

Ester Sigillò

Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Università di Bologna
Strada Maggiore 45, Bologna – EMAIL: ester.sigillo@unibo.it

CURRENT POSITION

2023/12 – **Università di Bologna** – Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali
Senior Assistant Professor

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2022-2023 Junior Assistant Professor University of Bologna, Department of Political Science
2020-2022 Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Bologna, Department of Political and Social Science
2019-2020 Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow, European University Institute, Florence
2018-2019 Postdoctoral Fellow, Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris

EDUCATION

2014-2018 **DPhil (PhD) in Political Science:** Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Scuola Normale Superiore. Thesis title: *Mobilizing for development or through development? Trajectories of civic activism in post-authoritarian Tunisia*. Passed with mention *cum laude* and recommendation for publication.
PhD Award date: 28/05/2018

2012 -2013 **MA in EU External Relations and Diplomacy Studies:** College of Europe, Bruges
Title Award date: 21/06/2013

2009-2011 **MA in International Relations:** Università degli Studi di Firenze “Cesare Alfieri”, Florence
Title Award date: 20/04/2011

2004-2008 **BA in International Studies:** Università degli Studi di Firenze “Cesare Alfieri”, Florence
Title Award date: 5/5/20078

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

Sigillò, E. & Ramaioli M. (2024). *L'attivismo islamico in Maghreb. Politiche e ideologie contemporanee*, Roma, Carocci editore.

Sigillò, E. (2023). *Rethinking Civil Society in Transition. International Donors, Associations and Politics in Tunisia*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, pp. 220.

Edited books

Chiriatti, A. & Sigillò E. (2019). *Rethinking Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: new approaches for research and education*, Perugia, Perugia Stranieri University Press, 2019.

Articles published in peer-reviewed journals

Sigillo', E. (2026). *Islamic Activism in Exile: Reconfiguring Political Engagement Across Transnational Arenas*, «AMERICAN BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST», online first, 1 – 16.

Challand, B. & Sigillò E (2025). *Rethinking social research in the context of a Thermidorian Arab Middle East: for a Gramscian Methodology*, «INTERVENTIONS», 2025, first online, 1 – 19.

Sigillo', E. (2024). *Salafis' hybrid trajectories of socio-political engagement in Tunisia and Algeria. A social movement perspective*, «MEDITERRANEAN POLITICS», 1 – 22.

Sigillo', E. (2024). *Promoting Social Solidarity Economy in Tunisia: Neoliberal Assumptions and Missed Opportunities Within the Triple Nexus Discourse*, «THE INTERNATIONAL SPECTATOR», 1 – 20.

Sigillo', E. (2024). *Women's Activism and Political Change in Tunisia and Algeria*, «REVUE TUNISIENNE DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE», 11, 23 – 45.

Gana A. & Sigillò, E. (2023). *The political integration of the Tunisian Ennahdha party in the light of the notions of civil state and civil party*, «SOCIAL COMPASS», 70, 382 – 402.

Gana, A., Sigillò, E., & Blanc, T. (2023). *Rethinking Political Inclusion Beyond Moderation: Strategic Relational Pluralization in Tunisian Islamist Politics*, «MIDDLE EAST LAW AND GOVERNANCE», 1 – 32.

Sigillò, E. (2023). *Understanding the transformation of Political Islam beyond party politics: the case of Tunisia*, «THIRD WORLD QUARTERLY», 44, 152 – 169.

Mattoni, A., & Sigillò, E. (2022). *Digital media, diasporic groups, and the transnational dimension of anti-regime movements: the case of Hirak in Algeria*, «THE REVIEW OF COMMUNICATION», 22, 175 – 192.

Merone, F., Blanc, T. and Sigillò, E. (2021). *The Evolution of Tunisian Salafism after the Revolution: From La Maddhabiyya to Salafi-Malikism*, «INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MIDDLE EAST STUDIES», 53, 455 – 470.

