

# Bibliometric Analysis of Social Protection Programs in Social Welfare

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## Article Info

### Article history:

Received Mar, 2024

Revised Mar, 2024

Accepted Mar, 2024

### Keywords:

Social Protection Programs

Social Welfare

Bibliometric Analysis

## ABSTRACT

This bibliometric analysis examines the scholarly discourse surrounding social protection programs in the domain of social welfare. With a focus on understanding the landscape, dynamics, and impact of these initiatives, the study employs systematic methodologies to analyze a comprehensive body of literature spanning disciplines such as economics, sociology, public policy, and development studies. Through citation metrics, top-cited research articles, and network visualizations, the study illuminates key thematic clusters, temporal shifts in research focus, and potential future research directions. The findings underscore the enduring relevance and influence of social protection research, offering valuable insights for academia, policy formulation, and program implementation in enhancing societal well-being and fostering inclusive development.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social protection programs play a pivotal role in safeguarding individuals and communities against various socioeconomic vulnerabilities, thereby fostering inclusive development and enhancing societal well-being [1], [2]. As nations grapple with multifaceted challenges such as poverty, inequality, and demographic shifts, understanding the landscape and dynamics of social protection initiatives becomes imperative for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners alike [3]–[5]. This study undertakes a bibliometric analysis to delve into the scholarly discourse surrounding social protection programs within the domain of social welfare.

The concept of social protection encompasses a spectrum of interventions aimed at ensuring access to essential services, mitigating risks, and promoting resilience among vulnerable populations [6]–[9]. Historically, social protection initiatives have evolved in response to diverse societal needs and ideological frameworks, ranging from the establishment of welfare states to contemporary debates on universal basic income and conditional cash transfers [10]. Amidst this evolution, a burgeoning body of research has emerged, spanning disciplines such as economics, sociology, public policy, and development studies, to elucidate the design, implementation, and impact of social protection programs worldwide.

Despite the proliferation of literature on social protection, there remains a need to systematically assess the state of knowledge, identify key thematic areas, and uncover emerging trends within the field [11], [12]. Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of social welfare research presents challenges in synthesizing insights across disparate disciplines and conceptual frameworks [13]–[15]. Addressing these gaps necessitates a comprehensive bibliometric analysis that maps the intellectual landscape, delineates scholarly networks, and elucidates the diffusion of ideas within the realm of social protection programs.

This research endeavors to conduct a bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications pertaining to social protection programs in the domain of social welfare. Specifically, the objectives include:

1. Identifying seminal works, prolific authors, and leading journals in the field of social protection research.
2. Mapping the thematic evolution and interdisciplinary connections within the scholarly discourse on social protection programs.
3. Assessing the dissemination and citation impact of key publications to discern their influence on policy and practice in social welfare.

The findings of this study are anticipated to yield valuable insights for academia, policy formulation, and program implementation in the realm of social protection. By synthesizing and visualizing the knowledge landscape, this research can inform researchers about emerging trends, highlight areas for further inquiry, and foster interdisciplinary collaborations. Moreover, policymakers and practitioners stand to benefit from evidence-based recommendations grounded in the collective wisdom of the scholarly community, thereby

enhancing the effectiveness and equity of social protection interventions worldwide.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social protection programs in social welfare are essential for promoting social and economic development, alleviating poverty and vulnerability, and ensuring the well-being of individuals. These programs can enhance productivity, employability, and economic development by creating better income-earning opportunities. They also foster social inclusion and participation by providing access to food, healthcare, education, and support services. Well-designed social protection programs have the potential to directly improve the enjoyment of rights for persons with disabilities. However, traditional disability-welfare approaches have often perpetuated paternalism, dependence, segregation, and institutionalization of persons with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for inclusive social protection systems that facilitate active citizenship, social inclusion, and community participation. States and other stakeholders should ensure the establishment of disability-inclusive social protection systems in line with the Convention [16]–[20].

