

Running the Right Race: The Impact of Electoral Rules on Celebrity Candidate Entry.

Justin Reeves
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Political Science
University of California, San Diego
<http://polisci2.ucsd.edu/jfreeves/>

Abstract

In this paper, I examine the effect of electoral institutions on descriptive representation. While the electoral systems literature has long focused on the impact of voting rules on the behavior of elected officials, a newer line of research has begun to identify the ways in which these rules may determine who runs for office in the first place. Previous scholars have utilized the rich variation in Japan's House of Councillors' electoral institutions to illustrate how these systems influence office seeking by candidates with local backgrounds and those who inherit political legacies. I revisit this case to show how these rules also help explain the underexplored yet increasingly prevalent phenomenon of celebrity candidacy in Japan and elsewhere. Utilizing a survey experiment designed to emulate the institutional conditions under which Japanese voters often encounter celebrity candidates, I demonstrate that voter support for such candidates does not necessarily hinge on their mere personal likeability, as is often assumed, but rather is very susceptible to the electoral context itself. Specifically, my results show that increasing the number of candidates on co-partisan ballots can induce voters to utilize simple familiarity as a heuristic and thereby significantly impact the electoral viability of famous political amateurs. Finally, I present preliminary evidence from postwar Japanese House of Councillors election data that suggests celebrity candidates incorporate these considerations into their own strategic decisions over where and when to seek office.

Keywords: Celebrity Politics, Electoral Systems, Personal Vote, Information Costs

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Introduction

If celebrity politics is consequential to the functioning of democracy as previous studies have asserted¹, it behooves social scientists to gain an understanding of its causes. To this end scholarly work on celebrity politics has posited a link between the increasingly personalized nature of political communication around the world and the appearance of celebrities in elections. While this has allowed us to better understand why the incidence of celebrities in politics may be increasing overtime², it does not, given that these changes in media structure and communication style are relatively universal (Hallin and Mancini 2012), shed light on why we see wide variation both across countries and within them in different electoral contexts of the same time period.

This literature highlights, for example, the numerous instances of celebrity candidacy identified in places such as Finland and Brazil, but does not ask why such reports are seldom found in neighboring Sweden or Argentina. Nor does it ask why we see more celebrity candidates running for some races but not others within the same country. Yet these are clearly important questions if we do not assume, as we shouldn't, that the occurrence of celebrity candidacy is a randomly distributed phenomenon.³ This paper is part of a larger project in which I aim to fill this gap in

¹ See for example Marshal, 1997; West and Orman, 2002; Arbour, 2005; Weiskel, 2005; Van Zoonen, 2005; Duval, 2007; Marsh et al, 2010.

² None of the aforementioned works present empirics on actual rates of celebrities running for/winning office overtime, but my own preliminary comparative investigations (see appendix) support the claim of a rise in some polities, while in others where the rise cannot yet be confirmed, current rates are high enough to suggest it is not a trivial phenomenon.

³ Why not assume it is random? If the incidence of celebrities entering politics were a completely random event, we should not see patterns across time in its occurrence. The fact that higher rates

our understanding of the causes of celebrity politics by exploring the effect of systematic and election-contingent factors on the likelihood of celebrity entry into politics.

In this paper, I focus specifically on systematic factors as I assess the impact of electoral rules on the entry of celebrity candidates in district races. It is curious that the aforementioned literature thus far has stressed the importance of personalized politics but ignored this institutional variable long considered highly consequential to the relative personalized nature of elections. The fact that nearly all of the celebrity-heavy legislative bodies identified by this literature happen to utilize electoral rules that either facilitate or encourage voter use of candidates' personal characteristics and reputations in the process of making voting decisions (see appendix), offers prima facie evidence that electoral systems are likely an important piece to the puzzle of why we find celebrities in government.

I suspect that analyzing real world incidences of celebrity entry into politics, in the context of electoral rules and the incentives they generate for candidates, parties, and voters, will go a long way towards explaining extant variation in celebrity politics around the world. The results of these analyses will also be useful to scholars of electoral systems as there are few studies in this literature that empirically demonstrate a link (or lack thereof) between electoral rules and

are consistently reported in certain countries suggests that there is something inherent to these countries – such as cultural biases, institutional rules, etc, that is driving this phenomenon. Furthermore, the fact that there are patterns within some of these countries in the types of races where celebrity candidates appear, suggests that non-random factors which are relatively constant within polities (such a culture) cannot explain all of the variation.

candidate type, and none to my knowledge that do so with respect to celebrity candidates.

I will begin below by very briefly reviewing the scholarly work on electoral systems and how it fits in with my own research agenda on celebrity politics. Drawing upon insights from this literature, I will then lay out a theory of the institutional determinants of celebrity candidate entry and derive testable hypotheses from it. Following that, I propose a research design that utilizes a survey experiment on Japanese citizens, as well as incidences of electoral reform in Japan's upper house to test these hypotheses. Finally, I will present results from the experiment and preliminary election data gathered thus far.

Electoral Systems, The Personal Vote, and Candidate Attributes

While the bulk of the literature on electoral systems has concerned itself with the effects these systems have on the number of parties that compete for political office, there is a growing body of work 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/candidates relate to constituents (Katz 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 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 et al. 1987).

Though the effects of these personal vote-seeking incentives on how office seekers behave have been and continue to be explored⁴, there is much less examination of how they influence *who* decides to run for office in the first place⁵. 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 candidate's or legislator's personal reputation that matters most is that which is defined by his/her behavior, and not the more immutable characteristics that also define who they are, such as social background, occupation, office experience, and other attributes.

Yet we know from studies of voter behavior that some citizens do make inferences about candidates from cues such as these⁶, 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-

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 in this literature point not to the electoral incentives of individual legislators but rather the logistical ease with which some systems allow for parties to enact quotas or overcome certain gender stereotypes without jeopardizing seat share, should they chose to do so.

⁶ See for example McDermott 2005 on the use of candidate occupation, Matsubayashi and Ueda 2011 and Aguilar et al 2012 on candidate race, McDermott 1997 on gender, Sadin 2012 on class background, Lawsen et al. 2010 on candidate appearance.

centric elections may have implications for democratic representation not only in a substantive sense, but a descriptive sense as well.

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, 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 the political reputation and support groups of predecessors they are connected to through familial or personal ties. Yet, besides localism and legacy, other personal vote earning attributes, such as those mentioned above, have not to my knowledge been touched by this literature. Here I introduce personal fame as an attribute that may also advantage candidates when institutions allow personal votes to be more electorally relevant.

