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MAINSTREAMING SECURITY NORMS AS JAPANESE STRATEGY TO GAIN ITS GLOBAL POWER: A CONTENT ANALYSIS ON ODA DOCUMENTS

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Introduction

In the 19th century, Japan was a major power, especially during the economic and military modernisation carried out during the Meiji Emperor's reign. The success of this modernisation, known as the Meiji Restoration, established Japan as a major power in East Asia. This position also positioned Japan as a global power that competed with Western colonial powers such as Britain, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, Spain, etc., which at that time controlled several regions in Asia. In its efforts to become a global actor, Japan won regional wars by defeating Russia and China (Morris-Suzuki, 2014). These victories enhanced Japan's confidence and led it into World War I, which was centred in Europe. Japan's involvement in the First World War began shortly after the outbreak of the conflict in Europe in 1914, when it entered the war on the side of the Allied Powers in accordance with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. At Britain's request, Japan declared war on Germany with the primary objective of expelling German influence from East Asia and the Pacific. Japan's military operations focused on seizing German-held territories, including the port of Qingdao (Tsingtao) in China

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and several Pacific islands such as the Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls. Although Japan's direct involvement in the European theatre was minimal, its participation allowed it to expand its regional influence, secure strategic territories, and gain recognition as one of the victorious powers at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Japan's confidence in becoming a major power grew stronger thanks to its success in seizing several European colonial territories, as well as its swift and powerful attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, which then triggered US participation in World War II (Slavinsky, 2004).

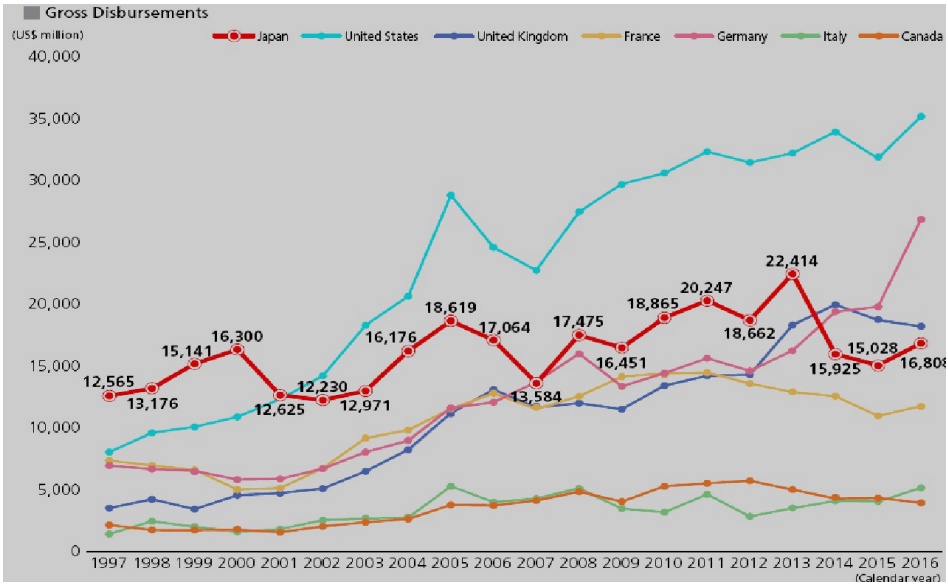
Japan's military mobilisation in the Asia-Pacific region then sparked World War II. This war was fought using mass destruction technology, causing ecological, social, economic, and political damage, as well as a huge loss of life. In this war, Japan and Germany became common enemies of the Allied Powers led by the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China. In World War II, Japan suffered defeat and incurred severe domestic infrastructure losses due to atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allies and remained under Allied occupation until 1952. During this occupation period, the Allies implemented policies of demilitarisation and political reform (Dobson & Kosuge, 2009). These policies forced Japan to transform itself into a pacifist nation by eliminating all provisions regarding the use of military force and power, and requiring Japan to remove war clauses from its constitution (Cooney, 2006).

However, there is an interesting fact in the 1947 Japanese Constitution, which forms the basis of Japan's pacifism, whereby Japan still declares itself a major power and internationally responsible for maintaining global prosperity. Japan, which was decisively defeated in World War II and bound by several international agreements, did not abandon its ambition to become a global power. This provides a valuable lesson for any country with ambitions to become a global power (Kinzley, 2001).

One of Japan's strategies to regain its position as a global power without violating the constitution is to use economic and development assistance instruments through Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The primary target of ODA as a tool of Japan's foreign policy was initially countries that had been victims of Japan's aggression and Third World nations (Rix, 2010). Japan's assumption was that the aid distributed would lead to Third World countries recognising Japan's hegemony. At the same time, several European and American countries joined the liberal bloc and also used economic aid instruments through the Marshall Plan to rebuild third world countries while also serving as a deterrent against the Soviet Union's economic initiatives through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), which

targeted the same objectives. The implementation of international aid to Third World countries was systematically, objectively, and amicably structured.

Figure 1: Trends in Major DAC Countries' ODA (Gross Disbursements) 1997 - 2016



Source: JICA, 2017

Figure 1 shows how Japan, as a donor country, has consistently provided substantial international assistance through ODA over the past 20 years. Japan's consistency as a donor country demonstrates its status as an established global power that defines the dynamics of the international system. However, Japan faces serious challenges in its quest to become a major power once again. Meanwhile, this is one of the main ethics of becoming a major power in the Samurai tradition (Titus, D. A., & Large, 1993). In this context, this article will fill the gap in the argument that intelligent, systematic, objective, and visionary legal governance is a critical variable in how a country deals with international regulatory issues and is able to become an established global power.

Literature Review

Japan has become an established global power in the middle of the international anarchy system, which caused some ups and downs. Japan became a global power that can manage challenges as a big nation effectively and efficiently. Many studies have discussed the Japanese foreign policy, especially Japanese foreign assistance (ODA) towards developing countries. However, most research on ODA relies on a rationalist perspective. ODA is often seen as a tool for Japan to satisfy its capitalist desires and achieve its own national goals.

Some articles expounded Japan's persistence as a global power by using an economic approach, such as norm of capitalism and Japan (Estevez-Abe, 2008) a norm to comply with agreements or international law (Cooney, 2006), develop science and technology, and utilization of foreign aid for recognition (Rix, 2010). However, how human security norms construct Japanese ODA has rarely hit the spotlight.