Sigillò, E. (2022). *Islamism and the rise of Islamic charities in postrevolutionary Tunisia: claiming political Islam through other means?*, «BRITISH JOURNAL OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES», 49, 811 – 829.

- Sigillò, E. (2020). *Ennahdha et l'essor des associations islamiques en Tunisie: revendiquer l'islam politique au-delà de la dimension partisane?*, «L'ANNÉE DU MAGHREB», 1, 113 – 129.
- De Facci, D. and Sigillò, E. (2019). *Associations et chômage en Tunisie. Politiques de l'emploi et stratégies d'insertion dans l'arène du développement de Kasserine*, «MAGHREB MACHREK», 242, 19 – 36.
- Gana, A., and Sigillò, E. (2019). Gana, A. & Sigillò, E. (2019). *Les mobilisations contre le rapport sur les libertés individuelles et l'égalité (COLIBE) : Vers une spécialisation du parti Ennahdha dans l'action partisane ?*, «L'ANNÉE DU MAGHREB», 21, 377 – 383.
- Sigillò, E. and De Facci, D. (2018). *L'économie sociale et solidaire : une nouvelle économie morale pour la Tunisie post-2011 ? La construction de l'«alternative» à Médenine*, «L'ANNÉE DU MAGHREB», 18, 51 – 68.
- Dell'Aguzzo, L. and Sigillò, E. (2017). *Political legitimacy and variations in state-religion relations in Tunisia*, «THE JOURNAL OF NORTH AFRICAN STUDIES», 22, 511 – 535.

Book chapters

- Sigillò, E. (2025). *Progressive politics in the Middle East and North Africa: analyzing the notions of modernity and backwardness through context*, in: Handbook of Progressive Politics, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 92 – 104.
- Sigillò, E. (2024). *Anti-corruption 'from below' and digital media during regime change: A comparative analysis of two North African countries*, in: Digital Media and Grassroots Anti-Corruption, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 75 – 95.
- Sigillò, E. (2023). *European Islam and the 'Identity Challenge': Exploring the Nexus between Integration Policies and Radicalization*, in: Composite identities. Percorsi tra cinema, teatro, letteratura, musica, scienze sociali e politiche., Milano, LED Edizioni Universitarie, 153 – 165.
- Sigillò, E. (2023). *Filling the Urban Space after Authoritarianism in Tunisia. The Case of Islamic Activism in Sfax*, in: Mediterranean in Dis/order. Space, Power, and Identity, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 25 – 48.
- Sigillò, E. (2023), *La transizione tunisina da 2011 al 2021*, in: Il Maghreb Contemporaneo, Milano, Franco Angeli, 168 – 182.
- Sigillò, E. (2023). *When free and fair elections are not enough: Party fragmentation and unaccountability in Tunisia.*, in: Francesco Cavatorta; Valeria Resta, Routledge Handbook on Elections in the Middle East and North Africa, New York, Routledge, 109 – 120.
- Sigillo', E. (2022). *Islamic Activism and Dynamics of Radicalization Beyond Religion in Tunisia*, in: BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND RADICALIZATION IN NORTH AFRICA. A focus on Morocco and Tunisia, Bologna, Bologna University Press, 79 – 96.
- Sigillò, E. (2022). *"Reconceptualising the Political Role of da'wa in Civil Society: Associations and Islamic Activism in Tunisia." Missions and Preaching. Brill, 2022. 354-381.*, in: Missions and Preaching, Leiden, Brill, 1 – 354.

