JAPAN'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH AFRICA SINCE THE 1970's AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR POPULAR DEMANDS FOR DEMOCARCY IN AFRICA: A PRELIMINARY REFLECTION

By

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(I)   Introduction

(A) Objectives and General Issues

> The development of Japan's ODA can be characterized in four stages since the end of World War II. First, Japan began its postwar period as a major recipient of foreign aid. A total of $5 billion was provided from the United States between 1946 and 1951. Japan received thirty-four loan projects worth about $860 million from the World Bank…The Second stage of Japan's ODA history began in 1954, when it joined the Colombo Plan to extend technical cooperation to Asian countries…Japan entered the third period of ODA history upon the completion of reparations in 1976, when it began a period of systematic expansion… In 1989, Japan entered the fourth stage in the development of ODA history as it became the largest donor of bilateral foreign aid with its net disbursement of $9 billion (Fujisaki, Briscoe, Maxwell, Kishi, and Suzuki, 1997-1998, pp. 520-521).

> Can the economic assistance consistently support the principles of accountability, political participation, respect for human rights, transparency, rule of law, social justice, gender and social equality, the formation of political parties, electoral and legislative reforms, and the writings of constitutions, as they are being claimed in Africa's liberal democracies?
> Several approaches can be explored in studying the above question: (1) One may examine how much official economic assistance the Japanese state has been providing to, and/or, supporting, specific sectors of civil societies' agendas, which have been challenging the state's monopoly of powers. (2) One may look at how the Japanese state has been contributing financially to the international institutions, which support democracy. And (3) one may focus on how the Japanese state has been using democracy domestically as the basis for its foreign aid policy articulation.
> I do not intend to address the issues in linear causal relations between economic assistance and the rise of liberal democracy in Africa. The question is used as a guideline for an analytical focus. This paper, which is mainly a theoretical reflection, seeks to explain the general patterns of Japan's official economic assistance and its implications in the search for democracy in Africa from the 1970s to present. It raises the issues and poses

questions about the Japanese-African motivations, expectations, and consistency related to economic assistance within the context of rapidly changing international relations.

The literature on Japan's economic assistance to Africa in general is relatively limited. However, there is a growing interest in this area by both Japanese and African scholars (e.g. Adem, 2005). Furthermore, Japan's policy toward Africa during most of the Cold World Era was of secondary importance (Morikawa, 1997). Described in the 1960s as an emerging stable economic giant but "a political pygmy," as it did not have in itself significant political influences in world politics, Japan's relations with Africa were more localized in South Africa than in any other African countries. However, with its eclectic "Goliath" based kind of economy and its "David" based kind of politics, Japan has been able to negotiate its way in international relations.

The premises upon which this paper has been articulated present some limitations, which should be taken into account. The major claim underlying my discussion is based on the assumption that Japanese economic and political relations with Africa should promote social progress and that democracy is mutually beneficial to both Japan and African countries. This assumption is based on the normative claim that there is a "common beneficial good principle" with the opening up of nation-states. Thus, it is assumed that Japan should appreciate the values associated with economic and political reforms that are taking place in Africa.

"All things being equal," the possible realization of the projected claims in policy formulation depends very much on the quality of various domestic economic and cultural factors, and the nature of the African political regimes. Furthermore, the following factors should be taken into account in our generalizations: First of all, African states and people are not monolithic. However, their reactions to the vagaries of world political economy have been relatively similar. Thus, their "reactive identities" have been more or less similar and in some cases even identical.

Second of all, Africa has 53 distinctive countries with different political experiences, various levels of economic performances, different resource bases and perspectives on democracy. Third of all, these countries are playing different roles in world politics depending on their political locations and the quality of their historical, cultural, and economic relations with their former colonial powers. Fourth of all, these countries are generally grouped in one category of Third World. And fifth of all, some countries are more economically advanced than others. In fact, some are considered part of the fourth world because of their extreme level of poverty and underdevelopment. Thus, generalizing about Japan's economic and political relationship with Africa may not provide specificities and particularities that are needed to quantify the nature of these relations with precision.

ODA is one of the most important pillars of Japan's foreign policy. Its adopted 1992 charter "identifies democratization, human rights, and restraint in military spending as pre-requisite conditions for developing countries to receive Japanese aid" (Hook and Zhang, 1998, p. 1051). The implications of aid policy to democratization are part of the reform policies that have been taking place both in Japan and among recipient countries. Democracy has become one of the conditionalities by the donors since the early 1990s.

Since the 1970s, Japan has emerged as a "soft" political actor, though intimidated by the hard politics of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era. It also has been culturally hesitant to make a big jump in its relations with the countries in Global South, with the exceptions of those in Asia and strategic countries in the Middle East, producers of petroleum. However, instead of remaining a reactive actor in its relationships, in the 1970s, Japan became sufficiently determined to make its own inroad gradually in the areas of international economic development.

It should be added that the nature of the state, its capability, its place, and its role in world politics are the determining factors in the way a nation confronts its contradictions. To contextualize the dynamics of Japan-Africa's relations, it is important to identify and locate some major political moments that may have constituted Africa-Japan's identities as defined in their own historical and sociological contexts. Colonization and decolonization processes, and the mechanisms of the state formations, for instance, constitute some of those moments. They are dynamics, as they create actors that can transform their own environment to satisfy the imperatives of the moment. Africa and Japan have met to try to satisfy the requirements associated with the imperatives of time and challenges of nation-states in the global context.

