

North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum: Session 4

How Do Donor Identities Matter with International Aid Norms for Sustainable Development?

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Introduction

■ Background

■ Diversity of donors in North-east Asia:

- Japan: a long-standing traditional donor
- South Korea: a new traditional donor
- China: emerging global leader

■ Environmental issues:

- Requiring urgent and 'borderless' actions = essentially international and regional co-operation is necessary.
- Sustainable development: normative > pragmatic

■ Regional co-operation for sustainable development: not emerged yet

Introduction

■ Questions:

- What aid do Japan, South Korea and China offer? Do they focus on sustainable development?
- How identities and norms of the donors may promote or not promote regional co-operation for sustainable development?

■ Approach

- Constructivism: if three countries in North-east Asia have their identities and norms that support to co-operate with established international order, regional co-operation may be facilitated.

Theoretical Review and Analytical Framework

■ International Aid Norms

- DAC has been setting international aid norms.
- DAC argues that donors should focus on substantial aid targets like ...
 - Gender
 - Environment
 - Participatory development
 - Democratic governance
 - Peace-building.

Theoretical Review and Analytical Framework

■ Constructivism

- Focus on non-material elements: values, norms, identities, ideas and ideologies
- Non-material elements: internalised in individual donors and their major actors = particularly important to shape the attitude of donors to the established international aid norms.
- Reilly (2012):
 - A country with middle-power identity: a norm-taker approach
 - A country with super-power identity: a norm-maker approach

Theoretical Review and Analytical Framework

■ Spill-over thesis

■ Theory of international politics:

- Economic co-operation among countries facilitate political co-operation
- The increase of international exchange promotes the sense of 'us', ultimately promotes mutual co-operation.

■ Increase in international economic co-operation and increase in international exchange: helpful to promote mutual co-operation in other areas, including aid.

Japanese Aid

■ Historical evolution of Japanese aid

- 1950s: post-war reparation and economic co-operation
- 1980s: becoming the world's largest donor in 1989

■ Aid reform from the 1990s

- Reducing aid from economic considerations, increasing non-economic including environmental considerations
- Publishing the Official Development Assistance Charter: the key philosophical principles as:
 - the imperative nature of humanitarian considerations
 - recognition of the interdependent relationships among member nations in the international community
 - the necessity for conserving the environment

Korean Aid

- Historical evolution of Korean Aid
 - 1963-1970s: diplomatic interests
 - 1980s-1990s: economic interests
 - From the 2000s: economic interests + humanitarian consideration
- ‘Korean Aid Model’ from the 2000s:
 - Leaving commercial aid model behind
 - Complying with DAC norms
 - Norms
 1. Advocating poverty reduction, recipient’s interests and ‘universal values’
 2. More humanitarian aid to Africa
 3. Untied aid
 - Partnership with international aid community

Chinese Aid

- Historical Evolution of Chinese aid
 - From the independence in 1949 to 1970s: motivated by south-south solidarity, Non-Alignment Movement and diplomatic competition with Taiwan
 - From 1980s: preparing for globalisation and WTO membership by 'Go Global' (*Zou Chuqu*)
 - 1990s: a series of institutional reforms
- Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence & Eight Principles for China's Aid to Third World Countries:
 - 'Win-win' principle
 - 'Go Global' strategy

Donors in North-east Asia

- Asian donors: pragmatic approach for economic development > normative approach for sustainable development
- Diversity in North-east Asian donors: Japan and South Korea are more active to sustainable development than China
- Why?
 - Identities differentiate their attitudes to international aid norms.

Why Different Attitudes to International Aid Norms?

Superpower Identity (China)

- A superpower identity: the most powerful drivers for alternative norm-makers
 - Traditional aid for ideological solidarity with newly independent countries until the 1980s
 - Recent Aid for a ‘rising superpower’
- Criticism and response: pursuing pragmatic a ‘mini-max’ approach

Why Different Attitudes to International Aid Norms?

Middle-Power Identity (Japan and South Korea)

- Middle power identity: norm-taker; sensitive to international pressure
 - Japan's aid reform: partially due to pressures from DAC
 - South Korea's aid reform: due to international criticism and long-standing ambition to gain the status of an 'advanced' or 'developed' country
- Middle powers: legitimise their aid by complying with international aid norms (including their advocacy to sustainable development)

Seed of Hope? ADB-GMS

- Objective of ADB-GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion): to promote sustainable economic development and poverty reduction by reinforcing economic linkages

- A seed of hope:

- ADB-GMS: impact on confidence building
- Japan-China Policy Dialogue on the Mekong Region in 2008: discussing that they not only assist infrastructure, but also co-operate in the area of environment protection, public health and human resource development.

Conclusion

- Japan, South Korea and China:
 - Attention: pragmatic approach to economic development > sustainable development
 - Identities and norms: very different between China and Japan/South Korea
- Trilateral relationship: sensitive and subject to political context
- Spill over: from mutual exchange and initial collaboration in economic assistance, then to regional co-operation for sustainable development

Thank you!