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The Political Economy of the TICAD Process: Bureaucratic Interests and the Immobility of the Japanese Private Sector

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Abstract: Taking its cue from the Japanese government's conception of the TICAD in the early 1990s, the essay interrogates the development content of the dispensation as initially articulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which was premised on the advisory functions of the process with no financial pledges towards Africa's economic development. Consequently, the paper argues that the original format of the TICAD deviated from Japan's practice of ODA, which emphasised economic cooperation packages reinforced through aid, direct investment, and trade in a formula that essentialised the role of the Japanese private sector in the process of economic development. The paper further investigates the roles of the Japanese bureaucracy in the TICAD, suggesting that inadvertently perhaps the MOFA monopolised the TICAD process. The discussion also explores recent reactions of the Japanese private sector to the process.

Keywords: TICAD; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Economic Cooperation; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; Kezai Doyukai

Introduction

In 1987, the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industries (MITI) initiated the New Aid Plan (New Asian Industries Development Plan) for Japan's engagement with the developing countries of East Asia (Shimomura and Wang 2015 12-13; Shimomura and Wang 2013, 122-126; Wade 1996,7). The plan, as inaugurated by the then Minister of MITI, Hajime Tamura, involved 'comprehensive economic cooperation packages with the trinity of aid, direct investment, and imports from developing countries', what has been referred to as 'the linchpin of Japan's win-win approach…' designed to contribute to '…the aid recipient's economic development as well as the promotion of Japan's exports' (Shimomura and Wang 2015, 12). Integral to that formula was the objective to promote the export-oriented industries of Asian countries, in particular ASEAN members, who were desperately pursuing a '…transformation of their export structure from primary goods to the products of labor/technology-intensive manufacturing' (Shimomura and Wang 2015, 12). The success of the initiative largely depended on '…attracting direct investment from export-oriented industries', and to that end, the Japanese private sector was

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indispensable to the plan. Indeed, the formula was not new with regard to Japan's engagement with aid recipients in East Asia, not least because it formed the core of the package for Japanese development assistance as early as the 1960s and 1970s.

The plan, as originally articulated by the Japanese Ministry of Finance (MOF), should also be seen in the context of Japan's hegemonic contests with the international multilateral financial institutions of the World Bank and the IMF to assert Japan's economic leadership vis-à-vis the neoliberal economic imperatives of the US and its allies in the West (Wade 1996, 4; Terry 2000, 275-276). According to Wade (1996, 4), '…the episode involve[d] a Japanese challenge to the World Bank and its core ideas about the role of the state in the strategy for economic development', as MOF and its agency the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) attempted to get the Bank to revise its ideological stance, and to respect Japan's pragmatic belief in the state's role in economic development assistance.

This essay examines whether the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process fits within the seemingly quintessential Japanese approach to development assistance mentioned above, which inherently factors Japan's own economic interests into its plans for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Indeed, in the MOFA's Development Cooperation Charter of 2015 (2015, 8), it is clear that 'Japan will provide assistance [to Africa] through joint efforts of the public and private sector through the process of the …TICAD so that Africa's remarkable growth in recent years based on expanding trade, investment, and consumption, will lead to further development for both Japan and Africa': an equation of mutual interests. Thus, this study investigates what defines Japan's national interests within the TICAD framework and how this was negotiated among Japanese government ministries and relevant bureaucratic agencies by assessing some of the specific roles these institutions might have played in the development and evolution of the TICAD. Crucial to the analysis are issues concerning the flow of interests between the public and private sectors in relation to TICAD, and how these have evolved and been negotiated over time.

Taking its cue from the framework and ambitions of the New Asian Industries Development Plan of 1987, this essay places TICAD in the wider context of Japanese policy towards development aid from the latter part of the 1980s, and essentially argues that the origins and ambitions of the TICAD initiative as articulated from the early 1990s inherently detracted from the traditional Japanese approach to development assistance, which involved 'comprehensive economic cooperation packages with the trinity of aid, direct investment, and imports from developing countries', as the Minister of MITI, Tamura, put it. This is not least because the dominant ministry in the inception and implementation of the TICAD policy was the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), while the economic ministries, MITI and MOF, which are traditionally more relevant to the policies and logistics of economic development, had seemingly remained disconnected from MOFA's deliberations and discussions concerning the content of the TICAD.

The extant literature (Orr 1990; Arase 1995; Rix 1980; Yanaga 1968) alerts us to how the system of bureaucratic policymaking in Japanese ODA which involves consultations among various ministries, primarily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Ministry of International Trade and Industries (MITI), Ministry of Finance and their subordinate agencies, reflected competing interests between ministries. As the essays by Shirato (2020) discussed below further affirm at times such conflict of interests percolates among departments within a ministry. At any rate, with MOFA as the architects of the TICAD the summits started out as diplomatic sessions premised on the rhetoric of economic development assistance.

