

*Japan's Abandoned Partisans:
Realignment After Electoral Reform*

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I. Introduction

Since its founding in 1955, the Liberal Democratic Party has been the plurality party in every election but one and in government for all but four years. However, there has been a spike in electoral volatility since the electoral system was revised in 1994, casting doubts about the durability of LDP dominance. The most remarkable change has been in incumbency advantage: the average reelection rate has collapsed from over 80% before reform to under 50% in the 2009 and 2012 elections.

Until the 1990s, election outcomes were determined principally by constituency-level factors, such as the quality of individual candidates and the sectoral composition of the economy. The LDP remained in power by soliciting good candidates, particularly ex-local politicians, and by ensuring that rural economies enjoyed expansive public works expenditures (for the construction industry) and insulation from foreign competition (for agriculture). Because voters and parties focused more on local affairs than national ones, and political preferences and policy exigencies were regionally heterogeneous, massive swings in election outcomes were rare.

Electoral volatility in the last two decades, by contrast, can be traced to two related factors: a surge in the share of independent voters, and the growing salience of party labels to electoral victory. The net outcome has been highly “nationalized” elections. As McElwain (2012) shows, vote swings have increased in magnitude and are also more correlated across districts, suggesting that more voters are changing their ballots *in the same pattern* from election to election. This indicates two things: 1) voters are no longer strongly attached to a particular party or candidate; 2) instead, they are paying more attention to nationally salient cues, such as macroeconomic trends or the charisma of party leaders.

That said, there remain questions about why, when, and—importantly—which voters have become more sensitive to partisan cues. These issues are relevant to understanding the process of political realignment following major institutional change. This paper explores the linkage between electoral reform and political (in)stability by analyzing changes in the composition and behavior of *independent voters*.

First, I show that the nature of independent voters differs vastly before and after electoral reform. The new (1994) mixed-member majoritarian electoral system prioritizes victory in single-member districts. This has prompted minor, progressive parties to (try to) amalgamate into a broad center-left front that could challenge the LDP head-to-head. This process of realignment took approximately three elections to sort out, with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) eventually emerging as the center-left champion in 2003. During this time, however, more than ten parties were established, disbanded, or absorbed. Crucially, this turmoil decimated some minor parties that had been around since the 1960s and had a small but active base of partisan supporters. The elimination of these parties left their followers bereft of partisan attachments, producing a large cohort of what I call “abandoned partisans”—voters with ideological convictions but no partisan identification.

Second, the electorally salience of these abandoned partisans has changed as they slowly realigned behind the DPJ. The early inability of progressive parties to inculcate new partisans benefited the LDP, which suffered no major schisms in the early years after electoral reform.¹ The rise of the DPJ,

¹ The LDP did suffer from party schisms in 1993, when the Takemura and Hata/Ozawa factions defected and voted to bring down the LDP government.

however, was accompanied by a gradual increase in DPJ partisan supporters, which put both parties on a more equal footing. Nonetheless, there still remains a large cohort—approximately 35% of the electorate—of “true independents”: voters who do not love any party. This ratio is not that different from the pre-1993 period, but in this earlier era, the greater salience of local factors over national ones limited the size of uniform partisan swings in favor of one party. In the last two decades, however, the nationalization of elections has prompted the LDP and DPJ to solicit independent voters more aggressively. They have had mixed success, in large part because “true independents” are more sensitive to short-term cues when casting their ballots. Instead, the overall volatility of elections has skyrocketed since the 2005 contest.

My analysis rests on a unique dataset of constituency-level surveys since 1979, spanning ten elections before and after electoral reform. In the next section, I will describe changes in electoral stability / volatility in the postwar period. Section III will focus on the ideological ramifications of electoral reform, which prompted a comprehensive reorganization of the party system. Section IV will examine constituency-level variation in the *realignment of abandoned partisans*. I will show that parties that repeatedly compete in and nominate candidates in the same districts are more successful at inculcating partisanship. This accords with research on partisanship in new democracies, which suggests that familiarity with and consistency in party messaging is crucial to the development of party affinity. Section V will link this finding to the *determinants of election outcomes*. While independent voters leaned towards the LDP until the 1990s, they are equally likely to support the DPJ today. This has made the DPJ a more viable competitor, but also reduces the likelihood that any party wins successive elections.

The shape of Japanese partisanship has implications for comparative politics more broadly, as many advanced democracies have experimented with electoral reform in the 1990s. While the political science literature has robust theories about equilibrium party systems under different institutional frameworks, we know much less about transitions *between* equilibria, or variation in how long it takes to move from one party system to another. This paper offers new data, methods, and interpretations to explain the causes and effects of partisan realignment following electoral reform.

II. The Ideological Underpinnings of Single-Party Dominance (or the Lack Thereof)

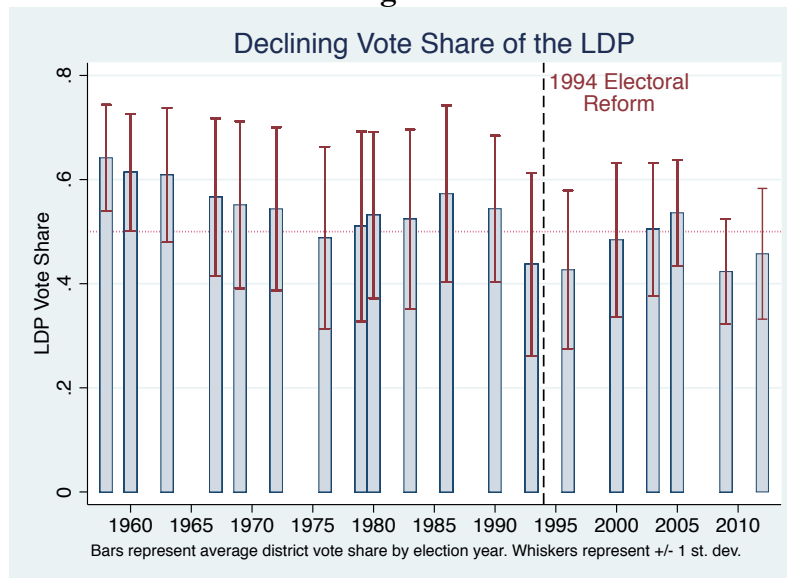
The Liberal Democratic Party has dominated Japanese politics for much of the postwar period. It won a majority of seats in the powerful House of Representatives (HR; Lower House) in twelve consecutive elections, spanning 38 years. Bribery scandals in the late-1980s and early-’90s led to the party’s first defeat in 1993, but it quickly returned to power eleven months later, albeit in a coalition government. While the LDP lost once more in 2009, it has been in power for all but four years in the last sixty years.²

That said, the LDP’s dominance is somewhat overstated. Figure 1 shows the LDP’s average district vote share (as bars; +/- one standard deviation as capped lines) between 1958 and 2012. There has been a steady decline in the LDP’s vote margins, with a sizable dip in 1976 on the heels of PM Kakuei Tanaka’s arrest over the Lockheed bribery scandals. While the party recovered over the next

² According to ParlGov’s (Döring and Manow 2011) database, a party has won a vote (seat) majority in only 0.9% (3.7%) of elections (N=3196 party-elections in established democracies). The LDP accounts for 10% of those vote majority cases and 8% of seat majority ones.

decade, economic slowdown after the 1973 and 1979 Oil Shocks substantially reduced the LDP's electoral base.

Figure 1



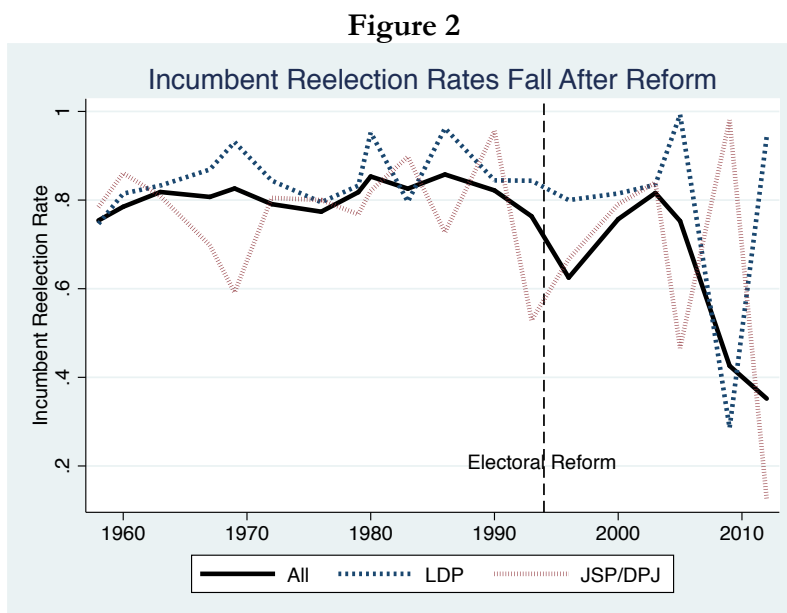
Kent Calder (1988) has described the LDP's tenure since the 1970s as “institutionalized insecurity”. The party increasingly relied on targeted fiscal redistribution and regulatory favors to cobble together enough votes to hold onto its ever-shrinking legislative majority. The institutional environment made this strategy viable. First, Japan's high degree of fiscal centralization made poorer, rural regions dependent on national government transfers to fund development and public works projects, making them amenable to clientelistic relationships (Scheiner 2006). Second, rural votes were particularly valuable because of legislative malapportionment. Despite rapid postwar urbanization, seats were only occasionally reapportioned, leaving many rural areas under-populated / over-represented (Christensen and Johnson 1995, Thies 1998). This meant that the LDP could defend its seat majority as long as it maintained a stranglehold over its rural bailiwicks, even in the face of declining popularity elsewhere. This tactic was aided by a third institutional feature: the multi-member district, single non-transferable vote (MMD-SNTV) electoral system. With an average district magnitude of four, smaller opposition parties with 15-20% vote share remained electorally viable, diminishing incentives to coordinate behind a common label to challenge the LDP one-on-one (Cox 1997, Kohno 1997).

