

The Koizumi Revolution

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On September 11, 2005, Koizumi Junichiro and his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) achieved a stunning victory in the 44th House of Representatives election. In stark contrast with the previous election, just two years earlier, in which the LDP had only managed 237 seats, the LDP captured an impressive 296 seats. This meant that together with their coalition partner, the Komeito, the LDP now controlled two thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives (the more powerful of the two houses that comprise Japan's Diet, or parliament).¹

Koizumi's personal popularity largely explains his party's victory. While it has become standard to compare Koizumi with British Prime Minister Tony Blair or German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Koizumi ended his tenure with an electoral majority that would be the stuff of dreams for Blair or Schroeder.

Throughout his tenure as prime minister, Koizumi had to expend much energy on maintaining public approval. This is true of most democratically elected leaders, but it is particularly true in Koizumi's case. Since he lacked a support base in the Diet among his own party, he was forced to rely on the strength that public support gave him: Dietmembers (DMs) would not jettison a popular leader, thereby risking their own positions in an election. Initially, Koizumi's stratospheric approval ratings guaranteed

his position, but as his ratings began to fall, he relied on a series of populist strategies to shore up his support. These strategies were of dramatic, but transient significance to his ratings, as soon as the temporary stimulus was removed, his popularity levels returned to their pre-existing level of stability.²

In this article, we discuss how Koizumi managed to become president of the LDP against all odds, how he managed to survive various challenges as leader and prime minister, and how, toward the end of his tenure, he was able to revive spectacularly both his, and his party's, flagging popularity. Finally, we turn to the implications of Koizumi's policy agenda and leadership style both for Japan's future international relations and for Japanese democracy.

Explaining Koizumi's Initial Popularity

Koizumi seems to abhor the system epitomized by Tanaka Kakuei. Tanaka, prime minister from 1972 to 1974, epitomized the "LDP system"—a system that helped redistribute national wealth to rural districts, but did so largely via grants, farm subsidies, and "pork barrel" projects that became a breeding ground for political corruption. Tanaka famously "never saw a spending program he didn't like." Koizumi, on the other hand, sought to "smash" this system, advocating neoliberal economic reform, small government, and a more open LDP—these beliefs placed him in a minority position within his own party in 2001.

At the beginning of 2001, against a background of continuing economic stagnation, public opinion had turned against the LDP and its leader, the gaffe-prone, unpopular Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro. Support for the Mori cabinet had fallen dramatically; by February 2001 it was in single digits. LDP party members were bracing for defeat in the run-up to July's House of Councilors election. In a last-ditch attempt to revive their fortunes, the party chose a new leader (known as the LDP president).

Although four candidates sought the position, the race was essentially between Koizumi and Hashimoto Ryutaro. Usually, the head of the largest faction

within the LDP wins the presidency (or the post is decided through interfactional negotiations), so initially Hashimoto, head of the party's largest faction and swinging considerable organizational clout with the party's regional rank and file, was the favorite. Hashimoto was the backroom player, the faction leader, and, as the media constantly reminded the public, although he, too, supported reform his previous tenure as prime minister had been disastrous. Hashimoto could equally—and accurately—have been described as a former prime minister who achieved a number of significant reforms during his tenure, which was cut short by the introduction of a necessary—but unpopular—tax, but this was not the story the media chose.

Koizumi had run for the prime ministership twice before, and lost both times, but this time he quit factional politics and had endorsed new plans for structural reform. Of all the candidates, Koizumi stood out from the party insiders. He alone appeared galvanized by the party's plummeting popularity and was the most outspoken in calling for change within the party. Koizumi put forward his sense of crisis simply and straightforwardly: in his sound-bites, he was the man who was going to "Change the LDP, change Japan." His sense of crisis resonated with party members. Since defeat seemed imminent for the LDP, local party members were convinced that electing a party insider would spell doom. Hopeful that changes in their party could lead to changes in Japan and the survival of the party, members broke from the usual factional allegiances to throw their support behind Koizumi.

