



# Mid-American Review of Sociology

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A Cross-National Analysis

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Some Considerations in Interviewing  
the Old Old

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## Sectoral Models of the Welfare State

### SECTOR MODELS OF THE WELFARE STATE: A CROSS-NATIONAL ANALYSIS

**Stanley DeViney**  
*University of Kansas*

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*Past comparative research on the welfare state has focused on the problem of general overall development using a summary indicator of all major programs. This paper tests the applicability of models of welfare state development to five subsets of welfare-state programs: 1) old-age pensions; 2) disability pensions; 3) worker compensation; 4) unemployment compensation; and 5) sick benefits. Analysis of a sample of 18 Western industrial nations shows that no single model of the welfare state fits all five subsectors. The paper concludes that individual programs within the welfare state are a response to particular needs and/or demands and not the result of a uniform set of factors.*

Past comparative research on welfare-state<sup>1</sup> development has focused on general overall development using a summary indicator of all major programs (Cutright, 1965; Wilensky, 1975, 1981; Castles and McKinlay, 1979). The use of a single, inclusive indicator of welfare state policy is justified by the assumptions that sector variation is minimal and that programs are interdependent and integrated responses to one of several sets of factors: (1) a response to problems of general economic development; (2) an outcome of working-class demands; or (3) an immediate consequence of state structures.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this research, conclusions are made that the welfare state, as a whole, is predominately a result of a single set of factors drawn from one perspective.

Only recently has attention turned to models of individual programs (Pampel and Williamson, 1985; DeViney, 1984; Myles, 1984) and the possibility of program differentiation within the welfare state (Coughlin and Armour, 1983; Schneider, 1982; Shalev, 1983). This growing interest in subsections of the welfare state presents the possibility that individual elements of welfare-state programs need not be the outcome of a single set of factors. Rather, subsets of programs may be a response to different factors that do not necessarily affect other subsets.