

# The Relationship Between Ministerial Status and Candidate Success in Japanese District Elections, 1967-2009

Masahiko Asano  
Dennis Patterson

**Abstract:** We know that different electoral systems help produce different patterns of aggregate election outcomes because, among other things, they behoove office seekers to alter their electoral strategies in accordance with the imperatives that different rules present. We add to this important finding by showing that different electoral systems also influence aggregate outcomes altering the impact that certain factors can have in raising or diminishing the electability of candidates in district elections. Specifically, we investigate the impact that holding a ministerial post had on the electability of candidates competing for seats in Japanese district elections from 1967 to 2009 inclusive. We show that being a minister had a strong, positive impact on the ability of candidates to be elected in successive elections under the old multi-member district system with SNTV but also show that this positive impact was greatly reduced under Japan's new mixed member, majoritarian system that replaced it in 1994.

## Introduction

There is a well known Japanese cliché that states, *sue wa hakase ka daijin ka*, “be sure to become either a great academic or a cabinet minister.” Clearly, in political life, to be a minister has long been highly valued, and it is no exaggeration to say that the ultimate goal of most elected officials holding national office in Japan is to become a minister. Ministerial posts in Japan then are highly sought after. Indeed, they provide a high status to the office holder, and they give officials holding such posts influence over the content of legislation and the shaping of policy that ordinary Diet members do not have.

As is also well known, the supply of available ministerial posts falls far short of the demand that exists for them among Diet members. Consequently, elected members of the Japanese Diet who would ascend to such offices must usually possess certain characteristics. More than any other qualification, Diet members must demonstrate a high level of electoral dependability, that is, they must show their party colleagues that they can win seats in their own local districts in successive elections. This is because, when Diet members reveal themselves as being electorally dependable, their status within their own party rises, leading to more responsible posts and, ultimately, increased chances of obtaining a ministerial post.

Consider the data in Table 1, which lists postwar prime ministers from Ikeda Hayato

(1960) to the present and the number of times they were elected prior to becoming Japan's head of government. As the data make clear, a record of electoral success has been necessary for a Diet member to become Prime Minister. Indeed, from the 1970s to 2010, most elected officials who became Japan's prime minister were elected in their respective districts an average of ten or more times,<sup>1</sup> and the overwhelming majority of these individuals enjoyed these victories in consecutive district elections.

In light of this, we know that being able to be elected repeatedly is a necessary condition for achieving ministerial posts, but we do not know if this relationship is non-recursive, that is, whether holding a ministerial post enhances the electability of those candidates who are able to obtain them. We also do not know if such a non-recursive relationship continued under the electoral system that was instituted for elections to the Lower House of the Diet in 1994. This is an important problem not simply because answering it will help us gauge the extent to which ministerial status enhanced the electability of candidates in district elections under different electoral systems. It is also important because addressing it will add to our knowledge of how different electoral rules contribute to different aggregate outcomes by affecting those factors that raise or lower the electability of candidates in legislative elections.

We know that institutions matter in that different electoral systems are associated with different patterns of aggregate election outcomes. This is because different electoral systems present office-seeking candidates with different electoral incentives, requiring them to design their strategies in accordance with the electoral imperatives they face. Again, these different imperatives are determined principally by the electoral systems under which elections for legislative seats are conducted, and, consequently, when Japan replaced its old electoral system with a new set of rules in 1994, we knew, as Rosenbluth and Thies (2010) noted extensively, that the new electoral system altered the electoral incentives faced by parties and candidates seeking district seats.

What we do not know is if the changed electoral incentives candidates for office in Japan faced under the two systems affected aggregate election outcomes in any other way. Specifically, the question is whether the impact of factors that have been known to influence the electability of office-seeking candidates in one way or another was different under the two different electoral systems. We examine several of these factors in this paper but focus on one in particular, the electoral impact of a candidate holding a ministerial post. We determine the extent to which holding a ministerial post enhanced the electability of a candidate, both under the old SNTV system as well as under the mixed-member plurality rules currently in use. Our purpose is to determine how the different incentives faced by those seeking district seats under the two sets of rules affected the electoral benefits—the enhanced ability to be reelected—that were attendant to holding a ministerial post.

To accomplish this, we must be certain not only that we capture the different electoral incentives that exist in two systems but also that we are circumspect to control for other

---

1 The most notable exception was that of Hosokawa Morihiro, founder of the Japan New Party (JNP), who was elected one time before heading a multi-party coalition that pushed the LDP out of power for the first time in 38 years. Moreover, most prime ministers who were under the ten election benchmark were also non-LDP candidates.

individual and district-level factors that affected the ability of candidates to achieve repeated victories. By incorporating these factors into a statistical analysis, we will show not simply that holding a ministerial post enhanced a candidate's electability under one set of rules but not another, but, more importantly, that different electoral systems affected aggregate outcomes by altering the incentives candidates faced, which in turn changed the impact that certain explanatory factors had on the electability of office-seeking candidates. In this way, our hope is to extend our understanding of how electoral institutions matter. Specifically, we will show that it is not simply the different incentives and resultant party/candidate strategies that lead to different aggregate outcomes under various electoral rules but also that the different incentive structures can and do alter the electoral impacts associated with those factors that directly enhance or reduce the electability of candidates.

