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# From Pork to Policy: The Rise of Programmatic Campaigning in Japanese Elections

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We examine two related propositions central to the subfield of comparative politics: that candidates for office adopt different electoral strategies under different electoral systems and rely more on particularism when faced with intraparty competition. We apply an innovative methodological approach that combines probabilistic topic modeling with in-depth qualitative interpretations of each topic to an original collection of 7,497 Japanese-language candidate election manifestos used in elections on either side of Japan's 1994 electoral reform. We find that the reform, which eliminated intraparty competition, was associated with a decline in particularism and an increase in promises of programmatic goods such as national security among candidates affiliated with Japan's Liberal Democratic Party. This is not explained by the entry of new candidates or other variables that could plausibly increase discussion of national security. Consistent with the theory, we find that opposition candidates relied on programmatic goods under both electoral systems.

Do candidates adopt different electoral strategies under different electoral systems? Decades of research in political science provides compelling reasons why the answer is yes. Scholars have used formal models to explain why candidates interested in winning office in majoritarian electoral systems have incentives to adopt electoral strategies that target the median voter, whereas their counterparts in proportional systems have incentives to adopt strategies that target groups of voters (e.g., Cox 1990; Downs 1957; Myerson 1993). Other scholars have demonstrated that candidates in electoral systems with intraparty competition have incentives to cultivate and run on personal reputations relative to their counterparts in electoral systems without intraparty competition, who can afford to rely on their party's reputation (Carey and Shugart 1995). Despite the intuitive propositions advanced in this work, there have been few attempts to evaluate their empirical validity in real-world political systems. This article seeks to remedy this. It applies quantitative text analysis to a new collection of 7,497 Japanese-language candidate election manifestos used in eight consecutive elections to Japan's House of Representatives (HOR) on either side of its 1994 electoral

reform to examine whether the electoral strategies that candidates adopted in those elections conform to our theoretical expectations.

An empirical examination of the relationship between electoral system and candidate electoral strategies is important in light of the explosion of interest in recent years in the effects of electoral systems on public policy outcomes (e.g., Bagashka 2012; Carey and Hix 2013; Chang 2008; Chang and Golden 2007; Hankla 2006; Iversen and Soskice 2006; Persson, Roland, and Tabellini 2007; Persson and Tabellini 2000; Rogowski and Kayser 2002; Rosenbluth and Schaap 2003; Wright 2010). Scholars have shown that consumer prices, banking, and welfare policy are more reflective of the preferences of the median voter in majoritarian systems than proportional ones, results that they attribute to candidate incentives to adopt electoral strategies that target the median voter (e.g., Estevez-Abe 2008; Rogowski and Kayser 2002; Rosenbluth and Schaap 2003; Rosenbluth and Thies 2010). Others have shown that countries using electoral systems characterized by intraparty competition are associated with more corruption (Chang and Golden 2007), greater protectionism in trade policy (Hankla 2006), less

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successful economic reform (Bagashka 2012), and less equitable aid distribution in developing countries (Wright 2010), results they attribute to the incentives that candidates in those systems have to adopt electoral strategies that court narrow groups of voters. This work has contributed greatly to our understanding of the determinants of policy differences across democracies and has reaffirmed the far-reaching effects of political institutions. Strictly speaking, however, it is not the electoral system per se that pushes candidates to choose different policies after reaching office but the electoral strategies that candidates are *thought to be adopting* under different electoral systems. Evidence that they are adopting the strategies expected of them would make us even more confident in the claims of this work.

To examine the relationship between electoral system and candidate electoral strategies, we focus on the case of Japan, where candidates for election to the HOR competed under single-nontransferable-vote in multimember districts (SNTV-MMD) prior to 1994 and mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) after 1994. There are at least four advantages to this empirical strategy. First, focusing on the behavior of candidates in a single country before and after an electoral reform mitigates the effects of other variables that could also be influencing candidate electoral strategies. A before-and-after comparison also enables us to examine the behavior of some of the same candidates over time. Because communicating new policy priorities and positions to one's constituents is presumed to entail costs (Cox 1990), evidence that candidates who adopted one strategy under one system changed their strategy under a new system would lend even stronger support to the proposition that they adopt different strategies under different systems. A before-and-after comparison is particularly illuminating in the case of Japan because many candidates who were members of the ruling party (opposition) before electoral reform remained members of the ruling party (opposition) after electoral reform, which enables us to rule out the possibility that gaining (losing) access to government resources could explain any observed change in strategies.<sup>1</sup> A before-and-after comparison is not free of problems because it does not eliminate the possibility that something else happened at the time of the reform that could account for any observed change in strategies; however, this can be addressed by identifying such

1. The reform was carried out in early 1994 by a coalition government that had wrested control from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) six months earlier. The LDP had formed every government since 1955. This government ruled until June 1994, when it was replaced by another coalition government, of which the LDP was the largest member (Curtis 1999). The LDP remained the largest member of every coalition government until losing the 2009 HOR election to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

variables and measuring them and also extending the theory's logic to explain variation within each electoral system.

Second, Japan's electoral reform moved it from a system in which candidates faced the constant presence or threat of intraparty competition to a system in which they face no intraparty competition. It thus provides a close-to-ideal laboratory in which we can evaluate the proposition that candidates facing intraparty competition will attach greater priority to particularistic goods relative to programmatic ones in their campaigns because they have more of a need to cultivate and run on a personal reputation. Articulated by Carey and Shugart (1995) and refined by Shugart (2001) and Farrell and McAllister (2006), among others, this proposition bequeathed the subfield of comparative politics with a compelling explanation for why some democracies distribute more public goods than others. Scholars have since found robust correlations between the level of intraparty competition in a political system and the level of public goods provision in that system (e.g., Chang and Golden 2007; Golden 2003; Hicken and Simmons 2008; Nielson 2003). While this variation is itself evidence that candidates facing intraparty competition are adopting electoral strategies dominated by particularism, evidence from the campaigns of candidates competing in real-world political systems would substantially bolster our confidence in this line of research.

Third, using the case of Japan enables us to answer two questions of interest to Japanese politics scholars. The first concerns the extent to which Japan's 1994 electoral reform was associated with changes in candidate electoral strategies. Scholars have documented momentous changes after the reform. To offer a few examples: candidates of the ruling party were found to have broadened their geographic bases of support (Hirano 2006), changed their relationships with party leaders and interest groups (Cox, Rosenbluth, and Thies 1999; Horiuchi and Saito 2010; Krauss and Naoi 2009; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; McElwain 2012; Pekkanen, Nyblade, and Krauss 2006, 2014; Reed, Scheiner, and Thies 2012), become extroverts (Estevez-Abe and Hikotani 2008), spent less money on their campaigns (Carlson 2006), implemented administrative reforms to strengthen the authority of the Prime Minister (Kaihara 2007; Mishima 2007), and tilted policy away from the interests of organized groups such as farmers, bankers, and construction companies (Estevez-Abe 2008; Horiuchi and Saito 2003; Noble 2010; Rosenbluth and Schaap 2003; Rosenbluth and Thies 2001, 2010; Saito 2010). These changes are all broadly consistent with the proposition that they have less of a need to court narrow groups of voters under the new system. Peculiarly, however, scholars have found less evidence of change in their elec-

toral strategies (Christensen 1998; Kollner 2009; Otake 1998). As late as 2008—four elections into the new system—Scheiner (2008, 167) noted that “campaigning continued to be highly candidate-oriented, with substantial emphasis on pork-barrel politics.” Similarly, a 2009 study described these candidates as relying on many of the same techniques to mobilize votes that they had used prior to electoral reform (Kollner 2009). These findings are difficult to reconcile with work that attributes other changes to the effects of electoral reform because it is unlikely that candidates would have acquiesced to these other changes if they had not also changed their electoral strategies. If they had not moved away from particularism in their campaigns, it is unlikely they would have moved away from particularism in policy outcomes. We present compelling evidence that candidates changed their electoral strategies in the expected direction after electoral reform.

