

Tracing The Ideological Roots of Erdogan's Conservative Democracy: Analysing the Fulcrum of Neo-Ottomanism

Durgesh Kumar*

ABSTRACT:

This paper discusses the nuances encapsulated in the Erdogan regime's 'conservative democracy' in the Turkish politics and beyond. The paper argues that the proposition of conservative democracy is not just an illegitimate interpretation of democracy, it is also acting as the fulcrum for the Neo-Ottomanism being professed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey. The paper concludes that such interpretations of democracy are diversionary baits and they are used only to forcefully justify diverse ranges of authoritarian tendencies.

Democracy, as an argument, is so central to the political thinking of our times that it has not suffered any lack of deference even from those rulers who are known to have shown greater level of high-handedness. Mao-Tse-Tung of China justified the infamous 'cultural revolution' and 'great leap forward' by using the extremely subjective logics of his 'new democracy doctrine'¹. The world may raise concerns over the human rights conditions in China and large-scale suppression of public opinion but Chinese Communist Party stills holds that China is a democracy, but with a different trait. CCP calls its model as 'new model social democracy'.

Similarly, the aggressive brand of ideological showmanship, being displayed in Turkish politics by the ruling government and its leader for two decades Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is also proposing a new and controversial interpretation of democracy which

1 Nick Knight (1990), "On Contradiction and on New Democracy: Contrasting Perspectives on Causation and Social Change in the thought of Mao Zedong", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 22(2): pp. 30-32.

**Doctoral Candidate, Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi - 110067*