- Sigillò (2021), *Salafis' Hybrid Trajectories of SocioPolitical Engagement in Post-2013 Tunisia. Elements for a Comparative Analysis with Algeria*, in: SALAFISM: CHALLENGED BY RADICALIZATION? Violence, Politics, and the Advent of Post-Salafism, Florence, European University Institute, 1 – 88.
- Sigillò, E. (2020). *Se spécialiser dans le secteur associatif: la transformation de la charité islamique à l'aune de la reconfiguration du jeu politique en Tunisie*, in: Les mondes de la bienfaisance.(Se) mobiliser pour le «bien»,(se) gouverner par le «bien». Paris: CNRS Editions., Paris, CNRS Editions, 379 – 402.
- Sigillò, E. (2019). *The EU's response to Arab Uprisings: a shifted paradigm?*, in: Alessia Chiriatti & Ester Sigillò, Rethinking Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: new approaches for research and education, Perugia, Perugia Stranieri University Press, 33 – 47.
- Merone F., Sigillò E. and De Facci, D. (2018). *Nahda and Tunisian Islamic Activism*, in: F. Merone, E. Sigillò, D. De Facci, New Opposition in the Middle East, Singapore, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 177 – 201.
- Sigillò, E. (2016). *Beyond the myth of the Tunisian exception: the open-ended tale of a fragile democratization*, in: Diodato, E; L, Dell'Aguzzo; con scritti di, F Duranti; G, Giordano; E, Sigillò, The 'state' of pivot states in south-eastern Mediterranean: Turkey, Egypt, Israel, and Tunisia after the Arab Spring, Perugia, Perugia Stranieri University Press, 8 – 143.

Policy and Outreach Publications

- Sigillò, E. (2021). Shifting from Party Politics to Civil Society: hybrid trajectories of Islamist engagement in post-authoritarian Tunisia, Working Paper, *EUI MWP*, 2021/04.
- Blanc, T. and Sigillò, E. (2019). *Beyond the 'Islamists vs. Secularists' Cleavage: The Rise of New Challengers after the 2019 Tunisian Elections*, Policy Brief, University Institute, 1 – 6.
- Sigillò, E. (2019), *Il falso mito della stabilità Tunisina*, «LIMES6, 169 – 177.
- Sigillò, E. et al. (2013). *Overview and Analysis of I:1 Learning Initiatives in Europe*, Luxembourg, Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, 2013, pp. 162 (JRC Scientific and Policy Reports).

Blog posts and online articles

- Sigillò, E. (2021). “Analysis of the Algerian Legislative Elections Between Continuities and Changes”. *Al Sharq Strategic Research*. Available at: <https://research.sharqforum.org/author/ester-sigillo/>
- Sigillò, E. (2021). “Hirak is not “back”: Algeria’s process of revolution never stopped”. *Middle East Directions Blog*. European University Institute. Available at: <https://blogs.eui.eu/medirections/hirak-is-not-backalgerias-process-of-revolution-never-stopped-2/>
- Sigillò, E. (2021). “Riletture del Jihad”. *Orient XXI*. Available at: <https://orientxxi.info/lu-vu-entendu/riletture-deljihad,4611>
- Sigillò, E. and Blanc, T. (2019). “Tunisia’s 2019 Elections: Beyond the Islamists vs. Secularists Cleavage”. *Middle East Directions Blog*. European University Institute. Available at: <https://blogs.eui.eu/medirections/tunisias-2019-elections-beyond-islamists-vs-secularists-cleavage/>

- Sigillò, E. (2019). “Conducting immersive fieldwork on Tunisian Islamic activism: Methodological and Ethical Challenges”. *Security Praxis*. <https://securitypraxis.eu/immersive-fieldwork-tunisia/>
- Sigillò, E. (2019). “La société civile tunisienne postrévolutionnaire: un chemin tortueux entre intégration internationale et activisme local”. *Le carnet de l'IRMC*. Available at: <https://irmc.hypotheses.org/1975>
- Sigillò, E. (2016). “Tunisia’s Evolving Islamic Charitable Sector and its Model of Social Mobilization”, *Middle East Institute*, Available at: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/tunisias-evolving-islamic-charitablesector-and-its-model-social-mobilization>

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND INVITED TALKS

Conference papers (selected)

