

Electoral Incentives in Mixed-Member Systems: Party, Posts, and Zombie Politicians in Japan

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How do electoral incentives affect legislative organization? Through an analysis of Japan's mixed-member electoral system, we demonstrate that legislative organization is strongly influenced not only by the individual legislators reelection incentives but also by their interest in their party gaining power and maintaining a strong party label. Electorally vulnerable legislators are given choice legislative positions to enhance their prospects at the polls, whereas (potential) party leaders disproportionately receive posts with greater influence on the party's overall reputation. Members of Parliament elected from proportional representation (PR) lists and in single member districts also receive different types of posts, reflecting their distinct electoral incentives. Even small variations in electoral rules can have important consequences for legislative organization. In contrast to Germany's compensatory mixed-member system, Japan's parallel system (combined with a "best loser" or "zombie" provision) generates incentives for the party to allocate posts relating to the distribution of particularistic goods to those elected in PR.

In all democratic legislatures elected representatives must cooperate, organize themselves, and create institutions to achieve their individual and collective goals. Despite the universal nature of the challenge of legislative organization, the scholarship on the topic has been dominated by studies of the contemporary U.S. Congress (Gamm and Huber 2002). If, as most scholars suggest, electoral incentives affect legislative organization, scholarship that focuses exclusively on Congress misses some of the most interesting variation in legislators' electoral incentives, which differ with the type of electoral system. This article presents an analysis of Japan's mixed-member

electoral system, a particularly good case in which to test the effects of electoral incentives on legislative organization because the system creates different types of Members of Parliament who face very distinct electoral incentives.

Although legislative organization scholars generally agree on the importance of electoral incentives, they have been divided on precisely *how* electoral incentives influence legislative organization. In the literature on the U.S. Congress, some scholars have focused on how politicians may seek "gains from trade" in organizing the legislature, so as best to respond to their individual reelection incentives (Shepsle 1978; Weingast and Marshall 1988). Others, however, emphasize that legislative organization may be used to overcome collective action problems and promote common interests that legislators have in the electoral value of their party label (Cox and McCubbins 1993) and in effectively obtaining, maintaining, and using governing power (Krehbiel 1991). The much smaller comparative literature also is divided. For example in the literature on Germany, some scholars have found that legislative organization is driven by parties' collective interests, and there is no significant effect of the different electoral incentives MPs face on legislative organization (see Ismayr 1992; Nohlen 1990). In contrast, others have suggested that in Germany Single-member-district- (SMD)-based MPs consider their electoral fortunes more tied to procuring particularistic benefits for the district than do proportional representation- (PR)-based MPs (Lancaster and Patterson 1990) and that this influences the posts that politicians receive (Stratmann and Baur 2002).

One failing in this literature is that most studies generally assume that the various types of electoral incentives are mutually exclusive in their influence on legislative organization. But there is no reason to believe that these competing theories are always incompatible. Legislative organization should be influenced by the individual legislators' reelection incentives (depending in part on the electoral system), as well as by

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the interest they have in their party gaining power and maintaining a strong party label. The proper question should be: how do specific types of electoral incentives affect specific aspects of legislative organization?

We argue, following gains from trade theory, that individual legislators are disproportionately likely to hold legislative positions that help their individual reelection needs. We also argue that the posts that are most valuable for reelection are more likely to go to vulnerable legislators, whereas posts that are most apt to influence the value of the party label go to (potential) party leaders. We test this argument by examining post allocation in Japan's new mixed-member electoral system. We show that in Japan, legislative organization both reflects the different reelection incentives facing MPs elected in the SMD and PR portions of the mixed-member electoral system and also their collective interests in building a strong party label and maintaining their position in government. Variation in electoral rules can have significant consequences for legislative organization, for example, in a mixed-member electoral system like Japan's where there is dual listing of candidates and no proportionality, there is greater incentive to allocate valuable posts to vulnerable legislators than in a proportional mixed-member electoral system like that of Germany or New Zealand.

ONE PARTY, TWO SYSTEMS: THE INCENTIVES OF MIXED-MEMBER ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Scholars attempting to understand political parties and legislative organization base their theories on some form of understanding of electoral incentives or ambition theory (see Schlesinger 1965). Legislators seek reelection and career advancement, and organize their parties and legislatures around promoting these goals. It would be rather naïve to expect that legislators would seek to organize their legislature without regard to furthering their political careers. Similarly, a political party would be irrationally organized if it gave out its chief benefits to its members without regard to maximizing its interests in winning elections and gaining (or maintaining) power in government. Understanding how electoral incentives affect legislative organization is more complex than simply considering how the electoral system alone conditions the electoral incentives faced by legislators, although we agree this is a key position from which to start. Electoral incentives also affect legislative organization because legislators value government membership and a strong party label.

How would we expect electoral incentives to affect legislative organization in mixed-member (MM) systems? It has been long suggested that different electoral systems create different electoral incentives affecting the party system, the type of policy produced, and also legislative organization (see Carey and Shugart 1995, Cox 1997, Taagepera and Shugart, 1989). Legislators elected in SMDs are expected to be more interested in delivering particularistic goods to their district, whereas a PR electoral system generally

is expected to produce policy outcomes that provide more dispersed benefits (see, e.g., Lijphart 1999). On the other hand, SMD legislators are more likely to represent unorganized interests than are PR legislators (Bawn and Thies 2003). Stratmann and Baur 2002 and legislative organization theories based on gains from trade theory focus on how legislative organization should reflect the differing electoral incentives that individual legislators face.

