

**Between Co-operation and Confrontation:  
The Government-NGO Relationship in Japan's  
Official Development Assistance**

by

Moe Mashiko  
Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria, 2010

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the Department of Political Science

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**Supervisory Committee**

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## **Abstract**

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This thesis examines the relationship between the Japanese government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in Official Development Assistance (ODA). Japanese NGOs are too easily co-opted into the mechanisms of state power, sometimes putting at risk the very objectives that ODA is meant to embody. Against this prevailing trend; however, some NGOs have rallied to resist and transform undemocratic ODA policies and practices, and challenge Japan's traditional bureaucratic politics. Gramsci's theory of state and civil society, which treats civil society as a field of contention between hegemony and counter-hegemony, provides a useful frame of reference to understand the contradictory role of Japanese NGOs.

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## List of Abbreviations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ASEAN  | Association of South East Asian Nations                   |
| DAC    | Development Assistance Committee                          |
| ECOSOC | United Nations Economic and Social Council                |
| EIA    | Environment Impact Assessment                             |
| EPA    | Economic Planning Agency                                  |
| IMF    | International Monetary Fund                               |
| INGO   | International Non-Governmental Organizations              |
| JANIC  | Japan NGO Centre for International Co-operation           |
| JATAN  | Japan Tropical Forest Action Network                      |
| JBIC   | Japan Bank for International Co-operation                 |
| JCBL   | Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines                           |
| JICA   | Japan International Corporation Agency                    |
| JPP    | JICA Partnership Program                                  |
| JVC    | Japan International Volunteer Centre                      |
| MOF    | Ministry of Finance of Japan                              |
| MOFA   | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan                      |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organization                             |
| NPO    | Non-Profit Organization                                   |
| OECD   | Organization of Economic and Co-operation and Development |
| ODA    | Official Development Assistance                           |
| REAL   | Reconsider Aid Citizens' League                           |
| UN     | United Nations  |

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

In the last few decades, the global proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been the subject of considerable academic attention. Salamon, for one, described the phenomenon as a “global associational revolution – a massive upsurge of organized private voluntary activity, of structured citizen action outside the boundaries of the market and the state.”<sup>1</sup> Political science studies, especially in the subfields of globalization and social movements, often treat NGOs as important actors in global civil society because of their capacity to advance social and political goals independently. At times, they challenge and influence the dominant neoliberal practices and policies of powerful states and international organizations such as the World Bank.

This simplified characterization; however, neglects the important role of government in facilitating the growth and operation of ostensibly non-governmental NGOs. In particular, perhaps in part because the literature on globalization tends to underemphasize the continued centrality of the state in global affairs, scholars have likewise tended to underemphasize the importance of the state in determining NGOs and their prospects for survival and success. To varying degrees, NGOs are often co-opted into advancing the values and interests of states, especially in the areas of foreign aid and international development, and sometimes to such an extent that NGOs are perceived as being little more than cover for the regional ambitions of economically powerful donor states.

In making this observation, it is not intended to deny the more idealized liberal

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<sup>1</sup> Salamon, Lester M. “An ‘Associational’ Revolution.” *UNESCO COURIER* 54 no. 6 (2001): 36.  
Salamon, Lester M. “The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector.” *Foreign Affairs* 73 no. 4 (1994): 109.

view of NGOs as champions of an autonomous civil society. Around the world and for decades, NGOs have presented a counterweight or check against unregulated abuses of states and corporate economic power. They have frequently served the interests of constituencies in civil society, in regard to democracy, social welfare, and environmental protection (Amnesty International and Greenpeace are good examples). Yet NGOs have been subject to the whims of more traditional geopolitics. This raises certain questions as to how we should understand the apparently paradoxical role and dual functions of NGOs with regards to state power and civil society. Political realist schools of thought are insufficient for this task because they do not account for the growth and influence of global civil society, including the work of NGOs. Likewise, neoliberal institutionalism too easily overlooks the priority of the state. How then are we to conceptualize the significance of NGOs in relation to government?

These questions will be explored through the case of Japan and its relationship with NGOs in the field of international development aid. Japan exhibits all the elements of this problematization of the role of NGOs. On one hand, and to varying degrees, Japanese NGOs have been heavily conditioned and co-opted into agreeing with government policy, especially in terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA),<sup>2</sup> the most important component of Japan's foreign aid policy, where NGOs have recently become most active. In the 1990s, Japan saw a sudden explosion in the number of NGOs engaged in overseas development assistance, in large part due to the increasing financial and legal support of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in the incorporation of NGOs into the delivery of ODA. While Japanese NGOs are much smaller and younger

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<sup>2</sup> See Section 1.2 for definitions of the key terms and concepts used in this thesis, including ODA.

than NGOs in other industrialized countries, MOFA's deliberate effort to use them in the delivery of ODA has caused increasing collaboration between MOFA and NGOs in regions such as Southeast Asia, where Japan's ODA net disbursement is the highest.

On the other hand, and also to varying degrees, the surge of NGO activity in Japan's expanding ODA includes NGO initiatives that resisted and sometimes challenged the legitimacy of government policy. Since the 1990s, a growing number of NGOs, particularly the more progressive ones, such as the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) and Mekong Watch, have sought to exert influence over ODA policy by employing a wide range of tactics (direct lobbying, public campaigns, and policy dialogue) to confront the Japanese government about some of the detrimental effects of its ODA projects. The advocacy work of these NGOs has helped ensure a more transparent and democratic decision-making process in ODA policy against the heavily centralized bureaucracy of the Japanese state.

This thesis undertakes an empirical study of the diverse roles of Japanese NGOs in relation to the Japanese government in the area of ODA. My central question is: How should we theorize the contradictory and dual functions of Japanese NGOs, with regard to state power in the realm of ODA? The thesis also addresses the following sub-questions: To what extent have Japanese NGOs been co-opted into serving the interests of the state; and to what extent have NGOs challenged or influenced these interests?

To answer these questions, this thesis explores a range of positions that NGOs occupy with regard to Japan's ODA policy, from supportive and co-operative to critical and confrontational. I argue that state-NGO relations in the case of Japan's ODA unfold in a field of political contention where NGOs are too easily co-opted into the

government's agenda, sometimes putting at risk the very objectives that ODA is meant to embody. Against this pervasive trend; however, individual cases such as JVC and Mekong Watch illustrate the small but burgeoning role of Japanese NGOs that have begun to resist the bureaucratic forces of the state and challenge the government's ODA policy. Framing the Japanese government-NGO relationship as a field of political contention, we can arrive at a more nuanced understanding of NGOs that they are not merely tools to be manipulated by the state in pursuing its own agenda, nor do they operate in an independent sphere as autonomous actors.

To help conceptualize Japanese government-NGO relations, this thesis first adopts an alternative way of thinking about NGOs that transcends the pervasive liberal perspective and the traditional realist perspective. Civil society is neither a façade of state power nor an autonomous sphere, but is involved in a field of contention where social and cultural ideas and values, and formal political institutions, constitute political leverage in the struggle for (or against) hegemonic dominance. This conceptualization draws on the thought of Antonio Gramsci,<sup>3</sup> who treats civil society as an integral part of the state (for Gramsci, the state is more than just formal political institutions) and as an arena of contestation where both hegemony and counter-hegemony can emerge. With certain qualifications, this framework of analysis is useful in understanding both the cooperative (co-optative) and confrontational modes of interaction between the Japanese government and NGOs. Nevertheless, in this analysis, Gramsci's radically polarized understandings of hegemony and revolution are limited to a less dramatic struggle for influence in the field of contention. In simple terms, civil society and its elements,

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<sup>3</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Volume III*, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

including NGOs, are in a political contest between bureaucratic state power and counter-hegemonic forces, the latter signifying the democratic interests of people over and above the interests of the state or capital. Gramsci's theory is helpful in highlighting the complex relations between the state and non-state actors, challenging the popular liberal notion of civil society<sup>4</sup> that regards NGOs as autonomous actors and almost as a "panacea for addressing many of the political, economic and social ills" facing the world today.<sup>5</sup>

Second, to conceptualize Japanese government-NGO relations, this thesis will engage with a body of literature that situates the Japanese case in a broader geopolitical and cultural context. I attempt to conceptualize Japanese government-NGO relations from the perspective of Northern/Western NGOs and the culture of their political relationships with government, which is often characterized as being highly co-operative. A review of Northern/Western government-NGO relations illustrates the importance of state support in fostering NGO activities; the Japanese government's position with regard to NGOs is consistent with this mode of interaction. Nevertheless, because of the more rigid regulations applied to all Japanese NGOs by the Japanese government and other cultural differences from Northern/Western NGOs, I situate Japanese NGOs against the Southern/Asian NGO community, where tense and hostile government-NGO relations are common. Since Japan is not a recipient of aid, unlike many other Southern/Asian countries, this frame of reference also has its shortcomings.

By combining insights from the literature (on Gramscian perspectives and on alternative regional modes of state-NGO relations) this thesis seeks to arrive at a more

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<sup>4</sup> See Section 1.2 for the (neo)liberal notion of civil society and relevant scholarly work.

<sup>5</sup> Ingrid Landau, "Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 38 no. 2 (2008): 254.

nuanced understanding of Japanese government-NGO relations in the domain of ODA, an area of study that has been largely neglected in academia. While highly empirical, this study is theoretically significant in that it challenges popular liberal notions of civil society assumed by many Western NGO studies. In addition, the thesis has practical implications not only for the future activities of Japanese NGOs but also for East Asia, particularly South Korea and Taiwan, emerging powerhouses in terms of ODA. The Japanese experience offers a useful frame of reference for analysing and ultimately improving policies of NGO incorporation in ODA activities.

### **1.1 Methodology: Case Study and Case Selection**

This thesis adopts a case-study approach (Chapter 4) to demonstrate how, despite the very institutionalized relationship between NGOs involved in ODA and the government (as illustrated in Chapter 3), some development-focused NGOs have been able to challenge the government's policy, approach, and priorities in ODA. Through employing different tactics, these NGOs demonstrate that they have not only contributed to shifting policy and development discourse but have also begun acting as the government's watchdog, and to some extent, formed a 'counter-hegemony' in a small way.

A case study method is commonly used in NGO studies because each NGO has a different culture, operational methods, and strategies, necessitating individual analysis for a study of this kind. In *Case Study and Theory in Political Science*, Eckstein defines the case study as an intensive study of a small number of individuals (phenomena, persons, and collectives) for the purpose of capturing the particular and unique, as contrasted to

extensive large-n experimental studies that tend to produce generalized knowledge.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Lijphart points out an advantage of focusing on individual cases rather than broader-based studies: “[The] case can be intensely examined even when the research resources at the investigator’s disposal are relatively limited.”<sup>7</sup>

The first case study, Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC), was chosen because it is a primary example of one of the oldest and most progressive Japanese NGOs engaged in overseas development assistance and advocacy work for ODA. Also serving as an umbrella organization, JVC often represents many smaller NGOs at government-NGO meetings, posing a range of critical views regarding Japan’s ODA activities.

Besides JVC’s predominant position in the Japanese NGO community, the rationale behind choosing JVC as a case study is twofold. First, JVC is a purely Japanese NGO, with most staff members being Japanese and its head office in Tokyo. In contrast, while some major international NGOs such as Care Japan, Oxfam Japan, and Save the Children Japan operate in Japan, their organizational culture may be similar to that of their international headquarters in North America or Western Europe. Second and more importantly, JVC’s history of advocacy since the 1980s permits the study of NGO strategy changes over time in a particular organization, revealing an evolving relationship with the government, and ultimately, a shift towards increasing collaboration in recent years.

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<sup>6</sup> Harry Eckstein “Case Study and Theory in Political Science.” In *Handbook of Political Science: Strategies of Inquiry*, eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975), 81-85.

<sup>7</sup> Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method.” *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 691.

The second case study, Mekong Watch, was chosen because the organization's active and newly emerging role in advocacy work in ODA, especially despite its small size, deserves particular attention. In discussions about NGO work, most scholars and government officials have focused on major organizations such as JVC because they often appear in government-NGO meetings but they have failed to pay attention to smaller NGOs, such as Mekong Watch. Even though Mekong Watch has done important work, the organization rarely receives an invitation to government-NGO meetings because of its size. More importantly, Mekong Watch is highly autonomous both financially and operationally and does not take part in many of the MOFA-NGO collaboration schemes proposed by the Japanese government. Therefore, how such small and independent organizations seek to influence Japanese ODA policy must be examined to understand the role of Japanese NGOs in this field.

Research for this thesis is based on primary sources, such as documents produced by governments, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank, but it relies mostly on secondary sources such as scholarly books and journal articles. Although a wide variety of authors are cited to minimize bias from individual sources, I acknowledge that a greater use of primary sources (particularly interviews with NGO leaders and participatory research inside NGOs) could have contributed to the strength of this thesis.

## **1.2. Definition of Key Terms and Concepts**

### **Civil Society**

According to Cox, "The concept of civil society has a long history in European

and American thought.”<sup>8</sup> To Marx, for example, the realm of civil society consisted of the projected interests of one social class, the bourgeoisie, based on a capitalist economy where the forces and relations of production determined unequal, illegitimate, and outdated social relations; hence, it was to be abolished.<sup>9</sup> By the late-19<sup>th</sup> century; however, the concept of civil society came to be associated with the spirit of volunteerism, as was earlier observed in the work of de Tocqueville on American democracy.<sup>10</sup> This concept was further developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by American theorists such as Almond and Verba, and Putnam, all of whom emphasized the importance of voluntary associations for the vitality of democracy.<sup>11</sup> In the post-Washington consensus world and with the increasing scale of global civil society, the concept has often become posited by liberal scholars as a counterforce to neoliberal globalization, consisting of various transnational advocacy and reformist groups such as think tanks, religious charities, and trade unions.<sup>12</sup> These organizations commonly possess characteristics that are described as “voluntary,” “autonomous,” and “self-regulating.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert W. Cox, “Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium: Prospects for an Alternative World.” *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999): 4.

<sup>9</sup> Keiko Hitara, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Aid and Development Policy* (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example: Henk E. S. Woldring, “State and Civil Society in the Political Philosophy of Alexis de Tocqueville.” *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 9 no. 4 (1998).

<sup>11</sup> See, for example: Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); Robert Putnam D., *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1993).

<sup>12</sup> See, for example: Taylor Rupert, *Creating a Better World: Interpreting Global Civil Society* (New York: Kumarian Press Inc., 2004); and David C. Korten, Nicanor Perlas, and Vandana Shiva, “Global Civil Society: The Path Ahead,” *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*, December 2002, A Discussion Paper.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example: M. E. Warren, *Democracy and Association* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); V. Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Michael Walzer, *Toward a Global Civil Society* (London: Berghahn Books Inc., 2002), Chapter 2; Nye “The Rising Power of NGOs: Transnational Groups Are Making Their Voices Heard, and Governments and Corporations Are Taking Notice,” 2.

This study takes a different approach to civil society by drawing on Gramscian concepts. As will be examined in the next chapter, Gramsci sees civil society as an integral part of the state and a political space where struggle for dominance is based on the exercise of popular ideas, values, norms “and manufacturing cultural and ideological consent.”<sup>14</sup> Although applying Gramsci’s theory has limitations, it emphasizes the tension between the government and NGOs, and provides a counterweight to the liberal notion of civil society, outlined above.

### **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

NGOs are just one form of actor in civil society. Although conceptually vague, in common usage, NGO refers to “any organization that is both non-governmental and non-profit,” which includes purely domestic organizations.<sup>15</sup> NGOs that operate internationally are often identified as International NGOs (INGOs), a term that is becoming common in the field of international development.

The term INGO is rarely, if ever, used in Japan. Instead, the definition of NGOs refers to citizen-based organizations that are active in international co-operation as defined by the Japan International NGO Centre for International Co-operation.<sup>16</sup> This body differentiates NGOs from Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), which refers to non-profit organizations engaged mostly in domestic activities. For the purpose of this study, I use “NGO” to refer to non-profit and non-governmental organizations, especially those engaged in overseas development assistance.

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<sup>14</sup> Landau, “Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective,” 246.

<sup>15</sup> David C. Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* (Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1990), 95.

<sup>16</sup> Japan International NGO Center for International Co-operation, <http://www.janic.org/en/> (23 June 2012).

## Advocacy

The term *advocacy* refers to “efforts to change institutions’ policies in ways that are expected to favour the poor and marginalized”<sup>17</sup> or “the act of organizing the strategic use of information to democratize unequal power relations.”<sup>18</sup> Common strategies undertaken in advocacy include lobbying, campaigning to mobilize the general public, research and policy analysis, development education, and networking.<sup>19</sup> In this thesis, the term *advocacy* refers to the evolving efforts of Japanese development-oriented NGOs to weaken or change the hegemonic practices and control of the government’s ODA.

## Foreign Aid

The commonly used definition of *foreign aid* stems from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)<sup>20</sup> of the OECD, which defines the term as: “financial flows, technical assistance, and commodities that are: (1) designed to promote economic development and welfare as their main objective, thus excluding aid for military or other non-development purposes; and (2) provided as either grants or subsidized loans.”<sup>21</sup>

## Official Development Assistance (ODA)

ODA is a resource flow, concessional in character, provided by official agencies,

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<sup>17</sup> Alan Hudson, “Advocacy by UK-Based Development NGOs.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 31, no 3 (2002): 404.

<sup>18</sup> Lisa Jordan, and Peter Van Tuijl, “Political Responsibility in Transnational NGO Advocacy.” *World Development* 28 no. 12 (2000): 2052.

<sup>19</sup> Andy Norrell, *Bridging Gaps or “A Bridge Too Far?” The Management of Advocacy within Service Providing NGOs in the UK*. CVO International Working Paper 3 (1999): 10-12.

