Christian Aspalter

Ten Worlds of Welfare Capitalism

A Global Data Analysis

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Niemand ist hoffnungsloser versklavt als jene, die fälschlicherweise glauben, frei zu sein.

Nadie es más esclavo que aquéls que falsamente creen ser libre.

No one is more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe to be free.

Personne n'est plus en esclavage que ceux qui croient à tort d'être libres.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
(1749-1832)

The original version of the book was revised: Belated corrections in references and tables have been updated. The correction to the book is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-7863-0_8

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Introduction: On the Particular Nature of Ideal Types Applied and Moving Science Forward a Bit at a Time

With a bit of surprise, the welfare regime debate has shifted rather quickly in last twelve years, and here again particularly in the last six or seven years. It shifted from fervently trying to establish a new welfare regime in the South or East of Europe (Leibfried 1992; Deacon 1992; Ferrera 1996; cf. also Abrahamson 1999a; Arts and Gelissen 2002, 2010; Arcanjo 2006, 2011; Fenger 2007; Powell and Barrientos 2011; Badescu 2019), or before that at the other end of the world in Down Under (Australia and New Zealand) (Castles and Mitchell 1991, 1992, 1993), to realizing and stressing the importance of ideal types in the study of welfare regimes or welfare capitalism—these two terms are hereafter being used synonymously (cf. e.g. Arts and Gelissen 2002, 2010; Jæger 2005; Aspalter 2005, 2006a, 2012a, 2017b, 2020a; Powell and Barrientos 2011; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2011; Arts 2020).

It had been an almost quiet decade and a half after Arts and Gelissen (1999) first emphasized the distinction between *ideal types* and *real types* in the social policy arena (cf. also the influential article of Abrahamson 1999a). Esping-Andersen had caused this confusion, by for sure *deliberately* dropping the words ideal types from mentioning in his seminal 1990 Three Worlds book. His 1987 book (edited together with Martin Rein and Lee Rainwater), on the other hand did focus on the importance of identifying ideal types (cf. Esping-Andersen 1987a, b). However, at the end of the second decade in this new century, there has been a new awakening, and the distinction between the different methodologies (e.g. using simple typologies, or ideal types where the cases fit more or less, rather than having to fit all of the way) and theories of either ideal types or real types has moved to centerstage in international, and now global, study of welfare state system comparison.

On the Ideal–Typical Representation of Reality

Additional confusion was caused by the professional use of the terms "ideal" and "real" in welfare regime theory and comparison. 'Ideal' to be sure does not mean

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ideal in the ordinary sense (common people's sense) or in the Aristotelian sense, i.e. here 'ideal' does not mean 'perfect', not at all. 'Real' on the other hand also does not mean what people (and many researchers alike) think it means, as they refer to the common dictionary meaning of it, and not the scientific/professional meaning and usage of it. Real types refer to any method and perspective that is void of ideal types, nothing more, nothing less. This professional terminology was first coined and spread by German economist Arthur Spiethoff a long time ago, in the early 1950s (Spiethoff 1953; cf. also Engerman 2000).

Now that we have come to focus on the nature and virtues of establishing, identifying and checking against ideal types in the Weberian sense (Aspalter 2020a), we still have to deal with what it really means, and more importantly perhaps *what not* (Arts 2020, cf. also Van Kersbergen 2019; Van Kersbergen and Vis 2015). Max Weber has in his very prolific lifetime established a great number of ideal types for different purposes in different disciplines of the social sciences. He developed and used this new methodology (within which there are different methods of doing so) to provide new "sociological tools for social and historical research … and illustrated their use in dozens of applications, treating everything from ancient Roman land use practices to workplace behavior in his grandfather's textile mill" (Sica 2004: 131).

This is very important to note and be aware of. Using one of the most famous quotes of Weber, it is often being maintained that ideal types do not exist in real life (again the meaning of real here is often, too often, hijacked). However, he had pure forms of bureaucracy, pure forms of capitalism, and many other things on his mind when he made that famous statement—not welfare regimes. He never talked about welfare regimes.

