

Political Pre-Condition for Industrialisation Promoting Social Security Development through Chinese Case Before the Reform

Huang Guan*

Department of Social Work, Changzhou University, Jiangsu, China

Commentary

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***For Correspondence:**

Huang Guan, Department of Social Work, Changzhou University, Jiangsu, China

E-mail: Guan@gmail.com

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DESCRIPTION

Industrialist's explanation of social security development has not been tested in non-Western, and non-capitalist contexts raises further questions. For instance, what happens to a country's social security when an autocratic government changes its doctrine? China presents a useful means of addressing these gaps. While the design of China's urban social security system did not undergo significant revision between 1949 and 1988, the doctrine of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was modified frequently. More specifically, CCP doctrine fundamentally changed with the transfer from the first to the second leader-generation following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. Accordingly, this study examines the development of social security in China between 1949 and 1988 in order to discern the impact of changes in the doctrine of an authoritarian communist government on the modification of a country's social security.

Unlike advanced Western countries, the improvement in per capita income did not lead to a consistent increase in public expenditure on China's urban social security between 1949 and 1988. Although located on the margin of the CCP's governing system, urban social security was an important means of implementing CCP doctrine. Throughout study period, the operation and implementation of China's urban social security was promoted or interrupted by national political movements. This is reflected in the country's fluctuating increases in social security expenditure, which lagged behind economic growth. Moreover, the system's redistribution function was not very efficient, with social security benefits and resources varying across industries and work units.

However, this too reflected CCP doctrine. Designed as a multi-tier system, social security was realized by dividing the extension of coverage according to value and status: the benefits received depended on the recipient's class status and value to the CCP. Accordingly, the system served to strengthen existing class stratification.

In the Chinese case, the bicorrelations between the development of social security and socio-economic conditions do not align with the predictions of industrialization theory. Rather, as this study demonstrates, the doctrine of the ruling party determines social security development. This difference alters the expected impact of the economy and society on social security development. The unequal development of China's urban social security system can be attributed to the country's politics, particularly insofar as politics plays a major role in decisions regarding social security expenditure. These findings complement the popular understanding of social security development and offer new insight into social security variation. The results of this study also indicate that the widely accepted correlation between economic growth and social security development is only applicable to specific political contexts.

This study has some limitations. Extant studies have established that the bicorrelation between economic development and the proportion of GDP spent on social security has been significantly positive since Chairman Mao's death. However, findings regarding the pre-reform period—in which CCP doctrine centered on class-led revolution—underscore the need for further comparative analysis in respect to pre- and post-Mao politics and reform. While, this study conducts detailed comparative analyses of shorter periods of social security development in pre-reform China in order to elucidate the impact of modifications in CCP doctrine, further studies of this nature are required to facilitate and improve regression analyses of Chinese social security development. Although the very small sample sizes of each sub-period may illuminate unforeseen phenomena, the observation of these sub-periods is only the first step in verifying the results of regression analysis. This limitation will be addressed in future research comprising long-term longtime comparison between China's pre- and post-reform urban social security.

Our findings indicate that SUC involvement in qualifying social work education is a positive experience for both students and SUCs. For the service user and/or carer the sharing of stigmatized 'lived experiences' on issues such as mental illness and substance misuse seems to provide some form of social support. This review has highlighted shortcomings in terms of the evaluation modalities used to assess SUC involvement in social work education programmes. Future research would benefit from longitudinal methods to follow students into practice to explore the impact of SUC involvement on the quality and outcomes of their practice.