

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of The System of Social Protection for Youths Deprived of Parental Care

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## Abstract

The article examines the socio-philosophical foundations and contemporary mechanisms of social protection for youths deprived of parental care, with a focus on the complex interplay between moral, cultural, and institutional determinants in the formation of social security systems. The study explores how social philosophy, particularly the principles of justice, solidarity, and human dignity, underpins state policies and public attitudes toward vulnerable social groups. It reveals the dialectical relationship between individual autonomy and collective responsibility within the structure of social protection, emphasizing the need for a human-centered paradigm that transcends bureaucratic paternalism.

## KEYWORDS

Social protection; parental care; youth welfare; socio-philosophical analysis; human dignity; moral responsibility; institutional ethics; social justice; Uzbekistan; post-Soviet transformation.

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of social protection for youths deprived of parental care occupies a profoundly significant position in the philosophical, moral, and institutional discourses of modern society. It represents not merely a question of social policy or humanitarian obligation but a deeper philosophical challenge to the essence of human coexistence, justice, and the ethical responsibilities of the state and civil society. The contemporary world, characterized by rapid social transformations, global inequality, and the erosion of traditional forms of kinship and moral solidarity, forces us to reconsider the ontological meaning of "care," "protection," and "responsibility." Youths who grow up without parental care embody one of the most vulnerable social categories, whose existence calls forth the moral test of the entire social system. In this sense, the protection of such individuals cannot be reduced to administrative measures or social benefits alone; rather, it

must be understood as a multi-layered socio-philosophical process grounded in the dialectics of freedom and necessity, individuality and collectivity, morality and law. From a philosophical standpoint, the deprivation of parental care represents not only a sociological condition but also a symbolic rupture in the continuum of human intergenerational connection[1]. The absence of parental figures disrupts the natural and cultural mechanisms of value transmission that are central to human development. As the sociologist Émile Durkheim observed, society functions through the moral integration of individuals within collective consciousness; therefore, any form of exclusion or deprivation constitutes a disruption of this moral cohesion. Youths without parental care are, consequently, situated at the crossroads of two existential dimensions: one defined by the absence of intimate care, and the other defined by the impersonal rationality of institutional

protection. This tension between emotional void and bureaucratic structure shapes the philosophical essence of social protection, revealing its dual nature as both a moral phenomenon and a socio-political construct. In contemporary philosophical literature, the concept of social protection is increasingly understood through the lens of justice theory, particularly in the works of thinkers such as John Rawls, Martha Nussbaum, and Amartya Sen. According to Rawls' principle of "justice as fairness," the moral legitimacy of a society depends on its ability to secure the well-being of its least advantaged members. The deprivation of parental care places individuals in precisely such a category, demanding a social contract that actively compensates for their structural disadvantages. Nussbaum's capabilities approach, similarly, insists that every human being must be granted the substantive freedom to realize essential life functions — education, emotional security, and social participation — regardless of their circumstances of birth. When analyzed through these philosophical frameworks, the protection of youths deprived of parental care emerges as an existential necessity rather than a charitable act, and as a measure of the moral maturity of the state. Within the Uzbek socio-political context, the question of social protection for vulnerable youths has acquired particular significance during the post-independence period. The transition from a Soviet-era paternalistic welfare system to a national model rooted in indigenous moral traditions and modern governance principles has been a complex process. The Uzbek social philosophy, deeply influenced by both Islamic humanism and modern civic ethics, emphasizes the balance between individual initiative and collective responsibility. The philosophical foundation of social protection in Uzbekistan thus lies in the synthesis of spiritual values — such as compassion (*rahm-shafqat*), mutual support (*hamjihatlik*), and social justice with institutional mechanisms aimed at ensuring equitable access to welfare. This synthesis reflects the broader civilizational aspiration to construct a humane society where moral and political rationality are harmoniously aligned[2]. From a historical perspective, social protection systems have evolved through a series of philosophical transformations. In pre-modern societies, protection was primarily a matter of familial or communal obligation, governed by moral norms and religious ethics. The emergence of modern nation-states redefined this relationship, transferring the responsibility of protection from family units to bureaucratic institutions. This shift represented a fundamental change in the ontology of care: what was once