Political scientists have argued that the specific rules of MM electoral systems, and how parties adapt to them, can make a big difference in systems' electoral incentives (Bawn and Thies 2003; McKean and Scheiner 2000; Shugart and Wattenberg 2001a). However, most of the literature on how electoral systems affect legislative organization has primarily focused on pure electoral systems, even though over the last decade there has been a rise in the adoption of MM electoral systems. Bawn and Thies 2003 (20, 24) is one exception, specifically suggesting that in the case of a mixed system where candidates can be dual listed as in Japan, the dual-listed candidates elected in PR should actually be district focused, even if they wind up being elected in PR. This is primarily because the candidates are first and foremost hoping to gain election in the SMD district, and use the PR alternative as a "hedging" device in case they lose in SMD.

But legislators also value government membership and a strong party label, which complicates how electoral incentives can influence legislative organization. Thus legislative organization may reflect the desire of legislators to maintain and increase the size (seat share) of their party, to enhance their probability of maintaining their position in government. In particular, parties frequently organize and target their resources to further the reelection of their most vulnerable members (Denemark 2000).

Unfortunately, simply rewarding the most vulnerable members of the party with resources and key posts may improve those members' individual reelection chances, but hurt the value of the party label. Cox and McCubbins (1993) argue that even in the American context, legislators face further incentive for the development and maintenance of an appealing party label, a factor missing from existing accounts of legislative organization in MM systems settings, but one even more important in the parliamentary context in which control of the executive is at stake in legislative elections (Cox 1987). In fact, the common wisdom concerning parties and legislative organization emphasizes this aspect of the collective electoral incentives. For example, Cox and McCubbins (2004, 18) liken the organization of legislatures and political parties to that of law firms: legislators work their way up the ranks, earn seniority, and effectively become the "senior partners." There is a clear underlying electoral logic here as well: it is generally considered valuable to present a consistent party platform to the voters, a clear record of popular accomplishments (if in office), and, ideally, popular leadership. However, again legislators face a collective action problem in doing so. It makes sense to delegate the maintenance of a party label to those who both

have seniority (and thus experience with the party) and will most likely be around the longest—those who are the likely future “senior partners.” Maintenance of the party label should be delegated not to inexperienced politicians but to senior legislators who have the most experience and knowledge concerning what helps the party fortunes as a whole. It is also in the interests of the party for future party leaders to develop the background necessary to lead the party effectively.

We suggest that existing comparative scholarship analyzing the incentives of electoral systems generally misses this crucial factor in explaining legislative organization—MPs desire is not simply to be reelected but also to have an interest in their party gaining or maintaining government membership. Fundamentally, legislators face a collective action problem: individually, each of them would like to do everything in his or her power to ensure his or her own reelection; but collectively, all would benefit from the party gaining power and enhancing the value of its party label. This allows politicians not only to gain greater influence on policy but also to benefit from the greater allocation of legislative and government posts, furthering their own long-term career ambitions.

Considering these factors, we suggest three basic propositions concerning electoral incentives and legislative organization:

Proposition 1 (Gains From Trade). Legislative organization reflects the value legislators and parties place on responding to the differing electoral incentives facing legislators by rewarding legislators facing differing electoral incentives with the posts most suitable to their needs.

Proposition 2 (Gains from Government). Legislative organization reflects the value legislators and parties place on government membership by disproportionately rewarding legislators that are more electorally vulnerable with the posts most useful to ensuring their reelection to help maintain and increase the parties’ seat share.

Proposition 3 (Gains from Label). Legislative organization reflects the value legislators and parties place on a strong party label by disproportionately rewarding legislators that are “senior partners” or likely future “senior partners” with the posts that most directly determine the party’s overall reputation, avoiding giving these posts to those who are untried and untested.

Although we would suggest these basic propositions are generally applicable to legislative organization, the specific application of these propositions will vary from legislature to legislature. For example, in a legislature in which legislators are elected from a closed-list proportional representation electoral system, MPs’ reelection probabilities are not strictly tied to their individual vote-garnering capability, but instead to their position on the list and their parties’ overall electoral fortunes. Thus in this circumstance, we would expect party and legislative organization to be much less tied to ensuring the reelection of individual MPs (Propositions 1 and 2)

and more focused on developing strong party labels (Proposition 3). On the other hand, in systems with an open-list PR system, individual MP’s careers (as well as their parties’ fortunes) are much more closely tied to MP’s electoral popularity (Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen 2005).

We believe legislative organization following the adoption of Japan’s MM electoral system in 1994 provides an ideal opportunity to test all of these propositions simultaneously. Within the past decade or so, Japan has joined Venezuela, New Zealand, and Italy in making this change.¹ Germany has used the system since 1949; and Russia, Hungary, Bolivia, and Mexico adopted it after recent democratizations, although each system has its own distinctive institutional features. So many nations recently have moved toward this hybrid form to gain the benefits of both equitable distribution of seats to votes and individual representation of geographic units that such MM electoral systems may well “prove to be *the* electoral reform of the twenty-first century, as PR was in the twentieth century” (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001a, 1).

