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Managing international cooperation projects for organizational capacity-building: a design-focused case study of the Egypt–Japan University of Science and Technology*

A mainstream view about development is that becoming a successful society depends on strengthening a society's organizations. This claim is not as banal as it may appear out of context. Fifteen years ago, this idea was put forward in challenging mainstream development thinking, which had held that economic progress depended on solving technical challenges – for example, in expanding irrigation and treating disease – on monumental scales and diverse circumstances. This earlier paradigmatic belief was put into question on the basis that succeeding in solving technical challenges on the scale required depended on factors that were organizational and administrative in kind: factors such as marshalling stable political support within the governmental system, the structuring of careers, and the efficient management of resources. This line of argument was summed up in terms of organizational capability being a fundamental enabling factor in development. The view that organizational capability is important to successful societies and their development has become self-evident, but is no less significant for that.¹

The debate just summarized was instigated, transpired, and resolved in the institutional realm of development cooperation.² Given this context, the debate's resolution implied that building organizational capacity ought to become part of the intent of international cooperation projects whose mechanism-features include technical assistance. This implication was rationally straightforward; its further practical implications have been less so.

Over the past decade, experience has been gained with international

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cooperation projects that make organizational capacity development central to their intent. By way of illustration, Japan's institutions and instruments for international cooperation have been used in projects to strengthen the higher education sectors of partner countries, especially in the realm of technology and engineering; and those efforts have included the intent of building organizational capacity in universities.³ A specific illustration of Japan's organization-strengthening higher education projects led to the founding and successful startup of a stand-alone university specializing in engineering research and post-graduate education in Egypt. These experiences are among those that offer the prospect of bringing to light the implications of a policy stance in favor of including organizational capacity development in the function and specific intent of international cooperation projects.

Turning this prospect of deeper understanding into reality involves research. A suitable form of research about international cooperation projects is the case study. This chapter reports on a research case study in which the empirical phenomenon includes Japan's support for establishing the Egypt–Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST). The support from Japan was orchestrated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Its partners in Japan included Tokyo Institute of Technology, Waseda University, Kyoto University, Kyushu University and Ritsumeikan University. The partner in Egypt was E-JUST and its sponsors in the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. As an empirical phenomenon, the establishment of E-JUST was a lengthy episode in which the process was first formalized in 2006. The implementation phase of Japan's project to support E-JUST's establishment began in 2009. The university has been up and running – though in provisional facilities – since 2010. The E-JUST–JICA–Japanese universities partnership remains intact and operating nearly a decade after its inception.

In broad terms, the aim of the case study is to clarify the implications of including organizational capacity-building within the intent of international cooperation projects. However, as “clarify the implications” is not itself a clear idea, somewhat more needs to be said by way of preliminaries to this chapter's report on the E-JUST case study.

The intent of the chapter is to advance professional knowledge about organization-strengthening international cooperation projects. As a general matter, professional knowledge is rational, empirically-grounded argumentation about purposeful phenomena.⁴ In intent, professional knowledge has intelligence-value at the point where professional practitioners encounter situations that require problem-solving in the service of better realization of intent.⁵

Advancing professional knowledge about purposeful phenomena has much in common with research conducted in social scientific disciplines.⁶ For example, theorizing is involved in advancing either disciplinary or professional knowledge. Some of the same aspirational standards apply: such as closely integrating ideas recruited from differing sources and keeping track of how lines of argument run from theory to case analysis and back again to theory. Another similarity between advancing disciplinary and professional knowledge is that explanatory

research arguments about cases need to engage with ideas about causation that have clear meanings within identifiable traditions of social science research.⁷

Nevertheless, there are some dissimilarities, as well, because, unlike disciplinary knowledge, professional knowledge is meant to have intelligence-value in the professional practice of problem-solving. Accordingly, theorizing about purposeful phenomena includes arguments about mainstream or alternative doctrines about intent, function, and design. Another difference is that case analyses can have intelligence-value, without them being used to make empirical generalizations, *as cases*, provided they are well-theorized and well-argued.

This chapter reports on the case study of the Egypt–Japan University of Science and Technology. It introduces the empirical phenomenon of E-JUST’s coming to be established with Japanese support and partnership. It develops a direction for purposive theorizing about such projects. It provides a detailed analysis of a feature of this project – known as the Strategic TV Conference. This case-within-the-case is offered up as a design-precedent⁸ that might be considered when partners in an international cooperation project become concerned about how deficits in organizational capability will be a limiting factor on their project’s success, where the intent includes but is not limited to organization-strengthening.

Establishing E-JUST: the empirical phenomenon (2006–2009)

From the beginning of 2005, Japanese and Egyptian government officials engaged in increasingly serious bi-lateral diplomatic discussions over Japan’s prospective support for planning and establishing a research-intensive technological university in Egypt. In March 2006, the Government of Egypt and the Government of Japan announced that plans were afoot to establish such a university, namely, the Egypt–Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST). In substance, the idea of E-JUST included adapting what was seen from Egypt as Japan’s successful model of post-graduate technological education and engineering research. The Japanese model included “lab-based education.” The idea that E-JUST would include the Japanese learning system for engineering meant that the project would have to involve Japan’s universities.

The mechanism that the Japanese government would use in supporting E-JUST’s establishment was a technical cooperation project. Accordingly, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the government’s executive arm for Japanese Official Development Assistance, took the lead on behalf of the Japanese Government in 2006. Not much later, Egypt’s minister of higher education set up a formal Advisory Committee on the Establishment of the Egypt–Japan University of Science and Technology.

When this advisory committee was formed in 2006, Professor Ahmed Abou-Ismael of Assiut University, in Upper Egypt, became its secretary-general. Unusually for Egyptian engineering academics, Abou-Ismael had earned his doctorate in Japan, at Tokyo Tech. Another committee member was Professor Ahmed B. Khairy. At the time, Professor Khairy was on leave from the faculty of engineering of Alexandria University, serving in Cairo as a First Undersecretary

of the Ministry of Higher Education, overseeing cultural affairs and scholarships for the country's entire higher education system. In parallel, Khairy was involved in reforming Egypt's Academy of Science and Technology.

