

Globalization and Changing Food Politics in South Korea¹

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Globalization and Agriculture

In September 2003, a Korean farmer by the name of Lee Kyung-Hae committed suicide in Cancun, Mexico to express his opposition against neo-liberal globalization and World Trade Organization (WTO). The Food First Daily Report observed that Mr. Lee's suicide "gave us the energy to derail the WTO talks in Cancun, and his spirit of struggle will live on in our hearts as we keep fighting for that better world that is possible." While foreign observers treated the news seriously, Korean media was not enthusiastic. Most of Korean media, with the support of the government and business group, maintained that the opening up of agricultural sector is inevitable for the sake of development adding that globalization would bring about economic prosperity and more jobs. Korean farmers were losing the public support for their voice as neo-liberal ideology and business push for globalization became powerful. The withdrawal of public support was climaxed in March, 2005 when Korean national assembly decided to repeal the bill on rice purchasing program. It seems evident that a series of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Chile and the US greatly threaten the sustainability of Korean farmers and rural community. The far-flung rural crisis is a result of industrial development of the past and the present. While agriculture apparently is an industry, it contains much deeper meanings related to food, people, and ecology. Many Koreans forget that food comes from the farm. Many people forget that everybody should be fed in order to survive. And many people forget that FTA's impact on food system is a universal one which will affect everyone's diet.

Over the past decade or so, globalization has become a key word characterizing the dynamics of social change. Unlike what is generally believed, current globalization involves power dynamics among different actors with unequal resources. The international organizations such as International Monetary Fund(IMF) and World

¹ This paper is partially re-written based on previous works including "The Rise and Decline of Statist Agriculture and the Farmers' Movement in South Korea" and "Changing Rural Communities."

Bank, big transnational companies, the political leaders of a few powerful nations, and market-fundamentalist economists share the common ideology of free market and ardently promote globalization. This particular form of globalization ignores social, cultural, and ecological aspects. Current neo-liberal globalization can be termed a globalization 'project' in the sense that it is promoted by certain social actors with a particular interest and that these social actors are trying to make the rules and norms for a new liberal world. The globalization project tainted with free market ideology attempts to incorporate the 'social' by market system. Theoretically speaking, this colonization of social life by the economic system is at the core of current globalization. The globalization, hence, eliminates measures installed to protect the rights of people such as workers and farmers. It also commodifies every element of society including labor, nature, and food. Or use Karl Polanyi's expression, "self-regulating market" becomes dominant principle of a society. The advocates of globalization use powerful ideological rhetoric to persuade people or buy off the public support. The most alluring line of argument is liberalization and privatization would bring about economic growth, which would in turn increase jobs.

In regard to agriculture, it is argued that backward and traditional farms in many part of the world should be rationalized. This can be attained by implementing market norm and completely deregulating global agriculture. The neo-liberal paradigm does not see or does not want to see that agriculture is more than an economic sub-sector, that food is more than just another commodity, and that agriculture is a complex system consists of human being, living organism, and eco-system. At the same time, the advocates of globalization often conceal that profit-seeking business interests are behind their rhetoric.

This paper attempts to analyze the trajectory of food politics in South Korea by locating Korean food system in the context of national development. Analytically, I focus on the relationships among developmental regime, food system, and food politics. The food politics involves actors within a particular political opportunity structure. It is argued that industry based development model of Park Chung-Hee severely repressed farmers' discontents and their collective action. Thanks to general democratic movement in the 1980s, farmers began to challenge the government policy and to voice their demand actively. The democratic movement of 1987 was important for the farmers' movement to become a self-standing movement. The success of democratic movement resulted in a differentiation of many social movements in Korea and same can be said to the farmers' movement.

By late 1980s, Korean economy was transforming into a liberal one clearly showing weakening of the state dominance in economic sphere. Ironically, farmers' movement demanding 'national' protection was strengthened during this period. To put it roughly, there was a decoupling of economic structure and farmers' movement strategy from late 1980s to until late 1990s. While there was a degree of mismatch between farmers' movement strategy and Korean development regime, farmers' voice was taken relatively seriously because of the support from urban class, who were enjoying the economic prosperity. The urban workers, significant portion of whom were migrants from farm area and whose parents still remained in their hometown, were supportive of farmers' voice. And they were willing to pay extra for expensive rice or for rural subsidy as they were thankful, and even felt guilty, that the farmers were making great sacrifice for national development.

