

Preface

This book is a comparative study of three non-European welfare states: the United States, Japan, and South Korea. The concept and theoretical framework of the small welfare state is rooted in the Korean case and expanded to look at the US and Japan. In this regard, this edited volume is a sequel to my book, *The Political Economy of the Small Welfare State in South Korea* (2017, Cambridge University Press). However, comparative work through close collaboration between political economists, historians, and sociologists has made the sequel better than the original.

We seek to answer the questions: Why are the welfare states in the US, Japan, and Korea small in comparison to those of Europe? Why do they maintain low tax regimes? And why are functional equivalents to 'standard' social polities widely used and what are the end results?

The contributors to this book examine various aspects of the small welfare states and explore the underlying causes through explicit or implicit comparisons with big European welfare states. This systematic comparison confirms that the factors shaping American exceptionalism have comparable effects in Japan and Korea, and vice versa. It is no coincidence that the US and these two Asian countries across the Atlantic Ocean have many common characteristics that are distinct from the big welfare states in Europe. Shared political and institutional factors, such as narrowly organized labor, big business, plurality electoral rules and single party governments, and active civic movements and the early development of functional equivalents and low tax have shaped small welfare states in these three industrialized democracies.

Our stories are not all new but bound to be controversial and thus contribute to the study of the welfare state as we elucidate the factors behind and routes toward a small welfare state, which have been often overlooked and sometimes wrongly taken for granted by mainstream Eurocentric welfare state theories. However, this edited volume is not the end of story. We hope that new lines of research and analysis will arise from our book to cover the welfare states in liberal Anglo-Saxon countries and the developing world as well.

This book project began in January 2018 at Indiana University, Bloomington where I spent my second sabbatical year. The first and most important mission was to assemble a team of esteemed contributors. Fortunately, many distinguished scholars responded positively to my call and put significant effort into

contributing to this volume. I would like to thank my colleagues for their hard work. Without them, this edited volume would not have borne fruit.

According to the theoretical framework presented in the introductory chapter, empirical chapters are designed to shed light on each theme in the context of particular countries. In this sense, it was top-down. But indeed, it was a bottom-up collective work. The authors have actively exchanged ideas online and met twice offline. The first meeting was held at the School of Global Policy and Strategy of the University of California, San Diego in August 2018 with the first draft of each chapter. It was an intense and stimulating debate. We were able to raise new interesting research questions and align the chapters of the book. We are grateful to Stephan Haggard for hosting the meeting and Lisa Lee for assisting with the event. The second meeting was held at the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology of the University of Tokyo in March 2019, where a full draft was presented. Over the manuscript we were able to exchange not only constructive comments but also empathetic criticism. Theoretical arguments and empirical cases fitted together, and the chapters became better aligned. Lively and amusing conversations over *sake* was also an indispensable part of the successful meeting. We would like to thank Sung-won Kim for preparing for the meeting.

“The effect of electoral rules on the policy preferences and behavior of politicians in South Korea” (Chapter 5) won the 2019 Akira Nakamura Best Paper Award from the AAPA (Asian Association for Public Administration). The introductory chapter was also invited and presented at a 2019 ESPAnet stream, *The European Social Policy from Non-European Perspectives*. I wish to thank stream convenors, Young-Hwan Byun, Sijeong Lim, and Jaemin Shim, and Yasuhiro Kamimura and Traute Meyer for questions and comments on this book project. It was a useful final check on it. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers and editors at Edward Elgar Publishing as well, especially Misa Izuhara and Catherine Elgar, for their editorial advice and comments on the manuscript. I have also benefited from skillful research assistance from Lanhee Ryu, Sung-won Yun, Ho Yeon Lee, Jung Ju Lee, Moonsoo Lee, and Tae Hyeong Lee.

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Finally, we would like to remember Jungho Roh, who initially participated in this project to statistically test the thesis of the small welfare state but was sadly unable to finish it. He was a promising young scholar. We wish to dedicate this book in his memory. May his soul rest in peace.

Jae-jin Yang on behalf of authors