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Trick, trap, treason: conspiracy theories on Turkey's internal and external enemies (2002-2022)

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Trick, trap, treason:
Conspiracy theories on Turkey's internal and external enemies (2002-2022)

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*In loving memory of my father Ömür Derin (1948-2024)
and mother Hüma Demirarslan (1953-2012),
neither of whom could see this thesis.
I hope I have been a son worthy of both of you.*

*I dedicate this thesis to my beloved sister Irem Kurtsal Steen.
You may not have directly contributed to this project Iremcim,
but your love and support since the day I was born
have greatly helped me become the person I am now.*

Trick, trap, treason: Conspiracy theories on Turkey's internal and external enemies
(2002-2022)

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magazine *Uykusuz* on 4 July 2013

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Foreword and acknowledgements

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This thesis began as the product of my conviction that if the Turkey of the mid-2010s and afterwards has been authoritarian (which it certainly has been), its reasons could not just be related to the characteristics of Erdoğan, or “the nature” of the political right in Turkey, and that the legacy of the single-party period in Turkey in today’s authoritarianism should not be neglected. I still hold this conviction. However, due to the difficulty of academically comparing two different periods in a thesis, I was steered by my supervisor Prof. Erik-Jan Zürcher in a different direction. My initial idea that “treason” was the justification for the suppression of opposition in both today’s Turkey and a century ago when the Turkish Republic emerged, led Prof. Zürcher to tell me that I could write a thesis about *the discourse on Turkey’s internal and external enemies*. And so, we were on!

I am indebted to many people for managing to complete this process. It goes without saying that a supervisor, a *doctorvader* as the Germans put it, contributes greatly to a thesis. In my case, I was lucky enough to work with two great supervisors, who both contributed to the thesis in various ways. Prof. Zürcher not only proposed the topic of this thesis, but has shown since day one that his contribution to my PhD life would go far beyond academic support, continuing his mental support until the end. In 2020, Asst. Prof. Alp Yenen became my co-supervisor and took the project to a far greater level, especially through his guidance regarding contextualisation and the current literature in the field. With their different types of perfectionism (each offering different type of sources, focusing on different types of mistakes of mine and suggesting different methods to improve the content), my supervisors really complemented each other. Two other academics I am grateful to are my former professor and now colleague Kaya Akyıldız, with whom we correspond on a daily basis to discuss all kinds of political matters, and my dear colleague and paronymph Gözde Kırıcıoğlu from Leiden University Turkish Studies.

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