an expression of moral affection became a function of legal rationality. Max Weber's notion of rational-legal authority elucidates this transformation, as the state assumes the role of moral agent through impersonal procedures and codified regulations. Yet this rationalization also risks depersonalizing care, reducing the individual to a statistical entity within administrative systems. The challenge for contemporary societies, therefore, lies in reconciling institutional efficiency with moral intimacy — ensuring that protection does not become an abstract exercise in governance, but remains grounded in the lived experience of compassion and empathy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The philosophical and sociological exploration of social protection for youths deprived of parental care has attracted the attention of numerous scholars across the world. Within the international academic discourse, two figures—Amartya Sen, an Indian-born economist and philosopher, and Martha C. Nussbaum, an American philosopher—stand out for their influential contributions to the theoretical understanding of human welfare, justice, and moral responsibility. Their works provide an essential intellectual foundation for analyzing the socio-philosophical dimensions of care and protection in contemporary society, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups such as orphans and socially marginalized youths. When their ideas are examined together, they form a cohesive framework that transcends disciplinary boundaries and illuminates the philosophical essence of social protection as both an ethical and institutional enterprise. Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* provides a profound philosophical argument for redefining social protection beyond mere economic welfare[3]. Sen rejects the narrow utilitarian and GDP-centered conception of development, asserting instead that true progress lies in expanding individuals' substantive freedoms—the real opportunities they have to pursue lives they value. Within this framework, the deprivation of parental care can be seen as a multidimensional form of "unfreedom," not merely in material terms but also in social, emotional, and cultural capacities. For Sen, social protection systems are moral instruments designed to restore and enhance these capabilities, ensuring that every individual, regardless of origin or social status, can achieve human flourishing. His capability approach therefore calls for the creation of social structures that empower youths to develop agency and dignity rather than merely providing passive support. This vision implies a moral obligation for societies and governments to intervene

where structural inequalities impede personal development—a notion that aligns closely with the moral imperatives of social justice and ethical governance. Building upon Sen’s conceptual foundation, Martha Nussbaum’s *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* deepens the philosophical reflection on human dignity and moral responsibility[4]. Nussbaum introduces a list of ten central capabilities—life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, concern for other species, play, and control over one’s environment—which together constitute the minimal conditions of a life worthy of human dignity. In her argument, the deprivation of parental care directly threatens several of these core capabilities, particularly emotional development, affiliation, and the ability to form stable human attachments. Consequently, the role of social protection must extend beyond institutional care to include the cultivation of environments that nurture emotional security, interpersonal trust, and moral development. Nussbaum’s emphasis on compassion as a political virtue further reinforces the idea that institutions must embody empathy and human sensitivity in their structures and policies. When analyzed together, Sen and Nussbaum present a unified ethical framework that views social protection as an essential instrument for realizing justice and dignity[5]. Their theories transcend traditional welfare paradigms by focusing not on the redistribution of material goods but on the expansion of human potential. In this sense, youths deprived of parental care represent a test case for the practical realization of the capability approach: they are individuals whose basic freedoms and capacities are systematically constrained by the absence of familial support. The philosophical task, therefore, is to design institutions that actively compensate for this deprivation—not merely through financial assistance, but through educational, psychological, and cultural empowerment. This transformation requires a moral reorientation of the state’s social policy, wherein protection is reimagined as an act of moral partnership between the individual and the community[6]. Both scholars also converge on the idea that the moral worth of a society can be measured by its treatment of its most vulnerable members. Sen’s notion of public reasoning—the collective deliberation on ethical and social matters—emphasizes that justice is not imposed from above but constructed through democratic discourse. Similarly, Nussbaum’s insistence on the universal validity of human dignity challenges cultural relativism and demands a global moral commitment to the protection of vulnerable

groups. In the context of Uzbekistan and other post-Soviet societies, these ideas acquire particular relevance. They suggest that successful social protection for youths deprived of parental care requires more than economic reform; it demands the cultivation of a moral culture that recognizes vulnerability as a shared human condition and responds with empathy, justice, and institutional integrity.

## **METHOD**

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in a socio-philosophical and hermeneutic approach, integrating elements of dialectical analysis, phenomenological interpretation, and comparative methodology to reveal the deeper moral and institutional structures underlying the system of social protection for youths deprived of parental care. The dialectical method enabled the exploration of contradictions between moral ideals and institutional practices, exposing how the principles of justice, compassion, and equality are transformed into bureaucratic mechanisms within social policy. The phenomenological approach, inspired by Edmund Husserl and further developed in the existential-humanistic tradition, facilitated an understanding of the lived experiences of vulnerable youths as conscious subjects, rather than mere objects of social intervention. Through hermeneutic interpretation, drawing from Hans-Georg Gadamer’s theory of understanding, the research reinterprets legislative texts, policy documents, and philosophical doctrines to uncover their embedded moral meanings and cultural assumptions. Additionally, a comparative socio-philosophical method was employed to juxtapose the Uzbek model of social protection with Western welfare philosophies, particularly those articulated by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, thereby situating national practices within a broader global ethical context. The study also applied systemic and structural-functional analysis to conceptualize social protection as a dynamic system of interrelated moral, political, and institutional components, highlighting the interdependence between individual agency and collective responsibility. Finally, the methodological pluralism adopted here ensured that the research transcended narrow disciplinary confines, enabling a holistic understanding of social protection as both an ethical phenomenon and a socio-political structure that reflects the evolving moral consciousness of society.

