
POLITICAL ISLAM

Starts on 24th of October
Tuesdays: 10-12
Location: G00 039, Wilhelm-Röpke-Straße 6

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Office Hours: Wednesday 15-16.30
Uhr, please make an appointment
before

Welcome to Political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa!

Movements and political parties drawing on religious ideology are ubiquitous in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). While these organizations share a common ideological core (political Islam) they are very diverse in practice: some are more radical whereas others are moderate, some use peaceful means and work within the system whereas others use violent means or combine these strategies, some focus on individual transformation, others on charitable and missionary work, and yet others on political party activity.

This seminar is an introduction to Islamist movements and parties in the MENA. The overall objective is to engage with a complex and politicized topic in a sober, academic, fashion.

We will look at:

Ideology and objectives:

- What are core objectives of political Islam?
- What is the political agenda of Islamist political parties?

Supporters and activists:

- What explains the rise of political Islam in the 20th century?
- Who supports Islamist parties and why?
- Why do women become activists or supporters of Islamists movements?
- How much support is there for Islamist organizations using violence?

The role of context

- What is the impact of repression on Islamist organizations?
- How have Islamist organizations reacted to political liberalization?
- What role does the legitimacy of the state play for the success of Islamist organization?

We will draw on books, journals, primary sources (e.g. party manifestos), and public opinion data to engage with these questions. Key cases are Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine.

ASSESSMENT

Continuous Assessment (Studienleistung):

- **Participation in in-class activities** (e.g. working on typologies, coding of an Islamist manifesto, analyzing data on terrorist attacks) and presenting them to the class; you need to participate at a minimum in three activities + presentations to get credit.

Exam (Prüfungsleistung):

- **Term paper** (literature review) -> more information during the seminar

OVERVIEW

Note: I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule. Please check your university email address and ILIAS regularly for announcements

Term	Week	Session	Date	Topic
1			17-Oct	No seminar
2		1	24-Oct	Introduction
3		2	31-Oct	What is Political Islam, What are Islamists? => Key movements
4		3	7-Nov	What is Political Islam, What are Islamists? => Building typology
5		4	14-Nov	Social Movement Framework for analyzing Islamist Movements
6				Reading Week – no seminar
7		5	28-Nov	The role of grievances for the appeal of Islamist Movements
8		6	5-Dec	Framing: the role of ideas and ideology for Islamist movements
9		7	12-Dec	What is a good literature review (1)?
10		8	19-Dec	What is a good literature review (2)?
				Winter Break
11		9	9-Jan	Political Violence (1)
12		10	16-Jan	Political Violence (2)
13		11	23-Jan	Who supports Islamist parties and why? (1)
14		12	30-Jan	Who supports Islamist parties and why? (2)
15		13	6-Feb	Islamists and women

Important Dates FB03:

This is for Marburg BA/MA students, if you are an international student, this might be different!

- Oktober - 02. November 2023: Anmeldung zur **Teilnahme** an Lehrveranstaltungen
- 17. Oktober 2023 - 15. Januar 2024. An- und Abmeldung **Prüfungen und verbindlichen Studienleistungen**

SESSION BY SESSION

Part I. Introduction to the Topic

1. INTRODUCTION

Questions:

Practical

- What are the topics in this seminar?
- How will we learn?
- What is expected from students?

Substantive

- What is the difference between Islam and political Islam?
- Is there a clash of civilizations between “Islam” and “The West”?

Activities:

Brainstorming political Islam
Answering practical questions
Discussing Islam’s image problem

Preparation:

Read this syllabus!

Esposito, John L. *Islam’s image problem.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqEkuP2bREg>

2. WHAT IS POLITICAL ISLAM – WHAT ARE ISLAMISTS? (1) => HISTORY AND KEY MOVEMENTS

Questions:

Where does political Islam come from?
How can we systematize the varieties of Islamist actors in the MENA

Activities:

Lecture on Q1
Presentations & Discussion Q2

Preparation:

Find out information on two Islamist movements/ groups in two different countries

- Since when do they exist?
- What are their (official) goals?
- Are they legal?
- Do they use violent tactics?
- What is the political system in which they operate?
- Do they participate in elections? If yes, how successful are they? (Wiki on specific elections <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/> => election data archive)

3. WHAT IS POLITICAL ISLAM (2) – WHAT ARE ISLAMISTS? => TYPOLOGY

Questions:

What is a typology?

- How can we systematize the varieties of Islamist actors in the MENA?

Activities:

We will build a typology of Islamist actors, based on the different typologies in the readings below; make sure to have at least browsed all these readings.

Preparation:

Yavuz, M. H. 2004. "Opportunity Spaces, Identity, and Islamic Meaning in Turkey." In *Islamic Activism. A Social Movement Theory Approach*, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 270–88. => **read only pages 273-276 with typology**

Sadowski, Yahya. 2006. "POLITICAL ISLAM: Asking the Wrong Questions?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (1): 215–40. => **read only pages 219-22 with typology**

Rubin, Barry. 2012. *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East*. SUNY Press=> **read only pp. 213-215 with typology**

Ayoob, Mohammed. 2020. *The many faces of political Islam: Religion and politics in Muslim Societies*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. => **read only pp. 21-25 with typology**

Part II: Understanding the Appeal and Strategies of Islamist Movements

4. SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY AS FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS

Questions:

What are the main explanatory factors in Social Movement Theory?

