



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Comparative Analysis of Current Developments in Studies on the System Secures the Social Sustainability

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In order to figure out the main points and limits of current studies on social security the most important fundamental system protects the sustainability of a society from a political science perspective, we have composed this literature review. Current studies on social security have been reviewed in a comparatively systematic way to figure out differences of the measures scholars adopt to answer the basic questions for understanding social security. To do so, a new comprehensive system has been designed, so that the studies of each school can be compared from different perspectives and constructed around the three basic questions of social security studies. After present the measures scholars adopt to recognise social security systems, we find studies indicate that scholars tend to use political factors to explain social security system modifications, but describing and testing the decisive correlation between them meet some difficulties. The predicts on the development of the way to secure the social sustainability gather in two dimensions, the cause of the appearances of these opposite two dimensions has been figured out by comparison. Then, comments on existing studies and the missions need to be completed by further studies have been give in conclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social security as the most important fundamental component of sustainability of a society is closely related to its economy and society, it is directly designed and operated by its politics (Hicks 1999; Stephens et al. 1999). Unlike social security studies from other academic perspectives, political science always tries to identify the essential political mechanism creating a country's social security system. By focusing on political factors' impact on social security development, the structure and the qualitative development of a social security system, in addition to the political results of the running of social security system, existing studies usually start from a macro and supply perspective, preferring to use official statistical data on macro supply to support their arguments. Compared with political science studies, economic studies on social security usually identify the correlation between the economy and social security by testing their mutual effects, and paying attention to the economic efficiency of the running of social security system, preferring quantitative methods and statistical data to evaluate national social security development and test the hypothesis on the correlation. Sociologists focus on 'how a society modifies its social security, and what social security does to the society'. They also test mutual interactions between their independent and dependent variables, as do scholars from the other two schools, but prefer using data obtained through surveys and usually start from a micro and demand perspective.

This review will examine the general nature and value of the development of existing studies from a political perspective. The fact that studies with the same arguments may adopt different methods, or studies may use similar methods to support very different arguments, seriously undermines the reliability of arguments put forward by existing reviews, especially in the case of individual countries. To eliminate that problem, a proper review, comparison and evaluation of the major aspects of

existing studies is necessary. We designed this literature review around the three basic questions (How to categorise a social security system? How to study and explain the modification of a social security system? How to comment on and predict the development of a social security system?), one or all of which existing studies try to answer (Esping-Andersen 1990; Myles and Quadagno 2002). Table 1 displays the structure of the literature review.

Table 1: The structure of the literature review

Research questions Measure schools	Ideological	Institutionalism		Re- arrangement
How to categorise a social security system?	Typology	Universal Level, Benefits, Market Relationships		
How to study and explain the modification of a social security system?	Industrialisation, globalisation	Political institutionalism	Cross-class alliances	
	Communist, Productivist			
How to comment on and predict the development of a social security system?	Convergence vs. Divergence			

In this way, existing studies can be analysed, compared and evaluated from as many points of view as possible. After completing this review, comments on existing studies and points for further research are presented as a conclusion, and the significance of the existing study for improving the overall state of research and scholarship in understanding the development of social security the most important foundation for securing social sustainability has also been pointed out.

2. ANALYSIS

Though Germany initiated social security to strengthen its sustainability in the later nineteenth century, it was significantly expanded by Britain during and after World War II (WWII) (Robson 1957). Britain even created the phrase ‘the welfare state’ to distinguish itself from the so-called ‘warfare state’, Nazi Germany, when their governments intervened relatively intensively in the market to collect resources to support social security (Williamson and Weiss 1979). In 1948, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, social security became a generally accepted human right, though its nature was still debated. Since the definition and content of social security varies across states, scholars prefer to use supports (both in kind and in cash), services and welfare whose supply is not expected to yield economic profit, to describe it, using as their key term either ‘the welfare state’ or ‘social security’. Though some differences between the perspectives and main points of ‘welfare state’ and ‘social security’ exist, those two phrases have usually been used synonymously. As no scholar officially distinguished between social security and welfare, and the two overlap in design, in practice and in statistics, more and more scholars began to use descriptive methods to define their topic: Adema and Ladaique’s (2009) report *‘How Expensive is The Welfare State?’*, published by the OECD, uses nine social security departments to describe a welfare state. From a political science perspective, the political connotations of these studies make the phenomenon of alternatively using the two different phrases common. In this study, ‘social security’ has been used to represent the meanings associated with both phrases.

