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In the Wake of TICAD V: Japan–Africa Relations Today

Abstract: The paper looks at how Japan, one of the major donors of African countries, has been redefining its positions on the African continent in terms of bilateral aid and business opportunities, triangular collaboration and multilateral development projects in an increasingly 'interpolar' world of international relations. The discussion includes China's expanding presence all over Africa as an important 'reference point' for the Japanese public at large and how that may influence Japanese pragmatic foreign policy towards the continent and Japan's involvement in African development. What are Japan's priorities in the wake of hosting the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) early in June 2013 in Yokohama? How does Japan go along with its confident manner of inclusive development and ownership in African societies when at the same time it is challenged by China and other emerging actors? What are the items on Japan's agenda for a re-intensified Africa policy?

Keywords: Japan–Africa relations, Tokyo International Conference on African Development, foreign aid policy, Pacific World Order, triangular cooperation

Introduction

Japan has for many decades been a stable and appreciated partner for a number of African countries. In the past twenty years, its relationship with the African continent "has been highly variable" yet at the same time "shaped by changing foreign policy objectives and internal political conditions" (Cornelissen 2012, p.461). Not only has Japan long been rhetorically engaged with African development; it has also been involved in the form of micro projects and large-scale developments on the ground. The central argument presented in this article states that with the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) held between 1 and 3 June 2013 in Yokohama, Japan has redefined its presence across Africa, and while it re-intensifies its involvement, its primary objective is to re-position

itself both in an Afro–Asian context and in the global politico-economic arena; while secondly, this creates substantial policy implications for rival powers, in particular China.

It is not the intention of the study to provide yet another overview of Japan's involvement with Africa since the launch of TICAD in 1993—many scholarly papers[1] have been written about that to date—but to investigate Japan's redesigned African development strategy in a new "interpolar"[2] environment, in particular in connection with China's rapid and extended engagement with the continent, as well as the new Pacific context with the USA playing a key role in Asia, both as traditional partner of Japan, and redefined partner for China. The article aims at contributing to recent efforts by academic circles to "bring Japan firmly back into the debate about the unfolding synergies between Africa and the Asian drivers" (Ampiah and Rose 2012, p.153), which is in fact obvious in the light of the latest edition of TICAD with all its results and implications. The article seeks first to provide a brief summary of the TICAD process, but from the point of view of how it grew over the years, as well as how it has changed in its development philosophy. Secondly, TICAD V will be analysed from the 'new discourse' angle, including the major thematic considerations of the summit that will certainly have an effect on thinking about African development in the coming years. Third, some major policy comparisons will be drawn between China's and Japan's involvement in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in that Japan's approach in official terms is a 'regional initiative for Africa', in co-operation with many international organisations such as the World Bank or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and since TICAD V, with the African Union Commission. With TICAD V, Japan again lays emphasis on 'inclusive development' and the 'ownership' principle on behalf of the African partners, and puts Japanese business interests high on the agenda. How successful this can be in the long run both in the African context and in a broader Afro–Asian framework will also be elaborated on. Finally, concluding remarks will summarise why Japan wants to remain an important actor in the system of international relations of the African continent and its national, regional and pan-African entities, and how it plans to utilise the TICAD process for implementing its foreign policy goals.

Japan in an interpolar context: adaptation and innovation

The period following the "unipolar moment" in international affairs, as Charles Krauthammer proclaimed it in 1990[3], has seen a number of challenges—the hardest to cope with being the events of 9/11—and while one might think that the moment is over, we may have been witnessing the "emergence of a more multipolar world" (Smith 2012, p.52) with the United States of America

