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Neoliberalism in Japan's Tuna Fisheries?

Government intervention and reform
in the Distant Water Longline Industry

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Abstract

Neoliberalism is a political economy term that refers to a public policy mix that is market oriented, pro trade liberalization and advocates minimal state intervention in the economy. Japanese governance has arguably not been based on neoliberal principles, and some see this as contributing to Japan's long running recession. Japan's distant water tuna longline fleet has been in economic difficulties since the early years of the recession. In 2001 Prime Minister Koizumi came to power promising neoliberal style reform. This paper presents a history of government involvement in the distant water tuna longline industry and looks for evidence that recent reforms have changed this involvement; both in terms of observable changes to governance structures, and of key stakeholders' receptiveness to neoliberalism as visible in their representations of issues facing tuna fisheries. We find that very few neoliberal reforms have been implemented in this sector. Furthermore key stakeholders show little sympathy with neoliberal policy prescriptions, meaning they are unlikely to champion such reforms. This conclusion may be specific to fisheries since in Japan the political importance of food production and the iconic status of fish cuisine make the sector particularly susceptible to economic nationalism. In examining relations between industry and government the paper also highlights problems in Japan's co-management of fisheries.

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Neoliberalism in Japan's Tuna Fisheries? Government Intervention and Reform in the Distant Water Longline Industry

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 1970s combination of economic stagnation with inflation discredited the Keynesian principles that had informed post World War II governance in wealthy capitalist economies. At the same time, economic failures in many of the worlds' developing countries discredited neomaxist principles of protectionism and state sponsored industrialization. In countries such as the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in international donor agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, there was a swing against Keynesian and neomaxist faith in state intervention in economies, and a corresponding swing towards faith in markets and free trade, based on neoclassical economic theories. The public policy school of thought that emerged from this swing – pro-privatization, pro-trade liberalization, pro-globalization, pro-markets, pro-small government, anti-protection, anti-trade union, anti-welfare, and anti-state planned economy – has been called neoliberalism.⁴

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⁴ 'Neoliberalism' is an imperfect term for many reasons, including the fact that rather than being a new form of liberalism it mixes strands of liberalism with strands of conservatism. Furthermore, people who espouse neoliberal tenets do not usually apply the term to themselves, indeed it is often used (pejoratively) by opponents of neoliberalism. But in the absence of another umbrella term with which to refer to this style of capitalist governance, 'neoliberalism' must suffice.

Concurrent with the fall of faith in state intervention and the rise of neoliberalism, Japan demonstrated miraculous economic recovery after the devastation of World War II. The economic success of Japan and other East Asian economies were interpreted by some as evidence supporting neoliberalism [1,2,3]. Empirical evidence, however, indicates that Japan's capitalism has been distinguished by extensive government intervention. Before the bubble burst in the early 1990s some posited Japan's interventionism in opposition to the neoliberal model, claiming Japan was a 'capitalist developmental state' that showed government intervention could be economically successful [4]. Since the recession more research has focused on the dysfunctional nature of Japanese government intervention in the economy, arguing that it stymies economic recovery [5,6,7].

Since the onset of recession sporadic attempts to reform the economy have been made by successive Prime Ministers, but far reaching reform seemed most likely to be implemented with the election of Koizumi Junichirô in 2001. Koizumi's platform included 'a raft of changes designed to drive the economy in a more market-liberal direction', and he has suggested his plans constitute an attempt to introduce neoliberalism to Japan [5 pp.3-4]

This paper assesses the extent to which neoliberal reforms have affected the distant water tuna longline industry. First, a general overview of government intervention in the Japanese economy sets the groundwork for discussion. Second, a history of Japanese fisheries governance shows the nature and extent of government intervention in this sector. Then three major areas of government support for fisheries are examined to see whether neoliberal reforms have changed governance of the distant water tuna longline industry in recent years. Following that the normative framework of fisheries governance is examined, to gauge the political feasibility of neoliberal reform attempts. This involves analysis of representations by stakeholder groups, including consumer representatives, industry bodies and fisheries bureaucrats. Findings suggest that the Japanese tuna industry has not yet been significantly liberalized and is unlikely to be in the foreseeable future. There are vested interests against neoliberal reform by stakeholders with the structural capacity to block reform, and prevailing public policy philosophy amongst stakeholders does not constitute

pressure to liberalize this sector. Indeed, there is more pressure for protection of tuna fisheries, based on arguments about cultural heritage and food security.

2. GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE FISHERIES INDUSTRY

2.1. Overview of Japanese Government Intervention in the Economy

The bureaucracy wields a great deal of power in Japan. Bureaucrats have a very significant role in developing policy, and the bureaucracy is relatively autonomous from Prime Minister and Cabinet [5]. Furthermore, the bureaucracy usually directs government intervention in the economy [7]. The main procedure by which the bureaucracy intervenes is ‘administrative guidance’ (*gyōsei shidō*). This procedure has been well documented; ministry officials are ‘entrusted with much discretion in filling in the detail of broad and vaguely worded laws with ministerial regulations and administrative notices’ [8 p. 56]. Administrative guidance takes place within, and gains much of its efficacy from, a thick layer of affiliated organizations (*gaikaku dantai*) that sit between the ministries and the industries they govern.

The *gaikaku dantai* includes thousands of bodies such as special corporations (*tokushū hōjin*), public corporations (*kōeki hōjin*) and chartered corporations (*ninka hōjin*), that are managed and subsidized by the national government [7]. These corporations service industries under the portfolio of the ministry that sponsors them. For example, many are financial services institutions or public works corporations. There are also a range of associations (*shadan*) and foundations (*zaidan*) similarly managed and subsidized by ministries for the benefit of sectors under their portfolio. Although industry associations might be assumed to be civil society organizations, in Japan most were established by government and remain structurally closely affiliated to government [9].

The two main mechanisms by which influence and money flow between the bureaucracy and business are: 1) ministries’ discretion to allocate public money for public works and for a wide range of industry support programs; and 2) practices of *shukkō* - seconding mid-career officials for a few years to management positions in *gaikaku dantai* - and *amakudari*

- senior bureaucrats taking up positions in the private sector upon retirement.⁵ Together these mechanisms form a system of incentives that facilitate the execution of ministry directives in the private sector and/or in organizations that directly service the private sector.

Vast amounts of public money is spent on the private sector through the *gaikaku dantai*, in the form of public works or various kinds of subsidy, at the discretion of the ministries that manage them. The *gaikaku dantai* therefore extend ministries' power and prestige in the sector in question. The ministries thus have corporate interests in preserving this system. The practice of *amakudari* provides financial and status incentives for individual senior bureaucrats to protect the status quo. The private sector also has vested interests in supporting this system. *Gaikaku dantai* industry associations exert pressure against industry members challenging the *gaikaku dantai* system, since the industry associations are subsidized by government and many of the leadership posts in *gaikaku dantai* are held by ex-ministry officials. Businesses fear retribution from ministries through ministries' regulatory powers (for example, withholding of licenses), and also fear ostracism from the industry association (for example, boycotting by other members of the industrial group) [7]. The private sector is thus inhibited from pushing for reform of the *gaikaku dantai* system.

In sum, Japanese government intervention in the economy is characterized by a very powerful bureaucracy which has an established role directing the private sector through administrative guidance, and which is tied closely to industry by flows of managers and public funds through the *gaikaku dantai*. This institutional system emerged out of political economy developments in Japan over the twentieth century. The following section of the paper details how these general governance features have been manifest in tuna fisheries.

2.2 History of Japan's Distant Water Longline Tuna Fisheries

Japan's modern industrial fishing industries started during the Meiji era (1868-1912). The Meiji government was remarkably successful in its aim of matching European powers of

⁵ When senior officials retire they are banned from taking positions in the private sector proper for two years, but they are allowed to take up positions in *gaikaku dantai* corporations/organizations, which gives them a continued income until they can move on to the private sector proper, or they may stay in the *gaikaku dantai*.

the time by modernizing, building military strength, and building a colonial empire. Overseas fishing activities were part of the empire building exercise [10,11], and also part of the improvement and expansion of food production and distribution necessary for an urbanizing industrializing economy, especially since parts of Japan were susceptible to famine [12]. Because offshore fishing was playing these important roles it was supported by the Meiji government. The Fisheries Promotion Act of 1897 was the framework for this support, which included initiatives such as the Fisheries Training Institute (opened 1889, now the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology), as well as financial support for technological developments in ship-building, such as installing engines (1903), refrigeration equipment (1907) and radios (1918) [12].

