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likely candidates to be elected. Nevertheless, in the end, Hirasawa defeated the incumbent by a margin of about 10,000 votes. This chapter analyzes the means by which a conservative candidate with few initial prospects mobilized supporters to win in intense urban electoral competition.

This essay is written with three aims. First, I hope to provide empirical evidence to further, rather than stymie, reasoned debate on the political reform agenda. For this purpose, I am including detailed description of the events before and during the official election campaign period. Another aim of this essay is to determine those characteristics distinctive to urban, rather than rural, electoral districts. Third, through the empirical observation of an actual campaign, this essay attempts to address the issue of change and continuity in Japanese election campaign practices.

The chapter is composed of six sections. The first section is a historical and sociological analysis of urban districts, using the Tokyo Seventeenth District as an example. The next section will explore the ways in which the electoral system reform brought about changes in electoral strategies and nominating practices at the district level. The following section deals with the means by which a candidate begins building a *koenkai,* or personal support organization. I will then cover activities of local-level politicians, focusing on interactions among them as well as their ties to the candidate. The fifth section addresses the ways in which organized groups are instrumental in mobilizing supporters. The final section is an analysis of the voter turnout and its implications. In the conclusion, I will comment on change and constancy in Japanese electoral campaigns.

The Political Landscape of the Tokyo Seventeenth District

The current Tokyo Seventeenth District was the Tokyo Tenth District under the multiseat constituency system; it included Adachi Ward, Katsushika Ward, and Edogawa Ward. Up through the 1963 Lower House election, this area was the Tokyo Sixth District, electing five Lower House members. After redistricting in 1967, this region became the Tokyo Tenth District, with its elected representatives reduced to four until 1976, when a fifth seat was restored. In the former Tokyo

Chapter 3

The Enduring Campaign Networks of Tokyo's Shitamachi District

Park Cheol Hee

The first general election of the House of Representatives (Lower House) under the newly introduced single-seat district system combined with proportional representation took place on October 20, 1996. Experts in the field exchanged their views on the pros and cons of the new electoral system long before the election.[1] It is not surprising that they continue to raise contrasting views on the impact of the new electoral system.[2] This suggests that there is a great need today for sound contextual analysis of election activities—not for the purpose of widening the gap between the pros and cons of electoral reform, but in order to construct a bridge between them.

This chapter is based on field research on the electoral campaign of a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) candidate, Hirasawa Katsuei, in the Tokyo Seventeenth District. Located in the Shitamachi area of Tokyo, the district is a community of both long-time residents with strong traditional social ties and highly mobile newcomers who represent the floating vote and are left out of the local network. This essay is consciously designed to show the varying impacts of electoral reform on political and social organizations in a metropolitan setting.[3]

The candidate Hirasawa was of particular interest in that he was consistently said to have had little chance of defeating the incumbent New Frontier Party (NFP) member.[4] As a new candidate without local connections, Hirasawa was initially regarded as among the least

Sixth District, the five seats were traditionally taken by three members of the LDP and two members from the Japan Socialist Party (JSP). However, this three-to-two formula changed drastically in 1967, when the Komeito (Clean Government Party) fielded one of its strongest candidates, Takeiri Yoshikatsu. Takeiri, who had long been the chairman of the Komeito, was subsequently elected for eight consecutive terms until Yamaguchi Natsuo inherited his seat in 1990. In addition, the Japan Communist Party (JCP) candidate has held one seat without interruption since 1969.

Since that time, the seats have been fiercely contested by the opposition parties. For ten years between 1967 and 1976, when the district had only four representatives, two of the seats were retained by conservative members, but the JSP first relinquished one seat to the Komeito in 1967 and the other seat was captured by the JCP twice, in the 1969 and 1972 elections. With the return to a five-seat constituency in 1976, the pattern of representation was consolidated under a "two-one-one-one" formula: two conservative politicians from the LDP; one from Komeito; one from the JCP; and the last claimed by either such non-LDP conservative parties as the New Liberal Club (NLC) or the Japan New Party (JNP), or by the progressive camp according to prevailing political trends (see table 1).

This electoral district thus presented a clear pattern of party representation. It is notable that since 1969 the LDP has retained two seats in every election except one, when the NLC candidate, Tajima Mamoru, was elected at the expense of an LDP candidate. Nonetheless the seat remained in conservative hands, as Tajima was closer to the LDP than to any of the other political parties. Tajima lost his seat after the NLC was integrated into the LDP in August 1986. In subsequent elections, the LDP candidates Kujiraoka Hyosuke and Shimamura Yoshinobu were both consecutive winners in the district.

Another important characteristic is that both Komeito and the JCP, respectively, have secured one seat without interruption since 1969. With the increasing vulnerability of the JSP over the years, Komeito and the JCP were able to assume continuing control of Lower House seats. Support for Komeito and the JCP has been at a stable level since the late 1960s.

A related characteristic has been the fluctuating support for the JSP, particularly since 1969. The fact that the NLC and the JNP were able to wrest a seat from the JSP in elections after 1976 points to the

Table 1. Results of General Elections in the Old Tokyo Tenth District*

	LDP	JSP	Komeito	JCP	DSP	NLC	Others	Indep.	Total
1955	3	2	—	0	—	—	0	0	5
	(5)†	(3)		(1)			(2)	(5)	(16)
1958	3	2	—	0	—	—	0	0	5
	(4)	(3)		(1)			(2)	(5)	(15)
1960	3	2	—	0	0	—	0	0	5
	(5)	(3)		(1)	(2)		(2)	(3)	(16)
1963	3	2	—	0	0	—	0	0	5
	(4)	(3)		(1)	(1)		(8)	(3)	(20)
1967	2	1	1	0	0	—	0	0	4
	(2)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(1)	(2)	(10)
1969	2	0	1	1	0	—	0	0	4
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(2)	(2)	(10)
1972	2	0	1	1	0	—	—	0	4
	(2)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)			(1)	(8)
1976	2	1	1	1	—	—	—	0	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)				(4)	(9)
1979	1	1	1	1	—	1	—	0	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(1)		(1)	(7)
1980	2	0	1	1	—	1	—	0	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(1)		(1)	(7)
1983	2	1	1	1	—	0	—	0	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(1)		(1)	(7)
1986	2	1	1	1	—	0	—	—	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(1)			(6)
1990	2	1	1	1	0	—	0	0	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(4)	(3)	(13)
1993	2	0	1	1	—	1‡	0	0	5
	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(1)	(3)	(1)	(10)

Source: Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee. 1989. *Records of Elections.* After 1989, *Records of Elections,* corresponding years.

* From 1955 to 1963, the old Tokyo Tenth District was part of the old Tokyo Sixth District.

† Number of candidates who ran

‡ Japan New Party (JNP)

instability of the JSP's support base. This suggests that a significant number of JSP supporters have transferred their support from one camp to another since the mid-1970s.

A final feature has been the inability of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) to become a significant political force in this district. Although the DSP fielded candidates in five consecutive elections

between 1960 and 1972, none of them was able to win a seat. This is very different from the situation in Osaka, where the DSP has long maintained a strong support base.

These long-term trends are confirmed in ward-level politics as well. Changes over time in the political party composition at the local level are common to urban districts like this one. As of spring 1995, the Katsushika Ward Assembly was composed of forty-eight members. Among them were fifteen members from the LDP; eleven from Komei, the local-level successor to Komeito; seven from the JCP; three former members of the Japan New Party; four from the Social Democratic Party of Japan, as the JSP was then known in English; three former members of the DSP; three former members of the Japan Renewal Party; and one unaffiliated member. Table 2 shows the decreasing share of the LDP and the rising share of the Komeito and the JCP over the past two decades. Through the 1959 election, the LDP and the JSP dominated the scene, although many members claimed to be independent (see table 2). But the Komeito's debut in local politics in 1963 changed the matrix drastically. The LDP's dominance declined after 1987, leading to increasing cooperation between the LDP and the Komeito at the local level.

These trends aptly illustrate the distinctive features of urban districts in Japan. The impact of industrial and demographic changes on interactions among political forces in urban areas like Tokyo has differed from the situation in rural districts in several important ways, as explained below.