as undoubtedly still "by far the most powerful state on the face of the earth" (Mearsheimer 2006, p.113), and with an increasing number of emerging powers practicing a growing influence in the global arena. Today's international context is best described as 'interpolar' with the moment when "major global and regional powers cooperate to manage deepening interdependence, and build a viable and effective multilateral order" (Grevi 2009, p.7). As an "adaptive state", Japan has been able to adjust herself to international change, and her "long-term goal is not [purely] the enhancement of Japanese power but the creation of an international system that will be protective of Japanese interests" (Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama 2007, p.279). Several scholars[4] see that "more than any other country, Japan faces a number of challenges in relation to the changing global order, the rise of regional rivals, particularly China, and the reorganization of the architecture of global governance" (Dobson 2012, p.231). As Japan wants to maintain the status quo, demonstrating that it (still) is a contemporary great power, as one of the founding members of G6 (in 1975) it advocates G8[5] as the core institution of internationalism, coming up with innovations to reach out toward the developing world. Japan intends to keep its agenda-setting power in international fora—we will see this in the case of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development—and all its "attempts at innovation and institution building[6] in global governance […] have actually been aimed at reinforcing the status quo" (Dobson 2012, p.250). In addition, as within her own vicinity China has grown into an influential regional power, overtaking Japan as the second largest economy in the world after the US, a more *realpolitik*-oriented approach seems inevitable for Japan in order to keep the balance of power in the region, "balancing Chinese influence in Southeast Asia" (Johnstone 1999, p.367). This rise may add to a re-born Japanese frustration, which was a symptom of Japanese Asia policy in the post-Cold War era. Her frustration is not particularly about China, but rather about how her top ally, the United States, has been managing international relations in the region and beyond. At the end of the 1980s it was more connected to the dominance of American power; today it may be attached to how the US has been formulating a new and extremely dominant framework of bilateral relations with China, thereby making determined steps to "frame a new 'Pacific' order" (Mendis 2013, p.24), seemingly along the dominant line of redefined Sino–American co-operation. In the meantime, Japan has been amassing more frustration, something, which "must not be underestimated".[7] It is not in the scope of this paper to look at how much and in what measurable ways Japan (and Japanese foreign policy) shows symptoms of frustration; its potential presence, however, needs to be noticed for further analyses.

Another evident feature of Japanese foreign policy is its innovative strength, and how—apart from adaptation to international values and the norms of global governance—it has been used in serving both Japanese

national interests and contributing to world peace and global development. The purpose of, for instance, launching TICAD, "the African Development Conference [was] not merely to hold such a conference. It is also a method for realizing Japan's larger long-term national interests,"[8] and while doing that setting the example for other such events. Not surprisingly, some years after TICAD was launched in 1993, other nations, including China, India, South Korea, Turkey, and even Singapore and Iran held similar events—of course, with different scopes and scale, but with the aim of fostering closer ties and cooperation between their respective countries and African states. Other such innovations can be seen in terms of establishing the entire international institutional framework in Southeast Asia with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the desired East Asian community, which, Japan believes, "can be built in the future on the basis of *yûai*[9], the spirit of fraternity" (Toshiro 2010). With all these, as Berger suggests, Japan represents a pragmatic liberalist approach to the international system, which is motivated by an essentially liberal philosophy of international relations, one that stresses the building of international institutions and the deepening of economic and social ties between nations, including potential adversaries, as ways of creating an international system that is inherently more cooperative and peaceful than it has been in the past (Berger, Mochizuki and Tsuchiyama 2007, pp.260-261).

In particular, in times of uncertainties ranging from an increasing number of natural disasters (partially due to climate change) to financial vulnerabilities, political and economic crises, as well as changing power relations, a well-maintained innovative capacity is the way forward. Key to fostering the balance in the system is how the state can adjust itself to the changing environment and, in the case of Japan, how it can rejuvenate herself so that the rest of the world maintains or re-develops an interest in cooperating with her. Regarding relations with Africa, Japan again demonstrated how innovative she could be when African growth and development are at stake. The fifth TICAD addressed a number of issues closely connected both with the future of the continent and the coming decades of Africa's changing context of international relations, which Japan will certainly intend to influence. The next sections will analyze the TICAD process and the latest summit in detail.