The financial crisis of 1997 changed everything. The economic crisis and restructuring program imposed by the IMF led to massive layoffs in the urban sector. The urban middle class collapsed. Many families have broken down because of financial difficulties. Many instances of divorce, separation, suicides (of both individuals and families) were reported. The cold reality of economic crisis in turn led to a turnaround in the people's social psychology. For the first time in Korean modernization history since 1960s, Koreans realized that the future could be worse than the present. The trauma was deep and socially this brought about a more individualist, materialist, and developmentalist culture. No longer could farmers expect moral support from the urban class, which meant that farmers' movement was left in a lonely position fighting against globalization which was concretized in FTA talks with Chile and the US.

Rural Korea : An Overview

Korea has been able to achieve rapid economic growth over the past forty years. The modernization meant a transformation from an agrarian society to an industrial society. As of 2005, Korean GDP exceeded 800 trillion Korean won and the share of agriculture was less than 3%. Yet, in terms of employment, agriculture is still significant as more than 8% of Koreans rely on agriculture for their living. This number is meaningful compared with other OECD countries such as Germany (2.5%), United Kingdom (1.4%), and the United States (2.5%). Korean rural community is still important physical and cultural space where many people live.

Current rural population is slightly more than 3.4 million, a drastic change from 14 million in 1960. The number of farm household remains at 1.4 million and 62.6% of them are regarded as full-time farmers. This change is quite significant since the number of farm households was more than 2.5 million and the full time farmers exceeded 90% in 1965. The average number of family members for each farm has declined from 6.31 to 2.70 during the past forty years.

<Table 1> provides a summary of what happened during the past several decades of modernization. The table delivers several interesting messages to the readers. First, the absolute number of farms has decreased to half in 2005 compared to 1965. Many farmers have given up farming and even those who remain in the farm look for other source of income. Second, farm size in terms of members continued to decline as some members of a family farm migrated to the cities. It was during the years between the late 1960s to the 1970s when massive out-migration took place. The rural migration was two types. The first one was young females, mostly teenagers, moving to the cities to become workers for light industries such as apparel, textile, shoes, and electronics. The second type was young males, often the eldest or smartest son, moving to the cities for better education or jobs in manufacturing sector.

<Table 1> Key Changes in Korean Family Farms

Year	Changes in farm number		Per farm family	Per farm income (thousand won)	
	Total number	% full-time		Total income	% off-farm income
1965	2,507	90.8	6.31	112	20.5
1975	2,285	80.6	5.57	873	18.1
1985	1,926	78.8	4.42	5,736	18.5
1995	1,501	56.6	3.23	21,803	31.8
2005	1,273	62.6	2.70	30,503	32.4

While the concentration of workforce to the cities was the engine of economic growth nationally, it meant the drainage of human capital from the farms, which

exacerbated the social and economic conditions of rural Korea. Third, Table 1 shows that the annual income of a farm household was slightly more than 30 million won, which is about 75% of the income of urban household. The farmers are increasingly depending on off-farm opportunities for their survival as 32.4% of total income is generated from off-farm sources.

Behind the economic success story of Korea lies the shade of rural sacrifice. Rural Korea has been the victim of industrial development ever since the 1960s. Park Chung-Hee's modernization project was based on export-oriented industrialization which required cheap labor. In order to maintain the cheap labor, providing food at a low price was important. This was made possible not by producing more food from domestic farm sector. Instead, imported food in the form of food aid from the US played a key role in lowering the food price. The US food aid since 1950s till early 1970s was important for Korean industrial development; it made the low cost labor available by feeding urban workers on the one hand and it continued to press the farm household financially so that members of farm family left their hometown to become potential workers in the cities on the other hand. The latter formed the so-called 'surplus' labor, which was essential for industrial competitiveness in the global market for low ended market. This system of industrial development resulted in the rural underdevelopment.

