

Yasuyuki Matsunaga

curriculum vitae
May 2025

Current Position

Professor of Political Science
School of International and Area Studies, and Graduate School of Global Studies
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, Japan

Address: 3-11-1 Asahicho, Fuchushi, Tokyo, 183-8534, Japan
Phone: +81-42-330-5384
Email: matsunaga@tufs.ac.jp

Fields of Concentration

Teaching: (1) Approaches to Contentious Politics, Conflict, and Political Change
(2) Approaches to Culture in Comparative Historical Analysis
(3) Comparative Political Regimes and Democratization
(4) Qualitative Social Science Methodologies and Theories

Research: (1) Islam and Politics in Iran, Kurdistan, and the Greater Middle East
(2) Dynamics of Sectarian Conflict in the Greater Middle East
(3) Contentious Politics and Democratization in Iran
(4) Postrevivalist Reformist Islamic Trends and Thinkers

Education

Ph.D., Political Science, Department of Politics, New York University, New York, NY
September 2006

Dissertation: *Struggles for Democratic Consolidation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979-2004* (Director: Farhad Kazemi)

M.A., International Studies, Department of Government and International Studies,
University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, August 1994

B.A., Islamic Studies, Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan, March 1987

Language Competence

Persian (advanced – reading; intermediate - speaking and writing);
Arabic (basic/intermediate - reading);
Kurdish (Sorani) (introductory/basic – reading)
French (introductory - reading);
English (fluent);
Japanese (native)

Full-time Academic Appointments

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, Japan

2013- : Professor (tenured)
2008-2013: Associate Professor (2010-2013: tenured)

Nihon University (College of International Relations), Shizuoka, Japan

2003-2004: Associate Professor (tenured)
2000-2003: Assistant Professor

Other Appointments

April 2004 – March 2009

Non-Resident Fellow, Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions
Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan

October 1997 – October 1999

Cultural Attaché and Special Assistant to Ambassador Takaya Suto
The Embassy of Japan in the Islamic Republic of Iran
Tehran, Iran

January 1997

Junior Consultant

Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme
New York, NY

Summers 1993 and 1994

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Department of German and Oriental Languages, University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC

External Grants and Awards

- “Armed Non-State Actors in the Middle East: Their Transnational Networks and Impacts on Conflict Dynamics,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (18,590,000 Yen), 2025-2029
- “The Geopolitical Location of and Socio-Religious Changes in Southeastern Kurdistan (Iraqi Hawraman),” JFE 21st Century Foundation 2024 Asian History Research Grants (1,500,000 Yen), January-December 2025
- “The State, Politics, and Religious Nationalism: Rojhelat in Comparative Perspective,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (17,160,000 Yen), 2021-2025
- “Preventing Sectarian Wars: An Examination of Sectarian Irregular Armies and Their Transnational Networks,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (17,680,000 Yen), 2016-2020 [grant waved due to multiple awards]
- “Democratization, Postrevivalist Islamism, and Path Dependence in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (3,510,000 Yen), 2014-2017
- “Emerging Democratic Discourse and the Democratization Process in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (1,000,000 Yen), 2001-2002
- Department of Education Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS) for the study of Persian, Hagop Kervorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, 1996-1998 [grant waved for 1997-1998]

Publications

Peer Reviewed Articles in Journals and Edited Volumes

- “The Myth of Vertical Integration in Regional Conflict: Iran and the ‘Axis of Resistance,’” a chapter to be published in *Gaza Nakba 2023–2024: Background, Context, Consequences*, ed. Hiroyuki Suzuki and Keiko Sakai (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2025), pp 123-140. DOI: [10.1007/978-981-97-4868-6_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-4868-6_8)
- “Review Essay: (Theological and Institutional Soul-Searching Aside) Will Re-Problematizing Iran’s Islamic State à la ‘Religious Secularity’ Require Another Islamic State?” *Journal of Religious and Political Practice*, 3, 1-2 (2017): 84-87. DOI: [10.1080/20566093.2017.1292173](https://doi.org/10.1080/20566093.2017.1292173)

