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Japanese and South Korean Environmental Aid: What are their life stories?

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DIIS Working Paper 2013:08

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Part of this study was conducted under the research project 'Development Strategies of Nordic and Asian Countries – understanding cultural relations' at Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, partially funded by the Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation (No.12-8). The authors would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the officials of the Japanese and South Korean governments and to thank our commentators.

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DIIS WORKING PAPER 2013:08
© The authors and DIIS, Copenhagen 2013
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Cover Design: Carsten Schiøler
Layout: Allan Lind Jørgensen
Printed in Denmark by Vesterkopi AS

ISBN: 978-87-7605-557-8 (print)
ISBN: 978-87-7605-558-5 (pdf)

Price: DKK 25.00 (VAT included)
DIIS publications can be downloaded free of charge from www.diis.dk

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
EACP	East Asian Climate Partnership
ECDF	Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund
FAIDC	Framework Act on International Development Cooperation
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KEXIM	Export-Import Bank of Korea
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LMIC	Lower Middle Income Countries
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan
MoF	Ministry of Finance of Japan
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
MOFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea
MOSF	Ministry of Strategy and Finance of Korea
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
ODA	Official Development Aid
ODA/GNI	Official Development Aid/Gross National Income
OECC	Overseas Economic Cooperation Council
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
REX project	The Reforestation and Extension Project in the Northeast of Thailand
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WWII	World War II

ABSTRACT

Environmental aid has become a major component of foreign aid, as environmental degradation and climate change have arisen as global concerns. Japan contends it has committed itself to the protection of the global environment since the 90s, and environmental aid has been an important part of that effort. South Korea has recently become an emerging actor in the development aid community and has also started to market its green diplomacy through programs such as the Global Green Growth Institute. Meanwhile, both Japanese aid and Korean aid have been criticized for being driven by their economic interests rather than altruism and that they focus too strongly on infrastructure projects.

Against this background, we aim to analyze and compare Japanese and Korean environmental aid to shed light on the influence that emerging agents of aid such as South Korea can bring to the political dynamics and the overall governance of environmental aid. In our analysis, we refer to the definition of Williams (2002), which regards aid policy as an 'autobiography' of donor countries. Using an 'autobiography' approach we examine five elements of Japanese and Korean environmental aid: The bureaucratic and institutional imperatives, the internal procedures and processes, the stated policies, the practices and particular attitude that underlie them, and the broader impulse behind aid. By moving away from an altruistic/self-interest dichotomy, this analysis seeks to understand autobiographic trajectories of Japanese and Korean environmental aid rather than to evaluate them.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental aid has become a major component of foreign aid as environmental degradation and climate change have emerged as global concerns. Japan contends it has committed itself to the protection of the global environment since the 1990s and environmental aid has been an important part of that effort. South Korea has recently become an emerging actor in the development aid community. South Korea, said to be following in the footsteps of Japan in designing and managing its aid, has also started to market its green diplomacy through programs such as the Global Green Growth Institute and the East Asian Climate Partnership. Meanwhile, both Japanese aid and South Korean aid have been criticized for being driven by their economic interests rather than altruism and that they focus too strongly on infrastructure projects (Alesina & Dollar, 2000; Hirata, 2002; Kalinowski & Cho, 2012; OECD-DAC, 2008; Watson, 2011).

Against this background, we aim to analyze and compare Japanese and South Korean environmental aid to shed light on the influence that emerging agents of aid, such as South Korea, can bring to the political dynamics and the overall governance of environmental aid. In our analysis, we refer to the definition of Williams (2002), which regards aid policy as 'autobiography' of donor countries. Using an 'autobiography' approach, we examine five elements of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid: The bureaucratic and institutional imperatives, the internal procedures and processes, the stated policies, the practices and particular attitudes that underlie them, and the broader impulses behind aid. By moving away from an altruistic or self-interest dichotomy, this analysis seeks to understand autobiographic trajectories of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid rather than to evaluate them. There are of course limitations to such an approach. Autobiographical analysis does little to understand the outcomes of environmental aid policies or how these policies are negotiated and renegotiated in specific projects, where a variety of other actors such as NGOs and recipient country governments may influence actual implementation. We acknowledge these limitations, but find it useful to delve deeper into the processes of environmental aid policy formulation as a reflection of the donors' stories about themselves.

AID AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Much analysis and policy formulation of Official Development Aid (ODA) centers on issues regarding its effectiveness and ownership. Meanwhile, these arguments explicitly or implicitly express normative concerns; they both seek to say something about what ought to be and done. From a policy perspective these concerns are of course highly relevant, however, in this paper we attempt to explore how aid policies in the case of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid are guided by reflections of trends in these countries' own developmental trajectories. As previously mentioned, both countries have been criticized for pursuing economic and political self-interest through their aid. But the question we raise here is whether political and economic self-interest stands in opposition to, for example, humanitarian objectives? In a review article from 2002 David Williams asks whether it is possible to say that the work of aid agencies may not be grounded in any

well-established claim about the effectiveness of their work at all, but rather about the desirability of particular policies or aid projects (Williams, 2002, p. 167). Proposing that aid most often is autobiographical of the donor rather than a well-thought assessment of the needs of the recipient, opens opportunities for understanding the underlying dynamics of aid policies and practices. Whether humanitarian impulses, economic interests, or political concerns actually guide aid is no longer in opposition to each other, but rather a reflection of the donor. An autobiographical approach to understanding the impulses behind aid moves away from a normative analysis of what aid ought to do. It also moves the focus of aid effectiveness away from recipient 'deficiencies' (poor governance, corruption, etc.) to an analysis of the aid donors, and how their values and institutional imperatives may guide aid. Our approach to Japanese and South Korean aid thus seeks to identify the socially and historically contingent character of environmental aid priorities in both countries.

