

The Welfare State As ‘Shadow Regulator’ in Korea after the Economic Crisis: An Interpretation from the Viewpoint of the Voluntary Sector

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Abstract

This study aims to review the changing roles of the state and voluntary agencies in the wake of the 1997 economic crisis in the context of the Korean welfare regime. It is a common interpretation of the Korean welfare state in the post-crisis years that the Korean state was positively transformed from regulator to welfare provider and advanced voluntary forces as key associates working for enhancing human dignity under the rosy slogan of ‘state-civil society partnership.’ Against the current understanding, I argue that the ‘welfare state’ in Korea after the economic crisis needs to be redefined as a *shadow regulator* in the sense of its indirect social engineering to neutralize welfare demands from the voluntary sector and mustering voluntary contributions to welfare provisions. The government’s institutional arrangements for incorporating civil society in this period include the emphasis of voluntary roles in facilitating social integration, the invitation of voluntary agencies to the public works projects, and the mobilization of private transfers from civil society by means of voluntary organizations.

Introduction

In most societies, the space occupied by civil society has evolved as part of a dynamic process of adaptation and change and in the course of evolution has altered its character and composition. Gaps have opened up, new opportunities have appeared and voluntary bodies have taken up different roles and started to perform them in different ways, in part, in response to shifts in the external environment such as the modification of the role of the state and markets (Deakin 2001). In particular, the institutions with which they interact have also been in a state of flux.

In general, the retreat of the state – a common phenomenon in developed welfare countries – has left spaces to be filled, where the functions that it previously performed and still need to be discharged are located. The voluntary sector in Western countries has been spotlighted as an alternative candidate for the task of taking on these responsibilities on behalf of the state. Due to priorities of national economic competi-

tiveness in the period of neo-liberalism, the universal idea of social welfare to cover the whole population in the beginning of the Western welfare states has been increasingly sidelined by the introduction and expansion of social insurance system that is eligible to only those who could pay contributions, and the public welfare expenditure has been partly reduced by attracting the welfare service delivery organised by voluntary organisations. It is in this historical context that we can witness the institutional settings initiated by the government for the purpose of its cooperation with the voluntary sector for more effective welfare provision (i.e. the government-voluntary sector partnership, the introduction of quasi-market, etc.). Accordingly, it can be argued that the rapid expansion of voluntary organisations in the Western welfare system took place in line with the dismantling of the welfare state since the mid-1970s.

In contrast, the government-civil society relationship in South Korea (hereafter, Korea) has undergone the different developmental path of the welfare system

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after the advent of the financial crisis of 1997: the paralleling growth of the public and the voluntary sector in dealing with social welfare. As well known, before the financial crisis, the public social expenditure in Korea along with other East Asian countries was much less than that of its European counterparts. This observable fact results from the history of the Korean welfare state in which economic development was the overwhelming concern, taking priority over social protection (Kwon 1995). Most of welfare programmes put less weight on general elements of welfare provision from the government than the national project of economic development. The state as a 'regulator' of welfare provision came up with general consensus that made more than half of the Korean population support the notion that individuals should be responsible for their own welfare (Shin 2000: 104), and the family-based or the community-based welfare delivery was mobilised by the state as one of the driving welfare providers to fill the gap stemming from the low public spending for social welfare. However, the civil protest against the authoritarian government on the 10th of June in 1987 played a significant role in shifting the status of civic organisations from the dependent groups on the public sector to the independent advocacy and countervailing powers. In addition, the 1997 financial crisis was the imperative watershed where the voluntary sector could partake in social welfare reform movements and expand its role as welfare provider in filling the empty space left by the state's economic mismanagement. These two historical events forced the Korean government to launch a new welfare slogan 'Productive Welfare' following a series of welfare reforms that seem to discard the characteristics of the 'developmental welfare'. In consequence, unlike many OECD countries where the public authority has tried to reduce the size of its government and social spending in particular and it has encouraged voluntary activities to provide social welfare service, the Korean government has expanded the scope and commanded an increasing bulk of their public financing, and it has also emphasised the 'partnership with civil society' that seems to reflect the growing power of the voluntary sector.

Indeed, Korea has witnessed a rapid expansion of the welfare state since the economic crisis of 1997. Much of the Korean literature on the expansion of the public welfare programmes jumps at a conclusion that

the Korean government changes its role for social protection from the previous 'regulator' to the active 'provider' to the extent of the welfare state in the Western Europe (Kim 2002). However, if we look at this hasty conclusion in more depth, we can find out that the government is still regulating the public welfare system and furthermore, using civil society as the supplementary provider of social welfare service. It is not only because despite the relative increase of the public social expenditure, the level of the public spending in Korea still remains much lower than that of most OECD countries, but because the Korean government is marshalling the private transfers from voluntary welfare organisations through the political rhetoric of the 'government-civil society partnership'. By adopting this paralleling expansion of the public and the voluntary sector for welfare provision, the government could skilfully deal with two different problems coming from the financial crisis: the accommodation of growing demands for social welfare from the population under the economic disasters, namely, social integration; and the mobilisation of the private transfers from civil society to fill up gaps that the government should do as the welfare provider. In this sense, it is fair to state that the Korean government commenced social welfare reforms and embraced civil society as not the state of 'provider' but the state of 'shadow regulator'.

The explosive growth of voluntary organisations since the late 1980s gave crucial impacts on the changes of the government's welfare policy. To begin with, the nation-wide political advocacy organisations such as the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) and the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ) has played a central role in agenda setting for welfare reform and in the enactment process of the key laws stipulating the National Minimum Living Standards. While advocacy groups took on political campaigns for welfare reform, many voluntary organisations have been involved in social welfare provision conducted by the Community Chest of Korea (CCK) that includes wide ranges of social sectors such as the government, the business, media, trade unions, academia, the religious groups, and civic organisations. The nation-wide CCK has been symbolised as the meaningful product of social cohesion based on social consensus but in reality funds collected from civil society by the CCK support partly

the public assistance that the government should provide. Although it can be suggested that the voluntary sector in Korea makes contributions from the political pressure for welfare reforms to the implementation of welfare provision in mixed economies of welfare, this janus-faced feature of voluntary organisations results in the conflicting tension between advocacy voluntary organisations and conventional social welfare agencies. Moreover, the internal tension in civil society enables the government to function as 'shadow regulator'.

