

**The Civilizational Rift and the Idea of the Turkish Model: A Case Study
(2002-2014)**

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Abstract

The idea of the Turkish model and the idea of clash of civilizations appeared in the International Relations academic discourse around the same time. Initially during the post- cold war days and later during the post 9/11 years the two ideas prevailed side by side. At a time when the global war on terror was seen as an evidence of an inevitable clash between Islam and the West, the idea of the Turkish model showed the possibility of reconciliation between the two. The current study examines the case of the idea of the Turkish model through the theoretical lens provided by the clash of civilizations narrative. It undertakes a cross sectional, comparative discourse analysis of the idea of the Turkish model as constructed by academics from the West, the Muslim world and Turkey. The analysis finds that contrary to the clash of civilizations narrative, the academic discourse from the West, the Muslim world and Turkey tends to present similar ideas on and around the Turkish model through various phases of the extended AKP rule in Turkey. It is compatibility rather than a clash of ideas which emerges as a dominant trend in the academic discourse across civilizations.

Key Words: Turkish model, comparative discourse analysis, clash of civilizations, AKP

Introduction:

Turkey and the idea of the Turkish model has attracted a great deal of academic attention in recent years. A vast academic literature as well as media reports is available on the topic which cover various aspects of the Turkish model. The current study examines the academic discourse on the Turkish model, exploring the construction of the idea by academics from the West, the Muslim world and Turkey during the extended AKP rule in Turkey (2002-2014).

AKP came to power in Nov 2002, shortly after 9/11 , an event which brought a paradigmatic shift in global political landscape. The current study is embedded in the academic milieu around 9/11, when the debate on the 'clash of civilization' thesis proposed by Huntington (1993) continued to dominate international relations theory. The clash of civilization proposition by

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Huntington (1993) was an attempt to predict the future world order in the post-cold war global context. The theory predicted that the fault lines of future conflicts lie across cultural boundaries rather than ideological or economic ones. The civilizational identity would become increasingly important and the world would largely be shaped by interaction between seven or eight major civilizations. The major civilizations identified by Huntington (1993) included, amongst others, the Western and Islamic civilizations which, according to him, have been contesting for 1300 years. The centuries old military interaction between Islam and the West may revive in future and become more virulent.

In a world order , defined by civilizational identity Turkey is being described by Huntington (1993) as a 'torn country' , a country which has been historically divided between two contending civilizations and which is now seeking to carve out its identity in a new world.

The clash of civilization proposition was followed by a wide spread and intense debate amongst academics which continued to dominate international relations dynamics as the world witnessed 9/11 and a full scale war on terror which symbolized the clash between Islam and the West as proposed by Huntington (1993).

The critique on clash of civilization narrative nevertheless came from various perspectives. The thesis was challenged historically, empirically and logically. A selection from various responses to clash of civilizations thesis is listed below which indicates the diversity of critique received by it.

An international effort to counter the idea of clash amongst civilizations was initiated when the Iranian President Muhammad Khatemi called for a 'Dialogue amongst civilizations' on United Nations forum. United Nations welcomed the Iranian President initiative and declared 2001 the year of a 'dialogue amongst civilizations'. The United Nations Millennium Declaration identified tolerance as a fundamental value essential to 21st century international relations which should seek active promotion of dialogue among civilizations ("United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations", 2000). It is ironic that 9/11 occurred in the year dedicated to inter civilization dialogue , as it turned out to be an event that changed the global context in the opposite direction.

Said (2001)challenged Huntington's notion of civilizational identity and his emphasis on the idea of clash between Islam and the West. He pointed out that the clash thesis conveniently ignores the internal dynamics and plurality within each civilization. The concept of civilizations as 'shut-down, sealed off'

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entities brushes aside the extensive history of mutual interaction, cross fertilization and sharing of ideas amongst different cultures and civilizations.

Sen (2007) too, questioned Huntington's presupposed classification of humanity into distinct civilizational units. He noted that the religion based classification of people was reflected in US response to global terrorism which tended to complicate the issue instead of resolving it.

