

THE STANDING OF CHINA IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AID FIELD AND CHINA'S UNIQUENESS

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Abstract: *This study focuses on a prevalent topic named development aid system that almost all the actors in international system consider. The transformation from being development aid tool to being a part of development cooperation became more important after some turning points in the countries' history. For this reason, firstly the history and transformation of Chinese development aid are explained with the key changes in China's history. The Beijing Consensus, some declarations and agreements are considered while explaining historical transformation. In this context, the features and the uniqueness of Chinese aid are explained in details. As indicated in the title of this study, China shows uniqueness in development aid field. While China get advantages of these features, these features may also create challenges in international arena for China. In the last part of the study, the challenges and critics that China faces are analyzed in the process that lasts from the beginning of being a recipient country to be an active donor country. The reports and international policies announced by official authorities and articles are used to analyze this process. The untypical form of Chinese aid is seen at the end of the study. The China's implementations of the aid policies show the way China goes. To better understand and realize the study, the overall evaluation of the paper is situated in the last part of the study.*

Keywords: Chinese aid, development cooperation, aid system, institutions of development aid, challenges of Chinese aid policy.

Çin'in Uluslararası Kalkınma Yardımları Alanındaki Konumu ve Eşsizliği

Öz: *Bu çalışma uluslararası sistemdeki hemen hemen tüm aktörlerin dikkate aldığı kalkınma yardımı sistemine odaklanmaktadır. Kalkınma yardımı aracı olmaktan kalkınma işbirliğinin bir parçası olmaya giden dönüşüm süreci, birtakım dönüm noktaları ile birlikte daha önemli hale gelmiştir. Bu sebeple öncelikle Çin tarihindeki önemli değişiklikler ile Çin kalkınma yardımlarının tarihi ve dönüşümü açıklanmıştır. Süreci açıklarken Pekin Konsensusu, Çin'in dahil olduğu bazı bildiriler ve anlaşmalar göz önüne alınmıştır. Bu bağlamda Çin yardımlarının özellikleri ve eşsizliği ayrıntılı şekilde incelenmiştir.*

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Çalışmanın başlığında da belirtildiği üzere Çin bu alanda birtakım farklı özellikler sergilemektedir. Bu özellikler bir yandan avantajlar sağlarken bir yandan da uluslararası arenada Çin için zorluklar oluşturabilmektedir. Çalışmanın son bölümünde Çin'in alıcı ülke olmaktan aktif bir donör ülke olmaya giden süreçte karşılaştığı zorluklar ve bunlara eleştiriler analiz edilmiştir. Bu analizi yaparken raporlar ve resmi otoriteler tarafından açıklanan politikalar kullanılmıştır. Çin'in sıradan olmayan yardım yapısında çalışmanın sonunda belirtilmiştir. Yardım politikalarının uygulamaları, Çin'in çizdiği yolu göstermektedir. Çalışmayı daha iyi anlamak adına çalışmanın değerlendirmesi de son bölümde yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Çin yardımları, kalkınma işbirliği, yardım sistemi, kalkınma yardımı kurumları, Çin yardım politikasının zorlukları.

Introduction

Since development aid accelerated in the second part of 20th century, it has become a crucial issue worldwide. The importance attached to development aid and development cooperation is increasing day by day with the rise of emerging powers. Development aid has many functions such as being a soft power tool, a foreign policy tool, enhancing commercial relations and promoting the ties with the less developed countries.

China is one of the most important country that has been an important development aid player gradually. China's development aid policies have changed over time. In the beginning, development aid was rooted in the ideological motives. However, the policies have transformed to more rationale and pragmatic policies by time. With the help of economic transformation inside the country, the improvements on development aid have been rapid. Through the last years of 20th century, China has been engaged in international economy with its high growth rates and meets the needs required by being an international actor. This created a major advantage to China.

China has crucial impact on today's development cooperation with its power to route international goals and rules. China's principles and rules helps China to get over the problems in both international and domestic arenas.

The co-operations with international organizations and the institutions in partner countries are highly important for China to have successful results in development aid field. Besides the outer actors, the institutions and organization mechanism inside the country are also very crucial factor. China attaches importance to its institutions. Since the institutions in China are too many, the interaction among them is inevitable. The operation of interaction mechanism in a proper way is vital for development aid implementations' effectiveness. In China, development aid mechanism functions well. However, due to the lack of accountability, it does not function properly. Moreover, the lack of information about some needed issues and statistics influence the mechanism adversely.