Japan’s complex electoral system gives rise to different types of MPs, based on the type of district they were elected from. In addition to MPs elected from SMD and those who ran only on PR lists, there are “zombie” MPs, who are losing SMD candidates elected on their party’s PR list (and thereby “risen from the dead”). A joint listing provision allowed for these zombies to be chosen by a “best-loser” rule.² SMD candidates running on the PR list could be listed at the same rank. If a candidate ranked for both types of seats won in her SMD, his or her name was removed from the PR list. Which of the remaining candidates at the same rank would take the party’s balance of apportioned seats was determined by the identically ranked candidates’ performance in their SMD districts—as measured by the proportion of their votes compared to the other party’s winning candidate. The several candidates who were identically ranked in PR before the election and lost in SMD were reranked according to this proportion

¹ In 1994, Japan fundamentally reformed its electoral system for its House of Representatives, the most important chamber of the Diet, its national parliament, for the first time since 1947. Japan had a medium district-size, multimember, single-non-transferable vote (SNTV) system in which in most districts multiple candidates competed in the same district for three to five seats, even though the voter cast only one ballot for an individual candidate (not a party) and the vote could not be “transferred” to other candidates of the same party. Because of the perceived consequences of this system on the political process (Curtis 1999, 142), when a split occurred in the long-ruling LDP and a diverse coalition government took power in 1993 they agreed on little except that some type of electoral reform was necessary to satisfy a disaffected public. The coalition only succeeded in getting a compromise electoral reform bill through the Diet in August 1994, with LDP support (Curtis 1999, 137–70) before it broke up and lost power. The new electoral system adopted was an MM system combining three hundred SMD seats with two hundred PR seats (later reduced to 180) elected from eleven regional districts (Reed and Thies 2001; Shugart and Wattenberg 2001b).

² Italy’s reform also has an unusual feature called “*scorporo*” that compensates smaller parties in the PR portion of the Chamber of Deputies, and the Italian Senate also features a best-loser provision. We thank Matt Shugart for highlighting this point. See also McKean and Scheiner 2000. On Italy’s system see Katz 2001.

to determine who got the seats. Because the LDP chose to identically rank almost all of its SMD candidates on the PR list, in practice, these PR legislators were dependent not only on the overall vote totals on the party list but also on district-level electoral performance.³ These various types of MPs face quite distinct electoral incentives, as discussed next.

ANALYZING ELECTORAL INCENTIVES AND LEGISLATIVE ORGANIZATION IN JAPAN, 1996–2003

Hypotheses

Our analyses focus on electoral strength and MP type on the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) post allocation under the new Japanese electoral system. Our first proposition suggests that legislative organization should reflect the potential for gains from trade among legislators, with MPs being awarded posts that are most suited to their individual electoral incentives. In the U.S. context, there has been some support for this proposition empirically when considering the effect of constituency characteristics on committee assignment (Adler and Lapinski 1997; Frisch and Kelly 2004). Although data limitations constrain complete consideration of all potential district characteristics in all analyses (although we do include a measure of district population density), the nature of the MM system provides an even more important factor affecting the electoral incentives of MPs—the type of electoral system from which the legislator is elected.

Analytically, there are four types of MPs in Japan's lower house: those who ran only in PR (PR-Only), those who ran only in single-member districts (SMD Only), those who ran in both and were elected in the SMD (SMD Dual), and those who ran in both but lost in the SMD and were “brought back to life” by PR (Zombies). Additionally, we can also separate out from PR-Only MPs those who had a “Costa Rican” arrangement to alternate running in SMDs and PRs, as we have clear *ex ante* reason to believe these MPs intend to run in an SMD in the next election.

How do electoral incentives vary among these types of MPs? The most significant distinction is between those who run (or intend to run) in single-member districts and those who do not. Those who do not (PR-Only MPs) are not tied to their own personal electoral performance, but to that of their party. Thus our first hypothesis (H1) is simply: *PR-Only MPs, being less tied to their own electoral vote-garnering ability, are less likely to receive posts.*

But we can go beyond this hypothesis, because not only does the extent to which PR-Only MPs need posts differ, but the types of posts that should enhance

their electoral prospects also differ. Stratmann and Baur (2002) make distinctions between “district-centric” and “party-centric” committee assignments in Germany. However, this distinction is not necessarily easy to make in the context of Japan's LDP, which is largely seen as being unprogrammatically making party-centric and district-centric difficult to define. Instead, we follow Bawn and Thies (2003) in suggesting that in Japan the distinction of PR-Only MPs may be that they are most interested in specializing in representing organized interest groups. PR-Only MPs should be less likely than those interested in SMDs to represent unorganized interests, because such posts play a small role in their reelection prospects, whereas organized interest groups can petition the party to reselect the MPs for the party list. Thus our second hypothesis (H2) suggests: *PR-Only MPs should be underrepresented in posts in which they would represent unorganized interests.*

In general, based on district electoral incentives and our first proposition, we have no strong reason to distinguish between those who run (or intend to run) in SMDs—namely, SMD-Only, SMD-Dual-Listed, Zombie, and Costa Rican MPs. However, our second proposition gives us strong reason to consider Zombies separately from the other types. As both the LDP and the individual MPs place value on the seat share of the party, posts that aid in reelection should disproportionately go to those whose reelection is most uncertain. In Japan, this is clearly Zombie MPs—those who in fact have actually lost in SMDs, but are elected in PR. The parallel nature of the proportional representation seats means that, unlike in Germany or New Zealand where the seats are compensatory, every seat lost in an SMD is one fewer seat for the party in parliament. In other words, every Zombie that is turned into an SMD winner is an additional seat in parliament for that party. Thus our third hypothesis (H3) is that: *Zombies will be overrepresented in the allocation of posts that are most likely to improve their electoral performance.* More generally, the party should be strengthening all of its weak MPs, whether they lost in SMD or won their district by only a few votes. So our fourth hypothesis (H4) is that: *Electoral weak MPs will be overrepresented in the allocation of posts that will improve their electoral performance.*

Finally, our third proposition suggests two further hypotheses. First, the party may see those most secure in their district as the most likely future leaders, and future leaders may be groomed for leadership within the party. Likely future leaders within the party tend to have greater electoral strength, thus our fifth hypothesis (H5): *MPs with greater electoral security will be more likely to hold posts that affect the value of the party label.* Second, we expect that the party attempts to ensure that those entrusted with positions affecting the party label are those who are most capable and committed to the future success of the party; thus they should avoid granting key posts to new party members who are untested and inexperienced. (H6) *Lower seniority leads to a decreased likelihood of holding posts that affect the value of the party label.*

³ Thus if candidate A won 21,000 votes in his SMD district to his winning rival's 25,000 votes (an 84% proportion), he would be ranked ahead of candidate B who won 22,000 votes to his winning competitor's 29,000 (a 75.8% proportion). Descriptions of the reformed electoral system and how it works are found in, among others, Reed and Thies 2001.

