If you are puzzled by how Turkey—Western media’s previous wonder kid as an emerging economy and ‘role model’ for the Middle East—is now represented as an authoritarian country that just went through a failed coup, you may want to read Bilge Yesil’s *Media in New Turkey: The Origins of an Authoritarian Neoliberal State*. The book, meticulously organized and based on theoretically informed material, demonstrates the failure of Eurocentric approaches toward countries like Turkey, at least in terms of understanding how modernity unfolds unevenly where media, in its symbiotic relationship with the state and global capitalism, produce highly unpredictable and dramatic political outcomes. Yesil’s major point in the book is that the governing AKP’s (Justice and Development Party) authoritarian turn should not be regarded as an aberrance since it was ‘in the making for some time’ since 1980s (p. 2). For her, Western media and scholarship has been missing some of the continuities in Turkey’s media system regarding clientelist relations with the state and a persistent nationalism. The book fills a major gap in global media studies and Turkey’s own media scholarship with its systematic treatment of the Turkish media system and its transformation since the 1980s within a neoliberal and increasingly conservative state system.

The first chapter is a short introduction for readers not familiar with Turkish history. The author clearly outlines Turkey’s conflict-ridden history by examining the role of the army and the media in constructing modern Turkey as a secular nation bound to the West, a nation that restricts non-Turkish ethnicities and conservative populations in the public sphere.

The second chapter takes the reader through the political economic transformation that Turkish media underwent in the 1990s: the military’s pressure on the unions, the entrance of business people into the field of journalism,
the somewhat chaotic and initially illegal deregulation of broadcasting and the dissolution of the TRT (Turkish Radio Television) monopoly, the flood of newspaper columnists and the consolidation of a bipolar and sensationalist journalism. The dissolution of TRT's monopoly is particularly important as it points to continuities with the AKP, in that the state's ad hoc legal interventions to regulate the media are not the exception in Turkey, but the rule and in this sense, it is similar to countries in Latin America and the Middle East. Yesil targets liberal media theory and argues that deregulation does not automatically lead to pluralism. Rather, it produces oligopolies and therefore undermines the democratic participation of less powerful groups in a commercial media system shaped by elite interests as opposed to an intrinsically authoritarian structure attributed to countries in the Middle East.

The third chapter points to striking continuities with regard to the media coverage of Kurdish issues in terms of censorship and government pressure on journalists and editors. The censorship of the mainstream media is relevant not only for the Kurdish issue but also in relation to political Islam, given the strategic economic alliance between the military and the media elite, which also exists in countries like Pakistan and Egypt.

This alliance had to change with the AKP's ascendance to power and this is the story that Yesil narrates in chapter 4, where she demonstrates the changes and continuities of AKP's cultural policy in its first term of government (2002–2007). While the initial AKP period was one of change and reform with respect to oppressed social groups and national policies, Yesil also underlines the persistence of nationalist and religious sentiments articulated through a straightforward economic liberalism and centralized state authority (p. 86). These became possible thanks to a strong pragmatism that might be grasped through the framework of a politics of hegemony.

While this initial period was relatively peaceful with regard to AKP-media relations, chapter 5 is key to how the AKP surprised Western commentators like Fareed Zakaria, when Turkey became an ‘illiberal democracy’. It is in this chapter that the author lays out the transformation of the Turkish media landscape: the creation of a yandas (partisan) media, the Gulen affiliated media’s campaign against the military (see Aladag, 2013), and the government’s financial pressure on the mainstream media bloc, in which newspapers like Hurriyet had to terminate contracts with some of their influential columnists and hire those ‘suggested’ by the government. This chapter informs the reader of the background of the AKP-Gulen friendship and how this friendship eliminated the common enemy, but became a fight against each other and culminated in a failed coup (undertaken by Gulenists) in July 2016. Yesil's main theoretical point in the chapter concerns the market-state relationship. She targets liberal