This paper seeks to explore causal links of developmental paths between the welfare state and the voluntary sector in Korea in order to verify three hypotheses presented below, with the particular emphasis on a question why the Korean government needs and allows the expansion of the voluntary sector in dealing with the welfare problems in the aftermath of the economic crisis.

- (1) *The expansion of the government intervention in the area of social welfare does not necessarily indicate that the government reinforces the role as the 'provider' of welfare service.*
- (2) *The explosive surge of the voluntary sector and its associated social welfare reform movement are not necessarily equalised with the retreat of the state welfare.*
- (3) *Social welfare reform movements do not necessarily demand the increased scale of welfare provision and coverage from the government.*

Given these hypotheses, the rest of the paper consists of the three-fold sections: the first part briefly touches on academic discourses on the characteristics of the Korean welfare system; the second part deals with the evolutionary development of the voluntary sector and the inner weaknesses of voluntary organisations; and the last part analyses how the Korean government in the aftermath of the financial crisis set in motion institutional adaptations to the changing society in order to regulate adeptly social unrest resulting from the radical economic restructuring, and mobilise the private transfers from civil society.

Debates on the Characteristics of the Korean Welfare System

Before the financial crisis of 1997, the East Asian

combination of low public spending on welfare with economic dynamism was praised in the West by left- and right-wing politicians alike, albeit for different reasons⁽¹⁾. Several studies have already tried to make sense of East Asian welfare systems, adopting historical, cultural or political economy approaches. Catherine Jones (1993: 214) characterizes the East Asian welfare state as the 'Confucian welfare state' with the accent on "conservative corporatism without (Western-style) worker participation; subsidiary without the Church; solidarity without equality; laissez-faire without libertarianism: an alternative expression for all this might be 'household economy' welfare states and run in the style of a traditional, Confucian, and extended family". Criticising her cultural determinism, Roger Goodman *et al.* (1998) offer a comprehensive and up-to-date review of large literature by noting that while they share certain common features, East Asian welfare systems are not homogeneous and one should be cautious about oversimplification. Nevertheless, the three core characteristics – limited to three East Asian countries: Japan, Korea, and Taiwan – are spelled out as general understandings of the East Asian welfare state: family welfare that appears to negate much of the need for state welfare; a status-segregated and somewhat residual social insurance based system; and corporate occupational plans for core workers (Goodman and Peng 1996).

However, after the crisis, scholars have begun to focus on the inadequacy of East Asian social safety nets and the needs for strengthening them with public money. Applying six factors⁽²⁾ as the analytic standards to East Asian welfare systems, Didier Jacobs (2000) concludes that the evidence allows putting some conventional statements about the virtues of East Asian welfare states into questions, and public expenditure on welfare are bound to rise a lot in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The mainstream of scholarly researches on the East Asian welfare state seems to accept the shift of the state role from negative regulator to active provider of welfare provision. However, this section examines whether or not this hasty assessment is applicable to the Korean case by looking at the existing accounts for the development of the Korean welfare state.

Developmental Welfare State

There seems to be no objections to the argument that Korean social policy before the financial crisis of 1997 has been more strongly shaped by the developmental priorities of politically insulated states (Deyo 1992; Kwon 1995, 1997; Shin 2000). For instance, Industrial Accident Insurance was chosen as the first social welfare programme by the Park Chung Hee (in office 1961-1979) government in 1962. This programme was regarded as an essential requirement for a country embarking on an ambitious economic development plan. In the case of National Health Insurance, industrial workers employed in big business were the first group of people to be protected while the more vulnerable were left unprotected. It was also clearly shown that economic growth was given overwhelming priority in policy making when the National Pension Programme was first considered in 1973. The National Pension Programme was seen as an effective measure for mobilising the capital much needed for economic development. In this policy paradigm, the economic-pragmatists had dominated social policy making until the economic crisis of 1997. Most of the incumbents of presidency strongly supported the economic-pragmatists' approach since they wanted to enhance their weak *political legitimacy* through economic performance (Kwon 1995). Given the authoritarian institutional setting in which the president and his bureaucratic authorities occupied the most effective point of decision for the imperative purpose of the maintenance of legitimacy, it was very difficult for different voices to be heard in policy-making (Kwon 2002). As in Europe historically and now, political factors played and play an important role in accounting for social policy development (Kuhnle 2002). On the other hand, the emergence of occupational welfare in Korea is also interpreted as the main instrument of social protection formed within a framework of the authoritarian state's policy of integrating economic development, labour control, and social welfare (Hong 1996; Yi 2007). This pattern of social policy have determined the path of occupational welfare development in the private sector, which has been influenced, shaped and constrained by institutions resulting from government policies. During this period of economic development, the Korean welfare state can be predominantly characterised by the notion that the main role of the state was performed as 'regulator' for social

welfare institutions.

Productive Welfare

President Kim Dae Jung's vision of a system of 'Productive Welfare'⁽³⁾ elaborated in his Liberation Day speech in August 1999 was made against a background of a serious financial crisis. The vision of productive welfare suggests a blue print for social welfare that spells out why and how a balanced and harmonious interaction of democratic, market, social and cultural forces can provide a model for a desired future Korean welfare society (President Secretariat of Republic of Korea 1999). It is argued that only the interplay of institutions and forces can overcome the economic crisis and provide a sustainable future welfare society (Kuhnle 2002). Unemployment grew rapidly and peaked at more than 8 per cent in early 1999, and more than one million Koreans were thrown into poverty. The unemployment rate rose to 6.8 per cent in 1998, from less than 3 per cent before 1997, and it was expected to keep rising due to the massive layoff scheduled by the restructuring of public sector and big business corporations (OECD Observer, October 2000). It is also worth noting that there was a sweeping change in the public perception of the role of the state in social welfare over this period. According to the survey research conducted twice in May 1997 and in October 1998, 83 per cent of the respondents replied that the state was responsible for citizens' social welfare in 1998, whereas 49 per cent responded in that way in 1997 (Shin 2000). Therefore, social impacts of the financial crisis made state responsibility for social welfare enhanced considerably, and facilitated plans for further improvement in coverage and benefits of social insurance schemes to be formulated. The Kim Dae Jung administration gave impetus to reform policies on income maintenance programmes for the unemployed and the poor, in the public health care system, including the reform of National Health Insurance and the policy for redefining the work of health care professionals, and in the National Pension Programme (Kwon 2002).

