

MASTER THESIS REVIEW

Author: Kazuma Yabe
Thesis: Aid Allocation across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: The Role of Fragility as a Donor's Motive
Reviewer: doc. Mgr. Zdeněk Opršal, Ph.D.

Content

The author of the diploma thesis defines his goals on page 2-3 (where he specifically states that "*The purpose of this research ... is to identify potentially differing role fragility plays as a donor's motive across the [Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP)] nexus and investigate if and how the aid allocation is tailored to address fragility*"). In addition, the author defines one main research question "*How are donors motivated by the fragility of recipient states?*" and two subquestions i) "*How does the impact of fragility on aid allocation policies differ across the HDP nexus?*" and ii) "*What roles do the 'state' of fragility and the 'degree' of fragility play as a donor's motive?*". In his diploma thesis, the author consistently strives to answer both specifically defined research sub-questions. In order to do so (i.e. in order to analyze ODA allocation of 23 DAC members to 127 developing countries from 2009 to 2019), the author first defines the basic concepts and terms with which he deals in his thesis (concretely - fragility, Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, DAC and ODA). The following "Literature review" chapter introduces the current state of knowledge in the field of i) foreign aid allocations and of ii) foreign aid in fragile context. Based on these theoretical chapters, the author skillfully defines the knowledge gap and builds methodological framework. Advanced quantitative research methods (the random-effect Tobit model) were selected with respect to the nature and limits of availability data (these limits are reflected and discussed). I appreciate the clear presentation and justification of the dependent and explanatory variables.

The findings of the research are clearly presented in the chapter "Regression Results and Discussion - Individual Donor Countries". The Table 3. Regression results - fragility variable in individual donors" is worth attention. It turns out that the author's innovative methodological approach yields results that are far from trivial. The innovative approach lies in the disaggregation of ODA into three subcategories - Humanitarian, Development and Peace ODA. These three subcategories approximate the individual components of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. In addition, these dependent variables are analysed separately for the State of fragility (in binary form) and Degree of fragility (in the form of ordinal data) categories. The selection of independent variables is well supported by the relevant literature and is divided into four broad groups into donor's self-interest, recipient need, merit and a separate category of fragility. The results of the analyses are discussed. Illustrative are Tables 4, 5 and 6, which present patterns of donor's response to fragility - in the three already mentioned subcategories of ODA (Humanitarian, Development and Peace ODA).

Literature and references

To the best knowledge of the supervisor, the thesis includes a representative number of relevant academic papers on foreign aid allocations and issues (relationship) of fragility and foreign aid. References are consistent and conform to common academic standards.

Formal requirements

I have two (rather minor) critical comments on the formal requirements. Firstly, for the diploma thesis it is appropriate to align the text into a block. Secondly, in the case of the Figure 3, the proportions of ODA to fragile and non-fragile contexts are not recognizable for some donors with low total ODA allocations. A similar weakness appears in Figure 5.

In general, the diploma thesis has the character of an extended academic paper; I like this approach and consider it worthwhile for other diploma theses.

Topics for discussion

Could you please comment on a discrepancy regarding the findings in Table 2 Model 2 Development pillar? Results are statistically insignificant for majority of individual donors (in some cases even with a negative sign), while at the aggregate level DAC23 is positive at the 5% level of significance. What could be the explanation?

Overall evaluation and proposed grade

In terms of content, this is a mature diploma thesis. It is likely that the thesis benefited from the (on-line) internship of the author of the diploma thesis at the OECD (within the Fragility working group). The critical remarks are only minor and concern formal aspects. After some rather minor modifications, I suggest the diploma thesis for publication in an academic journal of a higher quartile.

I do recommend the thesis for defense with grade A.

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Signature:

