

Book review essay

The paradoxes of 'new' Turkey: Islam, illiberal democracy and republicanism

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Contemporary Turkey in conflict: ethnicity, Islam and politics. By Tahir Abbas. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press. 2017. 200pp. £90.00. ISBN 978 1 47441 798 3.

Regime change in contemporary Turkey: politics, rights, mimesis. By Necati Polat. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press. 2016. 293pp. £90.00. ISBN 978 1 47441 696 2.

The new Turkey and its discontents. By Simon A. Waldman and Emre Caliskan. London: Hurst. 2016. 342pp. £57.00. ISBN 978 0 19066 836 5. Available as e-book.

Turkey is in turmoil. It was the first Muslim country to engage with European modernity and transformed itself from the Ottoman Empire into a secular nation-state at the beginning of the twentieth century. Modern Turkey has been at the centre of debates concerned with the future of liberal societies, secularism, democracy and economic development in an Islamic context. When the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or AKP) first came to power in 2002, Turkey was described as a shining example of 'the only Muslim democracy' in the Middle East.¹ The party has remained in power since then. The 'new' Turkey under AKP rule has missed a historic opportunity to prove that liberal democracy could work in a Muslim country.² On 16 April 2017, the majority of people (51.4 per cent) voted 'yes' in a public referendum to change Turkey's political system from a parliamentary democracy to an executive presidency (*Cumhurbaşkanlığı sistemi*). The 'democratically' approved change of political system and the new constitution strengthens the presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by extending his powers. In fact, this final stage of a 'regime change' has plunged Turkey into turmoil.

¹ Bernard Lewis, 'Why Turkey is the only Muslim democracy', *Middle East Quarterly*, March 1994, pp. 41-49, <http://www.meforum.org/216/why-turkey-is-the-only-muslim-democracy>. (Unless otherwise noted at the point of citation, all URLs cited in this review essay were accessible on 14 June 2017.)

² Ayla Göl, 'What went wrong with Turkey's referendum', *Open Democracy*, 4 April 2017, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/ayla-gol/what-went-wrong-with-turkey-s-referendum>.

The AKP rule and regime change

During the AKP's tenure, Erdoğan had become the Turkey's longest serving Prime Minister and carried his party to victory three times (2002, 2007 and 2011) and then became the first elected president in 2014. While some hailed this as the so-called 'Turkish model', many have been rather sceptical about an ideological 'hidden agenda' of the AKP leadership to Islamize Turkish politics. Nevertheless, a stable Turkey under the pro-Islamic AKP rule was perceived as essential to improving relations between the West and the Muslim world. Under Erdoğan's leadership, Turkey has achieved exemplary economic development, tackled the state within a state (deep state) bureaucracy and clamped down on the military's power, while engaging in a peace process with the Kurds, at least during the early days of the AKP governance. Since 2014, the 'new Turkey' has become one of the AKP's popular slogans, encapsulating its political project for reimagining the nation and the state. In the aftermath of the Turkish referendum in 2017, none of these achievements are sustainable, and the trajectory of Turkish politics is uncertain. Within the last two decades under Erdoğan's leadership, it has become clear that a western model of 'liberal democracy' will probably not be the final destination of Turkey's journey, but just one of many possible stops.³ What went wrong under the AKP government, that caused a promising 'Turkish model' to turn into authoritarian rule and the rise of illiberal democracy? While the three books under review have different emphases and address different questions, all of them offer timely insights into understanding this pressing question in both Turkish and Middle Eastern politics.

Collectively, these works make a valuable contribution to our understanding of how Turkey under AKP rule found itself in turmoil in 2017. Simon Waldman and Emre Caliskan's *The new Turkey* is written in an engaging style and is highly recommended to anyone interested in understanding the rise of the AKP under the leadership of Erdoğan and its policies throughout his three terms in government. Necati Polat's *Regime change in contemporary Turkey* complements Waldman and Caliskan's book by specifically focusing on the AKP's second term, between 2007 and 2011. In *Contemporary Turkey in conflict*, Tahir Abbas diligently analyses the complex dynamics between ethnicity, nationalism and Islam in relation to neo-liberalism and conservatism. His original emphasis is on how issues of political trust and social capital have impacted citizenship and identity in Turkey since the rise of AKP, and to what extent the ethnic, religious and cultural dimensions of Turkish identity have changed. Like Waldman and Caliskan, Abbas provides a historically-conscious analysis of Turkish politics. Both books are particularly concerned with the themes of economic development; the rise of Erdoğan's leadership within the AKP; the changing dynamics of civil-military relations; the challenges of managing tensions between Islam, nationalism and democratization; the 'Kurdish issue' and the peace process; and the Gezi Park awakening. Polat's

