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## THE MODERNISATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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**Abstract.** *High-quality social services are being transformed into a social protection system in response to the global conditions that will exist in the post-pandemic period. This will require significant investment and the expansion of the integration and cooperation of the targeted social service system. The novelty of this study is determined by its focus on the interests of objects of social protection in a market economy, and how they are influenced by economic, political, and social institutions. Moreover, the market model of the economy can offer certain individuals, households, social groups, or territorial communities support from the government or public organisations, and can induce them to activate internal resources to increase their motivation to rationalise their own lives. The authors show that the activities of the subjects of social protection are aimed at a positive perception of reality by preventing and overcoming the destructive consequences of market failures, social and economic risks, their characteristic socio-economic relations, and systems of the organisation of society as a whole. The practical significance of this study is determined by the fact that it proves the mobility of object-subject relations in the social protection of the population, contributes to the qualitative improvement of this protection, and provides a path for the transition of these subject-object relationships to a qualitatively new level.*

**Keywords:** *social protection, social assistance, community service, pandemic and post-pandemic, modernisation.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *socialinė apsauga, socialinė pagalba, visuomeninis darbas, pandemija ir pōpandeminis modernizavimas.*

## Introduction

The implementation of social protection of the population is accompanied by the interaction of institutions and subsystems with one another, as well as with different groups, strata, and classes of the population. At the same time, there is also the provision of a variety of services, the implementation of cash payments, settlements, and other factors. Sustainable interaction between the components of social protection of the population is possible if subjects are endowed with power over others, if those to whom this protection is directed are endowed with appropriate rights, and if the institutional and legal norms of this interaction are established (Chang 2020). On the basis of laws and other normative acts, state bodies for managing social protection of the population are formed, and their relations with non-governmental organisations and individual groups of the population are regulated. This helps to establish the forms and types of social protection of individual groups, strata, and classes, and the procedures and conditions for the generation of social insurance funds and their management and use (Qiu, Jessani, and Bennett 2018). That is, the organisation of social protection of the population occurs deliberately, in compliance with certain legal norms (Shin et al. 2017). These norms regulate the behaviour of individuals in the activities of state and non-state organisations in various situations (Dudova 2014). The system of social protection of the population in all its manifestations is a concrete historical method – a form of entity (Malyovanyi, Rolinskyi, and Lysa 2016). The existence of this system appears in the form of a chain as: essence–concrete historical conditions of manifestation–system. This means that the system of social protection of the population is formed not only under the decisive influence of its essence, but also under the substantive forms of manifestation and implementation (Avraamova and Maleva 2017). Whilst the essence remains in conditions that are constantly changing, its role as the core of this system must be maintained in order to fulfil its main function (Zaitov et al. 2020).

From the standpoint of the main provisions of the theory of institutionalism, without taking into account institutions and organisations it is impossible to provide various qualitative parameters of the corresponding protection of various subjects of the state's economic system (Cruces and Bērgolo 2013). In the context of this study, the authors refer to the theoretical developments of the founder of institutionalism – T. Veblen – who is characterised by a constructive social approach to the analysis of the role of economic phenomena in the life of society (Cai and Du 2015). Veblen identified a number of institutions including social, socio-economic, economic, and so forth (Cornelisse and Goudswaard 2002). In his opinion, social institutions are special ways in which society exists, which form a special system of social relations and are an active factor of selection and

adaptation, in the process of which the formation of dominant types of relations – that is, economic institutions – takes place (Šimiková and Vyhlídal 2010).

### Analysis of the Social Protection System

The elements that form the institutional structure of social protection of the population mutually contribute to obtaining a certain positive result through the interaction and joint perception of the components required to obtain a useful result (Costella et al. 2017). Thus, the provision of social protection, often in the form of material and financial support of a person in the event of illness or partial or temporary disability, will have a positive result in the form of maintaining a certain standard of living (Suptelo et al. 2020). In the authors’ opinion, the system of social protection of the population consists of a set of institutions, which include functional subsystems in the form of institutions of the economic, social, political, organisational, and legal subsystems (Figure 1).