The second question concerns the degree to which the increased interest in national security among LDP politicians in recent years (e.g., Estevez-Abe and Hikotani 2008; Grimes 2003; McCormack 2002; Sasada 2006), and the dramatic changes that occurred in Japanese security policy (e.g., Hughes 2009; Pyle 2007; Samuels 2007) are rooted in their need to compete under new electoral rules that place a premium on promising and providing programmatic goods. For many years, individual LDP politicians paid little attention to security issues, even as they presided over a dramatic shift in Japan’s economic and technological power, and even though their positions on the US-Japan security alliance and pacifist clause of Japan’s constitution were what divided them from the socialist and communist opposition parties (e.g., Bobrow 1993; Calder 1988; Cowhey 1993; Hellman 1977; Ishiba 2005; Katzenstein 1996; Keddell 1993). As a consequence, nothing but “almost-imperceptible” shifts in security policy occurred during this time (Mulgan 1988, 244). Recently, Rosenbluth and Thies (2010) have posited that Japan’s new activism in foreign security policy can at least partially be explained by their need to promise and provide programmatic goods after electoral reform, of which a sound foreign security policy is one.<sup>2</sup> We provide evidence from their campaigns that is consistent with this proposition.

The fourth advantage of using the case of Japan concerns data availability. Empirical work on the relationship between electoral system and electoral strategies has focused almost exclusively on the electoral strategies of *parties* (e.g., Dow 2011; Ezrow 2008; Karp and Banducci 2002).

2. See Estevez-Abe and Hikotani (2008) and Pekkanen and Krauss (2005) for slightly different arguments about how Japan’s electoral systems influenced decision making surrounding national security.

But when candidates are competing against copartisans, their party platforms will be poor proxies for the issues they are choosing to emphasize in their *own campaigns*. To evaluate whether candidates facing intraparty competition attach greater priority to particularistic goods in their campaigns, we need data on those issues. In Japan, candidates for office produce candidate election manifestos (in Japanese: *senkyo koho*), which local electoral commissions are required to distribute to all registered voters in the district at least two days before an election. Because all candidates are subject to the same campaign rules, which severely restrict the means they can use to communicate with voters during campaigns (McElwain 2012), we can assume that the manifestos are not only broadly representative of the issues they emphasized during their campaign but also carry similar weight in the campaigns of all candidates, regardless of level of personal wealth. For the purpose of this study, we collected the manifestos of every serious candidate who competed in the three elections immediately prior to Japan’s 1994 electoral reform and the five elections immediately after. Altogether, we collect and analyze the manifestos of 7,497 serious candidates.

The article is organized as follows. The second section uses existing theory to deduce the electoral strategies candidates from all major parties ought to have adopted before and after Japan’s electoral reform. The third and fourth sections describe how probabilistic topic modeling and in-depth qualitative interpretations of each topic were applied to the manifestos to construct comprehensive, reliable indicators of electoral strategy for all serious candidates running in the eight elections held between 1986 and 2009. The fifth section presents the results, the sixth section weighs up the possibility that these results are better explained by other variables, and the seventh section describes our contribution to comparative politics and Japanese politics.

## ELECTORAL REFORM AND CANDIDATE ELECTORAL STRATEGIES IN JAPAN

From 1947 until 1994, Japan’s House of Representatives used an electoral system called SNTV-MMD (single-nontransferable-vote in multimember districts) to elect between 467 and 512 members in between 118 and 131 districts. Under this system, voters cast a single vote for a candidate in a district that elected between two and six representatives, and the top *n*-vote getters in each district won a seat. Cox (1990) shows that systems such as SNTV-MMD, which combine plurality rule with a single vote per voter and a district magnitude larger than one, produce centrifugal electoral competition, with candidates spreading out across the ideological spectrum and targeting groups of voters. District magnitude has this effect

because it influences the number of candidates running. When it is high, more candidates enter the race, which lowers the vote share each candidate needs to win. Lower vote shares encourage candidates to target groups of voters (Downs 1957; Myerson 1993).

SNTV-MMD also required majority-seeking parties to run more than one candidate in each district, which required their candidates to compete against each other. When candidates from the same party are competing against each other, they cannot rely exclusively on their respective party labels and must find an alternative means of attracting votes. One way they can do this is by cultivating and running on a personal reputation, or a “personal vote” (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Reed 1994). Carey and Shugart (1995) argue that the degree to which candidates will benefit from developing a personal reputation varies according to four features of an electoral system: the degree of control party leaders have over access to the party label, whether votes are pooled across candidates from the same party, the number and kind of votes voters possess, and district magnitude. They assert that the value of cultivating a personal reputation increases as district magnitude increases in systems with intraparty competition but decreases as district magnitude increases in systems without intraparty competition. In their taxonomy, SNTV-MMD, in which voters select candidates and there is no pooling of votes across candidates of the same party, ranks as a system with extremely strong incentives for candidates to cultivate and run on personal votes.

As Carey and Shugart (1995) and others note (e.g., Cain et al. 1987), one way that candidates seek to cultivate a personal reputation is by promising and providing “particularistic goods,” defined here as goods whose benefits are designed to be concentrated on select groups of voters while the costs of providing them are diffused throughout the rest of the population. A rich literature in Japanese politics documents that this was the electoral strategy adopted by candidates affiliated with the LDP, which claimed a plurality of seats in the Diet from its inception in 1955 until the last election held under this system in 1993. LDP candidates came up with particularistic goods such as roads, bridges, tax breaks, subsidies, grants, and treats like trips to the hot springs, and promised those goods to select groups of voters in their district through their own personal support organizations (in Japanese: *koenkai*; see, e.g., Bouissou 1999; Curtis 1971; Fukui and Fukai 1999; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; Thayer 1969).

To ensure they could deliver on their promises, they created an elaborate system of intraparty policy committees, gave each other the right to select two of these committees to join, gave all committee members a veto over policies

that fell within that committee’s jurisdiction, and required party leaders to gain the assent of the relevant policy committee before submitting legislation to the HOR (Estevez-Abe 2008; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; McCubbins and Rosenbluth 1995; Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993). This system gave each LDP politician the ability to create a personal reputation for delivering particularistic goods of interest to their constituents. Unsurprisingly, the committees with the largest memberships were in policy areas conducive to generating particularistic goods, such as construction, agriculture and forestry, and commerce and industry (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993, 32). Committees with smaller memberships pertained to areas that were not as conducive, such as science and technology, the environment, justice, and national security. One study noted that membership in the LDP’s defense committee was “unpopular,” meetings were “poorly attended, with only 3–5 members present,” and service in national security-related positions were “avoided whenever possible” (Keddell 1993). This gives rise to the following hypothesis:

**H1.** Under SNTV-MMD, LDP candidates adopted electoral strategies dominated by promises of particularistic goods.

Under SNTV-MMD, the level of intraparty competition faced by each LDP candidate varied according to variation in the number of candidates the LDP leadership thought the party could plausibly elect in each district and variation in the relative popularity of the candidates running (Cox and Rosenbluth 1994). If the priority candidates attach to particularism is influenced by intraparty competition, then it is reasonable to expect that LDP candidates facing more intraparty competition would have attached greater priority to particularism than their counterparts facing less. The intuition here is that more same-district copartisans means a greater risk that one’s supporters might be poached and thus more pressure to signal one’s commitment with particularistic goods. While this pressure may have been less acute at lower levels of intraparty competition, it would not have disappeared entirely even at no intraparty competition. This is because even LDP candidates facing no intraparty competition would have faced the possibility that their constituents would be poached, either in that election by a candidate running as an independent who hoped to join the party after the election, or in the next election by a candidate who had managed to obtain the party’s nomination or who was running as an independent, hoping to join the party after the election (Reed 2009). In short, the threat of more LDP-inclined candidates in the future would have deterred

even LDP candidates facing no intraparty competition from switching entirely to programmatic goods under this electoral system. This gives rise to a second hypothesis:

**H2.** Under SNTV-MMD, LDP candidates facing higher levels of intraparty competition relied more on particularism.

In January 1994, the electoral system was reformed by a coalition government that had wrested control from the LDP the previous August. The LDP regained control of government in June 1994 and ruled in a series of coalition governments until 2009, when it lost to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which was formed after electoral reform and became the second-largest opposition party in 2000. The new electoral system is comprised of two tiers. In the first tier, 300 members (reduced to 295 in 2013) are elected in single member districts (SMDs), and in the second tier 200 members (reduced to 180 in 2000) are elected from closed party lists in 11 regional blocs according to proportional representation (PR). Importantly, the allocation of seats in the SMD tier is independent of the allocation of seats in PR, making the system mixed member majoritarian (MMM). The independence of tiers means that the number of seats a party wins in the SMD tier are added to the seats it wins in the PR tier, which gives majority-seeking parties incentives to win as many SMDs as possible. The two majority-seeking parties, the LDP and the DPJ, adopted the principle that their candidates would be dual-listed in both tiers, with their chances of being resurrected in PR made dependent upon how closely they lost their SMD (Bawn and Thies 2003; McKean and Scheiner 2000). We can thus assume that candidates from majority-seeking parties will be prioritizing their SMD competitions but will also want to maximize the share of seats their party wins in PR (Pekkanen et al. 2014).

