

Appendix 9a – Things cut for space reasons from Chapter 9

New Party Formation

“Japan’s public financing of political parties created incentives for party consolidation. Parties that have won a specified number of votes and seats in the previous election are eligible to receive substantial amounts of public funding.” When the previous leading new party, the NFP, disbanded in late 1997, this law gave the splinter groups that emerged from it incentives to join existing parties. While I have not seen any statements arguing that without this law the new DPJ would not have formed in 1998, this is often given as the key reason that, despite the merging of a number of existing groups (including the old DPJ), the new party chose to continue calling itself the DPJ. I am grateful to Steven Reed for this information.

Divisions within the DPJ

“[M]any of the party’s junior members formed separate study groups, the bodies that drove much of both policy-making and group dynamics within the party. The media sometimes characterized these groups as precursors to a new round of party defection and realignment, in particular as the divisions appeared to be along old party lines.” Indeed, if along old party lines, this would suggest an “un-alignment” of the new system that had emerged.

One group was made up of former *Sakigake* members within the party. A second was organized around more “conservative” members, who (a) sought to reduce the party’s reliance on labor unions, (b) thought favorably of Liberal Party leader Ozawa Ichirō’s plan to realign the opposition yet again and (c) found it distasteful to work with members of their longtime enemy, the Socialist Party (Yomiuri Shimbun, May 1, 2001). A third group, led by well-known former Socialist Yokomichi Takahiro, was made up of party members affiliated with labor unions or those from the former Japan Socialist Party (Yomiuri Shinbun, July 8, 2002). There also existed a fourth, made up of former members of the Democratic Socialist Party, which partly interacted with the other groups, but it was slower to share information on its local organizations and maintained a sense of being its own group. Such a stance by the former DSP members should not be surprising, as they had never themselves broken apart, unlike the other parties that had come together to form the DPJ. (Interview with national DPJ headquarters’ staff, December 16, 1998.)

NFP Party Organization

As a staff member for one former NFP Diet member suggested, the general lack of local organization was a big reason why many local assembly members might have chosen not to leave the LDP and join the NFP, even when they were sympathetic to the opposition. Yet there is something of a Catch-22 situation to this. Part of the reason the NFP was unable to develop solid local organizations was that it had difficulty bringing in local assembly members. (Interview, 11/17/98.)

Impact of Uncertainty on Vote Choice

“Analysis of U.S. elections by Alvarez (1997) and Bartels (1988) and Mexican elections by Magaloni (1997) indicates that voters tend to be leery of casting ballots for parties they are uncertain about.” Morgenstern and Zechmeister (2001) provide an interesting twist to all this in their analysis of Mexican voters, as they find that risk-acceptant voters are more likely to cast

ballots for the opposition, while risk-averse voters tend to stick with the “devil they know” (the ruling PRI).

Question Phrasing on Conservative-Progressive Question in JEDS

“In addition, the JEDS survey asked respondents to place parties on a scale from 0-10 on three different issues: the extent to which parties are progressive or conservative, the extent to which they support political reform, and the extent to which they support administrative reform. By and large, the overall responses regarding each party appear accurate. For example, the Progressive-Conservative measure runs from 0 as the most progressive to 10 as the most conservative.” The question was phrased: “The words conservative and progressive are used to express some positions in politics. If progressive is a ‘0’ and conservative is a ‘10’... where do you think the LDP is located? What about the NFP and the other parties?”

Types of Party Formation

See Chapters 1 and 3 and, especially, Shefter (1994) for greater discussion of external and internal mobilization as types of party formation.