

UNILATERALISM VERSUS MULTILATERALISM? EMERGING COUNTRIES AND EMERGING MULTILATERALISMS¹

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Abstract

This paper discusses the diverse approaches of the emerging countries to multilateral aid. It compares the different approaches of two unique Asian partners to multilateral aid: Gulf donors and China. Secondly, Gulf donors, a culturally and religiously homogeneous group, share common norms. Those norms, prevailing regional members, facilitate to develop their unique multilateral aid systems on a regional level. Particularly, their Co-ordination Group is an unique regional co-ordination mechanism of their aid, which may function in a similar way to DAC. Meanwhile, Gulf donors are recently collaborating with the traditional multilateral aid. And thirdly, China, an emerging superpower, has not only the unique aid norms but also the outstanding power to institutionalise its new multilateral aid structure on a global level. While it demands more space and voice for emerging countries in the traditional multilateral aid, it succeeded in initiating new multilateralism, AIIB, NDB and OBOR.

Key words: emerging countries, multilateralisms, Gulf donors, China

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

From the end of the Second World War (WWII), western countries have established a number of multilateral institutions in the area of international development assistance. The Bretton Woods regime, comprising of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), was institutionalised as the embodiment of such multilateralism under the *Pax-Americana*. The World Bank and IMF are Post-war multilateral institutions, which have been developed on a global level (multilateral development banks: MDBs). Post-war multilateral institutions were also created on a regional level (regional development banks); the Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) are such examples.

Besides the establishment of these traditional multilateral and regional financial institutions, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has devoted its efforts to standardise aid programme, improve policy coherence, and promote more harmonisation of aid policy among its members through multilateral

¹ This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) 26301016 and (C) 17K03578, and Grant-in-Aid for Challenging Exploratory Research 26590022.

approach (Potter 2008, p. 4).

It is recently discussed that such a traditional multilateral aid architecture seems to face a number of crises. Both developed countries, which institutionalise and benefitted from it, and emerging countries engendered crises. OECD member countries, for instance, have weakened their support to multilateralism. Due to their unfavourable economic conditions and less trust of people in multilateral institutions, their multilateral aid of the total official development assistance (ODA) was reduced from 33 percent in 2001 to 28 percent in 2009 on average (North-South Institute 2011, pp. 15–6). Traditional donors are thus shifting to ‘bilateralisation of multilateral aid’ (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 594). Surprisingly, a traditional multilateral aid architecture is swayed by emerging unilateralism. US President Donald J. Trump has been asserting its unilateral action to the issues of diplomacy, security and international economy. Such a unilateralism from US is seemingly causing chains reactions to other countries, covering the world. The unilateralism may be seen in US aid policy, too. In fact, the Trump administration announced stopping its contribution to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). And even other traditional donors recently re-advocate the national interests in aid; Japan explicitly referred national interests in its aid in the Development Co-operation Charter in 2015 and unilaterally reserved its contribution to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) due to its frustration over the decision-making process for the Memory of the World in 2017. These episodes illustrate that multilateral aid seems to be replaced not only by bilateralisation but also unilateralisation.

The crises of traditional multilateral aid architecture also come from the initiatives of emerging countries. As Davis (2008, p. 6) indicates, international aid architecture is in the process of substantial transformation: aid-related actors increase, and ODA delivery channels are diversified. One of the most prominent elements is the growing presence of non-DAC assistance partners. Though comprehensive statistical data is not available, these non-DAC partners allocated US\$ 11–41.7 billion totally, occupying 8–31 percent of total aid of the world (Walz *et al.* 2011, p. 1). Woods (2007) points out that these non-DAC members are generally indifferent to the collaborations with the traditional multilateral aid framework. It is because their influences on and voice to the traditional multilateral institutions are limited while the traditional multilateral institutions were created on the basis of western norms, which are not necessarily advocated by the non-DAC members (Rowlands 2008: 16, 8).

However, it is true that non-DAC development partners are diverse and heterogeneous group (Kondoh *et al.* 2010). This implies that their perceptions to multilateral aid may also diverse. According to Tok *et al.* (2014, pp. 594–5), South Africa and Brazil, on the one hand, are collaborative to the traditional multilateral institutions, allocating their 75 percent of aid resources to multilateral aid institutions although they prefer allocating their fund to regional development banks, which are led by the South. China and India, on the other hand, restrict multilateral interactions and prefer bilateral co-operation (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 594).

1.2 Structure of the Paper

This paper discusses the diverse approaches of the emerging countries to multilateralism. The research questions of this paper are as follows:

1. Whereas unilateralism is globally emerging in diplomacy, security and international economy,

is it also endangering multilateral aid?

2. How has multilateralism in aid evolved?
3. How have emerging countries responded to multilateralism in aid?
4. What determine their diverse approaches to multilateralism in aid?

To examine these questions, this paper firstly reviews literature. Particularly, the historical evolution of multilateralism in aid is briefly reviewed, and it is followed by discussing that interests, norms and power may key elements to diversify the different approaches to multilateral aid. It will also suggest the analytical framework of this paper. This paper then follows a comparison of the different approaches of two unique Asian partners to multilateral aid: Gulf donors and China. These two cases share the similarity in the fact that two have been institutionalising their own multilateralism in aid. Secondly it will be discussed that Gulf donors institutionalised its own regional multilateralism while they also collaborate with the traditional multilateralism. Since the Gulf donors are a group, which is loosely integrated on the normative basis of religious solidarity, they developed their own multilateral aid. Their multilateralism is not necessarily conflictual to the traditional multilateral aid; therefore the Gulf donors are being recently establishing a number of communication channels with the traditional multilateral aid institutions. And thirdly, China is institutionalising a new multilateralism in a global dimension. Due to its superpower potentials, China has a grand strategy to maximise its interests in diplomacy, security and economy. China's norms on development co-operation recently gain more supports from developing countries, increasing its more normative power. With the comprehensively improved power, China is creating new multilateral aid institutions under its initiatives while it also claim for more space and voice for emerging countries, including China, at the traditional multilateral aid institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definitions of Key Terms

2.1.1 International Co-operation and Aid

This section starts with the definition of key terms. First, what is aid or ODA? OECD/DAC (2015) defines 'official development assistance (ODA)' as:

Grants or loans to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients (developing countries) and to multilateral agencies which are: (a) undertaken by the official sector; (b) with promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective; (c) at concessional financial terms (if a loan, having a grant element of at least 25 per cent). In addition to financial flows, technical co-operation is included in aid. Grants, loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. Transfer payments to private individuals (*e.g.* pensions, reparations or insurance payouts) are in general not counted.