Whereas pursuing the labour market reform based on the IMF prescription for restructuring, the Kim's government introduced a package of social policy, the 'Master Plan for Tackling Unemployment', to deal with unemployment and protect the unemployed (Kwon 2002: 8). In this regard, the Employment Insur-

ance Programme has been extended to small-scale workplace to cover the newly unemployed amidst the economic crisis. In addition, a new income support programme for the poor was enacted: the Minimum Living Standard Guarantee (MLSG) would give benefits to those below the poverty line, increased to a much higher level than previously defined. It also aimed to cover the wider population of the poor. The health care system was also reformed during the period of 1998-2000 (Kwon 2001). A quasi-governmental agency was set up to manage integrated National Health Insurance, and the fundamental division of health care professionals between physicians and pharmacists was redefined.

On the face of it, these active reform manoeuvres under the political rhetoric of productive welfare lead us to assume that Korea is rapidly building the foundations of a modern welfare state, to the similar level of many OECD countries. Stein Kuhnle (2002) evaluates in this venue that "a reading of the vision on productive welfare gives rise to the impression that the type of welfare system in Korea is one which holds the potential of pushing Korea more in the direction of a social democratic, Scandinavian type of welfare regime" (Kuhnle 2002: 16). It is simply because productive welfare emphasises a stronger state commitment to welfare, so that all citizens should be covered by government welfare schemes, social integration, and democratic participation. His perspective can be easily developed into the argument that the main role of the welfare state in Korea is shifted to 'provider'.

This assessment of productive welfare can be commonly found in the literature containing debates on what is the driving force behind social welfare reforms in the wake of the economic crisis. Globalism enthusiasts argue that the extent to which the state becomes involved in shaping economic activities is determined by the pressures of globalisation (Lee 1999). Contrary to expectation, to the globalist's argument of the dismantling of the welfare state by the logic of globalisation, the Korean welfare state seems to develop towards a more redistributive and comprehensive welfare system, not limited to the establishment of a social safety net described by the IMF's prescription. However, they assert that it will come as less of a surprise to those who are familiar with the work of Dani Rodrik, who argues that there is

a highly significant correlation between openness and the growth of social protection (Rodrik 1997). On the other hand, some scholars counter-argue that the ongoing development of the social security system is mainly attributable to domestic institutional changes rather than external shocks to the economy (Shin 2000). That is, new policy networks characterising a tripartite corporatism together with growing social demands for social welfare have led to reforms. What we can catch up from these debates is that in spite of different approaches to the Korean welfare development in the aftermath of the financial crisis, they all seem to agree with the same assumption that the expansion of the welfare state means that the state's role as 'provider' of welfare service is much more reinforced.

However, Huck-Ju Kwon (2002) poses an important question regarding the expansion of the welfare state in Korea. The question is why Korea has extended its welfare state, at a time when neo-liberal ideology has been predominant in public policy discourse in Korea and abroad. Moreover, he strongly points out that these reforms went beyond the functional minima necessary to cope with social problems caused by the economic crisis. Adopting political factors as the main variables, Kwon cautiously presupposes that over-expansion of the welfare state in the wake of the financial crisis indicates not the state as provider of social welfare, but the temporary policy for the victory of the presidential election in 1997 and the general election in April 2000. At this historical juncture, welfare reforms were essential policy for the government to mitigate social unrest and the unemployment rate in support of winning elections and maintaining its political legitimacy. The failure to win the general election in 2000 manifested the thrust of reform beginning to lose its momentum. In a nutshell, his approach to productive welfare implies the negative side of welfare reforms for which we cannot come to a hasty conclusion that the Korean welfare state is identified as the welfare provider. Yet, like most of the literature, he pays less attention to influences of the voluntary sector on welfare reforms that I will focus in this paper.

The State as Provider or Regulator?

From the beginning of 2000, the hot debates on the role of the Korean welfare state have been ignited by

Korean academia in the division of social policy, with a special reference to change or continuity of the features of the welfare state resulting from a series of welfare reforms in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 1997. Although there is no clear consensus on the identity of the Korean welfare state, there seems to be no dissenting opinion to the notion that the correlation between social welfare delivery and public expenditure depends upon the nature of state responsibility for social welfare. According to writer's perspective located at a certain point of a wide spectrum of the state responsibility, the state's role for social welfare could be described in a different way. These debates can be largely summarised by the three clusters.

First, welfare reforms in Korea have to be understood as the expansion of state responsibility for welfare provision to the people (Kim 2002). The proponents of the idea of productive welfare claim that President Kim's welfare reforms apparently embarked upon the expansion of the state welfare, accepting the universal rights of social welfare to the level of the West. Second, a series of welfare reforms pursued by the Korean welfare state is the product of the structural adjustment tuned by neo-liberal market principles (Cho 2002). Most reforms took place in the line with the expansion of insurance programmes in which social welfare can be distributed to only those who can pay contributions (Tang 2000)⁽⁴⁾, and restrictively increasing were the amount and scale of the Public Assistance Programme that the government should take responsibility for. Consequently, the outward appearance of welfare reforms is viewed as the massive expansion of the state welfare, but in reality, the policy of productive welfare put less weight on the extension of social security nets. That is, it cannot be said that the state as provider of social welfare was firmly established after the economic crisis. Third, some scholars try to elaborate their argument between these two extreme perspectives. They admit that welfare reforms based on the expansion of the application scope of insurance programmes and social consensus through the tripartite committee could be defined as the expansion of state responsibility (Jung 2002). Nevertheless, the intention of social integration by the institutional adaptation has been undermined by the low level of the public expenditure allocation and by the continuous emphasis on the neo-liberal logic of

welfare-to-work (Lee and Yeo 2001). Therefore, the state plays a restrictive role in providing welfare service under the unstable mixture of the expanded state welfare and neo-liberal reforms.

