

## The 'Chameleon' Korean welfare regime

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## **The 'Chameleon' Korean welfare regime**

### **Abstract**

The path-breaking work of Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990) on 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' was based on 18 OECD countries in 1980, and subsequently has been largely limited to 'advanced Western' OECD nations. However, this ignores much work on the East Asian Welfare Model. This article aims to export the 'welfare modeling business' to East Asia in general and to the Korea in particular. We search for articles in English or Korean which aim to classify Korea. We find 26 studies that are rather different in terms of concepts, measures and analysis. Korea seems to be a 'chameleon' changing its appearances to different viewers, with some support for almost every possible classification, apart from the Social Democratic regime. We find six possible types: liberal; conservative; hybrid; East Asian Welfare Model as the fourth regime; East Asian Welfare Model as a distinct regime; and underdeveloped. In addition, some studies suggest that Korea is moving too fast to enable a clear classification. The modal conclusion is of a fourth regime, but there are some differences between writers and over time, with scholars writing in Korean having a rather different view to scholars writing in English, and with early Korean writers placing Korea in the original triad, but later studies favouring a distinct world. We conclude that it is not clear if the Western welfare modelling business can be successfully exported to other parts of the world without a change in strategy (concepts and measures).

### **Introduction**

The path-breaking work of Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990) on 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' has become one of the most cited works in social policy, and has led to the development of the 'welfare modelling business' (Abrahamson 1999; Powell and Barrientos 2011). Based on 18 OECD countries in 1980, he pointed to 'three worlds' of conservative, liberal and social democratic welfare regimes. The 'Three Worlds' has been subject to conceptual and methodological critique, with much subsequent discussion on the number and composition of worlds (eg Arts and Gelissen 2002, 2010; Powell and Barrientos 2011). Moreover, it is narrow in three senses of sectors; time; and countries. First, the three worlds were largely based on cash benefits and excluded services (eg Jensen 2008; Stoy 2014). Second, welfare regime typology analyses are often rather static (Scruggs 2007; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2011), with Esping-Andersen's (1990) original data being from around 1980. Third, the three worlds consist largely of 'advanced Western' OECD nations. Ebbinghaus (2012) reports a meta-analysis of 11 follow up studies which range from 11 to 25 countries, although most focus on Esping-Andersen's 16 to 18 OECD countries, with problems of a selective and biased sample (Scruggs 2007; Ebbinghaus 2012; Hudson and Kühner 2012). Hudson and Kühner (2012) write that it is necessary to extend the inclusiveness of the 'welfare modelling business' in a manner that reflects diverse and highly significant cases beyond the Western lens that dominates the literature.

This article focuses on the third issue. We aim to export the 'welfare modeling business' to East Asia in general and to Korea in particular. Kam (2012) notes that East Asian countries are underrepresented in the 18 members of the OECD studied by Esping-Andersen, with only Japan included in the original three worlds. As a result, there are calls for expanding the scope of the studies on the classification of welfare regimes to those in East Asia (eg Goodman et al. 1998; Holliday 2000; Aspalter 2002; Gough and Wood 2004; Ramesh 2004;

Ku and Jones (2007). Kwon (1997) states that there have been a few attempts to put East Asian welfare systems into a typology of welfare regimes (Gould 1993; Jones 1993; Goodman and Peng 1996), but none of them seems to capture successfully the essential characteristics in common among nations in this region. Hudson and Kühner (2012: 40) write that one of the thorniest questions within both welfare regime analysis and this wider discourse on 'productive welfare' has been how best to classify East Asian states.

