

# *Japanese Election Campaigns & the Political Spouse*

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# The Under-valued Variable of an Election Campaign Team:

The Spouse

## Does the Spouse Matter in Electoral Politics?

- Political candidates running for public office are seldom evaluated by voters on their own merit.
- Other political actors participating in the campaign on the behalf of the candidate are under scrutiny by voters.
- Candidates are perceptive about voter calculations other actors associated with the election campaign.

### WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

- Evaluation of political participation of the spouse.
- A question about how constituents can be targeted via spousal action.
- A question about change/no change in the willingness of the electorate to find merit in the spouse's participation in electoral politics.
  - Issue advocacy – spousal-influenced policy
  - The spouse as a “face” of the campaign

# Questions of Interest

- What contribution(s) is representative of the spouse in Japanese elections?
- 日本の選挙において、候補者の配偶者のどのような貢献が代表的といえるだろうか？
- Does the spouse assume a responsibility to participate in political and electoral activities? Does the responsibility vary based on sex, geography, party affiliation, level of office, tenure in office?
- 配偶者は政治、選挙活動への責任を想定しているだろうか？その責任は性、地理、政党との提携、役職のレベル、任期を考慮したうえに成り立つものか？
- Do politicians believe voters think the participation by the spouse is necessary? In other words, is the presence of the spouse necessary in election campaigns, wherein it represents a “spousal effect?”
- 政治家は投票者が政治家の配偶者の介入は必要であるとみていると思っているのか？すなわち選挙活動における「配偶者による効果」を示す候補者の配偶者の存在は必要なのか？
- Do politicians believe it is important for the spouse to participate in a “prescribed” way?
- 政治家はその配偶者にとって「規定」の方法で政治に介入することは重要であると思っているのか？

# Research Methodology 研究方法

- 1+ Hour Face-to-Face Interviews and Oral histories\*
  - Individual interviews (spouse only; politician only)
  - Joint interviews (spouse and politician)\*
- All levels of elected office; different geographic regions
- Interviews conducted between 2010 and 2012
- Survey – National level, Lower House only
  - 436 (of 480 members) mail surveys targeted at the spouse of Diet members.
- Direct Observations (Participant Observations)
- Media Analysis

# Mixed Sampling Methods

- Convenience/Opportunity sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Snowball sampling

## RESULTS

- Face to Face Interview Sample size: 56\*  
(current)
  - Small sample??
- \*Mail-in (Fax) surveys responses: 107

# Politician & Spouse Interviews by Party Affiliation

	Town	City	Prefectural	Mayoral	Gubernatorial	National	
							<b>TOTAL</b>
DPJ	0	1	4	0	2	12	<b>19</b>
LDP	0	2	3	0	0	10	<b>15</b>
JCP	0	2	2	0	0	2	<b>6</b>
SDPJ/JSP	2	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Other Parties	0	1	2	0	0	2	<b>5</b>
Independent	2	3	0	4	0	0	<b>9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>56</b>

## Participants/Respondents by Gender & Level of Office

	Town	City	Prefectural	Mayoral	Gubernatorial*	National*	
							<b>TOTAL</b>
Male spouse	0	1	5	1	0	6	<b>13</b>
Female spouse	2	4	2	1	1	11	<b>21</b>
Male politician	2	4	2	1	1	5	<b>15</b>
Female politician	0	0	2	1	0	4	<b>7</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>56</b>



# Participants

	Male Spouse	Female Spouse	Male Politician	Female Politician
Senior politician (Public service total)	7	13	9	4
Junior politician (Public service total)	6	8	6	3
Under age 40	5	7	4	2
Age 40 and older	8	14	11	5
Retired/Unseated/Unelected	0	6	7	1
East Japan	7	11	9	4
West Japan	6	10	6	3
Urban	7	4	2	4
Suburban	6	8	8	3
Rural	0	9	5	0

