureaucracy, military's role in bureaucracy and infrastructural power. Firstly, Brazilian 1988 Constitution established a Weberian merit-based bureaucratic structure with the legal administration of RJU (Regime Jurídico Único, Single Juridical Regime in Brazil) (Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p. 206). Private sector's role diminished in favor of the public sector to guarantee tenure and retirement benefits (p. 206). In contrast, Turkey adopted market principles with AKP government while 1982 Constitution weakened the power of public sector unionization and labor laws (p. 206). AKP especially aimed to weaken the power of "bureaucratic oligarchy" (Somer, 2016) which was the reminiscent of the military and Republican elite and symbolized their power in the politics. In the end, AKP's institutional power became a threat for democracy in Turkey because state becomes an extension of the party through the weakening power of the opposing bureaucratic force. Secondly, the current Brazilian president, Bolsonaro, does not have an institutional support from the constituency and established parties. Therefore, Bolsonaro's populism draws support from the "traditional family, the church, the nation and the military" (Heller, 2020, p. 559). Particularly, he has turned to military as an alternative source to stay in power and push the political agenda (Akkoyunlu 2021b, p. 11). For Bolsonaro, military support also gives an opportunity to put pressure against the opposing groups and prevent a possible impeachment against his presidency (Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p. 341). The domestic deployment of the armed forces has been a populist strategy to repress the opposition that poses a danger to populist rule (Yılmaz and Ertürk, 2021; Houle et al.,

2018). Similarly, Bolsonaro uses the military to suppress the opposition from the political parties and civil society (Heller, 2020, p. 559).

Bolsonaro has this considerable support from the military thanks to his ex-military position and therefore networks with the retired and active-duty officers (Akkoyunlu 2021b, p.11). Nonetheless, military's increasing role in the politics is not specific to Bolsonaro government because president Temer also relied on the military for balancing his weak popular support in the post-impeachment process (Akkoyunlu 2021b, p. 8). However, Bolsonaro received support in exchange of political positions given to the military officers which allowed military to be involved in governance at the national level. Therefore, such recently increasing influence of the military over the government is called a "stealth intervention" in Brazil considering the significant number of military personnel in the bureaucracy and the political arena (Akkoyunlu 2021b, p.12; Hunter et al., 2021; Weyland, 2021).

Figure 18: Number of the Military Personnel with Civilian Positions in Brazil's Federal Government



Source: Created by the author from the data compiled by the political scientist William Nozaki on the data of Brazil's Federal Court of Accounts and Institute for Applied Economic Research

Figure 18 shows clearly the growing number of retired and current military officials within the Bolsonaro administration which reached a higher level (6157) than the one in the Brazilian military dictatorship⁴⁵. As a result, some prefer to define Bolsonaro's government as "bolsochavista" because increasing number of military officials in the bureaucracy could lead to a backsliding from the political order that ended military privileges and authority, established after 1985 democratization period. Therefore, military's increasing power during Bolsonaro administration threatens the future trajectory of Brazilian democracy because higher number of military officials in bureaucracy means increasing "military autonomy under future administrations" (Hunter et al., 2021, p. 337).

Thirdly, compared to the current influence of the military in the Brazilian politics, military's political power has waned in Turkey through dissolving the military rankings, civilian control over the military schools and imprisonment of the coup plotters since 2016 coup attempt. However, militarization of the politics continues under the control of the state in Turkey thanks to its unitary state power and monopolization of the use of force. For example, military and the police still fight against the Kurdish ethnic separatists in the southeast of the country. This security politics is especially used to legitimize the authoritarian policies of the governing party. Therefore, power balance is currently on the side of the state with the increased security operations. In comparison, paramilitary groups have a considerable power in Brazil and threatens the state's "legitimate use of force". Particularly, Brazilian weak infrastructural power undermines government performance and weakens the public support for authoritarian rule (Levitsky, 2018, p.105). In the current context, technocrats are not dominant in Bolsonaro's political coalition as he is known for keeping science and its believers at a distance. Therefore,

military officers provide technocratic expertise for the presidents in the areas of energy, transportation, infrastructure, and public security where the bureaucracy and police force remain ineffective. As a result, infrastructural power in favelas remains weak and it becomes the manifestation of the “continued socio-economic and racial inequality” in Brazil (Ystanes, 2018; Richardson et al., 2005). State has to fight with the crime and inequality at the same time⁴⁶ which weakens the authoritarian populist rule and its legitimation in Brazil compared to the centralized unitary state power of the governing party in Turkey. In that sense, urban violence is another indicator of the militarization in Brazil. It is especially a key challenge to socioeconomic development and adversely affecting the security and quality of life in urban slums and rural areas. Violence is legitimized because the marginalized groups are not defined as citizens but as “security threats” while good citizens are considered to deserve protection from such groups.

Brazil has decentralized police force under the control of state governments while organized crime is active in many urban areas like Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Norte and Recife. Paramilitary organizations are formed by the former policemen and firemen to control favelas, carry out executions, collect protection money and threaten those who refuse to pay. Powerful landlords have also a crucial impact on the local judiciary and police while there are quite large number of military officers in the current Bolsonaro government.

Currently, Bolsonaro’s presidency provides a favorable political climate for state violence. He clearly stated his support for state violence during his presidential campaign and praised tortures during military regime. In his presidential campaign, he said:

“If someone says I want to give carte blanche to the military police to kill. I’d respond yes. I do want that. A police officer that doesn’t shoot anyone and gets shot at is not a police officer”⁴⁷

Bolsonaro also claims that “the armed people will never be enslaved” and “society would be safer if people carried guns to protect themselves from violence.”⁴⁸

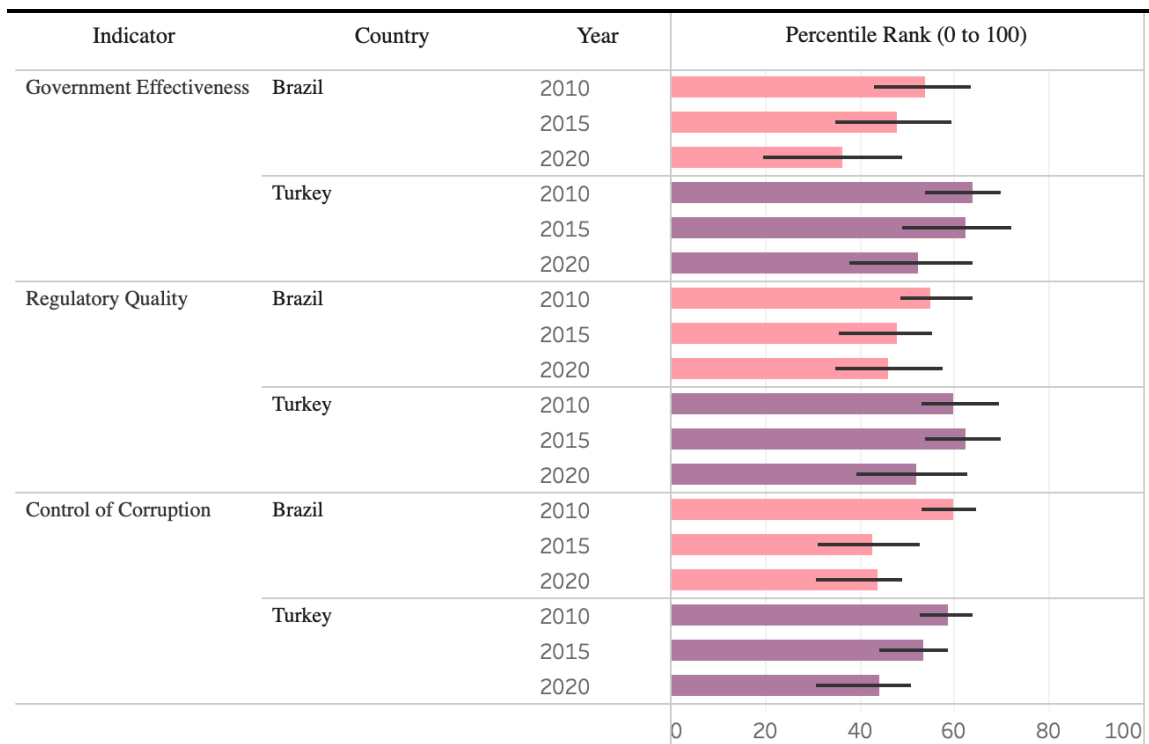
Brazil has therefore worse performance considering the infrastructural power because the administrative structures are insufficient to provide the most basic public services. For example, health system has faced critical problems due to budget cuts since 2016. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, people with the virus could not receive effective treatment in a country where majority lives at the risk of poverty. There was also lack of vital equipment like ventilators and oxygen in distant areas. In the first place, Bolsonaro did not take necessary measures to fight against the pandemic at the national level while the states and municipalities had to deal with the pandemic despite their financial difficulties. At the same time, school closures had dire consequences for the poor in comparison to the wealthy families because of its probable long-term effects on human capital accumulation and socio-economic opportunities.

As a testimony, World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators also show that effectiveness of the Brazilian government is lower on policy efficiency and regulatory quality as indicators for bureaucratic efficiency (See Figure 19).

Figure 19: Change in Governance Indicators for Turkey and Brazil, 2010, 2015, 2020

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Source: Received from data on “Worldwide Governance Indicators” for Turkey and Brazil in 2010, 2015 and 2020 from, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>

Consequently, Turkey has an increasingly powerful central government with an efficient infrastructural power. Weberian based merit principle has been undermined because of the increased political patronage in the public sector (Akkoyunlu, 2021c). Therefore, despite the lower level of meritocracy and professionalism in Turkey, there is a centralized bureaucratic power with a “more flexible, efficient and result-oriented public service in large part through weakening labor laws and co-opting public sector employees” (Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p.227). Bureaucrats’ campaigning for the governing party in the elections and the abuse of state resources for campaign funding are especially the critical pillars of the higher extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey based on the executive aggrandizement in bureaucracy (Esen et al., 2016).

From a comparative perspective, bureaucratic efficiency and performance legitimacy is weaker in Brazil considering the recent mismanagement of the pandemic crisis. Currently, the expansion of military members in political positions has also undermined

democratic accountability in Brazil. Therefore, this section focused mostly on the increasing influence of military officers in the Brazilian politics compared to Turkey. Currently, the Brazilian opposition parties and the experts are debating about the possibility of a coup and a continuing presidency of Bolsonaro. It is likely that lower-rank officers could support Bolsonaro after his defeat to Lula although anti-Bolsonaro voters and the institutions like the courts and media would resist any violation in the constitutional order⁴⁹. Bolsonaro's supporters could also take part in an uprising and thereby disturbing a nonviolent power transmission. Nonetheless, some experts do not expect a coup d'état and a democratic breakdown at this stage (Hunter et al., 2021, p. 338). Top commanders have showed a reluctant attitude to support Bolsonaro and expressed their commitment for the state and the constitution (p. 350). In the recent past, military also hesitated to give support on Bolsonaro administration especially during his unsuccessful COVID-19 management. As a result, populist-military alliance has weaknesses even during Bolsonaro administration and therefore shows a strong and resilient democratic trajectory for the future politics of Brazil in case of a defeat of Bolsonaro.

4.2.4 Political Economic Factors in Executive Aggrandizement

This section primarily focuses on the political economy aspect of authoritarian populist consolidation. It empirically looks at the state-business relations and political-economic factors in executive aggrandizement by combining the theoretical framework and historical trajectory in Chapter 3 (See also Figure 10).

Turkey

To grasp the role of political economy in authoritarian populist consolidation, it is significant to have an overview of the economic environment in Turkey in the first place.

Accordingly, dependency on consumption and construction are the two challenging realms on Turkey's economic growth. Turkey has an unsustainable growth because of the reliance on construction and tourism sectors rather than a production economy. In the early years of AKP, there was an economic growth, increasing levels of income, employment and FDI. However, after the rising economic recession and regional conflicts in the world, Turkey has been experiencing economic problems because of the rising inflation and the costs in the construction sector. At that time, young population and well-educated labor force is a challenge because of the increased youth unemployment. Regional disparities between Eastern and Western Turkey are also another challenge in terms of the infrastructural services. Hence, Turkey should invest more on research and innovation in the name of a sustainable economic growth and preserving the performance legitimacy. Economic growth is especially important for performance legitimacy (Mounk, 2018) to hold on power.

Recently, extreme poverty rate has started to increase from 13.5% in 2016 to 14.4% in 2018 (BTI 2022, p. 19). Gini coefficient (0.40) and the income quintile ratio (7.8) also shows that income inequality increased together with at-risk-of-poverty rate (21.2%) (p. 19). As a result, Turkey has the highest Gini coefficient in Europe (Statista, 2020). Recently, informal economy has decreased but in 2019, the total rate of unregistered employment was still 34.5% of the total workforce (BTI 2022, p. 21). At the same time, 36.1% is not protected by the labor law which is also a source of concern considering the socio-economic inequalities and the refugee population in Turkey.

GDP growth recently faced some fluctuations and eventually declined from over 8% growth in 2010 to below 1% in 2019⁵⁰. Turkey also faces an economic recession as the value of Turkish lira declined by about 30% in one year and increasing inflation rate (Demirel-Pegg et al., 2021). The consumer price inflation (CPI) rate increased to double

digits (36%) as of December 2021. The lira lost 44% of its value against the US dollar as of March 2022⁵¹ despite interventions of the Central Bank. Inflation rate was also 73.5% as of May 2022⁵² because of the price pressures and the depreciation of lira against the US dollar.

As a result of that recent economic slowdown, inequality has increased since 2018 with the declining average incomes in Turkey (World Inequality Report, 2022). For example, the top 10% of the population owns 54.5% of total national income while the bottom 50% has a share of 12% (World Inequality Report, 2022). Turkey has economic woes because of the conflicts with the West, the politicization of financial institutions like the Central Bank, the COVID-19 pandemic, the high number of refugees after regional conflicts and the absence of commitment to the rule of law and thereby unpredictable economic policies. Additionally, low wages, high unemployment and the prevalence of informal sector have further increased the economic vulnerability at the social level in Turkey. Especially, the COVID-19 pandemic left the economy vulnerable and adversely affected the tourism sector, trade volumes and FDI. Sustainability of the current policy is also difficult considering the Russia-Ukraine war at the global level and the proximity of the 2023 general elections in the domestic context. Although Turkey was more successful in fighting the pandemic compared to Brazil thanks to its stronger healthcare infrastructure, SGI 2021 Report also states that welfare policies did not protect socio-economically underprivileged groups from the adverse effects of the pandemic. AKP's social assistance program is also fragmented and target only the elderly, widowed and disabled but exclude the homeless compared to the inclusive PT-led social assistance programs (SGI, 2021). As a result, poverty and income inequality still persist in Turkey

because the existing cash transfers and recovery packages put extra financial burden on the budget.

Considering that the regime's survival relies on its ability to avoid, manage and resolve such economic crisis and problems, patronage, clientelism and corruption are important pillars of the neo-patrimonial arrangements in Turkey. They are built between the government and the co-opted groups to consolidate the power of the authoritarian populists (Yılmaz et al., 2021). For example, the current Brazilian administration co-opts with the military groups while it is mostly the business and political actors in Turkey. Patronage has further increased in Turkey with the increasing power consolidation and the continuation of the redistribution policies (Somer, 2016, p. 8). As a result, Turkey has succeeded in creating a "conservative and personalized social neoliberalism" (Somer, 2016).

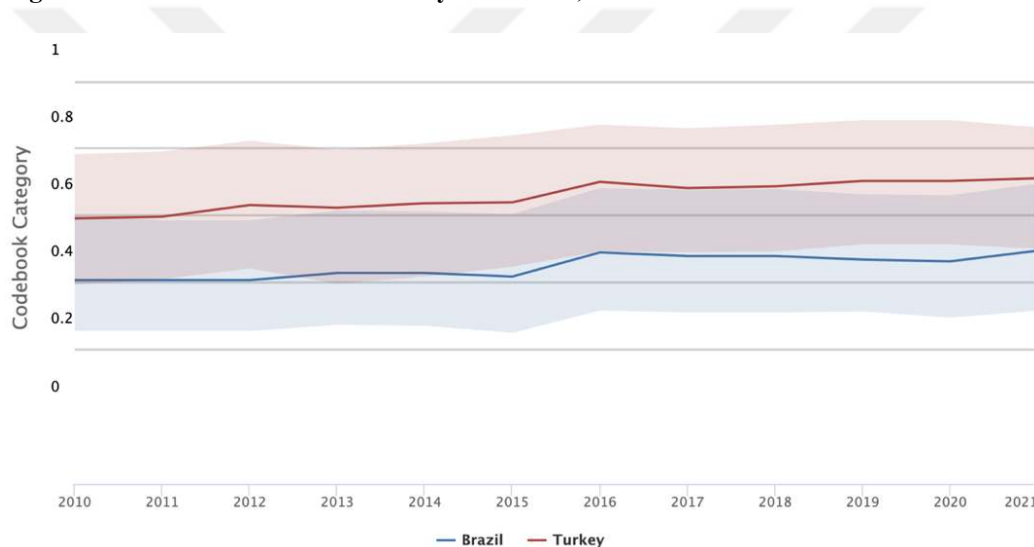
Neoliberal populism in Turkey, rests on two pillars. On the one hand, populism offers the opportunity to provide a certain level of welfare to the citizens with the social assistance policies of the government (Akçay, 2021, p.16). Compared to Brazil, Turkey adopted authoritarian neoliberalism as part of an authoritarian statism where democracy declined and executive power increased (Akçay, 2021, p. 6). For example, one of the greatest achievements of AKP government in the eyes of the electorate is the increased social assistance programs and the integration of informal labor into the social security system (Esen et al., 2021). Scope of the "green card" also increased for the lower income groups. Municipalities and pro-government NGOs were responsible of such financial aids.

On the other hand, union activities are suppressed with neoliberal policies, and systematic reductions of the purchasing power of the lower and middle classes and the role of the state in the economy through privatizations. Legal regulations undermined the political and social power of the labor unions. Small and medium-sized enterprises that employ

cheaper and uninsured labor was the segment that most benefited from this policy. As a result, power of the working class was broken, and the labor market became insecure. Therefore, millions of people are dependent on government assistance to survive as part of the neoliberal populism.

Further evidence for dependent relationship can be derived from the V-Dem's "clientalism index". Figure 20 graphs the extent of clientelist relationships in politics of Turkey and Brazil.

Figure 20: Clientelism Index in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Clientelistic relationships are present in populist regimes which also depicts a similar trend for Turkey and Brazil. Accordingly, Brazil has a higher score in clientelism, and Turkey shows normatively better situation. This may stem from historical trajectory of populism in Brazil which was also ruled by a leftist PT administration.

Considering that clientelism is marked by targeted policies and distribution of resources in return for political support, AKP also created a partisan distribution system in which public resources are systematically transferred to pro-government capital groups. For example, 40% of the public tenders were given to pro-government companies and the remaining 45% of the tender was distributed to subcontractors, affiliated with these

companies between 2004 and 2011 (Çeviker Gürakar and Bircan, 2018). By this way, AKP government could consolidate its electorate through financial support to the loyal supporters, strengthening the pro-government media and maintaining financial support to the government-affiliated foundations and companies (Esen et al., 2016, p. 21).

