The Peculiarities of AKP's Populism in Turkey:

Moving beyond European and Latin American Typologies

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Despite the growing literature on Turkish populism, there is yet no consensus on how best to categorise the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* –AKP). This article argues that this difference of opinion in the literature is due to a selective focus on either one of the attributes of AKP's populism. Indeed, when the party's features are examined altogether, it does not neatly conform to the dominant typologies of populism, which were conceived mostly for European and Latin American examples. For historical reasons, AKP's populist discourse defines "the people" versus "the elite" in civilizational terms and combines this with strategies of neo-liberalism, strong party organisation and grassroots mobilization. This blend of populism distinguishes the Turkish case from the exclusionary/inclusionary and classical/neo-liberal/radical typologies previously identified by the literature. However, the Bharatiya Janata Party in India and the Thai Rak Thai Party in Thailand have similar attributes, drawing attention to the need to move beyond the existing ideological and strategic approaches to populism and towards a more comprehensive, socio-cultural approach. The article contributes to the general literature on populism by highlighting possible avenues for further research based on comprehensive understandings of populism and including cases from Asia.

Keywords:

Neo-liberal populism, Exclusionary populism, Islam, Turkey, India, Thailand

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The Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* –AKP) in Turkey won the elections first in 2002, and until 2019 has renewed its mandate at the ballot box in every poll, except for the June 2015 elections. The party also called three successful referendums in 2007, 2010 and 2017, fundamentally changing the 1982 constitution and securing a system with a super-powerful president. This new system went into effect in the most recent elections of June 2018, in which the leader of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, won the presidency, and the AKP (along with a coalition partner) received the majority of seats in the now weakened parliament. The endurance of the AKP and Erdoğan over a span of more than 15 years is an interesting case not only for specialists of Turkish politics, but also for the broader literature on populism since the staying power of the AKP is in part attributed to its populism.

The AKP illustrates how populism in an already fragile democratic regime can further erode freedoms and increase polarization, leading to authoritarianism (Castaldo 2018; Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Levitsky and Loxton 2013). Turkey is one of the few countries that highlights the dangers of prolonged rule by populists, and thereby contributes to the literature on the relationship between populism and democracy and what happens when populists are in power (for examples of this literature, see Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015; Müller 2017; Rovirra Kaltwasser 2012).

Partly due to these consequences of AKP's populism, in recent years, scholarly works looking into the Turkish case have burgeoned, both as single-case studies and in comparison with others. Although these in-depth analyses and comparative studies have yielded insightful

results, there is yet no consensus on what type of populism the AKP conforms to. While most describe the case as "neo-liberal populism" (for example, Akcay 2018; Bozkurt 2013; Özdemir 2015; Yıldırım 2009), others use various other adjectives, such as "Islamic" (Hadiz 2014, 2016; Göle 2017), "authoritarian" or "nativist" (Arat-Koç 2018) that are more in-line with the type the general literature refers to as "exclusionary populism." Similarly, while some see affinities with Latin American cases (Aytaç and Öniş 2014; Castaldo 2018; Selçuk 2016), others draw on similarities with Eastern European (see for instance, Yabanci and Taleski 2018) or Middle Eastern and Muslim-majority countries (Hadiz 2014, 2016; Kirdiş and Drhimeur 2016). Thus, a quick overview of the Turkey-specific literature shows that there is no consensus regarding the type of populism and regional category the AKP fits into. Given the significance of the AKP for the broader literature on populism, however, it is necessary to ask, "what is the best way to categorise AKP's populism?" Only through this exercise, future research can properly interpret its endurance in power and the consequences of its prolonged rule.

The divergence of opinion in the categorization of the AKP in the literature results from a selective focus on one of its main attributes relevant to the study of populism. Based on the general literature on the phenomenon, studies on Turkey emphasise either one of the following features of the AKP: 1) the ideological and discursive characteristics of the party and its leader; 2) economic, welfare and distributive policies of the party in government; 3) political and organisational strategies, such as the linkages of the leader with his supporters. Scholars who focus on the first aspect, draw attention to AKP's Islamic/religious, nationalist, nativist and

exclusionary characteristics (Arat-Koç 2018; Erçetin and Erdoğan 2018). This interpretation, at times, leads to comparisons with Eastern European, Middle Eastern or other Islamic cases (Kirdiş and Drhimeur 2016; Yabanci and Taleski 2018). This contrasts with those scholars, who stress the second aspect of AKP's populism, meaning its economic policies. Looking at the AKP's macroeconomic stance and distributional strategies, authors classify it as a case of "neo-liberal populism" and/or situate it within the Latin American family of populisms (e.g. Akcay 2018; Aytaç and Öniş 2014; Bozkurt 2013; Özdemir 2015; Yıldırım 2009). Similarly, those who study the organisational and leadership linkages of the AKP (third aspect) more tend to compare it with Latin American cases, but diverge on the classification as "movement populist" with a relatively strong grassroots intermediary organisation (Castaldo 2018, 474) or as more personalistic type of populism with unmediated links between the leader and the people (Selçuk 2016).

Acknowledging that a focus on one attribute leads to divergences of categorization, the primary aim of this article is to analyse the three aspects of AKP's populism *together*, from a comprehensive point of view. After providing a brief overview of the existent approaches to populism, the first section would apply to Turkey the most commonly used typologies of populism based on Europe and Latin America. This step would show that once the discourses, economic policies and organisational characteristics of the AKP are considered *altogether*, the case does not fit into any of the existent typologies. Indeed, this finding explains the different categorizations and inconsistencies found in the Turkey-specific literature, as described above.

Grounded on this finding, the second section adopts a more comprehensive, socio-cultural approach to the study of populism, as recently advocated by scholars such as Hadiz (2014, 2016) and Ostiguy (2017), and moves beyond the typologies based on Europe and Latin America by looking at possible resemblances with two Asian cases, namely Indian People's Party (Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP) and Thais Love Thais (Thai Rak Thai, TRT). Although there is no agreed upon "Asian type of populism" in the literature, this exercise is justifiable because there are scholars who have noticed (but did not elaborate in-depth on) AKP's similarities with the BJP (Harriss 2015; Ohm 2015) or the TRT (Bozkurt 2013; Yıldırım 2009).

The main finding of this article is that the AKP's populist discourse is civilizational, its main economic policies are neo-liberal and its mobilization strategy rests on a strong party organisation with active grassroots support. This combination of attributes sets the AKP apart from most of its counterparts in Europe and Latin America, but has similar blends of characteristics, with at least two cases in Asia, namely India and Thailand.