Despite the involvement of the Japanese state in various aspects of economic development in some countries such as Ethiopia before the 1930s, and the apartheid South Africa since 1950s, some scholars tend to characterize its culture, history and its people as being essentially "passive" within the world politics. I claim, in this study, that Japan is not such a "passive" dragon. In fact, in the 20th century Japan was never timid or passive. As John W. Dower stated:

> In the 1920s and 1930s, as the world plunged into depression and instability, the country's leaders responded (and contributed) to this disorder with an increasingly frantic quest for control over the markets and resources of Asia. Dai Nippon Teikoku—the Great Empire of Japan— spread like a monstrous stain. …Nineteen thirty-one saw the take over of Manchuria; 1937, the launching of all-out aggression against China; 1941, the attack on Pearl Harbor as part of a strategy of seizing control of the southern reaches of Asia and the Pacific. At the peak of its expansion in early 1942, Japan bestrode Asia like a colossus, one foot planted in the mid-Pacific, the other deep in the interior of China, its ambitious grasp reaching north to the Aleutian Islands and south to the Western colonial enclaves of Southeast Asia. Japan's "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" briefly embraced the Netherlands East Indies, French Indochina, the British colonial possessions of Burma, Malaya, and the Hong Kong, and America's Philippine colony. There was talk of reaching further to take India, Australia, possibly even Hawaii (1999, pp. 21-2).

During the Meiji restoration, with its modernization agenda, the Japanese leadership started to open up in learning about other people, their economies, their education systems, and their cultures, especially those of the West, and in injecting the selected foreign elements into Japan's own culture through what I call "a relatively perfect fused monistic

perspective." Indeed, its extreme visibility or 'imperial visibility" supported by its military might in supporting Nazi Germany and Fascist Mussolini of Italy led Japan embroiled in World War II against the United States and Western European allies. This military embroilment led the Japanese military to attack the United States naval base in Pearl Harbor near Honolulu on December 7, 1941. The consequences of its militarism and imperialism forced Japan to a total defeat after the United States, under the leadership of President Harry Truman, dropped the Atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in June 1945. As Roskin et al said:

> Strange as it seems to Americans, the Japanese regarded Pearl Harbor as retaliation for a war that we had already begun. From nonrecognition to embargoes, to the Flying Tigers fighting for China, the United States had taken one anti-Japanese step after another (p. 104).

Between 1945 and 1952, Japan remained under the control of the American military occupation. However, the Japanese political will was not totally destroyed. In its past, it borrowed many cultural elements from Confucianism and Buddhism.

Since the economic boom of the 1960s, Japan has been an economic superpower. Because of the rapidity of its economic successes, the patterns of its state based kind of industrialization, and its passed history of militaro-imperialism, its post-war development model, which was heavily sponsored by the United States and the World Bank, has been an object of debates.

Intellectually, but more so culturally, it is not easy to know exactly what the Japanese state and people think about Africa. In fact, one would even go further to say that it is difficult to know how and what Japanese think about other people around them. This is due to the fact that culturally Japanese are generally reserved people, who tend to listen more than engage the public. And Japanese tend in general not to accept easily criticisms coming from any people or institutions they consider as outsiders. What are the implications of such a behavioral caricature for international relations?

Japan was an active participant in the Bandung Conference in 1955, which promoted solidarity in new developmental paradigms among the countries in the Global South (African and Asian) through the emerging non-alignment movement. This grouping later constituted the foundation of the group of 77 in the United Nations. As Samir Amin stated:

> If I define Bandung as the dominant characteristic of the second phase of postwar period, it is not from any "third worldist" predilection, but because the world system was organized around the emergence of the Third World (1994, p. 14).

The Conference offered a new departing ideological definition about the existing capitalist system and its main agency, the state. It is necessary to project how Japan-Africa's relations reflect change within the spirit of the Afro-Asian alliances and how these alliances influence the orbit of power as Samir Amin indicated:

> The real obstacle to the United States hegemony came from the Afro-Asian national liberation movement. The countries in these regions were determined to throw off the colonial yoke of the nineteenth-century. Imperialism has never been able to make the social and political compromises necessary to install stable powers operating to its advantage in the country of the capitalist periphery (1994, p. 28).

Between the 1960s and 1990s, Japan's relations with Africa reflected the dynamics of the international power struggles between the West and the East. But the spirit of, and commitment to, the Bandung Conference guided, to a large extent, the relations among the countries in the Global South themselves and between them and the industrial countries. Japan's economic assistance focused aggressively more on Asia and the Asian Pacific regions than in any other parts of the Global South. In Africa, its relations timidly followed the patterns of those of the United States minus militarism. These relations have been highly selective, mainly market-oriented but with least-risk policy behavior as Ichiro Ozawa, then the Head of the Liberal Party of Japan cited by Seifudein Adem, said:

> The fact is that, deep down, most Japanese want to be able to avoid that troublesome area called 'foreign relations.' They want to carry on with their peaceful comfortable lives, and live with their age-old systems, practices and customs without worries about the future. Simply put, Japanese people want the luxury of reacting only when necessary, and want as little participation as possible in international relations.

Even within the framework of the dominant modernization paradigm of the 1970s and its so-called invisible hand of Adam Smith, Japan was reluctant to take high risks in investing in Africa, despite its interests in selected countries with rich and exportable natural resources. However, Japan maintained solid relations with Apartheid South Africa as Morikawa stated:

> A major step towards expanded exchanges was the establishment of the Nippon Club of South Africa by the Japanese business community in Johannesburg in 1961. This club, created to assist the growing number of Japanese companies in Johannesburg, was responsible for the promotion and early development of the Japanese School of Johannesburg. The racist behaviour of these 'honorary Whites—doing business with South Africa and residing in White residential areas—soon brought criticism at home and abroad (p. 57).

With strong international pressures, the rise of internal peace movements in Japan, and its strategic diplomatic calculations, Japan's relations started to be challenged in the 1970s.

