

# **Fate to be failed? Interpretations and responses of different layers of government in the social welfare delivery system reform in Korea**

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## **Welfare Delivery Reform**

- Establishment 'welfare hub' in Dong Resident Centre (frontline neighbourhood office of local government)
- In order to integrated access and embrace the hard-to-reaches
- One of the 140 presidential agenda of Park Geun Hye Government since 2013

# Measures for enhancement

- Move non-welfare service to municipal office, in order to ease work pressure in frontline office
- Put simple administrative job of welfare services on administration workers so that welfare workers could focus on more professional work (ex. Case management)
- Deploy more than one welfare worker with level 7 or above in every frontline office as 'welfare coordinator' who provide comprehensive advice over welfare benefits and services to visitors

# Research

- Focus group interviews of fifty-six public servants in six local governments within Kyungsangbuk-do region
- Thirty two public servants working in municipal office & Twenty-four working in frontline office
- questions about issues of welfare delivery, implementation process of the reform, and their expectations questioned

# Fate to be failed?

We are very tired. Previously, when it comes to new reform, we said “let’s research this”, “we say something to the mayor”  
... now nothing happens. ... We lost our energy (City B  
frontline office, welfare level 9)

When the reform was announced, what frontline workers said was not “it would be great, good!” but “again, whatever”...  
they don’t expect a lot (City C Authority, Welfare Level 7)

Social welfare related things are always under transformation.  
Yesterday and today, always. No good day. (County E  
Authority, welfare level 7)

# Top-down approach

- Investigation to ‘implementation deficit’ by mathematical means (Pressman and Wildavsky)
- Rational model: finding out what makes the achievement of preset goal difficult
- How to control implementation in order to achieve goal desired by policy makers?
- Analysing implementation problems against ‘perfect administration’ (Hood, 1976)

# Bottom-up approach

- ‘Street-level bureaucrats’: relatively routine and stereotyped way of practice by frontline workers to cope with uncertainties, work pressure, and inadequate resources (Lipsky, 1980)
- Attempts to control implementation just increase the tendency that original goal is ignored by frontline workers under pressure
- Continuing political process throughout implementation – difficult to separate implementation from policy formation

# Factors for analysis

- Level of ambiguity and work pressure, and adequacy of resources
- Multiplicity of actors with different interests, values and policy preference
- Level of consensus between actors
- Policy networks and series of interaction between actors (level of cooperation or conflict)

# Major issues

- Inappropriate measures
- Lack of resources
- Different interests
- Lack of power
- Head of frontline office

## Inappropriate measures

Departments which take the services from frontline offices are very unhappy because there is no additional staff for that. (City A municipal office, Administration Level 6)

In fact, people don't have only welfare issues. Welfare is one of the benefits resident should get ... When a resident visit Dong Office, we can do what he or she need. That's welfare in broad term. (City B municipal office, Administration Level 7)

Because of 'welfare hub', ... head of office and other line mangers in administration line said "then when sewerage is broken, residents have to go to city office? ... People have a lot of issues apart from welfare. ... It absolutely nonsense!" ... we also thought 'it is not quite right' (City C municipal office, Welfare Level 7)

# Lack of resources

Now we say “we can cope with workload a bit” then if level 7 workers have more work then they will. But even if they do comprehensive advice, I don’t think it results in more satisfaction of welfare users. (City A frontline office, Welfare Level 7)

Realistically, giving comprehensive advice would be difficult. From workers point of view, they struggle with their own services, how they can see others’? (County D frontline office, Administration Level 6)

If comprehensive advice is required, staff to do that should be put in place then they can do the job. Without it, one day, no one know who do that job. (County D municipal office, Administration Level 5)

# Lack of resources

With same people, same number of staff, … so no big effect from it. (City A municipal office, Administration Level 6)

It should be implemented after budge and all the additional staff are prepared. There is problem because it has been implemented without them. (City B municipal office, Welfare Level 6)

In order to do proper job, we need support. But new policy keeps introduced then no staff and support is followed. It is worse than do nothing, and we got a lot of stress from this. (County E frontline office, Welfare Level 7)

# Different interests

If we have more welfare workers and do more reach-out service then the most realistic problem we face is discontent of other workers line. (City A frontline office, Welfare Level 9)

They just do administrative work they have to do then don't care about other (related) matters. Just residents may have to come again and take more journey. (City C frontline office, Welfare Level 8)

Increase of administration workers is ease. Our organisation is just like that. Overall, it is ver bad tendency. It is in favour of administration workers. (County F frontline, Health Level 6)

# Lack of power

Ministry of Welfare had an ambitious proposal and they said it was agreed with MOSPA(Ministry of Security and Public Administration) but what actually comes down looks something like you can do if you want, you don't then that's ok... (City A municipal office, Administration Level 6)

If delivery system reform or organisation related things comes down from Ministry of Welfare then there is no power on it. Only if it comes from the MOSPA through administration support office or personnel line then general affair department leads (it may work). (City B municipal office, Welfare Level 7)

