

Review of Classical Studies on the Welfare State

--By Methodologies of Political Science

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Abstract - This review aims to portray the real face of existing studies that use methodologies of political science to analyze the welfare state. By choosing three basic questions (First, how should different kinds of welfare states be categorized? Second, what are the factors that make up the character of each welfare state? Third, what is the tendency of welfare states' development?) as key points, I have divided this review into two parts to show the generally accepted definition tools, methodologies, and research tendencies in this area of study. The first part of this study concerns differences in methodologies, and the second part examines differences in conclusions. In addition to providing a clear and comprehensive overview of existing studies on welfare states, this paper uncovers a source of conflict in contemporary welfare studies and shows their advantages and disadvantages.

Key Words – Typologicalism , Political Institutionalism , Socialized Institutionalism, Convergence or Divergence

To distinguish itself from Nazi Germany's 'warfare state', Britain created the term 'welfare state', since both states used political means to collect and distribute resources. During World War II, both used aggressive political measures to run their states. Though they both used political means, their aims were very different. Historically, government-sponsored welfare appeared much earlier than the term 'welfare state' (Megginson 2001). Governments only began to take explicit responsibility for civilians' welfare after WWII, when they faced serious post-war circumstances. It was WWII that forced democratic governments to create modern welfare states to contrast fascism. Without a strong outside threat, it would have been impossible for an inefficient democratic political system to institute a welfare state so quickly and in a one-pass operation. Considering the cost of welfare (high taxes), a modern welfare state would ordinarily take a significant amount of time to implement.

Depending on the development history of a welfare system, the system can be classified as traditional, pre-modern, modern and post-modern. The governmental welfares that existed before WWI can be distributed into the traditional class. These early welfare programs were rudimentary and survival-oriented. The period from WWI to the end of WWII was marked by pre-modern programs. From the end of WWII to the mid 1970s, pre-modern welfare systems have evolved into modern ones. After the golden years of welfare state development, there is no distinctive development of welfare state, and this period can be marked by post-modern. Since this study focuses on recent developments of the welfare state, its primary area of concentration will be the post-modern welfare state. Actually, the most significant difference between

the current welfare system and the traditional systems is the function of redistribution. In a current system, welfare states play the main role in redistributing social wealth.

Existing studies deal with three questions: First, how should different kinds of welfare states be categorized? Second, what are the factors that make up the character of each welfare state? Third, what is the tendency of welfare states' development? Different scholars give different answers. Depending on the way they answer the first two questions, studies concerned with mass welfare states can generally be divided into two classes: typological and institutional (the first kind of distribution). Almost all studies, whether general or specialized, include a hypothesis of the tendency of welfare states' development. Depending on their answers to the third question, studies can be distributed into two additional classes: convergence and divergence (the second kind of distribution).

This paper dedicates more time to the first kind of distribution, for two reasons: (1) the second kind of distribution standard only concerns a small part of studies and qualitative analyses. It is not an efficient way to clearly distinguish different kinds of studies, as it is more concerned with the differences among arguments on welfare states' tendency and (2) since the first kind distribution method pays more attention to the methodologies of different studies, it is more useful in clarifying the decisive differences among them.

I. Typologicalism

Typologicalism actually appears on the scene later than institutionalism, but ever since its appearance, it has become one of the cornerstones of the study of welfare. Esping-Andersen, Korpi, Hicks, Stephens, etc. are representative of this class. Their studies are primarily based on or elicited by Esping-Andersen's pioneering work in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Within this book, Esping-Andersen classifies Western welfare states into three types: social democracy, conservatism, and liberalism. It has since become customary to classify a welfare state by type and figure out its specifications and mechanism. In other words, by emphasizing the differences between welfare states, scholars in this camp classify each welfare state into an existing type or hybrid, or may create a new type, and use their existing theories, tools, and inferences to test the subjects.