AKP formed a “cross-class coalition” based on economic benefits and sociocultural identities (Sunni Muslims coming from Turkish and Kurdish ethnicity) (Esen et al., 2021, p. 1080). Accordingly, pro-government business is reliant on AKP “for capital accumulation through public procurement, construction permits, cheap credit, and tax reliefs”. In return, AKP relies on such business groups “for financial, material, and human resources in the form of campaign contributions, government-friendly media, donations to pro-AKP charities and foundations, and the provision of goods to the urban poor” (p. 1080). As a result, AKP government enriches the pro-government capital groups through partisan resource distribution and reduces their costs by making wage workers insecure. At the same time, AKP’s neoliberal populist policies pave the way for forming a voter base among urban working class, Islamist religious groups, small and medium sized business groups. This policy provides a more consolidated support base for Turkey thanks to its socio-cultural and economic links tied to the government. In comparison, Bolsonaro’s mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-democratic tendencies alienated moderate and centrist supporters. Bolsonaro’s main voter base consists of Evangelical Christians⁵³, police, military, business and rural landowners. Particularly, his anti-corruption and anti-communist messages attracted moderate supporters and lavajatistas (Lava Jato case supporters).

Consequently, control over economic resources and distribution of them to the partisan groups in Turkey not only turns the playing field in favor of the government, but also limits the opposition's capacity to move. Government has especially increased its control

over the economy through its “regulatory authority” (Akçay, 2021, p.4). Politically, the extensive control over media outlets gives the government a huge advantage in setting the political framework and limits the opposition's ability to raise new political issues and influence the agenda. Those mechanisms create the perception that the government is the only legitimate force to rule the country. Therefore, government creates a symbolic control over economic and political sphere with the continuous use of propaganda tools. Thus, this narrows the opposition's field of action and turns it into a system that ensures the continuity of authoritarian populist power.

Brazil

Based on the historical trajectory in Chapter 3, Brazil is one of the most unequal countries in the world because of the high level of income and wealth inequality⁵⁴. Social programs of the PT government (Bolsa Familia and Fome Zero) lifted 25 million Brazilians out of poverty (BTI Economic Transformation, 2021). However, income inequality continued to increase at the same time. Therefore, there is still a considerable gap between the rich and the poor and therefore social exclusion is still high in Brazil (Funke et al., 2020). Despite high socio-economic inequality, Brazil moved towards a market-friendly socio-economic model after the impeachment of President Rousseff and Temer’s presidency in 2016.

Recently, Brazilian economy is facing challenges similar to Turkey. As of 2019, Brazil was “one of the worst performing economies globally in terms of GDP growth, unemployment, and investment”⁵⁵. Prices for energy, metals and agricultural products have been declining since 2014. This caused a recession in 2015 and 2016 because of the absence of productivity gains and diversification but economy is slightly recovered in 2017 and 2018, with the 1.1% increase in GDP in 2019 (BTI Economic Transformation,

2021). However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic plunged the economy into a global recession and adversely affected the Brazilian economy in 2020. Lately, prices of agricultural and mineral products increased while global inflation was also increasing. As a result, prices of import goods like fuel and fertilizers, consumer goods, machinery and equipment have increased⁵⁶. In recent years, the Brazilian currency has depreciated against the US dollar and the exchange rate fell from \$1 to BRL 5.70 in 2020 (BTI, 2022). This economic outlook is different from early 2000s when economy grew, US dollar fell, inflation was under control, national income increased, and extreme poverty rate declined “from 27.5% of the population in 2001 to 8.4% in 2014”.⁵⁷ As a result, many people today experience food insecurity and deal with the high prices because of high inflation (over 12%) and devaluation in Brazil⁵⁸. Frequency of moderate or severe food insecurity increased from 18.3% between 2014-2016 to 23.5% between 2018-2020 (FAO, IFAD, PAHO, UNICEF and WFP, 2021).

Similar to Turkey, many Brazilians work in the informal sector, and do not have institutional protections, and constitutional rights. They do not also belong to a trade union and lack the benefits from collective bargaining which causes the lack of a “strategic economic management and a sustained income redistribution”⁵⁹. Corruption scandals exacerbate this situation. For example, Lava Jato corruption scandal revealed the structure of firms and their relationship with the Brazilian federal government⁶⁰.

Neoliberal populist parties were responsible of the proletarianization and increasing informal labor during this process of market-oriented economic model (Bekmen et al., 2022, p. 10). Therefore, neoliberal hegemony also had to embrace a policy of financial inclusion to obtain the consent of the lower classes for the neoliberal regime’s survival in Brazil similar to Turkey. For example, Bolsonaro’s presidency appealed to the precarious

and informal workers whose material gains declined with the economic collapse in later years of PT government. Those workers live in the margins of urban centers and thereby having weak infrastructural settings but recognized with their neo-Pentecostal Evangelical identity (Braga 2019; Bekmen et al., 2022). Bolsonaro government maintains the redistribution programs because of their popularity. In 2020, cash transfer is made for approximately 13.4 million families. However, the existing welfare policies became unsustainable. Brazilian economy grows at high rates, but it is not sustainable in the long-term and subjects to high growth volatility⁶¹. Such volatility weakens government performance and capacity.

Poor government performance also stems from business and government relations which relies on nepotism, relations among elites, and oligopoly in Brazil (Schneider, 2015; Schneider et al., 2009; Samuels, 2002). Similar to Turkey, Brazil has high corruption levels because populist trajectories of the two countries have paved the way for political clientelism through benefits and services to their partisans (Somer, 2016). Turkey especially allowed the privatization of the public ownership in favor of partisan companies' profit-making. Corruption investigations in Turkey and Brazil have also showed the influential role of the business interests on the elected officials. For example, in 2014, Operation Car Wash corruption investigation targeted state oil company Petrobras and private construction companies (Freedom House, 2021c). Judge Sérgio Moro was a key figure in this investigation and later joined the Bolsonaro administration as Justice Minister. Investigative reports (Car Wash Leaks) published in 2019 showed inappropriate relationship between Moro and the federal prosecutors of the corruption investigation against the high-ranking PT members including the former president, Lula da Silva. However, although Brazil has a chronic corruption problem and rentier state

relations with the business, the Brazilian government takes the political responsibility as seen in the case of Operation Car Wash. In comparison, Turkey's officials show domestic or foreign conflicts as the causes of economic problems and does not take any responsibility for corruption allegations. Such practices contributed to the resiliency of the institutional democracy, transparency, social state structure and the fight against discrimination in Brazil.

Compared to Turkey, Brazil has also a “developmental hierarchical market economy (DHME)” model based on a division between domestic and transnational companies and formal and informal labor market (Taylor, 2020). Brazilian weak regulatory control on economy stems from its “coalitional presidentialism” and the fragmented party system and therefore weakly planned organization among the executive branches. Taylor says that governments are

“...ineffective at the essentially political act of controlling the distribution of rents in ways that channel business energies in strategically productive long-term directions” (Taylor, 2020, p.192).

Consequently, in comparison to this loose control mechanism in Brazil, AKP government used neoliberal economic policies to consolidate its power over political and economic institutions (Günay and Dzihic, 2016, pp. 6-7). The key pillars of its neoliberal model were to reduce inequality, unemployment, and to embrace growth through construction. From a comparative historical perspective, AKP had a stronger neoliberal position than the PT thanks to its Islamist-conservative patronage network, whose seeds were planted in September 12 period, expanded in the 1990s and institutionalized in the 2000s. Transportation, education and health investments that the PT neglected were embraced by AKP. As a result, this left a lasting impact on the voters. The PT government was also more vulnerable because the economic crisis in Brazil was at a level that would have

shaken even the strongest government. The Brazilian economy declined by 3.8% in 2015 and is still struggling for recovery. However, the construction industry and cheap labor are the backbones for the fragile economy in Turkey.

Compared to Brazilian authoritarian populist governments, political economic factors have also become favorable for AKP government in Turkey because AKP's political economy policies created new classes as opposed to resilient Istanbul based industrial and financial bourgeoisie of the early years of the Republic. Firstly, a new bourgeoisie class emerged in the urban centres of Anatolia in the 1990s who were conservative small-capital groups engaging in exports (Kumral, 2022). For example, AKP attempted to weaken the Western economic policies oriented TÜSİAD (Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği, Turkish Industry and Business Association) to support a pro-government business group, MÜSİAD (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği, Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association)

Secondly, a new bourgeoisie elite emerged with the growing construction sector. Thanks to the foreign loans and cheap credit during the initial years of AKP, this sector grew with the construction projects on airports, bridges, mosques, malls and mega-housing projects like TOKİ (Kumral, 2022). Public contracts with such elite groups have been made in exchange of their partisanship for AKP's policies (Balkan et al., 2014).

Thirdly, a new middle class was formed since the mid-1980s (Tuğal, 2016) who have been residing in metropolises and working in financial sector and multinational companies. However, the last group can be seen as the resilience force against the authoritarian power of AKP who also supported and participated in Gezi protests (Tuğal, 2016; Keyder, 2013).

Lastly, traditional working class transformed into an informal precariat class. Compared to the PT's universal rights and encompassing redistribution policies in Brazil, AKP preferred a clientalistic welfare system rather than the one with rights-based because only the members of AKP or the partisan foundations and NGOs would benefit from such welfare policies (Yörük, 2012; Eder, 2010, 2013).

This stems from the fact that AKP embraced neoliberal policies more than the PT government in Brazil thanks to the privatizations. Accordingly, AKP regulated the employee-employer relationship for the benefit of the employer and transferred the social responsibilities of the state to foundations, communities, party and family. In comparison, the PT carried out the social policies as the state responsibility thanks to its leftist tradition. For example, *Bolso Familia* was financed by the progressive taxation compared to Turkey where regressive taxation is applied in a business-friendly way to sustain the government tenure. Therefore, compared to PT-led social benefits, Turkey's authoritarianism is politico-economically consolidated thanks to the conditional cash transfer programmes and benefits given to particular political personalities rather than impersonal welfare rights. Such relationship with the state created a dependency on AKP and challenged the opposition because benefits are associated with the party rather than the state. As a result, authoritarian populism in Turkey created a relationship between the "providers" as patrons and beneficiaries as "clients" (Somer, 2016). Therefore, the political economy aspect of authoritarian populism in Turkey relies more on political patronage and clientelistic links with the poor, business groups and NGOs as a redistribution policy and state-society relationship. Particularly, AKP's initial years were triumphed with social policies in education, public transportation, housing and health. In a socio-economically unequal country like Brazil, Bolsonaro has only recently announced

a social spending plan, Help Brazil (Auxilio Brasil), for 16.9 million poor families⁶².

However, this costly spending program violates constitutional federal spending restriction and controverts with the economists and business. Therefore, even the current imminent threat of the authoritarian populist administration in Brazil has weaknesses in terms of the political economic factors.

4.2.5 *Executive Aggrandizement in Media*

Based on the political economic factors explained in Chapter 3 and the previous section, media has also been the propagating tool for neoliberal policies to introduce mega projects and legitimize the economic growth at the expense of rising unemployment and precarity of the new informal class in Turkey and Brazil. Therefore, executive aggrandizement in media is the last dimension to understand the extent of an institutional consolidation path for authoritarian populism in Turkey and Brazil. Below, they are compared for the extent of the press independence in mainstream and social media networks.

Media coverage is important for voters to hold politicians accountable (Garz et al., 2021; Hopkins et al., 2018; Snyder et al., 2010; Besley et al., 2006) because partisan media gives selective information to its viewers. In the end, public learns information favorable to that media network's ideology (Broockman et al., 2022). For example, if the network gives more emphasis on a specific news topic, viewers consider the topic significant and recall it more in the elections (Iyengar et al., 1987, p. 16). Viewers of the partisan media could also be resistant to persuasion for an opposition view (Prior, 2013; Zaller, 1992). Therefore, violation of press freedom is an indicator and a contributor for deepening democratic backsliding.

Accordingly, the existing literature also suggests two strategies for authoritarian populist consolidation: the censorship to manipulate the "information" and restriction of the

opponents (Gehlbach et al., 2021; Guriev et al., 2019). Therefore, although press freedom is significant to keep the public informed about the government's actions for a strong and sustainable democracy, Freedom House data shows that media freedom has been declining globally in the last decade⁶³. It is declined through attainment of media outlets by pro-government holding companies, regulatory and financial pressure, and violent attacks against the journalists reporting against the government policies. In this way, media serves for the holding companies' business interests and the government to receive the major public tenders rather than the public's interests. Media censorship also distorts the quality and quantity of information and thereby misleading the public and avoiding the opposition to challenge the government (Petrova, 2022, p. 8).

As a result, authoritarian populist regimes target the state-owned and privately-owned media to influence the public opinion. However, by doing so, populist incumbents reduce the media pluralism. Manipulation of the media is made through control by ownership, advertising and sanctions, and legal provisions and law enforcement agencies. As media outlets become associated with the incumbents, opposition parties could not find an opportunity to secure their presence in the media. Hence, the opposition prefers the social media in such an uneven playing field. Although traditional media serves as a propaganda platform for manifesting deepening ideological cleavages and polarization, social media has become a hub for the opposition to create an alternative platform to make their claims against the government and counteract misinformation spread by the authoritarian populist governments. However, such uneven environment for media networks could deepen the political polarization (Diamond et al., 2019). Governments have been using societal polarization to pursue their illiberal policies and restrict free speech and press. Populists tend to

-
- limit individual freedoms,
 - make it difficult to criticize and punish the government and prevent the dissemination of anti-government news,
 - and introduce penal regulations such as defamation and slander.

Governments restrict the freedom of the press, make the activities of the opposition media more difficult, and prevent them from continuing their existence by giving financial penalties. While populist governments are moving towards authoritarianism, it is a common pattern of behavior that they generally try to justify themselves by citing the practices of other countries as examples, to speak appreciatively of their prohibitions and limitations, and to point out that they also need such practices in their own countries.

Similar to these theoretical underpinnings for authoritarian populists in the world, the Global Expression Report⁶⁴ also shows significant declines in the scores for freedom of expression in Turkey and Brazil. Accordingly, percentage change between 2010-2020 for Turkey is 81% while it is 40.8% for Brazil. Compared to Turkey, freedom of expression and the media network in Brazil is much more vibrant although Freedom House data⁶⁵ shows that journalists researching on corruption are usually threatened, face harassment and economic pressures from the government. In 2014, Brazil passed a “network neutrality” law. However, government does not practically implement this law. Likewise, international human rights treaties are ratified to protect the freedoms of expression and association. However, control and censorship on media began under the presidency of Michel Temer and increased further with President Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro also announced his plans to close Brazil’s largest media conglomerate, Grupo Globo⁶⁶ and intended to close the Brazil’s Communication Company (EBC - Empresa Brasil de Comunicação) and merge a public broadcaster, TV Brasil with the state-owned broadcaster, TV NBR. By this way, Bolsonaro aimed to link the public, private and state-owned broadcasting systems and increase the control over the media. Brazil directly applies censorship but

only on sensitive issues. In Turkey, government censorship efforts are more direct and routine. AKP government relies more on the media conglomerations and the legal means to censor the opposition media (Akser, 2018). In the World Press Freedom Index (2021), Turkey is also portrayed with high political control over media funding and news agencies. Journalists are also fired or left with limited options for coverage and commentary about the government policies. Overall, Turkey and Brazil can be compared to understand the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation with a focus on the absence of media pluralism in the areas of media conglomerations, restrictions for the journalists and media channels and the incumbent's censorship policies in the social media.

Firstly, the absence of media pluralism is closely related with strengthening of pro-government oligarchs in the media market who also have economic interests in other sectors. Accordingly, Turkey's media moved from a liberal to a polarized and corporatist network (Akser, 2018). Media Ownership Monitor⁶⁷ Report also shows that media pluralism is in danger for Turkey because it is mostly conglomerated at the hands of the pro-government business. This gives government a crucial control over the mass media thanks to the relationship between the business and government. Compared to Brazil, AKP consolidated its authoritarian populist rule through seizing media organizations and then vending them to pro-government business groups to have a loyal media (Bekmen et al., 2022).

In Turkey, conglomerates emerged with the 1980s privatization and market economy model which paved the way for businesspeople to buy multiple newspapers (Akser, 2018, p. 78). The incumbent also used its leverage to guarantee transferring ownership of the key media outlets to pro-government business. In return, such media outlets provided

favorable content and coverage for the government so that the business groups could obtain massive state contracts in construction, energy, and transportation because the investments in other sectors provide more profits for such businesspeople than the media. Accordingly, business interests play a significant role in the relationships with the government.

Similarly, in Brazil, most of the mass media outlets engage in other industries and businesses like commercial, private education companies, “financial sector, agribusiness, real estate, energy, and health/pharma businesses” (Media Ownership Report, 2021a). Primarily, dynasties of the landowners (Colonels) own the media, and thereby having, what Gramsci called, a “hegemonic power” in Brazil. Those landowners connect their economic and political interests through controlling the public opinion. Despite the prohibition by the Brazilian Constitution, deputies also have connections with media companies. This is called as “electronic Coronelism” with a reference to the traditional landownership pattern in Brazil. Additionally, Brazilian media is under the influence of religious networks. Nine media outlets out of 50 are owned by Christian religious leaderships (Media Ownership Report, 2021a). Those religious leaders, who own the media networks, have also political roles. This is however a violation of the Brazilian Constitution. In Turkey, Gülenists’ media network had a similar influence although their power decreased after the end of close relationship between the Gülenists and the government.

Compared to Turkey, Brazil also has a regional inequality in terms of the distribution of media networks. Accordingly, 80% the media outlets operate in the South and South-East regions. São Paulo is the front-runner. Therefore, many cities do not have independent media network and tend to rely on social media platforms like WhatsApp to get

information and follow the news. This also shows the extent of the influence of local politicians, oligarchies over the Brazilian media outlets. Considering the importance of an independent and plural media network for a democracy, diversity of information and views is crucial for the content of the media that could shape the public opinion. Therefore, the centralization of the media power in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro could prevent the plurality of opinion and the priorities of topics in the Brazilian media.

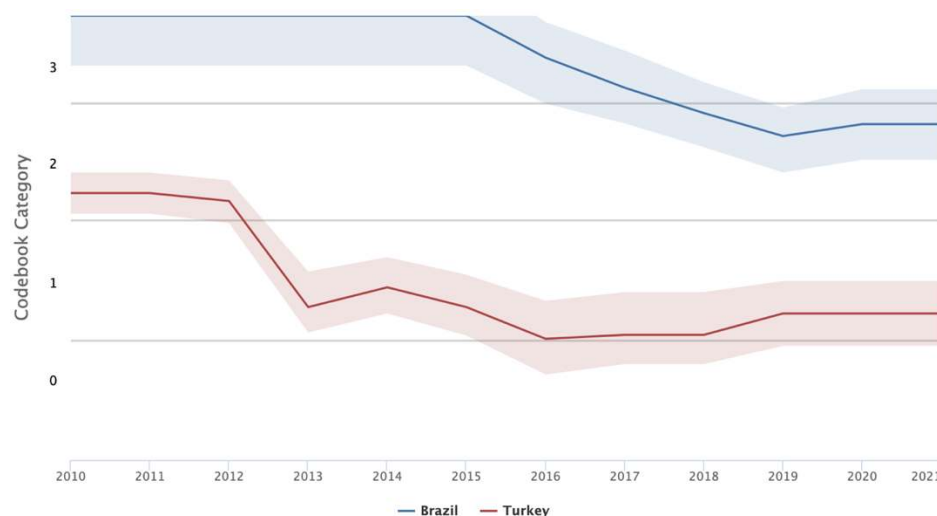
Second reason for the absence of media pluralism stems from the arrests and jailing of journalists. Accordingly, Turkey is one of the leading countries that arrest and jail people (Global Expression Report, 2021, p. 90). After the failed coup attempt in 2016, anti-terror legislation has been significantly used for suppressing the political dissent in Turkey. The drop in its freedom of expression rating from “highly restricted” to “in crisis” as of 2014 could be related to the worsening relations between the government and the Gülenists after the Gezi Park protests (The Global Expression Report, 2021). Since 2014, the rating has not changed but intensified with the legal actions after the failed coup attempt and the beginning of the State of Emergency rule in 2016.