While this finding is significant for Turkish political studies, as the conclusion will discuss in detail, it is also highly pertinent to the broader literature on populism. By serving as a hypothesis-generating or theory-infirming case study (Collier 1993, 106-108; Lijphart 1971, 691-693), this article shows how the broader literature on types of populism can be refined and expanded by using more comprehensive approaches and by systematically analysing Asian cases in comparison with each other and with Latin America and Europe.

Applying the Existent Typologies to the Turkish Case

The literature on populism is quite wide and in an almost constant state of expansion since the 1960s (Rovira Kaltwasser, Taggart, Ochoa Espejo, and Ostiguy 2017). Despite divergent readings, most authors in this literature agree that the enmity between the people and the elites is the essential core of any populism. Most scholars also agree that populists diverge from each other when they refer to an "idealized heartland", advocate taking decisive action against an "extreme crisis" and when they act like "chameleon[s], adopting the colours of [their] environment" (Taggart 2000, 2). In other words, there is relative consensus in the literature that one case of populism would not exactly be the same with any other (since there would be country and policy differences dependent on the epoch), but all populists would pit what they believe to be the people against the elites in the name of the former. The AKP fits into this definition of populism although the way it has demarcated the people and the elite, as well as the extreme crisis, has changed from the party's inception in 2001 until 2018 (the timeframe of this article). The adaptive nature of the party and its lack of well-defined values is, in fact, one of the reasons why the AKP can be best described as populist (Özpek and Yaşar 2018).

Once scholars who work on populism move away from this basic level of agreement, there are differences of opinion on how best to conceptualize, categorise and methodologically study populism, and this is where AKP's categorization also becomes divergent in the literature. There are at least three distinct, but not necessarily mutually exclusive approaches: studying populism as an ideology, as a discursive style or as a political strategy (Gidron and Bonikowski 2013). For the purposes of this article, the stylistic and strategic approaches are the most critical because it is the typologies of these genres applied to Europe and Latin

America that have produced the most extensive body of work and have been adopted by the literature on Turkish populism. In the following sections, I will look into the categorizations of these two approaches by separating them somewhat artificially for practical purposes, and demonstrate that, although the AKP shares many commonalities with exclusionary and neo-liberal populism, it also has attributes that are distinct from these two types and defies easy categorization. This finding justifies the need to move beyond the ideological and strategic approaches and their typologies focused on Europe and Latin America.

The Ideological Approach and the AKP: Exclusionary versus Inclusionary Types of Populism

The ideological approach commonly defines populism in reference to Mudde's (2004) oft-cited conceptualization, as "a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (543). The ideological approach argues that populism does not have the elaborate precision, coherence or "thickness" of traditional left and right ideologies, such as socialism or fascism, but "can be easily combined with" them (Mudde 2004, 544).

Moreover, the precise description of populism's core concept, the people, might vary from one case to another, leading to two different types, inclusionary and exclusionary (Filc 2015; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013). The inclusive type of populism sees the people as mostly the "plebeians, the common people" and aims to represent the groups that were previously barred from politics. As such, inclusive populism has the potential to incorporate the masses into politics and broaden democracy (Filc 2015, 265-266). In this type of populism,

the difference between the elite and the people is mostly defined in socio-economic and class terms. The exclusionary populist type, however, sees the people mostly as a cultural and ethnic community. The antagonism between the elite and the people is outlined in xenophobic and nativist terms (Hellmann 2017, 165). Due to this narrow view, groups outside of the community are perceived as the threating "other" and exclusionary populism aims to expel them from society. While the exclusionary type is associated mostly (but not exclusively) with radical right populism (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, 155), inclusionary populism is mostly leftist (although not necessarily radical) (Filc 2015, 273-274). As stated by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013), "European populism is predominantly exclusive, while Latin American populism is chiefly inclusive" (148).

Given these basic definitions, at first glance, AKP's populism seems to fit in with exclusionary populism as witnessed in Europe and as has been identified by the literature cited in the introduction. This type of populism emphasises ethnic identities in defining the people and adheres to a "xenophobic version of nationalism" excluding the "non-native (alien) people and values" and seeing them as a menace to "the nation state" (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, 168). As it will be elaborated in further detail in the next section, with its definition of the people in a way that excludes the opposition Kurdish ethnic minority, the non-Sunni and the secular, the AKP conforms to this type. Unlike the inclusionary type of populism which defines the people as a heterogeneous multi-ethnic and multi-racial identity group, the AKP rejects those who are not believed to be part of the natives.

Despite these obvious similarities with the exclusionary type of populism, however, in two respects, AKP's discourse and policies diverge from this grouping *in practice* (although not necessarily in theory). First, immigration has been one of the main issues in European radical right populism (for Central and Eastern Europe, see Stanley 2017; for Western Europe,

see Taggart 2017). As Filc (2015, 266) argues, "exclusionary populism expresses how certain social groups confront the threat of exclusion and subsequent dissolution of their identity and subjectivity by excluding weaker groups, that is, migrant workers or ethnic minorities." While the Turkish case of populism fits into the "ethnic minorities" part of this expression, it does not conform to the "migrant workers". In AKP's discourse and policies, immigration has so-far never been an important element that distinguishes the natives from the aliens. From the 1950s until 2010, Turkey was a country of negative net migration since more people emigrated especially to Europe than those moving to the country (Net Migration Rate 2017). This makes immigration historically a non-issue. With the arrival of Syrian refugees, this has become a thorny matter in Turkish politics, but the emphasis on Islam in AKP's ideology has prevented Syrian refugees from being the basis of exclusion. Thus, the so-far open doors policy of the AKP resembles inclusionary type of populism and their calls for "normalizing migrants' citizenship status" (Filc 2015, 273).

The second element that distinguishes the AKP from the exclusionary variant of populism is its policies explicitly targeting the poor and the class dynamic that underscores the differences between the people and the elite. In this material dimension that sets apart inclusionary and exclusionary types of populism, the AKP approaches the former. As it will be further explained below, universal policies of welfare were abandoned by the AKP, but they were substituted with social assistance programs in healthcare and distribution of aid, resembling Latin American populisms' aim to "establish… the conditions for a good life for 'the people'," more than the European radical right's "welfare chauvinism" geared toward the "protection" of already existing universal benefits from the immigrants (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, 160). Through material distribution of aid, religious symbolism and political empowerment, the AKP and Erdoğan have given the conservative poor and the previously marginalized classes, including Kurds who vote for the party, a "sense of belonging" and the

"recognition and self-worth", buttressed by "policies aimed at improving" their conditions, similar to Latin American populist leaders (Filc 2015, 266).