TICAD and African development in Japanese foreign policy

To demonstrate how responsible Japan thought it was in the international system, its government proposed the launch of TICAD at the United Nations General Assembly in 1991. "It was a part of Japan's diplomatic attempts to play a more active role in international affairs of the post-Cold War era as an

economic power" (Ochiai 2001, p.37). Several academic pieces[10] thoroughly deal with the role of such conferences, which is therefore not the aim of the present paper. Our approach is to look at how TICAD has contributed to supporting Japan's agenda-setting power about African development, and thence to the country's leading interregional influence in the global arena, which had been planned to "elevate Japan's overall foreign policy profile" (Seabra 2012, p.9). The end of the Cold War, according to Japanese scholar Kitagawa, "took away Africa's strategic importance and the nations of the West abandoned policies of intervening in the internal affairs of African nations', which were left with a series of hurdles such as, for instance, how 'to deal with the failure of the structural adjustment programmes and the political changes that occurred as a result" (Kitagawa 2013, p.9). Japan behaved in a proactive way along pragmatic foreign policy lines and wanted to promote Afro–Asian cooperation. Although Japan has never seen itself as a country of the South, it has been an advocate of South–South dialogue and cooperation, and as of today it has initiated several triangular projects with Southern partner countries, mainly involving China, India and Korea in her African development projects. The original Global South idea and its net of South–South mutually beneficial collaborations can be traced back to the Bandung Conference of 1955 and the Non-aligned Movement (NAM),[11] added to which "Tokyo's South–South cooperation is founded on the paternalistic thinking and methodology whereby a developed nation of the North, in particular Japan, takes initiative under which mutual cooperation between the countries of Asia and Africa is promoted" (Morikawa 2005, p.491). Notwithstanding this critical stance, Japan did take part in the Bandung event as the sole economically-technologically more advanced industrial country, and the 'spirit of the conference' can provide useful ground for developing linkages with sub-Saharan Africa. "Japanese initiatives through TICAD can probably be seen as an extension of the commitments made at the Bandung Conference" (Kitagawa 2013, p.16), which might still have been useful for Japanese diplomacy even if Japan had not participated in NAM-events after Bandung, and the country was not member of this growingly large group of states (not even an observer, as for instance, China). Apart from warnings from some scholars that "we should be careful not to overstate Japan's activism at the Bandung conference" (Adem 2010, p.890), Japan was again present at the 50th anniversary of the 1955 event, held in April in Indonesia, which underlined how seriously Japan takes the "need for Africa–Asia cooperation" (Ibid p.891). In the context of South–South interregional economic relations, Japan (together with the Asia-Pacific region) aspires to a "proper role in global economic governance more broadly" fostering among other matters the "existing (though incomplete) East Asia Summit (EAS) framework" (Trasher and Najam 2012, p.5).

The first TICAD, which focussed on the "Asian experience and African

development", was held in October 1993. It obviously had two major intentions: first, to revitalise and add new dynamism to the international community's approach toward African development, and secondly, to act as a "vehicle to properly conceptualise and project Japan's interests in Africa" (Ampiah and Rose 2012, p.154). Such a proactive and dynamic attitude at the end of the Cold War on behalf of the leading industrial power of East Asia wishing to position itself as a 'global middle power' was understandable first and foremost in the region where Japan had plans to spread her influence.[12] In a period when the international community was best characterized by 'aid fatigue', Japan came up with TICAD as a tool to advertise its will as a top donor ready to take the responsibility of tackling Africa's predicament, which she considered a global challenge.[13] As a unique initiative in Japanese diplomatic history, TICAD could add to Japan's respected position in the international donor community, but until 2013 it was not considered domestically to have been successful, bringing tangible results for the Japanese economy. The business community did not really develop an interest in the process, and it took five summits to draw the attention of the Japanese people to African affairs. The nature of TICAD has changed: in the course of preparing for the fifth summit it has been presented as much more inward-looking, stressing the importance of the business sector, private companies and the concept of public-private partnerships (PPP) in light of Japan's national interest. The event itself has grown in numbers: while the first summit hosted 48 African nations, 31 donor and partner countries and 41 international or regional non-governmental organisations and observers, at TICAD V 51 African nations, 30 donor and partner countries and 77 other organisations represented themselves at high levels. The number of participating country leaders—mainly heads of state—has shown a steady increase from 15 in 1993 to over 40 in 2013. The intention of the Japanese government to make and keep TICAD massively attended not only by essentially all the African states, but also by Asian countries, together with other donors (European countries and the US) and a growing number of non-governmental entities, is clearly seen from the data in Table 1.

