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首相と2大政党への好感度におよぼすNHKニュース視聴と対人環境の影響
—小泉内閣期のパネルデータの分析— (2014)
Effects of the NHK TV News and Social Networks on the Reputation
of Prime Minister Koizumi and Two Main Parties (2014)

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要旨 小泉内閣期における対人環境とテレビニュースが、有権者の小泉首相・自民党・民主党に対するFeeling Thermometer Scale（感情温度）へおよぼす影響を論じ、在来政党の自民党と新興政党の民主党から成る2大政党制の成立において対人環境とNHKのテレビニュースが果たした役割、および対人環境とテレビニュースの影響過程を解明する。この際、殊に対人接触とニュース接触の相互作用に着目する。

キーワード 2大政党制, ニュース視聴, 対人環境

1. Data

The data set used in this research was the “Japan Election Study III, 2001-2005 (JESIII)”². Between 2001 and 2005, this study was carried out for the House of Representatives’ election of September, 2003, and September, 2005, and the House of Councilors’ elections of July, 2001, and July, 2004. The study was implemented as a panel survey. For the national elections, it was carried out before and after the election. For this research the data sets used were those obtained in the panel surveys carried out before each of the national elections and in the panel survey carried out after the election of 2005³. The size of the data set obtained from the pre-election surveys between 2001 and 2005 and the post-election survey of 2005 was 2061 (68.7), 2162 (57.5), 2115 (56.6), 1504 (70.5), 1498 (86.3), with the values in parenthesis representing the collection rate of responses⁴.

2. Assumptions and hypotheses

In this paper, cross-sectional analyses and panel analyses were carried out. In order to compensate for the sample attrition in JES III for the four national elections that are dealt with in this paper, new survey respondents were added for the surveys conducted during the elections of 2003 and 2004. In order to supplement the findings of the panel analyses, the panel data sets collected during each of the national elections, including the supplemental data, were considered to be cross-sectional data and cross-sectional analyses were carried out.

The objective of this paper is to clarify the effects of Social Networks and the mass media on voters’ Feeling Thermometer Scale (Reputation Scale) for political parties and politicians, as these feelings affect their political perceptions and behaviors. First, the effects of Social Networks will be considered. Flanagan et al had argued that the harmonizing of political behavior tends to occur easily within Social Networks within Japan and they investigated whether this was the case during the Koizumi administration (Flanagan & Richardson, 1977; Flanagan, 1991a). In order to take into account the party affiliation of Social Networks, the samples for the cross-sectional data analyses were divided into whether the survey respondents perceived their conversation partner to be affiliated with the LDP or the DPJ. However, limiting the panel data set to those survey respondents who perceived their conversation partner to be constantly affiliated with either the LDP or the DPJ throughout the survey period would not have resulted in a sample size large enough to be analyzable. Therefore, the sample was not divided for the panel analysis as it was for the cross-sectional analysis.

In this paper, the effects of Social Networks were obtained through two regressors. The first was the frequency with which the survey respondent engaged in conversations with a partner about politics. The second was the extent of the knowledge about politics that the survey respondent perceived their

conversation partner to have. The Columbia School considers that on entering an election period and the conversation more frequently turning to politics, voters will have more opportunities to be made re-aware of the pre-eminent party affiliation of the people around them and therefore, they themselves are more likely to acquire this party affiliation (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Also, according to Mutz, voters tend to more easily support popular candidates as they attempt to understand why these candidates are supported by others and if they come to actually understand these reasons, they tendency to more easily support these candidates (Mutz, 1998). The idea that the party affiliations found in Social Networks can be perceived through conversations about politics is reasonable and so the hypothesis put forward is that the frequency of conversations about politics increases the homogeneity of party affiliations in Social Networks. That is to say, in this hypothesis, the greater the frequency of conversations about politics, the greater the increase in the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for the party that their conversation partner plans to vote for and in addition, if the party that their conversation partner plans to view for is the LDP, the greater the increase in the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi. Conversely, based on the fact that the period of the Koizumi administration coincided with the formation period for the two-party system, the hypothesis put forward is that the higher the frequency of conversations about politics, the more the decline in the survey respondent's Feeling Thermometer Scale for the party other than the party that their conversation partner plans to vote for, when there is a choice between two major parties, and also, if the party that their conversation partner plans to vote for is the DPJ, the greater the decline in the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi. However, it is possible to consider a counter hypothesis to this hypothesis. Based on an assumption that the media is unbiased, if the people around the respondents all support the same party, then it becomes difficult for them to obtain information from their Social Networks that would encourage them to support the party other than the one supported by these people. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that what affects voters is not the frequency with which they have conversations with the people around them, but rather the environment itself that encompasses the people around them with a specific party affiliation. If this hypothesis is correct, it can be expected that the conversation frequency variable in the cross-sectional analyses in this paper will not have any effect on the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale. Based on the data collected during the 1995 and 1996 national elections in Japan, Ikeda et al. analyzed the effects of the conversation partner's party affiliation in conversations about politics, and also the conversation frequency, on the party identification and voting behavior of the survey respondents. They concluded that while the conversation partner's party affiliation did have a significant effect, conversation frequency did not and therefore, the members of Social Networks did not induce support for specific parties among the other people within the Social Network, rather that the survey respondents were affected by the environment that encompassed the people with the same party affiliation within the Social Network (Ikeda, Liu, Aida, & Wilson, 2005).