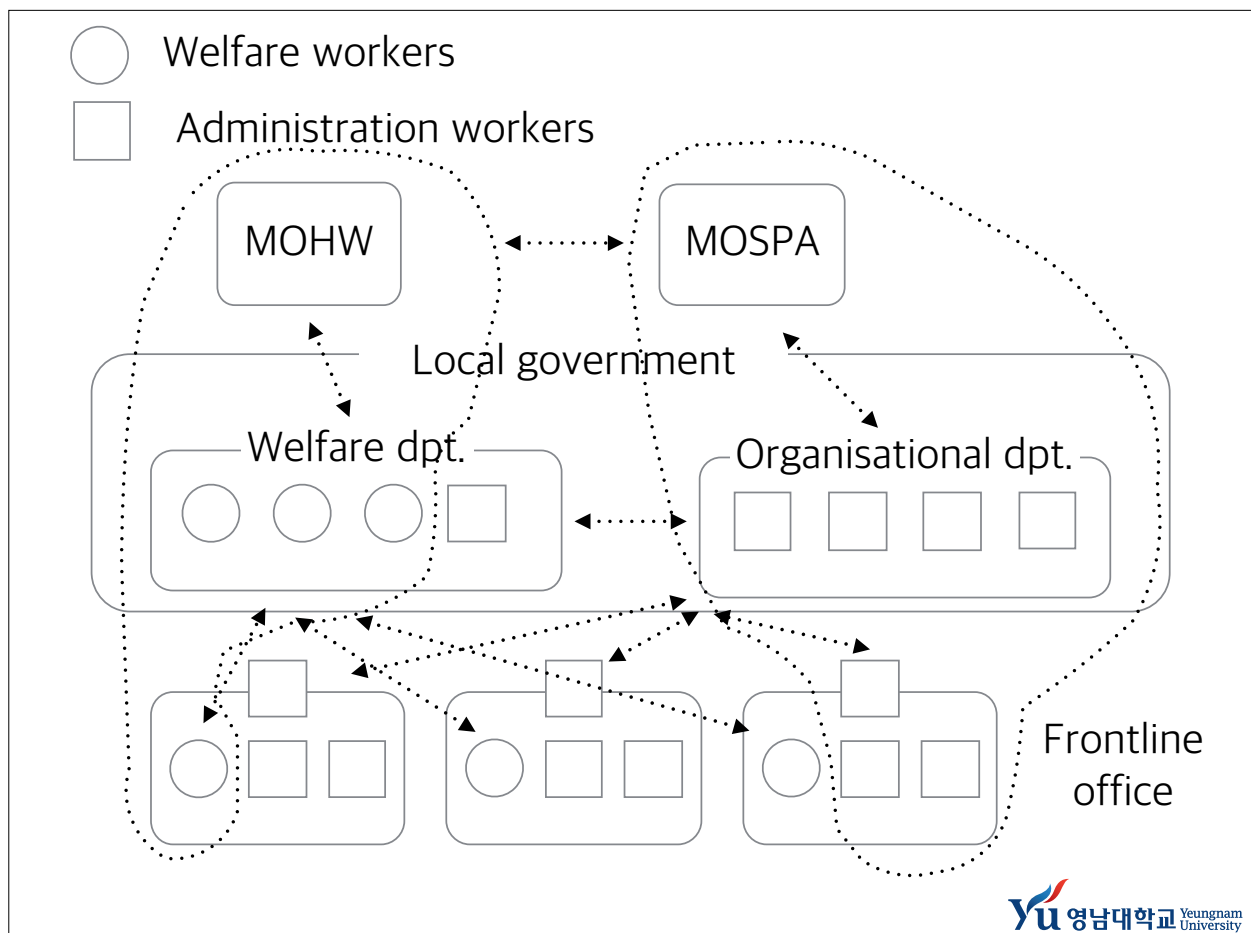
Organisation thing should be done by organisation department. ... We don't have power. So such a things should be pushed by the part with strong power. I think like that. (City C municipal office, Welfare Level 6)

# Head of frontline office

There is just one Head of Dong Office from welfare worker line. ... Others just say “not only welfare is important, but also other work!” ... heads of frontline offices are not willing to understand. (City A municipal office, Welfare Level 6)

They might think our work is less important than general administration work. ... They become the head from administration line. So ... they know well about administration work. But they say you alone do what currently two workers do. And we can say nothing. (City C frontline office, Welfare Level 8)

... Heads of offices use their power put other administration work onto welfare workers, not welfare work. But no one control this. (County F frontline office, Health Level 6)



# Discussion

- Two lines of actors: MOSPA-administration workers & MOHW-welfare workers
- MOSPA line is more central and responsible for organisational and staff matter while MOHW line is more peripheral
- Lack of cooperation entails lack of power and resources
- Under this discrepancy, any welfare delivery reform has a fate to be failed?

# Further questions

- Is it feature of developmental state in terms of welfare implementation? - Strong initiative of bureaucrats (more central organisational ministry) and departmentalism
- Lack of political initiative over welfare policy and programmes (more peripheral welfare ministry)
- Different implementation type by welfare regime like Agents of the Welfare State (Jewell, 2007)?