**Political Islam**

From: Nicole Gilbertson, 2016

**History Standards: 10.10**

Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China.

**CCSS Standards: Writing, Grade 9-10**

CCSS RH 9. Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS WH 10. 10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Guiding Question:** What is Political Islam?

**Overview of Lesson:**

1. As a whole group, teachers work with students to develop a definition of political Islam. Teachers use the Political Islam PPT and students each get a worksheet.
2. Teacher shows students the survey data on democracy in countries with majority Islamic populations and students answer questions in groups.
3. Teachers divide students into groups of 4 and assign each group a case study: Turkey, Iran, or ISIS. Each group reads the sources and answers the questions on the worksheet. Each group is responsible for sharing out or creating a display (poster or online) summarizing the information

**Resources Below:**

* **Student worksheet**
* **Source set: Iran**
* **Source set: Turkey**
* **Source set: ISIS**
* **PowerPoint in separate file**

Political Islam

World History

Class Definition of Political Islam

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What do opinion polls of Muslims in the Middle East (and beyond) tell us about attitudes toward democracy? Synthesize the data from the Pew Research Poll “Views of Democracy,” develop a claim and use evidence from the charts.

Case Study: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What does Political Islam look like in your case study location?

What are the goals of the party/state?

How successful are they in achieving their goals?

Who supports the Islamist party/state? Who is opposed?

How does the information you learned from your case study allow you to revise and/or refine your definition of political Islam?

Political Islam

World History

Iran

Source 1 :

Iran Country Profile from BBC

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14541327>

Guiding Questions:

* Who is the Supreme Leader? What is his role in Iranian politics?
* Is the press free in Iran? Why is this important for understanding how ideas are spread in Iran?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Iran?
* What does political Islam look like in Iran?

Source 2:

Emma Borden, “Demystifying Iran’s Parliamentary Election Process,” Brookings, February 9, 2016.

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/02/09-iran-election-parliament-explainer-borden>

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| On February 26, Iranians will begin the process of electing their tenth parliament. While much discussion has focused on implications for Iran’s foreign policy, the electoral process itself remains a mystery to many. Here are the basics of the Iranian parliamentary election process.What is the Majlis, and what powers and responsibilities does it have? Iran’s Majlis—officially the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis-e shoura-ye eslami), and in Western terms a popularly elected parliament—was established in the wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. While the Majlis is institutionally separate from the Guardians’ Council, an appointed body of 12 Islamic jurists, the Council plays a large role in the parliament’s elections and its legislative role. The 290 members of the Majlis represent Iran’s [207 electoral districts](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-parliamentary-elections-inside-the-candidate-approval-process). Thirty seats are devoted to representatives from Tehran, the largest district. The second largest has only six seats. The main responsibilities of the Majlis are [legislation and oversight](https://majlismonitor.com/en/2016/01/video-how-does-irans-parliament-work/). After the Majlis debates and passes a law, the Guardians’ Council must confirm that the law conforms to the Constitution and Islam. The veto power of the Guardians’ Council over legislation has meant that [substantive political and economic reform—even if supported by the Majlis—has often been obstructed.](http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/parliament) (In fact, because approximately half of the bills passed by the parliament were later rejected by the Guardians’ Council, Iran in 1989 established a third legislative body, the Expediency Council, which is empowered to mediate between them and overrule both.) If approved by the Guardians’ Council, the piece of legislation must be signed by the president to become law. Among other things, the Majlis reviews and [approves the annual budget, may approve and impeach heads of ministries, issues formal questions to the government](http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/parliament), and [approves international treaties](http://www.irantracker.org/analysis/pendleton-bucala-irans-2016-elections-process-players-stakes-january-12-2016). Members are elected every four years by [direct popular vote](https://majlismonitor.com/en/2016/01/video-how-does-irans-parliament-work/). Although they are subject to considerable restrictions, parliamentary elections have been held regularly since 1980. To qualify to run for a seat, candidates endure numerous rounds of vetting. The Interior Ministry oversees initial vetting, but the Guardians’ Council ultimately calls the shots on who is qualified to run. According to [Article 28 of the Elections Act of Islamic Consultative Assembly](http://www.princeton.edu/irandataportal/elections/lawparl/), candidates must satisfy the following criteria at the time of registration: 1. Belief in and practical obligation to Islam and the holy system of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
2. Citizenship in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
3. Expressed loyalty to the Constitution and progressive principle of the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurisprudent.
4. A document proving possession of at least an Associate’s degree or equivalent.
5. Not having a bad reputation in the electoral district.
6. Physical health such that they at least enjoy the blessings of vision, hearing, and speaking.
7. At least 30 years of age and at most 75.