Williams identifies five areas that may help shed light on how a donor's aid policies and priorities are shaped by the donor, whether they are of economic, political, or humanitarian interest. Firstly, aid agencies face bureaucratic and institutional imperatives or 'hard humanitarian interests' (Williams, 2002, p. 159). These hard interests include the ability to earn money, spend money and avoid criticism that may impede the agencies' ability to raise further funds. Secondly, aid agencies tend to adopt programming systems similar to the ones preferred by those in control of fund allocation. Williams here highlights the proliferation of an evaluation and auditing culture that may affect the aid agency's operations. Evaluation and auditing procedures may operate as control systems that define and confine the aid agency's operational processes. Thirdly, the agency's policies may not be a learning-from-experience approach, but driven by changing political concerns in donor countries. Fourthly, Williams identifies the expert culture of aid agencies and professionals that dictates that they know best, or at least they know best how to identify what the recipient needs. This expert knowledge justifies the existence of the aid agency and programs. Finally, Williams proposes as a fifth dimension, the broader impulses in donor countries that drive aid and humanitarian activity. These include a more fundamental question regarding what drives our concern for helping the poor.

In this paper we apply the above framework of aid as autobiography. Our initial assumption is that Japanese and South Korean aid is contingent upon changing balances of economic interest, foreign relations and humanitarian concerns. In other words, we seek to examine the socially and historically contingent character of environmental aid as an outcome of the countries' interpretation of their own development history and position in world politics. These may be applied simultaneously with certain biases, they may change over time, and they may change according to recipient countries. Understanding changing aid priorities, policies, and politics by situating these processes within a domestic and international political institutional framework is the main purpose of this paper.

BACKGROUND ON JAPANESE AID

In 2011, Japan was the fifth largest aid donor, providing 10.6 billion USD in Official Development Aid (ODA) (OECD, 2012).

Japan is so far the only major aid donor not located in Western Europe or North America. Japanese aid can be characterized in many ways; Japanese aid has always demanded fewer conditionalities, its terms have been harder, and it has focused much more on the hardware side of aid, such as building infrastructure, rather than software, such as policy and institutional change. In addition, Japan has been more supportive of a leading role for the state in development (Lancaster, 2010).

Japanese aid started from 1954 as reparations to 13 Asian countries after WWII. In the same year, Japan joined the Colombo Plan and started to provide a small amount of technical assistance to its Asian member states. This trend – aid as reparations – continued until 1977. In 1958, a negotiation with India on Yen loans started. Similarly, Yen loans with Paraguay, to where many Japanese emigrated before WWII, and South Vietnam were launched in 1958. In 1960, the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund was established to take care of development aid finance due to pressures from the business sector and politicians. In the same year, Japan joined DAC, and in 1961 the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency, which handled technical assistance, was established. Japan later joined the OECD in 1965 but remained a relatively small donor until much later.

From the mid-1970s, mainly due to external pressures including from the US, the amount of Japanese aid began to increase dramatically. From 1975, several events affecting Japan's resource security also convinced Japan to use aid for diplomatic purposes. Meanwhile, the Japanese government announced that it would untie aid in 1978, which was considered by other Western governments as a major step to align Japanese aid with DAC standards. Japan made an official announcement to make aid more consistent with DAC norms in 1981, and the effort to untie its aid continued during the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Japan enjoyed its position as the first or second largest aid donor amongst DAC donor countries.

The start of economic decline in 1991 gradually changed Japan's aid. After its peak in 1995, except for a few hikes in 2000 and 2005, aid has been on a downward trend. On the other hand, related to a relative decline in power of the government and business due to economic problems, Japanese NGOs started to exert more influence over development aid policy during the 1990s. Also starting from the 1990s, the institutional aspect of Japanese aid became much more coordinated and organized. The first ODA Charter was introduced in 1992, which stated four philosophical underpinnings: 1) The imperative of humanitarian considerations, 2) Recognition of the interdependent relationships among member nations of the international community, 3) The necessity for conserving the environment, and 4) The necessity for supporting self-help efforts of developing countries (MoFA, 1997).

In 1999, the Japanese government made a distinct announcement for the first time that it intended to improve the quality of overseas assistance rather than its quantity, which was a dramatic change of direction in the country's aid policy. In 2003, the ODA Charter was revised and the government declared that it would adopt the concept of 'human security'. In its charter, Japan stated that the basic policies of its ODA are: 1) Supporting self-help efforts of developing countries, 2) Perspective of 'human security', 3) Assurance of fairness, 4) Utilization of Japan's experience and expertise,

and 5) Partnership and collaboration with the international community (MoFA 2003). These new priorities reflect the on-going discussions on development aid at the time; the Japanese tax payers considered ODA should not only be beneficial for recipient countries but also for Japan in the midst of a prolonged recession and demanded much more visible effects of their aid abroad.

In 2006, based on the Koizumi Administration's effort to slim down and further streamline the system of ODA, the Overseas Economic Cooperation Council (OECC) was launched. In 2008, a new JICA was established, merging JBIC and JICA, changing the role and resources of related ministries and JICA. Nonetheless, the Japanese development aid system involves over 13 ministries and agencies, though the system is coordinated around a central hub: the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). MoFA is given the central coordinating role by the ODA Charter, and around two-thirds of Japanese official development assistance is managed through MoFA and the new Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). JICA is an independent administrative agency, and is held accountable by MoFA through a multi-year performance plan. JICA is responsible for technical cooperation, ODA loans, and Grants Aid. The Overseas Economic Cooperation Council (OECC), which is chaired by the Prime Minister and composed of the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Ministers of MoFA, Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), helps to coordinate ODA policy issues. In addition to MoFA, MoF is responsible for Japan's contributions to the World Bank, IMF and regional development banks. JICA loans also have to be approved by the METI. MoFA, MoF, and METI are responsible for around 92 percent of Japanese official assistance (OECD, 2010).

At field level, country-based ODA task forces work together to ensure that policies are executed coherently. Task forces are also responsible for facilitating donor coordination and consulting with other stakeholders, such as NGOs and business. Country-based ODA task forces are composed of staff from embassies, JICA offices and other Japanese government organs.