However, when classifying ideal types in the case of sects and churches, *Weber clearly did stress that ideal types do exist, perfect replicas of ideal types do exist*, or near perfect cases thereof—in some cases they are seldom to be found and come across.

Weber when looking at the concepts of ideal types of 'a church' and 'a sect' stressed that both, for the purpose of classification, "may be broken down into complex characteristics; but, in that case, not only the boundary between the two concepts but also their substantive content will necessarily remain fluid … they cannot *or can only rarely* be found in [their] completely *pure* conceptual form" (first emphasis added, Weber 2012: 127).

Therefore, it is all down in general (in the general application of ideal types) to *the definition of 'rarely,' or 'rather rarely'—'not often', 'less often'*—and the difference of what *'completely pure'* means versus just *'pure'*. This of course is and *must*, by virtue of logic itself, *be different from the classification of one type of research subjects (or, one application of a classification) to another*—depending on the nature of research subjects under scrutiny.

On the Existence of Perfect More-or-Less-Fits

To be sure, the Chinese welfare state system is *in terms of its institutional set-up* a rather perfect (or very close to perfect, depending on one's preferred usage of the word 'perfect') representation of the East Asian Welfare State Regime, the ideal–typical Pro-Welfare Conservative Welfare Regime. The Brazilian welfare state system on the other hand is also an almost perfect depiction of the Latin American Anti-Welfare Conservative Welfare Regime *when one looks at the institutional set-up of its major social security systems*. The same can (and must) be said of India, Russia, and (of course) Cuba for the Slightly Universal Welfare Regime, the Selective Rudimentary Welfare Regime and the Communist/Socialist Welfare Regime respectively (cf. Aspalter 2011, 2017b, 2020d).

Germany on the other hand, however, is not a perfect or any near perfect replica of the Christian Democratic Welfare Regime in Continental Europe—*not anymore*—when one wants to analyze its main institutional components, or when one wants to demonstrate as closely as possible (and that is very easily possible) how a Christian Democratic Welfare Regime looks like in its *rather* 'pure' form (i.e. with the presence of least amount of deviations). In this case, one just would e.g. have to look over the border to Belgium or Luxembourg. These two countries would be much better candidates of resembling the real-life, empirical embodiment of the conceptual ideal type of the '*old*' Christian Democratic Welfare Regime (cf. e.g. Cantillon et al. 2017).

Germany has changed especially after the Hartz IV reforms (that were passed into law in 2003 and took effect in January 2005), as well as before that the Riester Pension reform of 2002, which was not so consequential, not at all, as the former, but still signified a major shift in welfare philosophy along neoliberal lines. On the contrary to Belgium and Luxembourg, yet further to the west, France, for the most part in its modern-day history lacked a strong and influential (and pure) Christian Democratic party and movement (cf. Aspalter 2008; Revauger 2003). When looking at the 'old, limited group' Christian Democratic countries, Austria would have too strong universal elements, a very generous universal family/child allowances and universal long-term care system (cf. e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990; Leichsenring 2017).

But, as we will see in the following the new additions, ever since Aspalter et al. (2009), to the Christian Democratic Welfare Regime, now also include Croatia (see Chap. 4) that has also a universal basic health care system in place. Both cases of the Slovenian and the Croatian universal *basic* health care elements reflect the Italian case of universalism in its National Health Service (Servizio Sanitario Nazionale, SSN). Now having at least four countries within the Christian Democratic Welfare regime pursuing universalism to a greater extent, and even crossing the lines of Northern and Southern, Western and Eastern Europe, is really significant. Croatia here does make a tremendous difference. In addition, the continuous steady path of Slovenia on the course of also building on more generous levels of universalism (in terms of people, medicines 'and' services), to some extent, is contributing to and thus consolidating this finding (cf. ISSA 2021; Albrecht et al. 2021; Vončina et al. 2018; Leichsenring 2017; Bertolissi 2015; Aspalter 2012b; Aspalter et al. 2009).