- 2026/6, Conference “Social Movement Studies in Intense Times”, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence 3-5 June 2026, Paper presented: *Between Home Repression and Host Securitization: Islamic Activism in Exile*.
- 2025/11, Middle East Studies Association (MESA), November 22-25 2025, Washington DC, Paper Presented: *Hybridization of Tunisian and Algerian Islamic activism between local repression and global constraints*.
- 2025/9, Società Italiana di Scienza Politica (SISP), 4-6 September 2025, Naples. Paper Presented: *Adaptive Trajectories of North African Islamist Diasporas*.
- 2025/8, European International Studies Association (EISA), The Pan-European Conference on International Relations, 25-29 August 2025, University of Bologna, Paper Presented: *Hybrid Trajectories of Transnational Islamism: Adaptation, Resistance, and Contestation of North African Movements in the West*.
- 2025/4, Mid-West Political Science Association (MPSA), 3-6 April 2025, Chicago, Paper Presented: *Hybrid pathways of Tunisian and Algerian Islamic activism*.
- 2022/9, SISP General Conference, Sapienza Università di Roma, Paper Presented: *Rethinking ‘aid’ and ‘security’ in borderland regions. The impact of development cooperation programs in southern and interior Tunisia*.
- 2022/7, ECPR General Conference on Organised Crime, at Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna. Paper Presented: *When Religious Precepts Meet Anti-Corruption Rhetoric: Salafism and New Forms of Radicalism in the Maghreb*.
- 2021/9, SISP General Conference (online event): Paper Presented: *Framing the enemy in fragile democracies and authoritarian regimes: the construction of the ‘threat’ in Tunisia and Algeria*.
- 2021/8, ECPR General Conference (online event): Paper Presented: *When the local contention goes transnational. The Hirak movement and the role of digital media* (co-authored with Alice Mattoni).
- 2021/7, Osservatorio sul Mediterraneo (OSMED). Conference title: “Percorsi femminili e femministi tra Medio Oriente e Africa”. Online speech. Paper Presented: *Diritti delle Donne, Islam e Conflitto Politico nella Tunisia post Ben Ali*.
- 2021/5, ECPR Joint Session (online event): Hybrid Pathways to Resistance in the Muslim World: Islamist Groups and the Modern State in a Comparative Perspective. Paper Presented: *Shifting from Party Politics to Civil Society: hybrid trajectories of Islamist engagement in post-authoritarian Tunisia*.
- 2020/11, EUI MEDirections Roundtables: Salafism Challenged by Radicalization? Paper Presented: *Salafis’ Hybrid Trajectories of Socio-Political Engagement in Post-2013 Tunisia. Elements for a Comparative Analysis with Algeria*.

- 2020/8, ECPR General Conference (online event). Paper Presented: Ethical Dilemmas and Safety Concerns When Investigating Anti-Corruption from the Grassroots.
- 2019/10, International Congress of the German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO), Hamburg. Paper presented: *Ennahdha's concept of civil state and party: the ambiguities of the separation between religion and politics* (co-authored with Munteanu A.)
- 2019/5, Middle East Directions Programme. European University Institute, Florence. Workshop: « Fieldwork research challenged », Paper presented: *Studying Islamist Movements in Post-authoritarian Tunisia: Constraints, Methodological challenges and ethical concerns*.
- 2018/7, WOCMES, Sevilla. Paper presented: *Mobilizing for or through development? Dynamics of Islamic activism in post-authoritarian Tunisia*.
- 2017/12, MMSH d'Aix en Provence. Workshop: "Enquêter sur la bienfaisance. Approches comparatives des pratiques du bien". Paper presented: *Agir pour le développement ou s'engager par le développement ? Analyse des trajectoires du secteur caritatif dans la Tunisie post-autoritaire*.
- 2016/11, MESA annual meeting, Boston. Paper presented: *The evolution of Islamic charities in post-revolutionary Tunisia*.
- 2016/10, IFPO Beirut. WFAW International workshop: "How Economics Matter? Year 5 of the Revolutions, a social and economic lens". Under the framework of the ERC programme. Paper presented: *L'action associative pour le développement en Tunisie: Des modèles économiques alternatifs? Les cas de Médenine*.
- 2016/4, MPSA General Conference, Chicago. Paper presented: *State-Society Relations and Democracy: a comparative analysis of Tunisia and Egypt* (co-authored with Dell'Aguzzo L.).

