

## ***Electoral Incentives and Policy Preferences: Mixed Motives Behind Party Defections in Japan***

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Examining the 1993 split of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan offers an opportunity to gain greater insight into the impact of the various incentives that influence the behaviour of politicians. Surprisingly, previous analyses of the LDP split have been able to demonstrate only weak evidence of any electoral connection driving politicians' decisions. However, by also examining the role of policy preferences (support for reform) and utilizing interaction terms, our analysis takes into account the fact that politicians at different stages in their careers and facing different sorts of electorates respond to electoral factors in very different ways. Our findings thus confirm the importance of the electoral connection. We are also able to add that a variety of other incentives also shape political behaviour and that politicians do not necessarily all respond to similar stimuli in the same way.

Ruling political parties should not fall apart. Bringing together diverse groups of politicians into a single party and maintaining discipline within that party is a formidable task.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the most effective glue for maintaining party cohesion is power, either the current control of government or the prospect of gaining control in the near future. Small parties that lack that glue often do split, but political power normally proves more than sufficient to maintain the unity of larger parties. Large parties, particularly those controlling the government, seldom split. Why would any politician in his right mind leave the party in power?

Yet, on occasion, politicians *do* in fact leave a powerful ruling party. In some cases, defection poses no particularly difficult puzzle. For example, the implosion of the Christian Democratic Party (DC) in Italy came as no great surprise because the growing number of DC politicians facing formal corruption charges along with the party's substantial decline in the 1992 election made it clear that the party was on its way out of power.<sup>2</sup>

The split that occurred in Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 1993, however, is not so easy to understand. The LDP was the party in power, the largest party in the system and, because it faced a fragmented and ineffectual opposition, a party with excellent prospects for holding on to power in the future. Thus the break-up of the LDP cannot be understood as a case of politicians deserting a sinking ship. To understand defection from the LDP, we must understand why politicians deserted a still seaworthy craft.

To this point, the bulk of the analysis of legislators' behaviour has focused on the behaviour of members of the US Congress. We know a good deal less about legislative

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<sup>1</sup> This point is the burden of the chapters in Shaun Bowler, David M. Farrell and Richard S. Katz, eds, *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Gianfranco Pasquino and Patrick McCarthy, eds, *The End of Post-War Politics in Italy: The Landmark 1992 Elections* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993).

behaviour in parliamentary systems simply because there is less variance to analyse. The British system has afforded scholars a few opportunities to study such behaviour through periodic cases of dissent<sup>3</sup> and procedures such as free votes on private legislation.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the behaviour of individual legislators in parliamentary systems is normally determined by party discipline. The split of the LDP in 1993 provides a rare instance of the breakdown of party discipline in a parliamentary system. The split thus offers a golden opportunity to study the factors that lead politicians in a parliamentary context to buck party discipline.

Along with previous analyses, we take both the fact and timing of the defection as given and analyse the differences between those politicians who chose to leave and those who chose to stay. The puzzle of the LDP split has already attracted considerable academic attention.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, despite widespread agreement on the importance of electoral incentives to politicians' behaviour, these analyses have been able to uncover only weak evidence of an electoral connection driving the decision to defect from the LDP. If these analyses were correct, students of electoral behaviour would be forced to dramatically revise their understanding of what underlies political behaviour.

In our analysis, however, we find clear evidence of electoral incentives driving party defection. The key to uncovering electoral incentives is understanding that the motives driving defection were mixed and we utilize an approach that allows us to distinguish between these different motives. First, by using interaction terms, we find that politicians at different stages in their careers and politicians facing different sorts of electorates respond to electoral factors in different ways. We thus confirm in a parliamentary setting findings from analyses of the US Congress that electoral incentives are not constant but vary across space and time.

Secondly, we find that, in addition to electoral incentives, policy preferences – in particular, an interest in pursuing political reform – also played an important role in LDP members' decision to defect. Indeed, it is a policy preference that proves to be the single most consistent and powerful influence determining who would leave the LDP and this preference appears to be independent of many politicians' electoral incentives.

Model building struggles for both parsimony and completeness. Our analysis indicates that excessively parsimonious models based upon a single incentive, even the powerful re-election incentive, can be so incomplete as to leave us with an inaccurate understanding of political behaviour. While one need not understand all of the incentives that drive political behaviour in order to understand the 1993 LDP split, the most parsimonious model capable of explaining the split includes both policy preferences and variations in the re-election incentive.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Mark Franklin, Alison Baxter and Margaret Jordan, 'Who Were the Rebels? Dissent in the House of Commons, 1970–1974', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 11 (1986), 143–60.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, John R. Hibbing and David Marsh, 'Accounting for the Voting Patterns of British MPs on Free Votes', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 12 (1987), 275–97; and Philip Norton, 'Private Legislation and the Influence of the Backbench MP', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 30 (1977), 356–62.

<sup>5</sup> The most notable studies include Gary W. Cox and Frances Rosenbluth, 'Anatomy of a Split: The Liberal Democrats of Japan', *Electoral Studies*, 14 (1995), 355–76; Junko Kato, 'When the Party Breaks Up: Exit and Voice among Japanese Legislators', *American Political Science Review*, 92 (1998), 857–70; Masaru Kohno, '93-nendo no Seiji Hendou' ('The 1993 Political Upheaval'), *Leviathan*, 17 (1995), 30–51; Hideo Otake, 'Forces for Political Reform: The Liberal Democratic Party's Young Reformers and Ozawa Ichiro', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 22 (1996), 226–94; and Eugene L. Wolfe, 'Japanese Electoral and Political Reform: The Role of the Young Turks', *Asian Survey*, 35 (1995), 1059–74.

## MIXED MOTIVES

The notion of politicians as election-focused creatures is well established. Indeed, the idea that legislators are 'single minded seekers of re-election' may well be the most useful simplifying assumption in all of political science.<sup>6</sup> However, while an analysis of the 'electoral connection' may be the best place to start analysing legislative behaviour, it is by no means the end of the story. Parties may maximize policy and office-holding, in addition to votes. Not only do most parties value all three goals, but different parties also place different weights on each goal.<sup>7</sup> The same might easily be said about candidates, who may vary even more widely in the extent to which they place weight on any given aim. Individual politicians have policy preferences and frequently act without fear of electoral repercussions.<sup>8</sup>

The literature on the US Congress suggests how politicians may be driven by different stimuli at different points in their careers.<sup>9</sup> In particular, the name recognition and reputation they develop over multiple years of service provide long-time incumbents with an electoral base that is secure enough to allow them to focus more on their legislative responsibilities in their later years. It is also reasonable to assume that similar differences may also exist between candidates from different types of districts. In particular, politicians running in volatile districts cannot be assured of re-election and therefore need to expend greater energy protecting their electoral base, while politicians running in more stable districts ought to have greater freedom to pursue their policy interests. In short, within any given legislative body, we ought to expect different members to respond to stimuli in different ways.

A researcher who lumps an entire set of legislative members into the same pool will be unlikely to capture the 'true' effect of a particular variable on them. As Miller and Shanks, discussing the behaviour of voters, write:

estimates of the 'apparent effect' for each individual variable in our model conceal significant variation among voters in the degree to which that characteristic was activated by the campaign, and in the degree to which, when activated, that characteristic exerted some influence on vote choice. The true influence of a given attitude on the vote is almost certainly higher for some voters than for others, and thus all of our estimates represent a kind of average over the entire sub-sample of voters – or an 'apparent average effect'.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes these apparent average effects conceal significant differences among cases. Given the discussion above about mixed incentives and the different weights given to them, this is probably particularly the case with legislators' responsiveness to the electoral context they face. Our empirical analysis below of the correlates of defection from the LDP in 1993 indicates the importance of differentiating between different types of legislators.

<sup>6</sup> David B. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974).

<sup>7</sup> See Kaare Strom, 'A Behavioural Theory of Competitive Political Parties', *American Journal of Political Science*, 34 (1990), 565–98; and Wolfgang C. Muller and Kaare Strom, *Policy Office or Votes: How Political Parties in Western Democracies Make Hard Decisions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> See Richard F. Fenno Jr, *Congressmen in Committees* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); and John Lott, 'Political Cheating', *Public Choice*, 52 (1987), 169–86.

<sup>9</sup> See Richard F. Fenno Jr, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1978); John R. Hibbing, 'Contours of the Modern Congressional Career', *American Political Science Review*, 85 (1991), 405–28; and John R. Hibbing, *Congressional Careers: Contours of Life in the US House of Representatives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 205–6.

## THE SPLITTING OF THE LDP: BACKGROUND

During thirty-eight years of continuous rule, the LDP had successfully adjusted to some of the most rapid socio-economic change that any nation had ever experienced and had survived repeated corruption scandals. Yet, in 1993, a party that had seemed invulnerable for almost forty years suddenly found itself in opposition for the first time in its history. The proximate cause of this historical turning point was the decision of thirty-nine sitting members of the governing party to leave and form two new parties.

The chain of events that resulted in removing the LDP from power was a drama in two acts. In the first act, reformers defected from the LDP. In the second act, voters responded enthusiastically to the new parties. The result was a coalition government that excluded the LDP. Without the defections, however, the most likely result would have been a narrow LDP majority.<sup>11</sup> It required both a large number of defections and an enthusiastic response from voters to unseat the LDP. We analyse the first act of this drama, the defections.

The Liberal Democratic Party was formed after the 1955 election from a merger of the Liberal and Democratic parties. At the time, few thought that the LDP would last very long, as observers doubted that two parties that encompassed so many incompatible personalities and policy positions, as well as years of antagonism towards one another, could long remain in one piece.<sup>12</sup> As was widely noted at the time, the LDP was held together by little more than its grip on power and its opposition to Communists and left-wing Socialists. As should have been expected, however, the sharing of power proved more than sufficient to hold the party together. Defection threats began immediately after the party was founded and resurfaced periodically thereafter, but none of these threats were acted upon until 1976. This first defection occurred before the 1976 election when the Lockheed scandal prompted a group of young conservative reformers to leave the LDP and form the New Liberal Club (NLC).<sup>13</sup> Though the NLC failed to build on its electoral successes of 1976 and was finally forced to re-enter the LDP in 1986, the lessons learned from its experience provided the reformers of 1993 with an important set of lessons, both positive and negative.<sup>14</sup>

In December 1992, the seeds of a more potent defection were sown when the Takeshita faction split. The Takeshita faction was by far the largest faction inside the LDP. Commentators had long expected it or its predecessors to break up because they seemed simply too big, filled with too much talent and ambition to be contained within a single faction.<sup>15</sup> Whoever led the faction would be virtually guaranteed to become prime minister one day and would wield great power under any circumstances. When Prime Minister Takeshita was forced to resign due to the Recruit scandal and several shocking defeats in local and by-elections, the faction split into two groups. The first group was the mainline successor faction led by Keizo Obuchi. The second was a group of junior reformers led by high-ranking senior members, Tsutomu Hata and Ichiro Ozawa.

Then, in 1993, when the Miyazawa Administration was unable to enact political reform legislation, the newly formed Hata faction defected from the LDP to form the Renewal

<sup>11</sup> Steven R. Reed, 'The Japanese General Election of 1993', *Electoral Studies*, 13 (1994), 80–2.

<sup>12</sup> Kent E. Calder, *Crisis and Compensation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 59–60.

<sup>13</sup> Susan J. Pharr, 'Liberal Democrats in Disarray: Intergenerational Conflict in the Conservative Camp', in Terry Edward MacDougall, ed., *Political Leadership in Contemporary Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1982).

<sup>14</sup> Steven R. Reed, 'Political Reform in Japan: Combining Scientific and Historical Analysis', *Social Science Japan Journal*, 2 (1999), 177–93, at pp. 188–9.

<sup>15</sup> Minoru Morita, *Jiminto Seikimatsu no Tairan* (The LDP's Turn-of-the-Century Rebellion) (Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Shinposha, 1992), p. 69.

Party (Shinsei) following a smaller group of reformers led by Masayoshi Takemura, who formed the New Party Harbinger (Sakigake, hereafter NPH).

#### MIXED MOTIVES IN JAPAN

There is good reason to believe that the differences in electoral incentives found in the United States also exist in Japan. First, there appear to be significant differences in electoral security between junior and senior members. In Japan, electoral security tends to follow a curvilinear path. Based on survey research, Miyake finds that voters' evaluations of candidates are lowest in the first three terms, highest from their fourth through ninth terms and then drop after the tenth term in office.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Reed finds that junior politicians suffer greater losses from a scandal than do politicians at the peak of their careers.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, when making political decisions, junior members ought to be more sensitive to their own electoral weakness.

In addition, legislators from stable districts ought to respond to electoral incentives differently from those in volatile districts. In Japan, the urban/rural distinction tends to be the sharpest feature dividing electoral districts.<sup>18</sup> Rural representatives, especially those from the LDP, tend to develop stable personal followings that ensure re-election and thus give them greater freedom to follow their policy preferences. In contrast, urban representatives face a less candidate-centred, more volatile electorate. Urban representatives must thus pay greater heed to their electoral standing.

Policy preferences may also guide different politicians in different ways. The dilemma facing anyone trying to analyse the 1993 defections from the LDP is that the Hata faction defected as a group. A dummy variable for membership in the Hata faction explains too much variance: every member of the faction left. Cox and Rosenbluth solve this problem with a dummy variable for membership in the Takeshita faction, but the Takeshita faction no longer existed at the time of the defection.<sup>19</sup> Kato finds that the correlates of defection for members of the Takeshita faction differed from the correlates of defection for members in the rest of the LDP.<sup>20</sup> The Cox and Rosenbluth analysis thus conflates two separate events, the splitting of the Takeshita faction in 1992 and the break-up of the LDP in 1993. The Takeshita faction split and the break-up of the LDP were distinct events that occurred under different circumstances and therefore were influenced by a different set of incentives. Therefore, we perform two sets of analyses for each model: one including only the Takeshita faction members deciding whether to join the Hata faction in 1992 and one that includes any member of the LDP who did not join the Hata faction.

Hata had headed the committee that drew up the electoral reform plan proposed by the Kaifu administration in 1991 and was clearly a leader of the reform movement. The Hata faction could thus be considered a reform group, much like the other major group to defect in 1993, the NPH. However, Ozawa, the other leader of the Hata faction, had a different

<sup>16</sup> Ichiro Miyake, *Nihon no Seiji to Senkyo* (Japanese Politics and Elections) (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1995), p. 45.

<sup>17</sup> Steven R. Reed, 'Punishing Corruption: The Response of the Japanese Electorate to Scandals' in Ofer Feldman, ed., *Political Psychology in Japan* (Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 1999) pp. 131–48, at p. 142.

<sup>18</sup> Ethan Scheiner, 'Urban Outfitters: City-based Strategies and Success in Postwar Japanese Politics', *Electoral Studies*, 18 (1999), 179–98.

<sup>19</sup> Cox and Rosenbluth, 'Anatomy of a Split', p. 368.

<sup>20</sup> Kato, 'When the Party Breaks Up', p. 863.

agenda.<sup>21</sup> Though Ozawa should probably also be considered a reformer in some sense, he and his followers did not participate in the reform movement represented by the NPH and the Hata group. We shall demonstrate below that the Hata faction consisted of at least two groups. The Hata group participated in the reform movement and most had joined the Democratic Party after the New Frontier Party broke up in 1998, but the Ozawa group did not participate in the reform movement and most followed Ozawa into the Liberal Party. This group did not participate in the reform movement but were first elected to the Diet when Ozawa was secretary-general of the party. They thus seem to have been motivated by personal loyalty to Ozawa. In sum, the Hata faction causes two problems for statistical analysis, lack of variance and mixed motives – some members were more motivated by loyalty, while others were more motivated by the desire for reform.

#### LEAVING THE PARTY IN POWER: HYPOTHESES AND PREVIOUS ANALYSES

Defectors' stated reason for leaving the LDP was the desire to pass political reform. Under what circumstances would a politician take such a risk and leave the party in power?

Two explanations seem particularly likely.

- (1) *Electoral incentives*. Some may have anticipated winning more votes by supporting the reform movement. Japanese politicians did indeed expect to gain votes by supporting reform, though few expected the bounce to be as large as it turned out to be. However, reformers also expected that bounce to last for only one election, based upon the experience of the New Liberal Club from 1976 through 1986. An electoral bounce might tempt a junior politician who is more worried about winning the next election than about his long-term political future, but it would be unlikely to move a senior politician whose future lay within the dominant party. Politicians learned from the experience of the NLC that a new party can only be new once and that one cannot build either a party or a career on the basis of a one-time bounce. A more likely electoral advantage politicians probably sought to pursue involved their position in the electoral system. That is, many may have sought to leave the LDP in order to pursue reform that would move them away from a system in which they were quite weak.<sup>22</sup>
- (2) *Policy preferences*. Some defectors may have decided to leave the party because of a desire to pursue reform as a simple policy preference. In short, for some, reform may have had little to do with their own electoral incentives, but instead reflected views of the intrinsic value of a reformed Japanese politics.

However, to this point, there has been little systematic evidence for either of these hypotheses. Cox and Rosenbluth find that junior members of the Diet (defined by the number of terms served), ex-members of the Takeshita faction, those who had fared poorly

<sup>21</sup> Otake, 'Forces for Political Reform', p. 289.

<sup>22</sup> In addition to such retrospective electoral considerations, it is possible that some sought to leave the party in power and support political reform because of their expectation of electoral strength under a *new* electoral system. In an earlier version of this article, we found strong results for a measure of electoral prospects under the proposed new system. That result, however, turned out to be spurious. Our measure of electoral prospects was based on the 1993 election results and, instead of politicians with good prospects under the new system defecting, defectors gained votes in the 1993 election and therefore appeared to have had excellent prospects. We tried several different techniques of purging the prospects variable of the effects of the 1993 election but failed. Though a better measure might yield different results, we find no support for the idea that defectors expected to be particularly strong under the new electoral system.

in the previous election, and candidates who had often run without the LDP nomination were more likely to defect than their colleagues with the opposite characteristics. At the same time, electoral marginality, defined as the difference between the Diet members' vote total in the previous (1990) election and the Droop quota for the member's district all divided by the Droop quota, fails to reach the 0.05 level of significance, though it did come close.

Kato analyses the split, adding several dependent variables, and utilizes new independent variables and alternative measures of variables Cox and Rosenbluth use. Unlike Cox and Rosenbluth, Kato defines electoral strength as the number of votes received by the winner divided by the number received by the top ranking loser in the district, and finds no influence of electoral strength on the probability of defection and little or no influence on any of her other dependent variables. As noted earlier, this lack of evidence for electoral incentives shaping the decision to defect is extremely surprising, as parties' and candidates' electoral circumstances have long been seen to be keys to predicting their behaviour.

Our earlier discussion suggests a potential reason for the lack of such evidence. In their analyses of defection from the LDP, neither Cox and Rosenbluth nor Kato differentiate between different types of LDP members.<sup>23</sup> Cox and Rosenbluth include membership in the Takeshita faction as an independent variable and Kato runs one model for Takeshita faction members and another for non-Takeshita faction members. If we add controls for Diet members at different stages in their careers and from different types of districts, we may be able to find the expected electoral connection.

As we mentioned above, a genuine preference for reform as a policy may have also driven LDP defection. Operationalizing support for reform is a difficult task and for this reason neither Cox and Rosenbluth nor Kato places much emphasis on demonstrating or rejecting the importance of such support in the decision to defect. Cox and Rosenbluth treat membership in the Takeshita faction as a proxy for such support, but such membership could just as easily represent a large number of other possibilities, such as desire for greater power for the leaders of the faction.

We use a new variable that appears to represent politicians' support for reform quite well and find that support for reformer was the single most powerful predictor of defecting from the LDP. Although we cannot completely eliminate the possibility that support for reform may have been based upon a politicians' desire to create a more electorally advantageous environment, we present evidence that renders this interpretation less credible.

#### THE MODEL

We build on previous research in several ways. In many cases, we dropped or altered variables utilized in Cox and Rosenbluth's and Kato's analyses. In particular, after confirming their unimportance, we dropped from our analysis variables that had been used in these authors' work that were found to have little effect in the model or that did not hold sufficient theoretical foundation to continue to use. In addition, after considering a number of different options, we ultimately decided upon a measure of electoral strength that was quite similar to that used by Cox and Rosenbluth. Our measure of *Electoral Strength* for a given candidate is computed by subtracting the Droop quota (the total vote in the district

<sup>23</sup> In 'When the Party Breaks Up' Kato does differentiate a bit more in her analysis of the exertion of 'voice' by LDP members.

divided by the sum of the number of seats in the district plus one) from the candidate's vote total.<sup>24</sup>

We have focused on retaining the variables that have proven useful in previous work. Most analyses agree that junior members (who have less of a stake in the party) were the most likely to split and these analyses each found *Terms*, the cumulative number of times a politician had been elected to the Diet in 1993, to be statistically significant. We include *Terms* and expect its coefficient to be negative. In addition, we use Kato's *Urban* variable, a four-point scale of urbanization (ranging from rural = 1 to metropolitan = 4). Kato found *Urban* to be positive and significant for the Takeshita faction. We expect a similar result, as LDP weakness in cities ought to leave its urban members less committed to the party and more likely to split. We also use Kato's variable, *Relative*, which indicates whether the politician had relatives who at some point also served in the Diet. *Relative* was frequently statistically significant and positive in Kato's analysis. Otake argues that second-generation Diet members felt guilty about the relative ease with which they entered the political arena and therefore tended to support reform. For this reason, we expect *Relative* to remain positive in our analysis.

Our new variable is *Reform*. In developing an indicator of support for political reform, we first calculated the number of reform groups and activities the politician participated in before the 1993 election, based on a list of fourteen different reform groups and activities.<sup>25</sup> This variable ranges from 0 to 7 and performs quite well in the analysis, but we found a simple dichotomous variable to work as effectively as the more complex calculations. We thus coded *Reform* as 1 if the politician signed the 10 November 1992 'Resolution to Ban Medium-Sized Districts' (Chûsenkyokusei Haishi Sengen) and 0 if he did not. We expect reformers to be most likely to defect from the LDP and *Reform* therefore ought to be positive.

Note that our measure of a policy preference, a commitment to political reform, is based not on attitudes but on behaviour. We would not trust a survey of politicians, even if it were available because, in the 1990s, even opponents of political reform claimed to support 'true political reform'. No one who wanted to win the 1993 election would openly oppose reform. Participation in the activities of one of the reform groups, however, was seen as opposing the party leadership and therefore involved real political risks. Of course, being seen to support reform also promised to increase a candidate's vote in the next election.<sup>26</sup> For some politicians the decision to participate in reform activities may well have been based on a simple calculation of political costs and benefits. For others, however, this interpretation is implausible, as we shall argue below. Though we can never completely separate electoral from policy incentives, we believe ours to be the best available measure of support for political reform. Reform had been on the Japanese political agenda throughout the post-war period and most politicians had well-developed stances on the issue.

As noted above, we take a cue from Kato in breaking our analysis into different LDP groups (although our groupings differ somewhat). Just as Kato does, we focus one part of our analysis on the Takeshita faction. However, our dependent variable is slightly

<sup>24</sup> In the Appendix to the website version of this article we offer a more substantial discussion of our adjustments to the variables used in previous research on the LDP split.

<sup>25</sup> The sources for this variable are the Sankei Shinbun of 25 May 1993, p. 12, and materials collected by the National Diet Library.

<sup>26</sup> Steven R. Reed, 'Providing Clear Cues: Voter Response to the Reform Issue in the 1993 Japanese General Election', *Party Politics*, 3 (1997), 265–77.



different. The 1992 Hata faction defection did indeed ultimately lead to an *en bloc* defection by its members before the 1993 election, but the Takeshita faction split was a distinct event, separate from the other defections in 1993. For this reason, we must consider the 33-member 1992 Hata defector group – which ultimately formed the Renewal Party in 1993 – and the other forty members who defected in 1993–94 as separate though related phenomena. For our analysis of the Takeshita faction split, we examine all members of the Takeshita faction and the dependent variable is coded 1 if the member joined the Hata faction.

We then exclude the Hata faction from our analysis of the LDP split. However, we include the other members of the Takeshita faction. For example, Yukio Hatoyama and Asahiko Mihara were Takeshita faction members who did not join Hata or Renewal, but did defect from the LDP in 1993 and joined NPH. Takeshita faction members who did not join the Hata faction but did leave the LDP before the 1993 election should not be counted as defectors in the analysis of the split of the Takeshita faction but should be in the analysis of the LDP split. Our analysis of the LDP split, therefore, examines all of the LDP except the Hata faction, and the dependent variable is coded as 1 if the politician ever left the LDP between 1993 and 1995.

#### RESULTS: WHO LEFT THE LDP?

We begin in Table 1 with the basic model including only those variables we use from previous analyses. Although all previous research finds that junior members were more likely to defect, we find that *Terms* has no effect on Takeshita faction split. Junior members were not more likely to join the Hata faction. For the other defectors, however, *Terms* is strongly negative and significant, indicating that junior members were more likely to defect from the LDP. We can thus confirm Kato's conclusion that the 1992 Takeshita faction split was caused by factors that systematically differed from those that caused the other defections. Just as previous research did with this model, we find that electoral considerations played no significant role in either split.

In the third and fourth columns of Table 1 we add our new independent variable, *Reform*. We find, first, that the fit of the model improves substantially. The pseudo  $R^2$  more than doubles for each of the dependent variables. Secondly, for both groups *Reform* is clearly the dominant variable. We interpret this to mean that only those politicians who supported reform were seriously tempted to leave the dominant faction or the dominant political party.

The strongest predictor of defections from within the Takeshita faction is *Reform*. The split of the Takeshita faction is usually depicted as a matter of pure power politics with no real policy significance.<sup>27</sup> We find, to the contrary, that the best predictor of whether a Takeshita faction member joined the Hata faction and, hence, later split from the LDP was whether or not he supported political reform. The Hata faction was, first and foremost, the reform group inside the Takeshita faction. We are not suggesting that all faction members were 'true' reformers. As we show below, for many LDP members, electoral considerations influenced the decision to support reform. In addition, within the Hata faction a substantial group linked specifically to Ozawa appears to have had different goals from other reformers within the faction. Nevertheless, motives are always mixed and,

<sup>27</sup> Hitoshi Abe, Muneyuki Shindo and Sadafumi Kawato, *The Government and Politics of Japan*. (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994) p. 123.

TABLE 1 *Who Were the Defectors?*

	Variables from previous analysis		Adding the reform variable	
	Takeshita split	LDP split	Takeshita split	LDP split
<i>Terms</i>	-0.083 (0.066)	-0.111 (0.038)***	0.036 (0.074)	-0.039 (0.040)
<i>Urban</i>	0.381 (0.200)	0.060 (0.110)	-0.207 (0.232)	0.051 (0.122)
<i>Relative</i>	-0.655 (0.346)*	0.433 (0.206)**	-1.297 (0.459)***	0.506 (0.226)**
<i>Electoral Strength</i>	-1.30e-05 (1.17e-05)	4.24e-06 (6.24e-06)	-2.03e-05 (1.57e-05)	8.56e-06 (6.44e-06)
<i>Reform</i>	—	—	2.069 (0.490)***	1.356 (0.241)***
Constant	0.511 (0.701)	-0.783 (0.349)**	-0.052 (0.782)	-1.644 (0.420)***
<i>n</i>	66	234	66	234
Log Likelihood	-39.43	-100.13	-27.89	-83.18
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.138	0.064	0.390	0.222

Note: The data are probit estimates. Entries are the coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; two-tailed tests.

whatever their reasons for supporting a change in the system, it was reformers who defected to the Hata faction.

Note that *Terms* ceases to be significant once *Reform* is added to the equation. It was not that junior members left the LDP. Rather, it was junior members who joined the reform movement and reformers who left the LDP. Junior members who did not support reform were not particularly tempted to leave. As with earlier analyses, we still find no evidence in this model that electoral considerations played a role in the decision to defect, whether from the Takeshita faction or from the LDP.

Electoral considerations emerge only after we examine two interactions with electoral strength: first with seniority and secondly with the urban–rural dimension. Based on the US Congress literature that we discussed above, we expect electoral incentives to work differently for junior and senior Diet members. We expect that, like their American counterparts, junior Diet members are more sensitive to electoral incentives. Based on the literature on the Japanese Diet, we further hypothesize that urban Diet members will react differently from rural ones. Politicians in urban districts face a more volatile and less organized electorate. We thus divide the sample into two groups. First we analyse senior and junior members separately. We define junior members as those elected fewer than four times and senior members are those elected four or more times. We use Kato's four-point urban–rural variable to divide the sample into urban (3 or 4 on Kato's scale) and rural (1 or 2) politicians.

Table 2 presents the results for the Takeshita faction split and Table 3 presents the results for the LDP split. We find first that *Reform* continues to dominate in each of the sub-samples but electoral considerations now become significant in three groups. Junior Takeshita faction members were more likely to join the Hata faction when they were electorally insecure. Unfortunately, this finding does not hold up when we use an interaction term in a single equation instead of dividing the samples into two halves. For the LDP split, defectors tended to be second-generation Diet members. More importantly, however, senior politicians and those representing urban districts were more likely to defect when they were electorally strong.