<sup>20</sup> The DAC comprises the world’s major aid donors (see its 24 member states: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/dacmembersdatesofmembershipandwebsites.htm>) and together they account for more than 90% of ODA worldwide (see: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/dacglossaryofkeytermsandconcepts.htm>)

<sup>21</sup> Steven Radelet, *A Primer on Foreign Aid, Center for Global Development*, Working Paper 92: July (2006): 4.

including state and local governments, to lower-income countries with the aim of promoting their economic development and welfare. The OECD's guidelines for what qualifies as ODA are as follows:

The objective of the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25% (using a fixed 10% rate of discount). By convention, ODA flows comprise contributions of donor government agencies, at all levels, to developing countries ("bilateral ODA") and to multilateral institutions.<sup>22</sup>

In Japan, the main objective of ODA in the new Japanese ODA Charter (effective since 2003) is "to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity."<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in the ODA White Paper (2002), the ministry indicates the growing importance of NGOs in the delivery of ODA:

Assistance activities by civil society, including NGOs, are becoming increasingly important in the international community because they enable not only fine-tuned and effective assistance tailored to the needs of local communities and residents in developing countries but also speedy and flexible responses in providing emergency humanitarian aid. Recognizing the merits of these activities and the increasing presence and role of NGOs ... [the] strengthening of relations with

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<sup>22</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Glossary of Statistical Terms," Official Development Assistance, last modified August 28, 2003.  
<http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=6043> (2 July 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Government of Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs Economic Co-operation Bureau, "Japan's Official Development Assistance Charter," 2, last modified August 29, 2003.  
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/revision0308.pdf> (30 June 2012).

NGOs has consistently been a prominent theme in subsequent reform proposals, such as those of the Second Consultative Committee on ODA Reform.<sup>24</sup>

### **1.3. Structure of the Thesis**

The rest of this thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of state-civil society or government-NGO relationships. The first section examines research and organizational reports on Japanese NGOs to establish the existing knowledge base and then juxtaposes a Gramscian concept of civil society to understand the Japanese situation. The second section seeks to examine Japanese government-NGO relationships in alternate geopolitical and cultural contexts by exploring the character of “Northern/Western” and “Southern/Asian” NGOs and their relationships with government.

Chapter 3, “Silent Partners of the Government? NGOs in Delivery of ODA” examines the co-operative mode of interaction between the Japanese government and NGOs by analysing the rationale and workings of MOFA-NGO collaboration schemes in the delivery of ODA, especially in Southeast Asia. First, the chapter explores Japan’s strict civil codes regarding the formation of NGOs. The chapter then provides an overview of Japan’s ODA policy. Close attention is paid to MOFA’s strategies to incorporate NGOs in the delivery of ODA, such as the establishment of the NGO Assistance Division and Subsidiary Division, and an overly bureaucratic political system that excludes many NGOs from MOFA-NGO dialogue. Having established the prevailing environment of Japanese NGO involvement in ODA, the rest of the chapter analyses their

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<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Part I. Trends in Japan's ODA in a Rapidly Changing World” ODA White Paper 2002. [http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2002/part1\\_3\\_3.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2002/part1_3_3.html) (2 August 2012).

legal, political, and economic constraints and how Gramsci's hegemonic mode of civil society is useful in analysing MOFA-NGO collaboration.

Chapter 4, "Influential Political Actors? NGO Advocacy Work against the Government's ODA," provides an empirical study of Japanese NGOs engaged in challenging MOFA's approach to development projects. How do these NGOs, who are critical of the government's ODA policies, advocate their positions and influence ODA policy-making? The first section reviews a historical series of attempts by Japanese NGOs to reform ODA policies. The chapter then discusses two NGO cases, JVC and Mekong Watch, which engage in advocacy work with the government. The last section of the chapter undertakes an analysis of the contemporary prospects and limitations of Japanese NGO advocacy work.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis, arguing that while many Japanese NGOs are in a vulnerable position in relation to the government, there is reason to expect that their repression or marginalization will continue to produce new and creative forms of resistance in the pursuit of more democratic ODA policies and practices.

## **Chapter 2. Framing the Japanese Government-NGO Relationship**

The study of Japanese NGOs has been neglected in academia. Many prominent studies have focused on Japan's foreign aid, such as *Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge* by Rix (1993) and *Buying Power: The Political Economy of Japan's Foreign Aid* by Arase (1995) but few studies have focused on the role of Japanese NGOs in ODA, particularly on their relation to the Japanese government.

To compensate for the lack of research on Japanese NGOs in this area, this chapter takes a particular approach to understanding the nature of the Japanese government-NGO relationship by exploring relevant theoretical frameworks and paradigms. Thematically, the chapter is organized into two major sections. First, the chapter situates Japanese NGOs in a broader framework of civil society and its relation with the state. Employing a state-civil society theory developed by Gramsci, the aim is to challenge the dichotomous liberal notion (state/non-state) of civil society and demonstrate that state and civil society are two sides of the same coin. Second, the chapter considers Japanese NGOs from the perspective of two distinct geopolitical and cultural contexts, the "Northern/Western" NGO model and the "Southern/Asian" NGO model, to clarify the different roles and modes of government interaction assumed by Japanese NGOs. In conclusion, this chapter finds no literature that adequately addresses the nature of the Japanese government-NGO relationship, a project taken up in the following chapters.

## 2.1. State and Civil Society

Situating civil society in relation to the state is not an easy task, especially in a country such as Japan where a great degree of ambiguity exists about the concept of civil society. In fact, many scholars, both Japanese and non-Japanese, disagree over how the concept should be translated. For example, Schwartz and Pharr point out:

[Although] the term *shimin shakai* (citizen society) has been commonly used in the past, the word *shimin* (citizen) carries so much ideological baggage that it is becoming common to simply transliterate the English word into its Japanese phonetic counterpart, *shibiru sosaeti*.<sup>25</sup>

As the “foreignness” implies,<sup>26</sup> the concept of civil society is not familiar in Japan, nor is it the topic of public attention and discussion. In her study of Japanese religious associations, Hardacre argues that Japan’s distinctive developmental state model<sup>27</sup> and bureaucratic approach to industrialization are major factors that have

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<sup>25</sup> Frank J. Schwartz and Susan J. Pharr, eds., *The State of Civil Society in Japan* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Schwartz and Pharr, *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, 4.

<sup>27</sup> This thesis uses the term “developmental state model,” also used in Hardacre’s work, as coined by Chalmers Johnson: “In states that were late to industrialize, the state itself led the industrialization drive, that is, it took on developmental functions. These two differing orientations toward private economic activities, the regulatory orientation and the developmental orientation, produced two different kinds of government-business relationships. The United States is a good example of a state in which the regulatory orientation dominates, whereas Japan is a good example of a state in which the developmental orientation predominates. A regulatory, or market-rational, state concerns itself with the forms and procedures – the rules, if you will – of economic competition, but it does not concern itself with substantive matters. For example, The United States government has many regulations concerning the antitrust implications of the size of the firms, but it does not concern itself with what industries are to exist and what industries are no longer needed. The developmental, or plan-rational, state, by contrast, has its dominant feature precisely the setting of such substantive social and economic goals.” Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1982), 19.

historically neglected the development of non-economic spheres.<sup>28</sup> Hardacre argues:

“[B]ecause Japan’s government and businesses have been inextricably joined since the beginning of the Meiji era, the country traditionally had a very narrow space for the development of a non-public sector unrelated to economic or political matters... [the] scope for a public sphere in the classic, liberal sense, therefore, has been extremely limited for most of modern Japanese history, and dominated by business interests.”<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, others argue that Japan’s cultural specificity and traditions are the major reasons for the weak presence of civil society in Japan. Schwartz states, for example, “[While] pluralism and individual autonomy are essential to civil society, Japan is not a country that celebrates diversity and challenges to authority.”<sup>30</sup> In a similar vein, Hirata notes that Confucian values, such as respect for authority and an emphasis on conformity to group interests rather than individual needs, are deeply rooted in Japanese society and its social hierarchies, which hindered the earlier development of private interest groups.<sup>31</sup>

These scholarly works offer interesting historical, political, and cultural explanations to the weak presence of a civil society sector in Japan; however, they fail to explain why some civil society organizations, including development oriented NGOs,

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<sup>28</sup> Helene, Hardacre, “Japan: The Public Sphere in a Non-Western Setting,” in *Between States and Markets: The Voluntary Sphere in Comparative Perspective*, ed., Robert Wuthnow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). 219.

<sup>29</sup> Hardacre, “Japan: The Public Sphere in a Non-Western Setting,” 219.

<sup>30</sup> Schwartz, “Civil Society in Japan Reconsidered,” 198.

<sup>31</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Development Aid and Development Policy*, 23.

have emerged in recent years, and occasionally even posed challenges to the state. Moreover, while a few prominent works have been recently produced on civil society, such as *The State of Civil Society in Japan* by Schwartz and Pharr (2003) and *Japan's Dual Civil Society* by Pekkaman (2006), much of their work has analysed legal and political frameworks that regulate civil society rather than state-civil society relations.

### **2.1.1. State-Civil Society: A Gramscian Perspective**

As briefly illustrated in Chapter 1, a liberal notion of civil society<sup>32</sup> as an autonomous sphere, separate from the state, does not adequately capture the nature of the Japanese government-NGO relationship. This section, therefore, turns to Gramsci's theory of state-civil society to help situate the role of Japanese NGOs in relation to the Japanese state.

In *The Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci characterizes civil society as an arena of contestation where both hegemony and counter-hegemony can be generated. To Gramsci, civil society is an integral part of the state. He distinguishes civil society and political society primarily for analytical purposes but regards civil society as the most resilient constitutive element of the state – the entire apparatus of social and political control, which includes civil society.<sup>33</sup> For Gramsci, the state “does not simply control society through coercive or regulatory means,” but instead, through the realm of civil society as a crucial space in which the state exercises ideological hegemony by dominating popular

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<sup>32</sup> See, for example: Rupert, *Creating a Better World: Interpreting Global Civil Society*; Korten, Nicanor Perlas, and Vandana Shiva, “Global Civil Society: The Path Ahead,” *Alternatives to Economic Globalization*; Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society*; Walzer, *Toward a Global Civil Society*, chapter 2; and Nye “The Rising Power of NGOs: Transnational Groups Are Making Their Voices Heard, and Governments and Corporations are Taking Notice,” 2.

<sup>33</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Volume III*, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 10.

ideas, values, norms, and “manufacturing cultural and ideological consent.”<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, the Gramscian concept of civil society refers to the space where, in the words of Katz, “leadership and movement from below can emerge, when deprivation is mobilized through consciousness and a revolution is attempted.”<sup>35</sup> Katz argues that this is because:

The concept of hegemony pertains to the condition in which the dominant classes utilize the state to both coerce and at the same time achieve consent for their dominance within civil society. Since this process marginalizes the interests of some subordinate groups, they organize in the only space available to them – civil society.<sup>36</sup>

Hence, civil society is a repository of popular resistance to government policies and the basis of counter-hegemony.<sup>37</sup>

In short, civil society constitutes a space in which the state is engaged in a struggle with other actors to dominate popular ideas, values, and norms. Civil society is an arena of contestation, conflict, and clashes of ideas, and “whoever controls the arena of civil society succeeds in manufacturing consent for political domination.”<sup>38</sup> Hence the two sectors – state and civil society – mutually structure each other to the advantage of certain groups, classes, and institutions. In fact, hegemony and counter-hegemony are

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<sup>34</sup> Landau, “Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective,” 245.

<sup>35</sup> Hagai Katz, “Gramsci, Hegemony, and Global Civil Society Networks,” *Voluntas* 17 (2006): 336.

<sup>36</sup> Katz, “Gramsci, Hegemony, and Global Civil Society Networks,” 336.

<sup>37</sup> Henry Veltmeyer, “Civil Society and Development.” In *Introduction to International Development: Approaches, Actors, and Issues*, eds., Paul A., Haslam, Jessica Schafer, and Pierre Beaudet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 212.

<sup>38</sup> Landau, “Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective,” 246.

best seen as “simultaneous double movements that reciprocally shape one another – hegemony informs counter-hegemony, and counter-hegemonic efforts cause hegemonic forces to realign and reorganize themselves.”<sup>39</sup>

Gramsci’s ideas provide an important perspective on state-civil society relations in the Japanese context because they challenge the autonomous notion of civil society put forth by liberal theorists such as Kaohane and Nye. For example, Landau writes:

The idea that NGOs should represent society to the state, from a position of independence, characterizes much of the literature [on civil society].... In contrast, Gramsci identified the realm of civil society as a crucial space in which the state can dominate popular ideas, values and norms.<sup>40</sup>

As will be illustrated in Chapter 3, the dominance of the Japanese government over NGOs in delivery of ODA illustrates the workings of a kind of hegemonic mode of civil society in which the government co-opts the realm of NGOs to the extent that they become diplomatic instruments of the state to implement pro-Japanese business ODA projects in Southeast Asia. The outcome of this relationship often has more to do with Japanese state interests (continued regional economic dominance) than it does with the purported development missions of the co-opted NGOs, as the following chapter will make clear. The Japanese government is able to impose a high degree of influence over NGOs because it dominates legal, political, and economic domains crucial for NGO activities. Thus, contrary to many liberal assumptions, Japanese NGOs are hardly

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<sup>39</sup> Hagai, Katz, “Global Civil Society Networks and Counter-Hegemony,” in *Civil Society: Local And Regional Responses to Global Challenges*, ed., Mark Herkenrath (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 188.

<sup>40</sup> Landau, “Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective,” 245.

autonomous actors operating in an independent domain.

On the other hand, Gramsci's counter-hegemonic mode of civil society casts some light on the Japanese government-NGO relationship. As will be illustrated in Chapter 4, a series of NGO advocacy campaigns to challenge conventional ODA policies, at least in their principle of opposition, constitute a repository of popular resistance to the Japanese government. Nevertheless, the extent to which they can be considered counter-hegemonic remains questionable, mainly because Gramsci's counter-hegemony refers to a radical ideology that seeks to overthrow the hegemonic order, with the attendant consequence of a socialist revolution. Although counter-hegemony may, in theory, occur in a capitalist economy such as Japan, the case studies examined in this thesis illustrate that Japanese NGOs, at best, challenge only a *part* of government policy: ODA.

Leaving aside the question of such macro-political ambitions, the relevant point of Gramsci's theory of civil society is that it breaks free from the binary state/non-state opposition that resides at the heart of classical liberal theory, demonstrated in works such as *Creating a Better World: Interpreting Global Civil Society* by Rupert, and *Toward a Global Civil Society* by Walzer. It goes beyond the dichotomous evaluation of state-civil society relations and situates the sphere of civil society in the domain of the state as an arena of contestation for dominance with the consequence of either maintaining the status quo or moving toward an alternative social order. In short, Gramsci's theory stresses the tension between the state sphere of civil society and the state. For this reason, many existing studies of Asian civil society and NGOs employ a Gramscian lens.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See, for example: Landau, "Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective;" Muthiah Alagappa, *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2004); Palanisamy Ramasamy,

### 2.1.2. Japanese Government-NGO Relations

The existing scholarly works on Japanese government-NGO relations, while they are few, tend to argue that the Japanese civil society sector has been handicapped by rigid government regulations. In particular, scholars claim that Japan's bureaucratic political climate has resulted in the relatively weak and late development of NGOs. For example, Randel and German argue, "The [Japanese] government has traditionally provided leadership, and has organized the delivery of most social services," which produced a dominant bureaucracy that left "a very limited place for non-governmental action."<sup>42</sup>

The marginalization of NGOs in Japanese politics is described by Yamamoto, who states, "[There] is an underlying assumption among government officials that NGOs are basically unauthorized actors in a society where government is the only authorized organization to promote public interest," and where government bureaucrats regard NGOs as a "potentially disturbing agent."<sup>43</sup> These scholars offer useful insights into understanding the dominant impact of the Japanese government on the NGO sector; however, their focus remains on the Japanese government rather than on the interaction *between* the government and NGOs.

In contrast to the weak development of NGOs posited by scholars, government and NGO reports tend to take a more optimistic viewpoint by emphasizing the growing influence of NGOs over the government. For example, in his work "*Nihon no ODA ni*

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"Civil Society in Malaysia: An Arena of Contestations?" in *Civil Society in Southeast Asia*, ed., Lee Hock Guan (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> Judith Randel, and Tony German "Japan," in *Stakeholders: Government-NGO Partnership for International Development*, ed., Ian Smillie and Henny Helmich (London: Earthscan, 1999), 149.

<sup>43</sup> Tadashi, Yamamoto, "Emerging Civil Society in the Asia Pacific Community: Nongovernmental Uprisings of the Emerging Asia Pacific Regional Community," *A 25th Anniversary Project of Japan Centre for International Exchange (JCIE)*, (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1995), 144.

*Shimeru NGO/NPO no Yakuwari* (Role of NGOs and NPOs in Japan's ODA)," Saotome, a former director of MOFA's NGO division, repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the partnership between the government and NGOs.<sup>44</sup> Major NGOs in Japan, which are often local organizations affiliated with large international groups such as Oxfam and Save the Children, have produced practitioners' reports promoting an allegedly strong position as grassroots actors and equal partners of the Japanese government. These government and NGO reports reflect their own viewpoints on Japanese NGOs and should be further analysed; however, because these operational reports might be self-serving, the importance of Japanese government-NGO relations may be exaggerated, depending on the position they seek to advance.

Perhaps one of the most influential scholarly works exclusively on the Japanese government-NGO relations is Hirata's *Civil Society: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid* (2002). In her work, Hirata analyses multiple factors such as globalization, domestic crises resulting from prolonged recession, and changes in the legal climate to explain the recent rise of Japanese NGOs as influential political actors in Japan's heavily bureaucratic, developmental state model. Hirata's work is innovative in the way she examines the modes of interaction between the Japanese government and NGOs. Nevertheless, because Hirata is most attentive to the organizations whose experiences support her conclusions, one has to wonder if her cases of Japanese NGOs involved in foreign aid are representative or selective. Equally problematic, Hirata treats all Japanese NGOs engaged in ODA without differentiation, failing to take account of their different ways of operating and interacting with the government or the fact that individual NGOs

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<sup>44</sup> Mitsuhiro, Saotome, "Nihon no ODA ni Shimeru NGO/NPO no Yakuwari (Role of NGOs and NPOs in Japan's ODA)", *Kokusai Mondai, International Affairs*, 517, (April 2003): 65.

can shift their attitude towards the government to accommodate the government's changing attitudes towards them. For these reasons, this thesis not only undertakes a case study of an often neglected but still significant small organization such as Mekong Watch, but also pays close attention to the evolving methods of advocacy used by JVC. In doing so, the thesis explores how an established organization such as JVC has shifted its advocacy tactics because of the increasing collaboration with the government in recent years.

Despite the growing number of Japanese NGO studies produced recently, academic sources are still lacking, especially in the English language. It is therefore useful to frame the nature of Japanese government-NGO relations in a much broader context: the next section goes beyond the domestic analysis of state-civil society and situates Japanese NGOs in a global geopolitical and cultural context.

