

# Electoral incentives, party discipline, and legislative organization: manipulating legislative committees to win elections and maintain party unity

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Political parties are often faced with seemingly opposing goals when trying to secure members' reelection and maintain party unity. On one hand, a party needs to fulfill members' diverse electoral needs for their reelection, and on the other hand, the party must force members to vote in unison according to party lines for collective decisions. How does a party influence its members to take unified action while meeting their individual electoral needs? Through an analysis of the Japanese Diet, this study argues that parties attempt to achieve the reelection of their members and maintain party unity by manipulating legislative committee assignments and deliberations. In particular, the study demonstrates that a party shapes committees in a different way according to policy areas over which committees have jurisdiction. A party tends to accept its members' requests for affiliation and allow their self-management in committees concerned with particularistic benefits so that they can deliver specific benefits to each electoral district. In addition, a party tends to assign members who have average policy positions in the party to committees concerned with general benefits to make policies that satisfy many constituencies.

**Keywords:** legislative committees; electoral incentives; vote trading; party unity; Japan

## Introduction

When seeking votes, offices, and policies (Strøm, 1990), parties are faced with certain contradictions. On the one hand, parties need to satisfy individual party legislators' diverse electoral needs for reelection. On the other hand, parties need to force party legislators to vote unanimously in accordance with party lines for collective decisions. How can a party achieve both the reelection of its legislators and ensure the maintenance of party unity?

Studies have discussed that political structures such as electoral rules, presidential or parliamentary systems, or unitary or federal systems shape party discipline concerning members' legislative voting.<sup>1</sup> A great deal of effort has been

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Carey (2007), Crisp *et al.* (2009), and Hix (2004) show that party discipline is more likely to be high under electoral rules with party-centered styles and centralized candidate selection

made to understand how a party attempts to control party legislators' behavior through power over their electoral fortunes; however, little attention has been given to understanding how a party is able to compel its legislators to take unified action while meeting their electoral needs and thus aiding their reelection. If a party constrains its legislators' behavior regardless of their electoral needs, they cannot improve their reelection prospects, and as a result the party will suffer an election loss.

This study examines how a party seeks both the reelection of its legislators and the maintenance of party unity by focusing on parties' ability to manipulate legislative committees. In most countries, the legislature establishes standing committees according to policy areas. Committees usually play a significant role in policymaking, especially in countries with decentralized policymaking structures like the United States and Japan. Thus, how a party controls committees is expected to significantly affect party legislators' electoral fates and party unity. In the US Congress, committees play a pivotal role in policymaking, and thus a large number of studies have focused on committees. Generally, three major theories have competed to explain the function of committees: the distributive theory (Shepsle, 1978; Shepsle and Weingast, 1981; Weingast and Marshall, 1988), the information theory (Gilligan and Krehbiel, 1990; Krehbiel, 1991), and the partisan theory (Cox and McCubbins, 2005, 2007). Although these studies have provided significant findings, most of them have looked solely at the US Congress and have not fully analyzed the organization of legislative bodies in other countries, particularly those with parliamentary systems (Gamm and Huber, 2002; Cox and McCubbins, 2004).<sup>2</sup>

This study discusses how a party manipulates committees in order to aid party legislators' reelection efforts and maintain party unity under parliamentary systems, and it expands committee theories developed for research on the US Congress to the Japanese Diet. In doing so, this study aims not only to apply US committee theories to the Japanese Diet, but also to create a unique theory that can explain the function of committees in other countries. Japan is a suitable case for adapting US committee theories, as the committee system of the Japanese Diet was modeled after the US Congress in the post-World War II (WWII) era. Similar to those in the US Congress, committees in the Japanese Diet are positioned to address each policy area, and they play a central role in the legislative process. On the other hand, although the United States has a presidential system and cross-voting is still frequent in the Congress, Japan has a parliamentary system where the

procedures, parliamentary systems, or unitary systems. In addition, Carroll and Kim (2010) found that in the US Congress, the majority party attempts to achieve party unity by providing particularistic benefits to party members that hold different views from the party line.

<sup>2</sup> Some studies have focused on legislative committees in other countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, and Venezuela (Crisp *et al.*, 2009); Japan (Pekkanen *et al.*, 2006); and Germany (Stratmann and Baur, 2002). See also Bowler *et al.* (1999) for a study of party discipline under parliamentary systems in European countries.

government is dependent on the confidence of the legislature, and the governing party needs to maintain party unity (especially voting unity) to hold power and pass bills or budgets in the Diet. Owing to the different institutional environments arising from the parliamentary system, committees in the Japanese Diet are expected to evolve independently and have a different function from those in the US Congress. Thus, an examination of Japanese Diet committees will contribute to understanding the function of committees from a cross-national comparative view and verifying the generalizability of the US-related theories.

This study shows that a party achieves both each party legislator's electoral needs and party unity by controlling Diet committee assignments and deliberations. In particular, a party shapes committees in a different way according to the policy areas over which committees have jurisdiction. Policy areas are largely divided into those concerning particularistic benefits and those concerning general benefits (e.g. Cain *et al.*, 1987). This study argues that a party tends to accept its members' requests for affiliation and allow their self-management in committees concerned with particularistic benefits so that they can deliver specific benefits to each electoral district. In addition, a party tends to assign members who have average policy positions in the party to committees concerned with general benefits in order to make policies that satisfy many constituencies. I demonstrate this argument by examining the Japanese Diet committee affiliations of the Lower House legislators of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in ten Diet sessions between 2003 and 2007.

This study is organized in four sections. First, I describe the legislative process and committee systems in Japan, which I focus on as a case to validate my argument. Contrary to the conventional view that committees are inefficient in the Japanese Diet, I show that committees have a meaningful impact on policy outcomes and legislators' reelection prospects. Second, I discuss the purpose and role of legislative organization for parties and legislators, and I propose that a party assists with the reelection of legislators and the maintenance of party unity by carefully shaping committees according to the policy areas over which the committees have jurisdiction under the parliamentary system. Third, as preparation for testing the hypotheses, I estimate legislators' policy positions and their policy distances from the party average in spatial dimensions using survey data. Finally, I demonstrate the validity of the hypotheses by examining the differences in members' ideology between committees.

### *Institutional background: committees matter to policymaking and legislators' reelection*<sup>3</sup>

After WWII, the Japanese Diet adopted a committee-centred system based on the model of the US system; thus, it has a similar committee system to the

<sup>3</sup> Nakajima (2007), Iwai (1988), and Oyama (2003) offer a good summary of the legislative process in Japan. See also the website of the Lower House in Japan. <[http://www.shugiin.go.jp/index.nsf/html/index\\_e\\_guide.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/index.nsf/html/index_e_guide.htm)>

US Congress. In the legislatures of both the United States and Japan, in concrete terms, committees are organized according to policy areas, all bills are referred to committees in principle, committee deliberations are substantively open to public inspection, and the plenary session cannot deal with bills until their passage through committees (Oyama, 2003). On the other hand, unlike committees in the US Congress, Japanese Diet committees rarely draft or revise bills, and committee members vote in accordance with their party lines.

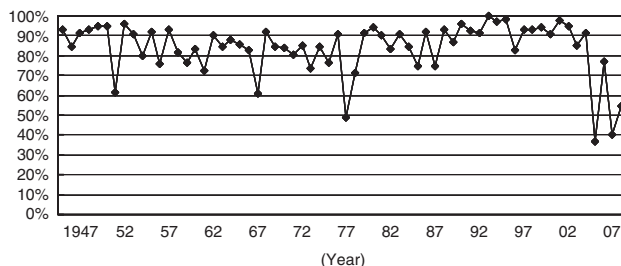
In the Japanese parliamentary system, government-sponsored bills account for most enacted bills.<sup>4</sup> During the LDP's reign between 1955 and 2009, the government and the ruling party firmly institutionalized the policymaking process (Sato and Matsuzaki, 1986; Inoguchi and Iwai, 1987; Iwai, 1988; Oyama, 2003; Nakajima, 2007).<sup>5</sup> Bureaucrats drafted bills, but they kept in close contact with LDP legislators during the drafting process. In the 13 policy divisions (*bukai*) of the party Policy Research Council (PRC), which were established in correspondence with Diet committees and government ministries, legislators who had special expertise and influence over each policy area substantively examined bills and coordinated interests. PRC divisions affected the contents of the bills and thus played a pivotal role in policymaking in the LDP. Furthermore, in order to submit bills to the Diet, the government was required to gain approval from the LDP. Thus, LDP legislators strongly influenced the content of bills. Once the government submits bills to the Diet, the Diet begins its deliberations and sends each bill to the committee that holds jurisdiction over the appropriate policy area. The Lower House has 12 standing committees divided by policy area, and these committees play a pivotal role in discussing bills in the Diet. During committee deliberations, each parliamentary group asks questions concerning the government-sponsored bills or the government's political management, and the government responds to these questions. After question-and-answer and debate sessions, committees vote on bills and send those that are passed to the plenary session. The plenary session provides additional discussion and votes on the bills. Japan has a bicameral system, and thus both Upper and Lower Houses discuss and vote on bills in committees and the plenary session. Bills are enacted after passage through both houses.