Electoral reform in 1994 stripped away many of these institutional advantages. The new mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system combines two parallel tiers: 300 single-member plurality districts, and 180 proportional representation seats (closed-list, D'Hondt) divided among eleven regional blocs. The mechanics of Japan's MMM emphasize the district-level contests, producing strong pressures for the opposition parties to coalesce.³ Despite some early meandering—more on

³ Voters get two separate ballots for SMD and PR, and winners for each tier are calculated separately. The MMM system in Japan has two twists. First, candidates can run in the SMD contest *and* be nominated on the party's PR list. Second, parties can rank nominees on the PR list equally, as well as ordinarily. If a candidate wins a plurality of votes in the SMD tier, then her name is taken off the PR list. Should she lose, however, she can be “resurrected” in the PR tier. If her ranking is above the

this below—the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) emerged in 2000 as the primary center-left champion. Importantly, a new reapportionment provision was written into the electoral code, requiring the maximum population disparity between districts to be less than 2:1, compared to highs of 5:1 in the 1970s (McElwain 2012). This has reduced the value of a rurally-oriented electoral strategy, prompting the LDP to invest more heavily in building an urban support base.

While this brave new world of electoral competitiveness may seem to be an improvement, or at least a reprieve, from five decades of LDP dominance, it masks the extent to which the party system overall has destabilized. The LDP and DPJ have traded enormous electoral swings since the 2005 Lower House election, resulting in a significant drop in incumbent reelection rates. Figure 2 shows the mean reelection rates of legislators from the LDP, the main opposition party (Japan Socialist Party before 1993, New Frontier Party in 1996, and DPJ afterwards), and the full sample average. While incumbents, regardless of party, were victorious in about 80% of races before the 1994 electoral reform, the mean ratio has dropped precipitously to below 50% in 2009 and 2012.



This electoral volatility runs counter to traditional explanations of Japanese elections. Much of the literature has pointed to the importance of candidate networks and clientelistic policy redistribution in fostering strong ties between individual legislators and their constituents (Curtis 1971, Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993, Krauss and Pekkanen 2011). As McElwain (2012) shows, vote swings were weakly correlated across districts under the old electoral system, suggesting that constituency-level outcomes were best explained by constituency-level factors, not national trends in voter sentiment. After four decades of stable elections, why have Japanese voters grown more fickle?

cutoff point (e.g. she is ranked fifth and the party is awarded ten seats), then she is still elected. If she is co-ranked with other candidates (e.g. the party obtains five seats, but ten candidates are ranked equally), then seats are awarded based on those candidates' winner-loser ratio, or their vote shares in the SMD relative to the winner. As a result, a candidate's fate—in the SMD directly, as well as for PR resurrection—depends on her performance in district races (McKean and Scheiner 2000).

Recent research points to the growing salience of *party labels*. Reed, Scheiner, and Thies (2012) argue that party popularity has become the primary determinant of victory since 2005, supplanting candidate quality. I agree with this diagnosis, but it is important to note that the popularity of parties is itself very volatile. No party has won successive Lower and Upper House elections in the last decade, and each contest has produced large, alternating swings in favor of the LDP and DPJ. While Japanese voters may be using party evaluations to judge candidates, they lack enduring, affective *partisanship* or *party identification* that binds them closely to a particular political party. In other words, they appear to be “independent voters”.

Of course, there is significant controversy in the political science literature whether self-declared independent voters are truly non-partisan. Keith et al. (1992) argue, for example, that most independents in the United States lean in favor of a particular party and behave more or less like a typical “Democrat” or “Republican”.⁴ This is also consistent with studies of European elections, where many declared independents are better characterized as “weak partisans” who vote for the same party with remarkable consistency (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, Wren and McElwain 2007).

In the Japanese case, independents have traditionally leaned conservative. Miyake, Nishizawa, and Kohno (2001) suggest that many independents are ex-LDP supporters from urban areas who, in the 1970s, became dissatisfied with the party’s slow response to the negative externalities of postwar industrialization, particularly over-crowding and environmental pollution. Tanaka (2012), who has written extensively on Japanese partisanship, argues that about half of independents (roughly 20-25% of the electorate) are politically engaged but mistrust all parties, due to high profile government scandals in the 1970s and 1980s. Both studies note, however, that disaffected independents value retrospective pocketbook factors and thus tended to vote for the LDP, at least until the 1990s.

If the same pattern persists today, then we would expect most independents to still vote for the LDP, preserving the ideological status quo. However, the amplification of vote swings since 2005 suggests that the composition of independent voters may have changed. The overall proportion of independents has doubled since the early 1990s, and most surveys report that 60% of respondents claim no party affinity. If these “new” independents are similar to the pre-1990s cohort, then they should also prioritize pocketbook factors and other national-level stimuli but otherwise remain electoral free agents.

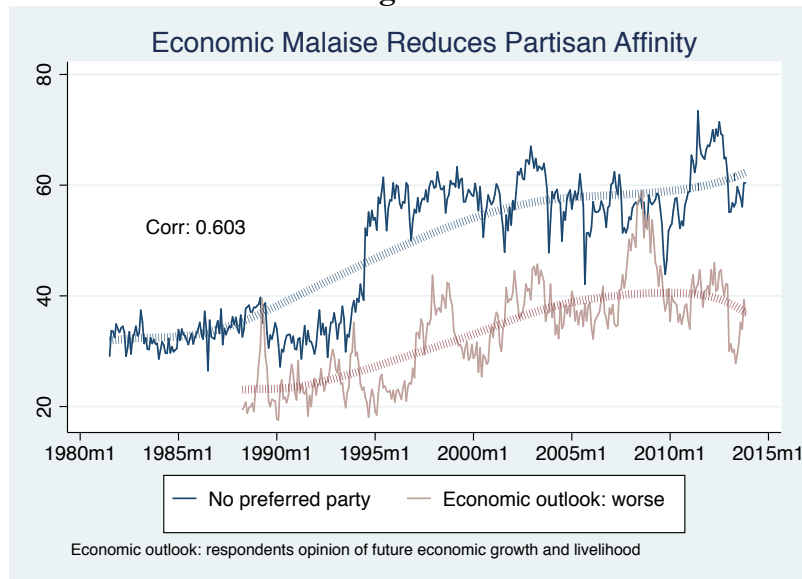
This interpretation certainly has merit, and it is not inconsistent with survey data. Figure 3 plots the proportion of independents against the share of respondents who, when asked to give their opinion on future economic growth and their livelihoods, replied “become worse”.⁵ The correlation between these two lines is a sizable 0.60, indicating that Japan’s economic malaise has weakened partisan affinity significantly. However, this is not a fully satisfactory story, for two related reasons. First, if voters are evaluating parties by economic factors, how did the LDP remain in power until 2009, almost two decades after the 1991-92 bursting of the asset bubble? Second, why did the emergence of large partisan swings not begin until 2005—the fourth contest after electoral reform?

⁴ For a more recent discussion of independent voters in the US, see:

<http://themonkeycage.org/2012/06/04/independents-are-mostly-partisans-chapter-gazillion/>

⁵ This data is taken from *Jiji Tsushin*’s monthly survey (N≈1500). On party affinity, respondents are asked, “Which party do you support?” On economic outlook, they are asked, “Looking to the future, do you think your livelihood (*seikatsu*) will become better or worse?”

