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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

Exit from democracy: illiberal governance in Turkey and beyond

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This essay gives a synoptic overview of what we will describe as Turkey's 'exit from democracy', a shift to authoritarianism and an Islamist 'revolution from above' that comes on the back of a much longer 'passive revolution'. Secondly, it engages with the ideas and papers emanating from an International Symposium on 'Populism, majoritarianism and crises of liberal democracy', which the authors convened at the University of Graz in October 2015.¹

Exit from democracy?

The 'decline of democracy', as well as the universalization of authoritarian modes of governance has been the concern of leading scholars of democratization lately (cf. Diamond and Plattner 2015; Diamond, Plattner, and Walker 2016). Democracies are suffering globally from the onslaught of neoliberal economic governance and the mostly right-wing populist counter currents it engenders. The privatization of public goods and services, the supremacy of profit and the reorganization of the world economy to benefit big corporations and financial markets have undermined cultures of civility and ideas of the common good without which a democratic policy cannot sustain itself. While the effects of these trends have been observed in most democratic systems, and certainly everywhere in Europe, the impact of the neoliberal project has been significantly more severe in countries with relatively weak institutions and immature democracies. In terms of democratic consolidation and institutional capacity, South-east Europe remains at the economic and political periphery and belongs to these severely affected countries, where the space for democratic politics has been shrinking rapidly (cf. Günay and Džihic for a comparison with Serbia and Macedonia in this issue). In the last few years, Turkey has seen the most radical authoritarian shift to the extent that we can safely assert the country is now in the process of exiting the most basic provisions of a democratic regime, i.e. a level playing field for incumbents and challengers in electoral campaigning, the safe transfer of power after a loss of elections and a minimum consideration by those in power for society as a whole rather than exclusively for their clients.

Turkey's political landscape shares a wide range of characteristics with relatively weak democratic systems in the Balkans, in Russia, in Latin America – the comparative cases discussed in this special issue – and their gradual transformation into authoritarian regimes. With the exception of Latin America, these political arrangements are based on neoliberal economies. These competitive authoritarian systems (Levitsky and Way 2002) are distinguished by a set of factors: they are ruled by democratically elected charismatic leaders, who resort to aggressive political discourses that mobilize 'genuine nations' against 'old elites' and divide the remaining world into friends and foes. Political parties function as machines creating consent, servicing their clients and replacing existing and more independent institutions and state agencies. As the contributions to this special issue show, their discourses, and their illiberal modes of governance – from their quest to mobilize voters by polarizing society to unequal election campaigning, from an assault on independent institutions to state capture through patronage networks – are close to identical. The left-wing populism of Chavez and Correa, the Russian nationalist discourse of Putin and Turkish President Erdoğan's Islamist nationalism follow similar logics of power accrual and maintenance (cf. Selçuk for Latin America and White and Herzog for a comparison with Russia, both in this issue). Often, they even share the same vocabulary.

Despite this wider challenge of the illiberality of neoliberalism and the larger phenomenon of populist threats to democracy, which are discussed in detail in this issue, we believe that the case of Turkey under the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) is further distinguished by at least two conditions. The first pertains to the ideology and the conduct of a revisionist project of regime change; the second to Turkey's fluid geopolitical environment with a wide range of actors and dynamics beyond the control of the government (cf. Akkoyunlu and Öktem in this issue). This fragile regional set-up is further complicated by an increasingly less assertive European Union in crisis (Turhan 2016), which accounted for most of the liberalizing reforms of the early 2000s. Both contribute to an accelerating radicalization of the political sphere and a loss of democratic conventions that goes well beyond democratic backtracking. The European Union's role may be viewed as particularly unfortunate. It is arguably the 'refugee deal' between the EU and Turkey and the fear of a resumption of the refugee route through the Aegean that keeps EU criticism at bay (Öktem 2016b). Sadly, the European Union is disengaging from Turkey at a time when its democracy and democrats are in need of ever more support. Yet, Turkey has exited democracy, and increasingly, the 'state of exception', where the distinction between legislative, executive and judicial powers, is becoming 'the paradigm of government' (Agamben 2005, 7).