More specifically, we focus on the 'theoretically important case' (Hudson and Kühner 2009: 39) of Korea. Esping-Andersen (1999: 90) writes that Japan, possibly with Korea and Taiwan, poses a 'particularly intriguing challenge' to welfare regime typologies because it is such a unique version of capitalism: sustained full employment, highly regarded internal labour markets and industrial structure, compressed earnings, and a relatively egalitarian distribution of income, all overlaid by a rather authoritarian employment structures, a conservative 'one-party' democracy, and 'corporatism without labour'. Ebbinghaus (2012: 6) states that some new OECD countries outside Europe such as Korea were 'commonly ignored'. Korea is omitted in all of 11 comparative welfare regime studies cited in Arts and Gelissen (2010). After discussing the transferability of the 'Three Worlds' approaches, we focus on the East Asian Welfare Model (EAWM) in general and on Korea in particular.

### **Extending the Three Worlds**

It has been argued that the welfare modelling business is based on an unclear business strategy. In particular, its conceptual criteria are not fully clear in Esping-Andersen's (1990, 1999) contributions or in many subsequent contributions (Powell and Barrientos 2011). The original 1990 account was based on the criteria of de-commodification, social stratification and the (neglected) welfare mix. The 1999 revision stressed more social risks, and the criteria of de-familization and the welfare mix. Some scholars argue that the concept of de-familization is vital in understanding East Asian regimes (eg Croissant 2004; Peng 2011). However, many empirical studies focus on de-commodification (eg Rudra 2007; Kam 2012), with little attention paid to stratification, the welfare mix or social risks (Powell and Barrientos 2004, 2011; Scruggs and Allan 2008). Kam (2012) states that a complete re-assessment of the empirical underpinnings of welfare regimes must explore the other dimension of welfare regimes highlighted in three worlds but as noted above, the dimensions changed to some degree between the 1990 and 1999 texts.

There are a number of arguments that suggest that the worlds of welfare may be a historically and geographically bound empirical typology. Rice (2013) stresses that the historical origins of welfare regimes link to the religious and state-building history of Western Europe, which were fundamentally shaped by two historical developments, the rise of Protestantism against the dominant Catholic tradition and the relationship between political rulers and organized religion in the early days of state formation. She proposes an ideal-typical welfare regime framework of four ideal-typical worlds: liberal, conservative, solidaristic and residualistic. She argues that one advantage of her ideal-typical welfare regime framework over a historically and geographically bound empirical typology is that it is not limited to Western welfare states but can also be used to analyze social policy developments in regions such as East Asia.

Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2011) note that a cornerstone of the regime typology is its foundation in the three main political movements of Western Europe, that is, social

democracy, Christian democracy and liberalism. Vrooman (2012) points out that Esping-Andersen's typology stems from 'power resources theory'. He goes on to state that the analyses could be extended to other traits and countries, but argues that Mediterranean and Eastern Asiatic countries were not included in the present analysis, because this would merely have assessed their degree of liberalism, corporatism and social democracy; a fair analysis would also have to include variables that are characteristic of these possibly distinct regimes (p. 472, fn).

This points to the danger of the 'Western lens' (Hudson and Kühner 2012) or 'ethnocentric western social research' (Walker and Wong 1996). Lee and Ku (1997) discuss whether it is such a good idea to try to understand East Asian welfare with the help of a conceptual framework and core components developed within a Western context: might it be better to search for another set of concepts and indicators from within the East Asian context, which allow for a better description but still follow the logic and methods of welfare regime study? Similarly, Kwon (1997) argues that Esping-Andersen's regimes represent a European historical product which cannot easily be applied to nations which have a quite different historical and political background.

### **Extending the Three Worlds: the East Asian Welfare Model**

Commentators discuss a number of different approaches to the EAWM (eg Croissant 2004; Peng 2004; Kim, P.H. 2010; Peng and Wong 2010; Kam 2012). First, the orientalist or cultural approach stresses the framing of social policy by a supposed or real Confucian welfare culture. Culture thus provides the foundations for a model of the family-based, so-called 'Oikonomic' or 'Confucian Welfare State' (eg Jones 1990, 1993).

