

FRAMING MULTIFUNCTIONALITY: AGRICULTURAL POLICY PARADIGM CHANGE IN SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN?

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (URAA) and the subsequent establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Japan face some of the most serious agricultural policy adjustment problems of all WTO signatories. Attempts during the last three or four decades to maintain politically acceptable farm income levels within their minifarm structures of agriculture relied upon a combination of protectionist domestic price support, import control, and high tariff policy measures. These policies must be gradually dismantled under the agricultural reform “disciplines” stipulated in the URAA (Nelson, et al. 2001). Ongoing challenges faced by both countries in meeting reform targets are evident in their present ranking among the most protectionist OECD countries in terms of Producer Support Estimates (PSE) used by the OECD in its periodic agricultural policy reviews (see Table 1 below; OECD 2004).

During the course of the URAA negotiations, Korea and Japan, along with the EU and other European countries, insisted that Non-Trade Concerns (NTCs), such as food security and rural socioeconomic stability, be recognized as legitimate rural/agricultural sector policy objectives (Normile and Bohman 2002). The subsequent inclusion of a NTC provision in the URAA accords has provided the impetus for the development of a new multifunctionality (hereafter MF) policy paradigm, codified in such OECD publications as *Multifunctionality: Toward An Analytical Framework* (2001). In this new paradigm, policy attention is directed to a range of valuable public goods that are co-produced as by-products of agricultural production, but that are not presently marketised in ways that reward producers for their provision. Examples of such by-products, in addition to aforementioned NTC food security and rural socioeconomic stability concerns, include environmental service, aesthetic landscape maintenance, and cultural heritage preservation social amenities. MF proponents argue that such valuable positive externalities of agricultural production may be threatened in regions where agricultural trade liberalization measures jeopardize the survival of the farm sector and surrounding rural communities.

Policymakers in Korea and Japan have found MF ideas inviting rationales for continued support of their domestic agricultures in a changing global agricultural

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policy environment. It is even suggested that MF policy ideas originated earlier in Japan in analyses of the ecological functions of paddy rice agriculture (Goda 2005; Kajii 2001). Both Korea and Japan have joined the “Friends of Multifunctionality” and the “food importing countries” groups as promoters of MF policy options in the WTO Doha Round agricultural negotiations. Recent policy documents from their ministries of agriculture highlight their strong support for MF as a legitimate policy option within the WTO framework (JMAFF, n.d.; KMAF 2004).

In light of their stated commitments to MF policy principles, this study examines the extent to which domestic agricultural policies in Korea and Japan have taken a MF turn. Both Korea and Japan provide important case study benchmarks for comparative analysis of MF policy initiatives in high income countries with subsidized agricultures. Both countries are heavily reliant on food imports and lack significant agri-export subsectors. Their paddy rice-based agriculture, a distinctive, centuries-old agro-ecological adaptation to a monsoonal climate, poor soils, and high population densities (Bray 1986; Oshima 1986), is threatened by ongoing trade liberalization pressures from both bilateral (particularly the United States) and multilateral (WTO) sources. Such rural/agricultural sector profiles compound sectoral restructuring and agricultural policy reform problems, making Korea and Japan interesting candidates for MF paradigm shifts in their rural/agricultural development policies. Exploring the emergence of MF policy initiatives in the East Asian region provides important additional insights into the nature and scope of the current MF policy challenge to the market competition, comparative advantage agricultural policy orthodoxy that currently undergirds the WTO agricultural regime.

The Multifunctionality Policy Debate: Paradigm Shift or Policy Shuffle

We situate our paper in a debate about an agricultural policy paradigm shift in the OECD countries. The ongoing globalization of the agri-food system, in accord with neoliberal ideas of marketisation encoded in the WTO agricultural trade regime, threatens significant rural/agricultural sector displacement in regions that are not competitive in global agricultural markets. Not surprisingly, there are policy reactions to counter such threats. In the literature under review, the emergence of a MF policy challenge to WTO orthodoxy is framed in these Polanyian terms, a policy “countermovement” in response to globalization’s disruptive threats (Hollander 2004; Losch 2004; McCarthy 2005; Polanyi 1944).

Coleman, Grant, and Josling (2004:93-109) capture this current agricultural policy contestation conjuncture in the world political economy in their recent analysis of competing competitive, global production, dependent, and multifunctional policy paradigms in an era of global agri-food system restructuring. The competitive and global production paradigms emphasize market-driven agri-food system restructuring policies based on the logics of trade liberalization and comparative advantage as encoded in the WTO regime. The dependent paradigm, premised on food security as a vital national interest and on the inherently unstable nature of agricultural markets that periodically jeopardize producer economic viability and consumer price stability, justifies protectionist government interventions when necessary. This policy paradigm is now judged to be trade-distorting under WTO rules. The URAA disciplines mandate gradual dismantling of domestic price support, import control, and tariff measures that have been characteristic dependent paradigm policy instruments. The

new multifunctionality paradigm challenges the neoliberal market-oriented paradigms by emphasizing the loss of positive externalities in the event of displacement of farming and rural communities by trade liberalization (competitive paradigm) and/or spatial re-organization of agri-food commodity chains (global production paradigm). It should be emphasized that Coleman, et al (2004) have developed this policy paradigm typology as an ideal type construct. Real world policy regimes show considerable intra-paradigm variation and inter-paradigm mixing as policies in one country often vary across commodities, farm enterprise types, and/or regions.