Since the end of the 1990s, Japan's economic and financial assistance to Africa has taken a qualitatively different policy orientation due to Tokyo's decision to diversify its relations for the benefits of both Japan and the African states. Japan has even been talking

about the possibility of seeking a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. As Motoki Takaharashi stated: "Japan has become the world largest bilateral donor and has already vowed to take a leading role in development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa" (1996 p. 5). Since the 1990s, Japan has become first among the industrial countries in providing ODA to Africa. In 1993, the Japanese government sponsored the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), which has become the "*incontournable*" policy guidelines in Japan. The Tokyo Declaration identified the following key issues of development in Sub-Saharan Africa (Takahashi, 1996, p. 11):

- Political and Economic reforms initiated by the countries themselves;

- Sustainable economic development propelled by private-sector activity;

- Regional cooperation and integration conducive to open multilateral trade;

- Prevention of an emergency relief for the natural and man-made disasters which act as bottlenecks for development;

- Transfer of successful experiences of Asian economic development and promotion of South-south cooperation; and

- International cooperation for the resolution of broader development issues including gender relations, environment, and HIV.

(B) Main Approaches, Theoretical Claims and Assumptions

Using a critique of neo-realism and neo-liberalism, mixed with the assumptions and arguments of the dependency theory, I have attempted to identify Japan's perceptions of Africa and what Africa represents as an economic force and political entity.

Internal and external factors influence the behaviors of nation-states, and the nature of their international relations. Furthermore, these relationships cannot flourish in a closed vase kind of historical determinism, especially within a highly interdependent and turbulent world. Intellectual perceptions and historical realities relate to one another dialectically. These perceptions and realities provide the basis for defining social phenomena differently. They are shaped by the dominant ideologies, the dynamics of cultures, the class basis of those who define them, and the style and the attitudes of the ruling class.

In this context, international relations must be able to demystify, by rigorous analyses, the 'generalized perception' and promote informed reality. Within the dominant paradigms (realist and positivist typologies in Western scholarship), studies of the interactions include state-state agendas, state policies, economic ideas or ideals embodied in those policies, the availability of the necessary resources to implement policies, and the political climate of the social milieu.

At the end of the Cold War, it has become more difficult, using the dominant paradigms, namely realism and idealism, to predict the behavior of the actors because of the contradictions related to bipolarity. However, it is more appropriate to contextualize and historicize the analysis of international relations as it can help explain how and why the

actors in world politics pursue their interests as they do based on the realities of their regions or subregions within the dynamics of the global puzzle (Mansbach, 1994). As summarized elsewhere:

> The analysis of political and economic relations is not a technical inquiry. It deals with power configurations and their social impact at a given time in a given society. Political and economic relations can be strategic and instrumental in promoting various objectives; they can also be developmental and intended to essentially pursue social objectives. Thus, economic and political relations must be analyzed in historical context. The degree and nature of the impact of those relations in a given milieu depend on specific local conditions, the actors involved, and the historical configurations in which the relations have evolved. Despite the dynamism that those relations are capable of engendering and their underlying ideologies and policy implications, they cannot be approached as autonomous phenomena. The "non-objective" factors (non-economic or so-called non-rational characteristics such as culture, leadership, and political personality of the leadership) influence the relations of exchange, production, management and consumption (Lumumba-Kasongo, 1999, p. 16).

To be able to assess the significance of Japan's official economic assistance in Africa as a "soft power" and its policy implications, it is also necessary to compare the trends of Japan's international relations with the main objective of locating its intention and its approaches in Africa in geopolitical and economic imperatives.

International relations, their agents, and agencies may be inspired by Hobbesian human nature theory. However, pragmatic relations are neither natural nor spontaneous. How to reconcile between the search for the balance of Japanese comprehensive security interests, the Cold War political imperatives, and demands of anti-colonial African people?

It is difficult to conceptualize how Africans and Japanese would have met and interacted within the evolution of world politics despite the fact that they have strikingly similar elements of cultural behaviors, linguistic sounds, and names. If Japan and Africa did not formally and directly meet during the colonial period in a significant way, a *rendezvous* of history was set up in the motion of global capitalism *à la Japonaise*.

While the meaning of geography in the process of redefining the nation-state's sovereignty is significantly changing in the development paradigms of Western Europe within the framework of the European Union and within the arguments of World Trade Organization, in Africa and Japan, it is still a relevant variable in their international relations. Japanese state and the African states are still ontologically the states *par excellent.*

Geo-politically, the study of relationship between Japan and Africa raises issues about the level of analysis. Japan, located in East Asia, with the Buddhist and Shintoist cultural elements, formerly an imperialist state, and militarily occupied by the United States between August 1945 and April 1952, is defined by many scholars as "homogenous." Africa, with its linguistically and culturally diverse people, brutalized by Americo-European slavery, European colonialism, and currently by multinationals, is the poorest continent in the world. As quoted by Jun Morokawa (1997, p. 1), Matsuura Koichiro, Director General

of the Economic Co-operation Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs at London's Royal Institute of International Affairs in July 1989 stated:

> Africa is remote from Japan. We have had few historical and cultural ties with Africa. Yet we are being urged to give more attention to that continent and we have been responsive. Since 1977, Japan has increased assistance to Sub-Saharan countries ten times over. Japan was the top bilateral donor in four African countries in 1987: Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Nigeria. Right now, over 600 young Japanese volunteers, or 35 percent of the total, are engaged in activities of technical assistance in ten African countries…Many people may not know it, but Japan is the number two contributor to the African Development Bank from outside regions and the number one contributor to the African Development Fund (Koichiro, 1990, pp. 373N4).

This general background captures some important phases of historical development associated with the state formation in Japan and Africa that may help understand the nature of their relationships.