The *gaikaku dantai* played a key role in facilitating governance and guiding modernization from the outset. In 1882 the Meiji government established the *Dai Nippon Suisankai* (Great Japan Fisheries Association) [13]. The *Dai Nippon Suisankai* was established by bureaucrat Shinagawa Yajirō, who also set up several similar associations for other sectors under the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. The first president of the *Dai Nippon Suisankai* was not a fisherman, but a representative of the state (Prince Komatsunomiya Akihito). Local fisheries associations were another part of the fisheries *gaikaku dantai*. In 1901 the Fisheries Law transferred fishing rights from the corporate property of fishing villages to local fisheries associations set up all over the country (*Gyogyō Kumiai*, which later became the *Gyogyō Kyodō Kumiai*, usually called *Gyōkyō* or Fisheries Cooperative Associations). These fisheries associations took on the regulation of fishing licenses [13,14]. Agricultural and industrial societies established in the first half of the twentieth century were legally empowered to engage in a range of activities including marketing and distribution [9]. Some fishing associations diversified into the marketing of seafood products and by the 1920s had largely taken over the role merchants had played in the Tokugawa and Meiji eras [14 p.139]. In addition, industry associations became involved in policy making processes, not just through lobbying, but also more direct involvement in governance, such as setting prices and executing policies in the relevant sector [9 p.42]. The distribution and regulatory functions of the industry associations were strengthened with the military build-up and during World War II. Early public corporations that supported fisheries endeavors include

the Ishigaki Industry Promotion Foundation (now called the Agriculture Forestry Fisheries Promotion Foundation – *Nôrinsuisan Shôrei Kai*) established in 1926 [13].

Japan's fisheries were decimated at the end of World War II [15 p.13] (see Table 1). In the immediate postwar years there was famine, so in order to boost food production the Allied occupying forces and the Japanese government again supported tuna fishers to rebuild fleets and port infrastructure. The colonial empire had provided a large proportion of Japan's food supply, so in the immediate postwar years Japan had not only to recover domestic food production but also to replace colonial production. Offshore fisheries played a major role in this [16 p.177]. The government promoted Japanese fishers moving out into the world again after restrictions on their travels by the Allied occupying force were lifted in 1952, in a policy with the slogan 'from coastal to offshore, from offshore to distant waters' [15 p.13, 12 p.58]. Postwar distant water fishing was no longer part of a military expansion, but it retained a sense of being a Japanese political presence overseas. The postwar political role of distant water fisheries has been mainly through economic ties and aid diplomacy [17].

The Japanese economic recovery was consolidated in the 1960s. Fisheries production as a whole increased dramatically during the 1960s, and tuna production was no exception (see Table 1). Up until 1950 tuna (other than skipjack) production had remained under 10,000 tonnes, then by 1960 was over 50,000 tonnes and from then on mostly stayed over 40,000 tonnes into the 1990s [12]. Quantity ceased to be a pressing national food security issue and consumers started to demand high quality high value products. At the same time developments in ultra-low freezing technology enabled Japanese distant water longline fishers to supply sashimi tuna in commercially significant amounts.

Table 1. Kagoshima Prefecture Fisheries Production 1936-1965 (metric tons)

	Tuna⁶	Sardines	Skipjack	Shark	Mackerel⁷	Total
1936	5,012	23,944	9,542	1,231	6,762	60,498
1937	6,969	27,491	11,071	1,321	5,914	67,769
1938	6,311	22,997	12,005	1,495	4,931	62,447
1939	10,044	28,082	9,118	1,611	4,292	66,153
1940	3,810	24,597	312	73	7,117	57,080
1941	5,024	34,832	7,186	1,049	4,729	81,990
1942	2,092	21,256	8,555	1,214	6,435	59,488
1943/4⁸	2,176	13,998	6,273	3,568	3,082	44,892
1945	118	3,664	322	223	1,675	13,268
1946	431	4,830	2,099	348	1,749	16,289
1947	764	13,355	3,047	552	2,933	27,974
1948	1,403	8,091	2,712	973	3,391	25,295
1949	2,941	18,745	6,365	1,788	8,045	47,265
1950	2,751	21,842	12,002	1,373	4,008	54,984
1951	4,747	17,526	10,895	1,992	7,625	57,260
1952	4,424	11,276	13,868	2,567	14,947	60,504
1953	5,285	16,884	14,169	2,830	14,262	69,128
1954	3,983	7,839	15,735	2,183	16,640	61,901
1955	3,860	14,488	18,724	1,889	25,833	78,146
1956	4,252	9,106	15,870	1,646	17,211	63,019
1957	4,758	11,000	18,718	2,604	45,543	97,374
1958	5,375	8,995	23,175	1,888	40,485	95,487
1959	5,980	10,123	24,511	1,453	27,837	86,746
1960	5,755	11,989	17,856	2,213	33,840	87,815
1961	6,777	6,566	21,429	1,334	33,252	86,100
1962	7,911	13,158	28,191	1,984	26,298	98,936
1963	6,758	14,120	24,097	1,801	41,406	109,247
1964	9,411	7,530	28,685	1,650	45,888	116,257
1965	8,952	13,833	29,413	2,873	56,490	135,331

Source: Kagoshima Prefecture Skipjack and Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association. *Kagoshima Ken Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai Sôritsu Gojûnenshu Shi* (Kagoshima Prefecture Skipjack and Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association Fifty Year History). Tokyo: Suisan Shinshio Sha; 2000, p. 16.

By the early 1980s the longline tuna catch had reached 15 per cent of the total value of Japanese fisheries and it remained at this level for most of the 1990s. In 1980 the value of the longline tuna catch was around ¥280 billion (US\$1.3 billion) and in 1990 around ¥270 billion (US\$1.9 billion) [15 p.15]. Although Japan was no longer in danger of famine, government support for distant water tuna fishing continued because the industry suffered a range of setbacks. These setbacks included increasing fuel costs, restricted access to overseas fishing grounds through the declaration of marine territories (exclusive economic

⁶ 'Tuna' includes swordfish.

⁷ 'Mackerel' includes horse mackerel.

⁸ The figures for 1943 and 1944 were exactly the same in the original, probably indicating that one year has been transposed to the other, so 1943 and 1944 have been merged in this table.

zones) as part of the development of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, and increasing competition, especially from Korean and Taiwanese fishers. Support provided by government to the longline tuna industry to overcome these setbacks included price support schemes, low interest loans, fleet reconstruction schemes (to update technology), and structural adjustment [12, 15 p.14, 18 p.48].

Government support included fleet reductions. In 1976 longline vessel owners were paid up to ¥163 million each (US\$567,000) in a government program to retire their vessels [18 p.48]. In 1980 the government and industry decided to reduce the longline fleet by 20 per cent, with government support [12 p.62, 15 p.14]. Then in 1987 ¥60 billion (US\$417 million) from the Japan Fisheries Agency (part of MAFF) budget was provided for low interest loans for tuna fishing vessel retirement [18 p.48].

At the same time, large amounts of public money was also provided for upgrading the tuna fleet, even when the economic problems of the industry listed above, combined with declining stocks in many of the large tuna species meaning there were low or negative returns on capital [15 p.14]. Government subsidies for fleet upgrades concurrent with fleet reductions may explain why the buybacks were less than decisive in reducing the size of the fleet size operating in the Pacific Ocean over this period (see Table 2). According to the Kagoshima Prefectural Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association, the fleet reductions in the 1970s and 1980s should actually be seen as restructures, enabling the fleet to invest in more fuel-efficient boats and target higher value species [19 pp.429-33].

Table 2. Number of Japanese Longline Vessels⁹ Operating in the Pacific Ocean 1955-1991

Year	No. of Vessels
1955	2,042
1960	2,685
1965	2,392
1970	2,443
1975	2,138
(vessel buyback) 1976	2,223
1977	2,154
1978	2,149
1979	2,143
(vessel buyback) 1980	2,341
1981	2,296
1982	2,078
1983	1,831
1984	1,811
1985	1,919
1986	1,796
(vessel buyback) 1987	1,878
1989	1,809
1990	1,838
1991	1,890

Source: Miyabe N, Ogura M, Matsumoto T, Nishikawa Y. National Tuna Fisheries Report of Japan as of 2004. Paper presented to the 17th Meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish, Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Majuro, Marshall Islands, August 2004. Shimizu: National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries.

