Article

Title: Electoral Polarization, Class Politics and A New Welfare State in Brazil and Turkey

Abstract:

We explain why and how governing AKP of Turkey and PT of Brazil converged on the same path of relying on the poor as the main strategy to stay in power. With the neoliberal reorganization and internationalization of the economies, these governments weakened in capacity to set up developmentalist alliances with big capitalists, middle classes and organized working classes. Based on a most-different-systems design and on descriptive statistical analysis, we argue that both PT and AKP failed to build multi-class bases and thus had to mobilize the poor by using various strategies, most importantly expanding social assistance policies, which accelerated the emergence of a new welfare state.

Keywords:

Turkey, Brazil, welfare, electoral polarization, poor, class

Introduction

In 2013, Brazil and Turkey were suddenly in the international spotlight for hosting massive waves of street protests, ultimately, challenging ruling parties that had been holding power quite solidly for more than a decade at the time. Since 2013, increasing social and political tensions have culminated. In 2016, in a parliamentary and judiciary coup d'état in Brazil eventually removed *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers Party - PT) of Brazil from power and a failed military coup in Turkey was followed by widespread authoritarian repression from the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party - AKP) government of Turkey. Being culturally, historically, and geographically very diverse, these two countries converge to a very similar pattern of socio-political polarization, which ultimately answers for the breakdown of the existing democratic institutions in both countries.

Having come of age “from below” and obtaining power as political outsiders to the traditional system, PT and AKP ruled both countries uninterruptedly after 2003 (Brazil) and 2002 (Turkey), as we will show, with an increasing support from the poor. Electoral politics in both countries have been accompanied by social and cultural contentions, resulting in extra-parliamentary forms of conflicts and struggles, ranging from protests waves to military and parliamentary coups and judiciary interventions. Both parties reached power during periods of deep economic crises that brought substantial impoverishment and unemployment; once in office they both relied on an ideology of economic growth as the main pillar for maintaining power, generated generous pro-poor policies domestically and attempted to join the powers-that-be internationally.

We argue that ruling such culturally, historically and geographically distant countries, coming from ideologically opposite poles (left trade-unionism for the PT and radical Islamism for the AKP), the two governments converged on the same path of “governing the poor” as part of their strategy of maintaining power. We argue that this has occurred because, notwithstanding the ideological differences, due to neoliberal re-organization and internationalization of the economy, governments have declining capacity to frame development and establish class alliances with more structured sectors of the society (including big capitalists, middle and organized working classes). The poor have appeared as a critical social base from which these ambitious political parties could derive political power for their long-term domestic and international political projects. Both political parties have historically developed ideological and organizational roots within the poor and, once in power, they effectively delivered to the poor, as we will demonstrate.

Three main features unfolding together are key to describe this pattern: i) increasing class-based electoral polarization between, on the one side, mostly low educated low wage workers, small family farmers, unemployed and underemployed people (the “poor”, as we call them here) voting for the ruling parties and, on the other side, the higher educated urban middle and upper classes (by contrast, the “wealthy”) voting for opposition parties; ii) the development of new sets of welfare policies targeting low income and marginalized groups (the poor); and iii) the establishment of durable (for local standards) electoral hegemonies at the national level by once outsider political parties and leaderships, whose histories are embedded within those very same poor and marginalized populations.

This article is based on a most-different-systems design comparative research strategy in order to point out the effect of class politics on government behavior. By class politics, we mean electoral competition based on class-based mobilizations, policies and ideologies. Class politics do not only consist of bread-and-butter issues, but also various politicized cultural and social cleavages that take class divides as the main demarcation lines. We use the MDS design and choose to compare PT and AKP as they are very different on a large number of aspects, such as ideological positions (left-right), geographical tradition (Latin America – Middle East), leadership structures (non-leader-based – leader-based), historical origins (unions – middle classes). Despite these stark differences, over the course of their ascendancy to power as well as their rule, both parties have converged on relying on the poor as a critical, if not only, strategy to rule Brazil and Turkey, which involved sharply expanding pro-poor social policies. We contend that this commonality is explained by an observed similarity in both countries, namely that the neoliberal political economy in both countries have increasingly detached the governments from more structured sectors of the society, resulting in an increasing electoral dependency on the poor. By the poor, we refer to the urban and rural population groups characterized by low incomes, informal employment and jobs, irregular employment or unemployment, and informal squatter housing. In short, we refer to what Portes and Hofman (2003) and Mike Davis (2004) call the informal proletariat.

In what follows, we first show the remarkable similarities found in the governing style of parties, including their relationship with the lower class constituency. Then, we present empirical evidence of what we are calling electoral polarization in which the poor emerges as the widest, if not the only, popular base of the ruling parties. Then we bring a

political economic explanation of “why” these parties had to rely on the poor, emphasizing their declining capacity to garner support from more structured sectors of the society. Finally, we explain “how” PT and AKP managed to appeal to the poor, with an examination of the new lineage of welfare policies developed under these governments. We here stress the novelty of these policies to make sense of the overwhelming support that both parties came to garner among the poor. We focus on the period between 2003 and 2016, during which both AKP and PT were ruling parties and shared very similar trajectories of political development. Since 2016, the trajectories of two parties have diverged once again, when PT was removed from office and AKP returned to overtly authoritarian policies as the main strategy of ruling.