2.1 How to categorise a social security system?

2.1.1 Typology

The typological approach to classifying a social security system actually appears later than other approaches, but has grown to dominate the mainstream of social security studies. Esping-Andersen (1990), Korpi (1983), Hicks and Swank (1984), Stephens (1979), etc. are representative of this trend. Esping-Andersen’s masterpiece *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* epitomises the most popular style of this approach, classifying social security systems in advanced modern western countries under three headings: social democratic, conservative and liberal. It has become customary to

classify systems by type and identify their specifications and mechanisms. Emphasizing the differences between social security systems, these scholars classify each as an existing type or hybrid, or create a new type, and use existing theories, tools and inferences to test the subjects.

These scholars have chosen a broad approach to social security (Esping-Andersen 1990) that treats issues of employment, wages and overall macroeconomic steering along with the narrow approach's social amelioration, which composes the main body of social security and usually frames it in terms of political economy. They generally agree that some typical kinds of social security exist everywhere, though their theories are typically Eurocentric since they are primarily developed from the cases of advanced western countries. Since the publication of Esping-Andersen's (1990) famous book, 'social democratic', 'conservative' and 'liberal' have become the most popular labels for different social security systems and new types have been added to compensate for existing deficiencies or to label newly-developed non-European states, such as 'Japanese or Developmental Capitalism Style' (Esping-Andersen 1997; Miyamoto 2003), 'Asian-Pacific style' (Tyabji 1993) or 'East Asian Style' (Peng and Wong 2010) (sometimes called the 'Confucian style'), etc., though those categories are disputed among scholars. Those new types, created following the same logic, can be assigned to a 'Culture & Region' group, since cultural, historical and regional factors have played decisive roles in their creation.

Different scholars build their classifications by different methods. The generally accepted method developed by Esping-Andersen (1990), using the two dimensions of de-commodification and de-stratification, have been adopted to classify different social security systems; Figure 1 shows their operational principle. However, as testable standards are not provided for the two dimensions, these two popular and widely accepted parameters are still qualitative. This weakness generally exists in all classification methods, making it hard to compare the classifications developed by different methods or where the same methods are used to support different arguments.

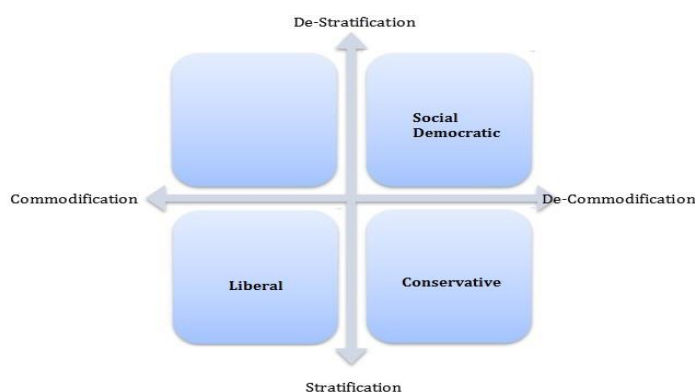


Figure 1: Parameters for social security distribution

*Resource: Esping-Andersen, Gosta. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press.

As the most popular approach, Esping-Andersen's two parameters are used as examples to show the development of classification methods of this group. Esping-Andersen (1990) and his supporters (Liu 2013; Inductivo 1997; Kwon 1997; Jacobs 1998) argued that de-commodification and de-stratification are two ideal and final aims for social security to achieve, and the key qualities that differentiate current social security systems from others. In other words, a current social security program should ultimately aim for de-commodification and de-stratification to compensate for the 'fair-play' market economy's faults. As ideological and historical factors were included in explaining differences between social security systems, they have also been used as characteristics to compensate for the method's only being equipped to assess social security systems qualitatively. Typological scholars append many criteria, such as culture, historical path and region, to the definitions of different types (Peng and Wong 2010). This causes other problems, the main one being that those criteria are the results of the studies of one or more types of social security, but after that, they become the standards to classify other social security systems.