First, the rapid and massive inflow of rural residents into urban areas transformed the patterns of interaction among community members. Residents with widely varied local origins have resettled in Tokyo over the years. There have been three critical junctures that have changed the metropolitan demographic configuration: a disastrous earthquake in 1926, after which many Tokyo residents migrated to the suburbs; air raids during World War II that resulted in the rapid evacuation of residents to outlying areas; and a massive influx from rural areas to Tokyo during the postwar period of rapid economic growth (Allinson 1979). Accordingly, the strong community spirit that had formerly sustained Tokyo neighborhoods was attenuated by the new inhabitants. The "hometown consciousness" continued to erode.

Many residents who felt alienated in their new urban home sought respite with new religious organizations, like Sokagakkai, which

Table 2. Election Results for the Katsushika Ward Assembly

	LDP	JSP	Komeito	JCP	DSP	NLC	Others	Indep.	Total
1955	24	6	—	1	—	—	—	13	44
	(53)*	(17)		(1)				(32)	(103)
1959	25	9	—	0	—	—	—	10	44
	(43)	(14)		(2)				(27)	(86)
1963	28	8	7	2	1	—	—	2	48
	(47)	(8)	(7)	(2)	(5)			(7)	(76)
1967	29	9	10	3	0	—	—	1	52
	(32)	(10)	(11)	(3)	(2)			(6)	(64)
1971	26	9	9	6	0	—	0	2	52
	(35)	(10)	(9)	(6)	(1)		(1)	(8)	(70)
1975	26	6	11	8	0	—	—	1	52
	(29)	(11)	(11)	(8)	(2)			(10)	(71)
1979	26	5	11	7	0	1	1	1	52
	(35)	(8)	(11)	(8)	(1)	(4)	(1)	(9)	(77)
1983	25	4	11	5	—	2	0	5	52
	(29)	(6)	(11)	(8)		(2)	(1)	(8)	(65)
1987	19	4	12	8	1	—	—	4	48
	(27)	(6)	(12)	(8)	(1)			(9)	(63)
1991	22	4	12	6	1	—	0	3	48
	(26)	(6)	(12)	(8)	(1)		(1)	(3)	(59)
1993	16	4	11	7	1	6†	0	3	48
	(18)	(4)	(11)	(7)	(1)	(8)	(2)	(5)	(56)

Source: Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee. 1989. *Records of Elections.* After 1989, *Records of Elections,* corresponding years.

* Number of candidates who ran

† Japan New Party: 3 (4) + Renewal Party: 3 (4)

benefited from their frustrations and economic hardships.[5] In addition, new inhabitants, who were less bound by local social networks, were more receptive to progressive ideas. It is against this background that the Komeito and the JCP increased their influence in urban areas. On the other hand, the composition of such traditional LDP footholds as neighborhood associations became more diversified, constituting a variety of groups with differing ideas and political orientations. As will be shown later in this chapter, the political solidarity of traditional community organizations in urban areas is on the wane, although it is undeniable that the LDP still receives strong support from members of these organizations. Today, the leaders of neighborhood

organizations cannot make unilateral political moves without the consent of their members.

Second, Tokyo's urban landscape has been greatly reshaped by the course of industrial development. The wide-scale construction of railroads enabled Tokyoites to move outside the central city in search of either pleasant living environments or inexpensive industrial sites. With the massive inflow of new residents, industrial complexes were forced to relocate farther out in suburban areas. The Tokyo Seventeenth District was no exception to this pattern (Katsushika Ward 1992). Katsushika Ward was predominantly rice fields and vegetable patches until the 1920s. But with the development of heavy and chemical industries in the 1920s and 1930s, it became host to a major industrial complex comprising many large firms. After World War II, this area was gradually transformed in response to rising demand for residential and commercial development for newly incoming residents, and the larger industrial sites were displaced to the Chiba area. In their place came a flood of small and medium-sized industries, along with the continuing inflow of outside residents.

Due to these changes, labor unions could no longer assume a solid base for their activities. As most of the large-scale factories relocated to semirural districts, union members were no longer concentrated as before in urban areas.[6] That resulted in decreasing organizational support for the DSP as well as the JSP. It is also notable that unions of local government employees in Tokyo tend to support the JCP rather than the JSP. Hence this changing industrial composition led to the decline of the JSP and the DSP in Tokyo districts.

The third characteristic of the urban district has been the large number of floating votes that shift from one political party to another. Urban areas nurture the views and ideas of the new middle class (Murakami 1982, 29–72). Nonorganized voters in urban areas, who are relatively unbound by hierarchically organized social networks, pay great attention to issues related to personal and social concerns rather than ideological debate. They have propelled such urban issues as the environment, consumer issues, social welfare, and education to the top of the political agenda. In the 1970s, these issues were taken up by moderate opposition parties like the Komeito and the DSP. But with slowing economic growth in the 1980s, vacillating voters took a conservative swing, strengthening the LDP's grip on the government. Since the Recruit scandal in the late 1980s, however, they have largely

refrained from political engagement, yielding an increasing number of non-party-affiliated voters (Kokumin Bunka Kaigi 1997).

In the Tokyo area, the increase of floating votes is further reinforced by two factors. First, Tokyo lacks local media that can play a significant role, as they do in other regions. All the major daily newspapers have their headquarters in Tokyo and include stories about Tokyo in a small section at the back of each newspaper. Hence, national issues make inroads upon metropolitan issues. Second, the Tokyo metropolitan government fails to draw much public attention despite its huge size, in both financial and personnel terms. One commentator wrote that especially since the governorship of Minobe Ryokichi, the face of the Tokyo metropolitan government has barely been visible. Dynamics in prefectural-level politics scarcely affect most Tokyoites (Toki 1995); national politics predominates in Tokyo (Mikuriya 1996).

To sum up, Tokyo politics has three distinctive features: a complex and diverse composition of community organizations; the declining influence of labor unions combined with the increase of small and medium-sized industries; and a vast number of floating votes. These demographic and industrial factors create a political landscape distinct from that of its rural counterparts.

Electoral System Reforms and Adaptive Strategies

The introduction of the single-seat district system combined with proportional representation for Lower House elections changed the competitive context for political parties and their candidates.

The new electoral system presents politicians with at least three implications. First, a political party can nominate only one Lower House candidate in a district. Second, candidates must target about 50 percent of the votes, not 20 percent as in the former Tokyo Tenth District, to win a seat. Third, the new electoral districts are smaller in size than the old districts.

With the introduction of the new electoral system, the old Tokyo Tenth District was redrawn into three electoral districts. Edogawa Ward, except for the Koiwa area, became the Tokyo Sixteenth District. The Koiwa area of Edogawa Ward and all of Katsushika Ward became the Tokyo Seventeenth District. Adachi Ward, 22 percent of which was included in the Tokyo Twelfth District, became the Tokyo Thirteenth District.

The first issue that faced the political parties was to coordinate nominations from among several incumbents who had been elected under the multiseat district system. In almost every party, priority was given to the incumbents. The LDP nominated Shimamura Yoshinobu as their candidate for the Tokyo Sixteenth District, which is his home base,[7] whereas Kujiraoka Hyosuke switched to being endorsed for proportional representation in the Tokyo block. The NFP nominated Yamaguchi Natsuo as their official candidate for the Tokyo Seventeenth District. This was unusual in that many former Komeito (now NFP) members transferred to proportional representation listing. However, Yamaguchi was said to be one of the strongest former Komeito members in terms of his personality, career experience, and support base. Yamaguchi was a graduate of the law faculty of the University of Tokyo who practiced law until he ran in the Lower House election in the old Tokyo Tenth District, with strong support from the Sokagakkai. Yamaguchi inherited Takeiri's seat, securing the status of key member within the Komeito's party organization. In his second term, Yamaguchi served as a parliamentary vice minister of the National Defense Agency.

When there was no incumbent in a district, parties were forced to quickly identify a new candidate with maximum vote-getting potential. As they knew they could not sweep a single-seat district, the JCP chose the strategy of seeking the largest number of votes for proportional representation seats. The JCP nominated candidates for all the electoral districts earlier than any of the other parties to make best use of the time before the election. Accordingly, the JCP quickly announced its choice of Sugie Akira, a JCP party executive member, as its official candidate for the Tokyo Seventeenth District. Later, they selected eleven nationwide districts as especially promising; the Tokyo Seventeenth District was not among them. In the New Party Sakigake (*sakigake* means pioneer) camp, there were two contending candidates, Sekine Shigenobu and Yoneyama Kumiko. As both of them desired to join the newly formed Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), they had a hard time in coordinating party endorsement, but at the last moment Yoneyama was officially designated as the DPJ candidate. Yoneyama's experience as a Socialist member of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly helped her to secure the nomination over Sekine.