Figure 3



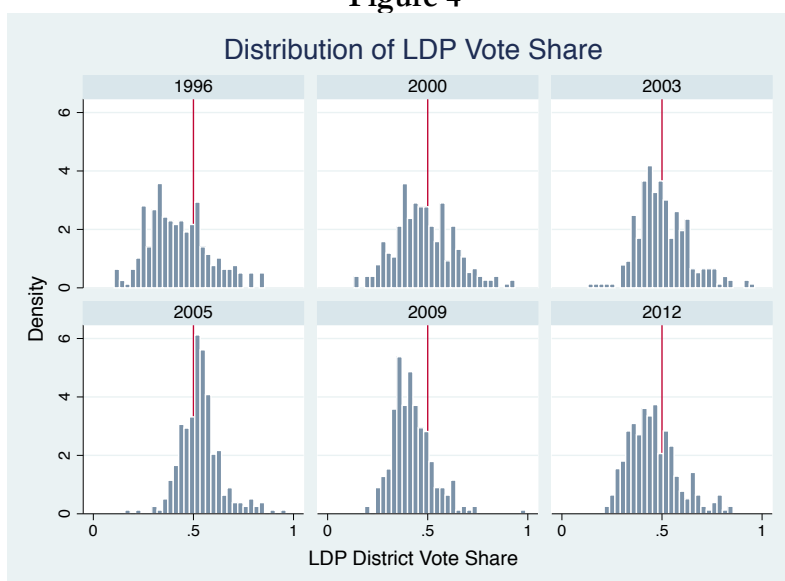
Instead, I argue that there has been a gradual but significant realignment of Japanese voters after the adoption of the MMM system. The key mechanism is how voters—partisans and independents—responded to legislative party-switching in the Diet. Progressive political parties rearranged themselves fairly quickly to adapt to the new single-member plurality districts, but the process was entirely elite-driven: legislators changed teams regularly, but no party represented a genuine grassroots movement. The new parties were also beset by policy inconsistencies, as progressive and conservative politicians formed partnerships based on electoral arithmetic, not ideological sympathies. This generated a large cohort of what I call “abandoned partisans”: former supporters of minor Leftist parties who lost their objects of affection when their parties disappeared or split apart.⁶ These abandoned partisans do not lack ideological convictions—after all, they used to support a party in the past. However, they had limited opportunities to develop new affective attachments, as the names, compositions, and platforms of post-reform progressive parties changed election-to-election.

The new electoral system’s emphasis on programmatic competition suited the LDP early on, as the party retained many of its partisan supporters, even as chaos on the Left fragmented its challengers. The inability of opposition parties to offer a coherent, alternative policy agenda also insulated the LDP electorally from public backlash over the bursting of the asset bubble. However, the gradual realignment of progressive voters behind the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) began to reduce the proportion of “independents”. As I will show in the next section, partisan support for the DPJ steadily increased as the party nationalized its campaigns, making the electorate more familiar with the DPJ’s platforms and leadership. This, in turn, improved the DPJ’s electoral viability and spurred its victory in the 2009 election.

⁶ Some parties that emerged and disappeared in this period include the Democratic Socialist Party, New Frontier Party, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Japan New Party, and Sakigake. Even the Japan Socialist Party—the largest progressive party and main challenger to the LDP through the 1980s—shrank significantly to below 5% of legislative seats and rebranded itself as the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

A caveat is warranted: the growth in DPJ supporters should not be confused with the widespread inculcation of DPJ party identification. After all, the DPJ’s spectacular loss in the 2012 House of Representatives election can be traced to the softness of its support base; the party received 20 million fewer votes in 2012 than 2009, even as the LDP itself lost 2 million votes. However, the DPJ’s success in 2009 hinged on its ability to convince “abandoned partisans” that it was the only center-left alternative worth supporting. Doing so reduced the fragmentation of progressive votes among multiple non-LDP parties, allowing the DPJ to challenge the LDP head-to-head. Opposition consolidation has been absolutely crucial to unseating the LDP. As the histogram of the LDP’s district vote share since 1996 (Figure 4) shows, the party’s median vote share has been below 50% in every post-reform contest save 2005. As I will demonstrate in later sections, the DPJ’s victory in 2009 was made possible by its ability to convert independents into DPJ supporters. In 2012, those abandoned partisans split their votes among a multitude of new “Third Wave” parties, thereby allowing the LDP to capture a super-majority despite winning fewer than 50% of the votes.

Figure 4



To understand post-reform electoral volatility, as well as the DPJ’s victory in 2009, we must analyze geographical and temporal variation in partisan support, including changes in the composition of independent voters. Before measuring these factors directly, let me first expand on how electoral reform disrupted the “1955 system”, both by prompting elite realignment in the Diet and by unmooring voters from a familiar partisan landscape.

III. Ideological Ramifications of Electoral Reform

During the LDP’s heyday between 1955 and 1993, the center and left-wing positions on the ideological spectrum were split between four parties. While I have described the emergence and strategies of these parties in other work (McElwain 2014), it is worth noting that each represented distinct segments of society. The Japan Communist Party (JCP) is the oldest party (est. 1922), but its popularity has largely been confined to dedicated Marxists and the academic intelligentsia. The largest progressive party was the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), whose presence expanded with the legalization of labor unions at the end of WWII. However, its ranks shrunk in 1960 when the party’s

right-wing faction—backed principally by private sector unions—split off to form the smaller Democratic Socialist Party (DSP).⁷ A second new party, the Komeito (aka the Clean Government Party), was formed in 1964. Its primary support group is the *Soka Gakkai*, a lay Buddhist organization, although the party is not explicitly clerical. The Komeito has advocated a centrist policy platform that targets nonunionized workers and small business owners in urban areas.

While none of these progressive parties seriously challenged the LDP, each had its share of committed partisan supporters. However, electoral reform disrupted this multi-party status quo. In the late-1980s, senior LDP politicians and cabinet ministers were indicted for accepting bribes in exchange for regulatory favors in the “Recruit-Cosmos” and “Sagawa Kyubin” scandals (Schlesinger 1997). Furthermore, the stock market and real estate bubble popped in 1991-92, reducing voter confidence in the LDP’s economic stewardship. These crises led to the LDP’s ouster in the watershed 1993 election, and the succeeding eight-party coalition government altered the electoral system with the mandate to eradicate clientelistic politics. The new mixed-member majoritarian system, described above, was designed to encourage the merger of the non-LDP parties into a viable center-left alternative. Equally important, bipartism was expected to clarify and spotlight programmatic differences and induce greater government accountability and alternation.⁸

Figure 5 (Appendix) summarizes the dizzying reorganization of political parties since 1990, roughly arranged left to right ideologically. [NB: this graph shows better in color!] Realignment had a profound effect on supporters of smaller center-left parties. The Komeito and the DSP, which had won 69 seats and 12% of the votes in 1993, were absorbed into the New Frontier Party (NFP) in 1994, negating—for better or for worse—thirty years of branding and policy messaging. Conservative voters were not completely spared: two LDP factions, accounting for 46 legislators, split off to form new parties (Sakigake and the Japan Renewal Party) prior to the 1993 election. The Renewal Party, along with the centrist Japan New Party that had led the short-lived post-LDP coalition government, also merged with the NFP in 1994, making it a broad centrist front to rival the LDP in the all-important single-member district races. However, the NFP fell apart in 1998 after just one election, due to ideological tensions between its progressive and conservative legislators. The Komeito split off to compete on its own and many leftist legislators from the former DSP and JNP moved to the Democratic Party of Japan. By 2000, the DPJ had become a more robust LDP alternative. In sharp contrast, the JSP—the LDP’s historical rival—had shrunk to less than 5% of HR seats, renaming itself the Social Democratic Party in 1996.

The reorganization of the party system does not inherently denote a collapse in voter partisanship or a surge in independents. For example, new parties may mobilize and inculcate voters who were marginalized under the old status quo. If parties were too internally divided on political goals, splitting into separate groups may improve ideological coherence. In the Japanese case, however, the process of realignment, especially until the emergence of the DPJ, was entirely elite-driven. Scheiner (2006) critiques the short-lived New Frontier Party on this point, noting that the party never developed a strong grassroots organization or partisan base. Incumbents changed parties regularly as

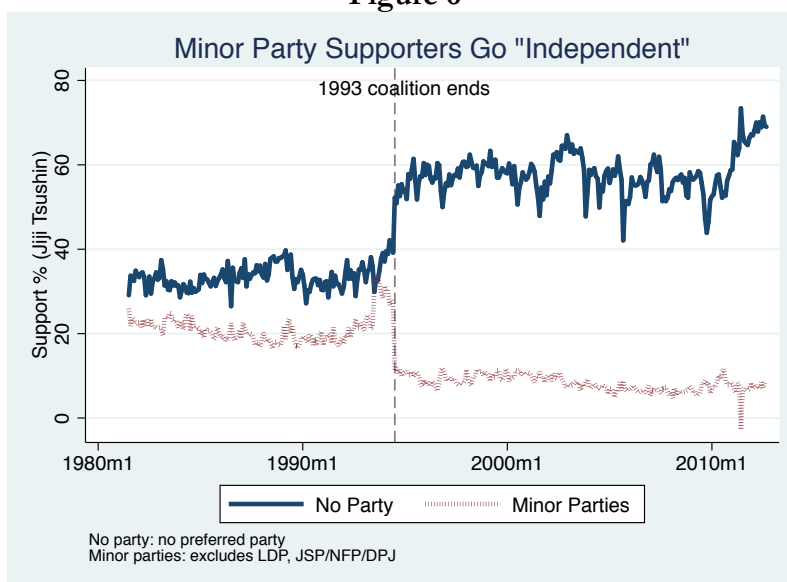
⁷ Japanese labor law prohibits public sector unions from engaging in strikes and other industrial actions. This lessened their bargaining leverage in the marketplace, and instead encouraged greater confrontation in the political area to win wage concessions. Private sector unions, which were not similarly bound, were more willing to work with the LDP and their big business backers.