The first short history: AKP and its protracted struggle for national power in Turkey

Following the coup d'état in 1980, the political stage in Turkey was set for the Islamic movement to flourish and mobilize broader segments of the population (Keyder, 2004). By the 1990s, the cadres of the Islamist movement, organized around the Welfare Party, assumed positions in various ranks of state bureaucracy, education, health, justice and state finance, and produced a mass base composed of newly urbanized informal workers that politically and demographically expanded as a consequence of rapid urbanization through push migration and economic deregulation (Öniş, 2006; Shively, 2008; Tugal, 2009). Having initially gained municipal governments, particularly Istanbul and Ankara by the mid-1990s, and then become the governing party, the Welfare Party embraced and

reached out to working class neighborhoods with a rhetoric that combined justice and tradition, supported largely by welfare initiatives, increasing the quality of urban services in these long-neglected areas (Tugal, 2007). However, the military overthrew the Islamic government with a *coup* in 1997. This was a critical turning point for Turkey's political Islam, which would culminate in the establishment of the AKP in 2001.

In 2002, the AKP won the elections and gained two thirds of the seats in parliament. The party had originated from the Welfare Party in a reformed but politically more organized form, “moderately religious” and neo-liberal in its essence (Dinçşahin, 2012; Sarkissian and Ozler, 2009). In 2001, the worst economic crisis in the history of Turkey hit the country after an exchange-rate based disinflation program engineered by the IMF during the 1990s. The devastating effects of the crisis as well as the recovery program on the vast majority of people, rising poverty, unemployment and the resulting political grievances from the existing political parties of the 1990s created a unique opportunity for the AKP government to set up the basis for a long-lasting hegemony. When AKP came to power in 2002, the 2001 financial crisis was nearly over and the AKP began implementing the IMF ‘neoliberal’ reforms that were already put into action by the economy minister Kemal Derviş of the previous government. The AKP embraced a neo-liberal economic agenda relaxing financial markets, accelerating privatizations and layoffs, limiting agricultural subsidies and liquidating the welfare rights of private and public formal sector employees. For Tuğal, what the AKP accomplished was a “passive revolution” against the anti-capitalist radicalism of the previous Islamist party (Tugal, 2007).

Politically, AKP represented a coalition of conservative provincial bourgeoisie and liberal/conservative intellectuals with massive popular electoral support from the poor. The bourgeois fractions that had supported the Islamist party in the 1970s transformed from small nationalist provincial entrepreneurs into big capitalists integrated into global networks (the so-called Anatolian Tigers). Islamic capital has organized itself into a business association, MÜSİAD, which became a smaller counterpart and rival to the organization of Istanbul-based secularist big capitalists, TÜSİAD (Gumuscu, 2010; Somer, 2007). AKP has been supported financially and ideologically by the comparatively small but growing devout bourgeoisie and middle classes (Gumuscu and Sert, 2009; Hosgör, 2011). Both AKP and its predecessor Welfare Party have enjoyed this devout middle class and bourgeois support whose loyalty has been manufactured by distributing public resources through central and municipal governments. Yet, despite overt pro-capitalist policies and support from the small devout fraction of middle and upper classes, AKP and its founding leader Erdoğan managed to appeal to the populous poor as the main source of electoral support, way more than they appealed to the existing economic elites and the middle classes, which tend to identify themselves more with secularism and align themselves with economic globalization and cultural Europeanization (Keyder, 2005; Yoruk and Yuksel, 2014). Therefore, although AKP managed to garner support from different segments of the society, including new growing conservative bourgeoisie and the middle classes, the heavy majority of the votes came from the poor, as the most loyal section of Erdoğan's constituency.

Erdoğan's rising popularity in the 1990s as the mayor of Istanbul had created anxiety among the secularist elite of the period, and he was put into prison for four

months on the basis of invoking Islamist radicalism with a religious poem he read publicly. This widely lionized his image and evidently magnified his long-standing claim to be an outsider and a victim of the elite establishment. Coming from a lower middle-class neighborhood, he had the ideological instruments, images and discourses to continuously perpetuate his rhetoric of being “a man of the people,” despite his intense relations with the then-newly growing, and now very powerful, conservative bourgeoisie (Aytaç and Öniş, 2014).

Over the 2000s, the ruling AKP has been engaged in a decade long intense political battle with the secularist nationalist economic and bureaucratic elite – the Kemalists. The Kemalist bloc consisted of the Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* - CHP), the military and civil high-level bureaucracy, including high courts, media institutions and secularist intellectuals, backed by the Istanbul-cantered industrial and financial bourgeoisie. Both AKP and Kemalists did their best to annihilate each other’s political leverage with the mobilization of various judicial, social and bureaucratic forces. The Kemalist bloc attempted to wage a coup against the AKP in the mid-2000s, and the Kemalist bureaucracy tried to ban the AKP at the Supreme Court, whose failure gave the AKP substantial leverage to initiate police and juridical operations against the civil and military leaders of the Kemalist bloc. Many high-ranking generals, politicians, university presidents, journalists and leaders of various influential Kemalist NGOs were put into prison on the charges of being members of illegal organizations aiming at a coup (Dinçşahin, 2012; Sarkissian and Ozler, 2009). As Aytaç and Öniş stated, Erdoğan claimed that it is precisely these institutions of “the political establishment,” such as the Constitutional Court and the High Judiciary, that “formed an alliance to prevent people

from achieving power” (Aytaç and Öniş, 2014). AKP argues that it represents the lower classes while the political opposition represents and stands for the economic and bureaucratic elites. The famous motto of the AKP, *Milli İrade* (The Will of the Nation) referred to the people, the Muslim lower classes as opposed to the secularist economic and political elite (Aytaç and Öniş, 2014).