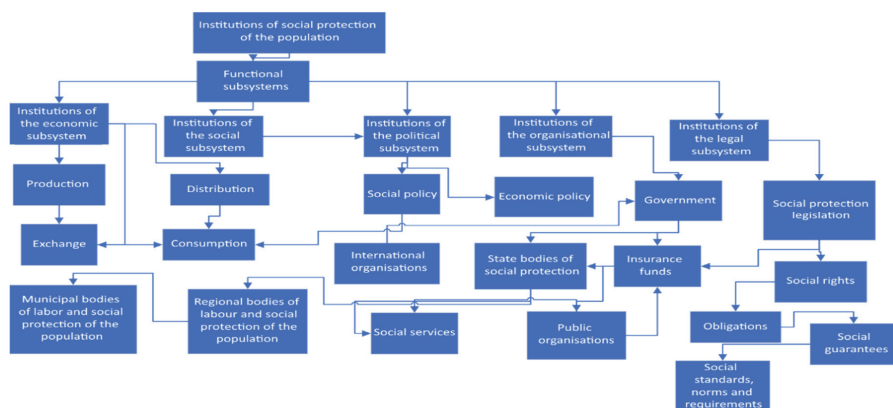


Figure 1. Institutions of social protection of the population

The institutions of the economic subsystem are the basis of social protection, as only in the presence of the final results of their functioning, in the form of gross domestic product, can material goods and services – which are then subject to distribution, exchange, and consumption – be developed. Expanded reproduction within the economic subsystem on an intensive basis makes it possible to strengthen its social orientation through the priority use of the final results of this process for the purpose of the social protection of members of society. In addition, the expanded reproduction of the economic subsystem includes the reproduction of labour and employment relations, which in general play a decisive role in creating the material prerequisites and financial resources for the implementation of social protection (Chernychko and Ihnatyshyn 2020). The institutions of the economic subsystem of social protection of the population, in addition to production, also regulate the distribution and redistribution of income by

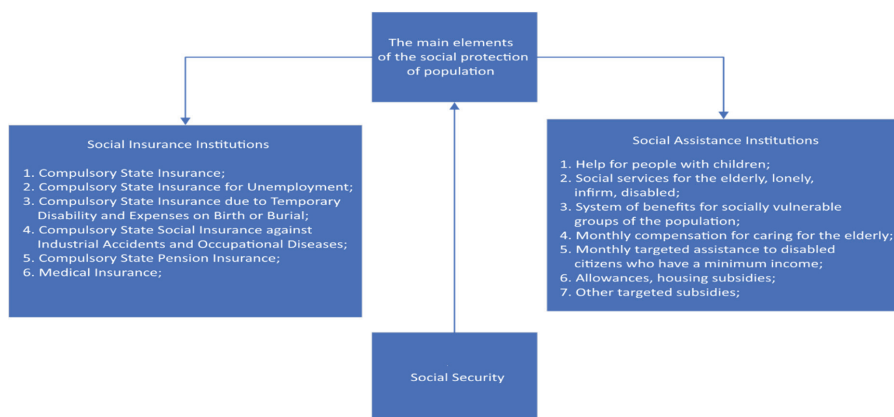
levying taxes and other payments. In this regard, social protection of the population is closely related to the distribution and redistribution of gross domestic product in favour of people who temporarily or permanently need special support from society: from the rich to the poor, from the healthy to the sick, and from the young to the elderly.

The institutions of the social subsystem of social protection constitute an organised whole that encompasses individuals and different communities, which are characterised by a variety of relationships. The specificity of these actions lies in the fact that they are targeted according to the corresponding social community (social groups or social organisations). Consequently, the behaviour of the subjects of the social subsystem – the main components of which are people, their connections, and their interactions – is determined by their social positions (statuses), specific social functions (roles) that they perform, social norms and values adopted in society, and their individual qualities (motives, value orientations, and interests). The peculiarity of the social subsystem lies in the fact that the relations that arise in it are complex in nature and cannot be reduced solely to economic or political relations. These are specifically manifested in all spheres of life and, to a certain extent, are simultaneously socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural in their content, because a person, class, nation, demographic, or professional group are bearers of the entire totality of their social relations.

