

Stratified Party Organization and Strategic Segregation of National and Local Elections

: Analysis on Kōmeitō's Side-Switching in Tokyo in 2017

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine why Kōmeitō sometimes employs double-sided behaviors in local and national elections, and to shed light on the party's electoral rationality by analyzing the perceived opportunity structures surrounding local and national elections in 2017. The analysis reveals that the party has indeed developed high level of local autonomy and segregation from national politics in order to maintain organizational integrity. As the results of two elections held in Tokyo in 2017 show, the side-switching between local and national elections is not the result of intra-party conflict, but rather the embodiment of electoral rationality

within the Kōmeitō's party organization,

This paper first discusses the characteristics of Kōmeitō's party organization as 'stratified organization,' in which the decentralization of power is systematized for the sole purpose of maintaining electoral integrity. Second, it draws LDP-Kōmeitō relations at local level in Tokyo as 'disengaged' relationship characterized by strategic complacency. Lastly, this paper analyzes the results of two elections held in Tokyo in 2017 which vividly exposed Kōmeitō's effective side-switching between local and national elections.

Key words

Kōmeitō, Liberal Democratic Party(LDP), electoral rationality, 2017 Tokyo metropolitan assembly election, 2017 general election, Tokyo Tomin First

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I . Introduction

Despite what appears to be a smooth operation of coalition government since 1999, the relationship between Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) of Japan and its coalition partner Kōmeitō has on occasion displayed high level of conflicts over the past two decades. The source of inter-party tension derives not only from the two parties' diverging perceptions toward critical socio-political issues such as constitutional revision, but also from their electoral interests. Built upon close electoral alliance particularly during general elections, where LDP and the Kōmeitō engage in vote-bartering, the LDP-Kōmeitō relations often demonstrate conflicts of interests during elections. As the two-party partnership prolongs

and has grown increasingly interdependent, such frictions that are found during election period develop complex posture, intertwined between diverging logics in both national and local politics.

One recent development that symbolized somewhat puzzling inter-party relations between the two parties took place during two critical elections held in 2017—Tokyo metropolitan assembly election in July and general election held three months later. Suspending four-decades-long partnership in the local assembly, the Kōmeitō openly supported newly-elected Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko in her anti-LDP stance and engaged in fierce electoral cooperation with her local party Tokyo Tomin First in the assembly election. Only three months later, however, Kōmeitō retracted its cooperation with Governor Koike, who formed Party of Hope to run national candidates in general election, and engaged in full-fledged cooperation with LDP candidates in districts in Tokyo.

The purpose of this study is to examine why Kōmeitō sometimes employs double-sided behaviors in local and national elections, and shed light on the party's electoral rationality by analyzing the perceived opportunity structures surrounding local and national elections in 2017. The analysis reveals that, despite static emphasis on Kōmeitō's multi-level party organization as 'highly-centralized,' the party has indeed developed high level of local autonomy and segregation from national politics in order to maintain organizational integrity. As the results of two elections held in Tokyo in 2017 show, the side-switching between local and national elections is not the result of intra-party conflict, but rather the embodiment of internal electoral rationality within the Kōmeitō's party organization.

II . Political Parties as Stratified Organization

In order to unravel what appears to be contradictory inter-party relations between the LDP and the Kōmeitō at two polity levels, it is necessary to shed light on the two parties' organizational structure within which the logics of cooperative/conflicting operation of alliance partnership are shaped. While the key to successful electoral alliance between the LDP and the Kōmeitō has largely been assigned to Kōmeitō's highly centralized party organization, such perspective overlooks the internal organizational functions that are set up to mediate the possibly conflicting interests between central leadership and local actors.

Disputing Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy,'¹⁾ scholars have argued that the political parties develop interdependence among different levels of strata—or 'faces'—in order to maintain control over the growing diversities among activists as well as supporters. Accordingly, the distribution of power among different faces of the organization is not always uniformly defined, but rather displays significantly variant patterns. Calling political party a 'social organism,' Eldersveld argued that distribution of power within a party, no matter how oligarchic it may seem, does not follow a simple hierarchical order, but instead it is characterized by 'reciprocal deference structure.'²⁾ The diversities of membership and local tradition

1) Michels, Robert, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Hearst's International Library, Co., 1915).

2) Eldersveld, Samuel, *Political Parties: A behavioral analysis* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964).

as well as 'milieus of opinions' often deprive the party leadership from imposing centralized control, and the 'absence of effective sanctions' provide incentives for the central leadership to tolerate local autonomy and initiative. According to him, this tolerance essentially derives from the party leaders' drive for collecting votes, and the 'rapport system' molded out of such interdependence between top elites, middle-level cadre, and local activists "rests on mutual perspectives concerning the strategy of electoral success, or mutual tolerance of ineptness in the face of sure defeat."³⁾

Building upon this observation, as well as Mair's remarks on growing tendency of cartel parties to develop 'mutual autonomy' among different faces of a party organization,⁴⁾ Carty introduced the concept of 'party stratarchy' in explaining how the parties operating in multi-level systems maintain party coherence, while allowing substantive level of autonomy among different faces of the organization.⁵⁾ He argued that in a stratarchical party, "organizational power and authority does not finally rest in any single place" but rather it is "broadly shared."⁶⁾ Unlike Eldersveld, he recognizes that the central leadership possesses certain ways to punish the local elites or deter local demands if these actions do not meet the party requirements or goals. What is important for the

3) Ibid., p.10.

4) Mair, Peter, "Party Organizations: From Civil Society to the State," In *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, edited by Richard S. and Peter Mair Katz(London: Sage Publications, 1994), pp.1~22.

