

Japanese domestic air pollution regulation and diplomacy: A review

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1. Introduction

Air pollution is a serious global problem. The WHO estimates that, in 2019, air pollution caused 4.2 million premature deaths worldwide, and in China, ambient air pollution was estimated to have caused over 1 million premature deaths, making the East Asian region one of the air pollution hotspots. Located in East Asia, Japan is undoubtedly one of the most successful countries in the world to tackle domestic air pollution, especially in the 1970s and 80s. However, even in Japan, air pollution problems have not been resolved, and there are signs of transboundary air pollution in the East Asian region.

This paper briefly depicts Japan's air pollution policy and diplomacy, and reviews the relevant existing literature mostly in the field of political science. It concludes with some thoughts on the problems and issues ahead of Japanese air pollution policy and diplomacy, as well as the relevant existing literature.

2. Domestic air pollution regulation

The overall regulatory structure is basically a combination of pollutant-by-pollutant air quality and emission standards, requirements for dispatching pollution control managers and supervisors for certain factories, voluntary agreements named as pollution control agreements (PCAs), government's policy-oriented financing and subsidies, and compensation schemes for victims suffering from certain pollution-caused health damage. Although Japan's air pollution control policies are basically successful, it is certainly not free from problems. The most serious ones are those of PM2.5 and photo oxidants. These pollutants involve not just domestic but also transboundary problems.

Basically, the existing literature on Japan's air pollution control policy agree that the policy-mix significantly contributed to the reduction of air pollution while there are still some serious problems left. The existing literature also mostly agree on the driving forces of Japan's APCP: it was not the objective of enhancing

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environmental quality in Japan but the combination of domestic and foreign pressures (高橋 2017; Broadbent 2002).

3. Japanese transboundary air pollution diplomacy

Japan's international air pollution policy focuses mainly on EANET, which is a monitoring network established in 2001 by a Japanese initiative. EANET's "major activities are monitoring and reporting, data management, technical assistance, capacity building, research and public awareness" (EANET Summary of Fact Sheet of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia). The participating countries increased from 10 in 2000 to 13 in 2005 from East Asian and Southeast Asian regions. Japan initially hosted the secretariat and the network center; from 2002, Japan hosts only the latter while the Secretariat is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme Asia and the Pacific. EANET's framework has been stipulated in the Instrument for the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia, which is a non-legally-binding document. Until recently, its scope of activities had been restricted to acid deposition in the EANET countries only; especially, transboundary air pollution is out of scope even today.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Regarding Japanese domestic air pollution regulation, the biggest problem is that there is very limited consideration of environmental policy integration. In terms of domestic air pollution, policy integration means integrating domestic air pollution policies and objectives into, for example, domestic energy and climate policies, and transboundary air pollution diplomacy. The second problem is that the existing literature does not clearly distinguish problem structures and framings of *kogai* and the modern environmental problems. Mixing up two issues having different problem structures and framings may cause methodological problems because such differences may create incommensurability between *Kogai* and environmental problems. On the other hand, there are certainly continuities between *Kogai* and environmental problems. An important one would be Japan's domestic governance structure.

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