

KARABEKIR AKKOYUNLU

Comparative Politics | International Relations | Global South

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RESEARCH PROFILE

Comparative political scientist and international relations scholar studying the actors and institutions that drive and resist democratisation, autocratisation and militarisation in the Global South. Research uses interregional comparison to connect cases not usually studied together - especially Turkey, Iran, Brazil and Indonesia - and combines archival research and interviews with quantitative evidence. Current work examines populist-elite bargaining, the militarisation of environmental governance, and the sources of autocratic appeal and democratic resistance.

Research areas: democratisation and autocratisation; civil-military relations and militarisation; comparative politics; international relations and foreign policy; populism and elite politics; Middle East politics; environmental governance and security; state institutions and public administration.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS & RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

2026-2027	University of Oxford, Latin American Centre <i>Research Associate</i>
2025-2027	Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Department of Political Science, Belo Horizonte <i>Visiting Professor</i>
2024-2026	SOAS University of London, Department of Politics and International Studies <i>Research Associate (through August 2026)</i>
2021-2024	SOAS University of London, Department of Politics and International Studies <i>Lecturer in Middle East Politics</i>
2020-2021	Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), School of International Relations, São Paulo <i>Lecturer in International Development and Middle East Politics</i>
2018-2020	University of São Paulo (USP), International Relations Institute <i>Visiting Scholar</i>
2014-2017	University of Graz, Centre for Southeast European Studies <i>Postdoctoral Fellow</i>

EDUCATION

2014	London School of Economics and Political Science <i>PhD in Government</i> Dissertation: "The Rise and Fall of the Hybrid Regime: Guardianship and Democracy in Iran and Turkey". Supervisors: Dominic Lieven and Zhand Shakibi. Viva passed without corrections.
2007	University of Cambridge <i>MPhil in International Relations</i> Dissertation: "Military Reform and Democratisation: Turkish and Indonesian Experiences at the Turn of the Millennium". Awarded Distinction.
2005	Brown University <i>BA in History and International Relations</i>

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS & NETWORKS

2026-2033	Civil-Military Relations Network (CMRN) <i>Collaborator, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Grant</i> International research network on civilian control, military politicisation, democratic erosion and resilience.
2026-2027	Environmental Crises and Militarisation in the Global South <i>Project lead, UFMG - Latin American Centre, University of Oxford</i> Comparative research on how environmental crises and climate-related governance expand military involvement in civilian governance, with a focus on Brazil and Indonesia.
2026-2028	DeAppeal: Deconstruct and Resist Autocratic Appeal to Reinvigorate Democracy <i>Senior Researcher, Horizon Europe (HORIZON-CL2-2025-01)</i> Research on the affective, discursive and material sources of autocratic appeal and the conditions under which democratic alternatives and resistance can be strengthened.
2024-2026	Strange Bedfellows: Intra-elite Rivalries and Populist-Elite Coalitions in Tutelary Hybrid Regimes <i>Project co-lead with Yasser Kureshi; British Academy/Leverhulme Small Grant (£9,538)</i> Comparative study of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, focusing on populist-elite bargaining, institutional power and regime trajectories.

SELECTED FUNDING & AWARDS

2024-2026	British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant <i>Strange Bedfellows: Intra-elite Rivalries and Populist-Elite Coalitions in Tutelary Hybrid Regimes</i> (£9,538), with Yasser Kureshi
2022-2024	Open Society University Network - Threatened Scholars Integration Initiative SOAS project lead; collaborative research on militarism and foreign policy in Turkey (US\$20,000)
2018-2020	International Scholars and Specialists Programme, University of São Paulo Research funding (BRL 380,000; approximately £82,000 in 2018)
2017-2018	Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO) Research Grant (US\$6,000)
2015-2019	Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey (CEST) Four-year funding from Stiftung Mercator (€48,000)
2012-2013	LSE Middle East Centre Emirates PhD Scholarship (£13,000)
2009-2012	London School of Economics PhD Scholarship (full tuition plus maintenance support)

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2025	Contesting Autocratisation: Actors and Institutions of Democratic Resistance in a Global Perspective. Routledge. Co-edited with B. Yabancı and K. Öktem.
2024	Guardianship and Democracy in Iran and Turkey: Tutelary Consolidation, Popular Contestation. Edinburgh University Press.
2018	Exit from Democracy: Illiberal Governance in Turkey and Beyond. Routledge. Co-edited with K. Öktem.
2007	Military Reform and Democratisation: Turkish and Indonesian Experiences at the Turn of the Millennium. IISS Adelphi Series. Routledge.

Edited Special Issues

2025	"Limits of Autocratisation: Actors and Institutions of Democratic Resistance and Opposition." <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 46(2). With B. Yabancı and K. Öktem.
2016	"Exit from Democracy: Illiberal Governance in Turkey and Beyond." <i>Southeast European and Black Sea Studies</i> 16(4). With K. Öktem.