5) Carty, Kenneth R., "Parties as Franchise Systems: The Stratarchical Organizational Imperative," *Party Politics* 10-1(2004), pp.5~24.

6) Ibid. p.9.

central elites, he argues, is the electoral success, and the reason why certain degree of independence within a single organization is tolerated is because the political party, facing growing decline of party membership, has an incentive to incorporate growing demands—such as democratization of inter-party decision-making processes—in order to retain as many supporters as possible.

To supplement Carty's conceptualization, Bolleyer distinguishes party stratarchy from other forms of party organization at two extremes—hierarchy and federation—in that stratarchies “establish a division of labour between two mutually dependent yet distinguishable levels to which functionally different competences are assigned, none of which is able to fully dominate the other.”⁷⁾ At the same time, she stresses the ‘hierarchical’ element of party stratarchy, arguing that, unlike party federation in which the locus of power as well as competence distribution follow geographical and territorial divisions, in stratarchy, ultimate power of conflict resolution rests in the hands of central leadership, and the local autonomy is limited by the coherence of national brand.

In terms of electoral strategy, this approach to party organization argues that the party is organized in the way that maximizes the chances of winning elections. In other words, the variations in the perceived opportunity structures, which stems from the differing ‘local milieus,’ generate divergent degrees and systematizations of power decentralization within a single organization in order to accommodate diverse interests among the voters. In terms of LDP-Kōmeitō alliance during elections,

7) Bolleyer, Nicole, “New Party Organization in Western Europe: Of Party Hierarchies, Stratarchies and Federations,” *Party Politics* 18-3(2011), pp.315~316 · p.319.

then, it implies that the Kōmeitō's often-conflicting behaviors vis-a-vis the LDP at local and national levels can be interpreted as the result of party's electoral rationalism whose purpose is to protect organizational integrity (i.e. winning elections). In other words, Kōmeitō sometimes employs contradictory behaviors in local and national levels not because of the intra-party conflict between national and local leaderships, but because the party's internal systematization of power allows, at least to some extent, diverse forms of cooperation to take place depending on the changing external as well as internal environments.

There is scarcity of academic resources on Kōmeitō's party organization, except perhaps for a common characterization of the party as 'highly-centralized.'⁸⁾ Typically, the Kōmeitō's party organization is characterized by highly centralized pyramid structure, consisting of central headquarter, provincial headquarter, prefectural headquarter, general headquarter, and area headquarter. What is often overlooked, on the other hand, is the critical role of Kōmeitō's prefectural headquarters in dealing with everyday political activities—from candidate evaluations, policy formation, to supporter mobilization. The empowerment of prefectural headquarters through the downward delegation of power was a result of external pressure that imposed structural reform upon Kōmeitō-Sōka Gakkai relations after the press suppression incident in 1970.⁹⁾ While the Kōmeitō's 1970 Yearly Agenda, adopted at the 8th Party Convention held

8) For classical readings on Komeito's party organizations, refer to 村上重良, 『公明党』 東京: 新日本出版社, 1969; 西島久, 『公明党』, 東京: 雪華社, 1968; 堀幸雄, 『公明党論, その行動と体質』 東京: 南窓社, 1999.

9) For the details on press suppression incident, refer to 中野潤, 『創価学会・公明党の研究』, 東京: 岩波書店, 2016, pp.35-37.

in June, is often cited as the turning point for the organizational separation between Kōmeitō and Sōka Gakkai as well as the former's shift from progressivism to 'centrism,' it is also worth noting that it initiated rather drastic structural reform as well. Specifically, the 1970 Yearly Agenda put forward three measures to consolidate 'new organization,' which included the strengthening of organizational system centering on prefectural headquarters. The empowerment of prefectural headquarters was essentially an effort to alleviate the densely-centralized nature of party organization and decentralize some of the decision-making powers to the local party branches. The role of prefectural headquarters was significantly enhanced, such as launching of executive bureaus (including organizational, policy, and public relations bureaus), whose operations became the responsibility of prefectural executive committee. Further, local daily activities, from public relations, election campaigns, to hosting of variety of policy study sessions, were to be organized 'autonomously and voluntarily' by the local leadership and activists.¹⁰⁾ In other words, since the 1970s, Kōmeitō has developed some degree of local decision-making processes within party organization in shaping the divergent interactive mechanism at the local level.

At the same time, as discussed in line with the stratarthic organization of political parties, such decentralization of power must be justified and compensated by the local leadership's competence in developing effective election campaign. In discussing why local political actors shape divergent opportunity structures, or why local party branches often develop different organizational structures, the scholars have

10) 『公明新聞』 1970.6.15 3~5頁.

presented several variables in terms of institutional factors. The studies on the effects of multi-level political systems on the behaviors of local politicians suggest several factors in determining local politicians' electoral strategies.¹¹⁾ First, the local electoral system, specifically the *district magnitude* in local elections, has considered as one of the most critical determinants of the running candidates' dependency level on party labels.¹²⁾ The electoral strategies of candidates would differ depending on whether they are running in single-member or multi-member district.¹³⁾ For example, the district magnitudes of Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election vary across electoral districts between one and eight, and in municipal ward assembly elections, it ranges from twenty-five to fifty, according to the size of administrative ward. In Osaka, on the other hand, only one or two representatives are elected from a single district in prefectural assembly election, and the district magnitudes of government-designated city assembly elections in Osaka and Sakai cities are relatively small compared to Tokyo, ranging between two to nine. The implication here is that the behaviors of a local LDP politician would

