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# Elections in Japan

IARU Global  
Summer Program  
July 19, 2013

Sadafumi Kawato

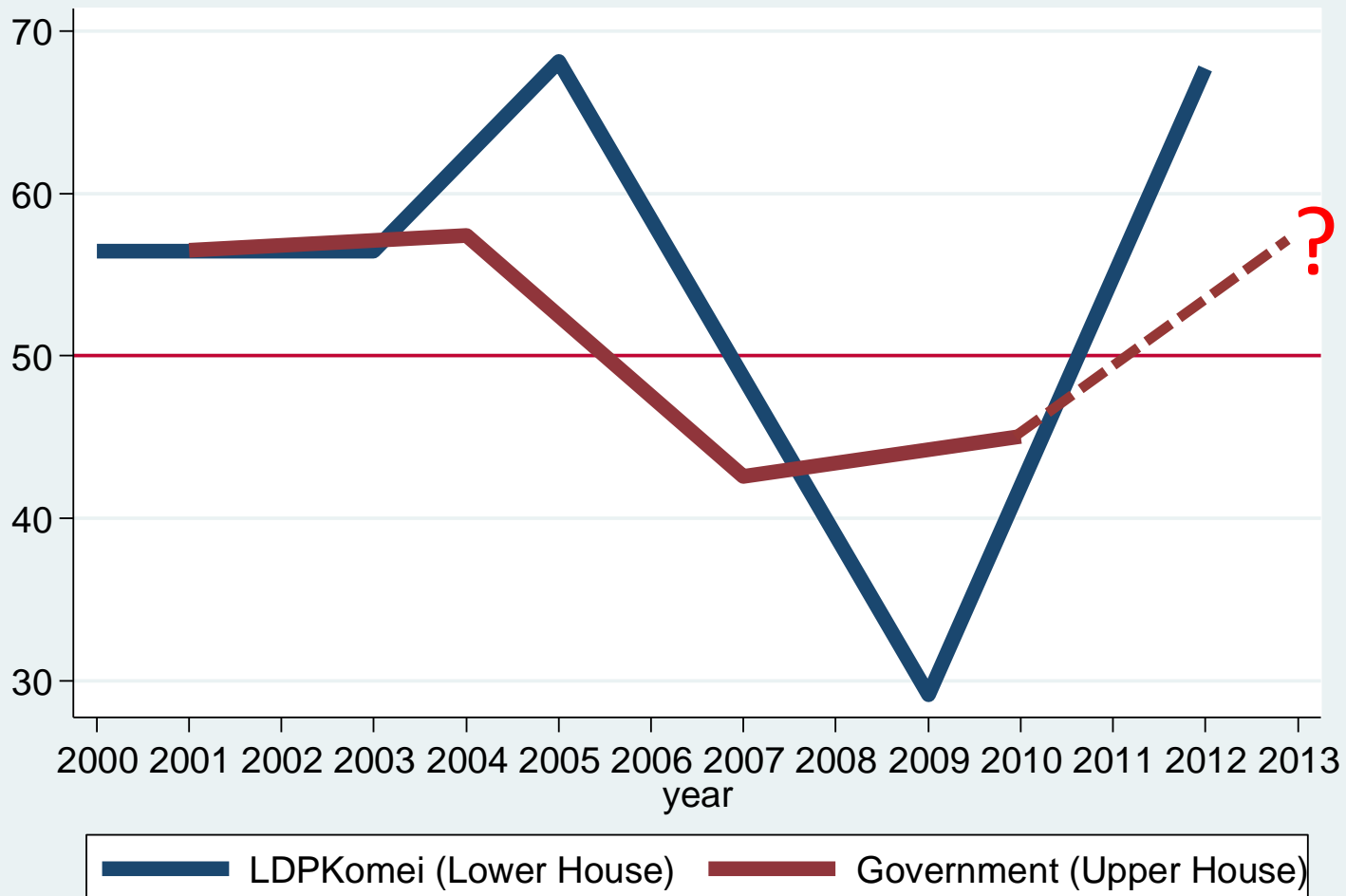
Professor of Political Science

Graduate School of Law and Politics



- General elections for the House of Representatives (the Lower House): 2000, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2012
- Elections for the House of Councillors (the Upper House): 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013
- LDP & Komei Government: -2009 & 2012-present  
DPJ Government: 2009-2012
- Divided Diet (Legislature): 2007-2009, 2010-present