The coefficients here offer support for our hypotheses from above. The negative sign on *Electoral Strength* in the first column of results indicates that junior members were more likely to defect from the LDP when they were electorally insecure. In short, junior members defected to help their electoral position. For senior members, the coefficient is positive, suggesting that senior members were likely to defect when their electoral strength appeared sufficient to provide them with freedom to act according to their own political (policy) desires. For rural members, *Electoral Strength* is non-significant, suggesting that LDP politicians from the countryside largely had sufficient freedom so that they did not have to consider their level of electoral strength in making a decision of this kind. In contrast, urban members – facing a more volatile electorate that was less candidate-centred – typically paid greater attention to their levels of electoral strength. In particular, the positive sign on *Electoral Strength* for urban members suggests that they sought to defect when they felt that they had sufficient electoral strength to let them follow their own personal political desires. Moreover, these findings hold up when we use a single equation with interaction terms.

Based on the coefficients listed in the interaction model in Table 3, Figure 1 gives a greater sense of the effect of electoral factors on the likelihood of non-Hata faction members choosing to leave the LDP. Holding constant the *Relative* and *Reform* variables at their means, we adjust the values of the other variables to estimate the probability of

TABLE 2 Analysing Interactions: The Takeshita Faction Split

	Junior	Senior	Urban	Rural	Interaction
<i>Terms</i>	—	—	0.120 (0.111)	—	-0.685 (0.523)†
<i>Urban</i>	-3.333 (2.062)	0.165 (0.299)	—	—	-0.445 (0.426)‡
<i>Relative</i>	-5.133 (2.590)**	-1.036 (0.636)	-1.515 (0.623)**	—	-1.443 (0.501)**
<i>Electoral Strength</i>	-1.85e-04 (9.48e-05)**	-1.60e-05 (1.89e-05)	-2.24e-05 (1.76e-05)	—	-2.84e-06 (2.34e-05)
<i>Rural × Elect. Strength</i>	—	—	—	—	-2.56e-05 (3.55e-05)
<i>Junior × Elect. Strength</i>	—	—	—	—	-3.79e-05 (3.61e-05)
<i>Reform</i>	7.439 (3.934)*	1.614 (0.780)**	1.655 (0.582)**	—	2.317 (0.560)**
<i>Constant</i>	5.779 (3.873)	-0.837 (0.814)	-0.882 (0.667)	—	-0.027 (0.357)
<i>n</i>	29	37	35	12	66
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-4.48	-15.83	-16.17	—	-26.49
<i>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></i>	0.75	0.34	0.330	—	0.421

Note: The data are probit estimates. Entries are the coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; two-tailed tests.

† The number of observations for rural districts is too small to offer reasonable estimates.

‡ Dichotomous version of *Terms* variable (0 = senior [4 + terms], 1 = junior [1-3 terms]).

§ Dichotomous version of *Urban* variable (0 = rural, 1 = urban).

TABLE 3 Analyzing Interactions: The LDP Split (excluding Hata defectors)

	Junior	Senior	Urban	Rural	Interaction
<i>Terms</i>	—	—	-0.009 (0.056)	-0.086 (0.067)	0.047 (0.302)†
<i>Urban</i>	-0.104 (0.173)	0.213 (0.191)	—	—	0.325 (0.240)‡
<i>Relative</i>	0.118 (0.326)	0.984 (0.370)**	0.797 (0.351)**	0.392 (0.322)	0.567 (0.233)**
<i>Electoral Strength</i>	-1.26e-05 (1.34e-05)	1.58e-05 (7.40e-06)**	1.59e-05 (8.12e-06)**	-9.60e-07 (1.28e-05)	2.07e-05 (8.19e-06)**
<i>Rural × Elect. Strength</i>	—	—	—	—	-1.66e-05 (1.26e-05)
<i>Junior × Elect. Strength</i>	—	—	—	—	-2.68e-05 (1.46e-05)*
<i>Reform</i>	1.456 (0.344)***	1.477 (0.422)***	1.868 (0.385)***	1.000 (0.340)**	1.405 (0.257)***
<i>Constant</i>	-1.484 (0.524)**	-2.723 (0.647)***	-1.884 (0.434)***	-1.297 (0.407)***	-2.078 (0.282)***
<i>n</i>	100	134	118	116	234
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	-45.19	-33.86	-39.88	-40.06	-79.96
<i>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></i>	0.211	0.245	0.297	0.199	0.253

Note: The data are probit estimates. Entries are the coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; two-tailed tests.

† Dichotomous version of *Terms* variable (0 = senior, 1 = junior).

‡ Dichotomous version of *Urban* variable (0 = rural, 1 = urban).

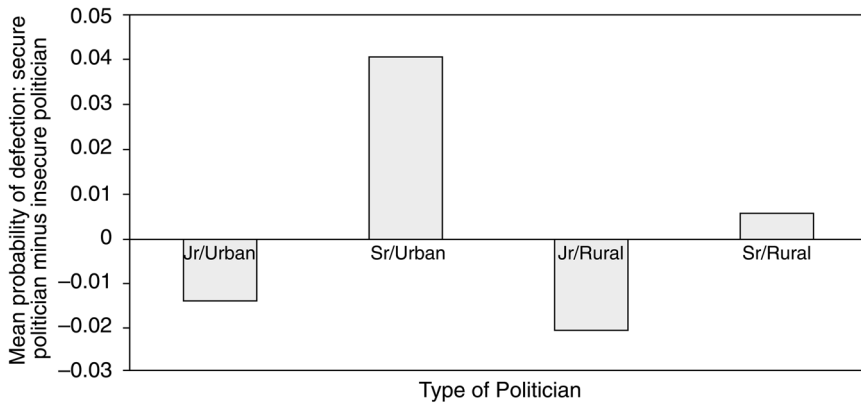


Fig. 1. Differences in the probability of defection based on degree of electoral insecurity: senior/urban members defected when electorally secure; junior members defected when insecure

defection for different types of politicians. Our findings with respect to electoral security can be summarized by calculating the difference in the probability of defection between the secure and the insecure for each type of politician. 'Secure' politicians have levels of electoral strength two standard deviations above the mean for their category (for example, junior/urban members) and 'Insecure' politicians are two standard deviations below the mean. Positive values indicate that as politicians gain greater electoral security, they have a higher likelihood of defection; negative values indicate the opposite. The figure makes it clear that it was senior politicians from urban districts who were most likely to defect when they were electorally secure. As they became more insecure, junior politicians grew slightly more likely to defect. The probability of defection was not affected by electoral security for senior members from rural districts.

Nevertheless, at the same time it is very important to note that it was not electoral considerations but support for political reform that played the largest role in driving defection from the LDP. As Figure 1 indicates, among senior, urban politicians (the group most affected by changes in electoral strength), the move from substantial electoral insecurity to great security only altered a politician's likelihood of defection by about 4 percentage points. A similar calculation for political reform indicates that, all other variables held at their means, there was a 5 per cent probability of defection for members who did not sign the reform petition, but a 40.7 per cent probability of defection for those who did sign, a difference of around 35 percentage points. In short, the impact of reform on the likelihood of defection was markedly greater than the impact of electoral strength.

We conclude that the decision to defect, either from the Takeshita faction or from the LDP, was a complex one involving many different factors. Statistical analysis cannot take all of those factors into account but it does allow us to make two generalizations. First, support for reform was the dominant factor explaining both defections. Secondly, electoral considerations played a role, at least for some groups, but junior politicians were more likely to be motivated by fear of defeat, while senior and urban politicians were more likely to defect when they felt secure. Previous analysis failed to find an electoral connection for two reasons. First, the electoral connection does not emerge clearly until one controls for policy preferences. Secondly, combining groups that are more likely to defect when

insecure with groups that are more likely to defect when safe obscured the effects of the electoral connection.