Workshops and seminars

- 2026/6 "Between Home Repression and Host Securitization: Islamic Activism in Exile", *CONNECT Seminars*, University of Bologna.
- 2026/4 "Islam Politique au-delà des frontières: les reconfigurations de l'engagement dans des espaces transnationaux", *Research Seminar*, SciencesPo, Paris.
- 2025/12 "Hybrid Trajectories of Islamic Activism Across Borders", *Research Seminar*, The New School, New York.
- 2025/8, "From Civil society to Transnational Networks. Islamic Activism in Exile", at the Workshop *Revolution Theory, Social Movement Theory: Bringing Them Closer*, Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies Workshop, Amsterdam.

Invited talks

- 2025/5, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, *PhD Seminar on Academic Skills*, University of Trieste, Italy.
- 2025/12, "Transnational Islamic Activism", *Research Seminar, Guest Lecturer*, New York University, New York
- 2020/2, "La spécialisation d'Ennahdha et l'essor des associations religieuses en Tunisie: revendiquer l'islam politique par d'autres moyens?", Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne.
- 2019/4, "Tunisia alla prova della democrazia: Il rapporto tra stato e società dall'indipendenza al post-2011", University of Pisa. Dipartimento di Civiltà e di Forme del Sapere.
- 2017/3, "Tunisia alla prova della democrazia: storia di un fragile compromesso", . University of Florence, Department of Political and Social Sciences.

- 2016/12, “Les autres Tunisie. Cinq ans après la revolution”, École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Paris.

RESEARCH FUNDING/AWARDS RECORDS

Project/Award	Funding body	Amount (Euros)	Period	Role
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Global Fellowship	European Commission (Horizon Europe)	265.000	2023-2027	Principal Investigator
Hybrid Trajectories of Transnational Islamism (HYBRIS) <u>Seal of Excellence Certificate, granted by the European Commission</u>	Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR), PNRR – Young Researchers Programme	150.000	2022-2023	Principal Investigator
Scholarship for the Advanced Master in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6.000	2012-2013	Awardee (College of Europe, Bruges)
Doctoral Scholarship in Political Science	Scuola Normale Superiore	50.000	2014-2018	Doctoral Researcher
Examining current trends among religious and social actors in the Arab region	American University in Cairo	5.000	2018	Mapping charitable and religious activities; analysis of the legal framework, 9 interviews (with consent form), 6 informal meetings, participant observation, desk research, writing a policy paper, 6 informal meetings in Tunis and Sfax, finalizing the policy paper. Deliverables.

ORGANIZED CONFERENCES, PANELS, WORKSHOPS AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

- 2025/11, Panel co-chair at MESA, *Redefining the Boundaries of Political Islam: Hybridization and Change*.
- 2025/9, Panel co-chair at SISP, *Comprendere la deriva autoritaria nella regione MENA tra dinamiche locali e globali*.