Historically, Japan's defeat in World War II led to its pacifism and heavy dependence on US aid. This marked the beginning of ODA development. However, Japan worked hard to rise and transform itself from a recipient country to a donor country within a few years (Takashi & Jain, 2000). The evolution of Japan's foreign aid can be classified into four stages: from repatriation to export promotion, from export promotion to interdependence rationality, from interdependence rationality to a tool for global position, and from global position to the protection of world peace and stability. In the first stage, as it began to emerge as a donor nation, Japan joined the UNCTAD and DAC (Donor Countries) 30 years after becoming an aid recipient. In the second stage, Japan joined several international organisations, including OPEC, to manage the energy crisis caused by the oil embargo imposed by some OPEC countries on Western nations. Japan's international aid was not limited to Asian countries but also extended to several Middle Eastern nations. In the third stage, Japan managed international aid as a tool to ensure Japan's needs and interests, as the idea of investing for the future had become widespread at that time. In the fourth stage, Japan finally succeeded in integrating international aid, particularly ODA, to create world peace and stability, as stated in the ODA Taiko on 2 June 1992 (Inoguchi & Bacon, 2006; Takashi & Jain, 2000).

Since the 1970s, Japanese ODA has begun to take on a more strategic nature, particularly in its relations with China, where aid is seen as a tool to curb military development and support the principles of human rights and democracy. Concerns about security issues were further emphasised with the enactment of the ODA Charter in the early 1990s, which stipulated that

aid should not be used for military purposes and should take into account environmental, democratic and human rights considerations. These changes were also related to global dynamics and geopolitical relations, such as Japan's reaction to China's nuclear tests, which led to a reduction in aid funds. Meanwhile, the development of human security issues in the context of Japanese ODA distribution became an important part of foreign policy that prioritised the political stability of recipient countries as a prerequisite for creating an environment conducive to investment and bilateral relations. The 2003 ODA policy reform further emphasised Japan's repositioning in the face of global challenges such as post-9/11 terrorism and the decline of the domestic economy, which ultimately changed the aid strategy with a greater emphasis on human security and sustainable development cooperation. However, how human security norms shape Japan's ODA has rarely been highlighted.

Studies on security have undergone a number of developments over the past few decades. The contextualisation of World War I and World War II has influenced security studies, which were initially viewed through a militaristic approach. Security was understood only as the absence of physical violence in international or inter-state relations. However, since the end of the Cold War, the trend of conflict and war has changed drastically, from wars and conflicts involving two or more state actors to wars and conflicts involving individuals, groups, opposition forces, and entities below or equal to state actors. Within a century, genocide, civil wars, brutal separatist movements, terrorism, corrupt governments, extreme hunger, and poverty have caused many people to die at the hands of their fellow citizens, even their own governments. This phenomenon challenges previous understandings of security and contributes to the emergence of a new paradigm in security (Centre, 2005).

The concept of national security, traditionally interpreted by traditionalists as the protection of the state's survival through the enhancement of military and economic capabilities, has shifted to the protection of human dignity and living standards (Tsai, 2009). The securitization paradigm introduced by the Copenhagen School provides a narrative explanation for analysing security issues. Security management is not only carried out by gathering forces capable of neutralising actors who have the opportunity to threaten national security, but also through the resolution of problems that may cause insecurity. States do not need to increase their military budgets to be secure (McDonald, 2008). The emergence of Human Security has gained momentum amid the increasing role of non-state actors in international relations. Human Security is constructed as a new value that will make the anarchic international world more concerned about humanitarian issues.

Human security does not only prioritise the protection of the state against external threats, but also emphasises the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals and communities. The idea of human security has also been adopted by a number of political parties as a platform for electoral political struggle in several countries.

This new spectrum has sparked debate regarding the concept of human security. Some experts argue that human security only addresses issues related to development (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2006), while others argue that the concept of human security needs to be tightened and made more rigid (Hobson & Bacon, 2014). To prevent ambiguity in understanding human security, the UNDP outlines seven points as indicators of human security, namely economic security, food security, environmental security, health security, personal security, community security and political security. Economic security ensures economic sovereignty, including access to decent work, adequate and reliable income, and improved living standards. Food security encompasses access to food, good nutrition, and access to food during and after natural and man-made disasters. Environmental security refers to the protection of forests, land, prevention of various environmental problems, and the ability to resolve them, as well as mitigation of natural hazards. Health security aims to improve access to adequate health services, clean water, a safe environment, prevention of exposure to illegal drugs, and protection from serious diseases. Personal security safeguards freedom from fear, violence, torture, accident prevention, crime, drugs, or other things that may harm individuals. Communal security aims to preserve specific ethnic cultures, languages, and values, eliminate discrimination, and promote freedom from fear of inter-ethnic or inter-regional conflict. Finally, political security encompasses freedom of speech, the promotion of democratisation, and protection of citizens from state oppression. Given the complexity of human security, the indicators used to evaluate security can vary across regions and locations.

Human security issues have so far been discussed more by international organisations than by countries. The concept of human security that promotes inclusiveness and non-participation always comes up against state sovereignty (McDonald, 2002). The United Nations, for example, has successfully incorporated the concept of human security into the MDGs and SDGs, making the MDGs and SDGs widely accepted at the global level. The concept of human security, on the one hand, appears to be central to the functions of International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) (Thomas, 2001). On the other hand, human security is rarely articulated by states, as states

often prioritise the preservation of sovereignty, nationalism, and national security, making state articulations of human security tend to be overly bureaucratic, exclusive, and rigid (Mahmud, Quaisar, Sabur, & Tamanna, 2008). The construction of human security by states is often used merely as a "sweetener" to strengthen state hegemony.

In her article, Sarah Tanke explains that human security has become a central concept in Japanese diplomatic discourse over the past three decades (Tanke, 2022). By tracking Japanese state speeches in international forums, Tanke notes that human security has been consistently used as Japan's diplomatic identity to gain international recognition. Furthermore, Japan not only promotes human security for global development but also as a means to strengthen its legitimacy, role, and self-image among other nations in the international community. In its speeches at international forums, Japan constructs a narrative that highlights its contributions and leadership on human security issues, linking them to domestic achievements, foreign aid (ODA), and multilateral cooperation. This article highlights the need for a study on how Japan prepares human security issues as part of its diplomatic narrative to position Japan as a global player, which could ultimately restore Japan to its position as a global power (Tanke, 2022).

In the constructivist approach, norms are not simply external rules that govern the behavior of the state, but are an integral part of the identity and interests of the state itself. Alexander Wendt in his famous work *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) asserts that "anarchy is what states make of it", which shows that international structures are not fixed determinants, but are constructed through social interactions and norms embraced by international actors. In this context, post-World War II Japan sought to revitalize its position in the global arena by utilizing international norms, especially *human security* norms, as a strategy for identity reconstruction and expansion of its global role. Instead of relying on military power limited by its pacifist constitution (Article 9), Japan developed normative power through development assistance, humanitarian diplomacy, and active engagement in non-traditional security issues. This approach shows how Japan uses norms as an instrument of status transformation, from a militarily "castrated" country to a morally and politically respected global actor (Wendt, 2003).