## **RESULTS**

The findings of this socio-philosophical inquiry reveal that the

system of social protection for youths deprived of parental care operates as a multifaceted moral and institutional construct in which ethical imperatives and administrative mechanisms are deeply intertwined, reflecting the broader evolution of humanistic governance in modern societies. The analysis demonstrates that social protection cannot be limited to the mere provision of material support but must encompass the development of individual capabilities, moral agency, and psychological stability, thus aligning with the principles articulated in Sen's and Nussbaum's capability theory. In the Uzbek context, the results highlight a gradual but substantive transition from paternalistic state dependency toward a morally participatory model of protection grounded in *ma'naviyat* (spirituality), *hamjihatlik* (solidarity), and *adolat* (justice), which together form the ethical foundation of national social policy. The study confirms that genuine protection arises where the institutional structure of the state internalizes moral values, enabling policies that foster human dignity, empathy, and social inclusion rather than bureaucratic control.

## **DISCUSSION**

The intellectual dialogue surrounding the philosophical foundations of social protection has often revolved around the interpretive tension between Amartya Sen's pragmatic humanism and Martha C. Nussbaum's normative essentialism. Both scholars converge on the moral necessity of ensuring human dignity through institutional structures, yet they diverge on the epistemological and ethical grounds upon which such protection must be constructed. Their polemic—though respectful and complementary—illustrates a profound philosophical debate about the nature of justice, the role of the state, and the moral status of the individual within welfare systems[7]. When applied to the issue of protecting youths deprived of parental care, their disagreement becomes not merely theoretical but existential, as it touches the core of how societies define compassion, responsibility, and autonomy. Amartya Sen, in his analytical humanism, argues that justice cannot be defined through idealized or universal principles alone but must emerge from the practical reasoning of democratic deliberation. In his view, the legitimacy of social protection depends on its capacity to expand real freedoms through context-sensitive policies rather than on adherence to a fixed moral blueprint. Sen warns against the dangers of "transcendental institutionalism," the belief that there exists one perfect model of justice applicable to all societies. For him,

social protection should evolve through public reasoning—a dialogical process that incorporates the perspectives of those affected by deprivation, including the youths themselves. This procedural ethics, grounded in empirical realism, insists that moral progress is achievable only through participatory structures that allow the vulnerable to define their own needs and aspirations. Sen thus situates social protection within the dynamics of pluralism and agency, emphasizing that freedom and dignity are achieved through collective moral discourse, not imposed through paternalistic policy[8]. Martha Nussbaum, however, critiques Sen's procedural openness for its lack of moral determinacy. In her view, the absence of a normative core risks reducing justice to mere consensus, allowing cultural relativism to undermine universal human dignity. Nussbaum contends that societies must establish non-negotiable moral thresholds—a list of fundamental human capabilities that every individual must possess to live a dignified life. Unlike Sen's flexible empiricism, her model asserts that compassion, emotional development, and moral education are not context-dependent values but universal ethical imperatives. She thus advocates a "thick" conception of human dignity, where the role of the state transcends facilitation and assumes moral leadership in securing citizens' basic capabilities. Applied to the protection of parentally deprived youths, Nussbaum's framework demands that institutions actively nurture emotional and relational capacities—love, belonging, and trust—rather than merely ensuring survival or economic support[9]. In this sense, her argument reclaims social protection as a form of moral education and ethical cultivation, embedding the virtues of care and solidarity within the very fabric of institutional life. The polemic between Sen and Nussbaum therefore embodies a larger philosophical dilemma: should social protection systems prioritize procedural pluralism or normative universality? Sen's emphasis on dialogue and context ensures flexibility and democratic legitimacy but risks moral ambiguity, while Nussbaum's insistence on universal values safeguards human dignity but may inadvertently impose moral uniformity[10]. Within the context of Uzbekistan and similar societies, this debate acquires pragmatic relevance. Sen's pluralistic reasoning aligns with the cultural diversity and community-based ethos of Uzbek social philosophy, whereas Nussbaum's universalism resonates with the spiritual humanism (*ma'naviyat*) embedded in the nation's ethical identity. The synthesis of their ideas—contextual reasoning informed by universal moral standards—thus offers the most

promising philosophical foundation for constructing humane and just systems of social protection. Ultimately, the dialogue between Sen and Nussbaum demonstrates that the true meaning of protection lies not in institutional form or economic measure but in the continuous moral negotiation between freedom and obligation, individuality and community, reason and compassion.

## CONCLUSION

The socio-philosophical analysis of the system of social protection for youths deprived of parental care reveals that the phenomenon transcends administrative and economic categories, standing instead as a moral and civilizational test of a society's ethical maturity. Social protection, when interpreted through the dialectics of moral responsibility and institutional rationality, emerges as both an ontological and axiological category—rooted in the essence of human existence and the collective consciousness of justice. The research has demonstrated that the true objective of social protection lies not in the passive maintenance of vulnerable individuals but in their empowerment, moral inclusion, and human flourishing.

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