These scholars have chosen a broad way to approach welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990). This approach treats issues of employment, wages, and overall macroeconomic steering accompany with the narrow approach's social

amelioration, which composes the main body of a welfare state and usually frames it in terms of political economy.¹

Typological scholars, since their arguments are primarily based on Esping-Andersen's studies that is a typically Eurocentric theory, generally agree that some typical kinds of welfare states exist all over the world, and have branded these types 'social democracy', 'conservatism', and 'liberalism' ever since Esping-Andersen's foundational work.² As time goes by, some new types are added, such as 'Japanese Style' or 'East Asian Style' (sometimes called the 'Confucian welfare state'), but these categories are disputed among scholars.³

Within his study, Esping-Andersen uses two dimensions to classify different welfare states: de-commodification and de-stratification. Figure 1 shows the operational principle of the two dimensions. Since he does not give out testable standards for the two dimensions, these two popular and widely accepted parameters are still only qualitative. This weakness undoubtedly makes it hard to use Esping-Andersen's methods to adequately support an argument.

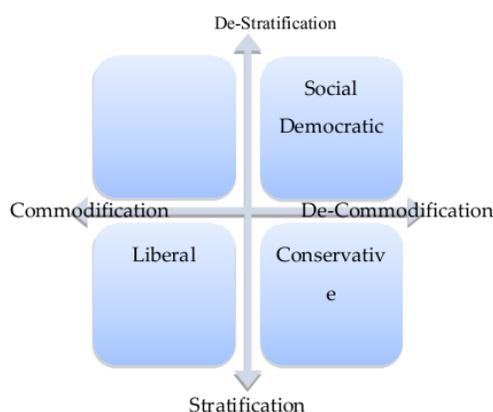


Figure 1, How Different Welfare States Are Distributed

Source: Esping-Andersen, (1990), 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism'

For scholars in the typological class, de-commodification and de-stratification are two ideal and final aims for a welfare state to achieve, and they are the most essential qualities that differentiate current welfare states from the other ones. In other words, a current welfare program should ultimately aim for de-commodification and de-

stratification to compensate for the faults of the so-called fair-play market economy.

To compensate for only being equipped to qualitatively assess welfare systems, typological scholars append many criteria to the definitions of different types. This causes other problems, the main one being that those criteria are results of the studies of typical welfare states, but after that, they become the standards to classify welfare states. For example, if welfare state A has some conservative figures then it should be classified as conservative, and all of its features would be interpreted under the conservative label. In this situation, these criteria are both reasons and results. Though this class of studies has many problems to manage, it still supports very useful methods and arguments for recognizing and mastering the macro-view of welfare states.

In showing a clear overview of this class' theories, it is impossible to avoid introducing the three basic types of welfare states. Typological scholars assert that, in modern, advanced countries, different political trends would create different kinds of welfare states. Accordingly, there are also three basic types of political trends: social democracy, conservatism, and liberalism (Esping-Andersen 1990). Now let us consider an overview of each type.

A. Social Democracy

One of the most familiar types of welfare state is usually found in Scandinavian countries. These countries' social democratic powers compromises with other social classes and thus adopt universal and comprehensive welfare programs. They are the most decommodified states on earth; i.e. they allow for a total separation of work and welfare. They also advocate full employment and promote a social maxim that 'no one is allowed to fall through' (Esping-Andersen 1990). These countries try to realize de-stratification and de-commodification. Consistently, these states also use a means test as a criterion to receive social assistance; but they grant other benefits as a matter of right (health care, education, child allowances etc.). Social democracy, like liberalism, embraces individualism, and tries to remove reliance upon families or communities as the first alternative to the market. Unlike its conservative counterpart, which treats the family as a constant variable, its primary concern is not to wait until a family is unable to provide further, but 'to preemptively socialize the costs of family-hood' (Esping-Andersen 1990).

With the underlying belief that 'all benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay' (Esping-Andersen 1990), social democracy relies on universal and comprehensive welfare programs to realize its prior aims: de - commodification and de - stratification . Actually , Scandinavian welfare programs cost much less to administrate than similar private or corporate programs, and Scandinavians quite willingly pay high taxes.

B. Conservatism

Germany is one of the pioneers of this type of welfare state. Its history is much longer than that of the other two. It maintains many traditional ideas, like discouraging women

¹ Esping-Andersen, (1990), in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, writes, 'The broader view often frames its questions in terms of political economy, its interests focused on the state's larger role in managing and organizing the economy...and overall macro-economic steering are considered ... if you like, "welfare capitalism"'. p2.

² Esping-Andersen, (1990), lists the three types of welfare states in his book 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' as: social democracy, prominent in Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden; conservative, usually found in Germany, France, Austria and Italy; and liberalism, found in the USA, Canada, Australia and increasingly the United Kingdom.

