

Alternative Paths to Party Polarization: External Impacts of Intraparty Organization in Japan

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Although party polarization is one of the most significant focal points in the study of contemporary US politics, a limited number of studies have examined its theoretical implications for other countries. In addition, a great deal of effort has been made in the study of the changes in voting bases (i.e., constituencies or interest groups). However, little attention has been given to the features of party organization. In this study we look at the process of polarization between two major parties in Japan in recent years and analyze the way Japanese parties took an alternative path to polarization. We argue that party polarization can be caused by the strategic position-taking of the party executive in addition to the centralization of the party organization. KEYWORDS: party polarization, party organizations, political leadership, position-taking, Japanese politics

PARTY POLARIZATION IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FOCAL POINTS IN contemporary US politics (Hacker and Pierson 2004; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Theriault 2008). In these works, party polarization is defined as strict partisan voting behavior in Congress due to ideological divisions among activists and voters. However, few studies have examined the theoretical implications of US party polarization for analyzing other countries, discussed the applicability of US cases to others, or analyzed party polarization comparatively.

Although some exceptional works consider party convergence and polarization in comparative contexts or modify the Downsian model, their major interests are the effects of party systems formed by electoral rules or voters' recognition of parties. While Downs (1957) argues that parties tend to put themselves in the center to earn median voters' support, the theories of microeconomics and organi-

zations posit that convergence between two competitors is understood not as a natural consequence but as one possible outcome under unique circumstances (Porter 1980). Political scientists also show theoretically and empirically that Downsian convergence happens only in some specific contexts (Adams 2001; Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005; Grofman 2004; Kitschelt 1989, 1994; Powell 2006, 2009).¹ In fact, extremist interest groups often lead parties to leftist or rightist positions when parties have a decentralized structure, as in the United States. Adams (2001) and Adams, Merrill, and Grofman (2005) point out that factors such as the existence of non-policy considerations in voter decisionmaking can generate centrifugal pressures on the positioning of parties.

Whereas existing studies on parties' position-taking look mainly at voters, electoral systems, or party systems, our study focuses on the strategies of party leadership and the structure of the party organization as causes of polarization in Japanese politics. In other words, we aim at demonstrating Japanese parties went through an alternative path to polarization. Party leadership and backbenchers often take somewhat different policy stances. While leaders tend to pursue policies that will allow their party to maximize its seats and maintain political offices, backbenchers tend to seek policies that will improve their individual reelection prospects. In certain conditions, party leaders find it beneficial for the party to take extreme policy stances, but some backbenchers may resist such a move by their leaders. Therefore, we argue that whether the party organization is centralized or decentralized can make a difference in the party's policy stances. If parties are highly centralized like those of Japan, it is possible that party polarization occurs in a top-down manner.

We believe that this framework helps us understand party polarization in Japan more properly. Since the late 1990s, Japan has had a single-member-district-centered system and a two-party system between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The two major parties advocated similar policies in the late 1990s, but there seems to be a general trend toward polarization since the beginning of the new century. Despite the fact that both Japan and the United States adopt similar electoral systems, party polarization seems to have taken a different path in the two countries. Controlling the effects of electoral systems and party systems, in this study we show that the centralization of the party organization and the strategic position-taking of party executives can cause party polarization.

In the following, we define and classify party polarization and reexamine/extend the theories in US Congress studies in comparative text. Subsequently, we discuss the process of polarization between the two major parties in Japan in recent years and draw a hypothesis. Finally, we validate our hypothesis through statistical analyses and case studies.

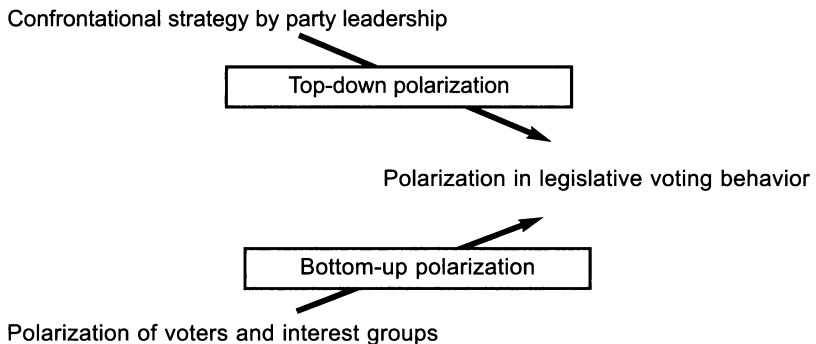
Multiple Classifications of Party Polarization

Party polarization is commonly understood as a situation in which two parties take extreme policy positions, and there is little diversity among the policy positions of each party’s members.² By contrast, the level of party polarization is low when the gap between the two parties’ policy positions is not significant. Although this general definition is clear and simple, it fails to capture the complex nature and causal mechanisms of party polarization. In this study, we classify party polarization into two types according to its causal paths: parties’ reaction to electoral constituencies (bottom-up) and voting strategy of leadership (top-down); see Figure 1.

Polarization from the Bottom Up

The first path to polarization is a reaction of politicians to their support base. Elected officials are sensitive to the preferences of their constituents and interest groups (Mayhew 1974). Although most

Figure 1 Multiple Paths of Polarization



politicians may have centrist views as governing officials, they cannot ignore their electoral base if it moves to extreme positions. In this situation, party politics experiences a voter-driven, or bottom-up, transition to polarization.³ The impacts of bottom-up polarization clearly appear in survey studies and opinion polls of voters, experts, and party members themselves. For example, the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) conducts cross-national public opinion surveys on politics and parties, and it uses public opinion to evaluate parties' stances.⁴ Furthermore, Kato and Laver (2003) measure the policy stances of parties using their inquiry surveys of experts (i.e., political scientists). There are many attempts of this kind that try to estimate the degree of party polarization by relying on the perception of each party's policy stance. When parties take opposing policy stances reflecting the policy preferences of their supporters, these surveys can easily detect such a trend.

However, surveys of this kind may fail to capture certain conditions in which seemingly similar parties may support divergent policies. For instance, the parties' policy stances may seem to be converging in the eyes of the public, but they might be taking a confrontational approach in the policymaking process. Such a gap between perception and the actual behavior of parties may occur because voting records are not always available to the general public, and it is difficult even for experts to conceptualize what politicians really stand for. In addition, as we demonstrate below, party leaders' electoral strategies can cause party polarization. Therefore, we will introduce different ways to conceptualize party polarization.

Polarization from the Top Down

Another path to party polarization is what we call polarization from the top down. It refers to a condition in which parties take confrontational approaches as a strategy to differentiate themselves from a rival party. In order to maximize the chances of winning the next election, party leaders may adopt such a strategy, even if party members prefer centrist policies. This type of polarization could be short-lived and may not reflect the true disposition of each legislator, and it is apparent mostly in legislators' voting behavior. Some existing works of electoral study argued that parties may have strategic reasons to take extremist positions to maximize their vote share, although they did not find any connections with polarization between parties (see, for example, Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989; Iversen 1994; Kedar 2005). Yet it is a possible route to party polarization.