## **2.2. Situating Japanese NGOs: Global Context**

Building on Gramscian theory, if civil society is a constitutive element of a state, the political climate of civil society must vary according to its geopolitical and cultural context. This section compares the Japanese government-NGO relationships with those of other industrialized countries, first in North America and Western Europe and then in Asia, to tease out the particular characteristics of the Japanese government-NGO relationship.

### 2.2.1. “Northern/Western Development NGOs”<sup>45</sup> and their Relationship with the Government

Today, many Northern/Western governments and international agencies such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank recognize NGOs as important and effective partners in international development, especially in grassroots issues and activities that are difficult for governments to address. For example, Article 71 of the UN Charter grants NGOs consultative status through attendance in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meetings and in discussions with the UN Secretariat, where NGOs make a broad contribution to UN activities.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, in recent years, most if not all DAC nations have increased the amount of ODA channelled to and through local and international NGOs instead of through bilateral or multilateral channels. In 1987, DAC began collecting statistics on “ODA channelled through NGOs,” data, distinct from official support *for* NGOs’ own activities.<sup>47</sup> Since then, several organizational reports have been released, providing comparative studies of ODA flow through NGOs in selected DAC countries.<sup>48</sup> According to the data that Agg draws from, the Netherlands and the UK experienced a significant increase in their ODA flow through NGOs since 1980 through 2002, while Italy, and

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<sup>45</sup> The term “Northern/Western” NGOs is loosely applied to describe the NGOs of DAC nations, and as a concession to practicality and for the purpose of theoretical parsimony. I do not, therefore, intend to reaffirm hierarchies of power through the use of these terms (as for the “Southern/Asian” NGOs described below).

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council, “Consultative Relationship Between the United Nations and Non-governmental Organizations” 1996/31. <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm> (23 April 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Catherine Agg, “Trends in Government Support for Non-Governmental Organizations Is the ‘Golden Age’ of the NGO Behind Us?” *Civil Society and Social Movement Programme Paper* Number 23 (June 2006): 17.

<sup>48</sup> While quantitative data of this kind is helpful for comparative study, statistical data illustrating NGO activity could be notoriously unreliable because of the complex reporting requirements and being interpreted differently by individual governments. Moreover, the US is not included in OECD data, which makes the total amount of ODA and that channeled through NGOs smaller than reality.

particularly Japan, showed less remarkable growth over the same period (see Appendix 1: in 2002, Japan channelled approximately 2 to 3% share of ODA through NGOs, only a slight increase from 1.2% in 1993).<sup>49</sup> In contrast, while Canada, Sweden, and Switzerland have experienced decreases in the amount of ODA channelled through their NGOs both in absolute terms and proportional terms since 2000 (see Appendix 2) these countries continue to channel significantly higher amounts and percentages of ODA through their NGOs among other DAC nations.<sup>50</sup>

While ODA flow through NGOs may be one measure to situate Japanese NGOs' degree of involvement in ODA in a global context, other notable differences between Japanese NGOs and other Western NGOs, many of which are involved in ODA, need to be recognized. One most obvious difference is the time in history when many NGOs emerged in Japan and in other Western countries. While the origins and roots of Western NGOs vary depending on different national traditions, many of them emerged in the 1940s and 1950s with the support of Christian missionaries to provide emergency relief and to assist European rehabilitation after the second world war.<sup>51</sup> For example, Canadian NGOs have their roots in 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary movements and relief activities following World War I and II. In the 1940s and 1950s, a number of relief and refugee agencies, often branches of British and American organizations such as CARE Canada and Oxfam Canada, were established. Then, in the 1960s, the country experienced a rapid expansion of home-grown NGOs, partly encouraged by the establishment of the

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<sup>49</sup> Agg, 17-20; Catherine Agg, "Winners or Losers? NGOs in the Current Aid Paradigm," *Development* 49 no. 2 (2006): 16-17.

<sup>50</sup> Agg, 17-20; Agg, "Winners or Losers? NGOs in the Current Aid Paradigm," 16-17.

<sup>51</sup> See, Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, chapter 1; David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 31-34.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)'s matching grant program.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast, most Japanese NGOs emerged in the late-1980s and especially in the 1990s, almost half a century after many Western NGOs were established. While no single case can explain the late emergence of Japanese NGOs, scholars such as Hirata argue that the combination of Japan's developmental state model and non-Christian origin (in terms of unfamiliarity with the spirit of volunteerism) are attributable factors that hindered the development of non-profit, non-economic sector groups.<sup>53</sup>

Another factor differentiating Japanese NGOs from their Western counterparts, both historically and contemporary, is the lack of government's legal and financial support. In fact, North American and European governments, throughout the 1950s and 1970s, have developed co-operative and supportive policies for NGOs, such as legal structures, tax breaks, subsidies, and most importantly, grant programs that played a major role in the early development and growth of International NGOs (INGOs). Part of the programs were matching grant schemes, for example, those which were developed first in Germany, Sweden, and then in most other OECD countries throughout the 1960s, to support their respective NGOs.<sup>54</sup> Similarly in the US, the government support to Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), which began with contributions to relief and disaster support during World War II, further expanded in the 1950s and 1960s to encourage the participation of NGOs in delivering US foreign aid, in part, to prevent the

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<sup>52</sup> Ian Smillie, "Canada," in *Stakeholders: Government-NGO Partnership for International Development*, ed., Ian Smillie and Henny Helmich (London: Earthscan, 1999), 71.

<sup>53</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, chapter 1.

<sup>54</sup> Ian Smillie, "At Sea in a Sieve?" in *Stakeholders: Government-NGO Partnership for International Development*, ed., Ian Smillie and Henny Helmich (London: Earthscan, 1999), 9.

spread of Soviet influence in the recipient countries.<sup>55</sup> While the government's motivation for NGO support may vary in each country, according to Smillie, an "almost linear evolution in government support for NGOs" occurred in most OECD countries.<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, Reimann argues that the Japanese state, at least until recently, had "arms-length and tense relations"<sup>57</sup> with INGOs in such matters as obtaining legal status, preferential tax treatment, and public funding. In fact, in Japan, the first small state funding was made available only in 1989 with strict government screening and selection criteria. Moreover, today, the vast majority of Japanese NGOs still do not enjoy favourable tax treatments (as discussed in Chapter 3), which could be another reason for the relatively weak development of NGOs.

Of course, the negative consequence of the dependency of NGOs on state funding has been discussed by many scholars. For example, Fisher argues, "The vulnerability of [NGO] positions as beneficiaries of outside funding and support make them less willing to advocate positions that run counter to the agencies funding them or their home governments."<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Fowler states that Northern NGO resource dependence on their governments shapes their agenda according to the donors' "predominantly politically and economically neoliberal agendas."<sup>59</sup> Those who take an extreme position,

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<sup>55</sup> Terje Tvedt, *Angels of Mercy or Development Diplomats? NGOs and Foreign Aid* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1998), 48-49.

<sup>56</sup> Smillie, "At Sea in a Sieve?" 9.

<sup>57</sup> Kim Reimann, *The Spread of Global Civil Society in the 1990s: Domestic Structures, International Socialization and the Emergence of International Development NGOs*, Cornell University Workshop on Transnational Contention, Working Paper (2001): 9.

<sup>58</sup> William F., Fisher, "DOING GOOD? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997): 454.

<sup>59</sup> Alan Fowler, "Strengthening the Role of Third Sector Development Organizations: Nine Policy Issues Facing Official Aid Agencies," in *Strengthening Civil Society's Contribution to Development: The Role of Official Development Assistance* (Washington D.C: Overseas Development Council and The Synergos Institute, 1996), 6.

such as Petras and Veltmeyer, declare that NGOs are “internally elitist and externally servile.”<sup>60</sup> In their view, NGOs collaborate with capitalists who finance their activities with business interests that direct sub-neoliberal economies, which have created a new form of “cultural internationalism”<sup>61</sup> and deepened poverty worldwide.<sup>62</sup> While Petras and Veltmeyer’s work lacks convincing evidence to support such strong claims, these scholars provide an important warning about the risk of NGOs becoming distorted by the donor policy, because of financial dependency.

Still, Western NGOs have increasingly become influential political actors as they actively participate in a variety of opportunities to voice their opinion vis-à-vis the government.<sup>63</sup> In Switzerland; for example, in addition to informal meetings between the Swiss Coalition and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), a formal Consultative Commission on Development Cooperation exists to report to the Federal Council; and for NGOs outside the Swiss Coalition, an annual conference is organized by SDC. Similarly, Randel and German describe the Dutch NGOs’ advocacy and engagement with the government as follows:

There is no shortage of opportunities for NGO-government dialogue in the Netherlands. Apart from formal exchanges at senior level at least twice a year

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<sup>60</sup> James Petras, “NGOs in the Service of Imperialism,” in James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer eds., *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2001), 132.

<sup>61</sup> Petras, “NGOs in the Service of Imperialism,” 132.

<sup>62</sup> Petras, “NGOs in the Service of Imperialism,” 134.

<sup>63</sup> See, for example: Korten, *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*; Michael Edwards, and David Hulme, eds., *Making a Difference: NGOs and Development in a Changing World*. (London: Earthscan, 1993); Ian Smillie, *The Alms Bazaar: Altruism Under Fire: Non-Profit Organizations and International Development* (London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995); Ian, Smillie, and Henny Helmich in Collaboration with Tony German and Judith Randel, *Stakeholders: Government-NGO Partnerships for International Development* (London: Earthscan, 1999); Ellen Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink, “Non-governmental Organizations and Transnational Issue Networks in International Politics,” *Structure of World Order* 89 (1995): 413-415.

through GOM (the consultative body of four Dutch financing agencies), officials can meet with the NGO community through the other groups and coalitions that draw together particular areas of interests or expertise.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for liaison with Dutch NGOs, for matters such as aid administration, policy reviews, and major international conferences, for emergencies and special situations, other departments have direct contact with NGOs,<sup>65</sup> indicating the crucial roles NGOs play in the Dutch political scene.

In contrast, Japanese NGOs had almost no contact with state aid officials, at least until the mid-1990s. Japanese NGOs were included in Japan's official delegation to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Cairo for the first time in 1994; and in 1996, the MOFA-NGO Council Meeting was established to encourage the greater participation of NGOs in ODA. According to Hirata, Japan's business-oriented approach to ODA, in large part to promote the country's own post-war reconstruction and resource acquisition through a tied aid scheme, rendered the business sector more privileged in ODA policy-making and implementation, while simultaneously excluding NGO participation.<sup>66</sup> Hirata argues that in recent years MOFA has begun to reform ODA by increasing soft aid,<sup>67</sup> a highly debatable subject (examined in Chapter 3).

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<sup>64</sup> Judith Randel and Tony German, "The Netherlands", in *Stakeholders: Government-NGO Partnership for International Development*, ed., Ian Smillie and Henny Helmich (London: Earthscan, 1999), 165.

<sup>65</sup> Randel and German, "The Netherlands", 165.

<sup>66</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 36.

<sup>67</sup> In this thesis, soft aid, as used in Hirata's work, refers loosely to the people-oriented, small-scale, long-term, labor-intensive and sustainable nature of aid, as opposed to hard aid, which tends to be infrastructure-based, large-scale capital-intensive (see: Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 38).

A review of the literature on Northern/Western NGOs and government-NGO relations illustrates that, while Japan is included in some of these studies, Japan exhibits different – in fact, almost contrary – relationships between the government and NGOs involved in ODA. While many Western NGOs are historically more established and enjoy collaborative relationship with the government through state financial support and formal and informal policy dialogues, Japanese NGOs have far less history, legal and financial support, and opportunities where they can voice their opinion in matters such as ODA.

The next section situates Japanese NGOs as part of the “Southern/Asian NGO” community, whose relationship with government may, because of the cultural similarities, offer fruitful observations to analyse the nature of Japanese government-NGO relationships.

### **2.2.2. “Southern/Asian Development NGOs” and their Relationship with the Government**

Before engaging in the analysis, the term, “Southern/Asian NGOs,” should be noted as only being loosely applied, contrary to “Northern/Western NGOs,” which describes NGOs that are not members of DAC and/or cannot be classified as ODA donors, according to OECD standards. For this reason, I do not place all Asian NGOs in the same category; in fact, a great variety of NGOs exist in Asian countries since, compared to industrialized Western countries, Asian countries are less integrated or institutionalized through the common practice and principles of DAC or OECD.

While most NGO studies have concentrated on Western NGOs as the benefactors of development, a number of scholarly works have recently covered the role of NGOs

inside former aid-recipient countries.<sup>68</sup> Originally seen as sub-contractors of Western NGOs, NGOs in aid-recipient countries are now seen as equal partners of Western NGOs, as Northern governments began seeking out and strengthening North-South partnerships.

While many Western NGOs tend to enjoy close relations with their government, many Southern/Asian NGOs struggle with their central government. In general, government-NGO relations in Asian countries are much more tense and hostile. Fonseca states, “Asian governments’ attitudes toward NGOs have been no more than a mix of wary *laissez faire* and repressive tolerance.”<sup>69</sup> Similarly, in *The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia*, Shigetomi suggests that Asian governments tend to regard their own rules as universal and legitimate, and impose restraints on NGOs that are deemed to be operating outside of these rules.<sup>70</sup> In addition, Bhatt notes that Asian governments have been supportive of voluntary action only to let NGOs act as the “implementers of specific development activities.”<sup>71</sup>

In some Asian states, NGOs and even the concept of civil society are simply non-

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<sup>68</sup> See, for example: Noeleen Heyzer and James V. Riker, *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*, ed. Antonio B. Quizon, (Kuala Lumpur: Asian and Pacific Development Centre, 1995); Ian Smillie and John Hailey, *Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy and Management in Asian NGOs* (London: Earthscan Publications, 2001); John Farrington, and David, Lewis with Satish, S. & Miclat-Teves, A eds., *NGOs and the State in Asia: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development* (London: Routledge, 1993); R Tandon, *Civil Society, the State and the Role of NGOs in I. Serrano ed., Civil society in the Asia Pacific region*. Washington, DC: CIVICUS 1994.

<sup>69</sup> Chandra de Fonseca, “Challenges and Future Directions for Asian NGOs,” in *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*, ed., Noeleen Heyzer, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon, (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1995), 64.

<sup>70</sup> Shinichi Shigetomi, “The States and NGOs: Issues and Analytical Framework,” in *The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia*, ed. Shinichi Shigetomi (Pasir Panjang: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2002), 12-13.

<sup>71</sup> Anhil Bhatt, “Asian NGOs in Development: Their role and Impact,” in *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*, eds. Noeleen Heyzer, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1995), 82.

existent. In his article, “*Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective*,” Landau notes the absence of NGO activities in Vietnam:

[The] most obvious way in which a Gramscian conception of civil society illuminates society in Vietnam is its emphasis on the potential of civil society to act as an arena in which dominant values and ideologies may be contested. The Party is well aware, as Gramsci was, of the potential for segments of civil society to challenge the dominant ideology and aspects of civil society to potentially undermine the ruling regime.<sup>72</sup>

To some extent, Japan possesses some of the “Asian” characteristics, such as the hostile characteristics of the government-NGO relations, that result from rigid state control and the expectation that NGOs will serve as implementers of government projects. Nevertheless, the literature on Asian modes of government-NGO relationships does not adequately describe the case of Japan for two reasons. First, Japan is not a recipient of ODA, which differentiates the country from other Asian countries presented above. Second and perhaps partly because of the first reason, Japanese NGOs are often excluded from discussions of Asian NGOs as in the works presented above. This lack of literature on the nature of the Japanese case, as well as the difficulty in situating it within either Western or Asian frameworks, supports the value for this study.

### **2.3. Conclusion: Towards More Empirical Research on Japanese NGOs**

This chapter revealed that, despite the vast volume and variety of NGO studies in both Western and Asian contexts, few scholarly works have examined Japanese

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<sup>72</sup> Landau, “*Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective*,” 252.

government-NGO relations. This finding provides the incentive to conduct an empirical study of Japanese NGOs and their relationship with the government.

This thesis challenges arguments that the study of NGOs must be more theoretical than empirical. For example, Najim argues:

[Much] of the literature still comprises case descriptions rather than a means to analyse, organize, and explain the universe of cases. For the most part, scholars have shied away from theory-building explorations of the nuances of NGO-government relations ... [the] dominant approach is to focus either on the “comparative advantage” of the third sector or simply on fears of threats to NGO autonomy by the coercive abilities of the state.<sup>73</sup>

This is a fair argument, especially regarding Western NGOs, which have been examined in volumes of diverse literature. Considering the lack of literature on Japanese government-NGO relations; however, this thesis seeks to build an empirical knowledge base before attempting a generalized understanding of Japanese NGOs. In doing so, it minimizes the risk of over-generalization that can result from a small-n study-based approach to theory-building, as argued in prominent political science texts such as *Designing Social Inquiry* by King, Keohane, and Verba (1994).

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<sup>73</sup> Adil Najam, “The Four-C’s of Third Sector-Government Relations: Co-operation, Confrontation, Complementarity, and Co-optation.” *Non-profit Management and Leadership* 10, no. 4, Summer 2000: 382.

### **Chapter 3. The Silent Partners of Government? Japanese NGOs in Delivery of ODA**

As the first step in my investigation of the role of Japanese NGOs and their relationship with the government of Japan, this chapter examines the collaborative modes of interaction between the Japanese government and NGOs.

In the 1990s, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Japan experienced “a sudden explosion” in the number of NGOs involved in overseas assistance.<sup>74</sup> The explosion was largely due to the deliberate efforts of the Japanese government to seek the wider participation of NGOs in delivering ODA projects. While the government encourages such partnerships, one must first ask: What is the rationale behind MOFA’s request for the wider participation of NGOs in delivering ODA? And, more importantly, what is the consequence of the increasing degree of collaboration? From examining various MOFA-NGO schemes and their effect on NGOs, I argue that many development-oriented Japanese NGOs risk becoming the silent partners of the government’s ODA, which perpetuates the pro-Japanese business policy and the highly bureaucratic decision-making.

The first section of this chapter examines the legal framework of Japanese NGOs. The second section provides an overview of Japan’s ODA and the government’s strategies to encourage the wider participation of NGOs in delivering ODA. The third section describes the role of NGOs in ODA as a consequence of the increasing

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<sup>74</sup> Reimann, *The Spread of Global Civil Society in the 1990s: Domestic Structures, International Socialization and the Emergence of International Development NGOs in Japan*, 3.

collaboration with the Japanese government.