The development aid system of China and the reflections on China's foreign policy sometimes bring advantages and disadvantages. All these challenges make Chinese development aid different from others'. However, the effects of all differences are debatable in international community. Even if China changes or not these features, it has unique structure.

History of Development Aid in China

The duration starting as a donor country in 1953 and continuing as a "recipient country" has finally transformed China to a "donor country," which means being an emerging donor especially in 21st century's concepts (Kobayashi, 2008: 2). Countries in international aid system either as donor country or as recipient country may be either a traditional donor or an

emerging donor. China is generally labeled as emerging donor by virtue of its characteristics that do not entirely suit to traditional donors. The differences that cause China not to be included in traditional donors system make China an emerging donor. By virtue of this considerable feature, the history of China in development aid system can be explained in chronological methodology. China has been both recipient and donor country in historical process.

The history of development aid in China goes back to the mid-1950s. In 1953, China gave support to the North Korea for the construction of the country after Korean War. The other destination for Chinese aid was to the Asia region such as Vietnam (Kobayashi, 2008: 4). Bandung Conference that took place in 1955 set out the key principles of development aid worldwide. The principles also guided China through its Africa policy under the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" motto that are;

- 1- Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- 2- Mutual non-aggression;
- 3- Non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- 4- Equality and mutual benefit;
- 5- Peaceful coexistence (MFA of the PRC)

When it came to 1960, owing to be African Year, Chinese target countries were mostly the ones which have gained their independence. In 1960s, ideological differentiation made China more isolated in international system (Kobayashi, 2008: 4). The hidden target behind supporting development aid projects was to play a leadership role among non-alignments against Russian ideology. During this period, the Tanzania- Zambia railroad was the largest project ever that China was included in. (Chin- Frolic, 2007: 5). The first and foremost argument about Chinese

development aid is about the ideology behind the aid system in the early 1970s. In the beginning of this period, firstly the aim of Chinese development aid was to advance Communist and Maoist model with considering national interests. To be a socialist state and to care about the Third World's interests are underlying reasons of this aim. Besides, China needed to compete for the natural resources in developing world and this was a part of its national interests. By 1979, China adopted pragmatic policies such as opening to new markets (Brautigam, 2008: 7). In this respect, in 1970s, the Latin American and the Middle Eastern countries got advantage of the Chinese aid depending on ongoing good relations with the USA. Since this policy made China economically powerful, the standing of China in international area has been more powerful. When the government changed and Deng Xiaoping came to the leadership, the stance of China in this field has changed and the policies regarding this change was named as "reform and opening up policy". Then China turned from being a donor to being a recipient (Kobayashi, 2008: 4-6). Almost until 1976, the Ministry of Economic Cooperation with Foreign Countries was in charge of the management of Chinese development aid with the guidance of "Eight Principles" (Chin-Frolic, 2007: 5). When it came to the mid-1980s China shifted its policy from competing about resources to development projects that may provide economic advantages both for China and recipient countries (Chin- Frolic, 2007: 4). The other major policy in this term is the need to build up domestic economy and to attract foreign direct investments. In 1995, China reached the peak as aid recipient and from that time on, it shifted to be a donor country again and started to increase the amount of aid which is given (Kobayashi, 2008: 7). The process have started from these years and went by promoting competitiveness of China. By the 21st century, China

has started to step globally. China has implemented “mutual benefit” policy from the last decade of 20th century to present.

Despite the evolution of Chinese development aid policies, there have been eight cardinal principles that were introduced by Premier Zhou Enlai in 1964. According to these principles, development aid should promote international friendship, peaceful relations and international cooperation. While ensuring such improvements, it should be based on support, equal relations and respect demands of partner countries. At this point, mutual support becomes a necessary feature. The approach in real perspectives also shows the necessity to offer aid within the country's capacity. The ultimate goal of China also requires making real win-win cooperation. When all the principles are successfully implemented, it contributes to building of international community (Chin- Frolic, 2007: 5). While adopting these principles, it must be appropriate to the principles which China adopted with Beijing Consensus in 1976. The policy about the development and security issues under the foreign policy and domestic policies was to create a Chinese model that is different than the Western model which was adopted by Monterrey Consensus (Ramo, The Beijing Consensus). It must be highlighted that development cooperation is an essential part of Chinese growth and development in some aspects. The reason why Beijing Consensus is weighty is hidden in the Chinese model of development. A new principle named “diversity in forms” was also considered in 1982. From that time on China went through a reconstruction process on development aid which made it to consider trade, cooperation and aid relations together (Defraigne- Bellogoli, 2012: 15-17).