Fame as a Personal Vote Earning Attribute

This is not the first study to consider fame as a personal vote earning attribute (hereafter PVEA). Earlier work on the strategic entry of candidates in the US has included “celebrity” in operationalizations of quality candidates (See Krasno and Green, 1988; Canon, 1990, 1993). More recent studies of PVEAs that signal candidate quality, however, have dropped fame and opted instead to include such

attributes as local birth, prior experience in office, education and income⁷. Part of the reason for this omission may simply have to do with the difficulty of measuring fame (see below). Also, however, what candidate fame means exactly to voters is not immediately obvious. While it is intuitive that voters would infer candidate intelligence from higher levels of education, candidate competence from experience in office, and candidate commitment to district concerns from local upbringing, what are they to glean from a candidate's status as a celebrity? I argue here that the electoral value of personal fame comes in two forms – direct and indirect.

In a direct sense, achieving celebrity status is typically seen as a pinnacle of ambition and success (Choi and Berger, 2010)⁸, and voters may reason that the personal qualities required to achieve such success – such as industriousness or charisma for example – would also make the candidate an effective public servant. Celebrity candidates are also endowed with outsider status and high visibility – two characteristics that voters may also value in a representative, particularly if the voter bears any distrust towards established politicians.

Moreover, in low information environments, where voters know very little about candidates on the ballot or are unwilling to bear the cost of procuring such information, simple familiarity with the celebrity may in itself be advantageous. Psychologists since the 1960s have documented what is called the mere-exposure-effect whereby individuals develop a preference for things merely because they are

⁷ See for example Galasso and Nannini, 2011.

⁸ A Gallup Survey of 2008 listed several celebrities of various occupational backgrounds as among the 20 “most admired people.”

familiar with them.⁹ This effect, it is argued, is capable of occurring without conscious cognition (Zajonc, 1980). Relied upon heavily in advertising (Grimes and Kitchen, 2007), there is some evidence that it is relevant to political contexts as well. For example Bornstein and Craver (2004), find that candidates' mere exposure has a strong effect on the number of votes they receive, independent of their policy platforms. Indeed campaign efforts in many instances seem to operate on the assumption of a mere-exposure-effect. In Japanese lower-house and local elections for example, a common method of campaigning known as "[renko](#)" entails repeatedly shouting only one's name and the office they are running for in densely populated areas so as to maximize exposure.¹⁰ If mere familiarity operates as a PVEA in this way, the celebrity candidate is advantaged all other things being equal.

Yet fame is also electorally valuable in an instrumental sense. Name recognition is widely acknowledged as an asset to office seekers (Mayhew, 1974). As it facilitates easier access to the media, it may afford candidates advantages in both fundraising and delivering appeals to constituents. Perhaps more importantly, fame may also serve to enhance the effectiveness of other PVEAs. If voters in a district value local upbringing for example, the celebrity-local should be advantaged relative to the mere-local, all else being equal, simply because more voters are likely to be aware of the celebrity and his/her localness.¹¹

⁹ See for example Zajonc, 1968, 1980; Goetzinger 1968; Bornstein 1989; Zola-Morgan 2001.

¹⁰ While there may be a nearby banner indicating party affiliation (if any) and some brochures with policy goal information, most often these points are not announced at all.

¹¹ while the personal vote literature has provided empirical support for the existence of a local advantage, we do yet understand the precise mechanism underlying this advantage. It may be that voters view locals as better suited/more likely to serve district interests. It may be that voters harbor some kind of psychological attachment to locals by virtue of a shared geographic identity. Or it may also be that district upbringing is an advantage simply because voters in that district are more

Identifying all the mechanisms through which celebrity status serves as a PVEA is a complicated endeavor. There are many possibilities, and some or all of these may only come into play under certain conditions. In other areas of the project I deal with more election contingent sources, such as the fallout of political scandal when voter trust in established politicians is rendered temporarily low. Here I take on the question of whether electoral rules impose costs on voters that lead to voter use of mere familiarity as a heuristic, and whether they consequently lead to greater incidence of office seeking celebrities in politics.

Theory and Hypotheses of Celebrity Entry

There are many reasons to believe that celebrity candidates harbor the potential to garner personal votes in ways their non-celebrity counterparts cannot. But whether this potential can be actualized is subject to other considerations. One such consideration is the degree to which candidates, and not just parties, serve as agents of representation for voters. If voters rely solely on the cue of party-label to make choices about their political representatives, the personal characteristics of candidates would have no bearing on the latter's election. Conversely, if partisan attachments are non-existent and party-labels hold no meaning to voters, then

likely, *ceteris paribus*, to be familiar with the candidate's name regardless of whether they're aware of the candidate's local ties. If the latter is the case, then the advantage of being local may not be functionally different than the advantage of being a celebrity.

candidates would be elected solely on their own personal merits and/or policy platforms.

I assume that in all democratic elections both party-labels and candidate characteristics convey some politically relevant information to voters, but that the relative degrees to which they do so differs. As the medium through which voters express their preferences for representatives, electoral systems play an important role in facilitating, if not altogether shaping, these differences. Comparing list proportional representation systems in this respect, Shugart et al 2005 posit that increasing district magnitude induces voters to rely on different cues depending on whether the system is closed-list or open-list. Open-list systems are more demanding on voters in that they require them to gather information not only about parties, but candidates as well, if they are to cast a preference vote on the party's list. As increasing district magnitude likely serves to increase the number of candidates on lists, voters are encouraged to rely on short cuts, such as seeking out a particular PVEA, rather than bear the cost of gathering more extensive information about each individual candidate and their particular policy agendas.

The same logic holds for non-list systems with higher district magnitudes where larger parties are encouraged to field multiple candidates. For a Japanese voter in an SNTV district where the party of their choice fields multiple candidates, for example, the cue of party label is, by itself, an insufficient voting heuristic and there is potential for the additional use of PVEAs¹². Similarly, for a Philippine voter

¹² SNTV refers to the single non-transferable vote system in which voters cast a single non-transferring vote for a candidate in districts that typically have seat magnitudes greater than 1. SNTV was used for the lower house from 1947 to 1996 (M generally ranged from 1 to 5), for the national

in a MNTV district where the party or parties of their choice do not field enough candidates to match the number of votes that voters are given, voters may exhaust their ability to cue on party label and thereby be left to incorporate PVEAs into their remaining ballot choices.¹³ The key distinction here about these systems is the degree to which they allow voters to make decisions on their ballot based on party label. All else being equal, where cueing on party labels alone is insufficient for completing ballots, we can expect candidate-specific information such as PVEAs to play more of a role in voter decisions.

