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Doctoral Dissertation

論文題目:

Impartiality in Japan's International Development Community:

A Discourse Analysis of Development Aid Evaluations

(日本の国際開発における不偏性

～事業評価の談話分析を例に～)

氏名: マエムラ ユウ オリバー

Yu Maemura

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Abstract

By providing stakeholders in the international development community with opportunities to assess the performance of their initiatives, evaluations are a key component of the development aid process. The effectiveness and credibility of an evaluation hinges upon its impartiality, which can facilitate authentic improvements to the efficacy of aid and ensure that relevant stakeholders are held accountable for the results of development programs and projects. An important question is thus raised: what exactly does it mean to be impartial, and what constitutes behaviours or decisions that are a product of impartiality?

The objective of this research is to provide an in-depth analysis of these questions, by observing and analyzing institutional evaluation practices that are designed to reflect principles of impartiality. The institutional context that has been examined for this research is the evaluation of projects by stakeholders in Japan's international development community. Publicly-funded bilateral aid-agencies such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conduct evaluations to ensure that tax-payer funds are being used effectively and appropriately – a concern for accountability that makes the impartiality of evaluations all the more an important issue.

Major international development stakeholders such as the OECD's Development Assistance Committee argue that independence is a prerequisite for the impartiality of third-parties in the context of monitoring and evaluations. Although such policy-making bodies argue strongly for the need of independence in maintaining impartiality, current practices in Japan reveal that a surprisingly large proportion of development project evaluations are conducted internally as JICA-led initiatives – an

unexpected practice in terms of an accountability mechanism.

Arguments supporting the closed-impartiality of such internal evaluations have been compiled and analyzed to reveal how development professionals construct understandings of impartiality. Discourse analytic approaches have been applied within a grounded theory framework to code and analyze a wide range of qualitative data from multiple sources, such as: interview notes with development professionals in Japan; domestic and international evaluation policy documents and guidelines; JICA's project evaluation reports; as well as conversational interaction among interview subjects.

An exploration of project evaluations as a professional genre in the current situational context reveals a group-centered, consensus-based model of interdependence that clashes with existing conceptualizations of impartiality that are linked to independence. This model of interdependence can be used to explain the situated language-use of institutional actors that has been observed. The analytical observations that can be framed with the model of interdependence include: defining and discussing impartiality as a procedural construct; discussing evaluations as a group-oriented and consensus-based process; utterances that are perceived as adversarial amongst development professionals in natural interaction; and perhaps most notably, the hierarchical concept of evaluations as a cognitive linguistic category. The current analysis has found that the structure of "evaluations" as a cognitive linguistic category is conceptualized utilizing vertical schemas to place "evaluators" above "evaluatees" within a spatial hierarchy, suggesting that an evaluator's impartiality can be closely linked to her perceived authority within a spatial hierarchy, as opposed to her independence. Evidence of the noticeable hierarchical structures and the importance of interdependence within the development discourse are presented from user-level

language amongst Japanese subjects, as well as higher-level policy documents within Japan and from the international community.

Utilizing a combination of analytical discussions – from the perspectives of discourse analysis, pragmatics, and cognitive linguistics – the current research attempts to add contextual depth to existing scholarly discussions concerning the theoretical and philosophical concept of impartiality, as well as cross-cultural insights into the institutional practices of Japanese organizations that operate in the global arena. The discussion aims to generate a better understanding of the concept of impartiality itself, as well as the institutional practices that can construct social understandings of the concept. A better contextual understanding of impartial evaluations in Japan’s development community also holds the potential to strengthen the institutional learning and accountability mechanisms of the respective organizations involved in international development. This dissertation has used an analytical discussion grounded in the observations of the Japanese development community to argue that a markedly distinct social construct of impartiality has been observed within the institutional context of project evaluations in the Japanese development community.

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCD-DAC	Development Co-operation Directorate (Development Assistance Committee)
DFID	Department for International Development
FaSID	Foundation for Advanced Studies in International Development
IACDI	Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Action
PDM	Project Design Matrix

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WB-IEG	The World Bank Independent Evaluation Group

Chapter 1

Introduction

International Development Challenges: Conflicts, Decision-making, and Impartiality

Conflict resolution has become an important area of study as an ever expanding international community recognizes the urgent need for cooperative and collaborative action to tackle the global issues that challenge humanity. Development challenges such as poverty, climate change, universal healthcare and education, gender equality, sustainability, or others listed under global agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent some of the concerted efforts of the international community to address the challenges that extend beyond the scope and interests of the nation state.

Under the back-drop of global issues and agendas such as the MDGs, this research has aimed its lens towards the realm of international development and Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) practices. The Japanese government spent over 10 billion US dollars on

foreign aid in 2012 (OECD¹) in its efforts “to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan’s own security and prosperity” (Japan’s ODA Charter, 2013). With such enormous amounts of tax-payer money at stake, transparency and accountability obviously become an extremely important issue. As publicly funded institutions, bilateral agencies such as the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are ultimately accountable to the tax-payers of Japan.

In their attempts to exercise and enforce accountability, the primary institutions involved in Japanese ODA – namely JICA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) – allocate a portion of their resources to programme and project evaluations. These evaluations (details to follow in Chapter 4) provide a mechanism for the public to better understand and assess the performance of these publicly funded institutions. With foreign aid budgets tightening in many countries (including Japan), performance assessments and evaluations of this kind become all the more a key component of the international development process. However, the complex nature of global issues and a widening circle of stakeholders make positive performance and progress a difficult challenge.

Large and resourceful institutions in the international development community are required to perform on a global stage that is constantly evolving. International development aid projects – which bring together stakeholders from government, the private sector, non-governmental groups, civil-society, and local communities, among others – have produced countless lessons and analyses on the difficulties of international and inter-organizational cooperation. These lessons have shown how large-scale collaboration is no easy task, and any number of factors or conflicts can obstruct the efficient spending of ODA funds. Recipient nations may have drastically different development priorities in comparison with donor

¹Preliminary figures at: <http://www.oecd.org/development/stats/ODA2012.pdf>

mandates; local citizens may object to the priorities of their governments; communities may protest over involuntary resettlements that are required to make room for infrastructure projects; relevant stakeholders can disagree on the distribution and allocation of resources; targeted beneficiaries may be skeptical of development initiatives and oppose any changes to their existing way of life. It may in fact be much harder to identify and describe a development initiative that proceeded *without* any problems.

The difficulties associated with project design or implementation also thus burden the monitoring and evaluation of such initiatives. If disagreements existed before and during a project, they are likely to remain as stakeholders attempt to evaluate the end results. To ensure the quality and credibility of evaluation findings and results, evaluation procedures often require the active (or primary) participation of external third parties. External and independent third-party evaluators are considered or perceived as appropriate as a result of their ability to objectively evaluate project outcomes from a position of impartiality.

It is at this juncture that a keyword of this research comes to the surface: *impartiality*. A profound and important question is thus raised: what exactly does it mean to be impartial, and what constitutes behaviours or decisions that are a product of impartiality? This dissertation will attempt to contribute to an in-depth discussion of these questions, by applying these topics of inquiry to the international development community of Japan. The following dissertation hopes to explore how the concept of impartiality can be examined through observations of impartial behaviours in the Japanese development community.

1.1 Objectives

By observing institutional procedures that are specifically designed to be, and characterized as impartial, this research will attempt to provide an in-depth analysis on impartiality as a social construct. Through investigative research² and an examination of a situated context, this research attempts to observe philosophical concepts and ideas of impartiality as they are practiced in an institutional setting. In other words, this research will attempt to address the question: how do institutions within Japan's international development community understand and practice impartiality?

In order to observe and analyze how the Japanese development community understands and practices impartiality, the evaluation process of Japanese ODA (which often requires the input of third parties) has been examined. As mentioned earlier, in addition to the multitude of challenges and potential for conflict that international development initiatives face, publicly funded institutions such as JICA or those in the international development community are required to evaluate their activities and progress through transparent accountability mechanisms. These project and programme evaluations represent one of the main institutional processes that are characterized as “impartial” by the development community, as the content and quality of project and programme evaluations are legitimized through their impartiality. Thus, deconstructing evaluations becomes an analysis of how understandings of impartiality can be defined through standards and principles, and constructed through institutional processes.

The resulting discussion on evaluations aims to produce a better understanding of both the concept of impartiality itself, as well as the relationships between such concepts and the

² Details of the interviewing and analytical process by which this issue was identified will be discussed later on in Chapter 3.

institutional processes that construct them. However, an analysis of *how* a group may construct an understanding of a concept such as impartiality will first require a consideration of how the term itself can be defined. Defining impartiality, however, is a monumental task that requires a deep discussion on some of the most fundamental issues underlying social conflicts. A review of existing literature reveals that a consideration of impartiality as an institutionally constructed concept is intimately linked to the existing scholarly discussions on the concept, which also define impartiality as a context-sensitive construct.

At the root of social conflicts, there lies a fundamental disagreement as to what defines a good decision, or what is "*right*". In a struggle to resolve or manage social conflicts, parties will realize often that differences exist in what defines a "*good*" solution. Fundamental disagreements may exist about *what* to decide, *when* to decide it, *what* the consequences or goals should be, and underneath it all, what is "*good*"? These questions have produced an enormous amount of scholarly thought and literature in moral philosophy, and the concept of impartiality can be seen in many of its most influential works, from liberal neutral thought and contractarian theory (Rawls, 1971; Scanlon, 1982; Barry, 1995); to the political philosophy of some of the most recognized philosophers (e.g., Smith, 1759; Kant, 1785). Existing literature within decision-making and conflict resolution literature reveals how the concept of impartiality resides within an enormous realm of deliberation and debate. This area of deliberation requires us to partake in a debate that reaches far in to philosophical discussions of moral choice; a vast area of discussion that ultimately this dissertation will attempt to contribute towards.

The chapters to follow will first attempt to provide a sufficient discussion on the definition of impartiality as applied to institutional or social decision-making, and examine how these concepts are manifested in Japan's development community (via evaluations). The analysis of these manifestations (evaluations) uncovers what the author hopes to be substantial

findings and an enhanced understanding about a cultural model that shapes institutional practice in Japan. The order and framing of this discussion will be provided next.

1.2 Outline of the Paper

This dissertation will proceed as follows: Chapter 2 will cover some of the philosophical dimensions and discussions concerning the meaning and role of impartiality. This chapter reveals how philosophical considerations of moral choice and judgment are intimately tied into the use of third parties in conflict resolution theories and practice. In order to observe these philosophical and theoretical concepts in practice within the development community of Japan, development discourse was compiled, examined, and analyzed to generate a better cultural understanding of the concept of impartiality as a social construct.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological and analytical approach of this investigative approach, with a description and overview of (1) grounded theory, and (2) the discourse analytic approaches that were utilized. Descriptions of the primary and secondary sources of data are also provided. This chapter describes how the interviews and literature reveal a discourse that views evaluations as a major impartial mechanism within the development process.

Chapter 4 then begins the discussion on the role of impartiality in Japan's development community with an overview of Japanese Official Development Assistance and its evaluation procedures. A deeper look into the evaluation practices of Japanese ODA organizations reveals a questionable practice of internal evaluations: a large number of JICA's project evaluations are actually approved by an internal process, meaning a JICA employee authorizes the content of an evaluation of JICA projects.

Chapter 5 attempts to explain these internal procedures and the questionable lack of independence through a discourse analysis of evaluations in the development community (within the interviews, conversations, and policies of development professionals compiled from institutions such as the JICA, MOFA, private development consultancies, and the OECD). Discourse analytic techniques are used to propose a cultural model of interdependence, and further analysis presents evidence that supports the model. Critical interpretations of the findings are also proposed to consider the social implications of the institutional practices that are examined. The critical discussion leads into a discussion of some theoretical and practical implications of the analysis. The chapter ends with some considerations of the limitations of the current research, before Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation with a short summary and reiteration of some key points.

Chapter 2

What is Impartiality?

This chapter will go over a selection of the vast literature discussing the role of impartiality in decision-making (moral judgment) and conflict resolution. The Collins English Dictionary, for example, defines the adjective “impartial” as: “not prejudiced towards or against any particular side of party; fair; unbiased” (2009). The terms ‘prejudice’, ‘fair’, and ‘unbiased’ in themselves merit an immense discussion, and so this proves to become just another example of how unhelpful dictionary definitions are for research in the social sciences. As the current discussion on impartiality proceeds, however, some chapters and sections will attempt to address relevant and intertwined issues such as bias, objectivity, prejudice (stereotypes), and fairness.

An alternative way to help define impartiality is to examine some of the major domains in which the term is invoked. For example, humanitarian interventions often invoke the principle of impartiality to legitimize their causes. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) includes impartiality as one of their seven fundamental principles, claiming to make “no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class, or political opinions” (IFRC, 2014³). Humanitarian aid from the Red Cross is to be provided to

³ “The seven Fundamental Principles”: <http://www.ifrc.org/who-we-are/vision-and-mission/the-seven-fundamental-principles/>

“individuals, being guided solely by their needs” (ibid.). Similarly, UN peacekeeping missions also claim to obtain consent and cooperation from conflicting parties through a policy of “impartial[ity] in their dealings with the parties to the conflict” (UN⁴, 2014, section 2 para. 1), while making sure not to “condone actions by the parties that violate the undertakings of the peace process or the international norms and principles that a United Nations peacekeeping operation holds” (ibid., section 2 para 2). Journalists are also sensitive to the notion of impartiality as a principle that must be upheld in providing objective and valuable information to the public. The BBC, for example, lists impartiality as a “key priority” in their commitment and obligation to “deliver duly impartial news...and to treat controversial subjects with due impartiality” (BBC⁵). In the world of sports, a referee embodies the impartial actor, indifferent to the outcome of the match, and tasked simply to consistently enforce the rules of the game to ensure a fair match.

What the domains of humanitarian aid, peace-keeping, journalism, and even sports demonstrates about the concept of impartiality is how the activity (or decision-making domain) affects the definition of the term. The nature of a decision will have a significant influence on the manner in which it shall be decided. Obviously, certain types of problems will require specific types of solutions, and thus impartiality is also a context-sensitive concept. In other words, the characteristics of a decision or conflict will produce different definitions of “impartiality”. For example, if a grandmother were deciding on the distribution of portions of her inheritance to several grandchildren, one may not find it unfair if she were to distribute an equal amount of money to each grandchild. One might say that her decision to equally distribute her money to each child and not display favoritism was a reflection of her “impartiality”. If we

⁴ “Principles of UN peacekeeping”: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/principles.shtml>

⁵ “Impartiality”: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/editorial_standards/impartiality.html

were to consider the perspective of the grandmother's children, however, the calculations may become more complex. One may firmly believe that perhaps the daughter who took care of the grandmother in her old age may merit a larger portion than the daughter who failed to visit her for over a decade. If this were the case, one may argue that an "impartial" standard would ensure that the distributed amount of an inheritance would reflect appropriately the amount of effort, work, or care that an eligible recipient has provided for the mother.

Obviously, these context-sensitive complexities and conceptual ambiguities of impartiality will complicate decisions within domains larger than the scale of common family disputes. A discussion on the difficulty faced by Red Cross employees in implementing humanitarian aid states powerfully:

...in the same emergency, a Red Cross nurse can use the term [impartiality] to describe her medical programme and a UN commander can use the same word to describe air strikes" (Slim, 1997, p. 344).

Slim's discussion calls for the location of humanitarian values within a context of crises, war, and "organized inhumanity" (343), and highlights effectively the need for more refined interpretations of impartiality – precisely the types interpretations that this dissertation hopes to produce. The following two sections will cover some of the scholarly discussion that has placed the concept of impartiality within the fields of decision-making, moral-choice, and conflict resolution.

2.1 Impartiality in Decision-Making

To begin the review of the scholarly discussions on impartiality, the topic of impartiality will be discussed by considering impartial actors as a “disinterested” party; a party without partial or vested interest to a situation (or conflict). This places the discussion of impartiality within a context influenced by conflict resolution and negotiation literature: the notion of “conflicts of interest”. Certain definitions define an impartial party to a conflict as one with no vested interest in influencing the outcome or resolution of a conflict (in their favour or against any party involved). Individuals and groups struggle over the resolution of conflicts, which amounts to a decision that has to be made.

A very clear example of an impartial actor is a judge within a court of law, whose purpose and authority are defined with clear stipulations that define and require impartial behaviour. For example, in collaboration with the International Bar Association (IBA), The United Nation’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a Manual on Human Rights for Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers (2003) in which an entire chapter⁶ is devoted to consolidating “knowledge and understanding of the importance of an independent and impartial Judiciary” (113). The notion of institutional independence and its central role in protecting universal human rights is described through the ability for the Judiciary to function independently in terms of administrative, financial, and decision-making matters (UN-OHCHR, 2003). The independence and impartiality of the Judiciary and prosecutors is clearly stated as one of the “fundamental pillars of a democratic society respectful of the rule of law and...of human rights” (115). The ability for Judges, prosecutors and lawyers

⁶ The chapter is entitled: “Independence and Impartiality of Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers”

to practice independently and exercise impartiality is thus a prerequisite for effective decision-making and conflict resolution in the context of administrative justice and the rule of law. When attempting to understand the conflicts that are associated with decision-making in any context, one can first analyze the nature of the decision that is being made:

- How will the decision be made?
- Who is allowed to make the decision?
- When will this decision be made?
- What is the jurisdiction of this single decision?

Consider the example of the court-appointed judge that was described above. Judicial decisions represent an extremely efficient conflict resolution mechanism due to the fact that all of these decisions have already been made, and the decision-making procedures and powers are defined within the court-room and rule of law. If the questions listed above are conceptualized as components of a decision-making system, the roles of impartiality can be located throughout the stages of a system. For example, impartial views would play a part in facilitating a group through the deliberative process, or providing input and structure to a procedure. If a group cannot come to an agreement of what decision should be implemented, they may seek impartial advice or standards to arbitrate or mediate a decision. Finally, if a decision has prescriptive or normative implications, an impartial mechanism must be put in place to enforce its consistent implementation. As we can see, the ability to conjure and apply the concept of “impartiality” is reflective of the complex nature of decisions-making procedures themselves. The meanings and actions that “impartiality” entails, depends not only on the characteristics of a decision that are being made, but also on the fundamental type of decision being made within a context of social

choice.

For example, Deutsch adds a level of abstraction to standards of decision-making by proposing that conflict resolution practices are simply a product of fairness standards that shift according to common goals (1975). Deutsch's hypotheses propose that different goals within cooperative relations produce a different set of dominant principles for distributive justice. His propositions state that: (1) if economic productivity is the primary goal (of a group), the distribution of conditions or goods that affect well-being will be allocated using the principle of equity, rather than equality or need; (2) if maintaining or enhancing interactional or social goals is the primary goal, equality will be the dominant principle of distributive justice; and (3) if fostering personal development of welfare is the primary goal, well-being will be distributed based on the principle of need (ibid., p. 143). If Deutsch's hypotheses are applied to generate different forms of impartiality that can be applied to decision procedures, a group that recognizes these proposals as correct could apply them to a notion of "impartiality" in several ways. A group could argue, for example, that: (1) equity, equality, or needs-based criteria are the best standards to follow, from an "impartial" standpoint; (2) using theoretical research that models the intuitive fairness of these different standards of fairness, the best mix of standards that a group can adhere to have been "impartially" identified; or that (3) a group can now design a social contract that impartially enforces these rules of distribution consistently to the respective goals of the group. In order to locate the application of "impartiality" that this research is concerned with, some fundamental issues of the decision-making process must therefore be covered.

The fundamental issue that lies underneath all of the concerns for *how* people can go about making decisions is a simple yet profound question: What is the right decision? And more specifically (and some would say more importantly), what does "right" mean, when we say

“what is the *right* decision”? Once this level of abstraction is reached, one comes to appreciate the scholarly works of philosophers discussing social justice (which may in fact have made little sense before this). The sub-sections to follow will attempt to go over some of the major contributions of moral judgment that have touched on the topic of impartiality.

Most of these philosophical works attempt to take on the task of deriving universal principles that will enable individuals, groups, and societies to make the right decisions. This topic, of course, is by no means any area of scholarly consensus. The argumentative and contentious nature of the views and concepts that exist within the scholarly literature are ironically analogous to the social conflicts that they were originally conceived to resolve. Upon recognizing the existence of conflicts and the need to resolve them, humanity will of course disagree on how to resolve them. It is tragically poetic to consider that perhaps the callous, wretched, and violent histories of human civilization are all made up of disagreements over how to make the world a better place.

2.1.1 Making good decisions: the philosophy of impartiality

Extraordinary minds have deliberated at length on the morality of decisions made by individuals, communities, societies, and nation states. The current work does not intend to produce any immense philosophical contributions that will require a re-examination of the nature of moral judgment, nor does it aim to produce fundamental changes or contributions to principles of justice. This dissertation only hopes to become part of the discussion provided by the scholarly work of such great philosophers – some of whom will be reviewed and discussed in the following sections – by observing their concerns and constructs in a specific and situated social context. A study on situational and cultural representations of impartiality merits a review of the scholarly debate exploring the issues of moral decision-making. In other words, what

does it mean to make “good”, “the right”, or “better” decisions? Not surprisingly, the topic of impartiality can be found in the work of some of the most influential political philosophers.

Impartiality should not be conflated with morality, in that a decision made impartially necessarily leads to moral decisions. From a consequentialist perspective, a morally righteous decision can come from a partial or biased individual, just as a morally questionable decision can be enforced impartially. One would not chastise the morality of a mother’s partial and biased decision to prioritize her children. Conversely, many governments and judicial systems seem to be impartially/consistently apathetic to preventing the actions of various global financial institutions⁷ that prioritize maximizing profit over any other aspect of what might constitute the foundations of a morally healthy society.

Existing literature on decision-making often looks at the substantial and procedural nature of the decisions to be made. In other words, is the resulting outcome of a decision desirable, or is the procedure by which a decision is made designed to ensure a fair outcome? The former reflects a consequentialist perspective and a normative frame of mind, which justifies decisions based on the end results of a decision. The latter reflects a liberal neutral paradigm that perhaps accepts the self-interested nature of humanity, and attempts to control and guide decision processes towards desirable outcomes. Even if a group manages to agree upon a standard of fairness to enforce or practice, the group will still need to create decision-making processes or social contracts that reflect these goals. This area of decision-making is in all likelihood where even more disagreements and conflicts will arise.

Adam Smith’s mention of an “impartial spectator” in his theory of moral sentiments is a powerful example of the role of impartiality in moral choice. The *Theory of Moral Sentiments*

⁷ E.g., predatory loans, laundering money for drug cartels and international terrorists, short-selling their own client portfolios, rigging interest rates, to name just a few such decisions.

(1759) defines the “impartial spectator”:

...as a product and expression of society, but becomes, once internalized, a source of moral evaluation that enables the individual to stand apart from, and criticize, his or her society. Individually free action and the social construction of the self are compatible, for Smith, even dependent on one another (Fleischacker, 2013, Section 3 para 2).

Smith’s philosophy allows individuals and societies to follow moral norms, while an imagined impartial spectator is to bestow “moral approval on those feelings” (Fleischacker, 2013, Section 2 para 2). Roderick Firth further explored this idea with his development of the ideal observer (1952). Building off of Smith’s theory of sentiments, Firth’s ideal observer (1952) embodies an actor capable of objective and impartial judgment due to her dispassionate and emotional detachment to sentiments and self-interests. His conditions clearly state that: “This suggests that one of the defining characteristics of an ideal observer must be complete impartiality” (Firth, 1952, p. 355). Firth does, however, go on to deliberate at length on the difficulties of defining impartiality so as not to create an “inconsistent” or “circular” analysis (ibid.). This area of deliberation has led many to adopt a “partialist” (as opposed to “impartialist”) perspective (cf. Friedman, 1989, 1991), in which it is believed that no actor – apart from an all-knowing god-like entity – has the ability to act or think in a purely, or completely impartial manner (Jollimore, 2011; Shaman, 1995)

Another example of an impartiality mechanism can be found in an interpretation of Kant’s profound operationalization of the Golden Rule through his single categorical imperative: “act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should

become a universal law.” ([1785] 1964, p. 88) The principle of universalization, which states that all moral principles must be universalizable, requires one to consider all relevant knowledge about all other relevant parties before exercising judgment. Such a hypothetical thought exercise symbolizes the ideal conditions of complete information and comprehension; conditions for an impartial judgment.

As the examples of Smith’s impartial spectator, or Kant’s principle of universalization indicate, questions of moral judgment have produced theoretical thought exercises to allow individuals to walk through the consequences of their decisions on a larger set of individuals. Contractarian theory consists of several such thought exercises and hypothetical decision-making mechanisms that are proposed to help groups formulate a fair social contract. Rawl’s veil of ignorance is perhaps the most famous example of this kind. With the proper implementation of Rawlsian procedures, unanimous consent concerning a set of basic principles is a sign that no partial interests have been favored by the conclusions (Rawls, 1971). The contractual model provides a mechanism to allow decision-makers to ignore their own self information and take an impartial stance.

Impartiality constructs like the veil of ignorance are designed to forcefully produce conceptual distance between the decision-maker and the decision-making domain, which is used to create (or enforce) an objective perspective and encourage consideration of a larger social environment. The mechanisms attempt to prevent bias and prejudice from becoming a factor of decision-making. As Friedman states, an “unbiased standpoint is widely regarded as the privileged standpoint for critically reflecting on normative matters” (1989, p.645). Thus we find that discussions on impartiality are often focused around how to control or mitigate factors that may have adverse effects on decisions, rather than as a desirable characteristic of a decision in itself:

...impartiality is probably best characterized in a negative rather than positive manner: an impartial choice is simply one in which a certain sort of consideration (i.e. some property of the individuals being chosen between) has no influence (Jollimore, 2011, Section 1 para 3).

Brian Barry's seminal work entitled *Justice as Impartiality* (1995) is perhaps the most representative example of impartiality taking a central role in justice theory and consequentialism. Barry's discussion elaborates on the role of impartiality in making moral decisions, and how impartiality embedded in morality can help societies achieve fairness (1995). Barry states that the effect of consequentialist impartiality "is, in effect, to extend to the whole of conduct the requirements of impartiality that on the common-sense view are restricted to judges and bureaucrats acting in their official capacities" (Barry 1995, p. 23). Barry endorses justifying impartiality on the basis of skepticism toward claims of certainty and consequentialist arguments of conceptions of the good (ibid.). His discussion on impartiality proposes a rigorous re-evaluation of common-sense morality, in which one could *reject* certain conceptions of the good over others from a position of liberal skepticism. Skepticism not directed towards the values or beliefs that define certain conceptions of the good, but skepticism towards any arguments of certainty in defining their truth values (Barry, in Jollimore, 2011). In making this distinction Barry specifies two types of impartiality to match the first and second orders of moral choice. First-order choices include relatively simple choices that people make every day such as what to eat for breakfast, or where to park the car. First-order impartiality applies to these ordinary individual choices, and proposes "a requirement of impartial behavior incorporated into a precept...[meaning that one is] not being motivated by private considerations (Barry, 1995 p.11). Second-order impartiality applies to evaluating and selecting

the rules, principles, and institutions which govern first-order behaviour (Jollimore, 2011). Barry's theory of justice as impartiality attempts to achieve second-order impartiality, and to derive "principles and rules that are capable of forming the basis of free agreement among people seeking agreement on reasonable terms" (Barry, 1995, p. 11). As seen in his definition of second-order impartiality as agreement based on "reasonable terms", the standard of skepticism applied to his theory of justice is influenced by Scanlon's contractual approach of *reasonable rejection* (1982). The major principle of reasonable rejection is to prevent any system to impose itself on individuals a policy that any member of the system could reasonably reject (Scanlon, 1982):

...an act is wrong if its performance under the circumstances would be disallowed by any system of rules for the general regulation of behavior which no one could reasonably reject as a basis for informed, unforced general agreement. (Scanlon, 1982, cited in Jollimore, 2011: Section 4.3 para 6)

Proponents of the need for "general agreement" and reasonable rejection can observe their principles reflected in many high-level national or organizational policies. The goals of such general policy and/or position papers are not necessarily to outline the specific strategies and actions to be taken by an institution. They are instead often used to outline which actions are prohibited by its policies or principles. Significant excerpts of such documents may be identified by language that promises *not* to act upon principles or values that any group to which it is accountable may reasonably reject. For example, if we were to consider how the relevance of development projects is defined through policy language, the principles of reasonable rejection can be observed in Japan's foreign policy:

ODA Charter - II. Principle of ODA Implementation

(2) Any use of ODA for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts should be avoided. (Japan's ODA Charter, 2012 [revised in 2003])

Military action and participation in international conflicts represent behaviours that are rejected by ODA policies (that reflect national interests), and “should be avoided.” However, even the prohibitive language in this example of ODA policy is hedged, using the word “should”, rather than phrases such as “must be avoided” or “will be avoided”. Such absolute terms are not used to ensure that exceptions can be made for exceptional circumstances. The language of Japan's ODA Charter provides interpretational freedom so as not to restrict the ability to design and act on evolving trends in development potential and political landscapes.

As we see with Barry's inclusion of “impartiality” directly into a major theory of justice, literature on impartiality can be more specific to conceptualizing and formally defining impartiality to fit theories of justice. For example, while much of the literature mentioned above focuses on the characteristics of an impartial decision, or decision process, Gert models a definition of impartiality as linked directly to the individual agent charged with making the decision:

A is impartial in respect R with regard to group G if and only if A's actions in respect R are not influenced at all by which member(s) of G benefit or are harmed by these actions” (Gert 1995, p.104).

In this manner, Gert views impartiality from an agency perspective, defining it as a property of a set of decisions made by an agent directed towards a group. Further conditions include specifying the group to which *A* is impartial, and the respect in which *A* is impartial to that group. The benefit or harm refers to effects not relevant to *R*.

Alternatively, in his discussion of assessing impartial morality, Nagel (1987) defines three levels of assessment: 1) Are moral rules being impartially applied? 2) Are practical decisions guided by impartial benevolence? And 3) are first-order moral rules being assessed from an impartial standpoint? His paper discusses the difficulties of truly integrating impartiality into a liberal framework. One of the arguments made is that the rejection of personal motives within impartiality requirements actually symbolizes the acceptance of a particular notion of the good (Nagel, 1987).

Amartya Sen has also made contributions to the debate on the role of impartiality in moral judgment. His discussion on what he calls “closed” and “open” impartiality defines two separate judgment mechanisms as related to a group’s decision to exercise impartiality (2002). Open impartiality refers to the procedure of making impartial judgments invoking judgments *inter alia* from outside the focal group, whereas closed impartiality refers to the procedure of making impartial judgments invoking only the members of the focal group itself (Sen, 2002). He argues that closed impartiality is not a sufficiently just process, as its parochial nature provides “no procedural barricade here against susceptibility to local prejudices” (*ibid.*, p. 458). Furthermore, Barry (1995) has discussed how doubts visible from outside a focal group do not necessarily infect the internal point of view (if one dominant view were to exist), thus weakening these beliefs’ internal authority. This argument highlights the following issue: whether or not judgments are made impartially, or consequentialist decisions are based on

impartial standards, these judgments can still be rejected or ignored by those concerned⁸.

2.1.2 *Culture and justice*

The philosophical contributions of impartiality to moral decision-making help lead us into the topic of procedural justice. Much of contractarian theory and impartiality concepts fit within this framework; well designed and inclusive procedures help produce fair and just solutions for all parties involved. For example, Thibaut and Walker's (1978) influential study revealed that procedural justice helped determine peoples' satisfaction with decision outcomes, finding that the perception that procedural justice had been exercised was more significant in eliciting satisfaction with decision outcomes than their actual substance⁹. An interpretive study by Morris and Leung's (2000; see also Morris, et al., 1999), building on the influential cultural variables developed by Hofstede et al. (1990), proposes that cultural differences affect the behaviour of the self and others, as actions are evaluated against criteria of fairness. Their research discusses how behaviour can reflect "abstract principles or criteria of fairness...[and] belief structures relied on in the construal of behavior" (Morris and Leung, 2000, p. 106).

The values and beliefs being discussed are moderated by specific social contexts, which are in turn influenced by cultural variables. In their study, interactional goals were used to select distributive criteria, which were reflected in the allocation behaviour observed among subjects. Their work builds on a notion that "allocators will attempt to follow an allocation criterion based on an interactional goal cued by the situation" (Morris and Leung, 2000, p. 109). These findings, like Deutsch's work (1975), inform a discussion on the relationship between the

⁸ This issue becomes relevant when considering the limitations of this research.

⁹ Their study goes on to argue that subjects believed that procedural justice would lead to equitable outcomes, suggesting that equity was the defining principle of justice.

allocation criterion and the nature of a task. The nature of the relationship, however, is not emphasized; the studies reveal that cultural variables will lead to different goals that influence criterion of decision-making, without considering *why* certain goals result in the selection of specific criteria.

Similar to Morris and Leung, a study by Sugawara and Huo (1994) builds on the foundational work of Thibaut and Walker by testing the model of procedural justice against Hofstede's (1980) individualist and collectivist variables. Their study attempts to observe differences in procedural justice concerns between individualists and collectivists with strong assumptions such as the universal collectivist tendencies of Japanese individuals; and egocentric perspectives applied to an individualist's ability to calculate payoffs. Such studies often predict and fuel stereotypic notions that collectivists (Japanese subjects) will be more concerned with maintaining harmony, and will enact non-fairness issues in an attempt to maintain this harmony. The results of Sugawara and Huo's study find that no such mechanism is at work, which suggests issues with the assumptions and model of their study. Theoretical implications of the findings of this research will be outlined in Chapter 5.5, where the discussion will attempt to discuss how and why Sugawara and Huo's predictive model was fundamentally flawed. An in-depth qualitative examination of impartiality will be used to redefine and reconceptualize key concepts and categories of justice, in order to better observe and understand cultural variations in justice and decision-making.

What the early mentions of impartiality in theories of justice, and the more specifically operationalized and modeled concepts of impartiality illustrate, is how the concept of impartiality itself has evolved alongside this scholarly debate of moral judgment and social choice. As we see with cross-cultural differences in the perception and implementation of fair procedures, an institutional, international, or cross-cultural context thus requires us to make

considerations of the latent conflicts that can originate from differences in social norms, values, and practices.

Another area in which the evolving concept of impartiality has become a central concept, is in the area of conflict resolution. This can be observed in the growing literature on alternative dispute resolution practices and third-party conflict resolution, which will be reviewed next.

2.2 Impartiality in Conflict Resolution: Third Parties

Long-standing social conflicts are a result of negative cycles of damaging communication and unproductive social interaction. Fundamental and underlying issues will manifest themselves in multiple positions and circumstances within a complex social conflict. If groups are heavily invested in their understanding of a conflict situation (or reality, for that matter), they will find it very difficult to alter their perceptions. Conceding to a single argument may lead to the invalidation of several supporting or parallel arguments, or even the unraveling of an entire belief system. This speaks to the enormous challenge of conflict management and resolution practices; as conflicts become more complex, an impartial third party may essentially need to question and explore peoples' understanding of reality.

Figure 1 (from Maemura, 2013) below depicts the progression of a typical conflict. To summarize, conflicts of interest arise when stakeholders hold different preferences. Stakeholders will hold their own perceptions and understandings of why the self and other hold such preferences. However, the negative conditions of a conflict influence the heuristics used to

interpret the gaps in understandings, often creating stereotypes that are used to help understand the conflict.

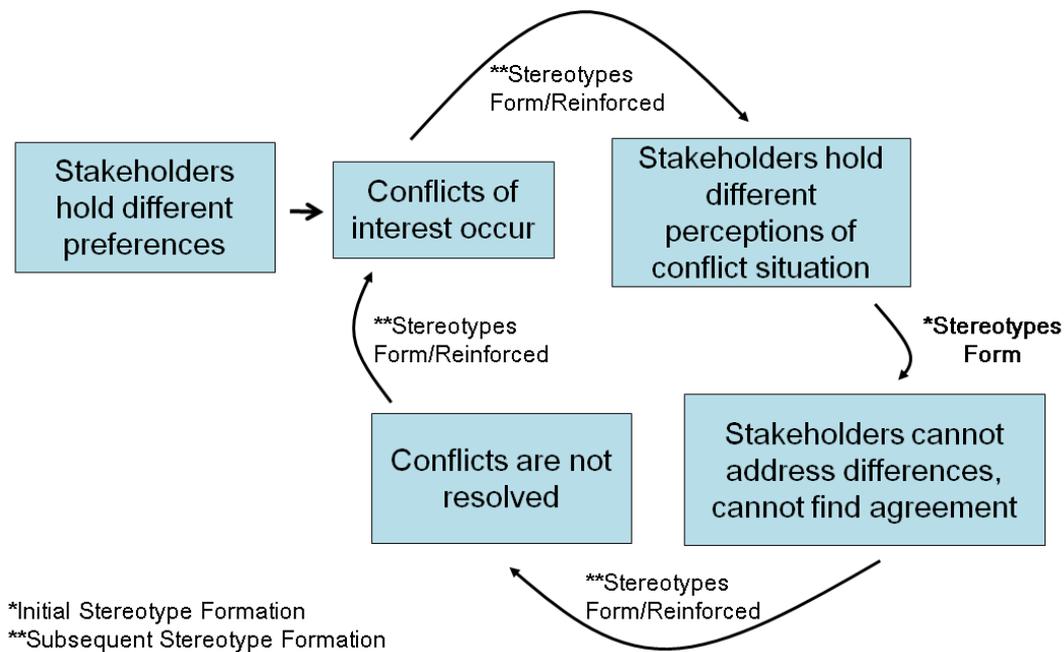


Figure 1: Stereotype formation and negative conflict spiral

At this point it is important to make a conceptual distinction between perceptions and stereotypes. An intuitive way of conceptualizing the relationship between perceptions and stereotypes is to consider perceptions as the superordinate concept. When discussing changing stereotypes, one is automatically discussing changes in perceptions (but not vice versa). In any given social context, within a crucible of differing perceptions among individuals and groups, specific perceptions may or may not be formed, contributing to “stored beliefs about characteristics of a group of people” (Bar-Tal, 1997, p. 491).