#### WHO WERE THE REFORMERS?

The results in Table 3 and Figure 1 indicate that electoral incentives played a substantively rather small part in driving defection. There was no statistically discernible effect at all for senior, rural members. Junior members (whether urban or rural) were more likely to defect when they were weak, but the substantive effect was quite small. Moreover, senior, urban members were more likely to defect when they were electorally *safe*. Electoral security produces no incentive to defect. Electoral security only reduces the potential costs of defection if there was a desire to defect for some other reason. That other reason was support for political reform. Diet members who were not interested in reform were almost always better off casting their lot with the LDP. With few exceptions, the only incumbents who were tempted to defect from the party in power were those who supported political reform. We therefore should ask who supported reform.

At the same time, it is possible that support for reform itself may have been due to politicians' desire to create a more advantageous electoral position for themselves. In particular, if we find that politicians chose to support reform, irrespective of their level of electoral strength or when they were electorally strong, this would suggest quite strongly that support for reform had more to do with a personal policy preference than any sort of electoral incentive. We should therefore also examine the correlation between electoral incentives and support for reform.

Cox and Rosenbluth and Kato consistently found *Terms* to be a strong predictor of defection. We find that, once *Reform* is controlled for, *Terms* falls to statistical non-significance. We interpret these findings to mean that junior Diet members were more likely to defect because they were more likely to be reformers. When we use a probit model to analyse the dichotomous variable *Reform* as a dependent variable, we find that this is indeed the case (Table 4). *Terms* is significant for the LDP as a whole, for the Takeshita faction and for the LDP excluding the Takeshita faction.

We find, further, that urban Takeshita faction members were more likely to be reformers. Kato found urban Takeshita faction members to be more likely to defect and our interpretation parallels that for junior Diet members: urban Takeshita faction members were more likely to defect because they were reformers.

We also find that support for political reform was influenced by electoral rationality outside the Takeshita faction, though not within it. Outside the Takeshita faction and within the LDP as a whole, all else equal, less secure Diet members were more likely to participate in the reform movement. But, as we learned above, not all members have the same sort of electoral rationality underlying their behaviour. For this reason, we consider junior, senior, urban and rural members each separately. Considering the interactions for the Takeshita faction offer little to the analysis in Table 4, but the correlates of *Reform* for non-Takeshita members are striking.

Most noteworthy, as Table 5 indicates, junior and urban members were more likely to support reform when electorally insecure, but *Electoral Strength* has no statistically significant impact on senior and rural members. This point is even clearer in Figure 2, where, based on the results of our interaction model in Table 5, we calculate the differences in the probability of supporting reform for secure and insecure members in each group. Positive values indicate politicians who are more likely to support reform when secure and

TABLE 4 *Who Were the Reformers?*

	All LDP	Takeshita faction	Non-Takeshita
<i>Terms</i>	- 0.148 (0.029)***	- 0.200 (0.075)**	- 0.145 (0.033)***
<i>Urban</i>	0.041 (0.090)	0.439 (0.205)**	- 0.069 (0.104)
<i>Relative</i>	0.039 (0.178)	0.512 (0.389)	- 0.125 (0.215)
<i>Electoral Strength</i>	- 1.09e-05 (0.6e-06)*	- 1.42e-06 (1.15e-05)	- 1.45e-05 (7.35e-06)**
Constant	0.048 (0.287)	- 0.602 (0.677)	0.236 (0.324)
<i>n</i>	271	66	205
Log Likelihood	- 152.24	- 35.78	- 110.31
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.127	0.210	0.133

Note: Data are probit estimates. Entries are the coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.  
 \*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; two-tailed tests.

negative values indicate the opposite. The figure indicates that it is junior members from urban districts who were more likely to support reform when electorally insecure: junior, urban members appeared to support reform in very large measure because of their great weakness under the old system.

However, as Figure 2 indicates, electoral incentives appear to have had little effect on the likelihood of other types of politicians supporting reform. Based on this analysis, it is rather difficult to say that senior, urban members and rural members of all kinds were pursuing reform for electoral reasons. Indeed, given the weakness of the results regarding the impact of *Electoral Strength* in shaping support for reform, it appears far more likely that they did so out of a simple policy preference. This appears to be further supported by

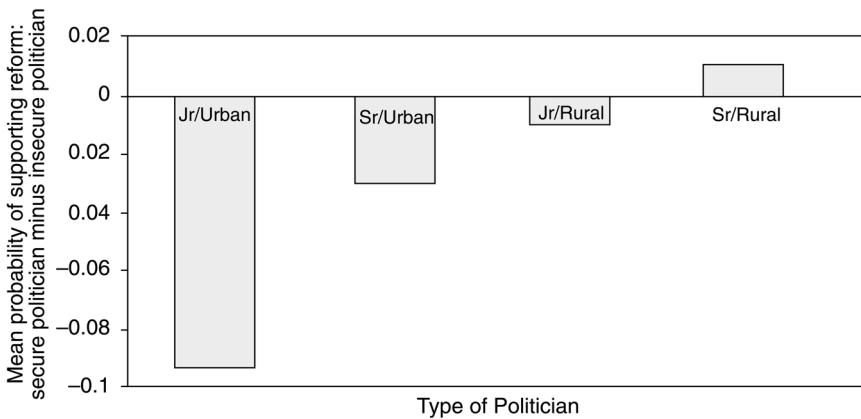


Fig. 2. Differences in the probability of supporting reform based on degree of electoral insecurity: junior/urban members more likely to support reform when insecure; electoral security has small impact on others



TABLE 5 Reform Interactions: Non-Takeshita Faction Members

	Junior	Senior	Urban	Rural	Interaction
<i>Terms</i>	—	—	-0.160 (0.050)***	-0.152 (0.049)**	0.903 (0.248)***†
<i>Urban</i>	-0.024 (0.145)	-0.005 (0.159)	—	—	-0.254 (0.234)‡
<i>Relative</i>	0.277 (0.297)	-0.529 (0.344)	-0.696 (0.374)*	0.238 (0.284)	-0.081 (0.218)
<i>Electoral Strength</i>	-1.88e-05 (1.14e-05)*	-9.05e-06 (8.55e-06)	-2.85e-05 (1.12e-05)***	3.31e-06 (1.26e-05)	-2.69e-05 (1.35e-05)**
<i>Rural × Elect. Strength</i>	—	—	—	—	2.18e-05 (1.49e-05)
<i>Senior × Elect. Strength</i>	—	—	—	—	1.02e-05 (1.51e-05)
Constant	-0.197 (0.403)	-0.905 (0.463)*	0.025 (0.293)	0.150 (0.277)	-0.919 (0.205)
<i>n</i>	92	113	104	101	205
Log Likelihood	-61.99	-45.99	-47.00	-59.16	-108.42
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.028	0.039	0.224	0.101	0.148

Note: Data are probit estimates. Entries are the coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; two-tailed tests.

† Dichotomous version of *Terms* variable (0 = senior, 1 = junior).

‡ Dichotomous version of *Urban* variable (0 = rural, 1 = urban).

the relatively weak link between *Electoral Strength* and defection (or, in the case of senior, urban members, the fact that many politicians chose to defect when they were electorally strong).

Political reform is seen as an 'urban issue' in Japan, so one might posit that urban Diet members, irrespective of their electoral security, may have supported reform to win votes. Yet the evidence suggests that reform was not a particularly urban issue. Using the JESII national survey of Japanese citizens, we calculated the percentage of respondents who said political reform was an important issue guiding their voting decision in 1993. Using the four-point urban-rural scale, we find reform to be no more important an issue for urban than rural voters. In fact, voters in the most rural districts were slightly more likely to consider political reform important and significantly more likely to favour changing the electoral system. Again, we doubt that it is ever possible to completely disentangle policy preferences from electoral considerations, but this evidence runs in the face of the notion that politicians supported reform simply to maximize their probability of being re-elected.

