

# **Labor Unions and Mass Protests of June 2013 in Turkey and Brazil**

by

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# Abstract

In June 2013, Turkey and Brazil witnessed simultaneous mass protests that targeted the policies of the governing parties, the AKP and PT, respectively. Although both protests grew to millions to encompass people from different social classes and their variety of demands, the labor unions were marked by their absence. This thesis focuses on the labor unions' role in the mass protests of June 2013 in Turkey and Brazil and explores the underlying reasons for their non-participation, marginal roles and in some cases condemnation vis-à-vis the protests. It argues that the attitude of the labor unions in the June demonstrations reflected (i) the success in which governments managed to integrate most labor unions into status-quo through corporatism and (ii) the lack of power of other labor unions that would challenge the status-quo. Finally, this thesis discusses state-labor union relations from a comparative perspective to make a broader point on emerging market economies.

**Keywords:** Labor Movement, Corporatism, PT, AKP, Gezi Park, 2013 Protests in Brazil

## Özet

2013 yılının Haziran ayında, Türkiye ve Brezilya mevcut hükümetleri hedef alan kitlesel eylemlere sahne oldu. İki ülkede de eylemler farklı toplumsal sınıflardan milyonlarca insanı ve onların çeşitli taleplerini kapsayacak şekilde büyüye de, sendikal hareketin büyük bir bölümü eylemlere katılmadı. Bu tez, Türkiye ve Brezilya'daki sendikaların büyük çoğunluğunun Haziran 2013'te meydana gelen kitlesel hareketlerdeki rollerini ve katılmamalarının ya da bazı durumlarda eylemleri kınamalarının altında yatan sebepleri inceliyor. Böylelikle, sendikaların Haziran eylemlerindeki tutumunun (i) mevcut hükümetlerin korporatist politikalar vasıtasıyla sendikal hareketin büyük bölümünü mevcut sistemin kuralları doğrultusunda içermeyi başardığını ve (ii) diğer sendikaların da mevcut sisteme karşı çıkacak gücünün olmadığını yansıttığını ileri sürüyor. Son olarak, bu tez, Türkiye ve Brezilya'daki devlet-sendika ilişkilerini karşılaştırmalı bir bakış açısından değerlendirerek, yükselen piyasa ekonomileri hakkında bir çıkarımda bulunmayı amaçlıyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sendikal Hareket, Korporatizm, PT, AKP, Gezi Parkı Eylemleri, Brezilya'daki Haziran 2013 Eylemleri

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## List of Abbreviations

**AKP** [Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi]: Justice and Development Party

**CGTB** [Central Geral dos Trabalhadores do Brasil]: General Central of Workers of Brazil

**CSP-Conlutas** [Central Sindical e Popular] : Trade Union and Popular Central

**CTB** [Central dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras do Brasil]: Central of Workers of Brazil

**CUT** [Central Única dos Trabalhadores] : Unified Workers' Central

**Deri-Teks** [Deri Dokuma ve Tekstil İşçileri Sendikası] : Leather and Textile Workers' Union

**DİSK** [Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu] : The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey

**Força Sindical** : Syndical Force

**Hak-İş** [Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu] : The Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions

**Hizmet-İş** [Tüm Belediye ve Genel Hizmet İşçileri Sendikası] : All Municipal and General Workers' Union

**ITUC** [International Trade Union Confederation]

**Kamu-Sen** [Türkiye Kamu Çalışanları Sendikaları Konfederasyonu] : Public Workers Unions Confederation of Turkey

**KESK** [Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu] : Confederation of Public Workers' Unions

**Memur-Sen** [Memur Sendikaları Konfederasyonu]: Confederation of Civil Servants Trade Unions

**MPL** [Movimento Passe Livre] : Free Pass Movement

**MST** [Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra] : Landless Workers' Movement

**MTST** [Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto] : Homeless Workers Movement

**PT** [Partido dos Trabalhadores] : Workers' Party

**Türk-İş** [Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu] : Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions

**UGT** [União Geral dos Trabalhadores] : General Union of Workers



## **Introduction**

Turkey and Brazil are two of the emerging market economies, which were greatly praised by the international institutions for their so-called fast growing and stable economies. They underwent rapid economic growth –which depended upon neoliberal policies to a great extent– in the last decade under PT (Workers’ Party) government in Brazil and AKP (Justice and Development Party) in Turkey. However, June 2013 witnessed simultaneous eruptions of mass protests in Turkey and Brazil. Both protests were triggered by seemingly trivial urban issues with the involvement of a relatively small number of people. In Turkey, the first protest was held on May 27, in an effort to stop the demolition of Gezi Park, while in Brazil the initial protest on June 6, had an agenda on the reversal of a 20 cents increase on the public transportation. The police brutality led to an expansion in the protests and they quickly turned into widespread mass uprisings over the course of few days. The central organizations in the protests were Taksim Solidarity in Turkey and Movimento Passe Livre in Brazil, which did not assume leadership but mostly had a role to call for protests after the spread of the protests. As these demonstrations exceeded their initial objective, the demands came to encompass a variety of issues and to target the incumbent government. In Brazil, the protestors showed the most discontent against the quality of public services such as healthcare and education, the expenses made on mega events, corruption, and police violence. The main grievance in Turkey concerned the government’s conservative and interfering policies, repression of freedom of expression, and police violence.

The initial interpretations of the protests indicated a specific class character of the protestors. However, subsequent research demonstrated that the massification of the protests gathered a multiplicity of people from various social groups of the society, which rendered the protests highly heterogeneous in terms of class composition as well as the claims that were made. While the workers' participation in the protests is undeniable, especially regarding the more local demonstrations that took place in the workers' neighborhoods in solidarity with the mass protests in the city center, it was not witnessed in organized terms. Hence, even after the mass participation turned these protests into popular uprisings, the biggest trade union confederations in both countries did not mobilize their members to take part in large numbers during the peak of the demonstrations, as the studies on June protests suggest and as my fieldwork explores. Some smaller unions participated in the protests through strike calls as well, however were not effective to meaningfully challenge the governments. Moreover, some of the confederations in Turkey even criticized the protests, while in Brazil the mobilization of the base took place with the intention to discuss the claims of the mass protests with the PT government, albeit in an amicable manner rather than pursuing the confronting agenda of June protests.

This thesis examines this lack of mass mobilization, marginal role and in some cases, condemnation by trade unions vis-à-vis the mass protests, by looking into their conception of unionism and their organizational position towards the decision-making mechanisms of the state, particularly under the incumbent governments, PT and AKP. In analyzing the state-union relations in Turkey and Brazil, class-theoretical approach is employed, which emphasizes the regulatory and demobilizing

function of establishing institutional contacts between state's decision-making mechanisms and organized interests. The explanatory power of class theoretical approach in the face of other theories derives from its emphasis on those groups that take place in the economic sphere, on the historical positions of different social classes towards each other, and the states' approach towards social classes in the context of capitalist system. As such, it aims to comprehend particular function of corporations in capitalist countries. Within this framework, I argue that most of the trade unions in Turkey and Brazil engage in clientalist relations with the incumbent governments in which they abstain from challenging actions as a union strategy, that these unions are favored by the AKP and PT governments within their corporatist approach towards mobilization, and that the attitude of the largest unions in the face of the mass protests of June was a reflection of their overall position. Furthermore, I maintain that the oppositional unions constitute a small proportion of the labor movements in Turkey and Brazil, which eventuate in their lack of power to challenge the status-quo.

## **Methodology**

The analysis hereby is based on my field research in São Paulo and İstanbul, conducted between April and July 2014. I employed parallel methodologies in the two countries, in order to comprehend the unions' positions towards the mass protests and underlying reasons behind their attitude. To this end, I conducted in-depth interviews with various members and organizers of trade union confederations and analyzed the union documents concerning the mass protests. The questions in the

interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. Hence, the analysis of this thesis is predicated upon the narratives of these union members.

In São Paulo, I conducted seven interviews with the presidents, representatives, advisors and organizers of trade union confederations including CUT, CGTB, CTB, Força Sindical, UGT, Intersindical, CSP-Conlutas and an interview with the leader of Metallurgical Workers' union, which is a member of CSP-Conlutas. In Istanbul, I conducted four interviews with the presidents, specialists, and representatives of trade union confederations including DİSK, KESK, and Hak-İş and two interviews with a specialist and the president of the Deri-Teks Union, which is a member-union in the Trade Union Coalition Platform, a dissident body within Türk-İş. My interviews with these confederations aimed to obtain their official views on the issue at hand.<sup>1</sup> The interview questions sought to conduct an inquiry about their approach towards the mass protests, the cases in which they mobilize the rank and file in an attempt to make their claims, the patterns through which they show opposition to the governments, the difference between their attitudes towards the states' decision making mechanisms before and after the incumbency of PT and AKP.

As a part of comprehending the unions' position vis-à-vis the mass protests, the press releases of Hak-İş, Türk-İş, Memur-Sen, and Türkiye Kamu-Sen on Gezi Park protests are also examined. While Hak-İş, Türk-İş and Memur-Sen released two co-signed press statements with many other non-governmental organizations on June 6 and on June 19, Türk-İş individually published another press release, concerning the Gezi protests, on June 5. Furthermore, Kamu-Sen reported of their official stance

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<sup>1</sup> It should be stated that CUT's advisor, one of my interviewees, underlined that he stated his own opinions and that he was not authorized to express CUT's official opinion.

towards Gezi Park protests through the statements of the President of Kamu-Sen on June 6, 2013 and of the General Organizing Secretary of Kamu-Sen on June 14, 2013. The analysis of the press releases was important in terms of understanding these unions' positions towards the AKP government as well as their conception of themselves as institutions that are expected to have a say on the country's political agenda.

The fieldwork process revealed some obstacles, which somewhat limited the scope of the analysis. During the fieldwork, it was not possible to reach and arrange a meeting with the representatives of Memur-Sen, Kamu-Sen and Türk-İş, despite various efforts. Therefore, to comprehend their positions towards the Gezi protests and their conception of unionism, I had to confine my analysis to the examination of their press releases on the mass protests and other union representatives' comments on them. Furthermore, in Brazil, some of the interviews were conducted with a translator, which restricted the extent of the questions and disrupted the interactive character of the interview.

### **Summary of the Chapters**

The first chapter presents the course of events and class analysis of Gezi protests and the June movement in Brazil. The mass protests in the two countries initially had very focused demands on urban issues. While in Turkey, the protests started with a rather small group of people against the demolition of Gezi Park, which is a public park in the heart of the city, in Brazil a 20 cents increase in public transportation was the triggering event leading towards mass protests. In both cases, the police violence towards the protestors played a substantial role in the massification of the protests.

The class composition of both protests was a matter of debate. Some scholars interpreted the protests as middle class movements, some propounded the working class identity of the participants and others regarded them as popular uprisings. However, subsequent analyses revealed that a heterogeneity of people participated in the demonstrations, and that social class was not a central determinative in the protests. Finally, despite the inter-class character of the popular uprisings, variety of claims, and considerable participation of proletarian neighborhoods, both of the cases witnessed the absence of the largest unions in the protests, while the numerically smaller ones did participate, although they were not powerful enough to put pressure on the government.

The second chapter examines the literature on corporatism. Corporatism emerged as an ideology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a reaction against the adversities of industrial capitalism and liberal ideas in the political and economic sphere. Its purpose was to bring a remedy to the eradication of the values in the traditional society, by emphasizing the morality in hierarchical order, organic society, and group-based contacts with the state and eventually to establish social justice in a status based society. However, the later practices of corporatism in various European and Latin American countries themselves posed a criticism to the advocates of corporatism. The historical cases demonstrated that corporatist structures resulted in the repressive control of the labor movement to enable the capitalist accumulation process. While these analyses on corporatism indicate structural factors behind the establishment of corporatist systems, another current advocates a culturalist analysis. It claims that the pervasiveness of corporatist structures in Latin American countries and Iberian

region in Europe represent the extension of the traditional structures of these cultures, as well as their value systems. This current is criticized in terms of its various premises. The debate on neocorporatism initiated in the 1970s, which regards these practices not as pertinent to specific period in the history or related to a particular culture, but as an implementation, that reveals itself in various countries with distinct historical backgrounds. As such, neocorporatism literature aims to comprehend the corporatist practices in various contexts.

This chapter gives considerable place to the recent discussions on neocorporatist literature, and finally delineates the characteristics of the class-theoretical approach. Various aspects of class-theoretical approach grant it a much stronger explanatory power than other theories in analyzing the relations between unions and governments in capitalist countries. It regards corporatism as a political substructure in capitalism rather than as a system by itself alternative to capitalism. Also, it does not expand the definition of corporatism to fit several cases, but aims to comprehend it within the context of capitalist structure. As such, class theoretical approach indicates the institutional links between the labor groups and state's decision making mechanisms as intrinsic to the corporatist practices, while at the same time it emphasizes the regulatory and demobilizing impact of such institutional contacts on the rank and file, in order to facilitate the capitalist markets. Due to its focus on the groups that are marked by their position in the economy, the historical position of capitalist and labor groups vis-à-vis each other and the particular role of corporatism in capitalist economies, the class theoretical approach is employed hereby to constitute a framework for the analysis at hand. While class-theoretical approach has a focus on

the production sphere, this thesis includes the organized interests that derive their pressuring power from their positions in the economic system.

Third chapter presents the pertinent events in the last thirty years in Turkey and Brazil, which sets the background information to better comprehend today's state-labor relations. The historical background section is especially important since it demonstrates the curious situation regarding the convergence between the two cases despite the different patterns the labor movements follow, as well as the distinct political ideologies of the AKP and PT. In Brazil, the democratization movement against the military regime went hand in hand with the emergence of the *New Unionism* current, which opposed the previous state-labor relations that mostly operated along corporatist lines. The Workers' Party (PT), the incumbent party during the mass protests, emerged from the workers' movement itself. As PT came to power, the organic relations between the labor movement and the government started to be a much-debated issue. While some scholars claimed that both the movement and the party were against corporatist relations and aimed to sustain the autonomy of both sides, some others claimed that the organic relations and financial support of the government to the labor unions of the two resulted in the demobilization of the labor movement. In Turkey, on the other hand, the aftermath of the military regime witnessed a major demobilization of the labor movement and deunionization accordingly. The oppositional labor movements could never regain their previous capacity prior to the military coup, while those unions, which are prone to engage in corporatist relations with the governments, flourished. The 1990s presented the final mass mobilizations of the labor movement. Starting from the 2000s, with the advent



of the AKP and the advancement of neoliberal policies to facilitate capitalist accumulation, the labor movement was further enervated. The statistical data demonstrate that there is an apparent deunionization, despite which the collaborative unions expanded their scope. As such, it represents the pattern of unionization that is favored during the AKP period.

Finally, the fourth chapter presents the findings of the field research, analyzed within the framework that the class-theoretical approach provides. In this chapter, first the unions' participation or non-participation in the protests are presented. Afterwards, their position vis-à-vis the protests are analyzed with a scrutiny on the ways in which they regard the union movement. As such, it is argued that the large part of the union movement in Brazil and Turkey engage in institutional relations with the incumbent governments, through which they engage in clientelist relations and follow a collaborative strategy as a union policy. While they undertake more contestatory action in local conflicts where the opposed party is an employer, a large eschewal from an attempt to conjoin the workers' movement to oppose the government policies is ostensible. On the other hand, the unions that reject corporatist relations with the governments and employers remain to constitute the smaller part of the union movement, which fall short to challenge the status-quo. Consequently, the parallel between the two cases in establishing corporatist relations between the unions and the states' decision-making mechanisms is interpreted as in close relation with the two country's rapid growth in the past decade, regarding the unions' regulatory function over the workers' political mobilization in order to keep the capitalist markets operate without fierce challenges.

## **Contributions to the Academic Literature**

In the academic literature, the state-union relations in Turkey and Brazil, particularly under the AKP and PT governments are already scrutinized. However, these studies look into the particular paths that these cases individually went through without a clear emphasis on the connection between corporatist structures and these countries' positions in the world capitalist system in a neoliberal period. The contribution of this thesis is to put them in a comparative perspective, which allows me to comprehend the state-union relations with respect to their positions in the world capitalist markets under the incumbent governments. A comparative analysis facilitates me to analyze the adoption of corporatist policies within the dynamics of macro-scale structural conditions rather than contextual contingencies, considering that PT and AKP are ideologically divergent governments, which converged into similar strategies in controlling the labor movement.

Another contribution of this research in the literature comes from its qualitative approach. The existing literature mostly relies on numerical data on the unionization patterns or the examination of the official ties between the AKP and PT governments and the unions. The qualitative methodology of this research that is based on field research to obtain the opinion of the unions facilitates me not only to observe the issue at hand from their point of view, but it also enables discourse analysis.

On the other hand, the argument of this thesis can be further developed with some quantitative analyses on the pattern of mobilization over the years, to demonstrate the increase or decrease in the number of mobilization of the rank and file, the changes in the content of mobilization, and the party the movement is directed to. This way,

the union movement under these governments can be more concretely compared with the period before their incumbency. This kind of an analysis might provide more supportive data on demobilization of the labor movement especially on large-scale policy framework related questions, directed to the incumbent governments, loss of their autonomy, and the maintenance of the corporatist consciousness, which seeks specific goals for the sectors the unions are organized in.



# **Chapter 1: The Course of Events and Social Composition of the June Protests in Turkey and Brazil**

## **Introduction**

June 2013 witnessed simultaneous nationwide uprisings in Turkey and Brazil. Both mass protests started with contentions over urban problems. While in Brazil activists raised against the 20-cents increase in the public transportation in the city of São Paulo, in Turkey the protests were initially concerned about the demolition of a public park in Istanbul, namely Gezi Park. The initial small protests grew to more than a million people mostly sparked by the brutal police violence, and started to target the incumbent governments' policies. Since both protests took place unexpectedly and had repercussions all over the country, the source of this discontent was widely debated, especially in terms of the social class that formed the backbone of the mass protests. In this chapter, I briefly summarize the ways in which the escalation of events proceeded in Turkey and Brazil. Then I move on to the academic debate on the social profile of the protestors. Finally, I depict the position of the labor unions vis-à-vis the mass uprisings.

## **1.1 Flow of Events in Brazil**

The mass protests in Brazil came on the heels of the Gezi Park protests in Turkey. The event that led to large demonstrations was seemingly trifling, triggered by a 20-cent increase in the public transport fares in the city of São Paulo. Despite the trivial appearance of the demand that led to nationwide demonstrations, which had a clear claim on free public transportation, São Paulo's longstanding issue around urban mobility lied behind the initial protests. São Paulo is a highly industrialized city, which is considered as a central economic hub of Brazil. In the urbanization process in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the arrival of industrialization led to a disorganized urban space. Like many other large cities in the world, transportation became very problematic in São Paulo, which exacerbated with the augmentation in the number of private transportation (Caldeira 2000, 216; Vasconcellos 2005, 91). Concomitantly, São Paulo city was urbanized in a dispersive pattern, which let the middle and upper classes live in the city center and push the poor to the peripheries of the city who were obliged to use the buses in a congested city to go to their works in the center, while former groups could afford private automobiles (Caldeira 2000, 220; Caldeira 2013). On top of these, right on the eve of the protests, the PT government made it financially easier to acquire private automobiles without state control, which led to an even more congested traffic and even worsening urban problems (Caldeira 2013).

