Electoral Revision in Japan--1982

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Introduction and Theoretical Framework

The revision of an election system is one of the touchiest issues in a western-style democracy. Every politician knows that a proposed reapportionment scheme might affect his chances for reelection. Thus, many accuse politicians of not considering the merits of a revision proposal, but only the personal consequences. This phenomenon is seen at regular 10-year intervals in the United States. With each new census, some states are required to redraw their congressional district boundaries, and, invariably, some of the disputes that ensue have to be settled by the courts or a nonpartisan panel. This kind of action is by no means limited to state governments. In many foreign countries which have a democratic form of government, attempts to revise the election system have sparked fierce debates. One of the most recent of these debates, concerning a 1982 revision of the Public Offices Election Law in Japan, will be the subject of this research.

A theory by Maurice Duverger will be used to explain politicians' behavior regarding this bill. He says:

The notion that politics is both a conflict between individuals and groups for the acquisition of power, which the victors use to their advantage at the expense of

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the vanquished and an attempt to establish a social order beneficial to all constitutes the basis of our theory of political sociology.

He continues:

The primary objective of parties is to acquire power or a share in the exercise of power; they seek to win seats at elections, to name deputies and ministers, and to take control of government.

As Duverger suggests, people often think that politicians are motivated solely by a desire for power. It will be shown that the positions Japanese politicians took regarding the 1982 revision bill were determined by whether or not the politician and his party would benefit from the proposed changes.

Duverger's ideas have been expressed and examined in other situations by many other political scientists. Lorimer says that because election boundaries help determine who gets elected, discussions about redrawing boundaries become an item of utmost concern to politicians. In Lightbody's analysis of revision in the municipal election system of Winnipeg, Canada in the 1920s, he describes the proposal worked out between the conservative Citizens' League and the opposition Labor party as a compromise where each party lobbied for the adoption of proposals that would benefit them.

More recently, Choi claims that the adoption of multi-member districts in South Korean elections was merely an attempt by the government party to give their urban candidates a chance to be elected. Under the former system of single-member districts, the government party often came in second to the opposition party. However, with
two candidates being chosen from each district, the government party now holds roughly half of the urban seats in the legislature.

Another example of this phenomenon can be seen in the initial adoption of proportional representation (PR) in Switzerland, an appropriate example because the change debated in Japan in 1982 was whether or not to adopt a PR system of election in the National Constituency of the House of Councillors. In the Swiss canton of Techno, an unfair election system allowed the conservative party to get 75 percent of the seats in the legislature with only 50 percent of the vote. The opposition Freedom party, who also got 50 percent of the vote, demanded adoption of a PR system where 50 percent of the vote would translate into 50 percent of the seats. The conservative party refused to negotiate on their demands. After a rebellion in which the opposition took all government leaders hostage and took control of government buildings, the conservatives gave in and set up a PR system of election. Clearly, the conservatives were unwilling to change an obviously unfair system that benefited them until riots demonstrated that continued intransigence would be more harmful to their self-interest than the adoption of the PR system.

To see how Duverger's theory, as illustrated in these case studies, works in the context of Japanese politics, it is first necessary to understand cultural differences that affect decision-making in Japan. Japanese society places a much greater value on the preservation of group harmony and consensus than do traditional western democracies. Nakane finds this emphasis on consensus throughout Japanese society, beginning with decisions made in the local village council.

Ward contrasts the U.S. system based on open competition in which the majority wins with the Japanese system where a simple majority is
not sufficient; a consensus is achieved where "face" and harmony (i.e., no open contention) are preserved at all costs. He further explains that even with the adoption of western democratic institutions, traditional Japanese decision-making has only been masked. Compromises are worked out beforehand and the Diet unanimously approves the decision.

