



**SOCIAL  
PROTECTION  
SYSTEMS**

TYING THE KNOTS

# **Presented Paper**

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Social Protection Systems

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# **Role of civil society organisations in the advancement of social protection systems**

## **A literature study**

*This research is still ongoing. Hence a summary of the preliminary research results is provided as input for the presentation and discussion at the international symposium on “Social protection systems – tying the knots” on September 5-6, 2016 in Bonn. Please check with authors for the final publication before quoting or reproducing.*

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## **Table of Contents**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Abstract .....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1 Introduction .....</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2 Research methodology .....</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>3 How does civil society influence national social protection systems? .....</b> | <b>6</b>  |
| 3.1 Summary of the main findings.....   | 6         |
| 3.2 Case evidence.....  | 12        |
| <b>4 Factors of success? .....</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| 4.1 Summary of the main findings.....   | 15        |
| 4.2 Case evidence.....  | 16        |
| <b>5 Further research.....</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| <b>References .....</b>   | <b>22</b> |

## **Abstract**

Over the past decade social protection has risen to the top of international and national development agenda's and has become one of the key policy priorities of many low- and middle income countries. Compared to its technical dimension, the political dimension of social protection systems remains underexposed in research so far. Hence, insight in the role of different political actors and power dynamics in the design, management or reform of social protection systems is limited. At the same time claims arise that the space for civil society is shrinking in many parts of the world. Against this backdrop this paper puts forward the question: What role do civil society organizations play in the advancement of social protection systems?

Based on a literature study of over 40 publications discussing general trends in social protection as well as country-specific dynamics across all continents, and complemented with exploratory fieldwork in Morocco and Senegal, the paper synthesizes 1) the current evidence related to the impact of civil society organization involvement on social protection systems; 2) at what stages and through what levers civil society organisations attempt to influence social protection policy; 3) the factors that contribute to their success or failure.

The existing literature conveys a strong assumption of the positive contribution of civil society organisations to social protection and individual case studies often support and illustrate the important role of civil society. Yet, comprehensive and cross-case analysis of the relationship between the quality of social protection systems and civil society involvement is lacking. Cross-cutting analysis of case study literature reveals that civil society organisations engage with social protection policy at all stages of the policy cycle. The paper offers a mapping of the different strategies used to exert influence in the different stage of the policy process. Finally, the paper identifies determinants for the influence CSOs can have on ongoing social protection policy processes. These include internal factors characterizing the civil society organization, and external factors related to the broader political context in which they operate, including the interplay between old and new civil society organisations. The paper reflects on what these findings can mean

for civil society organisations and other development actors aiming to advance social protection.

### **Key words**

social protection system, civil society, CSOs, policy cycle

# **1 Introduction**

Social protection has come to feature more and more prominently on international and national development agendas. Over the past decade the ILO, the World Bank, and different UN agencies all developed an approach on social protection. Many national governments in developing countries and their development partners are taking steps to put in place, expand or improve social protection systems.

However, little is known about the policy processes that shape the social protection system of a country and about the role of different political and societal actors within them. One of the actors whose contribution to social protection is poorly understood, is civil society (Devereux, Roelen, & Ulrichs, 2015).

Responding to this gap in current understanding, this study attempts to investigate the often made assumption that civil society involvement contributes to better social protection. The study explores the following questions in relation to the role of organized civil society in the advancement of formal social protection systems at a national level: 1) What is the current evidence related to the impact of civil society organization involvement on social protection systems; 2) at what stages and through what levers civil society organisations attempt to influence social protection policy; 3) What are the factors that contribute to their success or failure.

This paper gives an overview of the preliminary findings of an ongoing literature study exploring the current evidence related to the role of civil society on the advancement of social protection systems. The research is carried out by HIVA-KU LEUVEN and is supported by the Belgian NGO 11.11.11.