The 20 cents of increase in the public transportation took place in such context, which naturally influenced the working poor the worst. As a reaction, on June 6, Movimento Passe Livre (MPL-Free Pass Movement) called people to protest against

the hikes (Caldeira 2013; Fonsêca 2013, 8). MPL was founded in 2003 initially in Salvador, Bahia during a protest led by the students (Fonseca 2013, 8). It took the issues around urban mobility as its focus and ever since, it strived for 'zero fare' in public transportation, which they consider a fundamental right of all citizens (Fonsêca 2013, 5; Holston 2014, 888). The first protest that was held on June 6 in Paulista Avenue mobilized around 2,000 people. The following three demonstrations retained the clear agenda on taking a stand for mobility rights while witnessing a gradual increase in the number of protesters reaching more than 5,000 people in parallel with the exacerbating police violence in every demonstration. The fourth demonstration that was held on June 13 proved to be a turning point in terms of the expansion of the movement. Until then, the protests were mostly confined to São Paulo city with the determinate claim on reversing the hikes on the public transportation. However, violent police repression against the protesters on June 13 led to a change in the attitude of the mainstream media and attracted the public attention, which was followed by a tremendous increase in the number of people gathering on the streets, a propagation of claims and the emergence of parallel movements in many cities in Brazil (Singer 2014, 20-21).

Starting from the fifth protest on June 17, which gathered around 75,000 people in São Paulo city and thousands of people in other state capitals of Brazil, the social composition of the demonstrations started to become more heterogeneous. As people from different sectors of the society started to bring their own demands to the protests, the scope of demands exceeded the claims for public transportation. The widespread discontent about the quality of education and health services, expenses

made for upcoming sports events, corruption and brutal police violence came to the forefront to frame mass protests. Since the demonstrations coincided with the FIFA Confederations Cup, the preparation event for the 2014 World Cup, São Paulo city ceased to play the leading role in the protests. Rather, several other cities where this event took place became more prominent due to people's discontent with the expenses made for the World Cup in the face of the underinvestment for the basic services (Fonsêca 2013, 5; Singer 2014, 21-23).

Although the MPL was the organization calling for the demonstrations even after they spread throughout the country, it did not claim to lead the whole movement or to represent all of the demands that were expressed by the protestors. Therefore, the protests of June largely maintained as leaderless (Holston 2014, 889). As a response to the nationwide uprisings, the hikes on the transportation fares were cancelled on June 19, not only in São Paulo, but also in more than one hundred cities (Ercan and Mendonça 2014, 17). This was a strategic move on the part of the federal government since it aimed to categorically appease the movement that ended up as against government policies in various areas. In the face of the hike reversals, the protest that was planned to be held on June 20 took place as an occasion to celebrate the movement's victory with the participation of more than a million people. Claiming to embrace the demands that were expressed on the streets, Dilma Rousseff also called its own political base to join the demonstration for celebration on June 20 (Singer 2014, 23). After the reversal of the hikes, the MPL announced that they would not call for more demonstrations in the following days. Nevertheless, the

protest wave continued in late June and July albeit less frequently and in a more fragmented manner (Peruzzo 2013, 3).

## **1.2 Class Composition and Participation of Unions in Brazil**

The nationwide mass demonstrations were unforeseen, especially in a period when Brazil had been lauded for its fast growing large economy. Therefore, scholars endeavored to examine the social profile of the protestors to comprehend the origins of this unexpected discontent. In an effort to depict the political and economic background of June protests, Saad-Filho and Morais evaluate the social composition of the protestors with an emphasis on the middle class participants. Although they indicate the multiplicity of the social groups that were involved in the demonstrations by referring to the participation of the youth, workers, students and the involvement of working class districts with demands concerned with their localities, they specifically remark the advent of the white and middle class with the expansion of the movement (Saad-Filho and Morais 2014, 237). Arguing that the "White, articulate and economically privileged demonstrators seemed to be everywhere" (Saad-Filho and Morais 2014, 227), they underline the dominance of the middle class in the protests in a somewhat sardonic tone by saying that "It was especially paradoxical to see middle-class people expressing indignation over public services that they neither use, nor intend to use any time soon." (Saad-Filho and Morais 2014, 238).

In another article, Saad-Filho emphasizes the role of the mainstream media in the expansion of the protests. He claims that the right-wing media suddenly changed sides as they saw the protests as an opportunity to defame the PT government.



Therefore, they stopped criticizing the movement by alleging that it caused chaos in the city and instead, they started covering the demonstrations with a supportive attitude. In doing so, they helped the expansion of the movement and the manipulation of the demands towards an upper-middle class and anti-leftist agenda. Relating the immediate growth of the protests with the media's attempts, Saad-Filho claims that following the expansion of the protests the social profile became incommensurably white and middle class. As such, he interprets the mass protests as a reaction of the "large segments of the upper and middle classes" to Lula and Dilma, on the grounds that these groups have lost their privileges under the PT governments and cannot direct the political agenda as previously due to the democratization of the country under PT (Saad-Filho 2013, 658-661).

As opposed to the 'middle class discontent' arguments, Holston argues that the demonstrations witnessed the gathering of different social classes around common problems, which influence their everyday lives variably. Maintaining that the common claim about the disproportionate middle class composition of the protestors derived from the prevalent use of smart phones to access social media, he argues that smart phones cannot be accepted as an indicator of middle class due to their widespread use by various classes (Holston 2014, 890). Furthermore, Holston and Caldeira put that the banners that appear in the protests pointing out the absence of reaction to the unremitting mobilization for rights and even more brutal everyday police violence in the peripheries indicate the substantial participation of the lower class peripheries (Caldeira 2013; Holston 2014, 890-91).

In addition to these rather observational analyses of the social profile of the protests, André Singer advocates the multiplicity of the participants, relying on the surveys encompassing data from eight cities, from four different sources. In doing so, he evaluates the age, education and income levels of the protesters and argues that the June protestors comprised both the upper and lower strata of Brazilian society and the June protests reflected the discontent of both the middle class and the new proletariat. He maintains that the arguments on the dominance of the middle class rely on the high ratio of the protestors with higher education compared to their share in the overall population. However, he claims, an examination of the income levels of the protestors complicates the picture. The data suggest that there was considerable participation by the lower half of the income levels of the country. In fact, in some cities this stratum comprised half of the demonstrators. Depending on the seeming discrepancy between the income and education levels of the demonstrators, he argues that the precarious workers with non-manual jobs had a strong presence in the June protests. While Singer acknowledges the non-conclusiveness of his analysis because of the limited scope of data he scrutinizes, he argues that despite the considerable presence of the middle class in the protests, their participation and their demands do not explicate the entire case in hand. Therefore, he claims, after the protests became widespread, what is witnessed was a "crossover of classes" (Singer 2014, 24-29).

The participation of the Brazilian labor unions in the mass protests in June remains understudied in the academic literature. However, Saad-Filho and Morais's work indicate the unions' stance towards the protests to some extent. While they do not

speak of any organized mass participation by the labor unions during June demonstrations, they argue that the labor movement noticed the absence of a clear list of demands in the protests and therefore compiled a list of demands to present to Dilma Rousseff in a meeting on June 24. Subsequently, on July 11, with the participation of MST (Landless Workers' Movement), the union movement organized a unified act to bring the working class agenda to the focus of the protests (Saad-Filho, Morais 2014, 227-228). As the findings of their research present, the position of the labor unions vis-à-vis the mass protests in Brazil necessitates a subtler examination than a simple non-participation argument. During the peak of the movement in June, the biggest trade union confederations mostly maintained their quiescence. Nevertheless, they mobilized their rank and file as late as July 11, when the mass protests were already appeased. The union movements that participated in the protests in June were rather small ones. The findings of my fieldwork suggests that CSP-Conlutas and Intersindical were the only trade union confederations that took part in the movement in an organized manner as it became widespread and reached its peak in terms of number and intensity. On the other hand, Saad-Filho considers the July mobilization to be in the similar vein with the June demonstrations, as an ensuing protest (Saad-Filho 2013, 659). However, their relevance is disputable regarding the disparate ways they organized and appealed to the government, which I examine in the analysis chapter.

### **1.3 Flow of Events in Turkey**

Similar to Brazil, the countrywide mass protests in June 2013 in Turkey originated from a relatively small contention on an urban issue, the demolition of Gezi Park.

Reconstruction of Gezi Park was part of a larger project that aimed to transform Taksim Square into an area exclusive for the pedestrians. This plan, namely, Taksim Pedestrianization Project already started in October 2012 and subsequently, the Istanbul Mayor Kadir Topbaş announced the possibility of constructing a shopping center in the area where Gezi Park was located. The reconstruction of the Taksim Square and its surrounding area was a reflection of an ongoing trend in İstanbul in the past decade considering the gentrification projects all over the city: urban regeneration through dispossession, undergirding of consumerist culture through the construction of tens of shopping centers all over the city, and the exponential growth of the construction sector in the city center to serve the upper and upper-middle classes.

Initially, the objective of the Gezi Park protests was mostly focused and framed by the opposition against these neoliberal policies in the urban sphere. On May 27, construction equipment entered the park to demolish one of the most central green areas in the city. To stop the demolition of Gezi Park, a small number of protestors entered the park with their tents to perform a sit-in protest starting from May 27, with the call from Taksim Solidarity Platform. The next day witnessed a violent police attack against the protestors. From that day on, as the number of protestors gradually increased, the police attacks on the protestors to evacuate the park exacerbated parallelly. The images of police brutality with water cannons and tear gas against the protestors, circulating through social media led to an increase in the number of protestors (Gürcan and Peker 2014, 71; KONDA Gezi Park Survey, 2013). This gradual propagation of the protests witnessed a breaking point on May 31, when the

police attacked the activists to evacuate the park in the early morning by using excessive violence, setting their tents on fire and severely injuring many activists and journalists. As the news about the sheer police violence spread, thousands of people, whether organized or non-organized, started to march towards Gezi Park. Furthermore, the protests spread to other cities such as Izmir and Ankara. As a result, over the course of 4 days, the protests exponentially grew from tens to thousands (Hürriyet Daily News 2013; Yörük and Yüksel 2014).<sup>2</sup>

Gezi demonstrations were highly unforeseen and unprecedented, particularly considering the scope it reached in less than one week. On June 1, thousands of people reached Taksim square and eventually took it over as the police withdrew from the area. Until June 15 the park and the surrounding area was occupied by the protestors. In parallel, major cities throughout the country and various neighborhoods of Istanbul started to hold demonstrations in solidarity with Gezi Park protests. In the face of spreading protest wave, the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took on a different attitude towards the protests than that of Dilma Rousseff. Instead of evaluating the protests as an extension of democratic rights, he held various press conferences and gave speeches to the public in which he disavowed the Gezi protests and congratulated the efforts of the police. On June 15, the police managed to evacuate the Gezi Park through water cannons and tear gas. Thereafter, the police started to keep watch in Gezi Park and Taksim square in order to prevent any gathering for a possible protest (Hurriyet Daily News 2013; Karadağ 2013).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/timeline-of-gezi-park-protests-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48321&NewsCatID=341>

<sup>3</sup> <http://m.bianet.org/biamag/siyaset/148007-neler-oluyor-brezilya-da>

As the scope of protests extended with the rapid propagation of demonstrations, their target also exceeded the issues around Gezi Park. Although the protection of the park remained among the points of contention, reaction against police brutality against the demonstrators and conservative and interfering policies of the AKP government gained a pivotal part in people's discontent as the protests expanded (Yörük and Yüksel 2014, 121). During the Gezi protests, 'Taksim Solidarity' was the most prominent organization. Gathering various social movement organizations, 'Taksim Solidarity' was established to oppose the 'Taksim Pedestrianization Project'. As the Gezi protests exceeded their initial focus with the participation of a large number of people from different social sectors, it started to fall short to represent the protestors as a whole. Therefore, although it kept on calling for demonstrations, Gezi protests largely maintained leaderless.

#### **1.4 Class Composition and Participation of Unions in Turkey**

The widespread demonstrations that were held throughout the country gathered a wide range of opposition together against the AKP government. Such massive protests happened at a time when the AKP government was proudly putting forward the economic development Turkey went through since it came to power and when Turkey was praised by the international institutions as an economic success story. At the same time, as the population was largely depoliticized in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup and throughout the expansion of the neoliberal policies in Turkey, such massive protests with participation of millions of people was considered improbable for many. Hence, the underlying dynamics behind the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/timeline-of-gezi-park-protests-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48321&NewsCatID=341>

widespread discontent in the society and the social profile of the protestors were widely discussed.

An academic debate as to which social classes constituted the protestors was also evoked in the aftermath of the protests— some scholars interpreted the protests as middle class movements, some propounded the working class identity of the participants and others regarded them as popular uprisings. The scrutiny on the social profile of the protestors is a useful tool for not only understanding the discontent that was expressed during to protests but also to comprehend the stance and relevance of the labor movement vis-à-vis the popular uprisings. Çağlar Keyder relates the Gezi protests within the context of worldwide emergence and enlargement of the new middle class. He maintains that beginning from the late 1980s, a new middle class has emerged in Turkey, which was characterized by its relative autonomy from the employers and its level of education. Keyder argues that this social group is more inclined to be mindful about the issues around individual liberties, environmental problems, and authoritarian policies and they have the potential to rise against the patrimonial practices of the state. He interprets the Gezi protests as a consequence of the increase in the number of the new middle class and their discontent with the policies of the AKP government (Keyder 2013, 1-3).

In parallel, Cihan Tuğal underlines the importance of the professionals in the protests, especially in the outset of the protests. Arguing that the social profile of the protestors became more heterogeneous in the following days when the protests came to encompass thousands of people, he emphasizes the participation of the informal proletariat through the mass protests that took place in their neighborhoods.

However, he attributes professionals a leading role and argues that they were at the core of the movement. Hence, he evaluates the Gezi protests as mainly a middle class movement (Tuğal 2013, 166). Moreover, the survey that KONDA conducted merely in Gezi Park and its surrounding area during the protests emphasizes the dominance of participants with higher education and low participation from the workers (KONDA Gezi Park Survey 2013). Finally, Loïc Wacquant argues that Gezi Park protests had a dominant middle class identity. Building his analysis along Bourdieuan lines, he claims that the protesters were the young, educated petit bourgeoisie who went to the streets to protect their cultural capital in the urban sphere. He makes an analogy between the Luxembourg Gardens and the Gezi Park arguing that both are urban spaces that have cultural connotations for the middle class and he claimed that the middle class reacted against the state's attempt to seize an urban space that serves for its cultural consumption (Wacquant 2014).

Some other scholars oppose the approaches that regard the Gezi protests as middle class movement both due to the theoretical and political implications. Ahmet Tonak disavows the arguments that put forth the dominance of the middle class in the Gezi protests by challenging the conceptualization of the term 'middle class'. He argues that the disagreement on the social profile of the protestors lies in the theoretical debate on class analysis. Tonak employs the Marxist dichotomy between those who own the means of production and those who lack them. In doing so, he argues that selling one's labor force to the capitalist class renders him/her a member of the working class. By this definition, he includes those people who are considered as middle class by other analysts in the working class and maintains that Gezi protestors



were dominantly workers (Tonak 2013, 21-28). Boratav evaluates the term ‘middle class’ along similar lines with Tonak and interprets the Gezi movement as a matured class uprising. Therefore, he underlines the prevalent participation of workers and students, which he assumes the latter will end up either as workers or unemployed workers. Acknowledging that the workers did not participate in the protests with labor organizations, he propounds that the workers and the students, who are potential workers rose against the appropriation of urban spaces during the protests (Boratav 2013).

Instead of employing a particular class identity to comprehend the Gezi protests, Michael Hardt refers to the non-homogeneous and non-unified characteristic of the protesters and refers to the term ‘multitude’ (Semercioğlu and Ayyıldız 2014). Erdem Yörük and Murat Yüksel also emphasize the heterogeneity in the Gezi Park protests. They use three different surveys conducted in Istanbul and Izmir to analyze the social class identity in the Gezi protests. Through an analysis on the available survey data, they claim that all the social classes in Turkey supported or participated in the Gezi protests in a proportional manner with reference to the social class distribution in Turkey’s population. Acknowledging the higher ratio of participants from middle and upper classes compared to their share in the population, they draw attention to the fact that more than 50% of the protesters were members of formal and informal workers. As such, their analysis indicates the heterogeneous participation from different social classes of Turkey and they maintain that social class is not a useful tool to explain the Gezi protests; instead, political and cultural motivations were more salient among the protestors (Yörük and Yüksel 2014). Since

their analysis is based on representative empirical data, it is plausible to argue that Gezi protests encompassed a range of social classes rather than having a working class or middle class identity.

Gezi Park protests had repercussions all over the country and attracted a variety of social classes. Furthermore, Gezi protests took place in a period when the AKP government was advancing its anti-labor neoliberal policies. Therefore, the underlying dynamics behind the labor movement's position towards the protests become a curious case. The unions did not constitute a substantial social force during the Gezi movement. DİSK (The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions) and KESK (Confederation of Public Workers' Unions), which are noted for their historical oppositional stance, were already among the constituents of the Taksim Solidarity from the beginning of the process. Hence, they were the main workers' organizations that were expected to put a substantial pressure on the government with their participation in the mass protests. Their first attempt of organized protest was on June 4 and 5, through a call for a "warning strike" in various cities including the biggest cities, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir in collaboration with some professional chambers. The main points that were underlined during the warning strike gathered around the protection of the Gezi Park, police violence, the releasing of the Gezi Park detainees and the removal of bans on protests in any public sphere. While the demands of the strike by and large went along with the common contention points of Gezi Park protests, they also underlined the employment-related problems that concerned workers' conditions of work and their right to organize (Kural 2013).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/emek/147271-taksim-meydani-nda-grevdeyiz>

Despite the organized attempts of the two oppositional unions, the warning strike did not attract a large number of people or bring the expected impact, which was to stop the life for one day (DİSKAR 2014, 34-35; Yörük 2013). The second joint attempt of the oppositional labor unions and professional chambers for organized participation took place on June 17. Their call for action underlined the importance of solidarity against the authoritarianism and violence, although not emphasizing the workers' deteriorating conditions under the AKP government.<sup>6</sup> The protest on June 17 ended with a similar outcome as the first (Tuğal 2013, 166). In addition, the Trade Union Unity Platform, a dissident body in Türk-İş, supported the Gezi Park protests with limited participation (DİSKAR 2014, 35), while nationalist labor union for public workers Kamu-Sen was contented with a rhetorical support through press release without any attempt of mass mobilization. Finally, the bigger part of the labor movement which was mostly in cooperation with the AKP government did not support the Gezi movement. Moreover, these trade unions, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and Memur-Sen announced their condemnation of the protests through press releases, calling for peace and stability.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.kesk.org.tr/content/disk-kesk-tmmob-ttb-ve-tdb-17-haziran%E2%80%99da-i%C5%9F-b%C4%B1rak%C4%B1yor>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter depicts the course of events in the mass protests of June 2013 in Turkey and Brazil. As the both protests sparked with seemingly trivial urban questions, it grew to millions in the course of few days mostly due to the brutal police violence. While the protestors increased in number, the claims of the uprisings started to target the incumbent governments concerning various issues around democratic rights. The expression of widespread discontent in the society initiated the academic debate on social profile of the protestors. The analyses on survey data show that the protests encompassed a variety of people from different social classes and it is not possible to attribute a single class identity to the protests. The labor organizations were largely absent from the popular uprisings in both cases. Therefore, both in Brazil and Turkey, the workers participated in the protests, however, mostly independently of the labor organizations. While the few numerically small union confederations called their members to take part in the protests, bigger part of the labor movement did not mobilize their rank and file for support. In fact, in the Turkish case, various confederations condemned the protests.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

### **Introduction:**

In this chapter, the discussion on corporatism, which dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is examined. Corporatist ideology emerged as a response to the major structural changes that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. It aspired to traditional structures, status based order and organic society in an attempt to redress the disruptive impact of the dynamics of the new society. However, the corporatist practices which followed the ideology demonstrated a deviation from the original goals of the ideology as the former was largely employed for regulatory purposes in 1930s in various countries. While the earlier literature make a connection between corporatist structures and socioeconomic environment, another current in the literature regards corporatism as an extension of the traditional political culture of Iberic-Latin American societies. Finally, the most recent debate on corporatism, which detaches the term corporatism from its employment in a specific time span or geography, is provided. This chapter presents the wide spectrum of discussions on corporatism to finally depict the class-theoretical approach towards corporatism, which serves as a framework for the analysis of this thesis.