Under the LDP rule, the Japanese Diet, including committees, was generally viewed as inefficient, as revising or abandoning bills was rare (Baerwald, 1974).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Bills generally consist of government-sponsored bills and legislator-sponsored bills in Japan. For the 10 years between 1997 and 2006, 1353 government-sponsored bills were submitted to the Diet and 1246 were enacted, whereas 929 legislator-sponsored bills were submitted and 225 were enacted (Nakajima, 2007: 67).

<sup>5</sup> The LDP was nearly always in power between the period of its formation in 1955 and 2009. It lost power only once in July 1993 and returned as the ruling party in June 1994. In October 2009, the party lost power to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).

<sup>6</sup> The LDP, which usually held the majority of the seats in both the Upper and Lower Houses, attempted to enact bills in their original form.



**Figure 1** Enactment rate of government-sponsored bills in postwar Japan.

Instead, the heart of policymaking in the government and the ruling LDP was seen in the latter's bill-screening process, which took place in the PRC divisions before the submission of bills to the Diet. However, in reality, Diet committees do have some impact on policy outcomes and legislators' reelection probabilities in Japan. First, regarding the committees' policymaking function, committees affect the success or failure of bills because delays in committee deliberations scraps bills (Mochizuki, 1982; Ito, 1988; Iwai, 1988; Sone and Iwai, 1988). Figure 1 shows the enactment rate of government-sponsored bills in postwar Japan.<sup>7</sup> Between 1956 and 2008, when the LDP was in office, 6879 government-sponsored bills were submitted to the Diet and 5805 of them were passed. The average rate of bill enactment was 84.4%, meaning that more than 15% of bills were discarded in the Diet. Why did approximately one-sixth of government-sponsored bills fail in spite of the fact that the LDP usually maintained a majority of seats in both Houses and was theoretically able to pass all bills? The reason lies in 'the rule of withdrawal by failure to act'. In the Japanese Diet, bills not adopted by the end of a session are scrapped (Article 68 of the Diet Law). Thus, although opposition parties cannot vote down government-sponsored bills because of the lack of a majority, they can instead attempt to cause bills to be abandoned by delaying deliberation and blocking votes (Mochizuki, 1982).<sup>8</sup> Japan has a committee-centred system, and committee deliberations form a large part of the legislative process in the Diet. The smoothness of committee proceedings affects the fate of bills. If committee discussions are delayed, bills will be scrapped because of the Diet's failure to act. Therefore, ruling and opposition parties compete over completing the legislative schedule in committees. The ruling party (or parties) seeks to attain smooth committee proceedings, whereas the opposition parties attempt to play an

<sup>7</sup> The data were taken from Masuyama (2003) and the homepage of the Lower House. <[http://www.shugiin.go.jp/index.nsf/html/index\\_gian.htm](http://www.shugiin.go.jp/index.nsf/html/index_gian.htm)>

<sup>8</sup> Opposition parties take various measures to delay deliberations, such as hindering the submission of bills to the Diet, requiring the government to explain bills in the plenary session, submitting massive bills with no chance for enactment, adhering to the legislative schedule, excessively proposing motions, taking a long time to make speeches or approach the podium to vote, refusing to attend a session, or occupying the Diet chambers (Ito, 1988).

obstructionist role. The conventional rule of unanimity in the Diet helps opposition parties delay committee proceedings (Mochizuki, 1982).<sup>9</sup> In short, committees are political battlefields where ruling and opposition parties compete over completion of the legislative schedule. Committees influence the fate of bills and thus shape legislative outcomes.

Second, committees serve as forums for debate that allow Japanese legislators to appeal to their constituencies and thus promote their reelection probability (Matsumoto, 2007; Matsumoto and Matsuo, 2011). Matsumoto (2007) and Matsumoto and Matsuo (2011) found that legislators have some autonomy over their committee statements, and they often act out of concern for reelection, not on behalf of their party. They investigated legislators' statements in committees, and emphasized that committee deliberations are in effect open to the public while the party policymaking process is closed. Notably, under the LDP's rule, party legislators sometimes openly made adversarial comments against the government or the party in committees. Generally, there are three types of legislator comments: expression of their policy stance, asking for policy measures, and claiming credit for policy achievements.<sup>10</sup> By doing so, they appeal to their constituencies. Meanwhile, from the standpoint of the government and the ruling party, statements by legislators that excessively violate party lines can have a negative influence on other legislators' reelection chances or the smooth enactment of bills. In short, committees help legislators appeal to their constituencies and improve their reelection prospects by allowing them to express their stance on policies, request policy measures, and claim credit for policy achievements.

Indeed, the PRC of the LDP, the PRC divisions in particular, had a significant impact on legislative outcomes and legislators' reelection prospects. The LDP sought to maintain voting unity through the intraparty coordination of the PRC. Moreover, LDP legislators attempted to draft bills that would be useful for their reelection (Inoguchi and Iwai, 1987; Iwai, 1988; Tatebayashi, 2004). However, it should be noted that committees were also important to the enactment of bills and legislators' reelection prospects – independently of the importance of the PRC – for the following two reasons. First, committee deliberations are open to the public,

<sup>9</sup> In the Japanese Diet, the decision of the committee deliberation schedule customarily requires the unanimous approval of both ruling and opposition parties. Under this rule, if opposition parties disagree, a ruling party faces difficulty in smoothly managing committee deliberations. As a result, the ruling party revises or gives up several bills to conciliate opposition parties and pass other bills.

<sup>10</sup> Legislators make more statements in committees that have jurisdiction over pork-barrel spending, such as the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Committee on Commerce and Industry; and the Committee on Communications. For example, in the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, legislators lobby the government to maintain or increase the prices of agricultural or fishery products or to protect agricultural or fishery workers. In the Committee on Commerce, legislators call on the government to achieve macroeconomic stability on behalf of big companies or they protect individual industries in the interest of small companies. In the Committee on Construction, legislators talk about the underdevelopment of roads and bridges in their district or local developments from previous public projects (Matsumoto, 2007).

whereas PRC deliberations are closed. In particular, committee statements and deliberations are relayed via television, and the minutes of committees are recorded so that they can be easily accessed in print and online. Thus, especially in general benefit policy committees, if a party legislator makes a statement that is controversial or different from the government's official view, that statement can help opposition parties delay deliberations or block bills. Moreover, committees conduct roll call votes, whereas the PRC makes decisions on the basis of the conventional rule of unanimity without taking a vote. Therefore, committees provide each member with a chance to formally raise an objection. If even one member rebels, his or her rebellion would contribute to delaying deliberations and the possibility of a blocked bill. At the same time, and especially in particularistic benefit policy areas, the openness of committee deliberations helps legislators develop their reelection probability. Legislators devise bills that will benefit their constituencies in the PRC, but they cannot publicize their efforts and contributions to their constituencies in closed PRC deliberations. However, they can make their efforts known in committees by asking for policy measures or claiming credit for policy achievements. That is, committees can serve as a forum where legislators appeal to their constituencies. Second, LDP legislators competed or negotiated with opposition parties in committees, whereas they coordinated their own interests in the PRC. Thus, even if party legislators agreed to pass certain bills in the PRC, disgruntled legislators could attempt to delay deliberations or change legislative outcomes under the pretext of negotiations with opposition parties. In this way, Diet committees have an impact on the enactment of bills and members' electoral fortunes to some extent; this impact is independent of the significance of the PRC.