## Seat shares in Lower House & Upper House



-2009 : LDP & Komei Government

2009-2012 : DPJ Government

2012- : LDP & Komei Government



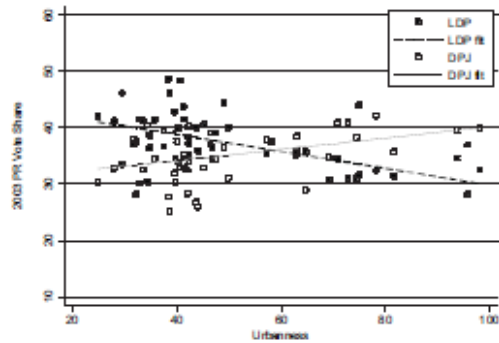
- Reed, Steven R., Ethan Scheiner, and Michael F. Thies. 2012. “The End of LDP Dominance and the Rise of Party-Oriented Politics in Japan.” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 38(2), 353-376.
- Nyblade, Benjamin. 2011. “The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Japanese Prime Minister: An Unusually Precarious Perch.” *Shakai Kagaku Kenkyu* 62(1), 195-209.

# Reed, Scheiner, & Thies (2012)

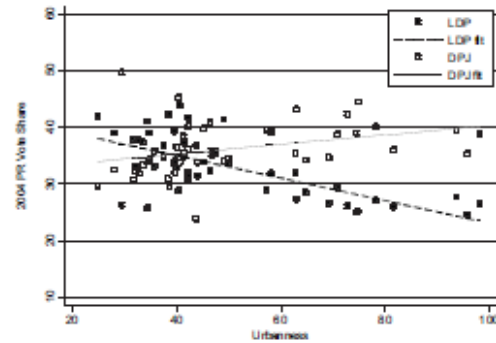
- Irreversible change in the nature of electoral politics: shifts in the foundations of party support and the importance of national swings
  1. LDP' dominance: clientelism, personalism, and rural capture
  2. Electoral system change and LDP's policy change: reform
  3. DPJ's inroads into the countryside
  4. Electoral support flattens in 2005: nationalized competition



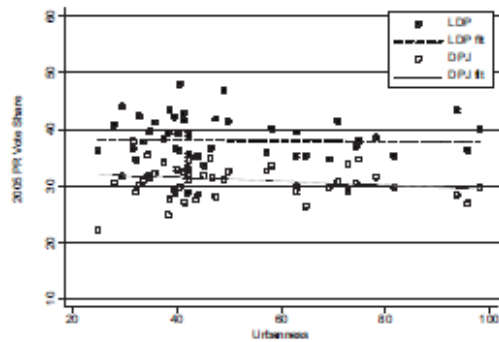
2003–4 Party Support: LDP, rural; DPJ, Urban  
(a) 2003 Lower House



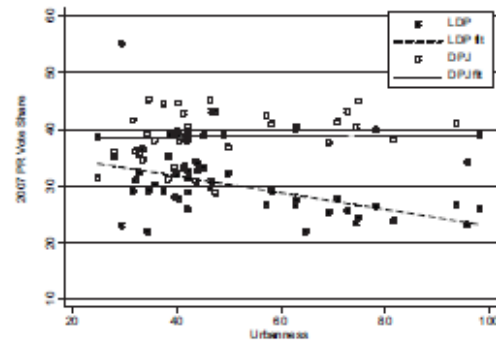
(b) 2004 Upper House



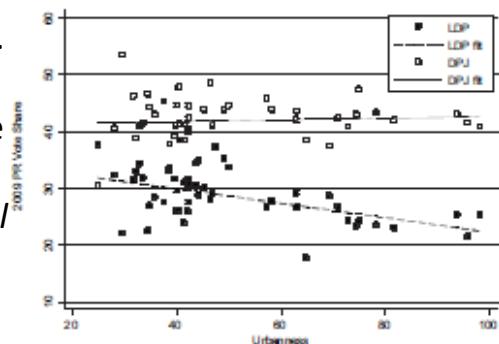
After 2004, DPJ no longer principally an urban party  
(c) 2005 Lower House



