



The Rural Developmental State: Modernization Campaigns and Peasant Politics in China, Taiwan and South Korea

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Taiwan and South Korea

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the causes of rural development in East Asia, as well as the relative success or failure of rural development policies among East Asian countries, providing detailed case studies of China, Taiwan, and South Korea. These countries exhibit a range of variation on the dependent variable, rural development, which is defined as improvements in rural living standards, agricultural production and the village environment. Taiwan in the 1950s-1970s is the most successful case; South Korea in the 1950s-1970s is a less successful case; and China evolves from a failed case during the Maoist period (1949-1976) to a more successful case during the reform period (post-1978), but still one that is less successful than either Taiwan or South Korea. This study expands and challenges the developmental state literature, which, despite its contribution to explaining industrialization in East Asia, generally ignores the role of the state in rural development, fails to account for variation among East Asian countries, and excludes China from the comparative analysis.

Based on two years of fieldwork and data culled from interviews, archives, and libraries, this dissertation advances a theory that specifies the varying contributions of land reform, farmers' organizations, and modernization campaigns in rural development. This study shows that the reversal of urban-biased policies is possible in authoritarian states but does not account for variation in rural development outcomes; that variables such as decentralization and democratic checks on authority are not necessary conditions for rural development; that land reform is less important than previous studies have assumed; and that farmers' organizations are

critical to successful rural development. This study also shows that rural modernization *campaigns*, defined as policies that demand high levels of bureaucratic and popular mobilization to transform “traditional” ways of life in the countryside, have played a central role in East Asian rural development. This finding contradicts the developmental state model’s assumption of technical-rational policymaking, and runs counter to studies that portray state intervention in rural society as predatory or even pathologically destructive. Finally, this dissertation reveals a dynamic process of regional policy learning and modeling that has largely gone undocumented.

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Chapter 1: Towards a Theory of East Asian Rural Development

Throughout history, states have pursued industrial development goals at the expense of the rural sector. In many developing countries, urban bias, or the preferential allocation of resources to the urban-industrial sector, has resulted in growth without development—industrial growth and urban expansion occurring alongside rural stagnation and poverty. East Asia, however, emerged in the post-WWII period as a region that seemed to defy this logic, achieving both growth and development. Moreover, East Asia has maintained a robust, smallholder farm economy, something that is not only rare, but also runs counter to both liberal and Marxist versions of modernization theory, which predict the inevitable disappearance of the peasantry.

This dissertation analyzes the causes of rural development in East Asia, as well as the relative success or failure of rural development policies among East Asian countries, providing detailed case studies of China, Taiwan, and South Korea.¹ These countries exhibit a range of variation on the dependent variable, rural development, which is defined as improvements in rural living standards, agricultural production and the village environment. Taiwan in the 1950s-1970s is the most successful case; South Korea in the 1950s-1970s is a less successful case; and China evolves from a failed case during the Maoist period (1949-1976) to a more successful case during the reform period (post-1978), but still one that is less successful than either Taiwan or South Korea.² This study expands and challenges the developmental state literature, which, despite its contribution to explaining industrialization in East Asia, generally ignores the role of

¹ For the sake of convenience, this study uses the word “country” or “nation” when talking about Taiwan, even though it is not recognized as such by the governments of Mainland China or Taiwan.

² There were significant improvements in rural welfare during the Maoist period, especially in terms of public health and education, but in light of the Great Leap Forward and other rural policies, this study categorizes China during this period as a case of failure.

the state in rural development, fails to account for variation among East Asian countries, and excludes China from the comparative analysis. Based on two years of fieldwork and data culled from interviews, archives, and libraries, this dissertation advances a new theory of East Asian development that specifies the varying contributions of land reform, farmers' organizations, and modernization campaigns in rural development.

This chapter elaborates the theoretical framework and presents the main arguments of the dissertation. To briefly summarize, this study shows that the reversal of urban-biased policies is possible in authoritarian states but does not account for variation in rural development outcomes; that variables such as decentralization and democratic checks on authority are not necessary conditions for rural development; that land reform is less important than previous studies have assumed; and that other variables such as farmers' organizations, even when controlled by an authoritarian state, are critical to successful rural development. This study also shows that state-led modernization *campaigns*, defined as policies that demand high levels of bureaucratic and popular mobilization to transform "traditional" ways of life in the countryside, have played a central role in East Asian rural development. This finding contradicts the developmental state model's assumption of technical-rational policymaking and runs counter to studies that portray state intervention in rural society as predatory or even pathologically destructive. Moreover, the importance of campaigns in East Asia suggests a causal pathway for rural development that is missing from existing literature.

Campaigns can play a positive role in development by increasing popular participation and encouraging greater commitment of local resources, which reduces the costs of central policy implementation. Unlike formal institutions that seek to minimize uncertainty, campaigns seek to overhaul the status quo by mobilizing both bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic actors,

which creates high levels of uncertainty. This uncertainty may undermine the ability of the central state to achieve its policy goals at the local level, but it may also allow for more flexible, local adaptations of central policy. As evidenced by the Great Leap Forward, modernization campaigns can fail miserably. However, the other cases examined in this study demonstrate that modernization campaigns can also succeed, especially when there are feedback mechanisms such as strong bureaucratic controls and effective farmers' organizations, which can correct misguided policy and reign in campaign excesses. Under these conditions, campaigns are a powerful tool for rural transformation.

As one of the first comparative studies of East Asian rural development to include China, this dissertation reveals surprising linkages among countries and a dynamic process of international policy learning and modeling that has largely gone undocumented. In particular, this study finds that China has modeled its current rural development policies after South Korea and Taiwan.

This chapter starts with an overview of the main cases of Taiwan, South Korea and contemporary China (Section 1). A short description of China's Great Leap Forward is also included to illustrate an extreme case of failure. It proceeds with a discussion of relevant concepts (Section 2), followed by an examination of existing theories on why state intervention in rural society often results in underdevelopment or failed development (Section 3). Then it discusses theories of successful development and outlines a new theoretical framework to explain variation in East Asian rural development (Section 4). Finally, it shows how this theory explains the main cases of the dissertation (Section 5).

Section 1: Overview of Cases

The Great Leap Forward was a millenarian development campaign, which aimed to

rapidly transform China into an industrialized nation. Instead of delivering a communist paradise, however, the Great Leap Forward was a total failure, which resulted in mass famine and tens of millions of unnecessary deaths, the greatest destruction of property in history, and two decades of systemic underdevelopment and poverty.³ The Great Leap Forward may have only lasted a few years, from 1958 to 1960, but Leap-inspired agricultural policy, in particular the system of collectivized agriculture, was not fully reversed until the early 1980s. The Great Leap Forward is perhaps the most extreme and tragic example of a failed development policy in world history.

In Taiwan, the defeated Kuomintang (KMT) regime sought to regain control of Mainland China by transforming Taiwan into a model province that would legitimize its right to rule. Knowing that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had established its rural base through redistributive land reform,⁴ the KMT carried out one of the “biggest noncommunist land reforms on record,” which resulted in the creation of a smallholder agricultural economy with extremely low levels of inequality.⁵ In addition to land reform (completed in 1953), the KMT established an extensive network of farmers’ organizations and implemented an agricultural policy that resulted in nearly two decades of accelerated agricultural growth.⁶ In the 1951-1955 period, the rural

³ Dikotter 2010.

⁴ The CCP started experimenting with land reform during the Jiangxi Soviet period (1928-1934). For a detailed account on this period, see Averill 2003.

⁵ Wade 2004: 241.

⁶ From 1952 to 1967, the average annual growth rate for agriculture was 4.6%. Production levels for crops rose 82.1%, livestock 186.3%, fruits 476.5%, and vegetables 107.6%. After 1967, the agricultural sector entered a period of decelerated growth, but still grew at the average rate of 3.7% annually during the 1967-1977 period. Average GDP growth for 1952-1979 was 9.1%; see Yager 1988: 2-3, 51-2, 61-62. In 1960 rice yields reached 3 tons per hectare, the second highest level in Asia after Japan; see Wade 2004: 76.

sector contributed to more than 90% of Taiwan's exports and to more than 75% of total capital formation.⁷ According to Taiwan's former President Lee Teng-hui, who is perhaps the only agricultural economist to ever become a head of state,⁸ Taiwanese agriculture played a textbook role in Taiwan's development, meeting the domestic demand for food, contributing to the majority of exports, and providing capital and labor for industrialization.⁹ As one of the first countries in the post-World War II period to achieve industrialized nation status, Taiwan stands out as an exemplary case of successful development.

In South Korea, President Syngman Rhee's government also carried out a land reform program in the early 1950s that significantly altered the structure of rural society and created a smallholder agricultural economy. Before land reform, more than 80% of the rural population was engaged in tenant farming. By 1965 the rate of tenancy had dropped to 7%.¹⁰ Unlike Taiwan, however, South Korean agriculture was neglected for most of the 1950s and 1960s and consequently did not contribute as many resources to industrialization. In the 1970s, President Park Chung-hee tried to stimulate the agricultural sector by launching a comprehensive modernization program known as the New Village Movement (also known as the New Community Movement or Saemaul Undong in Korean). This development campaign resulted in dramatic changes to the village environment such as the arrival of paved roads, new and renovated housing, tap water, electricity and community activity halls. As part of the New

⁷ Wade 2004: 76; Cheng 2001: 30; Amsden 1985: 84; Yager 1988: 2-3. In the 1951-1967 period agricultural exports grew 128%; see Yager 1988: 61-62.

⁸ Francks 1999: 160. Lee Teng-hui served as Taiwan's president from 1988 to 2000. The rural development process by that time was largely completed.

⁹ Lee 1971.

¹⁰ Hsiao 1981: 71-79; Kay 2002: 1079.

Village Movement, the government orchestrated a green revolution by forcibly distributing a high yield variety of rice known as Tong'il (unification) and by raising the procurement price of rice such that rural incomes surpassed urban incomes in 1974.¹¹ The New Village Movement secured a popular base of rural support for the Park regime, but it was not a complete success. In the late 1970s, the government ended its high price policy for rice, and Tong'il production was abandoned because of its unpopularity with consumers. Village infrastructure improved, but income generation schemes, which attempted to build up light industry and create off-farm employment opportunities in the countryside, failed to curb a rural exodus to the cities. Between 1970 and 1990, more than half of the rural population (7.7 out of 14.4 million people) migrated to urban areas.¹² Although the New Village Movement was not as successful as Taiwan's rural development program, it did play an important role in modernizing the Korean village environment, and is remembered today as a kind of golden age for rural Korea.

By the early 1980s, the rapid postwar industrialization of Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong had transformed East Asia into the "center of world economic dynamism."¹³ It was in this context that the PRC government, led by Deng Xiaoping, initiated sweeping reforms to liberalize the Chinese economy. De-collectivization and market reforms stimulated the agricultural sector, and preferential policies for special economic zones along the

¹¹ Burmeister 1988; Park 1979: 231, 241. Rural incomes may have surpassed urban incomes in 1974-1975, but official statistics on income levels for the 1970s have been disputed by Korean and Western scholars; see Park 2009: 119; Douglass 1983: 191.

¹² Park 1998: 142-143, 212. Migration in Taiwan was also significant, but was much slower because of Taiwan's decentralized pattern of industrialization, which provided off-farm employment for people in the countryside. Between 1953 and 1990, the percentage of people living in rural areas dropped from 51% to 20%; see Knapp 1996: 784-785.

¹³ Cumings 1984: 1.

coast created a dynamic export sector that enabled China to “grow out of the plan.”¹⁴ For the past three decades, China’s impressive GDP growth has made it the fastest growing major economy in world history. China’s development, however, is extremely uneven. Coastal provinces are significantly wealthier than provinces in the interior, urban residents earn at least three times more than rural residents, and high levels of rural inequality can be found across regions and even between neighboring villages.

Until recently, China’s reform-era agricultural policy could be summed up as de-collectivization followed by resource extraction and neglect. Between 1980 and 1984, de-collectivization resulted in astonishing economic changes; agriculture grew 10.1% annually, and the number of people living in absolute poverty dropped from 260 million (33% of the rural population) to 123 million (15% of the rural population).¹⁵ After 1984, however, government investment in the rural sector and agricultural productivity started to decline.¹⁶ As was the case in the Maoist period, local governments were expected to be self-reliant and raise their own resources for development. Township and village enterprises allowed some rural areas along the coast to “take-off”,¹⁷ but for resource-scarce areas in central and western China, rural industrialization was more difficult. Under pressure to impress higher-level government officials with development achievements, many local officials resorted to imposing heavy taxes on farmers.¹⁸ Most revenues collected by the government went towards developing local industry

¹⁴ Naughton 1995.

¹⁵ Bramall 2004: 119-120. China’s definition of absolute poverty is 300 yuan per person per day at 1990 prices; see OECD 2009: 57.

¹⁶ See Figure 5.1. From 1984 to 2001 agricultural output grew 4.1% annually; see Bramall 2004:122.

¹⁷ Oi 1999.

instead of providing public goods. The quality of roads, schools, clinics and other public goods declined in many places, and the rural-urban gap widened.¹⁹ By the 1990s and early 2000s “heavy peasant burdens” had given rise to widespread rural unrest.²⁰

There are still high levels of inequality, government corruption and rural protest, but overall, the situation in rural China today is very different from ten years ago. In 2005 the Hu Jintao government adopted a comprehensive rural modernization program called Building a New Socialist Countryside (NSC), which aimed to reduce the rural-urban income gap, stimulate agricultural production, and improve rural public goods provision. The New Socialist Countryside represents a significant break from the past. For the first time in PRC history, the central government is channeling significant resources to the rural sector in the form of agricultural subsidies and earmarked transfers for rural public goods. As was the case in South Korea, the New Socialist Countryside has transformed the Chinese village environment in some places, bringing paved roads, electricity, running water, flush toilets, new housing and community activity halls to many parts of the countryside. As part of the New Socialist Countryside, the government has also stepped up efforts to stimulate agriculture by supporting the development of agricultural producers’ cooperatives and agribusinesses. While smallholder farming is still widespread, the emergence of large-scale, commercialized farms in some regions marks the beginning of a new phase in Chinese agriculture, which Qian Forrest Zhang and John Donaldson have called the “rise of agrarian capitalism.”²¹

¹⁸ Bernstein & Lu 2003.

¹⁹ Tsai 2007.

²⁰ Bernstein & Lu 2003; O’Brien & Li 2006.

²¹ Zhang & Donaldson 2008.

Like the Korean New Village Movement, however, the New Socialist Countryside has achieved mixed results. It has been criticized for focusing too much on rural housing and not enough on agricultural production. Housing policy, the most controversial aspect of the NSC, has been manipulated by local governments. Driven by a profit motive, local governments have used the NSC as an excuse to build “modern” apartment-style homes in place of traditional village homes, which allows them to sell off a portion of villagers’ land for urban-industrial development. The various development outcomes of the NSC, which have yet to be recorded in the literature on rural China, are presented in Chapters 5-7.

Section 2: Conceptual Framework

Modernization, Agrarian Transition and Development

The problem of modernization has received more scholarly attention than perhaps any other topic in the social sciences. Modernization can mean many things, but in general it refers to a process by which rural, agricultural societies become urban, industrial societies. In the tradition of Karl Polanyi’s *The Great Transformation* (1944), which traces the origins of the Industrial Revolution in Europe to the emergence of markets and the rise of powerful nation-states, scholars have dedicated themselves to understanding the causes of modernization and the different pathways by which countries shed their rural character. Seminal works by Barrington Moore (1966) and Theda Skocpol (1979) reveal that agrarian bureaucracies, or states that are controlled by landowners, are unlikely to modernize in the absence of revolutionary change.²² Revolution, however, is a rare historical event that offers little hope to modernizers in the developing world. Unlike the protracted process of European industrialization, most governments in developing countries seek to modernize rapidly through the active and deliberate

²² Moore 1966: 417; Skocpol 1979: 48-50.

pursuit of industrial development.²³

Related to modernization is the idea of agrarian transition, defined by Terence J. Byres as “those changes in the countryside necessary to the overall development of capitalism or of socialism.”²⁴ According to Byres, in England and Prussia capitalist landlords changed property relations in the countryside (through the enclosure movement and the elimination of serfdom) in order to unleash market forces. In America and France, landlords did not play a significant role in agrarian transition, but market forces gradually changed the traditional mode of family farming and peasant production. Japan experienced two agrarian transitions. As was the case in England and Prussia, in the Meiji period Japanese landlords were important in facilitating agrarian capitalism, but in the postwar period, Japan experienced a “transition without landlords.” Unlike the American and French model of market-capitalism from below, however, Japan’s postwar agrarian transition occurred because of heavy state intervention in the rural economy. South Korea and Taiwan also followed this pathway of “state-led capitalism from above.” Extending this analysis to the communist world, agrarian transition in Russia and China may be understood as “state-led socialism from above.”²⁵

While the idea of state-led development may be particularly important for understanding East Asia, most social scientists recognize that the state has always played an important role in development. In *Bringing the State Back In* (1985), Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Peter Evans point out that in “both early and late industrialization, state policy is assumed to affect the forms

²³ Kohli 2004.

²⁴ Byres 1986: 4.

²⁵ This summary is a simplification of Byres work, which provides rich details for each country’s transition. He does not use the phrase “market-capitalism from below”, “state-capitalism from above” etc., but he does borrow the phrases “capitalism from above” and “capitalism from below” from Lenin; see Byres 1986.

and the rate of capital accumulation and to play a major role in determining whether the negative distributional effects that normally accompany capitalist industrialization will be mitigated or made worse." From their perspective, work by Polanyi (1944) and Gerschenkron (1962) punctured "the myth of the original industrial revolution as a purely private process."²⁶ The important question to keep in mind when analyzing different countries' development trajectories is not the presence or absence of state involvement, but rather the degree or form of state involvement, which may depend on when a country modernizes and what type of regime is in power.

The concept of development is similar to modernization. Its meaning is complex and often contested, but in most academic literature it refers to industrialization. Defining development as industrialization conditions the way people think about the role of agriculture in development. In general, governments pursuing industrialization must address two problems related to agriculture. First, in the early stages of development, governments must address the problem of agriculture's contribution to industrialization. Whether agriculture is developed before industry or both sectors are developed simultaneously is a subject of much academic and political debate, but there is general agreement on the point that governments must adopt policies that facilitate a transfer of "surplus" resources from agriculture to industry, a process known as the "developmental squeeze" on agriculture.²⁷ Second, in the later stages of development, governments must address the problem of agricultural adjustment, or the declining performance of agriculture relative to other parts of the economy. Agricultural adjustment programs normally include import restrictions on agricultural products that compete with domestic farmers,

²⁶ Evans et al. 1985: 44.

²⁷ Owen 1966.

subsidies, and other measures designed to raise farm incomes. In the words of Penelope Francks, agricultural adjustment programs are designed to “maintain an agricultural sector larger than that which market forces and comparative advantage would produce.”²⁸

In the 1960s the United Nations, the World Bank, and USAID started promoting the idea of rural development, challenging the view that agriculture’s value is limited to the instrumental role it plays in industrialization.²⁹ International organizations called on developing countries to adopt more “employment oriented” and “basic needs oriented” development strategies, which were seen as necessary for achieving “growth with equity.” Many countries received international aid for “community development” and “integrated rural development” programs, which emphasized improving rural infrastructure and social services, applying appropriate technology to agriculture, and diversifying rural economies by establishing light industries such as agro-processing that could generate employment opportunities and raise rural incomes.³⁰ Critics have argued, on the one hand, that such programs rely too much on the rural community and ignore the importance of government resource provision; and, on the other hand, that such programs are too top-down and ignore the importance of local initiatives.³¹ By the 1980s, problems with implementation caused international aid agencies to scale back these programs

²⁸ Francks 1999: 11-12.

²⁹ This change occurred as it became apparent that industrialization schemes in developing countries were doing little to alleviate rural poverty. For more on the evolution of international aid organizations, see Murphy 2006.

³⁰ Rondinelli 1979.

³¹ The phrase “participatory development” is now more commonly used than “community development” or “integrated rural development.” For a critique of “community development” and populist development ideologies, see Lipton 1976: 135-138.

and focus instead on promoting higher growth rates as a way of alleviating poverty.³² Still, since at least the 1970s most governments have recognized the importance of rural development and have set rural development goals that are independent of industrial development goals.³³

In this study, rural development is defined broadly as improvements in rural living standards, agricultural production, and the village environment. In each chapter, various measures are used to evaluate the relative success or failure of rural development policies. These measures include rural income and indebtedness levels, the size of the rural-urban income gap, farm tenancy rates, agricultural sector growth (e.g. crop yields), the food trade gap, the provision of agricultural production inputs, technology and other rural extension services, as well as improvements in rural public infrastructure, sanitation and housing. The provision of social welfare services, while certainly important for rural development, is not the focus of this study. Except for China's New Socialist Countryside, which has emphasized rural education and cooperative medical care, the other cases examined in this study have prioritized these other dimensions of rural development over social welfare, perhaps viewing them as more urgent, challenging or conducive to the campaign approach to development.

State-led Rural Modernization and Campaigns

Central to this study is the idea of state-led rural modernization, in which the role of the government is more important than the role of the market in allocating resources to rural communities. State-led rural modernization can be roughly identified or measured by a high degree of state assistance to rural communities and a high degree of state control over the market. This phrase should not imply the absence of markets or the presence of state-owned

³² Kohli 1987: 39-40.

³³ Francks 1999: 9.

farms; state-led rural modernization can occur within the context of capitalism and private farming. In the East Asian context, there is a tendency to use the word “construction” (an action) in place of “development” (a process) and “modernization campaign” (a policy) in place of “modernization” (a process). This discourse implies a more interventionist and activist role for the state than most Western development ideologies prescribe. Instead of relying on market forces to gradually transform rural production and the village environment, East Asian governments carry out “rural modernization campaigns” to achieve their goals.

Campaigns are policies that demand high levels of bureaucratic and popular mobilization.³⁴ Studies of communist and authoritarian regimes have emphasized the role of mobilization in transforming and organizing society in such a way that the regime can consolidate and extend its power.³⁵ In analyzing the politics of the Soviet Union, scholars put forward the idea of “movement regimes” or “mobilizational regimes,” a concept that resonated with researchers working on the communist revolution in China, fascism in Europe and Japan, and nationalist independence movements in Africa and other parts of the post-colonial world.³⁶ In describing the totalitarian state, Juan Linz writes:

Citizen participation in and active mobilization for political and collective social tasks are encouraged, demanded, rewarded, and channeled through a single party and many monopolistic secondary groups. Passive obedience and apathy, retreat into the role of “parochials” and “subjects,” characteristic of many authoritarian regimes, are considered undesirable by the rulers.³⁷

³⁴ Discussing Chinese campaigns, Charles Cell writes, “all campaigns involve an increased intensity of activity beyond what is expected in regular work and living routines;” see Cell 1977: 7.

³⁵ Jowitt 1975.

³⁶ Tucker 1961; Linz 2000: 217-233 (originally published in Greenstein, Fred and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 3*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

³⁷ Linz 2000: 70.

So, while some authoritarian states try to demobilize or repress public participation, totalitarian and mobilizational authoritarian states try to harness the power of public participation.

In the Chinese context, mass mobilization campaigns were frequently used during the Maoist period to carry out central directives and to extend the power of the CCP, often by launching a real or symbolic attack against the Party's enemies, such as foreign imperialist powers, counter-revolutionaries, and rural backwardness. Key characteristics of Maoist campaigns include the setting of "core tasks" that local governments must carry out, intense competition for higher-level government resources between and within administrative units, emulation of models endorsed by the higher-levels, increased state penetration of villages, factories, etc., and the use of social mobilization instead of material incentives to increase popular participation. Social mobilization often entailed the use of ideological and nationalist appeals, and exhibited a strong, militaristic character.³⁸ China's "reform and opening" in 1978 may have marked the end of mass mobilization campaigns, but some scholars have recognized the continued use of campaign-tactics in policy implementation as a legacy of the Maoist period.³⁹

State-led mobilization campaigns for development can be found not only in communist countries, but also more broadly in the developing world. There are in fact hundreds if not thousands of historical examples of village improvement campaigns and cooperative movements led by states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In East Asia, the governments of China, Japan,

³⁸ Cell 1976; Bennett 1976. Andrew Walder has found that material incentives were actually important for motivating factory workers in the Maoist period, which challenges the idea that China fits the model of a totalitarian state that relies only on ideology and coercion to elicit participation; see Walder 1986.

³⁹ Bernstein & Lu 2003: 91-94; White 2006; Perry 2011.

South Korea and Taiwan all carried out rural modernization campaigns in the 20th century, but this is a sorely understudied subject in the academic literature on these countries' development. Scholars tend to focus on explaining development failures (the Great Leap Forward), or they simply dismiss campaigns as illiberal and misguided deviations from a more successful, technical-rational approach to development. Yet, campaigns have played a central role in East Asian rural development, which suggests a causal pathway for rural development that is missing from existing literature.

This study argues that campaigns have been particularly effective at changing the village environment. The empirical chapters highlight this dimension of campaigns because it is often overlooked in the secondary literature, which tends to characterize programs that focus on village appearance as overly “cosmetic” and incapable of bringing about real development. This assessment, while valid in some cases, overlooks the fact that village improvement programs seek to upgrade not only housing but also rural infrastructure and sanitation. This study argues, moreover, that village housing programs are an important and particularly interesting aspect of rural development in East Asia. It is reasonable to assume that as a country develops and incomes rise, housing conditions improve; and that market forces, rather than the government, affect changes in housing quality. However, even in the area of housing, the state has played a more important role than the market in affecting change. In East Asia, governments have been heavily involved in designing, planning and constructing rural housing, which is further evidence of a state-led approach to rural modernization. Especially in South Korea and China, housing programs have served as effective tools for increasing villager participation in rural development programs more generally, and for generating rural support for the regime. Housing programs in China, however, have also become a source of conflict between some local governments and

peasants, as corrupt officials have forcibly consolidated rural housing in order to sell off peasants' land. This trend is a major reason that the NSC has been less successful than similar campaigns in South Korea and Taiwan.

Campaigns can play a positive role in development by increasing popular participation and encouraging greater commitment of local resources, which reduces the costs of central policy implementation. Unlike formal institutions that seek to minimize uncertainty, campaigns seek to overhaul the status quo by mobilizing both bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic actors, which creates high levels of uncertainty. This uncertainty may undermine the ability of the central state to achieve its policy goals at the local level, but it may also allow for more flexible, local adaptations of central policy. This study argues that modernization campaigns can succeed, especially when there are feedback mechanisms such as strong bureaucratic controls and effective farmers' organizations, which can correct misguided policy and reign in campaign excesses. Under these conditions, campaigns can be a powerful tool for rural transformation.

Section 3: State Intervention in Rural Society—Theories of Failed Development

This section examines existing theories that explain how state intervention in the countryside often results in underdevelopment or failed development. First, it addresses the urban bias theory of underdevelopment and shows how East Asia overcame this problem. Although the urban bias thesis provides some leverage for explaining the cases in this study, it does not explain why East Asian governments eventually adopted protective policies for agriculture; nor does it explain the particular content or impact of these policies. Second, this section addresses James Scott's theory of state-led development, which helps explain the failed Great Leap Forward but cannot account for cases in which state intervention succeeded at improving rural living standards.

Urban Bias

Although the transition from squeezing agriculture to supporting and protecting it has occurred in every industrialized country, it should not be considered a natural outcome of development. Urban bias, or the preferential allocation of resources to the urban-industrial sector, is a systemic problem in most countries that is very difficult to reverse.⁴⁰ Michael Lipton (1976), Theodore Schultz (1964, 1978) and Robert Bates (1981) have richly documented how governments in developing countries pursue policies that promote industrialization at the expense of small farmers. For example, governments often overvalue exchange rates so that it is cheaper for industrialists to purchase the inputs they need from world markets, but this hurts farmers who produce cash crops for export. In Lipton's words, "Crudely, the farmer is the exporter, and gets too little for the dollars he earns; the industrial producer is the importer, and pays too little for the dollars he uses."⁴¹

To keep the domestic price of food and industrial wages low, governments import cheap food to depress prices, establish government-controlled monopsonies to purchase food at administratively determined prices, and direct rural assistance to large farmers who in turn produce cheap food for urban markets. Governments also impose hidden taxes on agriculture by monopolizing the sale of agricultural inputs at above-market prices. Policies that maintain high prices for manufactured goods and low prices for agricultural goods, may allow governments to extract more resources from the rural sector for industrialization, but they also distort farmers' incentives and threaten long-term agricultural productivity, a phenomenon commonly known as the price scissors effect. Despite this risk, Bates argues, governments pursue urban-biased

⁴⁰ Lipton 1976: 13.

⁴¹ Lipton 1976: 323.

policies because an “alliance of revenue-starved governments, price-conscious consumers, profit-seeking industries, and dependent farmers will persist in seeking their individual, short-run best interests, and will continue to adhere to policy choices that are harmful to farmers and collectively deleterious as well.”⁴²

The result of urban bias is growth without development—industrial growth and urban expansion occurring alongside rural economic stagnation and poverty.⁴³ Lipton’s work shows that common justifications for squeezing agriculture, such as historical models of successful development, the scale advantages of industry, and the promise of urbanization, are based on flawed assumptions and do not offer much hope for poor people in developing countries.⁴⁴ Similarly, Bates argues that incorrect elite understandings of the “rural problem” may lead governments to adopt policies that often fail to boost agricultural production. For example, governments in Africa have imposed communal property rights on villages because of incorrect assumptions about “traditional” rural society being more communal and equal than modern society. When small farmers do not adopt new technologies or turn away from cash crop production, governments see this as a problem with a conservative, risk-averse peasant culture governed by a “subsistence ethic” that eschews the principle of “profit maximization.”⁴⁵ These

⁴² Bates 1981: 132.

⁴³ Lipton 1976: 56. For a rich analysis of this problem in India, see Kohli 1987.

⁴⁴ Lipton 1976: 35-40, 121-122, 218-221. Lipton examines how different development ideologies are consistent with urban bias, including classical and neo-classical political economy (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, W. W. Rostow, W. Arthur Lewis), Marxist theories of capitalism, Leninist theories of imperialism, and debates on Soviet industrialization. Populism (John Ruskin), which inspired such ideas as community development and village self-government, does not support urban bias but, according to Lipton, may be equally damaging to rural communities because of its tendency to romanticize rural life and to ignore the importance of village access to developmental resources; see Lipton 1976: 92-138.

⁴⁵ Bates 1984.

authors suggest that the real causes of underdevelopment are lack of government investment in the rural sector, government support for scale farming instead of more efficient small farming, and price policies that distort markets and negatively affect farm incomes.⁴⁶

The urban bias thesis is good at explaining cases of development failure, and by extension suggests what a case of development success may look like—high government investment in the rural sector, small-scale farming, and undistorted markets. However, the urban bias thesis cannot explain why certain governments choose policies that actually protect and support the rural sector. In other words, we need a theory of policy choice to explain why certain countries make the switch from rural extraction to rural development. The cases examined in this dissertation reveal that even in strong authoritarian states, governments may under certain conditions reverse urban-biased policies. In particular, it is argued that cycles of rural unrest, albeit in different forms, may pressure authoritarian states to adopt protective policies for agriculture.

As the most successful case of rural modernization, Taiwan closely resembles Lipton's ideal of "mass agriculture," which is characterized by extensive, labor-intensive agriculture and rural development that precedes industrialization.⁴⁷ Many scholars have observed that compared to other countries, Taiwan had moderate levels of urban bias in the 1950s and 1960s, which was followed by pro-farmer agricultural adjustment policies in the 1970s. Moreover, because of land reform, Taiwan had a smallholder rural economy with low levels of inequality. This structure and the general provision of agricultural extension services allowed Taiwan to avoid the problem

⁴⁶ There is an ongoing debate concerning the economic advantages of small-scale farming versus large-scale farming. For a critical view of scale agriculture and Soviet collectivization, see Scott 1998: 164, 193-222.

⁴⁷ Lipton 1976: 21-23, 74-78, 215.

of “bimodal development” in which inputs go only to large-scale farmers.⁴⁸

However, the idea that the KMT did not pursue urban-biased policies is incorrect. In fact, urban bias was a fundamental characteristic of KMT agricultural policy until the 1970s. For example, under the rice-fertilizer barter system, farmers were paid only 70% of world market prices for rice, and they were forced to pay about 40% more for fertilizer than Japanese, Dutch, American or Indian farmers.⁴⁹ These unfavorable terms of trade for agriculture had a negative effect on farm incomes, which increased slightly after land reform and then remained constant until the late 1960s when they started to decline.⁵⁰ Virtually all gains in rural incomes during this period can be traced to the rise of off-farm employment opportunities.⁵¹ By the late 1960s, the relative decline of agriculture had become apparent. Agriculture’s share of GDP, rural employment and incomes had all declined, and the rate of out-migration was increasing.⁵² The switch from urban bias to rural development in Taiwan occurred partly because the Farmers’ Associations, being embedded in Taiwan’s village communities and closely linked to higher-levels of government, signaled these problems to the regime. To maintain its legitimacy in the countryside, the KMT responded by eliminating the rice-fertilizer barter system, carrying out a land consolidation program to scale-up agriculture, and adopting a community development program to improve village infrastructure.⁵³

⁴⁸ Yager 1988: 287-288. “Agricultural extension services” refers to the provision of technical education and inputs for agricultural production.

⁴⁹ Francks 1999: x; Amsden 1985: 86.

⁵⁰ Stavis 1974: 11-12.

⁵¹ Moore 1988: 122-3.

⁵² Moore 1988: 120; Wade 2004: 76-77; Stavis 1974: 10, 21.

⁵³ Yager 1988: 95-98.

Like Taiwan, in South Korea the smallholder economy created by land reform ensured the absence of the large farmer-small farmer dichotomy commonly found in other parts of the developing world. However, unlike Taiwan, the development of South Korean agriculture did not precede industrialization. South Korea's initial postwar conditions were less favorable than Taiwan, and South Korea's leaders largely neglected agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s. Francks notes that South Korea's development most closely resembles W. Arthur Lewis's "dual sector model" in which the rural sector's contribution to industrialization is limited to the supply of surplus labor.⁵⁴ The switch from rural extraction to agricultural adjustment occurred in South Korea because the Park Chung-hee regime found it politically necessary. In the 1967 and 1971 presidential elections, Park won by a narrow margin because opposition candidates Yun Po-sun and Kim Dae-jung were able to capitalize on dissatisfaction with government-set rice prices and capture much of the rural vote. The elections raised Park's awareness about the problems of rural-urban inequality, migration and food security, and prompted the regime to reverse its urban-biased policies and launch the New Village Movement.⁵⁵

In China, agricultural policy under Mao was designed to squeeze the rural sector. Despite the Maoist rhetoric of balanced development, the compulsory grain procurement system, the Great Leap Forward, and other policies ensured high levels of rural resource extraction. Reform-era rural policies resulted in less state control over agriculture, but the developmental squeeze continued. The central government invested few resources in the rural sector, requiring that rural local governments raise their own revenues for public goods. In both Maoist and reform periods,

⁵⁴ Francks 1999: 103; Lewis 1954.

⁵⁵ Park 1998: 33-34; Brandt 1978; Ravenholt 1981.

agricultural interests have been weakly represented at the national level.⁵⁶ These patterns, however, have changed in the 2000s. The New Socialist Countryside, introduced in 2005, marks the beginning of China's agricultural adjustment period. The government eliminated rural taxes and fees, and significantly increased rural sector spending. Moreover, reforms such as the recentralization of finances and administrative streamlining have helped reduce local government corruption. This period has also seen important changes such as "peasant advocates" and "pro-peasant" intellectuals becoming more outspoken and widely known, and peasant interests becoming better represented in national political bodies. As was the case in South Korea, these changes reflect the leadership's commitment to solving the problems of rural-urban inequality, migration and food security. Although there were no Farmers' Associations or national elections to signal problems to the regime, widespread social unrest in the form of rural protest prompted the regime to reverse its urban-biased policies. As Dali Yang pointed out in his analysis of de-collectivization, Chinese peasants may act as an informal "pressure group" that influences the course of central policy.⁵⁷

In summary, protective policies for agriculture may be adopted after economic trends cross a certain threshold that makes protection economically or politically necessary. As mentioned earlier, since the 1970s most governments have recognized the importance of rural development, but unless there is a clear reason to pursue rural development, governments will select urban-biased policies. In analyzing the case of Japan, Francks argues that in the later stages of development farmers may organize politically and push for protective policies. This may be true

⁵⁶ Lardy 1978; Lardy 1983; Bernstein & Lu 2003: 18-19, 45, 88-89, 224-230; Landry 2008: 80.

⁵⁷ Yang 1996: 224-225. Bernstein & Lu argue that peasant protest in China falls short of a social movement but can send signals to the regime and indirectly influence policy; see Bernstein & Lu 2003: 149.

for some countries but does not explain the cases examined in this study. Agricultural adjustment policies may be adopted out of the need to preserve stability in the countryside, to subvert political opposition, or to address macroeconomic problems such as food security.⁵⁸ Pressures to adopt protective policies for agriculture may be felt gradually as the relative decline of agriculture becomes more apparent (Taiwan), or they may be felt by way of triggering mechanisms such as elections (South Korea) or rural protest (China). As Francks has correctly noted, “Even politically and militarily strong authoritarian governments can be susceptible to ‘trouble down on the farm.’”⁵⁹

This study supports the view that reversing urban bias is a necessary condition for rural development. However, in East Asia, state-led modernization campaigns rather than undistorted markets were the main drivers of rural progress. Moreover, campaigns, which by definition seek to overhaul the status quo by mobilizing actors both within and outside of formal institutions, may potentially unseat the entrenched interests that underpin urban bias, especially when farmers are actively involved in campaign implementation.

Failed Development Schemes

The relative success of state-led rural modernization in East Asia is surprising in light of major work in comparative politics that portrays state intervention in local communities, especially in the form of campaigns, as pathologically destructive. In *Seeing Like a State* (1998),

⁵⁸ There are two other variables that are not the focus of this study but nonetheless deserve mentioning. First, protective policies are more likely to be adopted when there is urban support for them, such as urban nationalists who support self-sufficiency in food production or urbanites with populist, romantic ideas who see value in preserving the rural community; see Francks 1999: 11-14. Second, the international context may constrain a country’s ability to adopt protective policies, e.g. WTO regulations against heavy subsidies; but it may also encourage protective policies through international support for rural development programs.

⁵⁹ Francks 1999: 220.

James Scott writes that the “history of Third World Development is littered with the debris of huge agricultural schemes and new cities...that have failed their residents.”⁶⁰ Scott identifies four conditions that underpin development failures—the administrative ordering of nature and society, high-modernist ideology, authoritarianism and weak civil society.⁶¹ These conditions, he argues, work to undermine “local knowledge,” which is defined as “a wide array of practical skills and acquired intelligence in responding to a constantly changing natural and human environment.”⁶² Scott makes a strong case for adaptable, decentralized institutions, such as the small family farm, which he believes may be better suited for the application of local knowledge to development problems.⁶³

In the same way that urban-biased ideologies may result in failed development policies, Scott’s work reveals that high-modernist ideology may have a disastrous effect on development outcomes. Scott defines high-modernism as:

[A] strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws.⁶⁴

In his examination of collectivization in the Soviet Union and forced resettlement in Tanzania, which both resulted in famine, Scott shows how states with high-modernist ideologies formulate policies based on utopian visions that are, to a certain extent, doomed to fail.

⁶⁰ Scott 1998: 3.

⁶¹ Scott describes the administrative ordering of nature and society as a process of creating “maps of legibility” or “state simplifications;” see Scott 1998: 4-5.

⁶² Scott 1998: 313.

⁶³ Scott 1998: 221-222, 301, 353-354.

⁶⁴ Scott 1998: 4.

The failure of the Great Leap Forward may easily be explained by this logic. However, this study reveals that in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea, which also exhibit some of the characteristics outlined in Scott's theory, the state was able to play a rather positive role in development. The relative success of East Asia cannot simply be explained by the presence of family farming. In both Taiwan and South Korea the state pursued modernization campaigns that tried to scale-up agriculture and to transform the village environment by way of top-down planning. The latter goal, which is also important to China's New Socialist Countryside, shares strong similarities with Tanzania's Ujamaa village campaign.⁶⁵ We therefore need a theory for the conditions under which state-led development may succeed or fail.

Section 4: Towards a New Theory of Rural Development

This section develops a theory for explaining the success or failure of rural development policies in East Asia. First, it examines existing theories related to regime type and land reform and shows that there is an agricultural counterpart to the developmental state model but that it cannot explain variation among East Asian countries. It also shows that land reform is not a sufficient condition for rural development. Second, this section examines existing theories related to rural organization and shows that things often associated with "participatory development" such as decentralization, bottom-up initiatives and democratic checks on authority are not necessary conditions for rural development. Third, drawing on these existing theories, a new theory centered on farmers' organizations and modernization campaigns is advanced to explain the success or failure of rural development policies. These variables serve to increase

⁶⁵ Scott criticizes these villages for reflecting elite ideas about modern society rather than rural residents' actual needs. His analysis of why they failed emphasizes coercive implementation, "rational" but inappropriate design and inflexible planning; see Scott 1998: 223-261. The Ujamaa village campaign was partly inspired by China's people's communes; see Scott 1998: 238. For a comparison of rural policy in Tanzania and China, see Putterman 1985.

popular participation and reduce the costs of policy implementation in a way that is fundamentally different from participatory development, i.e. top-down, mobilized participation versus bottom-up, democratic participation. This new theoretical framework recognizes the importance of regime type and land reform in East Asian rural development, but posits that differences in nature of farmers' organizations and modernization campaigns are best able to explain variation among East Asian cases.

There are different pathways towards successful rural development. The combination of land reform and effective farmers' organizations in Taiwan may have been a sufficient condition for the reversal of urban bias but did not result in extensive rural development (especially in the area of village improvement) until the KMT initiated a modernization campaign in the 1970s. In South Korea, less effective farmers' organizations undermined prospects for rural development in the 1950s-1960s. Rural unrest prompted the regime to reverse urban bias, but instead of relying on farmers' organizations to channel resources to the rural sector, South Korea relied even more heavily on modernization campaigns to bring about rural development. In China, a country that has been extremely wary of organizing the "peasant majority," farmers' organizations have been relatively weak and have not played a major role in rural development. Although farmers' organizations have recently become more important, China has mostly relied on modernization campaigns to foster rural development.

Modernization campaigns are powerful tools for rural transformation that have been used throughout East Asia. They are not, however, necessary or sufficient conditions for rural development in general. Rather, they represent an alternative causal pathway for development (versus market forces or technical-rational planning) that may succeed under certain conditions. When combined with effective farmers' organizations and strong bureaucratic controls

(Taiwan's Community Development Campaign), modernization campaigns may succeed at promoting rural development. When these conditions are absent (China's Great Leap Forward), modernization campaigns can go horribly wrong. The mixed outcomes of the two intermediate cases, the New Village Movement in South Korea and the New Socialist Countryside in China, may be explained by the absence of effective farmers' organizations in both and the absence of strong central bureaucratic controls in the Chinese case. The important role of campaigns in East Asian rural development challenges the urban-bias school by showing that an activist state, not simply the presence of undistorted markets, was important for rural development; and it contradicts the literature on the developmental state, which portrays East Asian governments as extremely technocratic and therefore more likely to rely on formal institutions rather than campaigns to execute development policy.⁶⁶

Finally, the following sections reveal some surprising convergences and divergences among these cases. First, state-led development in South Korea and Taiwan occurred differently. Even though campaigns occurred in both countries, in Taiwan a more technical-rational approach to rural development dominated. Taiwan also had stronger, member-controlled farmers associations, which helps explain why rural development in Taiwan was more successful than in Korea. Second, there is a surprising convergence between the South Korean and Chinese cases. The New Village Movement shares strong resemblances with the Great Leap Forward and shares even stronger resemblances with the New Socialist Countryside. These similarities are not coincidental, but rather stem from active policy learning among East Asian countries.

⁶⁶ An important exception is Atul Kohli's work on South Korea, which discusses the mobilizational qualities of Park Chung-hee's regime, comparing it to China's communist regime and fascist regimes in Europe and Japan. Kohli highlights the negative impact of mobilization on political freedom but does not discuss the actual effects of mobilization on rural development; see Kohli 2004: 84-123.

The Developmental State and Industrialization

The developmental state model was first developed by Chalmers Johnson to explain Japan's rapid postwar industrialization. To briefly summarize the model, developmental states tend to exhibit the following characteristics: high levels of autonomy and strong state capacity, the prioritization of economic development over other goals, an elite technocratic bureaucracy, a modernization ideology that calls for heavy state intervention in the market, an authoritarian state-corporatist relationship with the private sector, and less urban bias in the provision of public goods.⁶⁷ Johnson's regime-centered theory of Japan's successful development was quickly applied to other East Asian countries, which seemed to confirm the model. Challenging dependency theory and the practice of import-substituting industrialization (ISI) common throughout Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s,⁶⁸ the economic successes of the East Asian Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs)—Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong—inspired a large body of scholarship on new institutional economics and the developmental state.⁶⁹

The developmental state model has been critically questioned because of its limited applicability to other developing countries, its misrepresentation as a model of “free market

⁶⁷ Johnson 1982. For a broad theoretical discussion on the concepts of corporatism, state autonomy, and state capacity, see Schmitter & Lehmbruch 1979; Migdal 1988; Evans et al. 1985; Evans 1995. For a critical view of Evans et al. 1985, see Migdal et al. 1994; Migdal 2001.

⁶⁸ Cardoso & Faletto 1979; Gunder Frank 1991.

⁶⁹ Wade 1990; Haggard 1990; Noble 1998; Woo-Cumings 1999; Amsden 2001; Doner et al. 2005. Of these scholars, Robert Wade most vocally criticizes the idea that the NICs did not use ISI and in fact sees the strategic application of ISI in East Asia as critical to these countries' development. He believes that the portrayal of the NICs as only using export-oriented industrialization (EOI) has led organizations such as the World Bank to make unfounded policy prescriptions to developing countries; see the introductory and concluding chapters to the 2004 edition of Wade's *Governing the Market*.

capitalism” by the World Bank, and for its apparent failure in the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.⁷⁰ However, this literature, like the modernization literature before it,⁷¹ has successfully called scholars’ attention to the potential links between regime type and development outcomes. For example, Atul Kohli uses a regime-centered theoretical approach to analyze various development outcomes among different states in India, and also cross-nationally, comparing development outcomes across a diverse set of countries that includes Brazil, Nigeria, India and South Korea.⁷² Kohli’s explanation of South Korea’s success highlights the importance of “colonial legacy” on regime type, but otherwise seems to support the developmental state model.⁷³ Despite criticisms of the developmental state model, it continues to be the dominant theoretical paradigm for comparing East Asian countries in political science.

The Developmental State and Rural Modernization

Considering that so much has been written about East Asian industrial development, it is surprising just how little has been written about East Asian rural development. As Francks has correctly observed, “the ‘East Asian model’ is almost unique amongst development models in prescribing no apparent role for agriculture.”⁷⁴ Aside from Francks’s research, which compares

⁷⁰ Fine 1999.

⁷¹ The modernization literature is too large to include all of the relevant citations here. For one of the most influential and representative works on this theory, see Lipset 1960.

⁷² Kohli 1987; Kohli 2004.

⁷³ Kohli actually uses the term “cohesive-capitalist” instead of developmental state, which he sees as different in that it emphasizes the power to narrowly define and effectively pursue economic goals; see Kohli 2004: 385-386. The colonial legacy of Japan on South Korean and Taiwanese rural development is discussed in the background chapter and in the case study chapters for those countries.

⁷⁴ Francks 1999: xi. Alice Amsden has written about Taiwanese rural development, and Robert Wade’s earliest book is about rural South Korea. However, these scholars and others have paid

Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and Michael Hsin-huang Hsiao's research on South Korea and Taiwan, there are very few pieces of scholarship that systematically analyze East Asian rural development. Moreover, almost no comparative research on this subject has included China.

According to Hsiao, South Korea and Taiwan followed very similar development paths. Each country experienced a period of postwar rehabilitation (1945-1953) when land reform was carried out and agricultural production was restored to prewar levels; a period of unbalanced growth (1953-1971) when rural sector resources were extracted for industrialization; and a period of transition to balanced development (starting in 1972) when the government began to subsidize agriculture, to consolidate farmland in an effort to scale-up agriculture, and to invest more resources in rural infrastructure in the name of "community development."⁷⁵

According to Francks, the key characteristics of East Asian rural development are: extensive state control over the agricultural sector, especially the production of rice and staple-foods;⁷⁶ land reform, which created a labor-intensive, smallholder economy that did not lend itself easily to mechanization or large-scale production; and extremely strong farmers' organizations. On this last point Francks writes, "[N]owhere, it seems, has communal or co-operative activity amongst farm households become so highly developed or so effective, commercially and politically, as in industrial East Asia."⁷⁷ The presence of farmers' organizations, which acted as interest-articulating organizations, helped to turn these countries'

very limited attention to the rural sector in elaborating their theories of the developmental state; see Amsden 1985; Wade 1982.

⁷⁵ Hsiao 1981: 35-37.

⁷⁶ Larry Burmeister refers to this phenomenon as the "state-rice complex" and describes East Asia as the world's "most striking example of statist agriculture;" see Burmeister 2000: 443.

⁷⁷ Francks 1999: 16.

agricultural adjustment problems into explosive political issues. Compared to Europe, the relative decline of agriculture appeared “sooner and with greater force,” causing Japan to start protecting agriculture in the 1950s, followed by Taiwan and South Korea in the 1970s after only one or two decades of industrialization.⁷⁸

These scholars deserve much credit for outlining the basic characteristics of East Asian rural development. While this study does not dispute their general findings, it seeks to make an important contribution by bringing China into the analysis; by critically analyzing the causal role of land reform and farmers’ organizations; and by adding campaigns as another important variable that is either missing or underemphasized in the existing literature. In summary, the East Asian developmental state model does have an agricultural counterpart; but as a general regional model, it cannot explain variation among East Asian cases.

Land Reform

“Of all the farmyards I have seen in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and in the Middle East, that of the average Taiwanese tenant is among the worst, both in appearance and in equipment. Tenants’ huts, so-called barnyards, equipment, and livestock, as well as their health point to nothing but poverty.”⁷⁹ –Wolf Ladejinsky, 1949

Wolf Ladejinsky is perhaps one of the first people in the noncommunist world to write extensively about land as a political resource.⁸⁰ Ladejinsky believed that the Russian and Chinese communists had correctly recognized a political opportunity in addressing the grievances of tenants and landless farmers, and he called on the US government to “fight Communist ideology

⁷⁸ Francks 1999: 13.

⁷⁹ Ladejinsky 1977: 98.

⁸⁰ Ladejinsky was a Russian-born American who worked for the US Department of Agriculture, the Ford Foundation and the World Bank. Known as the “architect of Japanese land reform,” he traveled extensively in Asia, advising governments on agrarian reform. Ladejinsky published his first essay on this subject, which examined Soviet collectivization, in *Political Science Quarterly* in 1934; see Ladejinsky 1977: 24-27.

with an effective version of the American farm tradition.”⁸¹ Repeatedly, Ladejinsky emphasized the need to replace exploitative landlord-tenant systems with small family farms as a way of promoting democracy, or at least as a way of giving farmers a stake in Asia’s noncommunist regimes. In the words of Samuel Huntington, “no social group is more conservative than a landholding peasantry and none is more revolutionary than a peasantry which owns too little land or pays too high a rental.”⁸² Similarly, Jeffery Paige finds that of all agrarian systems, smallholder economies are the most stable.⁸³ Driven by the desire for political stability in the countryside, South Korea and Taiwan followed in Japan’s footsteps, carrying out extensive land reforms that created a smallholder, family farming economy, and by almost all accounts effectively neutralized the influence of communism.⁸⁴

Although most scholarship on East Asian rural development points to land reform as the key variable that accounts for the region’s relative success,⁸⁵ its actual economic effect remains unclear. Cristobal Kay made an important contribution to the developmental state literature by looking at “agrarian reform” to explain different development outcomes in East Asia and Latin America. Kay argues that land reform contributed to East Asia’s development because it occurred before industrialization, created a more homogenous and equitable rural society, and

⁸¹ Ladejinsky 1977: 154.

⁸² Huntington 1968: 375. Michael Hsin-huang Hsiao’s book first alerted me to these points made by Huntington and Paige; see Hsiao 1981: 123.

⁸³ Paige 1976: 76-86. Other types of systems include decentralized sharecropping, migratory labor estate, hacienda and plantation.

⁸⁴ Wade 2004: 241; Francks 1999; Park 1998; Yager 1988; Hsiao 1981. These governments were able to successfully implement land reform for several reasons, including strong political will, US support, and a competent bureaucracy; see Kay 2002: 1079.

⁸⁵ See the case study chapters for country-specific references. For a general account of East Asia, see Griffin et al. 2002.

had the overall effect of giving security to small farmers and increasing the state's autonomy.⁸⁶

Kay, does not, however, argue that land reform made any significant contribution to agricultural productivity or rural incomes. In other words, land reform was important only in the sense that it created conditions conducive to the emergence of a strong developmental state.

What is clear is the fact that East Asian land reforms resulted in extremely small and parcelized landholdings. The central problem in Asia, Ladejinsky noted, was structural—"too many people, too little land" such that "even landlordism is on a molecular scale."⁸⁷ The elimination of landlords did have a positive effect on farmers' incentives, but the small size of plots limited farmers' productivity and forced them to find other, non-farm sources of income. Benedict Stavis notes that by 1960 about 42% of Taiwanese farmers owned less than .6 hectares of land,⁸⁸ an amount too small to support a family.⁸⁹ To supplement farm incomes, most rural Taiwanese farmed part-time while working in rural factories, which was possible because of Taiwan's decentralized pattern of industrialization.⁹⁰ In 1958, more than 95% of rural incomes in Taiwan derived from farming; by 1979 about 85% of rural incomes derived from non-farm sources.⁹¹ There was also part-time farming in South Korea, but its more concentrated pattern of

⁸⁶ Kay 2002: 1076-1078, 1085-1090. The concept of "agrarian bureaucracy" found in Skocpol's and Moore's work has already been mentioned. Along these lines, many scholars see state autonomy as inversely related to the power of landed classes in society. Kay and others argue that since land reform removed these classes in East Asia, these states were able to enjoy greater autonomy than, for example, Latin American states.

⁸⁷ The "molecular scale" quotation comes from S. Wakukawa, cited in Ladejinsky 1977: 174.

⁸⁸ 1 hectare = 2.47 acres.

⁸⁹ Stavis 1974: 18.

⁹⁰ Ho 1979a.

⁹¹ Gallin & Gallin 1982: 215.

industrialization (centered around Seoul and Pusan) resulted in much faster and higher rates of out-migration than Taiwan.⁹² It was through land reform and the growth of the non-farm sector that the KMT was able to mitigate the social impact of its price scissors policy; but because of declining agricultural productivity in the late 1960s, the government decided in the 1970s to try to consolidate landholdings and scale up agriculture.

The Taiwanese case is not unique. In fact, all East Asian governments have pursued land consolidation programs to try to solve the problems of parcelization, mechanization and scale.⁹³ The term “scale” is not meant to suggest the creation of large-scale farms resembling the US model of industrial agriculture, but rather moving from small to medium-sized holdings, and only occasionally, as in the case of wheat production, to larger-sized holdings.⁹⁴ Even China has recently tried to scale up agriculture as part of its New Socialist Countryside program.⁹⁵ In discussing the Chinese case, Chris Bramall finds that the 1947-1952 land reform and the 1981-1983 land reform (de-collectivization) resulted in only short-term productivity gains that can actually be explained better by technological improvements in the areas of irrigation and fertilizers.⁹⁶ He finds little evidence to support the idea of an inverse relationship between farm size and yields, and in fact finds that places in China that experienced more radical (egalitarian)

⁹² Ho 1979a; Ho 1979b.

⁹³ Bramall 2004; Zhang & Donaldson 2008: 28.

⁹⁴ In his critique of scale agriculture, Scott suggests that wheat is perhaps the one crop for which the model of industrial agriculture might work; see Scott 1998: 221-222, 253. Among East Asian countries, China has the greatest number of large-scale wheat farms.

⁹⁵ Zhang & Donaldson 2008; Waldron et al. 2006.

⁹⁶ Bramall 2004: 117, 123-126. Bramall cites Dwight Perkins, who also attributes productivity gains in the 1950s to improved agricultural inputs instead of land reform; see Perkins 1969: 190-199.

land reform in the 1950s actually had lower productivity levels than places with less radical land reform.⁹⁷ Moreover, agriculture grew at about the same rate in 1984-2001 (4.5% annually) as it had before de-collectivization in 1976-1980 (4.6% annually).⁹⁸

Even Ladejinsky, one of the most vocal proponents of land reform, recognized that land reform is not a sufficient condition for development. Land reform is just one component of successful agrarian reform, which must also include the provision of rural credit, irrigation, extension services, marketing services and other public goods.⁹⁹ Moreover, land reform is not a sufficient condition for resolving the problem of urban bias. Michael Lipton writes, “[T]he case for equalization within the rural sector—and especially for land reform, the most-discussed and (despite frequent evasion) most serious of intra-rural equalizing measures in many LDCs—is weakened by the size of the urban-rural gap.”¹⁰⁰ Given that land reform was not a sufficient condition for development in any of the cases examined in this study, we need to develop a theory of rural development that includes other variables.

Rural Organization and Participatory Development

Since East Asia has stronger farmers’ organizations than can be found in other parts of the world, their role in rural development needs to be considered when constructing a theory. To explain why East Asia has unusually strong farmers’ organizations, scholars often cite the cooperative tradition of rice cultivation at the village level. Rice cultivation may be more conducive to cooperative organization, but this explanation ignores the important role of the state

⁹⁷ Bramall 2004: 118.

⁹⁸ Bramall 2004: 121-122.

⁹⁹ Ladejinsky 1977: 356, 361.

¹⁰⁰ Lipton 1976: 171.

in imposing farmers' organizations on the village community. In Taiwan, the first formal farmers' association was established by tenant farmers in 1900 to "protect themselves from landlords and to seek land rent reduction through collective efforts."¹⁰¹ By 1908 there were 16 such organizations. In response, the Japanese colonial government quickly co-opted, legalized, and imposed them on rural society, converting them into extension organizations that provided various services to the farm population.¹⁰² In Korea as well, the Japanese colonial authorities set up an extensive network of farmers' cooperatives to provide extension services, and along with local security agencies, to monitor the rural population.¹⁰³ The postwar governments of Taiwan and Korea were therefore well positioned to essentially re-create farmers' organizations based on these pre-existing colonial institutions.

Farmers' organizations in East Asia should be understood as parastatal organizations that share a corporatist relationship with the state. In the 1950s and 1960s they assisted the government with policy implementation and were entrusted with certain economic activities such as collecting and purchasing rice for the government, selling fertilizer and other inputs to farmers, and providing general extension, credit and marketing services. Like marketing boards in Africa,¹⁰⁴ East Asian governments used farmers' organizations to extract a rural surplus for industrialization. However, they were not purely extractive institutions; they provided important inputs to farmers, and during these countries' agricultural adjustment phases, were used to channel subsidies and other resources to the rural sector. Francks suggests that the use of

¹⁰¹ Kuo 1964: 5.

¹⁰² Kuo 1964: 5-7.

¹⁰³ Kohli 2004: 25; Amsden 1985: 81.

¹⁰⁴ Bates 1981: 11-29; Lipton 1976: 100, 283.

farmers' organizations to protect agriculture had the effect of further institutionalizing the small farmer.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, despite government attempts to scale up agriculture, East Asia is one of the few places in the industrialized world that has maintained its smallholder farm economy.

There are some important differences among farmers' organizations in East Asia. In Japan, farmers' organizations actually grew out of a tenant union movement in the post-WWI period, which lasted for about 20 years.¹⁰⁶ As in Taiwan, they were later co-opted by the government, but overall, Japan's farmers' organizations had a stronger history of collective action. As a result, Japanese farmers' organizations functioned as demand-making interest groups during Japan's agricultural adjustment phase. In Taiwan and South Korea, most farmers' organizations did not grow out of collective action, but rather were imposed on villages by colonial authorities; which may explain why they could only affect policy indirectly by signaling problems to the government. Only after democratization in the late-1980s would these organizations play a more active role in politics, and even then, they were not as strong as farmers' organizations in Japan.¹⁰⁷

Comparing Taiwan and South Korea, Larry Burmeister et al. (2002) find that Taiwan's Farmers' Association (FA) was more autonomous from the state than Korea's National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF). In both countries, these organizations shared a similar, tiered structure reaching from the central state to the village, and both were parastatal organizations, but the FA in Taiwan was more member-controlled and thus more embedded than the NACF. As Chapter 3 on Taiwan shows, even though the FA system only allowed for indirect

¹⁰⁵ Francks 1999: 222-223.

¹⁰⁶ Ladejinsky 1977: 80-82.

¹⁰⁷ Francks 1999: 212.

representation of farmers' interests (a committee at each level elected representatives to the level above it), FA elections at the township level were extremely competitive and served to increase farmers' general participation in the state's rural development programs. These elections constituted a form of controlled ownership over the FAs. In other words, the FAs may be understood as rare examples of "transmission belt" organizations that actually incorporated farmers' interests. Significantly, FA leaders were native Taiwanese, not mainlanders, which contributed to the perception that the FAs were true farmers' organizations, not just extensions of the government. In contrast, farmers in South Korea saw the NACF as part of the government.¹⁰⁸

In an important 1970s study of rural organization across 16 Asian countries, Norman Uphoff and Milton Esman argue that effective organization and "linkage" are necessary conditions for rural development. They write:

Of key significance was the extent and effectiveness of linkages between and among institutions, horizontally with other organizations at the same level and especially vertically between local organizations and structures at the center of government which set policy and allocate resources essential to success in rural development.¹⁰⁹

Contrary to their expectation that local autonomy was important for development, they found that autonomy was actually inversely related to linkage, and that the latter variable played a more important role in development. Moreover, they argue that regime type, political ideology, and directional impulse of the development initiative (top-down versus bottom-up) were insignificant compared to the role of effective rural organization. Uphoff and Esman characterize effective local organization as having multiple channels linking the village with higher levels of government, controlled decentralization based on local capacity and technology involved, leadership that is subject to controls from above and below, and institutional legitimacy among

¹⁰⁸ Burmeister et al. 2002: 142-3.

¹⁰⁹ Uphoff & Esman 1974: xii.

farmer members.¹¹⁰

This research supports the Uphoff and Esman thesis that effective local organization is critical to development outcomes. Farmers' organizations in South Korea and Taiwan exhibit the characteristics of effective local organization outlined in their study, but South Korea's NACF was not as effective as the FA in Taiwan because leaders were not subject to strong controls from below, which resulted in the NACF enjoying less legitimacy among farmer members. This study shows that the NACF played a very minor role in Korean rural development; and argues counter-factually that the Korean case would have been more successful had the NACF been more like the FAs. Taiwan's FA system provides a strong example of controlled decentralization, combining local elections and patronage with central controls. Moreover, Taiwanese FAs share strong resemblances with Lily Tsai's "solidary groups" because they are embedded within village lineage and clan structures.¹¹¹

Comparing South Korea and Taiwan to China, it becomes apparent that tiered, federated, multifunctional farmers' organizations are better for development than China's system of decentralized, single-purpose agricultural producers' cooperatives. The simple presence of farmers' organizations does not guarantee development. They must be effective. Effective farmers' organizations were necessary to Taiwan's development success and may be necessary for rural development in general. Without formal institutions for development, the result is "enclave development" that is uneven and unequal. Without effective farmers' organizations in East Asia, rural development programs would likely be more "statist" and have less built-in accountability. Even though it would be a stretch to call Taiwan's FA system democratic, it did

¹¹⁰ Uphoff & Esman 1974: xviii-xx, 63-96.

¹¹¹ Tsai herself makes this observation with respect to Taiwanese Irrigation Associations; see Tsai 2007: 263.

provide an important check against excessive government extraction of rural resources.

Finally, this study confirms the finding that decentralization and local government autonomy are not necessary conditions for development, and in fact, may undermine prospects for development. China, which has a highly decentralized system (political power is concentrated at the center but it is administratively and fiscally decentralized),¹¹² has not performed as well as South Korea or Taiwan in terms of rural development. As Franz Schurmann and other scholars have noted, decentralization during the Great Leap Forward contributed to its failure.¹¹³ In the reform period, decentralization has been an insufficient condition for extensive rural development.¹¹⁴ Despite efforts to re-centralize China's fiscal and administrative system in the 2000s, the legacy of decentralization, and its effect of weakening central bureaucratic controls over local officials, has contributed to the mixed development outcomes of the New Socialist Countryside. Contrary to the idea of "participatory development," it appears that decentralization, bottom-up initiatives and democratic checks on authority (absent in all of my cases except for minimal checks from below in Taiwan) are not necessary conditions for successful rural development. In order to explain variation among East Asian cases, we need a theory of development that works in a non-democratic context.

Causal Pathways

The development pathways outlined below (see Table 1.1) suggest how land reform and

¹¹² There is a large literature on decentralization in China. For a recent account see Landry 2008.

¹¹³ Considering that Mao was so powerful, it may seem strange to argue that China during this period was decentralized. Although local officials competed to impress Mao and central leaders, regional party committees were empowered at the expense of central line ministries, which resulted in weakened bureaucratic controls. This was not the only cause or even the main cause of the Leap's failure, but it did make reigning in campaign excesses extremely difficult; see Schurmann 1966: 89-90, 216-219; Chang 1975; Domenach 1995.

¹¹⁴ Bernstein & Lu 2003; Tsai 2007.

farmers' organizations (abbreviated FOs) interact to promote rural development. The third key variable, modernization campaigns, is mentioned briefly here and discussed more in the next section.

Land reform is not a sufficient condition for development, but it may be a necessary condition for equitable rural development. Land reform's primary effect is to reduce rural inequality, which has the secondary effects of making extension services more equitable and making gains in agricultural productivity more dispersed. Of course, land reform cannot entirely solve the problem of rural inequality, but it eliminates the large farmer-small farmer dichotomy found in many parts of the developing world, which Bates, Lipton and others have identified as a primary cause of underdevelopment. Land reform also has the effect of increasing state penetration of the countryside, which strengthens the state's capacity for rural resource extraction and for agricultural adjustment (protection).

The presence of effective farmers' organizations may be a necessary condition for development. Farmers' organizations can provide an institutionalized way of transferring resources in and out of the rural sector, which results in stronger extension services, longer-term productivity gains, and, like land reform, greater state penetration of the countryside. Farmers' organizations may also have a positive effect on strengthening the government's political commitment to agricultural adjustment programs.

To clarify, this study is not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of farmers' organizations in East Asia. There are simply too many kinds of organizations to cover—state and non-state, traditional and modern, not to mention the various ties (lineage, religion) and purposes (labor, defense) on which these organizations might be based. The focus of this study is on production-oriented organizations that have been sanctioned and promoted by the state, such as

the FAs in Taiwan, the NACF in Korea and agricultural producers' cooperatives in China. As far as other organizations are concerned, the case study chapters examine the role of farmers' groups during campaigns, such as Taiwan's village community development councils, South Korea's Saemaul councils, and contemporary China's peasant councils. The emphasis on these particular organizations reflects their paramount role in rural development during the periods of study.

1.1: Rural Development Pathways

	Pathway 1: No Land Reform, No FOs	Pathway 3: No Land Reform, FOs	Pathway 2: Land Reform, No FOs	Pathway 4: Land Reform, FOs
Extension Services	Weak, inequitable	Strong, inequitable	Weak, equitable	Strong, equitable
Productivity	Weak improvement, concentrated gains, no systematic (only random) gains	Moderate improvement, concentrated gains, longer-term gains	Limited improvement, dispersed gains, short-term gains	Strong improvement, dispersed gains, longer-term gains
Extraction	Weak capacity, little or no resources transferred to industry unless taken coercively	Moderate capacity, more resources transferred to industry	Moderate capacity, fewer resources transferred to industry unless taken coercively	Strong capacity, more resources transferred to industry
Protection	Weak capacity, weak political will, little or no resources transferred to agriculture	Moderate capacity, fragmented political will, fewer resources transferred to agriculture	Moderate capacity, fragmented political will, fewer resources transferred to agriculture	Strong capacity, strong political will, more resources transferred to agriculture
Consequences	Persistent, systemic underdevelopment	Hurts small farmers, gains in productivity may provide sufficient basis for economic growth but not rural development, few gains in consumption or improvement in rural living standards, high rates of tenancy and rural poverty	Reduced rural inequality but only short-term gains in productivity, insufficient basis for development	Helps small farmers, gains in productivity may provide sufficient basis for economic growth and rural development, gains in consumption and rural living standards, low rates of tenancy and rural poverty
Examples	Many poor countries in the developing world	Taiwan (1895-1945) and South Korea (1910-1945) in the Japanese colonial period ¹¹⁵	China in Maoist (1950s-1970s) and reform periods (1980s-1990s) Note: China had ineffective FOs compared to the rest of East Asia, ¹¹⁶ relied on campaigns for rural development	Taiwan in 1950s-1970s Note: South Korea in 1950s-1970s and China in 2000s had less effective FOs than Taiwan, relied on campaigns for rural development; Taiwan relied less on campaigns for rural development

¹¹⁵ Without land reform, powerful landlords and large farmers are likely to control FOs, reducing the extractive and protective capacity of the state. However, FOs in colonial Taiwan

In summary, these different causal pathways for development help explain why Taiwan has performed better than either South Korea or China. In the absence of strong farmers' organizations, these countries relied instead on state-led rural modernization campaigns to achieve their goals. Contrary to the predictions of the developmental state model, campaigns were (and still are) important not only in China and South Korea, but even in Taiwan. Under certain conditions, campaigns can play a positive role in development by increasing local participation and resources for development, which reduces the costs of central policy implementation. The Taiwanese case illustrates that within the context of effective farmers' organizations and strong bureaucratic controls, modernization campaigns may succeed at promoting rural development. The mixed outcomes the New Village Movement in South Korea and the New Socialist Countryside in China may be explained by the absence of effective farmers' organizations in both cases, as well as the absence of strong central bureaucratic controls in the Chinese case.

