

Exploring Social Welfare Regimes in the Context of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region

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Abstract

Social policy derives from the welfare regime which is embraced in the political structure. Starting from this argument, this article provides an overview of social service provisions, and in light of major welfare regimes, it examines the adopted social welfare system in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In this article, social welfare is defined as a systematic attempt to provide the well-being of the population. Four social welfare approaches (Esping-Andersen's three typologies of welfare regime plus socialism) are critically examined. Additionally, taking into account the politico-administrative structure, the ambiguity in the social welfare system of the KRG is explored. The article argues that the social welfare system of the KRG, after three decades of self-administration, cannot deviate from the socialist perspective inherited from the former Baathist regime, while a diversion in the KRG's social welfare approach towards neo-liberalism is highlighted.

Keywords: *Social Policy, Welfare Regimes, Political Context, Kurdistan Region*

Introduction

This article offers an overview of the social service provisions and delves into the social welfare system adopted by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), taking into consideration major welfare regimes. Social welfare, within the context of this article, is defined as a deliberate effort to enhance the well-being of the population. The article critically assesses four different social welfare approaches, including Esping-Andersen's three typologies of welfare regimes and socialism. Furthermore, it examines the KRG's social welfare system in light of its politico-administrative structure, exploring the ambiguity that exists within it. The article contends that, despite three decades of self-administration, the KRG's social welfare system continues to adhere to the socialist perspective inherited from the previous Baathist regime. It also highlights the potential shift towards neo-liberalism in the KRG's social welfare approach.

Social policy and welfare regimes are closely related to socio-cultural, political and administrative structures. To understand the social policy in the Kurdistan Region, the given context needs to be examined. Accordingly, the first section of this article intends to deal basically with major perspectives of social policy/welfare. Section two provides an overview of the key public service provisions within the political and administrative structure mounted to clientelism and legal frameworks of social policy in the Kurdistan Region (in the second section). Section three of this article discusses the ambiguity in the adopted welfare regime in the KRG.

Research Questions and Objectives

The main objective here is to identify and explore the main welfare regimes and policy models. The key research question that has guided this paper is that in light of the governmental social policymaking and implementation, how and why the deviation from a socialist regime to a new liberal in the Kurdistan Region has resulted in a controversial welfare regime? The primary investigation of the subject matter led to the below detailed research questions:

1. What is the framework of social service provisions in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)? This article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the social service provisions framework in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

2. To establish a clear and systematic definition of social welfare in the context of the KRG, this article raises the question of how can social welfare be systematically defined within the context of the KRG.
3. This article critically evaluates various social welfare approaches, including Esping-Andersen's typologies (plus socialism), as applied in the KRG.
4. What are the sources of ambiguity within the KRG's social welfare system?
5. Does the social welfare system in the KRG, shaped by three decades of self-administration, still reflect the socialist perspective inherited from the former Baathist regime? Is there evidence of a potential shift in the KRG's social welfare approach towards neo-liberalism?

Method

This article has employed unstructured interviews (with 12 people in different ranks within KRG's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Ministry of Planning) and observations. The interviews were conducted during August 2022. The data set is owned by the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) and UNICEF. Additionally, in the two years, the researcher has been involved in various research projects on social security, social insurance and social protection strategy in Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, and has taken a lot of notes during the observation.

SECTION ONE. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF WELFARE REGIMES

There are many political and social ideologies which result in a variety of social policies. Many consistent theoretical attempts and applied research have been carried out to classify the typologies of social policy/welfare regimes (Titmuss, 1974; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Pfau-Effinger, 2000). Esping-Andersen's theory about *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* has been and is yet profound. He identified three distinctive logics of welfare regimes based on the criteria of decommodification, social stratification, and the state-market nexus. His work is considered a reference comparative study for a threefold typology of 'conservative-corporatist', 'liberal', and 'social-democratic'. However, for this research, a Marxist-Socialist approach has been added to Esping-Andersen's three typologies.