⁸ For more on this episode, see Curtis (1999), Reed and Thies (2001), and McElwain (2008).

they tried to figure out which mantle or label to unite behind. Crucially, this gave voters limited opportunities to form new partisan attachments.

The disruption of the party system produced a new group of self-identified independents, whom I call “abandoned partisans”. These are voters whose preferred parties folded or merged in response to electoral reform. Their provenance is indicated by the inverse relationship between the shares of minor party supporters and independent voters since 1994. Figure 6 plots these ratios, based on responses to *Jiji Tsushin’s* monthly questionnaire on party affinity. “Minor parties” are defined as all parties other than the LDP or the main opposition (JSP until 1994, NFP between 1994-96, and DPJ thereafter). What is striking is the significant discontinuity in both ratios after the fall of the 1993-94 non-LDP coalition government. The share of minor party supporters shrank by 20%, while independents rose by the same amount. While we cannot diagnose individual motives from aggregated national data, it appears that many supporters of minor parties began to call themselves “independents” after their parties disappeared and never realigned behind an alternative party.

Figure 6

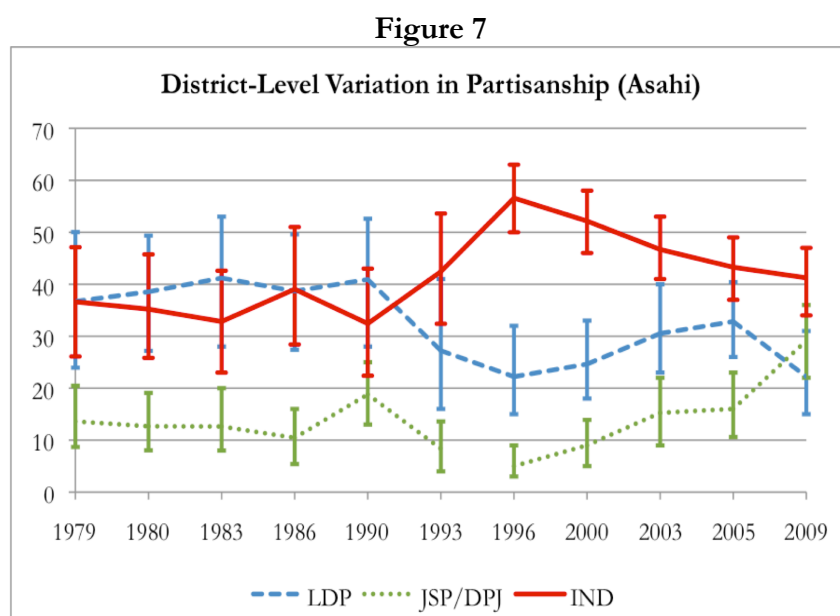


The *Jiji* data paints the pessimistic picture that abandoned partisans have remained ideologically aloof. This poses a problem for the restabilization of the party system if—as argued by Reed, Thies, and Scheiner (2012) and McElwain (2012)—Japanese voters are paying increasing attention to party cues. The lack of strong party identification can magnify the effect on voter behavior of short-term and/or impressionistic factors, such as economic shocks, foreign policy events, or party leader charisma. This, in turn, can prompt legislators to change party affiliations regularly, as they will not face a penalty for disavowing party principles if voters do not value them either.

However, I argue that Japan has actually been on a slow road towards partisan realignment. The reacquisition of party affinities is particularly pronounced among abandoned partisans, who used to support minor center-left parties—and thus do not necessarily lack ideological leanings—but were left bereft after electoral reform. The emergence of the DPJ has been particularly important in establishing a new social democratic focal point for progressive legislators and voters to coalesce around.

This trend is indicated by pre-election, constituency-level surveys conducted by the Asahi Newspaper between 1979 and 2009.⁹ Even a casual look at descriptive data suggests that many purported independents *do* have partisan leanings. Figure 7 displays the mean district-level percentage (with 5th and 95th percentiles) of self-identified independents, LDP partisans, and JSP/DPJ partisans.¹⁰ As suggested earlier by the *Jiji* national trend in Figure 6, the ratio of independents rose in 1996 when the party system unraveled. However, the constituency polls show that independents have *decreased* in every subsequent election, down to 40% in 2009.

Of course, the falling ratio of independents to pre-reform levels does not mean a return to LDP-era clientelistic politics, given the new electoral system’s emphasis on programmatic competition. Instead, it represents the realignment of abandoned partisans behind the DPJ, even though their affective identification may not be as strong as they were for their favored pre-reform minor parties. These weak partisans may be dissatisfied with all parties most of the time, as indicated in the national *Jiji* surveys. However, their underlying conservative or progressive leanings come to the fore as Election Day approaches. Election campaigns serve a crucial function in focusing voters’ attention on actual electoral alternatives, when the abstract question of whether one genuinely “loves” a party gives way to the reality of elections—whether one “likes” a particular party more than others (Gelman and King 1990).



⁹ This type of data is incredibly rare, as few nations have the infrastructure—in the media or the government—to conduct district-level surveys with consistent question wording in every election. Importantly, these surveys allow us to examine the preferences of the entire electorate, not just those that voted, as is the case with exit polls. The Asahi survey is conducted by telephone approximately two weeks before the actual election day, and targets 1000 respondents.

¹⁰ Unfortunately, due to the unexpected early election of Dec. 2012, the Asahi only ran surveys in 100 battleground (closely-contested) districts that year. This has made it difficult to do a similar analysis of the 2012 election, although I am still in negotiation with the Asahi Newspaper to receive their data.

So far, I have mainly compared national trends in voter partisanship. To examine whether the new cohort of post-reform independents is comprised of ideologically distinct “abandoned partisans”, I will use Asahi’s constituency surveys to examine regional variation in the acquisition of partisanship. Earlier research suggests that independents, especially before electoral reform, tended to vote for the LDP, because of pocketbook concerns. But given two decades of economic malaise, it is not clear if this pattern has continued, especially if “recent” independents are—as I postulate—ex-partisans of defunct minor parties.

IV. The Realignment of Abandoned Partisans

While “abandoned partisans” may no longer support a particular party, they are *not* apathetic about ideology or policy. According to survey analysis by Tanaka (2012; referenced above), approximately 20-30% of independents are political engaged and follow elections closely. As such, they may be amenable to realigning behind a new party that offers programmatic policies that are similar to that of their previous party. What, then, determines the development of party identification?

My central thesis is that for partisanship to materialize, voters need to come into contact with and be wooed by a party repeatedly and consistently. A series of experimental studies by Brader, Tucker, and Duell (2013) show, for example, that newer parties suffer from lower partisan support than older ones, because their labels offer fewer reliable cues about programmatic goals. In the Japanese context, the demise of minor parties and the rise of the DPJ should produce a steady but measurable increase in the latter’s partisan base, as voters become more familiar with the DPJ’s leaders, candidates, and priorities.

We can use the Asahi’s constituency level polls to determine whether *partisanship* increases with the number of times that a party has run candidates in that district. I focus on candidacy as the crucial mechanism, because it is precisely during elections that voters are most attuned to a party’s message. While parties attempt to exercise policy discipline to varying degrees, in practice, candidates have some leeway to translate and localize how their party’s programs will affect each specific constituency. Absent candidates, however, voters only consume party programs via the national media, where messaging tends to be more abstract and ambiguous.

With that in mind, I argue that the effect of candidacies should be stronger for the DPJ than the LDP, for two reasons. First, the DPJ was newly created after electoral reform, although many of its legislators originally hailed from now-defunct progressive parties or were ex-LDP centrists. Lacking a partisan base, the DPJ should benefit more from repeated candidacies than would the LDP, which already had an established track record in 1996. Second, since the Left suffered greater fragmentation as a result of electoral reform than the Right / LDP, we should observe stronger realignment behind the DPJ, as there are more abandoned partisans up for grabs. This leads to my first set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1A: The share of DPJ partisans should *increase* with the cumulative number of candidates that the DPJ has run in that district.

Hypothesis 1B: The share of LDP partisans should *not vary* with the cumulative number of LDP candidates.

There is a possible endogeneity problem with estimating this relationship: parties should be more likely to run candidates in districts where they are already popular, i.e. partisanship may drive candidacies, not the other way around. I control for this by interacting the number of cumulative candidates with the distribution of partisanship *before* electoral reform. The DPJ is a logical haven for progressive voters who are reorienting behind a new center-left alternative to the LDP. As such, the DPJ's popularity should be greater in districts where the Japan Socialist Party—the LDP's traditional foil—used to be popular.¹¹ We would not expect to see a similar conditional effect of LDP candidacies, given that, again, the party is already well-known to voters.