In addition to Abou-Ismaïl and Khairy, the Advisory Committee's membership included other engineering professors in Egypt. Two of them were early-career engineering academics who had earned their PhDs outside Egypt: Dr. Amr El Tawil and Dr. Ahmed El Mahdy. Both had returned to Egypt to join the engineering faculty at Alexandria University. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee included a few industrialists, including Engineer Amir Wassef, owner of Unitel, as E-JUST was envisioned to collaborate with Egyptian firms in engineering design projects.

The true kick-off event for joint project preparation was a three-day conference held in Tokyo in mid-April 2007. The conference included site visits to Tokyo Tech and Waseda University. The meeting's immediate product was a "results of discussions" report. It led off with a list of envisioned core attributes of E-JUST: being a governmental university based on the spirit of partnership between Egypt and Japan; being a research-oriented and graduate-focused university; and having the Japanese way of problem-based education and laboratory-based research. The report was specific about the target areas for developing research and graduate education: by way of illustration, these included micro mechatronics, robotics and medical robots in one area; and electronic and digital communication engineering and network security, in another area. The report took a firm view that the best location for E-JUST and its campus would be near Alexandria, in New Borg Al-Arab City, in an area that included a cluster of technology-oriented companies and that was anchored by the region's new airport.

It took time for the next major steps to ensue. In February 2008, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs convened a meeting with the presidents of 12 leading Japanese universities, formally requesting that they participate in the E-JUST endeavor as part of the Japanese University Supporting Consortium (JSUC) for E-JUST. In April representatives from these universities, the MOFA and JICA visited Egypt to conduct a first project preparatory mission. In July 2008, Egypt's Ministry of Higher Education announced the formation of an Executive Committee for the project to establish E-JUST. The role of advisory committee secretary-general was supplanted by the role of committee chairman. Professor Khairy was appointed to this role.

By August 2008, the planning work for E-JUST by the Joint Preliminary Study Team was well advanced. The draft Record of Discussions outlined the responsibilities of the Egyptian government, which included the provision of Egyptian administrative personnel. It also defined the measures to be taken by JICA, such as dispatching Japanese experts to Egypt, providing the machinery and equipment for the new university, and training the Egyptian personnel in Japan.⁹ The draft Record of Discussions also included a master plan and a Project Design Matrix (PDM), a comprehensive document that specified the main goals, indicators and means of verification. In September 2008, the Egyptian Cabinet

formally approved the establishment of E-JUST. In October 2008, a ceremony was held in Tokyo to celebrate the signature of the final Record of Discussions.

At the point where the technical assistance project was approved, the blueprint for E-JUST's formal organization was elaborately detailed for academic staff and their grouping into departments and larger units engaged in education and research. In comparison to the institutional blueprint for E-JUST's "operating core" and "middle line,"¹⁰ the one for its "superstructure" was sketchy, with only two definite features. First, the strategic apex would consist in the role of university president. Second, there would be a management board known as the university council, headed by the university president. There was no plan to form a major unit of the superstructure headed by an administrative professional called the university's "secretary-general," a standard organizational feature of Egypt's public universities. The secretary-general role's absence from the institutional blueprint reflected the advisory committee's wider view that E-JUST should *not* replicate patterns of governance found in the country's public universities.

During early 2009, E-JUST's superstructure consisted in an acting university council, headed by Professor Khairy as its chairman. The acting-status was to persist until the envisioned Board of Trustees for E-JUST was put into place and began to function. The acting university council was organized into committees, along the same lines as the sub-committees of the executive committee. There was also considerable continuity in personnel.

During the first half of 2009, JICA's support for E-JUST's establishment transitioned from the task of project preparation to that of project implementation. The E-JUST start-up team included JICA's own newly formed project team. As presented, the team leader's role was to be the chief adviser to the chairman of the acting university council. The individual chosen for the role was Dr. Tsunoda, who was to be dispatched to Egypt as a long-term expert.

In June 2009, a project monitoring mission was dispatched by JICA Headquarters to Alexandria, at the six-month milestone point. The mission was carried out by a two-person team: the head of the higher education team in JICA's Human Resource Development Department, Mr. Ko Goto, and Professor Chitoshi Miki. The mission took place in the face of strong signals that it was impractical to start-up E-JUST's educational activities beginning in September 2009. In the course of the review, acting university council members pointed to urgency in resolving a range of issues, in order for the university to begin operations and get on its feet as an institution. The main issues included: staffing of core subject teaching, policy and procedures for selecting academic staff selection on a merit basis; financial plans, both short- and medium-term; recruitment and selection of staff for non-academic roles; and selection of Board of Trustees members and plans for its organizing meeting.

During the review, Dr. Tsunoda took the view that more needed to be done by the Japanese partners to support E-JUST's acting university council. More specifically, he proposed the establishment of a meeting system for coordination, involving JICA, the Japanese universities active in both JSUC and the technical assistance project, and the members of E-JUST's acting University council. This

suggestion was favorably received by Professor Miki and Mr. Goto. It was recognized that if Japanese universities were to be involved in the meeting system, their consortium for E-JUST would need to establish a specific working group for this purpose. Following the review, Professor Miki took this forward with his JSUC colleagues. Shortly thereafter, a plan for holding coordination meetings by teleconference on a regular, monthly basis was proposed to Professor Khairy, as chairman of E-JUST’s acting university council; he accepted the proposal.

The first meeting was held in October 2009, under the chairmanship of Shuji Hashimoto, by then Provost of Waseda University. As for E-JUST, the participant-members included the acting University Council. Participants from JICA’s Human Resource Development Department included the E-JUST project team members stationed in Alexandria and Higher Education team members based in Tokyo. JSUC was represented by its five-member Strategic Working Group, including Professor Hashimoto and Professor Miki. The Coordination Meeting – later called the Strategic TV Conference – thus had full coverage of the E-JUST superstructure, the JSUC Strategic Working Group, and the JICA E-JUST team.