According to Downs's theorem, when two major parties are competing, their policies tend to be closer to the center. This conventional understanding, however, is not consistent with recent theoretical development or reality. In theories of microeconomics and business marketing, rivalry often leads to product differentiation to secure advantages (Porter 1980). According to this view, it is rational for parties to adopt differentiation strategies, particularly when their policy stances are relatively close to one another. Thus, in certain conditions, a party may be more successful if it advocates policies radically different from those of its rival party.

Putting Party Polarization in the United States in Comparative Context

Concerning the causes of party polarization in the United States, existing studies often point out three factors. First, the parties are believed to have responded to changes in their constituencies. This view emphasizes a historical trend beginning in the 1960s: Southern conservative voters, after a long-term commitment to the Democratic Party, became affiliated with the Republicans as a result of their opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.⁵ The second explanation for polarization is more institutional and focuses on the electoral system, particularly the introduction of primary elections, which enhanced the influence of activists and interest groups. Primary-election constituencies are more likely to be activists or members of interest groups and have ideologically extreme positions, and they tend to pull candidates away from general voters (Brady, Han, and Pope 2007; Burden 2004; Hacker and Pierson 2004; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2010; Gerber and Morton 1998). Third, some scholars suggest low voter turnout might have caused party polarization (see Callander and Wilson 2007; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2010; Macedo et al. 2005). Those active voters are more likely to hold extreme political positions. Low voter turnout makes the agendas of voters on the far ends of the ideological spectrum salient in elections. Therefore, parties have incentives to set their policies so that they attract voters with extreme views. This party unity and polarization between the two major parties in the United States are thought of as "conditional" (Rohde 1991). That is, the coherence of US parties is maintained as long as the rank and file retain their ideological unity. So, one way or another, existing studies suggest that US party polarization was caused by voters' preferences. In other words, it is polarization from the bottom up.

These explanations commonly have two features. First, as existing studies lack comparative viewpoints, it is difficult to judge whether other countries have similar kinds of experiences. In France, for example, the Socialist government led by François Mitterrand privatized some of the major nationalized companies such as Renault in the late 1980s and thus disappointed traditional left-wing voters. Although such left-wing voters could have leaned toward the Communist Party as a “purer” leftist group, they did not do so. The existing polarization theory fails to explain why France did not have a similar experience to that of the US South of the late 1960s and 1970s. The second feature is that scholars’ interest is limited to the change of voters and interest groups, and the causal effect on party polarization seems oversimplified.

Here we stress the need to take into consideration the role of party organization and party leadership.⁶ While ideological cohesion among the rank and file is affected by the preference distribution of voters, it might be accelerated or constrained by the strategic behavior of party leadership. Comparatively speaking, the US parties have decentralized party organizations, since the selection process of candidates is controlled by local organizations through the primary elections, and campaign funds are still largely raised by the candidate himself/herself. With localized party organization, in addition to the institutional setting of the congressperson as representative of local interest, US party leaders cannot effectively discipline party members.

There is the literature on party polarization in the United States that focuses on the roles of party activists, interest groups, and voters. However, it ignores another possible route to polarization—through leadership strategies—because US parties do not have the same kind of central control. If a party is more centralized, the party leadership can take one of two strategies against rival parties: polarization or convergence. If the leadership of a party takes a Downsian convergence strategy, party policies will not be polarized even when voters and interest groups are polarized. By contrast, if the leadership of a party pursues a confrontational strategy, party polarization may occur even when voters and interest groups are not polarized. Existing scholarly works on party convergence and polarization in comparative contexts are also generally concerned with bottom-up polarization, with little attention to top-down polarization (Adams 2001; Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005; Grofman 2004; Kitschelt 1989, 1994; Powell 2006, 2009). In order to better understand the complex

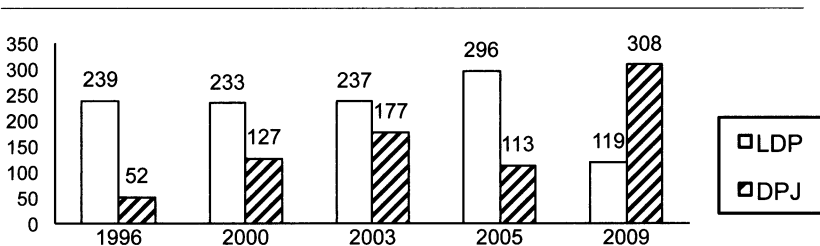
mechanism of party polarization, we need to clarify a different path to polarization from the United States—*polarization from the top down*. We ascertain the nature and process of top-down polarization in the case of Japan in recent years.

Hypothesis: Party Polarization in Japan

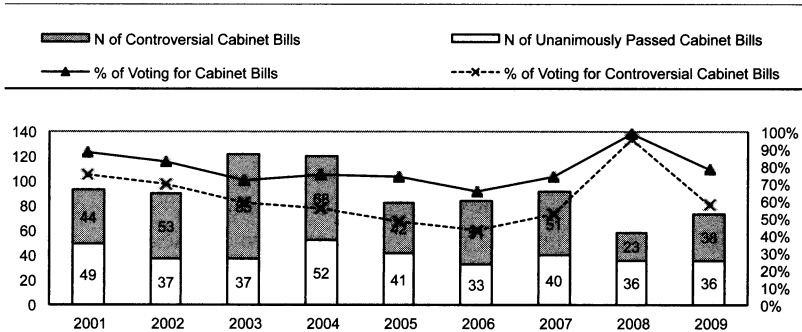
In Japan, the LDP was in power almost continuously between 1955 and 2009. However, under a new combination of single-member districts (SMDs) and proportional representation (PR) after 1996, a two-party system with the LDP and the DPJ appeared. As Figure 2 illustrates, the DPJ has expanded its influence since its formation in 1996 and rose to power in 2009. In this article, we focus primarily on the interparty competition between the two parties from the mid-1990s to 2009, primarily because together the two parties held about 90 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives during the period.

Figure 3 shows the DPJ’s attitude toward cabinet bills sponsored by the LDP government between 2001 and 2009. Voting unity within the DPJ was extremely high during these periods. Whether they voted for or against cabinet bills, all party members voted in unison according to party lines. Cabinet bills are divided into two categories: those that were unanimously approved (uncontested bills) and those that were voted against by one or more opposition parties (controversial bills). The lower and upper parts of a bar represent the number of bills that were approved by all parties and the number of bills that were voted against by one or more parties, respectively. Solid and dashed lines stand for the ratio of bills that the DPJ voted

Figure 2 The Seats Won by the LDP and the DPJ in the Lower House Elections



Source: *Kokkai Binran*, Vols. 97, 104, 112, 117, 125.