#### SORTING THEMSELVES OUT: DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN THE REFORMERS

The events in the years following the 1993 split offer additional leverage in attempting to understand the motivations underlying the different groups that split from the LDP, including the differences between the two groups (the reformers and the 'power seekers') that made up the Hata faction. Indeed, below we show that even within the Hata 'reform group', there were substantially different reasons for supporting reform and these differences played out in the longer-term shape Japanese party politics took.

A bewildering series of new parties were founded in Japan after the 1993 election. Most shared the goal of creating a large new party to challenge the LDP, but there were also a succession of coalition governments, many featuring combinations considered unthinkable only a few years earlier. Yet, none of the larger parties and none of the coalition governments displayed much in the way of ideological consistency. Beyond a general commitment to political reform, any reasonable hypothesis about what the LDP defectors stood for could be disproved by pointing to several defectors who did not fit the pattern.

The first serious challenger to emerge from the confusion was the New Frontier Party (NFP), which was made up of much of the former opposition and many of the defectors from the LDP. The NFP failed, however, to unify the opposition to the LDP. A second alternative was provided by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in 1996. The DPJ was primarily a merger of reformers from the Socialist Party and from NPH. The number of LDP defectors who joined the DPJ is too small to permit multivariate statistical analysis but they were clearly active members in the reform movement. First, all former LDP members who joined the DPJ in 1996 had been members of a number of political reform study groups. Using our seven-point reform scale, the mean number of study groups participated in was 0.99 for the LDP as a whole, 2.16 for all defectors from the LDP and 4.75 for defectors who joined the DPJ. Our data on the Socialist Party members are more limited but the figures are equally clear. Every single Socialist who participated in one of the reform study groups joined the DPJ in 1996.

The DPJ was clearly a party of reformers, but as we show below, the defectors who joined the NFP were more diverse. Although the NFP started off well, the party ultimately disintegrated in December of 1997. Former LDP defectors in the NFP faced several options. One possibility was a return to the LDP. Like defection, the decision to return was complex and we found no clear statistical differences between those who returned and

those who did not. Ultimately, it appears that the key factor determining whether a defector was *able* to return, however, was the LDP candidate in his district: when there was no LDP candidate already available in the candidate's district, former defectors were welcomed back into the LDP fold and given the LDP nomination.

For those former LDP defectors who chose not to return to the LDP, two primary choices remained: joining Ozawa to form the Liberal Party or linking up with other former LDP defectors and former opposition parties in opposition both to the LDP and to Ozawa. By following which of these two choices former LDP defectors pursued, the different motivations driving the original defection from the LDP become much clearer. Though we do not yet have a thorough case study analysis of the break-up of the NFP, one of the problems was clearly the presence of Ozawa. Ozawa's notion of political reform and his other policy positions did not mesh with the rest of the reform movement. As a result, in 1998 he founded the Liberal Party with the express intention of producing a party with greater policy coherence. He failed, as the party was immediately beset by debates surrounding its future.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, what is more important from our perspective is the fact that the Liberal Party was made up of a distinctive group of former LDP defectors. Most notably, they had not been active participants in the reform movement before 1993. We ran a probit model of the correlates of joining the Liberals. The dependent variable for this analysis is coded 1 if the Diet member joined the Liberal Party in 1998 and 0 if he joined one of the other conservative splinters from the NFP. We exclude from this analysis those who returned to the LDP and those who joined the 1996 DPJ. The results are presented in Table 6.

For seniority, we utilize a variant of *Terms*, which we call *New 1986–90*. Morita argues that the Takeshita faction split was based on the loyalty developed by those Diet members who were first elected in either 1986 or 1990 when Ozawa was secretary general of the party. These politicians owed a debt to Ozawa for helping them win that all-important first victory. Although the variable does not help explain the decision to join the Hata faction in 1992, it does explain the decision to follow Ozawa into the Liberal Party in 1998: *New 1986–90* is significant and positive. Liberal Party members may not have shared similar policy positions with one another, but they were loyal to their leader.

In the previous section, we found that urban members of the Takeshita faction were more likely to support reform. The current centralized system tends to benefit the poorer, more rural areas that remain heavily dependent on the central government, while urban dwellers are forced to bear much of the burden of this system. Defectors from the LDP, especially those who did not join the Liberal Party, explain that they left the party in order to create a two-party system where the current centralized, bureaucratic oriented system could come under debate (and be disbanded).<sup>29</sup> It therefore makes great sense that urban Diet members tended to remain in the opposition, and not join the Liberal Party, which is demonstrated by the statistically significant and negative coefficient for *Urban* in Table 6.

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, according to Kabashima, Liberal Party members displayed the greatest dispersion of locations on the left–right scale of any party in Japan at the time. See Kabashima Ikuo, 'An ideological survey of Japan's national legislators', *Japan Echo* (August 1999) pp. 9–16, at p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Ethan Scheiner, 'Democracy Without Competition: Opposition Failure in One-Party Dominant Japan' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 2001).

TABLE 6 *Ozawa's Liberal Party  
Members Were Different*

	Liberal Party
<i>New 1986–90</i>	12.287 (5.536)**
<i>Urban</i>	– 2.002 (0.893)**
<i>Relative</i>	5.270 (3.234)
<i>Electoral Margin 1996</i>	– 13.173 (9.158)
<i>Reform</i>	– 8.043 (3.757)**
<i>FDMPPR</i>	5.190 (2.295)**
<i>Constant</i>	5.190 (2.295)**
<i>n</i>	25
<i>Log Likelihood</i>	– 6.23
<i>Pseudo R<sup>2</sup></i>	0.630

*Note:* Data are probit estimates. Entries are the coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; two-tailed tests.

As Table 6 shows, Liberals were neither more nor less likely, however, to be second-generation Diet members, nor did we find any significant effect for electoral security based on the 1996 election. We do, however, find a very strong negative relationship between the probability of joining the Liberal Party and participation in the reform movement.

Using our more detailed measure of support for reform, Liberal Party members had an average score of 0.9 (or 1.0 for Liberal Party members who had been in the Takeshita faction) out of a possible score of 7. This is approximately equal to the LDP average of 0.996 and the Takeshita faction average of 1.152. It is considerably lower than the 1.806 average for members of the Hata faction (1.967 for those who did not join the Liberal Party) and the 2.164 average for all defectors from the LDP. In fact, of the study groups in our dataset, Liberal Party members had participated in only one, ‘The Federation of Diet Members Promoting Political Reform’ (Seiji kaikaku suishin giin renmei, or, FDMPPR). Moreover, this study group was among the most popular with all LDP members at the time. If we subtract this study group from our measure of support for political reform, the result is, as expected, a significant negative relationship with *Reform*. Members of the Liberal Party were clearly less reform oriented than other defectors from the LDP.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis also provides several lessons about electoral incentives and legislative behaviour. Our major findings can be summarized under three headings. First, electoral incentives did indeed affect the decision to defect from the party in power. We believe it is safe to say that electoral incentives always affect the behaviour of politicians. Winning elections is a necessary condition for pursuing any other goals a politician might have, and, for this reason, politicians can never afford to ignore elections.