The main thematic scope has also been changing (see Table 2), and apart from the basic concept of African ownership and 'owned' development—which in the eyes of some scholars strengthened the hegemonic donor regime, paying 'only lip service' to its core notion[14]—has helped Japan accentuate the need for a redesigned image of Africa (mostly by the Africans themselves), which encourages investments in all sectors from all around the world. TICAD V turned out to be the most business- and investment-oriented summit of the process. Let us now turn our attention to the event, its outcomes and their implications for the future of Afro–Asian relations and global politics, keeping an eye on the potential of a new Pacific power-distribution scenario along Chinese–American lines.

TICAD V in Japan and an eye to a new Pacific World Order

Japan was making preparations for a fifth summit devoted to African development at a moment when the international system had undergone a number of important changes. In our era of deepening interdependence, with more regional powers demanding that their increasingly stronger voices be heard and taken into consideration about what directions global politics and governance should take, the different entities of the system can witness the rise of Africa (together with other regions formerly referred to as 'third world'). As *The Economist* reported in its December 3 issue in 2011, "after decades of slow growth, Africa has a real chance to follow in the footsteps of Asia" (p.13). The Asian experiences of economic growth and development, therefore, have become a key issue for the African continent, which itself has been portrayed in a modified way: no longer the 'hopeless' but the 'rising continent'. The world can now recognize that "Africans are now masters of their fate and equal global partners. They are better prepared today than ever before to meet the challenges they face. In driving the change, they need partners" (Conze 2013, p.21). Within the framework of a relatively speedy competition, which signals a new period in Africa's international relations where the continent's major trading partners presently include China, India, South Korea, Brazil and Turkey, Japan wants to stay firm as one of the most influential partners of African development, not only as probably the biggest advocate and donor of human security-based development, but for instance in support of enhanced Japanese business-oriented presence across the continent. As African economies continue to grow alongside a rapid increase in Chinese engagement coupled with that of other emerging countries, "many Japanese, particularly policymakers, strongly feel the necessity to deepen the relationship with Africa".[15] In addition, the Japanese private sector is pushing the government to provide support for their expanding involvement in Africa. TICAD, therefore, is not only a tool to keep the Japanese diplomatic lead high on the agenda, but to present it as "an opportunity for advertising the government's efforts for internal pressure groups",[16] and thus to satisfy growing internal needs. Not surprisingly, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2013) wants his country "to fly higher hand in hand with a more dynamic Africa" at a moment when Africa demonstrates growth and increasing stability, thereby offering opportunities for investment in its various sectors.[17] Africa is most interested in lasting investments—in particular, in terms of infrastructure development and job creation— so Japan's promise from the past TICADs (in 2003 and 2008) to double official development assistance (ODA) is "not in Africa's interest anymore" (Aoki 2013). Today's set of aspirations is clear, both with regard to Africa's wants and Japan's national interests, and at the same time contains requirements in the changing global context.

From a more global political perspective, with serious implications for Japan's positions in her own region, the "birth of a Pacific World Order" (Mendis 2013, p.22) needs to be added to our investigation. The "Chimerican[18] symbiosis" offers "an opportune moment for the two Pacific nations to initiate steps to frame a new 'Pacific' order through trade and commerce" (Ibid p.24). "Countries in the region that are growing more economically dependent on China will discover incentives to also tie their security to China" (Ikenberry 2008, p.107), so presenting another perspective, from which our view is affirmed that it is not astonishing at all that the US encourages a new 'Pacific Century' with enhanced Sino–US relations in its centre. What is Japan's place in this imagined new scenario? Can we consider an already frustrated Japan reacting by getting her claws out? Both the US and China (or other states in the region) most probably underestimate the strength of Japanese frustration—not mentioning the capability of her Self Defence Forces (SDF), which, as far as the military equipment is concerned, are the most modern in Asia. Recently, Japan has decided to increase its military budget over a five-year term with five per cent.[19] "China is not rising in a vacuum. It is rising on a continent in which there are many, many competitors" (Zakaria 2011, p.14). In a pragmatic and strategic way China fosters a 'peaceful rise', and its "economic integration into East Asia has [already] contributed to the shaping of an East Asian community that may rise in peace as a whole. And it would not be in China's interest to exclude the United States from the process" (Bijian 2005, p.24). From both sides of the Pacific Ocean there seems to be a mutually shared target: to jointly build a peaceful (in this respect pacific, too) framework of collaborative behaviour and relations. On the US side this has obvious expectations: not to see a rising China with allies from her direct vicinity (an important sphere of American influence at the same time) formulating an alternative set of values, which then might challenge US geostrategic aspirations. We can agree with Ikenberry in stating that there are clear implications for the US, as "the more deeply institutionalized the Western order is, the greater the likelihood that China will rise up inside this order" (Ikenberry 2008, p.114). The US, therefore, needs to work along a strategy which attempts to avoid the rise of an 'alternative or even rival order' driven by China, thus, to "continue to uphold its multilateral commitments, maintain and even expand its alliance partnerships […] to perpetuate the existing international order" (Ibid). Obviously, Japan does not want to be left out from this strategic setting. Even more so, Japan intends to build upon its historically close ties with the US to foster an Asia-Pacific setting with strong Japanese involvement. "Japan is central to [President] Obama's effort to shift America's focus toward the Pacific Rim after years of preoccupation with war and with counterterrorism efforts in the Middle East and North Africa", at the same time encouraging "an Asia-Pacific trade agreement among democracies in the region struggling against China's growing economic clout" (Calmes 2013).

