

Analyzing Japan's Foreign Policy Toward Madagascar through Official Development Assistance During the Shinzo Abe Administration

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ABSTRACT: Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1962, Japan has consistently supported Madagascar through Official Development Assistance (ODA) aimed at promoting equitable and sustainable development. During Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration, Japan significantly expanded its development cooperation, focusing on key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare, and education. This study investigates the reasons behind Japan's decision to intensify its ODA engagement with Madagascar during the Abe administration. Employing a qualitative research approach that combines literature analysis with the theoretical frameworks of Rational Choice Theory, this study reveals that Japan's ODA policy toward Madagascar reflects not only humanitarian and developmental objectives but also strategic national interests. These include the creation of new markets for Japanese enterprises, access to natural resources, availability of skilled labor that meets the needs of Japanese companies, and enhancement of regional connectivity between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Ultimately, this study argues that Japan's ODA toward Madagascar represents a mutually beneficial form of cooperation that stimulates trade, fosters growth, and reinforces Japan's geopolitical presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

KEYWORDS: Foreign Policy, Japan, Madagascar, Official Development Assistance, Shinzo Abe

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, foreign aid has emerged as one of the most significant means adopted by developed countries to improve the economic and social conditions of developing countries. (Griffin, 1991) In 1952, the United States was the first to introduce such initiatives with its Marshall Plan in 1952, granting over 13 billion USD to 17 European countries to ensure that there were no humanitarian disasters and to facilitate economic revival. (Payne and Thakkar, 2012) Since the adoption of the Marshall Plan, many countries have agreed to the idea of giving aid as it became an opportunity to ensure international cooperation and peace. The process began with the United States in 1954 with the introduction of the Colombo Plan by the Japanese government. This was the inception of the country's contribution to developing countries. At this stage in history, Japanese aid had a significant impact on the reconstruction process in Asia in terms of political and economic revival (Orr, 1991), and the initial aim was to aid countries that had previously been victims of Japan's aggression during World War II.

Following the oil crises of 1973 and 1979, which were precipitated by the oil embargo enacted by Arab nations and the subsequent escalation of oil prices by member countries of OPEC, a transformation in Japan's foreign relations was observed, characterized by an emphasis on innovative strategies to secure energy resources. These crises compelled the Japanese government to acknowledge that its excessive reliance on oil imports from African nations rendered it susceptible to threats to its energy security. In its quest to acquire a diverse range of resources and forge economic partnerships with countries beyond the Asian continent, Japan identified the utilization of foreign aid as one of the most efficacious methods of diplomatic engagement within its relations with African nations. (Owoeye, 1984) In 1974, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Relations undertook a pioneering initiative by visiting Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt, and Tanzania, thereby marking the inaugural step in the establishment of diplomatic relations with African nations. This visit was emblematic and denoted the initial action undertaken by the Japanese government to cultivate more robust political and economic ties with Africa. (Ampiah, 1997) In 1979, Naoshi Sonoda, serving as the Japanese Minister of Foreign Relations, proactively sought to enhance diplomatic relations with additional African nations, including Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Tanzania, and Kenya (Owoeye, 1984). This initiative was of considerable importance as it symbolically marked a foundational step toward expanding Japanese diplomatic endeavors beyond the Asian sphere.

Since the mid-1970s, Japan has provided ODA to African nations. Within a decade, Japanese ODA to African countries increased from 8.45 million US dollars in 1970 to 371.36 million US dollars in 1980, making Japan one of Africa's key donors during the 1980s (Stein, 1998). The increased aid to African countries was evidence of Japanese economic power and its desire to be recognized internationally as a peace-loving state after World War II. In 1993, the First Tokyo International Conference on African

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Development (TICAD) was held to cooperate with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), African Union Commission (AUC), and World Bank, along with 48 African countries, including Madagascar (Raposo, 2014). The TICAD was significant in marking the change in the foreign relations that Japan needs to build with African countries to make it a prominent player in Africa's development process. As such, there was an emphasis on the use of principles such as ownership, partnership, and mutual benefit to allow African countries to take the lead in the country's development process, including cooperation with Japanese development aid in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, education, and governance. (Hirano, 2012)