The institutions of the political subsystem are multidimensional in form, and include state representatives such as the state apparatus, parties, various public associations, and the like. It should be noted that among the subjects of the political process, a special role in the formation, functioning, and development of social protection of the population belongs to the state. The dominant feature of the state's economic policy is the optimal implementation of the main goal of the economic system – achieving a high level of social welfare (Romanova et al. 2017). At the same time, the authors single out two priority components in the social policy of the state. The first is the development of those subjects that form society – that is, classes, social groups and the like, national or ethnic communities, linguistic and confessional groups, as well as the socialisation of a person. The second component is protective – that is, the protection of all elements of the structure of society, as well as individuals, from destructive processes that take place in society at different stages of its development (Rebukha and Rudakevych 2020).

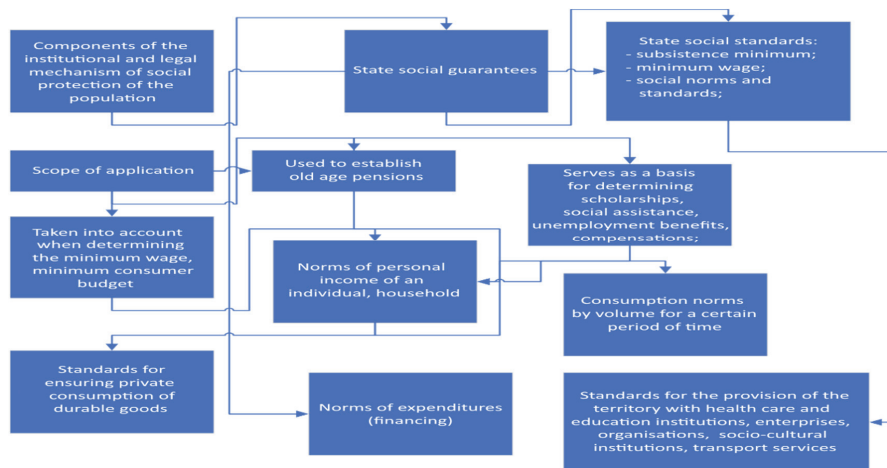
Institutions of the organisational subsystem of social protection of the population are a set of processes and actions carried out by the relevant structures of society that aim at combining the components of social protection into a single whole. The decisive role in achieving results belongs to those institutions of this subsystem that carry out appropriate actions to ensure the flow of certain processes. Such structures are: the state and its governing bodies for social protection of the population; non-governmental organisations; social insurance funds that accumulate financial resources and then determine the directions and forms of their use; the training system; and other similar structures. The peculiarity of the institutions of the organisational subsystem lies in the fact that they relate to the sphere of the practical formation of conditions that provide each member of society with the satisfaction of their needs, taking into account the system of values approved by the society (García Castillo et al. 2015). At the centre of this action, first, are

people who may find themselves in difficult life situations or who belong to socially vulnerable groups of the population. Such segments of the population need social assistance from society and the state, in particular: specific actions, procedures, and measures for the provision of social services which are implemented by the institutions of this subsystem in the process of support for the active existence of a person, family, social group, or population stratum (Honcharenko and Polianychko 2020). Taking into account the institutional dimension of the above methodological approaches, the system of social protection of the population of Kazakhstan can be presented via a model of organisational legal forms (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Organisational and legal forms of social protection of the population in Kazakhstan**

One of the defining prerequisites for the effectiveness of this protection is the presence of mechanisms that can trigger this complex social institution. In the authors' opinion, such mechanisms come in the form of social guarantees and state social standards. These traditionally constitute the institutional basis for the formation of social welfare, which is due to the functional purpose of the system of social rights and state social guarantees and standards – to provide each person with the opportunity to consume economic benefits at a level not lower than certain norms. The main components of the institutional and legal mechanism are presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Block diagram of the institutional and legal mechanism for social protection of the population in Kazakhstan**