### 3.1. Legal Framework for Forming Japanese NGOs

Although Japan is considered a liberal democratic country, because of its free elections and high level of political and civil liberty,<sup>75</sup> scholars argue that Japan may be “the strictest of all advanced industrial democracies in regulating NGOs.”<sup>76</sup> Currently, Japanese NGOs can obtain an incorporated or legal status in two major ways; the following sections explore both processes.

One way, and the only option to obtain a legal status until 1998, is that individuals wishing to establish an NGO meet the requirements as ‘non-profit public interests legal persons’ (hereafter PILP) under the Unified Civil Code of 1896; provide a sound financial proof; and obtain a permission from the concerning ministry. Schwartz describes the complex nature of Japanese civil code for NGO formation as follows:

Although Article 21 of the Japanese Constitution provides the freedom of association, this broad guarantee is limited by Article 33 of the civil code, which requires that all legal persons be formed in accordance with its regulations. This is followed by twin pillars, Articles 34 and 35 that, respectively, create the classes of legal persons. And while Article 35 provides for the establishment of for-profit organizations, it does not explicitly identify a corresponding category of non-profit organizations. Instead, Article 34 of the code provides a much narrower

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<sup>75</sup> See, for example: Freedom House, “Japan.” <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/japan> (19 April 2012); and “Combined Average Ratings for Independent Countries.” Accessed [http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline\\_images/CombinedAverageRatings%28IndependentCountries%29FIW2011.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/CombinedAverageRatings%28IndependentCountries%29FIW2011.pdf) (19 April 2012).

<sup>76</sup> Schwartz and Pharr, *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, 10.

category of public interest corporations (*Kôeki hôjin*) defined as “an incorporated association or foundation relating to worship, religion, charity, science, art, or otherwise relating to “public interests.”<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, the definition of PILP narrowed over time. In 1978, national ministries and prefectural governments reached an agreement that only non-profit organizations with “clear, unambiguous, and direct public benefits” were to be granted the status of public interest corporations.<sup>78</sup>

In addition, the Japanese civil code stipulated that “successful applicants had to have a sound financial basis, which government agencies generally interpreted as an endowment of at least ¥300 million (approximately US\$ 3 million).”<sup>79</sup> The applicants were also required to have an annual budget of at least ¥30 million (US\$ 300,000) for an activity plan, and a board consisting of “publicly respected individuals.”<sup>80</sup> The financial requirements were further tightened when Article 89 of the post-war constitution, effective from 1947, rendered private organizations ineligible for state funds: “No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit, or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Frank, J., Schwartz, “Introduction: Recognizing Civil Society in Japan,” in *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, eds., Frank J. Schwartz, and Susan J. Pharr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51-52.

<sup>78</sup> Frank, J., Schwartz, “Introduction: Recognizing Civil Society in Japan,” 11; Pekkanen, Japan’s Dual Society: Members without Advocates, chapter 5.

<sup>79</sup> All the conversions in this thesis are calculated as ¥100=US\$1; Frank J., Schwartz, “Introduction: Recognizing Civil Society in Japan,” 11.

<sup>80</sup> Frank, J., Schwartz, “Introduction: Recognizing Civil Society in Japan,” 11.

<sup>81</sup> Frank, J., Schwartz, “Civil Society in Japan Reconsidered,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 3 no. 2: 203.

To further complicate the process of forming NGOs, the civil code includes the provision that NGO founders must obtain authorization from each concerned agency of the central government before an NGO can be established.<sup>82</sup> Because of the nature of their activities, most NGOs in this category<sup>83</sup> are registered with MOFA while an organization such as Amnesty International would have to register with both MOFA and the Ministry of Justice.<sup>84</sup> While such regulations draw NGOs to necessarily work under the supervision of the concerning ministry, according to Hirata, in many respects they are “privileged and elite organizations” because of their financial conditions (since NGOs in this category receive tax-exemption) and relationship with the state.<sup>85</sup> In reality; however, an exhaustive application process and intrusive supervision made many would-be NGOs prefer an arbitrary, undefined status to a legal one, at least until the implementation of a new law in 1998.

To address some of the difficulties of the PILP system, in 1998, the NPO law was created, which has become another way for Japanese NGOs to obtain a legal status today. Interestingly, one of the major events that led to the promulgation of NPO law was the Great *Hanshin-Awaji* earthquake of 1995. The earthquake, which is often regarded as the benchmark and beginning of the NGO age, brought an aggregate total of about 1.35 million volunteers, including members of over 100 NGOs for overseas assistance,

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<sup>82</sup> Saotome, *Japan's NGO Activities and the Public Support System*.

<sup>83</sup> Hirata classifies Public Interest Corporations into two sub-categories: 1) incorporated foundations, which includes organizations such as the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) Japan, the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA), the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICEF), and Plan International Japan; and 2) incorporated associations, which include Save the Children Japan and Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service (JOCS). See Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 14.

<sup>84</sup> Pekkanen, *Japan's Dual Society: Members without Advocates*, 58.

<sup>85</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 13.

students, and ordinary citizens, to help the victims.<sup>86</sup> In this regard, the earthquake provoked the “volunteer revolution”<sup>87</sup> among ordinary Japanese citizens and gave impetus to the movement to redefine state-civil society relations.

Formally known as the law to promote “specified non-profit activities,” NPO law created a new category of NPO legal persons and loosened bureaucratic screening.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, the new law enabled formally unincorporated associations to gain legal status without being subjected to strict bureaucratic screening, and allowed the groups to operate without the subsequent bureaucratic administrative guidance. This is a major improvement as such measures could change the way NGOs relate to the government and international organizations. As of November 2012, 46,533 groups<sup>89</sup> have been granted legal status, some of which include international development NGOs, such as JVC (incorporated NGO since 1999) and Mekong Watch (2003).

According to Mori; however, the bill has “a fundamental flaw” because the NPO law does not provide NGOs with tax exemptions or tax deductibility privileges by the central government.<sup>90</sup> In fact, according to Pekkanenn, the main complaint of the vast majority of NGOs (84%) is the lack of tax benefits.<sup>91</sup> Tax issues are important and

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<sup>86</sup> Mitsuhiro, Saotome, *Japan's NGO Activities and the Public Support System*. <http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/jp-ngoactivities.html> (29 April 2012).

<sup>87</sup> Makoto, Imada, “Civil Society in Japan: Democracy, Voluntary Action, and Philanthropy,” in Henko, Vinken, Yuko, Nishimura, Bruce L.J., White, Masayuki, Deguchi, eds., *Civic Engagement in Contemporary Japan: Established and Emerging Repertoires: Established and Emerging Repertoires* (New York: Springer, 2010), 22.

<sup>88</sup> Japan Center For International Exchange, “Civil Society Monitor.” [http://www.jcie.or.jp/civilnet/monitor/npo\\_law.html](http://www.jcie.or.jp/civilnet/monitor/npo_law.html) (28 April 2012).

<sup>89</sup> Naikakufu (central government) NPO Homepage, “Getting to know NPO” <https://www.npo-homepage.go.jp/about/npodata.html> (29 November 2012).

<sup>90</sup> Satoko, Mori, “Global Forum NGO Treaties: Linking Japan to the World.” *Area Studies – Japan, Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, 2. <http://www.eolss.net/Sample-Chapters/C16/E1-57-44-00.pdf> (7 July 2012).

<sup>91</sup> Pekkanenn, *Japan's Dual Society: Members without Advocates*, 68.

frequently debated subjects among NGOs since the greater tax benefits could help NGOs retain more resources and spur their organizational development.

Given these constraints, the presence of NGOs in Japan has, until recently, remained limited, particularly in the field of overseas development. Since the vast majority of development NGOs still remain unincorporated,<sup>92</sup> their exact number is difficult to measure. According to the Japan NGO Centre for International Co-operation (JANIC), only about 100 Japanese NGOs were working in the field of overseas assistance during the 1980s, and more than half of them lacked legal status.<sup>93</sup> Although the conditions for non-legal status NGOs have not improved, the number of Japanese NGOs has grown considerably since the 1980s; by 2005, a total of approximately 400 Japanese NGOs were working in the field of overseas development.<sup>94</sup> While this number is still small compared to Western countries, the population of Japanese NGOs is growing, especially considering their relatively late emergence (Figure 1). What accounts for the rapid growth of Japanese NGOs in the field of overseas development? Moreover, what roles have these NGOs undertaken? Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of Japanese NGOs in foreign aid, it is crucial to discuss the role of the Japanese government and its ODA policy as unavoidable factors determining NGO activities.

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<sup>92</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society In Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 12.

<sup>93</sup> Japan NGO Center for International Co-operation (JANIC), "NGO Data." <http://www.janic.org/en/> (21 April 2012).

<sup>94</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Non-Governmental Organizations Assistance Division, Economic Co-operation Bureau "ODA & NGOs: Partnership with NGOs Under ODA" (Tokyo, December 2004), 2.

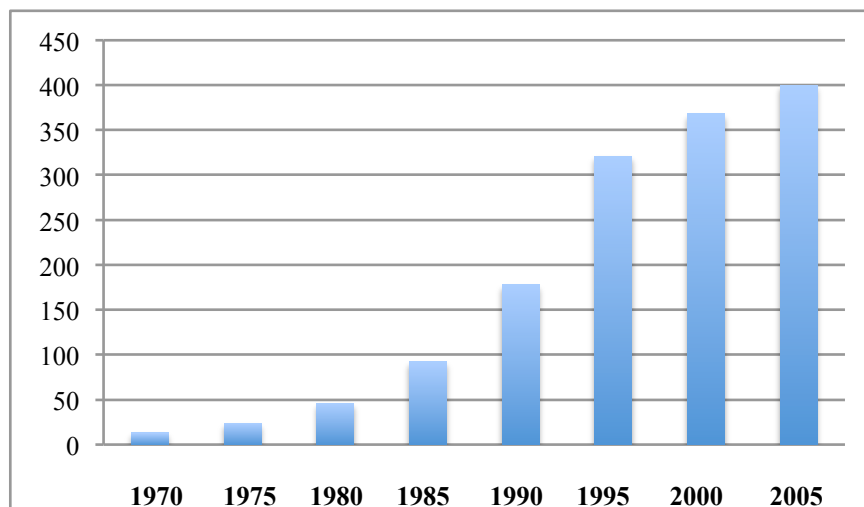


Figure 1. Number of Japanese NGOs involved in international aid and development.

Source: Japan International Centre for NGOs (1998a); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Co-operation Bureau Non-Governmental Organizations Co-operation Division, “International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs, November 2007.

### 3.2 Japanese Government and ODA Policy

In the last few decades, Japan has become one of the largest ODA donor countries in terms of overall amount.<sup>95</sup> Japan, which was a recipient of ODA until the 1960s,<sup>96</sup> became the world’s top donor country for the first time in 1989. Subsequently, from 1991 to 2000, the country topped the US as the largest foreign aid donor.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, in

<sup>95</sup> In absolute terms, Japan continues to be one of the leading donors in DAC, even despite the major decrease since 2006 due to the economic recession; however, in terms of Gross National Income (GNI), Japan’s ODA contribution is far from the UN target of 0.70%, for example, and the country ranks near the bottom among DAC countries (for example, in 2009 Japan’s GNI share of ODA was 0.19%, which slightly increased to 0.20% in 2010). See: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, “Japan (2010) DAC Peer Review - Main Findings and Recommendations.” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/5/44285062.gif> (25 May 2012); and <http://webnet.oecd.org/oda2010/>

<sup>96</sup> Japan received ODA from the United States and International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and IMF until 1966, while, as a donor, yen loan and grants began in 1954 as part of post-war compensation to other parts of Asia and continued until 1976. See Setsuko Kamiya, “Official Development Assistance: ODA Shrinking but Still Key Tool” *The Japan Times* October 9, 2007).

<sup>97</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. *ODA’s White Paper*. <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/index.html> (23 April 2012).

light of its budget deficit and the rapid decline in its tax revenue following the collapse of the bubble economy in the late 1990s, Japan's ODA budget dropped dramatically, and in 2001, the US dislodged Japan from its position.<sup>98</sup> In fact, in 2009, Japan's ODA represented only 60% of what it was during its peak in 1998 (Figure 2).<sup>99</sup>

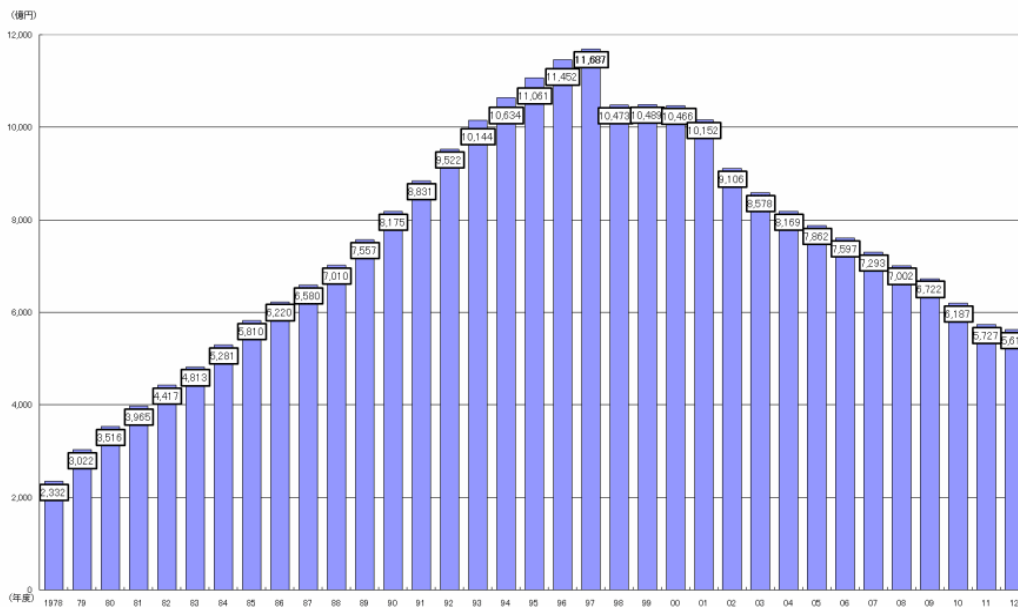


Figure 2. Japanese ODA disbursement (1978-2012).

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryoyosan.html> (accessed June 8, 2012).

In terms of geographical distribution, Asian countries are the most common recipients of Japan's ODA, receiving over 80% of their total funding.<sup>100</sup> This geographical trend largely reflects Japan's attempt to reconcile war guilt by building co-

<sup>98</sup> Minoru Makishima and Mitsunori Yokoyama, "Japan's ODA to Mekong River Basin Countries," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Working Paper, 162.

<sup>99</sup> According to the OECD, in 2009 Japanese ODA was \$US 9.48 billion and the country ranked as the fifth largest donor in absolute terms after the US, France, Germany, and the UK.

<sup>100</sup> Furuoka, "The Role of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Japan's Foreign Aid Policy," 9.

operative arrangements with neighbouring communities in Asia.<sup>101</sup> Muldavin notes that Japanese ODA to China is a “complex blend of bilateral historical responsibilities, strategic commercial planning, and contemporary geo-political concerns.”<sup>102</sup> This might explain why China was the single largest recipient of Japan’s bilateral aid from 1979 to 1991, beginning one year after the signing of the Japan-China Peace and Friendship treaty. In recent years; however, the necessity of ODA to China is highly debatable as China has grown into an economic superpower.<sup>103</sup>

In the aftermath of the second world war, Japan slowly began to improve relations with its neighbours when the country began a series of intermittent negotiations in the 1950s leading to the payment of war reparations to countries such as Burma, Indonesia, and the Philippines that, by the mid-1970s, became the largest recipients of Japan’s ODA. By the 1960s, Japan had become the second largest donor to the Republic of Vietnam after the US, assisting the Saigon regime and supporting the American war effort in Vietnam, while “vehemently opposing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and its allies.”<sup>104</sup>

The relationship between Japan and former socialist states, which was underpinned by the strong US-Japan relationship since the 1950s, began to improve in the mid-1970s in the wake of US withdrawal from Indochina and the end of the Vietnam

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<sup>101</sup> Arase, *Buying Power: The Political Economy of Japan’s Foreign Aid*, 31.

<sup>102</sup> Joshua Muldavin, “The geography of Japanese development aid to China, 1978-98,” *Environment and Planning* 32 (2000): 942.

<sup>103</sup> Shigeyuki Iwaki “Tai Chugoku ODA (Sefukaihatuenjyo) Minaosi Giron” (Rethinking the Japanese ODA to China). MOFA Conference Paper 2005 (Japanese). <http://www.ndl.go.jp/jp/data/publication/issue/0468.pdf> (28 February 2012).

<sup>104</sup> Ngoc Dien, Nguyen, “Japanese Investment and Aid Policies Toward Vietnam in Historical Perspective,” in *Vietnam and Japan: Japanese Investment and Aid Strategies in Vietnam: Implications for Development Directions*, ed., Barbara Duffield. (Victoria: University of Victoria, Center for Asia Pacific Initiatives, 1995), 160.

War. In 1977, then Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda proposed the Fukuda Doctrine, the first doctrine in Japanese foreign policy to be formally proclaimed by the government.<sup>105</sup> It stated three commitments to the region: (1) Japan rejects the role of military power; (2) Japan will do its best to consolidate relationships of mutual confidence and trust based on “heart-to-heart” understanding; and (3) Japan will be an equal partner in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), while attempting to foster mutual understanding from the nations of Indochina.<sup>106</sup>

Since the enunciation of the Fukuda Doctrine, ASEAN countries have been a priority for Japan’s ODA program. During the peak of Japan’s ODA (1991-2000), ASEAN countries consistently received approximately 50% of all Japanese ODA.<sup>107</sup> The number dropped to between 30 and 40% after 2004, largely due to a drastic decrease in Japan’s ODA budget, precipitated by the country’s economic recession (Table 1).<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Sueo Sudō, *The Fukuda Doctrine and ASEAN: New Dimensions in Japanese Foreign Policy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992), 4.

<sup>106</sup> Yeo, Lay Hwee, “Japan, ASEAN, and the Construction of an East Asian Community,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 28, no. 2. (2006): 260.

<sup>107</sup> Dennis D. Trinidad, “Japan’s ODA at the Crossroads: Disbursement of Patterns of Japan’s Development Assistance to Southeast Asia,” *Asian Perspective* 31 no. 2 (2007): 117.