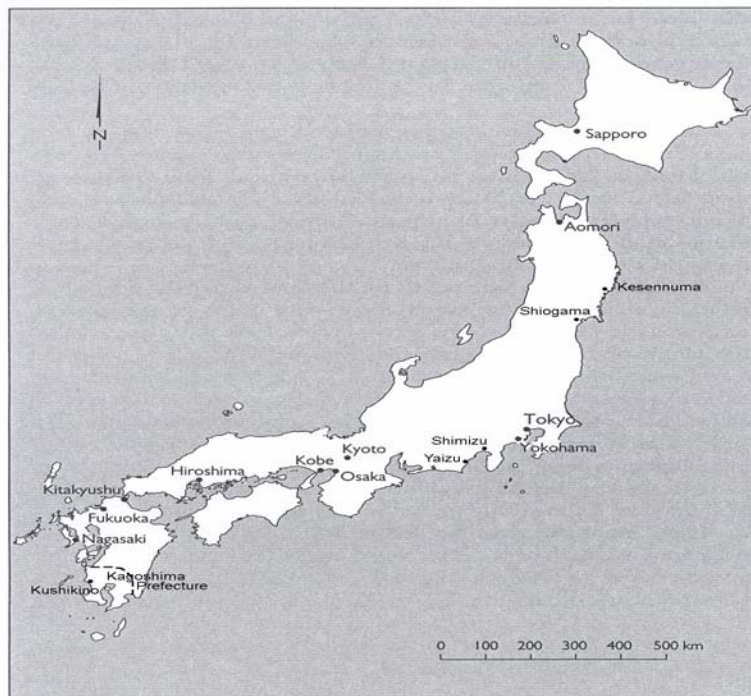
Economists Campbell and Owen found that in 1987 the total subsidies to the tuna industry from the Japan Fisheries Agency (¥269 billion, US\$1.8 billion) exceeded the losses incurred by the tuna fleet that year [18 p.48]. They also found that during the 1980s as a whole the Japanese distant water tuna fleet was operating at a loss to the extent that ‘it is difficult to believe the industry could have continued without such [government] assistance’ [18 p.49].

Direct subsidies from the Japan Fisheries Agency to industry, however, are only part of the total government support for distant water tuna fisheries. Rural areas are politically important in Japan, both because of the historical concern with food security mentioned earlier, and because rural electorates are weighted more heavily than urban electorates and these rural electorates have been the heartland of the Liberal Democratic Party, which has

⁹ This includes vessels of all sizes, includes vessels engaged in trolling.

been in power almost continuously since 1955.¹⁰ Rural areas receive a range of government benefits from preferential tax treatment, to lower electricity charges, to public works for infrastructure development [9]. Many distant water tuna companies are based in rural areas, such as Kushikino in Kagoshima Prefecture, and Kesennuma in Miyagi Prefecture (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Map of Japan



¹⁰ Rural areas are in decline, however, mostly from depopulation. For this reason among others they are less politically important than they were.

Fisheries specific government support comes through the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). MAFF connections to industry have been as problematic as any of the Ministries, with officials involved in scandals over 'excessive' wining and dining (*settai*) by industry and corruption during the 1990s, sparking public demands for reform of the Ministry and its governance [20 p.4, 21 p.171]. The MAFF sponsors a range of *gaikaku dantai* that support fisheries as well as other primary industries under the MAFF portfolio. MAFF has more chartered corporations (eight) than any other ministry [7 p.27]. Special corporations under MAFF supporting fisheries include the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Groups Staff Members' Mutual Aid Association (*Nôringyogô Dantai Shokuin Kyôσαι Kumiai*, effectively a pension fund) that since the 1950s has been subsidized one third by the government. Insurance is also provided via the *gaikaku dantai*. Since the 1930s Japanese fishers have been insured against loss or damage of vessels, and since 1967 against poor harvest, in a system administered by insurance associations at the prefectural level, and reinsured at the national level, and subsidized by the national government [22 pp.31-32]. According to Fujinami, in the late 1980s just over half of Japan's fishing vessels were insured through 'special government insurance programs' [12 pp.66-67].¹¹ *Gaikaku dantai* also provide financial services including venture finance. There is the Fisheries Resources Development Corporation (*Suishigen Kaihatsu Kôdan*) [9 p.115] and MAFF also supports the *Nôrinchûkin Bank* (*Nôrin Chûo Kinkô*), which provides financial services for agriculture forestry and fisheries employees and businesses.¹² For high risk projects the *Nôrinchûkin Bank* or other financial organizations cannot fund, low interest capital is provided by the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Finance Corporation (*Nôringyogyô Kinyû Kôko*), which is subsidized by the central government through the main MAFF budget, and through something called the Government Affiliated Agencies budget, as well as through the Fiscal Investment Loan Program (FILP) [9 p.114].¹³

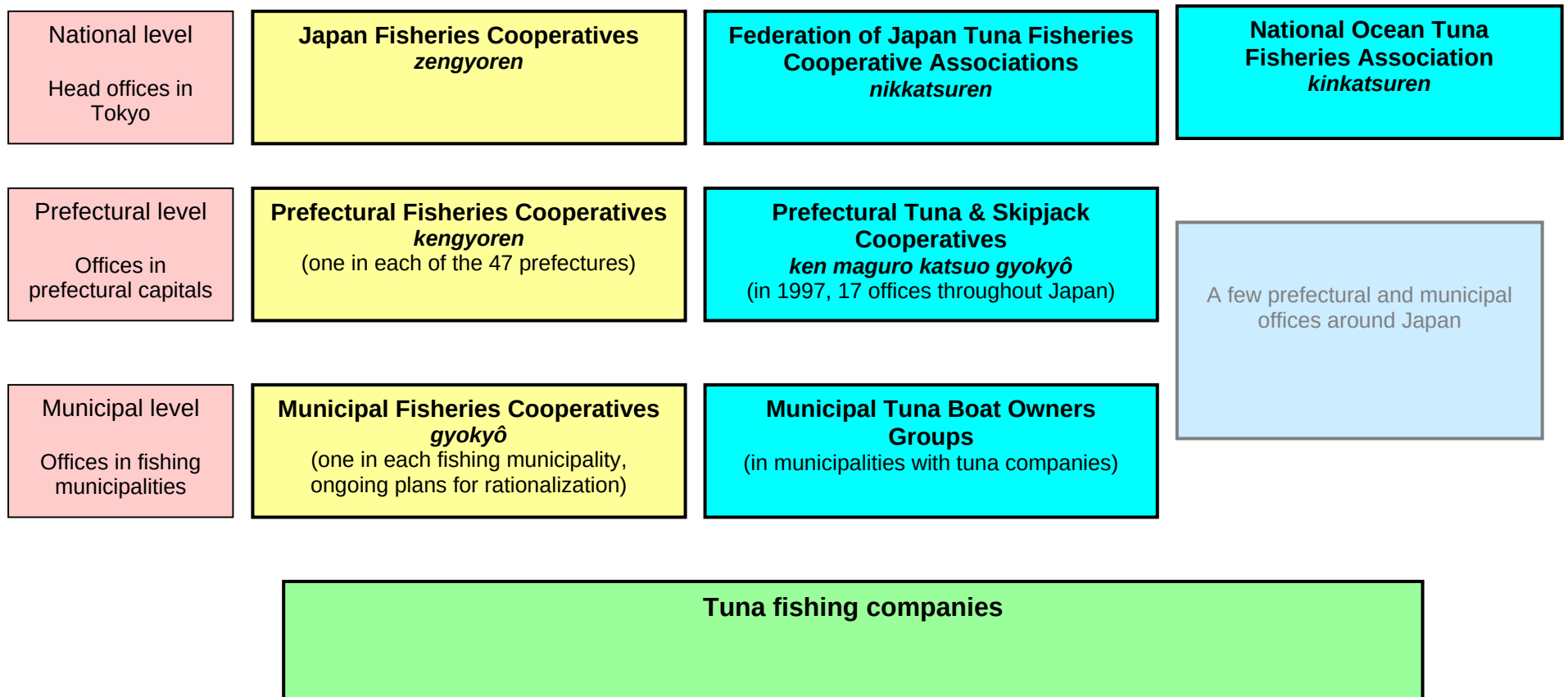
¹¹ For example the Seamen's Insurance Foundation *Zaidan Hôjin Senin Hoken Kai*, see www.sempos.or.jp (accessed 22 March 2005).