## **2.1 Advocates of Corporatist Ideas**

Corporatist ideas started to appear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although its practices were not witnessed until the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century not only in European and Latin American countries, which were the most discussed cases, but also in various other countries all over the world. However, the literature that proposed corporatism as a necessary practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emerged in Europe, as a response to the radical political and economic changes in various European societies, as Williamson and Wiarda argue. Observing the disruptive reverberations of the establishment of a new socio-economic order led to several discussions, which aspired to the traditional organization of the society. Particularly, the rise of industrial capitalism, accompanied by class conflict, and the advent of liberal ideas, which underlined individualism, were substantial impetuses for corporatist writings. As such, corporatist ideology was born as a reaction and as a prospective remedy to the rapidly changing socio-economic atmosphere in continental Europe. The earlier writings of corporatism were essentially conservative. Nevertheless, recognizing the persistency of the industrial society, corporatist theories aimed to revive the concept of organic society in the new conduct of political and industrial affairs in order to eradicate the conflictual aspects of this new societal order and to establish a consensual basis (Wiarda 1997, 34; Williamson 1989, 25).

Corporatism as an ideology expressed the concern for the rise of industrial capitalism and its implications for workers. However, it was not against capitalism per se, rather it was anti-liberal, as Williamson argues. Dissenting liberal ideas that "...removed

the old moral order, broken down the social bonds that held society in harmony, and instead turned society into a mass of atomistic, self-seeking individuals..." (Williamson 1989, 26), corporatist ideologues advocated a vertically ordered, group-based society, which would guarantee the representation of various groups' interests in the political sphere. As such, they aspired to assuage the injustices that came along with industrial society by restoring social harmony and cooperation (Wiarda 1997, 18; Williamson 1985, 20; Williamson 1989, 26). The rise of socialist ideas also had an impact on the emergence of corporatist theory. Socialist ideology did not conceive class conflict as a disruptive aspect of industrial capitalism like the corporatists. Rather, it is interpreted as a progressive social force that would prepare the conditions for an equal society by achieving a socialist order (Williamson 1989, 26). As the Bolshevik Revolution took place in Russia in 1917 and the capitalist countries went into economic crises in the aftermath of the First World War, corporatism came to be regarded as a viable option in between socialist and liberal ideals (Wiarda 1997, 18; Williamson 1989, 27). Hence, corporatist writers did not only protest against liberal ideas but they were also concerned that if the injustices of the industrial society were not paid regard to, socialist regimes could take over (Williamson 1989, 26).

Corporatist writers defended the corporatist model for diverse incentives and rationales. Nevertheless, the common premise of their theory was the necessity for institutionalized links between the decision-making mechanisms and organized interests (Schmitter 1974, 88). Furthermore, in theoretical texts, state was a vital component to constitute and maintain the corporatist establishment. The state was

assigned a central role of guardianship to act on behalf of fairness and national interest, rather than leaving the capitalist markets to its own devices. Therefore, their conception of state indicated a moral institution, whose duty was to dispense justice and attend to the common good through involvement in economic affairs. However, corporatist theory did not assign the state the task for direct intervention. Rather, state would help establish the associations, which would take on the intermediary role to represent the interests of various social groups that would otherwise be in conflict. These corporations would hold a legal position, granted by the state, but still maintain their autonomy from the state. In such system, the role of the state would be to arbitrate the affairs between these groups. By putting the capitalists and workers in dialogue through these corporations' representatives, corporatist theory aimed to achieve solidarity and collaboration between these historically antagonistic social classes, which would serve to the interest of all. (Williamson 1989, 28-29).

Corporatist theory aspired to the establishment of social peace through interest representation. Wiarda's definition presents the corporatist ideology in a nutshell as: "... stressing functional representation, the integration of labor and capital into a vast web of hierarchically ordered, "harmonious," monopolistic, and functionally determined units (*or corporations*), and guided and directed by the state." (Wiarda 1974, 6). Grounding on a moral basis, it envisaged the corporations as a safeguard for just wages to workers and for the prevention of over-exploitation, which would take place if the markets were left unchecked. However, undeniably, corporations would also have a regulatory function over the workers, which eventually restricted workers' rights. As such, corporatist writers put forth that the conflictual actions such



as strikes and lockouts by workers would not be compatible with such system and hence should be illegal since the corporations would be the legitimate entities that took on the role for intermediation and interest representation (Williamson 1989, 31-32).

## **2.2 Corporatism in Practice**

Corporatism, as an ideology, contemplated on a corporatist structure in order to attain social peace through interest representation. Although corporatism aimed to restrict workers' rights, in doing so safeguarding fair life standards for workers was a central component of such implementation. While the theoretical texts on corporatism are somewhat romantic and demonstrate the nostalgia for an organic society and the feeling of community, its practices lead to rather distinct analyses. It is viable to call 1930s as the zenith of corporatist practices. In the inter-war period, the practices of corporatism started to be apparent in continental Europe and in various Latin American countries as of 1930s, while it was frequently accompanied by the authoritarian regimes that started to prevail in several European countries. Although some of these countries in that period are not considered as full-fledged corporatist regimes, it is possible to observe corporatist practices in various countries including Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Brazil, Peru and Argentina starting from the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As such, corporatism in power indicated that the ideals in theory reverberated very differently in practice and could not attain the development of solidarity among distinct social groups, but assured the repressive hand of state over corporations instead. Therefore, corporatism operating within a

capitalist system by itself directs criticism against corporatist theories and reveals its irrelevance in achieving social justice.

The advent of corporatist practices in the 1930s, coincides with the failure of free capitalist markets which resulted in the Great Depression and as a consequence, led to increased state regulation over the economy as proposed by Keynesianism (Williamson 1985, 84). As such, the corporations were practical tools for production sphere in such period in order to keep the capitalist economy conduct smoothly. Particularly, these intermediary institutions were built in order to abstain from a sharp conflict between antagonistic classes and to sustain such discipline over the production. Although corporatist ideology aspired to state-authorized but autonomous interest associations, the practice of corporatism under authoritarian regimes appropriated these institutions in the state machinery in order to ensure direct intervention (Schmitter 1975, 59; Wiarda 1997, 40; Williamson 1989, 36).

Nigel Harris's comments on the corporatist regimes in practice under authoritarian governments and its contradictions with the corporatist ideology summarize the question at hand rather well:

The relationship between force and the appearance of unanimity is not settled in the modern, any more than in the earlier corporatist writings: it is assumed. Yet, as Pirou notes in relationship to Italian Fascism and Neumann with reference to Nazis, corporatism in these countries was not, and could not be, much more than a decorative façade for force. For the harmony which it is assumed is intrinsic to society –if the squabbling cabals can be swept away– can in practice only be reproduced by the use of force. And the use of force directly contradicts the assumption of intrinsic harmony. In Vichy France and in Salazar's Portugal, overtly corporatist societies, the same comment

is appropriate. Corporatism assumes what it is designed to create and destroys what it seeks to create by pursuing the only practicable means available: coercion (Harris 1972, 72).

Consequently, the aspiration to a harmonious society was far from being achieved under authoritarian corporatist regimes. Furthermore, the seemingly autonomous intermediary institutions, particularly the workers' unions, functioned as the state's arm to control the wages and to ensure the disciplining power of the state over the workers to restrict their political activism, which would otherwise produce highly disruptive results for the capitalist production (Williamson 1989, 36).

### **2.3 Corporatism as Political Culture**

The first two approaches towards corporatism in the literature, whether as proposing corporatism as a useful model to be employed in the presence of industrial capitalism or as depicting the historical experience of 1930s, either focus on the structural strains that prepared the ground for the emergence of corporatist practices or point out the functional elements of such model. Nevertheless, there is another current in the literature, which scrutinizes the cultural-historical traditions to assert the impact of political culture on corporatist polities. The scholars who approach corporatism as a political culture argue that the theoretical framework employed to understand the Western countries does not apply to Iberian and Latin American societies, since the latter do not comply with the liberal political culture of the former (Williamson 1989, 23). They emphasize the impact of political culture to point out particular prevalence of corporatist practices in Southern European and Latin American countries and argue that this experience was rooted in these countries' political culture. They put

forth that the commonalities in the value systems of these countries facilitated the conduct of corporatism. Hereby, I present the approaches of Wiarda, Silvert and Newton to indicate the ways in which corporatism is analyzed as a derivation of historical political culture.

Kalman Silvert aims to comprehend the underlying dynamics of underdevelopment of Latin American countries, taking the Western countries' standards of development. He argues that the "Mediterranean ethos" is intrinsic to the Latin American value system, which sets an obstacle before modernization. As an example, he proposes the strong presence of the state in settling the labor conflicts instead of collective bargaining. For him, this example demonstrates the corporative structure of the society and the aspiration to vertical order. Hence, he perceives the corporative structures in the Latin American society as an extension of the pre-modern world and advocates their phase-out for them to become developed nations (Silvert 1963, 48-52).

Ronald Newton, a historian, approaches Spanish America in a similar vein. He opts for the term 'functional interest groups' in referring to the corporations that are organized for a common end. Establishing his argument on the dichotomy between the "developed" Western societies and Spanish America similar to Silvert, he maintains that American pluralism does not fit the Spanish American case, and therefore, there is a need for an alternative analysis and a theoretical framework in order to scrutinize the Spanish American system. Hence, he looks into the development process in Spanish American countries, from a modernist perspective, and argues that in their "modernizing zones", the traditional patterns of relationship,

communication and solidarity eradicates. Nevertheless, as new patterns started to spring to encompass the occupational groups with a social function in the industrial society, the older patterns somehow perpetuated, resulting in a high resemblance to the institutional functioning to the traditional settings in these societies, as he claims (Newton 1970). As a result, Newton interprets the functioning of corporatist structures in Spanish America by referring to the corporate conception of the state and society in their pre-industrial societies.

While Silvert and Newton make rather implied analyses on the causality between Latin American corporatism and political culture, Howard Wiarda further articulates the relation between the value system of the "Iberic-Latin World" and corporatist culture, and the latter's impact on the ongoing political structures. Wiarda argues that in the academic literature by then, corporatism was conceived as a phenomenon that is pertinent to the inter-war period. As such, corporatist practices were vastly associated with fascist regimes, which led to the dismissal of the term in the literature as of the demise of the fascist states, since it was thought that reference to corporatism would conduce to an anachronistic analysis. Furthermore, the concept had negative connotations because of its authoritarian practices and corporatism was believed to be merely compatible with authoritarian regimes and could not be sustained under any other polity. Because of these reasons, according to Wiarda, corporatism in the post-war era remained understudied. However, he argues that corporatist practices, which are not pertinent to a particular political regime, are still in vigor in Iberic-Latin culture and that the ongoing socio-political structures and these cultures' responses to modernism cannot be understood without looking into

the persistent corporatist implementations, deriving from their historical political culture (Wiarda 1978, 29-30; Wiarda 1974, 9-11).

For Wiarda, the peculiarity of the Iberic-Latin nations is that they were not directly exposed to great revolutions of continental Europe, such as the advent of industrial capitalism and reform movements. As such, the Iberic-Latin culture remained to a large extent conservative and cautious towards the major changes, even after the rise of liberal ideas, which did not profoundly challenge the traditional bases of the political and economic models. Instead of total abandonment of the traditional structures, these nations absorbed the changes of the modern era into the existing political culture (Wiarda 1973; Wiarda 1978, 35-36). Wiarda argues that this corporatist political culture grounds on various ideologies and traditional establishments including Greek philosophy, Roman institutions, Christian-Thomistic traditions, feudal institutions and Spanish-Portuguese nation building processes (Wiarda 1978, 33-34). As their political culture was rooted in these currents and was not severely challenged, certain aspects of traditional order were retained, to manifest itself as a corporatist political culture, even though some of these countries never fully adopted corporatist practices. According to Wiarda, rather than liberalism or Marxism, Latin American and Iberian cultures approached towards the 'third -ism', as a reaction and solution to the social malaise that came along with the modern era (Wiarda 1978, 29-30). Hence, the aspiration for unity, authority, organic society and an authoritarian state -if not tyrannical- intrinsic to their political ethos approximated these cultures towards corporatism, which would ultimately help them grow to be developed modern societies (Wiarda 1978, 44-48). Even though he

accepts that corporatist structures are not exclusive to this cultural geography, he propounds that all of the Iberian and Latin American countries implemented certain aspects of corporatism and argues that this practice is a modern version of an old tradition and is compatible with Iberic-Latin culture due to its heritage of political culture (Wiarda 1978, 54-56).

Similar to the several social theories basing its argument on culture, the literature on corporatism as political culture confronted criticism. First of all, as Williamson argues, the aspects that fall under the term corporatism is not clearly defined. The advocates of this tradition refer to organic society, authority, and patrimonialism to define corporatism. However, the common features of these terms and how they altogether serve the advent of corporatism are not scrutinized. Furthermore, the causality between the traditional political culture and its alleged extensions in the modern era remains problematic and circular. Although the underlying logic of modern corporatist structures demonstrate resemblance to the earlier cultural characteristics, it is not possible to deduce whether current institutional arrangements derive from the political culture or the political setting structures the culture. In addition, the Iberic-Latin American societies that were claimed to be the most hospitable towards corporatism did not present the most advanced and long-lasting corporatist arrangements (Williamson 1989, 24).

Parallel to Williamson, Schmitter propounds that while the aforementioned literature emphasizes the impact of political ideology on current arrangements, the foremost corporatist theorists were from Germany, France, Belgium and Austria, not from the Iberic-Latin American societies. Therefore, the ideas, allegedly intrinsic to these

cultures were in fact introduced from abroad. Additionally, as he maintains, the reference to the political culture does not explicate the analogous practices that were implemented in several other countries neither does it clarify the reasons that corporatist arrangements ebbed and flowed in Iberic-Latin American countries throughout the history. Lastly, he points out that although these societies are believed to have a generic political ethos, culturalist theory does not elucidate the wide range of diversity among them in operation and in outcome (Schmitter 1974, 89-90).

In addition to the criticisms of Williamson and Schmitter, the culturalist current overlook the political economy behind the corporatist structures. Culturalist arguments look into the impact of alienation, atomization, and social dissolution that came along with the industrial capitalism and modern society on the emergence of corporatist arrangements as a response. However, they do not evaluate the function of corporatism within capitalism, although they acknowledge the former's advent as a reaction. Hence, they neglect the regulatory function of corporations, in this case trade unions, to contain political mobilization of workers, as the former is a necessary component of modern capitalism rather than the political culture of pre-industrial societies. Therefore, corporatist structures are not anachronistic as Silvert argues. Rather they are up-to-date, and vital for the smooth conduct of capitalist production.

## **2.4 Debate on Neo-Corporatism**

The academic discussion on corporatism was revived in the 1970s with Philippe Schmitter's well-known article "Still the Century of Corporatism?" Until then, the concept of corporatism was stigmatized due to its relation to fascist regimes and the



several usages of the term in the literature rendered it almost void of an analytical meaning. Therefore, as from Schmitter's article in 1974, new endeavor to understand corporatism started, not only as a phenomenon of the 1930s under the authoritarian regimes, but in a wider context of capitalism, especially within liberal democracies. This resurrection concerning the debate on corporatism was to a large extent stimulated by the observation on several Western European countries, which employed institutionalized interest representation, which could be characterized as 'neocorporatist'. This section presents different currents of neo-corporatism debate, including those aiming to generate an ideal definition of corporatism for it to fit several empirical examples; regarding corporatism as an alternative economic system to capitalism and socialism; and finally, perceiving corporatism as a political substructure within a class theoretical approach.

In his article of 1974, Schmitter argues that corporatism came to be used as an umbrella concept found ubiquitously in the academic literature, which prevented the term to serve its operational value to analyze corporatist structures in distinct political systems. Therefore, he argues, an examination on its usages in the literature and subsequently a reconceptualization is vital for analytical purposes (Schmitter, 1974, 85-86). Furthermore, he emphasizes the need for an alternative concept to scrutinize interest representation other than pluralism, as the latter came to prevail in and dominate North American social sciences while it does not suffice to explicate several cases (Schmitter, 1974, 95). Hence, he perceives corporatism as an institutional structure of interest representation, which constitutes a connection

between organized social groups and decision-making mechanisms of the state, (Schmitter, 1974, 86) and suggests an ideal-typical definition:

Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports (Schmitter, 1974, 93-94)

As many ideal-typical definitions, he acknowledges that this model is not able to fit every case perfectly, although claiming that the cases of Brazil and Portugal, which he did research on, approximate these characteristics. (Schmitter, 1974, 94) Schmitter's objective in forming an ideal-typical definition is to detach it from empirical implementations under various ideologies and regime types (Schmitter, 1974, 87). However, this kind of an approach renders the definition ahistorical, and out of context and therefore, creates problems in fitting the empirical cases. Furthermore, since he derives his definition of corporatism from that of pluralism and aims to formulate the former in similar terms, the conception of state and the inter-group interactions in his approach remains non-explanatory. As such, the substance of the state is not particularly defined and remains as a black box analogous to the conception of state in pluralist theory. The ways in which the engrained conflicts in the society shape the state's position is not articulated, and therefore, the presumption of state impartiality remains unchallenged (Panitch 1980, 166-169). Also, state is only given the role of licensing and recognizing in his

definition, whereas it takes on the role to supervise and interfere as well (Lehmbruch 1977, 94).

Again deriving from the pluralist theory, he includes the corporation-state relations in the definition while ruling out the interaction between the social groups themselves, like the interaction between the labor associations and capital institutions, which constitute the core aspect of corporatist system. Finally, Schmitter does not underline the indispensable role of class determinant in corporatist relations. This leads Schmitter's ideal-typical definition to have a group basis rather than a class basis, although the empirical cases demonstrate that corporatist structures deal with the actors of the economic sphere, as suggested in the class-theoretical approach (Panitch 1980, 169).

While Schmitter attempted to compose an ideal-typical definition to analyze corporatist structures in different contexts, Pahl and Winkler conceived corporatism as a system itself. Speaking for British case in the aftermath of the 1973 OPEC oil crisis, Pahl and Winkler argue that capitalism came to an end and would be replaced by corporatism by 1980. Accordingly, they describe corporatism as a radically distinct politico-economic system, in which the private ownership would be sustained, however with a stronger presence and meticulous control of the state in economic affairs in order to sustain stability, unity and order. Compared to Keynesian solutions of 1930s, they maintain that corporatism does not suggest a hybrid economic system, rather it assigns a more encompassing role to the state in taking decisions concerning the economy (Pahl and Winkler 1975, 28-31). Furthermore, Winkler propounds that, the state, which is envisaged to have a central

role in a corporatist structure, would in essence have the autonomy from the different segments of the economy, and that the real question lies in whether the state would have the tools to use that autonomy or not (Winkler 1976, 135-136).