In summary, although Japanese Diet committees rarely draft or revise bills, they serve as political battlefields where ruling and opposition parties compete over the completion of legislative schedules. In addition, these committees are forums for debate where members sell their policy positions to constituencies and thus improve their reelection probability. As a result, *the composition of committee members, who are assigned to each committee, affects legislative productivity and legislators' reelection probability* (Point 1).

Finally, in this section, I will briefly explain the committee nomination process and the electoral incentives that electoral rules generate for legislators in Japan. In the Japanese Diet, unlike the US Congress, legislators do not stay in one committee; they switch committees every parliamentary session. After a party receives seats in each committee in proportion to its size in the Diet (Articles 46 and 54 of the Diet Law), a party leader (principally the secretary-general) allocates its members to each committee. This is done after considering the number of terms the members have served in the Diet and any requests received from them or their factions (Sato and Matsuzaki, 1986; Inoguchi and Iwai, 1987).<sup>11</sup> In reality,

<sup>11</sup> The LDP has around five factions. They influence the party's decisions concerning issues such as selection of the party president, post allocation, and policymaking.



party executives typically accept requests from factions; thus, negotiations over committee assignments are conducted between a faction and its members. Therefore, faction leaders and party executives are included as party leadership in this study.<sup>12</sup> That is, *the party leadership, including party executives and faction leaders, determines its members' committee assignments to some extent on the basis of their requests* (Point 2).

Regarding the electoral incentives created by electoral rules, the Lower House has had a combination of single-member districts (SMDs) with 300 seats, and 180 proportional representation (PR) seats, since 1996. The Public Offices Election Law provides that candidates can run for both SMD and PR seats, and thus those candidates that are defeated in SMDs can have a second chance at getting elected to a PR seat. In particular, the LDP does not generally permit its members to run only for PR seats – most members must run for both.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the party does not endorse those who have lost SMDs twice in a row. Thus, almost all LDP legislators seek to win SMDs, and the SMD system offers incentives for them to deliver geographically particularistic benefits to their constituencies (Bawn and Thies, 2003; Machidori, 2005).

### *Theory and hypotheses*

Under legislative systems with decentralized policymaking structures like the US Congress or Japanese Diet, committees have a significant impact on policy outcomes. Thus, legislators aspire to belong to committees related to the interests of their constituencies and to take part in the policymaking process in such interest areas. They seek to pass, revise, or reject bills so as to make policies that contribute to improving their reelection chances.

In US Congress research, scholars have tended to focus on committees. Three competing theories have attempted to explain the purpose and role of committees.<sup>14</sup> First, the distributive theory states that committees help members deliver specific interests to their constituencies and thus improve their probability of reelection (Shepsle, 1978; Shepsle and Weingast, 1981; Weingast and Marshall, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> Faction leaders are usually appointed to positions as party executives, or leaders who are not executives will seek positions as party executives in the future. Consequently, both party executives and faction leaders usually share the common goals of achieving each party member's reelection and party unity. By attaining these collective goals for the party, they can bring the party to power and thus secure their executive position. Some faction leaders such as Shizuka Kamei, Takeo Hiranuma, and Mitsuo Horiuchi rebelled against the postal reform bills submitted by the Koizumi Cabinet in 2005. However, this was an exceptional case in that they really attempted to defeat the Cabinet. Furthermore, their decision was irrational because damaging party unity harmed the party's stable position as the ruling party and their hopes for positions as leading legislators or candidates for prime minister. In fact, they were expelled from the party.

<sup>13</sup> An LDP candidate who only runs for a PR seat is one who shares the same district with another party member and alternates running for an SMD or PR seat every election, or one who is nominated at the bottom of the party's PR list solely to fill out the list.

<sup>14</sup> See Shepsle and Weingast (1994) for a summary of this issue.



This theory assumes that legislators self-select committees that are especially concerned with their respective constituencies' interests and conduct committee deliberations autonomously of parties or the parent chamber. Second, the information theory posits that committees play a role in contributing to the efficient legislative process in the parent chamber by providing information and reducing uncertainty regarding policy outcomes (Gilligan and Krehbiel, 1990; Krehbiel, 1991). Third, the partisan theory argues that majority party leadership controls committee assignments and deliberations, and thus uses committees to maintain its majority status (Cox and McCubbins, 2005, 2007). Empirical tests to evaluate these three theories typically examine the composition of committees. The distributive theory predicts that the composition of committees is not representative of the party or the parent chamber in ideological terms as members self-select their committees. The information theory expects that committees will be representative of the parent chamber because committee policy specialists who supply information to the chamber reflect the preferences of the chamber. The partisan theory anticipates that committees will be representative of the majority party because the majority party assigns committee members in order to create favorable policy results.

This study aims to apply the committee theories developed in US Congress research to the Japanese Diet. In the US Congress, cross-voting is still frequent. In contrast, under parliamentary systems where the executive branch is built on the confidence of the legislative branch, the governing party needs to maintain party unity (and especially voting unity) to hold power and pass bills or budgets. Therefore, expanding US Congress committee theories to parliamentary systems requires the consideration of party unity in legislative voting. That is, under parliamentary systems, a party needs to organize committees so as to develop its legislators' reelection probability and make them vote unanimously in accordance with party lines.

This study shows that a party fulfills each party legislator's electoral needs and maintains party unity by shaping committees according to the policy areas over which the committees have jurisdiction. I divide policy areas into those that concern particularistic interests and those that concern general interests on the basis of their externalities.<sup>15</sup> The ways to improve each party legislator's reelection probability and secure party unity are different in particularistic benefit policy areas and general

<sup>15</sup> Cox and McCubbins (2007: chapter 8) show that party members of committees whose jurisdiction is composed of uniform externalities are representative of the party in ideological and geographical terms, while those of targeted externality committees are unrepresentative. They posit that the party selects loyal members for uniform externality committees to regulate externalities, and that this partisan selection causes the differences in membership between uniform externality and targeted externality committees. However, as the authors partly accept, the self-selection model can also explain these committee assignments. If members self-select committees that are concerned with their district's specific interests, targeted externality committees are expected to be unrepresentative of the party. Thus, the current study examines legislative organization design from the perspective of both the partisan selection and self-selection models.

benefit areas. Particularistic benefits can be defined as specific benefits that an individual electoral district enjoys, such as public projects or subsidies. The benefits of constituencies are diverse, and their distribution varies by electoral district. In order to achieve these benefits, legislators need to respond to each district's specific demands. For example, when constituencies demand construction projects or agricultural subsidies, legislators need channels that deliver such interests to their constituencies. Therefore, to fulfill their electoral needs, they seek to enter committees that can provide benefits for their own district and autonomously manage committee deliberations. From the viewpoint of party leadership, as realizing each constituency's specific benefits leads to a party's electoral victory, members are allowed to join the committees of their choice and exercise autonomous committee management over such areas.

In committees that have the power to substantively draft or revise bills, such as those in the US Congress, legislators can, by revising bills, achieve the special interests of their constituencies. In addition, they can block the passage of bills that will be disadvantageous to their constituencies. On the other hand, even in committees that rarely revise or reject bills, legislators can deliver particularistic benefits. For example, in Japan, where bureaucrats draft bills and the ruling party typically passes cabinet-sponsored bills without making revisions, committees still help legislators attain specific benefits and thus improve their electoral performance. In Japanese Diet committees, the legislators of the former ruling LDP party had some autonomy over their statements with respect to the party leadership. Legislators lobbied the government for policies that would benefit their constituencies, such as maintaining increases in agricultural or fishery product prices, protecting agricultural or fishery workers or small company employees, or building roads and bridges. Moreover, they claimed credit for pork-barrel projects or expressed their policy stances in committees. It is important to note that special interest groups monitor each legislator's committee membership and activities. In addition, most legislators issued newsletters in their constituencies and reported their speeches or activities in committees. In short, even in the Japanese Diet, where committees rarely revise or reject bills, legislators can appeal to their individual constituencies and thus improve their electoral performance.

