

Title of doctoral dissertation: Social Protection in Muslim Countries: an Islamic Welfare Regime?

The Author of the doctoral dissertation: mgr. Fabio Coriolano

Summary of doctoral dissertation: My research focuses on the mechanisms of social protection in Islamic countries. The goal is to identify if the welfare policies were developed along the global defined guidelines, or if the Islamic societies were successful in creating local-based alternatives. The study concentrates on the rise of Political Islam as an indigenous alternative to the existing order.

The analysis precedes along three lines: the first defines the evolution of the economic systems of each country under investigation, the second takes into consideration the mechanism of resource distribution within the society and the third observes the incidence of the Islamist movements on the redistributive policies.

To measure the economic and political relevance of the Islamist movements, this study utilises as a "proxy" the different social classes which form the social bases of the Muslim organisations. The Islamic groups base their popular support on mechanisms of resource redistribution, which are different depending on the social class targeted. The Muslim-oriented social classes can be either integrated, excluded or alternative to the government-based distributive flows.

The study traces the evolution of the welfare systems in twenty-two Islamic countries since the post-Second World War period and identifies four different "welfare bargains". The countries in each welfare bargain developed similar mechanisms of resource distribution, which in turn influenced the evolution of the Islamic parties.

The conclusion is that none of the welfare bargains managed to develop an "Islamic alternative". When it was not reduced or diverted toward specific social actors, the redistribution of public resources developed as an instrument to ensure the legitimacy of the ruling elites.