<sup>108</sup> Trinidad, “Japan’s ODA at the Crossroads: Disbursement of Patterns of Japan’s Development Assistance to Southeast Asia,” 117.

Table 1. Regional Distribution of Japanese Bilateral ODA (in US\$ million).

| <b>Region</b>        | <b>1985</b>  | <b>1990</b>   | <b>1995</b>   | <b>1998</b>   | <b>2000</b>   | <b>2002</b>   | <b>2004</b>     |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>Total</b>         | 2557         | 6941          | 10557.06      | 8606.9        | 9640.1        | 6725.91       | 5954.1          |
| <b>Asia</b>          | 1732         | 4117          | 5745.34       | 5372.03       | 5283.82       | 4085.56       | 2544.56         |
| <b>ASEAN</b>         | (46%)<br>800 | (56%)<br>2299 | (39%)<br>2229 | (44%)<br>2356 | (59%)<br>3126 | (43%)<br>1748 | (35%)<br>897.04 |
| <b>Middle East</b>   | 201          | 705           | 721           | 392           | 727           | 209           | 1030.87         |
| <b>Africa</b>        | 252          | 792           | 1333          | 950           | 969           | 585           | 646.97          |
| <b>Latin America</b> | 225          | 561           | 1142          | 553           | 800           | 592           | 309.3           |
| <b>Oceania</b>       | 24           | 114           | 160           | 147           | 151           | 94            | 42.15           |
| <b>Europe</b>        | 1            | 158           | 153           | 144           | 118           | 121           | 140.69          |
| <b>Unspecified</b>   | 122          | 494           | 1303          | 1048          | 1592          | 1043          | 1239.56         |

Source: Trinidad, "Japan's ODA at the Crossroads: Disbursement of Patterns of Japan's Development Assistance to Southeast Asia," 117.

More recently, the Japanese government has been attempting to expand Japanese infrastructure-based aid projects in the Mekong River Basin. The region is comprised of China (Yunnan Province), Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand. The region has a combined population of 300 million and covers 2.6 million square meters of fertile land, which yields timber, minerals, coal, and petroleum while the water of Mekong River supports agriculture and fisheries and produces hydropower energy.<sup>109</sup> Despite such production, approximately 75% of the region's residents live in poor, rural areas, where the per capita GDP is below US\$ 1,000.<sup>110</sup>

Given such potential for advancement of Japanese development corporations, in

<sup>109</sup> Makishima and Yokoyama, "Japan's ODA to Mekong River Basin Countries," 187.

<sup>110</sup> Makishima and Yokoyama, "Japan's ODA to Mekong River Basin Countries," 187.

2000, the Japanese government, as an observer of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) Economic Co-operation, allocated ¥250 billion (US\$ 2,500 million), while promising to increase bilateral aid to each of the countries.<sup>111</sup> Accordingly, a collection of 10-year strategies for 11 flagship projects was established, which included the construction of economic corridors and telecommunication backbones, while enhancing private sector participation and competitiveness in the region.<sup>112</sup>

Although the Mekong River Basin project may be just one example, it signifies that Japan's many other controversial development projects are largely economic infrastructure-based schemes aimed at increasing the prosperity of Japanese business. In fact, scholars argue that Japanese ODA is much more business-oriented and more concentrated on infrastructure than European ODA, which is more socially oriented.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, authors suggest that Japan employs its ODA as an instrument to protect its commercial interests abroad by concentrating on economic infrastructure such as the construction of hydroelectric dams and highways and establishing trade arrangements with local economies.<sup>114</sup> Japan's explicit aid philosophy, expressed by former Prime

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<sup>111</sup> On April 21 2012, it was agreed at Japan-Mekong Council Meeting that the Japanese government will allocate additional ODA of ¥6000 million (US\$ 60 million) to five Mekong River Basin countries (Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Laos) in the next three years. For more information, see: Asahi Shimbun Digital. <http://www.asahi.com/politics/update/0421/TKY201204210167.html> (23 April 2012).

<sup>112</sup> Ikumo Isono, "Possible Alternative Routes for Further Connectivity in the Mekong Region," in *Intra- and Inter-City Connectivity in the Mekong Region*, ed., by Masami Ishida, BRC Research Report, no. 6 (Bangkok: Bangkok Research Center, 2011), 378-389.

<sup>113</sup> Ngoc Dien, Nguyen, "Japanese Investment and Aid Policies Toward Vietnam in Historical Perspective," 165; Seteve, Chan "Humanitarianism Mercantilism, or Comprehensive Security? Disbursement Patterns of Japanese Foreign Aid," *Asian Affairs* 19 no. 1 (1992): 10.

<sup>114</sup> See, for example: David, Arase, *Buying Power: The Political Economy of Japan's Foreign Aid*; Chan "Humanitarianism Mercantilism, or Comprehensive Security? Disbursement Patterns of Japanese Foreign Aid"; and Hook and Gengu Zhang, "Japan's Aid Policy Since the Cold War: Rhetoric and Reality," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 11 (1998): 1051-1066.

Minister Taro Aso<sup>115</sup> in 2006, is that Japan's ODA should be used to strengthen ties between Japan and countries "with the same interests and aspirations as Japan."<sup>116</sup>

The particular quality of Japan's ODA (perhaps a greater target of international criticism than the economic infrastructure-based agenda) is in the inclusion of the private sector in policy-making and project implementation. Rather than the ministries developing projects themselves, private corporations (major ones including Toyota, Honda, and Panasonic) develop proposals for funding in collaboration with recipient governments. Thus, while recipient states play some role in project development, their influence pales in comparison to that exerted by Japanese companies, which seek to expand their access to foreign markets for technology and other products. This is the reason scholars criticize the Japanese government for employing ODA for the entry of Japanese firms into the recipient country's domestic market to develop competitive commercial advantages where previously they did not exist.<sup>117</sup> In this way, Japanese national competitiveness is established in the context of regional economic networks, also known as the Asian division of labour, in its quest to move up the global economic hierarchy.

Japan's economic investment in the ASEAN region is also encouraged by more conventional political motives. In MOFA's view, ASEAN countries are crucial to

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<sup>115</sup> Taro Aso: in office from 2005-2006.

<sup>116</sup> Maria Toyoda, *The Unheard Giant: Japan's Missing Voice in the ODA Debate* (Washington D.C: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010), 1.

<sup>117</sup> Chan, "Humanitarianism Mercantilism or Comprehensive Security? Disbursement Patterns of Japanese Foreign Aid," 7-11; Alan, Rix, "Japan's Emergence as a Foreign-aid Superpower," in *Foreign Aid Toward the Millennium*, ed., Steven Hook (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996): 81; John P. Tuman and Jonathan R. Strand, "The Role of Mercantilism, Humanitarianism, and Gaiatsu in Japan's ODA Programme in Asia," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 6 (2006): 65.

regional stability, not only in Southeast Asia but in Asia as a whole.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, if Japan plays a leadership role in the stabilization of ASEAN countries, Tokyo would increase its influence over other countries throughout Southeast Asia, particularly relative to China and South Korea, which would secure Japan's leadership position throughout Asia.

Some scholars, such as Hirata, suggest that Japan's growing involvement in ASEAN nations reflects the country's ambition to win more international support for its pledge to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.<sup>119</sup> This is a delicate subject repeatedly discussed in the Japanese Diet (parliament) mainly because of conflicting ideas and interests. First and foremost, a seat on the UN Security Council would symbolize the end of post-war issues to the Japanese government, whose acceptance in the international community depended on owning up to war guilt<sup>120</sup> and gaining the support of the former Allied Powers, in other words, the Security Council. Second, many in Japan believe that, given the country's considerable financial contribution, Japan deserves the seat. This is a false assumption since the country will be expected to meet the UN target ODA of 0.7% measured in Gross National Income (GNI), which would mean almost 3.5 times more than what Japan currently contributes. Even with successful admission to the Security Council, Japan would face a dilemma in the eyes of the whole international community because of the conflict resulting from the country's pacifist constitution and the demand for military action by the Security Council.

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<sup>118</sup> Keiko, Hirata, "New Challenges to Japan's Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making" *Pacific Affairs*, 71, no. 3 (1998): 316.

<sup>119</sup> Hirata, "New Challenges to Japan's Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making," 316.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example: San Francisco Peace Treaty (also know as the Treaty of Peace with Japan) which was signed in 1951 which put a official end to World War II and allocated compensation to former allied powers who suffered from Japanese war crimes. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "San Francisco Peace Treaty," <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/territory/edition92/period4.html> (5 July 2012).

The degree of Tokyo's political ambition is difficult to measure; however, it seems clear that for Japan, ODA is an influential means to advance its political and economic influence in the absence of military power.

### **3.3. MOFA's Collaboration with NGOs**

Whether or not MOFA was aware of the criticism towards ODA, since the late-1980s, the ministry has made a series of attempts to encourage the involvement of NGOs in delivering ODA. Following the establishment of the NGOs Subsidiary Division, in 1994, MOFA created the NGOs Assistance Division in the ministry and under the Economic Co-operation Bureau to promote "mutual support and collaboration" with NGOs.<sup>121</sup> In the official statement, MOFA claims that, through close dialogue, the government will benefit from the knowledge and human resources of NGOs, and in return, will provide them with financial and other forms of support.<sup>122</sup> Hence, MOFA describes its relationship with NGOs as a three-pillar system founded on "partnership, co-operation, and dialogue;" and various incentives to enhance MOFA-NGO collaboration have since been introduced.<sup>123</sup>

As part of the first pillar of the MOFA-NGO collaboration system (partnership), MOFA has established three major programs. One prominent example is the Japan Platform, a government-funded "non-governmental" organization. Created in 2000 by

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<sup>121</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan International Co-operation Bureau Non-Governmental Organizations Co-operation Division, "International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs" (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2007), 3.

<sup>122</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs," 3.

<sup>123</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs," 3.

MOFA and MOF, the objective of the organization is to encourage NGOs, the business community, and a government agency, namely MOFA, to form a “tripartite co-operation system,” in which they can work together to respond to emergency situations in the world.<sup>124</sup> In the last 10 years, the Japan Platform has received ¥176 billion (US\$ 1,760 million) in grant assistance aid,<sup>125</sup> and the organization has now grown to be one of the largest and most influential NGOs in Japan.

The other two programs under “partnership” are based on program assessment and efficiency management. MOFA and NGOs’ Joint Assessment Program, introduced in 1997, assesses the effectiveness of MOFA-NGO joint ODA projects and discusses the direction of aid. Similarly, through the Effect Measurement Study Program, established in 2007, MOFA and NGOs make comprehensive evaluations of ODA programs and NGO projects to foster a more co-operative relationship.

Second, to promote “dialogue,” a MOFA-NGO quarterly council meeting was established in 1996. The council meeting is aimed at exchanging views on ways to promote government-NGO collaboration, discuss government funding for NGOs, and the issues of development in certain regions such as Indochina, where NGOs are active and MOFA is anxious to highlight its new policies. Similarly, NGO-Embassy has held regular meetings since 2002 in countries where many Japanese NGOs are engaged in development assistance activities. Other meetings include NGO-JICA regular meetings, effective since 1998, and NGO-JBIC talks since 2001, both of which aim to enhance mutual understanding and communication between NGOs and the implementing agencies

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<sup>124</sup> See, the Japan Platform, <http://w3.japanplatform.org/E/index.html> (19 April 2012).

<sup>125</sup> Japan Platform, “Financial Reports: 2001-2-11,” (Japanese), <http://www.japanplatform.org/report/index.html> (23 June 2012).

of ODA.

Third, and most importantly, to enhance “co-operation,” MOFA has introduced a series of grant aid programs since the late-1980s. Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects, established in 2002, is the most significant financial support program designed for the grassroots-level economic and social programs of NGOs in developing countries. Grants of ¥10–100 million are extended to developmental projects such as consortium projects, emergency and humanitarian relief, microcredit funding, recycled aid goods shipping, and anti-personnel landmine removal.<sup>126</sup>

Another significant financial support program (in fact, the oldest and the second largest) is NGO Project Subsidies, which was established in 1989. NGO Project Subsidies provides assistance for half of the total project costs with a maximum limit of ¥10 million (US\$ 100,000) for project formation, ex-post project assessments, seminars, and training seminars related to economic and social development projects in foreign countries.<sup>127</sup> Others include Grassroots Technical Co-operation Projects and Capacity Building Support for NGOs, both of which offer support for the increasing expertise and management capacity of NGOs, including advisors, study groups, researchers, and seminars.

The increase in government funding, particularly through the grant assistance program, has been remarkable in terms of the amount of aid and the number of recipient groups. When it was established in 2002, the total amount of aid provided was ¥591

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<sup>126</sup> MOFA, “International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs,” 5-8.

<sup>127</sup> MOFA, “International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs,” 5-8.

million (US\$ 5.9 million), which was distributed among 60 projects by 36 NGOs.<sup>128</sup> The most recent data released by MOFA indicates that in 2011 the total budget was ¥2900 million (US\$ 29 million), an almost five-fold increase since 2002; it was distributed among 81 projects by 45 NGOs.<sup>129</sup> For typical small- to medium-sized Japanese NGOs, such as Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS), the total amount of grant aid accounts for 78% of their annual revenue. In 2010, the total revenue of the organization was ¥701 million (US\$ 7.1 million), of which ¥548 million (US\$ 5.48 million) was supported by MOFA's Grant Assistant Program.<sup>130</sup>

Not surprisingly, winning MOFA's financial support is a highly political process. To receive the assistance, an organization must be registered as an incorporated, non-profit organization or a public benefit corporation in Japan, and the headquarters of the organization must be in Japan.<sup>131</sup> This requirement excludes not only non-legal-status NGOs, which account for more than half, but also those with legal status that are based outside Japan, from working with the local groups and governments of aid recipient countries. As for the major required documents, NGOs must submit cost estimates for their projects, drawings, and three estimates for the intended purchase of materials, and a project proposal in accordance with MOFA's priority issue areas.

A special characteristic of the NGO Grant Assistance Program is that Japanese

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<sup>128</sup> MOFA, "Nihon NGO Renkei Musyō Shikin Kyōryoku Jisseki Ichiran 2002-2011" (Japanese NGO Grant Assistance Assessment 2002-2011), [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shimin/oda\\_ngo/shien/jngo\\_j.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shimin/oda_ngo/shien/jngo_j.html) (29 March 2012).

<sup>129</sup> In 2011, 55 out of 81 projects supported by Grant Assistance Program were in Asia. For more information, see MOFA, "Nihon NGO Renkei Musyō Shikin Kyōryoku Jisseki Ichiran 2002-2011".

<sup>130</sup> Japan Mine Action Service, <http://jmas-ngo.jp/ja/> (19 March 2012).

<sup>131</sup> MOFA "International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs," 5-8.

overseas missions (embassies and consulates) are in charge of screening the feasibility of proposed projects, including the signing of grant contracts. Three to four years after completing a project, MOFA will conduct a post-project inspection, and if results are not satisfactory or if problems arise in relation to maintaining and managing the project, the NGO will be required to take appropriate action at its own expense.

### **3.3.1. JICA-NGO Collaboration**

Since the 2000s, MOFA's efforts to strengthen the government's relationship with NGOs have also been made through the Japan International Co-Operation Agency (JICA), an independent governmental agency overseeing all three major ODA components: technical co-operation, grant aid, and concessional loans. Established in 2003, the current JICA replaced its predecessor, which was a semi-governmental organization under the jurisdiction of MOFA. In 2006, the Japanese Diet decided to merge JICA with Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC), an international wing of the Japan Finance Corporation administered by MOFA. Since its completion in 2008, "new JICA" has become one of the largest bilateral development organizations in the world, with a network of 97 overseas offices, projects in more than 150 countries, and financial resources of approximately ¥1 trillion (US\$ 10 billion).<sup>132</sup>

One of the major JICA-NGO collaboration schemes is the JICA Partnership Program (JPP). In the JPP, JICA provides financial and technical support to NGOs, universities, and public-service corporations with an established track record of activities in Japan but lacking experience in developing countries. Similar to the Grant Assistance

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<sup>132</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, <http://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/press/2011/110616.html> (30 March 2012).

Project, interested NGOs must submit their applications for funding with project proposals and financial statements, and only those who meet the strict criteria are selected by JICA for grants up to ¥5 million (US\$ 500,000).<sup>133</sup>

In addition, the Proposal of Technical Co-operation (PROTECO) was established in 2002 to invite the private sector to participate in “all aspects of the project implementation, from formulation of the technical co-operation project to participation in the project preparatory stages,” to improve the effectiveness of the private sector in co-operation projects undertaken in developing countries.<sup>134</sup> Under PROTECO, JICA first selects the development issues and project opportunities, for which the participation of NGOs is of significant value.<sup>135</sup> JICA then solicits proposals on these issues and opportunities, formulates projects, and at the final stage, entrusts project implementation to NGOs.

A review of various MOFA-NGO and JICA-NGO collaboration schemes indicates that what these governmental agencies call “collaboration” is, in fact, *incorporation* of NGOs into the delivery of ODA. While it may be advantageous for small Japanese NGOs to gain access to large fiscal resources, the strict grant application criteria and predisposed selection process leave NGOs with few options but to adjust their projects to the interests and expectations of MOFA. In this regard, the NGOs

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<sup>133</sup> MOFA “International Co-operation and NGOs: Partnership Between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese NGOs,” 10.

<sup>134</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, “Analysis of Experience in NGO-JICA Collaboration Programs With Focus on Grassroots-Type Projects: Prospects for better collaboration by utilizing the features of each other’s activities and the potential synergy” (Tokyo, Japan International Co-operation Agency and Institute for International Co-operation, 2008), 56.

<sup>135</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, “Analysis of Experience in NGO-JICA Collaboration Programs With Focus on Grassroots-Type Projects: Prospects for better collaboration by utilizing the features of each other’s activities and the potential synergy,” 56.

become the grassroots sub-contractor of MOFA and JICA who are the primary agents in designing almost all of the development projects. The hierarchical structure of the collaboration scheme has led some Japanese scholars, such as Usui, to posit that MOFA's attempt to encourage NGO participation is mainly to gain public and international support for its own ODA programs.<sup>136</sup>

### **3.4. Japanese NGOs as Silent Partners**

This chapter has focused on MOFA-NGO collaboration schemes, and the attention is now shifted to the NGOs themselves. This section examines the roles and activities of Japanese NGOs, as well as their problems, including their relationships with MOFA and JICA.