Because SMDs produce a single winner, fewer candidates enter the race, which increases the vote share each candidate needs to win. Higher vote shares, according to Cox (1990), produce centripetal electoral competition, with candidates converging on a centrally located ideological position and targeting the median voter. SMDs also mean that majority-seeking parties no longer have incentives to run more than one candidate in each district. In parliamentary systems with SMDs, candidates in majority-seeking parties have incentives to work together with their copartisans to identify positions on broad policy issues that appeal to voters in all districts in which the party is running candidates, advertise those positions in the mass media, and promise to collectively implement them after the election (Cox 1987;

Rosenbluth and Thies 2010). We refer to goods that purport to benefit large classes of people as “programmatic goods.” To ensure winning candidates do not defect from the collective provision of these goods after the election, it is thought that candidates acquiesce to the empowering of the party leader to punish would-be defectors by ceding the authority to, for example, nominate, fund, and award posts in return for the informational advantages they receive from being associated with a party that provides programmatic goods and the accomplishments they can take back to their constituents in the next election (Cox 1997).

Evidence of such a shift in electoral strategies is mixed. On the one hand, studies found that the introduction of MMM was associated with LDP leaders gaining the right to nominate (e.g., Reed 1995), fund (e.g., Carlson 2006), and allocate career-advancing posts to LDP politicians (e.g., Fujimura 2012; Pekkanen et al. 2006). It was also associated with policy expertise becoming a more important determinant of selection into Cabinet (Pekkanen et al. 2014) and party labels becoming more important determinants of candidate electoral victory (Reed et al. 2012). It also predated an increase in attention to national security (e.g., Estevez-Abe and Hikotani 2008; Grimes 2003) and shifts in government spending away from particularistic goods such as agriculture and construction toward programmatic goods such as social welfare, science and technology, and public order (Noble 2010). Together, this provides indirect evidence that LDP candidates switched to promising programmatic goods after electoral reform. On the other hand, work on electoral strategies has not found compelling evidence that such a shift occurred. Case studies of the campaigns of LDP candidates after electoral reform document a surprising degree of continuity (e.g., Christensen 1998; Kollner 2009; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011; Otake 1998; Scheiner 2008). These studies found that LDP candidates still campaigned on particularism and still mobilized votes through personal support organizations. Whether such a shift toward campaigning based on programmatic goods occurred therefore remains to be tested. This gives rise to a third hypothesis:

**H3.** Under MMM, LDP candidates adopt electoral strategies dominated by promises of programmatic goods.

Under SNTV-MMD, there were four major opposition parties. After 1958, none ran enough candidates to be classified as majority-seeking. The absence (or extremely low levels) of intraparty competition faced by these candidates, combined with their lack of access to government resources, would have encouraged them to adopt electoral strategies dom-

inated by promises of programmatic goods.<sup>3</sup> Under MMM, two types of opposition parties exist: majority-seeking parties such as the DPJ and nonmajority-seeking parties such as the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Japan Communist Party (JCP). Nonmajority-seeking parties can survive if they win seats in PR and therefore run candidates in SMDs to increase their votes in PR (Cox and Schoppa 2002; Mizusaki and Mori 1998). Candidates of neither type face intraparty competition and so should continue to emphasize programmatic goods. This gives rise to a fourth hypothesis:

**H4.** Under both SNTV-MMD and MMM, candidates from the opposition parties adopted electoral strategies dominated by promises of programmatic goods.

#### **DATA: 7,497 CANDIDATE ELECTION MANIFESTOS**

Upon registering their candidacy, candidates for HOR elections in Japan are given a form by their local electoral commissions. They are instructed to write whatever they want in the form and return it before 5 PM of the first day of the campaign. At least two days before the election, local electoral commissions are required to distribute the forms of all candidates running in the district to all registered voters. Unlike other proxies for candidate electoral strategy, such as roll-call voting records or survey responses, this form is produced by the candidate for the explicit purpose of communicating her policy views to voters during campaigns. Because it is comprised of policies the candidate herself chose to make part of her campaign, it can be treated as an election manifesto. Because it is of a fixed length and is distributed to all registered voters, it can be treated as a summary indicator of the policies the candidate emphasized, and by extension the electoral strategy she adopted, in her campaign.

The validity of the manifesto as a summary indicator of candidate electoral strategy would be threatened if candidates did not take its production seriously. There is some evidence that candidates do not implement the promises made in their manifestos (Kobayashi 1997). However, an interview with a secretary to a Member of the HOR revealed that the process of writing the candidate's manifesto

3. Like LDP candidates, candidates affiliated with the opposition also faced the threat of more copartisans running in the district in future elections. An important study shows that one way they dealt with this threat was to prevent their party leaders from adopting positions on programmatic goods that were more popular with voters because more-popular policy positions would have meant that the party could elect more candidates, which would have meant more same-district copartisans, which would have meant tougher electoral battles for individual candidates (Maeda 2012).

for the 2009 election involved five secretaries, who met five to seven times, with each meeting lasting approximately two hours. The secretary stated that the candidate "decides the policies himself" and thinks about "what his opponents are likely to write" and "what will be popular with his voters" when writing it.<sup>4</sup> The effort this candidate put into writing his manifesto makes sense in light of the fact that candidates for office in Japan are subject to an extraordinary array of campaign restrictions that severely limit the means they can use to communicate their policy views to voters during election campaigns on the one hand, yet face voters who profess interest in those views on the other.

To clarify, candidates for office in Japan are not allowed to purchase spots on television, time on the radio, or space in the newspaper (Curtis 1971; McElwain 2008). Until very recently, they were not even allowed to update their websites or their blogs during campaigns. Candidates competing in HOR elections during the period of study were able to use six means to communicate their policy views to voters until 1994, when the publicly funded candidate policy broadcast was discontinued, leaving them with only five. Of these five, the manifesto is the only means that candidates could use to reach all voters. While one might be concerned that such stringent restrictions reflected a lack of interest in the candidate's views and manifesto, post-election surveys conducted for the elections held between 1972 and 2005 reveal that, on average, 43% of respondents reported prioritizing "a candidate who thinks about the nation's politics as a whole" when deciding who to vote for, and on average, 42% of respondents reported that they had "watched, listened, or been persuaded by" the candidate's manifesto in the two days before an election (*ASSK National Survey Data* 2005). The fact that all candidates were subject to the same restrictions yet faced large numbers of voters who were interested in their views and likely to glance at their manifestos makes it unlikely that it was just this particular candidate who took its production seriously.

When the electoral system was reformed in 1994, the candidate policy broadcast was discontinued and a provision allowing parties to publish policy statements was introduced. In 2003, parties were allowed to distribute what became known as "manifestos" to voters (Estevez-Abe 2006). It is unlikely that candidates would have responded to the publication of the party manifesto by discounting the importance of their candidate manifesto when surveys showed that "a candidate who thinks about the nation's politics as a whole" continued to govern the choices of large propor-

4. Interview, April 29, 2010, Cambridge, MA.

tions of voters. It is more likely that candidates would have responded by calculating that some policies would be better off being presented to voters in the party manifesto. If this were the case, the candidate manifesto would paint a biased picture of the candidate's electoral strategy. But because the candidate manifesto is designed to be read by registered voters who resided in the district and the party manifesto is designed to be read by voters across the nation, it is likely that candidates would have put promises of particularistic goods into their candidate manifesto and promises of programmatic goods into their party manifesto. This means that if we observe an increase in discussion of programmatic goods in candidate manifestos after electoral reform, our estimate of the size of the increase will likely be biased downward. The size of the shift in electoral strategy toward programmatic goods is likely to be even larger than that observed in the candidate manifesto.