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- 11) Deschuer, Kris, "Political Parties as Multi-Level Organizations," In Richard Katz and William Crotty eds. *Handbook of Party Politics*(Sage, 2006), pp.291~300; 砂原庸介, 「地方における政党政治と二元代表制—地方政治レベルの自民党『分裂』の分析から」, 『レヴェイアサン』 47, 2010, pp.89~107; 砂原庸介, 「マルチレベル選挙の中の都道府県議会議員」, 『レヴェイアサン』 51, 2012b, pp.93~113; 砂原庸介・土野レオナード・ビクター・賢, 「地方政党の台頭と地方議員候補者の選挙戦略—地方議会議員選挙公報の分析から—」, 『レヴェイアサン』 53, 2013, pp.95~116.
- 12) 建林正彦, 「マルチレベルの政治制度ミックスと政党組織」, 『レヴェイアサン』 51, 2012, pp.64~91.
- 13) Carey, John M., and Matthew Soberg Shugart, "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas," *Electoral Studies* 14-4(1995), pp.417~439; Cox, Gary W., *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 1997.

be more constrained if his/her dependency on party label is high (i.e. when district magnitude is small, such as in Osaka), while those who rely less on party labels and more on personal votes (i.e. when district magnitude is large, e.g. Tokyo) are less constrained by the party label.

As important as electoral system, equally contributing to the significance of local electoral competition derives from the *timing of election*, particularly in relations to national-level electoral competitions. In Tokyo, Metropolitan Assembly election is held separately from the rest of general local elections held every four years. Some argue that the local elections that are held closely to national election often function as 'preliminary' or 'substitute' competition, resembling the inter-party competitions in the national Diet.¹⁴⁾ On the other hand, when prefectural/municipal assembly elections are held on the same day as gubernatorial election, the local politicians are likely to emphasize their associations with candidates who are most likely to win the race, regardless of the candidate's party affiliation.¹⁵⁾

Yet the variety of electoral systems alone cannot explain the diversity of individual actors' strategic choices or regional characteristics of local party organizations; it must be contextualized within wider local political landscapes. One of the characteristics of Japan's local politics is that both governor/mayor of local administrative unit and members of local assembly are elected by popular vote.¹⁶⁾ It indicates that the

14) 堀内匠, 「得票分析にみる2009年東京都議会選挙と衆議院議員選挙の連続性」, 『自治総研』 35-9, 2009, pp.62-92.

15) 砂原庸介(2010), p.96.

16) 曾我謙悟・待鳥聡史, 『日本の地方政治: 二元代表制政府の政策選択』, 名古屋大学出版会, 2007, pp.1-4.

governor/mayor and local assembly members may develop diverging interests in order to achieve their political goals, or it is possible that the local assembly members may weigh cooperating with governor/mayor more importantly than protecting party coherence at the local level. In that sense, *types of local governorship* and local inter-party relations must also be taken into consideration in evaluating the local political actors' incentives. For example, during the gubernatorial elections, if the likelihood of the election for the LDP-endorsed candidate is low, the local LDP assembly members may not choose to actively mobilize their personal networks. Or, when the governor in power is not affiliated with the LDP (e.g. Hashimoto Toru and Osaka Restoration Association and Koike Yuriko and Tomin First), the choices of local LDP politicians as well as the Kōmeitō may vary depending on their own perceptions toward the governor as well as the individuals' electoral environment. Sunahara, analyzing why local LDP members often do not engage in collective behaviors, argues that the asymmetric power balance between the governor and local assembly often urge the local assembly members to cooperate with the governor rather than with the party in order to realize their political goals.¹⁷⁾

In order to evaluate how Kōmeitō's perception of opportunity structure is shaped at the local level, then, it is necessary to shed light not only on its relationship with the LDP at the national level, but more so on the local institutional setting (i.e. electoral systems), timing of elections (e.g. national as well as gubernatorial election), as well as the party's relations with the local assembly and the governor. To provide

17) 砂原庸介(2010), p.95.

comparative perspective, the following section analyzes LDP-Kōmeitō relations at local level in Tokyo before the rise of popular local party.

III. Disengaged Relationship between LDP and Kōmeitō in Tokyo

The genesis LDP-Kōmeitō alliance partnership in Tokyo metropolitan assembly dates back to the 1970s. In the 1979 Tokyo gubernatorial election, Kōmeitō joined the LDP, Democratic Socialist Party, and New Liberal Club in recommending Suzuki Shunichi, who came to serve as Tokyo governor for four consecutive terms. Under the Suzuki governance, the LDP and Kōmeitō joined together as ruling coalition, whose alliance partnership has remained in tact until 2017. In other words, the history of two-party alliance in Tokyo metropolitan assembly goes farther back than its coalition partnership at the national level.¹⁸⁾

Yet the longevity of coalition partnership at the local level does not necessarily translate into deeper cooperative relations in terms of electoral rationalism. In fact, the level of ‘electoral cooperation’ between the two parties remained quite insignificant compared to the high degree of successful vote-bartering observed in the national elections. To illustrate this point, it is necessary to shed light on the local institutional setting. First, one of the critical characteristics of Tokyo metropolitan assembly election is the electoral cycle. Ever since the metropolitan

18) 佐々木信夫, 『都知事-権力と都政』東京: 中公新書, 2011, pp.69-70.

assembly was dissolved mid-term in 1965, the election was held separately from the rest of the general local elections. In 2005 and 2009, the local assembly elections were held shortly before the general elections, and along with the high publicity and interests, the two local elections were considered to have played the role of ‘preliminary skirmish’ for the upcoming general election. In fact, Horiuchi have demonstrated how Tokyo assembly elections in 2005 and 2009 foreshadowed the Koizumi cabinet's landslide victory in 2005, as well as the DPJ's overthrowing of the LDP rule in 2009.¹⁹⁾ In other words, in terms of electoral timing, the LDP-Kōmeitō relations reflected largely its partnership at the national level before the rise of popular local party.