The monthly meeting cycle came to exhibit a stable pattern (see Figure 7.1). Before the TV Conference, SWG members, JICA and E-JUST had a pre-meeting and confirmed the agenda. When they held the conference, starting from the confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting, the discussion proceeded through topics and issues according to the agenda. The conference acted to assign tasks for follow-up in a future meeting. After the meeting, the points of the discussion were documented and confirmed among participants.

The first meeting discussed the formation of nine working groups, established

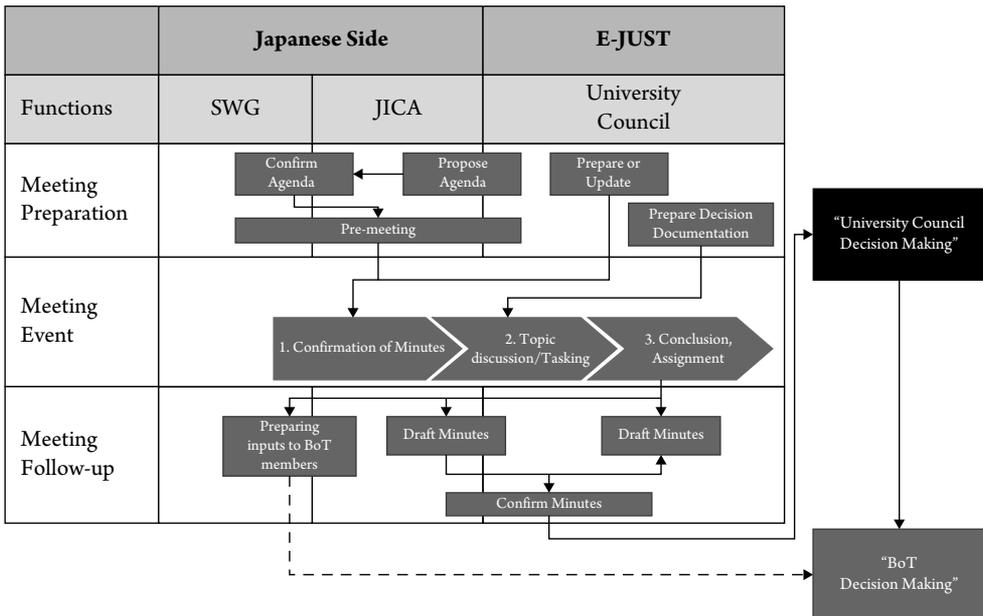


Figure 7.1 Swim lane diagram of the Japan–E-JUST Strategic TV Conference

on an interim basis, for the Soft-Opening phase. In addition, some issues for university management, such as setting up acting University Council, organizational chart and financial plan of 2009 were also discussed. The TV conference meeting was then held four times with open-ended discussions, before the first Board of Trustees meeting in February 2010.

Theorizing problems of management in international development cooperation projects

The case of E-JUST provides illustrative evidence for this chapter's central premise: namely, that management is a functional necessity of international development cooperation projects.¹¹ Elaborating this management-in-international-cooperation-projects premise involves movement along two pathways. Along the first pathway, the task is to characterize *international development projects* in a way that allows for a discussion of management-related necessities. Along the second pathway, the task is to identify appropriate lines of theorizing about *management*. As we will see, the two pathways intersect.

What a development cooperation project *is* depends on the style of theorizing. Here the style is purposive and design-oriented. Viewed from stratospheric heights, international development cooperation projects generically consist in a "triad"¹² of mechanisms. One element of the triad is self-evident: the project through which support for a partner organization is delivered. As technical assistance is a major feature of such projects, we call this part of the triad a "technical assistance project." In the E-JUST case, this feature was JICA's technical assistance project to support the establishment of E-JUST. Another element of the triad is almost as self-evident: it's the partner organization, in this case, E-JUST. A third element of the triad is the nexus to which a project's various key stakeholders belong. In indicative terms, the partners belonging to the Japan/Egypt/E-JUST partnership-nexus were JICA's Human Resource Development Department, leaders of the universities most active in the technical assistance project in support of E-JUST's establishment, Egypt's minister of international cooperation and its minister of higher education and scientific research, and Executive Committee for the establishment of E-JUST and its successor, the superstructure within E-JUST's organizational configuration. In sum, an international development cooperation project is a development-project-triad, a unified functioning whole made up of a technical assistance project, a partner organization, and a partnership-nexus.

Having sketched and formalized the idea of development-project-triads, let us now move along the pathway on management, before reaching the junction where the idea of *management* will intersect with the *development-project-triad* idea. Along this second pathway, there are many riches to sample, even within the genre of purposive, design-oriented theorizing. Henri Fayol's way of theorizing what he called "enterprises," in the classic volume, *General and Industrial Management*,¹³ belongs to this genre. Fayol's theorizing adopted usual placeholders for the intent of commercial enterprises. Fayol focused on necessities that are inherent in any enterprise and, in that sense, are uniform across all enterprises.

He implicitly likened the idea of an enterprise's necessities to the idea that any type of organism has functions that need to be performed for it to survive and thrive.¹⁴ Accordingly, he phrased the idea of an enterprise's necessities as its functions. We can refer to them as functional necessities. Under this direction of theorizing, an enterprise will fall short of whatever intent on which it fixes in the event that any of its functional necessities is not satisfied. The items on Fayol's original list of functional necessities were technical, commercial, accounting, financial, security, and management.¹⁵

Fayol held that management is a functional necessity of enterprises. (The less compact version of the idea is that organizations are mechanisms for realization of the intent of enterprises, and management is a functional necessity of organizations.) Fayol's management-function was a gestalt-concept in that the meaning of its elements was tied to the pattern of which they were a part.¹⁶ As a list, the elements of management included planning, directing, coordination, and controlling. The gestalt-like character of the concept is easily seen. If planning does not lead to the making of decisions that direct the organization to be guided by some plans, then the function of management will not have been adequately carried out. If directing is not supported by some systematic use of information and accumulated intelligence, then, again, the performance of the management function will be deficient. If plans do not exist, then there would be no clear basis for performing the controlling function, and it would be much harder to coordinate, as well.