Populism, majoritarianism and crises of liberal democracy

The very genesis of this special issue illustrates the depth of political conflict and the speed of escalation in Turkey's politics. Most of the contributing papers were first presented at the aforementioned Symposium 'Populism, majoritarianism and crises of liberal democracy' in October 2015. The Symposium itself was the result of the efforts of concerned academics, to create a regular venue for critical research on the politics and society of Turkey. They therefore established the CEST. When they first met with the selected participants of the Symposium, the mood was cautiously optimistic: the elections of 7 June had reduced AKP vote from 50 to 40%, signalling an end to the AKP's dominant party status (Muftuler-Baç

and Keyman 2012). As importantly, the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP) had succeeded to present itself as a socially progressive left-leaning party that seemed poised to move beyond the confines of ethno-politics and into the mainstream of the political system, a phenomenon discussed critically by Tekdemir and Leezenberg in this issue. The expectation, after more than six decades of Turkey's electoral – if not democratic – path dependence, was that the time of AKP hegemony was nearing an end through democratic means. The election result would normally have necessitated some form of power-sharing and an end to the violent polarization, on which the AKP and President Erdoğan built their election strategy. Hence, the mood was cautiously optimistic.

This was, of course, before the 'repeat elections' of November, which marked Turkey's 'exit from democracy'. They were called after the AKP failed to form a coalition government and President Erdoğan chose to ignore democratic convention, which would have mandated that he ask the leader of the opposition to form a coalition or minority government. For the first time in Turkey's electoral history since 1950, an election result was ignored. Between June and November, Turkey entered a period of heightened violence and terror attacks (Akkoyunlu 2016) against the HDP and pro-Kurdish activists. War erupted in the Kurdish provinces with both the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and state security forces using brute force. Entire neighbourhoods of major cities in the Kurdish south-east were literally reduced to rubble during the state's reaction to the declaration of 'autonomy' by Kurdish mayors and the digging of trenches by young men and women apparently following orders from the PKK.² Erdoğan, *de jure* a non-partisan head of state, campaigned on behalf of the AKP, indicating clearly that only he and his party would be able to deliver safety and security. The repeat elections then delivered a vote that allowed the AKP to once again form a single party government.

Ever since, Turkey's politics have been marked by a sense of accelerating escalation, inter-elite conflict and a war on institutions. The most visible episode of this escalation is the coup attempt of 15 July. Much of it remains shrouded in mystery. In fact, it is the mystery of the coup attempt, which is most enthusiastically spun into a narrative of (Turkish Islamic) martyrdom and a rebirth of the nation, and declared in a multitude of placards on roadsides and city squares (cf. Arango 2016).³ At the time of writing however, conclusive evidence about the coup's masterminds was still not forthcoming. It appears that many of the coup plotters were sympathizers of the AKP's erstwhile political ally, the Hizmet network around the charismatic preacher Fethullah Gülen. A complex web of globally operating schools and businesses, the network is hard to classify, but is increasingly seen as a hybrid between a relatively benign religious community and a clandestine Islamist movement seeking to take over power in Turkey (Filkins 2016; Gürcan 2016a, 2016c). It is unlikely, however, that followers of Gülen were the only faction involved, and Kemalist hardliners and opportunists are believed to have joined the ranks eventually, probably too late to turn it into a success (Gürcan 2016a). Whether the attempted coup was primarily a case of violent intra-Islamist elite conflict, as the government's narrative would suggest, or something much wider, we cannot say at this time. What we can say, however, is that the event shocked not only the Turkish public, but also called to mind that the country has entered a constant state of emergency.

State of exception

The AKP in government has tended towards forms of state capture from its first term in power. Top-level bureaucratic positions were staffed with party members, and more

importantly, with members of religious brotherhoods and orders, who were generally seen as more reliable than their secular predecessors. The most powerful of these religious networks was without doubt the Hizmet movement, which was particularly influential in the judiciary and the military (Filkins 2016).⁴ This arrangement was, however, balanced off with meritocratic elements at least in the lower-to-medium levels of universities, the state service agencies and the bureaucracy.⁵ Even before 15 July, purges had begun in the state as well as in universities and the private sector. These were, however, predominantly targeting members of the Hizmet network, and to a lesser extent, critical journalists and pro-Kurdish and socialist scholars.