- “Islamic Dissent in Iran’s Full-Fledged Islamic Revolutionary State,” in *Between Dissent and Power: The Transformation of Islamic Politics in the Middle East and Asia*, ed. Khoo Boo Teik, Vedi R. Hadiz and Yoshihiro Nakanishi (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2014), 66-88. DOI: [10.1057/9781137408808_4](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137408808_4)
- “Human Rights and New Jurisprudence in Mohsen Kadivar’s Advocacy of ‘New-Thinker’ Islam,” *Die Welt des Islams*, 51, 3-4 (2011): 358-381. DOI: [10.1163/157006011X603541](https://doi.org/10.1163/157006011X603541)
- “The Secularization of a *Faqih*-headed Revolutionary Islamic State of Iran: Its Mechanisms, Processes, and Prospects,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 29, 3 (2009): 468-482. DOI: [10.1215/1089201X-2009-032](https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-2009-032)
- “Revisiting Ayatollah Khomeini’s Doctrine of *Wilayat al-Faqih* (*Velayat-e Faqih*),” *Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*, 44 (2009): 77-90. DOI: [10.5356/orient.44.77](https://doi.org/10.5356/orient.44.77)
- “Popular Sovereignty and Republicanism in Iran’s Postrevolutionary Electoral Democracy,” in *Development of Parliamentarism in the Modern Islamic World*, ed. Sato Tsugitaka (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 2009), 134-153.
- “‘Atabat” (updating the original entry written by Hamid Algar) and “Borujerdi, Hosayn” (updating the original entry written by Manochehr Dorraj), in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, revised edition, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 240-245 and 361-362.
- “Political Parties,” in *Iran Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Islamic Republic*, ed. Mehran Kamrava and Manochehr Dorraj (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 390-394.
- “Mohsen Kadivar, an Advocate of Postrevivalist Islam in Iran,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 34, 3 (2007): 317-329. DOI: [10.1080/13530190701388333](https://doi.org/10.1080/13530190701388333)
- Reprinted in *Iranian Intellectuals, 1997-2007*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 57-69.
- “Iran’s Domestic Politics and Foreign Economic Relations after the Sixth Majles Elections,” in *Politics, Economy and Sanctions in the Persian Gulf States in a Changing Environment*, ed. Sadashi Fukuda (Chiba, JAPAN: Institute of Developing Economies, 2001), 16-25.
- “L’État rentier est-il réfractaire à la démocratie?” *Critique internationale*, 8 (2000): 46-58. DOI: [10.3406/criti.2000.1439](https://doi.org/10.3406/criti.2000.1439)
- “Examining the Views of ‘Allamah Majlisi on Legitimate Political Authority (*saltanat-i mashru‘ah*) and the Guardianship of the Jurist (*wilayat-i faqih*),” *Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan*, 35 (2000): 12-22. DOI: [10.5356/orient1960.35.12](https://doi.org/10.5356/orient1960.35.12)
- Reprinted in *Journal of Religious Thought* [published by Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Shiraz University], 2, 1-2 (2001): 3-16.

Paper Presentations (in English and Persian)

(with Sohrab Ahmadian) “An Anatomy of Islamic Awakening in Iranian Ouramanat: the Case of Naser Sobhani,” Kurdish Studies Conference, International presentation, LSE Middle East Centre, University of Sheffield, May 23, 2024

“Dissecting Ethnonational Undertones in Minority Religious Movements in Iran,” The Nation as a Sacred Communion? Religion, Legacies, Conflict, IPSA RC14 & RC43 Colloquium, Queen’s University Belfast, June 1, 2023

“Dissecting Multilayered Insurgencies: A Relational, Genealogical and Decolonial Perspective,” Decolonizing Kurdish Studies Initiative Workshops, Brown University Center for Middle East Studies & Yale MacMillan Center Council on Middle East Studies, Online, April 8, 2022

(with Umut Azak), “The State Regulations of Minority Religions in Comparative Perspective,” 35ème SISR CONFÉRENCE BIENNALE: The Politics of Religion and Spirituality, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, July 11-12, 2019.

“A Processual Sociological Perspective on Sectarian Insurgency in Iran’s Two Border Areas,” Conference: Rethinking Nationalism, Sectarianism and Ethno-Religious Mobilisation in the Middle East, St. Antony’s College and Pembroke College, University of Oxford, January 28, 2018

“An ‘Event-in-Sequential-Conjuncture’ Approach to ‘Global Crises’ Phenomena,” Conference: The Global Refugee Crisis: Mobile People under State Protection or Exploitation? Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, January 5, 2018

“Reconciling Islamic Constitutionalism with Pragmatic Governance: What Does the Iranian Experience Offer?” Conference on Religion and the State, hosted by The Arab Association of Constitutional Law, Tunis, Tunisia, on March 24, 2017

“Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Sanctified Punishment: A Case of Iran’s Islamic State,” 111th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (Regular Session: Redefining the Public Sphere in the Middle East), Seattle, August 21, 2016.

