How Large Are Koizumi's Coattails?

Party Leader Visits in the 2005 Japanese Election[1]

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I. Introduction

On August 8th, 2005, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi dissolved the House of Representatives and called for snap elections to the Lower House. This decision followed the Upper House defeat of the Cabinet's bill to privatize Japan Post by a larger-than-expected 125 votes to 108, largely due to the abstention or opposition of 30 LDP members. This internal revolt was presaged in an earlier Lower House vote on July 5th, when 37 LDP members voted against postal privatization and another 14 abstained. Intra-LDP opposition was driven by the electoral importance of *Taiju* – the association of retired postmasters, who opposed privatization – to key LDP members, including faction boss Shizuka Kamei and former Lower House Speaker Tamisuke Watanuki (Machlachlan 2006).

The Lower House election on September 11th was dubbed "Koizumi Theater", most notably for the media's extensive coverage of the pitched battle between the postal rebels – now expelled from the LDP – and Koizumi's "Assassins" – district-switching incumbents and high profile outsiders who were handpicked by Koizumi. When the election campaign kicked off on August 30th, even non-news programs spent hours dissecting the Shakespearean intersection of loyalty, betrayal, and conflict between these former co-partisans (opinion was split on who betrayed whom). Somewhat absent from the public debate were the actual opposition parties, notably the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), who had also voted against the postal reform bill but was left outside of Koizumi's theater looking in. When the votes were finally tabulated, Koizumi had carried the day: the LDP won 296 seats (+60) – its largest share in postwar politics – while the DPJ won only 113 seats (-64 seats).

While the events of July-August 2005 offer insights into a number of interesting phenomena, such as how (not to) bargain in parliament or how (not) to maintain party cohesion,

this paper focuses on one particular question: "How important were Koizumi's coattails to the LDP's victory?" When Koizumi was first elected as LDP President and Japanese Prime Minister in 2001, his lionesque hair, telegenic style, and reformist aura propelled him to support ratings over 80%. While these stratospheric numbers fell over the subsequent years, Koizumi's approval rate three weeks before the 2005 election was a still-robust 53% (Asahi Newspaper, 8/20/2005). Koizumi's popularity gave him political leverage that few of his predecessors had – namely, coattail effects. To the extent that an association with Koizumi bestowed some reflected glory, the LDP could use Koizumi's popularity as a tactical tool to boost the electoral prospects of its candidates.

I analyze coattail effects in the 2005 election in two related ways. The first half of this paper deals with strategic resource allocation: which electoral districts did Koizumi and Katsuya Okada (DPJ President) visit leading up to the election? Because the legal campaign period in Lower House elections is only 12 days long, leader visits are scarce resources that parties must distribute discriminately to win the maximal number of seats. The second half analyzes the *effects* of leader visits, disaggregating two types of coattail effects: the broader "collective coattails" from belonging to the same party as a popular leader, and the narrower "selective coattails" from having the leader visit one's district.

Combining local polling data, newspaper reports on party leader visits, and a variety of statistical tests, I demonstrate that the LDP adopted an aggressive swing-voter approach while the DPJ ran a defensive, incumbency-protection strategy. Both Koizumi and Okada focused on districts with narrow margins of victory in the preceding 2003 election, but while Koizumi favored new candidates or previous runner-ups in regions where his personal popularity was high, Okada mostly campaigned on behalf of incumbent candidates, irrespective of his own popularity

in those districts. As for the substantive effects of these visits, I find no evidence of either collective or selective coattails for Okada, but Koizumi's overall popularity and targeted visits produced consequential improvements in LDP vote share. Compared to the mean, a one standard deviation (3%) increase in Koizumi's local popularity raised the LDP candidate's vote share by about 1%. If Koizumi had actually visited that district, then the LDP candidate would have received an *additional* boost of 2.4%. Approximately fifteen percent of electoral races in the 2003 and 2005 elections were decided by margins smaller than three percent, suggesting that Koizumi's coattails were critical to the LDP's success.

In the next two sections, I review the literature on strategic resource allocation, coattail effects, and party leader visits in greater detail. A description and analysis of the statistical methods and findings follows. The final section concludes with a discussion of this study's implications.

II.   **Party Effort, Resource Allocation, and Coattail Effects**

A variety of factors explain election outcomes, some of which deal with national trends and others with local conditions. For example, national partisanship is heavily colored by perceptions of competence: better macroeconomic performance yields higher vote shares for parties-in-power (Inoguchi 1982; Lewis-Beck 1988; Powell and Whitten 1993). Research by Jacobson (1989) and Scheiner (2005) indicates that candidate quality matters: "strong" candidates, especially former local officeholders, are better equipped to win national races than those with no political experience.

An important component of electoral success is strategic party behavior. Under the old single non-transferable vote, multi-member district electoral system (SNTV-MMD), Japanese

parties learned to coordinate candidate nominations to avoid splitting their votes among too many co-partisans (Browne and Patterson 1999; Christensen 2000; Christensen and Johnson 1995). With an average of four seats per district under SNTV-MMD, the conservative camp (LDP and affiliated independents) and progressive parties (Socialists, Communists, and Democratic Socialists) tried to avoid over- / under-nominating candidates in order to maximize their seat shares.

The 1994 introduction of the *heiritsu-sei* system, with parallel single-member districts (SMD) and proportional representation (PR) tiers, simplified coordination efforts. Because only one candidate can win outright in the SMDs, Duvergerian pressures have taken hold, and Japan has been moving towards a two-party (or at least a two-camp) system (Reed 2007).[2] In recent years, the LDP has been coordinating nominations with its coalition partner, the Komeito, while the DPJ has been taking steps to avoid over-nomination with other progressive parties (particularly the Social Democrats).[3] The primary explanation for nomination coordination and two-party systems is strategic resource allocation: in the short-run, parties will only compete where their prospects are strong, and voters and activists should only support candidates with some hope of winning (Cox 1997; Duverger 1954; Reed 1991). As Weiner (2003) points out, this should result in incumbents running unopposed where their support base is strong, and two-party competition where victory margins are smaller.