Data

In our empirical analyses, our dependent variables are the offices given to Diet Members that are leadership positions or carry special privileges. Some are more valuable than others, as discussed next, but any post we consider assists the MPs in succeeding election campaigns—either through credit claiming or by serving as a marker for the legislator's power and influence in Tokyo. Generally, these leadership posts have been seen to be distributed according to seniority, and also to help Diet Members to differentiate themselves and compete under the old single-non-transferable-vote (SNTV) electoral system (McCubbins and Rosenbluth 1995; Tatebayashi 2004; Tatebayashi and McKean 2002). However, as we have suggested, with the change in the electoral system, we should expect the electoral incentives affecting the distribution of posts to change as well.⁴

As Epstein et al. (1997) have emphasized, the allocation of posts in the The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) developed along a two-tier track with seniority within party and legislative committees as the first tier; and cabinet posts, the second track. The party determines specific postallocation based on intraparty bargaining among factions. This practice has survived the electoral reform of 1994. Generally there are three kinds of posts distributed to LDP Diet Members: government, Diet, and party posts. They are not mutually exclusive. Diet Members usually serve as members of Diet Committees and as members of various party committees (in the LDP's Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC)). However, even more than membership, leadership posts are a valuable commodity, sought after and contested for by Diet Members, wrangled over by party leaders and faction bosses and sub-bosses, and doled out through the aforementioned bargaining process among LDP factions.

Most posts are shuffled annually to “spread the wealth” of serving in leadership positions around to as many party members as possible, necessitating that the dataset cover not simply the posts assumed after each general election, but also following subsequent cabinet and leadership reshuffles. Because the unit of observation is thus the Diet Member-Year for all LDP House of Representatives Diet Members over an eight-year period, the number of observations is

⁴ Nominations to districts, PR ranks, and Zombie, as well as to party, legislative, and government posts, of course, are determined by party leaders. However, in practice, both are determined by negotiations among the various factions within the party and therefore the product of compromise. These negotiations are separate, negotiated by different faction personnel, and held at different times—nominations obviously is done pre-election and post allocation is done post-election annually. It would be suicidal for the party to not renominate long-successful incumbents in SMD districts, and ultimate ranking on the PR list of dual listed candidates is determined by an automatic rule dependent on becoming a best loser in the SMD districts not under the control of party leaders but of the candidates themselves and voters. For all these reasons, nominations and post allocation should *not* be expected to be co-determined but can be treated as separate (independent and dependent) variables. On how party and Diet committee posts are negotiated and distributed, see Krauss and Pekkanen 2004 (15–17).

nearly two thousand. In this analysis we use the Japan Legislative Organization Data (“J-LOD”) database constructed by Krauss and Pekkanen, consisting of all the LDP Diet Members from 1980 to 2004 and their annual party, legislative, and governmental positions. We consider the following positions: Minister, Vice Minister, House of Representatives Committee Chair, and PARC Committee Chair. These are the chief positions under the party's control to distribute to its representatives. Choosing these offices gives us the most important formal policymaking posts within the government, Diet, and party. Becoming a Minister and being a Cabinet member is of course a major goal of career politicians in any parliamentary system, which is usually given to relatively senior and successful politicians. The position of vice minister tends to go to politicians earlier in their career, to those who are being groomed for future leadership in the party. The position of vice minister has recently been renamed and strengthened with the administrative reforms in Japan. House and PARC Committee Chairs are the leadership positions within the party (along with relevant ministers and vice-ministers) in specific issue areas. LDP Lower House members (8.7%) in our dataset hold a cabinet post, 9.0% hold a subcabinet (vice minister) post, 5.5% hold a PARC chair, and 5.4% hold a House of Representatives Committee Chair. As noted next, we test our hypotheses by analyzing the overall likelihood of holding a leadership post, and later we break down the posts by issue area.

Our major independent variables are MP type (the five types discussed earlier) and electoral strength. A substantial majority of LDP MPs were elected in SMDs but also ran on the PR list as insurance (63.7% of our observations); 9.6% of our observations were of zombie politicians, with almost precisely the same number (9.6%) of MPs running only in SMDs; 3.3% of our observations were of MPs who ran only in PR but were publicly committed to a Costa Rican arrangement in which they would run in an SMD in the next election; 13.9% ran only on the PR lists without such an arrangement.

Although there are numerous possible measures of electoral strength in an SMD, we use electoral margin (measured in percentage points) as our key variable. The electoral margin for LDP MPs ranges from -46.2 (Zombies by definition have a negative margin) to 69.6 , with a median of 12.5 ; and 90% of the observations falling between -3.8 and 42.6 . Because our hypotheses do not necessarily have a linear prediction for electoral strength, all models have been run with both a linear term and a squared term, although for ease of interpretation we report the linear model when the squared term has no effect.⁵ Note that we are forced to exclude

⁵ Including a squared term allows us to consider the distinction between electoral strength or weakness and electoral marginality, a nuance that we do not specifically hypothesize about. However, it would be reasonable to believe that the LDP should not necessarily favor the weak (as we have phrased H3 and H4), but favor those who are most marginal (winning or losing margin is closest) in its allocation of posts that most influence individual reelection chances.