The rise of the DPJ also has important implications for the size and composition of *independent voters*. I have posited that the spike in independents in 1996 represents a new cohort of abandoned partisans. If these voters are, in fact, former adherents of progressive minor parties, then we would expect the share of independents to shrink gradually as the DPJ expands its reach nationally. A more subtle implication is that the effect of DPJ candidacies should be greater in districts where there were more minor party partisans *before* electoral reform, as these voters were more likely to have become abandoned partisans. If, on the other hand, the DPJ's success was tied to its ability to steal away LDP partisans, then the statistical relationship between DPJ candidacies and the proportion of independents should be weak.

Hypothesis 2A: The share of independent voters should *decrease* with the cumulative number of DPJ candidates.

Hypothesis 2B: The *marginal negative effect* of cumulative DPJ candidates on the share of independents should be *greater* where the *share of minor party partisans* was larger before electoral reform.

I test these hypotheses with three random effects GLS models, each with distinct dependent variables that are based on responses to the Asahi's constituency polls regarding party affinity.¹² *LDP Partisans* is the district share (0-1) of respondents who listed the LDP as their preferred party; *DPJ Partisans* is that for the DPJ; *Independents* is that for no affinity. Each case in the dataset is a single-member district (out of 300) in a given election (1996, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2009).

The main explanatory factors are *DPJ Candidates* and *LDP Candidates*, the cumulative count of each party's nominated candidates in district *i* in year *t*.¹³ I also control for the partisanship of each district in 1993, which is the last election before reform. *LDP_93* is the district's share of Asahi respondents who listed the LDP as their preferred party in 1993. *JSP_93* is the JSP's share of the same. As discussed above, I also include the interaction terms *DPJ Candidates*JSP_93* and *LDP Candidates*LDP_93* to account for variation in the marginal effect of cumulative candidates based on underlying voter partisanship. As per Hypotheses 1A and 1B, I expect the net effect of *DPJ*

¹¹ The district-level correlation between the cumulative number of DPJ candidates and the popularity of the JSP in 1993 is -0.08.

¹² Many of the independent variables are time-invariant measures of voter partisanship in 1993, the last contest before electoral reform, making random effects models better suited for estimation than fixed effects. However, I also include dummy variables for each year, with 1996 as the baseline value.

¹³ For example, *DPJ Candidates* in 1996 is the number of DPJ candidates in district *i* in 1996; in 2000 it is the sum of DPJ candidates in 1996 and 2000; in 2003 it is the sum of 1996, 2000, and 2003.

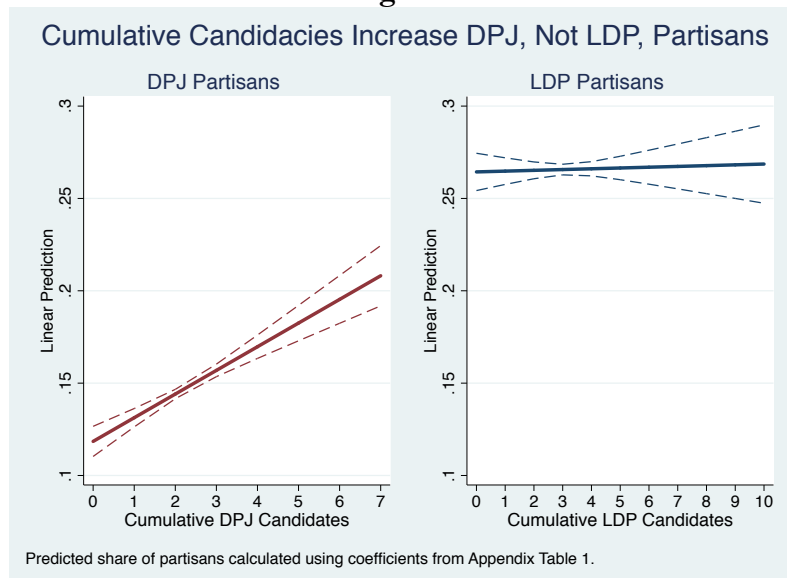
Candidates with respect to *DPJ Partisans* (Model 1) to be positive, while *LDP Candidates* should have no statistically significant impact on *LDP Partisans* (Model 2).

Hypotheses 2A and 2B posit that the effect of *DPJ Candidates* on *Independents* should vary with the popularity of pre-reform minor parties. I operationalize this first as *Minor_93*, the share of respondents who listed a party other than the LDP or JSP as their preferred party in 1993. In Model 3, I interact this with *DPJ Candidates*, and expect *Independents* to decrease when *DPJ Candidates*Minor_93* is greater.

I also distinguish post-reform abandoned partisans from the pre-reform cohort of independent voters in two ways. First, I control for *Independent_93*, the share of respondents in 1993 who declared no partisan affinity. Survey data from before electoral reform, as analyzed by Tanaka (2012) and Miyake et al. (2001), suggests that most “traditional” independents leaned conservative but were disillusioned by government corruption and policy unresponsiveness. These independents, unlike minor party ex-adherents who became abandoned partisans, should be more likely to support the LDP, as they resemble “weak leaners” more than they do true independents. Second, I account for the socioeconomic composition of the district with *Urban* (0-1), which is the census calculation of the number of people who live in densely-inhabited districts (DID; higher values indicate greater urbanization). Urban districts have historically housed more floating voters, due to weaker social networks and lower economic dependence on clientelistic linkages, making them an attractive target for progressive parties (Scheiner 1999). I expect that as *Urbanization* increases, the share of *Independents* and *DPJ Partisans* should increase, while that of *LDP Partisans* should decrease.

The detailed results from these regressions can be found in Appendix Table 1. Given the interaction terms in the three models, the marginal effect of each variable takes some care to calculate. To facilitate interpretation, I show the statistical and substantive significance of key variables graphically, with 95% confidence intervals as dashed lines. Figure 8 depicts the results for the magnitude of DPJ (Table 1, Model 1) and LDP (Model 2) partisanship.

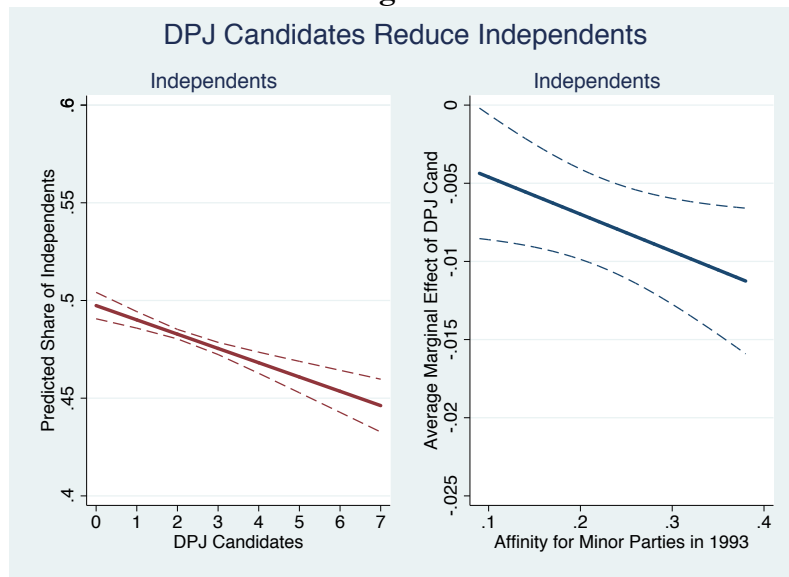
Figure 8



The cross-party differences are striking. For the LDP, there is virtually no effect of running more candidates on the district’s share of LDP partisans (**Hypothesis 1B**). This is not surprising; after all, the LDP is not a new party, and its candidates have been staking out support networks in most districts since the 1960s. By contrast, the share of DPJ partisans increases steadily as the party expands its candidate base (**Hypothesis 1A**). In 2000, the DPJ’s first year as the primary progressive party, the median district only had one cumulative DPJ candidate. By 2009, this had risen to four cumulative candidates. While many DPJ legislators had been in politics for decades as representatives of other parties, they had not campaigned under the DPJ’s brand and policies until switching parties more recently. The predicted difference in *DPJ Partisans* between having one and four *DPJ Candidates*, holding all other covariates at mean values, is 3.8%.

Figure 9 replicates this exercise for the share of *Independents* (Appendix Table 1, Model 3). The left panel shows the net effect of increasing the number of *DPJ Candidates* (**Hypothesis 2A**), while the right panel shows the average marginal effect of an additional DPJ candidate *conditional* on the underlying share of minor party partisans in 1993 (**Hypothesis 2B**). The net difference between having one versus four DPJ candidates is -2.2% in *Independents*. More interestingly, we can see that the reductive effect of DPJ candidacies is greater when *Minor_93* is larger. Where the share of minor party partisans in 1993 was 15%, each DPJ candidate is predicted to reduce the share of independents by 0.6%. If minor partisans comprised 35% of the district, however, the marginal effect doubles in magnitude to -1.1%.

