

GIZEM ZENCIRCI

*Associate Professor of Political Science
Department of Political Science, Providence College
Director of the Middle East Studies Program, Providence College
1 Cunningham Square, Providence, RI 02918-0001
fzencirc@providence.edu, 413-5613991*

[Google Scholar Page](#)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2020-2025** Associate Professor of Political Science, Providence College.
2023-2025 Director of the Middle East Studies program, Providence College.
2013-2020 Assistant Professor of Political Science, Providence College.
2012-2013 Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science, Amherst College.

EDUCATION

- 2013** Ph.D., Political Science, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
2013 Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
2004 MA, Political Science, Bilkent University, Turkey, *University Honors*.
2003 BA, Political Science, Bilkent University, Turkey, *University Honors*.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Islamic Neoliberalism, Middle East Politics, Religious Politics, Civil Society, Politics of Charity, Welfare Regimes, Islamic Politics, Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies, Heritage Studies, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Ethnographic and Interpretive Methods, Turkey, Malaysia.

PEER REVIEWED BOOK

2024 *The Muslim Social: Neoliberalism, Charity, and Poverty in Turkey*. Syracuse University Press (book series-Contemporary Issues in the Middle East).

Reviewed in:

Contemporary Sociology (by Cihan Tugal)

Turkish Studies (by Gorkem Altinors)

New Perspectives on Turkey (by Elifcan Celebi)

VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations (by Aziz Ardic)

Featured in:

New Books Network Podcast

Jadaliyya: Newton.

PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- 2025 Zencirci Gizem. “Saving’ Anatolian Girls: Nationalism, Neoliberalism, and “Gendered Community” in Turkey.” Forthcoming Nov 2025, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies*.
- 2022 Zencirci, Gizem and Catherine Herrold. “Project-Think and the Fragmentation and Defragmentation of Civil Society in Egypt, Palestine, and Turkey.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 51 (3): 545-565.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640211057450>
- 2021 Zencirci Gizem. “A Just Economy? Unifying and Dividing the Islamic Intellectual Field in Neoliberal Turkey.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 89(3), 840-862.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfab078>
- 2020 Zencirci, Gizem. “Markets of Islam: Performative charity and the Muslim middle classes in Turkey,” *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 13(5), 610-625.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2020.1741426>
- 2019 Zencirci, Gizem. “Affective Politics of Structural Adjustment: “Cruel Optimism” and Turhan Selcuk’s Cartoons in Turkey, 1983-1986,” *Journal of Social History*, 53 (1): 53-75.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shz030>
- 2015 Zencirci, Gizem. “From Property to Civil Society: Historical Transformation of *Vakıfs* in Modern Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (47): 533-554.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743815000537>
- 2015 Zencirci, Gizem. “Illusory Debates: How the ‘*Sadaka Culture*’ Discourse Masked the Rise of Social Assistance in Turkey,” *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 43 (1-2): 125-150.
https://brill.com/view/journals/ajss/43/1-2/article-p125_7.xml
- 2014 Zencirci, Gizem. “Civil Society’s History: New Uses of Ottoman Heritage by the Justice of Development Party in Turkey,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 19.
<https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.5076>
- 2008 Zencirci, Gizem. “The Headscarf in Turkey in the Public and State Spheres,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44 (5). (with Dilek Cindoglu)
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200802285187>

BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2012 Zencirci, Gizem. “Secularism, Islam and the National Public Sphere: Politics of Commemorative Practices in Turkey” in *Visualizing Secularism and Religion: Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, India*. Eds. Alev Cinar, Srirupa Roy, Maha Yahya. University of Michigan Press.

OTHER WORK IN PROGRESS

- “Islam, Capitalism, and the Quest for Economic Authenticity in the Islamic Intellectual Field,” (journal article conditionally accepted by *Turkish Studies*)
- “Contemporary Debates on Civilization in the Islamic Intellectual Field in Turkey,” (Special issue under review, most articles have been peer-reviewed and accepted at *Turkish Studies* with Dr. Alev Çınar, TED University), forthcoming 2026.

“Economic Civilizationism and the Spiritual Transformation of the State-Business Relationship in Turkey” (book chapter under review for a 3-book volume on New Civilizationisms, under contract with Cambridge University Press).

Co-edited, edited volume on *Civilizational Enterprises* (Cambridge University Press, under contract, forthcoming 2027) with Dr. Adam Knowles, University of Zurich and Dr. Rosario Forlenza, Luiss University, Italy.