Policy paradigm change and contestation themes loom large in recent literature on MF policy initiatives, with the focus primarily on the agricultural policy reform debate in the EU. Beginning in the early 1990s, claims about the transformation of European agriculture from a “productivist” to a “post-productivist” mode began to appear in the rural studies literature, with strong linkages posited between socioeconomic changes in the rural/agricultural sector and post-industrial, post-Fordist, and post-modern socioeconomic trends (Iberrry and Bowler 1998; Shucksmith 1993; Symes 1992, 1991; Ward 1993; Wilson 2001). The post-productivist era is viewed as a response to a new consumer-driven valorization of organic and locally grown foods (Gilig and Battershill 1998), distinctive artisanal regional products (Knickel and Renting 2000; Ray 1998), and agri-tourism (Armesto Lopez and Martin 2006; Knowd 2006), resulting in the emergence of a “consumptionist countryside” (Marsden 2003; Lockie and Kitto 2000) that is transforming the production activities of many farm households and reshaping local rural economies. It is also a response to increased societal concerns about the negative externalities of a productivist agri-food system that is prone to overproduction, environmental degradation, and food safety crises and that has exacerbated rural depopulation trends (Ploeg 2006).

The idea that emergent MF policy initiatives mark a new post-productivist era in EU agriculture generated a vigorous counter-response (Evans, Morris and Winter 2002; Potter and Lobley 2004; Potter and Tilzey 2005; McCarthy 2005; Wilson 2001). Those challenging the post-productivist transition argument pointed to increasing sectoral dualism, rather than a structural transition, as the contemporary EU rural/agricultural sector reality. They argue that a world-competitive farm enterprise agri-food subsector based upon productivist development principles co-exists with an increasingly marginalized small farm subsector in “less favored” agricultural regions, often within the same country. Accordingly, increased sectoral polarization explains the present bi-furcated nature of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). At present, the bulk of subsidies go to individual farm enterprises in the competitive subsector on a productivist output, hectarage, or livestock headage basis. A modest new “second pillar” 2000 reform initiative providing de-coupled support to economically marginal farm households has been added to effect the MF goals of landscape and cultural heritage preservation, environmental amenities provision, and rural depopulation slowdown in the less favoured agricultural production regions (Potter and Tilzey 2005).

In our view, this sectoral dualism reality is reflected in several recent policy analyses that distinguish articulations of “strong” and “weak” versions of the MF paradigm (see Hollander 2004; Losch 2004; Potter and Tilzey 2005). The main thrust of the weak version is to employ MF policy ideas to reposition existing productivist-oriented subsidy programs as suppliers of positive externalities. A common route is to turn commodity support programs into environmental stewardship programs by tying

benefit eligibility to environmental cross-compliance measures. This policy change is an attempt to increase the WTO regime compatibility of existing productivist domestic support programs by arguing that the re-configured policy now fits in the acceptable green box policy category. It is also a remediation response to the negative environmental externalities of industrial agriculture associated with productivist subsidy programs. Such weak MF versions represent a policy “shuffle.”

In contrast, the strong version of MF reorients agricultural policies away from support for industrial agri-food systems. The goal is to incorporate agriculture into more holistic, territorially-based rural development initiatives that promote ecological sustainability and the economic and sociodemographic viability of rural communities. In this strong version, the model for production agriculture becomes a more ecosystem-friendly, craft-artisanal agri-food system, embedded in locally-centred, short chain food production, processing, and marketing structures. Accordingly, both agricultural products and social amenity by-products are enhanced in quality and value terms. This strong MF version represents a paradigm “shift” (Hall 1993) signalling that a Kuhnian revolution has occurred in the way policymakers think about what agriculture contributes to development and how policies promoting agriculture must be restructured to achieve new objectives.

The debate about what the MF paradigm is and the extent to which there is an emerging MF agricultural policy paradigm shift has been carried out largely on EU turf. The Korean and Japanese cases provide interesting rural/agricultural sector contrasts with the EU. Table 1 below, a snapshot of current Korean and Japanese rural/agricultural sector conditions, highlights this contrast. Average farm size remains quite small in cross-national comparative terms, with unusually large numbers of farm households given current stages of economic development. This minifarm structure has made competitive restructuring of production agriculture very difficult. As a result, neither country has a significant agri-export sector and both are among the world’s biggest food importers. Governments in both countries fear the collapse of their strategic rice production subsectors if they are forced to open this market widely to foreign competition. There are major policy worries in both countries that a precipitous fall in farm household incomes accompanying the dismantling of current support programs would accelerate an already serious demographic hollowing out process in many rural regions (Park and Park 2003; Kim and Lee 2006; see also discussions by Investigative Council on Basic Problems Concerning Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas). It seems that the general public shares these concerns, as public opinion surveys carried out in both countries show strong support for preserving agriculture (Korea Rural Economics Institute [KREI] 2004, 1999; Prime Minister’s Office of Japan [JPMO] 2000). From our perspective, these current sectoral realities make Korea and Japan a promising environment for an agricultural policy shift in the MF direction, providing the major rationale for this study.