However, the electoral cycle that echoes upon the national political landscape does not necessarily induce close electoral cooperation during local elections, particularly because of the electoral system adopted in the assembly election. Another characteristic of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly Election, particularly in comparison to other prefectural-level assembly elections in government-designated cities, is the size of constituencies. The metropolitan assembly election adopts multi-member district system, whose district magnitudes ranges between one to eight in special ward districts (*tokubetsuku*, Table 1). Contrary to Osaka prefectural assembly election that adopts small-sized district system (magnitude ranging between one and two), such electoral system allows Kōmeitō to field significant number of candidates, who would compete against LDP candidates. Because of that, the local support bases of the LDP and Kōmeitō developed what seems to be a ‘disengaged’ relationship.

19)堀内匠(2009).

Table 1 shows the two parties' vote counts in the 2005 Tokyo metropolitan assembly, along with each party's vote counts earned in the 2003 municipal-level ward assembly elections, to indicate the scale of 'bare support base' of the two parties. First and foremost, the most striking aspect is the Kōmeitō's significant vote collecting capability during metropolitan assembly election. The Kōmeitō increased its vote counts by 11.2% between the two elections, despite the fact that the party did not field any candidate in six ward districts.

Secondly, in terms of local LDP-Kōmeitō relations, it is difficult to find any traces of vote-bartering between the two parties in the same way we find during national elections. In other words, even when there is no Kōmeitō candidate in the district, it does not appear that Kōmeitō voters voted for the LDP candidates by default, such as the cases of Chiyoda, Chuo, Minato, Taito, and Shibuya wards indicate. In those districts, LDP only fields one candidate and Kōmeitō had none. Yet the vote counts for the LDP candidates do not show significant change from the 'party votes' earned in ward assembly election. Such 'disengagement' between the support bases of LDP and Kōmeitō during local election derives from unique institutional settings in Tokyo. Not only does the multi-member district system adopted at the prefectural level induces 'personal support cultivation' among LDP candidates, but also the exceptionally high district magnitudes of Tokyo ward assembly elections that range between twenty-five to fifty are likely to hinder the integration of 'LDP voters' into a single support base.

Such 'decentralized' nature of LDP's local party organization in Tokyo, as well as the Kōmeitō's incentives to elect as many candidates

under the multi-member district system, seems to encourage the strategic complacency toward one another at local level. The complacency also derives from the lesser degree of dependence between the LDP and

〈Table 1〉 Result of local elections in Tokyo
(2005 metropolitan assembly, 2003 ward assembly elections)

Turnout (%)	2005 Metropolitan Assembly				2003 Ward Assembly			
	44.32%				43.23%*			
District/ Ward	M	Candidates (elected)		LDP	Kōmeitō	LDP	Kōmeitō	M
Vote share (%)		LDP	Kōmeitō	27.98%	21.62%	30.28%	20.33%	
Chiyoda	1	1 (1)	0	8,770		8,214	1,260	25
Chuo	1	1 (1)	0	16,416		15,786	6,220	30
Minato	2	1 (1)	0	16,216		14,331	8,716	34
Shinjuku	4	1 (1)	1 (1)	27,851	22,984	20,409	21,020	38
Bunkyo	2	1 (0)	0	17,008		9,431	11,754	34
Taito	2	1 (1)	0	26,244		21,248	10,160	34
Sumida	3	2 (1)	1 (1)	34,202	27,165	38,942	18,194	34
Koto	4	1 (1)	1 (1)	38,337	36,937	36,502	33,837	44
Shinagawa	4	2 (2)	1 (1)	41,195	27,729	37,633	22,982	42
Meguro	3	1 (1)	1 (1)	19,532	22,749	21,230	13,618	36
Ota	8	3 (3)	2 (2)	70,142	60,939	76,851	53,184	50
Setagaya	8	3 (2)	2 (2)	75,996	56,828	76,395	43,020	52
Shibuya	2	1 (1)	0	17,849		19,509	10,162	34
Nakano	4	2 (1)	1 (1)	32,507	26,221	31,580	19,700	42
Suginami	6	2 (1)	1 (1)	37,883	29,799	36,976	23,279	48
Toshima	3	1 (1)	1 (1)	18,480	21,912	27,045	16,591	38
Kita	4	1 (1)	1 (1)	24,133	31,770	38,365	28,446	44
Arakawa	2	1 (1)	1 (1)	16,720	25,405	25,425	14,526	32
Itabashi	5	2 (1)	1 (1)	47,034	43,433	53,202	39,067	50
Nerima	6	2 (2)	1 (1)	58,868	52,776	67,871	46,723	50
Adachi	6	3 (2)	2 (2)	93,074	71,983	94,407	58,931	50
Katsushika	4	2 (2)	1 (1)	53,053	42,267	57,430	35,878	46
Edogawa	5	2 (1)	1 (1)	59,260	56,258	62,353	53,911	46
TOTAL	89	37 (29)	20 (20)	850,770	657,155	891,136	591,177	933

*Turnout (%) for ward assembly election only reflects those that were held during the general local election. Ward assembly elections for Adachi and Katsushika wards were not held on the same day, therefore it is not included in the total turnout.

Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Election Committee.

Kōmeitō during local elections. In other words, relatively high district magnitude in both local elections in Tokyo allows Kōmeitō to elect a significant number of its own candidates, because of the lower election threshold and high concentration of supporters in the prefecture, allowing relatively autonomous operations of local party organizations.