## **2 Research methodology**

This study is mainly based on literature review. The selection of publications to be included in the literature study was done March-May 2016 and started with a search for

relevant and recent publications in the following databases, platforms and organisations: Limo/LibisNet and Ingenta Connect; World Bank Data & World Bank Social Protection & Labour; ASPIRE, The Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity; International Labour Organisation (ILO); Southern African Social Protection Experts Network (SASPEN) a not-for-profit alliance of stakeholders, scholars and consultants who engage with social protection in the SADC region; African Studies Centre Leiden, Knowledge Platform Development Policies, Social Protection; Overseas Development Institute (ODI); Socialprotection.org; 3ie, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. Key words used for the search have been ‘social protection’ and ‘social policy’ in combination with ‘civil society’, ‘non-state actors’ or ‘non-governmental organisations’. The literature review was complemented by expert interviews and field work on the reform towards universal health coverage in Senegal in May 2016.

### **3 How does civil society influence national social protection systems?**

#### **3.1 Summary of the main findings**

When investigating the impact of civil society involvement in social protection, it becomes clear that civil society can be involved in different ways and at different stages. Most often cited is their potential role in the design and/or the management of social protection systems. In fact, the case evidence points out that civil society can have a determining role in each stage of social protection policy development and implementation.

The policy cycle as well as theories on how policy change happens provide analytic tools to explore the role of civil society in the development and implementation of national social protection systems (see also figure 3.1):

In the phase of problem formulation, civil society can play the key role of organising and building consensus among the public and among civil society organisations. In this stage, CSOs can raise awareness on a specific problem as well as on a potential solution, for

example using a rights-based approach and informing people on their rights. They can drive organisation, consensus building and capacity building among people and civil society organisations to either implement a solution themselves or demand government action. Because this often happens before an issue enters the policy agenda, and hence outside the scope of official policy making, this contribution of civil society to social protection is often overlooked. Still, the work of organising and consensus building often determines how a problem and the solution are formulated.

In the phase of agenda setting, civil society can be key in pressuring politics to take action and in building a public support base for a specific course of action. They can do so through formal and informal lobbying and public mobilization (e.g. public campaigns, strikes) but also by setting-up experiments that prove a solution is feasible (to both the public and the politicians) and that provide valuable lessons. CSO involvement in this phase can determine how high social protection is on the policy agenda, and can affect the speed at which policy formulation or reform is happening. Depending on the type of their input and the framing used in their campaigns, CSOs can also influence the philosophy behind a specific policy. The textbox below also illustrates how civil society actors through their representation in tripartite social dialogue structures can play a role in protecting social contributions from political pressures to reduce them.

During policy formulation, CSOs can have an impact on the design of social protection systems. By bringing their experience, expertise, organisations, and networks to the table, they can provide a base or inspiration for building social protection systems. This may mean social protection mechanisms initiated and run by civil society are integrated in a state-initiated expansion of social protection, or systems developed by CSOs are used as inspiration in the design of a social protection system/mechanism. This could be understood as policy transfer or policy diffusion from CSOs to state. Tactics used in this stage include formal and informal lobbying, participation in official consultation processes and in social dialogue, as well as mobilization to keep public support. CSOs involvement in this stage can have a profound impact on every aspect of the designed policy, including the scope of coverage, the scope of services it will provide, the inclusion



or exclusion of specific groups, the provisions for quality control and accountability and the arrangements made for a good management of the system.

The phase of policy implementation again shows a clear role for civil society. Firstly, the role of service provider, in many cases as subsidiary of the state, is a common role for CSOs. In some cases this is limited to the simple executive provision of services to specified target groups. In other cases it can include a very significant and autonomous role in targeting, collection of contributions, and distribution of benefits. Secondly, CSOs can also be part of the management of social protection mechanisms or systems. By being included in the management, they can in theory continue to influence the execution of the agreed-upon policy as well as any adjustments made in the future. However, in practice not all management structures have as much power as envisioned on paper.

