

China's and Japan's Foreign Aid Policies Towards Ethiopia(2010-2020)

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Abstract: The phenomenon of Asia-African relations has received considerable attention since the start of the 21st century. As China and Japan are two leading Asian donors of Africa, their foreign aid policies are worth analyzing and comparing. Among African countries, Ethiopia is located in the horn of Africa, whose strategic position is relatively significant. In addition, Ethiopia has not been colonized in the history, which makes this case more meaningful. Most of the previous studies have concentrated on either one specific aspect like economic or certain country's foreign aid policies towards Ethiopia. This research aims to analyze and compare China's and Japan's multifaceted foreign aid policies towards Africa and Ethiopia in particular. For this purpose, the primary data and materials have been collected from the official websites, official reports, and previous studies. The result shows that their differences involve political, economic and societal aspects. The Japanese government has tended to design detailed policies, guide companies to invest in Ethiopia and cooperate with the NGOs. On the contrary, China's policies towards Ethiopia are more general, and the Chinese government has played a leading role in economic aiding than the Japanese government. In terms of the societal aspect, the Chinese government is more tending to cooperate with the Ethiopian government instead of the NGOs.

Keywords: foreign aid policy, China, Japan, Ethiopia, Africa

1. Introduction

Nowadays, Africa is having a more and more important position in both politics and economy, which attracts extraordinary attention from outside world. Without doubt, Western countries like the US and Europe have always had strong presence in Africa. Yet Asian countries have a relatively shorter history contacting with Africa but are of equal importance today. Generally speaking, they don't have colonial history in Africa. Within Asia, China and Japan are important economic and political partners of African countries.

At the same time, with the development of China's and Japan's overall national strength, their respective demand of natural resources and energy have been increasing greatly. Also, these two countries have already developed close relations with many countries in Africa mainly through foreign aid. According to the Chinese government, China's foreign aid towards Africa occupied 44.65% of its total amount from 2013 to 2018[1]. In 2019, Japan donated 14.2 billion dollars to Africa, second only to the US, UK and France [2].

In this research, the differences between China and Japan's policies towards Africa, especially towards Ethiopia will be presented and discussed. Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world. It has the second largest population in Africa. There are tons of resources which have not been properly explored due to its special geological location. In the past decade (2010-2020), China and Japan have realized the huge potential of Ethiopia and began seeking for cooperation in many aspects. The most effective and significant measure is by offering foreign aid. In 2009, the 4th Ministerial Conference of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, marked a new era for China-Africa relations. And in 2008 and 2013, Japan held the 4th and 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), showing Japan's high attention to Africa. By comparing the objectives, patterns and the effectiveness of China's and Japan's foreign aid policies, this research will analyze the differences of China and Japan as important Asian economies with different political and economic structures.

This paper will be divided into four parts as following. The first part of this paper will contain a short literature review. This review will analyze the previous works and introduce the main concern of this research. In the next part, there is an analysis about the diplomatic relations and policies that China and Japan have made with Ethiopia. Next, this paper will compare the patterns and results of China's foreign aid to Japan's in this part. Finally, a conclusion will be made.

2. Literature Review

Many studies have respectively studied the foreign aid of China and Japan since more and more scholars realized their importance in aiding Africa. Also, the growing importance of Africa have caught the attention from both China and Japan. Their assistance and cooperation with African countries have a huge potential due to Africa's political status and abundant natural resources.

The previous works are divided into two major categories----primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources are mainly the official reports released by the Chinese and the Japanese government. They introduce the relationships of China-Ethiopia and Japan-Ethiopia, analytical reports about Ethiopia, and the basic data on how much aid China and Japan have offered to Ethiopia. For example, in the report of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, not only does it introduce the basic information of Ethiopia, but also the ODA offered by Japan and other countries like China, US and so on [3]. While in the guidebook of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, it mainly tells Chinese companies how to invest in Ethiopia and adjust to the local environment [4]. With no exception, both China and Japan declared their amity with Ethiopia and other African countries.

The review of secondary works begins with Lv's analysis of the Nairobi Declaration of TICAD VI in 2016. Lv argued that Japan has political intent to compete with China in Africa. According to his essay, Japan is seeking for Africa's support to retain its inclusion into the United Nations Security Council. And its foreign aid and investment to Africa served this purpose [5]. There are also abundant research focusing on China's foreign aid towards Africa. Huang Zhenqian has used georeferenced sat and grid data to capture the spatial features of Chinese aid projects on the African continent. His findings suggest that natural resources do not determine China's funding of those projects [6]. According to Deborah Brautigam, China's economic activities in Africa are much more like Japan's outward-looking development [7]. For this similarity, Furuoka examined and compared the determinants of China's and Japan's foreign aid allocations in Africa. He concluded that there was no considerable difference in the patterns and motives of foreign aid between the two countries. Both China's and Japan's aid allocations were primarily driven by the aid donors' self-interests [8]. Yet he only compared the data of China's and Japan's foreign aid allocations, which is not comprehensive to discover the differences between these two countries. Based on these works, this article is aiming to compare the differences in China's and Japan's foreign aid in many aspects as typical as it can. By analyzing the differences, we can get a better understanding of their advantages and disadvantages.

