

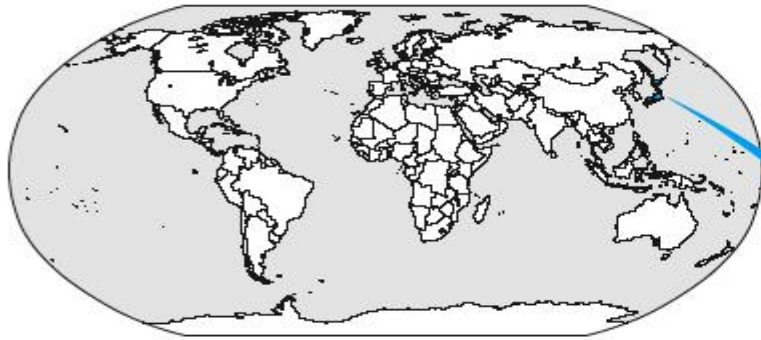


# **Chapter Eleven**

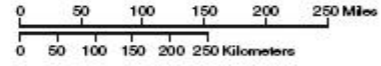
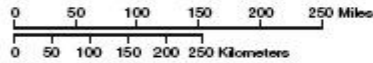
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## **Politics in Japan**

**Comparative Politics Today, 9/e**  
Almond, Powell, Dalton & Strøm  
Pearson Education, Inc. publishing as Longman © 2008

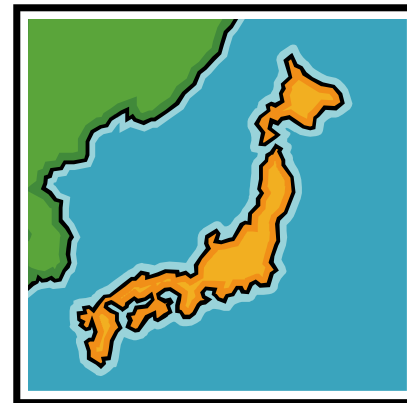


# JAPAN



# Country Bio: Japan

- **Population:**
  - 127.7 million
- **Territory:**
  - 145,882 sq. miles
- **Year of Independence:**
  - 660 B.C.
- **Year of Current Constitution:**
  - 1947
- **Head of State:**
  - Emperor Akihito
- **Head of Government:**
  - Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
- **Language:**
  - Japanese
- **Religion(s):**
  - Observe both Shinto and Buddhist 84%%, other 16% (including Christian 0.7%)



# Background

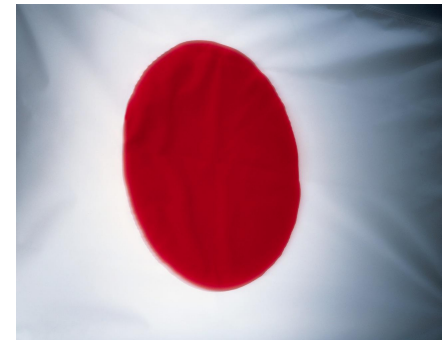
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- Japan is the only long-lived democracy in East Asia.
- Rapid economic growth post WWII
  - Fascinating to the world given Japan's scarcity of natural resources and its overcrowded population.
    - 7th most populous country in the world.
    - Only 20% of country is made up arable land.
    - How did it evolve into the 2nd largest economy in the world?
      - Other countries want to figure out the "Japan model" of rapid development where government is seen as playing an important economic role.
- Prolonged recession in the 1990s
  - But still 2nd largest economy

# Background

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- Democracy but with atypical institutions
  - Constitution imposed on Japan by the U.S.-led occupation authorities in 1946.
  - Never amended that constitution.
    - Foreign origin and alien ideals
    - Undermined by actual political practices
      - Corruption
      - Powerful bureaucrats
      - Political stability has vanished temporarily
        - Party system has fragmented



# Current Policy Challenges

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- Recession
  - 1997 Japan's first full year of negative economic growth since 1975
    - Banking crisis from the bursting of the inflated land price bubble of the late 1980s
    - Mountains of unrecoverable loans
    - Deflation, unemployment and bankruptcies
    - Shocked the national psyche
  - Government slow to respond
- Rapidly aging population
- Closed domestic markets
- Deregulation of economy needed