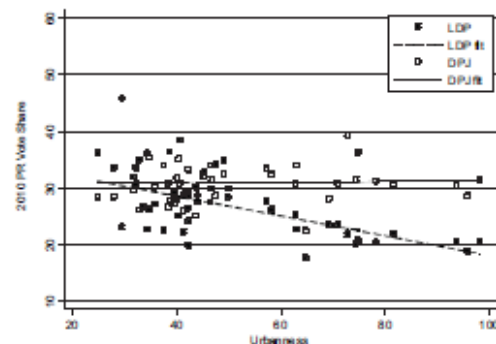
(d) 2007 Upper House



2009–10 Party Support: LDP, still mostly rural, DPJ, everywhere  
(e) 2009 Lower House



(f) 2010 Upper House



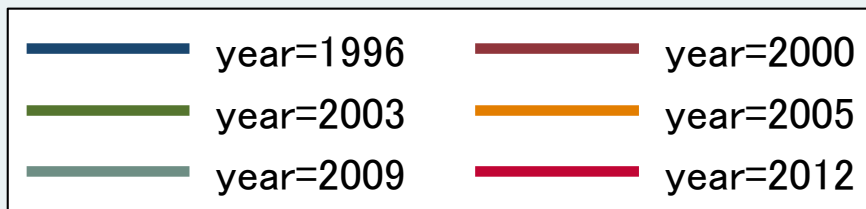
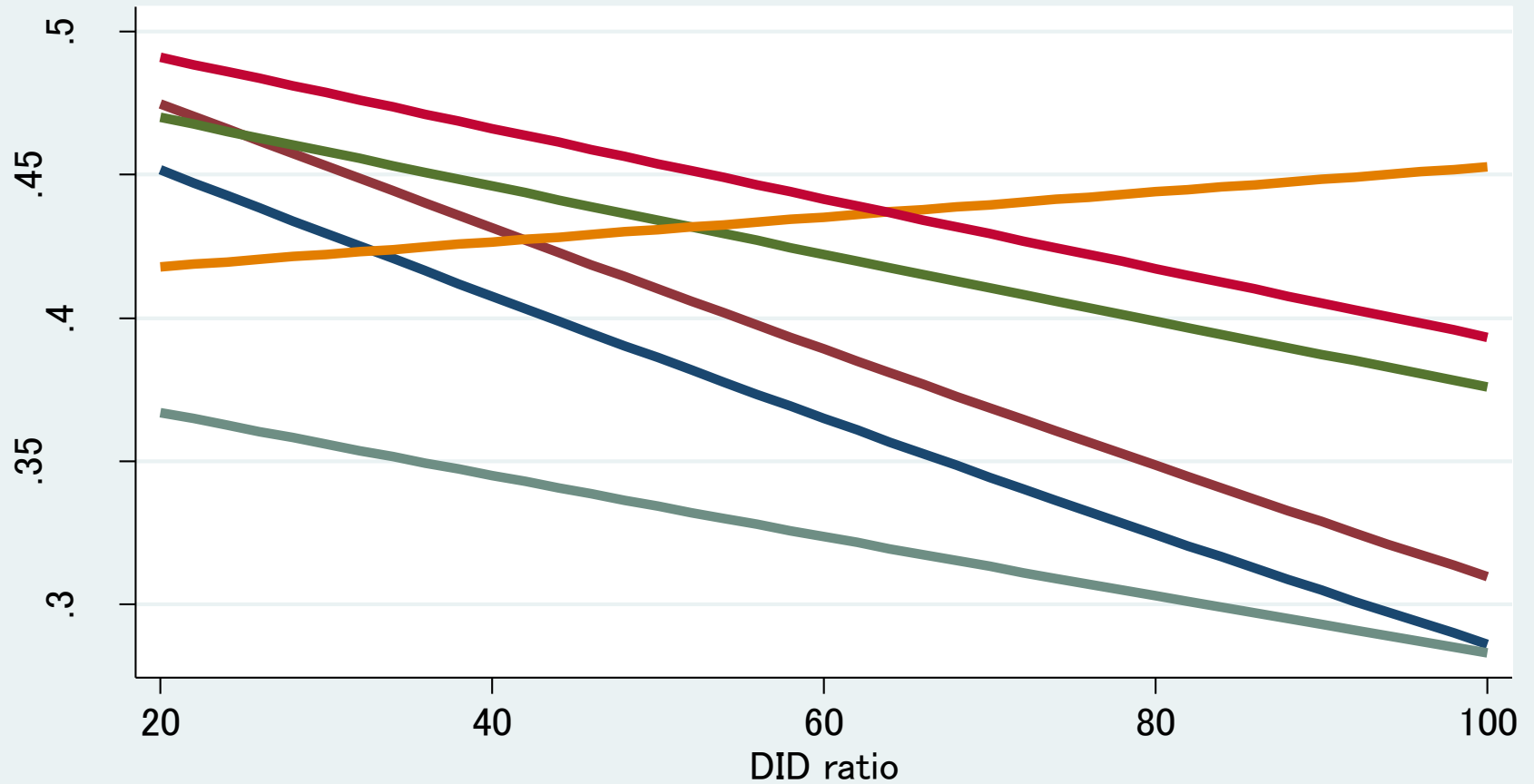
\*  
Steven R. Reed, Ethan Scheiner, and Michael F. Thies (2012) The End of LDP Dominance and the Rise of Party-Oriented Politics in Japan, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 38(2): 353-376, p.369  
Figure 2.