The analysis begins with a discussion of Keiichi Shirato's 2020 essays in the Japanese journal *Shinchosha Foresight* concerning the ideation at the bureaucratic level that went into the planning and construction of TICAD. It proceeds to address the TICAD process by reviewing its evolution from 1993, before interrogating the modus operandi of TICAD and assessing its dynamics, including why it has not so far managed to actively involve the Japanese private sector in its processes to help kick-start the development of the African economies, in the manner that Japanese companies deployed their investments, technological innovation and development practices to incentivise the East Asian economies to productive ends. In essence, Japanese ODA to East Asia was designed and used to leverage Japanese private sector trade and investment interests in the region, which helped to integrate Japanese venture capitalists in the economic development of East Asia. This aspect of the analysis incorporates a discussion of the interlocking relationships between the relevant Japanese bureaucracies, including ministries and government agencies, and the Japanese private sector, to assess how the latter have responded over time to the TICAD process. Thus, the analysis includes a discussion of the reactions of the Japanese private sector to the TICAD, focusing on the views and recommendations of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives, *Keizai Doyukai*, and to a small extent the *Keidanren*, the Japan Business Federation. The timeline of the analysis begins with the planning of TICAD in the early 1990s and ends in 2008, following TICAD IV in 2008, the latter event and period indicating a shift in the ambitions and direction of TICAD, including a concerted effort to make the summits more action-oriented and responsive to the interests of the Japanese private sector and indeed of the African countries.

1. MOFA and the Inception of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development

Shirato's 2020 articles about the origins of TICAD (which have been rendered into English in this volume by the author) reveal its working objectives as premised as being 'advisory', rather than making pledges towards Africa's development, a point confirmed in Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's keynote address at the first TICAD Summit of 1993. To put it another way, Japan's conception and implementation of the TICAD was essentially no different from how Japan had previously approached Africa in terms of development modalities, which were largely in the form of grant aid and technical assistance, with an emphasis on humanitarian support (Takahashi 2017 52, note 7; Sato 2010; Inukai 1993). If there was a difference, it was in the fact that TICAD also served as a motivational concept, an exercise designed to encourage African political leaders and elites to step up to the task of socio-economic development through self-help to fulfil the aspirations of their countries. Thus, the Tokyo Agenda for African Development adopted at TICAD

II in 1998 notes, with reference to the theme 'Asian experience and African development', that the 'backdrop of development success lies in the combination of a strong commitment by the leadership and the people to economic prosperity, appropriate long-term development strategies and functional government administration to pursue these strategies coherently' (MOFA 1993).

The compelling aspects of Shirato's narrative concern its insights into the bureaucratic decision-making regarding the justification for the TICAD and how it would be implemented, the factors that necessitated the Japanese leadership to bring about a summit about the political economy of Africa. The narrative brings to life the roles of two senior figures at the MOFA, Hisashi Owada and Yoshio Hitano, in the formulation and realisation of the TICAD. Owada had also served as senior advisor to the President of the World Bank, and as permanent representative of Japan to the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD) in Paris from 1984 to 1988. Hatano had been a member of the Japanese Delegation to the OECD in Paris from 1964 to 1966. His last ambassadorial post was as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York from 1989 to 1994, coinciding with the formation and implementation of the TICAD process.

In his discussion of the policymaking processes leading to the emergence of TICAD, Shirato chronicles the interdepartmental debates and negotiations within MOFA about how to engage with the African problematic, focusing in part on the issue of what the Japanese government aimed to gain from the initiative. What emerges from the series of interviews he conducted with leading retired officials of MOFA, including the two mentioned above, and analysis of archival documents is in part an attempt to dispel the popular perception that the Japanese government started the TICAD process to entice the large number of African countries at the UN General Assembly to support Japan's attempts to gain permanent membership to the UN Security Council. Thus, Shirato states '…that TICAD is more than a tool for winning African votes to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council', and presents the initiative as part of '…the beginning of the Japanese government's 'proactive diplomacy' after the end of the Cold War', suggesting a shift from the passive Japanese diplomacy necessitated by Japan's defeat in World War II and the burden of its bilateral alliance with the US in the post-war era.

The discussion reveals that the genesis of TICAD took place in a briefing held at the MOFA Press Club in Kasumigaseki, Tokyo, on 19 July 1990 by Makoto Watanabe, Director General of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau (Shirato 2020), regarding the African Ambassadors Conference of 1990 held at the MOFA from 17 to 19 July. It was at that meeting that Ambassador Hatano, then Japan's Permanent Representative to the UN, tentatively disclosed Japan's interest in taking the initiative to address Africa's socio-economic problems, while at the same time expressing caution about African expectations for more ODA from Japan. This must also be seen in the context of Japan's position at the time as the leading aid donor.

Shirato suggests that Hatano's remarks were the seed that sprouted into the TICAD, apparently designating Hatano as the originator of the policy. However, Hatano's plan was conceived in relation to Japan's ambitions to gain a non-permanent Security Council seat at the UN, the feasibility of which would depend on support from the African countries at the General Assembly. To make his proposal attractive to the African countries, Hatano's strategy apparently included engaging their representatives at the UN on issues relating to the economic development of the region, but the plan as conceived did not actually involve increasing aid to the African countries. Although some of the leading MOFA officials were not convinced of the efficacy of the plan, this pessimism did not stop Hatano from lobbying within MOFA for an African development summit.