Second, political economy (Kim, P.H. 2010) or public management of social risks (Croissant 2004) approaches focus on the terms 'Productivist Welfare Capitalism' (Holliday 2000) or 'Developmental Welfare Systems' (Midgley 1986, 1995; Tang 2000; White and Goodman 1998). The Developmental Welfare System approach is sometimes differentiated into two strands, with Korea and Taiwan within the selective (rather than the inclusive) strand (eg Kwon 2005).

We focus on the third welfare regime approach which stresses institutional traits, political structures and social outcomes of national welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999). Esping-Andersen (1999: 90-93) tends to regard the EAWM as a hybrid between conservative and liberal welfare states. In the preface to the Chinese edition of 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism', Esping-Andersen points out that East Asian welfare regimes can be interpreted in one of two ways: either as a hybrid of the liberal and conservative model or as an emerging fourth welfare regime. (Lee and Ku 1997; Kam 2012). However, it is not simply a question of whether countries such as Japan and Korea can be seen as part of the EAWM, but whether the EAWM accepts or rejects Esping-Andersen's three worlds.

Ku and Jones Finer (2007) observe that most of the studies which discuss the EAWM tend to be conceptual rather than empirical. Kam (2012) notes that in order to see East Asian countries as a fourth type depends on internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity: there must be significant similarities in the welfare systems between the East Asian countries; and that the welfare systems in these East Asian countries are significantly different from those of the 18 OECD members studied by Esping-Andersen (1990). However, Kam (2012) notes that

there is not a consensus on the existence of these two preconditions. While some writers argue that the EAWM represents a fourth world of welfare capitalism, others argue that East Asian countries fit into liberal or conservative worlds (also see below). The views on the similarities and differences in welfare systems between East Asian countries are equally diverse. While some writers stress similarity, others argue that it is misleading to think in terms of one homogeneous and overarching East Asian Welfare Model (see below). We now turn from the general EAWM to the Korean welfare regime.

### **The Korean Welfare Regime**

Elements of Korea's modern welfare state were first introduced in its Third Republic (1961-1972), eight years after the truce ending the Korean War (1950~1953) and a year after the military coup d'état led by General Park Chung Hee. Park's authoritarian regime implemented a series of social security schemes (Aspalter 2006; Yang 2010; Kwon 2014). However, the nation's minimal role of state welfare and strong emphasis on self-reliance with its near-full employment and deep-rooted tradition of family support could hardly exert its protective role in the face of the economic crisis in the late 1990s (Ringen et al 2011). Consequently, the nation's public social expenditure jumped from 2.8 percent of GDP in 1990 to 9.3 percent in 2012, albeit still far lower than OECD average of 21.8 percent (OECD, 2014). Coverage of social insurance programmes for public pensions, employment insurance and minimum living standard guarantee still covered less than half the population in 2012 (Kwon 2014: 224).

We carried out a search with key words of 'Korea', 'welfare state', 'welfare regime' for journal articles that classified the Korean welfare state between 1990 and 2012 (see Appendix for studies). We place studies written in English (E) and Korean (K) into six types: liberal; conservative; hybrid; EAWM as the fourth regime; EAWM as a distinct regime; and underdeveloped. In addition, some studies suggest that Korea is moving too fast to enable a clear classification. We translate Korean quotations into English.

#### ***Liberal Regime***

Cho (K2001: 237) argues that Korea can be categorized into the liberal welfare regime by comparing the nation's total social security expenditure and total tax burden in relation to its GDP with other welfare states. Choi (K2003: 853) concludes that Korea belongs to the liberal welfare regime after dividing 28 OECD member nations into five categories including conservative, quasi-conservative, social democratic, quasi-liberal and liberal after conducting cluster analysis with OECD 1990~1997 datasets. She utilizes Castles' (2002) measure of 'percentage shares of different types of social expenditure' to analyze welfare typology. However, these studies are largely based on expenditure data that Esping-Andersen (1990) regards as insufficient.