Madagascar is an island state situated in the Indian Ocean, approximately 400 km from the southeastern coast of Africa. Geographically, it is close to other countries, such as Tanzania and Mozambique, and other sub-Saharan African nations. In the 1960s, the country gained state sovereignty and experienced rapid economic expansion and optimism. Unfortunately, the country's state has deteriorated over time because of political crises and coups d'état. The cumulative result has been widespread indigence and weakness within these institutions. (Zondi and Khaba, 2014) To date, it remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world with inadequate industries, poor connectivity to the requisite infrastructural components, and predominantly agricultural and natural resources. The country's economic challenges are further intensified by the country's massive national debt, declining commodity prices, and an increasing informal sector workforce that puts Madagascar on the verge of economic meltdown. As such, it has become absolutely critical that economic aid flows to save and develop the country. One critical sector that has played a pivotal role in this process is the granting and provision of Official Development Aid (Republic of Madagascar, 2025). In fact, one critical player who has come to assume a vital role within this sector is 'Japan.

Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1962, there has been no wavering Japanese commitment to development aid to Madagascar through their Official Development Aid (ODA), which has since become the backbone of the bilateral relations that exist between the two countries. Initially, Japanese development aid to Madagascar was mostly in the form of technical assistance and humanitarian assistance. However, after organizing the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, Japan's African activities have become more structured and diversified (Yamada, 2011). TICAD has come to form the Japanese strategic vision that has become more African-inclusive since it was founded on the principles of shared responsibility and mutual benefit. In doing so, it has come to be placed within international relations with African countries that are significant to the continent, as it has come to symbolize Japanese development activities that are promoted within the continent. As such, these development activities are no longer aimed at making Madagascar an aid recipient but the African continent in its entirety that has come to be significant to Japanese development aid as it has come to be significant to other African recipients such as Madagascar that has come to be placed within Japanese African development activities. To ensure that Japanese activity becomes more effective within the continent and specifically within Madagascar, the Japanese government established the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2003, which has become the key institution responsible for Japanese development in Madagascar. (Obayashi, 2004) Since then, with Japanese Prime Minister Abe as the key proponent of Japanese development aid within African development activities, there has been a greater Japanese commitment to development aid to Madagascar that has become unlike anything that has previously existed within Japanese development aid to the African continent. These Japanese activities aim to make Japanese financial commitment to development aid to Madagascar greater since it has come to be in excess of 5,000 billion Ariary financial commitment that has come to be within key sectors such as agriculture, rural development, infrastructural development within agriculture and education that has come to be within key sectors within Japanese development aid to the African continent that has come to be within Japanese development activities to ensure that there is greater development within the African continent that has come to be within Japanese development activities to the African continent. (JICA, 2022)

The existing scholarship on Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) provides important foundations for understanding the evolution of Japanese development cooperation, particularly in Africa. Early analyses describe Japanese aid as combining humanitarian considerations with long-term economic and diplomatic interests, reflecting a dual logic of altruism and strategic self-interest (Cornelissen, 2016). Studies by Njinkeu et al. (2005) further show that Japan often allocates aid to sectors where it possesses technical advantages such as infrastructure, agriculture, and human development thereby supporting recipient countries' growth while simultaneously creating opportunities for Japanese industries. (Njinkeu et al., 2005) A second stream of literature emphasizes the institutional and diplomatic frameworks shaping Japan's engagement with Africa. Lehman (2005) highlights the central role of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in constructing Japan's identity as a consistent and reliable development partner on the continent. (Lehman, 2005) Complementing this viewpoint, Tuman and Ayoub (2010) as well as Hirano (2012) demonstrate that Japanese ODA is influenced by broader strategic calculations involving access to markets, natural resources, and political alliances. (Tuman and Ayoub, 2010) (Hirano, 2012) More recent works analyze Japanese aid under the Abe administration, underscoring the growing prominence of human security and proactive diplomacy. Nomura et al. (2020) show that health-related assistance during this period increasingly reflected Japan's commitment to the human security paradigm. At the geopolitical level, scholars argue that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision reoriented Japanese engagement toward connectivity, maritime security, and the stability of strategic sea routes, including those linking East Africa to the Indian Ocean. (Nomura et al., 2020) Despite this rich body of scholarship, Madagascar