The AKP rule in Turkey began to evolve during the time when academic milieu was led by the clash of civilizations narrative. The idea of the Turkish model was conceived and constructed around this narrative. The current study is an effort to examine the construction of the idea of the Turkish model by academics across the two 'contending civilizations', the West and the Muslim world, including academics from Turkey. The study is therefore embedded in the theoretical framework erected by clash of civilizations narrative. Key concepts used in the study are derived from this thesis e.g. the idea of the West and the Muslim world as two distinct civilizations is a concept taken from the clash of civilization thesis. For this study, the term 'West' generally denotes 'Europe, United States and Canada'; the term 'Muslim world' denotes 'Middle East, North Africa , South , South East and Central Asia' . The two broad regions are taken as two civilizational units, based on theoretical depiction of clash of civilization narrative. The academic discourse on the idea of the Turkish model is to be divided into three sections based on the 'civilizational identity' of the authors. The authors from the West , the Muslim world and Turkey are identified and their articles on the subject of the Turkish model are put into different sections labelled as 'the discourse from the West, the Muslim world and Turkey'. A cross sectional and longitudinal study of this discourse is then made to understand how academics from distinct 'civilizations' as well as Turkey, construct the idea of the 'Turkish model'.

The following research questions lead the study;

- How is the idea of the 'Turkish Model' constructed by academics from the West (US and Europe), the Muslim world (MENA and South Asia) and Turkey during the first three terms of the AKP rule in Turkey (2002-2014)?

Research Design

Since the current study aims to examine the academic construction of the idea of the Turkish model during the AKP regime in Turkey, its subject is the academic articles on the subject. The study is set in interpretivist research paradigm.

Population

Academic articles on the Turkish model from Western (US & Europe), Muslim (MENA, South and South East Asia) and Turkish authors published during 2002-2014.

The time period 2002-2014 was divided into three phases based on three terms of AKP rule in Turkey which itself is based on three general elections in the country in 2002, 2007 and 2011. Hence the three separate phases under study were (2002-2007) , (2008-2011), (2012-2014).

Sampling

The study required quota sampling as it needed to draw a sample from three distinct time periods (three terms of AKP rule in Turkey) and three different sections under study namely the West, the Muslim world and Turkey. These sections and time periods were coded as ' W 1, T 1, M1, W2, T2, M2, W3, T3, M3 , where W , T , M respectively stand for the West, Turkey and the Muslim world and 1,2,3 represent three periods of AKP rule (2002-2007) , (2008-2011) (2012-2014) in Turkey. In each time period and section the number of available academic articles varied. Quota sampling technique was thus used to draw a sample from each section and time period.

It was the problem of availability of articles in each phase and sections which necessitated the use of snowball sampling technique, which in this case meant consulting the bibliography and references of academic articles to find more articles on the same topic.

In the end it was researcher's judgment about the suitability of an article for the study which decided its inclusion or exclusion in the sample.

Data collection

Almost all articles sampled for this study were the ones available on the internet. The key data source was the search engine Google. Google Web and Google Scholar were extensively used to explore articles on Turkish model. Google advanced search was used to find articles published during specific time periods (2002-2007), (2008-2011) , (2012-2014). Google web was also used to find author's origin and other details about an article to classify it as 'coming from the West', 'Turkey' or the 'Muslim world'.

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Classification of articles

The decision about identification of an article as 'Western', 'Muslim' or 'Turkish' was made on the basis of the following criteria;

- 1) Author's origin
- 2) Publication Source
- 3) Content of the article

Since civilizational identity was the lens used to examine the articles, mostly the origin of the author decided the category of the article e.g. if the author was from America or Europe the article would be categorized as 'coming from the West', if the author was from Middle East , North Africa (MENA) , South or South East Asia , the article would be categorized as ' coming from the Muslim world', a Turkish author's article would be categorized as ' coming from Turkey'. In few cases however, the other two criteria were also considered owing to non- availability of information about author's origin or existence of multiple authors having different origin. In one case an article by a Turk author was categorized as 'coming from the Muslim world' because its contents covered the 'Arab perspectives' on the Turkish model, so in this one case it was the content rather than the author which decided the category of the article.