# Current Policy Challenges



- Need modernization of immigration policy
- Security issues
- Despite all these challenges Japanese remain among the wealthiest and longest-lived people in the world

# Historical Origins of the Modern Japanese State

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- First inhabitants
  - Hunter-gatherers from the Asian mainland
- Jomon - 11,000 B.C.
  - 300 B.C. shift from Jomon culture occurred
- New culture: Yayoi
  - Use of bronze and iron, including weaponry
  - Development of wet field rice agriculture
  - Spread over islands
  - Yamato, most powerful clan

# Historical Origins of the Modern Japanese State

- Japanese court – sponsored Buddhism
  - Began to write histories, legal codes
- Samurai's began to assume more power and warred with each other
- Tokugawa clan: ruled from 1600 to 1868
  - Feudal system
  - Confucian doctrine

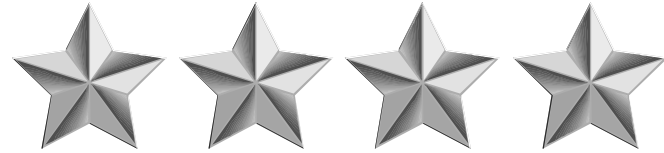


# Historical Origins of the Modern Japanese State

- Isolation
- Commodore Matthew C. Perry
  - Open ports to trade