Clearly, using such methods to identify social security sets up a typology system, using the results developed from advanced western systems to categorise others. Using this method, it is relatively easy to create images of different systems, but the reliability of the classifications remains questionable. Besides, the parameters used to classify social security systems are still qualitative. How to test those classifications quantitatively is a question scholars still need to answer. Since different systems increasingly adopt the same programs, operations, finance methods, etc., distinguishing between them is becoming difficult (Wang, Caminada and Goudswaard 2014).

2.1.2 Universal level, benefits & market relationships

As state social security systems become increasingly alike, scholars are trying to find generally applicable standards to show the differences between different states. Nowadays, more and more scholars would like to use universal level (both of regions and groups of citizens a system covers), benefit level (how much of citizens' needs a system covers and the compensation level), burden on citizens, resource distribution among regions, relationship between state and market connected by a social security system, etc., to show both qualitative and quantitative characteristics of social security systems (Huang, G. 2013). As Table 2 shows, existing systems can be classified as Universal Pro-Market, Fragmented Generous, Market-Conforming Generous and Fragmented Statist using the three most generally used standards (universal level, benefit level, the relation between state and market connected by a social security system) (Iversen and Sockice 2006). Universal Pro-Market emphasises citizens' general cover and the system's aim of supporting the market. Fragmented Generous emphasises high benefit levels and provides different support to different members. Market-Conforming Generous emphasises cooperation between social security and the market, and also provides high benefit levels to recipients. Fragmented Statist emphasises the need to use social security to support state strategy. Unlike the typology school, scholars in this group ignore the systematic detail and operational characteristics of each system, focusing on more calculable and comparable aspects.

Following this pattern, scholars have carried out more detailed comparisons. Estévez-Abe (2008) chooses four aspects — taxation levels to support social security, universal level, benefit level and functional equivalents — to identify a system, including the use of much statistical data to evaluate these factors. For example, the GDP percentage expended on social security has usually been used to show the integrated benefit level. By this logic, Estévez-Abe (2008) discusses eight possible social security models. As this method dismisses ideological, systematic and institutional characteristics, stratification and commodification are not properly calculated and are replaced by the above four aspects. Thus, different systems can be compared more generally and reliably. With the help of quickly developed statistical tools and abundant statistical data, scholars use measurable and clearly comparable factors to show a social security system's characteristics. Compared with the typological methods, which focus on qualitative results, this group prefers using quantitative standards. Though this method helps us to categorize social security systems based on more generally applicable criteria, underlying ideologies and aims have been ignored. Moreover, some scholars have broadened this approach, including programs hitherto not regarded as part of social security in systems they study to support their arguments.

2.1.3 Re-arrangement

This new group is becoming increasingly influential, analysing the systems of new developing countries by redefining and broadening the range of social security to include new areas while still using pre-existing analytical tools. Some significantly broaden the functions of a welfare state, listing them as national goal, provider and regulator (Takegawa 2005). The mainstream of this group prefer to limit their studies to governmental programs, and also pay great attention to items like industrial and market policies (Estévez-Abe 2008).

They propose to 'rethink the kinds of benefits, scale and nature of redistribution' (Takegawa 2005), highlighting the redistribution function of social security. In their logic, a country whose Gini-coefficient is continuously low must have a well-functioning and comprehensive social security system. If they cannot find a generous advanced western-style social security in that country, they investigate other programs to solve the puzzle they face. By including many policies from different fields, social security is endowed with a social regulatory role. In doing this, they compensate for the

limitations a newly developed country faces in providing social security in many areas. Arguing that social regulation is one of the two basic functions of social security (the other being social security provision), they find a basis for liberally amplifying their definition of the range of a newly developed country's social security, including many industrial policies.

Though studies like this make us rethink the boundaries of national social security, they also make it impossible to generate a generally acceptable comparative result, since the content of a country's social security system and those of its reference countries are different. Other problems exist, the most important being that since social security is closely connected with economic development (e.g. GDP level) and social situations (e.g. proportion of elderly), when we want to identify the size of a country's social security system, we need to use reference countries at the same economic and social development level.