Although most articles selected for the study were academic articles published in scholarly journals, the third phase (2011-2014) included newspaper articles and media reports written by academics as it included most recent events which were not adequately covered by scholarly publications. Also in one section 'the Muslim world', it was very hard to find an adequate number of scholarly articles on the 'Turkish model'. In order to overcome this limitation, snowball sampling technique was used and media reports expressing scholarly opinion were included in the sample.

Sample size

A sample of 145 articles was drawn for examination. The details of quota sampling from each section and time period is as follows;

Key : W- West , T – Turkey , M- Muslim world ;

1 – (2002-2007), 2 – (2008-2011), 3- (2012-2014)

Quotas - Sample size

W 1 - 14

T 1-	16
M1-	8
W2 -	17
T2-	12
M2-	16
W3-	16
T3-	21
M3-	25

Total: 145

A Cross Sectional Analysis of the Academic Discourse on the Turkish Model:

The divergent Turkish models

Academics across sections have identified the presence of different ideas from different groups about the key characteristics of the 'Turkish Model'.

The idea of the Turkish model originated in the West. The Western academics present a divergent picture of the Turkish model. Wattenberg (2002), a representative of an American think tank, describes Turkey as a pro-West, secular Muslim country founded on the ideals set by Kemal Ataturk who believed that the main source of Turkey's backwardness was religion. The Turkish Republic was founded as a strictly secular Muslim state, a character that makes the country a unique example in the world.

However, we also have a different view about Turkey's unique character amongst the Western academics. Hermann (2003), a German academic, argues that Turkey is a unique case because Turkish Islam is different from Islam of the Arabs and Persians. The traditional Islamic practice in Turkey is different because unlike most of the Muslim world, religion has not been used as a political tool for liberation in the country. Moreover, the modern Islamic practice in Turkey is influenced by intellectual and pluralistic movements like the Gulen movement.

Fuller (2004), an American academic points towards various versions of the Turkish model. According to Fuller (2004), the classical image of Turkey in the West is that of a secular, democratic, pro-West country which serves as a model for the Muslim world. But currently, a new and different model of Turkey is emerging. This model seems more independent, oriented towards the West, as well as the East, better able to resolve domestic and regional issues and better suited for Western strategic concerns in the region.

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Scholars from the Muslim world have also highlighted different meanings attached to the idea of the 'Turkish model'. Hunter (n.d), a renowned Iranian scholar, writes about the established perception in the West, that Turkey is an exemplary Muslim state because of its secular social and political system. But Hunter (n.d) points out that the traditional dynamics of Turkish politics have changed with the election of the new Islamist party AKP. The AKP represent the middle class in Turkey which resents excessive military interference in politics. Election of AKP represents strengthening of the democratic tradition and maturing of Islamist politics in Turkey. Turkey seems to be moving towards a liberal, inclusive democracy which serves as a better model for the Muslim world. The pre AKP Turkish model promoted by the West has been replaced by a new model that is firmly grounded in the aspirations of the middle class in Turkey.

Ibrahim (2006) of Malaysia praises Turkey's march away from the militant secularism, towards an open democracy. He too, maintains that the 'new consensus' in Turkey is a sign of a mature and vibrant Muslim democracy. According to Ibrahim (2006), the Turkish experience is relevant to the rest of the Muslim world.

Sallam (2013) from Egypt points out how various versions of the Turkish model have been used selectively by various groups in Egyptian politics. Initially when the term 'Turkish model' entered the political discourse in Egypt, the Egyptian military focused on one particular aspect of this model i.e. the military predominance in Turkey and used the idea of 'Turkish model' to retain their privileged status in the country. Later Muslim Brotherhood focused on the AKP rule, especially its economic management and foreign policy. For Brotherhood, the success of a fellow Islamist party on democratic and economic front was a useful example. The secular dimension of the Turkish model however, was conveniently ignored by the Islamist party.

Academics from Turkey take a closer look at various versions of the Turkish model. Akyol (2012) makes a clear distinction between the old and the new Turkish model. He comments that the Kemalist model of Turkey was based on rejection and suppression of religion for the sake of modernity while the new model seeks to be modern and religious at the same time.

Kuru (2013) explains why various groups are proposing the Turkish model to propagate their own interests. According to him, groups in the West as well as the Middle East, who fear the Arab Islamists turning their states into authoritarian sharia states profess the Turkish model. According to Kuru (2013), Turkey under AKP does serve as a useful example for Arab Islamists as it is practicing Muslim politics without establishing a sharia state.

