Social Policy Welfare State Studies: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to map the study topics in the field of social policy and welfare states to find out the progress of the study of government science because, basically, each country has different problems. The research method applied to this research is a systematic literature review using 116 scientific articles sourced from scopus databases. As for reviewing articles using the Vosviewer application. The research reveals that there are differences in the concept of social policy by governments in different countries, which is based on the fact that each country has a different background. In spite of the differences, the whole country is making an effort to improve the well-being of its people through its social policies. The entire government effort is supported by some important aspects of it, namely action, regulation, and social services, which are the dominant topics in the research findings. The results of this research contribute to the development of science, in particular governance science related to welfare state social policy, which covers the concept of social policy in welfare states and some important aspects that support social policy and welfare state. The limitation of this research is that the article was used only using secondary data that came from the Scopus database, so the research findings could not comprehensively describe social policies and welfare states in the world. So further research needs to use scientific articles that come from other reputable international databases, such as the Web of Science and Dimensions Scholars (Google Scholar).

INTRODUCTION

The issue of social policy is a phenomenal issue that attracts the attention of many countries. Social policy is a decision taken to deal with social problems that are being experienced by society (Mok & Wen, 2022). As the core of social policy, the government's policies relating to decisions and actions will affect the well-being of its citizens directly through the provision of social services or assistance provided. The current welfare system is becoming more and more conditional, with restrictions and legal requirements driven by money undermining access to state assistance (Carey, 2022). A welfare state is a model of state policy that focuses on social protection or public welfare through various programs, such as public health, pensioners' welfare, unemployment compensation, and simple housing. (public housing). So, the government's action is an attempt to improve the quality of life of people through the provision of various types of income benefits, social services, and other social benefit programs. However, the various policies given by the government do not guarantee the creation of the welfare of the country, because it is not uncommon to find misconduct from the government in the implementation of such policies (Li et al., 2022).

There has been a lot of research describing social policies linked to the welfare state. Zapata Celestino, (2023) reveals that the tools used by a welfare state relate to how to cope with the challenges of an ever-changing age, which means that the circumstances or needs of people are changing as well. Dai et al (2023) A case study conducted in the Beijing Municipality of Lugouqiao revealed that the rapid process of transformation strengthens the government in dealing with the various problems of society, so that the existence of an era is not something that weakens the state but rather a way that makes it easier for the government to know the needs of the people quickly. Another study conducted by Schreurs (2023) suggests that a nation's well-being can be achieved by restoring the components of an actor-centered institution, which means that a government that is on the whole institution is the key to creating a welfare state.

Although previous research has explained a lot of social policy toward a welfare state, not much of the previous research uses the approach of systematic literature review with articles that come from the scopus database, and not much uses the method of article review with the Vosviewer application. Therefore, this research focuses on the review paper with the SLR approach, which uses 116 scientific articles that come from scopus databases. The SLR method is a scientific method that has the power and advantage of understanding research issues based on previous research. This study will attempt to explain the concept of social policy in a welfare state and some important aspects that support social policy and welfare states. Because if the policy is not in line with the needs of the community in the field, then the policy can be said to be ineffective and can have an unfavorable impact, namely that the program is not running or can even hinder other better programs from doing so.

The focus of this research leads to an attempt to answer research questions, namely, "how social policy concepts in a welfare state" and "what important aspects support social and welfare policy." The research methods used are qualitative content analysis with SLR approaches and article analysis using Vosviewer. This research has contributed to the development of science, in particular governance science related to the welfare state, and the development of government policy in order to be a welfare country. In addition, it is intended that readers will be able to know the scope of the welfare state, in particular the aspects of social policy made by the government.

Many scholars have studied social policy and welfare states. It explains that social policy and welfare state issues relate to government efforts in formulating social policies to build and shape a welfare state. Social policy usually refers to the concept of social services that have been designed to help people who are experiencing difficult times in their lives. Thus, active workers or governments are vital infrastructure for a welfare country (Reiter, 2023). The performance of public servants is crucial in providing institutional arrangements for the provision of welfare services but also has the opportunity to influence future policy-making (Cai et al., 2022). The policies that are adopted will have a different impact between countries, social groups, and societies (Grasso et al., 2021).