IV. Komeito's Strategic Segregation of Local and National Elections in 2017

It was such disengaged nature of two-party relations as well as ‘strategic complacency’ that lay the ground for LDP-Kōmeitō conflicts in the 2017 metropolitan assembly election. To unravel what induced shift from complacency to outright conflicts, however, it is critical to delve into divergent perceptions vis-a-vis the rise of popular local governor and its newly-established local party. This section evaluates the results of two elections held in Tokyo in 2017, namely metropolitan assembly election and general election, to elucidate the efficacy of Komeito's party organization in the execution of effective electoral strategy.

1. Effectiveness of Kōmeitō's Side-Switching in the 2017 Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly Election

The 2017 Tokyo metropolitan assembly election was a historic one. Of 127 seats, the LDP only won twenty-three, losing thirty-four of previously held fifty-seven seats. Before 2017, the lowest number of seats

Tokyo LDP had earned in the assembly election was thirty-eight in 2009, and the news media carved the term ‘zanpai’(“devastating defeat”) to describe the unprecedented defeat of the ruling LDP. Though it is difficult to ignore the negative impact that has brought forth by the series of Prime Minister Abe's personal scandals surrounding Moritomo Gakuen and Kake Gakuen to this disastrous defeat, what was significant about this local election was the emergence of the new local party led by Tokyo Governor Koike Yuriko, who became the symbol of anti-establishment within the Tokyo assembly. Former LDP representative herself, Koike managed to mold out the image of ‘clean slate’ through the handlings of the Toyosu relocation issue and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The 2017 Tokyo assembly election was also historic in that the Tokyo Kōmeitō severed its more than four decades-long alliance relationship with the LDP, and sided with Koike's new Tomin First Party. The tension between the LDP and the Kōmeitō in Tokyo began as the public discontent grew over two consecutive resignations by Tokyo governors, Inose Naoki(2012~2013) and Masuzoe Yoichi(2014~2016), who were forced to resign after scandals erupted over illegal political donations and misuse of political funds. The public's anger toward the two governors turned to political parties that endorsed them during elections—LDP and Kōmeitō. Driven by a sense of crisis, the Tokyo Kōmeitō proposed a set of political reform measures that consisted of (1) cutting of assembly members' salaries by 20%, (2) reduction of political activity expenses and the complete online disclosure of balance reports, and (3) abolishing of travel expenses to assembly members.²⁰⁾ As the

20) 『東京公明』, 2017年春号外.

LDP shun off these demands from the Kōmeitō, the Kōmeitō moved quickly to sever the cooperative ties with the LDP and, by mid-March, had concluded an agreement with newly-elected governor Koike to work with her and her party not only in the assembly but also in the upcoming assembly election. As a result, the Kōmeitō and Tomin-First engaged in mutual recommendations of candidates, which led to the elections of all twenty-three Kōmeitō candidates and forty-nine Tomin-First candidates, securing the majority in the assembly.²¹⁾ Mainichi Shimbun estimated that the absence of Kōmeitō support had cost the LDP at least twelve seats in the assembly election.²²⁾ The shocking electoral result exposed the serious disintegration of the LDP's support base in Tokyo, and by extension the level of LDP's reliance on Kōmeitō in scraping up enough votes to elect its candidates in national elections. The implication of this local election extended to the prospective national election, and whether or not the LDP has enough strength to compete in metropolitan cities on its own.²³⁾

The perceptions toward Tomin First Party completely diverged between the LDP and Kōmeitō over the issues of political reforms within the assembly. The question, then, is why the divergent threat perceptions vis-à-vis local party led to the LDP-Kōmeitō conflicts in Tokyo. In fact,

21) Tomin-First endorsed fifty candidates. After the election, Tomin-First gave post de facto endorsement to six additional independent members, making it total of 55 assembly members.

22) 『毎日新聞』 2017. 7. 5, <https://mainichi.jp/senkyo/articles/20170706/k00/00m/010/103000c>

23) 上久保誠人, 「都議選が示した『自公分断・民進分裂で政権交代』の可能性」, 『ダイヤモンド・オンライン』, 2017. 7. 4, <https://diamond.jp/articles/-/134039> (access: 2018. 6. 25).

the rise of popular local governor and his/her political party does not always induce LDP-Kōmeitō conflict, as the case of Osaka indicates. The rise of Osaka Restoration Association (ORA) led by governor Hashimoto Toru in the Osaka Prefectural Assembly election in 2011, for example, did not lead to the split of LDP-Kōmeitō relations in the Osaka assembly. The Osaka Kōmeitō joined Osaka LDP in criticizing Hashimoto and his party. There are several comparative factors that distinguished electoral environments in Tokyo and Osaka. First, it is necessary to shed light on the timing of Metropolitan Assembly election held in July 2017. While Osaka prefectural assembly election was one of many local elections held in the 2011 general local elections, the Tokyo metropolitan assembly election was held independently and decorated with clear message that it was a competition between a reformist governor and the ‘corrupt’ LDP. Coupled with PM Abe's personal scandals that erupted in February 2017, the Tokyo metropolitan assembly election received nation-wide attention.

Second, the timing of gubernatorial election also played a key role. While Hashimoto was elected in 2008 and had been serving as the governor of Osaka for more than three years when the first prefectural assembly election was held under his leadership, Tokyo gubernatorial election that pushed Koike Yuriko to stardom was held only a year prior to the assembly election in July 2016. In the election, the LDP and Kōmeitō jointly endorsed Masuda Hiroya, who had served as the governor of Iwate Prefecture for three terms between 1995 and 2007. After the LDP Tokyo *kenren* refused to recommend Koike Yuriko, she intensified criticism against the party's local branch, successfully engraving the image of herself as ‘anti-establishment’ to the voters. That Koike won

the election by earning 44.5% vote share, and Masuda's vote share only reached 27.4%, was enough trigger for the Kōmeitō to shift its perception toward the newly elected governor, particularly considering how close Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election was scheduled to Koike's triumph.