The ruling party’s success against the Kemalist elites left behind a radicalized secularist crowd. Their disappointment with Kemalist leaders’ failure to challenge the AKP led to militant street activism as the sole remaining form of political opposition, culminating in the eruption of Gezi protests in June 2013 (Yörük and Yüksel, 2014). Shortly after the Gezi protests, Erdoğan’s rule was challenged once more in December 2013 through the largest corruption scandal in Turkish history, based on the claims about a large network of bribe and corruption that involved some ministers and Erdoğan’s family and himself. It did not take much time to understand that this was not a simple corruption scandal, but part of a larger political battle between the governing AKP and Fethullah Gülen Community, with which AKP itself allied against the Kemalist bloc until recently (Gürel, 2015). This struggle between Gülen and Erdoğan eventually erupted in a failed military coup on July 15, 2016. After the failed coup d’état in 2016, Erdoğan widened his one-man rule through a heavy hand on all political opposition, media, universities, judiciary as well as the economy. As such, Turkey’s ranking in the World Press Freedom Index increased from 98 in 2006 to 151 in 2016. Erdoğan also launched a full-scale offensive against the Kurdish opposition that had recently gained unprecedented power (Aktan, 2015).ⁱ The chaos perpetuated by the Kurdish war was intensified by the increasing attacks of the Islamic State in big cities. Erdoğan was

consolidating his rule but at the same time the country was being harnessed by terrorist attacks, an ethnic civil war, deepening economic crisis and ever widening state violence, leading to the conclusion that the chaos that characterized the state of political affairs has petrified.

In these years of contentious politics, the AKP garnered the necessary legitimacy and power from the dynamism, activism and massive support of the urban and rural poor (Öniş, 2013; Yörük, 2012). Erdoğan managed to survive the Gezi Protests, the corruption scandal, and the coup attempt and gained even greater popular support than before, based on a counter-*Gülen* and counter-*Gezi* mobilization among the poor. Except for the brief defeat in June 2015 elections, the AKP has won all elections at all levels with wide support from the poor and in order to maintain the support from the poor, the party increased the level of pro-poor social assistance programs and used an anti-elite populist discourse (Yörük and Yüksel 2014).

The second short history: PT, trying to appease all sides

The Worker's Party (PT) was born out of the “new trade-unionist” movement that emerged with the “economic miracle” of the 1970's, when the country was ruled by military dictators (Humphrey and Humphrey, 1982). After a decade of very rapid industrial growth, in 1978, the metal-workers' trade-union of the industrial belt surrounding São Paulo, broke the silence under the leadership of Lula da Silva and led a series of strikes that came to be the keystone for the creation of both the National Union's Confederation (CUT), by far the largest in the country, and the Worker's Party (PT) (Comin, 1996).

At the same time, in the historically violent countryside, several different populations displaced by the expansion of the economic frontiers towards the Center and Northern regions of the country began to radicalize. Small landowners, settlers, landless workers, and indigenous peoples were massively, systematically and violently expelled from their lands by both private and public agents as a result of large-scale agriculture, cattle raising, mining and hydro-energy production. In *favelas* sprawling in the largest urban areas that turned into the receiving end of those displaced populations, a myriad of grassroots movements, protests, and illegal organizations sprung up due to the chronic absence of almost everything from paved streets and potable water, to schools, health-centers and public transport (Sader, 1988).

Landless rural workers (the powerful MST – *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra*), as well as large parts of the grassroots social movements erupting in the outskirts of the urban areas, owe much of their emergence, organization and ideological orientation to religious institutions, networks and agents, such as the Theology of Liberation branch of the Catholic Church (Keck, 1995). Even new trade-unionism, whose social bases greatly overlapped with the urban poor, was largely influenced and helped by religious institutions and individuals, including high-ranking officials of the church (Azevedo, 2004; Della Cava, 1989; Klaiber, 1998; Mainwaring, 1986).

The PT was also joined by many small radical leftist groups as well as by intellectuals and other mainly middle-class groupings of environmentalists, feminists, black activists, and human rights advocates that helped to impart a more “socialistic” tone to the party's ideological rhetoric. Nevertheless, the party sought to widely represent the working people in general; that is not only the industrial proletariat or the salaried

classes, but also the self-employed, the landless farmer and indigenous groups. This ideal converged with that of the progressive branches of the Catholic Church who struggled for the “preferential option for the poor.” Lastly, most of the leaders and public faces of the then new party were indeed workers, not professional politicians, intellectuals and bureaucratic cadres. A large part of them of roman catholic faith. The humble origins of the metal-worker Lula da Silva (himself catholic), born in the “backward” North-Eastern region of the country, is key to understand both his popularity among the poor and the loathing he awakens among the upper classes (Bourne, 2008).

In electoral terms, until 2002 the party managed to grow consistently, relying mostly on large urban constituencies, where formal salaried work and union militancy tend to be concentrate. Similar to the AKP in Turkey, it was at the helm of municipal administrations that the party started to materialize institutional innovations, such as the participatory budgets, and gave more priority to social investments, such as public transport, education, and social housing. Lula lost his first three presidential bids, but in all of them he came in the second, consolidating his position as the main opposition leader. He eventually came to be seen by the elites and conservatives, which includes the entire mainstream media sector, as the candidate to be beaten at all costs. As in Turkey, the economic hardships experienced by workers and the poor due to the economic reforms, the sluggish economic growth and the crises in 1999, the rising unemployment, and informal labor and declining wages paved the way for the PT to reach national power, where it remained until the 2016 coup d’état, winning four consecutive presidential elections, an unprecedented electoral hegemony in the country’s history.

Starting his first mandate in 2003, Lula and his party experienced quite a change in their constituency, nevertheless. The orthodoxy of the economic policies of the first years led the more leftist groups to break away from the party. Reforms in the public pension system considerably angered previously sympathetic civil servants.ⁱⁱ Finally, as corruption scandals erupted in 2005, the party saw its support among the professional classes, younger and more educated people in general fade away (Singer, 2012). In the opposite direction, economic growth alleviated unemployment, and wages, including the minimum legal wage that applies to tens of millions of poor workers, started to rise faster than inflation. New social policies, such as the conditional cash transfer program, *Bolsa Familia*, began to reach tens of millions of the poorest citizens in the country, and party support among these constituencies grew sharply, pushing the party towards more “peripheral” areas (North and North-East regions, smaller towns, rural areas, urban slums). The political realignment, as Singer calls it, happened in 2006, when support from middle and upper classes vanished and abruptly turned into open and hostile opposition, and the “sub-proletariat” massively moved to support Lula. The “rich versus poor” divide quickly surfaced (Singer, 2012).