Japan's ODA project budget consists of the ODA general account budget (the budget allocated for ODA from the general account budget for one fiscal year), ODA special account budget (the budget allocated for ODA from the special account budget), fiscal loan fund, which becomes the source of Yen loans, and delivery bonds in order to contribute to international development finance organizations. Each ministry that has ODA-related projects (the biggest being MoFA) submits a request for budgetary appropriations to the Ministry of Finance based on appropriations standards, called 'ceilings', set by MoF and approved by the Cabinet. MoF summarizes the requests and report to the Cabinet, starts the process of hearing of explanations from each ministry, requesting of further documents, or assessing individual expenses. MoF makes an approximate assessment plan, which will then be discussed at the Ministry and becomes a draft MoF budget, which then will be submitted to the Diet after much discussion with various ministries. The draft budget will have to be approved in both the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. Once approved, the budget is distributed from MoF (Bank of Japan) to each ministry's account.

JAPANESE ENVIRONMENTAL AID

Environmental aid has been increasing at a steady pace reaching 8.6 billion USD in 2010 (MoFA, 2012). Japan has given environmental aid[1] since the 1980s, but this was given greater emphasis around the start of 1990s, particularly after the country's participation in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Around this period, solving environmental problems came to be highlighted by a wide range of actors in Japan as one of the key ways in which Japan could contribute to the international society. In the 1990s and 2000s, environmental aid became a central component of Japanese efforts in the field of 'human security' (Hall, 2010).

It is believed that Japan bases her environmental aid on the experience of environmental problems that brought serious pollution diseases with Japan's rapid economic development in the 1950s to 1970s (Gomez, 2008). Combined with Japan's relative preference for giving aid on infrastructure projects, Japanese environmental aid has also been concentrated around building facilities for water and sewage, energy and transportation, using Japan's advanced technology on environment conservation (MoFA, 2010). In addition, Japan has advocated the importance of human capacity to cope with environmental problems, i.e. capacity development for the environmental management. This manifests itself as training programs for government officers of recipient countries (Mori, 2009). As previously mentioned, the Japanese development aid system involves over 13 ministries and agencies, but the system is coordinated around MoFA, and MoFA and JICA are the main actors for the implementation of environmental aid, while the Ministry of Environment has a relatively small budget for international environmental cooperation as well.

According to Hall (2010), the rise of environmental aid in overall Japanese aid can be explained by three factors: 1) The meeting of a new set of transnational norms and networks and a remarkable convergence of interests at the domestic level, 2) Substantial leeway for Japanese actors to frame the nature of the contribution that Japan could make to the environment at the global level, because the new norms that helped make these projects were very vague, and 3) Dominant frame that emerged drew on existing narratives of Japan's own earlier pollution crisis, and of the nature of the Japanese political economy, to help shape the directions that environmental aid took.

ANALYSIS: JAPANESE ENVIRONMENTAL AID

Williams cites five areas through which the notion of aid as autobiography can be examined. In this section, we will attempt to apply the five areas to Japanese environmental aid and assess the nature of Japanese environmental aid when looked upon autobiographically. First, according to Williams, aid is autobiographical of a donor country in terms of the bureaucratic and institutional imperatives

[1] The Japanese government defines environmental aid following the definition of DAC_CRS statistics (MoFA, 2012). OECD-DAC defines environmental aid as 'aid targeting environmental sustainability', which includes activities that specifically aim at improving the environment (e.g. biodiversity conservation, biosphere protection, environmental policy and planning), and others that are environment-oriented activities, such as infrastructure projects designed with integrated environmental protection components, water resources protection or sustainable forest management programs (OECD-DAC). The Authors acknowledge the work of Hicks, Parks, Roberts, and Tierney (2008), which redefined and reconsidered the content of effective environmental aid, however, in this paper, we will conduct our analysis based on both governments' definitions of environmental aid as the authors are interested in their own narratives about aid.

facing aid agencies; they are 'hard interests' rather than 'soft interests' that are usually stated in the agencies' aims (p.159). Of such hard interests, at least three are described as: a) the necessity to obtain money, b) the pressure to spend money, c) the desire to avoid or be insulated from criticism. In the Japanese budgetary system, a competition among ministries (bureaucrats) to secure budget allocation to their own ministry or department is fierce, accelerated by the vertically fragmented and pluralistic decision-making system of the country's bureaucracy (Kadono & Takizawa, 2008). Naturally, the necessity to obtain money is high for aid-related agencies, even at least to maintain the level of budget allocation at the status quo. An increase in aid budget is generally welcomed among related officials, both in terms of their capacity to provide aid to recipient countries as well as securing their influence inside the ministry and beyond[2]. Based on the Japanese Constitution Article No. 86, which states that 'the Cabinet shall prepare and submit to the Diet for its consideration and decision a budget for each fiscal year', the Japanese budgetary system runs on a singular-year basis. This, combined with the fierce budgetary competitions, adds a strong pressure to aid-related agencies to spend the money they have obtained. JICA was given an exception for appropriate projects that run over multiple fiscal years since 2008. This is because it was widely criticized that the single-year budget system often did not fit the demand of development aid projects that require multiple years of commitment. Meanwhile, as for Japanese public finance as a whole, which includes aid finance, there remains a pressure to spend available money within the fiscal year.

[2] Interview with a government official, February 2012.

Japanese aid agencies are not an exception in that they want to avoid or insulate themselves from criticism. In 1991, Japan became the biggest bilateral aid donor; in the same year, however, an OECD report heavily criticized Japanese aid for being tied to Japanese businesses (Jempa, 1991). In reaction to this criticism, Japanese aid agencies proceeded to further 'untie' Japanese aid. This eventually aroused domestic criticism that aid did not circulate benefits to Japanese business or society; this criticism led to a consensus that Japanese aid to developing countries should bring economic benefits not only to the recipient, but also to Japanese tax payers if it is to fulfill accountability[3]. The Revised ODA Charter (2003) reflects this criticism well; in its introduction it states:

> In line with the spirit of the Japanese Constitution, Japan will vigorously address these new challenges to fulfill its responsibilities commensurate with its national strength and its standing in the international community. In this regard, it is important to have public support for ODA. It is essential to effectively implement ODA, fully taking into account the domestic economic and fiscal situation as well as the views of the Japanese people.