What happened after the coup attempt, and was still continuing at the time of writing, however, is a purge of so epic proportions that it probably compares to Stalin's Great Terror, if not in its physical brutality, at least in terms of its magnitude (Öktem 2016b, *forthcoming*). More than 1600 members of the military were dishonourably discharged, 149 of them generals and admirals, amounting to 40% of the military high command. The numbers are constantly growing, but in the aftermath of the coup attempt and at the time of writing, 40,000 people were in custody, 32,000 in prison awaiting trial. More than 90,000 public employees were suspended, and 60,000 had been dismissed (Tartanoğlu 2006), bringing the number of citizens directly affected to well above 200,000. A purge with such dimensions can of course not be realized within the confines of the rule of law, also because the judiciary itself is a key target of the purges. Many of the people, who are now experiencing or facing prison or at least an assault on their social status had little to do with the Hizmet network, let alone participated in the coup attempt.

It is the state of emergency order of 20 July that seemingly creates the legal backdrop for the purges. In fact, the state of emergency has also officially suspended the rule of law and the European Convention of Human Rights.⁶ Under emergency law, 934 schools were closed and the activities of 19 trade unions were terminated. The democratically elected mayors of 28 Kurdish municipalities are now suspended and replaced with AKP appointees (Tartanoğlu 2006). The closure of several media outlets close to the Hizmet network as well as socialist and pro-Kurdish newspapers and TV channels has limited the space of relative free speech to a few critical newspapers with limited circulation (Öktem 2016a). While the concept of 'illiberal governance' is most appropriate to analyse the AKP's mode of governance before 15 July, as most of the papers in this collection do, the current purges and government crackdown represent a new level of urgency in the form of governance, which calls into mind Giorgio Agamben's logic of the 'state of exception', which European governments resorted to during and after the first World War: 'One of the essential characteristics of the state of exception – the provisional abolition of the distinction among legislative, executive, and judicial powers – here shows its tendency to become a lasting practice of government.'

The logic of exception at the universities

The universities are just one of several domains in which the government is resorting to the 'logic of exception' with the explicit aim to reshape power relations. Fifteen foundation (private) universities affiliated with the Hizmet network have been shut down, leaving 2300 academic and administrative staff without work and tens of thousands of students searching for a place in state universities. Several hundred scholars have already lost their work in state

and private universities due to their critical research, political engagement or membership in socialist trade unions and several thousand are now facing some form of punishment for their support of signature campaigns and calls for peace in the Kurdish provinces.

A case in point is the 'Academics for Peace' Initiative, whose more than 3000 signatories are experiencing a wide range of administrative pressures and risk social isolation and economic precarity (De Medeiros 2016; Erkmen 2016). Around 10% of the initial 1128 signatories have already lost their job (Konuk 2016).⁷ Many more are likely to join them soon, due to an expected wave of purges against academics and civil servants, who are suspected of support for the PKK, or more generally, of sympathies for the Kurdish movement. The government's message is clear: universities shall not be places of critical reflection on society anymore, let alone venues for critical research social research. On an individual level, the price of this policy can be calculated in the thousands of broken academic career paths and personal lives. On a societal level, it means the destruction of the country's capacity for critical knowledge production. How can we explain this destructive urge, particularly when we consider that many of the critical academics, who now face an end to their career or even prison, received their positions in the last decade and a half of AKP government?

A revolution from above

Followers of a liberal institutionalist and pro-EU perspective in Turkey have tended to judge the country's political transformation by its performance vis-à-vis the institutional and legal provisions of the Copenhagen Criteria and the procedures of the European Union.⁸ From this angle, the deepening illiberalism of the political landscape and its authoritarian escalation appears, rightly so, to testify to Turkey's de-democratization and de-Europeanization. This includes even such mundane, but highly symbolical administrative measures such as the national broadcaster's withdrawal from the Eurovision Song contest,⁹ Turkey's exit from a major European cultural network¹⁰ and arguably, the government's decision not to synchronize with EU wintertime, increasing by one hour the time difference to its immediate neighbours, Greece and Bulgaria (The Guardian 2016).¹¹