Section 5: The Argument in Brief

Campaign Failure, Explaining the Great Leap Forward in China

The Great Leap Forward was motivated by a utopian vision that can be understood as an extreme (but perhaps slightly less rational) example of what Scott calls “high modernist ideology.”¹¹⁷ The Great Leap Forward is also a good example of what Stephen Quick calls an

and South Korea were exceptionally strong organizations, so for these cases the state's extractive and protective capacity was actually quite high.

¹¹⁶ Chapter 6 covers the history of different types of farmers' organizations in the PRC. The main differences with other East Asian FOs are structure (Chinese FOs are not tiered or federated) and functions (Chinese FOs perform a much more limited range of functions).

¹¹⁷ Mao Zedong was at times very critical of planning and scientific learning, and the Great Leap Forward, one could argue, was much less “planned” than the examples cited in Scott's book.

“ideological policy” committed to a “transforming vision.” In looking at the 1960s cooperative movement in Zambia, Quick describes ideological policies as those with ambiguous and immeasurable goals, numerous goals, no clear hierarchy of goals, high expectations, heavy commitment of government resources, politicized leadership, political popularity and immunity from public criticism.¹¹⁸ The pursuit of these kinds of policies creates what Quick calls the “paradox of popularity,” which is the idea that popularity “inhibits the feedback process and reduces the capacity of the implementing agency to respond creatively to problems.”¹¹⁹

Campaigns may fail not only when they suffer from a utopian ideology but also, as Quick and Scott would likely agree, when there are no feedback mechanisms to correct, or effectively resist, misguided policy. Some scholars have suggested that the communes failed because their large size distorted farmers’ incentives.¹²⁰ However, during the Great Leap Forward communes were only slightly larger than Taiwan’s township FAs and after the Leap they were actually slightly smaller.¹²¹ Using the Uphoff and Esman model discussed above it becomes clear that communes failed because they eliminated alternative channels of communication between the village and higher levels of government; they were too decentralized, subject only to regional, not central controls; they were staffed by leaders subject to minimal controls from below; and they were never really accepted as legitimate institutions by peasants, whose earlier resistance to

¹¹⁸ Quick 1980: 41-43.

¹¹⁹ Quick 1980: 58.

¹²⁰ Schurmann 1966: 452-453, 490; Tsai 2007: 257-258.

¹²¹ By the late 1960s there were 364 FAs organized at the township level averaging 2,200 households each. Within a single FA, village “teams” averaged 200-300 households. Chinese communes during the Great Leap Forward were slightly larger than Taiwanese FAs, but after the Leap were actually smaller. In terms of area, in 1974 Chinese communes oversaw the farming of approximately 2,000 hectares; Taiwanese FAs oversaw the farming of approximately 2,200 hectares; see Calkins et al. 1992: 13-14.

cooperative experiments required that the government forcibly impose the commune system.

Several other theories attempt to explain why the Great Leap Forward failed, pointing to such variables as Mao's leadership, bureaucratic politics, regime characteristics, failure of the command economy, international context, and path dependence, i.e. the legacy of war communism.¹²² In short, the Great Leap Forward is an overdetermined case for testing theories of failed development, so perhaps adding an organizational theory about why communes failed is just one more for the record. What is not so obvious from the existing literature, however, is whether there are any examples of policies like the Leap that turned out differently.

Campaign Success? Explaining the New Village Movement in South Korea

Perhaps one reason Western scholars have yet to take the New Village Movement seriously is its uncanny resemblance to the Great Leap Forward. Both Park and Mao were populist leaders with a rural, military background. In fact, Park had an even more humble upbringing than Mao.¹²³ Both leaders also believed in the power of mass mobilization. Like the Great Leap Forward, the New Village Movement is a good example of Quick's "ideological policy." It was vague, utopian and highly politicized; and it was basically immune from criticism. Its origins also resemble those of China's famous Dazhai campaign—Park felt inspired by a poor farming village that refused central government assistance after severe flooding and overcame its difficulties through "self-help" and "cooperation."¹²⁴ On several occasions throughout the 1970s,

¹²² For representative works, see MacFarquhar 1983; Chan 2001; Bachman 1991; Kung & Chen 2011; Dikotter 2010; Thaxton 2008.

¹²³ While Mao came from a relatively rich peasant family, Park Chung-hee was one of seven children whom his parents had to support on only .5 hectares of farmland; see Park 1998: 1, 4.

¹²⁴ Dazhai village in Shanxi province was the Maoist model for agriculture during the Learn from Dazhai campaign of the 1960s and 1970s; see Meisner 1978; Zweig 1989. The Dazhai model was discredited in the 1980s but revived again in the mid-1990s when Premier Zhu Rongji designated it as a national tourist destination.

Park actually called the New Village Movement a “great leap forward.”¹²⁵ Like China, Park’s regime supported model villages and encouraged competitive emulation of “advanced village units.” He even encouraged villages to set up village halls and “community kitchens” to free up women’s labor so that they could help with the campaign.

Despite these strong resemblances with the Great Leap Forward, the New Village Movement turned out differently. Its relative success was not because it was less ideological or because it was less top-down. There are three key differences between these campaigns. First, while the Great Leap Forward was a massive exercise in extraction, the New Village Movement was, above all, an agricultural adjustment program made possible by the government’s decision to reverse its urban-biased policies. As mentioned earlier, the reversal of urban bias is a necessary condition for rural development. Second, the campaign was meticulously planned and implemented by a technocratic bureaucracy that was forced to accept the mobilization tactics that Park so valued. In other words, the New Village Movement was run by “experts” instead of “reds.”¹²⁶ Moreover, these local bureaucrats operated within a highly centralized political system that may not have lent itself to being “responsive” to the farmers, but worked well to prevent corruption at the local level. Frequent inspection, close monitoring of funds, and mass supervision in the form of public radio announcements about villages that would be receiving funding, all worked to ensure that government support was not diverted to other purposes. Third, by organizing local Saemaul councils, by focusing on village improvement projects, by selectively supporting large numbers of villages (not just a few model villages), and by paying

¹²⁵ Park 1979: 152, 167, 204, 222.

¹²⁶ The adjectives “red” and “expert” refer to different types of Chinese officials. Scholars of the Maoist period refer to politically correct (more radical, more Maoist) cadres as “reds” and more educated, bureaucratic cadres as “experts.”

farmers high prices for rice, the Park regime succeeded at generating widespread support for the campaign. Although not a complete success, the New Village Movement did have a positive effect on South Korean rural development, especially the area of village infrastructure.

Regional Policy Learning and the New Socialist Countryside in China

China's leaders are extremely hesitant to call the New Socialist Countryside a "campaign" because of the Maoist connotations of this term, but unofficially it is referred to as a campaign by many people in China. It is probably best understood as a macro-policy that encompasses several rural development programs. This study focuses on two of those programs—farmers' cooperatives and village improvement—because they have historically been important to East Asia's agricultural adjustment programs, and because they best illustrate the ways in which China has actively emulated and followed the paths of both Taiwan and South Korea.

The New Socialist Countryside is a state-led rural modernization program that has been implemented as a campaign in some places but not in others. The NSC shares some important similarities with Maoist campaigns. For example, it uses some of the same slogans; it emphasizes speed and "hard targets;" it uses extra-bureaucratic mobilization mechanisms, such as ad-hoc NSC coordination committees that bring together diverse local actors; and it uses limited villager mobilization mechanisms, such as peasant councils. Unlike Maoist campaigns, however, the NSC emphasizes long-term goals, economic incentives, and gradual program expansion. It also generally discourages the practice of model emulation.¹²⁷

The New Socialist Countryside also shares some strong resemblances with the New

¹²⁷ There is a difference between Dazhai-style model emulation, which entails central government pressure to follow a specific village prototype, and NSC "showpiece" and "demonstration" villages, which are used by local governments to popularize the NSC. In some cases, local governments pressure villages to emulate local models, but this practice is not encouraged by the central government. For more on the NSC's campaign features, see Smith 2009; Smith 2010, Perry 2011.

Village Movement. Like Korea, the NSC has focused on the village environment and generally succeeded at improving rural infrastructure. It has also been implemented in a very similar way, which can be seen in the use of peasant councils to carry out NSC programs, and in the use of selective rewards and subsidies for villages that demonstrate high levels of participation. The NSC has also been criticized for being too top-down; for focusing too much on “cosmetic changes” to the village instead of income-generation projects; for failing to curb out-migration; and for pressuring peasants to renovate or build new housing that they cannot afford, driving many rural families into debt. Unfortunately, these problems are worse in China than they were in Korea because of a lack of central controls over local officials. In analyzing the problems with this policy area in China, this study finds that weaker bureaucratic controls may explain why local governments have been able to exploit the NSC as an opportunity to forcefully consolidate rural housing and illegally acquire peasants’ land. In other words, China’s more decentralized political system has undermined the success of the NSC.

To illustrate this unexpected convergence of the South Korean and Chinese cases, Chapter 7 provides a detailed case study of the NSC in Ganzhou, a city in southern Jiangxi province (south-central China).¹²⁸ The NSC in Ganzhou exhibits very strong campaign-style features, and like the New Village Movement has focused almost exclusively on village environmental improvement. It is argued that campaigns have been used in Ganzhou because unlike coastal China, there are low levels of industrialization and high rates of out-migration. Ganzhou officials see their NSC program as a potential model for other parts of central and western China that cannot rely on township and village enterprises or urbanization to deliver rural development. In

¹²⁸ Ganzhou, while technically a “city,” is actually larger than Taiwan in terms of land area, and has a population of 8.9 million, of which more than 7 million live in rural areas. The Ganzhou city government administers 18 counties and county-level cities, 283 townships, 3,467 administrative villages, and 48,789 “village teams” (actual villages).

other words, they see state-led rural modernization as a more viable path than relying on “market forces” for development.

This study suggests that campaign-style policy implementation is less common in the more developed coastal provinces, where local governments have prioritized the production goals of the NSC, i.e. product specialization, agro-processing, farmers’ cooperatives etc., over village improvement or other goals. Although very different from Taiwan’s FA system, farmers’ cooperatives in China may provide a strong foundation for future rural development. In other words, while the development path of coastal provinces in China appears to be converging with the Taiwanese model of rural development, the path of central provinces in China appears to be converging with the Korean model of rural development.

These convergences are not accidental, but rather stem from active policy learning on the part of the Chinese government. Since the early reform period, China has looked to its East Asian neighbors as potential models for development. Although China is not a perfect fit for the developmental state model (it is larger, more complex, more predatory, and is transitioning from socialism), it does exhibit some key characteristics of the model, such as the selective application of ISI and EOI, a technocratic bureaucracy, and extremely impressive growth rates.¹²⁹ This study finds that in the area of rural development, from the central government all the way down to the village level, Chinese officials have explicitly modeled their NSC programs after South Korea’s New Village Movement. Moreover, local implementers of NSC programs understand the promotion of farmers’ cooperatives as important because of the general success of these organizations in East Asia, and in Taiwan in particular.

Campaigns and Rural Development in Taiwan

¹²⁹ See Wade 2004: 1; Bernstein & Lu 2003: 5-7.

The Taiwanese case best illustrates how the variables of land reform and farmers' organizations interact to promote rural development. Still, it would be incorrect to think that together they constitute a sufficient condition for rural development. Such a claim can only be probabilistic because successful rural development depends on exactly what agricultural adjustment program is adopted and how it is implemented.

The KMT also carried out a state-led modernization campaign as part of its agricultural adjustment policy in the 1970s. This "community development" campaign was much more limited than those found in Korea and China, but it was still a campaign that mobilized local resources for village improvement. In fact, the program goals of the KMT Community Development Campaign are almost identical to those of the New Socialist Countryside and the New Village Movement: replacing thatched roofs with tile roofs, replacing tamped earth floors with concrete floors, separating farm animals from living quarters, installing flush toilets and water taps, paving village roads and building community activity halls.¹³⁰ Like these other campaigns, the KMT relied on "village community development councils" to mobilize villagers for collective action, and the state rewarded those villages with high levels of participation. This finding is surprising given the existing literature on Taiwanese rural development, which portrays the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) and the Farmers' Associations in a way that resonates with the developmental state literature, i.e. executing policy in a very technical-rational way.

Evaluating Success and Failure

Since the data used to analyze success and failure are slightly different in each case, Table 1.2 presents a general idea of how the main cases have been comparatively evaluated. As

¹³⁰ Stavits 1974: 40-41; Knapp 1996: 784-788.

already mentioned, rural living standards refers to rural income and indebtedness levels, the size of the rural-urban income gap, and farm tenancy rates. Agricultural production refers to agricultural output, the food trade gap, and the provision of agricultural production inputs, technology and other extension services. Village environment refers to village public infrastructure, sanitation and housing. In addition, Table 1.3 provides a simple illustration of how the main cases have been compared in terms of the key independent variables. As land reform does not really vary across the cases (it would be “Present, Strong” in each case), it is excluded from the table.

1.2 Dependent Variable: Rural Development				
	Rural Living Standards	Agricultural Production	Village Environment	Case Type
Taiwan 1950s-1970s	✓	✓	✓	Success
Korea 1950s-1970s	✓	✓	✓	Mixed
China 2000s	✓	✓	✓	Mixed

✓ Strong improvement ✓ Moderate improvement ✓ Weak improvement

1.3 Independent Variables				
	Farmers' Organizations		Modernization Campaigns	
	Links to Higher Levels of Government	Member Controls	Strong Farmers' Organizations	Strong Bureaucratic Controls
Taiwan 1950s-1970s	+	+	+	+
Korea 1950s-1970s	+	+	+	+
China 2000s	-	+	-	+

+ Present, Strong + Present, Weak - Absent

Conclusion

This chapter presents the main arguments and theoretical propositions of the dissertation,

which are summarized below and further elaborated in the empirical chapters that follow. To reiterate, this study finds that the reversal of urban-biased policies is possible in authoritarian states but does not account for variation in rural development outcomes; that variables such as decentralization and democratic checks on authority are not necessary conditions for rural development; that land reform is less important than previous studies have assumed; and that other variables such as farmers' organizations are critical to successful rural development. This study also finds that state-led modernization campaigns, defined as policies that demand high levels of bureaucratic and popular mobilization to transform "traditional" ways of life in the countryside, have played a central role in East Asian rural development. This study expands and challenges the developmental state literature, which, despite its contribution to explaining industrialization in East Asia, generally ignores the role of the state in rural development, fails to account for variation among East Asian countries, and excludes China from the comparative analysis. As one of the first comparative studies of East Asian rural development to include China, this dissertation reveals surprising linkages among countries and a dynamic process of international policy learning and modeling that has largely gone undocumented. In particular, this study finds that China has modeled its current rural development policies after South Korea and Taiwan.

This study advances a new theoretical model of East Asian development, which outlines the varying contributions of land reform, farmers' organizations, and modernization campaigns in rural development. Although not central to the model, arguments related to the urban bias thesis are also included in this summary.

1.4: Theoretical Model of East Asian Rural Development

<p>Urban Bias</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reversal of urban bias is a necessary condition for rural development. • The urban bias thesis, while important, provides little leverage for explaining why protective policies are adopted, their content, or their relative success/failure. • East Asia’s relatively successful development cannot be explained by the absence of urban-biased policies. • Urban biased-policies may be reversed even in strong authoritarian states. • The mechanism that causes states to switch from extraction to protection can take different forms. In Taiwan, the FAs helped alert the KMT to the need for policy change; in South Korea it was an election; in China it was rural protest. • The reversal of urban-biased policies does not mean that “market forces” will play the most important role in development; in East Asia the role of the state was generally more important than the market in allocating resources to rural communities. • Campaigns, by operating outside of formal institutional channels, may help unseat entrenched interests that support urban-biased policies.
<p>Land Reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land reform is not a sufficient condition for reversing urban bias or for rural development. • In all cases, land reform had only a short-term positive effect on agricultural productivity. • Land reform may, however, be a necessary condition for equitable rural development. • In all cases, land reform had a positive effect on reducing rural inequality.

1.4 (cont.)

Farmers' Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective farmers' organizations are a necessary condition for rural development. • The absence of effective farmers' organizations in South Korea and China helps explain the less successful development outcomes in those countries. • The interaction of land reform and effective farmers' organizations may be a sufficient condition for rural development. • However, even in Taiwan, campaigns were used as a means of achieving rural development.
Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns are powerful tools for mobilizing local participation and resources for development. • Under certain conditions, campaigns are a sufficient condition for rural development. • Campaigns may succeed when there are feedback mechanisms to correct misguided policy. • The mechanism that ensures feedback can take different forms. In Taiwan, the FAs provided feedback on KMT agricultural policy; in Korea it was strong bureaucratic controls (also present in Taiwan) that provided feedback. • Campaigns in South Korea and China would have been more successful if these countries had more effective FOs. • The absence of effective policy feedback mechanisms helps explain why rural modernization programs have been least successful in China.

Overview of Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 2 is a background chapter that discusses variation among East Asian countries, ranging from the failed Great Leap Forward in China to the success of rural development policies in Japan—two “shadow cases” that had a major influence on the main cases examined in this dissertation. This chapter also examines the role of the United States in shaping East Asian rural development policies, and finds that, while important, the US’s special relationship with East Asia in the postwar period should not undermine the general theoretical findings of this

study.

Chapters 3-4 are case studies of rural development in Taiwan and South Korea. The investigation of these countries is limited to the 1950s-1970s, which were the most important decades for rural development. Chapter 3 on Taiwan examines the KMT regime's agricultural policies, including land reform, farmers' associations, and the Community Development Campaign. Chapter 4 on South Korea analyzes the postwar agricultural policies of presidents Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee, but focuses mostly on Park's New Village Movement (1970s).

Chapters 5-7 provide one of the first in-depth case studies of China's current rural development policy, Building a New Socialist Countryside (2005-present). Chapter 5 examines the main reasons that the NSC was adopted, as well as the historical and regional context in which it was formulated. Chapter 6 analyzes the mixed rural development outcomes of the NSC, focusing specifically on policies related to farmers' cooperatives and village renovation. Finally, Chapter 7 provides a case study of the NSC in Ganzhou city, Jiangxi province.

Chapter 2: Historical Background—China, Japan and the Role of the US

East Asia's rapid industrialization is one of the most important economic success stories of the 20th century. The literature on this subject reveals strong similarities among East Asian countries in terms of their industrial policies and economic achievements. It is generally accepted that countries in this region have converged upon an identifiable "East Asian model," and yet there is actually a wide range of variation among East Asian countries in terms of their development experiences, particularly in the area of rural development. This chapter outlines in broad brush strokes the different experiences of Mao-era China, a case of failed rural development, and Japan from the Meiji period through the immediate postwar period, a case of successful rural development. These two shadow cases have influenced Taiwan, Korea and contemporary China as points of reference for rural policy formulation.

This chapter also addresses two alternative explanations for East Asian rural development—Japanese colonialism and U.S. aid and land reform programs. While Japanese colonialism had a mostly positive effect on Taiwanese rural development, it had a much less favorable effect on Korean rural development. To a certain degree, the different colonial experiences of Taiwan and South Korea foreshadowed their different postwar experiences with rural development. Especially in terms of their different patterns of industrialization, the varying effects of colonialism are apparent. However, in the empirical chapters that follow, this study suggests that the more important difference between these cases lies in the decisions made by their governments in the immediate postwar period. Taiwan and South Korea inherited similar rural institutions and relatively advanced agricultural technologies. Yet, the KMT in Taiwan placed more emphasis on reviving them and turning them into effective vehicles for rural transformation.

The United States, as an occupying power in postwar Japan and South Korea, and as a major supporter of the KMT regime in Taiwan, also helped shape the region's rural development policies. While certainly important, U.S. aid and U.S. sponsored land reform programs do not sufficiently explain the different rural development outcomes found in East Asia. In each case, land reform created a more equitable rural society but failed to provide a foundation for long-term economic growth. U.S. aid had the effect of facilitating rural development in Taiwan but delaying it in South Korea, and it had virtually no influence on the agricultural adjustment strategies adopted in both countries in the 1970s, as US aid was withdrawn around this time.

This chapter starts with an examination of rural development during China's Maoist period, with particular emphasis on the Great Leap Forward. A brief discussion of the Leap's influence on China's reform-era rural development policies is also included (Section 1). The chapter then proceeds with an overview of rural development in Japan. Specifically, it looks at the Rural Revitalization Campaign of the 1930s and the role of the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, also known as JA or by its traditional name Nokyo (Section 2). Next, it analyzes the legacy of Japanese colonialism on the Taiwanese and South Korean cases (Section 3). Finally, the chapter briefly reviews the effect of U.S. aid and U.S.-backed land reform programs on rural development in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea (Section 4). A discussion of how the examples of Japan, Korea and Taiwan have affected China's New Socialist Countryside policy is not included here but can be found in Chapter 5.

Section 1: Rural Development in Maoist China

Leading up to the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the communist base areas of north China experienced a "silent revolution" of record changes in rural living standards, stemming from the

CCP's redistributive tax and land reform policies.¹ Jack Gray notes that the CCP was “passionately concerned with rural development” in the 1940s and recognized that extractive policies were “counterproductive.” Lacking any kind of foundation for industry or capacity to impose central planning on scattered guerilla areas, the CCP depended on “persuading and assisting the villages to undertake their own development.” Gray observes that the CCP adopted many policies that by the late 1950s would be recognized internationally as critical to rural development—labor-intensive infrastructure projects, intermediate technology, and community development.²

In the early 1950s, China experienced a “honeymoon period” of relative political and economic stability. Formerly poor and landless peasants settled into farming their newly acquired plots of land, rural markets re-emerged as important economic and cultural centers, and significant gains were made in agricultural production and rural household income.³ This honeymoon period ended in 1955, however, with Mao's aggressive pursuit of rural collectivization. The “unified purchase and sale system,” introduced in 1953, became a compulsory grain procurement system whereby collective farms were required to sell all of their surplus grain to the state at fixed prices.⁴ Through its control over the grain market, the state was able to extract resources for industrialization. The developmental squeeze on agriculture reached extreme levels during the Great Leap Forward, giving rise to food shortages and mass famine in the countryside.

¹ Friedman et al. 1991: 80-110.

² Gray 1988: 198-199.

³ Friedman et al. 1991: 111-132.

⁴ Lardy 1985: 33-41; Shue 1980; Oi 1983; Thaxton 2008: 89-101.

Although this chapter characterizes China during the Maoist period as a case of failed rural development, it should be recognized that Mao's legacy was not entirely negative. Mobo Gao notes that between 1949 and 1975, life expectancy increased from 35 years to 63 years; and it was Mao's revolutionary government that "carried out land reform, promoted women's status, improved popular literacy, and eventually transformed Chinese society beyond recognition."⁵ Comparing China with India, Amartya Sen argues that China has performed better economically because of its superior record of social development, which can be traced to the Maoist period. Though unintentional, Mao's land reform, literacy, and public health policies created the "social foundations of a market economy and capitalist expansion."⁶ Like Sen, several scholars in the China field have focused on the pre-reform origins of China's economic success. For example, the rise of township and village enterprises in the early 1980s has been traced to China's commune and brigade enterprises of the 1960s-1970s.⁷ However, despite these positive contributions of the Maoist period to China's development, there is little question that the Great Leap Forward was a total failure.⁸

In 1955-1956 Mao drafted the Twelve-Year National Program for Agricultural Development and introduced the slogan "more, faster, better, and more economically" to speed

⁵ Gao 2008: 81.

⁶ Sen 1999: 258-261.

⁷ Shirk 1993; Putterman 1997.

⁸ For less negative views of the Great Leap Forward and other Maoist rural development policies, see Wheelwright & McFarlane 1970; Stavis 1974 (*People's Communes*); Gurley 1974; Paine 1976.

up the pace of collectivization.⁹ By the summer of 1956, nearly all peasant households were organized into cooperatives with less violence and resistance than had occurred in the Soviet Union.¹⁰ This rural collectivization campaign, known as “Socialist High Tide” or the “Little Leap Forward,” provided the organizational foundation for the water conservancy campaign of 1957. It was during the water conservancy campaign that the “people’s communes” first appeared and Mao started using the phrase “great leap forward” to describe his approach to modernization.¹¹ Mao believed that China could utilize its abundant labor supply to achieve a developmental breakthrough, transforming itself from a poor agricultural country into a wealthy industrialized country within the span of just a few years. Mao envisioned China overtaking Britain in steel production in 15 years; and at the height of the Leap frenzy, emboldened by the backyard steel campaign, he reduced this timeframe to less than 3 years.¹²

Instead of creating a communist utopia, however, the Great Leap Forward devastated the Chinese economy and resulted in the largest famine in world history. Between the 1st Five-year-plan (1953-1957) and the 2nd Five-year-plan (1958-1962), the average annual growth rate for national income fell from 8.9% to -3.1%; and the growth rate for agricultural production dropped from 4.5% to -4.3%. Industry did not fare much better; its growth rate dropped from 18% to 3.6%. Roderick MacFarquhar writes, “The total loss to the national economy as a result of the

⁹ MacFarquhar 1974: 28-32.

¹⁰ There was some resistance such as concealing grain and slaughtering animals, but the Chinese case was comparatively less violent than the Soviet case; see Bernstein 1967.

¹¹ Oksenberg 1969; MacFarquhar 1974: 15-32; MacFarquhar 1983: 122-123; Dikotter 2010: 26-29. See also *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 187 (September 2006) for relevant articles by Y. Y. Kueh, Liu Jianhui, Wang Hongxu, Yu Liu, Robert Ash and Christopher Howe under the section “High Tide Symposium.”

¹² Dikotter 2010: 14-15, 58.

leap is now estimated at 100 billion yuan, almost twice the total investment in capital construction during the 1st FYP (55 billion yuan).¹³ According to Frank Dikotter, the Great Leap Forward also resulted in the “greatest demolition of property in human history,” as 30-40% of all houses “were turned into rubble.”¹⁴ Of course the most tragic outcome of the Leap was the famine. Estimates for how many people died range from 20 million to 45 million.¹⁵

Several theories have been developed to explain the failure of the Great Leap Forward. Key variables found in the existing literature include Mao’s leadership, bureaucratic politics, central-local relations, the failure of the command economy, international context, and the legacy of war communism.

Many scholars have emphasized Mao’s leadership as the most important reason for the Leap’s failure, arguing it was his radicalism and domination of the policy process that paved the way for the Great Leap Forward and allowed it to continue for as long as it did.¹⁶ David Bachman offers an alternative bureaucratic politics explanation for the Leap, arguing that Mao’s choices were constrained by a radical coalition of “planning and heavy industrial interests” that after 1955 became more powerful than the reform-oriented “financial coalition.”¹⁷

¹³ MacFarquhar 1983: 330.

¹⁴ In some cases, mud-brick houses and barns were torn down to provide nutrients for the soil. In other cases, housing was torn down to make way for utopian housing plans; see Dikotter 2010: 38, 53, 169-170. Ronald Knapp reports that property destruction in Fujian was targeted at lineage temples and ancestral shrines in order to eliminate the power of local lineages; see Knapp 1996: 781.

¹⁵ Banister 1987; Kane 1988; Becker 1996; Yang 2008; Dikotter 2010.

¹⁶ MacFarquhar 1983; Teiwes & Sun 1999; Chan 2001; Bernstein 2006; Thaxton 2008; Dikotter 2010.

¹⁷ Bachman 1991. See also Halpern 1985.

Emphasizing the role of central-local relations, Thomas Bernstein pinpoints the Anti-Rightist campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s as having created an environment in which local dissent to central policy was suppressed. Intellectuals and officials learned that it was “better to be left than right” (i.e. more radical than conservative). Spurred on by the media and the central leadership, officials got caught up in a “wind of exaggeration,” producing reports of mostly false achievements.¹⁸ Similarly, recent work by James Kai-Sing Kung and Shuo Chen illustrates how China’s nomenclature system made it rational for lower-level officials to pursue extremist policies during the Great Leap Forward.¹⁹ Moreover, works by Franz Schurmann, Parris Chang, and Jean-Luc Domenach have emphasized how the decentralization of power from the central bureaucracies to the provinces during the Great Leap Forward created unfavorable conditions for economic planning and monitoring. Furthermore, below the provincial level there was actually a centralization of administrative power from the village (brigade) level to the township (commune) level. Because the communes were so large, it is argued, they created unfavorable conditions for production.²⁰

Still others focus on the failure of the command economy during the Great Leap Forward. The commune system, in addition to creating large units that were difficult to manage, also rejected scientific agriculture and material incentives. As a result, the communes distorted producer incentives and damaged agricultural production.²¹ Moreover, after assuming monopoly control of the grain market, the state had to oversee the entire process of purchasing, storing,

¹⁸ Bernstein 1984.

¹⁹ Kung & Chen 2011.

²⁰ Schurmann 1966; Chang 1975; Domenach 1995.

²¹ Schurmann 1966: 233; MacFarquhar 1983: 122-127; Dikotter 2010: 39.

transporting, and distributing grain via food ration coupons. Not surprisingly, there were many logistical failures that resulted in reduced grain supplies.²² Gene Hsin Chang and Guanzhong James Wen have proposed that commune mess halls resulted in extravagant and irrational food consumption.²³ Dali Yang also identifies the mess halls as a key institutional link between radicalism and mass starvation, and suggests the Great Leap Forward be understood as a “tragedy of the commons.”²⁴ More important than these factors, however, excessive procurement stands out as the main reason for food shortages during the Great Leap Forward.

Contrary to the rhetoric of “simultaneous development” and “walking on two legs,” the CCP prioritized industrial development over rural development starting in 1953 with adoption of the 1st Five-year-plan. Betraying its earlier commitment to rural development, the government allocated more than 50% of its budget to the development of heavy industry and only about 6% to the agricultural sector.²⁵ In the late 1950s, China purchased enormous amounts of materials from the Soviet Union and other countries to support its industrialization efforts. Imports included all kinds of metals and raw materials, agricultural and industrial machinery, as well as the complete infrastructure for steel mills, oil refineries, glass factories, and power stations. China consequently acquired enormous trade deficits that it repaid (ahead of schedule at Mao’s insistence) in grain. China’s leaders also procured grain in order to compete with Japan and the Soviet Union internationally. China engaged in a trade war with Japan by dumping grain

²² Dikotter 2010: 136-144.

²³ Chang & Wen 1997. Thaxton disagrees with this thesis, finding that while some officials encouraged overindulgence, farmers’ rejected it and maintained their frugal habits; see Thaxton 2008: 123-132.

²⁴ Yang 1996.

²⁵ Gray 1988: 199; Schurmann 1966: 76-83.

supplies into Asian and African markets. As relations with the Soviet Union worsened, China started providing generous amounts of food aid to poor countries in hopes of establishing itself as the leading communist power in the developing world.²⁶

Finally, Ralph Thaxton offers a path-dependent explanation for the Great Leap Forward, revealing how the legacy of war communism laid the foundation for excessive procurement and violence during the Great Leap Forward. Wartime conditions in the 1930s-1940s, he argues, empowered local militiamen to run the villages. Over time, these men developed a sense of war-related entitlement to the village's land and food resources. They were also fiercely loyal to Mao and the CCP and, most importantly, had been "schooled in the poorly controlled and chaotic violence of irregular warfare."²⁷

Each of these theories—Mao's leadership, bureaucratic politics, central-local relations, the failure of the command economy, international context, and the legacy of war communism—help to explain the tragedy of the Great Leap Forward. The plausibility of so many theories suggests that the Leap is an overdetermined case of failure. The Great Leap Forward indeed illustrates how rural modernization campaigns can fail miserably. The other cases presented in this study, however, underscore how campaigns have remained an important part of rural development policy in East Asia. Moreover, the Great Leap Forward has influenced these other cases in unexpected ways. South Korea's President Park Chung-hee, for example, paid close attention to developments in Maoist China and likely drew inspiration from the Great Leap Forward as he formulated the 1970s New Village Movement. Though the New Village

²⁶ Dikotter 2010: 72-83, 105-115.

²⁷ Thaxton 2008: 72-73, 82-83. Freidman et al. make a similar point about the politics of "macho-guerrilla-patriotic-heroism" that bonded poor male peasants to the state; see Friedman et al. 1991: 22-23.

Movement had some problems, it was certainly much more successful than the Great Leap Forward at promoting rural development. The Korean case therefore highlights how, despite the failure of the Great Leap Forward, state-led modernization campaigns have played a central and sometimes positive role in East Asian rural development.

The Great Leap Forward has also influenced China's reform-era rural development policies. The existing literature mostly emphasizes how the extreme failure of the Great Leap Forward undermined the legitimacy of China's rural collective institutions, which paved the way for de-collectivization in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There is some debate about whether the impetus for de-collectivization was bottom-up or top-down, but it is generally agreed that after the Great Leap Forward many rural families privately rejected the people's commune system and were eager to return to a system of small household farming.²⁸

While on the one hand, the Great Leap Forward has served as a negative point of reference for Chinese policymakers, on the other hand, there is a certain degree of continuity between the Great Leap Forward and the reform era. As Thomas Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu have observed, the Chinese state's aggressive, target-driven pursuit of economic development in the reform era represents a continuation of the Great Leap Forward mentality of "more, faster, better, and more economically." In fact, they argue, this mentality is perhaps even more damaging in the reform era, as officials have abandoned frugality in favor of ostentatious displays of progress.²⁹

²⁸ Scholars who view de-collectivization as a bottom-up process have framed the re-emergence of household farming in the post-Leap period as an example of peasant resistance or, in Scott's terms, a "weapon of the weak;" see Scott 1985; Zweig 1989; Yang 1996; Zhou 1996; Thaxton 2008. Others have emphasized how the state-socialist system created a rather homogenous rural society in which large numbers of farmers with similar interests and direct access to state institutions pressured the government to de-collectivize; see Kelliher 1992; Zhou 1993. For scholarship that portrays the process as mostly top-down, see Fewsmith 1994; Unger 2001: 95-118; Li Huaiyin 2009: 267-290.

²⁹ Bernstein & Lu 2003: 4, 91-94.

Finally, the New Socialist Countryside shares some similarities with the Great Leap Forward and other Maoist campaigns. For example, Elizabeth Perry and Graeme Smith have both pointed out that it uses some of the same slogans, emphasizes speed and “hard targets,” and has relied on both bureaucratic and popular forms of mobilization for its implementation.³⁰ Regardless if one considers these similarities to be negative or positive, they suggest that modernization campaigns remain important for understanding approaches to rural development in East Asia.

Section 2: Rural Development in Japan

The case of Japan illustrates that it is possible for the agricultural and industrial sectors to develop simultaneously. However, as Penelope Francks, Ronald Aqua and others have noted, agriculture’s relatively strong performance during Meiji Japan’s “industrial takeoff” period was preceded by investment in irrigation and the spread of technologies during the Tokugawa period. At the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japanese farmers had already developed relatively advanced agricultural techniques in the areas of irrigation, double-cropping, fertilizer application, land reclamation, and seed improvement (including high yield varieties of rice).³¹

Soon after taking power, the Meiji government implemented ambitious plans for industrialization in an effort to “catch up” with the West. Agriculture and rural industry received much less government support than the urban transportation, communications, mining and manufacturing sectors.³² Rural extension and cooperative institutions were developed, but they proved to be far less important than Japan’s “cultivating landlords” in promoting rural

³⁰ Perry 2011; Smith 2009: 56-59.

³¹ Francks 2006: 26-36; Francks 1999: 30-31, 54; Aqua 1974b: 8-12, 144-145.

³² Francks 2006: 84-85.

development.³³ Unlike rural elites in other societies, Francks writes, “they remained, throughout the early stages of Japan’s industrialization at least, small-scale operators based in their villages and operating within economic, social and political networks.” They helped integrate rural areas into the larger economy by acting as “a conduit, bringing new agricultural techniques, commercial opportunities and ideas and education into nineteenth-century Japanese villages.”³⁴ Central to this integrated economic structure was the practice of part-time farming, which also dates back to the Tokugawa period. This practice became increasingly common over time; during the 1880-1920 period it is estimated that in most prefectures 30-50% of agricultural workers had secondary occupations in the non-farm sector.³⁵

These favorable conditions, which had little to do with the Meiji state’s economic policies, made it possible for Japan’s rural economy to grow steadily as the industrialization process unfolded. Between 1880 and 1900 agricultural output grew about 1.6% a year. Agricultural production continued to improve in the early 20th century as well, growing about 2% a year between 1900 and 1920.³⁶ In 1873, the Meiji government implemented a tax reform that replaced the dues formerly paid by villages to the lord of their domain with a new land tax. Land ownership constituted the main source of wealth at that time, and with over 85% of the population living in rural areas, this system allowed the government to extract a “rural surplus” for industrialization. The land tax was the central government’s most important source of revenue for more than two decades, constituting over 70% of total revenue for most of the 1870s

³³ Aqua 1974b: 17-18, 28-30; Byres 1986: 43-50.

³⁴ Francks 1999: 65-67.

³⁵ Francks 1999: 51-52.

³⁶ Francks 1999: 53.

and 1880s, and dropping below 50% only after 1890.³⁷ The agricultural sector also contributed to about 40% of Japan's exports in the 1870s and 1880s, and produced enough food to meet Japan's domestic consumption needs in the period up to World War I.³⁸

A turning point occurred with the Rice Riots of 1918, a series of mass demonstrations against escalating rice prices. The state mobilized the military as well as various state and non-state actors to suppress the riots and implement emergency relief efforts to increase the available food supply.³⁹ These were only temporary measures, however, as the declining position of agriculture in the national economy meant that Japan's food supply problem would likely become more severe. In response, Japan increased its reliance on food imports; between 1925 and 1945 imports from South Korea and Taiwan accounted for about 20% of Japan's domestic rice consumption.⁴⁰ This solution unfortunately failed to alleviate the rural sector, which entered a long period of severe economic decline. Agricultural output slowed to about .9% a year for the 1920-1935 period, and then dropped to -1.9% for the 1935-1945 period. By the mid-1930s, industrialization had transformed the Japanese economy such that the agricultural sector's share of total economic output had dropped below 20%, and its share of total employment had dropped below 50%.⁴¹

The relative decline of the agricultural economy created conditions of widespread rural unrest in the 1920s and 1930s. Japan's landlords did not own large concentrations of land, but

³⁷ Aqua 1974b: 12-15; Francks 1999: 49-50.

³⁸ Francks 1999: 54-55.

³⁹ Lewis 1990.

⁴⁰ Park 1998: 9-10; Francks 1999: 74-75; Burmeister 1988: 33-34.

⁴¹ Francks 1999: 49-50, 53.

heavy demand for scarce farmland resources meant that landlords were in a position to extract high rents from tenant farmers. Wolf Ladejinsky notes that Japan's tenancy system was based on a crop fixed rent, a less flexible and more extractive system than sharecropping. By the 1930s, Japanese agriculture was in crisis, with farmers subject to exploitative tenancy conditions, heavy tax burdens, high levels of indebtedness, and stagnant consumption.⁴² These conditions gave rise to an active tenant union movement. By the 1930s there were more than 4,800 unions with over 300,000 members, and the number of officially recorded tenancy disputes had risen from just 85 in 1917 to 6,824 in 1935.⁴³ As discussed below, the tenant union movement was later co-opted by the state through the establishment of quasi-governmental farmers' organizations. Still, this history of rural collective action, combined with Japan's more open political system in the postwar period, meant that Japan's farmers' organizations have functioned more like interest groups than similar organizations in Taiwan and South Korea.

After the war, agricultural production was restored to prewar levels by 1950 and then quickly surpassed. Between 1945 and 1955, agricultural output grew on average 3.2% a year. Even during Japan's "economic miracle" period (1955-1970) when GNP grew about 10% a year, agriculture's performance remained strong, growing about 3% a year. Still, the rural-urban gap continued to widen in the 1950s, and by 1960 agricultural households were earning about 32% less than urban worker households.⁴⁴ Rural-to-urban migration became more common, and the

⁴² Ladejinsky 1977: 40, 70-76. See also Aqua 1974b: 47-49, Francks 1999: 62-63.

⁴³ Aqua 1974b: 71-72; Ladejinsky 1977: 81.

⁴⁴ Francks 1999: 53, 77-78.

rate of part-time farming rose dramatically from 50% in 1950, to 66% in 1960, to about 86% in 1972.⁴⁵

The Japanese government responded to these problems of agricultural adjustment with heavy price supports for farmers and a series of measures designed to increase the scale of agricultural production. To reduce the rural-urban income gap, the government used the Food Control Law, introduced in 1942, to increase producer prices for rice by 87% in the 1960s.⁴⁶ The government also increased spending on rural infrastructure with passage of the “New Village Plan” of 1957, followed by the “Agricultural Basic Law” of 1961. This law called for the improvement of rural public facilities, the consolidation of agricultural infrastructure, the provision of subsidies for farm machinery and other items, and the creation of medium-sized farms (about 10-20 hectares).⁴⁷

Aurelia George Mulgan’s study of Japanese agricultural policy reveals, however, that while these measures helped to reduce the income gap,⁴⁸ they completely failed to increase the scale of agricultural production. In fact, they entrenched the position of the small farmer in Japanese society.⁴⁹ The government’s heavy spending on rural infrastructure, Mulgan writes, “provided yet another key support for an inefficient farming sector by furnishing side-

⁴⁵ Aqua 1974b: 53-54.

⁴⁶ Mulgan 2006: 33-34.

⁴⁷ Mulgan 2006: 40; Mulgan 2000: 33-34; Francks 1999: 100.

⁴⁸ Francks confirms this point—Government spending on agriculture increased from 9.5% of the total budget in 1955 to 12.1% in 1970. Within the agricultural budget, Food Control constituted 8.8% of total expenditures in 1955 and 46% in 1970. Consequently the rural-urban income gap was reduced from 32% in 1960 to 8% in 1970. Because of heavy subsidies, farm incomes actually surpassed urban incomes for the period 1975-1990; see Francks 1999: 89.

⁴⁹ Mulgan 2006: 39-43.

employment and vital supplementary income for part-time farmers, as well as fixing up the agricultural and rural construction industry with continuing contracts. This simultaneously served the needs of politicians in the LDP [Liberal Democratic Party] using the allocation of public works projects as political goods.”⁵⁰ Despite several attempts to scale up agriculture, in 1990 more than 90% of Japan’s farm households were still cultivating less than 2 hectares of farmland.⁵¹ Moreover, in the 1970s and 1980s agricultural growth slowed to less than 1% a year. Rural labor shortages became more severe, and during the 1960-1990 period about 1 million hectares of farmland (1/6 of the total) went out of cultivation. Consequently, after 1970 industrial Japan quickly emerged as “the world’s largest food importer.”⁵²

The Japanese case is instructive for understanding larger trends in East Asia. It not only preceded the other cases examined in this study but also stands out as the most successful case of rural development. Despite the agricultural adjustment problems that emerged in both the prewar and postwar periods, Japanese farmers were more productive and enjoyed a higher standard of living than farmers in other parts of East Asia.⁵³ As a case of success, Japan has provided a template for other East Asian governments concerned with rural development. The key elements of the “Japanese model” may be summarized as modernization campaigns, farmers’ organizations, and land reform. To clarify, these elements have been identified because they

⁵⁰ Mulgan 2006: 42.

⁵¹ Francks 1999: 79.

⁵² Francks 1999: 80-82. Mulgan reports that for the 1960-1970 period alone, the farm population shrank by about 24%. For rural population estimates for the 1950-1998 period, see Mulgan 2000: 303-304.

⁵³ Francks 1999; Aqua 1974b. While most scholars of rural development would agree with this statement, Alice Amsden writes that during the prewar period, Taiwanese farmers may have enjoyed a higher standard of living than Japanese farmers; see Amsden 1979: 348; Amsden 1985: 79-82.

constitute the most important elements of *state policy* towards the rural sector. Japan's cultivating landlord class played an essential role in the early stages of rural development, but since this variable falls outside the purview of state policy and cannot be replicated by other countries, it is excluded from the discussion that follows. The subject of Japanese land reform, a key U.S.-backed policy, is not addressed here but can be found in Section 4 of this chapter.

As the effects of the Great Depression reached Japan, the government held a "Village Rescue Diet" in 1932, during which it adopted a series of policies to alleviate worsening economic conditions in the countryside. This session marked the beginning of Japan's Rural Revitalization Campaign, also known as the Rural Economic Rehabilitation Campaign. During this campaign, the government allocated a total of 1.6 billion Japanese yen for village relief, but since this amounted to only about 20 yen per family in the worst-hit silk producing areas, the campaign relied mostly on mobilizing the rural population for collective self-help projects.⁵⁴

Managed at the top by a special Revitalization Bureau within the Ministry of Agriculture, standard guidelines for village revitalization were developed and passed down to participating villages. These guidelines included items related to increasing agricultural production, reforming farm management, expanding cultivated land, establishing supply and marketing cooperatives, restructuring rural debts, renovating rural kitchens and toilets, and educating villagers in the principles of "thrift, diligence and self-sufficiency."⁵⁵ In order to participate, village governments applied for "revitalization status" and set up "revitalization committees" that worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture to develop and implement "economic rehabilitation plans," using

⁵⁴ Partner 2001: 494.

⁵⁵ Partner 2001: 497-498.

some government funds but mostly labor and cash donations from villagers.⁵⁶ In 1934 about 41% of Japanese villages were participating in the campaign. By 1940, more than 80% of villages had joined the campaign.⁵⁷

The Rural Revitalization Campaign, Simon Partner suggests, may be understood as part of a larger “Lifestyle Improvement Movement” that lasted from roughly 1925 to 1965.

According to Partner, the Lifestyle Improvement Movement was “an amorphous collection of government and private initiatives” that included both “hard” infrastructural and economic goals and “soft” spiritual and behavioral goals.⁵⁸ Over time, as government financial support for the Rural Revitalization Campaign dwindled, the spiritual and behavioral goals of the campaign were emphasized more heavily. After visiting Japan in the late 1930s, Ladejinsky criticized the Rural Revitalization Campaign for not addressing the more serious economic problems of exploitative tenancy conditions and rural indebtedness. Rural improvement, he writes, “cannot be achieved by self-help, spiritual regeneration, and the oft-repeated statement that the farmers are the mainstay and backbone of the nation.”⁵⁹ Scholars have also criticized the campaign for laying the groundwork for rural fascism. In 1937, while the Rural Revitalization Campaign was still under way, the government launched the National Spiritual Mobilization Campaign, which

⁵⁶ This campaign coincided with the rise of fascism and the militarization of Japanese society. The basis for collective action, therefore, seems to be nationalist appeals and selective government support for soldiers’ home villages rather than traditional labor mobilization; see Partner 2001: 499.

⁵⁷ Francks 2006: 261-263.

⁵⁸ Partner 2001: 487, 492.

⁵⁹ Ladejinsky 1977: 48.

emphasized the need for the rural population to support the war effort spiritually and concretely by maximizing production and minimizing consumption.⁶⁰

For the postwar period, the 1950s New Life Movement represents a continuation of these earlier efforts. In the context of the American military occupation, Partner notes, the campaign focused on “home life extension,” modeled after the 4-H movement, and rural democratization. Although it was clearly more of a private initiative than a state-led campaign, the New Life Movement drew on the tradition of mobilizing the rural population for village infrastructure development. As Chapter 4 on Korea reveals, the legacy of state-led rural modernization campaigns, which can be traced to Japan’s prewar period, not only shaped its postwar rural initiatives but also the policies of other East Asian countries.

Japan’s system of farmers’ organizations has also played an important role in rural development. In 1894 the Meiji government established the National Agricultural Association (reorganized as the Imperial Agricultural Association in 1910). This organization was politically centralized but federated in terms of its structure, with branches at each level of the administration. As membership in this organization was compulsory, it was able to co-opt village level organizations such as seed exchange associations and mutual aid societies.⁶¹ Although not totally controlled by the National Agricultural Association, thousands of rural cooperatives were set up in the early 20th century to facilitate rural development. Unlike the politicized tenant unions, Japanese cooperatives were mostly economic organizations, engaged in credit, supply and marketing, warehousing, and other production-related activities. The number of cooperatives was greatly expanded during the Rural Revitalization Campaign, and it is estimated that about

⁶⁰ Partner 2001: 498-499. For more information on Japanese fascism, see Moore 1966: 228-313.

⁶¹ Francks 1999: 70; Francks 2006: 147-148.

80% of farm households belonged to cooperatives in 1939.⁶² In the late 1940s, Japan's expansive network of farmers' cooperatives was streamlined and consolidated into a singular organization, the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives. Known as Nokyo, it emerged in the postwar period as one of Japan's most politically powerful organizations.⁶³

Nokyo's political power can be traced, at least partly, to Japan's history of tenant union activism. The Japan Farmers' Union, established in 1922, spearheaded the tenant union movement at the national level and helped with the election of union-backed candidates to local government assemblies. Although there were different branches of the movement, the unions agreed upon the need for legal recognition of tenant rights, the reduction of rents, and the development of economic cooperatives, among other things. In the context of war, the unions were suppressed in the name of "national unity" and co-opted by state-supported organizations, including the Imperial Agricultural Association, the Farmers' Patriotic Association, and the Agricultural Cooperative Association. Landlords also worked to suppress the union movement by forming the Japanese Landowners' Association, as well as local "harmony unions" comprised of landlords and tenants. At their peak in 1933, the harmony unions had a total membership of 279,000 (only slightly less than the tenant unions).⁶⁴ The unions were set back temporarily during the war but re-emerged after 1945. Union membership peaked at 1.7 million in 1949, just as land reform was being completed. The success of land reform, however, left the unions without a cause.⁶⁵ Following the retreat of the unions in the early 1950s, Mulgan writes, the

⁶² Ladejinsky 1977: 46-47; Aqua 1974b: 34-36; Francks 1999: 75.

⁶³ For a comprehensive account of Nokyo's role in politics, see Mulgan 2000.

⁶⁴ Ladejinsky 1977: 80-82.

⁶⁵ Mulgan 2000: 43-47.

agricultural cooperatives “became the dominant force in the villages” for addressing farmers’ economic and political concerns.⁶⁶

In terms of its structure and extension services, Nokyo may be understood as a direct descendant of the Meiji period’s National Agricultural Association; but in terms of its political power, Nokyo is the inheritor of the tenant unions’ strong tradition of rural collective action. Although Nokyo’s influence has declined somewhat in recent years, it nonetheless remains the key institution for rural policy implementation and for channeling subsidies to the rural sector. Moreover, as Mulgan’s meticulous research reveals, for several decades Nokyo has mobilized rural voters to support LDP candidates and played an active role in lobbying policymakers to adopt pro-rural, anti-urban policies, essentially making the state “captive of agrarian interests.”⁶⁷ This particular historical context, combined with Japan’s more open political system, has made Nokyo the strongest system of farmers’ organizations in East Asia, and possibly the world.

To summarize, during the Tokugawa period, the cultivating landlord class made significant gains in scientific agriculture. During the Meiji period, the landlord class continued to play an important role in developing the agricultural sector,⁶⁸ which contributed to industrialization as a major source of government revenue and exports for two decades (1870-1890). Agriculture also experienced about five decades of sustained growth (1868-1918). In addition, Japan’s more decentralized pattern of industrialization allowed for part-time farming, which helped to mitigate temporarily the effects of agriculture’s relative decline.

⁶⁶ Mulgan 2000: 49-50.

⁶⁷ Mulgan 2000: 645.

⁶⁸ Byres 1986.

Japan eventually adopted at least three key agricultural adjustment policies. First, in response to the Rice Riots of 1918, it increased imports from Korea and Taiwan. This pattern of relying on food imports continued in the postwar period. Second, to quell rural unrest in the 1920s-1930s, it launched the Rural Revitalization Campaign and expanded the scope of state-controlled farmers' organizations. While the effects of the Rural Revitalization Campaign on development are not entirely clear, the legacy of mobilized collective action for rural improvement has been central to rural policy in East Asia. Third, to address the growing rural-urban gap of the postwar period, it introduced a rural subsidy and infrastructure program in the 1960s, which was primarily implemented by Nogyo.

Considering that agricultural adjustment problems are common to all countries, Japan stands out as a case of successful rural development. Despite problems related to scaling up agriculture and food imports, Japan's postwar rural policies created an equitable rural society (see discussion of land reform below), reversed the rural-urban income gap, and resulted in the impressive annual growth rate of 3% or more for agriculture from 1945 to 1970. In both the prewar and postwar periods, Japan has exhibited one of the world's most scientifically advanced and well-organized rural sectors. However, unlike other modern agricultural economies, Japan's small farmer has remained firmly entrenched in the rural economy. Owing to land reform and the relative strength of farmers' organizations, this endurance of the small farmer in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia represents a pattern of rural development that is different from other regions of the world. Contrary to studies that predict the inevitable disappearance of the peasantry as a country modernizes,⁶⁹ East Asia remains one of the few places in the industrialized world with a robust, smallholder farm economy.

⁶⁹ Moore 1966: 505.

Section 3: Japan's Influence on Rural Development in Taiwan and South Korea

Elements of Japanese rural policy—modernization campaigns, farmers' organizations, and land reform—can also be found in Taiwan and South Korea. This convergence of rural development policies partially stems from U.S. influence over the region in the immediate postwar period, at least with respect to land reform. It also derives from active learning on the part of Taiwanese and Korean policymakers, who view Japan as a model of successful rural development.⁷⁰ More importantly, however, rural policy convergence in East Asia is a legacy of the Japanese colonial era. Chapters 3 and 4 of this study address the colonial origins of farmers' organizations in postwar Taiwan and rural campaigns in postwar Korea. To avoid redundancy, this section focuses not on the origins of postwar policies but rather the *effects* of colonial policy on rural development in these countries.

There is a consensus among scholars that Japanese colonialism had an overall positive effect on Taiwan's agricultural development. As was the case with colonialism in other parts of the world, Japan monopolized the colonial administration, controlled the most lucrative parts of the economy (the sugar industry), and extracted heavily from the rural sector, which had the effect of suppressing rural consumption despite gains in agricultural production.⁷¹ Japanese authorities did not, however, conform to the normal colonial pattern of neglecting agriculture. Under the policy of "Industrial Japan, Agricultural Taiwan," the colonial government engineered a shift from subsistence to export agriculture, transforming Taiwan into a major supplier of rice, sugar and other agricultural products for Japan's domestic market.⁷² In Tun-jen Cheng's words,

⁷⁰ Moore 1988: 119-120.

⁷¹ Clark 1987: 332-333.

⁷² Liao et al. 1986: 5.

“Japan took a high cost and high yield approach to colonizing Taiwan, pursuing extensive programs for economic growth before exploiting the proceeds.”⁷³

In the early 1900s Japan developed modern systems of transport, taxation, finance, education, and administration in Taiwan. Before Japan arrived, Taiwan had almost no roads or railways, but by 1908 the two major harbors of Keelung and Kaohsiung were connected by railway, and by 1940 Taiwan had over 900 kilometers of railways and over 12,000 kilometers of roads.⁷⁴ The government introduced a standardized system of weights and measurements in 1904, and completed a cadastral survey in 1905. These reforms clarified property rights in Taiwan and greatly facilitated tax collection.⁷⁵ Currency reform was also carried out in 1905, and the number of financial institutions (banks and cooperatives) expanded from zero in 1898 to more than 400 by the late 1920s.⁷⁶ In addition, the government expanded access to education, albeit in limited ways.⁷⁷ Literacy, defined as the ability to read and write Japanese, rose from 1% in 1905 to 27% in 1940, and enrollment in primary school rose from 8.7% in 1905 to 71% in

⁷³ Cheng 2001: 20. There are at least two reasons for this deviation from the normal pattern of colonialism. First, economic policy in Taiwan was “predetermined by its assigned role in the Japanese empire.” In Korea, where industry was prioritized, less attention was paid to agriculture; see Cheng 2001: 19. Taiwan was likely assigned this role because its subtropical climate allows for the cultivation of several crops per year; see Ho 1978: 1. Second, Taiwan needed an effective state to transfer the agricultural surplus to Japan. However, unlike Korea, Taiwan did not have a well-developed pre-existing administrative structure, so state-building efforts were much greater there; see Cheng 2001: 21.

⁷⁴ Huang 2006: 44-45. Of Japan’s total expenditures in Taiwan for the 1898-1939 period, about 62% went to transport and communication, and about 15% went to agriculture; see Ho 1978: 28-29, 35-36.

⁷⁵ Huang 2006: 44-45; Koo 1968: 9; Stavis 1974: 35; Gallin 1966: 16. The colonial government became self-financing in 1904, largely due to the efficiency of its taxation system; see Lee 1971: 40.

⁷⁶ Huang 2006: 44-45; Ho 1978: 28-29.

⁷⁷ Education beyond primary school was restricted to mostly Japanese.

1943.⁷⁸ Perhaps most importantly, an effective system of government administration was established that, for the first time in Taiwanese history, “penetrated right down to the villages.”⁷⁹

Taiwan’s agricultural sector underwent a green revolution in the 1920s-1930s, which is remarkable considering it occurred a full 40 years before the rest of Asia. The green revolution, which involved the adoption of chemical fertilizers, high-yield varieties of rice, and new cultivation practices, can be traced to at least three factors—changes in irrigation, land tenure, and the provision of agricultural extension services.

Before 1900, rice cultivation was uncommon in Taiwan because of undeveloped irrigation systems. Most farmers engaged in dry farming, growing wheat, soybeans, sorghum and sweet potatoes as staples.⁸⁰ In 1901 the government initiated an irrigation program aimed at drought prevention and the expansion of paddy land.⁸¹ Between 1906 and 1942, irrigated farmland expanded from 200,000 to 545,000 hectares, or from 32% to 64% of total cultivated land.⁸²

Japan also carried out a land reform program that simplified Taiwan’s tenure system. In 1905 the colonial authorities forced Taiwan’s “big landlords” to give up their rents in exchange for government bonds and conferred property rights on “small landlords.” The traditional three-level tenure system of large absentee landlords, small landlords and tenants was reduced to a

⁷⁸ Ho 1978: 33, 99-100, 104; Gold 1986: 45-46.

⁷⁹ Wade 2004: 232.

⁸⁰ Gallin 1966: 15-16.

⁸¹ Lee 1971: 44.

⁸² The government shouldered nearly 60% of the cost of irrigation, and irrigation associations covered the rest; see Ho 1978: 36-37.

two-level system of landlords and tenants.⁸³ Under pressure to meet regular tax payments, the new landlord class (former small landlords) became leaders of the “pao-chia” system and worked with Japanese authorities to stimulate agricultural production through the promotion of new seed varieties and cultivation practices.⁸⁴

In addition to using the pao-chia system and the police, Japan developed an extensive system of farmers’ organizations (agricultural associations and cooperatives) to provide agricultural extension services. By the 1930s there were 40,000 people employed by the farmers’ organizations, or approximately 1 worker for every 32 rural households.⁸⁵ In the 1920s-1930s chemical fertilizer use became common and farmers started growing a high yield variety of “ponlai” rice, which resulted in a 45% increase in rice yields.⁸⁶ Taiwan’s green revolution resulted in remarkable growth rates—agricultural production grew 5.12% annually during the 1920s and 3.32% annually in the 1930s.⁸⁷ Much less clear, however, is the effect of the green revolution on rural living standards. While Taiwanese sources tend to emphasize the poverty and insecurity inherent in the prewar farm tenancy system, Alice Amsden has suggested that

⁸³ Gallin 1966: 89; Ho 1978: 44-45, 330; Koo 1968: 12; Amsden 1985: 79-81.

⁸⁴ Gold 1986: 37; Lee 1971: 41. The pao-chia system was a community-based policing and defense system used throughout China during the Qing dynasty.

⁸⁵ Stavits 1974: 62; Cheng 2001: 21; Ho 1978: 64.

⁸⁶ Yager 1988: 48-49; Stavits 1974: 7; Kay 2002: 1082; Francks 1999: 164-165; Liao et al. 1986: 5. Taiwan started using chemical fertilizers in 1910, and fertilizer consumption grew to the second highest level in Asia in the 1930s; see Ho 1978: 52, 153. Ho writes that the spread of ponlai rice “may have been the single most important agricultural innovation” of the colonial period; see Ho 1978: 59-60.

⁸⁷ Ho 1978: 46.

Taiwanese farmers actually enjoyed a higher standard of living than Japanese farmers, in terms of housing, clothing, bank deposits and other indices.⁸⁸

Finally, Japanese colonialism affected Taiwan's pattern of industrialization in a way that benefited the rural sector. Decentralized, rural industrialization in Taiwan dates back to the development of the sugar and food processing industries in the colonial period. In 1930 the food processing industry accounted for 64% of all registered factories, 55% of factory employment and 76% of total factory production.⁸⁹ In the late-1930s Japan moved several of its industries to Taiwan, mostly for security purposes during the war. These included shipbuilding, oil refining, pulp, basic metals, textiles, and fertilizers. Taiwan was still an agrarian society at the end of the colonial period, but in Samuel Ho's words, it "had an industrial superstructure to provide a strong foundation for future industrialization."⁹⁰

In the postwar period, dispersed rural industries provided farmers with off-farm sources of income. Ho reports that rural areas absorbed 46% of all newly hired workers in the manufacturing sector between 1956 and 1966.⁹¹ This pattern had important income distribution benefits; rural incomes more than doubled between 1952 and 1972, mostly as a result off-farm activities.⁹² Like Japan, Taiwan experienced a dramatic rise in part-time farming in the postwar period. Taiwan's share of part-time farm households in total rural households increased from

⁸⁸ Amsden 1979: 348; Amsden 1985: 79-82.

⁸⁹ Ho 1978: 70-72.

⁹⁰ Ho 1978: 90. See also Clark 1987: 332; Hsiao 1981: 41-42.

⁹¹ Ho 1979a: 83.

⁹² Ho 1979a: 91.

about 51% in 1960 to 91% in 1980, after which it declined only slightly.⁹³ It is fair to say that the effects of the “developmental squeeze on agriculture” in Taiwan were partially mitigated by the availability of off-farm rural employment. Compared to South Korea, where little effort was made until the 1970s to develop rural industry,⁹⁴ Taiwan’s postwar development was more equitable.

The Japanese colonial government in Korea took similar steps to modernize its systems of transport, taxation, finance, education and administration. Most importantly, a comprehensive cadastral survey was carried out in 1910-1918, which legally recognized private ownership rights to land, formalized the position of landlords and tenants, and provided a foundation for land taxation. As a result of this survey, Atul Kohli writes, “the colonial state secured a revenue base and, less obviously, enhanced its control over the Korean agrarian sector by bringing in the landowning classes as ruling partners.” Kohli continues, “The relatively successful penetration by the Japanese colonial state of the agrarian periphery then stands out as a fairly unique display of state efficacy in the comparative history of colonialism.”⁹⁵ Unlike the case of Taiwan, however, Japanese colonial authorities were focused on developing heavy industry instead of

⁹³ Huang 1993: 51; Liao et al. 1986: 4.

⁹⁴ These different patterns of industrialization in South Korea and Taiwan may be attributed to different initial conditions and postwar economic policies. Whereas the KMT prioritized agro-processing and rural industrialization, the Park regime focused on manufactured goods and urban industrialization. The KMT may have pursued rural industrialization not only because of Taiwan’s pre-existing colonial infrastructure, but also because of the KMT’s need for rural legitimacy. As discussed in Chapter 4, one goal of Factory Saemaul in Korea was to encourage the industrialization of rural areas, but this was largely a failed effort. Since this campaign was launched well after the cities had industrialized, factory owners found it more costly to operate out of rural areas.

⁹⁵ Kohli 2004: 43.

agriculture. In fact, the Korean agricultural sector was largely neglected until after the Japanese Rice Riots of 1918.

Though not on the scale of Taiwan, the Japanese government in Korea implemented several important agricultural programs in the 1920s-1930s as part of a “Rice Production Increase Plan.” A network of farmers’ organizations, similar to the ones in Japan and colonial Taiwan, was expanded to implement the state’s policies in the villages.⁹⁶ High yield varieties were promoted, and the share of paddy land planted with the new varieties increased from about 39% in 1917 to over 85% in 1936. Chemical fertilizer consumption rose from only 400 metric tons in 1917 to over 522,000 metric tons in 1936.⁹⁷ The total amount of irrigated land also increased by about 10% a year between 1919 and 1938.⁹⁸ The result of these efforts was substantial growth in rice output. Yields increased from 1.7 tons per hectare in 1920 to 2.5 tons per hectare in 1940, and overall output grew steadily at about 3% a year during this same period.⁹⁹

These gains did not, however, improve the living conditions of farmers in Korea. The landlord class comprised less than 4% of rural population but controlled about 64% of all farmland; and Japanese landlords in particular controlled about 40% of all farmland. Tenancy conditions were similar to, if not worse than, those in Taiwan and Japan.¹⁰⁰ The Rural Revitalization Campaign, extended to Korea in the 1930s, managed to reduce tenancy disputes

⁹⁶ Wade writes that Japan first established Irrigation Associations in Korea in 1908, a full two years before Japan formally annexed Korea; see Wade 1982: 24.

⁹⁷ Keidel 1981: 89-90.

⁹⁸ Kohli 2004: 45.

⁹⁹ Wade 1982: 24-25; Keidel 1981: 89; Kohli 2004: 45.

¹⁰⁰ Burmeister 1988: 34; Steinberg 1982: 13-14; Douglass 1983: 187.

temporarily, but it did not greatly improve Korean living standards.¹⁰¹ Under the tight supervision of the colonial agro-bureaucracy, Korea was forced to export about 30% of its rice to Japan in the period 1925-1945.¹⁰² As this amount exceeded the gains in production, rice consumption in Korea actually declined in the 1920s-1930s.¹⁰³

Japanese colonialism may have resulted in the “spectacular industrialization of the peninsula,”¹⁰⁴ but it also created widespread starvation conditions in the countryside. Albert Keidel writes of 1930s Korea:

Japanese statistics show that the numbers of rural people searching through the woods and fields for edible bark, grasses and nuts during the period of ‘spring hunger’ before winter barley harvests passed 50 percent of the rural population, and for landless tenant farmers the incidence of spring hunger was greater than 70 percent in the southern half of the country.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, Keidel reports, more than 1 million Koreans, mostly from the southern agricultural provinces, migrated to Japan and Manchuria during the 1930s to escape poverty conditions at home.¹⁰⁶

Finally, the southern half of Korea remained predominantly agricultural throughout the colonial period. As most industrial infrastructure (including fertilizer plants) was concentrated in

¹⁰¹ Shin & Han 1999.

¹⁰² Park 1998: 9-10.

¹⁰³ Kohli 2004: 46; Hsiao 1981: 74-75; Ladejinsky 1977: 57; Burmeister 1988: 34; Brandt 1971: 81. Steinberg estimates that rice consumption, measured per person per year, declined from 111.5 kilograms in 1912 to 80.2 kilograms in 1944 (compared to 157 kilograms in Japan); see Steinberg 1982: 14.

¹⁰⁴ Quote from Keidel 1981: 15. For an analysis of colonialism’s effect on postwar industrialization, see Eckert 1991; Kohli 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Keidel 1981: 20.

¹⁰⁶ Keidel 1981: 20.

the north, South Korea's initial postwar conditions were less favorable than North Korea. And lacking the kind of decentralized agro-processing industry found in Taiwan, South Korea in the postwar period followed a more clearly urban-biased development pattern of rural extraction for the sake of urban industrialization.¹⁰⁷

In summary, the legacy of Japanese colonialism is important insofar as it helps explain the origins of postwar rural development policies in South Korea and Taiwan. However, it by no means had a purely positive effect on the rural development experiences of these countries. High levels of extraction in Korea clearly impoverished the countryside. In Taiwan, the effects of colonialism on rural living standards are less clear, but heavy extraction and exploitative tenancy conditions ensured that the state, not the peasantry, was the primary beneficiary of Taiwan's green revolution. Taiwan's decentralized pattern of industrialization helped to mitigate the effects of urban-bias on income distribution in the postwar period, but this variable alone does not explain the Taiwanese case.

The strong performance of Taiwan's agricultural sector in the 1950s-1960s is mostly related to the Taiwanese state's emphasis on technological and institutional development. Taiwan's network of farmers' organizations was quickly revived and went on to play an extremely important role in rural development. South Korea inherited the same "elaborate agricultural research and extension service" as Taiwan, but the Rhee government dismantled it and "did almost nothing to replace it."¹⁰⁸ It was not until the 1960s that the Korean government tried to re-construct a system of farmers' organizations, but as discussed in the following chapters, it played a much less important role in Korean rural development than in Taiwan.

¹⁰⁷ Ho 1979b; Ranis 1995.

¹⁰⁸ Ban et al. 1980: 269.

Section 4: U.S. Influence on Rural Development in East Asia

The U.S.'s special relationship with East Asia in the postwar period may be considered an alternative explanation to the variables emphasized in this study, namely rural modernization campaigns and farmers' organizations. This section analyzes the effect of U.S.-backed land reform programs and economic aid on East Asian rural development, particularly in Taiwan and South Korea.