This paper focuses on a second side to the resource allocation problem that has received much less academic attention. An implicit assumption of the strategic entry / coordination

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[2] An important caveat is that the new electoral system allows losing SMD candidates to gain a second life as PR "zombies". The Japanese system allows candidates to be listed on both SMD and PR tiers, and the tie-breaker for candidates on the same ranking in the PR tier is their "*sekihai-ritsu*", or their proportion of votes relative to the SMD winner. For more detail, see McKean and Scheiner (2000).

[3] The LDP and Komeito do not coordinate completely in all districts. While both sides avoid nominating candidates in the same district, formal cooperation in the form of vote-bartering (e.g. vote LDP in SMDs, vote Komeito in PR) is left to individual districts.

literature is that running for office is actually costly for political parties. However, entering an election race is relatively cheap; the true costs accrue from trying to *win*. Parties can nominate candidates where they have no hope of winning and spend very little money on the campaign. They may do this in order to start building a foothold in districts with little current following, or they may simply allow a rich, independent candidate who needs no financial support to wear the party's mantle. In measurement terms, candidate *nominations* are an imperfect way of assessing strategic behavior, because it does not take into how much *effort* parties put into winning each seat. To accurately capture party strategy, we thus need a more granular measure of how much (and where) parties expend scarce resources.

The standard metric of "party effort" in the political science literature is campaign expenditures. Damore and Hansford (1999) find that the campaign committees of American political parties allocate disproportionately more money to marginal districts in House of Representatives elections. Parties can also influence campaign war chests indirectly: Jacobson, Kernell, and Jeffrey (2004) show that presidents can help candidates raise money through targeted fund-raising efforts.

While money is undoubtedly one of the most revealing signs of campaign effort, a similar analysis is difficult to conduct in Japan because of rigid legal constraints. On the one hand, running in Lower House elections is not free: candidates need to pay a three million yen deposit to run in SMDs and six million yen for the PR tier. These deposits are meant to discourage "frivolous competition", since candidates forfeit their money if they fail to win a minimal number of votes (e.g. 10% of valid votes in SMDs). While these sums are non-negligible, particularly for independent candidates, they constitute a relatively small share of total campaign expenditures for the major political parties. The bulk of electoral spending is for the campaign

process itself, particularly wages for staffers, office rental fees, and other administrative costs. The maximum spending limit for *individual candidates* is set by law, and in the 2005 election, varied by district between 22 and 28 million yen.[4] Restrictions on *political parties*, however, are much more lax: parties can hire as many staff members as they want, and TV advertisements and transportation costs for campaign speeches do not count towards the legal spending ceiling. While parties are required to file reports on direct monetary transfers to politicians, these ancillary expenditures are not itemized, making it difficult to gauge how much money was spent per candidate during the campaign.[5]

Instead, I use a different metric to assess party effort and resource allocation: campaign visits by party leaders, or "*yuuzei*". The theoretical backdrop for the importance of leader visits is the expanding research on the "presidentialization of parliamentary politics" (Poguntke and Webb 2005). Because prime ministers are selected by other legislators, not elected directly by voters, the individual appeal of party leaders rarely received as much attention as *which party* controlled parliament. Over the last twenty years, however, media attention on party leaders has grown rapidly. Party leaders have been given more news coverage, and it is increasingly commonplace to see telegenic leaders featured prominently on television advertisements. Japan has not been an exception: Krauss and Nyblade (2005) report a steady increase in the share of voters who rely on TV news to make ballot choices, the number of newspaper articles on the prime minister, and the number of prime ministers' campaign visits for specific candidates.

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[4] Expenditure limit per district in 2005 = (15 yen * Total Registered Voters) + 19.1 million yen. There are also detailed rules on how much candidates can spend on specific items. For example, administrative staff members cannot be paid more than ￥10,000 a day, and campaign girls (*uguisu-jyo*) no more than ￥15,000. Food costs are capped at ￥3000 per person per day,
[5] A wealth of data on party revenues and expenditures can be found on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications website, particularly http://www.seijishikin.soumu.go.jp/

This newfound "cult of the party leader", of which Koizumi is an exemplar, has profound electoral implications. Specifically, party leaders should be able to generate coattail effects, defined here as the extent to which the popularity of the party leader boosts the electoral fortunes of that party's candidates *independent* of the individual popularity of those candidates. There are two components to prime ministerial coattails, which I term collective and selective effects. "Collective" benefits are the marginal added-value of the party leader's popularity relative to the party's overall popularity. A voter who has little affection for the LDP or his district's LDP candidate may still vote for the LDP because he wants Koizumi to stay in power. The narrower, "selective" effect is derived from the strategic allocation of party leader visits. In addition to the collective gains from being part of "Koizumi's LDP", an LDP candidate may benefit from having Koizumi visit her district, give a stump speech at her side in front of a crowded train station, and otherwise impress voters with the visual image of the Koizumi and the LDP candidate linked together.

Much like campaign expenditures, the allocation of these visits is subject to strategic decision-making due to the time constraints imposed by Japan's Public Office Election Law. Because stumping on behalf of candidates is restricted to a twelve-day official campaign period in Lower House elections, the LDP must ration visits to those districts where the marginal "selective effect" of a Koizumi visit generates the highest returns. Even in a relatively small country like Japan, party leaders are hard-pressed to travel to all 300 single-member districts in this short timeframe. As such, an examination of which districts were visited by party leaders allows us to analyze how much and where parties decide to expend the most effort in winning electoral races.