In particularistic benefit policy areas, a party can force its legislative members to vote unanimously in accordance with party lines, even if it accepts their individual claims for benefits. The externalities of one electoral district's particularistic benefits are limited for other districts, as such benefits are geographically targeted. For instance, the construction of a bridge or road in one district has few positive or negative effects for other districts. Similarly, the supply of subsidies for one sector has few effects on other sectors. Thus, in these policy areas, gains from trade between legislators are possible. The interests of one legislator are approved in exchange for the interests of another without undermining the interests of either. As a result, legislators can develop their reelection prospects by respecting mutual interests and by forming a majority so that they can vote in unison for bills or

budgets to achieve such interests. Some possible adverse externalities caused by achieving particularistic benefits are lax finances or excessive fiscal deficits. Immoderate particularistic benefit seeking by legislators can induce lax finances or excessive fiscal deficits, which lead to future tax increases or economic crises that affect most constituencies. If constituents blame the party as a result, they begin to distrust it, thereby affecting the reelection chances of most party legislators. To avoid such situations, party leaderships need only place a cap on total expenditures. If a leader sets an upper limit on total spending and committees allocate budgets to each district within the upper limit, the party can inhibit excessive fiscal deficits and thus prevent criticism from constituencies. In other words, to achieve fiscal discipline or financial restraint in most constituencies, a leader need only set an upper limit on total expenditures rather than control committees directly.

In contrast to particularistic benefits, general benefits can be defined as nationwide benefits that are shared equally by most constituencies. These general benefits have uniform externalities for most constituencies such as international security or relations with other countries. For example, if the government succeeds in reducing the threat of terrorism or denuclearizing other countries, all people can equally enjoy the benefits of peace. In contrast, if the government fails, all suffer the negative consequences. Thus, success or failure in achieving general benefit policies influences most party members' electoral fortunes, as such benefits concern most constituencies equally. If a party makes policies that satisfy the majority of constituencies, most members can improve their probability of reelection. On the other hand, if a party provokes protests from constituencies, they decrease their members' reelection probability. That is, general benefit policies influence most party members' electoral fortunes. Importantly, gains from trade regarding general benefits between legislators cannot work. As such benefits have uniform externalities for most constituencies, negotiating or respecting one another's interests is impossible. A party cannot force party legislators to vote in unison if it accepts their individual claims for such benefits.

In general benefit policy areas, for the sake of improving members' reelection prospects and maintaining party unity, a party must develop policies that benefit most constituencies and party legislators support. To develop such policies, a party is required to ensure centralized control over the policymaking process, and prevent any minority from influencing policies with their personal radical ideologies. Some extremely conservative or liberal members may attempt to make radical policies that generate protests from most constituencies and, as a result, threaten to negatively affect other party members' reelection. In particular, electorally secure members may tend to formulate policies to fulfill their own individual ideological beliefs rather than improving their reelection probability. Other legislators oppose such policies, and thus a party cannot maintain party unity in legislative voting. The party leadership needs to exclude such radical members from the policymaking process. In short, to advance most party legislators' reelection prospects and maintain party unity in general benefit policy

areas, a party is required to appoint committee members who have policy positions that most constituencies and party legislators support.

Which policy positions satisfy the greatest number of constituencies and party legislators in general benefit policy areas? Party members get elected by receiving support from their respective constituencies for their policies. Therefore, the average of members' policy positions within a party is expected to satisfy most constituencies and thus advance most party members' electoral fortunes. Therefore, this study argues that party leadership assigns members who have average policy positions to committees concerned with general benefits in order to receive optimal support from the greatest number of constituencies.

In summary, this study suggests that a party achieves both each party legislator's electoral needs and party unity by controlling Diet committee membership and deliberations. In particular, it argues that *a party accepts its members' requests for affiliation and allows their self-management in committees concerned with particularistic benefits so that they can deliver specific benefits to each electoral district*. At the same time, *the party assigns those members with average policy positions within the party to committees concerned with general benefits in order to ensure party unity and make policies that satisfy a broad range of constituencies*.

Consequently, different types of member composition will be observed in committees covering particularistic benefits vs. those covering general benefits. In particularistic benefit areas, the party allows members to join the committees of their choice and autonomously make policies so that they can serve each electoral district's specific demands. As a result, party members on particularistic benefit committees are not representative of the party in ideological terms. In contrast, in general benefit areas, the party seeks to make policies that are desirable for most party members by assigning loyal members to committees concerned with these benefits. Consequently, members of general benefit committees uniformly represent the central party ideology. Thus, this study suggests two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *Particularistic benefit committees are more likely to be filled by members who deviate from the party average.*

Hypothesis 2: *General benefit committees are more likely to be filled by members who have average policy positions in the party.*

It may be worth discussing the manner in which the party fulfills the electoral needs of those foreign and defense policy outliers who are excluded from foreign and defense committees, and how the party compensates these outliers for this exclusion, here. Although this study cannot comprehensively determine a method for compensating the excluded policy preferences of outliers, the following are some potential ways of doing so: providing them with *membership in a particularistic benefit committee*; allocating Cabinet or party posts to them; or distributing particularistic benefits to their districts. Determining a method for compensating outliers is a matter that necessitates further discussion; however, their exclusion

does not necessarily ruin their reelection prospects. Candidates' chances to win seats are influenced by their own reputations and their party's reputation. As stated above, foreign and defense policies mainly include nationwide benefits that are equally shared by most constituencies, and thus the success or failure of these policies influences the electoral fortunes of most party members. If parties formulate foreign and defense policies that satisfy most constituencies, the reelection prospects of the outliers also improve with the enhancement of the party's reputation. In other words, if the implementation of reasonable policies improves the party's reputation even without their membership in foreign and defense committees, the outliers' reelection needs will eventually be fulfilled. That is, even without compensation, outliers can improve their reelection prospects, and thus will not necessarily hold grievances against the party or attempt to disrupt party unity. Therefore, compensation is not considered a serious issue in terms of party members' electoral needs and party unity.

Extending the committee theories developed in US Congress research to the Japanese Diet, this study asserts that the distributive theory (Shepsle, 1978; Shepsle and Weingast, 1981; Weingast and Marshall, 1988) can be applied to committees concerned with particularistic benefits with low externalities, whereas the partisan theory (Cox and McCubbins, 2005, 2007) can be applied to committees concerned with general benefits with high externalities. The information theory that states that committees are the agents of the parent chamber (Gilligan and Krehbiel, 1990; Krehbiel, 1991) seems unable to explain the function of committees in the parliamentary system. Under the parliamentary system, where the majority party (or parties) holds the dominant position and dictates policymaking, deliberations in committees, as well as the parent chamber, are based on partisan conflicts between ruling and opposition parties. Thus, legislators aim to achieve their own interests or those of their party instead of those of the parent chamber as a whole.

This study focuses on legislative unity as party unity; however, it is worth discussing party splits and switching. Legislators belong to a party because it is more advantageous to their opportunities for reelection, career development, and policymaking than being independent (Aldrich, 1995). From this point of view, when a party makes policies that will ruin a member's reelection probabilities, that member will rebel against party policies or defect from the party. Which will benefit legislators' reelection chances and improve/sustain their career development and policymaking outlook – rebellion or defection? If a legislator defects from a party, they immediately lose that party's assistance and label in elections. Furthermore, they lose access to the policymaking process and any resulting benefits for their constituencies. On the other hand, if they rebel (e.g. they break party discipline in legislative voting) they will not necessarily be excluded from the party. Dissenters usually receive punishments such as the suspension of party membership or posts for a certain period, or an admonitory warning, although they may be expelled in the worst-case scenario. Thus, even if they rebel, legislators still have a high chance of enjoying the benefits of party membership. That is, defection can be more damaging

to a legislator's reelection prospects, career development, and policymaking than rebellion. Consequently, legislators who are dissatisfied with party policies will first attempt to rebel against party policies. Only when rebellion fails will they leave the party. From the viewpoint of party leadership, leadership must maintain voting unity because disaffected members will not defect from the party until they rebel. Preventing rebellion through the management of committee membership and deliberations helps prevent defection. In fact, when the LDP was a ruling party, the party experienced four collective rebellions: the designation of the Prime Minister in 1978 and the non-confidence resolution against the Ohira Cabinet in 1979; the non-confidence resolution against the Miyazawa Cabinet in 1993; the non-confidence resolution against the Mori Cabinet in 2000; and the postal privatization bills in 2005. Of these four rebellions, the only case in which dissenters spontaneously and collectively left the party occurred as a result of the non-confidence resolution against the Miyazawa Cabinet. In short, in both theoretical and empirical terms, rebellion precedes the appearance of defection. By attempting to prevent members from rebelling, party leadership can also prevent defection.