Winkler and Pahl's treatment of corporatism faced criticism by some scholars. First of all, it is argued that their conception of corporatism as a fundamentally different economic system compared to capitalism is problematic, since they do not suggest any radical transformation in the relations of production or allocation of resources. Furthermore, the question on the autonomy of the state appears to be addressed somewhat evasively, which does not sufficiently support his aspiration to an umpire state, detached from class determination (Panitch 1980, 162-163). As Jessop argues, they adopt a subjectivist perspective towards the state, which leads them to view it as independent from the socio-economic affairs and capable of pursuing its own objectives for economic policies (Jessop 1979, 189). However, they do not ground this assumption on empirical cases.

While Pahl and Winkler does not conceive corporatism as a substructure, Lehbruch's a definition on corporatism is among those "which are expansive in their scope" as Panitch states. Lehbruch defines corporatism as,

an institutionalized pattern of policy-formation in which large interest organizations cooperate with each other and with public authorities, not only in the articulation (or even "intermediation") of interests but –in its developed forms– in the "authoritative allocation of values" and in the implementation of such policies (Lehbruch 1977, 94).

Lehbruch is concerned with the relationship and the balance between liberal party governments and corporations, whether their functioning would disrupt each other.

Deriving his arguments mostly from Austrian and German cases, he maintains that the distinctive feature of liberal corporatism is the high level of collaboration among organized labor associations and the business groups in influencing the economic decision making processes, and that these groups are central to a corporatist system (Lehmbruch 1977, 93-96). However, he argues that while shaping the income policy is at the heart of a corporatist arrangement, any further expansion in the sphere of influence of corporatist system on economic policies would imply a structural change and a transformation in relations of power, which would not be feasible in a corporatist arrangement (Lehmbruch 1977, 109). Therefore, he considers corporatism as a subsystem as long as it is almost exclusively concerned with wage policies.

The above-mentioned theories on corporatism undoubtedly made a great contribution on the restatement of the concept in the literature, which remained understudied for long. Nevertheless, the final current that is examined here, namely the class-theoretical approach' provides substantial arguments on the conception of state, the socio-economic function of corporatist structures, and the interaction within the corporations themselves.

Panitch defines corporatism within liberal democracies as,

...a political structure within advanced capitalism which integrates organized socioeconomic producer groups through a system of representation and cooperative mutual interaction at the leadership level and mobilization and social control at the mass level (Panitch 1977, 66).

Panitch perceives corporatism within a structural framework, by considering the historical positions of capital and labor in the face of each other. Described as above,

corporatism does not only indicate the institutionalized interactions between the organized groups and decision-making mechanisms of the state, but also underlines the relations among the organized groups themselves, the functions of distinct levels inside the interest associations, and the class conflict factor to set the background. Furthermore, it does not overlook the restrictions by the state on the autonomy of interest groups. In contrast to those who regard corporatism as a system on its own, Panitch argues that corporatism is partial in the sense that it is not a rival body against the parliamentary representative structures. Hence, it does not aim to replace them, but it exists alongside and in symbiosis with them. Finally, he takes corporatism as "specific to those groups which *are* class based" and accordingly, which take part in the social division of labor (Panitch 1980, 173, 176).

Panitch does not expand the scope of corporatism to encompass all the interest groups in the society. Instead, he maintains that the two core elements of division of labor in the production sphere, namely the capital and the labor, constitute the main actors of corporatist structures, due to their ability to directly influence the capitalist markets. Therefore, he examines the interaction between the business associations and labor organizations. However, he does not assume that these two core groups of a corporatist structure have equal weight in their interaction among themselves and the state. Rather he acknowledges that "...the advice and expertise of business representation have greater bearing in these structures than that of trade unions..." (Panitch 1980, 174-175). In parallel, Offe argues that although the capital and labor organizations are subjected to a similar pattern of institutionalization process, the

restrictions that come along with engaging in official links with the state influence the latter the most (Offe 1981, 146).

Panitch approaches the state in corporatist theory rather different from earlier theories, which assigned a neutral role to the state, without considering its tendencies to look after the interests of specific social groups. Panitch's conception of state approximates to the Marxist state theory as Jessop puts it, since the state is not essentially labeled as capitalist, but it is considered capitalist or non-capitalist, depending on creating the conditions it sets for capitalist accumulation, or not (Jessop 1979, 191). Hence, the state partiality interpreted in the context of capitalist system, it is argued that the state would take action to encourage economic growth through capital accumulation and to increase the competitiveness of business groups in the world capitalist markets, which implies that state is more inclined to side with the capitalist interests (Panitch 1980, 173-175).

Panitch propounds that the containment of the political and economic mobilization of the rank and file is one of the core aspect of corporatist arrangements. According to him, by establishing corporatist structures, the aim is to integrate the labor in the decision making process of the economic policies, in exchange for compliance of trade unions to the capitalist economic growth principles. In addition to Panitch, Crouch approaches the question at hand within a similar vein. In fact, Crouch explicitly labels corporatism as a 'strategy of domination' rather than interest representation. He underlines the regulatory function of state recognition of the organized labor movement. According to him, through corporatist arrangements, state aims to make use of these institutions for its own benefit, in order to "buttress

the authority of employers, controlling and disciplining the work-force" (Crouch 1977, 36).

According to Panitch, this constitutes a major contradiction for trade unions, since they are the institutions to organize the workers to render the latter a considerable social force in the society, while at the same time they integrate into the state structure, which carries the risk for demobilization. Therefore, he argues, corporatism is bound to remain unstable, in the sense that the aspiration to class collaboration would be challenged by unofficial strikes and election of new leaders (Panitch 1980, 174-175). Another related concept that should be pointed out in Panitch's theory is the 'corporatist consciousness', which is another demobilizing aspect of corporatism. He argues that the corporations do not necessarily represent the interests of the whole working class, but they might limit themselves with those of their own sector. This derives from the existing corporative institutions, which engage with the decision-making mechanisms for the interest of their own corporations and sustain such logic in organizing the working class (Panitch 1980, 177).

The class-theoretical approach presents strong aspects to examine corporatist structures. First of all, in contrast to previously mentioned theorizations of corporatism, they detach their conception of state from its understanding in the pluralist perspective, and regard it in the particular context of capitalism. Although they do not treat the state essentially capitalist, they underline its tendency to promote economic growth through capitalist accumulation. Furthermore, it does not extend its range to encompass the state's approach to any organized interest, but it



restricts its focus to the relationship between the groups that are pertinent to the social division of labor and the state. The primary focus on the social division of labor derives from its attention to the historical stances of the capital and labor vis-à-vis each other and their significance for the production sphere. On the other hand, while the historical antagonism between the capitalists and workers is placed in the center of class-theoretical approach, the changing face of capitalism, which complicates the class structures compared to the period when this theory was built, should not be overlooked. Therefore, the processes of proletarianization and precarization that does not exclusively apply to the working class render it impossible to restrict the scope of corporatist relations to the two poles of the production sphere. While the immediate effect of the workers in the production sphere on capitalist accumulation is indisputable, other sectors do have a pressuring power over the employers and the state deriving from their organized manner of action in a certain field. Hence, while adopting the class theoretical approach, in this thesis, the analysis of corporatist structures are not restricted merely to the producer groups, but the structures that encompass those who take part in the social division of labor or in other words in the economic sphere are also included. The still corporatist attitude of Brazilian and Turkish governments towards the non-producer economic groups indicate the necessity of such approach.

The discussion above presents the most recent discussion on corporatism, to render it a concept, to understand the relationship between organized interests and decision-making mechanisms under liberal democracies. While the ideal-typical definitions or conceptions of corporatism treating it as a distinct politico-economic system

advanced the debate on corporatism, their certain premises remain insufficient to explicate the question at hand. Regarding the case of Brazil and Turkey, the class-theoretical approach serves the most suitable theoretical framework, in terms of its focus on those sectors in the economic sphere as the core element, its conception of non-autonomous state, and its attention to the interaction between the social groups themselves.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter aims to examine the debate on corporatism, starting from the 1870s. Firstly, corporatism as an ideology is presented, which started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a reaction to the advent of industrial capitalism and the increasing prevalence of the liberal ideas in the society. Then, its practices are examined through the experience of many countries in 1930s. As such, the distance between the ideals that the corporatist theory indicated and the actual practice are discussed. Following, those texts that perceive corporatism as a result of Iberic-Latin American culture are scrutinized. Consequently, the debate on neo-corporatism, which resurrected in the 1970s is presented. In doing so, different conceptualizations of corporatism are discussed, while finally depicting the framework that class-analytical approach provides, which is employed to explicate the cases at hand.

## **Chapter 3: Historical Background**

### **Introduction:**

This chapter provides the discussion on the ways in which the current state-labor relations in Turkey and Brazil came into being. The economic and political transformations that Brazil and Turkey went through in the last 30 years set this background in both countries. In Turkey, the military regime of the 1980s was a milestone in terms of the adoption of neoliberal policies, appeasement of labor insurgency and the rise of political Islam. As such, AKP could emerge as a conservative neoliberal party, which was not acutely challenged by the labor movement due to the relative weakness of the oppositional labor unions and the expansion of the ones that were willing to sustain dialogue-based relations with the government. In contrast with the drop off in the labor movement in the aftermath of the military takeover in Turkey, the New Unionism, which challenged the corporatist state-labor relations in Brazil, emerged in parallel with the popular movement against the junta regime. As the mobilization in the civil society had a major effect on the demise of the military regime, the oppositional labor movement grew stronger during and in the aftermath of the junta period, which was also marked by the birth of the Workers' Party from the workers' movement itself. Nevertheless, after the Workers' Party came to power, the allegations of co-optation of the labor movement, which sustained its contestatory attitude by then, started to appear on the academic debates. The background information here indicates the curious case that despite the different political inclinations and distinct paths that the labor movements followed the current debate on both cases underlines the discussion on corporatist relations with the

incumbent governments. The following pages briefly examines the democratic transition period, adoption of neoliberal policies, transformations in the labor market, evolution of labor insurgency, and the relations between the labor movements and the incumbent governments.



## **3.1 Brazil**

### **3.1.1 Gradual Withdrawal of the Military Regime**

Brazilian military regime was a long-standing and for some scholars a smoother one compared to other Latin American military regimes (Keck 1992, 25; Sader 2006,

116). In Brazil, the military overthrew the civilian government in 1964 and after 21 years of military government, the first civilian president came to power in 1985, although not through direct presidential elections. The Brazilian military suspended direct presidential elections until 1989 while leaving the parliament still in office, yet in an artificial manner (Keck 1992, 25). The junta regime allowed two parties to function in the congress. ARENA was the military regime's political party to represent its point of view while MDB was nominated to occupy the place for opposition (Roett 1972, 47). Indubitably, this was an ostensible opposition, at least until the gradual transition process in 1974 when the electorates considered the MDB as a possibility of a real alternative (Skidmore 1989, 9).

The massive oppositional movement during the junta period had a great effect on the demise of the military regime. After the first decade under the military regime, in 1974 a "slow and sure" transition to the civilian rule was referred to for the first time. The government-led democratization process gradually handed back some of the civil and political rights. As a consequence of this relatively free setting, the following years witnessed a contention between the military regime and a broad-based opposition through which the latter strived for the precipitation of the democratization process (Keck 1992, 25-26; Skidmore 1989, 11). The peculiarity of the oppositional movement starting from the 1970s was its composition. The organized movement against the military rule in the 1970s included people from various classes and statuses, including professional organizations, people from political elite, neighborhood movements and working class movement, as the latter was strengthening through *New Unionism* (Keck 1992, 26).

After 1973, MDB played a prominent part to represent the dissent among the civil society in high politics since it was the only legal opposition party in the parliament (Moreira Alves 2001, 287). However, in 1979, the military regime decided to remove the two-party system in the parliament and allow the opposition to be represented through multiple parties. Through the reorganization of the party system, the military regime aimed to split the opposition votes. As a result, several parties with different political orientations, including the Workers' Party were constituted as a result of this process. As the new opposition parties emerged, a new realm opened for the struggle for democracy, which was carried out through civil society until that point (Keck 1992, 24). After years of social struggles against the military regime and slow democratization process, the presidential election ended with the election of a civilian president (Skidmore 1989, 30-31).

### **3.1.2 New Unionism and Formation of the Workers' Party**

Workers' Party in Brazil, the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores) was constituted in 1979 during the government-led liberalization period. What renders PT peculiar is its birth from the labor movement itself, which took shape in the 1970s over the course of the struggle against the military regime. The New Unionism that started as a trend in the 1970s challenged the conventional state-labor relations in Brazil. Until then, the labor movement was mostly co-opted through the Consolidated Labor Laws (CLT) of 1943, which restricted the union activity to the collaboration with the governments to sustain social order. The hegemony of representation in every occupational group was granted to the unions that were deemed legitimate by the state and the scope of authority of the labor ministry over the unions were as broad as giving it the right to remove the elected union leaders. The law considered strikes as legal merely in

exceptional occasions while the collective contracts were almost never legally permitted. Thus, unions functioned as intermediary institutions between the state and the workers for regulatory purposes. This did not only aim to eliminate their possibility of posing a threat to the state, but also a phase of “popular unionism” prevailed which encouraged the unions to provide support for the government in return for alleviation of restrictions on unions (Keck 1992, 61-63; Roett 1972, 52).

Expectedly, under the military government the unions were suppressed even further grounding on the existing labor laws. Between the years 1964 and 1970, the military government meddled in the internal affairs of the unions to tame the labor movement that was radicalized in the 1960s before the military took over the government. However, a series of events in the 1970s led to a transformation in the relations between both unions and the state, and the workers with the unions. Coinciding with the government-led liberalization period, the “new unionism” current was initiated which refused corporatist unionism that prevailed in Brazil. In the 1970s, the advent of a younger generation to serve as the leaders of the unions, who had no experience of corporatist unionism, had a major transformative effect on the conception of unionism. These leaders were fundamentally different from the ones served until the 1970s, who complied with the military regime in terms of keeping the labor movement under control (Guidry 2003, 87-88).

First significant event conducted by the labor movement in the 1970s was the “Wage Recovery Campaign” of 1977, which took place after it was revealed that the military regime manipulated the numbers on cost of living. As a response, various unions came together for a campaign asking for the recovery of their wage raise

depending on the accurate change in cost of living according to the inflation rates. Although the workers were cognizant that the government would not make concessions, this movement changed their perception about the unions, by indicating the possibility that the unions were able to function to defend workers' demands (Keck 1992, 63-64). In 1978, a major strike took place in the ABC region, the industrial agglomeration of São Paulo, led by the president of the São Bernardo Metalworkers Union, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, or as commonly referred, 'Lula'. A year later, in 1979, a series of strikes broke out again in São Bernardo by the metalworkers. However, the movement spread quickly and ended up with the participation of more than 3 million workers from 15 states, going well beyond São Bernardo. This movement was peculiar in terms of the extent of support it received from the Catholic Church and the middle-class professionals. Although the government intervened to suppress the movement, not only the employers offered a 6% raise in the metalworkers' wages, but also the attention that the strikes attracted indicated workers' political significance (Skidmore 1989, 21; Keck 1992, 65-67).

Realizing workers' importance as political actors with the revival of the labor movement, discussions on forming an independent workers' party started towards the end of the 1970s. On the eve of the imminent political party reform, the debates on constituting truly democratizing political parties had started in 1978. While some people argued that the MDB could become the popular party to democratize Brazilian politics, others believed that MDB did not concretize its conception on democratic freedom and popular sectors' rights. While the former group pointed out that formation of multiple opposition parties would fulfill the military regime's



objective of dividing the unified opposition, the union leaders underlined the risk of elimination of the popular sectors' demands in an elite-based party under the disguise of 'unified opposition' (Keck 1992, 55-71, Guidry 2003, 90). As Margeret Keck indicates, "working-class leaders were no longer willing to leave the act of interpretation to others – they wanted to create an organizational opportunity for workers to speak for themselves." (Keck 1992, 60). Following these vigorous discussions, PT was established in 1980. Its leader was 'Lula' who was among the most prominent figures in the strike waves of 1978 and 1979. While the PT aimed to become an autonomous democratic mass party exempt from elite control, it also maintained its relations with various grassroots groups, which was considered as an essential aspect for a truly democratic structure (Guidry 2003, 90).

### **3.1.3 Brazil as a Latecomer to the Neoliberal World**

Brazil is considered a latecomer in adopting neoliberal strategies compared to other Latin American countries since it finally started to adhere to the neoliberal orthodoxy in late 1980s, albeit not as vigorously. The neoliberalization of Brazilian economy gained pace with the Washington Consensus in 1989, in which international financial institutions maintained that the state should only intervene in the economy to facilitate the market processes and that the national economies should be integrated into the world capitalist markets in order to overcome the economic problems (Cunningham 1999, 75-76). In the aftermath of the military government, partial readjustments were implemented through privatization auctions, lessening the import limitations and attempting to attract foreign capital through monetary policies. However, the Cardoso government, which was incumbent between 1995 and 2003, was counted as the first administration to fully adopt neoliberal policies to manage

the economy through the 'Real Plan' (Boito and Resende 2007, 116-117; Saad-Filho 2010, 16).

The Real Plan was an ambitious project with the objective of consolidating the neoliberal economic policies. To achieve this end, a number of regulatory reforms was applied including privatization or shutdown of state-owned companies, deregulation of the finance sector, deregulation of the labor market, liberalization of the domestic financial sector and opening up the economy to foreign capital (Evangelista Duarte 2013, 18; Rollemberg Mollo and Saad-Filho 2006, 103; Saad-Filho 2010, 17). These policies were in the same vein with those applied by Cardoso's preceding counterparts. The innovation that the Real Plan brought was its attempt to tame the high inflation, which well operated very shortly. While Cardoso's second election in 1998 was explained through his government's success in controlling the high inflation rates, it is argued that the growing unemployment, widening inequalities and the financial crisis of 1999 in his second term paved the way for the victory of his main rival Lula in 2002 (Guidry 2003, 95-98; Rollemberg Mollo and Saad-Filho 2006, 100). Lula administration, which was expected to determinedly run counter to the previous neoliberal orthodoxy, maintained neoliberal policies, although in a distinct manner.

During the 1990s, PT remained an opposition party while increasing the extent of its representation over the years in local and national state bodies. Concurrently, Lula stood as a candidate starting from the first direct presidential elections held in 1989. While Lula has been the runner up in three presidential elections since 1989, he outscored other parties' candidates gaining 61% of the votes in the second round of

2002 elections. The election of a leftist president in Brazil raised people's hopes for a radical change in the country after years of neoliberalism and its adverse effects in the country. This conception about PT originated from the party's strong connection with various grassroots movements and particularly, its strong historical links with the labor movement, which helped the party to grow and convey its influence through the social movement organizations. (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005, 60-62) Furthermore, its leftist discourse inspired by a democratic and egalitarian ideal referred to the necessity for land reform, fair distribution of wealth and repudiation of the foreign debt (Flores-Macias 2012, 117).

However, Lula's advent to presidency did not bring a groundbreaking rupture from the neoliberal policies prevalent in the previous decade. During the election campaigns for the 2002 elections, the increasing likelihood of Lula's victory led to a short-term financial panic in Brazil since Lula's prospective economic policies expected to derange the ongoing conduct of the capitalist system in Brazil. To appease this concern, Lula announced that in case of his presidency, he would maintain the ongoing financial commitments referring to the foreign debt and the conduct of finance capital (Flores-Macias 2012, 22; Rollemberg Mollo and Saad-Filho 2006, 112-113; Sader 2006, 122). This was the first glimpse on Lula's forthcoming approach to neoliberal system in Brazil.