III.   The Logic of Party Leader Visits

To analyze the allocation of party leader visits, information was gathered from a variety of media sources. While all political parties initially listed leader visits on their websites, this practice was blocked by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, which informed the DPJ and LDP on September 2nd, 2005, that updating party or candidate homepages "was most likely in violation of the Public Office Election Law" (Yomiuri Shimbun, 9/3/2005).[6] The bulk of campaign visit data is from the national and regional editions of the Yomiuri and Asahi newspapers, especially the Asahi's daily reporting of the Prime Minister's movements. In practice, it is extremely difficult to gather complete data on the precise visit locations of all party leaders, much less lower-ranked officials, because of the aforementioned proscription on self-advertisement by parties and the vague way that most visits are described in the news (e.g. "Koizumi traveled around central Tokyo today…"). As such, this paper will only focus on the district-level visits of the two major party leaders – Junichiro Koizumi of the LDP and Katsuya Okada of the DPJ – for which I have complete data.[7]

III.1   Allocation of Party Leader Visits

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[6] In practice, the legal parameters of what constitutes illegal online activities are vague. The Public Office Election Law enumerates the various mediums that candidates / parties are permitted to use. Because the internet is not mentioned in the POEL, electoral appeals on webpages after the campaign period begins could be interpreted as illegal. While the DPJ argued that the original complaint – the illegality of uploading Okada's first speech after the campaign period started – did not constitute vote canvassing, the LDP, which has generally been lukewarm about electronic media, countered that because voters cast ballots for individual parties in the PR tier, even a collective endorsement of parties was illegal.

[7] Okada's visit data was gathered from his personal website, http://www.katsuya.net/katsu2005.html, where visit location was listed *after* the election ended.

Table 1 lists some descriptive information on party leader visits.[8] Koizumi – despite not

campaigning at all on September 1st during a state visit by the Thai Prime Minister – visited 72

politicians in 18 prefectures. Okada focused on metropolitan areas, visiting 75 separate districts

in 16 prefectures, although there was an additional 12 repeat visits. In the last three days of the

campaign period (September 8th-10th), Koizumi and Okada visited 24 and 26 districts,

respectively. Koizumi traveled a total of 10,800 kilometers over the twelve-day campaign period,

approximately 1000 km. more than Okada (Asahi 9/11/2005). The most active party bosses were

Mizuho Fukushima of the SDP and Takenori Kanzaki of the Komeito, both of whom

accumulated extra kilometers visiting their SMD candidates in Okinawa. The total collective

distance traveled by party leaders was less than in the 2003 Lower House elections, because of a

typhoon that hit Japan between September 5th-7th that grounded most airplanes and forced many

candidates to halt campaigning for at least one day.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

We can tease apart the data to get at the political context of these visits. Overall, there

were 203 "head-to-head" matches between the LDP and DPJ, defined as a two-horse race

between official LDP and DPJ candidates or a three-party competition that also involved the JCP.

Neither Koizumi nor Okada placed any extra emphasis on these districts, spending slightly more

time in districts where the postal rebels, the SDP, and independents were also in the mix. The

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[8] On numerous occasions, Koizumi or Okada would visit one particular electoral district and be joined not only by that district's home candidate, but also the candidates of neighboring districts. This was more likely in metropolitan areas where the party leader gave speeches in front of major train stations. I have coded these joint-campaign stops as visits to all participating candidates, not just the home candidate. Voters in urban areas cross multiple electoral jurisdictions over the course of the day, particularly to and from work. The potential audience of a speech at Shibuya Station in Tokyo, for example, is not just the residents of District 7, but some subset of the 2.4 million commuters who go through Shibuya daily.

one distinctive difference between the two leaders' itineraries was that Okada was more likely to visit districts with DPJ incumbents. This suggests that the DPJ may have been taking the more conservative approach of defending existing seats than trying to win new districts.[9]

While the literature on party leader visits is relatively new, there are roughly two schools of thought on the distribution of scarce resources. The first strategy is *defensive*: parties should allocate assets where their popularity is strongest. Given that voter choice can be fickle, a bird in the hand is worth more than two in the bush, so parties should solidify their core base rather than overreach in trying to attract independent or weakly-sympathetic voters. The second strategy is *offensive:* parties should target leader visits in precisely those districts where the expected margin of victory is smallest. If the difference between winning and losing a seat is a few percentage points, a party leader visit may create a large enough swing to capture a marginal seat.

Previous studies have found mixed support for both defensive and offensive strategies. In their analysis of President George W. Bush's stump visits during the 2002 House of Representatives mid-term elections, Herrnson and Morris (2006) find that the president was most likely to visit competitive districts. On the other hand, Belanger, Carty and Eagles' (2003) analysis of leaders' tours in the 2000 Canadian election shows that established parties (the Liberals, Conservatives, and New Democrats) tended to defend their turfs, while the smaller, regional parties (Alliance and Bloc Quebecois) tried to expand their national popularity by visiting districts where their support was relatively weak.

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[9] An important caveat is that party leaders *did* visit electoral districts prior to the beginning of the official campaign period. After the Lower House was dissolved on August 8th, party leaders gave policy speeches in front of train stations, department stores, and other commuter hubs. These visits were occasionally accompanied by potential candidates in the next election, but did *not* involve endorsements of these candidates (which would have been illegal under the Public Office Election Law). Lacking systematic data on these earlier visits, I focus on stops during the official campaign period instead.

III.2   Effects of leader visits

Estimating the "selective" coattail effects of party leader visits can be tricky, as there are three plausible benefits from party leader visits – advertising, associational, and mobilizational – not all of which deal with coattails per se. *Advertising effects* are media coverage externalities generated by the activities of party leaders. Because reporters and TV cameras tail party leaders during the campaign period, public speeches by Koizumi or Okada may receive TV airtime that evening and a brief write-up in the next day's newspapers. Even if explicit support for the candidate is not included in the media's coverage, any mention of that candidate's name and party affiliation serves as free advertisement. *Mobilizational effects* are psychic rewards to party activists which generate indirect benefits to candidates. From an instrumental perspective, an undecided voter may not learn anything new from listening to a brief stump speech by Koizumi from 100 meters away. Party volunteers who spend hours walking around with leaflets and making cold calls to voters, however, are more likely to be energized by seeing their party's star. This can, in turn, generate second-order benefits, as enthused campaign volunteers may work harder on behalf of the party, thereby increasing the candidate's vote share.