Owada, who was at the time Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs at MOFA, apparently valued the idea of Japan taking the lead in Africa's economic development in the post-Cold War era, partly because of his experiences at the OECD, which had revealed to him how fundamentally flawed were Western donors' approaches to development issues in the developing countries, especially African countries. However, although he viewed the plan as an 'interesting idea', he did not warm up to Hatano's aspirations to use it as a campaign for Japan's ascendence in the UN. Instead, Owada focused on using the idea to transform Japan's hitherto passive diplomacy into a proactive diplomacy following the end of the Cold War. In that sense, TICAD was symptomatic of a revitalised Japanese diplomacy with grand ambitions. In Owada's assessment, the TICAD, as part of Japan's proactive foreign policy, would approach Africa's economic malaise 'from the perspective of development rather than as an issue about aid', and certainly not as a vehicle to promote Japan's ascension within the UN (Shirato 2020). The plan was eventually pushed through with the support of Owada. On 24 September 1991, Taro Nakayama, Minister for Foreign Affairs, finally officially announced Japan's plan to hold a conference on African development in a speech delivered at the UN General Assembly, based apparently on the evolving political events in relation to apartheid South Africa (Shirato 2020), and therefore designed to mitigate the potential backlash against Japan's gradual lifting of sanctions against South Africa, which had been officially disclosed on 6 May 1991.

Strikingly missing in Shirato's discussion is a lack of reference to the roles of the economic ministries, MOF and MITI, and their relevant agencies, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), among others, in the ministerial decision-making concerning the development of the TICAD process, which poses a question regarding the development content of the TICAD initiative. If indeed these ministries were not integral to the decision-making processes, and were nothing more than bystanders, as it were, to the discussions within MOFA about the plans for a conference on African development, to what extent could TICAD have been important to the Japanese government as a development initiative, given that Japan's political economy traditionally depends on its economic technocrats for crucial decisions about development matters?

2. High-level Policy Dialogues about Africa's Development, TICAD 1 - TICAD IV

From its inception in the 1990s, the TICAD initiative was micro-managed by MOFA. This is not least because TICAD was the brainchild of senior officials of the foreign ministry, and as noted above, MITI and MOF had not been particularly involved in the planning and organisation of the venture, although the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as the implementing agency of Japanese ODA, was automatically involved. There is a confluence of factors at play that are worth untangling in relation to the reticence on the part of MITI and MOF towards TICAD. Firstly, MOFA designed TICAD as an advisory platform for Africa's economic development that would not be supported by financial pledges from Japan. It is fair to assume that the opposition among departments at MOFA to making financial pledges as part of the TICAD framework must have been convenient, if not a relief, for MOF, as it saved it from having to contest with requests to provide more funds for ODA.

MITI's lack of enthusiasm for TICAD was based on two primary factors: a lack of conviction in the economic viability of the project; and the fact that the Japanese government would not be committing large funds towards the development of Africa. Consequently, because no such funds would be made available, MITI may have viewed the initiative as unattractive, as it lacked the 'seed money', the impetus, to attract the Japanese private sector, manufacturers and other industrial concerns, who would gain from the significant loans if they were available, as happened in Southeast Asia and East Asia. Nevertheless, Japanese ODA to Africa did continue to increase throughout the early part of the 1990s, maintaining between 11 percent and 12.8 percent compared to, for example, 2.2 percent in 1970[1] although as indicated in Tables 1, 2 and 3, Japanese ODA to the African countries was largely toward humanitarian assistance. As noted above, this continued in the TICAD era with emphasis on Grant Aid and Technical Aid, a great portion of which was for poverty reduction rather than as a kick-starter for economic development, as conceived in the traditional Japanese development practices which emphasised loan aid as seed money to attract Japanese private sector investment in the recipient countries. At the same time, it could be argued that had the *Keidanren* showed an interest in the economic prospects of the African countries, enough for its members to want to invest significantly in the region, more ODA might have been injected into the TICAD as seed money.

1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Official Development Assistance). https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1999/d_g2_01.html#c_2_2.