It is in this manner that social interaction can produce fundamental differences in the perceptions of a conflict, which in hand will often contribute to reinforcing and prolonging the existence of a conflict situation. The absolute nature of stereotypical statements and heuristics

often contributes to the intractability of positional conflicts. Issues cannot be resolved, preferences remain the same, and gaps in understandings persist; the system loops back into itself, and the vicious cycle continues. As the antagonistic relationships in a conflict continue through the cycle, additional stereotypes are formed, while the consequences and experiences generated from unresolved conflicts further reinforce the existing stereotypes. Jussim et al. (1996) have explored the role of perceptions and stereotypes toward such self-fulfilling prophecies, describing how “perceivers may interpret, remember, and/or explain targets’ behaviour in ways consistent with their expectations. This type of expectancy confirmation exists in the mind of the perceiver rather than in the behavior of the target” (286). This “expectancy” displayed by the perceiver has been defined by Robinson and colleagues as “naïve realism”:

[An] individual’s unshakable conviction that he or she is somehow privy to an invariant, knowable, objective reality – a reality that others will also perceive faithfully, provided that they are reasonable and rational, a reality that others are apt to misperceive only to the extent that they (in contrast to oneself) view the world through a prism of self-interest, ideological bias, or personal perversity (Robinson et al., 1995, para. 7).

2.2.1 Third parties – why do we need them?

If a group continuously fails to come to an agreement, and conflict is prolonged, the intervention of third-parties is one of the most effective and powerful methods of breaking out of the negative conflict cycle illustrated in Figure 1. Indeed, third parties embody the impartial party to a conflict. Third-party intervention and alternative dispute resolution are

well-established fields of practice and research¹⁰ (Pruitt and Carnevale, 1993). Existing literature on conflict management tends to take the rational-irrational paradigm in defining social conflicts (Brunsson, 1982; Schelling, 1980; Howard et al., 1993). Third parties are considered an important part of conflict resolution procedures as they are ideally disjoint from the irrational tendencies of entrenched parties.

As a result, third-parties are often defined within the literature for their *neutral* and/or *impartial* stance in a social conflict. Another clarification that must be made is concerned with the difference between neutrality and impartiality. Many use the terms interchangeably, and see both terms as representing the same concept. Admittedly, scholars can easily use both terms as they are related concepts. For example, neutrality conditions are formulated by scholars such as Piper, who calls for “generality”, in which there is a complete absence of proper names and definite descriptions so that no individual can be particularly identified (cited in Friedman, 1989). Friedman’s review of scholars who discuss impartiality explains how scholars like Piper operationalize the concept as “universality plus neutrality”, suggesting that neutrality is a component of impartiality. Approaches such as this reflect attempts at understanding impartiality through an analysis of its propositions, reasons, preferences, and understandings, as opposed to defining specific methods of impartial thought or action (p. 653). The propositions or reasons “must apply to all persons falling within the relevant domain; and...reasons must lack essential reference to particular or specifiable persons” (ibid., p. 654). In this case, neutral

¹⁰ A secondary study by the author explored the role of third party facilitators in producing perceptual and stereotype change in a conflict, to contribute to literature supporting the important role of third parties in contributing to solving intractable conflicts through facilitated dialogue (Maemura, 2013).

behaviour is seen as a means of enforcing impartiality, and must be defined and conceptualized as distinct and separate concepts.

However, neutrality has lost much of its following through lessons learned in the field, as it has been observed that “the neutral man refuses to make judgment, whereas the one who is impartial judges a situation in accordance with pre-established rules” (Pictet, 1979, p. 34). The limitations of neutrality in the context of conflict resolution and ADR have been argued extensively (Mayer, 2004; Field, 2000; Goetschel, 1999; Gibson et al., 1996; Rifkin et al., 1991; Forester and Stitzel, 1989), while the concept of impartiality is much less controversial in terms of its central role for conflict resolution practitioners. At a somewhat more abstract level, however, there remains a vigorous debate surrounding the role of impartiality in (moral) decision-making, as mentioned in the previous section (Barry, 1995; Touchie, 2001; Gert 1995; Jollimore, 2011). One of the goals of this research is to link the concepts located within the philosophical discussions of impartiality, with the descriptive analyses of practical examples of organizational conflict.

2.2.2 Culture and conflict resolution

There also exists a substantial amount of modelling and descriptive work focusing on the procedural role of mediators and arbitrators in various contexts (Lewicki et al., 1992; Poitras, 2009). Similar to the cultural perspective of justice theories, cultural explanations for conflict resolution theories and practices often test the behaviour of subjects against Hofstedian variables (1980). For example, Rahim and Bonoma’s dual concern model (1979) is an influential model of conflict management that provides a framework for testing conflict behaviour. The dual concern model takes two dimensions – concern for the self and concern for

others – and conceptually maps five styles of conflict management across the dimensions. The five resulting styles of conflict management are the integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating, and avoiding styles. With these conflict styles defined, hypotheses and predictions can be made as to how these styles relate to dimensions of individualism-collectivism (Hofstede et al., 1990); conceptualizations of the self and other (Triandis, 1989; Triandis and Gelfand, 1998), or the perception of emotions (Matsumoto, 1989). Work in these areas are able to observe how certain groups and situations would produce trends in interpersonal conflict management styles (Rahim et al., 2002; Oetzel and Ting-Toomey, 2003; Oetzel et al., 2001), or communication styles (Gudykunst et al., 1996). For example, Oetzel and Ting-Toomey find that cultural variables display direct and indirect effects on conflict styles and face¹¹ management strategies (2003). Those with a sense of interdependency tended to prioritize other face needs, and resulted in a tendency to use avoiding and integrative styles of conflict management (Oetzel and Ting-Toomey, 2003).

However, this area of research tends to focus less on exploring the reasoning behind cultural and contextual variations between these procedures. As opposed to the predictive models of these existing studies, the current research focuses on providing grounded explanations to grasp the reasons behind differences in face management, interactional styles, and self construals amongst Japanese development professionals. By exploring the perceptions of third-party impartiality within organizations of the Japanese development community (i.e., aid agency workers and development consultants working in developing regions, among others), this study attempts to generate theories that will also contribute to a deeper cultural understanding of organizational decision-making processes. Qualitative analyses will be used to contribute to an understanding of how impartiality is perceived within the current ideology,

¹¹ The concept of “face” and its significance will be defined and outlined later in chapter 3.2.3.2

language, rituals, and symbols that legitimize such institutional processes (Hofstede et al., 1990; Pettigrew, 1979).

The findings of the current research should provide valuable insight and practical implications to mediators, arbitrators, and managers who may find themselves in the position of having to act as a legitimate third-party within a culture that has been described as a culture of conflict resolution emphasizing the avoidance approach (Ohbuchi and Takahashi, 1994; Pruitt and Rubin, 1986) and compromise (Gelfand et al., 2001).

2.3 Linking Culture and Impartiality

Before concluding this chapter, a clarification of the scholarly discussion that the current research hopes to contribute towards is in order. The first section of this chapter reviewed a selection of philosophical literature that espouses principles or mechanisms of impartiality and its role in moral judgment. As the literature discussed has shown, impartial standards that apply to decision-making are context-sensitive, and groups will appeal to different standards of fairness depending on the decision to be made. In this manner, impartial standards are often linked with justice concepts within a discussion on the importance of procedural justice. The review also mentions existing work that tests cultural models to explain the impact of context to notions of fairness and justice. One way in which the context-sensitive nature of these decision-making situations can be understood, is to examine them against cultural dimensions. Studies thus also look at the cultural variations in how justice and decision-making are conceptualized and practiced. The second section of this chapter outlined how these notions of impartiality are also a central concept in the conflict resolution practices of

Alternative Dispute Resolution and third-party interventions. Again, the cultural variations and their relationships with conflict management practices were also covered.

Thus, we see that there exists a substantial amount of literature specifically discussing the strong links between (1) Impartiality & Justice, and Culture & Justice; as well as (2) Impartiality & Conflict Resolution, and Culture & Conflict Resolution. However, there appears to be relatively less focus on how cultural models in society and institutions may specifically affect impartiality constructs. The current research therefore argues that one of its unique research contributions stems from this discussion on how a specific cultural context can construct notions of impartiality. Cultural models that shape institutional practices will be examined through an in-depth qualitative analysis of institutional practices of Japan's international development community. All primary sources (to be explained in detail later in Chapter 3.3) have been compiled to represent the situated context of Japanese development practices. The institutional practices that have been examined (i.e., project evaluations) represent the procedural mechanisms that are characterized and designed to embody impartial practices within this context.

In order to produce a stronger link between specific impartial standards and cultural models, attempts will be made to link and apply the philosophical concepts of impartiality directly to the descriptive analyses of practical and contextual examples of impartial mechanisms in Japan. The resulting analysis will produce a situated discussion on impartiality as a socially constructed concept in the Japanese development community. As impartiality itself is a context-sensitive concept, it is natural to look more closely at specific contexts (cultures) to observe and test the explanatory power of cultural models that explain impartial behaviour.

The next chapter will outline the methodological and analytical framework that has structured the observations of specific impartiality standards and proposed cultural models to better understand the institutional practices of Japan's development community.

Chapter 3

Methodological and Analytical Framework

Grounded Theory and Discourse Analysis

This dissertation has employed a Grounded Theory approach and utilized Discourse Analytic techniques. These approaches and techniques, and how they were applied in this research initiative will now be explained. The first section will explain and describe how Grounded Theory has been employed, and the second section will then provide an explanation of the discourse analytic approaches that were utilized to produce more specific analyses within the grounded theory framework. This chapter will end with a section that summarizes the primary and secondary sources of data that were compiled and analyzed.

3.1 Methodological Framework:

The Grounded Theory Approach

In order to produce a systematic discussion of the concept of impartiality as a social construct, this dissertation has employed a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory¹² (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is an influential method of social research that was developed in response to Grand Theory and extreme positivism in the academic community.

The grounded theory process can be simplified and summarized as follows: 1) begin by compiling data, 2) code and categorize the data to build a theory, 3) use theoretical sampling to test your interpretations and strengthen your theory, and 4) repeat these steps and constantly compare your analysis with the data. The overall process of the ethnographic observations that have been collected, compiled, and analyzed for this research will now be described in this order.

3.1.1 *Data compilation*

The first step of grounded theory is simply to *compile and gather* as much qualitative information as possible or feasible. At the beginning of this research initiative, the initial problem statement that was formed was: “what is the role of impartiality in Japan’s development community?”

With this central theme in place, development professionals were approached and limited access was gained to respective organizations through snowball sampling. The range of

¹² The purpose of grounded theory is to try and uncover persuasive explanations for social behaviour, as opposed to the empirical verification of theories and hypotheses.

this analysis is thus strictly limited to the degree of access that was attained. Stories, experiences, and observations were compiled to try and identify patterns of issues or themes that characterized impartiality mechanisms among Japanese development professionals.

3.1.2 *Data analysis*

With theoretical roots in symbolic interactionism (cf. Mead, 1913 and Blumer, 1969), grounded theorists are tasked to reveal truth(s) through:

...both the act of observation and the emerging consensus within a community of observers as they make sense of what they have observed. In this pragmatic approach to social science research, empirical “reality” is seen as the ongoing interpretation of meaning produced by individuals (Suddaby, 2006, p.633)

The grounded theory approach also provides a framework for the systematic interpretation of meaning as it is being produced by individuals in society. As data is collected, *analysis* is conducted in 4 stages:

1. Codes : Identify key points in the data
2. Concepts : Groups and collections of codes
3. Categories : Groups of concepts used to generate theory
4. Theory : Explanations of the research subject

As codes and concepts begin to reveal patterns, the incidents can be categorized, their properties identified, and models can be constructed. After several preliminary interviews, it became clear

that evaluations (a central code) were perceived to be the prominent institutional practice that was associated with impartiality. The research evolved into an exploration of impartiality mechanisms of development institutions (JICA and major Japanese development consultancies) via their evaluation practices. Conflicting perceptions about the difficulty of evaluations (which was one of the key concepts) were gathered from the perspective of government bureaucrats, JICA officials, private development consultants, NGO representatives, and academic scholars. The semi-structured interviews that followed evolved to cover more specific elements of the evaluation process – a process known as *theoretical sampling*.

3.1.3 *Theoretical sampling*

As data is collected and analyzed, researchers will realize the need to compile more specific and focused data. *Theoretical sampling* requires the researcher to make decisions about which data should be collected next, dependent upon the theory that is being constructed. For the current research, a literature review and investigation of the evaluation practices of MOFA, JICA, and the OECD became necessary. The categories and working theories that were generated acted as a filter to comb through existing data. The analytical process itself acted as a guideline for gathering more observations from subjects, and the discussion to follow in Chapters 4 and 5 are essentially a summary and description of the categories that were identified through this process. Where most observational empiricists may understand the scientific method to be the repeated and controlled observations of phenomena to test/fit a theory, the grounded theory approach epitomizes the counter-approach in making attempts to understand social phenomena: produce an informative and convincing theory that helps explain complex social mechanisms observed out in the world. As issues and themes become apparent, the researcher can look for existing literature that covers the patterns that are identified through

analysis.

As the evaluation procedures of JICA and MOFA became a central category, subsequent interviews with development professionals were focused on their understanding of, or their experiences of evaluation practices.

3.1.4 *Constant comparative*

In this manner, the grounded theorist will need to constantly analyze and reanalyze the data in order to grasp an understanding of the subjects. Known as the method of *constant comparative*, data collection and analysis are a simultaneous process. Theories that were being generated were constantly compared with the data that was being collected. Follow-up interviews were organized and subjects were asked to name or introduce any professional colleagues that would be more knowledgeable on specific subjects.

Unfortunately, a process of constant comparisons delivers a significant challenge for researchers who wish to produce a chronologically ordered narrative for presenting the progress of qualitative research. The constant comparative method allows one to frequently go back and forth between data sets. This also allows the researcher to reanalyze issues with a modified filter using newly identified constructs and categories. In addition, the current analysis is based on various forms of qualitative data: one-on-one interviews, group interviews, a facilitated dialogue, as well as institutional policy documents and literature. Various methods and data provide unique opportunities and perspectives from which to observe and analyze different phenomena. For example, one-on-one interviews represent opportunities to unearth perceptions that may not or cannot surface in the presence of other stakeholders, while a dialogue provides the opportunity to reveal the situated meanings and cultural models that shape natural interaction between stakeholders. In this manner, the key concepts and categories that are to be discussed

Chapter 4 emerge from a data-base that combines all of these sources and perspectives. However, focused discussions based on the findings specific to the nature of the data, and appropriate analytical approaches will also be utilized.

Although empirical work is structured in a manner that first presents a theory and hypothesis which is then tested against controlled observation, many experienced researchers will admit that the final hypothesis presented in such a study is often the product of several failed attempts at interpreting and predicting the outcome of unobserved occurrences¹³. This can unfortunately lead to researchers “picking and choosing” their data in order to fit a pre-existing theory. Grounded theory is designed specifically to avoid such insincere attempts at producing knowledge, by generating theories only after (or during) the data collection. The process itself is designed to provide validity to the theory that emerges.

3.1.5 Emergence of theory

The end result of the recursive procedure of data compilation and analysis is to generate a sufficiently persuasive theory. This approach is well-suited to generate deeper cultural understandings of organizational decision-making processes. Whereas much scientific research is based upon systematically building on the foundation of knowledge created by the academic community, Grounded Theory offers an alternate route in forming an understanding of how to interpret and understand social phenomena. Rather than risk the possibility of existing literature framing and structuring a researcher’s observations, it is imperative that existing theories and explanations do not impede the data collection process.

¹³ Many researchers may argue that the constant comparative method is actually what is done in practice by researchers in most cases, and that grounded theory simply formally defines the concept as part of its glossary of terms.

The qualitative analysis to follow has been used in an attempt to contribute to an understanding of how impartiality is perceived within the current ideology, language, rituals, and symbols that legitimize the institutional process of project evaluations (Hofstede et al., 1990; Pettigrew, 1979).

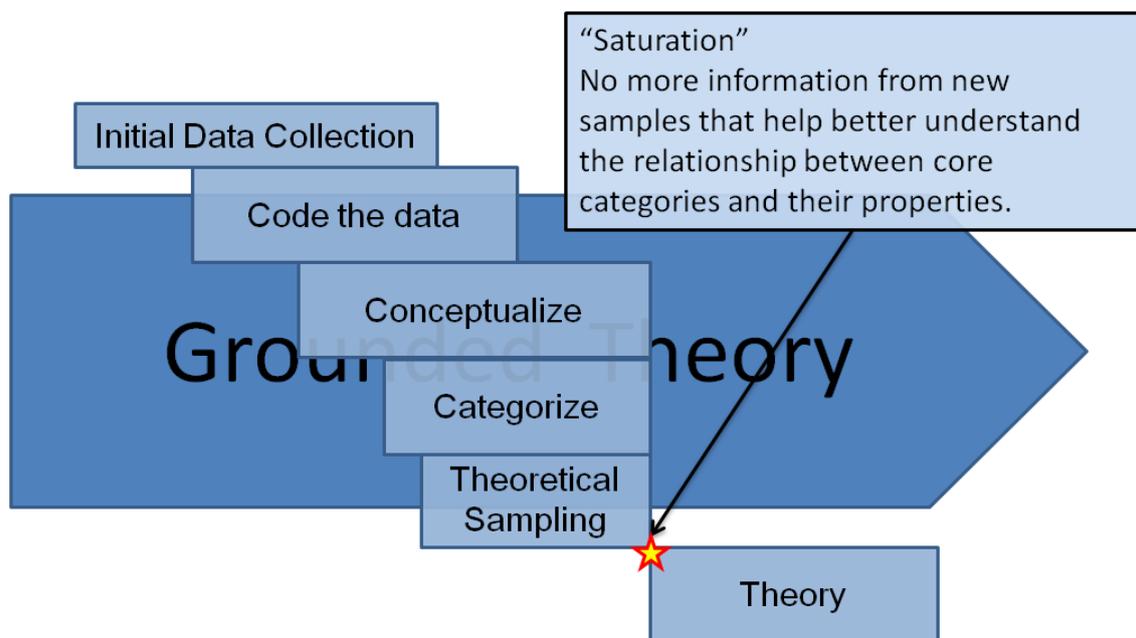


Figure 2: The grounded theory process

While the grounded theory approach characterizes the fundamental stance and rationale behind the research that was conducted, specific analytical methods and concepts that have been utilized fall within the realm of discourse analysis and linguistics. While Grounded theory characterizes the procedure of what this dissertation aims to produce, a description of the substantive contents of the analysis is still required. Grounded theorists must make relentless trips back and forth between gathering information in the field and interpreting its significance at the desk. The next section will outline the tools and frameworks that were used at the desk while struggling to make informative interpretations of the data.

3.2 Analytical Framework: Discourse Analysis

In order to observe and analyze institutional practices and behavior, this research has compiled and analyzed a broad range of qualitative data. These include interviews with development professionals, major policy documents, as well as existing literature on relevant themes and issues. Thus, it could be said that at an observable level, all of the primary and secondary sources were mostly a collection of words. The fields of discourse analysis and linguistics therefore provided a wealth of tools that could be used to produce systematic analyses of the data that was being compiled through the grounded theory process. Discourse analysis complements the grounded theory approach by providing a multitude of tools and frameworks for interpreting and analyzing qualitative data. With a meta-theoretical emphasis on constructionism, discourse analysts recognize “the constructed and contingent nature of the researchers’ own versions of the world” (Potter, 2011, p.188). Several authors have produced informative literature on understanding qualitative methodologies and the concept of discourse (Potter, 2011; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000;).

3.2.1 *Criteria of a valid discourse analysis*

The discourse analysis that is being presented here represents one of many attempts at describing the relationships between language use, social practice, and institutional structure. Or, in other words:

How people say (or write) things helps constitute *what* they are doing; in turn, *what* they are saying (or writing) helps constitute *who* they are being at a given time and

place...and, finally, *who* they are being at a given time and place...produces and reproduces, moment by moment, our social, political, cultural, and institutional worlds (Gee, 2004, p. 48).

Using this summary by Gee (2004) above as a general framework, the current dissertation attempts to produce a comprehensive discussion on the “institutional world” of the Japanese development community. The relationships between professional practices (the *how* and *what* is being said and written) of development professionals (the *who*) will be discussed and linked together using various analytical tools (to be outlined later on). Under this framework of Discourse Analysis, the current research aims to produce a valid interpretive and descriptive analysis as outlined by Gee (1999). Gee’s four major criteria of a valid discourse analysis are:

1. Convergence

“How language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of the situation network as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language” (ibid., p. 92). Using various forms of inquiry, a discourse analysis attempts to reveal how language builds meaning. However, as an analysis of discourse becomes both wider and deeper, convincing explanations will be compatible with, and *converge* around central themes and theories that emerge from the analysis.

2. Agreement

The analyses of a discourse are more convincing and valid if native speakers and subjects of

the domain agree with the explanations, and a persuasive argument has been presented.

3. Coverage

The analysis is more valid if it applies to more data. Contexts may be specific, but situations can fit within a broader picture. A valid analysis should also be able to predict similar observations in related situations.

4. Linguistic details.

Detailed and specific examples of linguistic structures will provide structural evidence for the analysis and theories being proposed. Social languages and communicative functions must be linked to lexico-grammatical and/or paralinguistic devices. (Gee, 1999, p. 94-96)

As this dissertation attempts to summarize and structure the discussion of a complex social construct in its relation to institutional practices within Japan's development community, these four elements of validity prove to be useful for providing a guide-map for the dense discussion that is to follow. Arguments will converge around a cultural model that emerges from a qualitative analysis that examines a multi-sourced and multi-structured data set. The analysis attempts to provide persuasive arguments for understanding international development practices with coverage that spreads further than just the micro-conversations of a few individuals, one institution's policy documents, or a single genre of text. Observations are also made at the pragmatic, semantic, and cognitive levels, to deconstruct and analyze linguistic details that reveal links between the language and proposed cultural models.

In terms of the criterion of agreement, this research in many ways will leave it to the readers (both native English and Japanese language users) to interpret, process, and agree with

the explanations that will be provided. It is my hope that a sufficient amount of data and observation has been provided to support the analysis and persuade native speakers. However, methods of data collection and analysis have been strategically selected and employed to strengthen: (1) the convergence of the explanations provided to the theoretical and analytical discussion; (2) the coverage of situations and scope with a comprehensive and complex data set; and (3) the detailed linguistic analysis that explain the language and discourse that is observed.

Language is perhaps the most common observable element that signifies knowledge and/or action that humans take within a society¹⁴. Collections, patterns, or significant examples of language can be used to form social practices (Bhatia, 2002) that allow (groups of) people to perform specific tasks or realize certain goals. Attempts by groups of people to organize and coordinate these practices are what give rise to institutions. Studies that aim to systematically analyze, describe, interpret, understand, or link each or any of these phenomena (in any combination) and their effects, constitutes a discourse analytic study.

Thus, a discourse analytic study could entail, for example, linking specific utterances, texts, or language use (e.g., the lyrics of contemporary popular music) to social practices (e.g., shopping and commercial activities), or the links between these practices (e.g., financial transactions) with the institutions they produce or sustain (e.g., corporations and profit-making entities). Discourse Analysis could of course also entail revealing the links between existing institutions (e.g., corporations) and the patterns of language use that are observed (e.g., the

¹⁴Although people, institutions, and societies use more than just language to communicate meaning. Influential scholars have provided deep intellectual thought into the fields of semiotics (e.g., Barthes, 1964; Eco, 1976), as well as attempts to incorporate multiple modalities through discourse analysis (Scollon, 2001; Iedema, 2003).

number of corporate advertisements or product placements within the lyrics of pop songs). The links between the utterances, practices, and institutions helps form our understanding of the meaning of “*meaningful*”. An example of language (or construct that can be described with language) that can be traced across these levels is what constitutes a “meaningful” piece of language. Some word, concept, or value that can work its way up from an individual’s utterance, through social practices and group tasks, up to an organized institutional effort would be an example of a “meaningful” piece of language, and thus an example of discourse. The significance of such utterances are situated within their specific contexts, displaying social significance and saliency as a result of the context in which they are used. For example, certain artists will only be recognized in certain markets. The brands, image, and characteristics that can be conjured by North-American musicians in North America may not signify or reflect the same trends in Japan (just as many Japanese musicians may not be *meaningful* at all in the North American market). The significance of increases in references to Western products would be situated within the North-American English pop scene. As we can see, relatively simple (and hypothetical) examples of the possible relationships between language, meaning, practice, institutions, societies, and the implications of such discussions, forms a portion of what can be referred to as a discourse analytic study.

3.2.2 *Three-dimensional framework of discourse*

An analytical model developed by Bhatia also provides a useful framework for describing the levels of analysis that will be presented in this research. Bhatia (2002) proposes an overlapping model of discourse analysis incorporating three perspectives (see Figure 3) which resembles other influential 3-dimensional frameworks (Fairclough, 2012). This model will be used to frame the investigation and analysis of the discursal construction of impartiality

within the Japanese development aid community. Bhatia's model proposes that discourse is largely composed of three elements: discourse as text, discourse as genre, and discourse as social practice (2002).

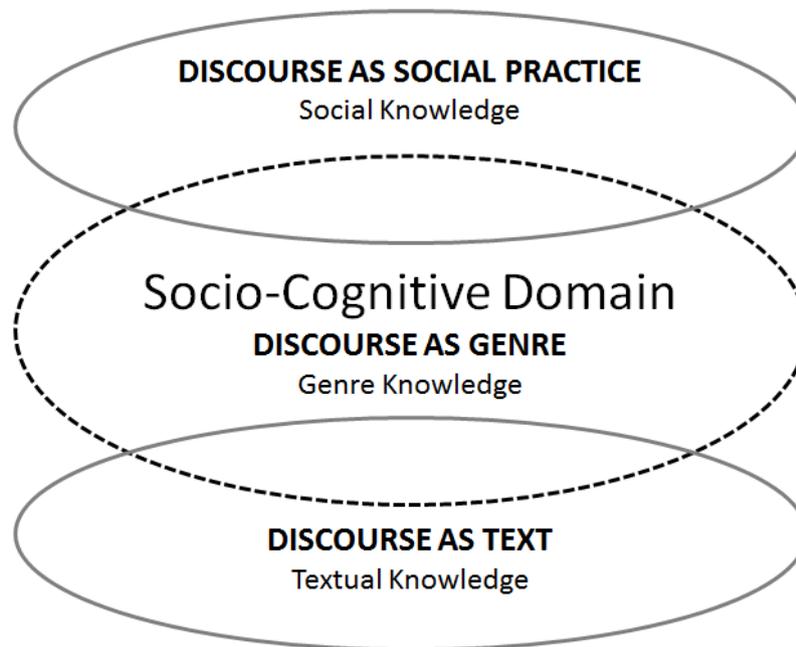


Figure 3: Multiperspective genre analytical framework (Reproduced from Bhatia, 2002)

The model thus provides three strategies for researchers to observe and analyze discourse. At one level, surface-level properties of discourse, i.e., patterns of textual, grammatical, and user-level language use create professional genres among a community of language users. Properties of text and language make up the observable evidence that discourse analysts can categorize to discuss and argue for the importance of context. These will be represented by individual utterances and interview testimony of subjects gathered in the field. At the second level, genres are made up of regular patterns of surface-level language. This level is represented by the language of evaluation policy and practice that can be observed amongst

development professionals as they interact with one another, as well as similar patterns and consistent contexts that are observed within higher-level policy language. This level incorporates a broader context and reflects the socio-cognitive construction of group knowledge. These groups, or discourse communities, use professional practice (in this case, development professionals are members of the discourse community who use evaluation practices) to make up the institutions that function through, and are reinforced by the practices that rely on social knowledge. This social knowledge forms the third level of discourse (e.g., participant identities, social structures, professional relationships, social space). This model was proposed by Bhatia specifically for his work on genre analysis (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990), a framework that has been adopted by this research and will be explained in more detail later on.

This three-level framework also displays a comfortable fit with Gee's criteria of validity (1999) mentioned above. The interpretive explanations of discourse across these three-levels all converge around our attempts to generate a deeper understanding of (the meaning of) impartial practices within the Japanese development aid community. Exploring these levels using different types of data and discourse allows for wider coverage of the case, while significant emphasis has been placed on linking the institutional and social analysis of the research to the linguistic details that lie within the user-level language that has been compiled and analyzed (so that ultimately, the readers may agree with this effort to generate a persuasive theory).

At every level of discourse, additional discourse analytic and linguistic methodologies have been employed to systematically explore and expand the analysis to the language-user (discourse as text), and institutional (discourse as social practice) levels. These specific methodologies will be described in the sections to follow. Diverse attempts to systematically or methodologically link these three perspectives are essentially what give rise to much of

variations in discourse analytic and linguistic research that exists today. These include, among others, approaches such as conversation analysis, ethnographic discourse analysis, corpus analytics, discursive psychology, multimodal discourse analysis, genre analysis, narrative analysis, critical discourse analysis, and mediated discourse analysis (see Gee and Handford, 2012; Bhatia et al. 2007; or Jaworski and Coupland, 1999 for reviews).

The various approaches associated with Discourse Analysis do not only differ in the methodological approaches that concentrate around specific types of data. The different approaches also illustrate differences in *where* the perceived significance of the analysis can be placed. In other words, whether the analytical implications of discourse analytic data lie within the data and language itself, or within the wider, institutional or social contexts in which they operate. Whereas some genre analytic approaches place emphasis on the structural characteristics and particular features of functional language (Halliday, 1993, 2005; Swales, 1990), others would claim that the patterns and characteristics that are formed over repeated use are not as important as the institutional and social discourses that shape them (Bazerman, 1991, 2012).

3.2.3 *Analytical approaches*

The current research employs multiple methods of data collection and analysis that are inspired by several established discourse analytic approaches. In order to explore the case of development aid evaluations in Japan, an interdisciplinary approach has been utilized to examine multiple perspectives and levels of analysis. By reviewing existing literature on discourse analytic approaches, this section will describe the methods that were used, the literature to which this research will contribute to, and the level and scope of analysis that has been generated.

Although each of the approaches that were used possess comprehensive frameworks for defining and guiding academic research, this dissertation will utilize a more flexible approach that feeds off of several discourse analytic methods, and discuss how these multiple methods help define the significance of the research. The methods that have been employed are as follows:

Genre analysis (Bhatia, 2002; Swales, 1990, 2004) has been employed to examine the evaluation practices and policies of development institutions as a form of professional discourse. Pragmatic analyses (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1975; Brown and Levinson, 1987) of interviewee testimony and conversational interaction will allow us to build a deeper understanding of *genre knowledge* and the institutional practices they form. Language that reflects knowledge and practices within the socio-cognitive domain (Bhatia, 2002) will be examined with cognitive-linguistic concepts (Langacker, 1986; Croft, 1993; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Cognitive linguistics will allow the analysis to systematically reveal how specific utterances represent a markedly different situational context that is observed amongst Japanese development professionals. The normative implications of interpreting the institutional relationships, and descriptions of the political nature and power dynamics of the case from a larger, social perspective, aspire to reflect the spirit of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 2004).

These individual components will now be covered individually in more detail. The following sub-sections will provide a general review of the each discourse analytic approach and define the scope and level of analysis that this research aims to target. This will frame the analytical discussions that will follow in Chapter 4 4 and 5, which aim to produce sufficient support for the descriptions of the *social knowledge* of institutional actors, and how the social construction of knowledge can be observed in their discourse (Berger and Luckmann, 1966;

Hacking, 2000; Bazerman, 1991). These additional frameworks developed by influential discourse analysts have been utilized to frame this study's attempt to strengthen the convergence, coverage, and linguistic details of the findings.

3.2.3.1 Genre Analysis

Discourse analytic work in the field of genre analysis provides an appropriate framework for structuring the characteristics of the data that was gathered for this dissertation, as well as the analytical scope of the interpretations and discussions that emerge from the data. Systematic analysis of professional written discourse (Bhatia 2012a, 2012b, 2004, 2002, 1993) and similarly structured written texts (Bakhtin, 1986; Bazerman 1997, 2012) situate regular attempts at communicating between institutional actors within a social domain. This regular language use is what makes up the *genres* that exist in Japan's development community.

What is genre?

Several definitions of "genre" exist within the literature, representing attempts to create succinct summaries of the enormous breadth and depth of material which the term places within its purview. For example:

Genre thus essentially refers to language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to the specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discoursal resources. (Bhatia, 2012b, p.241)

The word “essentially” in the definition above is necessary because many definitions of genre are in fact summaries of lengthy discussions of the various forms, purposes, and characteristics of genre¹⁵. Genres are made up of “sequences of interrelated communicative actions” (Yates and Orlikowski, 2002, p. 14); highly structured and conventionalized constructs that constrict linguistic contributions of language users for social or institutional purposes (Swales, 1990). The staged, goal-oriented texts that are a result of social processes (Rose, 2012) will conform to appropriate genres and form “recognizable templates” (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004) that take place within conventionalized communicative settings. The institutionalized document templates that have been examined in this research and their purposes will be introduced in the next chapter, which describes the communicative setting of this study: the role of (impartial) evaluations within the development aid process at large.

Professional genres are exploited in order to give expression to the specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution. For example, academic journal articles are an example of a type of genre. Journal articles are produced through conventionalized procedures and settings (academic conferences and peer-reviewed editing), and are a means of achieving various goals for researchers, scholars, and institutions such as universities or independent research institutions. A discussion of these goals will often prove to be multifaceted¹⁶. Institutions or academic communities may state that the goal of academic papers is to communicate progress and innovations among researchers. Individual researchers may be incentivized to produce journal articles to enhance their prestige and authority, or as part

¹⁵ See Swales, 1990, p. 45-57 for a comprehensive definition of genre.

¹⁶ While early work by Swales (1990) argued that a single, primary, and overarching goal was the appropriate frame for analyzing and understanding the significance of genres, his later work (2004) acknowledges that multiple goals however, do shape the language and resulting genres of discourse communities.

of an incentive scheme that is accepted or normalized by their community (i.e., funds, promotions, or tenure may be linked to the number of publications one holds). The group or institution one focuses on, and the goals that motivate and produce genres will depend completely on where the researcher decides to aim her lens of inquiry. Institutions that use genre will vary as widely as the groups that exist in civilization, while genre analytic work has attempted to identify defining characteristics of these genres across discourse communities.

Characteristics of Genre

The materials that can be encompassed within the term “genre” are not made up of static or independently definable elements. The objective of genre analysis was not to focus solely on the effects of discourse and the formal features of language, but to consider the sources of their effects and the origin of their purposes (Devitt, 1993). In order to establish itself within a discourse community, a genre must be capable of “a dynamic response to a construction of recurring situation, one that changes historically and in different social groups, that adapts and grows as the social context changes” (ibid., p. 580). Discourses that establish themselves in this manner among discourse communities comprise the material that genre analysts examine as their subjects.

Researchers can identify genres by examining the practices and discourse (Fairclough, 1989) of specific discourse communities (Swales, 1990), which is the strategy that was used at the beginning of this research initiative. Researchers cannot analyze an established genre or discourse, if they are not even aware of its existence. The genre of evaluations was identified, and genre analysis was incorporated into this study through an investigative exploration of subjects in the development community, as interviews and conversations about impartiality in international development inevitably led to discussions of the monitoring and evaluation process.

In this manner, exclusive communities will need to be approached to gain access¹⁷ to opportunities or environments in which one can recognize the existence of significant (or subject-worthy) genres. Drawing links between professional genres and the communities that use them requires access to, and understanding of, specialized or privileged information.

Swales (1988) outlined the following assumptions about discourse communities in attempts to link professional discourse and discourse communities: (1) genres are the properties of discourse communities; (2) discourse communities are composed of those who share functional rules that determine the appropriacy of utterances, and (3) individuals may belong to several discourse communities, and would vary in the number of communities they belonged to and the number of genres they could command (Swales, 1988). If we are to deconstruct the second assumption just mentioned, a system of “functional rules” implies a system of power and control.

Genres are characterized by their exclusive use, in that only members of the community can utilize or exploit the advantages that a genre has to offer. However, in a discourse community’s quest for change and progress, genres will also continue to respond dynamically. Therefore, genres possess contradictory features of an emphasis on conventions and a propensity for innovation (Bhatia, 2002). Conventions and restrictions on appropriate language use and practice situates rhetoric and institutionalizes textual activity, giving genres their own generic integrity. However, in order to survive and evolve, discourse communities will also have a specialist community that creates new forms in order to respond to novel rhetorical contexts or convey private intentions within their context (ibid.).

¹⁷ I would like to emphasize the significance of the trust that was required to gain access to some of the privileged information and honest perspectives that were shared amongst development professionals – a struggle that I believe ethnographers often do not highlight enough. As one of the informants described it: “Your research really borders on the line of on-the-record and off-the-record”.

The current research will attempt to attain the three criteria of what Swales (1988) called the “integrationists” approach, by analyzing: (1) shared linguistic forms, [i.e., specialized evaluation terminology and methods] (2) shared regulative rules [established evaluation practices and policies], and (3) shared cultural concepts [how development professionals understand evaluations within the industry and through their work] within a discourse community. Bhatia has called for “the contextualization of discourse” and the need to “study the context in all its multiple forms” (Bhatia, 2012, p. 245-246) through a multiperspective and multidimensional approach to genre analysis. This dissertation aims to incorporate the analysis of multiple forms of context by adding pragmatic analyses of spoken testimony and conversational interaction, providing depth to the contextual knowledge that situates the genre of evaluation practice and policy.

3.2.3.2 Pragmatics (Implicature and Politeness)

Studies on pragmatics and conversational implicature provide multiple tools that allow for the exploration of context and meaning between institutional actors. Foundational scholars that influence the analytical approach of this study include John L. Austin and Paul Grice. Grice’s development of philosophical modes of conversational implicature were accompanied by influential developments in pragmatics, notably through Searle’s refinement and expansion of Austin’s theory of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts (1975, 1976)¹⁸. These concepts are particularly useful in deconstructing the conversational interaction between institutional actors, interviewee testimony, and institutional policy discourse. Let us first outline each speech act as defined by Austin (1962):

¹⁸ Although, using “conventional” logical transitivity, it can also be understood that both Grice and Searle were fueled by Austin’s categorization of performative utterances (1962).

