

CHAPTER V

ODA CASE STUDIES AND HUMAN SECURITY

5.1 Overview

Case studies are important in that they provide specific examples of ODA. By taking a look at some representative ODA projects it will be possible to assess the degree in which the human security approach has affected ODA policy implementation. One of the research objectives of this dissertation was to compare Japan's official discourse to actual implementation of ODA policy and assistance through the UN Fund for Human Security and JICA. The previously mentioned objective will be done in the following sections by means of a discourse analysis of the reports provided by JICA regarding some of the projects that have been carried out with the help of Japanese ODA. Those projects will be judged according to the criteria set out by the Japanese government itself, that is Japan's view of human security. In other words, what will be tested here is not the actual impact of the projects themselves but rather whether the version of human security espoused by JICA and other government bodies was actually present in their formulation and implementation. The present study takes this original approach in that policy coherence is an oftentimes ignored area of public policy and of development studies. The previously described exercise will also be useful in order to determine to what extent the concept of human security has had an impact on Japanese ODA policy making and implementation.

5.2 JICA Case Studies

5.2.1 Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar is a controversial case when talking about Official Development Assistance. It is a state ruled by a military junta with a dark past regarding human rights and democracy. Most Western Democracies refuse to deal with Myanmar until there is a regime change and consider any aid given to this secretive junta to be counterproductive and to have the effect of retarding a possible transition to democracy. On the other hand, authoritarian states such as The People's Republic of China concentrate on economic opportunities and disregard human rights considerations and thus have developed close relations with Myanmar. Japan is an interesting case in that it takes a middle approach towards Myanmar. It does not renounce lucrative economic opportunities but at the same time it uses the rhetoric of human rights and human security.

The argument used by Japan is not new and echoes earlier debates on economic sanctions and the human cost they involve. In other words, some Nordic States and Japan argue that economic sanctions are counterproductive and against human dignity since the ones affected the most by them are not those in power but rather the most vulnerable. Therefore they favor limited engagement in which NGOs working at the grassroots level are supported in order to try to reach the most vulnerable while avoiding strengthening the oppressive regime in power. Japan and its supporters consider this approach to be more compatible with human security than a hard line approach involving economic sanctions and a complete disengagement due to its emphasis on providing protection and also by fostering long term growth at the

grass roots level. Critics point out that an improvement in living conditions may reduce opposition to the regime and thus lengthen the transition period to democracy. In more technical terms, an improvement may bring increased legitimacy to the regime.

Myanmar remains one of the most authoritarian states in the world and also has a very low level of human development. Nevertheless Myanmar has scored a few victories such as in its admission into ASEAN and in the continued assertion of the so called ASEAN way which provides a shield with which to protect itself from criticism and most importantly from external interference in its internal affairs.

At this point it will be useful to look at a specific case study in order to assess whether Japan's approach to Official Development Assistance is truly compatible with the concept of human security. The case in question is that of the Technical Cooperation Project for the Eradication of Opium Poppy Cultivation and Poverty Reduction in Kokang Special Region No. 1 (JICA, 2007b). This project was undertaken in Myanmar's Shan state. This region had an armed conflict with the central government for many years in order to achieve greater autonomy. In 2003 a cease-fire was finally achieved and in exchange for greater autonomy, the region was asked to ban opium poppy plantation. The impact of this prohibition was not only economic but also social. Due to the economic and social isolation of the region, poppy plantation was the most common occupation of the population. Therefore the decision to ban the practice left the majority of the population without a means to earn a living. The previously mentioned ban created great human insecurity and required a comprehensive response in order to be tackled.

This is where a joint project between the government of Myanmar and the Japan International Cooperation Agency came in. The intended plan was supposed to reflect the human security approach and to provide a long term solution for the region. The five year plan started in 2004 and had the goal of providing comprehensive assistance. The main objectives of the project as described by JICA were to “promote social development, including agricultural development (buckwheat cultivation and other substitute crops), infrastructure development, and satisfaction of basic human needs (such as education and health) in the Kokang Special Region of Shan State in northeastern Myanmar” (JICA, 2007b). The initial phase of the project reached 117,000 people and involved aspects of education, crop substitution, and small scale infrastructure (JICA, 2007b). The main idea behind the project was to provide the population with an alternative way of earning a living and for it to be sustainable. The previously mentioned goal was to be reached without sacrificing the most vulnerable in the short term in order to achieve long term goals. So this project had an aspect of protection as well as of empowerment.