We begin this effort, first, by reviewing the relevant literature on this problem, specifically, how scholars have explained the electoral success of Japanese candidates competing for seats in district elections. We next discuss the changes that occurred in the Japanese electoral system in 1994 and focus on how we would expect that new system to alter the impact that ministerial status would have on the electability of candidates competing for district seats.

## Ministerial Posts and Candidate Electability in Legislative Elections

While the literature on what enhances to ability of candidates to win in successive elections is extensive, scholarly attention to the electoral influence of candidates holding ministerial posts is not, and this is true whether we focus specifically on Japan or more generally on elections in all advanced democracies. In the Japanese case, the literature that does exist can be divided into two groups of studies, one that is focused directly on exploring candidate success and another that provides insight into this question by addressing the impact of electoral rules on this problem. Literature focused on the impact of electoral rules has dealt with the problem of how best to evaluate nominations under Japan's old electoral system of multi-member districts where voters cast a single nontransferable vote as well as how electoral strategies and outcomes changed when this system was replaced with a mixed-member plurality system in 1994.

Concerning studies of candidate success, explanations that focus directly on why some candidates are more electorally successful than others begins with the phenomenon of incumbent success. While the success rates of incumbents in Japanese House of Representatives elections have varied across contest<sup>2</sup>, they have averaged 81% between the elections of 1963 and 1990 inclusive. Like incumbents in other democratic countries, those seeking reelection in Japan have the advantages of name recognition, experience at conducting a successful campaign, and other enhancements that come with holding office<sup>3</sup>. In addition to

---

2 See e.g., Hickman (1992) who investigated the impact that open seats had on the ability of first-time challengers to obtain district seats.

3 Hayama (1992) notes that, while incumbent success rates are high in Japan, they are lower than in the U.S. House of Representatives because members of the U.S. Congress have fewer restrictions on their ability to conduct campaigns and enjoy additional benefits like franking privileges and extensive staff that their Japanese counterparts do not.

this, while all incumbents in Japanese district elections have advantages over their challenger counterparts, incumbency success rates did vary across party with the LDP, CGP, and JCP enjoying rates of 80% or better and the JSP and DSP with respective rates of 79% and 73%<sup>4</sup>.

The electoral advantages that accrue to incumbents also involve a number of ancillary factors that, while related, exerted their own impacts on the electability of candidates in Japanese district elections. One of these concerns the lack of effective opposition candidates, that is, opposition candidates who are electorally strong enough to have a chance of winning. As Scheiner (2006) observes in his investigation of “opposition failure” in postwar Japan, compared to the LDP, the opposition parties simply could not field candidates who entered the competition for district seats with a realistic chance of winning. To make this case, Scheiner (2006) calibrated the “quality” of candidates by employing a number of defining factors like past electoral success or other candidate characteristics that suggested higher levels of electability. Overall, he found that the LDP tended to have more quality candidates than did the Opposition, and this naturally explains the lack of opposition success in district elections.

Other factors are related to the ability of candidates to obtain financing for their respective campaigns and the fact that “quality” candidates will be more able than their weaker counterparts to attract resources to underwrite the costs of their election and reelections efforts. Such factors continue with the fact that some candidates enter the competition for district seats with advantages because they have inherited their entire electoral base from a retired candidate who has been successful at winning district seats in the past, while others compete for district seats without such advantages.

The literature discusses a second set of factors that affects the electability of candidates, and this refers to how different electoral rules affect the strategies and, thus, electability of candidates. Initially, the literature focused on the strategic problem that larger political parties faced under Japan’s old electoral system, specifically, how well Japan’s larger parties nominated under the old multi-member district system where voters cast a single nontransferable vote and winners were selected by plurality. Under Japan’s old electoral system, parties wishing to obtain a majority of legislative seats had to endorse multiple candidates in the same district<sup>5</sup>. This means not only that candidates from the same party competed against each other but also that parties had to be circumspect in allocating nominations because offering too many or too few endorsements could result in losing seats that they could otherwise win<sup>6</sup>.

While the scholarly literature on this strategic problem has not focused directly on the electability of candidates, it has shown that political parties that avoided the commission of nomination errors had higher rates of electoral success overall than when they committed

---

4 Again, see Hickman (1992) and, for an investigation of how incumbency success relates to other characteristics of district elections in Japan, see Reed (1994).

5 This applies to any political party whose goal was to obtain more than one seat in a district, especially those whose goal is to obtain a majority in the National Diet.

6 When political parties endorsed too many candidates or too few candidates in district elections, they committed a nomination error, and the most important general discussions of this issue can be found in Reed (1990), Cox and Niou (1994), Cox (1997), and Browne and Patterson (1999).

such errors<sup>7</sup>. Exactly which parties have been more effective at making “error free” nominations, however, has been the subject of debate. One side of this debate is represented by Cox and Niou (1994) and Cox (1997) who argued that it was the LDP that was the more efficient at nominating and, thus, avoiding the commission of nomination errors. The other side, represented principally by Christensen (2000) argued that Japan’s opposition parties eventually became better at coordinating their electoral efforts and, thus, more effective at avoiding nomination errors<sup>8</sup>. This is an important scholarly debate to be sure, but its relevance is at the district and not the candidate level and, thus, is not part of the factors that we need to incorporate in our analysis to more thoroughly explain the impact of ministerial posts on the electability of candidates.