- *Locutionary acts*: “The act of ‘saying something’ in [the] normal sense”, which includes “the utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a certain construction...the full units of speech” (ibid., p. 94).
- *Illocutionary acts*: The function of the utterance which considers “in what way precisely are we using [locutionary acts]? The “performance of an act in saying something as opposed to performance of an act of saying something” (p. 100); or the function that is intended by the speaker who produces the utterance.
- *Perlocutionary acts*: Utterances “include what in a way are consequences, as when we say ‘By doing *x* I was doing *y*’, and “what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something” (p. 108); or the function that is interpreted by the receiver of the utterance.

Or, in summation:

We can similarly distinguish the locutionary act ‘he said that...’ from the illocutionary act ‘he argued that...’ and the perlocutionary act ‘he convinced me that...’ (Austin 1962, p. 102)

The locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary dimensions of speech acts help separate the contextual and lexico-grammatical information that is packed within single utterances, while also revealing in a remarkably parsimonious manner the complexity of communication that takes place between interlocutors. Austin’s speech acts are some of the earliest attempts at explicitly modelling the dimensions of surface-level properties and user-level (both speaker and hearer) meaning. These levels of interpretation can easily be applied to institutional practices, by considering a certain action or practice as a (speech) act. The major institutional practice that

was identified as an “impartial mechanism” by informants of this research project was the act of evaluating projects (this will be elaborated on in Chapter 4). In-depth explorations of the surface-level definitions and policies associated with development evaluations (“doing evaluations”) do not prevent the various understandings and interpretations of what these actions mean (“evaluations *should* be done”) and for what reason (“evaluations should be done *because*”). A revelation of the complex illocutionary and perlocutionary dimensions of the actions and practices associated with (impartial) evaluations aims to be one of the significant contributions of this dissertation to the study of pragmatics.

Grice’s maxims of conversational implicature (1975) are the first attempts at providing a philosophical and axiomatic framework to analyze the difference between what is said, and what is meant (Grandy and Warner, 2013). His famous paper outlining the Cooperative Principle begins with the recognition of separate rules governing the interpretation of formal or conventional logical devices when used in real conversations. In any interaction between two or more people, interlocutors must use contextual information to decipher language that would otherwise be undecipherable with only conventional or literal definitions at hand. For a conversation to continue making sense, a level of cooperation between interlocutors is required. Thus, in any conversation, participants must observe the Cooperative Principle: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice, 1975: p. 45).

The Cooperative Principle consists of four categories (and sub-categories) of maxims that further operationalize the components of meaning. These are the maxims of:

1. Quantity

- i. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- ii. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality

- i. Try to make your contribution one that is true.
 - a) Do not say what you believe to be false.
 - b) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relation

- i. Be relevant

4. Manner

- i. Be perspicuous
 - a) Avoid obscurity of expression.
 - b) Avoid ambiguity.
 - c) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
 - d) Be orderly....and others.

These maxims represent the analytical tools that helped guide the coding and interpretation of qualitative data gathered from subjects. Differences in individual understandings or perceptions of the maxim of Quality (“make your contribution as informative as is required”) are observable differences between members of a discourse community (Swales,

1990). Even within a group of individuals sharing the same language, interlocutors from different groups, fields, industries, communities, or institutional cultures possess different understandings of what is deemed “required information”. In many interviews, clarification was required of interviewees to describe, explain, and elaborate on conversational assumptions that were beyond the comprehension of the interviewer (i.e., the author) as both an English speaker (literal English translations of Japanese testimony could not explain the meaning or significance of specific utterances), and as a non-member of the respective institutions of the interviewees (certain assumptions that were unknown to the author and those less-learned of the development industry’s practices, terms, rules, norms, or goals).

Grice’s model of conversational implicature is very useful for systematically explaining the contextual elements of generically exclusive or specialized discourses. The otherwise indecipherable elements of a conversation or spoken testimony of an institutional actor precisely represent violations of conversational maxims from the perspective of out-group members.

The existence of institutional genres and specialized and exclusive discourses can be operationalized or qualified through the revelation of contrasting perceptions of decipherable maxim violations. These areas of assumed understanding also represent areas that researchers will wish to explore and deconstruct, to reveal the underlying assumptions and motivations that drive and sustain institutional practices. Examples of assumptions that can lie behind contextual information in text include the use of definite articles, nominalizations, connectives, clause formation, and expressive adjectives (Van Dijk, 2003).

Group dynamics and the need for politeness were also found to be a significant element guiding the practices of Japanese development professionals. This reflected a need to consider utterances and speech acts as a product of social processes. Brown and Levinson’s

politeness theory further operationalizes the functions of conversational utterances within a social dynamic, and allows us to link the concepts of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts with their conversational implicatures. Conversational interaction was controlled by considerations of the group, politeness, and face maintenance. The relevance of these concepts will become more apparent in the analytical discussion of chapters 5.3-5.4. For the purposes of a review, we will first provide definitions of some key terms of politeness theory.

Brown and Levinson's influential Theory of Politeness (1987) models social interaction as taking place among Model Persons that possess the need to protect or enhance individual self-esteem, or *face*. Face is defined as:

The public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of two related aspects:

- (1) *Negative face*: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction
- (2) *Positive face*: the positive consistent self-image or "personality" (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants)

(Brown and Levinson, 1987)

Negative face produces a social desire among individuals that their "actions are not impeded by others", while their positive face functions to have individuals feel "that their qualities/ characteristics are desirable to others" (Spencer-Oatey et al. 2012, p. 577). Studies on politeness aim to reveal how face wants and needs motivate strategies of politeness that can be observed

among interlocutors.

In short, a large body of work (e.g., Coulmas, 1985; Hayashi, 1996; Takano, 2005, among others) reveals how formal expressions are relatively more indirect or ambiguous in grammatical form and structure than informal statements. According to Levinson, formal forms must be interpreted through their conventional implicature (1987), and implicature makes an utterance polite by its indirectness.

“When formal forms are used, they create a formal atmosphere where participants are kept away from each other, avoiding imposition. Non-imposition is the essence of polite behaviour. Thus, to create a formal atmosphere by the use of formal forms is to be polite” (Levinson, cited in Ide, 1989, p. 227).

However, the universality of politeness theory is significantly challenged by our expanding knowledge of situational contexts. While formal forms may closely *relate* to politeness in many (perhaps most) social settings, *equating* the use of formal forms with politeness cannot account for much social interaction. Strategic and functional communication reveals how formal forms could be used to be impolite (where informal forms are the norm), or politeness can be maintained without the use of formal forms (responding to informal greetings to signify intimacy or solidarity). Theories and models such as politeness theory do not only provide a framework for understanding a wide range of social behaviour, but are arguably more valuable in setting the stage for researchers to identify exceptions to the rule through further exploration. The incorporation of such anomalies in turn allows us to develop deeper and refined understandings of complex social phenomena.

Detailed discussions on the contextual information surrounding interaction between

Japanese development professionals will be used to explain the significance of interactional goals among speakers. These interactional goals and relational considerations have been observed to affect the utterances and processing of contextual information. Pragmatic approaches are thus appropriate to frame the discussion on context, but cognitive linguistics, semantics, and discourse analysis displays better fit for analyzing the user-level language that has been observed among institutional actors.

3.2.3.3 Cognitive Linguistics

Pragmatic perspectives highlight the importance of context and situate social practices within institutional settings. However, cognitive-linguistic (semantic) implications of discourse and knowledge structures among subjects in Japan's development community can demonstrate how patterns of institutional structure and practice can be seen reflected directly in the fundamental structures of language itself. This has been done to add a level of analysis to this discussion and systematically explore the level of "discourse as text", while illustrating the relationships of these texts with the "socio-cognitive domain" (i.e., the area of overlap between *discourse as text* and *discourse as genre*) of Bhatia's framework outlined above (Figure 3). Observations made at the semantic level, with cognitive-linguistic concepts, will demonstrate how the Japanese subjects display language use and knowledge structures that are markedly different from an English-speaking context.

The claim of using cognitive linguistic concepts to explore semantic elements of language is indeed a broad statement to make. The size and scale of research that falls under the umbrella of "cognitive linguistics" is admittedly intimidating. Evans et al. produced a useful and informative review and summary of the field and tried to define the term as follows:

Cognitive linguistics is best described as a ‘movement’ or an ‘enterprise’, precisely because it does not constitute a single closely-articulated theory. Instead, it is an approach that has adopted a common set of core commitments and guiding principles, which have led to a diverse range of complementary, overlapping (and sometimes competing) theories (Evans et al., 2007, p.3)

The paper will now provide some definitions of analytical and theoretical concepts within the dynamic “enterprise” of cognitive linguistics, to which this research intends to contribute towards. Work in cognitive linguistics attempts to unearth the fundamental structures and forms that are found in languages, and the current research falls into the category of cognitive semantics, where knowledge representation and the construction of meaning are explored. As Croft called cognitive semantics “the study of common sense human experience” (1993, p.163), this research will attempt to deconstruct and explicitly label some of the interesting differences in “common sense” that have been found in a distinct cultural context. The language to be analyzed “refers to concepts in the mind of the speaker rather than, directly, to entities which inhere in an objectively real external world” (Evans et al., 2007). The analysis to follow does not delve into the modelling of language systems, but intends to link existing theoretical concepts with the pragmatic and critical analysis of observed discourse in a real community.

We shall first review some of the fundamental principles and components that make up the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics. Two principles which moderate the categorization of terms and concepts: (1) cognitive economy, in which subjects or ‘knowers’ desire to maximize the information about their environment while conserving cognitive capacity; and (2) perceived world structure, in which objects of the world are perceived to

possess high correlational structure, moderated by “the functional needs of the knower interacting with the physical and social environment” (Rosch, 1999, p. 191).

Semantic knowledge is made up of *concepts*, which are the basic units or elements of a script. The order and structure of these concepts are what is commonly referred to as “categories”, “prototypes”. Semantic descriptions of a term such as evaluations are “an integrated conception of arbitrary complexity and possibly encyclopedic scope...[and] that certain conceptions presuppose others for their characterization” (Langacker, 1986, p.4). For example, the notion of a [DISSERTATION COMMITTEE] will require language users to hold some knowledge of the system of [HIGHER EDUCATION] and/or [GRADUATE SCHOOL]. [DISSERTATION COMMITTEES] will thus fall within the cognitive domain of relevant higher-order concepts such as [GRADUATE SCHOOL], [PHD RESEARCH], or [DOCTORAL DEGREES].

The structure of background information that defines contexts in which categories can be used and understood, are referred to as *domains*. Similar to the notion of a socio-cognitive domain as mentioned in the description of genre analysis, cognitive linguists use the term “domain” to denote abstract cognitive “spaces” in which knowledge operates, and contexts take form. Cognitive domains have been defined as a “semantic structure that functions as the base for at least one concept profile” (Croft, 1993, p.166); “where a domain can be any sort of conceptualization: a perceptual experience, a concept, a conceptual complex, an elaborate knowledge system, and so forth” (Langacker, 1986, p.4). Langacker (2001) defines the *current discourse space* as “the mental space comprising those elements and relations construed as being shared by the speaker and hearer as a basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse” (144), and “includes a body of knowledge presumed to be shared and reasonably accessible” (145).

Cognitive mechanisms that enable language users to interpret and perceive the information are known as *construals* or *conceptualizations*. A major characteristic of construals observed in language users all over the world is the use of *schemas* (or schematization, cf. Talmy, 1983). The human conceptual system is structured around a set of basic spatial relations and physical ontological concepts and basic experiences or actions (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Work in developmental and social psychology examine the role of schemas in interpreting and processing information (Bem, 1983); and studies on language acquisition reveal how children acquire schemas and apply them to understand the world at very early developmental stages (Bybee and Slobin, 1982; Gibbs and Colston, 1995). Discursive psychologists have coined the term “interpretative repertoires” (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), to propose that clusters of terms organize around a central metaphor, and are often used with particular grammatical regularities. Examples of schematized language are used to support the claim that discourse is action oriented, situated, constructed, and constructive. “Constructive” in that they build versions of the psychological worlds; “constructed” in that language resources are used to do the building (Potter, 2012). The nature of these structures, i.e., the patterns, formations, or configurations they take, can be described as schemas; “a way of relating percepts to concepts” (Oakley, 2007).

This selective review of cognitive linguistic concepts attempts to provide sufficient background information to interpret the analytical discussion that will be presented in Chapter 5. The discourse of development professionals in Japan’s international aid community has been analyzed to reveal the components (i.e., categories, domains, and schemas) of a cultural model within the development communities. “Cultural models” have been defined in discourse analytic literature as:

...every day “theories” (i.e., storylines, images, schemas, metaphors, and models) about the world that tell people what is “typical” or “normal”, not universally, but from the perspective of a particular Discourse (Gee, 2004, p.40: emphasis added).

As this definition states, details about the cognitive linguistic elements of development discourse, such as schemas and metaphors, constitute a discussion of the cultural model (or models) that are used by development professionals to interpret and function within an institutional setting. The discussion of chapter Chapter 5.3.2 will discuss these schemas and metaphors in detail, which leads this research to propose a cultural model that can also explain the institutional practices (and genres which are also analyzed at the textual level) of JICA officials and development consultants.

The analytical findings at the cognitive, conversational, and written (genre) levels all fit within a larger discussion of the role of institutional practices in society at large. This discussion requires a framework with a macro-perspective, which this current study will also attempt to incorporate employing an approach known as Critical Discourse Analysis.

3.2.3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

Up to this point, the analytical tools that have been covered have proceeded from the general to the specific. A review of 1) the characteristics of the discourse material to be analyzed (genre analysis), 2) the analytical tools that were applied to explore the context of the material (pragmatics), and 3) the cognitive processes that help us understand language-use at the individual level has been provided. The generalizability of these findings and their contribution to a larger discussion on social mechanisms and phenomena indeed represent the final step in my attempt to contribute to and create a “useful” or “meaningful” piece of social research.

I will attempt to generalize the interpretive discussions and implications of the multiple levels of discourse that have been covered in the previous subsections to the institutional level (*discourse as social practice* in Bhatia's 3-level framework). This discussion will be framed with an approach known as Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a normative and rhetorical approach for revealing cultural practices that reflexively reflect and reinforce social institutions. Critical interpretations and analyses are produced on the assumption that "Discourse helps produce the institutions of social life, the self-regulating mechanisms that shape individual behaviour" (Phillips et al., in Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 243). CDA advocates for a social commitment and interventionist stance in social research (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000), and has been developed and championed in large part through developments in Critical Language Studies¹⁹ (Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Van Dijk, 1993). As one embodiment of a critical tradition of social analysis, a primary objective of CDA is to reveal "the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 1). Similar to other discourse analytic approaches, CDA distinguishes three levels of social reality. At the general and abstract level exist *social structures*, while particular and concrete *events* constitute a level of specificity. These two levels are mediated through *practices*, which are reflexive in character, or: "simultaneously material and semiotic in character" (Fairclough, 2012, p. 10). With a focus on semiotic devices, CDA also possesses a strong foundation in linguistics:

¹⁹ Refer to Wodak (2009) for a historical review and introduction to CDA.

CDA should primarily be positioned in the linguistic milieu, and its successes should be measured primarily with the yardstick of linguistics and linguistically oriented pragmatics and discourse analysis” (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000, p. 452)

The goal of CDA is to reveal how power can be observed in language use and discourse, as language is “always fully situated in social and political contexts...where power operates” (Gee, 2004). A case-study of Japan’s international development community provides numerous opportunities to observe and analyze power dynamics in various forms. Inter-organizational relationships, intra-organizational structures, and socio-cultural norms that exist within Japan and among development professionals define power relationships that significantly affect the social maneuverings of these institutional actors within their community. The complex and multi-stakeholder nature of aid projects often force project managers and stakeholders to walk a tight-rope requiring the balanced management of diplomatic, political (domestic and international), and contractual relationships (among others, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.2).

An in-depth discussion and analysis of these power dynamics through an explanation of institutional practices, and the international and domestic policies and procedures that support them, represents the “normalization processes and disciplinary techniques” of institutions, and the semiotic devices that produce a “taken for granted” notion of common sense (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 243) and characterize semiotic devices as objective (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

However, it may be more appropriate to say that this research will attempt to provide a critical discussion *through* discourse analysis, rather than represent a pure or genuine example of Critical Discourse Analysis (cf. Gee, 2004 for a discussion on critical approaches to discourse

analysis, as opposed to Critical Discourse Analysis). For example, the current research does not follow some of the guidelines for CDA as provided by Fairclough (2012), in that it does not explicitly point towards a “social wrong” that is perpetuated by institutions, but rather discusses how social power is exercised through institutional discourse, and (*through* this discussion) illustrate how this process makes it difficult for non-institutional actors (i.e., the general public) to enforce and participate in government accountability (this discussion will begin in Chapter 0). In other words, this research project did not begin as an attempt at producing a piece of Critical Discourse Analysis; normative implications and social inequalities within the existing institutional structure revealed themselves through the interpretive process.

Pragmatic examinations of institutional discourse and genres are required to look at not only at the content of texts, but their “trajectories: where texts emanate from, how they are used by organizational actors, and what connections are established among texts” (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004, p. 646). Combining these explanations of the situational context with specific examples of language use and cognitive processes will constitute the “empirical material about social texts [that allow us] to move up on ‘a discursive ladder’ and build a case [for generalization]” (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000, p. 1146). The examination of institutional discourse aims to explore how purpose, order, and commitment are generated in an organization through beliefs, ideology, language, ritual, and myth (Pettigrew, 1979). However, the claims to generalization are not strong, as the discussion to follow has also been inspired scholars such as Forester, who has displayed the power of interpretive work in the observations of institutional power (2012, 1987). Forester’s influential work is introduced as follows: “the evidence reported here, therefore, is qualitative, and the argument that follows seeks not generalizability but strong plausibility across a range of settings” (Forester, 1989, p. 83). Some of the specific analytical findings of this work reflect similarly this attitude of Forester, in that the links between the

language and institutions of this case cannot be generalized to other contexts. However, the proposal of a grounded theory will potentially contribute to generating testable models that could help interpret, describe, or predict institutional behaviour in similar or related contexts.

3.3 Primary and Secondary Sources of Data

The primary sources of data are made up of two types of audio-recorded data: (1) semi-structured interviews with development professionals working in Japan (JICA officials and development consultants); and (2) a facilitated dialogue between JICA officials and development consultants. These recordings were transcribed and coded to look for patterns and central themes surrounding the evaluation of development projects.

3.3.1 Primary sources: interviews and interactions with development professionals

The primary data of this study is made up of a combination of audio-recordings and policy documents from several sources. Certain policy documents that were referred to (and accessible) during interviews thus make up the secondary sources of data for this research. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow the research and line of questioning to evolve in parallel with the grounded theory approach. The initial interviews were very abstract and exploratory, formulated around a single guiding question: *What is the role of impartiality in Japan's development process?* Interviewee testimony and statements “provide uncertain, but often interesting clues for the understanding of social reality and ideas, beliefs, values and other aspects of ‘subjectivities’” (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000, p. 1146). Through the grounded

theory approach, these “uncertain” and “interesting” insights and “subjective” discourses were grouped together to create this discussion on the impartial practices of Japanese development professionals.

The audio-recorded material was comprised of a total of approximately 15 hours²⁰ of audio-recorded interviews from 17 interviews (with 13 development professionals), and one facilitated dialogue between 4 of the interviewees. After a couple of interviews with development professionals, the importance of objective evaluations became a central theme; third-party evaluators represented the impartial actor within the development process. Subsequent interviews explored the difficulties and conflicts associated with the evaluation process. However, significant gaps in perspectives and experiences were being shared between what seemed to be JICA officials on one side, and private-sector development consultants on the other. To explore some of the potential reasons as to why these different perceptions existed among JICA officials and development consultants, a facilitated dialogue was organized with 4 of the interview subjects.

Facilitated Dialogue with Development Professionals

A facilitated dialogue between JICA officials and development consultants was organized to provide an opportunity for the stakeholders to share their experiences with one another. The dialogue was organized in an attempt to grasp a deeper understanding of how stakeholders perceived these issues from their unique perspectives. The facilitated dialogue was used to generate user-level depth and perspective on existing institutional policy and discourse,

²⁰A total of 14:49:06 hours of audio-recorded interviews.

which is considered one of the major and “preferred topics” of critical discourse analysis (as reviewed by Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). Four development professionals were gathered and asked to participate in a dialogue to discuss their respective perceptions of the project evaluation process.

The interactions between the subjects of this study provide a unique perspective on how the cultural model and professional context affects the social interaction among institutional actors, rather than simply as an informant. An environment was provided in which the interaction among stakeholders could be observed, rather than an explanation of the subject’s own understandings of how they themselves interact and understand the relationships with other stakeholders. A description of the dialogue process and its origins in the field of conflict resolution will now be provided.

What is Dialogue?

Practitioners in the field of conflict management argue that dialogue is a powerful tool and the appropriate modality to encourage perceptual change and address complex social conflicts. Conflict resolution practitioners use a definition of “dialogue” that is much more specific than what is often assumed by non-practitioners. Dialogue is built upon the premise that principled communication of a dialectic nature (Bohm and Nichol, 1996; Habermas, 1987) that combines effective speaking and active listening skills, is necessary to help people reach sincere mutual understandings that can lead to productive collaboration. The Conflict Research Consortium of the University of Colorado provides the following definition for the dialogue process:

Dialogue is a process in which parties engage in deep and meaningful conversations with their opponents, not for the purpose of resolving a dispute (as is usually true with negotiation or mediation), but rather for the purpose of developing a better understanding of the people "on the other side." Through dialogue, disputants break down negative stereotypes, focus on deep-rooted feelings, values, and needs, and come to understand the complexity of the conflict and the issues on all sides (Burgess et al., 1997).

The task of an effective third-party facilitator running a dialogue is to manage the optimal conditions of contact between stakeholders with complex relationships (Tropp and Pettigrew, 2005); and to create an environment that maximizes the “value of candid, relatively informal discussions...in which participants talk about their factual assumptions and the complexities of their values rather than simply defending their positions” (Robinson et al., 1995). If there is a deadlocked conflict situation, as represented by Figure 4, the procedural goal of a dialogue is to generate a better understanding and appreciation amongst stakeholders for the complex situation they are in.

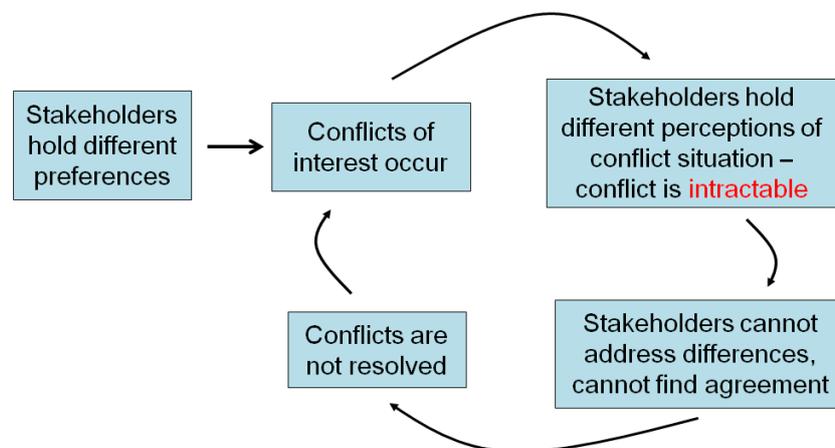


Figure 4: Negative conflict cycle

Dialogue procedures rigorously target and explore the perceptions, biases, and stereotypes of group members, in hopes of allowing stakeholders to perceive themselves within a tractable conflict. The ultimate goal of such a process is to work towards a sincere negotiation of interests, in an attempt to break the cycle of an intractable conflict (see Figure 5). The goals of many dialogue projects are extremely ambitious, and social conflicts with a long history can require a significant amount of painstaking effort and patience simply to get parties to agree to come to the table. Facilitators and stakeholders can be faced with months of necessary and planning and preparation for a dialogue that may last several years (cf. Maemura, 2013 for an in-depth longitudinal study of a multi-stakeholder dialogue in the industrial sector).

While traditional discourse analysis is primarily a linguistic endeavor, it has been argued that the most ideal source of linguistic data comes from naturally occurring talk (Gee, 1999; Potter, 2011). This dialogue was organized in hopes of analyzing the discourse of

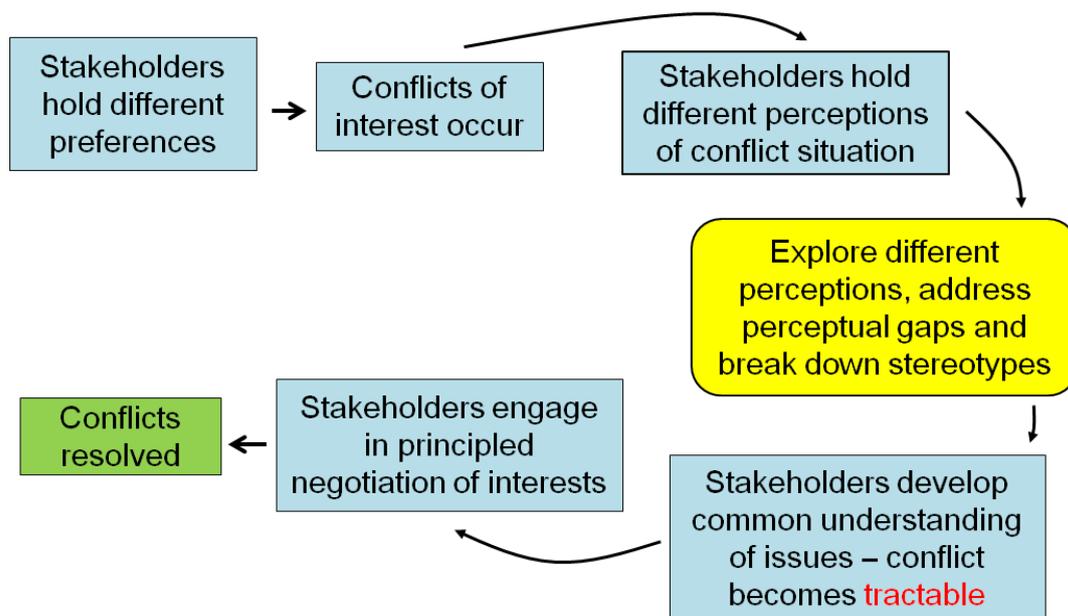


Figure 5: Purpose of a Dialogue intervention

development professionals as they conversed naturally amongst themselves. There exist very few formal analyses of such dialogue conversations, and even fewer looking at Japanese speakers. The context of the observable language became more specific to the development domain; subjects would be composing statements and responding to the context of a group discussion among professional colleagues within the development community, as opposed to responding to questions for an independent research study. The conversation was recorded and transcribed, amounting to approximately 2 hours of material. Themes were identified and transcripts were coded for their references or mentions of standards of impartiality, fairness, objectivity.

Although topics were provided and the *content* of the dialogue was controlled, the *manner* and freedom of expressions were natural. The dialogue was designed to observe how subjects, who were placed in an unnatural position to discuss specific topics and issues, express their opinions in a natural manner. Further details of the dialogue, such as the topics that were discussed and an analysis of the utterances will be provided in chapter 5.2.2.1.

3.3.2 *Secondary sources: evaluation standards and policy*

In addition to the interviews and conversations that were compiled specifically for this study, there exists a large body of policy and practice literature amongst the stakeholder institutions that were considered relevant to this study. For the purposes of a coherent discussion, the resulting analysis and discussion focuses its scope on a selection of these stakeholders. An enormous industry like a nation's bilateral aid efforts displays numerous examples of "interdiscursivity" (Bhatia, 2010). National policies define the interests of Japan's ODA strategies, to which JICA implements with additional policy and protocol. The private sector

development consultants respond to these national trends, while the entire network is also very sensitive to international trends and global standards. Thus, at each level of organizational activity, we find some central documents and policies that define evaluation process. The discourse of impartial evaluations in the development aid industry can be observed through language that runs across several documents and organizations. The evaluation documents and relevant development policies that have been incorporated directly in this analysis include:

- Japan's ODA Charter (MOFA) and White Paper on ODA.
- Domestic evaluation Reports (mostly annual) released by JICA, MOFA, USAID, DFID
- Terminal evaluations of technical cooperation projects published by JICA.
- Domestic evaluation Policy and Evaluation Guidelines published by JICA, MOFA, USAID, DFID
- International or Multi-lateral evaluation policy documents and reviews of development aid agencies published by the OECD.

3.3.3 *Summary of data*

The analysis and discussion of Chapter 5 is based on material that has come from one of the following sources (some of which will be summarized and outlined next in Chapter 4):

- Nine interviews with 6 JICA Officials
 - Notes and transcripts of 5:48:06 hours of interviews
- Eight interviews with 7 development consultants
 - Notes and transcripts of 6:46:44 hours of interviews

- One facilitated dialogue between JICA officials and development consultants
 - Notes and transcripts of 2:14:16 hours of interviews
 - Four of the interviews mentioned above, 2 of JICA officials, and 2 from consultants, are individual follow-up interviews with each participant after the dialogue.
- Secondary sources include over 100 evaluation related documents (policies, guidelines, evaluations, and reports) from bilateral, multilateral, and international agencies in the development aid industry (i.e., MOFA, JICA, OECD, WB, USAID, and DFID)

With the tools and frameworks outlined in the previous sections, the initial interviews and document analyses were structured around a single guiding question: *How is impartiality practiced in Japan's development community?* This general line of inquiry led all conversations to discussions about JICA's evaluation practices. The impartial evaluation procedures of the Japanese development community have been examined through a qualitative exploration of the relationships between institutional (evaluation) policy, structure, practice, and social interaction within the development community of Japan. The next chapter begins by summarizing much of the information that was provided during initial interviews at the outset of this research project. The chapter will move on to describe in detail the main issues that were identified through a discussion of the evaluation process: the questionable legitimacy of internal evaluations by JICA for enforcing accountability; the complexity of technical cooperation and capacity development; and the short-comings of the existing evaluation procedure.

Chapter 4

Exploring the Role of Impartiality in Japan's Development Community

Over the course of approximately 8 months (October 2012 – May 2013), access was gained from officials of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and employees of major Japanese development companies. These subjects were interviewed and asked to explain their understanding of the role of impartial third-parties in development work. Examples of decision-making scenarios and the role of third-parties were explained and analyzed to discuss how impartiality is perceived within institutional decision-making processes.

It became clear after several interviews that the main role of third parties in Japan's development process was in the monitoring and evaluation of development projects. However, when probed further about some of the specific standards and principles that would be used for deciding which project is "better", or how a project should be evaluated "impartially", the interviewees seemed to possess a nuanced, flexible, and contextual understanding of impartiality and objectivity. Fairness principles and decision-making standards relied entirely on the nature of a project and the goals that were to be achieved. In other words, every time

development professionals were asked to describe the standards of evaluation and the evaluation process, one of the first answers was always: “it depends on the type of project”. Thus, before moving forward with the discussion on how impartiality is practiced within the development projects and their evaluation, we must first cover some background information on the development process itself.

The next section will begin with an overview of the context in which the discussion on impartiality takes place: that of Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) and bilateral efforts of international development aid. The next sections will attempt to provide an overview of the Japanese development process, the role of evaluations within the process, and the identification of a problematic issue that became a focal point for this research.

4.1 Background:

Official Development Assistance in Japan

In order to discuss JICA’s evaluation process, it is necessary to understand the nature of the projects that are subject to these evaluations. Japan is the 5th largest spender among the 25 OECD member countries, spending approximately 10.5 billion USD²¹ on Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2012 (behind the US, UK, Germany, and France). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is the Japanese Government’s policy-making body primarily in charge of Official Development Assistance, tasked with formulating an ODA policy in line with Japan’s national interests. Projects and development strategies are designed to reflect the policies

²¹ Preliminary 2012 figures from the OECD

outlined in the government of Japan's ODA charter, and MOFA transfers the bulk of implementation of these projects to JICA, which is classified as an Independent Administrative Institution (IAI)²². The implementation of ODA activities takes multiple and complex forms of bureaucratic and institutional protocol, and reflects the multifaceted and broad mandate that officially guides and supports international development aid.

For example, one pattern of implementation that can be observed is as follows: a potential partner country may work with Japanese counterparts such as MOFA or JICA in an attempt to achieve specific development goals. Once stakeholders agree upon the type of development projects to be implemented, JICA can post a request for proposals for a technical cooperation project for general competitive bidding. Development consultants from the private sector can then bid for the projects by producing proposals for JICA to review.

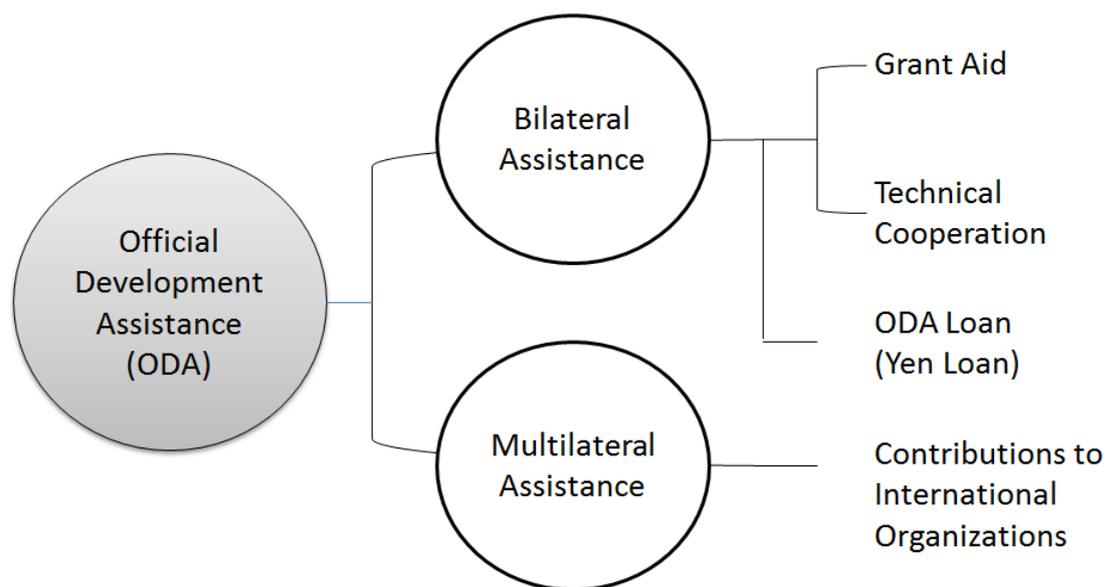
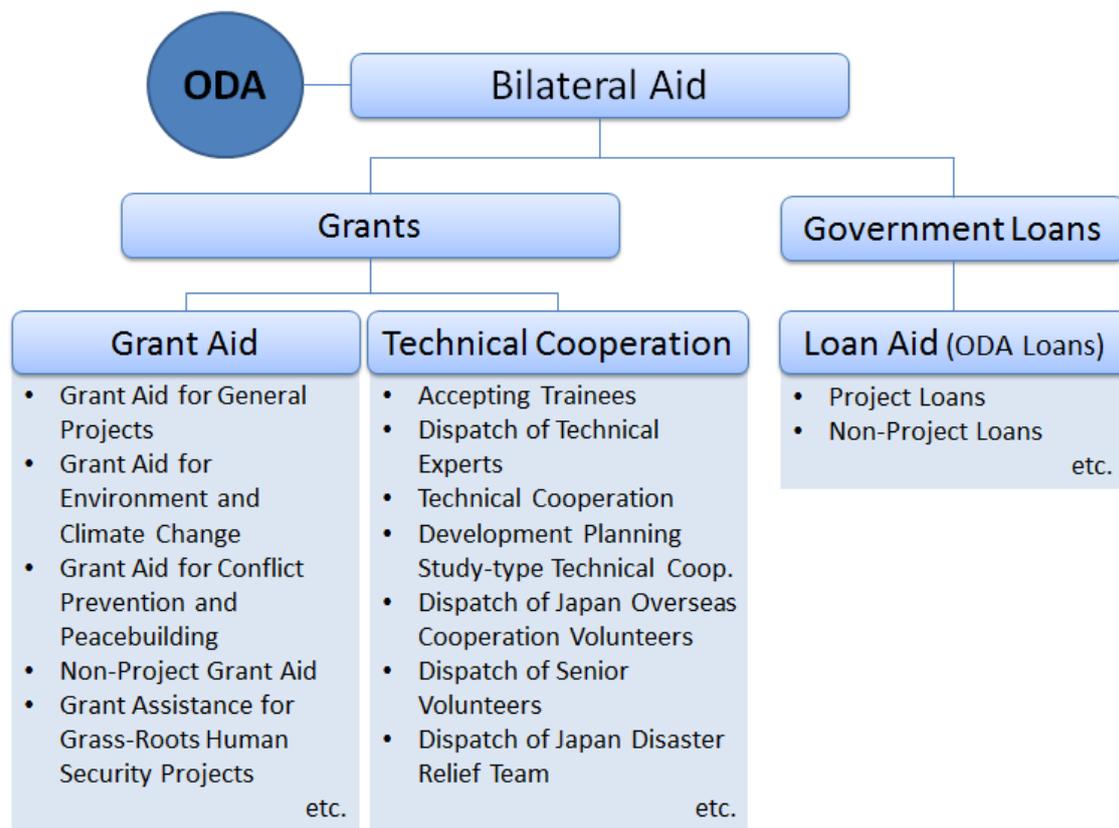


Figure 6: ODA functions as explained by MOFA
(Reproduced from: MOFA Guidelines for Project Evaluation, 2010.)

²² Japan has 102 IAI's operating independently of the government bureaucracy as of 2013.

The types of contracts and projects vary widely, as consultants can offer their resources and expertise for development projects that fall into the wide purview of Japan's bilateral aid. By and large, Japan's bilateral development aid activities fall into 3 categories, ODA Loans, Grant Aid, and Technical Cooperation (Figure 6 and Figure 7), while multilateral aid takes the form of contributions to international institutions (Japan is the second largest funder of both the UN²³ and the OECD²⁴).



**Figure 7: Chart describing existing forms of bilateral aid as explained by MOFA
(Reproduced from Japan's ODA White Paper: MOFA, 2011)**

²³ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/238

²⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/about/budget/member-countries-budget-contributions.htm>

Loans and grants take the shape of capital or funding provided to developing countries, and “Technical Cooperation” includes a wide range of efforts to provide sustainable aid through increasing the human capital of developing nations and strengthening the institutional capacity of recipient nations.