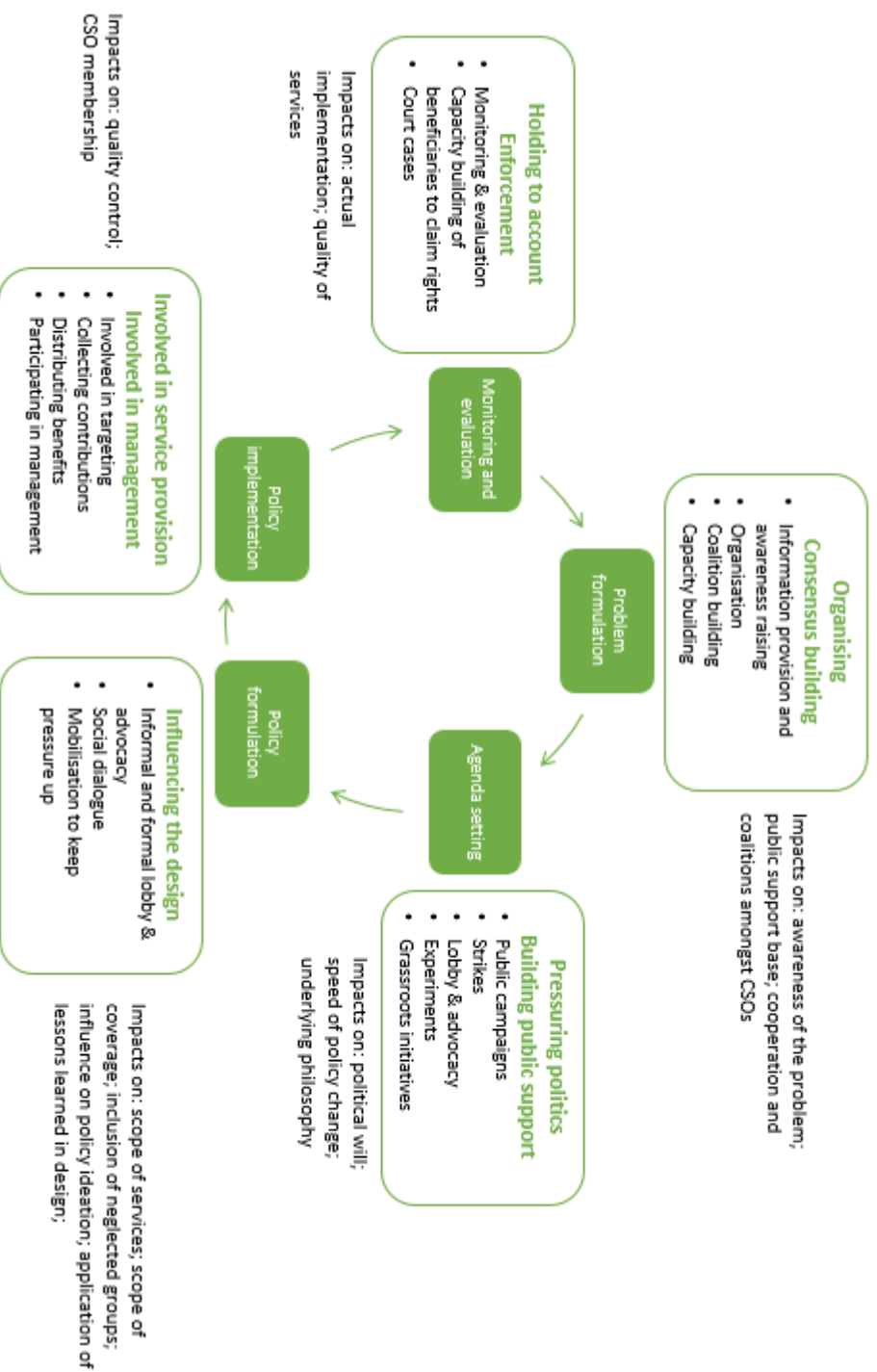
Furthermore, in the stage of monitoring and evaluation of policy, CSOs can stimulate accountability of government and services providers. By conducting independent monitoring and evaluation of the actual functioning of social protection mechanisms and systems, CSOs can be an important voice holding the government institutions in charge accountable. This can be vital for improving the overall quality of social protection systems. By building the capacity of beneficiaries to claim their rights and if necessary by going to court, CSOs can play an important role in enforcing the actual implementation of social protection provisions.