#### ***Conservative Regime***

Nam (K2002) develops scores of Korea's decommodification, stratification, public-private mix and familiarisation. Korea's decommodification scores turn out to be similar to those of conservative regimes and the familialism score is also very high. Stratification scores are medium for both conservative and liberal but stay low for social democratic criteria. Nam argues that the Korean welfare regime is in general closer to 'conservative' than any other regime. Kim, J.W. (K2005: 409) estimates social welfare expenditure in 2000 by five parties including state, enterprise, market, non-profit organization and family. 'Such a family-

oriented welfare mix structure in Korea indicates that the fundamental source of solidarity of the Korean social welfare system is family, and therefore the welfare regime is conservative.’

### ***Hybrid Regime***

Hudson & Kühner (E2009) add productive to protective dimensions in their fuzzy set ideal type analysis of 23 OECD countries over three time points (1994, 1998 and 2004). They note that much of the early critique of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) approach emanated from those concerned with the East Asian nations, and a common claim was that Esping-Andersen had overlooked the key features of a fourth world of welfare located within the region in which ‘productivist’ economic goals drive social policy. They present four fuzzy sets: two productive (investment in education; labour market training) and two protective (income protection; employment protection). They find nine productive-protective groups, which presents a challenge to Holliday (E2000) [see below] as neither of the two included East Asian countries actually qualifies as a purely productive ideal type. Korea is a member of the weak-productive-protective hybrid type alongside countries like Greece, Ireland, Switzerland and Italy, while Japan is seen as a weak-protective hybrid alongside countries like Spain, France, the Czech Republic and Portugal.

Hudson and Kühner (E2012) update (to 2005/2010) and extend their earlier work beyond the OECD, presenting a classification of welfare states in 55 high and higher-middle income countries. Their findings are in line with their earlier challenge to Holiday (E2000). It is again the USA and New Zealand, and not the East Asian countries that are placed most firmly in the purely productive type. Korea joins the productive- protective type, i.e. rather than subordinating protective to productive welfare functions, it manages to combine both to a significant extent. In their view, the ‘productive-protective’ category is an ‘ideal’ rather than a ‘hybrid’ type. However, in our terms, it is a hybrid type (ie combining productive and protective) rather than ‘purely productive’ or ‘purely protective’.

Wilding (E2008) discusses whether it is still useful to think in terms of an EAWM, and to characterise East Asian social policy as ‘productive’? After examining recent developments in social policy in Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, he argues that Korea is the test case for the productivist thesis, but it now may be more useful now to see these four societies as making up two clusters. Hong Kong and Singapore are still essentially productivist in their orientation. However, there has been more change in Taiwan and even more change in Korea. Wilding concludes that Korea now seems more of a welfare hybrid than a clear example of productivism.

### ***East Asian Welfare Regime as Fourth World***

A number of writers place Korea within the EAWM. However, as we noted above, there is a major difference between approaches that accept Esping-Andersen’s approach and regard the EAWM as a fourth type (discussed here), and those that consider that his approach is not appropriate for East Asia (discussed in the following section).

Some writers take the ‘Three Worlds’ as their starting point, claiming that Asian countries constitute a further ‘world’. Jones (E1990) adds the fourth regime on top of the three regimes. Similarly, Aspalter (E2006: 290) examines the EAWM in terms of five countries of Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and suggests the EAWM as the fourth ‘ideal-typical welfare regime’. Holliday (E2000) adds a new criterion – ‘the relationship between social and

economic policy' – to Esping-Andersen's list. He proposes a productivist welfare capitalism regime that 'stands alongside' Esping-Andersen's three worlds (p. 706). He finds that although some common features of 'productivist welfare capitalism' exist between his four countries, there are three different clusters: 'facilitative' (e.g. Hong Kong), 'development-universalist' (e.g. Japan in particular, and Taiwan and Korea, though limited), and 'developmental-particularist' (e.g. Singapore).