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. 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 are less in need of the PVEA shortcut to gain information about candidates. 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.

tier of the upper house from 1947 to 1980 (M was 50), and continues to be used for the prefectural tier of the upper house (M ranges from 1 to 5).

¹³ MNTV refers to a multiple non-transferable vote system in which voters cast multiple non-transferring votes for individual candidates (often the number of votes being equal to the district magnitude). In the Philippines this system is used for both local city councils (M ranges from 4 to 12) and for the Senate (M = 12).

In this paper test two hypotheses, derived from the considerations above, about the effects of electoral institutions on voting behavior and candidate entry. First, I focus on voter heuristics. The more candidates that voters are tasked to choose from, the more costly gathering information about them becomes. Under these circumstances voters are likely to seek ways to simplify their choice. When costs are sufficiently high, some should resort to mere candidate familiarity as a cue, even when other more reliable yet still more cognitively demanding cues, such as occupational background information, are available.

Hypothesis 1 *As the number of competing co-partisan candidates presented to voters increases, the greater the electoral value of personal fame becomes.*

If the distinction between district magnitude and party list magnitude is significant for voters in this way, so should it be for candidates hoping to capitalize on their own PVEAs. Moreover, if candidates wish to optimize the vote-gathering potential of their own PVEA(s), it behooves them to gain entry to larger party lists in an OLPR system, and smaller party lists in a CLPR system. In other words, the personal vote logic may tell us as much about who runs with what party as it does about where they run.

Of course, for party list magnitude to impact the strategic entry of PVEA-bearing candidates, however, they must have some sense beforehand of what this magnitude is going to be. The less variation there is in party list magnitudes from one election to the next (i.e. the more predictable it is), the more prospective

candidates are able incorporate the potential value of their own PVEAs into their decisions over where to run and whose nomination to seek.¹⁴

Hypothesis 2 *Celebrity candidacy will be more prevalent in democracies using electoral systems that promote candidate-centered rather than party-centered elections.*

Corollary 1-a. *Celebrity candidacy will be more prevalent in proportional representation systems that utilize open rather than closed party lists.*

Corollary 1-b. *Where party list magnitude is stable across elections, celebrity candidacy will be more prevalent on larger party lists in OLPR systems and smaller party lists in CLPR systems.*

Case Selection.

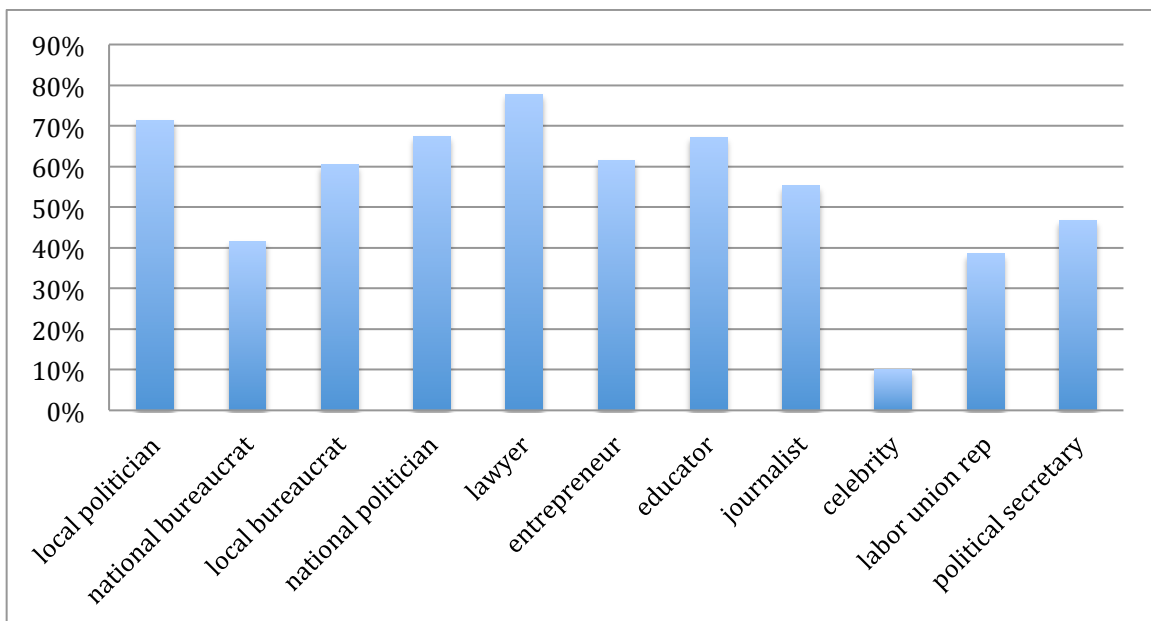
The Japanese case provides an interesting puzzle for the study of celebrity politics.

For one, there seems to be a disconnect between public opinion and voter behavior.

¹⁴ 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 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"). I do not expect these incidences, however, to disrupt the testing of my hypotheses above since variables such as electoral rules and party list magnitude should not correlate with "hopeless candidacy" in a way that only effects celebrity candidates.

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.¹⁵ My own survey results also comport with these findings. 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.

Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents Approving of Different Candidate Backgrounds



¹⁵ 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>

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 last summer's 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.

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 alone was driving 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, Kollner 2002).

Table 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, is inducing voters to employ different heuristics for these two tiers of the same political office. For the purposes of testing Hypothesis 1, 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 designed a survey experiment (described below) to isolate the effect of increasing co-partisan competition on voter behavior. The nationally representative survey 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.¹⁶ See appendix for demographic characteristics of general sample.

Research Design

Survey Experiment

Respondents were randomly assigned into 1 of 4 groups that corresponded to different combinations of the 2 treatment conditions – presence/absence of a celebrity candidate, and small/large level of co-partisan competition. (The groups are well-balanced on key demographic and political variables --see Hotteling tests in Appendix). 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 are informed that all candidates on the ballot are running with the nomination of the party they most support.

¹⁶ ("http://www.ipsos.com/sites/ipsos.com/files/2013_GlobalHonomichl25.pdf" *The 2013 Honomichl GLOBAL TOP 25 REPORT*". *Marketing News*. August 2013. pp. 24. Retrieved 26 March 2014.) Note that while Nikkei guarantees a nationally representative sample through their recruitment services, the sample frame by design is limited to internet users who can complete the survey on their personal computers or handheld devices. The Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications estimates that the current proportion of internet users in Japan reaches over 80%.