Japan's normative strategy is reflected in its international aid approach that emphasizes *human security* as the main framework. This concept places the protection of individuals from the threat of violence, poverty, health and disasters at the center of foreign policy and development assistance (Shibuya et al., 2016). Through Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japan actively supports developing countries, not only through financial assistance but also

technology transfer, institutional capacity building, and support for post-conflict reconstruction. In a constructivist framework, these actions are not merely technocratic policies, but rather part of the production of meaning and identity that shows Japan as a responsible, moral, and peace-oriented country. By positioning itself as a pioneer in the promotion of *human security*, Japan has gradually formed an international perception that supports its status as a *normal state*—a country that has the capacity and legitimacy to play a strategic role on the global stage (Yoshinobu, 2012), without having to rebuild aggressive military power.

The recognition of Japan as a legitimate and respected global power does not come instantly, but rather is the result of a long-term social construct based on the consistency of norms and international engagement. In Wendt's logic, social structures are formed through repeated practice and intersubjectivity—and Japan succeeded in creating a new social structure that saw it no longer as a military threat, but as a moral leader (Swenson-Wright, 2009). This recognition is reflected in Japan's increased role in international institutions, recognition of its humanitarian contributions to major conflicts, and support for its aspirations to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Thus, through the constructivist approach, it can be understood that Japan's transformation into a *normal state* is not merely the result of a change in material capabilities, but the result of its success in articulating *human security* norms as a national identity and foreign policy strategy, which ultimately gains affirmation from the international community as part of a legitimate global power.

Methodology

This study uses quantitative methodology by applying content analysis to Japanese normative and operational documents. Content analysis is a research method used to identify, categorise, and analyse various types of data such as text, images, or audio-visual recordings systematically and objectively in order to find patterns, themes, or hidden meanings in the content. Content that can be explored includes official government documents, news, speeches, or media articles, among others. This method was chosen with the aim of revealing the frequency of the appearance of words or ideas in the selected documents and identifying patterns that can be concluded.

In this article, the documents to be used are the 2015 ODA Charter or Development Cooperation Charter (DCC) and the White Paper on Development Cooperation (WPDC). The DCC is an official Japanese

government document (normative document) that serves as the main guideline for the implementation of Japan's international development cooperation, particularly ODA. Meanwhile, the WPDC is a report by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that provides information on Japan's international development cooperation policies, implementation, and results, particularly in the form of ODA (operational document). These two documents will be tracked through the most frequently occurring words to form patterns that identify Japan's strategy in using ODA to maintain its influence as a global power.

To achieve this objective, four significant variables will be analysed in this study. First, Actors. Keywords referring to actors include countries, society, developing countries, private companies, Japanese companies, the private sector, local governments, NGOs, individuals, institutions, non-state actors, communities, women, men, governments, nations, vulnerable groups, the public, and civil society. Second, governance. Some terms referring to governance include development cooperation, international cooperation, law, democratisation, economy, experience, expertise, and lessons, diplomacy, investment for the future, transparency, certainty, maintenance and protection of the international order, universal values, non-military objectives, human security, self-reliance, independence, quality growth, poverty eradication, technical cooperation, loan assistance, grant assistance, and partnerships. Third, value variables covering human security issues consist of universal values, justice, peace, freedom from fear and want, economic development, peacebuilding, governance, humanitarian assistance, human rights, women's rights, democracy, prosperity, development, sustainable growth, the environment, climate change, water issues, natural disasters, food crises and famine, energy issues, infectious diseases, and prosperity. In addition, issues covering the dimension of national security include international terrorism, cross-border organised crime, piracy, fragile states, regional conflicts, political instability, conflict, and stability. Fourth, the scope of assistance covers Asia, other countries, the Caucasus, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Oceania, the Caribbean, international, national, domestic, and foreign.

Discussion Analysis

Before analysing Japanese ODA documents to determine Japan's strategy in using ODA to maintain its influence as a global power, this paper traces several practices of using aid as an instrument of foreign policy carried out by countries. First, it traces the concept of how Japan designs capacity

building for state and non-state actors. In the practices of some other donor countries, cooperation with recipient governments is considered the best way to increase the donor country's hegemony over the recipient country (Barone, 1982). International partnerships can also aim to increase the capacity of the recipient country's bureaucracy or improve its productivity. The Japanese government appears to have a different argument compared to those developed by most donor countries.

Second, tracing the logic used in constructing Japan's ODA governance. Most Western donor countries aim to strengthen their political affiliations in exchange for supporting the recipient's economy (Barnett & Duvall, 2009). Political ideology is considered an important factor in building commitment and integrity between donors and recipients. Therefore, political affiliation is an important tool used by Western donors in establishing hegemony in other countries (Agnew, 2005). This fact raises the question of whether Japan uses a political ideology perspective or an economic perspective to support Japan's transformation into a global power.

Third, tracking Japan's aid management to determine whether it is based on human security or traditional national security. Major donor countries need to enhance the security of smaller countries or recipient countries to strengthen their position and build global power. This perspective explains why the United States established several military alliances such as SEATO, ANZUS, NATO, and CENTO during the Cold War. This also applies to the Warsaw Pact established by the Soviet Union. Accumulated and centralised security is more effective in building compliance from recipient countries, as political-security cooperation tends to be hierarchical in nature (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2010). This raises two questions: whether Japan is following the same pattern as the United States or the Soviet Union, or another pattern suited to Japan's political, economic, and social conditions. The next question is whether using the concept of human security as the basis for cooperation is more effective and appropriate for Japan in facing the post-Cold War era and multipolarity compared to the traditional concept of national security (Winkler, J. R., & Nye, 2005).