Likewise, Brazil is reported for 254 violence and stigmatization cases against the journalists in 2020. Government has made 464 public statements to attack the journalists (The Global Expression Report, 2021, p. 64). For example, dissemination of false narratives about the pandemic has especially increased with polarized discourses on vaccination under the presidency of Bolsonaro⁶⁸. Those criticizing the management of the pandemic has been systematically suppressed through the National Security Law although it was written for the political persecution during the military dictatorship era. Government also initiated disinformation campaigns and fake news on pandemic management through a newly passed rights-abusing legislation (The Global Expression

Report, 2021, p. 65). In 2020, some media channels like Globo, Folha, and Metr  poles also ended reporting from the presidential residence because of the attacks from Bolsonaro’s supporters (p. 65). The Global Expression Report argues that there were no such policies in Brazil since the end of the military dictatorship. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Brazil’s freedom of expression rating dropped to “restricted” in 2019 during Bolsonaro’s presidency while it was changed to “less restricted” from “open” after the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and the beginning of the presidency of Michel Temer (The Global Expression Report, 2021).

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Turkey is the leading country of imprisoning the journalists in the last decade⁶⁹. Figure 21 provides further evidence for arrests because of the political content in Turkey and Brazil. It graphs the change of likelihood that a citizen is arrested if there is an anti-government social media content. Until 2015, Brazilian graph shows extremely unlikely trend for such a likelihood although Brazilian score declined after 2015 and came close to 2 (unlikely) from 3 (extremely unlikely). In comparison, Turkey shows a higher likelihood of arresting a citizen.

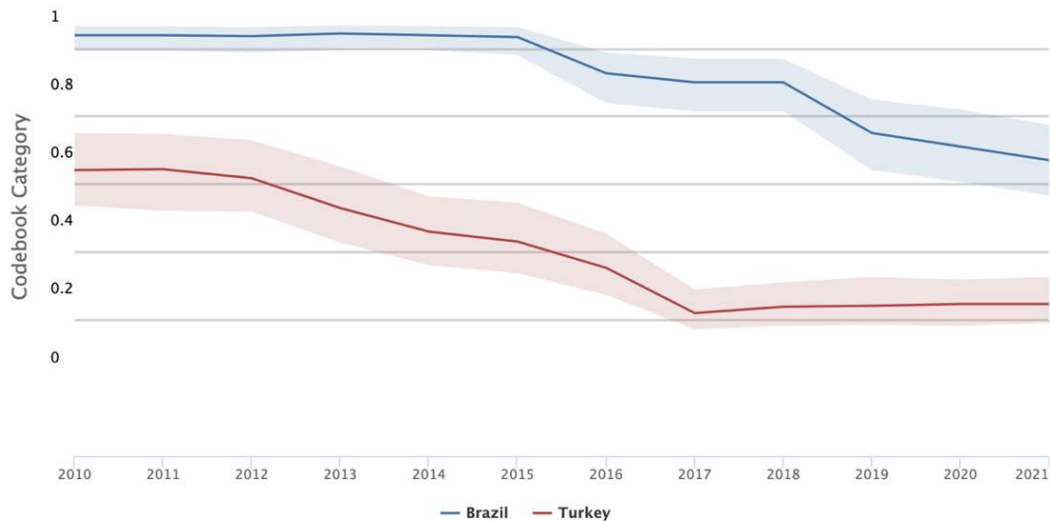
Figure 21: Arrests for Political Content in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Figure 22 also shows the extent of the government's respect for press and media freedom in discussing the political issues. It visualizes a dramatic decline for Turkey starting from 2012 and a declining trend for Brazil as of 2015.

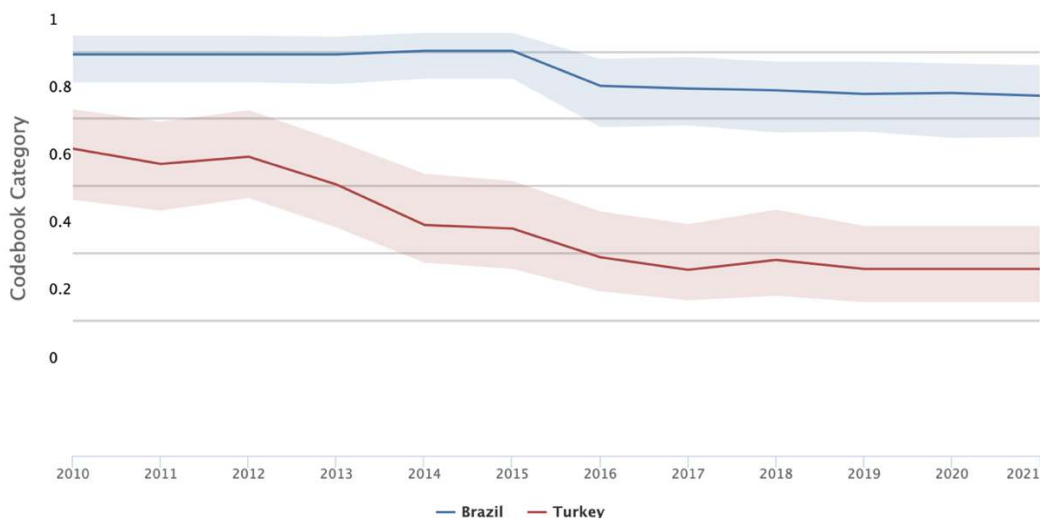
Figure 22: Freedom of Expression Index for Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Thirdly, voters tend to look for alternative media coverage to get informed because governments use legal measures to restrict the independent media and remove the content and arrest the journalists. V-Dem data provides evidence for such poor environment in Turkey and Brazil to get objective information about the happenings.

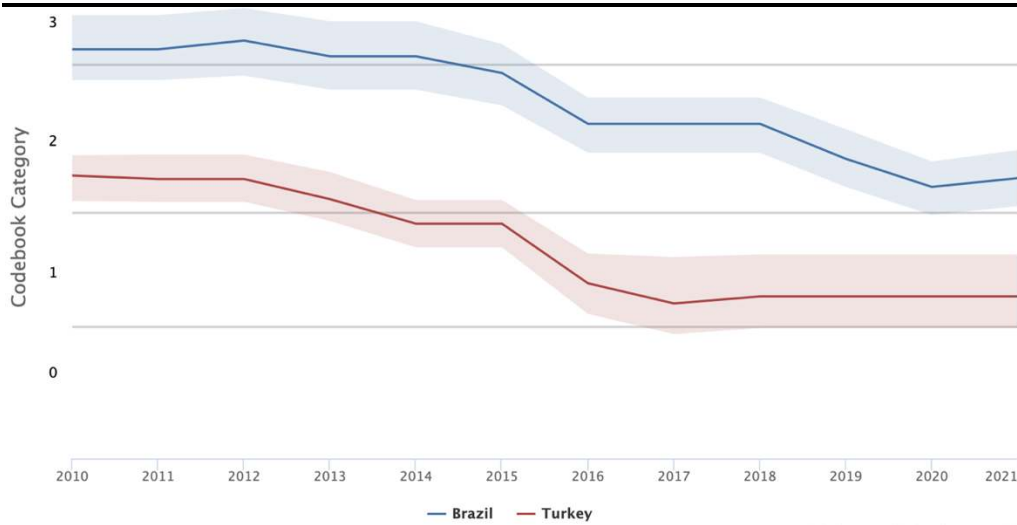
Figure 23: Alternative Source Information Index for Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Figure 23 shows V-Dem's alternative source information index for Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. Accordingly, Turkey has a significant decline in terms of the extent of the unbiased media coverage for the opposition, the content that criticizes the regime and the representation of different political perspectives in media networks (from 0.6 to almost 0.2). In comparison, change appears almost linear for Brazil while decline occurs at a small rate between 2015 and 2016 (as the years of political crisis due to impeachment process and the corruption scandals). As a result, despite high percentages of the TV-watchers in Turkey and Brazil, social media usage for following the news has been increasing especially since the COVID-19 pandemic (Media Ownership Report, 2021b). For example, 92% of the households in Turkey have access to the internet while 82.6% of those aged between 16 and 74 use it (Media Ownership Report, 2021b). Facebook (49%), YouTube (45%) and Twitter (30%) are also the three leading networks to access news in Turkey (Media Ownership Report, 2021b). In response, government passes new laws to restrict and control the online content. In 2020, social media related laws are enacted in the name of regulating the publications on the Internet. Those laws required social media networks to obtain a broadcasting license from RTÜK (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu, Radio and Television Supreme Council in Turkey) and allowed the government to give monetary penalties, ban advertisements and restrict bandwidth if the social media networks like Facebook and Twitter won't conform to the executive orders. In the future, such policies may expose such international platforms to government censorship to avoid heavy fines. Figure 24 provides further evidence and shows a common trend for self-censorship in Turkey. Brazilian media's self-censorship also increased over the last decade for politically sensitive issues

Figure 24: Media Self-Censorship in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021

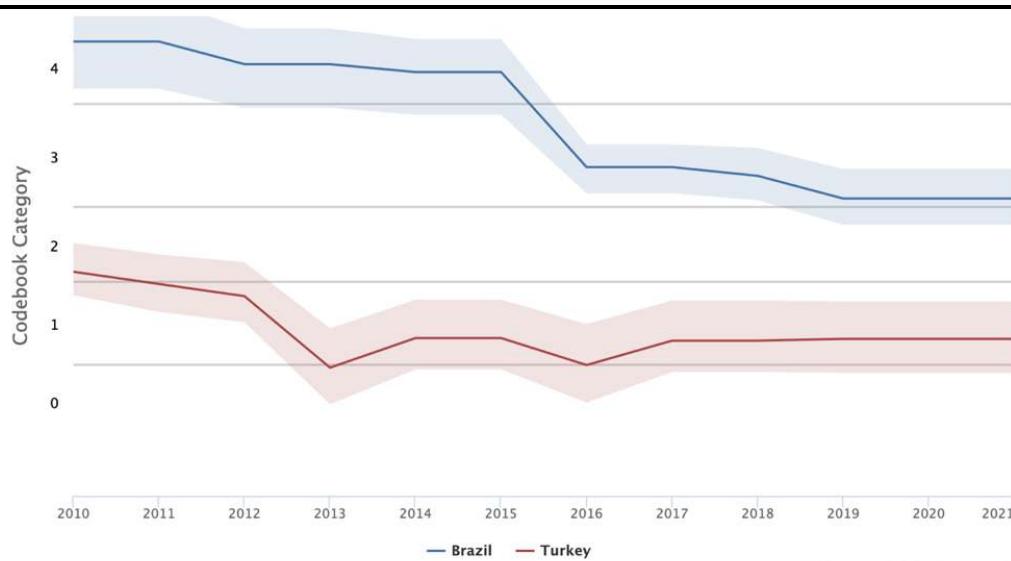


Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Government also obtained the right to access the personal data of the social media accounts if the owner of the account is a criminal and his/her posts are blocked or removed. At the same time, bureaucrats are monitored in social media and face risks of “losing their positions if they criticize the government” (Freedom House, 2021c).

Accordingly, Figure 25 shows the frequency of the government’s censorship on the political posts of the social media. Turkey’s scores are close to 0 which refers to “extremely often” censorship by the incumbent to remove political content. However, Brazil “rarely” removes political content.

Figure 25: Government Internet Filtering in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Transparency Reports provide another significant data about the censorship and online content removal. Since 2012, Twitter publishes Transparency Reports to show the number of removal requests sent from the local courts. In the period of 2012-2020, it shows a grim picture for Brazil with its 706 court decisions sent to Twitter. Brazil is also in the third rank globally. 341 of such decisions sent only in 2020 under the presidency of the right-wing populist and authoritarian leader, Bolsonaro. Such a high number of court decisions on behalf of Brazil is significant because of the increasing news on hate speech by the President Bolsonaro and his supporters targeting the opposition in Brazil⁷⁰. Nevertheless, Turkey is far worse considering that 7.070 of the court orders sent to Twitter from Turkey out of 12.499 court decisions sent worldwide. WordPress Transparency also confirms this data where Turkey has higher requests for online content and access restrictions.

However, compared to Turkey, mobile devices are mostly used for internet access in Brazil. As a result, this causes violations of the Brazilian law on network neutrality because internet data packages allow the users to send messages despite the absence of internet data package. Users could not access the internet with their limited packages but

use the free data package to access WhatsApp or apps like Facebook to follow the news.

This is significant considering that 49% of the Brazilians access the internet via mobile phones. However, this practice has been prone to spread fake information during the 2018 Brazilian elections. In 2018 elections, the key concerns of the voters were high-level corruption investigations, economic difficulties and increasing violent crimes. In response, Bolsonaro's polarizing campaign was marked by the "disinformation and conspiracy theories on social networks" like WhatsApp (Freedom House, 2021d). Additionally, Brazil mostly blocks content through charging extra fee for certain news networks compared to a free charge of WhatsApp which causes data discrimination. For example, Bolsonaro excessively used the social media for the election campaign in 2018 which let his supporters to spread fake news.

Bolsonaro did not use the traditional media and attend the debates in TV during the 2018 elections because he showed his health problems as the reason. In this way, Brazilians could not watch the debating of all the candidates like they have done since the re-democratization of Brazil in the 1980s. In this sense, Bolsonaro's rise to presidency can be linked to social media network in Brazil.

Particularly, Bolsonaro's campaign was in close relations with social media communities, called as the "right-wing bubble" (Prado, 2021). This bubble was created with the alienation of these people during the PT governments by being called as fascist, or a Nazi. It is within this right-wing bubble that the concepts of Olavo de Carvalho began to be introduced. They were the concepts of the extreme right in France and the United States. Similarly, Bolsonaro's main agendas, rhetoric and methods were all inspired by the international extreme right and radical right. As early as 2015, Brazilian right-wing movement started searching for a name that would be an embodiment of the demands of

the far right. Alt right methods such as trolling, bots, fake news and online harassment were used and linked to the far-right conspiracy theories.

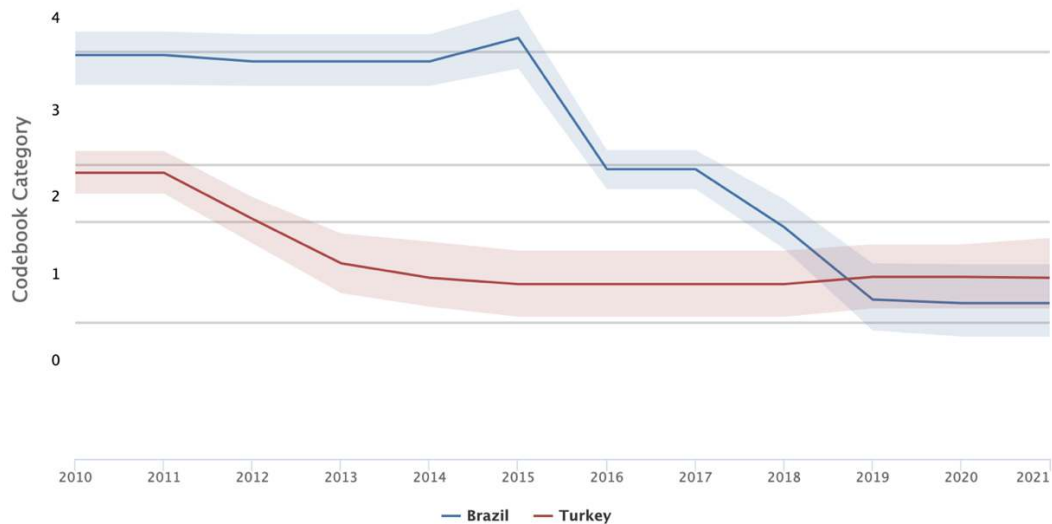
Right-wing ideologists like Olavo de Carvalho, Kim Katagiri started to receive huge visibility in the media in disseminating the right-wing conservative views at a time when the PT was losing voter support. Before 2018 elections, corruption cases were selectively shown in media. The PT was criticized harshly, and the corruption cases were broadly discussed in the media channels. As a result, Brazilians lost confidence in politics and chose to support a candidate from the outside of political elites: Bolsonaro.

In essence, social media usage relies mostly on hiding in the anonymity and the mass “shoot it with a cloak”. As a result, authoritarian populists do not take any individual responsibility but rely on collective insanity. Likewise, the current Brazilian government very often disseminates false information on key political issues. For example, pro-government troll groups in social media have caused intimidation and harassment in Brazil. Similar to misinformation practices and social media support behind the Brazilian authoritarian populist forces, AKP government “has also attempted to control the online information space, claiming that misinformation is rampant and encouraging users to rely on government-issued information or use state-funded verification platforms” (Freedom House, 2021b). Several reports have revealed that AKP has enlisted an “army of trolls to manipulate online discussions, drive particular agendas, and combat government critics on social media” (Freedom House, 2021b).

Accordingly, Figure 26 depicts the frequency of the governments’ usage of social media to circulate false information to impact their voter base. It also confirms that misinformation threatens democracy by misleading people, damaging responsibility, and increasing polarization (Boese et al., 2022, p. 15). Turkey’s line pictures a steady movement after 2013 but showed sharp decline from 2011 and 2013. However, Brazilian

score drastically declined and positioned itself below Turkey under the presidency of Bolsonaro.

Figure 26: Government Dissemination of False Information



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Consequently, this section on the executive aggrandizement in media suggests that the ruling regime in Turkey has manipulated media through ownership control, advertising, sanction regimes, and legal provisions. As a result, freedom of the press and expression in Turkey has been severely restricted. Brazil, on the other hand, draws a different picture considering that the political discussion and narrative is mostly revolved on social media rather than the traditional media. Accordingly, Bolsonaro has large networks of social media manipulation and thereby weakening freedom of speech by controlling social media content. However, most of the media networks do not conform to Bolsonaro administration and thereby remain objective and openly criticize authoritarian policies. While journalists in Turkey are put in jail and mainstream media is mostly controlled by progovernment media networks, Bolsonaro has failed to threaten media and public debate. Judiciary has also supported independent media in Brazil. For example, Bolsonaro's son had to pay \$5,600 because of his moral damage in spreading lies about Folha de São Paulo journalist, Patrícia Campos Mello (Gouvêa et al., 2022).

Generally, the section on institutional consolidation dynamics concludes that elections in Turkey are heavily regime controlled because of the pro-government institutional environment and thereby are not free and fair compared to Brazil. For example, the process of merging the state bureaucracy with the AKP government gained momentum with the consecutive election successes. In the last few years, it has also become commonplace for AKP administrators, who have no official duties, to be invited to official meetings in state institutions, and for local party cadres and civil administrators to act together politically in many regions. The use of legal and extra-legal procedures has been used to manipulate elections by the loyal political officials, media personnel and judges. Party institutionalization was also among the institutional measures used in Turkey to consolidate the authoritarian populist rule. Eventually, using governmental and private resources as well as media attention established an atmosphere of fear and created an unequal playing field in favor of an authoritarian populist rule in Turkey.