Land reform became a key part of U.S. policy in East Asia after the Second World War. In 1951 President Truman established the Inter-Agency Committee on Land Reform Problems to ensure that agrarian reform, especially land reform, was broadly incorporated into U.S. foreign policy.¹⁰⁹ In the context of the Cold War, the goals of economic aid and land reform were identical to the goals of national defense policy; to stop the spread of communism, the U.S. would have to transform "tenant" societies into "freeholder" societies.¹¹⁰ In a letter to Chiang Kai-shek dated June 17, 1946, Harry Truman wrote:

In the experience of the United States, agricultural improvement has been found so important in *promoting security*, producing industrial raw materials, providing markets for industrial products, and raising the level of living that we believe a successful national development cannot be assured unless the development of agriculture proceeds simultaneously with the development of other elements in the national economy.¹¹¹

Aside from military aid, the U.S. government provided substantial economic aid to East Asia for the purpose of agricultural development. For about 30 years, from 1945 to 1975, thousands of Americans were involved in administering aid programs and providing technical and policy assistance to the governments of Japan, Taiwan and South Korea.

¹⁰⁹ Hsiao 1981: 205-207.

¹¹⁰ Ladejinsky 1977: 154; Hsiao 1981: 166-171.

¹¹¹ Huang 1991: 17. Italics added.

In Japan, the U.S. military government carried out land reform between 1946 and 1950.

Ladejinsky, the architect of Japanese land reform, writes that General MacArthur fully grasped the political implications of land reform:

He remembered the failure of the Philippine government in 1945 to act upon his advice to fight farm unrest among the Filipinos through more widespread ownership of land. He understood that any real chance of cutting the political ground from under the feet of the Communists, of bringing even a semblance of democracy to Japan, depended on the improvement of the lot of those who worked the land. He knew that there was no point to preaching democracy to empty stomachs.¹¹²

Backed by strong U.S. support, in total about 5 million acres of farmland were redistributed.

Absentee landlords lost all of their holdings; resident non-cultivating landlords were allowed to retain 2.5 acres; and for cultivators, a 7.5-acre limit was placed on the scale of ownership (higher in Hokkaido). By 1955, only 9% of the total cultivated area in Japan was tenanted, and nearly 70% of the population was classified as owner-cultivators (up from 33% in 1946).¹¹³

The transfer of land was handled primarily by local land commissions, which were elected bodies comprised of 3 landowners, 2 owner-cultivators and 5 tenant farmers.¹¹⁴ Tenancy was not eliminated (in 1955 about 4% of the rural population was classified as full tenants), but written contracts between landlords and tenants were introduced, and tenant rents were capped at 25% of the value of the main crop. Tenants were given the option of purchasing their land at once or in thirty annual installments.¹¹⁵ Former landlords were compensated in government bonds, but these turned out to be of little value because of inflationary conditions. In 1952 the

¹¹² Ladejinsky 1977: 152.

¹¹³ Ladejinsky 1977: 107; Aqua 1974b: 81; Francks 1999: 76-77.

¹¹⁴ Ladejinsky 1977: 109-113.

¹¹⁵ Ladejinsky 1977: 152-153; Aqua 1974b: 81.

Agricultural Land Law was passed, which further restricted land sales and strengthened tenant rights.¹¹⁶

The economic effects of Japan's land reform were most apparent in the early 1950s, as agricultural output quickly returned to prewar levels and landowners purchased new farm machinery such as power-tillers, a symbol of rural prosperity at the time. Land reform's long-term effects on production and income inequality, however, are less clear.¹¹⁷ According to Francks, the reform's most important effect in Japan, as well as the rest of East Asia, was "the freezing in place of an agricultural structure dominated by small-scale, owner-farmer households."¹¹⁸ While this system has certainly hindered government efforts to scale up agriculture, its efficiency compared to large-scale agriculture is a subject of much debate,¹¹⁹ and at the very least, it represents a different pattern of rural development than can be found in most Western countries.

U.S.-backed land reform programs were also carried out in Taiwan (1949-1953) and South Korea (1950-1953). Like Japan, land reform in these cases was motivated by a political desire to neutralize the spread of communism in the countryside. After losing control of Mainland China, the KMT became fully committed to carrying out land reform in Taiwan. Several scholars have pointed out that the lack of ties between the KMT and Taiwan's landed

¹¹⁶ Francks 1999: 77.

¹¹⁷ Chris Bramall's work suggests that Japanese land reform had a minimal effect on agricultural production but perhaps did stimulate rural consumption. He also reports that the rural Gini coefficient dropped in the early 1950s but may have increased again after 1956; see Bramall 2004: 133-134.

¹¹⁸ Francks 1999: 77.

¹¹⁹ Scott 1998: 193-222.

classes was an important reason for the program's success.¹²⁰ Another reason for its success of course was strong U.S.-backing. The Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction helped the Taiwanese government devise its land reform program, modeled after the Japanese program, and provided most of the necessary funding and administrative support. In South Korea, however, the U.S. played a much less decisive role in land reform than it did in Japan or Taiwan. In fact, U.S. officials there "were reluctant to participate in a reform that involved a substantial expropriation of property,"¹²¹ and it was not until after North Korean-backed "people's committees" started gaining ground in the South that the U.S. and ROK governments took serious steps to implement land reform. It should also be noted that in both Taiwan and Korea, cadastral surveys and land grading systems developed by the Japanese greatly assisted with the implementation of land reform programs.¹²²

Taiwan's land reform program occurred in three stages—rent reduction, the sale of public land, and the sale of private land. The rent reduction policy imposed a cap on farm rents at 37.5% of the value of the main crop.¹²³ Like the land commissions in Japan, "37.5% rent campaign committees" and "landlord-tenant committees" were set up to carry out the policy.¹²⁴ The sale of public land involved the redistribution of farmland previously held by the colonial

¹²⁰ Kay 2002: 1079; Stavis 1974: 33-37; Ho 1978: 162. While the KMT did in fact lack ties to Taiwan's landlords, it should also be noted that many of them were killed during the 2-28 Incident of 1947; see Huang 2006: 40-41; Gold 1986: 66.

¹²¹ Ban et al. 1980: 284-285.

¹²² Stavis 1974: 34-35.

¹²³ Based on the assumption that farmers' rents were normally 50% of the value of the main crop, the limit of 37.5% was intended to achieve a 25% reduction in farm rents. In practice, the reduction was much higher than 25%, as wartime rents in some places had climbed above 70% of the value of the main crop; see Ladejinsky 1977: 97.

¹²⁴ Stavis 1974: 34-35; Gallin 1966: 94-95.

government and the Taiwan Sugar Corporation. As tenant rents on this land prior to the sale were only 25% of the value of the main crop, the purchase price was capped at this amount; but given the increased tax burden on landowners, it took several years for them to gain any financial benefits.¹²⁵ By far the most important component of land reform was the Land-to-the-Tiller program, which redistributed more than 16% of Taiwan's farmland. Similar to land reform in Japan, landlords were allowed to retain a small amount of land, tenant rights were strengthened, and limits were placed on the scale of ownership. Unlike Japan, however, Taiwan's landlords were compensated with commodity bonds (rice for paddy land, sweet potatoes for dry land) and shares in government enterprises; these items constituted about 70% and 30% of total compensation, respectively. In total, almost 50% of Taiwan's farm households obtained some land as a consequence of land reform (see Table 2.1).

2.1: Extent of Land Reform in Taiwan, 1948-1958

	Rent Control	Redistribution		
	37.5% Rent Reduction (1949-1951)	Sale of Public Land (1951-1958)	Land-to-the-Tiller Program (1953)	Total Redistribution
Cultivated Area Affected	29.2%	8.1%	16.4%	24.6%
Households Affected	43.3%	20%	27.9%	47.9 %
Total Revised Lease Contracts: 377,364 (100%)				
Total Cultivated Area Affected by Redistribution: 208,753 hectares (515,839 acres)				
Total Farm Households Affected by Redistribution: 334,511				
Total Landlord Households Affected by Redistribution: 106,049				

Source: Koo 1968: 32, 46; Yang 1970: 81-82; Ho 1978: 163.

¹²⁵ Another group that did not fare so well during land reform is joint farm owners. Most joint owners' land was expropriated in the same way as landlords' land. In Taiwan a single plot may have had up to hundreds of owners, but since only one owner was eligible to receive compensation, many joint owners suffered losses; see Gallin 1966: 96-97, 109-111.

To summarize the existing literature's assessment of land reform's effect on Taiwanese development, it stabilized the countryside politically; it created one of the most egalitarian rural societies in the world; and it forced former landlords to transfer at least part of their wealth to the industrial sector.¹²⁶ Looking at Taiwan's income distribution, Ho reports that in the post-land reform period the bottom 40% received 20% of all income, compared to an average of only 12.5% of all income (for the bottom 40%) in most other developing countries.¹²⁷ On the negative side, Taiwan's land reform resulted in extremely parcelized plots and an overall reduction in the average size of farm holdings, such that it became nearly impossible for farm households to survive on farm income alone.¹²⁸ Finally, it appears that land reform did little to improve rural living standards, measured in terms of nutrition, water, housing, clothing, transportation, communication and health care. In fact, most scholars attribute improvements in rural living standards in the 1950s-1960s to increases in off-farm income.¹²⁹

Korean land reform was very similar to the programs implemented in Japan and Taiwan. It was delayed, however, by a lack of political commitment. The U.S. military government announced a land reform package in 1945 but hesitated to implement it, and the ROK

¹²⁶ The enterprise stock shares given to landlords were for four companies earmarked for privatization—Taiwan Cement, Taiwan Paper and Pulp, Taiwan Agriculture and Forestry, and Taiwan Industry and Mining. While many landlords sold their stock shares before Taiwan's industrial boom, this mechanism ensured that at least some of their wealth was shifted to the industrial sector; see Gold 1986: 65-66; Ho 1978: 166-167; Kay 2002: 1080; Gallin 1966: 113, 124.

¹²⁷ Ho 1978: 143, 164-165.

¹²⁸ Gallin 1966: 35-36; Stavis 1974: 18; Ho 1979: 88. Households with farms under one hectare actually increased from 66.5% in 1960 to 75.2% in 1990; and despite state programs to consolidate farms (the Second Stage Land Reform of 1980), households with farms over three hectares decreased from 3.3% to 2.5% in the same period; see Huang 1993: 50, 60.

¹²⁹ Gallin 1966: 108-109, 121; Yang 1970. A discussion of Yang's survey can be found in Chapter 3.

government under Rhee, established in 1948, dragged its feet for fear of alienating political supporters from the landlord class.¹³⁰

Bruce Cumings was one of the first scholars to point out that land reform in South Korea was triggered by rural class conflict and the rise of radical leftist movements in the countryside.¹³¹ Building on this idea, Gi-Wook Shin has developed an “agrarian conflict theory” of Korean land reform and industrialization. Even before the American occupation forces had arrived in South Korea, hundreds of people’s committees had been set up, with the support of the North, to carry out land reform. Shin reports that landlord-tenant disputes escalated into a full-scale agrarian rebellion in 1946, making the people’s committees an even more powerful force. According to the North, by the end of the Korean War the committees managed to redistribute 95% of the farmland slated for redistribution in the ROK land reform bill. Though clearly an exaggeration, the threat of losing ground to the communists was enough to push the Rhee government to finally implement land reform in 1950-1953. Shin’s work persuasively suggests that land reform was not externally imposed but rather the product of agrarian class conflict. Shin goes on to show that because of their already weakened position in rural society, most Korean landlords had preemptively sold off their holdings and transferred their wealth to the industrial sector by the time of land reform.¹³²

The effects of land reform on Korean development were very similar to Japan and Taiwan. However, with few opportunities for off-farm employment, Korean farmers were eventually forced to either migrate to the cities or re-enter into farm tenancy agreements. From

¹³⁰ Hsiao 1981: 111-112, 115-119.

¹³¹ Cumings 1981.

¹³² Shin 1998: 1323-1343. See also Burmeister 1988: 35-36.

1965 to 1985, the share of rural households engaged in tenant farming rose from about 30% to over 65%. In the mid-1980s, it is estimated that more than 30% of Korean farmland was tenanted, compared to only 5% for Taiwan.¹³³ While certainly not worse than tenancy conditions in the pre-land reform period, concerns about tenant farmers' welfare did give rise to anti-government farmers' movements in the late 1970s.¹³⁴

Finally, it should be noted that U.S. economic aid to South Korea and Taiwan achieved varying results. The U.S. allocated substantially more economic aid to Korea than it did to Taiwan. Just looking at the 1953-1963 period, the U.S. allocated a total of 1.12 billion US dollars of economic aid to Taiwan, compared to 2.94 billion US dollars of economic aid to South Korea. Measured per capita per year, this amounted to 9.7 US dollars for Taiwan and 11.4 US dollars for South Korea.¹³⁵ A large portion of this aid to both countries was in the form of Public Law 480 (PL480) "Food for Peace" surplus food sales. Though Korea received more aid than Taiwan, it was used to depress food prices. The Korean government did not prioritize rural development until the 1970s, around the time that American economic aid was being phased out. In Taiwan, the aid was used much more efficiently and effectively by the JCRR in a way that facilitated rural development. It should also be noted that the U.S. had virtually no influence on the modernization campaigns that took place in Taiwan and South Korea in the 1970s, as these campaigns occurred at the same time the U.S. was withdrawing its aid programs.

For the entire period 1946-1976, South Korea received about 5.6 billion US dollars worth of economic assistance. Taking into account military aid, Korea received about 13 billion US

¹³³ Cha et al. 1997: 481; Boyer & Ahn 1991: 46, 77.

¹³⁴ Abelmann 1996: 213-215; Boyer & Ahn 1991: 79-80.

¹³⁵ Hsiao 1981: 197.

dollars in aid, making it one of the largest foreign assistance programs in American history. Assistance for agricultural development projects was minimal—about \$110 million US dollars for the whole period. Yet, Korea did import massive amounts of food under the PL480 program (about 32% of total economic assistance, compared to 24% for Taiwan). Easy access to cheap food imports allowed the government to set artificially low prices for domestic grain. In fact, David Steinberg notes, “In no year [1948-1960] did the government purchase price for rice equal the cost of production, and in six of the thirteen years the purchase price was under 50 percent of the market price.” As elaborated in Chapter 4, it was not until Park Chung-hee nearly lost the 1967 presidential elections that the government started to raise grain prices and invest in rural development programs. Park finally terminated the PL480 program in 1971 after the U.S. started requiring that Korea purchase the surplus food with foreign exchange instead of local currency.¹³⁶

U.S. aid to Taiwan lasted from 1951 to 1968. In total, Taiwan received about 4.2 billion US dollars worth of military and economic aid. Of this total, economic assistance amounted to 1.8 billion US dollars.¹³⁷ Unlike the Rhee and Park governments, the KMT actively promoted agricultural production in the 1950s-1960s. Purchase prices were also set artificially low in Taiwan, but they were not as unfavorable to farmers as they were in Korea. Moreover, the government was not as reliant on PL480 food aid, and the negative effect of food imports on domestic prices was not felt until the late 1960s.¹³⁸ Aside from food aid, about 24% of total economic assistance was allocated to agricultural projects. Michael Hsin-huang Hsiao suggests

¹³⁶ Steinberg 1982: 4, 15-16; Hsiao 1981: 176, 195, 200. At the time of Steinberg’s publication, only Israel and South Vietnam received more American aid than South Korea.

¹³⁷ Ho 1978: 110-111.

¹³⁸ Yager 1988: 58.

that this aid was used very efficiently, financing nearly 59% of net domestic capital formation in agriculture.¹³⁹ Even more surprising is the fact that total project expenditures for the JCRR amounted to only 7.1 million US dollars for the period 1951-1965. This meager budget was used to fund over 6,000 rural development projects.¹⁴⁰

The JCRR was established in 1948 as part of the China Aid Act approved by President Truman. The original commission was made up of 2 American and 3 Chinese members, and it was charged with the task of overseeing China's postwar rural reconstruction. As war conditions worsened on the mainland, in 1949 the JCRR was moved to Taiwan. It played an important role in Taiwanese rural development for 30 years, from 1949 to 1979, and is considered by many to be an exemplary, albeit unique, institution in the history of U.S. aid missions. Former JCRR commissioner Zhang Xunshun believes there were at least six features that made the JCRR successful: It was independent from the government and therefore less bureaucratic; it was able to set its own policy agenda; it was run by technical experts; it had access to capital and other resources; it was not beholden to the American or Taiwanese governments; and it could directly cooperate with any public or private institution.¹⁴¹ While on the one hand the JCRR was isolated from political pressure, on the other hand, it was able to influence the formulation of rural development policy in Taiwan. It had direct access to central government officials and participated in the drafting of several important policies, including land reform and the reorganization of farmers' associations.¹⁴² Importantly, the JCRR ensured that Taiwan's farmers'

¹³⁹ Hsiao 1981: 180-181.

¹⁴⁰ Hsiao 1981: 182; Yager 1988: 64.

¹⁴¹ Huang 1991: 131.

¹⁴² Wu & Jiao 1978: 19-25, 35-36.

organizations were controlled by actual farmers, which in the long run made them much more effective than their counterparts in Korea.

Conclusion

This chapter situates the main cases of this study—Taiwan, South Korea, and contemporary China—in a larger comparative and historical context. The rural development experiences of Maoist China and Japan are highlighted to illustrate the wide range of variation that exists among countries in East Asia. Despite the failure of the Great Leap Forward, this campaign had an important influence on the other cases in this study. Korea's New Village Movement was perhaps partly inspired by the Great Leap Forward, and China's New Socialist Countryside exhibits many features of Mao-era campaigns. The Japanese case is important because South Korea, Taiwan, and China have all looked to it as a model of successful rural development. As a model, Japan has informed the policy choices made by other governments in East Asia.

The East Asian model of rural development is not, of course, simply a product of policy learning. It also stems from the legacy of Japanese colonialism in East Asia. In the early 20th century, Japan transformed Taiwan and South Korea into relatively advanced countries in terms of their agricultural technologies and rural institutions, but the effect of Japanese colonialism on rural development in Taiwan and South Korea was uneven. Taiwanese farmers fared better than Korean farmers under colonialism,¹⁴³ and Taiwan's agricultural economy was more advanced

¹⁴³ Farmers in both countries were subject to exploitative tenancy conditions, but Taiwanese farmers likely suffered less because the rural population density was lower and because the agricultural economy was developed earlier and more fully. In contrast, Japanese colonial authorities did not invest many resources in the Korean agricultural sector until the 1920s, with the sole purpose of increasing rice supplies for Japanese consumers. The different experiences of the rural population under colonialism affected public and official perceptions of colonial-era institutions in the postwar period. For Korean (more negative) and Taiwanese (more positive)

than Korea at the end of the colonial period. Moreover, Taiwan's decentralized industrial infrastructure greatly facilitated its rural take-off in the 1950s-1960s.

Aside from these countries' different initial postwar conditions, variation among these cases may be attributed to the fact that the KMT prioritized rural development while the Rhee and Park governments neglected it. The KMT did not have to rehabilitate the agro-processing industry, which had been badly damaged by the war, but because of this pre-existing infrastructure and the KMT's need for rural legitimacy, it seemed strategic to do so. The Rhee and Park regimes did not inherit the same kind of infrastructure and therefore perceived urban-based light manufacturing as a more viable alternative for economic development. By the time Park realized the benefits of decentralized rural industry (see discussion of Factory Saemaul in Chapter 4), it was too late to change course, as factory owners found it more costly to operate out of rural areas than the cities. In addition, the KMT chose to rebuild Taiwan's farmers' organizations and extension services, while the Rhee government dismantled Korea's rural institutions, seeing them as instruments of colonial exploitation. Park rebuilt these institutions in the 1960s, but they did not play an important role in rural development until the 1970s when access to international food aid declined and food self-sufficiency became a national priority.

Finally, the U.S. was influential in shaping East Asian rural development policies. Land reforms were carried out in postwar Japan, Taiwan and South Korea with U.S. support, although it is clear that the main impetus for land reform in Korea was not the U.S. government. While these programs succeeded at reducing rural unrest and establishing relatively egalitarian societies, they also institutionalized the place of the small farmer in East Asian rural society, which according to some experts has hurt agricultural development in the long run. U.S.

views of colonial institutions, see Ban et al. 1980: 269; Ladejinsky 1977: 106. For comparative statistics on rural population density, see Hsiao 1981: 50-51, 79-80.

economic assistance to South Korea and Taiwan had different effects on rural development. In South Korea it delayed rural development, while in Taiwan it facilitated rural development. Like Japanese colonialism, it is clear that U.S. influence on Taiwanese and South Korean rural development was far from unequivocally positive.

As for the reasons Japanese colonialism and U.S. aid produced varying results in Taiwan and Korea, the strategic importance and aid priorities of these countries were simply different in each case. Japanese colonial authorities, perhaps taking into account natural endowments and comparative advantage, designated Taiwan as a base for agriculture and Korea as a base for industry within the larger Japanese empire. The U.S. mission to Korea likely had fewer rural experts in positions of power than the JCRR in Taiwan and was therefore less inclined to support land reform and other policies to foster rural development. The postwar governments of Korea and Taiwan (and China) also made different choices regarding the development of rural institutions and the timing of agricultural adjustment policies, based on their perceptions of the strategic importance of the rural sector. Still, there appears to be a convergence among East Asian countries in terms of the policies that were ultimately adopted. The following chapters are dedicated to examining how farmers' organizations and state-led campaigns for rural development were more effective in some contexts than others.

Chapter 3: Rural Development in Taiwan, 1950s-1970s

Taiwan's record of economic development in the post-World War II period ranks among the most impressive in world history. Between 1952 and 1981, Taiwan's average annual GDP growth rate was 8.9%, with a peak average of 10.97% for 1963-1973. Broken down by sector, from 1952 to 1981 the average annual growth rates for agriculture and industry were 3.8% and 14.1%, respectively.¹ By the early 1980s, it was clear that Taiwan had emerged as a newly industrialized country (see Table 3.1).

3.1: Agricultural and Industrial Sector Change in Taiwan, 1952-1981

Year	Agricultural Sector			Industrial Sector		
	1952	1967	1981	1952	1967	1981
% GDP	35.9	23.8	8.7	18	30.8	44.5
% Employment	61	49.4	28	9.3	14.6	31.2
% Exports	91.9	38.4	7.8	8.1	61.6	92.2

Source: *Taiwan Statistical Data Book* 1982: 8-9, 34, 189.

Successful economic development is often described in terms of the relative decline of agriculture with respect to industry. As Table 3.1 illustrates, Taiwan's transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy is reflected in agriculture's declining share of GDP, employment and exports. Most notably, Taiwan's export structure in 1952 was dominated by agriculture (including raw and processed agricultural products), which accounted for 91.9% of total exports. By 1981 agriculture's share of exports had dropped to 7.8%. Largely due to the transition from import-substitution to export-oriented industrialization in the early 1960s, industry's share of exports rose dramatically, reaching 92.2% of total exports by 1981.

Taiwan's rapid transformation from a poor, agricultural society into a wealthy, industrialized nation has received much scholarly attention. Robert Wade's research, for example,

¹ *Taiwan Statistical Data Book* 1982: 34.

reveals how the government of Taiwan, like Japan, was able to effectively “govern the market” and promote development through well-formulated industrial policy. While industrial policy is central to many accounts of East Asian development, the role of agricultural policy in development has been generally underemphasized. Moreover, the few scholars who have written about Taiwan’s rural sector tend to present an instrumentalist view of agriculture—that its importance lies in how much it contributed to industrialization. For example, former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui’s work shows how the government in Taiwan was able to generate a net agricultural surplus that met the domestic demand for food, contributed to the majority of exports, and provided capital and labor for industrialization.² According to Lee and other economists, Taiwan’s agricultural sector contributed to more than 75% of total capital formation in 1950-1955 and remained an important source of capital until about 1970.³

Unlike the existing literature, which narrowly focuses on industrial development and agriculture’s contribution to industrialization, the goal of this chapter is to explain Taiwan’s successful record of rural development. As is the case with industrialization everywhere, Taiwan’s agricultural sector was eventually surpassed by the industrial sector in terms of its relative importance to the national economy. The relative decline of agriculture, however, simply shows that Taiwan did in fact industrialize; it says nothing about agriculture’s performance in absolute terms or about rural development.

Taiwan stands out as an exemplary case of successful rural development. Agricultural production was restored to prewar peak levels by 1951 and then entered a 15-year period of

² Net agricultural surplus is defined as the net flow of material resources from the agricultural sector to the industrial and service sectors. Lee estimates the surplus based on the outflow of agricultural products (including exports), land rent, taxes, and savings for the period 1895-1960; see Lee 1971: 20-21.

³ Ho 1978: 103-110, 147-185; Amsden 1985: 87-88; Yager 1988: 3.

accelerated growth, averaging 5.6% annually. Overall, between 1952 and 1967, staple crop production increased 82%, and livestock production increased 186%. The production of fruits and vegetables increased 476% and 107%, respectively, providing the basis for a large-scale food processing industry. Agricultural exports grew 128%, and like the prewar period, agriculture accounted for approximately 90% of Taiwan's total exports throughout the 1950s. Although the relative income position of farmers declined in the 1960s, agricultural prices rose by an impressive 289% during this period. After 1967, the agricultural sector entered a period of decelerated growth, but nonetheless maintained an impressive annual average growth rate of 3.2% throughout the 1970s.⁴ Taiwanese rural development was also unusually egalitarian. The Gini coefficient in Taiwan declined from .56 in 1953 to .28 in 1972, making Taiwan's income distribution "among the most equal in the world."⁵

This chapter starts by providing some background information on Taiwan's immediate postwar conditions (Section 1). Then it turns to the role of farmers' associations in rural development (Section 2), followed by a discussion of Taiwan's Community Development Campaign (Section 3). Finally, it examines the reasons that Taiwan's record of rural development was more successful than the other cases in this study (Section 4).

Section 1: Background Information, 1945-1953

Following Japan's defeat in World War II, Taiwan was retroceded to the Republic of China (ROC) on October 25, 1945. The ROC's ruling Nationalist Party quickly established a new government in Taiwan that was staffed almost entirely by mainlanders. The Taiwanese, who had originally celebrated the restoration of Chinese power, soon became disillusioned by their

⁴ Ladejinsky 1977: 95; Ho 1978: 113; Amsden 1985: 84; Liao et al. 1986: 67; Yager 1988: 2-3, 51-52, 61-62; Wade 2004: 76.

⁵ Ho 1978: 141-143.

exclusion from politics, government corruption, and a worsening economic situation. Inflation, as measured by increases in annual wholesale prices, skyrocketed from 260% in 1946 to 3,500% in 1949.⁶ Tension between Taiwanese and mainlanders erupted in 1947, when protests over police violence in Taipei escalated into an island-wide uprising against KMT rule. The KMT responded by dispatching ROC troops to round up and execute an estimated 20,000 Taiwanese, including most of the island's intellectual and social elite.⁷ The uprising and its brutal suppression, known as the 2-28 Incident, undeniably damaged the KMT's legitimacy in Taiwan, but it also effectively eliminated any potential bases of domestic opposition to KMT rule.⁸ On December 9, 1949, after losing control of the mainland to the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek relocated the ROC capital to Taipei, and by 1950 more than 1 million refugees from the mainland had arrived in Taiwan.⁹

The KMT's immediate goals in Taiwan were to feed the army and the civilian population, stabilize prices, and speed up the process of industrialization. In the 1950s more than half of Taiwan's population lived in rural areas,¹⁰ and despite severe infrastructural damage from the war, agriculture was the largest and strongest sector of Taiwan's economy. Agriculture was also the main source of exports and therefore a critical sector for earning foreign currency that could

⁶ With the help of US aid and an elaborate system of price-cost controls, inflation was eventually brought under control, and by the 1960s it was reduced to 1.63%; see Ho 1978: 104, 112-113, 254-255.

⁷ Lai et al. 1991.

⁸ Gold 1986: 49-52.

⁹ By 1952 there were about 2 million refugees from Mainland China, including 500,000 military personnel; see *CAEC*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1952): 2; Ho 1978: 105.

¹⁰ In 1950 the rural population was 3,998,470, and the total population was 7,553,399. For 1910-1965 population statistics, see *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 7.

be used to finance industrialization. Major export crops included rice, sugar, tea, fruits, vegetables, and citronella oil.¹¹ These basic structural conditions pointed to an obvious policy agenda—to accomplish its goals, the KMT would have to develop Taiwanese agriculture.

The two biggest constraints on Taiwanese agriculture were limited land resources and a high rural population density. Taiwan's topography consists mostly of rugged mountains and foothills that are unsuitable for agriculture. Less than one-third of Taiwan's land is arable, and most of that land was brought under cultivation during the Japanese colonial period.¹² In the postwar period Taiwan's cultivated land area remained nearly constant, expanding only slightly from 22.7% in 1945 to 25.5% in 1975.¹³ Despite these natural constraints on agriculture, Taiwan's rural population continued to grow steadily throughout the colonial period and the first few decades of the postwar period.¹⁴ Taiwan's high rural population density is reflected in the small size of its farms. Farm size was stable during the colonial period, averaging 1.97 hectares per farm household from 1910 to 1940.¹⁵ After the war, however, Taiwan's population expanded

¹¹ During the colonial period, about 16% of Japan's total rice supply and more than 80% of its total sugar supply came from Taiwan. In the postwar period, sugar accounted for more than half of Taiwan's total export earnings until 1958, when other products such as canned fruits and vegetables became important exports; see *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 252-253; *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1977: 176; *CAEC*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1952): 31-32; Lee 1971: 173; Huang 1993: 48-49.

¹² Taiwan's cultivated land area expanded from 10.5% of the total land area in 1901 to 22.7% in 1945; see *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 11.

¹³ According to 1975 estimates, total cultivated land area was 917,111 hectares (2,266,230 acres), and total land area was 3,598,176 total (8,891,286 acres); see *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 11; *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1977: 3.

¹⁴ Although Taiwan's urban population first surpassed the rural population in 1957, the rural population did not start to decline in absolute terms until 1970; see *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 7; *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1977: 1.

¹⁵ Ho 1978: 42.

and the average farm size started to decline. In 1949 there were an estimated 620,875 farm households, and the average farm size was only 1.39 hectares. Significantly, because land was distributed unequally, about 57% of rural households farmed less than 1 hectare, and 29% of rural households actually farmed less than .5 hectares.¹⁶

When the Nationalists first arrived in Taiwan, tenant farming was the dominant form of agriculture. In 1949 about 36% of Taiwan's farm families were owner cultivators, 25% were part owners (i.e. part tenants), and 39% were tenants.¹⁷ Farm rents in Taiwan, typically 50% of the main crop, remained stable throughout the Japanese colonial period but climbed to 70-75% of the main crop during the 1945-1949 period. Population growth, including the sudden influx of refugees from the mainland, had the effect of raising tenant rents and reducing farm acreage, which created conditions of extreme poverty and threatened tenants' basic subsistence.¹⁸

KMT leaders were fully aware that their failed rural policies had cost them the mainland and were therefore committed to carrying out redistributive land reform in Taiwan. The implementation of land reform proceeded smoothly, owing to U.S. assistance and the KMT's autonomy from society. The regime had virtually no ties to Taiwan's landed classes and had already eliminated most of the elite in the 2-28 Incident. Completed around 1953, the effect of land reform was to dramatically reduce the rate of tenancy in Taiwan (see Table 3.2) and to provide a strong foundation for a more equitable pattern of development.

¹⁶ *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 7-8, 11; Ho 1978: 351.

¹⁷ *Taiwan Agricultural Statistics* 1966: 8-9.

¹⁸ Baker 1951: 61; KMT 1955a: 9; Gallin 1966: 90-1; Ladejinsky 1977: 96-8.

3.2: Impact of Land Reform on Farm Tenancy in Taiwan, 1949-1975

<i>Year</i>	<i>1949</i>	<i>1953</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1975</i>
Farm Households				
% Owner Cultivators	36	55	67	82
% Part Owners	25	24	21	9
% Tenants	39	21	12	9

Source: Taiwan Agricultural Statistics 1966: 8-9; Taiwan Agricultural Statistics 1977: 1-2.

However, Taiwanese land reform did not result in major improvements in rural living conditions. In 1964 sociologist Martin C. Yang conducted an extensive survey of rural living conditions in Taiwan, collecting data on nutrition, water, housing, clothing, transportation, communication and health care for 3,075 households. To assess the impact of land reform on different types of households Yang surveyed six groups—former tenants, tenants, original owner cultivators, hired farm laborers, former landlords, and non-farmers. With the exception of former tenants and non-farmers, the majority of households from all other groups reported no improvement or even a decline in living conditions since land reform.¹⁹ As explained below, it was not until the 1970s that major improvements in rural living conditions were achieved. Given the limitations of land reform as an explanatory variable, the next two sections examine the role of farmers' organizations and campaigns in Taiwan's rural development.

Section 2: The Role of Farmers' Associations in Rural Development, 1900-1972

The Evolution of Farmers' Associations in Taiwan

In the year 1900, a group of farmers living in the Sanxia township of Taipei county established Taiwan's first farmers' association for the purpose of providing assistance and

¹⁹ Even among former tenants, over 38% reported no improvement since land reform; see Yang 1970: 92-128, 261-350, 559.

protection to tenant farmers.²⁰ By 1908, there were 16 such organizations, which the colonial government promptly co-opted in order to facilitate agricultural development and rural resource extraction.²¹ During the first few decades of the 1900s, there was a proliferation of state-controlled farmers' organizations in Taiwan. And by 1944, a three-tier system of agricultural associations had been established, consisting of 1 provincial-level association, 8 county-level associations, more than 300 township-level associations, and 4,891 village-level agricultural practice societies.²² While there was some overlapping of responsibilities, each level of the system was intended to serve a different function. The provincial association was responsible for guiding all lower-level units; county associations were responsible for agricultural extension work; township associations were responsible for rural credit; and village agricultural practice societies were used to enforce the adoption of new technologies and cultivation practices.²³

The creation of Taiwan's farmers' association system constituted a massive expansion of the state. The Governor-General of Taiwan (the Sotokufu) served as the executive director of the provincial agricultural association. This leadership structure was mirrored at the county and

²⁰ The Sanxia FA gazetteer challenges the common narrative that the farmers' association was established in opposition to colonial rule. The gazetteer provides evidence that despite a strong anti-Japanese movement in Sanxia, the farmer's association was actually established in cooperation with Japanese authorities for the purpose of stabilizing food production and restoring social order; see Lin 2004: 1-4, 40-45, 101-102.

²¹ De Lasson 1988: 9; Dong et al. 2006: 102.

²² Anderson 1950: 5; *CAEC*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (December 1952): 4-5.

²³ Before 1944, there were thousands of township and village-level irrigation societies, credit cooperatives, and specialized cooperatives for farmers in the livestock, fishing, sugarcane, fruit and vegetable sectors. In 1944 colonial authorities merged all of them into a single organization—the township agricultural association. In the postwar period, the term “farmers' association” (*nonghui* 農會) replaced the term “agricultural association” (*nongyehui* 農業會). For the sake of convenience, this chapter uses these terms interchangeably and refers to both as FAs.

township levels, with chief Japanese officials heading the local associations. In the villages, the government appointed the leaders of the agricultural practice societies and dispatched about 9,000 agricultural extension workers (1 for every 32 households) to oversee their work. The size of this system was second only to the government; by the early 1930s, the FAs employed 40,000 people.²⁴

As an instrument of the state, colonial era farmers' associations facilitated a shift from traditional subsistence agriculture to modern export agriculture. The associations, along with the police, orchestrated Taiwan's green revolution by forcibly promoting the use of chemical fertilizers and the cultivation of ponlai rice.²⁵ The associations ensured that new technologies were distributed extensively, and despite high levels of taxation, farmers throughout Taiwan benefited from the gains in agricultural production. To sustain such high levels of production, farmers depended on the associations for access to critical inputs. For this reason, many Taiwanese farmers expressed a desire to rehabilitate the associations after the war.²⁶

The war severely undermined the capacity of Taiwan's farmers' associations. Over 50% of FA-owned warehouses, fertilizer stations and rice mills were destroyed, and nearly all FA managers and technicians returned to Japan.²⁷ In 1946, the newly established ROC government changed the structure of the FA system, creating separate farmers' associations (*nonghui* 農會) and cooperatives (*hezuoshe* 合作社) at the township level. In theory the farmers' associations

²⁴ Anderson 1950: 5, 42-43; *CAEC*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (December 1952): 4-5; Stavis 1974: 62; Ho 1978: 63-64.

²⁵ Lee 1971: 41-42.

²⁶ Ladejinsky 1977: 106.

²⁷ Anderson 1950: 31; *CAEC*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1953): 61-62.

were responsible for agricultural extension and the cooperatives were responsible for rural credit, but in practice the different organizations performed the same services and competed with each other for membership. Reform efforts were also handicapped by the fact that two different government departments, the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry (PDAF) and the Provincial Department of Civil Affairs (PDCA), were both working on rehabilitating farmers' organizations. To address these problems, in 1949 the ROC government re-established the FAs as singular,²⁸ multi-purpose organizations, and put the PDAF in charge of FA work. The government also took steps to revive the village-level associations, reorganizing the colonial-era agricultural practice societies into 4,903 small agricultural units (SAUs).²⁹ These reforms simplified the FA system administratively, but they were not enough to restore FA operations. Many FAs, which in the past had been supported financially by the colonial government, soon developed sizable debts that hindered their ability to provide basic services.³⁰ Desperate to revive the FAs, which were seen as critical to agricultural production, the government turned to the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction for advice.

In 1950 the JCRR invited W. A. Anderson, a rural sociologist at Cornell University, to write a research report regarding Taiwanese farmers' associations. The report contained several policy recommendations, which were adopted by the ROC government and remain the basis for

²⁸ While the total number of FAs fluctuated over time, the KMT generally allowed only 1 FA to operate within each administrative district (1 per county/city/township), which is consistent with patterns of state-corporatist organization found elsewhere; see KMT 1954: 12.

²⁹ *CAEC*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1953): 60-61. Unlike production teams in China, SAUs were organized at the village-level, not the team or neighborhood-level. On average, each SAU had about 160 members; see Kuo 1964: 2.

³⁰ Between 1949 and 1952, the number of FAs operating at a loss increased from 23 to 72, and the average size of FA debt increased from about 7,000 yuan to 62,000 yuan; see Guo 1984: 11, 128-129.

FA organization in Taiwan today. Anderson's main finding was that non-farmers controlled most of the FAs,³¹ which is also confirmed by KMT documents that estimate the number of non-farmer members in 1950 to be as high as 80% in some places.³² The category "non-farmers" included merchants, rural industrialists, urban workers, and other professionals who were members of the rural credit cooperatives before they were merged with the FAs. To reduce the power of these groups, Anderson recommended that the FAs distinguish between associate members and regular members, the latter being defined as those who derive the majority of their income from farming. In August 1952 the ROC government adopted the "Provisional By-Law Governing the Improvement of Farmers' Associations of Different Levels in Taiwan."³³ This law defined regular members as those deriving 50% or more of their income from farming,³⁴ and it stated that only regular members could vote or stand for election to the FA board of directors. Associate members were eligible for election to the FA board of supervisors (a less powerful body) but were not allowed to hold more than one-third of supervisor positions.

In 1953-1954 the PDAF and the JCRR carried out a massive reorganization of the FAs, which entailed registering members, organizing elections, and training new FA officials. These efforts produced impressive results—total FA membership expanded to nearly 590,000 households; 372,000 former members were downgraded to associate membership; more than

³¹ Based on JCRR statistics, Anderson writes that in 1946-1949 about 18% of FA members were non-farmers. By 1950, after the farmers' associations and cooperatives were merged, about 30% of FA members were non-farmers; see Anderson 1950: 27-28.

³² KMT 1954: 30.

³³ For the full text of the 1952 FA law, see KMT 1954: 110-124. For an English translation, see Kuo 1964: 93-117.

³⁴ Anderson actually recommended that regular members be defined as those deriving 70% or more of their income from farming; see Anderson 1950: 29.

28,500 new officials were elected; and about 95% of these officials were actual farmers.³⁵ At first these reforms had a negative effect on FA finances. Membership fees, which were set at low rates in order to ensure that all farmers could join the FAs, failed to generate any significant revenue. Moreover, many non-farmers felt alienated by this new system and consequently withdrew their savings from the FA credit department. Since non-farmers controlled most of the wealth in rural areas, the ability to recruit them to reinvest in the FAs became the mark of a good FA leader.³⁶ Aside from associate member savings, the FAs relied on the collection of service fees to finance their operations.

Farmers' Association Services

Taiwan's township-level FAs have four main service departments—agricultural extension, credit, insurance, and supply and marketing (i.e. the supply of production inputs and the marketing of agricultural goods).³⁷ Survey data from the 1950s reveals that FA services were widely used by farmers (see Table 3.3). From the farmers' perspective, the strongest and most important FA services were agricultural extension and credit. As elaborated below, FA supply and marketing services mostly benefited the state, not the farmers.

³⁵ These statistics include small agricultural unit officials but not SAU membership. SAU membership actually exceeded 720,000 households. By this measure the FA system encompassed nearly all, if not 100%, of farm families; see *CAEC*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1953): 60-61; KMT 1955a: 5; Miao 1957: 34.

³⁶ Huang Dazhou 1981: 17, 22-29, 91-95, 102-103.

³⁷ For a full list of FA functions, see KMT 1954: 103-104.

3.3: Percent Households Receiving FA Services in Taiwan, 1952-1959

<i>Year</i>	<i>1952</i>	<i>1955</i>	<i>1959</i>
Agricultural Extension Department			
Obtained improved seeds	48.3	45.5	70.6
Obtained crop protection assistance	24.1	61.3	91.3
Obtained hog vaccinations	36.2	76.1	83.7
Received home visit from extension agent	27.6	46.1	74.2
Credit Department			
Deposited savings in FA	29.3	35	67.4
Obtained loans from FA	46.6	57	75.6
Supply and Marketing Department			
Purchased goods from FA	36.2	72.8	90.1
Sold goods through FA	15.5	29.8	53.6
Total Households Surveyed	<i>n</i> =58	<i>n</i> =1200	<i>N</i> =1400
% Households with FA Membership	20.7	85.6	94.2

Note: Insurance departments were not added to the FAs until 1963.

Source: Data compiled from JCRR surveys, available in Guo 1984: 150-155.

FAs in the postwar period were used primarily to provide agricultural extension services to farmers. Though not on the scale of the colonial extension system, a sizable extension system was reconstructed after the war. By 1974 there were 548 paid FA extension workers and 3,895 volunteer FA extension workers.³⁸ To facilitate communication, the township FAs distributed radios and copies of the JCRR monthly *Harvest Magazine* to the village chiefs and the heads of the SAUs.³⁹ At the village level, the SAUs set up more than 6,000 farm discussion groups, 2,000 home economics clubs, and 3,000 4-H clubs.⁴⁰ In addition, there were about 4,000 agricultural researchers employed by government agencies. According to Samuel Ho, “In 1960 the number

³⁸ The irrigation associations also had about 4100 extension groups operating in the villages; see Li 1988: 296-298.

³⁹ Gallin 1966: 44-45.

⁴⁰ Wu & Jiao 1978: 169-175. For information on other village organizations, see Gallin 1966: 26-28.

of agricultural research workers per 100,000 people active in agriculture was 79 in Taiwan, 60 in Japan, and only 4.7 in Thailand, 1.6 in the Philippines, and 1.2 in India.”

Guided by the JCRR, FA extension services resulted in several important achievements: Insecticides and fungicides became widely used in the 1950s, and chemical fertilizer consumption increased from an average of 121 kilograms per hectare in 1935-1939 to 260 kilograms per hectare in 1965-1967.⁴¹ The multiple cropping index, which measures the planting of more than one crop in a single cultivated area, climbed from an average of 147.6 in 1946-1950 to 183.1 in 1966-1970. In other words, despite the fact that the total cultivated area did not expand much in the postwar period, the practice of intercropping almost doubled the total crop area in Taiwan.⁴² Building on the earlier green revolution, the postwar FAs continued to promote high-yield varieties of rice. In 1960 rice yields reached 3 tons per hectare—the second highest level in Asia after Japan.⁴³ The FAs also created a comprehensive livestock improvement program, complete with veterinary diagnostic centers, mass vaccinations, artificial insemination, hybrid hog production, and dairy farm development.⁴⁴ As already mentioned, between 1952 and 1967 staple crop production increased 82%, livestock production increased 186%, fruit production increased 476%, and vegetable production increased 107%.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ho 1978: 153, 155.

⁴² Intercropping refers to planting a second crop between the rows of the first crop before the first crop is harvested; see Ho 1978: 150, 353.

⁴³ Wade 2004: 76.

⁴⁴ Lee 1971: 45. For more information on livestock improvement and several other extension programs, see Wu & Jiao 1978.

⁴⁵ Yager 1988: 61-62.

Growth in the agricultural sector can also be attributed to the expansion of FA credit services. In the colonial period, the development of agricultural credit cooperatives constituted an extension of the organized money market to the countryside. By 1940, banks and cooperatives were providing over 50% of the rural credit in Taiwan. Rural credit services were badly damaged by the war, but in the early 1950s the ROC government injected capital into the rural credit market and charged FA credit departments with the task of mobilizing rural savings. Between 1949 and 1960, the amount of farm loans provided by the organized money market increased from 17% to 57%.⁴⁶ The FAs in Taiwan, unlike most developing countries, greatly alleviated the problems of rural capital shortages, high-interest money lending, and rural debt.

In terms of other services, insurance departments were added to the FAs in 1963 to provide livestock insurance to farmers. Some FA supply and marketing departments also ran stores that sold daily use items like candy, beer, shoes, clothing, and household tools.⁴⁷ These services, however, were considered unnecessary by many farmers and consequently did not generate much revenue for the FAs.⁴⁸

From the Fertilizer-Rice Barter System to the Accelerated Rural Development Program

During the 1950s and 1960s, FA supply and marketing departments were primarily responsible for carrying out government “entrusted activities” (*weituo yewu* 委託業務), as opposed to “self-operated activities” (*ziying yewu* 自營業務). Entrusted activities were not the

⁴⁶ Ho 1978: 63-64, 179-180. Huang Dazhou writes that in many places FA savings surpassed that of the commercial banks; see Huang 1979: 75.

⁴⁷ Anderson 1950: 48; Guo 1984: 35-36.

⁴⁸ Huang 1979: 67-69.

most important source of FA revenue, but they consumed the majority of FA resources.⁴⁹ To clarify, the FAs in postwar Taiwan had some degree of financial autonomy. Unlike colonial-era FAs or the NACF in South Korea, they generally did not receive grants from the government. They collected fees from the government for carrying out entrusted activities, but most revenues were generated from extension, credit and other services.⁵⁰ Also, JCRR financial support for the FAs was mostly limited to loans instead of grants.

The main entrusted activities were fertilizer sales and rice management. In 1948 the government established a “fertilizer-rice barter system” (*feiliao huan gu zhidu* 肥料換谷制度) by which farmers obtained chemical fertilizers in exchange for in-kind payments of rice. Through this system, the government established monopoly control over the fertilizer and rice markets, and it accordingly set artificially high prices for fertilizer and low prices for rice. On average, Taiwanese farmers were paid only 70% of world market prices for rice but were forced to pay about 50-100% more for fertilizer than farmers in America, Japan, India, Pakistan and Thailand.⁵¹ Despite the negative effects of this system on farm income,⁵² it had an overall positive effect on production by ensuring that chemical fertilizers were made available to all farmers. It also stabilized rice prices and provided the government with enough rice to feed the

⁴⁹ Guo Minxue estimates that in 1952 about 80% of FA facilities were devoted to entrusted activities. In terms of FA finances, entrusted activities accounted for 46% and self-operated activities accounted for 54% of total service-related income. Guo also finds that inadequate compensation for entrusted activities contributed to FA debt in the 1950s-1960s; see Guo 1984: 19-20, 35-38.

⁵⁰ Burmeister et al. 2002: 133-134.

⁵¹ Gallin 1966: 78; KMT 1972: 60-61; Ho 1978: 181; Amsden 1985: 86. For exact prices and exchange rates for fertilizer and rice from 1950 to 1972, see Huang 1992: 246.

⁵² Charles Hsi-chung Kao estimates that the barter system cost farmers 6 billion yuan between 1951 and 1961; see Kao 1967: 559-561.

military and the bureaucracy.⁵³ In addition to rice collected through the barter system, the FAs were also responsible for rice collected from in-kind land payments, tax payments, loan payments, and compulsory rice purchases. In the 1950s and 1960s, the FAs helped the government procure about 650,000 tons of rice per year, or about 50% of the surplus rice market (i.e. all rice not consumed by the agricultural sector).⁵⁴

As an instrument of resource extraction the barter system was quite successful, but it also created a lot of problems for the FAs. The FAs received support from the Provincial Food Bureau to process and store rice for the government, but they were frequently underpaid and forced to carry out these tasks at a loss.⁵⁵ To obtain fertilizer, the barter system required that a farmer pay 40% up front and 60% after the harvest. As a result, farmers would often have to store some of their rice for a few months in order to purchase fertilizer at the beginning of the next planting season. Farmers' anxiety about rice storage gave rise to private grain agents who charged high interest rates to store and deliver rice to the FA. Moreover, farmers growing non-rice crops still had to use rice to obtain fertilizer from the FAs, and the fertilizer they did obtain was often not the right kind or amount. Again, private agents stepped in to correct these inefficiencies.⁵⁶ The emergence of private grain and fertilizer agents deepened farmers' resentment towards the barter system.

⁵³ Huang 1992: 67-68, 252-254, 262.

⁵⁴ Ho 1978: 182. Taiwan's barter system was similar to China's unified purchase and sale system, but the developmental squeeze on Taiwan's farmers did not result in food shortages like it did during the Great Leap Forward in China. For more on the Chinese system, see Shue 1980; Oi 1983.

⁵⁵ A 1954 survey of 34 township FAs reveals that all of them had acquired debts from rice management activities, and 18 out of 34 had acquired debts from fertilizer distribution; see Guo 1984: 80-85, 99-100. See also Huang 1979: 138.

⁵⁶ Gallin 1966: 76-78; Huang 1979: 136-137.

As the rural-urban income gap widened in the 1960s, the barter system was widely criticized for depressing rural incomes. It was finally abolished in September 1972 with passage of the Accelerated Rural Development Program (ARDP). The elimination of the fertilizer-rice barter system was a watershed event, marking a shift in government policy from squeezing the rural sector to protecting it. In other words, the ARDP marked the beginning of agricultural adjustment in Taiwan.

The ARDP, also known as the “Nine Measures for Accelerating Rural Construction,” outlined the following policy goals: eliminate the fertilizer-rice barter system and establish a “rice stabilization fund;” eliminate the educational surtax on rural land; make it easier for farmers to obtain loans; improve agricultural marketing services; increase rural public investment; accelerate the dissemination of new technologies; create specialized production zones (i.e. large farms); strengthen experimental research and extension work; and encourage the establishment of factories in rural areas.⁵⁷ The government allocated 2 billion yuan in spending and 1.8 billion yuan in loans to the ARDP, with the aim of completing it in just two years (1973-1974).⁵⁸ The most immediate outcome of the ARDP was that domestic fertilizer and grain prices surpassed world market prices, resulting in record grain production levels in the mid-1970s.⁵⁹ As certain programs such as the creation of specialized production zones proved to be more difficult, the government extended the ARDP for the 1975-1979 period, allocating 2 billion yuan to it annually.⁶⁰ The ARDP was also supplemented by other adjustment policies, including import

⁵⁷ KMT 1972: 1-4; De Lasson 1976: 116; Hsiao 1981: 10-11, 206-208; Yager 1988: 81, 95-98.

⁵⁸ Ho 1978: 184-185.

⁵⁹ Li 1988: 296; Yager 1988: 255; Huang 1993: 56.

⁶⁰ Wu & Jiao 1978: 33; Liu 1991: 109-110.

restrictions, a wide range of subsidies, and community development. Community development, which is the subject of the next section, may be understood as a village improvement campaign that focused on upgrading rural infrastructure.

To summarize, in the 1950s and 1960s, the farmers' associations effectively provided a wide range of services that resulted in enormous gains in agricultural production. They also facilitated a massive transfer of resources from the rural-agricultural sector to the urban-industrial sector, which provided the basis for Taiwan's industrialization. They were perhaps most important to Taiwan's rural development (measured in terms of production output) in the decades leading up to the ARDP, but this does not mean that they were purely extractive institutions. Throughout the postwar period, they provided Taiwan's small farmers with critical extension, credit and marketing services, and during the agricultural adjustment phase they channeled subsidies, public investment and other resources to the rural sector. In Penelope Francks's words, "the network of FAs, like its equivalents in Japan and Korea, became the vehicle for transferring benefits to farmers."⁶¹ Following the discussion of community development, Section 4 returns to the questions of the FAs' effectiveness and their role in both the extractive and protective phases of Taiwanese agricultural policy.

Section 3: The Role of Modernization Campaigns in Rural Development, 1955-1978

KMT documents describe the Community Development Campaign as the most important rural policy since land reform because of its tangible and clearly visible impact on village living conditions. Like the New Socialist Countryside in China and the New Village Movement in Korea, the Community Development Campaign in Taiwan was aimed at transforming the village environment. Although it is sometimes referred to in Taiwanese sources as a single campaign,

⁶¹ Francks 1999: 206.

community development in Taiwan can actually be disaggregated into two separate campaigns and four supporting policies (see Table 3.4).

3.4: Community Development Policies in Taiwan, 1955-1978

<i>Campaigns and Supporting Policies</i>	<i>Chinese Name</i>	<i>Years</i>
People's Livelihood Construction Campaign	基層民生建設運動	1955-1965
Compulsory Labor	國民義務勞動	1947
Community Development Campaign	社區發展運動	1965-1978
People's Livelihood Social Policy	民生主義現階段社會政策	1965
Community Development 8-year-plan	社區發展八年計畫	1969
Community Development 10-year-plan	社區發展十年計畫	1972

Note: Years indicate the first year that a policy became effective.

The People's Livelihood Construction Campaign

The People's Livelihood Construction Campaign was a community development policy that drew inspiration from Sun Yat-sen's people's livelihood principle. Nearly all government documents from this period mention the KMT's goal of retaking the mainland by turning Taiwan into a "model people's livelihood province." In terms of rural sector policy, the people's livelihood principle meant ensuring equal access to land resources, sustaining high levels of agricultural production, and satisfying the people's basic needs (i.e. clothing, food, housing, transportation, education, and recreation). Land reform was seen as a positive but insufficient first step towards accomplishing these goals. In terms of the village environment, land reform had resulted in only marginal improvements, and there was a concern that it had actually empowered individuals at the expense of the village community. Although it was not called "community development" until later (that phrase was imported from the UN in the 1960s), the

main idea behind the People's Livelihood Construction Campaign was to mobilize villagers to improve their living environment through collective action.⁶²

The campaign started in 1955 with five villages.⁶³ After an initial two-year period of experimentation, the campaign expanded to some of Taiwan's more remote and poor villages. By the end of 1965, every county and township government in Taiwan was sponsoring at least one experimental village, and in total 417 villages had participated.⁶⁴

Though limited in scope, the campaign had a dramatic impact on living conditions in these villages. More than 300,000 meters of roads and more than 800,000 meters of irrigation canals and drainage pipes were added to existing infrastructure. Other improvements included the installation or construction of embankments, water towers, water pumps, bridges, rice drying areas, public toilets, bathhouses, animal pens, compost houses, streetlights, televisions, radios, childcare centers, community activities centers, and gardens.⁶⁵

Despite the campaign's emphasis on grassroots collective action, the government was heavily involved in the campaign. At the central, provincial, city and county government levels, "people's livelihood construction committees" were created to coordinate campaign efforts among different government agencies. At the township and village levels, "people's livelihood

⁶² Tan 1969: 45; Chen 1973: 15-16; Hong 1978: 90-91. For a discussion of Sun Yat-sen's "three principles of the people" philosophy as it relates to rural and urban land policy, see Li 1988: 78-85. Although individual farm households maintained control over their land and production practices, this emphasis on collective action and the village community suggests that the campaign was partly a response to China's collectivization drive.

⁶³ The villages were located in 1) Mushan township, Taipei county 2) Longtan township, Taoyuan county 3) Jiaoxi township, Yilan county 4) Wujie township, Yilan county 5) Yuanshan township, Yilan county; see Hong 1978: 91.

⁶⁴ Tan 1969: 45-48; Tong 1970: 7; Chen 1973: 18; Hong 1978: 91.

⁶⁵ For KMT statistics for each of these items and more, see Chen 1973: 22-25; Tan 1969: 63-66.

experimental area guidance teams” were set up to mobilize all local organizations to participate in the campaign. In addition to local government executives, the leaders of local schools, the police, and the farmers’ association were all required to serve on these teams.⁶⁶ The government’s main role in the campaign was to select “demonstration” and “experimental” villages and to mobilize local resources, especially labor.

In 1947 the ROC government established a system of compulsory labor in Taiwan. Based on a 1943 law, this system required that all men between the ages of 18 and 50 take part in road building, irrigation, production and defense projects. The men were required to work without compensation for 10 days per year, normally during the agricultural slack season. To increase support for the campaign, in 1956 the government revised its compulsory labor policies to include additional projects related to village public housing, bathrooms, recreation facilities, and green space. According to the revised policy, not only farmers but also factory workers and teachers were required to take part in village improvement projects. As the campaign expanded and more labor was needed, the government initiated a “labor competition” with the stated goal of “rectifying environmental and sanitation conditions” (*zhengdun huanjing weisheng* 整頓環境衛生).⁶⁷ All of Taiwan’s administrative districts were divided into two teams that competed with each other to modernize the least developed areas in their jurisdictions. The competition, occurring annually between 1962 and 1964, was apparently quite successful at mobilizing local resources. According to provincial statistics, the ratio of government to local resources dedicated to village improvement was 1: 8.19 yuan.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Tong 1970: 6.

⁶⁷ Tong 1970: 8-9; Zhuang 1972: 58; Hong 1978: 85-90;

⁶⁸ This statistic includes the value of both capital and labor resources; see Hong 1978: 90.

The Community Development Campaign

The success of the People's Livelihood Construction Campaign, as well as a favorable international environment, paved the way for a more comprehensive program—the Community Development Campaign of 1965-1978. In the mid-1960s, UN consultant Zhang Hongjun introduced international ideas about community development to Taiwan, which quickly gained currency among ROC officials who were eager to raise Taiwan's status internationally.⁶⁹ Until Taiwan lost its UN seat to China in 1971, the UN heavily supported ROC community development efforts. In particular, food aid from the World Food Program covered about half of the government's community development expenditures between 1969 and 1971.⁷⁰

The phrase community development first appeared in ROC documents in 1964 with passage of the "People's Livelihood Social Policy." This policy identified community development as one of the most important works of the government, and it outlined four basic goals for community development in Taiwan—to foster a spirit of proactive self-governance; to establish community service centers and community councils; to improve sanitation and public infrastructure; and to promote cooperative organizations for consumption, sideline production, marketing, and public welfare activities.⁷¹

This policy was first implemented on an experimental basis. Building on the coordination committees already in place, the government established "community development committees" at each level of the administrative hierarchy. These were powerful organizations, comprised of

⁶⁹ Chen 1973: 10; Hong 1978: 38; Lin 1996: 18.

⁷⁰ Stavis 1974: 40-43; Hong 1978: 103; Liang 1981: 25. The UNDP also helped establish the ROC Community Development Research and Training Center in 1970; see Lin 1996: 18; Zhuang 1972: 13.

⁷¹ Hong 1978: 2, 75, 97-98; Tan 1969: 3.

leading officials from virtually every state and non-state institution.⁷² The committees were placed under the control of the Ministry of Interior, which added a police element to community development efforts.⁷³ Between 1965 and 1968, these committees sponsored the development of 260 rural communities.⁷⁴

Community development went from being an experimental policy to a national campaign in the late 1960s when the government adopted the Community Development 8-year-plan (1969-1976). This plan described community development as a “social movement” aimed at “eliminating dirt, disorder and poverty, increasing production and welfare, and promoting a new morality.”⁷⁵ Comprehensive in terms of its goals and scope, the plan organized all of Taiwan’s 6,215 villages into 4,893 communities and outlined exactly how many communities would be developed each year.⁷⁶

In Taiwan, village and community organizations were established for different purposes. The village was legally defined as an extension of the township government; it was not an independent, self-governing organization. In contrast, the community was defined as an autonomous, non-governmental service organization.⁷⁷ In the 1960s the community and the village shared the same boundaries. After adoption of the 8-year-plan, however, some villages were merged together to form communities. The purpose of village mergers was to standardize

⁷² For rules governing these committees and a full list of members, see Chen 1973: 120-121.

⁷³ Zhuang 1972: 14-16. Hong 1978: 99-100. The Ministry of Civil Affairs also played a major role in community development, especially at the township level; see Zhuang 1972: 40-43.

⁷⁴ Zhuang 1972: 17-18; Hong 1978: 104.

⁷⁵ For a detailed elaboration of these goals, see Chen 1973: 27.

⁷⁶ Chen 1973: 27-28.

⁷⁷ Hong 1978: 155-159; Liu 1991: 79-80.

the size of rural communities. Whereas villages at this time ranged in size from 100 to 300 households, the government-recommended size for communities was 350 households.⁷⁸ Standardizing the size of communities was intended to facilitate campaign planning and implementation.

After community lines were drawn, affected villages elected about 10 people to the community council. This council was responsible for overseeing the campaign and setting up a community service center. Similar to the farmers' associations, the community councils selected a general manager to oversee the daily operations of the center. The quality of community center programs depended largely on the quality of village leaders who, in most cases, also served on the community council. Community council members normally included the village chief, neighborhood chiefs (the equivalent of team leaders in China), small agricultural unit leaders, representatives from the township government, and prominent local figures.⁷⁹ Again, one of the main purposes of the council was to mobilize residents to improve their living environment through collective action.

The 8-year-plan required that villagers contribute their labor and money to community development. The government allocated 250,000 yuan to each community, and it required that community residents come up with "matching funds" of the same amount, bringing the total estimated cost of community development to 500,000 yuan per community. In this way, community development imposed a financial burden on many families. The poorest villagers had

⁷⁸ Zhuang 1972: 41, 51.

⁷⁹ Tong 1970: 13; Zhuang 1972: 16; Chen 1973: 26; Hong 1978: 99-100.

to borrow money or donate more of their labor in order to meet the matching funds requirement.⁸⁰

In terms of bureaucratic mobilization, the provincial government encouraged competition between local governments by inspecting and ranking the communities under their jurisdiction. Based on community rankings, local governments received selective rewards and penalties for their performance. In addition to the use of outside inspection teams and competition, Chiang Ching-kuo suggested the military take an active role in community development. Chiang, who was secretary of defense at that time, ordered the military to build 17 “demonstration communities” across Taiwan (1 per county).⁸¹ This effort, which was intended to improve the military’s public image, at the very least imbued the campaign with a sense of urgency and importance.

In 1972 the government revised its policies, replacing the 8-year-plan with the Community Development 10-year-plan (1969-1978). The basic goals remained the same, but there was more emphasis on production and cultural programs. This change reflected the government’s concern that community development had been too focused on improving basic infrastructure. The 10-year-plan also revised the estimated cost of community development upwards to 630,000 yuan per community, of which 330,000 yuan would come from the government and 300,000 yuan would come from community matching funds. Considering the potential negative effects of this requirement, the plan stated that poor areas were to be developed first and given a higher share of financial support from the government. The 10-year-

⁸⁰ Zhuang 1973: 46-47, 64.

⁸¹ Chen 1973: 30-31.

plan, like previous policies, also relied on a combination of compulsory labor and selective rewards to mobilize villagers and the bureaucracy.⁸²

The Community Development Campaign, like its counterparts in South Korea and China, resulted in major changes to the village environment. The sheer scope of the campaign, as measured by the number of projects implemented and the number of rural households affected, is impressive (see Table 3.5).

⁸² Chen 1973: 33-34, 87-92; Hong 1978: 102-108, 136-137.

3.5: Results of the Community Development Campaign in Taiwan, 1969-1981

Total Number of Communities	4,025
Total Number of Community Residents	7,328,074 (about 1.3 million households)
Total Cost of Community Development	6,082,449,911 yuan
Government Expenditures	3,687,463,819 yuan (about 61%)
Community Expenditures	2,394,986,092 yuan (about 39%)
<i>Basic Infrastructure Projects</i>	
1. Water towers	9,274
2. Toilets	172,307
3. Showers	37,107
4. Drainage pipes	10,395,456 meters
5. Pathways	21,055,140 square meters
6. Parks	1,520
7. Playgrounds	913
8. Athletic fields	1,016
9. Activities centers	3,531
10. Home sanitation improvement	335,307 households
11. Township roads	71,023 kilometers
12. Village roads	57,132 kilometers
<i>Production and Social Welfare Projects</i>	
1. Rice drying areas	2,101,259 square meters
2. Animal pens	55,831
3. Compost houses	39,478
4. Technology training classes	3,898
5. Farm improvement stations	1,577
6. Childcare centers	1,725
7. Agricultural cooperatives	122
8. Home renovation for the poor	20,262 households
9. Home construction for the poor	25,481 households
10. Employment assistance	33,405 people
11. Community production funds	1,063
12. Cooperative farms	49
<i>Spiritual and Moral Construction Projects</i>	
1. "Life basics" courses	12,706
2. Cultural and athletic activities	20,383
3. Recognizing good people/deeds	4,343
4. Elderly associations	1,909
5. Boy scout troops	389
6. Classes for mothers	2,945
7. Sports tournaments	494

Note: In 1978 the 10YP was extended by 3 years. Results cover the period 1969-1981.

Source: Taiwan Provincial Government Social Affairs Department, cited in Liu 1991: 69-72.

The Community Development Campaign in Comparative Perspective

Taiwan's Community Development Campaign, following a pattern similar to South Korea and China, has been criticized for focusing too much on housing and basic infrastructure, and for adding to the "peasant burden." Taking advantage of the campaign, in the 1970s some construction companies built large residential districts in the name of community development, which fostered a public misperception that community development and new home construction were one and the same.⁸³ And yet, references to these problems in Taiwanese sources appear with much less frequency than they do in the literature on China's New Socialist Countryside or Korea's New Village Movement. Of these three campaigns, which are almost identical in terms of their goals, programs, and implementation styles, Taiwan's Community Development Campaign was the most successful.

Unlike China's rural community building program, village mergers in Taiwan did not result in the large-scale demolition of traditional rural housing or the forced relocation of villagers into centralized housing units (see discussion of Chinese case in Chapter 6). Housing programs in Taiwan were also more limited in scope compared to China or Korea. Based on the official statistics presented here, home renovation and construction programs were targeted at poor households and affected less than 46,000 out of 1.3 million households that participated in the campaign. In addition, using official data from both Korea and Taiwan, it appears that "community expenditures" on the campaign were much lower in Taiwan (39%) than Korea (63%), meaning that the campaign imposed less of a burden on farmers in Taiwan.⁸⁴

⁸³ Hong 1978: 115-116.

⁸⁴ Both statistics include villagers' labor and cash donations to the campaign. Actual community expenditures were probably higher than the official statistics for both cases, but still lower in Taiwan than Korea; see Park 2009: 126; Liu 1991: 69-72.

In China, Korea and Taiwan, rural modernization campaigns resulted in dramatic improvements in rural public infrastructure, housing and sanitation. All three governments relied on instruments of bureaucratic and mass mobilization to carry out the campaign, such as ad hoc policy coordination institutions, selective rewards, and village-level councils. In the Korean and Taiwanese cases, even the police and the military were involved in the campaign (in some parts of China, the police have also taken part in the NSC, see Chapter 7).⁸⁵ This kind of intense bureaucratic and mass mobilization for development stands out as being very different from the conventional wisdom about Taiwan. Wade's "governing the market" model does not seem to apply to Taiwan's rural sector development. The state did not "pick winners" and let the market do the rest. Instead, it launched a modernization campaign to speed up the pace of rural transformation. The Community Development Campaign made an important contribution to Taiwan's rural development (measured in terms of the village environment) in the 1970s. The next section analyzes the reasons Taiwan's overall record of rural development in the 1950s-1970s was more successful than the other cases in this study.

Section 4: Explaining the Taiwanese Case

There are several variables that contributed to Taiwan's rural development. As already mentioned, Taiwan inherited from the Japanese colonial period an extensive network of farmers' organizations, advanced agricultural technologies, and an industrial infrastructure that was based primarily on agro-processing and dispersed throughout the countryside. Taiwan's decentralized pattern of industrialization provided critical off-farm sources of income and mitigated the negative effects of Taiwan's developmental squeeze. Taiwan also benefited from U.S. aid. In particular, the JCRR oversaw land reform and the reorganization of farmers' associations, and it

⁸⁵ For more information on the Korean case, see You 1986: 53; Burmeister 1988: 66; Chung 2009: 41-43; Brandt & Lee 1981: 68-69; Ban et al. 1980: 276.

encouraged Taiwan's government to pass legislation that ensured the farmers' associations would be controlled by farmers instead of non-farm interests. In addition, the KMT's development strategy in Taiwan was very different than its strategy in Mainland China. In order to secure food and foreign exchange, as well as political control of the countryside, the regime placed heavy emphasis on rural development. It quickly carried out land reform and granted Taiwan's farmers limited autonomy over rural affairs through the farmers' associations.

As for KMT rural policy outcomes, land reform reduced rural inequality but otherwise had a limited effect on Taiwan's rural development. While most gains in rural incomes must be attributed to rural industrialization instead of farming,⁸⁶ Taiwan's farmers' associations were critical to gains in agricultural production during the period of accelerated growth (about 5.6% a year in the 1950s-1960s) and agricultural adjustment (about 3.2% a year in the 1970s).⁸⁷ Modernization campaigns also played a role in Taiwan's rural development, contributing to major improvements in the village environment in the 1970s.