(Religious minority candidates are not required to satisfy the first criterion.) Even if a candidate meets each requirement, the Guardians’ Council has been known to find excuses to disqualify parliamentary hopefuls. Incumbents may be disqualified. The manipulation of the Iranian electoral system has garnered significant international criticism. [Freedom House stated](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/iran) that although “there were no claims of systematic fraud” in the 2012 elections, “several sitting lawmakers accused the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of rigging activities.” According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Guardians' Council has [used information from undisclosed sources](https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/24/iran-threats-free-fair-elections) to disqualify candidates in recent years. [HRW's Sarah Leah Whitson](https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/24/iran-threats-free-fair-elections) stated that there are “serious structural problems that undermine free and fair elections” and that “certain officials arbitrarily act beyond their legal powers to leave virtually no alternative candidates for people to vote for…”  |

Guiding Questions:

* What power does the Majlis have in Iran?
* The Supreme Leader appoints the Guardian’s Council, how do these leaders exercise their political authority over the Majlis?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Iran?
* What does political Islam look like in Iran?

Source 3:

Videos of Iranian voters being interviewed, watch:

“Iranians on the election results”

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000004241621/iranians-on-the-election-results.html>

“Iranians turn out for national elections”

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000004236190/iranians-turn-out-for-national-elections.html>

“Iranians speak about election”

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000004233076/iranians-speak-about-election.html>

Found at *New York Times*

Guiding Questions

* How do Iranians participate in politics?
* What are their political concerns?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Iran?
* What does political Islam look like in Iran?

Source 4:

Ted Regencia, “Iran election: Women make gains in new parliament,” AlJazeera, March 7, 2016

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/iran-election-women-parliament-160301121014801.html>

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| During an international volleyball tournament in Iran in 2014, Fatemeh Alia, a member of the country's current parliament, caused an uproar when she supported banning women from watching the games live, saying that a woman's primary duty was to "stay at home" to serve her husband and children.As results of Iran's first round of parliamentary election emerged, it appeared the conservative MP's words had come back to haunt her, as she was voted out of office.In contrast, eight female reformists prevailed, all coming from the same Tehran district as Alia - one of them is a 30-year-old MBA graduate, Fatemeh Hosseini, who campaigned on an economic reform platform. According to official results reported on Thursday, 14 female candidates, all reformists, won seats across the country, five more than the current nine members.In addition, seven are headed for a runoff in April, potentially bringing the number of female MPs to 21 - in what could be the largest female delegation in the history of Iran's parliament, including the pre-1979 revolution assembly.  While the number of women represents only a tiny fraction of the 290-member parliament, analysts said the increase represents progress, even if it did not hit the 30-percent benchmark envisioned by women's rights groups prior to this year's election."The most important thing is there are women," Fateme Karimkhan, a Tehran-based journalist with news agency ISNA, told Al Jazeera."It could be a chance for women to have their own voice in parliament."Overall, reformists increased their number in parliament winning all 30 contested seats in the capital. However, they failed to achieve an outright majority, with conservatives winning outside of Tehran. About 64 seats are being contested in the second round.   Of Iran's estimated 81.8 million population, 49 percent are women. But in the recent polls, only 586 of the 6,229 parliament candidates, or 9.4 percent, were women. In the parallel Assembly of Experts election, all female candidates were disqualified, including a top Islamic law expert and educator from Qom, [Zohreh Sefati](https://majlismonitor.com/en/2016/02/disqualifying-the-qualified-female-candidates-for-the-assembly-of-experts/). The 88-member council of clerics is empowered with choosing the nation's supreme leader in the event of a vacancy.New blood'Despite the most recent victory of female deputies, there are reasons to be sceptical given the conservative leanings of previous parliaments, said Karimkhan. She said it remains to be seen, whether the new female MPs can do "something revolutionary"."I am not too much optimistic," Karimkhan said. "Most of them are young, some of them have no clear political background, so maybe we have to wait and see what happens next."Among those young contenders who won was Zahra Saeidi, a 29-year-old industrial engineer, who beat 10 male candidates in the constituency of Mobarakeh, in the province of Esfahan.  Karimkhan said what is more significant is that reformists will be coming in the next session."I do not look at this as an opportunity for women, but still there is a chance for new members to show something fresh in this situation."Still, feminist activists are happy because of this "new blood", she said.Negar Mortazavi, an Iranian-American journalist and commentator born in Tehran, told Al Jazeera that in Iran, being a woman in parliament does not automatically translate to being supportive of women's rights.Citing the case of Fatemeh Alia, Mortazavi said that most of the current female members of parliament are aligned with the ultra-conservative wing of Iranian politics."They actually introduced and voted for some of the very traditional and limiting laws concerning women and family," she said.Referring to the electoral loss of Alia, who advocated for women staying at home, Mortazavi said it was ironic given that she is a member of a male-dominated parliament."There's a joke going around with people saying, 'We heard your [Alia's] message and we let you stay home and focus on your family'."… |