- Meiji Restoration (1868)
- Oligarchs
  - Constitution
  - Established the Diet
  - Nascent political parties
- Taisho Democracy (1918-1932)
  - Cabinets dominated by political parties
  - Zaibatsu favoritism
  - Growth of military
  - Ultrnationalism



# The Occupation



- Allied Occupation of Japan
  - Administered by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP)
  - U.S. General Douglas MacArthur
    - Demilitarize and democratize Japan
    - Render Japan unable and unwilling to wage war ever again
  - New constitution
    - Peace Clause, Article 9
  - Land reform
  - Independent trade-union movement
  - Structural changes to the bureaucracy

# The Occupation

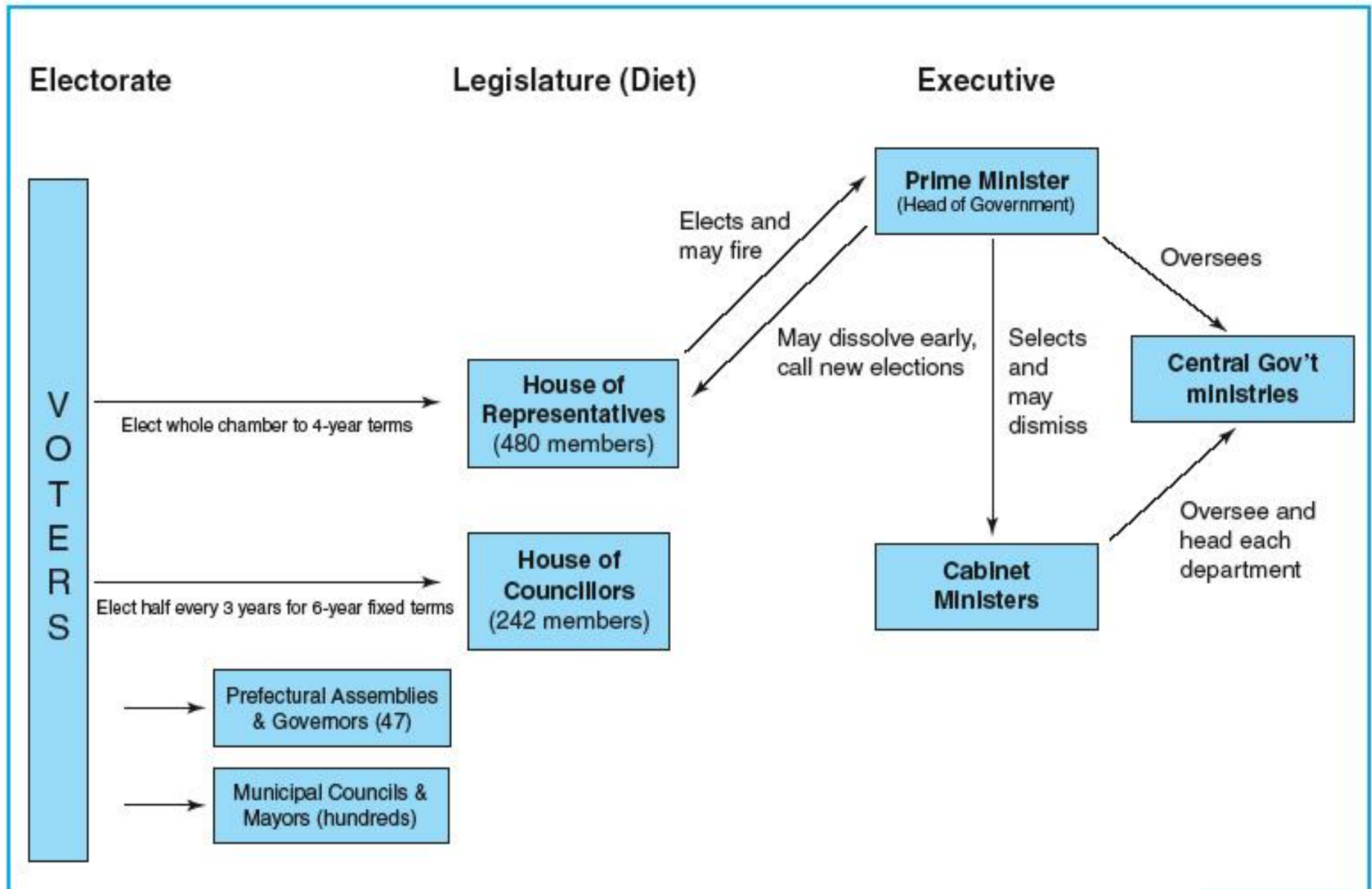
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- Goals shifted from demilitarization to securing Japan as a reliable ally in the Cold War
  - 1951 general peace treaty in San Francisco with all allied powers except the Soviet Union
  - U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty

# Political Institutions

- Japan's system of government
  - Parliamentary, bicameral, and nonfederal
- The National Diet: House of Representatives
  - House of Councillors
- Local government
  - 47 Prefectures
    - Each elects its own governor and legislature
    - All local government authority is delegated and may be retracted
- The Judiciary
  - Judicial independence; guaranteed in the Constitution
  - Cabinet directly appoints the 15 members of the Supreme Court
    - Helps to appoint all lower court appointments as well
    - LDP - only elderly judges; forced retirement
    - Secretariat
    - Malapportionment case





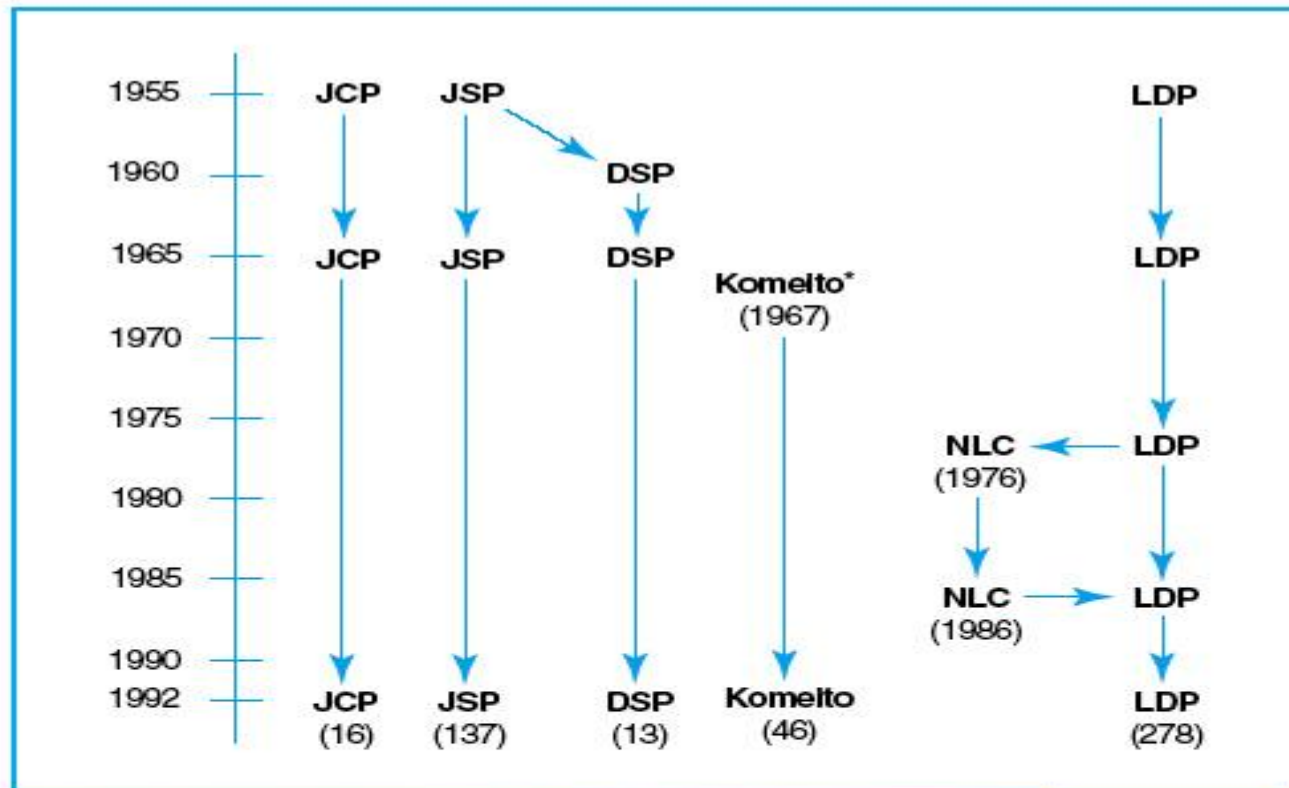
The Structure of Government in Japan

FIGURE 11.1

# Electoral Systems and Electoral Competition

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- Two chambers of the National Diet use different electoral rules
- Old electoral rules –House of Representatives
  - Return to Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system
  - LDP allowed candidates to create decentralized campaign organizations
  - Barriers to challengers
  - Lowered the electoral salience of issues
  - Restrictive rules for campaigning



Japan's Party System, 1955–1992

FIGURE 11.2

**List of Political Parties**

Komeito	Komeito, or Clean Government Party
DSP	Democratic Socialist Party
JCP	Japan Communist Party
JSP	Japan Socialist Party (renamed SDPJ)
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
NLC	New Liberal Club

\*Note: The Komeito supported candidates in the Upper House as early as 1956, but did not endorse Lower House candidates until 1967.

# Electoral Systems and Electoral Competition

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- New electoral rules- House of Representatives
  - Size of the House of Representatives set at 500, later reduced to 480
  - 4 year terms
    - 300 elected on the basis of equal-sized single-member districts
    - 180 are elected from 11 regional districts by proportional representation
    - Each voter casts two votes: one for a candidate in the SMD and one for a party in the PR district
      - Zombies
  - Goal of new rules: eliminate intraparty competition

