

## Political Science on Agri-Environmental Policy: From a Perspective of Environmental Policy Integration

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### 1. Introduction

Some researchers in political science and policy studies analyze environmental policies from a perspective of environmental policy integration (EPI). EPI refers to the policy making and implementation where environmental concerns are taken into account, although there is no standardized definition of EPI. This paper adopts EPI as an evaluation framework for agri-environmental policies, where the author compares agri-environmental policies between Japan and the European Union (EU), and points out issues in Japan.

### 2. Environmental Policy Integration

Jordan and Lenschow (2008) broadly divided the concept of EPI into two categories: as a governing process and a policy outcome. Following this classification, Jordan and Schout (2006) described EPI as 'a process through which "non" environmental sectors consider the overall environmental consequences of their policies, and take active and early steps to incorporate an understanding of them into policy making at all relevant levels of governance'. In contrast, EPI as a policy outcome forms the viewpoint which asks to what extent environmental conservation has been achieved. Jordan and Lenschow (2008) took institutional, political and cognitive perspectives when they analyzed EPI as a governing process. Jacob *et al.* (2008) classified institutional instruments for EPI into three types: communicative, organizational and procedural.

Based on the above approach, in order to assess the progress of EPI, we check whether communicative, organizational and procedural instruments are implemented, analyze EPI from political and cognitive perspectives, and go through policy outcomes.

### 3. Policy Output: The Development of Agri-environmental Policies

#### 1) Japan

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) began to use the term "environmentally friendly agriculture" in the early 1990s. The following laws were enacted in 1999: Basic Act on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas, Act for Promoting the Introduction of Sustainable Agricultural Production Practices, Act on the Proper Management and Promotion of Use of Livestock Manure, and Act Partially Amending the Fertilizer Control Act. Measures to Conserve and Improve Land, Water, and Environment started in 2007. This is a subsidy program, which disburses farmer groups for collective action aimed at maintaining and improving farmland and water resources, and farming practices reducing chemical inputs. The latter payment, namely the grant for farming practices, was the first agri-environmental payment program in Japan. The current program is named Direct Payment for Environmentally Friendly Agriculture, where farmers receive payments if they halve the application of chemical fertilizers and agricultural chemicals from the conventional level, and make an effort which contributes to mitigating climate change or conserving biodiversity.

The position of agri-environmental policies in Japan is substantially lower than that in the EU. The budget of Direct Payment for Environmentally Friendly Agriculture is 2.54 billion yen in fiscal year 2022, which accounts for nothing but one thousandth of whole budget for MAFF.

MAFF drew up the Strategy for Sustainable Food Systems, MeaDRI in 2021, which set the following goals by 2050: halving the application of agricultural chemicals in terms of risk, the reduction of chemical fertilizer by 30%, one fourth of farmland (one million hectares) is farmed organically, and zero emission of CO<sub>2</sub> from agriculture.

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## 2) EU

The common agricultural policy (CAP) installed a pilot program of agri-environmental payments for environmentally sensitive areas in 1985. Agri-environmental measures were applied to whole areas in 1992. CAP reform in 2003 introduced cross compliance for direct payments to farms, which require certain environmental commitments of farmers. Maintaining the Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition has been the content of cross compliance since 2005. Greening measures were implemented in 2013, which will be reorganized to eco-schemes from 2023.

## 4. EPI from an Institutional Perspective

As for communicative instruments, Article 19 of the Basic Act on the Environment in Japan stipulates that “the State must give consideration to environmental conservation when formulating and implementing policies which have impacts on the environment”. The Basic Environmental Plan indicates the need to integrate economic, societal and environmental spheres. On the other hand, the concept of EPI is articulated in laws and programs in the EU. Article 11 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that “Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development”, which implies that all policies and activities in EU are the objects of EPI. The EU's Environmental Action Programmes mention EPI where the integrated policy and implementation approach must be strengthened. Basic Act on and Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan mention environmental concerns, whereas the purpose of CAP in the EU includes the environmental conservation. Both Japan and the EU have instituted a system of policy evaluation.

