The Changing Role of Japan in the International Trade Regime: from a Rule-Follower to a Rule-Maker

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Abstract

Japan has changed its status from a rule-follower to a rule-maker in the international trade regime in the past 60 years. When Japan joined the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) in 1955, it had to follow the rules that were set by the existing member nations. As Japan expected that membership would contribute in promoting its international trade, it accepted the conditions and followed the existing rules which were favorable for member countries. Major countries, especially Western countries, took advantage of their bargaining position in their negotiations. However, after 30 years, Japan reached major country status, influencing the creation of rules in the international trade regime. This paper aims to clarify the factors and the process of Japan’s changing role by comparing the structure of the world economy in the past and the present.

Comments welcome!

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