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

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## Stellingen (propositions)

1-Conspiracy theories thrive because they provide alternative and seemingly insightful explanations that can make one feel safe in a complicated and hostile world where mankind feels threatened.

2-Conspiracy theories in Turkey draw their particular appeal from a highly selective interpretation of Turkish history, which features recognisable patterns that involve ubiquitous but shapeshifting enemies.

3-The two-decade Erdoğan period (2002-2022) illustrates how political actors across the divide constructed similar conspiracy narratives with different variables shaped by their own political agendas and historical memories while denouncing such narratives when used by opponents.

4-Within Turkish politics, conspiracy theories replace accountability and responsibility by enabling both the rulers and the public to excuse or justify their own regressions and transgressions as consequences of plots by external powers and enemies within.

5-The master narrative of Kemalist historiography, according to which the single-party period (1925–1946) was a historical necessity because “the conditions were not suitable for pluralism,” collapse under close scrutiny: Atatürk’s one-party rule was not the inevitable product of its time.

6-Portraying the nation-state formation from the Ottoman Empire to the Kemalist Republic as a miraculous triumph of independence against all odds help justify violence against non-Muslims and Kurds.

7-Articles of the Turkish penal code—on “insulting the president” (299), “insulting Turkishness” (301), and “inciting hatred and hostility” (216)—together with the 1951 law on “insulting Atatürk’s legacy” (5816), severely restrict freedom of expression and hinder open debate on controversial policies, past and present.

8- Much of the political science literature on democratic backsliding in Turkey focuses narrowly on the Erdoğan administration and political Islam, but a deeper understanding requires situating his rule within the broader traditions of authoritarian governance in Turkey, dating back to the late Ottoman and early Republican periods.

9- If human beings lost the capacity for deception, much of modern economic and political life—especially marketing, advertising, insurance, law and politics—would have to be reinvented.

10-Those who ask the genie from the lamp for wealth are already fortunate, for they clearly do not have any serious non-material concerns.