Table 1. Key Features of the Farm Sector/Economy in Korea and Japan

<i>Features</i>	<i>Korea (2004)</i>	<i>Japan (2004)</i>
Calorie-Based Food Self-Sufficiency	43 %	40 %
Average Farm Size	1.48 ha (3.7 acre)	1.69 ha (4.2 acre)
Percentage of Agricultural Production in GDP	3.4 %	1.4%
Percentage of Agricultural Workers in the Labor Force	8.1%	4.3%
Percentage of Full-Time Farm Households	63 %	20%
Number of Farm Households (thousands)	1,240	2,161
Total Population (millions)	48.0	127.7
GDP per capita (US dollars)	14,144	33,778
Producer Support Estimate, 2001-2003	64	58

Sources: 1) KREI 2005, 2) KMAF 2005, 3) Bank of Korea 2005, 4) Korea National Statistical Office (KNSO) 2005a, 5) KNSO 2005b, 6) JMAFF 2005b, 7) JMAFF 2004, 8) Cabinet Office of Japan 2006, 9) Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (JMIC) 2005a, 10) JMIC 2005b, 11) OECD 2004:21.

Analytical Framework

Our study of the emergence of MF agricultural policy initiatives in Korea and Japan is based upon a frame analysis of official ministry of agriculture documents in both countries. Official policy documents are produced by ministry of agricultural officials or other affiliated researchers who are playing the role of policy entrepreneur (Kingdon 1995:122-124, 179-183). This role is especially important during the current period of agricultural policy contestation, as new policies are being developed in response to a challenging environment of domestic economic reforms, global agri-food system restructuring, and WTO reform pressures that are roiling their rural/agricultural sectors. In the process of unveiling new policy solutions, policymakers must explain, justify, and advocate the new initiatives to domestic constituencies and the rest of the world. As noted in the social problems construction literature (Best 1989; Spector and Kitsuse 1977), policymakers engage in claims-making, identifying a policy problem that requires innovative policy intervention. The most effective claims-making strategy is to portray the policy problem in social crisis terms. In the Korean and Japanese rural/agricultural sector restructuring case, the putative crisis is rural sociodemographic collapse in the face of fears of a precipitous decline in the minifarm economy due to the withdrawal of agricultural production

subsidies. Such a social crisis requires policy remediation, with MF policy interventions as potential solutions or at least partial remedies.

In order to analyse similarities and differences in recent Korean and Japanese agricultural policy initiatives, we identify and compare MF policy frames found in government agricultural policy documents. Following Benford and Snow (2000:614), we employ the frame concept in a two-dimensional sense. First, frames consist of “schemata of interpretation,” i.e., cognitive meanings of something which distinguish it from something else. In our analysis, we want to see how MF policy is defined and delimited as a distinctive policy option or approach. In addition to the cognitive dimension, a policy frame has an advocacy character in that it is being used by policy entrepreneurs to convince significant others of its situational relevance as a viable, desirable policy option. So when we compare MF policy frames that exist in Korean and Japanese agricultural policy documents, we identify rationales for MF-oriented policy change and policy instruments that are posited to effect desired MF outcomes. While the cognitive and advocacy dimensions are integrally connected in the policy framing process, it is often possible to identify these separate framing dimensions in policy documents. In our view, such framing is the foundational step in the development of alternative MF policy options during a period of policy contestation in reaction to discontent over the problematic outcomes (realised and/or projected) of WTO neoliberal agricultural policy measures (Coleman, Grant, and Josling 2004; Hollander 2004; Potter and Tilzey 2005). Our use of the frame concept follows, at least to some extent, other examples of framing analysis in the policy literature (Apthorpe 1996; Kolker 2004; Rein and Schon 1991).

Following Gasper and Apthorpe (1996), policy production is theorized as a relationship between *text* (policy dialogue transcribed in policy documents) and *context* (the political economy environment in which policies are made). Our approach to explaining the ideational and programmatic content of MF policy frames in Korea and Japan is best described as contextualized interpretation. In terms of comparative case methodologies, Korea and Japan represent a similar case design. As mentioned earlier, these countries have very similar agricultural sector profiles with the rest of the world and their rural/agricultural sectors have quite similar agro-ecological and minifarm structural foundations. In addition, the last decade can be characterized broadly as a period of market-oriented policy reforms in the domestic economies of both countries (George Mulgan 2005; Hundt 2005; Kong 2000), complicating policy initiatives premised on new mechanisms of government intervention. This allows us to bracket these important external and internal political economy contextual factors as “constants” in terms of policy impacts, and frees us to focus on other domestic political economy contextual differences in the two countries that are likely to influence the content of MF policy frames found in their official policy documents. The most important political economy factors we posit as critical for explaining differences in MF policy frames are variations in structures of agriculture (in addition to the farm size component); in agricultural policymaking structures and processes, including the range of actors involved in policymaking networks; and in historical development legacies that influence how policymakers think about political economy futures.