We have come full-circle, back to the premise with which this section began: namely, that management is a functional necessity of international development cooperation projects, when the specific intent includes capacity-building in the partner-organization. But now it should be clearer what the statement means, particularly as the terms "functional necessity" and "intent" had not been discussed beforehand. Further, international development cooperation projects have been described as development-project-triads. The result is that the original premise can be re-stated thus: management is a functional necessity of *development-project-triads*, no less so when the intent includes organization-strengthening. For the sake of complete clarity, the explicit rational argument¹⁷ behind this premise has the form of a syllogism and runs as follows:

Major premise: Management is a functional necessity for any enterprise.

Minor premise: Development-project-triads are enterprises.

Conclusion: Management is a functional necessity of development-project-triads.¹⁸

Our theorizing journey has not only come full circle, but the ground on which these ideas rest is also more fully apparent. A simple extension of this theorizing is to presume that what is true of the development-project-triad as-a-whole is also true of each of its elements, with the implication being that management is a functional necessity of a triad's technical assistance project, its partner-organization, and its partnership-nexus. Given what management means in this context, this statement leads to the idea that planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling are presumably involved in each element of the whole.

Purposive, design-oriented theorizing about organizations sometimes point to abstract scenarios where something goes wrong with the organization-as-mechanism, so that it falls further short of its intent than would otherwise be the case. Such scenarios are known as “traps.” A famous example of a trap in the management is the competency trap.¹⁹ The basic idea of this trap is that there is a robust tendency for organizations and their members to get better and better at tasks that are similar to each other, which will make the organization better than other organizations in relation to doing that spectrum of things. However, it may turn out that being good at that spectrum of things will not translate into business success for “ego,” because organizations doing other things (“alters”) have out-competed “ego” in the industry context. Traps are pragmatic ideas: they suggest dilemmas that might be a route to insight²⁰ and ultimately more intelligent decisions and practices.²¹

With that in mind, consider the well-established critique that technical assistance projects, in the interest of their intent being realized, tended to make participants in the recipient country quite dependent on the development agency’s dispatched technical experts. Call this the *TA-dependency trap*, with TA plainly being a reference to technical assistance. A question to ponder is whether a scenario similar to the TA-dependency trap is inherent in projects with an organization-strengthening intent. The dynamic might be that the overall development-project-triad is so keen for the partner-organization to be successful that, in the face of deficiencies in the latter, the “mechanism” for performing the partner-organization’s management function increasingly lies in other parts of the development-project-triad than the partner-organization. The harmful consequence would presumably be the partner-organization’s overreliance on the other partners. In terms of realizing the intent of organization-strengthening, that consequence would be harmful. Call this the *managerial-dependency trap*.

There are hints of the managerial-dependency trap having been at work in the E-JUST case. However, there is also evidence that JICA staff were sensitive to the practical dilemmas posed by this trap. More interestingly, there is clear evidence of measures taken to ease the dilemma and to neutralize the managerial-dependency trap. Neutralizing the trap involved creative ways of performing the management function for the E-JUST project-triad; it eased the dilemma faced by the partners in the project, and, especially, by JICA.

Structuring problems of management in international development cooperation projects

With all this in mind, let us establish a clear link between this chapter’s purposive, design-oriented theorizing of management within international development cooperation projects and the fact-pattern in the E-JUST case. The general idea is to outline the practical argumentation (and thus instrumental reasoning) behind the problem-solving effort in a clear and compact form. Some theorists of problem-solving label such outlining as problem-structuring.²² Accordingly, what follows is an exercise to structure the problem faced by E-JUST’s Japanese

partners. The exercise involves formalizing the presumptions within a practical argument and then stating practical conclusions that follow from them.²³ To wit:

Premise 1: The E-JUST project-intent includes (a) creating public value through E-JUST's education, research, and joint work with industry and (b) E-JUST becoming a capable organization.

Premise 2: It is rational for the members of the E-JUST partnership-nexus – including Japanese members acting on behalf of JICA and the Japan Supporting University Consortium (JSUC) – to bear responsibility for this project-intent being realized.

Premise 3: E-JUST's functional necessities – among them, technical and management – need to be satisfied adequately if E-JUST's project-intent is to be realized.

Premise 3a: E-JUST's technical-functions – education, research, industrial outreach, student recruitment, student administration, facilities procurement, campus development, laboratory supply and maintenance – need to be performed adequately.

Premise 3b: E-JUST's human resource management, accounting, finance, and security functions need to be performed adequately.

Premise 3c: For E-JUST's technical, human resource, accounting, finance, and security functions to be performed adequately, E-JUST's management-function needs to be performed adequately.

Premise 4: E-JUST's problem-solving activity and decision-making system is the mechanism that performs E-JUST's management function; an aspect of which is the role-structure within E-JUST's organization, especially its superstructure: to be specific, the acting president role and committee system roles.

Conclusion: This line of practical reasoning leads to two practical conclusions:

Conclusion 1 (general): If Japanese partners have reservations or more serious concerns about whether any of E-JUST's functional necessities are being adequately satisfied, it is rational for them to proceed to deal with the problem-situation they have encountered.

Conclusion 2 (specific): If Japanese partners have reservations or serious concerns about E-JUST's management-functions being performed adequately, then it is rational for them to intervene.