If the experience of colonialism is what leads to different versions of populism in Europe and Latin America, Turkey is, indeed, perpetually stuck in between (Filc 2015). It is a country that is heir to an Empire that ruled vast territories for centuries, but that was substantially weakened after the eighteenth century and nearly colonized by the European powers after the First World War. This identity as both a colonizer and colonized is reflected in AKP's populism today. On the one hand, Erdoğan has called himself "black" (Arat-Koç 2018; Radikal 2014) and the AKP's current discourse includes anti-imperialism and anti-Westernism similar to populist leaders in colonized Latin America. On the other hand, xenophobia and feelings of ethnic superiority, as well as pan-Islamic desires in foreign policy, are evident similar to populism in Europe. In short, the AKP does not perfectly fit into either inclusionary or exclusionary type of populism and these categorizations are insufficient in characterizing the party.

The Strategic Approach and the AKP: Classic, Neo-liberal, Radical Types of Populism

While in agreement with the ideological approach that the core aspect of populism is the antagonism between homogenously defined elites and the people, the strategic approach advocates studying the concept by considering differences between "political choices, political organisation, and forms of mobilization" (Gidron and Bonikowski 2013, 10). Although there is significant divergence among scholars in this grouping, their emphasis on "populism as a mode of political strategy" unites them.

Based mostly on the Latin American experience, populism in this approach can be divided into three subtypes –classical, neo-liberal and radical populism— corresponding to mostly different time periods, but also related to various economic policies and organisational attributes (de la Torre 2017). The classical populism of the 1930s, as exemplified by Juan and Eva Perón in Argentina and Vargas in Brazil, for the most part claimed to represent the workers and applied polices of Import Substitution Industrialization. They incorporated labour into politics by giving them more voice and expanding the political franchise. The neo-liberal populists, such as Menem in Argentina, Fujimori in Peru and Collar de Mello in Brazil, emerged in the 1990s and "abandoned nationalist and statist policies of their classical predecessors" by applying neo-liberal principles usually to the detriment of the collective benefits of labour (de la Torre 2017, 199). Finally, the radical populism of Chávez in Venezuela, Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador in the 2000s came to the fore as a result of dissatisfactions with neo-liberalism and representative politics. Among other policies, these leaders "relied on state intervention in the economy in the name of distributing wealth and reducing poverty and inequality" which they financed through the export of natural resources (de la Torre 2017, 201).

In terms of organisational attributes, most authors in this genre argue that "populism can be associated with a variety of specific organisational types that share one common feature: absence of autonomy within the movement" (Barr 2009, 42). No matter how "thin" or "thick" the party organisations are (Gunther and Diamond 2003), populists form "plebiscitarian linkages" between the leaders and supporters, where the latter become subordinate to the former and participate "in the decision-making process… only episodic[ally] and only at a specific point" controlled by the leader (Barr 2009, 36).

This commonality, however, does not mean that organisational attributes are unimportant. They are, in fact, associated with different types of populism. For instance,

Roberts (2006) argues that classical populists built strong party organisations and/or relied on the mobilization of civil society (mostly labour unions). Similar to their historical counterparts, radical populists, such as Chávez, formed grassroots organisations and socially mobilized supporters to defend against the elites if they were confronted with opposition forces, such as the military, outside of the ballot box. Yet, for the most part, recent populists and most notably neo-liberal populists have not formed links with the civil society and chose not to built strong party organisations (Roberts 1995). This lack of organisation in neo-liberalism in Latin America was also observed by Weyland (1999; 2001), who defines populism (in contrast to others in this approach) as a strategy where "the leader reaches the followers in a direct, quasi-personal manner that bypasses established intermediary organisations, especially parties" (1999, 381). This is why neo-liberalism was compatible with populism: at a moment when severe economic restructuring had to be carried out, the direct, non-organisational manner in which the populist leaders appealed to the masses became an advantage in carrying out reforms against vested and more organised interests.

On the face of it, the AKP and its economic neo-liberalism seem to belong to this variety and contrasts with leftist populism in Latin America. It shares with neo-liberal populism the common elements of integration with global markets, privatizations, fiscal responsibility and retrenchment of universal welfare benefits (Aytaç and Öniş 2014). It also shares with neo-liberal populism selective and targeted distribution of benefits to the poor that rely on community-based projects (Akcay 2018; Bozkurt 2013; Özdemir 2015). Similar to Peru under Fujimori, in Turkey under Erdoğan as well, "social policies have relied on direct, highly paternalistic relationships that are conducive to the microlevel exchange of material benefits for political support, even in the context of relative macroeconomic austerity" (Roberts 1995, 106).

Yet, despite these similarities in economic policies, the AKP diverges from the neo-liberal populist pattern in Latin America in its organisational attributes. Instead of weakening his party after getting elected like neo-liberal populists (Weyland 1999, 386-387), Erdoğan has continued to rely on his party's grassroots network and municipalities to win votes and to distribute social assistance, in part to counter-balance neo-liberal policies. Perhaps more crucially, Erdoğan quickly mobilized his followers on the streets against the 2016 coup attempt, relying in part on this grassroots network. The ability and choice of mobilization on the streets against an attack is similar to radical populists, but quite unlike neo-liberal populists. Moreover, although Erdoğan was directly elected as the president of the Republic –a position that could have allowed him to form more of an unmediated link with the voters (Weyland 1999, 389-391) – he deliberately chose to change the constitution so that the presidency would not be non-partisan and that he could continue to be the leader of the AKP. Weyland argues that "nonpopulist leaders rely on parties and reinforce them… nonpopulist chief executives work with and through parties," which is a characterization that can also be used paradoxically for populist Erdoğan's relationship with the AKP (and perhaps even with his coalitional partner since 2016, the Nationalist Action Party). Finally, although Erdoğan and the AKP have maintained a distance with *some* "associations of vested interests", such as labour organisations (Weyland 1999, 388-389), they have had organic links with a number of business associations, charities and other pro-AKP civil society groups. It is precisely this intermediation of vested interests, such as the government-dependent trade unions and confederations (like Hak-İş, Eğitim-Bir Sen, Memur-Sen) and women's organisations (like KADEM, AK-DER), that has guaranteed continued loyalty across classes (Yabanci 2016).