The a-bit-longer story short, Germany is not representing the most 'pure' system in terms of institutional set up, and in addition it is not the best choice for representing the whole group of Christian Democratic (CD) countries. Would one allow for dual leadership, a team Italy and Germany, would make lots of sense and point to the fact that Continental Europe is not Germany, and Germany, despite of its geographical size and location, despite its political and economic dominance, is not a perfect (or close to perfect) representation of what is going on the Christian Democratic world of welfare capitalism. In terms of welfare outcomes (see below), i.e. welfare regime performance, Germany is the lowest among the old group of CD countries, having been overtaken by Slovenia, Ireland, Slovakia, Italy and Spain, and being more or less on par with countries like Greece, Portugal Cyprus, Czechia and Croatia (in terms of *combined* overall povertization and inequality outcomes, see Fig. 4.3 in Chap. 4).

But then Germany does now not anymore stand in the center of the new extended CD-19 group of countries (with 19 member countries), having moved (relatively speaking) downwards in terms of relative welfare state performance outcomes. The neoliberal politics of the Schröder Government, plus inflationary povertization (poverty through inflation, cold tax progression, and cold social security progression), have left Germany, i.e. its citizens, poorer and in a less well-off situation than ever before, after the postwar development boom.

On the other hand, new rising stars in terms of welfare state development were ignored, or simply not on the radar, before. These for sure include now also e.g. Slovenia, Ireland, Spain and Cyprus (see the results of the global data analysis below). Cyprus is also a worldwide leader in healthy aging, right after Singapore (the unquestionable No. 1 here), being followed after a huge gap by Japan and Spain, which also does a very outstanding job in this regard (cf. Chap. 5 in this volume, as well as Aspalter 2020e).

> When looking at ideal types and ideal type comparison one should never disregard new, and especially *significant and/or massive new empirical developments.* The above are among these.

The model country status can now, in this 'new, extended' group of Christian Democratic Welfare regime members (see below, now there are 19 regime members, from Portugal to Poland, from France to Cyprus) as easily be *Belgium*, *Germany, Austria, Italy*, or *Slovenia*.

There is a new—significant, yet infant—center of gravity, a new bloc of countries, one that comprises Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and Austria, these are Christian Democratic Welfare Regime countries with a mix of universalism, and this group transcends the East-West and North-South boundary of the Europe (that is still lingering also in the heads of many scholars), which cannot be ignored, at least, not any longer. This is certainly good news for the European Union.

The East-West border in essence has ceased to exist in terms of welfare state analysis, as a result of the rim of countries (Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia) having joined the Christian Democratic Welfare Regime. In addition, the perceived lagging South of Europe has long caught up with the North in

terms of social development, welfare state system development and of course welfare outcomes. Both developments have been already in the making for some years, since the turn of the millennia (cf. Aspalter et al. 2009; cf. also Fenger 2007; Cerami 2007; Cerami and Vanhuysse 2009; Amitsis 2009).

When it comes the Anglo-Saxon Countries, the United Kingdom and the United States are relatively poor cases of any real-life embodiment of neoliberal (or liberal) ideal type of welfare regime. Australia is by far a better candidate, if not near perfect candidate, as its *mutual obligation doctrine* that grew out of the 1994 Working Nation Program of the Australian Labour Party not only framed and guided the Bill Clinton's welfare reform of 1996 in the United States, but also that of the UK Labour Party in 1997/1998, the New Labour reforms. Also, Australia is also is much more 'pure' a model (in the Weberian ideal–typical sense) by not having strong Bismarckian (occupationally and/or geographically divided) social insurance systems like in the US, or strong universal health insurance in the United Kingdom, or strong universal pension system in New Zealand. Furthermore, the US welfare state system is by far the lowest performing in terms of actual welfare outcomes on the ground within the rim of the *Neoliberal Welfare Regime* (see data analysis below) (cf. Aspalter 2020d; Kinnear 2003; Howard 2003).

With regard to the Social Democratic Welfare Regime, especially Iceland, but also to some extent Finland or Norway, may also make good candidates for representing the whole group of Social Democratic (SD) countries, perhaps even much better than the so-often-cited case of Sweden, as asset/wealth inequality is staggering in Sweden (as well as Denmark) in international comparison (cf. Aspalter 2020d; cf. Table 4.1 in Chap. 4). At least there are choices (which can be discussed, for which arguments can be found for or against) of who best represents each ideal–typical welfare regime, which are important to have, especially when one pursues different goals in one's concrete study, sub-field, or the topic one is working on.