II.   General Trends of Japan's Official Economic Assistance

Japan became the top ODA donor for the first time among the Development Assistance countries (DAC) in December 1989 before it completed the repayment of its World Bank loans in July 1990. And it is only in June 1992 that Japan's ODA Charter was approved at the Cabinet meeting. This raises the question of the relationship between loans, economic growth, and development. Fujisaki, et al wrote:

> Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) is undergoing a major transformation in the post-Cold War era. Foreign aid is no longer an instrument of bipolar international competition. However, despite expectations of a peace dividend, total aid flows have not increased. On the contrary, the total supply of foreign aid spent by the twenty-one member states of Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stagnated at about $60 billion per year from 1992 and 1994. Recession and increasing United Nations obligations for peacekeeping partly account for this, presenting further growth in ODA expenditures. Amidst these trends, Japan has become the top ODA donor (1996-1997, p. 519).

Japanese official assistance has been divided into two main categories: (a) "Hardware aid" and (b) "Software aid." Hardware aid, which includes assistance related to the building of infrastructures, physical construction such as schools, hospitals, bridges, dams, and provision of the equipment, has been dominating the Japanese foreign assistance since the 1950s. The Software on the contrary is defined as assistance related to human resource development and institutional building in economic and social development.

Furthermore, Fujisaki, et al citing JICA's report on Sectorial Development Group on Women in Development in 1991, indicated:

> These new elements of ODA policy have been adopted in response to discussions held in a series of major international conferences. Japan has reacted to these new trends by allocating more resources to new issues and reorganizing some ODA administrative structures. Based on the reports of the study groups, for example, guidelines were established by both JICA and OECF to make sure each project had components addressing poverty alleviation …(Ibid, p. 526).

The "new types of aid" and "small-scale projects" include: the promotion of democracy, good governance, and participatory development; and global issues, which also include, environment and sustainable development and population, and social development. Although the "software aid" is not totally new in Japan, the new issues have created a space for Japan to be involved in national policy at the capacity of advisor. The software type of aid creates high expectations as to what Japan is capable of offering and for what specific purposes.

Throughout the 1990s, Japan surpassed the United States as the world's largest contributor of overseas development assistance. And it has increased its international visibility even in the areas of wars such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Great Lake Region of Africa.

David Seddon argued that with this top position, Japan also faced some challenges. It emerged as the major source of ODA, while Western lending agencies cut back on their 'aid'—with the increase exceeding the growth in its own national budget. The budget for fiscal year 1998, however, indicates a reduction of 10 percent (1998, p. 132).

Despite the reduction stated above, Japan firmly became the major donor in Africa as Takahashi states:

> Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for around 10 percent of her bilateral ODA (11.8 percent in 1993).… In 1993, her ODA amounted to about US$11billion, far exceeding the USA. This is due partially to preferential budgetary allocation to ODA, which is now one of the most important vehicles to providing Japan's will to contribute to the international community… Japan's ODA now accounts for as much as one fifth of the total amount of ODA by OECD-DAC (Development Assistance Committee) members' countries. … Japan was the fourth largest donor to Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole in 1991 and 1992 in terms of net ODA, and was the top to Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria (1996, p. 10).

Since the early 1990s, Japanese government has been consistently re-adjusting its economic assistance to respond to both recipient's demands and conditions, and national and international imperatives and criticisms. As Fujisaki, et al indicated:

> In recent years, the Japanese government has begun to suggest new directions for ODA. In 1992, an ODA Charter was adopted in an attempt to improve ODA quality. It defined four principles for the provision of aid: (1) compatibility with environmental preservation; (2) avoidance of military use of ODA; (3) monitoring of recipient country military expenditures; and (4) promotion of democratization, a market-oriented economy, basic human rights and freedom… This is one of the most comprehensive document policy papers on international development… It highlights three themes: Japan's strong confidence in the applicability of "East Asian development model" to other developing countries; Japan's unique approach to foreign aid, including emphasis on recipient countries' self-help efforts and an importance of democracy, good governance, and role of women as guiding principles for development (p. 524).

For instance, the 2003's meeting of TICAD emphasized Asia-Africa's cooperation. It called for further consolidation of Africa-Asia as articulated earlier in the Bandung Conference with the exception that the current call toward consolidation advocates more free market kind of dogmas than ideological expressions of non-alignment.

III. Contextualizing Africa and Japan in World Politics Since the 1970s

(**A**) **General Perspective**

Only selected major events and characteristics of world politics and economics, their ideological basis, and the grand social forces and factors that have taken place since the 1970s are discussed. This does not mean that small political or social moments, trends, or local politics are meaningless variables in influencing international relations. Pragmatically, "all politics start at the local level." Local politics shape structurally the global politics. However, the goals and the functioning of international politics can claim to have some autonomy of their own at some level of their evolution. I do not intend to discriminate against domestic politics, without which there is no global politics.

 As the unit of analysis, the main organizing idea, is the nation-state in motion, politics, history, and economy are examined in this context as the constructs of the dynamics of the state.

By the 1970s, the Cold War politics have become ideologically mature. The struggles for the balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States and their allies were viciously intensified. The politics of polarization gave an impression on the surface that it has been acceptable as *fait accompli* in some parts of the world creating an illusion of equilibrium.

One's perceptions about a given epoch depend on who one is intellectually and culturally and where one is politically located in the dynamics of the world politics.

However, this work is not necessarily about the 1970s. The period only helps to contextualize my perspectives of the major trends in relationship as reflected in the object of this study.

One of the ways of examining the 1970s is to look at this period as a new stage of historical transformation, a new stage in the redefinition of the world capitalism rather than as an analysis of isolated events. The international ideological struggles contributed to change world politics from one stage to another. Having actors located in their ideological camps, as deterministic factors, did not imply that history was ending at the ideological level. The world was becoming different from the 1960s and new actors have joined world politics.