The LDP lacked an incumbent in the Tokyo Seventeenth District. The LDP chapter in Katsushika formed a candidate selection

committee in January 1995.[8] Their original intention was to identify a candidate with local roots, particularly because there had not been an LDP candidate from Katsushika since Nakajima Moritoshi had retired about forty-three years ago.

The committee members agreed that Katsushika was currently being represented by two outside politicians and that this would be their best chance to field a candidate with local roots.[9] A few names were put on the table, but all of them declined the offer. One reason they refused was because the incumbent, Yamaguchi, seemed to be so strong.

After a few abortive attempts to select a candidate without a professional political career, they began considering candidates from among local politicians in Katsushika. Two local LDP politicians were willing to run for the election, but it was difficult to reach a consensus among the committee members on which one to back. In the meantime, a few nationally known figures who were searching for a district in which to run contacted the committee, but the committee spurned them and continued to seek out an alternative. However, deciding candidates among the local politicians of equal status seemed to be impossible without outside intervention.[10]

It was at this moment that the LDP Tokyo headquarters suggested that the Katsushika branch should consider Hirasawa Katsuei as a possible nominee. Hirasawa was strongly backed by Gotoda Masaharu, the former deputy prime minister. The head of the selection committee agreed and broached the idea to the committee in Katsushika, but a few members were reluctant to accept the idea, because they had serious reservations concerning the fairness and openness of the selection process.[11] This conflict led to the breakup of the LDP chapter into two camps when Hirasawa was officially designated as the LDP candidate on December 13, 1995. Five local politicians separated themselves from the LDP and formed a new political group in the assembly.

Hirasawa is part of a new generation of candidates with bureaucratic careers. He was born in Gifu Prefecture in 1945. After graduating from the University of Tokyo, he joined the national police bureau. He served overseas, in the United States and Britain, for more than five years. Under the Nakasone administration, Hirasawa worked as a secretary to Gotoda, who was then a cabinet minister. He resigned from the bureaucracy just before his nomination; his last position was as defense counselor in the Defense Agency. Hirasawa's career background was not necessarily a source of strength: He had no local

connections and was unfamiliar with the personal and political networks among those active in the district.[12] In addition, in light of the poor public image of bureaucrats at the time of his nomination, his bureaucratic career was not generally regarded as an advantage.[13]

After the nomination, Hirasawa and the selection committee members targeted the share of the vote needed to win the election, as a preliminary step for the electoral campaign. Logically speaking, candidates are urged to target approximately 50 percent of the votes in order to get elected. But in reality that is not always the case. Particularly in the Tokyo area, vote estimations must consider the following factors. First, the targeted number of voters varies according to the voting rate. The Tokyo area historically records among the lowest voting rates in Japan.[14] Second, the number of candidates should be taken into consideration. This is important because some portion of the votes will go to peripheral candidates as well. The third critical factor is the constant organizational support claimed by such groups as the Komei supporters and JCP members.

Upon considering these assumptions, the Hirasawa camp made a rough estimate based upon past election tallies, with a view to identifying a target number of voters.[15] They started with the total number of eligible voters in the Tokyo Seventeenth District of about 420,000. Then they assumed a worst-case scenario in which the voting rate would reach only 50 percent, which would be a disaster for the LDP, because a low voter turnout is expected to benefit political parties with fixed support groups. So if only half of the voters cast their ballots, there would be 210,000 votes. Among the actual voters, around 60,000 votes were thought to go to parties other than the NFP and the LDP, including 30,000 votes for the JCP and 30,000 votes for the weaker candidates. Some 150,000 voters were left. Hence, if you divided them into two, the critical polling score would be around 75,000 votes. From the start, the NFP was known to have secured about 40,000 Komei supporters.[16] As for the LDP, the total of all the votes tallied in local elections for LDP candidates amounted to some 50,000 votes.[17] But this was only wishful thinking: There was no guarantee that all the voters who voted for local LDP politicians would cast their ballots for Hirasawa.

The vote estimates indicated that the LDP candidate in the Tokyo Seventeenth District needed to secure approximately 75,000 votes to win a seat. The next question was how to mobilize such a large number

of voters as a new candidate coming from outside the district. In the following section, I will describe how this conservative candidate, Hirasawa, worked to mobilize voters in a changed competitive context.

Laying the Cornerstone with Koenkai Building

Koenkai are known to be the equivalent of local-level party organizations for conservative politicians. Conservative politicians have been motivated to maintain koenkai as the core of their campaign networks due to several structural and institutional incentives, as indicated below. It is clear that koenkai are principally established for the purpose of winning elections.

First, under the multiseat constituency system several candidates affiliated with the same party competed in the same district, so a party label was not sufficient in differentiating candidates from their competitors. Hence, candidates and politicians felt it necessary to nurture personal support organizations. In this sense, koenkai have grown out of the need to respond to intraparty competition.[18]

Conversely, interparty competition also allowed conservative politicians to rely on koenkai. All political parties besides the LDP relied in some way on their organizational network. The JSP and the DSP relied on labor unions, Komeito relied on the Sokagakkai, and the JCP relied on its own cell-like organizational network for political and campaign activities.[19] The conservative party also needed an organizational bulwark to mobilize voters. This need was especially strong in urban areas, where the organizational bases of most of the other parties were firmly rooted. Koenkai also function as counter-organizations to the support organizations of other parties in interparty competition.

In addition, koenkai are rooted in the logic of organizational formation among conservative politicians. Conservative campaign organizations are based on electoral competition rather than constituent representation.[20] Organizations of a personal nature partly stem from the logic of party formation itself. It is unlikely that campaign organizations built for personal electoral interests will be retained if the candidates themselves change.

In a word, a koenkai is an organization that responds to the politicians' desire to consolidate their electoral base. Koenkai enable conservative politicians to maintain their autonomy, not only from the

party center but also from intraparty competitors. Koenkai have also allowed conservative politicians to maintain "stability" in election campaigns. Through koenkai activities, politicians can maintain scheduled and sustained contact with core members.

Electoral system reform brought about systematic change in these institutional incentives. The most important change has been the disappearance of intraparty competition. Without competitors within the party, conservative politicians no longer need to establish personal support organizations to prevail in intraparty competition. But the need for a counter-organization against the other parties continues. There is little doubt that interparty competition became more intensive after the reforms were implemented. Most conservative politicians began establishing koenkai with a focus on interparty competition. The first challenge for Hirasawa, as with the other LDP candidates, was to integrate a fractured LDP camp into one.

Under the multiseat constituency system, the LDP camp in Katsushika was divided into two koenkai by Kujiraoka Hyosuke and Shimamura Yoshinobu. Division was made not only according to geographical area but also in light of their respective support organizations.[21] Kujiraoka had stronger support in areas near Adachi Ward, including Kosuge, Horikiri, Kameari, Kanamachi, Mizumoto, and Yotsugi. Shimamura's dominant support bases were nearer Edogawa Ward, in areas such as Shin-Koiwa, Kamakura, Okudo, and Shibamata. The Koiwa area in the Edogawa district was also Shimamura's territory. The association of truck transport operators unilaterally supported Kujiraoka, while the local dentists' association adamantly backed Shimamura. This practice of dividing the territory had developed out of their accumulated experience of electoral competition.

Under the structured shadow of this past, it was no easy task to induce cooperation from members of the incumbents' koenkai. Several tactics have been tried throughout the country to integrate divided koenkai. Introducing key koenkai members, collaborative election campaigns, and exchanges of mailing lists are typical strategems for inducing cooperation.[22] The Tokyo Seventeenth District was no exception. Shimamura had serious reservations about implementation of the new electoral system, and he had pushed for its revision, but he now had no choice but to introduce Hirasawa to his old supporters for several reasons. First, Shimamura himself had consented to the idea of nominating Hirasawa in the Seventeenth District. Second, he

could not stop the progress of ongoing political events in the district. Third, as a senior member of the LDP, Shimamura was compelled to campaign for the party.[23] For these reasons, Shimamura introduced Hirasawa to his old supporters at every possible occasion, particularly at year-end parties and New Year's parties. Shimamura made it clear that he could not run for election in the Tokyo Seventeenth District and would concentrate his campaigning in the Tokyo Sixteenth District, in Edogawa Ward. He asked his supporters to support Hirasawa in his stead.