This section first focuses on the reasons Taiwan's farmers' associations were such effective institutions. It then examines the reasons that the KMT reversed its urban-biased policies and pursued an agricultural adjustment program in the 1970s. Finally, it compares the Taiwanese case with the Chinese and Korean cases to better understand the underlying reasons for Taiwan's successful record of rural development.

⁸⁶ Stavits 1974: 18; Gallin & Gallin 1982: 215; Ho 1979b: 648-649; Ranis 1995: 522-523.

⁸⁷ Yager 1988: 2-3, 51-52, 61-62. In contrast, Korea's agricultural sector grew only 3.6% a year in the 1950s and 2.7% a year in the 1960s and 1970s; see Ban et al. 1980: 291. China's agricultural sector grew about 3.6% a year in the early 1950s (followed by negative growth during the Great Leap Forward) and 2.4% a year in the 1960s and 1970s; see Bramall 2004: 114, 121. Bramall's estimates for Taiwan and Korea are slightly different. According to his data, Taiwan's agricultural output grew 5.2% per year in 1960-1970 and 2.3% per year in 1970-1980. Korea's agricultural output grew 4.5% per year in 1960-1970 and 2.7% per year in 1970-1980; see Bramall 2004: 134.

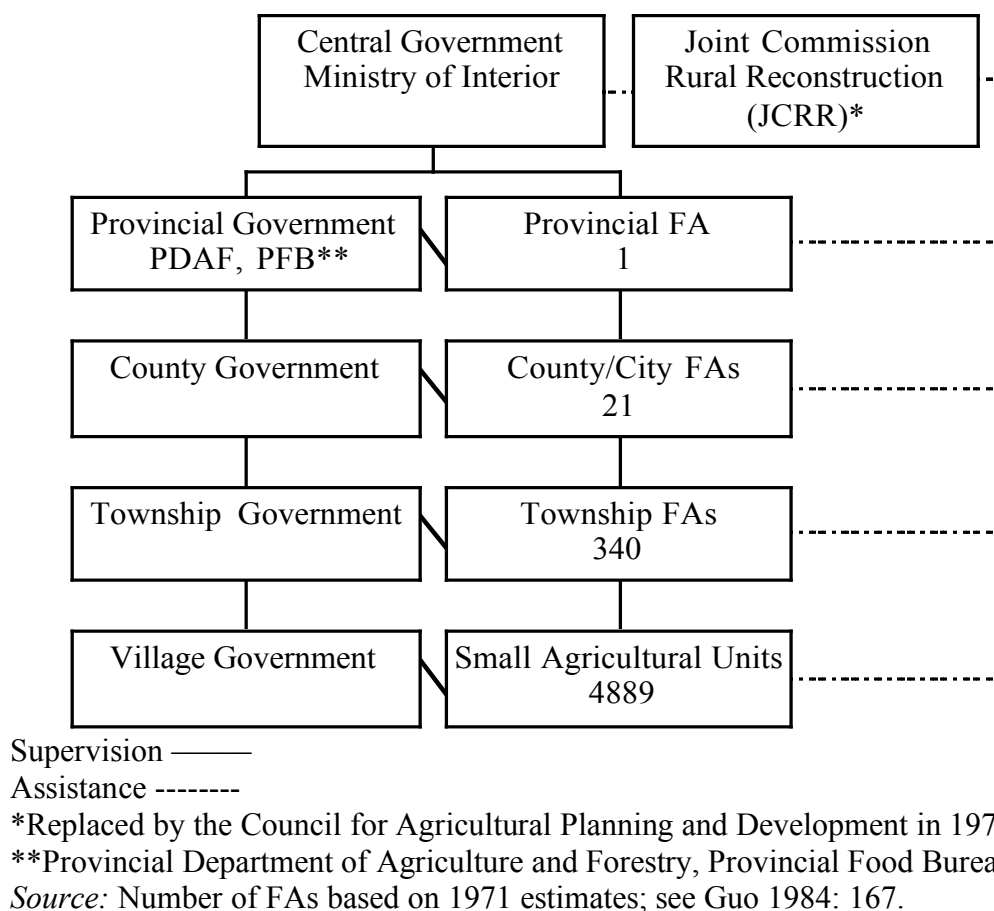
Structure and Internal Governance of the Farmers' Associations

Taiwan's farmers' associations were parastatal organizations that shared a corporatist relationship with the state. One reason for their effectiveness is that they were closely linked to higher levels of government that controlled developmental resources.⁸⁸ Like the ROC administration, Taiwanese farmers' associations have a tiered structure, reaching from the central state down to the village. At each level, the associations worked closely with the government to implement agricultural policy (see Figure 3.6). Higher-level FAs, along with several government agencies, carefully monitored the work of lower-level FAs. Township FA programs and budgets had to be approved at the county and provincial levels, and the provincial FA had the power to dissolve any poorly performing FAs. Writing in the 1960s, Bernard Gallin found that most farmers actually welcomed this supervision from the higher levels because it assured them that FA programs would be properly administered.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Uphoff & Esman 1974.

⁸⁹ Gallin 1966: 70.

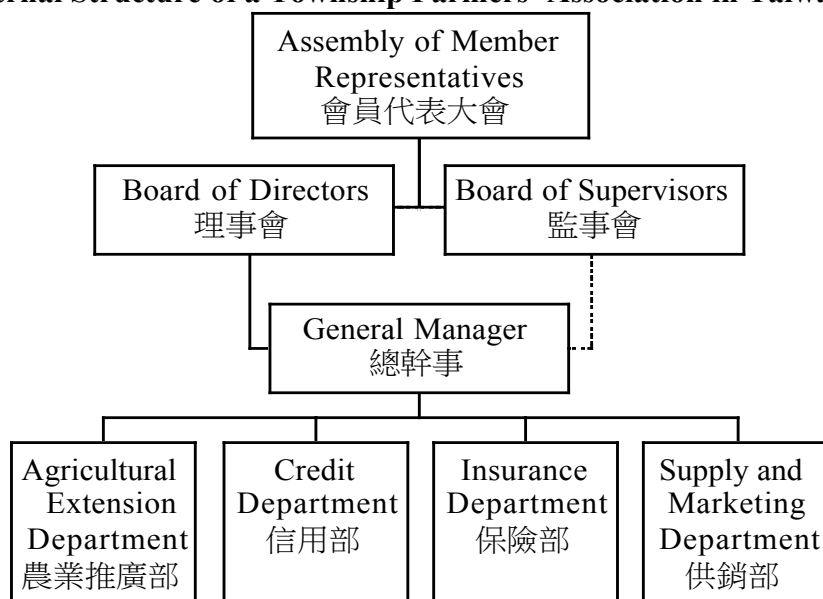
3.6: The Farmers' Association System in Taiwan



In addition to being closely linked to the government, the FAs were effective because of their rules for internal governance. The FAs employ a system of indirect representation. At the village level, farmers elect SAU leaders and township FA representatives. At the township level, the assembly of member representatives elects county FA representatives, as well as two groups of township FA leaders—the board of directors and the board of supervisors. The board of directors sets policy for the FA, and the board of supervisors regularly audits FA activities. The board of directors is in charge of appointing a general manager to oversee the daily operations of FA service departments (see Figure 3.7). Based on the principle of “separating authority and ability,” the board of directors (i.e. those with authority) can select non-farmers (i.e. those with

ability) as general managers.⁹⁰ The general manager is usually someone with close ties to the KMT and experience working in both the government and the FA system.⁹¹ Non-farmers are also allowed to hold one-third of elected positions on the board of supervisors, but these bodies normally have only 3 people in total.

3.7: Internal Structure of a Township Farmers' Association in Taiwan



Supervision ———
Secondary line of supervision - - - - -

County and provincial FAs, besides not having credit departments, are structured and governed in the same way as the township FAs. At the national level, the provincial FA elects representatives to the Legislative Yuan. In the 1950s-1970s, these representatives were instrumental in raising national awareness about rural sector problems, but they were never politically powerful and played only a consultative role in policymaking.⁹² The provincial level

⁹⁰ KMT 1954: 36-38; KMT 1955b: 10; De Lasson 1976: 150-157.

⁹¹ Huang 1981: 291, 415-417. For KMT-recommended selection standards, see KMT 1954: 56-57.

⁹² De Lasson 1988: 87-88.

was the only branch where mainlanders had a significant presence, but they were still a minority, comprising about 40% of FA staff.⁹³ In fact, the FAs were the only (quasi-) public institution in postwar Taiwan that was controlled by Taiwanese, not mainlanders.

These organizational features facilitated the monitoring of local policy implementation by higher-level governments and higher-level FAs. They also allowed lower-level FAs to provide feedback on agricultural policy. Compared to the Korean case, where there was strong bureaucratic separation between the different levels of the NACF, Taiwan's system of indirect representation was more effective at transmitting policy feedback upwards. Since the FAs were controlled by farmer members, it also allowed for greater representation of their preferences.⁹⁴ Although the FAs were perhaps less "representative" at the higher-levels, they were still controlled by Taiwanese with some kind of agricultural background, who along with the JCRR were able to alert the KMT to problems in the rural sector.⁹⁵ As described below, however, the FAs' success cannot be traced to factors normally associated with open, pluralist politics, such as autonomy from the state or democratic decision-making. Elections were an imperfect mechanism for selecting FA leaders, and the FAs operated with only limited autonomy from the state.

Farmers' Association Politics: Relations with Local Factions, the Kuomintang, and the State

On the surface, FA elections appear to be a narrowly circumscribed form of political participation, but especially at the township level, elections were highly politicized and contested. Joseph Bosco and other scholars have underscored the importance of local factions (*difang paixi* 地方派系) in Taiwanese politics. While questions about the origins and influence of particular

⁹³ De Lasson 1976: 245; Burmeister et al. 2002: 136.

⁹⁴ Burmeister et al. 2002: 136.

⁹⁵ For example, Wu Wangji was a FA Legislative Yuan member who was outspoken about growing rural unrest as the relative position of agriculture declined; see KMT 1972: 17.

factions are beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that local factions were also important in FA politics. Bosco writes, “The Farmers’ Association is a semi-governmental organization that controls much patronage, so its political offices are sharply contested by local factions.”⁹⁶ Indeed, the FAs controlled key developmental resources, which could be distributed to farmers as a form a patronage. For example, the general manager of the FA had the power to select staff and to distribute such items as cash crop licenses, construction contracts, loans, and community development funds.⁹⁷ The FA general manager was, in many ways, as powerful as the township government executive.

As the board of supervisors was a relatively weak body, local factions mostly competed to get elected to the assembly of member representatives and the board of directors. The board of directors would elect a chairman (*lishizhang* 理事長) who was in charge of selecting the general manager. The chairman’s selection for general manager had to be approved by at least two-thirds of the other directors, but was normally someone loyal to the chairman. The general manager was, in Anderson’s words, the “chairman’s man.”⁹⁸

To prevent local factions from gaining too much power, the KMT frequently intervened in FA elections and recruited FA leaders to join the party. During the reorganization of the FAs in the early 1950s, the KMT established temporary party organizations within each FA to

⁹⁶ Bosco 1992: 158. With the exception of places where one faction clearly dominated, FA elections were contested throughout the postwar period. Although this study does not extend beyond the 1970s, it appears that FA elections became even more contested over time, as agricultural adjustment policies increased the number of resources that could be distributed along factional lines as patronage; see Burmeister et al. 2002: 143; Bain 1993.

⁹⁷ Stavis 1974: 55-61, 95-98.

⁹⁸ Anderson 1950: 10.

oversee elections and recommend candidates for the position of general manager.⁹⁹ In 1954 the KMT successfully captured the majority of FA leadership positions (see Table 3.8), setting a pattern that continues through the present day.

3.8: Extent of KMT Representation in FAs (1954 FA Election Results)

	(a) Total Elected	(b) KMT Candidates	(c) KMT Recruits	% KMT (b + c)/ a
Village SAUs				
SAU Head	4875	1939	1642	73%
SAU Vice-head	4875	1456	1603	63%
Township FA Representatives	16916	6421	4141	62%
Township FAs				
FA Directors	3805	2193	862	80%
FA Supervisors	1086	617	22	59%
County FA Representatives	1349	782	351	84%
County FAs				
FA Directors	386	287	62	90%
FA Supervisors	124	82	27	88%
Provincial FA Representatives	89	69	0	78%
Provincial FA				
FA Directors	33	33	0	100%
FA Supervisors	10	10	0	100%
TOTAL	33548	13889	8710	67%

Notes: “KMT candidates” refers to party members who won the election. “KMT recruits” refers to those candidates who joined the party after winning the election. FA rules allow for the election of 4 representatives to the Legislative Yuan. Based on the data presented here, it is reasonable to assume that 100% of these representatives were KMT.

Source: KMT 1954: 59-60.

The state exerted its control over the FAs in several ways. In addition to backing its own candidates and recruiting newly elected leaders, the KMT set strict election rules that prohibited extensive campaigning. Concerned that FA elections might provide the basis for an independent political movement, the KMT only allowed candidates to campaign for 10 days leading up to the election. Candidates were allowed to criticize incumbents for their implementation of national

⁹⁹ KMT 1954: 57-58, 62, 93.

policies, but could be arrested if they opposed national policies.¹⁰⁰ The state also exerted its control over the FAs by setting strict training and education requirements for general managers.¹⁰¹ Finally, the state placed secret security agents in every township FA to monitor its activities. Normally employed by the Provincial Food Bureau (PFB), this agent was responsible for guarding the FA granary and checking for any signs of political or social unrest. In most cases, this agent was the only mainlander working in the township FA.¹⁰²

The FA system was simultaneously a highly centralized, state-controlled institution and a faction-ridden, patronage institution. The JCRR encouraged the government to grant the FAs some degree of autonomy because of its commitment to American democratic ideals, but this is not the main reason that the ROC government allowed the FAs to hold elections. The government needed the Taiwanese to run these institutions partly because fluency in local dialects was critical for agricultural extension work.¹⁰³ The more important reason, however, was that the KMT, as part of its anti-communist strategy, was determined to establish a firm base of support in the countryside and viewed elections as a way of giving legitimacy to FA activities. Moreover, the KMT's successful co-optation of FA leaders ensured that they would not function as a rival political party or interest group. In fact, the FAs functioned as a kind of voter mobilization machine for the KMT during local elections.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Stavis 1974: 58-59.

¹⁰¹ KMT 1954: 56-57.

¹⁰² Gallin 1966: 70-71; Stavis 1974: 118; De Lasson 1976: 172; Moore 1988: 131-137; Wade 2004: 242.

¹⁰³ De Lasson 1988: 24.

¹⁰⁴ Dong et al. 2006: 114; Stavis 1974: 61, 99.

Although factional politics meant that elections were often dominated by concerns other than the candidates' professional qualifications, they nonetheless gave farmers a vested interest in election outcomes and served to raise awareness about the state's rural development policies.¹⁰⁵ And while some resources were selectively distributed along factional lines as a form of patronage, the centralized supervision of FA resources helped to mitigate the potential negative effects of factional politics. It seems that even in places where one or a few factions dominated, the elections contributed to a general sense of farmer member ownership over the FAs. According to JCRR survey data, the percentage of farmers who stated that "the farmers own the FAs" increased from 1.7% in 1952, to 56.1% in 1955, to 79.5% in 1959.¹⁰⁶ The percentage of farmers who stated that "the chairman of the FA board of directors is determined by election" also increased from 20.7% in 1952, to 66.5% in 1955, to 80.2% in 1959. Farmers gave similar responses when asked about FA representatives. In addition to farmers' perceptions of ownership and control over the FAs, the survey data suggests that farmers were at least minimally engaged in FA activities: In 1959 about 82% of farmers said they had attended a SAU meeting in the last year.¹⁰⁷ Like its counterparts in Korea and Japan, the FAs were encompassing organizations that provided basic services to all of Taiwan's farmers. Indirectly, they also played a role in the government's decision to reverse urban bias and adopt protective policies for agriculture.

Agricultural Adjustment in Taiwan

¹⁰⁵ Burmeister et al. 2002: 134-5.

¹⁰⁶ Guo 1984: 146.

¹⁰⁷ Guo 1984: 148-149.

The government adopted the Accelerated Rural Development Program for both economic and political reasons. By the late 1960s, the relative decline of agriculture had become apparent in terms of the rural-urban income gap,¹⁰⁸ declining agricultural output,¹⁰⁹ and rural labor shortages caused by increased levels of rural-to-urban migration.¹¹⁰ In addition to the government's concern over these problems, the cost of pursuing agricultural adjustment had declined. Taiwan's rapid industrialization and the shrinking of the agricultural sector meant that the government was in a better position to subsidize farmers. In fact, even before the ARDP was adopted, the government started to experiment with more favorable terms of trade for agriculture, lowering the prices of fertilizers, pesticides and farm machinery in the late 1960s.¹¹¹ Moreover, the fertilizer-rice barter system was increasingly unnecessary as a source of cheap grains or government revenue. Mick Moore observes that urban consumer income levels and diet

¹⁰⁸ After 1964 the growth rate of agricultural income started to decline, and industrial wages ranged from 50-100% higher than agricultural wages; see Wade 2004: 76-77; Stavis 1974: 22. Owing to this wage differential and the small size of Taiwan's farms, increasing numbers of farmers sought off-farm employment. Using PDAF and JCCR data, Dennis Chinn writes: "Between 1955 and 1965 the percentage of all farm households earning more than half of their total income from off-farm sources increased from 28 to 42, while the contribution of off-farm sources to total income for all farm households rose from 29% to 52%;" see Chinn 1979: 299-300.

¹⁰⁹ Total output slowed from 5.2% growth annually between 1960 and 1970 to 2.3% growth annually between 1970 and 1980; see Bramall 2004: 134. Yager estimates that it slowed from 5.7% in 1952-1967 to 3.2% in the 1970s; see Yager 1988: 2-3.

¹¹⁰ Compared to Korea, where about half of the rural population migrated to urban areas in the 1970s and 1980s, the rate of out-migration in Taiwan was not as extreme. Still, Taiwan's dispersed rural industries were insufficient to prevent long-distance labor migration as the agricultural sector declined. Between 1950 and 1965, about 15% of the rural population (1 million out of 5.7 million) migrated from rural to urban areas; see Stavis 1974: 21. Due to rural labor shortages, labor costs increased from 1,992 yuan in 1960-1962 to 4,631 yuan in 1970-1972, contributing to an 8% rise in the total cost of agricultural production; see Chinn 1979: 289. For more on rural labor shortages, see Ho 1978: 159; Gold 1986: 106; Wu & Jiao 1978: 33.

¹¹¹ Li 1988: 296.

diversification greatly reduced political pressure to provide cheap rice to the urban sector. Moore writes: “The retail price of rice was almost doubled in 1974 without overt protest.”¹¹²

Besides the government’s economic calculations, rural policy change may also be traced to a process of political liberalization that was initiated in the late 1960s. For the first time since the ROC government arrived in Taiwan, elections were held in 1969 for the National Assembly and the Legislative Yuan. Intended to fill vacancies created by an aging political elite, the elections brought more Taiwanese into the government. Although mainlanders still exercised majority control over these bodies, the elections signaled a much deeper reconfiguration of power taking place, as aggressive party recruitment efforts had changed the basic composition of the KMT. It is estimated that by the early 1970s about 80% of the KMT’s 1.25 million members were Taiwanese.¹¹³ Thomas Gold refers to 1969 as the beginning of “Taiwanization” in the political sphere. In 1972, Shieh Tung-min became the first Taiwanese to assume the post of provincial governor. Following the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, Chiang Ching-kuo appointed a number of Taiwanese to top party and state posts and even selected Taiwanese politicians as vice-presidents in 1978 and 1984 (Shieh Tung-min and Lee Teng-hui).¹¹⁴ Gold attributes these changes to the government’s growing realization that it would not be returning to the mainland, especially after China’s 1964 atomic bomb test.¹¹⁵

Although few national politicians came from a farming background, the advent of elections enfranchised Taiwan’s rural population, which was already highly organized and

¹¹² Moore 1988: 139-141.

¹¹³ Gold 1986: 92.

¹¹⁴ Gold 1986: 114.

¹¹⁵ Gold 1986: 92.

educated in electoral politics because of the farmers' associations. Moreover, the FAs were an important entry point to local government for Taiwanese farmers. Huang Dazhou's oral history research on the farmers' associations reveals that most FA leaders moved between the FAs and the government during the course of their careers. The following example comes from one of Huang's informants, Mr. Jiang, and represents the typical career trajectory of an FA leader: Born in 1926, Jiang entered school at age 10, which he attended for 5 years before joining the military. Jiang returned to his village after the war in 1949 and became a small agricultural unit leader in the early 1950s. Jiang then became a township FA representative and a member of the board of directors in 1955. He was elected to the county government assembly in 1957, shortly after which he worked for the county party organization. Moving every few years between the county government and the township FA, Jiang eventually became a township FA general manager in 1970.¹¹⁶ According to KMT reports, few county assemblymen had a farming background (about 27% in 1957), but those who did normally had experience working in the FAs.¹¹⁷ Since FA leaders were mostly KMT members with experience working in government, they were able to use their political resources to influence the outcome of local government elections and, after 1969, national elections as well. The FAs essentially served as a bridge between national politicians and rural voters, who were inclined to support candidates in favor of pro-rural policies.

Among newly elected Legislative Yuan officials, a group of "agricultural advocates" emerged that influenced the government to change its policies. According to content analysis by

¹¹⁶ Huang 1981: 291. For the career backgrounds of Huang's other informants, see Huang 1981: 415-417.

¹¹⁷ Most farmers were involved in politics at the village and township levels. Not surprisingly, the percentage of politicians with a farming background was smaller in the upper-levels of the administrative hierarchy. At the provincial level in 1957, only 14% of assemblymen came from a farming background; see Miao 1957: 39.

Michael Hsin-huang Hsiao, these advocates made agriculture an important priority by raising more “formal questions” regarding agriculture during Legislative Yuan sessions.¹¹⁸ The language they used also changed public discourse about the rural sector, from one focused on “agriculture” and “production” to one more concerned with “farmers” and “welfare.” Whereas before 1970 agricultural production was described as being important for “government revenue,” after 1970 it was described as important for “farmers’ incomes.” Even though less than 20% of national politicians in the 1970s came from a farming background, these advocates, along with FA representatives in the Legislative Yuan, successfully raised awareness about rural conditions, and their ideas were directly incorporated into the ARDP and several other rural policies in the 1970s.¹¹⁹

Finally, the FAs were instrumental in transmitting farmers’ grievances upwards to the central agricultural bureaucracy. The FAs’ influence was similar to interest group pressure but subtler than it would have been in a more democratic context like Japan.¹²⁰ Their “voice” was accentuated, however, by the JCRR, which regularly conducted surveys of FA members and

¹¹⁸ The number of formal questions related to agriculture for 1954-1972 was 196, or 22.15% of the total number of questions. For 1973-1982, the number of questions related to agriculture increased to 689, or 77.85% of the total number of questions. The “agricultural advocates” were comprised of 24 legislators who raised 61% of the total questions related to agriculture. Among the advocates, 10 entered the Legislative Yuan before 1972 (presumably in the 1969 elections), 10 had experience studying or working in agriculture, 21 were KMT members, and 14 were Taiwanese; see Hsiao 1981: 99-100, 127-129, 138-144.

¹¹⁹ Liao et al. 1986: 11-12, 154-157, 235-240. For the full analysis, see Hsiao’s chapters in Liao et al. 1986: 93-160. Huang Chun-chieh does a similar content analysis of the Provincial Assembly; see Liao et al. 1986: 161-250.

¹²⁰ Huang Dazhou’s study provides many examples of township FA general managers reporting dissatisfaction with the barter system and other policies to the township branch of the Provincial Food Bureau, as well as county-level governments and higher-level level FAs. Despite their inability to change policy, they felt pressured by farmer-members to continue reporting problems and complaints; see Huang 1981. For more on the FAs as effective transmitters of information, see Stavis 1974: 103; Burmeister et al. 2002: 136.

shared those reports with the government. By the early 1970s, Francks observes, the government had become very concerned that farmers' dissatisfaction with rural economic conditions would provide a rival base of power for local Taiwanese politicians who had previously been co-opted by the FAs. Perhaps influenced by his son Chiang Ching-kuo,¹²¹ Chiang Kai-shek's government decided that it was politically necessary to adopt protective policies for agriculture.¹²²

To summarize, the reversal of urban bias and pursuit of agricultural adjustment policies in Taiwan occurred for a few key reasons. First, policy change was seen as critical to reviving the rural economy. Second, protective policies for agriculture had become more feasible, both economically and politically, in light of increased government revenues from the industrial sector and rising urban incomes. Third, political liberalization measures (albeit limited ones) increased the number of Taiwanese politicians serving in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly. Some of these politicians had a background in agriculture, but even those who did not were still sensitive to rural issues because of Taiwan's highly organized rural electorate and the political influence of local farmers' association leaders.¹²³ Fourth, a group of agricultural advocates in the Legislative Yuan raised national awareness about rural sector problems and placed pressure on the government to adopt more pro-rural policies. Finally, the farmers'

¹²¹ Moore writes that Chiang Ching-kuo "had very consciously attempted to build up connection and support among rural Taiwanese" after assuming the role of vice-prime minister in 1969; see Moore 1988: 139-141. The ARDP may also be understood as part of this agenda, as it was passed just a few months after Chiang Ching-kuo became prime minister in 1972.

¹²² Francks 1999: 193-194, 219-220.

¹²³ The urban population first surpassed the rural population in 1957, but in 1972 about 40% of the total population, or 6 million people, were still living in rural areas. In addition, the majority of Taiwanese voters still had ties to rural areas because of the prevalence of part-time farming and the fact that they had only recently migrated to the cities; see KMT 1972: 54.

associations, along with the JCRR, effectively channeled information about rural discontent to the government. As with land reform, the KMT was responsive because of its failed policies in Mainland China. Even though the KMT's membership base had become predominantly Taiwanese, the central government was nonetheless concerned about the emergence of rival political groups that might exploit rural discontent to undermine its power in the countryside.

At the same time these political reforms were taking place, the government, rather paradoxically, enacted measures to curb the power of the FAs. Perhaps because of the FAs' political power, especially their potential to influence election outcomes, the ROC government passed a new "Farmers' Association Law" in 1974 that reduced the FAs' autonomy. Specifically, the law changed the process of general manager selection. Whereas in the past the FA board of directors selected the general manager, the new law stated that the board of directors must select someone nominated by the government. The new law's intention was to reduce the influence of factions and bring more skilled managers into the FA system. Even though the previous selection process was also marked by some degree of government intervention (i.e. recommending candidates), the FAs saw the new process as an overtly undemocratic form of governance, and called for less government intervention in FA affairs.¹²⁴ The law also called for smaller FAs to merge with larger FAs. In 1975, a total of 55 township FAs were eliminated through mergers, which also evoked negative reactions from FA leaders.¹²⁵ Additional changes to associate members' status and FA stocks had the effect of further alienating non-farmer members.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Huang 1979: 98; De Lasson 1988: 59, 89; Liao et al. 1986: 197-200. The government actually tried to implement this change in 1972, but the JCRR and the Provincial FA temporarily blocked it, citing the negative effects it would have on FA autonomy; see Stavis 1974: 101-103.

¹²⁵ Huang 1979: 98; Liao et al. 1986: 190.

¹²⁶ The new law eliminated the right of associate members to be elected to the board of supervisors. Also, before 1974 members had the option of purchasing "stocks" (*gugin* 股金) in

The FAs in Taiwan today remain encompassing rural organizations (current membership is about 1.8 million) and the key institutions for implementing rural sector policy, but these changes in the 1970s, combined with the relative decline of agriculture, gradually reduced the FAs' power. Throughout East Asia, farmers' organizations have struggled with agricultural adjustment. Larry Burmeister, Gustav Ranis, and Michael Wang write that the decline of agriculture in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan "reduced the importance of farmers' groups as development agents."¹²⁷ Still, it is undeniable that the FAs were catalytic agents in the history of Taiwanese rural development. Samuel Ho writes:

The rural institutions ensured that the findings of agricultural science were widely disseminated, extensively adopted, and correctly applied. One lesson from the Taiwan experience is not that scientific farming is important but rather that science alone cannot transform agriculture without certain rural institutions being created first or at least concomitantly.¹²⁸

The FAs not only facilitated Taiwan's rural development in the 1950s and 1960s, but also helped to usher in major rural reforms in the 1970s.

After the ARDP was adopted, the FAs were involved in nearly all production-related development programs, but with respect to scaling up agriculture, these programs were not very successful. Sophia Wu Huang reports that between 1960 and 1990, the number of households with farms smaller than 1 hectare actually increased from 66.5% to 75.2%, and the number of

the FA for which they could receive dividends; the new law converted the stocks to "enterprise investments" (*shiyè zījīn* 事業資金), which had the effect of reducing member oversight of FA finances; see Cai 2006: 43; Huang 2006: 84; Liao et al. 1986: 196.

¹²⁷ Burmeister et al. 2002: 126.

¹²⁸ Ho 1978: 57-58.

farms larger than 3 hectares decreased from 3.3% to 2.5%.¹²⁹ The difficulty of scaling up agriculture in Taiwan, like the rest of East Asia, is perhaps not only a product of land reform but also the FAs, which served to protect and entrench the position of small farmers in Taiwanese society.

The most successful component of Taiwan's agricultural adjustment strategy of the 1970s was the Community Development Campaign. This campaign succeeded at improving rural living conditions because it occurred in a particular context that prevented the campaign from working against farmers' interests. Like the New Village Movement in South Korea, Taiwan's Community Development Campaign was meticulously planned and implemented by a technocratic bureaucracy operating in a highly centralized political system. Frequent inspections, close monitoring of funds, and crosscutting coordination agencies ensured that government support was not diverted to other purposes. Most importantly, Taiwan's strong farmers' organizations provided a critical check against campaign excesses. During this campaign, FA leaders held seats on the government's community development committees and the village-level community councils. They also took charge of production-related projects and administered special community development funds through their credit departments. The FAs, with their extensive organizational reach and politically influential leadership, were important for generating mass participation in community development projects. Without the FAs' assistance, the use of compulsory labor alone would have likely failed to sustain long-term participation in the campaign, and it would have undermined the government's legitimacy in rural areas.

The Taiwanese Case in Comparative Perspective

¹²⁹ Huang 1993: 50, 60. Chris Bramall writes that the Second Stage Land Reform of 1980 set the goal of consolidating 377,000 hectares by 1995. While this program had a positive effect on agricultural output, further consolidation was still needed; see Bramall 2004: 134-135.

The Taiwanese case best illustrates how farmers' organizations may contribute to rural development. As discussed in Chapter 6, farmers' organizations in China have played a less important role in development than they have elsewhere in East Asia. Compared to China, farmers' organizations in Taiwan and Korea share certain qualities that perhaps made them more effective institutions for extensive rural development—encompassing, multi-functional, and closely linked to the agricultural bureaucracy. However, there are also important differences between Taiwanese and Korean farmers' organizations that help to explain these countries' varying records of rural development.

During the extractive phase of KMT agricultural policy in Taiwan (1950 to 1972), the successful implementation of land reform and the reorganization of the farmers' associations resulted in the equitable provision of agricultural extension services and significant gains in agricultural production. As the existing literature correctly suggests, the success of Taiwan's extension services may be traced to strong JCRR and KMT support for the farmers' associations. The JCRR provided direct financial assistance to the FAs for three main purposes—to rebuild FA infrastructure after the war, to provide relief from natural disasters, and to support FA-initiated rural development projects. The JCRR also persuaded the KMT to let farmers elect FA leaders. The KMT was responsive because of its failed rural policies in Mainland China, and it agreed to revive the agricultural sector by building a comprehensive rural extension system within the FAs. Strong horizontal links were formed between FA extension agents and farmers, as the extension agents would frequently make home visits and attend small agricultural unit meetings in the villages. In a 1959 survey, about 74% of FA members reported receiving a home visit from an extension agent within the past year.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Guo 1984: 150-155. See also Burmeister et al. 2002: 134-135.

In contrast, the Rhee and Park regimes in Korea neglected agriculture for most of the 1950s and 1960s, and built an extension system that was controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development, not the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation. The NACF's lack of decision-making power over extension programs, combined with the fact that NACF officials were not elected,¹³¹ meant that Korean farmers had little opportunity to provide feedback or voice their preferences regarding the direction of technical change.¹³² The NACF also had rather limited interactions with Korean farmers. Before the 1970s, the ORD and the NACF operated at the township-level, and farmers who wanted to obtain fertilizer or other services were required to travel to the township. There was no equivalent of Taiwan's small agricultural units until the 1970s, when the NACF finally extended the scope of its primary agricultural cooperatives (PACs) from the townships down to the villages.¹³³ With little time to establish roots, however, Korea's village-level PACs proved less responsive to farmers' needs than Taiwan's SAUs, as evidenced by the top-down implementation of the Tong'il rice production campaign (see discussion in Chapter 4).

While both the NACF and FA personnel were usually from the localities they served, the FAs were more deeply embedded in rural society. First, as just mentioned, the level of interaction between organization staff and farmers was higher in Taiwan. Second, FA membership and election rules, which were devised by the JCRR, strictly limited the power of non-farmers and effectively guaranteed farmers' control over the associations. Burmeister et al. write that the absence of such rules in Korea contributed to a "bureaucratic distance" between the

¹³¹ NACF elections were not instituted until 1989; see Burmeister et al. 2002: 134.

¹³² Burmeister 1988: 154.

¹³³ Burmeister et al. 2002: 136.

NACF and its members, such that farmers would use the terms “government” and “agricultural cooperative” interchangeably.¹³⁴ Third, while the Provincial FA was run by Taiwanese with some kind of background in agriculture, most of the top NACF officials were active or retired military officers.¹³⁵ Fourth, farmers in Taiwan simply used the FAs more often. A survey of Korean farmers from 1970 reveals that, with only a few exceptions, the purchase of farm inputs and the sale of farm products occurred primarily through private commercial channels instead of the NACF.¹³⁶ Most importantly, the NACF did not provide credit services before the 1970s.¹³⁷ In contrast, Taiwanese farmers used the FA for nearly everything and considered credit to be the FA’s most important service, a solution to problems of rural capital shortages and high-interest money lending.¹³⁸ Finally, while the central government supported the NACF with fiscal transfers, the FAs mostly relied on raising their own revenues, which made them more autonomous organizations.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Burmeister et al. 2002: 137. For more on government control over the NACF and comparisons of Korea, Japan and Taiwan, see Burmeister 2006: 67-68; Francks 1999: 148; Reed 1981: 292-293; Keim 1974: 858; Kihl 1982: 17-18; Ranis 1995: 518; Steinberg 1982: 2; Ravenholt 1981: 55.

¹³⁵ Burmeister et al. 2002: 130.

¹³⁶ Farmers mostly went through the NACF to purchase fertilizers (100%) and farm chemicals (70%), but through private commercial channels to purchase animal feed (80%), and farm implements (40%). They also used the NACF to sell livestock products (60%), but used commercial channels to sell rice (73%), potatoes and other grains (90%), fruits and vegetables (60%); see Rossmiller 1972: 18, 25-28.

¹³⁷ Burmeister 2006: 71-72.

¹³⁸ In 1959, about 67% of members had made deposits in the FA, and about 76% of members had obtained loans from the FA. For more information on credit and other services, see Guo 1984: 150-155.

¹³⁹ Burmeister et al. 2002: 133-134.

These differences between the Taiwanese and Korean cases are both political and structural. With respect to the rural sector, the KMT was clearly more developmental than the Rhee and Park regimes. The US presence in Taiwan also placed much greater emphasis on rehabilitating the rural sector than it did in Korea. However, even if the Korean government and the US aid mission had prioritized agricultural development earlier, it is not clear that Korea would have performed as well as Taiwan because of structural differences between the NACF and the FAs. In fact, the qualities that made Taiwan's FAs successful—close ties to the government and the villages, strong farmer-member controls, leaders with an agricultural background, comprehensive extension services, and financial independence—constitute a package that is rarely found among farmers' organizations in the developing world. While the KMT and JCRR deserve some credit for laying out the broad policy framework for the FAs, it was the FAs themselves that ensured these qualities were maintained throughout the process of Taiwan's rural transformation.

Conclusion

The Taiwanese case has a few important implications for existing theory. First, in general, the literature on peasant politics focuses on analyzing the role of informal institutions in rural politics, as well as the causes of peasant rebellion and resistance.¹⁴⁰ So the idea that peasants or small farmers can play an active role in the development process through formal organizations with close ties to the state is unusual in light of the conventional wisdom. Second, this case study suggests that quasi-governmental farmers' organizations represent the key institutional link between society and the rural developmental state in East Asia. It also illustrates how East Asia's various rural development outcomes may partly be explained by differences among farmers'

¹⁴⁰ Scott 1985.

organizations. Third, it illustrates that the reversal of urban bias is possible even in an authoritarian context. While there were a few reasons for the reversal of urban bias in Taiwan, without the farmers' associations it is unlikely that Taiwan's national politicians would have been as responsive to farmers' interests. Urban-biased policies would have probably remained in place longer, and change would have been initiated only after conditions in the rural sector had reached a point of crisis, as was the case in Korea and China.

Finally, this case study illustrates that the KMT regime was actually somewhat different than the way it has been portrayed in the existing literature on the developmental state. In terms of its rural sector policies, the KMT regime was developmental, extractive and mobilizational. For over two decades, the KMT pursued a rural policy agenda that stimulated agricultural development in order to extract a large rural surplus for industrialization. In the 1970s, the KMT shifted its policies to favor the rural sector. As part of its agricultural adjustment strategy, the government carried out a state-led rural modernization campaign to transform the countryside. In fact, the ARDP was officially described and promoted as a campaign from the moment it was adopted. Addressing the rural masses in 1972, Chiang Ching-kuo declared:

Because of industrialization, the agricultural sector currently faces many difficulties. Although this may be an unavoidable part of the economic development process, the government must take responsibility for resolving these difficulties and take action to improve your working and living conditions. We have therefore decided to accelerate rural construction by mobilizing all government agencies and the power of the masses to help push forward this new campaign. Most important to this campaign, however, are the farmers. This campaign's success or failure depends on all of you farmers to take action and participate in the campaign to accelerate rural construction.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ KMT 1972: 5.

The existing literature on Taiwan makes almost no mention of the ARDP's campaign features or the Community Development Campaign.¹⁴² And yet, this campaign played an important and positive role in Taiwan's rural development in the 1970s. The next chapter on Korea examines more closely the potential contributions and drawbacks of campaigns as means of achieving rural development.

¹⁴² There appears to be only one English-language article by Ronald Knapp that mentions this campaign. Knapp refers to it as the "Intensive Village Improvement Program;" see Knapp 1996: 785-787.

Chapter 4: Rural Development in South Korea, 1950s-1970s

Korea's postwar rural policies have received much less scholarly attention than its industrial policies. This case study illustrates that the New Village Movement of the 1970s played a central role in Korean rural development and advances the idea that rural modernization campaigns should be included in the broader theoretical literature on East Asian development. Following a brief discussion and critique of the existing literature on Korean development (Section 1), this chapter proceeds with an overview of agricultural policies in the 1950s and 1960s (Section 2). It then examines the NVM's origins, implementation, and impact on Korean rural development (Section 3). The chapter concludes by discussing the Korean case in a larger comparative context.

Section 1: Industrialization, Rural Development and the Case for Campaigns

Unlike the protracted process of European industrialization, South Korea's industrialization was accomplished in just two decades. Between 1962 and 1981, Korea's Gross National Product rose from 355.5 billion Korean won (2.3 billion US dollars) to over 43 trillion Korean won (63.3 billion US dollars). The economy grew at an average annual rate of 8.4%, with a peak average of 10.2% for 1972-1976, and Korea's per capita GNP rose from 87 US dollars in 1962 to over 1600 US dollars in 1981.¹ Moreover, despite some rural-urban imbalances,² the benefits of Korea's spectacular economic growth have been distributed rather evenly. Between 1961 and 1980, the rate of absolute poverty declined from 48.3% to 9.8%, and

¹ Statistics are based on 1981 prices; see *Major Statistics of Korean Economy* 1982: 3. See also Wade 1982: 1; Ho 1979b: 645; Keidel 1981: 24; Douglass 1983: 187-8.

² Ho 1979b.

the average rate of relative poverty for the same period was about 10.6%, which is lower than most other developing (or rich) countries.³

Korea's transformation from a traditional agricultural economy to an advanced industrial economy is reflected in agriculture's declining share of GDP, employment and exports (see Table 4.1). After transitioning from import-substitution to export-oriented industrialization in the early 1960s, the Korean government under President Park Chung-hee's leadership pursued a development strategy of light manufacturing followed by heavy and chemical industrialization. By 1980, the industrial and service sectors accounted for about 82% of GDP and 66% of total employment; and about 93% of Korea's exports consisted of manufactured goods. Agricultural sector growth, averaging 2.7% a year in the 1960s-1970s, lagged far behind other sectors. Between 1962 and 1980, the services sector grew on average 9.2% a year, and the industrial sector grew at an astonishing rate of about 16% a year.

³ Absolute poverty is defined as earning less than 120,000 Korean won per month in 1980 prices for a household of four. Relative poverty is defined as earning less than one-third of the national average household income in 1980 prices; see Cha et al. 1997: 540.

4.1: Structural Economic Change in South Korea, 1962-1980

<i>Year</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1980</i>
Agricultural Sector			
% GDP	39.8	29.7	17.8
% Employment	63.1	50.4	34
% Exports	45	11.2	6.9
Industrial Sector			
% GDP	14.6	19.7	25.3
% Employment	8.7	14.3	22.6
% Exports	65	88.8	93.1
Services Sector			
% GDP	45.6	50.6	56.8
% Employment	28.2	35.2	43.4
Average Annual Growth Rates (1962-1980) by Sector:			
Agriculture (farming, forestry, fishing): 2.7%			
Industry (mining, manufacturing) 16%			
Services (construction, utilities, transportation, storage, communications, etc.): 9.2%			

Source: Major Statistics of the Korean Economy 1982: 7, 19, 58.

In a famous study undertaken by scholars at Harvard University and the Korean Development Institute (KDI), the agricultural sector is described as having contributed very little to the country's industrialization. As this view is commonly echoed in the existing literature on Korean development, it is worth quoting the main findings of this study at length:

A Korean agricultural revolution did not precede or lead development in other sectors of the economy. There were no substantial net flows of savings or tax dollars from the rural to the urban sector. There was a flow of agricultural produce in exchange for manufactures, and, most important, a massive migration of labor from the farms into the factories, transport and trade. For the most part, however, it was agriculture that benefited from the industrial and export boom rather than the reverse. This boom provided a rapidly expanding market for farm output and for rural "surplus" labor, together with an increasing supply of such key inputs as chemical fertilizer and farm machinery.⁴

According to this study, the Korean pattern of economic development closely resembles the "Lewis model" in which the rural sector's contribution to industrialization is mostly limited to

⁴ Ban et al. 1980: 5.

the supply of surplus labor. This model suggests that the “trickle down” effect of industrialization is what paves the way for rural development.⁵

Although unintentional, the effect of the Harvard-KDI study was to minimize the role of agriculture in academic and policy analyses of Korean development. Of course, the existing literature’s tendency to neglect rural development and focus on industrial development is somewhat understandable. For Korea in the 1960s-1970s, the agricultural sector’s mediocre performance is far less notable than the industrial sector’s stellar performance. Moreover, urbanization and industrialization occurred so rapidly that postwar Korea is rarely thought of as being “rural” or “agricultural.” With a few important exceptions, such as works by Robert Wade (1982) and Larry Burmeister (1988), the Western academic literature on Korea’s political economy tends to either ignore the rural sector because of its “minimalist” role in industrialization, or to focus on land reform as Korea’s most important and successful rural policy.⁶

Korea’s record of rural development should not, however, be overlooked because it has important implications for existing theory. For example, the Korean case underscores the limitations of land reform as an explanatory variable in East Asian rural development. South Korea’s land reform program (mostly completed by 1953) greatly reduced levels of rural inequality by destroying the landlord class and creating a smallholder farm economy dominated by owner-cultivators. The land reform law imposed a 3-hectare limit on landholdings, and although it did not eliminate tenancy, the share of full- and part-tenant farm households dropped

⁵ Lewis 1954; Ban et al. 1980: 10-12; Francks 1999: 103, 119-120, 129; Brandt & Lee 1981: 132.

⁶ For examples, see Amsden 1992, Kay 2002, Kohli 2004.

from about 80.4% in 1947 to 30.5% in 1965.⁷ Unfortunately, the Korean government made little effort to replace the rural functions formerly carried out by landlords such as making capital improvements in farmland or providing easy access to seeds, fertilizer and farm implements.⁸ The small and parcelized holdings created by land reform were also not conducive to mechanization or scale agriculture. As a result, land reform did not lead to significant gains in agricultural production. Between 1953 and 1961, the agricultural sector grew about 3.6% a year, but after a brief period of postwar recovery, agricultural growth slowed in the 1960s-1970s to 2.7% a year, which is actually lower than the 1930s rate of 2.9% a year.⁹ As Chris Bramall has noted of Korea and other East Asian countries, land reform “brought about a short-term improvement in the distribution of rural income” but did not “provide the foundation for sustained long-term growth.”¹⁰

The Korean case is also important because it illustrates that not all developmental states are the same. Similarities among East Asian countries in terms of their industrial policies and economic achievements actually overshadow key differences in their rural development trajectories. For example, Samuel Ho’s work reveals that Taiwanese rural development was “one of the most successful aspects” of its postwar economic growth,¹¹ and that Taiwan’s decentralized pattern of industrialization created off-farm employment opportunities in the countryside, which stemmed the rate of rural-to-urban migration and contributed to a relatively

⁷ Hsiao 1981: 79-80.

⁸ Ban et al. 1980: 291-292.

⁹ Ban et al. 1980: 291.

¹⁰ Bramall 2004: 136.

¹¹ Ho 1981: 1179-1180.

balanced pattern of rural-urban development. In contrast, Korea's pattern of industrialization was highly centralized, which resulted in large-scale migration to factories in the Seoul and Pusan areas.¹² The lack of off-farm employment opportunities in the Korean countryside resulted in a larger economic gap between rural and urban households as compared to Taiwan.¹³ Similarly, Penelope Francks observes that Korea did not follow the Taiwanese and Japanese pattern of “dense interrelations between agriculture and industry, through pluriactivity within households and through the development of small-scale manufacturing operations within rural areas.”¹⁴

These different patterns of industrialization, which can be traced back to the Japanese colonial era,¹⁵ offer only a partial explanation for Korea's less successful record of rural development. As explained in Chapter 2, a major reason for Korea's mediocre performance is that the Rhee and Park governments largely neglected rural development in the 1950s and 1960s. In stark contrast with the KMT regime in Taiwan, Rhee and Park relied more heavily on food aid

¹² Ho 1979a: 77-78, 83. In Korea there were an estimated 3.9 million rural-to-urban migrants in the 1960s; see Ban et al. 1980: 325-329. Since there are no official estimates, most of the literature uses urbanization rates as a proxy measure for migration. Between 1960 and 1985, the urban population increased by about 20 million, and the share of urban residents in the total population rose from 28% to 65.4%; see Boyer & Ahn 1991: 53. In Taiwan, the share of industries located in rural areas actually expanded between 1956 and 1966, and by 1968 only 26% of “newly absorbed industrial workers” had actually migrated to urban centers; see Ranis 1995: 522-523.

¹³ Between 1962 and 1975, Taiwan's share of off-farm income in total rural household income rose from 25% to 43%, but in Korea it remained constant at about 23%. In 1968 the per capita consumption of farm households in Korea was only 40% that of non-farm households. It increased slightly in the early 1970s and then dropped again after 1974 (Ho does not provide similar consumption data on Taiwan, but the gap is presumably smaller); see Ho 1979b: 648-649. The Gini coefficient was also lower in Taiwan than in South Korea. Ranis estimates it was .357 in South Korea and .330 in Taiwan for 1960-1970; and .313 in South Korea and .289 in Taiwan for 1970-1980; see Ranis 1995: 516.

¹⁴ Francks 1999: 129.

¹⁵ Ho 1978: 71-72, 90; Ho 1979a: 94-95.

from the United States,¹⁶ and it was not until the 1970s that the Korean government prioritized basic agricultural production, much less the development of scientific agriculture or effective rural institutions. Having suffered the political consequences of neglecting agriculture in China, the KMT in Taiwan was simply more developmental than the Rhee or Park regimes in South Korea.

Related to the idea that not all developmental states are the same, the Korean case reveals that the Park regime was surprisingly Maoist in its approach to rural development. The New Village Movement of the 1970s, also known as the New Community Movement or Saemaul Undong, is an example of what Mick Moore calls a “big push” policy, stemming from “a greater commitment to ‘Maoist’-type beliefs that social mobilization and human will are the mainsprings of social and national progress.”¹⁷ The Park regime’s use of mass mobilization tactics to promote rural development is surprising in light of the developmental state model, which attributes East Asia’s economic success to careful economic planning and technical-rational policymaking. This uneasy fit between the developmental state model and Park’s rural policies perhaps explains why the existing literature is generally critical or dismissive of the New Village Movement, characterizing it as an illiberal and misguided deviation from the more successful approach to development that was applied to the industrial sector.

There are few scholars outside of Korea who assign any role to the New Village Movement in contributing to rural development, and yet within Korea the campaign is remembered as a kind of golden age for rural advancement. In 2008, to mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Korea, the *Chosun Daily* published the results of

¹⁶ Hsiao 1981: 198-199.

¹⁷ Moore 1988: 119.

a Korean Gallup poll that revealed Koreans' views on their country's most important achievements. The New Village Movement topped the list for over 40% of respondents, receiving more votes than any other event, including the 1988 Olympics, the 2002 World Cup, the 1987 pro-democracy movement, and Korea's successful industrialization.¹⁸

The enduring popular legacy of the New Village Movement is just one reason scholars should more seriously consider the role of this campaign in Korea's rural development. To summarize the main insights of this chapter, the New Village Movement may be understood as a particular iteration of a more general campaign-style approach to rural development in East Asia. Although lauded by the Korean government as a uniquely Korean approach to rural development, the NVM shares similarities with China's Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), Japan's (and colonial Korea's) Rural Revitalization Campaign (1930s), and Taiwan's Community Development Campaign (1950s-1970s). These similarities are not coincidental, but rather reflect a process of regional policy learning that continues through the present day. As discussed in Chapter 5, China's New Socialist Countryside campaign (2005-present) has been explicitly modeled after Korea's New Village Movement. While each of these campaigns was launched as a political response to signs of rural instability, they achieved varying results (see Chapter 1). As elaborated in the following sections, the Korean case of rural development would have perhaps been more successful if the NVM had been implemented in a less top-down

¹⁸ According to the survey, the top ten achievements are 1) the New Village Movement 2) the Olympics 3) the five-year economic plans, especially the 1970s heavy and chemical industrialization drive 4) completion of the Seoul-Pusan highway 5) the World Cup 6) the Gwangju pro-democracy movement 7) development of the semiconductor industry 8) per capita gross income surpassing 20,000 US dollars 9) the South-North (inter-Korean) summits 10) the 1987 democracy movement; see Hong 2008. A similar survey was conducted in 1998 for the 50th anniversary, and again, the New Village Movement received the most votes; see Kang 1999: 50.

fashion, allowing for more genuine forms of participation in the policy formulation and feedback processes.

Section 2: Rural Underdevelopment in the 1950s and 1960s

After colonial rule ended in 1945, Korea entered a tumultuous period of division and occupation by foreign powers, widespread rural unrest, and civil war. Both the American Military Government (1945-1947) and the government of Syngman Rhee (1948-1960) faced major challenges related to post-WWII and post-Korean War reconstruction.

Before serious attempts were made at land reform, the rural situation was extremely volatile. South Korea's rural population in the late 1940s was over 14 million (about 61% of the total population), and rural population density was, by some accounts, the highest in the world.¹⁹ About 76% of all Korean farms were smaller than 1 hectare (versus 58% for Taiwan), and 42% of these farms were actually smaller than .5 hectares (versus 10% for Taiwan).²⁰ As is common in densely populated rural societies, farm tenancy was widespread. In 1945-1949 about 80% of rural households were engaged in tenant farming, and about 60% of total farmland was tenanted. Rents ranged from 45% to 80% of the main crop, and about 75% of farmers had contracted serious debts.²¹ According to Gi-Wook Shin, tenancy disputes erupted into a "major agrarian rebellion" in 1946 involving 2.3 million participants across 40 counties. Taking advantage of the

¹⁹ Ban et al. estimates that Korea's rural population density during this period was higher than Japan, China, India, Thailand, and the United States; see Ban et al. 1980: 14, 17. Albert Keidel also reports that Korea's rural population density was about 7,634 people per thousand hectares in 1973, compared to 6,579 for Taiwan, 4,065 for Japan and 43 for the United States; see Keidel 1981: 32-33.

²⁰ Hsiao 1981: 50-51, 79-80.

²¹ Ladejinsky 1977: 50-54; You 1986: 13.

situation, North Korean-backed “people’s committees” stepped in to redistribute land. Fearing communist revolution, the ROK government finally passed land reform legislation in 1950.²²

Land reform was not, however, a panacea for South Korea’s rural economic problems. North Korea, having inherited nearly all colonial era industries, cut off fertilizer supplies to the South, which severely damaged agricultural production and created food shortages.²³ Compared to the North, South Korea’s economy was much weaker, and even though its agricultural sector was arguably stronger, it was still much less developed than its colonial counterpart Taiwan. Already disadvantaged by less favorable post-colonial conditions, South Korea’s economy was basically destroyed by the civil war (1950-1953), which killed over 1 million people and left about 10 million people homeless.²⁴

Throughout his term in office President Rhee considered national defense to be the top priority and allocated nearly all government resources to the military, which had expanded during the civil war from about 65,000 troops to over 700,000 troops.²⁵ Given the poor state of Korea’s economy, Rhee depended heavily on U.S. aid to maintain the military and feed the population. During the 1950s, Korea imported about 242.6 million US dollars worth of food, mostly through the Public Law 480 surplus sales program. Though intended to offset food shortages, the surplus imports depressed domestic farm prices and killed any incentive the Rhee government might have had to implement a rural development program.²⁶ On the industrial side,

²² Shin 1998: 1336-1340.

²³ Park 1998: 15-16.

²⁴ Douglass 1983: 187.

²⁵ Hsiao 1981: 82.

²⁶ Hsiao 1981: 84-85, 238-241.

Rhee's import substitution development strategy helped the Korean economy recover from war but was unable to generate significant economic growth.

The Rhee regime's failed economic policies gave rise to an opposition movement that toppled the government and paved the way for Park Chung-hee. In Michael Hsin-huang Hsiao's words, "The failure of any effective development policy, the overdependence on foreign aid, corruption and political repression in the late 1950s, finally brought about the urban-centered student revolution that ended the 12 year Rhee regime on April 26, 1960."²⁷ The interim government that replaced Rhee was ineffectual and short-lived, and on May 16, 1961 Park successfully led a military coup against the government and installed himself as president.

South Korea began to resemble what scholars would later call a developmental state in the 1960s.²⁸ Soon after taking office, Park established the Economic Planning Board (EPB), a central bureaucracy responsible for drafting five-year economic plans and generally overseeing the implementation of national development policy. The 1st Five-year-plan (1962-1966) outlined a development ideology known as "guided capitalism" that called for strategic state intervention in the economy and the pursuit of export-oriented industrialization.

In contrast with industrial policy, Park's agricultural policy in the 1960s was much less successful. During his Revolution Pledge on May 25, 1961, Park promised "to quickly solve the problem of people struggling with starvation and despair" by eliminating exploitative money-lending practices and paying off farm household debts. Then in June 1961 Park launched the National Reconstruction Movement, a kind of work ethic and rural savings campaign that was similar to Japan's Rural Revitalization Campaign. It involved sending local officials into the

²⁷ Hsiao 1981: 85.

²⁸ Atul Kohli describes Rhee's government as personalistic and extractive, and Park's government as purposive and developmental; see Kohli 2004: 63, 67, 70.

villages to preach the virtues of diligence, self-help and frugality. However, these initiatives were more costly than the government anticipated and were abandoned in favor of projects that might simultaneously boost rural incomes and assist industrial sector development.²⁹

In the 1960s, the government successfully upgraded some irrigation infrastructure and built five large fertilizer plants, turning Korea into a net exporter of nitrogen fertilizer.³⁰ Park also revived Korea's colonial-era rural extension institutions, which had basically withered away during the Rhee administration. In 1962 the Office of Rural Development and the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation were established, but as mentioned in Chapter 3, these organizations were much weaker than their counterparts in Taiwan and Japan. They were allocated few resources and consequently ranked low on the bureaucratic hierarchy, making them an unappealing career choice for talented, ambitious government officials.³¹ Aside from carrying out a limited number of government entrusted activities, the NACF and ORD were generally ineffective at providing rural services.³²

As part of the transition from a military to a civilian government, formal presidential elections were held in 1963, and Park campaigned on an "agriculture first" platform. Unlike the Rhee administration, Park and other military leaders came from a rural background.³³ They

²⁹ Park 1998: 26-28; Kim 1981: 53-55; Kim 1994: 89; Brandt & Lee 1981: 56-58.

³⁰ Even though Park adopted an export-oriented industrialization strategy, this project is an example of successful import substitution. In the 1970s Park adopted an even more explicit import substitution approach in agriculture; see Burmeister 2006: 70-71.

³¹ Rossmiller 1972: 27; Taiwan spent twice as much as Korea on agricultural research (as a percentage of output) in the 1950s-1960s; see Ranis 1995: 518-519.

³² Francks 1999: 127-129, 148.

³³ Park 1998: 4; Ravenholt 1981: 55; Francks 1999: 120; Kohli 2004: 92. Park frequently referred to being "born into a poor farming family" in his speeches; see Park 1979: 67.

frequently conveyed an anti-urban tone in public,³⁴ but this did not immediately translate into pro-rural policies. The 2nd Five-year-plan (1967-1971) outlined grain self-sufficiency as an important national goal, but in practice the Park government neglected and exploited the agricultural sector. Throughout the 1960s, agriculture consistently received less than 9% of total government investments.³⁵ Similar to Taiwan, Park established a fertilizer-rice barter system in Korea to squeeze the rural sector. Administered by the NACF, farmers were forced to pay above-market prices for fertilizer and received below-market prices for grain.³⁶ In this way, the government transferred resources from agriculture to industry (although a meager amount compared to Taiwan) and managed to keep food prices and urban wages low.

Overall, Park's rural policies in the 1960s failed to raise agricultural production levels or rural incomes. Agricultural output grew 5.55% a year between 1960 and 1965, but then slowed to 2.84% a year between 1965 and 1970. Significantly, rice production, which grew on average 2.1% a year for 1954-1973, was slightly lower than the population growth rate.³⁷ To meet the domestic demand for food, Park relied on PL 480 aid and imported about 306 million US dollars

³⁴ A great example of anti-urbanism comes from a speech Park made in 1972 at a national NVM conference: "On the one hand, there are farmers laboring from early dawn to dark without distinction of age or sex, particularly the young girls who, if born in the cities, would be putting on thick makeup and fine dresses but who, just out of school, work with shovels and picks or carry rocks on their heads in an effort to make their village prosperous and a good place to live in. On the other hand there are the city people--it makes one doubt whether they are really citizens of the Republic of Korea--who by their weird and unruly behavior pour cold water on the Saemaul movement and dampen the enthusiasm of the rural people;" see Park 1979: 168.

³⁵ Ho 1979: 647-648.

³⁶ Wang 1986: 242-243. The barter systems of South Korea and Taiwan can likely be traced to the colonial period, during which the Japanese established firm control over the sale of chemical fertilizers and the purchase of surplus grains.

³⁷ Ban et al. 1980: 38-39, 45.

worth of grain between 1961 and 1971.³⁸ Food imports and grain price manipulation resulted in a widening rural-urban income gap. The average farmer's income, which was higher than the average urban worker's income in 1963, had dropped to only 65% of the average urban worker's income by 1969.³⁹

Park's urban-biased development strategy undermined his reputation among farmers, and he almost lost the 1967 and 1971 presidential elections to opposition candidates who captured the popular vote in Korea's southwestern rice belt. Park's loss of rural support, as well as concerns over rural-to-urban migration and dwindling grain supplies,⁴⁰ prompted the government to shift its economic policies in favor of the rural sector.⁴¹ Park stated, "The principal aim of the agricultural modernization program is nothing less than the liberation of our farmers from this yoke of poverty and backwardness."⁴² During the 1970s, "primary emphasis will be laid on the development of agriculture so that the fruits of economic construction will be equally distributed to the entire nation, including farmers and fishermen and people in low income brackets."⁴³

³⁸ The value of all grain imports amounted to 1.329 billion US dollars, and the value of total PL 480 aid (grain and non-grain imports) amounted to 638 million US dollars; see Ban et al. 1980: 30. Despite large amounts of aid, food shortages were not uncommon in the 1960s. Vincent Brandt's study of a Korean village mentions that "spring starvation" (i.e. a 4-6 week period after the winter food supply is exhausted and before the spring barley harvest) was a persistent problem until at least 1966; see Brandt 1971: 50-51.

³⁹ Hsiao 1981: 91.

⁴⁰ PL 480 was phased out in the late 1960s, and 1970 was the last year of PL 480 sales in local currency. As it was too costly for Korea to purchase imports with foreign exchange, the program was terminated in 1971; see Burmeister 1988: 69; Hsiao 1981: 244.

⁴¹ Park 1998: 33-34; Moore 1984-1985: 548-585; Moore 1988: 146; Ho 1979: 650-652; Han 2004: 71-73; Burmeister 1988: 69-70; Francks 1999: 120-125; Ravenholt 1981: 55; Steinberg 1982: 16-17.

⁴² Park 1979, 46.

⁴³ Park 1979: 53.

Korea's agricultural adjustment strategy, articulated in the country's 3rd Five-year-plan (1972-1976), included promoting high-yield varieties of rice, increasing government purchase prices for grains, improving rural credit and infrastructure, and developing major river basins into new industrial areas.⁴⁴ The New Village Movement, launched 1970, became the ideological and organizational framework for the 3rd FYP, and eventually all rural development programs were incorporated into the movement.

Section 3: The New Village Movement, 1970s

This section starts with a review of how the Korean government and scholars have defined and understood the New Village Movement. Then it examines the campaign's international and historical origins, methods of implementation, and impact on Korean rural development.

Official and Scholarly Interpretations of the NVM

Park Chung-hee subscribed to a cultural theory of modernization. He often remarked that development “must be viewed from the psychological angle” and that “modernization starts with the spiritual modernization of individual farmers.”⁴⁵ Throughout the 1970s, Park referred to the NVM as a “movement for becoming prosperous” and a “movement for better living,”⁴⁶ but more than anything else, he understood it as a kind of spiritual enlightenment campaign:

The Saemaul movement is a spiritual enlightenment campaign, a spiritual revolution, a philosophy of action. When our rural communities are overflowing with the Saemaul

⁴⁴ Park 1979: 22-23, 53, 82; Moore 1984-1985: 585-586; Ho 1981: 1180; Wade 1982: 18-19; Keim 1974: 855-857. The 3rd FYP also outlined a program for heavy and chemical industrialization and the expansion of industrial exports. Though it did not abandon Korea's basic development strategy, it did prioritize rural development for the first time in postwar history.

⁴⁵ Park 1979: 74-75, 83-84, 118.

⁴⁶ Park 1998: 3, 47; Park 1979: 237; *Saemaul* 1975: 11.

spirit, all our farm villages will become well-to-do in a short while, and the task of rural modernization will pose no problem.⁴⁷

The Saemaul spirit was promoted as a concept that combined modern and traditional values. The three parts of the Saemaul spirit were diligence (a modern value), self-help and cooperation (traditional values), and these were frequently contrasted with the “inferior” cultural values of indolence, dependency, and factionalism.⁴⁸

The Saemaul spirit was seen as an antidote to a host of rural social illnesses such as conservatism, passivity, hedonism and squalor.⁴⁹ Contradictory views of the countryside are apparent in official sources. On the one hand, the countryside and its traditional cultural values were seen as a source of hope and national renewal, but on the other hand, farmers were seen as trapped in a kind of culture of poverty. Kim Joon, director of the National Saemaul Leadership Training Institute, believed that the movement’s primary aim was to “cure the sickness of our minds in order to regain the pure traditions of our forefathers.”⁵⁰ The NVM drew not only from the “pure traditions” of Korea’s past but also from Western traditions. Inspired by Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, government leaders believed the Saemaul spirit could serve as the Korean equivalent of the Puritan work ethic.⁵¹ Park attributed Western

⁴⁷ Park 1979: 159-160.

⁴⁸ Park 1979: i, 2, 123; Park 1998: 169. The Korean word “sadaejuui,” which I have translated as dependency, literally means “to serve the great” (i.e. China); see Jager 2003: 81-83.

⁴⁹ Park Chung-hee frequently criticized farmers in his speeches, attributing economic backwardness to their behavior and attitudes; see Park 1979: 26, 37-38, 40-43, 117, 131-132, 152, 217-218.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Jager 2003: 81.

⁵¹ Park 1998: 43, 47, 86, 147-148; Han 2004: 74, 81. Park also thought of Israel as an admirable example of how a strong work ethic can overcome resource constraints on development: “[W]hat determines the growth or development of a country is not the natural environment of that country

modernization to Western culture, and he was outspoken about his desire for Korea to catch up with the West. After being awakened by the Saemaul spirit, Park insisted, Korea's farmers would transform the villages into "fully modernized agricultural communities, in no way inferior to their Western counterparts."⁵²

In the 1970s and early 1980s, many international development practitioners and Korean scholars praised the New Village Movement as a model of integrated, community-based rural development. Korean scholars' attitudes towards the NVM would change a few years later with the advent of democratization, but at least for the earlier period, Korean sources are quite favorable toward the NVM.⁵³ Western scholars, facing fewer political constraints than their Korean counterparts, have consistently expressed more skeptical attitudes towards the NVM. Few if any scholars have agreed with the Korean government's assessment of the rural situation or seen the need for a "spiritual revolution,"⁵⁴ and most people have understood the NVM as a kind of social control mechanism.

Anthropologist Vincent Brandt defines the NVM as a "highly organized, intensively administered campaign to improve the 'environmental' quality of rural life through projects undertaken by villagers themselves with government assistance," which later evolved into a

but the strenuous efforts of its people to explore and exploit that natural environment;" see Park 1979: 69-71.

⁵² Park 1979: 111.

⁵³ For a compilation of works of this kind, see Man-gap Lee's 1981 edited volume. In recent years, many Korean scholars have again revised their opinions about the NVM, saying that their earlier criticisms were fueled by the anti-Park and anti-Chun (Chun Doo-hwan) sentiment that swept the country during democratization.

⁵⁴ For a good critique of the government's views on rural society, see Brandt & Lee 1981: 85, 110-111. Brandt's earlier work highlighting village cooperative labor also runs counter to Park's assertion that rural society had lost this tradition; see Brandt 1971: 70-71.

“major ideological campaign aimed at the psychological mobilization of the entire country in support of ‘nation building.’”⁵⁵ Similarly, Nancy Abelman notes how the NVM evolved from a village environmental improvement program into a “massive indoctrination campaign” in which the Saemaul spirit was upheld as a “model for the nation as village writ large and thus a call to sacrifice for the state.”⁵⁶ Also underscoring the theme of nation building, Sheila Miyoshi Jager interprets the NVM as a campaign to transform Korea’s lazy and backwards farmers into “industrious, modern, and forward-thinking patriots.”⁵⁷ Indeed, making individual sacrifices for the sake of the village collective was seen as the key to rural and national prosperity. The Ministry of Home Affairs, in charge of running the New Village Movement, defined it as a “movement in which people cooperate with one another in order to construct better and richer villages, and hence a richer and stronger nation.”⁵⁸

In the 1970s, nation building increasingly came to mean supporting Park’s right to rule indefinitely. In October 1972 Park made his famous Yushin Declaration (also known as the October Revitalizing Reforms or October Restoration) in which he dissolved the National Assembly and the Constitution and effectively declared martial law. The new Yushin Constitution eliminated popular elections and presidential term limits.⁵⁹ Within this context of

⁵⁵ Brandt 1978: 198-199. See also Brandt & Cheong 1979: 15.

⁵⁶ Abelman 1996: 208-209.

⁵⁷ Jager 2003: 79.

⁵⁸ Cha et al. 1997: 491.

⁵⁹ Park 1979: 175-177. Mike Douglass has pointed out the contradictory impulses of Yushin (repression) and the New Village Movement (mobilization); see Douglass 1983: 203. Park, however, saw no contradiction between the two: “The October reforms are in other words, the Saemaul movement, and the Saemaul movement is the same as the October Reforms;” see Park 1979: 202.

heightened authoritarianism, repression and mobilization were used simultaneously to extend the state's power over society. Atul Kohli describes Park's rule in the 1970s as involving the "sustained imposition of the state's will on society and selective, controlled mobilization from below," and he compares Park's use of nationalistic mobilization during the NVM to "interwar fascist regimes" and "neighboring communist China." Mick Moore and Seung-Mi Han also draw comparisons between the NVM and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pointing out that they were similar in terms of the scope of mobilization but different in that Korean local governance structures were not upended.⁶⁰ Despite strong resemblances to China, the tone of the New Village Movement, as Robert Wade and others have observed, was decidedly anti-communist.⁶¹ Practically, the NVM aimed to fight communism by making farmers rich. Park believed strongly that farmers with assets equivalent to "middle-income urban residents" would be strongly anti-communist and that the "Communists would never dare to infiltrate thriving villages where residents work hard and wisely."⁶²

In general, the existing literature characterizes the New Village Movement as a top-down, highly politicized mass campaign aimed at solving the Park regime's rural legitimacy problem. And while scholars might disagree on how to precisely define the NVM and its ideology,⁶³ there

⁶⁰ Moore 1984-1985: 580; Han 2004: 85.

