

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

**Famous Amateurs in a Professional's Race: The Causes and  
Consequences of Celebrity Politics**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

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2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation broadly explores the increasingly prevalent but understudied phenomenon of famous political amateurs, or celebrities, running for and serving in political office. As there is yet no comparative empirical study of this phenomenon, chapter 1 takes the preliminary step of tracking the rates of celebrity candidacy in democratic polities around the world, wherever data is available. In the rest of

the dissertation I take advantage of a wealth of voter survey data, election records, and legislative behavior data from Japan to test hypotheses about the causes and consequences of this phenomenon. In chapters 2 and 3 I provide both experimental and observational evidence that electoral systems play a large role in the electability of these candidates, and that contrary to popular belief their supporters are not disproportionately young, less educated, nor apolitical. In chapter 4 I find experimental evidence that such support may also be linked to an individual's trust in government, however not through the commonly assumed mechanism of a protest vote. Rather, the results suggest that information about political scandal induces a sincere preference for celebrities as viable political outsiders. Finally chapter 5 takes the first steps towards empirically testing the popular notion that celebrities make for less reliable and less competent legislators. Tracking individual legislative performance in Japan's upper house from 1968 to 2015 using 11 different metrics, I find that by many measures celebrity legislators are indistinguishable from their less famous counterparts, while on some key indicators - such as bill sponsorship and parliamentary questioning - they are actually significantly more active.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of famous individuals without political experience running for and winning elective office is not new and exists to some degree in many democracies around the world (See Section 1.5). In recent years however there has been a proliferation of media and academic interest in celebrity politics, amid widespread perceptions that it is becoming ever more pervasive (Marsh, 't Hart and Tindall, 2010). Empirical investigations suggest that these perceptions are not unfounded for some cases, while in others the jury is still out. Ironically, the United States contributes much to these perceptions with a handful of very high profile executive cases - such as Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jesse Ventura, and frontrunner for Republican presidential nomination as of mid-2015 Donald Trump - while the actual rate of these conspicuous amateurs entering US elections remains comparatively low. In other countries such as Japan, Finland, and the Philippines, the phenomenon is much more commonplace.

It is puzzling that any rise in the number of celebrities entering politics would occur precisely when the professionalization of democratic politics is seemingly at its historical zenith. Studies of legislative career patterns in established democracies have revealed a modern tendency towards representation by the politically experienced. Not only do aspirants to elective office tend to come from political backgrounds<sup>1</sup>, but the re-election rates of incumbents are conspicuously high compared to earlier

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<sup>1</sup>See Polsby 1968, Shultz 1973, Kim and Patterson 1988, Hibbing 1999.

decades of the 20th century.<sup>2</sup> In recent decades, scholars concerned with the normative functioning of democracy and political representation have even begun to claim that this process of professionalization has gone too far – that officials are now putting their own reelection interests above the public good.<sup>3</sup> More than just an academic debate, these arguments have informed the implementation of reforms such as pay cuts and term limits for many legislative bodies (Cain and Levin, 1999). And yet the conviction that a politically experienced legislative body is normatively ideal remains strong (Polsby, 1991; Mann, 1992; Kurtz, Cain and Niemi, 2009). Against this backdrop of ostensibly conflicting ideals, the entry of conspicuous amateurs into politics raises important questions. Are career politicians becoming less ideal representatives? What explains the appearance and election of these unconventional candidates and how does this phenomenon impact democratic politics?

## 1.2 Explaining Celebrities in Office

The existing literature on celebrity politics has only recently begun to grapple with these questions. The developing consensus thus far is that the merging of celebrities with politics can be traced to the commercialization of the media and the consequent changes in political communication (Mukherjee, 2004; Marsh, ‘t Hart and Tindall, 2010; Van Zoonen, 2006). Specifically, the argument is that the style of political communication has moved in an increasingly personalized direction such that parties and office holders now engage the electorate through emphasis of the individual traits of politicians rather than issues. As both the style and medium (primarily television performance and imagery) of this communication are the forte of the celebrity, the latter’s entry into the political arena is now made arguably easier.<sup>4</sup> This view also rests on assumptions of particular changes in the way modern citizens engage with politics. No longer are they motivated to participate by ideology, group identity, or even an expectation of effecting change, but rather by a desire for self-

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<sup>2</sup>For analysis in the US, see Erikson 1971, Abramowitz 1991, Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002, For Japan see Hayama 1992, Shin 2011, and Ramsdell 1992. For a large cross national study see Matland and Studlar 2004.

<sup>3</sup>See for example Petracca 1992 and Will 1992.

<sup>4</sup>The conception of “celebrity” is not always well specified in this literature but here it clearly refers to individuals whose fame is derived from performance and entertainment backgrounds – a more narrow construct than that which is used in this dissertation.

cultivation, a feeling of involvement, and for enjoyment (Bang, 2004). Regarding the impact of this phenomenon, most conclude that it is a hindrance to the functioning of democracy. The rise of the celebrity, it is argued, trivializes politics by dumbing down political debate and lowering the quality of representation by placing style, looks, and personality above ability (Weiskel, 2005; Van Zoonen, 2006; Duvall, 2007).

This work provides valuable theoretical insight into the possible macro explanations of celebrity entry into politics, as well as into what some of its consequences may be. However, it offers little practical help in understanding the precise mechanisms by which individual voting decisions and candidate behaviors contribute to these outcomes. Existing empirical work does supply informative celebrity case studies<sup>5</sup> but falls short of conducting any systematic analyses or testing of the aforementioned contentions. There remains much in celebrity politics that the “personalization” narrative cannot explain. For example, while the commercialization of the media (a proposed driver of personalization) is a fairly universal phenomenon<sup>6</sup>, why is there wide variation across countries in the number of celebrities entering politics? It may be tempting to explain away such differences with cultural distinctions, but the fact that we see patterns of variation within countries in the types of offices that celebrities seek (and races where they are successful), suggests that there is more to the story.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The primary aim of this dissertation is to provide a more concrete understanding of celebrity politics through an empirical examination of its causes and consequences using the informative case of Japan. With its long and consistent history of celebrity candidacy in democratic races, and rich variation in its election environments, Japan offers a great starting point for an in-depth investigation into this phenomenon. The primary research questions I seek to address are: 1) Why are celebrity candidates and celebrity politicians prevalent in some electoral contexts and not others? 2) How do voters react to the entry of celebrity candidates and why do they sometimes support them? 3) Do elected celebrities behave differently in office than other politicians?

In answering these questions I draw upon studies in the areas of electoral

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<sup>5</sup>See Ribke 2015 for a comparative example addressing cases in US, Israel, and Brazil.

<sup>6</sup>see Hallin and Mancini 2012

systems, voter behavior, decision theory and heuristics, as well legislative behavior studies. I find that insights from these sometimes disparate literatures complement each other and may be used to generate testable hypotheses about the causes and consequences of celebrity politics. I test these hypotheses through analyses of data that was collected during my fieldwork in Tokyo from December of 2013 to June of 2014, and other data that has been collected since. This includes experimental survey data on voters, observational election and background data on candidates, parliamentary records of legislator behavior, as well as material from interviews that I conducted with Japanese celebrity legislators and candidates. Additionally, I rely on a wealth of data from election scholars both in and outside of Japan.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.4 Outline of Dissertation and its Contributions

This research agenda not only pushes forward the nascent literature on celebrity politics but also offers the opportunity to add to the general literature of several fields – electoral systems, voter behavior, decision theory, as well legislative behavior studies – by applying their respective insights to a less studied type of candidacy.

Chapter 1 takes the preliminary step of laying empirical foundations for the erstwhile unsubstantiated claims about rising celebrity candidacy. Chapter 2 examines the systematic processes by which voters come to support conspicuous political amateurs – a group that voters themselves expressly disapprove of in the abstract. In doing so it makes theoretical and empirical contributions to a recent line of work that bridges the studies of political institutions and decision theory (Lau and Redlawsk, 2001; Cunow, 2014). We already know from extensive research on strategic voting that institutions can influence voting behavior by changing voter expectations about the likely outcomes of their choices (Cox, 1997). However this more recent work contends that institutions can also shift the way people make decisions about their own preferences, irrespective of expectations over outcomes. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical framework for this process by advancing the idea of a “heuristic hierarchy” –

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<sup>7</sup>Here I am primarily indebted to Kuniaki Nemoto for consolidated Japanese election data, Matthew Shugart and Asa Bengtsson for Finnish election and candidate background data, Sugawara Taku for legislator behavior data, the Todai-Asahi research group for candidate survey data, and Megumi Naoi for bringing the latter two resources to my attention.

or a set of decision making strategies available to voters that differ in terms of cognitive costs and predictive benefits. I argue that the ultimate value of these strategies, and the individual's preference ordering among them, is not static. Instead it depends on the institutional context in which the strategies are to be implemented. Using an experiment with a national sample of Japanese citizens, I find that large ballot sizes induce voters to rely on the relatively inefficient, yet cognitively less demanding recognition heuristic. As a result, the electoral value of candidate fame increases significantly with the number of competing co-partisans presented to voters.

Chapter 3 provides further empirical support for this argument by tracking the rates of actual celebrity candidacy and success in several elections across Japan and Finland. I take advantage of the institutional variation that exists in each of these elections to highlight observational findings that comport with the experimental results of Chapter 2. By incorporating the analysis of Finnish elections, these findings support the generalizability of the heuristic hierarchy argument, suggesting it may be a process that is not unique to Japan.

Chapter 4 departs from institutions and heuristic types to address the general inferences that voters can make from a candidate's celebrity background. I argue that these inferences – electoral viability, high visibility, and outsider status – make celebrity candidates particularly ideal when trust in government and establishment politicians is low. I present experimental evidence that information about political scandal can significantly increase voter support for celebrity candidates, and that this support does not run through the mechanism of an insincere protest vote. These results build upon earlier research which finds that many electoral outcomes typically attributed to protest voting are actually expressions of sincere support for the platforms of non-mainstream parties (Tillie, 1995; Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000). Here I extend those findings to the level of individual candidacies, and in the process challenge conventional interpretations of celebrity support. The chapter also contributes to the literature on political scandal, which to date has been primarily concerned with whether or not voters punish tainted incumbents. The general consensus is that they do, but only when a number of qualifying conditions are met (Jimenez and Cainzos, 2006). More recent work addresses the follow up question of what voters do, after those conditions are met and a scandal-tainted incumbent is abandoned. The finding

that this does not rebound to the benefit of opposition party challengers is interpreted as evidence that disillusioned voters will withdraw from the political process altogether (Chong et al., 2011). However, the results presented in this chapter suggest that many such voters may not be losing interest in political outcomes, but rather are seeking credibly “clean” and viable political outsiders instead of simply other party politicians.

In Chapter 5, I switch gears away from voter behavior and elections to address the general pessimism found in journalistic and scholarly accounts of celebrities in politics. I outline the elements of these negative expectations about celebrities in office, such as their being ephemeral, rogue, and generally less competent. I then subject these expectations to empirical tests using data from 37 years of legislative activity, interviews with celebrity candidates, as well as a candidate and legislator survey on policy issues and campaigning. I find that the empirical evidence is completely at odds with conventional expectations and that in some ways celebrities are actually significantly more active than regular legislators. They sponsor and cosponsor more bills, submit more parliamentary questions, and engage in longer committee deliberations. I also find some evidence that they are more ideologically independent and self-oriented in campaigns, however this does not translate into defections or intentional abstentions on party floor votes. This analysis pushes forward the nascent literature on celebrity candidacy by applying more objective and not entirely crude measures to what has erstwhile been primarily an anecdotal and theoretical enterprise. The chapter also represents a modest step forward for studies in legislative behavior that seek to understand whether backgrounds matter for performance in office – a topic that is surprisingly understudied but has recently begun to receive attention (Volden and Wiseman, 2014). Chapter 6 concludes with avenues for future research.

## 1.5 Defining Celebrity Candidates

The concept of “celebrity” invariably involves personal fame. However, the usefulness of the term often depends not only on the presence or absence of fame, but also on its associations and the source of the individual’s renown. Here I am interested in the phenomenon of political representation and governance by those who are famous for something other than governance and representation itself. Thus, I

define “celebrity candidate” broadly as any candidate who possesses a high degree of name recognition prior to their running for office, and who is widely associated with something other than service in a public office.

Alternative constructs may be found in the celebrity politics literature where the topic of interest is not representation. Here celebrity status is often accrued exclusively from engagement with the media or entertainment industry. Some studies focus on the use of film stars and musicians for endorsing candidates, parties, and policies (Garthwaite and Moore, 2012). Others refer to individual politicians themselves cultivating extra-political reputations by making a spectacle of their engagement with pop-culture (Kellner, 2010). In this dissertation, the concept of celebrity is not limited to those in entertainment but includes anyone whose fame is not associated with being a politician or public servant. This could include, for example, renown business leaders, journalists, and astronauts, but would exclude bureaucrats, mayors, and legacy candidates.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, once such a celebrity is elected these distinctions become more murky as they may begin to also be widely associated with their new position. Many elected celebrities likely retain their previous reputations and will continue to be associated with the backgrounds they held prior to taking office. Others may lose those associations almost entirely after multiple terms in office. Determining the extent to which this is the case for any given individual is extremely difficult. With the experiment used in Chapters 2 and 4, I avoid this potential confound by intentionally selecting only celebrities who have never served in public office. With the observational data used in Chapters 3 and 5, the issue presents more of a dilemma. Removing celebrities that have served any term in office from subsequent analysis avoids the confound but at the same time removes a huge chunk of the signal. In doing so it likely obscures the political impact of celebrity status more than it clarifies it. For example, there may be something systematically different about celebrities who serve only one term and those who serve many, even while the latter’s fame retains its pre-office associations. Thus the “fix” of removing experienced celebrities presents new problems. Instead, I have opted to keep these candidates and legislators in the

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<sup>8</sup>The term “legacy candidate” refers to individuals who inherit a political reputation and support group from predecessors with whom they share familiar or personal ties (See Smith 2013). Even while these individuals have not served in office their fame is exclusively associated with it.

analyses while incorporating controls into my statistical models for incumbency status and the number of terms served to capture the independent effect of experience.

Identifying “fame” in the absence of national surveys is also a challenge to any empirical analysis of this nature. For the purposes of the experiment, this was not problematic as there was such a survey. Recognition rates of the celebrities used ranged from 85% to 93% of the demographically and geographically diverse respondents, which strongly confirms their fame.<sup>9</sup> With the observational data, capturing candidate recognition requires more crude approaches. Section 3.5 outlines the procedures used for operationalizing celebrity as well as robustness checks on the coding scheme.

## 1.6 Celebrity Candidacy in Japan and Elsewhere

The perception that celebrity entry into politics is a pervasive and rising phenomenon can be found in numerous studies (Van Zoonen, 2006; Weiskel, 2005; West and Orman, 2003; Street, 2004). However the empirical foundations for these judgments remain unspecified. In a preliminary and cursory comparative search, I used online newspaper archives via the news aggregator Factiva to query the terms “celebrity candidate,” “celebrity candidacy,” and “celebrity election” restricting returns to January 1st 1960 to August 15th 2015. Results were filtered by country for each of Lijphart’s list of 36 democracies (Lijphart, 2012). This search, which was by no means exhaustive or thorough, turned up journalistic reports of “celebrities” either running for or taking office in 21 countries from every region of the world. While this is suggestive of the phenomenon being widespread, there is seemingly great variation between cases. In Australia and New Zealand, for example, reported incidences are quite rare. Elected celebrities in the United States tend to garner the most attention however their numbers are still low compared to several other countries.<sup>10</sup> Since India’s independence, Mukerjee estimates the number of elected celebrities there to be in the hundreds (Mukherjee, 2004). Marsh et al report the phenomenon being more

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<sup>9</sup>The survey also included fake celebrity counterparts with the same backgrounds but a different name and face. Less than 2% of respondents claimed familiarity with these fictitious candidates, which suggests that the vast majority were answering seriously.

<sup>10</sup>I documented only 40 elected celebrities from 1960 to present. These were almost evenly split between executive and legislative offices. There were 19 House members, 5 Senators, and 19 who had served as either governor or mayor. For each type of office, these figures represent far less than 1% of all those winning.

**Table 1.1:** Celebrity Candidacy in Finland

	Total Number of Candidates	Percentage Celebrities	Total Number of Winners	Percentage Celebrities
2003	2029	1.8%	200	8.0%
2007	2004	2.7%	200	10.0%
2011	2315	2.6%	200	9.0%

*Finnish candidate and election data provided by Matthew Shugart and Asa Bengtsson, which was collected with funding provided by the National Science Foundation: NSF SES-0452573. See Chapter 3 for description of candidate coding scheme.*

widespread in Indonesia than the US or UK (Marsh, ‘t Hart and Tindall, 2010). Rates in Finland have also been comparatively high in the last three Eduskunta elections (See Table 1.1). In the Philippines, celebrity candidates have cropped up for races of every representative office in extremely high numbers for some (See Table 1.2).

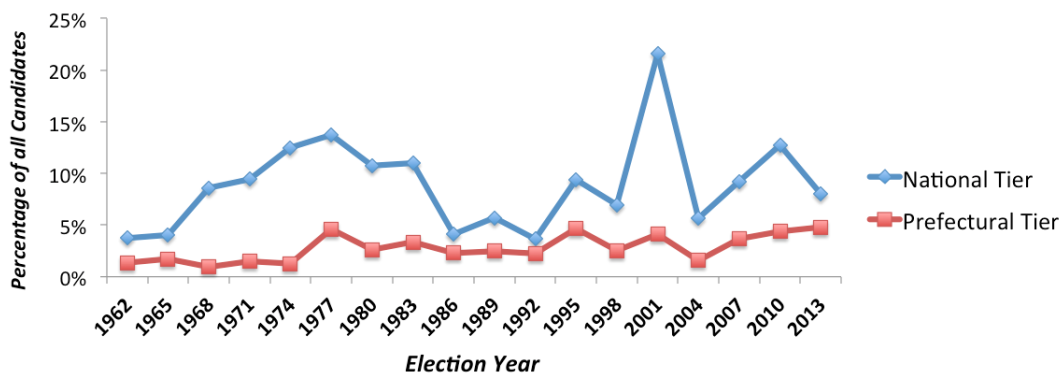
There is less empirical support for the notion of a general rise overtime, however some cases do comport with this perception. In the Philippine elections of 2013, the number of winning celebrities increased to 51 from 49 in the previous election (Santos, June 22nd 2013). In the single member district tier of the Korean National Assembly, Nemoto finds that the number of elected celebrities rose from 0%, in the first democratic elections of 1988, to over 5% of the legislators in 2012. Ribke documents elected celebrities in two periods of Brazilian election history, 1982-1990 and 2006 to 2012, and reports a rise from the 1st to the 2nd (Ribke, 2014). Arter reveals that the number of celebrity candidates in Finland has increased since the 60s and 70s, while their rate of winning has remained relatively stable (Arter, 2014). Celebrity candidacy has also risen in Japan’s upper house since 1962 (See figure 1.1).

Not only is there much variation across cases in the general rates at which celebrities enter into politics, but there are also noticeable patterns within countries in the types of offices they seek. In the Philippines for example, celebrity candidacy is more concentrated among executive positions, whereas in the U.S. there is more of an

**Table 1.2:** Philippine 2010 General Elections: Celebrities as a Percentage of all Candidates by Office

Office	Percent Celebrity
President	10.0%
Vice President	37.5%
Governor	2.7%
Vice Governor	1.9%
Senate	18.0%
Mayor	23.5%
District Representative	0.8%
Local Councilor	4.1%

*Celebrity candidate numbers collected by Brenda Barrientos and published in GMA news April 23rd 2010. Total candidate numbers retrieved from the Philippine Commission on Elections (Comelec). The offices of president and vice president are elected separately.*



**Figure 1.1:** Celebrity Candidacy in Japan's Upper House

*National tier candidate background data collected by me using newspaper archives (Asahi and Yomiuri) for 2007, 2010, and 2013 elections. All other candidate background data provided by Matthew Shugart (UC Davis) and Kuniaki Nemoto (Musashi University). See Chapter 3 for description of celebrity coding scheme.*

even split between executive and legislative office holders. Meanwhile, in Japan, the House of Councillors seems to serve almost exclusively as the celebrity springboard into politics. While there have been 8 celebrity governors in postwar Japan, 5 of these began their political careers in the upper house. Moreover distribution within the upper house is far from even as the overwhelming majority appear in the national tier

of that body. In the next two chapters I explore the dynamics of voting behavior and institutions, which helps to explain why this variation exists.

## Chapter 2

# Heuristic Hierarchy and the Electoral Value of Fame

## 2.1 Introduction

Candidates dedicate significant resources towards getting their names out in public. Through public appearances, flyers, yard signs, posters, and other means, candidates frequently reach out to voters with messages that are wholly devoid of policy content. In Japanese lower-house and local elections, for example, one of the most common methods of campaigning known as “renko” entails repeatedly shouting only your name and the office you are running for, in densely populated areas. It would seem the conventional wisdom in politics is that to be remembered at all is to be remembered favorably. But why would mere recognition ever be reason enough for voters to support a candidate for office? In this chapter I highlight the important role that institutions play in shaping the way voters evaluate candidates, and identify particular conditions that make mere recognition more electorally valuable.

Scholars of electoral rules have consistently documented that certain systems tend to enhance the value of candidates’ personal characteristics and reputations in elections (Shugart, Valdini and Suominen, 2005; Nemoto and Shugart, 2013; Smith, 2012; Arter, 2014). While this ‘personal vote’ literature has contributed much to our understanding of how institutions affect elite-level behavior among elected officials and parties<sup>1</sup>, there is less precision with respect to individual voters, and addressing how exactly some voters come to incorporate candidate characteristics into their ballot decisions, under different institutional arrangements.

On the other hand, studies in psychology, decision theory, and voting behavior have extensively documented the types of heuristics that voters use, the underlying cognitive processes involved, and the reliability of different shortcuts, but they have largely shied away from specifying the real-world conditions or institutional contexts under which some heuristics win out over others.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, there remains some tension between these scholars about the mechanisms through which these heuristics apply to voting decisions in general.

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<sup>1</sup>See for example Bowler and Farrell (1993), Andre and Depauw (2012) on constituency service; Carey (2008) on legislative voting; Ramsayer and Rosenbluth 1994 on pork barreling; Golden and Chang (2001) on corruption; Cox et al (1999) on factionalism; Pekkanen et al. (2006) on committee service; Crisp et al. (2004) on bill initiation.

<sup>2</sup>See for example McDermott (2005) on the use of candidate occupation, Matsubayashi and Ueda (2011) and Aguilar et al (2012) on candidate race, McDermott (1998) on gender, Sadin (2012) on class background, Lawson et al. (2010) on candidate appearance.

Regarding the short cut of name recognition and the mechanisms of its use, some favor an ecologically rational interpretation, whereby voters make inferences about recognition as a signal, or cue, of something that is more directly relevant to the election, such as candidate viability or competence (Marewski et al., 2010; Kam and Zechmeister, 2013)<sup>3</sup>. Others, however, maintain that previous exposure and recognition have a more direct and less conscious impact on voters' positive attitudes or preferences towards a candidate, allowing voters to make an even less cognitively taxing (but not necessarily more accurate) choice based on simple affectation (Harmon-Jones and Allen, 2001; Bornstein and Craver-Lemley, 2004).

Drawing upon insights from these often disparate literatures, in this chapter I argue that the question of how voters use recognition – whether directly or indirectly, as well as whether it is used at all in lieu of other decision making short cuts, is susceptible to the institutional context in which voters are forced to make representative choices. The more that context imposes a cognitive cost in terms of information processing, the more likely recognition will be used, even in the presence of other presumably more efficient quality cues, such as incumbency and occupational background. Moreover, when name recognition is made electorally relevant in this way – that is, by the burdens that certain electoral systems and ballots impose on voters – the short cut will be used not as an indirect way to make inferences about candidate viability or competence, but rather as a more crude affect heuristic – “I have positive feelings about this candidate, therefore I prefer her.” This, in turn, can lead to electoral outcomes that are seemingly at odds with voters' stated preferences in national surveys.

Identifying the independent effect of mere name recognition on a given candidate's support is difficult when it is also tied to a candidate's political history. Do voters support an incumbent, for example, because of simple familiarity, because of her past political behavior, or because incumbency signals quality? One strategy for getting around this issue is to focus on famous amateurs, or, “celebrity” candidates, who have a high degree of name recognition that is not associated with service in any public office. Here, I leverage the non-politically based fame of real celebrities to address the question of when (under what conditions) mere name recognition matters and why.

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<sup>3</sup>Kam and Zechmeister find evidence of both (indirect ecologically rational and direct affectation-based) mechanisms at play.

My analysis in chapter 3 on celebrities in Japanese upper house elections, and the relatively high rates of celebrity candidacy in other counties that feature personalistic voting systems, suggest that there is a relationship between voting rules and the electoral value of mere name recognition. But why would this be the case? How is it that these systems could induce voters to put a premium on candidate fame? Here I investigate the demand side of these outcomes with a survey experiment on voter decision-making under different conditions of co-partisan competition. I find that even a modest increase in the number of co-partisan candidates on ballots leads respondents to support political amateurs if they are endowed with personal fame. This is particularly surprising in light of the fact that these same respondents overwhelmingly reject “celebrities” in the abstract, when expressing preferences over an array of different candidate backgrounds (see figure 2.1).

Perhaps more striking is that this support comes in spite of the availability of other, arguably more efficient, cues, which runs against the expectations of recent scholarly work on the recognition heuristic (Gigerenzer and Goldstein, 2011; Kam and Zechmeister, 2013). Finally, a sub-group analysis of the results suggests that this support does not operate through the standard ecologically-rational mechanisms of the recognition heuristic, but rather through the less conscious mere exposure effect (MEE).<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 When Fame Matters Over Other Candidate Attributes and How Voters Use It

Studies in voting behavior that address when voters use candidate valence attributes have emphasized the pivotal importance of whether or not the more efficient cue of partisanship is available. They have also acknowledged the role of institutions by frequently evoking the example of primary elections, municipal elections, and other voting contexts that they dub “low information environments.” These are environments where voters know less about the policy platforms of candidates.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>4</sup>MEE is a phenomenon whereby individuals develop a positive affect and preference for objects or people, merely through exposure to them. See Zajonc, 1968, 1980; Moreland and Zajonc 1982; Bornstein 1989; Harmon-Jones and Allen 2001.

<sup>5</sup>See for example Popkin; 1994, Jervis; 1993, Burden; 2002, Kam and Zechmeister; 2013.

tacit and reasonable assumption in this literature is that voters will always default to the particular shortcuts that most accurately predict what their choices would be, if fully informed. If a high quality cue, such as partisanship, is not available then they will move on to the next best predictor (e.g. occupation background, race, gender, etc) that allows them to make some inference about the candidates' likely political behavior.

Note that the predictive cues here are being considered in terms of quality, rather than quantity. Yet there is a quantitative dimension to information as well that also has bearing on these decision-making strategies. Seminal work in cognitive psychology has emphasized that much heuristic use is driven by the mind's need to simplify decisions in the face of more information than it can (or is willing to) manage (Tversky, Kahneman and Moser, 1990). What many voting heuristic studies seem to overlook is that just as not all decision-strategies are created equal in terms of accuracy, neither are they equal in terms of the effort required to implement them.

Many heuristics can be broadly categorized according to whether they entail using features of objects as cues, or entail cueing off of one's very ability to remember the objects themselves (Marewski et al., 2010). McDermott's (2005) finding that voters utilize candidate occupation backgrounds to infer relative degrees of competence, would be an example of the former, while the recognition heuristic would be a memory-based strategy. Feature-based strategies generally produce more accurate (i.e. more consistent with individual preferences) outcomes than do memory-based heuristics (Marewski et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick and Epstein, 1992). Yet memory based mechanisms such as the recognition heuristic have a competitive edge over others because less time and effort is required to implement them (Pachur and Hertwig, 2006). This tradeoff between accuracy and effort in the adoption of different decision strategies or tools has been long recognized (Beach and Mitchell, 1978), but there remains ongoing debate about where exactly the thresholds lie by which one tool is likely to be chosen over another (Glöckner and Bröder, 2011). Recent experimental work suggests that the cognitive-effort threshold need not be that high, before voters start to rely on simpler but less reliable cues (Cunow, 2014).

Kam and Zechmeister (2013) found that name recognition has the potential to lead to voter support either directly – through a mere exposure effect (MEE)

– or indirectly through considerations of candidates’ relative viability. The direct mechanism is relatively inefficient next to the use of more informative cues such as incumbency and partisanship. However, it is also the least cognitively-taxing as it occurs automatically at a preconscious level (Bornstein, 1989; Volz et al., 2006; Verhulst, Lodge and Lavine, 2010). Experimental research has shown that MEE is more apparent when the complexity of choices facing individuals is greater (Bornstein and Craver-Lemley, 2004), and that increasing the cognitive demand on individuals can lead them to adopt more affective-based decision making (Slovic et al., 2007; Shiv and Fedorikhin, 1999). I reason that MEE may lead voters to support easily recognized celebrity candidates when the cost of both gathering and processing information about candidates is high.

So when is it that these costs are high? Gathering needed information about candidates becomes more costly when quality cues such as partisanship are absent. Furthermore, processing information about candidates becomes more costly when there are a greater number of candidates to evaluate and choose from. Electoral systems are relevant to both quality and quantity dimensions of information that may affect a voter’s decision-making process. These institutions structure not only what type of representative agents voters may choose at the ballot box (candidates, parties, or both), but also influence how many agents they may choose from (varying levels of district magnitude). In this respect, we would expect these costs to be highest in systems that feature high levels of co-partisan competition, where voters must choose from among many same-party candidates. As these conditions are often met in high magnitude preferential voting systems, it is no surprise perhaps that we tend to see many celebrities consistently running and winning in countries using those systems.<sup>6</sup>

The above considerations lead to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1** *As the number of competing co-partisan candidates presented to voters increases, the more voters will rely on a recognition heuristic.*

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<sup>6</sup>Some of these cases include the Finnish Eduskunta, the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, the Philippine Senate and the Japanese House of Councillors all of which have featured relatively high rates of celebrity candidacy (see Chapter 1 for rates of celebrity candidacy in these cases). ”High magnitude preferential voting systems refers to electoral systems where many seats are allocated to districts and voters have the option of choosing candidates rather than just party lists

## 2.3 Case Selection

To test this hypothesis I conducted a survey experiment on Japanese citizens asking them to vote in a hypothetical House of Councillors election, where ballots included real celebrities, and treatment conditions captured the typical variation in co-partisan choice-set sizes that voters encounter every 3 years at the polls. As real House of Councillors elections have long featured high rates of celebrity candidacy, and as turnout in Japan is comparatively high <sup>7</sup>, these respondents are more accustomed to the types of choices presented in the experiment. If the survey experiment were run with voters who never encounter high levels of co-partisan competition, or the presence of celebrities on elections ballots, the respondents' unfamiliarity with the voting format and the overly conspicuous nature of the candidates themselves presents the risk that such respondents would be unable to envision the choice as an actual election decision and behave as though they would in the voting booth.

