
CONFERENCE ARTICLE

THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE

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ABSTRACT

This article looks at the historical roots and gradual growth of social protection systems in different societies and times. Social protection refers to a collection of institutional strategies designed to shield individuals and groups from social vulnerabilities, including poverty, illness, unemployment, disability, and aging. Utilizing a historical and comparative framework, the study delineates the progression of social protection from primitive communal support systems and philanthropic traditions to contemporary state-sponsored welfare frameworks. The analysis shows that social protection has changed over time because of changes in politics, the economy, and how people think about social justice and human rights. The results show that social protection mechanisms have been around for a long time and are still changing, and they are becoming more important for dealing with today's global problems.

KEYWORDS

Social protection, welfare state, social policy, historical development, social security, and global perspective are some of the words that come to mind.

INTRODUCTION

Social protection systems are very important for keeping society stable, lowering inequality, and keeping vulnerable groups safe. Modern welfare states are often thought of as the beginning of social protection, but its roots go back a long way in history. Societies have always found ways to deal with social risks and meet the needs of the whole community, from early communal support systems to formalized national systems. To judge current policies and make systems that will last in the future, you need to know where social protection came from and how it has changed over time.

Historically, social protection developed as a response to fundamental human needs and social responsibilities within families, communities, and religious institutions. These informal arrangements slowly turned into structured legal and institutional frameworks over time. Industrialization, urbanization, and economic crises greatly sped up this process, which made states take on more responsibility for social welfare. The development of social protection is a reflection of larger changes in politics, the economy, and society.

This article seeks to examine the historical progression of global social protection systems, emphasizing significant phases in their development. It looks at the early types of social support, the rise of government involvement, and the creation of modern welfare systems. By taking a global view, the study shows both common trends and differences in the growth of social protection in different parts of the world.

The study utilizes a qualitative historical and comparative analysis of academic literature, policy documents, and historical sources pertaining to social protection. The main focus is on classical texts in social policy, economic history, and political science, as well as reports from international organizations. The research utilizes a chronological framework to delineate the progression of social protection mechanisms throughout various historical epochs.

Comparative analysis is employed to discern similarities and differences in the evolution of social protection across various regions and socio-economic systems. There is a lot of focus on the change from informal and charitable forms of help to state-run systems that are more formal. The methodological framework facilitates a comprehensive understanding of social protection as both a historical evolution and a dynamic social institution.

The earliest manifestations of social protection are evident in ancient and traditional societies, where support systems were integrated into kinship structures, communal solidarity, and religious practices. Families and local groups helped the sick, the old, and the poor. Religious groups were also very important in doing good works. In ancient societies like Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome, social protection took the form of things like giving out grain, helping the poor, and helping veterans of war.

In the Middle Ages, social protection was mostly decentralized and based on charity. Monasteries, guilds, and religious foundations helped people who needed it, and local communities set up ways for people to help each other. But these systems were not very broad and often relied on moral obligations instead of legal rights. People often thought of poverty as a personal or moral problem instead of a social one.

The beginning of industrialization in the 1800s brought about a big change. Rapid urbanization, labor exploitation, and economic instability revealed the shortcomings of conventional support systems. In response, states started to get more involved in social issues. The start of institutionalized social protection was marked by early labor laws, accident insurance, and health protection measures. The introduction of social insurance systems in several European countries marked a turning point, as social protection became linked to employment and legal entitlement.

The twentieth century saw the strengthening and growth of social protection systems, especially after the World Wars and the Great Depression caused problems in society and the economy. The rise of welfare states made social protection an important part of the government's job. Governments set up full systems for unemployment, health care, pensions, family benefits, and social assistance. These changes were closely linked to democracy, economic growth, and the recognition of social rights.

International organizations had a big impact on social protection norms around the world. The creation of the International Labour Organization and later the United Nations helped make social security a universal right. More and more, people saw social protection as more than just a way to help people; they saw it as an important part of human development and social justice.

In the last few decades, social protection systems have changed as a result of globalization, changes in population, and new technologies. Modern systems differ greatly from one country to the next, but they all have the same goal: to protect people from social risks and encourage social inclusion. The historical evolution of social protection illustrates its flexibility and sustained significance in evolving socio-economic environments.

The historical analysis in this article shows that social protection systems have changed slowly over time in response to changes in politics, economics, and society. Social protection has become an important part of modern societies, from informal community-based support to full welfare states. Its growth shows that more people are aware of their social rights, collective responsibility, and the need to protect human dignity.

Knowing where social protection came from and how it has changed over time can help policymakers make better decisions today. Past events have shown that good social protection systems need institutional commitment, social solidarity, and the ability to change when new problems arise. As societies confront ongoing economic instability, demographic transitions, and global crises, the insights derived from the historical evolution of social protection remain profoundly pertinent.

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