³ Fareed Zakaria, 'The rise of illiberal democracy', *Foreign Affairs* 76: 6, Nov.–Dec. 1997, p. 37, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1997-11-01/rise-illiberal-democracy>.

book differs in its methodology; the author locates his theoretically informed analysis of regime change within the study of International Relations.

In *Regime change in contemporary Turkey*, Polat argues that Turkey experienced a series of 'regime changes' since Ottoman modernization (*tanzimat*) in the late nineteenth century. However, the recent 'regime change' led by the AKP replaced the long-established dichotomy between the 'state' and the 'government' with a 'single—albeit authoritarian—rule' (p. 319). While explaining this change through the historical continuity between the 'new' and the 'old', he adopts an innovative methodology by drawing on René Girard's work on mimesis, which he had already developed in his previous book.⁴ Polat's argument is centred on the concept of 'desire', which is 'structurally mimetic; it is always already the desire of the other'; it is imitative and modelled on the other. Polat claims that in all cases of 'regime change' in Turkey, 'it may be possible to identify the main gestures of desire, proceeding simply to replicate the rival and the lead in to time to violence, scapegoating and more violence' (pp. 8–14). Therefore, he traces a pattern of 'mimetic rivalry' in his historic classification of 'regime changes' in Turkish politics, and more recently in the rivalry between the Islamic Gülen community, the Kemalist bureaucracy and Erdoğan.⁵ When, during the transitional period between 2007 and 2011, the Gülen community was an ally of the AKP, they 'mercilessly "lynched" the loyalists of the old regime [Kemalists]', but, since August 2016, the Gülenists have faced a similar lynching and have been made the scapegoats of the anti-coup purge (p. 16). Polat is successful in contextualizing the notion of 'mimetic rivalry' in the power struggle between secularists and Islamists in Turkey, but it is unconvincing as a universal pattern. He raises the key question as to why 'the political drama that has been unfolding in Turkey' does not appear in other countries, say Norway or Australia (p. 33). This is an important point that brings to mind the debates on 'Turkish exceptionalism', along with the age-old question of the role of Islam in politics.

In *Contemporary Turkey in conflict*, Abbas agrees with Polat's claims to historical continuity between modern Turkey and the Ottomans, and his argument that under President Erdoğan's rule the country has become increasingly authoritarian. Abbas explains the complex nature of Turkish politics through the lens of 'exceptionalism'—due to Islam's paradoxical relations with ethnicity and nationalism. In particular, for Abbas, the 'historical and political formation of the Turkish nation is rather different than western European conceptualizations'. Therefore, the complex 'ethnic and racial tensions that exist in Turkey'—such as the Kurdish issue—are less well understood (p. 55). However, the politics of ethnic nationalism, cultural discrimination and racism that Abbas identifies as unique to Turkey, is widespread in the world. The Irish question in the UK, Basque and Catalan

⁴ Necati Polat, *International Relations, meaning and mimesis* (London: Routledge, 2012).

⁵ The Gülen movement (*Hizmet*—'the service') run by Fethullah Gülen operates a global network of business, education, media and charitable organizations. It runs schools in over 150 countries, including more than 100 chartered schools in the US, and has grown into what is possibly the world's largest Muslim network with millions of followers. Gülen was accused of infiltrating the Turkish military, the police and the judiciary in an attempt to undermine the secular foundations of the Republic. Gülen has been living in exile in US since 1999.

nationalism in Spain and the Kashmiri issue in India all point to this. Consequently, the author's claims about 'Turkish exceptionalism' will fail to convince readers.