The Korean government carefully controlled the farm sector for many tens of years. In addition to well-organized system of government bureaucracy centered around the Ministry of Domestic Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, parastatal National Agricultural Cooperatives (which was run by the central government) carried out the functions of political control, input market, and financial manager.

Since mid-1980s, Korean economy in general has been liberalized even though Korean farm sector has been protected for political and social concerns. Yet, the ideology of free market began to seriously challenge the support provided to farmers with the financial crisis of 1997. Along the line of structural adjustment program imposed by the IMF, Korean economy underwent a major restructuring. The financial crisis was transformed into a *social* crisis. Millions of layoffs took place and even the ones who were working felt serious insecurity. The traditional communal concern at societal level rapidly disappeared.

Development Project and Political Economy of Food

In the history of 20th century capitalism, the role of US cannot be overemphasized. The US, with its economic power based on Fordist system, emerged as a new hegemon replacing the Great Britain. Following the end of World War II, the US launched an ambitious scheme to reorganize world in the name of development. So-called “the era of development” began after the Second World War until the 1970s. The era of development had several characteristics which need to be highlighted, especially if we are to comprehend the globalization from a comparative perspective.

While development might have taken place in the 19th century Europe and emerged during the colonial period, it became an explicit *political project* after the World War II (McMichael, 2004). In the context of decolonization, development became a universal goal through out the world. Development was political project since it was planned by the US as the new manager of world economy and pursued by the elites of Third World in the post-colonial context of cold war.

Development became a universal goal in many parts of the world. The universalization of development was based on a particular set of institutional arrangement: the nation-state and national economic growth. That is, the world was reorganized into a sum of nation-states with modern bureaucracy of ministries, police, and military. The newly formed nation-states attempted to form the national identity by making national flag, national anthem, and nationalism. After the state was established, the elites of Third World nations launched a economic development project defined in quantified GNP based on industrialization. As such, nation-state system was solidly established by 1950s. Both the socialist bloc and capitalist bloc marched for development defined in monetary terms.

In this context, post-war international division of labor distinct from that of colonialism evolved. What is most unique about the new division of international labor was the role played by the US agriculture. The US had become the major producer of agricultural products based on its industrial farming and huge government subsidy before the World War II. The US surplus grain played an important role in the making of industrial workers in other parts of the world. Providing cheap food, most importantly wheat, to the Third World led to the collapse of local peasant economy and to the making of industrial proletariat.

The national development, envisioned by the US as a new norm in reconstructing the post-war world order, had become an obsession by the leaders of Korea and it still is to some extent. Especially important has been the leadership of Park Chung-Hee who completely reorganized Korean society for national development. South Korean

development was possible by a national mobilization of any resource available for the sake of industrialization. It is important to point out here that the national development pursued by Park Chung-Hee and other leaders also involved the question of political legitimacy. Hence, the material and human resources from agriculture were reorganized and mobilized for both economic growth and political legitimacy.

South Korean agriculture had been under the strong influence of the state. The relationship between the Korean state and farmers was close to patron and client relationship. The state provided subsidies especially in the form of rice purchasing program. In addition, the government cancelled the farm debt once in a while for political concerns. Market was not fully developed for the agricultural inputs; instead the parastatal National Agricultural Cooperatives carried out the function of market. In return for the financial assistance, the farmers had been the main supporters of the regime. In short, Korean agriculture had become statist, which involved a reciprocal relationship between the state and farmers by the 1940s.

The formation of statist agriculture had both internal and external factors, which were mutually conditioning. Externally, the U.S. played a very important role in making of Korean agriculture. Among others, two policies worth mentioning: (1) land reform and (2) food aid. Land reform, which was planned by American agricultural economists after the World War II, was critical in reorganizing rural society of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea in many ways. Firstly, it transformed traditional tenant peasants into modern farmers, who were dependent on market. Secondly, the newly formed owner-farmers, even though their average land holding was less a hectare, were to become conservative constituents for the regimes later on. Thirdly, through the land reform, agriculture had become an integral sector of modern Korea both politically and economically. These changes meant that the Korean government could implement policies to the national sector of agriculture.