Methods and Data Sources for Policy Frame Analysis

We identify and analyze MF policy frames through a review of recent rural/agricultural sector policy documents. The policy documents we examine for this paper are shown in Table 2 below. Due to our limited accessibility to the government document archives, we rely primarily on the documents provided on the websites of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Korea (KMAF) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Japan (JMAFF). In each of the documents listed, we identify cognitive and advocacy components of MF policy frames through examination of policy text that specifies definitions of what MF is, rationales for why MF policies are needed, and policy instruments employed to achieve MF policy goals. Analysis of policy frame components enables us to position MF policy developments in both countries on the strong-weak version continuum we outlined in pp. 28-29.

Table 2. Policy Documents Reviewed

<i>Country</i>	<i>Document titles</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Korea	Basic Law on Agriculture and Countryside	Enacted in 1999, “Korean Basic Law”
	Basic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Development	Published in 2004, “Korean Basic Plan”
	Annual Report on Agricultural Policy	Issues from 1995 to 2003
	National Survey of People’s Attitudes about Agricultural Multifunctionality	Published in 2002 (KREI)
	Government Budget Management Plan 2005-2009 (agricultural sector)	Published in 2005
Japan	Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas	Enacted in 1999, “Japanese Basic Law”
	Basic Plan on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas	Published in 2000; revised in 2005, “Japanese Basic Plan”
	Annual Reports on Trends in Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas	Issues from 1989 to 2004, “Japanese White Papers”
	Public Opinion Survey on Trade of Agricultural Products	Published in 2000 (JPMO)
	Prospectus of the Direct Payment Program in Mountainous and Semi-mountainous Areas	Published in 2000, final revision 2005, “Direct Payment Program Prospectus”

Sources: Documents listed above accessed on websites of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (JMAFF) and the Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (KMAF).

Findings

Our examination of the documents listed above resulted in the identification of the following Korean and Japanese MF policy frame similarities and differences:

The Multifunctionality Concept in the Basic Laws

Both Korea and Japan have recently revised their principal rural/agricultural policy statutes, called Basic Laws, that spell out sectoral goals. The most striking point in the new Korean Basic Law, enacted in 1999, when compared with the old Basic Law enacted in 1967, is that it prescribes public or extra-economic roles for agriculture. Article 2 (which states the overriding rationale for the Law) characterizes domestic agriculture as “the key industry that performs economic and ‘public functions’ such as food security, environmental conservation, and balanced growth for the national economy.” Although the term “public function” is used in the document instead of MF, this recognized new role for agriculture implies a significant change in the overall Basic Law agricultural policy frame.

In a similar vein, the roles for agriculture embodied in the new Japanese Basic Law enacted in 1999 contrast sharply with those adumbrated in the earlier 1961 version, which aimed primarily to upgrade productivity of domestic agriculture. The new Japanese Basic Law incorporates the “fulfilment of the MF of agriculture” (Article 3) as one of the four key pillars of agricultural and rural policy. A more recent document, the “Basic Plan on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas” (published in March 2005), points out that “delays in structural reform of agriculture” could hinder fulfilment of MF. The MF concept, thus, has been enshrined as one of the key postulates guiding Japanese agricultural and rural policy interventions.

While promotion of the MF attributes of agriculture is identified as a substantive goal for rural/agricultural sector policies in both countries, closer examination of the Basic Laws elucidates an important difference between Korean and Japanese frames in terms of the centrality of the MF paradigm in the revised documents. The phrases that explicate the significance of MF reveal important differences in the intensity of commitment to the MF paradigm in rural/agricultural sector restructuring. The Korean Basic Law Article 5 (Basic Direction of Agricultural and Rural Policy) reads, “agricultural policies should pursue efficiency based on the principle of market economy, but *they should also consider public functions of agriculture*” (emphasis added). In contrast, the Japanese Basic Law Article 3 (Fulfilment of Multifunctions of Agriculture) reads, “In consideration of the importance of maintaining the stability of the people's lives and the national economy, *the multiple roles that agriculture plays ... shall be fulfilled sufficiently for the future*” (emphasis added). The critical difference between two clauses is that the Korean Basic Law treats the MF concept as supplemental to the structural adjustment project of construction of a competitive farm sector, while the Japanese Basic Law highlights agriculture’s multiple roles as central to policy by explicitly relating the benefits of MF to the national welfare.