## 3. METHODS

This research employs a systematic bibliometric approach to analyze scholarly publications related to social protection programs in the field of social welfare. Firstly, a comprehensive search will be conducted across major academic databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar using a carefully constructed set of keywords and Boolean operators. The search strategy will encompass terms related to social protection, welfare programs, and relevant subtopics such as conditional cash transfers, social insurance, and poverty alleviation. Following the retrieval of relevant publications, a series of inclusion and exclusion criteria will be applied to ensure the selection of high-

quality, peer-reviewed articles published in reputable journals. Subsequently, bibliometric software tool such as VOSviewer will be utilized to analyze bibliographic data, including citation networks, co-authorship patterns, and keyword co-occurrence. Descriptive statistics will be employed to quantify the distribution of publications across time and disciplinary domains. Additionally, network analysis techniques will be applied to visualize the intellectual structure of the field, identify key research clusters, and discern influential nodes within the scholarly network. Through this methodological framework, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the scholarly discourse on social protection programs, facilitating deeper insights into the evolution, trends, and impact of research in the domain of social welfare.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Research Data Metrics

Table 1. Data Citation Metrics

Publication years	1913-2024
Citation years	111 (1913-2024)
Paper	980
Citations	214215
Cites/year	1929.86
Cites/paper	218.59
Cites/author	168381.23
Papers/author	643.61
Author/paper	2.03
h-index	206
g-index	452
hI,norm	177
hI,annual	1.59
hA-index	50
Papers with ACC	: 1,2,5,10,20:796,680,448,277,152

Table 2. Top Cited Research

Citations	Authors and year	Title
12103	KJ Arrow (1978)	Uncertainty and the welfare economics of medical care
7118	D Rodrik (1998)	Has globalization gone too far?
6681	P Pierson (1996)	The new politics of the welfare state
5354	M Ferrera (1996)	The 'Southern model' of welfare in social Europe
4805	D Saleebey (1996)	The strengths perspective in social work practice: Extensions and cautions
4429	N Barr (2020)	Economics of the welfare state

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the citation metrics derived from the bibliometric analysis of publications related to social protection programs in social welfare from the years 1913 to 2024. Across the span of 111 citation years, a total of 980 papers were identified, accumulating a remarkable 214,215 citations, translating to an average of 218.59 citations per paper and an impressive rate of 1929.86 citations per year. The data further reveals a high level of productivity, with an average of 2.03 authors per paper and 643.61 papers per author. The h-index, a widely recognized indicator of scholarly impact, stands at 206, underscoring the significance of the research output in this domain. Additionally, the g-index, hI,norm, and hI,annual metrics provide further insights into the distribution and impact of citations within the scholarly corpus. Notably, the hA-index reflects the longevity of research contributions, highlighting sustained influence over time. Moreover, the presence of papers with various citation thresholds (ACC) illustrates the depth and breadth of influential works within the literature, as evidenced by the substantial number of papers meeting criteria at different citation levels. Overall, these metrics underscore the robustness and significance of the scholarly discourse surrounding social protection programs in social welfare, reflecting its enduring impact and relevance across decades of research.

Citations	Authors and year	Title
4158	E Huber, JD Stephens (2001)	Development and crisis of the welfare state: Parties and policies in global markets
4158	J Lewis (1992)	Gender and the development of welfare regimes
3959	W Beveridge (1942)	Social insurance and allied services
3671	AS Oorloff (1993)	Gender and the social rights of citizenship: The comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

Table 2 presents the top cited research articles within the domain of social protection programs in social welfare, showcasing seminal works that have significantly influenced scholarly discourse and policymaking. Topping the list is KJ Arrow's 1978 paper "Uncertainty and the welfare economics of medical care," which has amassed 12,103 citations, highlighting its enduring impact on understanding the role of uncertainty in healthcare economics. Following closely is D Rodrik's 1998 publication "Has globalization gone too far?" with 7,118 citations, underscoring its pivotal contribution to debates surrounding the consequences of globalization. Other notable contributions include P Pierson's 1996 work "The new politics of the welfare state," M Ferrera's investigation into the 'Southern model' of welfare in social Europe, and D

Saleebey's exploration of the strengths perspective in social work practice. Additionally, recent research by N Barr on the economics of the welfare state and E Huber and JD Stephens' examination of the development and crisis of the welfare state in global markets are also prominently cited. Rounding out the list are seminal works by J Lewis on gender and welfare regimes, W Beveridge's classic text on social insurance, and AS Oorloff's comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states, each making significant contributions to the understanding of social protection policies and practices. Overall, these top-cited articles represent foundational literature that has shaped scholarly inquiry and policy discussions within the field of social welfare and social protection programs.