The situation was different for Kujiraoka, who was in charge of Diet affairs as vice speaker of the House of Representatives. Because his position required him to remain independent of party concerns, he could not take political steps to support the LDP candidate, even though he had been a long-time LDP member. As he could not personally introduce or openly support Hirasawa, Kujiraoka let one of his senior secretaries assume responsibility for introducing Hirasawa to his supporters in the Katsushika area.

Shimamura made speeches of support for Hirasawa at every important political convention. In addition, Kujiraoka did not hesitate to invite Hirasawa to several meetings organized by the two Diet members' former supporters to ask them to lend their support to Hirasawa in the upcoming election. However, both men decided not to hand over their mailing lists of koenkai members to Hirasawa. It is apparent that the exchange of name lists can be implemented much more easily when it is based on equal and reciprocal terms. New candidate Hirasawa had little to give back to the two incumbents, except his loyalty to the party.

Hirasawa soon began to contact the core members of the two incumbents' koenkai. In fact, when he was officially nominated for the Seventeenth District, most of the voters there did not even realize that their electoral district had been redrawn and that the two LDP incumbents would not run in the Tokyo Seventeenth District.[24] Through the introduction of local politicians, Hirasawa contacted several of Shimamura and Kujiraoka's koenkai leaders. At first they were reluctant to give clear answers to Hirasawa's plea for support, especially because they were unclear about Hirasawa's personality and electoral potential. Because their koenkai were so personally linked with specific politicians, it took some time for these koenkai leaders to want to work for the new candidate, and they did not want to damage the

long-standing personal relationships they had cultivated with the incumbents. However, they all became aware of the fact that Shimamura and Kujiraoka could no longer run in their district. They had to choose between active support for Hirasawa and neutral disengagement.

Securing cooperation from the "local strongmen" was the first step. In the Katsushika area, Hirasawa visited Sato Masaaki to invite him to become the head of his Katsushika koenkai. Sato was a key koenkai member for Shimamura in the Rotary club for the past decade.[25] After several visits, he accepted the offer. Another influential local resident, Sado Takaaki, later became secretary-general of Hirasawa's koenkai. This company owner's strong affection for Katsushika impressed Hirasawa. Sado became a reliable partner in local campaigning. In the Koiwa area, Hirasawa paid several visits to Sugiura Hideo, a company chairman, to persuade him to take the position of head of the Koiwa koenkai. Sugiura had also been a long-time supporter of Shimamura in the past.[26]

After persuading several men to become leaders of his koenkai, Hirasawa contacted local intermediaries in a variety of fields with the intention of bringing together people from a range of occupations. Local leaders in agriculture, medicine, industry, and cultural fields were invited to become core members of the koenkai. His main concern was not to antagonize influential local leaders or to neglect any specific field.

Finally, he took regional balance into consideration in building his koenkai. Fortunately, the fifteen local LDP ward assembly members all had different home territories. Hirasawa supposed that if he could gain their cooperation he could obtain full coverage of their areas. The next section will discuss what steps he took to gain their support. What had to be considered were those areas without local LDP politicians, such as the Hosoda neighborhood. There, Hirasawa met the owner of a liquor store, who rapidly and successfully organized a koenkai for Hirasawa. In the Niiju area, a former ward assembly member was willing to lend his support to Hirasawa.

In sum, koenkai remain a vital mechanism for the conservative candidate to mobilize voters. Although it is no longer as necessary to form koenkai to respond to intraparty competition, interparty competition is becoming more intense. Koenkai that were divided among multiple LDP incumbents under the multiseat constituency system are now in the process of integrative transformation. To cope with the

new electoral system, candidates are establishing their koenkai with renewed focus on comprehensive and extensive coverage of neighborhoods within their district.

Uniting Fragmented Local Politicians

Interaction among local-level politicians is dependent upon three factors: views, organizational foundation, and access to state power.

Their political philosophy, or views, circumscribes the sphere of activity for politicians in general, which determines the outer boundary of party identification. LDP politicians join the LDP because they are in basic agreement on the political ideals suggested by the party. Under the 1955 system, the LDP is nothing more than a "nonsocialist party."[27] Japanese politicians tend to stay away from parties that pursue extreme political ideals.

Within the outer boundary established by these views, the organizational foundation is a critical factor that determines the behavior of local politicians. Local politicians who have koenkai may have more of an autonomous sphere of activity than others. On the other hand, members of highly organized parties like Komei and the JCP have limited autonomy. Komei politicians, who receive most of their support from Sokagakkai, are assigned to districts with an even distribution of supporters and a delineated division of their home territories.[28] Other candidates have little room to step in. The support organization of JCP politicians is even more tightly structured. JCP members are organized in cells, and they support only JCP politicians. Hence, electoral cooperation between either Komei or the JCP and members of other parties is virtually impossible.

The need for access to power influences cleavages among local politicians. To channel favors to and protect the interests of their supporters, local politicians need some access to national bureaucrats.[29] Political parties have functioned as a national clearinghouse for channeling local requests to the central bureaucracy during the stages of budget formulation and legislative deliberation. Naturally, the ruling party secures more maneuvering power over both resource allocation and legislative initiatives.[30]

These three factors help explain how the local political actors restructured their respective relationships and their ties to politicians.

In the Tokyo Seventeenth District, the Katsushika and Koiwa areas had different local political configurations. There were three local LDP politicians in Koiwa, and they cooperated smoothly from the start. This was in part because all three had belonged to the Shimamura camp under the old system, and more than 90 percent of their supporters were former Shimamura supporters, so they avoided an initial factional struggle. In addition, as their home regions were relatively limited, the election results would immediately reveal whether they made their strongest efforts to mobilize voters or not, so they were motivated to work hard.[31] Leadership was also a factor: one senior local politician played a leading role in coordinating the campaign with the office staff.

The situation was different in Katsushika Ward. When Hirasawa entered the race, fifteen of the forty-eight ward assembly members were with the LDP. However, the group soon fissured, with ten members remaining in the LDP and five leaving the LDP. What particularly annoyed Hirasawa was another factional cleavage. Among the fifteen members, five were linked to Kujiraoka, while another seven or eight were disciples of Shimamura. They not only suffered from divided loyalties, but as a group they had little prior experience in actively engaging in national-level elections.[32] As Katsushika was located between Edogawa and Adachi wards, which were the home territories for the two LDP incumbent Lower House members, local LDP members had not had to engage in Lower House elections under their collective initiative.

It is interesting to note that Katsushika Ward has no Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly members from the LDP. In the past, the LDP had two members in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly, but when these two incumbents retired without designating successors and when consultation between Diet members and local assembly members on selecting nominees ended in failure, several aspiring local assembly members ended up competing in the June 1993 election. The results disappointed them all: The four seats in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly from Katsushika Ward went to Komei, the JCP, the JRP, and the JNP.

Hirasawa's primary mission was to horizontally integrate the dispersed LDP camp under the party flag. Not all local assembly members were reluctant to cooperate. Out of the ten LDP members, four or five members were willing to support Hirasawa from the start. Three

of them were local party leaders and one hoped to run for the Metropolitan Assembly election in July 1997. Another was a first-term local politician who had more of an incentive to promote himself. Other assemblymen just appeared in Hirasawa's campaign office from time to time. Most of his early supporters found that Hirasawa showed great potential. They were quite surprised to learn about the depth and breadth of his personal connections. Hirasawa had worked closely with former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro and Gotoda Masaharu, and he had come to know Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro personally when he was in charge of the Okayama Prefecture police headquarters. LDP Secretary-General Kato Koichi was one of those who had pushed the LDP's Tokyo branch to accept him as a candidate for the district. Hirasawa also had personal contacts with Chief Cabinet Secretary Kajiyama Seiroku.

When Hirasawa convened his first large-scale koenkai meeting on April 13, 1996, with more than 1,600 participants, most local LDP politicians attended the meeting, with varying degrees of willingness. At the meeting, such major national LDP leaders as Gotoda, Kajiyama, and Kamei Shizuka appeared and made impassioned speeches supporting Hirasawa. With this event as a critical turning point, local politicians in the LDP camp raised their level of cooperation considerably. Almost all the local LDP politicians subsequently announced their willingness to support Hirasawa. In the meantime, more than 3,600 people participated in a fund-raising party for Hirasawa, a huge turnout for a first-term candidate. In the face of such strong expressions of support, local politicians lost any rationale for refusing to support Hirasawa. From June or July of 1996, all the local LDP politicians began introducing Hirasawa to their supporters.

