

COMPLETION REPORT

From Bureaucrats to Politicians: Seikai-Tensin (政界転身) 's Political success in Postwar Japan

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There has been a long debate over the dichotomy of politics and administration to construct a legitimate boundary between politicians and bureaucrats. The Developmental State Theory (hereafter DST), which has been supported by a plethora of research, has led us to believe the strong bureaucracy wields power and guides society to develop the state economy of Japan. As DST identifies the state with the bureaucracy, other political/governmental institutions, including the National Diet, are largely overlooked in its explanation of national decision-making. Nonetheless, there has been another body of the literature that argues politicians are more powerful. This line of research has recently gained more strength with the appearance of the strong politicians in the past two decades, most notably former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and incumbent Abe Shinzo. Taken together, to students of Japanese politics and government, it seems rather clear that the borderline between politics and administration is unclear; so the question now becomes, who have been predominating the postwar Japanese state, bureaucrats or politicians?

To address the long lasting academic debate, bureaucrats vs. politicians, my dissertation explores the persistent resilience of Seikai-Tensin (ex-bureaucrat Diet members)'s political success. With the generous support of the Sumitomo Foundation, I was able to complete data collection on personal background of the entire members of the Diet and cabinet in postwar Japan, and to conduct interviews of (would-be) Seikai-Tensin politicians. According to my studies, about 20.2% of Councilors, 16.9% of Representatives, and 36.2% of cabinet members have been classified as Seikai-Tensin politicians since WWII. This predominance even continues to the premiership. Seikai-Tensin's dual identity being former bureaucrats and incumbent legislators would enable them to act as agents that bridge politics and bureaucracy. That is, their political success is not just personal but has a significant influence on the policymaking process. Individual politicians' political success and political institutions' symbiotic development reinforce each other.

In conclusion, DST is a very powerful theoretical framework to understand the Japanese bureaucracy and its achievement, but the role of the Diet and relationship between the Diet and government are largely left out. My dissertation addresses the lacuna by focusing on Seikai-Tensin. In pursuing political success, Seikai-Tensin build multiple networks and stand in an intermediate position between bureaucracy and party. Seikai-Tensin do not actively form a distinctive group in Japanese politics, but are tightly embedded and adapted in the existing system

by serving as intermediary agents between major political parties, or distinctive network clusters, due to their educational and bureaucratic background. Although my analyses from multiple chapters constantly suggest that political memberships matter more than other ones, more so in recent years, Seikai-Tensin's bridging role does not fade from the scene. Their functional importance (, which exceeds the analytical scope of this dissertation project but will be explored in follow-up studies) may get even higher in the coming years under the post-1955 system with multiple active parties.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- March 9, 2017 / Kyoto University / Graduate School of Law Workshop / “Affiliation Network Analysis on Postwar Seikai-Tensin (政界転身) Network, 1947-2014” / Nara Park
- May 30, 2017 / Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, France / International Institute of Administrative Sciences / “Coevolution of Bureaucracy and Party: Seikai-Tensin in Postwar Japan” / Nara Park
- August 31, 2017 / San Francisco, USA / American Political Science Association / “Seikai-Tensin and Postwar Japanese Elections: Effects of Bureaucratic Background” / Nara Park

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)