Technically speaking, neither the advertising nor mobilizational elements are functions of party leader coattails, since the former is an epiphenomenal externality while the latter is conditional on the behavior of local activists. *Associational effects*, on the other hand, are direct coattail benefits derived from the explicit linkage between the candidate and the party leader. When Koizumi or Okada claims that the candidate they are stumping for is valuable to the party and the future of Japan, voters who have warm feelings toward either leader may transfer those sentiments to the local candidate.

The three effects – particular the advertising and associational aspects – can be difficult

to disentangle. A TV report that shows Koizumi giving a speech in front of a major train station

with Candidate A at his side generates both airtime for that candidate (advertising) and a visual

association between Koizumi and Candidate A (associational). Media tendencies and campaign

regulations in Japan, however, suggest that associational effects outstrip the advertising benefits.

First, TV coverage of leader speeches tends to be very short and focuses narrowly on the leaders

themselves, making it unlikely that voters will even see the candidate's face. Second,

newspapers are required to remain neutral in how they cover electoral campaigns. In practice,

this means that many articles omit the candidate's name – sometimes with awkward phrasing –

when covering a leader's visit.[10] Take, for example, snippets from the following articles (own

translation from Japanese editions):

> "On the second day of the Lower House elections, DPJ President Okada
> gave a stump speech [gaitoh enzetsu] at JR Kokura Station in the North
> Kokura Ward of Kita-Kyushuu City… *President Okada had come to*
> *support the DPJ incumbent in Fukuoka District 10…*"
> Yomiuri Shimbun, "Shuuinsen: Minshu Okada Daihyo ga Kitakyushuu
> Iri", August 31, 2005

> "The two coalition partners' leaders, Prime Minister Koizumi and Chief
> Representative Kanzaki Takenori of the Komeito, arrived back-to-back in
> Fukuoka on [September] 2nd… *Just before 3PM, Prime Minister Koizumi,*
> *who had visited Kurume to support the LDP's official candidate in*
> *Fukuoka District 6, stood on the campaign car...*"
> Asahi Shimbun, "Koizumi Shushou, Yuusei Tsuyoku Uttae; Komei
> Kanzaki mo Fukuoka Iri", September 30, 2005

The third plausible effect of leader visits – mobilizational – is also likely to be small. The

benefit of seeing the party leader is greatest for activists whose primary allegiance is to the party

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[10] The omission of candidate names is based on self-censorship that appears to vary with the interpretation of "media neutrality" by local newspaper editors. For example, some Asahi editions would list candidate names while others would not. The same holds true for local editions of the Yomiuri and Mainichi, two other major Japanese dailies.

organization. Japanese campaign activists, however, are mostly members of the *koenkai*, or personal support networks, of individual politicians. While one can love the politician and party simultaneously, the postal reform conflict in the Diet had tested the relationship between the LDP in parliament and the LDP on the ground. While 37 Lower House politicians had been expunged from the LDP for voting against the reform bill, many others were embittered by Koizumi's decision to force a legislative vote without creating intra-party consensus first. At the same time, numerous local LDP politicians in prefectural and municipal assemblies defied the LDP's dictum to withdraw support from the purged politicians, choosing to back the postal rebels' independent candidacies. In the best of times, the mobilizational effect of a Koizumi visit on local activists would have been small; in the 2005 election, it was most likely minimal.

Given the lack of consistent advertising and mobilizational externalities, campaign visits are most likely to produce associational effects, whereby the physical presence and popularity of the leader directly convince voters to cast their ballots for that party's candidate.

IV.   **Testing the Determinants of Party Leader Visits**

I analyze the allocation of party leader visits using an original dataset of district-level visits by Koizumi (LDP) and Okada (DPJ). Each case is one single-member district, although the four SMD districts in Okinawa are omitted due to the lack of consistent survey data used in the analysis below (N=296).

The statistical tests are based on two related sets of dependent variables. First, I examine whether each party leader visited that district during the entire twelve-day campaigning period. The dependent variables take the values [0, 1]: as shown in Table 1, Koizumi traveled to 72 districts, while Okada traveled to 75 districts. Second, I adjust the dependent variable to measure

whether Koizumi and Okada visited that district in the last three days of the campaign. On September 6th, the Asahi and Yomiuri newspapers reported district-level results from their respective 150,000 person surveys, which included prefectural-level data on the popularity of different political parties, their leaders, and most crucially, assessments of which districts were still competitive. That evening, the DPJ and LDP leaders met in Tokyo to review their campaign strategies for the last few days. With each party armed with up-to-date information, I expect leader visits in the last three days to represent an intensified version of their earlier resource allocation strategies.

The statistical models incorporate independent variables that operationalize recent popular sentiment, past electoral performance, and district characteristics. Descriptive statistics are provided in the Appendix to this paper. Three of the explanatory variables are based on survey data. *Koizumi Popularity* and *Okada Popularity* measure the difference between the popularity of each party leader and their respective parties. The Asahi (9/11/2005) reports prefecture-specific survey responses to a variety of questions, including: 1) "Thinking of the future of Japanese politics, who do you expect more from: Prime Minister Koizumi or DPJ President Okada Katsuya?" 2) "Which political party do you support?"[11] The two factors are not unrelated, but by subtracting DPJ support from Okada support (*Okada Popularity*) and LDP support from Koizumi support (*Koizumi Popularity*), we can estimate the independent coattails of each party leader.[12] I expect Koizumi and Okada to both visit districts where their coattail

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[11] I cannot discount contamination effects in this data. Because the survey responses were collected over August 31st and September 2nd, *after* the actual campaign period had started, some respondents may have seen one of the party leaders and changed their opinions before they answered the survey. However, since the Asahi poll had an average of 400 responses per electoral district (between 1000-8000 per prefecture), I expect the number of respondents who may have seen the party leaders to be a relatively small proportion of the sample, and hence inconsequential in the final analysis.