# Guiding Questions:

* Why is it important for women to be involved in political leadership, according to the article?
* How do women politicians reflect the larger Iranian population’s political ideology?
* What does political Islam look like in Iran?

Political Islam

World History

ISIS

Source 1:

Council on Foreign Relations, “What is the Islamic State?,” November 16, 2015

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| The self-proclaimed Islamic State is a militant movement that has conquered territory in western Iraq and eastern Syria, where it has made a bid to establish a state in territories that encompass some [6.5 million residents](http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/how-many-fighters-does-the-islamic-state-really-have/?singlepage=1). Though spawned by al-Qaida’s Iraq franchise, it split with Osama bin Laden’s organization and evolved to not just employ terrorist and insurgent tactics, but the more conventional ones of an organized militia.In June 2014, after seizing territories in Iraq’s Sunni heartland, including the cities of Mosul and Tikrit, the Islamic State proclaimed itself [a caliphate](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/caliphate/), claiming exclusive political and theological authority over the world’s Muslims. Its state-building project, however, has been characterized more by extreme violence, justified by references to the [Prophet Mohammed’s early followers](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/08/isis-islamic-state-ideology-sharia-syria-iraq-jordan-pilot), than institution building. Widely publicized battlefield successes have attracted thousands of foreign recruits, a particular concern of Western intelligence.The United States has led an air campaign to try to roll back the Islamic State’s advances, and a series of terrorist attacks outside of Iraq and Syria in late 2015 that were attributed to the group [spurred](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/16/world/europe/paris-terror-attack.html) an escalation in international intervention. The U.S.-led coalition has worked with Iraqi national security forces and the Kurdish peshmerga in Iraq; some of those forces have also worked with Shia militias. In Syria, a small number of U.S. Special Operations Forces have embedded with some opposition forces. Meanwhile, militant groups from North and West Africa to South Asia have professed allegiance to the Islamic State…The northern Syrian city of Raqqa is often cited as the Islamic State’s [de facto capital](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2015/feb/05/how-isis-rules/). There, the group has established some new institutions (e.g., judicial, police, economic) and coopted others (e.g., education, health, and infrastructure) to provide residents a modicum of services and consolidate its control over the population.After rapid expansion through Iraq in much of 2014, the Islamic State seemed to run up against its limits as it pushed up against majority Kurdish and Shia Arab regions, where it faced greater resistance from Iraqi forces and local populations along with U.S.-led air strikes. Its militants have failed to advance on Baghdad or the Kurdish capital, Erbil… |

Found at:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/what-is-islamic-state-iraq-and-syria/>

Guiding Questions:

* The article states that ISIS claims it is a caliphate, or a kingdom ruled by an Islamic leader, what are some examples of ISIS rule?
* How does ISIS use Islamic belief justify its policies?
* What does political Islam look like under ISIS?

Source 2:

ISIS Fast Facts at CNN.com

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/isis-fast-facts/>

view video, facts, and timeline

Guiding Questions

* Who is the leader of ISIS?
* How does ISIS use the media to promote its ideology?
* How does ISIS use Islamic belief justify its policies?
* What does political Islam look like under ISIS?

Source 3:

An interview with Bernard Haykel, a professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, who has provided context and background for several stories on ISIS in contemporary US news magazines.