In addition, this study regards defection as an exception to its argument. Indeed, between 1993 and 1994, and after 2009, when the LDP was in opposition or when some LDP members attempted to remove the party from power, some LDP members defected from the party. However, it is not surprising that some opposition legislators left the party in pursuit of power. Such defections do not contradict this study's argument, because the LDP in opposition provided hardly any benefits to its members and did not have to maintain party unity in order to pass bills. On the other hand, when the LDP was in power, that is, from 1955 to 1993 and from 1994 to 2009, spontaneous and collective defection occurred only once: in the departure of six members to form the New Liberal Club in 1976.<sup>16</sup>

Before presenting the following analysis, I need to clarify which committees deal with particularistic or general benefits. The Lower House of the Japanese Diet has 12 standing committees that have jurisdiction over individual policy areas: the Committees on Cabinet; Internal Affairs and Communications; Judicial Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Financial Affairs; Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; Health, Labor and Welfare; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Economy, Trade and Industry; Land, Infrastructure and Transport; Environment; and Security.<sup>17</sup> Because policy classification is often controversial, I adopt a

<sup>16</sup> Between 2003 and 2007, which is the period this study focuses on, 17 Lower House members and three Upper House members defected from the party after voting for the postal privatization bills or the Lower House election in 2005. However, all but two Upper House members were forced to leave the party as a countermeasure against deselection from party endorsement, expulsion from the party, or the order to resign. In other words, although they desired to stay in the party, the party expelled them. Such defections were not an obstacle to party unity.

<sup>17</sup> The Lower House has five other standing committees concerned with basic policies, the handling of the government, overall budget, accounting, legislative proceedings and discipline: the Committees on National Policies; Budget; Audit and Oversight of Administration; Rules and Administration; and Discipline.

commonly accepted view.<sup>18</sup> As stated above, I categorize particularistic and general benefits according to their externalities, focusing on the effects one district has on another and the possibility of vote trading. Particularistic benefits can be defined as specific benefits that an individual electoral district enjoys, whereas general benefits can be defined as nationwide benefits that most districts share equally. In Japan, three areas – agriculture, commerce and industry, and construction – have been called the ‘Big Three’, and regarded as areas that enable legislators to readily achieve special benefits such as geographically targeted public projects or subsidies for their constituencies (Inoguchi and Iwai, 1987). In these policy areas, the externalities of one district’s benefits have few impacts on other districts, and thus gains from vote trading between legislators are possible. For example, the construction of bridges in one district is unrelated to another district as long as the executive of the government or the party sets an upper limit on total expenditure. Therefore, legislators can trade votes to develop their reelection prospects (e.g. by approving public projects in one another’s districts). The Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry; and the Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport cover agriculture, commerce, and industry, and construction, respectively.

In contrast, it seems to be commonly agreed that two high-policy areas – foreign affairs and national security – largely have uniform effects on most constituencies. Peace and security, relations with other countries, or a reputation in the international community are benefits that most people enjoy equally. For example, relations with other countries or the threat of terrorism or nuclear weapons affect all people. As a result, negotiating or respecting one another’s interests is difficult. The Committees on Foreign Affairs and Security deal with foreign affairs and national security, respectively.<sup>19</sup> In short, the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry; and the Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport are all concerned with particularistic benefits, whereas the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Security are concerned with general benefits.

On the other hand, the other seven committees involve both particularistic and general benefits. For example, the Committee on Health, Labour and Welfare deals with the pension program, which concerns all people, and medical service fees, which only concern health-care workers. The main focus of this study is on how a party achieves both the reelection of its legislators and the maintenance of

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Pekkanen *et al.* (2006) and Stratmann and Baur (2002) for policy classifications.

<sup>19</sup> Some may point out that foreign or defense areas partly include special interests such as interests concerning foreign aid or weapons purchases. However, it does not matter whether or not foreign or defense policies involve special interests. Instead, the central point here is the level of their externalities. As foreign or defense policies, as discussed previously, have high and uniform externalities for most constituencies, party leaderships need to make policies on its centralized initiative that most constituencies and party legislators would support for the sake of improving members’ reelection prospects and maintaining party unity.



party unity in terms of a link between legislators' policy positions and committee membership. From this viewpoint, this study has no clear theoretical expectations regarding who should be assigned to the other seven committees. For these reasons, this study does not focus on these seven committees. As they are excluded, this study does not examine the influence of these committees on legislators' reelection and party unity. However, the three particularistic benefit committees are directly linked with legislators' personal reputations. In addition, the two general benefit committees are directly linked with party reputation. Thus, by focusing on 5 of the 12 committees, this study provides a rough estimation of the significance of committees for legislators' reelection and party unity.

This study assumes that legislators' economic and fiscal policy positions are unrelated to deliberations and votes in foreign and defense committees. A similar assumption is made regarding legislators' foreign and defense policy positions and their votes in economic and fiscal committees. In the Japanese Diet, 12 standing committees have been established to discuss bills according to their individual policy areas. Economic and fiscal committees are not concerned with foreign and defense policies, and foreign and defense committees are not concerned with economic and fiscal policies. Therefore, legislators' foreign and defense policies should be unrelated to achieving their constituencies' interests or vote trading between legislators within economic and fiscal committees. Similarly, legislators' economic and fiscal policy positions should be unrelated to the formulation of policies that satisfy a broad range of constituencies by those members with average policy positions. This issue will be examined in later empirical analyses.

### *Data and measurement*

In order to demonstrate the hypotheses, it was necessary to measure legislators' policy positions. In Japan, as legislators vote in accordance with party lines, researchers have had difficulty calculating individual legislators' ideal policy positions from their voting behavior. Instead, by using inquiry surveys of legislators, this study estimated legislators' ideal positions according to spatial dimensions. In particular, it uses the Asahi–Todai Elite Surveys method created by the University of Tokyo and the *Asahi Shimbun* to estimate legislators' ideal policy positions.<sup>20</sup> These surveys asked legislators about their stances on several policy issues in July and September 2003 and August 2005. The collection rate was 82.4% for the July 2003 survey, 95.3% for the September 2003 survey, and 91.4% for the August 2005 survey. Consequently, this study covered 2205 LDP Lower House legislators and estimated their ideal positions within the party over ten Diet sessions between 2003 and 2007.<sup>21</sup> During this period, the LDP government implemented various policies

<sup>20</sup> The data can be obtained from Masaki Taniguchi's website. <<http://www.j.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~masaki/ats/atpsdata.html>>

<sup>21</sup> Three sessions that were held over several days without deliberations were excluded.

that caused serious intraparty conflicts: drastic cuts in government expenditures and public projects, the privatization of public corporations, the dispatch of Japan's Self-Defense Forces to Iraq, the upgrade of the Defense Agency to a ministry, and the enactment of the National Referendum Law for Constitutional Amendments. The LDP faced serious intraparty conflicts over many issues, but it maintained party unity for all legislative votes except the vote on postal privatization. Explaining how the party compelled its legislators to take unified action while still meeting their electoral needs during this period of serious intraparty conflict could provide a useful example for achieving members' reelection and party unity in the future.

Legislators' ideal policy positions were estimated from participants' responses to six statements, which were composed of three foreign and defense issues and three economic and fiscal issues. The questions are as follows. (1) Japan should preemptively attack when it expects foreign aggression. (2) Japan should strengthen the Japan-US security alliance. (3) Japan should reinforce its defensive power. (4) The Japanese government should increase public spending to stimulate the economy instead of reducing spending for fiscal reconstruction. (5) Public projects are necessary to ensure employment in rural areas. (6) Japanese companies should firmly maintain lifetime employment. Legislators answered these questions using a five-point Likert scale: agree, slightly agree, neutral, slightly disagree, and disagree. I conducted principal component analyses with the varimax rotation on legislators' attitudes toward these six issues. Table 1 reports the results of the principal component analyses. The estimation produced two components for each session. In *Session 158*, Components 1 and 2 represent a foreign and defense dimension and an economic and fiscal dimension, respectively. On the other hand, in *Sessions 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, and 168*, Components 1 and 2 are reversed – they represent an economic and fiscal dimension and a foreign and defense policy dimension, respectively. The economic and fiscal dimension indicates the degree to which a member supports big government-oriented policies over small government-oriented policies. The foreign and defense policy dimension shows the degree to which a member supports aggressive policies over passive policies.