However from Busan High-Level Forum (HLF) in 2011, the focus has shifted from 'aid' to 'development co-operation.' It is firstly because the concept of aid, as defined the above, seems to be too narrow to take into consideration of the increasing importance of emerging partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charitable organisations, south-south co-operation and triangular co-operation, and secondly because modality is being diversified (Tok *et al.* 2014, pp. 593–4). As Saidi *et al.* (2011, p. 7) argue, the assistance of emerging countries should be called

“international development co-operation,” which blurs the boundary between trade, investment and aid in the narrow sense, as well as the boundary between public and private (Kondoh 2015, p. 5). In addition, some emerging partners identify themselves as ‘development partners’ rather than ‘aid donors’ since, as China does, their assistance is based on the horizontal principle of equality and reciprocity, which is different from the vertical principle of donor-recipient relationship (Walz *et al.* 2011, pp. 16–7). Nonetheless, due to avoiding conceptual complexity, this paper includes all activities, such as financial assistance, economic co-operation, and South-South co-operation, to ‘aid’ regardless of the partner’s preference. In addition, emerging countries, which engage with such ‘aid’, are regarded as ‘donors’ although they prefer the term of ‘partners.’

2.1.2 Unilateralism, Bilateralism and Multilateralism

Secondly, what are unilateralism, bilateralism and multilateralism? Unilateralism is ‘a situation where the powerful state disrespects multilateral norms and adopts a self-centered foreign policy’ (Wedgwood 2002 in Tago 2017). Unilateralism in aid is the approach to development issues with fewer considerations of other donors and recipients by solely maximising donor’s national interests. Bilateralism emphasises joint actions between two countries to the development issues. Multilateralism refers to ‘an institutional form that co-ordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of “generalised” principles of conduct—that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence’ (Ruggie 1992; Gu 2017, p. 138). This definition suggests that multilateralism has two elements: indivisibility and expectation of diffuse reciprocity among members (Gu 2017, p. 138). Growing global challenges, such as food shortage, financial crisis and climate changes, require globally co-ordinated responses, professional multilateral institutions (North-South Institute 2011, p. 5).

It is emphasised that multilateralism has a number of merits: (1) multilateralism may facilitate international democracy since voices of small countries are heard while major powers are disciplined by international responsibility, (2) multilateralism improves accountability, transparency and sustainability, and (3) in the case of aid, multilateral aid may be more efficient², effective and responsive to recipient needs than bilateral aid, which may often serve to donor’s interests (Gu 2017, p. 138; Cooray *et al.* 2004, p. 10; North-South Institute 2011, p. 14).

2.2 Evolution of Traditional Multilateralism in Aid

2.2.1 International Aid Regime

Global issues, including poverty, require well co-ordinated joint actions among donors. Hence, multilateralism in aid is institutionalised as an international aid regime. Krasner (1983) defined an international regime in general as a set of explicit and implicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures in specific areas of international relations, into which the expectations of actors converge. Inada (2013, pp. 9–10) further developed the understanding of international aid regime by suggesting that the international aid regime means institutions in which specific development philosophies and approaches, established by major donors, influence other donors.

² Multilateral aid is thought to be more efficient since it facilitates large-scale projects, achieving scale economy and lessens transaction cost (North-South Institute 2011, p. 14; Martens 2005, p. 649).

2.2.2 Bretton Woods System

Most influential multilateralism in aid, institutionalised to an international aid regime, is the Bretton Woods system and the United Nations (UN). The Bretton Woods system was established in 1944 with the foundation of IMF to stabilise international currency and World Bank to finance economic reconstruction and development. This institutionalisation was led by US's anti-communist strategy.

From the late 1950s to the 1960s, the basic norms that developed countries have a due responsibility to assist developing countries were internationally shared, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and OECD were created. In the 1970s, the decline of US hegemony and *Pax-Americana* paved the way to *Pax-Consortis*; mutual co-ordination and collaboration in the international community became the key *modus operandi* for multilateralism. When the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) regime was institutionalised in the 1980s, the World Bank and IMF increased its influence as the international aid regime; their norms constrained both donors and recipients to accept and implement SAPs. The poverty reduction strategy regime in the 1990s further strengthened the influence of the Bretton Woods system over domestic development policy in recipient countries (Inada 2013, pp. 13–8).

Multilateral aid has been institutionalised not only on a global level, but also a regional level. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, more than 20 regional development banks were also founded. These regionally founded multilateral development banks (MDBs), ADB, AfDB, IDB, for instances, share similar governance structures and operations with the World Bank. Therefore, these MDBs were regarded not as a threat to Bretton Woods system but merely as 'regional copy of the World Bank' (Wang 2017, pp. 113, 5).

2.2.3 DAC Aid Model

OECD was founded in 1961. DAC of OECD has been active to formulate international aid norms to define effective and appropriate aid. Based on the norms, DAC has been making an effort to share modalities-related norms such as ODA/GNP ratio, grant elements (GE), untied aid, project evaluation methods, and streamlining technical co-operation. DAC also has even been building norms on substantial aid issues like gender, environment, participatory development, democratic governance, and peace-building (Inada 2013, pp. 111–2; Kondoh 2015, p. 9). Particularly the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005, endorsed by 91 members, advocates a multilateral approach to improve aid effectiveness by pointing out that collaboration among donors improve aid effectiveness. As the multilateral approach, both donors and recipients should respect principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, result-based management, and mutual accountability (Reilly 2012, p. 73).