³ Ito Peng, Joseph Wong, Chapter: East Asia, (2010), Edited by Francis G. Castles, Stephan Leibfried, Jane Lewis, Herbert Obinger, and Christopher Pierson, 'The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State', 'In Japan, for instance, the Socialist party ... Third, the "productivist" approach ... policy evolution in East Asia'. 'The emergence of proto-welfare states in East Asia ... the study of the "Confucianism welfare state": "fundamentally...in East Asia"'. pp658, 709.

from working. Because of its long-lasting historical impacts, the political trend here is conservative, supporting a conservative welfare state. These states also try to de-commodify their members; meanwhile, they do try to protect the pre-existing stratification and maintain a hierarchical society.

Esping-Andersen (1990) identifies three ways in which conservative states deal with de-commodification. First, feudal patronage and clientelism have been transferred to the corporate world. Thus, in the updated guise of state, an extension of the notion of communal relief traditionally based around landowners has been imposed on the modern corporate world. Second, corporatist welfare originated from the Catholic Church based on the notion of providing protection and relief as a reward for loyalty to the Church. Third, unlike the other types, statist conservatism inherently opposes individualism and stresses protection of society as a whole. It adopts the notion of paternal authoritarianism that sees the provision of welfare to its subjects as an obligation.

Though there are some small differences in the extent to which different states advocate a minimal de-commodification of labour, their attempts to hold the stratification of the hierarchical structure are the same. Predominantly conservative, though scholars assert that conservative systems do a good job of protecting persons who are unable to succeed though no fault of their own, governments intervene as much but differently compared to, at least, Social Democratic ones, they remain their intervention stay at the doors of families.

C. Liberalism

Liberalism sometimes is used as the synonym of Anglo-Saxon style. It is no surprise to find the USA, Canada, Australia, and, increasingly, the UK are in this class. In these states, the political powers adopt means tests as the basic standard for welfare distribution. Based on their hypothesis that all individuals are capable of market participation and free competition creates winners and losers, liberals treat stratification not as a fault of market but 'solely a consequence of an individual's lack of foresight and thrift' (Esping-Andersen 1990). Since the freedom to compete in the market includes elements of insecurity that may result in poverty, it becomes a paradox to its own intended, liberal image.

The liberalist perspective never tries to realize de-commodification and de-stratification. Instead, they use welfare programs to maintain the conditions that the development of a liberal economy needs. In their view, a minimum social wage would not eradicate poverty but contribute to its perpetuation. Though contemporary liberalism acknowledges the 'dilemmas of labour commodification' via minimal social welfares awarded through means tests and prior contribution, they still treat welfare as a disruption of the stratification produced by free market and strongly advocate the cash nexus (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Pragmatically speaking, liberalistic welfare states fail to facilitate equal entrance to compete in the market, since they ignore hierarchical advantages or disadvantages. The stigma of the means test demonstrates the perverse nature of the free

market and liberal systems remain heavily commodified and dependent on markets.

It is easy to see that this class of theories sets up a typology of welfare states, and uses the results to categorize other welfare states. Using this method, it is relatively easy to create certain images of different welfare states, but reliable explanations for the mechanisms of welfare state creation are still unclear. They ultimately fail to explain the differences between the same types of welfare states and the commonalities among different types. Meanwhile, answers to the question 'What are the factors that make up the character of each welfare state?' are too simple to address further questions, like, 'How do a certain trends of political power gain influence?'

II. Institutionalism

Almost all studies on welfare states have some connection, to one degree or another, with institutionalism, since it is such a powerful methodology. Even some of the studies in the typological class have to base their argument on institutional logic, willingly or not. This class of study appeared even before the emergence of the word 'welfare state'. Hobhouse, who lived before the term 'welfare state' existed, conducted a number of studies on this subject. Though he described the government's decisive role in protecting humanity, liberty, and justice (1909), his studies' subjects are traditional and partly pre-modern welfare systems, and are outdated.

Being involved in the early period of studies on welfare states, William is one of the most important founders. Though he highly recommended Hobhouse's studies, and introduced Bentham, Keynes, Bismarck, and Sidney as the founding fathers of the principles of welfare states, it was he who first scripted the two basic duties of welfare states: the provision of social services and social security (1957). The descriptions of these two duties became the cornerstone for future studies on welfare states.