Table 1: Types and Geographical Distribution of Japan's Bilateral ODA by Region (1998). US$ million

Regions	Grant Aid	Technical Cooperation	Technical Cooperation + Grant Aid	Loan aid	Total ODA	
				Amount		
Northeast Asia	76.44	427.36		707.31	1,211.10	
Southeast Asia	437.85	489.31		1,510.49	2,437.66	
Africa	636.38	193.97		119.93	950.29	

Source: Derived from Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Official Development Assistance).
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1999/d_g2_01.html#c_2_2

Table 2: Japan's Bilateral ODA by Region (2010).US$

	Grants			Loan aid		
Regions	Grant aid	Technical cooperation	Technical cooperation + Grant aid	Amount Disbursed (A)	Amount Recovered (B)	(A)-(B)
East Asia	441.75	881.77	1,306.34	3,881.79	4,389.80	-508.02
Southeast Asia	385.15	504.83	874.22	3,242.34	3,187.34	54.99
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,481.57	408.02	1,559.92	273.37	102.55	172.83

Note: The figures for Grant Aid include Grants provided through multilateral institutions. These are not included in the total for Technical cooperation + Grant aid.
Source: Derived from Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Official Development Assistance).
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/summary/1999/d_g2_01.html#c_2_2

Table 3: Japan's Bilateral ODA by Region, (2018)

	Grants			Loan Aid		
Regions	Grant aid	Technical cooperation	Technical cooperation + Grant aid	Amount Disbursed (A)	Amount Recovered (B)	(A)-(B)
East Asia	433.76	413.37	847.13	2,282.06	4,456.18	-2,174.12
Southeast Asia	405.86	385.01	790.87	2,237.04	3,493.26	-1,256.22
Sub-Saharan Africa	746.77	312.34	1,059.11	430.59	118.87	311.72

Note: Recovery Procedure during Replenishment: 'In principle, when the amount remaining undisbursed for the total disbursement for the Special Account stipulated in the Loan Agreement reaches twice the amount of the initial disbursement, 4 JICA shall be entitled to initiate a recovery procedure, under which replenishment will be partially made at a recovery ratio of two-thirds (2/3) against the amount for the supporting documents submitted…'

Source: Redacted from Japan International Cooperation Agency, Brochure on Special Account Procedure for Japanese ODA Loans, August 2012. https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/types_of_assistance/oda_loans/oda_op_info/procedure/c8h0vm0000aoeopw-att/account_201208.pdf

2. The Logistics of the Tokyo International Cooperation on African Development, TICAD I -TICAD IV

Since its inception in 1993, there have been seven TICAD summit meetings, interspersed since 2001 with inter-ministerial meetings, which are convened as part of the institution of the TICAD process to review progress on decisions and agreements made at the previous summit meeting. Procedurally, as originally agreed, from 1993 TICAD was held once every five years in Japan, but this changed following the fifth summit in 2013, when it was agreed that the summits would be held every three years, conceivably due to pressures from the African countries on MOFA to lessen the gap between the summits to mirror those of China's TICAD equivalent, the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which meets every three years. Rotating the venue of the summits between Japan and the African countries, as was the practice with FOCAC, was also incorporated into TICAD.

Although the Japanese government orchestrates and single-handedly funds TICAD, as a multilateral venture the initiative is co-organised with the United Nations, World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), African Union Commission and other relevant partners, a reflection of Japan's own belief in the UN-centered multilateral system. The arrangement is also implicitly an affirmation of Japan's bilateral alliance with the US, as well as the liberal democratic orientation of its international relations. At the same time, Japan's attempt to rope in its 'alliance partners', including Britain and France (although apparently France was initially reluctant to participate in what it saw as potentially 'a one-day event') (Shirato 2020) was also seemingly carefully orchestrated to mitigate possible concerns on the part of the so-called traditional partners of the African countries, on whose interests Japan was attempting to encroach: the sort of opprobrium China has recently experienced in its expanding relations with the African countries. Nevertheless, TICAD as dictated by the ambitions of MOFA is indeed an offshoot of Japan's attempts in the latter part of the 1980s and the early 1990s to position itself as a prominent leader in international affairs, based on Owada's conception of Japan's proactive diplomacy, as noted above, and to be less dependent on its Western allies for its international political direction.

TICAD was indeed a unilateral Japanese initiative towards Africa, which did not involve having to seek permission from Africa's traditional partners, as Japan had tended to do in the Cold War era (Ampiah 2011). The fact that the first TICAD summit, incidentally or not, coincided with the World Bank's publication in 1993 of *The East Asian Miracle*, based on a project that was funded by Japan and interrogated the Anglo-American dominance in global economic policies (Wade 1996), was a further indication of Japan's emerging assertiveness. However, the perception among Japanese policymakers was indeed that by establishing the TICAD, Japan was taking on 'a burden' that other donors had seemingly given up on, become averse to, and were eager to divorce from. Thus, as part of the Japanese government rhetoric, the TICAD process was launched in 1993, during which time international interest in Africa was waning as a result of the end of the Cold War (MOFA 2003). At the same time, Japan's policymakers saw it as logistically, and perhaps strategically sensible to have the UN and the Global African Coalition co-host the event because the MOFA felt Japan lacked the expertise to handle such a huge operation on its own (Shirato 2020).