In addition to the Paris Declaration, DAC norms may be further expanded by recommending new DAC members to accept such norms. DAC has *Aide Memoire on the Admission of New DAC Members*, stipulating a guideline to accept DAC membership (Kim 2010, p. 4). Before the admission to DAC, donors are evaluated in terms of their aid strategy and policy, their institutional framework, their aid volume and their aid monitoring/evaluation systems, and after the admission, they are required to regularly report the progress of DAC recommendations, submit annual statistical data on ODA, attend at all DAC meetings, and submit annual review of their aid (Kim 2010, p. 4).

Based on these norms how aid should be, DAC implies desirable image on aid, which all donor

countries are supposed to conform, the 'DAC aid model.'

2.3 Origins of Multilateralism

How is multilateralism in aid institutionalised? As origins of multilateralism, this paper focuses interests, norms and power of donors. Firstly, as neo-realism argues, it is power, particularly overwhelming power of hegemons, that establishes the international order. Hegemons exercise their power to maximise their national interests through international regime built under their initiatives. Historically, it is only such hegemons as Portugal in the 16th century, Netherland in the 17th century, Britain in 18th–19th centuries, and US from the 20th century that had their own military and economic powers necessary to realise trade regime and international peace under new international order (Gilpin 1987)³.

Nonetheless this argument merely emphasises the strategies and roles of traditional hegemons and superpowers in the west; it lacks the perspectives to emerging courtiers.

Secondly, as constructivism argues, the expansion of norms may promote the enlargement of international aid regime. Constructivism focuses roles of non-material elements such as idea and norms, rather than power and interests. Norms are defined as a set of expectations on appropriate behaviours (Reilly 2012, p. 73). They include laws, ethics, morals and customs. In short, it is a set of 'ought tos.' International norms are referred to as 'ideas of shared expectations on appropriate behaviours of specific actors in the international community' or 'codes of behaviours which are regarded as the appropriate for most of actors in the international community' (Inada 2013, pp. 19–20; Kondoh 2015, p. 2). It is the UN and Bretton Woods system that have been leading major aid-related norms why donors should aid and how aid should be.

2.4 Analytical Framework

Based on the literature review, this paper suggests an analytical framework to compare Gulf donors and China as follows. Firstly, the explained variables are donor's approaches to multilateralism in aid. To operationalise them, this paper analyses (1) donors' approaches to the traditional multilateralism, and (2) donors' initiatives to their own multilateralism.

Secondly, this paper identifies interests, norms and power of donors as the explanatory variables. The first explanatory variable, interests, which are to be achieved by aid, are classified into diplomatic, security, economic, humanitarian and cultural. Harris (1997, p. 135), more specifically, classified the benefits of the commitment to multilateral aid. Donors may participate in multilateral aid for political gains (better international status and credibility, and improving national legitimacy) and for non-political interests (participation in decision-making process, access to specific economic interests, exchange of aid-related information, and acquisition of technical knowledge and expertises. Harris (1997, p. 135) also indicates that donors may incur some costs of their commitment to multilateral aid; donors are required to bear their burden of multilaterally determined obligations at

³ It also implies that, if hegemons decline their power and fail to incur its cost to maintain their international order, and if the benefits derived from international public goods such as international peace and free trade, decrease, hegemons may weaken their commitment to the international regime, which may further lessen the provision of international public goods, whereby international politics and economy may be destabilised (Yamamoto 2008, p. 75). The emerging US unilateralism may illustrate this point.

the expense of individual policy autonomy.

Norms, as the second explanatory variable to determine donors' approaches to multilateral aid, may have a considerable influence on the perceptions of policy-makers, civil society groups and people in donors on roles and responsibility of the states, meanings, goals, priorities of development, and desirable aid schemes.

The third explanatory variable, power, is a necessary element to realise the expected interests in multilateral aid. The scope of power is broad; it covers from military power, diplomatic power, and economic power to normative power. If a donor has power, it could lead multilateralism and maximise the expected interests, while it could also minimise the due costs attached to the involvement to multilateralism. Particularly, if a donor could rewrite the traditional norms and proliferate its new norms, which are more attractive to other countries, it creates favourable multilateral environment to such a donor. Hence to rewrite traditional norms and diffuse new norms require the basis of donor's power. This could be called 'normative power.' By contrast, norms may be also used more aggressively to improve diplomatic, economic influence (Manners 2002). For example, the European Union (EU) has incorporated a number of norms such as human rights, democracy and rule of law to the core principle of EU diplomacy. Through this norm-based principle, EU attempts regime changes of other countries (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 3). Normative power may thus be defined in a two way: (1) a capacity to construct and diffuse the concept of 'normal' (Manners 2009), and (2) a capacity to construct the international community through normative influence, rather than military and economic power. The concept of normative power is useful; some donors, probably including Japan, may have incompatible norms to DAC's norms, but it seems not necessarily to be successful to diffuse them to other donors and recipients. Therefore, alternative norms are just a necessary condition, not a sufficient condition, to build new multilateral aid.

In concluding this section, what is the key to understand donors' approaches to multilateral aid is who have interests, norms and power, and what interests, norms and power they have. The following two sections analyse the empirical cases in terms of analytical variables as discussed the above.