PR-Only MPs from our analyses of the impact of electoral strength. This leads us to run two models for each round of analysis: the first excludes measures of electoral strength but includes PR-Only MPs, whereas the second excludes PR-Only MPs but includes measures of electoral strength.

To operationalize seniority, we include a set of dummy variables for the number of terms an MP has served in the Diet, and exclude from our analyses all of the most senior MPs (above 12 terms), none of whom hold any of the posts we consider between 1996 and 2003. We also include several additional control variables. The first variable is a measure of how urban the district is that the MP is elected from, ranging from 1 (rural) to 3 (urban). This measure is taken from the Japanese census data on DIDs (Densely Inhabited Districts) census data and simply divides SMD districts into three categories, and PR-Only Diet Members are given scores that average all the SMD districts that the PR bloc covers. We considered a number of variables concerning factional membership, because, as noted earlier, post distribution has generally been a function of factional negotiation. Membership in any specific faction had no discernible effect in our analyses; however, we did find that MPs who were not a member of any faction were generally less likely to get posts, so we include a dummy variable coded one when the MP was not a member of a faction. We also considered a large number of variables relating to the background of the MP and found a significant effect for only one variable: whether the MP had previously been a legal professional (lawyer or prosecutor), which we include as well.⁶ In 7.5% of our observations, MPs held no factional membership, while in 3.5% of our observations, MPs were former legal professionals.

Analyses

We begin our analysis by considering what influences the overall likelihood of an LDP MP serving in a leadership position—any type of position in any issue area. From 1996 to 2003, roughly 25% of LDP MPs served as a Minister, Vice Minister, House or PARC Committee Chair each year. Hypotheses 1 and 2 suggest the PR-Only MPs should be less likely to hold a leadership post, so the coefficient on PR-Only should be negative, Hypotheses 3 and 4 suggest that Zombies and weak MPs should be more likely to hold posts, so the coefficient for Zombie should be positive and Electoral Margin should be negative. In contrast to Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 5 suggests that secure MPs should be more likely to hold a post, so Electoral Margin should be positive, whereas Hypothesis 6 suggests that more junior MPs should be least likely to hold a post. Table 1 shows logistic regression results analyzing the factors

In general as discussed next, however, the evidence more strongly supports the belief that the LDP supports those who are weak rather than those who are marginal.

⁶ Other variables for career background that were insignificant and had no impact on our results include whether the MP was a former local politician, bureaucrat, Diet secretary, union member.

influencing the likelihood of holding a leadership post. Model 1 reports all types of MPs. Model 2 includes electoral strength measures and excludes MPs who ran only on a PR list.

The evidence from Model 1 of Table 1 is consistent with our first and second hypotheses: those running in PR-Only were significantly less likely to hold a leadership post.⁷ However, there is no strong support for our third, fourth, and fifth hypotheses. Although Zombies are in fact the most likely to hold a leadership position in both models, they are not significantly more likely to hold a post than those who were elected in SMDs (either single- or dual-listed) or than those with Costa Rican arrangements who were elected in PR.⁸ Using Clarify (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) we estimate that a median seniority (third-term) Zombie from a suburban (average) district has a 60.5% likelihood in any given year of holding a leadership post. Dual-listed SMD MPs are marginally less likely to hold a post (56.8%), followed by Costa Rican in PR MPs (54.3%), single-listed SMD MPs (52.1%), and PR-Only MPs (47.4%).⁹

The electoral margin in an SMD does not significantly influence the likelihood of holding leadership positions when considering only the linear effect (Model 2), or when including a squared term or other nonlinear operationalization (not reported). There is also support for our final hypothesis: seniority strongly influences the likelihood of holding a leadership post, and junior MPs (especially first-term MPs) are strongly discriminated against. However, it is not the most senior MPs, but third- and fourth-term MPs, who are most likely to hold a post. This may be primarily a function of the regimented seniority system and the number of the different types of posts.¹⁰ Of the control variables, only lack of factional membership is significant; factional membership clearly enhances one's likelihood

⁷ It is possible that some unobserved characteristic makes a politician unsuitable both for SMDs and for holding posts, although because it must remain in the party's interest for the politician to run on the PR list, we believe that such a characteristic is probably rare and unlikely to be driving our results. It is worth noting that MP characteristics that suggest ties to interest groups or relatively broad name recognition leads to the greater likelihood of running only on a PR list (specifically: more senior MPs, those that have served in the Upper House and those with ties to interest groups or business organizations), whereas characteristics that suggest strongly localized ties meant a politician was less likely to have run only on a PR list: these include LDP politicians who had been self-employed or worked in business, as well as doctors, lawyers, and local government bureaucrats. However, none of these characteristics had a significant effect on post allocation except, as noted in the main text, for the fact that having a legal background increases the likelihood of an MP serving in a high-policy post.

⁸ For simplicity, we report two-tailed tests for every variable in our tables, even though this underrepresents the statistical significance of some variables. This does not affect significance levels here.

⁹ All probabilities reported in subsequent discussions are calculated using Clarify simulations assuming a third-term Diet member from an average district unless otherwise specified.

¹⁰ Simple descriptive statistics suggest that although the seniority system for leadership posts in the LDP is not as strict as it was in the 1970s and 1980s (cf. Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993), the general progression remains the same, and third- and fourth-term Diet members dominate the posts of vice minister and committee chairs, which form the majority of posts we consider in these analyses.