Yet, the actual exit from democracy and the symbolic exit from Europe can only be understood, when we acknowledge the revolutionary political project, which underpins the current state of exception. In fact, this is not only the desperate struggle for survival of a politician, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who knows, as we argue elsewhere in this issue, that 'he cannot share or relinquish power' without severe consequences for himself and therefore has to 'dominate to survive' (Akkoyunlu and Öktem in this issue). It is also the revolutionary logic of a political project that for a long time was understood to be a 'passive revolution' in Gramscian terms (Tuğal 2009), enabling the absorption of Islamic movements into capitalism.¹² As Tuğal himself argues in 'The fall of the Turkish model' (2016), this successful model of Islamic liberalism has collapsed with the challenges posed by the Arab uprisings. Instead, we now seem to be witnessing a very active, if top-down revolution of state and society by a party and its de facto leader President Erdoğan, who see the Kemalist republic as a 'parenthesis in history'.¹³ This is a revolution, which seeks to refashion Turkey's society along the lines of a programme of political Islam, resorting to a state-led civil society sector (cf. Yabancı in this issue), and attempting to write a legitimizing narrative for a 'new Turkey'. Yet, it is now surprisingly reminiscent of the methods of Mustafa Kemal's 'revolution from above',¹⁴ which the AKP and Turkish Islamists used to criticize for its Jacobin top-down

politics. Even the topos of ‘new Turkey’ which President Erdoğan has used extensively to distinguish his own vision for a ‘pious Turkey’ (cf. Lüküslü in this issue for a discussion of the ‘pious youth’) from that of the Kemalist republic, is a product of the early republican years.

We can reconstruct at least some of the aspects of society envisioned in this Islamist refashioning based on the papers in this selection and especially those that deal with the modes of AKP governance. Both Lüküslü and Öztürk in this volume show how such a refashioning is sought in the realms of education and through the Diyanet, arguably the world’s largest and most centralized administration of Islamic religious services. What strikes us is the fuzziness of this political programme, which the government uses so much force to impose. As we shall see, it combines an authoritarian understanding of politics, social conservatism, anti-Westernism, a revanchist attitude towards Kemalist republican history and a discomfort with secular and socialist intellectuals. It may be seeking to re-enchant (with Islam) the disenchanted world of the secular republic. Yet, all this Islamic conservatism is coupled with a neoliberal economic logic, which appears to be undermining any pretence of ethical values or an Islamist re-enchantment of the secular.

Despite 15 years in power, and several months of the ‘revolution from above’, the AKP has not been able to outline a political system that agrees with the modern world and with the basic tenets of Islam. Instead, it has opted for a temporary alliance between Islamic actors and capital. In the early days of its rule, the AKP government was able to combine this political arrangement with a generous extension of the welfare state – a major reason for its electoral popularity. It is now just about able to keep a modest growth rate of 3% thanks to massive infrastructure investments and state subsidies for the construction sector (Demiralp 2016). With the effects of the domestic economic slowdown and the massive loss of tourism revenue kicking in and the strains of warfare in both the Kurdish provinces and the adjacent territories of Iraq and Syria, the economy can be expected to falter.

What will follow if and when the country’s economic crisis erupts fully? Does the AKP’s authoritarianism have the potential to generate a new and much more authoritarian type of regime because it has salient properties associated with patrimonialism, smart censorship, managed democracy, political Islam and competitive authoritarianism, as Murat Somer argues in this issue? What kind of polity will emerge after the purges come to an end? Will this Islamist ‘revolution from above’ succeed in undermining almost hundred years of Kemalist nation-building and create something new? Will Erdoğan be able to keep a governing coalition that will take revenge for a century of state-enforced nationalist secularism and a life of humiliation for most Islamists? Or will the revolution eat its children and the AKP era in Turkish politics become another of those ‘parentheses’ in Turkey’s history? We do not know the answers to these questions, even though the destructive energy of the purges and the war in the Kurdish provinces, Iraq and Syria do not suggest a hopeful outcome for the future of Turkey as a democratic polity. The contributions to this special issue however provide multiple insights and starting points to make sense of Turkey’s exit from democracy and the possible paths ahead.