The analysis of the role of the government in adopting social policies and its capacity to act as actors that will serve the community from various aspects such as education, economics, health, or anything that relates to the needs of the people. Data shows that a welfare state depends on a country's system to respond to the various problems that exist in the country on a rapid scale (Hong, 2022). This essay is a point to consider: social policy is the influence of the formation of a welfare state. In addition, the expenditure or allocation of state funds for national programs will also be adjusted to the territory of the country itself (Kim & Zhao, 2023). According to Amich Alhumami, the two concepts of a welfare state focus on economic development and social welfare (Khan et al., 2021). Economic development, or economic development, includes economic growth, capital accumulation, and economic gains. This concept serves as a means of improving the standard of living, quality of life, and wealth, whereas social welfare or social well-being relates to the priority of the interests of others, which includes social rights, and the redistribution of assets is a wealth-sharing mechanism to finance social services for the poor and oppressed communities.

Most developing countries are stuck in debt with other countries, which causes the country's money that is supposed to be used for general development to be divided to pay the debt even more if it has such high interest rates(Béland et al., 2022). The above problem reflects that each country has different problems, so it makes different policies, especially in the social policy aspects. By assessing the short- and medium-term effects of government policies, it is possible to determine the impact of social policy on creating a welfare state. So in order to make a social policy, the government must take into account all aspects so that there is no future inequality (Guter-Sandu, 2021). Thus, making a social policy, of course, requires the entire coordination of the institutions involved, including the local government, the village government, and also the central government. Then, when the whole policy has been agreed upon, the government in charge will implement it according to the rules that have been in force. For example, according to Qu et al (2023) in a study that has been carried out, if local officials want to implement policies, they have to follow three

logics: to meet the goals of the central government, to balance the outcomes and risks of policies, and to encourage public participation. It aims to generate policy behaviors such as entrepreneurship, well-being, innovation, risk-sharing, and collaboration.

The government is a central actor in social policy (Rosengren et al., 2023). The government is tasked with seeking solutions to the problem of optimizing well-being over time through an optimal policy response (Muller, 2021). It's because the government is not only responsible for protecting children; intervention in the family is also one of the most important duties of the state, even of its entire people (Berrick et al., 2023). Under any circumstances, the government has a role to play in bringing things back to normal (Kamran et al., 2023). For example, in the country of Indonesia, one of the crisis problems is poverty. The Indonesian government has done a lot to reduce poverty in Indonesia by providing a variety of social assistance such as housing, shelter, education scholarships, BPJS, and so on. It was meant to give the Indonesian people a chance to have a better life.

In accordance with the enforcement of laws designed to guarantee the social rights of all citizens of its country (Bracha-Sadowitz et al., 2023). Therefore, the demands of the public include not only individuals but also institutions or governments that will determine their policy choices and regulatory substance (Lund, 2023). The diversity of the needs of society is one of the challenges to be faced, given that the era of technology has greatly changed the lives of nations. Digitalization has changed the dynamics of welfare services and welfare governance more broadly (Sheldrick, 2023). Indirectly, today's era of technology makes society much easier, even though sometimes there are societies that lack understanding about the use of technology.

Previous research has discussed a lot of social policies and welfare states. For example, in his research Saraceno(2023), he stated that the level and pattern of development of the welfare state as a whole include labor market conditions, demographic characteristics, family and gender culture, political heritage, and political culture. All these factors contribute to shaping family issues, which are framed as policy-relevant issues. According to Dobson & Turnbull (2022) if social policy suggests that social control and legal

control may be formed differently by institutions that provide services related to citizenship. However, according to Vabø et al (2022) the measures to enhance the integration of services are by using the capabilities of the holders of power, the relevant institutional actors. This means that if governments have to have good capabilities, they must be focused on their fields so that all the tasks that will be assigned can be completed.