Each group ballot contains a set of candidates with distinct backgrounds, their picture and name. All candidates are fictional except for a single real celebrity, which is placed on one of the small ballots and one of the large ballots. In place of the 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.

Figure 2: Example Small Ballot (1 of 8)































Candidate with Fame	Counterpart without Fame												
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Figure 3: Example Large Ballot (1 of 8).

Candidate with Fame			Counterpart without Fame		
 A 飯山友紀 明治大学卒 医者	 B 有賀芳正 京都大学卒 国家公務員	 C 金子吉宏 東北大学卒 弁護士	 A 飯山友紀 明治大学卒 医者	 B 有賀芳正 京都大学卒 国家公務員	 C 金子吉宏 東北大学卒 弁護士
 D 南恵太 東京大学卒元 衆議院議員	 E 池上彰 慶應義塾大学卒 ニュース キャスター	 F 今川智久 早稲田大学卒 元参議院議員	 D 南恵太 東京大学卒元 衆議院議員	 E 田中信明 慶應義塾大学卒 ニュース キャスター	 F 今川智久 早稲田大学卒 元参議院議員
 G 日高秀峰 筑波大学卒 経済学者	 H 荒井勇介 北海道大学卒 元衆議院議員	 I 原山昭文 一橋大学卒 報道関係者	 G 日高秀峰 筑波大学卒 経済学者	 H 荒井勇介 北海道大学卒 元衆議院議員	 I 原山昭文 一橋大学卒 報道関係者

There were 8 celebrities and ‘counterparts’ used for this experiment, that were incorporated evenly into each of the four groups. 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 dimension that distinguishes

different types of celebrity candidates, namely, proximity to politics. For example, while the soccer star Miura Kazuyoshi is disassociated with politics completely, the business magnate Mikitani Hiroshi is at least occupationally proximate (business backgrounds signaling leadership competency and being common in legislatures) and also not totally removed from the policy sphere, having taken a public stance on the nuclear issue. See appendix for full list of celebrities used on their respective counterparts.

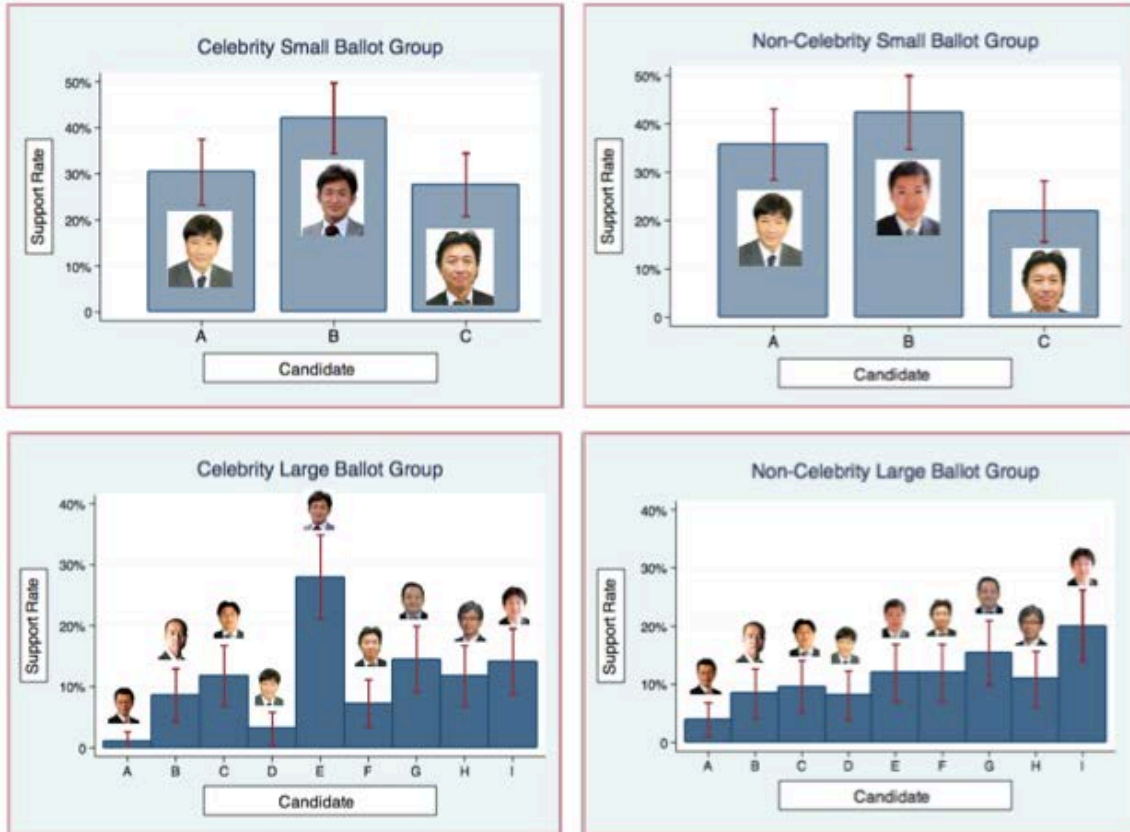
If Hypothesis 1 is correct celebrity candidates should fare better on the 9-person ballots than they do on the 3-person ballots, in terms of support rates from respondents. Comparing these rates statistically is not as straight forward as conducting a simple difference of proportions test, because by 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 add two 2 non-celebrity control groups, one for each ballot size, and conduct the comparison in two stages.

Expectations are that voters will not utilize the familiarity heuristic on 3 person ballots and therefore 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 respondents to start using the heuristic and for celebs to receive a significant bump in support accordingly.

Results

Hypothesis 1 is supported by my results. 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. Figure 4 presents aggregate support rates for candidates in each ballot position. Note that aside from the counterparts and celebrities in the middle position, candidates in all other positions were identical for each ballot. These results still hold whether or not we restrict results to non-politically proximate or politically proximate celebs. When we look at each celebrity ballot individually, the substantive effect still shows but is not always statistically significant, likely due to smaller n.

Figure 4: Candidate Support by Ballot.



Bars represent 99% confidence intervals for sample proportions for the candidates in each ballot slot.