**Existing System Needed Change**

Japan's basic election system was set up in 1947 as a part of the new postwar constitution. However, that system was modeled after the pre-war system that first came into being as a part of the Meiji Constitution promulgated in 1890. Both constitutions gave Japan a bicameral legislature. The Lower House was called the House of Representatives, currently consisting of 511 members whose term of office is four years or less if the Prime Minister calls for an election or is toppled by a no-confidence vote. The members of the Lower House are each elected from medium-sized local districts (three to five elected from each district). By contrast, the Upper House or House of Councillors is a 252-member body where each councillor is elected for six years with half of the members up for election every third year. The members of the Upper House come from two types of constituencies. One hundred of the 252 members are elected at large (National Constituency), and the remaining 152 members are elected in local two- to eight-member districts--similar to the Lower House election districts.

There are three aspects of this election system that are important when considering election revision. First is the National Constituency of the Upper House which was meant to be "a council of cool reason to exercise restraint on the Lower House." The framers of Japan's postwar constitution thought that the National Constituency
would attract talented people who were above party politics. Second, the postwar politicians also placed very stringent restrictions on campaign expenditures, the length of the campaign period and what types of election activities would be permitted. Third, they assigned to each district the number of representatives proportional to that district's population, but they failed to include any provision for revising their distribution in response to population shifts.

These three specifics of the 1950 Public Offices Election Law were the roots of problems that have since developed in the Japanese electoral system. First, the National Constituency has attracted so-called "talent" candidates (movie stars, TV personalities and famous athletes) as opposed to the high quality elites that the law was meant to attract. These "talent" candidates are elected because they have enough popularity nationwide to garner the votes sufficient for election. Though the political parties would rather have party regulars in those seats, they make use of the political reality by recruiting these "talent" candidates to run on their slate.

The second problem inherent in this system is that even though campaign spending is severely limited, campaign costs have skyrocketed. Oikawa estimates that in National Constituency elections, a candidate can be expected to spend two million dollars, and in the general election of 1974, called the "plutocratic election," the majority party spent a total of 120 million dollars.

Though campaign expenditure laws are on the books, they are, as a matter of course, ignored by almost all candidates. Why this is done can be understood by looking at the National Constituency races. A candidate is allowed to spend approximately 110,000 dollars (27 million yen), but this limit would be exceeded if he only put up the 100,000 posters allowed by the same law.
The third problem is that population has shifted, causing a serious imbalance in the apportionment of seats across the nation. An example of this shift is the election of Nishimura Shōji to an Upper House seat from rural Tottori prefecture. In Nishimura's sparsely populated district, he was elected with only 163,450 votes; however, in other more populous districts 41 candidates failed to be elected, even though they had more votes than Nishimura. The extreme case was a candidate from metropolitan Osaka who received 632,622 votes and came in fourth in a three-man race. This problem of malapportionment is not as bad as in Great Britain where the ratio of difference between the largest and the smallest districts is 10 to 1 or in the U.S. where the ratio between the largest and smallest Senate districts is 62 to 1.

Although the malapportionment ratio among the election districts in Japan is less than that in the U.S. Senate districts, malapportionment is a problem because, unlike the U.S. Senate, the seats in Japan are supposed to be evenly distributed. The opposition parties continually bring up this issue, and the Supreme Court (as recently as April 27, 1983) continues to rule that the districts should be reapportioned. However, the court also rules that reapportionment is a legislative matter and not in their area of jurisdiction. This ruling has produced the curious phenomenon in which all parties agree that reapportionment is necessary but no action is taken because the two largest parties would lose seats in any reapportionment scheme that would rectify the current imbalance.

With a knowledge of the major problems in the Japanese electoral system, it becomes necessary to understand the situation of each political party in order to see how each party's position affected that party's stand on election revision proposals.
Currently there are five major parties in Japan. Two are national parties which receive most of their support from rural areas, and the other three are largely phenomena of the metropolitan areas. The largest party is the conservative Liberal Democratic party (LDP), which has ruled Japan under one name or another since WW II. In the 1983 elections, the LDP's share of the vote varied from 60 to 70 percent in 10 largely rural prefectures to 20 percent in Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama, the three largest metropolitan areas. The LDP maintains its parliamentary majority by sweeping most of the rural districts. However, they also have considerable voting strength in metropolitan and semiurban areas, which makes the LDP a national party.

