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978-1-107-12049-5 - Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan:

From Pork to Foreign Policy

Amy Catalinac

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Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan

Japan is the third-largest economy in the world and a key ally of the United States. Yet the determinants of Japanese security policy are not well understood. The question of why Japan never sought the independent military capabilities that would be commensurate with its economic power has puzzled scholars of international relations for decades. By applying new tools for the quantitative analysis of text to a new collection of 7,497 Japanese-language election manifestos used in elections between 1986 and 2009, this book argues that the electoral strategies politicians in the ruling party were forced to adopt under Japan's old electoral system made it extraordinarily difficult for them to focus on security issues and to change security policy. It was only when their electoral strategies shifted after electoral reform in 1994 that these same politicians became able to pay attention and change security policy.

Amy Catalinac is a visiting assistant professor of politics at New York University. She earned a Ph.D. in government at Harvard University in 2011. She was also a postdoctoral fellow in the Program on U.S.-Japan Relations at Harvard (2011–12); an assistant professor at Australian National University (2012–14); and a visiting assistant professor at Harvard (2014–15). She has undertaken almost a decade of training in the Japanese language and has spent five years in Japan, where she observed the election campaigns of politicians all over Japan, interned for the Liberal Democratic Party, and conducted numerous interviews with political actors at all levels of the Japanese government. Her earlier work was published in *The Journal of Politics*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Politics and Policy*, *Japan Forum*, and *Political Science*.

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Amy Catalinac, *Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan*

“Can electoral incentives be powerful enough to change politicians’ behavior in countries like Japan where clientelism was deeply ingrained for decades? In this path-breaking book, Catalinac demonstrates with an original data set built from thousands of candidate election manifestoes that members of Japan’s longstanding dominant party, the Liberal Democratic Party, shifted their campaign rhetoric from pork barrel to policy after the change in electoral rules in 1994. She goes on to provide unmistakable evidence for the centrality of electoral incentives in Japan’s foreign policy making. This will be a staple reading not only for students of Japanese politics, but also for anyone interested in comparative politics, institutional design, and the politics of national security.”

– Frances Rosenbluth, Yale University

“If, as Tip O’Neill put it, ‘All politics is local,’ Japan’s used to be the most local of them all, and especially so when it came to national security issues. We Japan experts speculated that in the 1990s this had begun to change; but until Amy Catalinac’s brilliant and innovative study we didn’t really know the exact extent, and more importantly, exactly why. Thanks to her creative method of analyzing campaign manifestoes and her extensive interviews with politicians, now we do, and her nuanced but well-supported answer may be surprising to some. This important book has significant ramifications not only for the fields of Japanese politics and comparative politics, but for security studies as well.”

– Ellis S. Krauss, School of Global Policy and Strategy,
University of California, San Diego

“In this important new book, Catalinac develops a theory about how domestic political institutions shape debate about national security issues. Using the Japanese case, she shows that electoral reforms were the catalyst for rising attention to national security topics among conservative politicians. Through textual analysis of campaign materials, the book brings an impressive range of evidence to bear in support of the theory. The book will demand attention from scholars of Japanese politics and anyone with an interest in how institutional change can shift the national political agenda.”

– Christina Davis, Princeton University

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New York University



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