Against this background, the Government of Japan has revised the ODA Charter, with the aim of enhancing the strategic value, flexibility, transparency, and efficiency of ODA. The revision also has the aim of encouraging wide public participation and of deepening the understanding of Japan's ODA policies both within Japan and abroad.

[3] Interview with a researcher at JICA Research Institute, February 2012.

Secondly, Williams contends aid is autobiographical in terms of the internal procedures and processes the aid agencies use. Japanese aid agencies have also tended to adopt programming systems similar to those that are used in other government agencies. For instance, Japanese aid has experienced an upsurge in 'evaluation' and 'audit' requirements. In 2001, JICA released its first Guide to Project Evaluation (JICA, 2004). This coincided with the Japanese government's enation of Government Policy Evaluations Act (Act No. 86 of June 29, 2001). The Act aimed at promoting the implementation of policy evaluation in the planning and development of policy among the Japanese administrative bodies. The influence of internal procedures and processes on aid policy was also seen prior to this. The Basic Environmental Law of Japan (1993), which merged the Environmental Pollution Prevention Act (1967) and the Nature Conservation Act (1972), was enacted when environmental aid started to increase around the start of 1990s. In 1994, the framework for environmental cooperation was concluded between Japan and China, the largest recipient of Japanese environmental aid since then. Using internal procedures for aid projects can create frustration between donor and recipient. Wajjwalku and Tasarika (2008) described such frustration from the Japanese aid agency side and the Thai officials, who were the recipients of Japanese environmental aid. During the Reforestation and Extension Project in the Northeast of Thailand (the REX Project), the relations of both sides were not smooth to begin with, and the culture gap and the language barrier added to the problem (p. 213). Budget management was another aspect that frustrated cooperation, mainly because of the failure of the Thai government to meet the financial obligations requested by the Japanese aid agency (p. 214).

Thirdly, aid is autobiographical in that the stated policies of aid agencies often reflect changing political concerns among donor state and society. In the Japanese case, it is not just a reflection, but also an embodiment of the political concerns of the Japanese government and society. As a 'developmental state', where an interventionist government guides and supports social-economic development through industrial growth in a capitalist environment (Johnson, 1982), development aid has been one of two central tools of Japan's economic diplomacy, the other one being trade and investment. The Japanese government and private sector have made cooperative efforts to sell technologies where Japanese businesses have a strong competitive advantage (Okano-Haijmans, 2012). The Japanese government considers it almost as its mission to introduce Japanese environmental technology to developing countries[4] as part of environmental aid, because of its own experience with environmental problems that brought serious pollution problems in the wake of rapid economic development in the 1950s to 1970s (Gomez, 2008; Hall, 2010). The Ministry of Environment (2011) explains this logic as follows:

> During its period of high economic growth, Japan experienced heavy industrial pollution and other environmental problems. Through all-out efforts by the national and local governments, business corporations, and citizens' groups, pollution has abated dramatically. In addition, the country has achieved economic growth while improving efficiency in use of resources and energy. Today, Japan is working on waste disposal and other pollution issues related to everyday living, global warming and conservation of nature. Backed by experi-

[4] Interview with a ministry official, February 2012.

ences and technologies developed through its own development, Japan is cooperating with countries around the world, particularly developing countries in protection of the environment.

As previously mentioned, after Japanese aid agencies were criticized that aid did not benefit the Japanese tax payers at all, it became important to make Japanese aid more 'visible' to both Japanese tax payers and the citizens of recipient countries (Potter, 1994). The Japanese ODA Charter, first enacted in 1992 and modified in 2003, repeatedly emphasizes the benefit it will bring to Japan: "Such efforts will in turn benefit Japan itself in a number of ways, including by promoting friendly relations and people-to-people exchanges with other countries, and by strengthening Japan's standing in the international arena." (MoFA, 2003).

Fourthly, Williams indicated that aid activity is often shaped by a set of attitudes towards people and societies of developing countries. As previously mentioned, the Japanese ODA Charter describes the basic policies of Japanese aid: supporting self-help efforts of developing countries, a perspective of 'human security', assurance of fairness, utilization of Japan's experience and expertise, and partnership and collaboration with the international community. Japan places central importance on support for the 'self-help efforts' of developing countries. This belief in 'self-help efforts' comes from its own recent development experience after the defeat in WWII, when the country achieved rapid economic growth through its own efforts while at the same time receiving development aid (Sawamura, 2004). Rix (1993) pointed out that the connection between Japanese development aid philosophy and Japan's historical and cultural characteristics goes further back to its experience in the 19th century:

> Japan is quick to remind others of its own rapid modernisation process from the Meiji period (1868-1912) onwards, based on deliberate adaptation and learning from the West, strong internal leadership and control, conscious policies to promote education and national awareness, and imperial expansion to support domestic economic growth. It was a successful formula, and as a result the principle of self-reliance among recipients has been entrenched in Japan's current aid policies (p. 15-16).

The strong economic growth achieved by East Asian countries, which have been the main recipients of Japanese aid, strengthened Japan's belief in self-help. On the other hand, this notion of self-help is criticized for putting too much faith in a country's own ability to make efforts for development and weakens the sense of charity towards the less fortunate (Rix, 1993). In addition, many countries lack the administrative capacity necessary to act on their own initiatives (in other words, self-help), and this makes Japan's development aid policy less successful in some cases (Sawamura, 2004, p. 34). In environmental aid, administrative capacity is of particular importance, as environmental management is considered most effective if done at a local administrative level, based on the subsidiarity principle (Tonami & Mori, 2007).