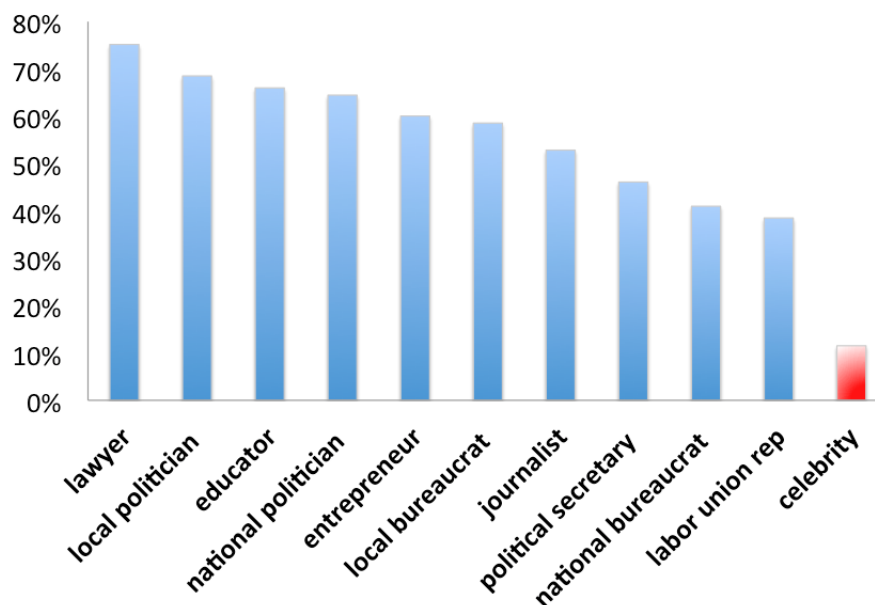
Aside from validity considerations with the experiment, the Japanese case also merits attention because the phenomenon of celebrity politics there is somewhat paradoxical. There is a clear disconnect between public opinion and voter behavior. National surveys conducted just prior to the 2010 Upper House Election indicated that the public largely disapproved of celebrities as political candidates when asked about them in the abstract. <sup>8</sup> My own more recent survey results also comport with these findings (see Figure 2.1). When queried about their approval of various types of candidate backgrounds from a list of those commonly encountered in Japan's Diet, respondents overwhelmingly disapproved of celebrity candidates in the abstract and only 10% expressed any positive attitude towards a celebrity background.

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<sup>7</sup>Japan ranks 65th out of 169 countries in vote to voting age population for parliamentary elections from 1945 to 2001 according to a Global Report by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

<sup>8</sup>Surveys conducted by Nikkei Newspaper and FNN on 6/21/2010. Support for "talent" candidates was a mere 10.5% while those expressing disapproval were over 85.7%. See: <http://matometanews.com/archives/1256849.html>

### Percentage of Respondents Approving of Different Candidate Backgrounds



**Figure 2.1:** Percentage of Respondents Approving of Different Candidate Backgrounds

And yet real celebrities continue to receive nominations from every major party in national elections and moreover perform well in many races. Only a month after the aforementioned 2010 surveys, an Olympic judo medalist and TV commentator topped their party's list with more votes than any DPJ or LDP list candidate. Meanwhile another former TV personality running for the Tokyo prefectural seat in the same election broke the record for most votes won in any constituency election ever. 2010 was not an aberration. For example, in the 2013 Upper House contest a former pro-wrestler topped the JRP party list while several celebrities beat out co-partisan LDP rivals in the national tier race.

Also interesting about the Japanese case is that there is a clear and consistent difference in both the rates of celebrity candidacy and the performance of celebrities who run for different tiers of the same office. Since 1962 celebrity candidates have comprised less than 3 percent of all those running in the prefectural tier, yet that rate nearly quadruples when one looks at the national tier (see Table 2.1).

Media coverage of this phenomenon has understandably attributed it to the

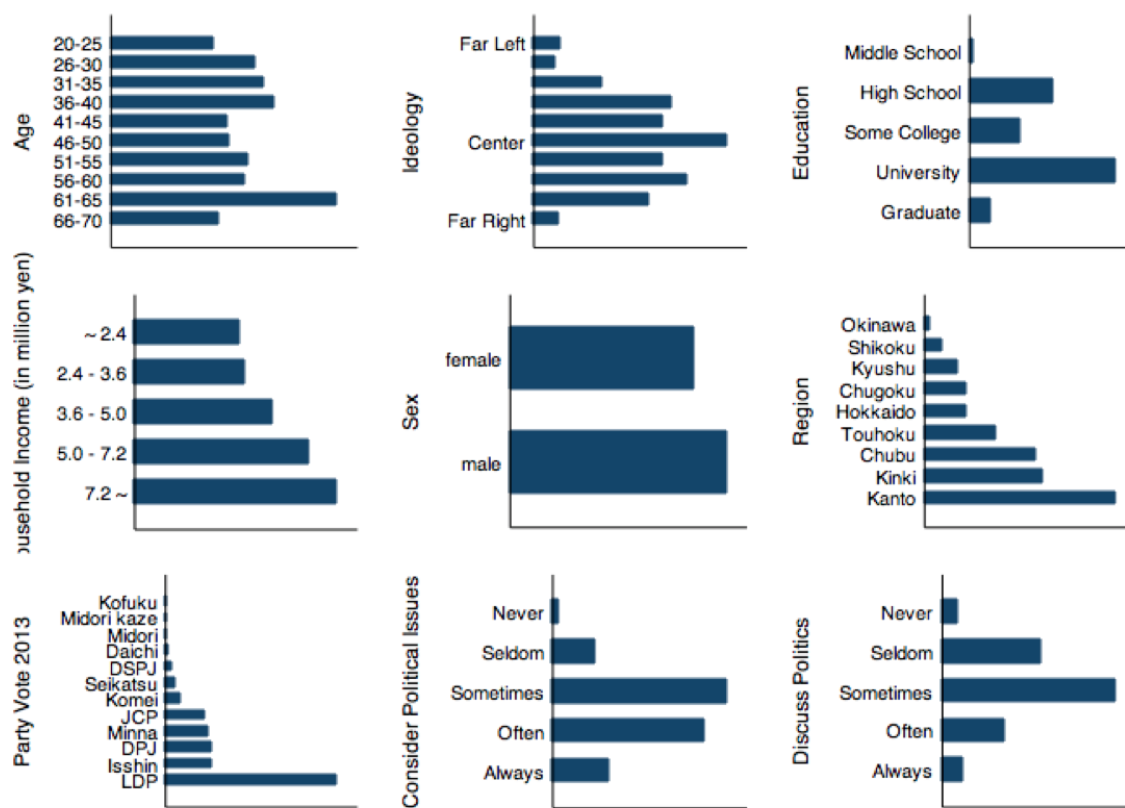
magnitude and national scope of celebrity fame that few politicians can compete with outside of their local spheres of influence. But closer inspection reveals there is likely more to the story than the simple geographic reach of celebrity name recognition. If name recognition by itself was sufficient to bring celebrity success, we would still expect them to far outperform their competitors in prefectural tier races since most non-celeb prefectural tier candidates do not have personal support bases that encompass the entire prefecture (Richardson, 1967; Köllner, 2002). However the celebrity edge in these smaller district races appears marginal at best.

**Table 2.1:** Celebrity Candidates in the House of Councillors 1962 – 2013

	National Tier	Prefectural Tier
Celebrity Candidates as Percentage of all Running	7.95%	2.89%
Overall Success Rate of Celebrity Candidates	54.66%	32.06%
Overall Success Rate of Non-celebrity Candidates	31.42%	29.72%

Thus, this seems to provide some prima facie evidence that name recognition, in conjunction with different levels of co-partisan competition, may be inducing voters to employ different heuristics for these two tiers of the same political office. For the purposes of testing the hypothesis above, however, note that with observational data alone I cannot rule out the possibility that the types of celebrities running in these respective tiers, or the types of challengers they face, are somehow systematically different from one another in such a way that causes these disparate success rates. In other words, rather than being driven by changes in voter behavior, the phenomenon may be the simple result of systematic differences in party nomination strategy between tiers, or some other such unobservable. Therefore, I utilize a survey experiment to

isolate the effect of increasing co-partisan competition on voter behavior. The national sample of 1,966 Japanese respondents was conducted online in March of 2014 using Qualtrics web-survey platform. Respondents were recruited through Nikkei Research Inc., one of Japan’s leading market research firms. Figure 2.2 shows the demographic characteristics of the general sample (See Appendix A for information about Nikkei’s recruitment).



**Figure 2.2:** Characteristics of Survey Respondents

## 2.4 Research Design

Recall the hypothesis is that the electoral value of personal fame increases with the number of competing co-partisan candidates presented to voters. This is tested using a survey experiment that isolates the impact of increasing the number of

co-partisan candidates on ballots in the presence of both celebrity and non-celebrity candidates. Respondents were randomly assigned into 1 of 4 groups that corresponded to different combinations of 2 treatment conditions – presence or absence of a celebrity candidate, and small or large level of co-partisan competition.

Within each group, respondents were presented with a co-partisan ballot and then asked to choose a single candidate from among the list to serve as their representative in a hypothetical House of Councillors election. Respondents were informed that all candidates on the ballot were running with the nomination of the party they most support.

Each group ballot contained a set of candidates with distinct backgrounds in terms of education and occupation, picture and name. All candidates were fictional except for a single real celebrity, which was placed on one of the small ballots and on one of the large ballots. In place of that real celebrity on the other small and large ballots is a ‘counterpart,’ that is, a candidate with identical background information but a different name and face. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the sample ballot format. Table 2.2 summarizes the treatment conditions. (See appendix for listing of the background characteristics used on ballots).

**Table 2.2:** Experimental Treatment Conditions

	<i>With Celebrity Candidate</i>	<i>With Counterpart Candidate</i>
<i>3 person ballot</i>	Respondent Group 1	Respondent Group 2
<i>9 person ballot</i>	Respondent Group 3	Respondent Group 4

There were 8 celebrities and ‘counterparts’ used for this experiment, that were incorporated evenly into each of the four groups (see appendix for list and description of each). For each group, there were roughly 50 respondents that received the same celebrity or ‘counterpart.’ The celebrities were chosen specifically to differ on a key



Figure 2.3: Example Small Ballot Set (1 of 8)



Figure 2.4: Example Large Ballot Set (1 of 8)

dimension that distinguishes different types of celebrity candidates found in Japan, namely, proximity to politics. For example, while the renowned science popularizer, Kenichiro Mogi, is disassociated with politics completely, business magnate Mikitani Hiroshi is at least occupationally proximate (business backgrounds signaling leadership competency and being common in legislatures) and he is also not totally removed from the policy sphere, having taken a public stance on the recently salient nuclear issue. The celebrities and counterparts were placed in the middle or center position to mitigate the potential confound of ballot order effects, which in similar experiments has been shown to benefit candidates on the ends (Cunow, 2014).

If the hypothesis is correct, celebrity candidates should fare better on the 9-person ballots than they do on the 3-person ballots, in terms of support rates from respondents. Comparing these rates statistically is not as straight forward as conducting a simple difference of proportions test, because by design, the rates have to be compared against different null-hypotheses. On the 3-person ballot each candidate has a 33.3 percent chance of being selected if respondents were choosing completely at random, while on the 9-person ballot each candidate has only an 11.1 percent chance. I therefore must have two 2 non-celebrity control groups, one for each ballot size, and have to conduct the comparison in two stages.

Expectations are that on the 3-person ballots, recognition of the celebrity candidate will not override respondents' use of other heuristics, such as incumbency or political experience (which can be gleaned from the listed occupation background), and therefore that the celebrity candidates will not perform significantly better than their control group counterparts. Meanwhile, when these same celebrities go up against the same counterparts on 9 person ballots, I expect the cognitive ease of mere familiarity to take precedence over other heuristics which are now rendered more costly to implement. Consequently on these ballots celebrities should receive a significant bump in support relative to their counterparts.

## 2.5 Results

Before elaborating on the results of the experiment, I will address the assignment process of survey respondents into different treatment conditions. The survey was

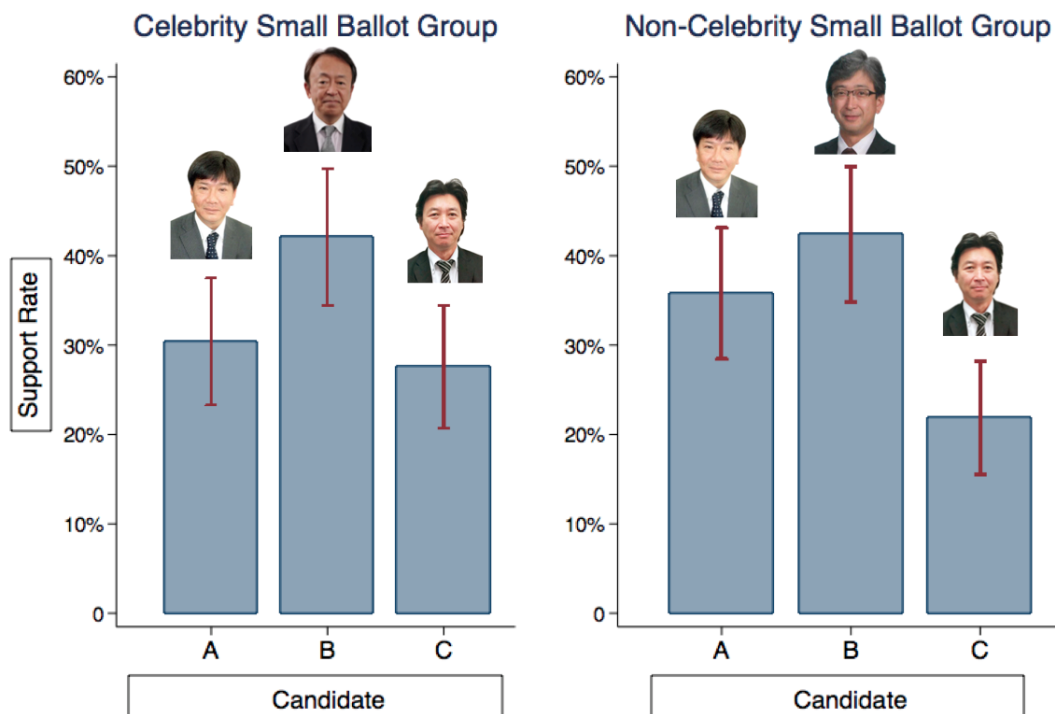
programed in Qualtrics to apply randomization algorithms for the assignment of each entering Nikkei monitor into one of the four treatment groups. The groups are well-balanced across key demographic and political variables. Group means are similar along income, age, gender, education, ideology, partisanship, level of engagement with politics, and general feelings towards candidates in the abstract with a celebrity background. One-way ANOVAs do not indicate any statistically significant differences across conditions, suggesting that survey randomization was successful (see Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3:** Covariate Balance across Experimental Conditions

	Small ballot w/celeb mean	Small ballot no celeb mean	large ballot w/celeb mean	large ballot no celeb mean	Prob >F
Income	502.184	504.464	516.414	518.671	0.672
Age	5.077	5.311	5.454	5.332	0.260
Female	0.486	0.464	0.446	0.451	0.662
Education	3.919	4.017	3.968	4.101	0.322
Conservative	0.312	0.256	0.269	0.253	0.207
Liberal	0.201	0.204	0.202	0.230	0.704
Vote Often	0.735	0.749	0.778	0.762	0.525
Consider Issues	0.469	0.491	0.499	0.463	0.706
Discuss Politics	0.233	0.251	0.207	0.203	0.310
LDP Support	0.334	0.294	0.287	0.268	0.218
DPJ Support	0.076	0.071	0.090	0.073	0.761
JRP Support	0.093	0.103	0.067	0.073	0.221
Komei Support	0.017	0.032	0.032	0.033	0.468
Prefer Celeb	3.614	3.688	3.716	3.658	0.566

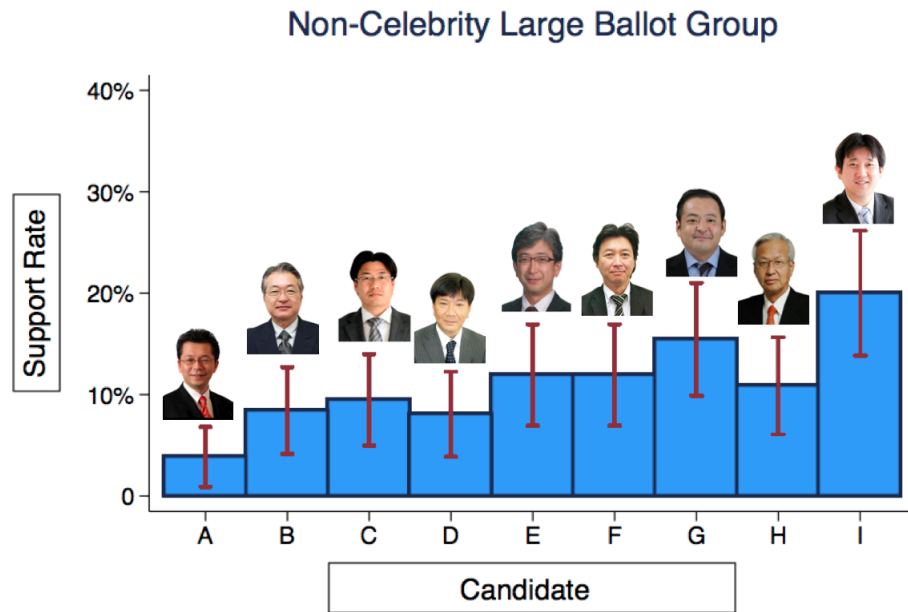
*p-values from one-way ANOVA*

The hypothesis is supported by results of the survey experiment. There was no significant difference in support for the celebrities and their counterparts on the small ballots, while on the large ballots the same celebrities outshined all opponents overwhelmingly, tripling the support rate of their counterpart. This difference moreover

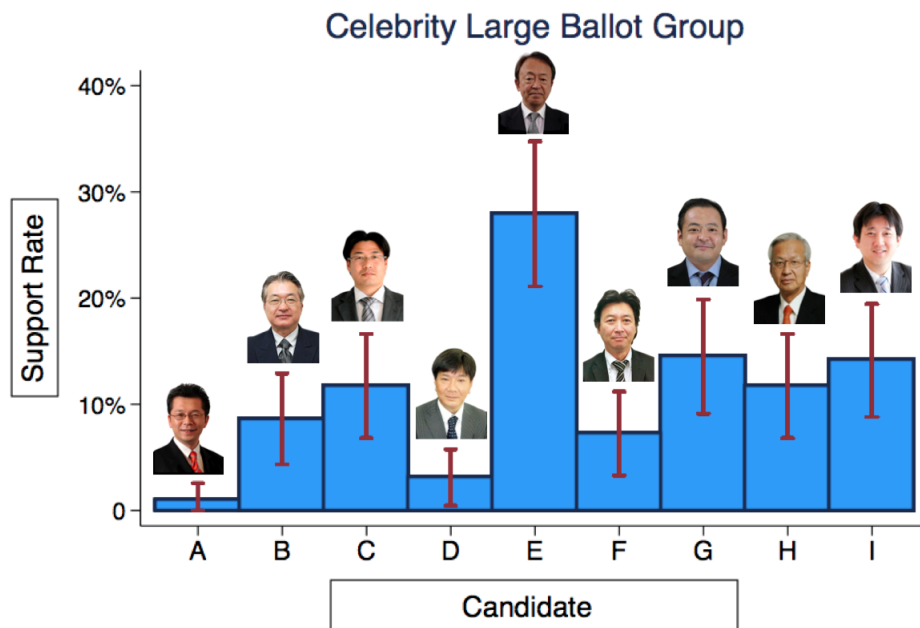


**Figure 2.5:** Aggregate Support Rates on Small Ballots

is significant at  $P < 0.01$ . Figures 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7 show aggregate support rates for candidates in each position across the ballot sets. Aside from the counterparts and celebrities in the middle/center position, candidates in all other positions were identical for each set. These results still hold whether or not we restrict results to non-politically proximate or politically proximate celebrities. When we look at each ballot set individually, that is, at each of the 8 individual celebrities and their counterparts, the substantive effect still shows, universally, but is not always statistically significant, likely due to smaller sample size. Figures 2.8 and 2.9 show individual celebrity-vs-counterpart support on the small and large and large ballot sets respectively.



**Figure 2.6:** Aggregate Support Rates on Counterpart Large Ballots



**Figure 2.7:** Aggregate Support Rates on Celebrity Large Ballots

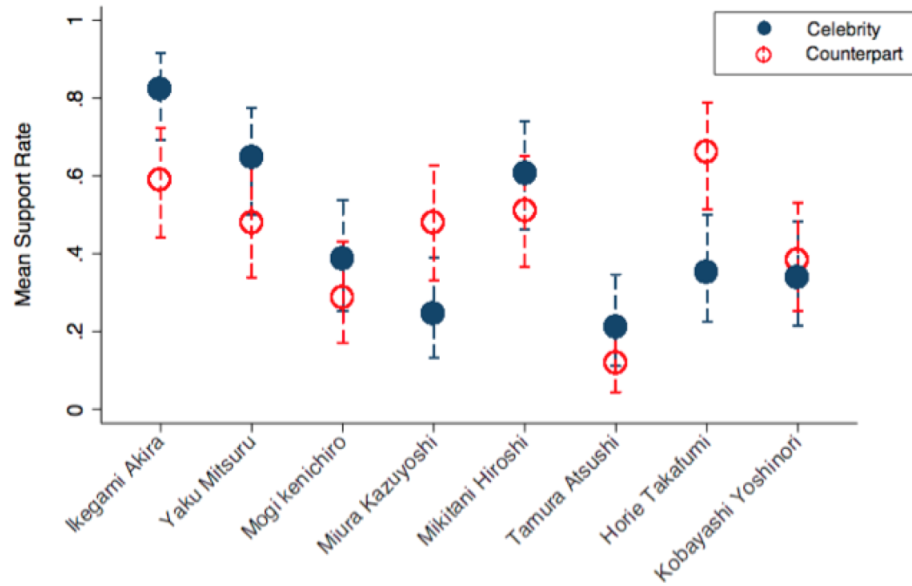


Figure 2.8: Individual Celebrity-vs-Counterpart Support Rates on **Small Ballots**

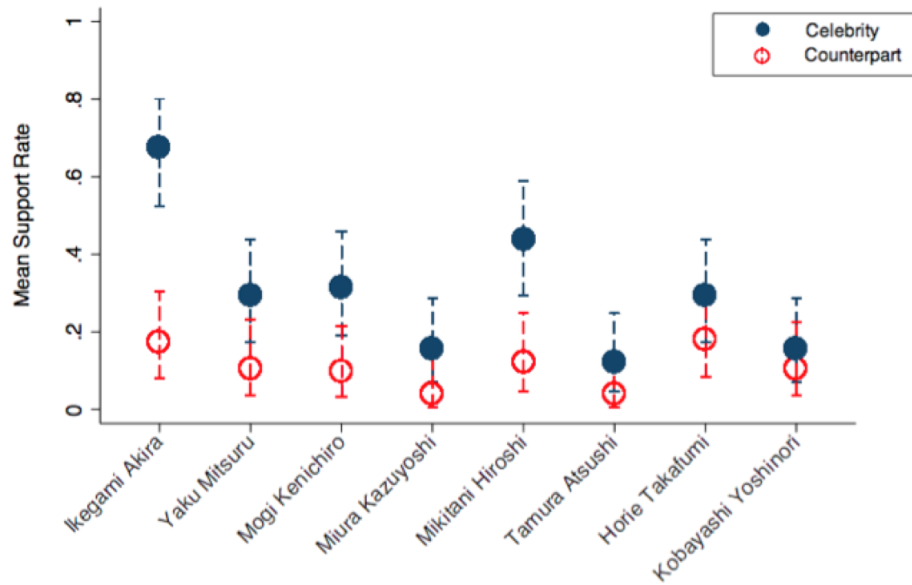


Figure 2.9: Individual Celebrity-vs-Counterpart Support Rates on **Large Ballots**

## 2.6 Ruling Out Appearance

Note that one limitation of the experimental design used here is that we can only glean the effect of the treatment as a whole rather than that of its individual components (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2013). In this case, those components include the candidate name, their appearance, and their fame (recall that the counterparts' occupational and education backgrounds are identical). For this study, these components cannot be separated through methods such as conjoint analysis because appearance, name, and background are all tied to the real celebrity's identity. Suppose, then, that it is not actually candidate fame driving my results, but rather simply the general appearance of the celebrity candidates relative to their counterparts. Perhaps when choosing among a large list of representative options, people are cueing not off of what is familiar, as I argue here, but simply off of what face is more attractive, more honest looking, more serious, or what have you. The evidence for voter support of candidates based on appearance alone is mixed. Lawson et al (2010) find that randomly selected Indian and American citizens shown only photographs of multiple candidates in Mexico and Brazil favored incumbents over losing candidates more than 68% of the time. Evidence from the United States however shows that the magnitude of this appearance effect, even where it does exist, is quite weak (Atkinson, Enos and Hill, 2009). For appearance to be a confound in this study, one would have to assume that the 8 celebrities used in the experiment systematically differ from their non-celebrity counterparts along one or more of these appearance-related dimensions, in such a way that is beneficial in the context of political representation. Recall that counterpart candidates (as well as other candidates on the ballot) were selected by design to roughly match the age of each celebrity used.

To help rule out the alternative hypothesis that treatment effects are related to appearance-related dimensions, I perform a separate test, restricting analysis to the smaller subset of respondents who reported not being familiar with the celebrity on their ballot. In the small ballot celeb groups, this set comprised 10.3%, while in the large ballot celeb groups it comprised 14.8% (see Table 2.4).<sup>9</sup>

If the alternative hypothesis is correct, we should find the same results for this subset of respondents that we find for those who are familiar with the celebrities –

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<sup>9</sup>In terms of the individual celebrities, recognition rates ranged from 85% to 93%

**Table 2.4:** Respondent Familiarity with the Celebrity Given

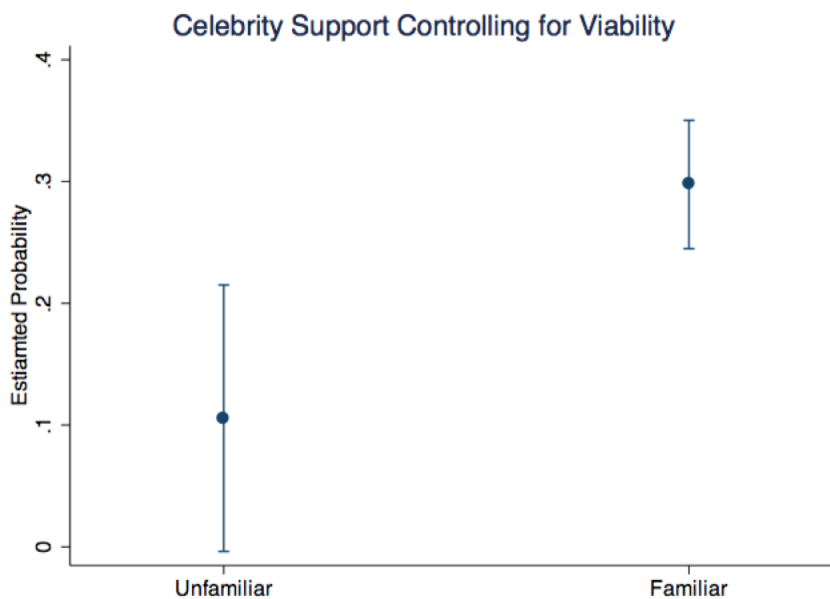
	Know	Don't Know
Small Ballot Group	365	42
Large ballot Group	339	62

that is, larger ballots should still lead to greater relative support for these candidates. If not, there should either be no statistical difference between the two candidate types' support rates, or the celebrities should actually fare worse than their counterparts. As it turns out, when respondents are unfamiliar with the celebrity, the celebrity actually appears to perform more poorly than his counterpart, yet this difference is not statistically significant. This is true for both large and small ballot respondent groups.

## 2.7 Familiarity Effect Not Mediated by Viability Inferences

The existence of respondents in the survey who are unfamiliar with the celebrity on their ballot allows me to conduct further tests on the Kam and Zechmeister (2013) contention that name recognition operates through the medium of viability in its impact on voter support. A follow-up question in the survey after respondents' made their respective vote choices redirected their attention to the celebrity listed on the ballot and queried whether or not they thought other voters would consider supporting this candidate in the same hypothetical election. Responses to that question were offered on a 5-point ordinal scale that provides us with a richer understanding of how "viable" these candidates were thought to be in terms of perceptions about the general public's willingness to support them over the other candidate options.

Leveraging variation in familiarity with the celebrity as well as in perceptions of their viability, I test for mediation effects using Barron and Kenny's (1986) causal steps approach. I use linear probability models for each step, testing first whether



**Figure 2.10:** Large Ballot Celebrity Support by Familiarity Controlling for Viability

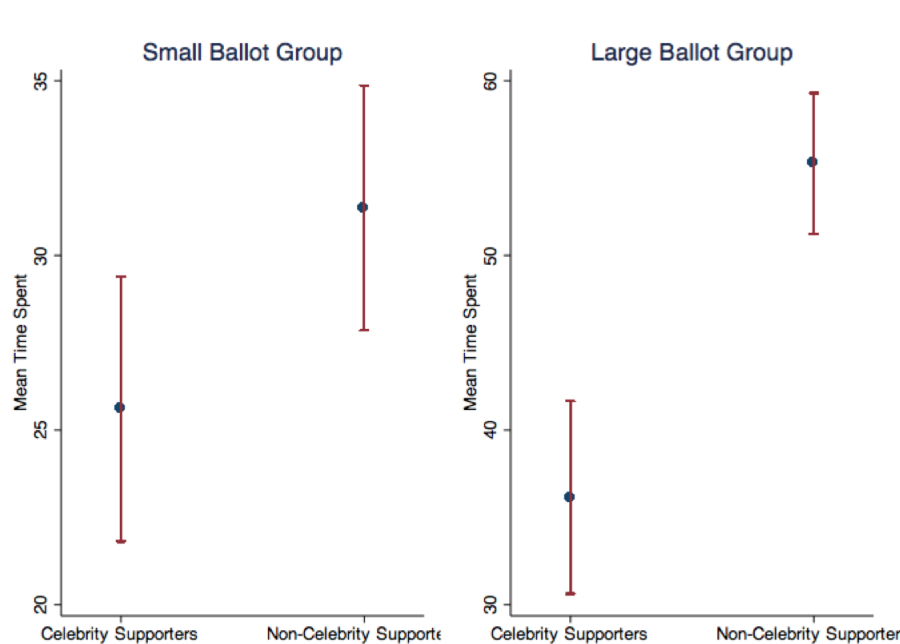
or not the treatment (familiarity) predicts the dependent variable (support), second whether the treatment predicts the considered mediator (viability), and third whether the mediator still impacts vote choice when we control for familiarity.

If the effect of familiarity that we see on the large ballots were operating through this proposed mediator of viability, we would expect it to disappear when assessing the treatment's coefficients from the step 1 model to the step 3 model. Instead, the probability of voting for the celebrity given familiarity, remains high at 29.7% (moving down only 1.4% from Model 1) and remains significant at  $P < 0.001$  (See Figure 2.10).

Recall that support for celebrities on the small-ballot group was not significantly different from the counterparts, suggesting that these respondents were not utilizing familiarity heuristics in the first place. Performing the steps above on the small-ballot group also yields results in line with the hypothesis. The difference in celebrity support rates between those expressly familiar with the celebrity and those unfamiliar is insignificant. This implies that whatever compelled small-ballot respondents to support the celebrity candidate was not a mere-recognition-based affect, nor viability-mediated recognition, but something else entirely.

## 2.8 Analysis of Response-Time Suggests MEE Mechanism

Time differences in respondents' vote choices support my contention that the celebrity vote is mediated by MEE and not other mechanisms of the recognition heuristic. If support is MEE-driven on the large ballots as I argue, then the time celebrity supporters spent choosing among candidates should be significantly less than the time spent by those who chose other candidates on the same ballots, since MEE processes operate faster than inference-based processes (Zajonc, 2001; Volz et al., 2006). Meanwhile, if celebrity support on the small ballots is less MEE-driven, as I argue, then the time celebrity supporters spent making decisions on the small ballots should not be much less than that of those who chose other candidates on the small ballots. Difference of means tests show that there is no significant difference between these sub-groups on the small ballots, while celebrity supporters on large ballots spent 35% less time than non-celebrity supporters and this difference is significant at  $P < 0.0001$  (see Figure 2.11).



**Figure 2.11:** Supporters vs Non-supporters Response Time Comparison by Group

## 2.9 Discussion

Electoral systems around the world, within countries, and even within individual legislative chambers differ in the way they structure representative choices and present information to voters. We know from previous studies that voter decision making strategies are sensitive to this electoral environment and that the personal characteristics of candidates become more important when cues such as partisanship do not allow voters to adequately narrow their options. How voters choose among these different candidate-cues, what inferences they make through them, and whether inferences are being made at all, is less understood.

