Interview protocol
Project: Do firms benefit from the revolving door? Evidence from *amakudari* in Japan
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In-depth interviews will be conducted with former bureaucrats, as well as directors of firms or organizations who have hired or refused to hire such individuals. However, firms who hire former bureaucrats are unlikely to be forthcoming about the reasons for engaging in the practice. I will therefore focus on asking firms who do not engage in the practice about the benefits they believe firms that do hire former bureaucrats hope to receive. The purpose of these interviews is to identify sources of benefit that firms believe accrue to them from hiring former bureaucrats. This fieldwork will be funded by a Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership Grant. These interviews will be loosely structured, as the primary purpose of these expert interviews is to identify new topics, themes, and strategies as yet unidentified by current literature, or to allow interviewees to discuss benefits that have yet to be studied in the academy. Individuals from the Japanese bureaucracy, private firms, NGOs, and academic researchers will be interviewed. A protocol for these interviews is provided below:

- How prevalent do you think *amakudari* still is in Japan?
- Why do you think some firms hire former bureaucrats?
- Why do you think some firms do not hire former bureaucrats?
- What specific strengths do you think former bureaucrats bring to firms compared to other hires?
- Do you think firms that hire former bureaucrats [receive more or less regulatory scrutiny/are more profitable/receive a stock boost upon making the hire]?
- What positions are most commonly given to bureaucrats within private firms?
- Walk me through the steps a firm would take in order to hire a bureaucrat? Is this process competitive?
- Do you think *amakudari* is helpful or harmful to individual firms?
- Do you think *amakudari* is helpful or harmful to the Japanese economy overall?
- If you think it is harmful, what additional steps do you think could be taken by the state in order to reduce the prevalence of *amakudari* or to make it less harmful?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?