The second largest party, with about half the votes the LDP receives, is the Japan Socialist party (JSP), the only other national party. In the same 1983 election, the JSP's share of the vote was similar to the LDP's in that the JSP did best in rural prefectures and did worst in Tokyo and Osaka.

As mentioned earlier, one can see why these two parties would oppose any reapportionment plan that would dilute the unrealistic electoral strength of the rural prefectures. Both the LDP and the JSP gain much of their support from these areas as opposed to the other political parties which are based in the metropolitan areas.

The other parties are the Democratic Socialist party (DSP), Japan Communist party (JCP) and Komeito. These three parties take a combined vote of 35 to 45 percent; however, because of the election system and malapportionment, they only receive about 25 percent of the seats in the Diet. In addition to these five parties, there are other minor parties, such as the New Liberal Club (NLC), which are trying to gain status as major parties.
Electoral Revision Attempts That Have Failed

Just as it is necessary to understand the pre-revision electoral system and situation in Japan, so also is it necessary to see what other election revisions have been attempted and why they were not passed.

Although proposals to revise some part of the election system are discussed in nearly every Diet session, the first major postwar revision attempt was made by Prime Minister Hatoyama (LDP) in 1956. His proposal was basically to change Japan from multi-member electoral districts to single-member districts as have the United States and Great Britain. Hrebenar estimates that under such a system the LDP would have taken 89 percent of the seats in the Diet. It appears that Hatoyama was using the guise of election revision to further strengthen the LDP. Although the LDP had ample votes to pass such a revision (they had 63 percent of the seats in the Diet in 1956), they tabled the measure in the face of a united opposition which threatened to block passage of other important legislation.

This decision is a good example of the Japanese desire for consensus. Because the opposition parties refused to negotiate on any revision that would weaken their position in the Diet, the LDP preserved consensus by tabling its proposition. If the LDP had insisted on passing the bill, the opposition would most likely have boycotted Diet sessions and resorted to various parliamentary measures to slow down legislation. In such a situation the LDP would have been painted as dictators and would probably have lost much of their support among the Japanese people. Above all else, harmony must be maintained.

This same revision proposal showed up with slight variations throughout the 1960s and 1970s.
The most significant variation was the inclusion of a PR system of election in the proposal put forth by Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka. Though a PR system had been proposed in the 1966 and 1976 LDP Election Research Council reports, Tanaka was the first to include it in a formal revision proposal. Tanaka suggested the following: first, change all districts to one-member districts (same as the Hatoyama plan); second, implement a PR system to elect some of the Lower House members; third, change the National Constituency of the Upper House to a PR method of election.

The significance of this proposal was that a few concessions were made to the opposition parties. The inclusion of a PR system of election in part of the Upper and Lower House elections meant that if Komeito took 10 percent of the vote, they would get 10 percent of the seats in the PR constituencies. However, the change to single-member districts for the other seats would virtually wipe out opposition representation in those seats.

The strategy behind this new proposal is easy to see. Thayer says the LDP included PR only as a means to attract opposition party support for the proposal. The LDP politicians were not dumb; they knew that even though they conceded some advantage by including a PR system, they would still improve their overall position. Hrebenar estimates that under the Tanaka proposal the LDP would have gained 78.9 percent of the Lower House seats. In addition to gaining Lower House seats, the LDP would improve its position in the Upper House by changing the National Constituency to a PR system. Why the LDP thought it necessary to revise the National Constituency can be seen in Hrebenar's statement that the National Constituency was one of the few parts of the election system that did not help the LDP.
The reaction to such a thinly disguised partisan proposal is easy to imagine. The opposition called the plan a "Kakumander," a play on words combining gerrymander with Tanaka's first name (Kakuei). Since the plan would only weaken their positions, the opposition parties obstructed Diet operations which forced Tanaka to abandon his proposal. Stockwin calls Tanaka's abandonment of his proposal "an unusual and stunning reversal." He calls it this because the LDP, with its parliamentary majority, can usually negotiate and gain the necessary consensus for passage of its proposals. But since this revision threatened the life of many of the other parties, there was no room for negotiation. Clearly, each Diet member based his decision on Tanaka's proposal on whether or not it would help his party or himself.