This article will explain and analyse four kinds of social policy ideologies, in terms of their philosophical lenses, political views, socio-economic stands and ultimately their perspectives

towards welfare. The four types of welfare regimes are Liberalism, Conservatism, Marxism-Socialism and Social Democratic perspective.

LIBERALISM AND LIBERAL WELFARE REGIME

liberalism as a political thought emerged from the Enlightenment, especially when the idea of the “individual” and its rights became a fundamental value. However, Hayek (1982) believes that liberalism can be traced back to antiquity age. However, it was reformulated in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a modern political philosophy, especially; it was adopted as the political doctrine by the English Whigs⁽¹⁾. From this period, a form of social liberalism emerged which makes account of welfare reform and economic intervention (Heywood, 1997: 41). Liberalism is formulated based on two major ideas. First is the “good life”. Liberals emphasize that in this case individuals can determine what is good or is not good for them (Fitzpatrick, 2001: 63). Therefore, anyone has a presumption of good life. Second, is that the self of individuals is different from the goals that person has chosen to follow (Fitzpatrick, 2001: 64).

Fitzpatrick (2001) explains liberalism in comparison with "communitarianism". He distinguished between the right and left wings of liberalism, and he uses these two wings in terms of explaining the equality-liberty axis which is a fundamental dualism in political-social ideologies. *The liberal left* gives priority to the rights and needs of people, and social welfare systems have to achieve these two things. While *liberal right* emphasizes priority to rights and free market. This perspective perceives people as they have the right to private property and exchange them in a free market, and individuals as they must depend on themselves.

In sum, liberalism gives preference to the "individuals' interests" before the interests of the social life. The duties of the state, however, are limited to supervising the achievement of law and order. A liberal state should be impartial in terms of the religious preference of its people, and it “should provide the autonomy of its people” (Fitzpatrick, 2001: 65).

Regarding the liberal approach to the welfare regime, there is no escape from Esping-Andersen's stance (1990). According to him, the idea of liberalism includes the

¹ Whigs were members of a British political party in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, which supported political and social change. For more information see McLean (1996) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, pp 529-30.

maximisation of the free market on one hand and the minimisation of state (government) intervention on the other. In liberalism, the role is given to the government to save and maintain this free market. Furthermore, liberal theory assumes that all individuals can participate in the market. This leads to the "stratification" of society because the fundamental idea is for freedom of competition, and competition produces winners and losers. The freedom to participate in the competition of the market will contain aspects of insecurity that may result in poverty. From a liberal perspective this "is not the fault of the system, but solely a consequence of an individual's lack of foresight and thrift" (Esping-Anderson, 1990: 42).

Freedom, therefore, becomes the paradox because the connotations of freedom seldom include images of poverty (which will be discussed in two subsections later related to Marxism and social democracy). In terms of social policy, historically liberals believed that poverty cannot be eliminated by the minimum living wage; on the contrary, it actively contributes to its perpetuation (Esping-Anderson, 1990: 35-6). Contemporary liberals acknowledge the "dilemmas of labour commodification" via minimal social policies awarded through means testing and prior contribution (Esping-Anderson, 1990: 42). Liberal states such as the United States, Canada and Australia view welfare in terms of minimal assistance to allow the worker the opportunity to gain entry back into the market.

CONSERVATISM AND ITS WELFARE REGIME

Conservatism is a political approach with its own philosophical and intellectual principles and a way to perceive social life. In addition, conservatives regard themselves as rationalists and supporters of common sense. They are named thus because they want to conserve important aspects of their tradition. According to the conservative approach, traditional human identities are defended, especially; those that have been established historically in kinship relations. For instance, our role as fathers and mothers or husbands and wives within a family and our place within a family tradition are vital and should not be destroyed.

Despite recognising social integration, social stratification and familialism, this regime, historically has been based on nationalism tradition, Bismarkian conservatism, social Catholicism, and Christian democracy (Fitzpatrick, 2005: 106).