Waldman and Caliskan, meanwhile, carefully unpack the paradoxes of the 'new' Turkey, through a novel approach to its internal and external discontents. According to their interpretation, the 'tragedy of Turkish politics' today is that 'Turkey's democracy remains deficient in many spheres', despite the removal of the military from politics. They examine this 'disappointing reality from many angles', analysing the country's domestic and foreign affairs, without reducing their explanation either to the role of Islam or Turkish exceptionalism. *The new Turkey and its discontents* offers in-depth examinations of Turkish politics based on an impressive number of diverse interviews with key politicians, academics and activists.

All three books seem to broadly agree that Turkey under AKP rule has changed in three stages: 'economic miracle' combined with pseudo democratization (2002–2007); 'regime change' (2007–2011); and, finally, the rise of authoritarianism and Islamo-nationalism (2011–15). Based on these insights, it is possible to argue that this metamorphosis has created the paradoxes of 'new' Turkey, which I will attempt to highlight and explore in this review essay.

The persistence of Islam in Turkish politics

The question is whether Islam played a crucial role during AKP's rise to power. When the 9/11 terrorist attacks shook the world, the majority of Turks did not perceive Islam through the prism of 'Islamophobia' and the 'Islamic threat'—as had become prevalent in the West. Turkey had its own internal security dilemma—the Kurdish question and PKK terrorism—combined with an economic crisis prior to the general elections in 2002. As Waldman and Caliskan highlight, the AKP positioned itself carefully before the 2002 elections and won a landslide victory for the following reasons: it branded itself as 'socially conservative'; leaders did not highlight the party's 'pro-Islamic' roots; but they recognized the 'secular' character of the state to avoid an immediate clash with the 'military's guardianship' of secularism; and they benefited from the economic crisis of 2001 (p. 21).

The persistence of Islam as part of the country's history, culture and society has created Turkey's first paradox in state–society relations. In Turkish politics, right- and left-wing parties have utilized the role of Islam in society for their own ends since the beginning of the multiparty system in 1950. Building on the experience of the previous centre-right parties and the history of military coups, the AKP leadership developed a rather ambivalent attitude toward Islam. Any increase in religious tone and activity was regarded as a threat to the secular character of the state and led to the closure of political parties or military coups almost every decade from the 1960s onwards. The last coup of the twentieth century was also known as the 'post-modern' coup, because the military's intervention in politics was carried out by an e-memorandum on 28 February 1997 (*The new Turkey and its discontents*, p. 20). In 2001, Turkey's Constitutional Court closed down the Virtue

Party for anti-secular activities and the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*) was established instead to represent strongly Islamist views. While the force of Islam reshaped the dynamics of international politics post-9/11, it did not increase support for the pro-Islamic Felicity Party (it received only 2.5 per cent of the vote in 2002 and 2.3 per cent in 2007).⁶ It was evident that the majority of voters were more concerned about the Turkish economy than Islam.

The November 2002 election, which AKP won, was declared on the heels of one of Turkey's major financial crises in 2001. The AKP never highlighted its 'pro-Islamic' roots, instead it prioritized economic development, paving the way for a recovery. To its credit, in its first term in power, the party closely followed the fiscal discipline and austerity introduced by the IMF (*Regime change in contemporary Turkey*, p. 313). This thorough regulatory adjustment programme, between 2001 and 2007, put emphasis on new normative frameworks for public procurement, privatization and social security. As experienced by the ordinary person on the street, the AKP achieved a 'Turkish economic miracle' by reducing the rate of inflation from 45 per cent in 2002 to 6.3 per cent in 2009. By 2010, Turkey had turned itself into a global player, 'confident of its economic and political position regionally and globally' (*Contemporary Turkey in conflict*, p. 1). Although Turkey's economic recovery was part of a global trend that promoted capital flows and growth in so-called emerging markets, the Turkish economy particularly benefited through increases in its gross domestic product (GDP), which more than tripled to £798.429 billion in 2014 (*Regime change in contemporary Turkey*, p. 313).