The contributions

The contributions to ‘Exit from Democracy’ are grouped in three sections. The first section maps the larger historical, political and geopolitical terrain of Turkey’s authoritarian transition. The second section employs a comparative perspective on ‘Illiberal Governance

in 'Turkey and beyond', looking at the cases of Serbia, Macedonia, Russia, Venezuela and Ecuador. The final section examines the micro-dynamics of 'Manufacturing Consent and Discontent' through government policies, as well as the cases of a counter-hegemonic Kurdish movements.

Making sense of Turkey's transition

Murat Somer, in 'Explaining Turkey's Democratic Breakdown: Old vs. New; Indigenous vs. Global Authoritarianism' discusses the historical and current sources of authoritarianism in Turkey. He acknowledges the authoritarian structures of Kemalist Turkey, which appear to have continued in the AKP era. Yet, he also sees a development towards a deeper form of authoritarianism, which is enabled both by global shifts towards authoritarian governance and neoliberal economic policies and by the simultaneously personalized and mass-based rearrangement of state-society relations on the domestic level. The AKP's current political trajectory therefore has the potential to generate an inherently more authoritarian type of regime because of its salient patrimonialism, its effective political communication and party organization and its orchestration of managed democracy.

In 'Existential Insecurity and the Making of a Weak Authoritarianism in Turkey' Karabekir Akkoyunlu and Kerem Öktem seek to explain the speed and intensity with which the country's authoritarian transformation has occurred by emphasizing the role of existential insecurity. They argue that since the late 2000s, the pursuit of regime change in a super-fluid geopolitical setting has raised insecurities exponentially, and led to a situation where President Erdoğan is no longer in a position to share or relinquish power and has to dominate in order to survive. Considering the historical roots of insecurity under Kemalist tutelage, they discuss the more recent ones: these are the publicly articulated Islamist project of conquering and restructuring the regime, which has triggered vicious power struggles between and within various elite groups inside the state; and a simultaneous environment of heightened geopolitical fluidity, both in Europe and in the post-Arab Spring Middle East, that has raised both the stakes and the risks associated with these domestic power struggles.

Illiberal governance in Turkey and beyond

The second section opens with Cengiz Günay and Vedran Džihčić's paper 'Decoding the authoritarian code: Exercising "legitimate" power politics through the ruling parties in Turkey, Macedonia and Serbia'. Günay and Džihčić suggest that Europeanization and neoliberalization created the space for ruling parties in these countries to use the 'European agenda' and neoliberal structural adjustment reforms to alter established political routines and reconfigure institutional settings. They argue that the ruling parties' power derives from their legitimation strategies based on institutional reforms in line with EU conditionality, redistribution through informalization and populist nationalist narratives. The ruling parties function as machines and clientelistic channels and have been replacing formal institutions and established practices with negative long-term repercussions on democracy and the functioning of the state.

David White and Marc Herzog compare Turkey and Russia as cases of electoral authoritarian regimes. They claim that the concepts of electoral authoritarianism and neopatrimonialism are particularly helpful in understanding how both political systems operate. The

main difference, they emphasize, lies in the transition to authoritarianism. Turkey's shift towards electoral authoritarianism since 2010/2011 has been much shorter, more conflictual and characterized by more elite and social contention than in Russia under Putin. The Putinist regime was more capable of harnessing the infrastructural and coercive capacity of the Russian state to institute a stable neopatrimonial and authoritarian regime that could function in a setting of electoral authoritarianism.

In his contribution 'Strong Presidents and Weak Institutions: Populism in Turkey, Venezuela and Ecuador' Orçun Selçuk compares the anti-establishment image, the plebiscitary understanding of democracy, and a Manichean worldview in the political projects and actions of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa. The case studies show that in each country, a strong leader positions himself against the traditional establishment, cultivates direct linkages between himself and his followers, and polarizes the political environment into two opposing camps.

Hegemonic struggles: manufacturing consent and discontent

In her paper 'Populism as the Problem Child of Democracy: The AKP's enduring appeal and the use of meso-level actors', Bilge Yabancı seeks to explain the endurance of the Justice and Development Party and its continued voter appeal by examining government-dependent trade unions and women's organizations. Based on the empirical case, she shows that the AKP expands the reach of populist antagonism between the people vs. the elites through these dependent organizations. They serve to reassert the AKP's continuing relevance as the only genuine representative of 'the people', while transforming labour and women's struggles in line with the government's agenda. They also keep newly arising social demands in check under a democratic disguise while denying pluralism to civil society and entrenching undemocratic governance.