With regards to responding to social changes, they believe that stability gives order, continuity, peace and security, but change might cause disorder and insecurity. What conservatives support in change is a slow change, not a radical one. The past's store of knowledge is respected, and in this process the traditional relations and institutions should guide the reforms which are started, instead social changes create disasters. Even trying to correct inequality, will be successful only when we do so with stability and equilibrium of the social organisation.

The conservative regime does not give the basic role to individuals. This approach to social policy, welfare, and the decommodification of labour is based upon stratification along class lines and the maintenance of a hierarchical society. Esping-Anderson (1990) identifies three ways conservative theory has addressed commodification. Firstly, the patronage and clientelism of feudal societies have transferred to the corporate world. Thus, an extension of the notion of communal relief based traditionally around the landowner goes beyond the modern world even though in the updated form of the state. Secondly, the conservative welfare regime originates with the Catholic Church based on the notion of protection and relief as a reward for loyalty to the church. Finally, statist conservatism originated with the notion of paternal-authoritarianism which sees the obligation of the ruling class to provide for its subjects, but unlike other theories opposes individualism (as mentioned above) and stresses the protection of society as a whole (Esping-Anderson, 1990: 38-41).

The state is viewed as a minimal interventionist with any welfare allocated firmly supporting the stratification of society or maintaining the hierarchical/patriarchal structure. Within mostly conservative welfare states the government remains at the periphery of intervention but, unlike the individualistic liberal theories, does not fail to intervene to protect those who are unable to succeed in the marketplace through no fault of their own.

MARXISM AND ITS SOCIAL WELFARE PERSPECTIVE

There are many social issues which have been interested in Marxism, and at the same time, are taken into consideration by welfare policy. The first element of Marxism which draws anyone's attention is the concept of base and superstructure. The economic base consists of the forces and relations of production, which both formalise the overall social system, whereas superstructure (legal, political and cultural systems) is determined by the base

(Fitzpatrick, 2001; O'Brien and Penna, 1998). Accordingly, social classes, state, law and class struggle reflect the economic base.

Marx, with his one-factor theory, argued that the “property” is the basic producer of class in society. Property has divided society into two classes throughout history. The First is the ruling class which in capitalist society is named the bourgeoisie, which not only has economic power through the ownership of the means of production but is also politically dominant through the organisation of the state (Heywood, 1997; Pierson and Castles, 2005). Fitzpatrick explains the Marxist view about the state: "At its crudest, this implies that the state has no autonomy and is merely an instrument of capitalists; a subtler theory suggests that the state possesses a `relative autonomy`" (Fitzpatrick, 2001).

In addition, inequality is one of the central issues in classical and new Marxism, and they believe that equality will be achieved by the redistribution process. According to them, the government must solve the problem of poverty.

Marxist welfare theory attempts to analyse the capitalist society and welfare state rather than giving its perspective on welfare. For example, Louis Althusser (1918-90) analysed the state and distinguished between “repressive state apparatus” and “ideological state apparatus”. Both try to preserve the capitalist state either by using force or making content (Ibid: 133-134).

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL WELFARE

Against Marxism as a more theoretical project, social democracy entered the world of socio-political views in the twentieth century. When conservatism and liberalism searched for a solution to capitalism dilemmas, they found a middle way between free-market capitalism and state collectivism. Social democracy was an outcome of these intellectual attempts. In other words, social democracy was the de-radicalisation of Marxism/socialism or revisionism of liberalism (Alcock et al., 2002).

The story of social democracy in the West, indeed, is the story of the Labour Party and social democrats who have been not only thinkers but also men of action. Thus, Fitzpatrick (2001) prefers to name them “utopian pragmatists”, who want to confess the present flaws and try to overpass them toward the future.

Social democrats are not against free-market capitalism and private ownership; however, they are more concerned about poverty about social inequality in capitalist societies. For this, social democracy considers itself a unique social welfare perspective to reform in favour of the working class. It not only aims to promote the interests of the working class but also regards capitalism as capable of reform via democratic means (Alcock et al., 2002).