As studies on welfare states grew more abundant, gaps appeared within institutionalism studies, using the same institutional methodology. Depending on the answers to the question 'What are the factors that make up the character of each welfare state?' these studies can be distributed into two subsidiaries: political institutionalism and social institutionalism. Since some scholars choose a broad view of welfare states and others prefer narrow or hybrid views, it has become a kind of convention to clearly describe one's own definition of welfare states at the beginning of one's study. However, scholars always share some commonality. Within the institutionalism class, for instance, they prefer to use published data to judge the size of a welfare state and mark it as either comprehensive or not. However, once again, there is no generally accepted standard of distinguishing comprehensive welfare states from others. Scholars also generally accept that there are different political trends, like socialist, conservative, and liberal, present in modern democracy. They mark the welfare programs as universal or

not by testing the coverage of benefits.

As these scholars pay the most attention to pre-existing institutions, they unwarily ignore the importance of welfare states' economic circumstances. Though there are some divergences and conflicts among these scholars' arguments, they still share many definition tools and basic theoretical logic. Almost all of the scholars in this class use one or more of the institutional factors, like electoral system, government regime, social structure, pre-existing paths, etc., as the basic variables in their theories. Now let us examine the two subsidiaries.

A. Political Institutionalism

Although conflicts among theories also exist within this subsidiary, all of its proponents set their cornerstone on the pre-existing political institution. After that, they divide into different strands. One is representative of path dependence, which argues that the pre-existing political legacy basically determines the developmental process and destination of a welfare state. In other words, if the starting point of a welfare state is un-universal and un-comprehensive, a converse change in steady circumstances is impossible. In this way, they explain cross-national differences by stressing their different historical, political legacies. Even Esping-Andersen claims that the 'continental European welfare-state regime has also been patterned by the new middle class, but in a different way. The cause is historical' (1990). Those within the typologicalism class also partly share this argument when they try to explain the different developing traits of welfare states.

Other scholars build their theories on differences between countries' governmental systems, especially the number of 'veto players'. According to Margarita's definition, 'Veto players ... are actors (whether political parties or individual politicians) whose consent is necessary to make law' (2008). Political institutionalism scholars follow this definition, and further classify 'veto players' into three categories: constitutional, parliamentary, and non-parliamentary. Some scholars would also add competitive and cooperative to these categories. They allege that the constitutional veto players are more competitive, and other partisan veto players, those in coalition governments or reliant on parliamentary systems, prefer to cooperate (Crepaz 2001).

Their basic assertion is that, in the countries where a large number of veto players exist, it is impossible to expect them develop a universal and comprehensive welfare state, since a minority of veto players can easily block programs that benefit the majority. Conversely, because policy reversals are easy in a political system with a small number of veto players, in order to avoid a future rollback, current governments prefer to create popular welfare policies that benefit the majority and are unlikely to be repealed.⁴

⁴ Moe and Caldwell, (1994), 'The Institutional Foundations of Democratic Government: A Comparison of Presidential and Parliamentary Systems', *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 150 (1), '[B]ecause policy reversals are easy in political systems with a small number of veto players, the current government opts for universalistic programs that benefit the majority in

In response to scholars who focus on the impacts of federal systems as the sole cause of variation of welfare states (Orloff 1993), another main strand, represented by Lijphart, Iversen, and Sockice, etc., shows up with an impressive methodology that brings governmental and electoral systems together as the basic independent variables for investigating welfare states. Scholars in this strand commonly associate a large welfare state with a proportional representation (PR)/ Multi-Member District (MMD) political system, and they call this system 'consensual democracy'. Unlike the so-called 'majority democracy', in which a plurality rules, and Single Member District (SMD) selects their government, consensual democracy paves the way for the appearance of a left-moderate coalition government that would enlarge its welfare state.⁵ In contrast to a majority democracy, consensual democracies facilitate cooperation among parties and make it possible for a coalition government to introduce universal and comprehensive welfare programs.