## Electoral Rule Change, Portfolios, and Candidate Electability

It is well known that the format that party systems take is strongly shaped by the electoral rules a country employs<sup>9</sup>. This is because the rules of the game help determine party strategies and, thus, the election dynamics that ultimately result in the aggregate outcomes that give party systems their specific but changing constellations. This finding in the literature tells us that the replacement of the old Japanese electoral system with a different set of rules of in 1994 should have carried a significant impact on how parties and candidates would approach their respective goals of obtaining seats in district elections. This is because we know that the incentive structure of candidates—endorsed and unendorsed alike—seeking district seats was profoundly different when they entered competition in multi-member districts where voters cast a single nontransferable vote than when they had to compete in single-member districts or be located in as favorable a position as possible on a party list in a larger PR district.

There is a fairly extensive literature on the differences the new rules were expected to bring and the extent to which expected changes were witnessed in the ensuing years<sup>10</sup>. While disagreements exist to be sure, most scholars agree that the primary change under the new system involves an enhanced role for parties in the electoral process. This is because, under the new parallel system, political parties have controlled where candidates were placed on party lists, and they also determined which individual candidates would obtain party endorsements in the single-member districts. As a result, elections for legislative seats are now much less candidate centered than under the old MMD/SNTV system, and this change is

---

7 Political parties also obtained higher shares of district seats when opposing parties committed nomination errors. See Patterson (2009), Patterson and Stockton (2010) and Patterson and Robbins (2012).

8 This does not mean that Japan’s electoral system is not important for our analysis. As mentioned briefly above, it figures prominently in our analysis in the context of Japan’s leaders abandoning the old set of rules for an entirely new electoral system. We discuss this in more detail in the following subsection.

9 Early studies of this phenomenon are found in Duverger (1961) and Rae (1967), while more recent treatments include Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Cox (1997).

10 See e.g., Reed and Thies (2001a and 2001b), McKean and Scheiner (2000) and Rosenbluth and Thies (2011).

magnified when we consider that there is no intra-party competition under the new Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM) electoral system, compared to its predecessor<sup>11</sup>.

This enhanced role for political parties and reduced intra-party competition will naturally have a direct impact on aggregate outcomes, but such changes will also affect outcomes indirectly by altering the influence that other explanatory factors have on the electability of candidates. As stated briefly above, one such important factor concerns the role played by ministerial status in the electability of candidates. Our expectation is that the change from SNTV to SMD should reduce the electoral value of ministerial posts in the competition for seats in lower-house elections. The reasons for this begin with the fact that, under SNTV, candidates won a seat by means of appealing to a particular group of voters primarily mobilized by the candidate-based, local networks called *koenkai*. Japan's old SNTV system then encouraged individual legislators to cultivate "personal votes" rather than to collectively pursue a coherent party label<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, since votes that individual legislators obtain to win a district seat cannot be transferred to other candidates of the same party, individual legislators had incentives to specialize either geographically or sectorally so that they could differentiate themselves from other same-party candidates under the old system<sup>13</sup>. One individual-level factor that would greatly assist in this effort was competing in a district election while holding a position as a cabinet minister.

Under the old SNTV system, legislators' incentives were to target a more narrow set of constituents with some "specialization" as opposed to building a majority coalition among a broader set of more diverse constituents<sup>14</sup>. Thus, under the old system, it was essential for a politician seeking a district seat to be a specialist or "*zoku giin*,"—someone who is an expert in a particular issue area—to please an interest group or a small number of interest groups in an electoral district. This was naturally easier for members of the erstwhile ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) who, when they were successful in successive elections, would then elevate their chances of obtaining a ministerial post. Once a Diet member got appointed as a minister, he/she would have fewer worries about his/her ability to be reelected because, as long as his/her core supporters—those defined by the policy area of the *zoku giin*—were satisfied, reelections would continue.

With the promulgation of Japan's new mixed member majoritarian system, this positive influence associated with holding a ministerial post should not continue. This is because, under the current SMD system, where the threshold of victory is much higher, winning candidates will need to build a majoritarian coalition with a broader and more diverse set of constituents. Under such institutional conditions, a strategy whereby a candidate continues as a single policy area specialist by targeting a narrow set of constituents will have a difficult time continuing to win a district seat. Compared to an SNTV system where a candidate can get elected with an average of 18.9% of the district vote (78,039 votes), he/she will need to

---

11 The new election system was partner to second- and higher-order effects which are discussed in more detail in Rosenbluth and Thies (2011).

12 See e.g., Cox and Thies (1998) and Ramsayer and Rosenbluth (1993).

13 On geographic differentiation see Hirano (2006) and on sectoral differentiation, see McCubbins and Rosenbluth (2005). See also Tatebayashi (2004).