Journal Articles

2026	"The memory remains: Brazil's unfinished reckoning in <i>I'm Still Here</i> ." <i>Journal of Disappearance Studies</i> 2(1): 98-110.
2025	"Limits of Autocratisation: Actors and Institutions of Democratic Resistance and Opposition." <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 46(2): 97-116. With B. Yabancı and K. Öktem.
2024	"Blood Gambit: How Autocratizing Populists Fuel Ethnic Conflict to Reverse Election Setbacks - Evidence from Turkey and Israel." <i>Democratization</i> . With Y. Sarfati.
2022	"Brazil's Stealth Military Intervention." <i>Journal of Politics in Latin America</i> 14(1): 31-54. With J. A. Lima.
2021	"The Five Phases of Turkey's Foreign Policy under the AKP." <i>Social Research: An International Quarterly</i> 88(2): 243-270.
2021	"Efficiency, Merit and Privilege: Public Administration Reforms in Brazil and Turkey." <i>Revista do Serviço Público</i> 72(1): 200-231.
2016	"Exit from Democracy: Illiberal Governance in Turkey and Beyond." <i>Southeast European and Black Sea Studies</i> 16(4): 469-480. With K. Öktem.
2016	"Existential Insecurity and the Making of a Weak Authoritarian Regime in Turkey." <i>Southeast European and Black Sea Studies</i> 16(4): 505-527. With K. Öktem.

Book Chapters

2026	"Politics and Democratization." In M. Uyar and E. J. Erickson (eds), <i>The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkish History</i> . Routledge.
Forth.	"The Sultan's Army? Remaking of Civil-Military Relations in Turkey." In R. Brooks and C. Harig (eds), <i>Politicization of the Military in Contemporary Democracies</i> . Oxford University Press.
Forth.	"Politics in Turkey: Actors, Institutions and Processes." In J. Bessant, R. Watts and P. O'Keefe (eds), <i>Encyclopedia of Political Science</i> .
2025	"After the Stealth Intervention: Civil-Military Relations and Rule of Law in Post-Bolsonaro Brazil." In L. Whitehead and J. Behrend (eds), <i>Mounting Pressures on the Rule of Law: Governability for Development and Democracy in Latin America</i> . Routledge. With J. A. Lima.
2023	"One Hundred Years of Kemalism." In A. Özerdem and A. E. Öztürk (eds), <i>A Companion to Modern Turkey's Centennial</i> . Edinburgh University Press.
2020	"Sessiz Devrimin Gürültülü Sonu: Brezilya İşçi Partisi'nin Yükselişi ve Düşüşü" [The Turbulent End of the Silent Revolution: The Rise and Fall of Brazil's Workers' Party]. In E. Akgemci and K. Ates (eds), <i>Dünya'nın Ters Köşesi: Latin Amerika</i> . İletişim.
2019	"Kemalism and the Republican People's Party (CHP)." In E. Altındış, E. Özyürek and G. Özpinar (eds), <i>Authoritarianism and Resistance in Turkey</i> . Springer. With B. Oran.
2019	"Electoral Integrity in Turkey: From Tutelary Democracy to Competitive Authoritarianism." In B. Başer and A. E. Öztürk (eds), <i>Authoritarian Politics in Turkey</i> . I.B. Tauris.

- 2014** "Turkey." In H. Hänggi and C. G. Hernandez (eds), *Security Sector Reform and Democratization: A Comparative Perspective*. Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces / Lit Verlag.
- 2012** "Turkey's Iranian Conundrum: A Delicate Balancing Act." In A. Kadioğlu, M. Karlı and K. Öktem (eds), *Another Empire? Turkey's Foreign Policy in a New Century*. Bilgi University Press.

Work in Progress / Under Review

- 2026** "Strange Bedfellows: Intra-elite Rivalries and Populist-Elite Coalitions in Tutelary Hybrid Regimes." With Y. Kureshi. Manuscript under review.
- 2026** "Greenwashing Autocratisation: Militarised Environmental Governance in Brazil and Indonesia." Manuscript in preparation.
- In prog.** "Climate Diplomacy as Strategic Autonomy: Middle Power Foreign Policy in Brazil and Turkey." With B. Alpan.

POLICY & ADVISORY EXPERIENCE

- 2020-present** **Oxford Analytica, Oxford**
Regular contributor to Daily Briefs on Turkey's domestic politics, foreign policy and geopolitics.
- 2026** **Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies**
Author, A Difficult Balancing Act: Turkish-Iranian Relations in Turbulent Times, SUITS Policy Brief 2026:2.
- 2018** **National School of Public Administration (ENAP), Brasilia**
Author, The Civil Service in Brazil and Turkey: A Comparative Study, Cadernos ENAP No. 60 (with FLACSO Brasil).
- 2013** **Southeast European Studies at Oxford**
Co-author, Western Condition: Turkey, the US and the EU in the New Middle East, SEESOX Book Series on Current Affairs. With K. Nicolaidis and K. Öktem.
- 2008-2009** **AKE Group Ltd., London**
Political risk consultancy.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching interests: comparative politics; Middle East politics; international relations; democratisation and autocratisation; civil-military relations; research methods.