Koizumi benefited significantly from changes in the LDP selection process that occurred in 1998. In 1998, the selection process had reverted to a primary-like system in which both DMs and party representatives from the 47 prefectures voted (many of the prefectures held primaries in which party members voted). In the 2001 election, the system was tweaked again to give the votes of the prefectural chapters more weight than they had in the 1998 race.³ Even though the prefectural chapters had less than half of the votes, the winner would have to be much more popular with rank-and-file members, since the DMs basically knew

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the prefectural results when they voted. Given the additional weight of the prefectures, the candidate had to appeal to a broad range of the populace since the membership of the LDP is not comprised only of party activists: all nurses, for example, are party members, as their dues are paid by the Nurses Association.

In addition, the media played a role in Koizumi's selection: he was an adept manipulator of his personal image, and he benefited from the ways in which the media framed the leadership contest. On the first point, Koizumi, rare among Japanese prime ministers, understood the importance of the media and went further than any other leader to develop and protect his image. Koizumi knew how to perform, unlike many previous prime ministers who were selected not primarily for their public popularity, but more on the basis of their effectiveness as intra-LDP political operatives. Koizumi appealed directly to the public with sound-bite politics, he was willing to court the softer news outlets to appeal to a more diverse audience, and he was confident in public debates, speaking and gesturing in an authoritative manner. He was widely perceived by the public as a charismatic leader with his unusual, easy-to-distinguish looks. On the second point, the media had consistently described the election as a way for the LDP to regain the trust of the public by being open and free from factional control. At the beginning of the campaign period the *Asahi Shinbun* (Japan's second-largest circulation national daily newspaper), for example, explicitly cautioned the DMs not to go against the choice of the prefectures.

Koizumi scored a landslide victory in the local primaries, coming out with about 90% of the electoral votes assigned to the prefectures. The prefectural results tied the hands of the DMs, who, left to their own factional allegiances, might have chosen Hashimoto. But it was difficult for party leaders to reject the rank-and-file position, particularly in light of overt media pressure on the LDP to listen to prefectural demands and the LDP's declining support. The momentum of taking the prefectures propelled Koizumi to victory in the final vote by LDP DMs.

Koizumi was formally confirmed prime minister on April 26, 2001, two days after winning the presidency of the LDP, and his popularity soared. Partly from necessity, Koizumi played on the "idolization" that occurred during the "Koizumi boom" period. Koizumi was a master among the "entertain-ized" politicians, barraging viewers with television appearances (Taniguchi 2004). The LDP produced and sold around three million

dollars worth of Koizumi dolls, masks, cell-phone straps, and posters. At the end of June, the LDP hung a gigantic poster of Koizumi on the outside of their headquarters. Koizumi himself admitted, somewhat shame-facedly, "It's really big, isn't it? But dreams are better big."

Political scientist Otake Hideo argues that Koizumi is the quintessential Japanese-style populist who shares much in common with U.S. populist leaders such as Ronald Reagan. For Koizumi to become popular, he needed to contrast with the unpopular senior members of the LDP; he needed to be anti-entrenched power, anti-wealth, and anti-elite. His policy preferences—neoliberal reforms and small government—would undermine the LDP status quo (Otake 2003). Despite his evident popularity, Koizumi denies that he is a populist, claiming that since the reforms that he proposes are "painful," they—and he—cannot be populist. However, in truth, Koizumi's reforms stem from his opposition to big government—eliminating inefficiency and waste became important goals for the proponents of reform, and thus important components of populism.

Koizumi excelled at another classic component of populism: the use of television to appeal directly to the public. Otake (2003, 115–6) contrasts Koizumi with Reagan, pointing out that Koizumi's television appearances were less professionalized and less calculated than were Reagan's. Koizumi deliberately used fresh, ordinary language, in contrast with the language usually favored by politicians and bureaucrats. For the LDP to continue in government in the early years of the twenty-first century would have been a continuation of the status quo: selecting Koizumi, an inside critic, allowed the LDP to maintain power, while seemingly destroying the status quo.

In fact, there is little that was "Japanese-style" about Koizumi's populism: Kurt Weyland's (1999; 2001) definitions of contemporary populism in his studies of Latin America and Eastern Europe also accurately define Koizumi's style of populism. Weyland defines populism as a political strategy by which personal leaders appeal to a heterogeneous mass of followers who feel left out: leaders reach followers in a direct, quasi-personal manner that bypasses established intermediary organizations (particularly via television); and use parties as "personal vehicles." Furthermore, in contrast to established notions of *economic* populism that embrace excessive government spending, Weyland argues that *political* populism and neoliberalism are compatible in that they both have anti-status quo orientations. Populist-

neoliberalist condemnation of interest groups, some of which have considerable political influence and include established politicians and government bureaucrats, as serving "special interests" provides a powerful ideological justification for neoliberal reforms.