Even within the LDP there was opposition to Tanaka's proposal. Many established Diet members had built up extensive support organizations in their districts, and the prospect of their election districts being cut up into smaller districts meant that a candidate would be cut off from many former areas of support. As the newspaper Asahi Shimbun commented, the stand a Diet member would take on this proposal could be easily determined by looking at conditions in his electoral district.

Both revision attempts failed because in a system that puts so much priority on consensus, the opposition would never accept the heavy-handed attempts by the LDP to improve its own position. The LDP could have forced the bill through with parliamentary majority. Such action, however, would have hurt the LDP's public image.
Successful Revision Attempts

In contrast to the proposals that failed, there are three election revisions that were passed during this same period. By looking briefly at these three revisions, one can see that in order to secure the necessary consensus for passage, a bill must clearly benefit the parties from which support is needed.

Twice the LDP has skirted the reapportionment issue by increasing the size of the Diet and adding seats to urban constituencies (1976 and 1967). These two bills were successful for three reasons. First, there was no attempt to decrease rural seats. Such an attempt would have been met with immediate opposition from the LDP and JSP who rely on rural support. Second, the metropolis-based opposition parties supported this measure because it gave them a chance to elect more Diet members. Third, the LDP also benefited.

How was this revision beneficial to the LDP? Since the law requires that Lower House districts have from three to five seats and most urban districts already had four or five seats, the addition of one or two new seats resulted in the splitting of each district into two new three-member districts. Also, since the LDP takes 20 percent of the vote in metropolitan areas, the LDP almost always takes one seat in each metropolitan district. One seat in a four-member district is only 25 percent of the seats, but one seat in each of two new three-member districts adds up to 33 percent of the seats. At the same time the opposition parties increase their strength with four in place of three possible seats.

It is clear that the LDP drew up a proposal that appealed to its selfish interests as well as those of the opposition, and by so doing consensus was achieved and the bills were passed.
The third example of a bill passed with the necessary consensus is the 1975 revision of the Public Offices Election Law. This revision of laws governing campaign financing activities came on the heels of the 1974 "plutocratic election." The election was called this because of the high level of spending that occurred. Public opinion demanded that something be done, so the LDP, with the cooperation of the DSP and JSP, drew up a law that Hrebenar describes as accomplishing nothing "except to legitimize the traditional sources of funds and give the incorrect impression that the entire process had been reformed." One interesting point of the bill was that it prohibited the distribution of party literature at train stations and department stores. Hrebenar sees this as an LDP-JSP alliance to restrict the campaign activities of the JCP and Komeito, both of which are based on large volunteer organizations (the Communist party and a lay Buddhist organization respectively); on the other hand, the LDP and JSP do not have similar organizations to rely on. As could be predicted from Duverger's theory, the only major parties that opposed the 1975 revision were the JCP and Komeito.

By comparing these successful revision attempts it can be seen that certain qualities are necessary for an election revision bill to become law in Japan. First, the supporters of a bill must have more than just a simple majority; a certain level of consensus is needed before a bill can be passed. Nakane, in her discussion of village decision-making, draws the bottom line at 70 percent. She says that when 70 percent of a group agrees, the other 30 percent will give in to preserve harmony, though they may maintain their opposition to the proposal. This behavior can be found in the passage of the 1975 revision bill where the LDP-DSP-JSP coalition provided enough consensus to override the JCP-Komeito opposition.
Second, in order to gain that consensus, the bill must appeal to the selfish interests of each party whose support is needed. Partial concessions which hurt the opposition parties' overall standing will not attract those parties' support.

Revision of the Public Office Election Law

With the lessons of Japanese election history in mind, it becomes easier to understand the behavior of politicians with regard to the 1982 revision of the Public Offices Election Law. The revision, which was introduced into the Diet in May 1981, consisted of the following basic provisions: (1) The 100 National Constituency councillors would be elected nationwide as before, but instead of voting for individual candidates, the voters would vote for a party name. If the LDP received 40 percent of the vote in this new PR system, then 40 percent of the 50 seats would be awarded to the LDP. The LDP would award these 20 seats to the top 20 candidates on their list of candidates submitted at registration time. (2) In order for a party to enter into the PR election, it must have met at least one of three criteria. The party must (one) have five current Diet members, (two) have polled over 4 percent of the vote in the last Diet election, or (three) have a total of at least 10 candidates registered in either the PR or local districts of the Upper House election. (3) The registration deposit must be doubled to 16,000 dollars (4 million yen) for a candidate in the PR election. This fee would be forfeited if the candidate loses and returned if he wins.