Once in power, PT tried hard to build an alliance with big national corporations to which the state delivered huge amounts of subsidized credit. The party aimed to build the so called “national champions”, mainly in commodities, construction and food sectors. In keeping the neoliberal macroeconomics, however, it has deepened the de-industrialization process (Rodrik, 2015), and ended up losing the support it had somehow raised among the industrial bourgeoisieⁱⁱⁱ. When the international crisis hit the external demand for commodities and the economy started to slow down, Dilma decided to

penalize the financial and rentier sectors. She pulled down interest rates by using the big federal banks to challenge the private banking sector through market competition. In failing to effectively boost the industrial sector and concomitantly confronting the interests of the financial and globally oriented sectors, PT completely lost any support among the capitalist class^{iv}. The struggle between PT and capital in this case descended into a dirty war of corruption scandals, accompanied by a massive corporate media campaign against the government, which paved the way for overthrowing it, through a legislative coup in 2016, ultimately articulated and backed by different branches of the judiciary, including the Supreme Court^v.

The parliamentary and judiciary coup d'état in 2016 interrupted 13 years of PT's ruling, but so far failed to establish a sustainable power alliance or even to stabilize the country politically. Lacking public support, the interim government is plagued by corruption scandals and has pushed an extremely unpopular agenda of reforms: a twenty-year freeze in social spending, flexibilization of labor laws, and an aggressive agenda of privatizations and market opening for foreign investors in the oil, gas, electricity, aviation and aeronautics, and land markets. Beyond that, almost all leaders of the mainstream parties have been linked to corruption scandals in the same investigations aimed at PT; and while they have not been seriously bothered by either the Justice or the Federal Police, their popularity virtually collapsed. The fact that matters is that the ousting of Rousseff has not improved the popularity of the politicians that took power in 2016, rather the opposite, and they will keep on having every reason to fear the ballot boxes.

The poor as the social base of the ruling Parties in Brazil and Turkey

We now characterize the significant parallels in class-based electoral polarization experienced in both countries highlighting the role played by the poorest sectors of the electorate in supporting the ruling parties. We resort to electoral poll data, reflecting closely the actual results of the elections that followed, provided by DataFolha in Brazil and KONDA research institute in Turkey. The DataFolha survey was conducted in October 2014 with a nationwide survey of 18,116 informants. The KONDA survey was conducted in July 2013 with a nationwide survey of 2629 informant.^{vi} The analysis of electoral polls from both countries show that both PT and AKP votes are negatively correlated with income and education and positively with age (see Figure 1 and Figure 2 below). The main opposition parties in both countries present opposite trends. Their votes are positively correlated with income and education, indicating a concentration of middle and upper-class support.

Figure 1: Vote rates of political parties by monthly family income (USD), education and age, Turkey (based on authors' own calculations, using KONDA Barometre Survey 2015.

Figure 2: Vote rates of political parties by monthly family income (USD), education and age, Brazil (based on authors' own calculations, using Datafolha (2014))

In addition, both PT and AKP expanded their popular base among the poor over the course of their rule. The following figure shows that the rates of lower income votes in total AKP and PT votes have continuously increased. The share of votes coming from families with household incomes less than two minimum wages increased from 57 percent to 71 percent for AKP between 2007 and 2015, and from 27 percent to 51 percent for PT between 2002 and 2014.^{vii}

Figure 3: Changes in rate of votes from households with incomes less than two minimum wage in total AKP and PT votes (2002-2015) (Based on authors' own calculations using DataFolha and KONDA reports (KONDA, 2007, 2011, 2015)).

Figure 3 shows that, between 2002 and 2015, households with incomes less than two minimum wages have increased their weight in AKP and PT's electoral base. This illustrates that both AKP and PT have relied increasingly on the votes of lower income

groups. We do not claim that AKP and PT have received support *only* from the poor (there are some middle and upper-class support as well), but the share of votes coming from the poor is very large and this composition has become even larger over time. But, why did these parties converge on this particular track of popular mobilization? In the next section, we describe the structural dynamics that condition these parties to rely on the poor as the main pillar of sustaining political power.^{viii}

Party politics in Turkey and Brazil is not solely based on social class. Rather, there are many other social cleavages that characterize political polarizations, including secularism-religion, modernity-tradition, center-periphery, ethnicity, race, ideology (Çarkoğlu, 2012; Çarkoğlu and Hinich, 2006; Jefferson West, 2005; Tezcür, 2012). As such, AKP supporters can be considered as the *periphery*, but this categorization should not be confined to the cultural domain of ideology and culture, but lower-class dimension should be articulated, as well^{ix}. In a similar vein, the opposition against the AKP has not only resulted from bread-and-butter issues but most often from the cultural and political programs and policies of the party. Gezi protestors, for example, have been differentiated from non-protestors (and governments supporters) by their cultural, ideological and political viewpoints. They are more secularist and leftwing (Yörük and Yüksel, 2014). However, in the case of Turkey, these cleavages overlap with class divisions to a significant extent and often times poor and non-poor are observed on opposite sides of these cultural/ideological divides (Çarkoğlu, 2007; Somer, 2007). Therefore, we argue that poor / non-poor divide has become a common denominator of existing socio-political polarizations in Turkey and Brazil, if not necessarily a causal factor of them.