Technical Cooperation is a very general and “all embracing term used to describe JICA’s practical assistance to developing countries (JICA, 2013). JICA lists 19 “subjects” of technical cooperation²⁵, such as education, social-security, transportation, economic policy, poverty reduction etc. (one of them being “others”). Assistance is provided to each of these subjects in the form of dispatching JICA experts, training local officials, supplying equipment, or providing financial assistance. JICA has also developed and implements “Technical Cooperation Projects”, which combine the dispatch of experts, training, and provision of equipment in an integrated package. Combinations and permutations of these forms of assistance with the 19 subjects results in a massive domain within which the term “technical cooperation” covers under its umbrella. This complexity becomes a significant issue during the evaluation process, as will be discussed later on.

²⁵ <http://www.jica.go.jp/project/english/subject/index.html>

4.2 Evaluating Development Projects: Transparency, Accountability, and Organizational Learning.

As a tax-payer funded institution implementing the Government of Japan's official development assistant policy set out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), JICA is accountable to the tax-payers of Japan. In order to ensure its accountability, JICA implements an evaluation scheme which aims to enforce transparency and continuously improve the development process.

In an effort to improve its projects and ensure accountability to the Japanese taxpayers, JICA implements operations evaluations in accordance with the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, and Action) cycle for Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans, and Grant Aid initiatives.

(JICA Annual Evaluation Report, 2011; emphasis added)

This section will now provide background information on the principles and standards that support JICA's evaluation system, as well as the evaluation procedures that are embedded in the project implementation process. These evaluation policies and documents make up the generic knowledge and discourse of evaluation processes in the development community. First, some of the major principles and standards espoused by the international community will be covered, before going over some specific domestic interpretations of evaluation policy. These policy areas represent the "generic conventions of knowledge" (Bhatia, 1997) that policy makers and evaluation practitioners must use to exploit or manipulate institutional procedures, as well as the

realm of institutional discourse in which social actors are operating.

The overview and summary of evaluation policies to follow are a summation and description of only those specific evaluation policies and standards that were mentioned by the interviewees. Literature has been exploring fundamental issues concerning the appropriate design, implementation, and pedagogical approaches of evaluation for decades (e.g., Alkin, 1969; Husek, 1969; Christie, 2003; Stake, 1970) which this dissertation does not include within its scope of analysis. Coverage has been limited to documents and policies that were referred to directly by subjects throughout the interview process (in consistency with principles of grounded theory). It can be assumed that the principles and standards espoused by the interview subjects and their respective institutions are a product of the research, intellectual debate, and experience of implementing agencies.

4.2.1 Development principles and international standards:

the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD-DAC)

Interviews with development professionals and a review of some of the development policies revealed a flexible framework that is used to define the “value” of development aid activities. Interviewees spoke of how development projects are designed (ideally) to cater to the needs and values of both the recipient countries and Japan’s national interests. Some regions may be in need of aggressive poverty reduction strategies aimed at basic education for the poor, while some countries may request highly skilled and complex technology-transfer to increase the human capital of specialized industries or elite institutions. There was no particular fairness principle, or value (e.g., a strictly consequentialist stance in regards to the economic benefits of a project), which held constant over all development projects (although some specific

development priorities and policies do exist, which will be discussed later on).

The most common, or instinctual answer for all subjects when probed about how the development community specifically determines or assesses the value of a project, was to refer to the OECD Development Assistant Committee's (DAC) principles and criteria for effective aid. The OECD has a long and well-established history of providing influential policy for economic development, originating from its initial mandate to run the Marshall Plan in 1948 (as the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation). The OECD's Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD-DAC) provides a wide range of research and policy concerning the understanding, implementation, and improvement of development policy.

The OECD's Paris Declaration (2005) outlines 5 major principles for making the aid process more effective. These five principles are:

1. Ownership

Developing countries set their own development strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.

2. Alignment

Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.

3. Harmonisation

Donor countries and organizations co-ordinate their actions, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

4. Managing for Results

Developing countries and donors focus on producing – and measuring – results.

5. Mutual Accountability

Donors and developing countries are accountable for development results.

The document that outlines these 5 principles is entitled the “Paris Declaration”. Confusion can be born because the original DAC Principles were also drafted in Paris, which is the document that development professionals and policy refers to when discussing DAC evaluation policy. It is in this original 1991 draft, entitled the “DAC Principles for Evaluation Development Assistance” which outlines major principles for making the aid process more effective. Although, once again, one must not confuse the *criteria* for evaluating development assistance with the *principles* on aid effectiveness. Interviewees of Japanese development institutions all mentioned the 5 *criteria* for evaluations, or the “DAC 5 項目” (*dakku go koumoku*: “5 DAC criteria”), as opposed to the *principles*. The DAC Principles for Evaluation Development Assistance begins with an outline of 5 evaluation *principles*. The *criteria* can be found in the original document’s definition of the term “evaluation”:

An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors. (OECD, 1991, p.4; underlining by the author)

The OECD later defined each evaluation objective as a criterion for evaluation, and now provides some examples to illustrate using the criteria in practice on their web site²⁶:

1. Relevance

The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. In evaluating the relevance of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

2. Effectiveness

A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.

In evaluating the effectiveness of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

3. Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly

²⁶ <<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>>, accessed March 2014

resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

4. Impact

The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions. When evaluating the impact of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the programme or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

5. Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. When evaluating the sustainability

of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

Development professionals most commonly referred to these five criteria when discussing the need to evaluate or assess the value of a project. As can be gleaned by the summary of the OECD-DAC principles and criteria, these items prescribe general goals and directionality for international development agencies. Specific methods and tools for achieving such goals are to be developed by the respective implementing parties on their own (or in consultation with the DAC Network on Development Evaluation and other evaluation specialists). While these criteria can be used as a guideline for determining the value of a project, measuring each criterion again depends on the project's specific goals and objectives.

The DAC does not have the authority, jurisdiction, resources, or mandate to strictly enforce or police the principles it espouses to the international community with OECD representation. Aid-agencies and organizations develop their own specific standards and procedures to fit their organizational capacity and resource constraints. Most development agencies will thus have their own guidelines on evaluation procedures to lead project teams and independent evaluators to produce an appropriate final report. For example, Table 1, (taken from JICA's 2011 annual evaluation report), further operationalizes some of the terms as applied to their own projects.

**Table 1: Itemized table outlining JICA measurements of DAC criteria.
(JICA 2011, reprinted with permission from JICA)**

		Reasoning		
		③	②	①
Relevance	Validity of aid (relevance with development policy of recipient country, Japan's ODA policy, and JICA's aid strategy)	Fully relevant	Partially relevant	Serious problems in consistency
	Relevance with development needs (needs of beneficiary, project area, and community)			
Effectiveness/ Impact	Achievement of expected project outcomes in target year (including use of facilities and equipment)	Objectives largely achieved, and project generated outcomes (80% or more of plan)	Some objectives achieved, but some outcomes were not generated (between 50% and 80% of plan)	Achievement of objectives was limited, and project did not generate outcomes (50% or less than plan)
	Status of indirect positive and negative outcomes	Project generated indirect outcomes as assumed / no negative impacts	Some problems with indirect outcomes generated / some negative impacts	Problems with indirect outcomes generated / grave negative impacts
Efficiency	Comparison of planned and actual project inputs, project period and project cost, etc.	Efficient (100% or less than the plan)	Partially inefficient (between 100% and 150% of plan)	Inefficient (exceeding 150% of plan)
Sustainability	Institutional sustainability (e.g., structure / skills / HR of organization)	Sustainability is ensured	Some problems, but prospects of improvement exist	Insufficient
	Financial sustainability (availability of operation and maintenance budget)			

Note: The criteria and items examined differ by assistance scheme and project.

The table outlines some of the specific means used by JICA projects to measure and examine DAC criteria. JICA's use of OECD principles and international standards are a clear example of inter-organizational "interdiscursivity" (Bhatia, 2008) in which development institutions appropriate and exploit established conventions, borrowing the generic resources from one domain and applying them in another (ibid.). Observing the links between policies across organizations allows us to observe the influence of international organizations on domestic practices.

As further evidence of interdiscursivity, under the criteria of "Relevance", in Table 1 above refers to (1) Japan's ODA Policy and (2) JICA's aid strategy. The table thus states that

development projects should be designed to reflect the strategies outlined in these two major policy documents. Relevant excerpts from Japan's ODA charter and JICA's aid strategy are provided below:

(1) Japan's ODA Charter

The ODA charter of Japan (available for download on the MOFA website²⁷) was revised in 2003, and outlines the following basic principles for Japan's ODA strategy:

1. Support self-help efforts to develop good governance through human resource development, institution building including legal systems, and economic and social infrastructure building. Countries that make active efforts to pursue peace, democratization, human rights, and economic and social structural reforms will be prioritized.
2. Strengthen the capacity of local communities through human resource development to increase the security of individuals.
3. Achieve fairness by considering the conditions of the socially vulnerable, the gap between the rich and the poor, the gap among various regions in developing countries. "Great attention will be paid" to factors such as environmental and social impact on developing countries, while gender equality is particularly important.
4. Utilize experience in economic and social development, technological advantages, expertise, human resources, and institutions to implement ODA in coordination with "key Japanese policies...taking into consideration implications for Japan's economy and society."
5. Endeavor to play a leading role in the international community (e.g., UN organizations, international financial institutions, other donors, NGOs, private companies). Enhance collaboration with political neutral international organizations and ensure Japan's policies

²⁷ <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/revision0308.pdf>

are reflected in their management. Actively promote South-South cooperation and regional cooperation frameworks.

Priority issues for the government of Japan are listed as poverty reduction, sustainable growth, global issues (e.g., global warming, health, food, energy, terrorism, among others), and peace-building. Priority regions include East Asian and ASEAN, South Asia, Central Asia and the Caucasus regions, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Oceania.

(2) JICA's aid strategies

JICA's aid strategies are meant to actualize the development objectives outlined in the ODA charter through integrated and seamless assistance, the promotion of development partnerships, and the enhancement of research and knowledge-sharing. Implementation principles include a synergistic approach to project expansion, the field-based approach, and enforcing transparency and accountability.

As can be gleaned through a brief summary of some of the issues covered in the ODA charter and JICA's strategies, both documents provide a wide interpretation of Japan's role in global development. This wide interpretation can be seen as a means of providing flexible and comprehensive aid, while a critical interpretation may question the worth of such a convenient or *ad hoc* policy. Indeed, one is pressed to consider whether there exist any development-related projects that cannot be framed as relevant using some of the themes, issues, and priorities listed above.

4.2.2 *The project cycle*

Returning to a description of the implementation of JICA's evaluation scheme, project evaluations are embedded within a Plan-Do-Check-Action (PDCA) approach, which frames the project management process as a cyclical system consisting of the ex-ante (planning), implementation, monitoring, and ex-post stages. JICA's evaluation scheme is designed to complement and function within (embedded in) the PDCA approach. Evaluations that target the relevant performance indicators at each phase of the cycle are conducted.

Plan:

At the request of developing nations, MOFA or JICA may agree to provide aid to a country. To ensure effective aid delivery, a substantial amount of effort is put into planning and design. JICA will work with recipient nations to create master plans, consultants will be hired to produce surveys and feasibility reports on the need for any type of aid project in the country. A major principle that guides the planning process is "relevance". Projects will be designed on the basis of how they fit with the priorities of Japan's development policies, as well as the recipient nation growth policies.

Do:

Once a project has been approved for implementation, the work on the ground begins. JICA often enlists the expertise and resources of the private sector, and contracts work out to development consultants. Short-term small-scale projects can take several months while large-scale infrastructure projects or sector-based initiatives may take several years.

Check:

Once a project is “finished”, both JICA and the recipient nation continue to monitor the effects of the project, to ensure that anticipated outcomes and impacts have been achieved, and to monitor its effectiveness. A major guiding principle during the monitoring process is “sustainability”, in that development projects must be designed to continue to produce the intended effects upon the Japanese counter-parts pulling out, sustaining its success on the capacity of the recipient nation without relying on further aid.

Action:

The final step of the PDCA approach closes the loop and connects the system back to the first step. Lessons learned and implications generated from monitoring past projects are fed back into the planning and design of future projects. Institutional learning is infused into the project management cycle in hopes of nurturing the continuous improvement of project decision-making and aid delivery.

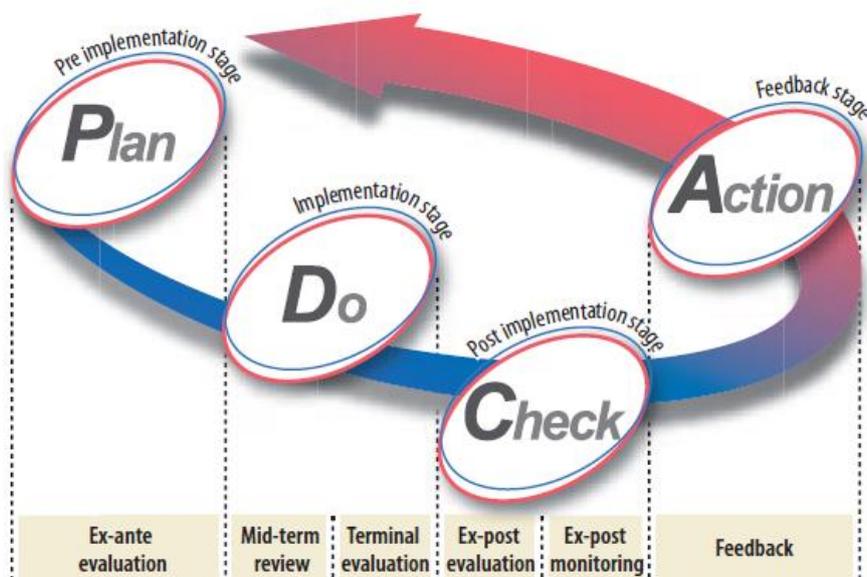


Figure 8: Timing of evaluations within the Plan Do Check Action project cycle (JICA, 2011. Reprinted with permission from JICA)

This brief review only summarizes a portion of the literature concerning the evaluation of development aid in Japan. Even with this wealth of policy and process at their disposal, no interviewee claimed that the process was perfect, or even ideal in several respects. Development professionals discussed several difficulties and controversial opinions regarding the evaluation process (to be discussed later in Chapter 4). However, a central issue that was identified was the legitimacy and difficulty of internal evaluations: JICA project managers are tasked to lead evaluation teams that evaluate and monitor the progress of their own projects. Ex-ante evaluations, mid-term reviews, terminal evaluations, and a portion of ex-post evaluation and monitoring activities are conducted in this manner, while *all* technical cooperation projects are evaluated in this manner, according to JICA evaluation policy.

4.2.3 *Evaluating technical cooperation and capacity building*

As mentioned earlier, “technical cooperation” and “technical cooperation projects” encompass an enormous range of development activities. To recapitulate, technical cooperation projects are mandated to strengthen the capacity of the institutions of recipient nations, and represent a softer approach to focusing on building the human capital of developing nations. Thus, technical cooperation projects arguably require significantly more inter-organizational communication and collaboration, as development specialists are tasked to transfer knowledge and provide training directly to the counterparts. The term “technical cooperation” refers to development aid that can take the form of dispatching JICA experts, training local officials, supplying equipment, or financial assistance. “Technical Cooperation Projects”, refer to comprehensive aid packages that combine and integrate these methods to build capacity over the medium- to long-term.

Technical cooperation projects will usually contract development consultants to train the counterparts, supply equipment, or assist in the management of technology transfer. For example, JICA may hire consultants to run a training program targeting rural farmers over the course of several years. JICA would then monitor and evaluate the progress of the project with communication lines directly between JICA headquarters and the regional offices, counterpart (partner country) officials, and the hired consultant(s), and most (all but 9 in FY 2011) technical cooperation projects are evaluated internally.

Several sources cited difficulties associated with measuring the outcomes and impacts of capacity building initiatives. This was particularly true for trained engineers and consultants with experience in “hard” infrastructure projects. Interviewees discussed the difficulty of accepting and managing the “soft” element, with a background in “hard” initiatives. JICA officials also discussed concerns over the difficulty of quantifying the capacity of local officials.

Interviewee: 技術協力プロジェクトで効果計るのはなかなか難しいところですね
There are some aspects of Technical Cooperation Projects that are very hard to measure.

Interviewee: だって、例えばサステナビリティとかどう計ればいいんだよ？
I mean, how do you even measure sustainability?

Interviewee: なんせ[効果は]よく分からないですからね (笑う)
In the end, you [sometimes] don't even really know what they [the impact of these projects] are (laughing).

These statements allude to the fact that the vast domain of technical cooperation creates a proportionally vast understanding of the appropriate means to discuss their impacts and outcomes. Indeed there is no established consensus within the development community as to

how capacity building should or can be evaluated, or even measured. Smith discusses the multi-faceted nature of capacity development, as it is seen as taking place “not just in individuals, but also between them, in the institutions and the networks they create” (Fukuda-Parr et al., in Smith, 2005: 446), and how results will impact the capacity of counterparts at the individual, institutional, and societal level. He argues that current evaluation practices also ignore the opportunities borne out of learning from mistakes, and how subjects can “learn to build by building” (Smith, 2005). Such arguments claim that some failures should be encouraged within a procedural approach to capacity building, and strictly measuring an institution’s ability to attain pre-determined performance indicators fails to incorporate the most significant element of institutional capacity building.

Amidst these serious concerns about the difficulty of evaluating technical cooperation, mid-term and terminal evaluations by JICA were conducted primarily around a project’s ability to fulfill its original intended goals and objectives. These objectives are drawn-up in the planning phase, resulting in the creation of a powerful document known as the Project Design Matrix (PDM).

4.2.4 The Project Design Matrix (PDM)

Employing a logic model known as the logical framework (logframe, see Table 2) defined by the DCD-DAC, JICA uses Project Design Matrices (PDMs) to link the planned project activities and actions with the outputs, objectives, and overall goals of a project. An ideal PDM displays persuasive and consistent logical reasoning to link individual project objectives on the field through to national or global development policy goals. The PDM provides a document to which completed projects or projects in progress can be evaluated based

on verifiable indicators that were developed during the planning phase.

Interviews with subjects tended not to go into extreme detail about the criteria and indicators that were used in past projects. What was emphasized was the process by which these standards were arrived at. Projects were formulated in collaboration with partner countries and stakeholders to create aid projects that were relevant to the growth strategies and priorities of recipients, as well as the aid strategies and interests of Japan. Stakeholders would create these standards and agree upon the indicators during the design phase.

Table 2: Configuration of a Logical Framework.
(Reproduced from the New JICA Evaluation Guidelines 2010)

Narrative Summary	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Overall goal (impact) Long-term development effects	Criteria to measure achievement toward the overall goal	Information sources for the indicators to the left	Conditions required for the project effects to be sustainable
Project purpose (outcome) Direct effects of the project	Criteria to measure achievement toward the project purpose	Information sources for the indicators to the left	External factor which must be met so that the project can contribute to the overall goal
Outputs Goods and services produced by the project	Criteria to measure achievement toward the outputs	Information sources for the indicators to the left	External factor which must be met so that the project can contribute to the project purpose
Activities Project activities to produce the outputs	Inputs Resources to be used for production of outputs		External factor which must be met so that the project can produce outputs

Nonetheless, perceived short comings of the PDM were considered a major reason behind problematic issues concerning the evaluation process. As a project's mid-term and

terminal evaluations are bounded by its PDM, several experiences led project members to feel that at times the PDM was too rigid and inflexible a document to evaluate a project adequately. The success or failure of a project is assessed based on how close the end product is to the objectives that have been laid out in the PDM. However, projects rarely (if ever) proceed exactly as planned, and project members often have to exercise skilled and flexible decision-making and management ability to pull projects through in the face of crises. Unfortunately, this nuanced and flexible interpretation of “performance” is often lost within the PDM framework:

JICA Staff: PDM を外れた物に関しては、評価をするときに、評価されないとは言わないけど、軽視されてしまう。5 項目の中のインパクトの一部として収められてしまう。それはちょっともったいないなとは思う...働いてて思ったけど、天災が起きるとかはどうしようもないんだけど、例えば「政権が変わらない」とか書いてあるんだよね、外部条件として。政権が変わっても上手く行ってるプロジェクトは実はあって、やっぱり、それって成果を出してるんだよね。すでに現場レベルで成果を出してて...政権が変わってもそれをきちっと売り込んでやってるところもあるから、そこはね、日本人の努力にかかっている部分があると思った。日本の働いてるコンサルだけではなくて、事務所とかそういう所に入ってるんだけど、リージョナルオフィスの努力。

For items that are not included in the PDM, when you evaluate [the project], I won't say they do not get evaluated, but they are somewhat neglected. They are grouped together simply as part of the “impact” [criteria], out of the 5 criteria. I think that's a bit of a waste...Now, after

working [for JICA] I feel that, aside from a natural disaster happening, which you can do nothing about, for example [a PDM might have] “assuming political leadership remains stable, or the same” written under its assumptions. There are actually projects that go well even if the political landscape changes, and, that is a [significant] output being produced. The project is already making an impact in the field...[and] even if the political leadership changed they still follow through with the project, so in that respect, I felt that the projects are dependent upon the efforts of Japanese [staff]. Not just the consultants from Japan, but the [Japanese] staff working at the offices, the hard work and effort of the regional offices.

This inflexibility of the framework was due to a strict before-and-after method of measurement, using metrics that had been decided upon before the implementation phase. Measuring the effects or impact of a particular project hinges heavily upon taking base metrics during the planning or design phase. For example, before a project one department had only 3 members, after there are 5; or before a project only 10% of staff could answer a set of questions (representing their knowledge capacity), after completion of the project, the number went up to 25%. In this manner, various performance objectives and their expected or assumed impacts are generated during the planning and design phases of a project which are again measured after the implementation phase. Any unexpected or secondary impacts however, do not technically qualify as impacts or outcomes under the measures and standards agreed upon under the PDM.

Interview subjects and JICA policy also disclosed that a significant amount of evaluation procedures are completed by JICA officials, while only a portion of the evaluations

were designated to external third parties. For technical cooperation initiatives, and some Yen loans and grant-aid projects, these evaluation procedures were conducted internally, with evaluation teams led by a member of JICA. The accountability of such an internal procedure is questionable, and must be explored in detail.

4.3 Internal vs. External Evaluations

A simple conceptualization of an accountability mechanism can model the role of transparency and evaluations for ensuring an institution's accountability. If a group *A* is accountable to a group *B*, a transparency mechanism should ensure that *B* can observe, monitor, and/or critically evaluate the actions of group *A* (Figure 9).

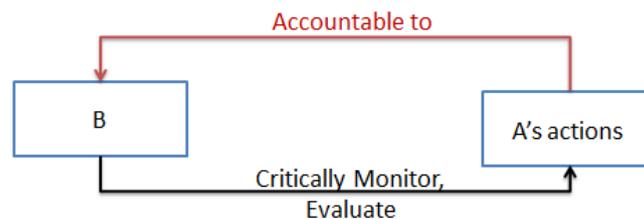


Figure 9: Model of accountability

However, the network of stakeholders involved in development projects is not this simple. As Figure 10 below illustrates, the organizational structure concerning just the evaluation process in Japanese ODA consists of a network of relationships between 7 organizations. When it comes to project implementation, JICA also relies on the resources and expertise of development consultants of the private sector to implement projects (Figure 12).

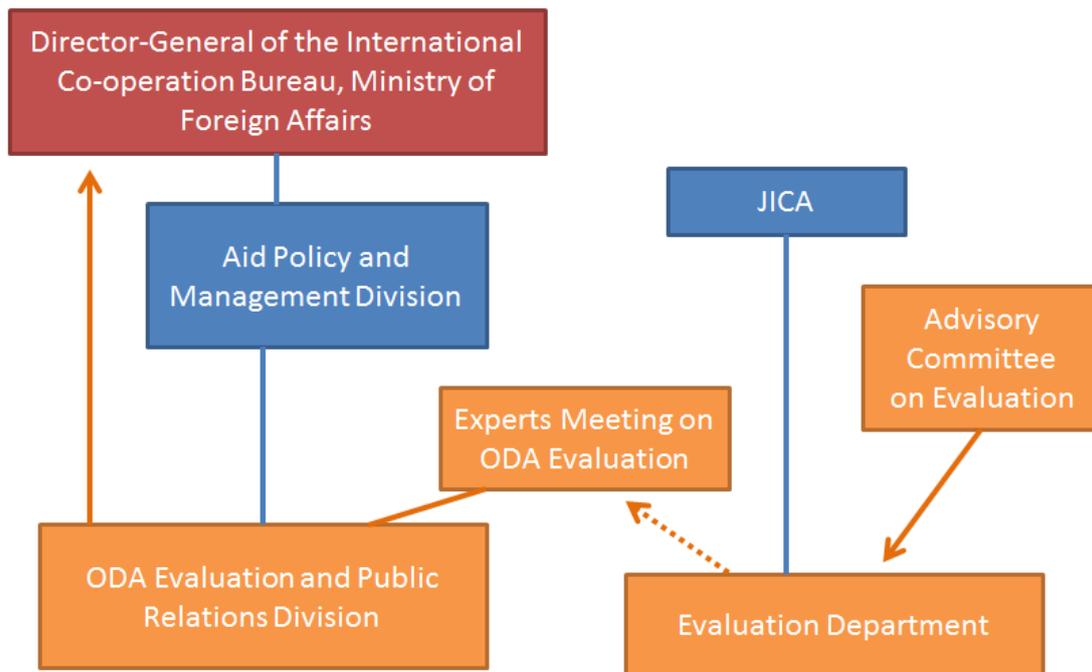


Figure 10: Institutional set-up and reporting lines between Japan’s ODA actors.
 (Reproduced from: OECD, 2010a)

Upon the request of recipient nations or in response to foreign policy agendas, JICA can announce a “requests for proposals” to tender contracts for public bidding. Consultants who bid and win the contracts proceed to collaborate with the recipient nation’s target institution to plan, implement, or monitor these projects. The target of aid activities, and the type of institution that is requesting aid can vary significantly (e.g., agricultural associations, local-municipal officials, public workers, NGOs, central government workers etc.), and so development professionals simply refer to the party receiving the aid as the “counterpart”. “Counterparts” (or “C/Ps”) denote whichever party or institution represents the recipient nation in the project implementation process.

JICA’s evaluation procedures ensure that ex-ante and ex-post evaluations are conducted by external evaluation experts for projects with a budget that exceed 10 billion JPY (approximately 100 million USD). The majority of these projects are made up of large-scale

infrastructure or long-term capacity building projects falling under the ODA yen loan category. Meta-evaluations are also conducted and reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Evaluation made up of academics, researchers (think tanks), journalists, NGOs and other representatives of the international development sector. The Committee provides consultation and advice to the Evaluation Department which reports to the board of management. Thus, accountability is enforced through a mechanism that employs third-party monitoring of MOFA policy and JICA activity (Figure 11).

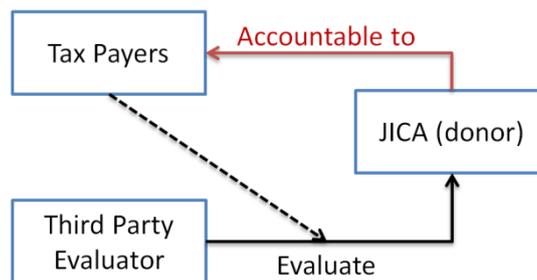


Figure 11: Accountability through third-party monitoring

However, mid-term and terminal evaluations are conducted only for Technical Cooperation initiatives and utilize an *internal* procedure. The internal evaluation scheme is structured in the following manner: Technical cooperation projects that span over several years conduct mid-term reviews throughout its schedule. Progress is monitored while the mid-term review provides an opportunity to reassess key objectives and implementation schedules (in other words, modify the PDM if necessary). Six months before a project's scheduled completion, an evaluation mission conducts a terminal evaluation, again assessing the status of the project by observing the final product with its planned design, or PDM.

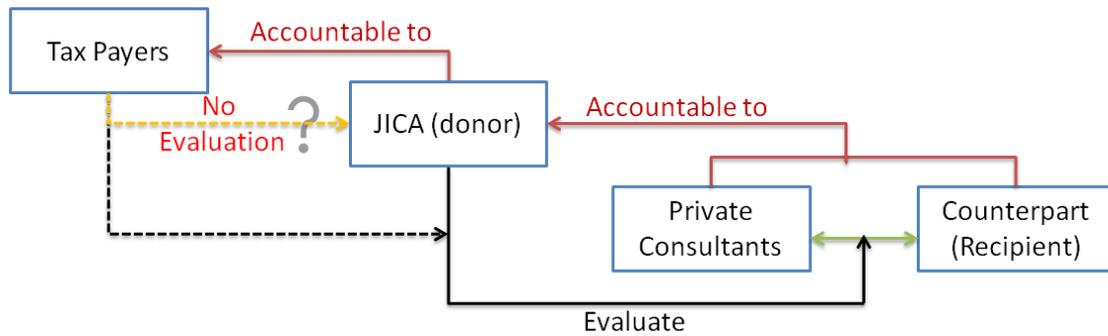


Figure 12: Internal evaluation process of JICA

The internal evaluation mechanism functions as follows: a project is given a score for their progress or the successful completion by an evaluation team (evaluation mission). This team is made up of an external consultant (evaluation expert), the project implementation team, and an evaluation chief. The post of evaluation chief is filled by the JICA project leader, and internal evaluations are classified as a JICA-led initiative, leaving JICA with the authority to make final approval of their content. As a monitoring mechanism, JICA then evaluates the performance of the consultants and counterparts in their ability to produce the project goals. As Figure 12: Internal evaluation process illustrates for *internal* evaluations, an accountability mechanism is in place to hold the consultants and recipient nations accountable to JICA. However, this type of internal mechanism is premised on the concept of closed-impartiality (Sen, 2002), meaning that accountability for the tax-payers through internal procedures is enforced only if we are to accept one of two strong assumptions: (1) the actions of the consultants and counterparts are equivalent to the actions of JICA, or (2) JICA represents the general public by holding the consultants and counterparts accountable on behalf of the tax-payers.

Compared to the other OECD members, Japan's development community produces the largest number of evaluations by far. Within the full network of the OECD (bilateral and multi-lateral agencies), Japan reportedly produced 159 evaluations compared to the network

average of 24 (OECD, 2010a). This repetitive and established procedure will be assumed to have produced a significant normalization process and the establishment of disciplinary techniques that are in many ways now “taken for granted” by industry professionals (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004).

Looking at the number of evaluations (Table 3), the large majority of evaluations are conducted internally (82%, 430 out of 523), as only ex-post monitoring and evaluations of projects over 1 billion JPY are contracted out to external third parties. For all other evaluations, JICA acts as the principal evaluator and utilizes the input and assistance of evaluation consultants and experts within an “evaluation team”.

Table 3: Number of evaluations performed by JICA in FY2010

	Ex-ante	Mid-term and Terminal		Ex-Post	
Technical Cooperation	126	71	76	21 (12)	294
ODA Loans	35	/		52	87
Grant Aid	79	/		63 (31)	142
	240	147		136 (43)	523

*Internal evaluations in bold

The team is led by a JICA official and submits evaluations directly to JICA’s Evaluation Department. The Evaluation Department offers critical input and advice before the final draft is approved by the evaluation team and made available for public viewing.

4.3.1 Do internal evaluations produce accountability?

The internal evaluation system is inherently not an independent process. However, the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance directly refers to independence as a key factor in contributing to the credibility of evaluations:

The evaluation process should be impartial and independent from the process concerned with policy-making, and the delivery and management of development assistance (OECD, 1991, p. 6).

To summarize the arguments, OECD policy claims that evaluation functions must be impartial and independent from the policy making and operational functions of development assistance. Impartiality is necessary to avoid bias, and independence reduces the potential for conflicts of interest that can arise from evaluating one's own activities. Through the independence and expertise of the evaluators, as well as the transparency of the process, evaluations become credible. This implies that failures should be reported on as well as successes with the full participation of the recipient countries. These principles can also be seen reflected in the policy of the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group:

Independence encompasses several interrelated aspects: organisational independence, behavioural independence of evaluators and evaluation managers, protection from external influence and avoidance of conflicts of interest (World Bank Group, 2004, cited in OECD 2010).

Although independence is espoused as a defining characteristic of impartial evaluations within the policies of the OECD and WB, again, as the numbers indicate, a significant portion of JICA evaluations are conducted internally and not independent of the operational functions. This gives rise to the question of whether or not JICA is sincerely incentivized to report on failures as well as successful aid initiatives. In fact, scholars such as Bazerman et al. have gone so far as to argue that psychological barriers will even prevent independent auditors from exercising impartiality (*The Psychological Impossibility of Independence*”, 1997) as a result of an auditor’s competitive interests to be hired for their services.

One explanation provided by an interviewee for employing this internal method of evaluations was linked to a lack of supply and inadequate competition amongst industry specialists and development consultants in Japan’s private sector. There are several medium-sized to large international development consultancies in Japan that possess the resources and capacity to successfully bid for projects tendered by JICA. To avoid conflicts of interest throughout the designing, implementing, evaluating, and monitoring phases of a project, in the past there existed restrictions on consultants winning bids for multiple phases of the same project. This created an incentive climate in which several projects failed to receive any bids, as the major players were opting to target the larger and more lucrative contracts within the project cycle. The current internal mechanisms were argued to be partly a result of JICA reforming this contract scheme. In order to allow competitors to apply for various phases of the project (planning, implementing, evaluating, and monitoring), some phases (such as planning and a portion of evaluations) were technically classified as JICA initiatives. In these initiatives JICA would only enlist the assistance and/or resources of consultants at the capacity of an assisting or advisory body. With JICA taking lead on these peripheral phases of the projects, any participating consultants would be relinquished from conflicts of interest in bidding for the

larger and more lucrative phases of the project.

A closer look at MOFA policy uncovers language that places substantial control of internal evaluation procedures into the hands of the government agencies:

In case where an agreement cannot be made between the evaluation teams and other relevant parties because of their differences in opinion, it is reasonable that the evaluation team, which is responsible for writing the report, makes a final decision **considering** the benefit of a third party evaluation. However, in order to have a practical feedbacks on the policies and implementations, it is important to make an objective and well-balanced evaluation report, **reflecting the opinions of MOFA and JICA,** which are the receivers of the report, up to some level (MOFA ODA White Paper 2011, emphasis added)

The ODA White paper frames the input of third party evaluators as something that only requires “consideration”, implying that the external mechanism is not mandatory, but optional. The clear indication of evaluation content “reflecting the opinions of MOFA and JICA” are surprising when interpreted from a context of a government accountability measure. Other aid agencies will often take additional measures to ensure that parties have “agreed to disagree”, in a sense, rather than to approve a report that will reflect the opinions of a select group of stakeholders. For example, a section within USAID’s evaluation policy which covers “Evaluation Transparency” outlines when to draft a “Statement of differences”:

When applicable, evaluation reports will include statements regarding any significant unresolved differences of opinion on the part of funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation team. (USAID Evaluation Policy, 2011)

Whereas this type of policy in the U.S. allows for the presentation of unresolved differences of opinion or conflicts in a final evaluation report, the Japanese policy implies that an “objective” and “well-balanced” report reflects the opinions of the state-funded institutions. These are strikingly different evaluation procedures that reflect contrasting policy principles, and perhaps organizational histories. At its origins, the main objective of MOFA’s Economic Cooperation Evaluation Committee in 1981 was to assist the management of individual projects and “make Japan’s economic cooperation more effective” (MOFA, 2012, p. 8), in contrast to the first evaluations in the U.S., which were for Congress to ensure the accountability of the government’s administrative systems (MOFA, 2011). The resulting policies in place today are a product of significantly different discourses that have guided and constructed institutional procedures. Some additional reasons as to why such differences may exist will be discussed through the analysis to follow in the next chapter.

In a closed system such as JICA’s internal evaluation system, a critical mind is pressed to ask: who or what is monitoring the biases of the entity itself? JICA’s internal evaluation scheme seems to be a text-book example of the “parochial nature” of closed impartiality that Sen argues against (Sen, 2002). Indeed, as it stands, JICA’s internal evaluations can be criticized for implementing “no procedural barricade...against susceptibility to local prejudices” (Sen, 2002, p. 447). Since JICA wields authority over approving the content of internal evaluations, interviewees were further asked to explain and discuss the quality and value of such a scheme.

While discussing the legitimacy of JICA's internal evaluation procedures, the argument being made by JICA officials in particular, was the following: although JICA may possess the final say on evaluation contents, the evaluation procedures and standards mentioned above ensured that the end product would not be skewed or reflect any biases. A simple analysis on the content of terminal evaluations was conducted to investigate whether or not this really was this case.

4.3.2 Are JICA's terminal evaluations biased?

One of the main purposes of an evaluation is to hold the institution and their actors responsible for potential wrongdoings and abuse that result from problematic or poor projects (or, conversely, to praise, commend, and incentivize stellar performance). With the wealth of scientific, objective, and expert methodology at their disposal, the development professionals that were interviewed for this research (from JICA in particular), displayed confidence in their ability to evaluate their own projects objectively. Furthermore, it was mentioned that mid-term and terminal evaluations are somewhat less utilized as an accountability mechanism to provide the tax-payers with critical material to assess their performance. It was explained that evaluations in the implementation (or "Do") phase are often used as a management tool by project members to keep projects on track, or to improve the performance/progress of troubled projects.

However, even if it were the case that JICA uses mid-term and terminal evaluations solely for feedback and management purposes, the process should represent impartial standards to a certain extent to prevent self-serving, biased, and insincere feedback. A relatively simple content analysis of terminal evaluations displays linguistic trends that unfortunately do not reflect what one might consider a completely unbiased and impartial stance. Term frequency queries and semantic analyses were conducted on terminal evaluations available for download

from the JICA website²⁸. The general format of the evaluation reports can be seen in Table 4 on the page to follow. Evaluation teams are required to fill in the relevant information and produce reports based on the structure and format of this table.

²⁸ http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/tech_and_grant/project/term/

Table 4: Example of Mid-term or Terminal evaluation summary.

Source: Reproduced from JICA Evaluation Guidelines, 2004.