Koizumi ably combined populism and neoliberalism, an ideological combination that made painful measures political viable. In addition, as political scientist Yamada Masahiro points out (2004), the electorate may not have known the details of Koizumi's neoliberal reform policies, but they could use their own anti-status quo sentiments as voting cues.

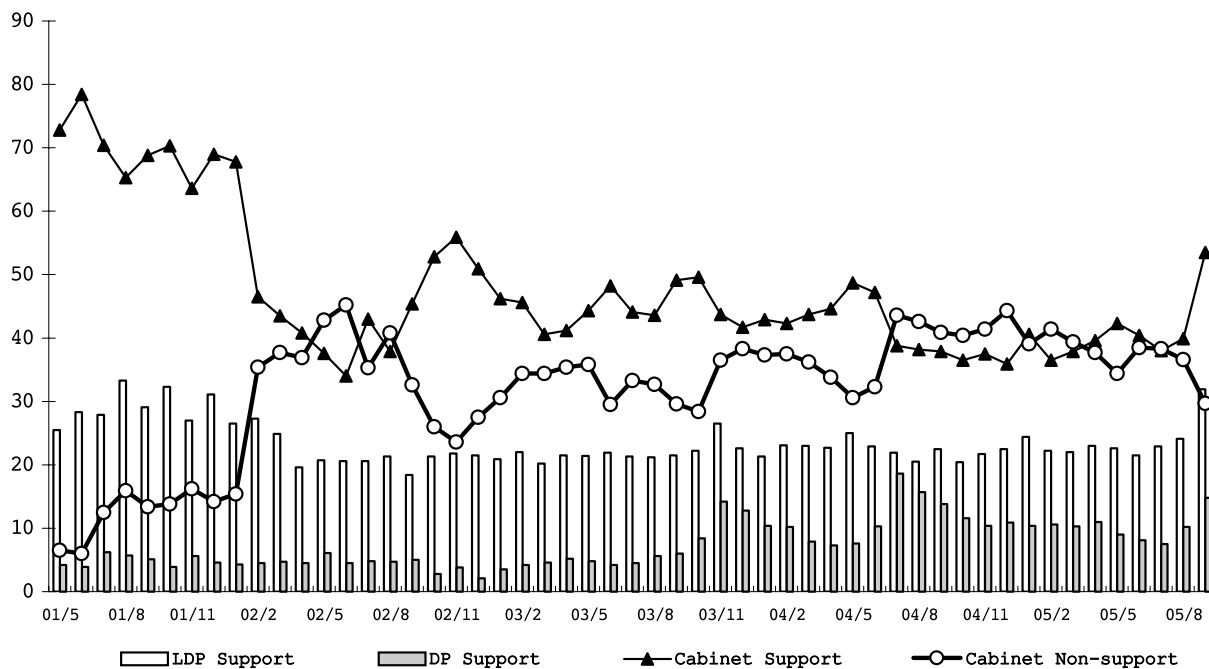
Koizumi's Strategies as Prime Minister

Koizumi put the drama back into politics. He made Japanese politics exciting again, and the public response was overwhelming. With his flair for public relations, he used the media to dramatize his beleaguered position within the LDP, presenting his struggle with the anti-reformists in his party in a theatrical manner. Koizumi managed to position himself as the standard-bearer of the reform camp, seeking to promote the interests of the electorate and fight the self-serving politics of the old guard. The press saw him as an Oda Nobunaga-like figure. Nobunaga, born into the family of a minor sixteenth-century provincial lord, became a brilliant, brutal military tactician, decimating his enemies and paving the way for the unification of Japan.

Koizumi, in his less-bloody battle, succeeded in identifying his intra-LDP opponents as the "forces of resistance," (*teiko seiryoku*)—powerful LDP DMs who opposed neoliberal reforms, including Koizumi's pet project, privatization of the post office (a policy that became emblematic of broader reform). He attached this negative label to any politician who got in his way, particularly politicians from the Hashimoto faction, the largest grouping within the LDP, and one of Koizumi's fiercest intra-party opponents. Koizumi portrayed the situation as an intra-party battle between good and evil, offering a compelling, simple drama that captured the popular imagination.