It is appropriate at this stage to delineate some of the salient features of the TICAD proceedings from 1993 to 2008 to help appraise and interrogate the aspirations and evolution of the process. I will first discuss the Tokyo Declaration on Africa Development towards the 21st Century (MOFA 1993), which was adopted by participants at the first TICAD summit (TICAD I), as it provides further insights into the essence and ambitions of the TICAD. The first paragraph of the Declaration begins with a commitment of intent, announcing that, '[w]e, the participants of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), consisting of African countries and Africa's development partners, declare… our continued dedication to the development of Africa towards a new era of prosperity'. How is this laudable aspiration transmuted into and realised as concrete economic development? In other words, how is the declared intention formulated and realised? Crucially, as a framework for capitalist development, the Declaration centres the importance of the private sector in strategies for economic development and growth, maintaining that 'the participants of TICAD agree that though foreign aid has an impact on development, its role is only supplementary in magnitude and catalytic in nature'.

This leads to the theme of economic development through activities of the private sector, which addresses the relationship between the state and the private sector as a much-valued component of the TICAD strategy for economic development. It is declared that 'a workable and practical cooperation between government and the private sector is a key factor for development'. As such, the African countries are exhorted to invest in and promote the 'climate of trust between these two actors'. To further promote the importance of the private sector in the development process, the Declaration also 'recognize[d] the importance of appropriate insurance and guarantee schemes to protect private enterprises investing in Africa from political and economic risks'.

While acknowledging 'the differing international and internal conditions' for development, the Declaration confirms '...no one model of development can be simply transferred from one region to another'. All the same, it 'acknowledg[ed] some relevance of the Asian experience for African development', suggesting the possible repurposing of the Asian experience for the economic development of the African countries (Stein 1998,19-22). Relevant to this is that the so-called Asian experience is nothing more than a technique of capitalist production, and as Foucault (1989, 124) informs us, '[t]echniques are easily transplanted'.

48 African countries, of which five were led by presidents and 43 represented by either ministers or ambassadors to Japan, attended TICAD I in October 1993. Given the novelty of such an event organised by a country in East Asia, the African delegates viewed the initiative with a mixture of hidden excitement and patient expectation, hoping it was more than a meeting to conduct 'a policy dialogue', and that the dialogue would be elevated into concrete development practices that would lead to transformations in the African economies.

However, the format and orientation of the TICAD II in October 1998 was essentially no different from that of the previous summit in 1993. The policy dialogue led to the summit's adoption of the Tokyo Agenda for Action, which emphasises (MOFA 1998):

1) Social Development: to accelerate development in education, health and population, and measures to assist the poor
2) Economic Development: to advance private sector development, industrial development, agricultural development, and [examine] issues about external debt
3) Foundations for Development: to provide guidance towards good governance, conflict prevention and post-conflict development

The tenth anniversary of the process ushered in TICAD III from 29 September to 1 October 2003, which was, as with the first two events, held in Tokyo. Again, with an emphasis on a 'high policy dialogue' between the African countries and their partners, the summit explored six thematic ideas, as follows: consolidation of peace; capacity building, human-centred development; infrastructure; agriculture; and private sector development. It was also at this summit that TICAD began to take the shape and achieve the status of an institution, confirming its staying power, even though there was rising concern, if not irritation, among the African delegates about the effectiveness of the meetings, reflecting queries the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo had raised with MOFA.[1] Effectively, the African participants were more interested in attracting Japanese private sector investments and expanding trade with Japan, and were less inspired by discourses and lectures, on the principles of economic development, good governance and nation-building, which they felt, rightly or wrongly, patronised them. In essence, they wanted the contemplation to pick up steam and for the summits to be action-oriented.

Within MOFA itself, at least based on Owada's testimonies, it was also felt that what was needed in Africa were development initiatives to address the region's socio-economic problems, rather than allocation of aid based on donors' GDP and dictated by the dynamics of global politics (Shirato 2020). These were ideals that, as will be discussed below, the Japanese private sector also shared, based on the understanding that aid should only be seen as a catalyst for economic development. It is intriguing, however, that, according to Owada, MOFA, or perhaps he meant himself and his cohort, 'are opposed to fashioning TICAD into a platform for pursuing the interests of Japanese companies for Japan's ascendency in Africa,' (Shirato 2020) a non-sequitur in every sense in so far as Japan's relations with Africa were concerned, unless perhaps the point was meant as criticism of China, or indeed the West, in their relations with the African countries.

Nevertheless, Japan's perspective on Africa was being gradually transformed within the framework of TICAD, becoming more positive towards engaging more proactively with the African economies, and indicating some new directions in the TICAD process. This became more evident in the run-up to TICAD IV, which was held in Yokohama from 28 to 30 May 2008. The Yokohama

[1] Apparently in preparation for TICAD I there had been intense meetings between MOFA officials and members of the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo that exposed heightened disagreements between the two parties.

Declaration, *Towards a Vibrant Africa* (MOFA 2008), adopted at the summit, reflected '…positive trends which have emerged across the African continent in general since TICAD III in 2003', citing 'increasing political stability and improved governance, buttressed by strong economic growth and rising levels of foreign direct investment' – much of it coming from Asia, in particular from China.