Period of Evaluation	Day/Month/Year ~ Day/Month/Year	Type of Evaluation: Terminal or Ex-Post
III. Results of Evaluation		
1. Summary of Evaluation		
1) Relevance		
2) Effectiveness		
3) Efficiency		
4) Impact		
5) Sustainability		
2. Factors promoting sustainability and impact		
(1) Factors concerning to Planning		
(2) Factors concerning to the Implementation Process		
3. Factors inhibiting sustainability and impact		
(1) Factors concerning to Planning		
(2) Factors concerning to the Implementation Process		
4. Conclusion		
5. Recommendations		
6. Lessons Learned		
7. Follow-up Situation		

Under each heading in the section entitled “Summary of Evaluation”, evaluation results will be filled in and summarized. To use an example of a terminal evaluation on a project for seed dissemination in Burkina Faso, the section for “Relevance” reads:

1) Relevance

Relevance of the project is relatively high based on the following reasons.

First...

By briefly examining the other evaluations, a pattern is found in which the five DAC criteria are assessed or ranked using language that forms a Likert-scale. JICA’s annual evaluations specify that the 5 DAC criteria should be rated on a 3-point scale: high, moderate, and low. The overall rating is given a letter grade between A and D, with each letter corresponding to the following evaluations:

A: Highly satisfactory

B: Satisfactory

C: Partially Satisfactory

D: Unsatisfactory

A content analysis of terminal evaluations was conducted to identify trends in the results of these evaluations. Relative terms were compiled, categorized, and compared using a qualitative data analysis software package (NVivo©). Term frequency queries were conducted targeting terms that would reflect the substance of the evaluations, and these findings were analyzed for their pattern of occurrences. Two types of term frequency analyses were conducted (Table 5):

“Exact” queries searched only for exact hits of each term, including grammatical tenses (e.g., fail, failed, failing); “Stemmed” queries include inflected and derivational variants, which leaves considerable potential for identifying relevant terms as well as irrelevant variations (e.g., positive, positively, position).

If one plots the evaluative terms across an axis from lowest possible evaluation to highest possible evaluation, the frequencies reveal a visible skew. A collocation of positive terminology is observed (Figure 13), in which positive modifiers occur significantly more frequently than neutral or negative terms in JICA’s terminal evaluations.

Table 5: Frequency of terms in JICA Terminal Evaluations (2010-2012)

		Exact	Stemmed
Negative terms	Fail	2	7
	Unsatisfactory	3	3
	Poor	29	30
	Low	99	99
	Negative	73	91
Neutral Terms	Moderate	89	90
	Fair	33	58
	Satisfy/Satisfactory	88	92
Positive terms	Positive	210	266
	High	620	728
	Good	163	179
	Success	163	169
	Excellent	7	14
		1579	1826
Total words: 208181 (3 letters or more)		104 total documents	Avg = 2001 words/document

This relatively simple analysis does not take into account the potential use of each term in

various other contexts. For example, “high” could be used to modify negative evaluations, for example, “highly unstable”, or “high failure rate”²⁹; although the same could be said of all other terms that are included in the frequency queries (e.g., “low rates of failure”, or “no negative effects”). In either case, these numbers indicate a tendency for project members to describe their performance with positive connotations. For example, phrases such as “relatively high”, or “not as expected” are used rather than to simply characterize the project outcomes as “moderate”, “bad”, or “unsatisfactory”. From a critical perspective, this type of pattern in rhetoric could be interpreted as disingenuous or suspicious originating from a tax-payer funded operation. As a potential bias in terminal evaluations has been identified, the dissertation will now attempt to uncover some additional factors that complicate the evaluation process, as described and understood by the development professionals.

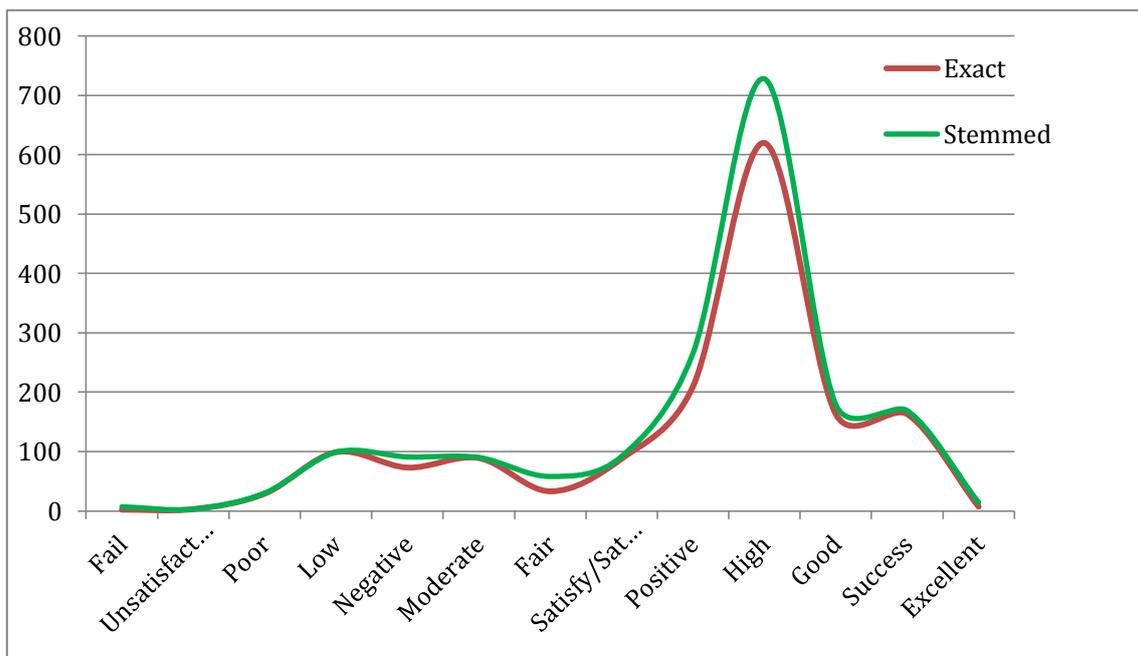


Figure 13: Frequency of descriptive terms in JICA terminal evaluations from 2010-2012

²⁹ However, the phrase “not high” only occurred 9 times [“very high” (39), “relatively high” (50), “fairly high” (9), “moderately high” (6), “reasonably high” (4), and “quite high” (3)]

As internal project evaluations were identified as a key topic with impartiality issues within the development process, subsequent interviews focused on digging further into the details of these evaluation procedures by discussing the internal evaluation processes in their work. In addition, a facilitated dialogue (as mentioned and described in Chapter 3) was organized to allow JICA officials and development consultants to share their respective understandings and experiences of the evaluation process. The specific topics and issues that were discussed and covered in the dialogue will now be described.

Chapter 5

Findings

Evaluations and Development Discourse in Japan

The following section will outline the linguistic patterns and institutional practices that reflect in the discourse of development professionals. Combining the interviews and dialogue transcripts, the data was coded and categorized using concepts found within the existing literature of impartiality and moral judgment. As interviewees were being asked about the role of impartial third parties, statements and claims were coded in their relation to the existing literature to create a picture of how development professionals viewed, defined, and interpreted impartiality as a construct. Initially, the interviews and transcripts were analyzed in hopes of defining particular impartiality values for the development process. Development professionals were asked to provide justifications for the decisions they need to make, and the role of impartial third parties in helping to achieve such ideals. As a result, much of the content of the interviews focused on explaining the principles and standards that were mentioned in chapter 2.2 (i.e., international principles outlined by the OECD or domestic policies of MOFA). The following discussion focuses on information more specific to the daily operations of

development professionals, provided by insights found within the experiences and understandings of the interviewees.

The literature review on impartiality principles provided a general framework which inspired the coding of recordings and transcripts. As interviewees were discussing the impartiality of project evaluations, the intent was to identify and code statements that would fall into one of three categories: (1) substance-based, (2) procedure-based, and (3) agent-based claims of impartiality within evaluations. Substance-based claims were identified as statements that would legitimize evaluations through an explanation of their substance, content, or quality. Procedural claims are represented by statements that discuss the legitimacy or quality of the procedure by which evaluations are conducted. Agent-based claims were identified as statements that would define impartiality through the characteristics of a third-party agent (individual or group). Some of the findings and discussion points that will be brought up will be specific to the dialogue that was described in Chapter 3.3.1, while some of the analysis will build on larger or more general topics, supplemented with consistent statements and claims made during interviews and policy documents.

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) focused on the policy-level discourse and professional genres that shape the institutional practices of development professionals. The following discussion will now look at individual utterances and perspectives gained at the level of the institutional actor (or language user), in order to explore the socio-cognitive level and analyze the “situated cognition related to the discursive practices of members of disciplinary cultures” (Bhatia, 2002, p. 14), namely, that of the JICA officials and development consultants working in Japan.

5.1 Impartiality as a Procedural Construct

Within the framework of impartiality being defined through procedural, substantive, or agent-based arguments, the compiled discourse displayed a tendency to legitimize the impartial substance and agency of evaluations through procedural mechanisms. The semi-structured material showed an overwhelming emphasis on framing impartiality (via evaluations) as a procedural construct. That is, impartiality in evaluations was interpreted as a concept that was produced, exercised, and implemented through procedural mechanisms built into the evaluation process. Impartiality within evaluations was linked to a sound methodological procedure, in which objectivity was protected and enforced through group-oriented and consensus-based procedures. Development professionals described how proper procedures would ensure proper substance, and that the characteristics of an impartial or appropriate evaluator included expertise and proficiency in evaluation procedures. These claims will now be provided and discussed in detail.

5.1.1 *Useful and objective evaluation procedures*

As stated in JICA's evaluation policy, a principal goal of project evaluations is to produce lessons that will feed back into better decision-making and management of future projects. JICA members claimed that they really had “no incentive to make it seem as if everything we are doing is good/positive”.

JICA staff: このプロジェクトをやったことによって、どういう効果があったのかと言うことに対しては、もしここは効果が無かったということであれば、それに対してどういう改善策があるだとか、要は結局そこでしっかりどういう

ことをした結果、何が上手くいかなかったのかと言うことを JICA 自身も見極めないと、質の良いプロジェクトができないので、そこはわりとニュートラルにやっているといます。

By doing this project, we need to know what were the outcomes, but if this project did not produce outcomes, [we need to know] what are the improvements (strategy reforms) that can be made; basically, if we don't properly reflect on things like, after taking what type of actions, what didn't go well, [we] can't produce projects of good quality; so I believe that is being done quite neutrally.

JICA interviewees argued that they possess a sincere interest in improving their current and future aid projects. Insincere and biased evaluations are viewed as wasteful and useless for JICA, as the organization itself stands much to gain from the experiences and lessons that can be gleaned from aid projects.

In addition to the perceived lack of incentives to positively spin their own activities, it is argued that systematic and objective evaluation methodologies ensure that no such positive bias can realistically affect the results or contents of an evaluation. The content of Chapter 3 only covers a portion of the literature that can be used by members of the development community to guide effective evaluation practices. However, all of this literature represents the foundation of an objective methodological approach to evaluations. All development professionals were familiar with policy papers and think-tanks that defined the major processes in their respective fields (which will be outlined below). An argument that was made consistently was that the quality and substance of evaluations (no matter internal or external) is ensured through a proper evaluation process: objective standards are used, and a rigorous procedure is enforced. Rather than discuss the characteristics and quality of the evaluator, or the quality and legitimacy of the evaluation findings and substance, interviewee testimony and policy documents tended to emphasize the nature of the process, and how procedural

mechanisms would ensure that appropriate evaluations would be produced. This is also supported by the wealth of literature covered in Chapter 2, which outlines the information which was provided throughout interviews and corroborated with document reviews.

JICA staff: If the procedures/process is objective and impartial, it does not necessarily matter who does the evaluations

The expertise of evaluators in the industry was also considered a strong factor in protecting project evaluations from the reflection of bias. While objective and standardized methodology ensured that it would not matter who did the evaluations, only those familiar with the methodology would be qualified to produce proper evaluations.

It must be admitted that this type of response – to claim that institutional procedures were strong enough to prevent individual biases – is quite natural to follow this line of inquiry being presented to the subjects. Development professionals were being asked to discuss the legitimacy of internal procedures, and perhaps it is only natural that answers would reflect a rhetorical strategy that focuses on the procedural element of evaluations rather than the characteristics of the evaluator. However, the analysis will proceed further in an attempt to illustrate how such concepts fit within a specific cultural model. The concepts and arguments that support internal evaluations also apply to external evaluations and reflect a distinct discourse within institutional practices in Japan.

The legitimacy of the evaluation methodology was not just linked to expertise and methodology, but also to a passion for fair and objective methodology represented by the NGOs and think-tanks that contribute to the establishment of standardized evaluation methodology. The Foundation for Advanced Studies in International Development (FaSID) offers training courses to development professionals to become qualified evaluators. This complements the

Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach, which is a well-established management practice in Japan's development industry.

Development

Consultant : 5日間で10万円とか一人から取って、教える訳よね、で、それを受講していないと資格が得られないんだ。彼らは凄い、PCMに対して熱意と情熱を持っていて...PCMの、この、理念から逸脱した評価にならないように、頑張ってコンサルを育成するし、自分自身も評価団の一員としてプロジェクトを取って、評価のプロジェクトに入ってくる。そういう人たちは...FASIDの中の人たちって、PCMを正しく適応して正しく評価しよう、と言うのが凄く元にあるから...

[They] charge about 100,000 yen (1000 USD) per person for [a] 5 days [course], and, you aren't licensed [to evaluate] without that training. Those people [the trainers], they have a lot of passion and drive for the PCM...they work really hard to train and educate consultants so that they don't produce evaluations that fail to follow the principles of the PCM, and they themselves join evaluation teams and take on evaluation projects. Those kinds of people...the people from FASID are really motivated to apply the PCM [approach] and conduct evaluations properly and effectively...

As the above statement was produced by a consultant, similarly to JICA, the consultants viewed the established evaluation practices to represent a sincere attempt to evaluate development aid objectively. A strong incentive or motivation of the evaluation community was perceived to be an influential factor supporting the legitimacy of current evaluation practices.

5.1.2 *Group-oriented and consensus-based procedures*

As JICA officials are given authority over the content of the majority of evaluations, a substantial amount of potential exists for evaluations to be subject to bias and partial interests.

However, this scenario seemed quite unlikely to most interviewees mostly due to rigorous bureaucratic mechanisms of checks and approvals that enforced quality control. A development consultant discussed the lengthy and laborious process that involves the production and approval of mid-term and terminal evaluations:

Development

Consultant : まとめた資料が一発で決まることなんかありえなくて、その資料の中身を向こうの政府の人にもたたいてもらおうし、JICA の人もたたいて、言い分が食い違えば、こういった理由なので、ここの形で進めればいいんじゃないですか、ということをするのが普通で、凄いい味に時間がかかるし、一個一個作った資料の集大成が報告書だから、きれいにあんなものが一発で出てくる訳が無い。

It's not possible for all of that paperwork to come together like that in one shot, we have the government [people/workers] over there [the counterparts] go through them, JICA staff goes through them, [and] if their opinions clash, [we or they would say] "these are the reasons", or "we think it is good if we proceed in this manner", and that's what normally happens, and that work takes up a lot of time, each individual document that was made [in that manner] all put together makes up the report, so there's no way a report like that comes together so cleanly like that in one shot.

The development consultant above shared how, with input from all members of an evaluation team, there was little chance that any individual could significantly skew the results of any evaluation. Interviewees from JICA shared the same sentiments, and explained how several knowledgeable people were involved in producing evaluation reports. JICA interviewees emphasized how reports were produced by a "team" made up of several key persons:

JICA staff : 調査団、団でいくから、団長もいるし、更にその後から決済を取るから課長も次長もいるし、だからそこはその形で確保してるかな、人次第と言うところを、多くの人の目を通して。

[it's an] evaluation team, we go in a team, so there's an evaluation chief, and after that we have to authorize payments, so there's a section chief and a deputy director, so in that sense I think we have it covered, where although it depends on the people involved, we have many people look at it.

Information concerning details about the legitimacy of teams was used to support the argument that while it was unlikely that any individual would be able to exercise bias, it seemed virtually impossible that a group (the evaluation team) would be capable of bias. Although individuals were perhaps prone to biases and subjectivity, the objectivity of the group seemed to be assumed. The group-oriented procedures enforced a strong institutional belief that the group was objective and impartial.

Group-oriented discourse permeates throughout the development community, and can also be seen in MOFA's evaluation policies and evaluation guidelines. For example, the language of JICA's 2010 Evaluation Guidelines displays grammatical tendencies to minimize the role of individuals. These include fairly standard examples of the use of passive clauses such as, "In the past, monitoring was performed inside the aid agencies for the purpose of checking the implementation process", or "Evaluation was performed at the predetermined times during the project cycle". In the active voice, these sentences would require a subject to be the agent of the action of "performing" monitoring or evaluations (i.e., "Consultants performed monitoring inside the aid agencies..." or "JICA performed evaluations at the predetermined times..."). Further abstraction can also be observed in a sentence such as the following:

"The reports of the Second Council on ODA Reform and the Advisory Board for the Reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both submitted in 2002, made recommendations..." (JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluations, 2010)

This sentence further shifts the agency of an action (the subject responsible for "making recommendations") to "the reports", rather than a "Council" and "Board". In this manner, intransitive verbs that do not require an agent, allowing for a responsible or active entity to go unspecified in the sentence – a trend that has also been observed in political discourse and discussed by Fairclough (1992).

Furthermore, where the passive voice was not used, JICA's evaluation guidelines (2010) consisted of remarkably few instances of references to an individual, or phrasing that places an individual as the subject of a sentence. There are only two examples where the subject of a sentence (within an 87 page document) is a singular individual:

- 1) It is mentioned that an "external evaluator" is chosen by publicly announced competition.
- 2) An "evaluation chief" is referred to in a diagram depicting the evaluation implementation system (Figure 14). However, the document pluralizes the subject in writing, stating that:

"Evaluation Chiefs, who are in charge of controlling evaluation quality and facilitating project improvement through evaluation, are appointed in business units and overseas offices involved in evaluation" (JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluations, 2010)

Apart from these two examples, all other actions, occurrences, or states take a plural, abstract, or group entity as its subject. The remainder of the entire document uses subjects such as “The Evaluation Department”, “The Advisory Committee on Evaluations”, JICA, MOFA etc.

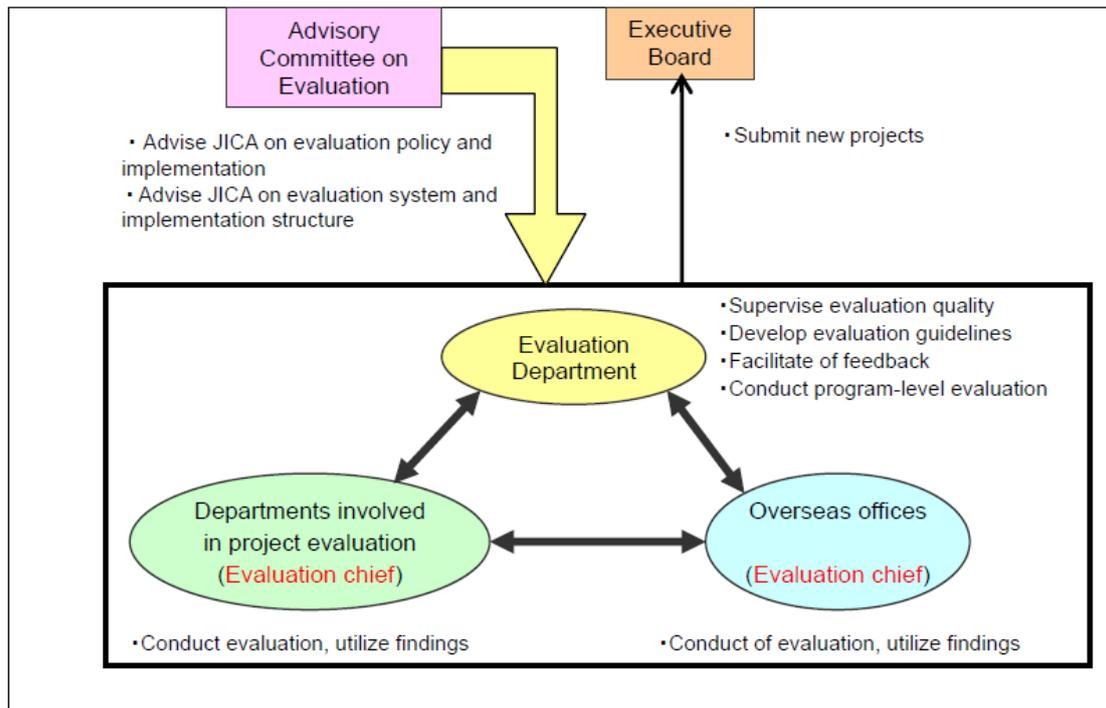


Figure 14: JICA Project evaluation implementation system mentions singular “Evaluation Chief” (JICA, 2010. Reprinted with permission from JICA)

Figure 15, taken from JICA’s evaluation guidelines (2010) frames the act of evaluations as an action taken by the respective organizations, rather than by individual evaluators, evaluation chiefs, or evaluation team leaders. The document goes on to explain the implementation structure of Figure 15 as an act in which JICA and MOFA are “collaborating with each other in performing evaluations at various levels” (9).

The emphasis on group-oriented procedures is further noticeable when the discourse

of MOFA and JICA policies is examined alongside the institutional policies of other major aid agencies. For example, USAID’s Evaluation Policy Task Team emphasizes the independence of the evaluation team leader and also delegates a USAID representative responsibility for compliance with evaluation standards.

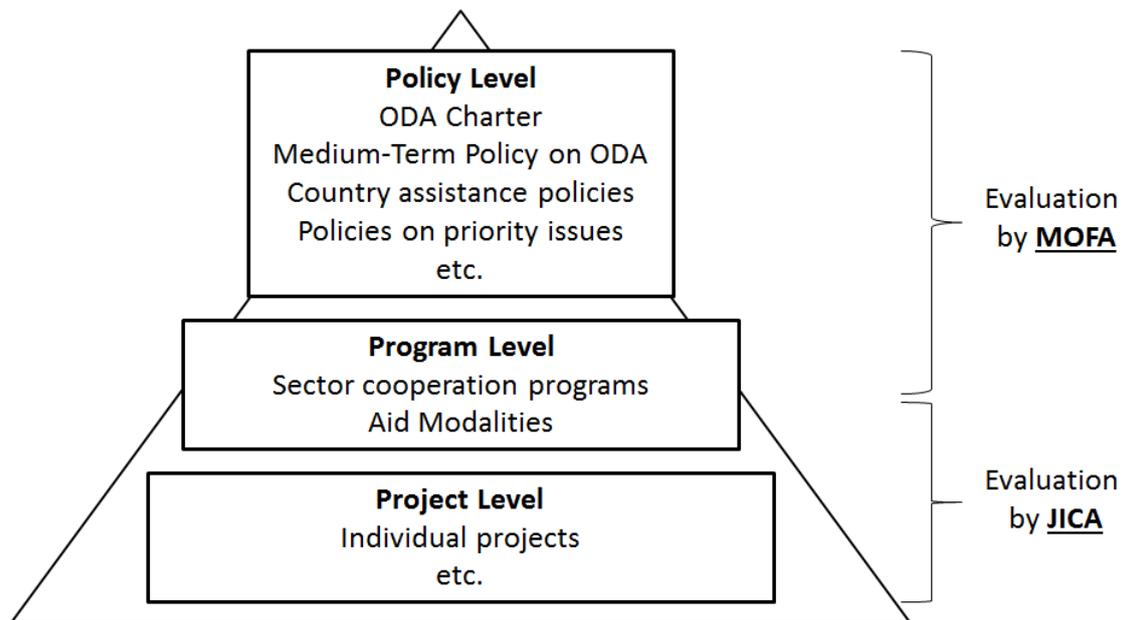


Figure 15: Targets and implementation structure of ODA evaluations as defined by MOFA

Reproduced from: MOFA, 2012

The evaluation policy document’s 3rd chapter which outlines “Basic Organizational Roles and Responsibilities” stipulates an individual’s responsibilities within the first requirement:

“Operating units will: Identify an evaluation point of contact. This individual will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the policy across the breadth of the operating unit’s projects, and will interact with the regional and technical bureau points of contact

and the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning, Office of Learning, Evaluation and Research (PPL/LER).” (USAID Evaluation Policy, 2011)

USAID’s “how-to-note” on evaluations goes on to stipulate that the evaluation team leader must be independent, and possesses final authority over approving the content of the evaluation report. The content of an evaluation cannot be changed without the leader’s permission.

Similarly, DFID’s Independent Advisory Committee on Development Impact (IACDI) has been commended for its strong impartial and independent structure. An OECD report³⁰ analyzing the evaluation practices of all OECD members claims DFID’s IACDI to be “one of the strongest examples of a separate entity overseeing evaluation and development effectiveness”. Chapter 6 of DFID’s evaluation Policy, entitled “Evaluation Policy Implementation within DFID”, delegates individual responsibility in its second clause:

A DFID Senior Civil Servant is to be appointed to act as the lead contact for each report produced by ICAI (Independent Commission for Aid Impact). This lead person is responsible for ensuring that DFID provides information directly to ICAI in an efficient manner. (DFID Evaluation Policy, 2013)

While these documents and policies from other major aid agencies delegate responsibilities and accountability directly to individuals, for Japanese development professionals, a single document such as an evaluation is perceived to be the result of rigorous group procedures, with the end product symbolizing a group’s consensus. A group’s consensus based on objective

³⁰ “Better Aid – Evaluation in Development Agencies (2010)

standards is perceived to embody an impartial decision, which in turn places significant value in a group's ability to exercise consensus-based procedures. The emphasis on consensus and consensus-building is reflected in the discourse of Japan's development-related evaluation policies and procedural manuals:

"It is very important to follow through with...data interpretation...by coming to a consensus about them with the stakeholders" (JICA Evaluation Guidelines, 2004).

In this manner, JICA's evaluation guidelines (2004) mentions "consensus" a total of 18 times, while the following documents from other development agencies never mention the term:

- DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance (1991)
- DAC Evaluation Series: Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations (2006)
- DFID Evaluation Policy (2013)
- DFID Monitoring and Evaluation Guide (2006)
- USAID How-To-Note for Preparing Evaluation Reports (2012)
- USAID Evaluation Policy (2011)

USAID guidelines state that evaluation teams "may consider" including implementing partners and other stakeholders in the review process (2011), while the OECD Evaluating Development Cooperation Summary of Key Terms only mentions consensus once, but in the following context: "...building consensus between the agencies and maintaining effective co-ordination processes can be costly and time-consuming"(OECD, 2010b, emphasis added).

Interviewees qualified the importance of consensual bureaucratic practices by describing a process in which a single document was passed back and forth between several (anywhere from 4 to over 10) project members before it would be made available for public viewing. The evaluation chief would collaborate with an evaluation consultant and the counterparts and evaluate the progress of the counterpart (partner country institution) and project consultants. The evaluation team would take the PDM and conduct research to ascertain whether or not the project goals and objectives were successfully implemented. Importance was also placed on ensuring that the counterparts also participated and contributed to the evaluation process.

However, this arrangement was regarded as a major reason for conflicts that occur during the evaluation process. Stakeholders often disagree over the project's level of criteria achievement. Naturally, project (implementation) consultants and counterpart institutions have the desire to have all of their activities positively evaluated. An assessment of the progress of a project is perceived as equivalent to the evaluating the quality of their work.

Development

Consultant : コンサルは理解しなきゃいけないのは、これはプロジェクトの評価であって、コンサルの評価じゃないんだよ、ということをもっと理解しないと、変な喧嘩じゃないけど、自己主張が出てくるわけだよ。What the consultants need to understand, is that this is a project evaluation, and it's not evaluating the consultants, they need to understand that first, otherwise you will create, I won't say fights, but conflicting self-assertions will be made.

Perceptual gaps arise when the progress of a project is hindered due to reasons that are out of the control of the project team (e.g., environmental, political, or economic instability). This formed an ambiguous concept of evaluations which produced different and conflicting

perceptions of their primary purpose, and consequent impacts.

As the content of an evaluation can only be defined by the indicators outlined in the PDM, any complex factors (direct, indirect, environmental, political etc.) cannot be incorporated into the evaluation report. Thus, even if the efforts and practices of consultants and counterparts were commendable and reasonable, if the goals set-out in the PDM were not implemented, project would be evaluated as “poor”, or “bad”. It was this aspect of evaluations which seemed to be the most common cause of conflicts between stakeholders. While stakeholders need to collaborate with one another to complete projects, each group experienced different consequences regarding poor evaluation results. Although it seemed reasonable to assume that each stakeholder had their own interests in having projects evaluated positively, it was argued that this was not necessarily always true. JICA staff argued that they had no incentive to “bend the truth”, or “act as if everything [we] do is good” (personal interview).

This was argued to be the case “despite” the “loyalty” that was perceived to be present amongst partner agencies. The concept of loyalty helps this discussion transition to the inter-organizational relationships and dynamics that are born between relevant partner organizations through development work. The next section will discuss perhaps the most significant element of Japanese institutional practices in development: inter-organizational relationships.

5.2 Inter-organizational Relationships as a Primary Concern: A Model of Interdependence

A salient factor that was enforcing the collaborative and consensual nature of evaluation procedures was the need to preserve inter-organizational relationships that exist between stakeholders within the development process. The importance that is placed on preserving positive relationships affects both the organizational goals of respective parties, as well as the interaction that takes place between them. Rather than participating in a chicken-or-egg debate on whether the need to preserve relationships results in collaborative and consensus-based processes, or the group-oriented processes created a social environment that values inter-group harmony and cooperation, this dissertation will argue that a reflexive context has been identified (cf. Gee, 1999). The importance of inter-organizational relationships places a high value on harmony and positive group relations. This creates a need for the collaborative and consensus-based institutional mechanisms that in turn reinforces the importance of inter-organizational relationships. This section will now provide a detailed discussion of the situational context which places inter-organization relationships as a priority amongst development professionals.

Perhaps the easiest place to begin is at the literal word: “關係” (*kankei*: ‘relationship’). Several variations of the term *kankei* are used by development professionals when describing the development process. The relationships and their significance provide a vast source of anecdotal insight and potential case studies to explore the multitude of social factors that can affect development aid projects:

契約関係 / 甲乙関係

(*keiyaku kankei / kou-otsu kankei* – Contractual relationship)

Keiyaku (契約), literally translates to ‘contract’. *Kou* (甲) and *otsu* (乙) refer to the signatory titles of the parties to a contract, using the first two characters of a counting system originating from the Chinese zodiac and sexagenary cycle. These terms are referring to the contractual relationship between JICA and the development consultants. Although JICA is classified as an independent administrative institution (IAI) in charge of operational functions of ODA, a large portion of actual implementation at the project sites is contracted out to private consultants. JICA staff located at the district offices and headquarters are tasked to oversee the completion of specific development projects while monitoring and managing the progress of the consultants and the counterparts. Completing the development projects requires the consultants to collaborate with counterpart officials. As a JICA project, however, any modifications or significant developments in response to challenges will need to be authorized by JICA. In principle, consultants only need to fulfill their duties as stipulated in their contract with JICA.

Similar to most contractual relationships, all parties involved are shouldering a certain amount of risk while trying to attain the benefits associated with such an agreement. Recipient nations wish to receive aid, consultants wish to win contracts, JICA wishes to successfully implement projects, and MOFA wishes to protect Japan’s national interests through ODA. Each party’s interests are intimately linked together through the aid process. Contractual obligations represent the formal link between the interests of the counterparts, consultants, and JICA.

クライアント関係 / 発注者関係

(*kuraianto-kankei / hacchuusha kankei* – Client-relationship)

Within the context of a contractual relationship, JICA is often referred to as “the client”, amongst development consultants³¹. The perception amongst development professionals is that consultants are providing service to their main (and most important) client, which is JICA. If one considers the interests of consultants from the perspective as a private entity, their interest is in protecting profits and generating income. Thus, JICA becomes the client as opposed to the beneficiaries of a project or a recipient nation. Although the individuals receiving the development training are officials and citizens of the recipient nations, the funding for the project is authorized and granted through JICA. Consultants are obliged to produce results that reflect the terms of the contract –ergo wishes– signed with JICA, while it is JICA’s responsibility to ensure that the goals of a development project and the terms of its contract adequately consider the interests of the recipient nation as well. JICA officials and foreign affairs bureaucrats will have ideal visions for successful development projects in developing countries. When a project runs in to trouble, stakeholders can be quick to begin pointing the finger. JICA may hold issues with the consultant’s approach, or local officials may not be cooperating as expected. Consultants may feel that JICA’s wishes or the PDM create unreasonable demands. It was suggested that some consultants perceive JICA as generalist bureaucrats with relatively less expertise and resources to pour into a single project, while JICA officials may not find it so much their responsibility to “implement” projects as to “manage” them.

³¹ While interestingly, some JICA officials will refer to counterparts and consultants as clients.

外交関係 / 政治関係

(*gaikou kankei / seiji kankei* – Diplomatic/political relationship)

Another complex dynamic within development projects is concerned with the political and diplomatic nature of development aid. While the DAC principles for effective aid places significant importance on the relevance of development aid to the policies and needs of recipient countries, certain exceptions seemed to embody examples in which Japan's domestic or diplomatic interests could overshadow a developing country's development priorities. While Japan has a reputable history of development cooperation in Asia, MOFA and JICA are working to expand their presence in other regions. Whether these represent an attempt to extend better diplomatic relations with these nations, or to unleash further growth potential through development cooperation, it was often mentioned that other aid agencies (e.g., from the US, China, Korea, Europe, or multi-laterals) were more competitive in other regions such as Africa or South-America. In such regions, these other aid-agencies would often win the bids to implement large development contracts, while MOFA and JICA occasionally found themselves trying to establish better relations by taking on what development professionals considered to be of low priority, or questionable design. Extreme examples included providing or designing service delivery in a region before security and stability was established in a conflict zone, or in regions without necessary infrastructure.

パワー関係/力関係/上下関係

(*pawah kankei/chikara kankei/jouge kankei* – Power relationship)

The various relationships between stakeholders formed an intricate power structure

between organizations that are often further complicated by socio-cultural norms that work to preserve and enforce a clearly defined social hierarchy. While JICA “holds the money” (*okane wo nigitteru kara*), consultants possess the necessary resources to successfully implement any development agenda. As bureaucratic generalists, many JICA officials understood that their organization lacked the expertise and resources that are necessary to implement development projects. In this manner both organizations are dependent on one another, but credence of “the customer is god” clearly places an elevated social status onto JICA. Socio-cultural norms and interpersonal dynamics can complicate this relationship, as younger JICA officials talked about the nuanced approach that is required when a consultant, although a customer “serving” JICA, can be much older and possess considerably higher social and professional status. Many young professionals must deal with the social dissonance that arises when an older and clearly more experienced individual is put in a position to “serve” the younger, and less experienced individual’s organization. These situations are a product of social norms and practices that clash when applied simultaneously across individual and group levels.

Nuanced social maneuvering is also often required due to the diplomatic nature of development projects, as some projects are doomed without the cooperation of high-ranking officials or bureaucrats in developing countries. Acquiring buy-in from these individuals or delegations becomes a top priority for Japanese stakeholders and can shift power relationships. Some recipient nations are also seen to enjoy the ability to leverage their development potential in a buyer’s market, offering international and diplomatic presence to donor countries through their agreements to large-scale development projects (interview testimony from a private-sector

development consultant). In this manner, the development process reveals an elaborate network of stakeholders, leveraging their resources in collaborative attempts to satisfy the interests of all parties through development aid.

Individuals from JICA and development consultants often refer to the other stakeholders as “partners”, and these numerous relationships frame each stakeholder as an entity with a vital role within the development process. Their continued collaboration is considered vital for the success of any aid initiative. Close collaboration and cooperation among the project members creates a collaborative group dynamic that the Japanese stakeholders wish to protect. However, independent and frank consultants were valued for their “candid way of speaking”, or the “sharp criticisms”, which project members seem to have trouble expressing in fear of threatening the cooperative dynamic. Evaluations of technical cooperation projects were felt to be significantly difficult because of the high level of inter-organizational collaboration and relational dynamics inherent in capacity building initiatives. Officials from foreign institutions are trained by Japanese experts, collaborate with JICA officials and project managers from consultancies, and work together to achieve project objectives. Interviewees were very conscious of the need to preserve positive inter-organizational relationships while working together to complete development projects. Interview testimony and transcripts reveal that these priorities were significant enough to impact the implementation of institutional practices, such as evaluations, as well as social interaction among stakeholders.

5.2.1 *How do inter-organizational relationships impact evaluations?*

An evaluation consultant is required to compile a significant amount of information when conducting a mid-term or terminal (internal) evaluation. Preliminary research takes place in Japan by reviewing relevant documents from the design and implementation phases of the project. This is done in preparation of a 1-2 week field study of the project site to interview, survey, and deliberate with relevant stakeholders and project team members about the progress of the project. Ideally, the evaluation expert will provide the necessary input that the evaluation chief requires to produce a report that reflects a consensus about the status of a project according to all stakeholders involved. Consensus building is often not a short and easy process, and this concern is again directly reflected in the MOFA evaluation policy, which states:

なお、利害関係者は、評価者の独立性を尊重し、評価判断そのものに立ち入ることは避けるべきであるが、同時に、評価者の方も独善的にならず、中立な立場から評価を行うことが重要である。

In case occurs a conflict of opinions among the evaluator and stakeholders in final report, both of the opinions shall be listed if considered significant. While “intervention” of stakeholders to judgment of evaluations should be avoided considering the independency of the evaluators, it is also important for the evaluators to conduct evaluation in a neutral manner by not taking **self-righteous manner** (MOFA ODA Evaluation Guidelines, 2012, p. 39).

The explicit concern for “self-righteous” behaviour is arguably significantly distinct to Japanese (or Japan’s English language) policy. Indeed one would be hard-pressed to find any other major (national-level) policy document that so directly refers to inter-personal conflicts of “self-righteousness”. It should also be noted that the latter half of this statement is underlined in the original policy document (the underlining in the excerpt above reflects the original style), further emphasizing the importance of managing inter-organizational tensions and conflicts that can arise out of the evaluation process. This excerpt of MOFA evaluation policy reflects a significant concern for the management of inter-organizational conflicts through evaluations.