The bottom line here is that the Japanese partners in E-JUST considered it rational to intervene with the intent of effectuating the more adequate performance of E-JUST's management-function, specifically within a time-horizon of months, not years. In philosophical terms, the Japanese partners considered they had “conclusive reasons”²⁴ for acting on their intent. However, there's more to problem-structuring than deciding on an agenda. The implication is that a client or designer should state a *problem-solving challenge* in such a way as to effectuate the design activity on which the creation of truly adequate solutions depends.²⁵ Accordingly, what follows is an exercise to state the problem-solving challenge as faced by E-JUST's Japanese partners. To wit:

Problem-situation: As of mid-2009, six months into E-JUST's start-up phase, designs and plans for mechanisms to perform E-JUST's technical functions were

not adequately specified and approved, given the time-scale of plans for start-up. E-JUST could not create public value unless and until the situation changed for the better (given Premise 1).

Problem-diagnosis: Specification and approval of technical-function plans and designs, as a general matter, depend on the management-function being performed; insufficient specification and approval of such plans and designs implies deficiencies in the performance of E-JUST's management-function (given Premise 3).

Decision-dilemma: Japanese partners had reason to intervene to correct the deficiency in the management-function's performance (given Premise 2). However, correcting the deficiency could have the unintended consequence²⁶ of actualizing the managerial-dependency trap, thereby jeopardizing the E-JUST project's organization-strengthening intent. In sum, there was a reason for Japanese partners to intervene (given the situation, diagnosis, and Premise 2) *and* a reason for them not to (given Premise 1b and the theorized managerial-dependency trap). Japanese partners thus faced a decision-dilemma.

Problem-solving challenge: Devise a Japanese partner intervention that corrects E-JUST's management-function deficiency, while keeping the theorized managerial-dependency trap from being actualized to the point of jeopardizing the project's organizational-strengthening intent.

Solving management problems: case analysis preliminaries

Let us now characterize the intervention – the Strategic TV Conference – that came to exist as a response to this problem-solving challenge. The focus here is on the practice itself rather than on the way in which it came onto the scene. In characterizing it, we adopt a well-known conceptual scheme in the program planning and evaluation literature, due to Pawson and Tilley.²⁷ This scheme exemplifies purposive, design-oriented theorizing and case analysis.

In its most compact form, Pawson and Tilley's generic schema for programs was presented symbolically as: $C + M = O$. In this metaphorical arithmetic expression, the letter *O* stands for the idea of "program outcome," though the vocabulary of "program intent" would be more apt. On the left-hand side, the letter *M* stands for the idea of "program mechanism," while the letter *C* stands for the idea of "program's context."

The schema includes only essential elements. If *O* were excluded, the schema would represent what a program consists in, but would not indicate what it is for. Second, if *M* were excluded, the schema would provide no indication of how the program's intent is to be fulfilled. Third, if *C* were excluded, the schema would overlook the effect of program context on what eventuates from a program mechanism's configuration and operation. In sum, this core and compact idea is that the fulfillment of intent is "effectuated"²⁸ by *M* as situated in *C*. In our view, Pawson and Tilley provided a highly serviceable template for developing a *model of the case* that is consistent with the purposive, design-oriented theorization of management in international development cooperation projects that is part and parcel of this study.

As a preliminary point, let us consider how to refer to *M* for purposes of this chapter.²⁹ Two options are self-evident. One is to refer to *M* as the Strategic TV Conference; the other is to stick with *M*. Referring to *M* as the Strategic TV Conference has two merits. First, seeing this word-string presumably makes for a more pleasing reading experience, for this chapter's audience, than seeing the letter *M* repeatedly; and "pleasing" is a reader-response whose importance in academic writing is hard to overstate.³⁰ The second reason is authenticity. The participant-members used this term in referring to the empirical phenomenon we are analyzing in this case study, after having called it the "E-J University Strategic Coordination Meeting" for the first three meetings. However, we wish to avoid the qualitative-research-trap of naturalizing the very phenomenon we are trying to understand.³¹ Repetition of the word-string for the Strategic TV Conference, in the context of this chapter's purposive and design-oriented style of case analysis, could easily lead this naturalizing trap to take hold. We thus face a decision-dilemma and, hence, a reason to seek a third option.

In acting on this reason, what comes first to mind is to identify various aspects of the feature under analysis and present the whole (arbitrarily truncated) list each time reference is being made to the feature. This option would presumably neutralize the qualitative-research-trap of naturalizing the phenomena being studied, but at a high cost in terms of word count and aesthetics. We thus reformulate the dilemma into a problem-solving challenge, that is, to craft of form of words that not only uses the authentic label, Strategic TV Conference, but also reminds the reader that the object of analysis is an empirical phenomenon that relates to what Pawson and Tilley labeled as *M*. A form of words that would satisfy both criteria is the "M-like Strategic TV Conference," which we adopt.

A further set of preliminary remarks concerns *C* in Pawson and Tilley's purposive theorizing scheme. Recall that what effectuates the realization of intent is the *concatenation of context and mechanism*, although Pawson and Tilley rather cheekily portrayed this idea as an additive relation, $C + M$. Given that purposive case analysis pivots around the issue of what gives *M* leverage over *O*, it is difficult to say much that is general about context. However, as we seek to understand what effectuates the realization of intent in the present study, a reasonable "placeholder" for *C* is the development-project triad.

The triad idea points to the partnership-nexus as a context factor, which we will now explore illustratively by focusing on the Japan University Supporting Consortium (JSUC). We take JSUC as a context factor in two senses. First, JSUC was what some sociologists would call a "site for organizing"³² within Japan's university sector. Enough organizing went on at this site – mainly by high-echelon university officials in concert with JICA's Human Development Department – for JSUC's member-universities to become a collective, constitutive part of E-JUST's development-project-triad. In relational and reciprocal fashion, JSUC's status as a constitutive part of the triad endowed certain individuals representing its member-universities with "actor-hood" in the triad.³³

That actor-hood status was contextual vis-à-vis the Strategic TV Conference's mechanism in two senses. First, the actor-hood of Professor Hashimoto and Professor Miki did not arise from the Strategic TV Conference and, to that

extent, the context was autonomous from the mechanism. Second, realization of the Japanese partners' intent depended on the concatenation of the actor-hood of these individuals (*C*), on the one hand, with these biological individuals being participant-members of the meeting (*M*), on the other. Analytically, if JSUC's being part of the triad is viewed in *isolation* from the mechanism features, it is hard to see its significance for the Strategic TV Conference; but if it is viewed in *relation* to the mechanism-features of Professor Hashimoto and Professor Miki's participation, then JSUC's significance is clear and substantial.

In sum, these remarks are preliminary in character, because our immediate intent is to underscore the point that the analysis of the E-JUST case, and specifically the Strategic TV Conference, works in part because of the conceptual constraint of the ideas symbolized as $C + M = O$, when they are properly construed, with the aid of processual sociology's theorizing mindset.³⁴

Analysis

Table 7.1 presents an analysis of the Strategic TV Conference case. The three rows present questions that exemplify mechanism-intent thinking about a purposeful phenomenon: what it is for; what it consists in; and how it works. The two columns exemplify mechanism-intent thinking in the professional discipline of engineering. A conceptual design represents a purposeful phenomenon's character, intent, and constitutive functions; to the extent that a conceptual design represents mechanisms, few specifics are mentioned. By contrast, an embodiment design identifies process design features or other conditions that shape a mechanism's context-activity-outcome profile. Thus, the conceptual design column furnishes a high-level, generic representation, while the embodiment design column furnishes a detailed, specific one. The two columns together give a professional practitioner flexibility when using the Strategic TV Conference as a design-precedent for another organization-strengthening international cooperation project. At an early stage, the high-level representation, drawn from the conceptual design column, will be more relevant than a detailed one; and vice versa for a later stage.

We will now run through the rows. The Strategic TV Conference involved two linked-enterprises: (a) the international cooperation project involving Japan and Egypt, and (b) the public organization, E-JUST. The Strategic TV Conference was for effectuating enterprise-intent in two respects: (a) to effectuate E-JUST's "start-up transition"³⁵ and (b) to strengthen E-JUST as an organization. The other entries in this row reflect mechanism-intent thinking about public management: the idea is that enterprises will struggle to effectuate their intent, insofar as their enterprise-functions are deficiently performed. As analyzed here, the Strategic TV Conference's conceptual design was to perform the management function of (a) the Japan–Egypt international cooperation project and (b) E-JUST, in certain respects. Specifically, the conceptual design of the Strategic TV Conference was to perform "coordination," a constitutive function of management, for both the international cooperation project and for E-JUST. It was not designed to perform E-JUST's directing function. Rather, the conceptual design was to enable

Table 7.1 Mechanism-intent analysis of the Japan–E–JUST Strategic TV Conference

	What was the Strategic TV Conference's conceptual design?	What was the Strategic TV Conference's embodiment design?
What was the Strategic TV Conference for?	<p><i>Enterprises:</i> (a) the Japan–Egypt international development cooperation project (b) the public organization, E–JUST.</p> <p><i>Intent:</i> (a) effectuate E–JUST's successful start-up transition; (b) strengthen E–JUST as an organization.</p> <p><i>Functions:</i> (a) Management, specifically, coordination.</p>	
What did the Strategic TV Conference consist in?	<p><i>Scenario-process mechanism:</i> Flow within and between meeting cycles (composed of preparation, tele-conference sessions, and follow-up steps).</p>	<p><i>Scenario-process mechanism:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>Preparation</i> included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) interaction between JICA E–JUST Office and members of E–JUST committees, (ii) interaction between JICA HQ, JICA E–JUST Office, and SWG. (b) <i>Video tele-conference sessions</i>, chaired by Provost of Waseda University, with opposite number being Acting E–JUST President, with JICA staff in attendance, on a monthly basis, lasting one hour. (c) <i>Follow-up</i> included drafting meeting minutes, jointly between JICA E–JUST Office staff and E–JUST faculty. <p><i>Organization-design mechanism:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>Japan side:</i> (i) Strategic Working Group (SWG) of university consortium, (ii) JICA HQ and JICA E–JUST Office.</p> <p>(b) <i>Egypt side:</i> (i) E–JUST “University Council,” headed by Acting President; (ii) E–JUST faculty, beyond University Council.</p> <p>(Detailed analysis of the scenario-process mechanism's context-activity-outcome dynamics, discussed in relation to the conceptual design.)</p>
How did the Strategic TV Conference work?	<p><i>Organization-design mechanism:</i> Liaison device, between Japan universities, JICA, and E–JUST.</p> <p><i>Labeling mechanism:</i> Coordination meeting (initially), Strategic TV Conference (later).</p> <p><i>Activated the social mechanisms</i> of (a) frame alignment, (b) homo- and hetero-phony in networks (c) performance feedback (arising from successive iterations of the scenario-process).</p>	

the performance of the management function within E-JUST, in its totality, so as to effectuate E-JUST's start-up transition.

Let's turn now to the middle-row, concerned with the mechanism aspect of the Strategic TV Conference. The theoretical approach here is to view a mechanism primarily as being constituted by its scenario-process (with its context-activity-outcome dynamics). The scenario-process' high-level structure was that of a meeting cycle, with each cycle consisting in steps for preparation, the video tele-conference session, and follow-up. The cycles were connected, as the video tele-conference session inputs resulted from performing tasks that had been commissioned during a previous such session. The standard monthly periodicity of the video tele-conference sessions, as well as their standard one-hour duration, were marked process design features. The profile of pre-meeting activity included agenda-formulation, involving intensive communication between some E-JUST personnel and the JICA E-JUST Office; between the JICA E-JUST Office head (Dr. Tsunoda) and the JICA HQ official with lead responsibility for E-JUST (Mr. Ueda); and between JICA and members of the universities' Strategic Working Group. The profile of the conference sessions included chairing by Professor Shuji Hashimoto, the Provost of Waseda University, in his capacity as chair of the universities' Strategic Working Group, as well as active participation by Professor Chitoshi Miki, of Tokyo Tech. The Strategic Working Group members addressed the Acting E-JUST President, Professor Khairy, as their direct counterpart. Reports were received from other members of E-JUST's University Council and their associates, drawn from the small initial faculty. The profile of the follow-up activities included formulating minutes of the video tele-conference meetings, with initial drafting being conducted by JICA E-JUST Office staff and their counterparts within E-JUST (specifically, Dr. Etawil, a faculty member).