¹² See <http://www.nochubank.or.jp/business/02.shtml> (accessed 14 March 2005).

¹³ In Japanese the FILP is *Zaisei Tôyûshi Keikaku*, or *Zaitô*. FILP money comes not from taxation revenue, but from the post office savings account pool, to which the Japanese government has access for spending on public projects and programs. The FILP is immense, it has long been the largest savings pool in the world. Because it is so commonly used for government spending the FILP is also called the 'second budget'.

Fishing industry associations also direct government money flows to industry. Up until the 1960s the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai had been the premier industry body for distant water tuna as well as other fisheries, but from the 1960s another industry group the *Nippon Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai Rengô Kai* (Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Associations, also called Japan Tuna and *Nikkatsuren*) came to the fore as the main industry body for the distant water tuna fisheries, including longlining. By the 1990s Nikkatsuren represented 89 per cent of Japan's distant water tuna fishers [15 p.17]. The Dai Nippon Suisankai operates at the national level, but Nikkatsuren and the fisheries cooperative associations (*Gyokyô*) have an active presence at three levels; municipal, prefectural and national (see Figs. 2 and 3). Nikkatsuren and the *Gyokyô* undertake a wide range of functions including: administering payrolls for fishers; recruitment; managing employment contracts; setting employment conditions; coordinating financial services through the *Nôrinchûkin* Bank; providing and managing port infrastructure; freighting, distributing and marketing fisheries products; conducting related enterprises such as the provisioning of fuel and fishing equipment; managing overseas access to ports and fishing grounds (Nikkatsuren); lobbying; and representing industry in policy advisory committees (such as *shingikai* and *kondankai*). The extent to which the *gaikaku dantai* act as connective tissue between industry and government are revealed by this range of activities, because it includes tasks that might otherwise be done by government, as well as tasks that might otherwise be done by businesses themselves.

Fig. 2 Fisheries Cooperative Associations and Tuna Boat Owners' Associations



Almost all people working in fisheries in Japan belong to their local Gyokyô. In addition, tuna boat owners belong to tuna industry associations, Nikkatsuren or the National Ocean Tuna Fisheries Association (*Zenkoku Enyô Katsuo Maguro Gyogyôsha Kyô Kai*, or *Kinkatsuren*). Kinkatsuren offers similar services to Nikkatsuren but Nikkatsuren is larger and more powerful.¹⁴ Many tuna boat owners belong to both tuna associations as well as their local Gyokyô.

According to MAFF officials interviewed for this research, Nikkatsuren representatives and Fisheries Agency bureaucrats work very closely in developing and implementing policy regarding distant water tuna fisheries through meetings at which each side presents their positions and then negotiates towards a consensus position. The outcome of this process becomes policy. Ministers are not usually involved in developing policy; policies are mostly worked out between the bureaucrats of the Fisheries Agency and Nikkatsuren.¹⁵ Nikkatsuren and the Fisheries Agency also work together to monitor and regulate the distant water fleet's tuna catch. For example, for the southern bluefin tuna fishery, which has a national quota for member countries set by the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, the quota sits with the Fisheries Agency as representative of government, yet it is Nikkatsuren that licenses longline tuna fishing companies to enter that fishery.¹⁶ So the fishery is very much co-managed by government and the industry body, as is usual for fisheries in Japan [22 pp.51-55].

Fishing industry bodies are sites for amakudari. Local branches of the tuna associations are headed by fishermen, but 'industry' people *per se* do not hold executive office at the prefectural and national level of the tuna associations. Executive and senior staff positions at the higher levels are predominantly held by former or seconded Fisheries Agency bureaucrats. For example, Ueda Yamato had a career in the Fisheries Agency, ending up as head of the Pelagic Fishery Department. Upon retirement Ueda became President of

¹⁴ Nikkatsuren's relative importance is demonstrated by the fact that Nikkatsuren representatives are listed above Kinkatsuren representatives in the lists of delegates for international tuna commission meetings. See the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna www.ccsbt.org/docs/meeting_r.html (accessed 22 March 2005).

¹⁵ Interview with Tamai Tetsuya, Japanese Embassy, Canberra, April 2003.

¹⁶ Interview with Mae Akihiro, Fisheries Agency, Tokyo, January 2003.

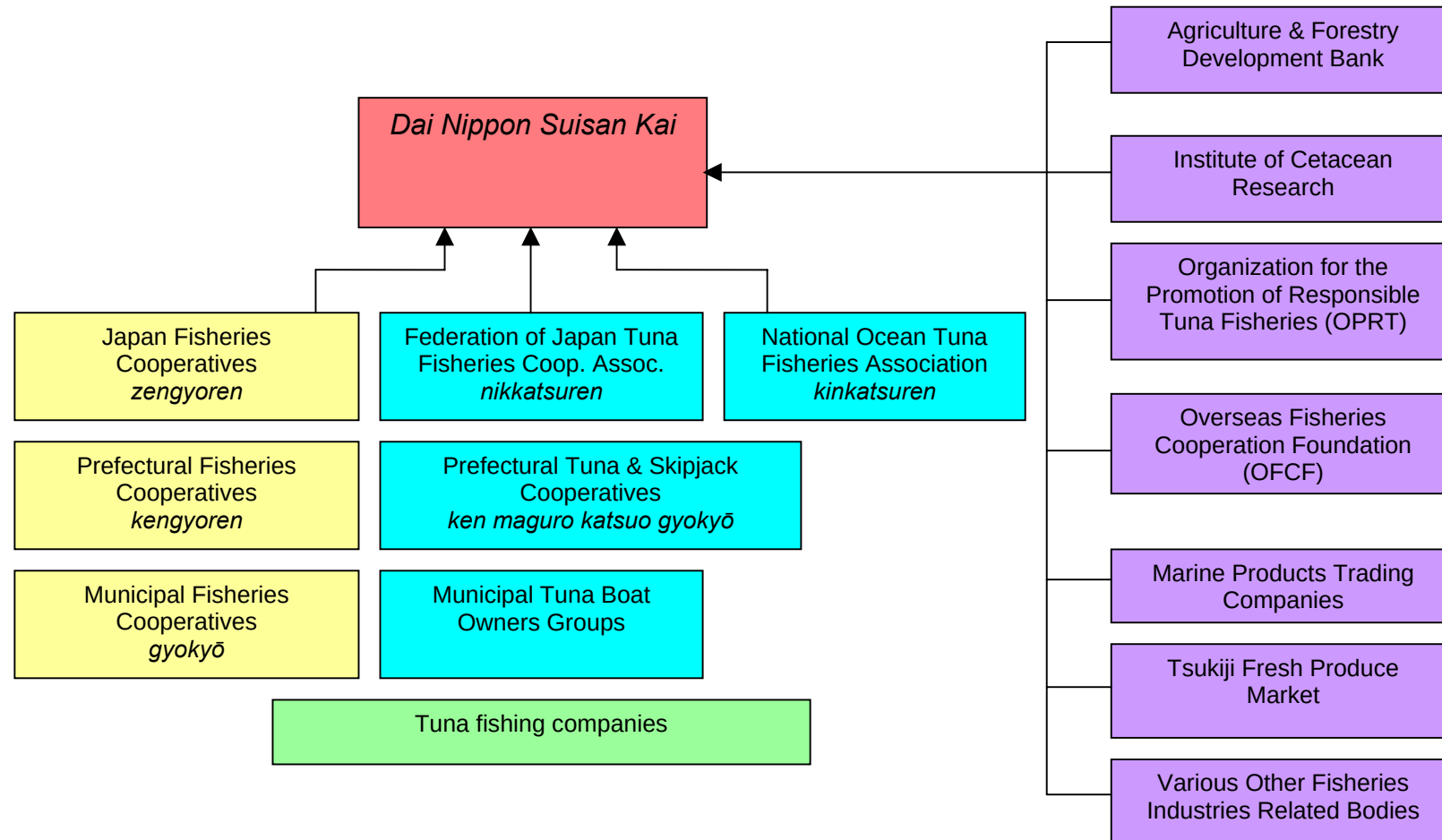
Nikkatsuren in 1985, a position he held for more than 15 years. Other post retirement positions Ueda has held include Managing Director of the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation and Managing Director of the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai [23]. Since ex-bureaucrats have connections of influence over current bureaucrats in MAFF via their status as senior (*sempai*), their post-retirement positions tie the industry bodies very closely to MAFF.¹⁷ Bodies like Nikkatsuren do not purely represent industry, they may also be said to represent MAFF.