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remains almost entirely absent from academic analyses of Japanese ODA. Existing studies examine Japan's continental African partners such as Kenya, Mozambique, or South Africa but do not address how Japanese foreign policy doctrines, including FOIP and proactive diplomacy, translate into cooperation with island states in the Western Indian Ocean. No study has specifically investigated why Japan increased its ODA to Madagascar during Abe's administration, nor how this bilateral relationship reflects Japan's evolving strategic priorities in the Indo-Pacific. This gap is significant because Madagascar occupies a critical geostrategic position along Indian Ocean maritime routes, yet it has received little scholarly attention in the context of Japan's foreign policy. As a result, the motivations behind Japan's intensified ODA to the country remain unexplored. Addressing this empirical and geographical gap, the present study seeks to analyze the factors shaping Japan's foreign policy toward Madagascar through ODA during the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Building on the broader evolution of Japan's development cooperation and the growing importance of its ODA in Africa, an empirical puzzle emerges regarding Japan's engagement with Madagascar during the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Although Japan's aid policies have been widely analyzed at the continental and thematic levels, the specific dynamics of Japan-Madagascar cooperation remain largely unexplored in academic literature. A notable feature of this period is the visible increase and diversification of Japanese ODA to Madagascar. Yet, despite this rise in engagement, existing studies do not examine why Madagascar became a more prominent aid recipient during the Abe era, nor how this cooperation relates to Japan's broader foreign policy orientations. This lack of scholarly attention creates an important gap in understanding both Japan's bilateral approach and the strategic or developmental considerations that may have shaped it. In response to this gap, the present study aims to investigate the factors that influenced Japan's decision to intensify its ODA toward Madagascar during Prime Minister Abe's administration, without presupposing any motivations. The study employs a qualitative research design grounded in Rational Choice Theory to analyze policy decisions and contextual developments in a systematic and theoretically informed manner. Accordingly, the research is presented under the title: Analyzing Japan's Foreign Policy toward Madagascar through Official Development Assistance (ODA) during the Administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

II. RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

The rational choice theory has proven to be one of the most popular models used in international relations studies. (Novelli, 2018) The rationale behind rational choice theory is that people, groups, and even governments act rationally by making choices to optimize utility within the boundaries of precedents and anticipated outcomes (Fiorina, 2001). In international relations, this theoretical construct is useful for understanding state behavior in making decisions that favor the national strategic interests of the state (Morin and Paquin, 2018). Therefore, the state is assumed to act within rational capacities that take the time to calculate the possibility versus cost- effectiveness before taking active measures to cooperate with other states, engage in diplomacy, and engage in international conflict. (Carlsnaes, Risse, and Simmons, 2013) The rational choice theory has managed to bridge this gap by offering economic models that are useful in understanding political action (Morin and Paquin, 2018). The use of rational choice theory is significant in international relations analysis because it provides models that help us understand how governments take rational means to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to exploit international opportunities and challenges (Novelli, 2018). Therefore, the rational choice theory model is significant in understanding the decisions made by the Japanese government regarding offering development aid to the Republic of Madagascar.

The history of Rational Choice Theory begins with the classical tradition in economic thought and utilitarianism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hobbes' and Locke's works served as the theoretical background to the rational action idea that people act in terms of self-interest to attain the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of pain (Ogu, 2013). In economic traditions and thought, this idea was later formulated by economists such as Adam Smith, who brought forth the theoretical invisible hand explanation that suggested that people acting in rational ways lead to optimizing social welfare (Lopes Júnior, 2022). The development took shape with the Theory Of Games and Economic Behavior book collaboration that von Neumann and Morgenstern produced in 1944, which brought about the application and use of rational choice theoretical models to understand people's rational action choices made in interdependent situations. The 1950s and 1960s saw the use and application of the rational choice theoretical principles in political science study that was directed to understanding the processes that formed people's choices in political and social actions such as those exhibited during elections (Morin and Paquin, 2018). The 1970s brought forth international relations applications to rational choice that highlighted rational state action maximization through possible superior state economic gain, giving the rational choice theoretical applications direct use to understand government strategic maximization in implementing international relations aimed at economic gain (Nakaska, 2010).