Next, research by Huckfeldt, who used data from 1996, found that survey respondents willingly engaged in conversations about politics with conversation partners who the respondents themselves perceived to be knowledgeable about politics (Huckfeldt, 2001). Based on the results of the same research but using data from the surveys from the 1990s, this effect was confirmed for both West Germany and Japan (Huckfeldt, Ikeda, & Pappi, 2008). All of these researchers speculated that when the topic of a conversation is politics, the more that the survey respondents perceive their conversation partner to be knowledgeable about politics, the more persuasive becomes what the conversation partner had to say: therefore, the hypothesis put forward is that the more that conversation partner is knowledge about politics, the more this strengthens the homogeneity of party affiliation within Social Networks. In other words, based on this hypothesis, the more that the conversation partner is knowledge about politics, the greater the increase in the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for the party that the conversation partner plans to vote for, and also, if the party the conversation partner plans to vote for is the LDP, the greater the increase in the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi. Conversely, based on the fact that the period of the Koizumi administration coincided with the formation period for the two-party system, the hypothesis put forward is that the more knowledgeable about politics the survey respondent perceives their conversation partner to be, the greater the decline in the survey respondent's Feeling Thermometer Scale for the party other than the party that their conversation partner plans to vote, when there is a choice between two major parties, and also, if the party that their conversation partner plans to vote for is the DPJ, the greater the decline in the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi.

Next, the influence of the mass media, including those arising from interactions with Social Networks, will be discussed. In this paper, the effects of coming into contact with the mass media were ascertained from whether or not the respondent watched the NHK news. Some of the features of the mass media in Japan are that its reporting is neutral, that there are legal restrictions on the use of the mass media by political parties and candidates, and that the electoral districts are comparatively narrow and so it is difficult for the mass media to report on each electoral district. For these reasons, Miyake and Flanagan argued that the mass media has little effect on voter behavior in Japan (Miyake, 1991; Flanagan, 1991b). Also, Schmitt-Beck emphasized that a stable political party system generates Social Networks with shared party identification among the voters within them and consequently, these voters are not affected by the mass media outlets that they perceive to have a different party affiliation than their Social Networks (Schmitt-Beck, 2003). Following on from this argument, from the 2003 election, which was when the idea first started to appear that a two-party system had developed, thanks to the DPJ's increased number of seats following

its absorption of the Liberal Party, it is thought that the development described by Schmitt-Beck, of moving toward “Social Networks with shared party identification,” also began. Even in the cross-sectional data set actually used in this paper, for the elections of 2004 and 2005 a sample size large enough for analysis could be obtained for survey respondents frequently engaging in conversations about politics during a national election in conversations with at least two people and for when both the parties plan to vote for either the LDP the DPJ; therefore, it was possible to attempt to verify the hypothesis of Schmitt-Beck.

The data used in this paper does not include questions about the survey respondents’ perceptions of the mass media’s party affiliations. As a result, the following hypothesis was put forward; “based on the absence of bias in the NHK news, watching the NHK news doesn’t have any effect on respondents’ Feeling Thermometer Scale. Even supposing that it did have an effect, it would be limited to increasing the Feeling Thermometer Scale for the political party supported by the Social Networks to which the survey respondent belonged or the leader of that party, or alternatively, to decreasing the Feeling Thermometer Scale for the political party not supported by the Social Networks to which the survey respondent belonged or the leader of that party.” A cross-sectional analysis was established for this statement and the theory of Schmitt-Beck was tested⁵. On the other hand, a sample size large enough to be analyzed was not obtained for the data set of survey respondents who had conversations about politics in conversations of two people and who always voted for the LDP in four elections, nor was it obtained for survey respondents who had conversations about politics in conversations with two people and who always voted for the DPJ in four elections; therefore, no hypotheses were established for these data sets for testing by panel analysis. However, for both the cross-sectional analyses and panel analysis, in this paper it was assumed that the NHK news complies with the Public Office Election Law and the Broadcasting Law and is unbiased in its reporting. That is to say, while it is possible to suppose that the NHK news will provide its viewers with information that might be advantageous to either one of the political parties, there are no grounds for assuming that the NHK news has any kind of party affiliation that influences its reporting.