Table 1 Typical Logical Lines of Creation of the Four Main Kinds of Welfare States

Types of Welfare States	Electoral	Governmental	Personal
Universal Pro-Market	SMD	Majority	Strong Party
Fragmented Generous	MMD	Coalition	Strong Party
Market-Conforming Generous	MMD	Minority	Strong Party
Fragmented Statist	MMD	Coalition or Majority	Weak Party

Source: Summary from Iversen and Sockice, (2006), 'Electoral Institutions, Parties and the Politics of Class: Why Some Democracies Distribute More Than Others', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 100 (2)

Table 1 shows the typical logical lines of this strand (Iversen and Sockice 2006). They choose government types, district magnitude, and the relative importance of the personal vote as basic independent variables and theoretically combine 12 types of states (see Table 2). Taking the existence of different veto players as a premise, their hypothesis is that individual veto players, as politicians, always seek reelection and organizational veto players seek to expand their influence in the political system. In their arguments, district magnitude and the importance of personal vote together determine the strategies veto players choose to win an election, the configuration of parliament, and the emergence of non-parliamentary veto players. The first two results would deeply impact the overall characteristics of a welfare state, and the third adds additional details.

the hope that popular programs that benefit many are more difficult to roll back in the future'. p171-195.

⁵ Iversen and Sockice, (2006), 'Electoral Institutions, Parties and the Politics of Class: Why Some Democracies Distribute More Than Others', *American Political Science Review*, 100 (2), 'Our argument implies a) that center-left governments dominate under PR system, while center-right governments dominate under majoritarian systems, and b) that PR systems redistribute more than majoritarian systems'. pp165-81.

Table 2, The Theoretical Combination of Different Types of States

	DM	Government	Party	Identifiability	Accountability	Tax	SSP	SSB	FE	Aren
1	SMD	Majority	Strong	Highest	Highest	Small	Universal	Meager	Market-Based	Competitive
2	SMD	Majority	Weak	High	High	Small	Fragmented	Meager	Market-Restricting	Safe
3	MMD	Minority	Strong	High	Low	Big	Universal	Generous	Market-Restricting	Safe
4	MMD	Minority	Weak	Medium	High	Medium	Fragmented	Comprehensive	Market-Restricting	Safe
5	MMD	Coalition	Strong	Low	Low	Big	Fragmented	Generous	Market-Restricting	Safe
6	MMD	Coalition	Weak	Low	High	Medium	Fragmented	Generous	Market-Restricting	Safe
7	MMD	Majority	Strong	Highest	Medium	Medium	Fragmented or not	Generous	Market-Restricting	Safe
8	MMD	Majority	Weak	Low	Low	Medium	Fragmented	Generous	Market-Restricting	Safe

Source: Summary from Margarita, (2008), *Welfare and Capitalism in Postwar Japan*, Chapter 2

After making the main arguments, they also list associated factors: organized voters, geographically specific benefits, and particularly rent-seeking classes. As seen above, they establish the two important mediating variables as identifiability and accountability. These variables concern the question as to whether or not it is easy to identify a party's action and implement the appropriate consequences. Thanks to low identifiability and accountability in a consensual democracy, it is easier for parties to introduce universal and comprehensive welfare programs, though this also means raising taxes and thus lowering the income of citizens. On the other hand, in a country full of constitutional veto players, fragmental welfare programs are more likely to be adopted.

Because of the opposed logical lines, the veto player based strand conflicts greatly with the electorally based strand.⁶ According to the logic of the veto player based strand, a large number of veto players would nurse a small welfare state, so a coalition government will never adopt a universal and comprehensive welfare state, and the converse is true about majority governments. This is significantly counter to the arguments of scholars who recommend consensual democracy.

Political institutionalism studies conflict severely with each other. There is no generally accepted agreement except that pre-existing polity impacts the formation of welfare states, but the path dependence theories are gradually becoming peripheral. Different scholars appear with different arguments, but no matter how wide the gap between these theories, all of them can find evidence in the real world by highlighting some aspects of a welfare state and ignoring others.

B. Socialized Institutionalism

In response to questions that arise from the above studies, such as 'What are the factors that create the political systems that propagate welfare states?' some institutionalism scholars go further and position their studies in a wider social economy environment. They pick out different class unions as independent variables, and create a useful mediate variable: cross-class alliances. Their main argument is that, with the

help of modern democracy, different cross-class alliances would force political systems to adopt different sizes of welfare states.

In order to clear the demands of different unions, these studies investigate the details of welfare programs more carefully. In addition, as Margarita claims, 'Studies in this camp have greatly improved our understanding of social policies preferences of employers and unions' (2008). They also list a range of factors, such as labour cost, insurance against risks, and operational needs, that would affect employers' and unions' calculations of welfare programs (Swenson 2002 and Martin 2000).