Kōmeitō's side switching that followed Koike's decisive victory at the gubernatorial election and her growing popularity over the handling of controversial Toyosu relocation project and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics worked favorably for the Tokyo Kōmeitō. In the metropolitan assembly election, Tomin First Party collected 1,884,030 votes, earning 33.7% of vote share. In order to show where these votes came from, Table 2 compares the vote gains of major political parties in the 2013 and 2017 metropolitan assembly elections. The upper-section shows the vote gains of political parties that earned less number of votes in 2017 than in 2013, while the lower-section shows the vote gains of Kōmeitō, JCP, Independent, etc., who increased their vote gains between the two elections. As the table shows, most conservative parties lost significant number of votes; the party that suffered the worst electoral loss was Japan Restoration Party (JRP), whose vote gains declined by 86%. LDP's absolute vote gains also declined by 23%, and the DPJ lost about half of previously earned votes. On the other hand, Kōmeitō and Japan Communist Party (JCP) managed to enhance their vote shares, by earning 15% and 25% more votes, respectively. Put differently, including the 'floating voters,' about 2.4 million votes which were either not casted in the previous elections or casted for the conservative parties were divided among Tomin First, Kōmeitō, JCP, and independent candidates. Tomin

〈Table 2〉 Total vote gains by party in
Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly elections (2013, 2017)

	2013 MA (43,50%)	2017 MA (51,28%)	Difference(+/-) (A)	(A)/TOTAL	(2013)- (2017) difference (%)
Total Votes	4,532,279,994	5,593,630,996	(-)1,061,351,002	44,31%	
LDP	1,633,303,909	1,260,101,444	-373,202,465	15,58%	-22,85%
DPJ	690,622,746	385,752,149	-304,870,597	12,73%	-44,14%
JRP	374,109	54,016	-320,093	13,36%	-85,56%
Network	94,239	69,929	-24,310	1,01%	-25,80%
Your	311,278	0	-311,278	13,00%	
TOTAL			-2,395,105,064	100,00%	
Kōmeitō	639,160,495	734,697	95,536,505	3,99%	14,95%
JCP	616,721,524	773,722,553	157,001,029	6,56%	25,46%
Independent	118,450	375,048	256,598	10,71%	216,63%
Others	54,395,32	56,335	1,939,68	0,08%	3,57%
Tomin First	0	1,884,029,85	1,884,029,85	78,66%	
TOTAL			2,395,105,064	100,00%	

Source: Tokyo Election Committee.

First candidates earned 78,66% of those votes. In other words, those who supported Koike Yuriko and her new party consisted of ‘floating voters’ and the conservative voters who had previously voted for LDP, DPJ, JRP, or Your Party. In terms of Kōmeitō's vote gains, the result shows that Kōmeitō's outright side-switching brought in some of the ‘non-LDP votes,’ and succeeded in segregating the national and local party images.

2. Back to the Old Nest: The 2017 General Election

Perhaps what was even more striking about the Kōmeitō's behaviors in Tokyo was its swift side-switching back to the LDP-Kōmeitō framework at the national level in the general election held in October

2017. Since 2000, LDP and Kōmeitō have engaged in ‘vote-bartering’ during general elections, where the supporters of the two parties are encouraged to split their votes between SMD and PR tiers. Since the Kōmeitō is a small party and fields only a limited number of candidates in SMDs, the Kōmeitō supporters vote for the LDP candidate in their district, while the LDP candidates return the favor by asking their supporters to vote for the Kōmeitō in PR. Based on the Kōmeitō's party votes, some estimate that about 20,000 to 30,000 Kōmeitō votes are delivered to the LDP's candidate in each district.²⁴⁾ Some studies suggest that, without the electoral cooperation with the Kōmeitō and Sōka Gakkai, the LDP would have single-handedly lost general elections to the largest opposition party as early as 2003.²⁵⁾ Of Tokyo's twenty-five single-member districts, the Kōmeitō fields only one candidate in District 12, a symbolic district where Kōmeitō runs its star politician Oota Akihiro.

In light of upcoming Lower House election in 2017, Kōmeitō's ambivalence between its local partnership with Governor Koike and the coalition partner at the national level was exposed to rivalry between Koike and LDP as well. In September 2017, as the talks of general election surfaced, Koike Yuriko expressed her desire to establish a national counterpart to Tomin First Party, Named Party of Hope (*kibouno*

24) This calculation is based on Kōmeitō's vote gains in PR during national elections, which usually range between seven to nine million votes. Divided by the number of single-member districts(300), some believe that the Kōmeitō is able to mobilize 20,000 to 30,000 votes per district.

