

CURRICULUM VITAE

Dr. Ester Sigillò
Ester.sigillo@unibo.it

CURRENT POSITION

Since 11/12/2023 - **Assistant Professor (Senior) and Marie Curie Global Fellow**, University of Bologna

Academic Appointments

12/2022 – 12/2023 **Junior Assistant Professor** University of Bologna, Department of Political Science
1/9/2020 – 19/12/2022 **Postdoctoral Fellow**: ERC Funded project BIT-ACT, University of Bologna
1/9/2019 - 31/08/2020 **Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow**: European University Institute, Florence
10/7/2018 - 20/7/2019 **Research Fellow**: ERC-Funded Project-TARICA, Ladyss, Paris
1/9/2015 - 15/12/2017 **Visiting PhD Fellow**: *Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain*, Tunis

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

2007 **Socrates/ Erasmus Exchange Programme**, Université Robert Schumann, IEP Strasbourg (France)

Publications

Books and Volumes

- Sigillò, E. (2023) *Rethinking Civil Society in Transition. International Donors, Associations, and Politics in Tunisia*, Amsterdam University Press (Open Access).
<https://www.aup.nl/en/book/9789463727976/rethinking-civil-society-in-transition>
- Chiriatti, A. & Sigillò E. (2019). *Rethinking Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: new approaches for research and education*, Perugia Stranieri University Press.

Articles published in peer-reviewed journals

- 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(3), 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(aop), 1-32.
- Sigillò, E. (2022). Understanding the transformation of Political Islam beyond party politics: the case of Tunisia. *Third World Quarterly*, 1-18.
- Mattoni, A., & Sigillò, E. (2022). Digital media, diasporic groups, and the transnational dimension of anti-regime movements: the case of Hirak in Algeria. *Review of Communication*, 22(3), 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*, 1–16.
- Sigillò, E. (2020). Islamism and the rise of Islamic charities in post-revolutionary Tunisia: claiming political Islam through other means? *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1-19.
- 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*, (22), 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*, (4), 19-36.
- Gana, A., and 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) 2018-I.
- Dell'Aguzzo, L. and Sigillò, E. (2017). Political legitimacy and variations in state-religion relations in Tunisia. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 1-25.

Book chapters:

- Sigillò, E. (forthcoming). "Anti-corruption 'from below' and digital technologies during regime change. The cases of Tunisia and Algeria". In Mattoni A. (ed.) *Digital Media and Anti-Corruption from the Grassroots: Contexts, Platforms, and Practices of Anti-Corruption Technologies Worldwide*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Sigillò, E. (2023). “European Islam and the ‘Identity Challenge’: Exploring the Nexus between Integration Policies and Radicalization” in Chierici A.M. & Orsitto F. (eds.). *Composite Identities*, LED Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere, Economia, Diritto.
- Sigillò, E. (2023). “Filling the Urban Space after Authoritarianism in Tunisia. The Case of Islamic Activism in Sfax”, in R. Di Peri and Daniel Meier (eds.) *Mediterranean in Dis/order. Space, Power, and Identity*, University of Michigan Press.
- Sigillò, E. (2023). “When Democratic Elections are not Enough. Party Fragmentation and Unaccountability in Post-Authoritarian Tunisia”, in Cavatorta F. & Valeria Resta (eds.), *Handbook on Elections in the Middle East and North Africa*, Routledge.
- Sigillò, E. (2022). “Islamic Activism and Dynamics of Radicalization Beyond Religion in Tunisia”, in Borraccetti M. & Villani S. (eds.) *Between Integration and Radicalization in North Africa. A focus on Morocco and Tunisia*, Bologna, Bologna University Press, 2022, pp. 79 - 96
- Sigillò, E. (2022). “Reconceptualising the Political Role of da‘wa in Civil Society: Associations and Islamic Activism in Tunisia”, in N. Neveu, K. Sanchez Summerer & Annalaura Turiano (eds.) *Missions and Preaching. Connected and decompartmentalized perspectives from the Middle East and North Africa (19th-21st century)*, Brill, Series: Leiden Studies in Islam and Society, Vol. 15.
- Sigillò (2021), “Salafis' Hybrid Trajectories of socio-political engagement in post-2013 Tunisia”, in Roy O. and Théo Blanc (eds.), *Salafism: challenged by radicalization?: violence, politics, and the advent of post-Salafism*. European University Institute.
- 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 Ruiz de Elvira, R. & Saeidnia S. A., *Les mondes de la bien-faisance. Les pratiques du bien au prisme des sciences sociales*, CNRS Editions.
- Sigillò, E. (2019). « The EU’s response to Arab Uprisings: a shifted paradigm? », in Chiriatti, A. & Sigillò E. (eds.), *Rethinking Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: new approaches for research and education*, Perugia Stranieri University Press
- Sigillò, E. (2019). Il falso mito della stabilità tunisina, in *Dalle Libie all’Algeria, affari nostri*, LIMES, n.6/2019.
- Merone F., Sigillò E. and De Facci, D. (2018). *Nahda and Tunisian Islamic activism*, in (eds.) Akbarzadeh S. and Dara Conduit, « New Opposition in the Middle East », Palgrave MacMillan.
- Diodato, E., Dell'Aguzzo, L., Con Scritti Di, F. D., Giordano, G., & Sigillò, E. (2016). The ‘state’ of pivot states in south-eastern Mediterranean: Turkey, Egypt, Israel, and Tunisia after the Arab Spring.

