My research focuses on the dynamics of political contestation in the developing world, with a regional focus on the Middle East and North Africa. My research on Islamist movement organizations in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Kuwait seeks first and foremost to contribute to the theoretical literature on social movements and contentious politics, a field that spans the disciplines of political science and sociology. My first book, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt* (2002), explains how Islamist groups mobilized ordinary citizens for “high risk” activism under conditions of authoritarian rule. My second book, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (2013) traces the impact of political participation on the world-views, goals, strategies and organizations of mainstream Sunni revivalist Islamist groups in the Arab world. The primary objective of the book is to offer an analytically nuanced and fine-grained analysis of the evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from its founding in 1928 to Muhammad Morsi’s election as President in the wake of the Arab Spring. Yet by comparing the Brotherhood’s trajectory to those of mainstream Islamist groups in Jordan, Morocco, and Kuwait, the book also identifies a broader pattern of Islamist movement change that transcends the particulars of any single country case.

The books and articles I have written on Islamist movements and political contention in the Arab world also connect with wider debates in the fields of Comparative Politics (especially Democratization Theory), Middle East Politics, and Islamic Studies. In particular, my work seeks to contribute to the generation and refinement of “mid-range” theory on the dynamics of mobilization, the role of ideological commitments (as distinct from interests) as bases of political action, and the causal connection between the “participation” and “moderation” of anti-system groups in different cultural and institutional contexts. In addition, my work seeks to demonstrate how historical-institutional analysis and small-n qualitative research can contribute to the derivation of valid causal inferences about the origins and dynamics of real-world social and political change.