3. Gulf Donors' Approaches to Regional Multilateralism

3.1 Gulf Donors' Approaches to Multilateralism

Gulf donors have been known as the 'generous' donors and they are neither new nor emerging donors. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been visible from the 1970s (Tok 2015, p. 2; Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 591). In fact, these three Arab nations established individual national aid agencies from the 1960s: the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (1961), UAE's Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (1971) and the Saudi Fund for Development (1974) (Walz *et al.* 2011, pp. 3–4). Recently, Qatar has been remarkably committing its donorship. Qatar has experienced the highest GDP growth rate in 2010 (19.4 percent) and two digit growth for years. With the ample revenue from the remarkable economic growth, the Qatari government allocated US\$ 729 million of US\$ 44 billion of the total government budget to its aid in 2011. The Qatar Development Fund was founded to disburse US\$ 10.8 billion to aid governmental sectors and US\$ 4.2 billion to assist non-governmental sectors from 2006 and 2012 (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 602).

These Gulf donors, preferring their bilateral aid, have been generally careful to commit to the traditional multilateral aid (Tok 2015: 4–5). Bilateral aid of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE occupies 89 percent of their total aid from 1995 to 2007. Meanwhile the share of the multilateral aid of Arab countries in their overall aid remains 13 percent from 1973 to 2008. It is considerably low as compared with the DAC average, 30 percent (Tok *et al.* 2014, pp. 597–8).

These statistical data does not necessarily mean that Gulf donors are reluctant to participate in the traditional multilateralism in aid. Gulf donors have been making their contributions to the UN organisations such as the UNRWA for regional stability and solidarity (Tok 2015, p. 5). While Saudi Arabia remains minimum collaboration with western donors, UAE has been actively participating in setting agenda of international humanitarian assistance and development aid with traditional donor community. To take a concrete example, UAE is positive to build collaboration relationship with traditional donors and traditional multilateral institutions for multilateral aid policy co-ordination, by joining the Donor Support Group of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2006 and the Donor Support Group of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2009 for the first non-western and Arab donor (Binder *et al.* 2010, pp. 19, 22–3). Kuwait, despite few commitments to the traditional multilateral aid, also signed on to the agreement with OCHA in 2012 to mutually and regularly consult the issues on humanitarian assistance, information management and fund raising (Tok 2015, p. 7).

Gulf donors are rather compatible with norms set by traditional donors. The ODA/GNI ration of Gulf donors from 1973 to 1990 was 1.5 percent; more than two times higher than the UN target (0.7 percent), and five times of DAC average. Despite some decrease in the 1990s, their ODA/GNI ratio is still high: that of UAE have been maintaining 1.34 percent in 2013 and 1.17 percent in 2014 while Saudi Arabia also remains 1.12 percent in 2003 and 1.26 percent in 2008 (Tok 2015, pp. 2, 4). In addition to their generous aid volume, Gulf donors support internationally agreed development agendas, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These donors adhere to donor-recipient dialogues for aid effectiveness, which are also internationally agreed (Tok *et al.* 2014, pp. 598–9). At the Busan HLF in 2011, Gulf donors aligned with donor co-ordination and welcomed more dialogues between the southern donors and the northern donors (Tok 2015, p. 7). They are also positive to reform their aid to conform multilaterally agreed DAC aid norms. While the multilateral aid of Gulf donors is well documented, their data on the bilateral aid is less consistent and less transparent. UAE thus published the report on their aid flows in 2010 for the first time (Tok *et al.* 2014, pp. 600–1). These features illustrate that Gulf donors generally comply with practices and norms, which the traditional multilateralism recommends.

Gulf donors, nevertheless, have several qualitative differences as well. Their aid modality concentrates on loans to develop economic sectors (infrastructure, energy and industry) rather than social sectors (Kragelund 2008, p. 567). Although they are not eloquent rebutters in normative debates how aid should be, Gulf donors do not accept conditionality as DAC do. These donors participate in the traditional multilateral aid to reinforce their visibility and voices inside the traditional system. By doing so, they expect to reshape their position in the traditional multilateralism (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 596; Tok 2015, p. 6).

Whereas Gulf donors are generally collaborative to the traditional multilateral aid, they have their own strategy to institutionalise their own multilateralism in aid. Actually, donors in Gulf region have

developed and highly institutionalised their own multilateral aid systems, which have the unique institutional origins. Currently, Arab nations had 10 multilateral institutions, which have been established by their initiatives.

The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (Arab Fund or AFESD) was established in Kuwait in 1974. This multilateral aid institution offers concessional loans and small-scale technical co-operations to assist economic and social development of Arab countries and to promote regional integration. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB), founded in Jeddah in 1975, has 56 members. IDB, the largest aid implementation agency, has a mandate to finance economic development and social progress of members and Muslim community. Since IDB emphasises that all of its activities and operations should conform to Shariah, interests on loans are not allowed (Walz *et al.* 2011, p. 13; Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 597)⁴.

In addition to these regional multilateral aid institutions, it should be noted that Gulf donors highly institutionalised its co-ordination mechanism on a regional level. In 1975, Gulf donors established the Co-ordination Group of Arab Nation and Regional Development Institutions (Co-ordination Group) as the umbrella organisation of 10 bilateral/multilateral institutions⁵ in order to co-ordinate aid of Gulf donors (Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies 2017, p. 3). This Co-ordination Group enables jointly to design aid policy, to share best practices and to promote harmonisation among members by facilitating active communication and co-operation (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 599). To take an example of the 82nd meeting of the Co-ordination Group, held on the 17th of September 2018, the topic was how Gulf donors should collaborate with the UN and DAC (OPEC Fund for International Development 2018).

Gulf donors also introduced their unique guidelines on procurement and disbursement process. Arab Co-ordination Group's Procurement Guidelines stipulate common procedures; procurements should be based on competitive bid. These guidelines exclude tied aid from their multilateral aid (Walz *et al.* 2011, p. 13).

In short, Gulf donors seem to pursue the dual approaches; they have developed their own region-based multilateral aid; but they are also co-operative to the traditional multilateral aid.