Policy reports and Working Papers

- 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*, *European University Institute*.
- Sigillò, E. et al. (2013). "Overview and analysis of 1: 1 learning initiatives in Europe." *JRC Scientific and Policy Reports*: 1-62.

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-back-algerias-process-of-revolution-never-stopped-2/>
- Sigillò, E. (2021). “Riletture del Jihad”. *Orient XXI*. Available at: <https://orientxxi.info/lu-vu-entendu/rilettura-del-gihad,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/tunisia-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/tunisia-evolving-islamic-charitable-sector-and-its-model-social-mobilization>

Conference papers, seminars, and invited talks

Conference papers (selected)

- September 2022, 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.*
- July 2022, 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.*
- September 2021. 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.*
- August 2021. 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).
- July 2021. Osservatorio sul Mediterraneo (OSMED). Conference title: *Percorsi femminili e femministi tra Medio Oriente e Africa*. Paper Presented: “Diritti delle Donne, Islam e Conflitto Politico nella Tunisia post Ben Ali”.

- May 2021. 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.
- December 2020. 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”.
- August 2020. ECPR General Conference (online event). Paper Presented: “Ethical Dilemmas and Safety Concerns When Investigating Anti-Corruption from the Grassroots”.
- October 2019. International Congress of the German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO), Hamburg. Paper presented: Sigillò, E. and Munteanu A.: «Ennahdha’s concept of civil state and party: the ambiguities of the separation between religion and politics”.
- May 2019. 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 ».
- July 2018. WOCMES, Sevilla. Paper presented: « Mobilizing *for* or *through* development? Dynamics of Islamic activism in post-authoritarian Tunisia”.
- December 2017. 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”.
- November 2016. MESA annual meeting, Boston. Paper presented: “The evolution of Islamic charities in post-revolutionary Tunisia”.
- October 2016. IFPO Beirut. WAFAW 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”.
- April 2016. MPSA General Conference, Chicago. Paper presented: “State-Society Relations and Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Tunisia and Egypt”.

Invited talks and seminars

- February 2020. Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne. “La spécialisation d’Ennahdha et l’essor des associations religieuses en Tunisie: revendiquer l’islam politique par d’autres moyens?”
- April 2019. University of Pisa. Dipartimento di Civiltà e di Forme del Sapere. “Tunisia alla prova della democrazia: Il rapporto tra stato e società dall’indipendenza al post-2011.
- March 2017. University of Florence, Department of Political and Social Sciences. “Tunisia alla prova della democrazia: storia di un fragile compromesso”.
- December 2016. École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Paris. “Les autres Tunisie. Cinq ans après la révolution”.