In addition to the policy cycle, the concepts of ‘policy entrepreneurs’ and ‘veto players’ are often used to describe the role CSOs play. In brief, the former are actors that work from outside the formal governmental system to introduce, translate, and implement innovative ideas into the public sector. The latter are political actors whose agreement is necessary to change an existing policy or the current state of affairs. The processes of ‘policy transfer’, ‘policy diffusion’ and ‘ideation’ are also considered relevant. The first two refer to processes through which successful policy innovation in one context is used (either as blueprint or as inspiration) for designing and introducing policy in another

context. Ideation refers to the process through which ideas, such as social inclusion, or social justice, shape policies. These concepts also play a part in different theories on policy change and on tactics to change policy (Stachowiak, 2013). Of these theories the consulted literature on social protection and CSOs most often referred to the policy window theory (Kingdon, 1995), the Power Elites theory (Mills, 2000) and the Regime theory (Stone, 1998), which are all used to reflect on the specific roles CSOs can play and the type of allies they need, to be effective in influencing social protection policy.



Figure 3.1 Different actions & tactics CSOs use through the policy cycle of social protection policy



\* The inner circle visualizes the policy cycle. Listed in bold green are the different actions CSOs have been reported to take in a specific phase of the formulation or reform of social protection policy, complemented with a non-exclusive list of tactics used. It is also briefly indicated what impact such actions and tactics have been reported to have (if successful).

### 3.2 Case evidence

The case of Senegal illustrates the role of CSOs in different stages of the policy cycle well (Vaes et al. 2016). To begin with problem formulation, CSOs have been the initiators and driving force behind the establishment of community-based mutual health organisations. This involved a lot of sensibilization, organisation and experimentation (for example with different tools for governance and information management). By the time health coverage ended up on the political agenda, at least part of civil society had extensive experience with mutual health organisations and the key challenges they face. Hence they were equipped to put mutual health organisations and the need to make them more sustainable and affordable at the heart of the policy on health coverage. It is unclear to what extent domestic civil society has been influential in getting social protection on the political agenda. The role of international organisations, bilateral development partners and external civil society organisations working on ‘mutuelles’ is more pronounced in this regard. At the time presidential elections came around, social protection was ‘hot’ in sub-saharan Africa and the international development discourse. Several rounds of consultations - among civil society and between civil society and the state - have been organized throughout the past two decades and more intensely since 2010, in order to develop a possible approach for health care coverage. This shows the clear involvement of Senegalese civil society in policy formulation. As they will also be the key institutions through which individuals can access their social benefits, they clearly have a strong role in the actual implementation of the policy. It is also agreed that they will be represented in the structures managing the decentralized universal health coverage. At the moment it is still too early to tell whether this gives civil society a real control over the actual implementation and further evolution of the system. Finally, with regard to monitoring, a big question mark remains: at the moment many mutual health organisations have difficulty even getting their own data management in order. Actually playing a real independent monitoring and advocacy role will demand extensive capacity building in this regard.

Bender et.al. (2014) discuss existing research on policy transfer and policy diffusion in different cases, including: the Brazilian programmes ‘Bolsa Escola’ and ‘Alfabetizacao Solidaria (Alfasol)’ transferred to Ecuador and Mozambique respectively; the health sector decentralisation in Malawi; and the transfer of Chile’s ‘Programa de Mejoramiento de la Gestion (PMG)’ to Mexico. They concluded that change agents (e.g. ‘policy entrepreneurs’) and organizations involved in the policy transfer process matter. For example, for agenda setting, both International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations seem to be important actors within the transfer process. For implementation, the role of Knowledge

Institutions and again Non-Governmental Organizations are pointed out as significant (Bender, Keller, & Willing, 2014).