Many scholars have studied the issues of social policy and the welfare state, which explains that social policy relates to government efforts to build welfare states with the concept of social services to help people in difficult times. Government workers play an important role as the infrastructure of the welfare state. An analysis of the role of government shows the importance of public servant performance in institutional settings. Social policy affects the development of the welfare state by considering economic and social aspects. But state debt and various problems affect different social policies across countries. So good coordination between government agencies in social policy making is necessary to achieve goals and overcome disparities. The most important actor is the central government, because the agency plays a key role in social policy to optimize the well-being of the people. Besides, the laws and demands of the public also influence government policy choices, as do the challenges of digitalization that affect welfare governance.
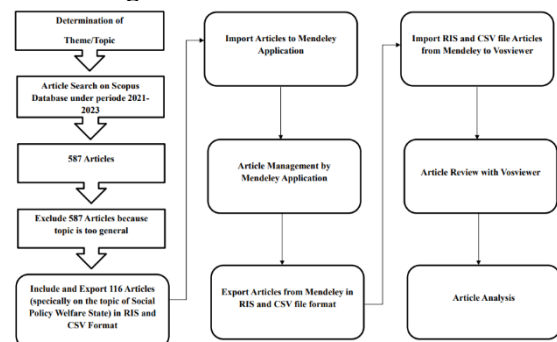
METHODS

The scientific articles that support this research are 116 that have been focused, with previously obtained as many as 587 scientific articles from the Scopus database. In this study, the method of analysis used is a systematic literature review (SLR), which aims to obtain data on social policy and the welfare state. This method is not just about reading articles; it's crucial to finding innovation in research. Furthermore, the library data collected from various journal articles in the Scopus database is used as reference material by analyzing how previous discoveries relate to social policy and welfare states, which are then processed to become scientific works of benefit to readers.

Figure 1 below describes how the implementation of the research, which started with the SLR research approach using the mapping of the social policy puzzle topics of the welfare state, continued with the search for articles from the period 2021 to 2023. From the search results obtained, article 587 was selected as 116, and then the results were exported in the RIS format. Then it continued, using the help of several applications to manage the data. Thus, this method allows researchers to review and find journals that match the social policy topics of the welfare state.

Look at Figure 1 below.

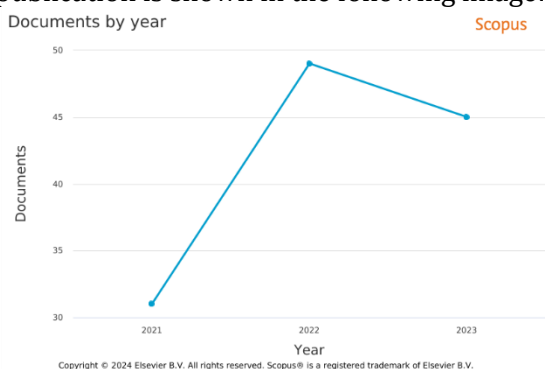**Figure 1: Stage of Research Implementation (PRISMA)**

The analysis phase of the systematic literature review begins with the process of searching journal articles in the scopus database using the keyword "Social Policy Welfare State." Then, in this search, the time vulnerability of articles has been set in order to obtain articles from 2021 to 2023, so this research can obtain the latest information. The next phase is based on the above image, which is the selection of articles in the journal. This study has 587 scientific articles concentrated into 116 scientific articles. This is done because the 587 academic articles are still very common discussions. The focus of scientific articles related to research is social welfare state in order to make future research easier to analyze existing scientific articles, so that when the scientific articles have been considered sufficient to be research materials, subsequently the 116 articles are included and exported in the RIS format. When all of these sets are done, the next step is to use VOSviewer to help analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis found in Figure 2 describe the percentage that, since 2021, there have been about 31 documents related to social policy articles. Since 2022, there has been a high rise in social policy, which makes this topic a very

popular one for scholars to research. However, since 2023, research related to social policy and welfare states has been declining. So this has described that the attention of the scholars is no longer on social policy and the welfare state, but that attention is obviously shifted to other social issues relevant to the circumstances of the time, for example, related to technological developments. This graph continues to change, either increasing or decreasing, from year to year, so this topic is still relevant if we want to discuss it further by providing an update of existing articles. More than 40 documents on social policy are stored in Scopus's analytical database, so they can be used as a reference for further research.