For the analysis of the change of the state's role in dealing with social welfare, most of the literature, as I mentioned before, pays much heed to the correlation between social welfare service and the degree of the expansion of state responsibility, taking other sectors such as the voluntary sector into less account. More examination on the relationship between the public sector and other sectors might help to redefine the state's role in the post-IMF period. On the basis of the debates on welfare reforms that are explored so far, I will move over to the position and functions of the voluntary sector in order to verify a hypothesis that the expansion of the voluntary sector does not automatically result in the dismantling of the welfare state, and rather, it might be employed to identify the state as 'shadow regulator' of welfare provision.

The Evolution of the Voluntary Sector in Korea

As well known, the existing literature related to social welfare systems in Korea has paid little attention to the roles of the voluntary sector in social policy-making and the output to be implemented by its presence. The plethora of scholarly debates on the nature of the Korean welfare state has shed much more lights on state- or market-oriented perspective as a main analytical tool. Even among few studies about the voluntary sector, its roles and influence on social welfare seem to have been exaggerated and over-highlighted with no regard to its inherited limits because the voluntary sector such as non-profit organisations is so regarded as a new attractive factor that can be academically commercialised. Furthermore, it is not easy to examine the voluntary sector in Korea, because it is traditionally mixed with the informal sector (family, relatives, etc.), such that there is no clear boundary between the two sectors (Hong 1999).⁽⁵⁾ Therefore, this section consists of the fragmental sources mainly collected from literature coping with the general perspectives on civil society or civic movement in Korea. Adopting the methodology of the historical chronicle, I depict how the voluntary sector has evolved and developed to transform itself from marginal actor to active actor in social welfare issues.

The Authoritarian Developmental Period (1961-1987): the Marginalist-Instrumental Approach

During the authoritarian developmental period, in general, the voluntary sector played an instrumental role in providing welfare service and a marginal role in claiming more expanded welfare provision from the government sector. As many Western scholars designated, the private and informal support alongside welfare systems the government operated assisted the reduction of the public social expenditure, and the family- or the community-based welfare provision, in itself, seemed to negate the demands for more welfare services from the public sector. Social demands for welfare provision had been controlled by the great cause of economic development as well as the authoritarian government capsulated by the developmental ideology. In a nutshell, the voluntary sector in this period remained as the instrumental provider of social welfare, which was totally controlled and manipulated by the government.

The Park Chung Hee government who had forcefully come to power by means of military coup d'état in May 1960 faced poverty and increasing unemployment. In response, the government decided to utilise resources from foreign private aid organisations which had been running social relief operations in the country. Despite strong opposition from international aid organisations, the Korean government used grain and other basic materials to maintain political legitimacy of a new regime and to enhance the government's control over private welfare institutions and their efficiency by launching the Central Committee for Aid Activities (Yi 2007: 84-86). The period of the 1960s is characterised by 'aid economy' under the international circumstance of the Cold War, and social welfare policies was highly controlled by the government that implanted the ideology of economic development and anti-Communism into population (Kim 1994).

In the 1970s, Korea had experienced the rapid economic growth and the prosperity of the big business conglomerates that were on the frontline of the export-oriented industry in Korea. The economic growth enabled the government to consign welfare responsibility to private firms. Therefore, the firm-based welfare system became a major institutional framework for social welfare, and the voluntary sector became involuntarily involved in welfare provision

programmes made by private funds and designed by the big business conglomerates (Hong 1996). Still, given that the private firms were under the control of the authoritarian developmental government, the hierarchy in implementing social welfare provision was institutionalised in the order of the state – firms – voluntary sector.

The Fifth Republic established by another military coup d'état in 1980 began to restructure the institutional system of social welfare delivery under the name of a new slogan – the 'Achievement of Social Justice' (Yi 2007). The government monopolised the agenda-settings of social policy and pushed the leaders of the big business conglomerates to support the government programmes financially. The government created the quasi-voluntary organisations to work for the government-sponsored welfare programmes (Hong 1999: 139). A number of social welfare organisations tailored to the government policies were established to play an instrumental role in dealing with welfare provision, and they took root in Korean society so firmly that until now they have strong conservative influences on activities of voluntary organisations, thereby making conflicts with new social welfare movements (Lee 2001). Over the whole years of the authoritarian developmental period, the instrumental role of the third sector contributed to two interrelated objectives of the government: to enhance political legitimacy of the government for social welfare, and to mobilise the financial support and labour forces from the third sector – families and communities – fitting for the government plans of social policy.

The Democratisation Movement of 1987 (1987-1997): the Growth of Political Advocacy Organisations

Ever since the work of Karl Mannheim, historical social scientists have hypothesised that epochal watersheds have their biggest influence on the outlooks of society. This is true of Korean society in June 1987. The democratisation movement starting on 10th of June 1987 reformulated the status of the voluntary sector from the passive taker of social policy made by the government to the proactive maker of welfare programmes. The trade unions and their associated social organisations took initiatives of social movement to reform the diverse welfare-related projects that had been deeply embedded in the authoritarian regime,

ranging from the employment insurance programme to the national secure minimum standard of living (Moon 2002). Accordingly, the scope of roles covered by the voluntary sector was expanded from filling the gap instead of the government to creating new social welfare issues. However, the role of the voluntary sector in this period seems to be limited to social welfare related to political inequality, because the firm-based economy still had strong influence on occupational welfare.

In this period, we can witness two significant changes in the third sector that give important implication to the research on the role of the voluntary sector in welfare provision. First of all, the voluntary sector began to become separate from the informal sector. The voluntary sector became to independently promote democracy by facilitating solidarity and fostering the development of civil society. Social movements could shape a distinct area of social activity between individuals and the primary group of the family, on the one hand, and the state on the other. Korean society has undergone the age of civil and social movement ‘explosion’, which is similar to the world trend as Lester Salamon (1994) has described. Indeed, the number of articles titled ‘civil or social movement organisations’ which were put on four major newspapers (Chosun, Joongang, Donga, and Hankook Ilbo) during the late 1980s was 91 only (Joo and Nam 2001). However, the number increased by 20 fold up to 1,710 in the early and mid-1990s. Therefore, a thriving voluntary sector is seen as an indispensable component of a civil society and of a democratic political system in Korean society.