### **Problems in the Implementation of the Functions of the Social Protection System in Kazakhstan**

The problem of determining the functions of the social protection of the population based on the social rights of citizens requires their theoretical understanding and the generalisation of the practice of implementation in the conditions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the authors' opinion, the identification of the specifics of the relationship between the functions of social protection of the population and social rights will allow for scientifically-grounded ways of reforming the system of social protection of the population in Kazakhstan to be outlined. This system should be based on the normative and legal consolidation of economic relations in the field of social protection of the population with the help of a significant arsenal of social rights, guarantees, standards, and norms, which are now essentially only nominally declared by various branches of the power structures in our country. At the same time, some scholars interpret social rights as human and civil rights in the social sphere. Their observance consists of the acquisition of social benefits, the possession, use, and disposal of them, and their protection or performance of certain actions in this area. With this understanding of social rights, their essential characteristics are rightfully associated with a set of property rights, and the legal foundations of social protections of a person are outlined. Social rights are a component of the institutional mechanism of social protection of the population, with the help of which its functions are implemented to meet the basic needs of the individual. Social guarantees, standards, and norms can be defined as institutional mechanisms for the social protection of the population.

The leading trend in the establishment of these human rights and freedoms in Kazakhstan is their implementation in national legislation. This refers to the implementation of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other international laws and regulations. This led to a significant increase in the range of basic social rights and freedoms of citizens and individuals in normative documents. It should be noted that in the complex of institutional mechanisms of social protection of the population, a significant role belongs to social rights. It is in the social-protective sense that social rights outline the possibility for a person to: receive a livelihood from socialised sources; possess the economic opportunity for social self-defence; and use state and communal property (Mukhamadiyeva et al. 2017).

Regulatory guarantees regarding the exercise of human rights are some of the most important features of the rule of law. A high-quality system of social guarantees is an effective factor of social protection of the population, and social standards and norms are decisive for meeting human needs. Social guarantees appear as a series of legislatively defined socio-economic norms that combine common values and procedures aimed at meeting the basic needs of a person and society. With their help, standardised patterns of behaviour in group processes are formed, which are part of the relationship regarding the distribution and consumption of economic and spiritual goods. The vesting of members of society with socio-economic rights is inextricably linked with the presence of certain responsibilities, the totality of which determines their status as an individual.

Social guarantees as an institutional basis for the social protection of the population are formed in society under the influence of the level of economic development and the state of ensuring the functioning of the democratic foundations of the society. This leads to three directions for the formation of social guarantees. The first defines the obligation of the state to its citizens to guarantee those employed in labour activities an acceptable level of well-being by establishing an indexed minimum level of wages, not applying burdensome taxes, and promoting entrepreneurial activity. Satisfaction of the priority needs of society, which each individual citizen cannot provide independently, determines the second direction of the formation of social guarantees, and the third is carried out through the legislative guarantee of the state to meet these needs through appropriate forms at the minimum sufficient level.

The trend towards changes in existing social norms and standards is caused by the variation of economic dynamics in Kazakhstan, which determines the need to change the quantitative parameters of existing social guarantees, norms, and standards in monetary terms – which is also due to the inflation rate. This is why social security reforms are cumbersome and carry a significant potential for social conflict. The reason for the conflict-inducing nature of such reforms is that institutions often undergo changes which do not necessarily embody the stability of the objective fundamental foundational values of society. On the one hand, the dialectical interaction of these mechanisms ensures the relative stability of the system of social protection of the population, whilst on the other, it leaves them open to a range of backlashes stemming from guarantees, standards, and norms that acquire values and weight in society. Regarding these social institutions, it

can be argued with certain reservations that their value in society reaches an ephemeral metaphysical depth – which is now happening in Kazakhstan.

Bearing in mind the transformation of society, it is appropriate to recognise the correctness of the supporters of the philosophy of pragmatism, according to which the assimilation of new social practices (the institutionalisation of social guarantees, standards, and norms in the conditions of market transformations in Kazakhstan) is associated with their inability to consistently facilitate the adaptation of a person to new conditions of life. In the everyday practice of the regulatory activities of state institutions, social guarantees, standards, and norms have acquired the attributes of usefulness and necessity. However, the effectiveness of these utilities becomes possible only if their metaphysical component is successfully converted into the area of pragmatism.

Based on the above properties of social guarantees, standards, and norms, they appear as a set of institutional mechanisms which create an appropriate environment for the social protection of the population. Being built into the general system of social protection of the population, they serve its functioning and influence its development. As such, social guarantees, standards, and norms can be considered as important institutional elements of the social protection of the population. The variety of these elements is due to the fact that their actions extend to almost all spheres of human life. Therefore, according to the author's concept, the most analytically acceptable classification of social guarantees in post-socialist countries is their systemic relationship with the categories of "benefits", "free services", and "compensation and privileges". This approach is shown schematically in Figure 4, from which it can be seen that the system of social guarantees in a transformational society has a significant number of different forms.