"China's initiatives and development are always matters of top priority to the Japanese public; its expanding interests in Africa [had already] attracted much media coverage in the period leading to TICAD IV" (Hirano 2012, p.191). Comparisons of most of its moves with those of China can be traced in many publications, such as in the special issue of the Japan Times published on the first day of TICAD V citing African studies specialist Mitsugi Endo when he says that "China's presence has increased (during the five years since 2008), and that of Japan has been unable to compete" (Aoki 2013). In light of her neighbouring competitor as well as the need to locate her national interest in Africa properly, together with keeping its distinctive role as Africa's development partner, Japan was committed to make a twist in the TICAD process at its fifth quientennial forum.

TICAD V was held from 1 to 3 June 2013 in Yokohama, Japan, under the motto 'Hand in Hand for a More Dynamic Africa', and discussed six major elements of a new road map in the form of the Yokohama Action Plan 2013–2017. These covered 1) private sector-led growth, 2) accelerated infrastructure development for the sake of 3) 'sustainable and resilient growth', continuous capacity development, 4) the empowerment of farmers, and therefore enhanced emphasis on agricultural development, 5) the creation of an inclusive society by 'reducing poverty and fulfilling basic human needs', so developing the education, health and water sectors, and 6) the consolidation of peace, stability, democracy and good governance as the overarching framework for long-term development.[20] The Action Plan renewed Japan's original 'twin principles' of African 'ownership' and international 'partnership'. Since the launch of the TICAD process Japan has focussed its strategic approach on human security and 'inclusive development', and has been promoting the issue of 'ownership', which can be a significant step towards sustainable development as such on the continent.[21] In addition to the long-term co-organizing partners of the Japanese government, such as the United Nations or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), TICAD V offered the opportunity to deepen 'African ownership': as Helen Clark of UNDP said in her keynote address at a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) symposium, "the inclusion of the African Union as a co-organizer is the latest reflection of the ownership by Africa of TICAD's approach" (Clark 2012). As numerous forms of partnership, the Yokohama Declaration of 2013 underlines that the TICAD process has "effectively promoted and supported South–South and Triangular cooperation, including [also] intra-African cooperation".[22]

Triangular cooperation has long been favoured by the Japanese government, as it can—as Japan sees it—offer adequate response not only to events, pressure and activities of third parties within Africa, but also outside the continent, and can help Japan develop her relations with Southeast Asian nations. One of the integrated development models that Japan's aid agency, JICA always refers to as a successful triangular project is in Nacala,