The social welfare state policy article by year of publication is shown in the following image:
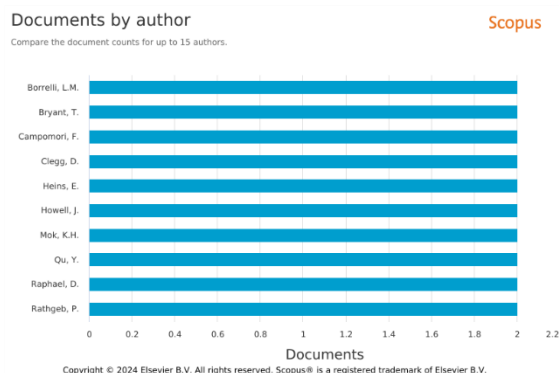

Figure 2. Scopus documents by year

Figure 3 shows that the article on social police welfare states was written by an author who is an expert in the topic. For example, Borelli L. M., Brynt T., Campomori F., Clegg D., Heins E., Howell J., Mok K. H., Qu Y., Raphael D., and Rathgeb P. had a tremendous influence on the writing of scientific articles on social policy and the welfare state. Usually, authors' presentations are different between authors and authors; of course, they are based on scientific articles made by authors with their own ideas and views related to the topic. However, the presence of such differences can provide the information needed by the readers or even be used by further research as a reference update in order to obtain up-to-date information that is relevant to the circumstances. Nevertheless, the presentation of the author's expertise this time is one of the very good things, even with a maximum of two articles, as there is rarely an equal presentation for the entire author in the search for the same article. Thus, the existence of such a reality has described whether the authors of this article are experts

because they have succeeded in contributing to the topic of social police welfare states.

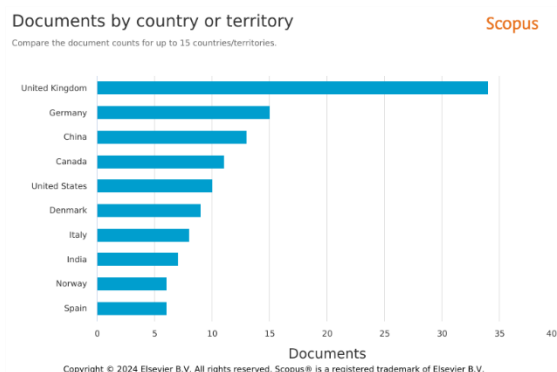Based on the author's expertise, note Figure 3 as follows:

Figure 3: Scopus Document Based on the Author

Figure 4 shows that the social policy and welfare state topics in the Scopus database show that, first, about 34 documents were found in the UK, where the UK is the country with the most discussions related to the social policy and welfare state topics, in the sense that many British scholars are so interested in the topic that much of the scientific articles obtained come from the UK. Secondly, there are 15 documents in Germany, as the second country to earn the most in writing scientific articles on the topic of social police welfare state, making Germany a country that has something in common with the UK, that is, both have an interest in discussing the subject of social police welfare state, even though the level of presentation is very different. Third, there are 13 documents in China, where the state of China is almost the equivalent of the state above it, that of Germany, because the differences between the two countries are not too far apart—only two documents. In about 11 papers in Canada, it has been described that scholars in the country do not have as much interest as in other countries such as the UK, Germany, and China. And fifth, it consists of several countries like the United States, Denmark, Italy, India, Norway, and Spain.
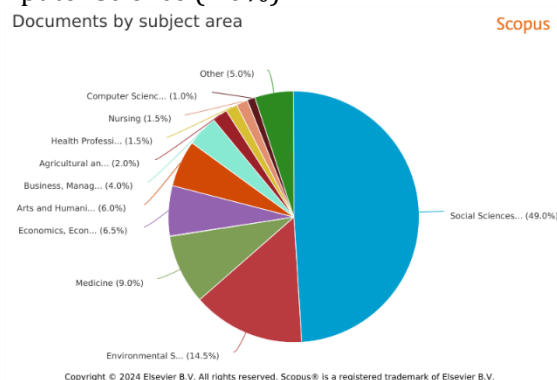
As for the country of origin of the researchers recorded in the Scopus database, see figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Scopus documents by country or region