Recent work has suggested that the characteristic of candidate familiarity becomes inconsequential when the cue of incumbency is available to voters (Kam and Zechmeister, 2013). This suggests that there may be a hierarchy among the many candidate-based cues, and that voters select on them according to which heuristic allows for the most accurate inferences. However, there is also evidence that increasing the amount of representative options and information available to voters may have the unintended consequence of inducing them to rely on simpler but suboptimal shortcuts (Lau and Redlawsk, 2001; Cunow, 2014). This implies that any consideration of a heuristic-hierarchy needs to also take into account the relative cognitive costs of processing information through these cues, and not just their relative predictive values.

This paper provides evidence that even modest increases in levels of co-partisan competition – a common consequence of different electoral institutions – can be enough to activate voter use of the recognition heuristic, in spite of the availability of arguably superior cues. My analysis also suggests that the use of this heuristic in the context of abundant choice, operates through the crude mechanism of Zajonc’s mere exposure effect, and that voters are not making inferences about candidate viability. Finally, I show that this interaction of institutions and decision-making tendencies has real-world consequences on the types of candidates that run for office, and can lead to electoral outcomes that are inconsistent with voters’ stated preferences.

The results presented in this paper have implications for institutional engineering as well as how we evaluate the efficacy of different heuristics. If heuristic use is governed by both quality and quantity dimensions of the information environment, how do we optimize that environment to best serve voters’ needs? Are nationwide

and very large districts compatible with the voter option of casting a preference vote?

These results also contribute to what is still an open debate about whether or not the use of crude heuristics is limited to certain types of voters, or whether it is a more universal phenomenon. While some maintain that uninformed voters are more likely to rely on simpler cues (Popkin and Dimock, 1999; Abrajano, 2005; Baldassarri, 2013), I find that these institutional effects on the use of candidate familiarity persist across respondents of different ideological persuasions and partisan attachments, at varying levels of income, education, and even across different levels of robustly measured political sophistication.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Respondents' level of engagement with politics was captured on 5 point ordinal scales of frequency for seven different measures of political activity: 1) voting, 2) considering political issues, 3) discussing political issues, 4) donating to candidates or political organizations, 5) attending political events, 6) volunteering for political campaign activities, 7) contacting district representatives

## Chapter 3

# Running the Right Race: Voting Rules and Celebrity Candidate Entry

### 3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 I provided experimental evidence that some voters tend to support famous amateur candidates when forced to choose among a multitude of co-partisan alternatives. If that is true, we might expect to find parties especially willing to nominate and recruit celebrity candidates when and where voting rules facilitate intraparty electoral competition. Similarly, we might expect a pool of potential celebrity candidates to be much more willing to entertain nomination offers under such conditions. In this chapter I explore the link between electoral rules and celebrity candidate entry, as posited by Thart and Tindal (2009) and loosely supported by my cross-national findings outlined in Chapter 1, where higher rates of celebrity candidacy tended to be found in countries featuring more personalistic elections). Here I conduct a more robust test of the relationship, by taking advantage of institutional variation within two cases – the Japanese House of Councillors and the Finnish Eduskunta. In analyzing candidate backgrounds and election outcomes across multiple election years in these two legislative chambers, I am able to control for political history, constituents, and even chamber-specific party organization. I find that rates of celebrity candidacy are significantly sensitive to changes in electoral rules and the size of co-partisan party lists. Celebrities tended to turn out in much higher numbers when high magnitude preferential voting systems were used, and they moreover won at much higher rates than non-celebrities.

### 3.2 Electoral Systems, the Personal Vote and When Candidate Attributes Matter

There is a growing body of work on electoral systems that considers what has been dubbed the intraparty dimension of these institutions – namely, how electoral rules effect the internal organization of parties and the ways in which individual legislators and candidates relate to constituents (Katz and Bardi, 1980; Taagepera and Shugart, 1989). Much of this work has focused on explaining the political behavior of candidates and legislators in the context of their election or re-election goals and the particular incentives they face under different sets of electoral institutions. Here

the key distinction has been whether or not these arrangements encourage candidates and legislators to seek personal votes, which are votes based on the office seeker's personal reputation rather than his or her partisan affiliation (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987).

Though the effects of these personal vote-seeking incentives on how office seekers behave have been and continue to be explored<sup>1</sup>, there is less examination of how they influence who decides to run for office in the first place. It would seem the tacit assumption of this literature is that for voters, and by extension for rational office seekers as well, the part of the candidates' or legislators' personal reputation that matters most is that which is defined by their behavior, and not the more immutable characteristics that also define who they are, such as education, occupational background, race, gender, and other attributes.

Yet we know from studies of voter behavior that some citizens do make inferences about candidates from cues such as these<sup>2</sup>, which, while crude, are nonetheless often more transparent and readily available sources of information compared to records of political behavior. It stands to reason that if these attributes draw personal votes just as we assume political behavior does, then the distinction we make between electoral rules that promote candidate-centric versus party-centric elections have implications for democratic representation not only in a substantive sense, but a descriptive sense as well (Pitkin, 1967).

Shugart et al. 2005 and more recently Nemoto and Shugart 2013 have provided evidence from Europe and Japan that the prevalence of one such personal-vote-earning attribute (hereafter PVEA), namely local-ties to a district, is subject to differences in electoral institutions along the intraparty dimension. In a similar study, Smith 2013 also demonstrates the effect of electoral reform on the prevalence of "legacy candidates," or, candidates who inherit a political reputation and support group from predecessors with whom they share familial or personal ties. Yet, besides localism and legacy, other PVEAs, such as those mentioned above, have not to my knowledge

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<sup>1</sup>See for example Bowler and Farrell 1993, Andre and Depauw 2012 on constituency service; Carey 2008 on legislative voting; Ramsayer and Rosenbluth 1993 on pork.

<sup>2</sup>See for example McDermott 2005 on the use of candidate occupation, Matsubayashi and Ueda 2011 and Aguilar et al 2012 on candidate race, McDermott 1998 on gender, Sadin 2012 on class background, Lawsen et al. 2010 on candidate appearance.

been examined through an institutional lens.<sup>3</sup> In Chapter 2 I outlined how fame and the familiarity that comes with it can also serve as a PVEA when voters lack more quality information cues, and/or when an abundance of choice options renders these other cues too costly to process. I further pointed out that electoral systems are relevant to both of these quantity and quality dimensions of information that feed into a voter's decision-making process, since they structure both the type of agents that voters choose, and how many they choose from. The conditions that would seem to maximize the value of fame in elections are those in which there is either a high degree of intraparty completion on ballots or a high degree of candidate choice options in politics where party labels carry little or no value to voters.

Of course, the electoral rules by themselves do not guarantee these conditions since the number of candidates that parties field is up to the parties themselves. When comparing proportional representation systems in this respect, the electoral systems literature has tended to make comparisons at the district level – using district magnitude and the open or closed nature of lists as independent variables. Note, however, that where this logic really comes into play is at the level of party lists (Crisp, Jensen and Shomer, 2007). Consider, for example, an open-list system where increasing magnitude is assumed to increase the value of PVEAs. If a party fields only a few candidates (in spite of high district magnitude), its supporters face fewer costs in processing candidate information and may elect to view individual policy platforms in lieu of resorting to PVEAs. Conversely where a party fields more candidates than there are seats (which occurs, for example, in Brazil), the PVEA shortcut should be more important than we might expect from merely looking at district magnitude.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, whenever votes are pooled (list-systems), parties have an incentive to over-nominate. Even when votes are not pooled, parties have an incentive to nominate multiple candidates whenever they enjoy enough popular support within a district to

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<sup>3</sup>There is a sizeable literature on the role of electoral institutions and female representation that we might well place under the rubric of the intraparty dimension of electoral systems studies, but it does not, I would argue belong to the branch of these studies which deal with the personal vote. The mechanisms these studies point to do not concern the electoral incentives of individual legislators, or voter heuristics, but rather the logistical ease with which some systems allow for parties to enact quotas and overcome certain gender stereotypes without jeopardizing seat share, should they choose to do so.

<sup>4</sup>However it is worth pointing out that outside of the OLPR cases of Brazil and Finland (where lists often exceed M) and Japan (where lists are often shorter than M), the correlation between M and list size is stronger (I thank Matthew Shugart for bringing this point to my attention).

take multiple seats. Therefore higher district magnitude does not automatically imply intraparty competition, but it does at least increase the probability of its occurrence wherever voters are allowed to cast preference and/or nominal votes.

### 3.3 Celebrity Entry: Incentives for Parties and Candidates

When PVEAs are useful to voters, so should they matter to candidates and parties hoping to capitalize on these attributes. Candidates under these conditions should incorporate the potential value of their own PVEAs into their decisions over where and when to run for office.<sup>5</sup> From the standpoint of parties, candidate PVEAs are also always value added in list systems where votes are pooled, and under many circumstances are beneficial in nominal systems as well.<sup>6</sup>

It could be argued however that the PVEA of celebrity-status is unique in that it might carry both positive and negative valence. The results in Chapter 2 suggest that a positive valence may be triggered by large ballot environments, but what happens in other environments? We saw that voters dislike celebrities in the abstract. Could parties face reputation costs when fielding famous amateurs in races that bring closer voter scrutiny to the candidates running?

In Japan, recruitment and nomination procedures are mixed in that major parties like the LDP and DPJ utilize a combination of both open (*koubo*) and closed

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<sup>5</sup>Note I assume here that celebrity candidates are rational seekers of office, and that, given the choice, they elect to run in races where they have the greater chances of winning. Just like any other candidate type, however, celebrities do not always fit this model. There are, however, cases of celebrity candidates who run in hopeless races and are arguably not genuinely seeking office but running for alternative reasons (See for example Rosanne Barr's stated objective of "making socialism a part of the narrative"). To the extent that these cases exist in Japan (I was only able to document 2 – Mac Akasaka and Dr. Nakamatsu – neither of which ran for Diet elections) it is unlikely that they correlate with electoral rules in such a way that would positively bias my results since there is no incentive to run in high magnitude open-list races when their only aim is publicity. Rather, these types of candidates seem to flock to high profile executive elections that garner more media attention.

<sup>6</sup>For example, candidate PVEAs can only be value added for parties in a single member district system and an MNTV system when voters are given M number of votes. However in MNTV with votes <M, and under a system like SNTV, the value of candidate personal votes hinges on the question of whether they fielded the right number of candidates and how strong the PVEAs are. Just as parties should want to avoid the scenario of hopeless candidates taking away votes from other co-partisans in the race who are potentially viable, they also should be wary of a very strong PVEA-bearing candidate sucking up all the party's votes into only 1 seat.

methods. It would appear however that when celebrities are nominated they tend to be almost exclusively recruited by party leadership. It also seems that they tend not to bear other PVEAs – such as local status – as much their competitors. During the 6 lower house elections from 1996 to 2012 the DPJ recruited only 3 celebrities via *koubo* while the LDP did so with only 4. Moreover, only 50% of the LDP’s celebrity candidates were born in the district in which they ran compared to 72% of non-celebrities. In the DPJ, a similar pattern exists – only 24% of celebrities have local status compared to 52% of non-celebrities.<sup>7</sup> Recruitment data in the Upper House is not currently available, but my qualitative research in Tokyo during 2013 and 2014 suggest the patterns are similar. Of the 7 upper house celebrity candidates and elected celebrities that I interviewed, all except Yamamoto Taro reported having been recruited to run by party leadership, rather than seeking nomination for their own accord. Taro also was solicited by several leftist parties but opted to run in 2013 as an independent in the comparatively high-magnitude SNTV Tokyo district, where he succeeded as the only non-party affiliated winner. 8 of the 20 candidates running in this race took more than 91% of the votes and half of that group were celebrities – all with party affiliation except for Taro.<sup>8</sup> The willingness of party leaders to consistently and actively recruit celebrities in both tiers and in lower house SMD races would seem to suggest that they are not particularly concerned with reputation costs in any type of race. Recall from Table 2.1 that celebrities tend win at higher rates than non-celebrities in both the national and the prefectural tiers, even while that effect may be more pronounced in the former.<sup>9</sup>

For celebrity candidates then, more than their nominating parties, the presence

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<sup>7</sup>These recruitment and lower house celebrity candidate figures were generously provided by Daniel Smith, who generated them using a combination of his own candidate recruitment data and other background data from the Krauss and Pekkanen Japan Legislative Organization Database (J-LOD), which is part of a broader comparative candidate data project funded by the National Science Foundation and managed by Ellis Krauss, Robert Pekkanen, and Mathew Shugart.

<sup>8</sup>Interviews with Okura Jun 6/19/2013, Kirishima Rowland 8/23/13 (in English), Santo Akiko 4/23/2013, Shimizu Takayuki 4/24/2014, Maruyama Kazuya 4/30/2014, Yamamoto Taro 5/13/2014, and Tokunaga Eri 5/15/2014.

<sup>9</sup>There may be differences across parties, of course, in terms of their willingness to recruit candidates. In the case of Japan, the Communist Party and Komeito, unlike nearly all other parties, appear to rarely ever nominate celebrities. The communist party used to adhere to a policy of fielding candidates in all single member districts however both JCP and Komei now strategically limit their SMD contests while always running lists in the national tier. Note that, to the extent this skews estimates of the effects of electoral rules, it works against my hypothesis. In other words, I can sign the bias.

or absence of co-partisan competition seems more consequential. Even in cases of highly centralized nomination procedures where candidates do not self-select but are recruited and approved by the party, the ultimate decision to run still lies with the candidate.<sup>10</sup> The candidate must individually invest substantial time, effort (and often personal funds), and face reputation costs associated with the possibility of losing. While it may be the case that a given candidate's opportunity to run is determined entirely by parties, their decision over whether to act on such an opportunity and bear these costs is still made with a mind towards their relative probability of winning. For the PVEA-bearing celebrity candidate, that probability is subject to the conditions outlined in Chapter 2 that shape the relative value of recognition to voters. Thus, with respect to the influence of electoral institutions, I expect that higher degrees of intraparty competition will both encourage celebrities to accept nomination offers and garner them greater vote shares when they run.

These considerations lead to the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 2** *Celebrity candidacy will be more prevalent under systems that feature high numbers of candidates who cannot be meaningfully distinguished on the bases of partisanship.*

**Hypothesis 3** *As the number of competing co-partisan candidates increases, the better celebrity candidates will perform.*

If the hypotheses above are correct, we should expect to see higher incidences of celebrities taking office in systems where district magnitude is high and where partisanship alone does not distinguish the representative options available. Some examples of where these conditions are often met include the Finnish Eduskunta (OLPR; M: 1-33), the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies (OLPR; M: 8-70), the Philippine Senate (MNTV; M: 12) and the Japanese House of Councillors (SNTV, OLPR; M: 1 – 48), all of which have featured relatively high rates of celebrity candidacy (see Chapter

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<sup>10</sup>Though I have come across at least one case where a celebrity candidate was nominated against his will, won, and was later forced to serve in office when the courts ruled against his appeals to not take office: Sjur Lind Brække. Lind Brække was a WWII resistance fighter hero.

1). Recall from Table 2.1 that national tier celebrities tend to be more prevalent and to win at higher rates than celebrities in the prefectural tier. Celebrities running in Finland from 2003 to 2011 were more than 4 times likely to win than non-celebrities.<sup>11</sup>

While these aggregate figures comport with the above hypotheses there are still several confounds that must be ruled out and thus more controlled tests of the institutional effects are necessary. Below I will describe the specific institutional arrangements that make the Japanese House of Councillors and the Finnish Eduskunta ideal for such tests. I will then discuss the measurement of celebrity candidates, research design and results before concluding.

### **3.4 Case Selection: the Japanese House of Councillors and the Finnish Eduskunta**

The rich institutional variation of the Japan's upper house is particularly suited to an analysis of how electoral rules interact with the value of different candidate characteristics. Not only are these rules theoretically on opposite sides of the spectrum with respect to promoting candidate-centered or party-centered races, but they have also been employed side-by-side as the chamber is divided into two tiers. The prefectural tier has utilized the same set of electoral rules – single non-transferable vote (SNTV) – with a smaller district magnitude ranging from 1 to 5 for the duration of the postwar period. SNTV is a system whereby voters cast a single vote for candidate who competes in a multi seat district and where the candidate's votes accrue only to her rather than being pooled among others in her party. The national tier, on the other hand, has undergone 2 major reforms of its electoral institutions, and thus far held 12 elections under SNTV, 6 elections under closed list proportional representation (CLPR), and 5 elections under open list proportional representation (OLPR), each with the high district magnitude of 48 to 50 (see Table 3.1. Under CLPR voters cast votes for a party list and have no influence on the ranking of candidates on that list. Under OLPR by contrast, voters have the option of casting a preference vote for any individual candidate on one of the party lists such that while the candidates' votes are pooled among co-partisans they still have the potential to move that individual

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<sup>11</sup>The Finnish celebrity win rate was 35.5% while that of non-celebrity candidates was 8.8%.

candidate up in the list ranking. When district magnitude is high, SNTV and OLPR are especially conducive to personal voting, while CLPR, by contrast, is expected to promote much more party centered elections (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Shugart, Valdini and Suominen, 2005; Nemoto and Shugart, 2013).

**Table 3.1:** Post-war Structure of Japan’s House of Councillors

	1947 – 1980	1983 – 1998	Since 2001
Total number of seats	252 (250 bef.1970) Pref tier: 152 Nat tier: 100	252 Pref tier: 152 Nat tier: 100	242 Pref tier: 146 Nat tier: 96
Electoral System Used	Pref tier: SNTV Nat tier: SNTV	Pref tier: SNTV Nat tier: CLPR	Pref tier: SNTV Nat tier: OLPR
Election Cycle	Pref tier: 76 seats elected every 3 years Nat tier: 50 seats elected every 3 years	Pref tier: 76 seats elected every 3 years Nat tier: 50 seats elected every 3 years	Pref tier: 73 seats elected every 3 years Nat tier: 48 seats elected every 3 years
Length of Terms	6 year terms	6 year terms	6 year terms

In contrast to the House of Councillors, Finland uses only one set of electoral rules – OLPR – in the Eduskunta, its 200-seat unicameral national legislature. However there is much variation across districts in the magnitude of seats contested. In the country’s 15 districts, the number of seats ranges from 1 to 35 with 2/3rd of districts having a magnitude between 9 and 21. With 8 viable parties (those who win 6 or more seats) contesting elections across all districts, and the ability to nominate as many candidates as there are seats in each, there is also rich within-party variation in the size of lists presented to voters. Moreover, unlike the Japanese case, Finnish voters are obligated to cast a candidate preference on one of the lists and cannot opt to simply support the list itself. With roughly 2000 candidates running in each election, there is a lot of data to work with in assessing any relationship between candidate attributes

and levels of co-partisan competition.

### 3.5 Measuring Celebrity: Celebrity Candidate Construct and Operationalization

I define a celebrity candidate as any candidate that enjoys a high degree of personal fame prior to service in any public office. Measuring fame is of course more challenging in the absence of national surveys that query citizen familiarity with all candidates (Krasno and Green, 1988; Smith, 2012). To capture fame, previous scholars have relied on occupationally based coding schemes whereby occupational backgrounds that are typically associated with celebrity status were used to designate a candidate’s celebrity status. I follow this operationalization by coding candidates of the following backgrounds as famous - actors, television personalities, professional athletes, comedians, musicians, novelists, news anchors, and radio show hosts.

This procedure is potentially problematic in that it may generate false negatives and false positives to the extent that 1) fame bearing candidates of different backgrounds enter the data set and that 2) non-fame bearing candidates with one of these backgrounds enter the dataset.

As a robustness check on the accuracy of this operationalization procedure in Japan, I conducted a content analysis of newspaper archives from the 4 largest national Japanese news organizations – Yomiuri, Asahi, Mainichi, and Nikkei, – as well as the content aggregator Factiva, to assess the number of independent and non-repeating reports in which candidate names appeared from these various media sources. As a proxy measure of candidate fame, this number was recorded for 129 randomly selected “celebrity” and “non-celebrity” candidates from 15 of the 18 elections covered in the dataset. For each represented election and tier in this sample, an separate average hit count was calculated for the non-celebrity candidates, who were all either incumbents or previous Diet members. These separate averages served as fame thresholds by which the individual occupationally-coded “celebrities” were judged. If the celebrity candidates’ hit counts surpassed the fame threshold averages of their same-tier incumbent contemporaries, then the occupational coding would be supported by this alternative measure. Among the 51 occupationally-coded celebrities

in this sample, 81% met this standard. The distribution of those who did not meet the standard was not concentrated into any particular legislative period of electoral rules, but there was some small variation across election years. Celebrity candidates in the Finnish dataset were also coded on the basis of occupational background by Finnish political scientist Asa Bengtsson of Abo Academi University. The occupations counted included: movie and television actors, television and radio newsmen, print journalists and columnists, professional athletes and medalists, as well as owners, managers and coaches of national teams. As an added check on the validity of the coding scheme, Professor Bengtsson presented this list to a senior non-political scientist Finn and queried her about familiarity with each. Only those who were known were given celebrity-status.

I performed a separate content analysis test similar to the one described above, this time using only Factiva, on a subset of all candidates running in the districts of Uusimaa and Helsinki from 2003 to 2011. Over 3/4th of the 674 candidates received less than 4 Factiva hits. Of the 32 Bengtsson-coded celebrities in this sample, 66% surpassed this 4-hit threshold, meaning most seemed to be at least as publically mentioned as the top quartile of all candidates.

### 3.6 Research Design: House of Councillors

To test the proposition that celebrity candidacy is more prevalent under candidate-centered systems featuring high levels of co-partisan competition, I used individual level candidate data from Japanese House of Councillor elections from 1962 to 2013, as well as from three Finnish Eduskunta elections (2003, 2007–2011).<sup>12</sup> Hypothesis 2.2 is tested with individual level candidate and preference vote data from the aforementioned Finnish elections.

With the Japanese data, I estimated logistic regression equations on the dependent variable of candidate celebrity status to see whether electoral rules impact

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<sup>12</sup>Finnish candidate and election data were generously provided by Matthew Shugart and Asa Bengtsson who collected with a grant from the National Science Foundation: NSF SES-0452573. Japanese Upper House election and partial candidate background data were generously provided by Kuniaki Nemoto and Matthew Shugart. While in Tokyo during 2013-2014 I completed the dataset by collecting background data for national tier candidates in the last three elections. This data was obtained from online Yomiuri newspaper archives: <http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/election/sangiin2007/kaihyou/yb00001.htm>

the likelihood of an individual candidate being a celebrity, even in the presence of certain key controls. The models include controls that measure whether or not national tier candidates are members of a major party, and whether or not they were incumbents leading into the election. Including incumbency in the models is important because incumbents are generally assumed to enjoy wider name recognition than other candidates, yet they also bear other electorally relevant characteristics, such as experience. Without this control then, it would be difficult to distinguish whether the effects are operating through familiarity or other valence traits that celebrities might accrue through incumbency. Membership in a major party is included because party size is an important determinate of whether or not co-partisan competition manifests within each institutional context. If for example, large parties just happened to field more celebrity candidates in the national tier's SNTV and OLPR years for reasons orthogonal to the institutions, the models might overestimate the impact of the institutions themselves.

The independent variables of theoretical interest are a series of binary variables that code 1 for the legislative term year in which the legislator exists, otherwise 0. In Model 1 there are 19 such binary variables – one for each election cycle. Instead of displaying the model estimates in tabular form I will visualize the results. I do this because statistical significance tests are relevant in comparison only to the excluded group, therefore 18 models would be required to make all the needed comparisons. To display the results more parsimoniously, I estimated predicted probabilities using Margins in Stata. I expect that the likelihood of holding celebrity status will be greater during years when the national tier's SNTV and OLPR rules are in effect compared to CLPR years. (See Figure 3.3 for results of Model 1.)

Model 2 aggregates elections into periods that correspond to the different electoral rules used in the national tier. Period 1 (SNTV) is the aggregation of the seven elections that occurred from 1962 to 1980. Period 2 (CLPR) corresponds to the 6 elections occurring from 1983 to 1998, while period 3 (OLPR) covers five elections from 2001 to 2013. Again, the expectation is that the likelihood of being famous is greater during the SNTV and OLPR periods compared to the CLPR period (See Figure 3.2 for results).

Model 3 includes only prefectural tier legislators and uses the same aggregation

of years into periods as Model 2. The expectation is that the likelihood of being famous should remain relatively constant during all periods. (see Figure 3.1 for results).

### 3.7 Research Design: Eduskunta

With the Finnish data, I estimated a series of logistic regression equations on the dependent variable of candidate celebrity status to see whether variation on the size of party lists impacts the likelihood of an individual candidate being a celebrity. This test allows for a more direct assessment of the effect of intraparty competition which is the key mediating variable in the mechanism of my hypothesized effects of electoral rules.

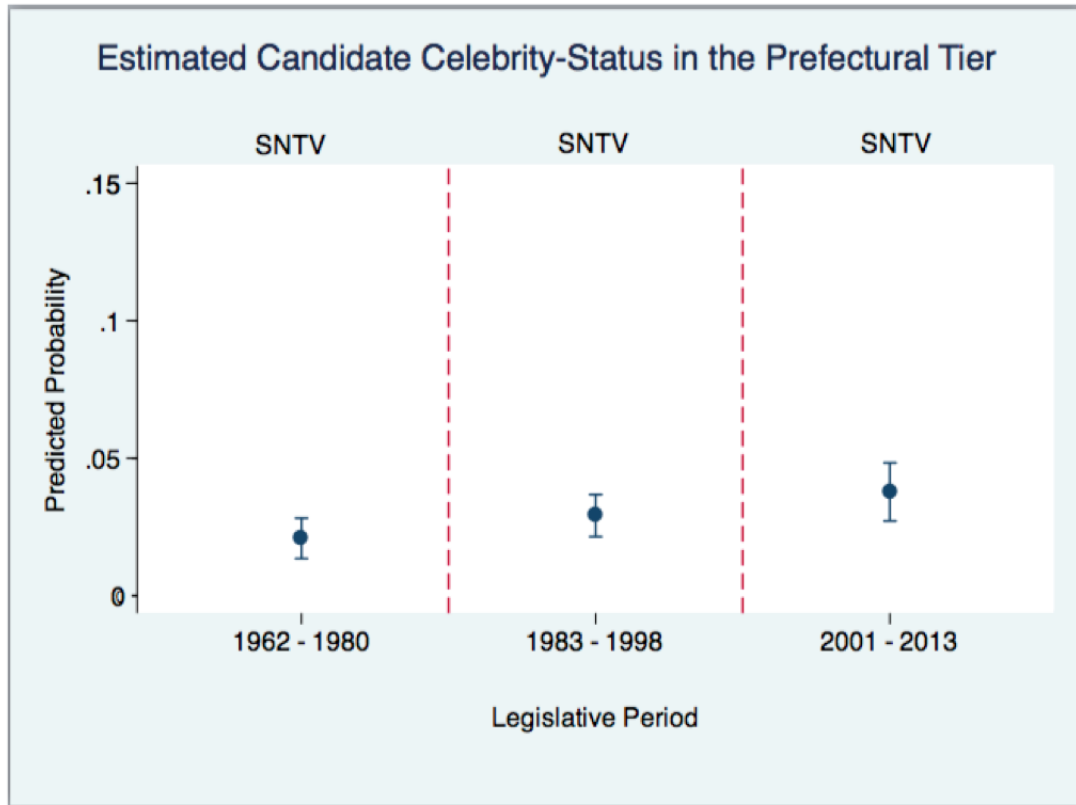
Model 1 looks just at the effect of party list size, while Model 2 includes controls for other candidate attributes that may be linked to personal votes. These included incumbency, gender, and local district upbringing. Dummy variables for election year were also included to help rule out the confound of election contingent factors – such as political scandal outlined in Chapter 4 – that may independently boost the electoral value of non-political fame. To clarify the impact of list size in Model 2, I estimate predicted probabilities of candidate fame at different levels of list magnitude, using Margins in Stata (see Table 3.2 and Figure 3.4 for results).

As outlined above, celebrity candidates tend to win at much higher rates than non-celebrities, and particularly so when district magnitude is high. However, comparing win-rates with list systems is problematic because the pooling of votes distort outcomes in unobservable ways. A more direct test of the relationship between celebrity status and electoral strength, under differing conditions of intraparty competition, would look at the relative share of votes earned by these candidates. In the Japanese case, we cannot do this because there are no preference votes during the closed-list PR period. A comparison across tiers during the open-list PR period is problematic because votes are pooled in the national tier while those in the prefectural tier are not. In the SNTV period (where SNTV is used in both tiers) there is simply not enough prefectural tier celebrities in each election year to make statistical inferences. Finally, variation in district magnitude across prefectures in the prefectural tier is not great enough to yield significant differences in levels of intraparty competition.

In Finland however, the abundance of candidates, the rich variation in list sizes, and the mandatory nature of casting preference votes allow for robust tests. I test for a relationship between the attribute of non-political fame and a candidate's share of list preference votes using two ordinary least squares regression models with district and election year fixed effects. The dependent variable in both models is the percentage of preference votes a candidate won among all those cast for candidates on her list. The independent variable of interest for Model 1 is candidate celebrity status while Model 2 incorporates an interaction between the two indicator variables of celebrity status and presence on a large party list. Both models include controls for incumbency, gender, localism (district birth), and the proportion of the candidate's list that is populated by celebrities. The latter variable is important because the benefit of fame for an individual celebrity on a large list may be significantly diminished if there are many other celebrities running on the same list—particularly if the benefit operates through the MEE mechanism I describe in Chapter 2 (See Table 3.3 for results).

### 3.8 Results: Japan

The results of the prefectural tier analysis meet expectations. As anticipated, the differences across the legislative periods are not statistically significant and predicted celebrity-status is stable in the prefectural tier. Even while the more candidate-centered SNTV system is used in this tier, district magnitude only ranges from the low numbers of 1 to 5 and thus levels of co-partisan competition are relatively minimal. At present there are thirty-one prefectures with M of 1, ten prefectures with M of 2, three prefectures with M of 3, two prefectures with M of 4, and only Tokyo with M of 5. We might be tempted to leverage this variation to see if rates of celebrity candidacy are higher in prefectures such as Tokyo (M=5) and Osaka (M=4), which in fact they are, however in this type of analysis it is not possible to rule out the confound of regional variation in celebrity residency. As there is good reason to suspect that the pool of potential celebrity candidates is greater in Tokyo and Osaka, these higher rates could be driven by non-institutional supply-side factors rather than demand. Note that there does appear to be a rising trend, which comports with the contentions of the celebrity politics literature. An overall rise might be partly

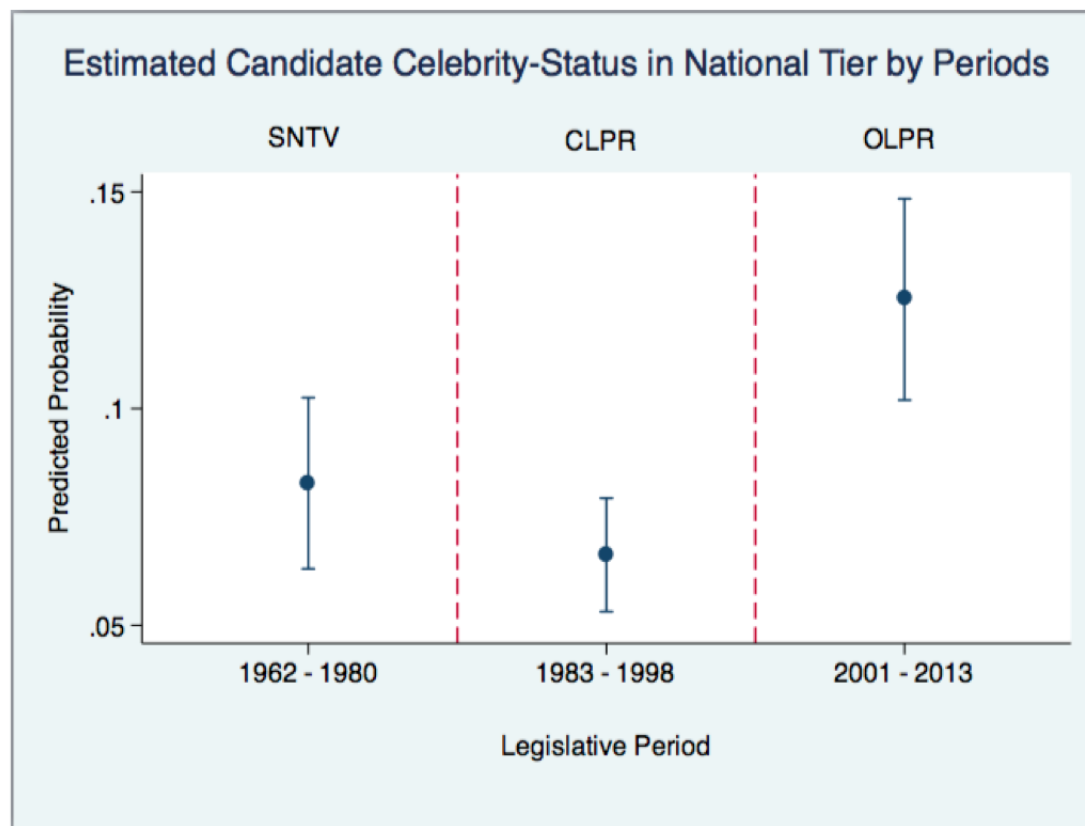


**Figure 3.1:** Predicted Probability of Candidate Celebrity Status, Prefectural Tier

expected due to the increased use of television in Japan since the 1960s. Not only might this expand the pool of famous potential office seekers (television personalities, news anchors, comedians, etc.) relative to the more normal lot (of ex-bureaucrats, career politicians, hereditary candidates, and organization leaders), but it may also increase the value of fame in campaigning – as it facilitates easy media access.