14 See Naoi and Krauss (2009), p. 877.

garner as much as 50.4% of a district's vote (105,678 votes) to guarantee a seat in a SMD system.<sup>15</sup>

These altered electoral incentives will persist and be stable because, under Japan's new electoral system, legislative organizations have adapted to candidates' new incentives that have been shaped by electoral reform<sup>16</sup>. Evidence for this is witnessed in the fact that after the electoral reform bill was passed, the LDP expanded the number of "PARC" affiliations it allowed its members to have, eliminating previous limits<sup>17</sup>. There is no doubt that the LDP quickly learned that the new rules would be electorally kinder to office-seeking candidates who were policy generalists.

## Electoral Rules and Ministerial Status: An Empirical Investigation

With the problems associated with electoral rules, ministerial status, and candidate electability defined, we can now state the empirical problem that we will investigate in the remainder of this paper. We present this problem in the form of the following hypothesis:

*H1: Ministers will be less likely to win a seat under the new system than under the previous SNTV system.*

This hypothesis tells us that the variable to be explained in the statistical analysis we conduct below is defined as a dichotomous measure of electoral success, taking on a value of 1 when a candidate wins a district seat and a 0 otherwise.

### Independent Variables: Ministerial Status and Electoral Rules

The principal explanatory factor we want to capture in the statistical analysis we conduct below is the extent to which holding a ministerial post contributed to the electability of a candidate. While there is certainly more than one way to calibrate this explanatory factor, we measured it in a way that highlights the importance of holding such a position prior to an election and captures the ability of a Diet member to provide benefits to his/her district. For this reason, we defined ministerial status as a count of the number of days a legislator served prior to a lower-house election<sup>18</sup>.

Defining this explanatory factor in this manner has certain advantages over defining it as the total length of time a candidate has held a ministerial post. Our purpose is to capture the

---

15 These figures are calculated using the lower house election results between 1955 and 1993 for SNTV whereas between 1996 and 2009 for SMD, and the 105,678 or 50.4% figure declines to 46.8% of the vote share (98,468 votes) when zombies are included.

16 See e.g., Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss (2006) for a discussion of these adjustments.

17 PARC refers to the LDP's Policy Affairs Research Council. The party originally allowed up to four affiliations whereas under the new system it allows virtually unlimited affiliations. See e.g., Krauss and Pekkanen (2004 and 2012).

18 The overall average of this primary explanatory factor was 17 days with a standard deviation of 92 days. Moreover, since the majority of Diet members in our data sought district seats without holding a ministerial post, this variable's minimum value was a 0 while its maximum value was 1,497 days or just over four years.

extent to which holding such a position offers an advantage to an individual candidate seeking a seat in a district election. Consequently, it is necessary that we distinguish between those appointed shortly before an election versus those who have been a minister for a sufficient length of time to use that position to offer benefits to the district in which the legislative seat is being sought. Consequently, calibrating this variable in days served prior to an election, for each individual election, best serves this purpose. This is true not simply for the reason given above but also because this form of the variable avoids the impact of any declining returns that would be attendant to capturing it as a single number over multiple elections.

As stated above, our intention is to show that the impact of ministerial status on the electability of candidates was large, positive, and significant under the old MMD/SNTV electoral system, while much less important under the parallel electoral system currently in use. To capture this change in electoral institutions and the different electoral incentives presented to candidates under each, we estimated our statistical model for two sets of elections. The first set is designed to capture the impact of ministerial status under the old MMD/SNTV system and involves model estimates for the ten elections held between 1967 and 1993 inclusive. To capture the extent to which holding a ministerial post was less important for the reelection of Diet members under the new Mixed Member Majoritarian system, we estimated our statistical models for the five elections held after the new system was put in place in 1994. These include the elections of 1996, 1990, 2003, 2005, and 2009.

#### Independent Variables: Individual and District Effects

District elections are distinguished by the characteristics of the candidates that compete for available seats. We refer to these candidate characteristics as individual effects, and we capture them in the statistical model we estimate below by including four “individual effects” variables. The first of these concerns whether or not a candidate competing for a district seat was an incumbent when he/she entered a district election<sup>19</sup>. The second of these variables concerns the number of previous elections that a candidate won prior to the election under consideration. In our data, the average number of elections won by candidates was 2.56 with some being first-time candidates and others entering district contests with as many as 20 election victories. The last two individual effects variables involve the extent to which candidates entered the competition for district seats with an electoral base (*jiban*) available for use in that election’s campaign. We use two dummy variables to capture this, the first indicating whether or not the candidate inherited the *jiban* from his/her predecessor and the second indicating possession of an electoral base that was not inherited from a predecessor<sup>20</sup>.

The elections that we investigate are also distinguished by the nature and level of electoral competition for seats that took place in individual local elections and other factors that can be aggregated up to the district level. We refer to these as district effects and capture them in the models we estimate below by including five variables. The first district effect variable we include captures the average amount (Yen) per candidate expended in that

---

<sup>19</sup> In our data, 44% of those entering into district contests were incumbents while 56% were not.

<sup>20</sup> In our analysis, 9% of district elections involved candidates with *jibans* that were inherited from their predecessors but less than 1% (0.69%) where candidates had *jibans* that were not inherited.



district election. We also captured district effects by including three dummy variables that indicate whether candidates being endorsed by the LDP, the JSP, the JCP, or DSP depending on the election year<sup>21</sup>. Finally, we included a dummy variable to capture the presence of an unaffiliated (*mushozoku*) candidate in a district election.

