Despite being democratically elected, Turkey’s ruling AKP party moved towards increasingly authoritarian measures in the years that followed. After the coup attempt in July 2016, the AKP government declared a state of emergency which President Erdogan saw as an opportunity to purge the public sector of pro-Gülenist individuals and criminalise opposition groups including Kurdish groups, Alevites, leftists and liberals. The country experienced political turmoil and rapid transformation, and debates around constitutional amendments began that would change the regime to a “Turkish style” presidential system. This book identifies the process of democratic reversal in Turkey. In particular, contributors explore the various ways that a democratically elected political party used elections to implement authoritarian measures. They scrutinise the very concepts of democracy, elections and autocracy to expose their flaws which can be manipulated to advantage. The book includes chapters discussing the roots of authoritarianism in Turkey; the political economy of elections; the relationship between the political Islamic groups and the government; Turkish foreign policy; non-Muslim communities’ attitudes towards the AKP; and Kurdish citizens’ voting patterns. As well as following Turkey’s political trajectory, this book contextualises Turkey in the wider literature on electoral and competitive authoritarians and explores the country’s future options.

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