

Institute for Policy Research



Religion and social policy in the Middle East: beyond the rentier state towards a new ethic of welfare

The research will examine what kinds of social welfare services are offered by the government in three countries in the Middle East: Iran, Turkey and Lebanon. It will also look at the social welfare services which are offered by religious welfare organisations in these three countries.

The aim of the study is to find out what social welfare and social policy mean in these three countries in order to make a more general assessment about how social policy works in the region. We are especially interested in finding out about the role of women in religious welfare practices. The research is also particularly interested in finding out about the personal points of view of policy-makers, practitioners and service-users since very little is known about them in the academic studies which already exist.

The research benefits directly from consultation with senior government officials as well as directors and religious leaders of faith-based welfare organisations in Iran, Turkey and Lebanon.

The research methods will consist of

1. Face-to-face interviews
2. Focus groups
3. Documentary analysis of policy statements
4. Participant observation in faith-based organisations and local government centres
5. A review of available data on social security legislation and expenditure in the region drawn from international donor organisations

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