On the Nature of Ideal Types in the Ten Worlds Theory

Regarding what is the lead country, or '*more or less perfect main representative*', for each ideal typical welfare regime, it is not so important which country is being showcased as the (or a) model country for any respective ideal–typical welfare regime (nevertheless it is very interesting, indeed, in most cases). Most important though is the realization that ideal types *do* exist in real life, even perfect and near-perfect replicas or representatives with the acknowledgement that there is *leeway* built into ideal types (that is their nature, their advantage). One also needs to see and realize that ideal types *do change over time*. Therefore, we shall choose to employ a dynamic perspective, here and in general, and not *out of habit* (cf. Van Kersbergen 2019) go back to a locked-up 1980 data set, on which the 1990 study of Esping-Andersen had been based on.

> More important yet is to understand that *ideal types are not fictions, they are not fictious*—they *do not* come from, or wander, or represent a fictional (what in common people's language is called 'theoretical') world. There are different ways to construct and perceive ideal types (cf. Aspalter 2020c). One always has a choice.

One can choose to have either an abstract version of ideal types, or a (by now) dusty version of ideal types that is static and not dynamic, or, as in our case here with the Ten Worlds Theory, *a dynamic, fully empirical-based and fully empirical sensitive version* of ideal typical models (Aspalter 2017b). The latter choice needs more work, more empirical analysis and constant observation. Yet a dynamic version of ideal type classification is still much more stable (and hence stronger, i.e. less perceptible to more or less minor system changes and policy changes) than any real-typical classification.

> In order to be user-friendly (i.e. more useful) and hence fruitful, as well as theoretically and empirically more significant, the world of ideal types has to be standing firmly on empirical grounds.
>
> It is a great advantage when ideal types have been built upon and are adapted to, every now and then, the reality of the empirical world.

In this way, they can serve the empirical world of welfare state systems, social security systems on the ground. In other words, the very functioning of ideal types, if we have chosen (a bit) dynamic versions of ideal types, is dependent on serving the real world: the people, the profession and science of social policy (plus related disciplines), as well as the governments and administrators in place.

That is, ideal type theory—as we understand it here—is *not* just conceptual; or even to a greater or lesser degree estranged from reality. On the very contrary, *ideal type theory is born* (or brought to light) *by reality, by real-life empirical findings and serves the practice of social policy* (cf. Midgley 2017a), *as well as the practice of welfare state comparison* (Arts and Gelissen 2002; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2011), be they descriptive, explanatory or normative studies (Midgley 2002).

About Moving Forward

The positive developments of the past several years have been topped by the fast realization that the concept of decommodification in particular is not apt to (even does not try to) capture the realities of welfare and well-being, i.e. social policy and social security, on the ground in Africa, or in Latin America, South Asia, and so forth—that is the very majority of the world's population and countries (Böger and Öktem 2019; Yörük et al. 2019, etc.).

The concept of decommodification *was indeed useful*, and hence very correct, especially *for rich developed countries* in Europe and other Anglo-Saxon countries, plus Japan.

But, there was a major shortcoming, one that never left the continuous stream of criticism of Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds book*, that of completely neglecting

the welfare of women, their precarious situations, their inequality and their poverty: especially, the formal and informal work divide, gender inequalities in care work provision at home for children and other family members, gender inequalities in housework provision, gender inequalities on the labor market, and so forth (Muñoz Boudet et al. 2021; Roumpakis 2020; Yu et al. 2018; Mathieu 2016; Haberkern et al. 2015; Grown et al. 2010; Mandel and Shalev 2009; Orloff 2009, 1996; Bambra 2004, 2007a; Gornick and Jacobs 1998; Davis Hill and Tigges 1995; Sainsbury 1994, 1999, 2000; O'Connor 1993; Lewis 1992; Pascall 1986; Land 1978). The emphasis, and hence over-emphasis, on decommodification created this blindness on the welfare duality that institutionally discriminates against all women and all care-takers in general. The major problem was to ignore this blindness, and not to solve this blindness of the particular method and theory used.