[12] The Asahi newspaper did not report responses to the first question (Koizumi vs. Okada) for 11 out of 47 prefectures. Here, I used Stata 9's *impute* function to fill in the gaps. *Impute* uses an OLS regression with secondary independent variables to estimate the predicted value of the missing data. The independent variables used

effects will be strongest, i.e. *Koizumi Popularity* and *Okada Popularity* are high. I also include *No Party Preference* to measure the electoral salience of political independents. *Ceteris paribus*, the preferences of independent voters are more likely to be swayed by small cues, and as such, I expect party leaders to favor districts where *No Party Preference* is high.

Four independent variables capture the structure of competition in each district. *Assassin* is a dichotomous variable which equals "1" when the race involves an ex-LDP postal rebel and one of Koizumi's hand-picked assassins. There were 33 assassin districts, and these races received the greatest television exposure during the campaign period. Because of the high profile nature of these districts, I expect the party leaders – particularly Koizumi – to favor these areas. *2003 Margin* is the difference in vote share between the winner and first runner-up in the 2003 Lower House election. To the extent that future electoral performance correlates highly with past electoral performance, the margin of victory in the last election is a good proxy for competitiveness in 2005. As such, *2003 Margin* allows us to estimate whether the LDP and DPJ played an offensive or defensive resource allocation strategy. *Incumbent* is a dichotomous variable which equals "1" where the party's candidate is an incumbent. Similarly, *New* tabulates whether the party's candidate is a new challenger, defined as not having run in the 2003 election. For the DPJ analysis, *Incumbent* and *New* only measure official DPJ candidates, but for the LDP regressions, they include both LDP and Komeito candidates to better reflect the strong electoral coordination between the two parties.

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here include: 1) prefectural approval/disapproval rates of the Cabinet, as reported by the Yomiuri Shimbun (09/06/2005); 2) prefectural support rates for the LDP and DPJ (Question 2in the Asahi survey); 3) proportion of voters who have no party attachment (also from the Asahi survey). For each party leader, the imputation regression took the form:

$Koizumi\ Support =\ _0 +\ _1(Cabinet\ Approval) +\ _2(LDP\ Support) +\ _3(No\ Party\ Preference)$

$Okada\ Support =\ _0 +\ _1(Cabinet\ Disapproval) +\ _2(DPJ\ Support) +\ _3(No\ Party\ Preference)$

In Models 1A and 1B, I use a logistic regression model to predict the incidence of Koizumi and Okada visits over the twelve-day campaign period. Table 2 reports the coefficients and standard errors from the statistical analysis.[13]

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

One notable point of similarity is that both party leaders avoided districts where the margin of victory in the 2003 election was large. Holding all other variables at median values, a one percent increase in *2003 Margin* reduces the probability of a Koizumi visit by 1.2%, and that of an Okada visit by 0.7%. A five percent increase in *2003 Margin* reduces the probabilities of Koizumi and Okada visits by 5.8% and 3.2%, respectively.

On other measures, however, leader strategies diverged. Koizumi avoided shilling for LDP incumbents (-19.1% predicted probability), while Okada was much more likely to visit DPJ incumbents (+24.7%). Instead, Koizumi focused on areas where his personal popularity was high. A one percent increase in *Koizumi Popularity* increases the predicted probability of his visit by 4.8%, while a five percent increase raises the probability of a visit by 29.4%. Surprisingly, Okada was *less* likely to visit districts where his popularity was strong, although the coefficient is small and statistically not significant. An interesting finding is that Koizumi favored districts where Assassin candidates were running (+24.6% predicted probability), while Okada treated these districts like any other. Since the Assassin districts were noted principally for the media's attention on the horserace between postal rebels and Koizumi's hand-picked

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[13] Predicted probabilities are generated using the *Clarify* program on STATA (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003). I initially explored using event count data (number of times each district was visited) and a negative binomial regression or zero-inflated negative binomial regression, instead of the logistic regression. However, because the number of double visits by each leader was small relative to the sample (1 for Koizumi and 12 for Okada), I believe that a dichotomous dependent variable is more appropriate.

acolytes, it is not surprising that Koizumi viewed these areas as political crucial. Okada, on the other hand, may have judged it inefficient to campaign in districts where his own candidates were the third wheel, as the *Assassin* coefficient in Model 1B is not statistically significant.

The most counterintuitive result is that neither leader focused on districts with a large proportion of political independents. A one percent increase in *No Party Preference* reduces the probability of a Koizumi visit by 7.2%, while a five percent increase reduces it by 25.3%. *No Party Preference* was neither substantive nor statistically significant for Okada in Model 1B.

The determinants of party leader visits vary slightly when focusing on the last three days of the campaign period (Models 2A and 2B). The regression equations are different for Koizumi and Okada's visits, because Okada *only visited incumbents* between September 7th and 10th, suggesting that he intensified his earlier strategy of favoring sitting parliamentarians. To avoid statistical over-determination, I run Model 2B with only districts where DPJ incumbents were involved (N=166). Koizumi followed his earlier strategy of avoiding incumbents (-17.9% predicted probability), although he began to avoid *New* candidates as well (-15.4% predicted probability). Both leaders still favored districts where the vote margin in the last election was smallest, and this was particularly pronounced for Okada: a five percent increase in *2003 Margin* reduced the predicted probability of an Okada visit by 6.8%.