The results of model 2 also meet expectations. Recall, that district magnitude here is consistently high (M 48-50) and thus rates of co-partisan competition are expected to be greatest during the SNTV and OLPR periods, when voters rather than parties have the power to determine each candidate’s electoral fate.

The LDP is an important outlier here, however, since it employed a peculiar list-ranking rule during the CLPR period, whereby list ranking was directly tied to the number of new party registrants each candidate could procure between elections. This gave LDP candidates influence over their ranking to the extent that they could utilize their own resources, and in theory their own candidate-valence attributes as well, to

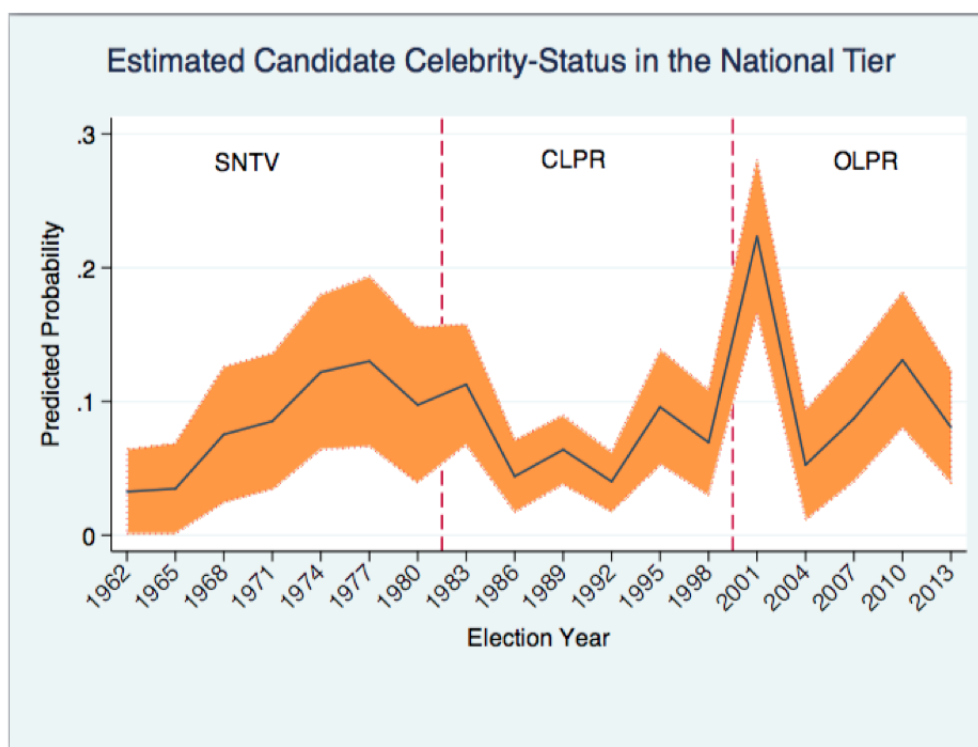


**Figure 3.2:** Predicted Probability of Candidate Celebrity Status, National Tier by Period

mobilize supporters. In practice however, the party rule had the effect of further advantaging candidates who were tied to large organized interests that could fund the registration fees for the group's members on behalf of their candidate (McElwain and Reed, 2009). Anecdotally, the LDP rule did not seem to help celebrities. In discussion with the only LDP celebrity legislator (former actress, reporter, and renowned quiz-show champion) to have served under all 3 national tier electoral systems, she revealed that the CLPR period was particularly difficult. Her comparatively unorganized and geographically diffuse personal support base was not easy to mobilize for registration, and she therefore had to forge ties with a number of small interest groups to meet this bar, which she was only able to accomplish in one of the six elections during this period – not returning thereafter to office until the first year of OLPR in 2001 (celebrity legislator Santo Akiko, personal interview, April 23rd 2014, Tokyo).

Whether the LDP rule biases celebrity entry during the CLPR years in one

direction or the other, the control for large party membership in Model 2 and Model 3 captures this variation and results should therefore be unaffected. As expected, there are two directional changes in predicted celebrity status that correspond with the theoretical effects of changes in the national tier’s institutions (see Figures 3.2 and 3.3).



**Figure 3.3:** Predicted Probability of Candidate Celebrity Status, National Tier by Election Year

Note that, while running in the expected direction, the difference between the SNTV and CLPR periods is not statistically significant, which may be interpreted in a few ways. While it is tempting to attribute the higher-than-expected CLPR-period fame to the aforementioned television-driven general trend, the disaggregated results (Figure 3), reveal more within-period fluctuation than would be expected from any party response to a gradual rise in the importance of recognition.

Another possibility is that parties made more attempts to nominate marginal celebrities as “list-pushers” in the CLPR period.<sup>13</sup> As Nemoto and Shugart (2013)

<sup>13</sup>This term refers to candidates whom parties intentionally place low on lists with the expectation that any votes they draw in may garner more seats for the party, and thus “push” other lower ranking

point out, the vote pooling of the list systems provides parties with an incentive to nominate such candidates, while under SNTV they actually face a disincentive to field any relatively hopeless candidates that may detract from party's more viable contenders and end up actually costing the party seats.

Finally, the fluctuations may be partially explained by party system changes over the post-war years. Both the Liberal Club off-shoot of the LDP (1976) and the earth-shattering splits of the early 1990s correspond to significant rises in fame. These defections from the LDP came in the wake of corruption scandals that may have diminished the value of the party label in times of particularly low trust in government. These temporary changes, in turn, may have indirectly increased the electoral value of celebrities as credible and visible 'outsider' candidates.

As expected, the switch to open-lists corresponded to a dramatic rise in celebrity status. The giant bump in the first year of OLPR (2001) suggests that both parties and candidates were eager to capitalize on the expected electoral value of personal fame, and that they may have even over-estimated its potential. One small party in this election, the Liberal League, even stuffed its list with 17 celebrities but failed to win a single seat. Among the preference votes the party's list did procure, these celebrities took a disproportionate share. The occurrence of celebrities topping the lists of larger parties such as the DPJ (e.g. Tani Ryoko) and the JRP (e.g. Antonio Inoki) is not uncommon. However, it is impossible to say whether these conspicuous candidacies actually redounded to benefit of parties by, for example, attracting swing votes and support from those who normally do not turn out, or whether they simply detracted votes from other co-partisans among voters who would have already supported the party list anyway.

### 3.9 Results: Finland

Hypothesis 3.1 is supported by the results of my logistic regression models. While controlling for incumbency, gender, and local background, the size of party lists is significantly linked to celebrity candidacy and there no particular election year that appears to drive the results as I included indicator variables for each election. As

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list candidates into the election threshold.

with the Japanese case, it appears celebrities are significantly less likely to have local status, which would suggest that their success, such as it is, does not derive from this competing PVEA (See Table 3.2). Moreover, at every increase in list size, the predicted probability of a candidate being a celebrity goes up (See Figure 3.4).

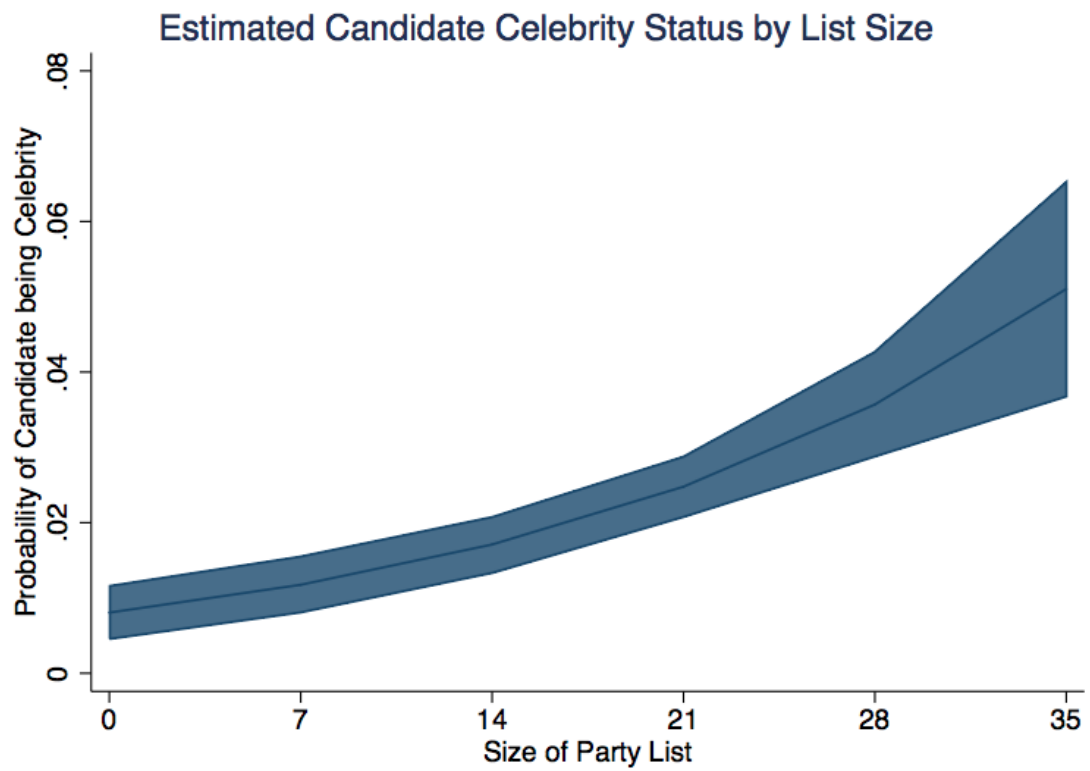
**Table 3.2:** Logistic Regression of Candidate Celebrity Status on Party List Size

	(1) Celebrity Status	(2) Celebrity Status
Listsized	0.0640*** (7.07)	0.0550*** (5.67)
Incumbent		1.605*** (8.80)
Female		0.0297 (0.17)
Local		-0.522** (-2.86)
2007		0.412 (1.86)
2011		0.392 (1.80)
Constant	-4.966*** (-23.06)	-5.185*** (-17.23)
Observations	6348	6298

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Hypothesis 3.2 is supported by the results of my OLS regression models (See Table 3.3). From Model 1 we see that celebrities take a greater share of a list's preference votes independent of other PVEAs that they may also have such as incumbency status, local status, or gender based-appeal. This positive and significant impact of celebrity status on vote share persists even when controlling for the effects of election-year contingencies and idiosyncratic district characteristics. Not surprisingly,



**Figure 3.4:** Predicted Probability of Candidate Celebrity Status by Size of Party List

being on a large list – one that contains more than 14 candidates (recall that list size ranged from 1 to 35) – decreases a candidate's vote share significantly. As the interaction term in model 2 shows however, being both a celebrity and present on a large list significantly increases a candidate's vote share by over 7%, which is a non-trivial margin in terms of one's likelihood of taking office.<sup>14</sup>

It is curious that the attributes of localism (being born in the district) and female status both have significant and negative effects on candidate vote share. We should be cautious about these particular results however since I did not include controls for the proportions of those attributes represented on each list. If, for example, a given party list contained multiple local candidates, the usefulness of this localness cue for district voters might be diminished. Even where it is not diminished and voters still do choose on localism, they would now have many candidate options to select from and the attribute's relative strength should be weakened for any individual local candidate.

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<sup>14</sup>The average threshold for winning on a large list was 14% vote share.

**Table 3.3:** Candidate Share of List Preference Votes with Indicator Variables

	(1)	(2)
	Vote Share	Vote Share
Celebrity*Largelist		0.0729* (2.27)
Celebrity	0.0296** (2.61)	-0.0327 (-1.10)
Largelist	-0.0847*** (-24.52)	-0.0856*** (-24.63)
Incumbent	0.0930*** (15.84)	0.0929*** (15.84)
Local	-0.0142*** (-4.13)	-0.0144*** (-4.19)
Female	-0.0176*** (-5.04)	-0.0178*** (-5.10)
2007	0.00270 (0.63)	0.00265 (0.62)
2011	0.00643 (1.55)	0.00663 (1.60)
[1em] Constant	0.132*** (30.72)	0.133*** (30.81)
Observations	6298	6298

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Both Models Include Fixed Effects for election year and district which are not shown

### 3.10 Discussion

Cunow (2014) has shown that there is an inherent trade off between systems that offer voters only a few candidate options and those that offer them many. On the one hand, fewer options may limit the expression and representation of diverse preferences among the electorate. On the other hand offering voters too much choice may induce them to make suboptimal decisions or vote “incorrectly” (Cunow 2014). My findings in Chapter 2 comport with this recent literature by showing that larger choice-sets lead some voters to employ a recognition heuristic, which is a fairly crude and often less accurate decision-making strategy than making inferences from other available attributes.

In this chapter I provided evidence that these tendencies can have real world consequences in terms of political representation, by increasing the likelihood that celebrities run for, and win office. This in turn helps to explain the puzzle of why we see voters electing candidates in Japan that they explicitly reject in the abstract as ideal representatives. Moreover, the analysis in Chapter 2 suggests that these tendencies generalize beyond the single case of Japan (or Cunow’s case of Brazil) and may also impact representation in a variety of systems featuring very different social and cultural norms, and in elections with very different issues at stake.

The results from both Chapters 2 and 3 have implications for institutional engineering and call into question the wisdom of presenting voters with several candidate options when informative cues cannot be used to distinguish among them. Not only may these conditions lead voters to choose candidates they do not actually prefer, but they may also prevent them from making any choice at all. Over the last 3 upper house elections in Japan 71% of voters supporting one of the top 7 parties declined to exercise their preference vote option, meaning they wrote only party name on their ballot and left the choice of individual representatives up to the remaining minority of other voters.<sup>15</sup> This might not be problematic if we assume that the preference-vote abstainers are simply indifferent about who takes the parties’ seats while those who choose candidates actually harbor stronger preferences about them. However, the results presented here suggest that even this minority of preference-vote casters is not necessarily voting as if fully informed. Moreover, among survey

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<sup>15</sup>Data compiled from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

respondents who reported that they abstained from the real preference-vote in the 2013 upper house elections, a substantial portion (46%) reported having done so not because of indifference, but for lack of adequate information about the candidates. To the extent this sample is representative, that figure would correspond to approximately 18 million voters.

Finally, the paper should be of interest to those following the nascent literature on celebrity politics, which to date been more of an enterprise in the fields of sociology and communication studies rather than political science. These studies have provided informative analyses of some of the macro-level causes of celebrities entering modern politics. This work complements these endeavors by addressing some of the more micro-foundations of this phenomenon, which may give us more leverage on the question of why we see variation in celebrity politics not just across polities but within them as well.

## Chapter 4

# Seeking Credible Outsiders: The Impact of Political Corruption on Candidate Evaluations and Celebrity Support

## 4.1 Introduction

In Chapters 2 and 3 I outlined the systematic role that institutions play in both encouraging celebrities to run for office and inducing voters to support them. It was shown that the combination of large candidate choice-sets and the absence of a distinguishing partisan cue – a common effect of large magnitude preferential voting systems – could lead to the use of a recognition heuristic. I posited that this heuristic, moreover, operates through the mechanism of a mere exposure effect – a subconsciously derived preference for people and things that are familiar.

The results also show, however, that some voters do still support celebrities even when it is not costly to use other, non-recognition based, decision strategies. Recall from the election analysis in Chapter 3 that celebrities still outperformed non-celebrities even in the smaller district magnitude prefectural tier of Japan’s upper house, as well as on smaller party lists in Finland. Recall also from the experimental results in Chapter 2 that even on small ballots celebrities still fared slightly better than incumbents or other non-famous amateurs. But if, as surveys suggest, voters overwhelmingly disapprove of celebrities as political candidates in the abstract, why would this be the case? What explains this support when voters are not utilizing a recognition heuristic?

In this chapter I hypothesize that the relative salience of political corruption, as a valence issue in elections, can induce some voters to consciously overlook their misgivings about celebrities as office holders, and support them because of the specific information that celebrity status conveys. These candidates are not perceived as “political insiders,” and yet they are bestowed with high levels of visibility, which means they are subject to greater public scrutiny. I argue that these characteristics give rise to an expectation that celebrity candidates are less likely to engage in unethical behavior, which may be of particular importance to voters who associate establishment political candidates and incumbents with corruption. Furthermore, because the high profile nature of celebrities also confers them with electoral viability (the perception that many others will support them), celebrity candidates may provide individual voters with a rational alternative choice when they are unsatisfied with the existing array of incumbent options, but still unwilling to cast wasted votes for other electorally hopeless newcomer candidates.

I test these propositions with a survey experiment that observes the voting behavior of respondents primed to think about government graft and compares it to that of two control groups – one with an identical celebrity ballot but no priming treatment, and one with a non-celebrity ballot. In addition to the priming, respondent vote choices are analyzed in light of whether they rated corruption as more or less important than other valence issues.<sup>1</sup> I find that respondents primed to think about government graft are significantly more likely to abandon establishment political candidates, and flock to famous political amateurs in particular, rather than other outsider candidates. Independent of the priming treatment, I also find that caring more about corruption is associated with the same patterns of vote choice.

In the next section I will address previous work on the electoral impact of corruption scandals – focusing first on how voters react to scandal-tainted incumbents, and then on the question of who benefits when corruption is salient. I then discuss my theory on voter evaluation of celebrity candidates in this context. After outlining the research design used to test my hypothesis that scandal redounds to the benefit of celebrities, I report the results of my analyses and address limitations and potential confounds of the findings. The chapter ends with a discussion of the study’s contributions and avenues for future research.

## 4.2 Corruption Scandals and Vote Choice

The expectation that citizens in a democratic state will punish the unethical behavior of elected officials, by voting against them, is intuitive and commonly assumed. However, studies of vote choice in the context of scandal paint a more complex picture. On the one hand it would appear that the conditions required for scandal to reverse a voter’s decision about an incumbent are quite numerous, and that it should be a relatively rare event. On the other hand, multiple studies have consistently documented electoral consequences for the illegal or unethical behavior of incumbents, which suggests that for many voters these conditions are often met.

Voters evaluate a candidate’s character on several dimensions such as intelli-

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<sup>1</sup>Valence issues are political issues about which there is broad public agreement on goals (e.g. lowering crime, improving the economy). See Stokes 1963. The valence issues used in this survey experiment are discussed in the appendix.

gence, industry, honesty, etc (Funk, 1997). While revelations of scandal may impact assessments of an office holder’s integrity, other dimensions of his character will likely remain unaffected. In some instances competence may be valued over integrity as illustrated by the popular political adage in Brazilian elections – *rouba mas faz*, “he robs, but he gets things done,” (Pereira and Melo, 2014). Furthermore, voters will not necessarily always incorporate character assessments into their choices in the first place (Mondak and Huckfeldt, 2006). Constituents may rely on several different criteria when deciding whether or not to support an incumbent. Voters sharing partisan identification or ideological preferences with scandal-tainted incumbents often do continue to support such politicians in spite of their transgressions, suggesting that other evaluative criteria often trump any reputation costs incurred. This explains why scandal tainted candidates have a much harder time winning primary elections than they do general elections where partisanship distinguishes the candidates (Jacobson and Dimock, 1994; Brown, 2006). There is also evidence that voters who positively evaluate an incumbent’s past performance, who agree with their policy positions, or who receive particularistic benefits from them, are less likely to punish the incumbent for unethical behavior (Chang and Kerr, 2009; Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2010). Finally, even when voters do care about corruption enough to override other evaluation criteria, it may be difficult for them to identify who is individually responsible (Tavits, 2007). Thus, voter punishment of incumbents for incidences of scandal and corruption would seem to be subject to several qualifying conditions.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, many citizens do regularly punish the unethical behavior of elected officials by voting against them. Observational studies in the U.S. find that this is true for scandals of various types (moral and financial) and that, as expected, the effect is stronger the more serious the transgression and the more widely it is reported in the media (Peters and Welch, 1980; Jacobson and Dimock, 1994; Shea, 1999; Brown, 2001, 2006).<sup>3</sup> Experimental work has largely confirmed these results and shown that the

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<sup>2</sup>See Jimenez and Cainzos 2006 for a concise overview of this literature and expanded discussion of these qualifying conditions: awareness, evaluation, responsibility, saliency, and the existence of alternatives (Jimenez and Cainzos, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>Some of this work has tried to tease out which types of scandal voters tend to punish most, but has yielded mixed results. For example, while Peters and Welsch find that moral scandals (e.g. adultery and sexual misconduct) are more severely punished than financial scandals (e.g. tax evasion and bribery), Brown finds that only Democrats tend to be punished for financial scandals while only Republicans tend to be punished for moral scandals. The latter results I suspect may be driven by

negative impact of scandal is particularly great when compounded with abuse of office powers, meaning the transgression was facilitated in some way by the official powers at the politician's disposal (Rundquist, Strom and Peters, 1977; McCurley and Mondak, 1995; Funk, 1996; Doherty, Dowling and Miller, 2011). Comparative literature also supports these findings in other advanced democracies such as Japan (Reed 1996), in more recent democracies such as Brazil (Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2010), and in consolidating democracies such as Bulgaria Klasnja (2011) and several African polities (Chang and Kerr, 2009). Thus, in spite of the many competing evaluation criteria and conditions limiting the impact of scandal, incumbents associated with unethical behavior do appear to suffer at the polls.

The question of who benefits from this incumbent abandonment has received a lot less attention, but studies thus far have pointed in two general directions – 1) towards quality challengers and untainted candidates who are electorally viable, and 2) towards candidates with attributes that convey more honesty. In analyzing elections from 1972 to 1988 in the US, Canon finds that the entry of “ambitious amateurs” and politically experienced quality candidates tends to increase when the incumbent is mired in scandal. Moreover, these candidates tend to receive more votes under such circumstances than they do when incumbents are scandal-free (Canon, N.d., 1993).<sup>4</sup> In studying the effects of the US House Banking Scandal of 1992 (which implicated to varying degrees over 60% of the entire chamber's incumbents), Jacobson and Dimock similarly found an overall increase in “quality challengers” and greater support for these challengers in districts where the incumbent was among the implicated (Jacobson and Dimock, 1994).<sup>5</sup>

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differential drop-out rates (e.g. Anthony Weiner vs David Vitter), rather than differential treatment by voters.

<sup>4</sup>In Canon's 1990 book the conception of “ambitious amateur” was operationalized as candidates with no prior political experience that had defeated an incumbent in a primary election. In his 1993 paper however the operationalization was modified to include inexperienced candidates that either garnered 40% of the general election vote, or were celebrities (which he coded on the basis of occupation).

<sup>5</sup>While their conception of “quality challenger” included candidates with name recognition and the ability to raise competitive levels of campaign money, their operationalization was more crude – candidates with previous experience in political office, such as state assemblymen, mayors, etc. In other words this study did not include celebrity candidates as they are defined in this paper. Krasno and Green, looking at elections from 1972 to 1980, find largely the same results as Canon for his operationalization of “quality candidates,” which included not only those with prior experience but also celebrities (Krasno and Green 1988).

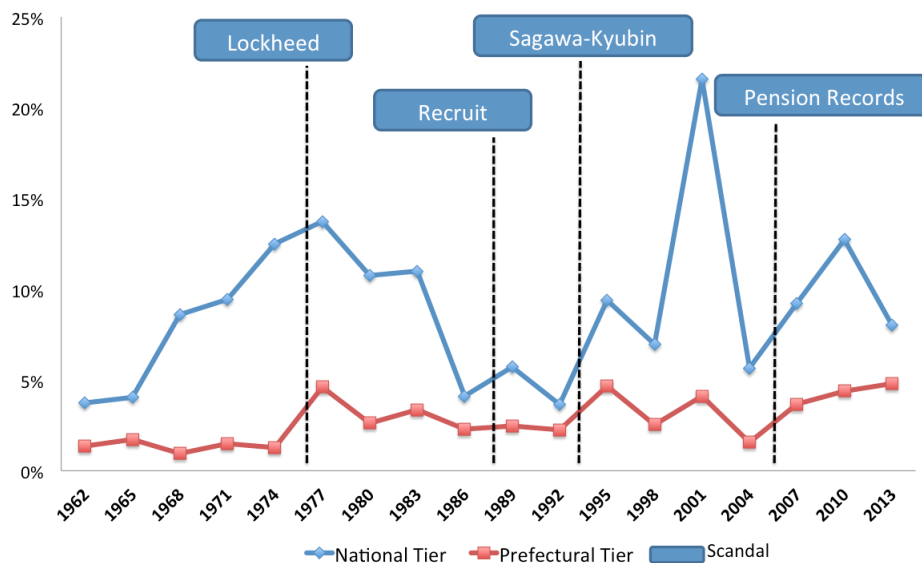
There is also some evidence that scandal redounds to the benefit of female candidates (Kahn, 1994; Valdini, 2005; Gaunder, 2009). It is theorized that voters in these incidences use the cue of gender to make inferences about candidate character and tend to associate female candidates with innocence, honesty, and cleanliness. This association, it is argued, leads voters to throw their support behind female candidates particularly during incidents of political scandal, when voters presumably place a higher premium on these characteristics.

Marsh, ‘t Hart and Tindall arrive at similar expectations in their theoretical work on celebrity candidates. They argue that the electorate should be “more responsive to celebrities who seek to win office if overall levels of trust in the established political system and party politicians are low, and, disillusioned, [voters will] turn to more unconventional alternatives or political outsiders” (Marsh, ‘t Hart and Tindall, 2010). In agreement with Marsh et al, below I make the case that voters seeking alternatives to incumbents, whom they associate with scandal, will tend to find celebrity candidates especially alluring. In contrast to gender, the outsider status and high visibility of these candidates (and the greater public scrutiny that accompanies it), offer voters a superior cue for making predictive inferences about the unlikelihood of future corrupt behavior. Furthermore, like the “quality candidates” mentioned above, celebrities are also endowed with greater viability relative to other mere amateurs, which may alleviate voter concern for casting wasted votes.

### **4.3 Trust and the Relevance of Celebrity Attributes**

While there is no dearth of anecdotes suggesting a link between voter concern for political corruption and celebrity candidate support, there remains no systematic study of this relationship (see Appendix B for a limited listing of comparative cases in 8 countries). Having tracked rates of celebrity candidacy in Japan’s upper house from 1962 to 2013 I am able to conduct a cursory inspection by mapping these trends over the history of Japan’s major postwar political scandals. It is noteworthy that in elections immediately following each major scandal, the rates of celebrities running noticeably increased. Moreover this occurred simultaneously in both tiers of the chamber, where voters cast separate votes for different slates of parties and candidates

(See Figure 4.1). With an N of 4, these findings are of course far from conclusive. Before turning to a more rigorous test of the relationship I will elaborate on my theoretical expectations and the hypotheses derived from them.



**Figure 4.1:** Rates of Celebrity Candidacy in the House of Councillors and Major Political Scandals

As outlined in Chapter 1, the construct of celebrity candidate used throughout this dissertation is any candidate who possesses a high degree of name recognition prior to serving in any office, and whose fame retains its associations with this previous background. While some of these candidates may be perceived as more proximate to politics than others (e.g. business leaders vs film actors), I expect that all, regardless of occupational background, share a set of fundamental characteristics in the context of elections – ‘outsider’ status, visibility, and viability.

As political amateurs, celebrity candidates’ lack of experience may be detrimental to their electoral prospects, and is indeed often treated negatively in the media. This experience handicap is likely the reason the celebrity background is rated so poorly relative to others (See Figure 2.1). However, it may also serve as the basis for greater trust. Not being a career politician, for some voters, may translate as not captured by special interests, less duplicitous, and generally lacking in a host of unfavorable characteristics that surveyed citizens often attribute to established politicians, or insiders (Erber and Lau, 1990; Levi and Stoker, 2000). The popular

yet cynical belief that career politicians are committed to reelection above all else leads to the assumption that these ‘insiders’ are more likely to have cultivated 1) connections to powerful private interests which help them in reelection efforts, as well as 2) campaign skills and oratory guile which allow them to mask their true policy preferences with platforms engineered to maximize electability. Both of these characteristics are negative, from the standpoint of the voter, because they imply that the incumbent’s loyalties either lie elsewhere (with private interests) or are indecipherable. The perception of political amateurs and outsiders on the other hand is that they are less likely to have cultivated either 1 or 2. Note that voters need not necessarily believe outsiders to be inherently more honest in order to disassociate them with these negative traits. Rather, it sufficient that they simply assume amateurs are less capable of concealing any negative qualities or beliefs that would otherwise compromise their electability, and that they are less likely beholden to special interests, by virtue of inexperience with campaigns and not occupying positions of political power.

Aside from having outsider status, celebrity candidates are also endowed (and burdened) with high visibility. Compared to non-famous amateurs, and in many cases compared to incumbents as well, these candidates are subject to greater public scrutiny and media attention both in and out of office. While this visibility may serve them in several ways, such as providing easier media access for appealing to voters with policy positions or promises, it may also hurt their electoral prospects when negative information, such as gaffes or compromising aspects of their personal history, are highly reported. Visibility, in other words, is a double-edged sword for celebrity candidates and continues to be so even after they are elected. Indeed, to the extent that the public associates political inexperience with a likelihood of incompetence, celebrity candidates may find the sword’s negative edge to be sharper. Those who are elected may experience inordinate pressure to perform well and may also face greater reprisals for political mistakes. Here I argue that some citizens will be aware of these implications, and that visibility itself will factor into their expectations of candidate behavior in office *ex ante*. Voters with a heightened concern for the ethical behavior of elected officials should value this visibility as a element of their candidacy that promises greater transparency and is likely to keep them clean in office. Relative to the mere amateur then, the celebrity’s visibility confers their outsider status with

more credibility.<sup>6</sup>

Studies of name recognition in a political context have shown that recognized candidates are also perceived as being more electorally viable (Gaissmaier and Marewski, 2011; Kam and Zechmeister, 2013). Celebrity candidates by definition enjoy wide recognition and are therefore seen as presenting a competitive challenge to incumbents in elections. It is this perceived viability that has prompted some scholars to include celebrities in their operationalizations of “quality candidates” (Krasno and Green, 1988; Smith, 2012). In the survey presented in Chapter 2, which is also revisited in this analysis, Japanese citizens rated celebrity candidates as almost twice as likely to receive votes from others compared to non-famous candidates with otherwise identical backgrounds. This difference was significant at  $P < 0.05$ . Because of this viability perception, celebrities are less likely than other outsiders to suffer from strategic voting concerns. That is, voters who harbor a sincere preference for these candidates are less likely to abandon them out of fears that aggregate support will be hopelessly insufficient and that their vote would then be wasted.