Figure 3 The DPJ's Attitude Toward Cabinet Bills

Source: DPJ, <http://www.dpj.or.jp/diet/report/index.html>.

for to all bills and the ratio of controversial bills that the DPJ voted for to all controversial bills. The figure indicates that the DPJ has increasingly voted against cabinet bills sponsored by the LDP government since 2001. In addition, the percentage of controversial bills that the DPJ voted for declined drastically, from 75 percent in 2001 to 43.1 percent in 2006.⁷ Similarly, the DPJ voted for 88.2 percent of all cabinet bills submitted by the LDP government in 2001, but voted for only 65.5 percent in 2006. This finding is striking, considering the fact that even during the period (1965–1987) in which the LDP and the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) sharply clashed over ideological issues, the JSP supported no fewer than 67.8 percent of cabinet bills (Iwai 1988, 103). This suggests that the DPJ has pursued a confrontational strategy (*taiketsu rosen*) comparable to that taken by the JSP during the Cold War era. In short, there is a clear trend toward party polarization in Japan, particularly in terms of voting behavior in the Diet.⁸

There are two possible explanations for an increase in the DPJ's dissenting votes over time. First, the LDP might have submitted radical bills that the DPJ could not accept. Indeed we cannot perfectly deny this. However, as shown in our case studies below, there were a certain number of DPJ members who supported LDP bills in most cases. Therefore, it was unlikely that the LDP's extremeness caused the DPJ's opposition. The second explanation for the increasing dissenting votes resulted from the DPJ's change in its voting strategies. In the late 1990s, the DPJ adopted a strategy called "counterproposal strategy" (*taian rosen*), which aimed at demonstrating the party's

ability to formulate effective policies and manage the government by demanding realistic and meaningful amendments in the ruling party's bills. However, as our case studies suggest, the party started to take a more confrontational attitude to the LDP government in the later period. This explanation seems to be more plausible than the first one, and we will explore the validity of this explanation more in depth in the case studies.

What led DPJ legislators to engage in polarized voting behavior? First, was the ideological polarization of voters or interest groups causing party polarization? In order to examine voters' ideological distribution, we use the Asahi-Todai Public Opinion Survey conducted by the University of Tokyo and the *Asahi Shimbun*.⁹ This survey asked voters about their stances on several policy issues three times: in November 2003, June 2007, and September/October 2009. The response rate and the number of respondents were 62.3 percent and 1,223 for the 2003 survey; 72.2 percent and 1,541 for the 2007 survey; and 69.5 percent and 2,085 for the 2009 survey, respectively. We estimate voters' ideal policy positions from six questions, which were composed of three foreign policy and defense issues and three economic and fiscal issues. The questions are as follows: (1) Should Japan reinforce its defense capability? (2) Should Japan preemptively attack when it expects foreign aggression? (3) Should Japan become a permanent member of the UN Security Council? (4) Are public projects necessary to ensure employment in rural areas? (5) Should the government increase public spending to stimulate the economy instead of reducing spending for fiscal reconstruction? (6) Should Japanese companies maintain lifetime employment? Voters answered these questions using a five-point Likert scale: agree, slightly agree, neutral, slightly disagree, and disagree.

We conducted principal component analyses with the varimax rotation on voters' attitudes toward these six issues. Table 1 reports the results of the principal component analyses. The estimation produced two components. In the 2003 and 2009 surveys, Components 1 and 2 represent a foreign policy/defense dimension and an economic/fiscal dimension, respectively. On the other hand, in the 2009 survey, Components 1 and 2 are reversed—they represent an economic/fiscal dimension and a foreign policy/defense dimension, respectively. The analyses assigned each voter with two principal component scores in the economic/fiscal dimensions and the foreign policy/defense dimensions. The scores show a voter's relative policy location. In the economic/fiscal dimension, a supporter of big government has a

Table 1 Principal Component Analyses of Voters' Policy Positions

	2003		2007		2009	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
Enforcing defense power	0.836	0.087	0.859	-0.019	0.104	0.820
Preempting attacks	0.867	-0.048	0.840	0.082	0.046	0.853
Becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council	0.448	0.175	0.372	0.240	0.359	0.292
Requiring public project	0.127	0.841	0.082	0.779	0.736	0.073
Increasing public spending	0.162	0.764	0.191	0.746	0.677	0.162
Maintaining lifetime employment	-0.007	0.563	0.010	0.607	0.663	-0.034
Proportion (%)	28.215	27.450	27.100	26.601	26.368	25.300

Table 2 Principal Component Analyses of Legislators' Policy Positions

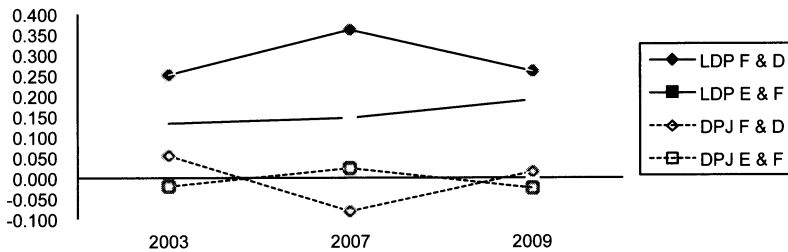
	2003		2005		2009	
	1	2	1	2	1	2
Enforcing defense power	0.836	0.139	0.012	0.871	0.885	0.037
Preempting attacks	0.860	0.141	0.114	0.851	0.875	-0.036
Becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council	0.683	-0.071	-0.135	0.497	0.493	0.084
Requiring public project	0.134	0.746	0.826	0.099	0.131	0.870
Increasing public spending	0.052	0.860	0.882	0.048	0.240	0.736
Maintaining lifetime employment	-0.009	0.639	0.539	-0.185	-0.172	0.347
Proportion (%)	32.094	29.153	29.717	29.603	31.588	23.799

positive score, whereas a small-government-oriented voter has a negative score. In the foreign policy/defense dimension, a supporter of assertive policies has a positive score, whereas a supporter of cautious policies has a negative score.

The survey also asked voters which party they supported. We can see the ideological positions of LDP and DPJ supporters. Figure 4 displays the mean of the principal component score by LDP and DPJ supporters in foreign and defense policies and economic and fiscal policies, respectively. From 2003 to 2007, the distance between LDP and DPJ supporters on foreign and defense policies increased, but from 2007 to 2009, it decreased. On the other hand, the distance between the parties on economic and fiscal policies remained mostly unchanged. In short, there is no clear evidence of ideological polarization between LDP and DPJ supporters.

It is worth noting that even though ideologies between LDP and DPJ supporters showed little sign of polarization, the introduction of a manifesto election in 2003 could have called voters' attention to parties' policies and thus induced the two parties to offer distinct policies. We acknowledge that an increase in voters' attention to parties' policies was one of reasons for party polarization. However, an increase in voters' attention to parties' policies alone could not have induced most party members to set extreme policy positions. Party leadership's decision and control over members were necessary for members to take a polarized voting behavior in a unified manner. Therefore, we argue that leadership's strategies and party centralization offer a more general explanation for party polarization than an increase in voters' attention to parties' policies.

In addition, we estimate legislators' ideological distribution using the *Asahi-Todai Elite Survey* conducted by the University of Tokyo and the *Asahi Shimbun*.¹⁰ This survey asked all lower house legislators about their stances on several policy issues in September 2003, August 2005, and August 2009. The response rate was 95 percent for the 2003 survey, 91 percent for the 2005 survey, and 97.6 percent for the 2009 survey. We estimate legislators' ideal policy positions from the same six questions mentioned above. Again, we conducted principal component analyses with the varimax rotation on legislators' attitudes toward these six issues. Table 2 reports the results of the principal component analyses. The estimation produced two components. In the 2003 and 2009 surveys, Components 1 and 2 represent a foreign policy/defense dimension and an economic/fiscal dimension, respectively. On the other hand, in the 2005 survey, Com-

Figure 4 The Mean of Principal Component Score of LDP and DPJ Supporters

Source: The authors' analysis on the basis of the Asahi-Todai Public Opinion Survey.