Lee and Ku (E1997) claim that their study could be the first to test for the existence of an East Asian welfare model – namely the developmental/productivist regime – using empirically hard data. They analyse data on 15 indicators for 20 countries from the 1980s and 1990s, published by international organizations (ILO, IMF, OECD and WB) including the typical European welfare states and the East Asian cases (Japan, Korea and Taiwan). The indicators are much wider than Esping-Andersen (1990), but are not justified beyond the claim that 'it is better to compare welfare regimes with a large number of indicators derived from different concepts. Theoretically, the more indicators we adopt, the more precisely we may be able to understand the regime characteristics across many dimensions.' Factor analysis finds four factors: 'developmentalism', 'corporatism', 'individual responsibility in social security', and 'international trade competition'. Using cluster analysis they point to a new group, consisting of Taiwan and South Korea, which is distinct from Esping-Andersen's three regimes – unlike Japan, which remains a composite of various regime types. This new welfare regime coincides with the theme of developmentalism as proposed by scholars such as Holliday (E2000), with regime characteristics including: low/ medium social security expenditure, high social investment, more extensive gender discrimination in salary, medium/high welfare stratification, a high non-coverage rate for pensions, high individual welfare loading, and high family welfare responsibility. When compared with Esping-Andersen's three regimes, the East Asian developmental regime shows similarity with his conservative model, in respect of welfare stratification, while the non-coverage of welfare entitlements is similar to his liberal model. There is virtually no evidence of any similarity between the developmental welfare regime and Esping-Andersen's social democratic regime type.

On the other hand, Kam (E2012) finds a lack of sufficient conditions for the development of an all-encompassing East Asian welfare regime as far as health de-commodification is concerned. According to cluster analysis, the five East Asian countries spread into three clusters (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan; Singapore; and Hong Kong) rather than concentrate in one cluster.

Rudra (E2007) claims to build on Esping-Andersen (1990) to classify 'less developed countries'. Although she argues that examining government budget priorities is insufficient (cf Esping-Andersen 1990) in developing nations, she uses spending and outcome variables due to the dearth and reliability of data. She finds three clusters: promoting market dependence of citizens (a productive welfare state), protecting certain individuals from the market (a protective welfare state) and a third group with elements of both (the weak dual welfare state). Korea (and Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia) is in a diverse cluster with (eg) Chile and Greece that privileges commodification over de-commodification in promoting market development (a productive welfare state).

Abu Sharkh and Gough (E2010) examine the claim that a small number of distinct 'welfare regimes' can be identified across the developing (or the original non-OECD) world. They

argue that Esping-Andersen's (1990) regime approach remains a fruitful paradigm for thinking about social policy across the developing as well as the developed world, but it requires a radical reconceptualization and broadening of focus from 'welfare state regimes' to 'welfare regimes'. First, the welfare mix must be extended beyond 'the welfare state', financial and other markets, and family/household systems. Second, the 'decommodification' of labor has less salience as a measure of security in societies where labor markets are imperfect and livelihoods diffuse. Third, political mobilizations in many developing countries are more diffuse and particularistic with less intentional impacts on state policies. They use cluster analysis of two fundamental components of the welfare mix and welfare outcomes for the 65 countries of the non-OECD world that remained after excluding 'micro-states' and those without data availability. Korea appears in Cluster B ('Successful Informal Security Regimes') in both periods (along with China, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand in 2000). In 2000 it contained 16 countries with good welfare outcomes and moderate levels of state responsibility, but with a smaller or absent role for social protection and lower levels of public social spending. However, the degree of variation within the cluster is rather high, and culturally and historically it is a disparate group. They point out that in countries like Korea, with social protection systems mandated by governments but administered privately, the mandated contributions of employers and employees will not figure as government expenditures or as social security contributions. Korea would probably be identified as proto-welfare states (cluster A) if the data were more sensitive. Rudra (E2007) and Abu Sharkh and Gough (E2010), then, conclude that East Asian nations do not cluster in their own regime, but are found in the same cluster as nations from other Continents.