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. In this case, those components include the candidate name, their appearance, and their fame. Suppose, for example, 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 cue not off of what is familiar, as I argue here, but simply off of what countenance is more attractive, more honest looking, more serious, or what have you. For this to be the case, 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.

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 group, this set comprised 10.3%, while in the large ballot celeb group 3 it comprised 14.8%. 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, that is, larger ballots should 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.

Here I conduct a preliminary test of Hypothesis 2 with observational election data from Japanese upper house elections from 1962 to 2013. Postwar Japanese House of Councillors elections provide an ideal setting for such a test owing to the rich variation in electoral rules used (see appendix for elaboration on the institutional structure of the upper house).

If the logic behind Hypothesis 2 were to hold for this case, rates of celebrity candidacy in the prefectural tier should remain relatively stable throughout the postwar period, while rates in the national tier should fluctuate. Specifically, they should be lowest in the CLPR years, when voters have no incentive to employ familiarity heuristics, and higher in the SNTV and OLPR years when they do. Office seeking celebrities, and party nominating organizations seeking the votes they can provide, should recognize this potential and coordinate their running/nomination decisions accordingly.

A rough first look at the data seems to comport with these expectations. Celebrity candidacy in the prefectural tier never rises above 5% but does gradually rise overtime, probably owing to the increased use of television in Japan in the latter part of the SNTV period. 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, political inheritors, and organization representatives), but it may also increase the value of fame in campaigning – as it facilitates easier media access etc. The national tier pattern is also follows expectations in that there are two directional changes in the rates of

celebrity candidacy, which correspond to the theoretical effects of the different electoral institutions used.

That said, the average rates in the CLPR years are still surprisingly high. It's possible that party leaders in this period made a concerted effort to recruit celebrity candidates for their closed lists, as pullers,¹⁷ which is something I hope to tease out with upcoming scheduled legislator interviews. There are also election contingent factors to consider such as the earth-shattering LDP splits of the early 1990s that changed the party system and likely diminished the utility of the party label as a heuristic for voters. Preceding these defections from the LDP were a series of major corruption scandals that may have temporarily boosted the electoral appeal of non-establishment outsider candidates.¹⁸

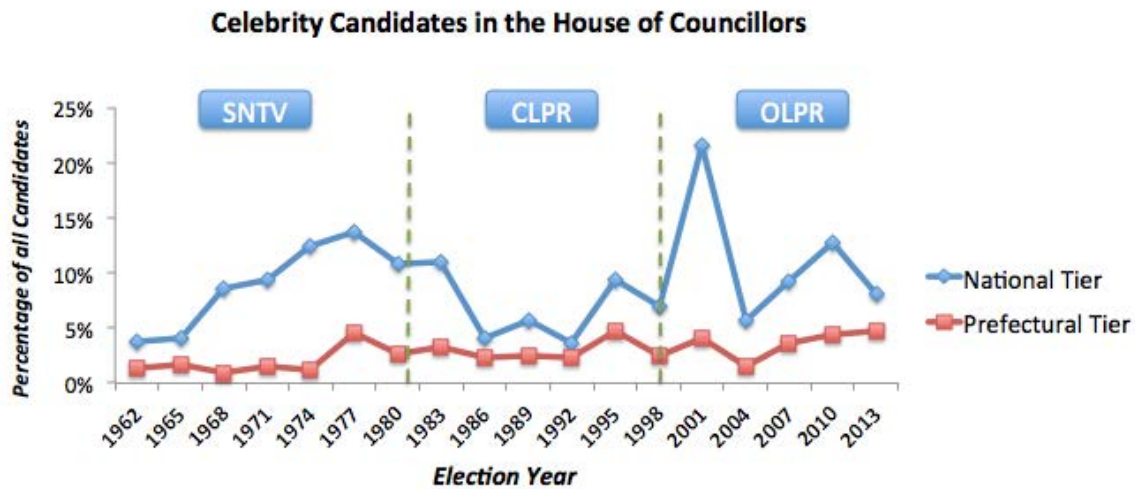
Table 2: Average Rates of Celebrity Candidacy Under Different National Tier Rules

	<u>SNTV</u>	<u>CLPR</u>	<u>OLPR</u>
National Tier	8.01%	6.05%	11.60%
Prefectural Tier	1.98%	3.00%	3.84%
	(1962 - 1980)	(1983 - 1998)	(2001 - 2013)

¹⁷ This term refers to popular candidates whom parties intentionally place high on lists with expectations that they will draw more list votes, garnering more seats for the party, and thus “pull” lower ranking list candidates into the election threshold.

¹⁸ In a separate experiment I find strong evidence that priming voters to think about political corruption enhances the electoral value of being both famous and of a non-political background.

Figure 5: Rates of Upper House Celebrity Candidacy in Each Tier by Year



Before proceeding with regression models and more rigorous analysis of the election data I will to collect more variables and finish the planned more labor-intensive celebrity coding.

My coding scheme for candidate fame in this preliminary analysis was only cursory – namely, it was based on occupational background, which is prone to both false positives and false negatives. Candidates with backgrounds as actors, musicians, professional athletes, TV comedians, Novelists, news anchors, journalists, telecasters, and radio show hosts were coded as celebs.

An improved operationalization, however, will ignore occupation and define celebrity candidates as those without prior experience in political office (at either the local or national level) that also possess a high degree of name recognition (as measured by frequency hits in pre-election newspaper archives generated through content aggregators such as Factiva). This operationalization

will be superior to using simple occupational background because it maximizes cross-cultural generalizability and minimizes the false positive/negative problem. Occupations may carry different value and entail varying degrees of fame across different cultural contexts. Moreover occupation does not necessarily guarantee celebrity status in any cultural context (there may be famous plumbers and completely obscure actors). Politicians with celebrity status should be excluded from any analysis, after their first election, because one cannot thereafter distinguish between the fame they derived politically and that which they already enjoyed.¹⁹

¹⁹ As a preliminary test of this coding scheme's efficacy, I constructed a small list of non-experienced candidates identified by newspapers as "celebrities" in both Japan and Finland, and compared them to a small set of relatively well-known incumbent career politicians running in the same elections. Using the search function [Factiva](#), I generated hit counts for each set of candidates from the Japanese Upper House elections of 2001, and 2010, and the Finnish Parliamentary elections of 2007. In all cases the celebrity candidates received hits well above or nearly equal to the hits of those relatively known politicians, suggesting that candidates identified as celebrities by my coding scheme would comport with the standards of fame used in newspaper reports. See appendix for specifics of these results.