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS

- 2025 Accinno Teaching Award, Providence College.
- 2024 Inherit-Heritage in Transformation Residential Fellowship, Käte Hamburger Kolleg Advanced Research Centre, Berlin, Germany.
- 2023-2024 Civil Discourse Faculty Fellow, Providence College.
- 2022 Interdisciplinary Scholar Award, School of Arts and Sciences, Providence College.
- 2018 & 2019 Co-recipient of an Equity and Engagement Grant, Office of Institutional Diversity, Providence College.
- 2017 Summer Scholars Award, Providence College.
- 2017 Research Grant for a project titled: “Tracing Asian Connections: An Analysis of Knowledge Production and Islamic Charity in Turkey and Malaysia,” Providence College.
- 2017 Curriculum Development Grant for developing an undergraduate course titled: “Globalization in the Muslim World,” Global Religion Research Initiative, University of Notre Dame.
- 2015 TUBITAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) 1001 Research Grant for a multi-year project on Islamic political and economic thought.
- 2013 Joyce E. Berkman Award for Best Paper in Advanced Feminist Studies, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, UMass, Amherst.
- 2011-2012 Science of Generosity Dissertation Fellowship, University of Notre Dame.
- 2011 ARNOVA Dissertation Fellowship.
- 2006 Graduate Student Best Paper Award, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

BOOK REVIEWS

- 2025 “A review of Hilal Alkan’s ‘Welfare as Gift: Welfare as Gift: Local Charity, Politics of Distribution, and Religion in Turkey.’” *Religion, Politics, Ideology*, Jul 1, 2025.
- 2025 “A review of Meral Ugur Çınar’s ‘Memory, Patriarchy and Economy in Turkey: Narratives of Political Power.’” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 78, Numbers 2-3, Winter-Spring 2025.
- 2024 “A review of Timur Hammond’s ‘Placing Islam: Geographies of Connection in Twentieth Century Istanbul.’” *Reading Religion*
<https://readingreligion.org/9780520387430/placing-islam/>.

- 2024 “A review of Florian Weigand’s ‘Waiting for Dignity: Legitimacy and Authority in Afghanistan.’” *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 53, Issue 1.
- 2015 “A review of ‘Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony.’” *Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 49: (2).
- 2014 “A review of Mona Atia’s ‘Building A House in Heaven.’” *Sociology of Islam*, Vol. 2: (3-4).

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 2016 “Lessons from Turkey: Populist Nationalism and the Threat to Democracy.” *Duck of Minerva*.
- 2014 “Neoliberal Islam and Emergent Forms of Social Service Provision in Turkey,” Memo for the Islamist Social Services Workshop, POMEPS, September 23, 2014.