Local politicians clearly serve as a primary force in national-level electoral campaigns. Securing the cooperation of local politicians is critical to the success of the electoral campaign. Local politicians are specialists in campaigning; they are not only knowledgeable but also willing to engage in campaigning. These politicians can identify the political loyalties of nearly every household in their home territories. And as they are engaged in politics as a career, they can volunteer their time for the campaign. Those in other occupations have to take time off from work to make a serious commitment to campaigning. In addition, as local politicians have their own personal supporters, Diet candidates can use their channels to secure easy access to ordinary

voters. In this sense, local politicians proudly claim that they do not owe their positions to Diet members as much as Diet members owe their status to them.[33]

Along with electoral system reform, a party's image is gaining more importance during campaigns. When party members remain divided, candidates have to vie for election beset by a critical weakness, which may make them vulnerable to negative campaigning by their opponents. A divided camp sends a bad signal to voters. In this sense, a united front among local politicians may have symbolic meaning for the campaign as well.

As was noted above, obtaining cooperation from the local LDP politicians was not easily achieved. Even after local politicians began cooperating with Hirasawa, it took some time for them to become internally cohesive. This internal cohesion among the local assembly members resulted from external pressures, with four factors proving especially instrumental.

The first was the cooperation displayed by local politicians who were not affiliated with the LDP. Kabayama Takashi, a Metropolitan Assembly member, led a group of four local politicians affiliated with the former JNP who refused to join the NFP when Japan New Party head Hosokawa Morihiro joined forces with Ozawa Ichiro and Komeito leader Ichikawa Yuichi to form the NFP in 1994. Their main reason for opposing the merger was their belief that religious groups like Sokagakkai should remain neutral in political affairs. They were also aware that even if they switched their party affiliation, they could not count on any support from Sokagakkai. Because JNP politicians had no solid organizational foundation beyond personal support, they were pressured to take sides with a particular party, for independent local politicians have little leverage. The access to power secured by the JNP organization disappeared when their leaders joined the NFP while the local JNP remained independent. As a result, Kabayama and his colleagues coordinated on their strategy for local affairs and announced that they would cooperate with Hirasawa. This move from outside the LDP also strengthened cooperation among LDP members.

A second important factor was the mounting popularity of the JCP, which generated a feeling of crisis among the LDP members. Ever since the JCP made an impressive showing by nearly pulling off an upset in the Kyoto mayoral election of February 1996, the JCP was on the rise. The party won two local elections in 1996, including in

Komae in Tokyo. However, the threat remained a distant one until something unexpected took place in a nearby district: In a mayoral election in Adachi Ward held in early September, the LDP candidate was defeated by the JCP candidate. For the first time since World War II, a communist was mayor of one of Tokyo's wards. The main reason the LDP had lost the election in Adachi was because the local LDP politicians had been fragmented into three camps. The local LDP politicians in Katsushika learned a good lesson from this event and strengthened their cooperative stance for the sake of the party.

A third rallying point was the death of a local LDP politician, Nakagome Daijiro, who had enthusiastically supported Hirasawa. The fact that Nakagome breathed his last breath while on stage making a speech in support of Hirasawa shocked and inspired the other LDP politicians. This further stimulated last-moment unity among the local LDP politicians.

A final factor concerned another group of local politicians affiliated with the NFP who joined the LDP just before the official campaign period began. Their leader, Funasaka Chikao, was known to be a strong follower of Takahashi Ichiro, a Diet representative who had become a ranking NFP member. When Takahashi decided at the last moment to return to the LDP fold, Funasaka was also advised to come back to the LDP.[34] Hence, Funasaka returned to the LDP with another local NFP politician on October 3, 1996. This move not only weakened the NFP in the district but also improved the local image of the LDP.

As mentioned above, local politicians strategically restructured their internal relations as well as their ties to national politicians. The formerly divided LDP camp was united under the party flag, as the possibilities for leaving the party became less attractive. Many non-LDP politicians also opted to cooperate with the LDP when they realized the difficulty of gaining support for themselves from Komei and the JCP. The unscripted end result of these factors was the emergence of a "conservative coalition" on the local electoral front.

Interest Groups as Quasi-Party Organizations

The behavior of local politicians is bound by their party dictates, but that is not the case with support organizations. Interest groups need

not follow the party flag. It is often said that Japan has no party organization at the local level, but this statement is only partly accurate. It is true that interest groups do not want to be formally affiliated with a specific party, but in actuality, many interest groups have displayed consistent support for a particular political party. Organized groups that support a particular party cannot be called party organizations, but they are serving the function of not only distributing information on party activities but also mobilizing party supporters. In this sense, they may be regarded as the functional equivalent of party organizations. The electoral system reform also changed the matrix of interactions between organized interest groups and politicians.

It is more accurate to say that candidates in the last election relied more on a "voter-share strategy" based on local organizational networks. The existence of segmented organizations in Japanese society enables Japanese politicians to rely on this strategy. Organizational support networks that had developed under the prior 1955 LDP control system still endure. However, we should take note of the potential for a party to recover its vigor and succeed in the polls in the new transformed competitive context. Parties backed up by organized social forces with consistent party support face few problems here. The JCP's support organizations had no reason to turn against the JCP because they are united in terms of ideological concerns. The Komeito, which will be analyzed below, was also secure.

The most deeply affected by these changes was the Japan Socialist Party (JSP, at this time known in English as the Social Democratic Party of Japan), which had been declining since the early 1970s. Even before the introduction of the new electoral system, support for the JSP was decreasing steadily, except for in the 1989 general election of the House of Councillors where the party capitalized on opposition to the newly introduced consumption tax.[35] However, the introduction of the new electoral system jeopardized the fate of the JSP in several ways. Incumbent Lower House members were mainly too old to gather wider support from ordinary voters and there were few fresh faces. In addition, most of the Socialist incumbents had secured the last or next to last seats during elections under the multiseat constituency system. It was unrealistic to expect them to win in single-seat districts in the coming election. Most important, the change in the Socialist policy line when Murayama Tomiichi became prime minister in 1994 made the party unpopular among many former supporters.

The party's new stance negated two of the basic principles it had adopted under the 1955 system. First, its symbolic status as a non-LDP party disappeared when it joined with the LDP to become part of the ruling coalition. Second, Murayama abruptly reversed the party's fundamental policy opposing the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty without full consultation with party supporters. All that remained for the JSP was to form a new party, in whatever form that would take. Ironically, though, this made the labor unions, the main pillar of the Socialists' support organizations, ambivalent about continuing to back the party. As it became apparent that only a handful of Socialist members would be reelected, the labor unions were at a loss to find alternative channels to represent their interests. They even considered the LDP. They realized that the outdated tactic of raising their concerns via an opposition party was unlikely to be effective when the Socialist party was declining and economic conditions were worsening. Against this background, labor unions were less active than before in election campaigning.[36]

Former Komeito support groups, mainly Sokagakkai, remain loyal to the NFP. Although there were some exceptions, Sokagakkai supported the NFP in most electoral districts. The exceptions were primarily when there was no NFP candidate or the LDP candidate was almost certain to be elected, when a non-NFP candidate had long-term links with Sokagakkai, or when Sokagakkai members decided not to provoke a key LDP politician by strongly contesting him.

The strength of Sokagakkai lies in its organizational characteristics. In numerical terms, it is said that there are an average of twenty thousand affiliated voters in every electoral district.[37] However, considering the fact that Sokagakkai has little organizational clout in rural areas, urban districts may have more than thirty thousand voters. From the perspective of the contending candidate, this is a terribly significant number. As a hierarchically controlled organization, Sokagakkai members have a high level of solidarity and their voting rate is consistently high. Sokagakkai members are willing to volunteer for a candidate whom they favor.[38] This affords the candidate thousands of hard-working, unpaid campaign workers.

To respond to the consistent party support JCP and Komeito candidates enjoy from their organizational blocs, their competitors naturally rely on counter-organizations that can match them. However, there are a number of additional factors behind the reliance that

politicians place on networks of organized groups to provide them with efficient, low-cost access to voters. Three factors that are particularly important are the burdensome campaign regulations, the limited size of the electoral district, and the volatility of unorganized voters.