Secondly, two important nation-wide civic organisations were voluntarily formed after the civil protests for democratisation in 1987. In 1989, the CCEJ in 1989 was founded in response to the problematic side-effect of rapid economic development, claiming that in this process, equitable distribution of wealth has been forgotten and the social rights of people has been gravely damaged. Also, in 1994, the PSPD was founded as a civil organisation dedicated to promote political justice and human rights through participation of the people. For the most part, they either acted to raise issues for government attention by campaigning for policy suggestions in support of numerous projects for the unemployed and the poor. Growing political power of civil society could force the govern-

ment not to ignore voices and demands from voluntary organisations, and thereby, make it impossible that the government regulates and controls the voluntary sector in order to replace, in part, the role of welfare provision on behalf of the government. However, it seems that at this historical stage, the voluntary activity was limited to the political advocacy role at either local level or national level (Shim 2000: 42). Functions as social welfare provider can be hardly found in newly rising voluntary organisations in this period, such that we can assume that some parts of welfare provision have been still maintained by the informal sector and quasi-voluntary sector steered by the government or the big business conglomerates.

The Economic Crisis of 1997 and Social Welfare Reform Movement: the Paralleling Expansion of the Voluntary and Public Sector

The financial crisis in 1997 was portrayed as another crucial turning point for the voluntary sector. The resulting effects of economic mismanagement fatally undermined capacities of the government and firms as welfare providers, and yielded the massive layoff and *de facto* collapse of social security service. Under this circumstance, civic organisations could boost their voice in much wider range of social welfare agenda, especially economic sector: social security nets – the national pension, the reform of social insurance, the reform of medical insurance programmes, etc (Shim 2000). It was the voluntary sector that took part in providing welfare services for the homeless, and the destitute by voluntarily mobilising the charitable funds from social network (Kim and Ryoo 2000). The government responded to the demands from the voluntary sector by taking measures of launching a new institutional cooperation: the ‘Government-Civil Society Partnership’ in which all sectors discuss social policy issues and the following means of more effective implementation. This shows that the main role of the voluntary sector after the financial crisis was expanded into making a bridge between the government and the local people by participating in social policy-making.

Korean scholars evaluate this historical shift as the product resulting from the failure of the developmental welfare system. Jin-Young Moon (2002: 6) points out that “as the myth of economic development has collapsed, the Korean government was not able to

grasp the policy point to tackling the unprecedented social problems, and turned out to be incapable of running social programmes effectively". It can be further argued that these social programmes can hardly be successful even if they actively introduce new schemes and allocate vast amount of budget to these programmes. On the other hand, adopting Karl Polanyi's idea in his classic work *The Great Transformation* as a main theoretical tool to analyse the growth of the voluntary sector, Kyung-Joon Hong (1999) states that the livelihood of man in Korea after the economic crisis would be reorganised and complemented by 'reciprocity' through self-help system operated by the voluntary sector, in that 'redistribution' mechanism by the government and 'exchange' mechanism by the market are proven malfunctioned. His emphasis on the complementary role of the voluntary sector is put in the similar line with Stanley Katz's suggestion that "civil society must be thought of as a process and a state of mind – a social process that generates trust and mutual understanding and mediates state and market pressures or failures" (Katz 1999: 37). For the most part, these reviews on the rapid increase of voluntary organisations and their influences to welfare provision seem to indicate that the government leaves to voluntary associations functions that elsewhere and at other times have been performed by the state, as the public sector, allegedly, lost both roles of regulator and provider. However, as Theda Skocpol (1996) warns against the Republicans and their theoretical supporter, Robert Putnam, we need to realise that pitting voluntarism and charity in zero-sum opposition to the government is too hasty policy-making⁽⁶⁾. It is simply because the government institutionally adapted itself to the changing society, and called for the participation of voluntary associations in dealing with welfare issues under the political rhetoric of 'Partnership with Civil Society' based on the goals of 'Productive Welfare'.

Given academic analyses presented in the above, we can draw two crucial insinuations necessary to explain the relationship between the voluntary sector and the government after the financial crisis. Firstly and most importantly, it is very interesting to note that the voluntary sector in Korea continued to grow in the parallel with the expansion of the public welfare schemes, contrary to Salamon's survey (1994: 110) showing that the voluntary sector in Western world is

thriving in consequence of the development of the welfare state. This double-track expansion can be viewed as mutual understandings of close symbiosis, in that the government has to expand the public welfare expenditure in order to reduce or prevent social unrest stemming from the economic disaster, and at the same time the government needs the voluntary participation of civic organizations to fill gaps resulting from the expanded welfare schemes that it plans to implement. In consequence, it can be argued that the role of the government is located in somewhere between provider and regulator. In addition, we now know that the correlation between the expansion of voluntary organisations and the retreat of the welfare state may be differently verified in different contexts.

In the second place, there is an unintended trend of the division of labour within the area of civil society in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Alongside advocacy activities lasting since the democratisation movement of 1987, a number of voluntary organisations either at the national base or at the local base pay great attention to activities of social welfare provider in order to overcome the high rate of unemployment and the shortage of subsidies for the poor by means of fund-raising from generous individuals in collaboration with mass media or the public agencies (Chung 2001). Whilst political advocacy groups strongly participate in campaign for welfare reforms as social forces against the government, voluntary organisations undertaking social welfare delivery have room for working with the government. This would be the cleavage within the voluntary sector that might bring about tensions between the two different styles of organisations when they cope with the problems of welfare reforms.