Figure 9



The main findings confirm my thesis that many post-reform partisans are, in fact, “abandoned partisans”. DPJ partisanship is greater in districts where the DPJ runs more candidates, controlling for underlying voter ideology prior to electoral reform. By contrast, LDP candidacies do not significantly impact LDP partisanship. DPJ candidates also reduce the share of independents, and this effect is particularly strong where minor party supporters were more numerous before reform.

An important insight can also be gleaned from *Independent_93*, the share of independent voters in the last pre-reform election. As can be seen in Appendix Table 1, the coefficient is positive in all three models. However, its substantive size is greatest in Model 2, which analyzes the distribution of *LDP*

Partisans. A two standard deviation increase in *Independent_93* raises the share of LDP partisans by 2.1%, compared to 1.1% for DPJ partisans and Independents. This finding confirms earlier studies which argue that pre-electoral reform independents were mostly conservative leaners. While some pre-reform independents clearly stayed independent or drifted to the DPJ, many of them ultimately rallied behind the LDP come election time. In other words, the behavior of traditional independents clearly differs from that of (the more progressive) abandoned partisans, who were more likely to side with the DPJ.

These predictions have two broader implications. First, the DPJ's rise is attributable to its success in corraling abandoned partisans, not in stealing supporters away from the LDP. In other words, it is a story about the realignment of post-reform independents, not of the creation of new ideological dimensions or cleavages that disrupted the progressive vs. conservative nature of Japanese politics. Second, abandoned partisans are not political disengaged. Their votes are up for grabs, and they are amenable to aligning behind a strong center-left alternative to the LDP. However, it took more than three elections for the DPJ to entice their support, because the development of partisan affinity is not a simple matter of ad hoc or periodic overlap in policy preferences between candidates and voters. It requires repeated, consistent messaging at the district level to convince voters that a party's label or brand, denoting its leadership, candidates, legislative competence, and policy priorities, can be trusted. New parties need to put in work before constituents trust them with their vote.

V. The Electoral Consequences of Partisan Realignment

Given the rise in progressive party affinity, how has the impact of independent voters on actual elections changed, if at all? First, to the extent that the LDP has historically had better candidates (Scheiner 2006), we would expect LDP vote share to increase with the proportion of independents, both before and after electoral reform. While strong partisans will consistently back the same party, "true" independents may be swayed by factors that become more visible closer to the election, such as the personalities and accomplishments of the actual candidates running in the race.

Hypothesis 3: LDP vote share should be *positively* correlated with increases in the percentage of independents.

By contrast, we should observe pre- and post-reform differences in the effect of independents for progressive parties. The empirical results from the preceding section suggest that pre- and post-reform independents are different breeds. While pre-reform independents leaned conservative and were more likely to vote LDP, the ranks of independents have swelled since then to include progressive "abandoned partisans", who should be amenable to voting for the DPJ.

Hypothesis 4: DPJ (post-reform), but not JSP (pre-reform), vote share should be *positively* correlated with increases in the percentage of independents.

Third, both LDP and opposition party vote share should be influenced by changes in the proportion of *partisans*. This is (hopefully) an uncontroversial point: voters who feel a strong affinity to a particular party should be more likely to vote for candidates from that party.

Hypothesis 5: LDP and JSP/DPJ vote share both be *positively* correlated with increases in their percentages of partisan supporters.

The statistical tests are designed to ascertain how the ratio of declared independents influence the vote share of political parties. I analyze two competing sets of parties: the LDP on the one hand, and the JSP/DPJ (pre-/post-electoral reform) on the other. The dependent variable is *Vote Swing*, or the change in the district vote share of each party from the previous to current elections.¹⁴ This measure is fairly self-evident after electoral reform, as each party nominates one candidate in the single-member districts. During the MMD-SNTV period, however, the LDP and JSP frequently endorsed multiple candidates. In this latter case, I sum the vote shares of all candidates from each party to calculate their respective district vote shares.

The Asahi district surveys are available for every election since 1979. I run separate models for MMD-SNTV (1980-93, five elections) and SMD / MMM periods (2000-09, four elections). The LDP and JSP/DPJ's vote shares are also analyzed separately, and I include each party's vote share in the preceding election as a baseline (*Lag_Vote*). Because vote shares tend to revert to a baseline popularity value, I expect higher vote shares in the previous election to reduce vote shares in the next. Each model is analyzed via a random-effects GLS regression with robust standard errors.¹⁵

The main independent variables conform to the three hypotheses detailed above. The most important covariates are derived from the Asahi's district-level polls. For each model, I include *Ch_Independents*, which is the change in the ratio of survey respondents who claimed no partisan affinity. This measure sums the responses "no party", "other", or "no answer" in the Asahi survey question regarding partisanship. I expect this variable to be positively correlated with LDP vote share in both electoral periods (Hypothesis 3) and DPJ vote share after reform (Hypothesis 4). I also use *Ch_Partisans* to capture changes in the district ratio of LDP partisans versus JSP / DPJ partisans (Hypothesis 5).

I incorporate additional covariates that can influence the electorate's interest in the contest, and hence the vote shares of each party. *Ch_Turnout* is the change in the share of the electorate who cast a ballot, from the previous to current election. Higher turnout, caused by short-term exogenous factors (scandals, foreign policy crises), may temporarily inflate either party's vote share. *Ch_Candidates* is the change in the number of candidates from that party from the preceding to current elections. As the previous section showed, increasing the number of candidates can improve the share of partisan supporters. While the change in partisans is directly measured with *Ch_Partisans*, *Ch_Candidates* may exert an independent impact by improving the *mobilization* of partisan voters.

Finally, I add two variables that capture the district's electoral environment, similar to what was used in the previous regression analyses. *M* is the district magnitude or the number of seats per district, which ranges from two to six under MMD-SNTV and equals one in the SMDs after electoral reform. As the district magnitude increases, the percentage of votes needed to win a seat decreases. This, in turn, can incentivize less popular parties and candidates to enter the race, thereby fragmenting and reducing the vote share of the major parties (Kohno 1997). *Urbanization* codes the population density of each district. Historically, there have been more independent votes up for grabs in urban districts, making vote swings potentially larger (Scheiner 1999). During the MMD-SNTV period,

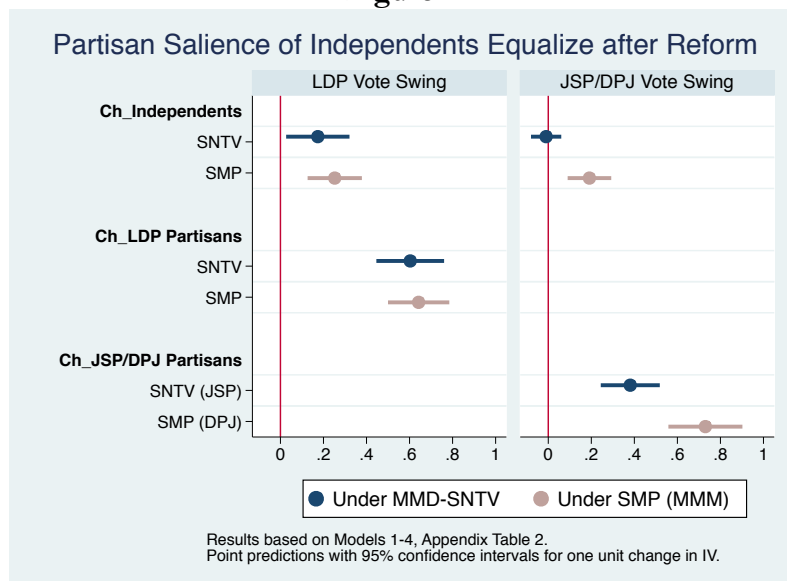
¹⁴ I use vote swings instead of absolute vote share levels, because there is less auto-correlation in the former than in the latter.

¹⁵ The statistical and substantive significance of the coefficients only change marginally when using fixed effects instead of random effects.

Urbanization is operationalized as Asahi’s four-part categorical variable, where four equals metropolitan and one equals rural districts. After 1993, however, *Urbanization* is the ratio of voters (0-1) living in densely-inhabited districts (DID). [NB: If anybody has DID data for the pre-reform electoral period and is willing to share, let me know!]

Table 2 in the Appendix lists the regression results from four models. Models 1 and 2 estimate the LDP and JSP’s vote swings under the MMD-SNTV period. Models 3 and 4 do so for the LDP and DPJ after electoral reform. Figure 11 shows the substantive significance of a one-unit change in two key variables—*Ch_Independents* and *Ch_Partisans*—for all four models. Note that the unit change indicates a shift from 0 to 100%, which does not occur empirically. As such, I reinterpret the substantive effects below (in the text) as a change in the value of the covariate from one standard deviation below to above the mean values.