INVITED TALKS

- 2025 **Book Talk:** *The Muslim Social: Neoliberalism, Charity, and Poverty in Turkey*, at Smith College, organized by the Program in Middle East Studies, and co-sponsored by the Smith College Department of Religion Wilson Rikert Memorial Fund and the Department of Government.
- 2024 **Book Talk:** *The Muslim Social: Neoliberalism, Charity, and Poverty in Turkey*, at Stanford University, organized and co-sponsored by Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies, CDDRL’s Program on Turkey, and the Middle Eastern Studies Forum.
- 2024 **Book Talk:** *The Muslim Social: Neoliberalism, Charity, and Poverty in Turkey*, at the *IMES Colloquium*, German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) Institute, Hamburg, Germany.
- 2024 “The Politics of Reviving Ottoman-Islamic Civilizational Heritage in Turkey,” at the *Inherit: Heritage in Transformation* Lecture Series, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany.
- 2024 “Economic ‘Warfare’ and the Civilizational Imaginary: The Neoliberal Politics of Reviving Ottoman-Islamic *Abi* Heritage in Turkey,” at the *New Civilizationisms Project Workshop, InterAsia Week*, Beirut, Lebanon.
- 2018 “Humanitarian Responsibility and the Muslim Poor,” at the *Islamist Movements in Indonesia and Turkey: Mobilization, Islamization and Legitimacy Workshop* at Northwestern University, Chicago, USA.
- 2015 “Reimagining the Ottoman Past, Depoliticizing Civil Society: Islamic Neoliberalism and the *Waqf* Civilization Rhetoric in Turkey,” Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.
- 2014 “The Market and The Mosque: Islamic Neoliberalism and Emergent Forms of Charity in Turkey,” presented at the *Islamist Movements and Social Services Workshop*, POMEPS (Project on Middle East Political Science), Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University, USA.
- 2010 “Geographies of Veiling: Post-Islamism, Secularism and Statehood in Turkey” presented at *New Mexico State University*, USA.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 “De/Colonial Politics of Civilizationism and Turkey’s New Presidential Complex,” *Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies*, Oslo (Sep 2025), accepted.
- 2025 “Civilizational Heritage, Islamic Decoloniality, and Kulliye as a Site of “Organic” Governance,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, Washington D.C. (Nov 2025), accepted.
- 2024 “Decentering the West,’ and Dissident Readings of Ottoman-Islamic Economic Heritage,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference (Virtual)*, November 2024.
- 2023 “The Muslim Social: Islamic Neoliberalism and Governing Poverty in Turkey,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, Montreal. November 2023.
- 2022 “The Hidden Codes of Civilization:” Reviving Ottoman Ahi (Craft) Guilds and Rebuilding Islamic Business Ethics, *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, Denver. December 2022.
- 2022 Saving Anatolian Girls: Neoliberalism, Nationalism, and Paradoxes of Gendering Poverty. *New England Political Science Association Conference*. April 2022.
- 2021 “Muslim Intellectuals and Theorizing the ‘Islamic Economy’ in Turkey.” *Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics Conference. Virtual*. July 2021.
- 2021 “Muslim Intellectuals and Markets of Islam in Turkey.” *Turkish Political Thought Working Group*. Virtual. April 2021.
- 2021 “Project-Think?: A Critical Perspective on NGOs, Social Justice, and Democracy in the Middle East. *International Studies Association Annual Convention. Virtual*. April 2021.
- 2020 “Project-Think: Effects on Civil Society and Democracy in the Middle East.” *116th American Political Science Association Annual Meeting. Virtual*. September 2020.
- 2019 “Between Heritage and Audit: Islamic Materialities and the Revival of Waqfs in Turkey and Malaysia,” *Social Science History Association Annual Meeting*, Chicago, Illinois.
- 2019 “Project Think? A Critical Perspective on NGOs, Democracy, and Development in the Middle East,” *Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting*, New Orleans, Louisiana. (with Catherine Herrold).
- 2019 “Islamic Humanitarianism and Shifting Representations of the Muslim Poor in Turkey,” at the *Islamist Movements in Indonesia and Turkey: Mobilization, Islamization, and Legitimacy Workshop*, Northwestern University, March 2019.
- 2018 “Good Governance according to Islamic NGOs in Turkey: Political Autonomy or Technical Expertise?” *Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting*, San Antonio, Texas.
- 2018 “Populist Reform and Social Assistance in Turkey,” *Northeast Middle East Politics Working Group Meeting*, Harvard University.
- 2018 “Islamic Civil Society and the Rise of the Muslim Individual,” *International Studies Association Annual Meeting*, San Francisco.
- 2017 “Islamic Political Theory and Ottoman Civil Society in Turkey,” *Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Washington D.C.

- 2016 “Islamic Capitalism and Moral Narratives of Humanitarian Generosity in Turkey,” *New England Political Science Association Conference*, Newport.
- 2015 “Producing Knowledge, Democratizing the Middle East: Turkey, Indonesia and the Model Muslim Democracy Discourse,” *ISA-Northeast Conference*, Providence.
- 2015 “Rethinking Wealth, Reconfiguring Piety: Neoliberal Islam and the ‘Ottoman’ Culture of Generosity in Turkey,” *Northeast Middle East Politics Working Group Meeting*, University of Connecticut.
- 2014 “Pro-poor and pro-market? Market Islam and New Politics of Islamic Generosity in Turkey,” *Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Washington D.C.
- 2014 “Neoliberal Welfare: Islamism, Secularism and New Cultures of Generosity in Turkey,” *POMEPS Junior Scholars Book Manuscript Development Workshop*, Yale University, New Haven.
- 2013 “A Neoliberal ‘Logic of Relief’ or a Post-neoliberal ‘Logic of Rights’? An Analysis of the Welfare Regime in Turkey”, presented at the workshop “After Neoliberalism: The Future of Post-Neoliberal State and Society and Asia,” *SSRC Inter-Asian Connections IV: Istanbul Conference*, Istanbul.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2025 Panel Organizer and Chair, “Rethinking Civilizationism, Identitarianism, and Political Governance in New Turkey,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, Washington D.C. (Nov 2025), accepted.
- 2025 Invited participant at a roundtable titled, “Navigating Fieldwork and Research in Turkey: Challenges, Adaptations, and Insights,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, Washington D.C. (Nov 2025), accepted.
- 2025 Panel Organizer, “Between Memory and Heritage: Politics of Remembering, Reclaiming, and Contesting the Ottoman Empire,” *Memory Studies Association Conference*, Prague (Jul 2025).
- 2024 Panel Organizer, “Counter-Hegemonic Articulations of ‘Decentering the West’ in the Islamic Intellectual Field in Turkey,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, November 2024 (Virtual).
- 2024 Chair of a panel titled, “Memory and Living History,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, November 2024 (Virtual).
- 2022 Panel Organizer, “Mapping AKP’s Civilizational Ideology in Turkey,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, December 2022, Denver, Colorado.
- 2018 Chair and Discussant of a panel titled “Modernizing Hegemony and Discourse,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, November 2018, San Antonio, Texas.
- 2018 Panel Organizer, “Civil Society and Governance in the Middle East,” *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, November 2018, San Antonio, Texas.
- 2018 “The Cruel Optimism of Neoliberalism: Political Cartoons in Turkey during the mid-1980s,” *Political Science Department Brown Bag Lunch Series*, Providence College.