- 2022/6, Summer School on Ethics and Safety in Political Studies, University of Bologna, SPS Department. Event co-organized with Professor Alice Mattoni.
- 2020/2021, Scientific coordinator of a cycle of roundtables. *METARESPS: Research ethics and safety in Political Studies*, Bologna University, SPS Department.
- 2019/2020. Scientific coordinator of the *Muslim World Working Group*, European University Institute, Florence.
- 2021/8, Panel Chair at ECPR (European Consortium for Political Research) General Conference (online event): *Rethinking contentious politics in the time of pandemic: The challenges of online activism in authoritarian regimes and fragile democracies*.
- 2020/10, Panel chair at MESA (Middle East Studies Association) General Conference (online event): *Rethinking contentious politics in the Middle East and North Africa: Analysis of social networks beyond protests*.
- 2019/10, Panel co-organiser at the 26th International Congress of the German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO), Hamburg. *Rethinking the Process of Normalization of Islamist Parties in Light of the Models of 'Civil State' and 'Islamic Secularism*.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2026/2027, MA Course, *Islam and Global Politics* (40 hours), Bologna University, SPS Department.
- 2023/2024, BA Course, *Evolution of the International System* (28 hours), Bologna University, SPS Department.
- 2022/2024, BA Course, *Introduction to Political Science* (28 hours), Bologna University, SPS Department.
- 2022/2024, BA Course, *International Relations* (28 hours), Bologna University, SPS Department.
- 2022/2023, MA Workshop, *Academic Papers, Scientific Reports and Informative Articles* (10 hours) Bologna University, SPS Department.
- 2021/5, PhD Crash course, *Research Methods and Ethics in Risky Environments* (10 hours delivered to Ph.D. Students), University of Bologna, SPS Department.
- 2019/2, MA Course, *Training experts on transnational Euro-Mediterranean processes* (40 hours). Lectures and handson sessions delivered to Tunisian and Italian postgraduate students, Università per gli Stranieri di Perugia.
- 2018 -2020, BA Courses, *European Environmental Policy; Comparative Political Systems in the Mediterranean World* (240 hours over 6 semesters), Georgetown University (Florence Campus).

Lectures delivered

- 2023/3, Lecture delivered to MA Students: “Algeria and the Hirak Movement”, Rotterdam University
- 2022/4, Lecture delivered to MA students: “Mobilizations in Algeria and the role of digital media”, University of Bologna
- 2022/4, Lecture delivered to MA students: “The local roots of transnational jihadism The case of Islamic radicalization in Tunisia”, University of Bologna (Forlì Campus)
- 2021/5, Lecture delivered to MA Students: “The EU External Action in the Mediterranean”, University of Florence “Cesare Alfieri”, Scuola di Scienze Politiche
- 2020/5, Lecture delivered to BA Students: “Refugees and displacements in the Arab World”, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona

- 2019/10, Lecture delivered to MA students: “Political Islam, Radicalization and Jihad – University of Florence, Department of Political and Social Sciences
- 2018/4, Lecture delivered to BA Students: “the EU and its institutions”, Stanford University, Florence Campus

ACADEMIC NETWORKS AND ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

- Member, Italian Political Science Association (Società Italiana di Scienza Politica, SISP)
- Member, Middle East Studies Association (MESA)
- Member, Council for European Studies (CES)
- Member, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
- Member, European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)
- Member, Standing Group on Organised Crime, Italian Political Science Association (SISP)
- Member, Standing Group on Politics and Religion, Italian Political Science Association (SISP)
- Research Fellow at the *Institute de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain* (IRMC)

LANGUAGES

Italian – Mother Tongue

English – Full working proficiency

French– Full working proficiency

Arabic – intermediate user in Standard Arabic/ proficiency in Maghrebi dialect

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2012/2-8

Project Manager Assistant/Research Assistant - European Schoolnet (EUN), Brussels Provided support to the research team for the development of reports on education systems in the world; networking and coordination with schools participating in EUN school pilots.

2011 - 2012

Project Manager Assistant - Euronet Consulting EEIG, Brussels

Provided assistance for project management and business development department for the implementation of European Commission Development Programmes in the MENA region. Main tasks included elaborating projects and tender proposals (and methodologies); developing of partner network; preparation of financial technical offers; mission logistics management; writing reports.

2009/4-10

Assistant of UNESCO Florence Director - UNESCO Club, Florence

Organization of national and international cultural events

2007/1-6

MEP Assistant – European Parliament, Strasbourg and Brussels