- 2025-2026** **Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG)**
• The Middle East in Global Politics (PG)
- 2021-2024** **SOAS University of London**
• Introduction to Comparative Politics (UG)
• Methodology in the Social Sciences (PG)
• State and Transformation in the Middle East (PG)
• Government and Politics of the Middle East (UG)
- 2020-2021** **Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV)**
• International Development (UG)
• The Middle East in Global Politics (UG)
- 2018-2020** **University of São Paulo (USP)**
• History and Politics of Modern Turkey
• Major Themes in the Contemporary Middle East
- 2017** **Olympia Summer Academy, Nafplio, Greece**
• Turkey in the 21st Century: Politics, Society and Economy
- 2014-2017** **University of Graz**
• Introduction to Interdisciplinary Approaches (PG)
• Political Systems in the 21st Century (UG/PG)
• The History of Modern Turkey (UG/PG)
- 2010-2012** **London School of Economics**
• Democracy and Democratisation (UG)
• The Middle East in Global Politics (Summer School)
- 2005-2006** **Universitas Atma Jaya, Yogyakarta - Princeton-in-Asia Fellow**
English language instructor for Political Science students and faculty; designed and implemented new curriculum for the Language Department.

SELECTED INVITED TALKS & CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

- 2026** **"Greenwashing Autocratisation: Militarised Environmental Governance in Brazil and Indonesia"**
3rd SOS4Democracy Conference, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, 24-26 June
- 2026** **"War, Resilience and Regime Transformation in Iran"**
Invited lecture, postgraduate Comparative Politics, Boğaziçi University, 29 April
- 2026** **"Stealth Militarisation in Brazil and Beyond"**
Invited lecture, Federal University of Minas Gerais, 8 June
- 2026** **"Strange Bedfellows: Intra-elite Rivalries and Populist-Elite Bargaining in Tutelary Hybrid Regimes"**
Invited research seminar, CEL-DCP, UFMG, 6 March

2026	"The Mechanics of Autocratization" / Security and Cooperation in Latin America <i>Paper presenter and panel discussant, IPSA RC44 & RC52 International Conference, UNESP, 3-6 August</i>
2026	"Latin American Presidential Unilateralism in Global Comparative Perspective" <i>International Seminar on Executives and Democratic Governance, PEX Network / UFMG, 14-15 May</i>
2024	"Militarisation of Politics in Turkey" <i>Book workshop, Royal Danish Defence College, 12-13 September</i>
2023	"After Erdogan: The Future of Democracy in Turkey" <i>LSE IDEAS workshop, London, 6 June</i>
2023	"Militarism, Militarisation and Democracy in an Uncertain Age" <i>Panel organiser, 27th IPSA World Congress, Buenos Aires, 15-19 July</i>
2022	"Limits of Autocratisation: Actors and Institutions of Democratic Resilience" <i>Conference co-organiser, 7th CEST Symposium on Turkey, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 18-20 November</i>
2022	"Blood Gambit: How Populist Autocrats Fuel Conflict to Reverse Election Setbacks - Evidence from Turkey and Israel" <i>MESA Annual Conference, Denver, 1-4 December</i>

ACADEMIC SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2026-present	Associação Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa (ABED) <i>Member</i>
2023-present	International Political Science Association <i>RC51 International Political Economy (Steering Committee); RC24 Armed Forces and Society; RC36 Political Power</i>
2016-2024	Middle East Studies Association (MESA) <i>Member</i>
2021-2024	SOAS University of London <i>First-Year Undergraduate Tutor (2023-24); Co-convenor, MSc Politics of the Middle East (2022-23); Departmental Liaison for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows (2021-23)</i>
2014-2018	Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey (CEST) <i>Founding Member</i>
2014-2017	Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz <i>Editor, Working Paper Series; Editor, Globalising Southeast Europe Research Blog</i>
2006-2007	Cambridge Review of International Affairs <i>Assistant Editor</i>

SELECTED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2026	The Economist / Folha de S.Paulo / Tagesschau / Al-Monitor / NRC / BirGün / Agos / Medyascope / Rethinking Democracy / Middle East Institute / İlke TV / Roteirices <i>Interviews, commentary and podcast/television discussions on Iran, Turkey, regional security and democratic resilience</i>
2025	Politiken / Corriere della Sera / Ta Nea <i>Commentary on Turkish politics, opposition and democratic resilience</i>
Earlier	BBC World News & Newshour; The Guardian; Foreign Policy; Al Jazeera; Libération; O Globo; Estadão <i>Regular media commentary on Turkey, Iran, the Middle East, Brazil, democracy and international affairs</i>

LANGUAGES

English — Native-level | **Portuguese** — Fluent | **Turkish** — Native
French — Advanced comprehension/reading; intermediate speaking/writing | **Persian** — Advanced comprehension/reading; intermediate speaking/writing
Indonesian — Intermediate comprehension/reading; elementary speaking/writing

REFERENCES

Felix Berenskoetter Reader in International Relations, King's College London felix.berenskotter@kcl.ac.uk	Risa Brooks Allis Chalmers Professor of Political Science, Marquette University risa.brooks@marquette.edu	Laurence Whitehead Senior Fellow, Nuffield College, University of Oxford laurence.whitehead@nuffield.ox.ac.uk
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