The impact of Turkey–EU relations on the democratization process

The AKP came to power at the apogee of Turkey–EU relations. Turkey's EU candidacy application was in line with the AKP government's commitment to the IMF's economic stabilization plan and recovery programmes. After the EU officially recognized Turkey as a candidate state for membership at the Helsinki summit of 1999, the accession process led to important developments in Turkish politics, by requiring Turkish politics and the economy to meet the 'Copenhagen criteria' for EU membership. In addition to a functioning market economy, these criteria included issues pertaining to minority rights, the rule of law, human rights and legislative alignment with the laws of the EU. The AKP government, during its 2002–2007 term, enthusiastically advocated Turkey's EU membership, even successfully passing a number of economic and political reform packages in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria. While the EU became Turkey's main trade partner, Turkey's historical problems—taboos such as the Cyprus issue, the Armenian genocide and the Kurdish question—remained sources of discontent. On the one hand, the government ensured the public that these taboos would never be part of any negotiations with European powers, as this could harm Turkey's national interests and state security; on the other, it gave the EU the impression of instituting progressive economic and political reforms.

⁶ Ayla Göl, 'The identity of Islam: muslim and secular', *Third World Quarterly* 30: 4, 2009, p. 802.

Turkish–EU relations have created the second paradox of the ‘new’ Turkey: the seemingly positive impacts of EU reforms on civil–military relations did not accelerate the process of democratization. The books reviewed here highlight two crucial aspects. First, the democratic reforms undertaken by the AKP were in fact instrumental policies designed to strengthen the party’s grip on power. EU-imposed political reforms were carried out in order to rid the military and other branches of government of Kemalist elements and replace them with AKP supporters. Second, the EU never seriously considered admitting Turkey, but imposed a set of political criteria that mostly served European short-term interests. Hence, the republican ideologues felt rather betrayed by the EU’s support for the AKP (*Regime change in contemporary Turkey*, p. 80). It seems to me that both the EU and the US turned a blind eye to the AKP’s pseudo-democratization, as long as the government satisfied the strategic interests of the ‘war on terror’ and later assisted the EU in stopping Syrian refugees at Turkey’s borders.

These insights serve as a valuable reminder of the dangers associated with imposing reforms in the name of democratization. This brings us to the well-rehearsed debates over whether or not democracy can be promoted by external powers: neither imposing elections on countries—as in Afghanistan and Iraq—nor interfering in the domestic affairs of countries—as in the case civil–military relations in Turkey—seem to work if the country is not ready. Democratization is a long-term and gradual process and any external interference can take a country in an unexpected direction. As seen in Turkey, EU programmes had unintended consequences for Turkey’s democratization, which I will discuss in relation to the failed coup attempt and the presidential referendum.

In the Middle East, events after the Arab Spring of 2011 and the Syrian crisis of 2012 made a stable Turkey under the democratically elected AKP government a prerequisite for western interests in the region. Meanwhile, Erdoğan’s way of conducting politics—like his tactical use of ‘European integration’, which led to regime change by 2011—went unnoticed. The AKP successfully subscribed to pragmatist populism throughout its tenure in power, but the Gezi awakening in 2013 was a turning-point. Despite its populist rhetoric, the government condones the excessive use of violence by police forces in response to the initially peaceful protests. It was clear that Erdoğan’s ‘new’ Turkey would not democratically engage with certain groups—comprising around 2.5 million people according to official figures—that took to the streets and public squares in anti-government protests (*Regime change in contemporary Turkey*, p. 145). What was unique about the Gezi protests was that the brutality of the state’s response formed a unique kinship between protestors from all walks of life—of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, gender, ideologies and religious views. Any similar event of this magnitude would have brought the end of a civilian government under ‘the old bureaucratic order’. Erdoğan himself was fearful, as Egypt experienced similar protests at the time which led to the end of the Muslim Brotherhood’s rule (*Regime change in contemporary Turkey*, p. 145). That the AKP government managed to survive the protests made it clear that it had been liberated from the influence of the military in politics,

but its disproportionate response to the protesters damaged its democratic image in international public opinion. The Gezi protests were also strong evidence that the tensions between different parts of society were not due to the old divisions between the secular and Islamic parts of society, but the democratization that the Turkish state had reluctantly signed up to. The AKP was simply singing the same tune as the previous governments: authoritarian tendencies with increased violation of civil liberties. Since the Gezi protests, the 'new' Turkey holds the world record for prosecuting journalists and anti-government voices—more than China and Iran.