Goskel (2012) holds similar views stating that the earlier version of Turkish model which represented secular Kemalist ideals was hard to emulate by conservative Muslim states. The new Turkish model (the AKP model) however, holds appeal for Muslim states as it represents a combination of tradition, modernity, democracy and economic prosperity.

Baran (2014) identifies three different versions of the Turkish model. The first model is put forward by authoritarian, secular elites in the Middle East, who view Turkey as a project of controlled modernization under military supervision which has successfully integrated Islamist actors in political system. The second model is advocated by Islamist groups in the region who view Turkey as a fine blend of Islamic politics and democracy, who admire Turkey's economic development and independent foreign policy especially its recent stance against Israel. The third set of Turkey's admirers include common people in the streets of the Middle East. The reason for their admiration for Turkey is, the country's successful transformation to liberal democracy. Moreover, liberal aspects of Turkey's social and political life, reflected through its popular TV serials, inspire the common Arabs.

How is the Turkish model described within and across sections

This section will synthesize various descriptions of the 'Turkish Model' from Western, Muslim and Turkish academics in a tabular form. Three separate tables below represent three different phases of AKP rule in Turkey.

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Table 1: *Descriptions of the Turkish Model from the West, the Muslim World and Turkey; Phase 1 (2002-2007)*

Ideas	Academics from the West	Academics from Muslim World	Academics from Turkey
Bridge across East and West	*		
Secular Muslim State	*	*	*
Moderate Islamic tradition	*	*	*
Muslim Democracy	*	*	*
Radical, Dogmatic, Fundamentalist Secularism		*	
Islamic Capitalism	*	*	
Western Ally	*	*	*
Benign Regional Power			*

Key: The asterisk *indicates the presence of the idea in the academic discourse on the Turkish Model.

Dominant narrative (in all sections)

The Turkish model represents a pro- West, secular, democratic, capitalist, moderate Muslim state. All three sections appear to have a similar image of the Turkish Model during this phase.

Observations

During the first phase of AKP rule in Turkey, the image of the Turkish model does not seem to vary much within and across sections. Turkey is seen as a country oriented towards the West; a Muslim state that willingly adopted the Western secular state model. All sections view Turkey as a close ally of the West.

But the apparent conformity of ideas may be misleading. A closer examination reveals that the same image may have different meanings for different sections. The image of a 'secular Muslim state' for example, may be advocated as a model for the Muslim world by the West as well as Turkey but Muslim world does not seem to take the same image in a positive way.

Turkish secularism, which is seen as a virtue in the West has been described as ‘radical’, ‘fundamentalist’, ‘dogmatic’ and ‘assertive’ in the Muslim world.

Similarly, the shared image of a ‘close Western ally’ across sections, may be seen as an asset on one side and a problem on the other. The Western academics praise Turkey’s commitment to the West but some Muslim scholars remain skeptical about the Turkish model precisely due to same reason.

Jenkins (2003) confirms this trend during the initial years of AKP rule in Turkey. He writes that the Western enthusiasm for the Turkish model is not shared by the Muslim world. The Arab world tends to resent the bitter memories of the final days of the Ottoman empire. Turkey’s cordial relations with Israel is another bone of contention. The assertive secularism of Turkey is also seen with contempt in the Muslim world.

Table 2: *Descriptions of the Turkish Model from the West, the Muslim World and Turkey ; Phase 2 (2008-2011)*

Ideas	Academics from the West	Academics from Muslim World	Academics from Turkey
Radical Islamist State	*		
Benign Islamist State	*		
Muslim Calvinists/ Socially conservative , economically liberal working class	*	*	*
Model for Post-Revolutionary Arab States	*	*	*
Muslim Democrats		*	*
Soft Power in the region		*	
Integrating Islamic Politics with Secularism		*	*
Bridge Across East and West			*
Pro-West/EU			*
Impact of Gulen Movement	*		*
Skepticism about the Turkish Economic Model	*		

Key: The asterisk *indicates the presence of the idea in the academic discourse on the Turkish Model

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Dominant narratives

West. The success of the conservative Muslim AKP receives a mixed response in the West. While some academics warn against growing 'radical Islamism' in Turkey, others praise Turkey for being able to reconcile modernity and tradition.