Fourth, tracing ideas rooted in human security norms. Other donor countries tend to position themselves as global powers using economic norms and values rather than social norms. Economic aid is seen as a panacea that can drive social change, as believed by modernisation theory (Ish-shalom, 2006). As one of the major powers, the United States has used the Marshall Plan and economic or financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and UNTACD to become a global economic power. The same applies to the Soviet Union (Gill & Law, 1989). Does Japan follow a similar pattern to the United

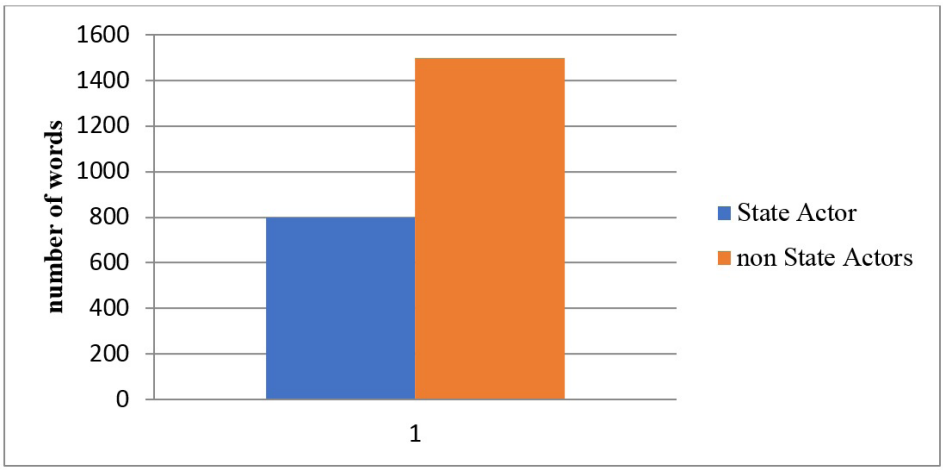
States and the Soviet Union in becoming a global economic power?

Fifth, tracking how areas of cooperation have become mainstream. Some countries that have developed themselves as global powers tend to spread their influence divergently and reach various regions around the world. Spain (Bishko, 2016) and Portugal, for example (Ikenberry, 2014), spread their influence divergently during the 13th to 15th centuries BC. This led to intense competition between the two kingdoms. A similar pattern was also applied by other countries such as England and France, which developed divergent hegemonic powers during the industrial revolution. The United States and the Soviet Union also applied a similar pattern to spread their hegemony throughout the world (Sedivy, 2004). So, what pattern did Japan choose to spread its influence throughout the world?

1. Empowerment of Non-State Actors

There is a significant trend that international aid patterns from donor countries to third world countries after the 1962 UN decolonisation resolution place governments as the main partners and beneficiaries. Donor countries will ensure that the international aid provided has a significant positive impact on recipient countries in a short period of time (Jain, 2016).

Figure 2: Discourse of Actors



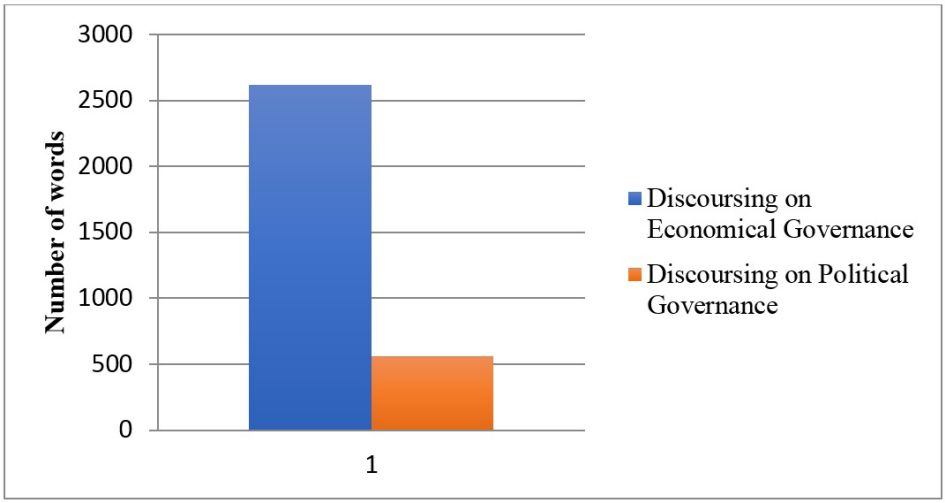
Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

Figure 2 shows that the DCC and WPDC documents discuss the use of non-state actors more than state actors. In fact, the difference in numbers is almost double. This data can be interpreted to mean that although Japanese aid is government-to-government in nature, the Japanese government seeks to strengthen the capacity of non-state actors. The Japanese government believes that through non-state actors, international aid can mobilise the social and economic sectors and avoid political corruption (Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2016). This kind of governance is expected to prevent Japanese aid recipient countries from falling into the Samaritan's Dilemma, which is a situation of dependency on the part of the recipient, reducing the incentive to improve their own situation, and even worsening the conditions of the recipient in the long term (Raschky & Schwindt, 2016). With this kind of pattern, it is hoped that international aid can benefit both parties, both the donor and recipient countries.

2. Mainstreaming Economic Cooperation Governance

In terms of governance, the results of tracking DCC and WPDC documents can be classified into two types: ideology-political governance, also known as high political governance, and socio-economic governance, also known as low political governance. This classification is important for understanding how Japan identifies the needs of third world countries as recipients and how to ensure that Japan's interventions in third world countries are effective and efficient. The results of tracking in the DCC and WPDC documents are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Discourse of Governance



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

From the figure, it can be seen that the governance that is more frequently mentioned in the documents is economic governance rather than political governance. This is in line with the characteristics and objectives of the Japanese government to become a global power through economic issues, not through military capacity.

3. Mainstreaming Human Security Norms

The results of the content analysis of the two documents reveal consistency in the use of terms related to human security development norms and national security development norms. These two terms are divided into traditional security norms and non-traditional security norms (Frieman, 2014). There are several interesting issues that Japan is concerned about in the context of non-traditional security, such as climate change, natural disasters, energy, and even women's issues.

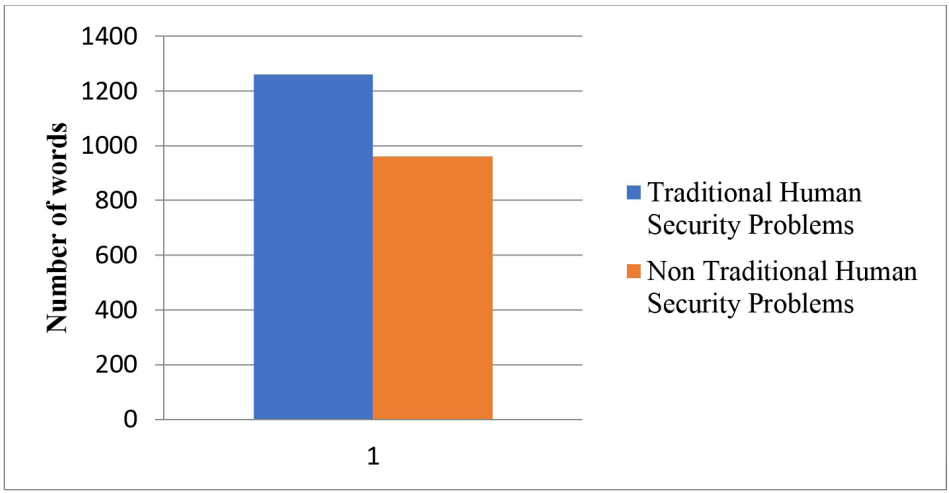
Japan is a country that is vulnerable to climate change (Emmers, n.d.), so climate change is a sensitive issue for Japan's future. This is because the increase in global surface temperature due to the depletion or leakage of the ozone layer will cause sea level rise, which could threaten Japan's geographical