We collected the manifestos of the 7,497 serious candidates who ran in the eight consecutive elections held between 1986 and 2009. We chose consecutive elections so that we could examine the strategies of some of the same candidates over time. Serious candidates were defined as those who were either endorsed by one of the 18 major parties running candidates in these elections or won more than 10,000 votes (Shinada 2006).<sup>5</sup> Three of these elections were held under SNTV-MMD (the 1986, 1990, and 1993 elections) and five were held under MMM (the 1996, 2000, 2003, 2005, and 2009 elections). Altogether, we have the manifestos of 2,520 candidates running under SNTV-MMD and 4,977 candidates running under MMM. The typical manifesto is divided into sections including Greetings, Policies, Promises, Public Pledges, Accomplishments, Biography, Profile, and Endorsements. We discarded the Biography/Profile sections, which were almost always a list of accomplishments resembling a resume, and the Endorsements section, which was almost always a list of names.

#### **METHODOLOGY: LATENT DIRICHLET ALLOCATION**

Our quantities of interest are the proportion of each manifesto devoted to particularistic goods, programmatic goods, and within the latter, national security. To obtain these quantities, we used the probabilistic topic model latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) to estimate the topics in the manifestos. Then we used in-depth qualitative interpretations of each

topic to ensure they were substantively meaningful. Finally, for each topic we used information about the proportion of Japan's population it purported to benefit to classify it as particularistic or programmatic. This section summarizes the research process, which is described in more detail in the appendix, available online.

Unlike more traditional approaches to text analysis such as hand-coding, which have been used by other scholars to analyze smaller collections of these manifestos (e.g., Kobayashi 1997; Shinada 2001; Tsutsumi 2002), LDA offers the advantage of not requiring the researcher to know in advance what topics will be observed in a collection of documents or how one would recognize those topics. Instead, it enables the researcher to uncover the topics in a collection of documents while simultaneously estimating the probability that each document in the collection is composed of each topic (Blei, Ng, and Jordan 2003). As input, it takes a term-document matrix, in which the words appearing in the entire collection of documents are in the rows, the document identifiers are in the columns, and the frequencies with which each word appears in each document are in the cells. It uses the frequencies with which words appear in each document, which are observed, to make inferences about the topics in the collection of documents that gave rise to the use of those words, which are unobserved. As output, it produces estimates of the probabilities that each word and each document are composed of each topic. For each document, the probabilities that it is composed of each topic sum to 1, which enables the researchers to treat them as estimates of the proportion of each document that is composed of each topic.

Instead of requiring the researcher to know in advance what topics will be observed in the collection or how one would recognize those topics, LDA requires the researcher to fit the model, which means selecting the number of topics. Conceptually, selecting higher numbers of topics enables the researcher to "zoom in" on narrower themes of interest (such as Japan's relations with China), whereas selecting fewer topics enables the researcher to "zoom out" to examine broader themes (such as Japan's foreign policy more generally) (Blei 2012). Political scientists who have used LDA or modified versions of it to answer questions of interest typically select the number of topics based on whether the topics outputted in a particular specification are substantively meaningful (e.g., Grimmer 2010; Moser and Reeves 2015; Quinn et al. 2010). This is ascertained by reading the words and documents with high probabilities of belonging to each topic and using other information, such as the authors of the documents or the date they were produced, to ensure they cohere with other well-known

5. Under SNTV-MMD, the major parties were the LDP, JSP, JCP, DSP, Komeito, Sakigake, Shinseitō, and Japan New Party. In the first five elections under MMM, they were the LDP, New Frontier Party, DPJ, Sakigake, Social Democratic Party (SDP), JCP, New Komeito, Liberals, Conservatives, New Socialist Party, Your Party, Nippon New Party, and People's New Party.

facts (Grimmer and Stewart 2013). We adopted the same approach. We fit the model with 69 topics because this was one of the lowest specifications that produced topics that were fine-grained enough to resemble our quantities of interest. To validate this specification, we used in-depth qualitative interpretations of each topic, conducted by reading the 15 Japanese-language words and 10 Japanese-language manifestos with the highest probabilities of belonging to each of the 69 topics, and characteristics of the manifestos in which the topics appeared to demonstrate that they cohered with well-known facts about Japanese politics. English-language translations of the labels we assigned to each validated topic and the 15 words with the highest probabilities of belonging to each topic are reported in the appendix.

Of the 69 topics, this procedure identified three credit-claiming topics (topics 23, 46, and 57). Because we are interested in the promises that candidates made in these elections, we excluded these from the analysis that follows. Of the remaining 66 topics, two types of topics were observed: those that were primarily discussed by the candidates of a single party in a single election (what we call “party-platform topics”) and those that were primarily discussed by candidates of more than one party in more than one election (what we call “issue topics”). No more unfair taxes, peace constitution (topic 7) is a party-platform topic and regional devolution (topic 17) and saving the natural environment (topic 39) are issue topics. The presence of party platform topics means that the policies these candidates were discussing were so similar to each other that the model classified this discussion as a single topic. While an unexpected result, party-platform topics provide additional support for our fourth hypothesis in a way that we explain below.

After we fit the model and validated the fit, we had to decide which of the 66 noncredit claiming topics concerned particularistic and programmatic goods, respectively. While the technical properties that distinguish programmatic from particularistic goods are excludability and rivalry, Malkin and Wildavsky (1991) show that neither is an intrinsic feature of a good. In his study of government spending in Japan, Noble (2010) jettisons these technical properties by classifying policies that purport to benefit large groups of voters as programmatic and policies that purport to benefit small groups of voters as particularistic. We adopt a similar approach. We read manifestos with high probabilities of belonging to each of the 66 topics, collected the names of the groups of people that candidates suggested would benefit from the promises associated with each topic (its “purported beneficiaries”), and collected data from Japanese government and other sources to calculate the proportion of each of these groups in Japan’s population. This enabled us to

distinguish topics aimed at large groups of voters, such as citizens, from topics aimed at smaller groups of voters, such as workers in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. We classified the former as programmatic and the latter as particularistic. Helpfully, this takes into account the fact that particularism can encompass policies for geographically defined groups of voters (such as residents of a particular district) and policies for socioeconomically defined groups of voters (such as doctors; Carey and Hix 2013). This left us with estimates of our quantities of interest for all 7,497 manifestos.

## RESULTS

To test hypotheses 1 and 3, we merged our estimates with variables in the Japan MMD Data Set and Japan SMD Data Set (Reed and Smith 2007, 2009). We performed two sets of calculations. First, we calculated the mean percentage of discussion composed of particularistic and programmatic goods, respectively, in the 2,355 manifestos produced by LDP candidates in these eight elections.<sup>6</sup> In this section, we use “pork” as shorthand for particularistic goods and “policy” as shorthand for programmatic goods. In 1986 ( $n = 323$ ) the average LDP candidate manifesto was 36% policy and 61% pork. In 1990 ( $n = 334$ ) it was 37% policy and 60% pork. In 1993 ( $n = 284$ ) it was 50% policy and 47% pork. In 1996 ( $n = 287$ ) it was 57% policy and 41% pork. In 2000 ( $n = 271$ ) it was 55% policy and 43% pork. In 2003 ( $n = 277$ ) it was 69% policy and 29% pork. In 2005 ( $n = 290$ ), it was 72% policy and 26% pork. In 2009 ( $n = 289$ ), it was 64% policy and 33% pork.<sup>7</sup> A difference in means test between the mean percentage of policy in the 1993 manifestos and the mean percentage of policy in the 1996 manifestos was significant, with a  $p$ -value of  $<.001$ . Figure 1 plots these figures.