Research Funding Record

Project Title	Funding source	Amount (Euros)	Period	Role of the researcher
MSCA - Global Fellowship	European Commission	265.000 euros	2024-2026	Principal Investigator
Hybris	Italian Ministry of University and Research (Young Researchers – MSCA Seal of Excellence)	150.000 euros	2022-2023	Principal Investigator
MA scholarship to attend II level Master in EU's international relations and diplomatic studies	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6.000 euros	2012-2013 (10 months)	Attending MA at the College of Europe, Bruges
Doctoral Scholarship in Political Science	Scuola Normale Superiore	50.000 euros	2014-2018 (3 years and half)	Doctoral Research at Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence
Examining current trends among religious and social actors in the Arab region	American University in Cairo	5.000 euros	2018 (1 month)	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.

Awards

- 2022 - MSCA Global Fellowship, granted by the European Commission
- 2021 - MSCA Individual Fellowship Seal of Excellence Certificate, granted by the European Commission

Organized Conferences, Conference Panels, Workshops, and Summer Schools

- 20-24/6/2022 Summer School on Ethics and Safety in Political Studies, University of Bologna, SPS Department
- 2020/2021. Scientific coordinator of a cycle of roundtables. METARESPTS: 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
- August 2021. 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
- October 2020. Panel Organiser and 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*
- October 2019. Panel Organiser and chair 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

Adjunct Professor at the University of Bologna

- 2022/2023_Course: Political Science, Bologna University (Forlì Campus).
- 2021/2022-2022/2023_Course: International Relations, Bologna University (Forlì Campus).

Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University

- From 2018 to 2022_Courses: European Environmental Policy; Comparative Political Systems in the Mediterranean World, Georgetown University (Florence Campus).

Lecturer

- March 2023: Lecture delivered to MA Students: “Algeria and the Hirak Movement”, Rotterdam University

- April 2022: Lecture delivered to MA students: “Mobilizations in Algeria and the role of digital media”, University of Bologna
- April 2022: Lecture delivered to MA students: “The local roots of transnational jihadism The case of Islamic radicalization in Tunisia”, University of Bologna (Forlì Campus)
- May 2021: Lecture delivered to MA Students: “The EU External Action in the Mediterranean”, University of Florence “Cesare Alfieri”, Scuola di Scienze Politiche
- May 2020: Lecture delivered to BA Students: “Refugees and displacements in the Arab World”, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona
- October 2019: Lecture delivered to MA students: “Political Islam, Radicalization and Jihad – University of Florence, Department of Political and Social Sciences
- April 2018: Lecture delivered to BA Students: “the EU and its institutions”, Stanford University, Florence Campus

Instructor

- March-May 2023: Workshop “Developing writing skills”, University of Bologna (MA students)
- May 2021: Crash course on Research Methods and Ethics to Ph.D. Students: Delivered a series of seminars and led discussions on qualitative research methods in contexts of violence and conflict. Lead sessions on fieldwork risk mitigation; set reading lists and essay questions, marked essays – University of Bologna, Department of Political and Social Sciences
- February 2019: Training “experts on transnational Euro-Mediterranean processes.” Lectures and hands-on sessions are provided to Tunisian and Italian postgraduate students – at Università per gli Stranieri di Perugia.

Academic Networks and Association Membership

- Standing Group on Organised Crime. Member since 2022
- Società Italiana di Scienza Politica. Member since 2015
- Middle East Studies Association. Member since 2016
- European Consortium for Political Research. Member since 2016

Languages

Italian – Mother Tongue

English – Full working proficiency

French– Full working proficiency

Arabic – intermediate user in Standard Arabic and Tunisian dialect

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2/2012 - 8/2012

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.

9/2011 - 1/2012

Project Manager Assistant - Euronet Consulting EEIG, Brussels

Assisted 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; preparing financial technical offers; mission logistics management; and writing reports.

4/2009 - 10/2009

Assistant of UNESCO Florence Director - UNESCO Club, Florence

Organized and ran national and international cultural events. Worked closely with internal and external partners to maintain strong volunteer and donor relations.

1/2007 – 6/2007

MEP Assistant – European Parliament, Strasbourg and Brussels

Focus on the EU foreign policy in Nord Africa