At the core of the Rational Choice Theory are a set of fundamental assumptions that convey how actors make decisions in either domestic or international settings. The first is rationality, whereby actors, whether as people or state entities, form decisions through calculated processes to derive the most optimal results with regard to available choices that are preferred and the resources accessible to them (Ogu, 2013) (Morin and Paquin, 2018). The second assumption is self-interest, which implies that actors seek to maximize their benefits or utility while minimizing potential costs or risks. The third assumption concerns the

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presence of complete or bounded information, where actors either possess full knowledge of the available options or at least make decisions based on the best information accessible to them. Another fundamental assumption is consistency, which suggests that actors' preferences are stable and transitive. If option A is preferred to B and B is preferred to C, then A will also be preferred to C. (Ogu, 2013) (Carlasnaes, Risse, and Simmons, 2013). In the realm of international relations, this implies that state actors function with strategic intentions, whereby potential courses of action, such as forging an alliance, economic cooperation, or aid allocation, are made by weighing the potential costs and benefits to ensure that national agendas are met. The use of these tenets offers a clear-cut model that fits actors' behaviors, since the adoption of the tenets allows one to know and predict state actors' potential decisions within the realm of international relations (Novelli, 2018). In such connections and considerations, this theory is particularly pertinent to deriving an understanding of the rational functions that define Japanese Official Development Aid (ODA), which is anticipated to work within set economic/geopolitical parameters.

The application of Rational Choice Theory in international relations entails the process by which abstract tenets are converted into research apparatuses that are useful in explaining and predicting state action. From this perspective, application entails the process by which states assess and make choices based on the anticipated maximization of benefits within set boundaries (Quackenbush, 2004). Within the realm of foreign policy analysis, the application of Rational Choice Theory aids in understanding state choices to implement directed diplomatic, economic, and security measures. (Carlasnaes, Risse, and Simmons, 2013). The application further aids in understanding international aid agreements, cooperation agreements, and other international agreements, such as those formed in terms of international alliances, as rational choices made after reviewing the relative merits and demerits of each state option. Analytically, the application of this state theoretical perspective aids in understanding state choices made through systematic rational processes to implement national foreign policy. In the Japanese context, application aids in understanding Japanese choices to apply Official Development Aid (ODA) to Madagascar as rational state choices made to implement development and geopolitical objectives. The Japanese government, led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, most likely viewed official development aid as an essential step to improve Japanese international relations with recipient countries to improve Japanese economic statecraft and implement its Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy. From this operational perspective, Japanese state action in terms of official development aid to recipient countries such as Madagascar is not just altruistic but constitutes rational statecraft within the confines of international politics.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive method to analyze Japan's foreign policy toward Madagascar through Official Development Assistance during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows for a deeper understanding of political behavior and decision-making in the real-world context (Creswell, 2014). This method focuses on interpreting and explaining the meaning of foreign policy actions rather than quantifying them. The data used in this study were obtained from secondary sources, including official documents, government reports, policy papers, journal articles, and relevant literature that discuss Japan's ODA, foreign policy, and bilateral relations with Madagascar. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, which systematically identifies themes, patterns, and rational motivations within Japan's aid policy framework. (Moleong, 2018) Through this analytical process, this study seeks to investigate the reasons behinds Japan's decision to intensify its ODA toward Madagascar during Prime Minister Abe's administration. The application of the Rational Choice Theory provides a conceptual foundation for interpreting Japan's aid allocation as a deliberate and goal-oriented act of foreign policy. This methodological approach ensures that the research remains consistent with theoretical principles while producing a comprehensive and contextual analysis of Japan's diplomatic strategy.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Japan's Official Development Assistance to Madagascar

Agriculture is an important factor in Madagascar's economic development, as the livelihoods of a vast population depend on this sector. Agriculture directly influences economic development, poverty alleviation, and the standard of living. However, the agricultural sector is facing various challenges in Madagascar, including inadequate infrastructure and technology, environmental degradation, changing climatic conditions, low productivity, and market availability. (Minten, Minten, and Barrett, 2005) The Government of Madagascar has been engaging with various international organizations, including cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which has promoted several programs and projects related to agricultural development. One prominent initiative is the PAPRIZ Project, a cooperation program between the Governments of Madagascar and Japan, which operates between 2009 and 2025. The project works towards improving agricultural productivity as well as food security, irrigation development, promoting agricultural production with a focus on sustainability, market access, and building capacity among Malagasy farmers as well as other stakeholders involved in agricultural production and marketing. The project has been appreciated as having achieved a successful result, including improvement in livelihood, alleviation of poverty, augmentation of agricultural production, improvement in quality, increase in farmers' income, and improvement in natural resource management.