Turkey found that both its domestic and foreign policies were in turmoil following the 2015 general election. In international affairs, Turkey was at the centre of a new era of regional conflicts—with the rise of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Syrian civil war—against the backdrop of a de facto end to the fragile ceasefire between Turkey and the PKK, negotiated in 2013. In domestic politics, on the evening of 15 July 2016, an unexpected military coup attempt shook Turkey. The attempt was just the tip of the iceberg, and much worse followed. The symbol of Turkish parliamentary democracy, the Grand National Assembly, was bombed by members of the country's own security forces; police and the military exchanged gunfire; and plotters attacked civilians on the streets of Istanbul and Ankara. The failed coup united people on the streets, as well as all party leaders—including the AKP's opponents—who sided with democracy or, rather, with Erdoğan. Once Erdoğan was assured that the government had taken control, he quickly announced that this was 'a coup attempt by a small faction in the military, the parallels [Gülenists]'.⁷ Since 2010, Erdoğan has accused the Gülen movement of running a 'parallel state' with the aim of overthrowing the AKP government. Erdoğan was quick to say that the putsch was 'a gift from God' to Turkey which would give him a reason to cleanse the army (*Contemporary Turkey in conflict*, p. 158).

The failure of the coup did not mean that democracy had won in Turkey. Between July 2016 and the presidential referendum in April 2017, over 50,000 people were arrested and around 100,000 state officers were fired because of presumed connections with the Gülenist movement. The country is governed under a state of emergency, with the ongoing purge creating a climate of fear. Paradoxically, the coup attempt not only helped President Erdoğan's quest for more power and greater authoritarian control over Turkish politics, but also made him the defender of 'civilian rule'—while clamping down on civil liberties. He successfully leveraged this popularity into 'yes' votes for constitutional change. According to Erdoğan, a path has now been opened for rapid development, so that Turkey will become a more 'democratic', secure and stable country. Many doubt this. Furthermore, this is where I differ from Waldman and Caliskan's claim that 'Turkey is still a democratic state' (p. 86). Under AKP rule, Turkey is no longer democratic and, more importantly, the future of republicanism is at stake.

Under US influence, 'in the west, democracy has meant *liberal* democracy—a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also the rule of law,

⁷ <https://twitter.com/AkyolinEnglish/status/754065067725955072>.

a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property'.⁸ Although Turkey's current democratic system is imperfect, political power is not concentrated in the hands of one man, because checks and balances operate through the separation of powers: the head of government (the prime minister) and the head of the state (the president) are two different people; the president is neutral, without any political party ties and role; the executive branch of the government derives its legitimacy from its ability to command the confidence of the legislature; and the power of the executive and legislative is balanced by an impartial judiciary. The separation of powers is protected by the constitution. Historically, constitutions have been essential to establishing the rules of a social contract and how power is exercised within the state. In general, constitutions evolve to reflect progressive changes in society but, unfortunately, this trend is going backwards in Turkey.

There is no question that the current constitution, which was accepted after the military coup of 1980, needs to be amended, but not in an illiberal way. With the referendum, a package of 18 constitutional amendments was passed: the post of prime minister has been abolished; the president can keep ties with political parties; has the authority to draft the budget and to declare a state of emergency; and can issue decrees to appoint ministries without parliamentary approval. More importantly, the impartiality of the judiciary has been undermined; the president will have broad authority over the high council of judges and prosecutors. All these changes lead to the concentration of political power in the hands of one individual, President Erdoğan, with weakened checks and balances. In short, by eliminating the separation of powers and the impartiality of the judiciary, these changes reverse progress made in Turkey and set it on a route towards illiberal democracy. In a global context, 'illiberal democracies have become more the norm than the exception' in many countries with different cultures and religions.⁹ Erdoğan's authoritarianism is not a new type of political Islam, but old-school nationalism combined with illiberal democracy, as seen in Putin's Russia and Modi's India. However, the rise of authoritarianism and illiberal democracy poses further, specific, dangers for the future of constitutional liberalism and its implications for republicanism in Turkey.

The future of republicanism in Turkey

It is here that I part company with the line of analysis pursued by Abbas and Polat about the nature of 'regime change' and the future of republicanism, which is the third paradox of the 'new' Turkey. For Polat, the last 'regime change' took place 2007–2011, but I would argue that this process has not come to an end yet. The main problem concerning the rise of illiberal democracy and authoritarianism in Turkey is not related to religious and nationalist (Islamist-nationalist) tensions, but

⁸ Zakaria, 'The rise of illiberal democracy', p. 22.