# Electoral Systems and Electoral Competition

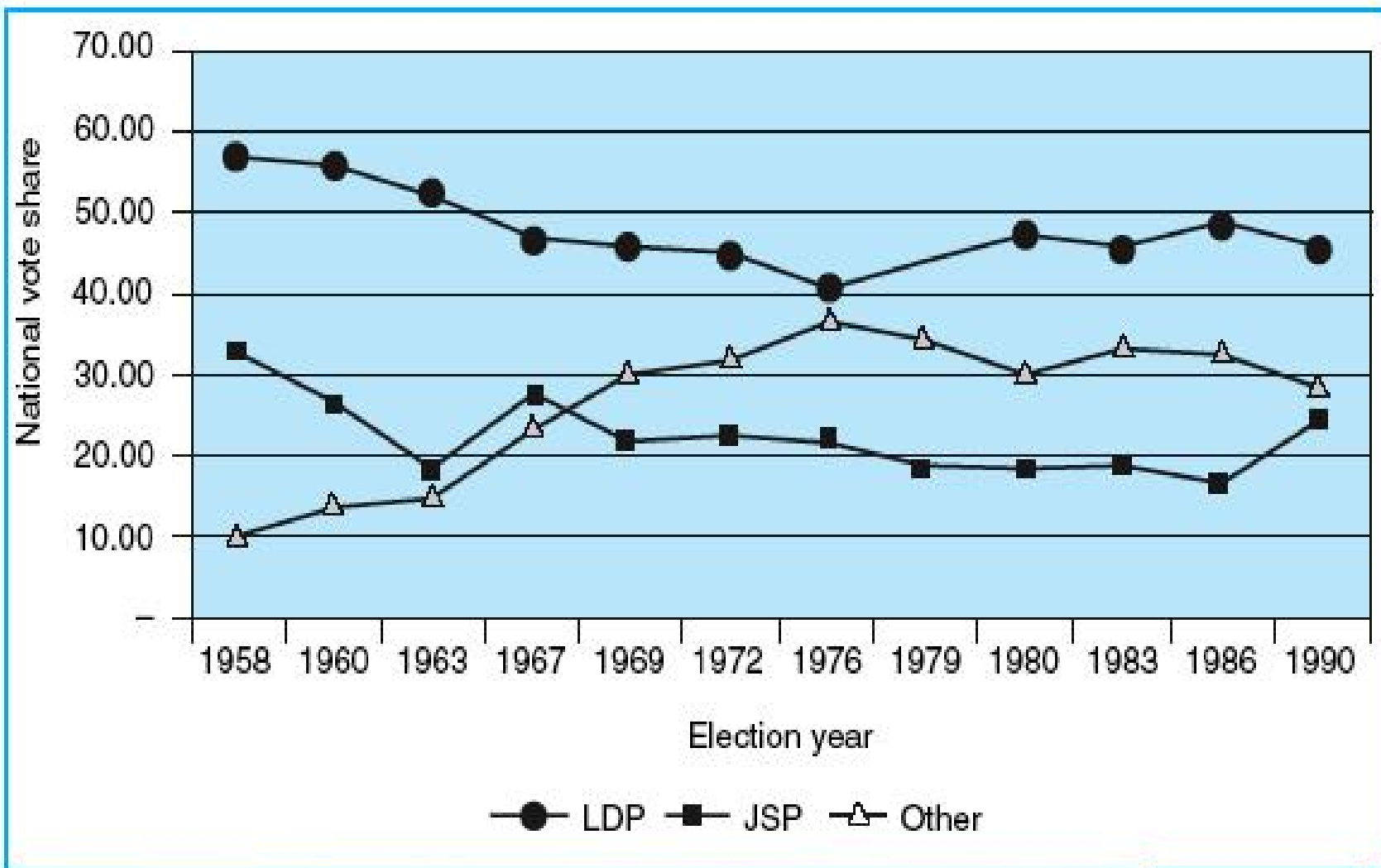
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- Electoral Rules – House of Councillors
  - Fixed six year terms
  - Half elected every three years
  - Each voter has two votes:
    - One cast in the prefectural SNTV district for an individual candidate
    - Second cast for a party in the national district (with each party receiving a share of the 50 PR seats that matches the share of the vote it receives)
    - Not much intraparty competition
    - Focus is on parties, not individuals
    - More issue-based campaigning

# The Japanese Party System

- Japanese party system combined multipartisim with the sustained dominance of one majority party.
  - The LDP
- The Party System, 1946-1955
  - Somewhat chaotic
  - Socialist Party - force in the Diet
  - Japan Communist Party
  - Japan Socialist Party
  - Liberal Democratic Party
- The Party System, 1955-1993
  - The 1960s
  - The 1970s
  - The 1980s