To build on this positive trend while remaining mindful of the developmental challenges facing the region, TICAD IV was devised to focus on the following inter-related priority areas: boosting economic growth; ensuring human security, including achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the consolidation of peace and good governance; and addressing environmental issues and climate change. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on the first priority, boosting economic growth, not least because it signifies the shift in the direction and priorities of the TICAD process towards sensitising the Japanese private sector about the emerging economic prospects of Africa. In essence, the remit of the TICAD was shifting away from the 'no pledge' principle that had served as the basis for the origins of the initiative. Perhaps more pertinent to the concept of boosting economic growth was the emphasis given to the role of the private sector – both domestic and foreign – in the promotion and financing of sustainable economic growth in Africa. Thus, unlike the previous summits, TICAD IV in 2008 was calibrated to encompass action-oriented outcomes (MOFA 2008, 6), and the discourse regarding TICAD from that point began to put more emphasis on public-private partnership. To reinforce the new orientation of the TICAD discourse, for the first time in 2009 MOFA's diplomatic Blue Book acknowledged that Japan's 'relationship with Africa, which is rich in natural resources and has a huge population that continues to increase, is of great significance for the future of the Japanese economy'. According to Shirato (2020), '[s]ince then, there has been a passage in the diplomatic Blue Book every year that clearly affirms Africa's growing importance in Japanese diplomacy'.

2. The Economic Ministries and the Private Sector in the TICAD Process

In 2007, MOF made a public intervention in respect to Japan's relations with the African countries, which was significant in the context of Japanese bureaucratic interests regarding TICAD (Pajon 2020): as noted above, these had previously largely been managed, if not unwittingly monopolised, by MOFA. The Minister of Finance, Omi (2007), who gave the keynote speech at the Africa Day Symposium in Tokyo on 25 May, reaffirmed the public-private partnership matrix in the TICAD process, as he proposed 'that Japan should deliver aid in a way that assists the efforts of African countries toward private sector development'. He also made the point that 'the development of the private sector is crucial to Africa's sustainable economic growth through accumulation of capital and promotion of external trade…', which are inextricably linked in so far as capital promotes external trade and vice versa in the generation of profit through further investment. In that context, the Finance Minister referenced Japanese ODA essentially as 'seed money' that would serve as the basis for the promotion of the activities of the private sector in Africa.

MOF's intervention indeed indicates Japan's attempt to explore the potential of the TICAD in a more mutually beneficial manner, and could therefore be seen as part of the process to reorient the original modus operandi of the process away from the 'advisory only' role that had been imposed upon it. From such a perspective, Omi stated that, in collaboration with the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), Japan had initiated 'EPSA (Enhanced Private Sector Assistance) for Africa…focusing on private sector development'. As might be expected from an official from one of Japan's economic ministries, Omi ended his speech with a remark that he hoped 'Japan will build win-win relations with African countries not only through financial instruments, but also through utilizing the power of science and technology' (Omi 2007). This meant supporting, as Shimomura might put it, the aid recipient's economic development, as well as promoting Japan's exports through that process (Shimomura 2015, 12).

These were also indications that the Japanese private sector was beginning to show signs of interest in the African economies, and these indications were perhaps integral to the plans articulated by Omi. The dynamics of this suggest that the original formulation of TICAD as a diplomatic initiative, which had by then passed its sell-by date, was gradually being recalibrated in favour of the economic imperative and within an understanding, according to the Kezai Doyukai (2013; 2018, 4), that 'the engine of the African economy has shifted from foreign governmental aid to trade and investment by the private sector'. In tandem, the Japanese government committed to fulfilling the promise it made at TICAD IV (2008) to double Japan's ODA to $1.8 billion by the 2012 fiscal year, and to offer yen loans amounting to $4 billion in the five years preceding that (Keizai Doyukai 2013), but this was done essentially to augment the principles undergirding the ideals of public-private partnership, the basis of Japanese development assistance to East Asia.

Consequently, the Keizai Doyukai (2018, 4) noted that 'since TICAD IV… the message concerning 'public-private partnership' and about graduating 'from aid to trade and investment has gained much traction in the discourses about African development, and the need for public-private partnership in Africa's development has also been advocated in Japan'. As such, the Kezai Doyukai (2016) exhorted the Japanese government to establish multiple development goals and attach timescales and finance to them.

One detects some exasperation in the tone of the Doyukai regarding Japan's engagements with the African countries, indicating that the association wanted the Japanese government to do more in the context of TICAD to promote the interests of potential Japanese investors in Africa. The Kezai Doyukai (2013) pointed out that from 2002 to 2011, the average annual amount of Japan's private sector investment in Africa remained at approximately $440 million, arguing that this amount, far below the amount disbursed as ODA (approximately $1,580 million), indicates that Japan must make further efforts to meet Africa's expectations of attracting more investments than aid. The point here is that the ODA that was disbursed to Africa, which was largely grant aid and technical aid, as indicated above in Tables 1, 2, and 3, was not attractive to Japanese investors, as the package was more geared towards humanitarian assistance, not economic development. In effect, the aid package was not designed for activities such as infrastructure development, for example, that could help attract more private sector investment. Thus, the Doyukai requested that, given TICAD's '…new trend toward public-private partnership and [the] shift in emphasis from aid to trade and investment, there is a growing need to tie trade/investment and business expansion by companies to Africa's development and growth' (Keizai Doyukai 2018b). More concretely, the association intimated that (Keizai Doyukai 2013):

> To encourage private companies to place higher priority on Africa…we believe that the Japanese government should provide a type of development aid that will improve regional economic and social infrastructures, and which will identify the types of business needs and seeds existing in Africa.