“Contention over Religious Violence: How Does Religion Sanction Violence, If It Does, in the Islamic Republic of Iran?” Fifth Annual Conference of Japan Association for Human Security Studies, International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan, December 13, 2015.

“Khomeinism: the Non-Obvious Constraints on Political Reform in Iran,” Cultures of Freedom and Contending Visions of Justice and Governance in the Muslim World Symposium, University of Sydney, Australia, April 9, 2015

- “Will Historicizing Desecularization Help the Iranian Postrevivalists?” Middle East Studies Association (Washington, DC), November 22, 2014
- “Theorizing Cross-National Conflict Non-Diffusion: Why Sectarian Violence Doesn’t Spread Beyond National Borders in and around the Middle East,” Fourth World Congress for Middle East Studies, Ankara, Turkey, August 19, 2014
- “Postrevivalist Islam or Traumatic Resecularization? What Does Historicizing the Religio-Political Unity Offer in the Post-Khomeini Iranian Context?” XVII International Sociological Association World Congress, Yokohama, Japan, July 15, 2014
- “Postrevolutionary Iran’s Strategic Culture and Its Regional Implications,” The ILCAA-National University of Singapore Joint Symposium: The Crisis of Stability in the Middle East, Held at The Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, Japan, February 12, 2013
- “Islamic Dissent in Iran’s Full-fledged Islamic Revolutionary State,” Institute of Developing Economies-JETRO and Murdoch University Workshop: Islam and Political Dissent—Studies and Comparisons from Asia and the Middle East, Chiba, Japan, November 8, 2012
- “Baztab-e Enqelab-e Eslami-ye Iran dar Zhapon,” Daneshgah-e Baqer ol-‘Olum, Qom, Iran, September 28, 2010
- “Human Rights and the New Jurisprudence in Mohsen Kadivar’s Advocacy of New-Thinker Islam,” MEIS Symposium: Otherness and Beyond (held at The Institute of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), December 6, 2009
- “Postrevivalist New Thinkers of Religion: The Case of Mohsen Kadivar,” Middle East Studies Association (Boston), November 21, 2009
- “The Secularization of Iran’s *Faqih*-headed Islamic State: Its Mechanisms and Prospects,” The Iranian Revolution: Thirty Years After, The Center for Iranian Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel, May 25, 2009
- “Secularizing Politics and Its Opponents in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Middle East Studies Association (Washington DC), November 19, 2005
- “Secularizing Politics and Its Opponents in Post-Revolutionary Iran,” Colloquium: “Iran and Iraq Face the Future,” Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, University of Michigan, September 26, 2005
- “The Birth and Growth of the Democratic ‘New-Left’ Islamist Discourse in Iran,” International Colloquium of the Islamic Area Studies Project: “Intellectuals in Islam in the Twentieth-Century,” Tokyo, Japan, October 15, 2000

“Legitimate Political Authority and the Guardianship of the Jurist in the viewpoints of ‘Allamah Majlisi,” International Conference commemorating ‘Allamah Majlisi, Esfahan, Iran, January 19-20, 2000.

“The Third Experts Assembly Election and the Future of the Clerical Rule in Iran,” Middle East Studies Association (Washington DC), November 21, 1999.

“An Analytical Perspective on the Post-Revolutionary Debate over the Islamic Republic of Iran Polity,” Japan Association for Middle East Studies-Asian Federation of Middle East Studies Associations Joint Conference (Tokyo), May 16, 1999

Associational Memberships

American Sociological Association (ASA)

Sections: Comparative and Historical Sociology, Political Sociology, Theory

Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA)

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES)

Association for Iranian Studies (AIS)

Past Memberships:

American Political Science Association (ASPA)

International Political Science Association (IPSA)

Social Science History Association (SSHA)

Service to the Profession

Steering Committee, RC43 (Religion and Politics), International Political Science Association, 2017-2019, 2023-2025

Program Committee, International Society for Iranian Studies, 2010

Editorial Board Member, Japan Association for Middle East Studies (2009-2017); Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan (2000-2016).

Journal Referee, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies, Bulletin of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan, Muslim World Journal of Human Rights, Critical Research on Religion

References

Farhad Kazemi

Professor Emeritus, Department of Politics, New York University

Shahrugh Akhavi

Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, University of South Carolina

Mehrzad Boroujerdi

Professor of Political Science, Department of History and Political Science, Missouri University of Science and Technology

Juan R. Cole

Professor, Department of History, and Director, Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, University of Michigan

Keiko Sakai

Professor, Faculty of Law, Politics and Economics
Chiba University, Japan