Koizumi faced his first major challenge as party leader was just three months after his selection as prime minister—the July 29 Upper House election. The LDP's electoral strength had plummeted in Upper House elections during the previous decade, and took a particularly bad pummeling in the 1989 election (following the introduction of an

Figure 1
Support for the Koizumi Cabinet, the LDP, and the DPJ, 2001–2005



Source: Jiji Public Opinion Surveys.

unpopular sales tax) to the point where the party could only garner 45–46 seats.

Koizumi went into the election campaign with an unorthodox call: that Japan should carry out necessary structural reforms even if this caused negative economic growth in the short run; the public would have to suffer “pain for gain,” as Koizumi described it. Similarly, the LDP and the DPJ’s support base would not be spared: he was widely quoted as advocating “reforms sparing no sacred cow” (*seiiki naki kozo kaikaku*), a stunning pledge from the leader of a party that had relied on “sacred cows,” or special interest groups, for support.⁴

Koizumi’s media “honeymoon” continued unabated during this time. His carefully cultivated “I don’t play by the rules” image allowed him to take risks and do things that other prime ministers would not have considered, such as giving interviews to the large-circulation sports newspapers, appearing on soft-news programs (“wide shows”), and allowing cameras into his residence. As a result, the LDP pulled off a major resurgence and emerged victorious in the Upper House election. Approval of Koizumi translated into votes for the LDP. The public distinguished Koizumi from his party, the approval rate for the LDP itself remained low, but it was able to win the election due to its leader’s popularity (see Figure 1).

Further Challenges Facing Koizumi

Koizumi, however, still faced significant challenges: nursing the economy back to health, reforming Japan’s creaking infrastructure, and revolutionizing the hidebound ways of the LDP. Though selected partly on the hope that his proposed structural reforms would pull the country out of recession, he faced formidable opposition within his own party to those reforms.

After one year in office, with no miraculous cure for the ailing economy, and Koizumi himself old news, support for the Koizumi cabinet had plunged to half its previous level. Koizumi was swept to office on a sea of “expectation voting,” but the performance, in macroeconomic terms, was limited, resulting in public dissatisfaction. At this point, popular opinion of Koizumi was broadly balanced between positive and negative, but Koizumi’s prospects were jeopardized by his declining support. His falling support ratings put fresh wind in the sails of his intra-party opponents, forcing the prime minister to bow to some of their demands. Through this process, Koizumi—who came onto the scene promising to do away with old-style LDP dealings—was forced to act like more of an LDP insider, the perception of which further reduced his support among the public.

The cabinet’s public support plunged sharply from February to June 2002, a development that began shortly before Koizumi removed the popular Tanaka Makiko from her cabinet position. Her dismissal uncorked people’s simmering dissatisfaction with the prime minister, who had made little progress on his promised agenda. By-elections and local government elections at this time confirmed that Koizumi’s star seemed to be fading. By June 2002, public approval of Koizumi had plunged to 34%.

The real question Koizumi faced was whether Japan could get back on the growth track (even if he were to overcome opposition and push through his reform program), but it was difficult for him to focus solely on structural reform, as he allowed himself to be sidetracked by the difficult task of getting controversial legislation through the Diet. A package of bills approved by the cabinet on April 16, 2002, giving the national government broader powers to respond to armed attacks on Japan, attracted particularly strong opposition since it was the first of this type of legislation in the postwar era and was indicative of a new stage in Japan’s security policy debate.

Against the background of falling public approval and watered-down policy proposals, Koizumi made the stunning announcement that he would travel to North Korea for a historic summit in

September 2002. The first Japan-North Korea summit resulted in North Korea's astounding admission, after decades, that it had kidnapped Japanese citizens in the 1970s and early 1980s. One month later, some of the kidnapped citizens were repatriated to Japan, leaving behind their Korean-born children and one victim's American husband.

Koizumi's support ratings seemed to improve, along with the outpouring of public sympathy for the victims and their families and heightened anger at the North Korean government that perpetrated the kidnappings. Immediately following Koizumi's first visit to Pyongyang, 81% of citizens approved of his trip, according to an *Asahi Shinbun* public opinion survey.