Jack Jenkins, What *The Atlantic* Left Out About ISIS According To Their Own Expert,” February 20, 2015, *Think Progress*

*Quote by Haykel*

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| “The Sunni Muslim community, under normal circumstances … [historically] had mechanisms for silencing or eliminating extremists who would emerge from among them,” Haykel said. “[But] Sunni Muslims feel really beleaguered today … It’s very hard for Sunnis to say, today, ‘Let’s go and fight ISIS militarily,’ when you also have, let’s say, the Assad regime killing hundreds of thousands of Sunni Muslims, or Iran and its forces in Iraq and Syria and Lebanon also attacking Sunnis at the same time. In a world where a lot of people are attacking Sunnis, it’s hard for Sunnis to say ‘ISIS is the only bad group.’”“In other words, ISIS is a bad group and [Sunnis] don’t agree with it, but there are also other bad groups that are just as bad if not worse — at least in terms of [number of people] killed.”Haykel said this sense of being under siege, when combined with several economic realities, is primarily why “a small sample of people” find ISIS’s ideology attractive. To the few who are able to get past ISIS’s obsessions with violence, their black-flag-waving conquests offer a sense of purpose — and, frankly, employment — amidst an otherwise frustrating existence.“The reason ISIS emerged clearly has to do with the chaos in Iraq, the disenfranchisement of the Sunnis of Iraq (which is the result of the American invasion-occupation), and the chaos in Syria (which is a regime that has also disenfranchised Sunni Muslims),” he said. “We have two big Arab countries, side-by-side, both in chaos, both with large Sunni populations that are disenfranchised … With a lot of young men who have no prospects for employment and feel marginalized. And who then identify their sense of humiliation and marginalization with the larger Muslim world, which they claim is also being marginalized and being humiliated.”“Let’s say you were an Iraqi, and you’ve had your entire family wiped out by the Shia government of Baghdad. Or you’ve seen your sister raped, or your brother tortured. Then you feel like you have nothing to lose, and the only way to respond to this is to resort to violence. And ISIS provides a ready-made ideology and package and movement to express that sense of rage.” |

Found at:

<http://thinkprogress.org/world/2015/02/20/3625446/atlantic-left-isis-conversation-bernard-haykel/>

*The Atlantic* article he is responding to can be found at:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>

Guiding Questions:

* How has the effects of the US Iraq war and its aftermath led to ISIS gaining support in the region?
* Why would people support ISIS?
* How does ISIS use Islamic belief justify its policies?
* What does political Islam look like under ISIS?

Source 4:

Aryn Baker, “How ISIS Is Recruiting Women From Around the World”, *Time Magazine*, September 6, 2014

<http://time.com/3276567/how-isis-is-recruiting-women-from-around-the-world/>

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| … Women have always played a role in war, if not in actual combat then in the vital areas of intelligence gathering, medical care, food preparation and support. ISIS’s vicious campaign to carve out a state ruled by a fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law is no different, though its strict laws prohibiting mixing between genders has limited women’s presence on the front lines. Instead, women are drawn — or recruited — into vital support roles through effective social-media campaigns that promise devout jihadist husbands, a home in a true Islamic state and the opportunity to devote their lives to their religion and their God…At the beginning, ISIS actively discouraged women from joining. Members active on social media urged their female followers to support jihad with fundraising and by asking their menfolk to join the fight. Women had no place in war, they said. But as the group came closer to its goal of establishing an Islamic state, exceptions were made. Women are necessary for a state to function, says Shiraz Maher of the [International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation](http://icsr.info/). Calls went out for female doctors, nurses and engineers. When ISIS took over the Syrian city of Raqqa in 2013, it required a [female security force](http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2014/07/5799/raqqa-all-female-isis-brigade-cracks-local-women/) to ensure that local women complied with Islamic laws of dress and conduct. It needed female police to check women passing through checkpoints, in case they were carrying arms for the opposition. Most of all, the Islamic State needed families to grow…But for any woman who thinks coming to Syria and joining ISIS might bring new opportunities or equal rights, al-Khanssa is clear. “The main role of the muhajirah [female migrant] here is to support her husband and his jihad and [God willing] to increase this ummah [Islamic community].” She follows with a quote culled from a [Salafist website](http://sayingsofthesalaf.tumblr.com): “The best of women are those who do not see the men, and who are not seen by men.” ISIS’s recruitment may take place with 21st century technology, but when it comes to women, its ethos is firmly ground in the seventh. |

Guiding Questions:

* What role do women play in ISIS?
* Why would women join ISIS?
* How does ISIS use Islamic belief justify its policies?
* What does political Islam look like under ISIS?

