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# Comparing the Food Citizen in South Korea and Japan

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## ● Background

- Global industrial agri-food system
- Controlled by transnational agri-food companies such as Cargill, ADM, Bunge & large super/hyper markets such as Tesco, E-Mart, Aeon increasingly control the food system.
- Under the global agr-food system, both farmers and consumers lose their control of food, socially separated from each other, and alienated from food.
- People became passive consumers involved in personal and individualized purchasing, choosing from whatever presented and promoted by the market.

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- There are some people who are more concerned about what they eat and how the food is produced.
  - Jennifer Wilkins (2005: 271): Food citizen is involved in “the practice of engaging in food-related behaviors (defined narrowly and broadly) that support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system”
  - While the concept of food citizen has been used in various context as an actor for sustainable food system (Polson Insitute, 2003; Brynn, 2007), little effort has been made to concretize the concept either theoretically or empirically.

## The food citizen: An ideal type

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- The food citizen, as an ideal type
  - 1) perception/knowledge about the food
  - 2) behavior of purchasing/consuming ‘good’ food
  - 3) social ties with other consumers/producers

- Food Citizen (Operational Definition) = those who have high scores in both perception & behavior of supporting good food

Perception:

- 1) perceive the importance of organic agriculture
- 2) concern about the food policy

Behavior

- 1) reflexive consumption (eg. check origin, components, additives when buying food)
- 2) buy locally produced food

<Table1> Classification of food consumer groups

	Food Perception(+)	Food Perception(-)
Food Behavior(+)	<b>Food Citizen</b>	Citizen-Consumer
Food Behavior(-)	Consumer-Citizen	<b>Conventional Consumer</b>

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- Data

- Korea: National survey of 728 females; 19+ years old (Aug. 2011)
- Japan: National survey of 996 females; 20+ years old (Feb. 2012)

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- What is the % of food citizens?

- Japan: 16.5%
- Korea: 18.4%

Approximately 1/5 of female Japanese and Koreans can be regarded as 'food citizens' who have the potential for a change in the existing food system

<Table 2> Distribution of food consumer groups

	South Korea	Japan	Total
<b>Food Citizen</b>	134(18.4%)	164(16.5%)	298(17.3%)
<b>Consumer/Citizen</b>	289(39.7%)	391(39.3%)	680(39.4%)
<b>Conventional Consumer</b>	305(41.9%)	441(44.3%)	746(43.3%)
Total	728(100%)	996(100%)	1724(100%)

$\chi^2 = 1.488$

<Table 3> Differences in Age, Education, and Incomes level

		Age	Education	Incomes
<b>South Korea</b>	<b>Food Citizen</b>	2.60	3.22	5.72
	<b>Consumer/Citizen</b>	2.74	3.17	5.42
	<b>Consumers</b>	2.41	3.21	5.07
F Test		<b>4.321*</b>	.188	<b>4.715**</b>
<b>Japan</b>	<b>Food Citizen</b>	3.38	2.64	1.94
	<b>Consumer/Citizen</b>	3.09	2.66	2.09
	<b>Consumers</b>	2.38	2.75	1.97
F Test		<b>50.872***</b>	1.869	2.059

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

<Table 4\_1> Comparing the food citizen in South Korea and Japan

		<b>Korean Food Citizen</b>	<b>Japanese Food Citizen</b>
Incomes Level	Lower Class	31(23.1%)	58(35.4%)
	Middle Class	61(45.5%)	70(42.7%)
	Upper Class	42(31.3%)	36(22.0%)
	Total	134(100%)	164(100%)
$\chi^2=6.315^* (p \leq .05)$			

<Table 4\_2> Comparing the food citizen in South Korea and Japan

		<b>Korean Food Citizen</b>	<b>Japanese Food Citizen</b>
Education Level	Lower	25(18.7%)	8(4.9%)
	Middle	49(36.6%)	72(43.9%)
	Upper	60(44.8%)	84(51.2%)
	Total	134(100%)	164(100%)
$\chi^2=14.254^{***} (p \leq .001)$			

<Table 4\_3> Comparing the food citizen in South Korea and Japan

		<b>Korean Food Citizen</b>	<b>Japanese Food Citizen</b>
Age Level	Below 34 years old	35(26.1%)	16(9.8%)
	35~55 years old	64(47.8%)	59(36.0%)
	Above 55 years old	35(26.1%)	89(54.3%)
	Total	134(100%)	164(100%)
$\chi^2=28.062^{***}$ ( $p \leq .001$ )			

● Japanese and Korean Food Citizens:

How do they think and behave regarding food?