Now let us analyze this project through the eyeglass of human security. The first question that comes to mind is whether it is a people-centered project. In this respect the project can be said to comply with the human security approach in that it is people-centered. Its goal is to try to cater to the needs of the population and to deal with their individual problems rather than with more macro economic considerations. Another aspect would be whether it places an emphasis on those who are most vulnerable. The project in discussion does concentrate on those who are most vulnerable and makes an effort to provide not only long term empowerment but also short term protection from the sudden economic downturn caused by the ban on

poppy plantation. Another aspect of human security is a comprehensive and inter-sectoral response to threats. This project involves aspects of education, health, agriculture, and others. In addition to that local, national, and international stakeholders are involved in the project. The central government jointly coordinated the project with JICA and the assistance of several community organizations was requested. Thus this project reflects this important aspect of the human security approach. The final aspect of the human security approach dealing with a comprehensive tackling of “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear” is the one that is controversial. While JICA claims that this project addresses both “fear” and “want” it is arguable whether the “fear” aspect is truly considered. The project report makes no mention of human rights nor do the objectives. Those are two important factors behind “freedom from fear”. The reason behind that blatant omission of such an important aspect is most likely pressure from the government of Myanmar. Due to this no mention is made of rights in any of their forms, nor of liberties and freedoms. Therefore taking all of those points into consideration one may conclude that this JICA-sponsored project in Myanmar concentrates mostly on tackling “freedom from want” while mostly ignoring “freedom from fear”. Furthermore this project shows that Japan is willing to compromise on vital aspects of human security such as human rights when dealing with uncompromising authoritarian states such as Myanmar. In addition to that due to Japan’s foreign policy imperatives in having a smooth and harmonious relationship with ASEAN, Japan tends to apply a double standard when it comes to disbursing ODA. Finally, this case study of Japan’s ODA policy towards Myanmar shows that in practice Japan’s ODA policy favors “freedom from want”

over “freedom from fear” and thus does not represent a truly complete human security approach.

5.2.2 Thailand

Japan has a very close economic relationship with Thailand. This Southeast Asian state underwent rapid economic growth through the 90s until it became the epicenter of the 97-98 Financial Crisis. With booming tourism and industrial sectors, Thailand is one of the economic powerhouses of ASEAN. The high degree of economic interdependence between Japan and Thailand should be taken into consideration when looking at its ODA policy towards this country. It should also be noted that since Thailand has reached a relatively good level of economic development, Japan has removed it from the list of its main ODA recipients. Instead Japan aims to establish a strong economic partnership with Thailand. Nevertheless there is still some degree of Official Development Assistance provided to Thailand, mostly in the form of grant aid. Also, due to Thailand’s central position in ASEAN it serves as the headquarters of several important aid organizations and region-wide projects. This is the case of the Project that will be discussed in this section.

The case in point is the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability. The previously mentioned Center is located in Bangkok and serves the entire Southeast Asian region. It is operated by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security which is funded by grant aid from Japan. Its goal is to empower disabled people and to build a “barrier-free society” (JICA, 2007d). The Center tackles both physical and non-physical barriers and thus takes a comprehensive approach to the

threats faced by disabled people. While the description provided by JICA is vague and ambiguous, from a discourse analysis point of view, it is important to note that it made an effort to use the language of Human Security to justify this project. The Center claims to use three methods in order to achieve its goal. The first is to promote cooperation among the government, NGOs, and others. The second method is to improve access to information for disabled people. And finally, the third method, is to promote the development of human resources in order to help disabled people help themselves. The Center trains disabled people to become leaders and to start their own projects. In addition to that, JICA sends disabled Japanese experts to train future leaders. This project takes a mid to long term perspective based on empowerment.