For the part of political advocacy for welfare reforms, we can take a typical example of the voluntary solidarity in the enactment process of the MLSG. In March 1999, the PSPD and the CCEJ took the initiative of organising the 'Solidarity for Enactment of the MLSG' consisting of 64 major Korean civic organisations such as the Korean Council of Trade Unions, the Federation of Korean Trade Union, the Representative Council for the Religious, the Lawyers for Democratic Society, and so on (Moon 2002: 7-8). The Solidarity achieved the successful outcome to enact the law of the MLSG by actively participating in the enactment process of the MLSG in four stages: (1)

issue making, (2) agenda setting, (3) policy alternatives, and (4) decision-making (Ahn 2000). Whilst a series of social welfare reforms launched by the Kim Dae Jung government may be appraised as an epoch-making, it is noteworthy that the process of such reforms is totally different from the previous processes. In general, it was the government that designed and proposed a new law and then the parliament examined and decided. It was thoroughly a government-centred process, and thus there has been no room for voluntary organisations. In contrast, these social welfare reforms under the Kim Dae Jung government have been strongly influenced by advocacy organisations, which have played a key role from the agenda setting and proposing policy alternatives, to the final enactment (Ahn 2000: 18-19; Kwon 2002: 13). The reasons why the two major nation-wide advocacy organisations (the PSPD and the CCEJ) have acted independently for social welfare reforms can be found from three features of internal composition of those organisations. First, organisations are composed of the regional branches, which means that they are able to systemically mobilise human resources for campaigning at the national level. Second, one article of their internal regulations stipulates independent fund-raising and its autonomous allocation, and proscribes any funds from the public sector. Lastly, all staffs are full-time activists or a group of progressive or somewhat leftist scholars. Based on independent principles of activity, the PSPD and the CCEJ have played a significant role in pushing the government to expand the public social expenditure and hampering the government from regulating welfare system arbitrarily.

On the other hand, the voluntary sector in Korea plays a key role in terms of fund-raising as well as welfare services, in particular, in the aftermath of the financial crisis. The voluntary sector contributions to the statutory social welfare bodies consist of voluntary donations, statutory bodies' own proceedings, and the Community Chest for social services (Chung 2001). Additionally, a number of local-level voluntary organisations are working for self-employed programmes that they set up voluntarily in order to trim down the high rate of unemployment (Jin 2001: 199-201). Those voluntary activities are supplementary or complementary roles for welfare service that the government should provide. Overlapping activity between statutory agencies and voluntary organisations enables the

government to collaborate with the voluntary sector or to consign welfare services into the area of civil society. The Community Chest of Korea (CCK) is the best example to explain how voluntary organisations taking on welfare provisions are organised and operated. Taking over the government-conducted community chest drive, the CCK was established in November 1998 as a social welfare organisation according to the Community Chest Law (CCL). According to the Clause 2 of the CCL, the main goals of the CCK are to raise donations on a national level, and to set up local funds to support social welfare projects (Yoon 2000: 256). Despite the voluntary identity prescribed by the CCL, the fundamental nature of operational principles returns the CCK into a pro-government organisation. Most of all, most famous figures in every sector of Korean society (the former or present cabinet members, the incumbent parliament members, two major trade unions, conventional social welfare organisations, and so on) are involved as full-time or part-time staffs in making decisions on how to allocate funds and how to choose welfare projects proposed by local voluntary organisations. Furthermore, the Korean first lady, Lee Heui Ho, is now acting as one of co-representatives in the CCK. Although the composition of main staffs gathered from all sectors of society may symbolise the CCK as a paragon organisation for social integration, the allocation of funds is more likely to be made by the policy-direction of the government. It is also noteworthy that the CCK has introduced the contract system in selecting some voluntary projects that will be funded in order to make voluntary candidates competing each other (Kim and Ryoo 2000). In a nutshell, the Korean government institutionalises quasi-voluntary organisation in order to facilitate welfare provisions not directly through the public sector, but through the voluntary sector, and thereby broadens the room for acting as indirect regulator.

As mentioned before, this unintended division of labour exposes voluntary organisations to conflicting tensions between political advocacy organisations and conventional social welfare organisations. It may be mainly because the advocacy groups have tended to see conventional agencies as one of the reform targets (Lee 2001: 1). It is also partly because their ideological orientation is somewhat different from that of social welfare organisations, for example, 'income

Table 1. Comparison of Three Major Nation-Wide Voluntary Organisations in Korea

	People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)	Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ)	Community Chest of Korea (CCK)
Sphere of Activity	National (8 branches)	National (32 branches)	National (16 branches)
Feature of Activity	Advocacy (Political issues)	Advocacy (Economic issues)	Social welfare provider
Fund-raising	Voluntary	Voluntary	Quasi-voluntary
Allocation	Voluntary	Voluntary	Quasi-voluntary
Composition of Staff	Civil Activists & Academics	Civil Activists & Academics	Politicians, Bureaucrats, Religious Orgs, Trade Unions, Media, Civic Orgs, Firms, Lawyers, etc.

Sources: Author's classification from www.pspd.org, www.ccej.or.kr, and www.chest.or.kr.

strategy' oriented vs. 'service strategy' oriented (Lee 2001: 7). More importantly, political advocacy organisations regard social welfare organisations as client groups mobilised by the government. Consequently, this conflict is a structural impediment for the voluntary sector in Korea to raise united voices for welfare reforms to the government.

The State as 'Shadow Regulator': Institutional Adaptation for Social Integration

Given the exploration of the evolutionary development of voluntary organisations, we can learn why the government needs the voluntary sector contributing to welfare service provisions, and how the government indirectly regulate civil society. In particular, the government adapts itself to social demands for welfare reforms by the introduction of new institutional settings such as the welfare rhetoric 'Productive Welfare' encapsulated by partnership with civil society, the linkage between the voluntary sector and self-employed programmes, and the enactment of the CCL. The state's goals in pursuit of the institutional adaptations are largely categorised by the following benefits.

The Mobilisation of the Private Transfers

It is widely accepted among scholars of social policy that speed and contents of the social welfare reforms under the Kim Dae Jung government are surprisingly epoch-making, compared with those in previous governments. Recent social welfare reforms entail the massive expansion of the public welfare expenditure. Indeed, the public social expenditure in Korea has been increased from 3.90 per cent of GDP in 1996

before the economic crisis to 5.94 per cent of GDP in 1998 after the crisis (table 2). However, the level of the Korean public spending is still tremendously lower than that of other OECD countries. At this point, we can raise an important question: how can over-expanded welfare schemes that are evaluated as the similar level of welfare systems in Western countries be financed for effective implementation? The correct answer may be located in the area of the voluntary sector.

