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Electoral Reform and National Security in Japan: From Pork to Foreign Policy. Amy Catalinac. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016. xvii, 252 pages.

Writing in the latter years of the Abe administration, it is difficult to remember a time when national security issues were not at the forefront of the attention of policymakers, researchers and journalists with an interest in Japan as well as the Japanese general public. Whether it be the government's decision to exercise its right to collective self-defense, or concrete responses to perceived regional and global threats, issues of national security have largely defined Japanese political discourse and debates surrounding its role in the world over recent years. No longer do we talk so readily about Japan as a "reactive state" or a low-profile foreign policy based upon the Yoshida Doctrine; instead we focus on an emerging Abe Doctrine and a "proactive contribution to peace". Yet, it is worth revisiting the process by which this transformation in both Japan's concrete international behavior, and the discourse surrounding it, came about. Catalinac's book, based on her doctoral research at Harvard University but the focus of her curiosity from before this time, takes up the challenge of accounting for this significant development.

Most explanations tend to account for this change in political discourse by focusing on structural or external factors, such as the end of the Cold War, or the rise of China and the threat of North Korea. Instead, Catalinac skillfully brings together two unlikely bedfellows to make her argument: the sometimes dry and technical world of electoral systems, and the higher stakes, more existential field of national security. Catalinac expounds her argument in much more nuanced

detail than can be captured here but her argument runs (very roughly) as follows. For most of the postwar period, Japanese elections were conducted on the basis of voters casting a single non-transferable vote in multi-member districts. This led the main political parties to field multiple candidates to maximize their success at the polls, resulting in intra-party competition and candidates having to distinguish themselves on the basis of what they could do for the locals. In other words, could they convince the electorate of their ability to bring home the pork? In contrast, for a politician to express an interest in foreign or security policies was regarded as electoral suicide. This state of affairs is nicely captured in the book by a vignette originally related by LDP senior politician Katō Kōichi to US academic and journalist Steven Vogel in a 1983 interview. Katō quotes being asked by a member of his electorate: "Its [*sic*] fine that you're doing all this foreign policy stuff. But we need an airport in this area. Are you really doing something about this?" (p. 38).

However, in 1994, the coalition of non-LDP parties managed to achieve one thing during their brief time in power – electoral reform. As result of this, multi-member districts were abolished and replaced with a mixed-member majoritarian system that comprised single-member constituencies and proportional representation in regional districts. Thereafter, and in direct response to this electoral reform, Japanese politicians began to refocus their electoral strategies "from pork for the district" (p. 115) to "policies for the nation" (p. 125). For Catalinac, 1997 was the tipping point at which this change became embedded. In making this argument and outlining her hypotheses, she engages patiently with and deflects persuasively every alternative explanation

and counter argument in turn. Over the course of eight chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion, and by focusing on a series of elections with a particular focus on candidates' election manifestos, Catalinac traces how politicians' interests and behavior changed as a result of the electoral reform and ultimately demonstrates how "…Japan has become normal…. a country in which politicians are able to pay attention to national security, debate the merits of different security policies, and offer frank assessments of the seriousness of the external security threats facing Japan" (p. 220).

To this end, the extent and detail of the fieldwork is hugely impressive. Almost 7,500 Japanese-language candidates' manifestos have been analyzed, in addition to over 100 interviews with policymakers and opinion leaders. Catalinac also completed an internship in the LDP's quarters in Tokyo. The richness of the fieldwork and treatment of the primary and secondary literatures results in both a compelling argument and some wonderful anecdotes. For example, I will be recycling the story of one Japanese politician's naivety in relation to crisis management at the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and subsequent Persian Gulf War. His proposal was to ban Japanese newlyweds from honeymooning on Hawaii as US soldiers might be returning there from the conflict in body bags and this could lead to embarrassing questions being asked of Japan by its most important ally (p. 4).

The accessibility of the writing style is equally impressive. Catalinac manages to write confidently in the forensic style of a confident social scientist but is also able to add the panache more associated with Arts and Humanities scholarship.

This ability to seamlessly shift between different styles and also keep numerous balls in the air simultaneously also applies not only to the writing style but also the skills sets in evidence as demonstrated in the application of methodologies, the use of sources and the argumentation.

As regards an audience for this book, I would expect a wide readership to appreciate the argument presented here both in terms of level – from upper-end undergraduates to postgraduates, researchers and practitioners – and disciplines/sub-fields – from political science, quantitative methodology and comparative politics to international relations and security studies.

Catalinac's argument raises a number of questions and suggests a range of future research directions. For example, it is striking how quickly this change in behavior emerged and embedded itself from the 1994 reform to the watershed of 1997, but why did this happen so rapidly? In addition, Chapter 7 looks at the impact of this process on actual security policy in Japan and takes up North Korea and the abduction issue as a case study. The current Abe administration provides a plethora of other case studies through which this question could be probed even further. The selection of candidates' election manifestos is persuasively justified and highly original but could a focus on election posters provide an illuminating alternative? Building on the work of Jonathan Lewis, Brian Masshardt and Axel Klein, and evident to anybody spending time in Japan during election season, it is clear that these are ubiquitous and meet a lot of the criteria by which Catalinac has justified her focus on candidates' manifestos. If a visual methodology could be embraced then posters might prove to be an

intriguing means by which to ask similar questions. Finally, as we live in world where politics is increasingly conducted and perverted by social media, Twitter would also provide an edifying focus, especially considering its popularity in Japan and the ability to say more in Japanese than English in 240 characters.

Any criticisms that could be leveled at this book are minor in nature. At times it reads and feels a bit like a PhD; for example, it refers to itself as a manuscript at one point, suggesting that the process of "de-thesis-ization" could have been extended. In addition, a few typos – mostly macrons – have survived the proofreading. However, it would be churlish to focus on these minor distractions. What we are presented with here is a rising star in the field setting a very high benchmark of academic rigor and for this she should be applauded.

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