Lastly, aid is autobiographical in terms of where the broader impulse for a donor country to engage in development comes from. The Japanese ODA Charter declares the objectives of Japan's ODA as: "to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity." Williams criticized foreign aid for being an expression of the particular moral outlook of West-

ern societies, and Japan does not hesitate to clearly express that Japan's development aid, including environmental aid, is (or should be) related to promoting Japan's interests, such as security and trade and investment promotion. In doing so, Japan developed the philosophy of 'self-help efforts' based on its own development experience, which is believed to function in recipient countries. Japanese aid, for these reasons, can be said to be a reflection of the Japanese history and autobiography.

BACKGROUND ON SOUTH KOREAN AID

In 2011 South Korean ODA amounted to 1.3 billion USD, of which grants accounted for 57.5 percent while loans accounted for the remaining 42.5 percent (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2012). The ODA budget for 2011 makes South Korea a lower middle donor among OECD-DAC member countries, but its ODA/GNI ratio stands at 0.10 percent significantly lower than the 0.31 percent DAC average (Smart, 2011). Historically, aid projects were characterized by many smaller projects with a wide geographical spread and covering a broad range of sectors. A phenomenon that some have observed as an indication of a wish to maximize political influence on a limited budget (Smart, 2011). South Korean ODA has always had a strong focus on Asia. This can be related to three major factors: 1) Geographical proximity, 2) Greater perceived compatibility between the South Korean Development experience and social, economic, political, and cultural proximity, and 3) Closer economic and political ties to Asian developing countries. South Korea has recently begun to restructure aid to focus on a fewer number of priority countries, mainly in Asia and Africa (KOICA, 2011b).

South Korean ODA goes back to the early 1960's when the government began to invite trainees from other developing countries to Korea. In the initial years, these training programs were financed by USAID, but by 1965 South Korea took over financial responsibility. Initially ODA was driven primarily by strategic political considerations to counter North Korean aid diplomacy (KOICA, 2011a). By the 1980's as South Korea's economic power rose, its aid began to focus on economic development to strengthen economic ties and to share its own experience (KOICA, 2011a). In 1987, the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (ECDF) was established to provide concessional loans under the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF). In 1991 the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) was founded to administer grant aid under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT). By 1995 South Korea was removed from the World Bank lending list and in 1996 the country joined the OECD and became a net donor of ODA (KOICA, 2012b; Smart, 2011). In 2007 the government began to prepare for entrance into the OECD-DAC, joining the group in 2010 as the first so-called 'Third World' country. In January 2010, the government passed the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation (FAIDC), the first comprehensive and overarching legislation on ODA to address ODA inefficiencies and fragmentation (KOICA, 2011a).

The South Korean aid budget has increased steadily from 1990 until today, with a slump following the 1997 financial crisis. The ODA/GNI ratio has also risen from a little above 0.02 percent in 1990 to above 0.10 by 2010.

South Korea's own experience as an aid receiving country is a major constitutive element in successive formulations of South Korean aid policy. Firstly, there is a sense of pride of moving from aid recipient to a major aid donor (Watson, 2011). It marks the 'completion' of the post-war development project. Secondly, South Korean aid has a moral component that emphasizes 'giving back' to the global community that supported South Korea in its efforts to develop. Thirdly, South Korean aid is guided by a wish (or imperative) to transfer the South Korean development experience and development model(s) (ECDF, 2008; S. Kim, 2011; KOICA, 2011a). Fourthly, the 'Miracle on the Han River' referring to the country's rapid economic ascent is used to position South Korea apart from the rest of the DAC members. The government has sought to place South Korea as a 'bridge-builder' between donor countries and recipient countries, while also emphasizing a particular 'South Korean' model of development based on its own experience (KOICA, 2011a). Fifthly, aid plays a significant role in strengthening economic ties to countries of significance either because of trade interests or resource interests. Finally, ODA policy formulation also increasingly mirrors a political wish to increase the status, recognition, and position of Korea as a significant player in global politics. This element became particular prevalent under the Roh Moo-Hun and has been further strengthened under the Lee Myung-Bak administrations, which is also reflected in the relatively higher increase of ODA budgets since the mid 2000's (Kalinowski & Cho, 2012; E. M. Kim & Oh, 2012; Watson, 2011).

ECDF and KOICA were established under separate laws and are under the jurisdiction of two different ministries. Historically there has been no overarching management of the two programs. The two institutions often consult with each other but lack coordination (OECD-DAC, 2008). Today, approximately 80 percent of South Korean ODA is administered by KOICA and ECDF. The remaining 20 percent is managed independently by 30 ministries, central government organizations, and local municipalities (ODA Watch, 2012). The government allows some ministries and agencies to administer their aid budgets, leaving significant room to spend aid according to individual strategies and interests, causing inefficiencies and overlapping projects (ODA Watch, 2012). The system also creates significant competition over aid funds. However, the structure of ODA seems difficult to change as the various agencies and ministries have significant interests vested in keeping control and even expanding their ODA funds[5]. To counter the inefficiencies and uncoordinated activities resulting from ODA fragmentation, the 2010 Framework on International Development Cooperation established the Committee for International Development Cooperation under the Prime Minister's Office. So far, however, it appears that further fragmentation has occurred since 2010 as several new ministries were assigned ODA budgets. An investigation in 2010 revealed that 71 implementation agencies, under 32 ministries, were carrying out 1,073 projects (ODA Watch, 2012).

Tied ODA in the South Korea portfolio remains much higher than allowed under DAC recommendations. South Korea is not immune to these criticisms and has committed to further align with DAC recommendations by untying 100 percent of its grant aid by 2015.

[5] Interviews with Professor Eun Mee Kim, Ewha Womans University and Lee Tae Joo, Chair ODA Watch, during August and September 2012.