In the picture below, for the topic of social police welfare states, the most attractive area to be studied is social science, with a presentation of 49.0%. This area has a lot of fans. It is possible that this is based on a lot of things that have a connection with the topic, considering that the subject of social policy welfare states is a social issue, so it is not surprising that the field of social sciences becomes a very dominant area and has a greater influence than other areas. Then continued by the environmental 14.5%; this is still in a good sense even though the presentation figures can be said to be very far from the previous because, basically, the environment is one of the important things in the topic of social police welfare state. The next order is medicine, which gains 9.0%. Medicine will be a highly researched field because medicine is a very influential supporter of the welfare state, followed by the fields of economics (6.5%), arts (6.0%), other 5.0%, business (4.0%), agriculture (2.0%, then health and nursing (1.5%), and computer science (1.0%).
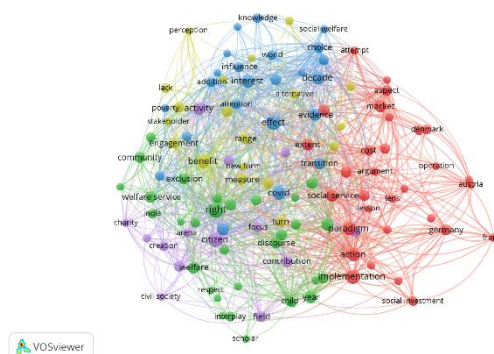

Figure 5. Scopus documents by subject area

From the data analysis obtained through the VOSviewer application, the researchers found a lot of correlation between social policy and welfare states, among other aspects. For example,

in the image, there is a grouping of red data: social investment, implementation, action, social service, operation, market, paradigm, lesson, and so on. So the various coverages have relationships between one and the other that move on the topic of social police welfare states. Not only that, there is also a grouping of blue data: COVID, transition, world, decade, effect, and so on. On the other side, there is a grouping of data that is different in color, purple and yellow, each of which has a relationship with the other. The data indicates that social and welfare policy encompasses a broad scope, making it a valuable resource for research.

Analysis on VOSviewer about data grouping obtained the following image results:

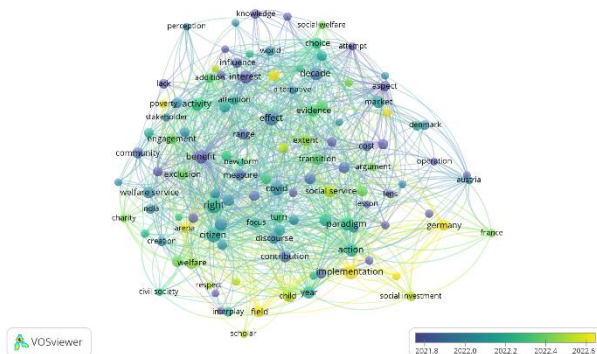**Figure 6. VOSviewer documents by data grouping**

In the data grouping above, there are many concepts obtained, so in the table below, divide the grouping of the data into 5 clusters, where in each cluster there are different numbers. For example, cluster 1 has 31, cluster 2 has 29, cluster 3 has 23, cluster 4 has 19, and cluster 5 has 14. This table is an option that can make research easier when it is difficult to see a data cluster image, because if it is divided by clusters, like in the table below, there is no need to look at the one-by-one color relationships that exist in the clustering of the data because the table has been divided and mentioned in detail and complete about any data that is interrelated.

Table 1. Themes grouped based on clusters.

Clusrter	Concept	Total
Cluster 1	Action, regulation, social service, argument, aspect, Austria, comparison, cost, Denmark, element, European union, European welfare state, extent, face, France, Germany, hypothesis, implementation, lens, lesson, market, new public management, operation, paradigm, point, public policy, attempt, scope, social investment, social service, top, and type.	31
Cluster 2	Child, community, disability, discourse, exclusion, expectation, family, ideology, information, innovation, interplay, order, paper analysis, parent, politic, relation, respect, right, scholar, scholarship, social group, special issue, state actor, theme, welfare, welfare provision, welfare service, wellbeing, and year.	29
Cluster 3	Addition, attention, Australia, bottom, Chinese government, choice, covid, decade, demand, effect, emergence, evidence, influence, interest, knowledge, land, pandemic, poverty, pressure, rise, social welfare, transition, and world.	23

With the help of the VOSviewer application, the researchers discovered the results of data analysis related to a multitude of trend topics that can be used as a reference in research on social policy and welfare states. In fact, the picture below is almost the same as the data grouping picture, but if the image below is more emphasizing the trend of the topic, then the image can describe any topic that is much discussed each year or what topic is much in the interest of researchers, and it can be seen by following the existing color relationships so that it facilitates research.