- Japanese Food Citizens are more concerned about “food policy” and more involved in “reflexive consumption”
- Korean Food Citizens (try to) buy more “local food”

<Table 5> Comparing the perceptions and behaviors of food citizen

		Mean Value	Standard errors	N	T test
Organic Concerns	Korean Food Citizen	3.96	.526	134	-1.405
	Japanese Food Citizen	4.07	.726	161	
Food Policy Concerns	Korean Food Citizen	3.77	.648	134	-3.786***
	Japanese Food Citizen	4.06	.675	162	
Reflexive Consumption	Korean Food Citizen	10.38	1.129	134	-3.438**
	Japanese Food Citizen	10.83	1.087	157	
Buying Local Food	Korean Food Citizen	3.25	.437	134	2.454*
	Japanese Food Citizen	3.12	.480	164	

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

● What are the Characteristics of Japanese and Korean Food Citizens?

-Koreans tend think they are healthier, higher in social status, and have larger family size (even though statistically not significant)



<Table 6> Comparing the characteristics of food citizen

		Mean Value	Standard errors	N	T test
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	Korean Food Citizen	6.57	1.845	134	1.819
	Japanese Food Citizen	6.14	2.145	161	
<b>stratum consciousness</b>	Korean Food Citizen	5.11	1.634	134	1.172
	Japanese Food Citizen	4.90	1.454	162	
<b>size of household members</b>	Korean Food Citizen	3.36	1.043	134	1.057
	Japanese Food Citizen	3.19	1.577	157	

● Where do they buy their food: food citizen vs. non-citizen

- Koreans: no difference
- Japanese: significant difference; farmers' market important

<Table 7> Buying Place in the Korean food citizen

	Major Supermarket	Small supermarket	Traditional Market	Farmers Market	Total
<b>Korean Food Citizen</b>	52.2%(70)	16.4%(22)	29.1%(39)	2.2%(3)	100% (134명)
<b>Korean Non-Food Citizen</b>	57.1%(339)	14.3%(85)	26.5%(157)	2.2%(13)	100% (594명)

$\chi^2=3.624$  ( $p=.459$ )

<Table 8> Buying Place in the Japanese food citizen

	Major Supermarket	Small supermarket	Farmers Market	Total
<b>Japanese Food Citizen</b>	31.6%(50)	41.8%(66)	26.6%(42)	100%(158명)
<b>Japanese Non-Food Citizen</b>	38.8%(318)	46.6%(382)	14.5%(119)	100%(819명)

$\chi^2=14.174^{***}$  ( $p \leq .001$ )

- Risk Perception

- Japanese food citizens have much higher risk perception ranging from radio active contamination to mad cow disease

<Table 9> Comparing of risk perception in the food citizen

Risk Perceptions	Korean Food Citizen	Japanese Food Citizen	T test
Radioactive contamination	3.29(.93)	4.05(1.28)	-5.758***
GMO	3.23(.88)	3.24(1.07)	-.135
Food additive	3.41(.83)	3.76(1.03)	-3.139**
Heavy metal	3.34(.885)	3.97(1.40)	-4.520***
Foot-and-mouth disease	3.36(.896)	3.82(1.47)	-3.201**
Mad cow disease	3.23(.95)	3.83(1.49)	-3.997***

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

- Alternative Food System awareness
  - Japanese food citizens are more aware of local food, consumer cooperatives, and farmers' market
  - Korean food citizens are more aware of 'food sovereignty'

<Table 10> Comparing of alternative food system awareness in the food citizens

	Items	Korean Food Citizen	Japanese Food Citizen	T test
Alternative Food Movements	Local Food	1.82(.89)	2.52(1.03)	-6.118***
	Co-operatives	2.12(.97)	2.79(.99)	-5.884***
	Farmers Market	2.40(.86)	3.39(.81)	-10.178***
	Food Sovereignty	1.95(.90)	1.78(.91)	1.596

\*  $p \leq .05$  \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$

## Conclusion

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- The following table sums up what we have discussed
- We need more historical and nuanced interpretation of survey results

<Table 11> Comparing the food citizens in South Korea and Japan

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	<b>Korean Food Citizen</b>	<b>Japanese Food Citizen</b>
Demographic/social economic background	Income, Economic Strata	Age
Consumption Style	Buying at Major Supermarket	Direct Distribution
Value	localism Rural Friendly	Safety-oriented
Risk Perception	Low Risk Perception Constructive	Radioactive risk Higher Perception , Preventive
Alternative Movement	Food Sovereignty	Local food, farmers' market, Co-op
	<b>Ideological</b>	<b>Practical</b>

## Conclusion

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- Food citizen and passive consumer should not be treated as simple dichotomy
- These two forms of actors should be seen as spectrum and process.
- The challenge is how to help consumers to become food citizens by changing food perception/knowledge and behavior and build social ties with other actors centered around food
- Food citizen issue brings up the issue of 'food sovereignty' and 'food democracy'