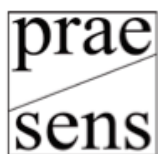# Japanese and South Korean Official Development Assistance (ODA): A Comparative Analysis of Rhetoric and Behaviour

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Abstract

This research aims at reviewing the coherence of rhetoric and behaviour of Japanese and South Korean aid policy. By using the theoretical framework of role theory, the role conceptions of Japanese and South Korean policymakers are compared with the actual role performances of the countries. A four step methodological approach is chosen. First, the aid-related rhetoric of policymakers between 2005 and 2012 is analysed. By using qualitative content analysis, six role conceptions are identified ("Bridge", "Model", "Respected Member of the International Community", "Responsible Leader", "Partner", "Newcomer"). Second, commitment indicators found in the role conceptions are compared to aid disbursement data from the OECD's Creditor Reporting System. Third, two case studies—an Asian and an African recipient country (Vietnam and Tanzania)—are presented to provide additional information on qualitative indicators. Finally, role performances are set in the context of the previously derived role conceptions. As a result, role gaps are identified for both donors, whereas in two instances respectively role performance is coherent with role conception. Japan acts as a "Bridge" and "Partner", while South Korea is a "Newcomer" and to some extent a "Partner". This research shows that the reliability of aid related commitments of Japan and South Korea is overall quite weak, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the two countries' roles in the international aid community by linking the fields of Foreign Policy Analysis, role theory, and Official Development Assistance.