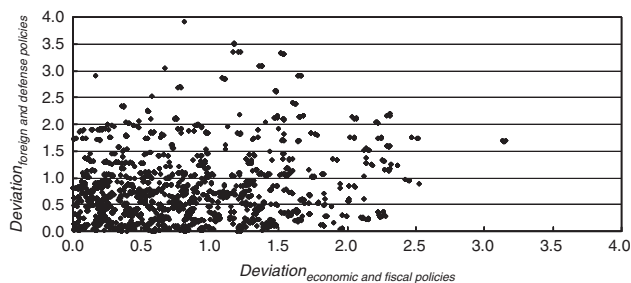
The analyses assigned each legislator two principal component scores in the economic and fiscal dimensions and the foreign and defense dimensions, respectively. The scores show a member's relative policy location within the party. In the economic and fiscal dimension, a big government-oriented member has a positive score, whereas a small government-oriented member has a negative score. In the foreign and defense policy dimension, an aggressive member has a positive score, whereas a passive member has a negative score. Principal component scores have a mean of zero and a variance of one. Therefore, the absolute value of each member's principal component score indicates how far his or her policy position is from the party average. That is, the absolute value of a member's principal component score is defined as *Deviation*, and this variable represents the distance between a member's ideal positions and the party's average positions in spatial dimensions. A member has *Deviation*<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub> and *Deviation*<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>.

Table 1. Principal component analyses of LDP legislators' policy positions

Session Year	156 2003		158 2003		159 2004		160 2004		162 2005		163 2005	
	Component		Component		Component		Component		Component		Component	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
1) Preempting attacks	-0.212	0.769	0.836	-0.086	0.840	-0.087	0.839	-0.073	0.842	-0.074	0.776	0.084
2) Strengthening the Japan–United States alliance	0.104	0.649	0.715	0.218	0.710	0.219	0.706	0.207	0.706	0.207	0.726	0.022
3) Enforcing defense power	0.131	0.675	0.644	0.281	0.640	0.274	0.639	0.268	0.641	0.268	0.779	0.099
4) Increasing public spending	0.914	-0.117	0.014	0.874	0.017	0.877	0.020	0.880	0.025	0.879	0.036	0.918
5) Requiring public projects	0.755	0.183	0.156	0.715	0.152	0.704	0.154	0.707	0.148	0.708	0.129	0.813
6) Maintaining lifetime employment	0.326	0.008	0.143	0.508	0.143	0.516	0.141	0.511	0.141	0.511	0.026	0.372
Proportion (%)	26.4	25.2	27.8	27.8	27.7	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.7	27.6	29.2	27.7
Session Year	164 2006		165 2006		166 2007		168 2007					
	Component		Component		Component		Component					
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2				
1) Preempting attacks	0.776	0.084	0.775	0.087	0.769	0.089	0.769	0.089				
2) Strengthening the Japan–US alliance	0.726	0.022	0.729	0.021	0.730	0.037	0.730	0.037				
3) Enforcing defense power	0.779	0.099	0.778	0.106	0.780	0.095	0.780	0.095				
4) Increasing public spending	0.036	0.918	0.032	0.920	0.035	0.924	0.035	0.924				
5) Requiring public projects	0.129	0.813	0.129	0.813	0.137	0.808	0.137	0.808				
6) Maintaining lifetime employment	0.026	0.372	0.032	0.370	0.032	0.379	0.032	0.379				
Proportion (%)	29.2	27.7	29.3	27.7	29.2	27.8	29.2	27.8				

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for *Deviation*

Session (Year)		Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
156	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.835	0.546	0.006	2.521	165
(2003)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.757	0.650	0.001	3.911	165
158	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.802	0.595	0.005	3.129	202
(2003)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.774	0.631	0.019	3.334	202
159	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.802	0.595	0.007	3.140	202
(2004)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.774	0.631	0.015	3.336	202
160	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.803	0.594	0.020	3.145	203
(2004)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.774	0.631	0.013	3.360	203
162	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.801	0.596	0.020	3.155	204
(2005)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.776	0.629	0.028	3.357	204
163	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.820	0.570	0.005	2.513	243
(2005)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.778	0.626	0.004	3.500	243
164	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.820	0.570	0.005	2.513	243
(2006)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.778	0.626	0.004	3.500	243
165	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.820	0.570	0.005	2.510	241
(2006)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.778	0.627	0.002	3.485	241
166	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.826	0.566	0.002	2.470	251
(2007)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.778	0.626	0.002	3.512	251
167	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.823	0.566	0.002	2.470	251
(2007)	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.778	0.626	0.002	3.512	251
Total	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.815	0.575	0.002	3.155	2205
	<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>	0.775	0.628	0.001	3.911	2205

Figure 2 Score plot of *Deviation*.

*Deviation*<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub> measures the degree to which a member's ideal position deviates from the party average in economic and fiscal policies, whereas *Deviation*<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub> measures the degree to which it deviates in foreign and defense policies. A member with a higher *Deviation* score is more likely to deviate from the party average. Table 2 provides the statistical summary of *Deviation*. In addition, Figure 2 indicates the score plots of *Deviation* for the 2205 LDP Lower House legislators. The horizontal axis indicates *Deviation*<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub> and the vertical axis indicates *Deviation*<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>.

### Analyses

The hypotheses put forward in this study suggest that particularistic benefit committees are more likely to have members who deviate from the party's average policies because the party leadership permits its members to self-select for such committees. On the other hand, it is expected that general benefit committees are more likely to have members who have been selected for their average policy positions in the party, as the leadership seeks to produce general benefit policies that appeal to a broad range of constituents and can be supported by most party legislators. As mentioned above, the particularistic benefit committees are the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry; the Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport; and the general benefit committees are the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Security.

Table 3 indicates committee members' policy deviations from the party average, reporting the average amount of Deviation for committee members.<sup>22</sup> Table 3A compares the degree of economic and fiscal policy deviation between LDP particularistic benefit committee members and other LDP members who do not belong to these committees. Of the total 2205 legislators, 582 belong to one of the three committees. The mean of *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>* for particularistic benefit committee members (0.862) is higher than that of non-members (0.798) at a statistically significant level ( $P < 0.05$ ). As Hypothesis 1 suggests, particularistic benefit committees are populated by members who deviate from the party average. On the other hand, Table 3B compares the degree of foreign and defense policy deviation of LDP general benefit committee members and LDP members who do not belong to these committees. Of the total 2205 legislators, 293 belong to one of the two committees. The mean of *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>* for general benefit committee members (0.693) is lower than that of non-members (0.788) at a statistically significant level ( $P < 0.05$ ). As Hypothesis 2 suggests, general benefit committees are populated by members who have average policy positions in the party.

Regression analyses were used to verify the results. I used a binary logistic regression model because the dependent variable is dichotomous (e.g. whether or not a legislator belongs to a committee).<sup>23</sup> The analyses also cover the 2205 LDP

<sup>22</sup> I obtained committee membership data from each issue of *Kokkai Binran* [Diet Handbook]. Other data about legislators, such as the number of terms served in the Diet and electoral performance, were also derived from each issue of *Kokkai Binran*.

<sup>23</sup> Most legislators belong to multiple committees. For example, the party can assign those who are extreme in terms of fiscal and economic policies but moderate on foreign and defense policies to both a particularistic benefit committee and a general benefit committee in the same parliamentary session. *Membership in a particularistic benefit committee* and *membership in a general benefit committee* are not mutually exclusive. Thus, a multinomial logit model (e.g. the dependant variable is 0 if a legislator is not a member of any committee; 1 if they are a member of a particularistic benefit committee; and 2 if they are a member of a general benefit committee) is not appropriate for this committee membership analysis.

Table 3. *t*-Test for equality of means

	N	Mean	Mean difference	<i>t</i> -value	Two-tailed significance
(3A) Economic and Fiscal Policy ( <i>Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub></i> )*					
Members of particularistic benefit committees	582	0.862	0.063	2.283	0.023
Others	1623	0.798			
(3B) Foreign and Defense Policy ( <i>Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub></i> )†					
Members of general benefit committees	293	0.693	-0.095	-2.415	0.016
Others	1912	0.788			

\*Particularistic benefit committees are the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery; the Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry; and the Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport.