Legitimizing Multifunctionality Policy Initiatives through Public Opinion Surveys

In our review of policy documents, we found that ministries of agriculture and/or affiliated research institutes in both countries employed public opinion surveys

to build a case for MF policy initiatives (KREI 2004; JPMO 2000)¹. The surveys reviewed elicited citizen opinions about the importance of different functional roles for agriculture. The question of what roles agriculture plays or should play in society is, of course, one of the key differences between MF and the other agricultural policy paradigms. The proponents of MF policies argue for an expanded role concept that incorporates explicitly the valorisation of co-produced social amenities of agricultural production that fulfil a variety of valuable social and economic functions.

Interestingly, there are distinct country differences both in the way the survey questionnaires were constructed to measure public opinion about roles for agriculture and in the survey results. Table 3 shows the results of the surveys. The Korean survey respondents put more priority on the food security role, whereas in Japan such values as environmental conservation and preservation of the nation's land garnered more respondent support. From the governments' perspectives, the survey results construct two important "facts" about public support for revised agricultural policies articulated in the Basic Laws. First, the results confirm that the general public has a high level of interest in the general idea of MF roles for agriculture, an advocacy framing device. Second, given that the response categories asking about MF were closed, multiple-choice items, the surveys projected perspectives of the government agencies (e.g., ministries of agriculture) on what MF means in order to show public support for their specific cognitive policy framings. Thus, the Japanese survey elicits public support for a more expansive vision of various MF roles for agriculture than the Korean survey. This was accomplished through the phrasing of the role question and the response categories provided. The Korean survey asked the respondents to identify what constitutes MF roles with a focus on the future: "*In the future*, what are the most important roles for agriculture?" (emphasis added); and the survey included food security as a functional role response category. On the other hand, the Japanese survey excluded the food production function as a response category in the following way, "*Besides food production and supply*, what roles for agriculture do you think of?" (emphasis added). In short, the public opinion surveys in the policy documents reviewed show both a domestic audience and the rest of the world that publics in both countries advocate a MF policy change, and they reflexively enhance the policymakers' own distinctive ideas about what this policy change means.

¹ The governmental institutions primarily responsible for the farm and rural sector in Korea and Japan are KMAFF and JMAFF, respectively. Nonetheless, perhaps due to jurisdictions and implementation capacity, these surveys on MF were conducted by different governmental agencies in both countries.

Table 3. Results of the Public Surveys on MF Values in Korea and Japan

<i>Korea</i> (2004 government survey)	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Japan</i> (2000 government survey)	<i>Percent</i>
Food security	29.5	Natural environment conservation	65.3
Environmental conservation	27.9	Preservation of the nation's lands	56.4
Rural amenities	13.3	Fostering water resources	45.3
Balanced development in rural/urban sector	12.0	Food security	39.8
Agro-tourism	9.1	Creation of scenic landscape	38.4
Cultural heritage	8.0	Aesthetic education	34.4
		Climate remediation	32.1
		Cultural heritage	32.1
		Preservation of vitality of rural communities	29.9
		Provision of amenities	18.4

Note: In the Korean survey, respondents were asked to provide only two answers; the results were standardized to sum to 100%. In the Japanese survey, respondents provided all applicable answers; the figures represent percentage of respondents who indicated a specific value as MF. Sources: JPMO 2000; KREI 2004.

Multifunctionality Roles as Rationales for Direct Payment Programs

In our assessment of new agricultural policy initiatives and their correspondence to MF ideas, we focus on how direct payment programs are framed in official policy documents. Direct payment programs that are decoupled from production are viewed as permissible agricultural policy reforms under WTO reform guidelines, as they are recognized as non-trade distorting. For countries like Korea and Japan that must wean themselves from protectionist agricultural policies to comply with WTO policy reform mandates, direct payment programs offer possibilities to redirect agricultural subsidies into more permissible policy instruments. Since these programs require significant budget outlays, policymakers engage in advocacy framing to justify their existence.

In the Korean case, the KMAF pronounces in its Basic Plan that “to stabilize the highly volatile farm income structure under the expansion of market liberalization, [it is necessary] to consolidate and expand various direct payment programs [including enhancement of public functions].” Here “various programs” include separate programs for farm income stabilization, the enhancement and expansion of

agricultural public functions, and the promotion of rural amenities (implemented in 2006). Among these programs the budget earmarked for farm income stabilization far exceeds the other program budgets (Korea Development Institute [KDI] 2005). Thus the direct payment program in Korea seems primarily focused on helping stabilize farm incomes during a period of restructuring to achieve increased farm enterprise market competitiveness. The program's commitment to enhance social amenity by-product provision roles for agriculture seems quite limited.

In contrast, to justify its direct payment program, the JMAFF pronounces in its Direct Payment Program Prospectus (JMAFF 2005a) that (1) “the lives and wealth of the nation's people including the urban residents living in the lower watershed areas are protected by MF [fulfilled by agriculture in the (semi-)mountainous areas],” therefore (2) [direct payments are instituted to] “maintain the multi-functionality in the (semi-)mountainous areas in which there exists the growing concern that MF is deteriorating due to the increasing abandonment of farmland.” These statements suggest a decidedly MF policy rationale, the preservation of farming in remote rural areas where flood prevention and other ecological functions provided by agriculture are under imminent threat due to rural depopulation. Direct payments are warranted as a crisis remediation measure to stem the outmigration of farm households in these areas. This advocacy framing contrasts markedly with the Korean framing noted above in terms of the distinctive MF social amenity provision role set forth as the goal of the direct payment program.