In terms of activities, almost all Japanese NGOs involved in overseas development work have taken part in small-scale development projects typically consisting of a budget under US\$ 1 million.<sup>137</sup> The top five fields are education, healthcare, agricultural development, vocational training, and reforestation and forest conservation.<sup>138</sup> Only two Japanese NGOs; namely, the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) and the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA-International), are engaged in large-scale social development projects such as the restructuring of welfare programs in developing countries. As for their target groups, women and children represent 70%, while for geographical distribution, Asia represents

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<sup>136</sup> Hisakazu Usui, "Nihon Gaikoo ni Okeru NGO (NGO in Japanese foreign policy)," *Kokusai Mondai* 519, (June 2003): 39.

<sup>137</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, "Understanding Japanese NGOs from Facts and Practice," (Tokyo: Japan International Co-operation Agency, 2008), 11.

<sup>138</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, "Understanding Japanese NGOs from Facts and Practice," (Tokyo: Japan International Co-operation Agency, 2008), 8-11.

over 70%, half of which is concentrated in Southeast Asia.<sup>139</sup>

The most serious problem among the Japanese NGOs, and commonly expressed by NGOs and noted by scholars, is the lack of fiscal resources.<sup>140</sup> According to JICA's survey, based on 247 NGOs involved in foreign aid, NGOs with an annual budget of less than ¥3 million (US\$ 30,000) comprised about 20%, while those with less than ¥10 million (US\$ 100,000) represent half, and those with a budget size of ¥100 million (US\$ 1 million) represent less than 15%.<sup>141</sup> This data indicates a stark difference from large US-based NGOs, such as World Vision, which has a budget of US\$ 1 billion, or CARE USA, for example, which has a budget of US\$ 700 million and operates in 70 countries.<sup>142</sup> About 12 of these large American NGOs have a combined annual budget exceeding the agencies of the UN engaged in international relief and development.<sup>143</sup> The lack of fiscal resources hinders the scope of the advocacy work of Japanese NGOs in relation to the Japanese government, as in conducting their own research to investigate and publish the detrimental effects of ODA projects both within and outside Japan.

Instead of strengthening the fiscal capacity of NGOs, the MOFA-NGO collaboration scheme has created only a financial dependency structure, where NGOs become reliant on MOFA's grant projects for organizational survival. In fact, Grant

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<sup>139</sup> JICA, "Understanding Japanese NGOs from Facts and Practices," 14.

<sup>140</sup> Furuoka "The Role of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Japan's Foreign Aid Policy," 34; Hirata, "Civil Society In Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy," 14; JANIC, NGO Data, available at <http://www.janic.org/en/data.html> (30 March 2012); Saotome, *Japan's NGO Activities and the Public Support System*, 89.

<sup>141</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, "Understanding Japanese NGOs from Facts and Practices," 20-27.

<sup>142</sup> Peter B. Bell, "The Role of Global NGOs in World Politics: The Case of Relief and Development Organizations" Lecture Prepared for Centre for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa, January 7, 2010.

<sup>143</sup> Bell, "The Role of Global NGOs in World Politics: The Case of Relief and Development Organizations."

Assistance Projects normally provide ¥10 million (US\$ 100,000), which is equivalent to almost 100% of the budget for half (about 130) of the NGOs surveyed.<sup>144</sup> In April 2012, the leading Democratic Party of Japan requested a reduction in the ODA and NGO Grant Assistance budget by 20% for the current fiscal year, to secure funding for the post-earthquake reconstruction budget, which left many NGOs concerned.<sup>145</sup> The cut in governmental support will not only compromise many ongoing and future ODA projects, but will jeopardize the survival of many NGOs.

Japanese NGOs are not only constrained by limited financial resources but also by a lack of human resources. Without ample institutional funding, Japanese NGOs experience difficulty attracting professional staff and have to rely on volunteers and part-time employees. Currently, only about 1,000 full-time staff members work for internationally-oriented NGOs in Japan.<sup>146</sup> Even the largest Japanese development NGOs, such as Peshawar-kai, has fewer than 300 permanent staff (19 Japanese and 250 local employees) in two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These figures once again indicate a stark difference from the world's major organizations, such as CARE USA, which has more than 10,000 permanent staff in 70 countries.<sup>147</sup> The small NGOs without permanent professional members find it difficult to afford the personnel and administration for an issue-based consensus network or even to attend international meetings, all of which are crucial in developing a global network and increasing

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<sup>144</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, "Understanding Japanese NGOs from Facts and Practices," 20-27.

<sup>145</sup> Asahi Simbun Digital, <http://www.asahi.com/special/10005/TKY201104060573.html> (28 April 2012).

<sup>146</sup> Japan International Co-operation Agency, "Understanding Japanese NGOs from Facts and Practices," 20-27.

<sup>147</sup> Bell, "The Role of Global NGOs in World Politics: The Case of Relief and Development Organizations."

bargaining power with the Japanese government.

The lack of human capital places many NGOs in a disadvantageous position in MOFA, especially when compared to the exclusivity of Japan's long-established bureaucratic political culture. Due to the lack of political activism in Japan by the silent majority, the Japanese bureaucrats have, for many years, experienced a kind of autonomy, the *sei-kan-zai* (politics-bureaucracy-business) co-operative system. As a result, these powerful autonomous bureaucrats enjoy full control over the routine policy-making process of foreign aid and disregard the opinions of groups that lack direct links with the bureaucracy – NGOs. Similarly, MOFA-NGO collaboration in decision-making is by invitation-only, with MOFA inviting a limited number of actors to participate. The NGOs involved in various meetings with the bureaucracy are relatively large ones that play a leadership role in the Japanese NGO community, such as the Japan NGO Centre for International Co-operation (JANIC), an NGO coordinating centre consisting of approximately 65 NGOs. Such an institutionalized MOFA-NGO collaboration that excludes small NGOs replicates the bureaucratic political system where the views of non-state actors are not reflected in one of the most important foreign policy areas, namely ODA.

A number of recent events help to illustrate Japan's closed politics and the lack of the NGOs' influence over Japan's ODA policy. Throughout the 1990s, the Network for Indonesian Democracy (NINDJA) criticized the serious human rights abuse and the misuse of Japanese ODA by the Suharto regime. Despite repeated calls to suspend foreign aid to the Suharto regime; however, no punitive measures were taken by the

Japanese government against Indonesia.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, when Myanmar's political situation deteriorated in 1996, bureaucrats in Tokyo paid no heed to the demand of Japanese NGOs to introduce economic sanctions against Myanmar's military regime.<sup>149</sup>

To summarize, to a large extent, Gramsci's hegemonic mode of civil society is applicable to the strong influence of the Japanese government over the NGOs. Although Japan is a liberal democratic nation where free association and activities of NGOs are permitted, the government's strong influence on NGOs in legal, economic, and political domains that are critical for NGOs dominates them to a level that can be considered a form of control.

In the legal sector; for example, the government seizes control by imposing the rigid civil code concerning the formation of NGOs, and in particular, the narrow definition of non-profit organizations as those which are in accordance with "public interest." This action excludes many NGOs from obtaining government funding and tax exemption, which has hindered the growth of NGOs in Japan.

Legal control also translates into the political power of the government over NGOs. A strict civil code already eliminates the would-be NGOs that do not meet the "public interest" definition, and the government collaborates only with legal ones, thereby eliminating any disagreement or conflict over agenda setting. Moreover, because of their small size and reduced bargaining power, NGOs are already excluded in an overwhelmingly bureaucratic political system.

By providing Grant Assistance to NGOs and ODA division and imposing strict

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<sup>148</sup> Japan Network for Indonesian Democracy, <http://www.nindja.org/> (17 April 2012).

<sup>149</sup> Furuoka, "The Role of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Japan's Foreign Aid Policy," 12.

selection criteria, MOFA not only creates financial dependency structures but also gains political influence over NGOs whose organizational survival may otherwise be at risk. Under the current system, NGOs do not determine which projects to initiate; instead, MOFA selects the organizations and projects it wishes to support while lending JICA full control over designing the projects. Consequently, many Japanese NGOs become silent partners of MOFA to undertake the small-scale work in MOFA's jurisdiction. Contrary to MOFA's official statement about the MOFA-NGO collaboration scheme, one wonders if MOFA's motivation to encourage NGO participation is to camouflage and demonstrate accountability to the government's controversial developmental projects both inside and outside Japan.

That is not to say that NGOs are completely unconscious actors. While it is not possible to generalize about the motivations of NGOs that collaborate with MOFA, it is important to remember that NGOs are making conscious decisions regarding their degree of involvement with MOFA. Some NGOs may willingly co-operate because they support MOFA's foreign aid philosophy or at least partially believe that the collaboration scheme enhances the effectiveness of their developmental projects. Some NGOs may be motivated purely by financial gain and for the sake of organizational survival, and try to adjust their project proposals to meet MOFA priorities. Most NGOs probably fall in between, understanding that mutual gains can accrue in situations where an NGO contributes its field experience and manpower, while MOFA contributes technical and financial support.

At best, the rigid regulation by the Japanese government in the NGO sector clearly parallels many "Asian" features put forth by authors such as Fowler, Shigetomi,

Smillie, and Yamamoto.<sup>150</sup> Fowler's argument best describes the current situation of the Japanese government-NGO relationship: "Distorted language of partnership is [an] example of how rhetoric masks major disparities in power and the maintenance of dependency."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Shigetomi, "The States and NGOs: Issues and Analytical Framework," 12-13; Smillie, *The Alms Bazaar: Altruism Under Fire: Non-Profit Organizations and International Development*, 61; Bhatt, "Asian NGOs in Development: Their role and impact," 82.

<sup>151</sup> Alan Fowler, *Civil Society, NGDOs, and Social Development: Changing the Rules of the Game* (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development [UNRISD], 2000), Occasional Paper 1, 8.

## **Chapter 4. Influential Political Actors? Japanese NGO Advocacy Works Against the Government's ODA**

While the previous chapter examined the MOFA-NGO collaboration schemes that have become increasingly prevalent, not all NGOs have passively agreed to the government's request for wider incorporation in its bureaucratic management of ODA. In fact, some NGOs have adopted various ways for challenging ODA policy since the 1980s, and scholars have noted their growing influence on Japanese politics, especially with regards to ODA.<sup>152</sup>

This chapter investigates the efforts of some Japanese development-oriented NGOs to resist and alter the hegemonic discourse and practices of the government's ODA since the 1980s. In particular, this chapter closely examines two case studies, the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) and Mekong Watch, and their evolving efforts to employ different tactics to influence ODA policy-making. In doing so, I argue that these cases demonstrate the resilience of NGOs, and while still small in number and scale, their advocacy work must be encouraged since, by challenging the important component of government policy (ODA), it represents a small yet emerging form of counter-hegemony to the Japanese government. The work of these NGOs signifies the prospect of weakening the Japanese state's bureaucratic stranglehold or hegemonic dominance of the system and moving toward a more democratic form of politics that incorporates and reflects the broader interests of civil society, including popular demands

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<sup>152</sup> For example, Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGO in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*; Reimann, *The Spread of Global Civil Society in the 1990s: Domestic Structures, International Socialization and the Emergence of International Development NGOs in Japan*.

for increased accountability, transparency, and participation in decision-making processes concerning ODA. In this sense, the NGOs discussed in this chapter, particularly JVC and Mekong Watch, represent the counter-hegemonic mode of contest in civil society, in contrast to the previous chapter, which illustrated the hegemonic mode.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The first section examines Japanese NGO attempts – including the work of JVC – to reform various aspects of ODA policy in the late-1980s and the 1990s, and how certain conditions of systemic marginalization and exclusion generated alternative and successful modes of advocacy. The second section examines JVC's post-2000 approach, to demonstrate its tactical shift in response to the increasingly institutionalized MOFA- NGO relationship. The third section analyses an alternative case of NGO advocacy through the example of Mekong Watch. This independent organization combines research and advocacy in collaboration with local groups to challenge ODA policy and ensure greater environmental sustainability and more democratic policy-making in ODA.

#### **4.1. NGO Advocacy from the 1980s to the 1990s: Lobbying the Government**

To a limited extent, the 1980s saw the emergence of NGO advocacy against the government's ODA policies because some NGOs, many of which were established by scholars, began to investigate the effectiveness and consequences of rapidly expanding ODA programs. One such campaign was the Japan Negros [Island] Campaign Committee (JNCC),<sup>153</sup> organized in 1986 by Waseda University Professor Jun Nishikawa, at the time of the non-violent anti-Marcos uprising in the Philippines. Professor Nishikawa drew

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<sup>153</sup> Japan Negros Campaign Committee is an NGO in support of sugar export and poverty alleviation in Negros Island, the fourth largest island in the Philippines. Negros Island was originally called Buglas, meaning "cut off" in a local native language.

public attention through the mass media about the negative impact of ODA on recipient countries, and particularly, about the fact that little or no direct assistance was actually reaching the people of the Philippines.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, the Japan Tropical Forest Action Network (JATAN), established in 1987 as a coalition of 12 Japanese NGOs, launched a campaign against a Japanese grant aid project for constructing a logging road in Sarawak, Malaysia.<sup>155</sup> Concerned with the detrimental impact on the local environment and on the livelihood of indigenous tribes in the area, JATAN spoke in the Malaysian press about the necessity of resisting the unaccountable and destructive impact of Japan's ODA.<sup>156</sup> JATAN achieved partial success in forcing Itoh Chu Co., one of the Japanese firms that won the aid bid, out of the project by revealing its financial mismanagement.<sup>157</sup>

Established in 1986 by Sophia University Professor Yoshinori Murai, the Reconsider Aid Citizen's League (REAL) became the first Japanese grassroots organization dedicated to reforming the government's ODA policy orientation.<sup>158</sup> Professor Murai has often appeared in the mass media and held open debates with government officials to call for policy reform and an end to corruption. Murai's activities led to the establishment in 1998 of another organization called the ODA Investigation Study Group. The group published a booklet of on-site reports on ODA projects and pointed to business and political interference in ODA. It claimed that many Japanese aid projects do more harm than good to the poor in developing countries.<sup>159</sup> This claim

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<sup>154</sup> Furuoka, "The Role of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Japan's Foreign Aid Policy," 3.

<sup>155</sup> Japan Tropical Forest Action Network, <http://www.jatan.org/> (23 April 2012).

<sup>156</sup> Japan Tropical Forest Action Network.

<sup>157</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society In Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 99.

<sup>158</sup> Furuoka, "The Role of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Japan's Foreign Aid Policy," 3.

<sup>159</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society In Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 98.

shocked many Japanese, who had assumed that their tax money was being spent on development projects that resulted in positive humanitarian outcomes.<sup>160</sup> Each of these examples so far demonstrates that the Japanese NGO sphere was not entirely co-opted into government collaboration schemes, as described in Chapter 3. Rather, these examples show that NGOs could challenge the dominance of the state. More examples can be found.

In the 1990s, this kind of advocacy work intensified as many NGOs formed coalitions, not only domestically but also internationally, and employed a greater variety of tactics such as lobbying through petitioning, writing letters, launching campaigns, and speaking through the media. One example is the 1990 campaign against the construction of a large-scale hydroelectric plant for Narmada Dam in India. In the campaign, Japanese NGOs, including Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan, worked with local communities and Western environmental groups. They launched public campaigns, held symposia, informed the media of the likelihood of environmental destruction, with the displacement of tens of thousands of people, and lobbied both the Japanese government and the World Bank to halt the project. The activity received considerable press attention in Japan, and within a month, the Overseas Economic Co-Operation Fund (OECF) announced its withdrawal from the Narmada project, becoming the first case in which the government yielded to pressure from NGOs.<sup>161</sup>

JVC, in particular, took a lead role in lobbying the government and launching public campaigns, one of which resulted in the 1993 cancellation of Japanese pesticide aid

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<sup>160</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society In Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 98.

<sup>161</sup> Balakrishnan Rajagopal, "Limits of law in Counter-Hegemonic Globalization: The Indian Supreme Court and the Narmada Valley struggle" Working Paper Series (New Delhi: Centre for the Study of Law and Governance Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2004), 23.

to Cambodia. In the early-1990s the Japanese government, through a grant project, had provided chemical fertilizer and agricultural machines to Cambodia, which many NGOs saw as being harmful to the local environment.<sup>162</sup> Japanese NGOs, and JVC in particular, campaigned by writing letters to MOFA, holding symposia, and publishing a booklet to inform the public of the dangers of the pesticide aid, which caught the attention of the media and added to the pressure on MOFA to end the aid.<sup>163</sup> This case was a notable victory for Japanese NGOs, since major Japanese chemical corporations, such as Sumitomo Chemical and Itochu Corporation benefitted from MOFA's policy and lobbied on behalf of the projects.<sup>164</sup> Many scholars have drawn attention to this case to demonstrate the growing influence of Japanese NGOs on government policy. For instance, Hirata states, "The success of NGOs in defeating an initiative that was strongly supported by both the Japanese government and industry was an important indication that the state-business alliance no longer held uncontested power in Japan."<sup>165</sup>

JVC's successful advocacy work was not limited to controversial development projects. In October 1996, Canada sponsored an international conference in Ottawa to discuss a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines, known as the Ottawa Treaty or the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in which the Japanese government was reluctant to take part. Concerned with the government's official position, JVC took the lead in bringing together more than 40 Japanese NGOs to launch

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<sup>162</sup> Keiko, Hirata, "Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 4 no. 3: 21.

<sup>163</sup> Hirata, "Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making," 21.

<sup>164</sup> Hirata, "Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making," 21.

<sup>165</sup> Hirata "Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making," 21.

the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), to pressure the Japanese government into supporting the treaty.<sup>166</sup> The NGO coalition submitted petitions and letters to the prime minister and to MOFA and hosted a symposium on landmines with the Canadian Embassy to persuade the Japanese Defence Agency. These lobbying efforts led to the ratification of the treaty in the Japanese Diet in September 1998. In addition, the NGO campaign led to an increased allocation of Japanese ODA for promoting de-mining activities and funding victims' rehabilitation.<sup>167</sup>

This historical overview of Japanese NGO advocacy work against the government in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s illustrates that many NGOs, and JVC in particular, advocated counter-positions against the government, ending controversial government grant aid projects and convincing the government to ratify an international convention. Toward these ends, NGOs formed coalition groups to increase their bargaining power with the government and employed tactics such as direct lobbying, public campaigns, letter writing, petitions, and use of mass media, all of which contributed to the outcomes described above.