When it comes to 21st century, China's development aid policies have started to be interpreted on “White Paper”. The

policies written on the White Paper are also parallel to Millennium Development Goals¹ that includes policies for both the least developed countries and donors of development aid. China made great progress on MDGs in the Asia- Pacific region and China has been a driving force in this system (Fenny- Clarke, 2008: 198).

The "Aid" System of China

In this section, first of all the institutional mechanism of Chinese foreign aid is explained. Since it has multi-track institutional system, it is important to understand the coordination and operation among the institutions. Following this mechanism, the features of Chinese aid including the types of aid, countries that are given aid and the policies regarding delivering aid are explained. To explain all these features, philosophy and ideology behind being a part of aid system and China's focuses while delivering aid are indicated.

Institutional Mechanism of Chinese Aid

The mechanism whereby China delivers aid and controls the aid mechanism has some processes. There are many institutions included in this process. However, there are major institutions that cannot be skipped over. Some institutions are responsible for some specific kinds of aid. However, the functions of these institutions are mixed in some conditions. The lack of coordination among these institutions may cause not to

¹ The Millennium Development Goals which were indicated at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 are following: i) eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, ii) achieving universal primary education, iii) promoting gender equality, iv) reducing child mortality, v)improving maternal health, vi)combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, vii) ensuring environmental sustainability, viii) developing a global partnership for development. Available at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

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be able to reach accurate numbers of aid volume and aid effectiveness.

Delivering of Chinese aid is a process that Sarah Langeuer defines it as a complex top-down management system which includes many actors. These actors are several ministries and some institutions (Lengauer, 2011: 37). These ministries and other institutions are stated below with their functions in the aid system:

Ministry of Commerce	Management of foreign aid grants and zero interest loans also bilateral aid. Promotion of diplomatic targets. Manages over 90% of bilateral funding. Drafts the aid budgets and regulations. Manages foreign aid joint ventures. Programs zero interest loans and grants. Coordinates concessional loans with China Eximbank (OECD DAC)
China Eximbank	Operation of concessional foreign aid loan programs ² that aims economic development and improving the living standards in recipient. Development, diplomacy and business objectives.
Ministry of Finance	Measurement of budget management of foreign aid. ³
Ministry of Health and Education	Shares a part of their budgets.
State Owned Enterprises	Provide aid-like transfers abroad and does not count by government.

² Concessional loans are parallel with Official Development Assistances (ODA) that means that concessional loans are extended under the designation of the Chinese government, to the government of the borrowing country with the nature of official assistance.

³ As Kobayashi indicated in his study in 2008 titled "Evaluation of China's Aid Policy", list of activities that are included in budget is as following: (i) costs of turn-key projects, general and military goods and cash; (ii) expenses for trainees from recipient countries and salaries of experts sent to recipient countries; (iii) interest subsidies for concessional loans; (iv) rebates for some specific expenses for Chinese firms involved in foreign aid-financed joint investment and cooperation projects; and (v) fees and administrative expenses for firms implementing aid projects. For detailed info: Kobayashi, 2008: 2.

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China Development Bank	Providing large lines of credits to overseas besides contributing to China's own development
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Request based aid programs by communicating with Chinese ambassadors and diplomats

According to the chart above, different types of foreign aid are seen. Since the Chinese foreign aid is analyzed in this study, it is proportionate to define the terms according to Chinese interpretation that is written on Chinese White Paper. According to White Paper that is about foreign aid of China, there are three types of aid that China delivers:

“Grant is mainly offered to help recipient countries build small or medium-sized social welfare projects, and to fund human resources development cooperation, technical cooperation, material aid and emergency humanitarian aid.