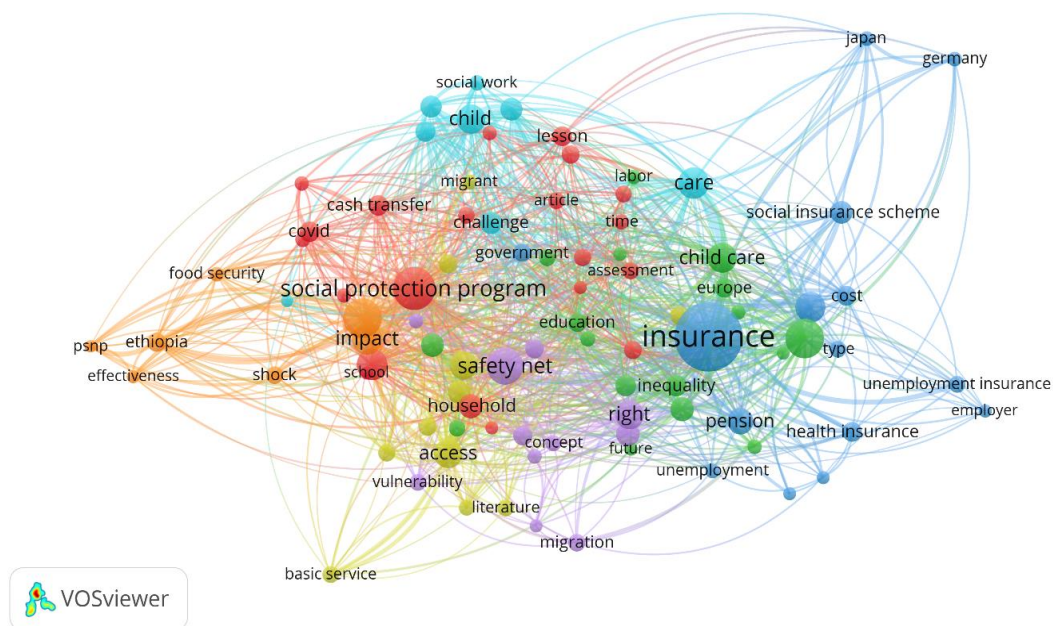


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

This network visualization shows a complex interplay of terms that appear to be associated with social protection, welfare, and insurance systems. The colors represent different thematic clusters where terms that are closely connected are colored similarly.

1. Red Cluster: Central to this cluster are the terms "social protection," "cash transfer," "food security," and "COVID," which suggest a focus on social protection programs, likely in response to economic shocks such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These terms are connected to "impact," "school," and "household," indicating a research interest in the effects of social protection on education and family welfare.
2. Blue Cluster: This cluster features terms like "insurance," "social insurance scheme," "pension," and "health insurance." It is likely concerned with the structured insurance systems within social protection, addressing how various types of insurance contribute to the social safety net.
3. Green Cluster: Terms like "child," "care," "child care," "labor," and "migrant" form this cluster. It seems to be related to research on childcare, labor markets, and migration, reflecting studies on how social policies impact families, workers, and migrants.
4. Purple Cluster: The terms "access," "vulnerability," "basic service," and "literature" suggest a focus on access to basic services and the vulnerabilities of populations, likely analyzing the literature on these topics to identify gaps or trends in social welfare research.
5. Yellow Cluster: This cluster includes "psnp," "ethiopia," and "effectiveness," which might indicate a specific focus on case studies like the Productive Safety Net Program in Ethiopia and the effectiveness of such programs.
6. Light Blue Cluster: Featuring "unemployment," "employer," and "unemployment insurance," this cluster is probably focused on unemployment insurance systems and their relationship with employers and the labor market.
7. Orange Cluster: consist of term like "food security", "effectiveness", "shock", and "Ethiopia"