2.2 How to study and explain the modification of a social security system?

2.2.1 Industrialisation, globalisation, post-industrialisation and gender revolution

Post-WWII social security developed quickly in the capitalist west. The first generation of scholars use the earlier phases of industrialisation to illustrate the western increase in social security expenditure (Wilensky and Lebeaux 1958; Kerr et al. 1960; Pryor 1968; Rimlinger 1971; Wilensky 1975), arguing that compared with previous agrarian societies, industrialisation destroyed the social support systems based on kinship and patrimonial traditions, forcing citizens to become wage labourers. Those without labour to sell (the old, the sick, the young) become vulnerable (Pampel and Weiss 1983) and need public help, rapidly increasing public spending on social security (Kerr et al. 1960). To maintain the labour force and achieve coordination and consensus, social security has inevitably expanded, as have the states' roles in supplying social security (Offe 1972; O'Connor 1973).

In this area, the pioneering study is Wilensky (1975). Not only does he empirically test theories on social security expansion, he finds the key correlations among economy development, demographic conditions and social security expenditure. His findings were strengthened by Esping-Andersen's (1990) study on European states' pensions. Kasza (2006) developed this even further, using Japan to demonstrate that GDP per capita, the proportion of non-productive citizens in the general population, and the age of social security programs have positive impacts on the proportion of GDP expended on social security. Their ideas, especially the positive correlation between GDP increase per capita and the percentage spent on social security, have become the most generally accepted on social security development.

As more non-western states adopt modern social security systems, industrialisation becomes insufficient to explain the social security expansion (Holiday 2000); globalisation becomes the new independent variable. Meanwhile, increases in social security expenditure in advanced western capitalist nations have slowed or reversed, with considerable changes to social security regimes (Hicks 1999). More and more states with different political and economic conditions have adopted similar programs and mechanisms. Since the 1970s, economic globalisation has commonly been used to explain worldwide social security expansion and the modification of western systems (Myles and Quadagno 2002), arguing that quick increases in the amounts and speed of capital flow severely impact the operation of each country's economy. To facilitate capital investment to create employment and revenue, governments everywhere have to compete with policies that stimulate business confidence despite their political preferences (Cerny 1994; Strange 1996). Their explanation then develops in two ways. Gough and Therborn (2010) argue that adopting a modern social security system reduces multinational capital costs for maintaining a labour force and distributes human resources internationally. Scholars prefer this argument when explaining social security expansion in non-western and developing countries. In contrast, globalisation is also used to explain the downward fluctuation of social security expenditure in advanced states, since high taxes and generous social security decrease the attractiveness of a state's investment climate and should be avoided (Mishra 1999).

However, globalisation theory, especially for advanced states, has been seriously challenged by econometric studies. Empirically, econometric causal studies demonstrate that openness leads to compensatory social spending (Garret 1998; Dani 1997) and that trade and capital openness do not

negatively affect public social security expenditure. Moreover, Swank (1998) identifies political institutions' intermediate impact between capital mobility and social security development, severely weakening the explanatory power of globalisation, thereby encouraging scholars to find new explanations for the phenomenon. Here, post-industrialisation appears as an alternative to globalisation; though some scholars still see globalisation as an independent variable, little evidence has been found.

After capitalism's 'golden period', productivity slowed, unemployment rose, and the 1973 and 1979 oil crises severely affected social security. Compared with those temporary factors, there is now a consensus that a key aspect of post-industrialisation, the massive employment shift from manufacturing to services, is the decisive factor in the decline of social security expenditure (Myles and Quadagno 2002). The logic is that service industries cannot match manufacturing productivity levels; the shift to service industries causes a decrease in the rate of productivity increase, eventually bringing about a decline in social security (Baumol 1967). Esping-Andersen (1999), although he has his own theory to explain the modification of social security, expresses this logic in detail in his later works regarding changes in continental European countries. As their social security and wage benefits are relatively high and egalitarian, the cost of services has also risen, discouraging people from consuming services. Service industry employment contraction then leads to poor employment growth. Compared with those countries, the US, where inequality is relatively high, can reduce labour-intensive services costs with low wages and secure high employment. Though Scandinavian governments underwrite high wage rates in public services, fiscal pressure is ever-increasing. Esping-Andersen's argument has been expressed as a 'trilemma' by Iversen and Wren (1998), where the core features of post-industrialisation — full employment, fiscal balance, and equality — cannot be achieved simultaneously.