“Why” did AKP and PT rely on the poor: globalization, reshaping national politics and class interests

We argue that the popular bases of governing parties in both countries signals that the breaking-up of those former developmental political frameworks have led to a situation in which the governments in question have declining capacity to ally with, co-opt or simply impose their decisions upon the most powerful and globalized economic actors. They, instead, tend to rely more on the poor, mostly through new welfare policies that are based on poverty alleviation. The economies of Brazil and Turkey, and, hence, their social structures were built out of decades of state-led developmentalist policies, along which industrialization played a key role in establishing and framing class interests in the “modern sectors.” Under the leadership of empowered public bureaucracies closely connected with key sectors of the economic elites, the state managed to integrate foreign and domestic capital, middle-classes, public sector employees and parts of the industrial working class.

The debt crises of the 1980’s put an end to the “developmentalist cycle” in most developing countries, including Brazil and in Turkey (Taylor, 2006). That was followed by IMF stabilization and external liberalization programs. After the neoliberal reforms, the economies of Brazil and Turkey relied heavily on FDI, which by its turn are tied to a country’s “credibility” before the foreign investors.^x The “credibility” market not only rules over the fortunes of companies, but over fortunes of governments in search of credit. Macro-economic stability, a vital source of “credibility” in the eyes of credit-rating agencies, has become the single most important priority of the governments,

leading both countries to keep interest rates at stunningly high levels.^{xi} The governments aimed at inflation control to attract foreign capital, while keeping their currencies chronically overvalued (Pereira, 2010). Market opening increased the penetration of imported goods, a trend reinforced by chronically overvalued currencies that used to boost domestic purchasing power and consumption (for all groups, including the poor) and to control inflation and to attract FDI (Rodrik, 2015). Capital account and trade liberalization, together with the internationalization of companies through mergers and acquisitions as well as privatizations, resulted in a relative shrinkage of several industrial sectors.^{xii} Instead of productive capacity, which used to be once a key component of industrialization strategies, domestic markets became the main asset to attract foreign capitals.^{xiii} The receipt of combining open capital markets, high interest rates and an overvalued currency led to recurrent balance of payments deficits, to the expansion of the public debt, and, eventually, to financial collapse (like Russia and many others) in the late 1990's.

Massive displacement of jobs from manufacturing industries to low-skilled short-term jobs in the service sector also resulted in a dislocation of the labor force from the more to the less unionized sectors and curtailed trade-union power. In the mid-1980s, the share of the manufacturing industry in Brazil's GDP reached almost one third of the total, against 11 percent in 2014. In Turkey, the overall share of these industries peaked in 1998, reaching 26 percent, declining to 18 percent in 2014.^{xiv} In 2000, the average wage in the formal sector in Brazil was at half its value in 1986. Additionally, wage inequality between skilled (college degree) and non-skilled workers increased by almost 20 percent, from 1991 to 1999. In Turkey, the share of wage-labor in private manufacturing added

value declined from 38 percent to 15 percent between 1979 and 1988. Union density declined by 65 percent (Cam, 2002). Employment in the formal sector declined as a share of the total employment, whereas most of the new jobs created were in informal activities, paying consistently less than in formal ones, and carrying no rights and benefits.

During most of their time in power, PT and AKP tried to make up for their neo-liberal approach in macro-economy by reviving industrial policies, providing subsidized loans for long-term investments, making up for high domestic interest rates, providing tax breaks for selected sectors, and some level of protectionism in trade. These efforts were, however, not enough to change the trend of deindustrialization, and the attempts to build strategic bridges with the industrial bourgeoisie seem to have completely failed. As argued, the neoliberal framework induces a strong appreciation of national currencies and high interest rates in order to compensate for balancing trade deficits (Pereira, 2010). Among the consequences of such policies, Bresser-Pereira highlights, converging with Dani Rodrik, is the weakening of domestic producers' competitiveness in the face of imported stuff, hence inducing underinvestment in new industrial capacity, overconsumption, and a decline in domestic savings. In a nutshell, as Rodrik alerts, deep globalization does not leave much room for domestic choices in terms of economic development, and, for most developing countries, deep globalization implies leaving behind aspirations to build the so-called national industries (Rodrik, 2015). Big capital in both Turkey and Brazil has increasingly sought investments abroad, rendering itself independent from the government policies and politics. Between 1992 and 2014, FDI net outflows as percentage of the GDP has increased from 0.034 to 1.06 in Brazil and from

0.041 to 0.75 in Turkey, while much of this expansion occurred during the 2000s^{xv}. By 2012, the ratio of inward to outward FDI for Turkey has decreased to one tenth of its value in 1995, converging to the ratio observed in Brazil^{xvi}. Largest corporations in Turkey and Brazil, such as Koç, Sabancı, Ulker, Petrobras, are leading this trend^{xvii}. Deindustrialization in the developing world has made class alliances tying the “national industrial bourgeoisie” to the “national interest” a relic of the past.

Hence, the economic boom in Brazil and Turkey over the 2000s deepened the economic changes associated with more globalization and less room for state activism. Investment decisions are now increasingly taken abroad, often times relying on foreign credit markets instead of domestic sources of credit, increasingly releasing themselves further from the state control, so characteristic of import substitution industrialization (Amsden, 2001). This deindustrialization has led to important changes in class structure and interests. A “capitalist class” that seeks quick gains instead of long term strategic developments is increasingly made up of foreigners or nationals working on behalf of foreigner. To those, we must add powerful rentier groups that live on the high interests paid by the state.^{xviii} Meanwhile, the structural core of the working class (the formal proletariat) declined in numbers and/or in political power, with the most dynamic sources of employment being displaced to routine and semi-routine occupations in services and retail trade, both in formal and informal sectors. As a result, governments in these countries have lost much of their capacity to build top-down class alliances with the big capital, the middle class and the “formal” working class after national developmentalist frameworks were dismantled by neoliberal economic reforms. Both PT and AKP have declined in capacity to build alliances with these sectors and have thus had to mobilize

the poor by using various strategies, and most importantly expanding pro-poor policies, despite their opposite ideological tendencies.