Despite no significant economic revival, nor major changes in Japan's political and administrative structures, public support for the administration rebounded temporarily, in part due to the Koizumi administration's stance on North Korea. The public were wary about Koizumi's attempt to normalize Japan's relationship with North Korea, and when the prospect of normalization collapsed the administration's shift to a hard-line stance against North Korea met with more popular approval. The abduction issue dominated Japanese politics and diplomacy for the two years following Koizumi's first summit with North Korea; the government gave priority to bringing back the victims and to obtaining information about deceased victims. By June 2003, 48% of the public still expressed support for Koizumi and his cabinet, a high level compared with the 36% average that post-1960 cabinets in Japan have endured.

Public support for the Koizumi administration may also stem from both the failure of the main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and the LDP to convince the public that they had a competent or equally charismatic alternative. The public was still unsure if the inexperienced DPJ was competent to govern, particularly during a time of economic crisis. On the LDP side, the young reform-minded LDP politicians were also considered inexperienced, and were members in the Mori faction to which Koizumi had belonged; other things being equal, DMs would rather select another leader from a different faction, preferring to revolve the position among the most powerful factions.

Public support played a crucial role in Koizumi's victory in the LDP presidential election in the fall of 2003. The general election loomed large in the minds of the DMs, particularly since in recent elections public support for the LDP

leader influenced voting preferences. LDP politicians were aware that their own seats would be jeopardized if the party failed to elect a popular leader.

Following Koizumi's re-selection, the Koizumi "magic" persisted. Until June 2004, more people consistently approved than disapproved of the cabinet. Koizumi was successful in maintaining his image as an unorthodox, unusual leader of the LDP, particularly compared with most past LDP presidents. The public considered Koizumi a leader who did not conform to the majority opinion of the party on many issues, and who had the courage to criticize the traditional LDP system which had close ties with vested interests from the regions. Even though his attacks against "the forces of resistance" gradually subsided, his approval rate remained high enough to keep his LDP opponents in check.

Koizumi was safe until mid-2004, when his approval ratings went into a freefall, improving only in response to short-term stimuli before continuing their descent. In mid-June, the Koizumi cabinet approved Japan's participation in a multinational force in the new Iraqi regime. The Japanese public questioned why Japan had to participate in this force and emphasize its attachment to the U.S., thus increasing the risk of Japanese troops and Japan itself becoming the target of terrorist attacks. This was particularly the case since the government explained that the activities of the Self Defense Force would remain the same as in their first "neutral and humanitarian" deployment in January, when they were legally unattached to the U.S. Such concerns were aggravated by the Koizumi administration's unwillingness to explain its intentions in depth to the public, which, along with Japan's post-war pacifism symbolized by Article 9 (the "peace clause") of the Constitution, probably contributed to the declining support.

Despite a second trip to Pyongyang, several important domestic issues contributed to the decline: the scandal that unfolded around politicians who had not consistently paid their pension contributions (that became public in April and May); the revision of the Pension Law; and improvements in the DPJ's public image due to that party's leadership change.

The unpaid pension contributions scandal (*nenkin mondai*) became public knowledge as the Diet dealt with revising the Pension Law. The scandal centered on the astonishing number of politicians who had not consistently paid their pension contributions. The media and the public started to question whether politicians who had not paid

their mandatory pension contributions consistently deserved the right to participate in the legislative revision of the pension system. The most devastating discovery was that Koizumi himself had not consistently paid his pension contributions, prompting a media attack. Koizumi tried to downplay the accusations, arguing that at the time it was not mandatory for Diet members to join the pension program: in an *Asahi Shinbun* survey, 52% of respondents were "not satisfied" with Koizumi's explanation for non-payment. The LDP's unwillingness to revise significantly the Pension Law did not help Koizumi win back support. Support for the administration continued its descent for the rest of the year.

On the same day that Koizumi admitted to seven years' worth of non-payment, he made the dramatic announcement that he intended to visit North Korea for a second time: a majority of citizens approved of Koizumi's decision, but the issue was not straightforward. The second summit with North Korea took place in May 2004, two months before the Upper House election and in the midst of the pension scandal, prompting some critics to describe the summit as a "diversionary tactic." The North Korean issue temporarily eclipsed the scandal, and when the five Korean-born children and the American husband of one of the repatriated victims were released (supposedly temporarily) one month later, Koizumi's popularity rose again. However, feelings were mixed: about 67% of voters approved of Koizumi's trip, but, at the same time, 61% of respondents opposed Japan's plan to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea. The wide shows added to the ambivalence by voicing opposition to the normalization of relations between the countries in the absence of a satisfactory solution to the abduction problem.