Based on the legal arrangement of Public Law 480, huge amount of food aid was provided to Korea. The surplus agricultural products including wheat fed the starving Koreans after the Korean War. The food aid, though, did much more than filling Koreans' stomach. It was an important measure to reorganize the Korean society in the international division of labor forming then. First, many Koreans became serious consumers of bread and noodle, made of U.S. wheat. Second, the surplus U.S. wheat lowered the grain price of Korea, which exacerbated the financial status of farm economy. This led to the out-migration from the rural society. In the 1960s and 70s, large number of young females have moved to a couple of cities such as Seoul. They became the workers employed in the light industrial sectors of apparel, shoes, wig, and

electronics. The food aid was transformed to commercial sales in the early 1970s, and the supply of US cheap food continued to lower the living cost of industrial workers.

At the heart of statist agriculture lies the *government rice purchasing program*(秋穀收買制). The program begun in 1948 but its role changed over time. In the 1950s, farmers used rice to pay their land tax or to buy fertilizer from the government within the framework of rice purchasing program. The government used the rice as rationing for the urban poor or for the employees of public sector.

Park Chung-Hee, after attaining power through the coup, pursued a series of national development plans. In the context of development project orchestrated by the US, South Korea was able to adopt an export-oriented policy based on cheap labor. The first Five-Year Economic Development Plan regarded the high price of farm products as an obstacle for economic development. The goal of the government purchasing was to stabilize the grain market and farmers were forced to sell their rice at lower-than-market price. This program, along with grain import from the US, caused the poverty of farm economy, which in turn led to the out-migration of farm population to become industrial reserve army.

Beginning in 1969, South Korean government began the *dual price policy of grains*(二中穀價制), by which the government purchased grains at high price from the farm and sold them to the consumers at low price. The financial deficit caused by this program was met by loans from Korea National Bank until the deficit became too much of a burden. The goal of the program was to subsidize the family economy of urban workers and rural farmers at the same time. This program was not sustainable financially, yet it was maintained because of political concerns about the farmers who were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their economic situation by late 1960s especially compared with urban residents. The revised government rice purchasing program was a desperate effort by Park's regime to solve the legitimacy crisis.

The rice purchasing program in the 1980s was again playing the role of stabilizing food price until 1988, when the opposition party became majority. Beginning from 1988, rice was purchased from the farmers to subsidize their income and sales price to the consumers was repressed to control the price index. The government financial burden increased again and the political burden grew even more as Uruguay Round talks developed in the 1990s.

Government rice purchasing program was an important measure to maintain the patron-cliental relationship between the state and farmers. It has been the legacy of the statist agriculture which was stabilized under the development project of the 1970s. It has been maintained, despite its obvious decoupling with the national accumulation

regime. This “duration” of statist legacy was possible because of the strong farmers’ movement and public acceptance of farmers’ voice as legitimate claim. The imbalance in the income and social well-being between urban residents and farmers was important rationale for the rice purchasing program.

Globalization and Changing Contours of Food Politics

As much as the South Korean statist agriculture was institutionalized in the international context of development, the decline of the statist agriculture in Korea has been conditioned by the globalization as a new international norm. Globalization, which became a prevalent social phenomenon in the 1980s, was in its making when the Bretton Woods system collapsed and dollar began to lose its political role in the world economy in the 1970s. It meant the end of an international arrangement based on nation-states. It also meant the beginning of a new international arrangement based on the principle of global market. As McMichael points out, this globalization process is political project because “markets are no more natural than nations--they have to be constructed, accepted as real, and reproduced.” Hence, globalization is a “political intervention to overcome the limits of the development project” (2004: 154). The Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF, the World Bank, G-7 nations, and the transnational corporate elites have taken the role of global manager and they redefined the development in the new terms of the world market.

Globalization expresses the changing relationship among the state, economy, and society. Most importantly, it exhibits the dominance of transnational capital, and of the global institutions supporting global business operations over the “state” and “civil society.” This general process of globalization acquires additional meanings reflecting peculiarities of agriculture.