Figure 11



Models 1 and 3 and confirm **Hypothesis 3**: an increase in the ratio of independents boosts LDP vote share both before and after reform, likely due to its continuing valence advantage and higher quality candidates. Under MMD-SNTV, a two standard deviation swing in the ratio of independents improves the LDP’s vote swing by 2.8%; under single-member plurality, the effect is equally strong at 2.4%. For the opposition parties, however, we see that changes in ratio of independents are only statistically significant after reform. The DPJ’s vote swing increases by 1.9% for a two standard deviation change in independent voters, but the JSP’s swing is indistinguishable from zero (**Hypothesis 4**).

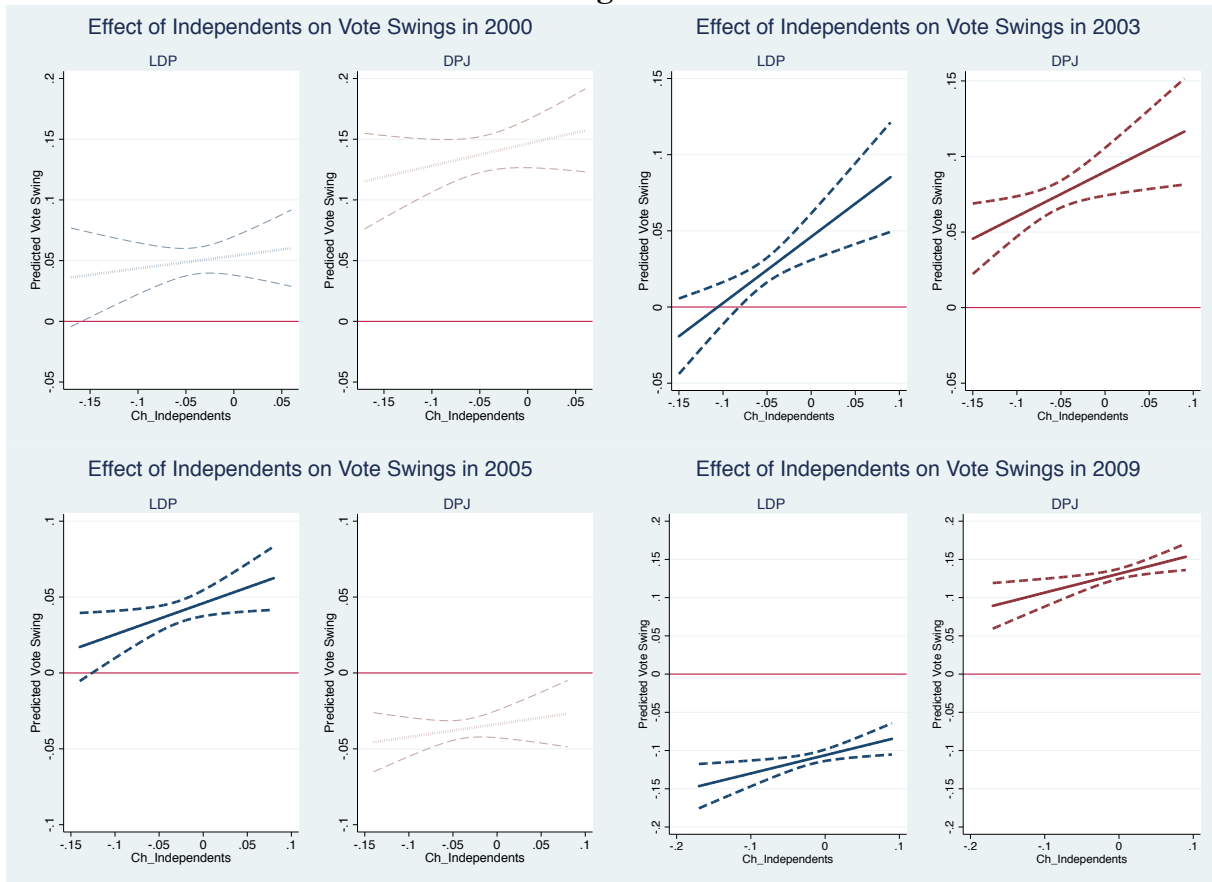
Hypothesis 5 is confirmed as well. Changes in the share of LDP partisans increases the party’s vote swing by 9.2% before reform, and 9.8% afterwards. For the JSP, the effect is +4.9%, and for the DPJ, +8.7%. While this empirical relationship between vote share and the number of partisans may appear self-evident, it is actually a major departure from traditional explanations of Japanese elections, which have placed greater emphasis on the personalistic linkage between constituents and individual *candidates*. At the same time, others have noted the growing salience of party labels (cf. Reed et al. 2012, McElwain 2012), but not necessarily *why* or *which* voters value them. The findings here reiterate the electoral value of inculcating and retaining partisan supporters. As the preceding

section showed, partisan affinity hinges on familiarity with a party, bred through interactions at the local level across multiple, successive elections. For parties to win, they must invest in building both a local party base to expand their share of partisans and a national brand to attract independent voters.

What is the collective significance of these findings as it relates to the nature of Japanese elections? As demonstrated in Section IV, the transition to single-member districts initially pushed supporters of progressive, minor parties into becoming politically independent. However, the gradual coalescence of the two-party system and the growing viability of the DPJ slowly transformed many abandoned partisans into DPJ followers or leaners. To the extent that voters are paying more attention to party cues, the ranks of independents should be thinning—something confirmed descriptively in Figure 7. As a result, election outcomes increasingly depend on the relative support that parties receive from *partisan* supporters. This, in turn, benefited the DPJ, whose growth was tied to its ability to cultivate new partisans in a way that the JSP could not.

To examine the changing substantive significance of independents, I rerun Models 2 and 4 (*Vote Swing* for the LDP and DPJ) separately for each election, i.e. different models for 2000, 2003, 2005, and 2009. I do not report the coefficients here, but Figure 12 plots the marginal effects of *Ch Independents* on *Ch Voteshare*, separated by year. (Note the differences in the y-axis scales in each panel.) Where the lines are in a faded color, the variable was not statistically significant.

Figure 12



Until the 2003 election, changes in independents benefited both parties. However, we see a radical break in their substantive significance in 2005 and 2009. While the effects of independents is still positive for both parties, the intercept for the LDP drops significantly in 2009, while the DPJ experiences a similar falloff in 2005. This reflects a substantial change in each party's share of *partisans* from 2005 to 2009: the LDP suffered an 11% drop, while the DPJ's share increased by 13%. This effectively meant that even with a positive slope for *Ch_Independents*, changes in the number of partisans ultimately swung the outcome of elections.

VI. Discussion

Party system stability rests on some durable attachment between voters and representatives. That attachment can take a number of forms. The LDP's single-party dominance until 1993 relied on strong clientelistic linkages between voters and individual legislators, which produced extremely high reelection rates even as the party's national popularity slowly sank. Electoral reform in 1994 altered the status quo by placing a premium on programmatic ties between voters and *political parties*. This led to the growing competitiveness of the DPJ as it corralled the support of progressive voters and abandoned partisans.

One corollary is that the emphasis on party-oriented competition may have begun quite soon after electoral reform, although the substantive significance of partisanship only manifested in 2005. This interpretation is consistent with Taniguchi (2004), who, writing on the 1996 election, shows that voters were already quite sensitive to party labels, especially in districts where the proliferation of candidates generated confusion and uncertainty about electoral options. In this interpretation, the LDP successfully stayed in office until 2009, even as its popularity was declining, because there was no corresponding rise in partisan support for an alternative party. In other words, the electoral consequences of programmatic competition were muted by opposition fragmentation.

More generally, two important caveats apply to this paper's findings. First, there still remains a sizable cohort of non-partisan / independent voters, suggesting that electoral volatility will be the rule, not the exception, for the foreseeable future. Second, affinity for a party, as measured in the Asahi surveys, is not equivalent to classical notions of partisan identification. It is better understood as "weak" or "leaning" partisanship, as voters are still willing to abandon a party if they observe any changes or deviation in policy positions or priorities.¹⁶

One clear manifestation of weak party affinity is the DPJ's clobbering in the 2012 House of Representatives election, when its seat share plummeted from 48% to 12%. I was unable to replicate this paper's analysis for that contest, due to the unavailability of comparable constituency-level

¹⁶ Parallel research suggests that the weakness of Japanese partisanship has vaulted the electoral salience of party leaders. Krauss and Nyblade (2005) argue that Japanese voters are increasingly judging parties by the quality of their leaders. This phenomenon is not unique to Japan (Poguntke and Webb 2005), and it can benefit parties when a popular leader generates electoral coattails that improve the prospects of co-partisan candidates (Imai and Kabashima 2008, McElwain 2009). Both the LDP and DPJ have responded by allowing grassroots members to have input in leader selection, thereby ensuring that the victor has a modicum of grassroots popularity (McElwain and Umeda 2011). However, it has also made parties more trigger-happy in replacing leaders who lack public support.

survey data [NB: although I hope to have this data in the next month or two]. However, one suggestive outcome was that while the DPJ lost twenty million (!) votes in the SMD and PR tiers, the LDP also lost 2 million. The DPJ's base collapsed, but it does not appear that their supporters fled to the LDP. Instead, the main beneficiaries were new "Third Wave" parties, such as the Japan Restoration Party, Your Party, and the (short-lived) Tomorrow Party. While these parties were not particularly progressive in policy outlook (except the Tomorrow Party), they represented a non-LDP receptacle for progressive voters who were disgruntled with the 2009-12 DPJ government but were not willing to join hands with the conservatives.