## 4.4 Scandal and Voter Support for Celebrity Candidates

I argue that the unique combination of these aforementioned characteristics is likely to benefit celebrities in electoral contexts where the salience of corruption is high and where voters lose trust in incumbents. Political scandal exerts a powerful, even if temporary, effect on these conditions (Bowler and Karp, 2004; Maier, 2010). I argue that the mechanism linking political scandal to celebrity candidate support proceeds along the following trajectory; 1) having been informed of a scandal (or multiple incidences of scandal), the voter loses trust in their district incumbent; 2) the event triggers a heightened sense of cynicism whereby trust in career politicians, even those not implicated, declines; 3) the voter then seeks alternative choices among candidates they perceive as less likely to engage in unethical behavior. 4) When presented with the option of a celebrity alternative, the voter infers from the candidate’s attributes

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<sup>6</sup>I suspect these implications of visibility have a hand in explaining why candidates such as Romário maintain stellar attendance records, and why others such as Tirirca have campaigned on promises to increase legislative transparency. I return to this topic in Chapter 5.

(viability, visibility, and outsider status) that she is electable and also the least likely to engage in such behavior. The voter then deems her the most attractive choice.

Note that the individual outcomes of this mechanism do not necessarily have to follow the temporal ordering given above to work. For some voters, distrust in career politicians may exist without scandal and be sufficiently high ex ante such that outcomes 3 and 4 occur without 1 or 2. Outcomes 1 and 2 might also occur simultaneously if the voter harbors ex ante associations of the incumbent with career politicians in general.

The transition from 1 and 2, and vice versa, may seem arbitrary and unintuitive. Why should anyone associate an individual scandal-tainted incumbent with all career politicians, or punish a single individual for the actions of others? While the mechanisms of such a cognitive bias remain unclear, experimental studies have found a generalizing effect that can run in both directions. Exposure to negatively perceived political behavior among a few politicians can induce greater cynicism about politicians in general. At the same time, greater levels of general cynicism can lead to more negative evaluations of individual candidates regardless of culpability in any specific transgression. As an example of the former Mutz and Reeves (2005) found that exposing subjects to uncivil televised political debates reduced overall trust in politicians as a group, rather than only those engaged in negative campaigning. As an example of the latter, McGraw et al found that respondents with less trust in politicians gave more negative evaluations of individual speeches when it was revealed the speaker was a public servant McGraw, Lodge and Jones (2002); Mutz and Reeves (2005).

I do not expect that all voters will exhibit this cognitive bias but I suspect there are conditions that will make it more prevalent. For example, voters with weak partisan attachments who do not identify with any group of candidates may be more willing to cast all party politicians under the same rubric. Similarly, when a scandal is pervasive and implicates several, or all, mainstream parties, it may be easier for the voter to make this generalization.

It is also important to point out that even after reaching this stage of distrust towards establishment politicians, the move to outcome 3 is not a given. Disillusionment may instead lead to abstention (Stockemer, LaMontagne and Scruggs, 2013) or protest

voting (Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000). Just as there is likely variation in who exhibits the aforementioned cognitive biases and how voters assign blame, so too is there likely to be differences in how voters respond. In systems where voting is mandatory, or strong voting norms exist, the option of abstention seems less likely, even when voters are disillusioned. While some voters may respond with a protest vote – voting insincerely for a stigmatized candidate or party to express discontent (see section 4.7) – there are still likely to be many, particularly among those with greater interest in politics, who wish to affect public policy by “throwing the bums out.”<sup>7</sup> For those in this latter category, the transition to outcomes 3 and 4 is rational and straightforward.

Based on these considerations about the impact of political scandal on voter trust, and about the attributes of celebrities and the logic of candidate evaluation, I advance the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 4** *Information about political scandal will decrease voter support for incumbents.*

**Hypothesis 5** *Information about political scandal will increase voter support for celebrity candidates and have no impact on support for other non-famous outsider candidates.*

## 4.5 Research Design and Case Selection

An experiment is an ideal means of testing the hypotheses above. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify otherwise comparable elections that vary only in the presence or absence of a scandal. Not only are the confounds on vote choice by district legion, but it is questionable whether we can delineate the geographical limits of a single scandal’s effects or the relative saliency of different scandals across time

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<sup>7</sup>In their study of voter support for stigmatized anti-immigrant parties across Europe, Van der Brug et al 2000 find that many of these assumed “protest voters” were actually voting along ideological lines.

and place. Confounds on vote choice include not only candidate attributes, campaign strategies, and voter partisan attachments, but also many unobservables such as baseline preferences on issues and clientelistic or other personal relationships with incumbents – all of which may impact the relative influence of scandal as noted by the literature above. Furthermore, as the studies referenced above have shown, the entry of quality candidates such as celebrities into district races is very likely not orthogonal to scandal or incumbent vulnerability. Using an experiment, I can vary information about political scandal that is exogenous to candidate attributes and voter preferences, while monitoring voting behavior in a way that is not possible in an observational study. Running the experiment through a survey rather than a laboratory setting, I can enhance external validity by capturing a diverse and nationwide sample of citizens.

As outlined in Chapter 2, Japan is well suited for a test of this nature given that rates of celebrity candidacy are high and Japanese voters are accustomed to seeing them on ballots. For respondents in countries where celebrities never appear on ballots, or where voters do not have the option of choosing candidates at all, such as in closed-list PR systems, the unusualness of the task may render them less able to consider it as a hypothetically legitimate set of political choice options. This in turn could lead to greater drop out rates and people not taking the survey seriously.<sup>8</sup> Japan also has a long history of varying scandal saliency in postwar elections (Reed, 1996). While turnover in some elections - such as 1989 and 1993 – is reported to have been, in large part, driven by scandal, in others corruption concerns played little role at all (Reed, 2004). Moreover, as campaign restrictions are severely limiting in Japan, and as intraparty competition in the large magnitude SNTV districts limits the ability of some candidates to distinguish themselves with policy based appeals, there is less platform information disseminated to voters. Thus the information environment in many of Japan’s elections resembles the environment in the experiment.

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<sup>8</sup>Insincere engagement with the survey is still a possibility of course even with Japanese respondents but comparatively less of a concern. To help mitigate against any skewing effects of non-serious respondents I timed all responses and compared them against a threshold set by a group of native Japanese citizens whom I instructed to take the survey as fast as possible while still answering questions sincerely. As the fastest individual in this group reported having finished the survey in 5 1/2 minutes I set the threshold at 5 minutes exactly assuming at least some respondents in the broader survey sample could be faster than this individual. Responses under this time were assumed to be insincere and excluded from the analysis. Note that including these “insincere” responses does not change the results presented here.

To test hypothesis 4 and 5 I embedded an experiment into the online Japanese survey described in section 2.3 with a different set of treatment conditions. From this survey 853 respondents were randomly assigned into one of three groups that were presented ballots in a hypothetical House of Councillors election. A translated version of the text they received when presented with these ballots reads as follows:

Please imagine that you are voting in a House of Councillors election. The following list of candidates all have affiliation with the party you most support and are running in the same race. Supposing you had to vote for one, please indicate whom you would choose.

Each of the ballots contained 3 candidates, a career politician, a non-political outsider, and either a celebrity or non-celebrity counterpart (identical background without fame). An English version of the celebrity ballot is shown in Figure 4.2 while the non-celebrity ballot is shown in Figure 4.3. The same set of fictitious career politicians and non-political outsiders were identical for all ballots, while the middle-positioned candidate randomly rotated among 8 real celebrities and fictitious counterparts. In other words, within each group, there were 8 distinct ballots and for each ballot roughly 35 respondents who received them (See Appendix A for listing the celebrities used).<sup>9</sup> Following the ballot choice, respondents were directed to a number of demographic and other questions before eventually being queried about their preferences over a limited series of valence issues. Four issues were presented in a randomized order and respondents ranked them according to personal level of importance (see Appendix B for elaboration on the issues used).<sup>10</sup> Very few respondents (9%) ranked issue importance in the quickest way possible (leaving the random default ordering in place), suggesting the vast majority attempted to complete the task sincerely.

Prior to being presented with a ballot, the treatment group was asked to perform a task aimed at priming implicit memories of distrust towards politicians.

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<sup>9</sup>To minimize the possibility that ballot order cues confound treatment effects celebrities and counterparts were placed in the middle position. Observational and experimental studies have found that ballot order effects tend to impact candidates on the ends of any ordering (Meredith and Salant, 2013; Cunow, 2014)

<sup>10</sup>The issue ordering was randomized to avoid the confound of ordering effects that has been shown to bias survey results (Presser et al., 2004)

Presented with an on-screen list of old and recent incidents of major political scandal in Japanese politics, they were asked to ‘drag’ each incident into one of two boxes according to whether they had any familiarity with the incident. A translated version of this treatment prompt is shown in Figure 4.4 and a description of each scandal incident is provided in Appendix B. The years and respondent recognition rates of each scandal incident used in the treatment group (N=282) were as follows: 1976 (89%), 1988 (88%), 1993 (68%), 2007 (95%), and 2013 (91%). The treatment group then received a celebrity ballot.

Control group 1 (N=283) received no scandal priming but was instead directly presented the same set of celebrity ballots. Control group 2 (N=288) also received no priming but was directly presented with a different set of counterpart ballots (these were otherwise identical except for the name and image of the candidate in the middle position. Treatment conditions are summarized in Table 4.1.

The direct impact of the scandal priming on celebrity support is measured by comparison of the treatment group with control group 1, which received identical celebrity ballot sets. The impact of corruption salience on celebrity support, independent of the scandal priming, is measured by comparison of control group 1 (celebrity ballots) with control group 2 (counterpart ballots). Expectations from hypothesis 4 are that scandal priming will reduce support for the career politicians on all ballots. Expectation from Hypothesis 5 are that scandal priming will increase support for celebrities on all ballots but have no affect on non-famous amateurs. As a corollary, expectations from both hypotheses are that, independent of scandal treatment, respondents ranking political corruption as more salient than other issues will also be more likely to support ballot celebrities, less likely to support ballot politicians, and show no differential tendencies with respect to support for either the non-famous counterparts or other ballot outsider candidates.

Difference-of-means tests were conducted for general comparisons of candidate support across the treatment group and control group 1. Aggregate support for ballot celebrities is shown Figure 4.5 while individual support rates are shown in Figure 4.6. Aggregate support rates for the celebrities along side their adjacent politician and outsider competitors are shown in Figure 4.7.

To clarify the significance of the scandal treatment, the corollary expectations

of corruption salience, and the impact of other covariates, I use a series of logistic regression models to test for changes in candidate support across different conditions, and within different subgroups of the sample.

Using respondent data from the treatment group and control group 1, I estimate equations on the dependent variable of celebrity support. Here I test the effects of scandal information, corruption salience, and perceived candidate viability, while including a host of controls for respondent characteristics. Model 1 looks just at the effects of scandal information, while Model 2 incorporates the viability variable and respondent characteristic controls. Model 3 adds respondents' reported level of corruption salience (a binary variable coded as 1 when respondents rank corruption high relative to other valence issues). Model 4 includes the interaction of scandal information and corruption salience. Results of these models are tabulated in Table 4.3. Restricting the analysis to subgroups of respondents for whom corruption salience was high and low respectively, additional equations were used to test the differential impact of scandal information across these groups. These results are presented in Table 4.4.

Using respondent data from control groups 1 and 2 (those who received no scandal information), I estimate logistic regression equations to test the effect of baseline corruption salience and perceived viability on support for both celebrities and counterpart candidates. This comparison allows me to evaluate support for real celebrities alongside non-famous candidates with otherwise identical backgrounds – rather than just the other amateur outsiders listed in the difference-of-means tests above. Respondent characteristic controls include age, education, level of political interest, income, ideology, gender, and a dummy variable for residence in the Kanto region. This regional variable is included to control for any local affinities respondents may feel towards the celebrity candidates, being as a plurality of the latter were either born in, or currently reside in, Kanto. These results are presented in Table 4.5.

Finally, using data from all three groups I evaluate the impact of scandal and corruption salience on support for the insider and non-famous outsider candidates, who were identical across all groups. These results are shown in Table 4.6.

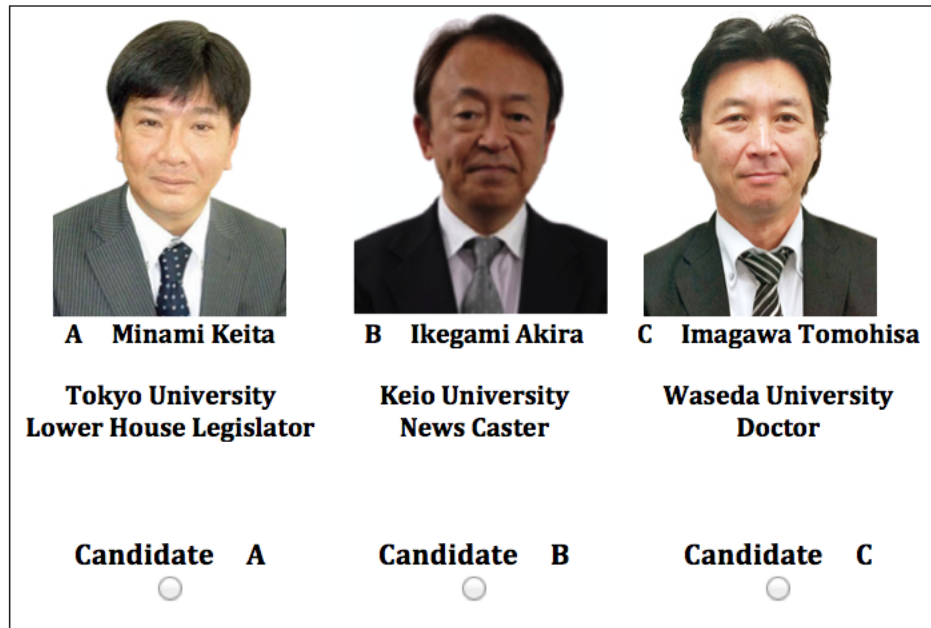


Figure 4.2: Celebrity Sample ballot 1 of 8 (*translated from Japanese*)

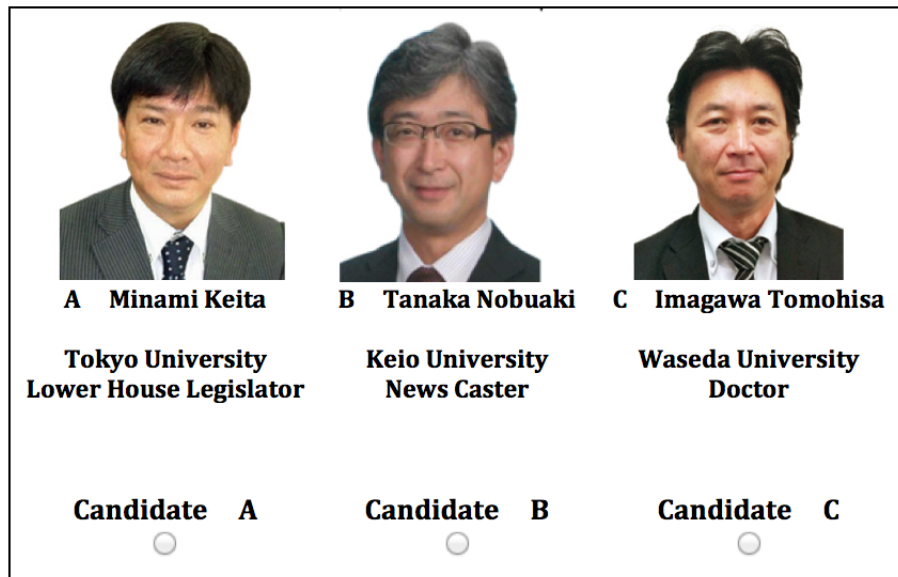


Figure 4.3: Counterpart Sample ballot 1 of 8 (*translated from Japanese*)

**Below you will see a list of Japanese political scandals that have implicated representatives of incumbent and opposition parties alike.**

**Please indicate which, if any, of these incidents you are at least remotely familiar with, and any of those you are unfamiliar with, by dragging them into the appropriate box.**

Items	At Least Remotely Familiar	Unfamiliar
Pension Record Incident		
Tokushukai Incident		
Lockheed Incident		
Recruit Incident		
Sagawa Kyubin Incident		

**Figure 4.4:** Scandal Treatment Prompt (*translated from Japanese*)

**Table 4.1:** Scandal Experiment Treatment Conditions

	<i>Scandal</i>	<i>No Scandal</i>	<i>No Scandal</i>
<i>Celebrity Ballot</i>	Treatment Group N=282		
<i>Celebrity Ballot</i>		Control Group 1 N=283	
<i>Non-Celebrity Ballot</i>			Control Group 2 N=288

## 4.6 Survey Assignment and Results

Before turning to a discussion of the results I will briefly address the assignment process of survey respondents into different treatment conditions. As outlined in section 2.5 the survey was programmed in Qualtrics by the author to randomly assign respondents into different experimental groups. Respondents were recruited by Nikkei Research. The groups are well-balanced across key demographic and political variables. Group means are similar along income, age, gender, education, ideology, partisanship, level of engagement with politics, and general feelings towards candidates in the abstract with a celebrity background. One-way ANOVAs do not indicate any statistically significant differences across conditions, suggesting that survey randomization was successful (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2:** Covariate Balance across Experimental Conditions

	Control 1 real celeb Mean	Control 2 fake celeb Mean	Treatment real celeb Mean	Prob >F
Income	508	520.7	553.5	0.052
Age	1.99	2.134	2.134	0.086
Female	0.477	0.434	0.44	0.536
Education	3.19	4.017	4.027	0.499
Conservative	0.332	0.260	0.259	0.087
Liberal	0.201	0.222	0.192	0.651
Vote Often	4.272	4.31	4.461	0.065
Consider Issues	0.53	0.538	0.521	0.922
Discuss Politics	0.233	0.267	0.227	0.48
LDP Support	0.339	0.316	0.34	0.783
DPJ Support	0.099	0.073	0.103	0.403
JRP Support	0.117	0.118	0.078	0.21
Komei Support	0.018	0.038	0.021	0.255
Celeb Backgd Preferecne	0.633	0.653	0.592	0.316

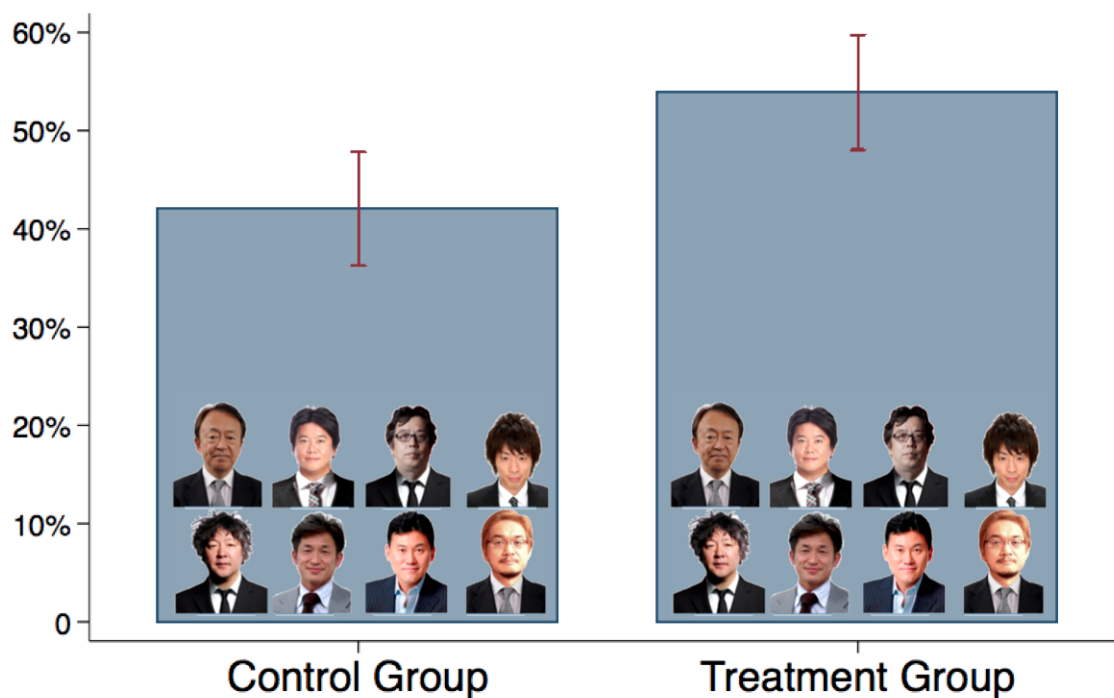
*p-values from one-way ANOVA*

Recall from hypothesis 4 that I expect scandal information to decrease support for incumbents. Results from all group comparisons are consistent with these expectations. Figure 4.7 shows that support for Candidate A, the incumbent, decreased by nearly 7% moving from control group 1 to the treatment group which received scandal priming prior to making their ballot selections. The corollary expectation that corruption salience decreases willingness to support incumbents is also supported by the results shown in Table 4.6. Both scandal information and corruption salience were associated with decreases in incumbent support and these effects were significant at  $P < 0.01$ . Interestingly, there also appeared to be an unexpected but significant liberal bias against incumbents. It is possible that some liberal respondents, even though they were told all candidates have affiliation with the party they most support, still associated incumbents with the reigning LDP that was in power at the time of the survey. Liberals were also more likely to rank corruption as an important issue. Also puzzling is that liberals were significantly more likely to support the non-famous celebrity counterparts, but not the celebrities themselves. This suggests that the liberal bias does not seem to redound to the benefit of celebrities, and that liberal voters may be more prone to “protest voting” (see section 4.7 below).

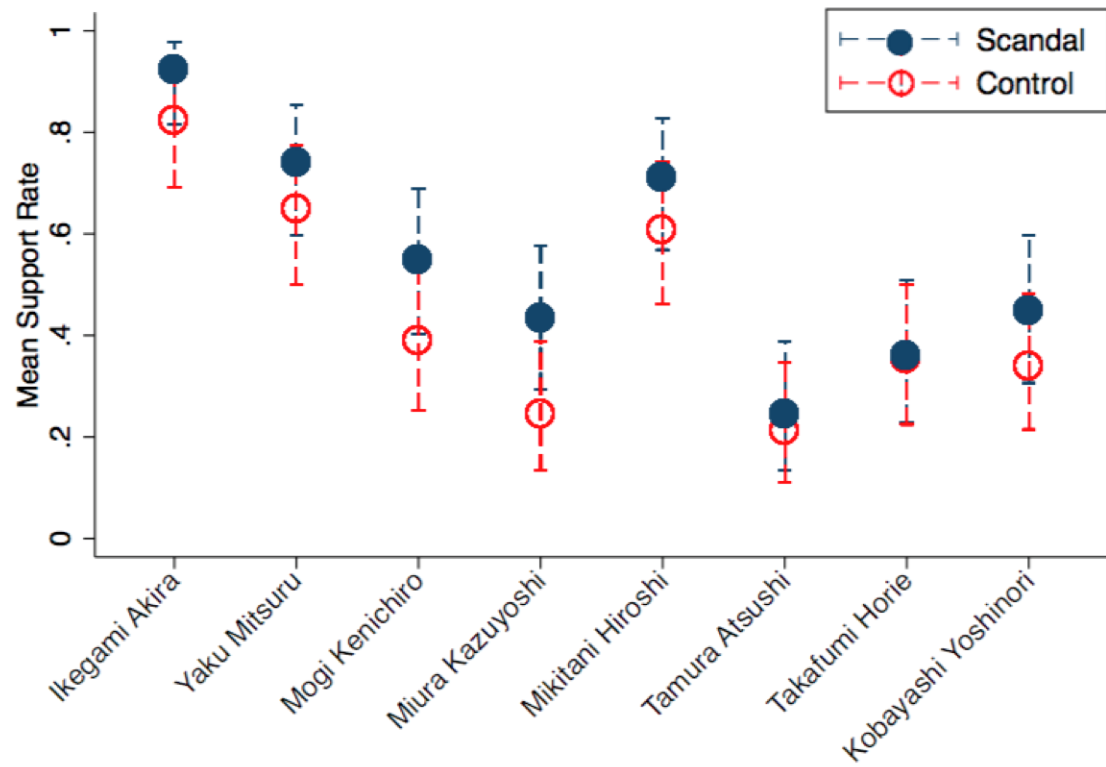
From hypothesis 5 expectations are that respondents primed with political scandal information will be significantly more likely to support ballot celebrities. Results from all group comparisons are consistent with these expectations. Figure 4.5 shows an 11.9% jump in celebrity support when moving from the control group 1 to the treatment group (difference is significant at  $P < 0.01$ ). The individual level results shown in Figure 4.6 reveal that this increase is not being driven by the idiosyncratic attributes of any single celebrity but rather is universal across each of the celebrities used. Individual differences are not statistically significant by themselves likely due to the much smaller sample size (average  $N=35$ ). There is one celebrity among the group however for whom the increase is almost negligible – Takafumi Horie (popularly known as Horiemon). This may be the exception that proves the rule. Horie is a very successful and aggressive business entrepreneur who founded the major ISP Livedoor and is famous for his non-conformist attitude and excessively casual attire in formal settings. However, he was indicted and arrested in 2006 on charges of securities fraud. After a lengthy and highly publicized appeals process he was eventually found guilty

and forced to serve 2 years in jail, having been released exactly 1 year prior to this survey. Reviewing the small ballot individual results from chapter 2 displayed in Figure 2.7, you can see that respondents were overwhelmingly more likely to support a fictional candidate with the same background as Horie, than they were to support Horie himself. It is telling that on small ballots, when respondents are not cueing on recognition and more attentive to the attributes of the candidates, Horie would be one of the few celebrities to fare worse than his counterpart. It is also telling, when respondents are primed with scandal information and presumably more likely to seek “clean” representative choices, that Horie would be the only celebrity option that did not receive a very noticeable bump in support.

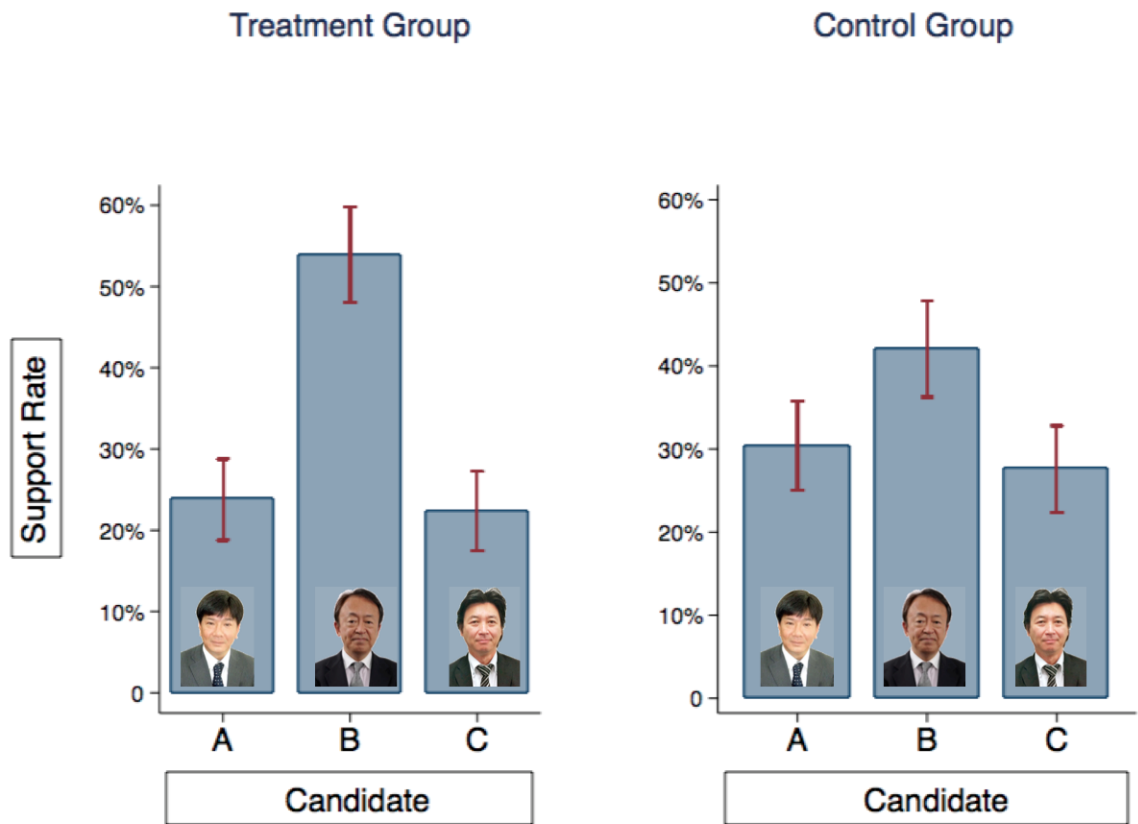
The corollary expectations of Hypothesis 5 about corruption salience are also supported by the results of logistic regression analyses shown in Tables 4.3 and 4.5. Respondents who reported corruption as more important than other valence issues were significantly more likely to support celebrities, but not their non-famous counterparts, nor other amateur outsiders. The interaction model (Model 4 in Table 4.3) shows that there is no significant mitigating effect of corruption importance on the effect of



**Figure 4.5:** Aggregate Celebrity Support in Treatment Group and Control Group 1



**Figure 4.6:** Individual Celebrity Support in Treatment Group and Control Group 1



**Figure 4.7:** Political, Celebrity, and Mere Outsider Candidate Support in Treatment Group and Control Group 1

the scandal priming overall. This comports with the subgroup analysis presented in Table 4.4 showing that respondents who already cared about corruption were not made more likely to support celebrities by addition of scandal information. Respondents who cared least about corruption on the other hand were susceptible to the effects of the scandal priming. This suggests that scandal information is more likely to impact the vote choice of people less concerned with corruption that is it those who may already harbor mistrust towards political insiders.

Not surprisingly, perceptions of viability are significantly associated with support for any candidate – celebrity or counterpart – suggesting that respondents were less willing to cast votes for those they did not believe capable of winning. We should be cautious however about assumptions regarding the direction of any causal relationship here. We cannot glean from the results whether respondents choose a candidate because they perceive him to be more viable, or whether their perceptions of viability themselves are driven by the respondents’ own ex ante positive dispositions towards a candidate.

Notwithstanding the above caveat, I have argued that voters who abandon incumbent insiders for reasons of distrust will be more willing to support celebrities than they will other mere outsiders, in part, because of fear over wasting their vote with the latter. I have asserted that fame increases the perception of candidate viability and that therefore celebrities will be viewed as more viable than other mere outsiders. This is tested in two ways using data from a viability question that was incorporated into the survey. As discussed in section 2.7 respondents were redirected to the ballot after making their initial vote choice and asked about their perception of other voters’ willingness to support the candidate in the celebrity position on ballots. Responses were given on a 5 point ordinal scale ranging from “definitely not willing” to “definitely willing.” Comparing viability ratings across control groups 1 and 2, I found that 65.4% of respondents rated real celebrities as viable whereas only 49.1% did so for counterpart candidates with identical backgrounds. Furthermore, comparing viability ratings across subgroups of respondents who reported being unfamiliar with the real celebrity to those who were familiar reveals an even more stark contrast. Among those who received a real celebrity ballot, 11.4% were unfamiliar with the celebrity

given, suggesting that these respondents did not view the celebrity as famous.<sup>11</sup> Mean celebrity viability ratings for those familiar was 61%, while only 26% for those unfamiliar (this difference was significant at  $P < 0.0001$ ).

Note that the perceptions of viability of real celebrity candidates across the treatment group and control group 1 yielded no significant difference. This suggests that perceptions of celebrity viability are independent of the treatment, and that while scandal priming may induce some voters to throw their support behind celebrities, it is not because these voters begin viewing the celebrities as more popular with others. Rather, the perceived electoral viability of candidates with real fame is already high, and remains so with or without any changes in the salience of corruption.