Summary of Frame Differences

In summary, in terms of MF policy cognitive and advocacy framings, our findings show that Japanese policy documents incorporate the MF policy paradigm in stronger terms. This is particularly evident in scope and temporality emphases. The Japanese policy texts focus on the need to continue implementing MF initiatives aimed at post-productivist rural/agricultural sector goals, while the Korean documents postpone the provision of such MF social amenity services to the future. The current Korean focus is to use new MF policy initiatives, couched in a narrow food security role, to support productivist farm enterprise restructuring efforts to enhance sectoral market competitiveness.

Discussion

In this section, we interpret the differences we discovered in the Korean and Japanese MF policy frames as effects of variations in political economy contextual factors that are now influencing rural/agricultural sector policymaking in both countries. As indicated in Table 1 above, while agricultural restructuring in both Japan and Korea is difficult due to their minifarm structures, the Korean problem is much more acute due to the heavy reliance of Korean farm households on income from agricultural commodity production. This is revealed in a comparison of the “percentage of full-time farm household” statistic, with 63 percent of Korean farm households classified as full-time farming operations, whereas only 20 percent of Japanese farm households fit this category. These statistics help explain the current inter-country disparities in average farm/non-farm household income ratios. In Korea, average farm household income has fallen to approximately 80 percent of average non-farm household income, while in Japan average farm household income remains higher than average non-farm household income (OECD 2003:2). In spite of

continued high levels of support for domestic agriculture, the Korean farm household economy is unable to keep pace with economic growth trends in the wider society due to farm size and other constraints. The heavy reliance of Japanese farm households on off-farm income sources mitigates this problem.

As the Korean government dismantles trade-distorting domestic support measures to comply with WTO policy reform dictates, relative prices for strategic agricultural commodities like rice will likely fall further, exacerbating the farm household economic problems outlined above. In order to deal with this ongoing farm politics problem, the government has promulgated new direct payment programs to replace, at least partially, commodity support programs now being dismantled. In Japan, by contrast, a less severe farm income problem gives the Japanese government has more political and economic space to implement MF structural adjustment measures aimed at broader rural development goals. This broader development vision is reflected in the way the MF policy initiatives are framed conceptually. In the policy documents we reviewed, the term MF is associated with environment-centred themes such as the “natural cyclical function of agriculture,” defined as “the function of agriculture in stimulating the biological and physical cycle of nature [in order to realize environmental protection and landscape preservation benefits] ...” (Japanese Basic Law, Article 4). Hence, JMAFF insists that “from the future perspectives of the global environment and food supply, constructing cyclic [i.e., reusing or recycling of resources] societies has become a mandate for every country/region, so it is indispensable to develop agriculture in a sustainable way through fulfilment of the positive externalities of agriculture [such as envisioned by MF] while controlling negative impacts on the environment” (Japanese White Paper 2002). MF is one of the ideas underlying such government policy discourse as the “Coexistence and Convection [i.e., exchange] of Urban and Rural” and the “Construction of a Cyclical Society” (JCEFP 2001; JMAFF 2001), promoting the notion that there is a symbiotic connection between rural and urban regions and that stabilization of rural communities, both economically and demographically, will enhance these beneficial ecological and sociocultural connections.

Our analysis of JMAFF White Papers from 1989 through 2003 provides a clue to understanding how policymakers in JMAFF have constructed the MF concepts outlined above to signal a shift in societal development emphasis. The policy history embedded in these reports chronicles how rapid post-World War II economic growth coincided with alarming declines in the vigour of rural communities, threatening the loss of MF social amenities produced by the rural/agricultural sector. In more recent annual reports, the emergence of MF policy interventions to maintain rural communities and farming are linked to a shift in societal values represented by the phrase “from material wealth to spiritual wealth (*mono-no yutakasa kara kokoro no yutakasa*)” (Japanese White Paper 1997). This value shift is constructed as a popular reaction to rapid accumulation of material wealth tempered by the long-lasting economic recession in the 1990s, with the word “*yutori*” used in these documents to connote liberation or freedom from the pursuit of excessive economic materialism. Recent JMAFF documents that designate rural places as the “spiritual home (*kokoro no furusato*)” (JMAFF 2003:1, 2006:18, see also Science Council of Japan 2001:28) evoke a sense of connection between renewed spiritual values and sustainable development in rural areas. The Korean policy documents, by contrast, do not articulate a parallel post-materialist societal vision. Different development legacies and differences in economic development conditions (i.e., differences in per capita

income levels, economic structure, and social welfare attainment) in the two countries have produced different ideas among agricultural policymakers about what kind of political economy future beckons, contributing, we argue, to the production of different MF policy frames.