areas in the northern latitudes due to the melting of ice in the Arctic. The issue of natural disasters also highlights Japan's vulnerability to disasters due to its geological structure, which has the highest level of vulnerability in the world. The experience of facing natural disasters has prompted Japan to develop better natural disaster management. This situation influences Japan's perspective on its international aid schemes, as Japan feels the need to emphasise the importance of proper disaster management (Herningtyas, 2010). This is related to the issue of disaster mitigation so that the impact of disasters can be managed properly and does not significantly affect some of Japan's investments (Sahashi, 2015). Water issues are also a concern for Japan. Japan is one of the countries with high standards in clean water management (Engle & Lemos, 2010). For recipient countries, most of which are developing countries, water is a strategic issue, both in the context of clean water shortages due to geological and geographical structures and poor clean water management in urban areas due to contaminated water sources.

Energy issues have also received serious attention from Japan. This is related to Japan's experience of once being highly dependent on fossil-based energy sources such as oil and coal (Morse, 1981). This situation prompted Japan to use cleaner and cheaper energy sources, such as nuclear energy, which requires high technology to reduce and manage the risks of its use. Currently, Japan has chosen nuclear energy as its primary energy source to meet the needs of industry and households (Patrick, 2011). Japan's experience in managing this energy source has become an alternative for energy development in developing countries. This position is inherently strategic for Japan because its ability to manage nuclear energy for peaceful development is far more advanced than that of other nuclear-armed countries. The Fukushima nuclear disaster was not caused by technological failure, as was the case in the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Instead, the disaster was caused by a natural disaster, which forced Japan to manage the issue seriously. Additionally, the Japanese Prime Minister had to resign as a form of public accountability. The Japanese government successfully handled the nuclear leak in Fukushima, allowing Japan to claim itself as the most efficient country in managing nuclear energy peacefully (Openshaw, 2002; Patrick, 2011).

On the issue of women, Japan has a desire to change values to strengthen the position of women in politics in third world countries. The dominant patriarchal culture in third world countries was formed due to women's low capacity in public issues. The Japanese government defines the low number of women in public issues as one of the problems that must be solved by third world countries (Bauer & Tremblay, 2011).

Figure 4: Discourse of Human Security



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

The results of tracking words related to human security issues are shown in Figure 4. The results show that Japan's human security issues in the distribution of international aid place more emphasis on traditional human security than on non-traditional security. This refers to the norms developed by Japan regarding 'investment for the future.' Traditional norms in security issues will be a major factor in whether Japan's international aid will be productive for Japan's future. If non-traditional security factors prove to be safe, the probability of achieving greater investment interest will be guaranteed (Rix, 2010)

This construction needs to be further investigated. Is the Japanese government not committed to cooperating with countries in the fragile category for investment or humanitarian reasons? This is stated in the DCC document as a normative document, in which the Japanese government demonstrates an affirmative policy in the form of a willingness to engage in conflict resolution in vulnerable countries. However, in its operational practice, the affirmative policy becomes less robust. Many studies on international aid find that international aid routinely considers the national stability of the recipient country. This means that the logical reason for aid as an investment in the future becomes rational.

Countries with unstable social and political conditions cannot provide a clear picture of how much they will benefit from investment (Lawson,

2013). Unlike women's issues, in the normative DCC document, the Japanese government does not provide clear affirmative policies on the importance of women's issues in international cooperation. Instead, in practice, women's issues are outlined in operational documents.

This construction is interesting because, to a certain extent, women's issues in developing countries are less noticed. Women tend to be objects rather than subjects of development. In the patriarchal culture that dominates developing countries, women's roles in public issues are often ignored (Salviana & Soedarwo, 2014). In some JICA photo documents, images of women and children are more dominant than images of men. An image of a woman providing healing care to conflict victims, Ms Ran Honda, a Japanese overseas cooperation volunteer (JOC), is teaching by playing games with students at the Teacher Training Centre in Mchinji, Malawi, which was later published as the cover photo in the WPDC document.

What about the security norms developed by Japan within the framework of its assistance? From the outset, Japan decided to prioritise human security norms while still paying sufficient attention to several issues related to state security norms without getting too involved.

Japan confidently emphasises that partner countries should consider peaceful political governance. This is clearly evident in the normative DCC document, which does not introduce the term 'war' while still using the term "conflict" in many places. The term 'war' in Japanese political logic is traumatic, and it is Japan's obligation to eliminate this term in its interactions with the international context, as explicitly stated in its constitution (Kinzley, 2001).

Regarding the term 'conflict,' the Japanese government emphasises the importance of peaceful conflict resolution. Third world countries, in Japan's perception, are still experiencing identity conflicts that give rise to horizontal and vertical conflicts. Japan is quite concerned that conflict management norms in third world countries can be implemented democratically by adhering to the principle of non-violence (Williams, 2018).

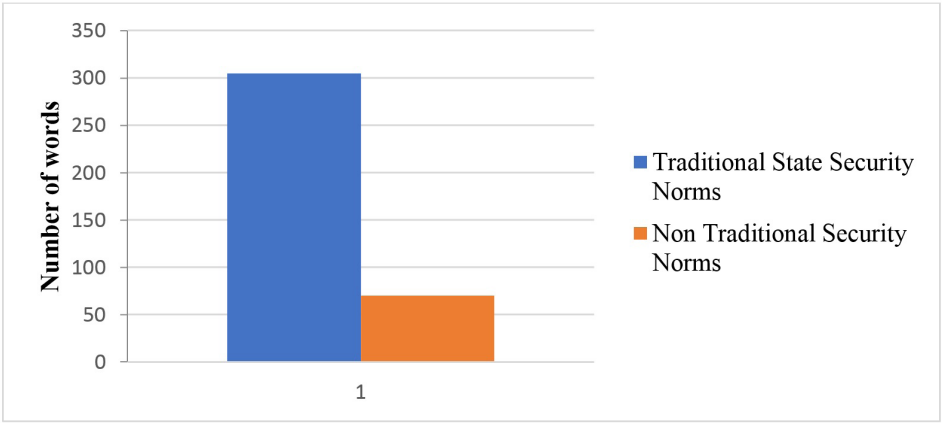
In managing non-traditional national security norms, Japan places greater emphasis on terrorism than on transnational organised crime or piracy. It is interesting to note that in the DCC document, these three terms of non-traditional national security are mentioned equally, i.e., once. However, in operational documents, the term 'international terrorism' is mentioned 47 times, far more than the terms "piracy" and 'transnational organised crime.' This can be interpreted as the Japanese government needing to address terrorism in third-world countries with a different approach compared to many Western countries in dealing with terrorism (Azam & Thelen, 2010;

Woods, 2005).