Despite their limited capacity and ambiguous boundary with the informal sector, voluntary organisations in Korea have traditionally played a great role in providing private transfers for the poor and the unemployed, which have contributed to facilitate the redistribution of income as well as modify income inequality (Kwon 1998). According to Kwon's re-estimation (1998: 476), private transfers account for 15 per cent of the market income of the poor. In the same venue, it is quite worth mentioning Ian Gough and J. Kim's research (2000) revealing that the total level of welfare expenditure in Korea at 22 per cent of GDP is much closer to the likely OECD average than if public spending alone is considered. They conclude that Korea has a genuinely mixed system of welfare, with the public and private sector, all playing a notable role (Gough and Kim 2000: 6). In other words, the government can make up for the large amount of welfare expenditure by mobilising the private transfers. If we look at the way of fund-raising and its allocations of the CCK in more depth, this operational mechanism can be clearly confirmed. First, staffs with various affiliations are easily able to collect donations from all sectors such as enterprises, mass media, the religious

Table 2. Comparison of Public Social Expenditure of OECD countries

Measure: As % of GDP

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Denmark	29.32	30.17	30.72	32.35	33.06	32.41	31.69	30.66	29.81
Finland	24.78	29.91	33.92	33.88	33.04	31.24	30.97	28.72	26.54
France	26.45	27.09	27.88	29.34	29.07	28.98	29.31	29.27	28.82
Germany	20.29	24.17	25.56	26.37	26.19	26.70	28.06	27.74	27.29
Italy	23.87	24.33	25.52	25.73	25.45	23.75	24.38	24.94	25.07
Japan	10.80	10.94	11.45	12.07	12.67	13.47	13.91	14.32	14.66
Korea	3.16	2.96	3.25	3.33	3.38	3.67	3.90	4.27	5.94
Mexico	3.23	3.58	3.93	4.24	4.68	7.44	7.54	8.02	8.22
Netherlands	27.92	28.10	28.56	28.76	26.85	25.92	25.29	24.88	23.90
New Zealand	22.53	22.56	22.40	21.02	19.90	19.32	19.67	20.76	20.97
Norway	26.00	27.15	28.41	28.13	27.95	27.62	26.48	26.16	26.97
Sweden	31.02	33.18	36.39	36.66	35.21	33.03	32.99	32.26	30.98
United Kingdom	21.62	23.41	25.75	26.46	26.10	25.84	25.79	25.33	24.70
United States	13.36	14.41	15.11	15.36	15.34	15.41	15.30	14.93	14.59

Source: www.oecd.org

Table 3. The 1999 Fund Allocation of the Community Chest of Korea

Unit: 10,000 won

		Number of supported proposals	Supported amount	Percentage
Support of living expenses		19	3,038,908	45.8%
Support of health costs		13	421,670	6.4%
Programs	Counselling	36	636,659	9.6%
	Self-employed projects	81	2,229,898	33.5%
	Publicity activities	6	99,044	1.5%
	Sub-sum	123	2,965,601	44.6%
Support of facility operation & renovation		12	211,145	3.2%
Total sum		167	6,637,321	100.0%

Source: Internal Document of the National Association of the Community Chest (1999). Recited from Kim and Ryoo (2000).

charities, and so on. Second, the fund allocation is chiefly focused on living expenses and health costs in support of the poor (replacing the Public Assistance Programme in part) that are equivalent to over 50 per cent of the total fund, as well as on self-employed projects (replacing the Public Works Projects in part) that are equivalent to 33.5 per cent (table 3). Some scholars criticize that the government has been utilising donations collected from the people for the purpose of supporting the public welfare schemes, rather than expanding social welfare budget (Kim and Ryoo 2000: 433-435). Accordingly, the Korean government effectively mobilises the private transfers

from the voluntary sector in order to manage over-expanded public welfare programmes.

Supplements of the Public Works Projects

To dealing with the high rate of unemployment, the Kim Dae Jung government extended the Employment Insurance and Industrial Accident Compensation to all employees. The government also launched the Public Works Projects, targeting at those people, who were outside of the Employment Insurance Programme and the Public Assistance Programme (Kwon 2002: 9-11). In other words, this programme was for those unemployed who were not eligible for unemployment

benefits and at the same time not poor enough to get public assistance benefits. They were not eligible for public assistance benefits, simply because the means testing of the Public Assistance Programme was very strict in Korea. The Public Works Projects provide a work force for social service and charity organizations such as community centres and welfare institutions (Jin 2001). This sort of work is by and large consigned to voluntary organisations based on the local community. As table 3 shows, the nation-wide voluntary organisation also allocates its funds to the programme of self-employed projects. Hence, the government puts voluntary organisations to practical use for the partial replacement of the Public Works Projects. That is, as Ralph Kramer classifies (1981: 234), the voluntary sector supplements or extends the governmental system with similar services, some of which may offer an alternative choice or serve a substitute for a governmental service.

When the government selects voluntary agencies as the substitute of the Public Works Projects, it adopts the introduction of the quasi-market system for promoting competition. The quasi-markets arrangement involves a process of separation of state finance from state provision of welfare services, alongside the introduction of competition in the provision of services between independent agencies (Le Grand and Bartlett 1993). The institutional setting of contracting relationship with voluntary organisations makes the voluntary sectors reliant on the public funds, thereby facilitating the government to play a key role as 'shadow regulator'.