⁴ As regards other Arab multilateral aid system, the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), based in Vienna, offers development assistance for south-south solidarity. Of 12 OFID members, 6 members are from Arab nations, which contribute 65 percent of the direct operation account (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 597). The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) established its own department of humanitarian affairs in 2008 to implement humanitarian assistance and policy-making, and policy dialogues with humanitarian NGOs in OIC members (Binder *et al.* 2010, p. 10). The Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), composed of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain, is the 'powerful union' to co-ordinate humanitarian responses among members (Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies 2017, p. 4). The Global Donors Forum, functioning as biennial meetings for the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists, invests social sectors (Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies 2017, p. 4).

⁵ The Co-ordination Group is currently composed of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Gulf Programme for Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, OFID, the Qatar Development Fund and the Saudi Fund for Development (OPEC Fund for International Development 2018).

3.2 Origins of Gulf Donor's Approaches

Why do Gulf donors adopt the dual approaches to multilateral aid? Firstly, their interests in multilateral aid matter and do not matter. As already mentioned, Gulf donors advocate the joint effort to aid effectiveness, and they pay little attentions to their material gains in multilateral aid (Tok *et al.* 2014, p. 600). Therefore, economic interests are not influential to determine their approach to multilateral aid. However, more practically and diplomatically, their commitment to the traditional multilateralism is expected not only to improve the transparency and accountability of their aid, but also to increase their global soft power and visibility in the international community, which may legitimate their aid (Tok 2015, p. 7). In the case of their aid to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), donors have explicit interests in gaining recipient's diplomatic support to the Palestinian issue (Lancaster 2007, pp. 32–3).

Secondly, the approach of Gulf donors to multilateral aid is influenced by their norms, religious solidarity. Their major recipients had concentrated on MENA since both donors and recipients are bounded by the same cultural and religious ties. These cultural and religious proximities would not only increase cohesiveness between donors and recipients as well as among donors; but they could be a common asset and platform to facilitate Gulf donors to mutually collaborate, set common priorities, and share expertises (Walz *et al.* 2011, p. 13; Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies 2017, p. 5).

Thirdly, does power matter with Gulf donors' approach to multilateralism? Although Gulf donors are generous as a group, individual donors in Gulf area are neither necessarily large nor influential donors. For them, formulating a group through their multilateral framework may strengthen their presence and regional power in the international community. In addition, Gulf donors have been endowed with the revenue of petro-dollars. This results in increasing the economic power of Gulf donors, functioning as one of the origins to build their own bilateral and multilateral aid (Lancaster 2007, pp. 33–4).

In sum, Gulf donors, motivated by the norms of religious solidarity and endowed with their abundant petro-dollar, have institutionalised their own multilateral aid mechanisms on a regional level. Most elements of their aid are not necessarily conflictual to the traditional multilateral aid. Hence, Gulf donors could pursue dual approach to multilateralism: the institutionalisation of their unique multilateralism on a regional level as well as the compliance with the traditional multilateral aid.

4. Superpower's Initiatives for Global Multilateralism

4.1 China's Approaches to Multilateralism

4.1.1 Traditional Multilateralism

China's approach to multilateralism has been changing by timing and according to issues dealt with multilateralism. From 1949 to 1971, China was excluded from the UN and did not participate in international organisations. For China's perspective, Bretton Woods system was recognised as 'the instrument of capitalist exploitation' (Harris 1997, pp. 135–6). It was this background that China actively promoted the Non-Aligned Movement as an alternative to the traditional multilateralism. Even after China recovered its seat for UN in 1971, it preferred the bilateral approach in the

international community.

However, China perceived that bilateralism alone was not sufficient to construct its position as a superpower in the 1990s (Rozman 1999, p. 392). Hirsch *et al.* (2006, pp. iv–v) indicate that China shifted its diplomacy from bilateralism to multilateralism. Accordingly, China has been gradually accepting multilateralism: in 1971 when China recovered its seat in UN, China participated in only one inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), whilst it participated in 49 IGOs in 2003 (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, p. 273).

Although China quantitatively expanded its engagement in multilateralism from the 1990s, its engagement is also made in a complex and selective manner. To analyse the complex and selective engagement of China to multilateralism, the argument of Wuthnow *et al.* (2012) is relevant. According to Wuthnow *et al.* (2012, p. 277), China's multilateral diplomacy after 1978 has not been monolithic; rather it mixed four approaches, changeable accordingly to timing and contexts (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, p. 277). The first approach to multilateralism is 'watching.' China carefully watches to learn what international organisations do, how power is exercised internally, and how China's interests fit. This approach does not challenge rules and processes of the traditional multilateralism. Wuthnow *et al.* (2012, p. 274) indicates that China often adopts this approach immediately after it was admitted to a multilateral organisation. The second approach is 'engaging.' As gaining more experiences and confidence, China may play more active and assertive roles in multilateral negotiations. By building coalition with other members, resorting a veto, modifying agendas, persuasion, and doing backroom campaign, China may press others to accept its own objectives (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, pp. 274–5). This assertive approach is still pursued in the framework of traditional multilateralism; it would not challenge rules and authority of the traditional multilateralism. 'Circumventing' is the third approach to be chosen when China could not ensure its net benefit by pursuing its interests in the framework of existing multilateralism. China would then operate outside of the existing multilateral architecture, and co-operate to build new international regime, which may be compatible with China's objectives (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, pp. 275–6). The final approach is 'shaping.' This approach refers to a more assertive choice for discontented China to shape rules and procedures to match its national interests (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, p. 276).

In sum, China has not pursued a single approach to multilateralism. According to different timing and different issues, it has strategically chosen different approaches to multilateralism. Recently, too, China's approaches to multilateral aid are not monolithic. It would be clear if its unique aid is compared with the DAC aid model.