Though the post-industrialisation theory has wide appeal, another influential contemporary variable, gender revolution, has been used to explain social security modification. These studies criticise former studies' neglect of the effects of gender on social security modification, pointing out that empirical studies generally use the so-called average industrial worker and the male-breadwinner family model; this anti-female bias weakens their reliability (Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; O'Connor et al. 1999; Sainsbury 1996). Feminist studies in the 1980-90s broadened social security research by investigating new and groundbreaking hypotheses and significantly extending the range of social security studies. Highly abstract feminist studies (O'Connor 1996) stimulated a range of comparative and historical case studies highlighting the dramatically different ways women influence and are influenced by social security (Jenson 1986; Skocpol 1992; Pedersen 1993). Though their main argument is that female political mobilization leads governments to adopt women-friendly social security programs, whether women's participation influences the type of programs developed is still debated (Skocpol 1992; Pedersen 1993; Hobson and Lindholm 1997; O'Connor 1996; Mahon 1997).

To sum up, industrialisation, globalisation, post-industrialisation and gender revolution all have been used as independent variables in the development of social security. Although these theories are still seen as fundamental explanations to the correlation between the economy and social security, their arguments have been increasingly challenged by new studies, both within and outside this stream. The general mainstream of research has progressed and developed new ideas that seriously challenge those previously developed theories.

2.2.2 Political institutionalism

Though different scholars have different theories on social security modification, almost all connect somehow with political institutionalism. These scholars build their theories on differences between countries' governmental systems, especially the number of veto players, defining these as constitutional, parliamentary and non-parliamentary actors whose consent is necessary to make laws (Estévez-Abe 2008). Some scholars add qualities — competitive and cooperative — to veto players, alleging constitutional veto players are more competitive, whereas other partisan veto players, in coalition governments or relying on parliamentary systems, prefer to cooperate (Crepaz 2001).

Their thesis is that a large number of veto players means universal and comprehensive social security cannot possibly be expected, since a minority of veto players can easily block programs. Conversely,

policy reversals being easy in political systems with few veto players, to avoid future roll-back governments prefer to create social security policies benefitting the majority (Moe and Caldwell 1994). Another main strand, represented by such as Lijphart, Iversen, and Sockice, developed an impressive methodology combining governmental and electoral systems as basic independent variables to investigate social security, explaining how a party with a special ideology can take control of its country. These scholars commonly associate large welfare states with PR/ MMD (proportional representation/multi-member district) political systems, which they call 'consensual democracy'. Unlike 'majority democracies' with plurality rules and SMDs (single-member districts), consensual democracy facilitates left-moderate coalition governments that prefer to enlarge the welfare state (Iversen and Sockice 2006). Unlike majority democracy, consensual democracies facilitate interparty cooperation, making it possible for coalition governments to introduce universal and comprehensive welfare programs.

Table 2 shows the classical logical lines of this strand. They choose government types, district magnitude and the relative importance of the personal vote as basic independent variables and theoretically combine 12 possible types of state (also shown in Table 3). Taking the existence of different veto players as given, they hypothesise that individual veto players, as politicians, always seek re-election; organizational veto players seek to expand their influence within a political system. In their arguments, district magnitude and the importance of personal votes together determine the strategies veto players choose to win an election, the parliamentary configuration, and the emergence of non-parliamentary veto players. The first two deeply shape the overall characteristics of social security systems, the third adds additional details.

Table 2: Typical logical lines of creation of the four main kinds of social security

Types of Social Security	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), 165-81.

They also calculate associated factors: organised voters, geographically-specific benefits and particular rent-seeking groups, as well as two key mediating variables: identifiability and accountability (see Table 3). This concerns the possibility of a party's action being dependable and enacted or not. Thanks to low identifiability and accountability in consensual democracy, parties can more easily introduce universal and comprehensive social security programs, though this also means raising taxes. In a country full of constitutional veto players, however, fragmented social security programs are more likely.