Lula kept his promise on maintaining neoliberal policies that he gave before his ascent to power. Some scholars point out the qualitative transformation that the PT went through already started in the 1990s, by eliminating the radical elements from its discourse, moving to a more social democratic line from socialism, weakening its

ties with the grassroots mobilization and retaining a meager existence of the working class in the party composition (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005, 63; Petras and Veltmeyer 2003, 8). While PT's gradual transformation took place before coming to power, its acceptance of the neoliberal policies started in 2003. Not only Lula did not derange the neoliberal restructuring that was undertaken by the previous regimes, but he also furthered the market liberalization project, signed a contract with the IMF to stick with its policies in exchange for borrowing money and putting a strict fiscal austerity package into action (Petras and Veltmeyer 2003, 11-12; Sader 2006, 124). Moreover, it is argued that while a new cadre of 'Neo-Lulistas' with a neoliberal perspective were more influential in shaping the party agenda, the more leftist members were appointed for marginal ministries (Petras and Veltmeyer 2003, 11). Despite its neoliberal policies, some scholars highlight the positive developments under the PT government in terms of workers, which point to the hybrid character of the PT government. Among these, expansion of social policy programs, growth in the scope of social security, and the rise in the minimum wage come to the forefront (Morais and Saad-Filho 2011, 35).

While several Brazilian governments gradually embraced neoliberal orthodoxy as a developmental strategy starting from the late 1980s, it bore its fruits in the past decade with the country's prominence in the world scene under Lula administration. Considering its neoliberal economic growth from the outset of the millennium, Brazil is rated among the large economies with rapid growth, which were praised by the international financial institutions for their dynamic economies, their fast recovery from the economic crises and their outperformance compared to developed countries

in terms of the share in world economy (BBVA Eagles Annual Report 2012, 37; IMF Working Paper: The Rising Resilience of Emerging Market and Developing Economies 2012, 4-5). Speaking for the Brazilian case in particular, the maintenance of Cardoso's neoliberal policies by the PT is considered as conducive to Brazil's ascent as a regional leader as well as its prominence in the global issues (Roett 2010, 126-127). Obviously, these praises concerning Brazil, pay regard to its capitalist growth, its potentiality for further investments and its integration in regional trade cooperations; and they do not look into the adverse effects of neoliberal capitalist growth strategies.

#### **3.1.4 The Condition of the Working Class and the Labor Movement in the Post-Military Coup Period**

As far as the labor movement is concerned, "New Unionism" had a major effect on labor movement and workers' rights. In contrast with the worldwide trend of decline in workers' politicization in the 1980s, Brazil witnessed an unprecedented growth in labor mobilization until 1989. The union activity grew sizably in the late 1970s and towards the 1990s unions represented 18 million workers. However, this favorable picture dramatically changed in the 1990s, particularly after 1994. The neoliberal restructuring crippled the labor movement's ability of constituting collective action for labor rights through a number of structural changes concerning the labor force (Cardoso 2002, 283-286).

Firstly, with the advent of 1988 constitution, the union formation was liberated from government consent, which led to the partitioning of the labor representation through creation of multiple unions, most of which were powerless. Secondly, the

implementation of neoliberal reforms brought about privatization of state-owned enterprises which resulted in the eradication of the base of these unions. On top of these, the production process was restructured according to neoliberal development strategies through the introduction of “continuous improvement programs” and “zero defect mechanisms”, which aimed to instruct a cadre of central workers and render them loyal to the company against the labor unions. This strategy aimed to eliminate the intermediary position of the unions and manage the companies’ relations with the labor force directly, which worsened the social base of the unions (Cardoso 2002, 288-292).

New current of reforms in the 1990s did not only influence the working class in terms of politicization, but it also had an impact on workers’ quality of lives. As a consequence of these structural reforms after the crises of 1970s and the full implementation of neoliberal policies in the 1990s, the deregulated labor market further deteriorated the conditions of the labor market. This meant further exploitation through longer working hours, lower wages resulting from the high unemployment rates and less secure jobs. It is argued that, although the Lula government sustained the overall framework that it inherited from the previous governments, some distinct policies were also pursued to benefit the working class in terms of job structures and living conditions. According to this, in this period, parallel to the apparent amelioration in the economy in terms of GDP growth, lower inflation rates and appreciation of the Real, the condition of the labor markets also improved. Despite still high unemployment rates, as argued, an expansion in the formal employment was observed alongside a decline in the more insecure types of

employment such as informal, un-paid and self-employment, which reversed the prevailing tendency in the 1990s. There was also an increase in the minimum salary and an augmentation in the purchasing power due to the improvement in the economy, although it is argued that this amelioration could only restore the levels of 1998 (Evangelista Duarte 2013).

While it appears that the Lula period improved workers' conditions in terms of occupational structures, some accounts point out the certain practices of the Lula administration, which encountered with a discontent among the organized labor. Some of the most salient examples are PT's compliance with the IMF targeting programs, the public pensions reform, which especially worsened the conditions of the public sector workers, the tax increases on the salaried workers, and reduction of the taxes on the employers implemented to sustain the market competition (Flores-Macias 2012, 144; Petras and Veltmeyer 2003, 16). The contradistinctive accounts on Lula's policies to enable markets and to improve the labor market indicate the hybrid character of the PT government as a consequence of a workers' party government in a neoliberal period.

The discussion on PT's relations with the labor movement commonly revolves around its relations with the Unified Workers' Central, the CUT, which was established in 1983 by the activists of the "New Unionism" current. By 1989, the CUT had around 2000 member unions, representing 8 million workers, while this number exceeded 18 million workers in the beginning of 2000s (Cardoso 2002, 287; Guidry 2003, 91). As a consequence of being born from the same movement, a number of activists of CUT were also members of PT starting from their

establishment. Some scholars maintain the ‘no affinity’ argument concerning these ties. Remarking that the unofficial organic relations between the party and the confederation are apparent and indisputable, they argue that both the party and the confederation avoided an institutional intertwinement of the two organizations. Accordingly, as they remark, the party aimed to preserve its independence from the unions and eschewed being the political arm of the labor movement while concurrently securing the autonomy of the unions. The premise of the no ‘affinity’ argument is that both the party and the movement were resentful to corporatist unionism in which the labor movement was bounded by a political institution. Therefore, they conclude that PT defined itself as complementary to the labor movement, meaning that its duty was not to take the lead of the movement, but to represent the workers’ concerns in high politics (Guidry 2003, 91-92; Keck 1992 180, 167-186, Guedes De Oliveira 2010, 127).

In contrast with those scholars who maintain the ‘no affinity’ argument, some others argue that these organic ties between the labor movement and PT crippled the former’s autonomy of defying the government, after PT came to power. Petras and Veltmeyer disavow the ‘no affinity’ argument by claiming that the government aimed to co-opt the CUT members from the high-level positions in the union by inviting them to take place in the government as advisors and hence, they became reluctant to take an oppositional stance against the anti-labor policies that the government proposed. Furthermore, they argue that Lula’s working class origins and the Party’s organic relations with the labor movement had a demobilizing effect on the rank and file (Petras and Veltmeyer 2003, 16-17). Similarly, Boito and Resende



argue that PT's inclusion of CUT members in the government has an ideological effect on the workers. In addition, as they maintain, CUT relinquished its macro approach towards labor mobilization and limited itself to the protection of sectors that are directly related with its members (Boito and Resende 2007, 123-125). Galvão does not only scrutinize CUT's position but analyzes the Brazilian labor movement as a whole in terms of its confrontation with the PT government. He claims that social partnership and negotiation came to constitute the major oppositional strategy of the bigger part of the labor movement under the PT government, because of the expanding channels for institutional participation. Through this way, as he maintains, although their involvement in the policy making was unprecedentedly expanded during the PT government, their influence on the process remain rather limited, as advisory rather than determinant (Galvão 2014, 184-187). Another point underlying the debate on the PT government's relations with the labor movement is the financial support provided to the confederations. Antunes and Santana argue that CSP-Conlutas (Central Sindical e Popular - National Struggles Coordination) and Intersindical were the only ones who showed a fierce opposition against the state support to the unions, whereas the others acted in accordance with such practice (Antunes and Santana 2014, 19).

As both parties of the 'affinity' debate suggest, PT has an inherent connection with the labor movement, especially with CUT. The years before PT's accession to power indicate an opposition by both PT and CUT against the intertwining of the two institutions, while the practices under the PT government demonstrate a transformation in their approach to a certain extent. Maintaining its close ties with

the social movements, PT seems to have succeeded to incorporate the labor movement in the government, through the institutional access it ensures and the financial support it provides the unions.

## **3.2 Turkey**

### **3.2.1 Transition to Democracy**

The military coup of 1980 in Turkey was rather transient compared to the 21 years long military regime in Brazil. Turkish military took over the government in 12 September 1980, and civilian rule was allowed to politics in 1983, after the creation of 1982 constitution. As the coup d'état took place, the military shut down and arrested the leaders of all political parties and two labor union confederations, which was in the center of radical activism in the 1970s, DİSK and MİSK (DİSK - Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey and MİSK – Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions). While suspending all parliamentary and extra-parliamentary political actions, the military collected the power solely under the authority of the National Security Council (Dağı 1996, 125; Karabelias 1999, 133; Zürcher 2004, 278-279). Despite this rapid and strict takeover, the coup leader Kenan Evren implied an eventual transition to the civilian rule in his first meeting with the press (Dağı 1996, 125; Karabelias 1999, 134).

In contrast to Brazil, the military coup in Turkey was not brought to demise with a civil society movement, which created a great difference in the aftermath process in terms of labor movement and political democratization. The liberalization process was kept under strict control of the military and a constitution was designed to ensure the continuation of a radical political and economic transformation and the

consolidation of the military influence over civilian politics. As such, the 1982 constitution granted overwhelming power to the executive branch and brought extensive restrictions concerning freedom of expression, freedom of press and, freedom of association. The new constitution was promulgated and the first elections were held in 1983. However, the struggle for liberalization continued in the subsequent years with the civilian governments (Karabelias, 135; Narlı 2000, 114; Zürcher, 281).

### **3.2.2 The Implementation of Neoliberal Policies through the Heavy Hand of the Military**

While the adoption of neoliberal policies were accompanied by the democratic liberalization in Brazil, Turkey experienced the implementation of neoliberal orthodoxy intertwined with state repression under the military government (Özkazanç 2005, 6). By the 1970s, observing the downfall of pro-Keynesian, ISI-led economies mostly through the impact of oil prices, Turkey appealed to IMF in order to receive loans to recover the economy to a certain extent in return of which IMF demanded Turkey to adopt an extensive stabilization program, to the detriment of the working class. However, the end of 1970s was marked with the increased power of the labor unions and the severe conflict between the capitalists and working class. Therefore, no government was willing to take the risk of alienating the working class with such hostile policies against them, which was referred to as “political suicide” (Boratav 2011, 141-142; Keyder 1987, 188).

Economic crisis, political instability, growing discontent among the industrial capitalists led by the shortcoming of foreign exchange, increasing labor militancy

and relatedly, the obstacle that the labor movement put before the capitalist expansion prepared the advent of the military regime. Partial stabilization policies were not enough to overcome the crisis and only the strong hand of the military could put down the labor insurgency and the oppositional voices to initiate a radical transformation process. The January 24 decisions, which symbolizes the turning point for the radical neoliberal turn were formed prior to the military coup but could only be implemented under the junta regime. The structural adjustment program that was initiated in 1980 continued with the subsequent civilian government until 1988 (Boratav 2011, 139-148, Zürcher 2004, 306).

The military regime created a safe environment for January 24 decisions by arranging the overall policy structure and by violently repressing the labor movement and the leftist militancy (Karadağ 2010, 15). The 1980s witnessed significant shifts in Turkish political economy through export and import liberalization to adopt a free-market economic model, deregulation of the labor market, privatization of state-owned companies, and application of austerity programs. In general, a legal framework was put in place to enable the functioning of the neoliberal capitalist market economy. These structural adjustment measures renewed Turkey's credibility in the eyes of international financial institutions like IMF, OECD and World Bank and concretized Turkey's integration into the world capitalist markets (Karadağ 2010, 14; Öniş 2004, 10). On the other hand, the new economic policies worsened the situation of the wage-dependent employees in industrial and public sectors. Because of the freeze on their salaries and the increasing interest rates, their purchasing power declined dramatically in the 1980s (Zürcher 2004, 307).

After passing the 1980s with moderate growth and moderate inflation rates – compared to the 1990s–, the year 1989 put a milestone in Turkish neoliberal restructuring with full opening of the economy to world capitalist markets, the consequences of which reverberated in the 1990s (Öniş 2004, 17-18). Full opening meant leaving the economy unguarded vis-à-vis the global financial dynamics although it was not strong and stable enough to counterbalance it (Öniş and Şenses 2009, 1). 1990s were hallmarked with coalition and short-lived minority governments, corruption allegations, and a post-modern military coup against the rise of the religious right. In terms of economy, the IMF-recommended structural reform programs determined the faith of the decade. The inflation rates reached the highest numbers since the foundation of the republic, immediate privatizations were attempted to rescue the economy and successive financial crises took place, because of governments' attempts to overcome the results of neoliberal policies with further neoliberalization, and all of these resulted in the term 'lost decade' to name this period. (Karadağ 2010, 18; Tuğal 2012, 26-27; Zürcher 2004, 300-302).

### **3.2.3 Rise of Political Islam and the Emergence of the AKP**

AKP has its ideological roots in the political Islam tradition in Turkey, although it relatively digressed from its orthodox principles. While the movements and political parties that underlined the necessity of Islamic values and principles in public sphere became prominent beginning from the multiparty years, the 1980 military coup was a turning point for the rise of political Islam. The military was in search of a new ideology, which would overcome the vast scale polarization in the country, renew people's loyalty to the state and result in a widespread depoliticization. As a result, the military regime embraced nationalist and religious ideas, and bolstered the role of

Islam in the society to fight against the left-wing ideologies. This led to a new period in Turkish politics (Eligür 2010, 93-94).

The Islamist Welfare Party was established in 1983, in such tolerant attitude towards religion in the public sphere on the part of the state. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1990s, when political Islam started to reemerge in high politics with great electoral success. The Welfare Party, aiming to represent the voice of the “have-nots”, underlined the need for a “just order” which was appealing to people in the context of turbulent 1990s (Yavuz 1997, 72; Zürcher 2004, 289). The party had a radical approach towards the conduct of the economy and society based on the Islamization of the society through state’s initiative. Although the party did not rule out market economy, it had the idea that its deficiencies could be remedied putting the morality over the market rules by involving small business people and guaranteeing the state’s presence to prevent the exploitation of the workers (Tuğal 2012, 32-33).

The year 1996, witnessed the ascent of an Islamist prime minister as the Welfare Party took part in a coalition government. Less than a year after, the military, which still had the influence over politics, forced the prime minister and the party to withdraw due to their anti-secular attitude (Zürcher 2004, 300-301). Ironically, the military involvement in the Welfare Party government and the closure case against its successor Virtue Party in order to preclude political Islam led to a split within the party, which bolstered its rise in the following years. AKP (Justice and Development Party) was born in 2001 from the ‘reformist’ or ‘modernist’ current, which argued that the party’s agenda needed revision concerning the religious issues, democracy and the approach towards the West, in order to avert from another unmediated

conflict with the seculars (Rabasa and Larrabee 2008, 45; Zürcher 2004, 304). The following years proved that the AKP also reformed the economic approach of the former party, moving closer to the capitalist orthodoxy.

#### **3.2.4 AKP: A Neoliberal Conservative Government**

After a decade of unstable coalitions and minority governments, AKP gained 34 per cent of the votes in the 2002 elections, which enabled it to have the overwhelming majority of the seats in the parliament and to form a government on its own. Although the AKP was one of the predecessors of the Welfare Party, its rhetoric was substantially decoupled from it and the National View Movement. Therefore, AKP primarily described itself as a conservative democratic party, which is sensitive to Islamic values, aiming to drift apart from the Islamist label (Eligür 2010, 247). Furthermore, in contrast to its predecessors, leading figures in the AKP dropped the anti-globalization and anti-Western discourse by underlining their commitment to the free market economics, and EU-accession process, which was one of the main pillars of Turkey's devotion to the Western ideals (Tuğal 2012, 34). Its renunciation of the socioeconomic agenda of the Welfare Party and the embrace of the accession to the European Union opened the gates to the embrace of the neoliberal policies while concurrently putting forward claims on the advancement the human rights record of the country converging towards the EU standards (Atasoy 2009, 110). An important indicator of the new appearance of AKP was its relations to the business groups. The emergence of the new provincial bourgeoisie became the main pillar of the AKP's cross-class electoral victory, which ceased to represent the small-medium enterprises but expanded its spectrum through the growing share of the Islamic bourgeoisie among the big capitalists over the years. While AKP maintained its close relations

with the business groups, it retained its promises on poverty and inequality (Atasoy 2009, 113-118).

The ascension of AKP to power took place in the aftermath of the twin crises in 2000 and 2001, which bolstered the idea that strong commitment to the regulatory reforms of the IMF was necessary to recover from the crises. During the election campaigns, AKP leaders declared that they would comply with the prescriptions that the previous governments agreed on with the IMF while remarking that they would revise some aspects considering the people's welfare as well. In doing so, they aimed to relieve the international institutions, while concurrently abstaining from alienating people by giving an impression that the party retained its concern for social welfare (Patton 2006, 516). Accordingly, in the aftermath of the 2002 elections, AKP kept its promise on the IMF prescriptions and intensely adopted the neoliberal development strategies starting from the early years of its government (Öniş and Şenses 2009, 3).

Similar to PT in Brazil, prior to its election, AKP prioritized the elimination of poverty, inequality and social injustices in its discourse. However, its commitment to the neoliberal strategies prescribed by the IMF concerning macroeconomic and fiscal stability was not the perfect framework to fulfill its promises (Patton 2006, 514-515). In the first decade of the new millennium, the economy presented a more favorable image compared to the 1990s. The inflation rates fell and growth rates were more sustainable comparing to the overall neoliberal era in Turkey (Karadağ 2010, 22; Öniş and Şenses 2009, 5-6). Despite this positive picture depicted by some scholars, neoliberal policies in the last 10 years had adverse effects on the population, especially on the labor market.



The neoliberal program that was adopted by the AKP government mainly focused on advancing the benefits of the big capitalists in the country alongside the international capital. Committing itself to the IMF structural adjustment program, the AKP government adopted some practices such as decreasing subsidies for agriculture, reducing the public sector's share in the economic realm and increasing privatizations, reaching unprecedented levels in 2005 and 2006. Furthermore, keeping the interest rates high, it aimed to attract foreign capital, obtaining a rapid, however speculative growth rate. At the same time, the promise on the eventual benefits of the restructuring process for the labor market did not yield since the unemployment rates sustained their after-crisis level and real wages did not present any amelioration, despite the growth rates (Atiyas 2009, 101-102; Esensoy 2009, 50-52; Onaran 2009; Yeldan 2007, 2-4). Regarding these policies that were undertaken under the AKP government, it would by no means be an overstatement to propound that AKP maintained the ongoing neoliberal policies and furthered them depending on the stability of its political power, which enabled it to be regarded among the emerging market countries.