The Muslim world. The success of AKP earns admiration of the Muslim world. The Muslim academics begin to advocate the Turkish model, which strives to achieve a balance between modernity and tradition.

Turkey. Turkish academics see Turkish model as an attempt to reconcile Islam and secularism, East and West.

Observations

During the second phase of the AKP rule in Turkey, there seems to be a greater variation between the ideas from the West and the Muslim world in general. However, a greater conformity between the ideas from the Muslim academics and Turkish academics is visible during this phase.

A greater variation of ideas is also visible within the Western camp. The range of views about the Turkish model include divergent ideas such as 'a radical Islamist state' to 'a benign Islamist state' and 'a model for the post – revolutionary Arab states'.

A number of Western authors express concern about Turkey's growing Islamist tendency. Some worry that Turkey is losing its democratic, secular character (Krespin, 2009). Some out rightly term the country as 'radical Islamist' (Pipes, 2009). However there is a different point of view within the Western camp. Turkey has also been termed as a 'benign Islamist state' which strives to develop better ties with the Muslim world but at the same time keeps a distance from radical Islamism prevalent there.

The Western academics also differ on the subject of the Gulen movement in Turkey. *The Economist* admires the influence of Gulen's pro-democracy , pro-west ideas in Turkey. But Krespin (2009) smells a grand ambition and a hidden Islamist agenda behind this movement.

The growth of Turkish economy is another subject where Western academics seem to disagree. Some admire the work ethics of socially conservative Turkish businessmen terming them as 'Muslim Calvinists'. Their contribution to the growth of Turkish economy is acknowledged and highlighted. Others

remain skeptical about the economic boom in Turkey and term it a temporary phenomenon which will not survive for long (Spengler, 2011).

The popularity of the Turkish model during the Arab Spring again receives a mixed response among Western academics. Ulgen et al (2011) lists reasons which make Turkey a useful model for post -revolutionary Arab states. While Pipes (2011) gives another list of reasons warning the West against advocating the Turkish model for the Arab states. Esposito (2011) openly negates Pipes views and support AKP model for the Middle East.

The Muslim academics make a note of Turkey’s tilt towards the Muslim world. The new developments in Turkey earn the admiration of academics from the Muslim world. Turkey’s steady economic growth, efforts to build economic and cultural links in the Middle East are described in a positive way. The negative image of secular Turkey seems to have subsided during this phase.

An examination of the cross sectional trends during this phase , show that Turkey’s image has improved in the Muslim world . There is greater acceptance of the Turkish model amongst the Muslim academics. Also there is greater variation in the western opinion about the Turkish model. The Turkish academics seem to admire the AKP achievements and approve of the idea of the Turkish model for the Muslim world.

Table 3: *Descriptions of the Turkish Model from the West, the Muslim World and Turkey; Phase 3 (2012-2014)*

Ideas	Academics from the West	Academics from Muslim World	Academics from Turkey
Compatibility of Islam and democracy	*	*	*
Secular Orientation	*		
Western Ally	*		
Economic Miracle	*	*	*
Model for Post-Revolutionary Arab States	*	*	*
AKP Authoritarianism	*	*	*
Corruption	*	*	
Curbing Opposition and Basic Freedoms	*	*	*
Conflict with Gulen	*		*
Sideling the Old Guard	*		
Zero Problems to Zero Relations	*	*	*

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Moderate /Sufi Islamic tradition		*	
Balancing East and West		*	
Independent Foreign Policy		*	

Key: The asterisk * indicates the presence of the idea in the academic discourse on the Turkish Model.

Dominant narratives

West. The positive views about Turkey’s political and economic achievements are accompanied by concerns about growing authoritarian tendencies of AKP rulers.

Muslim World. The admiration for Turkish model is accompanied by concerns for growing political conflicts in and around Turkey.

Turkey. Turkish academics express concerns about corruption, authoritarianism and failure of zero problem policy.

Observations

Academics from the West, the Muslim world and Turkey seem to have a greater agreement amongst them, about the idea of the Turkish model during the third phase of AKP rule. They also express similar concerns about the growing troubles within the Turkish model.

