

DCU PhD Studentship on Islamist Movements in Exile

The School of Law and Government at Dublin City University invites applications for its four-year fully funded PhD programme, starting in September 2024. Outstanding PhD candidates will be offered **fee waiver and a tax-free scholarship of €22,000 per annum** for four years. All applicants (including international applicants) will be automatically considered for funded studentships.

The PhD candidate will work on a research project titled **Islamist movements in exile**, which aims to assess the evolution of activism of moderate Islamist social movements in exile in Europe since the so-called “Arab Spring”. In particular, the project investigates how the forced displacement and resettling abroad of Islamist social movements following the uprisings and authoritarian strengthening in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), affects their internal composition, ideology, values, political mobilization strategies, transnational networks, and their relationships with host societies.

Following the 2010-11 MENA uprisings, Islamists fell victim to renewed regime repression in many countries and were forced to flee (Topak, Mekouar and Cavatorta 2024), with high numbers relocating to Turkey, Malaysia, the US, and Europe. Since then, Islamists have worked to rebuilding unity under exile while also trying to settle into their new reality in host societies (Ar dovini and Biagini 2021a). This led to the creation of new Islamist pressure groups whose impact on European political landscapes and societies has only started to be researched (Moss 2021). Significantly, the dimension of forced exile is leading many Islamists to question their pre-held beliefs and belonging, resulting in challenges against established hierarchies, values, and practices (Ar dovini and Biagini 2021a, 2021b; Biagini 2021a, 2021b; Ar dovini 2022 and 2023). These processes have started to generate internal change, which is likely to considerably reshape Islamist movements, their activism, political mobilization, identity, value system, and engagement with host societies. However, despite their growing presence within European contexts, Islamist diasporic movements remain largely understudied.

This project contributes to an emerging but fast-growing scholarship on Islamist diaspora communities in Europe, intersecting with disciplines such as international relations, social movements, security studies, and diaspora studies (Vasquez and Knott, 2014; Müller-Funk, 2016; Knott and McLoughlin, 2010; Gorman and Kasbarian, 2015; Bakker and Meijer, 2012; Baser and Halperin, 2019). Most of the existing research on Islamic communities in the West has, since 9/11, been driven by a focus on violent jihadism and radicalisation. While research on what makes Islamism appealing to diasporas, especially among second generations, exists, a considerable knowledge gap remains when it comes to Islamists’ political mobilization and engagement with their host societies, and processes of internal renewal or re-alignment within their main movements. Without a proper understanding of the extent of their presence, politics and activities, host countries are unable to promote

appropriate policies to deal with the growing presence of such movements and networks in their home states.

Priority will be given to projects that propose to investigate aspects of the above noted dynamics to moderate Islamist movements in European countries such as Ireland, the UK, Italy, France, Belgium, and Turkey; that apply or include a gender dimension; that adopt a comparative approach either between host countries or between host and home country. Candidates whose interest is on MENA Islamist social movements in exile in Southeast Asia are also encouraged to apply.

The successful candidate will work under the supervision of Dr Erika Biagini (Full profile: <https://www.dcu.ie/lawandgovernment/people/erika-biagini>) and of Dr Paola Rivetti (Full profile: <https://www.dcu.ie/lawandgovernment/people/paola-rivetti>).

The School of Law and Government

The School of Law and Government is a research active school with world-class faculty willing to supervise PhD students on topics in their areas of research www.dcu.ie/lawandgovernment/people-law-and-government. DCU regularly ranks among the top "100 under 50" universities as per Times Higher Education and hosts various research centres. The School is committed to embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion, and to that end welcomes applicants from all backgrounds.

The School operates a full-time structured four-year PhD programme with a range of taught courses in the first year and further professional training offered in other years. The programme combines the rigour and professionalism of the largely taught US approach with the independence and imagination of the traditional European supervisory programme, and it is designed to prepare its students to conduct cutting-edge research and pursue successful academic careers. As well as a tax-free stipend, we may support our students with limited funding for conference and research travel. The School also gives its PhD students opportunities to contribute to teaching.

How to apply

The deadline for application is **7th May by 5pm GMT**. Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants should send 1) a full **CV with contact details for 2 referees**, 2) the **grades/full transcripts** achieved in Masters degree with copies of transcripts, 3) a **research proposal** (c. 2-3,000 words).

Applications should be sent to: james.gallen@dcu.ie by 17:00 GMT 25 March. Applications that do not include all required information (1 to 3 above) will not be considered. Applications will be acknowledged by email. Candidates are not required to apply formally through the university system at this stage; they first will be assessed internally by a School panel.

We intend to shortlist and interview selected candidates either in person or online in May. Successful candidates will then be required to apply formally to be admitted as PhD students and may also need to show proficiency in the English language. Successful candidates will begin their studies in September 2024 and are expected to be resident in Dublin for the duration of the programme.

Prospective applicants may make informal contact with the supervisory panel Dr Erika Biagini (Erika.biagini@dcu.ie) and Dr Paola Rivetti (Paola.rivetti@dcu.ie) in advance of an application.

You can find additional information about doing a PhD in DCU at the faculty page: <https://www.dcu.ie/humanities-and-social-sciences/doctoral-studies-hub>