### **3.2.5 Labor Movement in the post-Military Coup Period and the Condition of the Working Class in the Neoliberal Era**

Regarding the developments in the aftermath of the military coup, the year 1980 was also a turning point for workers' rights and labor mobilization in Turkey. The military regime helped to repress the ascending labor movement and ensured the control mechanisms of the state over the working class. In the first years of the Republic, labor rights were severely restricted especially through the prohibition on labor union formation and the right to strike. The advent of multiparty period and

increasing urban industrialization, surfaced the necessity of new techniques to contain a possible labor insurgency. Therefore, in 1947, the ban on formation of labor unions was lifted, although the prohibition on strike activity was retained. This was followed by the constitution of the first labor confederation Türk-İş in 1952 (Mello 2007, 212-216). A prominent feature of Türk-İş was its resemblance to American type unionism, which aimed to arbitrate the relations between the workers, the governments and the employers on the national level, instead of leading an active policy towards labor insurgency. While it generally made alliances with the right-wing governments, it pursued an anti-communist and nationalist agenda, eventually declaring that it embraced non-partisanship politics. Furthermore, to maintain its reconciliatory type unionism, Türk-İş was financially supported by the American Labor institutions and its administrators were brought to trainings in the USA (Güzel 1996, 232-236).

The 1961 Constitution introduced an extended framework of democratic rights in parallel with the mid-century ISI strategies and Keynesianism. This transformation in the constitution also reverberated on the labor rights, by procuring the workers the rights to form unions, to organize and undertake strike activities, which proved to be a major determinant of labor insurgency in the subsequent 20 years (Mello 2007, 218; Margulies and Yıldızođlu 1984, 16). In 1960s, the dissatisfaction of some unions with the union strategy of Türk-İş led to the establishment of an independent trade union in 1967, DİSK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions), which adopted a class-based, militant unionism (Esensoy 2009, 14; Margulies and Yıldızođlu 1984, 17). The advent of DİSK and the liberties introduced by the 1961

Constitution, conducted towards a vivid era in terms of social movements. The 1970s witnessed an expansion in labor insurgency with rising union density, strikes, and clashes with the police and military forces (Mello 2007, 222-223; Esensoy 2009, 15). In this period, the workers obtained significant gains through the collective bargaining strategy that DİSK adopted (Adaman, Buğra and İnel 2009, 173). However, this vigorous picture was repressed and eventually reversed by the 1980 military coup. The ascending labor mobilization, especially by DİSK, was a major obstacle before the neoliberal economic reforms that were considered as necessary for the country's economic prosperity (Boratav 2011, 146; Zürcher 2004, 253-268).

Immediately after the military takeover, the activities of the two radical trade unions left-wing DİSK and nationalist MİSK were suspended and hundreds of prominent members of DİSK were arrested (Margulies and Yıldızoğlu 1984, 19; Zürcher 2004, 278-280). Following the military coup, the rights to collective bargaining, strike and lock-out were suspended, until 1984 (Uçkan 2012, 570). Based on 1982 Constitution, Trade Union Act and Collective Labor Agreement, Strike and Lock-out Act introduced some amendments in order to consolidate the state's repressive hand on the labor movement. Thus, it legislated the limitations on strikes, the introduction of bureaucratic complexities for union membership, threshold requirements on collective bargaining priorities in the workplaces, and increased difficulties for the establishment of new unions. In doing so, the labor force was disciplined aiming to preclude its possible reaction to the structural adjustment reforms. This was accomplished to a great extent with the prohibition on politically motivated strikes, which aimed to eliminate the labor unions' reaction against the neoliberal framework

of socioeconomic transformations in the country (Boratav 2011, 150; Esensoy 2009, 34; Margulies and Yıldızođlu 1984, 20; Uçkan 2012, 570).

The case of DİSK itself, which suffered the most among others, represents the state's new stance towards class-based leftist movements in an era where the capitalists should stay strong in the face of international competition (Adaman, Buđra and İnel 2009, 173-174). Hak-İş, which was founded in 1976, having organic relations with the Islamist National View Movement, was allowed to restart its activities again six months after the military coup and MİSK was reconstituted four years later, while the DİSK case continued for 11 years and it could become active in 1992 (Ongun 2012, 906). In the meanwhile, Türk-İş remained untouched by the military government, while the prominent members were attained to significant positions in the military government (Blind 2007, 295). As gradual liberalization slowly advanced throughout the Özal government following the junta regime, the labor movement obtained some restricted opportunities as well.

The labor movement was revitalized beginning from 1989 in the face of swiftly decreasing real wages, undertaking unprecedented collective strikes and mass protests, which led the workers to resist the adverse effects of the structural adjustment policies of the past decade. These strikes attracted great attention from all the confederations, regardless of their political alignments. Even Türk-İş who claimed to be "above politics" noticed that the new civilian government was not eager to maintain the conventional dialogue-based state-union relations and participated in the protests under rank-and-file pressure. Therefore, "1989 Spring Strikes" was a unique moment in Turkey's history where workers with

heterogeneous backgrounds could act in unison in a movement that targeted the government (Blind 2007, 297-299; Boratav 2011, 175-176; Esensoy 2009, 36). Although the workers acquired certain gains through these movements, particularly in wage hikes, the following years substantially reversed their gains. In the course of 1990s, the labor market widely suffered from the growth in the ratio of informal and temporary employment, declining real incomes, growing income inequalities, and increasing incidents of dismissals. The financial crisis in 1994 and the accelerating privatizations further crippled the barely recovering labor movement (Boratav 2011, 175-176; Cam 2002).

Twelve years under the neoliberal AKP government demonstrates the maintenance, even furtherance of the deteriorating conditions of the labor market and workers mobilization. During the 2000s, whereas the economy grew without creating more employment, the restructuring of the labor market ensured flexibility. Despite the stable growth in the GDP under AKP government, the unemployment rates continued to be higher than the 6.5 per cent level, as prior to the 2001 economic crisis. This jobless nature of neoliberal growth took place despite the decline in the labor costs (Onaran 2009, 252-253; Yeldan 2007, 14-16). The legislation on labor market in 2002, facilitated the subcontracting system, fixed-term and part-time employment, and paved the way for the employers to hire and fire the workers easily. Additionally, privatizations considerably increased in the 2000s, especially after 2004, which further damaged the unions' social base (Atiyas 2009, 101; Onaran 2009, 252; Özler and Taymaz 2004, 24). In 2012, the AKP government made some changes in the legal framework on unions, through the Trade Union and Collective

Agreement Act. Although some restrictions on unionization were amended, the Act was widely criticized. These criticisms mostly targeted the lessening of job security and union membership protections, tacit prohibition of unionization of certain sectors, and maintenance of limitations on strikes (Uçkan 2013).

By virtue of the state-led depoliticization of workers and as a consequence of neoliberal employment patterns, from 1980s onwards a massive de-unionization process took place. The number of union members was around 1 million in 2013, while this number exceeded 5 million in 1979 (Uçkan 2013, 571). A closer view of the past decade of the AKP government reveals the severity of this decline. The statistics by state authorities indicate higher rates of unionization and rather minor declines in union density than other sources, deriving from the variants they include. However, these numbers were contradicted by the unions and scholars (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2010, 43). In this respect, Çelik indicates a considerable drop in unionization rates between 2000 and 2010, from 10.0% to 5.7%, which consistently followed the trajectory that was set in 1980s (Çelik 2013, 44). In parallel with this decrease, the political effectiveness of union mobilization waned in the 2000s, compared to the 1990s when the massive protests and strikes against government policies resulted in workers' favor (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung April 2012, 12).

The legal framework on labor unions and the statistics on union density demonstrate that the AKP government does not promote the growth of unionization, in coherence with its pursuit of neoliberal policies. However, the cases of Memur-Sen (Public Workers Unions Confederation) and Hak-İş present a rather contrasting picture in AKP's overall attitude on unionization. A confederation for public employees,

Memur-Sen, established in 1995 and known for its affinity with the AKP government, raised the number of its members by 1448 per cent from 2002 to 2012, compared to the 107% increase in the overall number of unionized public employees. KESK, also established in 1995 through fierce struggles on the streets and known for its oppositional approach towards the AKP government as well as anti-labor policies in general, witnessed a decrease in its members by 8% while the nationalist Türkiye Kamu-Sen could only increase its member base by 15%. Memur-Sen's unique success in contrast to the minor increases or even decreases in other confederations in the same sector is attributed to the government support it received (Çelik 2013, 47; Dinler 2012, 5). On the other side, Hak-İş demonstrated a rather steady expansion in its membership rates over the years, while the most recent numbers indicate a miraculous expansion. According to this, only in the first half of the year 2015, Hak-İş gained 85.000 new members. Also, some scholars argue that in various sectors, the workers were pressured by employers and government officials to break with their unions and join the ones that are members of Hak-İş (Çelik 2013, 47; Çelik 2015; Esensoy 2009, 80). These cases demonstrate the type of unionization that AKP government favors. While not encouraging the expansion of unionization *per se*, it aims to strengthen those unions that are close to them which do not pose a strong opposition to its policies.



## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I present the background information on the economic and political transformations that Brazil and Turkey experienced in the last 30 years, which was a major determinant of today's state-labor relations in both countries. While the AKP government managed to sustain its power over the labor movement throughout its incumbency, depending on the lack of power of the oppositional labor movement in the post-military coup period and the proliferation of the labor unions that maintain favorable relations with the government, the very same reason enabled it to remain relatively unchallenged despite its advancement of neoliberal policies. On the other hand, Brazil witnessed the revival of oppositional unionism during and in the aftermath of the military coup, which indicated a rupture in the conventional state-



labor relations. As the labor movement strongly contradicted the neoliberal policies under various preceding governments, the ascent of Workers' Party brought up the discussions on the corporatist relations and the demobilization of the labor movement. Hence, this chapter depicts the distinct ideological currents the two governments pertain to and the ways in which they nevertheless converged in similar relations with the labor movements in an era when Turkey and Brazil emerged as fast-growing economies.



## **Chapter 4: Research Analysis**

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to analyze the underlying reasons of the non-participation on the part of the trade unions within the framework of class-theoretical approach towards corporatism. To this end, the position of the labor movement vis-à-vis the protests are examined regarding the institutional links they have with the incumbent governments, which indicate corporatist practices, although they do not represent pure examples. As such, the non-participation and in some cases the condemnation of the large union confederations towards the mass protests and the support of the smaller confederations are evaluated by examining the narratives of various trade union presidents, representatives, advisors and organizers from Turkey and Brazil.

The findings of the field research submit that the largest confederations in Turkey and Brazil engage in institutional contacts with the government and prefer dialogue and social cooperation instead of challenging the government through the mobilization of the rank and file, whereas the few, numerically less strong oppositional labor movements strive for sustaining their autonomy from the cooptation of the state mechanisms, in order to pursue their independent agenda. The historical background puts forth distinct paths behind the advent of PT in Brazil and AKP in Turkey, whereas they converge in corporatist structures to cope with the organized labor movements. Considering the regulatory and demobilizing function of institutional political inclusion of the labor unions through institutional links, the success story of these two cases in the past decade cannot be considered distinctly from the facilitating of the capitalist accumulation through the absence of a powerful opposition by the organized labor movement.

## **4.1 Brazil**

### **4.1.1 Spontaneity of the June Protests and the Rejection of Traditional Social Movements**

Most of the trade union confederations were marked by their absence in the June movement. The most salient explanations for their non-participation that surfaced in many interviews were the spontaneous characteristic of the June movement and protestors' rejection of traditional movements in the demonstrations. As the mass protests were not organized along the accustomed practices of traditional social movements –with a definite leadership, working along vertical lines, having a clear list of demands– non-partisanship was believed to be widespread in the June protests. This impression was grounded on the cases of violence against the people with red flags or with protestors' banners saying that traditional institutions do not represent them. However, Winters and Weitz-Shapiro disavow the non-partisanship characteristic of the June protests by indicating the strong presence of the protestors who were affiliated with smaller leftist parties. In parallel, they argue that despite the concerns about the participation of the right-wing groups in the protests, the presence of the left-wing groups was much higher. Although the non-partisanship idea was

challenged through the recent analysis of Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, over the course of the protests, irrelevance of the political parties to the movement was well accepted (Winters, Weitz-Shapiro 2014, 4-5).

Connected with this debate, most of the confederations stated that although the June movement's claims were not in disaccord with the historical demands of Brazilian labor movement, they did not participate because the protestors refused their involvement. As CTB argues: "[...] our deal when we tried to participate in this protest was to try to fight together with these protestors, together with these people. But we couldn't, because we were rejected. [...] It was something difficult for us because we were physically rejected, with fights." The fundamental disparity between the fashion of mobilization of the June protests and the workers' movement was another prominent point for some confederations. They argued that the trade unions have a more institutionalized way of mobilization and a different rhythm. Força Sindical's (Syndical Force) statement is a good example for this approach. Emphasizing their responsibility to the workers as a trade union confederation, the representative of FS stated that "[...] [the] trade unions don't go to spontaneous protests. First you need to listen to the workers to do something."

Although the largest confederations' statements on their position towards the June movement sound coherent and tenable, the participation of CSP-Conlutas and Intersindical complicates the picture. Furthermore, the leader of the Metallurgical Workers' Union, which is a member of CSP-Conlutas, remarked that besides supporting the protests in the city center, the confederation made an appeal to the workers to spread the movement to their own cities. My interviews with one of the

leaders of CSP-Conlutas and a representative of Intersindical show that although being traditional institutions with similar structures as the rest of the labor movement, they could participate in the protests in an organized manner. In parallel, the leader of CSP-Conlutas maintained that the difference in the manners of mobilization was not the main problem, whereas he put the central problem as ‘political’ and argued that: “There are only three centrals [confederations] in this country that have this idea of organizing the whole working class. Two of them are CUT and CTB. [...] [They] did not want to go to the mobilizations because they [the protests] were against the government. [...] There is obviously also the contradiction between the horizontalism [horizontality] of the street movement and more vertical[ity] and hierarchy we see in these other labor unions. There is also that, but that’s not the central point. This contradiction also existed for CSP-Conlutas. [...] But it could nevertheless participate.” Paying regard to the participation of CSP-Conlutas and Intersindical undermines the non-participant confederations’ assertions promoting their position, since these two labor union confederations, also organized along traditional lines, could appeal to their members to support the spontaneous protests.

#### **4.1.2 The Trade Union Rally on July 11**

Almost three weeks after the apogee of the June demonstrations, the trade union confederations, together with the Landless Workers’ Movement (MST), decided to organize a general strike on July 11 and a street demonstration to promulgate the working class agenda. The demands that were uttered in the movement were in parallel with those in June, added up with the historical demands of the workers, although the different participant confederations interpreted the motivation of this

demonstration somewhat variably. Furthermore, while Saad-Filho treats the trade union rally on July 11 as the continuation of the June demonstrations (Saad-Filho 2013, 659), here it is argued that although July mobilization had a relation with the June movement, the two movements did not have a straight continuity.

Advisors of UGT (General Workers' Union) and CTB (Central of the Workers of Brazil) and president of CGTB (General Central of Workers of Brazil) interpreted the July mobilization in a similar vein. They claimed that its aim was to put the dispersed demands of the June protests in a more organized manner to discuss with the government instead of going against the government as the June movement did. The leader from CSP-Conlutas argued that the objective was to pressure the government by supporting the demands from the street and to integrate workers' historical demands concerning the working conditions. Furthermore, he stated that the trade unions felt obliged to go to the streets in July: "Because of the big pressure of the streets at that moment, [...] the labor union centrals [confederations] had to do this one day paralyzation." CUT's advisor claimed that the intention was to defend the PT government, as they thought the June movement was tending to "[...] shift too much to the right and was beginning to become [an] anti-PT, anti-Dilma demonstration." Parallel to CSP-Conlutas's remark on the obligation that the trade unions felt, CUT's advisor also remarked that the demonstration on July 11 was "[...] partially in response to being accused of doing nothing during June."

Such interpretation from CSP-Conlutas and CUT corroborates the idea that the traditional social movements were expected to stand by the demands of the June protests due to their historical stance of defending the workers' rights and their role

in the democratization struggle. Accordingly, their absence required an explanation and a compensation, which they attempted to achieve with the July mobilization. However, concerning the manner in which it was organized and correlatively, the way it appealed to the government, the demonstration in July should be evaluated disparately from the June movement.

The June movement was spontaneous, leaderless, and therefore it culminated in a range of dispersed demands expressed by a heterogeneous group of people through non-institutionalized ways. The interviews indicate that this fashion of mobilization contradicted the ways in which the labor movement organize and mobilize the rank-and-file. Having more institutionalized access to the government, the bigger part of the Brazilian labor movement mobilizes the workers for a cause as a ritual without the intention of meaningfully challenging the government through the political power of the rank-and-file and aims to have dialogue with the government on the issue at hand. Therefore, instead of taking part in the June movement, which did not accord with their accustomed way of mobilization, they organized a separate one, which they could manage in their own ways. This discrepancy in the forms of mobilization supports the argument that the July mobilization was not a follow-up event of the June movement.

Additionally, related to the disparate ways of organization, the non-participant confederations perceived the June movement as a radical threat to the government as UGT puts: "They did not want to fix the government. [...] what the revolutionaries wanted was to create a new form of government. [...] In July, these reasons got more specified. So, you have a more focused and more targeted [agenda] to complain for."

Therefore, they aimed to direct the demands to the government in a collaborative, dialogue-based and with a less menacing manner. As CTB argues: "[...] we tried to transform this in something organized and something that we have questions to discuss with the government. Our manifestation was not mostly against the government. The idea was to pressure the government to accept our questions, to accept our demands." Hence, they re-organized the discontents that were expressed in the June movement in a more structured framework through which they could be discussed with the government via institutional ways without an attempt to put pressure on the government, in accordance with their habitual relations with the PT government. Lastly, the mobilization on July took place almost one month after the peak of the June movement. In July, the streets were already appeased to a large extent. Therefore, the July 11 mobilization did not attract many people and remained as only a trade union rally, with the absence of popular participation.

The confederations avoidance of the June movement and their attempt to organize a separate movement in July indicate the ways in which they mobilize the rank and file and relate to the PT government. For them, a social mobilization without a definite leader or a clear direction like the June movement risked to destabilize the government, whereas, their pattern of mobilization in July 11, represents a ritual, which allows the confederations to discuss with the government. However, it is highly disputable the extent to which the confederations actually laid bare their power of pressuring the decision-making mechanisms, in terms of deriving that power from their significance in the division of labor. Put in this way, in fact the objective of trade union rally on July 11 appears to *not to* pressure the government.



#### **4.1.3 Labor Unions and the World Cup**

The trade union confederations' attitude towards the World Cup is illustrative of the pattern they engage with the PT government and of their stance vis-à-vis the June 2013 demonstrations. The field research for this thesis was conducted in May and June 2014, on the eve of the World Cup 2014, which took place in Brazil. As a corollary, a hot debate was on country's agenda concerning the problems that came along with this mega event such as over-exploitation of the workers, deaths in construction sites, evacuations of poor people from favela neighborhoods and excessive amounts of money spent for World Cup services. Popular Committees were founded with the participation of various social movement organizations – mostly with the initiative of different workers movements focusing on housing problems–, to draw attention to the adversities that came along with the World Cup.

The expenses made on the World Cup had already been manifested in the mass protests of June 2013. Also, many World Cup-related problems around working conditions and housing issues undoubtedly concerned the workers' organizations. Hence, the labor union's stance towards the World Cup and the issues around them came up during the interviews. All of them stated that they had an agreement with the PT government, coordinated by ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation), to ensure decent working conditions during the preparation period for the World Cup. Additionally, UGT remarked that they undertook some protests in the stadiums for decent work conditions and CUT's advisor stated that they organized local workplace committees to prevent over-exploitation, and mobilized the construction workers in the stadiums and roads concerning wages and working conditions. Nevertheless, all of the confederations, except CSP-Conlutas and

Intersindical presented an affirmative approach towards the World Cup. They specified that they were in favor of the World Cup, emphasizing the investments and job opportunities it would bring to the country.