They further challenged the Japanese 'government to increase the percentage of aid to Africa' (Keizai Doyukai 2013).

If the Doyukai comes across as supporting more Japanese development assistance for Africa, it is because more 'seed money' for the region would inherently augment Japanese private sector interests in the region, in the formula Omi referred to as 'win-win'. Indeed, among the Doyukai's recent proposals is that 'the Japanese government … set forth and implement a focused strategy for Africa oriented around the needs and priorities of the private sector, as a means to encourage companies wishing to set up operations in Africa', and it wants the Japanese government's assistance in prioritising the needs of the private sector (Keizai Doyukai 2018b). Thus the association is forthright in '…request[ing] that the Japanese government take a more strategic and flexible approach to ODA, to meet the needs of both African countries and Japan's national interest in the mid- to long-term' (Keizai Doyukai 2013).

The Doyukai's other complaint concerned what the association saw as the uncoordinated and conflicting bureaucratic interests surrounding the TICAD process. This is because, as it noted, while other ministries such as Ministry of Economy Trade and Industries (METI)[2] and MOF have become more actively involved in the vision of the TICAD process as an economic initiative, ministerial roles remain scattered, with ministries and agencies carrying out independent and insufficiently coordinated activities in terms of how frameworks for public-private collaboration are administered (Keizai Doyukai 2013). Consequently, the Doyukai '…suggest[ed] the establishment of a minister responsible for TICAD, who will administrate various ministries and agencies and integrate their policymaking and coordination functions regarding African strategies under his/her leadership' (Keizai Doyukai 2013).

The association also wanted the Japanese government to step up support to the private sector with an emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are willing and flexible but lack resources (Keizai Doyukai 2018b, 2). In essence, the Doyukai wanted the Japanese government to abandon policies that were designed to please all and sundry, and instead focus on enhancing 'public funding schemes tailored to the needs of SMEs and start-up companies and to actual business

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[2] MITI was reorganised to METI in 2001.

conditions' (Keizai Doyukai 2018b, 2). The appeal for the Japanese government to desist from making policies that please all, and the emphasis on SMEs, might reflect the Doyukai's irritation in the reticence of certain members of the business community towards Africa.

As would be expected, the association was also concerned about how one-sided the commitments made at the TICAD were, with all expectations on Japan, while the African countries did not seem to make any commitments apart from attending the events. Consequently, the Doyukai requested that the Japanese government 'encourage the governments of African countries to offer incentives to private-sector companies dealing with issues of basic education and other local human resource development issues', and further appealed to Japan to 'resolutely urge these countries, by utilizing all available bilateral and multilateral frameworks, to address governance issues such as regulatory [and] systemic changes connected to industrial policy and economic activities and [inadequate] administrative capabilities' (Keizai Doyukai 2018b, 3). The credibility of the Doyukai's criticism of the African partners is perhaps evident in, for example, the African Diplomatic Corps (Tokyo) recommendations submitted in 2012 with regard to TICAD V (2013), which were essentially a shopping list of what the African countries expected from Japan without offering to commit to anything themselves (African Diplomatic Corps, 2012).

As Hirano (2012, 184) confirms, initially there was a 'lack of interest in TICAD from the Japanese business community'. Nevertheless, the *Keidanren*, which has tended to demonstrate a more conservative and reticent stance regarding Africa, has also become more attentive to the evolution of TICAD in tandem with the changing business dynamics of the African countries. Not surprisingly, the Federation's interventions in the discourses regarding TICAD also reinforce the business content of Japanese ODA, as discussed above. Reflecting on economic development in Asia and its relevance to Africa, the Keidanren (2018) noted that 'the provision of Japanese public funding and technology helped to build infrastructure and systems and human resources (HR) training, leading to public sector trade and investment, job creation, technological improvement, and industrial development in the region'. It further notes that '[i]n Africa too, at TICAD V a statement was made on the importance of viewing African countries not simply as destinations for aid but rather as trade and investment partners… [that] public-private partnerships can help to maximize the development…' and recommended that further partnerships be designed to 'achieve a collaboration incorporating the three strands of investment, trade, and aid' (Keidanren 2018), the trinity Shimomura identified in Japanese ODA. With such a shopping list, it is fair to suggest, as with the Doyukai, but unlike the architects at MOFA who had driven the formation of the TICAD, that the Keidanren (2018) approaches Africa, not surprisingly, through a business model. This is not least because of the 'economic growth and the growing middle-income population expected in the future' in the region.