The Strategic TV Conference's organization-design mechanism was a liaison device. Within Mintzberg's theory of organizational design,³⁶ liaison devices are formalized venues for regular interaction among representatives of different institutional hierarchies. In this case, the venue established regular interaction between E-JUST, the universities' Strategic Working Group, and JICA. It also created an additional, effectively external, role to be played by E-JUST's *internal* liaison device, its University Council, as that grouping formed part of the Strategic TV Conference.

The labeling mechanism initially involved the verbal sign of a "coordination meeting," but the term Strategic TV Conference took hold after a few iterations of the scenario-process. The original label highlighted the mechanism's function, while the replacement label highlighted a distinctive mechanism-feature (the video teleconference).

Finally, let's turn to the bottom-row, concerned with how the Strategic TV Conference worked. Saying how this phenomenon worked requires causal insight, which, in turn, requires explanatory argumentation.³⁷ The approach to explanation taken here is mechanism-based,³⁸ with explanatory mechanisms essentially being causal (and descriptive) idealizations that form part of a discipline or substantive field of knowledge.³⁹ The concepts used here to formulate

mechanism-based explanations fall within the category of social mechanisms: they are frame-alignment, homo- and hetero-phily in networks, and performance feedback. The general argument is that the Strategic TV Conference would have failed to perform the management/coordination function for the Japan–Egypt international cooperation project and for E-JUST as an enterprise, if these social mechanisms had not been causal influences within the Strategic TV Conference’s scenario-process.

The idea of frame-alignment – originating in the Chicago School of Sociology – concerns how a situation is “defined” by the people who experience it.⁴⁰ A situation’s definition is influenced by the way it is framed, with a frame essentially being a stereotype. A frame channels how participants in a situation act toward anything in the situation, including other participants; the experience of those actions then validate, or challenge, the definition of the situation. When the definition of a situation for some participants clashes with that of other participants, then the interaction will tend to involve rivalrous claims-making about what the situation is. When participants come to define the situation in similar ways, there’s a tendency for a pattern of activity and interaction to take hold, as participants’ actions conform to the situational definition. Frame-alignment is a trajectory toward a pattern of interaction with consistent, frame-based, situational definitions.

The idea of homo- and hetero-phily in networks concerns relations among participants in a social situation. Homo-phily involves recognition of social similarity between two individuals, relative to their context. An example of similarity concerns occupational role and status. A typical effect of homo-phily is the strengthening of ties between the individuals who recognize themselves as being socially similar. Two actors may give close attention to each other because they play similar roles in the same network and/or they play similar roles in different networks.⁴¹ By contrast, hetero-phily involves recognition of social difference between two individuals, relative to their context. An example of dissimilarity is not having worked in the same country over the course of a career. A typical effect of hetero-phily is to be interested in the perspective of individuals who are different in such respects, as it might be instructive.

The idea of performance feedback concerns scenario-processes and, especially, how upstream and downstream ones are connected.⁴² Performance feedback involves assessment of scenario-outcomes. A favorable assessment of a given iteration tends to enhance commitment to the scenario-process, which tends to be reflected in patterns of interaction in subsequent iterations. The mechanism operates in part through the validation of scenario-participants, which enhances the emotional energy they experience when involved in iterations of the scenario-process.⁴³

These social mechanisms are sources of causal insight into how the Strategic TV Conference worked. In broad terms, frame-alignment had the effect of creating a common definition of the Strategic TV Conference and participation in it. The definition involved the need for more coordination (and direction) inside E-JUST, in order to effectuate the soft-opening. It also involved a sense of the appropriateness of regular support from the Japanese side, especially in respect

to methods of coordination and the involvement of top officials of prestigious Japanese universities. As to how frames came to be aligned, we can point to the presentation of the Strategic TV Conference's specified process design features, as well as to the strength of the pre-existing frame that E-JUST was a Japan–Egypt collaboration – a frame rooted in the experience of several years of planning and approval work.

The homo-phily mechanism was activated by social similarity between Professors Hashimoto, Miki, and Khairy. As Professor Hashimoto agreed to chair the TV conference sessions, Professor Khairy was more inclined to participate routinely. During the sessions, Hashimoto, Miki, and Khairy were the highest status individuals present. Homo-phily had the effect of making Professors Hashimoto and Miki a center of attention for Professor Khairy, which, in turn, contributed to the attention accorded to what remarks and advice they stated. The hetero-phily mechanism was activated by social dissimilarity, owing to Professor Hashimoto and Miki's career experience in Japan, while the University Council members' experience included Egypt and, to a lesser extent, the U.K. and U.S. The effect was to increase interest in what the Japanese professors had to say during the sessions.

Finally, the performance feedback mechanism was activated by moving through iterations of the Strategic TV Conference. Commitment to the Strategic TV Conference strengthened as participants on the Egyptian side made effective use of the sessions to put information and issues before Professor Khairy, while his responses were under the guise of Professors Hashimoto and Miki. Commitments also strengthened as participants from JICA, including its E-JUST Office, were able to put issues before Professor Khairy, as Professors Hashimoto and Miki participated. Finally, joint commitment to this scenario-process strengthened as each installment of official minutes of the Strategic TV Conference came to be viewed as expanding the "Common Understanding" between the Japan and Egypt sides (and within E-JUST).

Discussion and conclusion

As can be seen, this discussion doesn't provide a complete explanation of how the Strategic TV Conference worked, but it's not meant to. For one reason, that's not what explanations ever do. The point is that they provide "causal insight." I would suggest that the three mechanisms discussed above are bases for independent (though compatible) lines of theorizing the Strategic TV Conference. The result is a loosely-organized theory of this purposeful phenomenon.