Furthermore, large industry associations in Japan may develop their own corporate interests [9 pp. 64-69]. Nikkatsuren employs hundreds of administrative staff, is largely led by ex-bureaucrats, and has its own revenue raising enterprises. It is understandable Nikkatsuren could develop a corporate identity somewhat at variance with its tuna fishing company membership. When we interviewed Japanese longline tuna company owners in 2002-3 several owners often said they wished the Australian government would lift the ban on Japanese fishing vessels from docking at Australian ports. In fact, in May 2001 The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer had announced the 'immediate lifting of the bans currently in place on Japanese fishing vessels visiting Australian ports' [24], and this was reported in an Australia-focused Japanese language wire service [25]. Yet a year or two later many Japanese tuna boat owners thought the ban was still in place. Clearly Nikkatsuren had not effectively disseminated information about the lifting of the ban to its membership. One possible reason for this is that in the years Japanese tuna vessels had been operating in the southern Indian and Pacific Oceans without being able to dock and refuel in Australian ports, Nikkatsuren developed its method for refueling longliners at sea. Some Australian tuna boat owner interviewees expressed the opinion that Nikkatsuren has a vested interest in Japanese longliners not using Australian ports, so Nikkatsuren can maintain its business provisioning fuel to the longliners.¹⁸ Certainly, Nikkatsuren's failure to effectively disseminate accurate information about the lifting of the ban seems somewhat at odds with Japanese tuna longline industry interests.

¹⁷ Senior/junior (*sempai/kōhai*) relations are a fundamental organizing principle in Japanese society.

¹⁸ Various Australian tuna fishing and aquaculture company owners interviewed in 2002-3.

Fig. 3 Dai Nippon Suisan Kai (Great Japan Fisheries Association)



Although Nikkatsuren supplanted the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai as the leading body for distant water tuna fisheries in the 1960s, the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai is still important, partly because it has exceedingly high connections to government. The Honorary President of the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai, until his death in 2004, was former Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko.¹⁹ Members of the imperial family have always been involved with the organization. In addition to having such high government connections, the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai membership is made up of hundreds of organizations from all facets of Japan's marine industries from fishing to trading, processing, shipping, marketing, and investing [26]. This large, broad and high-ranking membership means the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai is a useful forum for cross-sector collaboration on fisheries issues. This has enabled it to be instrumental in the establishment of several important *gaikaku dantai* [13].

The current President of the Dai Nippon Suisan Kai, Nakasu Isao, is concurrently President of the *gaikaku dantai* Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna fisheries (OPRT, *Sekininaru Maguro Gyogyô Suishin Kikô*). The OPRT was established in 2000 to coordinate cross-sector initiatives to conserve tuna resources. OPRT lists the important stakeholders as tuna fishing organizations (including the Taiwan Tuna Boat Owners Association and Nikkatsuren), tuna trading organizations and consumer groups [27]. Under the auspices of OPRT these organizations work together to prevent the sale in Japan of tuna from Illegal Unregistered and Unreported (IUU) or Flag of Convenience (FOC) vessels, which means tuna caught outside the regulations of the international tuna management institutions. They work closely with the Japan Fisheries Agency to do this, for example by helping to develop and implement the 'positive list' system by which only tuna caught from vessels that are listed as abiding by international management and conservation rules should be imported [27 p.2].²⁰

The preceding passages show that from the inception of modern distant water fisheries more than a century ago, Japanese tuna fisheries have been co-managed by government and

¹⁹ Suzuki had originally studied fisheries at college, and then worked in organizations connected to the fishing industry until entering politics in 1947. He was the Minister of MAFF for several years in the 1970s, before becoming Prime Minister in 1980.

²⁰ The legislation for regulating imports is the 1996 Law on Special Measures for the Promotion of the Conservation and Management of Tuna Stocks, also called the Tuna Management Act.

industry, and this governance has always involved extensive use of government money to support industry. The next section of this paper examines recent developments in three major areas of government support for fisheries - gaikaku dantai, public works, and direct subsidies – to see whether neoliberal reforms are affecting this pattern of governance.

2.3 Neoliberalism in the Gaikaku Dantai?

Privatization is a key neoliberal reform, but there has been very little privatization of fisheries related gaikaku dantai. The Norinchukin Bank was ‘privatized’ in 1986, but in 2000 most of the executive and staff of the bank continued to be seconded or retired MAFF bureaucrats, and the bank continued to be subject to MAFF direction via regulations [9 p.115].

After long having been considered a best practice model of resource governance [28] the Japanese fisheries cooperative association system has since the early 1990s been widely recognized as having serious problems. Forty per cent of municipal Gyokyô are in deficit and have been since 1993 [22 pp.42-48]. Other problems include the aging of the workforce and a lack of young people willing to go into fishing as a career, meaning declining industries and memberships. Several solutions to the problems of the Gyokyô are offered in a booklet on Japanese fisheries authored by prominent fisheries academics as well as a manager from Zengyoren (the peak body for local fisheries cooperative associations) and the Managing Director of the OPRT. No mention is made of reducing the level of government support, or reforming the relationships between government and business via the Gyokyô and other industry associations. Remedies proposed for fiscal mismanagement are to improve the training of Gyokyô employees, and to reduce costs through downsizing and rationalizing Gyokyô [22 pp.42-48].

Rationalization is another key neoliberal policy, but like privatization it has not advanced far in fisheries related gaikaku dantai. Rationalizing the Gyokyô system by reducing the number of municipal Gyokyô (every fishing municipality has had its own Gyokyô) was actually tabled as far back as the 1970s when the government and Zengyoren wanted to amalgamate smaller Gyokyô with larger ones [14 p.143]. Then in the late 1990s the dozens

of municipal Gyokyô in each prefecture were due to be merged into single prefectural level bodies, with branch offices in key fishing municipalities.²¹ Failure to substantially rationalize the Gyokyô despite rationalization being on the agenda for 30 years indicates substantial resistance to rationalization in the Gyokyô, meaning it may still not occur for some time.

2.4 Neoliberalism in Public Works?

One of Koizumi's pledges for economic reform has been to stop the wasteful public works projects that have been one of the hallmarks of Liberal Democratic Party dominance, especially in geo-electorally important rural areas. Public works are desired because of the economic benefits large construction projects can bring. Impressive constructions can also bring status and civic pride for regional towns, helping them aspire to the image of modern Japan. During the 1990s, in a failed attempt to reverse the recession, the Japanese government spent ¥120 trillion in fiscal stimulus packages, much of which was unfortunately spent on public works that did not usefully serve the Japanese populace [7 p.119]. The MAFF in particular responded to the recession by increasing public spending to more than 50 per cent of the budget [21 pp.171-74]. Some of the spending on public works was for infrastructure for distant water tuna fisheries.

Kushikino, a small city in Kagoshima Prefecture in the south of Kyûshû (see Fig. 1) has long been a distant water tuna port (see Table 3), and it represents itself as a tuna town. For example, in the early 2000s there was a regional tourism program called '*Maguro Râmen*', involving seven local restaurants developing and selling a new noodle soup dish – tuna ramen. Nikkatsuren and a group called the *Kushikino Maguro Râmen Kyôei Kai* (Kushikino Tuna Mutual Prosperity Society) produced a *Maguro Râmen Map* to show visitors where the restaurants selling tuna ramen were, in relation to other notable features and tourist spots in the city. Participating restaurants had brightly colored flags advertising *Maguro Râmen* flying outside their doors as part of the promotion.

²¹ This was according to Kagoshima Kengyoren (the prefectural level between the municipal Gyokyô and the national peak body Zengyoren) officials during a fisheries study tour organized by the Kagoshima University Marine Social Science Department for visiting scholars from Indonesia and the Philippines, 19-21 November 1998.