However, it is possible to consider a counter theory to the theory put forward in the preceding paragraph. Flanagan noted that the mass media has significant influence in situations where voters place greater importance on image than issues or ideology, (Flanagan, 1991b). Also, even if the electoral districts were not comparatively small, based on the popularity of Prime Minister Koizumi, it is a possible that the mass media might generate a coattails effect for support for the LDP. In actuality, McElwain discovered a coattails effect had been generated in the 2005 election when votes for the LDP increased in those electoral districts visited by Prime Minister Koizumi to provide the LDP candidate with electoral support (McElwain, 2009). Between 1992 and 1993, Mondak conducted opinion polls in Pittsburgh and Cleveland and verified that the President generated a coattails effect in the voting behavior of voters with weak party identification in a congressional election. Mondak concluded that the mass media was necessary for this generation of a coattails effect that saw the popularity of the President reflected in the results of a congressional election (Mondak, 1995). Based on the above research, it can be hypothesized that the effects of the NHK news were to decrease the survey respondents’ Feeling Thermometer Scale for the political party supported by the Social Networks to which they belonged, or for the leader of that party, or to increase the survey respondents’ Feeling Thermometer Scale for the political party not supported by the Social Networks to which they belonged, or for the leader of that party.

Next, the other regressors used will be discussed. In all of the analyses, ideology and income are used as predetermined variables. In addition, in the cross-sectional analyses, age is used as a predetermined variable.

3. Construing the Numerical Analysis: Panel Analysis

Regarding contact with other people, the greater the survey respondents perceived that their conversation partner 1 (the voter who most frequently converses with the respondent about a politician or an election), who planned to vote for the LDP, was knowledgeable about politics, the greater the increase in their Feeling Thermometer Scale for the LDP. Similarly, the more the survey respondent perceived that their conversation partner 1, who planned to vote for the DPJ, was knowledgeable about politics, the greater the decrease in their Feeling Thermometer Scales for the LDP. However, the opposite trend—namely, the more the survey respondent perceived that their conversation partner 1, who planned to vote for the LDP, was knowledgeable about politics, the greater the decrease in their Feeling Thermometer Scale for the DPJ—was not observed. Therefore, it can be said that the effects of conversation partner 1’s knowledge about politics was limited to content that affected the survey respondents’ Feeling Thermometer Scale about the LDP. In other words, this suggests a situation in which when conversation partner 1 who is knowledgeable about politics plans to vote for the DPJ, the content of their conversation deters the survey respondents from supporting the LDP, but on the other hand, their conversations does not include content that would encourage them to support the DPJ.

When considering the fact that conversation partner 1’s knowledge about politics only affects the survey respondent’s Feeling Thermometer Scale for the LDP, then when looking across the five years of the Koizumi administration, it is apparent that no simple relationship exists in terms of mutually linked increases and decreases in voters’ Feeling Thermometer Scale for the LDP and DPJ. A possible reason for this is that regardless of the party the survey respondent supports, their conversation partner 1 did not possess enough information to affect their Feeling Thermometer Scale for the DPJ. In other words,

even supposing that conversation partner 1 was extremely knowledgeable about politics, it is possible that his or her knowledge was predominately about the LDP or that his or her knowledge about the DPJ was limited to unimportant information. Therefore, it is possible that in their conversations about politics, conversation partner 1 could not incite the survey respondents' interest in the DPJ. In fact, the DPJ did not come to power until 2009 and excluding during the election period, the amount of LDP-related information transmitted on a day-to-day basis by the mass media surpassed the amount of DPJ-related information, even during the Koizumi administration that coincided with DPJ's period of growth. In addition, it can be said that when the survey respondents evaluated the LDP and Prime Minister Koizumi based on the information they received from their conversation partner, they did so while compartmentalizing the two as entirely different political entities.

The only variable to affect survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi was conversation frequency with conversation partner 1. Also, an increase in conversation frequency when conversation partner 1 planned to vote for the LDP only resulted in an increase in the Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi. Or conversely, an increase in conversation frequency when conversation partner 1 planned to vote for the DPJ only resulted in a decrease in the Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi.