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Appendix

Countries Reported to Feature High Numbers of Celebrity Legislators and the Electoral Systems they Use.

Country	Electoral System
Brazil	Open-List Proportional Representation
Finland	Open-List Proportional Representation
India	Single Member District Plurality
Japan (upper house)	SNTV and OLPR (formerly CLPR)
Philippines	Single Member District Plurality
South korea	Mixed-Member Majoritarian (formerly SNTV)

Celebrity Candidate Coding Sample Using Factiva

Election	Candidate Type	Name	Factiva Hits
Japan 2001	Celebrity	舛添要一	271
Japan 2001	Celebrity	大仁田厚	24
Japan 2001	Celebrity	田嶋陽子	14
Japan 2001	Celebrity	大橋巨泉	99
Japan 2001	Incumbent	小野清子	85
Japan 2001	Incumbent	尾辻秀	34
Japan 2001	Incumbent	山東昭子	36
Japan 2001	Incumbent	朝日俊弘	24
Japan 2001	Incumbent	ツルネンマルティ	14
Finland 2007	Celebrity	Markku Uusipaavalniemi	50
Finland 2007	Celebrity	Juha Mieto	8
Finland 2007	Celebrity	Tanja Karpela	190
Finland 2007	Incumbent	Esko Kiviranta	7
Finland 2007	Incumbent	Susanna Haapoja	16
Finland 2007	Incumbent	Lauri Oinonen	34
Finland 2007	Incumbent	Kimmo Tiilikainen	13
Finland 2007	Incumbent	Esko Ahonen	8
Japan 2010	Celebrity	谷亮子	4,213
Japan 2010	Celebrity	三原じゅん子	559
Japan 2010	Celebrity	有田芳生	705
Japan 2010	Incumbent	中村博彦	195
Japan 2010	Incumbent	水落敏栄	178
Japan 2010	Incumbent	山谷えり子	808
Japan 2010	Incumbent	藤井基之	18

Institutional Structure of the House of Councillors

The chamber is divided into two tiers – a national tier and prefectural tier – whereby the latter has utilized the same set of electoral rules, SNTV, for the duration of the postwar period.²⁰ 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 CLPR, and 5 elections under OLPR rules (see Table 1 below). Moreover these particular rules are notably distinct with respect to the voting options they present to voters; while SNTV and OLPR are expected to promote candidate-centered elections (forcing voters to choose among not only on party label options but also candidate options), CLPR is expected to promote more party centered elections (allowing voters to make complete ballot choices with only the cue of party label) (Carey and Shugart 1995).

Table 4. *Post-war structure of Japan's House of Councillors*

	1947 – 1980	1983 – 1998	Since 2001
Total number of Seats	252 (250 before 1970) Prefectural tier: 152 National tier: 100	252 Prefectural tier: 152 National tier: 100	242 Prefectural tier: 146 National tier: 96
Electoral system Used	Prefectural tier: SNTV National tier: SNTV	Prefectural tier: SNTV National tier: CLPR	Prefectural tier: SNTV National tier: OLPR
Election cycle / length of terms	Prefectural tier: 76 seats elected every 3 years National tier: 50 seats elected every 3 years 6 year terms	Prefectural tier: 76 seats elected every 3 years National tier: 50 seats elected every 3 years 6 year terms	Prefectural tier: 73 seats elected every 3 years National tier: 48 seats elected every 3 years 6 year terms

²⁰ Note however that while SNTV usually implies multi-member districts, in practice many individual prefectures operate as single member districts in elections since only half the body goes up for election in staggered 3 year cycles, and seat share is apportioned by prefectural population.

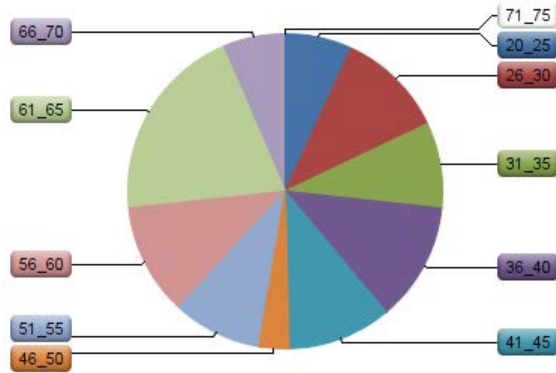
Percentage of Celebrity Candidates / Legislators by Country & Election

Election	Brazil	Philippines	Finland	Korea PR	Korea SMD	Japan N.tier	Japan P.tier
Last Election	2.44	*	6.65%	1.85%	5.10%	8.02%	4.80%
2 Elections ago	*	18.03%	4.00%	5.56%	4.95%	12.73%	4.38%
3 Elections ago	*	*	5.50%	7.41%	4.85%	9.23%	3.67%
4 Elections ago	*	*	*	5.56%	4.08%	5.66%	1.56%
5 Elections ago	*	*	*	3.70%	0.82%	21.57%	4.11%
6 Elections ago	*	*	*	0.00%	0.41%	6.96%	2.53%
7 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	9.39%	4.66%
8 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	3.65%	2.25%
9 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	5.71%	2.46%
10 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	4.12%	2.29%
11 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	10.99%	3.36%
12 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	10.75%	2.62%
13 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	13.73%	4.61%
14 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	12.50%	1.27%
15 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	9.43%	1.49%
16 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	8.60%	0.95%
17 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	4.04%	1.72%
18 Elections ago	*	*	*	*	*	3.74%	1.36%

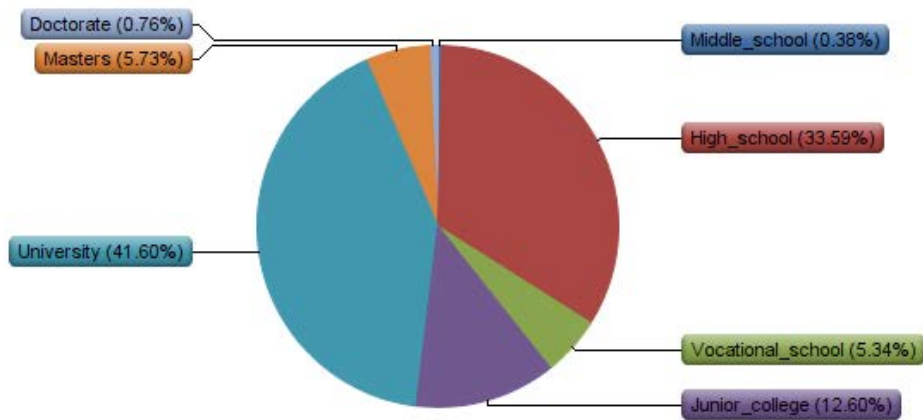
** Indicates data I either don't have or haven't coded yet. All figures except those for Korea are at the candidate level—the Korean figures are legislators only. Figures for Japan and the Philippines refer to Upper House candidates while all other data refers to Lower House candidates/legislators. All figures are based on preliminary coding—that is, by occupation, rather than content analysis.*

General Sample Characteristics.