All sections describe Turkey’s ability to synthesize Islam and democracy and its economic achievement in a positive manner. But all also express similar concerns about the fate of the Turkish model due to growing political troubles in and outside the country. Almost same problems with the Turkish model have been highlighted by academics from the West, Muslim world and inside Turkey. AKPs authoritarianism, scandals of corruption , suppression of opposition, and internal rift with the Gulen movement have been identified as elements that have damaged Turkey’s image as a model . Turkey’s involvement in regional conflicts and deteriorating regional political scenario has also been identified as a factor that undermined the idea of the Turkish model.

Conclusion: Making sense of the Turkish model.

A closer examination of the academic discourse from the West, the Muslim world and Turkey on the subject of the ‘Turkish model’ reveals that certain groups and certain ideas have been mentioned repeatedly from all camps.

This section shall make an attempt to identify and locate such groups and ideas, examine how they are being depicted and how they are being associated with the notion of the Turkish model.

The two tables given below show respectively various parties (groups) and various ideas which frequently appear in the academic discourse on the Turkish model.

The actors involved.

The table below will show various actors involved in the narrative of the Turkish model and the way their roles, both positive and negative are generally described in the West, Muslim world and Turkey.

Table 5: *Identification and Description of Various Actors associated with the idea of the Turkish Model.*

Actors	Connection to the Turkish Model		
	Descriptions from the West	Descriptions from the Muslim World	Descriptions from Turkey
Ottomans		Positive influence	Positive Influence
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence
Kemalists	Negative Influence	Negative Influence	Negative Influence
Turkish army	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence
Islamists	Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Negative Influence
AKP	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Positive Influence	Positive Influence

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Erdogan	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Positive Influence until recently (3 rd Phase)	Positive Influence until recently (3 rd Phase)
Gulen	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence		Positive Influence until recently (3 rd Phase)
Gulen Movement	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence		Positive Influence until recently (3 rd Phase)
West	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence
Muslim World/ Middle East	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence	Divided opinion Positive & Negative Influence
Sufi Networks	Positive Influence	Positive Influence	Positive Influence
Anatolian Tigers	Positive Influence	Positive Influence	Positive Influence
Turkish Middle Class	Positive Influence	Positive Influence	Positive Influence
Muslim Middle Class		Positive Influence	Positive Influence
European Union	Positive Influence	Positive Influence	Positive Influence

Observations. A cross sectional examination of the table above , reveal that there is no major difference of opinion about the role of various parties in the making and development of the Turkish model in all three camps. Apart from minor differences the academics from the West, Muslim world and Turkey

tend to express similar ideas about various groups association with the Turkish model.

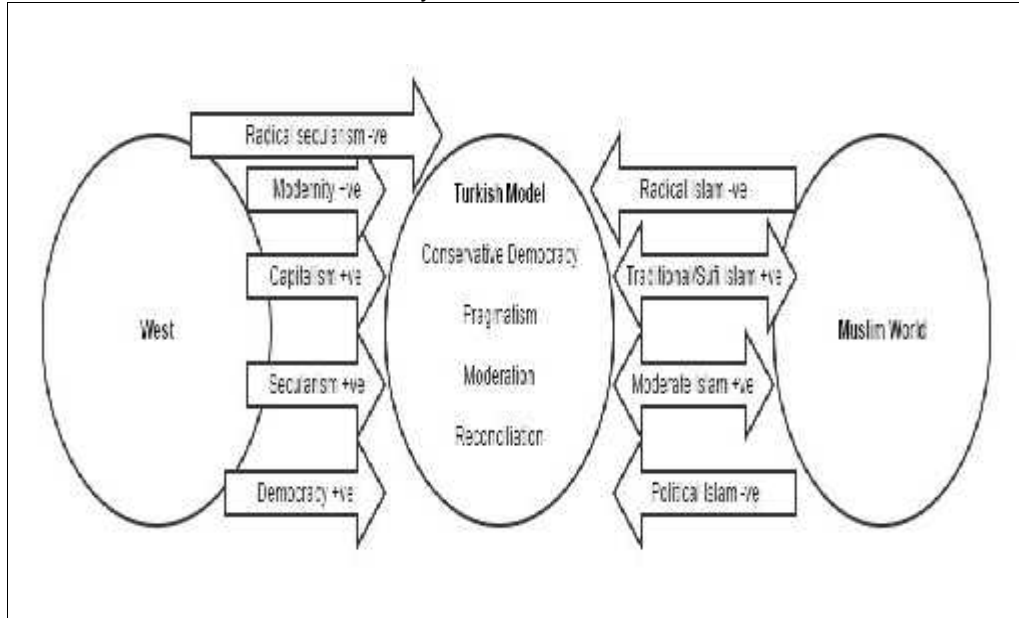
The Ideas discussed.