To enhance the objectivity of the evaluation process, consultants with expertise in the respective project goals or evaluation methodology are contracted to assist the evaluation team. Again, although JICA policy dictates that it is necessary to hire an external consultant, there are no specific stipulations or enforcement measures to ensure that their input is reflected in the final evaluation report. This ambiguity results in a variety of work patterns that have been observed by development professionals:

Interviewee: 実施コンサルタントの声も結構入ります、そこは結構担当者によって違うんですが。担当者でも、自分が高評価したいと強い思いを持つ人は、本当にコンサルタントの方にはただ作業してもらおう扱いで、自分で全部決めて、後は報告書をコンサルタントに作ってくださいと言う人もいれば、人によってはコンサルタントの意見を尊重する、第3者の方がプロジェクトをニュートラルな目で見えてどういう風に評価するかと言うところに尊重してやる人もいますが、それはどっちでもいます。

[I believe] The voice [input/opinions] of the consultants are included [in evaluations] quite a bit, although it depends on the (JICA) person in charge. Among the evaluation chiefs, if you have one who feels strongly that they want to give a good evaluation, they might just use the consultants as administrative assistants, and decide everything on their

own, and just have the consultants write up the report; but you also have people who will respect the consultant's opinions, and respect the third-party's ability to observe the evaluation process from a neutral standpoint; there are examples of both [types].

Within this flexible process that allows for various patterns of professional arrangements and work styles, interviewees described personal experiences where they observed the work of respected evaluation consultants. These consultants were remembered and admired primarily for their frank, border-line "aggressive" manner of inquiry and evaluation. Examples of "aggressive statements" were given as follows:

JICA staff: 「これ、本当に効果あるんですか」とか「これ、こっだけ投入してるけど本当に意味あったんですか」「何もやってないじゃないですか」とか結構平気で言う...

They [the consultants] sometimes have no problem asking: "Is this really creating the impacts it was supposed to?" or "You spent a lot here, but was it really worth it?", or "You haven't [really] done anything have you"

Translated into English, the examples above are not the typical phrases that come to mind as aggressive examples of piercing criticism, or brutal honesty. In fact, by applying Austin's speech act theory to this example, the importance of inter-organizational relationships governing social interaction is brought forward even further. At their surface level, the "aggressive" and "critical" examples mentioned above are inquisitive statements. In other words, the locutionary act takes the form of a question (i.e., "is this really creating impacts?" or "was this really worth it?"). The illocutionary act, however, can be deciphered by considering the goals and motivations of the stakeholders who took the action that is being questioned. By questioning the existence of outcomes or value, the evaluators are not asking for yes or no answers, but looking to logically link the specific decisions and actions of the consultants and counterparts, with the intended

outcomes and values that were originally intended by the project design. Thus, the illocutionary act takes the form of a “(critical) evaluation”, or “asking for clarification/justification of decisions or actions”. However, as testimony from informants illustrates (see below), such direct inquiries can be perceived as criticisms of (only) the actions of consultants and counterparts. The perlocutionary act of inquisitive illocutions directed at implementing stakeholders thus formed blatant and/or aggressive criticisms of the decisions and actions of consultants and counterparts. Subjects explained that questioning the end results of several months or years of work implied that (1) not enough, or no work was done, that (2) someone’s, or the group’s efforts were useless, or that (3) no effort was made. As was discussed earlier, such explicit mentions of individual liability (through the use of individuals as the subject of a transitive sentence) are not common in the Japanese development discourse. Several reasons were provided to explain why many interviewees were not accustomed to such explicit criticisms:

JICA staff: やっぱり専門家だと...ずかずか言ってくれる人が専門家に対してそういうのを言ってくれれば、良くなるきっかけにはなると思う...
When it comes to experts [consultants]...to have someone who will be very blunt (or plain-spoken) towards the expert [consultants], I think it creates opportunities for improvements...

Consultants work closely with counterparts to successfully implement projects, and JICA officials closely monitor the progress and provide assistance when necessary. Continued cooperation is necessary for projects to proceed smoothly. As a result, an external evaluation consultant is perceived to be better suited to take on a critical stance, as they are seen to be under less pressure to maintain positive inter-relations with other project members. However, their critical remarks are often perceived as “rude”, and “aggressive”.

There appear to be salient contextual elements at play in organizational processes that frame the seemingly ordinary inquisitive statements such as “is this (process) creating the impacts it was supposed to create?” as overly critical, unnecessarily imposing, and even hostile. An explicitly critical perspective threatens the positive relationships between the project members. Strong applications of politeness theory would argue that Japanese speakers are expected to first consider the state, or perspective of the other, and speak in a manner that would prioritize, or protect the positive and negative face (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987) of interacting parties. These examples in themselves represent the importance of inter-organizational relationships, and the care that must go in to supporting them.

To add more depth to this claim of the saliency of professional group dynamics among development stakeholders, a study was conducted in an attempt to analyze the rationale and thinking behind appropriate behaviour within this context directly. The facilitated dialogue introduced in Chapter 3.3 was manipulated so as to make direct observations of statements and utterances that would threaten the group dynamic. The findings of this next study represent the contributions to pragmatic analyses of Japanese language in professional contexts.

5.2.2 Discussing the difficulty of evaluations: a facilitated dialogue between JICA staff and development consultants

The theoretical and practical issues surrounding internal evaluations became a central theme of which development professionals were asked to explain: How do you justify/ensure accountability and the quality of development through internal evaluation procedures? This led to the eventual design and organization of a facilitated dialogue between development professionals. Four subjects were gathered, two JICA officials (both Male, in their late 20s) and two development consultants (both female, in their late 20s). All participants were also the

subject of one-on-one interviews, and consent to participate in a dialogue was negotiated after the first interviews. A date was organized in which all participants could gather for a 2-hour discussion on project evaluations. Emails were sent in advance to provide participants with the following information:

Table 6: Handout disbursed to participants of the facilitated dialogue

Over the course of several months, development professionals have been asked to share their opinions and knowledge concerning issues with JICA's evaluation process.

Several issues have been identified, and the following questions have been explored concerning the evaluation process:

- a. JICA takes the lead on several evaluations, which essentially means JICA is evaluating itself. Is JICA truly able to objectively evaluate its own activities?
- b. JICA hires consultants to conduct, or provide input for evaluations. Can consultants (companies) be critical of their clients?
- c. What kind of pressures do development consultants, and JICA staff face through evaluations? How do these pressures affect the evaluation process?

These guiding questions and issues in Table 6 above were given to provide a context for the discussion that was to take place. Handouts were also prepared on the day of the dialogue. Several statements that were found to be controversial, adversarial, or aggressively critical were compiled into a handout and disbursed to the participants of the dialogue. For example, statements such as “consultants often try and fake their results and outputs”, or “JICA doesn't know anything (about realities in the field)”. These statements represented controversial arguments and opinions that were given in one-on-one interviews and research prior to the dialogue. The participants were asked to share their thoughts, experiences, and understandings as to why such claims may exist among professionals in the development community.

5.2.2.1 Observing Adversarial Communication

In the dialogue between JICA officials and development consultants, a manipulation was designed in an attempt to produce and observe specific examples of socially undesirable behaviour amongst the participants. Two JICA officials and two development professionals were gathered to discuss issues concerning the evaluation process, as described earlier. However, one of the JICA officials was asked in advance to behave in an uncooperative manner. The objective of the dialogue was to have an informative and stimulating discussion concerning project evaluations and to share the unique and differing perspectives between JICA staff and development consultants. The confederate was asked to try and deliberately derail or disrupt the discussion, using whatever style of speaking or behaviour he felt natural or necessary to do so.

This manipulation was inspired by a separate study examining the implicit and unspoken norms governing social interaction in Japan known as *kuuki* (Maemura, in press). The objective was to observe how Japanese speakers in groups would define and follow conversational norms as a dialogue was being facilitated. Japanese people have coined the term *keiwai* (*KY*), short for *kuuki-yomenai* ('cannot read the *kuuki*'), to denote or label people who are unable to pick up on contextual social cues "to an unacceptable or unfortunate extent. A person is labeled *KY* when they cannot read the atmosphere to the degree that their consequent behaviour disrupts, damages, or ruins a social setting" (Maemura, in press). The confederate was first asked to behave in a *KY* manner, so as to observe how *not* to behave in these situations, and to provide concrete examples of *KY* behaviour in the current context.

This type of social experiment, in which the confederate is tasked to disrupt the social environment, is an efficient approach to observing and understanding some of the norms and customs that guide social interaction. By asking the confederate to act in ways that would

otherwise be perceived as uncooperative, or hostile, the resulting behaviour can reveal the rules and assumptions that lie behind socially acceptable behavior. Socially unacceptable or undesirable behavior represent examples of behaviours that are inconsistent with, or run counter to existing social norms. This approach thus reveals clearly the factors and assumptions that affect conversational interaction, as the discussion below will reveal how the sensitive nature of cooperative relations between JICA officials, development consultants, and counterparts creates a social environment that values cooperative and collaborative behaviour within an interdependent system.

The primary theme of the dialogue was “Rethinking the evaluation process in development projects”, and participants were asked to gather with the objective of generating a better understanding of the issues associated with the evaluation process. This was done in an attempt to draw out each stakeholder’s interpretation of how impartiality is maintained in a closed system such as JICA’s internal evaluation scheme.

Table 7: Profiles of Dialogue participants

	Confederate	Participant	Participant	Participant
Organization	JICA	JICA	Development Consultancy	Development Consultancy
Age	20s	20s	20s	20s
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female

The entire dialogue lasted approximately 2 hours, and the confederate removed himself half-way through the conversation, after approximately 1 hour. The remaining participants continued and concluded the dialogue without the confederate. After the dialogue concluded, the remaining participants were debriefed about the manipulation and asked to share

some comments about the confederate's behaviour. In addition, within 2 weeks of the completion of the dialogue, each participant was given a follow-up interview to specifically discuss the behaviour of the confederate, as well as any other issues that they may have wished to cover. The first person to be interviewed was the confederate himself, and specific instances where he was deliberately acting uncooperatively were identified and explained. The other participants were asked to listen to the examples that were identified by the confederate himself, and to provide explanations as to why such statements were negatively perceived. This methodology allows for an analysis of both the behaviour of the speaker, as well as the understanding and perceptions of the receiver (a systematic analysis of the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces). The information that was gathered through these follow-up interviews represents an in-depth discussion of the salient contextual elements that can frame certain locutions as aggressive, hostile, or rude.

The discussion to follow will provide examples of specific utterances by the confederate that were perceived as noticeably rude, uncooperative, or hostile. The recordings and transcripts alone did not provide enough information to help non members of the discourse community understand the hostility of such utterances (i.e., English speakers, members of the general public, or those with no knowledge of the field of international development, would most likely not perceive these interactions as uncooperative, hostile, or awkward). Thus, the information gleaned from explanatory confirmations provided by the confederate directly, as well as from follow-up interviews with the other dialogue participants, describes why certain utterances can be perceived negatively within the current institutional context. These contextual elements, such as the need to manage positive inter-organizational relationships, power asymmetries between stakeholders, and the collaborative nature of international development projects fit within a cultural model of interdependence.

The contextual elements that frame stakeholder interaction can also be linked to the theoretical framework of politeness theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Watts 2003) which draws a link between the level of directness of a statement, to its politeness. Pragmatic considerations that were required to translate the statements of dialogue participants demonstrated a significant level of indirect speech and contextual communication that takes place between interlocutors, which will be described below. For example, the issues and constructs that have been identified so far by this study remarkably reflect Brown and Levinson's model that proposes "three sociological factors are crucial in determining the level of politeness which a speaker will use to an addressee" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 15). The three factors named in their work are (1) relative power of the hearer over the speaker, (2) the social distance between the speaker and hearer, and (3) the ranking of the imposition involved in the face threatening act (ibid.).

Politeness theory is useful for characterizing and operationalizing the politeness of specific utterances, while Leech's Politeness Principle (2007) may be more appropriate for interpreting the relative differences in perceived politeness across cultures. The discussion to follow can be interpreted as a description of a unique set of politeness maxims that regulates proper communication between the subjects. The politeness maxims and constraints within the context of Japanese development professionals may seem markedly different when read and interpreted from a Western or native English speaker's perspective.

The next section will discuss each example of adverse communication in detail. The discussion below will show that explanations for the apparent rudeness or impoliteness of statements are contextually built, describing the situational and pragmatic implications of such utterances at a significantly nuanced level. These contextual cues also reflect a profound consideration for the 'other' and relational dynamics. These dynamics may fit Spencer-Oatey's

(2008) proposed model of “rapport management”, in which face sensitivities, behavioural expectations, and interactional goals constitute the bases that interlocutors manage through interaction. An explanation of the context of each utterance will be provided to discuss the situational meanings and conversational rules that shape the confederate’s statements as uncooperative, rude, or hostile.

Before going over each example in detail, a short summary of the contents of the dialogue is necessary to help place each utterance into context. The two hour conversation proceeded to cover topics in the following order:

- 1) The difficulty of evaluations: How objective and accurate are project evaluations?
- 2) Challenges beyond the scope of project teams.
- 3) Evaluating projects vs. evaluating consultants.
- 4) Power asymmetry between stakeholders.

Within each topic, the confederate produced statements that were perceived as markedly uncooperative, or rude³². These will now be discussed and explained from both the perspective of the speaker and the hearer, to elucidate the relational dynamics and institutional discourse that guides the conversational style of the subjects.

³² **Disclaimer on the nature of the social manipulation:** A clarification and emphasis of the nature of the social manipulation is necessary. The utterances of the confederate that are to be discussed in the following sections were produced *purposely* as inappropriate, rude, aggressive, or hostile statements. In otherwords, the confederate is producing statements and describing practices that *do not* reflect the appropriate behaviour of an official from an institution such as JICA.

Example #1: “JICA is objective”

After some casual greetings and small-talk, the participants began to discuss some of the difficulties associated with evaluations. The concern being addressed was that the complexity of development projects is often misrepresented in evaluations. The group briefly touched upon whether or not the current evaluation procedures were adequate in reflecting the value of a project, and whether 2 weeks in the field for evaluation consultants (contracted to assist in the evaluation procedure) is an adequate amount of time for an evaluation team to assess the state of a project. One of the consultants began describing a project in which her manager had trouble accepting a negative evaluation of a project they had implemented for JICA:

Consultant: ...前のプロジェクトなんだったんだけど、サステナビリティが、なんか、**Low**とか、**Bad**だったかな、で、すごい評価団の人に「なんでこれ **Bad**なんだよ」言うのをずっと話してたのよ。で、その時は多分評価されなくて、もったいないとか、アンフェアと思われてたと思うんだよね。だけれど、5つの軸で見て全体に評価されてるかもしれないけど、やっぱり、たくさん色んなことをしているプロジェクトだと、ここは、これぐらい出来たと思ってても、評価団の人は1週間とか2週間とか来ただけで、そこまで見れなくて、本当はこうなのに、と言うのは伝わらなかったっていうのは、あるよね。でも、時間もお金も無限にあるわけじゃないから、その2週間でつかみ切れないような成果だったら無しとみなすのか、それはね、ちょっとわかんない、そのために2週間っていう期間が妥当かどうかも分かんないけど。

...it was in a past project [that I heard about], the sustainability of a project was graded as “low”, or “bad” maybe, but anyways, the manager of the project was saying to the evaluation team the whole time: “Why is this bad?” So, for that project I think he (the manager) felt that the fact that some aspects of the project weren’t being evaluated was unfair. But, a project might be evaluated overall using the 5 criteria, but, when a project is doing multiple/various things, even if you feel that a project

achieved something, someone from the evaluation team will come just for a week or two weeks, and won't be able to see much, and the reality of the situation isn't fully communicated. That happens. But, it's not as if there is unlimited time or money, so I don't know if outcomes that can't be grasped [and understood] in 2 weeks should be regarded as non-existent. That, I don't know. I also don't know whether 2 weeks is the appropriate time for that sort of thing.

The confederate from JICA responded by telling a similar story about a project that was being evaluated negatively in terms of its sustainability and created disagreements with the consultants implementing the project. At this point the confederate produced a statement outlining his opinion about the “objectivity of JICA”:

JICA

Confederate: ...でも実際評価って入る時は事前にいろいろ調べてきて、客観的に見るから、どっちかと言ったらやっぱり本部側の意見が正しいか客観的なのかなと思ってて...

...But when evaluation teams go in, they prepare and research a lot beforehand, and **look at things objectively**, so if I had to say which, **I think the opinion of Headquarters is correct and objective...**

This was the first exchange amongst the group members where conflicting views about the evaluation process were presented. The development consultant (Female, late 20s) first describes how some project managers did not feel that their projects are being evaluated sufficiently. However, she goes on to acknowledge the difficulty of having to produce within a limited time frame and with limited resources. The confederate (Male, 20s) immediately followed with a presentation of a belief statement that JICA represents the objective party during evaluations. Further explanations from the other participants described why this type of statement was perceived as surprising. The other JICA staff member mentioned that decisively

claiming that JICA was the “correct”, or “objective” party was something he wished his colleague would speak about in a more “humble manner”, and that such statements were not appropriate in front of consultants whose job is to put in the work to implement these projects. The manner in which the confederate attributed objectivity on the side of JICA was interpreted as not “humble” enough, resulting in borderline arrogant behaviour. Alternate ways of framing this opinion were given:

JICA staff: そこは言い方としては、例えば「JICAのほうが客観的」という言い方よりは、「色々な考え方はあるけど、ちょっと離れた目で見れてるのは事実だよ」とか。

He could have said there, for example, instead of saying “JICA is more objective”, you could say [something like] “there are various ways of thinking about it, but it is a fact that [JICA] can assess [the project] from more of a distance [compared to consultants who are implementing on the ground]”, something like that.

By claiming JICA as *the* objective party, the confederate produced a truth-statement which left little room for the other speakers to maneuver and express their opinions. Labeling JICA as the objective party simultaneously implied that consultants were subjective or narrow-sighted. Speakers are interacting within an intimate domain of co-existence and interdependency, which heightens sensitivity to the relative implications that result from characteristic attributions of a group. As self-deprecation and modesty are used by speakers to highlight and affirm positive aspects of the listener, acknowledging positive characteristics of the self can be interpreted as a disparaging act; explicitly labeling a party with positive attributes will highlight the relative negative conditions of another party. With a strong sensitivity to relative characteristics, enhancing the positive face of the self (via comparison) acts as a positive face threat on the other. Defining one stakeholder within a group as “objective” implies that the other stakeholder is

“subjective”. The Japanese speakers were very sensitive to this type of intrinsically face threatening act and the relative consequences of how listeners’ may interpret statements from an interdependent perspective. The confederate’s perceived arrogance was attributed to his explicit acknowledgment of the superiority of his own group (JICA), and this image was further reinforced through his style of speaking throughout the discussion. While the other participants proposed alternate explanations and elements of the issues being discussed, the confederate continued to produce determinative statements attributing objectivity to JICA.

JICA

Confederate: ...本来であればもう少し回りくどい言い方をしながら、でも自分はそれが正しいと思うからそれを主張したと思うけど、主張の仕方が結構端的だったんだよね。本当に決め付け的な感じ。本来であれば、日本人だったら回りくどく、「自分はこう、こう、こういう風に思うんだけど、どうかな」みたいな、[話を] 持ってくる言い方を自分は普段するんだけど、ここはあえて、「いや、本部が客観的だからでしょ」、とある種、断定的な言い方をした。

Usually, I would use much more indirect phrasing, although I was trying to express what I thought was the right opinion, the way I said it was quite straight/blunt. It was as if I really/truly had already decided. Usually, Japanese people would be more indirect, “I think that this, this, and this, but I’m not sure”, I would usually frame my statements in that way, but here I purposely said it in a very deterministic way, like: “Nope, (evaluations are fine) because Head Quarters is objective”.

The confederate explained that he would usually not speak in such a direct manner, and that most responses would have begun with an acknowledgement of a contrary view. The deterministic phrasing eliminates opportunities for debate or dialogue, as the others felt as if it was an area that could not be discussed (with the confederate). A typical exchange would have provided much more leeway or ambiguity surrounding the truthfulness of such a statement. This

is done in order to leave room for interpretation and flexibility for alternate and potentially conflicting opinions. The confederate's deterministic statements and absolute claims early on in the dialogue were effectively able to restrict the other participants' perceived ability to explore and expand on these topics and issues.

The ability to restrict the conversational and expressive freedom of other conversational interactants may be a significant strategic implication for interlocutors. Attaching deterministic and absolute speaking styles and phrasing to key concepts or issues within a discussion can significantly guide the content of an entire conversation. This sort of behaviour may be referred to as *topical anchoring*, and can be a strong strategic tool for those that may wish to influence the content of a conversation. If people have decided to accept (if temporarily) the "definition" of a term (e.g., an "objective JICA"), it will seem less logically consistent to explore other possible interpretations or alternate understandings of such a concept within the context of a group conversation.

One interview subject qualified the implications of conceptual determinism and topical anchoring affecting management practices and project meetings through a counter-example. An interviewee from JICA (Male, 20s) shared how he had experienced challenges stemming from an extremely diligent bureaucrat's attention to detail. Meetings with this high-ranking official were perceived to be challenging, as lengthy discussions on the definition of key terms prevented the group from achieving meeting agendas as planned by the Japanese side, but allowed the recipient institutions to grasp deeper understandings of Japanese aid approaches and exert more process control over decision-making procedures.

Example #2: “A bad evaluation is a bad evaluation”

As the conversation continued, participants began to discuss some specific examples of factors beyond the control of project teams that can impede a project’s progress. In the following excerpt, a consultant (Female, 20s) is describing the hard work being done by local officials and how negative evaluations from JICA can have adverse effects on the project team members, specifically the counterparts. The other JICA official (Male, 20s) responds to her story before the confederate (Male, 20s) responds:

Consultant: ...彼ら（カウンターパートは）は彼らなりに頑張っていて、だけれども、彼ら一人一人じゃ何ともならないような、もっと大きな組織があって、政府とか実施機関とカウンターパートが違ったりとかするじゃん。実施期間は地方自治体だけれども、カウンターパートとして、それを総括している中央省庁があって、彼らはほとんど活動しているけど彼らのサインがないと何も決まらないとか。そういうところにあらがえなくて、彼らもどうにか頑張ろうとしているんだけれどもなかなか進まない、となった時に、**JICA** の評価が来て、色んな人にインタビューしにきて、上から下まで、で、「b a d です」とか言われちゃうと、「はー」となるわけよね、一番末端の市役所の職員とかは...やっぱりそういう時に、「ええ？こんなに頑張ったのに J I C A から b a d なのか」、と言われてしまうと、後の半年間、なんかちょっとしぼんじちゃうよね。

The counterparts are doing the best they can, but, there are things that they as individuals can do nothing about, there’s a larger institution, and you know how sometimes the implementing agency and counterparts are separate from the government. The implementing agency is a local government body, but as the counterpart, there’s a central government ministry is overseeing it all, so they [the local body] are doing most of the work but without their [the central body] signatures nothing gets decided. So there’s nothing they can do about that, but they [the local body] are trying in some way or another but there isn’t much progress, when that happens, JICA’s evaluation comes in, and they interview various people, up to the top and at the bottom, and then when they’re told, “This is bad”,

they sigh [in disappointment], like those city-hall workers at the very end of the chain...So when that happens, when JICA tells them [they say], “What? We tried so hard but JICA gave us a bad”, for the remaining half a year, [motivation] kind of withers.

JICA: うん。でも評価の中には、ただ b a d、確かに全体に評価は b a d となったとしても、結構こまかくあるとは思っただけだね。で、そこに例えばこの部分がボトルネックになって、例えば、今の話からすると上層部からのパーミッションがボトルネックになって、なかなか下がうまく動けなかった、そういうところは書かれていて彼らの努力はちゃんと、書いてればいいのか、と、まあ、でも、案件全体は評価で見ちゃうことはわかるけどね。

Yeah. But in an evaluation, it's not just “bad”, it's true that overall it might be [labeled] “bad”, but I think there are specific details there. So, for example there was a bottle-neck here, for example in that case [you shared] just now, the bottle-neck was obtaining permission from higher offices, and so the lower workers couldn't maneuver well, and I think it's OK if that information and their hard work is clearly written in [the evaluation], well, although I understand that you tend to [simplify and] look at projects overall with evaluation results.

JICA

Confederate: 自分は、そこはもう b a d と書いて、ちょこちょこ書くのかな、頑張れよ、見たいな。 (笑う)

I would just evaluate it as bad, and just write a little something, you know, like “keep at it”. (laughter)

JICA: 上目線だね (笑う)。

You are looking down from above/You look down on them (“*That's arrogant*”) [laughing].

Consultant: 上目線だな (笑う)。

[Yes,] You're (being) arrogant [laughing].

JICA

Confederate: いやいやいやいやいや、でもそうじゃん、それが評価なんだから。

No no no no, but isn't it true? That's what an evaluation is.

For several conversational turns, the discussion had been centered around how the complexity of technical cooperation projects, and how evaluations may over-simplify the efforts, impacts, and value of a project. The consultant was providing examples and information about how certain factors beyond the control of consultants and counterparts can cause projects to fail, and explained how local officials and counterparts can be discouraged by negative evaluation results. The JICA official (Male, 20s) responded by explaining how those factors are supposed to be included in a detailed progress reports, while acknowledging the consultant's concerns that such complexity and detail may be overshadowed by the results of an evaluation, which holds significant weight for assessing the quality of a project. The confederate then responds with his claim, stating that he would just evaluate the project as "bad". This was perceived as arrogant enough to generate direct responses ("You're arrogant") from the other speakers (although the response was made somewhat humorously to buffer the confrontational nature of the statements).

The confederate explained how the conversational context framed his response as arrogant:

JICA

Confederate: そもその問題は、コンサルタント側が **Bad** つけられて困る、止めてくれ、と言う風な問題だけど、それに対して自分は、いやそもそもその時点で間違ってるでしょ、と言うロジックだから、何あほなこと言ってるんだよ、見たいな感じで言っちゃうと、自分がコンサルに対して、「馬鹿じゃないの？」と言うのと同じで、それは彼らはわかっているから、それはむかつくよね...

The whole problem that was being discussed, was something like, consultants have to deal with the fallout from a "bad" [evaluation], so please stop [giving out negative evaluations], but in response I was

saying that the entire argument is nonsense, with my logic. If I respond sort of like, “Why are you saying such silly things”, it’s the same as saying “are you stupid?” to the consultants, and they know that, so that’ll piss them off.

Similar to the previous example, this statement was consistent with the closed-minded and assertive position being taken by the confederate. In the first example, the confederate produced a truth-statement about the relative objectivity of JICA over consultants, and in this example he continues to neglect the concerns that arise from consultants through evaluations. The speaking style was also meant to be taken as arrogant:

JICA

Confederate: 「Bad と書いて、頑張れよ」と言うのが上からで良くない。
Saying “[I would] write bad, keep at it (good luck)”, [a statement like that] is “from above” (arrogant) and not good.

The statement was meant to be arrogant, or “上から” (*ue-kara*: from above; superior) statement, depicting the confederate as someone with an unreasonable and inappropriate stance concerning project management. The other JICA official commented as follows:

JICA staff: There are two sides to every story...but when you say it in a deterministic way, “well, it’s bad, so go on and do your best”, it seems like you’re not involved in the project at all. [He is saying,] “A bad project is a bad project, and that is that”. We [JICA] talk of managing/overseeing a project, obviously, yes, we aren’t on the field doing the work together with the project team [like the consultants], but we should share the desire to make that project better [with the other partners]. But, if you say “well, do your best,” you’ve separated it from yourself completely. You develop an aversion to things like that. It makes you feel like, you know, take more

responsibility! Although, that is a difficult aspect of the contracts of JICA projects.

The confederate was able to efficiently produce a salient negative image of himself with just one short phrase. His response, lacking any acknowledgement of the consultant's concerns or display of mutual understanding, simultaneously rejected the claims and arguments that were being made by the other speakers, while portraying him as someone isolated from the project team with little concern for the complexities associated with difficult projects. The simple statement portrayed the speaker as someone willing to paint over complex realities with broad strokes.

Example #3 "The consultants are misunderstanding"

The conversation above allowed the group to recognize that there was a gap in understanding concerning the perceived subject of the evaluations. While project evaluations are there to assess the progress of a project, they are not necessarily meant to evaluate the work being done by the consultants. However, as consultants are strongly associated with the project, and evaluations are designed to assess the project, it was perceived as natural to link the results of an evaluation directly to the work of consultants. It was suggested that consultants possess a reasonable interest in having projects evaluated positively. About 30 minutes in to the conversation, the second consultant (Female, 20s) arrived late, and the confederate took the opportunity to provide a summary of the discussion:

JICA

Confederate: ...中間評価と終了時評価で評価されてないものがあるんじゃないか、みたいな、で、現地でやってるコンサルとそのパッと行って、パッと来ただけで何が分かるんだお前らに、みたいな、もっとちゃんと見ろよって言う。でも実際そこはなんか、現地で業務をやってるコンサルさんの誤解で、確かにプロジェクトとしては評価が悪くなったとしても、今後それをどうやって進むべきなのかって言うのを考えるのが中間時と終了時の主な目的であるから、それを受けてじゃあコンサルさんとして、真摯に反省して、って言うか気に掛けて今後やっていくっていうことで、ただ、別にその評価が悪いからといってコンサルさんの評価が悪い訳ではないので、そこらへんはちょっと誤解しているんじゃないか、みたいな。
...[we were talking about how] there were perhaps some things that are not being evaluated in mid-term and terminal evaluations, and how, the consultants working in the field are like: “you guys who just jump in and glance over everything, what do you know?” Like, “you should be looking more carefully!”. But in reality, **the consultants working in the field, are making a misunderstanding**; granted, even if, as a project, the evaluation is bad, the major goal of mid-term and terminal evaluations is to think about how to move forward. So, with that information, they can sincerely reflect [on what they need to do] as consultants, and the point is to keep that in mind as they move forward, however, just because the evaluation is bad does not necessarily mean the [performance of the] consultant is bad, **so they’re making a bit of a misunderstanding there**, you know.

The term “誤解” (*gokai*: “misunderstanding”) was identified as a significant “key word” for triggering the perceived impoliteness of this statement. The confederate’s colleague from JICA was quite shocked at his choice of words:

JICA staff: He’s pretty much telling us that *he* is right...it’s like, why are *you* the one who’s right? In this context, we were talking about how there could be a misinterpretation/misunderstanding of a project’s evaluation and an individual’s [performance] evaluation, but the way he said it, the “misunderstanding” he was talking about, was that the consultants are too

deep into the field and too involved in the projects, and so your opinions are wrong, and we, the objective JICA-*sama* (-*sama* is an honorific post-title) are correct, so what the consultants are saying is a mistake/misunderstanding. I thought, that's not quite right. The summary you're giving is fundamentally wrong.

A “misunderstanding” can be considered a common and relatively innocuous component of social conflicts. However, the current context reveals that by attributing responsibility for misunderstandings to the consultants, the consultants’ role in causing conflicts is emphasized. Simultaneously, JICA’s own contributions to the issues being discussed are diminished. For approximately 30 minutes, the participants had been discussing several difficulties associated with evaluations such as the complexity of capacity building, the limitations of the PDM, the resource constraints and capacity limitations of counterparts, and the perceptual link between project evaluations and stakeholder performance. While the group was trying to generate an appreciation for the complexity of project evaluations, the confederate produced a “summary” that framed the entire discussion as a “misunderstanding” on the part of the consultants.

JICA staff: Certainly, there are times when [we] misunderstand, but some of that can't be helped and [we were talking about] how various circumstances contribute to that, but he just took all of that, and said it was the consultant's misunderstanding. I thought, [*sarcastically*] that took a lot of guts to say.

The word *gokai*, which is literally translated as “misunderstanding”, when attributed to a specific stakeholder, had the effect of implying that the consultants were actually “in the wrong”, or making a “mistake”. The phrasing of the confederate was as follows:

(1) 「誤解をしている」

Gokai-wo-shiteiru

Misunderstanding-obj-doing (present continuous)

“(Consultant is) making a misunderstanding”,

“(Consultants) have the wrong understanding”

This sentence is a clear example of contextual information affecting the pragmatic interpretation of Japanese utterances (the perlocutionary act). Even within a relatively simple grammatical sentence such as “(to) make a misunderstanding”, within the context of interdependent stakeholder relationships, the literal word for “misunderstanding” is interpreted with a negative frame (i.e., “a mistake”, or “wrong”) by the other development professionals. Although this sentence uses the *-suru* form of a verbal noun “to misunderstand”, the previous statements and context strongly imply the subject of the sentence as the “consultants”. The subsequent phrase that was used was the following:

(2) 「コンサルさんの誤解」

Konsarusan-no-gokai

Consultant-of-misunderstanding (possessive)

“Misunderstanding of the consultants” (“Mistake of the consultants”)

A typical response would also have mentioned JICA’s role or contribution towards the misunderstanding, or hedged the subject of responsibility by framing the misunderstanding as a natural, spontaneous, or passive occurrence. Itakura has illustrated how Japanese evaluators often use the passive spontaneous form (i.e., *-rareru* in phrases such as *kangae-rareru*: ‘it can be

thought possibly’) to avoid attributing subjectivity to any particular person, so that evaluations are “formed on its own and came to the review writer’s awareness” (Itakura, 2013, p.140). The noticeable lack of hedging or accommodation in the current example was perceived as markedly inconsiderate, functioning as an additional face threatening act through placing the entirety of blame onto the consultants. The following alternate and ideal phrasing for the statement was provided by the confederate’s colleague from JICA:

JICA staff: 「JICA とコンサルの間に誤解が生じる」、「生じてしまう」、とか。
[He could have said,] for example, “a misunderstanding develops between JICA and the consultants”, or “is developed”.

By examining these more polite alternatives above, a systematic detachment of the agents (JICA and consultants) from the act of misunderstanding can be observed. The more polite examples given were the following sentences (3) and (4):

(3) 誤解が生じる

Gokai-ga-shoujiru

Misunderstanding-sub-born/develops

“A misunderstanding is born”, “A misunderstanding develops”

(4) 誤解が生じてしまう

Gokai-ga-shoujite-shimau

Misunderstanding-sub-developed (completed)

“A misunderstanding is developed”

Let us work through how the confederate's statements illustrated in (1) and (2) will come to be grammatically transformed and rephrased as something resembling (3) or (4). This analysis can illustrate how grammatical tendencies can systematically shift the agency (and thus, the responsibility) of negative states or actions away from individual stakeholders, so as to prevent relational tension or any explicit recognition of blame for those states or actions.

Often, intransitive verbs will be used to leave the agent of the action undefined so as not to assign responsibility or blame for any specific acts, states, or events (in this case, the act of 'misunderstanding'). The ideal phrasing of sentences (3) or (4), provided by an interviewee, nominalizes the verbs "to misunderstand" or "misunderstanding" to the noun phrase of "a misunderstanding", and transforms the verb phrase by adding 'is developed'; the sentence is now a verb phrase about "developing" rather than "misunderstanding". The insertion of an inchoative verb (a grammatical category that expresses how actions, events, or states relate to the flow of time) further de-emphasizes the role of any individual or agent being responsible for the misunderstanding. In the following sentences of (5), 'misunderstood' starts out as the verb:

(5) a. JICA がコンサルタントを誤解する

jaika-ga-konsarutanto-wo-gokai-suru

JICA-sub-consultant-obj-misunderstanding-do

"JICA misunderstands the Consultants"

b. コンサルタントが J I C A を誤解する

konsarutanto-ga-jaika-wo-gokai-suru

consultants-sub-JICA-obj-misunderstanding-do

"Consultants misunderstand JICA"

However, by inserting the verb 生じる (*shoujiru*: ‘develop’ (V)), sentence (6) places JICA and Consultants as the agents not of the act of ‘misunderstanding’, but as subjects experiencing the act of ‘developing’. *Shoujiru* is a state-verb rather than a descriptive or interpretive action verb of *-suru*.

(6) a. JICA に誤解が生じた (コンサルタントに対して)

jaika-ni-gokai-ga-shoujita (konsarutanto-ni-taishite)

JICA-in-misunderstanding-sub-develop (consultant-to-against)

“JICA developed a misunderstanding (of Consultants)”

b. コンサルタントに誤解が生じた (JICAに対して)

consarutanto-ni-gokai-ga-shoujita (jaika-ni-taishite)

Consultant-in-misunderstanding-sub-developed (JICA-to-against)

“Consultants developed a misunderstanding (of JICA)”

JICA and the Consultants are now the subjects of the transitive verb “to develop”. The passive voice construction of (7) then transforms ‘developed’ into an intransitive verb, and both JICA and Consultants can be taken out of picture entirely, resulting in (8).

(7) JICA と コンサルタント に 誤解 が 生じた

jaika-to-konsarutanto-ni-gokai-ga-shoujita

JICA-and-consultants-in-misunderstanding-is-developed

“JICA and Consultants developed a misunderstanding.”

(8) 誤解が生じた

gokai-ga-shoujita

misunderstanding-sub-developed

“A misunderstanding was developed”

Finally, JICA and the Consultants are included not as direct agents or subjects of the action of ‘developing’, but as a prepositional phrase supplying additional information concerning the environment in which the ‘developing’ act took place.

(9) JICA とコンサルの間に誤解が生じた

jaika-to-konsaru-no-aida-ni-gokai-ga-shoujita

JICA-and-consultant-of-between-in-misunderstanding-is-develops

“A misunderstanding developed between JICA and Consultants”

In this manner, indirect politeness mechanisms place distance between the grammatical relationships between the subjects and socially unfortunate or undesirable acts such as misunderstandings. The stakeholders are detached from the act of ‘misunderstanding’, so as to avoid the accusation that any subject is individually responsible for the negatively perceived act, state, or event. Transitive and causative verb forms will explicitly assign agency or blame for negative consequences, which will be interpreted as aggressive (if perceived as an intended communicative act) or inconsiderate (if perceived as an unintended communicative act).

Example #4: “Invincible” JICA: emphasizing power asymmetry

In this final example, the group was discussing the power asymmetry that exists between JICA and consultants within a contractual relationship. Without the approval of JICA, consultants could not receive payment for their work. The reality of the contractual relationship between JICA and the development consultants was that if JICA was not satisfied with the work of the consultants, they had the right to refuse the payment for deliverable services.