TABLE 1. Logit Analysis of Electoral Incentives and LDP Post Allocation (1996–2003)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Block 1: MP Type</i>		
Zombie	0.18 (0.22)	0.27 (0.22)
SMD Only	−0.19 (0.22)	−0.19 (0.24)
PR Only	−0.39 (0.18)**	—
Costa Rican in PR	−0.09 (0.29)	—
<i>Block 2: Electoral Strength</i>		
Vote share margin	—	0.005 (0.004)
Margin squared	—	—
<i>Block 3: Misc Controls</i>		
Urban-Rural Index	0.04 (0.08)	0.04 (0.09)
No factional membership	−0.86 (0.26)***	−0.98 (0.31)***
Legal professional	0.39 (0.29)	−.36 (0.30)
<i>Seniority</i>		
1st Term	−3.76 (0.36)***	−3.66 (0.37)***
2nd Term	−1.61 (0.19)***	−1.59 (0.21)***
4th Term	−0.34 (0.19)**	−0.45 (0.21)**
5th Term	−1.17 (0.22)***	−1.24 (0.24)***
6th Term	−1.15 (0.22)***	−1.04 (0.24)***
7th Term	−1.52 (0.25)***	−1.83 (0.29)***
8th Term	−1.66 (0.28)***	−1.82 (0.32)***
9th Term	−1.34 (0.32)***	−1.21 (0.33)***
10th Term	−2.89 (0.48)***	−2.77 (0.49)***
11th Term	−1.88 (0.43)***	−1.34 (0.46)***
12th Term	−1.08 (0.41)***	−0.94 (0.49)**
Constant	0.20 (0.20)	0.13 (0.26)
Log-likelihood	−917.24	−764.77
N	1895	1574

Notes: Dependent variables: 1 if MP holds a post of minister, vice minister, PARC, or HoR Committee Chair.

Base categories: SMD dual-listed, 3rd term. Excluded observations: senior MPs that held no post (>12 terms), PR-Only MPs in Model 2.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .001$.

of receiving an office, which is not surprising because the process of post allocation is done by bargaining among representatives of each faction.

The results in Table 1 are based on the overall likelihood of holding a leadership post. However, the logic behind most of our individual hypotheses is more specific. Hypothesis 2 suggests that posts related to issue areas with unorganized interest groups are less likely to be held by PR-Only MPs. Hypotheses 3 and 4 suggest that posts with influence on the individual reelection prospects of MPs are most likely to be held by zombies and weak SMD MPs. Hypotheses 5 and 6 suggest that posts that strongly influence the value of the party label should be held by MPs that are the “senior partners” or future senior partners, not new and untested MPs. Thus in our remaining analyses we break down the posts by issue area.¹¹

We divide the posts into three broad issue areas: distributive, high-policy, and public goods. Distributive posts were those that have generally been used in the distribution of particularistic benefits to constituencies,

¹¹ Analyses on the individual types of posts (ministers, committee chairs, etc.), finds results that are consistent with the results presented here, although the standard errors are larger as the overall likelihood of holding any given post is much lower.

such as agriculture and construction. Roughly 40% of posts were in distributive areas. We divided the nondistributive posts into high profile “high-policy” posts (37% of posts), and low-profile “public-goods” posts (23% of posts).¹² Given the LDP’s traditional support base and the organization of social interests in Japan, we believe that generally there are few significant organized interest groups related to the LDP in issue areas in high-policy or public goods posts (Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993; Sato and Matsuzaki 1986), so Hypothesis 2 would suggest that PR-Only MPs are less likely to hold posts in those areas.¹³ Distributive posts are generally considered to be the most important for

¹² Distributive posts include the following issue areas: Construction, Transportation, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Local Affairs, House Budget, and Posts and Telecommunications. High-policy posts include Finance, Foreign Affairs, Legal Affairs, Defense, Cabinet, Tax, and Basic Policy. Public-goods posts include Environment, Science, Labor, Social Affairs, Education, Youth, and House Management. The results in subsequent analyses are robust to minor coding variation.

¹³ Based on the gains from trade proposition, we might also expect that MPs from rural districts may be more likely to receive distributive offices, and urban MPs may be more likely to receive public-goods posts, based on the different styles of campaigning in urban and rural districts. Some of our results are consistent with this suggestion; however, we do not explore this in great detail.

TABLE 2. Logit Analysis of MP Type and Issue Area of Post

Variable	Distributive	High Policy	Public Goods
Zombie	0.54 (0.29)*	-0.04 (0.32)	-0.45 (0.45)
SMD Only	0.44 (0.29)	-0.60 (0.35)*	-0.75 (0.50)
PR Only	0.27 (0.23)	-0.79 (0.29)**	-0.73 (0.37)**
Costa Rican	0.19 (0.38)	-0.17 (0.40)	-0.27 (0.50)
Urban-rural	-0.12 (0.12)	0.03 (0.11)	0.28 (0.14)**
No faction	-0.58 (0.36)*	-0.42 (0.37)	-1.54 (0.73)**
Lawyer	-0.45 (0.49)	1.03 (0.32)**	-0.57 (0.61)
1st Term	-3.22 (0.53)**	-2.70 (0.53)**	-4.08 (1.02)**
2nd Term	-1.26 (0.25)**	-0.79 (0.27)**	-1.49 (0.33)**
4th Term	-0.26 (0.23)	-0.04 (0.26)	-0.30 (0.29)
5th Term	-1.08 (0.31)**	-0.31 (0.30)	-1.08 (0.39)**
6th Term	-1.41 (0.36)**	-0.28 (0.30)	-0.61 (0.34)*
7th Term	-0.65 (0.29)**	-1.06 (0.40)**	-3.10 (1.02)**
8th Term	-1.46 (0.42)**	-0.70 (0.39)*	-1.68 (0.61)**
9th Term	-1.73 (0.55)**	-0.40 (0.44)	-0.63 (0.51)
10th Term	-2.04 (0.61)**	-2.00 (0.74)**	—
11th Term	-2.05 (0.74)**	-0.30 (0.51)	—
12th Term	—	0.92 (0.44)**	—
Constant	-1.03 (0.26)**	-1.64 (0.27)**	-2.02 (0.33)**
Log-likelihood	-564.76	-549.79	-353.60
N	1858	1895	1734

Notes: Dependent variables: 1 if MP holds a distributive, high-policy or public-goods post.