The year before the World Cup was an especially opportune time for the social movement organizations to pressure the government to obtain gains, which, for instance, the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST) made use of by organizing massive demonstrations, and by blocking the streets in the city center of São Paulo and in the area around the stadiums. However, although remarking on the adversities that came along with the World Cup, the largest confederations did not take part in any of the popular committees or they were not planning to organize any collective mobilization to pressure the PT government to ensure their demands. As such, trade union confederations remained contented with having co-signed the decent work agreement, and eschewed from engaging with the grassroots organizations, which would put them in conflict with the PT government.

The issues around the World Cup 2014 indicate the effects of the labor movement's institutional inclusion into the decision-making mechanisms. While they remained contented with the contract that was agreed upon with the government, they did not attempt to mobilize the workers to actively join the larger struggle, which was conducted by various social movements. Furthermore, while they did not keep completely silent vis-à-vis the violation of the decent work agreement, they engaged in rather local struggles, in the sectors they were organized in, rather than readdressing its claims to the federal government. Hence, their attitude in local resistances represents the cases of corporatist consciousness as the class-theoretical

approach remarks. As a consequence, abstaining from disrupting the preparation for the World Cup, and thus, putting the government in a difficult position, they aimed to ameliorate the working conditions through local mobilizations.

#### **4.1.4 Corporatist Syndicalism under the PT Government**

Brazilian labor movement's position vis-à-vis the mass protests of June 2013 and the demonstrations related with the World Cup 2014 was a reverberation of the habitual attitude that they built in the past years towards the PT government. While CUT's historical affinity with the PT government renders CUT the subject of a deeper analysis, the PT government's relations with the trade unions indicate a strategy towards having corporatist ties with the labor movement, providing them with institutional ways to access the government and somewhat including them in discussions for policymaking.

PT and CUT both originated from "New Unionism", which challenged the corporatist unionism and had a great role in the democratization process in bringing the demise of the military regime. However, as PT came to power, these organic ties between CUT and PT led to a discussion on 'demobilization' among the unionists. In fact, CTB and CSP-Conlutas were established by separating from CUT. CTB claimed that the labor movement, especially CUT was largely demobilized with the advent of the PT government and that they founded a new confederation in order to be "more independent [...] more active, more participant and to pressure the government."

On the other hand, CSP-Conlutas directed its criticism to not only CUT but also to the condition of the labor movement altogether under the PT government while

explaining its split from CUT. It stated that most of the trade union confederations receive financial support from the PT government, which renders them politically dependent on the government. As such, these confederations could not sustain an independent political agenda to defend the workers against the PT government. As CSP-Conlutas maintains: "From that point on, a split started between the interests of the workers and the interests of the centrals [trade union confederations] that represented those workers. Because they could not defend the government and the workers at the same time. Because they [the workers] were being attacked by the government. That contradiction was what made possible the splits which formed CSP-Conlutas."

The reasons behind the establishment of Intersindical present similar concerns on autonomy of the labor movement. Intersindical argued that "Most of the trade union movement is connected to the PT. [...] PT unionism believed in reconciliation. Big mistake. The unions should have autonomy and require more changes. [...] [Intersindical's] reason of being is the rejection of excessive control of parties and governments [over the] trade unionism and the need for combative unionism without being avant-garde and apart from the struggles of the people." Consequently, the establishment processes of these three union confederations indicate their concerns about the union movement in Brazil. Asserting their criticisms towards the attitude of the Brazilian labor movement under the PT government, CSP-Conlutas, CTB and Intersindical claimed that they had to form separate organizations to have more autonomy.

While CUT was frequently mentioned with its quiescence vis-à-vis the PT government's policies not only by these two split confederations, CSP-Conlutas and CTB, but also by others, CUT's advisor too pointed to the contradictory position of CUT in criticizing the government. Remarking that CUT used to mobilize the people for strikes more in the 1990s than in the 2000s, he explained the situation as follows: "[...] because it is very hard to measure how much you pressure for that government to be a leftist government, [a] progressive one and how much are you doing a service for the right with your critiques. So, this is the balance that CUT tries to find, sometimes not successfully." As CUT's advisor indicates, despite having disagreements on certain points, CUT supports the current political project of the government, which results in a reluctance to cause the destabilization of the left-oriented government.

Parallel with CUT's hesitance in opposing the PT government with the fear of serving the right-wing, some examples indicate a change in the manner in which CUT shows its opposition to the government. The most striking example is CUT's opposition regarding two similar free trade agreements: FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) in the 1990s and Mercosur EU, which is currently under negotiation. CUT's advisor stated that they do criticize the PT government for its engagement with Mercosur EU, although he proceeds as such: "But we do not manage to do that with as much force as it was not for the PT. For instance, we are participating in audiences about this project, we have meetings with negotiators, we try to know what is going to be negotiated and so on." On the other hand, when asked about the way in which CUT expressed its criticism against the FTAA agreements in the 1990s, he

remarked that they organized workshops, public plebiscites and interacted with the public and other social movements. The different socioeconomic context of 1990s and 2000s might have had an effect on these distinct attitudes of CUT. Nevertheless, this example demonstrates the ways in which CUT lowered its intensity of pressure on the government during PT's incumbency.

While CUT's case can be evaluated by its historical relations with the government, a similar pattern of opposition under the PT government applies for other non-participant confederations. As such, the easier institutional means for negotiation that is provided by the PT government seem to shape the opposition strategies of the bigger part of the Brazilian labor movement, which reverberated on the June movement. For instance, CGTB's president highlighted the institutional ways through which they can communicate with the government while referring to the difference between the movements of June and July: "We have contacts with the government. We press the government and we could be received by the ministry of labor and other ministries. We talk with them, including with Dilma Rousseff, [the] president herself. We have an institution much more organized than these people, than this movement." Likewise, CTB referred to the Lula government's attitude saying that "[...] in the Lula government, there was a lot of dialogue with the social movements and there was a lot of conversation, and a lot of deals with the social movements", although she stated that their dialogue with the PT government has not been as good during Dilma Rousseff's presidency.

The narratives of several trade union members indicate the impact of institutional contacts with the PT government on union activism. While CUT remains in the

center of the discussions, a similar pattern of corporatist and collaborative syndicalism can be observed many of the largest unions. PT is a left-oriented government, having the historical relations with not only the labor movement but also with various other grassroots movements. Undoubtedly, it has a receptive approach towards social movements, especially the workers' movements. The easier institutional access to the decision-making mechanisms and the reliance on the left-oriented government to attain workers' objectives within the limits of the ongoing capitalist system hampers the political will of the labor movement to employ its organized power stemming from its central role in the economic system, to effectively pressure the government. Hence, what is seen is the institutional inclusion in the decision-making mechanisms of the state in return for the demobilization of the rank and file, as the class-theoretical approach suggests.

As the workers' political party, which has historical ties with the social movements, PT's attitude towards the labor movement structured the confederations' opposition against the government in a more conversation-oriented way. Under the PT government, the unions obtained a more amicable environment for conveyance their demands through institutional ties. Furthermore, PT government financially supports the labor unions, except for CSP-Conlutas and Intersindical. These factors derange the autonomy of the labor movement to a great extent which resulted in the formation of new labor unions. The financial support and the institutional access that the PT government ensures for the largest trade union confederations eventuated in such relations between the labor movement and the PT government. Additionally, CUT's closer affinity with PT is another substantial factor behind the more docile

position of Brazilian labor movement, especially regarding the former's numerical dominance among the organized labor force. Hence, as class-theoretical approach maintains, while the unions are granted institutional access to the state mechanisms, they prefer to engage in negotiations with the governments, which remains more advisory than effective in policy-making, rather than putting pressure on the government with the power of the union base.

The non-autonomous position of most of the unions does not necessarily mean that they are completely demobilized. As referred in the class-theoretical approach as corporate consciousness, they maintain social mobilization in the cases for their own sector, to ameliorate the conditions of their members. However, they hesitate to bring the workers' struggle to a larger scale to pressure the PT government more powerfully. In fact, disruption of their autonomy make some of them to take on a role to stand up for the government itself, let alone harshly criticizing or challenging it. This is what is witnessed during the mass protests of June 2013 and the anti-World Cup protests of 2014. As such, the largest trade unions' marginal position in the mass protests of 2013 reflected their habitual corporatist confrontation with the PT government that was gradually built in the past decade.

## **4.2 Turkey**

### **4.2.1 Participation of DİSK and KESK**

DİSK and KESK attempted organized protests to support the Gezi movement on June 5-6 and later on June 15-16. However, they could neither mobilize a large number of people, nor did they have a large impact, by integrating the workers' agenda into the movement in which a large spectrum of demands from different



groups from the society was expressed. As a research specialist in DİSK remarks, their lack of a powerful organized capacity in İstanbul was one of the reasons behind the poor mobilization of DİSK on June 5-6, whereas its call for strike action received more reaction in Kocaeli and İzmir, where it had a stronger base. Another specialist in Birleşik Metal-İş union (a member of DİSK) indicated that it was by no means possible to name the organized action on June 5-6 a general strike and that even the decision-makers did not expect a responsive reaction from workplaces, due to the objective conditions of the organization. Although DİSK took part in the Taksim Solidarity from the very beginning, the Birleşik Metal-İş specialist emphasized that it did not take on a primary role in the mass protests to mobilize workers by indicating the movement's tie with workers' demands, rather it remained as an external supporter. Similarly, the DİSK research specialist referred to the oppositional unions' inability and lack of capacity to fully comprehend the Gezi movement, which resulted in a failure in making themselves heard in the protests with workers' political agenda.

The co-president of KESK (a confederation for public employees established in 1995, known for its oppositional stance) presented a self-critical approach similar to DİSK concerning the confederation's attempt for organized participation in the Gezi movement. According to her, the decision-makers of DİSK and KESK interpreted the Gezi movement as a middle class mobilization at the time. Therefore, they provided partial support to the movement and could not become a primary component of it. Additionally, she remarked that KESK has been facing systematic diminution in face-to-face organization, resulting in flagging ties between the union

members and the confederation, which poses a big obstacle before KESK's mobilizing capacity. This situation, also reverberating in the Gezi process, appears to be another reason underlying the partial support of KESK to the movement.

Although their attempt for organized participation failed to constitute a substantial force, their support had a legitimizing effect on the Gezi movement, which was already seen as legitimate for a large number of people. Nevertheless, the co-president of KESK and the Birleşik Metal-İş specialist drew attention to other possible ways to support the Gezi movement. The Birleşik Metal-İş specialist argued that DİSK could have taken actions that were more plausible concerning its objective conditions: "It wasn't a necessity to be on a general strike in terms of their power relations. Making calls like 'the park is under attack, we call all our members at 21:00'... [...] Because, as I have just said, as of their objectivity there was no response for a thing on that level [general strike]. But, other more massive forms to include their members as well... One of these was weekend calls. Or it [the confederation] didn't make calls for the evening either." With a rather different approach, the co-president of KESK propounded that spreading the movement to the workplaces could have had a more long lasting and pervasive effect than a general strike for a day or two.

DİSK and KESK are historically oppositional workers' movements. At the same time, as it is ostensible, they are institutionalized and have institutional contacts with the government. Even in the Gezi process, as they were both constituents of the Taksim Solidarity Platform, their representatives attended the meeting with the government after the movement got widespread. However, their institutionalization

does not necessarily mean co-optation of the movement by the government. Even only speaking for the Gezi movement, their dialogue with the AKP government did not prevent their effort to mobilize their base to challenge the government. Furthermore, they do not adopt the corporatist consciousness as the class-theoretical approach suggests. Instead, they consider the unions as important actors in defending not only workers' rights in general but also influencing the overall economic policy frameworks of the governments in various areas. Their partaking in Taksim Solidarity even when it initially had focused claims on socio-economic policies in the urban areas is an example of that. While their efficiency in doing so is disputable, their historical stance indicates that they aim to sustain a conception of unionism that is not 'invaded' by the state mechanisms.

As stated by these organizations, the lack of capacity to understand the dynamics of the movement was a factor behind their poor participation. However, their waning organizing abilities indicate the other and very important façade of the issue, as well as it is highly related to the capacity problems of these unions. As the DİSK specialist argues, the demobilization of the contestatory unions in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup exacerbated in the 2000s under the AKP government, as the latter substantially increased pressure over these unions and atypical forms of employment that prevailed complicated these unions' means of organization. DİSK specialist suggests that while DİSK managed to reconstitute itself in 1992, it still faces plenty of obstacles: “[...] For example, Union of Revolutionary Health Workers [Dev-Sağlık-İş] is a seriously influential union in the health sector. Despite the court ruling, its 7000 members are arbitrarily not acknowledged by the Ministry

of Labor. There are such examples. At the moment, they abruptly want to transfer those who work in the cleaning services at hospitals to general services, to break the effectiveness of such a challenging union in health as Union of Revolutionary Health Workers. Or they arbitrarily change the lines of work. [...] they form unions accordingly; they enroll those workers to the partisan unions through employers or managers so that an alternative would not burgeon there. [Therefore], they create unions, counter-unions that can somehow control the reaction of the workers and that work like some kind of human resources department.”

For the case of KESK, the legal regulation of unionization of the public workers led to an obstacle before its organization among the workers. The Trade Unions of Public Workers and Collective Agreement Law (No. 4688) was enacted in 2001 after years of struggle, which ensured state recognition of the public workers’ right to association and representation. However, as the co-president of KESK argues, the state recognition first led to a sudden increase in the number of members, whereas the bureaucratization of unionization processes caused the loosening of vivid membership ties. While this resulted in a diminution in KESK’s number of members, the legal recognition led to a far-fetched increase in the sectors Memur-Sen organized in which let it to reach 314.701 people, compared to 41.871 union members in 2001, prior to the law.<sup>7</sup> The different consequences of the Law No. 4688 on Memur-Sen and KESK indicates the ways in which the legal recognition of workers’ organizations can facilitate the state to manipulate the organizing capacity of different institutions in order to use them in its best interest. Therefore, in this case, Memur-Sen, which remained adopted a collaborative, corporatist unionism,

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.memursen.org.tr/tarihce/>

was facilitated to expand its scope, while certain aspects of the law somewhat restrained KESK's capacity to organize.

As a matter of fact, the conception of unionism of DİSK and KESK explicate their current conditions in terms of organizing and mobilizing capacity. As union principle, they aim to mobilize the rank and file to maintain their political agenda and to remain autonomous from any government instead of building corporatist relations with the decision-making mechanisms and sustaining acquiescence of the base. As such, their agenda does not comply with the necessities of capitalist accumulation, especially that in a neoliberal period. Regarding the difficulty of establishing corporatist ties with these unions, what is attempted is to enervate their mobilizing capacities and to challenge and sometimes to replace them with those unions that are willing to cooperate with the employers and the governments. This way corporatist structures fulfill their function in the capitalist production processes, as class-theoretical approach suggests. As a consequence, KESK and DİSK remain rather small confederations compared to overall number of union members and the work force in general.

#### **4.2.2 Non-Participation and Condemnation of the Largest Confederations**

While the attitude of DİSK and KESK appear to be supportive to the Gezi protests, they by no means represent the overall stance of the workers' organizations in Turkey. Therefore, examining the positions of Hak-İş, organized among workers, and Memur-Sen and Türkiye Kamu-Sen, organized among the public workers, during the Gezi demonstrations is indispensable for evaluating the attitude of the labor movement as a whole, since these organizations encompass the bigger part of

Turkey's unionized work force. In this section, the non-participation, condemnation or rhetorical support of the larger part of the unions towards the Gezi protests are presented.

After the Gezi protests spread throughout the country with the proliferation of demands, Türk-İş, Hak-İş and Memur-Sen issued two co-signed press releases with many other non-governmental organizations on June 6 and on June 19. Emphasizing their support for people's expression of democratic demands within the framework that the law allows them, in the press release, they evaluate the Gezi protests as infiltrated by 'marginal groups' and as serving those who are malevolent towards Turkey. Condemning the acts of violence and "havoc of the public property", they ask the "sincere citizens" to convey their democratic demands to the government through dialogue. Calling on the citizens to act responsibly, they put great emphasis on Turkey's image and power and they condemn those who attempt to make Turkey look like an anti-democratic country. Their statements as a whole stand unequivocally against the Gezi movement by denouncing it as an illegitimate act of violence damaging the country's good. However, one phrase in the statement indicating the '2023 targets' is striking, since this is a bold expression frequently used by the AKP government to stress their persistent popularity, which they anticipate to continue in 2023 as well: "Instead of wasting its energy on sterile discussions, Turkey should issue its new constitution; proceed immediately to its 2023 targets, towards a stronger economy and democracy by preserving all the gains achieved in recent years."

The statements of Hak-İş's İstanbul representative are in parallel with the press release of which Hak-İş was a co-signer. He maintains the illegitimacy of the Gezi protests due to its deviation from the initial environmentalist motives and the acts of violence with the infiltration of the provocateur groups in the protests. Rather than approaching Gezi Park protests as an expression of discontent, he employs a criminalizing discourse with particular emphasis on the tradesmen's financial loss deriving from the chaotic atmosphere in Taksim. As such, he evaluated the Gezi demonstrations as illegitimate reactions to AKP and its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose legitimacy derived from its accession to power through democratic ways, such as the "ballot box". Noting the proliferating percentage of votes that AKP had been receiving in the elections, he interpreted the Gezi movement as a reaction, a 'civil coup' that took place because of the absence of a genuine opposition [referring to the opposition in party politics].

The common press release on June 6 and on June 19 does not represent Türk-İş's singular stance towards the Gezi movement. On June 5, Türk-İş published an individual press release concerning the Gezi protests, which has a slightly different discourse from the common press release that indicates a sheer support for the AKP government. While calling all the involved parties, including the AKP government to the language of "peace and reconciliation", it condemns the "blind" violence of the security forces and relates the indignation of protestors to this excessive violence. However, it does not state its opinion on the specific points that appeared during the protests, which underlay the protesters' discontent with the AKP government. Avoiding meddling in the discussions that emerged during the Gezi protests, Türk-İş

made rather rhetorical comments on democracy, although not presenting a pronounced support behind the AKP government that is quite outstanding in the press release of which Türk-İş was co-signer.

Another union confederation, Türkiye Kamu-Sen (Public Workers Unions Confederation of Turkey - known for its nationalist stance and its opposition against AKP government in this respect) did not attempt to participate in the protests in any way, while it is possible to see the confederation's stance towards the movement through the statements of the high-level union members. The President, and the General Organizing Secretary of Türkiye Kamu-Sen presented the confederation's oppositional stance towards the AKP government and its rhetorical support behind the Gezi movement. Nevertheless, in his statement made in the end of the second week of the Gezi protests, the General Organizing Secretary stated that the protests attained its aim of conveying its message to the AKP government and therefore should be finalized before starting to damage the country.

The statements of Hak-İş, Türk-İş, Memur-Sen and Kamu-Sen indicate that their approach to the Gezi movement was far from supporting it as a democratic expression of discontent, let alone mobilizing their bases for this cause. The claim hereby is that, these unions' positions vis-à-vis the Gezi protests are reverberations of their approach towards unionism and the relations they form with the governments, and particularly for this case, with AKP government. As it is indicated in the following, Hak-İş and Türk-İş adopt corporatist consciousness and favor collaborative, corporatist syndicalism through institutional links to the decision-making mechanisms rather than mobilizing the base to challenge the authorities. The



institutional links with the decision-making mechanisms disrupt the autonomy of the unions, as the latter turn into legitimizing tools of the government, as it is observable in the case of press releases concerning the Gezi Park protests.