# Independent Variables & Variable Conflation

- ▣ **Sex: Male/Female**
- ▣ **Political Party affiliation**
- ▣ **Geography** (i.e., urban, suburban, rural)
- ▣ **Region/Areas of cultural or nuanced distinction**
  - East/West Japan
  - Kyushu/Shikoku/Honshu/ Hokkaido
  - Kansai/Kanto/Tohoku
- ▣ **Level of office**
  - Prime Ministerial/Ministerial
  - National Legislator
  - Governor
  - Mayor
  - Prefectural Assembly member
  - City Councilor
- ▣ **Generation/Age**
- ▣ **Term/length/*life-cycle* of office (public service total)**



## The Role of the Spouse 配偶者の役割

Caption:  
“Smile, Wave, Solve Libya. Just what is a candidate's wife supposed to do these days?”

これだけが最近の候補者の妻がすべきことだろうか。

# Gender Role Spillover to Electoral Politics

## ジェンダーロールの選挙政治へのスピルオーバー効果

- Electoral/Political “Role Play”
    - Gender-driven Expectations of Behavior, namely the female spouse 性差から来る女性配偶者の態度への期待
  - Survey question:
    - What kind of image of the role of a politician’s spouse do you think is held among voters?
    - 投票者の政治家の配偶者に対するイメージはどのようなものだと思いますか？
  - Response:
    - 「にこにこ笑って; ペこペこしているイメージ」
- Translations: “Ingratiating, demure acting, smiling and maintaining a soft-spoken presentation of self”
- A response by a 40-some year old female spouse of DPJ LH member.

# Roles of the Spouse 配偶者の協力

What are the expressions of support by the spouse?

配偶者からどのような協力ですか。

- **Public appearances** 公的な場への出現
  - Public speeches
  - Event “host” and “greeter”
  - Regular companion to candidate at public events
- **Campaign Management: Finances, Scheduling, Monitor of Campaign Rules** 選挙会計官、活動、法律管理委員
- **Campaign office organizer and greeter/host** 政治/選挙事務所  
所の担当者
- **GOTV: District Canvassing and Voter Outreach**
- **Fundraiser** 資金の調達係
- **Koenkai leader** 後援会管理者
- **Personal Attendant/Advisor to Candidate** 個人的なアドバイザー

What is the frequency of the support? どの程度協力をするか。

- Full-time 常勤
- Part-time 非常勤

# Interpretative Political and Electoral Role of the Spouse in Japanese Politics?

**1. Spouses' and Politicians' *Perceptions* of Voter Expectations** (Largely congruent perceptions between spouses and politicians): 配偶者と政治家による投票者が持つ期待の認識

- Passive: Seen, but not heard, or “window-dressing;” 受動的：配偶者は目に見えるが意見は求められない
- Active: Low-profile involvement; modest/reserve self-presentation
  - Program assistant/facilitator, but little decision-making authority/role
 能動的：控えめ、慎重深い/自己主張を控える

**2. Politicians' Acknowledged Expectation of Spouse:** 配偶者に対する政治家の定評ある期待

- A political “partner” and supportive ally 政治的「パートナー」
- A political “surrogate” 政治的「代理人」

**3. Spouses' Acknowledged Self-Expectations:**

配偶者の定評ある自己期待値

- A personal, political advisor or confidant 個人的、政治的アドバイザー
- “Cheerleader” 「チアリーダー」
- “Protector” or “Guardian” (Assuring good health, deflecting distraction) ・「後援者」、もしくは「保護者」（健康を保証、気を晴らせてくれる）
- Political/Electoral Administrator 政治/選挙担当者

## Top Concerns Expressed by Spouse

- 1. Be sure to show a positive attitude, always appear humble, polite, and confident.
- 2. Show appreciation for voters' opinions. Be a good listener.
- 3. Not being too forward, or opinionated. Allow political candidate to take charge or lead.
- 4. Remain mindful of election laws/rules
- 5. Maintain one's health and the health of the candidate
- 6. Have a clean and fashionable appearance

\*NOTE: Attention to policy is low among priorities.

