

Individual or Societal Responsibility? How Policymakers in Israel Perceive Poverty

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The State of Israel stands out among Western nations in its social inequality and high poverty rates. The research literature indicates that the perceptions of policymakers play a central role in shaping policy. This study focuses on how policymakers perceive the causes of poverty, what policy options they prefer for reducing poverty rates, and whether policymakers in various sectors differ in the ways they perceive the problem. The author interviewed 103 people who have influence on the public discourse and/or the shaping of social-economic policy in Israel. The findings show that the majority tends to attribute poverty to structural causes and to see the state as responsible for coping with it. The findings also indicate that in Israel policymakers' perceptions about poverty vary by sector.

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