JICA

Confederate: でも実際無敵だよ、だってあれ、先方政府も金くれと来る訳だからね、何もせんとも。

But we are [pretty much] indeed invulnerable/invincible (the strong party), since, you know, even the recipient governments will come asking for money, [even if] we do nothing.

This phrase is an example of the confederate verbally expressing his agreement and explicit approval to the argument that JICA has a significant power advantage over the other stakeholders in the development process. The phrasing goes as far as to suggest JICA is “無敵” (*muteki*: invincible), as they possess the ability to authorize the transfer of funds in exchange for services rendered. This phrase in combination with statements that resembled example #2 painted the confederate as someone who was flaunting the ability to provide consultants with work, and recipient nations with funding. Drawing attention to the fact that JICA possessed a relative power advantage over the consultants within their contractual relationship was negatively perceived:

Development

Consultant : こっち[JICA]がお金出してるんだから。出してやってるんだから。結局お金出してるのはこっちでしょ、と言う考えになるよね、コンサルタントに対しても、カウンターパートに対しても。

We [JICA] are providing the money. Providing it *for* you. The mentality [that he has] towards consultants and counterparts is: ultimately we're the ones giving you the money [and that's all that matters] right?

JICA staff : There's no respect there.

The message that was being received by the audience was one that assumed the dependency of the consultants for the approval and payments from JICA. The brute emphasis on monetary funding as the most important or powerful element of the development process was considered crude and ungraceful. Such an explicit acknowledgement of unilateral dependencies and power asymmetries was perceived as insensitive and arrogant. The audience was expecting conversational interaction that framed the relationship as one of an interdependent nature. Conventional politeness norms would produce empathic statements describing how no single party can survive or succeed without the input and cooperation of other relevant stakeholders. The confederate's style of speech was upsetting not only for the confrontational arguments they represented, but also for reflecting a way of thought, or an unpleasant personality:

JICA staff : Not just what he said, or how he said it, it's about how he thinks.

The above statement is a remarkably simple and appropriate embodiment of the multiple dimensions that construct speech acts (Austin, 1962). The facilitated dialogue recreated a social environment in which individuals tried to deduce “the way people think” using the contextual information located within “what people say”, and “how they say it”, in order to make

judgements about the character and qualities of conversational interactants.

After finishing the dialogue session, in the absence of the confederate, the group was debriefed about the manipulation that had taken place. The remaining three participants were asked if the confederate was speaking in a noticeably impolite or uncooperative manner. Relief, followed by negative responses were immediate. The dialogue participants confessed that they were quite uncomfortable with the “arrogance”, “cockiness”, and “condescending attitude” of the confederate.

On the surface, simply stating that one is objective, or that someone is making a misunderstanding, do not appear to be examples of noticeably impolite statements. However, as the responses above demonstrate, there were salient contextual cues associated with the relationship between JICA officials and development consultants which framed such statements as closed-minded, impolite, arrogant, and significantly rude. Furthermore, consultants confirmed that the inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships ultimately supersede most concerns that lie underneath a conflict or disagreements between parties. As the contracted party, consultants had little incentive to prolong conflicts or disagreements with JICA over the results of evaluations. The negative impact on potential and future work relationships was considered too important:

Development

Consultant : 最終的には、コンサルがぶつかりに行くメリットは無いと言うことになるんだよね、心象悪くなくてもさ...次の受注に響くからさ。

Ultimately, the thing is that there is no merit for the consultants to clash [with JICA]...if it damages our image...it will affect [our ability to get] the next contract.

The speaker testimony and discussions on context and conversational implicature

illustrates the importance of inter-organizational and interpersonal relationships between development professionals. Cooperative relations between JICA officials, development consultants, and counterparts create a social environment that values cooperative and collaborative behaviour within an interdependent system. Communicative styles that do not reflect concerns for such values and systems are perceived negatively. Where international or multi-cultural contexts provide ample interpretations for miscommunication and management issues, the current context reflects a much more restricted view on the acceptable range of professional behaviour and appropriate utterances.

Evaluation procedures explicitly highlight organizational privileges, which bring forward power asymmetries that lie underneath collaborative technical cooperation projects. The critical element of evaluations can threaten the relational goals that are held by Japanese development professionals. Findings on the uncooperative and hostile behaviour of the confederate converge with a cultural model within the development community that prioritizes inter-organizational relations in order to support an interdependent network of stakeholders. The notion of interdependence provides an important and powerful frame that can be used to understand and model the social and cultural practices of Japanese development professionals. Examples of utterances in the current situational context illustrate how statements (by the confederate) that do not reflect or reinforce a model of interdependence are negatively perceived. In the following section, we will discuss how this model of interdependence contributes to a unique construction of the notion of impartiality.

5.3 Managing Interdependent Relationships with needs of Independence and Impartiality

The discussion up to this point has tried to reveal the manner in which impartiality is perceived in the development process via project evaluations. Previous sections have attempted to reveal how the discourse of the Japanese international development community characterizes impartial project evaluations as a group-oriented and procedural construct. These characteristics create a social environment amongst development professionals that places high social value on preserving or fostering positive inter-organizational relationships and generating consensus.

While a primary objective for conducting evaluations is to ensure accountability to the tax-payers, JICA conducts a significant amount of evaluations internally, meaning they exert control over the content of their own evaluations. Some of these internal procedures can be explained as a result of efforts by JICA to evaluate *all* of its projects, while attempting to manage the process to ensure evaluation results are useful and effectively fed back into future decision-making processes. Furthermore, because of the collaborative nature of development aid (and technical cooperation in particular), development professionals require the cooperation and resources of several stakeholders within the development community. JICA officials at Japan headquarters are tasked to oversee projects that are being implemented in collaboration with JICA officials stationed at regional and field offices, development consultants whom possess the necessary resources to complete development objectives, counterparts from recipient nations, as well as other governmental departments or civil organizations that have been included as relevant or necessary stakeholders to a development initiative. As an interdependent network will cease to function without the cooperation of all of its members, maintaining positive

inter-organizational relations becomes a priority. A model of interdependency frames the institutional relationships and defines the appropriate actions of institutional actors.

However, evaluations put pressure on these relations, as evaluations are imposed upon project members. In addition, conflicting interests can incentivize stakeholders to negotiate the results of an evaluation in their own favour. It is up to the groups to assess the status of the project objectively and impartially, so that evaluations can enforce accountability and produce lessons to contribute to the organizational learning of all parties. External consultants that are called in to assist in the evaluations are perceived as less restrained in their ability to provide critical input, indicate deficiencies, and call attention to underperformance issues. In some cases, evaluation consultants are believed to display less concern for the long-term consequences of negative evaluations or relational tensions. The blunt comments or frank criticisms that are launched by evaluators are often perceived as aggressive, putting strain on the collaborative relationships that exist between JICA officials, development consultants, and the recipient nation's counterpart institutions.

The discussion will now attempt to move on to a description of how the procedure of impartial evaluations fits and functions within the cultural model of interdependence. An examination of evaluations as a social construct amongst members of Japan's development community reveals an institutional context that fits a cultural model of interdependency. Chapter 5.1 described how evaluation policies and discourse in the Japanese development community defined evaluations as a procedural construct performed and ritualized through consensus-based procedures. The analysis suggests that the lack of independence in internal evaluations was accommodated for with the use of standard and objective methodology, as well as group-oriented procedures. The discussion of this section, which explores the evidence of interdependency observed in the behaviour of institutional actors, can now also be linked to this

discussion on the relative lack of independency observed in Japanese evaluation procedures.

5.3.1 *The struggle for independence in an interdependent network*

As it has been argued that institutional practices fit within a cultural model of interdependence, it is now reasonably simple to construct an intuitive understanding of the relative non-emphasis on independence in existing evaluation practices. Simply stated, interdependence and independence are fundamentally contrary concepts, and independence will not thrive in an interdependent system. Extreme proponents of an interdependent system may even find it reasonable to feel that defining independence as the most important principle of an accountability mechanism (such as evaluations) could threaten the system itself. Acceptance of an external, independent, and impartial third party amounts to placing influence and power into the hands of an outsider, and hinges upon the ability to question the actions, motivations, and purpose of the entire network. This can lead to the creation of negative arguments and perceptions about (purely) independent entities, such as claims that too much independence implies that such a party is in actuality an irrelevant party, and that externality is not necessarily a positive trait:

JICA staff: 逆に、完全に外部な人、評価の人は、関係ない（とも言える）。
On the other hand, a completely external person, an evaluator, is [or would be/can be thought of as] irrelevant.

JICA staff: 外部者だからと言って必ずしも客観的ではないので。
External parties are not always objective.

A purely external third party can be perceived as someone “irrelevant” to the project, and hence not useful. Such an external presence would burden the management and progress of the project

by putting too much procedural power in the hands (for dictating the perception of the quality/progress of a project) of an external party. Statements such as “external parties are not always objective” are qualified, for example, by the behaviours of radical or fringe environmental or civil society groups whose primary goal is to see the termination of any and all such development activities. External evaluations were perceived as useful upon assumptions of good faith and *constructive* criticism, as ideal project evaluations were perceived as a process that discusses how existing and future projects could be *improved*, and not whether or not they should have been implemented in the first place. It is apparent that ownership of the process was considered an important element of development projects and their evaluations. It was thought that “purely” impartial or external parties would not understand or care for the complexity of certain projects, as such factors may be irrelevant to the purposes of an evaluation.

While this type of independent behaviour is considered necessary for monitoring public institutions, the act can be perceived as considerably hostile and aggressive. The perception of critical assessments as a significant face-threatening act is qualified by statements and opinions about independent auditors within the industry. Meticulous and rigorous reviews of the financial and management practices of government bodies by independent auditors were jokingly referred to as the work of “enemies”:

Interviewee: [検査機関]とか、あれは敵だから。(笑う)
Inspectors [for example], they are enemies. (laughing)

Interviewee : 完全に穴を探しに来るからね、敵だからね。(笑う)
They come and thoroughly look for holes [in our operations], they're the enemy you know [laughing].

The rigorous mandate of independent auditors to critically and thoroughly examine a group's finances and activities paints auditors with a negative image. It seems difficult for the Japanese workers to imagine themselves in a position where empathic and accommodating consideration of the realities and challenges of fellow workers and other organizations can be ignored even while examining the performance of the organization itself. However, this is essentially the task that is thrust upon evaluators of development projects.

The following subsection will describe further evidence within the discourse of development professionals that illustrates how an "independent" evaluator in the "interdependent" Japanese development community can legitimize its position as an impartial evaluator. This discussion has noticeable links to research exploring cultural variations of facework (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998). In discussing the different knowledge dimensions that build an individual's framework for social interaction, "individual factors such as independent and interdependent self and conflict salience factors should be taken into account in explaining facework preferences...across cultures" (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, 1998, p. 201).

These concepts of interdependence and independence – identified and coded through a grounded analysis of the semi-structured data that has been compiled – and their contrastive properties are central topics of study and research within work on the social knowledge dimensions of the self (Triandis, 1989; Markus and Kitayama 1991). The current discussion thus provides support for the significance of these dimensions for framing differences in social knowledge across cultures. As a result, the analytical discussion produces contributions to the fields of social cognition and cognitive linguistics (social semiotics). Evidence of vertical schemas in the language of development professionals demonstrates how hierarchy can be used to frame independent evaluators as part of the interdependent network of stakeholders.

5.3.2 *Privileged evaluators: vertical schemas applied to the concept of evaluations*

Evidence within the genre (Bhatia, 1993) of evaluations and language use of development professionals reveals the use of hierarchical and vertical schemas when conceptualizing evaluations and development work. This hierarchical language represents the observable evidence and remnants of a cultural model manifesting itself in the knowledge structure (Rosch, 1999; Langacker 2001) of institutional actors (i.e., development professionals as the discourse community (Swales, 1988)).

Relational goals within an interdependent system that are threatened through the critical nature of evaluation procedures are moderated using values and practices of a vertically organized social hierarchy. Consequently, this is reflected directly in the cognitive-semantic construction of evaluations. Hierarchy can be used to frame independent and impartial actors as part of the interdependent group. As “independent” evaluators can in some extreme cases be viewed as an “enemy”, it has been discussed how “purely” independent entities will experience difficulty being incorporated or accepted as part of the collaborative goals of an interdependent group. However, exploiting a social hierarchy allows external evaluators to be perceived as part of an interdependent network of stakeholders from a position of authority and privilege. The presence of an independent evaluator can (and in some cases, will need to) be legitimized through her authority. This is most exemplified by an alternate phrasing of “to evaluate” that has been observed among the language of development professionals. Similar to English, the Japanese word for “evaluations” (*hyouka*) can take the form of “to evaluate” (*hyouka suru*), creating a verbal noun. In its basic form, *-suru* is post-fixed to the noun to create the verb form of the activity:

(10) 評価 (*hyouka*) ‘evaluation’ (N)

(11) 評価する (*hyouka-suru*) ‘to evaluate’ (V)

However, an analysis of the interviewee testimony and conversational interaction between development professionals displays the following phraseology of “performing evaluations”: “評価を下す” (*hyouka-wo-kudasu*). This phrase, which roughly translates to “passing down and evaluation”, or “handing down and evaluation” is a verbal noun that is constructed using the verb *-kudasu*:

(12) 下す (*kudasu*)

- a. pass judgment, conclude, rule
- b. issue an order

The plain irregular verb form of *-suru* (‘to do’) in (11) is replaced with the subject marker *-wo* and *-kudasu*, which is a verb that incorporates the semantic component of path, and can be used to refer to the passing of judgments, conclusions, rules, or orders. English verbs use particles such as “over” or “under” to specify the path of the verb in phrases such as “run over” and “hide under”. Japanese, on the other hand, is a verb framing language “in which the semantic component of path is incorporated in a single verb, such as *hairu* ‘enter’, *deru* ‘exit’, and *agaru* “ascend” (Tsuji-mura, 2002). It may be useful to clarify that the *kanji* character for *-kudasu* is a deictic in itself, and takes many forms including the following:

(13) 下(*shita*) “bottom” (N)

(14) 下がる(*sagaru*) “descend, lower” (V)

Kudasu, however, is a unique form of the deictic verb used only in certain contexts, phrases, and actions – one of which includes evaluations. Thus the following verb phrase is constructed:

(15) 評価を下す

hyouka-wo-kudasu

evaluation-to-pass(V)

[an evaluation that is passed/handed downwards]

“(To) hand down an evaluation”

The significance of focusing specifically on *-kudasu* can be framed with the help of Talmy’s gestaltic work, which indicates the significance of such “closed-classed” subsystems of language for determining conceptual structure, and the systematic spatial structuring in language (2000, 2005). “Closed-class” forms (to which *-kudasu* belongs) refer to language elements that are relatively difficult to augment, (e.g., case inflections, conjunctions, prepositions) and pertains to paths, sites, shapes, or dispositions (Talmy, 2005). An examination of the use of *-kudasu* reveals how Japanese development professionals possess a markedly contrasting knowledge structure of evaluations as a social construct. We will now draw upon further cognitive linguistic work on the categorization and structure of knowledge to frame and understanding the significance of this phrase. The notion of “evaluations” being something to be “passed” or “handed down(wards)” is a product of the perceived structure of an “evaluation” as

a category.

As reviewed in Chapter 3.2.3.3, perceived world structure is one of the primary principles of cognitive linguistic research aimed at elucidating the process in which language users moderate the categorization of terms and concepts (Rosch, 1999). The current analysis reveals an observable world structure as reflected in the language of Japanese speakers, who perceive a correlational structure that does not exist when interpreted from a (native) English-speaking context. By looking specifically at the phrase *hyouka-wo-kudasu*, within the domain of international development, the analysis enables us to index “semantic or cognitive categories which are themselves recognized as participating in larger conceptual structures of some sort” (Fillmore, 2006).

Again using Talmy’s (2000, 2005) theoretical work to interpret these results, we can segment the spatial schema of “evaluations” into individual components of the Figure and Grounds. The Figure “is a moving or conceptually movable entity whose path, site, or orientation is conceived as a variable, the particular value of which is the relevant issue”; the Ground “is a reference entity, one that has a stationary setting relative to a reference frame, with respect to which the Figure’s path, site, or orientation is characterized” (Talmy, 2005). The combination of the figure and grounds creates a planar image of the spatial relations between the evaluator and the evaluatee, rather than a linear or parallel image formation. These spatial heuristics, known as image schemas, were developed and proposed to represent a psychological reality with supporting evidence from experimental research in psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, and developmental psychology (Gibbs and Colston, in Clausner and Croft, 1999).

The cognitive linguistic perspective assumes that individuals build knowledge and order information to make sense of the world around them. From this perspective, it is proposed that multiple levels of abstraction of categories are formed in a culture, and that the internal

structures of categories are segmented across horizontal and vertical dimensions (Roach and Lloyd, 1978). The horizontal dimension denotes the segmentation of categories at the same level of inclusiveness (i.e., exclusive concepts), while the vertical dimension denotes the level of inclusiveness of the category (i.e., type-specificity). The vertical dimension organizes concepts in increasingly abstract terms; for example: [Barack Obama] is the [President of the US] is a [Politician] is a [Person]. The horizontal dimension distinguishes prototypical categories that would be included as part of the same group: for example, how [Barack Obama] and [George HW Bush], [pen] and [pencil], or [tea] and [coffee] relate to one another. The current example being examined is elucidating a unique feature about the category of Japanese “evaluations” through a consideration of the horizontal dimension: What other actions, including evaluations, can be appropriately completed with the phrase *-kudasu*?

Principles of categorization propose that the logic of natural language use is a significant representation of the categorization of terms. Thus, logical categories allow similar terms defined by a prototype to be substitutable in sentences. A prototype is a representative example of a category, in other words, “they appear to be just those members of a category that most reflect the redundancy structure of the category as a whole” (Roach and Lloyd, 1978, p. 12). An exercise in substitutability clearly demonstrates a prototype of evaluative actions that is different from that of the English category. Other actions to which *-kudasu* is attached include:

(16) 判決を下す

Hanketsu-wo-kudasu

Ruling/verdict-sub-make

“Hand down a verdict”

(17) 判断を下す

Handan-wo-kudasu

Judgment-sub-make

“Pass a judgment”

English equivalents to the phrases of (16) and (17) are represented by to “hand down a verdict”, or to “pass a judgment”. If we substitute the “verdict”, or “judgment” with “evaluation”, the difference in prototypical categories becomes evident:

(18) *Hand down an evaluation

(19) Pass an evaluation

a. “Pass”: successfully complete

Sentence (18) proves to be an unnatural phrase, while sentence (19) shows that a different frame will be applied to interpret the sentence: “pass” is interpreted as a goal-oriented action, (i.e., “to successfully complete an evaluation”), rather than as a subject-oriented action performed from a position of authority, which is the interpretation of “to pass a judgment”. The notions of “passing” or “handing down” judgments and verdicts place the concepts within a category that recognize the inherent authority within the actions. The Japanese phrase of *hyouka-wo-kudasu* places evaluations in this same category. Where substitutability can be applied naturally in Japanese, we find it is not the case in English.

Kreitzer (1997, in Oakley) also distinguishes between three levels of schematization, the component, relational, and integrative levels. The advantage of these levels is that the

criteria can specify different components of image schemas. The relational level organizes components into specific spatial relations. As this example demonstrates, the schematization of the relational level for the word “評価” and ‘evaluation’ take fundamentally different characteristics, and the ability to “-*kudasu* evaluations” (to ‘perform evaluations downwards’) draws upon a spatial image schema that does not register in the English context.

Several other examples of the vertical path-infused phrases were found in the language of development professionals describing the evaluation process. The spatial positioning of individuals and groups within the development network are referred to directly, in a manner that resembles someone referring to one’s own “standing” in an organization.

Development

Consultant : JICA とコンサルの立ち位置の大きな違いがあるから、なんだかんだ言
って...しゅんとなって丸めるでしょう。

There’s a large difference in where JICA and the consultants **stand**, so
in the end...[consultants] will give in and end it [the disagreement].

This example discusses how there exists a difference in the “立ち位置” (*tachi-ichi*: standing position) of JICA and Consultants. However, within this context this phrase also assumes a vertical orientation relative to other organizations in defining the dimensions of the “standing position”. The relative differences in a “standing position” are defined with vertical dimensions, as opposed to a horizontal, scalar, or centrality (distance to a center) dimensions. This also helps frame the common usage of the phrase “上目線” (*ue-mesen*: arrogant) that was used to describe the arrogant behaviour observed earlier in this study, as well as personal experiences shared by the interviewees. The term *ue-mesen* is shortened from:

(20) “上から (の) 目線”

Ue-kara-mesen

Above-(from)-viewpoint (view from above)

“condescending; arrogant; looking down on”

The shortened phrase forms an adjective that is a vertical-spatial description of the relationship between entities. Literal translations of the *kanji* characters are “上” (*ue*: up, above), “目線” (*mesen*: perspective; viewpoint). As discussed earlier, behaviour that explicitly highlights or acknowledges the inherent asymmetric power relationships between collaborating entities can be viewed as arrogant and conceited, and *ue-mesen*, a phrase that explicitly describes and symbolizes such a situation, is used to define such negatively perceived behaviour.

The inherent vertical hierarchies within social relationships, however, can also be seen reflected in subtler and less explicit language mechanisms. For example, the following phrases use a hierarchical schema to frame the flow of information taking place between JICA, consultants, and district offices:

JICA official: ある程度情報[を]現場から上げてもらって評価をする。
To a certain extent, we evaluate using information that is **brought up** from the [teams in the] field.

JICA official: 基本[的に]在外事務所から、日本に要望が上がってきて、それを本部と外務省で出来るか出来ないかを判断する。
In principle a request **comes up** from the district offices to [the] Japan [office], and then headquarters and MOFA will decide on whether or not it [the request] can or cannot be done.

The previous sentences describe the flow of information within the development process with a

hierarchical spatial schema. Information is depicted as “*flowing upwards*” towards JICA or MOFA offices and staff, who will then use the information to conduct project evaluations (from the elevated position). In addition to explanations for the flow and direction of information, metaphorical descriptions of the act of gathering information are also framed using a vertical schema:

Development

Consultant : [考える必要があることは]コンサルが言ってることをくみ取るのか、後
はもしくは CP (カウンターパート) が言ってることを汲み取るのか、
で汲み取った結果どれくらいそれを[レポートに]反映させるのか。
[What you need to think about is] whether you **pick up** what the
consultants are saying, or you **pick up** what the CP (counterparts) are
saying, and after **picking up** [that information] how well can you reflect
that [in the reports].

JICA Official: 情報をくみ取った上で評価をしている
Evaluations are done after **picking up** the information [from the field
and through research]

This is an example of a “dead metaphor” (although some may argue it not to be dead entirely), in which the original metaphorical imagery is no longer the defining character of its use. “くみ取る” or “汲み取る” (both read as *kumi-toru*) are polysemantic idioms. The two definitions of *kumi-toru* are:

(21) 汲み取る (くみとる) [*kumi-toru*]:

- a. To scoop or transport liquids; to transfer liquids from one container to another.
- b. To understand or become aware of another’s feelings or situation; to

empathize or sympathize. (*Daijisen*, 2010, author translation)

The phrase originates from the act of collecting or gathering water from their sources (wells, lakes, rivers, etc.), as represented by sentences (22) and (23). It can also be used to describe the action of distributing liquids, e.g., pouring tea for others from the pot (お茶をくむ *ocha-wo-kumu* “to pour tea”) and is metaphorically applied to the collection and interpretation of information, in sentence (24).

(22) 水を汲む

Mizu-wo-kumu

water-sub-collect

“[To] gather/collect water”

(23) 水を汲み取る

Mizu-wo-kumi-toru

Water-sub-kumi-take

“To gather/collect water”

(24) 情報を汲み取る

Jouhou-wo-kumi-toru

Information-sub-kumi-take

“[To] gather/understand information”

This metaphor characterizes the form and structure of the information as a liquid. The phrasing suggests that in order to generate an appropriate understanding of information, useful or relevant information is to be selectively chosen or skimmed from the top, as if from a body of water. This also places the information gatherers and evaluators at an elevated position from the underground sources of information.

These findings illustrate the cognitive-linguistic features that are associated with evaluations, and are able to add another dimension to discursive psychology's discussion of "object side" and "subject side" constructions of such action verbs (Edwards, 2007). These findings place "evaluations" within the category of a "verb of judging" (Fillmore 1969; Fillenbaum and Rapoport, 1974), in the Japanese context – one that also contains within it the characteristics of an appropriate evaluator. The interpersonal characteristics of an appropriate evaluator are implied (Au, 1986) within the cognitive-linguistic category of *hyouka* – one that is vertically or spatially above the evaluatee – which has constructed an accepted definition that links social cognition with reality (Semin and Fiedler, 1988).

If we consider "evaluations" as an abstract concept, these findings are consistent with Boroditsky (1999, 2000), as evidence against claims of universal abstract domain representations. Contrasting spatial schemas are applied to the construct of evaluations between Japanese and English speakers, supporting the metaphoric account of knowledge structure and illustrating how mental representations of abstract concepts can vary at a fundamental level (Boroditsky, 2000). The findings of the current analysis describe in detail "how the symbolic structure in question forms a complex network of related senses" (Oakley, 2007, p. 5), which in the current case is demonstrated by how institutional actors in Japan's development industry use a vertical schema to understand evaluations. The noticeable vertical schemas represent "our

manifest capacity to “structure” or “construe” the content of a domain in alternate ways” (Langacker, 1986, p.6).

5.3.3 Vertical schemas applied to institutional structure and practice

A study by Richardson et al. (2003) discusses how vertical image schemas were ascribed to the verb “respect”, and so it must be clarified that these findings do not mean to suggest that the hierarchical schema are unique and observable only in the Japanese context and culture. The analysis means to argue that a distinctly marked cognitive-linguistic category of “evaluations” has been identified, in which Japanese subjects use hierarchical linguistic categories to construct an understanding of evaluations that are fundamentally different to that of the English term. Evaluations are perceived as an assessment or judgment to be made by authority figures within a social hierarchy, or ordered down upon subjects from a position of privilege. Some further digging into the evaluation procedures of Japan’s development community confirmed how this specific knowledge structure is ritualized and reinforced through institutional discourse and practice.

As briefly mentioned before, the hierarchical schema also applies naturally to the structure of the organizations, which in turn shapes the implementation of evaluation procedures. Vertical schemas are not only evident in the language of the institutional actors (the Speakers and subjects). They can also be found in observations of those other than Japanese development professionals (i.e., the international community). The following excerpt is taken from a comprehensive report of Japanese ODA practices written and published by peer-evaluators from the OECD, with examiners representing the European Commission and the United States.

MOFA focuses on **policy** and programme evaluation, and JICA and JBIC place their primary emphasis on **project**-level evaluation. While this information tends to rise vertically within the framework of each of the ODA organisations, a growing effort is being made to share feedback among agencies so as to encourage a process of common learning. MOFA formed joint committees on ODA evaluation feedback (Internal ODA Evaluation Feedback Liaison Committee) and to share perspectives among ministries (Experts Meeting of ODA Evaluation). (Peer Review of Japan, OECD DAC report 2004)

The example above is a clear example of how reviewers from the OECD also describe Japanese ODA evaluations as one in which information “rise[s] vertically”. Interviewee testimony of evaluation practices also displayed the use of vertical schema in conceptualizing the organizational structure of Japanese ODA institutions, for example:

Development

Consultant : ...JICA の評価が来て、色んな人にインタビューをしにきて、上から下まで...
...the JICA evaluations come in, and they interview all the people, **top to bottom**...

Evaluation procedures are perceived to work their way through a vertical structure of organizations, by interviews and meetings with “lower-level” workers and staff as well as “higher-level” decision-makers and managers. Thus we can observe how the privilege that is associated with evaluations is inherently linked to the vertical spatial schema that is also applied to the act of collecting information, the nature of the information, and the structure of the

organizations that hold the information. All of these semantic schemas frame the perception of a legitimate evaluator as an entity that merits a privileged position of elevated status. The source-path-goal of evaluations are defined as an asymmetric relationship between entities within a hierarchy. The exploration of semantic categories of *hyouka* and “evaluations” across Japanese and English prototypes reveal distinct constructs, which are also evidence of the relationship between a specific cultural context and the structure of knowledge.

As impartial evaluators are understood to be partaking in an action with inherent authority and privilege, Japanese institutional practices are consistent with values and a belief-system that emphasize the hierarchical social order. As a result, evaluators will be legitimized and validated for their authority, expertise, or privilege – characteristics that will place them higher in a social hierarchy. In this manner, completely “independent” evaluators, who would otherwise be perceived as extraneous or irrelevant, are conceptually included into the interdependent system. Although evaluators are independent of the development process or project management cycle, their expertise in certain fields or their prestigious status as respected experts in larger circles will justify their duty to evaluate (down upon) the project members.

These findings suggest that evaluations in the development community are not perceived as an independent act to be conducted amongst peers, or a vessel for critical thought to hold higher institutions accountable; they are a privileged act of assessment to be exercised from a position of authority or power. The graphical representation of JICA’s evaluation scheme (Figure 16: Evaluation system implementation as conceptualized by MOFA in comparison to DFID’s evaluation structure (Figure 17) is a simple yet striking example of how the different bilateral agencies conceptualize their evaluation practices. Figure 16 shows how, in Japan, a pyramid is used to frame ODA activities in a hierarchical structure, and colour gradation is used to depict the distinct evaluation roles of MOFA and JICA as transitional and connected.

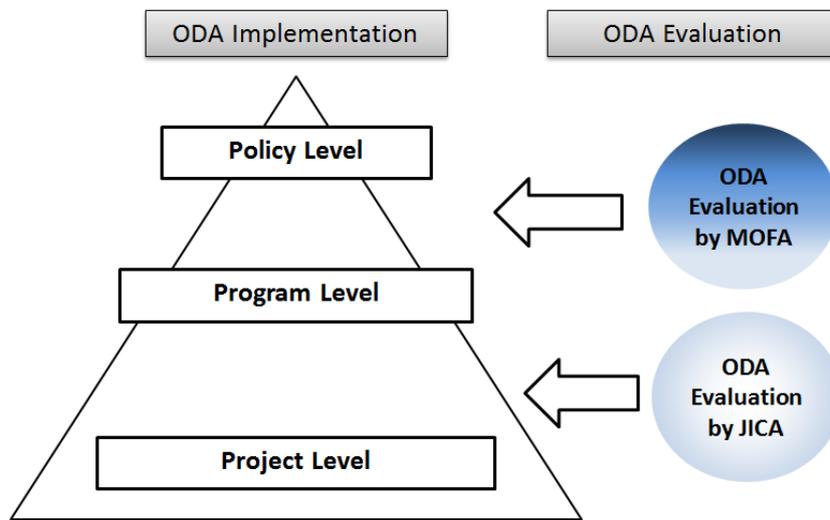


Figure 16: Evaluation system implementation as conceptualized by MOFA
(reproduced from MOFA, 2012)

In stark contrast, the IACDI of DFID depicts itself as isolated and independent of the planning and operations of the development agencies. No attempts at visually or conceptually connecting the IACDI, or representing its hierarchical relationship to the development agencies can be seen (Figure 17).

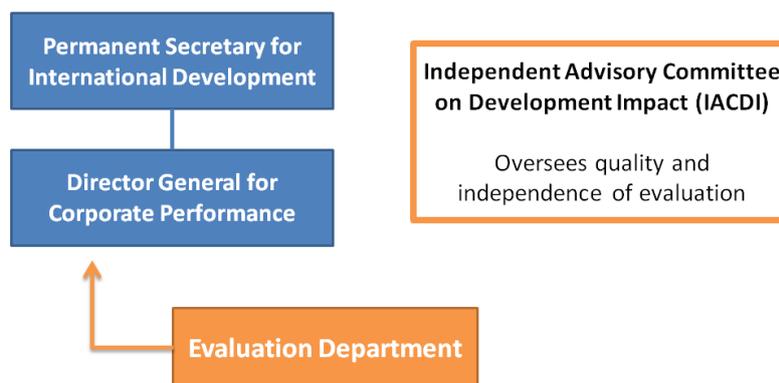


Figure 17: Evaluation set-up as summarized by DFID
(Reproduced from OECD, 2010)

Another valuable source of insight into the relative structures and perspectives of development institutions is the DAC peer-reviews. Every four to five years, DAC reviews and assesses each members' development practices. OECD member countries alternately evaluate one another's development organizations and produce comprehensive reports approximately every four to five years with the following objective:

The objectives of DAC peer reviews are to improve the quality and effectiveness of development co-operation policies and systems, and to promote good development partnerships for better impact on poverty reduction and sustainable development in developing countries.

(Information Note on the DAC Peer Review, 2013)

The content of these peer reviews represents outsider perspectives and perceptions of the institutional structure and practices of the Japanese development community. A content analysis of 45 peer reviews published by the OECD was conducted to look for further examples of the vertical schema as applied to Japan's ODA practices.

Table 8: Number and subjects of DAC reviews analyzed

	Subject of Review	# of Reviews			
1	Australia	3	13	Japan	3
2	Austria	2	14	Korea	1
3	Belgium	1	15	Luxembourg	1
4	Canada	2	16	Netherlands	2
5	Denmark	2	17	Norway	2
6	European Community/ European Union	3	18	New Zealand	1
7	Finland	1	19	Portugal	1
8	France	3	20	Spain	2
9	Germany	2	21	Sweden	2
10	Greece	2	22	Switzerland	2
11	Ireland	1	23	UK	2
12	Italy	2	24	US	2
				Total	45

Fifty-four peer reviews of 23 countries as well as two reviews of the “European Community”, and one of the European Union have been analyzed for their content. The documents consist of a total word count of 1,172,670 words with 3 or more characters. To grasp the scale of this corpus, let us calculate a rough estimation of the number of pages that have been analyzed. After rounding up the number of words to 1.2 million (with the addition of one and two letter prepositions and determiners), and taking a conservative estimate of 500 words per page, we can estimate that this collection of DAC peer reviews is made up of approximately

2400 pages of material.

Of the 45 reviews, 9 of the documents revealed 23 total occurrences of the terms “vertical” or “vertically”. Of the 23 instances, 9 (39%) were from the documents reviewing Japanese ODA practices. The following examples are taken from the peer reviews of Japan in 2004 and 2010 (reviewed by the European Commission and the United States; and the European Commission and Italy, respectively). The examples are as follows:

3 examples from Peer review of Japan 2004

(25) Japan’s historical context of highly centralised administration and the special interests of the different ODA institutions create bureaucratic obstacles. The vertical organisation of Japanese ODA structures means that operational decentralisation will take place at different speeds.

(26) MOFA (ECB’s Evaluation Division) focuses on policy (ODA Charter, mid-term policies, country policy, special policy issues) and programme (sectors) evaluation, and JICA and JBIC place their primary emphasis on project-level evaluation. While this information tends to rise vertically within the framework of each of the ODA organisations, a growing effort is being made to share feedback among agencies so as to encourage a process of common learning.

(27) ODA field organisation in Vietnam and Tanzania appears to be a series of vertically organized agencies with separate lines of command to

Tokyo. Such compartmentalised behaviour comes with a range of transaction costs that merits greater analysis and attention in Tokyo, particularly as Japanese ODA leadership seeks to promote greater decentralisation.

All three examples above (#25-27) are clear examples of vertically infused language and schemas applied to describing the structured relationships of Japanese ODA organizations. Example 25 and 27 explicitly describe the organization of agencies as “vertical”, while example 26 describes the flow of information within the network of agencies as “vertical”. Six more examples of the term “vertical” are found in the 2010 review of Japan as follows:

6 examples from the peer review of Japan 2010

(28) Japan could re-visit both the horizontal and **vertical division of labour** in its development co-operation system.

(29) The **vertical division of labour** - i.e. between headquarters and the field - should also be re-visited. Partners perceive that the bottlenecks in project approval occur in headquarters rather than in the field.

(30) To build on the progress achieved in its major organisational change Japan should: Review the horizontal and **vertical divisions of labour** within the system, i.e. whether MoFA can delegate more implementation responsibilities to JICA, and whether they can both delegate more

decision-making authority to the field.

(31) Nevertheless, earmarking and separately administered **vertical** funds involve high transaction costs and may also undermine or duplicate the accountability structures of the multilateral organisations.

(32) This difference in approach for projects versus grant and loans highlights the potential for harmonising procedures across the three schemes (while retaining some necessary specificities) and to review **the vertical division of labour** in order to increase field orientation and increase efficiency.

(33) Now that the new JICA is up and running, Japan should take stock and build on its achievements by: Re-visiting the horizontal and **vertical divisions of labour** within the system, i.e. examining whether JICA can absorb more implementation responsibilities and whether more decision-making authority can be given to the field.

Of these six examples from the 2010 review, every example with the exception of (31) refers to a “vertical division of labour” that exists within the development agencies. Notice how all of the relevant examples of Japan’s 2004 and 2010 reviews are discussing the negative effects of a “vertical organization” (in examples #25 and #27), or “vertical divisions of labour” (with the exception of #31). These institutional structures and practices are something that “should” be “re-visited”, or modified to allow for “increased efficiency”. While it is evident that the

hierarchical schema is observable from DAC evaluators with representatives from other OECD member countries, the language clearly implies that a vertical structure is not the most appropriate or desirable organizational structure. This issue produces significant practical implications for Japan's ODA scheme, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Organizational theory and structure may lead one to believe that a phrase such as “vertical divisions of labour” or “hierarchy” within organizations are common occurrences and hardly unique to the Japanese context. However, the term frequency queries of the term “vertical” only produced 23 occurrences. In addition to over a third of the total coded instances being found in the peer reviews of Japan, a closer look at the remainder of the examples (the remaining 14 instances) indicate that most are used in different contexts. “Vertical” or “vertically” are not used to describe the current organizational structure or practices of the aid agencies being reviewed. For example, the following excerpt is taken from a review of Belgium's aid practices in 2005:

(34) The policy support unit is thus now a cross-cutting department attached directly to the Directorate General whereas it used to be an additional vertical directorate (the strategy directorate).

The excerpt reveals that a policy support unit of Belgium forms a “cross-cutting department” *as opposed to* a “vertical directorate”. This excerpt discusses how a vertical structure of the policy support unit existed in the past, and no longer reflects the current organizational structure. Assuming the accuracy and validity of the DAC peer reviews, Belgium's ODA structure is not “vertically” organized.