3. Analysis of Japan's Relations with Africa and Ethiopia

3.1. Japan and Africa

Japan-African diplomatic relationships began after the Korean War. With the rapid development of Japanese economy, Japan's foreign aid towards Africa grew at the same time. In the 1990s, Japan became one of the top donors of Africa, along with France, US, and Germany [9]. To facilitate deeper cooperation, the Japanese government initiated the Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD) in 1993. But since the TICAD V held in Yokohama in 2013, Tokyo became more aware of the importance of Africa because of China's increasingly large and all-around foreign aid towards Africa [5]. Japan regarded China as a competitor to Japan's interest in Africa. On top of that, in 2016, on the TICAD VI, Japan put forward a new diplomatic strategy with African countries as follows [10].

First of all, Japan has gradually veered from offering official aid to leading the enterprises to invest in Africa. For example, because of fiscal difficulties, Japan channeled its financial aid via African Development Bank (AfDB), a financial provider to African governments and companies. In addition, the Japanese government wanted to bring Japanese companies' superiority into full play. The government has promoted law reform in Africa countries, which could improve the investment climate of Japanese companies. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs also emphasized this point [11]. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), an institute under the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its mission of offering official development assistance, investigated the Japanese companies in Africa from 2016 to 2019. According to this survey, more than 80% companies expressed that the incomplete legal system was one of the highest investment risks in Africa. To deal this challenge, the Japanese government has actively promoted legal reforms, such as sending judicial officials, training judicial personnel and organizing advanced training [12]. This effort is integral to Japan's ODA.

What's more, Japan has its political purpose. The Japanese government has been trying to promote the reform of the United Nations Security Council since the 1950s, which requires Africa's support. As China's influence expanded in Africa, Japan has also developed a sense of crisis. Its strategic initiative, the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) clearly targeted China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The latter is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations [13]. Japan introduced the FOIP concept and formally put it down as a strategy in 2016, which is an umbrella term that encompasses Indo-Pacific-specific strategies of countries with similar interests in the region [14].

3.2. Japan and Ethiopia

Probably to the surprise of many, Japan and Ethiopia's diplomatic relationship has a long history. In the early 20th century, with the exploitation of the overseas market, there was an "Ethiopia boom" appearing in Japan. In 1931, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister visited Japan to facilitate the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan. Ethiopian intellectuals wanted to use Japan as a model to change their own society. While in Japan, people saw many similarities with Ethiopia, such as not having been colonized by European powers and both trying to abolish existing unequal treaties. In Japan, the Japanese merchants were also interested in investment and trade opportunities in Ethiopia. The Japanese government once selected a female named Masako Kuroda to marry into the imperial household of Ethiopia but ended up with nothing definite. Almost immediately the contact between these two countries was stopped by the outbreak of the World War II. After the Korean War, the Ethiopian government ratified the Treaty of Peace with Japan in June, 1952. Japan resumed the

diplomatic relationship with Ethiopia in 1955. Ethiopia finally headed down a path of socialism in 1974 [3].

In the past decade (2010-2020), the frequency of visits between Japan and Ethiopia was at a relatively high level. Most of the visits were conducted by senior officials of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to attend the conferences organized by the African Union (AU). At these conferences, delegates from both countries exchanged their views on bilateral relations, as well as Japan's assistance to Africa within the TICAD framework. They also exchanged views on Japan-African cooperation in the international arena including the controversial reform of the UN Security Council [15]. Shinzo Abe, then Prime Minister of Japan, personally visited Ethiopia in 2014. He expressed his concern about the situation of South Sudan and his wish to help the Ethiopian economic transformation by strengthening Ethiopia KAIZEN Institute [16]. Officials of Ethiopia's every department and Parliament Representatives visited Japan in order to attend the TICAD or on the invitations of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), an institute belong to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to offer official development assistance [17].

In November of 2020, a war broke out in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The tension between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian government is the main reason of this war. The war lasted till December 2021 and caused serious humanitarian crisis. Japan is one of the countries who carefully monitored Ethiopia's situation. According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japanese government promised to provide 6.6 million dollars as Emergency Grant Aid for people affected by the military engagement in Tigray region in February 2021[18]. In November 2021, Fumio Kishida, the new elected Prime Minister of Japan, made a speech in the inspection ceremony of Self-Defense Forces Memorial Day. He stressed that the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense had sent the investigation team to Djibouti to collect information [19].