In 2010, KOICA announced that untied aid had increased to 45.3 percent[6], a significant increase since the early 2000's when untied aid only accounted for a couple of percent of total aid. This, however, is still much lower than the DAC average and also quite far away from South Korea's own target of 100 percent by 2015 (KOICA, 2011a). Another significant feature of Korean ODA is the high proportion of concessional loans in its ODA budget, explained and defended by the government as a result of South Korea's own experience with high levels of foreign borrowing during its own development in the 1960's to 1980's (Kalinowski & Cho, 2012; E. M. Kim & Oh, 2012; Watson, 2011). It is argued that loans provide greater fiscal responsibility and motivate loan recipients to take ownership of their own development (S. Kim, 2011). The final feature of South Korean ODA to be pointed out here is the fact that it tends to have a strong bias in favour of Lower Middle Income Countries (LMIC's) rather than Least Developed Countries (LDC's), a phenomenon that can be explained by stronger economic ties to LMIC´s (E. M. Kim & Oh, 2012), and a notion that South Korea's experience is more compatible with a certain stage of economic development (Smart, 2011).

SOUTH KOREAN ENVIRONMENTAL AID

In this paper, we only focus on environmental aid from the South Korean government falling under the jurisdiction of either the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) or the Korean Economic Development Fund (ECDF). KOICA administers approximately 80 percent of total grant aid while ECDF, operated by the Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM) provides concessional loans to developing countries. Approximately 20 percent of grant aid is administered by other ministries and agencies and thus not under the control of KOICA. Historically, the paper limits itself to aid since the inception of KOICA in 1991, acknowledging that modest amounts of environmental aid was provided before this date and that the ECDF goes further back to 1987. This section will highlight major shifts in the past decade from which data is more reliable.

From the inception of KOICA in 1991, environmental aid has increased from a few hundred thousand USD per year to 135 million USD in 2010 (KOICA, 2011a, 2011b). While there has been an upward trend in aid allocated to environmental issues during the years where English language information is available, a major increase occurred around 2004 (a year for which data was unavailable at the time of writing). In 2003, environmental grant aid stood at 780,000 USD, but in 2005 the number had increased to over 27 million USD and by 2010 this number had increased to over 135 million USD or 29.9 percent of the total budget allocated to KOICA (KOICA, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011b). The increase in grant aid for environmental projects has been followed by increases in concessional loans as well, but it is difficult to assess exactly to what extent, since concessional loans for environmental projects are not reported separately in the annual reports from the ECDF (ECDF, 2008, 2009, 2011). By reading through major loan financing projects, it can be assessed that an increasing number of loans are given to projects re-

[6] OECD statistics report an increase of bilaterial untied aid from approximately 2 percent to approximately 35 percent in 2010, thus the numbers from KOICA and OECD do not correspond. (OECD Stat, accessed October 24, 2012)

lated to renewable energy and climate change (ECDF, 2011).

Environmental aid from South Korea in the early years was quite scattered and small-scale. Projects seemed to be selected on the basis of South Korean comparative advantage of expertise from its own development history as well as on the basis of regional environmental concerns that directly affected South Korea. Reforestation and forest management activities in China and Mongolia have been a long-term area of activity because desertification in Northern China and Mongolia causes dust storms during the spring season throughout the Korean Peninsula, with significant implications for public health and agriculture in South Korea (KOICA, 2002, 2003). Another area that has experienced a long-term, sustained focus has been research on seed selection and plant nurseries for reforestation efforts in Indonesian rain forests (KOICA, 2006). South Korea built significant expertise in this sector during its own reforestation efforts during the decades following the Korean War. Remaining aid covered a wide range of areas, but most funds were used for training and education of government officials from Developing Countries, and supporting the overseas volunteer corps. By the early 2000's environmental aid received increasing attention and South Korean expertise in areas such as waste management, water management and industrial pollution prevention became central components in development activities overseas, however with a continued emphasis on Asia (KOICA, 2011b). The increase in environmental aid coincided with domestic ambitions to improve South Korea's global standing that would reflect South Korea's economic wealth under then President Roh Moo-Hyun (Kalinowski & Cho, 2012). During Roo Moo-Hyun's presidency, environmental aid as a share of total aid allocations remained relatively low, reaching 15 percent of total aid in 2007, the final year of his term. However, the amount of environmental aid increased as the total aid budget grew along with South Korea's increased global engagement.

The biggest surge in environmental aid and loans can be traced to the current government led by Lee Myung-Bak, who came to power in late 2007 at the onset of the global economic recession. Lee Myung-Bak was elected in a landslide victory promising to revive economic growth, but his popularity was hit early and hard by the global economic recession. In August 2008, President Lee announced his new 'Low Carbon, Green Growth' vision[7] for South Korea's economic future as a way to get the economy back on track. The following year, the government introduced the National Strategy for Green Growth, the first five year national economic development plan since 1996 (Korea Economic Institute, 2011). The 'Green New Deal' that allocated 38.1 billion USD over four years to stimulate the domestic economy by fostering new green growth engines such as renewable energy, green building, and low carbon vehicles (UNEP, 2010). At the same time President Lee also attempted new strategies for establishing South Korea as a truly global player with clout (Kalinowski & Cho, 2012; Watson, 2011). The 'Global Korea' marketing initiative to elevate South Korea's recognition and standing was announced

[7] The national Green Growth strategy has received widespread international recognition, but domestic criticism has been fierce. Controversial elements of the plan such as the CO_2 emissions targets, the expansion of nuclear power, overseas resource diplomacy and the controversial Four River Restoration projects are central elements of the strategy, but also the elements under heavy criticism for their limited or potentially damaging impact (Green Korea United, 2010a, 2010b; S. Yun, Cho, & Hippel, 2011; S. J. Yun, 2010).

on January 22, 2009, almost simultaneously with the Green New Deal. The Low Carbon Green Growth paradigm has become a defining element of a Global Korea. One pillar in President Lee's 10-point strategy for establishing South Korea as a global brand is an increase of ODA (Watson, 2011). In addition, as part of the country's entry into DAC, South Korea aims to increase its ODA budget to 0.25 percent of GNI by 2015, and to increase 'Green ODA' to 30 percent of the total aid budget by 2020 (KOICA, 2011b). The most significant initiative under Green ODA so far is the East Asian Climate Partnership (EACP) proposed at the 2008 G8 summit in Seoul. South Korea committed 200 million USD to the initiative between 2008 and 2012 (KOICA, 2011b). The EACP is managed by KOICA and has resulted in a dramatic increase in total South Korean ODA committed to environmental issues (KOICA, 2011b).