The decline in public support for Koizumi occurred despite significant economic improvements. This was partly attributable to the DPJ selecting a new leader. Kan Naoto, president of the DPJ when the pension issue erupted, was forced to resign over unpaid pension contributions. Okada Katsuya was selected to replace Kan, and the public and the media reacted positively, approving of his proclaimed straightforward political attitudes, integrity, and photogenic qualities. The House of Councillors' election held on July 11th ended with a major victory for the DPJ over the LDP. LDP support continued to decline, and stood at less than 36% at the end of the year. In short, the combination of the Self Defense Forces joining the U.S.-led forces, the pension scandal, and the

appeal of the new DPJ leadership contributed to declining support for the LDP from May 2004 onwards.

From 2005, however, LDP support suddenly rebounded, and remained fairly steady until August. The failure of the DPJ to capitalize on the initial appeal of their leader and be an effective opposition partly explains the LDP rebound. The DPJ's lack of dynamism was evident in Okada's lackadaisical attitude to losses in by-elections in April, the party's wishy-washy confrontation of the LDP over postal privatization; over money scandals; and Koizumi's handling of relations with Asian countries.

Koizumi, on the other hand, epitomized dynamism: he proposed a series of postal privatization bills that squeaked through the Lower House on July 7, 2005, with 37 members of his own party voting against him. The day before the Upper House vote, he told former Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro "[postal privatization] is my belief. I am even ready to be killed [for that]." The bills failed to pass through the Upper House, galvanizing Koizumi for a fight: he dissolved the Lower House and, since the Upper House cannot be dissolved, called an election.

Koizumi was determined to fight the election on the issue of postal reform. In the most exciting campaign in decades, he denied party endorsement to the LDP DMs who had voted against the bills, and parachuted in "assassin" candidates to run against them. These so-called assassins were well-known women, high-profile celebrities, and relatively young, successful non-politicians.

Again resorting to his penchant for drama, Koizumi portrayed the election as a clash between good (assassins, reformers) and evil (rebels, anti-reformists). Koizumi successfully set the agenda of the election by asking the public whether they supported reform (privatization of the post office). The opposition parties failed to undermine this agenda. In 2005, a vote for Koizumi and the LDP became a vote for reform, a vote for change, rather than for the status quo. Koizumi and his assassins dominated the media coverage of the election.

The LDP won a huge share of the seats: in the current electoral system, voters cast two ballots, one in their single-seat constituency and the other in which they can vote for a political party (the PR portion). Although the LDP's seat share massively increased, the LDP's share of the popular vote only increased from 44% in 2003 to 48% in 2005 in the single-member districts, and from 35% in 2003 to 38% in 2005 in the PR vote.

The Lower House election of 2005 was Koizumi's last chance to make his mark and avoid being dismissed as a "lame duck" prime minister. Although the Koizumi administrations carried out substantial reform in some areas, particularly deregulation, budgetary expenditures, and the Fiscal Investment and Loan Program (Noble 2005), many of his other reforms had been diluted, while others were non-starters. Although the economy was picking up, support for the LDP seemed to be declining overall. Koizumi claimed to want to change the LDP, but in the previous four years he had done little to increase female representation or to include more young DMs. He used the assassin candidates as a tactic to regain popularity. Cynics argue that postal reform was only a tool; of course he wanted to pass reform, but more than that, he wanted to be revolutionary, he wanted his popularity to explode.

Ramifications of Koizumi's "Revolution"

With the "Koizumi revolution" have come benefits, but also potential risks, both domestic and international. Koizumi's clear influence over policy-making has further weakened the policy-making dominance of the so-called iron-triangle, the alliance of conservative politicians, top bureaucrats, and big business. This in itself brings more openness to the political system, but it may result in prime ministerial domination of the policy-making process. Koizumi reinvigorated the LDP's popularity, increasing the likelihood that his successor, Abe Shinzo, who succeeded Koizumi as prime minister on September 26, 2006, would follow his successful strong leader/populist model. It would be too risky electorally for the LDP to shy away from the increasing "presidentialization" of the Japanese political system and choose an old guard anti-reformist. The strengthening of the role of the prime minister in decision-making assures party discipline and, particularly on important issues in the near future, DMs will not dare vote against the party line. It also opens up the possibility for more reform: the 2005 election showed that Japanese voters can be successfully mobilized around policy issues, giving governments clear mandates. This stronger role for the prime minister is likely to become an institutionalized feature of the political system, given the success with which Koizumi routed the rebels and showed how popular a strong, decisive leader can be. This is not to say that future prime ministers will control policy-making: the