Note: F & D and E & F refer to foreign and defense policies and economic and fiscal policies, respectively.

ponents 1 and 2 represent an economic/fiscal dimension and a foreign policy/defense dimension, respectively.

Figures 5a and 5b indicate principal component score by LDP and DPJ legislators in foreign and defense policies and economic and fiscal policies. Figure 5a displays the mean of score and Figure 5b shows the standard deviation of score. Figure 5a reveals that the policy distance between the two parties did not increase from 2003 to 2005, while LDP legislators' ideology shifted somewhat from 2005 to 2009. However, this trend was caused by the LDP's devastating defeat in the 2009 lower house election. In this election, the LDP won only 119 seats, down from 300 before the election. Because the LDP legislators who survived the election were mostly rural-based, senior, and conservative members, the mean of the LDP legislators' ideology shifted accordingly. This is confirmed by a decrease in the degree of policy variations among LDP legislators from 2005 to 2009, as shown in Figure 5b. In addition, the mean of DPJ legislators' policy positions remained stable. That is, in the level of each legislator's ideological positioning, the LDP and DPJ did not become polarized. It is also worth noting that the degree of policy variation among party members was higher in the DPJ than in the LDP, except for economic and fiscal policies in 2003. Even so, the DPJ leadership often compelled party members to vote against the LDP government's cabinet bills in accordance with the party's confrontation strategy.

Figure 5a The Mean of Principal Component Score of LDP and DPJ Legislators

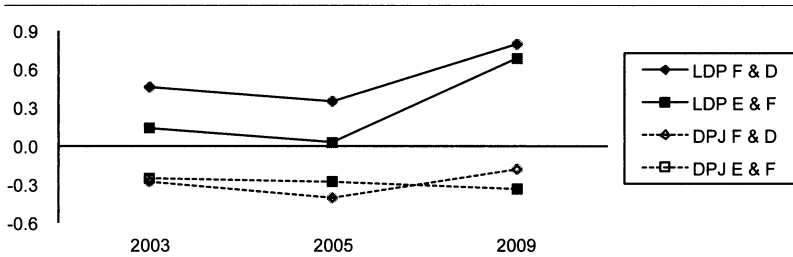
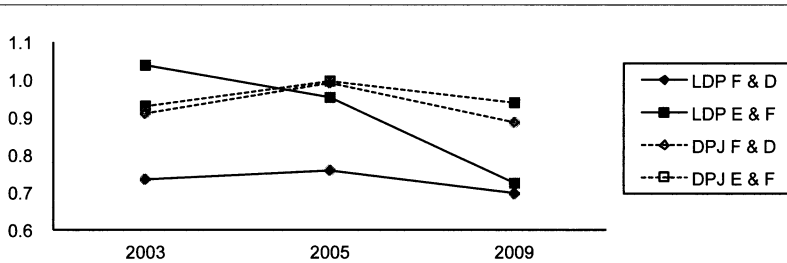


Figure 5b The Standard Deviation of Principal Component Score of LDP and DPJ Legislators



Source: The authors' analysis on the basis of the Asahi-Todai Public Opinion Survey.

Note: F & D and E & F refer to foreign and defense policies and economic and fiscal policies, respectively.

In sum, although the LDP and the DPJ became polarized in terms of their voting behaviors, there is no clear evidence of polarization among party legislators and party supporters in terms of their individual ideal policy positions.¹¹ Therefore, we assume that party polarization in Japan was caused not by the electoral constituencies but by the strategic position-taking of party executives. Based on that assumption, we draw the following hypothesis: *the centralization of the party organization and the strategic position-taking of party executives can cause polarization.*

In a broad sense, the centralization of party organization can refer to the increasing control of a party leader or leadership over members. To be precise, there can be two types of centralization of party organization: (1) structural changes in the organizational capacity of a party and (2) the strengthening power of a party leader or

leadership. We suggest that either type of centralization of party organization can cause party polarization. However, in this article, we show that the strengthening power of a party leader or leadership caused party polarization in Japan. In addition, we look at a party leader as an individual rather than party leadership as a position. In short, in this article we define the centralization of party organization as the strengthening of a party leader's power, while either type of centralization of party organization can cause polarization.

Testing the Hypothesis

Party Centralization in Japan

To verify our hypothesis, we first need to establish that the party organizations of the LDP and DPJ have indeed centralized, and that the party leaders have become strong enough to make their members vote along party lines.

Both the LDP and the DPJ are classified as elite parties. Diet legislators occupy all key positions within the party and play a dominant role in making important decisions. In both parties, decisionmaking is usually bottom-up. However, when the party leader has policies or decisions that he or she is determined to pass, he or she seeks to control members' behavior in a top-down approach. When the party leader and rank-and-file legislators conflict over policies, the former tries to control the latter using carrots and sticks. The leader provides a post or endorsement with the supporters while threatening opponents with being expelled from the party or deprived of a post or endorsement. However, if the opposing members succeed in collecting enough sympathizers within the party so that the leader no longer has majority support from the Diet, the leader will be forced to abandon his or her policies. That is, both in the LDP and DPJ, which side can win control of policies depends on whether the leader is able to pose a credible threat to members through expulsion from the party or the deprivation of a post, or whether members are able to assemble a sufficient number of opponents.

Most scholars indicate that party organization has been centralized since the 1990s in Japan. The first, and biggest, factor driving the centralization of party organization is the electoral reform in the 1990s (Machidori 2005; Takenaka 2006; Estévez-Abe 2006; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011). Under the old single nontransferable vote/multimember district (SNTV/MMD) system in use between 1947 and

1993, some 500 members were elected from around 130 districts, and thus three to five members were elected from each district. The ruling LDP used to field multiple candidates in each district, and LDP candidates competed against each other in the same district. Thus, the party's label or assistance was less important for party candidates to defeat their colleagues and win a seat. Instead, the candidates gathered votes on the basis of their personal supporting organizations (*koenkai*) and intraparty factions, which led the party to decentralize. However, the introduction of the SMD/PR system after 1996 allowed the leadership of a major party to develop a tighter hold on its members through party endorsements, as the party label has had decisive effects on the electoral fortunes of candidates. In addition, the increase of voters' partisan support for the DPJ boosted the impact of a party endorsement on members' electoral fortunes. Under the current SMD/PR system (300 seats elected from SMD and 180 seats from PR), most candidates run for both SMD and PR seats, so those candidates defeated in an SMD have a second chance of winning a PR seat. Thus, if candidates received an official endorsement from the party, they were highly likely to win a seat in PR even if they were defeated in SMDs.

The second factor for centralization is the amendment of the Political Funds Control Law and the legislation of the Political Party Public Subsidy Act in 1994 (Carlson 2012; Park 2001). The amendment of the Political Funds Control Law required legislators to show the name of those who donated 50,000 yen or more per year and limited only one political fund-managing organization to receive contributions from corporations and other organizations (contributions from corporations and other organizations to a political fund-managing organization were completely prohibited in 1999). As a result, it became harder for individual legislators to collect political funds. Moreover, the Political Party Public Subsidy Act made the government provide the parties with public subsidies (the amount of subsidies is determined in proportion to their seat share and vote share in national elections). The act granted party leadership control over a large amount of political funds, strengthening party leaders' sway over their members. The third factor is that the growing influence of television and the increase in floating voters led to an increase in the importance of a party leader's public image on party members' electoral fortunes (Estévez-Abe 2006; Krauss and Pekkanen 2011).