Interest-free loan is mainly used to help recipient countries construct public facilities and launch projects to improve people's livelihood.

Concessional loan is mainly used to help recipient countries undertake manufacturing projects and large and medium-sized infrastructure projects with economic and social benefits, or for the supply of complete plants, machinery and electronic products.” (China White Paper, 2014).

As it is seen, China has multi institutional aid structure. The continuation of the process depends on these institutions. In this structure, the institutions seem independent from each other but actually are dependent in terms of the functions of each element. This shows us the interconnected structure of Chinese foreign aid. Among all the institutions, the Ministry of Commerce has the major importance. The think tank of aid allocation and coordination process of China seems as the Ministry of Commerce. According to MOFCOM statements, the works of before projects' activation, their implementation and after their completion are included in evaluation reports.

However, this shows the lack of proper assessment system, because numeral conclusions are not included in (Cabria, 2013: 26-27). While using this classification, another classification made by Chin and Frolic must be indicated. Their claim is that: there are four main institutions which manage the huge proportion of Chinese aid. They are the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, some line ministries (Ministry of Science and Technology- Agriculture- Health- Education- Communications) and the International Liaison Office of the CCP Central Committee. While these institutions manage the portion of aid, there are other institutions and organizations which are involved in the aid delivery system and coordination of aid such as Ministry of Finance, some service organizations such as International Cooperation Centre, the National Development Reform Commission and the Ministry of National Defense. (Chin-Frolic, 2007: 7-8).

The Main Features of Chinese Development Aid

China's development aid has some features which come from its historical traditions and philosophy such as non-interference of the others' politics, sovereignty, equality and mutual respect. As indicated in the first part of study, these traditions are related to some official papers and have functioned in this mentality for years (ECOSOC, 2008: 22). China shares some similarities with countries which are in the same path. However, it has also some differences which makes China to be in another path. First of all, it is important to highlight the Chinese point of view on the "foreign aid" term. The emerging markets' aid allocation is similar to each other. The countries which are members of South-South cooperation tend to call foreign aid as "development cooperation". China also does not prefer to be called as donor and prefers the term of "cooperation"

and “partnership” (Brautigam, 2008: 30). The denotation issue is more complex than it seems. Because when China changes its label in development aid field, it might be a part of another classification and this may cause some changes in the balance of power in international system. As a country which seems a powerful part of South-South cooperation and also part of G77, it may also danger its position (Binder- Meier- Steets, 2010: 13) The conceptual definition of development cooperation is to help the needed countries in their development process. While this basic definition explains the substance, the components of the term should be analyzed here.

China does not have any specific recipient selection criteria. Its grant aid goes to more than 121 countries today. Talking about quantitative statistics is dispensable at this point since the statistical data already shows high quantity. On the one hand, there seems no detailed official development aid statistics on China as donor country. On the other hand, there are many reports indicating the scope of Chinese aid. According to OECD reports, the main sectors that China concentrated on are public facilities, industrial and economic infrastructure. While it is providing aid in these sectors, cooperation with turnkey projects are also have importance in Chinese aid. In addition to these, China provides humanitarian aid.⁴ On the humanitarian aid issue, China is willing to cooperate with international organizations especially about the humanitarian aid. While this type of cooperation and involving in trilateral cooperations especially in Africa make him similar to traditional donors, China is not a traditional donor because it is not transparent

⁴ In this field, it may be seen the roots of Confucianist philosophy that includes such ideas regarding human relations: 1) Ruler to the ruled, 2) father to son, 3) husband to wife, 4) older brother to younger brother, 5) friend to friend. Look at: Lengauer, 2011: 43.

enough (Brautigam, 2011: 753). The types of aids are also indicated in White Paper on foreign aid which includes complete projects by focusing on agriculture and infrastructure, goods and materials, technical cooperation, human resources development cooperation, medical teams, volunteer programs, emergency humanitarian aid, debt relief (China White Paper, 2014). As it is seen in focusing points in cooperation fields, the targets of these cooperation are reducing poverty, improving livelihoods of people, developing agriculture, enhancing education level, improving medical and health services, building public welfare facilities in developing countries. Focusing points are implemented with reference to targets. Besides these targets, another important consideration about giving aid is to strengthen capacity building and trade development. However, the basis of the aid is a debated issue by the international community. While providing aid in such ways, China also considers the recipient countries' political stability, because the political stability effects the economic stability of the countries and in turn this effect the feasibility of long-term relations (Gabas, 2009: 201).