South Korea's Green Growth strategy also extends into environmental aid through the establishment of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). The GGGI was established in June 2010 at the order of President Lee in order to share the green growth experience of South Korea with developing countries and diffuse Green Growth as a new model of economic development (Global Green Growth Institute, 2012). The President and the South Korean diplomatic apparatus have been actively involved in building partnerships with strong environmental credentials that can legitimize GGGI as an influential international organization, most notably countries such as Denmark, Norway, and Qatar as well as notable academic 'celebrities' such as Jeffrey D. Sachs and Sir Nicholas Stern.

ANALYSIS: KOREAN ENVIRONMENTAL AID

Using Williams' five areas of aid as autobiography, we will try to analyse the historical and contingent character of South Korean environmental aid in this section. Aid budget allocation among a plethora of ministries, agencies and local governments create fierce inter-institutional competition each year. Despite official commitment to improve overall coordination though the Committee of International Development Cooperation in 2010, further fragmentation has occurred. South Korean government bureaucracies are hierarchically ordered, which means certain ministries have much better leverage in accessing aid funds. Therefore, one way that 'hard humanitarian interests' guide South Korean ODA is through competition over aid allocations in a hierarchical structure of favoured or less favoured ministries, agencies and local governments. This funding competition is not only about funding. It is also about maintaining the governmental hierarchy, hence a competition for recognition, influence and maintenance of the inter-institutional government hierarchy.[8]

Sheltering the government from outside criticism is an issue that is of concern, leading to some changes in South Korean aid policy, especially since the entry into DAC. South Korea is keenly aware of its international position as a wealthy but small country. Its international standing depends much on building a reputation as a balancing middle power. South Korea is using multiple strategies to accommodate and sometimes deflect criticism. For example, the government has committed itself to untying its aid by 2015 (KOICA, 2011b). There is visible progress, however in

[8] Interview with KOICA official, September 17, 2012.

2010, 64 percent of aid remained tied, which is far away from the 2015 target. South Korea is also deflecting criticism by emphasizing its early stage of ODA experience, accommodating some structural changes to aid policies, while stressing South Korea's unique position as an aid-recipient-turned-donor. The latter argument is used to defend a particular South Korean approach to development. Insulation from domestic criticism is done in various ways. The government has actively promoted ODA to the public through media campaigns to emphasize the importance of ODA for South Korea's international reputation, economic interest, and to share the South Korean miracle with the less fortunate countries of the World. A significant part of ODA criticism comes from civil society groups such as ODA Watch, which is repeatedly denied access to detailed data on the ODA budget on the grounds of confidentiality and other non-disclosure of information (ODA Watch, 2012).[9]

Williams' second area of interest is the internal procedures and processes that the agencies use. The South Korean agency in charge of a major share of grant aid set up internal evaluation principles and guidelines based on the evaluation from the OECD-DAC recommendations (KOICA, 2011a). Projects are evaluated based on five standards: appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, influence, and sustainability. In 2006, KOICA expanded evaluation procedures to include policy, strategy, sectors, and topics. The organization also adopted a rating system. The evaluation guidelines were completely revised as part of the preparation of entry into OECD-DAC (KOICA, 2011a), and at the time of this writing a unified evaluation process was underway to further streamline evaluation and auditing of ODA. However, critics have already pointed out the lack of a feedback loop on evaluation results and the quality of independent evaluation (ODA Watch, 2012). While KOICA and ECDF are taking steps to improve external evaluation, many other ministries do not delegate evaluation to external auditors, which makes it very difficult to assess ODA procedures and processes. It has not been possible to obtain information on evaluation and auditing guidelines from other agencies and ministries with ODA activities. What we can derive from this is that internal procedures and processes are not coherent due to the fragmented nature of South Korean ODA across many ministries, agencies, and local governments, although certain actions are in place to streamline ECDF and KOICA procedures and processes. The confusing array of implementing agencies has also been criticized for putting unnecessary administrative strains on recipient countries who have to deal with many different agencies with different application procedures and reporting requirements (ODA Watch, 2012).

Thirdly, the stated policies of South Korean environmental aid clearly reflect the changing political concerns of the government and society. In the past decades environmental aid has moved from small projects providing aid based on the comparative advantages derived from South Korea's development experience and domestic environmental concerns, such as yellow dust storms. Today a more forward-oriented approach is taken, in which environmental aid is defined by South Korea's global diplomatic ambitions and domestic economic priorities. The environment and climate changes have major components for a 'Glo-

[9] This lack of access to information is not an issue particular to ODA. Civil society groups and the government tend to have adversarial relationships and the government often limits access on the grounds of national security and confidentiality, which also shelters the government and agencies from civil society scrutiny and criticism.

bal Korea'. Two major initiatives highlight the strategy of combining economic interest and political ambitions for international recognition as an environmental leader. Proposed at the G8 Summit in 2008, South Korea committed 200 million USD between 2008-2012 to the East Asia Climate Partnership (KOICA, 2012b). The stated goal of the EACP is to "successfully realize a 'win-win' strategy that pursues both to deal with climate change and to continue economic development by researching a new sustainable economic paradigm and by creating 'East Asia Low Carbon Development path'"(KOICA, 2012a). The EACP has helped South Korea's Low Carbon Green Growth development model establish a regional leadership position through environmental aid activities while disseminating South Korean technology and expertise. The Global Green Growth Institute founded in 2009 by the President has become the spearhead initiative in advancing South Korea's national development strategy to the front stage of global environmental governance. Recently GGGI was recognized as an international organization, thus achieving global acknowledgement not only for the institution itself, but for South Korea's Green Growth development model.