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<sup>11</sup>In terms of the individual celebrities, recognition rates ranged from 85% to 93%

**Table 4.3:** Logistic Regression of Celebrity Support on Scandal Information

	(1) Celebrity Support	(2) Celebrity Support	(3) Celebrity Support	(4) Celebrity Support
Scandal Priming	0.477** (2.81)	0.539** (2.90)	0.538** (2.86)	0.658* (2.54)
Viability		0.691*** (7.31)	0.725*** (7.51)	0.724*** (7.51)
Age		0.0264 (0.75)	0.0349 (0.98)	0.0369 (1.03)
Education		-0.0433 (-0.44)	-0.0249 (-0.25)	-0.0233 (-0.24)
Political Interest		-0.156 (-1.50)	-0.173 (-1.64)	-0.170 (-1.61)
Income		-0.000104 (-0.25)	-0.000168 (-0.40)	-0.000172 (-0.41)
Liberal		-0.0553 (-0.24)	-0.152 (-0.65)	-0.151 (-0.64)
Female		-0.0725 (-0.38)	-0.0537 (-0.28)	-0.0414 (-0.21)
Kanto Region		-0.134 (-0.66)	-0.0506 (-0.25)	-0.0570 (-0.28)
Corruption Importance			0.637*** (3.35)	0.761** (2.87)
Corruption Importance*Scandal				-0.250 (-0.67)
Constant	-0.321** (-2.66)	-2.240*** (-4.08)	-2.721*** (-4.71)	-2.799*** (-4.74)
Observations	565	547	547	547

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 4.4:** Logistic Regression of Celebrity Support on Scandal Information, by Corruption Importance Subgroups

	Respondents who care <b>most</b> about corruption	Respondents who care <b>least</b> about corruption
	Celebrity Support	Celebrity Support
Scandal Treatment	0.493 (1.72)	0.622* (2.42)
Viability	0.898*** (6.12)	0.596*** (4.48)
Age	0.0269 (0.50)	0.0433 (0.88)
Education	-0.251 (-1.69)	0.168 (1.22)
Political Interest	-0.133 (-0.84)	-0.233 (-1.57)
Income	-0.000299 (-0.47)	-0.000110 (-0.20)
Liberal	-0.132 (-0.39)	-0.155 (-0.43)
Female	-0.0477 (-0.17)	0.000424 (0.00)
Kanto Region	0.142 (0.44)	-0.265 (-0.96)
Constant	-1.883* (-2.40)	-2.892*** (-3.52)
Observations	260	287

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 4.5:** Logistic Regression of Celebrity Support vs Counterpart Support on Corruption Importance

	(1) Support for Celebrity	(2) Support for Counterpart
Corruption Importance	0.862** (3.14)	0.0101 (0.04)
Candidate Viability	0.717*** (5.32)	0.307* (2.10)
Age	0.114* (2.29)	0.0119 (0.25)
Education	0.0564 (0.41)	0.0536 (0.41)
Political Interest	-0.230 (-1.61)	-0.149 (-1.08)
Income	-0.000253 (-0.44)	-0.000531 (-0.90)
Liberal	-0.0507 (-0.15)	0.803** (2.67)
Female	0.475 (1.72)	0.216 (0.83)
Kanto Region	-0.262 (-0.90)	0.301 (1.11)
Constant	-3.600*** (-4.39)	-1.351 (-1.75)
Observations	283	288

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**Table 4.6:** Logistic Regression of Support for Incumbent Insider vs Amateur Mere Outsider Across All Groups

	Support for Incumbent	Support for Amateur
Scandal Priming	-0.459** (-2.72)	-0.159 (-0.91)
Corruption Importance	-0.487** (-3.14)	0.0842 (0.52)
Age	-0.0489 (-1.70)	0.0341 (1.09)
Education	-0.0408 (-0.51)	0.0334 (0.39)
Political Interest	0.131 (1.55)	-0.0578 (-0.64)
Income	-0.000495 (-1.45)	0.000700 (1.89)
Liberal	-0.557** (-2.67)	0.248 (1.26)
Female	-0.0365 (-0.23)	-0.0159 (-0.09)
Constant	0.117 (0.30)	-1.798*** (-4.26)
Observations	853	853

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## 4.7 The Protest Vote

The concept of “protest voting” is widely evoked in journalistic reports and academic studies to describe what is seen as behavioral evidence of voter disillusionment with politics. However, there is much inconsistency in how it is operationalized into specific behavior, as well as in descriptions of its intent. While some highlight cases of voter support for the candidacies of inanimate objects and animals as evidence of a desire to satirize elections, others are content to categorize the casting of blank ballots and even simple absenteeism as a form of “protest.”<sup>12</sup> Voter support for unknown amateur candidates and celebrities alike has also been included in descriptions of this behavior. The nomination of Finnish professional wrestler Tony Halme, for example, is reported to have drawn in a massive number of “protest votes” for the True Finns party, as he was the 5th highest vote getter in the 2003 Finish election (Kestilä, 2006). Similarly, some attribute the professional clown Tiririca’s success to protest (Tiririca was the highest vote-earning candidate in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies elections of 2010 and 2nd highest in 2014).

At first glance the concept of a protest vote seems quite similar to the type of voting I hypothesize in this chapter. The behavior I describe throughout this chapter and the vote choices described in the preceding paragraph both involve a fundamental dissatisfaction with mainstream parties and candidates, and a consequential willingness to support non-establishment alternatives. They are however fundamentally different in terms of voter intentions and expectations over outcomes. A protest voter, to borrow from Van Der Brug’s definition, is not sincere in their support for the candidate of their choice, and merely wishes to “show discontent with the political elite by voting for a party or candidate that is an outcast in the political arena” (Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000). They do not expect or even necessarily desire to change the outcome of the election. The type of voter behavior outlined in this chapter by contrast, is sincere and such voting is conducted with the intention or at least the hope of impacting the immediate election outcome. While protest voting may indeed be the basis for the election of some celebrities in politics, as is reported to be the

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<sup>12</sup>In the 1958 city council elections in Sao Paulo, Brazil, a rhinoceros named Cacareco won more votes than any party. In the town of Picoaza, Ecuador, the 1967 mayoral election was won by the candidacy of foot powder product (Reuters. ”Foot Powder Produces Headaches in Ecuador.” The New York Times. 18 July 1967 p. 39).

case for Tony Halme, I argue that celebrity candidates are also chosen on the basis of their own merits. For many such candidates, support may come from both sincere and insincere voters. In the case of Tirirca, for example, some reports claim that his votes were awarded by supporters who identify with him (Schwarcz, 2010).

It would seem that there are several paths to celebrity support. Thus far I have highlighted voter use of a recognition heuristic, the sincere seeking of credible outsiders, and now protest voting. Still some may be using other, more idiosyncratic, heuristics. In observational studies it is probably impossible to distinguish between the protest vote model and the model of voting behavior articulated in this chapter. With the experimental design used here, however, I can tease out the difference in two ways. First, I will broadly categorize any hypothetical protest voters in my sample into two types: 1) those who simply look for any outsider and are indifferent between celebrities and mere amateurs, and 2) those who look for the most visible outsider thinking, for example, that this candidate, and any stigma that he may have, will better convey their message of protest.

Results from the logistic regression models shown in Table 4.6 however reveal that neither scandal information, nor corruption salience redounded to the benefit of mere amateurs. Moreover, the results shown in Table 4.5 also reveal that corruption salience did not help non-famous celebrity counterpart candidates either. This would suggest that there were not many protest voters of the type 1 category in my sample. To get at the type 2 category of protest voter, I can leverage respondents' reported preferences for different candidate backgrounds in the abstract (see Figure 2.1). The type 2 protest voter does not sincerely support the celebrity and is indeed probably doing so because they believe the celebrity represents the most ridiculous or stigmatized option. To the extent that such voters exist in the sample, they should be concentrated among those respondents who disapprove of the celebrity background in the abstract. If there were any significant amount of such voters in the sample then, we would expect to find a positive interaction effect between abstract celebrity disapproval and corruption salience, on the likelihood of ballot celebrity support. Similarly, we would expect to find the same interaction effect with scandal information and disapproval of abstract celebrity backgrounds. Instead, neither of these interaction terms are significant, while abstract celebrity disapproval by itself is significant and negatively correlated with

ballot celebrity support (see Appendix B for results of these equations). This suggests that the treatment effects I find in this chapter are not operating through either hypothetical category of protest voting.

## 4.8 Discussion

This chapter presents the first national level survey experiment to test the impact of political scandal information on voter support for non-incumbent candidates. The experiment seeks to avoid some of the methodological challenges associated with observational data based approaches to identifying the effects of scandal on vote choice. Furthermore, with a broad and diverse sample capturing respondents of every prefecture in Japan, across multiple age groups, income levels, and ideological leanings, it does so while minimizing external validity concerns that beset some other experimental work in this area. Much of the literature on political scandal has focused on identifying the external conditions under which voters will be willing to punish incumbents for corrupt behavior. Other work has looked for systematic tendencies within different types of voters to explain variation in support for such candidates. While the results of this work remain mixed and inconclusive with respect to who punishes and when, there are consistent findings that scandal does result in a net average vote loss for implicated office holders, and that this loss is not driven solely by abstention.

This chapter builds on these studies by addressing the follow up question of whom voters turn to when they do abandon an incumbent. Recent work finds, somewhat counter-intuitively, that this abandonment does not lead to support for opposition party challengers (Chong et al., 2011). The results presented here suggest that the reason for this is not necessarily that disillusioned voters are withdrawing from the political process, but that they are seeking credible and viable political outsiders, rather than just other party politicians. I find that information about political scandal, and caring more about corruption, can lead voters to abandon candidates with a political background regardless of the candidates' culpability or lack thereof. I further show that this abandonment can lead to the support of unconventional "celebrity" candidates, whom voters otherwise tend to shun in the abstract. Rather than being

an expression protest moreover, I find that this support for conspicuous outsiders is sincere and likely driven by the unique characteristics that make famous amateurs attractive alternatives in the context of heightened concerns about corruption.

What do these results tell us about democratic accountability in Japan and elsewhere? Given its documented history of clientelism<sup>13</sup>. (Rosenbluth and Ramseyer, 1993) and reported limits on the degree to which voters have punished past scandal-tainted incumbents (Reed, 1996), Japan appears to be a hard case for the hypotheses I present here. The fact that I do find strong evidence of scandal information having a “throw the bums out” effect, implies that the many limiting factors enumerated by Jimenez can in fact be overcome. Thus, in line with other recent experimental work on the impact of scandal information in Brazil (Winters and Weitz-Shapiro, 2012), the results of this chapter are cause for some optimism.

However there is also reason for some caution. Voters may throw the bums out, but do the bums’ replacements behave any more ethically? To the extent that lawful opposition party candidates and other clean politicians also fall prey to the mistrust generated by the misdeeds of other office holders, voter response to scandal may not be all that ideal. Future scholarly work could examine more closely the mechanisms behind this transference of mistrust from one group to another. Understanding the cognitive biases that allow even lawful insiders to be perceptively marred by scandal may illuminate a means of disrupting this transference. It would also be worth knowing whether elected celebrities and other outsiders are, in practice, really any less prone to graft, and whether they can serve as effective legislators. Whether driven by the effects of electoral institutions, political scandal and mistrust, or other factors, it does not appear the phenomenon of celebrities in politics is going to disappear anytime soon. As political scientists it behooves us to address whether this conspicuous and often controversial phenomenon actually exerts any meaningful impact on the policy making process or the quality of democratic representation in general. I turn to this topic in the following chapter.

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<sup>13</sup>Clientelism refers to a patron-client type of relationship between representatives and supporters in which targeted benefits (direct payment, employment, goods, or services) are exchanged for (and contingent upon) votes. These arrangements have been linked to greater voter tolerance for the malfeasance of representatives among those receiving the benefits (see Pereira and Melo 2014)

## Chapter 5

**Active Amateurs and the Clown**

**Myth: Evaluating the Performance  
of Elected Celebrities**

## 5.1 Introduction

In chapters 2 through 4 I dealt with the puzzle of why voters support famous amateurs for office. In doing so I identified key systematic and election contingent factors that contribute to the causes of celebrity politics. It was shown that conventional explanations of protest voting and political apathy among young and uninformed voters paint an incomplete, and often incorrect, picture of what drives this phenomenon. Here I will switch gears to evaluate another set of conventional claims, not about the causes but rather the consequences of celebrities entering politics.

When considered in the abstract, and not with a focus on any particular individual, the common perception of celebrities in government is decidedly negative. The prevailing narrative warns us that the star's foray into politics will be ephemeral, unproductive, and trivializing. But never has this narrative been buttressed with more than conjecture and a handful of anecdotes. Here I seek to subject these claims to a more rigorous empirical test by taking advantage of the long history of celebrity politics in Japan's House of Councillors and the wealth of data it has produced.

Using a combination of candidate/legislator surveys, roll call voting records, committee attendance and deliberation reports, legislative attendance records, bill sponsorship and co-sponsorship data, as well as archives of parliamentary questioning from 1968 to 2015, I am able to evaluate celebrity performance in this chamber on a wide array of measures across a long span of time. Employing multidimensional scaling techniques and robust regression models I use these measures to test for any meaningful differences between celebrity legislators and their non-celebrity counterparts.

I find, somewhat counterintuitively, that while celebrities are significantly less likely to give speeches on the floor, they are significantly more likely to sponsor and cosponsor bills, to give lengthy addresses in committee, and to submit parliamentary questions to the government. Meanwhile, their rates of regular legislative and committee attendance, the number of terms they serve, and their propensities for party switching are no different from other representatives. Furthermore, they are no more likely to defect on party votes or engage in strategic abstention, however I do find evidence of ideological distance from fellow co-partisans among celebrity candidates.

In sum, I evaluate celebrities in 11 different ways and find them indistinguishable from other representatives in all but 4. In only 1 of these 4 do they rate as less active,

while in the remaining 3 they are more active. These results cast doubt on what I call the “the clown myth” – a reference to Brazil’s infamous Tiririca and the aforementioned narrative – and even suggest that there may be forces at work causing these conspicuous legislators to outperform their non-celebrity counterparts.

Unlike the previous three chapters this inquiry is meant to be exploratory. That is, I am not testing formal hypotheses deductively derived from existing theory but rather testing the merits of existing assumptions about an increasingly prevalent but understudied political phenomenon. The chapter thus proceeds as follows . I will first briefly discuss the existing literature on legislator evaluation and backgrounds to highlight how this study fits in with previous work. I will then turn to the much less empirical literature on celebrity politics, elaborating on the “clown myth,” and what motivates this chapter. Following that I will introduce the individual evaluation measures as well and the data and methods used to analyze each before presenting the results and offering interpretations of my findings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study’s limitations, its implications, and avenues for future research on celebrity politics as well as the underexplored link between legislative background and behavior.

## **5.2 Legislative Studies and the Boundary Between Backgrounds and Behavior**

There is surprisingly little overlap between the scholarly work that tracks legislator backgrounds and that which evaluates legislator performance. The former has primarily been concerned with identifying broad and changing patterns of careerism in the political development of different democratic systems. While this “backgrounds” literature is also interested in the quality of representation, it tends to assess that quality in terms of access and descriptive representation. That is, the focus is on which groups in society have influence in policy making. Moreover, that influence is often concluded on the basis of whether and to what extent members of these social groups occupy seats in a country’s governing institutions. With the focus being on access itself, there is much less attention to what happens after access is attained.

The question of whether some groups behave differently in office is never raised.<sup>1</sup>

The literature that does focus on legislator performance, by contrast, is not concerned with backgrounds, or access. Instead, these studies have followed two main lines of research with related aims. The first aim has been to evaluate the effectiveness of different institutional rules – such as term limits, allotted staff & salaries, or electoral systems. The second has been to determine whether a legislator’s behavior in office has any impact on her subsequent electoral fortunes and her advancement within the chamber or party hierarchy (See for example (Kousser, 2005; Miquel and Snyder, 2006; Nemoto, 2013; Loewen et al., 2014), but cf . (Volden and Wiseman, 2014).)<sup>2</sup>

This lack of overlap is somewhat surprising given that citizens seem to harbor different expectations of legislators with different backgrounds (see Figure 2.1). Of course, some of these expectations may simply be grounded in ideological inferences rather than considerations of competence or skill (e.g. leftist voters may support labor union representatives because the background is associated with congruent policy positions rather than any implications it may have for performance capabilities). In other cases however, backgrounds do seem to carry different valences that are not simply driven by policy considerations. Political secretaries for example, a common pedigree of Diet members in Japan (Ramsdell, 1992), appear to be valued much less than legal professionals. Results from the survey introduced in chapter 2 suggest that this difference is not attended by any patterns of respondent political affiliation or ideological leanings. Why then, are political scientists seemingly loath to compare the performance of elected businessmen to that of educators, of bureaucrats to journalists, etc?

This reluctance is understandable to the extent that, in spite of the subtle

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<sup>1</sup>See for example Borchert and Zeiss 2003 – a fairly comprehensive edited volume of legislative professionalism in 19 advanced democracies. Only one chapter incorporates any measure of individual legislator activism, and this measure is simply the number of terms served, not legislative output, speeches, attendance or the like. See Mathews 1984 and McKenzie 2009 for overviews on the limited scope of the exiting “backgrounds” literature.

<sup>2</sup>Volden and Wiseman offer a recent and notable exception with their analysis of legislative effectiveness scores (based on the success of individual bill submissions) and the social characteristics of Congressmen, finding, for example, that women are more effective in getting laws passed. A third strand of this literature has looked at the relationship between legislative activism and progressive ambition. Occasionally background and characteristic variables do enter into these analyses but they are never a focus. See for example Herrick 2001 who includes controls for legislator gender and race but curiously never explains the inclusion of these variables into the model nor address the seemingly unexpected findings of significance on all measures of activism.

differences in public perceptions, there is no real expectation among scholars that any one of these groups is significantly different in terms of their ability to perform the duties of public office. We would not expect much interest in group-based performance analysis if there were no groups among those consistently elected who could be expected to behave systematically better or worse in any measurable way. However that is not actually the case. In several countries now, there is at least one recurring subset of elected representatives whose background seems to carry very low expectations among both scholars and non-academic observers alike – celebrities.

### 5.3 Star Stigma and the Burden of Non-political Fame.

Journalistic accounts of celebrities winning office are rarely favorable and consistently document pessimistic expectations among observers. (See for example (Fisher, 1998; Toms, 2004; Ferreira, 2010; “*Spo-tsu Sakai Shusshinsha, Saninsen ni Zokuzoku Yuukensha kara Sanpi*”, 2010)). These negative expectations have three general components – ephemerality, unproductiveness, and trivialization.

The first of these is the idea that the celebrity’s tenure in office will be short lived. This could be because they are less committed to public service as a profession and have more attractive opportunities to fall back on outside of politics, or because they have unrealistic expectations about their abilities to achieve legislative goals and will more likely leave in frustration. This was reportedly the case for the Irish celebrity journalist-turned-MP, George Lee, who caused a stir when he resigned from office only 8 months after having been elected by a wide margin. His cited reason for returning to reporting was his lack of influence over the policy making process (Rafter and Hayes, 2015).

The second component is the idea that celebrities lack the knowledge, skills, and temperament necessary to be effective at lawmaking. This could be not only due to a dearth of policy expertise, but also a decreased willingness to work with party organizations owing to a greater sense of electoral independence or perhaps even an inflated sense of self. Arter cites the Finnish example of the national curling team captain Markku Uusipaavalniemi who was elected on the Center Party ticket in 2007

but soon became a “loose canon” voting against the party on key bills and defecting to the populist right True Finns party by the next election (Arter, 2014).

The third component is the idea that having famous non-political amateurs in elections and government undermines the integrity of democratic institutions. The celebrity in this conception has no merits. Pulitzer prize winning historian Daniel Boorstin captures this sentiment in referring to the celebrity as a “human pseudo-event” – a personality that is devoid of any intrinsic value except for that of being advertised (Boorstin, 2012). Other academic work warns that celebrities trivialize politics by dumbing down political debate and by placing style, looks, and personality above ability (Weiskel, 2005; Van Zoonen, 2006; Duvall, 2007). Some have even gone as far as equating celebrity candidacy to licentious political propaganda, and called for state sanctioned “mechanisms” to protect the integrity and legitimacy of elections (Braga Albuquerque, 2014).

Collectively, I refer to these three generalizations as the clown myth because there is probably no greater exemplar of this model than Tiririca, who arguably incorporates all three components, and yet who seems to be quite unique as celebrity politicians go. After his election in 2010, Tiririca was accused of being illiterate (a condition which would disqualify him from serving) and was humiliatingly forced to take a literacy test. His performance in office meanwhile, in spite of all the scrutiny, has been reportedly lackluster with low attendance and very little participation in deliberations (Ribke, 2014). He finally announced before the end of his term that he was frustrated with office, felt more effective as a clown, and planned to quit (Bevins, 2013), though he did ultimately end up running again.

While the clown myth may be the dominant narrative about celebrities in politics, there are also a few studies that paint a more nuanced picture of the phenomenon and are less pessimistic. Street, for example, argues that there is nothing decidedly unnatural about having famous amateurs in office and that to say there is imposes an overly limiting view of the nature of representation (Street, 2004). Others highlight that there may be positive effects on voter participation, arguing that celebrities have the ability to mobilize otherwise apathetic publics (Marsh, ‘t Hart and Tindall, 2010). Moreover, there are several individual cases around the world that either contradict the narrative outright or suggest a more complicated story.

Former comedian-cum-governor Higashi Kokubaru’s political career was indeed short<sup>3</sup> however his fame was also reported to have greatly boosted the sales of local products in the otherwise poor and relatively obscure prefecture of Miyazaki (Brasor, 2007). Brazilian soccer star Romario, elected to Congress in the same year as Tirirca, received subsequent accolades for ranking as one of the country’s hardest-working lawmakers, compiling a near perfect attendance record and delivering scathing reform speeches on a variety of issues (Romero, 2012). Actor Yamamoto Taro, elected as a Japanese upper house councilor in July 2013, soon cultivated a reputation as one of the most active members of the chamber. The July – December 2013 edition of the Mitsuhoishi Databook (a catalogue of legislative activity published by the NPO Mannenyato) ranked Yamamoto as the 2nd most active councillor of that period, and his subsequent efforts do not seem to have subsided since.

In what appears to be the only systematic empirical treatment of celebrity legislative behavior to date, Arter tracks the retirement rates and upward mobility of legislators in Finland from 1991 to 2007, finding that celebrities “replicate the pattern of non-celebrity candidates” – which contradicts the clown myth (Arter, 2014). Here I aim to subject the myth to further testing using a variety of legislative activity measures from Japan. In the next section, I elaborate on the specifics of these measures, the data used to generate them, and the methods of my analyses before presenting the results.

## 5.4 Measuring Celebrity Activism and Independence

Studies evaluating individual legislator performance have tended to focus primarily on the submission of bills, as opposed to other legislative behaviors such as attendance or floor speeches. Moreover, these performance indexes have generally not been based on the simple number of submissions alone but have also incorporated the relative fate of submitted bills as well (e.g. whether released from committee, whether passed but vetoed, whether passed without veto, etc). Kousser’s “batting average” for example records the number of bills authored by a legislator that pass through both houses, divided by the number of bills that she introduces during one legislative

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<sup>3</sup>Higashi served one term as governor and was then felled by scandal less than 1 year into his subsequent first term as lower house representative

session, without discarding vetoes (Kousser, 2005).

As the generation of laws is the primary function of a democratic legislature, it is understandable that the focus would be on bills alone, and moreover on submissions that are deemed “effective.” However, the drawback of this approach is that it limits our attention to an outcome that in many systems is only available to a small subset of legislators. While opposition party members and governing party backbenchers may have less chance of submitting successful bills in any democratic system, that probability is almost zero in some while still positive in others.<sup>4</sup> A few studies have opted to incorporate further measures into the analyses of behavior. In the US House, Olsen and Nonidez incorporate floor speaking while in the Japanese lower house Nemoto looks at rates of parliamentary questioning (Olson and Nonidez, 1972; Nemoto, 2013). Dal Bo and Rassi look conduct an analysis of the Argentine House that includes floor attendance, committee attendance, floor speeches, and the number of bills introduced (Dal Bo and Rossi, 2011).

In this study, I am interested in contrasting celebrities with non-celebrities to test the behavioral implications of the clown myth. Beyond the success rates of submitted bills, the myth has implications for all legislative activity, including not only work on the floor and within committees but also longevity of service and independence from party organizations. I therefore take a broad survey of activities, career patterns, and ideological leanings rather than narrowing the scope to only a few comparisons. As measures of true legislator “effectiveness,” all of these indicators are crude. They do not capture what happens informally behind the scenes, nor any of the extra-legislative activities, such as surgeries and casework, that are also considered an important element of representation in some polities. However they are informative as rough indicators of relative legislative activism and independence. The measures also represent a step forward in the literature on celebrity candidacy which to date has offered only theoretical and anecdotal accounts of office behavior.

To assess legislative activism, I compare Japanese celebrity councillors with other House of Councillors members across 8 variables. These include attendance

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<sup>4</sup>For example between 2002 and 2007 in the Irish Oireachtas only 1 of over 87 private members bills were passed suggesting a norm of near automatic dismissal of any non-government bill (Breadun 2014). In other Westminster systems such as the UK and Canada, there is a lottery system in place such that private members bills have a decent probability of at least receiving floor consideration.

records for both regular plenary sessions and committee meetings, the number of speeches given on the floor per term, the total character length of floor speeches, the total number of speeches given in committee sessions for the term, the total character length of committee speeches, and the number parliamentary questions submitted during the legislative term. The analysis spans 36 years (12 terms) of activity in the House of Councillors from 1968 to 2004.<sup>5</sup>

All of these outcome variables are based on count data which is strongly skewed to the right, with many observations at zero, indicating that an ordinary least squares estimation would be inappropriate. Furthermore, as can be gleaned from the summary tables below, the data is over-dispersed – the conditional variance exceeds the conditional means (see table 5.1 and 5.2). Therefore, following Nemoto and Hanamoto (2013) as well as Dal Bo and Rassi (2014), I estimate the effects of a celebrity background on activity counts using negative binomial regression models for each measure. Likelihood-ratio chi-square tests confirm that the negative binomial model is a good fit for each. The unit of analysis is legislator and term. Because legislators serving more than one term contribute to multiple observations, the models are run with standard errors clustered by legislator. In each model controls are added for seniority (number of terms served prior to each observation), and party affiliation (dummy variables included for all parties). Term “fixed effects” are also added to control for legislative term-specific characteristics not captured by the other covariates. The models for floor speeches and committee addresses are restricted to legislators who gave speeches or addresses. The attendance models were run with an exposure option that specified total days per term (i.e. the maximum possible count that any legislator could have had). See tables 5.3 for the results of these analyses. Figure 5.2 provides a visualization of the whole distribution of effects using box plots.

To assess legislative independence, that is, the extent to which celebrity legislators are ideologically distinct from co-partisans and to which they toe the party line, I utilize roll call data from the last year of legislative activity in the House of Councillors, as well as results from a candidate & legislator survey conducted just

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<sup>5</sup>The activity data is obtained from the Diet Member White Paper, published by Professor Sugawara Taku at the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology of Tokyo University. The combined legislator background data is partially provided by Professor Kuniaki Nemoto of Musashi University. The author thanks Yusaku Narita for assistance with the consolidation of this dataset.

**Table 5.1:** Summary of Legislative Activism Variables, Celebrities

Celebrity Legislators	N	Mean	Variance	Min	Max
(co)sponsorships	242	0.7561983	2.96521	0	12
attendance	242	97.54132	745.4111	7	173
floor speeches	242	1.958678	16.52111	0	46
speeches length	242	5726.909	2.29e+08	0	173416
committee attendance	242	88.56612	2126.828	0	250
committee addresses	242	23.69008	344.7127	0	89
com. addresses length	242	112276.2	1.38e+10	0	648646
parliamentary questions	242	1.082645	33.81057	0	62
terms served	242	5.917355	9.445424	1	12

**Table 5.2:** Summary of Legislative Activism Variables, Non-Celebrities

Celebrity Legislators	N	Mean	Variance	Min	Max
(co)sponsorships	2886	0.6767152	4.363042	0	34
attendance	2886	98.77374	833.6857	3	173
floor speeches	2887	3.005561	57.0403	0	149
speeches length	2887	7524.815	1.38E+09	0	1216704
committee attendance	2887	98.62704	2385.024	0	323
committee addresses	2887	23.49913	406.5359	0	115
com. addresses length	2887	104887.1	1.66E+10	0	1399617
parliamentary questions	2887	0.4734098	6.830047	0	49
terms served	2887	5.24748	5.7315	1	13

prior to the 2013 upper house elections.

The roll call data consists of abstentions, yeas and nays from each LDP and DPJ member on 104 bills that were voted on over a period of 24 days of legislative activity from February 3rd to July 10th 2015.<sup>6</sup> As outright defections are rare in Japan for the vast majority of bills, I pay special attention to isolated abstentions<sup>7</sup>, which are also sometimes used to express individual disapproval. If the case is particularly high profile, these abstentions can draw media attention and create a stir. For example the LDP celebrity legislator Maruyama Kazuya's<sup>8</sup> abstention on a party vote over consumption tax increase in 2012 was widely reported and he was quoted as criticizing that the LDP was contradicting its own principles with the vote (*Jiminmaruyama*, 2012). He was later admonished by party leaders not to “defect” again lest they withdraw the whip (Author interview with Maruyama, 4/30/2014, Tokyo).

The candidate and legislator survey was conducted from June 1st to July 21st 2013 as a collaborative project between the Tokyo University Taniguchi Research Group and Asahi Newspaper Politics Group. It was administered by local chapters of the Asahi group and targeted 433 candidates running for open upper house seats, as well as another 121 incumbent councillors who were not up for re-election. They obtained a 96% response rate from the candidates and a 68% response rate from the non-running incumbents. Among those who responded there were 26 celebrities. To make comparisons of the latter group with their non-celebrity counterparts, I analyzed responses on a series of questions dealing with general ideology, specific policy issues, as well as campaign strategy. I selected 8 policy questions – 4 dealing with foreign policy and security issues, and another 4 dealing with economic policy. Each was answered on a 5-point ordinal scale ranging from the most conservative position to the most liberal (see Appendix C for a listing of the survey instruments and a translation of each). Using these issue responses I estimate the ideological distance between candidates

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<sup>6</sup>This data is publically available and published on the House of Councillors website however not downloadable. For analysis the author scraped data using the API building software Kimono.

<sup>7</sup>By “isolated,” I mean that the same legislator did not abstain from all other votes on that day, which would otherwise likely be an indication that he was simply absent rather than an indication of intentional abstention on a particular bill.

<sup>8</sup>Maruyama was formerly a regular character on the popular TV drama *Gyouretsu no Dekiru Houritsu no Soudanjo*.

with multi-dimensional scaling in Stata.<sup>9</sup> This procedure takes any set of measures of the similarity between different observations across multiple variables, calculates the distance between the observations, and transforms this multi-dimensional distance into two-dimensional space, which can then be used for visualization. I perform these estimates first between LDP and DPJ respondents to get a sense of how well the policy issues divide the two main parties. I then conduct the same procedure for each of the top 4 parties individually to see where celebrity candidates and legislators map out in relation to their co-partisans. Having generated the similarity distances for each respondent by party using MDS, I then regress these distances on celebrity status and other covariates to test for any significant differences. Table 5.5 shows the results of these estimations, while Figures 5.3 and 5.5 provide visualizations by party.

The survey also includes a question asking respondents to self identify themselves on an abstract ideology scale ranging from 0 (extremely liberal) to 10 (extremely conservative). See Figure 5.4 for frequency distributions of these responses by party. Another set of questions queried respondents about the issues on which they were most focused leading up to the election, as well as their tendencies for different campaign styles. Figure 5.6 shows comparative frequency distributions of issue-focus by celebrity and non-celebrity candidates. Table 5.6 presents results from a logistic regression of respondent tendency to emphasize personal characteristics over policy appeals during campaigns, on several covariates. See Appendix C for the specifics and a translation of these survey instruments.

In the next two sections I will present results and offer interpretations of my findings from the analyses described above. I will first address the findings related to legislative activism and then turn to the findings related to legislative independence.