“How” did AKP and PT Rely on the poor: a new welfare state for the poor

Given that AKP and PT had to rely on the poor, we now move to examine the role played by social and distributive policies in sustaining this, signaling the emergence of a new modality of welfare state in developing countries. This new welfare state is based on extensive and generous income-based social assistance and poverty alleviation programs, in contrast with the corporatist fragmented employment based social policies of the developmentalist period (Buğra and Keyder, 2006; Haggard and Kaufman, 2008). During the developmentalist era, sometimes through authoritarian and violent means, the states marginalized and kept tight control over a whole gamut of poor laborers, peasants, artisans, indigenous and national minorities, street merchants, shanty-town dwellers, domestic workers, usually corresponding to a large or major share of the populations of those countries. This was, in short, *the poor*, a mix of economic, social, cultural, sexual, regional, ethnic and/or racial marginalization. Those populations hardly had any social and political rights, and little or no access to basic social provisions, such as educations and health. Moreover, among them many were historically discriminated against on racial, ethnic, religious or other grounds, of which Indigenous and African descendants in Brazil, and Kurds in Turkey are eloquent examples of non-citizens of the nation-state in which they have been born. In a nutshell, economically unequal (to the extreme) and politically (also culturally and regionally) segregated societies.

This picture has changed during the 2000s. Piven and Minnite argue that while advanced capitalist countries have undergone significant welfare retrenchments, many developing countries including Brazil and Turkey have expanded their welfare states mostly on the basis of new types of social assistance programs (Piven and Minnite, 2015). For them, these policy innovations/expansions in developing countries have a form and extent much different from those social assistance programs of the West and those previous poor relief arrangements of the developing world. As such, according to World Bank, the percentage of the population that receives social assistance of any form reached 36 percent in Turkey in 2013 and 31 percent in Brazil in 2015.^{xix} In Brazil, the flagship *Bolsa Família* (BF) program reached 27 percent of the population of the country in 2014, covering 76 percent of those considered eligible in rural areas and 49 percent in urban areas. Some other four million poor, elderly or disabled people, unable to work and formally with no right for support for not having contributed to the social security, were granted pensions (*Benefício de Prestação Continuada* - BPC) equivalent to one legal minimum wage.

Under Lula, improvements through the labor markets had a significant role in improving ordinary people's wellbeing. This included employment growth and policies to substantially raise the legal minimum wage above the inflation, enforcement of labor laws, extension of labor rights to domestic workers. The legal minimum wage (LMW) has also a huge positive impact on the social protection system. Among the 27 million pensioners supported by the General Pension System (RGPS) in 2013, approximately 17 million (62 percent of all pensioners) earned the floor value, which is legally equivalent to the LMW. In PPP US dollar terms, the LMW rose from 141 in December 2003, to 301

in December 2014, more than doubling its purchasing power, in real terms.^{xx} Overall, the total social public expenditure (social security, education, health and housing) rose from 21 percent to 27 percent of GDP (Robles and Mirosevic, 2014). In regard to the educational policies, PT promoted rapid expansion of higher education, by means of granting tuition scholarships and subsidized credit to students of disadvantaged and low income backgrounds, as well as by doubling slots in the federal system of universities, for which there are no fees. In addition, ambitious affirmative action policies were launched to substantially increase access to higher education for black, mixed and indigenous peoples. The racially motivated affirmative action policies were received with a particularly vehement opposition by the middle-classes, once it started to be implemented in the public elite schools.

More than ten million formal jobs were created during Lula's two terms alone, mostly jobs in the lower earnings brackets. The result was a ten percent decline in the rate of informality in the labor market, which fell from 40 percent to 30 percent of the total.^{xxi} The unemployment rate which was at 11,7 percent in 2004, dropped to 6,7 percent, in 2010 (end of the second Lula's term as president) and further to 4,9 percent in 2014, when Dilma was re-elected. Finally, the positive impacts of both the expansion of social programs and job creation due to economic growth and public investments in infrastructure (water and electricity, sewerage, telecommunications, trains, ports, highways etc.) were much stronger in the less developed regions in the north and northeast of the country, than they were in the wealthiest and older industrial centers in the southeast and south, making a decisive contribution to the popularity of the PT in

these regions in the actual scenario of social polarization (Barrientos, 2013; Robles and Mirosevic, 2014).

During the AKP rule, Turkey has witnessed a boom of social assistance programs for the poor, as well. Before the 2000s, the Turkish welfare system was based on a corporatist fragmented social provision, in which employees in the state sector, workers and the self-employed were members of different institutions with different qualities of service and benefits. The new welfare system of the 2000s has largely eliminated this fragmented structure and created a social security institution and a general health insurance system to cover all citizens so that services for the informal poor have been equalized with formal sector employees. More importantly, the quality of healthcare has significantly improved, which has often been seen as one of the main pillars of AKP social policies (Yoruk, 2012). In 2011, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy was established to administer central government programs and to introduce new social assistance benefits. The social assistance expenditure, moreover, increased from US\$ 860 million in 2002 to US\$9.34 in 2016.^{xxii}

Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of social assistance spending in total government spending increased by 266 percent (Üçkardeşler, 2015). AKP has drastically expanded means-tested social assistance, in kind or cash transfers, and free health care programs for the poor, conditional cash transfers, programs for orphans, food stamps, housing, education and disability aid for the poor, sharply increasing the number of beneficiaries and the share of government budgets allocated (Buğra and Keyder, 2006; Elveren, 2008; Günal, 2008; Yoltar, 2009; Yörük, 2012). The coverage of the free health care card program for the poor (Green Card Program) increased from 4.2 to 12.7 percent of

the population from 2003 to 2009. In 2012, a universal health care system was established, and Green Card holders were included in the new system (Yörük, 2012). In addition to these benefits from the central government, the family is still eligible to benefit from many types of in-kind and cash assistance programs from municipal governments, which have been expanding exponentially during the decade as well. As such, the regular in-kind and cash benefits from the central government for a poor family adds up to US\$260, while the official minimum wage in Turkey is US\$370.