Theories are good, when they are fruitful (cf. Bottomore 1972: 37), i.e. useful and hence bring forth scientific progress, knowledge, understanding, and related critical (i.e. deep) thinking.

Esping-Andersen himself in 2000 brought up what he coined *the problem of bimodal distribution* in global welfare analysis, i.e. one variable or dimension, or concept, might be super useful in one (in our case) welfare regime (or couple of them), but not in the rest of them; or in a couple of others, or not at all in all the others.

For that reason, *in general*, Esping-Andersen was not wrong doing what he did, conceptually, with the *dimension of decommodification*, on the contrary to Yörük and his colleagues' suggestion (cf. Yörük et al. 2019). But, *in addition*, when leaving the Western world of rich developed countries, one also needs to leave this, now not so useful or not useful concept of decommodification behind. Next the gender-blindness, decommodification is also marked by and causes blindness towards well-being and welfare in the Global South.

A series of strong research studies by high caliber investigators has put forward this argument in the past: Mkandawire (2007), Cerami (2013), Künzler and Nollert (2017), Böger and Öktem (2019), and of course Yörük and his colleagues (2019).

The Way Ahead

Hence, in this book, there are still several key tasks that need yet to be completed, and these are:

First, the establishment of new overall concepts—or a replacement and/or recalibration thereof—of the *broadly conceptualized (grand) dimensions* that characterize welfare regimes in general. That is, we have to replace the dimensions of decommodification and stratification, and then theorize these alternative dimensions.

Second, these new-found, more workable or fully workable dimensions need to be broken down into sets of variables and proxy-variables—that work for all people and all parts of the world (cf. Esping-Andersen 2000), for all countries of all stages or levels of development, and all kinds of welfare regime type backgrounds.

Third, and this may be the most important part of the welfare modelling business (cf. Abrahamson 1999a) perhaps, with this rich and extensive data that is woven into our newly setup grand dimensions, we can *for the first time* identify regime members of each of the 10 ideal-typical welfare regimes *in full* when also factoring in previous theoretical and empirical knowledge and findings of case study analysis on the one hand and textual-data from e.g. the country profile database of the International Social Security Association.

Fourth, it would be very useful (but not entirely super necessary) to identify better (and more) model countries for each regime type, that can serve diverse research purposes on the one hand and that break up the locked-in old habitual practice of always looking at Sweden, Germany, the UK, the US and Japan perhaps (i.e. we need to break up the habit of *conducting 'normal science', meaning business-as-usual or Fordist conveyer-belt type of welfare state comparison*, cf. Van Kersbergen and Vis 2015; Van Kersbergen 2019; Arts 2020). In case of the African welfare regime, the *Ultra Rudimentary Welfare Regime*, in particular however, this new outcome-based data helps a great deal choosing a set of representative model countries (or a model country), as there are so many countries to choose from, that may qualify otherwise.

And, last but not least, and perhaps most useful and important of all, we need to zoom in on the empirical realities—*i.e. outcomes in terms of people's state of well-being, health, education, housing and job situation, etc.*—on the ground, in form of key variables (or proxy variables) of the newfound grand (overall) dimensions here and there, to *further* substantiate and validate the existence and demonstrate the consequences of ideal-typical welfare regime types around the world (cf. also Hempel cited in Arts 2020: 48). For a while now, researchers (cf. e.g. Bambra 2005, 2006, 2007a, b, 2019; Bambra et al. 2009; Kammer et al. 2012) have resorted to analyzing first and foremost welfare regime *outcomes* (not *institutions*) to make conclusions about the welfare regimes themselves, among other goals. Mixed approaches, institution- and outcome-based, were also present (cf. e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2006). When Esping-Andersen talked about outcomes in his 1990 book, he talked about institutional outcomes (benefit structures and generosity), not about outcomes in terms of states of well-being or suffering of people themselves.