### Models for Estimation

Again, given that we are interested in determining the extent to which holding a ministerial post increased the probability that candidates in district elections would be reelected, controlling for the two different electoral systems that Japan used throughout the period under consideration here, the models that we estimate below take on the following form:

$$Y_i^* = \alpha + X_{i \dots i,k} \beta + \varepsilon \quad i=14,589,$$

where  $Y^*$  is a continuously valued, unobserved variable estimating the probability of a candidate winning a seat in the  $i$ th district election, and  $X_{i \dots i,k}$  is a one by ten vector containing the covariates. From the above discussion, recall that two of the covariates are count variables, (1) measuring the number of days prior to an election that a candidate held a ministerial post and (2) the number of times a candidate had been elected prior to the current contest. One of the covariates is a continuous variable, (3), capturing the per candidate average campaign expenditures in a district contest. The seven remaining covariates are dummies, indicating (4) whether a candidate was an incumbent, (5) whether a candidate entered a district election with a *jiban* inherited from a predecessor, (6) whether a candidate entered a district election with a *jiban* that was not inherited from a predecessor, (7) whether a candidate was endorsed by the LDP, (8) whether a candidate was endorsed by the JSP or DPJ, (9) whether a candidate was endorsed by the JCP, and (10) whether a candidate entered a district contest as an unaffiliated candidate (*mushozoku*).

Given that the dependent variable is dichotomous, the models were estimated using a maximum likelihood estimation procedure with robust standard errors to account for conditional heteroskedasticity<sup>22</sup>. Results of estimating the model for the two different electoral systems are presented in Table 2, and we see that the impact of our individual and district effects are quite different for a number of variables across the two electoral systems. This tells us that the two different sets of rules used for Japanese district elections presented actors with very different electoral incentives. This is an important finding that coincides with the scholarly literature, but what is more important is that such differences across the two models' coefficients highlights the importance that individual and district factors with respect to the electability of candidates were different across the two electoral systems.

The impact of campaign finance and the number of times a candidate was reelected remained relatively unchanged across the two systems, but the impact of incumbency did

---

21 We captured JSP endorsements for elections up to the 1993 lower-house election and DPJ endorsements for the five contests from 1996 to the present.

22 We also checked whether the levels of multicollinearity among regressors was sufficiently high to inflate the variances of the coefficients, but no evidence of this was found.

increase albeit only slightly. More important than this is the fact that candidates entering the competition for district seats in possession of a *jiban* was greatly reduced under the current system, whether it was inherited from a predecessor or not. Even more important than this was the enhanced impact of being endorsed by a political party in the single-member district portion of the electoral system currently in use. This was true for the LDP, but it was somewhat more true for the Democratic Party of Japan. Indeed, the increased importance of being endorsed by the DPJ under the current system suggests that this party's great victory in 2009 was helped along because of the increased importance political parties experienced under the new electoral system.

Turning to our variable of interest, the ministerial status of candidates competing for district seats, the results tell us that the enhanced status attendant to being a minister was clearly more important under the MMD/SNTV system than the current set of electoral rules. Under the current system, the coefficient on this variable was statistically insignificant, and its sign was in the negative direction for ministers, indicating that having a ministerial post would not help in the SMD portion of the current electoral system. Its coefficient is somewhat larger, in the positive direction for ministers seeking seats under the earlier system, and statistically significant at the  $P < .05$  level, indicating that ministerial status did enhance the electability of candidates.

To be sure that the positive impact of ministerial status is valid and that this variable is important for the explanatory power of our models, we conducted parameter encompassing tests. These tests allowed us to determine if the explanatory power of the ministerial status variable in both models was effectively equal to zero and, thus, added no explanatory power to our models, allowing us to eliminate it. We compared the log likelihoods of our estimated model with all the original variables in it to a restricted model, one where the ministerial status variable was dropped. We made this comparison for both the MMD/SNTV and MMM/SMD estimations, and results indicated that the number of days a candidate served as a minister added to the explanatory power of the models in a statistically significant manner.

In light of these results, we can say that ministerial status enhanced the electability of candidates under the old SNTV electoral system but not the current one. Its impact on candidate electability was small to be sure, but this was to be expected because, as we recall from the above discussion, these are already electorally strong candidates, because they had to be reelected a number of times to qualify for a ministerial appointment. Figure 1 illustrates this impact for both electoral systems. The curves in the figure indicate clearly that a candidate's electability was directly proportional to the number of days that candidate served as a minister. We also show that this relationship is robust under the SNTV (Figure 2) system even when we control for the amount of money that was spent competing for seats in district elections.

While the preceding analysis has shown that institutions matter, not only by altering the incentives that office-seeking candidates face in district elections but also by altering the impact that certain explanatory factors have on the electability of candidates. Our results have shown specifically that holding a ministerial post was helpful for a candidate seeking reelection under Japan's old MMD/SNTV system but not under the new rules that are currently in use.