A related effect of weak voter attachment is the parade of legislative party-switching that has taken place, in fits and spurts, after electoral reform. The large share of self-described independents, as reported in national polls (Figure 6), creates the perception that the costs of party-switching are low, insofar as leaving a party does not mean that a candidate will anger or leave behind a sizable base of core partisan voters. For example, the Your Party is comprised of many ex-LDP politicians¹⁷, while the Tomorrow Party included ex-DPJ politicians aligned with Ichiro Ozawa. Party-switching can be attributed to considerable uncertainty about ideological cleavages in Japan today: what issues do voters care about most, and what should be adopted in party manifestos? In the early 2000s, many voters rallied behind PM Jun'ichiro Koizumi's call for privatization and neoliberal reforms, but the LDP rolled back many of these principles after he stepped down, due to public consternation about growing economic inequality.

According to this paper's analysis, however, party-switching may actually be dangerous for electoral health. Voters care about policies and party leadership, but many independents are sufficiently sophisticated so that they will not follow a flashy new party unthinkingly. As the DPJ's slow rise has shown—and the New Frontier Party's collapse in 1998 also attests—party success is intimately tied to crafting a coherent, consistent policy agenda and running competitive candidates in every district. This also suggests that the Japan Restoration Party—at one point the third largest party in the Diet, until the Shintaro Ishihara wing split off in 2014—may have problems expanding its base outside of its core Osaka / Kinki region. While the party has a national reputation, founded largely on the popularity of its leader Toru Hashimoto, name value alone is insufficient for repeated national electoral success. Until the JRP can run a full slate of candidates, voters will not stick with the party—even if they may be willing to be seduced for one election—because a new party's label has low informational value or reliability.

¹⁷ The Your Party has split again in 2014, with the breakoff group now called the Unity Party.

APPENDIX

Figure 5

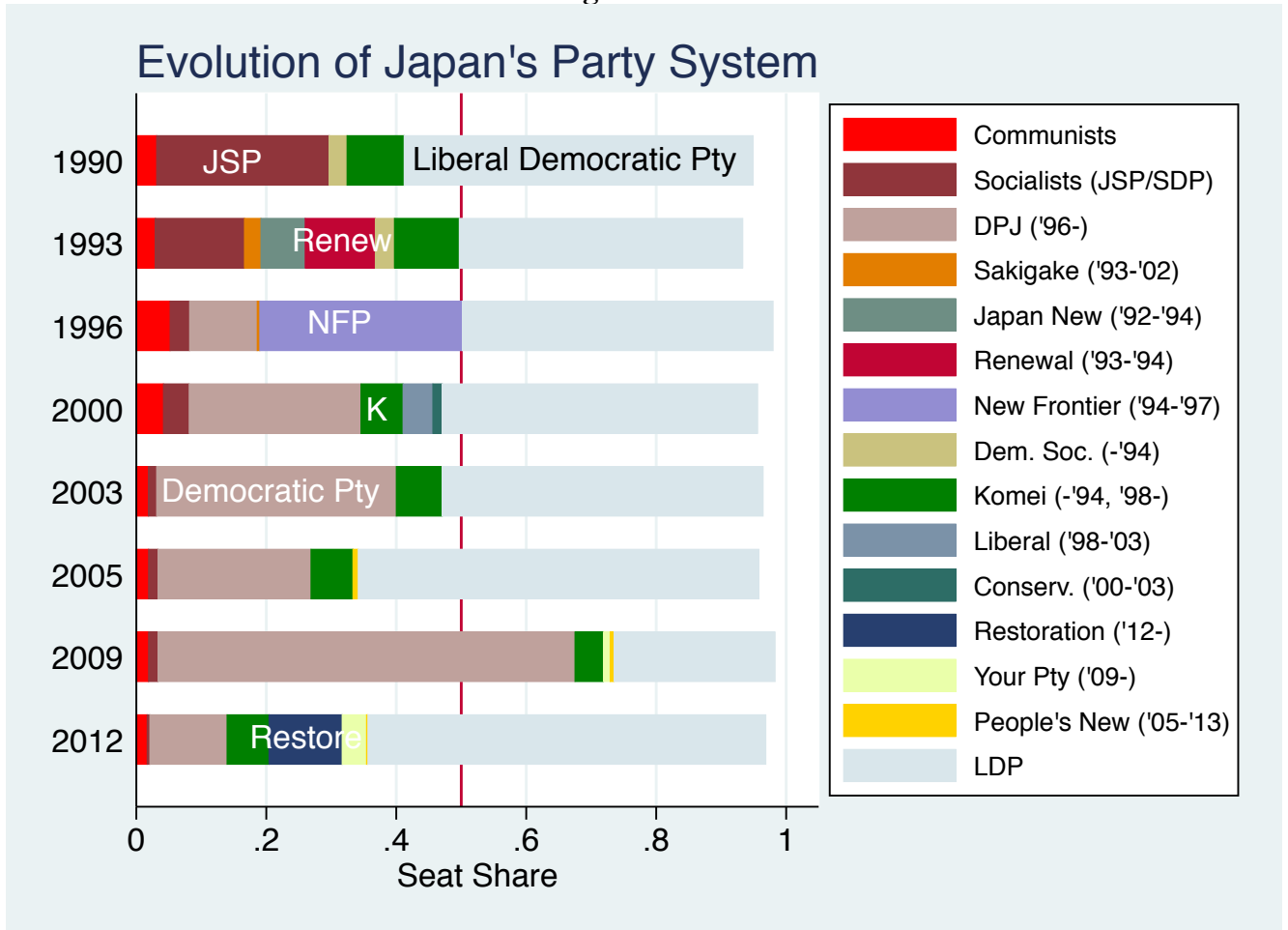


Table 1

DV:	Model 1 DPJ Partisans	Model 2 LDP Partisans	Model 3 Independents
<i>DPJ Candidates</i>	0.006** (0.002)		-0.002 (0.003)
<i>LDP Candidates</i>		0.011*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)
<i>JSP_93</i>	-0.007 (0.060)		
<i>DPJ Cand * JSP_93</i>	0.081*** (0.021)		
<i>LDP_93</i>		0.731*** (0.0561)	
<i>LDP Cand * LDP_93</i>		-0.038*** (0.008)	
<i>Minor_93</i>	0.079*** (0.026)	0.298*** (0.049)	0.119*** (0.034)
<i>DPJ Cand * Minor_93</i>			-0.024** (0.012)
<i>Independent_93</i>	0.122*** (0.031)	0.241*** (0.053)	0.120*** (0.035)
<i>DID</i>	-0.000 (0.006)	-0.039*** (0.008)	0.019*** (0.006)
<i>Constant</i>	-0.026* (0.016)	-0.116*** (0.043)	0.482*** (0.015)
R ²	0.882	0.692	0.7172
Observations	1,463	1,463	1,461
Number of districts	300	300	300
Year fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes

Random Effects GLS. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2

DV:	<i>MMD-SNTV (pre-reform)</i>		<i>SMD (post-reform)</i>	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Ch_LDP Vote	Ch_JSP Vote	Ch_LDP Vote	Ch_DPJ Vote
<i>Lag_Vote</i>	-0.134*** (0.0181)	-0.183*** (0.0258)	-0.365*** (0.0317)	-0.426*** (0.0254)
<i>Ch_Candidates</i>	0.0393*** (0.00406)	0.0512*** (0.00635)	0.104*** (0.0102)	0.0539*** (0.0137)
<i>Ch_Partisans</i>	0.602*** (0.0808)	0.381*** (0.0699)	0.642*** (0.0726)	0.730*** (0.0877)
<i>Ch_Independents</i>	0.172** (0.0749)	-0.00995 (0.0356)	0.252*** (0.0643)	0.191*** (0.0517)
<i>Ch_Turnout</i>	-0.0619 (0.0791)	-0.246*** (0.0404)	-0.337*** (0.106)	-0.532*** (0.131)
<i>Urbanization (DID)</i>			-0.0455*** (0.0115)	0.0275*** (0.00949)
<i>District Mag</i>	-0.00261 (0.00209)	-0.00551*** (0.00157)		
<i>Urbanization (2)</i>	-0.00511 (0.00646)	0.00353 (0.00287)		
<i>(3)</i>	-0.0222*** (0.00775)	0.00288 (0.00328)		
<i>(4)</i>	-0.0384*** (0.00911)	0.00141 (0.00315)		
<i>Constant</i>	0.122*** (0.0172)	0.0738*** (0.0101)	0.237*** (0.0215)	0.201*** (0.0121)
R ²	0.626	0.766	0.628	0.625
Observations	643	620	1,086	878
Number of Districts	129	129	298	283
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Random Effects GLS. Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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