According to empirical studies, cross-class alliances can happen in two ways: one is lateralized as nation-wide labour unions, which comprise people from different vocations but belong to the same class; the other is 'longitudinalized' as different kinds of guilds composed of people from the same vocation but belonging to different classes. These strategically allied unions would mainly use electoral systems to realize their demands, both business interests and welfare requests.

Pre-existing polity in these studies are being treated as disturbing variables. As historical institutionalism scholars have already pointed out, pre-existing policies exercise important feedback effects, '... precluding political coalitions around particular outcomes, and facilitate cross-class alliances in support of other policies' (Pierson 1996). However, these kinds of impacts only slow or speed the appearance of a particular cross-class alliance. Social economy structure still basically shapes the outlook of cross-class alliances.

The most important contribution of this subsidiary is the demonstration that different political composition of cross-class alliances would lead to different outcomes of welfare states. For instance, a cross-class alliance composed of large manufacturers and the core part of labour movements would support pro-contribution, universalized, and compulsory social insurance. On the contrary, a fragmented, both vocationally and geographically, and un-universal welfare program would be accepted were the ruling alliance composed of labour and petit-businesses.

This theory can be used to explain variations in all kinds of social policies. This makes it hard to prove. Unlike popular quantitative orientation, it stays on qualitative analysis.

⁶ Margarita, (2008), 'Welfare and Capitalism in Postwar Japan', 'An important tension exists between the electorally based account of welfare politics and a subgroup of veto player-based account...' p10.

Without a clear definition of cross-class alliances, the investigations would comprise a vicious circle. Scholars successfully demonstrate what kinds of cross-class alliances would cause a particular welfare state, but fail to figure out the standards to be reached to win the ruling position, and fail to illustrate why particular unions ally with each other. In order to reach clear and testable illustrations and reliable predictions, this subsidiary needs to do a lot of quantitative work.

In order to examine the real level of welfare that a citizen receives, researchers bring together both public and private sources, making it hard to test the state's impact on welfare. These scholars face a paradox in that, in portraying an accurate overview of welfare, it is impossible to examine the governmental efforts and show the clear range of governmental welfare systems. As I choose the narrow view of the governmental welfare system, and thus the narrow view of the welfare state, I avoid this problem from the beginning.

III. Convergence or Divergence

The above classification measure distributes different studies depending on their methodological criteria. Conversely, the classification measure we are about to consider prefers arguments to methodologies. Though this kind of classification is familiar and widespread, it is not an efficient way to distinguish the core differences of each theory. This method primarily focuses on answering the third question: the destination of welfare states' development. When classifying different studies, scholars using this method combine studies that use different kinds of methodologies into one class, marked by convergence or divergence, depending on their predictions for the developmental trends of welfare states. Since they ignore important differences of methodologies, no matter how hard they work on quantitative analysis of the developmental trends of welfare states, their conclusions are still qualitative. Without clearly distinguishing the different methodologies, the theoretical applicability of this classification measure is strictly limited.

This kind of classification was introduced under the conditions of Euro-recovery and globalization, and its convergence component peaked in the 1970s. Before the publishing of *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, convergence arguments took advantage of the deputation on the developmental trends of welfare states. Generally speaking, the conflict between convergence and divergence arguments focuses on the political economies of industrialized countries, which existed long before the noticeable development of welfare states.⁷ One consistent argument of globalization theories is that the industrialized countries are becoming more similar (Held & McGrew 2003). Beginning with the rapid development of new industrialized countries, especially Japan and other East Asian countries, divergence

theories began to fight back. 'Later-development', 'neo-corporation', and 'varieties of capitalism' are the main forces of divergence theories. Though the studies on welfare states comprise only a small part of this classification and are never at the forefront, they have still been impacted by the changes of the force balance of the two branches (Kasza 2006).

A. Convergence

The typical argument of convergence scholars is that, by statistic methods, they demonstrate that the overall expenditures of all welfare states are significantly increased, and then assert that the main trend of development is convergence (Wilensky 1975). Otherwise, they investigate the kinds of programs that countries adopt and allege that, since similar welfare programs have been found in different countries, welfare states are tending toward convergence (Meyer, et al 1997). The reasoning behind these arguments is that, accompanying globalization, multi-country companies' power increased dramatically. To avoid premiums, they prefer countries with the same welfare state as their motherlands. Thus, countries across the world tend to adopt similar welfare states (Rodrik 1997). On the other hand, these scholars found that 'modern democracies with similar demography and ages of their welfare programs, no matter rich or poor, would have the nearly same sizes of welfare states, especially expenditures on the programs of old-age and health cares' (Wilensky 1975).