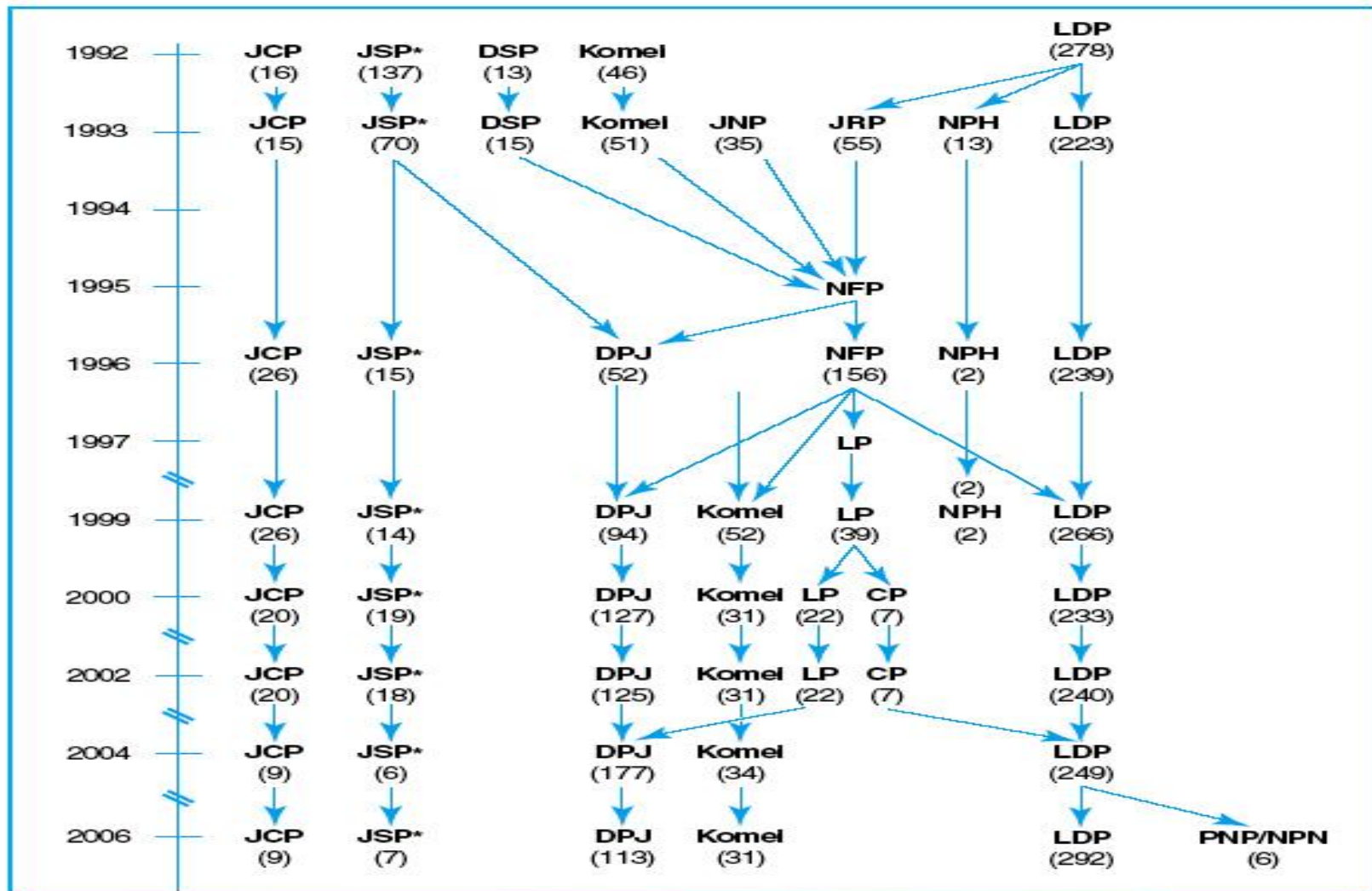
National Vote Share for LDP, JSP, and Others, 1958–1990

FIGURE 11.3

# The Japanese Party System: Since 1993

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- Stability disappeared for a while
  - LDP tried to put together coalition party
  - Coalition was established
    - Contained seven parties except the LDP and the Communists
    - Goal: to complete the reform of the electoral system that the LDP had failed to accomplish



Japan's Party System, 1992–2006

FIGURE 11.4

Political Parties: Komei-Komeito or Clean Government Party; CP-Conservative Party; DPJ-Democratic Party of Japan; DSP-Democratic Socialist Party; JCP-Japan Communist Party; JNP-Japan New Party; JRP-Japan Renewal Party; JSP-Japan Socialist Party\*; LDP-Liberal Democratic Party; NFP-New Frontier Party; NPH-New Party Harbinger; PNP/NPN: People's New Party/New Party Nippon