Table 3. Distant Water Tuna Fleets: Kushikino City, Kagoshima Prefecture and Japan 1976-1987 (No. of Vessels, Catch in Metric Tons, Catch Value in ¥'000,000²²)

	Kushikino	Kagoshima			Japan		
	<i>Vessels</i> ²³	<i>Vessels</i>	<i>Catch</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Vessels</i> ²⁴	<i>Catch</i>	<i>Value</i>
1976	(42)	45 (73)	9,738	93,700	923	192,665	1,499,900
1977	(44)	42 (69)	11,509	102,400	910	202,097	1,857,800
1978	(42)	45 (73)	10,239	87,400	880	201,835	1,605,600
1979	(44)	49 (75)	9,158	121,500	900	205,042	2,208,000
1980	(48)	55 (72)	10,612	122,000	943	211,997	2,127,400
1981	(50)	60 (71)	13,212	171,100	964	205,651	2,097,200
1982	(55)	68 (76)	13,212	152,000	854	217,710	2,397,900
1983	(62)	74 (80)	17,360	197,700	770	220,335	2,452,300
1984	(66)	77 (81)	17,567	227,000	761	222,572	2,707,000
1985	(67)	75 (81)	19,643	224,000	773	232,704	2,585,200
1986	(69)	72 (83)	23,130	273,700	771	229,035	2,301,100
1987	(66)	75 (78)	23,250	212,200	770	201,781	1,904,700

Sources: Kagoshima Ken Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai (Kagoshima Prefecture Skipjack and Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association). *Kagoshima Ken Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai Sôritsu Gojûnenshu Shi* (Kagoshima Prefecture Skipjack and Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association Fifty Year History). Tokyo: Suisan Shinshio Sha; 2000, p.430. Fushuku Miyoshi. *Kushikino Gyogyô Shi* (Kushikino Fisheries History). Kagoshima: Kushikino Shi Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai (Kushikino City Fisheries Cooperative Association); 1989, p. 364.

Kushikino City Hall lists tuna as one of Kushikino's specialities (*tokusanhin*) [29 p.20]. A City Hall pamphlet from 2002 displays the recently completed outer harbor center top in an aerial photograph of the city, juxtaposed with the City Hall's three future-oriented *machizukuri* slogans, one of which reads: 'aiming for a town developing in the 21st century,

²² The exchange rates of the yen increased greatly over this period; from 1976 USD\$1 = JPY¥305 to 1987 USD\$1 = JPY¥158.

²³ The numbers in parentheses are from Fushuku, the rest are from Kagoshima Ken Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai. We have distinguished the two sources this way because there are large discrepancies between the two sets of figures. Fushuku's original source is company records from Seto Suisan. Kagoshima Ken Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai's figures are based on their own records. One possible explanation for the discrepancy is that although both sources list types of vessel as *enyô maguro* (distant water tuna) the criteria for this category may have varied between these two organizations. Despite the discrepancy raising questions about the reliability of the figures, we have included this table to roughly indicate the relative status of Kushikino as a tuna port in Japan.

²⁴ The numbers of vessels listed here are much lower than those listed for the same period by Miyabe et al. in Table 2. This is odd since the figures in Table 2 are only for longliners and trolling vessels operating in the Pacific Ocean, while the figures here are for all gear types in all distant water fishing grounds, so should be greater. Miyabe et al. based their figures on annual catch statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries. Kagoshima Ken Katsuo Maguro Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai based their figures on numbers of licenses issued by the Japan Fisheries Agency, under the same Ministry.

vital infrastructure for the city's potential' (authors' translation) [29 pp.22-23].²⁵ Photos of tuna longliners are featured in a City Hall brochure representing local fisheries, along with this passage:

The fishery of Kushikino City centers around deep-sea tuna fishing and the coastal fishery. We have improved fishing ports and fishery-related facilities, and are working hard to make a mother port base for tuna fishing as well to revitalize the coastal fishery to combat the industry's difficulties (authors' translation) [29 pp.32-33].

The outer harbor was specifically built for longliners because the inner harbor used by all the other local fisheries was too small. The outer harbor project was first announced in 1971, and various aspects of the project, such as wharfing facilities and cold storage were built in stages during the 1970s and 1980s [30]. During that time fewer and fewer of the Kushikino fleet were landing their catch and taking on fuel, gear and bait at Kushikino. Instead many of them came and went from Shimizu and Yaizu, which are close to Tokyo, making the overland transport of fresh/frozen fish to the main market in Tokyo easier (see Fig. 1 and Table 4). As the Japanese tuna industry consolidated operations at Shimizu and Yaizu these ports also became cheaper than Kushikino for fuel, gear, bait and other supplies. Yet still construction of the outer harbor proceeded during the 1980s and 1990s. By the year 2000 no longliners had been landing their catch at Kushikino for years, although around 20 companies based their offices and registered their vessels in Kushikino, and some longliners docked there once every five years or so for repairs. All of the people we interviewed in Kushikino, including officials in City Hall, knew that the longliners did not use Kushikino as their regular port, and none suggested this would change in the future. There are sound reasons the City Hall might want to claim identity with the tuna industry, and want to attract large public works. The Kushikino outer harbor, however, seems to be the kind of problematic public work Koizumi has pledged to reform.

²⁵ *Machizukuri*, literally 'town-making', is a local government activity (often funded by the national government in rural areas) aimed at generating a communal sense of place and belonging. It involves slogans, public buildings and events coordinated around central themes.

Table 4. Kushikino Tuna Boats Loading Patterns by Port 1986

	No. vessels using port	Fuel	Bait	Gear	Food	Others	Total
	#	¥'000,000					
Shimizu	40	690	1,156	372	303	443	2,966
Yaizu	14	212	374	189	96	142	1,016
Kushikino	25	53	370	47	70	277	821
Misaki	1	10	11	1	3	1	133
Shiogama	1	11	-	-	-	-	11
Kesennuma	1	7	-	-	-	-	7
Total	82	983	1,911	609	472	959	4,954

Source: Fushuku Miyoshi. *Kushikino Gyogyô Shi* (Kushikino Fisheries History). Kagoshima: Kushikino Shi Gyogyô Kyôdô Kumiai (Kushikino City Fisheries Cooperative Association); 1989, p. 180.

2.5 Neoliberalism in Fleet Reductions?

Previous discussion outlined government subsidies for structural adjustments to the tuna longline industry during the 1970s and 1980s. For the last five years the longline fleet has again been in serious financial trouble, and structural adjustment has been one solution tabled. This has dovetailed with increased efforts to respond to international criticism of the environmental effects of longline tuna fishing. In 1999 the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recommended that the world long lining fleet should be reduced immediately by 20 to 30 per cent in order to counteract over fishing of large tuna species for the sashimi market [31]. The Japanese tuna industry responded by announcing a reduction in the Japanese fleet by this proportion over the next couple of years. The vessel owners whose boats were scrapped as part of this fleet reduction were compensated through a government sponsored boat buy-back scheme. Nikkatsuren administered the fleet reduction by selecting companies that looked weak, either because of lack of profits or lack of a successor to carry on the company, and sent instructions down the line to the prefectural level then the municipal level that those companies would surrender their vessels.²⁶ According to Sato Yasuo of Nikkatsuren the buy-back scheme cost USD\$335,000,000 (JPY¥40,025,800,000 at a 2001 exchange rate) of which 70 per cent was

²⁶ Interview with Sugai Hiroshi of the Kagoshima Prefecture Skipjack and Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association, June 2003.

funded by public money.²⁷ This example shows that in recent years direct subsidies are still as much a tool of governance in Japanese tuna fisheries as they were during the twentieth century.

These examples from the tuna longline industry support the conclusions of researchers who have been following the general theme of structural reform in Japanese governance. Koizumi and predecessors who promised reform have made only limited headway in reducing the capacity of the ministries to disperse public money and cement corporatist relations via the *gaikaku dantai* [5 pp.25-33, 7, 20 p.5]. One explanation for this is that Prime Minister and Cabinet do not have effective control over either the Liberal Democratic Party or the bureaucracy, so reform directives can be ignored [5 p.23]. It should be pointed out that the reform agenda is progressing differently in different ministries. For example, there is evidence that the Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry (formerly MITI) has arguably taken the reform agenda on board, is deregulating and focusing government assistance to industries that are competitive [32,33]. MAFF, however, seems less inclined to adopt Koizumi's reforms [21].

Structures of material incentives, however, are not the whole picture. Public policy is also influenced by the philosophies underpinning it. For example, ideas about what is 'good' governance and what kinds of government actions are considered il/legitimate also affect governance. The following section explores ideas about governance in representations from key stakeholders in tuna industries, in order to estimate the normative strength of neoliberal discourses relative to other philosophical frameworks and thus the likelihood that key stakeholders will champion neoliberal reforms.