Due to strict campaign regulations, politicians must search for alternative channels for their campaign activities. For one thing, the new law limits the official campaign period to only twelve days. Common sense suggests that without a party organization to regularly convey information about party activities and candidates, little can be accomplished within the twelve-day period. Hence most election campaigning takes place before the election, under the rubric of political activity rather than electoral activity. Furthermore, there is no chance for candidates in the same district to conduct policy debates. In addition, canvassing of voters' residences is legally forbidden: No politician can visit voters' homes at random to ask for support for himself or the party. Of course, whether residential canvassing actually occurs or not is a different issue. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the existence of these legal regulations highly constrains the candidates' political activities.

All of these campaign regulations compel the candidate to seek exclusive access to their supporters as well as potential supporters. The best means for candidates to acquire exclusive access to voters is to employ organizations that are more likely to support them, particularly community organizations. Community organizations are superior to other organizations in that they are informed about local affairs. Sokagakkai also has community-based organizations, but their reach is limited due to their organizational exclusivity. Some public sector unions, such as local government employee unions or teachers' unions, are also community-based, but strong labor unions do not exist in every region.[39] The most comprehensive community organization may be the neighborhood association (*chonaikai* or *jichikai*). It is an open secret that neighborhood associations serve as vote-collecting bodies for the LDP. However, in urban areas, the membership composition of neighborhood organizations is complex and more diversified. Many of the households within the organization are not supportive of the LDP. In this connection, to assume that the neighborhood organization is equivalent to an LDP organ would be a gross exaggeration.

Certainly, however, many neighborhood associations *do* support the LDP. The most widely accepted support activity is to invite the

candidate to festivals organized by the local community. These associations are most active holding summertime festivals, which attract the largest number of local residents. Candidates can secure valuable access to voters on these occasions. Another benefit of links to these groups is that they inform the candidate of occurrences, both positive and negative, in the local community. Attending marriage or funeral ceremonies is a well-known practice for Japanese politicians. The LDP outperforms other parties in taking advantage of neighborhood associations not because the associations always select LDP supporters as their heads but because the long-term residents in the community who serve as leaders of neighborhood associations are usually conservative, and thus tend to be supportive of the LDP.[40]

Another vital community organization for the LDP is the Japan Agricultural Cooperative Association (Nokyo, hereafter JA). In rural areas, JA is not simply a community organization so much as an industrial group. Yet few farmers remain in urban areas, so their actual number has only symbolic impact. Katsushika Ward had 816 farming households in 1968, but as of 1990 there were only 281 farming households, and among them, 66.9 percent were full-time farmers (Katsushika Ward 1996, 36). However, JA Katsushika maintains about 1,300 members, for most former landowners are affiliated with JA.[41] In fact, the size of the group is much less important than their comprehensive local ties. Most JA members have been residents in their community for more than 30 years. Some of them have lived in the area for generations. They are aware not only of the composition of the households in the area but also of personal relationships among local residents. Hence, this group can work as a good conduit to other voters.

The other organizations worth mentioning are networks of retired special post office heads and associations of retired school principals. Members of both organizations are highly aware of their local situations, with decades of experience and personal ties with community residents.

Strict campaign regulations are not the only factor that compels candidates to rely on organizational networks. Another factor is the limited size of the electoral district, especially in urban areas. The Tokyo Seventeenth District, for example, is one-third the size of the former multiseat district. One can travel from one end of the district to the other within two hours by bicycle. This small geographic size has contributed to more locally intensive campaign activities, as no

neighborhood can be left untouched.[42] However, as residential canvassing or random visits are prohibited, candidates must be introduced to residents via mediating organizations. In this case, community organizations are not sufficient.

Some organizations are better equipped than others in terms of voter accessibility. Those that are organized hierarchically are much more efficient in not only transmitting information but also in monitoring members, and organizations that cover the entire district are preferred.[43] Organizations that have functional ties with a party headquarters are also desirable, saving the candidate from having to conduct time-consuming negotiations. Hence, candidates tend to contact organizations that are friendly to their party. In the case of the LDP, the organizations that best meet these conditions are found in the business world.

Despite the popular conception that big business is the greatest source of support for the LDP, they are not of much help on the electoral front. Large companies tend to be clustered in specific areas, rather than widely dispersed, and most large firms also have labor unions that offer organized support to the opposition parties. For these reasons, small and medium-sized companies are more fertile ground for election campaigning.[44] To Hirasawa, the fact that Katsushika was mainly home to small and medium-sized industries was not a disadvantage.[45] He was even more pleased about the existence of a strong association for owners of small and medium-sized companies, known as the Foundation for Promoting the Welfare of Independent Entrepreneurs (KSD). This was a local chapter of a national organization for the welfare and insurance concerns of operators of small and medium-sized companies. The chairman of KSD Katsushika had long been a key member of the Shimamura koenkai, but after the district was redrawn he decided to support Hirasawa. KSD Katsushika has 20,000 members within Katsushika, and it is organized hierarchically throughout the district. The group has twelve deputy chairmen and ninety-six bloc directors. Most members at the bloc director level or above are LDP supporters.[46] Its organizational strength was enhanced when KSD hosted a convention of female supporters with more than 1,200 participants.

The local dentists' association also actively supported Hirasawa from the start. Kojiro Tatsuji, head of the political league at the dentists' association, took the lead in coordinating cooperative activities. In the Katsushika area there were 246 dentists, organized into eight branches

according to geographical area. These were further divided into 51 school districts, which geographically corresponded to polling precincts at election time. Under Kojiro's leadership, local dentists actively mobilized supporters for Hirasawa. According to Kojiro, during the Upper House election in 1995, the organization collected up to eight thousand votes for the LDP.[47]

Associations of real estate dealers are another traditional organizational pillar of support for the LDP. As of 1996, about 400 real estate agencies in Katsushika were divided into six regional blocs.[48] Members of the organization are highly informed about the activities of residents in their area. Although one cannot assume that all the members supported the LDP, it is certain that the organization's leaders actively promoted Hirasawa.

The other factor that increased reliance on organizational networks was the volatility of unorganized voters. Candidates may desire to have unorganized voters kept at a distance, because there is no sure way to keep them under control. All a candidate can do is to persuade each individually when allowed a chance. However, considering the limited time and energy for campaign activities, it is better to expend personal contact with potentially reliable organized supporters. Investing precious time and resources to contact scattered individual voters involves too much risk, and one can never be certain about their support orientation.

For these reasons, instead of personal contacts, candidates try indirectly to draw attention from the undifferentiated public. Image campaigns are specifically designed for that purpose. They can involve either of two strategies: the "positive" strategy of image building, and the "negative" strategy of damaging the competitor's image.

Certainly not all candidates adopted negative campaigns in the Lower House election (Otake, Kataoka, and Yamada 1997). In some electoral districts there was little reason to engage in negative campaigning. For example, when the candidate from the NFP was not a Sokagakkai member, the other parties did not feel compelled to mention Sokagakkai from the start, as it is not necessarily a good strategy to begin the campaign with incendiary remarks. If the candidate looked headed for certain victory, he or she also had little incentive for engaging in ill-natured acts. As negative campaigning often incites reciprocal crossfire, candidates are cautious about adopting the strategy, but as the leading candidates became more clearly identified, the incentive for negative campaigning increased.

As a part of his image-building strategy, Hirasawa assiduously distributed pamphlets containing his interviews with major newspapers and weekly news journals and other coverage in the news media. Hirasawa also recommended that supporters read his book (Hirasawa 1996). Notably, Hirasawa had one senior secretary concentrating only on media and public relations. In addition, Hirasawa invited several well-known singers and comedians to appear at koenkai rallies. To display his knowledge of and interest in various cultural activities, Hirasawa showed up at a number of cultural events, including dance parties, karaoke gatherings, sports events, and travel courses. The media covered the Tokyo Seventeenth District with great interest, because Yamaguchi Natsuo was a former Komeito member while Hirasawa was clearly taking an anti-Sokagakkai stance. Those politicians who came to his political conventions all emphasized that Hirasawa was vying with a representative of Sokagakkai.