⁶¹ Wade 1982: 149-150; Han 2004: 78.

⁶² Park 1979: 11; *Saemaul* 1976: 19.

⁶³ Han's work highlights the complex and sometimes contradictory ideologies at play in the 1970s and suggests that "state populism" is the most appropriate framework for understanding the NVM; see Han 2004: 78-85, 87-88. Unlike Kohli, Wade considers the term "fascist" misleading because Korea had no mass political party or mass ideology linking the state and civil society; see Wade 1982: 149. Moore believes that the NVM was actually an attempt to create a mass political party for Park; see Moore 1984-1985: 580, 590-591. Ronald Aqua disagrees with this idea; see Aqua 1981: 418.

is a general consensus that the campaign did in fact increase rural support for the regime, even if it failed to bring about real development.⁶⁴ Moreover, among Korean scholars, there is growing support for the idea that without the NVM, Park would not have ruled as long as he did.⁶⁵

This case study seeks to move beyond the idea that the entire reason for the NVM was political, or that its only success was in terms of sustaining Park's rule. Even before the elections that threatened to end his presidency, Park was committed to the idea of a state-led rural modernization campaign. The government saw the NVM not only as a means of bolstering rural legitimacy but also as an effective rural development strategy.

International and Historical Origins

The official narrative of the campaign pinpoints its origins to a village in North Kyongsang province. In August 1969, Park visited the village after heavy flooding and was impressed with how its roads and housing had been quickly repaired and were in better condition than other affected villages. The villagers' example of diligence, self-help and cooperation formed the basis of the Saemaul spirit and provided the inspiration for the campaign.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ In addition to the works already cited, see Burmeister 1988: 66; Aqua 1974a: 61; Aqua 1981: 412, 418; Park 1998: 197; Brandt & Lee 1981: 64.

⁶⁵ This idea came up several times during meetings with scholars at Yonsei University, Korea University, Seoul National University, the Korean Development Institute, and the Korean Academy of Social Sciences.

⁶⁶ *Saemaul* 1975: 19, 21; Kim 1994: 90. According to these sources, the village is called Sindo and is located in Chongdo county, but apparently there are other villages that also claim to be the model that inspired the NVM. Interestingly, the official narrative of the Dazhai campaign in China is very similar. Mao was supposedly impressed with Dazhai's recovery after serious flooding and its refusal to accept government assistance in 1963, and he was inspired by the village to launch a national agricultural campaign based on the principle of self-help. Unlike Dazhai, however, Korean villages were not expected to emulate a particular model during the NVM.

While this story may explain the immediate inspiration for the campaign, its origins can actually be traced to larger, international pressures affecting Korea in the 1970s. Despite the political gains from land reform, South Korea's leaders feared that if North Korea performed better economically then the communists would re-emerge as an opposition force in the countryside. North Korea, according to official statistics, had experienced the highest rate of industrial growth in the socialist world since the Korean War, and had achieved the highest rate of agricultural growth in the entire world in the 1970s.⁶⁷ Park heard reports attributing North Korea's success to the Chollima Movement, an economic modernization drive akin to China's Great Leap Forward.⁶⁸ Both movements likely motivated (if not inspired) Park to launch the New Village Movement. Throughout the 1970s, Park repeatedly called the NVM a "great leap forward."⁶⁹ He also encouraged the competitive emulation of "advanced village units" and the establishment "community kitchens" to relieve women's labor and make it easier for them to participate in the campaign.⁷⁰ These parallels suggest, at the very least, a desire for South Korea to keep up with its communist neighbors and a keen interest in their approach to development.

More than North Korea or China, however, Japan's powerful global status and its historical influence on Korean development stands out as the most important source of inspiration for the New Village Movement. Park was obsessed with turning South Korea into a "second Japan." Atul Kohli writes that Park viewed his own rise to power as a kind of Meiji

⁶⁷ Cumings 1984: 1.

⁶⁸ Moore 1984-1985: 587.

⁶⁹ Park 1979: 152, 167, 204, 222.

⁷⁰ Park 1979: 4-5, 9. Unlike China, in South Korea it was not compulsory to eat in communal kitchens, and private kitchens were actually upgraded as part of the NVM's village renovation program.

Restoration, and with this model in mind Park constructed “a militarized, top-down, repressive, growth-oriented state.”⁷¹ As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the 1930s Japan carried out a modernization program known as the Rural Revitalization Campaign. This campaign, or rather a similar version of it, also took place in colonial South Korea, and it may be understood as the direct precursor of the New Village Movement.⁷²

Launched in 1932, Korea’s Rural Revitalization Campaign aimed to “cultivate consent” for Japanese rule by raising rural living standards.⁷³ Provincial and county officials devised five-year economic rehabilitation plans for every village, which included measures designed to alleviate food shortages and reduce household indebtedness. “Spiritual regeneration” was also emphasized, and values such as social harmony, collectivism and self-sufficiency were promoted.⁷⁴ To implement these plans, councils for rural revitalization were set up in every village, financial cooperatives were mobilized to provide low interest loans for land purchases, and mutual aid associations were called upon to provide supply and marketing services for poor households. The government also recruited village youths to be “mainstays” of the campaign. While its economic achievements were modest, the campaign succeeded at undermining the landlord class, reducing the number of tenancy disputes, and bringing villages into more direct contact with the state.⁷⁵ As scholars Gi-Wook Shin and Do-Hyun Han have observed, when the

⁷¹ Kohli 2004: 87-88.

⁷² Shin & Han make the point that Korea’s campaign was not simply an extension of Meiji Japan’s agrarian social policy. Their work illustrates how the campaign borrowed ideas from Korean agrarianism and incorporated existing rural movements into the campaign; see Shin & Han 1999: 81-83, 95.

⁷³ Shin & Han 1999: 83, 94.

⁷⁴ Shin & Han 1999: 81-85; Ladejinsky 1977: 56-58.

⁷⁵ Shin & Han 1999: 71, 86-95.

New Village Movement is placed in historical perspective, the “parallels to the colonial campaign are unmistakable.” Both campaigns emphasized the “economic and spiritual aspects of rural improvement, including such objectives as crop diversification, improved seed selection, simplification of traditional rituals, respect for traditional norms like filial piety, and loyalty to the nation.”⁷⁶

As for the campaign’s postwar historical origins, some scholars have cited the Rhee government’s 1950s “community development” initiatives, which were supported by the American government and the United Nations. These programs, like the New Village Movement, emphasized improving village infrastructure and addressing social ills like excessive drinking and gambling, but they were small in scale and suffered from a lack of government commitment.⁷⁷ In the 1960s, the Office of Rural Development also outlined a plan for community development, but it never really took off and was eventually eclipsed by the New Village Movement.⁷⁸

On the one hand, the New Village Movement represents an important shift in postwar development policy and the beginning of Korea’s agricultural adjustment period. On the other hand, it also represents a return to Korea’s colonial past and to Park Chung-hee’s earlier ideas for rural transformation laid out in the National Reconstruction Movement of the 1960s. The NVM was not simply about rebuilding Park’s rural base after two very close presidential elections, as the existing literature suggests. Political motivations aside, the NVM was perceived as a viable

⁷⁶ Shin & Han 1999: 96.

⁷⁷ Chung 2009: 15-16; Oh 1998: 80; You 1986: 45-46; Kim 1981: 48-50.

⁷⁸ Kim 1981: 51-53.

rural development strategy, comparable to successful strategies pursued in North Korea, China, Japan and colonial Korea.

Methods of Implementation: Institutional Context, Bureaucratic and Mass Mobilization

Korea has an extremely centralized political system, stemming from its Confucian culture, dynastic and colonial history, and its postwar experience with the Park and Chun military regimes (1961-1987).⁷⁹ Not surprisingly, Korea's postwar industrial and agricultural policies have been implemented in a top-down manner. Larry Burmeister and Mick Moore have both emphasized the "statist" nature of Korean agricultural policy, which has changed only gradually since 1980 with market liberalization and the rise of commercial agricultural firms, especially in the livestock sector.⁸⁰ The New Village Movement, despite its calls for mass participation, was no exception to this statist pattern. Being so centralized (and militarized), Korea's political system during the Park era was conducive to sustained bureaucratic mobilization, which made the campaign possible and ensured it was implemented in a tightly controlled, top-down fashion.

Park Jin-hwan, special advisor to Park Chung-hee and architect of the New Village Movement, attributes much of the campaign's success to the president's strong political will, which had the effect of mobilizing every level of the bureaucracy.⁸¹ Saemaul promotional councils were established at the central, provincial, city, county, and township levels to coordinate campaign activities by bringing together the leaders of government and civic institutions. Saemaul bureaus were also appended to county and township government offices,

⁷⁹ Boyer & Ahn 1991: 23; Douglass 1983: 202; Steinberg 1982: 1.

⁸⁰ Burmeister 2000; Burmeister 1988: 1-5; Moore 1988: 114, 117, 120-122.

⁸¹ Park 1998: 91, 216-217. See also Cha et al. 1997: 491.

and all government personnel, including local police and military units, were required to work on the campaign at least part-time.⁸² The Ministry of Home Affairs, not the Ministry of Agriculture, was charged with leading the Saemaul promotional councils. These two ministries fought for control of the campaign, but ultimately the more powerful Ministry of Home Affairs was chosen because it controlled the police and local administration. At the local level, this meant that county governments were primarily responsible for campaign implementation. The NACF and the ORD, both of which were controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture, were in charge of production-related programs such as the dissemination of Tong'il (a high-yield variety of rice, see discussion below), but otherwise played a supporting role in the campaign.⁸³ After many decades of weak and fragmented attempts, Vincent Brandt and Ji Woong Cheong observe, Korea had “finally achieved a coordinated administration of rural development policies.”⁸⁴

Below the township, village development committees were strengthened along lineage or neighborhood lines (i.e. *ban* in Korean; the equivalent of Chinese or Taiwanese teams). Prior to the 1970s, these committees functioned as mutual aid societies,⁸⁵ but during the NVM they became the focal point for mobilization in the village. The committee, also known as the Saemaul council, normally consisted of about 15 members, including the village Saemaul leaders (one man and one woman), the village head, the *ban* leaders, and other influential residents of the village. The committee was also comprised of different departments related to specific programs

⁸² You 1986: 53; Burmeister 1988: 66; Chung 2009: 41-43; Brandt & Lee 1981: 68-69; Ban et al. 1980: 276.

⁸³ Ban et al. 1980: 278-279; Steinberg 1982: 17; Wade 1982: 22-23.

⁸⁴ Brandt & Cheong 1979: 17.

⁸⁵ Traditionally, there were many types of mutual aid societies at the village level. Wade remarks that since 1961, however, the only private ones were those providing assistance with wedding and funeral expenses; see Wade 1982: 91.

or special groups like youth and women. Though separate from local branches of the NACF and the reserve army, the committee also carried out some limited credit and defense functions.⁸⁶ Unlike the Saemaul promotional councils, the village development committee was considered a private organization, but in practice it was closely connected to township and county officials, who, at the height of the campaign, visited the villages several times a day.⁸⁷

According to Brandt's scholarship on rural Korea, before the New Village Movement, Korean officials largely adhered to the traditional Chinese administrative practice of leaving the village alone "so long as taxes were paid and there was no rebellion." Villagers were distrustful of outside authority, and village heads rarely functioned as agents of change.⁸⁸ The biggest accomplishment of the NVM, Brandt believes, was the development of stronger links between the village and the bureaucracy, which provided the village with better access to developmental resources.⁸⁹ The campaign also changed Korea's "status quo oriented bureaucrats" into "enthusiastic activists dedicated to transformation of the countryside."⁹⁰ To be clear, increased state penetration of villages during the NVM made campaign implementation easier but did not necessarily make the government more responsive. Officials' commitment to rural development stemmed more from administrative pressure than popular pressure, and the fact that villagers were cut off from the decision-making process limited officials' capacity to respond effectively to villagers' needs.

⁸⁶ Chung 2009: 49-51; Park 1998: 63-64.

⁸⁷ Aqua 1974a: 60.

⁸⁸ Brandt 1971: 12-13.

⁸⁹ Brandt & Lee 1981: 91, 119-120.

⁹⁰ Brandt & Cheong 1979: 17. See also Brandt & Lee 1981: 90; Ban et al. 1980: 389.

NVM projects were generally initiated at the central level and passed down the bureaucratic chain of command until it reached the villages. County governments were not autonomous since about 80% of their funds derived from the central government.⁹¹ Township governments functioned as outposts of the county government, and being closest to the villages geographically and culturally (most staff were native to the area), officials at this level were under the most pressure to produce results.⁹² Because of this extreme administrative pressure, Ronald Aqua reports, about 90% of NVM projects were “handed down” and less than 10% were locally initiated “special projects.”⁹³ Once a project reached the village, there was presumably some bargaining that took place between village and township officials, but the village’s dependence on government resources gave the government veto power over village decision-making, and NVM projects were almost always adopted. Villager “participation” essentially meant complying with government policy and contributing labor, cash and materials to NVM projects. To generate high levels of participation, different methods were used, ranging from peer pressure and shaming, to withholding access to agricultural inputs and credit, to outright physical coercion.⁹⁴

The term mass mobilization conjures up images of strong leaders rallying villagers to make sacrifices for a cause that the government has imposed on them. Yet, mobilization without a popular base of support for campaign objectives is unsustainable. If the majority of farmers are strongly opposed to the campaign or even just apathetic, then coercion and indoctrination will be

⁹¹ Wade 1982: 22-23; Ban et al. 1980: 268; Douglass 1983: 203.

⁹² Boyer & Ahn 1991: 27, 37-38; Park 1998: 62-63.

⁹³ Aqua 1974a: 45, 66-68.

⁹⁴ Reed 1981: 283-288; Brandt & Lee 1981: 94-98; Jang 1983: 2.91; Abelmann 1996: 211-212; Wade 1982: 96-97, 147-148; Brandt & Cheong 1979: 15-16.

costly and ineffective. In Park-era Korea, farmers' mobilized participation in the New Village Movement was certainly different than the kind of decentralized, democratic process normally prescribed by development practitioners. Nonetheless, the campaign's longevity suggests it enjoyed at least some degree of genuine popular support. As Seung-Mi Han and others have correctly pointed out, the NVM tapped into farmers' long held desire for a better, modern life. Many villages, which before the NVM had received virtually no development assistance of any kind, welcomed the arrival of free cement and other supplies with enthusiasm. Even the leaders of anti-government peasant movements such as the Catholic Farmers' Union at first welcomed the New Village Movement.⁹⁵

To be sure, villagers were exposed to a heavy dose of propaganda during the NVM. In Maoist fashion, loudspeakers were installed in the villages, and every day at 5:45 a.m. villagers were awakened by the "Song of Saemaul," which was allegedly penned by Park Chung-hee himself. Just as the song called on villagers to "work while fighting" and "fight while working," NVM leaders frequently used militaristic exhortations while conducting meetings and directing collective work.⁹⁶ Symbols of the movement were ubiquitous. The Saemaul flag, featuring a green and yellow image of a three-leaf bud to represent the three parts of the Saemaul spirit, was displayed on all public buildings and is still commonly found in both rural and urban parts of Korea today.⁹⁷ NVM leaders also wore green caps and armbands with the same logo, which suggested state backing of their authority.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Han 2004: 75-76; Park 1998: 214-15; Moore 1984-1985: 579-580, 587; Ban et al. 1980: 389.

⁹⁶ Park 1979: 201; Park 1998: 179-180; Meier 1982: 4-6.

⁹⁷ Chung 2009: 100; Park 1998: 178-179.

⁹⁸ Han 2004: 79-80.

To generate mass participation, the New Village Movement had to fundamentally change authority relations within the village. Korean sources emphasize that prior to the NVM, women had virtually no influence over village affairs. Park Jin-hwan writes that women's participation was "a new concept for a country embedded in the Confucian cultural tradition where voices of women have been neglected. The election of female village leaders induced rural women to organize for the first time in the history of rural Korea."⁹⁹ In practice, not all villages elected female Saemaul leaders, but it seems that in most villages women's associations were actively involved in the campaign. They organized anti-gambling and anti-drinking campaigns and participated in the promotion of family planning.¹⁰⁰ They also placed "rice savings jars" in kitchens and encouraged women to deposit a spoonful of rice before each meal. At the end of the month, the rice was collected by the women's association and used for collective projects such as constructing children's playgrounds or taking elderly villagers on "filial piety" tours, normally to NVM model villages.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Park 1998: 111-112. See also Park 1979: 4.

¹⁰⁰ Birth control was heavily promoted during the NVM; see Meier 1982. A popular comedic film called "Mission Sex Control" (the Korean title "Live Well" is much less racy), released in 2006, tells the story of how one village became a famous NVM success case by achieving a 0% birth rate. Because of this film, younger Koreans are most familiar with this aspect of the campaign.

¹⁰¹ Park 1979: 9; Park 1998: 112-115, 157-158; Kim 1981: 367, 373-374. During the Great Leap Forward, women were expected to turn over household responsibilities to the communes and labor alongside men; see Schurmann 1966: 472. Besides the Leap and the NVM, it is not clear that the other campaigns in this study had a major impact on gender relations in the villages. During Japan's Rural Revitalization Campaign and Taiwan's Community Development Campaign, women were mobilized to participate in home economics and health-related extension programs; see Partner 2001: 508-9; Wu & Jiao 1978: 169; Chen 1973: 34-36, 89-91, 120-121. During the New Socialist Countryside in China, some places set up women's councils to mobilize women for village renovation and agricultural cooperative programs. Interview with women's council leaders in Longnan, Jiangxi 7/2010.

As relatively young men and women (usually in their thirties or forties) from modest family backgrounds, village Saemaul leaders posed a challenge for the traditional village elite. The village chief was usually an elderly, well-educated man from an influential family. The New Village Movement, however, promoted an egalitarian ethos as the foundation for collective action. As Han has observed, Confucianism was upheld as a ruling ideology at the national level (i.e. the Yushin ideal of absolute loyalty to the state), but was dismantled at the village level as Saemaul leaders and the egalitarianism they embodied became more powerful.¹⁰²

Unlike the village chief who was appointed and paid a salary, NVM leaders were, for the most part, elected volunteers.¹⁰³ They enjoyed some benefits such as financial help for their children's education, discounts on train and bus tickets, and priority access to NACF credit. More importantly, the job of NVM leader was considered prestigious. Travel to conferences and trainings, phone calls and letters of encouragement from the government (with special postcards to the Minister of Home Affairs), and possible recognition by Park himself all served as strong incentives for NVM leaders.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, Park played an important role in empowering Saemaul leaders. Throughout the 1970s, Park honored outstanding leaders with the Presidential Saemaul

¹⁰² Han 2004: 78-82. See also Jager 2003: 87. Writing before the NVM, Brandt notes how land reform also undermined Confucianism and strengthened egalitarianism in the villages. His "dualistic model of village social relations" is based on these different cultural impulses; see Brandt 1971: 18, 25-29.

¹⁰³ Park Chung-hee frequently described the Saemaul movement as "a training ground for Korean democracy"; see Park 1979: 10, 160, 208, 245. Considering the high levels of repression under Yushin, this rhetoric seems like empty propaganda, but at least for some places, elections did alter village authority relations. Of course, elections did not occur in every village, and the state intervened heavily in the leadership selection process, making it more top-down than bottom-up. Yet, it was more democratic than the selection of village chiefs who were always appointed; see You 1986; Aqua 1974: 68; Wade 1982: 93-94; Brandt & Lee 1981: 65; Abelmann 1996: 209-210.

¹⁰⁴ Chung 2009: 55; Oh 1998: 88; Boyer & Ahn 1991: 101-103; Brandt & Lee 1981: 69-70; Han 2004: 80.

Medal and regularly invited Saemaul leaders to present their “success cases” at nationally televised monthly meetings of the Economic Planning Board. The narratives contained certain predictable elements that underscored the themes of self-sacrifice and the egalitarian community—the leader coming from a “typical poor rural village” and a “humble background,” encountering some kind of difficulty, struggling alone to overcome that difficulty, winning the trust and support of fellow villagers, and finally achieving success.¹⁰⁵

These success stories were also used during Saemaul trainings. The National Saemaul Leadership Training Institute, established in 1972, provided short two-week courses for village NVM leaders on “democratic decision-making,” production technology, bridge construction, farm house renovation, as well as national security and economic development.¹⁰⁶ In 1974, the institute’s training program was extended to central officials, business leaders, intellectuals, priests and monks. In keeping with the NVM’s egalitarian spirit, these groups trained alongside farmers. The institute trained a total of 46,420 people in the 1970s, and about 25% of trainees came from the ranks of the political and social elite.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the Ministry of Education conducted Saemaul trainings for millions of farmers at “winter schools” (held at schools during students’ winter break).¹⁰⁸ Saemaul training in 1970s Korea, like Maoist China, emphasized the need for officials and farmers to learn by “eating, living, and laboring together,” and the sharing

¹⁰⁵ For English translations of six famous NVM success cases, see Kim 1981: 357-396. See also Park 1998: 160; Jager 2003: 92-93; Chung 2009: 99; Kim 1994: 96.

¹⁰⁶ Women received special training related to childcare, health and nutrition; see Park 1998: 153, 157-158. In 1970 Taiwan set up the Community Development Research and Training Center, but as it is rarely mentioned in Taiwanese sources, its activities were presumably much more limited than the Saemaul Center in Korea; see Lin 1996: 18; Zhuang 1972: 13.

¹⁰⁷ Park 1998: 183-189.

¹⁰⁸ Keim 1974: 860; Brandt & Lee 1981: 69; You 1986: 58.

of Saemaul success stories was quite similar to CCP propaganda about “model laborers” and “advanced units.”

Finally, the New Village Movement employed the method of competitive, selective assistance to generate mass participation in the campaign. Between October 1970 and June 1971 each village (more than 33,000 in total) received 335 bags of cement to be used for village infrastructure projects. Following government inspection, in 1972 only those villages considered to have made significant improvements (about 16,000 in total) were given an additional 500 bags of cement and one ton of steel rods.¹⁰⁹ Villages were also grouped into the categories of basic, self-help, and self-sufficient. Based on standardized criteria related to village infrastructure, agricultural production, and household incomes, villages demonstrating improvement could move out of the basic category into the self-help and self-sufficient categories.¹¹⁰ Obsessed with fostering a strong rural work ethic, Park insisted that government aid be channeled to self-help and self-sufficient villages, and specifically to those villages exhibiting a strong commitment to the campaign as measured by residents’ labor, cash and material contributions. The dramatic and highly visible transformation of villages receiving aid induced neighboring villages to participate

¹⁰⁹ Boyer & Ahn 1991: 34; Kim 1994: 90-92.

¹¹⁰ For a list of criteria, see Brandt & Lee 1981: 71-72; Park 1998: 55-61, 110; Wade 1982: 96. Park wanted all villages to achieve self-sufficient status by 1981, defined as having an average income of more than 1.4 million Korean won; see Park 1979: 205, 219. According to official statistics, in 1972 the breakdown of village types was 53% basic, 40% self-help and 7% self-sufficient. By 1977, it had changed to 0% basic, 33% self-help and 67% self-sufficient; see Douglass 1977: 201. In 1980 President Chun Doo-hwan reclassified villages as self-sufficient, self-managing, and welfare. Welfare status was defined as having an average income of more than 4 million Korean won; see Boyer & Ahn 1991: 47-48.

in the campaign, if only for the sake of keeping up appearances. In many parts of Korea, the pattern of coercion and resistance was gradually replaced by competitive emulation.¹¹¹

In summary, the New Village Movement occurred within a very centralized political-institutional context. Implementation of the campaign relied on high levels of bureaucratic and mass mobilization. Competition between neighboring villages for resources and status were important drivers of mass participation during the NVM. Yet, as Burmeister and Wade have noted, high levels of state penetration and inter-village competition also had the effect of making villages more dependent on the state and atomizing rural society in a way that prevented grassroots articulation of economic and political interests.¹¹² The mixed development outcomes of the campaign are indeed a testament to the drawbacks of the campaign's overly top-down approach.

Impact on Korean Rural Development: A Case of Mixed Outcomes

The New Village Movement evolved over time to incorporate different development goals. From 1970 to 1973, the campaign was mostly focused on changing the village environment—paved roads, new and renovated housing, tap water, electricity, community activity halls, et cetera. After 1974, the campaign's emphasis shifted to agricultural production, rural industrialization and other activities designed to raise rural incomes. The movement was

¹¹¹ In some cases, officials forcibly tore down traditional brush fences and thatch roofs, but this kind of coercion became less necessary as more farmers came to embrace the campaign; see Brandt & Cheong 1979: 15-16. Villagers were most resistant to making land donations for road construction; see Ho 1979: 653; Brandt & Lee 1981: 91-93.

¹¹² Burmeister 1988: 45-46; Wade 1982: 101, 147-148.

also extended to cities, schools, and factories. In these arenas, the campaign was more ideological than development oriented.¹¹³

Following Park's assassination in 1979, the movement was weakened but nonetheless continued under Chun Doo-hwan's presidency in the 1980s. The Central Headquarters for Saemaul Undong (now called the National Council of Saemaul Undong) was established as a private organization in 1980. However, since President Chun's younger brother Chun Kyung-hwan was placed in charge of the headquarters, the Saemaul movement maintained a quasi-governmental status. In the mid-1980s, Chun Kyung-hwan was exposed for corruption and attacked for orchestrating a deal to import cattle from New Zealand, something that threatened domestic livestock producers and, coinciding with the democracy movement, set off mass anti-government demonstrations. This scandal severely tarnished Saemaul's reputation, and by the late 1980s virtually all Saemaul programs at the village level had ceased.¹¹⁴ It was not until after democratization that Saemaul would reinvent itself as a multiple-purpose community service organization.¹¹⁵ The discussion that follows is limited to the impact of the Saemaul Movement on rural Korea in the 1970s.

The New Village Movement dramatically transformed the village environment. Korean sources often characterize rural conditions before the NVM as "life with a kerosene lamp under a

¹¹³ As part of "Urban Saemaul," city residents were expected to clean the streets collectively, and even Park swept the streets in front of the presidential office. Park's eldest daughter Park Keun Hae also launched a spin-off campaign called the New Spirit Movement, which promoted "thousand-year-old Korean ethics" such as loyalty, filial piety, and respecting nature; see Park 1979: 14-15, 103-104; Park 1998: 172; *Saemaul* 1976: 122-125; Park (Keun Hae) 1979.

¹¹⁴ Chira 1988; Boyer & Ahn 1991: 47-51; Park 1998: 198-200.

¹¹⁵ In recent years Saemaul has focused on raising environmental awareness and green initiatives. In 2008 President Lee Myong-bak attended the annual National Saemaul Leaders Conference, which was the first time a president had attended since the 1980s. Interview with officials at the Saemaul Central Training Institute 10/2009.

thatched roof.” In 1970, about 80% of rural homes had thatched roofs made of rice straw that had to be replaced each year, and only about 20% of homes had electricity. Less than 10% of all roads were paved, and the majority of villages, about 60%, were inaccessible by car.¹¹⁶ In just these three areas—roofs, electricity, and roads—the NVM brought about remarkable changes. Official statistics report that by 1979, 100% of rural homes had replaced thatch roofs with slate or tile roofs, about 98% of rural homes had installed electricity (and most had purchased televisions), and 100% of villages were accessible by car. In total, about 80,000 bridges and 43,000 kilometers of rural roads had been built, according to Park, with “shovels, picks and crude tools, using our bare hands, heads and backs to carry earth and stones.”¹¹⁷

Rural housing was emphasized throughout the campaign. In the early years, roof replacement, in particular the installation of blue tile roofs, was considered an important symbol of village modernization. In later years, after the roof replacement program was completed, the government shifted its focus from basic renovation to new home construction.¹¹⁸ Seong-jun Jang, in his comprehensive study of Korean rural housing in the 1970s, writes that housing development prior to the NVM was largely an autonomous process. As the campaign evolved, however, rural housing became a “factor in the administration,” something that had to be

¹¹⁶ Park 1998: 1, 70-72. There are different estimates for the number of villages accessible by car. According to 1969 Ministry of Construction data, 33% of villages had “access roads of such poor quality that major truck deliveries and pickups could not be made as needed;” see Rossmiller 1972: 28-30.

¹¹⁷ Park 1979: 3-6, 240, 257; Park 1998: 136-137; Kim 1994: 94-95; Moore 1984-1985: 588-589. Official data distinguishes between the construction of village roads and farm feeder roads, which expanded by about 43,000 km and 61,000 km, respectively; see Park 2009: 120; Lee 1981: 433.

¹¹⁸ Jang 1983: 2.13-2.16.

“finished” instead of allowed to evolve organically.¹¹⁹ Jang attributes this change to two main causes: First, because of high levels of rural-to-urban migration “there was little voluntary reconstruction of houses by the private sector.” Most housing was dilapidated by the 1970s, and the government was really the only institution interested in addressing this problem. Second, the government viewed rural housing as a redistributive good. Jang writes, “The underdevelopment of the rural area legitimized a paternalistic control over every detail ostensibly for the public good, for the enlightenment of the people and for a just distribution of national wealth.”¹²⁰

In 1976, as part of the NVM, the government launched the Rural House and Village Structure Improvement Project, which set the goal of reconstructing all dilapidated housing within 10 years. This program affected about 190,000 homes between 1976 and 1979, mainly located along expressways, railroads and near major tourist sites. In fact, the central government openly encouraged the relocation of farmers to new housing developments along the highways as a way of advertising the achievements of the NVM.¹²¹ Unlike the Chinese case where housing relocations have often been compulsory, it is unclear the extent to which rural Koreans were forced or pressured to relocate during the NVM. Still, it is quite apparent that the NVM’s village improvement program exhibited strong authoritarian features.

Starting with the initial cement distribution phase of the campaign, the government set uniform standards for village beautification that had to be followed in order to continue receiving external support. Approved projects included reforestation, widening and paving village access

¹¹⁹ Jang 1983: 1.2-1.3, 4.2-4.4.

¹²⁰ Jang 1983: 1.2-1.3.

¹²¹ The Ministry of Home Affairs defined dilapidated housing as being more than 30 years old, smaller than 23 square meters, and/or poorly located. In 1975 about 19% of rural homes (540,000 out of 2.9 million) were considered dilapidated; see Jang 1983: 1.3, 2.17-2.34, 2.76.

roads, repairing dikes and ponds, and constructing compost barns and outdoor laundry facilities. Villagers' were also expected to renovate their homes by upgrading kitchens and toilets and replacing traditional brush fences and thatch roofs.¹²² Government sources insist there was some flexibility and room for innovation. For example, the construction of village halls was apparently initiated by peasants and later incorporated into the campaign. Yet, as an extremely top-down, bureaucratically orchestrated campaign, the NVM was mostly an exercise in standardizing and rationalizing villages, or as James Scott would say, making rural society more "legible." The government's commemorative Saemaul pictorials indeed underscore this point; they convey, on the one hand, dramatic improvements in the village environment, but on the other hand a kind of rigid uniformity among renovated villages.¹²³

The state was heavily involved in designing, planning and constructing rural housing. Starting in the mid-1970s, the government released annual blueprints for "modern" Saemaul housing, which increasingly came to mean "Mediterranean summer villas," or rather a Korean interpretation of that style.¹²⁴ The NACF made long-term credit available to farmers who wanted to renovate or rebuild their homes, but it maintained strict control over expenditures and building

¹²² Villages receiving cement from the government were expected to follow standards laid out in the "Ten Projects for Constructing Better Villages." These guidelines were later expanded to 20 approved projects; see Jang 1983: 2.29-30; Boyer & Ahn 1991: 33.

¹²³ See for example *Saemaul* 1975. Most of the Saemaul success stories, some of which can also be found in these pictorials, suggest that villagers initially resisted these changes. The extent of resistance is difficult to ascertain, however, as the success stories and other publications on the NVM are focused on explaining how peasant resistance was ultimately overcome.

¹²⁴ Park 1979: 5, 256-257; Wade 1982: 97. These blueprints, known as standard designs for rural homes (SDRH), were produced by the Korea Housing Corporation and published by the Ministry of Construction. To promote the designs, the NACF built model homes to be used during Saemaul leadership trainings. The SDRH were applied uniformly throughout Korea, and it was not until 1980 that provincial SDRH were introduced; see Jang 1983: 1.4, 2.19, 2.42-2.45, 2.53-2.58.

materials by distributing the loans directly to construction companies instead of farm households.¹²⁵ Despite increasing levels of migration to the cities, many farmers took advantage of the opportunity to build a new home. Vincent Brandt and Man-gap Lee found during field research that village-wide investment in housing construction was not only a product of farmers' improved income position but also of farmers' concern for status.¹²⁶ Similarly, David Steinberg found that even poor households invested in housing construction during the NVM, but he attributes this mostly to administrative pressure: "Often one can see a modern façade masking a traditional home, indicating that the government quota of housing improvements was met, at least on paper."¹²⁷

Even though secondary sources are quite critical of the New Village Movement's authoritarian characteristics and its focus on "cosmetic" changes to the village environment, they almost universally concede that the campaign resulted in significant improvements in village infrastructure. Making up for two decades of rural neglect, the state-led New Village Movement was undeniably successful at strengthening and expanding rural infrastructure (see Table 4.2).

¹²⁵ Park 1998: 102; Jang 1983: 2.77.

¹²⁶ Brandt & Lee 1981: 117.

¹²⁷ Steinberg 1982: 17-18.

4.2: Achievements of the New Village Movement, 1970s

<i>Project</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Completed</i>
Village road expansion	26,266 km	43,558 km	166%
Farm feeder road construction	49,167 km	61,797 km	126%
Bridge construction	76,749 bridges	79,516 bridges	104%
Reservoir construction	10,122 reservoirs	10,742 reservoirs	106%
Irrigation channel renovation	22,787 channels	28,352 channels	124%
Irrigation raceway renovation	4,043 km	4,442 km	109%
Embankment renovation	17,239 km	9,180 km	53%
Village hall construction	35,608 halls	37,012 halls	104%
Warehouse construction	34,665 warehouses	22,143 warehouses	64%
Housing improvement	544,000 homes	225,000 homes	42%
Village layout improvement		2,747 villages	
Sewage system renovation	8,654 km	15,559 km	179%
Electricity installation	2,834,000 homes	2,777,500 homes	98%
Telephone line installation		345,240 homes	
Factory Saemaul	950 factories	727 factories	75%
Reforestation	744,354 hectares	347,153 hectares	47%

Source: Park 2009: 210; Kang 1999: 24.

Compared to its success in the realm of village infrastructure, the campaign fell short of achieving its production and income goals and in fact created a number of problems for the rural economy. The main programs related to agricultural production and income generation were Tong'il cultivation (i.e. Korea's green revolution), regional development, and rural industrialization.

To stimulate agricultural production and narrow the rural-urban income gap, in the late 1960s Park began shifting the terms of trade in favor of agriculture. Continuing with this trend, in the early 1970s, the government adopted a "high rice price policy" in order to diffuse Tong'il, a high yield variety developed by the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines and first cultivated in Korea in 1972. The Tong'il green revolution program resulted in impressive gains in rice yields (see Table 4.3), and by 1976 Korea had achieved the second highest yields in

Asia after Japan.¹²⁸ Burmeister's work reveals that despite some initial resistance, the homogeneity of Korean agriculture ensured that the technology was rapidly and widely diffused. Moreover, Park skillfully played on Koreans' collective emotions, declaring in 1977 that South Korea was ready to extend food aid to the North.¹²⁹

The high rice price policy, however, proved to be extremely costly for the government since it insisted on subsidizing both producers and consumers, who by all accounts preferred the taste of traditional varieties to Tong'il. The government created extra-budgetary accounts (the fertilizer and grain management funds) to manage its subsidies, and by 1974 the deficit of these accounts was more than 2% of Korea's GNP. Unable to keep up with the costs, the government eventually abandoned the high rice price policy in the late 1970s.¹³⁰ Tong'il was also abandoned after it proved vulnerable to blast outbreaks and cold temperatures.¹³¹ The failure of Tong'il greatly damaged the reputation of the ORD and the NACF, which had used coercive measures such as destroying the seedbeds of non-Tong'il varieties to implement the campaign.¹³²

¹²⁸ Park 1998: 20, 124; Ho 1979: 653; Kim 1994: 93; Douglass 1981: 196; Wade 1982: 16-17.

¹²⁹ Burmeister 1988: 62, 66, 72.

¹³⁰ Only fertilizer and Tong'il grain subsidies were abandoned; see Park 1998: 20, 124; Ho 1979: 649-653. Korean farmers nonetheless continued to receive above-market price supports for rice production as part of the government's drive to achieve grain self-sufficiency; see Steinberg 1982: 16. For data on the rate of grain self-sufficiency from 1961 to 1994, see Cha et al. 1997: 475.

¹³¹ Burmeister 1988: 62-63; Francks 1999: 138.

¹³² Wade 1982: 99-100.

4.3: Rice Variety and Production Data, 1970-1983

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tong'il adoption (% Acreage)</i>	<i>Tong'il yields (tons per hectare)</i>	<i>Traditional variety yields (tons per hectare)</i>	<i>Total yields (million tons)</i>
1970	0		3.3	3.94
1971	0		3.4	4.00
1972	16	3.9	3.2	3.98
1973	10	4.8	3.4	4.23
1974	15	4.7	3.5	4.42
1975	23	5.0	3.5	4.63
1976	44	4.8	4.0	5.18
1977	54	5.5	4.2	5.97
1978	85	4.9	4.4	5.78
1979	61	4.6	4.4	5.46
1980	50			3.60
1981	27			4.92
1982	33			5.12
1983	34			5.33

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry data, cited in Burmeister 1988: 61.

The regional development program was aimed at transforming the Han, Kum, Yongsan and Naktong river basins into major economic centers with large-scale, specialized agricultural sectors. In these areas, about 370,000 hectares of agricultural land was rezoned in an effort to create large mechanized farms.¹³³ Medium-sized “joint farms” were also promoted as a way of scaling up agriculture, but these efforts largely failed.¹³⁴ With the exception of the livestock industry, the New Village Movement was unsuccessful at promoting scale agriculture. The number of farm machines increased substantially, but their use was concentrated at the household or village level.¹³⁵ Perhaps because of the NVM’s original focus on village-level projects and inter-village competition, it was difficult to elevate the campaign to the regional

¹³³ Park 1979: 58, 66, 111; Cha et al. 1997: 476.

¹³⁴ Wade 1982: 99-100.

¹³⁵ Francks 1999: 139-140. For data on farm mechanization from 1951 to 1975, see Ban et al. 1980: 75.

level. Like Taiwan and Japan, Korea's small household farm proved resilient to the state's agricultural modernization efforts.

Rural industrialization was promoted as part of the "Factory Saemaul" campaign.¹³⁶

While it is unclear whether Korean policymakers felt the NVM would actually stem the tide of rural-to-urban migration,¹³⁷ at the very least they hoped that it would reduce the rate of long-distance migration by creating off-farm employment opportunities outside of Seoul and Pusan.¹³⁸

In the early 1970s, the government provided companies with incentives to locate their factories in rural areas; these included preferential loans, tax breaks, priority installation of electricity and telephone networks, and, in some cases, product purchasing contracts with government firms.

However, because the government preferred to locate these factories in small townships, the available labor supply and infrastructure was simply not competitive with the cities. At best, the campaign had a modest impact on the rural economy: Between 1973 and 1976, the government authorized the development of 693 Saemaul factories but only about half of them survived, and those that did survive were tied to urban centers. In 1977, out of a total of 361 factories in

¹³⁶ In urban areas, Factory Saemaul was promoted as an ideological, social control mechanism designed to address the problem of management-labor relations; see Kohli 2004: 101; Park 1979: 252.

¹³⁷ Han believes the government was not actually trying to curb or reverse migration with the NVM; see Han 2004: 76-77, 91. At least publicly, however, Park said he hoped the NVM would entice young people to "stop leaving for the cities" or induce those in the cities "to return to their villages;" see Park 1979: 148, 199-200.

¹³⁸ Between 1949 and 1970, the population of Seoul increased 5-fold, and the population of Pusan increased 4-fold; see You 1986: 30-31. Just looking at the years 1973-1978, 1.2 million people migrated to Seoul, of whom 68% were from rural areas; see Boyer & Ahn 1991: 55.

operation, 240 were located within 30 miles of Seoul, Pusan and Taegu. Saemaul factories in these areas accounted for 79% of production output and 73% of employment.¹³⁹

The New Village Movement also failed to reduce the rural-urban income gap. With the exception of 1974-1975,¹⁴⁰ between 1963 and 1985 the average farm income, as measured per worker, was consistently lower than 40% of the average non-farm income.¹⁴¹ In the long run, Korea's green revolution, regional development and rural industrialization programs failed to raise rural incomes high enough to make staying in the countryside more appealing than leaving. Between 1970 and 1990, more than half of the rural population migrated to urban areas, causing the rural population to drop from 14.4 million to 6.7 million, or from 45% to only 15% of the total population.¹⁴² Survey data reveals that the New Village Movement did little to change Koreans' aspiration for an urban lifestyle, if not for themselves than for their children, and by the 1980s most farmers had become disillusioned with farming.¹⁴³

In addition, the New Village Movement placed a heavy financial burden on villages. In order to receive government assistance villages were expected to come up with matching funds, which could take the form of cash, labor or material donations. Actual government investment in the NVM was much lower than the official propaganda would suggest (see Table 4.4). For the whole decade, the government covered only about 37% of the total cost of the NVM; and with

¹³⁹ At the height of the campaign in 1976, about 49,000 people were employed in Saemaul factories; see Ho 1979: 653-658; Francks 1999: 141; Park 1998: 142-145, 212-213.

¹⁴⁰ Korean government sources assert that the income gap was reversed in 1974, but they are normally measuring total household income instead of farm income; see Park 1979: 231, 241; Kang 1999: 50; Kihl 1982: 6; Cha et al. 1997: 573.

¹⁴¹ Park 2009: 119; Douglass 1983: 191.

¹⁴² Cha et al. 1997: 75.

¹⁴³ Keim 1974: 860; Han 2004: 72-73, 85-86; Moore 1984-1985: 595.

the exception of 1975, the government never spent more than 5% of its tax revenue on the campaign. Since these averages also include NVM expenditures for cities, factories and schools, the actual burden on villagers was probably much higher than 63%. Both Hsiao and Ho, for example, estimate that villagers covered up to 78% of the total cost.¹⁴⁴

4.4: Annual Expenditures on the New Village Movement, 1970s (in Billions Won)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Government expenditures</i>	<i>Community expenditures</i>	<i>Total expenditures</i>	<i>Government expenditures as % tax revenue</i>	<i>Government expenditures as % GDP</i>
1971	4	8	12	.38%	.12%
1972	4	29	33	.29%	.09%
1973	17	79	96	1.24%	.31%
1974	31	102	133	1.55%	.40%
1975	165	131	296	5.17%	1.59%
1976	165	157	322	3.76%	1.15%
1977	181	286	467	3.67%	.99%
1978	233	401	634	3.63%	.94%
1979	227	531	758	2.66%	.72%
Total	1027 (37.3%)	1724 (62.7%)	2751 (100%)	Annual average= 2.48%	Annual average= .70%

Source: Park 2009: 126.

The NVM affected farmers differently depending on their income position in the village. Survey data from Brandt & Lee show that poor and landless farmers were especially reluctant to work (without pay) on projects that increased the productivity of more prosperous farmers' land; and while 80% of respondents said their standard of living was better in 1976 than in 1971, many complained that NVM projects "only help the rich."¹⁴⁵ Jang's housing study even suggests that the poor were sometimes pushed out of the villages: "Not a few poor people, who could not

¹⁴⁴ Hsiao 1981: 95-96; Ho 1979: 652. See also Brandt & Lee 1981: 97.

¹⁴⁵ In total, 263 farmers from 4 different villages were surveyed; see Brandt & Lee 1981: 91-93, 100-102, 107-109. See also Brandt & Cheong 1979: 17; Aqua 1974a: 67; Abelmann 1996: 211; Park 2009: 117-118, 130-134.

afford the reconstruction, even with big loans, were unable to participate in the project and had to move out of the villages.” Moreover, since out-migration meant there was no real market for rural housing, Jang reasons, “debts could not be cancelled out by the increasing market value of houses.” Farmers who remained in the village were strapped with devalued homes, decaying communal infrastructure, and heavy debts.¹⁴⁶ It is estimated that between 1978 and 1983 average farm household debts rose from 110,000 won to nearly 1.3 million won.¹⁴⁷ Tenant farming increased in the 1970s partly as a result of the rural debt problem. Unlike Taiwan where off-farm employment was available in the countryside, Korean farmers struggling to make a living in the 1970s were forced to either migrate to the cities or engage in tenant farming. The share of tenant farmers increased from about 27% in 1960, to 36% in 1977, to 65% in 1985.¹⁴⁸

The unfulfilled promises of the New Village Movement eventually gave rise to anti-government peasant movements in the late 1970s. Abelmann writes that farmers’ movements converged on two broad issues—the failure of state economic programs and the undemocratic nature of state intervention. The Catholic Farmers’ Union and the Christian Farmers’ League, working separately in the 1970s, staged protests against the NACF and called for greater protection for tenant farmers, who often had no contracts and were forced to pay their landlords’ taxes.¹⁴⁹ After a period of state crackdown, these organizations emerged united in the 1980s as

¹⁴⁶ Jang 1983: 12.37-12.39.

¹⁴⁷ Boyer & Ahn 1991: 76.

¹⁴⁸ Cha et al. 1997: 481. See also Boyer & Ahn 1991: 46, 77.

¹⁴⁹ Abelmann 1996: 213-215; Boyer & Ahn 1991: 79-80.

radical, anti-government organizations and played an instrumental role in the 1985 livestock farmer demonstrations.¹⁵⁰

Conclusion

The New Village Movement is a case of mixed rural development outcomes. It resulted in widespread improvements in the village environment, especially in terms of rural public infrastructure, but it was much less successful at stimulating long-term rural economic development. The government's obsession with making villages look modern unfortunately undermined the campaign's potential to affect greater economic change. The campaign resulted in some improvement in rural incomes, but these gains were wiped out by increasing levels of rural debt, causing many households to turn to tenant farming just as they had done before land reform.

Although the New Village Movement shared many similarities with Maoist campaigns, it was not a total failure. Unlike China's Great Leap Forward, which aimed to extract as many resources from the rural sector as possible, the New Village Movement marked the end of Korea's "developmental squeeze" period. The NVM should be understood as an agricultural adjustment program and an important turning point in Korea's postwar history. Prior to 1970, the Rhee and Park governments had severely neglected agriculture, and it was only during the NVM that the government began to channel any real investment to the rural sector. Though government investment was meager compared to spending on the industrial sector, it was the first time in Korea's history that rural investment was being used for rural development instead of rural extraction. In light of this fact, the problems created by the NVM seem rather insignificant compared to its achievements. Moreover, compared to China, Korea's more

¹⁵⁰ Abelmann 1996: 215-217; Han 2004: 89; Francks 1999: 149; Moore 1984-1985: 597-598.

centralized political system was better equipped to prevent corruption at the local level (see discussion of Chinese system in Chapter 6). Frequent inspection, close monitoring of funds, and mass supervision in the form of public radio announcements about villages that would be receiving funding, all worked to ensure that government support was not diverted to other purposes.¹⁵¹

In comparison with Taiwan, Korea's rural development policies were not as successful at stimulating agricultural production or raising rural incomes. The Korean government in the 1950s and 1960s made a different choice than the KMT. Both countries had been Japanese colonies, but Korea inherited a much weaker economy and infrastructure than Taiwan. These conditions, combined with significant natural resource constraints, meant the Korean government saw little potential in developing the agricultural economy. Instead of developing agriculture, the government directed its scarce resources to the military and industrial sectors. There was also no Korean equivalent of Taiwan's JCRR to pressure the government into prioritizing rural development. During the New Village Movement, Korea tried to emulate certain features of both the Japanese and Taiwanese models of rural development. The NVM, like Japan's Rural Revitalization Campaign and Taiwan's Community Development Campaign, succeeded at improving rural living conditions. However, Korea's Factory Saemaul campaign was unable to promote decentralized rural industrialization. As a result, problems related to Korea's rural-urban income gap and rural-to-urban migration were more severe than in these other countries.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Korea's farmers' organizations were also much weaker than those in Japan or Taiwan. Unlike Taiwan's system of farmers' associations, the NACF in Korea was more centralized and more tightly controlled by the government, making it less responsive

¹⁵¹ Brandt & Lee 1981: 98, 100-102.

to farmers' needs.¹⁵² During the New Village Movement, the NACF expanded and improved its rural extension and credit functions, but it was also responsible for implementing Tong'il, which turned out to be one of the least popular programs of the campaign. Korea's farmers were faced with a more "statist" set of policies and simply did not participate in the rural development process in the same way that Taiwan's farmers did. The mixed outcomes of the NVM underscore the limitations of an overly top-down, state-led approach to rural modernization.

In terms of other kinds of farmers' organizations, village development committees were strengthened in the 1970s and a new set of village leaders was recruited to run the committees and spearhead the campaign. While the NVM did empower these leaders, creating opportunities for upward mobility within the village, their role was to execute policy handed down to them by the local government, not to critically question specific NVM programs or to develop their own local programs. Initiated from the apex of political power, the NVM successfully reached down into the villages, affecting the lives of farmers in both positive and negative ways. There was certainly some degree of popular enthusiasm and support for the NVM, but farmers' influence over the direction of the campaign was extremely limited.

Finally, leaving aside the question of the campaign's successes and failures, the New Village Movement is important for understanding Chinese rural development policy. Since 1992, the National Saemaul Leadership Training Institute in Korea has trained 489 Chinese officials, more than any other foreign country,¹⁵³ and since 2005 tens of thousands of Chinese officials have studied the New Village Movement as a model rural development policy. Scholars writing about the decline of the NVM campaign in the 1980s and 1990s would likely be surprised to find

¹⁵² Burmeister 1988: 153; Burmeister 2006.

¹⁵³ Statistics on international NVM promotion collected during a visit to the institute 10/2009.

that the New Socialist Countryside bears more than just a passing resemblance to the New Village Movement.

Chapter 5: Building a New Socialist Countryside in China, 2000s—Origins

Hu Jintao era rural reforms, which fall under the New Socialist Countryside policy framework, are targeted at solving China’s “three rural problems” of agriculture, farmers, and villages (*sannong wenti* 三农问题), and have been deemed “the most important work of the party” (*zhongzhongzhizhong* 重中之重) for nearly a decade. In order to understand the origins of Chinese rural policy in the 2000s, this chapter first discusses the NSC as an agricultural adjustment program, looking at the reasons it was adopted and the debates surrounding its meaning (Section 1). It then analyzes the NSC from a comparative historical perspective, revealing certain similarities with Maoist campaigns and rural modernization strategies found elsewhere in East Asia (Section 2).

Section 1: The New Socialist Countryside as an Agricultural Adjustment Program

Central Government Adoption of the NSC

After assuming power in 2002, one of Hu Jintao’s first acts as General Secretary of the Party was to increase central government spending on the rural sector. Hu called on China’s major educational, medical and cultural institutions to follow suit by reallocating some of their resources to rural areas, but this was met with resistance, as most institutions were focused on developing modern facilities in urban areas. Provincial and city governments were also concerned about how this new policy might affect their plans for urban development and expansion. However, the increasing severity of China’s three rural problems eventually provided the necessary support for a policy shift, and in 2004, the number one document was released, which for the first time in 18 years placed rural work at the top of the Chinese government’s policy agenda.¹

¹ Wen 2006: 8-9.

At the beginning of every year, the central government releases the “number one document” (*yihao wenjian* 一号文件), which outlines the nation’s most important policy goals. In the 1980s the government released five number one documents related to agriculture, ushering in sweeping reforms in the rural sector. The people’s communes and the state rationing system were dismantled; household-based contract farming and rural markets were introduced; and private farmers’ organizations were developed to help producers adjust to new market conditions. After 1986, however, the government did not release another number one document on agriculture until 2004. The number one document of 2004 stated that China had entered a new period of development in which “industry should nurture agriculture, and the cities should support the countryside” (*gongye fanbu nongye, chengshi zhichi nongcun* 工业反哺农业, 城市支持农村).² In fact, since 2004 every consecutive number one document has been related to agriculture.³ Chen Xiwen, chairman of the Central Leading Group on Rural Work, observes that like the Deng reforms of the early 1980s, Hu’s rise to power ushered in a “second golden age of rural reform.”⁴

The central government’s decision to prioritize rural reform may be understood as a response to growing rural unrest in the late 1990s and early 2000s. After the 1994 tax reforms,

² This idea was further elaborated at the 4th Plenum of the 16th Party Congress in November 2004, when Hu Jintao introduced his theory of the “two trends” (*liang ge quxiang* 两个趋向), which stated that in the early stages of industrialization, agriculture must provide a base for industry, but in the later stages of industrialization, industry must nurture agriculture; see Zhang 2007: 115-116.

³ For a brief summary of the number one documents, see Yang & Gu 2012. All number one documents from the 2000s are available at www.xinhua.net and www.gov.cn. They are searchable by year using the term “[Insert year]年中央一号文件.”

⁴ Sun 2008: 42.

which dramatically reduced local government tax revenues,⁵ township and village governments became increasingly dependent on extra-budgetary fees. Excessive fee collection resulted in extremely heavy “peasant burdens” (*nongmin fudan* 农民负担), giving rise to widespread rural protest.⁶ In some places, peasants even formed their own political organizations for the purpose of “defending their rights” (*weiquan* 维权) against local government corruption.⁷ Li Changping’s *I Tell the Truth to the Premier* (2002), which is perhaps the most influential work on this subject, provided a firsthand account of a rural society in crisis and raised China’s three rural problems to the forefront of national media and political attention.

In this context, the central leadership initiated a program of comprehensive rural tax and fee reform (RTFR), which culminated in the total elimination of agricultural taxes in 2006.⁸ Chinese sources frequently praise this reform as one of the most important policies of the reform period, an end to 2,600 years of “imperial grain taxes” (*huangliang guoshui* 皇粮国税), and the beginning of a new era of rural social and economic development. The slogan “give more, take less, enliven” (*duoyu shaoqu fanghuo* 多予少取放活), which first appeared in the 2004 number one document, is often invoked to describe the state’s relationship to rural society in the post-RTFR era.⁹ Ma Xiaohe, a researcher at the National Development and Reform Commission

⁵ The Ministry of Finance estimates that between 1993 and 1994, the share of total government tax revenue controlled by local governments declined from 78% to 44%; see Chen et al. 2008: 234.

⁶ Bernstein & Lu 2003; O’Brien & Li 2006.

⁷ Yu 2007.

⁸ Gobel 2010; Li 2012.

⁹ Zhang 2007: 115-116.

(NDRC), argues that the RTFR successfully averted a very serious social and political crisis.¹⁰ Taking a more cautious view, Li Jiange from the Development Research Center (DRC) of the State Council warns that in a post-RTFR world there is still a risk of social turmoil if the rural sector is ignored: “If we continue to exploit and ignore agriculture, the agricultural sector will atrophy, the rich-poor gap will reach a level of enormous disparity, the urban-rural gap will increase, and the regional development gap will widen, resulting in intense social conflict, upheaval and regression to a state of backwardness.”¹¹

Far from ignoring agriculture, the Chinese government further overhauled its rural policy with adoption of the 11th Five-year-plan (2006-2010), which identified “building a new socialist countryside” (*jianshe shehuizhuyi xin nongcun* 建设社会主义新农村) as the nation’s top domestic policy priority.¹² The official slogan for the NSC outlined broad goals for rural development: “develop production, enrich livelihood, civilize rural habits, tidy up the villages, and democratize management” (*shengchan fazhan, shenghuo kuanyu, xiangfeng wenming, cunrong zhengjie, minzhu guanli* 生产发展, 生活宽裕, 乡风文明, 村容整洁, 民主管理).¹³ To

¹⁰ Sun 2008: 138

¹¹ Li Jiange 2009: 4.

¹² Perhaps to ensure that officials took the NSC seriously, the 11th FYP was the first ever to distinguish between mandatory (*yueshuxing* 约束性) and anticipated goals (*yuqixing* 预期性). The plan contains eight mandatory goals related to population growth, energy consumption, water consumption, cultivated land protection, pollution control, forest protection, pension coverage, and rural health cooperative coverage. The full text is available at: http://www.gov.cn/ztl/2006-03/16/content_228841.htm (accessed 5/13/2012).

¹³ This translation is borrowed from Elizabeth Perry; see Perry 2011: 39.

fund this ambitious program, it was announced that nearly all “new increases” in central and local government spending would be “primarily allocated to rural areas.”¹⁴

In terms of fiscal policy, the central government did indeed strengthen its commitment to rural development in the 2000s. Xie Xuren, the Minister of Finance, groups China’s fiscal policies to “support and benefit the rural sector” (*zhinong huinong zhengce* 支农惠农政策) into three periods—First, from 1978 to 1994, rural support policies were mostly limited to disaster prevention and relief; and the share of government investment allocated to rural areas actually declined. Second, from 1994 to 2002, the government increased its investment in rural infrastructure;¹⁵ it adjusted poverty alleviation efforts to align with World Bank recommendations; and it developed a system of fiscal transfers to compensate for declining local government tax revenues. Third, after 2003, the government replaced rural taxes with subsidies;¹⁶ and it increased rural sector spending in the name of the NSC.¹⁷

¹⁴ In Chinese, the main funding mechanisms for the NSC are known as the “three increases” (*san ge gaoyu* 三个高于) and the “three primary allocations” (*san ge zhuyao yongyu* 三个主要用于). The term “three increases” refers to budgetary spending, bond and fixed asset investments, and land transfer revenues. The term “three primary allocations” refers to social welfare spending, basic infrastructure spending, and (redundantly) land transfer revenues. It seems that land transfer revenues are intended for environmental improvements. Aside from these key sources, some NSC funding comes from state oil revenues, car sales taxes, and urban maintenance taxes; see Li et al. 2008: 49-50; Ma 2008: 14-15; Xie 2009: 549; CSUS 2009: 5; Ma 2007: x.

¹⁵ Government investment at this time was mainly focused on the “six small projects” (*liu xiao gongcheng* 六小工程), i.e. irrigation, drinking water, biogas technology, hydropower, roads, and fencing around grasslands. Investment in the six small projects has continued through the present. Especially since the Asian financial crisis of 1997, government investment in rural infrastructure has been considered critical to boosting domestic demand; see Xie 2009: 105-107.

¹⁶ In Chinese, this policy is known as the “four reductions, four subsidies” (*si jianmian, si butie* 四减免, 四补贴). The term “four reductions” refers to rural tax and fee reform, or specifically to the elimination of the agricultural tax, the agricultural specialty tax, the slaughter tax, and the livestock tax. The term “four subsidies” refers to subsidies for grain production, seeds, farm machinery, and other inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides. Like the RTFR, the provision of rural subsidies evolved from an experimental program to a national policy in the early 2000s.

Measured in both absolute and relative terms, central government spending on the rural sector has increased dramatically over the past decade (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2). During the NSC, the share of government spending allocated to rural areas has reached its highest level since 1980, which is remarkable considering that the rural sector is significantly smaller than before.¹⁸ The Ministry of Finance (MOF) has been tracking overall government investment to rural areas using a measure known as “three rural issues spending” (*sannong zhichu* 三农支出).¹⁹ Although it is difficult to obtain data on the exact breakdown of spending by program area, it seems that the bulk of government investment has been allocated to social welfare, infrastructure and agricultural subsidies.²⁰

During the NSC, subsidies have expanded from grain production to livestock farming, reforestation, household electronics, and even cars in an effort to boost rural consumption; see Li et al. 2009: 38.

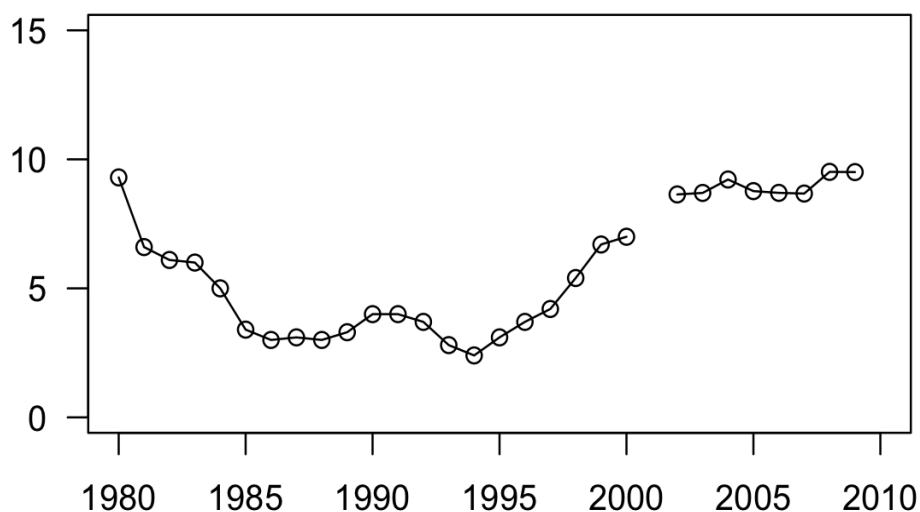
¹⁷ Xie 2009: 105-107.

¹⁸ In 1980, over 80% of China’s population lived in rural areas; in 2011, slightly less than 50% of the population lived in rural areas; see Yusuf & Saich 2008: 159; Chang 2012.

¹⁹ Also known as the three rural problems, the term *sannong* refers to the broad categories of agriculture, farmers, and villages. MOF officials admit that this measure, which was introduced in 2005, is a “work in progress;” see Fock & Wong 2008: 60; Li et al. 2008: 51; MOF 2010.

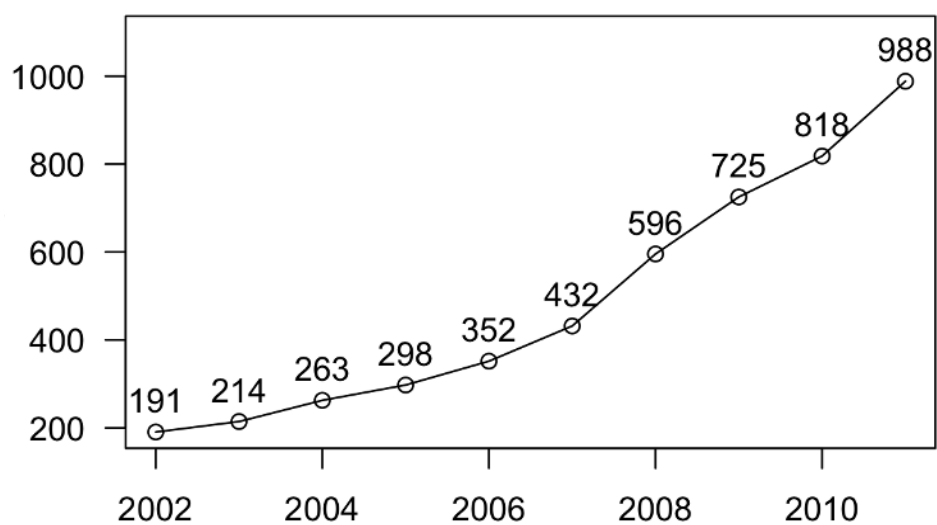
²⁰ The following figures are based on MOF estimates of total government spending (rural and urban) by program area: *Education* spending from 2003 to 2008 increased by 169%, from 335.2 billion to 901 billion yuan. *Health* spending from 2003 to 2008 increased by 232%, from 83.1 billion to 275.7 billion yuan. *Social security* spending from 2003 to 2008 increased by 151%, from 271.2 billion to 680.4 billion yuan. *Rural fixed asset* spending from 2003 to 2007 increased by 104%, from 975.5 billion to 1.99 trillion yuan. *Agricultural subsidies* spending from 2004 to 2008 increased by 288%, from 26.5 billion to 102.9 billion yuan; see Xie 2009: 549, 564-577; Chen et al. 2008: 261-262.

5.1: Rural Sector Spending as Percentage of Total Government Spending, 1978-2010



Source: Chen 2003: 46; China Statistical Yearbook 2010: 286; MOF 2010; MOF 2011.²¹

5.2: Three Rural Issues Spending, 2002-2011 (Spending in Billion Yuan)



Source: MOF 2010; MOF 2011.

²¹ The 1980-2000 data points represent total rural construction spending as a portion of total basic construction spending (*jiben jianshe touzi* 基本建设投资), and the 2002-2010 data points represent three rural issues spending as a portion of total government spending. From reading Chen Xiwen, it appears that basic construction spending is the most similar measure to three rural issues spending for the earlier period. Data points are missing for 2000 and 2001.

In summary, Hu Jintao and the Chinese central leadership made the decision to reverse urban bias and adopt protective policies for agriculture in a context of rural unrest, which they perceived as threatening to China's social and political stability. The rural tax and fee reform of the early 2000s changed the state's relationship with rural society to one of "giving more and taking less" and laid the foundation for China's contemporary rural development framework, Building a New Socialist Countryside. As suggested by changes in rural fiscal policy, the NSC marks a historic break from the previous pattern of rural resource extraction and the beginning of China's agricultural adjustment period.

Debates Surrounding the NSC

Since the NSC was adopted, there has been much debate about China's most important rural development goals. From an economic perspective, the NSC may be understood as an agricultural adjustment program that aims to address the problems of a growing urban-rural income gap, declining food production, and weak domestic demand. From a community building perspective, the NSC aims to address the problems of a growing social welfare gap, a waning sense of village community, and weak political and civic institutions. This section presents these different views in order to shed light on some of the underlying reasons behind this rural policy shift, which are perhaps less obvious than the rural unrest that triggered the initial reforms. These debates are also important because they have shaped public ideas about what constitutes an appropriate long-term strategy for China's rural modernization.

At a meeting with provincial leaders in February 2006, Hu Jintao explained that the New Socialist Countryside was important for several reasons, including reducing urban-rural disparities, solving China's food security problem, increasing domestic demand, and securing the Party's popular legitimacy. Hu emphasized, moreover, that programs to "develop production"

should be the top priority of local NSC initiatives.²² This focus on the rural economy (instead of social welfare, village governance, etc.) stems from the perception, held by many in China, that the urban-rural income gap and declining food production constitute two of the country's most urgent problems.

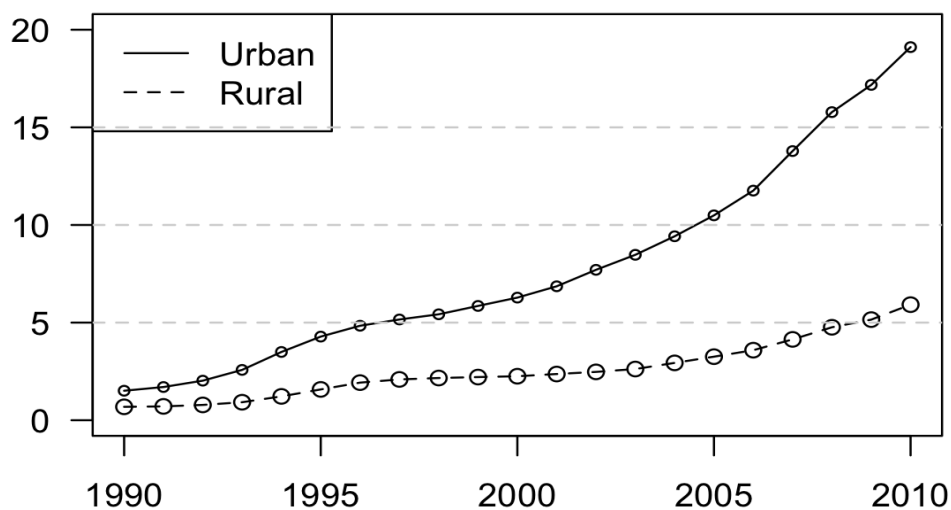
The urban-rural income gap has widened in the recent reform period (see Figure 5.3). According to data from China's National Bureau of Statistics, the average urban income in 1990, measured per capita per year, was 1,510 yuan, and the average rural income was 686 yuan (a proportional difference of 2.2:1). And despite the adoption of pro-rural policies under Hu, this gap has grown larger over the last 10 years. Looking at data for 2010, the average urban income was 19,109 yuan, while the average rural income was only 5,919 yuan (a proportional difference of 3.2:1).²³ Most Chinese scholars attribute the income gap to the existence of a "dualistic urban-rural society" (*chengxiang eryuan jiegou* 城乡二元结构), formed over decades of rural resource extraction and enforced by the Mao-era household registration system, which restricted peasants' access to urban areas. This system remains in effect today, providing urban residents with privileged access to better paying jobs and higher quality services. While it is difficult to measure the effect of income inequality on social and political stability,²⁴ some members of the CCP are nonetheless worried that its "worker-peasant alliance" may unravel if the income gap continues to grow.

²² Zhang 2007: 48-49, 60.

²³ *China Statistical Yearbook* 2010: 342.

²⁴ Survey research by Martin Whyte actually suggests that inequality is unlikely to contribute to political unrest; see Whyte 2010.