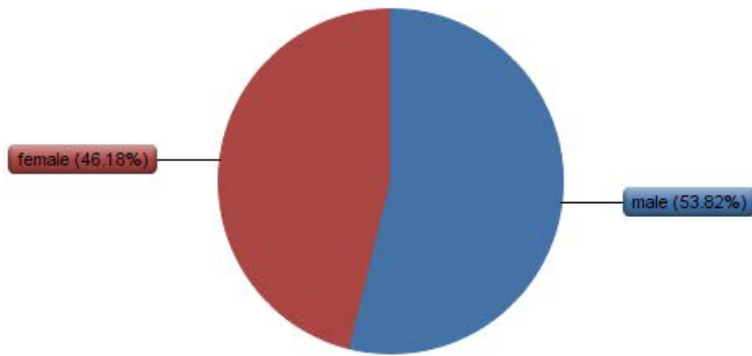
Age Cohorts as Percentage of Total Sample.



Educational Attainment of Sample.



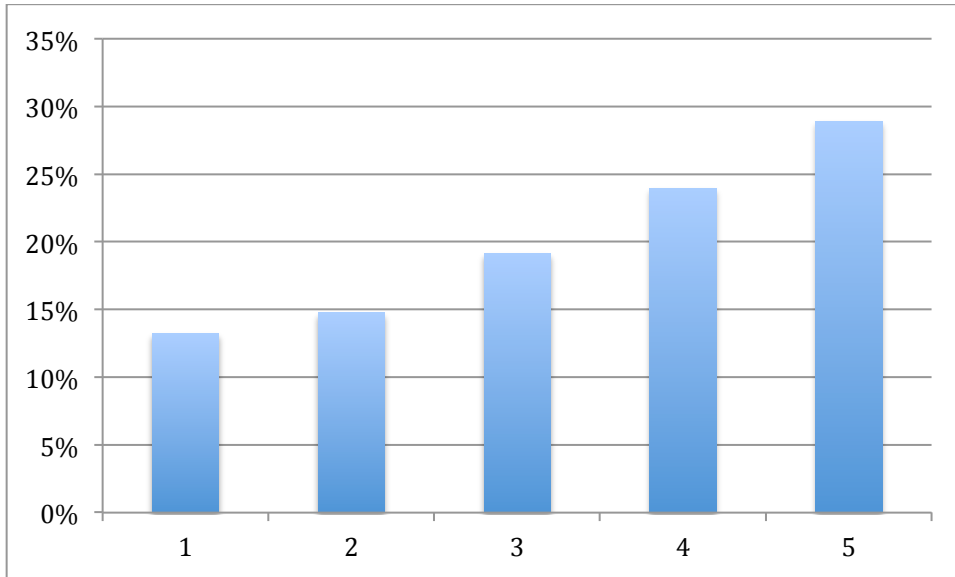
Gender of Sample.



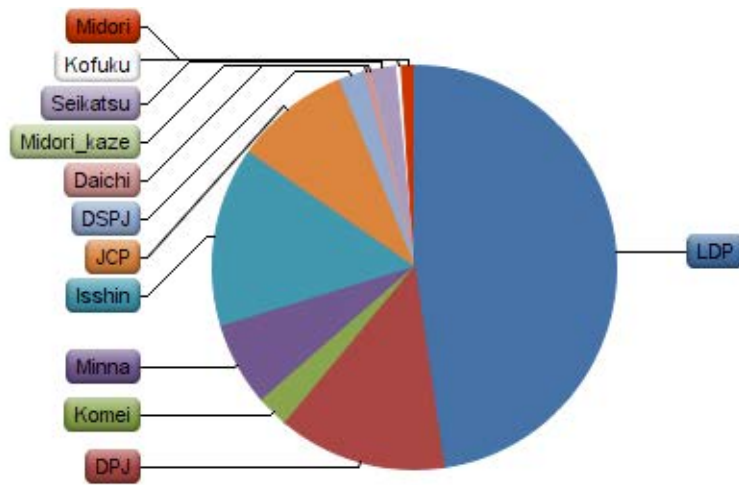
Geographical Distribution of Sample.



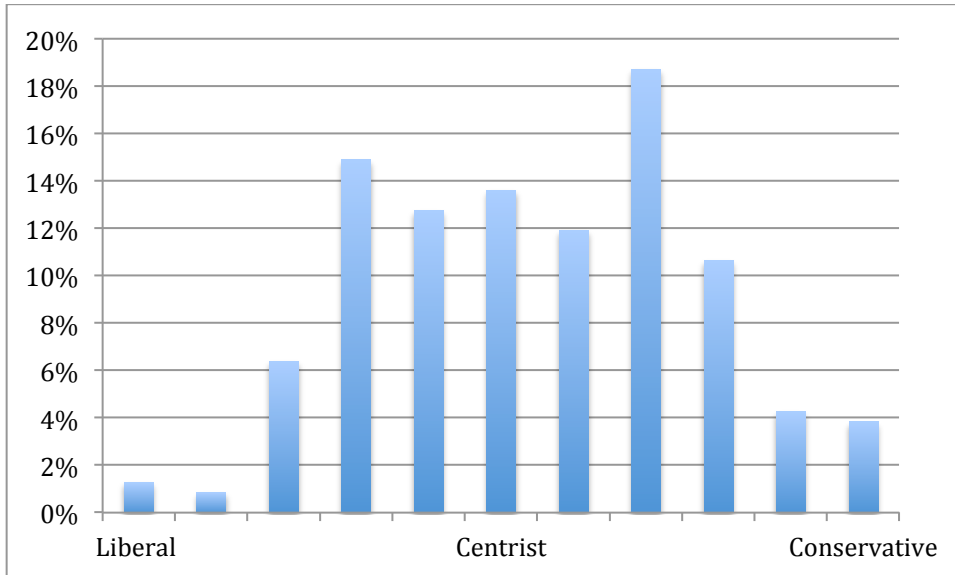
Distribution of Sample Annual Household Income Quintiles



Party Voted for in Upper House election of 2013



Self Reported Ideology on 1 to 10 Scale.