Taking everything into consideration, the AKP has characteristics parallel to classical or radical populists in organisational terms, but is similar to neo-liberal populists in economic policies. Thus, its blend of populism does not resonate with the types of populism that were

identified by the strategic approach and the literature on Latin America. This, however, does not mean that the AKP is a unique case. The main point of this section, along with the discussion on the inclusionary versus exclusionary categorization of populism above, was to show why it is not surprising that AKP's populism in the Turkey-specific literature was labelled variously as neo-liberal, Islamic or nativist due to a selective focus on some of its attributes, rather than a comprehensive approach. This section also showed the limits of the literature on Europe and Latin America, as well as the ideological and strategic approaches' typologies based on these two continents, when applied to Turkey. As the next section will demonstrate, however, AKP's populism may be similar to other cases from other regions, but making this argument would also entail adopting a comprehensive understanding of populism, which the next section will briefly discuss.

Moving Beyond Ideational and Strategic Approaches: More Comprehensive Understandings of Populism

By demonstrating how the AKP does not fit into any existent typology, this article advocates moving beyond the ideological and strategic approaches that currently dominate the literature. Ideological approach acknowledges that the core of populism can be combined with other country-specific features. Likewise, most scholars who work on the strategic approach agree that populists adopt different policies, organisational characteristics and mobilizational instruments. Thus, this type of comprehensive approach would not necessarily go against these genres of research but expand them to also enlarge their typologies.

There are a number of scholars, who combine these approaches successfully. According to Ostiguy (2017), for instance, populism is about ideology, discourses, strategies and more: it is "a spectacle, a show, a performance"; it "is always anti-elitist, though it can be quite top-down in its organisation and the nature of the elite antagonized can vary widely" (92). More specifically, "In claiming to represent, and at times to embody, a –neglected—true 'us-ness,' it flaunts a politically or socially 'unpresentable Other,' a historical by-product of an allegedly 'civilizing process,' and champions it as the authentic 'Self' of the nation" (92-93). The civilizational discourses and performances of the populists may include religion and ethnicity, but they are also more: populists tap into historically shaped cuts that have led to feelings of social and cultural isolation and represent those who feel denigrated by the civilizational project of the elites. Thus, according to this socio-cultural approach, the specific attributes of populism can be properly examined only through a comprehensive analysis of the social, cultural and political antagonisms that historically took shape in each context.

Similarly, Hadiz's approach to populism (2016) concurs with those "that place the concerns of political economy and historical sociology at the forefront. This is in contrast to approaches that highlight populism's discursive, ideational or organisational aspects" (Loc. 726). In his study, Hadiz specifically analyses the possibilities of cross-class alliances for Indonesian, Turkish and Egyptian Islamic populists given these countries' historical socio-political dynamics from the Cold War era onward, as well as their interactions with the market economy and globalization.

Ostiguy and Hadiz are not in explicit conversation with one another and have different goals. Ostiguy aims to define populism and establish the socio-cultural approach; Hadiz explains the relative success of various populist parties in Muslim-majority countries. Yet, they share commonalities in taking on a similar comprehensive understanding of populism and looking into the historically shaped civilizational antagonisms and alliances that cross-cut economic interests. Both authors demonstrate that populism "connect[s] deeply with a society's history, existing group differences, identities, and resentments" (Ostiguy 2017, 77), and does not necessarily and only reflect economic and material interests. Although Hadiz emphasises political economy more, his approach is in-tune with Ostiguy's socio-cultural approach since Hadiz also acknowledges that cross-class alliances are possible due to social and cultural dynamics shaped by history. More specifically, Hadiz observes that the AKP successfully brought together segments of the pious Turkish bourgeoisie, new middle classes and the urban and rural poor in a neo-liberal setting associated with global capitalism. These groups' "aspirations and grievances [were] symbolically conveyed through the idioms of Islam, but ultimately analyses would need to account for the sets of interests that are served by agendas being promoted and the sorts of social coalitions that may then emerge" (Hadiz 2014, 132).

While in agreement with his argument, this article diverges from Hadiz (2014; 2016) in his methodology. Hadiz selects three Muslim-majority countries and focuses on Indonesia as the primary case, leading him to group them under the label "Islamic populism." In contrast, this article's primary case, Turkey, is grouped with two other countries, India and Thailand,

that have no religious (or any other apparent) similarities. This case selection allows for more generalisation taking into account civilizational divides but not necessarily Islam, in line with Ostiguy's more general approach, and reinforces Hadiz's arguments that religion is not the only element in AKP's appeal and other religions can be used for similar purposes in other countries, including in India (Hadiz 2018, 568-569).

Turkey in Comparison with Asian Cases

For various reasons in Turkey's political and social history, AKP's populism is a blend that combines civilizational discourses with socio-cultural differences in defining the people and the elite, neo-liberalism with social assistance, a cross-class coalition with strong grassroots party organisation, and mobilization with personalistic centralization. As will be shown below through a descriptive overview of the cases, this blend is in many ways quite similar to two political parties from Asia, the Indian BJP and the Thai TRT.

Taking shape in different religious, institutional, geographical and democratic settings, the possible commonalities between the three parties do not come into immediate sight. The experiences of the parties themselves have also been different. The BJP was founded in 1980 by those politicians who had connections with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (1951–1977) and the Janata Party (1977–1980). After leading a coalition government between 1998 and 2004, the BJP won the absolute majority of the seats and came to power under the leadership of Narendra Modi in 2014, renewing its mandate recently in May 2019. The TRT was formed as a new party in 1998 under Thaksin Shinawatra's leadership and won the elections in 2001. Five years later, the TRT was overthrown by a military coup and Thaksin fled Thailand. Although the

TRT was succeeded by two other parties, another military intervention in 2014 ended this experience as well. In the elections of March 2019, conducted under military rule, the heir of TRT won most of the seats in parliament despite a significant decline in its vote share. The futures of Indian and Thai populist parties are not clear and it is beyond the scope of this article to give a detailed account of their past experiences and their most recent election results. The main purpose of this section is to demonstrate in systematic fashion what some scholars have so far ignored or mentioned only in passing (Bozkurt 2013; Harriss 2015; Ohm 2015; Yıldırım 2009) –that AKP's populism has more commonalities with recent cases of populism in India and Thailand than with Europe and Latin America.

Civilizational Discourse: Defining the People and the Elite in Turkey, India and Thailand

Recent manifestations of populism in Turkey, India and Thailand have underscored a civilization divide with historical antecedents in the societies of these countries, as would be highlighted by Ostiguy's (2017) socio-cultural approach to populism. In all three countries, this divide goes back to the creation of their nation-states in the early twentieth century by state elites, who faced colonial powers and adopted Western notions of modernity, along with secularism in the case of Turkey and India. Modernity meant neglecting, overlooking and even sometimes belittling the traditional ways of lives of especially the rural lower classes, now represented by populists. Partly because of their relative late development in different geographical settings, all three countries had different approaches to migration as well, with no populist discourse "othering" the immigrants in contrast to the European cases of populism (a point that was already made above for the case of Turkey). The sub-sections below will briefly analyse these historical civilizational dynamics that are manifested in recent populisms of Turkey, India and Thailand.