On the Ways to Move Along

The methodology of this study is built on the findings of the *extended case study research* (Aspalter 2020d: 112–115) from hundreds of case studies from many dozens of research works from around the world in the past decades—as it represents one additional step up on the pyramid of theory building, in a series of research studies that span a quarter of a century, when building *this* global welfare regime theory. Therefore, this book is *not to be read and interpreted in exclusion* from the previous studies by the author and instrumental works from other authors that build the fundament of this long-term research project (cf. Box 1.1).

Following the need to '*invest in theory construction*' in comparative social policy (Arts 2020: 51; cf. also Arts and Gelissen 2002, 2010; Powell and Barrientos 2011; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser 2011), this book explores further the conceptual and empirical geography of ideal types in *all* major parts of the world, saying goodbye once and for all to the any *post-Colonial attitudes* of 'only rich developed countries (of the West, plus Japan) count and the rest are to be put under the rug.'

The study is employing the *method of theory building* (cf. e.g. Steiner 1988), with the prior use of *political-historical* reasoning that emphasized the decisive (however not exclusive) role of Colonial history and Colonial governance (not everywhere, but in the very most of places/countries) when it comes to *explanatory* variables of welfare regime development. This is being done by resorting to earlier historical explanatory meta-analyses of Midgley and Piachaud (2011) and Aspalter (2020d) (cf. Aspalter 2021c; Pierson 2004).

The book of James Midgley and David Piachaud (2011) entitled *Colonialism and Welfare: Social Policy and the British Imperial Legacy* is of particular importance, as it laid out the basic fundament for the explanatory theory for the rest of the *Ten Worlds Theory* (cf. Aspalter 2020d: 116–122). This book and many other studies that our book here is building on are *historical empirical findings* (cf. Pierson 2004)—i.e. *facts*, with multiple vetting by multiple researchers, with sometimes multiple methods (i.e. researcher triangulation plus method triangulation). They are gathered over dozens of years and from around the world.

With regard to *descriptive* variables and proxy variables—to additionally extend the empirical reach of the theory—we will employ the benefits of quantitative social indicator research. Here, we will test *yet again empirically* the earlier developed *Ten Worlds Theory* (in addition to hundreds of case studies from around the world and their findings, on which this theory is built on, Aspalter 2017b). In the past, many global (or not so global) quantitative research studies on comparative welfare regime analysis had to avoid "data availability and reliability issues that have plagued quantitatively informed classifications of *global* welfare regimes" (emphasis added, Hudson and Kühner 2011: 35).

The *Ten Worlds Theory* is not the result of, but the basis for the quantitative data analysis below (cf. Aspalter 2017b). In other words, the *Ten Worlds Theory* is the basis for the (as much as possible) comprehensive empirical testing and further analysis that is being put forward in the latter part of this book (cf. also Arts 2020: 48; Emmenegger et al. 2015: 6–7). The following Box 1.1 traces past and current key steps of theory development, as theories are not built overnight, or on one day.

Box 1.1: Key Steps in Developing the Ten Worlds Theory

1. Setting up the theory by identifying and substantiating the existence of new and old welfare regimes, i.e. groups of countries resembling each other to a very significant extent, here, in the *ideal–typical* sense (Aspalter 2006a, 2011, 2017b; Aspalter et al. 2009; cf. also Hui, Aspalter and Lai 2010).
2. Once the first leg of the theory has been developed, the welfare regime characteristics of each welfare regime need to be identified (Aspalter 2017b, 2019b; cf. also Hempel cited in Arts 2020: 48).

3. Offering a deep explanation for the methodology used, plus developing and refining the methodology (and methods) being used (Aspalter 2012, 2019a, 2020b, 2020c; i.e. offering 'positive heuristics', cf. Arts 2020: 45).
4. Offering a deep explanation of the explanatory historical record for regime building and development (Aspalter 2020d, cf. also Midgley and Piachaud 2011).
5. Working out new effective grand dimensions that characterize the overall fabric of welfare regimes all around the world (*this volume*).
6. Applying/testing the theory by looking at e.g. numerical (and/or textual) data, by breaking down the new-established dimensions into sets of variables and/or proxy variables (*this volume*).
7. Based on the theory being constructed, substantiated and empirically tested, one can start to set up hypotheses, and test them (cf. also Arts 2020: 47–48). That is the very purpose of setting up ideal type theories in the first place (they are not meant to be an end in themselves).