Wiliams' fourth area of inquiry is that aid often is shaped by a set of attitudes towards people and societies in developing countries. The significant emphasis that South Korea puts on highlighting its own former status as a poor Third World country seeks to set the country apart from other OECD-DAC donors by highlighting the emotional and historical ties to the developing world. Yet the notion of being a development success also seeks to establish South Korea's development model as an empirical model for other countries to follow. Sharing South Korea's own development experience has been a central feature of aid for decades. In the meanwhile, it establishes South Korea as the 'ultimate' expert on development and that by following its model of development, other countries can replicate its success. In the environmental area this has been expressed in the strong focus on specific areas where South Korea has expertise, such as reforestation, water management and pollution management. However, the Green Growth paradigm, which is now the center of South Korean domestic economic policy, is also the central guiding light of environmental aid, and 'green' aid is planned to make up 30 percent of total aid by 2020 (KOICA, 2011b). What is interesting to note, however, is that, while earlier environmental projects were implemented in areas where South Korea did have long-term experience, areas such as climate adaption, mitigation and renewable energy are relatively new to South Korea. At the time of writing, significant improvements of South Korean technology in these areas remain to be seen. This is often overlooked because environmental aid is incorporated into the development success narrative. This attitude to the 'universal applicability' of the South Korean development experience, with modifications, may make South Korean aid less responsive to local needs and circumstances.

This also leads us to the final area of Williams' framework; Where does the broader impulse for aid come from? As previously mentioned, South Korean aid is guided by a combination of moral obligation to share its own experience with other Third World countries, domestic political and economic interests, and a strong drive for global recognition in global politics. These three impulses may interact, conflict, and complement each other in various ways. In the case of environmental aid, the heavy focus on disseminating the Green Growth paradigm combines

the impulses in particular ways. The ability to establish Green Growth as an internationally recognized development paradigm has opened new opportunities both politically and economically. It has enhanced the status of the country in the eyes of the international community. This recognition in turn enables environmental aid to become a central aspect of strengthening economic and political ties to resource-rich developing countries. In the process, South Korea's own understanding of itself has also changed from that of a country catching up with the rich developed world to a country taking the lead on global governance issues. It appears that specifically within environmental aid, South Korea has found a domain in which all three impulses become mutually constitutive.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we attempted to analyze and compare Japanese and South Korean environmental aid using David Williams' theory of 'aid as autobiography'. Our aim was to illuminate the contingent characters of environmental aid of Japan and South Korea as the outcome of the interpretation of their own development history and position in the global politics. A comparison of the Japanese and South Korean environmental aid was particularly useful to highlight the characteristics of South Korea, an emerging actor in the environmental aid sector, as well as global environmental governance. Based on our analysis that used the five elements of Williams' theory, we have found the following.

First, both Japanese and South Korean aid systems incorporate the budgetary need to obtain and spend money, which is based on bureaucratic and institutional imperatives. Both countries are sensitive to external criticism, particularly from OECD-DAC. The Japanese have a relatively longer history of giving aid and therefore a longer history of the involvement of the public. As a result, Japanese aid, including environmental aid, seems to reflect more the opinions of domestic business and the public. Secondly, the internal procedures and processes are well reflected in Japanese and South Korean aid, seen from the perspective of 'evaluation' and 'audit' (or lack thereof) and related laws.

Thirdly, the stated policies of Japan and Korea demonstrate the changing political and economic concerns of the two countries. Both countries consider development aid as an important tool of their diplomacy, and in environmental aid, promoting their domestic environmental technologies abroad is considered an important mission, backed by their stories of success. This experience of once being a developing country and rags-to-riches drama is embedded in Japan's 'self-help efforts' philosophy and in South Korea's 'Korea model'. This belief is what underlies their aid practices and attitudes towards developing countries. While the manner in which numerous actors are involved in providing aid is similar in both countries, it is observed that much stronger power revolves around the President in South Korea. This suggests that aid policy is very much determined by the type of vision the President has for the future of South Korea. As a result, changing international or domestic political concerns are much more vividly expressed in the case of South Korea.

Lastly, the broader impulses behind the aid of Japan and South Korea are a combination of a moral obligation, domestic, international political and economic interests. What distinguishes them from other Western donors is that both Japan and South Korea empha-

size their past as developing countries; Japan considers itself as having a role to lead other developing countries, because it can understand what it means to make 'self-help' efforts, whereas South Korea positions itself as a 'bridge' between so-called developed nations and developing countries. Both Japan and South Korea clearly indicate that aid is not only altruistic, but also about mutual benefits, global recognition and economic interests. This does not necessarily make Japanese and Korean environmental aid less altruistic than Western donors, but rather that the non-altruistic motives are explicitly stated. In this regard, Japan and South Korea appear to distance themselves from the so-called West; they try to promote their experience-based development models, yet these also tend to make universal claims about development. Both Japan and South Korea are relative latecomers in the aid industry. Their environmental aid started off as a reaction to an existing situation (e.g. pollution), and environmental aid was a natural category for them to specialize in, taking advantage of their technological expertise. For both countries, environmental aid became the opportunity to play a significant role in the global aid community; for Japan this occurred in the 1990's and for Korea took place in the 2010's.

There are remaining aspects to be analyzed in the future. By using William's theory, we were able to give narratives of environmental aid policies of Japan and South Korea a structure. These narratives were based on the countries' understandings of their own development trajectories and positions in the global order. Meanwhile, this study did not address an understanding of their narratives; in other words, it does not address how these narratives are used in actual environmental aid projects or programs and how they enforce or undermine their belief in the prescribed narrative. Furthermore, in this paper, we have limited our analysis to Japan and South Korea's bilateral environmental aid. With new financial mechanisms becoming more prominent in aiding developing countries with environmental issues and climate change issues, we look forward to giving attention to this aspect of Japanese and South Korean environmental aid in the future.

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