Shimamura Yoshinobu and Kamei Shizuka, with whom Hirasawa maintained close ties, took the lead in trying to corner Sokagakkai with the campaign. Both of them seriously questioned whether the political involvement of Sokagakkai was desirable for Japan, asking voters "Can we allow a specific religious organization to take control of this electoral district?" On the first day of the official campaign, Hirasawa began his kickoff speech by saying, "The battle for this election is not between the LDP and the NFP. What we confront is a battle between the LDP and Sokagakkai" (Fujita 1996, 33).

What is significant in this respect is the existence of a number of religious organizations that have negative relationships with Sokagakkai. It is well known that such religious Buddhist organizations as Reiyukai, Rissei Koseikai, Bussho Konenkai, and Tenrikyo have long been supporters of the LDP. This time these groups, all of whom took a stance opposing Sokagakkai, volunteered to support Hirasawa. During the final stage of the electoral campaign, they actively campaigned for the LDP on their own initiative. It is also striking that several Buddhist temples did not hesitate to show sympathy for Hirasawa, as they did not want a Sokagakkai member to be the sole representative of the district in the Lower House.[49]

These religious organizations did not support the LDP because of its policies or for their own visible interests but because of ideas and norms that they did not share with the competing religious group. At the last stage of the election campaign, pamphlets claiming that "The

NFP is the party of a specific religious organization" and "Ikeda Daisaku is after political power" (Ikeda is honorary chairman of the Sokagakkai) were delivered to the voters from unknown sources. On discovering these printed materials, Hirasawa was at a loss as to what to do. He expressed annoyance with the fact that these materials had been distributed without any prior notice or consultation, but a source in the Komei camp told me that the pamphlets had been distributed all over the country at the initiative of the LDP party headquarters.[50]

Voter Turnout and Significance

The Lower House election was held on October 20, 1996. The voting rate was lower than expected: The national average reached only 59.65 percent, the lowest recorded in the postwar period. In the Tokyo Seventeenth District, the voting rate was 53.6 percent, which was 2.4 percentage points lower than in the prior election. The voting rate suggests that, in relative terms, residents in the Tokyo Seventeenth District showed more interest in this election than in previous ones. In the past, the voting rate in Katsushika was about ten percentage points lower than the national average: 10.3 percentage points in 1989, 9.9 in 1990, and 10.9 in 1993. But this time the gap was narrowed to six percentage points (Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee 1997, 17).

Hirasawa obtained 73,726 votes, while his main competitor, Yamaguchi, received 63,732 votes. Of Hirasawa's 73,726 votes, 13,023 votes came from the Koiwa area. In terms of eligible voters, Hirasawa received 17.7 percent support, but he gained 34 percent of the actual votes, while Yamaguchi netted 29.4 percent (Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee 1997, 17–28). Yamaguchi's votes came to 86.4 percent of the number recorded by Hirasawa. Considering that Yamaguchi had received only 39,671 votes in this area in the previous Lower House election, he extended his support by more than 23,000 votes under the NFP banner.

A comparison of the estimated vote and actual voter turnout shows some interesting findings. The Hirasawa camp estimated that the critical polling total would be approximately 75,000 votes. In reality, Hirasawa received 73,726 votes to win the race. The other competitors besides Hirasawa and Yamaguchi accounted for a total of 79,320

votes. Although it was not exact, the rate of voter support was not appreciably different from the vote estimates.

This means that it is logical for candidates to calculate their potential for success on the basis of their organizational support. Vote estimates may realize themselves, like self-fulfilling prophesies, but this does not necessarily imply that all of Hirasawa's votes came from predictable sources. Straightforward counting by adding up the candidate's supporters may result in a miscalculation. But backward counting, or extracting the votes of reliable organized groups first, makes sense. If voters actually behaved as the sole and final decision-makers when casting their ballots, politicians would never be able to estimate their number of potential supporters. However, the fact of the matter is that voters decide on whom to back in terms of their long-standing personal networks. In this sense "network voting," or bloc voting, is the rule rather than the exception in Japanese elections.

Candidates also try to mobilize supporters based on longer-term exchanges between the politicians and their supporters. Thus, we can characterize the Japanese political campaign as being rooted in the behavioral principle of "long-term multiple-form compensation" (Kokumin Bunka Kaigi 1997). Politicians make careful and continuing investments in building support organizations whenever possible. Politicians also rely on "vote-sharing strategies," predicated on the availability of various types of social networks. A "catch-all strategy," which supposes the existence of an even distribution of ordinary voters, is not popularly adopted by Japanese politicians. In the Japanese context, in fact, the term "catch-all" may be better interpreted as meaning to catch all organizational networks that show support potential.

Conclusion

Based upon the observations above, a few general conclusions can be drawn about change and continuity in campaign practices. There is no question that change took place; we must ask why and how change or continuity were reflected in campaign practices.

The changing aspects of election campaigns may be summarized as follows.

First, party identification is gaining more significance under the new electoral system, especially for those candidates whose behavior is

restricted by party boundaries. The introduction of the single-seat district system eliminated politicians' concerns about intraparty competition at election time. However, koenkai, as counter-groups in an interparty competitive context, remain viable despite the electoral reforms, for they best serve the election interests of conservative politicians without solid support groups. In a changed competitive context, the party flag works like an umbrella under which all the local political forces unite. But this does not necessarily mean that party platforms are gaining more importance in election campaigns. Candidates continue to rely on networks of organizations rather than policy-based appeals. It seems to me that conservative party organizations at the local level are evolving from being client networks to becoming "party machines."

Second, local politicians are being forced to clarify their stance on cooperation with the candidates. Not only has their potential for leaving the party been reduced, but they are also finding that their ability to shift loyalty from one politician to another is quite restrained when only one candidate is nominated. The nature of cooperation on the part of local politicians is shifting from being voluntary to becoming compulsory if they hope to remain loyal party members. The margin for action remaining for independent local politicians is also getting more constricted.

Third, the formerly fragmented support organizations for the major parties are now consolidating, while those for the minor parties are becoming more fragmented. Segmented multiple channels of representation, which worked smoothly under the multimember district system, are no longer viable, for the minor parties can barely secure enough seats to maintain their influence. One support organization cannot dominate a party as in the past if the party desires to be electorally competitive. Interest groups are encouraged to come to terms with the reality that they are "one among many" support organizations. When a party is dominated by one or two support organizations, it must sacrifice the desire to link up with all other organizations that are needed to win the election. In this sense, political parties and support organizations are urged to gear themselves more to election campaigning rather than representing constituents.

However, despite the changes in the rules of the game, several aspects of election campaigning remain unchanged. Politicians still heavily rely on vote-sharing strategies, due to the existence of many

segmented organized groups that act like quasi-party organizations. Changes in the formal rules of the game have not severed the culturally entrenched informal links that were cultivated in the past.

In addition, campaign networks are becoming more, not less, important for the candidate due to onerous campaign regulations, the reduced geographical size of the district, and the volatility of unorganized voters. Certainly, some organizations are more helpful than others in election campaigning. Candidates naturally gravitate to their loyal supporters, both individual and organized, when faced with restricted access to voters and increasing uncertainty due to elevated barriers to entry. With their existing support networks as their foundation, candidates try to extend their reach to formerly untouched territory. Koenkai, local politicians, and support organizations work like building blocks to enable candidates to reach high targets.

It is important to note, however, that personal contacts remain the most viable election strategy. Objective and impersonal appeals to the voters, such as relying on policy platforms, are not sufficient to gain support, because the district's limited size makes it incumbent upon politicians to maintain informal, personal contact with their constituents. With regards to campaign tactics targeted at unaffiliated voters, it must be noted that voters are losing interest in politics as their lifestyles diversify. An image-based appeal is a better alternative than intoning the party platform in drawing attention from unaffiliated voters.

In conclusion, while some aspects of Japanese election campaign styles have changed, others have remained constant. The electoral reforms were not sufficient in and of themselves to structurally transform Japanese politics. That being said, I would suggest that electoral system reforms in general exerted differing impact on different political actors. Two factors are critical to understanding the situation. First, whether a politician's behavior in the competitive arena is bound or not by his party is a critical indicator of the candidate' s behavioral orientation. Those who regarded their party affiliation as having great significance were forced to adapt early on to the changed competitive context and the new rules. The nature of competition among equals in the political arena is being rapidly transformed, but cooperative ties among asymmetrical actors continue. This is logically viable, because the electoral system rules structure the competitive context among political aspirants. In other words, the horizontally based changes in

the competitive context did not necessarily alter mobilization networks based on informal and hierarchical ties.