AKP has also initiated social housing programs targeting the poor that provide houses with cheap credit, covering over three million families by 2013. The Ministry of Education distributed all school course book materials free of charge to all students in primary and secondary education, amounting to 15 million students. 600 thousand students each year are part of free-transportation-to-school program, where they are served free lunch at the school. The party has put into the constitution affirmative action policies for disabled people, which largely increased their participation in the labor market. The coverage and generosity of disability benefits tripled and doubled since 2002. This is also the case for old age pensions for the poor. Most importantly, if a poor family provides nursing to a disabled family member, it receives US\$350, which is almost equal to the minimum wage (Özgür, 2014).

These social policies are, at least partly, responsible for declining poverty rates and inequality in Turkey, and particularly in Brazil. According to World Bank World Development Indicators, between 2003 and 2014, Gini coefficient declined from 0.58 to 0.51 in Brazil and 0.42 to 0.40 in Turkey. Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (2011 PPP) as percentage of population declined from 12.3% to 3.66% in Brazil and 3.74% to

0.33% in Turkey. PT and AKP have expanded social assistance programs as the most important platform for providing social inclusion for vast informal and rural sectors never reached by the welfare policies enjoyed by workers in the formal sector and the middle-class. This has been done partly by means of reforming the existing welfare system and partly through the creation of new policies purposefully drafted to attend poor families, informal workers, small farmers, discriminated groups and minorities. The leaderships of PT in Brazil and AKP in Turkey both tried to simultaneously engage in globalization and deliver more benefits to the poor, using different strategies and above all embracing very different ideological positions. By increasing exports (mainly from commodities or low-tech industries) and by attracting FDI with privatization and acquisitions of domestic firms by foreign investment funds, both governments were able to channel downwards enough of the extra revenues, as we shall argue, to earn political support among the poorest sectors of the society.

Conclusion

We argue that popular bases of governing parties in Turkey and Brazil have less to do with left- and right-wing ideologies than it has to do with structural social changes resulting from the economic transformations those countries have gone through during the last 30 years. These transformations led to the erosion of the state's capacity to regulate the economy and create alliances with the capital, middle classes and organized labor. Although PT was born as a left-wing party, whereas AKP is religiously conservative, both parties made their way into national politics by approaching and setting up popular sector's movements and organizations: workers' trade unions,

shantytown dwellers and religious communities. Both parties matured step by step, having first ruled some of the most important local governments in the country before reaching national power. It was as the head of municipal governments that they started the implementation of pro-poor policies that would later become their national trademark and political bent. Before and after taking power, both were considered outsiders to the traditional political system, which often times meant a threat to the establishment, as they voraciously struggled, though unsuccessfully, to gain the support of the existing economic elites and establish alliances with the majority of the middle classes. Hence, they were forced to largely rely on the shoulders of the “poor,” and developed extensive pro-poor public policies in the face of increasingly active opposition from middle-classes and old-moneyed elites. It should be noted that pro-poor policies are not the only mechanism developed by these governments to stay in power vis-à-vis grand challenges from rival political actors and PT and AKP have quite different strategies. AKP government, most critically, resorted to what is frequently designated as “competitive authoritarianism”, which involved repressing opposition groups, protestors and the media (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016)^{xxiii}. In this article, we focus on the non-repressive means of sustaining government, such as garnering support from the poor through pro-poor policies, which, in turn, can be said to accompany more repressive means, as well.

We argue that the process of internationalization and financialization of the national economy has increased the relative political bargaining power of the poor in developing countries, where they make up the majority of governing party supporters. In these countries, we argue, the poor have appeared as the most feasible social base on which governing parties can rely in order to extract the popular support needed to

implement economic and political projects. The poor, in short, grows as the most salient source of political support. Piven and Cloward once argued that in the Western world “some of the poor are sometimes so isolated from significant institutional participation that the only “contribution” they can withhold is that of quiescence in civil life: they can riot (Piven and Cloward, 1971).” In the West “the poor were disadvantaged again because their cooperation was less important to major institutions than the cooperation of other groups” (Piven and Minnite, 2016). It is our argument that in the many developing countries, contrary to the West, support of the poor is now more indispensable for major institutions than the cooperation of other groups because of the reconfiguration of classes and state power under neoliberal internationalization of the economy in the way we described. The poor are able to do politics in these countries not only by protesting, but also by not protesting and supporting the governments. The pro-poor policies came to be a response to the rising political power of the poor, who turned to “outsider” political actors to perform this role. The outsiders ended up with these policies not because they chose to, but because they failed to co-opt or submit to the most powerful sectors of existing economic elites. To our mind, this analysis of electoral polarizations and new welfare policies in Brazil and Turkey presents the conditions of possibility of ruling emerging market economies during times of neoliberal economic transformation: relying on the poor for political support, while, in return, expanding social welfare programs to them. The limits of such a strategy, however, as we can learn from the two stories presented here, seem quite clear: in both countries the polarization arising from a decade of power struggles have ended in the collapse of the democratic rule and heralded ahead times of endless instability.