Despite these results, there remains more work to be done on this problem. For example,

it would be interesting to know if certain posts, substantive versus party, mattered more or less under the old system or if this distinction matters at all under the current system. It would also be interesting to see if the types of portfolios candidates held changed across different districts. For example, was it necessary for a candidate to be an agricultural *zoku giin* in a rural district or could specializing in another policy area suffice. These are important questions to be sure, and we hope the results provided above offer a way to explore them in future research.

**Table 1 : Japan's Prime Ministers and the Number of Electoral Victories, 1960-2011**

Prime Minister	Start Date	Term of Office	Party	Number of Times Elected	
				Total	Consecutive
Ikeda	July 1960	51 Months	LDP	5	5
Sato	Nov. 1964	92 Months	LDP	7	7
Tanaka	July 1972	29 Months	LDP	10	10
Miki	Dec. 1974	24 Months	LDP	14	11
Fukuda	Dec. 1976	23 Months	LDP	10	9
Ohira	Dec. 1978	19 Months	LDP	10	10
Suzuki	July 1980	29 Months	LDP	14	13
Nakasone	Nov. 1982	59 Months	LDP	14	14
Takeshita	Nov. 1987	19 Months	LDP	11	11
Uno	June 1989	2 Months	LDP	10	10
Kaifu	Aug. 1989	27 Months	LDP	10	10
Miyazawa	Nov. 1991	21 Months	LDP	9	9
Hosokawa	Aug. 1993	8 Months	JNP	1 (HC 6)	—
Hata	Apr. 1994	2 Months	JRP	9	9
Murayama	June 1994	30 Months	JSP	7	4
Hashimoto	Jan. 1996	30 Months	LDP	11	11
Obuchi	July 1998	21 Months	LDP	12	12
Mori	Apr. 2000	13 Months	LDP	10	10
Koizumi	Apr. 2001	64 Months	LDP	10	10
Abe	Sept. 2006	12 Months	LDP	5	5
Fukuda	Sept. 2007	12 Months	LDP	6	6
Aso	Sept. 2008	12 Months	LDP	9	7
Hatoyama	Sept. 2009	9 Months	DPJ	8	7
Kan	June 2010	16 Months	DPJ	10	10
Noda	Sept. 2011	15 Months	DPJ	5	4

Source: *Asahi Nenkan* [Asahi Yearbook] (Various Years), Asahi Shimbunsha (1997), and Reed (1994).  
In the rightmost column, HC refers to House of Councilors Elections.

**Table 2 : The Impact of Ministerial Status on Candidate Electability under SNTV and MMM, 1967-2009**

Factors Influencing Electability	MMD/SNTV	MMM/SMD
<u>Ministerial Status</u>	.0012 (0.046)	-.0006 (0.251)
<u>Individual Effects</u>		
Incumbent	.3910 (0.000)	.5361 (0.000)
No. of Previous Victories	.3409 (0.000)	.2986 (0.000)
<i>Jiban</i> (from Predecessor)	1.3146 (0.000)	.4714 (0.000)
<i>Jiban</i> (not from Predecessor)	1.8197 (0.002)	.9979 (0.004)
<u>District Effects</u>		
Avg. Per Candidate Expenditures	.0004 (0.001)	.0006 (0.000)
LDP Endorsement	.3339 (0.000)	1.0339 (0.000)
JSP/DPJ Endorsement	.1821 (0.023)	1.1498 (0.000)
JCP Endorsement	-1.1883 (0.000)	-3.8311 (0.000)
Unaffiliated Candidate	-1.3069 (0.000)	.3253 (0.063)
<u>Constant</u>	-.9527 (0.000)	-3.0370 (0.000)
N	8624	5480
LR Chi Sq.	1991.83	1058.60
Pr >  chi sq	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R Squared	0.3407	0.3793

Figure 1 The Impact of Ministerial Status on Candidate Electability, Controlling for Past Electoral Success in District Elections (1967 – 2009)