The two leaders continued to diverge on the question of personal popularity. A one percent increase in *Koizumi Popularity* generated a 4.0% increase in the likelihood that Koizumi would visit, while the same increase in *Okada Popularity* lowered the probability of an Okada visit by 5.0%. Okada did, however, place greater emphasis on districts with more independents. While *No Party Preference* is statistically insignificant for Koizumi visits, a one percent increase in Model 2B increases the likelihood of an Okada visit in the last three days by 6.8%.

Referring back to the theoretical distinction in resource allocation strategies, the statistical findings suggest that Koizumi played an *offensive* strategy while Okada was more *defensive*, and neither candidate radically changed his travel patterns over the course of the campaign period. Koizumi's visits were concentrated in the politically important Assassin districts and avoided "safer" districts where LDP incumbents were running. Importantly, Koizumi's travel schedule reflects an explicit attempt to take advantage of coattail effects, as his visits focused on areas where his personal popularity was relatively high. The DPJ, on the other hand, allocated leader visits to help protect the seats it already held. Instead of trying to win new seats, Okada spent most of his time supporting incumbents, and he displayed a surprising tendency to visit areas where his own popularity was lower.

Two interpretative points are in order. First, given the diminished media attention on the DPJ in this election compared to the last, Okada's defensive strategy may have been appropriate. Leading up to the 2003 Lower House election, a Yomiuri survey (10/25/2003) showed that 12% of voters intended to vote DPJ in single-member districts (37% for the LDP), while 14% would do so in the PR tier (35% for the LDP). In a Yomiuri poll before the 2005 campaign period (8/20/2005), 14% of voters responded that they would vote for the DPJ candidate in the SMDs (39% for the LDP), while 16% claimed the same in the PR tier (37% for the LDP). While the LDP-DPJ gap in the two polls is similar, the increased attention on "Koizumi Theater" in 2005, particularly the postal rebel vs. assassin phenomenon, meant that the DPJ was unlikely to create an upsurge in popularity during the campaign period, regardless of how many districts Okada visited.

Second, Okada's tendency to not take his own popularity into account when picking visit destinations may be a function of his lower profile relative to Koizumi, which prompted the DPJ

to adopt a tag-team strategy. Nationwide, the proportion of voters who trusted Okada to lead Japan was only 25%, compared to Koizumi's 42% support (Asahi 09/05/2005). Although he had been president of the DPJ since May 2004 and had led his party to electoral victory in the 2004 Upper House election, Okada was a relative newcomer compared to party stalwarts like Naoto Kan and Yukio Hatoyama. Indeed, the DPJ explicitly prioritized the "Team DPJ" concept over Okada's personal appeal, as Kan, Hatoyama, and Ichiro Ozawa (whose Liberal Party had recently merged with the DPJ) were sent out to canvass as many districts as Okada. Whether this tag-team strategy worked is hard to judge without comprehensive visit data for the other party bosses, but when it came to Okada, the DPJ did not display any strategic effort to market their leader to generate selective coattails.

V.   **Testing the Effects of Party Leader Visits**

Having analyzed the determinants of leader visit allocation, I now turn to the electoral effects of these visits. Here, I use a standard OLS regression, where the dependent variable is each candidate's fractional *Vote Share* in 2005, ranging from 0 to 1. As with the previous section, I run separate regressions for LDP and DPJ candidates (N = 286 and 288, respectively). In addition to the independent variables from the previous section, I include some new measures which better capture baseline electoral outcomes.

First, I disaggregate *Incumbent* into SMD winners and PR zombies. PR zombies are candidates who lost in the SMD race, but were also listed in the PR tier and "resurrected" by virtue of having a close winner:runner-up vote ratio. *SMD Incumbent* = 1 for true incumbents who won the SMD race, while *PR Zombie* = 1 for resurrected PR incumbents. This distinction allows us to implicitly capture the past performance of incumbents, and hence their predicted

vote share in the current election. *Koizumi Visit* and *Okada Visit*, which were dependent variables in the previous section's analysis, are now included as independent variables. While I expect individual visits to improve candidate vote share, I also interact these visit variables with party leader popularity: *Koizumi Visit * Koizumi Popularity* and *Okada Visit * Okada Popularity*. The popularity variables in isolation capture the "collective" coattail effects that candidates obtain from being in the same party as their party leaders. The interaction term, on the other hand, allows us to tease out the "selective" coattail benefits from associational effects, i.e. from being seen with the party leader. Finally, I include the control term *Total Candidates*, which counts the number of candidates competing in that district. Since the proliferation of candidates – even minor ones – can depress the winning vote share, I expect the coefficient for this variable to be negative.

Table 3 reports the results from the OLS regression of candidate vote share. The baseline category in these models is each party's returning challengers, i.e. non-incumbent, non-new candidates. Model 1 focuses on LDP candidates exclusively, while Model 2 runs the equation for DPJ candidates. Almost all of the control variables conform to stated expectations. For both LDP and DPJ candidates, *SMD Incumbents* did better in the 2005 election, winning 10.1% and 11.1% more than their respective returning challengers. *PR Zombies* also tended to win more votes, although the coefficient is statistically significant only for DPJ zombies (+4.5%). *"New"* candidates tended to do a bit worse for both parties, and as expected, *Total Candidates* is statistically significant and negative in both models.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

The theoretically interesting result concerns the coattail effects generated by party leader visits. Unfortunately for the DPJ, Okada's visits generated no boosts in vote share, nor did the candidates benefit from Okada's collective coattails. *Okada Visit, Okada Popularity,* and the interaction term between the two are all substantively and statistically insignificant. To some extent, this could be an artifact of Okada's poor choice of districts to visit, which was analyzed in the previous section. By focusing on incumbent candidates, Okada may have missed out on opportunities to convert independent voters to his cause.