China's definition of 'foreign assistance', for instance, is broader than that of the DAC; it not only includes the schemes of grant and concessional loan, but also commercial loans and cultural exchanges, which may be allocated to governments, research institutes, private companies and educational institutions. It is because, from its actual development experiences, China understands that a trinity of trade-investment-aid has synergic effects on promoting economic development, employment opportunities, export growth and foreign currency accumulation on recipient part as well as contributing more business opportunities and export growth on China's part. In short, it is this trinity that facilitates reciprocity and win-win between recipients and China (Shimomura 2013, pp. 180–1). For aid to be compatible with the principles of reciprocity and win-win, China's aid should be tied with Chinese economic interests. There are aid projects to seek competitive bid,

however those projects were substantially tied; only pre-qualified Chinese companies may be allowed to tender, and the Export-Import Bank of China has concessional loan guidelines, which restrict exporters and contractor only to Chinese companies (Brautigam 2009, p. 152). By contrast to its tight conditions on procurement, China is a less demanding donor in terms of political conditionality, except 'the One China Policy' (Brautigam 2009, pp. 149–50; 284).

China's unique approach to the traditional multilateralism is also seen in its distance to donor co-ordination under the aid effectiveness agenda. Although China dispatched its delegation to the Paris HLF and signed up the declaration, it did so as a recipient. In fact, China has been less positive to multilateral co-ordination among donors. Consequently, while China has accepted the DAC norms of ownership, alignment and result-based management, it has not engaged with harmonisation, mutual accountability, conditionality support for local civil society, 'aid only benefits recipient' (Reilly 2012, p. 78).

Though its remote distance to the traditional multilateral aid remains, China is approaching to the traditional multilateralism, too. For example, China has been criticised for less commitment for debt problems of recipients. The traditional donors argue that China has been getting free-ride on the international efforts to cancel US\$ 43 billion of Africa's debt. These donors also indicated that the excess volume and less concessionality of China's loans deteriorated the debt sustainability of low income countries (LICs) (Reisen 2007, p. 1). The traditional donors expressed their concerns that China's 'debt-trap diplomacy' by taking an example of Hambantota Port, Sri Lanka. It should be noted, however, that China's aid contribute recipients' export growth and increased their foreign currency exchange reserves, which further improve their weak debt sustainability (Reisen 2007, p. 5). In addition, although China had been less positive with debt cancellation initiatives since they are thought to be wrong incentives to recipients, China declared at the first Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 that RMB 10 Billion of debt of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs) and less developed countries (LDCs) were to be cancelled (Brautigam 2009, p. 128). China has already cancelled RMB 18.96 billion of the debt of 35 African countries until 2009 (Saidi *et al.* 2011, p. 18)⁶. In addition, among the traditional multilateralism, G20 is a useful platform to increase the power and to articulate the interests of emerging countries. Therefore China has been participating in this multilateral framework very actively (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, p. 283).

In short, China has been recently participating in the traditional multilateral aid only in a partial and selective manner. As Suzuki (2013, p. 260) indicates, international aid regime of traditional multilateral aid benefits China relatively less. This is contrasting to international trade regime, in which China's participation would increase its economic benefits.

4.1.2 New Multilateralism

After China established its bilateral institutions of aid policy-making and implementation in the 1990s⁷, it is materialising to its initiatives to institutionalise its new multilateralism, the Asian

⁶ Similarly to its more collaborative approach to debt problems, China faced the criticism to its low commitment for environmental protection and aid transparency, and has been gradually adjusting its approach. For example, the Export-Import Bank of China released guidelines of social and environmental impact assessment in 2008 and the White Paper of its external assistance were released in 2011 (Brautigam 2009, pp. 12, 303; Reilly 2012, p. 75).

⁷ In 1994, China founded its policy banks: the China Development Bank, the Export Import Bank of

Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the New Development Bank (NDB or BRICS Bank), and the One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR).

Despite huge investment demands for infrastructural development in Asia⁸, the World Bank and ADB could commit only US\$ 10–20 billion annually. In financial terms, it is this background that the AIIB is expected to supplement insufficient supply for investment. In 2015, AIIB was founded with the 57 Prospective Founding Members (PFM) and more than 20 ‘economic areas’, which are more than 67 members of ADB. According to Gu (2017), AIIB is a purely multilateral institution. Firstly, AIIB is the first international financial bank, which is jointly initiated by Asian emerging and developing countries. Secondly, although China has prominent influence with 26.06 percent of votes, which is higher than US’s votes of 16.65 percent in the World Bank, AIIB emphasises consensus-seeking among members (Gu 2017, pp. 138, 47, 49, 54; Wang 2017, p. 116). Thirdly, AIIB is learning from the traditional multilateral aid institutions to upgrade its governance and operations. AIIB introduced the Environmental and Social Framework to address environmental and social risks of its projects, which has been already enforced from 2016. This framework facilitates voices of all stakeholders to be heard in the course of project formulation and implementation (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 13; Gu 2017, pp. 146, 56)⁹. Fourthly, AIIB is aiming at building collaborative relationship with traditional multilateral aid institutions such as ADB, AfDB, IADB, the West African Development Bank, and Caribbean Development Bank (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 7). The AIIB signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ADB in 2016 to co-finance aid projects for sustainable development, and agreed with the World Bank on the framework of co-finance (Wang 2017, p. 115).

In addition to AIIB, the New Development Bank (NDB) was founded jointly by BRICS members¹⁰ in 2015 to materialise aid flow (Stiglitz 2015). NDB is a joint venture of BRICS to assist infrastructural and sustainable development in developing countries (Wang 2017, p. 113). Similar to AIIB, NDB officially manifested that it complies with rules, which have been widely accepted by the traditional multilateral aid institutions. Both AIIB and NDB employed a number of staff members, who have professional careers at traditional MDBs, as their senior management staff (Wang 2017, p. 116).

Although both AIIB and NDB have the enormous budget scale and consequently huge potential influence on the multilateral aid system, both new multilateral aid institutions seem to be rather ‘watching’ than ‘circumventing’ the traditional multilateralism and ‘shaping’ totally new norms in the traditional multilateral aid.