Differences in the structure of rural/agricultural sector policymaking, including the actors involved in policymaking networks, have also had important effects on the MF policy frame variations we have outlined. In Japan, the infrastructure of agricultural policymaking connects local-level organizations with long-established corporatist histories directly with provincial and central government agencies (see George Mulgan 2005 and Stearns and Almeida 2004 for discussion of these structure/process dynamics). This results in routinized information flows and political lobbying back and forth between the localities and the center. An exemplary case of how this organizational structure works to promote MF ideas at the grassroots is found in the activities of the National Federation of Land Improvement Associations (NFLIA known also as *Zendoren* or *Midori Net*: <http://www.inakajin.or.jp/index/html>), an umbrella organization representing the local land improvement districts (LIDs) established under the Land Improvement Law to manage irrigation facilities. NFLIA's appeals to the general public stress the importance of the LIDs' maintenance of irrigation systems and their contribution to agricultural MF performance, specifically the ecological preservation and flood control functions. This theme is evident in Japanese White Paper 2003, wherein the LIDs' vital contribution to sustainable development of agriculture and preservation of the national land and environment is described. There are other local-level government or quasi-governmental organizations actively promoting the realization of MF values as part of a local development strategy, and in the process, constructing positive images of development initiatives anchored in MF concepts. This articulation of local level support for MF concepts and programs strengthens the hand of JMAFF within ministerial policymaking venues where decisions are made about new directions for rural/agricultural sector policies and budget allocations to implement new programs.

In our view, the weaker MF policy emphasis in the Korean agricultural policy documents reflects, in part, attenuated relationships between corporatist rural/agricultural sector organizations and local-level actors who are potential supporters of MF policy initiatives. This is a legacy of post-World War II authoritarian state/society relationships that structured agricultural policymaking networks in exclusionary ways. Compared to Japan's post-World War II history of farmer organisation involvement in agricultural policy networks through close relationships with legislators and agri-bureaucrats, agrarian political relations in Korea were established in more explicit one-way, top down fashion. Peak sectoral organizations, such as the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF), have yet to develop routinized organizational channels that link grassroots farm and environmental group concerns, which often reflect MF policy ideas, to the agri-bureaucracy policymaking network (see Burmeister 2006; 1999).

Democratization has provided opportunities for Korean farmers and other interested groups in civil society to exercise political voice in noisy confrontations with the government over agricultural policy reform. MF ideas have been used in these protests as countervailing policy visions to the government's market-oriented restructuring initiatives. To the extent that MF discourse has been inserted into the Korean agricultural policy documents we have reviewed, there is some relief of this

political tension, as the government signals that alternative policies are on the table. But, to the extent that democratization and the revitalization of civil society in rural areas has brought local actors into agricultural policymaking processes, they may be more likely to advocate continuation of commodity-based agricultural sector restructuring policies than MF policy alternatives. Due to the selective subsidy targeting policies in place since the 1990s that have channeled resources to farm households judged to have competitive restructuring potential, the government has in effect created elite farmer segments that have recently mobilized through commodity-based interest group associations to influence policy decisions in productivist directions (see Choi 2004:77-86). Strong NACF support for MF policies at this point might alienate some of its most powerful farmer members. In contrast, in the post-World War II era, Japanese farm organizations based upon corporatist state/society relations routinized access to agri-policymaking to a more diversified membership (e.g., full-time and part-time farmers), facilitating negotiation among competing sectoral interests during periods of policy contestation.

This difference in the extent to which local actors are institutionally embedded in the policymaking apparatus is evident in the relative attention paid to regional/local development priorities in the texts of the Korean and Japanese agricultural policy documents. In the Korean documents, for example, the long-standing attention paid to enhancing national productivity in key agricultural commodities has minimized the articulation of distinctive regional agricultural and rural development concerns. It was not until 1994, with the enactment of the Agricultural and Rural Enhancement Law (a policy response to the unpopular provisions in the URAA that began to force market-oriented sectoral reform policies), that the term “local agriculture” (*ji-yeok nong-op*) entered KMAF agricultural policy terminology. Given that MF values for agriculture are rooted in ideas about how location-specific policy responses need to be tailored to regional and local diversity, the institutional legacy of nationwide commodity-based development strategies has dampened consideration of MF policy options in Korean agricultural policymaking circles. By contrast, the articulation of regional/local development agendas in the Japanese policy documents valorises the MF policy orientation.

As Coleman, Grant, and Josling (2004:Ch. 4) argue, agricultural policymaking, as well as the restructuring of agricultural production and consumption in the world political economy, is also a globalization process. The neoliberal WTO agricultural policy regime and the reactive policy responses to social dislocations caused by this regime, such as the emergence of the contesting MF policy paradigm, are the result of the global flow of ideas through institutional frameworks that support their production and distribution. Our findings, however, are a reminder that these globalizing processes are also mediated in important ways by national-level policymaking structures and processes. What happens at the national level, in turn, modifies globalizing processes in reflexive rounds of policy contestation played out in both WTO and national policymaking venues.