5.3: Urban and Rural Incomes, 1990-2010 (Income in Thousands Yuan)



Source: *China Statistical Yearbook 2010*: 342.

The Chinese government has always been concerned with food security, but it was not until the early 2000s that declining food production prompted the government, for the first time in history, to start subsidizing farmers. Between 1999 and 2003, grain output dropped from 508 million tons to 431 million tons (see Figure 5.4). Subsidies targeted at grain producers helped to reverse this trend, and grain production has steadily increased during the NSC. The food trade gap, however, has grown much wider in the 2000s than the previous two decades (see Figure 5.5). Given the size of its population, relying on food imports is not seen as a viable option for China's long-term development. Ke Bingsheng, the President of China Agricultural University, estimates that even if China imported half of all available rice on global markets, it would meet only 10% of domestic demand.²⁵

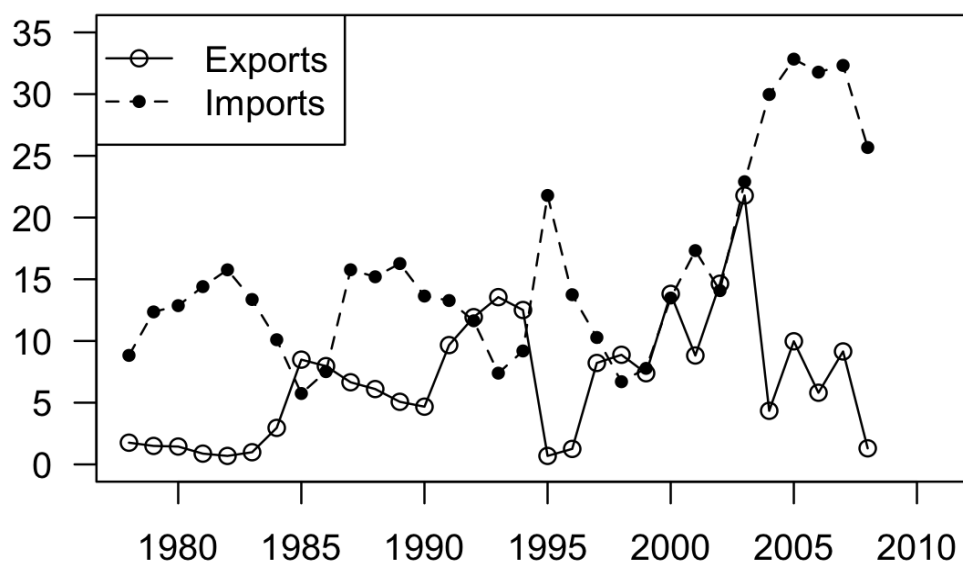
²⁵ Sun 2008: 107.

5.4: Grain Output, 1990-2010 (Grain Production in Million Tons)



Source: *China Statistical Yearbook 2010*: 470.

5.5: Grain Exports and Imports, 1978-2008 (Food Trade in Million Tons)

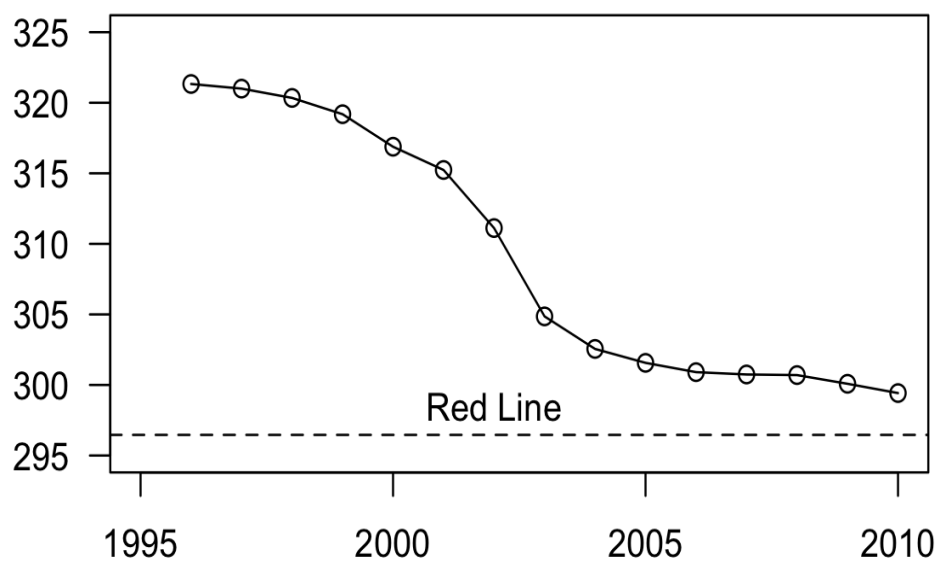


Source: *China Grain Development Report 2007*: 131-133.

Aside from subsidizing rural producers, the government has tried to achieve food security through the enforcement of strict farmland protection measures. After the 1994 tax reforms, local

governments turned to extra-budgetary fee collection and land sales to make up for lost revenue. The sale of land to urban industrial interests resulted in a significant decline in the amount of available farmland. In 1997, the central government enacted measures to restrict the conversion of rural farmland to urban construction land, but the measures were largely ineffective. Between 1996 and 2006, China lost about 20 million acres of farmland (see Figure 5.6). The central government stepped up its efforts to restrict land sales in 2006 by establishing a “red line” (*gengdi hongxian* 耕地红线) of protected farmland, defined as 297 million acres (1.8 billion mu). According to official data, enforcement of the red line has so far succeeded in preventing further reductions in farmland.²⁶

5.6: Farmland, 1996-2010 (Farmland in Million Acres)



Source: Zhang Ping 2009: 200; Wen 2011.

At the beginning of the NSC, rural policy documents focused heavily on the issues of rural incomes and agricultural production; but in recent years, they have placed much greater

²⁶ Chen et al. 2009: 48; Zhang Ping 2009: 200.

emphasis on consumption as a key rural development goal. This idea of consumption as development is reflective of a larger shift in China's national development strategy. Since the early 1990s, the Chinese government has been concerned with "increasing domestic demand" (*kuoda neixu* 扩大内需) and restructuring China's economy so that it is less reliant on export markets.²⁷ After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Justin Yifu Lin argued that China should launch a "new village movement" (foreshadowing the NSC) to resolve the problem of surplus production and weak domestic demand.²⁸ The notion that China's economic future is linked to boosting domestic consumption has become mainstream in light of the ongoing global recession.

The government has tried to stimulate rural consumption by expanding subsidy programs to include household electronics, cars, and building materials for new homes.²⁹ Central policy documents on the NSC actually made no mention of rural housing until 2008, when the number one document raised the issue of dilapidated and unsafe housing.³⁰ By 2010, the government had become aware of the potential for a rural housing boom, and the focus of central policy shifted from renovating dilapidated housing in poor areas to promoting new home construction

²⁷ Zhang Ping 2009: 222; Zhu 2009: 22.

²⁸ Wen 2006: 5, 13; Lin 2005. Around the same time as Lin, noted sociologist Lu Xueyi also suggested that China carry out a national rural modernization campaign. Instead of focusing on domestic demand, however, Lu's emphasis was more on urbanization and reducing the urban-rural income gap; see Lu 2000.

²⁹ The central government's policy of "household electronics go down to the countryside" (*jiadian xiexiang* 家电下乡) was added to NSC subsidy programs in 2007. Ma Xiaohe attributes this policy to China's surplus goods problem. He estimates that in 2006, 10% of Chinese GDP was tied up in surplus inventory; see Ma 2008: 6. Car and housing subsidies were introduced in 2010; see Hui 2010; Lu & Wen 2010.

³⁰ Earlier number one documents mention housing only to remind local governments of the need to regulate construction so that homes are not built on protected farmland.

throughout the countryside. Li Guoxiang, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), argues that housing policy is an important new development for the NSC. Li estimates that farmers already spend 400 yuan per capita on housing, versus 5 yuan per capita on household electronics, and that central government subsidies for housing may stimulate 10-15% growth in this area, adding 50-60 billion yuan to annual domestic consumption. Li and others are optimistic that China's rural housing boom may continue for the next 10 years.³¹

Several Chinese scholars have criticized the domestic-demand-centered view of development, arguing that rural community building, not infrastructure and consumption, should be the focus of NSC efforts. These scholars point out that, in many places, the quality of rural social welfare services, village community life, and rural institutions has deteriorated in the reform period. However, among proponents of rural community building, there are strong differences of opinion regarding how these problems should be addressed.

Pan Wei, a scholar at Beijing University, perhaps holds the most radical view of the NSC. According to Pan, rural tax and fee reform severely undermined the capacity of village and township governments to provide services to the rural population. Moreover, the use of fiscal transfers to fund the NSC has only increased the dependency of local communities on central government assistance. This pattern, Pan argues, is not only unsustainable but also wasteful, especially when investment is channeled to those places with high rates of out-migration and large numbers of “hollowed-out villages” (*kongxin cun* 空心村).³² Pan suggests that the NSC's heavy emphasis on rural infrastructure is misguided because it fails to address the root causes of rural poverty—the inherently weak position of agriculture in all modern economies; a high

³¹ Lu & Wen 2010.

³² Pan & He 2006: 7-11, 57.

population to land ratio that hinders large-scale farming; unwillingness among the rural population to engage in cooperative agriculture; the lack of effective farmers' organizations; and widespread rural apathy. The solution to rural poverty, Pan insists, is to build stronger rural institutions while also pursuing fast-paced urbanization, such that the rural population is reduced to less than 10% of the total population.³³ Flipping Mao's famous revolutionary dictum on its head, Pan has proposed that the "cities encircle the countryside" (*chengshi baowei nongcun* 城市包围农村).³⁴

Wen Tiejun, a professor at Renmin University who is known for popularizing the phrase "three rural problems,"³⁵ strongly disagrees with Pan, believing that fast-paced urbanization would result in massive urban slums, a problem that unlike India or Brazil, China has managed to avoid.³⁶ Wen suggests that, given the size of China's population, the most appropriate development strategy is gradual urbanization and the simultaneous development of rural and urban areas. Lending support to this view, Chen Xiwen estimates that even if China's urbanization rate surpasses 55% by 2020, as the World Bank has predicted, there would still be approximately 796 million people living in rural areas.³⁷ In terms of a specific development strategy, Wen has suggested that the NSC draw on the tradition of China's Rural Reconstruction

³³ Pan & He 2006: 7-9.

³⁴ Pan & He 2006: 19.

³⁵ Starting in 1996, Wen published several essays on the three rural problems in the policy journal *Strategy and Management*. Central leaders began using this phrase in official speeches and documents in 1999; see Liu 2008a: 12-13.

³⁶ Liu 2008b: 3-4.

³⁷ Chen 2008: 161.

Movement (RRM) of the 1920s and 1930s, which focused on strengthening the village community through the development of farmers' organizations.³⁸

In fact, Wen Tiejun, He Xuefeng, and other scholars have been leading what is known as the New Rural Reconstruction Movement (*xin xiangcun jianshe yundong* 新农村建设运动) since the early 2000s. The Liang Shuming Rural Reconstruction Center at Renmin University was established in 2004 as a civil society organization and a kind of movement headquarters. As of 2008, volunteers from the center had set up 70 experimental sites across 27 provinces, and had trained more than 1,000 leaders of village-level organizations, including farmers' cooperatives, performance troupes, and elderly associations.³⁹ Stig Thogersen suggests that the RRM's tradition of "participatory development" has been invoked in recent years because few people in China see official organs of rural self-governance (i.e. village committees) as a solution to the problems of social cohesion, community building, or economic development.⁴⁰

He Xuefeng, a scholar at Huazhong University of Science and Technology, has proposed the idea of "low-consumption, high-welfare" (*di xiaofei, gao fuli* 低消费, 高福利) as an alternative to the domestic-demand-centered view of the NSC. According to He, increased consumption is not inherently good in a society with scarce resources. Moreover, unless the cost of living is dramatically reduced, then state-sponsored programs aimed at boosting consumption may result in the return of heavy "peasant burdens" (i.e. rural indebtedness).⁴¹ He's research reveals that despite increased central spending on social welfare programs, since the RTFR the

³⁸ Liu 2008b: 3-4.

³⁹ Liu 2008b: 227-229.

⁴⁰ Thogersen 2009: 4-6.

⁴¹ Pan & He 2006: 12-14, 21.

provision of public goods has become more costly for local governments. In many places, these costs have been passed on to rural residents in the form of more expensive, lower quality services.⁴² The NSC, He reasons, should therefore focus primarily on reducing the urban-rural social welfare gap by rebuilding rural political and civic institutions.

Indeed, it seems that post-RTFR reforms to reduce the size of government by merging villages into larger “central villages” (*zhongxin cun* 中心村)⁴³ have not only weakened villagers’ sense of community but also reduced the capacity of village officials to govern effectively. He Xuefeng reports that the elimination of village team leaders (*xiaozu zhang* 小组长) has been particularly damaging. In one village He visited, where there were only 4 officials in charge of 3,000 residents, an official explained: “In the past, because we had team leaders, the village officials would know if someone’s chicken had died, but now we do not even know if a person has died.”⁴⁴

Perhaps even more alarming for the government, Yu Jianrong, a scholar at CASS, warns that unless rural institutions are strengthened, then mafia-like organizations (*nongcun heie shili* 农村黑恶势力)⁴⁵ will emerge to take over the functions of the local state. Yu suggests that in many parts of China, this phenomenon is already contributing to the “deterioration of local state political power” (*ji ceng zhengquan tuihua* 基层政权退化).⁴⁶

⁴² Pan & He 2006: 13.

⁴³ The term “central villages” is an official designation for administrative villages with above-average public infrastructure and services. It seems that Jiangsu province and a few other places started using this term in the mid-1990s; see Zhang Wanfang 2008: 171.

⁴⁴ Pan & He 2006: 17.

⁴⁵ The literal meaning of this phrase is “rural dark and evil forces.”

⁴⁶ Yu 2003. See also Pan & He 2006: 16-17, 64; Liu 2008b: 11-12; Liu 2008a: 25.

To conclude this section, the New Socialist Countryside is a comprehensive rural modernization program that aims to address several problems, including the urban-rural income gap, declining food production, weak domestic demand, inadequate social welfare services, a waning sense of village community, and weak rural institutions. Strengthening domestic demand is the most controversial goal of the NSC, and yet looking at official policy documents, it appears that the Chinese government has placed greater emphasis on this goal in recent years. One reason for this shift is that China is transitioning from export-driven growth to domestic-demand-driven growth, but perhaps another reason is that boosting rural consumption has proven easier than other goals like closing the urban-rural income gap. As illustrated in the following chapters, the subordination of other goals to domestic demand is one reason that local NSC efforts have focused so heavily on rural housing. Finally, although this emphasis on domestic demand stands out as somewhat different than the other cases in this study, it is clear that the NSC was adopted for many of the same reasons that the Taiwanese and South Korean governments revised their rural policies in the 1970s. In all three countries, agricultural adjustment programs were adopted in response to a growing income gap, declining food production, and the weakening of village institutions as increasing numbers of people left for the cities.

Section 2: Historical Context and Regional Policy Learning

This section situates the NSC in a larger historical and comparative context for two reasons. First, this kind of analysis reveals that the NSC shares some important similarities with Mao-era campaigns. Second, it reveals that in formulating the NSC, central policymakers have borrowed directly from the experiences of China's East Asian neighbors.

“Building a New Socialist Countryside” in the Mao and Reform Eras

The phrase “building a new socialist countryside” has been part of China’s rural policy rhetoric since the Maoist period. Starting in 1956, the Twelve-Year National Program for Agricultural Development, which helped launch the Great Leap Forward, was promoted as “a great guiding program for building a new socialist countryside.” As Elizabeth Perry and others have observed, despite the Leap’s failure, the slogan “building a new socialist countryside” re-emerged in the context of other rural campaigns, such as the “Up to the Mountains, Down to the Countryside” movement and the “Learn from Dazhai in Agriculture” campaign of the 1960s-1970s.⁴⁷ This phrase also survived the transition from Mao-era to reform-era agricultural policy. For example, it was included in the 1984 number one document,⁴⁸ and it was used during the 1980s “Civilized Village” campaign.⁴⁹ It appeared in a few important rural policy documents of the 1990s and early 2000s as well, including the Agriculture Law.⁵⁰

A few of China’s current leaders began using the phrase “building a new socialist countryside” long before the NSC was adopted. For example, Hu Jintao first used it publicly in 1994, while speaking at a national conference on rural party building. At this meeting, Hu identified the younger generation of peasants as the greatest “hope for building a new socialist

⁴⁷ Perry 2011: 35-38; Zhang Wanfang 2008: 3; Wang 2009: 233-234.

⁴⁸ The 1984 number document called on the “party, youth league, and social activists to unite with hundreds of millions of peasants and struggle to build a new socialist countryside;” see Zhu 2007: 5; Wang 2009: 236; Wen 2006: 63.

⁴⁹ Perry 2011: 37-38; Wen 2006: 63.

⁵⁰ In 2002, the government revised Section 1.3 of the 1993 Agriculture Law to read: “The State will make agriculture the most important priority for developing the national economy. In order to reduce urban-rural inequality the state will build a prosperous, democratic and civilized new socialist countryside;” see Yu et al. 2007b: 1715. As for other documents, the 15th Party Congress approved a rural work document in 1998 that stated China should build a “wealthy, democratic and civilized new socialist countryside;” see Wen 2006: 64.

countryside and basic-level party organizations.”⁵¹ Hui Liangyu, the Hu administration’s vice-premier in charge of agriculture, even published a book in 1993 titled *Building a New Socialist Countryside with Chinese Characteristics* in which he wrote:

Building a new socialist countryside with Chinese characteristics is an important component of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. Without stability or progress in the countryside, there can be no stability or progress for the whole society; without a moderately well-off standard of living for the peasantry, there can be no moderately well-off standard of living for all the people; without the modernization of agriculture, there can be no modernization of the national economy.⁵²

Fifteen years later in 2008, the 17th Party Congress adopted Hui’s words almost verbatim to underscore the link between the NSC and national modernization.⁵³

This adaptation of revolutionary rhetoric to the NSC signifies that the Party still finds some value in invoking its Maoist past. Hu Jintao and other central leaders have been careful to avoid using the word “campaign” or “movement” (*yundong* 运动) in official speeches and documents on the NSC, but they are quite intentional about linking current efforts to the past. For example, at a meeting with provincial leaders in February 2006, Hu quoted Mao to explain the significance of this new policy:

“We must look after the cities and the countryside. We must do urban work and rural work, so that we can unite the workers and peasants, industry and agriculture. We cannot throw away the countryside and just look after the cities. If we think that way, we would be completely mistaken.” –Mao Zedong, 1949⁵⁴

⁵¹ Around the same time, the Central Committee issued a memorandum that called on all lower-level cadres to “lead the peasants to serve as backbones for the construction of a new socialist countryside;” see Wang 2009: 234.

⁵² Hui & Liu 1993: 1.

⁵³ Han 2008: 83.

⁵⁴ Zhang 2007: 45.

Despite the rejection of Mao's rural policies that took place in the reform period, his words serve as a reminder that the party has yet to fulfill its promise of "looking after both the cities and the countryside." Similarly, the various iterations of "building a new socialist countryside" over the decades may be understood as serving the same purpose—reminding the Party of the critical importance of rural work.

Indeed, at this same meeting, Hu explained that the NSC is a continuation of the Party's long-standing tradition of rural work. However, he also stressed that the NSC is different from past initiatives because it has clearer guiding principles, is supported by a stronger economy, has more comprehensive goals, and calls for the broad participation of all parts of society.⁵⁵ Moreover, unlike the Great Leap Forward and other Maoist campaigns, Hu emphasized that the NSC should be understood as a long-term and arduous task that will "require decades or even close to a hundred years to realize."⁵⁶

This study suggests that the NSC is different from past campaigns in two important ways. First, the NSC is historic because, unlike past campaigns, its purpose is not to extract resources for industrialization or to encourage "self-reliance" so that the state can channel more resources to the urban-industrial sector. As explained in Section 1, the NSC is an agricultural adjustment program that aims to support and protect the rural sector. Second, like the New Village Movement in South Korea and the Community Development Campaign in Taiwan, the NSC is an agricultural adjustment program that has taken the form of a campaign. Despite the central government's rejection of the word "campaign," it is still informally referred to as a campaign and has been implemented as a campaign in many parts of China.

⁵⁵ Zhang 2007: 50.

⁵⁶ Zhang 2007: 60.

This study defines campaigns as policies that demand high levels of bureaucratic and popular mobilization to transform rural conditions. In order to mobilize the bureaucracy, the NSC has relied on the creation of powerful policy coordination institutions at the local level and the revision of cadre evaluation and promotion standards to include NSC objectives. As for mobilizing the rural population, the NSC has employed such mechanisms as sending cadre work teams and propaganda teams to the villages, training village activists, setting up peasant councils, and providing selective support to model and experimental villages.

Shortly after the NSC was announced, sub-national governments established policy coordination institutions to better mobilize local resources for rural development. These institutions include the “NSC Leading Group” (*xin nongcun jianshe gongzuo lingdao xiaozu* 新农村建设工作领导小组)⁵⁷ and the “Rural Work Department” (*nongcun gongzuo bu* 农村工作部). Since the NSC Leading Group, which is made up of key leaders from each department of the government, meets just a few times a year to set and review development plans, it is normally the Rural Work Department (RWD) that oversees the daily tasks of program implementation. In many places, the RWD is simply a reconfigured, more powerful version of the “Rural Work Office” (*nong gong ban* 农工办), which prior to the NSC was part of the Ministry of Agriculture or some other bureau on the administrative side of government.⁵⁸ In places where the RWD has been placed under the local Party committee, bureaucratic mobilization has been more

⁵⁷ This institution goes by a few different names, including the “NSC Office,” the “Leading Group on Rural Work,” and the “Leading Group on Integrated Urban-Rural Development;” see Li Jiange 2009: 44-45.

⁵⁸ In 1952, the Rural Work Department was established at the central and provincial levels to coordinate rural development efforts among different bureaus and to lead rural collectivization. In the reform period, sub-provincial governments set up similar umbrella organizations, though only some are referred to as the RWD; see Yu et al. 2007b: 1779-1780. See also Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 71-72.

successful.⁵⁹ As part of the Party committee, the RWD can organize work teams, reward successful efforts, and recommend outstanding officials for promotion.

In recent years, cadre evaluation and promotion standards have been altered to include the various objectives of the NSC. Although official documents and speeches stress that the NSC must be “adapted to local conditions” (*yindizhiyi* 因地制宜), the central government has nonetheless been involved in this process. In 2006, the NDRC, the DRC, the Ministry of Agriculture, and CASS drafted the *Urban-Rural Innovative Development Blue Book for China’s Building a New Socialist Countryside*, which outlined a set of nationally recommended program indicators and cadre evaluation standards for local governments (see Appendices 1 and 2). Anna Ahlers and Gunter Schubert have documented how local authorities regularly evaluate NSC programs, assigning numeric points to cadres based on their performance.⁶⁰ Such a system makes it easy to rank and compare cadres who are competing for limited promotion opportunities.

In addition, several Mao-era campaign tactics have been used to implement the NSC. For example, cadre work teams (*ganbu gongzuo dui* 干部工作队) charged with overseeing NSC implementation in the villages have served the dual purpose of mobilizing the bureaucracy and the rural population. In many places, the RWD has successfully recruited young officials to leave their departments temporarily and join work teams with the expectation of early promotion.⁶¹ As Perry has observed, campaign tactics also include sending “propaganda teams” to the villages, setting “struggle targets,” and training village “activists” and “backbones.”⁶² In some places,

⁵⁹ Interviews with officials in Jiangxi and Hebei 5/2010-8/2010.

⁶⁰ Ahlers & Schubert 2009: 49-53; Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 82-83.

⁶¹ Li Jiange 2009: 44-45.

⁶² Perry 2011: 39-42.

cultural performance troupes have even been organized to literally sing the praises of the NSC.⁶³ To a limited extent, Mao-era collectivism has also been revived, as famous villages like Dazhai and Huaxi have provided training for thousands of village leaders on the importance of fostering a collectivist spirit to carry out the NSC.⁶⁴

Perhaps more effective than these mechanisms, many officials and scholars have endorsed the establishment of independent “peasant councils” (*nongmin lishihui* 农民理事会) below the village government to organize and mobilize subgroups of villagers. Representing the position of the NDRC, Ma Xiaohe has suggested that villagers elect peasant council members from the “five elderly groups” (*wulao* 五老), i.e. elderly and retired Party members, cadres, teachers, soldiers and model laborers.⁶⁵ It seems that in practice, most peasant councils consist of 5-15 members who either belong to the five elderly groups or to a subset of younger, economically successful villagers.⁶⁶

Regarding the purpose of peasant councils, the Ministry of Construction stated in 2005 that they would “make decisions under the guidance of the Party, listen to the villagers’ suggestions and demands, foster communication between the government and the people, bring grassroots organizations closer to the villagers, and unite the efforts of all villagers to improve

⁶³ In Ganzhou there are traveling Hakka-language NSC song and dance troupes. Site visit to Wenyuan village, Xingguo 6/2010.

⁶⁴ Both Dazhai and Huaxi have retained certain collective elements from the Mao-era and developed burgeoning “red tourism” industries. During the 11th FYP, Huaxi pledged to provide free NSC training to 50,000 village party secretaries from across China; see Li Hua 2008: 168.

⁶⁵ Ma 2008: 16.

⁶⁶ Li Zuojun 2008: 135-136.

their living environment.”⁶⁷ As this quote suggests, peasant councils are similar to the old production teams. However, depending on election outcomes, team leaders do not necessarily take part in council activities; and compared to teams, peasant councils are much more limited in scope, existing in only some parts of China. Since the central government has yet to provide a formal legal basis for the existence of peasant councils, there is no available data on how many villages in China have established them,⁶⁸ and it is unlikely that many local governments recognize a need for them. For instance, during fieldwork in Hebei province, several local officials expressed the view that peasant councils were redundant with village committees and therefore unnecessary.⁶⁹

Finally, during the NSC local governments have drastically altered the physical appearance of certain model villages in order to generate competition for status and resources among neighboring villages. In some places, villagers have willingly (or grudgingly due to pressure from other villagers) torn down their old homes and widened village roads to attract the attention of government officials who have the power to formally designate them as a “NSC site” (*xin nongcun jianshe dian* 新农村建设点) or “NSC showpiece site” (*xin nongcun jianshe jingpin dian* 新农村建设精品点). In general, this status lasts for one to two years and opens the door for substantial financial support from provincial, city, and county governments.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ MOC 2005.

⁶⁸ At least in Jiangxi province, where the government has enthusiastically promoted peasant councils, it is required that at least one council be set up in every NSC site. In 2010, Jiangxi had a total of 46,000 NSC sites; see Bian 2010.

⁶⁹ Interviews with officials in Qing county, Hebei 8/2010.

⁷⁰ NSC sites are commonly differentiated as provincial-level sites (*shengji dian* 省级点), city-level sites (*shiji dian* 市级点) and county-level sites (*xianji dian* 县级点), depending on which level of government provides the most financial support.

In summary, there are clear links between the NSC and past rural improvement campaigns. In formulating the NSC, the government seems to have drawn inspiration not only from the Rural Reconstruction Movement of the Republican period, but also from the Great Leap Forward and other controversial campaigns of the Maoist period. The NSC has borrowed a political rhetoric and implementation style reminiscent of mass campaigns in order to imbue current efforts with a sense of historical mission and urgency. Perry has proposed that the NSC be understood as a “managed campaign,” which is more pragmatic and eclectic than the mass campaigns of the Maoist period, but can nonetheless “operate as a powerful tool for combating bureaucratic rigidity and resistance.”⁷¹ Similarly, this study supports the view that the NSC is indeed a campaign. Although it resembles past campaigns in many ways, it is also fundamentally different in that it seeks to overturn the long-standing pattern of urban bias that characterized the Maoist period and the first few decades of the reform period. As explained in the next section, this particular kind of rural campaign likely derives more from regional policy learning than from China’s own historical experience.

The NSC as an East Asian Approach to Rural Development

In its search for a new modernization path, China has turned its attention to the experiences of Korea, Japan, and Taiwan as examples of an “East Asian model” (*dongya moshi* 东亚模式), in which rural construction is “led by the government” (*zhengfu zhudao* 政府主导) and implemented by a quasi-governmental, “comprehensive farmers’ association” (*zonghe nongxie* 综合农协). Chinese scholars believe that the East Asian model is rooted in the existence of a strong central state and a smallholder farm economy. In contrast, Western models are

⁷¹ Perry 2011: 43-45, 51.

described as being based on a market-driven logic, private economic cooperatives, and large-scale farming dominated by agribusinesses.⁷²

Of China's East Asian neighbors, South Korea has been the most important model for the NSC. Soon after China and South Korea established diplomatic relations in 1992, China's Ministry of Agriculture started organizing study tours to South Korea. Li Shuishan, a researcher at the Ministry of Agriculture, first learned about Korea's New Village Movement in 1993 while attending an international conference on rural education in Beijing.⁷³ Li, a Chinese-born ethnic Korean, then visited Korea's Saemaul Headquarters and organized a conference on regional development and rural education in Shenzhen,⁷⁴ which led to the publication of the first book on the NVM in Chinese, *Korean Agriculture and the New Village Movement* (1995).⁷⁵

Chinese efforts to study the New Village Movement intensified in the 2000s. While visiting South Korea in October 2000, Premier Zhu Rongji helped to establish the "Sino-Korean Economic Cooperation Research Society." The society's fourth annual meeting, held in July 2006, focused on comparing China's New Socialist Countryside with Korea's New Village Movement.⁷⁶ Shortly after this conference, the Chinese government announced that it would send 30,000 civil servants to Korea between 2006 and 2009 for NVM training.⁷⁷ Also, between

⁷² Li Jiange 2009: 454; Chen et al. 2008: 531; Bi 2008: 35; Zhang Wanfang 2008: 3; Hao & Liao: 278; Wen 2006: 12-13, 17. For more on Chinese comparisons of the NSC and East Asian rural development models, see Perry 2011: 47-49.

⁷³ Li 2006: 44.

⁷⁴ Considered a successful model of regional development, the NVM has also been used as a point of reference for China's "Open Up the West" campaign; see Liu 2007: 2-3; Jin 2008: 2.

⁷⁵ Li 2006: 31.

⁷⁶ Ma 2008: 1-2, 201.

⁷⁷ Do 2009.

2002 and 2009, another initiative known as the “Joint Sino-Korean Love and Sunshine Program” introduced Korea’s NVM to more than 10,000 Chinese agriculture specialists from 13 different provinces.⁷⁸ Zheng Jiaokuan, former director of Korea’s Saemaul Training Institute, frequently lectured at these training sessions.⁷⁹

Chinese sources suggest that the New Socialist Countryside was explicitly modeled after Korea’s New Village Movement. In 2005, Zheng Xinli from the Central Policy Research Office led a group of high-level officials to South Korea to study the New Village Movement “in order to draft the 11th Five Year Plan, resolve the three rural problems, and promote rural economic and social development.”⁸⁰ After returning from South Korea, Zheng submitted two reports to the State Council, the “Investigative Report on Korea’s New Village Movement” and the “Recommendations on Building a New Socialist Countryside.” These reports suggested that the central government follow the example of the NVM by gradually expanding from a few experimental sites to the majority of villages and townships by 2020. Zheng also proposed that county governments take responsibility for local NSC initiatives, and that selective rewards be used to generate high levels of peasant participation.⁸¹

In Korea, officials and scholars familiar with the New Socialist Countryside understand it as an adaptation of the New Village Movement.⁸² The Korean government actually began

⁷⁸ Guangdong Provincial Association for Science and Technology 2009.

⁷⁹ Jin 2008: 2.

⁸⁰ This group included officials from the Central Leading Group on Rural Work, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Construction, the People’s Bank, and the Guizhou provincial government; see Fang & Liu 2006: 49.

⁸¹ Fang & Liu 2006: 49-50, 54-55.

⁸² Interviews with experts at the Saemaul Headquarters, the Saemaul Training Institute, and the Korean Development Institute in Seoul 10/2009.

promoting the NVM as an international rural development model in the 1970s. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) identified the NVM as a “best practices” poverty alleviation program, and since 2002 it has been working with the Korean government to promote the NVM in such places as Cambodia, Laos, and Nepal.⁸³ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has also suggested extending the reach of NVM training to developing countries in Africa. For many Koreans, international NVM promotion is a source of pride, and Korean news sources have even boasted that Hu Jintao himself has studied the NVM.⁸⁴

The introduction to the Chinese translation of Park Jin-hwan’s memoir (rural policy advisor to Park Chung-hee) nicely summarizes why China is so interested in the NVM:

China’s neighbor Korea, during the process of industrialization and urbanization, successfully managed the urban-rural relationship, and within a short period of time became a successful model of transitioning from a traditional agricultural society to a newly industrialized country. Starting in the 1970s, at the same time Korea was undergoing industrialization, urbanization and globalization, it started the great New Village Movement, which quickly reversed the urban-rural gap and the rich-poor gap. Over the course of only 20 years of construction and development, Korea was able to taste the fruits of modernization.⁸⁵

The NVM represents a promise that China can overcome its long-standing pattern of urban bias, reduce the urban-rural gap, and successfully achieve modernization in a short period of time.

Chinese sources attribute the success of the NVM to several factors, such as the prominent role of the government, the cultivation of new village leaders, the creation of a new rural culture, and the strengthening of farmers’ organizations.⁸⁶ Chinese sources also praise the

⁸³ Ma 2008: 73; Park 2009; Do 2009.

⁸⁴ Do 2009.

⁸⁵ Park 2005: 1-3.

⁸⁶ Fang & Liu 2006: 52; Ma 2008: 74-76; Li 2006: 8-9; Li Jiange 2009: 455.

NVM for using an “integrated development model” that combined top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation.⁸⁷ This kind of integrated model is said to have changed the nature of state-society relations—from the government “ruling” (*tongzhi* 统治) society to the government “serving” (*fuwu* 服务) and “consulting” (*xiezhi* 协治) society.⁸⁸ Zheng Xinli argues optimistically that the NSC will succeed because China is much stronger economically than Korea was in the 1970s and because China’s authoritarian political system is conducive for mobilizing developmental resources.⁸⁹ However, Li Shuishan warns that Chinese officials, who are accustomed to “going down to the countryside” (*xiaxiang shi* 下乡式) and “injecting themselves” (*zhuru shi* 注入式) into policy campaigns, should not misinterpret the Korean case by overestimating the role of the government and underestimating the importance of the Saemaul spirit that motivated peasant participation.⁹⁰ The Saemaul spirit, described in Chinese sources as deriving from Korea and China’s shared Confucian cultural heritage, is also considered a strong reason for China to embrace the Korean model over other development models.⁹¹

To a lesser extent, Japan and Taiwan have also served as models for the New Socialist Countryside. Chinese interest in Japan can be traced back to 1993, when the Ministry of Agriculture designated Shaanxi and Shanxi as pilot provinces for “Learning from the Japanese Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives.”⁹² Chinese sources describe this organization as

⁸⁷ Ma 2008: 78-79; Li Zuojun 2008: 104.

⁸⁸ Park Jin-hwan 2005: 185; Ma 2008: 100-101.

⁸⁹ Fang & Liu 2006: 52-53.

⁹⁰ Li 2006: 24.

⁹¹ Li Zuojun 2008: 103; Park 2005: 7; Ma 2008: 74-75.

⁹² Ma 2008: 41.

different from Western agricultural cooperatives because of its quasi-governmental, comprehensive (i.e. multifunctional) nature. Bi Meijia, former director of the Anhui Provincial Committee on Agriculture, argues that compared to sector-based cooperatives found in the West, a Japanese-style farmers' union is better for promoting broad-based rural development.⁹³ Along with farmers' cooperatives, China has also recognized Japan's "One Village, One Product Movement" (*yicun yipin yundong* 一村一品运动) of the late 1970s as a promising means of promoting agricultural specialization.⁹⁴ Finally, as Perry has noted, despite the fact that treating Taiwan as a model may be politically problematic, Chinese scholars have nonetheless taken a serious interest in understanding Taiwanese rural development.⁹⁵ Hao Zhidong, a professor at Macau University, has argued that because of its similar culture, Taiwan is perhaps the most useful model for China.⁹⁶ As will be elaborated further in the next chapter, several scholars have used the NSC as an opportunity to call for the development of a Taiwanese-style Farmers' Association in Mainland China.⁹⁷

Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on the origins of China's New Socialist Countryside by elaborating the reasons the Chinese government adopted it, the debates surrounding its main goals, and the various historical and regional models from which it has borrowed. The NSC may be understood an agricultural adjustment program that has taken the form of a rural

⁹³ Bi 2008: 40.

⁹⁴ Li Jiange 2009: 454; Yang 2009: 120, 124.

⁹⁵ Perry 2011: 49.

⁹⁶ Hao & Liao 2008: 1.

⁹⁷ Wen 2006: 17; Yu et al. 2007a: 191-192; Bi 2008: 46; Hao & Liao 2008: 274, 292-293.

modernization campaign. It shares similarities with Maoist campaigns, as well as rural campaigns found elsewhere in East Asia. In formulating its rural policy, China has looked to Korea, Japan, and Taiwan as models of successful rural development. Like these other cases, the NSC has heavily emphasized the role of the government and farmers' organizations in rural development. However, even though China appears to be converging with an East Asian model of rural development, it has not been as successful as these other cases. The next chapter presents the NSC as a case of mixed rural development outcomes and analyzes the reasons for China's less successful performance.

Chapter 6: Building a New Socialist Countryside in China, 2000s—Outcomes

A review of central government work reports suggests that much progress has been made since the New Socialist Countryside was first introduced. The 2011 work report stated that during the 11th Five-year-plan, the “peasant burden” decreased by more than 133.5 billion yuan per year, and that rural incomes grew at the average rate of 8.9% per year (compared to 9.7% for urban incomes). The total amount of farmland was stabilized, and grain production increased for 7 consecutive years. The goal of providing free, 9-year compulsory education to all children was realized, and rural cooperative medical care was extended to all counties, nearly encompassing the entire rural population. Major achievements were also made in the areas of rural pensions, poverty alleviation, and infrastructure development.¹

Despite these notable achievements, this study treats China during the NSC as a case of mixed rural development outcomes. The NSC has had a moderate, positive effect on stimulating agricultural production and raising rural incomes, but it has failed to significantly reduce the urban-rural income gap (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.3). Of course, difficulties in these areas are to be expected, as Japan, Taiwan and South Korea all tried, rather unsuccessfully, to stem the tide of rural-to-urban migration and to scale up agriculture as a way of maintaining production levels as the rural population declined. Like these other cases, China’s smallholder farm economy has remained in tact since the second land reform of the early 1980s (i.e. de-collectivization), and it is unclear if recent efforts to increase the scale of production are succeeding. Grain production has increased as a result of government subsidies to farmers, but the food trade gap has also risen to unprecedented levels during the NSC (see Chapter 5, Figures 5.4 and 5.5).

¹ Wen 2011.

The NSC has been most successful in the area of village environmental improvement, which includes village public infrastructure, sanitation, and housing. However, these gains are mostly limited to those villages that have been designated by local governments as NSC sites, and in many parts of China, local NSC initiatives have focused almost exclusively on housing at the expense of other goals. Indeed, many observers have criticized NSC model villages for setting unrealistic standards for poor villages, and NSC housing programs as an exercise in “image engineering” (*xingxiang gongcheng* 形象工程).² Ye Jingzhong, a scholar at China Agricultural University, blames Party propaganda departments and news media organizations for focusing so much on model villages that many peasants understand the NSC as simply a rural housing program. Ye finds that when designating models, local governments choose the easiest cases—villages that are strong economically, have capable leaders and little or no record of peasant protest.³ Local governments then invest up to 100 times more than what they invest in non-model villages, making it impossible for other villages to emulate without accumulating massive debts.⁴ The widespread construction of new homes, while consistent with the central government’s desire to boost rural consumption and expand domestic demand, has resulted in elevated levels of rural household indebtedness.⁵

Even more problematic, some local governments have forcibly torn down traditional village housing and relocated farmers to newly built apartment-style housing. The large-scale

² Zhang Ping 2009: 195; Zhu 2007: 11; Su 2009.

³ Ye 2006: 8-13.

⁴ Ye 2006: 235.

⁵ It is very difficult to obtain data on levels of rural household indebtedness because the “peasant burden” is a very sensitive issue in China, but interviews suggest that to build new homes, farmers have been borrowing 30,000 yuan or more from banks and private sources. Interviews with villagers in Jiangxi and Hebei 5/2010-8/2010.

demolition of old villages in the name of the NSC constitutes a new form of rural land grabs, as local governments have sold off rural construction land (i.e. villagers' housing plots) to urban-industrial interests for enormous profits. It appears, therefore, that despite the central government's commitment to rural development, entrenched urban-biased development ideologies, as well as the age-old problem of government corruption, have hindered successful implementation of the NSC.

This chapter first elaborates the main reasons that China has been less successful than the other cases at promoting rural development (Section 1). It then examines policies related to farmers' cooperatives (Section 2) and village renovation (Section 3). Although this chapter is focused mostly on the problems associated with village renovation, Chapter 7 discusses the ways in which it has made a positive contribution to rural development in some parts of China.

Section 1: Explaining the Chinese Case

Rural Land Tenure

China's unique land tenure system of village collective ownership and household usage rights makes it different than the other cases in this study, which raises the question of whether privatizing rural land would actually stimulate rural development and eliminate the problem of rural land grabs.⁶ While there is certainly some support for this idea, research by Qian Forrest Zhang and John Donaldson, for example, suggests that the Chinese system actually "provides farmers with a source of economic income and political bargaining power, and restricts corporate actors from dispossessing farmers of their land."⁷ Similarly, scholars such as He Xuefeng and

⁶ Western media reports have criticized the NSC for not addressing what they see as the root problem of Chinese rural development, i.e. the failure to privatize farmland; see McGregor 2006a; McGregor 2006b.

⁷ Zhang & Donaldson 2008: 26.

Wen Tiejun have argued that China's land tenure system has guaranteed farmers a minimum level of security, thus allowing China to avoid the problem of urban slums populated by large numbers of landless peasants.⁸ Perhaps if land were privatized, some of the problems related to NSC housing programs would be alleviated, but even in Korea where land was privately held, the New Village Movement resulted in housing-related problems not unlike those found in the Chinese case.

Farmers' Organizations

One of the key differences between China and the other cases, it is argued here, is that China lacks effective farmers' organizations. Farmers' organizations are important during both the extractive and protective phases of agricultural policy, as they provide an institutionalized way of transferring resources in and out of the rural sector. They are essential for the provision of agricultural extension services and, as the examples of Japan and Taiwan illustrate, may help strengthen the state's political commitment to agricultural adjustment programs. Unlike their counterparts in Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea, however, farmers' organizations in China are neither encompassing of the rural population nor linked to higher levels of government. They are extremely decentralized organizations, operating mostly at the village level, with limited access to the state's developmental resources and virtually no political power.

There is tremendous variation among Chinese farmers' organizations in terms of the services they provide and the way they are managed. Leaders may be elected or appointed, and while some of the more effective organizations are run by local farmers who are embedded in the rural community, others are run by external actors, such as government officials seeking quick promotion or agribusiness executives seeking control over more farmland. Contrary to the notion

⁸ Wen 2009; He 2011.

that decentralization is conducive for participatory development, Chinese farmers' organizations have played a much less important role in rural development than, for example, Taiwanese farmers' organizations, which are far more centralized. The aggregate effect of the Chinese system is a kind of enclave development, as opposed to the kind of extensive rural development found in other East Asian countries. A more in-depth discussion of farmers' organizations can be found below in Section 2 of this chapter.

Campaign Feedback Mechanisms

Another key difference between China and the other cases is that it lacks certain feedback mechanisms that are important if rural modernization campaigns are to succeed. As the example of the Great Leap Forward illustrates, under conditions of extreme top-down pressure to meet campaign goals, local officials are likely to produce false reports that exaggerate their achievements. This tendency is more pronounced in authoritarian political systems, where demonstrating commitment to campaign goals constitutes a means of currying favor with higher-level officials and advancing one's political career.⁹ If central leaders are particularly devoted to a policy, as Mao was devoted to the Great Leap Forward, then it becomes a kind of ideological policy that is largely immune from criticism.¹⁰ When bureaucratic feedback mechanisms are inhibited (i.e. lower-level officials not reporting problems to higher-level officials), then the central government's capacity to monitor local implementation becomes essential to campaign success. However, if bureaucratic controls are weak (i.e. higher-level officials not monitoring or disciplining lower-level officials), then campaigns are likely to fail. When these conditions are

⁹ Kung & Chen 2011.

¹⁰ Quick 1980.

combined with a weak civil society, the result may be deadly, as evidenced by the mass killings in Xinyang and other places during the Great Leap Forward.¹¹

Briefly stated, the success or failure of modernization campaigns is related to the strength of bureaucratic feedback mechanisms, bureaucratic controls, and civil society, which all help to ensure that there are certain checks from above and below to counterbalance the power of local government officials in charge of campaign implementation. All three of these mechanisms were extremely weak during the Great Leap Forward. In contrast, Taiwan during the Community Development Campaign and South Korea during the New Village Movement had highly centralized political systems in which the state's capacity to monitor local implementation was relatively strong. Similar to China, Taiwan and South Korea had authoritarian political systems with weak civil societies, but the presence of farmers' organizations that were closely linked but still separate from the government (unlike the people's commune system in China) constituted a potential check on local government authority. While Korea's NACF proved to be rather ineffective at reigning in campaign excesses during the New Village Movement, Taiwan's FA system, which was more embedded than the NACF, ensured that farmers maintained a certain level of control over the Community Development Campaign.

What does this mean for the New Socialist Countryside? In terms of bureaucratic feedback on agricultural policy, compared to the Maoist period, local officials today face fewer political repercussions for reporting problems to the higher-levels, assuming of course that they do not implicate their superiors. However, officials in China, like anywhere else, are still prone to exaggerate their achievements and conceal their shortcomings. In any political system, authoritarian or democratic, bureaucratic feedback is an imperfect mechanism for improving

¹¹ Scott 1998; Dikotter 2010: 269-323.

policy, as individual officials and institutions may have vested interests in maintaining policies that are inefficient, misguided, or even failing.

Bureaucratic Controls: Administrative and Fiscal Centralization

Regarding bureaucratic controls, the NSC has coincided with administrative and fiscal reforms aimed at shifting political power upwards. For example, many township and village governments have either been eliminated or merged,¹² county governments have taken over several functions that were previously handled at the lower-levels,¹³ personnel appointments in certain departments have become more centralized,¹⁴ and all local governments have become increasingly reliant on inter-governmental fiscal transfers to cover their operating and program expenses. Between 2003 and 2008, central fiscal transfers to local governments nearly quadrupled, rising from 483.6 million yuan to 1.871 trillion yuan (see Figure 6.1), and the percentage of local government expenditures funded by transfers reached as high as 58% in some

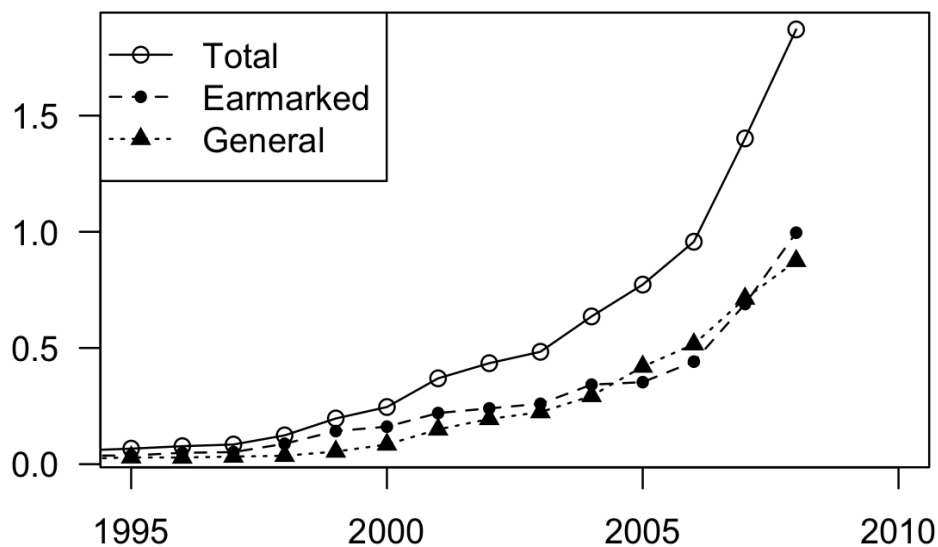
¹² As part of the policy to “eliminate rural market townships and merge administrative townships” (*chexiang bingzhen* 撤乡并镇), between 2002 and 2008, the total number of townships dropped from 41,000 to 34,301. During this same period, the total number of administrative and natural villages also declined from 3.39 million to 2.66 million; see MOHURD 2009: 136-143. For more information on Hu-era administrative centralization, see Tan 2007.

¹³ Following RFTR, in 2005 the central government announced a policy of “comprehensive rural reform” (*nongcun zonghe gaige* 农村综合改革), which called for the continued reduction of townships and the reform of township functions; the implementation of compulsory education by county governments; the centralization of county and township financial management; the reduction of county and township government debts; and the central government’s assumption of debts related to compulsory education. Reform of collective forest rights was added to this policy in 2007; see Chen 2008: 158; Li et al. 2009: 51-53; Xie 2008: 197-201.

¹⁴ Mertha 2005.

places.¹⁵ These reforms have reduced the number of local government “agents” that must be monitored and, at least in theory, made it easier for the higher-levels to ensure that NSC funding is not diverted to other purposes.¹⁶

6.1: Central Fiscal Transfers, 1994-2008 (Transfers in Trillion Yuan)



Source: Xie 2009: 590.¹⁷

Despite these efforts, however, administrative and fiscal reforms have not been very successful at strengthening bureaucratic controls. In many places, reducing the number of townships and villages has not actually reduced the size of the bureaucracy. Graeme Smith has

¹⁵ From 2003-2008, the rate of local government dependency on fiscal transfers rose from 28% to 38% nationally, from 40.6% to 51% in central China, and from 46.5% to 57.6% in western China; see Xie 2009: 590-591.

¹⁶ Aside from these reforms, Chapter 5 discusses cadre evaluation standards and NSC coordinating committees, which have been used to both mobilize and control the bureaucracy.

¹⁷ While some transfers are for general use (*yibanxing zhuan yi zhifu* 一般性转移支付), most NSC-related transfers are earmarked for specific spending purposes (*zhuanxiang zhuan yi zhifu* 专项转移支付).

suggested that while township governments have indeed been “hollowed-out,” county governments have been expanding rapidly. In addition, many former township officials have simply been transferred to the villages as “sent-down” cadres, and the “shadow state” of secretaries and assistants that surrounds the formal bureaucracy has actually grown more powerful at the township-level.¹⁸ Moreover, Andrew Mertha finds that reforms to centralize personnel appointments have been mostly limited to those sections of the government with the greatest revenue potential (e.g. the State Administration for Industry and Commerce). Mertha reports that these reforms have increased the power of provincial governments, not the central government, and made it extremely difficult for township leaders to monitor the activities of those officials whose departments have been centralized.¹⁹ Smith also reports that the centralization of certain bureaus has reduced bureaucratic cohesiveness and actually made it difficult to elicit compliance from officials whose bureaus have not been centralized: “With little prospect of promotion or recognition, and limited agency over their daily work, they shirk their duties.”²⁰

In terms of fiscal policy, Pierre Landry finds that China’s share of sub-national government expenditures, about 55% for the 1958-2002 period, makes it one of the most decentralized countries in the world.²¹ Though Landry’s data does not go beyond 2002, work by Achim Fock and Christine Wong shows that the inter-governmental fiscal transfer system remains extremely decentralized, with county and township governments continuing to spend the

¹⁸ Smith 2009; Smith 2010.

¹⁹ Mertha 2005.

²⁰ Smith 2010: 611.

²¹ Landry 2008: 3-9.

bulk of government resources. NSC funding is also particularly difficult to monitor, as fiscal transfers have to pass through five levels of government (province, prefecture, county, township, village) before reaching the intended recipients.²² Another problem with transfers for NSC programs is that they are conditional on local governments coming up with “matching funds” (*peitao zijin* 配套资金), which may be eligible for reimbursement after NSC programs are completed. Unfortunately, county governments often pass along this burden to township and village governments,²³ which have few resources for raising revenue or obtaining credit.²⁴ Furthermore, it appears that fiscal transfers have adversely affected public goods provision in some places. John James Kennedy’s work on northwest rural China, for example, reveals that in the post-RTFR world, insufficient transfers to weak township governments have contributed to an overall decline in rural public goods and services.²⁵

The political systems of Taiwan and South Korea share the same kind of tiered administrative structure as China, but they were much more centralized under the KMT and Park regimes. Up until democratization in the late 1980s, the national government of South Korea appointed the top leaders at each level of local government (except the village heads, who were appointed by the township) and set the budget for rural development programming, allowing

²² Fock & Wong 2008: 6-10.

²³ Ahlers & Schubert 2009: 48. Some Chinese sources creatively refer to this problem with matching funds as “the center orders the meal, but the localities foot the bill” (*zhongyang diancai, difang maidan* 中央点菜, 地方买单); see Li et al. 2008: 21.

²⁴ Xinhua news reported in February 2010 that there were no financial institutions present in 2,945 townships (8.6% of the national total), and no financial services available in 708 townships. This article does not specify the difference between financial institutions and services, but presumably the post-office may provide limited financial services in places where there are no banks; see Yao & Han 2010.

²⁵ Kennedy 2007.

only a small amount of discretionary funds to be disbursed to villages on a competitive application basis. In Taiwan, some elections were allowed at the local level, but the national government was heavily involved in elections to ensure that KMT-backed candidates would fill all of the top leadership positions.²⁶ Moreover, the JCRR in Taiwan, which functioned like a central ministry, administered aid directly to the farmers' associations and villages, thus eliminating the possibility of local governments misallocating or simply confiscating funds. Obviously, China is a much larger country than Taiwan or South Korea, which makes it more difficult and costly for the national government to monitor local officials. Moving forward, China is likely to continue the process of centralizing its administrative and fiscal systems, but given the sheer size of the local state bureaucracy, it is unlikely that bureaucratic controls alone will be able to check the power of corrupt and unwise officials.

Rural Civil Society: Village Governance and Farmers' Organizations

The Chinese government has increasingly recognized the importance of strengthening rural civil society through the development of village self-governance institutions and farmers' organizations. To clarify, in 1982 the central government defined the township as the lowest level of the formal government apparatus, and the village as an autonomous, self-governing administrative unit (*xiangzheng cunzhi* 乡政村治). While the term "village government" refers to the village Party organization and the village committee, the term "village self-governance institutions" refers to the village committee, village teams, and other non-Party organizations formed to supplement or monitor the work of the village committee.

As part of the New Socialist Countryside's call to "democratize management," the central government has promoted certain policies to improve rural governance. In 2004, the Ministry of

²⁶ Gallin 1966: 21-22.

Civil Affairs (MOCA) announced a policy known as “transparency in village affairs” (*cunwu gongkai* 村务公开), which supports villagers’ rights “to know, to decide, to participate, and to monitor.” Aside from elections for village committees, which have been in place since the 1980s, the MOCA has called for the establishment of “village transparency monitoring groups” to ensure that information previously controlled by the village committee is made available to village residents.²⁷

Given the rather weak financial position of villages since rural tax and fee reform, participatory budget planning has also been introduced as a way of improving rural governance and mobilizing resources for NSC-related development projects. Known as the “one issue, one discussion” (*yishi yiyi* 一事一议) method for “soliciting money and labor” (*chouzi choulao* 筹资筹劳), villagers can make contributions of up to 15 yuan per person to a collective budget and then decide how the budget should be spent on a case-by-case basis. Village budget proposals need approval from two-thirds of all villagers, and final approval from the “peasant burden monitoring department” (*nongmin fudan jiandu guanli bumen* 农民负担监督管理部门) of the county government before taking effect.²⁸

Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to determine the extent to which these measures have been implemented. Li Changping argues that although elections are now more widespread,

²⁷ MOCA documents call for transparency in the areas of family planning, disaster relief, land usage, collective assets, officials’ salaries, compensation for requisitioned land, collective debts, budget planning, rural health cooperatives, farming subsidies, grassland and forest reclamation, and whatever else the population feels is relevant to their lives. Means for achieving transparency include public meetings, announcement boards, loudspeaker, radio, television and web announcements, and the circulation of “instructional memos;” see Yu et al. 2007b: 1814-1821.

²⁸ Yu et al. 2007b: 1726-1727; Wei & Yuan 2007: 13; Ren 2007: 90-91, 101-103; Xie 2008: 202; Xie 2009: 561.

village governments have become less democratic and responsive because of their financial dependence on the higher-levels for nearly everything. Li states that in the absence of strong collective assets to serve as the foundation for village development programs, participatory budget planning is just a meaningless formality.²⁹ Li Xiaoyun of China Agricultural University agrees, observing that from the perspective of villagers, both government transparency measures and participatory budget planning are ineffective, surface-level formalities required by higher-levels of government.³⁰ In addition, survey research by Ye Jingzhong confirms that most peasants do not understand participatory budget planning and believe that the village committee should only implement, not fund, NSC programs.³¹

Moreover, the process of village amalgamation that has taken place as part of Hu-era administrative reforms has complicated, if not severely weakened, rural self-governance institutions. In many cases, village mergers have resulted in the elimination of team leaders. Chen Xiwen cautions that the team is an important layer of village self-governance because it helps to protect villagers' most valuable asset, i.e. collective land rights, and that the erosion of control over land will only worsen as villages are merged together.³²

Despite the official rhetoric of "peasants as the main actors," these measures to improve rural governance have largely failed to incorporate the interests of villagers into local New Socialist Countryside initiatives. Han Jun, a central policy researcher at the DRC, writes that post-RTFR village committees and Party organizations are no longer able to represent villagers'

²⁹ Yu et al. 2007a: 187-188.

³⁰ Li et al. 2008: 21-22.

³¹ Ye 2006: 4, 10.

³² Chen 2008: 158.

interests, and that village officials' basic function has shifted from transferring information upwards (*shangchuan* 上传) to carrying information downwards (*xiada* 下达).³³ Li Xiaoyun similarly argues that village officials have turned into agents of the state who are “responsible to higher-levels” (*duishangfuze* 对上负责) instead of accountable to the people.³⁴

Given the limited influence of rural self-governance institutions over local policy implementation, this study suggests that the NSC has been more successful in those parts of China where farmers' organizations are relatively strong. Most farmers' professional cooperatives are relatively new organizations that have yet to establish firm roots in society. Still, preliminary survey research by Chinese scholars reveals that places with more effective cooperatives have experienced gains in agricultural production and rural income levels. The strongest cooperatives, unfortunately, seem to be located in the more developed coastal provinces. In these areas, local governments have generally been more proactive about promoting farmers' cooperatives, viewing the modernization of agriculture as more important for their localities than other NSC goals like village infrastructure improvement. Regarding peasant councils, Chapter 7 illustrates that they have been critical to the success of NSC village renovation programs in Ganzhou. There are still some problems, such as increased levels of rural indebtedness, but it seems that the worst aspects of NSC village renovation programs have been avoided. Specifically, peasant councils have served as a safeguard against the large-scale demolition of old villages and the construction of new villages with consolidated housing.

To summarize, the Chinese case is less successful than the Taiwanese and South Korean cases because its farmers' organizations are weaker and because it lacks effective campaign

³³ Han 2008: 289.

³⁴ Li et al. 2008: 22.

feedback mechanisms. Bureaucratic feedback has likely become more reliable since the Maoist period, but it is still an imperfect mechanism for improving policy. Despite the centralization of China's administrative and fiscal systems, the central government's capacity to control the local bureaucracy and monitor NSC implementation is still very weak. Finally, even though all of the cases in this study are examples of state-led rural development, the implementation of the NSC has been overly top-down. Village self-governance institutions and farmers' organizations have generally been too weak to counterbalance the power the local state. County governments have pushed their agendas onto ineffective township and village governments, which have become increasingly dependent on fiscal transfers and, consequently, less responsive to the rural population.

The following sections discuss developments in two specific policy areas—farmers' cooperatives and village improvement. These areas were chosen for two reasons. First, they have been historically emphasized in East Asian rural development strategies. Second, they best illustrate the ways in which China has tried to emulate the policies of both Taiwan and South Korea.

Section 2: Farmers' Cooperatives

Widely seen as effective organizations for rural transformation in East Asia, many Chinese officials and scholars are hopeful that farmers' cooperatives can overcome the limitations of China's smallholder farm economy and facilitate a transition towards a larger-scale, more specialized form of commercial agriculture. As part of the NSC's call to "develop production" in recent years the central government has actively promoted the creation of farmers' professional cooperatives (*nongmin zhuan ye hezuoshe* 农民专业合作社) and associations (*nongmin zhuan ye xiehui* 农民专业协会). In the early reform period, local

governments offered limited support to farmers who wanted to form their own professional organizations, but it was not until October 2006 that a legal framework for these organizations was established with passage of the Farmers' Professional Cooperative Law (*nongmin zhuan ye hezuoshefa* 农民专业合作社法). As of September 2009, there were approximately 216,000 farmers' cooperatives in China.³⁵

The Evolution of Farmers' Cooperatives in China

In an effort to show that there is a historical precedent for farmers' cooperatives, Chinese sources are looking back to the Republican period, citing not only the Rural Reconstruction Movement of the 1920s-1930s but also the Cooperative Movement of the 1920s-1940s. Interestingly, both CCP and KMT contributions to this movement are being recognized, and some observers have even pointed out that the KMT was perhaps more successful than the Communists in adapting this "Western concept" to Chinese conditions.³⁶

Drawing on his overseas education in the US and Germany, Xue Xianzhou first introduced the idea of economic cooperatives to China while teaching at Fudan University in Shanghai, where he also established China's first cooperative bank in 1919. In addition, Xue founded a weekly magazine called *The Common People* in 1920, which would serve as an important intellectual platform for discussing the Cooperative Movement. These efforts attracted the attention of Chiang Kai-shek, who asked Xue to help draft the 1927 "China Cooperative Program" (*zhongguo hezuohua fang'an* 中国合作化方案).³⁷ That same year, Mao published his "Report on an Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement," in which he used Marxist

³⁵ Chen 2010.

³⁶ Bi 2008: 53.

³⁷ Bi 2008: 54; Lu & Lu 2008: 11.

philosophy to argue that the CCP should establish economic cooperatives in both rural and urban areas.³⁸ Endorsed by both parties, cooperative development accelerated in the 1930s.

Although the CCP eventually gained control of the countryside and defeated the KMT, it is clear that the majority of Republican period cooperatives can trace their origins to the Nationalists. Starting with just a few hundred cooperatives in the 1920s, by 1945 the KMT had established an estimated 170,000 cooperatives, with a total of membership of 17 million.³⁹ In contrast, the CCP had established about 40,000 cooperatives, with a total membership of just 2 million.⁴⁰

The fact that Chinese sources are disclosing this history not only reflects improved relations between Mainland China and Taiwan, but also stems from a desire to show that current farmers' cooperatives, while consistent with Chinese culture and tradition, are not a throwback to the Maoist period. In Mainland China, unlike Taiwan, the term "farmers' association" is linked to Maoist class warfare organizations. In fact, Yu Jianrong and others believe that the legacy of peasant revolution and subsequent rural campaigns carried out by politicized and sometimes violent "peasant associations" (*nongmin xiehui zuzhi* 农民协会组织, abbreviated as *nonghui* 农会) has severely hindered efforts to build a national farmers' organization in the reform period.⁴¹

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the CCP set up a national network of peasant associations to overturn local power structures and carry out land reform. Although these associations were somewhat different from cooperatives, they were in fact related organizations.

³⁸ Lu & Lu 2008: 7-9.

³⁹ Bi 2008: 53.

⁴⁰ Bi 2008: 55-56.

⁴¹ Yu et al. 2007a: 155, 192.

According to the 1950 “General Rules on Peasant Associations,” their functions included “uniting the farmhands, poor peasants, middle peasants, and all elements in rural society who reject feudalism,” organizing peasant production, establishing rural cooperatives, and protecting peasants’ political rights.⁴²

After land reform was completed around 1953, most peasant association leaders became village and township government officials. This transition led to the temporary disbandment of the associations until 1963, when they were revived as “poor and lower-middle peasant associations” for the purpose of carrying out the Socialist Education Movement. During this campaign, as with land reform, the peasant associations attacked those villagers with relatively privileged class backgrounds. However, they also turned against local CCP officials for questioning the Great Leap Forward and going down a “revisionist road” that contradicted Mao’s teachings.⁴³ In an effort to reign in the violence unleashed by these groups, the Central Committee of the CCP issued a memorandum to the peasant associations in 1967, which stated:

The majority of commune officials are good or pretty good. For those who have made mistakes, they should rectify those mistakes through labor in the coming spring planting season. If they do a good job, then the poor and lower-middle peasant associations should forgive them and support their work. When criticizing the commune officials, the peasant associations should remember Mao’s advice to “learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones,” and “to cure the illness to save the patient.”⁴⁴

Ten years later as Deng Xiaoping’s rise to power ushered in the reform period, these class warfare organizations began to disappear, and by 1982 they had completely vanished.⁴⁵

⁴² Yu et al. 2007b: 1776-1777.

⁴³ Baum & Teiwes 1968; Yu et al. 2007a: 153-155.

⁴⁴ Yu et al. 2007b: 1799.

⁴⁵ Yu et al. 2007a: 155.

The 1984-1986 number one documents replaced the commune system with household contract farming, establishing what is known in China as the “dual system of production,” i.e. collective, centralized production (*jiti tongyi jingying* 集体统一经营) and family-based, decentralized production (*jiating fensan jingying* 家庭分散经营). While these reforms greatly undermined the Mao-era collective system, they still allowed for the coexistence of collective and household production practices, and farmers’ cooperatives were promoted as a way of bridging the two approaches. The formerly state-run “supply and marketing cooperatives” (*gongxiao hezuoshe* 供销合作社) and “technology associations” (*jishu xiehui* 技术协会) were gradually privatized,⁴⁶ and cooperative experiments in Sichuan, Anhui, and Guangdong provinces soon spread to other parts of China. It is estimated that by 1987 there were approximately 78,000 cooperatives nationwide, of which 91% specialized in agricultural technology extension services.⁴⁷ Along with township and village enterprises, these early reform-era cooperatives helped to give the terms “collective” and “cooperative” a more positive meaning, especially since individual members were allowed to retain private property.⁴⁸

After the 1980s, the central government intensified its efforts to promote cooperatives. From 1993 to 1995, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the China Association for Science

⁴⁶ Sun 2009: 224-225.

⁴⁷ While Li Ruifen states that the first reform-era cooperative was located in Sichuan, others claim it was in Anhui. Statistics on the number of cooperatives for this period vary. Some people only count newly formed organizations as cooperatives, not older state-run organizations that were privatized. Here, Li uses Ministry of Agriculture statistics that include both new and former state-run organizations. However, it should be noted that for the pre-2007 period, even the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance report very different cooperative statistics because of inconsistent definitions of cooperatives across provinces; see Li 2004: 105-106; Bi 2008: 65; Lu & Lu 2008: 18; Han 2007: 47-48.

⁴⁸ Chen 2008: 72-73.

and Technology (CAST) designated Shaanxi, Shanxi and Anhui as pilot provinces for farmers' cooperative experiments. The MOA and CAST also released a model constitution for farmers' cooperatives, supported cooperative development funds in villages, and set up elderly associations, water users' associations, and other environmental cooperatives.⁴⁹ In the early 2000s, the central government allocated more earmarked funding to cooperative development, and preliminary steps were taken to legalize farmers' organizations. For example, in 2002 the Agriculture Law was revised to say that the government should support cooperatives,⁵⁰ and in 2004 Zhejiang became the first province in China to pass its own farmers' cooperatives law.⁵¹

These earlier developments helped to lay the foundation for the 11th Five-year-plan, which identified farmers' cooperatives as key actors in the New Socialist Countryside.⁵² Finally, a national legal framework for these organizations was established in October 2006 with passage of the Farmers' Professional Cooperative Law (effective July 2007). Sun Zhengcai, who was Minister of Agriculture at that time, hailed the new law as a major achievement for the NSC.⁵³

Development of Farmers' Cooperatives During the New Socialist Countryside

The Farmers' Professional Cooperative Law defines cooperatives as “voluntarily assembled and democratically managed mutual-aid economic organizations that exist on the

⁴⁹ Li et al. 2009: 9-11. The World Bank also sponsored its own experimental cooperative programs in Heilongjiang and Sichuan provinces in the 1990s; see Han 2007: 5.

⁵⁰ The Agriculture Law mentions several types of farmers' organizations, including professional cooperative economic organizations, agricultural production organizations, agricultural product associations, supply and marketing cooperatives, and rural collective economic organizations; see Yu et al. 2007b: 1714-1730.

⁵¹ The Zhejiang law was later used as a model for the national Farmers' Professional Cooperative Law; see Han 2007: 37.

⁵² Li et al. 2009: 9-11; Lu & Lu 2008: 22-23.

⁵³ Sun 2009: 228.

foundation of the household contract farming system, whose members are either producers of the same agricultural products or providers and/or users of the same agricultural services.”⁵⁴ The law states that cooperative activities may include purchasing agricultural inputs, providing relevant technology and information to members, as well as selling, processing, shipping and storing agricultural products. Cooperatives must have at least 5 members, and 80% of members must be farmers. Non-farmer members must work in an area directly related to the cooperative and also benefit from cooperative services. The law also states that, similar to Taiwan, farmers’ cooperatives are governed by a “general assembly of members” or “member representatives,” which directly elects a “board of directors” and a “board of supervisors.”

