

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Overview

The second largest economy in the world is located in East Asia and has exerted a strong influence on neighboring regions. Japanese economic power saw a sharp rise after the Korean War and the period of high economic growth. Due to Japan's export oriented economy, the government identified early on, that its economic future depended on its ability to penetrate foreign markets and of taking advantage of the natural resources of other better endowed nations. The recognition of those economic imperatives led to the formation of the Japanese trading empire, whose expansion was undertaken without a single bullet being shot.

Due to the strong connection between trade, foreign investment, and economics in general to development, Japan took a leading role in helping Asia, more specifically East and Southeast Asia, develop as potential markets for its finished products and as necessary sources of raw materials and cheap labor. Several tools were used to do this such as official development assistance, foreign direct investment, private loans, training programs, and more recently free trade agreements. All of those tools of foreign policy have important ripple effects for the development of the target countries and because of this Japan had to gradually start to sugarcoat them in its foreign policy discourse in order to justify its economic intervention in them. In other words, Japan had to offer something in exchange to the target countries. The early years of Japan's economic rise after the War lacked any sugarcoating on the part of the Japanese government other than simple trade and free market policies. This

started to change after some target countries started to question Japan's policies and whether they were actually benefiting the target beneficiaries or only the Japanese economy. This prompted the Japanese government to justify its policies in order to make them more acceptable for the target beneficiaries. This is when Japan put forward the development argument based on the national norm of "developmentalism" which claims that helping other countries develop is beneficial for everyone not just for the target country. Later on Japan introduced the flying geese model which attempted to justify Japan's economic leadership of Asia by saying that Japan was leading the other dependent economies towards development and economic growth. The period in which Japan took the raw materials from the rest of Asia and then exported back the finished products transformed into a period in which Japan started to face strong competition from other rising East Asian economies and decided to move some of its production to Southeast Asia and China. That shift was also justified at the foreign policy level by the discourse of comprehensive security and international development as a way to help those countries develop and more recently as a way to improve regional and global security. The final step in this process of discourse transformation has been Human Security. The growing popularity of this concept and its all encompassing nature made it a very appealing idea for the Japanese government and was eagerly adopted during the late 1990s. This concept was based on promoting security through development and favored long term solutions instead of short term ones. The nature of the Human Security concept as promoted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) fit Japan's "economism" and "developmentalism" perfectly and as another value added consequence it helped Japan justify its lack of military cooperation with the UN.

On the other hand, there are groups in Japan such as NGOs and international civil servants, *inter alia*, who truly believe in the concept of Human Security and think that it is a good framework to guide foreign policy due to its focus on prevention and other dominant development norms such as a needs-based approach. This study will concentrate on the gaps between official discourse and actual implementation of the concept of Human Security.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is clear that Japan is making use of the concept of Human Security as the overarching framework of its official discourse. Human Security is used in the most recent diplomatic bluebook to bring cohesion to Japan's foreign policy. The general goal is to give the picture that Japan's foreign policy has the single aim of promoting global human security. Such a praiseworthy goal justifies, at least in theory, all the policies used by Japan in trying to achieve it. When dealing with ODA and development in general, the Human Security approach includes some guidelines for policy making. While the concept still remains loosely defined and flexible, some general characteristics of the human security approach to development can be identified. The first one is its emphasis on prevention and early warning. Long term solutions to root causes of insecurity are preferred over short term fixes. Human Security promotes the use of a holistic approach to development which stresses the interconnectedness of the different areas of security. Two other popular currents in development thinking are also included by the human security approach, namely empowerment, and a rights-based approach. Human Security, especially the version espoused by the UN Commission for Human Security, stresses the importance of

ownership and sustainability. Thus the Human Security approach brings under its wings most of the cutting edge development methods.

By claiming to follow a Human Security approach in the promotion of development through ODA and the Fund for Human Security, the Japanese government is making the commitment to follow the guidelines set forth by this approach. This means that the effectiveness and success of its ODA policies will be judged according to whether they help achieve human security or not and whether they follow the guidelines of the Human Security approach to development. This is the main problem that will be tackled. The gap between official discourse and actual implementation and whether following the human security approach makes any difference at all compared to for example following a sustainable development approach. The present dissertation wants to look at how Japan's official adoption of the concept of Human Security as part of its discourse in 1999 has affected its policy towards ODA (MOFA, 1999b). The challenge is to assess the actual effect of the concept on actual policy making and implementation. Due to the all encompassing nature of the paradigm two variables were chosen to represent Japan's development assistance policy, ODA and assistance through the UN Fund for Human Security and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. By comparing official discourse to actual implementation in the previously mentioned areas of foreign policy it was possible to determine the degree of influence the concept actually has on Japanese foreign policy. Finally a simple yet important question is answered. Is Japan using Human Security as a policy advocacy tool in order to hide its national interest? And a more general question is Human Security more than a change of label for Japan's foreign policy?