### ***East Asian Welfare Regime as a Distinct World***

Some writers appear to reject the relevance of the 'three worlds' for the EAWM. However, unlike most of the other categories discussed here, many of these studies are largely conceptual rather than empirical, focusing on whether Western theories and measures can be applied to the EAWM and to Korea. Park and Jung (E2008: 57) note that not only do the Asian countries tend to be different from the Western types, but different from themselves as they found three groups, which suggests the difficulties in grouping the Asian nations into a single category. Na (K2010:26) writes that 'the origin and the growth of the Korean Welfare State (Regime) can be understood and explained in the theoretical framework of the authoritative developmental state.' He suggests that a new approach to examine the EAWM is needed, as some writers point out that the importation of Western theory to East Asian soil cannot match its intrinsic social and historical texture.

Kwon (E1997) examines whether the welfare systems in Japan and Korea could be placed within Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes. He writes that despite some similarities between the conservative welfare regimes on the one hand and the welfare systems in Japan and Korea on the other, the type of conservative welfare regimes does not successfully capture the distinctive characteristics of the welfare systems in these two countries. Despite the Bismarckian strategy behind the welfare initiatives, the class politics in these two countries does not quite fit into what Esping-Andersen formulates in his typology of conservative welfare regimes. Class has limited applicability in explaining the politics in Japan and Korea in general and the development of the welfare systems in particular. He concludes that there is a strong case for an 'East Asian welfare regime type', at least as regards Japan and Korea.



### *Underdeveloped*

Esping-Andersen (1997) states that it is arguably the case that the Japanese welfare system is still in the process of evolution; that it has not yet arrived at the point of crystallization. As a recent ad hoc construct, the Japanese welfare-state model may not yet have sunk its roots. It has not yet cultivated powerful institutionalized interests in favor of itself as have the European welfare states. Some writers make similar points that Korea is not a welfare state yet, and its welfare system cannot be analyzed in parallel with other mature welfare states. Kim, Y. B. (K2002:102) criticizes conclusions of Confucian welfare states or liberal welfare models, asserting that Korea's welfare is not mature enough to be categorized into any welfare model. Baek and Ahn (K2009: 231) trace the public spending on welfare back to as early as 1970, concluding that they could not find any structural formation of the welfare state in Korea. Therefore, it is premature to place Korea in a category as in terms of its trajectory, it may in future take the form of either liberal or conservative model. They also conduct another cluster analysis with variables of welfare state attributes such as universalism/selectivism, cash benefit/service benefit, public spending/private spending, which results in Korea being in its own 'cluster' of one country. Kim, K. (2009) concludes after conducting cluster analysis based on an OECD dataset that Korea belongs to a same group with Mexico and Turkey: Korea has yet to become a welfare state despite the expansion of welfare state in the late 1990s.

### *Dynamic Perspective*

In contrast to the 'frozen landscapes' or 'path dependency' of European welfare states, a dynamic perspective suggests that some nations are moving too fast to be captured in regime terms by a static classification. The fast-changing nature of Korea's welfare cannot be comprehended on a 'snapshot' approach, In other words, it is difficult to detect the trajectory of Korean welfare model (Hudson and Kühner, E2009), with different interpretations of Korea's trajectory claiming that it may be heading for the liberal (Yang, E2011), conservative or liberal (Baek & Ahn, K2009) in the future.

Hudson and Kühner (E2009) find that Korea moved away from the more productive ideal types in 1994 towards more protective types, which conflicts with the commonplace claims that Korea provides an illustration of a productivist welfare state. One explanation is Korea's 'extraordinary emphasis on education spending' which is 'perhaps the most striking feature of its welfare state'. It is fully within the education set at each point of their analysis, but does not gain 'additional points' for being the clear leader in the OECD. They speculate that it may well be that Korea will rejoin the productive-plus set in the near future and, if its recent expansion of social security continues, it may even be a candidate for the productive-protective set in the future. Updating and extending their earlier work, Hudson and Kühner (E2012) state that Korea joins the productive- protective type (ie has changed classification).