The results of VOSviewer's analysis of the topic trends are as follows:
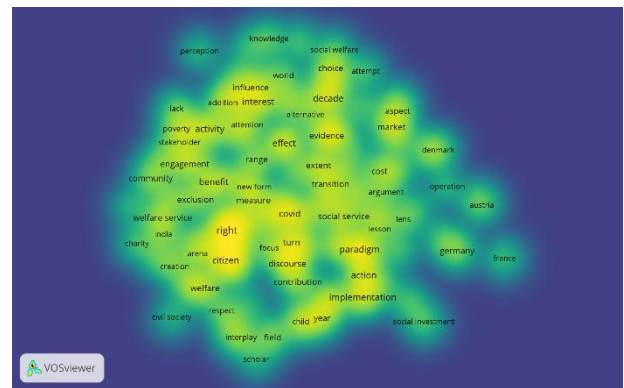

Figure 7. VOSviewer Documents According to Topic Trends

The data analysis of the topic density on the Vosviewer app shows that the more people discuss the topic, the brighter the color. For example, in the picture below the paradigm, citizen, right, COVID, influence, implementation, child, decade, and so on have bright colors so that it indicates if these topics are the ones that most interest researchers to discuss. As for the blurred colors, they indicate that these topics are less in demand for researchers to analyze. For example, there are community, civil society, operation, perception, social welfare, and so on. Thus, the presence of a density picture of this topic can help

research renew scientific articles by addressing things that were rarely discussed by previous researchers.

As for the results of the analysis on VOSviewer-related topics, density can be seen in the picture below.

Figure 8. VOSviewer Documents by Topic Density

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it has been obtained that since 2021, the number of documents related to social policy has increased in 2022 but has decreased since 2023. The graph demonstrates that numerous authors who are subject-matter experts have written articles on social policy, demonstrating a significant influence in the article's writing. Furthermore, research reveals that some of the articles originate in the UK, then in nations like Germany, China, Canada, the United States, Denmark, Italy, India, Norway, and Spain. As for data analysis using the VOSviewer application, it shows links between social policy, welfare states, and other aspects, as well as trends in topics that can serve as a reference for further research on social policy and welfare states. Thus, it provides an overview of the trends and characteristics of research related to social policy and the welfare state and highlights the importance of collaboration between various aspects in understanding and designing effective social policies.

This study seeks to answer the question of what the scope of the welfare state is in particular to the aspects of social policy made by the government; that is, there are things that the government should pay attention to in making social policy in order to give birth to a welfare state. Thus, the sphere of welfare countries on social policy aspects covers how social policy concepts in welfare countries are made and what

aspects of social policy are made by governments. To answer the first question, this study finds that the concept of social politics in well-being countries is different in each country. It is based on the many differences in the whole country, such as the form of the country, the form of government, the conditions of the territory, and even the conditions of society. There are such differences that the concepts of social policies in welcoming countries depend on the conditions in that country. For example, the problem that exists in Indonesia is not necessarily the same as the problems that exist in the United Kingdom or another state. With so few steps taken by the government in making policy, it will follow the development of its country. That way, the steps taken by the government in making policies will follow the development of the country. It's done using the form of a democratic state as its supporter, and it's also in line with previous research that states that democracy consists of three components, including participation, competition, and power-sharing, then effectiveness, representation, accountability, responsiveness, and performance, which is social well-being and trust (Chung & Cho, 2022). On the other hand, Australia has chosen to use big data to generate relevant policy insights (Curchin & Edwards, 2021). It is strongly supportive that the policy adopted should be aligned with the issues on the ground, so that in the context of social and welfare state policies, the Australian government chooses to use technology in its country's development process. As for China, poverty reduction has long been a priority of the Chinese government (Zhao & Kai, 2023). Thus, some of the above states have explained that each country has its own way or strategy that is then made a priority to transform its country into a welfare state.

In addition, the findings of this research show the dominant topics related to social police welfare state exactly on cluster one (table 1), that is, action, followed by several topics such as regulation, social service, and so on. Thus, some important aspects of social and welfare state policy are, firstly, action, which decrypts how government action becomes decisive in dealing with social problems, which will later be considered for policy making. Along with the findings, there are some previous studies that also explain that the views and actions of governments on problems are the primary means of solving frequent problems (Blum, 2023). The role of government in existing problems provides an opportunity to maximize the scope of organizational action in the decision-making process (Aboussi & Lacomba, 2021). Government action as a reform aimed at reducing social disparities and as a collective action to increase the responsibility of the state to its society (Grubački & Selišnik, 2023). To encourage certain social mobility, which is viewed top-down as a state settlement, governments take action by making social policies that are usually covered with policies of improvement or compensation (Delcea, 2022).