Besides statistical studies, empirical research also finds evidence of convergence in public opinion on what constitutes welfare states (Coughlin 1980), the influences of egalitarian movements on welfare states (Williamson & Joseph 1979), normative patterns (Mishra 1976), and social functions of welfare states across capitalist and communist countries (Armour & Coughlin 1985).

In response to the challenge from divergence theories, these scholars investigate two dimensions regarding the selection of subjects: the construction of welfare states and the age of welfare programs. They try to demonstrate that, globally speaking, different welfare systems that have the same construction and expenditures tend to reach the same level when those countries' economic development lines up and they are met with the same demographic circumstances. They also assert that the '... discovering of divergence exists across countries are resulted by faults of cases and timeline selections' (Wilensky, et al 1985).

B. Divergence

Since the end of the cold war and dramatic development of non-Western countries, especially the revival of Japan, more and more scholars are challenging convergence arguments about welfare states as well as in other fields. According to historical studies, even in Western nations, there is no trend to convergence in the eligibility criteria of welfare programs, financial methods, or the coverage of benefits, only in the duration of benefits of compulsory unemployment programs (Alber 1981). Some scholars even use statistical measures to demonstrate that there is a big gap, or divergence, between different countries' expenditures on welfare states.

⁷ Kasza, (2006), 'One World of Welfare: Japan in Comparative Perspective', 'There is a long-standing debate among scholars concerning the likely convergence or divergence of the political economies of industrialized states...' p5.

Advanced countries are inclined to adopt the same programs, but the details, benefits, and coverage are quite different (O'Connor 1988). Since the rise of typologicalism, these scholars allege that countries with different political factors can never be described by convergence; even when they adopt the same programs, the details are significantly different (Hewitt 1977; Korpi 1982 and 1983).

Ever since the publishing of *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, the divergence strand began to gain the advantage. As I have shown above, most recent studies accept that welfare states can be distributed into some typically exclusive classes. As Kasza puts it, 'Divergence theorists focus on the differences rather than the similarities among the welfare policies of the industrialized states, and they see these differences as deeply embedded in each country's distinctive class structure and politics' (2006). Besides the three basic types, some other scholars, even Esping-Andersen, append some new types (Esping-Andersen 1997). Other scholars, such as institutionalists, use different methodologies, even creating new standards to classify welfare states.

Studies in this class noticeably diverge into two trends: typologicalism and institutionalism. This does not mean that typologicalism and institutionalism studies can be wholly dominated by divergence theories; some of their studies also can be marked by convergence. This means that recent divergence theories can be perfectly classified into those two classes, depending on the way they demonstrate their arguments. Typological studies of divergence can also be called 'power resource theory' (Kasza 2006). Scholars in this camp see the influence of class-based parties in the creation of welfare states, and describe it as 'class-centred but state-mediated theory of the welfare state' (Alexander 1999). The institutionalists, on the other hand, link the divergence of welfare states to the differences between each country's political systems.

Generally speaking, studies that focus on a welfare state of a particular country are more likely to make convergence predictions. Take Margarita's (2008) and Kasza's (2006) studies as examples: because these studies are inclined to compare their subjects with other welfare states to figure out the developmental traits, it is impossible to avoid revealing the influences of the preexisting welfare states. It is easy for them to see the programs that their subjects adopt from other countries and observe ways in which these countries become more similar to one another. Conversely, studies with a wider or global focus are more likely to make divergence predictions, since they stress the differences between each welfare state.

IV. Conclusion

To sum up, contemporary studies on welfare states have already been theoretically well established. Since the main definition tool—the welfare state—is not exclusively or officially defined, more and more scholars begin their studies by redefining the range of meaning of the welfare state. In addition, new methodologies have been used in research,

though comparison is still the main method used to judge the development of a welfare state. Clear and quantitative standards are still needed in order to objectively judge the development of a welfare state. Though pre-existing studies theoretically explain the modification of welfare states, conflict between studies is fierce. Definition tools and unchallengeable quantitative standards are the two key factors in overcoming such conflict, and it is for this reason I have composed this review.

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