OBOR is the conception of mega economic zone, which covers Asia, Europe to Africa, initiated by China (Fujimaru 2019, p. 172). OBOR has objectives to integrate markets, co-ordinate economic policies, and to establish the framework of regional economic co-operation among members (Fujimaru 2019, p. 173). Although this huge conception of OBOR may potentially challenge the traditional multilateral aid, the guiding principles of OBOR are derived from the UN Charter and

China, and the China Agricultural Development Bank.

⁸ Total demands from 2010 to 2020 are estimated as US\$ 8 trillion.

⁹ There are NGOs, which are critical to the framework for the weak enforcement mechanism, and short-term and superficial consultation with stakeholders, for instances (Wang 2017, p. 116).

China's Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, mixing both the traditional aid norms and Chinese aid norms. The combination of both norms has succeeded in attracting the commitment of overwhelming number of countries and international organisations¹¹.

What would imply from the cases of AIIB, NDB and OBOR is that China is very careful to take approaches of 'circumventing' or 'shaping.' As Wuthnow *et al.* (2012, pp. 276–7) precisely find, China often starts from 'watching' or 'engaging' approaches when it admitted to multilateral systems, regardless of the fact whether such systems are initiated by the traditional donors or China. But it does not necessarily mean that China would continue to pursue the same approach to AIIB, NDB and OBOR for the long terms. It could be indicated, at least in this time, that China is institutionalising its own multilateral aid on a global level, which is compatible with its own norms and experiences of development.

4.2 Origins of China's Approaches

To build its own multilateralism on a global level is a highly costly project. Nonetheless, why has China engaged with this huge task? Firstly, from political, diplomatic and security interests, China has a long history to seek an alternative multilateralism outside the traditional order by building a coalition with the Non-Aligned Movement since it was excluded from the UN for 22 years. This multilateral platform became an important instrument for China due to subsequent Sino-Soviet Split and a long-standing diplomatic competition against Taiwan. From the 1990s, China has gradually been committed to the multilateralism such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and from the 2000s, China became more sensitive to secure the stability of sea lanes and neighbouring countries in Central Asia for security reasons. These security considerations are some of the backgrounds of OBOR. In addition, China, as gaining its confidence as a responsible member in the international community, is demanding due voices in the multilateral institutions. Nonetheless, emerging countries, including China, perceived that they are underrepresented in the international community, where they are not allowed to participate in decision-making and even their voices are not heard sufficiently. Therefore, while developing countries, particularly, influential emerging countries, jointly demand the traditional multilateral institutions to reform voting structure, allocation of director seats and staff recruitment, they also established the new multilateral aid systems (Gu 2017, p. 142). This does also fit in China's diplomatic interests, more voices in the international community (Wang 2017, p. 116).

As often indicated, China's aid has keen pragmatic economic interests in securing markets and natural resources for it (Potter 2008, p. 10). Brautigam (2009, p. 86) identifies reasons for China's engagement to Africa as (1) to prepare for WTO admission, (2) to secure natural resources, and (3) to diversify its trade, all of which are motivated by its economic logics. Wang (2017) further discusses that OBOR is a tool to solve China's domestic problems: (1) domestic excess production capacity, (2) insufficient natural resources, and (3) national security, affected by the domestic economic disparity and unstable neighbouring countries in Central Asia. Fujimaru (2019, p. 177) is correct to indicate that the OBOR is the initiative to amalgamate both domestic and external policy

¹⁰ Namely, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

¹¹ In the end of 2016, more than 100 countries supported or participated in OBOR while 39 countries and international organisations concluded 46 collaboration agreements with OBOR (Fujimaru 2019, p. 173).

of China. It should be also noted that China needed to replace the obsolete legitimacy of socialist ideology with continuing economic development. AIIB, NDB and OBOR are also expected to benefit China's continual economic development.

Secondly, China has been constructing different identities and norms of international co-operations. Unlike the traditional donors, China has the common identities of the colonised nation and peer of the South with other developing countries. They became historical assets to construct China's different norms of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and prevail them to the recipients. For instance, they clearly define that win-win co-operation, mutual support and respect, and non-interference in internal affairs are China's key principles for external assistance (Rowlands 2008, p. 7). The Eight Principles for China's Aid to Third World Countries offer more practical and pragmatic guideline for its aid, mentioning 'no strings attached', 'equality and reciprocity' and 'non-interference in internal affairs'. Such identities and norms are widely accepted and positively appreciated among most developing countries (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 12). These pragmatic norms have driven its bilateral aid, but they are also translated as the key norms of China's new multilateral aid mechanism. Peng *et al.* (2016, p. 5) argues that AIIB's policy succeeded the principles of China's external assistance. The Article 13 of the Articles of Agreement (AOA) defined that '[t]he Bank shall ensure that each of its operations complies with the Bank's operational and financial policies, including without limitation, policies addressing environmental and social impacts'. This implies that the AIIB would not accept the norms of conditionality. What is noted is that China has gained a global infrastructure to actively disseminate its own aid norms both for and through the AIIB (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 6).

Thirdly, it is clear that China has been remarkably developing its power necessary to build a new international aid regime under its initiatives. It has experienced more than 10 percent annual economic growth for two decades after its open door policy; consequently it has reached to the position of the second largest economic power in the world. Its outstanding economic development provides China with abundant financial resources to build its multilateral platform to provide public goods and to proliferate Chinese aid norms (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 4). Nonetheless, China seems to be in a cautious position to exercise its own power. China may 'shape' new and alternative multilateral order only in limited occasions when it could expect broad political support from other emerging or developing countries by building coalitions with them (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, p. 287). So far, China has been careful to be a single challenger against the traditional multilateral aid. In this sense, although Naím (2007) is very critical to China's 'harmful' 'rogue aid', which unilaterally consider its own exclusive interests, China's approach to multilateral aid is never unilateral.