There are some ways to channel foreign aid and China is mostly engaged in bilateral aid. However, China has become engaged in triangular cooperation in recent years partnering with international organizations and the members of OECD DAC. The United Nations is primary partner channeling the development cooperation. The World Bank and regional development banks are also supporters of multilateral partnership. While engaging in many organizations, China also closely cooperates with DAC on triangular cooperation and aid for trade. (China's Development Cooperation, OECD). Since China attaches great importance to group mechanisms, it has strong regional ties with both to Africa and the East Asia.

The Advantegous Sides, Challenges and Critics about Chinese Aid

The concepts of “donor”, “recipient”, “foreign aid” are debated issues. Instead of these concepts, “aid provider” is more preferable by China. China’s providing aid is interactive and based on mutual benefit with the recipient country. This relation makes China to accept the partnership in the cooperation process. The reason why the concepts of “donor” and “recipient” are used is because of making some comparative analyses in historical perspective.

The new sensibility that China encounters is economic consideration which may offer advantages for both China and the “partner” country. These considerations include seeking new markets since China has growing potential and needs potential to growth. Reducing in productivity, growth and development in China may cause slowdown in its region. Hence, China has to increase its sources to grow (Davies, 2008: 4). This dual relation between growth and resources is due to the need of new markets. For this reason, China prefers the regions which have difficulties on their development. One of the most advantageous feature that China has helps China to integrate easily especially in African continent. This feature is that China does not consider the principle of conditionality as the West does. It makes China prominent figure firstly in African continent and the East Asia region. The other major advantage is China’s non-intervention principle. With the help of this principle, the countries which receive aid are more prone to cooperate with China. The last advantage shaping China’s effective influence on partner countries is not to have democratization targets in recipient countries. While these advantages increase the China’s penetration, it has also some risks. China does not postulate any

conditionality such as democratization, so the possibility to deliver aid to rogue states increases. Besides the not intervention to corruption, the already corrupted states may get worse (Brautigam, 2008: 5).

By the main principles that China adopts, the way of delivering aid also shows the professionalism of China on this issue. The mechanism that clusters the types of aids and projects functions properly. Since China offers wide range of in kind and in cash aid (McCormick, 2008: 73-92). This shows that the logic behind the mechanism fits to the implementations of aid. For all these reasons, both structural and institutional mechanisms need to be functioned properly. However, the banks which are both organizes the commercial relations between China and the partner country and give credits to traders may have negative impacts on the accountability of Chinese aid system. Somehow pragmatic approach of China to development aid may also damage the mentality of "helping the poor". There are some countries who report OECD even if they are not members of DAC. Non-DAC countries may also report to OECD, however China is not one of these countries. For the transparency of the projects and aid programs, the statistical data needs to be published. Otherwise the credibility of China in development aid scene may decrease.

The other issue can be accepted both as a good mark and debated issue: trade-aid. Stressing openly its aid as a trade relation, China holds an honest position. This approach is prestigious in some ways such as accountability and reliability. The other countries which cannot adopt a manner such this may also enhance development cooperation or partnerships via trade relations. At this point, implementing this policy and explaining it as a strategy or policy is advantageous for China. The

underlying factor which pushes China to behave in this way is the understanding of “mutual benefit” (Li, 2007: 78- 79). According to some scholars, this understanding may block the development target in partner country. However, it may also help the partner country to utilize its resources in a good way. This debatable issue is more prone to be a positive aspect for China.

Conclusion

Since all the cooperation and partnerships are not accepted as “aid” in China, the numerical statistics may change. However in this study, all the monetary and non-monetary aid are accepted as development aid since it is believed that any cooperation which helps the development of a second country can be accepted as aid because there is a need situation. Less developed countries always need to cooperate or receive aid from more developed countries. China cares a lot of country both in its region and in the other continents with the understanding of mutual benefit. As my opinion when benefit goes to the both partners, it is almost impossible to call it as one partner’s “interests”. Because when there is needer, it is the most important point to satisfy one’s need. The needs of country which is developed cannot be same as the needs of an underdeveloped or a developing country.

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