On the case of Finland, introduced earlier, authors Kuivalainen & Niemelä (2010) reported: “The Finnish case of the active role of the Church and the non-governmental social welfare organisations gives support to Kingdon’s (1995) argument that experts and interest groups can promote a policy alternative in the absence of a clear problem to solve. Slow government action prompted especially the Church as well as the non-governmental social welfare organisations to fill the void and introduce a new language” (Kuivalainen & Niemelä, 2010, p. 270).

Kim’s (2015) article analyzes the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in social protection in East Asia. The article focuses on two types of NGO roles in social protection—direct provision and indirect pressure—and examines how the relative proportions of the two types of roles vary by country in East Asia, depending on factors that are contextual (political democratization), pulling (developmental welfare state), or pushing (civil society). A comparative analysis of Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia reveals that each represents a differing mix of pressure and provision functions by NGOs in social protection. In Korea pressure seems to be the main role of NGOs; in Indonesia it is provision; while in Thailand pressure and provision are relatively evenly mixed (Kim, 2015).

No (2001) pays attention to the changing role of CSOs and the social partners when it comes to social protection in Korea. Before the economic crisis in 1998, CSOs showed no interest in co-operating with government to combat unemployment. Instead, they focused on providing emergency assistance to unemployed workers and their families, while the trade unions fought against mass lay-offs and the structural adjustment policies backed by the government. Neither CSOs nor the trade unions had previously sought to improve the situation of the unemployed and the excluded. The CSOs became only gradually associated with the design and implementation of social protection reforms, as their awareness of the need on the ground grew. When they became actively involved, they successfully mobilised and convened several hundred organisations that were combating unemployment and poverty in the field; they built a partnership relationship with the government; and they launched a new policy of Social Integration through Work (SIW) by providing assistance for the creation of social enterprises (No, 2001, p. 356). Since 1999, the government has entrusted CSOs with the management of about 10% of these so-called SIW schemes provided that they do not create profit-making activities. For CSOs this involvement in the management offers a means to strengthen their local activity base and to keep close contact with their constituency.

Ford et.al. (2004) report on a 2002 court case where two Thai people with HIV-1 won an important legal case to increase access to medicines. The authors discuss how the Thai court case was the outcome of a learning process and years of networking between different civil society actors who joined forces to protect and promote the right of access to treatment. They also state that CSOs have been central in defending and promoting access to medicines in Thailand (Ford, Wilson, Bunjimnong, & von Schoen Angerer, 2004).

The free universal health coverage introduced in Thailand in 2007, discussed by Lund and Alfors (2012), provides additional insights in the potential roles of CSOs. They report: “The Consumer Association began to recruit other civil society groups, eventually forming a network that could push for health reform through the drafting of legislation and the collection of signatures. This alliance of nine civil society groups, which became known as the Network of People Organizations, was originally made up of groups representing a wide range of interests: informal workers, women, the urban poor, agriculturalists, the elderly, children and youth, indigenous people, the disabled, and people living with HIV/AIDS. Through the efforts of this network, 50,000 signatures were collected and a health reform bill was submitted as a people’s sector law to the 2001-2002 sitting of the Thai Parliament” (Lund & Alfors, 2012, p. 1). The growing public support for health reform did not go unnoticed by government and opposition parties who were about to compete for election. All five versions of health reform legislation submitted to the 2001-2002 sitting of Parliament had been clearly influenced by the propositions of the Network of People Organizations. Widespread consensus on the need for the health reforms was now established.