#### **4.2.3 Corporatist Syndicalism under the AKP Government**

Hak-İş's opposition against the Gezi movement and their approach towards the AKP government is ostensible through the interview and the press release, while their conception of unionism is another considerable aspect of their preferred manner to confront the state. The Hak-İş representative stated that the confederation favors dialogue as a principle rather than conflict, produces alternatives to the existing conditions, and struggles through their legal advisors regardless of whichever government is in power. On the other hand, he emphasized that for the cases, which could not be resolved through dialogue, they undertook more challenging, contestatory actions as well. He exemplified such case with the slowdown strike they undertook against the irregularities in wage payment due to the arbitrary behavior of the employer, AKP municipality at the time. "Of course dialogue comes first in the mission of Hak-İş, in the opinion of Hak-İş, there is never conflict. But when the push comes to shove, we got into that conflict for the sake of the worker's labor and right; there are examples for that. And when we got up against for the sake of the worker's labor and right, AKP was holding the municipality and the government; and here, there was Hizmet-İş [Union for Entire Municipal and General Services Industry]. When you look from this perspective [...], although Hizmet-İş looks like as if it were the backyard of AKP, we carried out these actions."

Nevertheless, it is not possible to observe this sort of a rather small scale challenging confrontation on the national level. Expressing the confederation's discontent with AKP's number of policies concerning the workers, he remarked that through their legal advisors they convey their researches to the government. When asked if Hak-İş would follow a strategy towards mobilizing the rank-and-file on a national level to put pressure on the government in the cases where mere dialogue-based solution seeking does not conclude in an advantageous way, he stated that he did not recall such an example hitherto. While this is the case, the comments of the Hak-İş representative implied a prediction on the fruitlessness of the legal advisors' recommendations to the government: "There is work concerning the omnibus bill again. Regarding that, [...] I personally know that the chairperson of Hak-İş, the legal advisors of Hak-İş presented their work particularly on occupational health and safety as well as on legal regulations [...] regarding subcontractation. At this point, how much of that work the government will put into practice, time will show us that."

The difference between the confederation's attitude towards local mobilizations against the employers and its stance towards the opposition against the overall economic scheme of the governments exemplifies the notion of corporatist consciousness. While in some occasions the member-unions mobilize for the rights of those workers who are affiliated with the sectors they are organized in, they sustain their corporatist relations in the national level where they are supposedly included in the decision-making mechanisms since they are asked to provide insights on the issues at hand. Hence, although several anti-labor regulations are accepted by

the AKP government, mobilization of the rank and file does not appear as an option to attain their goals. As such, Hak-İş case represents the ways in which the institutionalized contact between the labor movement and the state mechanisms can result in inconclusiveness in influencing the economic policy framework and in the compromise for the autonomy of the movement and demobilization of the workers, which would otherwise have the possibility to be more politically active if organized in a different union.

Another co-signer of the press release, the largest trade union confederation, Türk-İş presents a similar conception of corporatist unionism as Hak-İş. During the field research, it was not possible to reach the Türk-İş representatives to have the official opinion of the organization on the Gezi protests. However, the interview I conducted with one of the member-unions of the Trade Union Coalition Platform, Deri-Teks, and the press release that Türk-İş separately issued are informative of the latter's approach towards unionism and its attitude in the Gezi protests.

The Trade Union Coalition Platform was founded in 2011-2012 by 10 unions, as a dissident body within Türk-İş. These 10 unions coalesced based on the commonality of their opposition against the corporatist unionism that Türk-İş pursued. As a corollary, the principles behind the establishment of such a platform indicate Türk-İş's overall approach towards unionism, which the specialist in Deri-Teks similarly corroborates: “[...] they do not put a political goal that could move the base, on a political or economic improvement, or an improvement concerning the working life in Turkey. Firstly, they follow a route detached from the class and the base. This is one of the basic issues. They progress detached from the class, from the base of their

own structure. What we call union member worker is unaware of most of those developments. There have been many developments concerning the working life, like severance pay or on many other aspects. The process of privatization, marketisation of health... Türk-İş does not embark on a movement that will seriously mobilize the base for these issues. It does not create a potential, which will put pressure on the government. Completely through dialogue and a conciliatory route...”

The remarks of the president of Deri-Teks further delineate Türk-İş's relations with the governments. Emphasizing that Türk-İş's attitude is far from being a unique case related to the AKP government, he continued by saying: “Türk-İş has the same attitude. Whichever government it is... Against the extortion of workers' rights, whichever power is on rule, they do not develop a stand against it. As much as it is possible, they try to make business by rubbing shoulders with them, by compromising [...]” As a recent example, the Soma coal mine accident, which occurred in May 2014 and caused more than 300 workers' death, lays bare Türk-İş's eschewal from contestatory confrontation with the state and the employers. As Deri-Teks specialist remarked, while the labor union that was organized in that coal mine was a member-union of Türk-İş, the confederation settled by calling the employees to have a 3 minutes long stand in silence as a reaction to the accident, before they started working. However, in such a major disaster where the government's policies on coalmines and the employer's neglect of workers' safety were called into question, the pressure from the rank-and-file obliged Türk-İş to call the union members for a one-day long work stoppage.

The establishment of Türk-İş in 1952 itself indicates their conception of unionism, since it was founded by the very own hand of the Turkish state to contain the workers' mobilization. From then on, it maintained its tradition and aimed to demobilize the workers' political activism by incorporating them in the union, and by representing them along corporatist lines, abstaining from disrupting the conduct of the business. In parallel, corporatist consciousness, which is apparent in Hak-İş's syndicalism, can be observed in the practices of Türk-İş as well. Deri-Teks specialist terms Türk-İş's approach as "wage-unionism" and he continues as such: "Unfortunately, unions that are content with their existing situation, that collect their subscription fees and have no serious problem with employers set no political goal oriented towards future anyway. You look and see that some of the unions, as I said, struggle only on that line. Well, I mean in terms of wages. [...] they set policies in terms of wage-unionism, policies based on the wages and the social benefits of workers. But they do not mobilize workers on a line which will include workers in a struggle for democracy. They may not look at May 1<sup>st</sup> from that perspective. They participate at the representational level [...]"

Türk-İş's unionism resulted in the foundation of the Trade Union Coalition Platform. However, since they rejected the corporatist unionism and adopted a contestatory approach towards unionism, they were challenged by the government and the employers as well as the Türk-İş headquarters in order to enfeeble the coalition's oppositional power. Therefore, while the coalition emerged as a viable alternative and a rival to the collaborative approach of Türk-İş, they are not as powerful today. One example of the intervention in the conduct of unions is the case of Hava-İş –

Turkish Civil Aviation Union organized in Turkish Airlines—, which took part in the establishment of the coalition and was among the most active unions. It is no longer a constituent of the coalition, due to the changes in the unions' administration, which aimed to push the union to a more conciliatory line.

As Deri-Teks specialist indicates, the intervention was undertaken collaboratively: “It is not necessarily and directly related to Türk-İş. Everyone has some sort of contribution to this. The administration of THY [Turkish Airlines] [...], and state had impact on this matter. There was a pressure through government. THY administration imposed a different pressure on workers and staff. THY united with the circles it finds close to itself and attempted to manage the union in this way. Türk-İş administration partly strived to change this process because Hava-İş was one of the few unions that engaged in influential opposition activities. That is why, they all together changed the union administration.” The case of Hava-İş exemplifies the ways in which the leadership level of organized interest groups can cooperate with the employers and governments in order to repress the mobilization of the rank and file by employing institutional channels and collaborating with employers and governments through clientelist ties, as suggested in the class-theoretical approach.

Looking into the positions that the labor union confederations took during the Gezi protests, a widespread refrain from supporting the movement stand out. This fact cannot be evaluated distinctly from the condition of the Turkish labor movement throughout the past decades where the few oppositional, struggle-oriented union confederations are challenged and oppressed through the hand of the state while those who form corporatist relations and collaborate with the governments are

facilitated to keep their prevalence in the Turkish labor movement. As a consequence, during the Gezi protests that provided a common ground for those who were discontent with any aspect of the AKP government, most of the confederations either condemned the movement as a whole, or remained contented with a press release or an official statement, which made comments on the "legitimate" sides of the movement.

The overall attitude of the largest unions is tightly related to their conception of unionism, which abstains from meaningfully challenging the government, supports dialogue and moderation among the relevant parties, and eschews engaging the workers' movement with democratic struggles in other spheres of society. Correlatively, these unions do not encounter oppression by the AKP government, if not support. Besides this general attitude towards unionism of the bigger part of the labor movement, the AKP's approach towards the unions that are close to itself largely determined the condition of today's labor movement. Bolstering the trade unions that are close to their ideology, the AKP formed collaborative relations with large confederations, which in turn rooted for the AKP government.

As the class-theoretical approach suggests, the establishment of institutional contacts between the state mechanisms and labor movements facilitated the control over the workers' political activism. While during the AKP government, the unions, which favor the corporatist relations with the governments and sustain dialogue based activism rather than mobilization of the base, flourished, the contestatory unions faced either legal obstacles or pressures on the part of the employer, state or in some cases the confederation itself. Furthermore, the collaborative relations between the

largest unions and the AKP government do not mean that these unions do not struggle for workers' rights at all. Rather, as class-theoretical theory claims, these unions adopt the corporatist consciousness. Therefore, the examples of sector-based mobilizations are observed in these organizations, whereas mobilizing the rank and file to have a say in broader economic policy frameworks is out of question. Finally, it should be underlined that the corporatist practices are by no means peculiar to the AKP government. They existed prior to the advent of AKP government, and most probably will continue later on as well. However, what is underlined here is the practices and connections that are peculiar to the corporatist practices under the AKP government and the ways in which corporatist unionism advanced in this period.



## **Conclusion**

This chapter analyzes the relations between the labor movements and the incumbent governments in Brazil and Turkey within the class-theoretical approach towards corporatism. In Turkey and Brazil, the mass protests of June 2013, which encompassed demands from various sectors of society, witnessed meager organized support from labor unions. The marginal role of the labor movements in the June demonstrations in Turkey and Brazil indicate a larger phenomenon, namely, a parallel between the two countries in terms of the relations between the governments and the workers' movements. In both countries, the bigger part of the labor movement favors dialogue with the governments through institutional ways instead of mobilizing the base. This seems to be a widespread attitude of these trade union confederations, due to their view of unionism, or particularly in the Brazilian case due to the easier dialogue with the PT government, which has historical relations with the labor movement. On the other hand, the close, almost organic relations between the incumbent parties and Hak-İş and Memur-Sen in Turkey and CUT in Brazil point out another more particular reason behind their eschewal from mobilizing the base.

The convergence between Turkey and Brazil in terms of state-labor union relations is a curious case considering the different trajectories that the labor movements followed starting from the 1970s and the distinct ideological stances of the incumbent governments. In Turkey, unionization suffered dramatically in the last three decades. Nevertheless, the confederations that are close to the government were strengthened despite AKP's disinclination towards overall unionization. In Brazil,

unionization is much stronger than in Turkey. However, the strongest trade unions are those who form clientelist relations with the government, adopt corporatist unionism and who do not undertake fierce opposition against the PT government. These cases affirm the corporatist approach of AKP and PT towards the workers' mobilization.

Through the corporatist approach towards the trade union confederations, the PT and the AKP governments aim both to garner support from them through an institutional way and to neutralize the opposition of the rank-and-file by having these clientelist relations with the higher positions of these organizations. Considering the implementation of neoliberal policies underlying the emergence of Turkey and Brazil in today's world capitalism, these governments' relations with the unions become more of an issue. Unions constitute the primary actors in societies that are expected to mobilize against the neoliberal policy frameworks that disrupt workers' living and working conditions. Accordingly, the economic success stories of Turkey and Brazil cannot be fully comprehended without looking into the mild opposition of the strongest confederations towards the incumbent governments' policies. Consequently, Turkey and Brazil, pursuing similar development strategies, employ corporatist practices towards syndical movements in order to maintain the latter's quiescence vis-à-vis the neoliberal policies. As such, what was witnessed in June 2013 in terms of unions' attitude was a reverberation of the collaborative syndical movement under the PT and AKP governments.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis examines the state-labor relations under the PT government in Brazil and AKP in Turkey, in an attempt to comprehend the role of the labor movements in the mass protests of June 2013 that simultaneously took place in the two countries. The widespread discontent of a myriad of people, revealing itself in massive protests confronting the governments in Turkey and Brazil, were largely unforeseen, since these two countries were lauded for their fast-growing and stable economies in the past decade. These protests, which started with seemingly trivial urban questions, spread to other cities, turned into popular uprisings, and started to target the incumbent governments in the course of a few days mostly because of the brutal police violence. A variety of people from different social groups in the society started to participate in the protests, which led to the exceeding of the initial demands on protection of the Gezi Park in İstanbul and reversal of the hikes in public transportation in São Paulo. After the massification of the protests, the demonstrators started to express their discontent on the government policies, not only on the urban sphere, but concerning a wide spectrum of citizenship rights and personal liberties.

Since these nationwide protests were unforeseen, especially in a period when these countries were considered as emerging market economies, the source of this discontent was widely debated. The analyses on the social profile of the protesters reach distinct conclusions. While some scholars underline the dominance of middle class participants, another current argue that the demonstrations had a working class identity. However, further research indicates that both protests gathered a multiplicity of people in terms of class identity, encompassing various social classes

in proportion with their presence in the society. However, both in Turkey and Brazil, despite the heterogeneous and widespread participation from the society, support of various institutions and grassroots movements, and the widespread unorganized support of the workers, the labor organizations were absent from the protests that expressed popular demands.

In Turkey and Brazil, the main unions that usually show strong opposition against these governments' anti-labor policies and mobilize their rank-and-file for this cause constitute a small part of the labor movement. Therefore, they are not capable of effectively challenging the status-quo. In Turkey, the few oppositional unions, DİSK and KESK, attempted to support the protests in an organized manner, aiming to put pressure on the government. In doing so, they called their members to go on strike on June 5-6 and later on June 17. However, these attempts did not resound in terms of influencing the course of events. On the other hand, the unions that occupy a larger place in the organized workers, Hak-İş, Türk-İş and Memur-Sen did not support the movement. In fact, they criticized and condemned the Gezi protests through press releases, underlining the cases of violence and regarding the protests as an attack to the democratically elected government. In Brazil, the stance of the labor movements towards the mass protests was more complicated, which cannot be simply evaluated as non-participation. While the peak of the protests merely witnessed the participation of the small oppositional unions, namely CSP-Conlutas and Intersindical, the large part of the labor movement arranged an organized protest on July 11, professing to be parallel to the June movement. However, since the mass protests were appeased towards the end of June, the trade union rally on July 11 did

not achieve popular mobilization. Furthermore, the manner of mobilization in July 11 was diametrically opposed to the June movement, while its claim to be in solidarity with the latter is contestable.

The literature on the last 30 years on Turkey and Brazil tell much about the current condition of state-labor relations. In Turkey, the oppositional labor movement was greatly suppressed by the 1980 military coup, and could only reconstitute itself in 1990s. However, parallel to its enervation, the collaborative unions spiked to encompass various sectors. During the last decade under the AKP government, while an overall de-unionization is ostensible, the unions that are close to the government sustain their dominance among the organized work force. Similar to Turkey, the military coup in Brazil was a turning point for Brazilian labor movement, however leading to a distinct direction. Until the 1970s, the labor movement mostly functioned along corporatist lines, with the heavy presence of the state in the internal affairs of the unions. The revival of the militant labor movement took place parallel to the civil society movement for democracy. As such, towards the end of 1970s, the radicalization of the rank and file resulted in contestatory labor movements. However, the ascent of the PT to the government, as a political party born from the movement itself, is marked as another milestone for the workers' movement. Many scholars argue that PT's historical organic relations with the labor movement, its inclusion of the latter to the government bodies and the financial support the government provided for the unions hamper the autonomy of the labor movement and eventuate in the demobilization of the masses.

As this thesis examines the state-labor relations in Brazil and Turkey, the literature on corporatism is presented here, in order to put the discussion within a theoretical framework. While there are several approaches to corporatism, the class-theoretical approach is employed to analyze the cases at hand. The class-theoretical approach regards corporatism as an institutional relationship in advanced capitalism between the state's decision-making mechanisms and the organized labor, which aims at the incorporation of the latter into the state mechanism at the leadership level while attempting to contain the mobilization of the rank and file. The groups that might be subjected to corporatist relations are those who take part in economic sphere, which obtain its leverage from its ability to disrupt the capitalist system. Furthermore, the state is not assumed as neutral, but it is treated as more inclined towards facilitating the capitalist accumulation processes. Finally, class theoretical approach does not expect a complete demobilization of the workers by the unions. Instead, it assumes that the more local, wage-related struggles would be sustained in the associated sectors, whereas economic policy related questions would not be confronted with challenging mobilization.

Class-theoretical framework towards corporatism facilitates the analysis on the position of the labor movement vis-à-vis the mass protests and state-labor relations in Brazil and Turkey. As such, this thesis claims that the organized labor movements' position in the mass protests both in Turkey and Brazil reflect their overall condition in terms of mobilization under AKP and PT governments. The corporatist relations that are established and strengthened between the biggest labor movements and the incumbent governments led to a corporatist, collaborative syndicalism, which

restricts the unions' autonomy and serves for the demobilization of the rank and file. The larger part of the labor movement adopt a more conciliatory attitude under the PT and AKP governments even when they show their opposition and in return, these unions are bolstered by the incumbent governments. The cases of CUT in Brazil and Hak-İş and Memur-Sen in Turkey require particular emphasis. Their mild opposition is further related to their close ties with the incumbent parties and the ideological affinities that lead them towards similar political projects. On the other hand, this thesis by no means claim that Brazil and Turkey under PT and AKP respectively represent the ideal types of corporatist structures. Rather, it argues that it is possible to observe various practices and approaches that come close to corporatism and which result in the demobilization of the rank and file.

Put in a broader perspective, the condition of the labor movements in Turkey and Brazil indicate the implementation of corporatist approach towards the labor movement to appease their mobilization. Despite coming from different political currents, the workers constitute an important part of both the PT and AKP's electoral bases. Both governments appeal to and mobilize the masses with an anti-elite discourse and with a national pride based on their economic success stories. While in Brazil a leftist discourse is commonly employed in order to appeal to the poor, in Turkey, Islam-oriented speech serves a similar role. In parallel with these characteristics of their appeal to their bases, their approach towards the formal workers indicates that incorporating labor unions as a common characteristic of mid-century governance appear to maintain their efficiency in the neoliberal era. In other words, these two governments do not leave the workers entirely unorganized.

However, they help organize the workers within the institutions that are close to the government and that engage in corporatist relations with them instead of taking on a more contestatory opposition against their policies. As such, these governments mobilize their bases with corporatist logic, by including the workers' organizations into the state structure, within their populist approach towards the population. This way, they facilitate those unions, which prefer to keep clientalist relations with the governments in the face of those, which reject co-opting strategies.

The state-labor relations in Turkey and Brazil indicate that, the largest unions are employed as intermediary institutions that work for the benefits for their own sectors and contain the labor mobilization on the national level, which would otherwise disrupt the functioning of the capitalist system. Concerning the success stories of Turkey and Brazil in the past decade, the relations between the incumbent governments and the unions that result in a conciliatory opposition by the larger part of the labor movement come forth in comprehending the successful implementation of the neoliberal policies in both countries. Undoubtedly, the corporatist relations between the states and labor institutions are not and will not be exclusive to the PT and AKP governments in these countries. What is underlined here is the specific developments under these governments that help contain the mobilization of the workers, which is also tightly connected with the position of Turkey and Brazil in world capitalism as emerging markets.



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