By the 1970s, the international power struggles framed within ideological and military grounds have been consolidated as the differences between political camps have sharpened the political discourse both in the United Nations and at any regional politics. These struggles have become dangerously opened as the capitalist West and socialist East re-claimed the appropriation and redefinition of territorialities. The proxy wars between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified. To a large extent, nation-states could hardly claim impartiality and neutrality in the world affairs. But, the leadership of the People's Republic of China (PRC) under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Mao's Red Army tried to push toward a third ideological option.

In the Global South, the non-alignment movement, articulated since the 1950s and promoted by the group of 77 in the United Nations, has become weaker and divided in practical terms. The struggles mentioned earlier have penetrated politics of the nationalists and regionalists in the South.

Another important characteristic of the 1970s is the oil crisis that started to specifically explode in 1973. Following the Arab-Israel October 6, 1973 war (called also by the Arabs as Ramadan war) when the Syrians and Egyptians struck without warning against Israel (Roskin and Berry, 1999, p. 145), the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) embargoed oil shipments to countries deemed pro-Israel, the United States and the Netherlands and then quadrupled the price of petroleum. This kicked up world inflation for years.

The question of Palestinians was a central part of this international crisis as reflected in the specificities of oil crisis. The majority of OPEC members are located in the Middle East and thus are predominantly Arab nations. In short, the oil crisis was a dimension of a larger crisis that has to be understood structurally as Samir Amin rightly indicates:

> In my contribution to Dynamics of Global Crisis, I suggested a systematic history of the course of the crisis: the ideological crisis in 1968; the dollar crisis in 1971; the oil crisis price in 1973; the United States defeat in Vietnam in 1975.

This crisis affected the nature of the relations between the United States and its good allies as Samir Amin indicates: "The United States alliance with the South in 1973 oil price increase was a U.S. counter offensive in the competition with Europe and Japan" (1994, p. 100).

The 1970s and 1980s firmly reflected continuous tensions and coalitions of the old politics. The decades of the 1980s and 1990s were also shaped by the politics of global reforms known as the Structural Adjustment Programs of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in which Japan was a major participant.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 followed by the military coup d'etat and the power struggles in the Soviet Union in 1991 ended the Cold War era with the establishment of a new political regime of Boris Yaltsin as President of Russia, who declared on January 25, 1992, "no longer considered the United States our potential adversary" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 2001 p. 583).

The collapse of the concept of balance of power engendered new tensions and new possibilities, which led to wars and political instability in Russia, the Balkans, the horn of Africa, the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Central African region, Pakistan, Afghanistan, to cite only a few. The new possibilities were originated from social and popular movements.

But the 1990s also brought new optimism similar, to a certain degree, to that associated with dynamics of the 1960s in the Global South, especially in Africa. The release of Nelson Mandela from the prison in South Africa where he spent an unnecessary and wasteful 27 years brought new energy unprecedented in contemporary history of political struggles and forces of social transformation. The representation and symbolism associated with this release went beyond South Africa and Africa. It universalized freedom and it brought a reconciliatory tone in world politics.

Since the 1990s, peace, good governance, and international cooperation have become the pillars in international development discourse. Multiparty democracy, projected and even perceived as an engine of social progress, has become the criterion to fulfill in order to have access to foreign loans.

(B) Specific Conditions in the 1970s in Africa

Despite deceptions reflected in the failures of the African states to improve the conditions of their citizens and to stop the vicious power struggles, which led to civil wars in many parts of Africa, the euphoria of the 1960s did not completely disappear in that decade. The wars of liberation and the second wars of independence energized many Africans. The struggles for national liberation became mobilizing forces against colonialism in the lusophone countries, Zimbabwe, and the Apartheid South Africa.

By the 1970s, in Africa, most countries have won their political independence through either a combination of armed struggles, national political struggles, or compromises. The struggle against apartheid became an all-African struggle, firmly sponsored and supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the various groups within the civil societies. This unity in the struggle contributed to accelerate the process of decolonization of Southern Africa.

The ideological division of the Cold War weakened the OAU. The forces that led to the defeat of Kwame NKrumah's project of establishing an African Federal State in 1963 became even more consolidated in the 1970s. The former European colonial powers, including the United States, and the international financial institutions made systematic efforts to create the compradorial states and to consolidate their powers.

Leftist national and popular movements met brutal oppositions in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Zaïre, (Democratic Republic of Congo), Congo-Brazzaville, Togo, the Central African Republic, etc. Thus, there was a rise of military regimes, most of which were reactionaries to support the peripheral capitalism in controlling the organizations of working classes, social movements, and most phases of production. In most cases, the processes leading to this kind of financial and economic control had reversal consequences to political liberalism.

However, Afro-optimism, which started in the 1950s and which was also historically linked with pan-African movements, despite the massive efforts by the Americo-European forces and coalitions to co-opt or to eliminate the nationalists did not disappear in the 1970s. It was reflected in the expansionism of the African socialism of Julius Nyerere, African humanism of Kenneth Kaunda, the Afro-Marxism in Ethiopia and Afro-Marxist political parties and social movements in other African countries. Various forms of nationalism, even the reactionary ones such as authenticity of the General Joseph Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which was copied later by many other African politicians in Togo, the CAR, Gabon, etc., flourished.

This Afro-optimism was based on the revival of some aspects of pan-Africanism, syncretic religious movements, and nonalignment. The Lusaka Declaration about the nonalignment (September 10, 1970) was interpreted differently between the Francophone and Anglophone countries depending on the nature of ideologies of decolonization, which shaped their relations with their former colonial powers. However, most African states started to realize that the first process toward establishing some nationalistic policy base is to redefine their political and economic relations. The nonalignment produced various types of horizontal versus vertical alignments between the African countries and the former colonies, and among the African countries with similar ideological and historical backgrounds (Martin, pp. 111-121).