Social democratic regime prefers cooperation to competition as a means of organising societies and economies. It offers a high level of collective provision for all residents, giving the state a key role in welfare provision. Entitlements are based on residency, and the levels of benefits are high. The collective provision is financed through taxation. The universalistic nature of this regime makes private provision unnecessary. According to Esping-Anderson (1990), the level of de-commodification is high, depending on the level of benefit. Because of its universalistic nature, this regime promotes the equality of citizens as a whole.

The social democratic approach argues that welfare aims to reduce social divisions, and would oppose means testing as criteria to receive assistance. Furthermore, social democratic theory advocates full employment and promotes equality, including the provision of a safety net that no one should be allowed to fall through.

The de-commodification of workers is a priority and is achieved through universal and comprehensive welfare policies with the underlying belief that "All benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay" (Esping-Anderson, 1990). Of course, the reality of fully socialised welfare programs is minimal due to the very high maintenance costs and the problems experienced by governments that try to persuade the population to pay higher taxes, whether they like it or not, to provide for those who cannot compete in the marketplace.

SECTION TWO. AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

Social welfare is a vital aspect of any society, reflecting the values and commitments of a nation towards the well-being of its citizens. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, a region marked by historical struggles and political complexities, social welfare has emerged as a critical area of development to improve the lives of its people.

The Kurdistan Region has been making significant strides in building and refining its social welfare regime. This section aims to provide an overview of the various components of the social welfare system in the Kurdistan Region, highlighting the challenges faced and the progress achieved.³

HEALTHCARE

All people residing in the Kurdistan Region have access to free universal health care (Anthony et al., 2018). It is a non-contributory health insurance programme for all, financed via a public budget (Moore et al., 2014). The government has recognised the importance of a robust healthcare system in the KRI. However, only small steps have been taken to improve public healthcare infrastructure and services compared with private healthcare. Public hospitals and clinics have been set up to provide medical care to residents, particularly in rural areas where healthcare facilities were previously limited. Additionally, efforts have been made to enhance medical facilities, train healthcare professionals, and ensure the availability of essential medicines and treatments.

EDUCATION

Education is the cornerstone of human development and economic growth. In the Kurdistan Region, significant efforts have been made to strengthen the educational infrastructure and enhance access to quality education for all citizens. Public schools have been the primary means of education, but the region has supported and facilitated private education to supplement government schools. Despite the poor quality of the government-run schools, most families still prefer to send their children to public school. There are education services for all – from early childhood to formal and non-formal learning and for adults participating in lifelong learning activities.

To promote higher education, the government has provided scholarships and financial aid to deserving students (i.e. family members of martyrs, genocide survivors and political prisoners), allowing them to pursue their academic studies.

SOCIAL SAFETY NET

The Social Safety Net (SSN), formerly known as the Social Protection Fund (SPF), was established in response to economic challenges and international aid agencies' involvement. It provides financial assistance to various vulnerable groups, including widows, students, and disabled individuals (Irwani, 2015: 68-70). The program has undergone significant expansion and ups and downs since 2011, until it was suspended by the government, claiming to review the beneficiaries list from ineligible people.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND INSURANCE

Social insurance schemes are essential for providing financial protection against specific risks, such as unemployment, work-related injuries, and retirement. In the Kurdistan Region, efforts have been made to establish social insurance programs, albeit in their early stages of development. Public sector employees are subscribed to social security by default. Formal private sector workers can optionally register for social insurance. The informal sector (i.e. own-account and/or family workers, casual workers and daily wage employees) is the largest sector of employment; however, it is not covered by any social insurance coverage. There has been recently an initiative by the government and supported by the International Labour Organization to expand social security coverage to include informal workers in Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. These initiatives are crucial for promoting social security and economic stability for citizens.

LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

As part of the social welfare regime, the Kurdistan Region has implemented labour market policies to promote employment and economic growth. Job training programs and vocational education initiatives have been introduced to equip the workforce with the necessary skills and enhance employability. Additionally, support for entrepreneurs and small businesses has been a priority to encourage economic diversification and reduce unemployment rates.