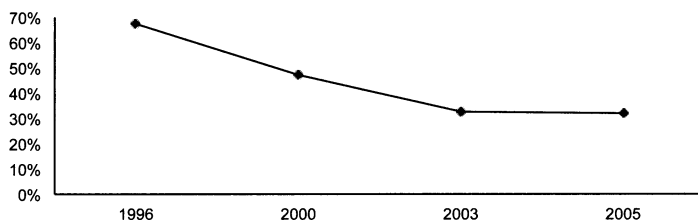
Yet it took several years for the leadership to strengthen its control over members' behavior after the introduction of the SMD/PR

system. This was because parties had a number of members who relied little on the party during the election. These veteran members, who had strong *koenkai* or organizational support from labor unions, were more or less independent of party leadership even under the new SMD/PR system. As illustrated in Figure 6, about two-thirds of DPJ members won a seat in the SNTV/MMD systems in 1996. However, the rate dropped below half in 2000 and reached less than one-third in 2003 and 2005. For those members who had no experience in the SNTV/MMD system, a party endorsement had a significant impact on their reelection chances, as they lacked strong supporting organizations. Thus, the leadership was able to better control members' behavior through party candidate endorsements as well as political fund distribution and a leader's public image.

In addition, the increase of voters' partisan support for the DPJ boosted the impact of a party endorsement on members' electoral fortunes. Under the current SMD/PR system (300 seats elected from SMD and 180 seats from PR), most candidates run for both SMD and PR seats, so those candidates defeated in an SMD have a second chance of winning a PR seat. Thus, if candidates received an official endorsement from the party, they were highly likely to win a seat in PR even if they were defeated in SMDs.

In short, as a party label came to have a pivotal impact on members' reelection chances, the party leadership increased its control over members by dangling official party endorsements. That made party leaders increasingly capable of consolidating member opinion, allowing the parties to pursue a confrontational strategy against their rival party. In the following section, we will present case studies and

Figure 6 Percentage of DPJ Members Once Elected from the Old SNTV System



Source: *Kokkai Binran*, 1996–2009.

analyze how changes in party leadership and the party's strategy have caused a polarization trend between the LDP and DPJ during this period.

Case Studies

In our case studies, we explore the Diet proceedings of five major legislations between 1998 and 2008. The purpose of our case study is to examine how the level of party leadership has changed during the period and to analyze how the voting strategy and party leadership (or lack thereof) of the LDP and DPJ affected the level of polarization between the two parties. We selected these cases because three of these legislations are closely related to the issues of national security, and Japanese parties are more likely to take extreme positions in these policy areas than in other areas. We can expect that if parties are not polarized in one of these policy areas, then polarization was not likely to have happened in other areas during the same period. We also included two economy-related cases to demonstrate that this pattern is not limited to security-related cases.

Case 1: The US-Japan Defense Guideline-Related Laws. In this case, the lack of party leadership in the DPJ and its counterproposal strategy prevented parties from polarizing in this period. There was a large discrepancy between the opinions of progressive and conservative politicians within the DPJ, but the lack of leadership in the party made consolidation of opinion difficult. Also, the party's decision-making organ—the Policy Research Organization—was still underdeveloped in this period, and the DPJ aimed at demonstrating the party's ability to manage the government. Thus, the party submitted amendment proposals whose policy stance was not so different from the ruling party's bills and eventually voted for some of the ruling party's bills.

The US-Japan Defense Guideline-Related Bills were introduced to the Diet by the cabinet (led by the LDP and its coalition partner, the Liberal Party) in April 1998. The bills laid out a guideline for the operation of the US-Japan Security Treaty and the measures to be taken by Japan in the event of a crisis in the region surrounding Japan. The growing instability in East Asia led the government to make this legislation. The LDP attempted to improve the effectiveness of the US-Japan Security Treaty by officially acknowledging such measures in the law. Furthermore, the LDP wanted to legalize the Japanese Self Defense Forces' (SDF) activities to support US

forces, including rear-area logistic support, search and rescue operations, and ship inspection in order to strengthen the US-Japan Security Alliance. LDP Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, as discussed more in depth in the next case, lacked strong control over his party members. However, the party acted coherently, as there was broad consensus among LDP members regarding this issue.

At that time, the DPJ was advocating a security policy significantly different from that of the LDP. The party's policy was called "Security Without Permanent Stationing [of US forces]." It proposed that Japan should ban the stationing of US forces on its territory and should request assistance only at a time of emergency. Therefore, the LDP's plan to strengthen the existing alliance with the United States was unacceptable to the DPJ. However, the DPJ did not opt for total opposition to the bills. Instead, the DPJ's strategy was to make the LDP amend the bills. The DPJ requested eight amendments, such as requesting preauthorization by the Diet for SDF operations.

One of the reasons why the DPJ did not pursue a confrontational strategy against the ruling parties was the lack of consensus within the party. Within the DPJ at the time there was a serious difference of opinion between progressive politicians, many of whom were former members of the Japan Socialist Party (JSP, later the Social Democratic Party) and conservative politicians who used to belong to the LDP and the New Frontier Party (another conservative party).

For instance, Katsuya Okada, the deputy chairman of the Policy Research Council, claimed "we must acknowledge the importance of the American troops in Japan." On the other hand, Kosuke Uehara, a former Socialist, contended that "we should not make comments that would encourage perpetuation of U.S. bases (in Japan). Discussion within the party has been futile so far" (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, March 28, 1999, p. 2). Other reports suggested that if the DPJ was to pursue a confrontational strategy against the ruling party's bills, "there was a possibility that it would provoke strong opposition from conservative party members, and the party might split up" (*Mainichi Shimbun*, April 26, 1999, p. 2). This difference of opinion and disarray in the decisionmaking process also demonstrate a lack of party leadership.

Another reason why the DPJ did not choose a confrontational approach was the party's strategy in Diet proceedings. When the New Frontier Party disbanded in 1997, the DPJ became the largest opposition party. As a handover of power became a real possibility, the DPJ placed great emphasis on presenting the party's ability to

manage the government. This is because the DPJ tried to avoid the mistake made by the JSP. The Socialists drastically lost public support in the mid-1990s, partly because they had only opposed the LDP's policies without presenting feasible alternatives. A newspaper article reported the DPJ's concern about this issue: If the DPJ completely opposes the ruling party's bills, the LDP and the Liberal Party would promote the idea that "the DPJ is no different than the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party" (ibid.). The DPJ's strategy to avoid total confrontation with the ruling party and focus on promoting the party's governing capability by demanding realistic and minor amendments in the ruling party's bills was called the "counterproposal strategy" (*taian rosen*). This was a tactic similar to the Downsian convergence strategy discussed above.

The Diet passed the US-Japan Defense Guideline-Related Bills in May 1999 with majority approval from the LDP, the Liberal Party, and Komeito. Although the ruling parties accepted some of the amendment requests from the DPJ, the DPJ reacted to the bills ambiguously by voting in favor of two of the bills and opposing the third.