(B) Japan as a New Major Actor since the 1970s

Two official approaches tend to have dominated the interpretations of Japanese assistance especially between 1989 and post-1992. The first deals with the motives, goals, and mechanisms associated with, and articulated by, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), which "defended the use of aid as a vehicle for Japan's own economic growth" (Hook and Zhang, 1998, p. 1052) and collective interests. The official aid was conceived as a legitimate arm of the Japanese national policy. The second projected through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), which "associated Japanese aid with social and political factors of interest to most aid donors and international development" (Ibid). Economic interest, security issues, and nationalism are some of the motivating factors that have an impact in the way states and the market forces interact with one another. As Purnendra Jain and Takashi Inogushi stated:

> With the so-called end of geography, national security has become more a part of a regional or international co-operative security system; national economies have become parts of the global economy; national

governance can best be conceived of as a part of global governance. Autonomous management of security and economic policies has become increasingly unsustainable. Japan has found that it cannot continue to be passive beneficiary of security arrangements underpinned by the United States; it cannot continue to sustain its position as a global economic power while maintaining a *keiretsu-*organised domestic economy; and above all, Japan's political economy cannot sustain the politics of complex clientelism in a self-contained policy environment (1997, pp. 3-4).

Japan started to become a powerful economic force when most African countries had just gained their political independence. Despite internal contradictions and ambiguous national agenda, most of these states enveloped their policies within some nationalistic languages and politics, and Japan as a newly emerging power challenged, without much *tambours,* the existing global power relations as Morikawa stated:

During this period (1960-75), Japan actualized its dual diplomacy toward White and Black Africa in the context of the intensification of the East-West confrontation in Africa and the rapid economic growth of Japan. The increase in Japan's economic power was confirmed on 28 April 1964, when Japan achieved membership in the 'advanced nations club' when it was admitted as a full member to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Only four years later, Japan's gross national product had reached a level surpassed only the United States and the Soviet Union (1997, p. 55).

Japan was perceived in the world, as the "democratic bulwark in Asia," against communism with a U.S. military presence being essential to help combat any possible communist insurgency in Asia (Hamilton, 2000, p. 58). It entertained solid good relations with South Africa when most African countries were still colonized by the European powers. Despite specificities of South Africa, a settler's colony, and its extreme racist system, the relations between Japan and South Africa can be used as the barometers to test the principles behind the Japanese relations with Africa at large. All the colonial systems in Africa were based on racism.

Japan established the Consulate-General in Pretoria in 1952. According to the Japanese Government's 'Diplomatic Blue Book,' Tokyo and Pretoria announced on 1 March 1961 that they had agreed to establish Diplomatic Relations and would implement them as soon as the necessary procedures on both sides could be concluded" (Jun-Morikawa, p. 133). However, the internal struggle against the Apartheid and later the mobilization of the international opinions and the positions of the Africans and African states against it did not permit a quick and full realization of diplomatic relations. As Jun Morikawa stated:

In April 1964, soon after the tactical decision had been taken to drop formal diplomatic representation in favour of strong Consular relations, the Japanese Government opened a strong Consular in Cape Town. By the 1980s, it was clear in terms of personnel and activities that two consular

offices in South Africa were much more important and influential than the Japanese embassies in either Nigeria or Kenya (pp. 133-134).

Japan also was gradually becoming a major player in its own right. The United States could not keep the Japanese nation as a "genie-in-the-bottle" (ibid) any more. By the 1970s, Japan also started to take credits of the economic growth in Southeast Asia, especially in South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, and Singapore.

As a world economic leader, in order to implement its "comprehensive security" agenda, Japan operated firmly within the Euro-American orbit but without necessarily adopting the American model of development. The Japanese model has been defined by some as being articulated on the basis of the "guided capitalism" as expressed by Howard Stein:

> In contrast, in the main bank or Japanese system of companies are lent money by many banks and own equity in a number of financial institutions. However, one bank takes responsibility as a main bank. As a main bank, it takes the lead in arranging financing and owns a significant number of shares. The banks have widely dispersed ownership providing considerable autonomy… The government has a close relationship with banks. It plays an extensive role in setting sectoral priorities and in providing subsidized credit through the central bank. Public and quasi-public long-term banks participate with private sector banks in financing investment and extending the time horizons of loans (1998 p. 30).

In April 1974, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was founded. With it, Japan contributed to re-locate the international capitalism in its regional dimensions, and redefine the nature of the international relations. This new role, among other factors, contributed to re-weaken in the early 1970s the status of the United States as a hegemonic power.

In redefining its role, Japan started to seek its own directions. In 1978, "Japanese government, for the first time, set up a medium-term ODA plan with quantitative goals. Since then, there have been five such plans and the growth of the ODA budget achieved most of its goals" (Fujisaki, et al, p. 521). Japan expanded its aid to sub-Sahara Africa dramatically since the latter half of the 1970s (Morikawa 1997, p. 3). With this new status came new expectations, responsibilities, and advantages. With Japan's involvement, the North is partially no longer a geo-political arena defining the centrality of Western Europe.

Japanese financial market deregulation also started in the 1970s as Hideaki Miyajima and Hidetaka Aoki stated:

> Until the 1970s, firms had limited financial options due to strict regulation of bond markets. Collateral requirements made it prohibitively difficult for firms to issue bonds and the Bond Insurance Committee (the Kisaikai) decided which firms could issue unsecured straight bonds. In 1979, firms were allowed to issue unsecured straight bonds for the first time by introduction of the accounting index and profitability index as the bond

issue criteria…. This relaxation of the bond issue criteria was one of the conditions, besides other favourable macroeconomic factors, that made it possible for Japanese firms to raise money through equity-related bonds in either domestic or foreign markets (2002, p. 73).

The "merger-mania," another dimension of deregulation, is characterized by monopoly, reduced the chance of the Japanese banks to diversify the lending and borrowing practices and policies. The law of the market forced Japan to compete with its products in the market place with other world economic actors. Furthermore, with the drastic changes in the external environment, since the 1990s, Japan had to take some cautions in its economic assistance with Africa. Thus, within the context of hyper-competition in product market and uncertainty, (op, cit, p. 78), Japan was not willing to take too many risks in Africa.