Base categories: SMD dual listed, 3rd term. Excluded observations: MPs of a seniority level that held no posts of a specific type (>11 terms for distributive, >12 terms for high policy, and >9 terms for public goods).

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .001$.

improving the electoral prospects of individual MPs, as they are most likely to give MPs more privileged access to providing selective benefits to their constituencies, so Hypotheses 3 and 4 would suggest that Zombies and electorally-weak MPs should be more likely to hold those posts. Finally, the high-policy posts are those with the greatest press coverage and media profile, thus the greatest influence on the value of the party label. So Hypotheses 5 and 6 suggest that these posts should be less likely to be held by weak and junior MPs.

Table 2 reports the results of the effects of MP type on the likelihood of holding these three types of posts. As in the results in Table 1, Zombies are the most likely to hold a distributive post, but unlike the findings for all types of posts, the result is statistically significant for distributive posts, giving stronger support to Hypothesis 3. Simulations suggest that for the same “typical” MP considered earlier, a Zombie is half again as likely as an SMD Dual-Listed LDP MP to hold a distributive post. The typical Zombie has a 32.4% probability of holding a distributive post, whereas SMD Only MPs have a 30.7% likelihood; PR-Only, 27.3%; Costa Ricans, 26.0%; and SMD Dual-Listed MPs, only 22.0%.

Table 2 also suggests that the fact that PR-Only MPs are less likely to hold posts is consistent with the logic underlying Hypothesis 2 rather than Hypothesis 1. Rather than being discriminated against in all types of posts, PR-Only are in fact *more* likely to hold a distributive post than are SMD Dual-Listed MPs (although this difference is not significant), but significantly less likely to hold high-policy and public-goods posts. These results seem to be consistent with the interest representation logic captured in Hypothesis 2 rather than the more general weak electoral connection argument

suggested by Hypothesis 1. PR-Only MPs may indeed be delegated to represent organized interest groups focused on distributive politics.

Table 3 excludes PR-Only SMDs but includes electoral strength to allow us to provide more nuance to our results and testing of our hypotheses. In distributive posts, the weaker the electoral strength of the MP, the more likely he or she is to receive a leadership post (holding control variables constant). The distinctions between MP types are insignificant. Thus, although both Hypothesis 3 and 4 are supported in our analyses, the results suggest the greater importance of electoral weakness rather than the simple categorical difference between zombies and those elected in SMDs.¹⁴

The interpretation of the results for high-policy posts in Table 3 is perhaps the least intuitive of our models. The results suggest that both electoral strength and MP-type matter, but in different directions. Again simulating a “typical” situation, the strongest Zombies—those who lose by a handful of votes—are almost twice as likely as the weakest SMD incumbents to receive a high-policy post (20.5% to 10.5%), and they are nearly as likely as strong SMD incumbents to hold a high-policy post—SMD incumbents who win by forty points in their district have a 23% likelihood of holding a high-policy post. Thus the LDP seems to

¹⁴ We also considered a division among distributive posts between “traditional” distributive posts (agriculture, construction, transportation, and trade and industry) and “other” distributive posts (local affairs, posts and telecommunications, and the House budget committee). It is interesting to note that electoral marginality (and not Zombie status) increases the chances of holding traditional distributive posts, whereas Zombie status (and not electoral marginality) increases the likelihood of holding other distributive posts.

TABLE 3. Logit Analysis of Electoral Strength and Issue Area of Post

Variable	Distributive	High Policy	Public Goods
Zombie	0.18 (0.32)	0.77 (0.42)*	-0.15 (0.49)
SMD Only	0.43 (0.29)	-0.66 (0.35)*	-0.69 (0.51)
PR Only	—	—	—
Costa Rican	—	—	—
Vote margin	-0.013 (0.006)**	0.05 (0.02)**	0.01 (0.01)
Vote margin ²	—	-0.0005 (0.0003)*	—
Urban-Rural	-0.22 (0.13)*	0.14 (0.13)	0.30 (0.17)*
No Faction	-0.74 (0.42)*	-0.19 (0.40)	—
Lawyer	-0.97 (0.61)	1.15 (0.33)**	-0.55 (0.62)
1st Term	-3.14 (0.53)**	-2.49 (0.54)**	-4.00 (1.02)**
2nd Term	-1.19 (0.27)**	-0.73 (0.28)**	-1.60 (0.36)**
4th Term	-0.27 (0.27)	-0.14 (0.29)	-0.45 (0.32)
5th Term	-1.34 (0.36)**	-0.26 (0.31)	-1.09 (0.39)**
6th Term	-1.46 (0.41)**	-0.18 (0.32)	-0.59 (0.35)*
7th Term	-0.68 (0.33)*	-1.76 (0.55)**	-3.05 (1.02)**
8th Term	-1.42 (0.46)**	-0.76 (0.42)*	-2.78 (1.03)**
9th Term	-1.61 (0.56)**	-0.22 (0.46)	-0.56 (0.53)
10th Term	-1.81 (0.62)**	-1.78 (0.74)**	—
11th Term	-1.43 (0.76)*	0.12 (0.53)	—
12th Term	—	1.00 (0.51)*	—
Constant	-0.56 (0.33)**	-2.45 (0.39)**	-2.19 (0.45)**
Log-likelihood	-454.77	-463.91	-296.89
N	1551	1574	1349

Notes: Dependent variables: 1 if MP holds a distributive, high-policy, or public-goods post. Base categories: SMD dual-listed, 3rd term. Excluded observations: MPs of a seniority level that held no posts of a specific type (>11 terms for distributive, >12 terms for high policy, and >9 terms for public goods). * $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .001$.

distribute high-profile, high-policy posts disproportionately to strong Zombies—to MPs in districts where a few extra votes are most likely to help win the LDP an extra seat—in addition to giving them to relatively secure SMD-based MPs. Furthermore, comparing the dummies for seniority across the three types of models, it is clear that more senior MPs garner high-policy posts. These findings support both H5 and H6; posts tied to the party label are less likely to be held by junior MPs, but more likely to be held by the electorally secure future senior partners of the party. But high-policy posts are also used to enhance the electoral prospects of those whose election would most improve the party’s seat share (H3).