Compared to Turkey, lack of an institutional support in the form of political party and judiciary is challenging for Bolsonaro to consolidate his authoritarian populist power although he attempts to obtain the support of bureaucracy through military appointments and social media. In Brazil, Bolsonaro's rise to presidency can be related to economic downturn, corruption scandals, political polarization and declining trust in the established parties like PT and PSDB (Hunter et al., 2021, p. 340). Thanks to the online chat groups like WhatsApp, Bolsonaro used a right-wing populist discourse based on anti-establishment political class, anti-corruption and polarization (p. 340). Bolsonarismo relies on such unsystematic online support. Apart from Bolsonaro's threat, Brazilian political structure is not also sustainable for such authoritarian leaders to consolidate their power. Compared to the institutional conditions that pave the way for a greater move towards an authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey, Brazil lacks favorable

conditions for the support from i) parties in the parliament to pass legislation, ii) judiciary to interpret the laws and to support the functioning of the government, iii) bureaucracy to provide technocratic expertise and implement laws, iv) neoliberal policies to introduce mega projects and legitimize the economic growth at the expense of rising unemployment and precarity of the new informal class and v) media to bolster the legitimacy of the regime and propagandize its discourse and the narratives.

As a right-wing populist president, Bolsonaro attempts to create favorable conditions for consolidating his power. However, Brazilian authoritarian populism needs time to consolidate because such authoritarian governments gradually erode the democracy in a process. For example, institutional conditions have paved the way for consolidating authoritarian populist rule in Turkey thanks to the consecutive electoral successes over 20-year-long control in the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, political economy and media. Hence, time is an important indicator that institutionally separates the current authoritarian populist path of Turkey from Brazil.

4.3 *Ideological Conditions*

While there is currently a global drift towards authoritarian populism, ideological strategies are commonly used along with the institutional ones to consolidate authoritarian populism. Authoritarians tend to connect the fate of their country with their government and target the domestic and external opponents as the existential threats and enemies to ruin the well-being of the country. By this way, they aim to consolidate their followers and control the opposition. For example, Trump benefited from polarized political affiliations and used the rhetoric of the “enemies of the people” for the opposing groups in the press. Similarly, Putin rules Russia since 2000 by targeting the opposing

groups in the civil society and media as “enemies of the people” apart from enacting a new constitution to consolidate his power.

Additionally, such authoritarian populist regimes also oppose the truth, science and scientific institutions. For example, Trump’s neglect for the pandemic increased the costs of its management⁷¹. Moreover, Mexico’s president, Obrador, is not in good terms with civil society groups like the environmentalists because he blames them for being funded by foreign foundations to oppose his policies⁷². Recently, Mexico has also passed a law to constrain the activities of civil society groups⁷³. Another significant example is the Hungarian law, which enables the Orban’s government to control universities⁷⁴. Likewise, Trump administration attempted to limit funding to colleges that were considered “leftist”, because of their disallowance for conservatives to give speech and lectures⁷⁵.

Similar to these global examples, this section examines the ideational dynamics used by Turkey’s and Brazil’s authoritarian populist regimes to consolidate their power. Therefore, in addition to the executive aggrandizement over the institutions, another important indicator for an authoritarian populist consolidation is to spread the regimes’ ideas and obtain legitimation. Based on the historical background for ideological spectrums elaborated in Chapter 3 for Turkey and Brazil, this section explains how the ideological cleavages are mobilized by the authoritarian populists. Specifically, it shows how populism, centered on anti-elitism in Brazil and Islamist nationalism in Turkey, is solidified through polarization, solid relations with the pro-government NGOs and the opposition to critical thinking in the name of consolidating authoritarian populist rule.

4.3.1 Polarization

Polarization is a significant factor for the literature on democratic breakdowns (Huntington, 1970; Linz, 1990; Linz et al., 1996; Bermeo, 2003; Mainwaring et al., 2013). Similarly, it has adversely affected democracy in recent years (Boese et al., 2022, p. 2). Polarization can be defined as a “process, state of equilibrium, and a political strategy” which creates a “binary division of the society into mutually antagonistic camps” (McCoy et al., 2022). It is also a basic human tendency to form identities through groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Hogg et al., 2008). In a political environment with the loss of the center and the established parties, society is polarized between “the people” and “the enemies of the people”. Likewise, authoritarian populist regimes in Turkey and Brazil greatly used polarization as an ideological tool for the consolidation of their power. For example, President Erdogan drew a distinction between the “people” and the “oppressive minority” in Turkey in a 2015 election rally:

“My story is the story of this people. Either the people will win and come to power, or the pretentious or oppressive minority – estranged from the reality of Anatolia and looking over it with disdain –will remain in power. The authority to decide on this belongs to the people” (Stockemer, 2018).

Correspondingly, Bolsonaro often criticizes the “corrupted established elites”⁷⁶. In a statement on September 7, 2021, he also criticized the Supreme Court harshly for opposing the people’s choice:

“Either the leader of this branch of power gets this minister under control, or this branch will suffer what none of us want. Even if we need to pick up arms and die for Brazil then we’ll do that. I want to tell those who want to make me unelectable in Brazil: Only God removes me from there”⁷⁷

Recently, affective polarization has also increased and changed the nature of the polarization (Iyengar et al., 2012; Reiljan, 2019; Gidron et al., 2020; Mason, 2015). Through affective polarization, people are especially attached to *social in-groups* and

show hostility towards *out-groups* because of different partisanship, social class and opinions (Tajfel et al., 1979; Iyengar et al., 2015; Mason, 2015; Robinson et al. 2020; Hobolt et al., 2020). However, this damages democracy because data shows that, in polarized societies, voters tend to “tolerate abuses of power and sacrifice democratic principles if doing so advances their side’s interests and keeps the other side out of power” (Frantz et al., 2021, p. 101).

Similarly, affective polarization created a path for a consolidated authoritarian populist regime in Turkey. Party system polarization has also negatively affected electoral democracy. Compared to this, affective polarization has always been part and parcel of the Brazilian politics. For example, 2013 protests were the turning point for Brazilian path towards affective polarization⁷⁸. As a result, in 2018 elections, economic polarization and affective polarization of anti-petismo and the pro-petismo (PT) sentiments affected conservatives’ votes. Nonetheless, Brazilian party system polarization has positively affected the electoral democracy and paved the way for the emergence of political pluralism.

Consequently, populist supporters’ positive affection towards the populist leaders and parties could prevent them from keeping those leaders and parties accountable for authoritarian behavior and corruption investigations if the supporters receive *symbolic*, *political* and *material* gains in such a regime (Selçuk, 2019). As theoretically discussed in Chapter 3, if the opponents are excluded from symbolic, political and material benefits, they are less likely to give legitimacy to the authoritarian regime (Selçuk, 2019). For example, at the symbolic level, populist leaders call their supporters as “the nation” and define the voter base through shared grievances (Hochschild, 2018; Ingelhart et al., 2017; Jay et al., 2019), excluding others with phrases like tyrants (populist calling for governors

in Brazil) or traitors and coup-sympathizers (populist calling for the opponents in Turkey). Populists thus offer symbolic inclusion through such definitions while the leaders and the party became “identity entrepreneurs” in aligning themselves with the voters (Reicher et al., 2017; Wodak, 2015).

Accordingly, Turkey and Brazil are highly polarized countries. They are polarized to the extent that followers of opposing political ideologies are unwilling to have friendly interactions with each other. Figures 27 and 28 provide further evidence for this.

Figure 27: Polarization of Society in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



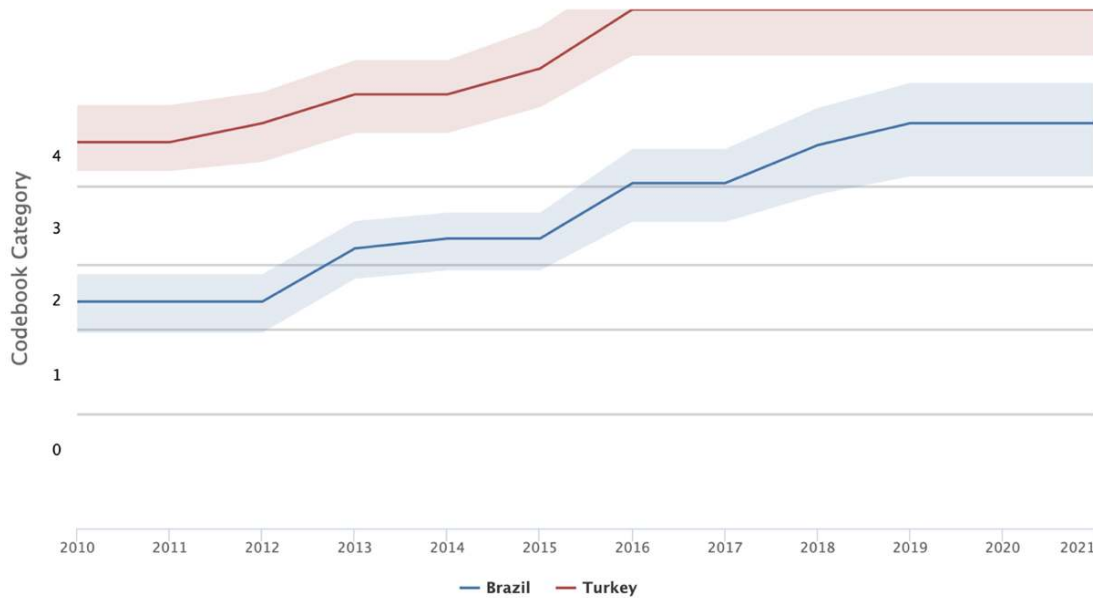
Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Figure 27 shows a serious polarization (with a score between 0 to 1) in Turkey and Brazil because of the prevalence of different opinions about the key political issues in society. Both countries showed dramatic increase in polarization after 2011 and converged in this dimension after 2020.

Political polarization is more detrimental for liberal democracy during the incumbency of an authoritarian populist power because polarization paves the way for such incumbents to implement illiberal and anti-democratic policies to weaken democracy (Boese et al., 2022, p. 14). V-Dem data on political polarization refers to the political differences that could affect social relationships and political discussions. Hence, another significant

evidence for high polarization in Turkey and Brazil is illustrated in Figure 28. It shows that they have polarized to a large extent over the years (with a score between 3 to 4). It also refers to the hostile interaction of the supporters from the opposing political camps.

Figure 28: Political Polarization in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Despite such similar high polarization scores, Turkey and Brazil have different polarization fronts, which is discussed in Chapter 3 as different ideological spectrums and cleavages. Particularly, Brazil has deep racial, regional, religious and economic class divisions, which also intersect with each other. Political parties also represent such divisions. However, they intensify the problems rather than reach a common ground. Therefore, apart from the internal procedures, political party factionalism in the Brazilian Congress has prevented an effective policymaking for the identity-based problems. For example, considering the regional inequalities, 56.8% of the people in the northeast region were classified as extremely poor in 2019 while approximately 27% were poor in the southeast region (BTI 2022). Such regional inequality is significant considering the high level of paramilitary organizations in the northeastern region. Although freedom of

association and speech are constitutionally protected, paramilitary organizations and the police cause human rights violations and massacres in the rural areas and urban favelas of Brazil. Accordingly, 2021 witnessed the largest police massacre in a favela of Rio de Janeiro when at least 29 people were killed in a police operation in the Jacarezinho massacre⁷⁹. This is not surprising considering that Rio de Janeiro is known as the “consolidated political authority of organized crime”⁸⁰. However, police killings mostly target the blacks in Brazil and thereby intersecting the racial and regional inequalities. As a result, despite not being a minority group, black or mixed-race groups face high rates of poverty and illiteracy who are also mostly the victims of violence⁸¹.

Prevalent socio-economic inequalities are also critical because racial inequality still persists in Brazil and intersects with the class inequalities considering that the rich is primarily white. In the current context, although wage inequality declined since the 2000s thanks to the PT-led policies of minimum wage increases and programs like Bolsa Família, income inequality continues because of the financial deregulation and the lack of tax and land reform. For example, the bottom 50% of the population owns less than 1% of total national wealth in 2021 (World Inequality Report, 2022). COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbated the already-existing inequalities and especially intensified poverty in Brazil (Freedom House, 2021c). For example, in the early months of 2020, inflation increased to 4.52% and caused a 14% increase in food and beverage prices.

In terms of the racial socio-economic inequalities, Latinobarometro 2021 also shows that 49% of the people are defined as black or “pardo” (mixed race) while they are mostly unemployed, poor and face violence. 47.2% of Brazilians think that the most discriminated people or groups of people are black. 90% of the Brazilians also consider racism as a social problem although the current Bolsonaro government rejects racism. In

2019, 74.4% of victims of lethal violence were black people and 79.1% faced violence by the police. 66.7% of prisoners in Brazil were also black in 2019. Despite such inequalities, black people are politically underrepresented. In 2018 elections, 24.4% of the representatives were black or pardo in the National House of Representatives. In state parliaments, blacks and pardos were also represented with 28.9%.

Recently, political influence of religious organizations has also increased in number although the Brazilian state is secular. Accordingly, the Pew Research Center 2019 Survey⁸² shows that 84% of Brazilians think it is necessary to believe in God to be “moral”. Similarly, this is 75% for Turkey. Specifically, 25% of Brazilian citizens have also defined themselves as Evangelical whose percentage reached approximately to 25% from around 7.7% in 1995 (Lapopbarometro 2021). This result is significant considering that Evangelicals provide significant support base for Bolsonaro in the current context.

Another example for intersecting identity problems in Brazil stems from the poor conditions of indigenous people. Indigenous communities are relatively poor as a minority group and lack sufficient infrastructure like sanitation and education services. There are approximately 900,000 indigenous people in Brazil and have constitutional protection rights⁸³. However, the current authoritarian populist rule ignores their protected areas and attempts to open indigenous lands to agricultural activities and mining although the judiciary and the parliament show resiliency to such actions and political decisions. For example, while all citizens have the same civic rights and are not systematically excluded from political citizenship based on their ethnic, religious and cultural identities, indigenous people were the ones who were worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic⁸⁴. Since 2013, sociopolitical conflicts have further increased in Brazil. The election of Bolsonaro was itself a result of such polarization. Reactionary populism of the

Bolsonarismo relies primarily on the patriotism and anti-communism and has managed to form a conservative and populist collectivity in a diverse political spectrum of Brazil. With his presidency, polarization is even intensified through targeting the leftists, women, LGBTQ+, indigenous people, and Afro Brazilians because Bolsonaro and his supporters are intolerant to diversity and pluralism. In essence, social media troll groups worked in favor of the regime. They mobilized people around a right-wing bubble where people received hate speech related contents from the domestic and international far right groups. In the end, they are radicalized in polarized identities⁸⁵.

Similar to Brazil, there has also been political party and ideological cleavages in Turkey. However, Turkey has incompatible ethnic, religious and regional polarized identities. Polarized environment especially paves the way for the governing party in Turkey to politicize the identity cleavages and consolidate their power through polarized identities and legitimize their rule by referring to the security threats. Accordingly, the society is divided along ethnic (Syrians/Afghans/Kurds/Turks), political (conservative nationalists/modernists) and religious lines (Sunni Islamists/secularists). Ethnic and religious terrorist groups such as PKK and the Gülen movement are seen as the biggest security threats. Turkey has also a long-tradition of secularism-religion conflict. With the current Islamic-based authoritarian populist regime, religion's influence especially increased in every sphere of life. For example, the budget of the Diyanet (Directorate of Religion) increased by 34% in 2020 compared to the last year. It has also become a governmental tool for constructing a homogeneous Islamic society. Furthermore, the constitution defines everyone as "Turk" through the bond of citizenship which makes nationality as a modern constitutional citizenship rather than ethnicity-based citizenship. Nevertheless, minority groups face discrimination in their daily lives through hate speech.

Particularly, refugees exacerbated this. In the current context, approximately four million Syrian refugees became a significant minority group in Turkey under the status of “temporary protection”. Since 2020, 93,000 Syrian refugees became citizens. However, with the increasing tensions, it now became bureaucratically difficult for the refugees to gain citizenship in Turkey. As a result, they are threatened with forced deportation and expulsion.

Polarization has been a long-standing problem in Turkey. However, AKP government uses the traditional cleavages through a discourse of “us” (the oppressed conservatives) and “them” (those who oppress the conservatives). This has been sharply manifested in the political party polarization (SGI, 2021)⁸⁶. For example, social distance with different party affiliations is a significant indicator for high polarization in a recently made survey by Turkuazlab⁸⁷. Accordingly, some does not want their children to marry one of the supporters of another party (74.9%), do business with them (72.0%), want their children to be friends with their children (66.6%) or to be neighbors with them (60.8%). Results also show that respondents define party supporters that they feel close as patriot (87.3%), working for the good of the country (86.3%), and open-minded (83.7%). However, others are seen as those posing a threat to the country (77.6%), hypocrite (85.9%) and selfish (84.7%). Phones of that group's members should also be tapped and recorded if needed for security reasons (47.8%). Subsequently, people tend to tolerate their in-groups and sacrifice democratic principles if it benefits their side’s interests (Frantz et al., 2021, p. 101). Those results are not also surprising considering the executive’s polarized rhetoric to demonstrate the opposition as the “enemy” or “traitors”. Such discourse helps legitimizing authoritarian populist rule and the repressive policies in Turkey. However, it also causes worsening relations between different ideological groups.

Consequently, although Turkey and Brazil are highly polarized countries, degree of identity-based polarization is deeper in Turkey in line of ethnicity, political party affiliation and secularism-conservatism. In the next sections, the extent of executive aggrandizement in authoritarian populist consolidation process is discussed in terms of the restrictions on the opposing civil society organizations and opposition to critical thinking.

4.3.2 Restrictions on the Opposing Civil Society Organizations

Research shows that democratic consolidation is justifiable in case of a high civil society participation (Putnam, 1995). On the other hand, civil society organizations could also provide support for authoritarian populists because many NGOs or civil society groups are financed by the government and form rent-seeking relationships with the regime (Sarfati, 2017, p. 404; Greskovits, 2020; Ekiert, 2019). Recently, “pillarized civil societies” have also been increasing the cultural and political polarization because authoritarian populists restrain the liberal pillar of the civil society and instead enable the development of illiberal civil society movements (Ekiert, 2019, pp. 10, 11). Based on such studies, tracing the activities of civil society organizations could show the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation and the restrictions on political pluralism and freedom of association and speech in polarized societies like Turkey and Brazil.

From a comparative perspective, political polarization in Brazil became consolidated with the increasing influence of conservative civil society groups. Conservative groups have diverse claims but receive significant public support for their programs that opposes the left-wing socioeconomic policies and corruption in Brazil. Additionally, they seem to support illiberal moral values, and have different views on economic liberalism as they

define themselves as *nationalist*. Some also support authoritarian military rule between 1964 and 1985.