Ethiopia will continue to be integral to Japan's global vision. Current Prime Minister Fumio Kishida served as Foreign Minister from 2012 to 2017. He once visited Ethiopia when attending the Ministerial Conference of TICAD V. He also attended the TICAD VI and made a speech about promoting gender equality and changing the position of African females [20]. In 2021, Fumio Kishida was elected Japanese Prime Minister. According to his political stance revealed in the election, he will deepen Japan-Africa's political connection and his aggressive posture towards China may intensify the conflict of interest in Ethiopia or Africa [21].

4. Analysis of China's Relations with Africa and Ethiopia

4.1. China and Africa

A few years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Chinese government began to directly engage with African countries at the first Asia-African Conference in 1955. In 1967, China approved the assistance of constructing the Tazara Railway by offering interest free credit, technological cooperation and experts [22]. The railway has so far been the largest project of China's foreign aid. In 1971, many African countries voted in support of PRC's restoration of its legal seat in the UN General Assembly. This revealed the obvious importance of Africa's political status and power. It is one of the reasons that Japan is seeking for African support to promote the reform of the United Nations Security Council. When entering the 21th century, the relationship between China and Africa has become closer. In 2000, China initiated the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), a forum aiming to promote cooperation with African countries.

During 2010-2020, the FOCAC facilitated fruitful cooperation in many areas. Take education for example, the Chinese government had many scholarships for African students to study in China, and offered training sessions to cultivate young talents for Africa. In specific African countries, the

Chinese government also set up many Confucius Institutes to promote Chinese traditional culture. And as well, the most significant achievements are in the economic sector, for example, China declares that it has offered financial aid as much as it can without political conditions. China also expands bilateral trade with Africa. According to the Chinese official data, the bilateral trade volume in 2016 had increased by four times compared to that in 2004 [23].

Correspondingly, African countries' attitudes towards China's foreign aid are generally positive. However, there are still a lot of questions to be solved. For example, whether cheap Chinese goods make the local goods less competitive, whether Chinese companies really have contributed to the poverty alleviation and so on. According to Marek Hanusch's investigation report, he used multi-level modelling techniques to estimate the African attitudes towards China's presence in Africa. In 20 sub-Saharan countries in Africa, the answer is yes. Most of Africans who give priority to the poverty alleviation or the so-called democracy are favorable to China. The data shows that Africans believe China's assistance has good intentions, which has no difference with other countries [24]. This conclusion corresponds to what the Chinese government has declared to a great extent.

4.2. China and Ethiopia

China established diplomatic relations with Ethiopia in 1970, which is later than Japan. The reason is closely related to the Cold War. During 1950s to 1960s, newly established People's Republic of China allied with the Soviet Union, while the Ethiopian government was close to the US. Though Zhou Enlai, then Prime Minister of China, expressed his recognition and respect to African countries including Ethiopia, the relationship between these two countries was still on a tight rope. That is because China established diplomatic relations with Somalia, which had conflicts in territorial boundaries with Ethiopia at that time. However, with the change of the international situation around 1970, the Soviet Union tended to be superior in the Cold War. Thus, the US government had to seek for cooperation with other countries. The relations between China and the US also gradually normalized in this period. At the same time, the US government loosened its control of Ethiopia, which allowed Ethiopia to develop closer relations with China [25].

Generally speaking, China-Ethiopia relations have been developing in a good trend after they established diplomatic relationship. But from 1977 to 1982, the friendly relationship had a setback. In 1977, after the Ethiopian revolution in 1974, the Ethiopian military junta, then ruler of Ethiopia, developed increasingly close ties with the Soviet Union. While the relationship between China and the Soviet Union was not as good as the past. After the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front took power in 1991, their relations have steadily improved, with increasing diplomatic contacts and growing trade and Chinese investment in the Ethiopian economy [26].

With the foundation of the FOCAC in 2000, the cooperation between China and Ethiopia has developed in depth. Confirmed by the Chinese government, the Eastern Industry Zone built by the Chinese company in Addis Ababa is a good example. In 2008, this industry zone was approved to be the only overseas economic & trade cooperative zone in Ethiopia at the national level [27]. This industry zone has brought benefits to Ethiopia. It generated taxes of 82 million dollars and jobs for 18,000 local people [28]. According to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the Ethiopian government took an active part in building industry zones [4]. The government legislated and made preferential policies for the industry zones in order to attract investment from all over the world.

After the 4th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC was held in 2010, China-Ethiopia relationship has been strengthened. Compared to Japan, China and Ethiopia have frequent exchanges of senior politicians. They exchange their views mainly on deepening the cooperation in economy, infrastructure construction, state governance and other aspects.