Nevertheless, Japan is also concerned about piracy. However, Japan's concern is not traditional piracy, such as the hijacking of ships at sea, which often occurs in East Africa or the Malacca Strait. Japan is more concerned about piracy in the context of technology transfer (Bond, 1998). For Japan, this is very important because Japanese international aid is also provided through technology transfer; therefore, these norms are strongly emphasised by Japan.

With regard to norms for managing transnational organised crime, the Japanese government believes that this needs to be addressed. This is related to common problems in third world countries such as human trafficking, drugs and illegal firearms. Such issues are often found in Africa and some conflict-ridden regions in Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Japan's commitment to addressing this issue is linked to its compliance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (JICA, 2017; Koivu, 2015).

Figure 5: Discourse of State Security Norms

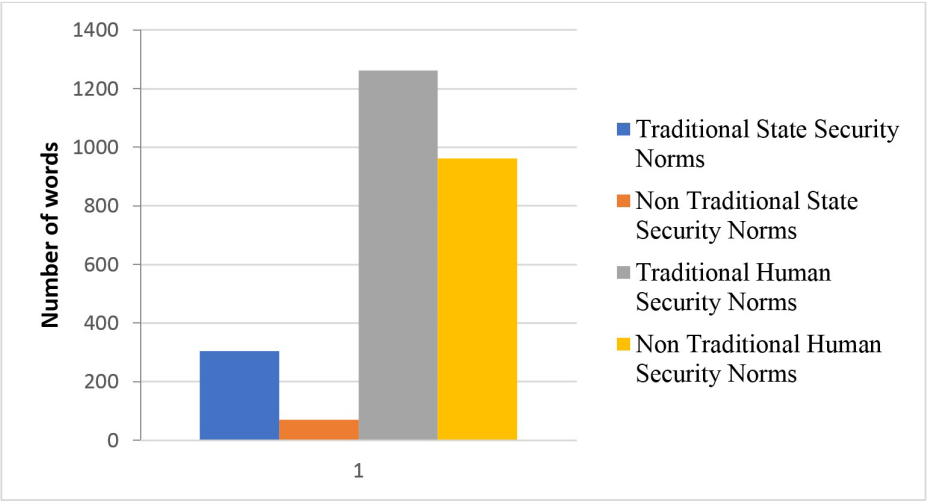


Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

Figure 5 shows that the Japanese government continues to use traditional national security norms rather than non-traditional security norms. Similar to human security norms, the Japanese government also emphasises traditional human security norms. This indicates that the main issue for Japan's partner countries in relation to Japanese international assistance is

traditional security. Nevertheless, Japan also believes that managing non-traditional security issues is also very important (Er, 2006).

Figure 6: Discourse of Security Norms



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

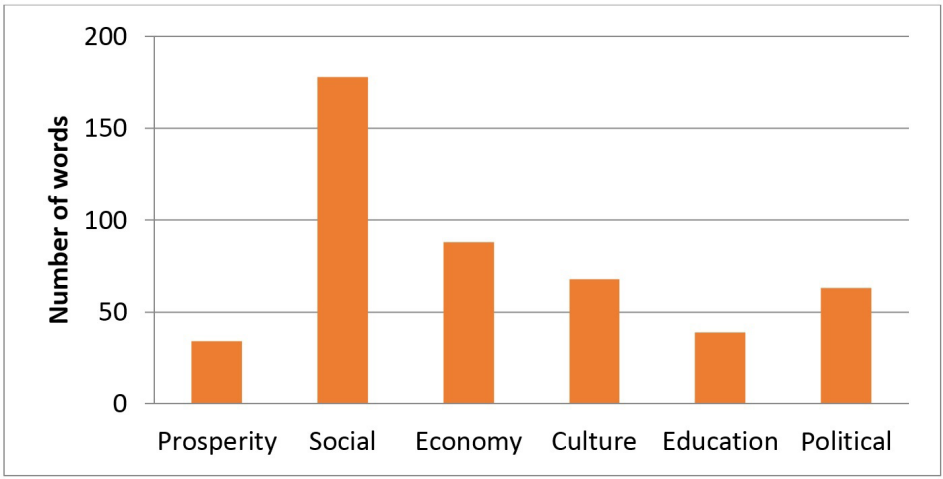
Figure 6 shows that among the four security norms, Japan prioritises traditional human security norms, followed by non-traditional human security norms. This indicates that the Japanese government assumes that international assistance should reach the private sector and individuals. This differs from Japanese international assistance in the 1970s–1990s, when many Japanese assistance programmes focused on public sector-based human security issues, such as infrastructure.

In the context of international cooperation to build national security norms, Japan has consistently refrained from engaging in military-oriented cooperation. Although the Japanese government recognises that many third world countries face vertical conflicts such as separatism and need military assistance to resolve them, Japan has remained consistent in not engaging in this area.

4. Economic Assistance as a Norm of Social Assistance

This section discusses the scope of programmes offered by the Japanese government in relation to international assistance. This analysis is used to describe which programmes are most important by tracking the use of words in the two documents analysed.

Figure 7: The Scope of International Assistance Program



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

Figure 7 shows that the scope of partnerships is more focused on the social sector than the economic sector. This is unique because Japanese aid schemes always use "development" as their tagline. The choice of the word "development" has a meaning closely related to the economy and prosperity. However, the global economy is not the main focus, and is even lower than the words "culture" and "politics". Further research is needed to determine why Japanese documents prioritise social engineering over the economy.

Referring to several development theories, the engineering process is a transformational effort to change behaviour. This behavioural change will then have a multiplier effect on other aspects of life. Cluckhohn's idea about behavioural patterns and norms that shape behavioural patterns provides a convincing argument, stating that behavioural patterns will shape behavioural patterns (Dollar & Alesina, 2000).

New technical behaviour patterns, by providing new norms about the order of life in society, will shape new behaviour. As a case example, in

Indonesia, Japan provided assistance for road infrastructure development to improve horizontal mobility. This assistance aimed to change existing norms in Indonesia, where the most efficient mode of transport was railways.