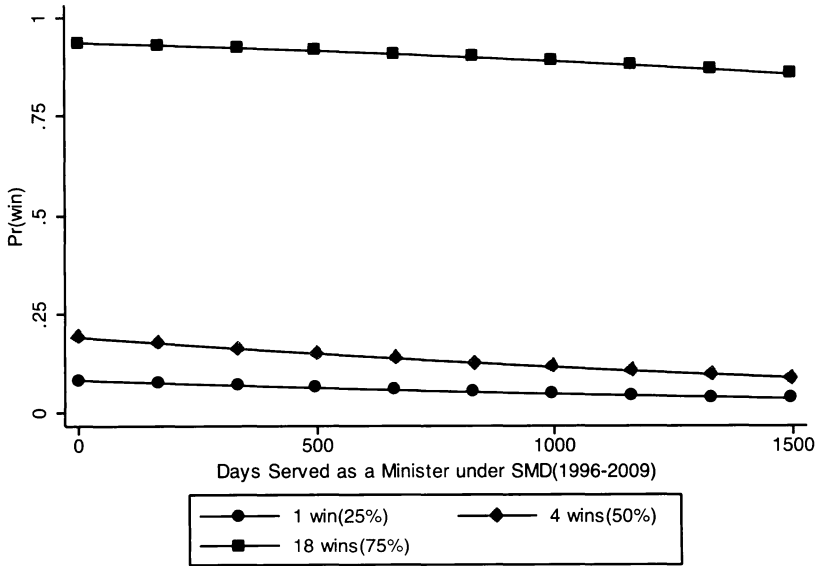
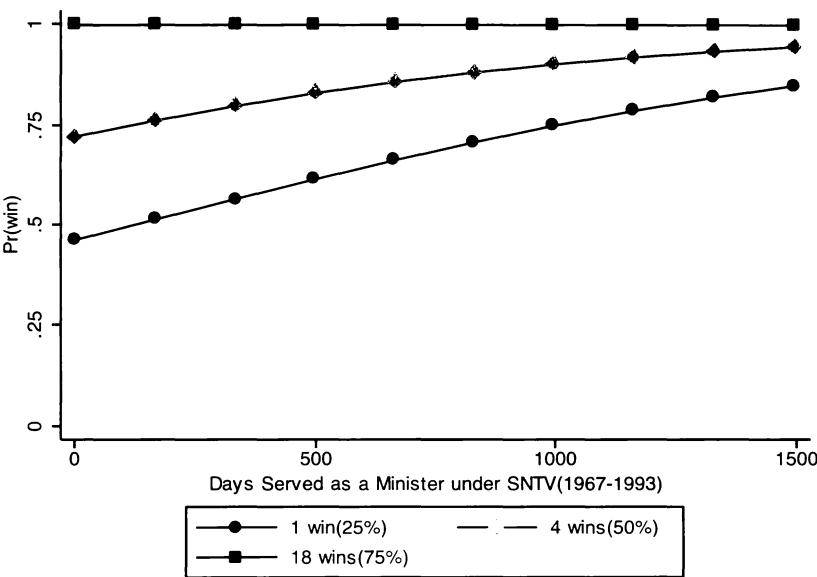
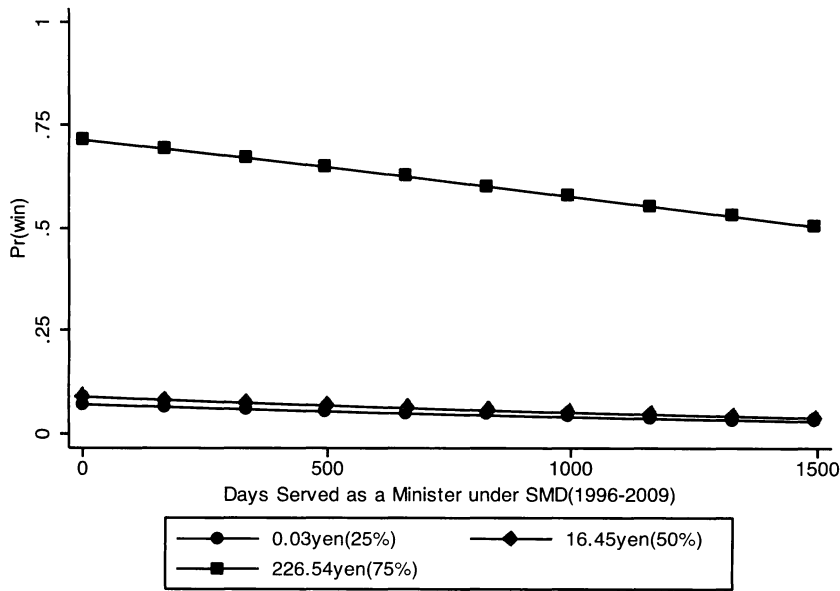
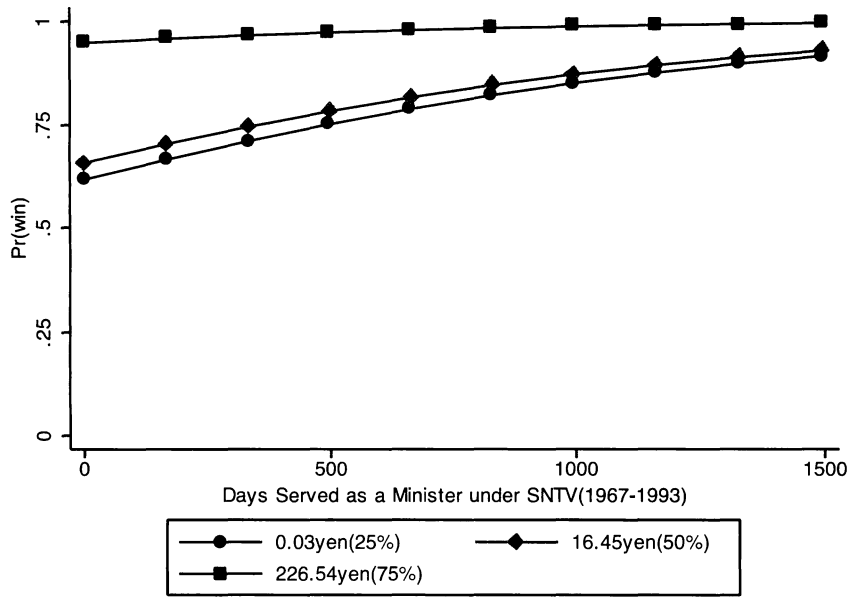