25) 蒲島郁夫, 『戦後政治の軌跡－自民党システムの形成と変容』, 岩波書店, 2014, pp.371~387; 川人貞史, 『選挙制度と政党システム』 木鐸社, 2004, pp.270~274; Liff, Adam P., and Ko Maeda, “Electoral Incentives, Policy Compromise, and Coalition Durability: Japan's LDP-Komeito Government in a Mixed Electoral System,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* (2018), pp.1~21.

to), fourteen Diet members, mostly defectors from Democratic Party (*minshin to*, DP), joined her cause.²⁶⁾ Maehara Seiji, then the president of DP, made inquiries to the governor of Tokyo about dissolving the party and joining the Party of Hope, in order to prevent opposition fragmentation from paving the ground for another landslide victory of the LDP-Kōmeitō alliance. Koike, who was running out of time in recruiting prospective candidates yet did not wish to be taken over by the DP, stated to the press on September 29 that prospective DP representatives who wish to join the Party of Hope would be evaluated individually, and those who do not share the basic views on security policy or constitutional reform would be “crossed off” (*haijo*) from the list of party membership.²⁷⁾ To this, liberal conservatives within the DP who showed strong aversion against the idea of joining the Koike-Maehara alliance, defected and formed a new party, Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ, *nikkenminshutou*), with Edano Yukio as the party president.

Despite the opposition's attempt, the opposition failure in Tokyo districts was not fully mitigated in Tokyo where PH fielded fifteen candidates and CDPJ fielded eleven in seventeen special ward districts, while LDP fielded sixteen and Kōmeitō one. The result was rather disappointing for the Party of Hope. The LDP-Kōmeitō alliance secured fourteen seats in seventeen metropolitan districts in Tokyo, while CDPJ scraped three and PH lost in all districts. Above anything else, the victory of LDP-Kōmeitō alliance in Tokyo owed to the high coherence of the

26) Associated Press, September 27, 2017. Of fourteen participating Diet members, twelve were Lower House representatives and two were Upper House members.

27) 『朝日新聞デジタル』 2017年9月29日, <https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASK9Y572FK9YUTIL02P.html>

LDP-Kōmeitō alliance in seventeen districts. Table 3 shows the vote gains by LDP/Kōmeitō candidates in Tokyo's seventeen single-member districts, along with the 'party votes' earned in respective districts. Consolidation rate (CR) is calculated by dividing LDP/Kōmeitō candidate's vote gains in single-member district by the two parties' total vote gains in respective district; higher the consolidation rate, more effective the LDP-Kōmeitō electoral cooperation. As the result indicates, the LDP and Kōmeitō's total consolidation rate reached above 100%, elucidating the continuously successful conflation of two support bases in

〈Table 3〉 LDP/Komeito candidates' vote gains in 2017 general election and vote consolidation rate (CR) in Tokyo [Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication]

	SMD (A)	PR		PR Total [LDP+Kōmeitō] (B)	CR (A/B)
		LDP	Kōmeitō		
Tokyo 1	93234,92	84649	18436	103085	90,4%
Tokyo 2	112993	87177	14808	101985	110,8%
Tokyo 3	107708	82643	23183	105826	101,8%
Tokyo 4	115239	72216	31369	103585	111,3%
Tokyo 5	101314	79994	17524	97518	103,9%
Tokyo 6	98422	75543	18480	94023	104,7%
Tokyo 7	85305	76737	18148	94885	89,9%
Tokyo 8	99863	76828	18297	95125	105,0%
Tokyo 9	122279	73779	27819	101598	120,4%
Tokyo 10	91146,92	72402	23295	95697	95,2%
Tokyo 11	104612	69223	28887	98110	106,6%
Tokyo 12	112597	68506	34670	103176	109,1%
Tokyo 13	120744	66815	33728	100543	120,1%
Tokyo 14	104137	70794	29036	99830	104,3%
Tokyo 15	101155	73688	25923	99611	101,6%
Tokyo 16	84457	65648	34482	100130	84,3%
Tokyo 17	127632	73498	31963	105461	121,0%
TOTAL	1782839	1270140	430048	1700188	104,9%

Tokyo. Put from another perspective, the Kōmeitō supporters continued to support the LDP candidates in single-member districts in the national election. The candidates who recorded relatively lower consolidation rate, such as Tokyo Districts 1, and 7, faced potent CDPJ candidates like Kaieda Banri and Nagatsuma Akira.

The results of the two elections once again elucidate Kōmeitō's patent strategy that segregate local and national elections which successfully safeguarded party's most critical interests—electoral success. Kōmeitō's side-switching between local and national elections in 2017 was triggered once again by the changes in perceived opportunity structures. In other words, Koike's hardline policies concerning ideological inclinations of the Party of Hope, as well as her intension to dismiss liberalist agenda, failed to echo Kōmeitō voters' policy preferences. Coupled with chronic opposition failure, Kōmeitō's strategic choice to amend the relationship with the LDP in Tokyo was further buttressed by the institutional incentive—namely the single-member competitions that would require LDP's support in electing its candidates.

While Kōmeitō may have succeeded in appeasing LDP in the 2017 election in Tokyo by successfully mobilizing its support base for election of fourteen candidates in the metropolitan districts, the cost of abrupt side-switching as well as its indecisive positioning between local and national elections came with a cost. As Table 4 shows, the Kōmeitō's vote losses in proportional representation in Tokyo's metropolitan districts was much severe than the LDP's; while LDP's absolute vote gains only decreased by 1%, Kōmeitō's 'party votes' declined by 7.9% between the 2014 and 2017 general elections, hitting the lowest count since the

launching of the two-party alliance. Instead, the newly established CDPJ and Party of Hope earned a significant number of votes, gaining 23.0% and 13.7% of vote shares, respectively. In the past, Kōmeitō had managed to mobilize about at least 490,000 PR votes in Tokyo's metropolitan districts; in the 2000 general election, when the party received virtually no support from the LDP counterpart, the Kōmeitō collected 496,926 votes, and in 2009, even when the coalition partners had one of the most difficult electoral situations against the DPJ, the Kōmeitō's managed to scrape up 492,199 party votes in Tokyo's metropolitan districts. That the Kōmeitō's vote gains in PR in the 2017 general election fell largely short of the 'bottom line' seems to suggest that the coherence of Kōmeitō supporters in Tokyo is on verge of erosion at the very least, possibly outflowing to newly emerging political