Case 2: The Bank Recapitalization Bill. In this case, the weak party leadership on the side of the ruling party prevented polarization between the two main parties. As in the previous case, the DPJ adopted a counterproposal strategy, because the DPJ's goal was to convince voters of its ability to make effective policies and manage the government rather than completely opposing the ruling party's bills. The ruling LDP lacked a majority in the upper house, which gave the opposition parties de facto veto power, and the LDP took an unprecedented step of accepting almost all of the DPJ's proposals. Lacking the ability to function as the party's "control tower," the LDP leader Obuchi failed to consolidate the interests of LDP members on this issue (*Mainichi Shimbun*, September 27, 1998). With the lack of leadership and a majority in the upper house, Obuchi was forced to approach the opposition party and abandon its own bill.

In 1997, a financial crisis hit East Asian countries. The earnings of Japanese banks and financial institutions dramatically deteriorated, as a large amount of their loans and investments had become unrecoverable in neighboring countries. Mounting bad loans forced some Japanese financial institutions such as Hokkaido Takushoku Bank and Yamaichi Securities to go bankrupt, stirring up fear in the market in late 1997.

In an effort to restore stability and facilitate restructuring of the banking industry, the ruling LDP submitted the Bank Recapitalization Bill, which aimed at providing a legal procedure for disposal of failed banks, to the Diet in 1998. The LDP bill intended to temporarily nationalize failed banks and then transfer them to a government-operated bridge bank until successor institutions were found. However, the ruling party faced difficulties in passing its bills without opposition parties' support, for it had lost its majority in the upper house election in July 1998.

The DPJ refused to cooperate with the LDP and Prime Minister Obuchi for two reasons. First, the LDP was planning to bail out a government-controlled bank called Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan (LTCB) using government funds. The DPJ claimed the bailout of LTCB would cause moral hazard. Second, the DPJ thought that some administrative reform was critical to fundamentally restructuring the financial industry. The DPJ was calling for a separation of fiscal and financial functions of the government, both of which were dominated by the Ministry of Finance (MOF). In the LDP bill, failed banks were to be nationalized and placed under the direct control of the mighty MOF, giving it more power to control the financial industry.

As noted earlier, DPJ leader Naoto Kan did not have strong control over the party members in this period, but DPJ members' interests in financial reform were somewhat consolidated, therefore the party was able to act collectively. The DPJ submitted its own bill to the Diet, although the DPJ bill was not radically different from the LDP bill. One major difference was that the DPJ bill aimed at establishing a new agency called the Financial Reconstruction Commission, completely independent from the MOF, which would manage temporarily nationalized banks. Furthermore, the DPJ made it clear that it would not allow any bill to pass the upper house unless the ruling party withdrew the bailout plan for the LTCB.

The Diet passed the DPJ's Bank Recapitalization Bill in October 1998 with majority approval by the LDP, the DPJ, and a few other parties. The passage of the bill seemed to be a victory for the DPJ, but it only benefited the ruling LDP as it allowed the government to avoid a financial disaster. The opposition party missed a golden opportunity to defeat the LDP government (Ito 2008, 60; *Asahi Shimbun*, July 13, 2010), and this experience made the DPJ recognize the disadvantages of a counterproposal strategy and encouraged the party to take a more confrontational stance against the ruling party.

Case 3: The Iraq Assistance Special Measures Law. In this case, the DPJ's election strategy and the strengthened party leadership allowed the party to act in unison against the LDP, and the distance between the two parties widened as a result. Even though DPJ member opinion regarding national security was not yet consolidated, the party leadership grew stronger and managed to unite the party in opposition to the ruling parties' bill. This was because the party's new election strategy was called "the manifest election strategy." The new strategy vested the DPJ party leader with a rationale to control the members and propose policies that were drastically different from those of the ruling parties.

In 2003, the LDP and its coalition partner, Komeito, proposed the Iraq Assistance Special Measures Bill. The bill aimed at legalizing the SDF's supportive activities in Iraq. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and the ruling parties emphasized the friendly relationship between Japan and the United States. Compared to his predecessors, Prime Minister Koizumi exercised stronger leadership thanks to his charismatic character, high public popularity, and most importantly the results of administrative reforms in the late 1990s.¹² Despite the controversial nature of this bill, Koizumi was able to consolidate party members' interest relatively easily in this case. The ruling party's bill planned to dispatch the SDF to Iraq and provide humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance, provision of water, and rebuilding schools and roads, as well as logistical assistance for US forces. The bill limited the SDF's activities to within "non-combat zones."

Unlike other opposition parties that immediately voiced criticism of the ruling parties' bill, the DPJ initially refrained from responding (*Mainichi Shimbun*, June 26, 2003, p. 5) because some DPJ members were sympathetic to the LDP's bill. According to a survey conducted in 2003, among the 171 DPJ legislators (the House of Representatives), 18 percent of them either supported or did not oppose dispatch of the SDF.¹³ For example, former DPJ leader Yukio Hatoyama expressed his understanding of the ruling parties' bill: "The SDF is not going to Iraq for a military mission, so its dispatch does not violate the constitution" (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, February 1, 2004). However, unlike the previous cases, the party was able to unite its members with relative ease.

One of the reasons why the party could act in a unified manner was the rise of the so-called manifesto election. The DPJ initiated its

manifesto election as a new campaign strategy for the upcoming lower house election in 2003. The party planned to publicize its manifesto prior to the election to outline the party's campaign pledges and clarify the differences in policy stances between the DPJ and the ruling parties. It was reported that Kan was rushing completion of the manifesto and trying to draw a picture of confrontation between Koizumi and himself (*Asahi Shimbun*, July 26, 2003, p. 3). The party's new strategy aimed at competing with the ruling parties with a manifesto, which laid out concrete policy objectives, numerical goals, and timelines.

The manifesto election strategy gave the DPJ party leadership a justification to consolidate DPJ member opinion. In order to compete in an election upholding a manifesto, the party needed to draw a clear distinction in policy stances between the DPJ and other parties (particularly the LDP). Therefore, DPJ party president Kan was able to unite the party members in opposition against the LDP and its bill in Diet sessions and suppress resistance within the party.

The DPJ decided to firmly oppose the ruling parties' bill and submitted its own bill. The DPJ announced the reasons for their opposition, including the lack of justification for the war in Iraq and safety concerns for the SDF. The alternative bill submitted by the DPJ opposed dispatching the SDF to Iraq and advocated humanitarian assistance provided solely by civilian personnel. Furthermore, it was designed as a temporary legislation valid for only two years, as opposed to four years in the ruling parties' bill. Furthermore, the DPJ, along with other parties, attacked the ruling parties by sending the Diet a motion censuring the foreign minister on July 24 and a no-confidence motion against the cabinet on the following day.¹⁴

Despite the strong resistance from the opposing parties, the ruling parties managed to pass their bill on July 26, 2003. Kan harshly criticized the ruling parties by stating, "dispatching the SDF for an unjustified military operation would lead to serious trouble in the future. The ruling parties are to be blamed for forcing legislation of a defective law" (*Mainichi Shimbun* [evening edition], July 26, 2003, p. 2). Moreover, even after this legislation, the DPJ submitted a bill calling for repeal of the law in November 2004 and continued to oppose the ruling parties' policy.

Case 4: The Postal Privatization Law. In this case, the DPJ leadership was not strong enough to stand firm in a confrontational strategy but managed to unite the party in opposition against the ruling party.