Survey Group Balance: Hotelling Tests.

Group 1 and 2 Small Ballot Comparisons: Hotelling T-Tests

Non-Celebrity Small Ballot (Group 4) Respondent Characteristic Means:

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
income_1	401	504.5461	234.2196	0	800
Age_20s	401	.1820449	.3863636	0	1
Age_30s	401	.201995	.4019901	0	1
Age_40s	401	.1670823	.3735153	0	1
Age_60s	401	.2743142	.4467254	0	1
female	401	.4613466	.4991264	0	1
liberal	401	.2069825	.405649	0	1
conservative	401	.2568579	.4374461	0	1
High_school	401	.2842893	.4516387	0	1
University	401	.478803	.5001745	0	1
Masters	401	.0673317	.2509086	0	1
vote_dicho~s	401	.7506234	.4331926	0	1
consider_d~s	401	.4912718	.5005483	0	1
discuss_di~s	401	.2493766	.4331926	0	1

LDP_2	401	.2892768	.4539931	0	1
DPJ_2	401	.0723192	.2593393	0	1
JRP_2	401	.1047382	.3065983	0	1
Komei_2	401	.032419	.1773313	0	1
Your_2	401	.0698254	.255171	0	1
JCP_2	401	.0623441	.2420816	0	1
celeb_diss~e	401	.6084788	.4887002	0	1

Celebrity Small Ballot (Group 2) Respondent Characteristic Means:

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
income_1	397	504.7733	236.3217	0	800
Age_20s	397	.2115869	.4089488	0	1
Age_30s	397	.2493703	.4331944	0	1
Age_40s	397	.1612091	.3681877	0	1
Age_60s	397	.1964736	.3978321	0	1
female	397	.4785894	.5001717	0	1
liberal	397	.2065491	.4053399	0	1
conservative	397	.3098237	.4630043	0	1
High_school	397	.3047859	.4608975	0	1
University	397	.440806	.4971102	0	1
Masters	397	.0604534	.2386257	0	1
vote_dicho~s	397	.7380353	.4402584	0	1
consider_d~s	397	.4735516	.49993	0	1
discuss_di~s	397	.231738	.422475	0	1
LDP_2	397	.3425693	.4751676	0	1
DPJ_2	397	.0780856	.2686449	0	1
JRP_2	397	.093199	.2910779	0	1
Komei_2	397	.0176322	.1317767	0	1
Your_2	397	.0503778	.2189994	0	1
JCP_2	397	.0554156	.2290784	0	1
celeb_diss~e	397	.5768262	.4946859	0	1

2-group Hotelling's T-squared = 20.244406

F test statistic: $((798-21-1)/(798-2)(21)) \times 20.244406 = .93979775$

H0: Vectors of means are equal for the two groups

F(21,776) = 0.9398

Prob > F(21,776) = 0.5386

Group 3 and 4 Large Ballot Comparisons: Hotelling Tests.

Non-Celebrity Large Ballot Respondent Characteristic Means:

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
income_1	381	518.1575	227.8921	0	800
Age_20s	381	.152231	.359717	0	1
Age_30s	381	.2335958	.4236743	0	1
Age_40s	381	.1784777	.3834179	0	1
Age_50s	381	.167979	.3743392	0	1
Age_60s	381	.2677165	.4433512	0	1

female	381	.4409449	.4971531	0	1
liberal	381	.2388451	.4269386	0	1
conservative	381	.2572178	.4376752	0	1
University	381	.5170604	.5003659	0	1

vote_dicho~s	381	.7769029	.4168704	0	1
consider_d~s	381	.4776903	.5001588	0	1
discuss_di~s	381	.2099738	.4078251	0	1
LDP_2	381	.2782152	.4487092	0	1
DPJ_2	381	.0761155	.2655315	0	1

JRP_2	381	.0761155	.2655315	0	1
Komei_2	381	.0341207	.181778	0	1
celeb_diss~e	381	.6246719	.4848442	0	1

Celebrity Large Ballot Respondent Characteristic Means:

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max

income_1	392	514.4668	229.9392	0	800
Age_20s	392	.1632653	.3700799	0	1
Age_30s	392	.2168367	.4126171	0	1
Age_40s	392	.1709184	.3769187	0	1
Age_50s	392	.2142857	.4108503	0	1

Age_60s	392	.2321429	.4227392	0	1
female	392	.4413265	.4971801	0	1
liberal	392	.2015306	.401656	0	1
conservative	392	.2755102	.447342	0	1
University	392	.4872449	.5004761	0	1

vote_dicho~s	392	.7831633	.4126171	0	1
consider_d~s	392	.502551	.5006325	0	1
discuss_di~s	392	.2066327	.405407	0	1
LDP_2	392	.3010204	.4592878	0	1
DPJ_2	392	.0892857	.2855201	0	1

JRP_2	392	.0688776	.2535694	0	1
Komei_2	392	.0331633	.1792916	0	1
celeb_diss~e	392	.6428571	.4797698	0	1

2-group Hotelling's T-squared = 10.614192

F test statistic: $((773-18-1)/(773-2)(18)) \times 10.614192 = .57667537$

H0: Vectors of means are equal for the two groups

F(18,754) = 0.5767

Prob > F(18,754) = 0.9174

Celebrity and Counterpart Pairings

Candidate with Fame	Counterpart without Fame
 <p>B 池上彰 慶應義塾大学卒 ニュースキャスター</p>	 <p>B 田中信明 慶應義塾大学卒 ニュースキャスター</p>
 <p>B 三木谷浩史 一橋大学卒 実業家</p>	 <p>B 田中信明 一橋大学卒 実業家</p>
 <p>B 三浦知良 静岡大学卒 サッカー選手</p>	 <p>B 田中信明 静岡大学卒 サッカー選手</p>



B 田村淳

中央大学卒
司会者



B 田中信明

中央大学卒
司会者



B 堀江貴文

東京大学卒
企業家



B 田中信明

東京大学卒
企業家



B 茂木健一郎

東京大学卒
脳科学者



B 田中信明

東京大学卒
脳科学者



B 小林よしのり

慶應義塾大学卒
漫画家



B 田中信明

慶應義塾大学卒
漫画家



B やくみつる

早稲田大学卒
漫画家



B 田中信明

早稲田大学卒
漫画家