⁹ Dani Rodrik and Sharun Mukand, 'Why illiberal democracies are on the rise', *Huffington Post*, Project Syndicate, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dani-rodrik/illiberal-democracies-on-the-rise_b_7302374.html.

is rather about the nature of republicanism in the Turkish context. The so-called 'new' Turkey's last paradox is the notion of republicanism. Abbas advances his arguments based on Turkish exceptionalism, as explained earlier, arising from a unique combination of ethnic nationalism and Islamism. The success of AKP's three consecutive periods in power is a testament not only to its popular pragmatism, which combined Turkish nationalism with Islam, but also to its move to post-Islamism. In the Turkish context, the idea of post-Islamism goes beyond the notion of a purely Islamic system of governance. Post-Islamism 'incorporates secular and liberal notions of democracy' (*Contemporary Turkey in conflict*, p. 54). In this sense, it seems to me that the AKP has not advanced to post-Islamism by turning Turkey into an illiberal democracy. The term republicanism in the Turkish context should not be reduced to the ideology of Kemalism only, as highlighted in all books under review. From a Kantian perspective, republicanism means 'a separation of powers, checks and balances, the rule of law, protection of individual rights, and some level of representation in government (though nothing close to universal suffrage)'.¹⁰ Therefore, a broader interpretation of republicanism, incorporating constitutional liberalism, is useful to illustrate what is really at stake for the future of the 'new' Turkey. Via the constitutional changes ushered in by the last referendum, AKP rule under Erdoğan's leadership challenges not only Kemalist ideology but constitutional liberalism too. As highlighted by Zakaria:

In countries not grounded in constitutional liberalism, the rise of democracy often brings with it hyper-nationalism and war-mongering. When the political system is opened up, diverse groups with incompatible interests gain access to power and press their demands. Political and military leaders, who are often embattled remnants of the old authoritarian order, realise that to succeed that they must rally the masses behind a national cause. The result is invariably aggressive rhetoric and policies, which often draw countries into confrontation and war.¹¹

Once the AKP gained access to power as the representative of Muslims—who were seen as incompatible with the secular character of the Turkish state—they seemed to be against 'the old authoritarian order', that is the Kemalist establishment. The AKP's struggle for power resulted in more aggressive rhetoric and policies towards, the internal enemies of the state—the Kurds and the Gülenists—accompanied by increasing levels Turkish hyper-nationalism and post-Islamism (*Contemporary Turkey in conflict*, p. 112). The end result was the majority approval of the presidential referendum that allowed Erdoğan to change Turkey's constitutional liberalism and remain in power possibly as late as until 2029. In other words, Turkey might be ruled by the same leader for 30 years, as it was under the Ottoman sultans.

The rise of Erdoğan's authoritarianism, combined with illiberal democracy, will have serious implications for Turkish foreign policy. On the one hand, Turkey's pro-western—EU and US—policies will be effected by the AKP's regressive

¹⁰ Zakaria, 'The rise of illiberal democracy', p. 37.

¹¹ Zakaria, 'The rise of illiberal democracy', p. 38.

policies. On the other hand, with a weakened system of checks and balances, President Erdoğan can easily drag the country into a war in the Middle East and change Turkey's foreign policy direction. While the Middle East state system faces one of the biggest threats to regional and international security, Erdoğan's Turkey will be in search for new illiberal democratic allies—such as Modi's India or Putin's Russia. This will in return put in doubt Turkey's reliability as an ally within western institutions—NATO and the EU. Therefore, Turkey's latest regime change will lead the country into further instability and chaos in the Middle East. Within the next two years, in November 2019 or probably earlier, presidential and parliamentary elections must be held. With the end of constitutional liberalism, this will be the opportunity to complete the final stage of regime change in Erdoğan's Turkey, which will bring the age of republicanism to a conclusion. People—Turks and Kurds—will have a chance to observe how Erdoğan uses his extended powers in the coming months. Much is at stake under the one-man rule for Turkey's future, including for Erdoğan himself. The question is whether the majority of people in Turkey will decide to celebrate the centenary of the Turkish Republic in 2023 as a secular republic or an Islamic one.