First, globalization of agriculture means the trade liberalization of agriculture and sharp increase in agricultural trading. This also means the launching of new institutional arrangement to facilitate “de-sectorization” of agriculture and taking away the protective measures from poor farmers. The Uruguay Round of GATT and following talks of WTO have been the international efforts to bring about free trade norms to agriculture. Here, the US has been playing the major role, along with CAIRNS countries. As <Table 2> shows, the US has been the major exporter of agricultural goods, especially since mid-1970s, which has helped the US cope with chronic problem of trade deficit over the years. For example, the US had more than twelve billion dollars of trade surplus in farm goods in 2002. Hence, it is no surprise

that US has been the leader in the move for free trade of agricultural goods in the WTO talks.

<Table 2> Changes in US agricultural Trade (1935-2002)
in Million Dollars

Year	Export	Import	Trade Balance
1935	669	934	-265
1940	738	1,239	-501
1945	2,191	1,729	462
1950	2,986	3,177	-191
1955	3,144	3,781	-637
1960	4,519	4,010	509
1965	6,097	3,986	2,111
1970	6,958	5,686	1,272
1975	21,817	9,435	12,382
1980	40,467	17,292	23,176
1985	31,201	19,740	11,461
1990	40,349	22,706	17,643
1995	54,644	29,788	24,856
2000	50,744	38,857	11,887
2002	53,294	40,979	12,314

Sources: USDA, Census of Agriculture, various years.

Second, globalization leads to the establishment of transnational agro-food businesses, which increasingly dominates the whole food system today. The agro-food businesses are trying to minimize the uncertainties caused by “nature” by either appropriating production process by industrial activities or by subcontracting with the farmers. In addition, the agro-food businesses are aggressively involved in vertical integration of production, processing, distribution, and marketing. The transnational agro-food giants are strong supporter of free trade ideology and influence national policies, endangering the very survival of farmers in the world.

Third, partially related with what has been discussed above yet worth more in-depth discussion, is the expansion of business areas and merger & acquisition among the food, pharmaceutical, and seed businesses. During the mid-1990s, agro-chemical business such as Monsanto has acquired seed companies, while pharmaceutical companies have led the merge with bio- & agro-firms (Park, 2001).

The large transnational agro-food companies such as Cargill, ConAgra, Monsanto are actively involved in expanding their business scope, reconstructing food system to fully exploit the world as consumer market and the source of food input in maximizing the profit. In response to the globalizing force, individual states are subject to the free trade regime victimizing the farmers whose subsistence relies heavily on state protection. The FTA, while it is made between the states, is strongly affected by the transnational companies. The FTA between Chile and South Korea can be said to serve the interest of Delmonte, which is in control of Chilean agriculture, and Samsung, which dominates the national economy of Korea.

Fourth, globalization radically changes the food consumption patterns. More food imported from other parts of the world are consumed, fast food restaurants became important part of eating out culture, and homogenization of diet take place. These changes lead to a process called “distancing,” which means the increase of social and physical distance from “farm to mouth” (Kneen, 1994). Again, the US is playing the role of breadbasket of the world, including Korea. Korea ranked 4th in total import of US processed food in value terms in 2000 (See <Table 3>). The food dependency of Koreans to the global market, especially to the US, can develop into a major problem when food crisis takes place.

<Table 3> Export of Processed Food by the US (2000)
in Million Dollars, %

	US Export to	
	Value	Share
<i>Total</i>	<i>30,044.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Japan	6,213.6	20.7
Canada	5,746.5	19.1
Mexico	3,369.0	11.2
Korea	1,839.6	6.1
Hong Kong	885.3	2.9
Britain	741.3	2.5

Taiwan	730.2	2.4
Holland	704.6	2.3
China	661.5	2.2
Germany	497.3	1.7

In short, the globalization of agriculture, by spreading the free market principle, intensifies the agricultural specialization which is not sustainable, integrates farmers into an agro-food complex organized by transnational food companies, and transforms farm products to mere input for industrial processed food.

While globalization transformed Korean economy in general, the agriculture remained rather protected until recently. Yet, the ideology of free market and rationalization began to seriously question the protective measures traditionally provided to Korean farmers. The IMF financial crisis was a major blow to Korean farmers and to anything that was “non-market.” Neo-liberal ideas claimed its hegemony in Korean society and market rationality was advanced as the sole norm to organize all social relationships. While international environment has been important for the dissolution of statist agriculture, the domestic dynamics also was very significant in the process.