Four examples of the term “vertical” also occurred in the 2008 review of France. One

of the examples is as follows:

(35) France has opted not to nominate a list of so-called Fragile States. Rather, the French approach assumes that every situation can be located along a continuum between fragility and functionality of state institutions and society. Furthermore, fragility is located as a transversal theme rather than a vertical sector.

This example also proves to be unrelated to the current context of vertical organizational structures, as the example describes how the French aid agency defines and measures the fragility of nation states using a continuum that is not vertical. The three remaining examples (out of the four total) describe “vertical funds”, which refers to funding models or programmes that focus on issues, themes, or diseases, rather than a country- or region-based approach. This is again unrelated to the structure of ODA organizations. The one occurrence of the term “vertical” in the 2006 review of the UK is an identical example, where the report refers to “vertical funds”, as opposed to vertical structures or practices. We have now covered 6 of the remaining 14 instances of the term “vertical” that were found in the reviews of other DAC countries.

The 2006 review of the Netherlands produced one instance of the term “vertical” as follows:

(36) The Netherlands also supports the global funds, despite initial concerns about their vertical management structure being a major obstacle to alignment and harmonisation efforts at the country level.

Although this excerpt refers to a “vertical management structure”, it is not describing the structure of The Netherland’s Ministry of Development Cooperation, but that of the existing global funds which it supports. Furthermore, the passage states that vertical management structures of these funds are problematic and something that warrants “concern”. Vertical management structures are perceived to be something that obstructs “alignment” and “harmonisation efforts”.

Of the two examples that are found in the review of Switzerland (2005), the first example uses “vertical” in the following context:

(37) Specific targets aiming at equal representation of men and women from the position of programme officer upwards have been elaborated, at least until 2010. Concerns such as creating **vertical and horizontal development potential** for both women and men;

The passage refers to vertical development potential, as opposed to vertical structures of ODA or practices of aid agencies. The second example, however, is used in a similar context to that of Japan. In fact, the remaining 4 out of the 5 instances of the term “vertical” that occurred in DAC peer reviews display a similar context to that of “vertical” schemas applied to the current ODA practices of OECD countries. For example, Switzerland’s administrative units were described as in need of better “vertical co-ordination”:

(38) More recently, an assessment of the Swiss Federal Administration pointed to a need for clearer functional differentiation between different forms of evaluations and a better vertical and horizontal co-ordination among the administrative units.

In its 2002 review, the European Community also created a “vertical split” in its organizational roles:

(39) The establishment of an implementing office (Common Service) had created a vertical split between planning and implementation, thus disrupting project cycle management.

This excerpt is part of a discussion that outlines the organizational and system reforms that were being implemented by the Directorate-Generals for Development and External Relations. This example is consistent with the context that is being discussed and is similar to the description of vertical organizational structures, as observed in the reviews of Japan. The second occurrence of “vertical” in the review of the European community, however, refers to the “vertical axis” of a graph, and thus does not relate to the current context.

The remaining 3 examples of the term “vertical” can be found in the 2006 review of Germany, and are also used in the same manner as Japan; DAC peer reviews find that Germany’s ODA organizations are structured “vertically”:

(40) Also noted in the previous DAC Peer Review, this separation of bilateral country programmes into free-standing, **vertically organised** compartments of technical or financial co-operation at field level leads to confusion among local partners, leads to separate missions and official agreements with the recipient government and requires multiple meetings to co-ordinate internally.

(41) For all agencies within the broader system, information is gathered at the activity level, then is sent **vertically** to their respective headquarters.

(42) Need for stronger country team and empowerment of the Development Co-operation Officer. Despite closer integration among implementing agencies at the field level through the country team, planning and programming still carried out **vertically**.

Again, the vertical organization found within Germany's ODA practices are not described in a positive light. Passage (40) describes how the arrangement is seen to create "confusion among local partners" and complicates internal coordination. Passage (42) states that *despite* integration activities, planning and programming are *still* conducted vertically, strongly implying that a vertical orientation is something that requires reform.

To summarize the results of the query of the stemmed term "vertical", it has been revealed that out of 23 total occurrences, 13 reveal a context in which the current organizational structures or practices of the respective aid agencies are being described. The ten remaining examples use the term "vertical" in different contexts (i.e., discussing the structure of *other*

organizations, a structure that existed in the past and has been reformed, or other concepts such as vertical financing or vertical development potential).

Out of the 13 occurrences of DAC reviews describing “vertical” organizational structure or practice, 8 are from the reviews of Japan, 3 from descriptions of Germany, and Switzerland and the European Community account for one descriptive occurrence each. This contextual use of “vertical” organizational structure and practice thus are not found in reviews of the 20 other DAC countries that have been examined, suggesting that the ODA practices of Japan, Germany, Switzerland, and the European Community display relatively more “vertical” characteristics than other bilateral aid agencies of the OECD.

An identical term frequency query was conducted for the stemmed word “hierarchy” to look for similar patterns in the distribution of this term to describe organizational structure. This query produced 36 total instances of the stemmed term “hierarchy”. One example is found in a review of Japan (2004) and is consistent with the current discussion:

(43) MOFA now plays a core role within the ODA organizational hierarchy, over which it was accorded the *de jure* responsibility for co-ordination in 2001, in addition to its responsibilities for policy formulation and the provision of grant aid.

The above statement is located in a description of the “current ODA management system”, placing MOFA at the “core” of this “hierarchy”. The paragraph then goes on to describe the role of the “two implementation agencies”, JICA and JBIC. The description produces an organizational hierarchy that places “responsibility for co-ordination” between the three organizations within the hands of MOFA, a clear example of organizational hierarchy

within Japan's ODA structure. Five similar contextual occurrences of the term "hierarchy" as applied to organizational structure are found in the reviews of France (two examples from the 2000 and 2008 reviews); Germany (one example from 2006); Greece (one example from 2006); and the US (one example from 2002). The remaining 30 examples of the term "hierarchy" are used in different contexts, including the "lack of any hierarchy" (review of Belgium 2005); as well as the hierarchy of abstract concepts such as "policies", "principles", "priorities", "values", "objectives", "goals", "needs", and "instruments" in reviews of Australia, Canada, Denmark, the EU, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

The analysis finds that 6 out of 36 occurrences of the stemmed term "hierarchy" are used to describe the existence of an "organizational hierarchy". Japan is in this group of countries along with France, Germany, Greece, and the US. Again, this means that out of 24 subjects of the DAC reviews, 19 of the aid agencies were not described as possessing "organizational hierarchies".

These observations have been presented to support the claim that the vertical schema that is observed in the language of individual subjects can also affect Japanese institutional structure at a higher level (i.e., "discourse as social practice", in Bhatia, 2004). Evidence of the vertical/hierarchical schema has been presented from both within the discourse community (i.e., Japanese development discourse and language), as well as outside the community (i.e., discourse and language of OECD member countries).

5.4 Hierarchical Evaluations and Institutional Power

Analyses of all three levels of discourse within Bhatia's 3-level framework (2002) have been presented: "discourse as text", through cognitive-linguistic analyses of the word *hyouka* ('evaluations'); "discourse as genre", through a pragmatic exploration of language observed in evaluation policies, documents, and conversational interaction among institutional actors discussing evaluations; and "discourse as social practice" through observations of similar patterns occurring in higher-level institutional policy and documents related to the genre of evaluations. These levels of analysis have been presented to provide evidence of a reflexive and interdiscursive context that constructs a distinct notion of impartiality through evaluation procedures in Japan's international development community.

As this discussion proceeds with the argument that Japanese institutional practices and evaluation discourse reveal vertical and hierarchical characteristics, the discussion will now move on to some of the larger institutional and social implications that become apparent in acknowledging the existence of such a discourse. The clearly defined hierarchical social order of development discourse also explains why a style of speaking among professional peers that does not represent an attuned awareness of inter-organizational dynamics, hierarchy, and an active concern for the other (as discussed in chapter 5.2.2.1) in an interdependent system is perceived as impolite, rude, or aggressive. In the development community, where complex contracts bind institutional actors across regional, national, institutional, and public-private boundaries, the previous analytical discussions can support a grounded theory that the development professionals observed in this context perceive themselves as part of an interdependent system. The confederate that was observed and discussed in the manipulated dialogue (chapter 5.2.2.1) was speaking amongst peers, and his lack of authority further framed

his attitude as inappropriate:

JICA staff: In his case, well, if he were an authority figure [that would be a different story]...He's not exactly in the position to be making such judgments, and for that reason especially, you want him to hold a larger, wider perspective.

The relational tension that results from critical evaluations and a judgmental stance is perceived to be easier to accept, or appropriate coming from a person who holds authority: “権威のある人” (*ken-i-no-arui-hito*: a person who holds/possesses authority). Phillips and colleagues discuss how the ability to impose formal authority, or a “consensually validated” or warranted “right to speak” adds to the *discursive legitimacy* of an institutional actor in producing texts that are more likely to be embedded in discourse (Phillips et al., 2004).

Such authority figures represent the individuals or ranking members of an institution that can exercise power through process or content control. Holmes et al.'s (1999) study on the exercise of power through discourse provided six examples of power in professional discourse: setting the agenda, summarizing progress, closing an interaction, issuing directives, expressing approval, and issuing a challenge. In the current case being examined, we can see that MOFA and JICA work together (sometimes with partner countries) to “set” development “agendas”, while organizational procedures and protocols define how “progress is summarized” through evaluation reports. For internal evaluations, JICA holds the ability to “close the interaction” by “expressing approval” through authorization of the final report and “issuing directives” as to how they should be re-written or improved. Definitions of power can also be interpreted through Orlikowski and Yates' dimensions of genre systems, which are the: purpose, content, participants, form, time, and place of communicative interaction (Orlikowski and Yates, 2002). Institutional practices that have been discussed up to this point explain how JICA (and MOFA)

are able to control the participants (by selecting the evaluators through hiring procedures and standards), and content (through approval).

In this manner some concrete examples of institutional power in the hands of JICA can be observed through their control over institutional discourse and evaluation genres. The cognitive linguistic constructs (vertical schemas) are examples of linguistic conventions that normalize inequalities in power within social relations (Fairclough, 2001; Hammond, 2006). Recent policy developments in MOFA's evaluation policy also reflect a normalization of this power dynamic. In April 2011, the evaluation function was transferred from the International Cooperation Bureau to the Minister's Secretariat, and along with establishing a new ODA Evaluation Division, an independent evaluation specialist was appointed as head of the Division to strengthen the ODA evaluation structure within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While the move towards independence is much welcomed by the international community, a closer look at the organizational restructuring reveals a consideration for the hierarchical social structure inherent in evaluations. MOFA's ODA white paper describes the recent change with the following language:

Conventionally, the International Cooperation Bureau was in charge of ODA evaluations based on the Order for the Organization of MOFA; however, in FY 2011, ODA Evaluation division was established in the Minister's Secretariat with the class of which is higher than the International Cooperation Bureau, in order to maintain the independency of implementation of evaluations. (MOFA ODA White Paper 2011)

The direct logical link that can be read in this policy language, between the “higher” position of the new evaluation division, and its ability to maintain the “independency of [its] implementation of evaluations”, is further evidence of the vertical schema as applied to the linguistic category of “evaluations”; as well as evidence of the need for “higher” social or institutional status to function as a legitimate division within this institutional structure. The language clearly states that “*in order to maintain independency*” the ODA evaluation division was established with a “higher” class. The logic presents a “higher class” as being a prerequisite to maintaining independency; a logical assumption that does not hold when deconstructed or considered from different contexts.

From a critical discourse analytic perspective (Fairclough, 1989), these findings can be interpreted as an explicit reflection of reinforced power (inequalities) within the institutional structure of Japan’s development industry. Hierarchical language that is reflected in evaluation discourse reinforces the relative power differences between development organizations (i.e., MOFA and/or JICA having more power than the consultants and counterpart institutions), and how JICA has a need to “*kudasu*” evaluations (downward) unto the less powerful and “lower” dependent development consultants. The resulting power structure can help JICA (and MOFA) ensure that development projects and agendas reflect national interests (through the government bureaucracy), without displacing too much procedural power over to independent (private sector or civil) organizations through the evaluation process.

The vertical-hierarchical category of the knowledge structure of evaluations, in combination with a sensitivity to maintaining positive inter-organizational relations (which has been observed in similar Japanese contexts by Tanaka (2011)), helps explain the lack of agent-based arguments that were generated from the interviewees and policy documents when discussing impartiality. According to its cognitive category, an evaluation in the current context

by its very nature presupposes an asymmetric relationship between parties. Similarly, an explicit acknowledgement of an impartial party implies that the other relevant parties or subjects are partial and biased. Interpreting this context from a philosophical perspective (of impartiality), an impartial actor symbolizes an entity with a superior understanding of the values and principles that a group must or should adhere to in order to make the “right” decision (or define a “good” project). Shifting the focus towards procedural mechanisms that represent impartial principles (as opposed to impartial agents) allows the group to avoid conceptualizing the (potential) partial or biased nature of the stakeholders involved. This shift allows for stakeholders to reduce the relational tension that can occur between development organizations when their projects need to be evaluated, as well as the tension that is generated from the (inherently face-threatening) act of evaluators evaluating those involved in a project.

Revealing the vertical schemas and metaphors that have been found within conceptualizations of Japan’s development community does not mean to contribute to a scathing critique of these public institutions (such as those in the spirit of Orwell or Barthes, cf. Apthorpe 1986). This discussion intends only to demonstrate how a model of interdependence, in combination with a vertically organized social order, can give birth to language that applies vertical schemas and metaphors directly to the construct of evaluations – an institutional mechanism that is in place precisely to hold those institutions accountable. If we are to critically examine this situation, the logic of hierarchical evaluations does not form an ideal situation for ensuring a balance of power. If accountability mechanisms are meant to retain a balance of power between institutions and the people that support them (i.e., government bodies and the tax payers), it does not seem necessary (or appropriate) to have as a prerequisite, an authoritarian or hierarchical schema attached to it. In fact, if we are to deconstruct the logic of the privileged evaluator, we find that only those with *more* power, or *more* authority, have the

privilege or right to evaluate and assess the actions of those with power. If this is the case, a social mechanism (meant to support a cultural model) of this sort over time will only result in the consolidation of power amongst powerful institutions.

To prevent such consolidations in power, and to ensure that people do not fall victim to the “tyranny of the majority” (Tocqueville, in Horwitz, 1966; Susskind and Cruikshank, 2006), powerful concepts such as deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1996) and impartiality (as reviewed in Chapter 2.1) have been conceived as a means for allowing people to generate and choose fair decisions. These aspirations for social justice can be seen reflected in existing definitions of impartial evaluations, which hold independence and externality as defining principles used to legitimize such procedures. Again, examples from the OECD illustrate this construct:

The evaluation process should be impartial and independent from the process concerned with policy-making, and the delivery and management of development assistance. (OECD, 1991, p. 6)

The World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (WB-IEG) also supports this view of impartiality as applied to evaluations in a Sourcebook for Evaluations published in 2007. Dimensions of independence as related to components of the development process are defined within a section entitled “Independence and Impartiality as a Prerequisite for Credibility of Evaluation”, which states:

To ensure its credibility, the evaluation process should be independent from any process involving program policy making,

management, or activity implementation, as well as impartial. Impartiality is the absence of bias in due process, in the scope and methodology, and in considering and presenting achievements and challenges. The principle of impartiality applies to all members of the governing body, other donors and partners, management, beneficiaries, and the evaluation team. And the requirements for independence and impartiality are present at all stages of the evaluation process... (WB-IEG, 2007, p. 15)

These clear definitions of the need for independence to perform impartial and credible evaluations frame the critical dimension of this entire dissertation. Current practices by JICA reveal that a large number of evaluations are conducted internally which forms a mechanism of closed impartiality (Sen, 2002) and questionable accountability. Clearly, independence and impartiality are not “present at all stages of the evaluation process”, as defined by the World Bank above.

However, this discussion has attempted to illustrate how certain characteristics of Japanese development discourse can be explained as the product of salient concerns for legitimizing evaluators within a hierarchical social order, in order to better fit a cultural model of interdependence. The aim is not to dismiss the entire efforts of Japan’s ODA community and claim that there is no accountability being exercised at all. As hierarchy can be used to alleviate the relational tension that is inherent in the face-threatening act of evaluations, it has been proposed that evaluations are schematically conceptualized as a vertical process, with a spatial understanding that the “position” of an evaluator is located above the subject that she is evaluating. Naturally, an authoritative or hierarchical figure is perceived as the appropriate

entity to enact this role. The lack of independence observed in current evaluation practices in Japan's development community can be explained not simply as a lack of impartiality, but also as the manifestation of contrasting social mechanisms that legitimize the impartiality of evaluators within an interdependent system.

The discussion will conclude here after what has been an attempt to provide a comprehensive discussion of how a substantial amount of development discourse from a range of sources – i.e., stakeholder perceptions, policy discourse, institutional practices, and social interaction – all fit within a cultural model of interdependence, which consequently results in a unique construct of evaluations and impartiality. Before moving on to the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, the limitations of this research will be considered.

5.5 Implications of the Study

Putting aside the social critical elements that exist within an examination of large-scale and publicly funded institutions that function within Japan's international development community, there are theoretical and practical implications that can be suggested or applied to the academic and institutional communities, respectively.

5.5.1 Theoretical implications

One way of framing the theoretical implications of this study are to view the group decisions (of project evaluations) in terms of their (1) procedural or (2) substantive characteristics. The current analysis argues that group harmony and relational goals are a factor

that guide and influence decision-making *procedures*, while it is not the defining standard that applies to the *substance* of the decision. A deliberation on the theoretical implications leads one to further recognize the essential role of independent and critical thought for the monitoring and evaluation of institutional decision-making. As social institutions ritualize and reinforce cultural models and practices, critical thought, input, and expression are necessary components of innovation and progress. The current discussion has illustrated how values of social hierarchy intimately interact with concepts of interdependent or independent concepts of the social self (Triandis, 1989) through institutional practices.

In addition, the complexity and context-sensitive nature of evaluations and impartiality observed in the current case can help us better understand some previous (failed) attempts at cross-cultural models of procedural justice. For example, Sugawara and Huo's (1994) study (mentioned in Chapter 2.1.2) attempted to observe differences in procedural justice concerns between individualists and collectivists with the following assumptions:

1. Japanese subjects represent collectivists
2. Collectivists are relatively more concerned with harmony and solidarity than individualists
3. Individualists display concern for the consequences of their own actions, needs, interests, and goals
 - This is reflected in the desire to exercise process control in order to maximize their payoff.

Their study predicts that collectivists (Japanese subjects) will be more concerned with maintaining harmony, and will enact non-fairness issues in an attempt to maintain group

harmony. The results find that no such mechanism is at work, and Sugawara and Huo's failed predictions suggest flawed conceptualization and experimental design. The grounded theory approach is precisely the method designed to avoid such instances of unsuccessful or misguided attempts to understand and interpret social behaviour with preconceived assumptions or existing frames of thought. The current discussion enables the reinterpretation of failed theoretical predictions from a theory generated from patterns and observations identified in a more specific (yet characteristically representative) situational context.

The discussion generated from the current analysis suggests that while maintaining positive inter-organizational relations and group harmony are a significant factor in social interaction, these are in fact a product of what Japanese development professionals perceived to be fair and just procedures. Group harmony and positive relations are perceived as important because they represent the ideal end product of a fair and just procedure – that of a group consensus. Where past interpretations of collectivist tendencies conceptualized group harmony as an interactional goal that could supersede standards of fairness, this discussion identifies a cultural context in which harmony is in fact perceived to be a product of procedural justice.

Japanese development professionals exert significant thought and effort into designing and implementing procedural mechanisms that are designed to enforce standards of quality, efficiency, and fairness. Ideal agreements are a result of group-consensus, where the fairest agreement is represented by group-oriented procedures that incorporate and reflect the input of all relevant parties. However, the true issue of concern that lies behind the failed predictions such as those by Sugawara and Huo remains a problematic reality for those who wish to produce or encourage fair and just outcomes. Due to the fact that in the current case, for example, group harmony reflects the ideal state or progress of a group's efforts for achieving fairness (through consensus), *perceived* group harmony enables the *perceived* attainment of

those principles. Social interactions and group procedures that are designed to *generate* genuine consensus and fair results can easily be transmogrified into mechanical social rituals that merely *mimic* consensus. This results in the all-too-common predicament in which liege yet entrenched adherents of a bureaucracy can lose sight of the underlying purposes and objectives of institutional procedures and protocols; an unfortunate misconstruing of the means for the ends.

Such unfortunate misunderstandings can be understood as the inappropriate interpretation and application of justice constructs. It could be argued that substantial (e.g., consequentialist) arguments are being strictly applied to evaluate procedural justice mechanisms. Encouraging proper procedure to ensure the enforcement of equal or fair opportunities for achieving justice (e.g., practicing due diligence), is a separate issue from whether or not said procedures have generated the outcomes they were designed to create. Proponents of procedural justice should still be required to critically evaluate the consequences of their methods, and to adapt and refine their procedures appropriately. These conceptual misunderstandings and overlaps can also be observed in the evaluation process, representing opportunities for practical suggestions and improvements to current practice.

5.5.2 *Practical implications: refining evaluation practice*

Apart from simply contributing in general to a better cross-cultural understanding of development processes in the international community, the current discussion can be applied to produce policy and procedural implications for development aid organizations. Just as theoretical conceptualizations of culture and justice can conflate and confuse the relationships between concepts such as justice, procedure, consensus, and group harmony; bureaucratic procedures can produce misinterpretations of the purpose and rationale behind institutional protocol.

5.5.2.1 Clearer Definitions for the Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms

Clearer definitions and delineations between the concepts and objectives behind JICA's evaluation schemes could aid in the resolution and prevention of gaps in understanding and evaluation-related conflicts. The current analysis of conflicts in project evaluations has produced insight into the various perspectives that can be incorporated into the conceptualization of project evaluations.

It is no surprise that the rationale and design of JICA's evaluation procedures might confuse the general public. The current dissertation's efforts and attempts to deconstruct and understand the entire ODA evaluation system was a time-consuming and challenging task. Even those directly involved have experienced difficulty understanding the purpose of some evaluation activities:

Development

Consultant : 自分でも誰のどんな利益のために評価やっているのか分からないと思うこともある。

Sometimes I feel that I don't know for whose and for what benefit we're even doing the evaluations.

Development

Consultant : 私見だけれど、評価ミッションを入れるなら単なるネガティブチェックを厳正にすればいいという話ではなくて、予想通りに効果が出ていないんだとしたらどうやったらよくなるのかっていう話をするために使うのが、実務的にはいいんじゃないかということも考える。

My opinion is, if you're going to implement an evaluation mission, instead of just running through a check of all the things that went wrong, I think that it's more practical if we talk about how to steer projects in the right direction, if they're not producing the impacts and outputs that we were hoping for.

It should be noted that these types of difficulties were shared only when discussing internal evaluation procedures (mid-term and terminal evaluations). Confusion is born when evaluation practices fail to define clearly the jurisdiction and role of the parties involved. Is MOFA to be held accountable or JICA? Is it the contractors and development consultants, or the recipient nations that need to be monitored since this is where the money flows? And which organization is responsible for producing feedback for future projects so as to spawn institutional learning? The obvious and somewhat dismaying answer is that to a certain extent, the answer is “all of the above”, and that all stakeholders should be held to a certain level of accountability, just as all organizations should strive for a certain level of institutional learning. The difficulty lies not only in creating an effective and efficient evaluation mechanism for the parties involved, but to *communicate* the purpose and objectives of such practices to the parties involved as well as to the tax-payers. However, with such confusion, one must question whether the current scheme is effectively producing the accountability or institutional feedback it strives for, and where improvements can be made.

5.5.2.2 Refining the Rationale behind Evaluation Practices: Separating External and Internal Mechanisms

The present case of internal evaluations (mid-term and terminal evaluations in particular) may be an example of MOFA and JICA “biting off more than they can chew”, in which the current system makes claims that these procedures are both accountable *and* useful, although this does not necessarily have to be the case. Development institutions may do well to recognize and explicitly acknowledge that enforcing accountability and supporting feedback are distinct organizational goals, which can be achieved through separate institutional mechanisms. Mechanisms which, it should be noted, are already being enforced and implemented through

other evaluation mechanisms within the ODA scheme.

For example, at present both JICA and MOFA use external evaluations and third-party input to strengthen the accountability of ODA programmes and projects. JICA, for example, commissions external evaluations for the ex-post evaluations of projects totaling over 1 billion JPY. These measures are put in place to strengthen accountability, while operational capacity and the reality of finite resources ensure that such “external evaluations cannot be conducted for too many projects in terms of efficiency and quality assurance (JICA Annual Evaluation, 2011, p. 10). Any spending on evaluation procedures ultimately means less resources flowing directly to respective beneficiaries. External evaluations require funding, time, and resources to be consumed by external institutions, while internal evaluations also consume a portion of the finite resources of JICA officials and project members.

JICA also receives advice on evaluation policy, systems, and methodology from the Advisory Committee on Evaluation, entirely made up of external experts from academia, international organizations, NGOs, and private-sector groups. These represent JICA’s efforts to embed external mechanisms into JICA’s institutional evaluation procedures and strengthen accountability. MOFA also commissions external third parties to conduct policy-level and program-level evaluations via open competitive bidding; and has established the ODA Evaluation Division, headed by an external expert.

Therefore, this discussion does not intend to say that there are no external mechanisms in place within Japan’s ODA scheme. The current research has focused largely on the *internal* evaluations that comprise the largest proportion of evaluations in the current scheme, and questions the strength and legitimacy of such mechanisms in producing accountability. From a theoretical perspective, however, it can be argued that internal mechanisms are much more (or strictly) useful for producing enhanced feedback for future projects.

Extrapolating from this assumption, although the results of the internal evaluations can be used to enhance and improve internal processes, linking internal procedures to external accountability (to the tax-payers) is questionable, and can be interpreted as insincere. Furthermore, inter-organizational relations and relational dynamics complicate the hierarchical nature of evaluations, which seem to be a reasonable byproduct of enforcing accountability, but unnecessary for enhancing institutional feedback. The following suggestion could then be proposed: removing the evaluative component from internal evaluation procedures may reduce the inter-organizational tensions that result from the privileged and hierarchical nature of evaluations (in Japan), while arguably producing the same amount of external accountability. Reframing internal “evaluations” as joint or collaborative initiatives to identify best management practices and solutions (or some other non-hierarchical management jargon), would enable the simultaneous removal of the authoritative connotation of evaluations, as well as the pressure of positive performance assessments that inhibit unrestricted efforts to engage in honest and critical self-reflection. A reframing of the internal evaluation functions away from accountability in development projects could help prevent unnecessary inter-organizational tensions and conflicts, while arguably producing the same amount of perceived accountability (via existing external accountability mechanisms).

This would mean that MOFA and/or JICA could simply focus all internal efforts purely for producing enhanced feedback, rather than as a mechanism to legitimize accountability. The legitimacy of accountability mechanisms would strictly be attributed to external evaluation mechanisms. Interpretive and critical functions could then be left in the hands of independent third-parties or the general public, through the transparent maintenance and strengthening of existing external evaluation mechanisms. Unfortunately, this touches upon another lengthy debate of whether or not transparency leads to accountability, and whether

simple and easy-to-understand interpretations, even if internal, are a useful method for generating accountability. Interpretations made on behalf of the general public will reduce the cognitive burden of the tax-payers and can arguably lead to a better understanding and enhanced awareness of the state of ODA in Japan. This dissertation did not explore the preferences of the general public concerning JICA's internal evaluations and the perceived accountability of such procedures. Whether or not the public prefers such evaluations (even if they are internal) over independent third-party evaluations is a related but separate issue. Future work on the perceived accountability of evaluation practices by the audience is an extremely valuable area for expansion. Future research may also look to explore the social-psychological relationship between the perceived legitimacy or quality of evaluations and the source of its content (cf. reactive devaluation by Ross, 1995).

In short, it may be useful to simplify and/or reframe existing evaluation procedures with distinctly separate mechanisms for enforcing accountability and encouraging institutional learning. The continued implementation and strengthening of existing external evaluations can be used to argue for the enhanced accountability of public institutions involved in ODA to the taxpayers, while internal performance assessments and institutional learning mechanisms can be used to ensure that development aid practices will learn from past experiences. Each procedure could voluntarily use the findings of the other mechanism to generate further insights. However, there does not necessarily need to be overlap within the conceptual design and rationale of procedural mechanisms used to attain the organizational goals of accountability and feedback. From a critical perspective, it is hard to swallow the argument that internal procedures directly contribute to external accountability. Reconceptualizing the overall evaluation scheme could significantly reduce the burden on the audience/readership in understanding the purpose, objectives, and value of evaluations.

These implications consider how the practice of evaluations could be refined to reflect the complexity that has been observed in the discourse. An alternative approach to suggesting implications would be to provide prescriptive suggestions for modifying the discourse that has been identified, so that it may reflect desired institutional practices.

5.5.2.3 Changing Evaluation Discourse in Japan

The Critical Discourse Analytic approach provides a prescriptive stance for suggesting that the vertical schemas and hierarchy that was observed in the genre of evaluations represents and reinforces power inequalities within the institutional structure. The cognitive linguistic category of “evaluations” and the vertical schemas attached to it forms a construct that implies or assumes that an evaluator is superior (higher) to an evaluatee. From the perspective of an accountability mechanism, this can be a disturbing finding. If the ultimate purpose of accountability mechanisms is to restore or maintain a balance of power, such mechanisms must be designed so that those in power are held accountable and critically evaluated. However, if the concept of evaluations entails that an evaluator is, or should be superior, only those with more power will be able to legitimately hold the powerful accountable.

Changing the linguistic traits of evaluation genres and language may help restructure evaluation discourse to consciously or unconsciously prevent consolidations of power in institutions or society. Where accountability is the goal, policy-makers and development staff should be sensitive to the inequalities that vertical schemas and hierarchical metaphors can reinforce. A reasonable step would be to remove any such type of language (grammatical, vertical schematic, metaphoric, or metonymic) from official policy, and to provide critical and self-reflective language training to managers and development staff to help them recognize and amend this type of language use. Specific examples that could be exercised in this case would

be, to suggest that evaluations are not something that requires authority or hierarchical legitimacy, but is simply a mechanism that functions in parallel with principles of equality. Active strategies to undermine the vertical nature of evaluations may be possible by strengthening or infusing horizontal schemas and metaphors to the evaluation discourse (e.g., *hyouka-wo-mawasu* ‘pass evaluations around’; *hyouka-wo-watasu* ‘hand over evaluations’). With the construction of a new discourse, evaluation chiefs, experts, and consultants could become familiarized with new evaluation policies that conceptualize evaluations as a horizontal (or even a bottom-up) construct. Peer evaluations, anonymous bottom-up evaluations and 360 degree feedback (Atwater and Waldman, 1998) could also be implemented within the agencies to strengthen a horizontal culture of accountability in which higher-ranking and senior workers become more accustomed to being evaluated critically by subordinates, contractors, and counterparts.

The practical implications of this research for organizations within Japan’s international development community represents the most significant area in which future work is required. Further research in verifying the theories and observations that have been made in this dissertation are required before more specific and embedded suggestions can be made towards the entire ODA evaluation scheme. The explanatory power of the generated theories can and should be enhanced and refined with future research in the testing and observation of these cultural models. The relationship between vertical hierarchy and relational or inter-group perceptions can also be further tested using psychological, social, or cognitive experiments.

5.6 Limitations of the study

Under a discourse analytic framework, these findings represent an attempt to systematically explore the relationship between language, institutional practice, and social knowledge. The validity of this approach (see Chapter 3.2) is argued to exist within the ability for these explanations to converge, and for analyses to cover an ample area of social inquiry (Gee, 1999). However, in no way can this research claim that the entire set of data available for observing the discourse of Japanese development professionals, or evaluation procedures, has been examined. Critics will understandably point towards a large area of unexplored and undescribed contexts in which inconsistent patterns of language may be observed. However, as stated earlier, this research has attempted to highlight markedly distinct examples of language use and discourse in a specific institutional context. The results aim to suggest a strong plausible and persuasive explanation for these practices, as opposed to universal or generalizable understandings of social ('Japanese', or 'professional') behaviour.

Additionally, while the current discussion assumes, like other discourse analysts (e.g., Gee, 1999; Bazerman, 1991; Potter, 2012) that discourse possesses reflexive properties, the current discussion in a sense only captures a moment within a dynamic and evolving social context. Policies, practices, projects, agendas, managers, workers, and all other aspects of the development process will continue to evolve, and the explanations will not always align with the realities of the institutional practices. It was brought to my attention (anecdotally) that although it is stated in MOFA policy that the independence of the ODA evaluation process was strengthened through the hiring of an independent and "higher ranking" individual to lead the ODA Evaluation Division, the current practices did not seem to adequately reflect this ideal situation. The head of the ODA Evaluation Division, although *in principle* is given a higher

class than the International Cooperation Bureau, is actually headed and composed of lower-ranking bureaucrats within the MOFA bureaucracy. If this is the case, it could be suggested that even if a cultural model of interdependency *requires* independent and impartial actors to be authoritative or hierarchically superior entities, current practices might only be exploiting this cultural model at a formal level. Formally, evaluation practices are hierarchically legitimized in policy language and reports, while informally (or in reality), power imbalances can be maintained so that power does not fall out of the hands of the institutional bureaucracy.

However, the fact that existing policies are not reflecting the realities of current practices is a separate issue from the fact that the existence of such policy discourse reflects a strategy to legitimize institutional practices through hierarchy. Even if it were the case that MOFA or JICA were not actually using authoritative figures within a social hierarchy to enforce meaningful and effective evaluations in Japan, the policies and practices represent responses to and a concern for social-institutional and cultural norms that shape evaluation procedures within the Japanese international development community.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusions

A brief summary of the narrative of this dissertation and a reiteration of some of its main findings will conclude this dissertation. This dissertation has attempted to produce a comprehensive discussion on impartiality as a social construct by observing and analyzing evaluation practices in the international development community of Japan.

In order to explore the role of impartiality in the development community, development professionals were approached directly and interviewed. Inspired by the grounded theory approach, policy documents to which interview subjects were referring to were analyzed in parallel with in-depth interviews which contributed to the evolution of further interviews. While discussing impartial third-party procedures with development professionals, the discussion led to an exploration of JICA's project evaluation scheme. Further investigation into evaluation procedures revealed that a majority of evaluations – meant to enforce accountability – were being conducted internally. These current practices suggested that a large portion of evaluation results were not a product of independent and external (and hence, internal) procedures.

As development professionals were further probed to discuss this issue of internal evaluations, an emphasis on the procedural element of evaluations became another key theme. The impartiality of evaluations were argued to lie in the consensus-based and objective evaluation procedures that were implemented by evaluation teams (rather than individuals, whether or not they were internal or external). Subjects indicated that impartiality was perceived

as a procedural construct.

In discussing the importance of group-oriented consensus, the discourse of development professionals and an analysis of natural interaction among JICA officials and development consultants display strong concerns for maintaining interdependent inter-organizational relationships. The concern for interdependence can be observed to be strong enough to frame and define the relationships between stakeholders in the development community. Contextual information on the interdependence of development stakeholders framed the adversarial communicative styles and utterances that were observed in a manipulated dialogue session between JICA officials and development consultants.

Due to the fact that interdependence and independence are fundamentally contrary concepts, it has been theorized that the need for interdependence produces difficulties for the enforcement of independent and external evaluations (a primary characteristic of existing definitions of impartiality); a conceptual conflict significant enough to affect evaluation practices among Japanese development professionals. A closer look at the concept of “evaluations” as a cognitive linguistic category revealed distinct structural characteristics (the application of vertical schemas) relative to the equivalent term in English. Discourse analytic literature defines “cultural models” as differences in how images, schemas, and metaphors (Gee, 2004, p.40), are used to understand social realities. The identification and analysis of these cognitive linguistic components within the observed language use of development professionals in Japan has been presented as evidence of a distinct “cultural model” as defined above.

Subsequently, the hierarchical and vertical schemas and images that have been identified can also be understood utilizing the model of interdependence: framing independent evaluators as hierarchically organized authority figures helps legitimize their role in an interdependent network. Evidence of vertically schematized categories of evaluations can also be found within higher-level policy discourse (in official MOFA and JICA policy), while the hierarchical characteristics of the Japanese institutions was also found in international policy

discourse (i.e., hierarchically organized ODA institutions according to the OECD).

All three levels of Bhatia's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (2002) has thus been examined: discourse as text (user-level language and conversation); discourse as genre (evaluation documents and evaluation policies); and discourse as social practice (high level policy and international reviews of Japanese ODA activities). The entire analysis, interpretation, and discussion that has been outlined here attempts to produce valid evidence of a distinct concept of impartiality within Japan's international development community. The four criteria of a valid discourse analysis as by Gee (1999), and how they have been addressed are as follows:

1. Convergence: How the discourse that has been analyzed converges around a cultural model of interdependence.
2. Coverage: How observations have been compiled from interview testimony, conversational interaction, as well as domestic and international development policy
3. Linguistic details: Detailed analyses have been presented from the perspectives of discourse analysis, pragmatics, and cognitive linguistics.
4. Agreement: The arguments presented aim to convince both native Japanese and English speakers, providing valuable insight into the Japanese context, as well as Japanese institutional practices manifested in English policy language.

The analysis has attempted to examine understandings of impartiality as a concept amongst institutional actors by looking specifically at project evaluations – an institutional mechanism which holds impartiality as one of its defining characteristics.

While the international community continues to try and produce consensus about global issues through discussions and dialogue taking place within multi-lateral institutions, observing unique and differing institutional practices across major donors and development

agencies is proof that understandings of effective and appropriate development practices continue to evolve. Scholars and development agencies have struggled for decades in providing effective aid to developing regions, and much of the policy and practice we see today can arguably be simplified crudely as the result of policy-makers and practitioners learning from past mistakes. Project evaluations must utilize fluid tools and employ flexible frameworks that can adapt to the various levels of complexity that will characterize international development goals and projects. Developing evaluation procedures to adequately assess the quality of aid can be as complex, if not more, than efforts put in place simply to provide quality aid. It is my hope that this discussion helps produce a better understanding of impartiality in the context of international development, and contributes in some way towards continued efforts to improve or establish innovative evaluation practices and international development aid.

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