5. Parties, not individuals, matter in elections in 2005 & 2009. Elections have become genuine contest and alternation in power a reality.
6. “One thing we should not expect is a return to single-party dominance, either by the LDP or the DPJ.” “There are good reasons to believe the changes we identify will persist.”(p.375)



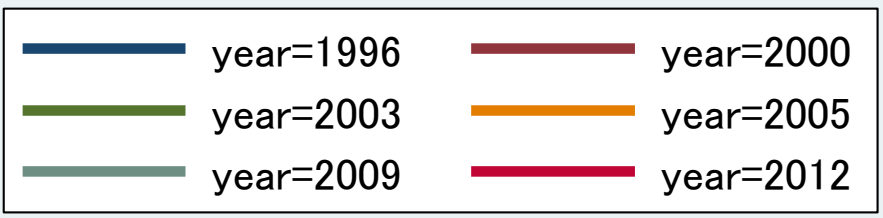
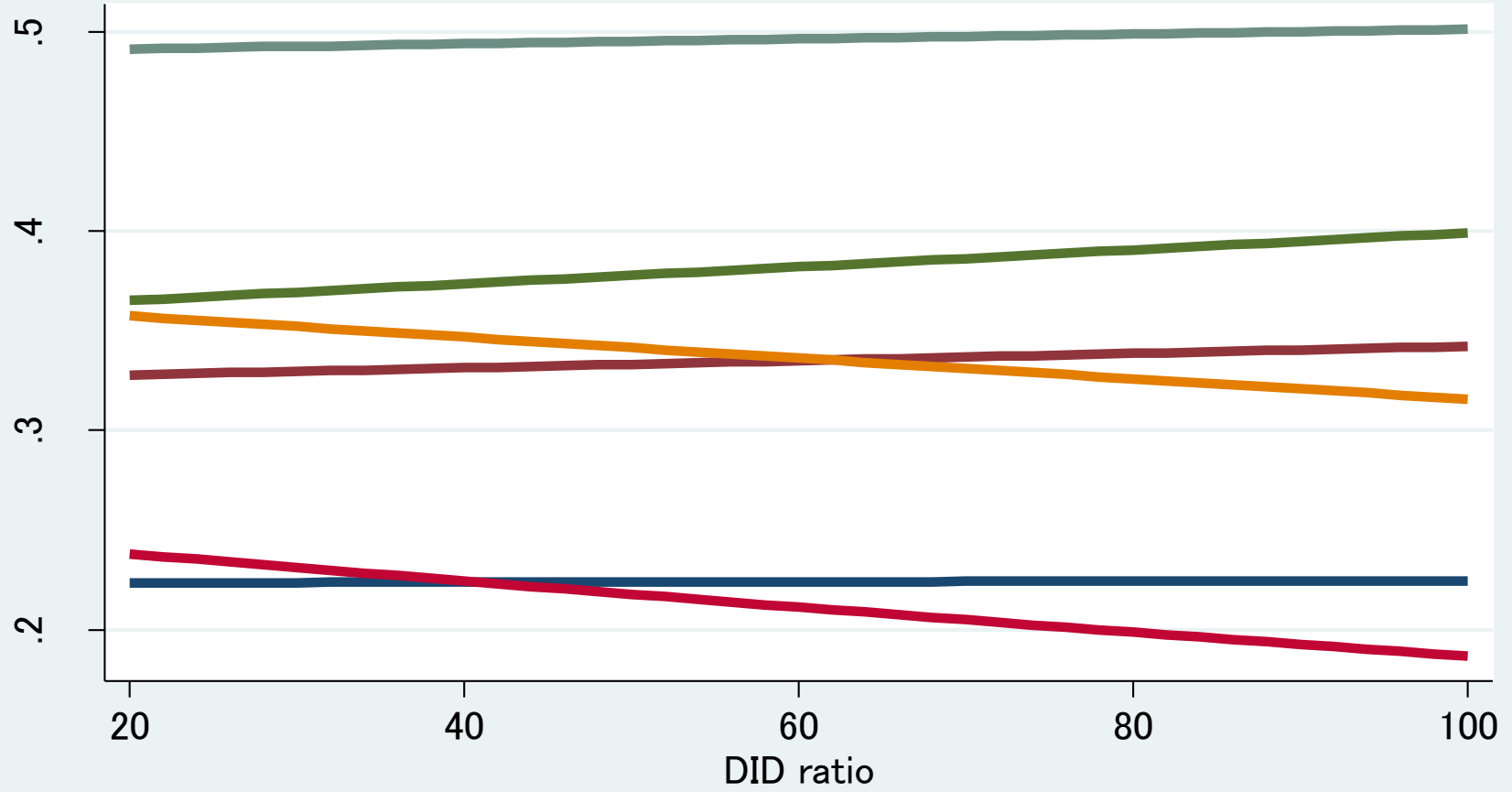
- Kawato, Sadafumi. 2013. “Partisan Competition under the Dual SMD-PR System.” *Quarterly Jurist* No.5, 75-85.