SECTION THREE: SOCIAL WELFARE REGIMES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KRG

Despite the progress made in developing social welfare programs in the Kurdistan Region, several challenges persist. Political instability, economic difficulties, and conflicts have affected the region's ability to implement comprehensive and sustainable social welfare policies. Additionally, the Kurdistan Region faces resource constraints, limiting its capacity to fully fund and expand social welfare initiatives.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq has made commendable efforts to establish a social welfare regime that addresses the needs of its citizens. Through investments in education, healthcare, housing, and social assistance, the region has taken significant steps towards improving the well-being of its population. While challenges remain, the commitment to social welfare underscores the region's determination to build a prosperous and inclusive society for all its citizens.

FRAMEWORKS AND CONTEXTS OF THE AREAS OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROVISIONS: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This detailed overview provides a foundation for a deeper analysis of the successes, limitations, and potential areas for enhancement within the Kurdistan Region's social welfare provisions.

Universal Healthcare: The region offers free healthcare to all residents, funded through public budgets.

Infrastructure Development: Efforts are made to improve healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural areas with historically limited access.

Professional Training and Medicinal Access: Initiatives include training healthcare professionals and ensuring essential medicines and treatments are available.

Public vs. Private Education: While public schools are the primary means, the region supports private education to complement government institutions.

Challenges in Public Schools: Despite deficiencies in public schools, they remain the preferred choice for most families.

Support for Higher Education: Scholarships and financial aid are provided for deserving students, including those connected to specific historical circumstances.

Assistance Programs: Support for vulnerable groups like widows, students, and the disabled through the Social Safety Net.

Suspension and Review: Periodic review and suspension of these programs to ensure they cater to eligible individuals.

Social Security and Insurance Coverage Initiatives: Efforts to establish social insurance programs, particularly for public and formal private sector employees.

Challenges in the Informal Sector: The largest sector of employment, the informal sector, lacks social insurance coverage.

Expansion Efforts: Initiatives in progress to expand coverage, including informal workers, supported by international organizations.

Employment Promotion: Initiatives such as job training, vocational education, and support for entrepreneurs aimed at reducing unemployment rates and fostering economic growth.

The context here showcases a mixed scenario. While efforts are evident in various sectors, there are persistent challenges, especially in public education quality and coverage gaps in social insurance for the informal sector. The government's commitment to expansion and improvements reflects an awareness of social welfare's importance.

EXAMINING THE KRG'S SOCIAL WELFARE APPROACH: SOCIALIST, NEO-LIBERAL AND/OR SYNTHESIS

The KRG has moved away from the socialist regime that was established and practised by the Ba'thist regime in Iraq for nearly four decades. Although the free market is adopted by the government it seems that the opportunities to emulate have opened for the private sector. This is not run by an economic policy but has been monopolized by people close to the power circle. In addition, the private sector efforts get hampered by people in power. It seems like a big gap between ordinary people and people in power.

After 1991, international aid agencies or other international NGOs who worked in the region did not have to look for specific related legislation, because there was none. This

resulted in each of them working according to their policies. This leads to the emergence of contradictory social policy.

This section illustrates and analyses the interplay between socialist and neoliberal ideologies within the social welfare provisions of the Kurdistan Region-Iraq. The provision of free universal healthcare embodies socialist principles, emphasising equitable access to essential services, irrespective of financial status. Initiatives to establish public healthcare facilities, particularly in underserved rural areas, reflect socialist ideals of prioritising public infrastructure for the benefit of the masses. Emphasising education as pivotal for development and providing lifelong learning aligns with socialist values of equal educational opportunities for all.

Conversely, support for private education supplementary to government schools reflects neoliberal inclinations favouring a blend of public and private sector involvement in service provision. The prioritisation of public healthcare and education reflects socialist ideals while acknowledging private education mirrors neoliberal tendencies.

