

## Can there be an Islamic Democracy? Democratization in Turkey

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**Abstract:** *Concern over the issue of compatibility between democracy and Islam has been the focus of worldwide debate. After the fall of communist regimes worldwide, both democracy and Islam began a revival and expansion period. Can these two modes of governance be reconciled at all, or is it highly unlikely for them to reach a synthesis and instead clash as Huntington and others have claimed?*

*This paper argues that Islam and democracy can be reconciled, since both are what Feldman (2003) notably called mobile ideas in nature, ideas that spread across the world, appealing to many people living in strikingly different countries and societies. Given that mobile ideas claim to work always and everywhere, there can be a potential clash. Nevertheless, they also incline towards flexibility in that they function in different ways all over the world and therefore are capable of coming together in fascinating ways to produce unimagined, new configurations. In order to encourage the spread of democratic values of liberty and equality requires arguing that, to the contrary, certain readings of Islam not only accommodate but actually mandate freedom and self-government. It won't be a surprise if in a decade or two, the argument made by some that the Muslim World cannot accommodate democracy, will come to seem just as outdated as the now-defunct, once-popular arguments that Catholicism and Confucianism, each in turn were incompatible with democracy. This will be illustrated by an analysis of the process of democracy consolidation in the Republic of Turkey.*

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