This reveals that LDP candidates relied on electoral strategies dominated by pork in 1986 and 1990 but not in 1993. This election was different for two reasons. First, LDP candidates faced lower levels of intraparty competition because the party failed to replace all its defectors.<sup>8</sup> Second, LDP candidates squared off against candidates from seven different opposition parties championing political reform.

6. A total of 2,356 LDP candidates ran in these elections. One candidate in 1996 did not produce a manifesto.

7. In 2009, the LDP failed to capture a plurality of seats for the first time in its history.

8. An index of intraparty competition, created for each LDP candidate by calculating the number of LDP opponents she faced relative to district magnitude, showed that the average LDP candidate faced similar levels of intraparty competition in 1986 and 1990 (indexes of 4.6 and 4.4, respectively) and a lower level in 1993 (an index of 3.7).

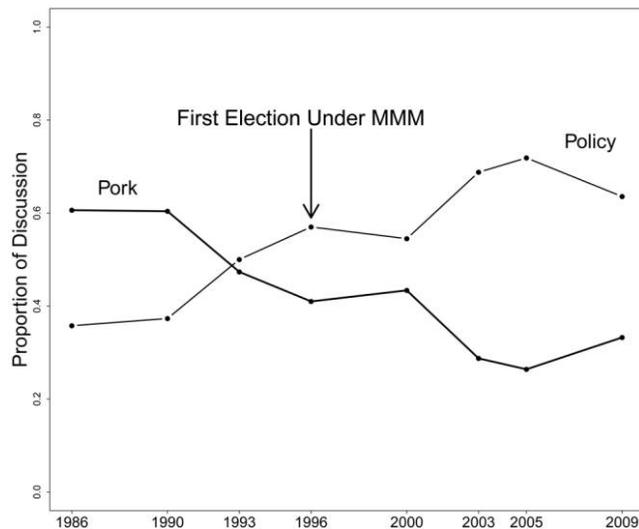


Figure 1. LDP candidates switched to more policy and less pork in the 1993 election and continued with this strategy under MMM. This figure plots the mean proportions of discussion devoted to pork and policy, respectively, in the 2,355 manifestos produced by LDP candidates in these eight elections.

It is likely that LDP candidates calculated that forgoing some demonstration of commitment to constituents in favor of demonstrating commitment to the cause of political reform was the prudent strategy and their discussion of political reform can explain their increase of policy discussion. In support of this, the average LDP candidate manifesto in 1993 was 12% doing away with decayed LDP politics (topic 22) and 8% political reform (topic 19). Japanese politics was described as “mired in corruption,” with “low levels of trust.” Candidates promised to “get rid of decayed money politics,” “get rid of factions,” “devote their utmost to realizing political reform,” and “build a new Japanese politics.”

We also examined their discussion of national security. We calculated the mean percentage of discussion of national security (topic 6) in the 2,355 manifestos produced by LDP candidates in these eight elections. We can use this topic to examine discussion of national security because it was discussed in all eight elections. The mean percentage of discussion devoted to national security in the average LDP candidate manifesto under SNTV-MMD was 0.2% in 1986 ( $n = 323$ ), 0.2% in 1990 ( $n = 334$ ), and 0.1% in 1993 ( $n = 284$ ). Under MMM it was 0.5% in 1996 ( $n = 287$ ), 1.5% in 2000 ( $n = 271$ ), 6% in 2003 ( $n = 277$ ), 4% in 2005 ( $n = 290$ ), and 6.6% in 2009 ( $n = 289$ ). A difference in means test between the mean percentage of national security in the 1993 manifestos (0.1%) and the mean percentage of national security in the 1996 manifestos (0.5%) was significant, with a  $p$ -value of  $<.05$ . Figure 2 plots these

figures. With the exception of the unusual 1993 election, these results confirm hypotheses 1 and 3, and also provide evidence that the electoral reform was associated with an increase in discussion of national security among LDP candidates.

To test hypothesis 2, we examined the relationships between pork, policy, and intraparty competition for all 941 LDP candidates competing in the three elections under SNTV-MMD. For each candidate, we created an index, *opponents.m*, which measures the number of same-district copartisan faced relative to  $M$ , the district magnitude. We found that the correlation between discussion of pork and number of LDP opponents in the district relative to  $M$  was positive and significant (Pearson  $r = .28$ ,  $n = 941$ ). Similarly, the correlation between discussion of policy and intraparty competition was negative and significant (Pearson  $r = -.29$ ,  $n = 941$ ). The average manifesto produced by LDP candidates competing at higher levels of intraparty competition (an *opponents.m* value of 0.4 or above) was 61% pork and 36% policy. The average manifesto produced by LDP candidates at lower levels of intraparty competition (an *opponents.m* value of below 0.4) was 48% pork and 49% policy. A difference in means test between discussion of pork in the manifestos of LDP candidates facing fewer LDP opponents and LDP candidates facing more LDP opponents was significant, with a  $p$ -value of  $<.001$ . A difference in means test between discussion of policy in the manifestos of LDP candidates facing fewer LDP opponents and LDP candidates facing more LDP opponents was also

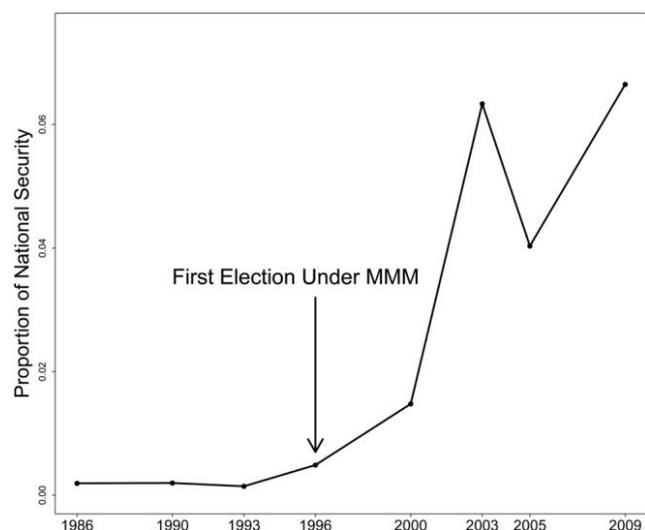


Figure 2. LDP candidates increased their discussion of national security in the first election under MMM. This figure plots the mean proportion of discussion comprised of national security in the 2,355 manifestos produced by LDP candidates in these eight elections.

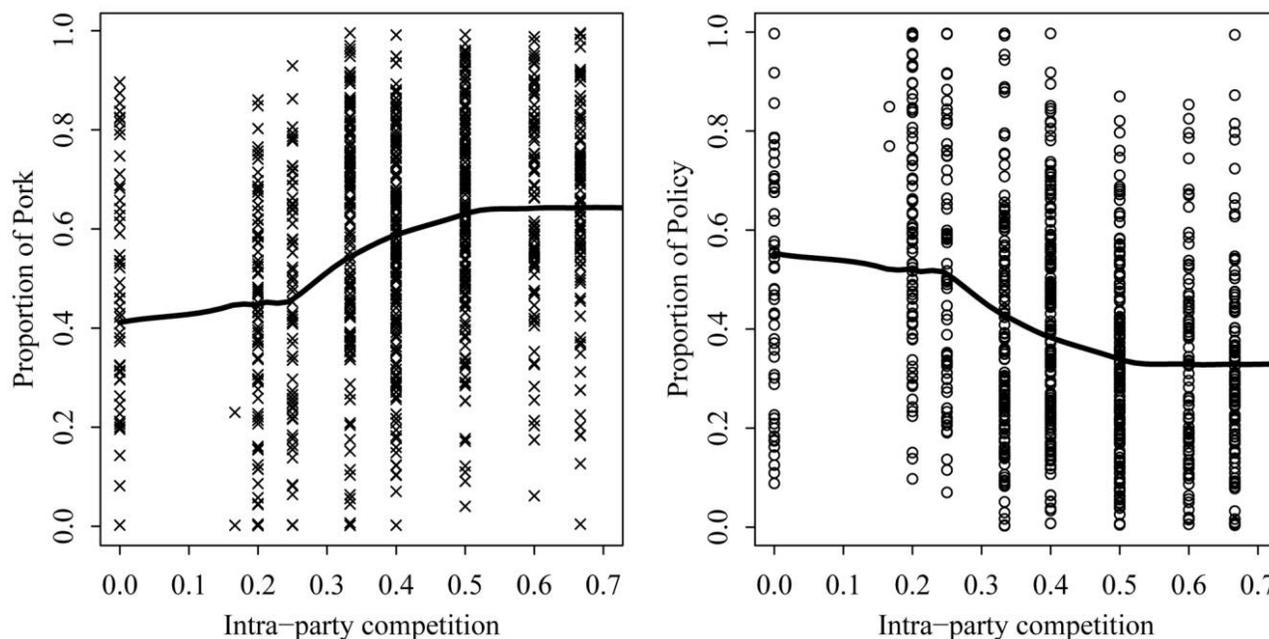


Figure 3. LDP candidates facing higher levels of intraparty competition discussed more pork and less policy than LDP candidates facing lower levels of intraparty competition under SNTV-MMD, where level of intraparty competition is measured by number of LDP opponents relative to district magnitude. The left panel shows that discussion of pork is higher at higher levels of intraparty competition. The right panel shows that discussion of policy is lower at higher levels of intraparty competition.