Political Islam

World History

Turkey

Source 1 :

Turkey Country Profile from BBC

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17988453>

Guiding Questions

* What type of government does Turkey have?
* Who is the leader? What is his role in Turkish politics?
* Is the press free in Turkey? Why is this important for understanding how ideas are spread in Turkey?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Turkey?
* What does political Islam look like in Turkey?

Source 2:

[Ömer Taşpınar](http://www.brookings.edu/experts/taspinaro), “Turkey: The New Model” Brookings, April 2012

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2012/04/24-turkey-new-model-taspinar>

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| Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) went through five incarnations before it found a balance that voters would embrace but the military would also accept, albeit reluctantly. Its evolution reflects how democratic traditions and institutions can both interact with and moderate political Islam, at least in one geostrategic country. In Turkey, a tradition of free and fair elections and capitalism has encouraged Islamic parties to play by the rules. Turkey’s radical secularism, enforced by the military, has also tamed the strident religious dogma that once landed Islamic politicians in trouble—and even in prison. The AKP is a political party with clear Islamic roots. It pragmatically moved to the center-right over a decade, mainly to escape the fate of its defunct predecessors. The party’s success, however, has had little to do with ideological factors. Turkish voters have been primarily concerned with bread-and-butter issues. In June 2011, they once again voted for political stability and rewarded Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for the country’s growing prosperity and better social services, particularly in health care and housing.The victory for the AKP was historic. It was only the second time since the beginning of Turkey’s multiparty democracy in 1946 that a political party had won three consecutive elections. And it was the first time that a party actually increased its percentage of the vote at each succeeding election. The AKP received 34.28 percent of the vote in 2002. It won 46.58 percent in 2007. And it scored 49.90 percent in 2011. It was a striking reversal. All previous Islamist parties in Turkey had been shut down by either military intervention or rulings by the constitutional court: The National Order Party, founded in 1970, was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1971. The National Salvation Party, founded in 1972, was outlawed after the 1980 military coup. The Welfare Party, founded in 1983, was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1998. The Virtue Party, founded in 1997, was banned in 2001. Turkey is notable because its Islamist parties have reemerged, more moderate and pragmatic, after each closure. “Autocratic regimes in the Muslim world often ban religious parties, which then go underground and turn violent. Turkey’s Islamists have taken a different path. Despite being repeatedly outlawed and ejected from power, pious politicians have shunned violence, embraced democracy, and moved into the mainstream,” The Economist noted in 2008. “No Islamic party has been as moderate and pro-Western as the AKP, which catapulted into government in 2002 promising to lead Turkey into the European Union.” Erdoğan, who founded the party, actually rejects defining the AKP in religious terms. “We are not an Islamic party, and we also refuse labels such as Muslim-democrat,” he said in 2005. The AKP leader instead calls the party’s agenda “conservative democracy…”The AKP leadership clearly views the party as a model for other Muslim countries. On June 12, 2011, Erdoğan told thousands who had gathered to celebrate the AKP’s landslide victory, “Sarajevo won today as much as Istanbul. Beirut won as much as Izmir. Damascus won as much as Ankara. Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, the West Bank, [and] Jerusalem won as much as Diyarbakir.” |

Guiding Questions:

* What is the AKP? How is its relationship to Islam?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Turkey?
* What does political Islam look like in Turkey?

Source 3:

Steve A. Cook, “Turkey: A Muslim Democracy,” *Politico*, March/April 2014

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/02/turkey-the-muslim-democracy-103885>