Civil society became more organized and autonomous after democratization in 1985 in Brazil whose number exceed 820, 000 today (BTI 2022, p.17). They are either representing the interests of the labor market, public interests or religiously oriented organizations. Accordingly,

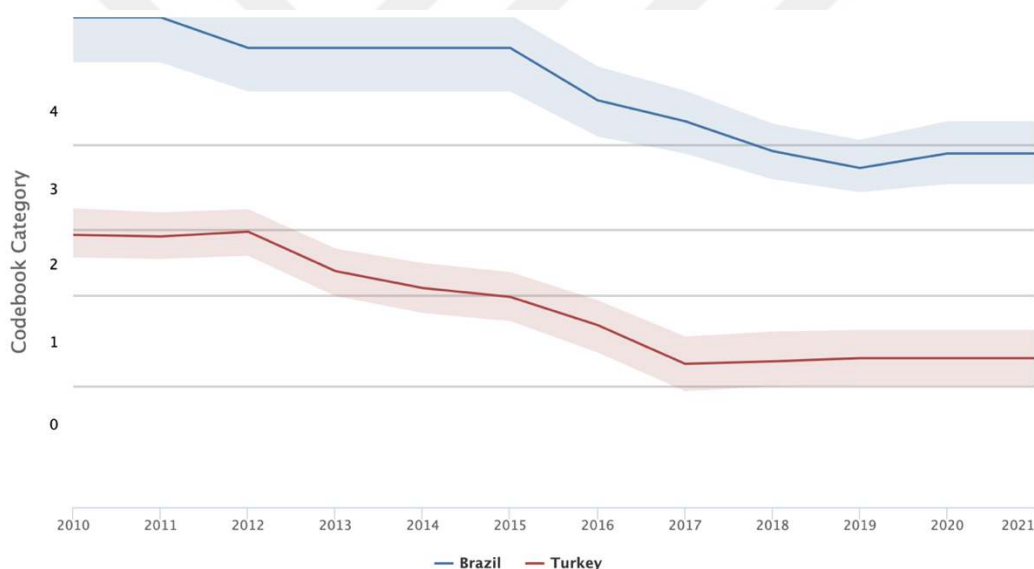
- 86% of them are private associations,
- 12% are religiously-oriented foundations to help the urban poor to provide public goods
- and 2% are private foundations (p. 17).

On the other hand, in the 1930s and 40s, state was the key agent in supporting and funding the civil society in Turkey to spread the Republicanism ideology to the society. Since the 1980s, many civil society organizations emerged for human rights, minority rights and women's rights. With the European Union integration process in 1999, civil society organizations flourished. Currently, 116,000 civil society associations actively operate while 5,158 are at the status of "foundation" (BTI 2022, p. 32).

NGOs are not the key actors in policy making of Turkey and mostly rely on foreign funding. However, pro-government NGOs have more influence. Those considered as a potential threat to the regime are restricted through arrests and intimidation of the members. In 2020, the Ministry of Interior further increased its control and power on NGO activities. Therefore, civil society is weaker in Turkey compared to Brazil. Union activity is also more limited by law and in practice considering the government's policies against the organized labor which prevents protection from economic exploitation and workplace safety. Informal sector involving large refugee population is particularly defenseless against such poor economic conditions.

Reinforcing the executive aggrandizement, government has also suppressed civil society groups (CSOs) in Turkey as shown in Figure 29. V-Dem data measures CSO repression to compare the attempts of the governments in Turkey and Brazil to repress civil society organizations. As a result, civil society organizations cannot freely organize, associate, strike or criticize the government in Turkey and Brazil in the current context because of the government sanctions and harassment. Brazilian government weakly repress CSO activity compared to Turkey where CSOs are substantially repressed through harassment, arrests, imprisonments and disruption of public gatherings.

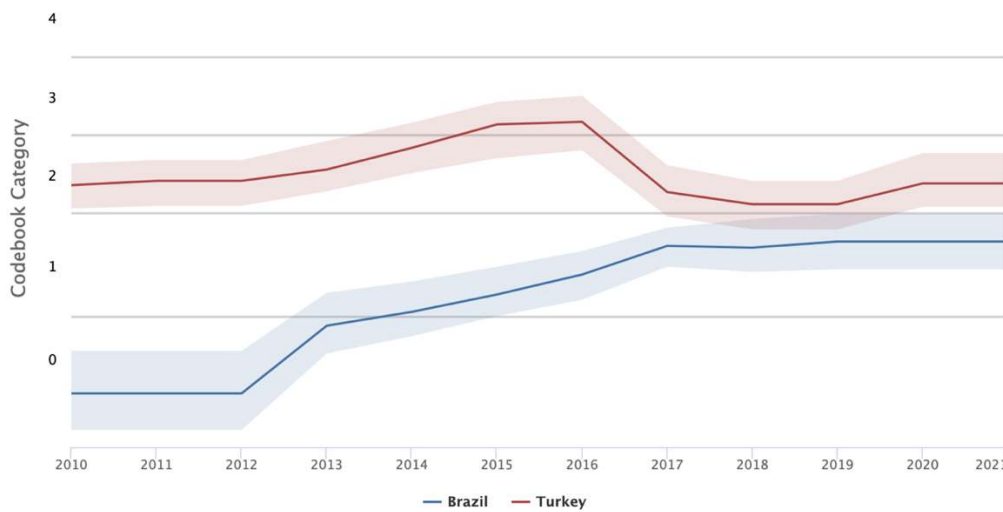
Figure 29: Civil Society Organization (CSO)'s Repression in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

V-Dem also measures the activity of civil society organizations and the presence of anti-government movements as graphed in Figure 30. It shows a drastic increase for the opposition-led movements against the current political system in Turkey starting from 2013 which was the year of Gezi protests. This trend of anti-system social movements declined between 2016 and 2017 in Brazil. However, it recently increased.

Figure 30: Civil Society Organizations' Anti-system Movements in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Consequently, Brazil's civil society is "fragile" under the current regime while Turkey has a "repressed civil society" organization (CIVICUS, 2022). Similarly, weak civil society has historic roots in Turkey considering the existence of a strong central government tradition compared to the federal Brazilian system. Civil society groups are more organized in Brazil which created "new rights culture" and transformed national and local institutions accordingly (Heller, 2020, p. 606). As a result, local municipalities are strengthened, and political and civil society formations at the local politics became more independent. In essence, the strength of the leftist movement paves the way for the resiliency against authoritarian populist consolidation in Brazil.

Historically, the left has been weaker and fragmented as opposed to the conservative right movement in Turkey. This creates a political space for an established right-wing movement. With the neoliberal economic model, the left has been further weakened with the waning political influence of the trade unions. At that time, the left-right ideological division was replaced by the religious and ethnic identity fault lines.

In the 1980s, Turkey and Brazil had both chronic inflation and adopted macro-economic stabilization, trade liberalization, and privatization to obtain loans from the IMF

(Akkoyunlu et al., 2021b, p. 19). However, the influence of civil society over politics created a different trajectory for Brazil. The election of Lula in 2002 as the Brazilian President was clearly a manifestation of the increasing role of welfare politics and the state's role in the economy (p. 21). Brazil only turned to the market-driven policies in the last term of the PT government under the leadership of Rousseff, which continued with the Presidency of Temer. Overall, such developments created a path dependency in Brazil for the left and right-wing populist trajectories.

4.3.3 Opposition to Critical Thinking and Science

Institutional autonomy is important for academic freedom and critical thinking. Therefore, universities should be autonomous from both the state and the capital because, in a vigorous democracy, academics make research, teach, and act as an informatory body for the society, government, and institutions. However, authoritarian populists tend to target academic freedom by weakening the institutional autonomy of universities and silencing academics and critical thinking.

Freedom House Report⁸⁸ also shows that academic freedom is important for spreading knowledge and promoting independent thinking of the academic staff (Schenkkan et al., 2020). However, it underlines a decline for academic freedom globally because

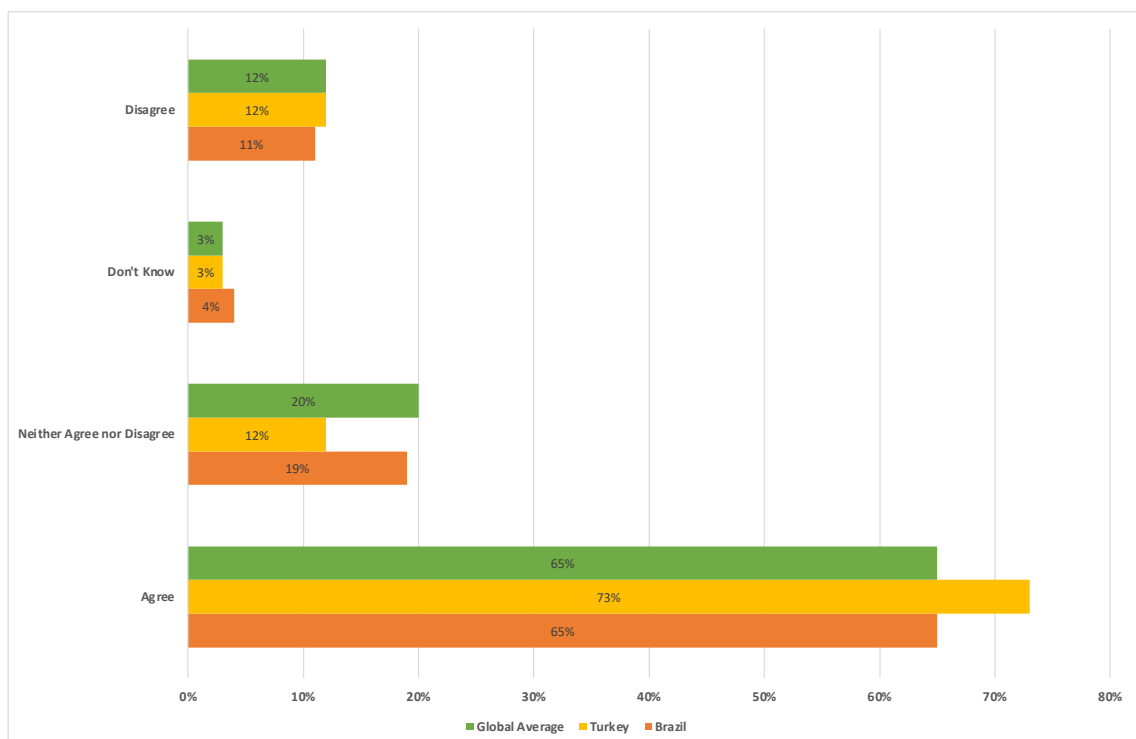
- i) academics and students are often oppressed and arrested for their research,
- ii) corporate governance model of universities increased globally,
- iii) and universities' financial and institutional autonomy declined. As a result, this pushed universities to cooperate with governments and therefore limit the space for freedom of expression and critical thinking.

In general, authoritarians have hostile attitudes to the academics because they are considered enemies of the state. As a result, such authoritarian practices increase electoral

fragmentation, anti-incumbent vote, and lower turnout. In Turkey and Brazil, universities and scientists are also targeted. Therefore, this last section compares the extent of the authoritarian populist consolidation from the perspective of academic freedom and the restrictions over the scientists' research and ideas. The section also provides a brief comparison of the youth's opinions over their countries in relation to the universities' autonomy from the government because such authoritarian practices could also cause moral polarization considering that the voter unhappiness creates polarization and declines the support for democracy especially for younger voters and experts.

Accordingly, opposition to critical thinking has two dimensions: anti-expert and scientific views and their implications in government policies and opposition to institutional autonomy for the universities and its implications in freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Figure 31: Percentage of People Thinking That Experts Do Not Understand Them



Source: Ipsos 2021 research conducted online with 19,017 urban and educated adults aged between 16-74 across 25 countries (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals in each of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea,

Sweden, and Turkey). *"The "Global Country Average" shows the average result for those countries and it has not been adjusted to the population size of each country and not intended to suggest a total result"*
(<https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2021-07/GA%20-%20Broken%20System%20Sentiment%20-%20Populist%20Anti-Elitism%20and%20Nativism%20in%202021%20-%20Graphic%20Report.pdf>)

Firstly, authoritarian populists have negative standpoints towards political elites, institutions and scholars (Wirth et al., 2016; Merkley, 2020). Scholars produce “true knowledge” and question the “truth” as technocratic elites (Mede et al., 2020). However, populists suppress the “truth” and scientific knowledge at the expense of the people and therefore favor conspiracy theories and distrust academics and universities (Castanho Silva et al., 2017, Fraune et al., 2018; Haltinner, et al., 2020).

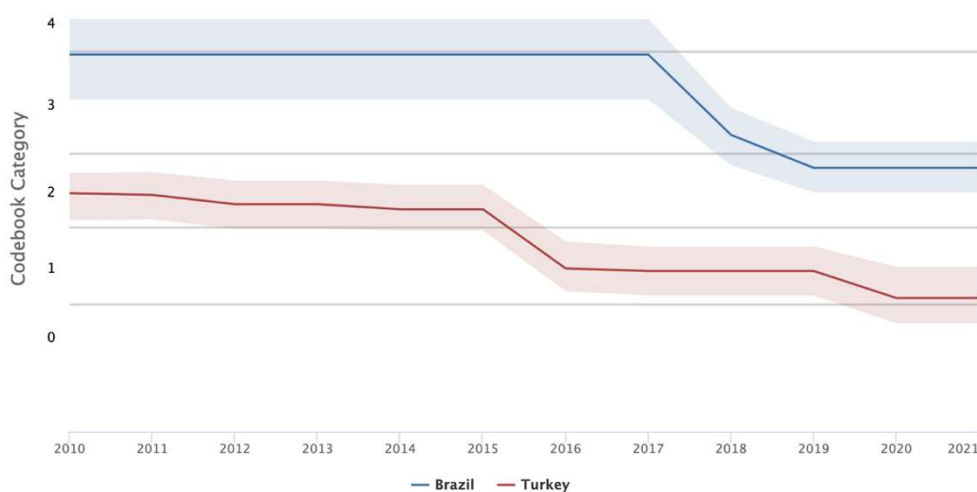
Similarly, Figure 31 also shows that 65% of the people in the world and in Brazil think that experts do not understand their life. Agreement to this statement is the highest in Turkey (73%). Since 2016, it has trended downward in Brazil by 9 points while it has increased in Turkey by 19 points since 2019. These results are appealing because they are materialized in decision making process and policies of the authoritarian populist administrations. For example, in case of Brazil, President Bolsonaro’s skepticism for the scientific evidence on global warming reduced the budget for the protection of the environment from 9.8% in 2020 to 27.4% in 2021. As a result, deforestation increased by 34% in 2020. Therefore, these results show that right-wing ideology could have more influence on the decision-making processes compared to the expert views and science. Similarly, such attitude has been visible in the pandemic management of Brazil. For example, Bolsonaro administration considered the pandemic as a “little flu” in the first place. As a result, Bolsonaro’s skeptic stance for the COVID-19 pandemic politicized and polarized the issue between the supporters and the challengers of wearing masks, hygiene policies and social distancing measures.

As Figure 31 shows, Turkey is also skeptic about the expert views and scientific evidence. For example, recent happenings showed the prioritization of economic growth over the

environmental protection. Accordingly, scientists warned against the proposed Kanal İstanbul Project, which would connect the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara because it would cause environmental damage. However, government insisted on this project and ignored the scientific opinion. Likewise, the mega airport in Istanbul is another example of the neglect of scientific expertise in Turkey, considering that more than 2.5 million trees were demolished to establish the new airport.

Secondly, authoritarian populist governments also emerged as control mechanisms for what is taught, researched, and discussed at universities in Turkey and Brazil. Governments prefer to use universities and research centers for their own political interests. Content of research is monitored, censored to a certain extent and funding is very much dependent on that content. Extracurricular activities and inviting a speaker to the campus are also monitored although it limits the freedom of thought. Meanwhile, critical assessments on issues like the pandemic and authoritarianism can be taken to the court. The one, who make criticisms, could be expelled from the universities. Below, Figure 32 provides results for Turkey and Brazil and shows the decline for the institutional autonomy and opposition to critical thinking at the macro and micro level.

Figure 32: University's Institutional Autonomy in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021

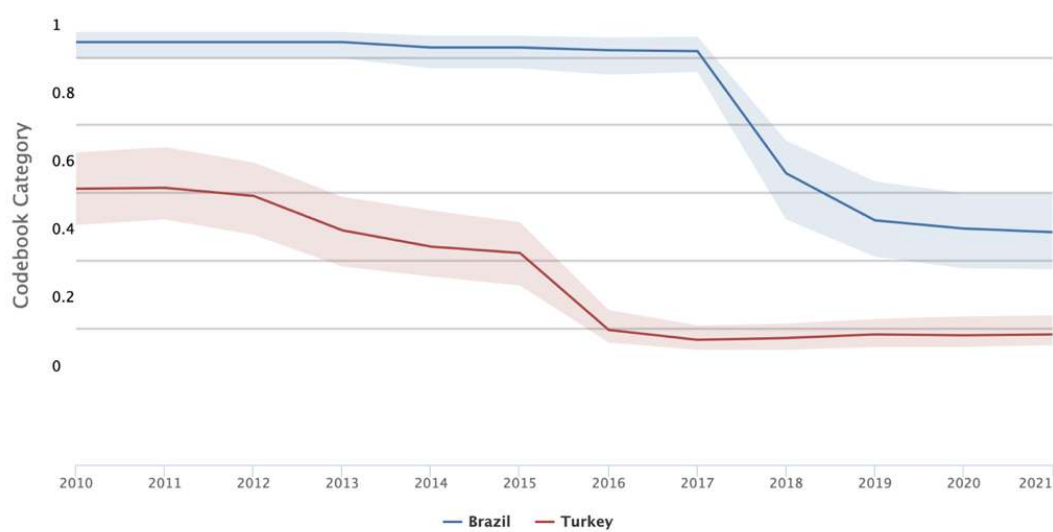


Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Figure 32 compares the independence of institutions from the government control and measures the extent of universities ability to establish their own policies for education and research in Turkey and Brazil. Accordingly, Turkey has almost no autonomy at all for universities' institutional independence. In comparison, Brazilian universities have moderate autonomy.

From a comparative perspective, limited number of universities are only at the standards of high-quality research in Brazil while their research quality is lower than the OECD countries. The quality of education is also low in Turkey. After the 2016 coup attempt, many academics and teachers were fired because of their alleged terrorism connections while some schools and universities were closed with presidential decrees. This stems from the extensive constraints on the academic freedom and causes budget cuts for research funding in Turkey and Brazil. Particularly, social science and humanities are ignored through lower funding opportunities and restrictions on the research content and publications because critical thinking and questioning are undesirable for authoritarians. For example, Brazil has removed funding for humanitarian studies, higher education, research and development at the federal level since 2016⁸⁹. Scholars are also restricted in research topics in Turkey through the interventions of the government and university administrations. AKP government has also established universities and staffed those universities with partisan academics (Alemdaroğlu et al., 2021).