3. GOVERNANCE PHILOSOPHY

Ever since Japan entered into the modernization race with the Western powers in the late 1800s, the belief that Japan is a resource poor country has influenced political and

²⁷ Sato Yasuo's reply to authors' question in a panel discussion on vessel buy-backs as a fisheries management tool during the biennial conference of the International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade in Tokyo, July 2004.

economic decisions. Famines, especially those after World War II, have been used to support the argument that Japan should have self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs. An opinion poll by the Prime Minister's Office in 2000 found that 78 per cent of Japanese were concerned about the stability of food supplies in the future, and 95 per cent called for the government to ensure national food security [34]. The mass media disseminates the discourse of dependency on imports, helping to keep fear about food security alive [35 p.167], even though famine seems a highly unlikely scenario in contemporary Japan. This argument in relation to government support of Japanese rice production is well known.²⁸ The same principles are invoked with regard to Japanese fisheries, including distant water tuna fisheries. The special place of food production in Japan's political landscape plays a significant role in legitimizing government support for Japan's distant water tuna fisheries.

We interviewed members of the non-government consumers' organization *Shōdanren* for their views on sashimi tuna.²⁹ The *Shōdanren* members said Japanese consumers tend to prefer domestically produced food because they believe that it is more likely to be healthy and safe to eat than food produced overseas. They also said Japanese consumers believe some goods, such as sashimi tuna, are better quality when produced by Japanese than by non-Japanese. They said Japanese consumers are willing to pay up to 50 per cent more for domestic rather than imported food.³⁰ The *Shōdanren* members raised the issue of Japan's low rate of food self-sufficiency, saying they felt the current rate of 40 per cent domestic food production was too low, and that Japanese consumers felt that a rate of '80 something per cent' self-sufficiency in food was the right level.

The *Shōdanren* discussion of food self-sufficiency ended with a strong statement from one of the interviewees saying that globalization was going too far and that she felt it reasonable that 'Japanese citizens' should defend their food self-sufficiency. The word she used for 'citizen' in this outburst was '*kokumin*', literally 'nation-people'. Other words she could have used are 'consumer' (*shōhisha*) or another word for 'citizen' '*shimin*' (literally

²⁸ For a thorough examination of the politics of Japanese agriculture see George Mulgan 2000 [9].

²⁹ *Zenkoku Shōhisha Dantai Renraku Kai*, usually referred to as *Shōdanren*, or 'Consumers Japan' in English. Interview with Kanda Toshiko, Itō Yasue and Hasuo Takako in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, May 2003.

³⁰ According to Bestor [35 pp.168-9] seafood products labeled '*kokusan*' ('made in Japan') have higher prices and prestige in the Tsukiji market.

‘city-people’), which is often used for ‘citizen’ in a civil society sense, such as in ‘citizens’ movements’ (*shimin undō*). Her choice of the word ‘kokumin’ shows the consumer nationalism undercurrent pervading the food security and food self-sufficiency debates in Japan.³¹

Patricia Maclachlan has theorized a kokumin aspect of Japanese consumer identity, arguing that historical developments during the twentieth century caused Japanese consumers to be politically different to consumers in the English speaking world [36]. Before and during World War II part of the difference was that consumption was seen by many Japanese as shameful waste, because of an ethic of personal frugality in order to be able to devote resources to the national endeavor. Then in the postwar period, with famines and chaos as Japan rebuilt itself, consumers sided with producers in a joint effort to achieve national food self-sufficiency. Consumers thus developed a ‘survivor’ identity that was teamed on the same side as, rather than in opposition to, food producers. This post war survivor consumer identity again connoted a sense of pulling together for the nation. Maclachlan notes that the ‘survivor’ kokumin aspect to Japanese consumer identity that has meant consumers’ movements have done apparently paradoxical things like supported agricultural protectionism, which means they pay several times the world price for rice.

The Tokyo-based consumers’ group Women’s Forum for Fish (WFF, in Japanese *Ūmanzu Fuōramu Sakana*) also represents fisheries issues with a kokumin aspect to consumer identity like that of the interviewee from Shōdanren. Shiraishi Yuriko started the WFF organization in 1993 after realizing the extent of Japan’s reliance on seafood imports,³²

³¹ Labelling social features in Japan ‘nationalist’ can be very contentious because of undesirable associations with Imperial Japan’s militarist ultranationalism, and continuing sentiments along these lines held by small numbers of *uyoku* right wing groups. The nationalisms described in this paper are neither militarist nor ultranationalist, but are the ‘banal’ forms of nationalism discussed by M Billig in *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage; 1999) that are endemic in the contemporary normative system of nation-states. We are not trying to make the case that Japan is any more nationalist than other countries, rather we aim to identify the roles played by everyday forms of cultural nationalism, economic nationalism and consumer nationalism in the governance of Japan’s distant water tuna fisheries, both as it currently operates and in thinking about potentials for change. This discussion of Japanese nationalisms borrows from T. McVeigh’s *Nationalisms of Japan: Managing and Mystifying Identity* (Lanham, Maryland, U.S.A.: Rowman and Littlefield; 2004).

³² According to MAFF Japan imports 60 per cent of its food supplies, measured in caloric intake [34]. In the 1970s Japan was the worlds largest seafood exporter, by 2001 Japan had become the worlds largest seafood importer, with 23% in value and 14% in volume of world production [22].

because she felt Japanese consumers should be better educated about this important part of their diet. Shiraishi's consumer identity resonates with that detailed by Maclachlan when she noted that *kokumin* identity was 'rarely evoked in movement discourse' (because it is an explicitly nationalist term which sits uneasily with progressive social movements in post-war Japan) but is nonetheless visible in activities and attitudes [36]. In written material Shiraishi uses the word *shôhisha* (consumer), not *kokumin* [37]. In her spoken representations, however, she does use the word *kokumin*.³³ Economic and cultural nationalisms are evident in various representations she makes about fisheries issues, interwoven with internationalism.

Shiraishi allies consumers not only with Japanese producers, but with producers the world over who supply the Japanese market. She wants to establish dialogue with seafood producers everywhere in order to educate Japanese consumers. She calls for an alliance between tuna producers, governments, traders and consumers against the IUU and FOC tuna fishers, who endanger stocks and undermine tuna fisheries operating in accordance with international and national measures to protect stocks [38,39]. This aspect of Shiraishi's representation is internationalist.

Shiraishi also calls for an alliance of 'fish food culture' (*gyoshoku bunka*) countries of Asia against the hegemony of the 'meat food culture' countries of Europe and North America. As well as being legitimized in terms of food security, government support for tuna fisheries is legitimized in rhetoric about the need to preserve cultural heritage in certain food production areas [16 p.167]. Food is a prominent part of culture at all levels in Japanese society, and is used as a marker of cultural identity, both for regional differences within Japan and between Japanese and foreigners [35]. Fish food culture - the arts of fishing, preparing and consuming fish - is seen by many as an essential part of Japaneseness. One way this form of national identity may be asserted is through representations of Japan having a fish food culture versus the meat food culture of the

³³ Shiraishi's spoken representation was observed when she spoke in a panel at the biennial conference of the International Institute for Fisheries Economics and Trade in Tokyo, July 2004.

‘West’ [35,40]. The fish food culture aspect of Shiraishi’s representation is thus both internationalist and cultural nationalist.

Economic nationalism is evident in Shiraishi’s assertion that increasing world population will put pressure on food stocks such that there will be a ‘fish war’ (*osakana sensô*) in the twenty-first century. She asks Japan what it will do regarding this situation (*dô suru, Nihon?*). She deplores the fact that Japanese consumers feel no sense of danger that half of their seafood is imported and predicts that soon it will not be possible to buy fish from other countries [37].