Model 1 shows, however, that Koizumi's visits generated substantial increases in the vote shares of LDP candidates. The three key variables – *Koizumi Visit, Koizumi Popularity,* and the interaction term – are all statistically significant. Because interpreting the value of Koizumi's collective coattails (*Koizumi Popularity)* and the additional selective effects generated by his visits *(Koizumi Visit + Koizumi Visit * Koizumi Popularity)* requires some tricky disentangling of the singular and interaction terms, I display their predicted effects in Figure 1.

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

The baseline case in Figure 1 is a returning LDP challenger (*SMD Incumbent, PR Zombie, New = 0*) competing in a district with two other candidates (*Total Candidates = 3*). The horizontal axis is *Koizumi Popularity,* or the difference between Koizumi's personal support rating and the LDP's collective popularity in each prefecture. The dotted line depicts collective coattail effects from belonging to the same party as Koizumi, while the solid line incorporates the selective effects from party leader visits. Not surprisingly, LDP candidates did better where Koizumi's popularity was higher. Where Koizumi had a popularity level of 9% (the mean), LDP

candidates have a predicted vote share of 46.1%. An increase in Koizumi's popularity of five percent raises the LDP candidate's vote share to 47.8%. While these coefficients are statistically significant, the actual substantive effect appears to be fairly small, as the difference between the maximum and minimal levels of Koizumi popularity (12%) only yields a 4.2% vote swing.

The more interesting finding, however, is the effect of *Koizumi Popularity* when Koizumi actually visits the district. At low levels of Koizumi's popularity, his visits reduce the predicted vote share of LDP candidates. This somewhat counterintuitive result is attributable to Koizumi's propensity of visiting marginal districts with no incumbents, i.e. where the baseline vote share of LDP candidates is lower. As Koizumi's popularity rises, however, we see the predicted vote shares of LDP candidates improve rapidly. A one percent increase in Koizumi's popularity raises the vote share of LDP candidates who host Koizumi during the election campaign by approximately 1.3%. Given an average turnout of 343,192 voters per district, a 1.3% increase in vote share equates to approximately 4460 voters who changed their ballot choice by virtue of a Koizumi visit. Importantly, as Section IV indicated, Koizumi tended to visit districts where his own popularity was higher, and thus was more likely to affect election outcomes. Koizumi's median popularity in visited districts is 11%, compared to 9% in areas where he stayed away; this difference alone generates a 2.6% swing in predicted vote share. While the average margin of victory between the SMD winner and first runner-up in 2005 was 12.4%, approximately 15% of districts had margins smaller than 2.6%, suggesting important opportunities for Koizumi to leverage his popularity through leader visits.

One caveat to note here is that it is difficult to assess the "true" effects of Koizumi's visits, because *Koizumi Popularity* – the key variable driving the results above – is a combination of the support ratings for Koizumi and the LDP, which are not theoretically independent values.

Some diehard LDP partisans reflexively support Koizumi because he is the leader of their party, while a different subset of Koizumi fans support the LDP only because of their affection for the politician. If there are more intrinsic Koizumi supporters than intrinsic LDP supporters "in reality", then my measure underestimates the real size of Koizumi's coattails. If the opposite holds true and Koizumi supporters are LDP supporters first, then the *Koizumi Popularity* variable overestimates the coattail effects. I am inclined to believe the first interpretation – affection for Koizumi draws people to the LDP – over the second, because Koizumi's support rating is 7-11% higher than the LDP's support in almost every district. As such, the statistical findings most likely *under*estimate the true magnitude of Koizumi's coattails, and how they paved the way for the LDP's stunning electoral victory in 2005.

VI.   CONCLUSION

Observers of European elections have been noting the increasing "presidentialization" of parliamentary politics for close to two decades. While the media focus on party leaders is unsurprising in presidential systems, where the chief executive (and putative party leader) competes in a separate election from the legislature, parliamentary elections have traditionally been the preserve of the party collective. However, a host of high profile party leaders have emerged over the last twenty years – Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair in the UK being notable examples. This suggests that charisma may/should be as important a criterion in picking party leaders as the traditional metrics of policy expertise, seniority, and ability to forge internal consensus.

Japanese elections have historically been about more than the party, since individual candidate characteristics and the personal vote have been at least as valuable as partisan

affiliation (Carey and Shugart 1995; Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1993). If anything, the combination of a parliamentary system and personalistic politics should predispose Japanese elections against measurable coattail effects of the party leader. This paper's analysis challenges this view, as Prime Minister Koizumi produced an electoral windfall for his party's candidates by virtue of his overall popularity and the targeted, associational effects from his campaign visits.

What I do not address here, but deserves a separate paper by future researchers, is the question: "how unique is the size of Koizumi's coattails?" There have been other popular prime ministers in the past, such as Nakasone in the 1980s and Hashimoto in the mid-1990s, whose campaign visits may have generated an equal or larger electoral benefit. Indeed, the effect of leader visits may have been higher when TV news was less dominant, simply because the novelty of seeing and hearing a party boss was greater. Media coverage of elections is only likely to intensify over time, and understanding the increasing role of party leaders will help us better judge the determinants of future election outcomes in Japan.

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Table 1: Party Leader Visits
August 30th - September 10th, 2005

Leader (Party) =>	Koizumi (LDP)	Okada (DPJ)	Shii (JCP)	Fukushima (SDP)	Kanzaki (Komeito)
Total SMD Candidates	290	289	275	38	9
# Districts Visited	72	75			
# Visited Twice	1	12			
# Visited in Last 3 Days	24	26			
Head-to-Head Districts Visited*	47	53			
Incumbents Visited	28	63			
Prefectures Visited	18	16	17	20	8
Total Kilometers Traveled**	10800	9100	8100	16500	12100

* Head-to-head: LDP vs. DPJ only or LDP vs. DPJ vs. JCP only; N = 203
** From Asahi Shimbun, 09/11/2005