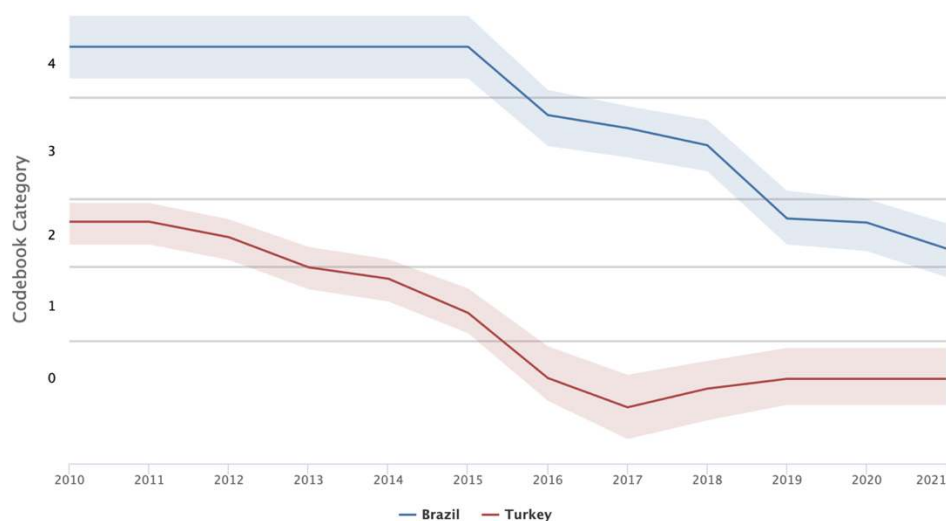
Figure 33: Academic Freedom Index for Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Accordingly, V-Dem Academic Freedom Index is modeled from the indicators of freedom of research and teaching, academic exchange and dissemination, institutional autonomy, campus integrity and freedom of academic and cultural expression. Figure 33 shows that academic freedom is more respected in Brazil. However, both countries' scores have been declining in the last five years.

Figure 34: Freedom of Academic and Cultural Expression in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Moreover, Figure 34 compares academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression in political issues for Turkey and Brazil. In Turkey, government does not respect such principles. Censorship and intimidation are often used to restrict and control the academic

and cultural expression. This has been clearly manifested after 2015. In comparison, Brazil has a better condition for academic and cultural expression, although it has also weak respect for such principles.

This poorer performance for academic freedom in Turkey is also evident considering the recent happenings when many academics and students are dismissed from universities, detained, and investigated under the terrorism law. For example, Boğaziçi University incidence caused regular detainment of university students because of the demonstrations against the incumbent's policies. In terms of legal measures, president has the authority to appoint rectors of universities as of 2018. Accordingly, in January 2021, he appointed an AKP-member as the rector to one of the Turkey's decent and top-ranking university, Boğaziçi University. Students, graduates and academics reacted to this decision and started a months-long protest movement. Appointment of a pro-government rector started protests by the university affiliates because the appointed rector was the first rector chosen outside the university community and meant a violation of the established rules and practices of an independent university governance since the 1980 coup. Although the rector left the position, the newly appointed rector also continues to take pro-government decisions and undermine institutional autonomy. Currently, police also use force against academicians and students who are detained, arrested or fired by the new rector and banned to give lectures at Boğaziçi University.

This recent incidence is an example of an executive aggrandizement of universities and suppression of independent institutions in Turkey (Alemdaroğlu et al., 2021). AKP was criticizing the youth since Gezi Protests as they are seen to be alienated from "national values". Likewise, Boğaziçi University incidence reflects the government intention to form a "cultural hegemony by cultivating pious, national and politically obedient" youth (Alemdaroğlu et al., 2021).

Based on this framework, a newly published report by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Turkey⁹⁰ shows that the majority of young people is pessimistic about the future of their country (98%). Therefore, 72.9% would like to live in another country if they had the opportunity. A recent survey in Turkey also shows that 62% of young people who have graduated from at least a bachelor's degree want to move abroad (Istanbul Economy Research-Turkey Report, 2021). Another important indicator is the percentage distribution of the trusted institutions. While politicians (3.7%), political parties (4.4%) and journalists (6.9%) are not trusted, 70.3% of the young people trust the scientists and 61.8% trust the military. Particularly, brain drain has become a major concern which is recently debated around the emigration of the doctors in Turkey because of the lower living standards⁹¹. Similar concern is also present in Brazil⁹² with the highest recorded level of emigration of skilled labor in the last decade (30%)⁹³.

Consequently, academic freedom and critical thinking is another area of authoritarian populist consolidation which is relatively a less studied research area in the literature. From a comparative perspective, public debates at Brazilian universities remain mostly free despite many threats against academics. Freedom House also classifies Brazil as “free” and rank it above Turkey (Freedom House, 2021a; 2021c). However, current authoritarian regime in Brazil also has an anti-social science and humanities attitude like the governing party in Turkey. For example, the current Bolsonaro administration uses the military dictatorship-era law (National Security Law) to silence opposing views through “political repression and the limitation of individual rights”⁹⁴. Such understanding is common across authoritarian-ruled countries (Väliaverronen et al., 2021) considering that the core truth is supposed to be initiated by the authoritarian leader, party and the pro-government media. Hence, opposition to academic freedom, critical thinking

and antiscientific policies is a global strategy for the authoritarian populists to consolidate their power like in the cases of Turkey and Brazil.

4.4 Conclusion

Comparative analyses of this chapter on the authoritarian populist consolidation process in Turkey and Brazil demonstrate a strong reflection of the theoretical framework developed in the introduction chapter. The thesis has located macro and micro actors and structures with their interests to understand the overall picture behind the authoritarian populist consolidation process through the executive aggrandizement at institutional and ideological levels. While many studies have been conducted separately on each of these variables illustrated in Figure 6, it is evident that rare studies combine all of them in a single study from a comparative perspective.

As a result, a series of conclusions can be drawn from this chapter (See the details in Table 7).

Table 7: Similarities and Comparisons on the Trajectories of Authoritarian Populism in Turkey and Brazil

SIMILARITIES		
Historical Trajectories of Coups	○ Never been a fully consolidated liberal democracy because of the existing tutelary democratic elements. Turkey was directly ruled by military in 1960-61 and 1980-1982. Brazil was directly ruled by military longer (between 1964 and 1984)	
Western-model Modernization Process	○ Modernization initiatives at the beginning of the 20th century. ○ Extensive reform programs under the leadership of Atatürk in Turkey and Vargas in Brazil	
Political Spectrum in the Democratization Process	○ 1980s witnessed political instability ○ Democratization process only started with the new constitutions in 1982 in Turkey and in 1985 in Brazil. ○ The 1980s and 1990s witnessed various initiatives for democratization in terms of the activities of civil society organizations but not experienced the triumph of western liberal democracy.	
Economic Development	○ Upper middle-income economies, ○ Adopted ISI models ○ Policy of financial inclusion to obtain the consent of the lower classes for their regime's survival ○ Recent economic challenges with the increasing inflation ○ Business-government relations rely on nepotism and clientelism ○ Have corruption problems	
COMPARISONS		
INDICATORS	TÜRKİYE	BRAZIL
Time dimension	○ Being ruled by an authoritarian populist rule for over 20 years--undisrupted authoritarian populist rule ○ Time dimension favors the authoritarian populist consolidation	○ Experiencing an imminent threat against democracy since 2018--authoritarian populism for a shorter period. ○ Populist trajectory in its political history. BUT--the leftist populist governments of the PT strengthened democratic institutions
Political System	○ A unitary state and parliamentary democracy since 1923. After 2016 coup attempt, adopted presidential system with lower checks and balances. ○ Political party institutionalization for constitutional amendments.	○ Federal republic with a presidential system ○ Fragmented party system which weakens an institutionalized and organized party network behind an authoritarian populist rule.

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	10% threshold limits the number of political parties to gain seats in the parliament and thereby avoiding the political pluralism. - Elections are held regularly but irregularities in the recent elections because of the unequal media access for political parties, exploitation of state resources to support the government campaigns	- Regime based on a leader cult like Bolsanorismo or Lulismo (exception: the PT, created a party ideology as <i>petismo</i>). - System of "coalition presidentialism" - Political pluralism and relatively free and fair playing field. - Absence of a national election threshold and weak party discipline-- challenges to form a majoritarian rule in a bicameral system
Judiciary	- Constitutional changes increased executive control over the judiciary - Violations of rights to due process and long pretrial detention also weaken the independence of the judiciary.	- Fundamentally independent from government intervention and has the power of judicial review - The Supreme Court's power to abolish laws if they violate the constitution. - Recent violations of the judiciary's integrity despite the constitutionally proven independence of the judiciary
Bureaucracy	- Lower level of meritocracy and professionalism but higher bureaucratic efficiency and infrastructural power. - Diminishing power of military despite the continuing militarization of politics through fight against the terrorist groups within Turkey and abroad. - Armed forces' historical guardianship role-- Indirect and continuous influence of the military through the constitutional changes.	- Lower infrastructural power because the administrative structures are insufficient to provide the most basic public services - Military influence ended after democratization process in 1984 until the presidency of ex-military officer, Bolsonaro who appointed military personnel to bureaucracy and political positions.
Political Economy	- Adopted free-market economics after the 1980 coup. - Effective and widespread patronage network relies more on the neoliberal paradigm as it transferred the social responsibilities of the state to foundations, communities, parties, and family. - In addition to the new informal class, AKP created new bourgeoisie classes to gain support for its regime. - Regulation of the employee-employer relationship for the benefit of the employer. In comparison, the PT carried out the social policies as the state responsibility thanks to its leftist tradition in the same period. - In the 1980s--adopted macro-economic stabilization, trade liberalization, and privatization to obtain loans from the IMF (similar to Brazil).	- Influence of civil society created a different trajectory. - Pursued a liberal developmental model after the ISI crisis in the 1990s and adopted welfare state policies and social assistance programs like Bolsa Familia. Only turned to the market-driven policies with Temer's Presidency. - Distributed social benefits through state institutions in a very transparent way. However, created a less solid mass support behind the left-wing populist, PT. - Regulatory control on economy stems from its "coalitional presidentialism" and the fragmented party system and therefore weakly planned organization among the executive branches.
Media	- Propagating tool for neoliberal policies to introduce mega projects and legitimize the economic growth at the expense of rising unemployment and precarity of the new informal class. - Transferring ownership of the key media outlets to pro-government business. In return, media outlets provided favorable content and coverage for the government so that the business groups could obtain massive state contracts in construction, energy, and transportation - Government censorship efforts are more direct and routine. - High political control over media funding and news agencies. - Higher requests for online content and access restrictions. - Freedom of the press and expression has been severely restricted.	- Freedom of expression and the media network is much more vibrant. However, many cities do not have independent media network and tend to rely on social media platforms like WhatsApp to get information and follow the news-- influence of local politicians, oligarchies over the Brazilian media outlets, & prone to spread fake information - Dynasties of the landowners (Colonels) own the media. - Deputies also have connections with media companies--"electronic Coronelism" - Under the influence of religious networks. - Current regime's reliance on social media as an institutional support.
Polarization	- Center-right and conservative party trajectory in the post-1980 period. - New divisions in the 1990s: Kurdish and Turkish ethnic identity problem and secularism and political Islam - Exclusionary populist discourse of Sunni Turkish identity in which caused a homogeneous discourse and a growing prejudice towards pluralism and created tensions with secular Turks, non-Turkish citizens (Kurds), and non-Sunni citizens (Alevites). - Historical secularism-conservative division. Secular military and bureaucracy elites' role in power-sharing with the elected government created a path dependency for authoritarianism.	- Right-left divisions (Similar to Turkey). Stronger leftist trajectory. - Colonized country with historical race-based diversities. Created a path towards socio-economic inequalities and elites' significant role in the Brazilian politics. - Economic inequality between North-South regions. However, there is no militant separatism compared to Turkey's South-East. Hence, security threat is not used by the authoritarian populists for consolidation attempts.

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Civil Society Organization	○ NGOs are not the key actors in policy making and mostly rely on foreign funding. But pro-government NGOs have more influence. ○ Weaker civil society organization--historic roots of leftist tradition considering the existence of a strong central government tradition compared to the federal Brazilian system.	○ After democratization in 1985, more organized and autonomous civil society. ○ But government sanctions and harassment in the current context. ○ Local municipalities are strengthened, and political and civil society formations at the local politics became more independent.
Opposition to Critical Thinking	○ Almost no autonomy for universities' institutional independence. In comparison, Brazilian universities have moderate autonomy. ○ Both countries have anti-scientific attitudes and anti-expert views	○ Academic freedom is more respected. However, both countries' scores have been declining in the last five years.

Firstly, Turkey and Brazil have experienced democratic backsliding in the last decade. From a comparative perspective, Turkey “lost its status as a democracy in 2014” (V-Dem Institute, 2021, pp. 14-16). Turkey is not also a free country because of the poor conditions for political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House, 2021a) and the lack of “respect for democratic standards, the rule of law, and fundamental freedoms” (European Commission, 2020).

Secondly, the two countries have similarities in terms of their historical trajectories of coups, political instabilities in western-model driven democratization and modernization process and economic development trajectories. However, they are currently on the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation and experience it in different degrees. In other words, Brazil’s democratic reflexes are more resilient than Turkey despite the recent violations and threats against democratic principles. Specifically, institutional conditions in Turkey have paved the way for a greater move towards such a consolidation, thanks to the 20-year-long uninterrupted authoritarian populist control in the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, political economy and media.

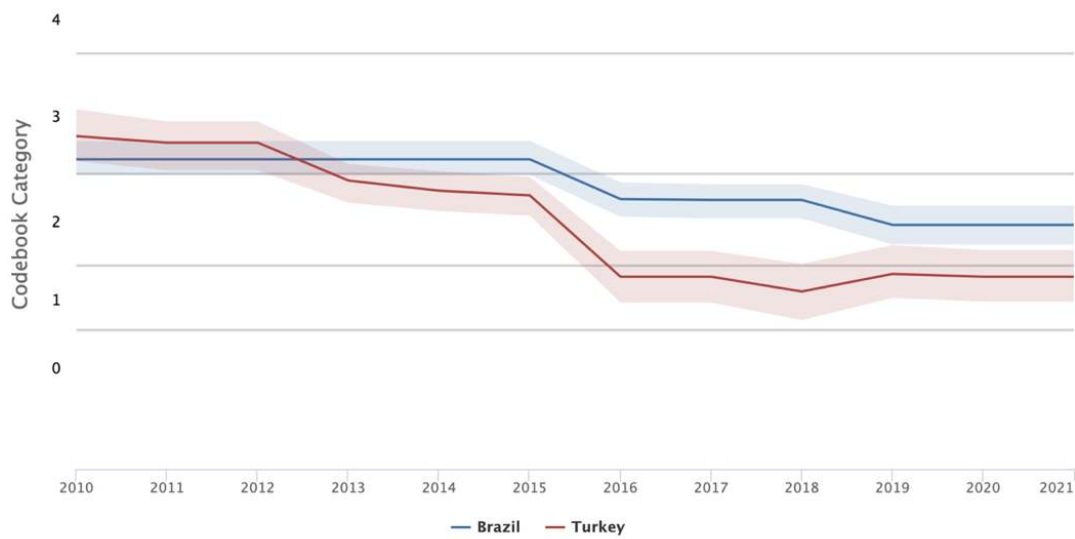
Despite some differences among the left-wing parties and leaders like in the case of Obrador in Mexico, left-wing political trajectory is much more friendly and inclusive towards democratic principles like in the case of Lula in Brazil. Considering the difference between the left and right-wing populists, Turkey is being ruled by a right-

wing populist rule for over 20 years. It is also the longest-ruling populist party in Europe (Kubát et al., 2020, p. 12). However, Brazil has been experiencing such a rule for only three years. Previously, Brazilian politics was led by a leftist populist party, PT. However, after 1980 coup in Turkey, the left-oriented parties and movements are weakened to a certain extent and majority of the voter support has been moved towards the right-wing, center and liberal parties in Turkey.

Currently, Bolsonaro's uncompetitive leader profile has created a strong democratic resilience in Brazil. However, this dissimilarity can change depending on the re-election of the right-wing populist president, Bolsonaro, in the next elections through his opportunity to appoint loyal judges to Supreme Court and strengthen his consolidated support from the military, cultural ideologues, center-right parties and neoliberal technocrats. Re-election of the authoritarian populist regime is thus a critical juncture in the institutional consolidation of authoritarian populist rule in Brazil considering that research shows more fierce tendency of the authoritarians against democracy after re-election⁹⁵.

Nonetheless, the current situation of Turkey creates weaker conditions for the authoritarian reversibility because the rules of the game changed, and this weakened democratic institutions to show resiliency against the consolidation of the political power. Legal and illegal methods were much more used to rig elections and repress the political opponents. For example, AKP radically altered the constitutional provisions to institutionalize and win legal legitimacy for its authoritarian populist regime with the amendments in 2007, 2010, and 2017. Figure 35 bears testimony for this statement.

Figure 35: Executive Respect of the Constitution in Turkey and Brazil, 2010-2021



Source: Compiled from V-Dem Data 2021, Variable Graph, https://www.v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/

Figure 35 shows whether the members of the executive respect the constitution. Turkey has worse record in executive violation of the constitution. Still, the line is above 0 which means there are still certain respected provisions. On the other hand, Brazilian government would face legal consequences if violates the constitution. As a result, compared to Brazil, authoritarian populist rule in Turkey is more organized, programmatic, and ideological, thanks to its widespread patronage network.

Thirdly, although ideological conditions pave the way for authoritarian populist consolidation in both Turkey and Brazil, institutional conditions put Turkey more in the direction of an authoritarian consolidation compared to Brazil. From a comparative perspective, current reliance on social media and military as institutional support mechanisms is unsystematic and short-lived for Bolsonaro government (Hunter et al., 2021). Generally, Brazilian presidents lack institutional support from the parliament and political party for consolidating their authoritarian rule. It is known as “coalition presidentialism”⁹⁶. Brazilian presidents can lead policymaking and formulate the budget while they need the approval from the Congress where they do not have a majority. Many political parties in Brazil do not also act with ideological concerns. They give their

support for the presidents in exchange for patronage. As a result, this paves the way for passing vote-winning projects such as painting schools but adversely affect long-term planning⁹⁷. This also makes it difficult for the presidents to obtain support from various polarized parties to pass legislation. High party fragmentation stems from the federal and preferential voting systems and the lack of barriers for forming new parties. Eventually, intra-party competition and personalist campaign strategies emerge (Mainwaring, 1999). Party fragmentation therefore make coalition governments weaker and more unstable (Martínez-Gallardo, 2012; Neto, et al., 2011; Pereira et al., 2017). For example, the Mensalão was a vote-buying scandal which Lula was involved to pass a legislation through giving payments to the deputies in 2005. Therefore, despite Linz (1990)'s arguments on the relationship between authoritarianism and presidentialism, executive and the legislature is clearly separated in Brazil.

In comparison, Turkey has a rooted organizational support base and a competitive leadership thanks to the government machine with a centralized power under a unitary state, organized party network and majority government in the legislature. Additionally, AKP has a powerful grass roots movement thanks to its vibrant youth and women's branches (Somer, 2016, p. 16). Therefore, it is more appealing for an authoritarian populist leader or party to consolidate authoritarian rule in Turkey. For example, in the current context, Turkey is ruled by a majority government while Brazil is ruled by a coalition government. Brazilian veto players show a democratic resilience against the current authoritarian rule. Majoritarian government provides a leverage for the executive in Turkey to have significant control over the bureaucracy, law enforcement and deploy public resources. For example, it paved the way for making amendments in the constitution in 2017 and allowed for judicial and bureaucratic appointments. AKP

government could also change the system of government and transfer the political system from a parliamentary to a presidential system.

Therefore, institutional conditions like party system, system of government and threshold in the electoral system make it less probable for Brazil to go in the direction of a strong and resilient authoritarian populist consolidation and have executive aggrandizement over the judiciary, parliament, bureaucracy and media. Data shows that personalist leaders became more dominant than the political party for election campaigns and “voters are becoming more candidate-centered in their voting preferences” (Frantz et al., 2021). However, without an institutional support, leaders cannot survive their rule.