Moreover, allowing formal private sector workers to choose social insurance aligns with neoliberal principles emphasising individual choice and market-oriented solutions. Additionally, initiatives promoting vocational education and supporting entrepreneurship resonate with neoliberal policies fostering individual skills and economic growth.

In the economic system, there is a free market, but it is monopolised by people in power. Heshmati (2007) carried out a descriptive analysis of the labour market conditions in the Kurdistan Region. He studied the determinant factors of the labour market in the region, providing a general overview of the economic situation of the Kurdistan Region, he states:

“mismatch of education and skills required on the job market; low quality of education and insufficient to create new job opportunities; high wage rate resulting in low relative labour productivity and competitiveness in the region; lowering capital investment, high risk and unknown prospects for future development; high profitability of import and distribution compared to local production; and finally the absence of well-functioning labour market institutions, lack of statistics and active labour market policy measures to promote production and employment creation” Heshmati (2007)

The Kurdistan Region's social welfare provisions exhibit a fusion of socialist and neoliberal elements, emphasizing universal access while accommodating private sector involvement and individual choice. The coexistence of these ideologies highlights the complexity of adapting welfare frameworks to the socio-economic context, necessitating ongoing evaluation and balance between inclusive policies and resource efficiency.

OBSTACLES OF WELFARE IN THE IRAQI KURDISTAN REGION

The prioritisation of welfare remains subdued within the government's agenda. This study highlights a foundational level of social protection extended to marginalized groups, encompassing family members of martyrs, survivors of genocide, individuals with special needs, and orphans. Yet, ensuring a decent livelihood for these disadvantaged groups remains unaccomplished. Various obstacles impede the KRG, contributing to the establishment of an insufficient social welfare structure. The predominance of politicization across all sectors overshadows social concerns, relegating them to the periphery while giving precedence to political issues. The overarching influence of the national question has resulted in the disregard for public social life. Moreover, numerous social laws within the region trace back to the Ba'ath regime era in Iraq, hindering effective governance. The attempts by the Kurdistan Parliament's Social Affairs Committee to amend these laws have encountered delays, impeding both governmental and private sector participation in social provision. This prolonged legal stagnation and political instability have fostered an environment conducive to heightened corruption in the region.

The challenges facing social welfare in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq encompass political fragmentation, economic instability, corruption, and regional conflicts (Gunter, 2014; Natali, 2010). The presence of internally displaced persons and refugees has strained social services further (Fazil, 2018). The prospects for the future hinge on political reform, economic diversification, and collaboration with international organizations.

Despite commendable strides in establishing social welfare programs in the Kurdistan Region, several obstacles persist. Political instability, economic hardships, and conflicts have hindered the region's ability to implement comprehensive and sustainable social welfare policies. Furthermore, resource limitations have curtailed the Kurdistan Region's capacity to fully finance and expand social welfare initiatives.

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq has earnestly worked towards creating a social welfare framework that attends to its citizens' needs. Through investments in education, healthcare, housing, and social assistance, the region has taken significant strides toward enhancing its population's well-being. While challenges endure, the commitment to social welfare underscores the region's resolve to construct a prosperous and inclusive society for all its inhabitants.

As circumstances in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq may have evolved, it is imperative to refer to current sources and official government reports for the latest insights into the region's social welfare systems. The pursuit of comprehensive social welfare remains ongoing, and continual endeavours are vital to achieve sustainable development and an enhanced quality of life for all citizens.

STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING SOCIAL WELFARE IN KRI

Establishing a Coordinated Social Welfare System

One key strategy for strengthening social welfare in KRI is establishing a coordinated system. This involves harmonising the various social protection initiatives implemented by different government agencies and NGOs. Coordination can help avoid duplication of efforts, improve efficiency, and ensure that resources are directed to those most in need (World Bank, 2018).

Fostering Transparency and Accountability

Improving transparency and accountability in the delivery of social services is another essential strategy. This can be achieved by implementing intense monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, promoting open government initiatives, and engaging civil society organisations to monitor social services (Transparency International, 2020).

