

# Curriculum Vitae: Aytuğ Şaşmaz

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Bryn Mawr College  
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## ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- 2022-            Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA, USA  
Assistant Professor of Political Science
- 2021-22        Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, USA  
Post-Doctoral Fellow, Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law
- 2020-21        Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA, USA  
Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow, Middle East Initiative

## AFFILIATIONS

- 2025-            Association for Analytic Learning about Islam and Muslim Societies (AALIMS)  
Faculty Fellow
- 2025-26        Koc University Department of International Relations  
Visiting Scholar

## EDUCATION

- 2021            Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA  
PhD Political Science  
Committee: Melani Cammett, Matt Blackwell, Steve Levitsky, Tarek Masoud, Daniel Ziblatt
- 2014            Brown University, Providence, RI, USA  
MA Political Science (started as a PhD student, transferred to Harvard)
- 2008            London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK  
MSc (Merit) International Political Economy
- 2007            Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey  
BA (High Honors) Political Science and International Relations

## BOOK PROJECT

“Parties of the Republic: How Secular State-Building Parties Can Compete with Religious Challengers in the Middle East and Beyond”

→ **Dissertation won the Edward M. Chase Prize for the best dissertation on a subject relating to the promotion of world peace (Harvard University Department of Government)**

Book workshop held in September 2024. Participants: Amaney Jamal, Didi Kuo, Noam Lupu, Ellen Lust, Thomas Pepinsky

## PUBLICATIONS

### Peer-reviewed journal articles

- Forthcoming    “Secular-Islamist Competition and Unequal Political Selection: Evidence on Drivers and Consequences from Tunisia”, *Perspectives on Politics*.  
→ **Best Paper Award (2022) by the Political Organizations and Parties section of the American Political Science Association**
- Forthcoming    “Anti-Americanism and Foreign Aid Preferences Among Politicians: Evidence from Tunisia” (with Alexandra Blackman, Renu Singh and Scott Williamson), *Review of International Organizations*.

- 2025 “Turkey’s Hard Road to Democratic Renewal” (with Ayca Alemdaroglu, Toygar Sinan Baykan, and Ladin Bayurgil), *Journal of Democracy*, July.
- 2024 “What Men Want: Parties’ Strategic Engagement with Gender Quotas” (with Julia Clark and Alexandra Blackman), *Comparative Political Studies*.
- 2022 “The IO Effect: International Actors and Service Delivery in Refugee Crises” (with Melani Cammett), *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 66.
- 2022 “How Voters Respond to Presidential Assaults on Checks and Balances: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Turkey” (with Alper Yagci and Daniel Ziblatt), *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 55.
- 2022 “Navigating Welfare Regimes in Divided Societies: Diversity and the Quality of Service Delivery in Lebanon” (with Melani Cammett), *Governance*, Vol. 35.
- 2021 “Targeting Humanitarian Aid Using Administrative Data: Model Design and Validation” (with O. Altindag, S. D. O’Connell, Z. Balcioglu, P. Cadoni, M. Jerneck, A. Kunze Foong), *Journal of Development Economics*, Vol. 148.
- 2017 “Political Context, Organizational Mission and the Quality of Social Services: Insights from the Health Sector in Lebanon” (with Melani Cammett), *World Development*, Vol. 98.  
→ **Best Comparative Policy Analysis Paper Award (2017) given by the Public Policy section of the American Political Science Association**

### Book chapters

- 2024 “Local Political Priorities during Tunisia’s First Democratic Municipal Elections” (with Alex Blackman and Julia Clark), in *Governance and Local Development in the Middle East and North Africa* (Kristen Kao and Ellen Lust, eds.), University of Michigan Press.
- 2016 “Social Welfare in Developing Countries” (with Melani Cammett), in *Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* (Tulia Falleti, Orfeo Fioretos and Adam Sheingate, eds.), New York: Oxford University Press.