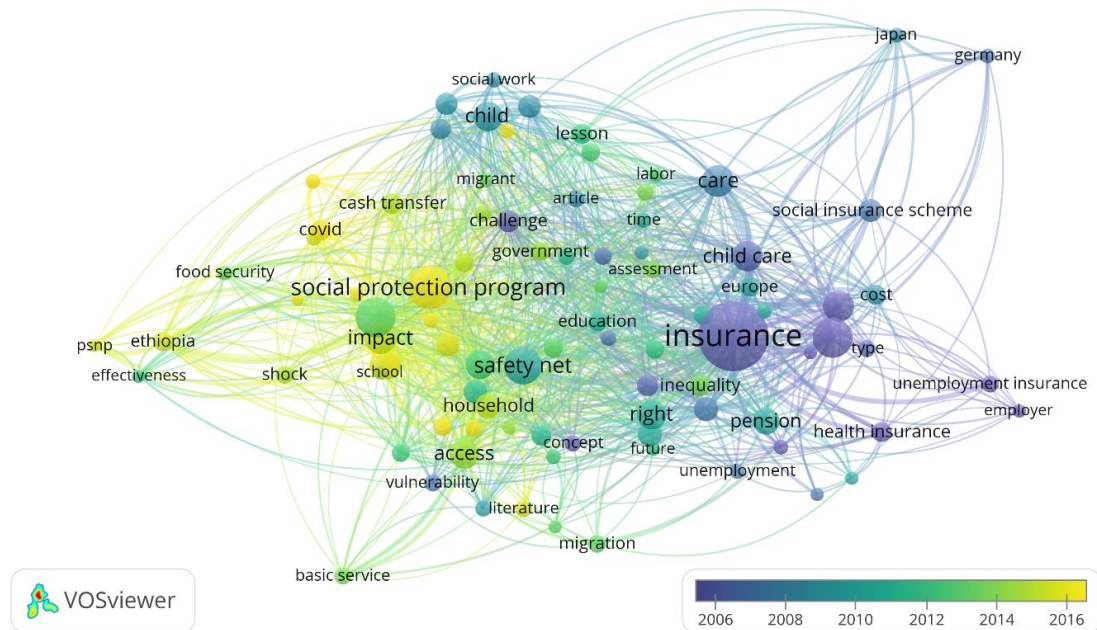


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization  
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

This visualization presents a temporal overlay on a network of terms related to social protection and insurance systems. The color gradient represents the average publication year of papers associated with each keyword, indicating how the research focus has shifted over time. Blue color represents earlier years, suggesting these topics were more prominent in the literature around 2006. Green color represents mid-range years, indicating these topics had a focus around the years 2008 to 2010. Yellow represents more recent years, showing these topics have been more prominent in the literature closer to 2016.

1. Earlier Focus (Blue): Initial research seems to have concentrated on broad systemic issues, such as "social insurance scheme," "Japan," "Germany," and "Europe." This implies that earlier studies may have focused on understanding and comparing social protection systems across these developed economies.

2. Mid-term Focus (Green): The green area contains terms like "social protection," "safety net," "vulnerability," and "access," as well as "household" and "shock." This could indicate a shift in the research focus toward the effects of social protection systems on households, especially in response to economic shocks, which could have been spurred by the global financial crisis of 2007-2008.
3. Recent Focus (Yellow): The terms "cash transfer," "COVID," "impact," and "school" in the yellow region highlight a recent focus on the immediate impacts of social protection measures in response to specific shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. The association with "school" suggests a particular interest in how social protection impacts education.

From these observations, we can deduce that the research has evolved from a comparative analysis of social protection systems in different countries, through an understanding of their role in household stability and response to economic shocks, to a more immediate concern with the impacts of such systems during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend reflects an

adaptive research landscape that responds to global events and their socio-economic consequences. The shift towards more recent topics in the yellow zone indicates that future research may continue to explore the effects of social protection in the face of contemporary challenges like pandemics, as well as other emerging global issues that impact socio-economic stability.