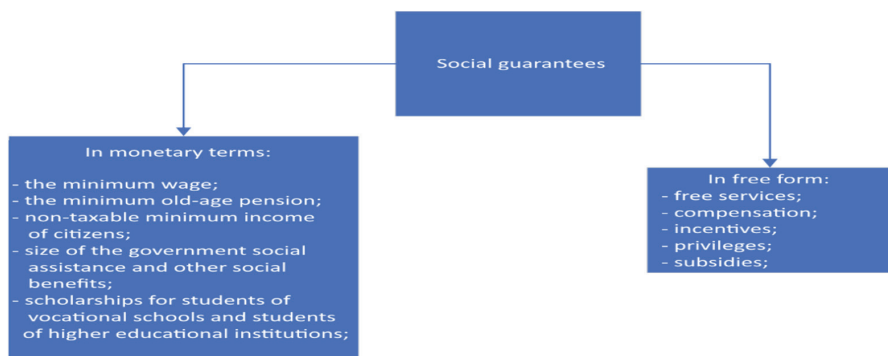


Figure 4. Classification of traditional social guarantees

The substantive characteristics of the category of "privileges" make it possible to understand the socio-economic essence of society, its socio-professional structure, and the forms of participation of certain social groups, creative persons, and strata of the population in the distribution of material and cultural benefits. Therefore, one should proceed



from the fact that the existence of privileges is generated by the social division of labour, and the possibility of the subjects of economic relations to choose forms of social activity that allow them to borrow the most profitable methods in production today in order to satisfy personal needs based on obtaining higher incomes. When characterising the institutional mechanisms of social protection of the population, two points should be borne in mind. First, the sociality of guarantees, standards, and norms is determined by the fact that their regulatory actions are aimed at the process of social reproduction of the subject. Secondly, here, as a rule, it is not mechanisms but individuals themselves that operate, albeit within the established institutionalised norms and rules.

Among the institutional mechanisms, a substantial role in solving the tactical and strategic tasks of the social protection of the population is played by the subsistence minimum, which is guaranteed by the state. The subsistence minimum has two forms of manifestation (physiological and social), each of which is focused on meeting certain needs. In this regard, it is objectionable that in the legislation on state social standards and state social guarantees, the subsistence minimum is referred to in the composition of basic social standards. Indeed, for over fifteen years this has not been revised, and has not been adjusted in volume relative to the minimum wage. The subsistence minimum is more than the minimum wage – although from the point of view of economic theory it should be  $1/3$  less than the latter. The subsistence minimum is a category with parameters that, in value and in kind, change in the process of social development under the influence of laws on the steady growth of needs, labour productivity, price dynamics, inflation, quantitative assessment of the set of consumer goods and services, etc. The volume of its set – that is, the so-called “consumer basket” – is determined by the economic capabilities of society, which depend on the efficiency of the functioning and development of the national economy, the state’s welfare policy, national traditions in the sphere of consumption, and the mentality of the population. It follows from the above that, among the institutional mechanisms of social protection of the population, the subsistence minimum bears a significant functional load, which lies in the formation of the population’s income (Figure 5).

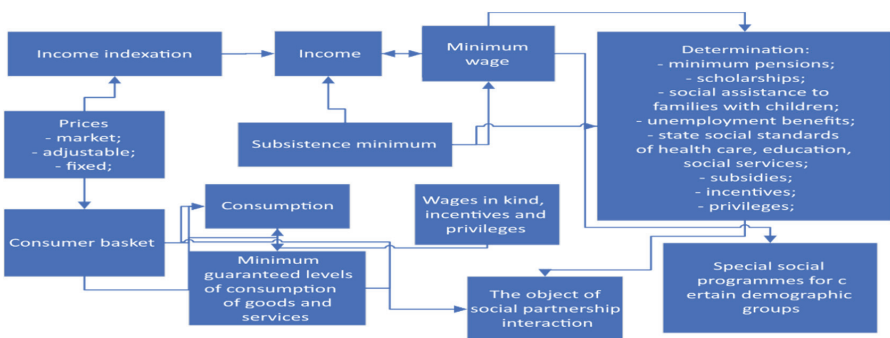


Figure 5. The main components of the institutional mechanism of social protection of the population in the field of income and consumption formation

