

State, Society and Economy in the Modern Middle East

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Abstract:

Debating Family Law in Contemporary Iran:

Conceptions of Sharia and women's rights

This paper explores a contemporary family law debate in Iran mainly from the perspectives of women's rights activists. Family law in Iran has been a controversial topic of debate since the early 1900s. In 2007, a new bill on family law was introduced. Some label it the "The Family Protection Bill" (*Layehe hamaiaat az khanevadhe*), and others the "Anti-Woman Bill" (*Layehe zed zan*). With this bill, the debate on family law has once again emerged as a divisive issue of debate. Polygyny, dower, and temporary marriage are among the most conflict-ridden topics of debate.

In the course of recent decades, women's rights activists have held an important position in family law debates and offer a wide range of perspectives on the combination of Islam and women's rights. The aim of my ongoing PhD project is to analyse women's rights activists' contribution to this recent family law debate. Consequently, the project takes on a wide perspective on Islamic law, and explores the correlations between activism and Islamic law (Shari'a). A main objective in the project is to inquire about conceptions of Sharia and women's rights. The project is based on interviews and discussions with a variety of women activists, as well as

studies of publications and activities. The proposed paper will present current results of the ongoing PhD project.

CV:

- PhD, Centre for Women and Gender Research / History of Religions, University of Bergen, 2008 - present
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