Yet, secondly, electoral incentives are not constant but vary between politicians at different stages in their careers and from different kinds of electoral districts. We thus confirm the findings of research on the US Congress in a parliamentary context. Electoral incentives for a politician with a fifty-fifty chance of winning the next election are much more powerful than electoral incentives for a politician with a safe seat or a politician with no chance of winning. Politicians who have yet to achieve a safe seat, the necessary condition for participation in legislative politics, must focus primarily on their electoral prospects. Politicians who have the necessary condition in hand can afford to think about other priorities.

We are also able to confirm that, while politicians can never afford to ignore elections, winning elections is not their only goal. They also have policy goals. One cannot explain defections from a party in power, particularly one with excellent prospects for remaining in power, solely on the basis of maximizing re-election prospects. The dominant factor explaining defections was participation in the reform movement.

One might argue that political behaviour always boils down to maximizing electoral prospects and that support for reform was no more than support for changing the electoral system into one under which the 'reformers' would have better electoral prospects.<sup>30</sup> We find this interpretation to be strained at best. Our evidence strongly suggests that support for reform was independent of the electoral concerns for many politicians. Support for reform was typically a necessary, if not a sufficient, condition for defection from the LDP. In particular, for senior and rural members, there was no statistically significant relationship between electoral security and support for reform. Most striking, senior, urban members were more likely to defect from the party, not when they were insecure, but when they were electorally strong. Moreover, research on political behaviour in other nations confirms the influence of policy preferences. We see no reason to suspect that Japanese politicians should be exceptions to this rule.

We agree that electoral incentives are important and that models based on the assumption that politicians maximize their electoral prospects are useful. Models based on the assumption that politicians change parties in order to maximize their influence within the legislature are also quite useful.<sup>31</sup> Models based on single incentives are useful but not realistic. Politicians, like the rest of us, live in a complex world of competing incentives. In order to understand the behaviour of political parties, one must consider at least three motivations: policy, office and votes. The same is true of individual politicians.

Finally, a review of the research on the break-up of the LDP reveals an interesting interaction between case studies and statistical analysis. Statistical analysis tends to focus on broad theoretical explanations, while case studies tend to focus on idiosyncratic explanations. The most common type of interaction between the two types of research is the statistical testing of a hypothesis derived from case studies. Our findings reveal an expected weakness in the case study approach: the tendency to generalize from a biased

<sup>30</sup> It has been suggested that our findings would be strengthened if we could show that reformers voted against the interests of their constituencies. Unfortunately, the 1993 election was held under the old multi-member district system. Candidates from the same electoral district represented different constituencies as they carved up the district into different geographical and functional electoral bases. It is hard to imagine collecting data on the actual constituencies of particular politicians.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Laver and Junko Kato, 'Dynamic Approaches to Government Formation and the Generic Instability of Decisive Structures in Japan', *Electoral Studies*, 20 (2001), 509–28; and Daniela Giannetti and Michael Laver, 'Party System Dynamics and the Making and Breaking of Italian Governments', *Electoral Studies*, 20 (2001), 529–54.

sample. Thus, Morita argues that the Takeshita faction split was less a matter of young reformers joining the Hata faction than it was a matter of young politicians who owed Ozawa a debt for helping them win their first election repaying that debt with loyalty to their leader.<sup>32</sup> We cannot confirm this hypothesis for the Takeshita faction split in 1992 but can for those Diet members who followed Ozawa into the Liberal Party in 1997. Similarly, based on a case study, Otake argues that reformers and defectors tended to be second-generation Diet members.<sup>33</sup> As the negative sign on *Relative* for the Takeshita faction in Table 2 indicates, we cannot confirm this hypothesis for all defectors. But the statistically significant and positive sign on *Relative* in the LDP split model in Table 1 certainly supports the argument that this was the case for the NPH, the party that Otake studied. Case studies have trouble assessing the range of cases over which the hypothesis applies. It is thus advisable, when possible, to follow up case studies with statistical analysis.

Our findings also reveal an unexpected weakness in statistical analysis: the tendency to focus exclusively on effects averaged across whole populations. The key to understanding the effect of electoral incentives and to integrating the findings of case studies into our statistical analysis turned out to be the examination of interaction effects: rather than simply rejecting hypotheses from the case studies, we were able to both confirm them and specify the range of cases to which they apply. Analysis of interactions can thus sometimes serve as a bridge between case study and statistical analysis, provided that there are enough cases available for analysis. This was critical to our understanding of members' varying degrees of responsiveness to electoral incentives in the decision to support reform and defect from the LDP. It also allowed us to see significant differences in the make-up of the defectors. The Hata faction, for example, consisted of two groups, one motivated by reform and the other more motivated by loyalty to Ozawa.

Miller and Shanks' 'apparent average effect' applies in this case. The apparent average effect of electoral considerations conceals significant positive effects for some groups and significant negative effects for other groups. Again, the analysis of interaction effects proved to be the key, averaging effects over smaller and more homogeneous groups.

<sup>32</sup> Morita, *Jiminto Seikimatsu no Tairan*, p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> Otake, 'Forces for Political Reform', p. 289.

## APPENDIX: ELIMINATION AND ALTERATIONS OF VARIABLES UTILIZED IN PREVIOUS ANALYSES

Our analysis included a few modifications to models utilized in previous analyses. After confirming their lack of significance, we dropped a number of variables used by Cox and Rosenbluth and by Kato. These variables include whether the Diet member had a bureaucratic career before entering politics, the amount of his personal assets, the size of his faction and a dummy variable indicating when the Diet member was not a member of any faction. The bureaucrat, asset and non-faction dummy variables did not approach statistical significance in our analysis. We also exclude Kato's variable *Local* (a dummy variable equal to 1 when the Diet member was a former local legislator), even though it was occasionally statistically significant in her analyses. We find little theoretical justification for including it and find that the analysis works more cleanly when it is excluded.

Faction size was statistically significant in Kato's analysis, but in such a way as to force us to question its substantive significance. When used to examine the LDP as a whole, the coefficient on faction size was, as Kato hypothesized, positive, suggesting that members of larger factions are more likely to split. However, once the Takeshita faction is taken out of the analysis, the sign on faction size's coefficient became negative. As Kato explains, the negative coefficient appears to have more to do with specific faction dynamics, unrelated to size. Given that the positive sign on the variable had been a result of the heavy splitting done by members of one faction, the large Takeshita faction, and the negative sign was due to factors unrelated to faction size, it seems reasonable to conclude that faction size has no systematic effect.

For both theoretical and practical reasons, we exclude Cox and Rosenbluth's independence variable, a measure of the number of times a candidate had run without the LDP nomination. Many conservative candidates in Japan run as independents. However, typically, they are awarded membership in the LDP once they win a seat. Cox and Rosenbluth's measure therefore combines independent candidates who were independent candidates out of electoral weakness with those who were independent because they could win without a party nomination. While Cox and Rosenbluth's variable was significant when placed in a model with only their own independent variables, we get no such significance when we introduce our other variables. We tried several other formulations but, given our theoretical criticism, as well as the fact that it makes little difference in the analysis, we drop it from our model.

We tried several measures of electoral considerations and decided that the best measure was a variant of that employed by Cox and Rosenbluth. As noted above, Cox and Rosenbluth's variable is computed by taking the difference between the 1990 vote total received by the Diet member and the 1990 Droop quota for the district, and dividing it by the Droop quota. We utilize the same calculation, but do not divide by the Droop quota. We chose the simplest measure that works. We originally preferred a simple measure more like Kato's but found it necessary to control for district magnitude by subtracting the Droop quota. However, we found that dividing by the Droop quota did not add anything to the analysis. Therefore, as noted earlier, our measure of electoral strength for a given candidate is computed by subtracting the Droop quota from his vote total.