## 5.5 Results: Legislative Activism

Celebrity legislators are less prone to give speeches on the floor of the chamber and significantly more prone to both sponsor private members' bills (PMBs) and submit parliamentary questions (PQs). Moreover, while they are not more prone to make addresses in committee, when they do, these addresses tend to be significantly

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<sup>9</sup>MDS was run with the Gower option which is a measure developed by J.C. Gower for generating distance between observations when variables are on an ordinal scale (See Gower 1971).

longer. By the model estimates celebrities are expected to submit over 4 times as many questions per term (2.2, with the average being 0.52). They sponsor and cosponsor almost twice as many bills per session (1.15 vs 0.68). Their committee addresses are expected to be 2,800 characters longer per speech, which corresponds to roughly 2 pages of text. On the other hand they're only expected to give roughly half as many floor speeches (3.12 vs 1.79).<sup>10</sup>

**Table 5.3:** The Effects of Celebrity Status on Legislative Effort by Outcome

	Floor Speeches	Floor Speech Length	Committee Addresses	Committee Addresses length
Celebrity	-0.551*** (-4.42)	-0.200 (-1.81)	0.126 (1.05)	0.443** (2.68)
Seniority	0.208*** (8.63)	0.212*** (8.41)	-0.0515*** (-3.94)	-0.0938*** (-7.10)
<i>N</i>	3119	2002	3119	2847

	Parliamentary Questions	Regular Attendance	Committee Attendance	Bill (Co)Sponsorship
Celebrity	1.819 (2.17)	-0.00321 (-0.25)	-0.0447 (-1.07)	0.516* (2.08)
Seniority	-0.142 (-0.54)	-0.00791*** (-5.21)	-0.101*** (-16.40)	-0.0755* (-2.51)
<i>N</i>	3119	3118	3119	3118

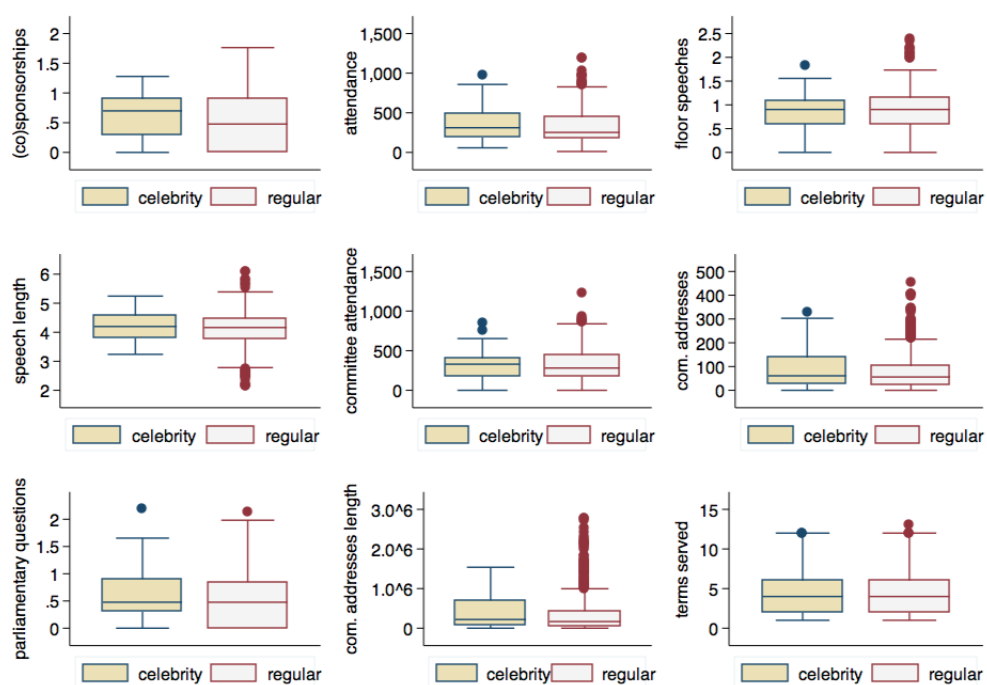
*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Term fixed effects and Party dummies in all models but not shown

If we hold on to the simple dichotomy of two general types of legislators - active and inactive - and assume that the active types should have consistently

<sup>10</sup>Postestimation marginal effects calculated with Margins in Stata.



**Figure 5.1:** Box-and-whiskers plots by type of outcome (celebrity vs. Non-celeb)

higher numbers on all of these measures, then these findings on celebrities would seem somewhat contradictory and puzzling. However, these activities differ greatly in terms of the functions they serve, the relative costs of implementing them, and the incentives for legislators to engage in them. For example, even while any Diet member is formally allowed to submit parliamentary questions, there is a norm in Japan that prohibits this practice by ruling party members (Nemoto, 2013). While the submission of questions may be a rewarded activity by opposition parties, it very likely faces some type of sanctioning for those in ruling parties. Thus, it is expected that we would find ruling party members to be less “active” on this measure, even where they are more active on others. Similarly, celebrities may face very different incentives to engage in these behaviors relative to other legislators, owing to different constituency demands or different expectations from their party.

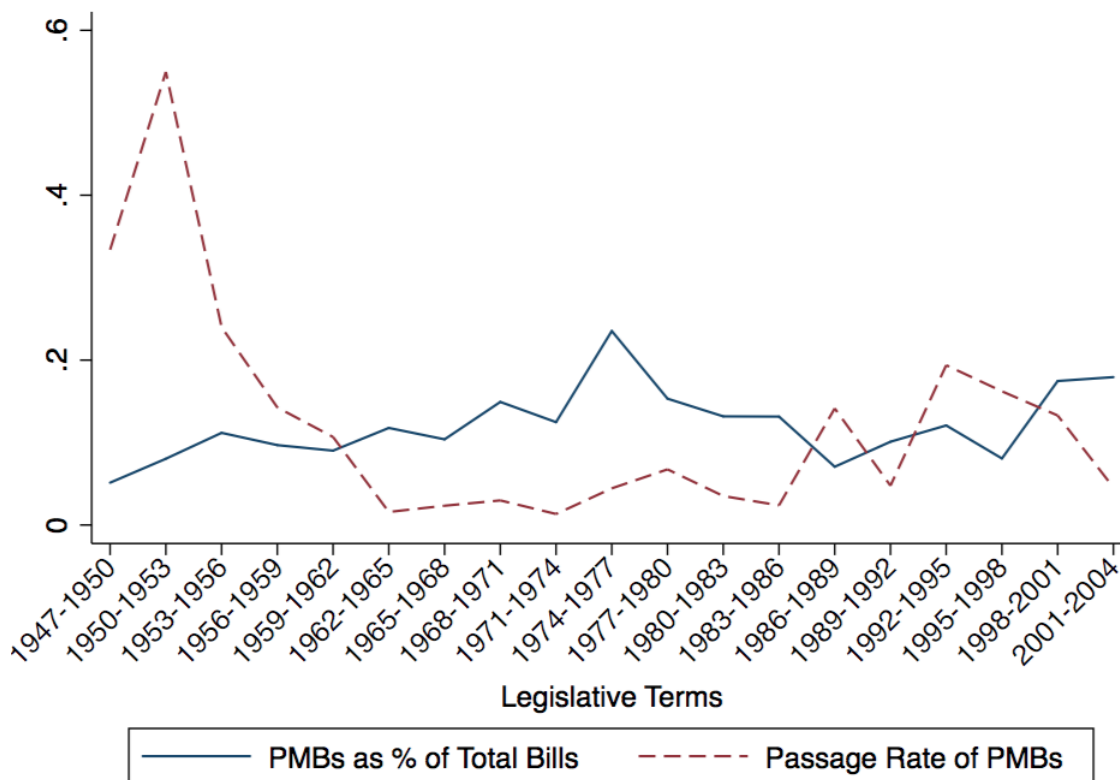
**PMBs.** Studies of bill submissions in the US focus primarily on the electoral connection (Mayhew, 1974). Vote seeking incentives are also commonly assumed even in more restrictive parliamentary systems with strong disciplined parties. In Canada for example, Blidook finds that electorally vulnerable MPs are more likely to submit private members’ bills that target their own constituencies (Blidook, 2012). Moreover, Loewen et al find strong evidence that this behavior is rewarded by Canadian voters (Loewen et al., 2014). However, while evidence for an electoral connection exists in some cases, in others there appear to be additional if not competing incentives at play. Looking at private members’ bill submissions in Japan’s lower house for example, Nemoto and Hanamoto find that nearly 80% of PMBs are referred to committees that tend not to handle constituency-targeting particularistic legislation. This, coupled with the fact that they find only a small percentage of the lower house PMBs are successful (11.4%), and the fact that PMB submission in Japan is a lengthy and costly process<sup>11</sup>, suggests that this activity is an inefficient means of targeting constituents in Japan. Instead, they find evidence that party leaders are incentivizing individual members to invest in PMB submission by rewarding more active members with higher posts such as ministerial or parliamentary secretary positions. Accounts from leading

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<sup>11</sup>Diet members are required to obtain 20 members’ signatures (50 if budgetary action is required). They are expected to hold hearings on the bill’s issue(s) with relevant interest groups, negotiate legal requirements with the Legislative Bureau, and obtain formal party leadership approval, in a process that can take years (Nemoto and Hanamoto 2013).

members of the LDP comport with this explanation in outlining the many ways PMBs have come to benefit the party, which is facing greater demands for the quick generation and implementation of new policies (Curtis, 2002).

Looking at aggregate rates of PMB submission and success in Japan's upper house, I find similar patterns to what Nemoto and Hanamoto report in the lower house. There has been a steady increase in submissions over time, likely driven by a broadening of policy demands as Japanese society grew more complex. However, the passage rates remain perennially low (averaging 12.3%) from the onset of the formation of the LDP and '55 system, which also suggests that targeting district voters and credit claiming with PMBs is an inefficient strategy (See Figure 5.1). Thus, while more data is needed, the exiting evidence suggests that PMB sponsorship in the House of Councillors, as in the lower house, may also be driven by party incentives.



**Figure 5.2:** Upper House PMB Percentage of All Bills and Passage Rate Per Term

So what explains the higher rates among celebrities? We already know from Chapter 3 that the majority of celebrities are elected in the national tier. We also

know that they tend to be recruited by central party leadership, rather than local organizations or through a self-nominating *koubo* system. Unlike many other national tier candidates, they tend not to be backed by powerful organized groups such as labor unions, medical associations, agricultural cooperatives, etc. These characteristics imply that they should be less responsible to geographically targeted groups of voters. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that we should assume their PMB sponsorships are not driven by vote seeking or reelection concerns. A legislator's constituents need not be locally concentrated nor organized in order for their activities in office to have an electoral impact – particularly if their activities are widely reported. Being subject to greater media scrutiny and fighting an uphill battle against the clown myth, celebrities may face greater pressures to be active in office lest they confirm the negative biases surrounding their candidacy.

However, a closer look at the PMB-sponsoring celebrities themselves casts doubt on both the Mayhevian electoral explanation and the alternative model – based on the carrots of cabinet promotion. For nearly the entire period of the dataset the LDP was in power and in complete control of promotion to cabinet posts.<sup>12</sup> Yet, in stark contrast to opposition party celebrities, over 90% of LDP celebrity legislators never sponsored a single private member's bill. In other words, the vast majority of this celebrity sponsorship activity was conducted by members who had very slim prospects of seeing the type of promotional rewards that Nemoto and Hanamoto report being leveraged in the lower house.

The electoral incentives explanation is also partly thrown in to question by the fact that PMB-sponsoring celebrities did not tend to get reelected at any significantly higher rate than those who never sponsored bills. There were 32 sponsors in the dataset and 36 who never sponsored a bill. The average number of terms for these groups was 4.9 and 4.3 respectively.

This near-parity in term lengths also suggests that the sponsors do not quite fit t'Hart and Tindal's (2009) categorization of "celebrity advocates." These are celebrities whose foray into politics is not career driven but rather issue focused. The recently elected actor Yamamoto Taro, for example, could be placed in this category as he reported not wanting to serve any longer than was necessary to pass

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<sup>12</sup>From 1968 – 2004 the LDP was in government for all but an 11 month period between 1993 and 1994, and held the premiership for 33 of the 36 years.

his particular agenda (Author Interview with Taro on 5/13/2014, Tokyo). If celebrity PMB sponsorship was primarily advocacy driven in this way, then we might expect to see sponsors leave office sooner than other career minded celebrities.

Note that the PMB measure is of both authoring and co-sponsoring and does not distinguish between these two activities, even while the former involves significantly more effort. A possible alternative to all of these models above is that celebrity sponsors are not actually, of their own accord, any more active than others. Rather, it may be that they are simply more frequently targeted as cosponsors by other legislative entrepreneurs who feel that having the celebrity's name on a bill would be beneficial. This could be because the name draws in more outside attention allowing the non-celebrity author to expand the impact of his own credit claiming. It could also be because the celebrity, seen as more of an outsider, is deemed useful for reaching across the aisle and drawing in support from other parties, or for making controversial legislation seem less partisan. For example Australia's most famous celebrity MP – former musician Peter Garrett – was widely reported as being used by the Labor Party in this way (Robertson, 2008; Onselen, 2010).

**Committee Deliberation.** Similarly, the finding that celebrities deliver longer addresses in committee meetings is open to multiple interpretations. All Diet members in Japan, unless they are serving as cabinet ministers or parliamentary vice-ministers, are required to sit on at least one committee, and seats are awarded in proportion to each party's strength in the Diet. In the earlier years of the '55 system, committee work was viewed as more of a burden than an opportunity to advance legislative goals, given that real policy making occurred outside these formal institutions in backroom negotiations with bureaucrats and parallel party policy committees (Baerwald, 1974). However, that began to change in the late 70s when the continually waning LDP majority could no longer fill chairmanships for all standing and special committees, allowing opposition parties to begin exercising the formal powers of these bodies (Krauss, 1982). Whether conducted as perfunctory *gimu* (obligation) or as sincere effort to influence the legislative process, it is more difficult to couch committee deliberation in Mayhewvian terms. As the meetings are not public and decisions cannot be solely attributed to any single individual, deliberations would seem ineffective for credit claiming purposes. For the same reasons, active engagement

in committee deliberation by celebrities is not likely a reaction to the clown myth or driven by a need to prove oneself to the public. This type of activism might, by itself, seem more suggestive of t'Hart and Tindal's "advocate" model of celebrity politician. However, the more verbose deliberators actually serve longer tenures in office, on average, rather than shorter (3.4 terms versus 2.1 terms)

But what can we glean from the simple length of one's addresses in committee? Is this a reasonable indication of greater activist tendencies or might it even be a negative sign? The clown myth interpretation would be that they are simply less articulate and therefore less able to deliver effective concise messages. However, the overlap between this pattern and the other measures supports a more activist interpretation. As was the case with PMB (co)sponsoring, over 90% of LDP celebrities were below average on this measure, while other parties' celebrities were more active on both. Celebrities that sponsored and cosponsored PMBs delivered almost 3 times as much oratory in committees per term than those who did not. As will be discussed below, they were also much more likely to submit parliamentary questions, as well as to give floor speeches.

**PQs.** Parliamentary Questions are a feature of almost all national legislatures (Franklin and Norton, 1993) and their function in most countries is to serve as a mechanism for the opposition to impose government accountability (Martin, 2011). Countries differ in the form and procedures of questioning but in all the government is obligated to respond in a relatively short amount of time. Japan adopted the British practice of Question Time in 1999 and now allots approximately 45 minutes a week of floor time to oral questioning that is televised. This oral questioning however is typically limited to leaders of parliamentary caucuses. Written questions on the other hand (on which the results presented here are based) have always been a feature of the postwar Diet and are open to submission by anyone. The government is required, moreover, to respond within 7 days and all exchanges are made public. While it is easy to dismiss PQs as an inconsequential ritual, the comparative evidence suggests otherwise (Martin 2011). As in other cases, PQs in Japan are reported to sometimes influence government decisions and also serve as inter-election campaign tools for individual legislators, suggesting that they may have an impact on voting decisions as well (Nemoto, 2013).

There are few studies that analyze the content of PQs but those that exist show within-country variation in the ways legislators use them. Using content analysis, Martin finds that even in the highly candidate-centered system of Ireland over 55% of the written questions between 1997 and 2002 did not have any constituency basis. Nemoto tracks which ministries were assigned to answer PQs in the Japanese lower house as a proxy for determining whether the questions were parochial in focus – with those being answered from ministries such as the Ministries of Construction, Transportation, and Agriculture deemed “distributive.” Interestingly, he finds a precipitous drop in the percentage of distributive type PQs following the 1994 electoral reform. This is suggestive of a general shift in the nature of PQs in response to changing electoral incentives. Where PQs were once more of an individual legislator’s campaign tool, Nemoto argues that PQs in Japan are now more a part of general opposition party strategy for challenging the government, and in the process, for enhancing the party’s reputation. As with PMBs, he finds some evidence that more PQ-active legislators are more likely to be promoted by their parties.

How do celebrities fit into this and what explains their higher rates of PQ submissions? As with PMBs, neither the electoral connection nor the party driven explanations seem to fit well. Recall that the majority of celebrities are national tier legislators without the close ties to powerful organizations that many of their same tier-colleagues enjoy, which implies that they stand to benefit the least from distributive type activity. Recall also that the bulk of the data comes from terms that were served prior to the reforms, when parties were supposedly not as actively rewarding PQ activity. Nemoto finds, in addition to drop in distributive PQs, that when parties started rewarding this activity the number of legislators engaging in it, and the number of questions themselves, went up dramatically. PQ rates rose nearly 300% in the post reform years (Nemoto, 2013). Whatever was driving the higher celebrity PQ rate before, we might expect then that now it has leveled off as formally locally focused MPs are being pushed by the parties to submit more. However, a look at the questions submitted in the most recent House of Councillors session in 2015 shows that the higher celebrity rates persist to this day. In the 8 month period between Jan 15th and August 15th of 2015 over 213 PQs were submitted by 27 councillors. Celebrities, while they make up only 8% of the chamber as a whole, accounted for

over 23% of those who submitted, and over 40% of the PQs. If the t'Hart and Tindal “issue advocate” categorization accurately describes these legislators, then the celebrity bump might be driven by their passion for the issues rather than career mindedness. Indeed, the aforementioned “advocate” Yamamoto Taro is among those who submitted PQs in 2015 and tied for 3rd among the highest celebrity submitters. Former TV commentator and investigative journalist Arita Yoshifu submitted a whopping 65 PQs (more than the next 4 submitters combined) similarly appears to fit the issue advocate model.<sup>13</sup> However, data from the longer term analysis shows that PQ submitting celebrities serve on average almost 3 years longer than non-submitters. On the whole then they would seem more career oriented than the advocate model suggests. Of course issue advocacy does not have to be mutually exclusive with serving longer political careers.

When we look at the measures together, the pattern that emerges is similar to what Arter finds about celebrity legislators in Finland, namely that there is just as much variation among celebrities as there is among regular legislators. There appear to be generally active types and generally inactive types – performance on each measure is correlated with performance on others. As mentioned above, celebrities that sponsored and cosponsored PMBs delivered almost 3 times as much oratory in committees per term than those who did not. 85% of the sponsoring group also gave floor speeches, while only 51% of the non-sponsoring group did so. 41% of sponsors also submitted PQs while only 15% of non-sponsors did so. PMB sponsoring celebs also attended 90% of legislative sessions per term, while non-sponsors attended 85%. Without further study it is difficult to glean what motivates this more activist subset, whether reaction to greater performance pressure, a greater tendency for issue-advocacy, or something else. What does seem clear however is that the clown myth is not an accurate representation of celebrity legislators in Japan.

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<sup>13</sup>Arita dedicates significant time and energy to particular issues such as erecting barriers to xenophobic demonstrations, which may ingratiate him with Korean residents and other foreigners in Japan, but the latter does not represent a powerful voting block.

## 5.6 Results: Legislative Independence

**Roll Call Analysis.** The current cohort of celebrity councillors is not a group of mavericks when it comes to voting on the floor. This runs contra to the clown myth but is perhaps expected when you consider that the majority of celebrities are recruited directly by party and factional leaders. Given that celebrities draw in more media attention and scrutiny, party leaders should be especially cautious in their nomination of these individuals lest they face the embarrassing spectacle of high profile defections. If Nemoto is correct about Japanese parties investing more in label-building, then we should expect celebrity candidates to be well-vetted, rather than haphazardly nominated. Of course, parties and factions may also be short sighted when it comes to elections. As was hinted at in Arter's analysis, there is a common perception that party nomination of celebrities is a vote-seeking gimmick – a short sighted move that is done without regard to the candidate's loyalties or policy compatibility, and which may come back to haunt them. Recall the case of Finnish Center Party defector Markku Uusipaavalniemi.

In Japan however, there remains a strong norm of personal loyalty to the person and faction that is responsible for recruiting individual candidates. 2013 celebrity candidate Kirishima Rowland, for example, was recruited into Your Party by his personal friend Matsuta Kota (founder of Tully's in Japan), who himself was recruited by former Your Party leader Yoshimi Watanabe. At the time there was much internal disagreement in the party over prospective coalition partners, which eventually led to the break up of the Your Party. Though Kirishima hinted at his personal agreement with the strategies of the opposing faction, he reported that he would always be bound to follow Matsuta and Watanabe (Author interview with Kirishima, 8/23/2013, Tokyo). The recent career moves of one of the most high profile celebrity councillors also illustrates this norm. Olympic judo medalist Tani Ryoko was recruited by Ichiro Ozawa to run as a DPJ candidate on the party's national tier list in 2010, where she won the second highest number of votes (just behind the aforementioned PQ enthusiast Arita Yoshifu). Since then, however, she has followed Ozawa's every move into 4 other political parties!

Party discipline in Japan is notoriously high save for limited cases of intra-party splits and bills dealing with cross-cutting issue dimensions, such as the Organ

Transplant Law of 1997 (Curtis, 2002). In the 104 bills of this dataset, there was not a single defection by LDP legislators. Even within the DPJ, a party known for being more internally divided, perfect party-line voting occurred on over 80% of the bills. Of the 19 bills that saw any DPJ defections at all, the greatest number of defectors never exceeded 2 councillors out of the party's 58 members. None were celebrities. The only celebrity defection on record for these bills occurred outside of the major parties and among a loose knit group of 3 legislators that does not really represent a party. In that sense, it is the exception that proves the rule. The “defector” Yamamoto Taro, who is one of the most active members in the chamber, voted against a bill supported by the other two legislators whom he is loosely affiliated under the label “The People's Life Party & Taro Yamamoto and Friends.” (Incidentally one of these “members” is the aforementioned Tani Ryoko who came in , along with Ozawa, from the People's Life Party).<sup>14</sup>

Since outright defections are rare, I take a closer look at abstentions, which are also sometimes used to voice dissent as was the case with the aforementioned celebrity councilor Maruyama Kazuya. However, I find that celebrities are no more likely to abstain than other councilors. Out of 104 bills the mean abstention rate for celebrities was less than one bill and nearly identical to non-celebrities (0.79 vs 0.78). Over 70% of councilors never missed a single vote during this period. There were 188 abstentions in total over 24 days of legislative activity. Restricting the analysis to abstentions that occurred in isolation<sup>15</sup>, I find that celebrities were even less abstention prone, accounting for only 4%, while they comprise 8% of all councilors. Table 5.4 summarizes celebrity abstentions during this period.

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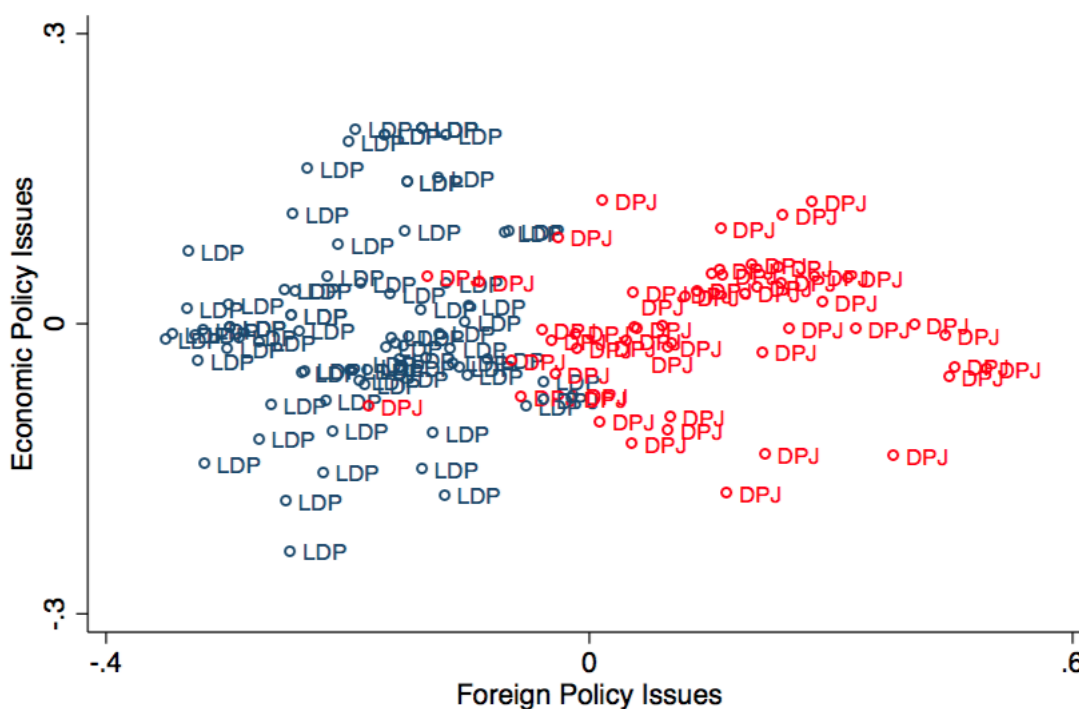
<sup>14</sup>The bill was not a PMB but rather a government bill about adjustments to postal regulations, ostensibly geared towards increasing efficiency but which expands the responsibilities of existing postal workers.

<sup>15</sup>Referring to those that did not occur along with abstentions for all other votes on the same day, which would suggest a general absence rather than a targeted abstention.

**Table 5.4:** Abstentions of Upper House Celebrity Candidates (Feb 3rd to July 10th, 2015)

Background	Name	Party	Tier	Total Abstentions
Olympic Speed Skater	Seiko Hashimoto	LDP	Nat	0
Pro Baseball	Hiroo Ishii	LDP	Pref	0
Singer, Quiz Show Champion	Santo Akiko	LDP	Nat	4
TV Asahi Announcer	Marukawa Tamayo	LDP	Pref	0
Pro Baseball, Commentator	Horiuchi Tsuneo	LDP	Nat	0
Popluar TV Drama Character	Maruyama Kazuya	LDP	Nat	1
Actress, Singer, Car Racer	Mihara Jyunko	LDP	Nat	0
TV Reporter, Newscaster	Yamatani Eriko	LDP	Nat	5
Nikkei Newspaper Journalist	Yamashita Yuuhei	LDP	Pref	0
TV Personality, Commentator	Renho	DPJ	Pref	0
Judo Gold Medalist	Tani Ryoko	Minor	Nat	0
TV Commentator, Journalist	Arita Yoshifu	DPJ	Nat	0
Local Reporter Sapporo	Tokunaga Eri	DPJ	Pref	0
Pro Wrestler	Antonio Inoki	JRP	Nat	0
Asahi TV Announcer	Shimizu Takayuki	JRP	Pref	2
Movie Actor	Yamamoto Taro	Minor	Pref	1
NHK Announcer	Wada Masamune	YP	Pref	0
Newscaster	Mayama Yuuichi	YP	Nat	0
Famous HIV Activist	Ryuuhei Kawada	YP	Nat	0

**Candidate and Legislator Survey Analysis.** The results of the multi-dimensional scaling among LDP and DPJ respondents are surprising in that two parties now seem even more distinct than they were in previous iterations of the same survey (Kearney and Naoi, 2012).<sup>16</sup> As with any multidimensional scaling scheme, no individual issue contributes exclusively to any one of the projected dimensions and thus defining the dimensions based on subsets of the issues is imperfect. However, running bivariate OLS regressions of the MDS predicted distances on each individual question reveals that the foreign policy & security questions contributed primarily to the first (bottom) dimension, which always has the greatest predictive value. Economic issues on the other hand contributed more to the second dimension.

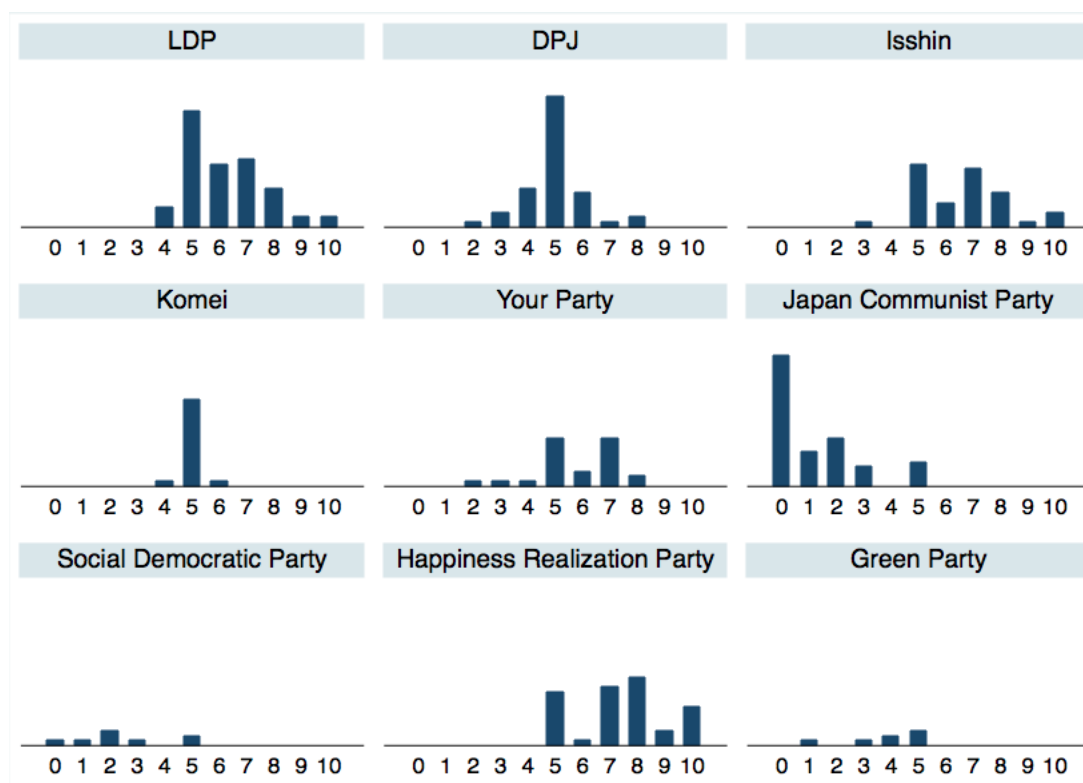


**Figure 5.3:** Policy Space Estimates for LDP and DPJ Candidates & Legislators, Todai-Asahi Survey 2013

<sup>16</sup>All eigenvalues are nonnegative and with two dimensions the scaling procedure accounts for more than 94% of the dissimilarity between candidates. This suggests that the 2 dimensional projection is accurate.

Figure 5.4 shows the distribution of ideological self-placement of the respondents for each party – 0 being extreme left, 10 being extreme right. These results comport with existing perceptions of each party’s general ideological orientation, which suggests that respondents were taking the survey seriously and answered accurately.

However, given that the survey was not anonymous and that it was run just prior to an election, there is also reason to suspect that some candidates may have responded strategically. That is, they provided answers with an eye towards how the published responses might effect their chances in the upcoming race. Individual responses were made public on the Asahi News website.