Good Wine Takes Time

Theories are carefully constructed over a number of years, sometimes ten years (e.g. Esping-Andersen's welfare regime theory, from the very beginning that is, according to his own comment, cf. Esping-Andersen 1998) and sometimes 20 years and more (e.g. Luhmann's very own version of a theory of social systems that sees social communication as the atoms of society). The very beginning of the *Ten Worlds Theory*, seen retrospectively, may lead back to a conference held in Puli (Taiwan) in the summer of 1998, which kicked off a succession of research undertakings aimed at working out the existence, shape, and reasoning of welfare regimes (groups of countries or regions that share existential traits, to a significant extent that is). Of course, this series of events was initiated by the presence, lecture, discussions of and with Gøsta Esping-Andersen (how could it be otherwise, one could ponder).

Very important hereby, from the very beginning, was a series of books that collected (and commissioned) research works by many dozens of researchers around the world, to find out more about welfare state systems all over the world, without the help and knowledge provided by these excellent scholars the *Ten World Theory* would have never come to see the light of day (cf. e.g. Aspalter 2003a, b, c; Aspalter et al. 2008; Singh and Aspalter 2008; Abrahamson and Aspalter 2008; Walker and Aspalter 2008; Aspalter, Uchida and Gauld 2012; Aspalter and Teguh-Pribadi 2017; Aspalter, Teguh-Pribadi and Gauld 2017).

New Conceptual Tools

In view of the above, this study then will be testing the theory of *Ten Worlds of Welfare Regimes* (Aspalter 2017b) with quantitative data, i.e. particular variables and proxy variables for (I) *the (grand/far-reaching) dimension of povertization* (which allows for a much more differentiated analysis poverty, introducing a somewhat inverse aspect of decommodification: i.e. the interplay of (a) poverty-related policies, including different types of social security and social assistance design, education policy, housing policy and health care policy in particular (cf. e.g. Brady 2009), and (b) poverty outcomes (cf. e.g. Nichols-Casebolt et al. 1994; Tang and Wong 2003; Tang 2006; Midgley and Tang 2009; Hoefer and Midgley 2013; Lee and Koo 2017), and (II) *the (grand/far-reaching) dimension of inequality* which in general is a wider concept than stratification of larger social classes, and *can* e.g. be extended to cover all kinds of inequalities, including health inequalities, education inequalities, housing inequalities, gender inequalities, gender role inequalities, inequalities of cultural, social, technological and environmental access and opportunities, etc. in future studies (cf. e.g. Westergaard 1978; Fraser and Gordon 1994; Sainsbury 1996; Kingfisher 2002; Ruda 2007; Stephens and Fitzpatrick 2007; Bambra et al. 2009; Esping-Andersen and Myles 2011; Chuang et al. 2012; Matznetter 2019; Yu et al. 2021).

In pursuing these two newly conceptualized dimensions, we advance and round up theoretical, conceptual progress, and thus extend the reach of the findings of the *Ten Worlds of Welfare Regime Theory* (Aspalter 2017b) yet further—and this around the world, in all major corners of the world, in all countries and regions with all kinds of development contexts.

In the following, we understand and hence define *povertization* as the act of creating the conditions of—as well as the conditions themselves that (together) create, cement and perpetuate—different forms and kinds of poverty. Also, there are many different subdimensions of *inequality*—different kinds of education and education outcomes, gender cum gender identity arrangements and outcomes, health service access and their outcomes in addition to accumulative lifetime health—and related cultural, social, economic, governmental and natural—conditionings and conditions, etc.

As there are different ways of looking at and measuring both of these *two wholesome and hence globally relevant dimensions of povertization and inequality*, there is ample room (which is very much needed and called for) for the observing and analyzing scientist to extend and/or modify the calibration and alignment of these two conceptual lenses.

With the instrument of analyzing these *two wholesome dimensions of povertization and inequality* across the world, we can include the majority of the world's population in welfare state analysis.

> It cannot be that a small minority of rich developed countries are the only subjects of social policy analysis, we need to carry social policy research to all corners of all continents of the world.