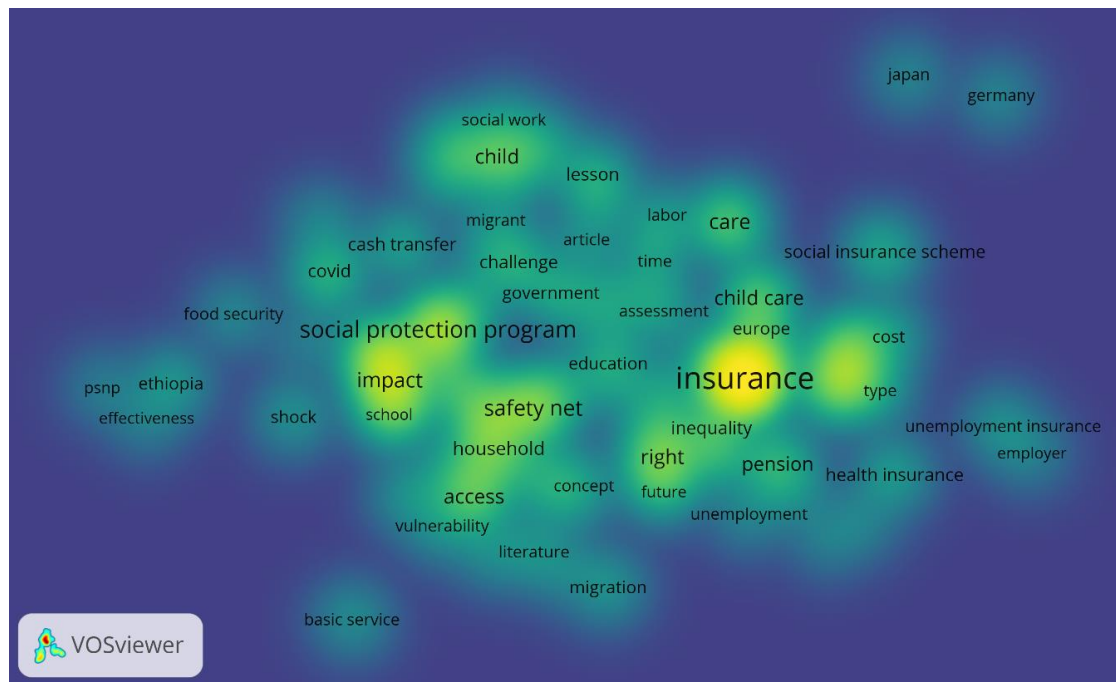


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

The less bright areas in a visualization like this usually suggest topics that are currently less prominent or less frequently explored in the existing body of research. Potential future research topics often lie in these areas because they may represent emerging trends or gaps in the literature that have not yet been fully developed or explored. Based on the figure, we can infer that the less bright areas around the periphery of the network could be indicative of such potential future research topics.

1. Intersections of Social Protection and Other Fields: There could be an opportunity to explore how social protection programs interact with other social

phenomena or policies that are not central to current research.

2. Longitudinal Impact Studies: As some central terms like "COVID" and "impact" are present, there might be a need for more in-depth longitudinal studies to understand the long-term effects of social protection programs, especially in the context of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Comparative International Analyses: Terms indicating specific countries or regions like "Japan" and "Germany" are somewhat peripheral, suggesting that comparative studies between different

national social protection systems could be valuable.

4. Effectiveness and Efficiency: The terms "effectiveness" and "psnp" (Productive Safety Net Program) appear less bright, which could indicate a need for more research on the efficiency and effectiveness of specific social programs in various contexts, including developing countries.
5. Emerging Social Challenges: The areas that are less bright may also represent emerging social challenges that have not been the focus of extensive research to date, such as the impact of automation on labor markets and the corresponding social protection needs.
6. Vulnerable Populations: Less bright spots near terms like "vulnerability" may indicate a need for future research focused on specific vulnerable groups and how they are impacted by or can be supported through social protection systems.
7. Technology and Social Protection: With the growing influence of technology on all aspects of life, investigating how technological advancements could enhance the delivery and administration of social protection could be a promising area of research.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the bibliometric analysis of scholarly publications on social protection programs within the realm of social welfare provides valuable insights into the evolution, trends, and impact of research in this field. The comprehensive overview of citation metrics underscores the robustness and significance of the scholarly discourse, demonstrating its enduring relevance and influence over time. Through the identification of top-cited research articles, seminal works shaping scholarly inquiry and policymaking are highlighted, showcasing the foundational literature that has contributed to the understanding of social protection policies and practices. The network visualizations offer a nuanced understanding of the thematic clusters and temporal shifts in research focus, reflecting an adaptive research landscape responsive to global events and socio-economic challenges. Moreover, the density visualization reveals potential future research directions, including intersections with other fields, longitudinal impact studies, comparative analyses, and investigations into emerging social challenges and technological advancements. Overall, this study contributes to advancing knowledge in social welfare by synthesizing and visualizing the scholarly discourse on social protection programs, thereby informing researchers, policymakers, and practitioners about emerging trends, areas for further inquiry, and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration to enhance the effectiveness and equity of social protection interventions worldwide.



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