In other words, assuming that the conversation partner communicates their party affiliation to the survey respondent during their conversation and that the conversation partner's party affiliation has a certain stable effect on the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for the LDP, it can be concluded that it is not conversation frequency that is important, but rather whether the conversation includes content that can persuasively explain the political situation to the survey respondent. On the other hand, if the conversation partner's party affiliation has a certain stable influence on the survey respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale for Prime Minister Koizumi, it can be concluded that it is not the reliability of the conversation content that is important, but the conversation frequency. To explain this in other words, it can be said that when voters evaluate a political party they do so based on evidence that they recognize to be objective, but when they evaluate a politician, they do so based on his or her newsworthiness. But this conclusion may have been arrived at because Prime Minister Koizumi was a particularly newsworthy politician. However, what can be inferred from this result is that even when the leader of a political party is extremely newsworthy, voters adopt a cautious attitude and evaluate political parties not based on their newsworthiness, but on concrete evidence.

Next, watching the NHK news does not affect respondents' Feeling Thermometer Scale. Either a conversation partner who is knowledgeable about politics or the NHK news have the function of explaining politics to the survey respondents. Also, it can be said that usually, survey respondents' use of NHK news to acquire knowledge about politics correlates to a high frequency of contact with the NHK news. However, when considering the assumption that the impartiality of the NHK news is the reason why its effects only manifest themselves in conversations, it can be thought that the key conditions for it to become source of information that stably affects survey respondents are that the information communicated is affiliated to a party and is of a circulating, interactive type.

4 . Construing the Numerical Analysis: First Election

In regard to this study of the first election, Social Networks seemed to have no effect. Watching NHK's news seemed to have affected neither feelings about Koizumi nor feelings about the LDP. On the other hand, the NHK's news seemed to have pushed up the approval rating of the DPJ, even for viewers surrounded by LDP voters. This may be because NHK's news is comparatively unbiased in general, although Koizumi's unprecedented surge in popularity was applauded and channeled through most of the media, and LDP-led cabinet had almost eighty-percent support from the public.

In terms of the other regressors, advancing age and growing conservatism increased the rating of the LDP, which was deemed to be familiar with studies of Japanese politics.

5 . Construing the Numerical Analysis: Second Election

With regard to this study of the second election, the effects of Social Networks became complicated, as a conversation partner being deemed to have a greater political knowledge was correlated with a decrease in approval of Koizumi, while greater conversation frequency still seemed to be correlated to greater popularity of the LDP. Those who had conversation partners with little political knowledge might be more likely to remain sympathetic with Koizumi, because they could not learn from their conversation partners. In sum, conversation partner with political knowledge might discourage the examinees from supporting Koizumi, because they would be more likely to question his political record. According to research by Axsom, Yates, and Chaiken in the US, an examinee without cognitive capacity, and the meaningful information enabled them to understand the pros and cons of an issue, would be inclined to vote according to useless information rather than actual knowledge (Axsom, Yates, and Chaiken, 1987). If a conversation partner provided so-called "useless information", it seems plausible that conversation with such people would not lead the examinee to alter their stance on Koizumi.

Regarding the effect of the media, the NHK's news seems to have decreased the approval rating of the DPJ. This result seems counterintuitive, because the media featured manifesto, which was perceived to develop a competitive advantage to the DPJ.

According to Ikeda, the newspapers, rather than TV news, contributed to the decreasing public popularity of Koizumi. Ikeda suggested that manifestos garnered newspaper attention, although the law put a limit on the distribution of the manifesto. Furthermore, unlike the LDP's manifesto, the DPJ's comprehensive manifesto suggested to the electorate that the DPJ might be a competent party at running the government (Ikeda, 2005). If news programs, including that of the NHK failed to cover the manifesto extensively in comparison with the newspapers, what did the NHK news convey? Presuming that the answer was the potential of power rotation, due to the House of Representatives election being different from the last national election, those viewers of the program who were LDP voters might feel threatened. In addition, the NHK news viewers who were surrounded by potential LDP voters shared a sense of danger, which might decrease the approval rating of the DPJ. Hence, conversations with partners who were alarmed at a change of guard might also encourage the examinees' sympathy with the LDP. Or, on the other hand, conversations with partners who were so familiar with politics that they could fill in the background, regarding evaluating the government's performance, or the expectations that would be placed on the future cabinet by the electorate, might decrease Koizumi's popularity.