The globalization of Korean economy based on industrial competitiveness and public opinion of urban class turning against the protection of agriculture were the final knell to the statist agriculture. This toll was loudly heard as the Korean national assembly decided to repeal the bill on rice purchasing program in March, 2005. The last protective measure for the farmers from the global market is finally teared down and the farmers are exposed to the violence of globalization, which is orchestrated by transnational business and organizations. Increasingly, globalization and neo-liberalism seemed to claim legitimacy in Korea. This in fact reflects the changing

structure of Korean capitalism and the dominance by the globalized Korean business. The rosy picture of globalization is spread without critically examining the danger and the power relationship included in the globalization discourse.

The farmers' movement in Korea, especially against the agricultural liberalization, was more than an effort to maintain their income level by opposing the import of US farm products. It was an explicit social effort to stop the imposition of a standardized market rule to historically constructed Korean agriculture. This was never fully appreciated by the neo-liberal government or by the business which believed in the market and instrumental rationality.

It was in the 1980s that farmers began to express their discontents with the agricultural policies and the feeling of deprivation through collective movement. In the history of social movement in South Korea, 1987 was an important turning point. In an effort to end the continuation of military leadership, various social movements from labor to farmers to environment collaborated. Interestingly, there was little differentiation of social movements until 1987. As <Table 4> shows, the most important issue advanced by farmers' organizations was democracy and demolition of dictatorship.

Korean farmers' movements have a long history which can go back as far as early 20th century during the Japanese colonial period. Modern form of organized collective action was extremely vital especially after the decolonization in 1945. During the political dark age of 1960s and 70s under Park Chung-Hee's repressive regime, religion supported organizations such as Korean Catholic Farmers' Organization (KCFO) and Korean Protestant Farmers' Organization (KPFO) played a important role in raising issues such as farmers' poverty, cruel working condition, and health issues due to farm chemicals. Yet, it was within the changing political structure after Park Chung-Hee's death and economic liberalization of 1980s that farmers' movement organizations became influential in Korean politics. Right after the June social movement of 1987, National Farmers Committee for Democracy (NFCD: 民主爭取國民運動 全國農民委員會) was formed on July 8, 1987, which became active in fighting against the import liberalization of agricultural goods. The NFCD organized a number of street demonstrations in 1988 against the liberalization of livestock market. In March of 1989, the National Federation of Farmers' Movements(NFFM: 全國農民運動聯合) was formed by amalgamation of KCFO and KPFO. The two organizations of NFCD and the NFFM have jointly formed National Federation of Farmers Organizations(NFFO: 全國農民會總聯盟) in 1990 which has represented all farmers' movements since then. NFFO has been the most active organization

challenging the government policy of agricultural trade liberalization, while other farmers' organizations such as KCFO remain quite strong and involved in concrete farmers' issues in the communities.

In <Table 4>, I have done a discourse analysis of official statements issued by the NFFO comparing key issues of 1987, 1996, and 2005. The findings were as follows: (1) Democratization was a key issue in 1987, which meant that farmers' movement was under the umbrella of a more macro social movement dealing with social structure of the time. (2) Rice issue was very important in 1996. The price of rice purchasing program was the key concern of farmers in 1996. (3) The issue of democracy, which was central in 1987, disappeared in later years. Instead, critique against political leaders such as Kim Yong-Sam rose as a major issue in 1996. NFFO and farmers demanded the resignation of President Kim Yong-Sam, arguing that he had broken the promise to protect the rice sector. (4) While the critique against import liberalization was among the list of key issues in both 1987 and 1996, it has become the most important one in 2005. Government effort to implement globalization became more visible and public opinion also became less favorable for farmers. (5) The critique against politicians for their indifference to agriculture and lack of commitment to farmers has increased as well in recent years. The NFFO continues use tactics of so-called 'street politics' to deal with farm problems.