Can Social Movement Theory be applied to Islamists?

How does SMT differ from previous approaches to understand Islamists?

Activities:

Lecture on social movement theory

Identifying resources, framing, and political opportunities of Hamas.

Preparation:

Read Robinson, Glenn E. 2004. "Hamas as Social Movement." In *Islamic Activism. A Social Movement Theory Approach*, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 112–39.

READING WEEK – NO SEMINAR

5. THE ROLE OF GRIEVANCES AND SELECTIVE INCENTIVES FOR THE APPEAL OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS

Questions:

What role does unemployment, education, and lack of upward mobility play for supporting Islamists?

Activities:

Discussion of grievance-based arguments

Preparation:

Read

Tessler, Marc. 1997. "The origins of popular support for Islamist movements: A political economy analysis." In *Islam, democracy, and the state in North Africa* [en]. *Indiana series in Arab and Islamic studies*, ed. John P. Entelis. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 95–126.

- How does Tessler describe the economic and social situation in North Africa in the 80s and 90s?
- Why did this help Islamist movements according to Tessler?

Wickham, C. 2002. *Mobilizing Islam. Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. Chapter 3 "Educated and Underemployed"

- What are characteristics of the Lumpen Intelligentsia in Egypt?
- How did this problem emerge?
- Why would this help Islamists?

6. FRAMING: THE ROLE OF IDEAS AND IDEOLOGY FOR THE APPEAL OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS

Questions:

How do Islamists frame their messages to attract support?

How important are ideas for individuals to join Islamist organizations?

Activities:

- Construct a frame table of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Hizbollah, and the Islamic State
- Presentations
- Discussion: what are commonalities/ differences between these frames?

Preparation:

- Andersen, Jan C., and Sveinung Sandberg. 2020. "Islamic State Propaganda: Between Social Movement Framing and Subcultural Provocation." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 32 (7): 1506–26.
- Karagiannis, Emmanuel. 2009. "Hizballah as a Social Movement Organization: A Framing Approach." *Mediterranean Politics* 14 (3): 365–83.
- Wickham, Carrie R. 2004. "Interests, ideas, and Islamist outreach in Egypt." In *Islamic Activism. A Social Movement Theory Approach*, ed. Quintan Wiktorowicz. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 231–49.

7. SKILLS: WHAT IS A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW? (1)

Questions:

- Key elements of a good literature review?
- What is an analytical/ systematic literature review?
- Identifying a topic

Preparation:

To be determined

8. SKILLS: WHAT IS A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW? (2)

Activities:

Produce/ Discuss Text snippets of a literature review on a topic of this seminar

9. POLITICAL VIOLENCE 1

Questions:

How does the environment impact on the use of violent/ peaceful strategies?

Activities

- Lecture
- Discussion

Preparation:

Grimm, Jannis, and Cilja Harders. 2018. "Unpacking the effects of repression: the evolution of Islamist repertoires of contention in Egypt after the fall of President Morsi." *Social Movement Studies* 17 (1): 1–18 => **Read from p.10 onward, Repression effects on the repertoire of contention**

Matesan, Ioana E. 2020. "Grievances and Fears in Islamist Movements: Revisiting the Link between Exclusion, Insecurity, and Political Violence." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 5 (1): 44–62. **Read in full = what are the key findings?**

10. POLITICAL VIOLENCE 2

Questions:

- What do we know about the mindset of suicide bombers?
- What is the nature of terrorism in the MENA?
- What is the target of political violence in the MENA?

Activities:

Analysis/ systematization of data on terrorist attacks in different MENA countries

Preparation:

Familiarize yourself with the Global Terrorism Database: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>
Hassan, Nasra. 2001. "An Arsenal of Believers." *The New Yorker*, November 12. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/11/19/an-arsenal-of-believers> (Accessed October 6, 2021).

Part III: Islamists and elections

11. WHO SUPPORTS ISLAMIST PARTIES?

Questions:

- What do Islamist parties advocate for?
- Who supports them and why?

Activities:

- Lecture
- Discussion of reading & hypothesis
- How to go about analysing data

Reading:

- Kurzman, Charles, and Didem Türkoğlu. 2015. "Do Muslims Vote Islamic Now?" *Journal of Democracy* 26 (4): 100–109.

12. WHO SUPPORTS ISLAMIST PARTIES?

Questions:

- Who supports Islamists and why?

Activities:

- Analysis of survey data, presentation of findings/ country

Reading:

- No reading this week

13. ISLAMISTS AND WOMEN

Questions:

- What are the consequences of political Islam for gender equality?
- Are Islamists less likely to have female members of parliament than other parties?

Activities:

- Lecture
- Presentation
- Activity: Comparing the gender ratio of different parliamentary groups in Morocco, Lebanon & Tunisia

Preparation:

- Read** Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2002. "Islam & the West: Testing the Clash of Civilizations Thesis." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. **What is the main argument about Islam and gender values?**
- Familiarize yourself with the data on parliamentary groups in Morocco & Tunisia