Then, the question is whether China would continue to pursue its careful approach as 'watching' to the multilateral aid? Reilly (2012, pp. 72–3) classifies donor's approach to norms into two types. The first approach as 'norm-takers' is to passively accept major international aid norms (Reilly 2012, p. 72). Despite its initiatives to institutionalise the new multilateral aid mechanism, China has been carefully 'watching' their operations. However, just watching operations of multilateralism could not realise its huge potential; China's interests in AIIB, NDB and OBOR would not be maximised. The second approach of 'norm-makers' is to actively promote their own alternative set of norms, derived from their own experiences and ideologies. By making and prevailing alternative norms, China would be able to increase its normative power to maximise its interests through the new multilateral aid. Although its actions are supposed to be embedded in multilateral co-ordination, as gaining more

experiences and confidence as the leaders of its new multilateral aid, China might take full advantages of AIIB to potentially increase their 'assertive' claims.

The normative power of China seems have been enhanced. China succeeded in building a coalition with other emerging and developing countries to demand governance reforms of the World Bank and IMF. In 2009, BRICS Group has demanded the Bretton Woods system (1) to transfer 7 percent of votes from developed to developing countries, (2) to nominate two representatives from developing countries to the IMF management. Accordingly, the World Bank pledged to transfer 3.13 percent of votes from developed to developing countries in 2010 (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 8)¹². The IMF also prepared its governance reform although it was delayed due to the resistance of the US Congress (Gu 2017, p. 142). The normative power of the Chinese multilateral aid is also increased by the positive reactions of African countries. Some African countries, Ethiopia, for instance, have appreciated Chinese economic development model and unconditional aid, as well as introduced state-led governance of China, which are strikingly different from the Washington Consensus model. As a result, Africa perceives China as 'a reliable economic partner' (Peng *et al.* 2016, pp. 10–1)¹³.

In sum, China has been constructing its own multilateral aid on a global level. It not only has certain diplomatic, security and economic interests in institutionalising its new multilateralism but also has the unique norms and power, which are widely accepted by recipient countries. While China demands more space and voices in the traditional multilateralism, it is also establishing its new multilateral aid on a global level. This would not mean China's immediate challenge to the traditional multilateral aid; but it has potentials.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Findings

This paper has discussed the impact of emerging countries on the multilateral aid. What was found is that, unlike the issues of trade and security, the issue of aid is not ruled by the dichotomous debate of 'unilateralism or multilateralism.' Although unilateral responses to aid are also seen in some developed countries, they are neither attractive choices nor mainstream aid policy. Empirical cases of Gulf donors and China illustrated that their approaches to multilateral aid differ according to timing and issues. Gulf donors, culturally and religiously homogeneous group, are relatively easier to share common norms. Those norms, prevailing among regional members, facilitate to develop their unique multilateral aid systems on a regional level (see Table 1). Particularly, the Co-ordination Group is a unique regional co-ordination mechanism of their aid, which may function in a similar way to DAC. Meanwhile, Gulf donors are recently collaborating with the traditional multilateral aid. China, an emerging superpower, has unique aid norms and outstanding power to institutionalise its new multilateral aid structure on a global level. While it demands more space and voice for emerging countries in the traditional multilateral aid systems, it succeeded in initiating new multilateralism, AIIB, NDB and OBOR. It has huge potentials to challenge the traditional multilateralism; however

¹² Votes of China increased from 2.77 percent to 4.42 percent in 2010 (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 8).

¹³ China's model is appreciated not only by recipient governments on African continent, but also by civil society (more than 60 percent of civil society groups evaluate China's contribution to high or some extent), and university students (74 percent of them understand that Chinese-style development

China carefully seeks a ‘watching’ approach to operate new multilateral aid institutions for a while. The approaches and attitudes of emerging countries to multilateralism are diverse according to timing and issues, and they may be determined by what interests, norms and power donors have.

Table 1 Diverse Approaches to Multilateral Aid

	Gulf Donors	China
Nature of Donor’s Multilateralism		
- Approaches to Traditional Multilateral Aid	Collaborative	Case-by-case
- Approaches to Own Multilateral Aid	Regional	Global
Origins of Donor’s Multilateralism		
- Interests	Diplomatic	Diplomatic, Security, Economic
- Norms	Religious Solidarity	Pragmatism
- Power	Regional	Global

Source: Prepared by the author.

5.2 Implications

What are implications of these findings? Firstly, although a debate of ‘unilateralism vs. multilateralism’ would not be appropriate in the area of multilateral aid, new and diverse multilateralisms are obviously emerging. Unilateral aid is not collapsing the traditional multilateral aid; emerging diverse multilateralisms are relativising the centrality of traditional multilateralism in aid. In 2009, BRICs, before the admission of South Africa in 2011, demanded the establishment of the multi-polar world order, by mentioning ‘the more diversified international monetary system’ (Wuthnow *et al.* 2012, pp. 283–4). Actually, the traditional multilateral aid institutions have already anticipated it, too; the ADB has once welcomed ‘the competitive pluralism’ in international aid architecture (Stiglitz 2015). What should be noted is that the initiatives of emerging countries finally succeeded in creating their own multilateralism on a global level. Yet, as frequently mentioned, China has not shown explicit challenges against the traditional multilateral aid. It tries to supplement the traditional multilateralism in aid¹⁴.

Secondly, it would be appropriate timing when diverse multilateralisms in aid are emerging that donors rethink relevances and comparative advantages of individual multilateralisms. The traditional multilateral aid would require to critically revise the relevances and effectiveness of their approaches. Particularly this is the case when as many as 250 existing multilateral institutions overlap their mandates and objectives, resulting in inefficiency (North-South Institute 2011, pp. 5–6). Multilateralism in aid may be in crisis in the sense that some ineffective and inefficient multilateralism may be sorted out through competitive ‘market selection.’

is the positive model to their countries) (Peng *et al.* 2016, p. 11).

¹⁴ The new multilateral aid systems could fill the gap with the traditional: (1) providing more funds, (2) designing aid programmes based on China’s experiences and knows-hows, (3) more deeply understanding the context of partners, (4) taking broader approach to development, and (5)

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