Figure 2 The Impact of Ministerial Status on Candidate Electability, Controlling for the Amount of Money Expended in District Elections (1967 – 2009)



## References

- Browne, Eric and Dennis Patterson (1999) "An Empirical Theory of Rational Nominating Behavior in Japanese District Elections," *British Journal of Political Science*. 29; 2: 259-289.
- Christensen, Ray (2000) *Ending LDP Hegemony: Party Cooperation in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Cox, Gary (1997) *Making Votes Count*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cox, Gary and Emerson Niou (1994) "Seat Bonuses under the Single Nontransferable Vote system: Evidence from Taiwan and Japan," *Comparative Politics*. 26: 221-236.
- Cox, Gary W., and Michael F. Thies. (1998) "The Cost of Intraparty Competition: The Single, Nontransferable Vote and Money Politics in Japan." *Comparative Political Studies* 31(3): 267-91.
- Duverger, Maurice (1954) *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. NY: John Wiley
- Hayama Akira (1992) "Incumbency Advantage in Japanese Elections," *Electoral Studies*. 11; 6: 46-57.
- Hickman, John (1992) "The Effect of Open Seats on Challenger Strength on Japanese Lower House Elections," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 17; 4: 573-584.
- Hirano, Shigeo (2006) "Electoral Institutions, Hometowns, and Favored Minorities: Evidence from Japanese Electoral Reforms." *World Politics* 59; 1: 51-82.
- Hirano Shigeo (2007) "Decomposing the Source of Electoral Support for LDP Representatives," Typescript, Columbia University.
- Krauss, Ellis and Robert Pekkanen (2004) "Explaining Party Adaptation to Electoral Reform: The Discreet Charm of the LDP," *Journal of Japanese Studies*. 30; 1: 1-34.
- Krauss, Ellis and Robert Pekkanen (2010) *The Rise and Fall of Japan's LDP: Political Party Organizations and Historical Institutions*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- McCubbins, Mathew, and Frances Rosenbluth (1995) "Party Provision for Personal Politics: Dividing the Vote in Japan." In *Structure and Policy in Japan and the United States*, ed. P.F. Cowhey and M. D. McCubbins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McKean Margaret and Ethan Scheiner (2000) "Japan's New Electoral System: La Plus ca Change," *Electoral Studies*. 19: 447-477.
- Naoi, Megumi, and Ellis Krauss (2009) "Who Lobbies Whom? Special Interest Politics under Alternative Electoral Systems," *American Journal of Political Science*. 53; 4: 874-892.
- Patterson, Dennis (2009) "Candidates, Votes, and Outcomes: A Method for Evaluating Nomination Strategies in MMD/SNTV Electoral Systems," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. 34; 2: 273-285.
- Patterson, Dennis and Hans Stockton (2010) "Strategies, Institutions, and Outcomes Under SNTV in Taiwan, 1992-2004," *Journal of East Asian Studies*. 10; 1: 31-59.
- Patterson, Dennis and Joseph Robbins (2012) "Party Competition, Nomination Errors, and the Electoral decline of the Japan Socialist Party," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*. 8; 1: 119-144.
- Pekkanen, Robert, Benjamin Nyblade, and Ellis Krauss (2006) "Electoral Incentives in Mixed Member Systems: Party, Posts, and Zombie Politicians in Japan," *American Political Science Review*. 100; 2: 183-93.
- Rae, Douglas W. (1971) *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Ramsayer, J. Mark, and Frances McCall Rosenbluth (1993) *Japan's Political Marketplace*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Reed, Steven R. (1990) "Structure and Behavior: Extending Duverger's Law to the Japanese Case," *British Journal of Political Science*. 20: 335-56.

- Reed, Steven R. (1994) “The Incumbency Advantage in Japan,” in Albert Somit, et. al., (eds.) *The Victorious Incumbent: A Threat to Democracy*. Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Publishing, pp. 278-303.
- Reed, Steven R. and Mike Thies (2001a) “The Causes of Electoral Reform in Japan,” in Matthew Soberg Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (eds.) *Mixed-Member Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* NY: Oxford University Press.
- Reed, Steven R. and Mike Thies (2001b) “The Consequences of Electoral Reform in Japan,” in Matthew Soberg Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (eds.) *Mixed-Member Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenbluth, Frances and Michael Thies (2011) *Japan Transformed: Political Change and Economic Restructuring*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Scheiner, Ethan (2006) *Democracy Without Competition: Opposition Failure in a One-Party Dominant State*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Taagepera, Rain and Matthew Soberg Shugart (1989) *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Tatebayashi, Masahiko (2004) *Giin Kodo no seiji keizaigaku – Jiminto shihai no seido bunseki*. Tokyo: Yuhikakusha.
- Wang, Yu (2007) “The Incumbent Advantage in Japanese Lower-Houses Elections: An Empirical Study, 1960-1996,” *Representation*. 43; 3: 199-208.

※本稿は、拓殖大学政治経済研究所・平成 22 年度個人研究助成の研究成果である。

(原稿受付 2013 年 11 月 6 日)