Mozambique—a complex project in co-operation with Brazil called the 'Nacala Corridor Development Programme'. This project and the Mombasa corridor in Kenya, as JICA reports, even "have the potential to become regional Specific Economic Zones—often called 'growth corridors'—developed around key natural resource investments and associated infrastructure" (Kato 2013, p.8). Potential triangular thinking among China, Japan and African countries has been on the agenda in particular, as "building a peaceful Africa is in everyone's interest" (Tarrósy 2012, p.60). For any such project, and from the overall perspective, 'Africa's own needs' and Africa's reinforced self-confidence are crucial. In response to these and the 'evolving global context' of 'interpolarity', "the TICAD process has become more action- and results-oriented" (MOFA 2013). Some of the strategic approaches of TICAD V can be observed by extracting the following phrases taken from the Yokohama Declaration:

> "supporting Africa's own efforts'; 'mainstreaming women'; 'increasing opportunities for youth'; 'develop the human potential, in a comprehensive manner, strengthening capacity in the areas of humanitarian concern, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, post conflict reconstruction and development, illicit trafficking and combating terrorism" (Ibid).

Many are convinced that female involvement is crucial for any long-term development on the continent. Lakshmi Puri, the Acting Head of UN Women (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) gave her firm opinion about this on the second day of TICAD V, saying that "women have been, and should be part of, realizing [the new growth] trajectory of the great power of possibilities", underlying that the gender strategy of TICAD V with all its elements and initiative "would not only bring productivity and economic growth dividend but also social and environmental benefits" (Puri 2013).[23] These are greatly needed for realizing a more developmentalist paradigm, which overarches Japan's policies fostering "how society grants to individuals the capacity for taking part in creating their livelihoods, governing their own affairs, and participating in self-government" (Peet and Hartwick 2009, p.3).

Another high-profile topic approaches the question of development the viewpoint of industry, also reflecting upon security concerns. The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization in his speech of 2 June 2013 underlined that "maritime development and the promotion of maritime industry will be an initial explosive and triggering device for Africa's own economic development" (Sekimizu 2013), but that fighting piracy, particularly off the coast of Somalia, was a common task both for Africans and Japanese and for the global international community, as shipping has a "vital role for world trade" and "maritime transport a vital facilitator of African trade", without which "African development would not be possible" (Ibid). The

building and modernization of African ports and maritime-related infrastructures, together with the transference of knowledge and technology, immediately and easily call for triangular co-operation, in particular when national interests are at stake. The Japanese government, therefore, has been paying attention to Djibouti's geostrategic significance, its role in regional stability and 'as a main base for Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force' mainly in 'mounting anti-piracy operations'.[24]

Japan vs. China in Africa? Can China fit into Japan's triangle?

Triangular thinking is even more understandable in the context of Japan's regional scope in different parts of the African continent. Over recent years Japan has been focussing on East Africa, where it has been involved in building 'soft infrastructure', for instance, in the form of border contact points. Japan "always looks at the projects it finances in a regional context, rather than only in a national framework".[25] Gradually, there has been a shift towards the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and after establishing a position at the East African Community (EAC) Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, Japan sent a full-time staff member to the SADC Secretariat, too. Hiroyasu Kobayashi, Ambassador of Japan to Botswana and Special Representative to SADC, is responsible for pushing Japan's efforts to bolster trade and investment in the SADC region, which recently has become more interesting for Japan due to its measurable political stability. Botswana's case clearly shows that due to this secure environment "Japanese companies have invested in mining, ICT, consulting, car service station and import services in Botswana and the country is seeking even more investment from Japan" (Tsimane 2013). Across Southeast Asia Japan has a number of agreements with the governments of Thailand, its International Development Co-operation Agency (TICA), that of Malaysia and Singapore, in collaboration with which it tries to channel

> "Asian energy (HR know-how) [into] how to absorb technologies into local contexts. Japan even uses some resources in Latin America, for example, in Brazil where Japanese immigrants' descendants understand the Japanese way of doing business, technology, farming, etc. Currently, this is a very small number, but it is an important diaspora for Japan."[26]

Many other examples demonstrate Japan's commitment in fostering the triangular–trilateral approach in Africa-related projects. The third partner, as seen earlier, can be another Asian country (advocating South–South co-operation), or multi-donor, international institutions. In a sometimes over-exaggerated discourse of Japanese–Chinese rivalry in Africa can anyone seriously think that China can also fit into any such triangular scenario, resulting in more

co-operation than competition? The last part of the closing section looks into some of the major trends.