significant, with a  $p$ -value of  $<.001$ . Figure 3 depicts the relationship. This supports hypothesis 2.<sup>9</sup>

To test hypothesis 4, we calculated the mean percentage of discussion composed of pork and policy, respectively, in

9. Under MMM, while no LDP candidate faced intraparty competition at the ballot box, some faced intraparty competition for the SMD nomination (Reed 1995). The redrawing of district boundaries that accompanied Japan's electoral reform often meant that more than one LDP candidate had support in a district and wanted to run in it. Another observable implication of the theory being tested here is that LDP candidates who faced tougher battles for the SMD nomination will rely more on particularism in their subsequent campaigns because they know there are other viable LDP candidates who their supporters and the supporters of other LDP politicians who used to run in the district could decide to nominate (or lobby the party headquarters to nominate) in future elections. Knowing this, these candidates will be mindful of the need to placate these various groups of supporters with particularistic goods. A difference in means test between discussion of pork in the manifestos of LDP candidates who had fought for the SMD nomination, secured it, and saw one or more same-district co-partisans move to the PR list after electoral reform ( $n = 88$ ) and LDP candidates who had not ( $n = 1,326$ ) was significant (with a  $p$ -value of  $<.01$ ), and in the expected direction (pork comprised 42% of the manifestos of candidates in the former category and 34% of the manifestos of candidates in the latter). An alternative indicator that an LDP candidate had faced intraparty competition for the nomination is if he or she was running in a rural district, where the conservative camps were better-organized (Curtis 1971; Scheiner 1999). Using a standard measure of population density, we found a significant negative correlation between discussion of pork in an LDP candidate manifesto after electoral reform and urbanness of the district in which the candidate ran (Pearson  $r$  was  $-0.39$ ).

the 4,505 manifestos produced by candidates running from the 17 opposition parties in these eight elections.<sup>10</sup> In 1986 ( $n = 384$ ) the average opposition candidate manifesto was 84% policy and 15% pork. In 1990 ( $n = 384$ ) it was 86% policy and 13% pork. In 1993 ( $n = 496$ ) it was 86% policy and 13% pork. In 1996 ( $n = 769$ ) it was 87% policy and 11% pork. In 2000 ( $n = 708$ ) it was 88% policy and 11% pork. In 2003 ( $n = 650$ ) it was 90% policy and 8% pork. In 2005 ( $n = 627$ ) it was 90% policy and 7% pork. In 2009 ( $n = 487$ ) it was 92% policy and 7% pork. A difference in means test between the mean percentage of policy in the manifestos of opposition candidates in 1993 and the mean percentage of policy in the manifestos of opposition candidates in 1996 was not significant, which was expected. Figure 4 plots these figures.

Another observable implication of the theory is that because opposition candidates were not facing intraparty competition, they were free to construct and run on their respective party labels. Party-platform topics, which were discussed primarily by opposition candidates, were evidence of this. In 1996, for example, the average JCP candidate manifesto was 60% no tax increases, no US-Japan alliance (topic 11) and in 2000 it was 75% no more LDP, no more public works (topic 21). While it is difficult to separate out the

10. These are listed in note 6. There were 4,507 opposition candidates in total (two did not produce a manifesto).

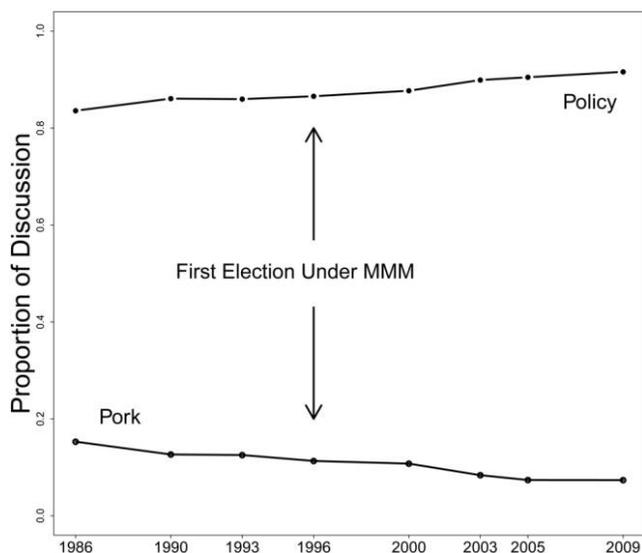


Figure 4. Opposition candidates adopted electoral strategies of more policy and less pork in elections held under both SNTV-MMD and MMM. This figure plots the mean proportions of discussion comprised of pork and policy in the 4,505 manifestos produced by opposition candidates running from the 14 major opposition parties in these eight elections.

proportion of discussion devoted to national security in the manifestos of these candidates because of the presence of party-platform topics, reading the words and manifestos with high probabilities of belonging to these topics revealed that positions on the US-Japan security alliance, US bases in Japan, and the Self Defense Forces were components of almost all the party platform topics adopted by JCP, JSP, SDP, and New Socialist Party candidates in these elections.<sup>11</sup> This supports hypothesis 4.

**ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS**

The above section presented evidence that intraparty competition explains variation in emphasis on particularism between and within electoral systems, which lends strong support to two propositions of theoretical interest: that candidates adopt different electoral strategies under different electoral systems and rely more on particularism when faced with intraparty competition. This section first evaluates whether the increase in discussion of programmatic goods depicted in figure 1 is explained by new candidates.

11. Readers may be concerned that national security was a component of other topics discussed by LDP candidates. Reading the words and manifestos with high probabilities of belonging to topics discussed by LDP candidates revealed that positions on security issues were largely confined to topic 6, which is why it formed the basis of our earlier analysis. We say “largely” because LDA assigns nonzero probabilities that all words, even security-related words, belong to every topic.

Then it considers whether the increase in discussion of national security depicted in figure 2 is explained by changes in ideological preferences or increases in concern about national security. Consistent with the theory being tested, the previous section demonstrated that opposition candidates discussed programmatic goods such as national security under both systems, which suggests we can rule out the possibility that a shift in their electoral strategies explains the changes in strategies of LDP candidates.

**Replacement?**

Our claim is that candidates adopt different electoral strategies under different electoral systems, not that different electoral systems attract different types of candidates who adopt different electoral strategies. The latter claim is another plausible effect of electoral reform, but our claim is that electoral systems have *direct effects* on strategies. We examined how discussion changed after electoral reform for the 209 LDP candidates who competed in at least one election under SNTV-MMD and one under MMM. We found that of the 209 LDP candidates who had embarked on their careers under SNTV-MMD, 78% (or 163 candidates) increased their discussion of programmatic goods, 75% (or 156 candidates) increased their discussion of national security, and 76% (or 158 candidates) decreased their discussion of particularistic goods after electoral reform. We ran a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to check whether the distributions of discussion of pork, policy, and national security among this group of candidates were different before and after the reform. The *p*-values for each test were <.001, confirming that the chance they were drawn from the same distribution was low.