Several scholars have analysed the historical development of social welfare in the KRI. Post-1991 autonomy granted the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) the ability to develop unique social policies distinct from Iraq (Natali, 2010; Stansfield, 2003). A significant aspect of this historical development was the creation of policies related to the oil

industry, with some arguing that welfare development has been tied to oil revenue (Yildiz, 2004).

The governance structure in the KRI has been a subject of study, particularly how the KRG manages social welfare policies (O'Driscoll, 2017). There have been efforts to establish a social safety net, including pensions, unemployment benefits, and programs for disabled people (Al-Jaf, 2015). However, implementation has faced challenges such as corruption, inefficiencies, and uneven distribution (Hama, 2016).

The KRI's dependency on oil revenue has been highlighted as both a catalyst and an obstacle to welfare development (Yildiz, 2004; Dodge, 2010). This dependency creates a "rentier state" mentality, where the government's primary income is not linked to taxation and weakens citizen-state accountability (Ross, 2012).

Prioritising Prevention over Cure

The KRG should shift its focus from alleviating poverty to preventing it. This involves investing in education, healthcare, and job creation, particularly for vulnerable groups. It also involves implementing social insurance programs that protect individuals and families from income loss due to unemployment, illness, or old age (ILO, 2020).

Social welfare is vital to any society, reflecting a nation's values and commitments towards its citizens' well-being. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, a region marked by historical struggles and political complexities, social welfare has emerged as a critical area of development to improve the lives of its people. As of my last update in September 2021, the Kurdistan Region has been making significant strides in building and refining its social welfare regime. This article aims to provide an overview of the various components of the social welfare system in Kurdistan, highlighting the challenges faced and the progress achieved.

The social welfare system in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) is closely linked to political, economic, and cultural factors within the region. As an autonomous region in northern Iraq, Kurdistan has distinct social welfare needs and practices. This review aims to synthesise existing research and literature on social welfare regimes within the KRI, looking at aspects such as historical development, governance structures, key policies, challenges, and prospects.

CONCLUSIONS

The welfare systems in place within any society mirror its political and economic structures. Every welfare system, whether leaning to the left or right, exemplifies governmental stances and is moulded by prevailing political and administrative dynamics. The varied welfare regimes addressed in this essay have informed a majority of the world's social policies.

The liberal welfare model champions the autonomy of individuals and their rights to make choices. It upholds the belief that individuals are responsible for their economic statuses, whether affluent or impoverished, advocating for a robust free market and limited government intervention. Conversely, conservative models do not prioritize individual agency, leaning towards preserving traditional provisions rather than adapting to change. Although Marxism has not had a direct, significant impact on welfare policies, efforts to tackle poverty and inequality have often been influenced by socialist ideologies. It's accurate to state that social democratic movements have roots in socialist/Marxist principles.

Kurdistan's political volatility has led to an absence of a cohesive social policy framework, impacting social provisions across the board. While traces of socialist-inspired provisions from the prior (Ba'athist) era in Iraq can still be found in Kurdistan, it's evident that free market principles are beginning to dominate its societal landscape. The present state in Kurdistan suggests a lack of a structured welfare system, and existing governmental services lack a focused social policy. To address this, the government in Kurdistan should prioritize formulating holistic social policies and strategies to guide its future decisions in this domain.

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پوخته به زمانی کوردی:

لێکۆڵینهوهیهک له رژیمهکانی خوشگوزهرانیی کۆمه‌لایهتی له چوارچێوهی ههریمی کوردستانی