Table 2: The theoretical combination of different types of social security

	DM	Government	Party	Identifiability	Accountability	CS	Tax	SSP	SSB	FE
1	SMD	Majority	Strong	Highest	Highest	Competitive	Small	Universal	Meager	Market-Based
2	SMD	Majority	Weak	High	High	Safe	Small	Fragmented	Meager	Market-Restricting
3	MMD	Minority	Strong	High	Low	Safe	Big	Universal	Generous	Market-Restricting
4	MMD	Minority	Weak	Medium	High	Safe	Medium	Fragmented	Comprehensive	Market-Restricting
5	MMD	Coalition	Strong	Low	Low	Safe	Big	Fragmented	Generous	Market-Restricting

6	MMD	Coalition	Weak	Low	High	Safe	Medium	Fragmented	Generous	Market-Restricting
7	MMD	Majority	Strong	Highest	Medium	Safe	Medium	Fragmented or not	Generous	Market-Restricting
8	MMD	Majority	Weak	Low	Low	Safe	Medium	Fragmented	Generous	Market-Restricting

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

Because of their opposed logical lines, the veto-player-based strand seriously conflicts with the earlier strand (Estévez-Abe 2008). According to the logic of the veto-player-based strand, a large number of veto players results in reduced social security and coalition governments having no way of adopting universal, comprehensive social security, the converse being true for majority governments. This contradicts the arguments of scholars who strongly recommend consensual democracy.

The other group in this stream prefers using path dependence to explain social security modification, arguing that pre-existing political legacies would determine the developmental process and destinations of a country's social security (Esping-Andersen 1990). If, for example, it starts with a non-universal, non-comprehensive system, it is impossible, under normal circumstances, to imagine the opposite developing. Thus, they explain cross-national differences by stressing their different political legacies (Garon 1997).

There is serious conflict between political institutionalism studies, with no general agreement on how a pre-existing polity would affect the formation of a social security system, but path dependence theories are gradually being marginalised. Different scholars appear with different arguments, and no matter how great the gaps between their theories, all claim to find empirical evidence in the real world to support their arguments by highlighting some aspects of a country's social security and ignoring others.

2.2.3 Cross-class alliances

Responding to the question that arises from the above, 'what are the factors in the creation of a country's political institution that determine its social security?', some institutionalist scholars go further, placing their studies in a wider socio-economic context. They define different classes and create their significant independent variable, cross-class alliances (usually unions or professional guilds), arguing that, with the help of modern democracy, different cross-class alliances would force political institutions to adopt different levels of social security.

These studies thoroughly investigate the details of social security programs and, as Estévez-Abe (2008) claims, 'Studies in this camp have greatly improved our understanding of social policy preferences of employers and unions.' They also list a range of factors, like labour costs, risk insurance and operational needs, that affect employers' and labour unions' calculations over social security programs (Swenson 2002; Martin 2000).

Empirical studies show that cross-class alliances can be horizontal, as with national labour unions and any other unions composed of people from different vocations but belonging to the same class, and vertical, like different kinds of guilds and any other associations, composed of people from the same vocation but belonging to different classes. These strategically allied unions would mainly use electoral systems to realise their demands, both business interests and social security requests. Pre-existing policies in these studies are treated as conditional variables. As historical institutionalism scholars have already pointed out, pre-existing policies exercise important feedback effects, '...precluding political coalitions around particular outcomes, and facilitat[ing] cross-class alliances in support of other policies' (Pierson 1996). But these kinds of impacts only slow or accelerate the appearance of a particular cross-class alliance. The social economy structure still basically shapes the outlook of cross-class alliances. This stream's most important contribution is to show that cross-class alliances of different political compositions lead to different social security outcomes. For instance, a cross-class alliance of large manufacturers and the core part of a labour movement would support a pro-contribution, universalised and compulsory social insurance; however, a fragmented, both

vocationally and geographically, and non-universal social security program would result from an alliance composed of labour and SMEs (small and medium businesses) (Martin 1995).

The main problem with this theory stream is that it can be used to explain variations in all kinds of social policies, a kind of multi-applicable tool that makes it hard to test. Rejecting a fashionable quantitative orientation, it endorses qualitative analysis. Without clear definitions of cross-class alliances, the investigations would be trapped in a vicious circle. They successfully demonstrate what kinds of cross-class alliances would create particular social security systems, but fail to identify the standards to reach to win the ruling position, as well as failing to illustrate why particular unions ally with each other. Considerable empirical work is needed for this school to be able to produce clear and testable illustrations and reliable predictions.