Although Japan has been operating within the orbit of the Western world, it also made an unspoken commitment to the Afro-Asian group, as articulated in the Bandung Conference in 1955. Japanese commitment to the conference's declaration may determine, to a certain extent, how Japan defines and deals with Africa.

From 18 to 25 April 1955, the Prime Ministers of five Colombo powers organized a meeting in Bandung to discuss the themes and problems of economic co-operation, human rights, and self-determination, the problems of dependent people, and the promotion of peace (Ampiah, 1998, p. 39). Most African countries, with the exception of Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Sudan, were still under the yoke of the European colonialism.

As a former colonial power, Japanese delegation's position was not comfortable. Japan was represented by Takasaki Tatsunoke, the Minister of State and the Director-General of Economic Counsel Board. But, geo-politics' interests and those of world politics must be reconciled.

As a nation-state *par excellent*, an auto-centered political entity in terms of its interests, Japan desired to renew ties with Asia in trade areas and also to become a member of the United Nations in 1956. And it must correct its past mistakes as Amphiah stated:

> Most importantly, Takasaki's speech at the conference contained an element of apology to Japan's neighbours for the atrocities Japan committed against them: 'In World War II, Japan I regret to say, inflicted damages upon her neighbours.' And he tried, obviously as instructed, to use the occasion to assure them that Japan had 'no intentions of repeating its past vicious foreign policy.' Japan has reestablished democracy, having learned her lesson at immense cost (p. 43).

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the 'aid fatigue' phenomenon in the United States and Western Europe, African expectations about Japan's role have increased dramatically (Morikawa, 1997, p. 3).

Furthermore, Japan's relations with Africa are reflected in the sympathetic attitudes and positive approach of Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, who visited Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa in January 2001. It was the first time that a Japanese Minister in office visited Africa. This trip was made when the Prime Minister's unpopularity was very high as Seifudein Adem stated:

> This must be viewed against the background of Prime Minister's record-breaking unpopularity at home. Towards the end of February 2001, public opinion polls showed that domestic approval rating of the government Prime Minister Mori had hit 7 per cent. The comparative unpopularity of the Mori government becomes clear if this figure in viewed against that for his successor, Prime Minister Koizumi, who registered a public support rating of 86.3 per cent immediately after he was elected Prime Minister (2001, p. 3).

Concerning the main objectives of the trip, a combination of motivation has been suggested as Seidufein quoted the Minister Mori who said:

> I definitely wanted to stand on the soil of the African continent and express directly to the African people the firm determination of the Japanese people to open our hearts along with you, to sweat and expand all our might to aid in the process of Africa overcoming its difficulties and building a bright future (2001, p. 3).

 Kweku Ampiah also stated:

> Invariably, this is a confirmation of Japan's attempts to co-ordinate its relations with Africa in the post-Cold War era through its triangular relations with South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria as its strategic points of reference and operation in Southern Africa, East Africa and West Africa, respectively. Importantly, the three countries are Japan's prominent trade partners in the region… (2005, p. 554).

However, the general interest of industrialized countries including Japan toward Africa shifted significantly after the end of the Cold War era to Eastern and Central Europe. In Japan, the percentages of the imports from Africa also diminished as Seifudeim indicated:

> The asymmetric nature of interdependence between the two is not only there for all to see but the gap is also widening considerably. For instance, the values of its imports from Africa shrank from US$4017.8 in 1994 to US$ 3878.8 million

in 1998. Similarly, Japan's reliance on imports from Africa fell from 2 per cent of the total values of its imports in 1989 to 1.4 percent in 1998. In 1999, Japanese exports to Sub-Saharan Africa fell 8.3 percent from the year earlier. In the same year, non-African country was listed in the category of the 20 countries from which Japan imports or to which it exports.

Implications of Japanese Economic Assistance to Liberal Democracy, Its Institutions, and Its Values in Africa

(A) Major Perspectives

How can we assess the Japanese economic assistance in relationship to the search of values of democracy in Africa? The discussion is general and preliminary.

It is assumed that Japan's theory of democracy should be able to promote, encourage, or support democracy in any context throughout its foreign policy. This assumption is based on the fact democracy has been projected to be both an instrument of social progress and an ontologically intrinsic value.

For the sake of the analysis, I project several possible perspectives through which one can look at the issues of the nature of the Japanese relationships. The first is an internal institutional perspective: One may examine how Japanese democratic institutions and democratic values within the Diet, political parties, public opinion, etc., define and support the economic assistance policies. It deals with the functioning goals of democratic values of the Japanese political culture.

The second perspective concerns the deontology of Japan's relations at large. Here the emphasis would be on the conditions and criteria that Japanese government sets up to provide economic assistance. What kind of societies and/or states does the Japanese government promote through its economic assistance?

And the third perspective emphasizes the nature of the interactions between the Japanese delivery processes and African receptive means. Are these processes and means democratic? None of the above perspectives is conceived as self-contained and fully autonomous from one another. However, one perspective may be more influential and appropriate than another depending on the configurations of the national politics and the imperatives of the global political economy.

(B) Some Characteristics of the Japanese Party Politics

Democracy, stability, and peace are the most important characteristics of the post war Japanese politics. The constitutional division of powers between the Lower House, the House of Councilors, the Executive and the Judiciary powers should promote democracy. The principles of universal suffrage and power to the people through elections reflect this democracy. In the 1970s and the 1990s, institutional stability and predictability (Jain and Inogushi, 1997, p. 2) were other important characteristics. However, despite the imposition of, and the gradual acceptance of, the American model of Constitution, the democratization of Japan did not become similar to the American

one. Within the implementation of an "imperial type of democracy," some scholars have even referred to the concept of "Japanization" of the American model of Constitution. The legendary rigidity of the Japanese public administration and its tendencies of controlling the institutions in the name of cultural harmony, development, and traditions did not change much in the 1970s.