Holliday (E2000: 721) predicts that it is 'highly unlikely' that East Asian nations will move beyond productivist welfare capitalism in the foreseeable future. Lee and Ku (E1997) ask if the developmental regime will maintain its core components, especially after the 1990s, in the face of continuing, rapid global change, as their analysis pointed to a shift in the position of the British welfare state since the 1980s. Wilding (2008) points to significance changes in Korea, which seems to be moving away from productivism to a more hybrid system. He claims that the terms 'social development state' or 'social investment state' seems better to capture where developments in Korea are currently pointing.

This dynamic perspective, then, includes two rather different interpretations. First, the dynamic nature of Korean welfare leaves open the possibility of regime shift as suggested by Esping-Andersen on UK's transformation (1999: 87). For example, Korea may be moving away from productivism and from familialism. This suggests that Korea can be classified but that too much stress cannot be placed on older studies. Second, Korea is moving too fast to be classified.

## Discussion

Details of the 26 studies are given in the Appendix, and are summarized in Table 1. Just over half the studies are by Korean authors, with ten written in Korean and therefore inaccessible to most Western scholars. All but one of the studies cite Esping-Andersen (1990), but some discuss his work largely in passing. Around half of the studies are conceptual, while the other half are statistical, with eight studies using cluster analysis. Eight focus only on Korea, while eight focus on East Asia with a further ten focusing on wider sample nations. Several quantitative studies use only expenditure data for their welfare regime analysis (Choi 2003; Kim, J.W. 2005; Kim, K. 2009). Decommodification is measured in other studies (eg Rudra 2007; Kam 2012), but few use the other concepts, with issues of stratification and the welfare mix relatively neglected (cf Powell and Barrientos, 2011).

The Korean welfare regime seems to be a 'chameleon' changing its appearances to different viewers, with some support for almost every possible classification, apart from the Social Democratic regime. However, the modal conclusion is that Korea is part of a fourth regime, followed by a distinct world, and then immature. Only four studies place Korea in an original world: conservative (Nam 2002; Kim, J.W. 2005) or liberal (Cho 2001; Choi 2003). It is noticeable that all of these are Korean-language article written by Koreans in the early 2000s. Moreover, of the ten with the wider sample of East and West nations, only Choi (2003) places Korea in one of original triad. There appears to be some temporal pattern, with early Korean writers placing Korea in the original triad, but later studies tending to favour a distinct world.

*Table 1: Summary of studies*

	Liberal	Conser -vative	hybrid	fourth regime	Distinc t world	Imma -ture	others*	total
<b>Author's name</b>								
Korean	2	2		1	4	4	1	14
non Korean			3	8			1	12
<b>Author's location/language</b>								
Korea/Korean	2	2		1	2	3		10
Asia/English				4	2	1	2	9
West/English			3	4				7
<b>Methods</b>								
Conceptual	1		1	5	4	2		13

Statistical Theories	1	2	2	4		2	2	13
based on Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999)	2	2		9			2	15
Sceptical on exporting welfare regime or only briefly quoting Esping-Andersen			3		3	4		10
No Esping-Andersen references					1			1
Case								
only Korea	1	2		1	2	2		8
East Asian nations			1	5	2			8
East + West nations	1		2	3		2	2	10
Timing of Writing								
90s				1	1			2
00~05	2	2		4	1	1		10
06~			3	4	2	3	2	14

\* Kam (2012) cannot identify a distinct East Asian model and Park & Jung's (2008) conclusion is rather ambiguous to be put in any of the cells.