The ambitious nature of this project reflects the human security approach in that it does not concentrate on an specific threat to disabled people but rather takes a more comprehensive and holistic point of view that attempts to improve their lives. The Center also argues that disabled people represent one of the most vulnerable groups in developing countries and that helping them should therefore be a priority. In this respect this project satisfies the “helping the most vulnerable first” criteria of the human security approach. On the other hand the emphasis on self-help and mid to long term results gives primacy to empowerment over protection. In other words, this project seems to ignore the immediate needs of the disabled. Even though this seems to be reasonable from a feasibility perspective, it is not compatible with the human security approach. From this perspective those disabled people who are most vulnerable at this moment in time should be protected concurrently to taking actions for mid to long term development. Nevertheless there is an important characteristic of this project that makes it highly compatible to the human security approach and that is

that it does not confine itself to any specific borders. In other words, it recognizes that the problems faced by disabled people are not limited to a certain country and therefore the Center deals with projects in the entire Asia-Pacific region. It is important to note how this intrudes into the internal affairs of countries but since the issue is not a controversial one, it is not opposed by the atavistic and retrograde elites of the region in question. Thus this is a good starting point in that it sets an example of how official development assistance and development as a whole should be carried out, without limiting the project to national boundaries and certainly not to outdated concepts such as national sovereignty. The project truly reflects human security's core which is a duty to protect and to empower individuals regardless of jurisdiction or geographical location.

5.2.3 Cambodia

Cambodia is a country that has undergone a long period of armed conflict. Due to this its human capital decreased dramatically and its legal system was left in total disarray. After peace was restored in Cambodia, the international community undertook the difficult responsibility of nation-building. Most organs of the government had to be created from scratch and the judicial system needed to be reformed. This large undertaking included training judges, and other legal workers and the actual drafting of the Civil Code and Code of Civil Procedure. In addition to that the population in general had to be reacquainted with a functioning legal system based on the rule of law. This included increasing awareness on human rights and legal procedures to enforce them. In order to tackle aspects of accessibility, advances on legal fees were provided, and local NGOs involved in similar projects were supported. All of the previously described activities were undertaken with the help of

JICA. This project of technical cooperation started in 1999 and through its duration it collaborated with Cambodian and Japanese experts in the drafting of more than 500 articles of the Civil Code and more than a 1000 of the Code of Civil Procedure (JICA, 2007c).

The sheer magnitude of this project makes assessment on terms of results difficult to say the least but since in this study we are interested in the application of the human security approach to development that is not an issue. In term of human security, this project deals with one of the leading trends in the field, nation building. Japan was involved in the entire process of conflict resolution and peace building in Cambodia and this project is an example of one of the most important stages of the process, institution building. The project takes a comprehensive perspective to ODA in that frequently ignored aspects such as institutional reform are tackled. In this case, a responsible member of the international community, is taking an active role in the solution of the internal affairs of Cambodia. In this case, national sovereignty was not a problem due to the peculiar nature of Cambodia at the time thus the pervasive problem of Southeast Asia, nationalism, was momentarily under control. In addition to that starting from scratch was a perfect opportunity in order to apply the most advanced trend in development and the best government institutions possible. Without the problem of having to reform preexisting outdated institutions, Cambodia became the flagship development project of the international community.

The technical cooperation project in discussion is interesting in that it is a case in which ODA was used for the purpose of improving an intangible asset rather than in a huge infrastructure project. In addition to that judicial reform is highly intrusive and political and therefore sets a precedent in that the international community not

only has the right but also the duty to interfere in building institutions conducive to the achievement of human security. In this case Japan tackled not only “freedom from want” but also “freedom from fear” and thus showed that at least in non-confrontational instances like judicial reform in Cambodia, it is willing to apply an important side of human security which is that related to “freedom from fear”. Thus this project of judicial reform is a comprehensive solution that both protects and empowers the Cambodian population in the short, mid, and long terms.

In conclusion while this project is a good example of Japan taking human security seriously as an approach to ODA planning and implementation, it also shows that its application is opportunistic. While human rights and the rule of law were not mentioned in the case of ODA to Myanmar they were the center piece in the case of Cambodia. This is a clear sign of an inconsistent application of the human security approach.

5.2.4 Indonesia

Indonesia has had a turbulent relationship with Japan. It had an ambivalent colonial experience in which Japan “liberated” it from Dutch rule and later imposed its own rule. However the important point about that period was that Japan was promoting its East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere with rhetoric of “Asia for the Asians” and thus served as an earlier attempt at empowerment. After WWII Japan paid reparations to Indonesia and quickly increased its economic interdependency with the Southeast Asian archipelago. Indonesia’s affiliation with the non-aligned movement during much of the cold-war prevented close political ties from developing but it did

not stop Japan's thirst for raw materials and Indonesia desire for consumer products (Trinidad, 2007).