As a result, the relationship between the two parties was contentious, but the level of polarization between them was moderate.

In the first few years of the twenty-first century, the Japanese government struggled with a mounting budget deficit. As a means to cut expenditures on public servants and the government, Prime Minister Koizumi introduced the Postal Privatization Bill in 2004. The Japan Post (JP) was a public company with over 260,000 employees, providing postal services, banking services, and insurance. The JP had been running a persistent deficit for years, and the LDP bill aimed at denationalizing the company and dividing it into four independent corporations (postal office, mail delivery, banking, and insurance). Yet, Koizumi faced intense opposition from within the LDP, as the postal office managers' association had been the largest LDP-supporting group for decades.

Despite the strong opposition, in September 2004 the Koizumi cabinet adopted the Postal Privatization Bill, which was later introduced to the Diet. However, in August 2005 the bill was rejected by the upper house, as twenty-two LDP members voted against it. Koizumi immediately dismissed the lower house and called an election. Koizumi resorted to an iron fist and punished those who opposed his bill by revoking party membership and sending alternative candidates to their districts. As Koizumi succeeded in expelling the rebels from the party and dominating the candidate nomination process, he further strengthened his control over LDP members.

The DPJ criticized Koizumi's bill as a "phony privatization plan," because the government would remain the JP's largest shareholder and continue to impede fair competition in the market (*Mainichi Shimbun*, March 30, 2005). The party under the leadership of Katsuya Okada took a confrontational strategy, refusing to take part in Diet proceedings and referring to a possible proposal of a vote of no-confidence against the cabinet.

DPJ members' stance on this issue was mixed. Party leaders were generally supportive of postal privatization, and the party's platform reflected this view. Some analysts speculated that some DPJ members might vote for Koizumi's bill (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, August 1, 2005). However, a number of DPJ members opposed privatization, as they received electoral support from the postal workers' union (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, August 19, 2004). Even though DPJ members lacked consensus on this issue, Okada took advantage of the fact that most DPJ members were critical of Koizumi's bill and brought the party together in opposition to the bill.

Koizumi's LDP won a massive victory in the 2005 election, earning 61.6 percent of the seats in the lower house. Okada resigned as party president, taking responsibility for the defeat, and Seiji Maehara assumed the position. Maehara adopted a counterproposal strategy and presented DPJ's own privatization plan, which called for a closure of JP's insurance service and a complete sell-off of the government-owned JP stocks. The electoral success gave Koizumi tight control over LDP members, and his privatization bill was passed by the Diet in October 2005.

Case 5: New Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law. This case reveals that polarization between the LDP and DPJ advanced considerably during this period for the following reasons: First, the DPJ party leadership significantly strengthened its control over party members, thanks to the new leader, Ichiro Ozawa. Second, Ozawa adopted a confrontational strategy against the LDP shifting away from its old counterproposal strategy. The LDP's Yasuo Fukuda, on the other hand, had relatively weaker leadership compared to his predecessors, but the consensus among LDP members allowed the party to take unitary action.¹⁵

The New Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Bill was submitted to the Diet by the cabinet (the LDP and Komeito) in October 2007 under the leadership of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda. The context behind this legislation was that the so-called old Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (enacted in 2001), which provided the legal basis for dispatch of the SDF to Afghanistan, was to expire in November 2007.¹⁶ The old Anti-Terrorist Special Measures Law authorized the SDF to provide assistance to the Allied Forces.

Originally, the ruling parties tried to renew the old Anti-Terrorist Law. However, they decided to legislate a new law that limited the activity of the SDF, making compromises to the DPJ, because the LDP lacked the majority in the upper house. For instance, the ruling parties' bill restricted the SDF's activities strictly to refueling missions within "the non-combat areas of the Indian Ocean." The old law, on the other hand, included search and rescue missions for missing soldiers of the Allied Forces and relief missions for local residents within "non-combat areas." Unlike Koizumi, Fukuda was not a strong leader, as he lacked popular public support and charisma. However, there was no strong opposition against the bill within the party, as the preceding administrations had strongly committed to assisting the US war on terrorism since 2001.

The DPJ voted in favor of the old Anti-Terrorist Law in October 2001 but voted against its renewal in 2003, 2005, and 2006. As this inconsistent reaction suggests, DPJ members' stances on the SDF's mission in Afghanistan were not uniform. Liberal DPJ members claimed the US "war on terror" was unjustifiable and opposed the SDF's overseas deployment in general. Yet conservative DPJ members emphasized the importance of Japan's international contribution and supported SDF missions. For instance, then DPJ president Maehara contended, "if our party jeopardizes Japan's relationship with the United States, voters would question our party's ability to run the government" (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, August 7, 2007, p. 1). Moreover, some DPJ members objected to completely opposing the bill. DPJ acting president Kan commented that even though the party voted against the extension of the law in the past, the party "did not flatly deny Japan's assistance" to the Allied Forces at the time (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, August 8, 2007, p. 3).

However, the DPJ went through several changes between 2006 and 2007, and the party's strategy changed as a result. DPJ president Maehara, who advocated a counterproposal strategy, resigned in 2006, and Ozawa became the next party president. Ozawa led the DPJ to a victory in the 2007 upper house election, and the party won the majority in the upper house, resulting in the divided government. The electoral victory significantly strengthened Ozawa's leadership within the party, and Ozawa adopted a "confrontational strategy" (*taiketsu rosen*) against the LDP.

Furthermore, Ozawa restructured party leadership, emphasizing solidarity within the party. As the divided government made the upper house salient, Ozawa appointed Masayuki Naoshima, an upper house member, as the chairman of the DPJ Policy Research Council, and also Azuma Koshiishi (the chief of the DPJ upper house caucus) as DPJ acting president. Naoto Kan stayed on as acting president, and Yukio Hatoyama also remained DPJ secretary general. Ozawa appointed former party presidents Okada and Maehara as vice presidents. This new party leadership prominently displayed all the powerful figures within the party. This allowed Ozawa to suppress opposition and succeeded in uniting the party for his confrontational strategy.

The lack of a majority in the upper house forced the ruling parties to make some concessions. However, the DPJ refused to make any deal with the ruling parties. The reasons the DPJ objected to the ruling parties' bill were as follows: First, the DPJ claimed Japan's

SDF could not take part in the anti-terrorist missions led by the United States, as the UN did not approve the missions.¹⁷ Second, the DPJ criticized the ruling parties' bill as not requiring preauthorization by the Diet for SDF operations and demanded more transparency.

For these reasons, the DPJ opposed the ruling parties' bill and submitted its own bill regarding Japan's contributions to Afghanistan. The DPJ's bill rejected deployment of the SDF to Afghanistan and proposed only civilian missions such as reconstruction support and food/medical assistance by nonmilitary personnel. The lower house passed the ruling parties' bill in November 2007; however, the bill was rejected by the upper house in January 2008, as the DPJ and other opposition parties voted against it. Nonetheless, the ruling parties managed to enact the bill into law shortly after that, using a provision in Article 59 of the constitution, which allowed the lower house to override the upper house's decision with more than two-thirds of the votes.