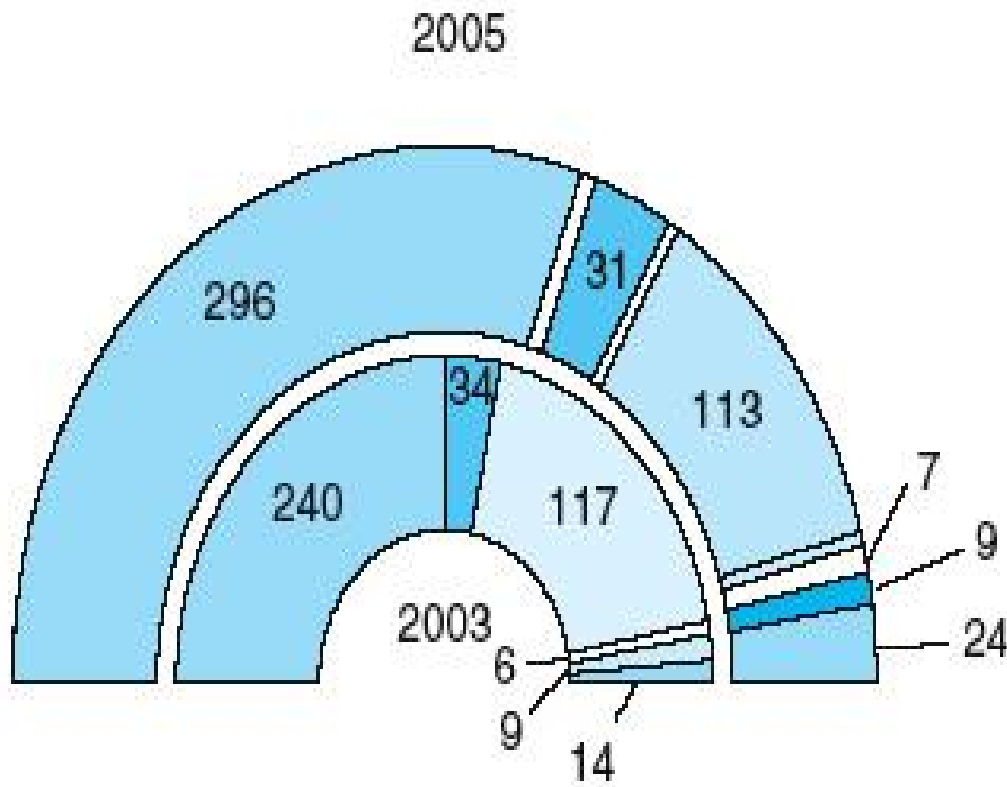
~The JSP changed its name to Social Democratic Party in the early 1990s, but we retain the old name for purposes of clarity. Parties are arranged ideologically left to right (relative placement of DPJ and Komeito is tricky, with the DPJ more to the left due to its inclusion of many JSP refugees and the Komeito's long-standing coalition with the LDP).

Note: Numbers in parentheses are the number of Lower House seats that each party held at several points in time. There were also 20 independents and two vacant seats as of 2007.

# The Japanese Party System: Since 1993

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- Electoral reform passed
  - Next on the agenda: tax reform
    - Conflict and the coalitional government collapsed
    - Who emerged? The LDP with the help of their once enemy, the Japan Socialist Party and a smaller party.
    - Produced the first Socialist prime minister
- New party system has elements of single member district systems plus proportional systems
  - Effect: party consolidation, campaigns have changed, intraparty organization, advent of coalition government



- Liberal Democratic Party
- New Komeito
- Democratic Party
- Japan Socialist Party
- Japan Communist Party
- Others/Independents

The Distribution of Lower House Seats in 2003 and 2005

**FIGURE 11.5**

# Political Participation and Voting Behavior

- By international standards, ordinary Japanese are not very politically involved.
  - Identify with political party through personal identification with candidate or through an interest group affiliated with the party.
  - Koenkai
    - Changing nature in modern Japan given the end of intraparty competition
    - Transformed themselves into district level party organizations
- Voter turnout declining steadily on a nationwide basis
- Recently party identification has declined as well
  - More independents