Insofar as "Sino-Japanese relations are characterized by a complex mix of co-operation and competition" (Johnstone 1999, p.383), the present study also finds that rivalry over African 'friendship' and the mutual presence of the two Asian nations is overstated in most cases. Triangular co-operation advocated by Japan in the African development context is possible except where growing territorial tensions, for instance, over some disputed East China Sea islets[27], and other related political problems, hinder it. "In the professional sphere", however, says Professor Takahashi of Kobe University, the "Chinese have been trying to learn from Japanese experiences in development assistance both through organizational interface and academic exchanges",[28] and all these indicate one potential dimension of this kind in the long run.

Part of the broader power-distribution context should be seen as rivalry, and both Japan's and China's (or other nations') "respective stances on Africa can be viewed as an integral part of their broader foreign policy objectives" (Rose 2012, p.222). In Fareed Zakaria's words,

"At the politico-military level, we remain in a single-superpower world. But in all other dimensions—industrial, financial, educational, social, cultural—the distribution of power is shifting, moving away from American dominance. […] we are moving into a post-American world, one defined and directed from many places and by many people" (Zakaria 2012, p.8)

In such a transforming international setting, "Japan also hopes to highlight its global strategic position by exerting greater influence in Africa and other developing regions" (Lehman 2005, p.440), so it is not surprising that it has a preference for triangular projects, the successful tool of its TICAD process. But it needs to be more cautious in choosing the right means and forms of co-operation, and how these are then communicated in the media. Katsumi Hirano underlines that "Japanese philosophy on development […] affirms that loans are more effective to development through the promotion of self-help and ownership (and of national development) than grants" (Hirano 2012, p.194). It is easier to imagine Japan's co-operation with China in Africa in a "business-like way", argues Motoki Takahashi.[29] For example, in yen-loan projects, in which Chinese companies won their participation with competitive bids, co-operation was inevitable. However, when it came to "cutting the tape at a Kenyan road opening, the Chinese did not behave in a correct way, and locals believed that it was a Chinese project [only]; in fact, no one knew who was Chinese and who was Japanese."[30] More attention has, therefore, be turned over the past few years to proper communication during and particularly after the completion of projects, both with the locals and with the partnering third entities. In general, monitoring and follow-up activities about maintenance have become crucial criteria for any Japan-

funded African development issue. In the last decade, since China launched its FOCAC in 2000, "discussions about possible areas of co-operation have begun to take place within the context of bilateral and trilateral (including South Korea) diplomatic efforts and epistemic communities", and we can agree with Caroline Rose and other observers about the main underlying idea of mutual learning from each other (Rose 2012, pp.230-231). New and proactive engagements from both Japan and China benefitting Africans, and therefore some dynamic triangular collaboration with the inclusion of China may also result in China's becoming a responsible donor, something also desired by the US. Not in an attempt to assimilate China, but to go along with adjusting the international system, gradually changing it and its institutions together with China, and thus to make China more responsible for its involvements and engagements globally. Being and taking part in a "shared commitment" (Brzezinski and Scowcroft 2012, p.32) can strengthen existing values, while at the same time present different approaches and methods, which finally can inspire all the actors of the international scene, and benefit the local levels.

Conclusion

In terms of African development Japan is a 'status quo' power—and it wants to remain so. In general, "its attempts at innovation and institution building in global governance […] have actually been aimed at reinforcing the status quo" (Dobson 2012, p.250). Looking at Japan's foreign policy architecture, TICAD is a unique initiative in historic terms. Yet, as seen by Japanese experts,

> "TICAD's position is small in priorities in Japan's diplomacy as a whole since Japan has not been so much committed in global developmental leadership and been more concerned about countries with more political and economic interests, such as the US, Asian neighbours, and Europeans."[31]

Scholars agree that "TICAD was becoming more like a kind of diplomatic 'festival'",[32] still an important pillar of Japan's Africa policy, yet transformed as an opportunity of awareness-raising to "draw the attention of Japanese people to African affairs."[33] TICAD has always had an important dimension pertaining to civil society, which to many in Japan, is "a bright aspect"[34] not only of the entire process, but also of contemporary Japan. Some other researchers view this slightly differently, although they confirm that the civil society dimension has been gradually enlarged in accordance with pressure from them directed at the Japanese government.[35]

"Latent Japanese fears of American neglect and abandonment" (Johnstone 1999, p.380) have been detected in Japanese diplomatic actions and reactions over recent years, in particular since the re-formulating Sino–American system

of relations, which received new impetus with the informal June 2013 summit of President Obama and President Xi in California. This definitely affects how Japan can plan its regional strategies and maintain its leading role in a number of domains.