Concerning organizational and procedural instruments on agri-environmental policy, only the establishment of the environmental section in MAFF can be found in Japan. In the EU Commission, inter-sectoral coordination can be classified as an organizational instrument. For example, the Directorate-General (DG) for Environment and the DG for Climate Action can comment on the draft of the regulation on CAP which the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development is in charge of. Procedural instruments in the EU include the regulatory impact assessment.

## 5. EPI from a Political Perspective

### 1) Political leadership

In the investigation of climate policy integration, Hirata (2021) claims that although the issue of climate change is a political agenda in Japan, the level of the importance in the political arena fluctuates, depending on international affairs, changes of government, and the prime minister's concern and creed. Japanese society has little interest in agri-environmental issues, resulting in politicians' non-involvement.

### 2) Policy making process

Agricultural policies in Japan have been regarded as the product of a policy community. A typical discourse is the theory of the iron triangle consisting of the Liberal Democratic Party, MAFF, and agricultural cooperatives (farmers). The agricultural policy network excludes environmentalists. They are not a member of the Council for Policies on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas nor its committees, whereas consumer organizations are.

CAP has also been attributed to the policy community, but the situation has been changing since the 1990s. The power of the European Parliament, which is relatively aggressive for the environment, is strengthening: it got the right to submit amendments and a veto to a legislative proposal, which implies that the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union stand as equals in the legislative process. In addition, environmentalists take part in the agricultural policy network.

## 6. EPI from a Cognitive Perspective

Several opinion surveys suggest lower environmental awareness of Japanese compared to Europeans. The priority of environmental issues in the EU is higher than in Japan.

Undesirable effects of farming on the environment have been pointed out since the 1970s in Europe, leading to the introduction of agri-environmental measures in CAP. Environmental burdens of agriculture are widely recognized. On the other hand, in Japan the media seldom cover negative environmental impacts of farming, and the standard discourse is that farming contributes to environmental conservation.

## 7. Policy Outcome and Summary

CAP has been getting more and more environmentally sensitive during the past four decades. However, researchers criticized CAP for having brought in practically no

environmental improvement. In Japan, there is no systematic policy appraisal on the environment, and all the more for agricultural policies where environmental burdens are less disputed.

Summing up the comparison of EPI between Japan and the EU, CAP is more progressive for environmental concerns from an institutional perspective. EPI in Japan is poor both from political and cognitive perspectives. Therefore, the policy output of CAP seems superior to that in Japan. Environmental achievements of agri-environmental policies nevertheless are almost nothing for both regions.

### 8. Other Issues

The following factors also hamper the improvement of agri-environmental policies in Japan.

#### 1) Farming style and the situation of agriculture

The share of agricultural land in the whole territory is larger in the EU. Paddy fields dominate in Japan, whereas in Europe, arable and pasture lands prevail: these land uses have severer impacts. Besides, food production is declining in Japan.

#### 2) Agricultural policy reform

The EU carries out agricultural policy reform regularly, while the reform in Japan has been very sporadic and environmental issues were out of sight in the debate on policy reform. In addition, the budget for agri-environmental policies in Japan is scarce.

#### 3) Logic of policies

Firstly, the concept of multifunctionality of agriculture discourages substantial efforts to consider environmental concerns. The Basic Act on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas is based on the premise that multifunctionality including environmental conservation will be naturally exercised if policies for sustainable agriculture and rural development are conducted. The concept of ecosystem services would be more appropriate to pay for environmentally friendly farming and to regulate practices with negative environmental impacts.

Second, a precise reference level is absent from agricultural policies. A reference level defines a burden sharing between farmers and society. Farmers' efforts above the level are rewarded. CAP has installed cross compliance (conditionality after 2023) which indicates the reference level.

Third, Japanese agri-environmental policy cover only practices. Changes in infrastructure such as farmland consolidation with concrete irrigation ditches also cause

ecological degradation. CAP address landscape elements.

### 9. Conclusion

Comparing agri-environmental policies between the EU and Japan from a perspective of EPI, this study pointed out that the political leadership has not been exercised, environmentalists do not participate in the policy making process, and most people are unaware of environmental burdens from agriculture in Japan. In addition, we discuss three characteristics specific to Japan which block agri-environmental policy reform. In particular, Japan faces low food sufficiency and shrinking agricultural production. In that sense, there is a need for Japan's own approach to agri-environmental policies.

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