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(JICA, 2014) Complementing this initiative, other projects include the Seed Production Facility Development Project, which aims to support the development of rice seed production, which is crucial to augment productivity and assure sustainability, as per Madagascar's National Rice Development Strategy, targeting the production of 10,000 tons of certified rice seeds. (Africa, 2016) Furthermore, Japan established the FY VARY Project, a partnered initiative between the Government of Madagascar, JIRCAS, and JST, established in 2017, targeting the improvement of rice production by establishing rice production technology suitable for low-nutrient soils, hence contributing to food security improvement in Africa. (Feldhoff, 2015) Finally, to support Madagascar's goal to achieve rice self-sufficiency by 2024 and become a rice exporter by 2030, a Japanese government initiative, a non-reimbursable grant to rehabilitate the irrigation scheme, "Périmètre Colonial 23" or PC23, situated at the southwestern part of Lake Alaotra, supports the country by contributing to improved rice productivity by providing irrigation support to 10,000 hectares, benefiting 4,500 households engaged in rice cultivation, hence improving rice productivity and rice irrigation infrastructure quality. The Japanese government believes that productivity improvement and modern development are required to assure overall agricultural growth and development in Madagascar. (Malagasy news, 2021)

Infrastructure development is an economic foundation that has remained a strength in Madagascar, and one of the main agents involved is the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), through the contributions and investments of the Japanese government, which have resulted in the development and upgrade of critical infrastructure. One critical development project that involves the Japanese government is the development and upgrade of basic infrastructure, including roads, bridges, harbors, and airports, as this is critical to the improvement of trading activities between countries and hence economic development among nations. (Niraula and Kusayanagi, 2006) One of the Japanese initiatives that stand out and will be involved as a critical development initiative is the Toamasina Port Expansion Project, which is one of the largest Japanese infrastructure development programs in Africa. (Ranaivoson, 2021)(Rakotoniaina, 2018) The project will cost a total of 639 million USD, with 411 million USD provided by the Japanese government through the funding by the JICA, an initial loan of 228 million USD by the government of Madagascar, targeting to quadruple the port's capacity by 2026. (Ranaivoson, 2021). As a major transit point, which handles approximately 75% of the country's commodities and 89% of the country's international trade, the development of the port is critical to accommodate the growing flow of commodities and ensure proper logistics. Funding and technical cooperation come directly from the Japanese government, which has provided funding support to the project over eight years. Simultaneously, funding was provided by the Japanese government through JICA to the TATOM Project or Tananarive- Toamasina, aimed at the development of a 'Master Plan for the Economic Corridor between Antananarivo and Toamasina. The project identifies investment priorities, as well as strategies and policies, that are required to ensure economic development and improvement in the region's connectivity (Iharilvia, 2019). The project is vital as the region connects Madagascar's capital city to its primary outlet for international trade and activities.

Japan's role in the social development of Madagascar has been crucial, and this has been directed at improving welfare, education, and healthcare systems. (Ogasawara, 2004) One of the initiatives by the government of Japan that has positively impacted the Malagasy population, particularly Malagasy children, is the Public Primary School Development Project, which concentrates on building public primary schools and improving various aspects related to quality education for Malagasy kids. Since the project's commencement in 1998, a total of 738 classrooms have been established by the Japanese government, hencelessly decreasing disparities between the availability of education in both urban and rural areas (Arena, 2018) Within the medical or health sector, Japanese development efforts have targeted initiatives that aim at improving community health and various medical service delivery systems. One such initiative or project is known as the TOLISABO Project, which involves providing various health services to vulnerable areas of southern Madagascar, targeting communities living under the poverty line or faced with food insecurity challenges. (Midi Madagasikara, 2017). Other than providing vital support, Japanese development initiatives have involved the posting of volunteer personnel, either under the program known as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers or JOCV, targeting crucial sectors that include agricultural development, environmental conservation, medical and health initiatives, as well as engaging programs related to education, all with the aim of contributing to capacity development and building, as well as strengthening community resilience. Such programs make clear that the Japanese ODA has a human-centered approach to development, as they focus both on the improvement of social welfare as well as capacity building and empowerment programs. (Yashima, 2010) Such cooperation represents the rational and strategic approach that the Japanese government, under the Abe leadership, adopts and pursues in its foreign policy, as they aim at securing both social and development stability in Madagascar.

b. Japan's Interests Behind Its Decision to intensify Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Madagascar during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Administration

From an economic perspective, extended Official Development Assistance by Japan to Madagascar could be termed as a move by the Japanese government to create a mutual approach towards economic development, as well as ensure its influence over the growing markets in Africa as a whole. The natural resources, agricultural land, and ideal positioning between major shipping routes through the Indian Ocean make Madagascar an ideal partner for Japanese economic policies and engagement (Owoeye,