When excluding PR-Only MPs, electoral strength and MP type have no significant impact on the likelihood of holding public goods posts. This is unsurprising, as these posts are the least likely to have opportunities for enhancing a MP’s electoral base in a district or for influencing the value of the party label. However, both our seniority and urban-rural control variables are significant: compared to other posts, less senior MPs are more likely to hold public-goods posts, and urban MPs are more likely to hold them than are rural MPs. This may not be surprising considering that the fields of environment, science and technology, labor, social affairs, and youth are more likely to be related to the social and economic issues of concern to urban rather than to rural voters. An even stronger finding, however, is that there are no SMD-based or Zombie MPs without factional affiliation who served in any public-goods posts at all (these MPs are in fact also excluded from

the statistical model, as the variable perfectly predicts failure).¹⁵

CONCLUSION

Electoral incentives very much matter in the allocation of legislative posts. In this article we have shown how allocation of offices is systematically influenced by electoral incentives: the LDP is indeed strategic in its allocation of offices to its Diet Members. The LDP treats members differently depending on how they got elected: PR and SMD matter for posts. The LDP allocates posts to weak representatives in an effort to bolster their chances in the next election, but also reserves leadership posts for those who are senior and particularly secure. This allows not only for MPs to respond to their own type of electoral interest (allowing members to engage in more effective credit-claiming at home, and to cement links with groups that can provide electoral support), but also for the party to allocate resources (posts) disproportionately to those members whose electoral success is least certain, and specific posts to those who are most senior and secure,

¹⁵ Also, although not something we specifically analyze in detail in this paper, the reduced likelihood of SMD-Only MPs in holding public goods and high-policy posts is consistent with the common wisdom concerning these MPs. Interviews with MPs and LDP staffers suggest that SMD-Only MPs are those with fewer ties to the party and those that find it useful to run “against the party” in elections, and holding public goods or high-policy positions may be seen as being inconsistent with this electoral strategy.

who then may focus on developing and maintaining a strong party label.¹⁶

Moreover, our findings provide evidence of the response to the incentives of the new electoral system not only at the level of individual candidates but also at the level of party and legislative organization. Beyond simply observing that dual-listed PR-winner and SMD-loser candidates turn to more personalistic campaigns, we see that the LDP as a party has structured its distribution of committee assignments and other offices, adapting to the changed electoral incentives.

Our findings on post allocation also provide empirical confirmation for some of the predictions made by other scholars about the effects of Japan's electoral system. Bawn and Thies (2003) argued (following on Thies 2002) that "The reason that this 'best-loser' system works against the development of 'list specialists' is that it makes winning a seat via PR dependent upon the showing in the SMD . . . it dulls the distinction between MPs elected in SMDs and those elected from PR lists, because the primary incentives for both are to act like SMD specialists" (Bawn and Thies 2003, 22). McKean and Scheiner asserted (2000, 47): "If dual candidacies are fully used, then, Japan's electoral system will end up offering almost none of the advantages of either PR or SMDs! PR seat-holders will emphasize personal service and private pork over national concerns in both campaigning and actual legislative action, so voters will lose the ability to obtain the public goods (national-level thinking) they wanted."

We have shown that this is indeed the case. The "best-loser" provision results in Zombie representatives being determined by their performance in the SMD districts. Zombies differ greatly from other MPs elected in PR. Moreover, any hopes that reformers in Japan may have had that a hybrid system with a sizeable number of PR seats would result in representatives focusing less on distributive goods and more on the provision of public goods have clearly not been fulfilled. This stands in direct contrast to Germany where a hybrid compensatory system without a "best-loser" provision seems to provide incentives for party service (Stratmann and Baur 2002).

It may well be that the reason that Stratmann and Baur (2002) do not find evidence of electoral strength mattering, as we do, is simply that the German MM system is proportional, whereas the Japanese MM system is not. Thus it matters much more in Japan that the party (and the candidate) win SMD seats, because there is no compensation for just gathering votes as in the German MM proportional system. In other words, the reason that the LDP favors SMD near-winners and German parties do not is that the consequences of winning rather than nearly winning in SMDs differ greatly in Japan but not in Germany. Thus the strategic use of legislative organization and the tactical allocation of posts to near-winners assume greater importance

to Japanese parties than to German ones. If this is the case, then further comparative empirical research on proportional MM systems in Germany and New Zealand should reveal different types of party legislative organization strategies compared to nonproportional systems with a "best-loser" provision, such as Italy and Japan. Specifically, there should be less attention in the former, than in the latter, to rewarding electorally vulnerable candidates in SMD districts with useful posts.

The specific electoral rules of a MM electoral system indeed matter in legislative organization. *How* they matter is very much determined by the particular electoral rules implemented and the party strategies adopted in that system.

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¹⁶ These findings are consistent with a general sense that those who are less worried about reelection have the ability to devote more time to other tasks—a similar suggestion is made in the literature on the "roles" of MPs (e.g. Searing 1994; and Strøm 1997).

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