Table 3 summarizes our case studies and illustrates the level of party polarization in Japan using the following scale:

1. Both parties advocate the same policy.
2. The opposition party (OP) presents a counterproposal that is similar to the bill of the ruling party (RP). However, OP votes for RP's bill.
3. OP presents a counterproposal that is similar to RP's bill. OP votes against RP's bill.
4. OP advocates a radically different policy and refuses to negotiate with RP.

In summary, our case studies suggest that as parties strengthened their leadership during the period, the level of polarization between the LDP and DPJ got higher. Even though their party members' policy positions were not significantly different, a top-down party polarization occurred as a result of party leaders' voting strategies.

Conclusion

In this article, based on our analysis of Japanese politics, we showed that party organization can affect the level of party polarization, and we proposed a general framework to understand party polarization. To draw out the implications of our argument for comparativists, it is useful to have the following matrix of party polarization in Table 4.

Table 3 Summary of the Case Studies

Case	LDP			DPJ			DPJ's Reaction to LDP	Polarization Level ^a
	Leader	Party Leadership	Strategy	Leader	Party Leadership	Strategy		
US-Japan Defense Guideline, 1998–1999	Obuchi	Weak	Passing its own bill	Kan	Weak	Counterproposal	Partly supported	2.5
Bank Recapitalization, 1998	Obuchi	Weak	Accepting DPJ's bills	Kan	Weak	Counterproposal	Supported	2
Iraq Assistance Special Measures, 2003	Koizumi	Moderate	Passing its own bill	Kan	Moderate	Manifesto election	Opposed	3
Postal Privatization, 2005	Koizumi	Very strong	Passing its own bill	Okada	Moderate	Confrontation/counterproposal	Opposed	3.5
New Anti-Terrorism Special Measures, 2007–2008	Fukuda	Moderate	Passing its own bill	Ozawa	Strong	Confrontation	Opposed	4

Note: a. The decimal numbers suggest that those cases fall in between the integral values.

It is based on two variables: party organization and the ideological distribution of voters/interest groups. If a party organization has a decentralized structure with weak party discipline, the party will mirror preferences among supporting voters and interest groups.

If voters and interest groups affiliate with a party of diversified interests, party politics is less likely to be polarized (Type 1). A classic case of this nonpolarized type was the United States prior to the late 1960s. However, while US party leaders have not been able to control their members since the 1970s, supporting voters and interest groups encouraged parties to take extreme positions, resulting in bottom-up polarization. This is a case of bottom-up polarization led by voters and interest groups (Type 3).

On the contrary, if party organization is centralized and well-disciplined, the party leadership has two strategies against other parties: polarization or convergence with other parties. If the leadership of a party takes a Downsian convergence strategy, party politics will not be polarized even when voters and interest groups are polarized (Type 2a). By contrast, if the leadership of a party takes a confrontational strategy, party polarization may occur even when voters and interest groups are not polarized (Type 2b). Furthermore, if ideological distribution among voters and interest groups is polarized, centralized party leadership is likely to take a confrontational strategy (Type 4b). Type 2b and 4b represent top-down polarization.

Table 4 General Framework of Party Polarization

		Party Organization	
		Decentralized	Centralized
Ideological Distribution of Voters and Interest Groups	Not polarized	Type 1 Party as a mirror; polarization is unlikely	Type 2 Party as an autonomous body; possible polarization by leadership strategy: (a) convergence; (b) top-down polarization
	Polarized	Type 3 Party as a mirror; bottom-up polarization	Type 4 Party as an autonomous body; possible polarization by leadership strategy: (a) convergence; (b) top-down polarization

Japan experienced Type 2b top-down polarization. Under the new electoral system, Japan's second-largest party had to choose between convergence and confrontational approaches. As the DPJ tried to appeal to the voters as a possible governing party, its party leadership initially took a convergence (counterproposal) strategy. Weak leadership initially impeded polarization, but a more centralized party organization in the late 2000s allowed the party to take a confrontational strategy, widening the gap between the two parties. Nonetheless, this top-down polarization could be short-lived, as leaders could alter their strategies at any time.

Based on a theoretical framework and case studies of Japanese polarization, we have demonstrated that the path for party polarization experienced within US politics is not the only one and that there are some variations involving the path for polarization. We believe that our framework is applicable to other cases and hope it will contribute to the comparative studies of party polarization.

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Notes

1. Kitschelt (1989, 1994) tries to connect organizational factors with party strategies in his study of party politics. However, he assumes that extremist positions are taken only by party activists.

2. There are some studies that attempt to determine parties' policy stances based on their elected members' voting behavior. For instance, the NOMINATE scores database estimates policy stances of each member of the

US House and Senate using their voting records. Such studies can tell us parties' policy stances on the basis of their behavioral level. We also present analysis of Japanese legislators' voting records below.

3. This is equivalent to what Karol (2009) calls "coalition maintenance."

4. See the CSES Web site, www.cses.org.

5. For example, Mann claims, "the party realignment of the South clearly played a major role" in party polarization in America (Mann 2006, 278).

6. Recent works in comparative politics show significant developments in the study of party organization (Bowler, Farrell, and Katz 1999; Katz and Mair 2002).

7. The downward trend reversed after 2007, reflecting the fact that the ruling LDP lost a majority in the 2007 upper house election. After the election, the LDP government reduced the number of bills and submitted only bills that opposition parties were likely to support.

8. In contrast to our view, Lipsky and Scheiner (2012) and Scheiner (2012) claim that in accordance with the Downsian model, the LDP and the DPJ converge on policy positions to appeal to median voters under the new SMD/PR system. While their view can be appropriate in several cases during some periods, the empirical data of the voting behavior of the LDP and the DPJ in Figure 3 demonstrate clear and systematic polarization between the two parties from 2001 to 2006.

9. Data available at Masaki Taniguchi's Web site, www.j.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~masaki/ats/atsindex.html.

10. Ibid.

11. Similarly, by using the Asahi-Todai Public Opinion Survey and the Asahi-Todai Elite Survey, Taniguchi et al. (2010) found no clear polarization trend among LDP and DPJ legislators and supporters.

12. For the impact of administrative reform, see Machidori 2005 and Estévez-Abe 2006.

13. The University of Tokyo-Asahi Shimbun Survey, data available at www.j.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~masaki/ats/atsindex.html.

14. Prime Minister Koizumi acknowledged the DPJ's confrontational strategy when he commented, "we cannot stop the party [the DPJ] from resisting our bill through various methods, because it is their strategy in Diet proceedings." *Mainichi Shimbun* [evening edition], July 25, 2003, p. 1.

15. In addition, the strengthened power of the prime minister due to the administrative reforms allowed Fukuda to exercise some level of leadership.

16. This law was also temporary, valid for two years. It was renewed in 2003, 2005, and 2006.

17. This view reflected Ozawa's so-called UN centralism, which posited that the SDF's overseas missions could be justified only by the UN. Ozawa refused to send the SDF overseas without the UN's approval even for humanitarian purposes. This was substantially different from the LDP's security policy, which centered on the US-Japan Security Alliance.

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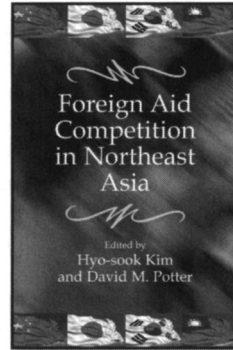
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HYO-SOOK KIM AND
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