# Typology/Continuum of Spousal Support Roles

## Four Types of Spouses (Attitudinal Positions & Behaviors)

**TYPE 1: “Dekinai spouse”/Iranai spouse”** - A spouse who is fully detached or divested from the electoral process. Initially opposed, turned “reluctant supporter/spouse.” Respectfully absolved of any participatory role.

タイプ1：「できない配偶者」、「いらない配偶者」

- 配偶者のうち選挙の過程から距離を置いたり離脱するもの。はじめのうちは違いうが、そのうち「乗り気ではない協力者、配偶者」となる。慎みつつ、どのような参加型の役割でも辞退する。



# Typology/Continuum of Spousal Support Roles

## Four Types of Spouses (Attitudinal Positions & Behaviors)

**Type 2: “Mendo spouse”** - A supportive spouse who is inactive, or largely absent from day to day political and electoral activities (e.g., Personal and professional obligations prevents any regularity of participation). Participation in political and electoral activities are for short, defined periods of time (i.e., during the official election campaign period).

### タイプ2：「面倒配偶者」

- 協力的な配偶者だが活動的でない、または毎日の政治、選挙活動の多くを欠席する。（例；個人的、職業上の義務により規則正しい参加を拒む）。政治、選挙運動への参加はその時期の期間を定める。（すなわち正式な選挙活動期間）

# Typology/Continuum of Spousal Support Roles

## Four Types of Spouses (Attitudinal Positions & Behaviors)

**Type 3: “Onegai-suru spouse”/“Onigiri spouse”** - A supportive spouse perennially engaged in (or limited to) traditionally gender-constructed(i.e., restricted) political and electoral activities.

タイプ3: 「お願いする配偶者」 / 「おにぎり配偶者」

- 協力的な配偶者で永続的に伝統的な性差観念に従事する（または支配されている）者。すなわち政治、選挙活動が制限される。

# Typology/Continuum of Spousal Support Roles

## Four Types of Spouses (Attitudinal Positions & Behaviors)

**Type 4: “Gambaru spouse”** - A supportive spouse, visible involved in political and electoral activities. Few restrictions on how she/he participates in the electoral process. Often a “political proxy or surrogate.” → Public backlash: “de sugi” “yari sugi”

タイプ4： 「頑張る配偶者」

- 協力的な配偶者で政治、選挙活動への参加が顕著な者。配偶者は選挙過程への参加をあまり制限されてない。主に「政治的代理人、代行者」。→有権者のバックラッシュ：「出過ぎ、やりすぎ」

## Self-Placement among 34 Spouses (Male: 13; Female 21)

\*Placement based on spouses' personal, retrospective reflections or reflections of current behavior )

- TYPE 1: 2 (Male: 1; Female: 1)
- TYPE 2: 16 (Male: 12; Female: 4)
- TYPE 3: 12 (Male: 0; Female 12)
- TYPE 4\*:4 Male: 0; Female 4)
  - (\*Senior-level, LDP, or Rural district spouse )

**TOTAL: 34**

## Politicians' Perceptions of Spouse (22) (Male: 15; Female 7)

\*(Placement based on politicians' personal perception of spouses' role)

- TYPE 1: 4 (Male politician: 2; Female politician: 2)
- TYPE 2: 7 (Male politician: 2; Female politician: 5)
- TYPE 3: 9 (Male politician: 9; Female politician: 0)
- TYPE 4: 2 (Male politician: 2; Female politician: 0)

**TOTAL: 22**

# Findings/Conclusion

- **Sex (Male/Female Spouse)**
  - Gender Matters
- **Political Party affiliation**
  - Matters for LDP
- **Geography** (i.e., urban, suburban, rural)
  - Matters for rural districts
- **Region/Areas of cultural or nuanced distinction**
- **Level of office**
  - Matters at prefectural level and national level of office
- **Generation/Age**
  - Matters for older generations
- **Term/length/*life-cycle* of office (public service total)**

Thank You

Questions? Comments/Reflections?  
Criticisms? Recommendations?