Again, any theoretical model that posits Japanese NGOs as exclusively playing a supportive role for the Japanese government is as misleading or incomplete as a model that treats NGOs and other civil society actors as being completely autonomous from the state and the market. The reality is that more complex or theoretical models should account for both co-optation into the state and resistance against it. I am arguing that a pseudo-Gramscian perspective allows us to understand both. The following section will

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<sup>166</sup> Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), "About us," <http://www.jcbl-ngo.org/English-Page---About-us/> (23 April 2012).

<sup>167</sup> Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL).

examine the counter-hegemonic mode in more detail, followed by two case studies. The aim is to understand this dimension of Japanese state-NGO relations and consider the prospect of enhancing this critical form of resistance.

#### **4.1.1. Oppression as a Generator of Counterforce?**

How were these newly formed NGOs able to employ these tactics? This section analyses the environment of Japanese NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s that contributed to generating advocacy campaigns against the Japanese government.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the NGO environment was far from favourable for independent advocacy work. NGOs lacked legal status, financial resources, and official communication avenues with the government. The unfavourable conditions for NGOs; however, inadvertently contributed to the generation of the counter-strategies detailed above. In other words, many of the initial disadvantages produced a more flexible, autonomous, and un-institutionalized approach to advocacy work with the government.

One possible attributing factor that generated successful advocacy work was the lack of legal status, which meant the absence of government oversight, allowing many NGOs such as JVC to speak and act autonomously in their counter-positions against the government. As illustrated in Chapter 3, until 1998 the strict PILP system was the only way for NGOs to obtain a legal status. This meant that the newly emerging organizations had to choose whether to obtain legal status under the strict civil code and accept government oversight or remain non-legal private voluntary organizations. Choosing the latter meant that NGOs were hampered by a lack of legal protection and various financial constraints such as restrictions on obtaining public subsidies, tax breaks, and incentives.

According to Pekkanen, they were also unable to “open bank accounts, hire staff, own property, sign lease agreements for office space, or undertake joint projects with domestic government bodies.”<sup>168</sup> Even so, many development-oriented NGOs, including all three organizations mentioned above, preferred to maintain non-legal status to be free of the strict bureaucratic interference: JVC, formally established in 1980, obtained NPO status in 1999; FoE, established in 1980, did so in 2001; and JCBL, active since 1997, obtained legal status only in 2009. Despite the lack of legal protection and financial support due to their non-legal status, being free of government oversight allowed the organizations to maximize their knowledge and available resources to criticize the government.

The lack of state funding also allowed the NGOs to act autonomously. As illustrated in Chapter 3, the first funding was introduced in 1989, for which only incorporated NGOs were eligible. This meant that most NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s had to rely on fundraising, donations, and membership fees to operate. On the positive side; however, obtaining financial resources from only those who supported their organizational goals and interests, and not having strict policy guidelines and criteria to fulfil to obtain state funding granted these NGOs a greater degree of autonomy.

Another and perhaps the most important factor for the successful advocacy work was that the government-NGO relationship was not institutionalized; trends toward institutionalization began only in the late-1990s. As illustrated in Chapter 3, until the mid-1990s, MOFA and the NGOs had almost no formal channels for exchanging views and information. This meant that relevant knowledge was kept to a small circle of bureaucrats, and a clear division existed between state officials and non-state actors. A

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<sup>168</sup> Frank, J., Schwartz, “Introduction: Recognizing Civil Society in Japan,” 51.

lack of transparency, especially at a time when Japan was becoming the world's top ODA donor, generated frustration and scepticism about the country's use of ODA. This trend encouraged NGO leaders and academics to express their scepticism about the role and effectiveness of ODA through direct lobbying and other measures that increased their public visibility and amplified their voices.

In short, much of the NGO advocacy work in the 1980s and 1990s was achieved because of the NGO's greater autonomy and determination to gain the government's attention in the absence of legal or financial support and any institutionalized communication mechanisms with the government.

#### **4.2. NGO Advocacy since the 2000s: Active Interaction with the Government**

As the government-NGO relationship has developed into a more collaborative and institutionalized form since the late-1990s, the tactics used in NGO advocacy work have begun to shift to what Hirata describes as “soft advocacy.”<sup>169</sup> As illustrated in Chapter 3, a series of MOFA-NGO schemes established during the 1990s (especially the MOFA-NGO regular council meetings) increased the formal communication between the government and NGOs. As a result, despite many Japanese NGOs not agreeing with MOFA's proposed collaboration scheme, NGOs no longer resorted to direct lobbying and aggressive public campaigns against the government. Instead, they used “soft measures,” such as institutionalized policy dialogue, symposia, and joint workshops to express their opinions and concerns with MOFA officials.<sup>170</sup> Hirata posits that, since MOFA has

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<sup>169</sup> Hirata, “Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making,” 27.

<sup>170</sup> Hirata, “Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making,” 27.

opened its doors to constructive dialogue, “some NGO leaders feel they no longer have to shout anti-government slogans to gain attention.”<sup>171</sup> The following case study illustrates the point, where JVC, whose post-2000 modes of advocacy shifted towards interaction through government-NGO bodies, rather than direct lobbying, as in the 1990s.

#### **4.2.1. Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC)**

As noted earlier, the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) is one of the oldest and most progressive organizations in advocacy work regarding ODA policy-making. It provides for an analysis of how the tactics in advocacy work changed in the organization over time. Before beginning the discussion of JVC’s shift in advocacy work; however, the history and funding structure of the organization must be considered.

##### ***JVC: Brief History, Organizational and Funding Structure***

Among Japanese development NGOs, most of which emerged during the late-1980s to mid-1990s, JVC has a relatively long history. A few Japanese volunteers formed the informal body of JVC in the late-1970s in Thailand to provide support for Cambodian refugees. Officially formed in 1980, its organizational activities expanded from refugee relief to rural development for a safe and stable life, which JVC thought was the best solution to reduce the number of refugees. Although the organization conducts its own development activities, such as rural development, emergency relief, and peace exchange in the former Indochina and the Middle East, JVC continues to play a prominent role in advocacy work against the government’s ODA.

JVC has a large number of staff, by Japanese NGO standards. The organization

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<sup>171</sup> Hirata, “Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making,” 27.

consists of 29 full-time staff members, including 8 associate members working overseas, and 61 local staff members.<sup>172</sup> While these figures are small compared to major Western NGOs, for Japanese development NGOs that typically have a few full-time paid staff and volunteer members, JVC is considered one of the largest Japanese NGOs involved in overseas development.

With an average annual budget of approximately ¥300 (US\$ 3 million), JVC is considered among the wealthiest 20% of Japanese NGOs involved in overseas assistance.<sup>173</sup> The organization has a steady funding structure. In 2010, the organizational income was derived from the following sources: personal donations (39.6%), grant aid from public/private corporations (31.1%), government grant (16.5%), and other (12.8%).<sup>174</sup> “Other” includes mainly membership fees and fundraising from selling calendars and hosting events such as annual Christmas concerts.

### *JVC’s Advocacy Work in Relation to the Japanese Government since the 2000s*

The organization’s active involvement in advocacy work in the 1990s was illustrated by the 1993 campaign for the stop on pesticides and the 1997 campaign to ratify the Ottawa Treaty; this section therefore focuses on JVC’s advocacy work since the 2000s, to identify changes in how the organization contests the government’s ODA policies.

JVC currently identifies three pillars in how it seeks to exert influence on MOFA officials and ODA policy-making. First, instead of directly lobbying the government,

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<sup>172</sup> Japan International Volunteer Center, “Information About JVC,” <http://www.ngojvc.net/en/aboutjvc.html> (9 July 2012).

<sup>173</sup> Japan International Volunteer Center, “Kaikai Houkou” (Budget Report) <http://www.ngojvc.net/jp/aboutjvc/finance.html> (7 July 2012).

<sup>174</sup> Japan International Volunteer Center, “Kaikai Houkou” (Budget Report) <http://www.ngojvc.net/jp/aboutjvc/finance.html> (7 July 2012).

JVC now advocates its position on ODA through participation in the recurring government-NGO meetings and raises opinions with MOFA officials. JVC's policy advisers usually attend as many meetings as possible, including those between MOFA or JICA and MOFA and any other meetings on ODA issues. By doing so, the organization takes a greater part in the ODA policy-making process, traditionally dominated by MOFA officials. For example, in a recent meeting (March 2012), JVC urged the government to maintain the ODA budget to at least at the same level as in the previous year and focus on humanitarian work rather than economic development.<sup>175</sup> This was an urgent call in response to the recent announcement made by the Democratic Party, the current leading party in Japan, to reduce the ODA budget by 20% to keep its financial resources for reconstruction after the 2011 earthquake.<sup>176</sup> Three members of JVC argued that it was important to understand the importance of humanitarian assistance and to increase the ODA budget to contribute to rebuilding devastated communities.<sup>177</sup>

Second, another major aspect of JVC's advocacy work involves hosting public forums and NGO networks to enhance public awareness of ODA. In 2008, for example, just before the inauguration of the JICA, the organization managed the ODA Reform Public Forum to look over Japan's ODA as a whole. As the main panellist, JVC invited other NGO members, and MOFA and JICA officials. Similarly, in 2009, JVC held

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<sup>175</sup> Japan NGO Center for International Co-operation, "Saishin Kyusai/Fukkouto Sekaino Hinkonkaisyou no Ryoritu no Tameni ODA Yosan no Ijiwo Tsuyoku Motomemasu," (Demanding the Maintenance of ODA Budget To Cope with Both the World's Poverty Reduction and Japan's Recovery from Earthquake," (April 15, 2011), [http://www.janic.org/mt/pdf/oda\\_joint\\_statement.pdf](http://www.janic.org/mt/pdf/oda_joint_statement.pdf) (30 June 2012).

<sup>176</sup> Yomiuri Online, "Koukyou Jigyou ni Ittyou Nisen Kyuhyakuokuen Kakuho... Ichiji Hosei An" (Saving \$129 Million for Public Infrastructure... the First Draft," (April 12, 2011). <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/feature/20110316-866918/news/20110411-OYTIT01169.htm> (24 June 2012).

<sup>177</sup> Japan NGO Center for International Co-operation, "Saishin Kyusai/Fukkouto Sekaino Hinkonkaisyou no Ryoritu no Tameni ODA Yosan no Ijiwo Tsuyoku Motomemasu," (Demanding the Maintenance of ODA Budget To Cope with Both the World's Poverty Reduction and Japan's Recovery from Earthquake".

another ODA Reform Public Forum to discuss Japan's ODA effectiveness and raised the following concerns: (1) Japan's ODA is used as an instrument of diplomacy and the close ties with private corporations focus on the prosperity of the Japanese economy rather than on poverty reduction in aid-recipient countries; (2) Japan contributes only 0.18% of GNI to ODA and the total amount has decreased by 40% in the last decade; (3) only 49% of Japanese ODA is grant aid rather than loans, while on average, DAC countries contribute 89.4% of their total aid as grants.<sup>178</sup>

Third, JVC seeks to exert influence on ODA policy-making by facilitating citizens' participation in policy-making, mainly by holding annual public ODA Policy Council meetings since 2000 to ensure the greater accountability and transparency of ODA.<sup>179</sup> Through these meetings, JVC provides opportunities for citizens to submit topics of their own choosing and come into direct contact with MOFA officials. In the most recent meetings held in March 2011, the public submitted a wide range of topics. They included concerns about: ODA risk management in relation to the use of pesticides for malaria prevention; construction of hydroelectric dams and sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin; ODA and human rights as promoted by DAC countries; and the role of civil society organizations (CSO) in international development.<sup>180</sup>

In short, the tactics used by JVC in its post-2000s advocacy are inherently less aggressive and more active in terms of the frequency and degree of interaction with the

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<sup>178</sup> Japan NGO Center for International Co-operation, "OECD/DAC Enjyo Sinsa Kontento Gaido no Shitsumon ni Taisuru JANIC no Ikensyo," (JANIC's Final Opinion Report on the Inquiry of OECD/DAC Content Guide," [http://www.janic.org/mt/pdf/Statement\(Ja\)-toOECD.pdf](http://www.janic.org/mt/pdf/Statement(Ja)-toOECD.pdf) (23 June 2012).

<sup>179</sup> Japan International Volunteer Center, "Research and Advocacy," <http://www.ngo-jvc.net/en/advocacy.html> (6 July 2012).

<sup>180</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "2011 NGO/Gaimusyo Teiki Kaigi (2011 NGO/MOFA Council Meeting)," [http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shimin/oda\\_ngo/taiwa/oda\\_seikyo\\_10\\_3.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shimin/oda_ngo/taiwa/oda_seikyo_10_3.html) (23 June 2012).

government. The organization now has a more general policy dialogue approach, such as opinion exchange and policy recommendation by participating in formal government-NGO meetings instead of lobbying the government from the outside on a case-by-case basis.

#### **4.2.2. Creating a Viable Actor or Taming Resistance?**

What are the implications of JVC's tactical shift in advocacy work in terms of the relationship with the government and with other Japanese developmental-oriented NGOs seeking to influence ODA policy? Based on the tactical shift in advocacy work, as seen by JVC's actions, this section analyses some of the advantages and disadvantages of the new forms of engagement with the Japanese government.

One aspect of the increased institutionalized communication venue is that JVC can now seek to influence the general direction of official aid policy at its root (the level of decision-making), rather than responding to problems long after the decisions have been made. Arguably, this change has increased JVC's ability to challenge the state monopoly over the processes and policies concerning ODA. In fact, scholars such as Hirata argue that the capacity of NGOs to induce policy change largely depends on their ability to engage with state officials. They also argue that, while access to state officials does not necessarily guarantee policy impact, "accelerating mutual understanding through dialogue is one of the most important conditions for NGOs to be able to change aid policy."<sup>181</sup> In this regard, JVC has gained consultative status with the Japanese government authorities. Hirata describes the status of JVC as follows: "[Even] though

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<sup>181</sup> Hirata, "Whither the Developmental State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making," 22.

JVC is outspoken about its opposition to Japanese infrastructure-based aid, MOFA has thus far been willing to work with the group, partly because of the influence of the group over other NGOs in Japan.”<sup>182</sup> In this respect, the inclusion of JVC in the government’s official meetings is a major step toward greater participation of Japanese NGOs in ODA decision-making and to potentially achieving a more democratic political system, because it promotes a range of perspectives in policy-making while weakening Japan’s closed and deeply entrenched bureaucratic political system.

While a more institutionalized form of government-NGO communication has granted major NGOs, like JVC, something of a civil society celebrity status, the ‘invitation-only’ MOFA-NGO meeting system often excludes small NGOs that are less well established. In fact, much of the criticisms about the MOFA-NGO schemes come from small NGOs that feel the current system, especially the MOFA-NGO council meetings, only expanded the bureaucratic circle to include “bourgeois NGOs,” such as JVC, partly to tame the activism of external lobbying and public campaigns of many NGOs in the 1990s.<sup>183</sup>

Moreover, one of the disadvantages for even established NGOs, like JVC, is the increasing financial dependency on the government, which could threaten organizational autonomy in their advocacy activities. As described in the previous section, in 2010, 16% of JVC’s total income was derived from government grants.<sup>184</sup> It may not be a significant amount compared to NGOs such as the Japan Platform, a ‘non-governmental’

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<sup>182</sup> Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Government Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Aid and Development Policy*, 144.

<sup>183</sup> Michio Koyama “Shin Kaigai Borantya Ron” (New Theory of Overseas Assistance and Volunteer” Forthcoming book (atworx: Osaka 2012), chapter 9.

<sup>184</sup> Japan International Volunteer Center, “Kaikai Houkou” (Budget Report).

organization established by the government, but it is important to be cautious about any negative impacts. The impacts could include a weakening of the organization's bargaining power with the government, in the case of strong disagreements with government policy proposals. This situation would make it difficult to engage in aggressive lobbying or launch anti-government campaigns, such as those of the 1980s and 1990s. State funding ensures that JVC maintains a diplomatic relationship with the government, which could limit the organization's bargaining power and autonomy while giving it the appearance of being able to play a larger role.

While some weaknesses of JVC's post-2000 modes of advocacy work are apparent, it is too early to tell if the organization is being tamed by the government or has an increasing capacity to resist and influence ODA policy. JVC's shift in advocacy tactics is *one example* of some of the emerging NGOs that have begun to act as government watch-dogs.

### **4.3. Small NGOs and their Emerging Presence**

Established NGOs such as JVC are participating more regularly in government-NGO bodies in their efforts to influence policy-making. Nevertheless, how do the small NGOs, which are often excluded from the institutionalized government-NGO bodies, seek to exert influence on ODA policy-making? This last section of the chapter examines Mekong Watch, a small-sized NGO that has developed an alternative approach for influencing the government's ODA policy.

#### **4.3.1. Mekong Watch**

Mekong Watch offers important insights into Japanese NGO advocacy work outside the institutionalized MOFA-NGO arrangement. Mekong Watch is an

associational member of JVC, but with a crucial difference: Mekong Watch rarely participates in MOFA-NGO council meetings and is operationally and financially independent from the government. Nonetheless, small NGOs, like Mekong Watch, are important because they also play a significant role in challenging the government's ODA policy. Specifically, Mekong Watch gives a voice to the people of aid-recipient countries who are under-represented in Japan's decision-making.

### ***Brief History, Organizational Goal and Funding Structure***

Originally established in 1993 as a member of a coalition of eight Japanese organizations, including JVC, Mekong Watch gained legal status and became an independent organization in 2003.

Mekong Watch's primary goal is to promote sustainability in the Mekong River Basin, particularly in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, where the Japanese government has been heavily involved in accelerating economic development. Since the mid-1960s, the Japanese government, often in collaboration with the Asia Development Bank (ADB) has built 29 dams in the Mekong River Basin; 13 additional dams are under construction.<sup>185</sup> The dams already in place are blocking fish from travelling upstream to spawn, and the new dams, many of which will sit nearer the river's headwaters, could threaten the entire river ecosystem. The damage to the ecosystem of the Mekong would not only result in the loss of the second largest area of biodiversity in the world, but also affect the lives of 65 million people who depend on the river for their sustenance and livelihood. In fact,

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<sup>185</sup> Mekong River Commission (MRC), "Basin Planning," <http://mrcmekong.mrcdev.info/topics/basin-planning/> (6 May 2012).

about 80% of the people's protein intake comes from the river's fisheries.<sup>186</sup> Moreover, most of these people, many of whom are members of ethnic minorities, face dislocation due to dam construction, often without adequate compensation.