This new law would help all the major parties by allowing them to cut down on campaign expenditures. Instead of 30 candidates having to run 30 nationwide campaigns, the 30 candidates could now concentrate on one nationwide campaign to push the party name. On the other hand, minor
parties and independents who ran only one candidate in the past would now be forced to put up 10 candidates at a cost of 160,000 dollars. Even if the top candidate got elected, the party would still forfeit 144,000 dollars. Thus, until the party could get 4 percent of the vote or elect five members to the Diet, the party would have to pay 144,000 dollars plus the costs of nationwide campaign each election year. Clearly, the 1982 revision financially benefits the major parties and appears to prohibit small parties and independents from entering the election.

In addition to concern over finances, parties are concerned with how the bill would affect their strength in the Upper House. Hrebenar claims that the old National Constituency system puts the LDP "at a serious disadvantage," since they "captured only 35.2 percent of these [National Constituency] seats despite gaining 44.3 percent of the vote." However, more recent elections (1977 and 1980) have shown the LDP doing much better in the National Constituency. The chart below illustrates the percentage point difference between the
percent of seats a party won and the percent of votes a party received in each election. By considering only the change in the seat distribution system that a PR system would bring, it is obvious that the JCP, DSP and Komeito would lose, the LDP would gain, and the JSP could gain or lose seats. A PR system would virtually eliminate these differences between the percent of vote received and the percent of seats received.

The introduction of a PR system would also have another side benefit for the LDP. In past elections, the opposition parties had often united and backed one candidate in districts where there was only one seat up for election. However, with the new PR system, each party would try to run candidates in as many districts as it could in hopes of raising the percentage of votes the party receives. The Japan Times notes that in the 1983 election each party was increasing the number of candidates in the local constituency races. Because each voter casts two ballots (one in his local constituency and one in the National Constituency), the parties were hoping that if a person voted for a party's candidate in a local district, then he would tend to vote for the same party in the National Constituency. The end result would be that cooperation among the opposition parties would virtually disappear, and the LDP would face a more splintered opposition in the local districts.

With a knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of the bill for each party, it is now possible to look at its actual passage. The revision bill was introduced in May 1981 to the 94th Ordinary session of the Diet, shelved during that session, reintroduced in October 1981 in the 95th Extraordinary session, and finally carried over into the 96th Ordinary session. Since Prime Minister Suzuki had made a promise to secure passage of the revision bill in the 96th Ordinary session, he extended the session which was to
end in May 1982 until August 21, a maximum of 94 days.

By July the bill was still backed up in committee, so in order to meet the August 21 deadline, the LDP, using their numerical majority, rammed the bill out of committee. The Asahi Shimbun says that the last bill passed through an Upper House committee without a consensus vote was the previous year's budget bill. The newspaper continues that the last bill forced through the entire Upper House by the LDP was the Alcohol and Tobacco Bill in 1975. Once again the LDP, unable to gain a consensus, was forced to take such drastic measures (by Japanese standards) in order to secure passage of the revision bill.

It is strange that the JSP, which would benefit from the bill, withheld support. This would seem to conflict with Duverger's theory, but actually the JSP supported the bill through its inaction.

After the LDP forced the bill out of committee, all the opposition parties with the exception of the JSP issued strong statements condemning the LDP action. But a JSP official conducted an interview in which he said that his party resented the fact that the LDP did everything by themselves, and thus it would be hard to call the committee decision valid. This was a much milder reaction than that of the other parties.

When the bill was up before the full body of the Upper House, the LDP made a minor concession. Masatoshi Tokunaga, the LDP leader in the Upper House, promised to review the proposed PR system after two elections and make any necessary changes at that time. With this minor concession, the JSP said they would attend the Upper House session when the bill would be passed if one
other party besides the LDP and JSP would also agree to attend.