This section will look at two projects funded by Japanese Official Development Assistance in Indonesia. The first project is a good example of development at the macro level (national level) promoting the human security approach. The title of this project was Community Empowerment Project with Civil Society (PKPM). PKPM started in 2004 as a three year-long venture (JICA, 2007e). The project was implemented in Indonesia's 10 eastern provinces, which were chosen due to their low level of development and high levels of poverty compared to the rest of the country. The project in discussion was undertaken with the cooperation of Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency as a means to promote a participatory approach to development. This goal was to be achieved through the provision of workshops on participatory development and other related approaches for local government officials, national government officials, and community leaders. The workshops were supposed to help engender support for local development initiatives at the community level.

Now let us put this project to the human security test. The first and most important principle of human security is that it is individual centered. It is clear that this project does not satisfy that criteria since it is community centered and this means that while a participatory development approach may have some things in common with the human security approach they differ in their most important tenet. Human Security clearly states that the referent is the individual and that the needs of the individual should be placed above that of the community. On the other hand, the participatory approach, especially as practiced in Asia and as depicted by this project,

is community based. A second criterion of the human security approach is that it aims to protect the most vulnerable first. In this respect, this project does follow the human security approach since it was first implemented in the ten poorest provinces of the country and was expected to spread from there. A third criterion is that of empowerment and ownership. The project does contain many elements that promote ownership and one of the major goals of it is to promote community initiatives. The project aims to train government officials to be responsive to the needs of the community and to collaborate with them in order to implement community initiatives for development. The Human Security approach is also compatible with the cross-sectoral nature of the project. It involves representatives from both national and local government, NGOs, community leaders, and international organizations. Therefore this aspect of the project is compatible with the Human Security approach.

So is PKPM a true example of the human security approach put into practice with the support of Japanese Official Development Assistance? The answer to this question is not clear. There are aspects of the previous project that are perfectly compatible with most aspects of the human security approach but there seems to be a different ethos to this project as compared to the other ones analyzed in previous sections. The evidence for the previous assertions is that the language used shows a slight but significant variation when compared to that of other projects that were clearly planned following the human security approach such as the one dealing with Judicial reform in Cambodia. PKPM uses a language reflecting earlier and sometimes parallel trends in development such as participatory development and community-based development which have, as of late, been adapted to the Human Security approach by some practitioners. Nevertheless on a theoretical level they differ on core

tenets when compared to a pure version of human security. Participatory development and community-based development place more emphasis on local development and on the protection of the community above all else while giving less emphasis to political and civil rights and to democracy at the national level. Furthermore it should be remembered that the main difference between them is that human security places emphasis on the individual and the community is just another level of human association. In conclusion the PKPM project is compatible with a loose version of Asianized human security but it is not an offspring of the human security approach but rather an adapted project molded to fit the currently prevailing trend. It should be noted that the main point here is not whether the project is compatible with human security nor whether it is effective or not, but rather what is its theoretical origin.

Now let us look at a second project, this project shares some of the aims of the previously analyzed one but deals with individual participation rather than only at the village level as the previous one. The Technical Cooperation Project for Community Development Based on Citizen Participation has the aim of promoting local development through individual initiatives and citizen participation in the fields of basic healthcare, basic education, the improvement of living standards, and the development of small-scale community infrastructure. The project aims to train citizens from all walks of life to participate in local development and to engage in capacity building. Local citizens are encouraged to work together with provincial government in order to plan and implement development initiatives. It is important to note that other than in the title the word “community” is scantily used and the word “citizen” is preferred. The level of government to which there is more frequent mention is the provincial one and the name given to the approach of this project is

citizen participatory approach. Finally, the overall goal of this project is “to create a framework for bottom-up development based on the implementation of projects that truly reflect the needs of people, and to extend that framework progressively to other regions” (JICA, 2007e).

It is evident that there are some important similarities between the two projects implemented in Indonesia. They both promote a participatory approach but while the first promotes a community based participatory approach, the second favors a citizen based participatory approach. The second project of Technical cooperation also tries to concentrate on four basic areas that are considered to be of importance to deal with vulnerable people. This reflects the vulnerability aspect of human security. This project also shows a large content of empowerment and ownership. Its aim is to promote local initiatives and participation which are both conducive to ownership and to empowerment. Therefore in that respect, this project also reflects the human security approach. The cross-sectoral collaboration criterion is also satisfied due to the involvement of a varied range of stakeholders from all levels. Finally the most important theoretical criterion is also satisfied, that is it is people centered. The emphasis on the role of the individual citizen is a true reflection of the human security approach. Thus in summary the Technical Cooperation Project for Community Development Based on Citizen Participation does reflect the human security approach to development.