Turkey.

Since its foundation, the AKP has claimed to represent the hitherto politically repressed and marginalized masses against the state establishment (Dinçşahin 2012). This masses versus the state divide in Turkey can be traced back to historical dynamics and the establishment of the Turkish Republic out of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the First World War. The military leaders, who expelled European armies, set up the Republic and founded the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* –CHP) regime that governed single-handedly until 1950. These state elites explicitly aimed to modernise Turkey along Western and European lines of republicanism, secularism and nationalism. Political change went in tandem with top-down social reforms, including major amendments to the daily lives of citizens, such as personal names, dress codes, family life and the use of language, which are still being contested (Palabiyik 2018).

The historically contested social reforms are now reflected in what Ostiguy refers to as a civilizational divide, which is also paralleled in the Turkish case with a rift between the religious and the secular (Çınar 2018). On the one hand, in the Turkish context, "the elites" has indicated an intellectual and an economic upper class with a more Western-looking and "modern" lifestyle. These are the so-called "white Turks", who have adhered to the revolutionary reforms dubbed as Kemalism, named after the founder of the Republic. On the other hand, "the people" has corresponded to the lower classes from the Anatolian heartland and the poorer areas of urban centres, with Islamist and conservative outlooks and seemingly more traditional ways of life, referred to as the "black Turks" (Arat-Koç 2018; Demiralp 2012).

The AKP is certainly not the only political party in Turkish history that has tried to tap into this divide. The party came out of a long lineage of conservative parties that used religious symbolism and were repressed by consecutive military coups that also clamped down on other

parties and most notably leftists. Given this historical background, in the early years of AKP rule, "the elite" meant most fundamentally the secular military and judicial establishment. During its first two terms in office, the party emphasised EU membership goals and democracy in order to break the secular state elites' grip on power. Once the military and the judiciary were brought under control following coup investigations, however, the enemies changed character, and external culprits (mostly Europe and the USA), as well as their internal collaborators, gradually took the centre stage (Aytaç and Elçi 2018, 99-100; Erçetin and Erdoğan 2018; Yabanci 2016, 598-600).

Domestic enemies, such as the secular CHP voters, the "interest rate lobby" (Daragahi 2018), the religious movement let by Fethullah Gülen (Taş 2018) and the Kurds who do not support the AKP (Martin 2018), are all tarred by the same brush and at times accused of being "terrorists" or "coup-sympathizers/putschists." They are "traitors to the homeland" (Selçuk 2016, 578) and pose an immediate yet obscure threat –the weakening of Turkey or preventing the rise of Turkey. These enemies are then juxtaposed against the people who is referred to as the *millet*, which in Turkish has ethnic and religious connotations (Akturk 2009). Drawing on xenophobic beliefs of grandeur and the re-defined gloriousness of the Ottoman past, this conceptualization of *millet* as the "Muslim nation" (White 2014) relates to a civilizational divide between the West and Sunni Islam. This then leads the AKP to also speak for the pious Muslims around the world and most notably in the Middle East. In foreign policy, especially after 2007, the party has had "pan-Islamist" ambitions of having influence in areas where the Ottoman Empire once ruled (Ozkan 2014).

The civilizational point of view has also led to the welcoming of around 3 million Sunni immigrants from Syria as religious brethren, giving some of them citizenship and setting them aside as "one of us" as opposed to, for instance, the opposition Kurds in Turkey, who are the "other". The refugee crisis itself has given an opportunity to pose the problem in a civilization

discourse: according to the government "while Turkey opens its doors to the refugees, providing a protector place… 'they' (the West) have failed to achieve, building discriminatory walls…" (Erçetin and Erdoğan 2018, 389).

India.

This dominance of a civilizational divide that underscores populism is also evident in the case of India. Although previous populists in India have defined the people in various ways, the 2014 electoral victory of the BJP rested in part on socio-cultural exclusion. In very similar terms to AKP's populism, the BJP used religion and nationalism in an intertwining way to designate the people and to distinguish them from the elite. In parallel with Turkey, the divide between the people and the elite has corresponded to a devout versus secular rift with clear civilizational undertones (Roy 2018). As Jaffrelot and Tillin summarise (2017, 184), for the current populists in India "their enemies are not the establishment defined in socio-economic terms but an establishment defined in cultural terms, a group made of English-speaking Westernized –uprooted— elites who defend secularism at the expense of the authentic Hindu identity of the nation".

Similar to AKP's opposition to the secular rulers of the Republic represented by the CHP, the BJP (and its predecessors) have focused on the Indian National Congress (INC) party that has ruled India for most of its history since independence (McDonnell and Cabrera 2018, 489-490). INC's secular policies are inclusive of the Muslims and Christians in India while the official ideology of the BJP, Hindu nationalism (or *Hindutva*), stresses that Hindu culture and religion cannot be separated from Indian nationhood. *Hindutva* aims at religious and cultural hegemony over minorities and the "reconversion" of Muslims and Christians to Hinduism (Palshikar 2015). This xenophobic understanding is similar to the exclusionary type of populism of the European radical right.

However, the BJP is distinguished from the European radical right in two practical ways, similar to the AKP. First, immigration has not been a core issue in India because of negative net migration levels since the 1990s similar to Turkey (Net Migration Rate 2017). Moreover, the religious focus of the party resulted in a more nuanced treatment of migration. The BJP rejects Muslim immigrants from neighbouring countries in tune with antagonisms toward Muslims at home and in ways that are quite similar to the AKP's "othering" of the Kurds in Turkey (McDonnell and Cabrera 2018, 490-492). Yet, Hindu immigrants from especially Bangladesh are welcomed and promised citizenship (Daniyal 2015). Although the party has not acted on this promise, at the discursive level, similar to the AKP's policy of accepting "friendly" immigrants, the BJP has welcomed Hindu brethren escaping from neighbouring countries.

Second, unlike the welfare chauvinism of the European populists which assumes the existence of a relatively well-functioning and universal welfare state that needs protection from the immigrants, the BJP increased its support among the lower classes with promises of expansion of the welfare state. The middle classes have traditionally supported the BJP more, but as Jaffrelot shows (2015, 20-21) in the 2014 elections the party also increased its vote among the poor and the lower classes. The party, indeed, formed a cross-class coalition, through three methods. First, the *Hindutva* was expanded to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the 1990s and the ethnic discourse overcame class differences. Second, the party outsourced the private provision of public goods, such as health and education services, to its affiliate associations, building social relationships between the voters and activists that could be translated into votes through persuasion (Thachil 2014). Third, Modi used his own OBC background as a tea seller symbolically to denote upward mobility for the aspiring lower classes (Sen 2016). In its election manifesto, the party referred to the demands of the "neo-middle classes" "for better public services" and pledged various schemes (Jaffrelot 2015, 26).