〈Table 24〉 Comparison of PR vote gains by party
(2014 & 2017 general elections)

	2014 PR	2017 PR	Vote Increase
LDP	1277482	1264976	-12506
Kōmeitō	464944	428309	-36635
DPJ	588646	0	-588646
CDPJ	0	929761	929761
PoH	0	701259	701259
PLP	112055	0	-112055
JRP	578686	144245	-434441
PFG	179122	0	-179122
NRP	11836	0	-11836
Kokoro	0	28737	28737
HRP	12214	11264	-950
SDP	84860	35464	-49396
JCP	596652	418219	-178433
No Party to Support	0	87800	87800
TOTAL	3906497	4050034	143537

parties. At the same time, the result indicates that the rise of local parties, as well as the emergence of new political players, affect the coalition partners in different ways, elucidating once again the ‘disengaged’ nature of the LDP-Kōmeitō alliance in Tokyo. The LDP demonstrated its capability to maintain its party strength in the national elections, yet the Kōmeitō seems to have paid the price for the inconsistency of their positions. In other words, it is the Kōmeitō, not the LDP, who paid for the political drama surrounding the rise of local party in Tokyo.

V. Conclusion

This study tried to illuminate upon the institutional factors that shape Kōmeitō's electoral rationality—from electoral system, electoral cycle, and local political milieu—that led to the party's strategic segregation of local and national elections in Tokyo in 2017. Specifically, unlike common characterization of Kōmeitō's party organization as centralized hierarchy, this paper sheds light on its ‘stratified’ aspect which accommodates local autonomy for the purpose of winning elections.

The apparent center-local contradictions within electoral politics of the Kōmeitō is not a unique phenomenon in Tokyo. The party's central leadership has repeatedly claimed that the local and national politics are different games,²⁸⁾ and Kōmeitō has on occasion employed ad hoc behaviors in choosing cooperation partners at local levels, overlooking

28) 『朝日新聞デジタル』 2017.7.2, <https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASK72756KK72ULFA00D.html>

LDP-Kōmeitō framework set up by the central party leadership.²⁹⁾ As the analyses of two elections held in Tokyo in 2017 showed, Kōmeitō's strategic choices are shaped not only based on the electoral rules, but also after giving considerations to local political landscapes. Furthermore, as the unequivocal competence of such 'inconsistent' behaviors demonstrates, it is the internal coherence among party supporters, rather than center-local tensions, that produces successful electoral results.

Ironically, however, such decentralized decision-making, as well as the electoral calculation by the local leadership that often displays contradictory behaviors, seems to go hand-in-hand with the risk of eroding party's external image. While Kōmeitō may be able to maintain its party strength in local elections without incorporating non-Kōmeitō votes, in national setting, the 2017 general election exposed the difficulty of maintaining support from the non-Kōmeitō voters. As the party's organizational integrity remains dependent on the electoral performance, it discloses the Kōmeitō's vulnerability towards local electoral environment that often compels them to prioritize electoral rationality over political consistency. 日本空間

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29) See, for example, Cox, Karen E., "A local five-party alliance challenges the LDP in Hyogo," In Steven Reed ed, *Japanese Electoral Politics: Creating a New Party System* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp.84~104; 馬渡剛, 「地方政党組織における意思決定の詳細－自民党青森県・秋田県連の事例から」, 建林正彦 編, 『政党組織の政治学』, 東京: 東洋経済新報社, 2013.

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계층화된 정당 조직과 국정-지방 선거의 전략적 분리

: 2017년 도쿄 도의회 선거와 중의원 선거에서의
공명당의 선거 전략에 대한 분석

손석의

본 연구의 목적은 2017년 일본 도쿄에서 실시된 지방선거와 중의원 선거를 둘러싼 기회구조를 분석함으로써 공명당이 지방선거와 국정선거에서 양면적인 행동을 취하게 되는 요인을 분석하는 것이다. 이를 위해 제도적 요인, 즉 선거제도, 선거 시기, 또한 지방정당의 부상이란 세 가지 변수에 주목하여 공명당의 선거 전략적 합리성이 형성되는 과정을 고찰하였다. 공명당이 조직의 청렴성을 유지하기 위해 지방 조직의 자율성 확보에 성공하였고, 이로 인한 결정과정의 분산이 지방-국정 선거에서의 불일치한 전략에 나타난 것이다. 2017년 도쿄에서 실시된 두 가지 선거의 결과가 보여주듯이, 지방 선거와 국정 선거에서의 공명당의 '모순적인' 태도는 당내 갈등을 의미하는 것이 아니라 공명당 조직 내에서 형성된 선거 전략적 합리성의 결과라고 할 수 있다.

본 논문은 우선 공명당을 '계층화된 정당조직'으로 정의하여, 분산된 의사결정 과정이 선거에서의 청렴성 유지를 그 목적으로 하였다는 점에 주목한다. 둘째, 도쿄 지방 레벨에서의 자민당-공명당 관계를 전략적 안일주의로 특징짓는 "유리된 관계"라는 것을 보여준다. 마지막으로 2017년 도의회 선거와 중의원 선거를 분석하며 공명당의 국정 및 지방 선거에서의 선거 편 바꾸기가 조직 유지에 효과적인 선거결과를 가져온 실태를

논한다.

주제어

공명당, 자민당, 선거전략적 합리성, 도교 도의회 선거, 도민퍼스트회,
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