In conclusion the two projects implemented in Indonesia do show important aspects of the human security approach. While the first reflects an approach more compatible with other trends such as community-based participatory development or sufficiency economy, the second is more theoretically compatible with human

security due to its citizen/individual centered approach. The two projects nevertheless lack an important aspect of human security and that is “freedom from fear”. They do not make any mention of political freedom nor of any other political or civil rights and rather concentrate on economic and social aspects. The reasons behind this are varied but a major one is probably Indonesia’s, and for that matter the region’s, mistaken nationalism and the primacy played by the principle of sovereignty. In other words, “freedom from want” is less controversial and is perceived to be less intrusive by recipient countries than projects dealing with “freedom from fear”, thus Japan probably opted for the former so as to maintain a harmonious relationship with the resource-rich ASEAN member. It is evident from the previous chapters that this is inconsistent with Japan’s twin policy regarding human security. Most important policies papers regarding Human Security and ODA maintain that both “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear” are vital parts of the human security approach and the two examples of Japanese ODA in Indonesia fail to show any mention of “freedom from fear”.

5.2.5 Vietnam

Vietnam is a country that has not had historically close relations with Japan due to its affiliation with the communist block during the cold war. However this started to change after the Doi Moi policy of opening up the country to a market-based economy. As shown in Table 4 of the present dissertation, Japan is providing increasingly large amounts of ODA to Vietnam in the form of loans. This shows Japan’s interest in the rising Southeast Asian economy and trust in its ability to pay back the loans incurred (Trinidad, 2007). Vietnam continues to be one of the last actually existing communist countries in the world and one of the last three in Asia.

Due to this, projects related to civil and political rights are limited by an authoritarian government. In order to circumvent these possible stones along the way towards a mutually beneficial economic partnership, Japan has placed an emphasis on the “freedom from want” aspect of human security when dealing with Official Development aid to Vietnam. The following case study is a clear example of one such project that ignores the “freedom from fear” aspect of the human security approach.

Reproductive Health Project in Nghe An Province started in 1996 in one of the poorest and most remote regions of Vietnam. This region is inhabited by hill tribe peoples who are among the most vulnerable in an already poor country. The 3 million inhabitants of this province tended to have very poor health coverage before 1996 and less than 60% of pregnant women gave birth in health centers (JICA, 2007g). The previously mentioned state of affairs represented a high health risk for the mothers and the unborn children and therefore the Reproductive Health Project promoted the establishment of an administrative service system covering health care needs of mothers and infants and also supported capacity building for those involved in health related education. This was done by the dispatch of experts, volunteers, and by the building of the necessary infrastructure by means of grant aid. A management committee composed of “representatives from among local residents, the government, community groups, and the healthcare sector at the provincial, county, and communal levels” was formed to direct the project (JICA, 2007g).

The project in discussion protects the most vulnerable first as seen by the choice of implementing the project in one of the most remote and poor regions of Vietnam. In addition to that, the project concentrates on one of the most vulnerable subgroups, women and children, and their health. By doing this, the Reproductive

Health Project reflects an important aspect of human security. The human security approach to ODA is also present in the management of the project which is composed by a cross-sectoral panel representing most stakeholders. An additional aspect to be noted is that Japanese volunteers were also deployed so as to tackle the problem at the grassroots level. In other words, the project takes a comprehensive and holistic approach to the reproductive health problem of the region. Training is provided at all levels and in addition to the provision of necessary infrastructure through grant aid, empowerment is also promoted through grass roots participatory development. Thus, this project embodies most aspects of human security but at the same time ignores important aspects necessary for achieving complete human security for hill tribe people. One such possible aspect could be related to proper registration of those babies. Another important aspect could be related to minority rights or representation in the national government. Those important aspects of human security are ignored due to practical considerations. In this case the main limiting factor is the authoritarian nature of the Vietnamese government and ASEAN's policy of non-intervention. Therefore Japan prefers to ignore those important aspects of human security in favor of maintaining harmony and of promoting a mutually beneficial economic partnership with Vietnam.