†General benefit committees are the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Security.

Lower House legislators who belonged to the party in *Sessions 156, 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, and 168*. Regarding *membership in a particularistic benefit committee*, the dependent variable is *Membership in a Particularistic Benefit Committee*, a dummy variable that is coded 1 if a legislator belongs to the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry; or the Committee on Land, Infrastructure and Transport, and 0 otherwise. The key independent variable is *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>* which expresses the degree to which a legislator's ideal policy position deviates from the party's average in economic and fiscal policies. Hypothesis 1 expects the coefficient of *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>* to be positive, as particularistic benefit policy committees are supposed to be more likely to have members who deviate from the party's average policies.

In addition, I included 14 control variables. First, Article 42 of the Diet Law states that 'legislators are obliged to be on at least one of the standing committees but the Speaker, the Vice-Speaker, ministers, senior vice-ministers, vice-ministers, and special advisors to the prime minister are excused from being a member of committees'. Therefore, I included *Cabinet Member*, a dummy variable coded 1 if a legislator served as a minister, a senior vice-minister, a vice-minister, or a special advisor to the prime minister, and 0 otherwise.<sup>24</sup> *Cabinet Member* is supposed to be negative. Second, LDP leadership (mainly the party president or the secretary-general) determines its members' committee assignments in view of their number of terms elected. Under the LDP seniority rule, junior legislators belong to more

Instead, I ran two separate binary logistic regressions: one for *membership in a particularistic benefit committee* and another for *membership in a general benefit committee*.

<sup>24</sup> The Speaker was excluded from the analyses as he or she temporarily leaves his or her party according to legislative practices.

committees as rank and file members in order to develop their policymaking abilities.<sup>25</sup> Thus, I used the variable *Terms*, which is the number of terms a legislator has served, and expect *Terms* to be negative. Third, the type of electoral system under which a legislator was elected can affect his or her committee affiliation. Under the existing combination of SMDs and PR in Japan's Lower House, there are three types of legislators: those who were elected in an SMD; those who were defeated in an SMD but elected through PR; and those who ran only in PR and won a seat. I used *SMD*, which is a dummy variable coded 1 if a legislator won a seat in an SMD and 0 otherwise, and *Revival*, which is a dummy variable coded 1 if he or she was defeated in an SMD but elected through PR and 0 otherwise. Among 2205 legislators, 1633 were elected from an SMD; 361 were defeated in an SMD but elected through PR; and 221 ran only in PR and won a seat through PR. In order to increase party seats, a party often needs to provide electorally weak members with posts to improve their electoral performance (Pekkanen *et al.*, 2006). Among these three types of legislators, those who were elected through PR after being defeated in an SMD are the most vulnerable. The LDP leadership can assign them to a particularistic benefit committee so that they can deliver particularistic benefits to their constituencies and improve their reelection prospects.<sup>26</sup> I predicted that *Revival* should be positive. Fourth, demographic conditions or demands from the district where a legislator was elected can affect his or her affiliation. In concrete terms, legislators elected in rural areas undergo more pressure to achieve particularistic benefits because there are more special interest group members (e.g. agricultural or construction workers) in such areas. I included the *Population Density* variable, which is the *population density* (per square kilometer) of a legislator's district and supposed that *population density* would be negative.<sup>27</sup> Finally, to control for session-specific effects, I included nine session dummy variables: *Session 158*, *Session 159*, *Session 160*, *Session 162*, *Session 163*, *Session 164*, *Session 165*, *Session 166*, and *Session 168*. The base category is *Session 156*. Each variable is coded 1 if a legislator is a member of the LDP in each session, and 0 otherwise.

Regarding *membership in a general benefit committee*, the dependent variable is *Membership in a General Benefit Committee*, a dummy variable coded 1 if a legislator belongs to the Committee on Foreign Affairs or the Committee on

<sup>25</sup> The correlation coefficient between the number of committees that each legislator was assigned to and the number of terms he or she has served is  $-0.530$  ( $P < 0.01$ ) from 2003 to 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Pekkanen *et al.* (2006) found that LDP legislators defeated in an SMD but elected through PR are more likely to obtain pork-barrel posts in the Cabinet, Diet committees, and the party.

<sup>27</sup> As stated above, there are three types of legislators. Regarding legislators who were elected in an SMD and those who were defeated in an SMD but elected under PR, I utilized the population density of the district where they ran as their *Population Density*. Regarding those who ran only in PR, I used that of the district where they have a local office as their *Population Density*. The *population density* data were created from the *Statistical Observations of Shi, Ku, Machi, Mura* of the Statistics Bureau at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. <<http://www.stat.go.jp/data/ssds/5b.htm>>



Security, and 0 otherwise. The key independent variable is *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>*, which represents the degree to which a legislator's ideal policy position deviates from the party's average in foreign and defense policies. Hypothesis 2 predicts that *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>* is negative as general benefit policy committees are supposed to be more likely to have members who have average policy positions in the party.

The same 14 control variables were added here. First, I inserted *Cabinet Member* in the analysis and predicted its coefficient would be negative. Second, I added *Terms* and expected that its coefficient would be negative. Third, I included *SMD* and *Revival*. As stated above, a party needs to provide electorally weak members with posts to improve their electoral performance. In other words, a party may exclude electorally weak members from posts that do not directly improve their electoral performance (e.g. general benefit policy posts). Therefore, the party may not appoint electorally weak members such as those who were defeated in an *SMD* but were elected through PR to the Committees on Foreign Affairs or Defense. *Revival* is expected to be negative. Fourth, I added *Population Density* to control for demographic conditions or constituencies' demands in the district where a legislator was elected. Party leaders may place legislators from urban areas in a general benefit policy committee as urban areas have more ordinary people who are not concerned about particularistic benefits; achieving general benefits will more likely to boost legislators' reelection probability in urban areas (as opposed to rural areas, which have more special interest members). I expected that *Population Density* would be positive. Finally, to control for session-specific effects, I included nine session dummy variables: *Session 158*, *Session 159*, *Session 160*, *Session 162*, *Session 163*, *Session 164*, *Session 165*, *Session 166*, and *Session 168*. The base category is *Session 156*. Table 4 reports the statistical summary of the variables.

Table 5 reports the results of the logistic regression analyses on committee membership. Model 1 illustrates the result of membership in a committee concerned with particularistic benefits. As was expected, the key independent variable, *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>*, is positive at a statistically significant level ( $P < 0.05$ ). This indicates that particularistic benefit committees are more likely to be filled by legislators whose policy positions deviate from the party average. This result supports Hypothesis 1. Model 3 shows the result of membership in a committee concerned with general benefits. As was predicted, the key independent variable, *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>*, is negative at a statistically significant level ( $P < 0.05$ ). This means that general benefit committees are more likely to be filled by legislators whose policy positions are close to the party average. This result supports Hypothesis 2.

As previously explained, this study assumes that legislators' foreign and defense policies are unrelated to the achievement of their constituencies' interests or vote trading in economic and fiscal committees. Similarly, legislators' economic and fiscal policy positions are assumed to be unrelated to the formulation of policies that satisfy a broad range of constituencies by those members with average policy

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the variables

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
<i>Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub></i>	0.815	0.575	0.00165	3.155	2205
<i>Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub></i>	0.775	0.628	0.00119	3.911	2205
<i>Term</i>	3.866	2.780	1	16	2205
<i>Population Density</i>	2648.939	3833.671	19.5	16,553.11	2205
Dummy variables					
	Value				
	0	1	N		
<i>Membership in a Particularistic Benefit Committee</i>	1623	582	2205		
<i>Membership in a General Benefit Committee</i>	1912	293	2205		
<i>Cabinet Member</i>	1863	342	2205		
<i>SMD</i>	572	1633	2205		
<i>Revival</i>	1844	361	2205		
<i>Session 158</i>	2003	202	2205		
<i>Session 159</i>	2003	202	2205		
<i>Session 160</i>	2002	203	2205		
<i>Session 162</i>	2001	204	2205		
<i>Session 163</i>	1962	203	2205		
<i>Session 164</i>	1962	243	2205		
<i>Session 165</i>	1964	241	2205		
<i>Session 166</i>	1954	251	2205		
<i>Session 168</i>	1954	251	2205		

positions. To validate this assumption, I included *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>* in the regression analysis of membership in a committee concerned with particularistic benefits (an economic or fiscal committee). Model 2 indicates that *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>* does not have a significant impact on the dependent variable, and adding this variable did not influence the effects of *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>*. Similarly, I included *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>* in the regression analysis of membership in a committee concerned with general benefits (a foreign or defense committee). Model 4 shows that *Deviation<sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>* is not significant, and adding this variable did not influence the effect of *Deviation<sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>*. That is, legislators' economic and fiscal policy positions were shown to have no significant impact on their membership in foreign and defense committees, and their foreign and defense policy positions were shown to have no significant impact on their membership in economic and fiscal committees.