## Predicted Vote Share for LDP Candidates by DID ratio

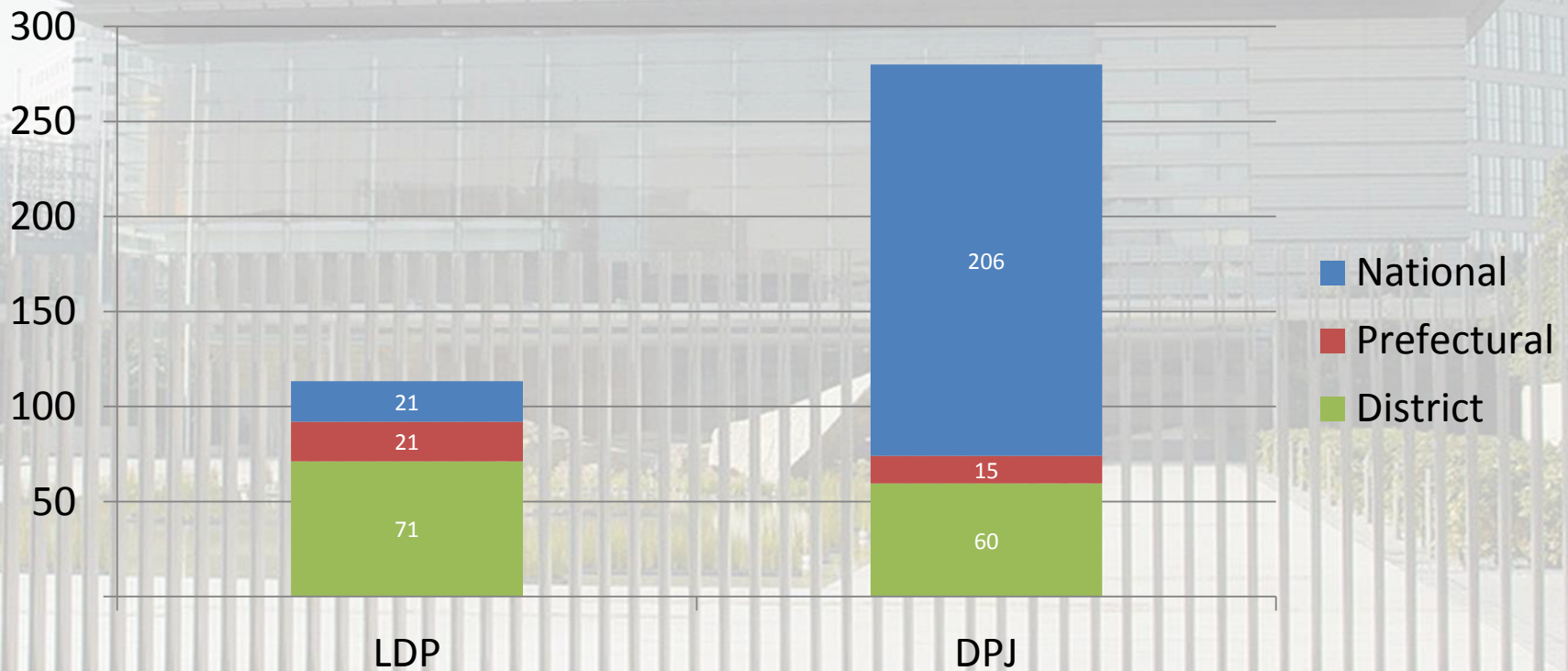




## Predicted Vote Share for DPJ Candidates by DID ratio



## Variance Components Analysis of Swings for LDP and DPJ 2000-2012





# Koizumi, Junichiro

## 2001.4.26-2006.9.26



\*

首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/koizumiphoto/2006/09/25burasagari.html>

# Abe, Shinzo

## 2006.9.26-2007.9.26



\*

首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/abepphoto/2007/09/24kaiken.html>



# Fukuda, Yasuo

## 2007.9.26-2008.9.24



首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/hukudaspeech/2008/09/01kaiken.html>

# Aso, Taro

## 2008.9.24-2009.9.16



\*

首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/asophoto/2009/09/16jisyoku.html>



# Hatoyama, Yukio

## 2009.9.16-2010.6.8



\*

首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/hatoyama/actions/201005/28kaiken.html>



# Kan, Naoto

## 2010.6.8-2011.9.2



\*  
首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/kan/actions/201108/26KAIKEN.html>

# Noda, Yoshihiko

## 2011.9.2-2012.12.26



首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照) \*  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/noda/actions/201210/01cabinet.html>



# Abe, Shinzo

## 2012.12.26 - present




首相官邸ウェブサイトより(2014/10/03参照)  
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/>