Most of the Japanese post war achievements occurred under the ruling of one single party, despite the ephemeral coalition between in Liberal Democratic Party and the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) (Jain and Inogushi, 1997, pp. 16-17). As Jain and Inogushi stated:

> It is not surprising, then, that Japanese political life rarely made headlines in international media, except at times when a major political scandal broke, something which was rare until the late 1980s. Even though Prime Ministers changed far more than often in Tokyo under the stable LDP regime than in many of the world's national capitals, Japan watchers generally assumed that no drastic political or policy changes were imminent. An apt description of political system in which Prime ministers ad cabinets changed while policy direction remained largely unchanged, is 'karaoke democracy;' on a karaoke stage, the visible singers come and go, but the songs remain the same, selected from a limited rarely changed menu (op. cit, p. 2).

While Japanese state has become stable, the capitalist system in which Japan is operating as a major actor was described in the 1970s and 1980s as essentially chaotic as it created disorder and international economic instability (Arthur MacEwan, 1990). However, despite the containment and *détente*, international socialism gradually expanded in the 1970s. The struggle for multipartyism, power sharing, or coalition politics started to emerge in 1976 as Jain and Inogushi stated:

> The formation of the New Liberal Club as an LDP splinter group in 1976; the rise of the Socialist Leader, Doi Takako in the late 1980s as a potential Prime Minister; the LDP's loss of its majority in the House of Councilors elections in 1989; the seething discontent in the LDP reflected in the establishment of Japan New Party (*Nihon Shintō)* renegades in 1992, and further splintering of the party just before the LDP's momentous fall from power. However, it was until the July 1993 general election that the LDP lost its majority in the House of Representatives … thereby its ability to form a government in its own right over three years, coalitions became the norm in Japan (p. 2).

Since the 1970s, the country has been absorbed by the search for a new domestic political constellation (Drifte, 1998, p. 1). Japan has gradually been emerging as multiparty democracy. The implementation of electoral and legislative reforms in the 1990s is also a sign of its democratic change.

Concluding Observations

ODA is not an autonomous domain from the dynamics of the national and strategic interests and the world political economy. It is not randomly that Japan was more present in the former British colonies than in countries colonized by France, Portugal, Belgium, and Spain. It followed the United States' patterns of foreign relations within the Anglo-saxon's dominant ideology of the world. In the 1960s, in addition to South Africa, official assistance was allocated to Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania. Also its "aid" was gradually increasing as Howard Stein stated:

> While aid in general grew, the increase in aid to Africa was proportionately larger. It grew between 1970 and 1973 to 10.7 per cent during 1980 and 1983. By 1988 to 1990 it reached 13.3 per cent of total ODA, before falling off slightly to 11.8 per cent in 1994… In 1989, for instance, Japan was the top aid giver to Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zambia (1998, p. 32).

However, the above patterns were not static. For instance, in 1997 Japan was the second largest donor in 25 countries among which 7 were Africans, which include Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Jibouti, Togo, Tunisia, and Mauritius. The majority of these countries were colonized by France, indicating the new trends of diversification of Japanese assistance to Africa.

One can examine the implications of the ODA through the TICADs. All the international conferences recently have announced the promotion of liberal democratization, especially good governance, accountability, respects of the rule of law, and conflict resolutions. During the TICAD II in 1998, the Tokyo Agenda for Action (TAA) was adopted. Other important items articulated include central role of the state in resource mobilization, the improvement in income distribution, the creation of employment opportunities, revitalization of rural communities, improvement of public expenditures, and the expansion of social services (Horiuchi, 2005, p. 472). Concerning democracy, Horiuchi stated:

> TAA requested strongly that governments reaffirm their commitment to improvements in democratic elections, strengthen the capacity of the legislature and judiciary, prevent corruption, devolve power, and restructure the civil service…It is regrettable that the support in the area of good governance and democratization is not the main thrust of Japanese ODA as a co-organizer of TICAD (Ibid, p. 473).

At the TICAD III meeting in September 2003, Tokyo committed also to provide five (5) billion dollars to Africa in the next five years. As Ampiah (Ibid, p. 550) stated:

> In his keynote speech at TICAT III, the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, enumerated what he referred to as three pillars that comprise Japan's initiative for assistance to Africa within the TICAD framework.

> These are "human-centered development, "poverty reduction" through economic growth, and the "consolidation of peace."

Also, in 2005, through the UNDP, Japan has pledged to provide millions of U.S. dollars for disarmament operations in the Great Lakes Region. Among the three countries that were visited by the Prime Minister in 2001, all have had new elections with active political parties, which produced new regimes in Kenya with Kibaki, in Nigeria with Obansajo, and in South Africa with Nelson Mandela and then Thambo Mbeki. However, the current political regimes in Kenya and Nigeria have been highly corrupted. Elections have not eradicated both poverty and corruption. South Africa is the only country in which the rule of law is institutionalized.

In1993 and 1994 Japan used a stick in its economic aid policy to punish in cutbacks or suspensions of aid to recipients for neglecting Tokyo's aid conditionalities in such countries as Sierra Leone, Zaire, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria to cite only a few (Hook and Zhang 1998, 1062). Poor governance, corruption, and the increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots are not conductive to the growth of liberal democracy. Japan puts more emphasis on democracy at the institutional level and not a societal level. Japan will have to learn and trust to work with the African non-government entities and civil societies as well to advance the values of individual and collective rights. The Japanese political realism and economic pragmatism should be shaped by developmental and democratic principles and the acceptance of the rise of hybrid multipolarity.

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