### 1.3 Objectives of Research

- To assess the impact of the concept of Human Security on Japanese ODA policy making and implementation.
- To identify the official government position regarding the concept of Human Security.
- To compare Japan's official discourse to actual implementation of ODA policy and assistance through the UN Fund for Human Security and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

### 1.4 Research Questions

- What has been the impact of the adoption of the concept of Human Security by the Japanese government on ODA policy making and implementation?
- What is the official government position regarding Human Security especially in relation to development assistance policy?
- Is there a difference between Japan's official discourse on ODA policy and assistance through the UN Fund for Human Security and its actual implementation and if so what is it?

### 1.5 Hypothesis

I am very skeptical of the actual impact of the adoption of the concept of Human Security on ODA policy making and implementation. While Japan's official government position on Human Security is very similar to that of the UNDP and of the UN Commission on Human Security the actual commitment by policy makers is doubtful. Some of the most prominent conservative politicians in Japan have espoused the term and used it to further very different goals, such as an expansion of Japan's military capabilities. Other large business sectors may use the term in order to expand their business opportunities. Due to the neo-realist inclination of the majority of the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the Diet it is very difficult to believe that the real goal behind ODA policy is the achievement of global human security rather than a more narrow national interest. Thus the hypothesis is that the term is being co-opted by powerful policy makers and the private sector in order to promote national and sectoral interests. In addition to that a large gap between discourse and actual implementation is expected.

### 1.6 Research Methods

The main research method that was used is documentary research. First a historical analysis of Japan's ODA policy was carried out based on official government documents such as the ODA White Paper and the yearly Diplomatic Blue Books. In addition to that other official government statements such as speeches and position papers were used in order to identify Japan's official position regarding Human Security.

A second step was to compare the results of the previously described discourse analysis with that of accounts by policy makers. In other words, official discourse was compared to accounts made by actual insiders but unofficially. This includes the accounts of former prime ministers and bureaucrats of the pertinent ministries. By doing this some of the hidden motifs behind official policies have been elucidated.

The next logical step was to review the accounts given by NGOs and other civil society organizations regarding the actual impact and implementation of Japanese foreign policy in the Southeast Asian region. This served as a counterpoint to official policy statements and helped identify some contentious issues related to Japanese ODA and other forms of development assistance. This was complemented by scholarly secondary sources which analyze the impact of Japanese ODA to this region.

The final step of the methodology was to look at the actual implementation of some representative development projects implemented through the UN Fund for Human Security and JICA. They were assessed following the guidelines set forth by the Human Security approach. A detailed assessment was also done for other projects carried out with the support of bilateral ODA. Analysis concentrated not so much on the actual success of the project per se but rather on the influence of the human security approach on the planning and implementation stages of it.

## 1.7 Research Scope

The present thesis concentrated on the post Cold War period and is mostly restricted in focus to Southeast Asia. The present study follows the guidelines set by Japan's holistic view of human security rather than the two prevalent versions of



“protection” human security and “development” human security. This means that the guidelines that are followed are those set forth by the UNDP and “Human Security Now” (United-Nations, 2003) by the UN Commission for Human Security. In addition to that due to the large scope encompassed by ODA and development assistance in general, this study gives a general overview of the field at the theoretical level and at the regional level while concentrating on a few representative case studies for a more detailed discussion. Finally the Japanese policy making process is a very complex one which involves many actors, societal norms, and structural constraints, therefore it was necessary to concentrate on a few major examples of each rather than try to cover the entire spectrum. This means that the author had to make informed decisions on which are considered to be the most influential agents for a certain policy or decision.

### 1.8 Significance of Research

Due to the nature of the research in question, the major contribution will be to knowledge. In addition to that this study may also be useful for policy advocacy groups and non profit organizations promoting the responsible and sincere application of the concept of Human Security. By shedding some light on Japan’s apparently idyllic ODA policies this study will improve the general understanding on policy advocacy tools and most importantly on implications of a possible shift in *epistemes* as Foucault foresaw or in paradigms as Khun predicted (Dyson, 2003). This study is a practical application of Foucault’s process of discourse formation and it will help

elucidate the process by which a state guides and creates a new discourse in order for its policies to be judged by it. This is clearly the case of Human Security in which a country that has concentrated on economic growth and development rather than military cooperation has attempted to justify its behavior by supporting a shift in *epistemes* and thus be able to set the rules of the game. While this is not the central focus of this study, the results and observations gained through a focused discourse analysis of Japan's ODA policy may provide some useful insights for the more complex question of the implications of a shift in *epistemes*.