- 2017 Chair and Discussant of a panel titled “Comparative Welfare Policy,” *New England Political Science Association Conference*, April 2017, Providence, RI.
- 2017 “Legitimizing Development: Shifting Notions of Welfare Policy in Turkey,” *Summer Scholars’ Presentations, The School of Arts and Sciences*, Providence College.
- 2016 “Making Capitalism Islamic: Market Piety and Moral Citizenship in Turkey,” *Political Science Department Brown Bag Lunch Series*, Providence College.
- 2014 Panel organizer, “Neoliberal Politics of Charity in the Middle East,” at the *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, 2014, Washington D.C.
- 2014 Participant at a roundtable titled: “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Islamic Charities,” at the *Middle East Studies Association Conference*, November 2014, Washington D.C.

ADVISING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Minor advisor, Middle East Studies Program, Providence College, 2023-present.

Major advisor, Department of Political Science, 2014-present.

Undeclared advisor, Providence College, 2018-2019; 2021-2022.

Honor’s Thesis Supervision, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2024.

SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE

New England Political Science Association Board Member, 2017-2019.

Middle East Studies Association Conference Program Committee Member, 2025.

External Reviewer for the Political Science Department, Bridgewater State University, 2024.

Manuscript Review

- Turkish Studies
- Religion and Politics
- Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis
- Gender, Place, and Culture
- DIYAR: Journal of Ottoman, Turkish, and Middle Eastern Studies
- The Muslim World
- Mediterranean Politics
- Southeast European and Black Sea Studies
- South European Society and Politics
- Religion and Development
- International Journal of Social Welfare
- Palgrave Macmillan
- Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management
- QIJIS: Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies
- Alternatif Politika (Alternative Politics)

Textbook Review

- Sage Publications
- Cambridge University Press
- Oxford University Press
- Routledge

Grants and Awards Review

- Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique – FNRS (Fund for Scientific Research, France).
- ARNOVA Global Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Award

SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT

Member of the Hiring Committee, Providence College, Department of Political Science, 2021-2022.

Member of the Faculty Development Committee, Providence College, Department of Political Science, 2019-2020.

Member of the Communications Committee, Providence College, Department of Political Science, 2015-2016; 2018-2019; 2019-2020.

Member of the Curriculum Committee, Providence College, Department of Political Science, 2015-2016.

Member of the Speakers Committee, Providence College, Department of Political Science, 2014-2015.

Consortium for Faculty Diversity Post-Doctoral Fellowship Committee Member, Spring 2019.

Adjunct Faculty Hiring Committee Member, Providence College, Department of Political Science, Spring 2014.

Member of the Core Curriculum Committee, Providence College, Department of Political Science, Fall, 2013.

SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE

Middle East Studies Program Director, 2023-2025.

Faculty Senate Departmental Representative, Providence College, Spring 2025.

Member of the School of Arts & Sciences Task Force for Faculty Inclusion, Spring 2019.

At-Large Faculty Senate Representative, Providence College, 2018-2019.

Member of the Faculty Senate Committee on Admissions, Providence College, 2018-2019.

Faculty Senate Departmental Representative, Providence College, Spring 2018.

Reviewer on the Providence College Core Curriculum Portfolio Project, Providence College, 2015-2016, 2019-2020, 2023-2024.

Summer Mentor for Incoming Junior Faculty, Providence College, Summer 2014.

Junior Faculty Research Group, Providence College, Department of Political Science, 2013-2016.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Providence College (2013-2025)

Middle East Politics

Human Rights

Middle East: Connections & Conversations

Introduction to Politics

Globalization and the Muslim World

Comparative Politics

Women, Gender, Politics in the Middle East

Comparative Revolutions

Art and Revolutions in the Muslim World

Comparative Welfare Politics

Amherst College, Visiting Assistant Professor (2012-2013)

Political Islam

Middle East Politics

Politics of Humanitarianism

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Instructor (2010-2013)

Middle East Politics

Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

New Civilizationisms Project <https://thecivilizationismproject.sites.stanford.edu>

The Islamic Political Thought in Turkey Working Group <https://islampolthoughtinturkey.com>

Middle East Studies Association (MESA)

American Political Science Association (APSA)

Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA)

Northeast Middle East Studies Working Group

New England Political Science Association (NEPSA)

1980s Network <https://blog.yorks.ac.uk/1980snetwork/>