\*

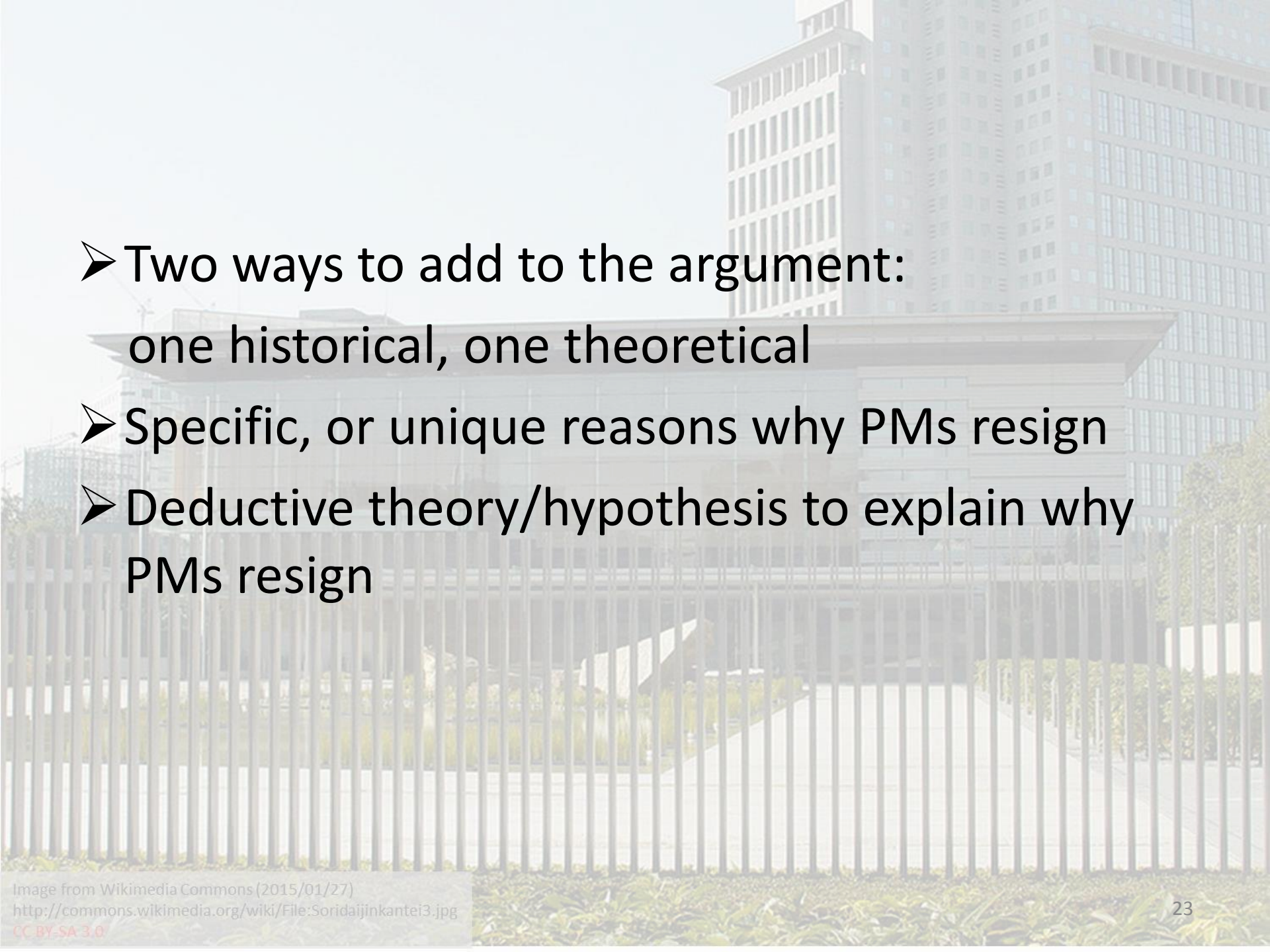


# Nyblade (2011)

1. Frequent turnover of PMs in Japan in recent years is nearly unprecedented.
2. Change in mass media, electoral reform, administrative reform  Increased expectations and hyper-accountability of PM to MPs and indirectly to voters. MPs have strong incentives to replace unpopular PM with a fresh face.
3. Consequences: shorter time horizons and a focus on maintaining popular support, which at times may conflict with leaders' desires to enact good policy.

1. Finding a regularity from data observation
2. Comparative perspective: predominantly a pure matter of internal party politics
3. Explanation/hypothesis: a series of reform caused hyper-accountability
4. Implications
  - Explanation of frequent turnover
  - Descriptive, not analytical
  - Generalized observation
  - Behavioral, not institutional



- 
- Two ways to add to the argument:
    - one historical, one theoretical
  - Specific, or unique reasons why PMs resign
  - Deductive theory/hypothesis to explain why PMs resign



# Why the PMs step down

- Each PM has unique reasons to step down
- Abe: Defeat in 2007 House of Councillors election, Ulcerative colitis
- Fukuda: Divided Diet
- Aso: Defeat in 2009 General Election
- Hatoyama: Futenma relocation problem and anticipated defeat in 2010 House of Councillors election
- Kan: Leadership problem, anticipated passage of no-confidence vote

➤ Noda: General election of 2012

3 party agreement of tax & social security reform package → Many DPJ MPs left the party.

"Noda will just have to be happy going down in history as the prime minister who raised the consumption tax." (My comment in *Japan Times*, Sep. 8, 2012)



# Institutional reasons why PMs should resign

1. The general election: defeat of majority party
2. Upper House election: divided Diet and difficulty in legislation ahead
3. Passage of no-confidence motion in the Lower House
4. Party leadership election
5. PM decides to leave office