Mekong Watch is a typical Japanese NGO in terms of its size of membership, which consists of seven Tokyo-based permanent staff members.<sup>187</sup> The organization is affiliated with 40 local NGOs and community groups in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. It helps with research into the local ecosystem and advocates against the destructive aspects of large-scale infrastructure development projects led by the Japanese government.<sup>188</sup>

Mekong Watch differs from JVC and many other Japanese NGOs in terms of its high degree of financial independence from the government. It has a budget of approximately ¥39 million (US\$ 390,000). In 2010, funding was derived from service and sales (7%); membership and contributions (3%); Japanese foundations (38%); and overseas foundations (52%).<sup>189</sup> Some of the eight major private organizations that have become particularly strong sponsors are the Charles Stewart Foundation (US), the Open Society Foundation (US), Oxfam Australia, Mitsui & Co. Ltd. (Japan), and AEON Environmental Foundation (Japan).<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Mekong River Commission "The Mekong Basin" <http://www.mrcmekong.org/the-mekong-basin/> (22 March 2012).

<sup>187</sup> Mekong Watch, "About Mekong Watch," <http://www.mekongwatch.org/about/index.html> (30 June 2012).

<sup>188</sup> Mekong Watch, "About Mekong Watch"

<sup>189</sup> Mekong Watch, "Kekka Houkoku, Yoson, Kessan," (Outcome Report, Organizational Budget and Report), <http://www.mekongwatch.org/about/report.html> (29 June 2012).

<sup>190</sup> Mekong Watch, "Partner," <http://www.mekongwatch.org/about/partner.html> (24 June 2012).

*Mekong Watch's Advocacy Work: Research and Advocacy*

Mekong Watch's approach is unique in that it combines investigative research and advocacy work to incorporate the voices of people affected by Japanese-financed development projects in the policy formation process. The purpose is to make it more democratic and ensure more socially and environmentally responsible ODA. For this reason, Mekong Watch's work often involves ethnological research in collaboration with local NGOs and community groups. For example, in one of the most recent field research projects, Mekong Watch conducted investigative research on the Kok-Ing-Nan Water Diversion Project, an example of a JICA-led project that provoked massive local protests. With the full financial support of the Japan Trust for Global Environment and consultative support from Thai NGOs, especially Salween Watch and Assembly of the Poor, Mekong Watch conducted a three-year research program on the social and environmental impacts of the water diversion project. Together, they developed several issue analysis reports, which were submitted to the JICA-NGO meetings to establish a new JICA Environmental Guideline in 2003.<sup>191</sup>

Unlike JVC, whose method of advocacy has become institutionalized with government officials, Mekong Watch takes a creative, grassroots approach in its advocacy work. In the most recent policy proposal submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in December 2011, Mekong Watch urged the Japanese government to halt the Xayaburi dam project, one of the ongoing hydroelectric dam projects in Lao People's Republic. Prior to this recommendation, the organization had conducted a year-long field

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<sup>191</sup> Mekong Watch, "JICA Kanyo/Syakai Hairyo Gaidorain Kaisei to Mekong Watch," (JICA Environment and Social Guideline Revision and Mekong Watch), [http://www.mekongwatch.org/activity/policy/jica-eg\\_eg\\_mw.html](http://www.mekongwatch.org/activity/policy/jica-eg_eg_mw.html) (14 June 2012).

research with monitoring, benefit-cost sensitivity analysis, and ethnographical research. The findings estimated that the damage from dam construction on the Lower Mekong River Basin would cause the loss of over 40 species and over US\$ 500,000 in aquaculture industry.<sup>192</sup> The organization distributed a documentary film made in 2003 about the project, called “Experience Sharing among Villagers to Prevent Deterioration of the Ecosystem in the Mekong River Basin” to stress the negative effects of dams on the ecosystem and the lives of people. A small-scale but powerful grassroots-level project such as this provides opportunity to reach out not only to MOFA officials but to a larger audience.

The major advantage of Mekong Watch’s advocacy work is its financial and operational autonomy from the government. The autonomy allows the organization to determine its own issue areas and conduct investigative research, though on a small scale, in confronting the Japanese government about the detrimental effects of its development projects. Moreover, Mekong Watch’s strong grassroots ties with local NGOs of Japanese ODA recipient countries helps to bridge the communication gap between the affected communities and the policy-makers in Tokyo, thereby promoting democratic policy-making in ODA. Although engaging in direct policy dialogue with MOFA is important, through grassroots-level work, practical insights can be put into operation to improve the quality of ODA. The Japanese general public has a dramatically different attitude toward small NGOs, such as Mekong Watch, whose members are seen as selfless and sincere, compared to the politicians and bureaucrats who are perceived to be tainted with

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<sup>192</sup> Mekong Watch, “Mekong Gawa Karyu Honryu Damu Keikaku heno Nihon Seifuno Taiouni Kansuru Shinsei,” (A request upon the reaction of the Japanese government Regarding Mekong Lower and Main River Dam Projects), [http://www.mekongwatch.org/PDF/rq\\_FM20111201.pdf](http://www.mekongwatch.org/PDF/rq_FM20111201.pdf) (23 June 2012).

corruption scandals. As a result, the public is more willing to listen to the voice of NGOs and make contributions to their projects, instead of contributing to those managed exclusively by the government.

A major disadvantage with Mekong Watch's work is that it is often limited to revealing the negative effects of government projects in writing, such as policy recommendations, rather than directly and dialogically engaging with government officials in formal meetings and conferences. Also, while the small organizational size may be advantageous in terms of having a more flexible administrative system, compared to the strict hierarchy of large organizations, its size may undermine its capacity to mobilize and lobby against a large bureaucracy such as the government.

One could argue that maintaining a robust organizational network to increase bargaining power with the target audience is a key element for successful counter-hegemonic actions. Perhaps the most effective short-term strategy for small Japanese NGOs, like Mekong Watch, would be to form a coalition group, both inside and especially outside Japan, to compensate for the lack of fiscal and human resources. To do so, the organization must manage its scarce financial resources and attend conferences, seminars, and symposia to network with other transnational development organizations and with private foundations that are willing to support NGO advocacy activities.

#### **4.4. The Future of NGO Advocacy Work**

This chapter has explored how, despite the institutionalized relationship between NGOs involved in ODA and the government, some development-focused NGOs, such as JVC and Mekong Watch, have been able to challenge the government's policy, approach, priorities for ODA, and in some cases, actually shift the policy and development

discourse. What do these cases imply, in terms of the position of NGOs in ODA policy-making and broader Japanese politics?

On one hand, the work of JVC and Mekong Watch represent a few emerging trends and are by no means representative of the general Japanese NGO community. Similarly, the effects of the growing collaboration with MOFA and its impact on NGO advocacy must be monitored and open to critique, as it could undermine the greater role that NGOs could play in ODA policy-making.

On the other hand, the emergence of advocacy-oriented NGOs such as JVC and Mekong Watch offers some empirical evidence and a degree of optimism about the prospects for the continued growth of NGO influence in ODA policy-making. Despite the shift in tactics used in advocacy work, and the increasingly institutionalized government-NGO relations, progressive NGOs such as JVC continue to offer important alternative perspectives to the government's ODA. Moreover, small but autonomous NGOs, like Mekong Watch, with an emerging role as a policy advisor to the government and to the people of countries receiving Japan's ODA, illustrate the importance of NGOs as a bridge between policy-makers and citizens. To varying degrees, JVC and Mekong Watch represent the growing presence of NGOs as influential political actors in ODA policy-making.

JVC and Mekong Watch's advocacy work has further implication in broader Japanese politics. By challenging the hegemonic discourse and practices of the government's ODA – economic infrastructure-based projects such as the construction of hydroelectric dams and inherently bureaucratic decision-making processes – JVC and Mekong Watch pose an emerging form of resistance to the Japanese government and its

bureaucratic political system. Through their institutionalized role, JVC and Mekong Watch are beginning to act as government watchdogs, not only with regards to ODA, but optimistically moving towards forming some counter-hegemony against Japan's traditional bureaucratic politics.

## **Chapter 5. Conclusion: Japanese NGOs at a Crossroads**

Through the empirical study of the Japanese government-NGO relationship in ODA, this thesis has examined both modes of civil society: supporting state hegemony and dissenting from it. As a result, examining the relatively new and under-examined issue provides a more nuanced understanding of state-civil society relations in Japan.

While ODA is meant to serve the economic development and social welfare of recipient countries, it has often been made to serve the interests of the donor state, even at the expense of its official purpose. NGOs have become complicit in this process by being co-opted into the mechanisms of state power. As a consequence, this produces partnerships between the government and the NGOs that risk reducing NGOs to a thinly veiled branch of Japanese foreign policy in pursuit of regional economic interests. Nevertheless, some NGOs, such as JVC and Mekong Watch, have rallied to resist and challenge the hegemonic discourse of the government's undemocratic ODA policies and practices that exclude the people who are most affected and often cause more harm than good.

A Gramscian perspective, which treats the state and civil society as a field of contention between hegemony and counter-hegemony, is useful in the understanding of the potentially contradictory role of NGOs. The NGOs are not merely tools to be manipulated by the state in pursuing its own agenda, nor do they operate independently and autonomously. Framed in this way, we can recognize the dangers faced by NGOs in becoming too deeply integrated with government interests. We can also appreciate the importance of continuing to resist Japan's powerful bureaucratic state institutions, while moving towards more democratic and open politics.

Of course, the relationship between the Japanese government and NGOs in ODA cannot simply be described as either co-operation (co-optation) or confrontation. This thesis did not intend to propose a dichotomous classification for the Japanese government-NGO relation. Rather, the sphere of civil society must be understood as a spectrum where both kinds of players, state and civil society (in this case, MOFA and NGOs) manoeuvre for advantage in a clash of interests, norms, and values. The outcome is a complex mixture of varying degrees of co-operation and competition. Also, by restricting the focus of this thesis to Japanese NGOs, no attempt was made to analyse broader elements of civil society activism across a range of political issues. Development aid represents only one component of civil society activism in Japan.

While the relationship between MOFA and NGOs is evolving, the friction between the two will likely persist, because of the fundamental differences in how they approach the provision of development aid. NGOs argue that aid should first benefit the people in the recipient countries, before benefiting Japanese interest groups or government agencies. In contrast, MOFA officials, in striving to consolidate their own power base in the government, often put the ministry at odds with the views of NGOs.

In summary, Japanese NGOs are at a crossroads. Despite their growing number and increased recognition by the government, their small size, funding dependencies, and weak bargaining power leave them in a vulnerable position in relation to the government. Yet, one must be hopeful. If Gramsci was right about the dual tendencies of civil society, then existing modes of repression will continue to produce creative forms of resistance in the pursuit of more sustainable and democratic aid and development. Consequently, the inclination would be to encourage and celebrate the ongoing emergence of civil society-

NGO work as it evolves in Japan and around the world.

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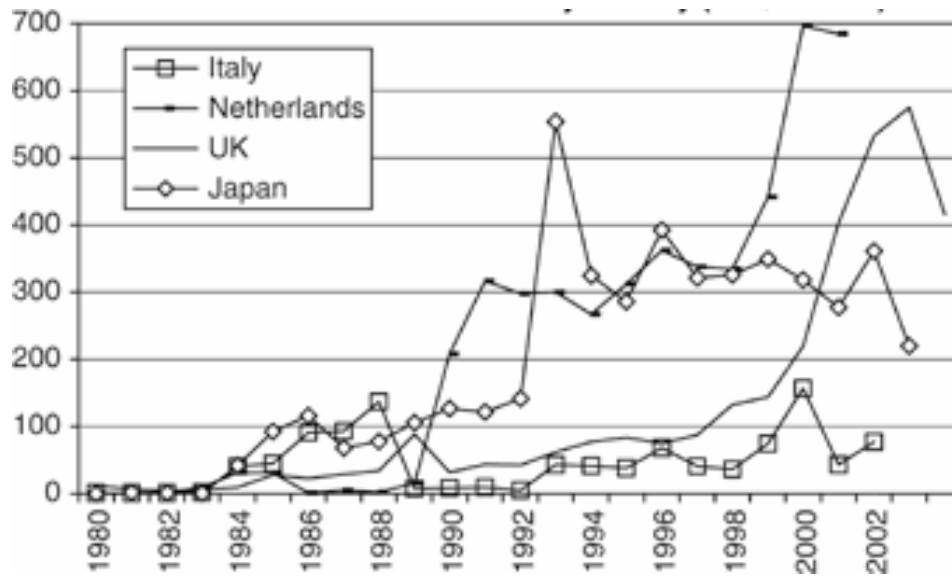
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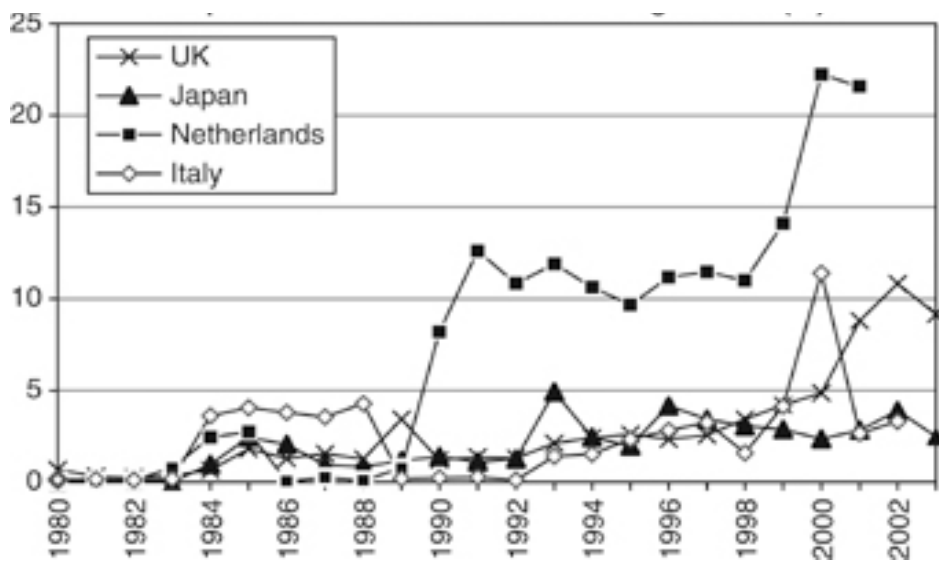
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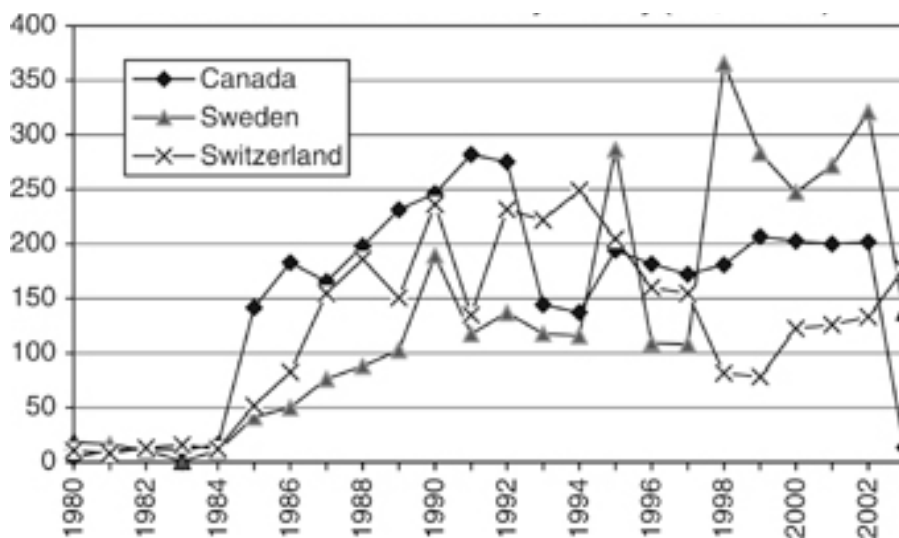
**Appendix 1. Net Disbursements to NGOs by Country:  
Italy, Netherlands, the UK, and Japan (US\$ millions)**



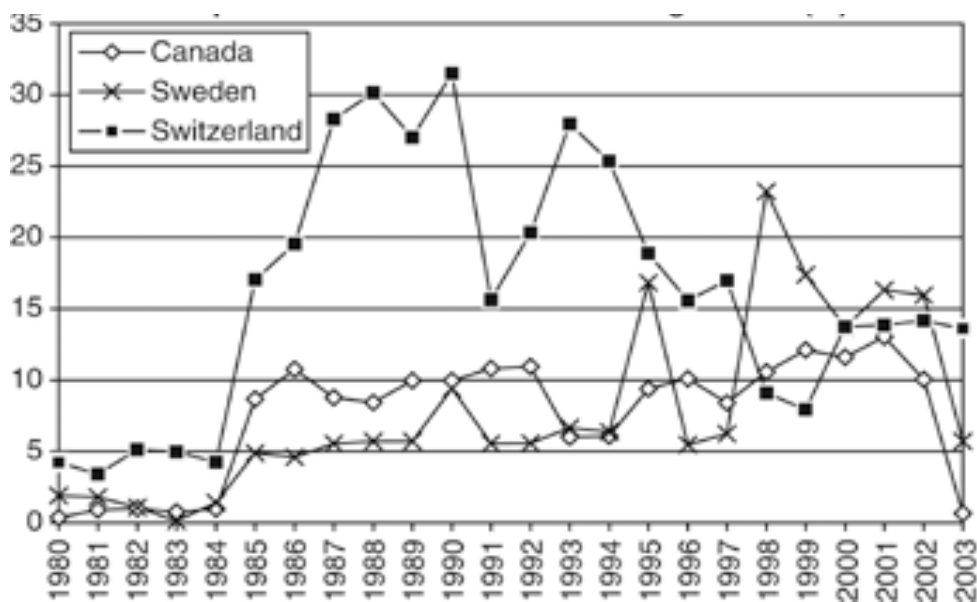
**Proportion of ODA Channelled through NGOs (%)**



## Appendix 2. Net Disbursements to NGOs by Country: Canada, Sweden, and Switzerland (US\$ millions)



## Proportion of ODA Channelled through NGOs (%)



Source: Catherine Agg, "Trends in Government Support for Non-Governmental Organizations Is the 'Golden Age' of the NGO Behind Us?" *Civil Society and Social Movement Programme Paper*, no. 23 (June 2006): 18-20.