Prior to the Cooperative Law, farmers’ organizations registered as a “social entity” (*shetuan faren* 社团法人) at the Ministries of Agriculture or Civil Affairs, or as a “corporate entity” (*qiye faren* 企业法人) at the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC). However, the new law states that in order to obtain legal status and protections, all cooperatives must register at the county-level SAIC office.⁵⁵ Despite the law’s clarity on this issue, the registration and regulation of cooperatives is complicated by the fact that there is no standard mechanism for coordinating the government’s cooperative promotion efforts, and at least five

⁵⁴ Yu et al. 2007b: 1830.

⁵⁵ Yu et al. 2007b: 1829-1838.

government agencies are working in this area.⁵⁶ Moreover, it seems that the majority of cooperatives are unregistered.⁵⁷

Although the total number of cooperatives has certainly increased since the Cooperative Law took effect (from about 150,000 in 2007 to 216,000 in 2009),⁵⁸ many experts are concerned that the scope of cooperatives is still far too limited given the size of the rural population. Zhang Xiaoshan, Director of the Rural Development Institute at CASS, writes that as of August 2008, less than 14% of the rural population belonged to cooperatives (about 35 million out of 252 million rural households). And of member households, only about 2% belonged to officially registered cooperatives (771,850 households).⁵⁹ Moreover, several Chinese sources point out that cooperative membership is often linked to a country's level of development. For example, the DRC reports that the percentage of the rural population belonging to cooperatives is above 90% for Denmark, France, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Korea; around 80% for Brazil and Chile; 40-60% for India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand; and only 10-30% for Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius and Uganda.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ The five agencies are the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, the China Association for Science and Technology, and the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives; see Li Jiange 2009: 334-335; Sun 2009: 226-227.

⁵⁷ At the end of 2007, the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that China had a total of 170,160 cooperative organizations, of which 150,000 were farmers' professional cooperatives, of which only 58,000 were registered at the SAIC; see Sun 2009: 5. Similarly, a 2005 survey by the DRC found that among 140 cooperatives receiving financial support from the central government, 75% had not registered at all. Han Jun maintains that even since the 2007 law took effect, the majority of cooperatives are still unregistered; see Han 2007: 14.

⁵⁸ Sun 2009: 5; Chen 2010.

⁵⁹ Sun 2008: 221.

⁶⁰ Han 2007: 192.

Aside from China's obvious desire to improve its international image and join the ranks of Japan and South Korea as one of the few Asian countries with a "modern" agricultural sector, Chinese sources give several reasons for why rural communities stand to benefit from cooperatives. Following the economic and community building perspectives outlined in the previous chapter, the arguments in favor of cooperatives include their potential to raise rural incomes, stimulate food production, strengthen the overall village economy, and increase levels of social cohesion.

Economic Justifications for Cooperatives

It is widely recognized in China that farmers' cooperatives can potentially boost rural incomes by reducing the costs associated with agricultural production and by increasing the market value of agricultural products. Specifically, cooperatives may purchase agricultural inputs in bulk at reduced prices, provide access to expensive farm machinery, coordinate sales among local producers who otherwise would engage in price-cutting, and develop brands for agricultural products. Cooperatives may also create job opportunities for local farmers and returned migrant workers. In fact, it is often returned migrant workers who draw on their connections to places and people outside of the village to expand and diversify cooperative operations.⁶¹ The link between cooperatives and improved incomes has indeed been supported by preliminary survey research. In a national survey conducted in 2007, about 93% of cooperative member households (330 out of 355) reported that their income had increased since joining a cooperative.⁶²

⁶¹ Interviews with cooperative leaders in Ganzhou 6/2010-8/2010. The DRC estimates that in 2007 alone, about 8 million returned migrant workers started businesses (including cooperatives) in their hometowns, resulting in the creation of 30 million jobs; see Han 2008: 165-167.

⁶² The other 7% of respondents reported no change in incomes. This survey spanned 7 provinces, 24 counties, 45 townships, and 91 villages; see Lu & Lu 2008: 97.

Cooperatives are also viewed as a important for scaling up agriculture and increasing food production,⁶³ especially in villages where high rates of out-migration have adversely affected the supply and quality of farm labor. To address these problems, local governments have been encouraged to support farmers who want to transfer their land to cooperatives.⁶⁴ Under Chinese law, farmers can neither own nor sell their land, but they may transfer their land usage rights to another party.⁶⁵ This third party may be another farmer, a cooperative, or an agribusiness. In the case of cooperatives, profits from the land are divided among members, either equally or proportionally based on members' shares in the cooperative.⁶⁶ The Chinese government hopes that by encouraging land transfers (*tudi liuzhuan* 土地流转) to cooperatives and agribusinesses, large-scale farming may gradually emerge in a system that is still fundamentally rooted in smallholder, family farming.

Finally, cooperative-led development is seen as a more viable alternative to village collective-led development. During the NSC, Huaxi village in Jiangsu province has received

⁶³ The average plot size in China was 9.13 mu (.61 hectares or 1.5 acres) per household in 2006. In contrast, this is about half the size of Korean plots and one-twelfth the size of Japanese plots, not to mention farms in the United States, which are on average 300 times larger; see Zhang Luxiong 2009.

⁶⁴ Chen 2008: 188.

⁶⁵ Some would argue that this is effectively a land sale because the third party must pay a fee (which varies depending on location) for the usage rights to the land. The Ministry of Land Resources is responsible for regulating land transfers, but a lot of transfers are also negotiated informally.

⁶⁶ “Land cooperatives” (*tudi hezuoshe* 土地合作社) are formed when membership is based on “using land to obtain shares” (*yidi rugu* 以地入股) in the cooperative. Requiring members to transfer land, however, is somewhat controversial because of China’s historical experience with collectivization. In general, most cooperatives only engage in voluntary land transfers and give members the option of purchasing shares in the cooperative with cash. The value of a single share may range from 100 yuan to 10,000 yuan. Interviews with cooperative leaders in Ganzhou 6/2010-8/2010.

much national media attention and trained thousands of village officials from across China in the “Huaxi spirit” (*huaxi jingshen* 华西精神) i.e. the spirit of collectivism.⁶⁷ Led by its famous village party secretary, Wu Renbao, and his family, Huaxi is one of the few villages that did not de-collectivize in the reform period,⁶⁸ and it is also the wealthiest village in China.⁶⁹ Often referred to as the “number one village under the sky,” Huaxi has literally been reaching for the sky and paying homage to the NSC by building a 74-story “New Village Skyscraper” (*xin nongcun dalou* 新农村大楼). While Huaxi’s success deserves more attention than is possible here, it is fair to assume that Huaxi is perhaps the only village in China wealthy enough to build the world’s 15th tallest skyscraper. Although Li Changping and other rural experts praise Huaxi for its economic success, they are aware that today’s rather weak village governments have few options for growing their collective assets, and cannot simply re-collectivize after decades of family farming or reverse the trend of privatizing village enterprises. Relying on farmers’ cooperatives to develop the rural economy is therefore considered more realistic than promoting a Huaxi-style village collective model.⁷⁰

The Community Building Perspective

⁶⁷ Li Hua 2008: 168.

⁶⁸ In 1992, there were about 7,000 villages (less than 1% of all villages) that had not de-collectivized. By 2006, the number of collective villages had dropped to about 2,000; see Chen 2008: 74-75; Pan & He 2006: 23.

⁶⁹ Huaxi’s industrialization process started during the Maoist period, and by 1980 village collective assets had already surpassed 100 million yuan. In 2005, village collective assets were worth about 30 billion yuan, and the average per capita income surpassed 120,000 yuan, which is 42 times the average rural income and 13 times the average urban income; see Li Hua 2008: 161; Interviews with Huaxi officials 3/2010.

⁷⁰ Chen 2008: 74-75; Han 2008: 27-28.

Beyond these economic justifications for cooperatives, many scholars believe that cooperatives can benefit rural communities by increasing general levels of social organization and cohesion. For example, in several villages that experienced high levels of unrest prior to rural tax and fee reform, volunteers with the New Rural Reconstruction Movement have trained former protest leaders and petitioners to become cooperative leaders.⁷¹ As one Chinese scholar affiliated with the movement explains, cooperatives provide opportunities for these “people’s heroes” (*minzhong lingxiu* 民众领袖) to maintain their status as village leaders in a post-RTFR world.⁷²

One could argue that there is actually more social cohesion in villages where frequent protests have occurred than in other villages, and surely New Rural Reconstruction Movement volunteers target protest leaders because of their ability to mobilize other villagers. To be clear, however, movement volunteers do not think that cooperatives should be resistance-based, political organizations. They tend to share the view that activities focused on “construction” (*jianshe* 建设) are much better for social cohesion than activities focused on “resistance” (*duikang* 对抗).⁷³ Wen Tiejun and other movement leaders also do not think of cooperatives as a substitute for the local state. Instead, they think that cooperatives should work closely with local governments, which also need to be strengthened, to implement the New Socialist Countryside.⁷⁴

Relations with the Government and Agribusinesses

⁷¹ As of August 2007, about half of the movement’s experimental sites (21 out of 44) had been set up this way; see Hao & Liao 2008: 269-270.

⁷² Hao & Liao 2008: 269-270.

⁷³ Hao & Liao 2008: 271.

⁷⁴ Wen 2006: 22; Liu 2008b: 8-12.

Adherents of the New Rural Reconstruction Movement admit that this approach of recruiting villagers with a reputation for protest to lead farmers' cooperatives is controversial for local governments.⁷⁵ In most cases, local governments prefer recruiting cooperative leaders from the ranks of village officials, returned migrant workers, and farmers who are already engaged in large-scale agriculture (*nongye zhuan ye dahu* 农业专业大户), or who work for rural "leading enterprises" (*longtou qiye* 龙头企业), i.e. agribusinesses. In fact, the NDRC reports that local governments have directly set up approximately 70% of the country's rural cooperatives.⁷⁶

Nearly all studies of farmers' cooperatives confirm that cooperative development has been most successful in places where local government support is strongest. However, over time government support may undermine the autonomy and sustainability of farmers' cooperatives. Government-sponsored cooperatives may hold elections, but these are largely ceremonial, and cooperative affairs are most often controlled by a small group of relatively wealthy shareholders.⁷⁷ While a small number of cooperatives have adopted membership rules to exclude government officials, a DRC-sponsored survey reports that out of 140 elected chairmen of the board of directors, 36% were government officials and 16% were government-backed candidates.⁷⁸ Also, because NSC evaluations require quantitative assessments of progress, government officials seeking promotion are more concerned with increasing membership numbers than building sustainable organizations and often require cooperatives to waive

⁷⁵ Hao & Liao 2008: 270.

⁷⁶ Ma 2008: 52. See also Han 2007: 12-13; Han 2008: 61; Lu & Lu 2008: 70-71; Li Jiange 2009: 325.

⁷⁷ Hao & Liao 2008: 271; Li 2004: 111-112. Interviews with cooperative leaders in Jiangxi 6/2010-8/2010.

⁷⁸ Han 2008: 18-19, 194-195.

membership fees.⁷⁹ In fact, the NDRC reports that most cooperatives have a lifespan of less than five years.⁸⁰ Similarly, a 2008 China Agricultural University survey of 180 villages found that only 7 out of 55 cooperatives established in the 2000s were still functioning.⁸¹

Besides the problem of cooperatives being highly dependent on local government support, other factors hindering cooperative development include limited access to capital and uneasy relations with agribusinesses. Unlike farmers' organizations in Taiwan and Korea, Chinese farmers' cooperatives do not have credit departments, and only recently have they been allowed to apply for credit from rural banks.⁸² And although many cooperatives are now registered as corporate entities, it is estimated that their capital assets are only about half that of rural enterprises.⁸³ Zhang Xiaoshan argues that cooperatives need capital investment from non-government sources to be sustainable, but there are few options aside from partnering with agribusinesses. Especially when the agribusiness is not founded or based in the same location as the cooperative, a conflict of interest may arise, as the agribusiness seeks to secure agricultural goods at the lowest price possible and the cooperative seeks to sell agricultural goods at the

⁷⁹ In contrast, cooperatives affiliated with the New Rural Reconstruction Movement require a 300 yuan membership fee as a way of generating a more active membership base; see Liu 2008a: 26-28. See also Han 2008: 125.

⁸⁰ Ma 2008: 49.

⁸¹ Li et al. 2009: 15.

⁸² To clarify, while agricultural producers' cooperatives do not have credit departments, China does have a separate network of rural credit cooperatives managed by the People's Bank of China.

⁸³ A DRC survey of 140 cooperatives supported by the central government found that the majority of cooperatives' "registration capital" (*zhuce ziben* 注册资本) fell between 10,000 and 50,000 yuan, and total assets (*zongzichan* 总资产) fell between 100,000 and 500,000 yuan. Cooperatives without central support are presumably much weaker; see Han 2008: 192.

highest price possible. If cooperative assets are tied to the agribusiness, then the agribusiness will almost always have the upper hand in price negotiations.⁸⁴

Finally, in terms of local attitudes towards cooperatives, even in places where there is general support for policy experimentation in this area, some officials fear that successful cooperatives may potentially compete with village committees and other government organizations for power.⁸⁵ Moreover, farmers living in places that fared poorly in the Maoist period are skeptical of cooperatives and have a “lingering fear” (*xinyou yuji* 心有余悸) that cooperatives may disregard property rights, for example, by appropriating farmers’ assets to deal with economic losses.⁸⁶

Prospects for a National Farmers’ Organization

Often described as “small, scattered and weak” (*xiao san ruo* 小散弱), China’s cooperatives hardly resemble their powerful, corporatist counterparts in Japan, Taiwan and Korea. Despite close links to the government, Chinese cooperatives are very decentralized organizations, operating mostly within the boundaries of a single township.⁸⁷ Their membership and functions are also much more limited in scope, and being disconnected from higher-levels of the government, they have been much less involved in implementing the state’s agricultural policies. Aware of these differences, several Chinese scholars and policymakers have used the

⁸⁴ Sun 2008: 222-224.

⁸⁵ Yu et al. 2007a: 10-11.

⁸⁶ Li Jiange 2009: 333. See also Han 2008: 3; Wen 2006: 20-21.

⁸⁷ In Zhejiang, where cooperatives are perhaps most developed, about 85% operated within a single township; see Lu & Lu 2008: 68. See also Li 2004: 107; Han 2008: 25-26.

NSC as an opportunity to advocate for the establishment of a national, comprehensive farmers' association.

One of the most outspoken supporters of establishing a national farmers' organization is Du Runsheng, a veteran of the Maoist period and one of China's leading rural policymakers in the early reform period. In the mid-1980s, Du proposed this idea to Deng Xiaoping, who responded that it was not the right time but that he would reconsider the matter in a few years. Du's plans to persuade the central leadership, however, were sidelined by the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, and when he raised the issue again in the mid-1990s, the center "dragged its feet."⁸⁸ In recent years, Du has commented that rural reforms should be less focused on the economy and infrastructure and more focused on creating institutions that can express and protect farmers' political interests.⁸⁹

There are a few reasons that the CCP has yet to establish a national farmers' organization. First, its relationship with the Party and existing rural governance institutions would have to be clarified. Second, farmers' professional cooperatives are seen, at least by some observers, as a sufficient substitute for a national organization. Third, and most importantly, while a national organization would not necessarily resemble the peasant associations of the Mao era, it would likely serve as the political arm of the "peasant majority" and potentially threaten the CCP's power.⁹⁰ Still, Du Runsheng, Yu Jianrong, and others have continued to advocate for a national farmers' association, arguing that farmers need such an organization to express their economic and political interests. Although the central government has yet to act on this recommendation, it

⁸⁸ Du 2008: 159, 164-165.

⁸⁹ Ma 2011.

⁹⁰ Yu et al. 2007a: 155, 192.

has clearly intensified its efforts to promote cooperatives, and has worked to legitimize farmers' cooperatives by giving them legal status and identifying them as key partners in NSC implementation.

In summary, during the NSC the Chinese government has actively promoted farmers' cooperatives because of their potential contribution to rural economic development and community building. Effective cooperatives may boost rural incomes, increase food production and improve the overall economy in villages with weak collective assets. They may also increase levels of social organization and cohesion, as well as mitigate social conflict in cases where former protesters assume the role of cooperative leaders. Yet, most government documents regarding the NSC tend to emphasize the campaign's "hard" economic goals over "soft" goals like community building. Along these lines, the central government has prioritized the development of agricultural producers' cooperatives over other kinds of cultural, environmental, and social-welfare cooperatives.

As most cooperatives are still in the early stages of development, they face a number of common problems such as being too dependent on local governments and agribusinesses, being controlled by wealthy, non-farmer members and having little access to capital. Moreover, many local government officials and farmers are skeptical of these new organizations. If they are effective, then their economic power may translate into political power, especially in cases where the cooperative controls large swaths of rural farmland. If they are ineffective, then local government officials may be punished for failed policy implementation, and farmers may experience economic losses.

Despite these problems, it is clear that farmers' cooperatives are spreading and in the future will assume a greater role in China's rural transformation. Whether they develop into

farmers' organizations that are “established by the people, managed by the people, and beneficial to the people” (*minban minguan minshouyi* 民办, 民管, 民受益) remains to be seen. At least for the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that cooperatives will compete with the state for power or defend farmers' interests in cases of local government corruption.

Section 3: Village Renovation

When the New Socialist Countryside was first adopted, Chinese and Western media reports tended to emphasize its economic and social policy goals, such as stimulating agricultural production, reducing the urban-rural income and social welfare gaps, and generally improving the lives of farmers and migrant workers. Over time, however, the NSC's goal of “tidying up the villages” has become the primary focus of many local NSC initiatives. Village renovation—defined as the transformation of village infrastructure, sanitation, and housing—is an area that has largely been ignored by outside observers.⁹¹ This section elaborates the main reasons that the NSC has focused so heavily on village renovation, and reveals how this policy that was intended to improve village conditions has actually facilitated a new form of rural land grabs and the destruction of many traditional village communities.

There are a few different programs related to village renovation: basic village renovation (*cunzhuang zhengzhi* 村庄整治); the construction of new rural communities (*xinxing nongcun shequ jianshe* 新型农村社区建设); dilapidated housing renovation (*weifang gaizao* 危房改造); and resettlement programs targeted at nomadic families (*mumin dingju gongcheng* 牧民定居工程) and farmers living in remote, mountainous areas (*shenshan yimin fupin zhengce* 深山移民扶贫政策). This study focuses on basic village renovation and the construction of new rural

⁹¹ One exception is Emily T. Yeh, who is working on the NSC and housing policy in Tibet. For more information, see <http://spot.colorado.edu/~yehe/>.

communities for two reasons. First, these programs have affected the greatest number of people during the NSC. Second, they have received the most media attention and have directly shaped local interpretations of the NSC.

Basic Village Renovation

While speaking at a conference in the fall of 2005, Wang Guangdao, the Minister of Construction, stressed that village renovation is a critical task for the New Socialist Countryside because it addresses the peasants' "most urgent, direct and important concerns," and is essential for narrowing the gap between China's modern looking cities and its "dirty, disorganized and poor" countryside. Wang warned that without villager participation, local governments might be tempted to use costly, campaign-style implementation tactics that overly stress appearance and quick results. Wang also stated that village renovation should not be misinterpreted as the large-scale demolition of old villages and the construction of new villages, or as the relocation of villagers into new, centralized housing developments.⁹²

On September 30, 2005, the Ministry of Construction (MOC) released the "Guiding Recommendations on Village Renovation Work," which outlined different types of renovation programs targeting new rural communities, hollowed-out villages, villages located within urban districts, and villages of historical or cultural importance. Depending on the type of village and the baseline level of development, renovation tasks included such things as improving access to safe drinking water, paving village roads, collecting trash, building new animal pens, planting trees, upgrading existing homes (installing flush toilets, water taps, etc.), and building new homes. The MOC specified that in order to align with administrative reforms to reduce the

⁹² Wang 2005.

number of township and village governments, renovation programs should encourage peasants to build new homes in central villages.⁹³

Regarding the issues of centralized housing and policy implementation, the Ministry of Construction's guidelines were rather ambiguous. Although the MOC did not state that housing in central villages should be multi-storied, apartment-style buildings, it did recommend that peasants "centralize housing construction" (*jizhong jianfang* 集中建房). It also suggested that peasant councils and "village renovation instructors" (*cunzhuang zhengzhi zhucun zhidaoyuan* 村庄整治驻村指导员) work together to implement the policy. Similar to cadre work teams, instructors from the county and township government would be responsible for overseeing day-to-day renovation work in the villages. In other words, the guidelines stopped just short of recommending that peasants move into centralized housing, and they failed to clarify whether peasant councils or the government would be primarily responsible for policy implementation.⁹⁴

In early government documents on village renovation, the terms "central village" and "new rural community" were used interchangeably to refer to larger, more developed administrative villages. However, rural community building took on a somewhat different meaning after 2007, when the central government began promoting rural communities as a new kind of administrative unit.

New Rural Communities

On March 29, 2007, the Ministry of Civil Affairs released the "National Implementation Program for Rural Community Building in Experimental Counties," which identified the two

⁹³ MOC 2005.

⁹⁴ On August 1, 2008, the MOC released another document outlining national standards for village renovation work, but this document did not provide any further clarity on the issues of centralized housing or policy implementation; see MOC 2005; CSUS 2009: 19.

main goals of rural community building as strengthening rural self-governance institutions and improving rural public goods provision. Each new rural community would provide residents with services that previously were only available at the township or county levels, such as social welfare, family planning, public security, technology training, and legal assistance. The MOCA called on county governments to “clarify the relationship between rural communities, township governments, grassroots Party organizations and village self-governance organizations,” and suggested that each new community build modern offices for the village government. In practice, however, new rural communities may encompass several administrative villages, which each have their own government, and central policy is unclear about whether village governments can function separately within a single rural community or if power must be reconfigured.⁹⁵

Since this policy is still in an experimental stage, it is difficult to estimate how many places in China have established rural communities or the nature of variation among them. Preliminary research by Jean Oi reveals that rural communities may provide services to several villages, to only one village, or to a subset of teams (i.e. natural villages or neighborhoods) within the village.⁹⁶ One thing that is clear, however, is that the construction of new rural communities will intensify over the coming years. By 2009, the Ministry of Civil Affairs had formally designated 304 counties across all provinces as experimental sites for rural community building, affecting 11% of the country’s villages. Moreover, the MOCA estimates that between 2011 and 2015 more than 60% of all counties (981 out of 1,635) will have fully implemented the policy.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ MOCA 2007.

⁹⁶ Oi presented this research at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting in 2011.

⁹⁷ Cao & Zou 2010.

Rural community building has also been promoted as part of China's "integrated urban-rural development" (*tongchou chengxiang fazhan* 统筹城乡发展) strategy, which is closely related to the New Socialist Countryside.⁹⁸ In June 2007, the NDRC selected Chongqing and Chengdu as "national experimental sites for integrated urban-rural development." After this designation, the Chengdu city government quickly built 600 new rural communities with apartment buildings to accommodate 270,000 people.⁹⁹ These developments in Chengdu and similar ones in Chongqing were reported throughout China, and soon local governments in Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces followed suit, becoming some of the most active promoters of new rural communities. In 2007-2008, Zhucheng city in Shandong converted all of its 1,249 administrative villages into 208 new rural communities, and in 2010 the city eliminated villages as an administrative unit altogether.¹⁰⁰ Even Beijing announced plans to convert all of its 3,950 administrative villages into a smaller number of "rural community service stations" (*nongcun shequ fuwu zhan* 农村社区服务站) by 2015.¹⁰¹

The Problem of Rural Land

⁹⁸ Jiang Zemin introduced the concept of "integrated urban-rural development" in November 2002 at the 1st Plenary Session of the 16th Party Congress. On a macro level, it refers to the Party's strategy for breaking down China's "dualistic urban-rural society." It is also considered the most important component of the "five integrated" objectives (*wu ge tongchou* 五个统筹), i.e. achieving integrated urban and rural development, regional development, economic and social development, human and environmental development, domestic development and international opening; see Zhang 2007: 115-116. Integrated urban-rural development is also a central theme of the 12th FYP. The full text is available at: http://www.gov.cn/2011lh/content_1825838.htm (accessed 5/13/2012).

⁹⁹ Liang 2007.

¹⁰⁰ Wang 2010.

¹⁰¹ Hou 2011.

Underpinning this evolution of the New Socialist Countryside's village renovation programs, from the basic renovation of village infrastructure to the complex creation of new rural communities, are land schemes designed to increase local government revenue. To clarify, this study uses the term "land sales" to refer to the transfer of land usage rights from one party to another. In China, there are three different rights to rural land—collective ownership rights, household contract rights, and usage rights (also known as production and management rights). Although the legal definition of the "rural collective" includes all village residents, it is often just the village officials who control the land.

As several observers have noted, after rural tax and fee reform, the main cause of social unrest in rural China shifted from tax burdens to land disputes. In some cases, the forceful expropriation of land with little or no compensation to villagers has led to violent conflict.¹⁰² The DRC estimates that because of rural land grabs, there are currently between 40 and 50 million landless peasants in China.¹⁰³

The central government has toughened its enforcement of compensation to villagers who lose their land, but experts believe that on average they receive less than 5% of the total revenue generated from land sales. Meanwhile, local governments have been willing to risk social instability for land sales revenue, which in some places accounts for 60% of total government revenue. Whereas most fiscal transfers are part of formal budgets and earmarked for specific purposes, land sales are considered an extra-budgetary revenue source; and despite central policy calling on local governments to allocate the majority of land-related revenue to NSC programs,

¹⁰² For recent work on this issue, see Whiting 2011.

¹⁰³ The number one documents of 2004 and 2006 called for increased security and welfare provisions for landless peasants, but it is unclear how well these policies have been implemented; see Chen 2008: 193-194; Han 2009: 11; Liu 2008a: 10-11.

there is no standardized accounting system that accurately documents how such revenue is collected or spent.¹⁰⁴

Before the central government established the red line of protected farmland, local governments would expropriate villagers' land by converting it from "rural collectively-owned farmland" (*nongcun jiti gengdi* 农村集体耕地) to "urban state-owned construction land" (*chengshi guoyou jianshe yongdi* 城市国有建设用地). After this conversion, the government would then offer the land to developers for extremely high rents. The red line, however, has effectively prohibited construction on rural farmland, leaving urban developers and local governments with only three options. First, they can build on the existing urban construction land. Second, they can try to increase the amount of rural farmland, through land reclamation or other means, in order to trade it for more urban construction land. Third, they can try to convert rural construction land into urban construction land. This third option is most relevant to the New Socialist Countryside.

The term "rural collectively-owned construction land" (*nongcun jiti jianshe yongdi* 农村集体建设用地) refers to land that has been allocated for rural public infrastructure and housing. At the end of 2008, China had a total of 170,000 square kilometers of rural construction land, or about 180 square meters per person. In contrast, the national total for urban construction land was only 50,000 square kilometers, or about 100 square meters per person.¹⁰⁵ This distribution, according to publicly available sources, did not change between 2008 and 2011,¹⁰⁶ but unofficially a massive conversion of rural construction land to urban construction land has taken

¹⁰⁴ These statistics come from media interviews with DRC officials; see Jiang 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Du 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Tian 2011.

place in the name of the NSC. Specifically, village renovation programs, by reducing the total amount of land occupied by rural housing, have contributed to the widespread expropriation of rural construction land for urban-industrial development.

“Linking Urban and Rural Construction Land”: A New Form of Rural Land Grabs

During the NSC, the Ministry of Land Resources (MOLR) has tried to reduce the amount of land occupied by rural housing. In 2004, the MOLR released the “Recommendations on Strengthening the Regulation of Rural Housing Plots.” This document suggested that local governments encourage rural families to move into “rural housing districts” (*nongmin zhuzhai xiaoqu* 农民住宅小区) or “new villages” (*nongmin xincun* 农民新村) located in townships and central villages. It also specified that each family should be allotted only one housing plot, and that all increases in a village’s rural housing land must be linked to increases in farmland. Most importantly, the MOLR stated that in order to facilitate urbanization and efficient land use, village renovation programs should be carried out to eliminate idle housing land.¹⁰⁷

To provide some context, between 1949 and 1958, PRC land law treated housing plots (*zhaijidi* 宅基地) as transferable, private property, and required that local officials distribute free housing plots to village residents. After the Great Leap Forward, however, the laws were changed so that rural homes remained villagers’ private property, but production brigades (i.e. rural collectives or administrative villages) assumed the ownership rights to housing plots. In the reform period, rural collective ownership over housing plots was written into the constitution, and villagers’ homes were defined as private property in both the Land Law of 1986 (revised in 1998) and the Property Law of 2007. These laws stated that villagers must return housing plots to the collective if they wanted to build a new home in another location, or if they changed their

¹⁰⁷ Yu et al. 2007b: 1916-1919.

household registration such that they were no longer official residents of the village. These laws also limited the growth of rural land and housing markets by stating that neither housing plots nor villagers' homes were transferable to urban residents. Whether or not villagers could sell, purchase or transfer homes and housing plots to other villagers has actually never been clarified.¹⁰⁸

In his work on Chinese land and property institutions, Peter Ho notes that “deliberate policy ambiguity” has allowed local governments to manipulate the system and acquire revenue from informal land markets.¹⁰⁹ While Ho is not writing about rural housing land specifically, his observation nonetheless applies to this area as well. In fact, several Chinese sources recognize the existence of informal markets for rural housing plots (*fei zhengshi zhajidi shichang* 非正式宅基地市场). And even though it is difficult to estimate the amount of land being traded, these sources suggest that rural-to-urban labor migration is largely responsible for the growth of these markets.¹¹⁰ However, because of market limitations—housing plots not being transferable to urban residents, villagers only being allowed one plot per family, etc.—it seems that the amount of “idle” (*xianzhi* 闲置 or *kongzhi* 空置) rural construction land has increased along with migration.

According to central government surveys, idle housing land can be found in many villages across China. For example, a DRC survey of the Beijing countryside in 2004 found that 17.4% of rural construction land was idle, and that 16.8% of housing plots were larger than the

¹⁰⁸ Han 2009: 4-5, 30-31.

¹⁰⁹ Ho 2005.

¹¹⁰ Han 2009: 9; Li et al. 2009: 133.

limit set by the Beijing city government.¹¹¹ Using national-level survey data from 2006, the NDRC reports that because of rural-to-urban migration, at least 45% of China's villages had experienced some degree of "becoming hollow," and at least 15% of total rural construction land was idle.¹¹²

In order to increase land use efficiency and promote NSC village renovation efforts, in April 2006 the Ministry of Land Resources designated Shandong, Tianjin, Jiangsu, Hubei and Sichuan as experimental sites for "linking urban and rural construction land" (*chengxiang jianshe yongdi zengjian guagou* 城乡建设用地增减挂钩).¹¹³ The basic idea behind this policy was to increase the total amount of available farmland and to create an "integrated urban-rural development strategy" in the following manner: First, tear down unoccupied housing to free up idle rural construction land. Second, build new housing that occupies less construction land than traditional village housing, thus freeing up more rural construction land. Third, convert some of this land into farmland and the rest into urban construction land. Although the policy was intended to align with the NSC goals of boosting agricultural production and improving the village living environment, it essentially gave local governments the green light to take rural construction land for urban development.

Since the policy of linking urban and rural construction land was introduced, it has expanded from only 5 provinces in 2006 to 24 provinces in 2009 (out of 34 total).¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, it is entirely unclear how much land has been converted to agricultural use versus

¹¹¹ Han 2009: 307-308.

¹¹² Li Jiange 2009: 27, 155.

¹¹³ Jiang 2011.

¹¹⁴ Jiang 2011.

urban-industrial use as a result of this policy. MOLR regulations from 2008 simply stated that during the process of reclassifying formerly idle construction land, experimental sites should “guarantee a balance” of new farmland and construction land.¹¹⁵

It is important to understand that conversion or reclassification goes far beyond simply changing how village land is used. As its name suggests, this policy allows for the “linked transfer of land quotas” (*guagou zhouzhuan zhibiao* 挂钩周转指标) within experimental areas that normally encompass entire counties.¹¹⁶ For example, if the local Rural Work Department designates a village of 1,000 people as an official NSC renovation site, and they manage to reduce the per capita size of housing plots from 120 square meters to 100 square meters, then they “save” 20,000 square meters of rural construction land. The county MOLR office can then reclassify this land as either farmland or urban construction land. If they reclassify it as urban construction land, they do not have to limit urban development projects to the village land itself, but alternatively can transfer the “land quota” to urban areas within the county that need more land. In this way, NSC village renovation programs carried out in remote, mountainous villages may have a direct impact on the expansion of cities and townships located several hours away.

This policy of linking rural and urban construction land has created a significant source of revenue for local governments. Officially, the Ministry of Land Resources reports that during the 11th Five-year-plan (2006-2010), the government approved more than 33 million mu (5.4 million acres)¹¹⁷ of new construction land, and that total government revenue from land transfers surpassed 7 trillion yuan. However, in a 2009 survey of experimental sites for linking rural and

¹¹⁵ MOLR 2009.

¹¹⁶ MOLR 2009.

¹¹⁷ 1 acre = 6.07 mu.

urban construction land, the MOLR found that at least 20% of land revenue was unaccounted for in local government budgets. Though it is difficult to estimate, some experts believe that within these experimental sites, local governments can sell new construction land to developers for several million yuan per mu. Meanwhile, villages may only receive 80,000-100,000 yuan per mu as compensation for lost construction land. The fact that local governments are making enormous profits off of land that technically belongs to villagers has made information about land revenues highly sensitive. During an interview with Chinese media, a central official from the MOLR stated that local governments keep separate accounting books for showing higher-level officials, and described actual land revenues as an “enigma” (*mi* 谜).¹¹⁸

Driven by a profit motive, local governments have exploited the policy of linking rural and urban construction land by designing elaborate land schemes. Both within and outside of officially designated experimental sites, local governments have been trading unproductive or low-quality farmland for construction land, transferring land quotas to local governments outside of experimental areas, and promoting informal rural land markets in order to “use rentals as a substitute for expropriation” (*yizu daizheng* 以租代征).¹¹⁹

Most importantly, this policy has given local governments a strong incentive to focus almost exclusively on village renovation in their local New Socialist Countryside programs. As early as 2006, the NDRC estimates that 25% of all villages were carrying out renovation programs to reduce the size of housing plots. According to their survey, villages were on average

¹¹⁸ Jiang 2011.

¹¹⁹ Chen 2008: 145; Chen et al. 2009: 84; CSUS 2009: 5.

“saving” about 55 mu or 16% of their rural construction land, of which 58% was being reallocated to farming and 42% to “non-farming” purposes.¹²⁰

The NSC has not only contributed to the expropriation of rural land but also helped to conceal it from the rural population. Chinese media reports suggest that most peasants are completely unaware of land schemes, believing that after village renovation all of the saved construction land is converted to farmland.¹²¹ Moreover, compensation to villagers for reductions in housing plots, monetary rewards for increases in farmland, and subsidies for new housing construction have left many farmers with the impression that they benefit financially from village renovation.¹²²

At least for the first few years of the NSC, many farmers welcomed the construction of new housing in the name of village renovation, new rural community building, and dilapidated housing renovation. On an economic level, there was a lot of latent demand for rural housing by the time the NSC was introduced. Migrant workers who spent 5-15 years working in the cities had saved enough money to buy homes and found it significantly cheaper to return to their villages than to purchase urban commercial housing, especially with NSC subsidies for new rural housing.¹²³ On a cultural level, returned migrant workers felt that building a new home would display their economic success and increase respect for their families. They also felt that building

¹²⁰ Li Jiange 2009: 26.

¹²¹ Pan & Yao 2010.

¹²² In Ganzhou city, Jiangxi province, peasants were on average compensated 50 yuan per square meter for reductions in housing plots, 230 yuan per mu per year (for 8 years) for increases in farmland, and about 10,000 yuan for new housing construction. Interviews with villagers in Ganzhou 6/2010-8/2010.

¹²³ Lu & Wen 2010. The household registration system, which excludes rural migrants from many social welfare services, is another reason people prefer to return to the villages.

in the village instead of the township or the county seat would give them a greater “sense of belonging” (*guishu gan* 归属感).¹²⁴ To a certain extent, farmers’ sense of urgency to renovate or move out of dilapidated housing also intensified after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, which toppled rural homes and schools and killed nearly 70,000 people.¹²⁵

Over time, however, village renovation has also become a source of social unrest, as local governments have aggressively devised plans to “tear down the old, build anew” (*chaijiu jianxin* 拆旧建新). In some places, older villages have been completely demolished, and peasants have been forced to move into centralized rural housing units. The extremely high cost of building these new housing developments suggests that local governments are either taking on tremendous debts or that the potential revenue generated from land schemes is even higher than speculated. For example, the local governments of Zhucheng city in Shandong province and Xinxiang city in Henan province have spent between 5 and 10 million yuan per centralized housing complex, not to mention the tens of millions of yuan required to tear down a single village. These cities have already built 93 and 263 complexes, respectively, and have plans to build several hundred more.¹²⁶ While this kind of apartment-style housing may be popular among younger generations, older rural Chinese are extremely wary of the costs and the potential re-emergence of heavy peasant burdens.¹²⁷ In Chongqing, farmers living in new rural communities reported a 200 yuan increase in monthly living expenses per person due to utilities

¹²⁴ Interviews with villagers in Jiangxi and Hebei provinces 5/2010-8/2010.

¹²⁵ Sun 2008: 157-158; *China News* 2008.

¹²⁶ Pan & Yao 2010. Li Jiange says that in Yuyao city, Zhejiang it costs about 30-50 million yuan to tear down one village; see Li Jiange 2009: 164.

¹²⁷ Li et al. 2008: 54.

fees, building maintenance fees, and the increased cost of food (unlike traditional villages, most centralized housing units do not allow plots for household gardens).¹²⁸

Although it is very difficult to estimate the degree of property destruction or rural household indebtedness that has resulted from village renovation programs, the central government is very concerned about these issues. Some observers have even likened the NSC's village renovation programs to a modern day enclosure movement or a Great Leap Forward-style campaign.¹²⁹ At the 2010 meetings of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, Chen Xiwen raised concerns about policy experiments to link urban and rural construction land, warning that "the campaign to make peasants live in storied buildings" (*rang nongmin shanglou yundong* 让农民上楼运动) if unchecked "will likely result in major problems" (*kongpa yao chu dashi* 恐怕要出大事).¹³⁰

In late 2010, the central government, under the direction of Premier Wen Jiabao, announced it would put an end to NSC-related housing and land schemes, and the MOLR released a new policy document calling for stricter regulations in experimental areas.¹³¹ In 2011, the central government intensified its efforts to reign in local governments by calling for a comprehensive investigation of experimental areas and all programs involving adjustments to rural land.¹³² Expansion of the policy to link rural and urban construction land was also temporarily suspended, but central officials were generally not optimistic that the center would

¹²⁸ MOLR 2011a; Li Jiange 2009: 28.

¹²⁹ Zhu 2007: 1; Liu 2008a: 10-11.

¹³⁰ Jiang 2011; For earlier statements criticizing rural centralized housing see Chen 2008: 74, 146; Zuo 2007: 131.

¹³¹ State Council 2011.

¹³² MOLR 2011b.

be able to collect accurate information, much less control the actions of local governments.¹³³ During the 12th Five-year-plan (2011-2015), these trends are likely to continue unless the government takes drastic measures to curb the power of local governments and protect rural construction land.¹³⁴ Meanwhile, the rhetoric of boosting domestic demand, urbanization, and integrated urban-rural development appears to be eclipsing the NSC's original focus on village improvement. According to Han Jun, these developments go against the idea that "industry should nurture agriculture, and the cities should support the countryside," and instead represent a continuation of the old pattern of "agriculture and the countryside subsidizing the cities."¹³⁵

In summary, the widespread expropriation of rural construction land that has taken place during the NSC stems from a few key factors. First, rural tax and fee reform generated even stronger incentives for local governments to increase their extra-budgetary revenue through land sales. Second, strict enforcement of the red line more or less removed farmland as a potential revenue source for local governments. Third, the central government encouraged NSC village renovation programs, at least partly, to reduce the amount of idle rural construction land. Fourth, experimental policies allowing for the conversion of rural construction land to urban construction land dramatically expanded in scope. Finally, and most importantly, neither the central government nor farmers have been able to effectively check the power of local officials.

While all of these factors have contributed to the expropriation of rural construction land, it is important to note that for the third factor, NSC village renovation programs, the causal arrow may be pointing in both directions. In other words, the NSC's emphasis on village renovation

¹³³ Jiang 2011.

¹³⁴ The 12th FYP only mentions the issue of construction land in Section 3.8.2, which states that the government may experiment with building markets for urban and rural construction land.

¹³⁵ Jiang 2011.

helped local governments to develop land schemes, and in turn, these land schemes have shifted the focus of the NSC away from comprehensive rural modernization towards village renovation and rural housing programs in particular.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter analyzes the reasons behind the NSC's mixed rural development outcomes. It argues that the Chinese case is less successful than the other cases in this study because its farmers' organizations are weaker and because it lacks effective campaign feedback mechanisms. Despite efforts to centralize China's administrative and fiscal systems, the central government's capacity to monitor local NSC implementation remains quite weak. Village self-governance institutions and farmers' organizations have also played a rather minor role in rural policy implementation. Compared to Taiwan and South Korea, China's bureaucratic controls and rural civic institutions have proven to be less effective at checking the authority of local government officials in charge of campaign implementation.

The policy areas of farmers' cooperatives and village improvement are most closely linked to the NSC's goals of "developing production" and "tidying up the villages." The Chinese government has recognized the importance of farmers' cooperatives and taken historic steps to legalize and promote them during the NSC. Compared to the FAs in Taiwan and the NACF in Korea, however, China's agricultural producers' cooperatives are much more limited in terms of their membership, functions, and access to the agricultural bureaucracy. They have consequently played a much less important role in implementing the state's agricultural policies. Just to give a small example, they generally do not have seats on local NSC coordination committees. Because of the many shortcomings of China's cooperative system, there is growing support among scholars to establish a Taiwanese-style national farmers' organization. Yet, it seems that this

kind of change is unlikely because of the enormous political power that such an organization would have in a country with a rural population of over 700 million.

Village renovation programs have received extremely limited attention in the existing literature on Chinese rural development, and yet they have become the focus of the NSC in many places. Like the New Village Movement in Korea and the Community Development Campaign in Taiwan, the New Socialist Countryside's village renovation programs were initially intended to modernize the appearance of villages, improve village sanitation and infrastructure, and increase access to public services. In many places, however, villages have been destroyed and peasants have been forced into large, centralized housing units located in "new rural communities." Even though this chapter has focused primarily on the problems related to village renovation programs, the next chapter provides insight into how these programs have actually worked in some parts of China to transform the village environment in positive ways. Focusing on renovation programs in Ganzhou city, Jiangxi province, it is argued that much of Ganzhou's success can be attributed to the important role that peasant councils have played in implementing the NSC.

Finally, while this chapter has focused on analyzing national trends, there are certain patterns of sub-national variation that may be worth investigating in future studies on Chinese rural development. It appears that both the Taiwanese and Korean patterns of rural development are occurring in different parts of China. Coastal provinces in China seem to be following the Taiwanese pattern of rural development, which is characterized by a decentralized pattern of rural industrialization, high rates of part-time farming, and a focus on improving agricultural production. Zhejiang province, for example, has prioritized the production goals of the NSC—product specialization, agro-processing and farmers' cooperatives—over village improvement or

other goals.¹³⁶ In contrast, central and western provinces in China seem to be following the Korean pattern of rural development, which is characterized by a lack of rural industrialization, high rates of out-migration, and a focus on improving the village environment. While campaign tactics have been employed in both parts of China, they appear to be more pronounced in the interior provinces. As elaborated in the following chapter, in places like Jiangxi, the campaign approach to rural development is seen as appropriate for areas without developed rural industries or access to urban markets. Whereas market forces have perhaps played a more important role in rural transformation along the coast, campaigns have been used to speed up the pace of rural change in the Chinese interior.

¹³⁶ In recent years Zhejiang has also pursued the construction new rural communities, but its NSC programs were never really focused on basic village renovation, as this kind of program was considered unnecessary given its level of development. As already mentioned, in terms of its rural development strategy, Zhejiang is well known for being the first province in China to pass a farmers' cooperative law.

Chapter 7: Case Study of Building a New Socialist Countryside in Ganzhou

This chapter examines the New Socialist Countryside policy in Ganzhou city, Jiangxi province. I selected Ganzhou because it was the first place in China to carry out the NSC, and because it has become a national model for rural development. The Ganzhou model, seen as appropriate for provinces in central and western China, emphasizes village renovation and the use of peasant councils to implement the NSC. While it has been mentioned briefly in the existing academic literature,¹ this case study represents the first in-depth examination of the Ganzhou model's origins and impact on rural development.

Regarding research methodology, between June and August 2010, I conducted over 100 interviews with Ganzhou government officials, peasant council leaders and village residents. I made site visits to a total of 38 villages and spent several days living in three of them. Most of these villages had either finished or were undergoing village renovation, but I also visited at least six villages where residents had not yet “done the NSC” (*gao xin nongcun jianshe* 搞新农村建设). In order to develop an understanding of how the NSC has unfolded in different parts of Ganzhou, officials from the Rural Work Department helped me select fieldwork sites spanning five counties and several townships at various levels of economic development.

After a brief discussion of some relevant background information (Section 1), this chapter turns to the origins of the Ganzhou model and the question of bureaucratic mobilization (Section 2). In particular, this study shows that Pan Yiyang, the Party Secretary of Ganzhou, was instrumental in shaping local, provincial and national ideas about the NSC. It also shows that Ganzhou mobilized the bureaucracy by creating effective policy coordination institutions and by linking the NSC to promotion opportunities. This chapter then examines how Ganzhou was able

¹ Thogersen 2009: 10-12; Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 9-10, 13.

to mobilize the rural population to participate in NSC village renovation programs (Section 3). Aside from the use of cadre work teams, mobilization mechanisms included propaganda, subsidies and, most notably, peasant councils. The main responsibilities of peasant councils have been to garner support for NSC applications, to collect money from villagers for public infrastructure, and to oversee the entire renovation process—including the renovation and demolition of old housing, the redistribution of housing plots, and the construction of new housing. Finally, this chapter examines the outcomes of village renovation (Section 4), and argues that by using peasant councils, Ganzhou has managed to avoid many of the problems associated with village renovation that were mentioned in Chapter 6. Although certain problems have occurred, Ganzhou has not experienced the large-scale demolition and construction of new villages with centralized, apartment-style housing.

Section 1: Background Information

Ganzhou city is located in southern Jiangxi province, bordering Fujian, Guangdong, and Hunan provinces. Ganzhou is one of China's largest cities in terms of the administrative area it oversees, which includes 18 counties and county-level cities. I conducted research in five of these counties (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2). In terms of total land area, Ganzhou occupies 39,400 square kilometers, or roughly one-fourth of the province, and is slightly larger than Taiwan. The city has a total population of approximately 8.9 million, of which more than 7 million live in rural areas. Over 95% of Ganzhou's population is Hakka, a subgroup of Han Chinese who migrated to the south from various parts of northern and central China, and who are known for having a distinctive language and culture. As far as I could tell, the fact that most of Ganzhou's population is Hakka did not greatly affect its New Socialist Countryside programming, except in

Longnan county, where emphasis has been placed on restoring and preserving traditional Hakka architecture as a way of developing rural tourism.²

In 2004, when the city's NSC programs first started, Ganzhou had 283 townships, 3,440 administrative villages, and 49,139 village teams (i.e. natural villages). Because of its mountainous and hilly topography, Ganzhou's infrastructure development lags behind other places, and despite its close proximity to more developed coastal provinces, its economy relies primarily on agriculture and the mining of rare earth metals. Given its level of development, Ganzhou is often described as a typical underdeveloped region (*dianxing de qian fada diqu* 典型的欠发达地区). Some basic information about Ganzhou and the counties where fieldwork was conducted can be found in Tables 7.3 and 7.4.

² Unlike the circular fortresses found in parts of Fujian and Guangdong, Hakka fortresses in Ganzhou are rectangular. Longnan has over 370 Hakka fortresses. A *People's Daily* article from 2008 highlights this aspect of the NSC in Ganzhou; see Zhang Jinlong 2008.

7.1: Map of Ganzhou City, Jiangxi Province



Note: The green and red areas combined represent Jiangxi. The red area represents Ganzhou.

7.2: Map of Fieldwork Sites in Ganzhou



Note: The white and shaded areas combined represent Ganzhou. The shaded areas represent Ganzhou city proper and the five counties where fieldwork was conducted.

7.3: Ganzhou City Statistics, 2003 and 2008

Indicator	2003	2008	Ganzhou as % of Jiangxi in 2008
GDP	36.65 billion yuan	83.49 billion yuan	12.88%
GDP by Sector	Agriculture 29.4% Industry 32.1% Services 38.5%	Agriculture 20.7% Industry 43% Services 36.3%	
Population (persons)	Total: 8.3 million Rural: 6.71 million Urban: 1.59 million	Total: 8.89 million Rural: 7.04 million Urban: 1.85 million	19%
Out-Migration (persons)	1.14 million (data from 2004)	1.39 million	
Incomes	Rural: 2,240 yuan Urban: 6,723 yuan	Rural: 3,570 yuan Urban: 11,834 yuan	
Land Resources	Total: 39,400 square kilometers Farmland: 2,957 square kilometers	Total: 39,400 square kilometers Farmland: 3,290 square kilometers	23.6%
Grain Production³	1.99 million tons	2.69 million tons	13.74%
Fruit Production	345,600 tons (39% oranges)	1.33 million tons (75% oranges)	48.28%
Government Revenue	3.14 billion yuan	10.01 billion yuan	
Government Expenditures	4.75 billion yuan	15.71 billion yuan	

Notes: Gains in government revenue and expenditures can be traced partly to industrialization, but mostly to increases in central and provincial fiscal transfers. Most gains in rural incomes (migrant remittances aside) can be attributed to development of the citrus farming industry.

Source: Ganzhou Statistical Yearbook 2009.

³ Jiangxi province is considered a “core grain producing area,” a designation given to 13 provinces that produce 74% of China’s grain. Jiangxi ranks 11 out of 13; see Han 2008: 115-116.

7.4: Statistics for Five Counties in Ganzhou, 2008

Name	Administrative Units	Rural Population	Population Engaged in Agriculture	Out-Migration	Rural Income	Government Revenue
Anyuan	Townships: 18 Villages: 151 Teams: 1,862	Persons: 330,093 Households: 68,362	75,416 (49% of working population)	52,120 (34% of working population)	2,896 yuan	200.08 million yuan
Longnan	Townships: 13 Villages: 94 Teams: 1,685	Persons: 257,946 Households: 63,744	53,010 (41%)	43,990 (31%)	4,110 yuan	554.18 million yuan
Ruijin	Townships: 17 Villages: 225 Teams: 3,531	Persons: 509,097 Households: 122,193	129,666 (52%)	99,056 (40%)	3,370 yuan	377.5 million yuan
Shicheng	Townships: 10 Villages: 131 Teams: 1,879	Persons: 254,447 Households: 58,032	82,687 (69%)	44,439 (37%)	2,574 yuan	142.89 million yuan
Xingguo	Townships: 25 Villages: 304 Teams: 4,364	Persons: 618,855 Households: 145,485	180,671 (52%)	148,878 (45%)	3,028 yuan	440.89 million yuan
Ganzhou City Aggregate Data	Counties: 18 Townships: 283 Villages: 3,467 Teams: 48,798	Persons: 7.04 million Households: 1.68 million	1.95 million (54%)	1.4 million (38%)	3,570 yuan	Total: 10.01 billion yuan City: 1.96 billion yuan Counties: 8.05 billion yuan

Notes: Anyuan and Xingguo have been designated as national poverty counties by the Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council. For information on this program, see “The Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction Program for Rural China (2001).” The full text is available at: http://english.gov.cn/official/2005-07/27/content_17712.htm (accessed 5/13/2012).

Villages are defined as the number of village committees, i.e. administrative villages. Teams refer to natural villages.

Source: Ganzhou Statistical Yearbook 2009.

Section 2: The Ganzhou Model

From Local Experiment to National Model

In September 2004, a full year before the central government unveiled the NSC, the Ganzhou city government released a document titled the “Decision on Strengthening Efforts to Build a New Socialist Countryside.”⁴ This document called for the development of “new townships and villages, new rural commodities, new economic organizations, new peasants, new culture, and good government leadership.”⁵ Known as the “five new, one good” (*wuxin yihao* 五新一好), this policy is understood in Ganzhou as the primary inspiration for the Chinese central government’s NSC slogan and as a place-specific adaptation of it.⁶

This same document outlined a five-year-plan to develop Ganzhou’s rural sector and identified developing “new townships and villages” as the most important policy goal, as it would produce the most tangible and immediate results. The government specified that a mechanism called the “three clean-ups, three changes” (*sanqing sangai* 三清三改) would be used as an “entry point” or “breakthrough point” for village renovation. The term “three clean-ups” refers to clearing the village of trash, mud, and road debris; and the term “three changes”

⁴ Local government documents were collected during fieldwork. Some of them are available on the city government’s website: <http://www.ganzhou.gov.cn/>. See also the city’s NSC website: <http://www.gzxnc.gov.cn/Index.html>.

⁵ Ganzhou City Government 2004.

⁶ Pan 2005b; *New Ganzhou* 2009: 4. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the central government’s NSC slogan is “develop production, enrich livelihood, civilize rural habits, tidy up the villages and democratize management.”

refers to improving the village's water supply, toilets, and roads.⁷ This heavy emphasis on altering the village environment is a key characteristic of the Ganzhou model.

The early adoption of these policies can be attributed to Pan Yiyang, the Party Secretary of Ganzhou from 2003 to 2010. During the NSC, Pan was not only the most powerful leader in Ganzhou but also an important political figure at the provincial level. He served as Director of the Jiangxi Provincial Rural Work Department (2001-2003) and was a member of the Provincial Party Standing Committee (2001-2010), an elite group of 13 officials.⁸ Pan received his PhD in Philosophy from Zhongshan University in Guangdong province in 2001, and his dissertation on Chinese rural development, *A Peasant-Centered Theory*, was published as a book in 2002. During an interview, Pan explained that there is an urgent need for China to adopt a peasant-centered view of development:

The biggest barrier to rural modernization is that peasants do not see themselves as the main actors. A peasant-centered theory of modernization is determined by our political system and constitution, by the rural-urban population ratio of 7-to-3 and by the fact that since reform and opening the peasants themselves have created many miracles such as household contract farming and township and village enterprises. We should allow the peasants to build their own communities, and we must respect their status as the main actors and their desire to rid themselves of poverty and contribute to China's rural modernization movement.⁹

⁷ The Jiangxi provincial government eventually modified the “three clean-ups, three changes” to the “three clean-ups, six changes, four universals” (*sanqing liugai sipuji* 三清六改四普及). Adopted throughout Jiangxi, the term “six changes” refers to changing village roads, homes, water, toilets, animal pens, and the environment; and the term “four universals” refers to spreading the use of telephones, household biogas digesters, cable television, and solar power; see Zeng & Luo 2007: 116.

⁸ Pan Yiyang left Jiangxi in October 2010 for Inner Mongolia. He is currently serving as the Vice-Chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and is a member of the Inner Mongolia Party Standing Committee.

⁹ Interview with Pan Yiyang 6/2010.

Pan's appointment as Party Secretary of Ganzhou gave him an opportunity to test his ideas about rural modernization and "peasants as the main actors," a phrase that was later popularized by the central government's adoption of the NSC.¹⁰

The fact that Ganzhou, a predominantly rural and underdeveloped city, was the first place in China to initiate a modernization drive under the banner of building a new socialist countryside quickly attracted the attention of the central leadership. In July and August 2005, Wang Guangdao, who was Minister of Construction at the time, and Zheng Xinli from the Central Policy Research Office made separate visits to Ganzhou to inspect the city's NSC experiments. They were deeply impressed by the results: In the first year of Ganzhou's NSC (2004-2005), the city completed renovation projects in 4,025 villages, provided access to safe drinking water for more than 74,000 people, installed 670,000 flush toilets in rural homes and paved 3,240 kilometers of rural roads. The city also tore down more than 3 million square meters of old housing, and reportedly not a single person protested or petitioned the government. Moreover, the city spent only 76 million yuan on NSC programs, or about 40% of the total cost, with villagers themselves making up the difference.¹¹ Soon after these visits, Wang Guangdao received approval from Premier Wen Jiabao to select Ganzhou as the host city for a national conference on village renovation in November 2005.¹²

At this conference, Wang praised experiments carried out in several provinces, but he

¹⁰ Zhang 2005.

¹¹ Most county governments in Ganzhou have a policy that villagers must cover 60% of village renovation costs, and this is actually written into contracts that peasant councils collect from village residents. If fewer than 85% of villagers agree, then village renovation will not be carried out; see Fang & Liu 2006: 178; Li Zuojun 2008: 135-136.

¹² Fang & Liu 2006: 56, 180; CSUS 2009: 45-46.

particularly emphasized the Ganzhou approach to village renovation.¹³ Wang and other leaders stated that the “Ganzhou model” should serve as an important reference for underdeveloped provinces in central and western China to consult when formulating their local NSC strategies. In contrast with the “Southern Jiangsu model” (*sunan moshi* 苏南模式) of developing collectively owned rural enterprises,¹⁴ or the “Wenzhou model” (*wenzhou moshi* 温州模式) of embracing market competition and privatizing township and village enterprises, the “Ganzhou model” (*ganzhou moshi* 赣州模式) of state-led initiatives to change the village environment was described as being appropriate for places with weak collective assets and limited access to urban markets.¹⁵ Moreover, the Ganzhou model’s use of peasant councils to mobilize villagers was praised for ensuring that renovation programs were “transparent, democratic and responsive to peasant interests.”¹⁶ After this conference, Ganzhou received significant media attention as a national model for the NSC and became an important NSC training site for central and local officials from across China.

Central government support for NSC experiments in Ganzhou led Pan Yiyang to publish articles in the *People’s Daily* in June 2005 and *Qiushi Magazine* in December 2005.¹⁷ In the

¹³ Wang 2005.

¹⁴ The “Southern Jiangsu model” is also known as the “Huaxi model.” Huaxi village is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

¹⁵ Fang & Liu 2006: 176-178; Li Zuojun 2008: 130. Chen Xiwen points out that total government revenue for Jiangxi province in 2004 was around 35 billion yuan, which is the same amount of money Zhejiang province spent in half a year on the NSC. For this reason, Chen praises Jiangxi and Ganzhou in particular as an appropriate model for underdeveloped areas; see Fang & Liu 2006: 45.

¹⁶ Wang 2005.

¹⁷ Pan 2005a; Pan 2005b.

latter publication, Pan calls for the nationwide establishment of peasant councils, an institution he believes embodies his peasant-centered theory of development,¹⁸ and he summarizes the city's approach to the NSC as “the government leads, the peasants are the main actors, the cadres serve, and the whole society participates” (*zhengfu zhudao, nongmin zhuti, ganbu fuwu, shehui canyu* 政府主导, 农民主体, 干部服务, 社会参与). During a visit to Ganzhou in May 2007, Zeng Qinghong, a close ally of Jiang Zemin and former Vice-President under Hu Jintao, hailed this slogan as an effective “work mechanism” and praised Ganzhou for being the first place in China to experiment with the NSC as a way of solving China's three rural problems.¹⁹

According to a reporter from the *People's Daily*, Pan may have had privileged access to central leaders, allowing him to anticipate central policy and take action to make Ganzhou a national model for the NSC.²⁰ Whether the center influenced developments in Ganzhou or Ganzhou influenced the center is difficult to determine, but it is clear that people in Ganzhou widely credit Pan for the NSC. According to one village party secretary, “China's NSC started in Gannan [Ganzhou]. The idea was first raised by Pan Yiyang.”²¹

Policy Coordination

¹⁸ In one village in Jiangxi, peasant councils appeared as early as 1998, but it was not until the NSC that this institution spread to the rest of the province and to other parts of China; see Fang & Liu 2006: 58. As mentioned in Chapter 5, there does not appear to be any good data on the total number of peasant councils in China, but in Jiangxi there are at least 46,000, or one for each NSC site; see Bian 2010.

¹⁹ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 72.

²⁰ Pan's connections to Beijing may have something to do with factional politics, but it was difficult to obtain more specific information since this topic is very sensitive in China. Interview with *People's Daily* reporter 6/2010.

²¹ Interview with the party secretary of Shangshe village, Xingguo 6/2010.

Pan is also credited with creating effective policy coordination institutions, allowing the city government to mobilize lower levels of government. Before the NSC there were 14 different departments carrying out rural work, which Pan consolidated into two umbrella organizations, the Rural Work Department and the Leading Group on the New Socialist Countryside.²² After the city RWD was established in 2004 as part of the Party standing committee, every county set up its own RWD and NSC Leading Group.²³ To ensure that these organizations have agenda-setting power, the party secretary serves as the head of the NSC Leading Group, and a member of the party standing committee serves as director of the RWD.²⁴ In the words of one county official, this “transformed the RWD into a very powerful leadership organization.”²⁵ Heralded as an institutional innovation and the “locomotive” (*huoche tou* 火车头) power behind the NSC, this organizational structure is now uniform throughout Jiangxi province.²⁶ Moreover, despite national reforms to strengthen county governments’ autonomy,²⁷ the city government in Ganzhou continues to exert considerable power over the counties, especially with respect to NSC policies. The Ganzhou city RWD sets annual development goals for each county, which the

²² Zhang 2005.

²³ Tang 2005: 101; Tang 2006: 122.

²⁴ Ganzhou City Government 2010a: 10.

²⁵ Interview with Xingguo RWD official 6/2010.

²⁶ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 60; Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 25.

²⁷ Measures to make counties accountable to provincial governments instead of city governments fall under the policy of “provinces managing the counties” (*sheng guan xian* 省管县). This policy is part of the Hu administration’s fiscal and administrative centralization agenda; see Tan 2007: 5; Li et al. 2009: 51-53.

county RWD then incorporates into the local NSC plan, and each local plan must obtain final approval from the city before taking effect.²⁸

At the county level, the RWD oversees NSC implementation at the township and village levels. In Ganzhou, like the rest of China, the NSC has been carried out in a post-rural tax and fee reform context in which county governments have become stronger and township and village governments have become weaker. Since the elimination of rural taxes and fees, county governments have covered township governments' operating budgets and funded most of the public services they provide. Moreover, county officials have increasingly assumed the top leadership positions at the township level. For example, in Longnan county all township party secretaries and governors live in the county seat and commute to the township, and many of them are former county officials appointed to the township for "training" (*duanlian* 锻炼) at the grassroots.²⁹ Dependent on fiscal transfers and often staffed with county officials, townships in Ganzhou have little autonomy and function more like extensions of the county government than a separate level of government.

In line with national trends, administrative reform in Ganzhou has led to a reduction in the number of townships. Between 2001 and 2003, the total number of townships declined from 358 to 283, and, in some places, township staff was reduced by as much as 70%.³⁰ Since 2003, the number of townships has remained the same, but township functions have been streamlined.

²⁸ Ganzhou Party Committee 2010: 20.

²⁹ Interview with the party secretary of Guanxi township, Longnan 7/2010.

³⁰ Zhong 2002: 65-66; Tang 2004: 70-71; For example, in the city of Ruijin, Yeping township's staff dropped from 200 people in 2002 to only 70 people in 2003. Interview with officials of Yeping township, Ruijin 7/2010.

Whereas Chinese townships in the past had 15 different offices,³¹ townships in Ganzhou now have one general office and three specialized offices for economic development, social welfare, and the New Socialist Countryside.³² “Peasant service stations” (*nongmin fuwuzhan* 农民服务站) have also been set up in every township, a seemingly popular reform that has made government services more accessible to the rural population. For example, service centers often hold drop-in hours during which farmers may seek assistance related to agricultural subsidies, cooperative development, family planning, and various social welfare programs.³³ In Ganzhou, the concepts of “service-oriented government” and “peasants as the main actors” are complimentary, intended to prevent top-down implementation of the NSC.

The Mobilization of Government Officials

The Rural Work Department has mobilized every government agency in Ganzhou, including the police, to participate in the NSC. Top government leaders are involved in conducting research and drafting local NSC plans. They also “link with NSC sites” (*guadian* 挂点), meaning they help fund and monitor development projects.³⁴ This practice of the leadership linking with sites extends from the 13 members of the Provincial Party Standing Committee all the way down to township party secretaries and executives.³⁵ Rank-and-file cadres do not link,

³¹ This structure was known as the “seven posts, eight stations” (*qisuo bazhan* 七所八站) and included offices of both the township government and the different line ministries.

³² Tang 2006: 103.

³³ For example, the Dabaidi township peasant service center in Ruijin proudly displays letters and banners from villagers expressing gratitude towards the center. Site visit to Daibaidi township, Ruijin 7/2010.

³⁴ Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 11; Zhang Wanfang 2008: 244.

³⁵ Interview with People’s Daily reporter 6/2010.

but rather “grab NSC sites” (*zhuadian* 抓点). The distinction between linking and grabbing is a matter of degree. Whereas top officials visit NSC sites only on occasion, rank-and-file cadres are expected to visit their sites daily while renovation is taking place. In general, each NSC site has a few “sponsoring departments” (*fuchi danwei* 扶持单位) that donate money for public infrastructure in the village, as well as one cadre work team that oversees NSC implementation by “squatting on site” (*dundian* 蹲点), which entails “eating, living, and laboring with the peasants.”³⁶ Organized by the RWD at the city and county levels, more than 9,000 work teams, or approximately 39,000 officials, have been sent to the villages since 2004.³⁷

The promise of promotion is one reason Ganzhou has succeeded in mobilizing its government officials for the NSC. In Xingguo and a few other counties, special promotion opportunities have been created for “cadres who leave their posts” (*ligang ganbu* 离岗干部) to join NSC work teams. For these officials, promotion depends on how much peasant participation they can generate and how quickly they can complete NSC implementation. In Ganzhou, at least 85% of villagers must sign a formal application agreeing to participate in the NSC before the village can become an officially designated NSC site. For cadres seeking promotion, however, the goal is to achieve 100% participation, which means contacting migrant workers who have left the village but still have residency there, and engaging in “thought work” (*sixiang gongzuo* 思想工作) with resistant villagers to convince them of the benefits of the NSC.³⁸ Getting the job done quickly is equally important. In the words of one work team member, “To effectively grab a site you must complete village renovation within six months to a year. Whoever finishes first

³⁶ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 63.

³⁷ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 63.

³⁸ Interview with work team cadre from Anjishan Forest Reserve, Longnan 7/2010.

gets promoted.”³⁹ Since 2004 more than 3,000 young cadres across Ganzhou have left their posts to join NSC work teams, and Xingguo in particular has promoted 120 of them from general cadres (*yiban ganbu* 一般干部) to township leaders (*zhengke ganbu* 正科干部) and deputy leaders (*fuke ganbu* 副科干部).⁴⁰

During the NSC Ganzhou has also made a push to recruit more college graduates to work at the township level, resulting in township leaders who are on average younger and more educated than before. Between 2004 and 2009, the city recruited 1,227 recent graduates to work at the township level, plus more than 200 to work at the village level, with the promise that after one year they may be promoted to deputy leaders of the township.⁴¹ In 2009, the average age of a Ganzhou township official was 34, and 54% of township officials were younger than 35.⁴² According to the city’s most recent NSC plan, by 2015 all township leaders and deputy leaders will have university degrees (*benke* 本科), and 90% of general cadres will have junior college degrees (*dazhuan* 大专).⁴³

³⁹ Interview with work team member in Butou township, Xingguo 6/2010. It seems that this competition ultimately creates more winners than losers, as those cadres who are not promoted the first time are given additional opportunities. During interviews, work team members often expressed that they had been posted to more than one site.

⁴⁰ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 37, 63; Tang 2007: 77.

⁴¹ Ganzhou City Government 2010a: 8; Guo 2008: 137; Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 5. Pierre Landry’s study of China’s personnel system also shows that opportunities for quick promotion are used as a way of fighting corruption and fostering loyalty among lower-level cadres; see Landry 2008: 95.

⁴² *New Ganzhou* 2009: 57.

⁴³ Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 22. In 2009, 87% of township officials already had a junior college or university degree; see *New Ganzhou* 2009: 57.

Along with creating promotion opportunities for young officials, Ganzhou has incorporated NSC work into its cadre evaluation system more generally, meaning that all departments and officials, regardless of their position, are evaluated based on their contribution to the NSC.⁴⁴ This system assigns numeric points to detailed, component parts of NSC programs and is uniform throughout Ganzhou, making it easy to compare and rank cadres. In 2010, for example, the city Rural Work Department released cadre and program evaluation standards for the following areas: peasant education and training, agricultural commercialization, the development of farmers' cooperatives, grassroots party building, village sanitation and waste management, the popularization of NSC new housing blueprints, village renovation, township renovation, and rural community building.⁴⁵ Meeting these standards may not result in promotion, but failing to meet them is likely to result in some kind of sanction such as a warning, probation, or transfer to a less desirable position.⁴⁶ These evaluations are an effective form of top-down pressure on local officials to achieve quantifiable results, which leaves cadres with two options—somehow forcing peasants to go along with the NSC or generating widespread popular support for it.