Agencies for Social Integration

The fundamental rationale of the state's institutional adaptation to accommodate the voluntary sector into the area of welfare service converges to one general objective: social integration in the very unstable historical juncture when the economic failure produced massive lay-offs and the malfunctions of social security nets. For this purpose, large portion of the political rhetoric of productive welfare emphasises partnership with civil society and the revival of community spirit through voluntary organizations. By mobilising the private transfers, consigning the unemployed to self-employed programmes operated by local communities, and assembling various social forces into a huge-sized voluntary organisation, the government is able to

reduce the public social expenditure, to cut down the high rate of unemployment, and to achieve the great cause of social cohesion. Very radically speaking, voluntary organisations can be seen as agencies of the government working for social integration. Therefore, unlike Kuhnle's evaluation, the role of the welfare state in Korea in the aftermath of the economic crisis shifted from 'explicit regulator' to 'shadow regulator' in coping with welfare issues.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this essay, I posited three hypotheses, with the particular weight on a question why the Korean government needs and allows the expansion of the voluntary sector in dealing with the welfare problems in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Through analysis of the historical development of both the Korean welfare state and the voluntary sector, it can be found that the Korean government has called for voluntary organisations in order to relieve financial burden stemming from over-expanded public welfare schemes, as well as to consign self-employed projects to local communities. The CCK is the typical voluntary organisation tailored to the government's goal of social integration. The expansion of the public welfare programmes does not mean that the government provides the whole coverage of the public expenditure. Instead, it manages the public expenditure by mobilising the private transfers from other social sectors. Consequently, the first of hypotheses stands confirmed.

As we explore in the earlier sections, the development voluntary sector in Korea is generally characterised by the rapid growth of the number and scale in parallel with the expansion of the public welfare programmes. It is the developmental path of the voluntary sector different from that of Western countries which have experienced the expansion of the voluntary sector in the consequences of the retreat of the state welfare. This phenomenon fundamentally results from close symbiosis based on mutual needs between the public and the voluntary sector after the economic crisis of 1997. The Korean context verifies the possibility of paralleling expansion of the voluntary sector with the welfare state. Therefore, the second of hypotheses stands correct.

Civil society has Janus-faced elements that can be very flexibly fitted to different conditions. The Korean

voluntary sector is largely composed of the two different types of voluntary organisations: political advocacy groups and social welfare organisations. Whilst advocacy organisations undertake the political campaigns and the suggestion of policy alternatives against the government-conducted welfare programmes, conventional social welfare organisations are more likely to collaborate with the government by receiving the public funds through contracting. This conflicting relationship between voluntary organisations produces dissonant voices that would be weakening the power of the voluntary sector when they demand welfare reforms to the government. In this regard, the third of hypotheses stands confirmed as well.

The second and the third hypothesis are finally reduced to the first hypothesis. The government facing the financial crisis needed the support of the voluntary sector, simply because the state- and the market-based welfare provision collapsed, and therefore, it allowed the expansion of voluntary organisations. The conflicts within voluntary organisations enable the government to regulate conventional social welfare organisations very easily, and the government accommodates social welfare organisations into the government-funded projects in order to mobilise human resources and financial resources from the voluntary sector. In a nutshell, all hypotheses confirm their convergence to the first one: the role of ‘shadow regulator’.

NOTE

- (1) The British Labour Party primarily regards East Asia as instructive in its emphasis on the role of government in stimulating economic growth and maintaining social cohesion, while the Conservative Party cites the same area of social welfare in support of an image of an enterprise society based on low levels of government expenditure and individual reliance (White and Goodman 1998).
- (2) Six factors are analysed based on aggregate data: the public/private mix of welfare programmes, the age structure, the maturity of old-age pension schemes, the population coverage of social security, the relative generosity of social security and the role of enterprises and families as alternative providers of welfare (Jacobs 2000).
- (3) The office of the presidential aides published a well-written book which explains the idea and policy of productive welfare. It summarizes a number of problems and concerns forming the background for this welfare ideology, and the goals of productive welfare (President Secretariat of Republic of Korea 1999).
 - (i) Problems and concerns: deteriorating social integration;

- poverty in the outskirts of urban areas; inequality in the distribution of income and wealth; regional imbalance in the distribution of resources; weak rights and interests of the socially underprivileged; old age pension coverage for people who have not paid contributions; high rate of unemployment; protection of needs of people outside the labor market; monopolistic tendencies in business-government collusion; globalization and high labor costs
- (ii) The goals of productive welfare: develop a welfare system that nurtures both growth and equitable income distribution; reach consensus between the government, the market and civil society; revive community spirit through civic organizations; develop a local-community based system of welfare; fair, equitable distribution of wealth; active policy of welfare through work; increased socio-economic participation; more comprehensive social security system that covers the entire population; increase the percentage of total government spending on social welfare; raise taxes for high-income earners; constitutional recognition of social welfare as a basic human rights; develop social participation programs; increase opportunities for participation of women; strengthen the protection of children’s living standards; strengthen the role of the private sector and of civic groups and voluntary associations; reduce socio-economic disparities among nations in the East Asia region; advance global harmony.
- (4) For example, in 1998, the Korean government extended the Employment Insurance Programme (EIP) to cover those previously outside the programme and loosened its eligibility requirement for unemployment benefits to take up people who were made unemployed. Although a great number of people benefited from this reform, this effort was not very effective in helping the unemployed previously in working in small-scale workplaces and informal sectors. It is because the EIP required to pay a premium first, even if the minimum period of contribution was reduced to six months. In other words, the EIP was still of no use for the unemployed who had not previously paid unemployment contributions.
- (5) The short history of civil society and voluntary organizations in Korea and the blurring of boundary between the voluntary sector and the informal sector lead Korean scholars to use the term, ‘third sector’ instead of the voluntary sector. It seems to be made so as to embrace all elements consisting of civil society for more convenience when we explain something about the voluntary sector. Although I need more research for the clear definition of the voluntary sector tailored to the Korean situation, I use the term ‘voluntary sector’ in general in this essay, except some cases when I spell out voluntary agencies that are confused or mixed with the informal sector.
- (6) Skocpol criticises many conservatives’ rhetoric, “return to the Tocqueville files”, in that the United States has never had much of a centralised welfare state like the Western Europe, and instead, the federal and state governments have often subsidised and acted in partnership with the efforts of voluntary, religious, and nonprofit agencies. In this regard, she emphasises the role of the state, by stating that “Organised

civil society in the United States has never flourished apart from active government or in opposition to government and politics" (1996: 7).

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