The second point that includes aspects of social policy and the welfare state is regulation. Regulation is something that has a tremendous influence on the state, specifically on social issues. If the regulation does not fit the problem on the ground, it will be a challenge in itself for the country, where the regulations are made to address the problem but are not targeted, resulting in lasting problems. This statement is also in line with previous research that suggests regulation can help better understand how governments and societies act to harmonize the economy and social well-being (Pokrovskaia et al., 2023). In order to achieve a welfare state, the relationship between regulation and policy output in responding to various challenges is crucial to pay attention to (de la Porte et al., 2023). The existing regulations have a major impact on improving the well-being of people (Purba et al., 2022). So that the rules that are made should be based on the state condition, that is, what social problems should be taken forward, then that policy should be the reference.

Third, that's social service, where this point has continuity with points one and two. There is government action in understanding social problems, realized by the creation of regulations that are so sensible that without good social services, the existing actions and regulations can be said to be ineffective because the social service to the community is not carried out as it should. In addition, there are previous findings that agree with the above statement that social services are a type of government that relates to economic efficiency, well-being, and social stability and therefore requires a subtle approach to organizing society (Howell et al., 2021). The government has

a responsibility to improve social justice in its country. The main way to do this is by encouraging and supporting social policies aimed at the implementation of fair social services (Schemmel, 2022). The capacity to provide social services is crucial to the success of the welfare state model (Klenk, 2023). The system of social services to the community is a reflection or process of the implementation of social policy (Bowles et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

In this study, there are two questions asked to be answered about the scope of the welfare state, in particular the aspects of social policy made by the government. As for the scale of the state of welfare, the social policy aspects include the concept of social policies in a welfare country and any of the important aspects that support social policy and welfare states. On the concepts of social politics in welfare countries, the findings of the research are the differences made by each of the respective governments of the country. It is based on the fact that in every country there are obviously different problem conditions, as well as some other reasons such as different forms of government, different priority goals, territorial conditions, conditions of society, and even conditions of government. Thus, in spite of the differences, the entire nation must make an effort to obtain the welfare of its country through the social policies it makes. The entire government effort is supported by some important aspects of it, such as the findings of research, where the dominant topics are action, regulation, and social service. This has become an important aspect because if the government does the wrong thing, it will have an impact on the people. Secondly, regulations are rules that are made to serve as a reference in the policy-making process until later implementation, so the rules are very important because they can prevent corruption in them. Thirdly, social services are how the government serves its people well, because without good service, the people will not prosper.

The results of this research have contributed to the discussion of social policy and the welfare state. Where social policy is the answer to the social problems that occur, which is then carried out with a long process to the well-being of the people that will refer to the welfare of the country. Without the social policy made by the government it will be difficult to be a peaceful country or a country without problems, given all the efforts that have been made by government, whether in the short or long period of time, of course have different and uncertain results. Sometimes the policy made can yield good results, but not rarely the policy is just trapping the country with the emergence of new challenges, even can be a threat to the state. Then everything that concerns social policy and the state of peace should get more attention, because it concerns the well-being of the people. Besides, the findings in this research contribute to the development of science in particular governance science related to the welfare state, and development of government policy. This research is expected to provide information to decision makers to consider, support, and make effective thought contributions to the achievement of national goals.

The limitation of this research is that the article used only secondary data from the Scopus database, so the research findings could not comprehensively describe the issues of social policy and the welfare state in the world. The scopus databases obtained were used as research material to see how the previous investigation dealt with topics related to social policy and welfare states, which was then processed to be a study. Furthermore, in the research, the topic only referred to the vulnerability of 2021–2023, where the journal numbered 587, which was then filtered into 116. So this research is limited only to the data base of the scope and does not look for the data in other sources. Therefore, the data that is obtained also has a limitation in that the interpretation is not so varied when compared to the use of more resources. The use of different sources can obtain a variety of interpretations, thus helping research in the development of the topic. So further research needs to use scientific articles that come from scopus database sources and other reputable international databases, such as the Web of Science and Dimensions Scholars (Google Scholar).

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