As pertains to other regressors, while advancing age and growing conservatism still increased Koizumi's popularity, they seemed to have no effect on the rating of the LDP itself. The reason growing conservatism put upward pressure on the favorability rating not of the LDP but of Koizumi seems to be attributed to Koizumi's intimate relationship with President Bush, which the media repeatedly covered⁶. Instead, growing liberalism increased the approval rating of the DPJ. In this election, the LDP tried to present itself as having had a makeover in accordance with neoliberalism, including privatization of Japan Post and Japan Highway Public Corporation, and pension reform. Compared with this, the DPJ did not submit plans that were particularly different from neoliberalism. Furthermore, they advocated a consumption-tax hike. In all of that, it would have been difficult for voters to understand the differences between the two major parties in terms of domestic policies. Regarding diplomacy, the LDP wanted to dispatch the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq, whereas the DPJ rejected the idea of dispatching them without United Nations Security Council resolutions on sending troops to Iraq. Thus, the effect of ideology in this study appears to reflect not so much on economic as on diplomatic issues.

6 . Construing the Numerical Analysis: Third Election

In this third election, the voters who were surrounded by potential LDP voters are observed first. Neither Social Networks nor the NHK news had any effects. On the other hand, Ikeda reported that the TV news increased both the examinees' future expectations and the examinees' performance evaluation on the cabinet, whereas it did not affect their rating of Koizumi (Ikeda, 2005). The pattern of the regressors' effects on the rating of the LDP was identical to that in 2001. Both of these were House of Councilors elections. Although it was said that the LDP won the election in 2001, but lost in 2004, in fact the number of LDP seat at stake only varied slightly between these two elections. Hence, in the period of the Koizumi administration the stable effects of advancing age and growing conservatism may have had a stabilizing influence on the number of LDP seat in the House.

After this, those who were surrounded by potential DPJ voters are observed. In terms of Social Networks, conversation frequency encouraged rather more positive attitudes towards the DPJ. Relating to the other regressors, youth and growing conservatism tended to be signs of supporting Koizumi.

7 . Construing the Numerical Analysis: Fourth Election

This study of the fourth election begins by observing examinees that were surrounded by potential LDP voters. Greater conversation frequency was correlated with lower approval rating for the DPJ. Although Social Networks had no direct effect on opinions of the LDP, active conversation with LDP voters seems to make people less likely to endorse the DPJ. Next, watching NHK news was to increase support for the LDP: by media strategies of the LDP, NHK news may have unwittingly become a voice for the party, despite its apparently objective standpoint.

Relating to the other regressors, it is surprising that ideology did not affect the approval rating of Koizumi or of the LDP, unlike in the case of the earlier elections. However, ideology, as in 2003, still had an effect on the approval rating of the DPJ. The seasoned conservatives, who had traditionally warmed to the LDP as a conservative party may have been unimpressed by the changes in the party since Koizumi took charge. Nevertheless, the DPJ was still far from the LDP for the conservatives. As a premise for the contrastive party alignment on ideology, therefore, ideology seems to decrease the approval rating of the DPJ, even though ideology did not increase the approval rating of Koizumi or of the LDP, in the election for the House of Representatives.

Now, the voters who are surrounded by potential DPJ voters are observed. When it comes to the media, NHK's news greatly increased the popularity of the LDP. Apart from examinees who had no contact with the media, media users who were surrounded by potential DPJ voters would be subject to the influence of the NHK news. In this forum, they would be exposed to both arguments of pro-DPJ Social Networks and of pro-LDP media. According to the public poll by Yomiuri Simbun, the longer someone watched TV for on a weekday, the more likely he was to vote for the LDP in the proportional-representation constituency (Ozaki, 2007). In addition, according to a public poll in September 2005 by Asahi Simbun, one of the leading newspapers, fifty

percent of the electorates thought that the media had probably favored one party or constituency in its coverage, whereas only forty-one percent thought it was truly unbiased (Nakai, 2007). The bottom line is that the NHK's news pushed up the approval rating for the LDP, regardless of partners' partisanship.

Relating to the other regressors, advancing age increased the approval rating for the LDP and for Koizumi, and growing conservatism increased the approval rating for the LDP. Allowing for the result that the LDP was associated with conservatism in the House of Councilors election and the DPJ was associated with liberalism in the House of Representatives election regarding examinees who were surrounded by potential LDP voters, the DPJ appears doubtlessly to have been consolidating its place in an emerging two-party system, thanks to its liberal stance.

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Notes

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² The data is open to the public in the Social Science Japan Data Archive of the University of Tokyo. <http://sjda.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp/sjda/> (accessed 2014-4-21)

³ Questions about income were included in the pre-election surveys of 2001, 2003, and 2004, and the post-election survey of 2005.

⁴ The planned sample size was 3000 (respondents).

⁵ "The party supported by Social Networks" indicates the party that the conversation partner plans to vote for.

⁶ With respect to the amount of airtime on tabloid shows in 2003, in first place was on North Korea, in second place was on the Iraq war, and the in third place was on the House of Representatives election (Osaka, 2007, 14-15)

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