### WORKING PAPERS

- “After the Victory: The Consequences of Opposition Local Wins for Voter Attitudes under Competitive Authoritarianism” (with Ayca Alemdaroglu, Toygar Sinan Baykan and Ladin Bayurgil) – presented at TPSA 2025
- “Governing Locally: Threat, Affirmation and Responsiveness among Local Politicians during Decentralization” (with Chantal Berman, Alexandra Blackman and Julia Clark) – presented at MPSA 2019, OSF pre-analysis plan available here, under review
- “Secular-Religious Party Competition and Conditions of Secular Party Success” (with Zeynep Bulutgil and Giovanni Hollenweger) – Presented at 2024 CES and APSA conferences
- “A Pragmatic Secular Shift under an Islamist Government? Exploring Socio-Political Change in Turkey” (with Tarek Masoud) – Presented at the Stanford Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies (May 2025)
- “Faith, Secularism and Democracy: Unpacking the Role of the Religiosity-Secularism Cleavage in Turkish Regime Preferences” – Presented at 2025 AALIMS conference
- “After Moderation? Implementation and Consequences of Infitah in Tunisia’s Ennahda” (with Alexandra Blackman and Julia Clark) – Presented at 2022 Yale Politics & Religion Conference
- “How Incumbent Mayors Affect Democratic Governance: Incumbency, Education, and Kinship Ties in Municipal Councils” (with Tugba Bozcaga and Rabia Kutlu) – Presented at 2023 GLD and APSA Conferences, and 2024 AALIMS conference

- “The Microfoundations of Power-Sharing: Citizen Support for and Opposition to Political Sectarianism in Lebanon” (with Melani Cammett, Uma Ilavarasan and Sami Atallah) – OSF pre-analysis plan [here](#), presented at 2023 POMEPS Research Workshop, 2023 MESA conference and 2024 APSA conference
- “Distributional Preference Divergence in Targeting Foreign Aid: Experimental Evidence from Aid Workers, Refugees, and a Proxy Means Test in a Humanitarian Setting” (with Zeynep Balcioglu and Stephen O’Connell)
- “Electoral and Governance Outcomes of Municipalization of Rural Governance” (with Tugba Bozcaga) – OSF pre-analysis plan [here](#)

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS (selected, full list available upon request)

- 2024 “CHP’yi birinci parti yapan oy geçişleri: Nereden, ne kadar, nasıl?” (“Turkey’s RPP is the leading party for the first time in 50 years: Vote swings from where, how much and how?”, with Onur Altindag, Amac Herdagdelen and Deniz Cem Onduygu), Medyascope.com. Available [here](#).
- 2023 “Demokratikleşme yolunda muhalefetin TBMM sınavı” (“The opposition’s TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly) test on the path to democratization”, with Onur Altindag), Medyascope.com. Available [here](#).
- 2022 “Voleybolun Türkiye’deki hızlı yükselişini kolaylaştıran toplumsal etmenler” (“The societal factors facilitating the rapid rise of volleyball in Turkey”), *Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 162.
- 2022 “CHP’nin Dönüşümünde ve Seçim Başarısında Parti Örgütlerinin Rolü.” [Policy brief](#) published by Turkish Foundation for Social, Economic and Political Studies. Also published as a three-part op-ed series at PolitikYol website ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)).
- 2021 “The Collapse of Tunisia’s Party System and the Rise of Kais Saied” (with Nate Grubman). Analysis piece in *MERIP Online*. Available [here](#).
- 2020 “Istanbul’s Hagia Sophia is a mosque again. Do Turkish citizens want Erdogan to restore the caliphate?” (with Tarek Masoud). Analysis piece at the Monkey Cage Blog of *The Washington Post*. Available [here](#).
- 2018 “Who really won Tunisia’s first democratic local elections?” Analysis piece at the Monkey Cage Blog of *The Washington Post*.
- 2015 “Politics of Educational Expansion in Turkey”, Background Paper for *UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015*. Available [here](#).

#### FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

##### For fieldwork and data collection of the book project

- Bryn Mawr College Center for Social Sciences Summer Research Grant (Summer 2023, Summer 2024, \$1000 each)
- Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies Field Research Grant (Spring 2018, Spring 2019, \$5000 each)
- Weatherhead Center Mid-Dissertation Field Research Grant (Fall 2018, \$3000)
- Institute of Quantitative Social Science (IQSS) Research Support Grant (Spring 2018, Spring 2019, \$3000 each)
- Democracy International Research Support Grant (Spring 2018, \$55000)
- Belfer Center for International Affairs Research Support Grant (Spring 2019, \$4500)

##### Other

- Mellon Tri-College Faculty Forum Brainstorming and Seed Grants (Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2025, \$9000 in total)
- Governance and Local Development in the MENA Region Edited Volume Research Grant (Fall 2019, \$3000)
- George Washington University POMEPS Travel Research Engagement Grant (Summer 2015, \$3000)

- Brown University Watson Institute Graduate Program in Development Research Grant (Summer 2014, \$2500)
- European Commission Jean Monnet Scholarship for master's level studies (2007-08, ~\$40000)

## TEACHING

### Bryn Mawr College

Introduction to Comparative Politics (Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2025)

Middle East Politics (Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024)

Introduction to Research Design and Data Analysis for Political Science (Fall 2023, Fall 2024)

Political Parties, Polarization and Democracy (Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2025)

Major Capstone Advising (Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Spring 2025)

### Teaching Fellowships at Harvard University

Spring 2020 Head Teaching Fellow, Power and Identity in the Middle East

Fall 2019 Teaching Fellow, Foundations of Comparative Politics  
→ **Distinction in Teaching Award; course evaluation average score: 4.6 out of 5**

Spring 2017 Teaching Fellow, Introduction to Political Science Research Methods  
→ **Distinction in Teaching Award; course evaluation average score: 5.0 out of 5**

Fall 2016 Teaching Fellow, Comparative Politics of the Middle East  
Course evaluation average score: 4.3 out of 5

## SKILLS

**Languages** Turkish (native speaker), English (fluent), German (fluent), Arabic (Modern Standard, advanced), French (beginner)

**Methods** Interview-based research, survey design (Qualtrics), analysis of quantitative data (Stata, R), analysis of spatial data (ArcGIS, QGIS, GEODA)

## SERVICE

2023-2025 Member of the Steering Committee for the Tri-Co Social Sciences Colloquium

2019- Reviewer for *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Democratization*, *Governance*, *Journal of Elections*, *Public Opinion and Parties*, *Political Behavior*, *Mediterranean Politics*, *Party Politics*, *Politics and Religion*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN POLICY-ORIENTED RESEARCH

2018-23 Research Consultancy for UNHCR and WFP Lebanon

2008-13 Education Policy Analyst for Education Reform Initiative, Sabanci University, Istanbul

## REFERENCES

**Melani Cammett** Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University, [mcammnett@g.harvard.edu](mailto:mcammnett@g.harvard.edu)

**Matthew Blackwell** Associate Professor of Government, Harvard University, [mblackwell@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:mblackwell@gov.harvard.edu)

**Steven Levitsky** Professor of Government, Harvard University, [levitsky@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:levitsky@gov.harvard.edu)

**Tarek Masoud** Sultan of Oman Professor of International Relations, Harvard Kennedy School, [tarek\\_masoud@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:tarek_masoud@hks.harvard.edu)

**Joel Schlosser** Professor of Political Science, Bryn Mawr College, [jschlosser@brynmawr.edu](mailto:jschlosser@brynmawr.edu)

**Daniel Ziblatt** Eaton Professor of the Science of Government, Harvard University, [dziblatt@g.harvard.edu](mailto:dziblatt@g.harvard.edu)