The nature of exchange relationships among political actors is another indicator for understanding the political changes. When we confine our analysis to election periods, exchange relationships between candidates and local politicians are more or less "symmetrical," based on reciprocal "short-term" reelection interests. On the other hand, the relationships between candidates and interest groups are structured by "asymmetrical" exchanges but with a view toward long-term interests. It is not unusual for ties between interest groups and politicians to persist longer than those among politicians.

In conclusion, the electoral system reforms exerted a greater influence on interactions between politicians as equals, based on short-term interests in a competitive sphere. However, the electoral reforms had a limited impact on interactions among political actors with long-term and asymmetrical exchange relationships. Rapid and dramatic political realignment among politicians occurred as a result, while traditional mobilization networks endured.

Notes

1. There are too many works on the new electoral system to cite here. A few examples include Yamaguchi (1993), Uchida (1989), Ishikawa et al. (1991), Sakagami (1994), and Miyagawa (1996a).

2. Several articles appeared with different evaluations of the impact of the new electoral system, including Sato (1997b), Yamaguchi (1997), Horie (1997), and Kawato (1996).

3. One may argue that Shitamachi is not representative of urban districts. Though I fully acknowledge that Shitamachi has its own distinctive features, I tend to think that the Tokyo Seventeenth District, which is located among the twenty-three wards in the Tokyo metropolitan area, is a case for an urban district.

4. A number of surveys and election forecasts were done, including the following: *Shukan Asahi* (January 19, 1996), *Shukan Post* (January 26, 1996), *Shukan Yomiuri* (May 12, 1996), *The Sunday Mainichi* (August 18, 1996), *Shukan Post* (September 6, 1996), *Shukan Bunshun* (October 10, 1996), and *Shukan Gendai* (October 12, 1996). None of these reports predicted that Hirasawa would win.

5. In his earlier work, Samuel Huntington (1968) associated social frustration with the issue of political institutionalization. This view posited a political party as a conveyor belt for social frustration. James White (1970) thoroughly analyzed the Sokagakkai revolution in the context of Japan's changing society.

6. The proportion of large companies in organized labor is quite high. As of 1994, companies with 1,000 employees or above accounted for 59.8 percent of organized labor unions. Ministry of Labor (1995).

7. For example, in the Lower House election in 1993, Shimamura received 56,429 votes (53.7 percent) of his total of 105,008 from Edogawa Ward. On the other hand, of his 100,763 votes, Kujiraoka obtained 57,148 votes (56.7 percent) from Adachi Ward (Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee 1993b, 56).

8. The candidate selection committee was composed of the following members: eleven Katsushika Ward Assembly members (among them four were former members of the local assembly); four representatives from the occupational branches of the LDP (doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and realtors); and eight senior party members of the LDP (among them four were from community organizations, two were representatives of the industries, and two from JA and the Junior Chamber of Commerce and Industry).

9. In my interviews with several members of the candidate selection committee, they all stated that their foremost concern was to pick a good candidate with local roots.

10. In an interview, one local politician told me that all ward assembly members were conscious of having status. He said, "I could not stand it if one of my colleagues was chosen as a candidate for the Diet. I simply could not support him if the selection was made in that way." Interview with a local politician on November 6, 1996.

11. These five local politicians bolted from the LDP not because they did not like the LDP's policies but because they had serious reservations about the procedures for candidate selection. This point is an important clue to understanding their later behavior. Interview with a local politician on April 17, 1996.

12. The election results reveal that out of 300 Diet members elected in the district 45 were not born in the district. If second-generation politicians are not included in this category, most of the politicians with no local connections were elected in urban districts. Tokyo is clearly an exception. Out of 25 politicians, 12 members were not born in the district. But it is interesting to note that most of them have been elected from outside of the Yamanote area.

13. From the summer of 1996, political discussions frequently centered on criticism of the bureaucracy in relation to state subsidies to financial institutions that specialize in housing loans.

14. The voting rate in Katsushika is usually about ten percentage points lower than the national average. In 1993, the voting rate in Tokyo was 60.2 percent while the national average was 67.3 percent. But in Katsushika, only 56.4 percent went to the polls (Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee 1993b).

15. One local politician who was actively involved in the campaign from the start explained the following calculations to his core koenkai members to boost their enthusiasm.

16. In the Lower House election in 1993 when Yamaguchi ran as a Komeito candidate, he obtained 39,671 votes in what is now the Tokyo Seventeenth District (Miyagawa 1996b).

17. The ward assembly election results show that the total votes for LDP members were 49,536 votes (Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee 1993a).

18. The best empirical work that links the development of koenkai with intraparty competition is a classic work by Gerald L. Curtis (1971).

19. A succinct and comprehensive description of intermediary groups and their party support was made by Sato, Kumon, and Murakami (1979, especially the last chapter of the book).

20. Herbert Kitschelt (1988) identifies the two-part logic of party formation: electoral competition and candidate representation.

21. Interview with a secretary to Kujiraoka Hyosuke on September 12, 1996.

22. Four categories of cooperation were pointed out to reporters at the *Yomiuri Shimbun* for a survey. Otake, Kataoka, and Yamada (1997).

23. Kato Junko (1994) suggests that senior party members may have more accountability over party affairs.

24. In an interview, one local politician told me that the first thing he did in speaking to voters was to explain the fact that the electoral system had been reformed rather than to ask for their support of Hirasawa. Interview with a local politician on November 6, 1996.

25. Interview with Sato Masaaki on October 30, 1996.

26. Interview with Sugiura Hideo on November 15, 1996.

27. Interview with Sato Seizaburo on March 7, 1997.

28. The even distribution of votes among Komei members is clear when we look at the voter turnout for Komei members. For example, in the ward assembly election in 1993, out of 48 local politicians elected, Komei members are located in neither the top 10 nor the bottom 14 in the list. All Komei members elected were ranked between 11th and 34th. The gap between the 11th and

34th is about 596 votes, while the gap between the first and the lowest, who are both JNP members, is 2,649 votes. See Katsushika Ward Election Management Committee (1993a).

29. Yamaguchi Jiro (1997) put emphasis on the political dynamics of central and local relations in his recent book.

30. In a short article, I linked this issue to the fragmentation of opposition parties (Park 1997).

31. A local politician expressed this concern in an interview. This is probable in that only the Koiwa area belongs to Edogawa Ward. Ballot counting is done according to the administrative district, not the electoral district. Interview with a local politician on November 6, 1996.

32. Several local politicians told me that this was the first time for them to be seriously engaged in a Lower House election.

33. One local politician raised his voice when he said, "We produce the Diet members. At election time, they need us, the local politicians, more than we need them." Interview with a local politician on November 6, 1996.

34. Interview with Funasaka Chikao on November 13, 1996.

35. About the factors that led to the decline of JSP power, refer to Curtis (1988).

36. Survey data shows the diversity of labor union support for political parties (Otake, Kataoka, and Yamada 1997).

37. On the basis of past election records, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (1997) estimates that there are about seven million Komei supporters around the country.

38. With regard to campaigning by Sokagakkai, refer to Kitagawa (1995).

39. Three areas where labor unions still maintain organizational strength and solidarity are in Hokkaido, Osaka, and Fukuoka. From a speech by the deputy chairman of Osaka Rengo at a JCIE study meeting on February 28, 1997.

40. In an interview, one head of a neighborhood association said among 37 chonaikai leaders, there are no Komei or JCP supporters. Interview with a head of a neighborhood association on October 30, 1996.

41. Interview with a head of JA Katsushika on March 11, 1997.

42. This is the reason why this campaigning style has been called *dobuita senkyo*. For the definition of *dobuita,* see Sakagami (1994, 114).

43. Williamson (1975) provides us with an insightful discussion of why hierarchical organizations are built.

44. About the LDP's effort to encompass small and medium-sized industries in their policies, see Calder (1988).

45. According to statistical data, Katsushika had 5,811 firms as of 1995. Among them, only 155 firms had 30 or more employees (Katsushika Ward 1996, 47).

46. Interview with the head of KSD Katsushika on November 14, 1996.

47. Interview with Kojiro Tatsuji, head of the dentists' association, on April 18, 1996.

48. Interview with the head of the real estate dealers' association on June 11, 1996.

49. Interview with a staff member at the Hirasawa office on November 13, 1996.

50. Interview with a Komei metropolitan assembly member in Tokyo on October 22, 1996.

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