**Changing ideological preferences?**

An alternative variable that could account for the increase in discussion of national security among LDP candidates is changing ideological preferences. Scholars have suggested that LDP members have grown more hawkish in recent years (e.g., Matthews 2003; Samuels 2007). If this is the case, then their growing hawkishness might be sufficient to push them to pay more attention to national security. To test this, we used Wordfish, which uses word frequencies to make inferences about the locations of documents on a single ideological scale (Slapin and Proksch 2008) to estimate candidate ideological positions from their manifestos. Developed to estimate the ideological positions in party manifestos, Wordfish yielded substantively meaningful results when applied to the public pledges made by party leaders during election campaigns to Japan’s HOR (Proksch, Slapin, and Thies 2011). If growing hawkishness can ac-

count for the new emphasis on national security, we should observe LDP candidates shifting to the ideological right over time. We also estimated the positions of opposition candidates from the DPJ and two nonmajority-seeking parties (the SDP and the JCP) to ensure the positions extracted from the model were substantively-meaningful.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 5 displays the model's estimates of the positions adopted by the 4,199 candidates running from the LDP ( $n = 1,414$ ), the DPJ ( $n = 1,215$ ), the SDP ( $n = 245$ ), and the JCP ( $n = 1,325$ ) in these elections. The line depicts the change in ideological position of the average candidate from each party over time, with lower numbers on the  $y$ -axis indicating the ideological right.<sup>13</sup> It shows that the position of the average LDP candidate swung to the ideological *left* between 1996 to 2005 (moving from  $-1.42$  in 1996 to  $-1.33$  in 2000,  $-1.24$  in 2003, and  $-1.07$  in 2005) and then swung slightly to the ideological *right* between 2005 and 2009 (moving from  $-1.07$  to  $-1.12$ ). Interestingly, their move to the ideological right was accompanied by their worst-ever performance in the 2009 election, which resulted in a decisive victory by the DPJ, whose candidates had gradually swung to the left (ideological center) since their founding in 1996 (moving from  $-0.64$  in 2005 to  $-0.16$  in 2009). Because discussion of national security increased in the average LDP candidate manifesto while its ideological position was swinging to the left (between 1996 and 2005), it is extremely unlikely that a rightward shift can explain their shift in electoral strategies.

### Voter concerns about national security?

A second alternative variable that could account for the increase in discussion of national security among LDP candidates is an increase in voter concern about national security. Scholars have noticed a nationalistic or rightward turn among Japanese voters recently, which they have attributed to new concerns about national security (e.g., Green 2007; Matthews 2003; Sasada 2006). This raises the possibility that LDP candidates' new emphasis on national security is an attempt to respond to those concerns. We reasoned that if Japanese voters were more concerned about national security, this would be manifest either in larger proportions of

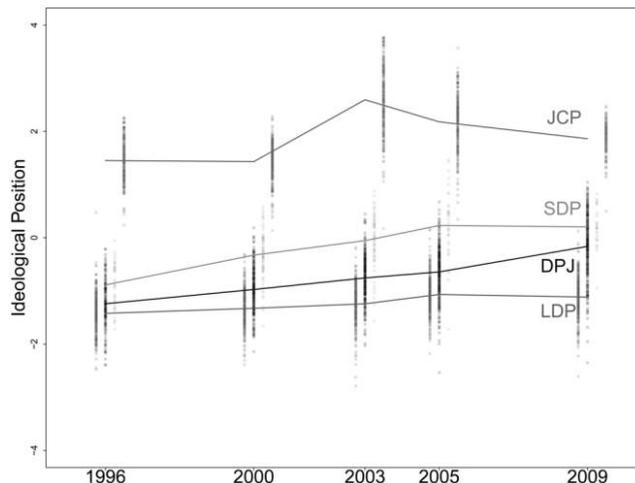


Figure 5. LDP candidates' new emphasis on programmatic goods (including national security) is not being driven by an ideological shift to the right. This figure plots the mean ideological position adopted by LDP candidates and candidates of the JCP, SDP, and DPJ parties from 1996 to 2009 ( $n = 4,199$ ). The mean ideological position of LDP candidates swung to the ideological left between 1996 and 2005, then swung slightly to the right between 2005 and 2009.

voters reporting that they wanted their government to recalibrate security policy or in larger proportions of voters reporting dissatisfaction with the government's security policy. Answers to the questions "How should Japan secure itself?"; "Is the US-Japan alliance effective in securing Japan?"; and "Should Japan increase, maintain, or decrease its defense capabilities?" in public opinion polls administered by Japan's Cabinet Office reveal no evidence of the former (reprinted in Hughes 2009; Kliman 2006). The proportions of voters reporting that they favored the current approach to securing Japan, felt the US-Japan alliance was useful and favored maintaining the current capabilities of the SDF, respectively, were extremely similar before and after LDP candidates increased their discussion of national security.

Ascertaining whether there was an increase in dissatisfaction with the government's security policy was harder. The Cabinet Office's Survey on the People's Livelihood includes the question "Which policy area do you want the government to devote effort to?" While respondents were given the choice of more than 18 different policy areas, "national security" was not offered as an option until 1998. In lieu of public opinion polls, we reasoned that one way politicians learn about the level of dissatisfaction voters have toward a particular policy area is through voter petitions. Article 16 of Japan's Constitution allows voters to submit petitions on any topic to both Houses of the Diet from the first day of a Diet session until seven days before it closes. The purpose of the petition system is to give voters the opportunity to have their demands heard by Members. To

12. We implemented Wordfish using the R package Austin (Lowe 2014).

13. To anchor the ends of the scale, we followed Proksch et al. (2011) in assuming that the position of the average JCP candidate was to the ideological left of the average LDP candidate. This locates the position of the average DPJ candidate slightly to the left of the LDP, which makes intuitive sense given that both are majority-seeking parties, and the position of the average SDP candidate close to that of the average LDP candidate in 1996, which makes intuitive sense because the two were coalition partners. The similarity in their 1996 positions was also found in Proksch et al. (2011).

submit a petition, voters secure a politician sponsor, who submits it on their behalf. After the petition is submitted, information about its content, petitioner, number of signatories, politician sponsor, and submission date is distributed to Members, and the petition is referred to the parliamentary committee tasked with that policy area. Committees consider the petitions referred to them and prepare reports for the Speaker recommending which petitions the House should send to Cabinet. The House conducts its own deliberations and then votes. The Cabinet is then required to report on the progress of petitions referred to it twice a year.<sup>14</sup>

Because Members receive information about the petitions submitted, we can treat increases in proportion of petitions pertaining to a particular policy area as evidence of an increase in voter dissatisfaction with it.<sup>15</sup> In an interview, a Member of the HOR told me: "I can tell if there are more petitions about, say, national security, because we are given lists, which say how many were about Futenma, etc. They have the number of petitions and their content."<sup>16</sup> We used data on the universe of petitions submitted to the HOR from 1989 to 2009. A total of 126,275 petitions were submitted during this time. Of these, 3,501 petitions were submitted to committees tasked with national security. Figure 6 plots the proportion of petitions pertaining to security policy submitted between 1989 and 2009. There is no evidence of an increase in voter dissatisfaction with security policy prior to the increase in discussion of national security among LDP candidates. The proportion of petitions pertaining to national security was larger in 1991 and 1992, respectively, than in 1994 and 1995, and yet LDP candidates did not discuss national security in 1993 and discussed it in 1996.<sup>17</sup>

### Politician concerns about national security?

A third alternative variable that could account for the increase in discussion of national security among LDP candidates is an increase in their own level of concern about national security. In lieu of data measuring level of con-

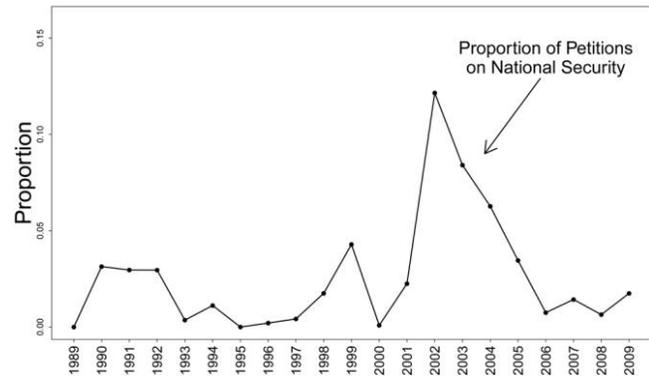


Figure 6. This figure displays the proportion of voter petitions pertaining to national security submitted to the HOR in the period 1989–2009. There is little evidence that Japanese voters grew dissatisfied with security policy before LDP candidates started discussing it.