Table 6: *The Ideas associated with the Turkish Model in the academic discourse from the West, Muslim World and Turkey*

Ideas Presented	Origin/Location	Representation Positive / Negative	Link to Turkish Model
Democracy	West	Positive	Incorporates
Conservative Democracy	Turkey	Positive	Constructs
Liberal Democracy	West/Turkey	Positive	Supports
Secularism	West/ Turkey		Incorporates
Passive Secularism	US	Positive	Aspires
Radical Secularism	France/Turkey	Both Positive & Negative	contests
Capitalism/Free Market	West	Positive	incorporates
Calvinism	West	Positive	incorporates
Islamism/Political Islam	Muslim World/Middle East	Negative	contests
Traditional/ Sufi Islam	Muslim World/Middle East	Both Positive & Negative	incorporates
Radical Islam	Muslim World/Middle East	Negative	contests
Moderate Islam	Turkey	Positive	adopts
Reformist Islam	Turkey	Positive	adopts
Modernity	West	Positive	incorporates
Moderation	Turkey	Positive	adopts
Pragmatism	Turkey	Positive	adopts
West (as an idea)	West	Positive	embraces
Muslim World (as an idea)	Muslim World	Both positive & Negative	embraces
Reconciliation (Islam and West)	Turkey	Positive	constructs

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Figure 8: The Turkish Model (the AKP Model) as described by the academics from the West, the Muslim World and Turkey



Observations

The divergent Turkish models discussed at the beginning of this section seem to share some common characteristics. Notably, academics across the West, the Muslim world and Turkey seem to perceive the Turkish model as a model for the Muslim world, not for the Western world. This notion is true for the pre AKP Turkish model advocated by the West , as well as the AKP model of Turkey. Despite the diversity of ideas advanced by academics across sections they all seem to share and project the following narratives;

- a) Turkey is a modern Muslim state that has successfully embraced the Western modernity, secularism and democracy hence it is a model for the Muslim world (not the West). This is the original narrative shared during pre AKP era or the initial years of the AKP rule in Turkey.
- b) Turkey is a modern Muslim state that has successfully synthesized the Western modernity, secularism, democracy, capitalism and Islamic piety. Turkey's economic growth, political reforms, rejection of Islamism, projection of moderate, reformist Islam and independent foreign policy makes it a model country for the Muslim world. This

narrative was shared during the second phase of the AKP rule and it became especially popular during the Arab Spring in the Middle East.

- c) Turkey is a model state for the Muslim world because of its ability to reject the negative influences from the West, namely the radical, assertive secularism; the Muslim world, namely the radical Islamism, and accept the positive influences from the two worlds namely democracy, passive secularism, modernity, capitalism from the West and moderate, Sufi, intellectual, reformist Islam from the Muslim world . The result of accepting the positive influences from both sides is a fine blend of tradition and modernity, a reconciliation of Islam and the Western world.

The image of the Turkish model does not seem to vary much across sections. The idea that Turkey is a model state for the Muslim world is also accepted across sections.

On the whole, the projected Turkish model (the AKP model) as described by the academics across the West , the Muslim world and Turkey seems to be embracing positive influences coming from the West and the Muslim world , rejecting negative influences from within and outside , it also seems able to incorporate positive influences from outside in its own system and effectively blend them with positive influences rooted in its tradition. The result of such a merger is a unique Turkish combination of conservative democracy which stands for reconciliation between East and West. This unique fusion makes Turkey a worthy model for the rest of the Muslim world.

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End Notes

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