Ahmet Erdi Öztürk focuses on religious policy and the complex relations between Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and the AKP government in the last decade. He posits that the Diyanet, under AKP rule, has become a pliable state apparatus geared towards implementing the political ideology of the ruling cadre. In exploring this recent transformation, he analyses the ways in which this institution's role has become synchronized with the AKP's discourses and actions in the domains of gender, social media, political economy and relations with other social groups.

Demet Lüküslü, discusses the youth and education policies of the third AKP government from 2011 to 2014. This government period, she claims, was marked by the emergence of a new myth of youth in Turkey: the myth of a pious generation. This generation is posited against both the history of the Kemalist republic and its own myth of the youth, and against the AKP's secular critics. Discussing the 'grand projects' of the Ministry of Education geared at constructing a socially conservative national identity and a new historical narrative infused with Islamic references, she suggests that the AKP's youth policy is geared towards controlling the future through controlling the young.

Ömer Tekdemir examines the HDP as a Kurdish-led left-leaning populist party that promised Turkish-Kurdish reconciliation by overcoming long-established antagonisms. Drawing on Chantal Mouffe's concept of agonism and radical democracy, and Ernesto Laclau's model of populism, he argues that the HDP could have undermined AKP hegemony with its commitment to radical democracy and the appeal of 'left-leaning populism'. With

the current return to arms in the Kurdish provinces however, the political space for such an agonistic approach has disappeared, at least for the immediate future.

Following up on these questions, and the political ideology and organization of the Kurdish movement in Turkey and Rojava, i.e. the Kurdish/controlled areas in Syria, Michiel Leezenberg discerns ambiguities of political slogans like democratic autonomy, or in fact, radical democracy. He does so by comparing the narrative of democratic autonomy, a key notion of the Kurdish movement in Turkey, with the Leninist vanguardism of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which continues to be the most powerful political and military Kurdish organization, as has become obvious during the latest episode of war in the Kurdish provinces.

Notes

1. We would like to thank the members of the Consortium of European Symposia on Turkey (CEST), the director of the Centre of South-east European Studies at the University of Graz, Florian Bieber, and the keynote speaker Ayşe Kadioğlu of Sabancı University, for their indispensable contributions to the Symposium and this issue. We are grateful to the participants of the Symposium, whose papers could not be published as part of the special issue for one reason or other. Finally, we owe unlimited gratitude to the external reviewers of this special issue, who ensured the academic excellence of the papers and made possible its timely publication.
2. Government-imposed curfews and heavy shelling by the state security forces and armed PKK forces have created human suffering on a scale that most probably exceeds that of the brutal Kurdish War of the 1990s. The Diyarbakır neighbourhood of Sur, a showcase for multicultural governance in Kurdish cities and home to a famous Armenian church was almost completely destroyed (Lepeska 2016). Smaller cities close to the Syrian border like Cizre were also severely destroyed since June 2015 (Albayrak 2016). These destructive campaigns led to several hundred thousand of local residents fleeing for the safety of larger cities. We cannot establish the effects of dispossession and psychological trauma. According to informal conversations, which Kerem Öktem conducted with state officials serving in Cizre in October 2016, the effects are severe, with thousands of families living in tents at the time of writing and much of the public service infrastructure being destroyed. As one of those interviewed put it: 'This is now a war zone and people act accordingly. They know what to expect and they keep their heads down'.
3. The discourse of Islamic martyrdom was present in the Kemalist republic, even though its religious aspect was not overly emphasized. Narratives of 'blood and nation' also predate the AKP government. Since 15 July, however, we witness a concerted re-appropriation of all of these images and phrases in the name of a belligerent understanding of Muslim-Turkish identity and Islamist-nationalist politics. Terms like 'nation' (*millet*), 'homeland' (*vatan*) are being re-Islamicized in slogans like 'The homeland is a piece of earth that is watered with blood' (*Kanla sulanan toprak vatanıdır*) (seen on a placard at the entrance to Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul on 17 October 2016). Variants of this new narrative have been imposed almost the day after 15 July, with the Bosphorus Bridge renamed to the '15 July Martyrs' Bridge', Istanbul Ataturk Airport's Turkish Airlines Business Lounge rechristened as the '15 July Martyrs' Lounge' and so on. The speed and also the venues of these narratives of martyrdom show the shallowness of the whole endeavour, but also illustrate the search for a legitimizing narrative for the AKP government and the country's recent history, which is infused with references to a certain form of Islam (cf. Arango 2016).
4. While the Hizmet network turned out to be the most powerful and hierarchically organized of the religious group in the state, they were certainly not the only one. A whole range of other Islamic brotherhoods are present within the AKP and therefore within the state apparatus, building on a long tradition of state capture that begins with Turkey's turn to multi-party