Again it is necessary to remember the Japanese desire for consensus decisions. If all the parties except the LDP were to have boycotted the Diet session, then the LDP would have withdrawn the revision bill in the face of public opposition to the LDP's tactics. The JSP requirement that one other party be present was a ploy by the JSP to keep their agreement to attend the session from being viewed as collusion with the LDP. Nevertheless, the Japan Times and Asahi Shimbun called the bill an LDP-JSP bill.

It would have been politically infeasible for the JSP to have done otherwise. To have come out in open support of the bill would have caused the JSP to lose their position of leadership among the opposition parties; yet to have opposed the bill with boycotts, etc., would have killed the bill. The JSP took the middle road of protesting the bill but also attending Diet sessions. In addition, it got the conservative DSP to also attend, which helped the JSP's position.

When the bill passed the Upper House, only the LDP voted for it. The JSP and DSP voted against it, and the JCP, Komeito, most minor parties, and independents boycotted the session. Though it could be argued that the LDP was passing the bill without a consensus, the actual situation was that the JSP and DSP were showing their tacit support of the bill by their attendance.

The bill passed the Lower House and became law on August 18 with all major political parties in attendance. The LDP voted for the bill with only the support of a minor party (NLC), and the JSP, JCP, DSP and Komeito all voted against the bill. Once again this vote can be viewed as a break in consensus, but the behavior of the
parties shows that a consensus did exist. The lack of obstructive action on the part of the JSP and DSP signalled to the other parties that the JSP and DSP actually did support the bill despite their public statements to the contrary.

In conclusion, it can be seen that for an election proposal to be successful, a consensus must be achieved by appealing to the selfish interests of those parties involved. The 1982 revision bill clearly helped the LDP and JSP in financial and electoral concerns. The DSP, JSP and Komeito all benefited financially but lost some of the advantages the old National Constituency system gave them. The DSP weighed the advantages and disadvantages and opted for tacit support. The JCP, Komeito and the independents all viewed the bill as detrimental to their interests and at first tried to obstruct passage by boycotting the Upper House. However, when the LDP-JSP-DSP coalition became evident by the JSP-DSP decision to attend Diet sessions, the JCP, Komeito and the independents all gave in to the consensus and attended the Lower House deliberations. Each party followed its own self-interest, and because the bill contained benefits for enough of the parties, a consensus, albeit a tacit consensus, was reached.

Of interest in this study is whether or not the predicted benefits of the revision actually occurred. Most political analysts predicted the following: (1) the LDP would do better in both the local districts and National (PR) Constituency; (2) the number of invalid ballots would go down; (3) the number of "talent" candidates would decrease; (4) election expenditures in the National (PR) Constituency would go down; and (5) the independents and minor parties would be shut out of the National (PR) Constituency.
The actual results were quite surprising. As expected, the LDP did better in the local districts. The LDP polled 43.2 percent of the vote and picked up four additional seats. This good showing by the LDP may be attributed to the change in the electoral system or to an increase in LDP support or to both.

In the National (PR) Constituency, the LDP had its worst showing in postwar election history. The party only polled 35.33 percent of the vote, lower than the previous low of 35.8 percent in 1977. Nevertheless, the PR method of seat allocation seems to have helped the LDP somewhat, as can be seen on the following graph.

Election analysts blame the poor showing of the LDP on a number of factors. First, in April, city, town and prefectural elections were held, which traditionally hurt the LDP. Second, many voters supported one of the many mini-parties that sprang up in the National (PR) Constituency.
It was also forecast that the number of invalid votes would increase. Mainichi Shim bun says this increase was one of the biggest worries in adopting the new PR system. However, when the votes were counted, the new election system set a record for the lowest number of invalid ballots since WW II.

The third prediction was that the number of "talent" candidates would go down. Actually the number of "talent" candidates increased from eight to 13 when compared to the 1980 election.