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1984) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2020). The Japanese government considers development as an economic approach rather than a humanitarian response, as it looks to offer development assistance as a strategy to enhance economic development by increasing agricultural productivity, enhancing industry, and upgrading infrastructure that facilitates both national development and global economic engagement via ODA. The collaboration between JICA and the Government of Madagascar has presented various opportunities for Japanese involvement in technology transfer, export market development, and investment opportunities for Japanese companies targeting various sectors, including agricultural production, fishing, and other renewable energy resources. This strategy is consistent with Abenomics Diplomacy, which involves utilizing economic strategy and international relations to enhance Japanese economic influence worldwide. (Söderberg, 2019) Additionally, the economic assistance offered to Madagascar helps increase Japanese resource availability while encouraging economic self-reliance among the target countries, hence influencing a predictable and mutually beneficial international outlook, favorable to Japanese economic interests.

As a case study, the Japanese government's engagement with Madagascar through official development assistance is an important element of its diplomatic approach to Africa and, by extension, to the Indo-Pacific region. The Abe government strongly advocated the significance of development cooperation as a vehicle of diplomacy that could bring peace, stability, and good governance. (Cornelissen, 2016) Through its engagement with states in Africa, such as Madagascar, the Japanese government perceives a strategy to diversify its approach and enhance its position as a global power in a world characterized by increasing or changing geopolitics. Alternatively, the Japanese government recognizes a peaceful and harmonious approach to its development cooperation as a strategy to enhance its foreign policy goals, as a viable alternative development partner, rather than China, among other global powers. (Murashkin, 2021) Madagascar is an important location for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy promoted by Japan, as it lies along the rim of the Indian Ocean, an important region for the Indo-Pacific strategy, focusing on freedom and ease of navigation, as well as economic integration, as a route to Asia and Africa. The development promoted by ODA will allow Japanese policy to assure Japanese-friendly routes and partners as a guarantee for the safety of the routes at sea, which are crucial for Japanese energy and trading security (Wang, 2023). Finally, the involvement of Japanese development policy through ODA, and not just through force, supports Japan's standing as a peaceful country, focusing on world stability and the observance of the world's rule of law. (Ishizuka, 2006) From a humanitarian and normative perspective, the Official Development Assistance between the governments of Japan and Madagascar depicts its consistent stand concerning human security and development. The Japanese government's approach to development perceives enduring stability to spring from a welfare society, education, and building capacity. The government, under Abe's leadership, stressed quality growth, which considers economic development alongside the well-being of humanity. (Van Wyk, 2007) (Yamada, 2015) Beyond humanitarian motives, these efforts serve as diplomatic investments in trust and goodwill, reinforcing Japan's moral authority on the global stage. By combining altruistic values with pragmatic statecraft, Japan has demonstrated that foreign aid can simultaneously serve ethical purposes and advance national interests. (Fukushima, 2000) Therefore, its Official Development Assistance to Madagascar under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe can be understood as a rational synthesis of moral obligation, strategic calculation, and global leadership, an approach that encapsulates Japan's unique role as a responsible and forward-looking actor in international relations (Melkonyan, 2023)

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Japan's Official Development Assistance to Madagascar during the administration of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe demonstrates how foreign aid can operate as both a tool of development and a means of advancing national interests. Japan's engagement was not limited to addressing poverty or promoting humanitarian values but was also part of a broader strategy to strengthen its influence in the Indian Ocean region. Through programs that supported economic revitalization, infrastructure modernization, and social improvement, Japan successfully positioned itself as a key partner in Madagascar's development process. This cooperation reflected Japan's long-standing commitment to promoting stability, prosperity, and self-reliance in developing countries while also expanding its diplomatic presence and economic networks across Africa. The Japanese government viewed the aid relationship with Madagascar as an opportunity to foster mutual benefits, combining economic partnerships with political dialogue and cultural exchange. As a result, the Official Development Assistance between Japan and Madagascar has become an example of how development cooperation can serve as a bridge between national interest and global responsibility. Ultimately, Japan's approach illustrates that modern foreign aid is shaped not only by compassion but also by calculated strategies that aim to create long-term partnerships, encourage sustainable development, and contribute to a more balanced and interconnected world.

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