Durán-Valverde & Pacheco (2012) present a convincing case for the strong role of civil society in creating fiscal space for the extension of social protection. Their paper presents the results of studies conducted in eight developing countries that successfully extended social protection including floors for national social protection systems in recent years: Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Costa Rica, Lesotho, Namibia, Thailand and South Africa. Based on the findings in various country cases, the study argues that tripartite representation and the participation of other stakeholders in the governance of social protection systems have functioned as a powerful political shield to protect social contributions. The experiences of Brazil (see also Niedzwiecki, 2014) and Costa Rica are considered very rich in this regard. In Costa Rica, during the 1980s and 1990s, when the neoliberal structural adjustment and stabilization packages reduced central government spending on health to a historical low, the revenue of the social security system actually increased and helped to keep expenditure on health at the same level. In Thailand, a combination of three key elements encouraged the process of extending social protection:

bringing together all the necessary know-how by means of research, broad social participation, and strong political commitment.

## 4 Factors of success?

### 4.1 Summary of the main findings

The literature review did not uncover any publications systematically discussing this question. However, throughout the different contributions and case studies, a range of factors playing a role in the success of CSOs were identified.

A general observation is that these factors can be either internal or external. Internal factors refer to characteristics of the CSOs themselves, including their organisational structure, financial strength, membership base etcetera. External factors refer to the wider context in which they are operating and can include the overall configuration of CSOs, their position in the broader political landscape, the economic context, etcetera. In the consulted literature, the emphasis lies on the external factors.

Internal and external determinants of success pointed out in the literature include:

| Internal determinants   | External determinants   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Membership base</li> <li>- Visibility, status, reputation, and public recognition of the organisation and/or its leaders.</li> <li>- Financial capacity, stability and autonomy</li> <li>- Internal organisation, democratic leadership, accountability towards members</li> <li>- Capacity and tools for cooperation and coordination with other CSOs</li> <li>- Capacity and systems for consensus building</li> <li>- Experience with different tactics, and expertise on social protection mechanisms and systems</li> <li>- Connection with the political establishment</li> <li>- Network &amp; contacts</li> <li>- Sense of timing</li> <li>- Use of social media &amp; technology</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic context</li> <li>- Political regime &amp; degree of democratisation</li> <li>- Type of government (e.g. more influence when minority government is in place)</li> <li>- Manoeuvring room for both CSOs and state to push policy (reforms) (e.g. how many veto players are there?)</li> <li>- Proliferation of organisations, leading to duplication or competition</li> <li>- State capacity to put in place and implement social protection policy</li> <li>- Policy making structures and the formal place of CSOs within them</li> <li>- Regional/multilateral policy</li> <li>- Partnerships with external donors</li> <li>- The overall social protection policy in which CSO contribution is integrated.</li> </ul> |



## 4.2 Case evidence

For the identification of factors that determine the success of CSOs, the literature on organised interest groups becomes relevant. Granados & Knokke (2005) point out that theoretical and empirical analyses of interest groups are divided among two major themes. The first considers the formation and maintenance of organized interests groups, and the second theme considers their role and impact on public policy making. The authors provide a comprehensive overview of the different theories on the role of interest groups in policy making, as well as on the internal dynamics within interest groups. They also offer a simple overview of the challenges that many interest groups come across during their development. Organizational formation, resource mobilization, internal governance, collective interest identification, democratic accountability, and issues of loyalty and exit (Granados & Knoke, 2005). We can assume that these challenges also affect the strength and functioning of CSOs.

A clear example of some of these challenges can be found in Senegal (Vaes et al. 2016). Mutual health organisations are being put at the centre of the ongoing expansion of the health coverage. With the aim of achieving full universal health coverage by 2017, the president has introduced free health care for specific target groups and health insurance through mutual health organisations has become subsidized by the state. All these provisions can be accessed only through a decentralised system of mutual health organisations. The existing number and geographical scope of mutual health organisations is by far insufficient to cover the entire population. CSOs have an opportunity to become the key pillar of health insurance in Senegal, but are confronted with huge organisational challenges. Are the existing mutual health organisations, most often run by volunteers, capable of expanding their service provision to such an extent as required by the president's ambitions? Are they competent enough to channel public money in a responsible and accountable manner? How to combine democratic governance with professionalization of the 'mutuelles'? Is it even possible to found so many mutual health organisations from scratch in such a short term, especially considering the need to be community-driven to work? If the idea of 'one village – one mutuelle' is put into practice,

will this run the risk of too much fragmentation and an insufficient membership potential for each mutual health organisation to become financially sustainable?