> "Japan's motivation in organizing [the first TICADs] was three-fold. Japan clearly saw the humanitarian needs in Africa and, given Japan's economic wealth, realized it could create a positive aid environment. Second, Japan desired to be treated as a major global power, […] Third, as part of its strategic plan to position itself as a major Asian power, Japan used TICAD as a platform to put forward the so-called Asian development model" (Lehman 2005, p.427).

As of today, TICAD is more related to business than to aid, and the Japanese government tries to balance between remaining a donor and encouraging Japanese (private) companies to enter the African markets. In an interpolar environment, in which similar initiatives about Africa and African development than TICAD have grown, as Kweku Ampiah in a piece reflecting upon the executive summary of African diplomats in Tokyo pointed out, "if TICAD is to retain its relevance, […] the process must refocus on the twin concepts of ownership and partnership" (Ampiah 2008, p.324),[36] and move toward an outcome more tangible than rhetorical.

As with all other TICAD meetings, TICAD V was also a PR exercise both at home and for a wider international audience, which at the same time could shed more light on the real intentions and needs of Africans (Aicardi de Saint Paul 1999, p.121). With the fifth edition of the summits, and especially with the more detailed and action-oriented policy documents and roadmap, Japan has given herself a chance to remain a leading force behind African development, together with a newly exposed element to promote her own national business interests, which can further strengthen her commitments to a long-term development path for the continent. The most important task now seems to be to keep the momentum alive with a strong follow-up mechanism that includes even more African content as long as the African Union Commission is also on board. Japan's development philosophy towards Africa has changed in the sense that it stresses more upon efforts to sustain growth while fostering local inclusiveness and the sense of owning local development, and lays emphasis on the involvement of businesses, thereby creating discernible synergies between Africa and Japan (since Japan's development philosophy in East Asia always revolved around sustainable growth). These obviously entail some new challenges for anyone in competition with the country of the rising sun.

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Table 1 From TICAD I to TICAD V: Basic facts and figures

No.	Year	African nations	Donors/partner/ other countries	Int'l/regional organisations, NGOs, observers
I	1993	48	31	41
II	1998	51	26	72
III	2003	50	38	100
IV	2008	51	35	77
V	2013	51	30	77

Sources of data: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan (MOFA),[37] SAIIA Global Powers and Africa Programme,[38] The Japan Times[39]

Table 2 Central topics and major policy outcomes at the TICADs

No.	Topic	Policy documents
I	Asian experience and African development Good governance	Tokyo Declaration on African Develop.
II	Social and economic development Human capital building	Tokyo Agenda for Action

III	Human security African ownership	'TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration'
IV	Accelerating economic growth Establishing human security Environmental and climate change	Yokohama Declaration Yokohama Agenda for Action TICAD Follow-up Mechanism
V	Boosting Economic Growth Accelerating Infrastructure and Capacity Development Empowering Farmers Promoting Sustainable and Resilient Growth Creating an Inclusive Society Consolidating Peace, Stability, Democracy and Good Governance	Yokohama Declaration 2013 Yokohama Action Plan 2013–17

Sources: MOFA, www.ticad.net

Notes

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5   Obviously, as a consequence of Russia's recent annexation of the Crimea, Japan agrees with the other powers of the G7 about keeping a distance from Russia as of spring 2014.

6   For example, to extend the regional dialogue to other Asian countries, thus creating the APT (ASEAN Plus Three), including the ten ASEAN members plus Japan, China and South Korea. See more about this: Mochizuki, M. M. 2007., Japan's Changing International Role. In: Berger, T. U., Mochizuki, M. M. and Tsuchiyama, J., eds. *Japan in International Politics. The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State*. Boulder–London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.19.

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