2.2.4 Dominant political ideology

In order to answer the questions ‘why do particular unions ally with each other?’ and ‘why does a social security system have some particular characteristics?’, Esping-Andersen (1990) provides a new way to explain the modification of different kinds of social security in different states. He uses dominant parties’ ideology to explain adoption and modification of different systems in western advanced states. In his logic, a state establishes its social security on the basis of the dominant political parties’ ideologies. Political parties with a particular ideology can achieve this domination because of the alliance between the parties and their partner groups that share the same ideology and represent the majority of the politics.

This has also been used to explain the establishment of social security in non-western countries. ‘Productivist’, ‘Confucianist’ and ‘Absence of strong left’ are the most widely used ideological alliance reasons, mostly in studies of East Asia. Unlike western states, new developing countries usually have clear aims, and their social security supports developmental goals. Productivist states sacrifice social security to develop their aggregate economy (Holliday 2000). Scholars hypothesise that traditional ideologies, such as Confucianism, constrain the establishment of typical western-style social security, with its relatively high fiscal burden. The absence of strong leftist alliances is also used to explain the favouring of economic development over social security (Wong 2004).

In the globalisation period, this study stream was used to challenge globalisation theorists’ arguments. Comparative study has demonstrated that where social democracy has been well realised, political authority is concentrated and universalism has been adopted as the fundamental principle, the impact from international capital mobility is limited and neo-liberal-led reform of social security prevented (Swank 1998). In other words, capital mobility can result in downward pressure on the social security supply where political authority is fragmented, where liberalism rules the political system and democracy has not been fully socialised. Their studies demonstrate the decisive intermediate impact of the dominant political ideology on social security development, though globalisation can also significantly affect social security operations (Kitschelt et al. 1999). Moreover, Soskice (1999) demonstrates that the typical correlations between industrial and financial capital, between companies and firms, and between employers and employees in a productivist system would fundamentally impact which social security programs are chosen, as a country’s economy can gain comparative advantages from such a social security regime (Manow 2001), which would also strive to block reform towards alternative models. The neoliberal response to globalisation, aimed at weakening labour institutions, deregulating markets, and reducing (rather than restructuring) the social wage, has made little headway in the coordinated market economies of continental and Northern Europe (Kitschelt et al. 1999).

2.3 How to describe and predict the development of a social security system?

Scholars usually come up with their different answers to this question. This question arose in response to Euro-recovery and globalisation and there are two conflicting answers: convergence vs. divergence. The convergence arguments peaked in the 1970s. Before the publication of *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, the convergence arguments held the lead in the debate on the developmental trends of social security. Globalisation theories consistently argue that industrialised countries become alike (Held and McGrew 2003). Even for typical newly industrialised countries, such as Japan, many scholars argue that their social security would follow the convergence trends

(Kasza 2006). Though divergence has held the competitive advantage ever since the publication of Esping-Andersen's work, convergence still continues to have a strong impact on studies of new economies.

2.3.1 Convergence

The typical argument of convergence is to statistically demonstrate that the overall expenditure of all countries' social security significantly increases, then assert the main trend of development is convergence (Wilensky 1975). Similarly, they investigate the kinds of programs that countries adopt, then claim that because similar programs are found in different countries, the systems are converging (Meyer and Ramirez 1997). Moreover, these scholars found that modern democracies with similar demographics and social security programs of similar length of existence, whether rich or poor, would have very similarly-sized social security systems, especially in old age and health expenditure (Wilensky 1975; Kasza 2006). Besides statistical studies, empirical research also finds evidence of convergence in public opinion on the constituent parts of social security (Coughlin 1980), the influences of egalitarian movements on social security (Williamson and Weiss 1979), normative patterns (Mishra 1976), and the social operation functions of social security across capitalist and communist countries (Armour and Coughlin 1985).