Nevertheless, in a recent survey, the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO 2020) pointed out that, 'while business momentum in Africa is growing, concerns about risks remain', noting that '[i]n terms of management issues, ''preparation/Implementation of legal regulations" was the biggest risk'. Of the firms the organisation surveyed, 'approximately 80% … viewed this as a problem, indicating strong concerns about governance'. Thus, Japan does not rank among Africa's major investors[3], although it has the third-largest economy in the world, after the US and China. It seems the problem is complicated by inhibitions of distance, both spatial and cultural (Keizai Doyukai 2015, 5), although China has successfully demonstrated that East Asian venture capitalism does not have to have any such limitations.

Conclusion

The discussion has drawn on the traditional conception of Japan's ODA to show how Japan's approaches to development assistance to Africa deviated from the norms according to which Japan administered aid. As noted above, these norms involved comprehensive economic packages, the trinity of aid articulated by MITI Minister Hajime Tamaru, an arrangement that ensures a role for the Japanese private sector in the bilateral engagement between the Japanese government as the donor and the recipient country, and where both donor and aid recipient benefit. The equation effectively promotes Japanese exports and investments while stimulating the development and growth of the recipient's economy. In contrast, Japanese ODA to Africa was largely in the form of humanitarian assistance and devoid of the incentives that would attract the Japanese private sector to engage in the development of recipient countries in the region. Taking my cue from Shirato Keiichi's account of the origin of the TICAD, I suggest that TICAD was indeed conceived as a diplomatic initiative and not an exercise in development, based on the formula according to which Japan approaches development assistance.

While Shirato seems inclined to suggest that TICAD was not designed to solicit African support for Japan's bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, it is evident in his own narrative that there were two schools of thought with different agendas within the MOFA as to what the TICAD could be used for. The indications are that the UN Bureau, led by Hatano, was keen to use the initiative to attract the support of the African countries for Japan's bid for a Security Council seat; the other contingent, led by Owada, seemingly had a primary motive to reinvent Japanese diplomacy after the end of the Cold War, reorienting it away from its previous overdependence on the US and Japan's EU allies, and TICAD was one of the vehicles designed to make Japanese foreign policy more proactive. Nevertheless, both teams agreed on one thing, which was not to turn TICAD into a costly exercise for Japanese taxpayers by increasing ODA to the African countries. The dual concepts of ownership and self-help were thus deployed as part of the TICAD framework to force the policy to stick to the regime of not making financial pledges at the summits. At the same time, these concepts were used conveniently as motivational instructions for self-reliance in economic development and nation-building for a region that is saddled with corrupt regimes and ineffective leaders (Shirato 2020).

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[3] Top Investor Economies in Africa (Billions of Dollars). Source: UNCTAD, 16 June, 2020. https://unctad.org/news/investment-flows-africa-set-drop-25-40-2020

Indeed, Japan's conception of TICAD has seemingly offered a new form of development dispensation to the African countries. However, its premise as an advisory body that would not make any ODA pledges toward Africa's development did not change how the Japanese private sector viewed Africa's economic prospects, which they continue to largely ignore. The analysis above suggests that this was largely a product of how TICAD was conceived from its inception by the senior members of MOFA, including Ambassadors Hisashi Owada and Yoshio Hatano, with their disparate interests. Thus, the discussion has explored the bureaucratic conflict of interests that fed the initial articulation and development of TICAD as a policy concept.

Discussions about TICAD often do not reflect the role of the economic ministries of MOF and METI, for example, in the formulation and articulation of its inception, because they were barely involved, a factor that I argue allowed MOFA to monopolise the initiative, and single-handedly run it. In many ways this was not useful to the interests of the African countries, as without an interest in the TICAD from these powerful economic ministries, the summits' actual development content was limited, and would therefore attract little interest from the Japanese private sector, which works in close association with the METI.

The change with the TICAD initiative seems to have come with TICAD IV in 2008, in response to the economic boom in Africa triggered by Chinese imports of the region's natural resources. As the momentum to boost the Japanese private sector's interest in Africa's economic prospects gathered pace, pledges by the Japanese government for infrastructure development and other incentives began to be made. The point to stress here is that the turnaround was indeed dictated by economic factors, both in Japan and in Africa. The discussion above also demonstrates the extent to which the Kezai Doyukai in particular has warmed up to the idea of the TICAD as a business forum.

The jury is still out on how successful TICAD can be as a factor in the development of the African economies. It would seem that for the initiative to succeed in some way in its ambitions, the African countries and the Japanese stakeholders, (including the Japanese private sector) will have to synchronise their respective responsibilities, with each playing roles commensurate with their capabilities. The African countries will have to attend to governance and institutional issues to make the region attractive for Japanese investors. Human capacity development through education is also imperative. On the other side, Japan's technological and financial prowess will need to be deployed in a focused and systematic manner to maximise the objectives set out for the TICAD. Perhaps a concentration on one or two countries in each of the sub-regions as a basis for development and from where development to the other countries might be orchestrated could be a good way of using tight ODA resources. In the meantime, the Japanese private sector as venture capitalists could use their investments wherever the opportunities are, and take risks.

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