Conclusion

In light of the potential reflexive impact of national policy initiatives on the global spread of ideas, what are we to make of the Korean and Japanese MF policy initiatives we have just analyzed? Are they strengthening the MF challenge to the global neoliberal agricultural policy regime? Hollander (2004) and Losch (2004) argue that a serious MF policy challenge will occur only if strong versions emerge

that go beyond national and/or regional interests to address the global socioeconomic dislocation effects of the WTO regime that currently afflict both rich and poor country rural regions. The “master frame” of a distinctive “European Model of Agriculture” (EMA) that is emphasized in much of the EU MF literature (see articles in Brouwer 2004; Huylenbroeck and Durand 2003) is decidedly problematic in this regard. According to Potter and Burney (2002), the EMA frame constructs an exceptionalist rationale for excluding vulnerable EU regions and subsectors from the WTO market liberalization disciplines and hence is regarded as another protectionist policy initiative by much of the rest of the world.

The East Asian MF policy documents we analyze do not yet evoke an explicit master frame. However, MF policy frames in both Korea and Japan point to the same overriding rural/agricultural sector issue, namely the threat posed by unfettered market liberalization to their strategic rice subsectors. This theme, if articulated in sectoral phase out risk terms, has “universalizing” master frame potential in that it points to the ultimate outcome of comparative disadvantage in a world of agri-food system restructuring based upon competitive and/or global production paradigm principles. Korean and Japanese policymakers are in a good position to articulate such a draconian risk threat. The strategic position of riziculture in both countries is anchored in an unusually strong constellation of agro-ecological adaptation, village social organization (in both social ecological and social structural dimensions), and cultural meaning (see, for example, Hahm 2005 and Ohnuki-Tierney 1993) attributes. As a result, paddy rice agriculture is in many ways synonymous with agriculture-in-general, nature, and the countryside. If phase out scenarios are linked to the collapse of MF agricultural by-products that are valorized across societies (see Satuyama 2006 for a discussion of the FAO “roles of agriculture” project targeting developing country situations), the policy contestation power of the MF paradigm is extended in a “universalizing” direction.

It is possible to envision a further evolution of Korean and Japanese agricultural policies that enhance the MF challenge to the current neoliberal agricultural policy order. Unlike the EU situation, current efforts to restructure Korean and Japanese agriculture are unlikely to lead to significant competitive subsector, marginal subsector bi-polarization. In cross-national comparative terms, the Korean and Japanese agricultural sectors have quite homogeneous commodity production structures, with cropland acreage and infrastructure and farm household commodity portfolios heavily vested in paddy rice agriculture. Yet possibilities for a competitive world market profile in rice production remain remote due to high land and labor costs. Hence, the outcome of current rice restructuring programs in Korea and Japan is most likely to be increasing differentiation of “commercial” and “rural residential” subsectors. The former will consist of larger-scale, more economically viable rice producing farm households (or group farming enterprises), while the latter will consist of part-time and retiree farm households who own paddy land but are much less reliant on agriculture for their household income. Any rural development plan that prioritizes the preservation of paddy rice agro-ecology will need to target support programs for both subsectors. A possible policy scenario, then, is the deepening and extension of MF policies to target the performance of different MF roles by different types of farm households who own and/or farm paddy land, a more fundamental MF paradigm shift in the agricultural policy regime. Out of such policy evolution, it is possible to envision the emergence of an evocative “universalizing” MF frame that highlights effective MF policy measures to deal with phase out risks to

strategic agricultural subsectors that play essential functional roles in comprehensive rural development initiatives.

This study has encouraged us to continue to explore the unfolding of East Asian MF initiatives and their potential for global policy impact. Whether the rather weak Korean MF version we discover in our policy frame analysis becomes stronger depends upon several key internal and external political economy factors. Continued decentralization and devolution of policymaking to regional and local government jurisdictions and the emergence stronger civil society organizations in rural Korea will likely be critical catalysts for MF paradigm strengthening. We find Japan's MF policy version to be considerably stronger than Korea's, but local governance issues remain important for further MF policy development there, too. In addition, external factors such as looming free trade agreements (FTAs) pose opportunities and constraints for further MF policy development in both countries. Whether Korea and Japan sign FTAs with each other and/or with the United States or other agri-exporters is likely to have quite significant agricultural policy consequences. Whether ministries of agriculture in both countries aggressively export their MF policy knowledge in international policy forums and assistance programs will help determine the global impact of their MF policy initiatives. At this juncture, it is important to begin to build an empirical data base on MF policy initiatives at all levels of agricultural policymaking in Korea and Japan, from analyses of policymaker networking in international forums to national-level policy action to local-level program design and implementation processes. We hope other researchers will join us in taking up this challenge. Such a knowledge base will provide a stronger empirical foundation upon which to assess the impact of Korean and Japanese MF policy initiatives on domestic rural development outcomes and on regional and global agricultural policy regimes.

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