The fourth prediction was that the cost of campaigning would go down for most candidates. Indeed, this was touted as the major reason for implementing the PR system in the National Constituency. Mainichi Shim bun conducted a survey of the finances of the National (PR) Constituency candidates during the election. Fifty-one percent of those responding replied that the election campaign wasn't costing them anything, 40 percent said that it was costing less than before, 6 percent said that it was costing about the same, and 3 percent said that it was costing more than before.

The fifth prediction was that minor parties and independents would be shut out from the election process because of the strict entrance requirements for all parties. The opposite occurred. Various interest groups and independents formed their own mini-parties, some of which were successful. There were a total of 18 political parties which met the requirements to enter the National Constituency election. In addition to the regular major and minor parties, new parties sprang up such as the Salaryman's party—Japan's version of the tax revolt, the Welfare party—campaigning for the rights of the handicapped, the Plebian party—healed by a self-proclaimed "gay boy" advocating sexual liberation, and the Liberal Party to Expel Kakuei Tanaka from Political Cir-
In the election, the Salaryman's party picked up two seats and the Welfare party picked up one seat. Two other previously established minor parties also won one seat each.

However, it is impossible to see the long range effects of the new PR system by looking at only one election. Brynildsen says, "a search for a normal Japanese election is likely to be as unrewarding as a search for Utopia, Eldorado, or the perfect Martini." Nevertheless, the trends seen in this election show that some predictions were right and some were wrong. The LDP appears to have benefited from the new system, and almost all of the candidates feel that campaign expenses have gone down. However, the number of "talent" candidates has risen rather than fallen. Also, though small parties and independents were thought to have been excluded from the system, the number of mini-parties increased dramatically and their electoral performance was consistent with past elections.

Conclusions

The revision bill of 1982 provides an excellent example of how parties view election reform proposals from a purely selfish point of view. Asahi Shimbun summed up the decision-making process in retrospect when it said that the debate in the Diet consisted only of a discussion of party advantages and disadvantages. The newspaper continued that it would be very hard to separate a political party's position on an election system from the advantages or disadvantages the party perceives it will receive.

The newspaper shows how the events surrounding the many electoral revision attempts in Japan all seem to concur with Duverger's theory that a party will pursue its self-interest in trying to preserve or gain power. The question remains,
how will this attitude affect future attempts at election revision in Japan? Further election revision is unlikely given the positions of the parties today. The LDP still desires single-member districts, and unless this proposal is modified in some way to assure current LDP members that their seats are safe and to serve the interests of some of the other opposition parties, the proposal will end up like its predecessors, the Hatoyama and Tanaka proposals.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 189.


12 Shoichi Oikawa and Yoshinori Yasuhiro, "Japan's Crucial Upper House Election," Asia Pacific Community 8 (Spring 1980):64.


14 Hokkaido Shimbun, 28 June 1983.


16 Japan Times, 30 April 1983.

17 Hrebenar, p. 989.

18 There was one exception, a socialist Prime Minister who did not even last a year.

19 Ehime, Fukushima, Gumma, Ibaragi, Ishikawa, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Saga, and Wakayama.

20 Asahi Shimbun, 28 June 1983.

21 Akita, Mie, Okayama, Oita, Shimane, and Tottori.

22 Hokkaido Shimbun, 28 June 1983.

23 Hrebenar, p. 989.

24 Ward, p. 123.


27 Hrebenar, p. 989.
28 Ibid., p. 988.
29 Ibid., p. 989.
30 Stockwin, p. 99.
31 Ibid., p. 93.
32 Asahi Shimbun, 14 February 1966.
34 Hrebenar, p. 995.
35 Nakane, p. 145.
36 Hrebenar, pp. 983-84.
37 Hokkaido Shimbun, 28 June 1983.
38 Japan Times, 21 May 1983.
39 Ibid., 10 July 1982.
40 Asahi Shimbun, 9 July 1982.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 16 July 1982.
43 Ibid.
46 Yomiuri Shimbun, 19 August 1982.
47 Hokkaido Shimbun, 28 June 1983.
48 Ibid.
49 Asahi Shimbun, 28 June 1983.
50 Mainichi Shimbun, 3 June 1983.
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