عێراقدا

سیاسهتی کۆمه‌لایهتی له ههر ولاتیکدا له رژیمی خوشگوزهرانیی په‌سندکراوی ئهو ولاتهوه سه‌رچاوه ده‌گریت و له‌ژێر کارتیکی پێکهاته‌ی سیاسیه‌که‌یدا. به‌ ده‌ستپێکردن له‌م ئارگومێنته‌وه، ئهم لێکۆڵینه‌وهیه تێروانینیکی گشتی له‌سه‌ر دا‌بینکردنی خزمه‌تگوزاری کۆمه‌لایهتی ده‌خاته‌ ڕوو و له‌ ژێر ڕۆشنایی رژیمه خوشگوزهرانییه سه‌رمکییه‌کان، به‌دواداچوون بۆ سیسته‌می خوشگوزهرانیی کۆمه‌لایهتی په‌سندکراو له‌ حکومه‌تی ههریمی کوردستان ده‌کات. له‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌دا، خوشگوزهرانیی کۆمه‌لایهتی به‌وه پێناسه‌کراوه که هه‌ولێکی سیستematیکه بۆ دا‌بینکردنی خوشبژێوی بۆ هاو‌لاتیان. هه‌رمه‌وه‌ها هه‌له‌سه‌نگاندنی ره‌خنه‌گرانه بۆ چوار رێبازی خوشگوزهرانیی کۆمه‌لایهتی (سێ چه‌شنی رژیمی خوشگوزهرانیی که له‌ لایه‌ن ئێسپینگ-ئه‌نده‌رسۆنه‌وه خراوه‌ته‌ڕوو، له‌گه‌ڵ سیسته‌می سۆسیالیزم) کراوه. سه‌ر‌ه‌رای ئه‌وه‌ش، به‌ له‌به‌رچاوه‌گرته‌ی پێکهاته‌ی سیاسی-ئیداری، له‌ حا‌له‌تی دژبه‌یه‌کی و بوونی ته‌موم‌ژ له‌ سیسته‌می خوشگوزهرانیی کۆمه‌لایهتی حکومه‌تی هه‌ریم کۆل‌دراوه‌ته‌وه. ئهم توێژینه‌وهیه به‌و ده‌ره‌جامه‌ گه‌یشته‌وه که سیسته‌می خوشگوزهرانیی کۆمه‌لایهتی حکومه‌تی هه‌ریم، دوا‌ی سێ ده‌یه‌ له‌ خۆبه‌ری‌وه‌بردن و سه‌ر‌ه‌رای په‌سندکردنی رێژه‌بیانه‌ی رێبازی لیبرالیزمی نوێ، هێشتا نه‌یتوانیوه خۆی له‌ روانگه‌ سۆسیالیستییه‌ رزگار بکات که له‌ رژیمی به‌عسی پێشووه‌وه به‌میرات بۆی ماوه‌ته‌وه.

دراسة أنظمة الرفاه الاجتماعي في سياق إقليم كردستان العراق

السياسة الاجتماعية مستمدة من نظام الرفاه الاجتماعي الذي يتبناه كيان سياسي معين. وانطلاقاً من هذه الفرضية، يقدم هذه الدراسة نظرة عامة حول أحكام الرعاية الاجتماعية، وفي ضوء أنظمة الرفاه الاجتماعية الرئيسية، فإنه يدرس نظام الرفاه الاجتماعي السائد في حكومة إقليم كردستان. يمكن تعريف الرفاه الاجتماعي على أنها محاولة منهجية لتوفير الرعاية للمواطنين. وتم دراسة أربعة أنظمة الرفاه الاجتماعي (النماذج الثلاثة للنظام الرفاه الاجتماعي المقترح من قبل إسبنج أندرسن، بالإضافة إلى النظام الاشتراكي). بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ومع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار البنية السياسية والإدارية السائدة، قام هذه الدراسة بتحليل الغموض الموجودة في نظام الرعاية الاجتماعية لحكومة إقليم كردستان. ويرى المقال أن نظام الرعاية الاجتماعية في حكومة إقليم كردستان، بعد ثلاثة عقود من الإدارة الذاتية، لا يمكن أن يتجنب من المنظور الاشتراكي الموروث من النظام البعثي البائد، وفي حين يتم تسليط الضوء على تحويل نهج الرعاية الاجتماعية في حكومة إقليم كردستان نحو الليبرالية الجديدة.