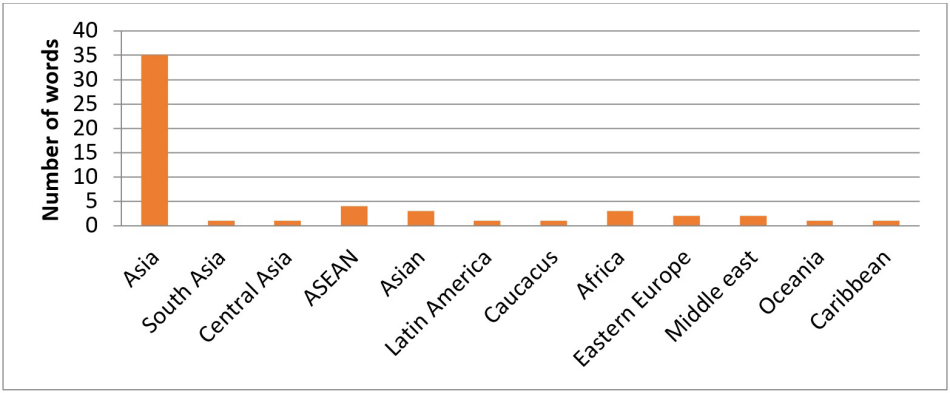
This was designed and developed by the Dutch government, which colonised Indonesia for a very long time. The Dutch government built very little road infrastructure, the most monumental being the road from Anyer to Panarukan. Japan's massive assistance in the form of road development has changed the norm of mobility from using trains to bicycles, motorcycles, and cars, as well as public transport such as buses and trucks for logistics.

The Japanese government, through its visionary aid, did not aim for immediate or short-term gains. This narrative is clear; Japan did not use direct reciprocity norms when providing aid, as found in international interaction norms (Keenes & Gilpin, 2010). Japan's economic motives were elegantly packaged as social and humanitarian motives (Jain, 2016). This is the factor that determines Japan's success as a global actor in managing economic assistance as a social dimension.

5. Integrating Asia as a First Step

The regions targeted for Japan's international partnerships have been designed systematically and objectively. The Japanese government has carefully mapped out its international assistance partners. The term 'partnership regions' covers almost every continent, from Asia, Africa, Europe, America, and the Pacific region. From this perspective, Japan does not engage in international aid mechanisms with developed countries. The G-7 countries or developed countries are not found in the document.

Figure 8: Japan's International Target Areas



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

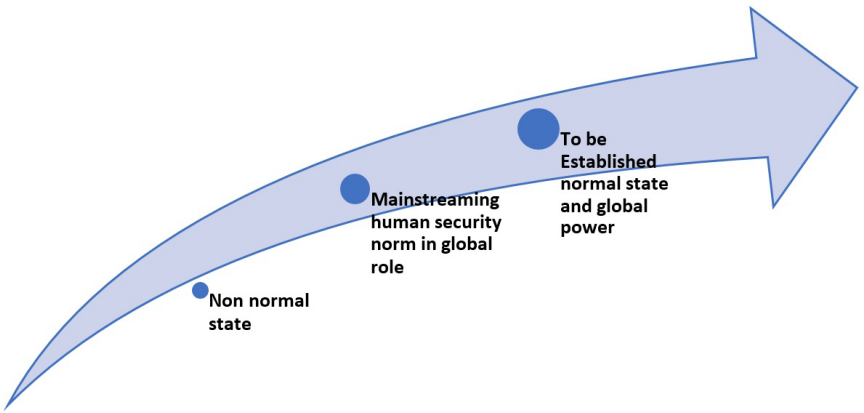
Figure 8 shows that Japan engages in comprehensive international cooperation with countries in Asia, Europe, America, Africa, and the Pacific region. However, there is an interesting fact: the Japanese government focuses more on Asia. From a review of the documents, the term 'Asia' appears ten times more frequently than other regions. This indicates that, to build global power, Asia is the most effective and productive region to adopt the norms offered by Japan (Lewis-Workman, 2018). Therefore, Japan builds its global power by engaging in intensive cooperation with neighbouring countries as the foundation of its partnerships. The region that is also a key focus for Japan in Southeast Asia is ASEAN. Japan has a long political and economic history with several Southeast Asian countries. ASEAN, as a regional organisation, is viewed by Japan as an organisation that can create harmony and stability conducive to economic growth and prosperity (Asplund, 2015).

6. Getting to be a Normal State and a Global Power based on a Global Role

The productivity of mainstreaming *human security* norms in Japan's foreign aid policy plays a strategic role in the process of repositioning Japan as a *normal state*. After World War II, Japan faced a serious challenge in rehabilitating its international image and role that had been tarnished by the expansion of militarism and imperialism. In this context, *human security* becomes a symbolic and substantive means to present a new face of Japan that

is responsible and peace-oriented. By focusing aid on basic human needs—such as protection from poverty, conflict, disease, and natural disasters—Japan is showing the world that it is no longer an aggressor but a contributor to global stability and humanity (Ishida, 2019). This strategy not only dampened suspicions of Japan's potential remilitarization, but also strengthened Japan's moral and political legitimacy in the eyes of the international community.

Figure 9: Logic Analysis on Japan's Road Map to be Global Power



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

One important dimension of this strategy is the mainstreaming of aid to non-state actors such as local NGOs, civil society, and educational institutions (Hollifield & Sharpe, 2017). Logically, support for non-state actors strengthens Japan's legitimacy as an inclusive and progressive power. Compared to elitist and top-down inter-state aid, cooperation with non-state actors allows Japan to reach out to grassroots communities and promote social transformation from the bottom. In Arrighi analysis (1998), it creates the impression that Japan is not only concerned with the stability of the country, but also with the resilience of the community and human development (Arrighi, 1998). Furthermore, by strengthening the capacity of civil society in aid-recipient countries, Japan is simultaneously creating a network of socio-political influences that asserts its role as a global normative force. This is a very effective soft power strategy to reconstruct Japan's status as a normal country that actively contributes to the new world order.

In terms of aid content, Japan prioritizes the mainstreaming of economic governance over political governance. It is a strategic choice that reflects Japan's prudence in entering a realm that is considered geopolitically sensitive. Instead of explicitly pushing for democratization or political reform, Japan prefers to strengthen the capacity of economic institutions such as the tax system, fiscal management, MSME development, and public infrastructure (Arrighi, 2007). This kind of assistance has two implications: first, it avoids Japan from accusations of meddling in the internal affairs of other countries; second, building a sustainable and stable economic growth base in partner countries, which ultimately strengthens regional stability that benefits Japan's strategic position. Although not directly related to political reforms, this economic governance assistance still supports the creation of stable political conditions through strengthening welfare and reducing inequality, which is part of the broader vision of *human security*.