After the BJP came to power, a digitised welfare scheme was introduced (Chacko 2018, 557) partly in line with these promises. When combined with the religious and nationalist discourse that does not translate into a general and strong anti-immigration discourse, this cross-class alliance that the BJP forged leads to the conclusion that the party does not lend itself neatly to either exclusionary nor inclusionary populism. In the words of McDonnell and Cabrera (2018, 495-496):

> The case of the BJP suggests the need to revise the idea that populism always appeals most to "the left behind"… The BJP in 2014 combined neo-liberal economic offer with social conservatism. The party thus seems something of a hybrid between neo-liberal (but not nativist) populists like Berlusconi's Forza Italia and protectionist (and nativist) populists like the French Rassemblement National.

Thailand.

A similar conclusion can also be reached for the case of the TRT. Before the 1997 regime, Thai politics were dominated by state elites, united around the royal house and consisting of the military, business, judiciary and political branches. The TRT broke apart the dominance of these groups in 2001 by representing the poor peasants especially in the north and northeast. Most of the schemes to attract voters consisted of economic entitlements. Thaksin promised easy credit for rural communities, a three-year debt moratorium to the farmers and cheap health care (Montesano 2002). Before the 2005 elections, Thaksin added more promises to his list, such as allotting livestock, land titles, ponds, more credit and funds to farmers, and affordable education and housing. In what looked like an impossible task, the TRT campaign also talked about eliminating poverty altogether (Pasuk and Baker 2008). Compared with India and Turkey, the inclusiveness of TRT's populism rested on economic distribution more than overt nationalism, and for that reason, approaches inclusionary populism more (Moffitt 2015).

Thaksin's use of "symbols of nation and state" were restricted partly because the opposing elite groups, and especially the royal family, held monopoly over such identifiers (Baker 2005). Nevertheless, the underlying dichotomy between the people and the elite was also a civilizational one, as Ostiguy's (2017) approach would predict. This divide shared close affinities with AKP's populism, going back to the formation of the modern nation state in early twentieth century. As Zarakol shows (2013), both the Ottoman and the Thai empires were not formally colonized but felt the need to modernise and centralise the state in order to compete with Western powers. While Kemalism and secularism eventually became the ideological foundation of these elites in Turkey, the monarchy and royalism underpinned the dominance of the Thai elites. However, in both, modernity and Western-ness were key elements that also became part of middle class identity. With the opening up of the economy to global markets in the 1980s, in both countries a new business class emerged, which embodied the traditional lifestyles of the urban and rural poor. Both Erdoğan and Thaksin are the representatives of these new businesses, as well as the previously marginalized poor, who were accused of being ignorant, irrational and uncivilized by the previous elites. Thus, even though there was no overt emphasis on nationalism or religion in Thaksin's populism, the civilizational divide shaped by the historical circumstances of Thailand is undeniable, and a focus on only material concerns would "mask deeper patterns of stratification" (Zarakol 2013, 160). It was the old middle class around the Thai monarchy that was alarmed by the possibility of "the loss of state identity as they know it" (Zarakol 2013, 154) and who, therefore, accused Thaksin of "brainwashing" the rural poor and giving into their "undisciplined needs and wants" (Hewison 2017, 433), repeating the past discourses of rural backwardness and ignorance. By speaking to and for this "unpresentable Other," Thaksin "flaunted" their ways as the "authentic Self" (Osiguy 2017) and increasingly embraced populism in an attempt to break the old elite's opposition (Hewison 2017).

The fact that Thaksin did not use overt nationalism in his discourse also does not mean that he was not a nationalist. First, in 2003 Thaksin began a "war on drugs" which killed thousands of Thais and raised concerns over human rights violations. During this war, Thaksin proclaimed himself as the redeemer of Thailand's morals and health, and thus, reinforced new nationalist sentiments. Second, during the TRT rule, a Malay Muslim insurgency began in Thailand's deep South and the government responded with heavy handed military repression (Croissant 2007), resembling Turkey's nationalist fight against the Kurdish insurgents and India's clashes with the Muslims.

This similarity can also be found in dealing with questions of immigration. After having a negative net migration rate in the 1990-1995 period, Thailand had positive levels of migration between 1995 and 2005 (Net Migration Rate 2017). Most immigrants in Thailand are from neighbouring countries, such as Burma, Laos and Cambodia, and they are employed as workers. The governments before the TRT portrayed migrant workers as a danger to the employment opportunities of the Thais, which included plans for forced deportation after the 1997 crisis. But the Thaksin government reversed this policy through a parliamentary resolution in August 2001 and permitted Thai businesses to employ migrants, "who have at least registered for the permanent legal status of 'Migrant Worker'" (Darunee 2001). The resolution also lifted restrictions of migrant workers, regions where they can work and types of employment they can undertake. In fact, these policies of the Thaksin government had been "widely criticized" for "giving away" employment "easily" (Darunee 2001). In contrast to India and Turkey, this type of attitude toward migration was led more by pro-business attitudes than by ethnic brotherhood and affinities. However, it is clear that the TRT's approach to migrants was quite different from the exclusionary discourse used by the European populists due to different historical, economic and geographical circumstances, and creating a blend of mixed populism similar to the AKP. Indeed, even in this case of populism, which was more

explicitly class-driven and had no overt religious discourses, it is possible to find socio-cultural differences, identities and grievances playing a role as Ostiguy's definition of populism highlights.

Economic Policies, Organisation and Mobilization in Turkey, India and Thailand

The similarities of Turkish, Indian and Thai populisms in terms of their strategic attributes is perhaps more striking than the general civilization discourses explained above. In all countries, populists adopted pro-business economic policies that were also dubbed "neo-liberal." Yet, in tandem with Hadiz's (2016) approach, all three parties formed cross-class alliances, representing both business interests and the new middle and lower classes. Facing economic crises (or forming right after financial turmoil in the case of Turkey and Thailand), all three populists found ways to integrate with the global capitalist economy while claiming to represent the interests of their cross-class supporters. Organisationally speaking, the personalistic leadership style of Erdoğan, Modi and Thaksin have been evident in all three countries, as expected in the neo-liberal typology of populism and by Ostiguy (2017). However, all three populist movements also have had relatively strong mass organisations that can be mobilised, like the radical populist variant. As a result of their historically shaped socio-cultural and civilizational conflicts, all three populists on occasion mobilized their supporters to defeat their enemies.