In summary, the analyses show that particularistic benefit committee members are more likely to deviate from party policies, whereas general benefit committee

Table 5. Logistic regression analysis of committee membership

	DV: Membership in a Particularistic Benefit Committee				DV: Membership in a General Benefit Committee			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
<i>Deviation</i> <sub>economic and fiscal policies</sub>	0.230**	0.087	0.255**	0.088			0.048	0.113
<i>Deviation</i> <sub>foreign and defense policies</sub>			-0.139	0.084	-0.234*	0.111	-0.242*	0.112
<i>Cabinet Member</i>	-1.142***	0.181	-1.145***	0.182	-0.703**	0.213	-0.704**	0.213
<i>Term</i>	-0.172***	0.022	-0.170***	0.022	-0.034	0.024	-0.034	0.024
<i>SMD</i>	0.185	0.176	0.183	0.175	-0.505**	0.185	-0.502**	0.186
<i>Revival</i>	0.373	0.201	0.390	0.201	-1.243***	0.265	-1.240***	0.265
<i>Population Density</i>	-3.31e-05*	1.39e-05	-3.39e-05*	1.39e-05	-2.59e-05	1.80e-05	0.000	0.000
<i>Session 158</i>	-0.265	0.246	-0.266	0.246	0.016	0.311	0.018	0.311
<i>Session 159</i>	-0.219	0.245	-0.219	0.245	0.025	0.311	0.026	0.311
<i>Session 160</i>	-0.212	0.244	-0.211	0.244	0.012	0.311	0.014	0.311
<i>Session 162</i>	-0.211	0.244	-0.211	0.244	0.096	0.307	0.098	0.307
<i>Session 163</i>	-0.130	0.232	-0.128	0.232	0.089	0.296	0.090	0.296
<i>Session 164</i>	-0.138	0.232	-0.135	0.232	0.095	0.296	0.096	0.296
<i>Session 165</i>	-0.198	0.234	-0.195	0.234	0.148	0.295	0.149	0.295
<i>Session 166</i>	-0.195	0.232	-0.193	0.232	0.091	0.294	0.092	0.294
<i>Session 168</i>	-0.230	0.233	-0.227	0.233	-0.043	0.301	-0.044	0.301
(constant)	-0.404	0.252	-0.326	0.257	-0.934**	0.292	-0.970**	0.304
Log likelihood		-1196.399		-1195.002		-841.222		-841.131
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>		0.060		0.061		0.026		0.026
Number of observations		2205		2205		2205		2205

Note: \*\*\* $P < 0.001$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ , \* $P < 0.05$ .

members are more likely to adhere to party policies. By manipulating legislative committee membership and deliberations, the party attempts to achieve both the reelection of each legislator and the maintenance of party unity. In particularistic benefit areas, the party allows members to join the committees of their choice and make policies autonomously so that they can serve their electoral district's specific demands. The party can force party legislators to vote unanimously in accordance with party lines as the effects of particularistic benefits are geographically targeted and legislators can make compromises to achieve their mutual interests. As a result, party members in particularistic benefit committees are not representative of the party in ideological terms. In contrast, in general benefit areas, the party seeks to create policies that are desirable for most party members by assigning loyal members to committees concerned with these benefits. The party cannot maintain party unity if it accepts individual legislators' requests for benefits in general benefit areas. In addition, the effects of general benefits are nationwide and legislators cannot compromise to gain each other's approval. Consequently, members of general benefit committees uniformly represent central party ideology.

The following is a discussion of the other factors influencing legislators' committee affiliation. The *Cabinet Member* variable is significant and negative for both *membership in a particularistic benefit committee* and *membership in a general benefit committee*. As prescribed by the Diet Law, ministers, senior vice-ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and special advisors to the prime minister are excused from being members of committees. *Terms* is significant and negative for being a member of a particularistic benefit committee ( $P < 0.001$ ), but it is not significant for members of general benefit committees. The LDP's seniority rule obliges junior legislators to join more committees in particularistic benefit areas; the rule does not apply to general benefit areas. To develop consistent foreign or defense policies that are favorable to most constituencies, the party may assign some middle or senior members with policy experience to committees related to such policy areas. *Population Density* has a significant and positive effect on *membership in a particularistic benefit committee* ( $P < 0.05$ ). Rural legislators are more likely to belong to particularistic benefit committees. Meanwhile, the variable is not significant for *membership in a general benefit committee*. Electoral incentives in mixed-member systems deserve special notice. In Model 1 (*membership in a particularistic benefit committee*), neither *SMD* nor *Revival* are significant. If *SMD* and *PR Only* (coded 1 if a legislator ran only in PR and won, and 0 otherwise) are included in the model without *Revival*, or if *Revival* and *PR Only* are included without *SMD*, no variable is significant. There is no evidence that the type of electoral system under which a legislator was elected affects his or her committee affiliation. In contrast, in Model 2 (*membership in a general benefit committee*), both *SMD* ( $P < 0.01$ ) and *Revival* ( $P < 0.001$ ) are significant and negative. When I insert *SMD* and *PR Only* without *Revival*, both *SMD* ( $P < 0.01$ ) and *PR Only* ( $P < 0.001$ ) are significant and positive. When I insert *Revival* and *PR Only* without *SMD*, *Revival* is significant and negative ( $P < 0.01$ ) and *PR Only* is significant and

positive ( $P < 0.01$ ). That is, the LDP leadership tends to include those who ran only under PR and won in general benefit committees, and tends to exclude those who were defeated in an SMD but elected through PR from these committees. This result corresponds to Pekkanen *et al.* (2006) finding that a party keeps electorally weak members away from posts that less directly improve their electoral performance. In contrast, the appointment of those who ran only in PR and won a seat in a general benefit post is unexpected and requires future consideration.

## Conclusion

Maintaining party unity and ensuring each party legislator's reelection can seem like incompatible goals. If a party were to attempt to comply with the electoral needs of each member, it could not reasonably enforce unified action among its members. However, if a party were to force its members to act unanimously in accordance with party lines, it would ignore its members' electoral needs completely. Studies have focused on the determinants of party unity, but few attempts have been made to investigate how a party compels its legislators to take unified action while meeting their electoral needs, thus improving their chances for reelection. This study examined committees in the Japanese Diet and found that the majority party achieved both the reelection of its legislators and maintained party unity by manipulating legislative committee membership and deliberations. In particular, a party shapes committees differently according to the policy areas over which the committees have jurisdiction. A party tends to accept its members' requests for affiliation and allow their self-management in committees concerned with particularistic benefits so that they can deliver specific benefits to each electoral district. At the same time, a party tends to assign members who have average policy positions in the party to committees concerned with general benefits in order to make policies that satisfy many constituencies.

The findings from this study imply that committee theories developed in US Congress research can explain the function of committees in other countries that have parliamentary systems, for example Japan. At the same time, this study indicates that the function of committees in Japan can differ according to the policy areas over which they have jurisdiction. In Japan, the distributive theory can apply to particularistic benefit committees, and the partisan theory can apply to general benefit committees. In addition, whereas former studies have stated that incentives created by candidate selection procedures or electoral rules affect committee assignments or structures (e.g. Cain *et al.*, 1987; Stratmann and Baur, 2002; Pekkanen *et al.*, 2006; Crisp *et al.*, 2009), this study indicates that committee assignments and structures differ according to their jurisdictional areas – even under the same candidate selection procedures or electoral rules. Moreover, even under a parliamentary system, individual legislators can participate in autonomous committee deliberations in particularistic benefit areas and still maintain party unity in legislative voting.

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