anti-reformists are able to dilute policies in the powerful Policy Affairs Research Council, but power is now more concentrated in the hands of the prime minister and the secretary general of the LDP (who is appointed by the prime minister).

On the other hand, the sheer size of the LDP majority may encourage complacency and inaction, with DMs feeling their huge victory means that they can continue politics as usual. Note that if that should be the case, the DPJ may be able to reassert itself: the growing and increasingly important non-aligned sector of urban voters is the key to future elections. Koizumi understood that without urban support, the LDP cannot survive. In the past two elections, Koizumi transformed the LDP's support base: whereas previously the LDP relied on the rural vote, it now draws votes almost equally from rural and urban areas. But the urban floating voters are not guaranteed to support Koizumi's successor: they were largely one-issue voters, and when the postal reform issue has gone they may turn from the LDP. In 2005, these voters chose the charismatic and reform-minded Koizumi, but if reform plans are thwarted they could easily swing back to the DPJ, particularly since urban voters did not vote on the issue of national security, so a backlash may result if Koizumi's successors pursue an activist foreign policy.

The Kabashima Research Group at the University of Tokyo, in conjunction with the *Asahi Shinbun*, conducts Ideological Surveys of DMs. The post-2005 election survey shows that a number of the new DMs favor reform, but once Koizumi has left office, his successors will have to maintain the upper hand to prevent the old guard from reasserting itself. Despite Koizumi's victory, the LDP remains a deeply divided party. But Koizumi leaves Abe with a less conservative parliamentary LDP that will ease the enactment of reform.

International repercussions, including those on Japan's relations with the U.S. and with Asian countries, depend on whether Koizumi's successors continue his brand of politics and leadership. Again, this seems highly likely. Koizumi is the heir to the Kishi-Fukuda-Abe line of LDP leaders, who are ideologically different from the classic LDP that Tanaka epitomized; the rural-oriented, social democratic, redistributive line. The ideological line that Koizumi inherited has both a market-oriented and a nationalistic component, but he focused his energies much more in the domestic arena, pressing for market-oriented reforms. Although Abe, too, inherits a nationalistic strand of ideology, he is aware

that to maintain public support, he needs to walk in Koizumi's footsteps.

In conclusion, the Koizumi administrations were slow in delivering heavily watered down structural reforms. But Koizumi's most interesting legacy may be his ideological and stylistic influence over the LDP and its future leaders, that is, the shift in ideology and style that subsequent leaders will have to make in

order to continue to attract urban votes. Abe clearly realizes that to attract these votes, he needs to be a politician in the Koizumi mold and his values have shifted accordingly. In the short span of two years between the 2003 and 2005 Ideological Surveys of DMs, astonishingly, Abe's values had changed considerably. His responses to the 2005 survey demonstrate that he is now much more

supportive of economic reform, moving away from support for the old style Japanese economic system. On issues of national security, he has moved only very slightly away from his former conservative stance. Abe's ideological shift suggests that Koizumi's most robust legacy may be the "Koizumi-ization" of the LDP.

Notes

1. For a detailed analysis of the 2005 Election results, see Kabashima and Sugawara (2005).

2. Carmines and Stimson (1989, 139) describe such a pattern as an "impulse-decay model" in their study of race as an issue in U.S. politics, suggesting that it is possible for issues

to have a short, but powerful influence on the political system.

3. DMs had 346 votes and the prefectural chapters had 141 (three votes per prefecture). The LDP instrumentally revised the selection rules: in this case, the faction-dominated back-

room selection of the unpopular Mori led to changes in the voting procedure.

4. In 2001 alone, the *Asahi* newsgroup (comprised of the *Asahi Shinbun*, and two news magazines, the *Shukan Asahi* and *Aera*) carried 422 mentions of Koizumi and his catch phrase, and selected it as one of the year's top phrases.

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