**Figure 5.4:** Frequency Distributions of Self-Identified Ideology Placement, by Party

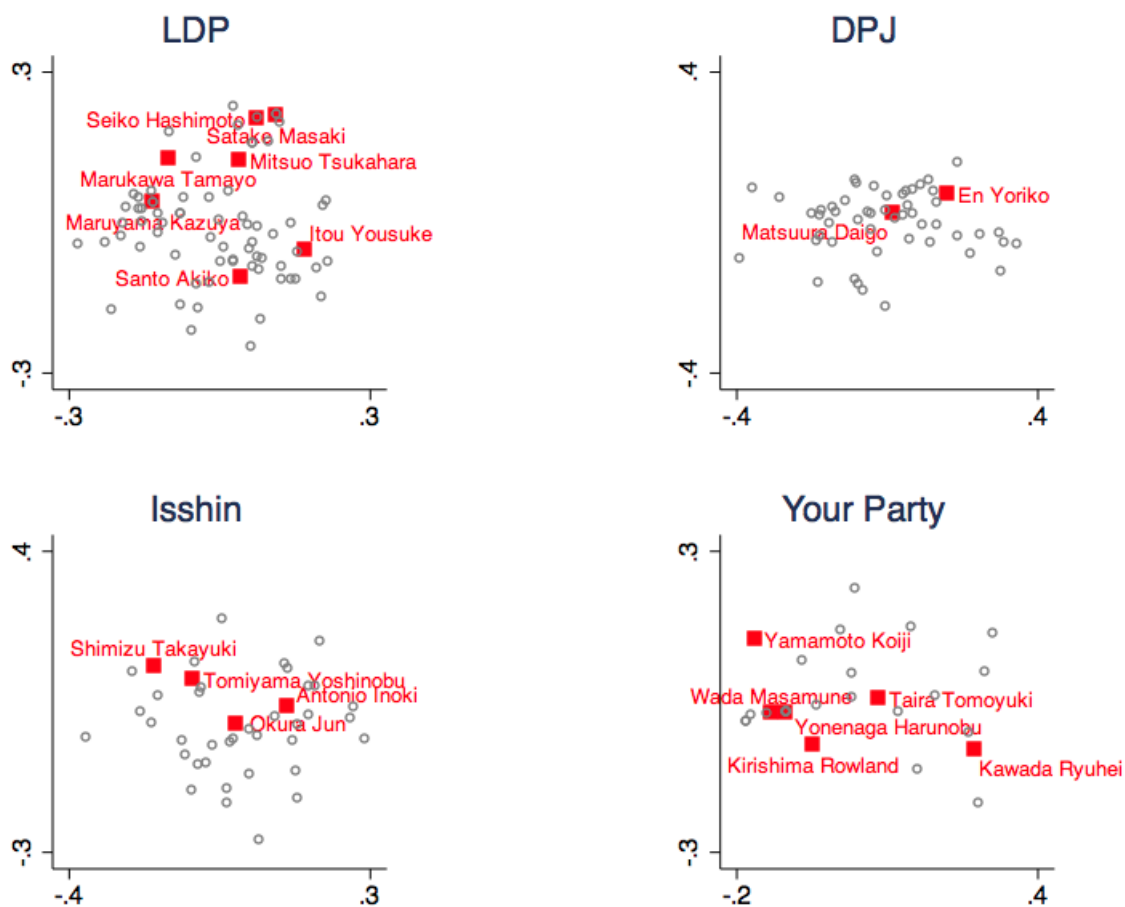
But what are strategic answers? And which candidates have the most incentive to give them? Performing a similar analysis with the same survey, run 8 years prior on lower house candidates, Kearney and Naoi find that challengers facing incumbents in “pork barrel” districts are more likely to take extreme positions on issues of lower salience (Kearney and Naoi, 2012). The researchers reason that this is because the

issue space is untapped by these particular incumbents who have chosen to rely on pork and valence positioning, leaving challengers the opportunity to attract more ideological voters in the district. Interestingly, they find no difference among SMD and PR running candidates, in spite of the theoretical differences in incentives that such candidates should face.

In the upper house, the theoretical difference between the prefectural tier and national tier candidates, in terms of the incentives they face, is also stark, albeit not along a policy vs. pork dimension. With districts so large in size, cultivating personal votes with pork, or direct ties to individual voters, is much less of a viable election strategy. While both tiers use electoral systems that are associated with incentives to cultivate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart, 1995), intraparty competition in the prefectural tier is generally limited only to the metropolis districts (Tokyo, Osaka, etc.) and even there is quite limited. National tier candidates, by contrast, have much greater pressures to distinguish themselves from co-partisans. Being cast on a crowded list of similarly minded competitors, these candidates need to do whatever they can to stand out, especially if they are not relying on a pre-established organized vote. One way of doing so could be to carve out more extreme ideological positions and exaggerate their preferences on issues. Celebrities, however, already stand out by default. Their burden is not finding recognition but rather, to the extent that they are seen as non-political, portraying competence and policy expertise.

The findings from the individual party MDS analysis are somewhat counterintuitive (see Figure 5.5 and Table 5.5). National tier candidates in general were no more likely to take extreme positions on issues relative to co-partisans, however celebrities from the right-leaning parties were significantly more likely to do so. These findings are also surprising in juxtaposition with the activism results above – LDP celebrities appear to be simultaneously more extreme, and less active in office. Of course, from the standpoint of conservative ideology, this might be exactly what we would expect – ‘good government is that which governs the least.’ In his analysis bill submissions in the California State Assembly Kousser finds that Republican’s submit on average 10% fewer bills (Kousser, 2005). But this still leaves the question of why celebrities in particular should be more extreme? One possibility is that these celebrities are embracing their outsider status. As outlined in chapter 2, notwithstanding all the

negatives associated with the clown myth and its expectations, outsider status can be a boon to celebrities where voters are dissatisfied with establishment incumbents, and indeed many do seem to base their campaigns on highlighting this outsidership. It may be that LDP celebrities are more prone to make such ideological appeals if there is a significant base of conservative voters who feel that the standard politicians are compromising on the party's principles. Figure 5.6 shows the comparative frequency distributions of issue-focus by celebrity and non-celebrity candidates. There is little discernable difference between the two groups except a slightly higher tendency for celebrities to focus on the valence issue of disaster relief & prevention. Table 5.6 presents results from a logistic regression of respondent tendency to emphasize personal characteristics over policy appeals during campaigns. Celebrities were significantly more likely to list self-promotion over emphasis on the merits of the party, which fits in with the outsider appeal narrative. DPJ and JRP respondents as well reported being less party-oriented in general.



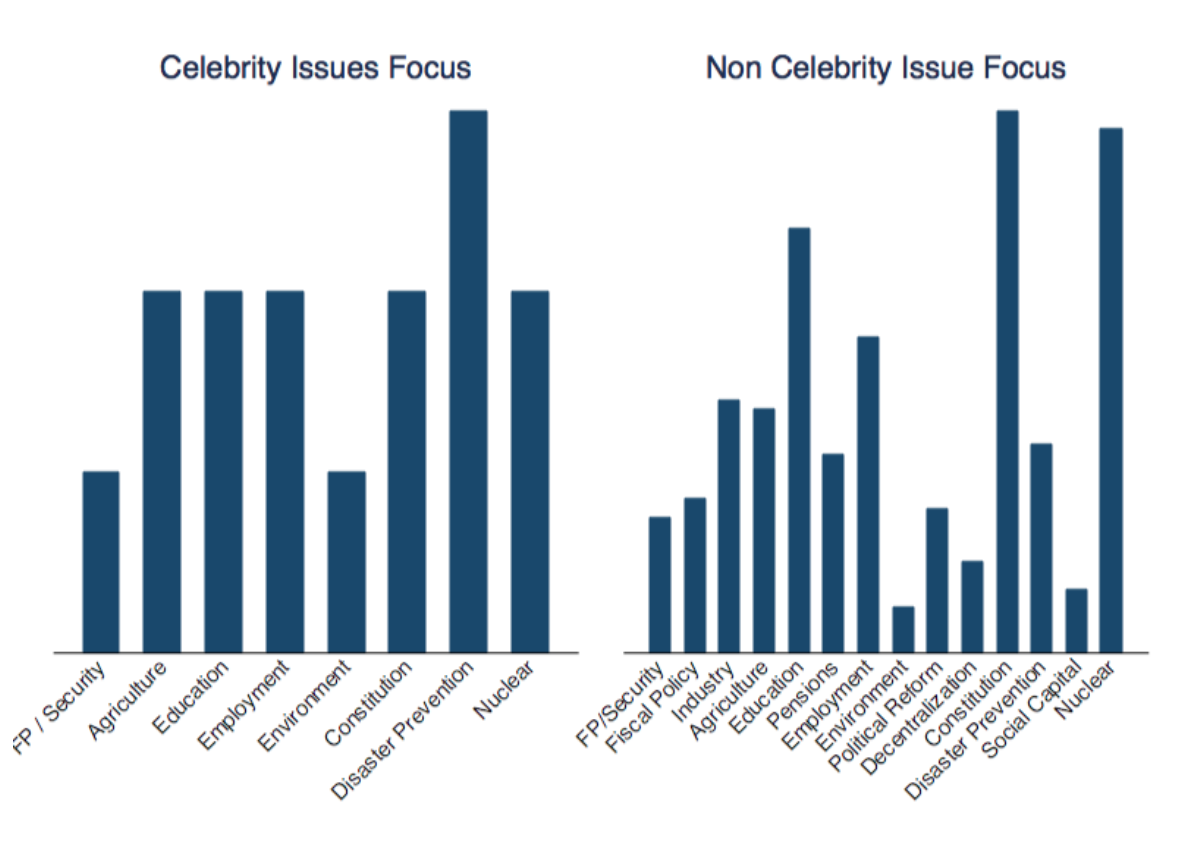
**Figure 5.5:** Ideological Distance Between Celebrity and Non-Celebrity Candidates & Legislators, by Party

**Table 5.5:** Determinants of Candidate & Legislator Dissimilarity with Co-partisans

	LDP	JRP	DPJ	Your
Celebrity	0.126* (2.60)	0.114* (2.05)	0.0463 (0.71)	0.00775 (0.19)
National Tier	-0.0313 (-1.12)	0.0397 (1.14)	-0.00896 (-0.35)	0.00806 (0.27)
Incumbency	0.0172 (1.23)	0.00960 (0.27)	0.000286 (0.02)	0.148 (1.51)
Female	0.00627 (0.15)	0.0987* (2.11)	0.0176 (0.56)	0.0423 (1.27)
Seniority	-0.0400* (-2.40)	-0.0345 (-0.55)	0.00145 (0.07)	-0.497 (-1.86)
Constant	-0.0137 (-0.28)	-0.157* (-2.30)	-0.0217 (-0.45)	-0.199 (-1.86)
<i>N</i>	76	42	53	34

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



**Figure 5.6:** Distribution of Issue Focuses Leading Up to Election

**Table 5.6:** Celebrity Status on Individualistic Campaigning

Emphasis on Self Character over Party Policy	
Celebrity	1.639* (2.15)
Incumbent	0.155 (0.27)
Seniority	0.130 (0.42)
National Tier	-0.226 (-0.97)
LDP	0.317 (1.07)
DPJ	1.629*** (3.38)
JRP	0.901* (2.19)
Constant	0.303 (0.53)
<i>N</i>	418

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## 5.7 Discussion

In this chapter I outlined the negative expectations commonly found in journalistic and scholarly accounts of celebrities entering politics – referred to collectively as “the clown myth” – and subjected them to a series of new empirical checks, using a variety of candidate & legislator behavior measures with data from Japan. Consistent with Arter’s findings that Finnish celebrities are no more ephemeral than other legislators, I find that elected celebrities in Japan serve tenures in office that are just as long as their non-celebrity counterparts on average. Furthermore, they are no more likely to switch parties or engage in maverick behavior such as defecting or intentionally abstaining on party votes. Even more at odds with the clown myth are the findings that celebrity law makers are actually significantly more hard working with respect to several legislative activities – the sponsorship and co-sponsorship of bills, deliberations in committee, and the submission of parliamentary questions.

A more surprising finding is that conservative party celebrities appear to be more ideologically extreme than their co-partisans and celebrity candidates in general seem to emphasize their own self-merits rather than the policies and achievements of their party during campaign appeals. These latter findings are consistent with the anecdotal accounts listed in Chapter 2 of celebrities appealing to the public as political “outsiders.” However, a note of caution must be sounded in that, unlike with the long term activism analyses, this survey data is one cross section of time just prior to 2013 elections.

Reliable empirical analysis of celebrity behavior in office is elusive in part because there are not sufficient numbers of elected celebrities in many polities to make meaningful comparisons, and even where there are, individual legislator behavior data is often hard to come by. For the nascent literature on celebrity politics then, this study represents a notable step forward. Still, readers will rightfully question how well these findings generalize beyond the case of Japan. More comparative work is needed if we are interested in identifying broad patterns and my hope is that other country specialists will replicate and improve upon the analyses conducted here. In Japan, the question of what is driving this greater celebrity activism is still unanswered. I provide several possible explanations above, based on rough indications in the data, but they all require further testing. To that end, a promising step forward would

be a content analysis of the parliamentary questions and private member's bills that legislators submit and sponsor. This may not only give us leverage on the question of what motivates celebrity activism in general but may also help explain the apparent partisan differences in ideological extremism among these conspicuous legislators.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusion

This dissertation has sought to answer three important and compelling questions about celebrity politics: 1) Why are celebrity candidates and celebrity politicians prevalent in some electoral contexts and not others? 2) How do voters react to the entry of celebrity candidates and why do they sometimes support them? 3) Do elected celebrities behave differently in office than other politicians? Addressing these questions with numerous empirical tests using the informative case of Japan as well as data from Finland has pushed forward our understanding of this conspicuous phenomenon. Perhaps more importantly, this in-depth look at an understudied type of candidacy has highlighted gaps in several fields of the general political science literature and opened the door for further studies beyond the focus on celebrities themselves.

## **6.1 Future Work on Electoral Systems, Voting Behavior, and Legislative Behavior**

As Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate, future work on the impact of electoral rules could benefit from more experimental research that helps identify the precise mechanisms by which institutional changes alter the decision making processes of voters. We know from studies of voter behavior that voters are apt to rely on information short cuts. We also know from studies in cognitive psychology and decision theory that not all short cuts are created equal – some tend to be more accurate, and some are easier to implement. We now have evidence from several studies that institutions can influence when and if some voter short cuts are used over others. This suggests that it may be possible to improve the degree to which voting decisions accurately reflect voter preferences, simply by altering the format of their choice. But what heuristics do we find ideal in a voting context and how do we optimize institutions to favor those?

While the traditional approach of observational data analysis in electoral system studies is more limited in its ability to address such questions, addressing them is clearly important from the standpoint of institutional engineering. Survey experiments using conjoint analysis offer one useful means of teasing out what political information matters on ballots under different conditions, however care should be taken

to maximize the electoral verisimilitude of the experiments, and not all treatments are amenable to such methods. Another promising, even if more costly, approach would be to design experiments with control group conditions that exactly match that of actual district elections (i.e. same ballot formats, same real candidates, same information environments, with the sample frame being the districts' electorate), and run them immediately prior to elections. Actual district returns could then be used to evaluate the representativeness of the samples in terms of preferences over real choice options (i.e. did control group outcomes match actual district returns?). This in turn would offer a strong criteria for evaluating the generalizability of any found treatment effects.

Chapter 4's finding that voter distrust towards politicians can lead them to seek credible and viable outsiders is positive in that disillusionment does not necessarily lead to voter withdraw from the political process, as previous studies suggest. However the finding that career politicians who have no ties to any political scandals can nonetheless suffer electorally when voters think about the latter is cause for some concern. More work is needed to understand the range of associations that voters make with different candidate backgrounds, and the way in which negative or positive information transfers among candidates within these associations.

Along with very recent research in the legislative behavior literature, Chapter 5 highlights the necessity of revisiting the study of legislator backgrounds. If career backgrounds have predictive effects on the performance of elected representatives, then it behooves political scientists to find out what those are and what mechanisms drive these outcomes. As a preliminary step the indices used in Chapter 5 could be replicated in other legislative chambers where such data is available, and with a focus that is not limited to celebrities. Where reliable patterns are found follow up work could benefit from content analyses of submitted bills, parliamentary questions, and floor speeches that may help clarify what's driving such relationships.

## **6.2 Future Work on Celebrity Politics**

More comparative work is needed to assess the extent to which the results of these chapters generalize beyond Japan. Other cases are also better suited for

addressing additional questions that remain completely unanswered by the celebrity politics literature. An in-depth analysis of celebrity candidates in the Philippines for example may reveal whether the dynamics of legislative elections discussed here also hold for executive elections, and whether celebrity executives exhibit some of the same behavioral proclivities that we find in celebrity legislators.

Another proposition that is advanced yet untested in this literature is that celebrity candidates have the power to draw in politically unengaged voters (Street, 2012). A seemingly low hanging fruit along this line of inquiry would be an analysis of voter turnout in district races where celebrities run for office. There is some anecdotal evidence to support such a connection. In the 2003 California recall election in which Arnold Schwarzenegger ran, over 61% of eligible voters cast a ballot, which is a full 10 percentage points higher than the State's previous gubernatorial election held only 1 year earlier. This turnout rate was also higher than any nonpresidential race in California of the last 30 years <sup>1</sup>, and comparatively higher than any gubernatorial recall election turnout in US history. <sup>2</sup> Moreover, analysis of the election shows a marked increase in turnout among younger, less partisan, and less politically experienced portions of the electorate (Arbour and Hayes, 2005). 5 years earlier Minnesota's gubernatorial election featuring Jesse Ventura similarly featured higher turnout (62.3%) than any of the state's nonpresidential elections of the last 30 years. Surveys indicated that this increase was driven by a disproportionate number of ballots cast from young, low income, and less educated voters (Lacy and Monson, 2000). These cases are suggestive but a more robust analysis could be conducted where rates of celebrity candidacy are consistently high and in elections where there are not too many confounds. The Japanese upper house is less useful here because most of the activity is taking place in a single nationwide district. India would seem to offer a promising setting with its high numbers of celebrities distributed across multiple single member districts. If these patterns of higher turnout in celebrity races are found, researchers should take caution not to conclude (without further analysis) that the erstwhile less active voters are all throwing their support behind the celebrities themselves. Rather,

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<sup>1</sup>See Arbour and Hayes 2005. These rates refer to registered voters but the figures derived from VAP or VEP are no less stark in terms of 2003's exceptional turnout.

<sup>2</sup>There are only 3 such elections: 1921 North Dakota Gubernatorial Recall (33.82%), 2003 California Gubernatorial Recall (61.2%), and the 2012 Wisconsin Gubernatorial Recall (57.8%).

it is entirely possible that the celebrity entry simply increases the salience of the local race, inducing nonvoters to turnout due to increased interest or other indirect means. One of the more surprising findings from the survey data in Japan is that celebrity supporters are not disproportionately young, less educated, or apolitical. It would be useful to have a more concrete understanding of the demographics of celebrity support elsewhere.

# Appendix A

## Chapter 2









	Ikegami Akira (Political)	Ikegami Akira is a popular TV commentator who covers political topics and current affairs on a freelance basis. He was recently courted by the LDP as a potential candidate for the 2014 Tokyo Gubernatorial Election but turned down the offer.
	Tamura Atsushi (Non-Political)	Tamura Atsushi is a famous comedian, actor, and reoccurring guest on multiple variety shows. Though he is reported to have once entertained candidate recruitment from the JRP, he has never actively engaged in policy debates.
	Miura Kazuyoshi (Non-Political)	Miura Kazuyoshi is a professional soccer player who rose to prominence in the 1990s for his performance on the Japan National Team. He remains one of the most recognized Japanese soccer players to date.
	Mikitani Hiroshi (Political)	Mikitani Hiroshi is a renowned business magnate and CEO of the e-commerce company Rakuten. He is categorized as political owing to occupational proximity and his campaign efforts on behalf of 8 business-friendly candidates for the 2013 election.
	Yaku Mitsuru (Non-Political)	Yaku Mitsuru is a well-known comic writer and Waseda-educated TV commentator. While he has engaged in some political satire and spoken publicly about Japan's use of nuclear power, he generally not considered political.
	Mogi Kenichiro (Non-Political)	Mogi Kenichiro is a famous neuroscientist and general science popularizer, often invited on TV programs to discuss various topics. Though he has publicly addressed domestic social issues, he is not considered a political figure.
	Kobayashi Yoshinori (Political)	Kobayashi Yoshinori is a famed manga author active since the 1970s who since the 1990s has been publishing very political and ideological works. Often popular among conservatives, he more recently was outspoken against the 2013 Secrecy Bill.
	Horie Takafumi (Political)	Horie Takafumi is a famous entrepreneur who garnered both positive and negative media attention for unconventional antics and aggressive business practices. He ran unsuccessfully as an independent candidate in the 2005 lower house election against the famed Kamei Shizuka.

Figure A.1: Celebrities Used in Experiment

***Small Ballot Groups***

(Picture) <b>A (name)</b> Tokyo University Lower House Diet Member	(Picture) <b>B</b> <b>(Variable Depending on Celebrity)</b>	(Picture) <b>C (name)</b> Waseda University Doctor
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***Large Ballot Groups***

(Picture) <b>A (name)</b> Meiji University Doctor	(Picture) <b>B (name)</b> Kyoto University National Civil Servant	(Picture) <b>C (name)</b> Tohoku University Lawyer
(Picture) <b>D (name)</b> Tokyo University Lower House Diet Member	(Picture) <b>E</b> <b>(Variable Depending on Celebrity)</b>	(Picture) <b>F (name)</b> Waseda University Upper House Diet Member
(Picture) <b>G (name)</b> Tsukuba University Economist	(Picture) <b>H (name)</b> Hokkaido University Lower House Diet Member	(Picture) <b>I (name)</b> Hitotsubashi Uni. Reporter

Figure A.2: Candidate Background Information on Ballots

# Appendix B

## Chapter 4

## B.1 Valence Issues Used In Experiment

The issues included 1) reducing political corruption, 2) addressing the effects of the aging society problem, 3) protecting the environment, and 4) improving the quality of education. National surveys conducted by the Cabinet Office of Japan have documented the high salience of these issues for the electorate as a whole, however naturally there exists wide variation across individuals over their relative importance.

The table below shows the percentage of survey respondents who ranked each issue as the most important and least important respectively:

**Table B.1:** Sample Distribution of Valence Issue Relative Importance

	Corruption	Education	Environment	Aging Society
Ranked Most Important	31%	16%	10%	42%
Ranked Least Important	28%	25%	36%	11%

Please arrange the issues below (from 1 to 4) according to which you consider more important.

1 = Most important 4 = Least important

Reducing political corruption	<b>1</b>
Improving the quality of education	<b>2</b>
Taking measures to deal with the aging society problem	<b>3</b>
Protecting the environment	<b>4</b>

**Figure B.1:** Valence Issue Rank Question (*translated from Japanese*)

## **B.2 Scandals used in experimental treatment**

### **Lockheed Incident:**

In 1976 it was revealed that Lockheed Martin bribed several top officials, including former prime minister Tanaka Kakuei and 17 other Diet members in order to procure a defense contract. Kakuei was arrested and sentenced to 4 years in prison. In all, over 460 persons were implicated in the incident.

### **Recruit Incident:**

In 1988 it came to light that dozens of prominent politicians, bureaucrats, business figures, and even members of the media had received stock shares and favors from the major HR firm Recruit in exchange for their assistance in procuring various advantages leading up to the initial public offering of their new subsidiary – Cosmos. Over 47 Diet members, from 5 different political parties, were implicated including former primer minister Nakasone and contemporary incumbent prime minister Takeshita, whose cabinet was felled by the Scandal.

### **Sagawa Kyuubin Incident:**

In 1993 continued revelations of graft involving the trucking company Sagawa Kyuubin and multiple prominent politicians brought down the reformist non-LDP government of Prime Minister Hosokawa. The company was shown to have close connections to organized crime and to have showered politicians of multiple parties throughout the 80s with money and donations in exchange for favorable treatment in licensing. The prime minister himself had accepted a 100 million yen loan from the company.

### **Pension Record Incident:**

In 2007 the Social Insurance Agency revealed that it was unable to identify over 51 million public pension accounts. While the problem ostensibly originated from

a botched attempt to integrate 3 databases of electronic records, widespread mistrust and public disillusionment ensued as it was further revealed that SIA officials had instructed some companies to falsify their records so as to pay lower premiums. While there were no overt allegations of political graft, the Abe government suffered severe reputation costs as the public questioned the absence of SIA oversight and complete lack of transparency.

### **Tokushukai Incident:**

In 2013 Diet member Takeshi Tokuda and several members of his staff and family were indicted for illegal electioneering practices involving the use of 150 million yen from the major medical group Tokushukai. The slush fund was purportedly used for illegal campaign contributions as well as direct vote buying. Among those implicated was the incumbent Tokyo governor Naoki Inose who was subsequently forced to resign over the scandal after being discredited in high profile televised court proceedings.

## B.3 Type 2 Protest Voter Test

**Table B.2:** Logistic Regression of Celebrity Support on Protest Vote Interactions

	(1) Celebrity Support	(2) Celebrity Support
Corruption Salienc*Disapprove	-0.114 (-0.30)	
Abstract Disapproving of Celeb	-0.584* (-2.21)	-0.723** (-2.63)
Corruption Salienc	0.735* (2.40)	0.666*** (3.46)
Scandal	0.511** (2.69)	0.406 (1.34)
Viability	-0.728*** (-7.49)	-0.728*** (-7.48)
Scandal*Disapprove		0.171 (0.44)
Constant	1.966*** (3.48)	2.034*** (3.57)
Observations	547	547

*t* statistics in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Both models include respondent demographic variables which are not shown. None significant

## **B.4 Support for Celebrity Candidates after scandal Anecdotes**

### **Japan examples:**

Hideo Higashikokubaru (comedian) wins Miyazaki prefecture's gubernatorial election of 2007 after the previous governor was arrested in scandal involving collusive bidding for public works projects.

Famous novelist Yasuo Tanaka's decisive victory in Nagano Prefecture's 2000 gubernatorial election is largely reported to have been driven by public displeasure with pork-barreling and expectations about his ability to bring transparency to prefectural politics.

Charismatic and well-known professor turned journalist, Ryokichi Minobe, ran and won Tokyo's gubernatorial election in 1967, following local corruption scandals that tainted the Metropolitan government.

### **Costa Rica Examples:**

PUSC nominated political outsider and famous TV commentator Abel Pacheco to run in the 2002 presidential elections in a reported attempt to woo younger voters disenchanted with what they saw as a "corrupt party system." He went on to win.

### **Brazil examples:**

As preparations for the 2014 World Cup to be hosted in Rio were marred by corruption scandals, soccer star Romário de Souza Faria ran and won on the Socialist Party's ticket in the state of Rio de Janeiro in the 2010 Congressional elections – actively criticizing Brazil's political establishment in his campaign. Moreover, since taking office, he ranks as one of Brazil's hardest working legislators with a nearly perfect attendance record.

Meanwhile in the state of Sao Paulo, Tiririca, a clown by occupation and once rumored to be illiterate, garnered more votes than any other candidate in the country

running on the promise to spend his time reporting back to the people what elected deputies actually do in office.

### **UK examples:**

Martin Bell, former BBC news correspondent, ran as an independent, against the scandal-mired Tory incumbent in what was one of the safest conservative districts in the nation (Tatton), and won by a landslide. Moreover, he fared much better than other party politicians who ran against scandal-mired conservatives in other districts of the same election (1997) as shown by Farrell et al 1998.

Glenda Jackson (actress) wins Labor nomination in 1990 over Peter Tatchell who was mired by his association with a controversial quasi-radical gay rights organization called "OutRage!", which had threatened to "out" over 200 politicians and celebrities. Later she wins the district election in 1992.

### **US examples:**

Basketball star Bill Bradley wins New Jersey Senate seat in 1978 after the outgoing incumbent, Clifford Case, loses his party's primary election. Case's executive assistant Stephen Bryen was under FBI investigation at the time for allegedly providing state secrets to Israel.

### **Ukraine examples:**

Vitali Klitschko (heavyweight champion boxer) founded his own party and ran in Kiev's 2006 Mayoral election. Running on an anti-corruption platform, Klitschko garnered more votes than the incumbent but still lost due to, according to some reports, his very late entry into the race. Still, his party won a significant number of seats on the city council, which secured him a local office from which he has continued to mount successful subsequent campaigns.

Oleh Blokhin (Soccer Coach) ran for and won an MP seat in the general election of 1998, under a reported climate of heavy distrust in government.

Nataliya Korolevska, young leader of the Ukraine-Forward! party has recruited soccer star Andriy Shevchenko and famous actor Ostap Stupka as numbers 2 and 3 respectively of her party's list for the upcoming 2012 parliamentary elections, announcing that "It's time for a new generation of politicians."

### **Canada examples:**

Jacques Duchesneau, former Montreal Police chief and famous anti-corruption whistleblower, ran in the 2012 Quebec National Assembly elections as a candidate for the newly formed CAQ party. Early reports indicated that CAQ's rise in the polls following Duchesneau's announcement of candidacy had come at the sole expense of the scandal plagued incumbent Liberal party, which dropped then dropped down to 3rd in the polls. As it turned out, discontent with the liberals mostly redounded to the benefit of the PQ, which nominated their own celebrity candidates, but Duchesneau still won his district easily.

### **Mexico examples:**

National soccer star Cuauhtémoc Blanco won the 2015 race for Mayor in the municipality of Cuernavaca. During the campaign he accused the former mayor of "stealing everything" and locals were quoted, saying of his candidacy that "I don't know how good a politician he would be, but what I do know is that at least he won't rob us." Blanco also touted his outsider status throughout the campaign with statements such as "I'm not a politician, I'm doing this for you." A former city-councilman, Martínez Garrigós, with close ties to the incumbent mayor was indicted for embezzlement and officially kicked out of his own party, the PRI, leading up to the election.

# Appendix C

## Chapter 5

## C.1 Selected Todai-Asahi 2013 Survey Instruments

translated from Japanese

Original text available at:

<http://www.masaki.j.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ats/atpsdata.html>

### Policy Questions:

*The following 6 questions contained these instructions and formatting:*

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Answer Choices:

Agree

Somewhat agree

Can't say one way or the other

Somewhat disagree

Disagree

(1)

Japan should increase its military strength.

(2)

When dealing with North Korea, military pressure should be given precedence over diplomacy.

(3)

The constitution should be amended or reinterpreted so that Japan has the right to collective defense.

(4)

I prefer that the prime minister makes visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.

(5)

A small inexpensive government is preferable even at the expense of lowering the quality of social services such as welfare.

(6)

At preset, rather than fiscal reform to reduce expenditure, we ought to be boosting the economy with government spending.

*The following 2 question contained these instructions and formatting:*

For each of the following issue cleavages, please indicate which of the two statements A or B more closely matches your beliefs.

Answer Choices:

Close to A

Somewhat close to A

Can't say one way or the other

Somewhat close to B

Close to B

(1)

A: Even with some level of social inequality, the most important thing now is improving the country's economic competitiveness

B: Even at the expense of reduced competitiveness, the most important thing now is reducing social inequality.

(2)

A: The national debt is being stably dealt with and it is not necessary to worry about the budget deficit.

B: The budget deficit has reached a critical stage and we must curb the issuing of government bonds.

**Ideology Question:**

Not only in Japan, political positions are often expressed in terms of "left" to "right."

On this measure, please indicate your own position. Please choose only 1 number.

Total Respondents	Response Option	Scale
28	0	Extreme Left
9	1	
17	2	
17	3	
18	4	
141	5	Centrist
36	6	
54	7	
33	8	
7	9	
16	10	Extreme Right

**Issue Focus Question:**

During this election, on which issues are you most focused. Place a 1 next to that which are most focused on, a 2 next to that which you are 2nd most focused on, and a 3 next to that which you are 3rd most focused on.

Total Respondents	Policy Choices
38	Diplomacy and Security
26	Fiscal Monetary Policy
43	Industrial Policy
13	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries
31	Education and Child Development
40	Pensions and Healthcare
65	Employment
0	Public Safety
2	Environment
10	Political and Administrative Reform
8	Local Autonomy
27	Constitution (Preserving and Changing)
2	Disaster Recovery
28	Infrastructure Improvement
44	Nuclear and Energy Policy

**Campaign Question:**

Aside from relaying one's policy platform, there are many kinds of campaign activities. Among the 5 listed here, please indicate which (non-policy related) activities you are most focused on, 2nd most focused on, and 3rd most focused on.

Total Respondents	Choice Options
247	I generally appeal to my supporting organizations and constituents
20	I emphasize past achievements (the positives of my party and negatives of opposing parties)
43	I emphasize governing abilities (the positives of my party and negatives of opposing parties)
17	I emphasize leadership quality (the positives of my party and negatives of opposing parties)
<b>78</b>	<b>I emphasize my own personal achievements and merits</b>

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