politics. It involves traditional brotherhoods like the followers of Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan (*Süleymanlılar*), the Nur cemaat as well as smaller groups, whose members have leading positions in different service ministries. Followers of the extreme right-wing Nationalist Action Party and the anti-Western but staunchly secular nationalist Homeland Party (*Vatan Partisi*) were still present in the intelligence services and now seem to be brought back into power (Gürcan 2016b).

5. This modicum of meritocracy was possible, thanks to centralized entrance exams for universities and, particularly important, public sector jobs (Entrance Exam for Public Employees, *Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı*). These exams enabled a significant number of socialist and pro-Kurdish leaning entrants to be selected for executive positions in universities and state institutions, from which they are now being purged. However, as it has been recently alleged, the Gülen network seems to have infiltrated all of these central state exams and used them to have its followers placed into top positions.
6. Turkish authorities notified the Secretary General of the Council of Europe that Turkey will derogate from the European Convention on Human Rights under the Convention's Article 15 on 21 July 2016 (cf. Withnall 2016). The meaning of this derogation is being discussed in Brussels and Ankara, but it is most likely that Turkey will not be able to make a convincing case for an all-encompassing suspension of the Convention.
7. There are many more aspects of the post-coup policies in universities, which we can only mention briefly. The forced resignation of all department deans in all universities after the coup attempt was one such policy. While the more established universities were able to reinstate their elected deans, in many newer state universities, the resignations were used to install pro-Erdoğan cadres in all levels of university governance. Another decree had immediate effect on Turkish academics on sabbaticals and research visits abroad. They were ordered back to their home universities in Turkey. Thousands of research projects and academic career paths have thereby been broken.
8. According to Murat Somer in this issue, the fixation on the European Union and the preoccupation with identity-based critiques of Turkey's Kemalist republic accounts for the fact the revolutionary nature of the AKP's political project was overlooked.
9. Turkey first withdrew from Eurovision in 2013, citing disagreements over administrative and financial matters. It is much more likely, however, that in the eyes of many AKP cadres, the Eurovision entries have become too concerned with bending gender roles, allowing too much nudity and giving too much space to LGBTI identities, and should therefore not be transmitted to the Turkish public.
10. In October 2016, Turkey declared its withdrawal from the European Union programme for the arts 'Creative Europe', which provided particularly independent art institutions in Turkey with funds. The withdrawal was explained with a concert commemorating the Armenian Genocide funded by the institution (Artforum 2016).
11. The construction of time and its 'colonization by the west' has been a major issue for Turkey's Islamists, who continue to see the abolition of 'Islamic time' structured around prayer times as a humiliation of their heritage. In the run-up to the November elections, the government already once meddled with its international commitments by delaying the introduction of winter-time and causing havoc, as electronic clocks did not adjust to the government decree (BBC 2015). The current abolition of winter-time may or may not be primarily inspired by the goal to increase the symbolic distance to Europe, but in effect, this is what happened and how it has been understood by many secular commentators.
12. Cf. Yabancı in this issue for the strategies of creating consent among a relatively large following in the work sphere and the sphere of women's politics.
13. This perspective also questions the international agreements, on which the Turkish Republic is established, including the Lausanne Treaty, leading Erdoğan erroneously to claim that the Aegean islands were lost due to Lausanne (BBC 2016).
14. The 'revolution from above' is of course an important topos in military bureaucracies, which Trimberger discussed with regard to Japan, Turkey and Peru (1978), and Hinnebusch with regard to Baathist Syria (2001).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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