⁴⁴ Maria Heimer has observed that cadres' guidance and performance targets may be adjusted to local conditions. Writing before the NSC was adopted, she observes that standards generally prioritized economic growth but that rural instability is one reason the government might revise its standards; Heimer 2003: 12-13. Both Heimer and Landry view promotion as a political incentive and political control mechanism. In Ganzhou, promotion seems to be used mostly as a political incentive mechanism, as it applies to all officials, not just those from economically successful areas, as Heimer and Landry suggest; see Heimer 2003: 13-16; Landry 2008: 105-106.

⁴⁵ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2010.

⁴⁶ Interview with Ganzhou City Organization Department official 8/2010.

Section 3: Mobilizing the Masses for Village Renovation

While drinking tea and listening to a skit about the New Socialist Countryside performed in the local Hakka dialect, a resident of Wenyuan village approached Secretary Pan to thank him for making Wenyuan such a great place to live. He explained that in the past people would steal his chickens but that now there is no theft in the village. Pan smiled for the cameras and proclaimed “the New Socialist Countryside revolution will leave its mark on the history of China’s modernization and the history of the developing world!”⁴⁷

This section examines the different tactics employed by the Ganzhou government to generate popular support for the NSC. Aside from the Hakka-language performance troupe and the occasional visit from Ganzhou’s leaders that I witnessed in Wenyuan, other mobilization tactics include heavy publicity, subsidies, and the use of peasant councils.

Encouraging Implementation from the Bottom-Up

Ganzhou’s campaign to modernize the countryside started at the very lowest level of organization—the city’s 49,139 village teams.⁴⁸ Ganzhou’s 2005-2010 NSC plan called for the renovation of 60% of the city’s townships and villages in order to “conserve land resources and change the image of the countryside.”⁴⁹ The city government defined renovation as “the drafting of renovation plans, the implementation of the ‘three clean-ups, three changes,’ the renovation of village housing, the relocation of farm animals to non-residential areas of the village, beautification of the village’s natural environment, and the dissemination of the village constitution.”⁵⁰ Moreover, the city government emphasized that although the main target of renovation would be natural villages, the program would align with province-wide administrative

⁴⁷ Notes from site visit to Wenyuan village, Xingguo 6/2010.

⁴⁸ Tang 2005: 70-71. In most cases, one team is equivalent to one natural village, but occasionally there will be more than one team in a natural village. Official data on Ganzhou only provides statistics on village teams, not natural villages.

⁴⁹ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 4, 8.

⁵⁰ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 12.

reforms to reduce the total number of villages: “merge small villages, tear down hollow villages, reduce the number of natural villages, and build central villages.”⁵¹ The plan also instructed officials to use a “tear down the old, build anew” approach to renovation in villages where the majority of housing was made of “mud-brick” (*tupi fang* 土坯房) or was unoccupied, “hollow housing” (*kongxin fang* 空心房).⁵²

Given China’s record of contentious rural taxation and land disputes, Ganzhou officials were aware that forcibly collecting money and tearing down homes would risk social instability, resulting in protest, petitioning and even violence. The city government therefore has invested tremendous resources in popularizing its NSC policies. Between 2004 and 2009, the government distributed more than 200,000 propaganda posters and more than 280,000 books with poems and songs about the NSC. The Rural Work Department invested at least 10 million yuan in media initiatives such as a website, a television channel and a free publication called *New Peasant Weekly*.⁵³ The city even backed the production of China’s first film about the NSC called *Gannan Love Story*, for which a special screening was held in Beijing in March 2008.⁵⁴ The Rural Work Department in Shicheng, which published its own book of songs about the NSC in 2008, has also sponsored field trips for 10,000 people every year to see villages that have

⁵¹ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 10.

⁵² Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 12; Tang 2004: 69; Tang 2006: 97. The prevalence of mud-brick housing, which does not hold up well during heavy rains, is one reason that the Ganzhou model has focused so heavily on village renovation.

⁵³ The television channel is accessible in 80% of villages, and the magazine is available in all villages with more than 20 households. Interview with city RWD official 6/2010; *New Ganzhou* 2009: 35, 42, 71; Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 13.

⁵⁴ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 47, 72.

completed renovation as a way of garnering support in villages that have yet to carry out the NSC.⁵⁵

Augmenting these publicity efforts, generous household subsidies for renovation have changed the way villages take part in the NSC, from a purely top-down selection process to a more bottom-up, competitive application process (see discussion of subsidies below). As one township official in Longnan explained, “The earliest NSC models were created through force, and tearing down housing was a very difficult problem; but now our government is much stronger and the villagers are clamoring for the opportunity to do the NSC.”⁵⁶ In many parts of Ganzhou, village teams initiated renovation even before the government reviewed their NSC application, proactively cleaning up the village and tearing down old homes as a way of attracting the attention of township and county officials. Known as “autonomous sites” (*zizhu dian* 自主点), these villages compete with each other to become official NSC experimental and showpiece sites. Normally guided by a few of the wealthier or more politically connected villagers, autonomous sites have become increasingly common. In Shicheng, for example, it is estimated that about 40% of all officially sponsored NSC sites were autonomous sites first.⁵⁷

Demonstrating high levels of “enthusiasm” (*jijixing* 积极性) increases the likelihood that a village will get selected, but officials admit that due to limited resources and political ambition, they tend to select “bright spots” (*liangdian* 亮点) or places that have the greatest potential to

⁵⁵ Zhong 2008: 54-91; Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2009a: 1-3; Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2009b: 7.

⁵⁶ Interview with official from Huangsha township, Longnan 7/2010.

⁵⁷ At the end of 2009, Shicheng had completed renovation in 472 official sites. Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2009b: 2, 5.

highlight NSC achievements to surrounding areas and visiting officials.⁵⁸ When asked why his village had not been selected after applying twice, the party secretary of Xiushui village in Xingguo replied, “The higher-levels do not look favorably on us; we are far from the highway and the homes here are too scattered, so it would be expensive to pave a road through the village.”⁵⁹

Putting aside the question of site selection, Pan Yiyang and other city leaders have pledged that, at the very least, the “three clean-ups, three changes” will be implemented in 100% of villages by 2020.⁶⁰ In addition, NSC village blueprints (*cunzhen guihua* 村镇规划), which show how the village will look after renovation, have already been drafted for every village with more than 20 households (most villages smaller than this are slated to merge with larger villages).⁶¹ As is often the case in China, at the same time the government encourages popular participation in the implementation process, it also sets policy goals that local governments are pressured to meet. Still, the government in Ganzhou has been remarkably successful at generating popular support for its policies,⁶² and some villages such as Xiushui have indeed been “clamoring” to take part in the NSC.

⁵⁸ Interview with official from Longkou township, Xingguo 6/2010. Writing about village applications for NSC funding, Schubert & Ahlers find that the distribution of funds is based on a village’s model status, the link between village development projects and the county’s overall development strategy, and the ability of village leaders to come up with matching funds and carry out the project; see Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 72-73.

⁵⁹ Interview with the party secretary of Xiushui village, Xingguo 6/2010.

⁶⁰ Interview with Pan Yiyang 6/2010.

⁶¹ To draft these blueprints, the government normally hires professional planners and architects; see *New Ganzhou* 2009: 21.

⁶² Although popular support is difficult to quantify in the absence of survey data, this conclusion is based on dozens of interviews conducted with villagers in both NSC sites and non-NSC sites.

Government Investment and Subsidies

Government investment in village renovation has been substantial, but certainly not enough to cover an area as vast as the Ganzhou countryside. At minimum, nearly all NSC sites receive a baseline amount of 160,000 yuan from the provincial government and are designated as “provincial-supported sites” (*shengfu dian* 省扶点) for a one-year period.⁶³ Each year the Jiangxi provincial government distributes NSC funding (from central and provincial sources) to city and county governments on the condition that they allocate a certain percentage of their local budget to the NSC. For example, in 2005 the provincial government allocated 62.25 million yuan to Ganzhou, and the city government supplemented this funding with an additional 5 million yuan from its own revenue sources.⁶⁴ By 2009, city government spending had risen to 90 million yuan, and counties were dedicating about one-eighth of their local budgets to the NSC.⁶⁵ During the first five years of the NSC, total city and county government spending was 254 million yuan and 1 billion yuan, respectively, but the city estimates that money allocated for village renovation only covered 30-40% of the total cost.⁶⁶ In Xingguo, for example, villagers must sign a renovation contract as part of their NSC application to the township government stating that they agree to cover 60% of the total cost of renovation; and in Shicheng villagers must cover 70% of the total cost.⁶⁷

In addition, county government officials expressed that each year they must reject the NSC applications of several villages due to lack of funds.

⁶³ Xie et al. 2007; Interview with Longnan RWD director 7/2010.

⁶⁴ Zeng & Luo 2007: 213; *New Ganzhou* 2009: 60.

⁶⁵ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 75.

⁶⁶ Ganzhou City Government 2010a: 11.

⁶⁷ Xingguo NSC Leading Group 2010: 24; Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2010: 4.

The total amount of money that is ultimately spent on renovating an individual village depends on the size of the county budget, the sponsoring department's budget,⁶⁸ private donations,⁶⁹ and villagers' income. Other important factors include the village's designation as a regular site or showpiece site, and its ability to apply for earmarked funds for special programs like poverty alleviation and environmental protection. An official from the city RWD estimates that each site receives an average of 430,000 yuan from government sources; but in practice there is tremendous variation both across and within counties.⁷⁰ For example, Xingguo and Anyuan are eligible for funding only available to national poverty counties; and Xingguo and Ruijin receive additional support for being "old revolutionary base areas" (*laogeming genjudi* 老革命根据地) during the Jiangxi Soviet period (1931-1934).⁷¹ Perhaps the most famous showpiece site in Ganzhou is Baihuayuan village in Ruijin, where in 2008-2009 the government spent more than 2 million yuan and village residents (46 households total) spent more than 10 million yuan on village renovation, an astonishing figure for a county where the average annual rural income is about 4,000 yuan.⁷²

⁶⁸ For example, in Ruijin sponsoring departments give 5, 10 or 20 thousand yuan to one site per year depending on the size and budget of the department. Between 2005 and 2009, Ruijin sponsoring departments invested a total of 12 million yuan in village renovation; see Ruijin RWD 2010b: 4.

⁶⁹ Donations from private companies and individuals residing in or away from the village are normally displayed publicly, for example, by carving the donor's name and donation amount into an honorary stone tablet. Donations may be as little as 5 yuan or as much as several thousand yuan. Site visit to Yuan village, Xingguo 6/2010.

⁷⁰ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 75.

⁷¹ Interview with city RWD officials 6/2010.

⁷² Interview with members of the Baihuayuan peasant council 7/2010. This village is a special case because its land was expropriated by the county seat (i.e. the city government) of Ruijin in 2007 for an industrial park where several village residents are now employed. The peasant

To encourage renovation, county governments set annual standards for household subsidies, which cover a wide range of itemized renovation tasks and are publicly displayed in all villages undergoing renovation. There is little variation across counties in terms of the items covered, and only some variation in terms of the value of the subsidies. As a typical example, Table 7.5 shows the 2010 compensation standards for Anyuan county's NSC sites. Officials from the Anyuan RWD estimate that on average each household receives 10,000 yuan in cash and material subsidies for carrying out renovation tasks.⁷³ The payment of subsidies is often linked to the rate of participation (see solar power in table below) and is contingent on inspection by the village, township and county governments. If the village passes inspection, the Rural Work Department directly deposits cash subsidies into villagers' personal accounts at the Jiangxi Rural Credit Association using what is known as the "one card" system (*yika tong* 一卡通).⁷⁴ Payment records to individual households, along with records of all other government investment in the village, must be signed by the village committee, the sponsoring department, and the peasant council, after which they are filed with the county RWD.⁷⁵

council members and village officials would not reveal how much the village received as compensation, but it is unclear if any of that money was spent on the NSC. In any case, the level of investment in renovation compared to neighboring villages is remarkably high.

⁷³ Interview with Anyuan RWD officials 7/2010.

⁷⁴ Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 25.

⁷⁵ Anyuan County Government 2010: 5.

7.5: 2010 Anyuan County Subsidies for Village Renovation

Item	Subsidy
Village Roads	10 yuan per square meter for cement
Doorsteps and Eaves	5 yuan per square meter for cement
Outer Walls of Home	3 or 4 yuan per square meter for paint or tile
Sewers and Drains	80 yuan
Tap Water	300 yuan
Flush Toilets	300-500 yuan depending on model; special biogas toilets provided by the Rural Energy Office of the MOA
Pens for Livestock	200 yuan per room (max. 1 room per household)
Planting Trees	30 yuan per tree
Village Waste Station and Trash Collection Supplies	700 yuan
Community Activities Space	3,000 or 5,000 yuan for existing space or new space
Solar Power	500 yuan (min. 70% of households)
Biogas Digester	1,500-4,000 yuan depending on size
Computers and Broadband Internet	500 yuan

Source: Anyuan County Government 2010: 3, 7-9.

Note: Showpiece sites receive slightly more for aesthetic renovations such as painting and tiling homes, planting trees, and the community activities space. The real difference between regular and showpiece sites, however, stems less from subsidies and more from the rate of new home construction and investments from sponsoring departments.

As for the demolition of old housing, toilets, animal pens, and other village infrastructure, either the county Rural Work Department or the peasant council may provide some limited compensation. For example, in 2010 the RWD in Ruijin gave villagers 6-12 yuan per square meter of housing depending on the scale of demolition; and the RWD in Xingguo gave villagers 60 yuan for each toilet and animal pen they tore down.⁷⁶ In many cases, however, villagers bear the cost of demolition themselves. To reduce the cost of renovation, villagers are encouraged to use “construction waste” such as bricks from their old homes as a foundation for paving new village roads.

⁷⁶ Ruijin RWD 2010a; Xingguo NSC Leading Group 2010: 23.

When asked about how much it costs to take part in the NSC, most villagers responded vaguely with “a few thousand yuan,” but they also insisted that subsidies are a “good policy” that has made widespread participation in the NSC possible. Regarding complaints about subsidies, some villagers have expressed that they could be more generous and delivered in a more timely fashion.⁷⁷ As will be discussed more below, the cost of participating in the NSC for an individual household is of course much greater if they choose to build a new home.

Peasant Councils

Of course even with subsidies, many poor households in Ganzhou are wary of the potential burden posed by the NSC, which is ultimately why the city relies on peasant councils to mobilize villagers. By the end of 2010 there were approximately 15,000 peasant councils in Ganzhou, one for each site.⁷⁸ The year before a village gets selected as an NSC site, cadre work teams and village officials informally back potential council members, who provide input to planners on an NSC blueprint for the village and spend several months going door-to-door soliciting support and preparing household renovation contracts for the NSC. Once 85% of villagers are in favor of the NSC, then the work team and village officials organize a NSC “mass mobilization meeting” (*qunzhong dongyuan dahui* 群众动员大会) to take place during the Spring Festival when most villagers, including migrant workers, are at home. During this meeting, villagers elect council members and prepare their NSC application for the township government. Villagers across Ganzhou confirmed that they did in fact elect council members, but

⁷⁷ For example, I spent several days living with residents of Guanxi village in Anyuan and Oulian village in Shicheng who made these points, Site visits 7/2010. Also, in Xingguo I found a few anonymous posts on the county government website regarding problems with the delivery of subsidies; see <http://www.xingguo.gov.cn>.

⁷⁸ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 9; Ganzhou City Government 2010a: 4.

they also expressed that “the township must agree with our choices.”⁷⁹ By the time the township receives the village’s application, the cadre work team has already made several reports about the village to the township government and the county RWD, which means that assuming the application materials are satisfactory, the village’s NSC status is granted within a matter of days. For this process to go smoothly, an effective peasant council is absolutely critical.

Despite clear government involvement in backing potential council members, villagers in Ganzhou understand these organizations as non-governmental, autonomous groups of volunteers who, for the most part, represent their best interests. Villagers often describe council members as having high levels of “prestige” (*weiwang* 威望) and a sense of “justice” (*gongdao* 公道), which enables them to handle disputes between villagers impartially.⁸⁰ Most council members are part of the “five elderly groups” or are young “activists” who are “capable of enriching the farmers.”⁸¹ Village officials cannot be elected to the peasant council, and unlike village officials, council members receive no salary. Many council members, however, are members of the CCP, and in large councils (10 or more members), there will often be small groups for Party members (*dang xiaozu* 党小组) within the council.⁸² Although the majority of peasant council members are men, Longnan county, for example, has established women’s councils in every NSC site to increase women’s participation in the NSC.⁸³ Occasionally, the township may compensate

⁷⁹ Interview with residents of Yu Zetan village, Longnan 7/2010. To clarify, these elections are separate from village committee elections, which occur once every three years.

⁸⁰ Interview with residents of Langmu village, Xingguo 6/2010.

⁸¹ As explained in Chapter 5, the term “five elderly groups” refers to elderly and retired Party members, cadres, teachers, soldiers and model laborers.

⁸² Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 9.

⁸³ Longnan NSC Leading Group: 3.

council members for missed workdays or reward them for outstanding achievements, but they generally understand their role as volunteers.⁸⁴

The city RWD believes that peasant councils, while different from the village government, are nonetheless an extension of village self-governance institutions to the natural village or team level.⁸⁵ According to one council leader:

The village government has only a few people and is weak, so the Rural Work Department decided to link up with the team leaders. Like in the past, the team leaders have been called on to mobilize the masses.⁸⁶

Whereas administrative villages are required by law to have a village Party branch and a village committee, peasant councils are non-governmental institutions. As such, the councils are often compared with “wedding and funeral councils” (*hongbai xishi lishihui* 红白喜事理事会) and other “civil society organizations” (*minjian zuzhi* 民间组织) within the village.⁸⁷ The city government is insistent, however, that councils are not clan-based organizations.⁸⁸ As part of the city’s goal of creating a “new rural culture,” much NSC propaganda has focused on combating

⁸⁴ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 29. For example, Shicheng gives 1,000 yuan to ten outstanding peasant councils each year. Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2007: 3.

⁸⁵ Zeng & Luo 2007: 300-303; Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 20.

⁸⁶ Interview with head of the peasant council in Shangshe village, Xingguo 6/2010. As mentioned in Chapter 5, team leaders do not necessarily have seats on the council.

⁸⁷ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 34.

⁸⁸ Stig Thogersen suggests that peasant councils are formed around lineages; see Thogersen 2009: 10-12. Except maybe for single-lineage natural villages, which are rarely found in Ganzhou, I found this to be untrue in my field sites. Ganzhou’s population is over 95% Hakka, so people trace their ancestry to hundreds of different places in northern and central China, and the mix of surnames found in a single village attests to this fact. While Hakka people hold their lineage history in high regard, they believe that diverse council membership is the only way to ensure that village renovation is implemented fairly.

“gambling, superstitions, and clanism.”⁸⁹ While it is unclear how effective these efforts have been, during the NSC thousands of lineage temples have been torn down or converted to “rural community activities centers” (see discussion below).⁹⁰ Regarding the council’s durability as an organization, there is some debate about whether councils are temporary organizations used for mobilization purposes only, or whether they should be made permanent. The city RWD favors making the councils permanent, but also insists that villagers must decide for themselves if the councils are to remain truly autonomous organizations.⁹¹

As non-governmental organizations, peasant councils are able to carry out certain tasks that would be extremely problematic for village governments, namely collecting money and persuading villagers to tear down their old homes.⁹² The village committee may solicit money from villagers using the “one issue, one discussion” mechanism of participatory budget planning,⁹³ but as one township official explained:

We cannot use “one issue, one discussion” because the central government set a limit of 15 yuan per person. That is not nearly enough for village renovation, so we need the peasant councils to collect money. Also, peasants distrust the government and don’t want to give the village officials any money.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Tang 2006: 97.

⁹⁰ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 60.

⁹¹ Interview with the director of the city RWD, 6/2010. Longnan appears to be the only county that has called for the permanent replacement of teams and team leaders with peasant councils; see Longnan NSC Leading Group 2009: 14.

⁹² Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 11-12.

⁹³ As mentioned in Chapter 6, since rural tax and fee reform this system has been promoted as a way of raising funds for village public goods. Under this system villagers make small donations to a collective budget and then decide how the budget should be spent on a case-by-case basis.

⁹⁴ Interview with official from Changgang township, Xingguo 6/2010.

While village public infrastructure is mostly covered by RWD subsidies and sponsoring departments, villagers are also expected to pay about 100 yuan per person to the peasant council for village roads and other expenses. In addition, the council solicits donations from wealthier villagers to cover the expenses of poor households.⁹⁵ Most villagers consider these payments to the peasant council to be reasonably low;⁹⁶ however, in some cases the peasant council may collect several thousand yuan per household, part of which is held as a kind of insurance to be returned after renovation is completed.⁹⁷ For example, in Gujing village in Shicheng, each household paid 9,000 yuan to the council as a “construction deposit,” plus 800 yuan per male resident of the village for construction of a new village activities center.⁹⁸

As this example suggests, one of the most important jobs of the peasant council is to ensure that renovation takes place according to the village’s NSC blueprint, which means reconfiguring the distribution of village housing plots.⁹⁹ Each NSC blueprint outlines which areas of the village are slated for demolition and new home construction. In a single village there may be different sized housing plots, depending on provincial government standards at the time the housing plot was assigned. Because of population pressure and scarce land resources, couples that married in the early reform period, for example, have larger housing plots than couples that

⁹⁵ Interview with peasant council members in Langmu village, Xingguo 6/2010.

⁹⁶ Interview with villagers in Xinzhen village, Longnan 7/2010. In this village the council collected only 100 yuan per person for village roads, a common amount across NSC sites in Ganzhou. I came across only one case where villagers believed that the peasant council had collected too much money. In Oulian village, Shicheng, the council collected a non-refundable amount of 3,000 yuan per household for public facilities.

⁹⁷ The highest amount I found was 50,000 yuan per household in Baihuayuan, Ruijin 7/2010.

⁹⁸ Interview with Gujing village peasant council members, Shicheng 7/2010.

⁹⁹ The 1st Five-year-plan states that councils are responsible for all housing plot transfers and related compensation; see Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 11-12.

married more recently. However, in an effort to conserve land resources, NSC blueprints require that plots for new housing are equal in size, normally around 100 square meters. To facilitate housing plot redistribution, the peasant council sells plots to villagers seeking to build new homes for about 150 yuan per square meter, and then uses that money to compensate villagers for the demolition of old housing and for reductions in the size of their housing plots. In most cases, the amount of compensation to villagers is written into household renovation contracts and signed by both council members and villagers before the renovation process begins.¹⁰⁰ Preparing these contracts is the peasant council's most difficult task and is complicated by the fact that within a single house, several households (normally siblings or different generations of a single family) may have property claims to different rooms.¹⁰¹

Once these contracts have been collected from all households, implementation of the NSC occurs very quickly. In general, the demolition of old buildings only takes a few days, and the construction of new homes and buildings may take as little as four to six months. To qualify for government subsidies, villagers must complete renovation within one year, but the government also rewards villagers for speed. In one village in Longnan, for example, the county government gave villagers 3,000 yuan for finishing new home construction within six months,

¹⁰⁰ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2010: 20. This practice is standard throughout Ganzhou and was confirmed by peasant council members in every NSC village I visited. In Langmu village, Xingguo, the head of the peasant council showed me all of the village's household renovation contracts with detailed information on housing demolition and compensation, housing plot redistribution, and deadlines for demolition and new home construction. Site visit to Langmu village, Xingguo 6/2010.

¹⁰¹ In several NSC villages I visited, there were houses with new paint on all the outer walls except for one or two rooms. The explanation given was that a few resistant villagers with property rights to those rooms refused to take part in the renovation. Interview with residents of Guanxi village, Xingguo 6/2010.

2,000 yuan for finishing within seven months, and 1,000 yuan for finishing within eight months.¹⁰²

Section 4: The Impact of Village Renovation Programs

New Housing

From the beginning, Ganzhou's leaders intentionally used the NSC to tap into latent demand for new housing. In 2004, results from a government-sponsored survey suggested that 70% of rural households had a strong desire to build new homes within the next five to ten years.¹⁰³ The city therefore focused much of its NSC propaganda on encouraging people to "live like urbanites in multi-story homes" and to "return to the village to build a new home."¹⁰⁴ The city also initiated experiments with banks and credit associations to give loans to villagers, normally on the scale of 30,000 yuan, for new home construction.¹⁰⁵ Although there are no official estimates for the average cost of new housing, during site visits the figure most often given by residents was 100,000 yuan at minimum. The city RWD estimates that for every NSC site at least 5 new homes are built,¹⁰⁶ which means that at least 75,000 new homes were built across 15,000 NSC sites by the end of 2010.¹⁰⁷ In Shicheng county alone, 13,250 households

¹⁰² Interview with officials and residents of Yangmei village, Longnan 7/2010.

¹⁰³ Meng 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Tang 2006: 61-62.

¹⁰⁵ Zeng & Luo 2007: 213; *New Ganzhou* 2009: 64.

¹⁰⁶ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 75. I believe that this estimate is rather conservative because many places are now applying the "demolish the old, build anew" approach to renovation, meaning that all residents are expected to build new homes.

¹⁰⁷ Ganzhou City Government 2010a: 4.

have either finished building a new home or committed to building a new home before 2015, contributing to a robust rural housing boom.¹⁰⁸

To ensure that new homes look a certain way, the government has invested substantial resources in hiring professional architects and planners to design hundreds of “NSC housing blueprints.” New housing blueprints, not to be confused with NSC village blueprints, are published by the city RWD and distributed to every township and administrative village.¹⁰⁹ Colorful pictures of model homes are also printed inside NSC calendars that are handed out to villagers as gifts during Spring Festival. These housing blueprints are not only meant to reflect traditional Hakka culture, for example, by having eaves shaped like the horns of a water buffalo, but also modernity by including such things as parking garages.¹¹⁰

To popularize the blueprints, the city requires that villagers have several options that are appropriate for different income levels, and some county governments have rewarded villagers who adopt the blueprints with 500-yuan subsidies.¹¹¹ The government has also trained thousands of local construction workers to use NSC housing blueprints. In 2010 alone, county governments trained a total of 5,000 workers.¹¹² In addition, some township governments have started to make

¹⁰⁸ Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2009b: 6.

¹⁰⁹ The city now requires that 2-3 township staff specialize in village planning, and at least one village committee member assist the township in village planning; see Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 9.

¹¹⁰ I was able to look at all of the official NSC housing blueprints at the city’s RWD office 8/2010.

¹¹¹ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 12; Shicheng NSC Leading Group 2010: 6.

¹¹² Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2010: 19, 25.

licenses for new home construction (in both NSC and non-NSC sites) conditional on using official NSC blueprints.¹¹³

Aside from NSC subsidies and bank loans for home construction, perhaps the most important driver of Ganzhou's rural housing boom is the city's 1.4 million migrant workers, who in the words of one township official, have been "returning in droves to build homes in their villages while the NSC is going on, and then going back to the cities for work."¹¹⁴ As one migrant worker explained:

There are more and more of us [migrant workers] who can afford new homes and cars. For the sake of our children's education, many of us eventually want to come back to our hometowns, and when we saw that the NSC had come we were happy to build new homes in the villages. The village is much cleaner and more comfortable than before, and building a new home in the village costs only half as much as buying a home in the township or the county seat. There are so many big, three- and four-story homes in the countryside now! Without us, this kind of new socialist countryside would be impossible.¹¹⁵

Even for villagers whose main income derives from farming, the desire for respect or "face" is often a strong incentive to build a new home. In those villages that carried out the NSC early on, people typically built two-story homes, whereas in neighboring villages that carried out the NSC later, three- and four-story homes were the norm. As one villager in Shicheng explained, "I saw that the villagers across the street had three-story homes, so I built a four-and-a-half-story home."¹¹⁶ Impressive from the outside, most of these homes have yet to be finished on the inside

¹¹³ In China it is national policy that all villagers seeking to build homes must obtain a license from the Ministry of Land Resources and the township government.

¹¹⁴ Interview with official from Zhukeng township, Shicheng 7/2010.

¹¹⁵ In recent years, policies to allow rural children to attend schools in urban areas have been promoted, but there are still very high barriers to entry (exorbitant fees, limited spots, etc.). In addition, the household registration system still requires that students take college entrance exams in their hometowns. Interview with resident of Gujing village, Shicheng 7/2010.

¹¹⁶ Interview with resident of Oulian village, Shicheng 7/2010.

due to lack of funds. Villagers admit that everyone who wants to build a new home during the NSC has to borrow money from the credit association, family members and other sources, but the actual amount of rural debt created by the NSC is difficult to estimate because the government considers this information highly sensitive. This attitude is not surprising given the backlash that could take place if the media were to report that the NSC in Ganzhou has resulted in the reemergence of heavy “peasant burdens.”

At present, people in Ganzhou and outside observers have yet to publicly express concerns about rural household debt and instead see the housing boom as a great success. Ganzhou’s leaders, including Pan Yiyang, take great pride in the fact that between 2003 and 2008 overall rural consumption grew by 75% from an estimated 8.7 billion to 14.7 billion. Like Justin Yifu Lin, they see the NSC as a mechanism for “expanding domestic demand.”¹¹⁷

The Rural Poor and “Migrant New Villages”

In 2008 Jiangxi province defined rural poverty as earning less than 1,196 yuan a year, as measured in terms of per capita net income. By this standard, Ganzhou’s rural poor (*nongcun pinkun renkou* 农村贫困人口) accounted for 5.7% of the rural population in 2008, or a total of 397,853 people.¹¹⁸ The Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for administering welfare programs for the rural poor, including “minimum living insurance” (Ganzhou’s standard is 1,000 yuan per person per year), “five guarantees insurance” (food, clothing, fuel, medicine and funeral provisions) and assistance for “dilapidated housing renovation.” In 2008 approximately 308,000

¹¹⁷ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 73-74, 77.

¹¹⁸ Tang 2009: 422.

people in Ganzhou participated in these insurance programs, and the MOCA either renovated old housing or built new housing for 3,707 rural households.¹¹⁹

As part of the NSC, the MOCA has sponsored the construction of “dilapidated housing renovation sites,” which are often two-story apartment buildings located within NSC villages. For example, in one NSC village in Shicheng, ten poor households from the surrounding area (different teams) lived in an apartment building made up of small, one- and two-bedroom units, which were basically given to them for free. The MOCA, the sponsoring department for this NSC site, and private donors contributed to building these apartments, which in total cost about 273,000 yuan.¹²⁰

For poor rural households who are not covered by the government’s poverty relief programs, the NSC poses a definite burden. In theory, once a village gets selected as an NSC site, households with higher incomes are expected to help poorer residents of the village by donating money to the peasant council. However, households with higher incomes are also the most likely to build new homes, leaving them with little extra money to donate. In Ganzhou, I found no concrete evidence of poor villagers’ homes being forcibly torn down, but it is nonetheless rumored that the NSC has indeed pushed some poor households out of their villages. When asked where these people might go, villagers responded, “to ‘hollow homes’ and ‘mud-brick homes’ in other villages that have not yet done the NSC.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Tang 2009: 420.

¹²⁰ Site visit to Linjianxuan New Village, Shicheng 7/2010.

¹²¹ Interview with villagers in Shicheng 7/2010.

Another important feature of the NSC in Ganzhou has been to resettle people living in remote, mountainous villages to “migrant new villages” (*yimin xincun* 移民新村).¹²² As early as 2004, Xingguo and Anyuan counties began building new migrant villages near townships and central villages.¹²³ Although migrant villages are often billed as a form of poverty relief, most residents have to spend significant sums of money to build new homes there. According to a resident of a migrant village in Anyuan:

I first heard of the NSC when a propaganda team came to our village and told us that we could move to a better place near the township. They said it would be more convenient for our children’s education and our grandparents’ medical care. They gave us 3,500 yuan per person, but that wasn’t enough to build a new home. In the new village the homes cost about 130,000 yuan to build and renovate. Most of us have small jobs in the township and do not farm anymore. They converted our farmland to forest. We get 230 yuan for every mu of farmland they converted for eight years, but after that we get nothing. Still, the NSC is a good policy. If it were a bad policy, then nobody would move.¹²⁴

In most cases, villagers from the same team will move together to the migrant village, but within a single village there may be more than one team. These teams may come from the same administrative village or different ones. When asked about how this policy might affect household registration or village elections, local officials across the board seemed unclear and remarked that this policy was still in an experimental stage.

¹²² To clarify, the term “migrant” refers to people who have been relocated, not returned migrant workers.

¹²³ Tang 2005: 431.

¹²⁴ Based on these estimates, the cost of building a home for a family of three would likely breakdown in the following manner—16% from subsidies (10,000 yuan from basic renovation subsidies, 10,500 yuan from relocation subsidies); 23% from official loans (30,000 yuan from the local bank or credit association); and 61% from other sources (79,500 from savings and unofficial loans from friends, relatives etc.). Interview with resident of Yuejin village, Anyuan 7/2010.

This practice of building migrant villages became more common after 2008 when MOCA-sponsored resettlement programs, which previously only assisted people displaced by road and dam construction, were modified to include villagers living in “deep mountains” (*shenshan yimin* 深山移民). Under this policy, each migrant is eligible to receive a small sum of money to resettle.¹²⁵ Residents of migrant new villages who give up their farmland are also eligible for free vocational training to find non-farming jobs.¹²⁶ Government officials in Ganzhou have actively embraced this policy because of its potential to reduce the overall cost of the NSC, for example, by making it unnecessary to pave roads to remote villages. By 2009 there were 174 migrant new villages, and by 2010 approximately 50,000 people had been resettled, further contributing to Ganzhou’s housing boom.¹²⁷ As an official from the Shicheng RWD explained: “this policy does aim to help poor people, but the term migrant does not necessarily mean poor.”¹²⁸

New Rural Communities

While in some parts of China the development of new rural communities, also known as central villages, has resulted in the forced relocation of villagers into centralized housing units, so far this is not the case in Ganzhou. Although it is difficult to measure with existing data, there has been some movement of the rural population into new rural communities during the NSC, stemming from a few different sources—administrative reforms to eliminate small villages with

¹²⁵ Interview with Xingguo MOCA officials 6/2010; Interview with city RWD officials 6/2010. In Ganzhou, this sum is 3,500 yuan per person, which I confirmed at site visits to 5 different migrant villages.

¹²⁶ Interview with city RWD officials 6/2010.

¹²⁷ Tang 2009: 423; Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 24.

¹²⁸ Interview with Shicheng RWD official 7/2010.

less than 20 households, construction of housing for the poor and new migrant villages within rural communities, and the development of new housing districts for residents of the surrounding natural villages. It is important to note, however, that Ganzhou's new housing districts (*nongmin zhuzhai xiaoqu* 农民住宅小区) in rural communities do not resemble urban, apartment-style housing, and I found no evidence to suggest that villagers are being forced to move there.¹²⁹ Instead, as illustrated in the figure below, rural community development in Ganzhou is intended to be an intermediary level of organization between the administrative village and village teams. As such, it is unlikely that rural communities will replace administrative villages.

¹²⁹ The city's first NSC plan stated that local governments should encourage peasants to move to rural communities, but insisted that this not be done using pressure or force; see Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 12. Schubert & Ahlers report, however, that while they were in Dingnan county in Ganzhou, three villagers in another county in Jiangxi who were being forced to evacuate their house engaged in self-immolation. It is unclear if they mean Ganzhou or another part of the province; see Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 79.

7.6: Post-NSC Village Structure in Ganzhou

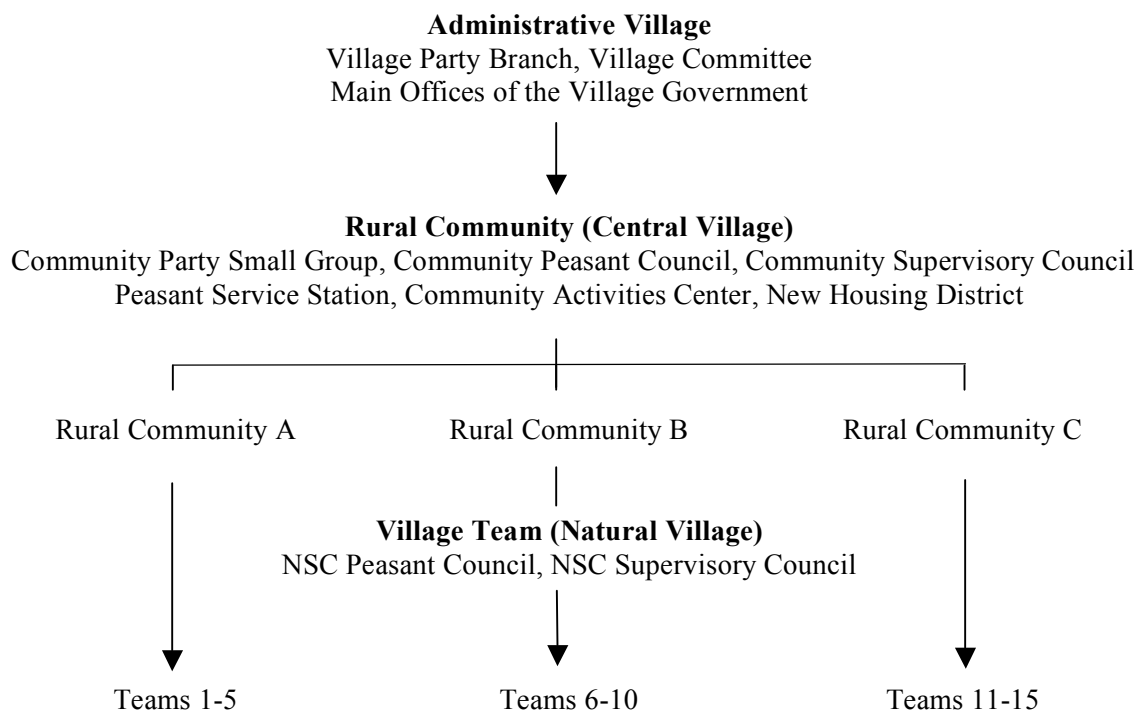


Figure created by the author.

Note: This is only an example. The number of communities and teams in one administrative village may vary. In general, after renovation the name of the administrative village stays the same, but new names are created for communities and village teams. As if this structure of villages-within-villages was not complicated enough, people often use both the old and new names when talking about their villages.

The city first began experimenting with rural communities in the early 2000s,¹³⁰ and although recent aggregate data on the number of communities appears to be unavailable, in 2008 alone the city built 3,483 new rural communities, affecting 3.4 million village residents.¹³¹ Underpinning the growth of rural communities in Ganzhou is the government's belief that they can improve the delivery of public goods and services. The city's 2005-2010 NSC plan called for

¹³⁰ In 2003 there were 28 demonstration communities in Ganzhou; see *Ganzhou Statistical Yearbook* 2004: 10.

¹³¹ Tang 2009: 422.

50% of administrative villages to set up new rural community centers that could provide services in the following areas: kindergarten and adult education, family planning and health, agricultural inputs and technology extension, library and computer resources, cultural activities and sports, and stores for purchasing basic consumer goods. More recently, the city government has promoted community service centers as an expansion of the policy to set up peasant service centers in townships, and has set the goal of building community service centers in 70% of all administrative villages by 2015.¹³²

All rural communities in Ganzhou have at least three organizations—the Party small group, the peasant council and the supervisory council. Of these three, the Party small group is considered the most important, and many policy documents on new rural communities emphasize the need for village Party members to “enter the communities and join the councils” (*jinqu ruhui* 进区入会).¹³³ At the team level, peasant councils are primarily viewed as mobilization mechanisms (*dongyuan jizhi* 动员机制) that serve little purpose after renovation except maybe to handle problems related to village sanitation.¹³⁴ Supervisory councils at both the community and team levels are supposed to monitor peasant council activities, but site visits to NSC villages suggest that, at least at the team level, these councils exist in name only. However, at the community level, peasant councils and supervisory councils are seen as more permanent

¹³² *New Ganzhou* 2009: 62; Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 23.

¹³³ Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 21. “Council” refers not only to peasant and supervisory councils but also to professional associations such as farmers’ cooperatives.

¹³⁴ Interview with peasant council members and village residents in Shangshe village, Xingguo 6/2010.

organizations. In Longnan and other counties, there are plans to replace all team organizations with permanent community organizations.¹³⁵

In line with lessening the importance of village teams and clans, the city government advocates that lineage temples be converted to community centers.¹³⁶ In official sources, lineage temples are often described as remnants of “feudal society” where families stage wasteful weddings and funerals, and the government has relied on peasant councils to try to convince villagers to either tear them down or use them as a space for “advanced, scientific learning.”¹³⁷ Officials in Shicheng, for example, have suggested that lineage temples in all administrative villages eventually be converted to community activities centers as a way of “conserving land resources” and “overlaying the old culture with new habits.”¹³⁸ In site visits to seven of these converted temples, peasant council members and village officials insisted that the community center could still be used for weddings and funerals.¹³⁹ When asked how they felt about the centers, a few village residents expressed that they were better than the temples, but most village residents were hesitant to say anything besides “we can accept it.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Longnan NSC Leading Group 2009: 14.

¹³⁶ Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2005: 14.

¹³⁷ *New Ganzhou* 2009: 60; Zhong 2007: 146-149, 189-191.

¹³⁸ Zhong 2007: 148-149.

¹³⁹ While visiting the community center in Baihuayuan village, residents were actually conducting a funeral on the first floor of the center. The second floor consisted of an adult education classroom and a library filled with books on scientific development and an adult education classroom. Site visit to Baihuayuan village, Ruijin 7/2010.

¹⁴⁰ Since this subject was quite sensitive, I did not pressure villagers to elaborate further. It seemed that in most cases, temple association leaders did not serve on the peasant council, but there was presumably some negotiation between the council and the associations, as evidenced by the preservation and renovation of temples in a few NSC sites. However, it should be noted

In summary, village renovation programs in Ganzhou reflect the mixed rural development outcomes of China's NSC. In terms of negative outcomes, village renovation has increasingly focused on rural consumption and new housing, goals that do not necessarily benefit the rural poor. Some efforts have been made to address the problem of dilapidated rural housing, but it is unclear whether or not these programs reflect the preferences of the targeted population. The creation of migrant new villages and new rural communities have also involved some degree of relocation, which, though not compulsory, is still a potential source of conflict between the government and the rural population. As Schubert and Ahlers have pointed out, resettlement programs are much more controversial than other programs like installing drainage systems and paving village roads.¹⁴¹ The destruction of lineage temples represents another source of potential conflict.

Despite these problems, however, this case study suggests that peasant councils have been remarkably successful at generating popular support and mediating conflict during village renovation.¹⁴² By controlling the process of land redistribution within the village, peasant councils have served as a check against local officials, who, if given the opportunity, would likely push for the consolidation of rural housing. With the exception of dilapidated housing renovation sites, I did not come across any apartment-style housing in Ganzhou. The absence of apartment-style housing suggests that while some degree of "linking urban and rural construction land" may have taken place, the problem of rural land grabs has not been as severe in Ganzhou as it has in other places. It seems that peasant councils, which are firmly rooted in the natural

that most newly renovated temples were considered the property of all village residents and that the renovations were funded by villager donations, not government subsidies.

¹⁴¹ Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 79.

¹⁴² Schubert & Ahlers find this to be true in Dingyuan county as well; see Schubert & Ahlers 2012: 79-80.

villages, have managed to protect villagers' land.

Moreover, in many places, village renovation has had an overall positive effect on rural development. It has dramatically altered rural living conditions, bringing paved roads, electricity, running water, flush toilets, and trash collection services to more than 15,000 villages. It has also created a rural housing boom, stimulated reverse migration, and generally contributed to a more positive view of the local government among the rural population. As the government likes to say, the NSC represents a new era in “cadre-mass relations.” In many villages, residents commented that their perception of the government had become more positive during the NSC. For example, elderly villagers frequently remarked that the “Soviet era cadres had returned” (*suqu ganbu huilaile* 苏区干部回来了), a reference to the golden age of the Jiangxi Soviet period when the communists experimented with many pro-rural policies.

Conclusion: Some Observations on the Evolution of Village Renovation Programs

Since 2004 the NSC in Ganzhou has brought about increasingly dramatic changes to the physical appearance of villages and rural housing in particular. When the NSC began, officials were instructed to start with the basic renovation of existing homes using the “three clean-ups, three changes,” and only to use a “tear down the old, build anew” approach in villages where the majority of housing was made of mud-brick, a common construction material that was used in most housing built before the mid-1990s. In early NSC sites (2005-2007) many mud-brick homes remain, but they now have water taps, flush toilets and paved entryways, and the outer walls have been painted white. In later NSC sites (2008-present) mud-brick homes have mostly been torn down and replaced with homes made of concrete, brick and tile.

Ruijin and Shicheng counties in particular have applied the “tear down the old, build anew” approach to many new NSC sites, meaning that after renovation few if any of the village's

old buildings remain. In Ruijin this approach is known as the “Baihuayuan method” after its most famous showpiece village. This method requires that villagers coordinate the selection of housing blueprints so that new housing is basically uniform. They must also tear down their old homes and build new homes at the same pace. When asked why they adopted this approach, leaders of the peasant council explained that 85% of the old buildings were made of mud-brick and mostly unoccupied, and also that villages with uniform housing were the “most beautiful.”¹⁴³ Full of four-story tiled homes with parking garages, the Ruijin government considers Baihuayuan an exemplary achievement, and in 2010 it applied the Baihuayuan method to 10 other NSC sites.¹⁴⁴ Many officials, including the director of the city RWD, understand that building homes like those in Baihuayuan would be too costly for most rural households, but see no problem with applying the Baihuayuan method to other villages.¹⁴⁵

Throughout Ganzhou, not just in Ruijin, renovation strategies across villages are becoming less diverse than before. In the early years of the NSC, different teams within a single administrative village would carry out renovation differently, depending on the recommendations of the cadre work teams and the preferences of the villagers. For example, in one administrative village in Shicheng, 15 teams (natural villages) fell into different groups depending on the strategy they adopted—renovation and beautification; general three clean-ups; tear down the old, build anew; and migrant new village.¹⁴⁶ However, using diverse renovation strategies became less common after 2009 when the city began promoting a strategy that

¹⁴³ Interview with peasant council members of Baihuayuan village, Ruijin 7/2010.

¹⁴⁴ Site visit to Baihuayuan village, Ruijin 7/2010; Interview with director of Ruijin RWD 7/2010.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with city RWD leaders 8/2010.

¹⁴⁶ Site visit to Zhukeng village, Shicheng 7/2010.

originated in Xingguo called “connecting the villages across an entire area” (*liancun zhengpian* 联村整片).¹⁴⁷ Under this policy, different teams within a single administrative village must carry out renovation at the same time, resulting in natural villages that look increasingly uniform. Moreover, this policy is understood as a way to further promote new rural communities, and has helped facilitate a shift in government investment away from natural villages to central villages.

Although recent policy documents continue to emphasize village renovation as an important goal, it appears that Ganzhou has actually adopted a somewhat different view of the NSC than it had before—using the program to speed up the process of urbanization. In early 2010, an estimated 31% of Ganzhou’s natural villages (more than 15,000 total) had completed village renovation.¹⁴⁸ To achieve the goal of completing renovation in all villages by 2020, the city government plans to renovate 2,000 villages per year.¹⁴⁹ However, the city’s 2010-2015 NSC Plan also calls for the renovation of “central townships” and the construction of several thousand “apartments for new urban citizens” as a way of “guiding the peasants into the cities” (*yinnong jincheng* 引农进城).¹⁵⁰ In order to achieve an urbanization rate of 50% by 2015, the city plans on renovating 20 “central townships” (*zhongxin zhen* 中心镇) per year to accommodate 200,000 residents each.¹⁵¹ In 2010 alone, the city instructed county governments to “guide” 150,000 people out the villages and into the townships.¹⁵² Without really clarifying

¹⁴⁷ Jiangxi NSC Leading Group 2010: 107.

¹⁴⁸ Ganzhou City Government 2010a: 4.

¹⁴⁹ Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 10.

¹⁵⁰ Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 8, 30.

¹⁵¹ Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 10.

¹⁵² Ganzhou NSC Leading Group 2010: 16.

how moving people into cities and townships will affect their rights to rural land or their household registration, the plan calls on governments to “establish a mechanism for linking urban and rural construction land” and to “encourage peasants who have stable jobs in the cities and townships to voluntarily give up their housing plots and farmland.”¹⁵³

To summarize, village renovation in Ganzhou has evolved over the years in a few important ways—from basic renovation to total demolition and reconstruction; from diverse housing to uniform housing; from natural villages to rural communities; and finally, from village renovation to urbanization. This policy evolution may partly be traced to greater clarity on the part of the government about what it aims to achieve with village renovation. Whereas in the early stages of the campaign experimentation was more common, in later years NSC renovation has followed more standardized guidelines. This policy evolution also reflects changes occurring in China’s macro-level policy environment. As central policy documents such as the 12th Five-year-plan place greater emphasis on consumption and the urbanization of small towns and cities (including affordable urban housing), local governments are likely to follow suit. In addition, the near completion of basic renovation tasks in Ganzhou has prompted the government to start thinking about new development strategies. There are some officials in Ganzhou who believe that village-level development projects have simply run their course and that the government should turn its attention to urban areas, or rather come up with new programs for “integrated urban-rural development.”¹⁵⁴

In light of these trends, it seems that the most important years for village-level

¹⁵³ Ganzhou City Government 2010b: 10, 30.

¹⁵⁴ Especially in Longnan, where the majority of the population lives in the county seat, the focus has shifted to integrated urban-rural development. Interviews with Longnan RWD officials 7/2010.

development in Ganzhou were 2004 to 2010. Under the leadership of Pan Yiyang, the Ganzhou city government effectively mobilized every level of the bureaucracy to carry out NSC-related projects, especially village renovation. Traditional campaign tactics such as cadre work teams and heavy propaganda were used to support policy implementation. In addition, peasant councils and the selective distribution of grants and subsidies to model and experimental sites worked to stir up popular support for the NSC. The councils played a critical role in formulating NSC blueprints, collecting donations, mediating potential conflicts over land and housing, and overseeing the daily tasks of renovation. While in some places, the NSC has led to the widespread destruction of villages and the forced relocation of peasants into centralized housing units, peasant councils have ensured that village renovation programs in Ganzhou are, for the most part, more aligned with villagers' preferences. The case of Ganzhou therefore presents a curious example of bottom-up participation in a state-led modernization drive. Whether or not Ganzhou will continue to include peasants in the rural policy process remains to be seen.

Conclusion

This brief conclusion provides a summary of the main points of each dissertation chapter. It then discusses the research methodology and the process by which a theoretical focus for the dissertation was developed.

Synopsis of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 presented the main concepts and arguments of the dissertation. It examined existing theories of development and presented a new theoretical framework to explain variation in East Asian rural development. The main findings may be summarized as follows: First, the reversal of urban-biased policies is possible in authoritarian states. It is a necessary condition for rural development, but it cannot account for variation in rural development outcomes. Second, land reform is less important than previous studies have assumed. In each case, it had a positive effect on reducing rural inequality, but it resulted in only short-term gains in agricultural productivity. It arguably hindered long-term productivity by creating small and parcelized landholdings and by “freezing in place” the position of small farmers. Third, farmers’ organizations are critical to rural development. As the case of Taiwan illustrates, they are more effective when they are linked to higher levels of government and when they have strong member controls.

Finally, Chapter 1 argues that state-led rural modernization campaigns have played a central role in East Asian rural development. For campaigns to succeed, it is important that there are certain checks from above and below to counterbalance the power of local government officials in charge of campaign implementation. This study points to the Community Development Campaign in Taiwan as an example of how modernization campaigns may succeed when there are effective farmers’ organizations and strong bureaucratic controls. When these

conditions are absent, as they were during the Great Leap Forward, then campaigns may fail miserably. The mixed outcomes of the two intermediate cases, the New Village Movement in South Korea and the New Socialist Countryside in China, may be explained by the absence of effective farmers' organizations in both and the absence of strong central bureaucratic controls in the Chinese case. The use of campaigns in East Asia to promote rural development not only challenges the developmental state model's assumption of technical-rational policymaking, but also runs counter to studies that portray state intervention in rural society as destructive.

In Chapter 2, the cases of Maoist China and Japan were discussed to illustrate the wide range of variation among East Asian countries. It was also shown that these cases influenced the main cases of this study. Policymakers in Taiwan, Korea and China have all looked to Japan as a case of success. Even more surprising in light of the failed Great Leap Forward, Korea's New Village Movement and China's New Socialist Countryside seem to have borrowed slogans and implementation tactics from Maoist period. In addition, this chapter discussed the effects of Japanese colonialism and U.S. aid, including land reform, on rural development in Taiwan and South Korea. It showed that the Japanese and U.S. presence in these countries resulted in different outcomes, creating more favorable conditions for rural development in Taiwan and less favorable ones in Korea. While these factors may partly explain the Taiwanese and Korean cases, this chapter argues that, perhaps more importantly, the governments in these countries made different choices regarding the development of rural institutions and the role of agriculture in the national economy. Whereas the KMT regime in Taiwan placed heavy emphasis on rural sector development in both the early and later stages of industrialization, the Rhee and Park regimes in Korea did not prioritize rural sector development until much later in the process of industrialization. As a result, farming in Korea was not as productive or profitable, and despite

improvements in the 1970s, Park's New Village Movement was unable to prevent the mass migration of farmers to the cities.

Of course, timing is not the only reason for Taiwan's more successful performance. As argued in Chapter 3, Taiwanese farmers' organizations were particularly effective because of certain qualities that were weaker or lacking in Korean farmers' organizations—close ties to the government and the villages, strong farmer-member controls, leaders with an agricultural background, comprehensive extension services, and financial independence. This chapter shows that Taiwan's farmers' associations were instrumental in promoting rural development during both the extractive and protective phases of agricultural policy, and that they actually helped to facilitate this policy shift. Moreover, this chapter shows that, like the other cases, agricultural adjustment in Taiwan took the form of a campaign, which suggests that the KMT was different than the way it has been portrayed in the existing literature. Its development policies exhibited both technical-rational and mobilizational features. The example of the Community Development Campaign suggests that under certain conditions—when there are strong bureaucratic controls and strong farmers' organizations—campaigns can make a positive contribution to rural development.

Chapter 4 examines the Korean case, with particular emphasis on the New Village Movement. The NVM resulted in major improvements in village public infrastructure, sanitation and housing, but was less successful at stimulating long-term agricultural production or reducing the rural-urban income gap. It also contributed to elevated levels of rural indebtedness. Despite these problems, however, the NVM is remembered as a golden age for rural Korea, perhaps because it represents the first time in Korean history that state investment in the rural sector was used for development instead of resource extraction. The example of the NVM illustrates the

limitations of an overly top-down approach to rural policy implementation. Although the Korean government was able to effectively mobilize both the bureaucracy and the rural population, the absence of strong farmers' organizations in Korea hindered the campaign's success. In particular, the failure of the Tong'il rice campaign may partly be attributed to the fact that Korea's National Agricultural Cooperative Federation was less responsive to the rural population's interests than Taiwan's network of FAs. Unlike the existing literature, which portrays the NVM as Park's attempt to politically control the rural population, this study reveals that Park's motivation behind the campaign was more than just politics. Drawing inspiration from the Rural Revitalization Campaign and other examples, Park believed that the New Village Movement represented a viable rural development strategy. Finally, Chapters 4 and 5 show that the NVM is important for understand the origins of China's New Socialist Countryside.

In Chapter 5, the New Socialist Countryside is described as a historic policy, a break from the previous pattern of urban bias. It shows that the NSC was adopted as a political response to rural unrest, but also that it seeks to address deeper economic and social problems—including the growing income and social welfare gaps, declining food production, weak domestic demand, a waning sense of village community, and weak political and civic institutions. This chapter also shows how the NSC shares similarities with Maoist campaigns, as well as rural development policies found elsewhere in East Asia. To formulate the NSC, China has borrowed from the examples of Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Like these other cases, the NSC has emphasized the role of the government and farmers' organizations in rural development.

Chapter 6 argues that the Chinese case has been less successful than the other cases because its farmers' organizations are weaker and because it lacks effective campaign feedback mechanisms. It shows that despite efforts to reform China's administrative and fiscal systems,

the central government's capacity to monitor local NSC implementation remains quite weak. It also shows that village self-governance institutions and farmers' organizations have played a very limited role in rural policy implementation. This chapter then examines the policy areas of farmers' cooperatives and village renovation to illustrate how China has tried to follow the paths of both Taiwan and South Korea. While some Chinese rural experts support the idea of establishing a national farmers' association like the one in Taiwan, it seems that the Chinese government is still wary of empowering the peasant majority. Instead, the government has actively promoted the development agricultural producers cooperatives during the NSC. Compared to the farmers' associations in Taiwan, however, China's agricultural producers' cooperatives are much more limited in terms of their membership, functions, and access to the agricultural bureaucracy. They are therefore less capable of contributing to extensive rural development. Regarding village renovation, this chapter shows how programs that were initially intended to improve the village environment have, in some places, resulted in the large-scale demolition of old villages and the construction of new villages with centralized, apartment-style housing. It is argued that the NSC has contributed to a new form of rural land grabs, which the central government has found very difficult to control.

Finally, Chapter 7 presents a case study of the NSC in Ganzhou, which has become a national model for rural development in recent years. This case study suggests that in certain places where farmers' have been more involved in policy implementation, the NSC has been more successful, resulting in significant improvements in the village environment. In Ganzhou, peasant councils have been instrumental in generating popular support for the NSC, formulating village blueprints, collecting donations, mediating potential conflicts over land and housing, and overseeing the daily tasks of village renovation. While there are still some problems in Ganzhou,

such as increased levels of rural indebtedness, the worst aspects of NSC village renovation programs (i.e. forced relocation into centralized housing) have so far been avoided.

Methodology and Theoretical Focus

The research methodology of this study falls within the tradition of comparative historical analysis, which focuses on analyzing causal sequences and patterns to explain a finite set of cases that exhibit a range of variation on a particular dependent variable. This method is useful testing and generating theory. It involves specifying the necessary and sufficient conditions or various causal pathways for different outcomes of interest. Specifically, my analytical strategy entails the structured comparison of cases and within-case process tracing.¹ For the dissertation, I spent two years in the field and consulted a wide range of sources to analyze my cases, including government policy and legal documents, surveys, field reports, statistical yearbooks, gazetteers, news reports, memoirs of economic planners, and retrospectives on rural policy. Because I was looking at historical periods for Taiwan and South Korea, I mostly collected data from archives and libraries in Taipei and Seoul. For China, I collected a lot of materials from the National Library in Beijing. In addition, I conducted approximately 200 interviews with academic researchers, central and local government officials, local economic elites, leaders of farmers' organizations, and ordinary villagers. I made several trips to the Chinese countryside but did most of my fieldwork in Ganzhou, where I was able to collect unique sources of data and see how different kinds of variables and processes actually worked at the local level.

Among the cases examined, there are varying conditions—political, cultural, social, economic, and environmental—that may affect the complicated process of rural transformation. The research presented here does not account for all of these variables, nor does it examine every

¹ For a broad discussion of this methodological approach, see Mahoney & Rueschemeyer 2003.

dimension of rural development. While there are trade-offs in any study, it is admittedly difficult with this kind of comparative research to control for certain conditions or even to find similar data across cases. Still, there are a few reasons that I ultimately decided to take up this project and to focus on the variables that I did. First, the existing academic literature tends to emphasize how farmers' organizations have played a positive role in East Asian rural development, especially in Japan and Taiwan. The comparative literature on this subject, however, is lacking,² and given recent developments to legalize and promote farmers' cooperatives in China, it seemed like a promising research agenda.

Second, the Chinese literature on rural development, which I started reading at the beginning stages of this project, frequently makes reference to an East Asian model in which "rural construction" is "led by the government" and implemented by a "comprehensive farmers' association." Although Chinese sources use the term "campaign" less often than they did in the Maoist period, the abundance of comparative literature on China's New Socialist Countryside and South Korea's New Village Movement suggested that both policies were, from the Chinese point of view, representative examples of the East Asian approach. As I searched for evidence of other rural campaigns in East Asia, I realized that the Western academic literature on this subject was not only sparse but also presented a generally negative view of campaigns. In contrast, the Chinese literature presented a much more positive view of campaigns, including elements of the Great Leap Forward, and suggested that the New Village Movement and other campaigns were actually important points of reference for the government's formulation of the New Socialist Countryside. This divergence between the Chinese and Western academic literature further motivated my interest in campaigns.

² For some of the few comparative works, see Uphoff & Esman 1974; Francks 1999; Burmeister et al. 2002.

Third, initial fieldwork in the Chinese countryside suggested that local New Socialist Countryside programs were heavily focused on the development of farmers' cooperatives and village renovation. Local officials, not knowing that my study was comparative, frequently explained that cooperatives were very important in Taiwan's and Japan's rural development, and that village renovation was a key element of Korea's New Village Movement. The fact that local Chinese officials were making these comparisons led me to more deeply consider the effect of regional policy learning on these cases, as well as the question of how very similar policies may produce very different outcomes, depending on the context in which they are implemented.

As a final note, there are a few questions that this study does not address, which may be worth investigating in the future. First, it might be interesting to expand the scope of the study within each case, by looking at the role of traditional village organizations, as well as private, society-driven initiatives in rural development. Second, the question of sub-national variation in China might be further explored. Finally, just as scholars have questioned the developmental state literature, it may be the case that the conditions identified in this study as being important for rural development are uncommon in the rest of the world. In order to better understand the extent to which these variables matter more generally, it might be interesting to expand the scope of the study to include success cases outside of East Asia.

Appendix 1: National Program Indicators for Building a New Socialist Countryside

Program	Indicator	Desired Level High/ Low	Agencies Responsible for Collecting and Reporting Data
Building New Villages and Townships	1. Number of NSC Demonstration Sites	H	NSC Office
	2. Number of NSC Peasant Councils	H	
	3. Total NSC Program Investment in Yuan	H	NSC Office, Ministry of Finance
	4. Townships with Completed Plans	H	NSC Office, Bureau of Planning and Construction
	5. Administrative Villages with Completed Plans	H	
	6. Natural Villages with Completed Plans	H	
	7. Size of New Housing Construction in Square Meters	L	NSC Office
	8. Size of Rural Housing in Per Capita Square Meters	L	Bureau of Statistics
	9. Number of Rural Community Service Centers	H	Township Government
	10. Rural Households with Cable Television	H	Bureau of Radio, Film and Television
	11. Number of Rural Fixed Telephone Lines	H	Telecom Companies
	12. Number of Rural Mobile Phones	H	
	13. Rural Households with Internet Access	H	
Developing New Rural Commodities	14. Number of Rural Leading Enterprises with Minimum Annual Revenue of 1 Million Yuan	H	Rural Work Department
	15. Rural Households Deriving Income from Rural Leading Enterprises	H	
	16. Output Value of Leading Rural Commodities in Yuan	H	Bureau of Statistics
	17. Number of Regional and Specialized Rural Commodities	H	Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Work Department, Bureau of the Fruit Industry
	18. Output Value of Regional and Specialized Rural Commodities in Yuan	H	
	19. Township Government Revenue in Yuan	H	Ministry of Finance
	20. Average Rural Income in Yuan	H	Bureau of Statistics
	21. Number of Agricultural Extension Service Agencies	H	Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forestry, Bureau of the Fruit Industry, Bureau of Science and Technology, Bureau of Personnel
22. Number of Agricultural Extension Workers	H		
Cultivating New Peasants	23. Number of Rural Technical and Vocational Training Centers	H	Office of the Leading Group for Peasant Education Programs
	24. Rural Population Receiving Technical and Vocational Training	H	
	25. Average Number of Technical and Vocational Skill Sets Acquired by Rural Labor Force	H	
	26. Rural Population Transferring to Non-Agricultural Sectors	H	Township Government
	27. Rural Population Employed in Secondary (Industrial) and Tertiary (Service) Sectors	H	Bureau of Statistics

Appendix 1 (cont.)

Forming New Economic Organizations	28. Number of New Rural Cooperative Economic Organizations	H	Office of the Leading Group for Agricultural Commercialization
	29. Number of New Rural Cooperatives that are Viable Economic Organizations	H	
	30. Rural Households Deriving Income from New Rural Cooperatives	H	
Creating a New Rural Image	31. Administrative Villages Reachable by Cement Roads	H	Bureau of Transportation
	32. Length of Rural Cement Roads in Kilometers	H	NSC Office
	33. Length of Paved Roads Connecting Village Teams in Kilometers	H	
	34. Rural Households with Safe Drinking Water Access	H	
	35. Rural Population with Safe Drinking Water Access	H	
	36. Rural Households Using Clean Toilets	H	
	37. Number of “Civilized Villages and Townships”	H	Office of the Guiding Committee for Building a Civilized Culture
	38. Number of “Civilized and Trustworthy” Households	H	
	39. Rural Poor Receiving Minimum Livelihood Guarantee	H	Ministry of Civil Affairs
	40. Rural Population Participating in Old Age Insurance	H	
	41. Rural Population Participating in New Rural Medical Cooperatives	H	Ministry of Health
	42. Number of Spaces with Infrastructure for Cultural (Educational) and Leisure Activities	H	Ministry of Culture
	43. Rural Households Using Clean Energy	H	Township Government
	44. Percentage of Rural Household Garbage Subject to Centralized Waste Collection and Management	H	
	Building Good Leadership Organizations	45. Number of “Three People” Township Leaders	H
46. Number of “Five Good” Village Leaders		H	
47. Number of Villages with the Same Person Serving as Village Party Secretary and Head of the Village Committee		L	
48. Number of Villages with at least 48.95% of Villagers Expressing Satisfaction with Village Transparency		H	

Source: The Urban-Rural Innovative Development Blue Book for China’s Building a New Socialist Countryside; cited in CSUS 2009: 196-199.

Appendix 2: National Cadre Evaluation Standards for Building a New Socialist Countryside

Program	Indicator	Desired Level High/Low	Point Value (Points add up to 100)
Economic Prosperity and Development <i>Total Point Value = 30</i>	1. Average Annual Growth Rate of the Agricultural Sector	H	3
	2. Agriculture as a Percentage of GDP	L	2
	3. Rural Employment as a Percentage of the Rural Working-Age Population	H	2
	4. Percentage of the Rural Population Employed in the Secondary (Industrial) and Tertiary (Service) Sectors	H	2
	5. Average Annual Growth Rate of Township Government Revenue	H	3
	6. Average Rural Income in Yuan	H	10
	7. Rural Gini Coefficient	L	2
	8. Rural Engel Coefficient	L	2
	9. Percentage of Rural Income Spent on Culture and Leisure	H	2
	10. Size of Rural Housing in Per Capita Square Meters	L	1
	11. Percentage of Rural Housing Constructed with Brick or Other Sound Materials	H	1
Improving Social Welfare <i>Total Point Value = 30</i>	12. Number of Agricultural Extension Workers	H	6
	13. Percentage of Rural Areas Covered by a Telecommunications Grid	H	2
	14. Percentage of Administrative Villages with Cable Television	H	2
	15. Percentage of Rural Children Attending School	H	2
	16. School Drop-out Rate for Elementary and Middle School Children	L	2
	17. Education Level of People Joining the Rural Labor Force	H	5
	18. Average Number of Technical and Vocational Skill Sets Acquired by Rural Labor Force	H	5
	19. Percentage of Township and Village Health Stations Meeting Quality Control Standards and Percentage of Upgraded Medical Equipment	H	2
	20. Number of Spaces with Infrastructure for Cultural (Educational) and Leisure Activities	H	2
	21. Population Growth Rate	L	2
Improving the Social Security System <i>Total Point Value =5</i>	22. Percentage of the Rural Population Participating in New Rural Medical Cooperatives	H	1
	23. Percentage of the Rural Poor Covered by the “Five Guarantees” Minimum Living Assistance Program	H	1
	24. Percentage of the Rural Poor Receiving Aid for Poverty Relief	H	1
	25. Percentage of the Rural Population Participating in Old Age Insurance	H	1
	26. Percentage of Rural Homeless and Residents of Dilapidated Housing Receiving Housing Assistance	H	1

Appendix 2 (cont.)

Beautification of the Environment <i>Total Point Value = 20</i>	27. Rate of Decrease in Farmland	L	2
	28. Percentage of Townships with Completed Plans	H	2
	29. Percentage of “Hollowed-out Homes” and “Hollowed-out Villages” Renovated	H	2
	30. Percent Green Space in Townships	H	2
	31. Percentage of “Paved, Lit, and Green” Township Roads	H	2
	32. Percentage of Administrative Villages Reachable by Cement Roads and Public Buses	H	2
	33. Percentage of Paved Main Roads in Villages	H	2
	34. Percentage of Administrative Villages where Most Villagers Use Clean Energy	H	1
	35. Percentage of Rural Households with Tap Water	H	2
	36. Percentage of Clean Toilets	H	2
	37. Percentage of Rural Household Garbage Subject to Centralized Waste Collection and Management	H	1
Civilized and Harmonious Rural Culture <i>Total Point Value = 15</i>	38. “Three People” Township Leaders as a Percentage of All Township Leaders	H	2
	39. Percentage of “Five Good” Village Leaders	H	2
	40. Percentage of Villages with the Same Person Serving as Village Party Secretary and Head of the Village Committee	L	1
	41. City-Level “Civilized Villages” as a Percentage of All Administrative Villages	H	1
	42. Percentage of “Civilized Family” Households	H	2
	43. Percentage of “Civilized and Trustworthy” Households	H	1
	44. Level of Satisfaction with Village Transparency	H	2
	45. Rate of Successful Mediation of Civil Disputes	H	1
	46. Rate of Major Accidents, Collective Petitioning, Mass Incidents, Violent Crimes	L	1
	47. Level of Satisfaction with Public Safety	H	2

Source: *The Urban-Rural Innovative Development Blue Book for China’s Building a New Socialist Countryside*; cited in CSUS 2009: 196-199.

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