Through case selection and redefining the range of social security, more and more scholars argue a given country's social security is no less generous than those to which it is being compared, the main programs at least having the same outlook. For example, scholars choosing old-age programs as their subject claim that the principles of Japan's old-age social security programs are almost the same as those of Europe (Campbell 1992). Furthermore, some scholars argue that 'the combination of social security and families, communities, and other social subjects can be commonly found all over the world' (Watanuki 1986). However, similarity of programs does not mean similarity of service and benefit delivery. Responding to the recent challenge from divergence, these scholars bring two dimensions into the arena when selecting subjects: the structures of social security and the situations a program develops from and is intended to deal with. With these two tools, they try to demonstrate that, under globalisation, different countries incline to adopt similarly constructed social security systems, and expenditures on those programs will reach the same level when those countries' economic development arrives at the same level and confronts the same demographic situation. They also assert that the discovery of divergences between countries results from faults in the selection of cases and periods (Wilensky et al. 1985).

2.3.2 Divergence

With the end of the Cold War and the dramatic development of non-western countries, especially Japan, more and more scholars challenged convergence arguments on social security. According to historical studies, even on western nations, there is no trend to convergence in the changes in social security programs' eligibility criteria, financial methods or benefit coverage, besides the duration of compulsory unemployment program benefits (Alber 1981). Furthermore, some scholars use statistical measurements to demonstrate that there is a big gap, or divergence, between different countries' expenditures on social security. Advanced countries are inclined to adopt the same programs, but the details, benefits and coverage are completely different (O'Connor 1988). Scholars adopting this stance claim that countries with different political factors can never become convergent; even if they adopt the same programs, their details are significantly different (Hewitt 1977; Castles 1982; Korpi 1983).

Since the publication of *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, the divergence strand has been gaining the upper hand, with most recent studies accepting that social security can be distributed into some typically exclusive groups (Huang, G. 2013). 'Divergence theorists focus on the differences rather than the similarities among the social security policies of the industrialised states, and they see these differences as deeply embedded in each country's distinctive class structure and politics' (Kasza 2006). Some scholars, even Esping-Andersen (1997), have appended some new types and others, like institutionalists, use different methodologies, even creating new standards to classify social security. In different ways, scholars demonstrate their arguments on divergence. They emphasise the influence of class-based parties in social security creation, describing it as a 'class-

centered but state-mediated theory of social security' (Alexander 1999). Institutionalists link the divergence of social security to the differences between each country's political system.

Generally speaking, studies mainly focused on a particular country's social security are more likely to generate a convergence prediction, taking Estévez-Abe's (2008) and Kasza's (2006) studies as examples. Because they tend to compare their subjects with other countries' social security and deduce the developmental traits, it is impossible to avoid highlighting the influences from pre-existing social security models. They can easily identify the programs that their subjects adopt from other countries, concluding that their subjects' structures and those of others are becoming alike. Conversely, studies focused worldwide or on a general area reach a divergence conclusion, since they have to stress the differences between each system.

3. CONCLUSION

A number of main empirical conclusions stand out quite sharply, as we review the existing studies on social security exist for protecting social sustainability from the perspective of political science. Scholars always want to find more exact and reliable ways to show a comprehensive image of a country's social security, to facilitate categorisation and comparison. Though new factors like culture and kinship have been added to the methods of categorising social security, de-commodification and de-stratification are still the fundamental dimensions. Since quantitative methods have been introduced to categorise different types of social security, the calculable aspects, like correlation with market, benefits and universal levels, are being used as standards. Some scholars wish to re-arrange the content of social security and highlight the regulatory ability. Studies on categorising social security systems more and more adopt empirical and quantitative approaches to improve the reliability of their arguments. However, a method by which we can evaluate all aspects of a social security system and properly categorise it is still being sought. Meanwhile, scholars also find that the periodic major changes in economics and politics are not sufficient to explain the development of social security as a whole, though they can be used as independent variables for some modifications of social security systems. The impact correlations of economic development, demographic changes and social security development have been explored, and the decisive underlying impact of politics on those correlations has also been detected. However, the kinds of social security that will be adopted by a country's polity is still in question. While the role of political ideologies in social security development is accepted, the impacts of different forms of government and electoral systems are still being debated. Besides that, cross-class alliances are generally applicable independent variables, but the theories relating to them need serious testing. The arguments on the description and future of social security development are more likely to be built on the particular selection of aspects by a researcher and their own perspectives (macro or micro). Though the studies are getting abundant, the understanding of social security development is still in progressing, and the future social security development also presents a mixture of convergence in functions and divergence in designing of programmes.

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