Ideologically, the strength of the leftist movements also creates a vibrant environment for civil society organizations in Brazil. Presence of social movements led by civil society groups to mobilize people and address the authoritarian rule’s failures is also a resistance tool in Brazil. Additionally, although Turkey and Brazil are highly polarized countries, degree of identity-based polarization is deeper in Turkey in ethnicity, political party affiliation and secularism-conservatism cleavages. Turkey and Brazil are polarized societies and experience affective polarization (pro-Erdogan and anti-Erdogan in Turkey, pro-Bolsonaro and anti-Bolsonaro, antibolsonarismo and pro-PT and anti-PT, antipetismo). Such regimes pursue distraction campaigns and thereby undermine the opposition-led criticisms with conspiracy theories. For example, Turkey relies on the “foreign powers” framing to counteract the criticisms of increasing economic inequality,⁹⁸ inflation and currency weakness⁹⁹. Likewise, Bolsonaro blamed the “globalists” for causing the emergence of the pandemic to initiate world communism and thereby defending himself against criticisms on mishandling the pandemic in Brazil¹⁰⁰. As a result, it drives the two countries more towards the authoritarian populism. In this case,

polarization threatens democracy in Turkey and Brazil because partisanship-led voting allows authoritarian regimes to win the elections and pushes the voters to favor their preferred party that stands for their ideological interests rather than democracy (Almond et al., 1963; Svolik, 2019; McCoy et al., 2021; Demirel-Pegg et al., 2021; Çakır, 2020; Kalaycıoğlu, 2015).

However, despite this crucial threat of polarization, the two countries have different identity poles that diverges their process of authoritarian populism. For example, Brazil has racial, socio-economic and regional (North and South) divisions, inequalities and polarization but they are not incompatible. On the other hand, Turkey has incompatible polarization around ethnicity (Turks vs. Kurds), regional (West vs. East) and religious (conservatives vs. seculars and Alevis vs. Sunnis) identities. Military's indirect role after 1980 coup d'état in Turkey also intensified polarization around religion. As a result, legal and non-legal changes made critical institutions of horizontal accountability (parliament, judiciary, bureaucracy, and media) dependent on the executive power in Turkey. At the same time, authoritarian populist regime gained support through strengthening the neo-patrimonial state power, socio-economic polarization, and silencing the civil society and science to secure the next elections (vertical accountability). There might be other variables, but the thesis shows that those institutional and ideological variables are systematically common variables to compare the extent of recent democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil. Still, the thesis briefly underlined the role of historical foundations, charismatic leadership, form of government and external factors like the foreign policy and the pandemic on the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in the two countries.

Historically, Turkey started democratization process earlier than Brazil. However, it has never achieved a transition to a consolidated democracy. More specifically, Turkey's authoritarian populist path came with the liberal-conservative alliance against the Republican tutelary democracy in the early 2000s. During the reforms in the first years of its incumbency, AKP had already authoritarian tendencies. However, liberals and conservatives allied against the Republican guardians of the tutelary democracy in Turkey. Later, this alliance ended because of the different views on the state authority, freedom of speech or media. However, in the first place, it allowed AKP to win the constitutional referendum in 2010. It was a replacement of the 1980 constitution of military. Liberals also supported the foreign policy of "zero problems with neighbors" which would push Turkey to act as a regional negotiator in the regional conflicts and have bilateral relations with the countries Turkey had historical problems such as Greece, Russia, Syria, Iraq and Iran (Kadioğlu et al., 2012). During this process, AKP also initiated talks with the opinion leaders of the minority groups like Alevis, Kurds and Armenians for the domestic politics. However, such policies have not achieved their main objectives because the policies towards ethnic minority Kurds and religious minority Alevis would reduce the support from the nationalist and conservative voters. In the end, Turkey assumed more of a paternal and conservative guardianship role and embraced an authoritarian path because of the consolidated success against the secular elites in 2007 elections at the domestic politics and the weakening relations with the EU, withdrawal of the US from the Middle Eastern politics and the regional conflicts in the global politics. In essence, Turkey's current regime is only a replacement by the Islamic right-wing populists who control the institutions once led by the military and secular bureaucrats who were the traditional representatives of authoritarianism. Therefore, the *new Turkey*

became a reproduction of the previous regime. Consequently, Turkey's authoritarianism was a transformation from institution-based, secular and nationalist politics to religious, nationalist and leader-based politics. For example, the military dominance is replaced by the police force, but the prevalent ideas of religious nationalist politics have continued with the militarization of the police (Gönen, et al., 2013). Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) was also established during the early Republican years but used prominently during the AKP government (Atalay, 2019).

As a corollary, authoritarianism is becoming increasingly prevalent all over the world. It prioritizes the interests of regime supporters over the interests of the public, creation of militarized laws against public demonstrations and centralization of power in the politics, economy, media and judiciary. One of the key points about authoritarian populist regimes is that authoritarianism is not fully consolidated. Therefore, the thesis considers Turkey and Brazil on the path to authoritarian populist consolidation because there is still fragility even in Turkey thanks to the current alliance among the opposition parties and the results of the local elections in 2019.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a comparative conclusion on the path towards the consolidation process of authoritarian populism in Turkey and Brazil. It consists of five main sections. The first section gives an overview of the study and its implications while the other chapters discuss the limitations of this thesis, future research areas and the future trajectories for Turkey and Brazil. The last section also serves as an epilogue.

5.1 Overview of the Study and Implications

The thesis started with an introductory chapter to discuss the research question, objectives, methodology and the argument of the thesis. Chapter 1 explained why it focuses on the authoritarian populist consolidation compared to the established literature on democratic consolidation. Accordingly, the chapter provided a framework on comparing the extent of the authoritarian populism process in Turkey and Brazil through institutional and ideological consolidation mechanisms. It did not argue that these factors are the best predictors to trace the consolidation process, but they are systematically common factors to discuss this process in the cases of Turkey and Brazil. Chapter 1 also discussed the contribution of the thesis on comparing the formation and consolidation processes of the current authoritarian populist regimes in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade based on the structural, institutional and agency dynamics.

Chapter 2 presented an overview of the definitions of democracy, democratic backsliding, and populism. It discussed the current debates on democratic backsliding and populism literature. At the same time, it provided a framework on the impact of such literature to explain the path towards a consolidation process of authoritarian populist rule in Turkey

and Brazil. This chapter showed that the studies on the Global South could offer insights into different socio-cultural and economic contexts because neoliberal globalization and inequalities have different impacts on the emergence of right-wing populist movements in the Global North and the Global South. Accordingly, Chapter 2 argued that the thesis contributes to this line of the literature by comparing the right-wing populism and authoritarianism in two different regions: Brazil in Latin America and Turkey in Eastern Europe. It suggested that the aim is to compare different regions and ideological forms of populism to reach more reliable and generalizable conclusions in the literature. Additionally, Chapter 2 showed diverse conceptual approaches and dimensions of democracy, democratic backsliding and populism in the literature and built a connection between these studies. It concluded that the thesis uses the concept of “authoritarian populism” for analyzing the consolidation process of current regimes in Turkey and Brazil and defined it as a “degraded version of democracy that embraces the idea of regular elections but opposes the liberal dimension of democracy”. That is, the authoritarian populists attempt to demolish the system of checks and balances and disrespect the political pluralism apart from their populist traits of the presence of a charismatic leader and an extensive constituency.

While the thesis concentrated on the last decade, it briefly covered the political history of Turkey and Brazil in Chapter 3 to understand the contemporary dynamics of the politics. Chapter 3 discussed the institutional factors (political system, role of military and economic development trajectories with a focus on the historical foundations of the executive aggrandizement in the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, media, and political economy) and ideological factors (the role of major nature of cleavages and ideological spectrums in the current polarized environment) to explain the historical foundations behind the path towards democratic backsliding in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade.

This chapter showed that Turkey and Brazil can be historically compared since the late 19th century because they both adopted European modernization and progress (Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p. 203). Similar to the transition from Ottoman Empire to the Republic, Brazil had an imperial history and later experienced a military led Republican era. Differently however, class-based inequalities continued in Brazil. Military's role was also visible in Brazil just like Turkey. As of the 1960s, military's role increased in the two countries especially with the coup d'états. While Brazil is led by a military dictatorship until 1985, Turkey held elections in 1961 despite continuing indirect role of the military in the politics and military interruptions in 1971 and 1980.

In the 2000s, a left-wing populist government in Brazil and a political Islamist- populist party in Turkey came to power in 2002. Hence, Turkey's and Brazil's integration into the newly formed neoliberal democratic global system were similar. However, the PT (left-wing) and AKP (right-wing) were ideologically different populist parties because the former always embraced the democratic principles. Neoliberal market-oriented economic policies also embraced a policy of less government interference in the economy. The partisan nature of the AKP's economic policies paved the way for the transfer of public resources to the pro-government business groups and CSOs (Arat and Pamuk, 2019; Esen et al., 2016; Erkoç et al., 2017; Yılmaz et al., 2018). In return, they used their private resources to assist the political campaigns of AKP. As a result, this has enabled the authoritarian populist government in Turkey to have unequal access to public resources, and at the same time benefit from the private sector resources. In comparison, the opposition has been largely deprived of that support. Media has also provided excessive media coverage for the incumbent and thereby leading to an unfair playing field for the opposition compared to Brazilian case. From a comparative perspective, Brazil has recently started to embrace such neoliberal policies. Since Bolsonaro's presidency,

Brazilian government has also been auctioning infrastructure businesses for the private sector to reduce the role of the government in the economy. At the same time, Bolsonaro recently attempted to privatize the state-owned enterprises such as electricity firm, Eletrobras and Casa da Moeda, which prints the currency and passports¹⁰¹.

Consequently, Chapter 3 provided a comparative perspective to show that autocratization is gradually deepened in Turkey since 2002. Initial years of the current right-wing populist party in Turkey was different from Bolsonaro administration in Brazil as the former benefited from the support of the liberals in and outside the country for its reform policies. However, the current Bolsonaro administration is more open in its authoritarian tendencies and therefore lack any institutionalized support from the domestic and global agencies and institutions. Accordingly, the chapter concluded that Brazil has been experiencing autocratization for a shorter period while AKP consolidated its power thanks to its uninterrupted 20 years of governance.

After this historical framework in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 provided a comparative overview of the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in the two cases with a focus on the institutional and ideological dimensions in the last decade. It discussed to what extent state institutions are politicized and weakened the level of playing field. It highlighted the executive aggrandizement in the legislature to control the political opponents, focused on the manipulation of the judiciary, bureaucracy, political economy and media to understand how the rules of the game are rewritten, governments' discourses are propagandized and the relations between the pro-government business groups and the state has formed a patronage network. In addition to the executive aggrandizement over the institutions, another important indicator for tracing the extent of an authoritarian populist consolidation was to understand how the regimes spread their ideas and obtain legitimation. Therefore, based on the historical background for ideological spectrums and

cleavages in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 explained how they are mobilized by the authoritarian populists. Specifically, it showed how populism, centered on anti-elitism in Brazil and Islamist nationalism in Turkey, is solidified through polarization, solid relations with the pro-government NGOs and the opposition to critical thinking in the name of consolidating authoritarian populist rule.

As a result, Chapter 4 concluded that Turkey and Brazil have experienced democratic backsliding in the last decade (See Table 7). However, Turkey currently lost its status as a democracy and is not considered a free country because of the poor conditions for political rights and civil liberties. Secondly, the two countries have similarities in terms of their historical trajectories of coups, political instabilities in western-model driven democratization and modernization process and economic development trajectories. However, they are currently on the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation and experience it in different degrees. Accordingly, Brazil's democratic reflexes are more resilient than Turkey despite the recent violations and threats against democratic principles. Specifically, institutional conditions in Turkey have paved the way for a greater move towards such a consolidation, thanks to the 20-year-long uninterrupted authoritarian populist control in the legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, political economy and media. Thirdly, although ideological conditions pave the way for authoritarian populist consolidation in both Turkey and Brazil, institutional conditions put Turkey more in the direction of an authoritarian consolidation compared to Brazil. From a comparative perspective, current reliance on social media and military as institutional support mechanisms is unsystematic and short-lived for the current Bolsonaro government. In comparison, Turkey has a rooted organizational support base and a competitive leadership thanks to the government machine with a centralized power under a unitary state, organized party network and majority government in the legislature. Therefore, it is more

appealing for an authoritarian populist leader or party to consolidate authoritarian rule in Turkey. Ideologically, the strength of the leftist movements also creates a vibrant environment for civil society organizations in Brazil. Presence of social movements led by civil society groups to mobilize people and address the authoritarian rule's failures is also a resistance tool in Brazil. Additionally, although Turkey and Brazil are highly polarized countries, degree of identity-based polarization is deeper in Turkey in ethnicity, political party affiliation and secularism-conservatism cleavages.

Finally, Chapter 5 aims to give an overview of the thesis, discuss its limitations, future research areas and the future trajectories for Turkey and Brazil. As a result, the thesis contributed to the literature by offering a thorough, up-to-date, empirically supported, and theoretically grounded account of the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil in the last decade. Since democratic backsliding is still an evolving process in the world, this study is timely and relevant. Therefore, it created a foundation for future research and provided experts, policymakers and scholars with a detailed analysis of the examined countries' domestic trends.

5.2 *Limitations of the Study*

This thesis aims to make a theoretical contribution to the broader field of comparative politics by offering a framework of authoritarian populist regime consolidation. However, the findings of the thesis are subject to limitations. Five major issues can be considered as possible drawbacks of the thesis.

Firstly, the contemporary political scope of the thesis presented the challenge of distancing the author from the events and dynamics that she witnessed first-hand in Turkey. However, adopting a scientific methodological approach paved the way for counterbalancing this limitation.

Secondly, reading documents in English, Turkish and Portuguese is a strength of this research. It provides a thorough knowledge of the local realia in Turkey and Brazil because the programs of parties, statements, and speeches of the party leaders and local statistical data are often available in local languages only. Turkish is the native language of the author, while personal and linguistic access to Brazilian politics and society was limited before working on this thesis. Therefore, the thesis referred to official translations to counterbalance this limitation.

Thirdly, rapidly changing political dynamics and the upcoming elections in the two countries require continuous analysis and following of the daily dynamics in the future research on this area. Therefore, arguments of the thesis need to be evaluated and empirically verified based on the results of the next elections in Turkey and Brazil.

Fourthly, arguments should be applied to other cases to generate new insights (Robinson et al., 2011; Müller-Bloch and Kranz, 2015). This thesis relies on two case studies which is relatively a small sample to generalize the argument that institutional and ideological consolidation directs countries in the direction of authoritarian populist consolidation. Future researchers might want to consider a larger survey or data to answer quantitative-driven hypotheses that might add to this line of research.

Fifthly, due to the limited focus of this thesis, research has not incorporated authoritarian populists' consolidation strategies in relation to international relations. However, foreign policy plays a significant role in authoritarian populist consolidation process. However, the thesis concentrated on the domestic lens of the politics with a focus on the institutional and ideological dimensions.

On the one hand, Turkey's conflict-driven geopolitics particularly paved the way for the government in Turkey to legitimize the authoritarian rule because of the security concerns compared to a relatively peaceful regional politics in Brazil. On the other hand,

democratic fragility of the international system has significantly affected democratic backsliding and domestic political norms both in Turkey and Brazil. Strong leadership, central decision-making, and policy management gained momentum at this process. For example, social order and centralized decision-making are the key principles in Russia and China which became examples for countries having democratic erosion like Turkey and Brazil. Brazil is currently described as a “pariah state”¹⁰² because of the worsening ties with other countries apart from the authoritarian populists like Orban in Hungary.

Brazil has two foreign policy trajectories: pro-US or autonomous foreign policy. With the impeachment process of the PT President, Dilma Rousseff, the latter trajectory has been interrupted. For example, Brazilian left-wing populist president, Lula prioritized the relations with the non-western actors. However, Brazil is currently more skeptical about China. Rather, the right-wing populist, Bolsonaro was closer to the American right-wing populist President Trump. In a speech, Bolsonaro said that:

“The American people have always been an inspiration for me. We have good relationships around the world,” he added, “but I am extending my hands so that the relationship with the United States is increasingly more important”¹⁰³

The US has always opposed extra regional influence on the Latin American countries as it prefers to maintain US hegemony on such countries. The current rivalry between US and China also gets intensified and increased geopolitical disputes. Therefore, presidential candidates, Lula and Bolsonaro are both looking for the ways to appeal to the “Brazilians’ desire for international recognition”¹⁰⁴. This also shows the close relationship between the foreign policy and the authoritarian populist trajectory in Brazil with the upcoming elections.

Historically, geopolitics has a crucial impact on foreign policy trajectory of Turkey as it pushed the country to have good relations with its European partners while Brazil had

relations with the US in its historical trajectory. However, Turkey has closer relations with the European powers because of its memberships of OECD and NATO and the founding membership of the Council of Europe. Considering the geopolitical importance of Turkey for the European powers and the US against the non-Western powers like Russia, China and the Middle East, Turkey has also a more leverage in the relations with the Western powers. However, Turkey has recently changed its international behavior from a pro-Western to a diversified foreign policy despite being a Western ally. Particularly, transformation of the international system has influenced this strategy. Since 2010, membership process with the EU has been disrupted. Problems with the US regarding the Syrian civil war have also decreased the leverage of the West on Turkey. Meanwhile, the pace of reforms declined parallel to the interrupted relations with the EU from the mid-2000s onwards. Turkey's "financial crisis in 2001-2002 initiated the IMF-imposed structural reforms in banking system and macroeconomic policy and led to a political earthquake that brought AKP to power" as a majority government in the early 2000s, with the promises of "economic growth, eradicating corruption and improving social services" (Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p. 214). However, IMF has also lost its leverage in Turkey's politics. In the end, these changing global dynamics paved the way for Turkey to obtain different material incentives based on an "exit strategy". Relations with China and Russia developed rapidly.

Consequently, global and domestic institutions are intertwined and equally affect authoritarian populist consolidation. Brazil is geographically away from the authoritarian China-Russia axis although Brazil is a member-state of the BRICS group and Bolsonaro's authoritarian populist policies isolated Brazil in foreign policy¹⁰⁵. However, Turkey is recently more inclined to rely on this China-Russia axis. Rather than the victory of liberalism with the end of the Cold War, we have been witnessing an unstable and

unpredictable global system considering the pandemic-intensified socio-economic inequalities, turmoils in the Middle East, worldwide socio-economic inequalities, the increasing populist threat in the advanced democracies, and the emergence of Russia and China compared to the Western-led liberal order (Akkoyunlu, 2021c, p. 259). Specifically, the authoritarian populist leaders learn how to disable constitutional democracies thanks to the circulation of authoritarian populist practices.

Furthermore, global events like the pandemic could also affect the authoritarian populist consolidation as an external factor. In the first place, authoritarian populist regimes were shown as unsuccessful cases in handling the pandemic. Biden's success in 2020 elections was directly linked with Trump's failure in managing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Bolsonaro also faced challenges in Brazil because of his disregard of the virus while the popularity of the presidential regime appears to be on a downward trend with the economic implications of the pandemic in Turkey.

Therefore, such global systemic challenges overlap with Turkey's and Brazil's domestic challenges and need an in-depth analysis. Moreover, there are many other variables that the thesis briefly highlighted such as the role of historical foundations, charismatic leadership and the form of government (federalism, unitary state, etc.) to compare the extent of authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil. However, for the sake of a structured and focused comparative analysis, the thesis mainly relied on the institutional and ideological dynamics at the domestic settings because they systematically show a common pattern to compare the path towards the authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil.