Table 2: The Location of Party Leader Visits

Model: Logistic regression with robust standard errors (in parentheses)
DV: Visit by LDP and DPJ party leader prior to 2005 election

|	Entire Campaign Period		Last 3 Days	
	1A: Koizumi	**1B: Okada**	**2A: Koizumi**	**2B: Okada**
Constant	12.75**	1.99	7.40	-18.60***
	(4.92)	(5.21)	(6.55)	(5.22)
Assassin	1.05*	-0.23	0.04	-0.60
	(0.50)	(0.60)	(0.92)	(1.23)
Incumbent	-1.04**	1.55**	-1.95***	
	(0.36)	(0.53)	(0.49)	
New	0.05	1.05	-1.58*	
	(0.45)	(0.68)	(0.65)	
2003 Margin	-5.39**	-7.20***	-5.76	-10.35**
	(1.87)	(1.79)	(3.46)	(3.87)
Koizumi Popularity	0.21***		0.23***	
	(0.06)		(0.07)	
Okada Popularity		-0.30		-0.56***
		(0.17)		(0.17)
No Party Preference	-0.34**	-0.02	-0.24	0.51***
	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
N	296	296	296	166
Pseudo-R^2	0.17	0.19	0.19	0.11

* = p<0.05; ** = p<0.01; *** = p<0.001

Table 3: The Effects of Party Leader Visits

Model: OLS with robust standard errors (in parentheses)
DV: Candidate vote share

	Model 1 LDP	Model 2 DPJ
Constant	0.551*** (0.029)	0.517*** (0.035)
SMD Incumbent	0.101*** (0.009)	0.110*** (0.010)
PR Zombie	0.015 (0.013)	0.045*** (0.011)
New	-0.054*** (0.010)	-0.015 (0.013)
Koizumi Popularity	0.003* (0.002)	
Koizumi Visit	-0.100** (0.033)	
*Koizumi Visit*Popularity*	0.009*** (0.003)	
Okada Popularity		0.002 (0.003)
Okada Visit		0.038 (0.076)
*Okada Visit*Popularity*		-0.007 (0.009)
Total Candidates	-0.041*** (0.007)	-0.062*** (0.008)
N	286	288
R^2	0.584	0.509

* = p<0.05; ** = p<0.01; *** = p<0.001

Figure 1: Koizumi Coattails and LDP Vote Share
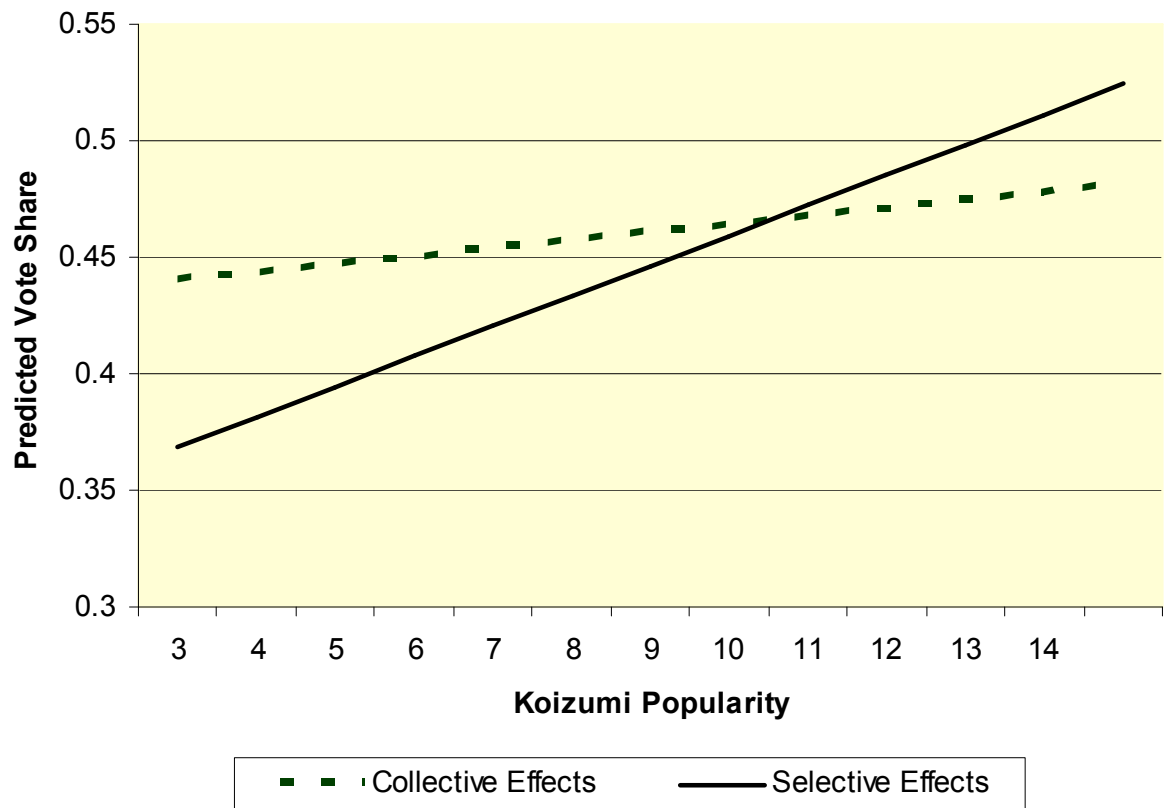
Appendix: Descriptive Statistics for Tables 2 & 3			
Continuous Variables	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Min, Max**
Koizumi Popularity	9.812	2.849	3, 15
Okada Popularity	8.467	1.411	4, 12
No Party Preference	43.527	1.729	40, 48
2003 Margin	0.158	0.147	0.002, 0.791
Vote share (2005)	0.310	0.190	0.022, 0.736
Candidate / district	3.329	0.627	2, 6
Dichotomous Variables	**Total**	**LDP + Komei**	**DPJ**
SMD Incumbent	286	144	104
PR Zombie	114	39	62
New	264	63	55
Assassin Districts	33		