<Table 4 > Key Issues in Official Statements by Farmers' Organizations

	1987		1996		2005	
Rank	Issues	#	Issues	#	Issues	#
1	Democracy	18	Rice Purchasing Program	15	Import Liberalization	61
2	Farm land	15	Critique of politicians	13	Critique of Politicians	48
3	Import liberalization	8	Health insurance	11	Rice Purchasing Program	9
4	Democratization of Cooperatives	6	Import liberalization	9	Anti-US	6
5	Price of farm products	5	Direct Payment	9	Farm Land	6
			Marketing	6	Revitalization Program	6
			Farm land	5	Direct Payment	5
			Labor	4		

This table shows that Korean farmers are extremely concerned about the import liberalization. It also shows that their strategy against globalization is based on “national politics” of protecting rice sector similar to the strategy of 1990s. The problem is that the current strategy is less favorably responded by the media and urban residents. This makes the farmers’ movement even more difficult.

Recently there have been other organizations which attempt to politicize food issue, but in a different way than that of NFFO. For instance, consumer cooperatives such as Consumer Cooperative of Korea Womenlink (CCKW: 女性民友會生協) has been actively involved in anti-FTA movement from consumer’s view based on food safety. As <Table 5> shows, CCKW has been widely involved in opposing Korea-US FTA in 2006 and 2007. While it also participated in street rallies along with NFFO and other farmers’ organization, it also has developed other tactics to educate and persuade consumers. CCKW, as a consumer cooperative with feminist perspective, has attempted to link urban consumers with rural producers using food as a media to build a community.

< Table 5> Major Activities of CCKW in 2006 and 2007

2006	<p>March: Street rallies against US beef import</p> <p>April: National campaign against imported rice</p> <p>June: Launched consumer action committee against Korea-US FTA</p> <p>July: Participated in national rally against Korea-US FTA</p> <p>August: Female producer-consumer workshop; Exchange program with Japanese consumer cooperative</p> <p>September: Harvest festival of organic rice in Hongsung</p> <p>October: Festival on Life-Peace-Environmental Farming Press conference against Mad Disease and US beef</p> <p>November: Lecture by Jane Goodall on harvest for hope</p>	
2007	<p>January: Press conference against Korea-US FTA</p> <p>March: National Statement to Stop Korea-US FTA</p> <p>April: Group Workshop on Korea-US FTA</p> <p>May: Domestic wheat festival in Soonchon</p> <p>June: Organic farm produce promotion event Urban-Rural area mutual prosperity festival in Hongsung</p> <p>July: Demonstration against E-mart which sold US beef</p> <p>August: Street campaign against US beef nearby subway stations</p>	

In addition to CCKW, there are other organizations of consumers and producers which emphasize life(生命), ecology(生態), community(共同體), and food(食品). While these organizations may be less aggressive in street politics, they are also very important actors opposing global food system that attempts to colonize food. It is the networks and ties among these different actors which can stop the brutal force of globalization and commodification and revive the multi-meaning of food.

Conclusion

To sum up, globalization came from two directions: from outside and inside. From the outside, the WTO and FTAs have pressed the Korean government to conform to the global rules of free market. From the inside, the Chaebols, which became transnational companies themselves, have demanded the policies of free trade to guarantee their access of global market. In this context, Korean farmers have been losing their allies and public support for their voice especially after the financial crisis of 1997. The neo-liberal ideology has become prevalent in media and public discourse. Under this condition, farmers' movement was regarded as an expression

of particularized interest. Farmers' movement has taken the strategy of organizing street rallies and demanding governmental protection based on nationalism. They might need a new strategy considering the changes in international and national political environment. Instead of relying too much on statist politics, the new farmers' movement needs to make more extensive ties with the urban consumers. Extreme commodification of food led to a very real and concrete danger in what we, i.e., everyone eat. Public concern with food safety and health are high and this should be fully capitalized for a new food movement. Instead of playing along the rule of global market, the new rule of game based on food as symbolizing life, body, and social meaning should be aggressively adopted. The new politics of food, which would overcome the separation between the urban and the rural, is needed. The current crisis of statist agriculture can serve as an opportunity for the new food politics integrating urban consumers and rural producers, which together can resist the commodity fetishism of globalization.

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