

Social policy – discipline or area of study? assignment

[Sociology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Social Policy is that part of public policy that focuses on improving human conditions i. e. well-being of the public. Social Policy, therefore, is about welfare. It concentrates on social problems such especially issues of education, health, housing, social security and income support. According to Beveridge's report that was published in 1942 and included in the Labour Party's 1945 manifesto, Five Giant Social Evils had undermined the British society before the war: ignorance, disease, squalor, idleness and want.

These are the five main evils that Social Policy centers on. In my view, Social Policy is interdisciplinary as it draws on many social science subjects but it is a distinct academic discipline in its own right, both in terms of its points of concentration and its methods of analysis. The development of Social Policy as a 'policy' and its development as a discipline are closely linked.

Formed in 1884, the Fabian Society, which was influenced by the work of labour MP Sidney Webb and that of Booth and Rowntree, challenged the conservative political assumption that economic markets could meet the welfare needs of all was challenged and argued that policy intervention by the state was needed to provide those forms of support and protection which the markets failed to provide.

Social Policy was then recognized as an academic discipline of importance when The Webbs ??? Sidney Webb and his wife Beatrice Webb, both prominent Fabians ??? established the London School of Economics (LSE). Within it, they incorporated the Charity Organization Society's School of Sociology to form a new Department of Social Sciences and Administration in 1912. Its first lecturer was Clement Attlee, who became Prime Minister of the

UK after the Second World War, and in 1950, Richard Titmuss was appointed as the first Professor of Social Administration in the UK.

Until 1987, Social Administration and Social Policy were used interchangeably, but later the name was changed to Social Policy as it was felt that social administration focused largely on analyzing the operation of existing welfare services whereas what was now known as Social Policy also analyzed the political and ideological bases of welfare provision. Social Policy is a broad but distinct academic discipline as it is closely related to many social science disciplines, four of the more important ones being Sociology, Economics, Political Economy and Political Science, but it only draws on them to achieve what are believed to be the objectives of a successful social policy: equality, social justice, liberty and the rights of a citizen. Sociology helps one understand the causes and effects of social divisions such as those on the basis of race, gender or class.

Its subject matter ranges from the micro level of face-to-face interaction to the macro level of societies at large, and traditionally, sociologists have focused on topics such as social relations, social stratification, social interaction, culture and deviance. Social Policy, on the other hand, is about provision of welfare to these various people and draws on Sociology to become aware of the various social divisions in order to better understand the needs of each particular group and how welfare can be provided to them.

Economics explores the concepts of scarcity and resource allocation. In his 1932 essay, British economist Lionel Robbins described economics as the “science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and

scarce means which have alternative uses". It also provides insight into the concepts of equity and efficiency. These concepts are central to the study of Social Policy as it is the scarce resources that policy-makers work to allocate in a way that ensures the greatest well-being of the people.

They must also be able to prove that their policies are both efficient ??? i. e. they are the least costly and of most benefit to those intended ??? and equitable or fair ??? i. e. those in similar categories are considered in similar ways. Political Economy originally was the term for studying production, buying and selling, and their relations with law, custom, and government. However, in the eighteenth century, it developed as the study of the economies of states ??? polities, hence political economy. It is the study of political ideologies and economic management.

For a policy-maker, an awareness of these various political ideologies is indispensable as many of these arguments govern the process of making social and economic policies. Political Science focuses on the interaction between institutions and human behavior and studies the way in which institutions shape choices and how humans change institutional frameworks. It provides an understanding of constitutional arrangements in different countries and their impact on policy formulation. Political Science introduces the student of Social Policy to concepts of equality, social justice, liberty and citizenship.