Consumers’ allegiance with domestic producers because of fears about food security and desires to preserve Japanese fish food culture in Japanese consumer discourse helps legitimize continued government assistance to distant water tuna fisheries. Bureaucrats governing distant water tuna fisheries usually represent the issues similarly to the consumer activists quoted above. Komatsu Masayuki has been a key figure in Japanese distant water fisheries governance over the last decade. A senior bureaucrat with the MAFF, he has been the Japanese Head of Delegation in international tuna management commissions and also been a vocal presence at meetings of the International Whaling Commission meetings. Komatsu is more outspoken than many of his colleagues but it is fair to say he represents the prevailing public policy philosophy of the Japanese government regarding distant water fisheries.³⁴ According to Komatsu:

Japan cannot continue simply relying on imported food. Can we afford as a country to be dependent on others, such as the United States or Australia, for our basic foods? Will we always have enough precious dollars to import what we need? It is the answers to these questions that should tell you why I firmly believe that we need to become more self-sufficient for reason of our national health and at the most basic level, to guarantee the supply of food to our people [as quoted in 41, translation R. Smith].

Komatsu’s representation is nationalist in that his ‘us’ and ‘our’ signify Japan, not some transnational alliance of fish consumers or producers. He usually frames issues along

³⁴ According to Hirata, opinion on whaling in MAFF is not unified, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often disagrees with MAFF stances taken on whaling, but the pro-whaling group, lead by Komatsu, is dominant and their agenda prevails [40]. Komatsu’s position vis a vis MAFF on tuna issues is similar.

national lines in terms of 'us' versus 'them'.³⁵ In Komatsu's vision the role of fisheries governance is to promote Japanese fisheries for the sake of the Japanese nation. This vision legitimizes government support for fisheries, which is antithetical to neoliberalism. Komatsu's vision is also incompatible with neoliberalism in that he is anti-globalization in terms of fisheries trade liberalization.³⁶ He has said that 'Japan does not need globalization', and that importing 'too much' tuna is 'bad for Japan'.³⁷ Other MAFF officials also assert that national interest should be balanced against globalization. In response to calls for further trade liberalization under the World Trade Organization MAFF has said 'further radical reforms will ... deteriorate food self sufficiency and multifunctional benefits. This must be a huge loss for *the Japanese* and their *national* economy.' [34, italics added].

While national boundaries are emphasized in these representations, not only are boundaries between producers and consumers underplayed, boundaries between industry and government are also underplayed. In a neoliberal vision government and industry are normatively distinguished from each other as different kinds of institutions, which should be kept separate. The vision demonstrated in the MAFF representations above is more corporatist than neoliberal. The first section of this paper showed the corporatist structure of relations between business and government, especially via the *gaikaku dantai*. These MAFF representations show the normative counterparts to those structures.

If neoliberal discourses had much salience in this context the close relationship between business and government in fisheries would be represented as a bad thing, or at least the representations would contain some kind of attempt to justify the close relationship, but Japanese fisheries stakeholders usually represent the close relationship positively. For

³⁵ This style generates political capital in that domestic contesting voices can be devalued because they seem to be against the nation. Hirata [40 p.194] notes the political device of framing issues as 'us' versus 'them' in the whaling dispute has helped marginalize domestic anti-whaling voices.

³⁶ Komatsu is not anti-globalization in terms of access for Japan's offshore and distant water fleets. Indeed, since Japan's domestic fishing grounds are fully exploited, unless there is a major increase in aquaculture, his call for greater food self-sufficiency must logically mean additional Japanese fishing in overseas fishing grounds. Thanks to Quentin Grafton for pointing this out.

³⁷ These comments were made by Komatsu in a panel discussion at the biennial conference of the International Institute for Fisheries Economics and Trade in Tokyo, July 2004.

example, in a booklet explaining Japan's fisheries produced by fisheries bureaucrats, academics and gaikaku dantai industry representatives for an international fisheries conference held in 2004, the close relationship between government and industry is presented as a unique form of fisheries co-management that enables local fishers to participate effectively in governance [22 p.51-55]. The booklet contains the following statement about problems in Japanese fisheries seen as being caused by globalization: 'the Japanese *government* and the fishing industries doing their utmost to maintain these industries' (*italics added*) [22 p.95]. According to neoliberal principles governments should not try to maintain industries if they are unable to prosper in competition with the rest of the world, rather they should be allowed to decline. So the authors of this booklet are clearly not significantly influenced by neoliberal ideas.

Moreover, the concern with food self sufficiency that pervades representations of fisheries governance issues in Japan runs counter to neoliberalism. In a neoliberal vision food security is ensured by generating wealth so people can buy their food from wherever producers can produce it most cost effectively. Neoliberalism requires faith in the wealth generating and distributing capacities of international trade, and it also requires faith that international lines of supply will remain open. Japanese governance philosophy as evident in discourses around distant water tuna fisheries has faith in trade bolstered by a supportive state rather than faith in trade alone. The philosophy that legitimizes government support for Japanese distant water tuna fisheries because of concerns about food security and self-sufficiency is more neomercantilist than neoliberal. Various kinds of nationalism, corporatism and anti-globalization are more apparent influences than neoliberalism on prevailing public policy philosophy in this sector in Japan.

Considering the prevalence of neoliberalism in policy circles internationally, the lack of neoliberal norms in Japanese public policy surrounding the governance of distant water tuna fisheries is striking. Hirata's work on norm diffusion with regard to whaling helps explain this phenomenon [40]. She argues that the prevailing international anti-whaling norm has not diffused to Japan because the domestic political context has not been amenable to this norm. In fact, not only did the norm not diffuse, domestic resistance was

inspired against it. Resistance was inspired because the international anti-whaling norm was framed as an attack on Japanese culture.

There are some parallels with whaling in the tuna situation. Environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, which are identified as Western in Japan, campaign against tuna long lining and accuse Japan of eating 'too much' tuna. Greenpeace's stance is resented as anti-Japanese by many Japanese people involved in fisheries. Japan's fish food culture and Japan's food security are seen as being at stake in debates over government support for distant water tuna fisheries, so neoliberal reforms may be framed as being against national economic and cultural welfare. Attempts to reduce or change the nature of government support for these fisheries may be framed as attacks on Japan, and therefore represented as illegitimate. The normative framework for governance of Japan's distant water tuna fisheries therefore supports the status quo in fisheries governance. Norms alone do not determine governance, so a severe economic downturn in tuna fisheries or some other shift in the situation could render this normative tendency less effective. At the time of writing, however, the prevailing public policy ideology regarding tuna fisheries visible in representations by key stakeholders indicate that these stakeholders are unlikely to support neoliberal reforms, indeed they are more likely to oppose them.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The governance of Japan's distant water tuna fisheries has been characterized by a high degree of co-management between industry and government, as have many sectors in Japan's economy. The *gaikaku dantai* layer of public corporations acts as a conduit for policy collaboration and for the spending of government money to support industry. Koizumi and other reformers have made limited headway in changing economic governance, in terms of decreasing economic intervention and increasing the role of market mechanisms in shaping industries. Our research shows that neoliberal reforms were not evident in governance of distant water tuna fisheries under the MAFF by the early 2000s.

Norms of tuna fisheries governance in key stakeholder groups, such as the bureaucracy, consumer groups and academia, dovetail with structural inertia of entrenched vested

interests against neoliberal reform. In tuna fisheries the politically powerful discourses of food security and cultural heritage are pitted against neoliberalism, strands of which are framed as excessive globalization by key stakeholders. Neoliberalism is not visible in public policy representations by stakeholders in tuna fisheries, indeed there are indications that a push towards neoliberalism in tuna fisheries would be framed as anti-Japanese and therefore be resisted. Even if other sectors of the Japanese economy become more neoliberal, the domestic normative context makes it likely arguments would be mounted to protect tuna fisheries as a special case, much as rice production has been protected. International fisheries managers engaging with Japan should do so bearing in mind that Japanese norms about what constitutes good economic governance are very different from those in the U.S.A., the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, Canada, and other countries where neoliberalism is more or less accepted in fisheries policy making circles.

Although we argue that neoliberal reform in Japan's distant water tuna fisheries is unlikely in the foreseeable future, however, it remains a possibility. Japan's ongoing economic difficulties undermine the status quo in both structures and norms. The failure of massive public spending to solve the recession in the 1990s may be used by neoliberals to gain support for their reform initiatives. Public dissatisfaction with the waste and corruption of the old corporatist system may also be harnessed to the neoliberal cause. The future of Japan's distant water tuna longline industry is in doubt at present, and if the industry collapses or shrinks to a far less significant proportion of the market its lobbying power may be reduced. These factors combined give reformers such as Koizumi more leverage than if the industry was stable and the public satisfied with MAFF governance, so tuna fisheries may yet feel the effects of his pledge to bring neoliberalism to Japan.

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