The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost all areas of public life and all segments of the population, but especially the most vulnerable social groups – including the elderly, people with disabilities, homeless people, orphans, and immigrants. The problems of domestic violence have become more acute, and there has been an increase in the number of unemployed people at risk of losing their homes. If social assistance is not addressed at the state level, the social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could also increase inequality and discrimination in society, as well as global unemployment in the long term (Skydan et al. 2020).

States around the world are taking action to support the populations most vulnerable to COVID-19. The main types of this assistance include the distribution of food, the payment of social assistance, the promotion of employment of citizens, medical assistance, and the creation of conditions to minimise infection. In addition to financial support, states also pay attention to the issues of psychological assistance to persons forced to remain in isolation due to the imposed restrictions, as well as measures to protect the life and health of those groups for whom isolation is an additional risk factor for domestic violence.

## **Conclusions**

1. Ensuring social protection of the population requires the close interconnection and interaction of economic and social policies. Economic policy separate from social policy cannot be perfect, and will not be able to ensure success in the socio-political development of society, including in achieving a high level of social protection of its citizens. On the other hand, social policy is gradually becoming the core of economic regulation. Therefore, social policy represents the source of the development and implementation of specific economic programs in the field of social protection of the population.
2. Disregard for the laws of development of economic and social subsystems leads to their disorganisation, which sets society back in its evolution. The leading role in achieving a balance of interests in this area belongs to state institutions, because it is the state that protects the interests of the people of the future from the consequences of irrational discounting of forward-looking policy and from providing advantages to current interests to the detriment of the interests of future generations.
3. In connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations (UN) developed a number of recommendations to support the most vulnerable populations. It recommended ensuring food security and access to information for self-isolated older people, as well as for people with disabilities. It also recommended establishing special control over the observance of sanitary standards in orphanages and boarding schools for orphans with disabilities, providing children with access to basic and vital medical services, and preventing COVID-19 outbreaks. The UN recommends that during an epidemic states: strengthen national health legislation and policies; identify and remove barriers to the provision of health services for people with disabilities; expand the coverage and accessibility of health care;

train health personnel on inclusiveness and improve service delivery for people with disabilities; empower people with disabilities to make their own decisions regarding their own health; prohibit discriminatory practices in the field of health insurance; and expand research and data collection for monitoring, evaluating, and strengthening health systems in the context of supporting people from the most vulnerable social groups.

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## Kazachstano Respublikos socialinių paslaugų tarnybos modernizavimas popandeminiu laikotarpiu

Anotacija

*Pasaulyje popandeminiu laikotarpiu socialinės paslaugos kokybės prasme transformuojamos į tokią socialinės apsaugos sistemą, kuriai reikės didelių išlaidų ir integralumo, tikslios socialines paslaugas teikiančių subjektų bendradarbiavimo ir t. t. Tyrimo naujumą lemia tai, kad socialinės apsaugos subjektų interesams didelę įtaką daro rinkos ekonomikos dalyviai. Jie gali pasiūlyti asmenims, namų ūkiams, socialinėms grupėms ar teritorinėms bendruomenėms tam tikrą paramą ir paskatinti juos aktyvinti vidinius išteklius bei padidinti motyvaciją racionalizuoti savo veiklą. Straipsnio autoriai įrodo, kad gyventojų socialinės apsaugos subjektų veikla yra nukreipta į tinkamą realybės suvokimą, užkertant kelią socialinei ir ekonominei rizikai bei visos visuomenės mastu įvertinant socialinės apsaugos organizavimo sistemą. Praktinę tyrimo reikšmę lemia tai, kad jame pateikiamas socialines paslaugas teikiančių objektų ir subjektų santykių bei bendradarbiavimo mobilumas socialinės gyventojų apsaugos kontekste, o tai prisideda prie tų paslaugų kokybinio tobulinimo.*

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