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| In early April 2009, President Barack Obama made a high-profile visit to Turkey, where he gave an important, if often overlooked, [address](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Turkish-Parliament) to the Turkish parliament. Obama moved the assembly with learned references to Turkey’s glorious Ottoman past and praise for Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who, since becoming prime minister in 2003, had overseen an array of constitutional reforms strengthening political parties, banning the death penalty, reinforcing personal freedoms and bringing the country’s coup-prone military to heel. Throughout his speech, Obama alluded both to Turkish democracy and the enduring alliance between Washington and Ankara—a friendship that grew so close Obama eventually named Erdogan a rare foreign leader with whom he had forged “ [bonds of trust](http://swampland.time.com/2012/01/19/inside-obamas-world-the-president-talks-to-time-about-the-changing-nature-of-american-power/?iid=sl-main-lede)…”How mistaken this reasoning now seems. To begin with, the idea that Turkey had something unique to offer the Middle East was naive, and the narrative meant that Washington was once again cozying up to a heavy-handed Islamist government, forming a partnership that overlooked serious violations of democratic norms. For Erdogan has in fact presided over an illiberal, even authoritarian turn. His ruling Justice and Development Party (known as the AKP) regularly touts tough measures like limiting alcohol sales and lifting the ban on head scarves and veils in civil service jobs. More important, free speech is also now under serious threat: As of last year, there were more journalists in jail in Turkey than in any other country—[at least 40](http://cpj.org/imprisoned/2013.php). Through intimidation, the purchase of media properties by businessmen close to the AKP and a new law that allows the government to block Internet access easily, Erdogan’s administration presides over a virtual ministry of information, even recently deporting a foreign journalist who criticized the government on Twitter.The government has also repeatedly pursued punitive measures against business elites who do not share Erdogan’s politics, in addition to limiting citizens’ ability to question or contest politicians. In a thinly veiled effort to silence artists who have become increasingly critical of the AKP, Erdogan in May 2012 threatened to cut off [$63 million](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/artists-protest-draft-law-in-turkish-parliament-with-mozart.aspx?pageID=238&nID=59285&NewsCatID=383) in funding for the arts, endangering 58 state theaters.Meanwhile, Turkish anti-terror police have arrested citizens on trumped-up charges of terrorism, allowing some of those targeted to languish in jail during lengthy pre-trial hearings. As of November 2013, there were 11,200 pending complaints against Turkey in the [European Court of Human Rights](http://echr.coe.int/Documents/Stats_pending_month_2013_BIL.pdf).But it was last spring’s protests in Istanbul’s Gezi Park and Taksim Square that highlighted just how far backward Turkey has slid. The protests were about not just the government’s redevelopment of a park as a shopping mall but also the ruling party’s arrogance, the crony capitalism that fuels the construction sector and provides patronage for Erdogan, police brutality and the AKP’s efforts to pass laws and push constitutional changes that entrench its power.The tens of thousands of Turks who poured into the streets in Istanbul—and then Ankara and Izmir—expressed mass frustration with what is essentially a one-party state. In addition to using tear gas, water cannons and metal truncheons, Turkish authorities made large-scale arrests, bullied NGOs and cracked down on social media. In December, the AKP-dominated parliament [proposed](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/democracy-package-is-revenge-for-gezi-turkeys-main-opposition-says.aspx?pageID=238&nID=59430&NewsCa) a measure that would make it illegal—with prison sentences of two to five years—to protest against public services, which broadly defined includes projects like Gezi’s redevelopment or a controversial road construction project in Ankara that requires large-scale deforestation…Washington continues to regard Turkey as a vital strategic partner in the Middle East, notwithstanding Ankara’s deeply strained relations with Egypt, Iraq, Israel and Saudi Arabia—in other words, every major country in the region.The most important aspect of Obama’s April 2009 speech in Ankara was not his fulsome praise of Turkey, but his subtle critique of Turkish politics, imploring lawmakers to deepen their commitment to a democratic future. “Democracies,” he exhorted, “cannot be static—they must move forward.” His address was historic not just because it was the first time he publicly broached the subject of Turkey’s democratic shortcomings—but because it was the last time he seemed to mean it.  |

Guiding Questions:

* What does the article argue has changed in Turkey’s politics since 2009?
* How do Turkish citizens protest against the government?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Turkey?
* What does political Islam look like in Turkey?

How

Source 4:

View video covering the November 2015 elections and the win of the Justice and Development Party (known as the AKP) party and the continued rule of this party in Turkey’s democracy.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/turkey-election-president-erdogan-tightens-his-grip-on-power-in-surprise-landslide-victory-a6717321.html>

Guiding Questions:

* What is the story about?
* According to the news story, why did the AKP win the election?
* How does Islamic belief guide politics in Turkey?
* What does political Islam look like in Turkey?