In 2013, Xi Jinping, president of PRC, came up with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to strengthen the closer cooperation with countries along the Silk Roads. Silk Roads was a network of

trade routes between Asia and Europe in the history. In the sea route of the BRI, it is called the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The maritime silk road runs from China to Europe and passes through eastern Africa [29]. In 2015, Ethiopia has been included in the BRI due to its special location in eastern Africa, which functions as an important bond between China and interior African countries. China helped build the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway in 2016. In 2017, Ethiopia joined Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), an international financing institution aiming to strengthen the infrastructure construction and economic cooperation. In terms of education, the Chinese government also admits more and more Ethiopian students to study in China [30].

In 2020, during the Covid-19 global pandemic outbreak, China and Ethiopia reached a consensus on anti-epidemic strategies. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali expressed his support to China. He didn't stop the bilateral trade and personnel exchange between China and Ethiopia. The Chinese government also provided Ethiopia with medical goods and materials, sent medical experts and helped to construct the headquarters of African Center for Disease Control [4]. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director of WHO coming from Ethiopia, once expressed his appreciation towards China's anti-epidemic strategies. He also expressed that the WHO is willing to cooperate with China to end the epidemic situation as soon as possible [31].

5. Discussion

Based on the analysis, the discussion on the differences between China and Japan's foreign aid will mainly focus on three parts--politics, economy and society. On the political aspect, Japan's foreign aid policy is detailed and systematical, which gives prominence to certain priorities. The Japanese government has made a detailed plan which has Ethiopia included to Japan's foreign aid system. The plan is targeted at some fields. For example, according to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main five sectors are agriculture, infrastructure, economy, education and medical treatment [3]. In each sector, it aims to improve Ethiopia's undeveloped situation in economy and other aspects. Also, Japan has a special institute to carry out its foreign aid policies such as JICA. On the contrary, China doesn't have a plan as specific as its counterpart. Its foreign aid policies are more likely to take Africa as a whole, though more comprehensive than those of Japan. China didn't set a special institute to take charge of foreign aid. Instead, the policies are directly made and carried out by the government (mainly the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce), which turned out to be more efficient in practice.

In the economic sector, both the governments and the companies have important roles to play. The main difference is their working modes. In Japan, the government mainly guides private companies to invest in Ethiopia and other African countries. The government also tries to improve the investment climate for the Japanese companies by offering legal assistance [11]. Meanwhile for China, although there are successful industry zones operated by Chinese state-owned enterprises, the government dominates the foreign aid towards African countries. The Export-Import Bank of China (EIBC) and the China Development Bank (CDB), two official financial institutions that manage the fund of China's foreign aid, provide African companies with concessional loans [7]. Compared to Japan, China doesn't take actions to promote law reforms in Ethiopia or other African countries. On the contrary, it is the Ethiopian government that enforce legal procedures in its industry zones, having recognized their huge economic potential [28].

Both Japan and China lay emphasis on different societal aspects. Like many Western countries, Japan pays attention to the issue of human rights in Africa. The Japanese government regards female liberation of Ethiopia as an important part of its foreign aid goals [3]. Fumio Kishida, the current Prime Minister of Japan, advocated for the leverage of female rights at the TICAD VI in 2016 [20]. When the Tigray War broke out, the Japanese government cooperated with many NGOs to provide humanitarian aid to Ethiopia [18]. China also provided necessary aid to Tigray. According to the press

secretary of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing will provide emergency food assistance like rice, wheat and so on [32]. But China did not channel its aid through cooperation with the NGOs. Instead, it delivered its supplies to the Ethiopian government directly. China's approach suggests that it has considered the Tigray War as Ethiopia's domestic affairs, which was in line with Beijing's proclaimed principle of non-interference.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this article has discussed China's and Japan's foreign aid policies towards Ethiopia from political, economic and societal perspectives. It tended to explain the differences between China and Japan as they have different political and economic structures. The first finding of this research is in political sector. The Japanese government has made detailed plan and has an institute to carry out the policies. While the Chinese government only has a general plan carried out by the government departments. The second finding is in economic sector. The Japanese government guides the Japanese companies to invest in Ethiopia and promotes legal reform to improve the investment climate. In China, the leading actor has always been the government. Yet the government has not initiated any legal reform in Ethiopia to support Chinese companies. The last finding is about societal assistance. As to the Tigray War, both Japan and China have provided humanitarian assistance for those who were affected by the war. Tokyo chose to cooperate with the NGOs, while Beijing channeled its supplies via the Ethiopian government.

However, there are some limitations to this research, which need further studies. Firstly, the foreign aid data of China is not accurate and abundant, which limits the comparison with Japan's data. The data from the Chinese government is very recapitulative and does not indicate the significance of Ethiopia. Secondly, this article lacks of detailed analysis and comparison of the FOIP and the BRI strategy. How these two strategies will develop and affect China-Africa and Japan-Africa relations need further studies.

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