Turkey.

The AKP has been coded as a party that has successfully combined Islamism with neo-liberal capitalism (see, for instance, Atasoy 2009; Tuğal 2009). When compared with the first era of neo-liberalism that started in the 1980s, the AKP's policies went deeper in policies such as the

privatization of state enterprises, setting up of new regulatory boards, decreases in public spending, suppression of real wages and shrinking the agricultural sector (Aytaç and Öniş 2014, 50; Bahçe and Köse 2017, 578; Karaman 2013, 3416). In terms of ensuring growth rates, the party also appeared to do well until recently, reaching to an almost 11% growth rate in the peak year of 2011 and well-above the 2% OECD average in the same year (OECD 2019).

In its economic policies, the party appeased businesses, by legalizing flexible, subcontracted and temporary labour, and by breaking down the power of independent labour unions (Bozkurt 2013, 379-380; Yabanci 2016; Yıldırım 2009, 40-41). The AKP came to power in an alliance with Anatolian businessmen, whose conservatism, religiosity and lack of economic opportunities had put them at a disadvantage relative to more secular big businesses in Istanbul and the Marmara region (Hadiz 2016). These "Anatolian tigers" have been systematically favoured by the AKP in public procurement and construction contracts awarded by national and local level public institutions, exposing the Turkish economy to clientelism, corruption and crony capitalism in previously unprecedented scales (Buğra and Savaşkan 2014; Gürakar 2016).

Despite the mismanagement of the economy in the long-run, the AKP has managed to hold on to its constituency from the lower classes by stabilizing the economy until 2018, reforming the welfare state, increasing lower class access to bank loans and credit cards, and distributing social assistance to the poor through charities, philanthropic organisations and private donors (Özdemir 2015, 10-24). These policies have led to mixed results for the lower classes: on the one hand, breaking their possible organised resistance, and on the other, awarding material benefits in exchange for party loyalty (Akcay 2018; Bahçe and Köse 2017; Bozkurt 2013; Eder 2014).

This party loyalty has worked hand-in-hand with party membership, which in 2017, stood at almost nine and a half million –eight times more than the CHP and corresponding to one in every nine citizen (Diken 2018). The AKP has, indeed, a strong party organisation with a hierarchically ordered and centrally controlled body that territorially penetrates even the remotest corners of Turkey. Membership is strictly controlled by the headquarters of the party and, because the main source of income is state subsidies (a feature of the Law on Political Parties), the grassroots is dependent on the higher echelons for resources rather than the other way around (Kumbaracıbaşı 2009). Thus, the party leadership is materially autonomous, but has at its disposal a machine that can be used year-round.

In AKP's organisational framework, the role of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is critical. Although he was a first among equals when the party was founded in the 2000s, he bypassed his comrades and became a personalistic figure (Castaldo 2018, 479). Rather than having messianic or divine characteristics, Erdoğan's leadership style rests on his meticulous control over his organisation, micro-management of every level of the party and a constant dynamism in holding mass rallies, meetings and speeches with party loyalists around the country (Baykan 2018).

Erdoğan commands a party base that can be used in activities related to elections, but also as a reserve force that can be mobilized on the streets against opponents. Erdoğan, for instance, threatened to socially mobilise his supporters following the Gezi Park protests in 2013 (Küçük 2017). Three years later, on the night of 15 July 2016, Erdoğan *did* ask people to defend the government by going out on the streets and seizing airports against the attempted military coup. Thousands responded and the coup failed partially because of this unprecedented and quick mobilization. For weeks after the coup, President Erdoğan called on his supporters to stay on the streets in case of a second coup attempt, significantly demonstrating the capacity

of the party to use its grassroots as a reserve army against opponents, similar to radical populists in Latin America.

India.

One of the reasons that led to BJP's success in the 2014 elections was its campaign on the economy and the failure of the previous government to sustain economic growth to the benefits of the middle classes. Modi highlighted the growth rates and economic development of Gujarat, where he was the chief minister for 13 years. He promised that he would be able to achieve the same "economic miracle" everywhere by efficient governance, new developmental projects and building infrastructure. The neo-liberal agenda of the party, summarized in the slogan "maximum governance and minimum government" (Kumar 2014), attracted India's big corporations consisting of a number of wealthy families, as well as the BJP's traditional voter base, the middle classes.

Since coming to power, the BJP government has continued with neo-liberal policies. The party announced a privatization initiative with the aim of selling 8.4 billion dollars' worth of shares in state enterprises (Keohane and Crabtree 2016). Under Modi's leadership, India has also increased foreign direct investment by nearly 40 percent in two years, in line with Modi's "Make in India" campaign (Baker, Mandhana, and Roy 2016). Although new insurance schemes were introduced for poor families with digitised databases and bank accounts, the new government also "weakened many labour protocols and environmental regulations… reduced public spending in primary education and basic health, and undercut many of the landmark rights-based acts that distinguished the tenure of the [previous government]" (Ruparelia 2015, 757-758).

Perhaps the most significant economic reform that Modi unleashed has been the demonetization drive which began in November 2016. The drive involved the removal of 500

and 1000 rupee bank notes from circulation that amounted to the 86 percent of India's bills in the market. The justification for this radical move was copied from the populist rulebook: The wealthy was evading taxation and this crisis that was generated by the corrupt elite required decisive and immediate action. While those who criticized the move were declared "anti-national", those who were hurt were hailed for their sacrifice. The need to strengthen the formal economy, to move on to a "cashless society" and to increase the "financial inclusion of the poor and especially, the neo-middle classes" was also emphasised, similar to the AKP's extension of new credit facilities to the Turkish lower classes. This policy also marked the neo-liberal desire, as one Minister put it, to "flush" the banks "with funds" so that they can "lend it to productive sectors" (Chacko 2018, 559).

Just like the neo-liberal populism of the AKP, the BJP also diverges from its Latin American counterparts with its organisational attributes. The BJP is backed by and Modi has been a member of the National Volunteers' Organisation (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* – RSS), a paramilitary group formed in 1925. The RSS and other Hindu nationalists frequently mobilize, and their activities lead to communal conflict and attacks against the Muslims, such as the one that occurred in Gujarat 2002 when Modi was the chief minister. Moreover, the BJP is well-organised at the local level throughout India. With its 88 million members (more than double the number of INC affiliates), it is arguably "the largest political party in the world" (Quartz India 2015). As an organizationally thick party, commanding grassroots affiliates, the BJP can recruit voters among the poor through the distribution of private goods but based also on personal relationships (Thachil 2014).