Similar to emergin markets, the number of the poor and the problem of social exclusion have been growing all around Europe as well, due to economic crises, immigration, deindustrialization. European welfare states have been struggling to deal with this situation. It is likely that existing poverty and social exclusion in Europe will be radically politicized with the intervention of political actors ranging from radical Islamist to the far right. As a result, the social and political problems most strongly occasioned by emerging markets may prevail in Europe as a permanent political crisis. Hence, following the argument of this article, i.e. political power of the poor leads to a new welfare regime, it can be expected that similar dynamics lead to the development of similar welfare policies across Europe, as well.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Endnotes

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- ⁱ. “Bloodshed Stokes Kurdish Separatist Sentiment - Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East.” Al-Monitor. December 9. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/12/turkey-kurds-bloodshed-stokes-separatist-sentiment.html>.
 - ⁱⁱ. It is worth saying that, differently from the AKP in Turkey, PT has never been hegemonic in the parliament. in 2002, when Lula was elected president amassing almost two thirds of the votes, in the second round, the party took a meagre 17 percent of the deputy chairs. In his re-election in 2006, it received 16 percent. For an overview, see (Terron and Soares, 2010)

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- iii. For detailed analysis, see Singer , 2015 “Cutucando onças com varas curtas”
- iv. For detailed analysis, see Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira “Remando contra a maré”.
- v The Brazilian Constitution prescribes the president’s removal from office only if he or she has been criminally charged, which never happened to Dilma Rousseff; she was impeached on grounds of “accounting mismanagement”, for artificially lowering the public deficit official figures, an expedient used in every single year by every one of her predecessors as well as her successor in the last two years, without any consequence for them. See Mark A. Weisbrot “Brazilian Prosecutor Finds No Crime Committed by Dilma: Will The Law Count For Anything In Brazil?”. Huffington Post, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-weisbrot/brazilian-prosecutor-find_b_11092200.html; Glenn Greenwald “New Political Earthquake in Brazil: Is It Now Time for Media Outlets to Call This a ‘Coup’?”, The Intercept, May 23 2016 <https://theintercept.com/2016/05/23/new-political-earthquake-in-brazil-is-it-now-time-for-media-outlets-to-call-this-a-coup/>; Jonathan Watts “Brazil minister ousted after secret tape reveals plot to topple President Rousseff”. The Guardian, May 23 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/23/brazil-dilma-rousseff-plot-secret-phone-transcript-impeachment>.
- vi. DataFolha is available online, see: <http://eleicoes.uol.com.br/2014/pesquisas-eleitorais/brasil/2-turno/>. KONDA kindly shared the dataset with the authors. We like to thank KONDA for their cooperation.
- vii. There is no similar available data on AKP for 2002 elections.
- viii Here, we do not ignore the expansion of the middle classes in Turkey and Brazil. On the other hand, the rise of the middle classes, who tend to support opposition parties in both countries, is one of the challenges that AKP and PT have faced during their office term. We argue that, failing to gain massive support from the middles classes, both parties resorted to the poor.
- ix Also see Mardin “Center-periphery relations.”
- x. Until the 1990s, Brazil received roughly one to two billion dollars in FDI, yearly. These figures jumped to US\$ 30 billion in the second half of the 1990s, US\$ 45 billion in 2008 and more than US\$ 60 billion annually, in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Data extracted from IPEA-Data: <http://www.ipeadata.gov.br/Default.aspx>. In Turkey, very small amounts of FDI had historically been received, the boom came in the 2000s, when the arrival of FDI jumped from less than 2 billion in 2003 and 2004, to 10 billion in 2005, 20 billion in 2006, 2007 and 2008, staying around 10 to 15 billion until 2014. For further information, see <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN>.

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- ^{xi.} In 2007, before the financial crisis, central banks' key interest rates were at 15,75 percent in Turkey and 11,25 in Brazil, compared to 4 percent in the USA and the Eurozone. The huge gaps between domestic and international interest rates are behind the boom in inflows of FDI and "hot money." For a detailed account, see (Gaulard, 2012)
- ^{xii.} Dani Rodrik has made the case for a wide process of "premature deindustrialization" (meaning decline in both employment and output) in most parts of the developing world, due to similar processes of external liberalization. The trend seems to affect more industrialized countries (such as Brazil, India and Mexico) as well as those less industrialized ones (such as the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, like Nigeria, for instance). The exceptions are the East-Asian countries, notably China, for a detailed account, see (Rodrik, 2015). Also, Brady, Kaya and Gereffi, in a comparative study of 20 Latin American countries, based on employment data for the period 1980-2006 and statistical models, show the process of deindustrialization unfolding widely in the region. For detailed information, see (Brady et al., 2011) Besides institutional features left behind by the long-standing military in power in those countries and inefficient regional trade agreements (RTAs), the authors attribute deindustrialization to the growing dependency on both elementary commodity exports and FDI inflows.
- ^{xiv.} World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- ^{xv} World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org>.
- ^{xvi} UNCTADSTAT
- ^{xvii} World Bank, Global Investment Competitiveness Report 2017/2018
- ^{xviii.} The rentier sector in Brazil owns no less than 6 percent of the country's GDP and reacts violently to any attempt to change the situation, as it happened when president Rousseff began to reduce interest rates, forcing devaluation in the real in the first two years of her first mandate. For a detailed account, see (Bresser-Pereira, 2016).
- ^{xix.} World Bank, ASPIRE: The Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/aspire/>.
- ^{xx.} All data were extracted from IPEADATA <http://www.ipeadata.gov.br/Default.aspx> (data downloaded in January 2016).
- ^{xxi.} The informality rate is the ratio between informal, self-employed and non-waged workers to the total occupied population IPEADATA: <http://www.ipeadata.gov.br/Default.aspx>.

^{xxii}. See <http://www.aile.gov.tr/haberler/2002de-sosyal-yardimlari-ayrilan-butce-13-milyar-lirayken-bugun-bu-rakam-33-milyar-lirayi-asti-sosyal-yardimlarda-buyuk-bir-cigir-actik>.

^{xxiii} Also see Özbudun, “Turkey's judiciary and the drift”

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