In their discussion of the Finnish case, Kuivalainen & Niemelä (2010) also point out some factors that determined the success of the church, the unions and CSOs in influencing the social policy discourses and policy. Firstly, the status, good reputation and broad public recognition of the church as one of the key protagonists, was important. Secondly, the fact that the Hunger Group, the expert group called together by the church, drew broad and influential representation from various institutions, such as parliament, labour market organisations and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, was important. It meant that powerful actors (possible veto players) were already ‘on board’. Finally, the impeccable sense of timing demonstrated by the Hunger group when they released a report right before the parliamentary election of 1999 proved vital.

In his account of the situation in Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand, Kim (2015) provides interesting insights in the determinants of the influence NGOs had on social protection. In the case of Korea, the advocacy coalition for inclusive health insurance only succeeded in concretizing their ideas and proposals (going from a health agenda to a welfare agenda) after they expanded to include several grassroots organizations. This resonates with FES’s remark (see above) that the insight in real needs and expectations on the ground constitute an important strength for CSOs. The subsequent appointment of members from the welfare advocacy coalition on key positions in the Kim Dae-jung administration in 1998 further built the political connections and hence possibilities for lobbying. His account of the Indonesia case shows how the limited capacity of the state to actually formulate and implement policy led CSOs to invest in service provision themselves.

Anria and Niedzwiecki (2015) discussing Bolivia’s Renta Dignidad come with an equally interesting conclusion. They argue that “old and new social movements have played a decisive role in achieving the universal pension scheme by exercising direct agency. (...) what mattered were their high levels of coordination and mobilization, which enabled them to play a direct role in helping the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) pass legislation. While our analysis privileges agency over structural determinants, it also confirms the importance of left parties as

crucial allies of social movements in explaining social policy reform” (Anria & Niedzwiecki, 2015, p. 2). In her discussion of the strong role of civil society in the pension and health reforms in Argentina and Brazil, Niedzwiecki, S. (2014) points out a key external factor: the overall configuration of civil society and its position within the broader political landscape. She concludes that “The mere existence of strong unions is not enough to explain structural reforms, since the game is defined by the interaction between their position for or against and the strength and position of other interest groups”.

As Devereux and colleagues pointed out, civil society in many African countries is often excluded by national governments from social protection policy formulation (Devereux et al., 2015). They argue that the lack of effective mass mobilization or of lobbying around social protection, is one of the explanations for the limited progress made in many African countries. This analysis shows how the overall power relations, and whether CSOs are recognized as legitimate stakeholders in the policy making process co-determines their success in influencing social policy.

A more profound question is whether CSOs necessarily contribute to the inclusive character of social protection. Some authors argue that this is not necessarily the case. Lengwiler (2006) offers an example of this, in his account of role of CSOs in the origin of social insurance in Germany, France, Britain and Switzerland. Lengwiler (2006) argues (p.414) that mutual insurance movement in nineteenth-century Europe “was not an unreserved promoter of civil society. (...) Rules for the internal associational life underlined values of equality, civility and sociability. In practice, however, most mutual societies confined their membership to inherited traditions of trade and craft associations, cultivating an aura of elitism and secretiveness.” He continues (p. 415): “Only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did friendly societies gradually reduce their selective rules and broaden their membership, but this increasing openness was hardly a voluntary act but the result of external pressures. With the rising competition of state-run insurance schemes, such as the mandatory societies in Germany and the later statutory social insurance, and the imminent prospect of forced integration into compulsory institutions of the welfare state, mutual societies had no choice but to adapt to the encompassing model of social insurance.”

Kim's (2015) cases in East Asia illustrate how the economic context can make or break the window of opportunity. The 1997–1998 economic crisis fundamentally changed Korea's traditional reluctance regarding social welfare. The private sector-dependent welfare system was simply inadequate to support the Korean population in a crisis. The Korean state could no longer turn a blind eye to the public uproar for better welfare and distribution. Political parties and electoral candidates without credible social policy agendas risked defeat.

