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Emergence of the Western Welfare State

by David Collier and Anne Sander

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Abstract and Keywords

This article offers a perspective on the early origins of the welfare state by focusing on the emergence of the institutions of social insurance in the countries of the European cultural complex including the European (British) settler nations. Then, it explores the early period of social insurance and protection developments until the end of World War II, and points to variations in timing, risk perceptions, and principles of social security across Western states. Industrial, urban, and capitalist developments, with their inherent, unprecedented social problems, spurred political demands for change of regimes and of social rights. Additionally, the political innovation of social insurance in the 1880s is reported. Moreover, the article covers the period until about the end of World War I and the phase of consolidation,

expansion, and geographical diffusion of social insurance and protection legislation after World War I. It presents a brief look at the World War II experience.

Keywords: Western welfare state, World War II, World War I, social security, protection legislation, social insurance, geographical diffusion

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