It's important to emphasize what such analysis is meant to be used for. The fundamental idea is to use it – within the professional practice of public management – as a design-precedent for enterprises falling under the description of international cooperation projects, where intent includes both enabling public value creation by partner organizations *and* strengthening them. A reason why design-precedents are useful in respect to organization-strengthening international cooperation projects is that there's only so much that can be said, by way of purposive theorizing, about how to balance the demands of helping a

partner organization succeed, against the prospect that doing so will cancel out the effects of actions intended to strengthen them as organizations.

With this consideration in mind, the Strategic TV Conference's overall profile is that it helped E-JUST accomplish its soft-opening, while helping to strengthen (rather than weaken) E-JUST as an organization. The analysis shows that these twin-virtues are due to the judiciousness of the Strategic TV Conference's conceptual design – with its clarity of focus on performing the management/coordination function – and to the way in which the Strategic TV Conference worked. The way it worked, in turn, was due to process design features within the Strategic TV Conference's scenario-process and to the related activation of the social mechanisms of frame alignment, homo- and hetero-phily, and performance feedback; with the specific argument not needing to be repeated here.

If there is a lesson from this case analysis, it is that it's possible to help a partner organization effectuate its intent, while strengthening it as an organization. Beyond that, there's no real lesson, unless one feels compelled to present the study in these terms. If that's true, one lesson is to embody a conceptual design for performing the management/coordination function, along the lines of a "coordination meeting," with a suitably configured scenario-process, complemented by an appropriately designed liaison device and an appropriate labeling. Another lesson can be patterned on Bardach's⁴⁴ principle of replicating smart practices in "target sites" based on analysis of "source sites": replicate mechanisms, while adapting features. Such a lesson would be that, in configuring the scenario-process of a "coordination meeting," replicate the mechanisms of frame-alignment, homo- and hetero-phily, and performance feedback, while adapting the features as presented in this case analysis.

NOTES

- 1 This chapter is drawn from Working Paper 172 of the Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute (JICA-RI), whose permission to reproduce it is gratefully acknowledged. The Working Paper was published in March 2018. The final analytical section of the paper was introduced subsequently. As mentioned in the acknowledgments, funding for this work was provided by JICA-RI and by Higher Education Innovation Funding through the London School of Economics.
- 2 UNDP (2002), Mabuchi and Tsunoda (2006), Miyoshi and Nagayo (2006), JICA Research Institute (2006, 2008), UNDP (2009), Hosono et al. (2011), Sato (2013).
- 3 See, https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/focus_on/education/index.html (Accessed: January 3, 2018).
- 4 Simon (1996), van Aken (2004).
- 5 Van Aken and Berends (2018).
- 6 Bardach (1994, 2004).
- 7 Barzelay (2007).
- 8 Lawson (2004).
- 9 http://open_jicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/12037545_03.pdf, p. 120 (Accessed: April 9, 2019).
- 10 Mintzberg (1983).
- 11 The premise may apply with equal force to international development cooperation projects where the intent does not specifically include organizational capacity-building; however, that is not an issue with which this chapter is concerned.
- 12 Choi and Wu (2009).
- 13 Fayol (1919/1984).
- 14 Arieuw and Perlman (2002).
- 15 Fayol's purposive, design-oriented theorizing about enterprises has largely been forgotten, but much of it remains in conscious awareness in the management field thanks to the impact of Michael Porter's

theorizing about enterprises in *Competitive Strategy* (Porter 1985). A feature of Porter's theorizing was an enterprise's value chain. It is roughly the same idea as Fayol's, even though Porter didn't cite Fayol. What Fayol called "functions" within an enterprise, Porter called "value-activities" within firm's "value-chain." Fayol's technical function is similar to six value-chain activities in Porter's scheme: inbound logistics, production, outbound logistics, after-sales service, research and development, and procurement. Fayol's commercial function is similar to Porter's sales value-activity. Looked at the other way around, Porter's corporate infrastructure value-activity is similar to four of Fayol's functions: accounting, finance, security, and management.

- 16 Lakoff (1987), Morgan (1986).
- 17 Baggini and Fosl (2010).
- 18 Note, that these statements would mean the same if the term "organization" were put in place of "enterprise," as, in this context, organizations are the mechanisms of interest within enterprises and management is a functional necessity of organizations.
- 19 Levitt and March (1988), Levinthal and March (1993).
- 20 Klein (2013).
- 21 March (2010). A literature has also developed around a trap that Diane Vaughan theorized through her research into the disastrous Challenger launch decision (Vaughan 2005). The term associated with the trap is the normalization of deviance.
- 22 Van Aken and Berends (2018).
- 23 Walton (1992).
- 24 Raz (1999).
- 25 Khurana and Rosenthal (1997), Rantanen and Domb (2002), van der Voort et al. (2011), Klein (2013).
- 26 Merton (1936).
- 27 Pawson and Tilley (1997).
- 28 Sarasvathy (2008).
- 29 Self-conscious exercises in labeling are not uncommon in academic work, not least in philosophy. For an example that inspired this paragraph, see Rescher (1996), where the issue was how to label the very topic of his book.
- 30 Booth et al. (2003), Becker (1997).
- 31 Van Maanen (2011), Stake (2010).
- 32 Fligstein and McAdam (2012).
- 33 Latour (2005), McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001).
- 34 McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001), Barzelay and Gallego (2006), Abbott (2016).
- 35 Watkins (2009).
- 36 Mintzberg (1983).
- 37 Pawson and Tilley (1997), Bardach (2004), Barzelay (2007).
- 38 Elster (1989), Craver and Darden (2013), McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2011).
- 39 Morgan and Morrison (1999).
- 40 McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001).
- 41 Kilduff and Tsai (2003: 58).
- 42 Greve (2003).
- 43 Collins (2004).
- 44 Bardach (2004).