

PUBLIC FUNDING SOLUTIONS FOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN MUSLIM-MAJORITY SOCIETIES

Public funding of political parties has become increasingly utilized as a mechanism to strengthen representative democracy by addressing resource disparities among political groups. However, to date the body of research on this topic has failed to address the applicability of public funding systems in Muslim-majority countries. Public funding systems can help ensure that large and small, both Islamist and secular, political parties can access the resources necessary to effectively represent their constituencies. Given the recent emergence of competitive elections in many transitional democracies of the Middle East and North Africa, it is important that this gap in research now be addressed. The proposed research will synthesize the existing research on public funding to identify factors most important to the construction and implementation of public funding systems, and then conduct primary and secondary research in four countries to assess the viability of public funding in Muslim-majority countries of the region. The proposed research will incorporate a framework that focuses on the impact that different public funding systems are likely to have on both Islamist and secular parties.