Despite this robust organisation, before the 2014 elections, Modi formed direct links with the voters through technological mechanisms, such as 3D hologram speeches. It has been this personalistic centralization of power that has carried the BJP to government and that has marked Modi's rule as the Prime Minister since 2014 (Manor 2015, 737-739; Jaffrelot and

Tillin 2017). However, Modi's success in 2014 was in part also due to his ability to appeal to "vote mobilizers" to reach local communities with no easy access to information. In as big and diverse a country as India, vote mobilizers donate money, campaign door-to-door or put up posters advertising the party, although most of them are not members and expect material benefits for their service (Chhibber and Ostermann 2014). Thus, the BJP has relied on a mixture of strategies, including Modi's personalistic style, organisational links with the RSS, strong party organisation and local activism, setting the BJP apart from the typical cases of neo-liberal populism.

Thailand.

The TRT came to power following the 1997 economic crisis, which had led to an IMF agreement and a strict application of neo-liberal principles of fiscal cuts, retrenchment of the state and privatizations. In an economic environment that had already damaged big business in Thailand, the IMF program benefited foreign investors more than domestic capital, giving the former more opportunities in the privatization schemes (Hewison 2005). Faced with competition from foreign capital, domestic businesspeople turned to a strategy of capturing state power. Thaksin –a wealthy business tycoon himself—founded the TRT in 1998 with this "principal mission," i.e. "to rescue Thai business people from the 1997 financial crisis and to restore economic growth" (Pasuk and Baker 2008, 64). The TRT advocated a form of capitalism that would restrict foreign shares in enterprises, but would continue with privatizations, favour employees over labour, facilitate free trade and reduce state involvement in the economy. Although Thaksin did not follow the IMF prescriptions, he was likened to Fujimori and the neo-liberal populists of Latin America because of these types of policies and links with domestic capital (Moffitt 2015, 307; Pasuk and Baker 2008, 73-77). However, unlike them (and as explained above), he balanced his big business bias with universal welfare schemes to the poor in rural areas or to the informal sector in urban settings in a more

inclusionary fashion. Again similar to the AKP, coming to power after the 1997 macroeconomic crisis, the party could also promise sustained economic growth rates, reaching to 7% in the peak year of 2003 (a major surge from -8% in 1998) that would appeal to a cross-class alliance (World Bank 2019).

Just like Erdoğan and Modi, Thaksin himself was at the centre of the populist appeal. He appeared as a successful businessman that assured small and mid-sized enterprises similar kinds of upward mobility. He blended his personalistic control over the party and the government with high membership levels to the TRT and social mobilization strategies. In the words of McCargo and Ukrist (2005, 86), the TRT had "an attachment to ideas of a mass bureaucratic party in terms of branches and membership, partly because no Thai politician dares to challenge this mythology." The TRT had a membership drive with around 8.5 million registered in 2003, six times more than its closest competitor, the Democrat Party. The levels of membership were important in order to receive state funding, but also, similar to the AKP, to provide a possible grassroots force that could be mobilized when faced with an elite attack. The value of such mobilization was made clear by the march of the Assembly of the Poor on Bangkok in 1997 and their subsequent months-long protests that provided the ideal ground for Thaksin to build his populist strategy (Hellmann 2017, 167).

After coming to power, the TRT ignored the demands of the Assembly and played down his own populist appeal, but the value of mobilizing the poor was re-understood when the party faced the 2006 coup (Hewison 2017). A grassroots movement started with the Caravan of the Poor marching on Bangkok to defend Thaksin. His followers later established the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) and wore red shirts to symbolise their opposition to anti-Thaksin groups (Markou 2016). With every change of government and at any critical political moment, the red shirts were actively mobilized, often times clashing with security forces and with anti-Thaksin groups. The activities of the UDD reached new heights between

2009 and 2010, when they stormed the ASEAN Summit in Pattaya and seized several locations in Bangkok, including the Parliament. In the end the UDD was not successful in preventing another coup, but this turn towards civil society mobilization and organisation after 2006 is a feature that sets the Thai case apart from the neo-liberal populist experience in Latin America and is similar to the AKP's mobilization strategy.

Conclusion

This article started with a simple observation: there is no consensus in the literature on the type of populism and regional variation that the AKP confirms to. After identifying the root cause of this discord in the literature, this article asked how the AKP *should* be categorized based on *all* its main attributes. The main finding of this article is that when its discourses, economic policies and organisational dynamics are taken into account together, populism in Turkey constitutes a specific ideological and strategic blend that contains elements from does not fit in with the typologies of European and Latin American populism, although it has interesting similarities with the BJP in India and the TRT in Thailand.

There are three implications of this finding for the broader literature on populism. First, by showing how one "theory-infirming" case does not belong to the most dominant types of populism identified by the general literature, this article supports calls for a more comprehensive approach to populism, combining ideology and strategy with historically shaped socio-cultural dynamics. This type of socio-cultural reading of populism, as explicitly advocated by Ostiguy (2017) and in similar ways applied to case study work by Hadiz (2014, 2016), would go beyond analyses of class dynamics and religious divisions but include and combine them. It would stress how populist alliances that cross-cut economic interests can be

formed among various social groups, based on civilizational discourses, economic policies and organisational instruments that are unique to countries, specific periods and geographical settings.

Second, this article highlights the need to expand the literature to other geographical areas. As others have also noticed, the literature on populism has an apparent "Atlantic bias" (Moffitt 2015, 293-295) and is still very much dominated by cases from Western Europe and Latin America (Hadiz and Chryssogelos 2017; Rovira Kaltwasser, Taggart, Ochoa Espejo, and Ostiguy 2017, 12-13). While typologies based on these continents may work for these regions and others with similar historical patterns, Turkey, India and Thailand are countries that had different experiences of nation building and civilizational projects in the twentieth century. Further research can dig deeper into these experiences and investigate how they manifest themselves in contemporary populism from a more causal and explanatory framework.

Finally, this article draws attention to the need to develop a new typology of populism by using comprehensive definitions of the phenomenon. This article was critical of the existent typologies and showed their limits but did not try to replace them. Such an effort would have required analysing as many global instances of populism as possible and including cases selected from different religious, geographical and developmental settings. A proper comparative analysis of the cases, then, would have necessitated resources for a larger project and resulted in findings that could not have possibly be confined to the space of an article. The goal of this article was more modest but its findings direct research to more ambitious aims which can hopefully be taken up by others in the future.

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