Bender (2013) takes a more critical look at the traditional views which hold that the extension of (public) social protection depends on economic development. While the experience of high-income countries with comprehensive social protection in Europe seems to confirm this, looking beyond Europe modifies the picture: reforms are definitely not limited to high- or middle income countries (Germany, Japan, Korea, Ghana, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam all started to extend their social protection coverage while they were still low-income countries). Also, sustained high growth rates do not trigger social protection reforms, as the big time gaps between strong economic growth and social protection expansion in Botswana, Brazil, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China and Indonesia show. Bender remains careful and admits that statistical cross-country studies on the relation between economic factors and social protection remain inconclusive. She does conclude that the relationship between economic development and the extension of social protection is not straightforward and may be dependent on other factor (Bender, 2013, pp. 36–37).

Bender (2013) continues with a discussion of the evidence for a link between regime type (and democratization) and social protection. Since quite some regime changes have occurred in low- and middle income countries between the 1980s and the 2000s, the impact of democratization on social protection can be judged using a relatively large sample of cases. The hypothesis put forward is that electoral competition and the formation of interest groups contribute to bigger pressure for redistribution, resulting in democracies offering higher levels of social protection to their citizens than authoritarian regimes. Several country examples demonstrate this positive link between democratization and changes in social protection, but some example also underscore that this link is not uniform. Several examples of authoritarian regimes extending social protection systems exist. In Korea and Taiwan, authoritarian governments expanded health services to prevent rural unrest. Middle Eastern governments developed social protection for the middle class to secure their support and China and Vietnam introduced substantial

reforms over the past two decades. Bender concludes that the existing evidence suggest that “neither economic development nor regime type is a necessary or sufficient condition for policy change. Instead, the impact of both factors is probably conditional on other factors” (Bender, 2013, p.39). Interestingly, she suggests that such other factors may include the specific attitudes or values within a population and the preferences in which they result, as well as specific interest group and partisan structures.

## **5 Further research**

The results of the literature review point towards the following areas that need further research:

In their 2015 state of play and scenario planning exercise on social protection, Devereux et. al. (2015) states that: “work is urgently needed to improve the understanding of political processes around social protection policy, including the roles of civil society and social accountability mechanisms and the challenge of delivering social protection in fragile states, given that much attention has focused on ‘building the evidence base’ and not enough on understanding the political drivers that result in social protection being either adopted or resisted by governments” (Devereux et al., 2015, p. 22). Bender (2013) also concluded that political processes shaping national social protection systems are severely under researched, and the role of civil society within them even more so. Based on our literature review, we can fully agree with these conclusions: in-depth understanding of the politics behind social protection, including the role of civil society is lacking and needs to be researched more systematically.

The literature review learned that scientific reflections on the evolution of social policy and social protection, on the role of social organisations or civil society organisations, and on the processes behind social policy change are quite diffuse: no single analytic framework jumps out as very influential or authoritative. Instead one quickly ends up with a list of several concepts and theories from policy analysis that are used to reflect on the role of civil society. More efforts are needed to develop suitable analytic frameworks that can facilitate an indepth analysis and understanding of the development of social protection systems and the influence and the role of different actors including civil society in this process.

There are very few scoping studies (which make a cross case analysis) on the relationship between civil society and the quality of social protection systems. Development organisations who collaborate with civil society in the development of social protection systems could join hands to support such scoping research.

Some quantitative indicators exist that provide information that relates to the strength of civil society and the quality of social protection systems. For example: democratization, freedom of organization, and overall environment for civil society on the one hand; coverage of social protection, % of GDP spent on social protection on the other hand. A quantitative study on the relations between such indicators may therefore provide interesting insights about the relationship between civil society and the quality of social protection systems. This could be an interesting area for further research, given that no such study was found during this literature review.

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