The mainstreaming of traditional and non-traditional security norms is also an important pillar in the process of normalizing Japan's status. In traditional security, Japan remains cautious and more instrumental through passive contributions such as peacekeeper training and the logistics of humanitarian assistance in conflict situations. But in non-traditional security, such as disaster mitigation, climate change, pandemic management, and countering human trafficking, Japan has been very active. This role strengthens Japan's position as a relevant country in responding to contemporary global challenges, while expanding the scope of its influence without generating resistance. Japan's main focus in foreign aid is also on the Asian region, especially Southeast Asia and South Asia, as a strategic geopolitical arena. This regional focus reflects not only geographical proximity, but also historical heritage, postcolonial responsibility, and economic importance. In this context, Japanese assistance serves as a diplomatic instrument to establish a stable and friendly regional environment, which is a prerequisite for the restoration of the normal status of the state (Rother, 2012).

In recent years, Japan has been increasingly active in expanding its economic influence in the Latin American region (Stallings & Horisaka, 2021), especially Brazil, through various forms of development assistance, infrastructure investment, and technological cooperation (de Oliveira & Lessa, 2022). This initiative is not only aimed at strengthening bilateral relations, but also as part of Japan's geopolitical strategy in the face of global competition, especially with China (Masahiro, 2013). One striking manifestation of the closeness is Japan's support for Brazil's claim to expand its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the South Atlantic region (Masahiro, 2013), especially around the underwater mountain known as the Elevado do Rio Grande. This support

reflects a reciprocal relationship, in which Brazil openly supports Japan's claim to the Okinotorishima archipelago, which is strategically important for Japan's expansion of the EEZ in the Western Pacific (Yoshikawa, 2007). This mutually supportive relationship reflects a diplomatic closeness that not only relies on economic relations, but also strengthens the position of each country in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and UNCLOS. Japan sees Brazil as a strategic partner in the South American region that has an important role in the global architecture of the South, while Brazil views Japan as an economic and technological power that can sustain its ambitions as a new maritime power.

After successfully positioning itself as a *normal state* through a norm-based strategy, Japan now has a strong foundation to establish itself as a *global power*. International recognition of Japan's contributions to non-traditional development, humanitarian and security is an important capital in expanding its global role. With the foundation of *human security* norms, Japan can position itself not only as an economic power, but also as a moral force that carries the values of peace, inclusion, and human development. In an era of global multipolarity, where military power is no longer the only indicator of power, Japan has a great opportunity to become a respected global power through normative and institutional channels. By strengthening its participation in global forums such as the G7, G20, and the United Nations, as well as expanding its diplomatic and foreign assistance networks, Japan is on track to consolidate its position as a *global power* that is not only economically strong, but also respected for its normative commitment to humanity (Befu & Guichard-Anguis, 2003) (Yoshinobu, 2012).

Conclusion

Japan's strategic embrace of human security norms within its Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework underscores a transformative approach to global engagement in the post-World War II era. This study demonstrates that Japan has successfully institutionalised a dual-track strategy that combines normative commitments with operational mechanisms to reposition itself as a global power. By shifting the emphasis from traditional notions of national security to the inclusive and human-centred agenda of human security, Japan leverages soft power rooted in humanitarian principles, non-military cooperation, and socio-economic development.

Through rigorous content analysis of Japan's Development Cooperation Charter (DCC) and the White Paper on Development Cooperation (WPDC), it

is evident that Japan consistently prioritises human security over hard security approaches. The Japanese government has tactically highlighted traditional and non-traditional human security themes such as disaster mitigation, environmental sustainability, energy security, and gender empowerment—demonstrating a nuanced understanding of global development challenges. Moreover, Japan's strategic preference for engaging with non-state actors over state-centric channels reflects an innovative model of inclusive governance aimed at reducing aid dependency and enhancing local ownership. The article also reveals Japan's region-specific strategy, with a notable concentration of ODA efforts in Asia—particularly Southeast Asia—as a foundation for its broader international ambitions. This regional focus not only reflects geographical proximity and historical ties but also Japan's calculated move to build legitimacy and trust within its immediate environment before projecting influence more globally. Japan builds its global power systematically and consistently. All international cooperation documents are well arranged to get a high coherence between the normative and operational documents. Japan's visionary management of international assistance documents arrangement and measurable legal drafting process can produce well-implementable working documents. In document arrangement, the Japanese Government can convert all obstacles into its global power as the consequence of being the losing party in World War II by transforming itself as a global state with unique international assistance style through the mainstreaming of economic, security, and humanity management in Asian regions. The mainstreaming decision is a part of selection and prioritization policies.

Japan's experience offers valuable insights for how a nation constrained by a pacifist constitution can still exercise significant global influence through the strategic use of legal instruments, development cooperation, and norm entrepreneurship. Its deliberate alignment of humanitarian ideals with pragmatic goals allows Japan to construct a credible image as a responsible global actor while subtly advancing its national interests. Ultimately, Japan's ODA strategy, with human security at its core, serves as a model for how global power can be pursued through normative leadership rather than military prowess. While questions remain regarding the measurable impact of these efforts on Japan's standing in global governance structures, the framework and coherence of its approach indicate a sophisticated and sustainable path toward renewed international prominence.

Limitation and Study Forward

This study has shown how the Japanese Government successfully created an ODA document that emphasized the importance of human security issues as Japan's means of achieving global power. However, in the writings, it has not yet been explained how effective this Japanese effort was towards achievement in Japan's global position. Will the international community be able to accept Japan to play its international role again and become a respected global power in the future.

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ABSTRACT

Japan's defeat in World War II did not discourage its obsession to become a global power that influences the behaviour of other countries and the world order at large. Following World War II, despite being constrained by the 1947 Constitution, Japan emerged as an economic agent capable of playing a significant role on the global stage through economic and cultural instruments. Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has become one of the key tools for Japan to actively participate and contribute to current global politics. This article aims to identify Japan's strategy in using ODA to maintain its influence as a global power. Using content analysis of 2015 ODA Charter or Development Cooperation Charter (DCC) and the White Paper on Development Cooperation (WPDC), this article finds that Japan's strategy to maintain its influence at the global level is carried out by prioritising human security norms in ODA distribution. The Japanese government consistently applies normative and operational norms regarding human security rather than national security to ensure acceptance from recipient countries. These efforts begin with the development of Japan's legal governance framework, which is designed in a smart, systematic, objective, and visionary manner. Japan demonstrates how a country facing constitutional constraints can become a stable global power.

KEYWORDS

Global Power, Security Norms, Japan's ODA, Content Analysis, Human Security

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