

Title	Towards a New Political Economy of Agricultural Policy in Japan : An Ideational Approach
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Osaka University

Abstract of Thesis

Name (BRADY, James Martin)	
Title	<p>Towards a New Political Economy of Agricultural Policy in Japan: An Ideational Approach</p> <p>日本の農業政策における政治経済の新たな視点 —観念的アプローチ—</p>
<p>Abstract of Thesis</p> <p>Why would a government facing a large national debt and chronic deficits continue to provide costly agricultural protection and support policies that materially benefit only a tiny and dwindling fraction of the country's citizens? Moreover, why would a clear majority of the population whose material welfare is reduced by such policies consistently support their continuation? In the case of Japan, standard political economy and political science explain this puzzle in terms of the pursuit of self-interest by farmers, the agriculture lobby, bureaucrats and politicians. However, such explanations have not kept pace with the continuing privileged position of the agricultural sector despite an ongoing decline in farmers' economic and electoral importance, and nor do they explain the apparent paradox of public sentiment.</p> <p>This thesis seeks to establish ideas as an important explanatory variable in shaping policy preferences towards agriculture and agricultural policy in Japan. Based on an original theoretical framework with cross-disciplinary applicability, it incorporates a range of insights from political science, economics, history, cultural anthropology and philosophy to develop a fuller account of the political economy of Japanese agriculture. First, the development of ideas in agrarian thought in modern Japan is traced to show the deep roots of many contemporary views of agriculture. Second, a content analysis of newspaper editorial articles discussing agriculture prior to two major policy turning points demonstrates how the mass media has framed farming as a multi-faceted sector with both economic and non-economic dimensions. Finally, the results of an original online survey confirm that contemporary popular attitudes to agriculture and agricultural policy are largely influenced by primarily non-economic ideas, like health, food safety and food self-sufficiency. The findings have important implications for the field of policy studies as well as for domestic policymaking and international trade agreement negotiations.</p>	

論文審査の結果の要旨及び担当者

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論文審査の結果の要旨			
<p>This thesis develops a new political economy of agricultural policy in Japan by focusing on the role of ideas in shaping agricultural policy preferences. It makes an original contribution to the existing literature by (1) incorporating ideas as a central variable in Japanese agricultural policy, (2) treating ideas as an independent variable that shapes outcomes, rather than a dependent variable used for political strategy purposes, and (3) developing an approach with interdisciplinary compatibility, based on an individual-level analysis.</p> <p>Chapter 2 surveys the prior literature relating to agricultural policy in Japan, highlighting four approaches. The two most important strands are the Economic Growth and Structural Change (EGSC) approach and the Empirical-Historical (E-H) approach, which both stress self-interest pursuit by economic and political actors.</p> <p>Chapter 3 analyses the economic and political costs and benefits of the postwar agricultural policy regime. It makes an original contribution to the English-language literature by providing a comprehensive summary of public opinion surveys since the 1970s concerning agriculture and agricultural trade issues.</p> <p>Chapter 4 discusses the concept of rationality in relation to public policy, and argues that questions of ‘values’ are inescapable when analyzing whether a policy is ‘rational’.</p> <p>Chapter 5 develops an original theoretical framework for the role of ideas in shaping preferences towards agricultural policy in Japan. The framework posits a relationship between history and culture, ideas, values, policy preferences, and policy.</p> <p>Chapter 6 undertakes an analytical survey of historical, cultural and philosophical texts in order to examine major ideas related to agriculture. The chapter traces the origins and development of agrarian ideas, with a focus on <i>nohonshugi</i> (農本主義) thought. It also creates an original taxonomy that classifies ideas about agriculture over time.</p> <p>Chapter 7 undertakes an original content analysis of newspaper editorial articles to examine how farming was framed in policy debates about the 1961 and 1999 agricultural basic laws. The results show that agriculture was portrayed in relatively simple terms in 1961, with non-economic frames slightly more common. In 1999, agriculture was framed in much more diverse ways, and economic frames were most common. In both periods, newspapers from both left and right on the political spectrum employed both economic and non-economic frames, showing a ‘cross-spectrum heterodoxy’.</p> <p>Chapter 8 presents the results of an original online survey that examines the ideas and values that shape attitudes towards agriculture and agricultural policy in Japan in 2015. Sentiment towards rice production and traditional village scenery was particularly strong. Sentiment towards all five <i>seiiki</i> (聖域) agricultural products was stronger than for economically or socially important items. A clear majority favored protecting agriculture in trade negotiations, mainly for reasons of food safety, food self-sufficiency and health. Images about agriculture focused mostly on primarily non-economic concerns, such as health and food safety, culture and tradition, and environmental protection.</p> <p>Chapter 9 concludes by arguing that the results of this study suggest that the EGSC and E-H approaches need to take account of the role of ideas in shaping attitudes towards agricultural policy in Japan. The findings justify further research about the effects of ideational factors in the political economy of agricultural and other policies in Japan and other countries.</p> <p>All examiners certified that this thesis merits awarding a Doctoral degree in International Public Policy.</p>			