Consequently, despite such limitations, the thesis aimed to contribute to the existing literature by analyzing the consolidation strategies in the comparative contexts of the Global South with a focus on the comprehensive theoretical framework by combining

two broad consolidation dimensions (institutional and ideological) and applying them in two different cases of the Global South. The thesis has found a strong reflection of the two-fold framework (institutional and ideological) to explain the path towards an authoritarian populist consolidation in Turkey and Brazil that experience different degrees of this consolidation process.

5.3 *Future Research Areas*

The thesis aimed to understand the common patterns to the authoritarian populist consolidation process and the nature of that process by looking at the lessons and examples from the two critical cases. Therefore, the central contribution is the development of the two-fold framework of institutional and ideological dimension in this process and its applicability in comparative contexts to understand to what extent such authoritarian populist regimes consolidate their power.

Firstly, future research on this area of research could study the extent of this consolidation process in Global North and the Global South from a comparative perspective.

Secondly, there is less theory-driven studies on how democratic backsliding affects the civil society organizations and universities in their research topics, access to policymakers, influence on policy processes, “conflicts with the government over institutional autonomy” and funding (Dobbins, 2022). Future studies can also compare right-wing and left-wing populists in terms of their policies towards humanities and social science from a comparative perspective, relying on the consolidation framework.

Thirdly, arguments of this thesis require further discussion because Turkey and Brazil have the possibility of a reversibility of their authoritarian populist regime in the next elections. The next step would be to expand the analysis to the reversibility of the authoritarian populism because the extent of the authoritarian populist consolidation can

affect the authoritarian reversibility. For example, it is still debated as to how depolarize the politics from “pernicious levels” considering the highly politicized and divided institutions, asymmetrical power balance between the institutions, and lack of public space to debate in divided media networks (McCoy et al., 2021). Therefore, a line of future research examines the authoritarian reversibility in contexts where polarization is high and the extent of consolidation of such regimes went to a level that makes it challenging for the opposition to compete in an unequal political and electoral environment.

Specifically, campaign strategies of the opposition can be compared to understand the authoritarian reversibility. For example, the US is still vulnerable to the right-wing populism resurgence considering the high polarization and continuing popularity of Trump among the electorate. Similarly, anti-votes in Ecuador and Chile handed the victory to Lasso and Boric, however they now suffer from low approval rates. In that case, it is crucial to understand the opposition strategies after coming to power to decrease polarization, respond to the demands of the electorate and prevent the authoritarian populist resurgence.

Fourthly, populism is a problematic and very stretched concept. Although many leaders are today defined as populists, ranging from Trump in the US and Orban in Hungary to Syriza in Greece and Obrador in Mexico, they are not the same considering the different problems they have addressed in their respecting countries. Considering conceptual stretching (Sartori, 1970), such kind of a usage of the populism concept homogenizes the political context of such countries. For example, what is the opposite concept of populism? Is it liberal or electoral democracy? The current scholarly debate does not open the space to discuss the economic models, inequality and the ecological transformations in economically developing countries. Some scholars only focus on the emergence of

“anti-democratic politics” in the West (Rancière, 2005; Brown, 2019). Therefore, future research area could fill the void in the area of political theory and focus on the theories on *change* and *state* in the Global South countries.

Fifthly, despite common dynamics, possibilities for authoritarian reversibility diverge across countries. Therefore, future studies may also focus on explaining the variations of authoritarian reversibility. Particularly, a critical question on future of democracy is whether authoritarian populists can be removed from office despite their institutional changes and polarized policies. For instance, Trump lost the elections, but his judicial appointees continue to undermine democracy in the US. Therefore, legacy of authoritarian populist rule may continue despite authoritarian reversibility as seen in Trumpism¹⁰⁶.

Considering that lifecycle of populists is based on “coming to power, in-power and recuperation of power”, reversibility of the established democratic regime in the post-authoritarian phase is always possible (Gonzalez et al., 2017). After democratic transitions, authoritarian elites often continue to use political influence thanks to existing authoritarian-era constitutions and successor bureaucratic officials and parties.

5.4 Future Trajectory of Populism and Democracy in Turkey and Brazil

Last V-Dem report on autocratization provides significant insights on the future of democracy in the world. It is globally under threat considering that the “share of world population living in autocracies” increased from 49% in 2011 to 70% in 2021 and the level of democracy diminished to 1989 levels and 44% live under an electoral autocracy (V-Dem, 2022, p. 12). Such results could point to “a third wave of autocratization” (Lührman et al., 2019) in place of a “third democratization wave” (Huntington, 1970). In fact, this unbalance between democracies and autocracies is historically relevant because

autocracies prevailed far longer than democracies considering that dominant form of government in Europe was autocracy until the 19th century. Therefore, democracy is comparatively a recent form of government (Loewenstein, 1935, p. 572). Consequently, democracies are systematically challenged to this date by the alternative form of governments (hybrid regimes and closed autocracies) and their own internal structural dynamics.

Lately, right-wing populism has been a “global phenomenon” (Oswald, 2022). One can cite Trumpism in the US and Boris Johnson in the UK for the Global North and Putin in Russia, Modi in India for the Global South. European periphery also experiences such phenomenon with cases of Hungary under Orbán and Poland under Kaczyński. Pundits speculate that Republicans will likely announce Trump’s candidacy for the presidency; however, this could bring unexpected implications for American liberal democracy considering high political polarization. Despite the lack of electoral victories, European right wing populist parties and leaders like AfD, Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany) in Germany and Le Pen in France has also a critical role in the political debate. Furthermore, countries in the European periphery (Poland and Hungary) poses great risks for the future of democracy. Specifically, the recent elections in Hungary started to question the access to the EU funds. Hence, right wing populist’ electoral victories in Global South countries like Turkey and Brazil could further undermine liberal democracy globally.

On the other hand, research shows that populists’ failures in the elections of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Israel and Italy reduced the number of populists in power from 17 to 13 in 2021 which is the lowest number since 2004 (Meyer, 2022, p. 3, 7). Such a decline may stem from the failures of the populists in handling the pandemic, anti-populist opposition coalitions (p. 3, 7). Authoritarian reversibility is also debated with the recent

social democrats' victories in Germany and Portugal, left-wing parties in Chile and Colombia. Bolsonaro refereed to this left-wing revival in Latin America:

“Cuba...Venezuela...Argentina...Chile...Colombia...Brazil???”¹⁰⁷

Regardless of the results that favored the left-wing parties, the big winner was democratic institutions in such countries because there was no political violence because the defeated candidate conceded defeat. This is shown as a great contrast the US, and a sign of the democratic maturity of such countries.

Accordingly, Turkey and Brazil are not exceptional cases but rather exemplify an international pattern. Since Turkey and Brazil have not been classified as advanced democracies but rather democratizing countries, their authoritarianism can be considered a process. Therefore, as the democratization process is reversed, their authoritarian process can also be reversed.

Brazil

In Brazil, democracy has not brought solutions for corruption scandals, economic volatility, social inequality, and crime (e.g., drug-trafficking organizations) despite the existing resiliency of democratic institutions (Weyland, 2021, p. 53). In 2016, with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, Brazil experienced a moment of Brazil's 'Que Se Vayan Todos' (Away with them all!). As a result, this paved the way for the rise of a right-wing populist candidate (Grigera, 2017). On the other hand, Brazil's current right-wing populist trajectory is weak because of the weak position of Bolsonaro considering his disastrous COVID-19 management, corruption investigations (rachadinha) about his sons, weak economy and absence of support from the Congress and the Supreme Federal Court.

Mainly, polls¹⁰⁸ suggest that Lula would be the next president. The polls show that Lula is ahead of Bolsonaro by at least 10% by a margin, and that he will be elected in the

second round with the support of the central candidates (supported with the belief of *frente ampla*, “broad front”), if not in the first round. Nonetheless, Bolsonaro could still win¹⁰⁹ because of a divided opposition, his conservative cultural discourse on armament, gender and abortion issues, and his demonizing discourse on Lula as a corrupt politician and the communism.

Although Bolsonaro’s support base declined among the wealthy and well-educated voters with the pandemic, he has increased his support base among the poor Brazilians thanks to the new social assistance program¹¹⁰. Unable to achieve his promises for the economy, Bolsonaro currently expects support especially from the Evangelists by increasing the tone of identity politics, polarization and electoral fraud. In 2018 election campaign, Bolsonaro promised to “save Brazil from political immorality, and socialism”, expressed his opposition to abortion, women's equal pay with men, or homosexuals' social rights. At the same time, he defended individual armament, continuation of religious tradition, and the broadening of the definition of “terrorism”.

In comparison, the former president, Lula appeared in the political arena to run for the presidency in October 2022 with the promises of increasing production and agriculture, continuation of social assistance and the fight against racism, inflation, unemployment. He softened his revolutionary tone when compared with his first presidency and embraced a program that includes the center and even the center-right groups. In his rallies, Lula often refers to his former presidency and successful policies. However, he also uses polarization politics like Bolsonaro and does not see a third way while calling centrist parties to join him and drawing a clear line between Bolsonaro’s project of “unemployment, neglect, and death” and his project of “food, education, and life”¹¹¹. Some experts criticize Lula’s polarizing discourse¹¹². That is, the social context was advantageous for the election of Bolsonaro in 2018 and the left-wing parties failed to

appeal to moderate-conservative voters. Considering the recent pandemic and economic crises, male and evangelical voters could be thus persuaded to vote for Lula in the upcoming elections¹¹³.

Additionally, the regional context also favors a *change* in Brazilian politics. Recently, Left-wing/centre candidates started to dominate the Latin American politics. In the last three years, presidential elections were held in 12 different countries of Latin America. Among these, 7 out of 10 were won by the leftist parties and candidates. The deepening economic crisis, increasing poverty and inequality in Latin America are combined with corruption scandals in many countries, and the result is common. Society wants “change” and the demand for change is overthrowing the ruling parties one by one because they could not manage the pandemic, put an end to corruption and violence¹¹⁴. Likewise, Lula may have the capacity and capability to solve the problems in Brazil. However, Brazilians do not expect Lula to turn Brazil back to his first presidency¹¹⁵. Rather, they want a leader to manage pandemics, protect democracy, achieve economic growth and reduce inflation¹¹⁶.

Accordingly, Brazil may fall into a left-wing trajectory similar to the recent Latin American cases¹¹⁷. A recently published data on ideological spectrum in Brazil also shows that more than 49% define themselves as the leftist based on their views on drugs, weapons, crime, migration, homosexuality, and taxes¹¹⁸. Relatively high percentage for left-wing ideas in Brazil is significant for the upcoming elections in Brazil.

Nevertheless, political and economic environment during the pink wave of the 2000s were different from the present time because of the current political and economic difficulties in the world. As a result, this challenges the leftist governments after the elections even in fulfilling the demands of their followers like in the case of Chile. Global dynamics would also challenge the Lula administration in case of his victory. In the domestic

politics, many Bolsonaristas also consider the presidency of a “criminal” like Lula as the end of democracy in Brazil¹¹⁹. In an interview with Tucker Carlson, Bolsonaro said that if the left wins, it will turn the country into Venezuela¹²⁰.

Meanwhile, Bolsonaro is sure of his victory in the elections. However, re-election of Bolsonaro would intensify polarization and institutional erosion in Brazil and pose more serious problems for Brazilian democracy¹²¹ because elected authoritarians have so far implemented more radical anti-democratic policies after the re-elections like in Venezuela, the Philippines and Hungary. If Bolsonaro loses the elections, he could react like Trump and threaten Brazil’s stability, institutions and investment. Bolsonaro often accuses the electronic voting system of being unreliable and giving privileges to the electoral boards to the leftists. Similarly, his campaign director and son, Flavio Bolsonaro said that “his own polls showed victory in the first round, otherwise the answer would not be within the jurisdiction”¹²². The recent events in Foz do Iguaçu also caused the assassination of Lula’s party treasurer by a Bolsonaro supporter and the attacks against Lula’s meetings¹²³. In the meantime, PT opened a criminal investigation against Defense Minister Army General Braga Neto as he is threatening to cancel the presidential elections in October¹²⁴. As a result, these discourses and happenings raise concerns for the internal conflict in the post-election period.

Brazil has always been a country that follows the US as a significant example for democracy. Therefore, January 6 Capital riot showed an adverse example for a fragile democracy like Brazil. For example, Bolsonaro said

“he would only leave the presidency dead, arrested or victorious (in the 2022 elections)...and he will never be arrested, or that only God could remove him from Brasilia”¹²⁵.

However, in his meeting with Biden, Bolsonaro said that he would exit presidency in a democratic way¹²⁶. Some analysts also point out that there is less possibility of a “military intervention”¹²⁷. Nonetheless, although Bolsonaro may not react, his ideas, policies and appointments of military officials would probably continue to keep his presidency alive and influence his supporters and thereby adversely affect the democratic future in Brazil. Additionally, although the left politics are stronger and the opposition has a popular leader in Brazil, Bolsonaro started to close the difference thanks to the diminishing economic effects of the pandemic and the reemergence of the cultural politics in the Brazilian mainstream agenda. Hence, Bolsonaro is still a critical presidential candidate for the October elections and poses questions for the future trajectory of Brazil¹²⁸.

Turkey

Similar to Bolsonaro administration, AKP government relies on splitting the opposition and uniting its voters over polarization. It emphasizes the conservative-secular and nationalist cleavages on Turkish-Kurdish identity although this policy failed in the 2019 local elections and allowed the opposition to win the key municipalities. However, this strategy is still important to determine the future trajectory of Turkey in the face of increasing wave of opposition and a possibility of an authoritarian reversibility.

Starting with the 2017 referendum campaign, the opposition parties have succeeded in acting more in harmony with each other and uniting around common candidates. A similar strategy would allow the opposition to reach the voters more easily and expand the potential voter pool. However, the opposition bloc has not yet agreed on a presidential candidate for the 2023 elections. Therefore, compared to the current context in Brazil, there is no clear sign of a strengthening opposition bloc against the governing party in Turkey. This stems from the fact that the opposition does not provide clear policies for solving the problems and therefore is not a serious alternative to the government so that

some voters, who have previously voted for AKP, may start to vote for them in the upcoming elections. As a result, AKP is popular for its electorate despite the economic difficulties¹²⁹. After the 2023 elections, Turkey's uninterrupted authoritarian regime could transform the political system into an invincible electoral majority. Hence, such a scenario could create an example of how authoritarians can transform the country into a fully authoritarian regime and face insignificant opposition thanks to what Scheppele (2018) calls "autocratic legalism."

From a comparative perspective, Brazilians expect a defeat of Bolsonaro because of the COVID-led economic crisis¹³⁰. However, Turkey's future trajectory is based on an extreme uncertainty although the current economic difficulties may tilt the balance in favor of a united opposition. The two cases show that minimalistic and procedural democracy does not create a democratizing country. Although the voters choose the elites outside the politics, they have seen that the political culture did not change but the agents and the structures. In Brazil, Dilma Rousseff was impeached. However, corruption investigations also targeted Temer and Bolsonaro in later years. Hence, substantial democratization in Turkey and Brazil could only come with building an unrestricted and self-reproducing process of public reasoning, discussion and deliberation.

In the current context, the global and domestic difficulties provide a good opportunity for the opposition to challenge the government in the two countries because the popular support for such authoritarian populists could deteriorate with declining performance in office and trust in the regime (Geddes et al., 1989; Magaloni, 2006; Mauk, 2020; Guriev et al., 2019; Rosenfeld, 2021). "Authoritarian social contract" argument relies on this relationship between citizen support for authoritarian populism and the provision of economic growth and public goods (Desai et al., 2009). That is, economic growth allows the authoritarian governments to "exchange patronage and public goods for loyalty and

support” (Neundorff et al., 2021). However, other studies discuss nationalism and religion for supporting authoritarian rule (Kuzio, 2016; Gill, 2019; Dukalskis et al., 2020; Koesel et al., 2020). Research has shown that economic downturn does not weaken the support for authoritarian rule (Geddes et al., 1989; Klingemann et al., 1995; Dalton, 1999; Norris, 1999; Hale et al., 2017; Mauk, 2020). This could change the expectations in the elections and affect the future of democracy in Turkey and Brazil. For example, Brazil is a critical Latin American country and economically emerging power. Election agenda has been shaped by poverty and inequality, especially after the implications of COVID-19 pandemic. So far, Lula also seems to be successful as he tries to reach out to centrists and conservatives which he shows with his vice-presidency choice: former São Paulo governor Alckmin, a center-right conservative¹³¹. However, Bolsonaro is systematically undermining public trust for the upcoming presidential elections as he calls for election fraud if he loses against Lula, similar to Trump in the US elections. Similarly, such fake news and misinformation promote the right-wing movements and intensify the polarization in line of cultural values and thereby having a potential to turn the 2022 vote in favor of the cultural values rather than poverty and inequality. Such polarized discourse is also adopted by the governing party in Turkey in response to the high inflation, unemployment and successive currency crisis.

Those strategies remind Berlant’s “cruel optimism” (Berlant, 2011) which he describes the voters who support the authoritarian populist regime through their emotional bond no matter the socio-economic situation got worse. Accordingly, voters build a “fantasy of a good life” and refuse listening the rational counterarguments of the opposition. Hence, being able to imagine an alternative “good life” and establish an alternative emotional bond through another identity can bring success to the opposition in Turkey and Brazil.

5.5 *Concluding Remarks*

Neoliberal management approach has always put democracy in the background and weakened it because of the global crises. For example, September 11 initiated a political debate on the security-freedom dilemma in fighting against terrorism. The 2008 economic crisis also weakened democracy to preserve the neoliberal market economy and caused the emergence of populist parties and leaders who promised to respond to the demands of the “people”¹³². Additionally, Arab Spring in 2010 turned a blind eye to coups, civil wars, state problems, refugee problem, and xenophobia which further weakened democracy and law in the region. Recently, climate change and the global warming emerged as additional challenges for the future of democracy and put governments in a dilemma whether to take the necessary measures on the pretext of damaging the market economy or not. COVID-19 pandemic especially shows the importance of socio-economic inequalities in the mainstream political agenda and the need for state and economic nationalism while Russia’s invasion of Ukraine created security-freedom debate once again like in the early 2000s. Overall, the “confidence and governance crisis” experienced by representative democracy causes the rise of authoritarian populism through the weakening of centre-right and left parties, deepening political, social and emotional polarization and declining trust in representative democracy and political parties. This is especially true for the young people while they mobilize as political actors for their identity, environment, and lifestyle.

The current democratic governments face problems in managing and finding solutions for unemployment and inequality, racism, violence, climate crisis and rising threats for the truth. Fake news and demagoguery became as effective as knowledge. In light of all these points, one can say that it is a question whether the rise of authoritarian populism will

continue, or another re-democratization wave will start in the world. Brazil and Turkey are critical regional examples of this question and political debate because if democracy fails in such countries, the consequences could be disastrous for their respecting regions. Hence, this thesis compared the process of democratic backsliding in the cases of Turkey and Brazil and questioned “how” and “why” Turkey’s and Brazil’s democracies have been declining in the last decade by the right-wing populism and “what” are the strategies of those authoritarian populist regimes to consolidate their rule. The aim was to open a scholarly debate to discuss the probable authoritarian reversibility in those regionally critical countries, facing the highest democratic change in the last decade in a path towards authoritarianism.

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