## Conclusion

It is not only Korea that has been neglected (Ebbinghaus 2012; 6), but also Korean scholars writing in their own language, resulting in some earlier conclusions needing to be revised. For example, Peng (2004: 389-90) claims 'it has been widely acknowledged that... welfare regimes in these countries (Korea and Japan) also do not fit in any of Gosta Esping-Andersen's welfare regime models'. However, we have seen that some Korean scholars *did* fit Korea into the original model. Moreover, Ku and Jones (2007: 122) state that although some regard East Asian welfare as conservative, more studies agree on the difficulty of fitting it to any of Esping-Andersen's regime types, and have therefore renamed it variously as Oikonomic, productivist, developmentalist, Confucian, and even hybrid. However, we have shown that the modal conclusion favours a fourth regime, but there appears to be some different conclusions between scholars and over time.

The most important issue is whether the Western welfare modelling business can be successfully exported to other parts of the world. On the one hand, some studies suggest that the concepts, measures and types of Esping-Andersen (1990) can be exported: for example, Korea is a liberal welfare regime (Cho 2001, 2002; Choi 2003). This implies that the criteria of de-commodification, social stratification and the welfare mix (Esping-Andersen 1990) are appropriate analytical templates. Rice (2013) proposes that her 'ideal-typical welfare regime framework' can be used to analyze social policy developments in regions such as East Asia while a 'historically and geographically bound empirical typology' is limited to Western welfare states.

On the other hand, other studies imply that a Western export of the welfare modelling business represents 'ethnocentric western social research' (Walker and Wong 1996) or a 'Western lens' (Hudson and Kühner 2012) which can be criticized for being "dubious and misleading... (for using) Western experience as some kind of yardstick (Wilding 2000; 76)". According to Goodman and Peng (1996: 192), 'given the relative youth of the subject, East Asian scholars of social welfare have, until recently, tended to rely on and accept Western analyses of their own social welfare regimes rather than genetic indigenous analyses.' They go on to argue that East Asian welfare does 'deviate fundamentally from Western experience' and needs 'to be examined in their own particular context' (pp. 193-4). Takegawa (2005: 160) criticizes 'the uncritical adoption of regime theory to non-European countries' as 'welfare orientalism' which has three trends including Swedocentric, Eurocentric and ethnocentric trends. He argues that what must be done first is to analyze the welfare state in the context of the structure and history of the society in which it is placed. In short, understanding East Asian welfare requires concepts and indicators from within the East Asian context (eg Kwon 1997; Lee and Ku 1997).

Our view is that the welfare modelling business cannot be exported without a change in strategy (concepts and measures). Policy transfer of terminology, concepts and theories associated with 'welfare', 'welfare states' and 'welfare regimes' from West to East are problematic, as these involve more than just a combination of institutions but contains historical, political and societal elements (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999). The Western welfare modelling business needs at least 'radical reconceptualization' (Abu Sharkh and Gough 2010) or "systematic overhaul rather than ad hoc modifications" (Kim, P.H. 2010: 414) for exportation.

Finally, we have reviewed studies from the period 1990 to 2012. However, it is not clear if past conclusions will hold in the future as both the past trajectory and future direction of the Korean welfare state is far from clear (Croissant, 2004; Peng, 2004; Kim, T., 2008, Wilding 2008, Hudson and Kühner, 2009), with different interpretations claiming that it may be heading for the conservative (Ramesh, 2003), liberal (Yang, 2011), conservative or liberal (Baek & Ahn, K2009) or even Social Democratic welfare model (Kuhnle, 2004) in the future. According to Wilding (2008), in some ways, the argument as to where to locate Korea at this moment in time is less important than trying to see where Korea is going. As Kim, Y.M. (2009; 175) puts it, Korea has so rapidly reinforced and changed its welfare state that academia seems to fail in catching up with its development. After the 10 year ruling of pro-welfare administrations, the nation's pro-market conservative party has come back to office since 2008. The conservative Lee Myung-bak administration (2008-2013) has been widely

regarded as significantly reducing the expansion of the welfare state (Kim, K. and Kim, S.W. 2009; Choi 2010). Under the current administration of Park Geun-hye, a daughter of the late dictator Park Chung Hee, Korean welfare may face another round of reduced growth. However, in charting these developments we should consider the rather neglected views of Korean scholars.

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