cern, we can use work on Japanese security policy to deduce conditions under which they ought to have been concerned about national security and then examine whether those conditions held prior to their increase in discussion. Given the extent to which Japan depends on the nuclear deterrent and combat-ready forces provided by the United States for its security, scholars would expect concern about national security to fluctuate with the strength of the US commitment (e.g., Berger 1993; Katzenstein 1996; Pyle 2007; Samuels 2007). Signs that the US capability or will to defend Japan was diminishing should have been sufficient to elicit a heightened level of concern. The coming down of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 removed the security threat that had originally motivated the United States to extend a security guarantee to Japan in 1951 (Samuels 2007). Given that Japan possessed neither the independent military capabilities nor the legal infrastructure to defend itself in the event that the United States withdrew its commitment, it is reasonable to expect that LDP politicians would have grown concerned about Japanese security in and after 1989 (Cha 2000). However, LDP candidates concentrated on particularism and criticism of the political system in the 1990 and 1993 elections. Discussion of national security in the average LDP candidate manifesto was a mere 0.2% in 1990 and 0.1% in 1993.

Peculiarly, the increase in attention to national security happened in the November 1996 election, which was just a few months after the United States had announced, in April 1996, that its protection of Japan would continue in the post-Cold War period. We are left with the puzzling conclusion that LDP candidates started discussing national security more *after* they received a signal that would have reduced concern. While the absence of a threat anchoring the United States to Japan meant that they would have been

14. This information can be found on the HOR website at: [http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb\\_annai.nsf/html/statics/tetuzuki/seigan.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_annai.nsf/html/statics/tetuzuki/seigan.htm).

15. Using the proportion rather than the total number controls for the effects of possible changes in ease of petitioning over time.

16. Interview, HOR Member Akihisa Nagashima, May 5, 2015, New York, NY.

17. It is true that voters who submit petitions are likely to be different from ordinary voters. However, it is more likely that they would have been dissatisfied with security policy while ordinary voters were not rather than the other way around. This suggests that using petitions to measure the level of dissatisfaction held by ordinary voters will, if anything, *exaggerate* their dissatisfaction.

more concerned about national security in November 1996 than in the years prior to 1989, their level of concern ought to have been lower after April 1996 than during the previous seven years. One might counter that their concern about Japanese security might have led them to push for a clarification of the US commitment to Japanese security in 1996 *and* start discussing national security. But if this were the case, we would find other evidence that they were concerned. For example, we would observe them trying to mount a response to the 1991 Gulf War, the 1994 North Korean crisis, and the 1995–96 Taiwan straits crisis, all of which threatened Japanese security, occurred against the backdrop of a weakened US commitment, and produced US requests for assistance Japan was unprepared to provide (Green 2001). While much ink has been spilled on these incidents, there is little evidence that they elicited much concern from LDP politicians. Newspaper articles in 1996 noted that LDP politicians had failed to consider what these security crises meant for Japan and failed to encourage their government to consider this question (*Daily Yomiuri* 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Kito 1996). Surprisingly, studies of the US-Japan alliance locate the impetus for the clarification of the US commitment to Japanese security in US policy makers, not Japanese ones (Funabashi 1999; Hughes and Fukushima 2004; Wakefield 2011).

The content of discussion in the manifestos also reveals little evidence of concern about Japanese security. If concerns about North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs or the rise of China were driving their discussion of national security, then it is reasonable to expect that LDP candidates would describe the threats and promise to enhance Japan's ability to meet them, whether through dialogue, regional security institutions, or increasing Japan's military capabilities. Instead, they discussed the security policies they envisioned for Japan ("a self-interested foreign and security policy"; "a foreign policy focused on the Asia Pacific"), the relationship with the United States they desired ("one in which we are equal partners"), and offered their own opinions on security issues such as the pacifist constitution, relations with Asian countries, securing a permanent seat for Japan on the UN Security Council, and rescuing Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea. The focus on these particular issues is telling because they existed prior to electoral reform yet were only discussed after electoral reform. This makes it unlikely that concern about national security explains their shift in electoral strategies.

## CONCLUSION

Applying probabilistic topic modeling and in-depth qualitative interpretations of each topic to an original collection

of 7,497 Japanese-language candidate election manifestos, we empirically corroborated theories that have been central to the subfield of comparative politics for more than half a century. Using the case of Japan, we showed that candidates for office change tried-and-true electoral strategies when confronted with an electoral reform, and this is not explained by the entry of new candidates. Using comparisons of candidates before and after electoral reform and within both electoral systems, we demonstrated that candidates for office rely more on particularism when facing intraparty competition. Our results lend strong support to recent work on the public policy effects of electoral systems, particularly electoral systems in which candidates face intraparty competition (e.g., Bagashka 2012; Chang and Golden 2007; Estevez-Abe 2008; Hankla 2006; Rosenbluth and Schaap 2003; Rosenbluth and Thies 2010; Wright 2010). We also tested an observable implication of the claim that the increased activism in Japanese security policy in recent years is explained by electoral reform (Rosenbluth and Thies 2010). Consistent with this claim, we found that LDP candidates increased their discussion of national security after electoral reform in the absence of changes in ideological preferences or increases in voter or candidate concern about national security.

For comparative politics, our findings serve as a reminder that electoral systems influence the policies that candidates pay attention to during election campaigns. If we observe new attention being paid to a particular policy area such as national security, we should not assume it is being driven by changes in candidate or voter preferences or concern. Instead, we should consider the possibility that it is being driven by candidates' efforts to survive under new electoral rules or new political institutions. Electoral systems do not make it impossible for candidates to pay attention to policy areas that are not conducive to re-election, but they can make it extraordinarily costly to do so. For international relations, the takeaway is that the level of attention paid to national security, and by extension, security threats, during election campaigns is influenced by the electoral system in which candidates are competing.

Future research should focus on the following five areas. First, cross-national studies of mixed-member electoral systems present compelling evidence that voter and candidate strategies in one tier are influenced by those being adopted in the other (e.g., Cox and Schoppa 2002). Future work should use our 7,497 indicators of candidate electoral strategy to examine whether and how the nature of goods being offered by candidates of majority-seeking parties under MMM are being influenced by the nature of goods being offered by candidates of nonmajority-seeking parties. This

would extend our understanding of cross-tier interaction effects in comparative politics and deepen our understanding of how small parties in Japan influence and are influenced by the electoral strategies of large parties. Second, Japan's House of Councillors (HOC) currently uses SNTV-MMD in prefecture-level districts and open-list PR in a national district to elect its 242 Members, half of whom are up for election every three years. The HOC matters because governments require either a two-thirds majority in the HOR or a majority in the HOC to pass legislation. Collecting, digitizing, and analyzing the manifestos of HOC candidates, who face and have faced varying levels of intraparty competition, would serve as a valuable check on our results while also enabling us to study the possibility of interaction effects between the electoral strategies of candidates in both Houses. Third, future research should use our indicators to examine the proposition that the nature of programmatic goods being promised by candidates of the two majority-seeking parties under MMM fit the preferences of geographically concentrated voters located in each party's marginal districts (Carey and Hix 2013; McGillivray 1997).

Fourth, future work should flesh out the impact of the new discussion of national security during election campaigns on the security policies LDP politicians choose after the election. This would further strengthen the micro-foundations of work on the public policy effects of electoral systems and also enhance our understanding of the determinants of Japanese security policy, which is a question of interest to scholars of international relations and security in East Asia. Fifth, work in American politics demonstrates that the presentation of competing positions on security issues during election campaigns tends to increase voter perceptions of its importance and tendency to consider it while voting (e.g., Aldrich et al. 2006). Whether the presentation of competing positions on security and other programmatic goods by candidates on all ends of the political spectrum after Japan's electoral reform has had these effects on voter opinion ought to be examined.

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