# Interest Groups

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- Big Business
  - keiretsu
- Small-and medium-sized businesses
- Agriculture
- Organized labor
  - Enterprise unions



# Political Culture and Issue Cleavages

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- Hierarchy, homogeneity, and conformity to group objectives
  - Key concepts in the discussion of Japanese political culture
  - The feudal experience: hierarchy
  - Meiji attempt to Westernize culture may have produced backlash of nationalism found in pre-War and wartime Japan
  - Social hierarchy: family, workplace and in politics

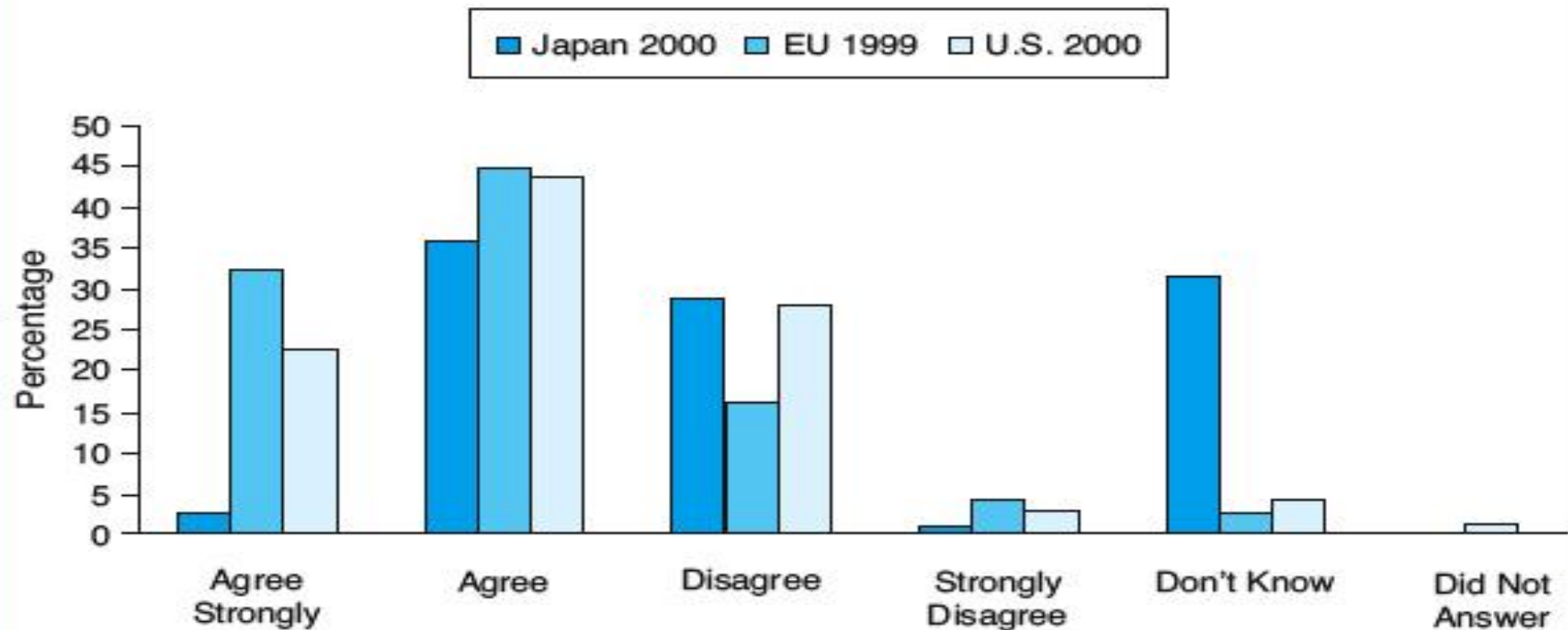
# Political Culture and Issue Cleavages

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- Women: At home and in the workplace
  - “good wives and wise mothers”
  - Equal Employment Opportunity Law
    - Glass ceiling low and impenetrable
    - Little help from government; little social welfare
    - Japanese women marry later and bear fewer children
    - Impact of aging society



### Husband and wife should both contribute to income



### Persistence of Traditional Gender Roles in Japan

**FIGURE 11.6**

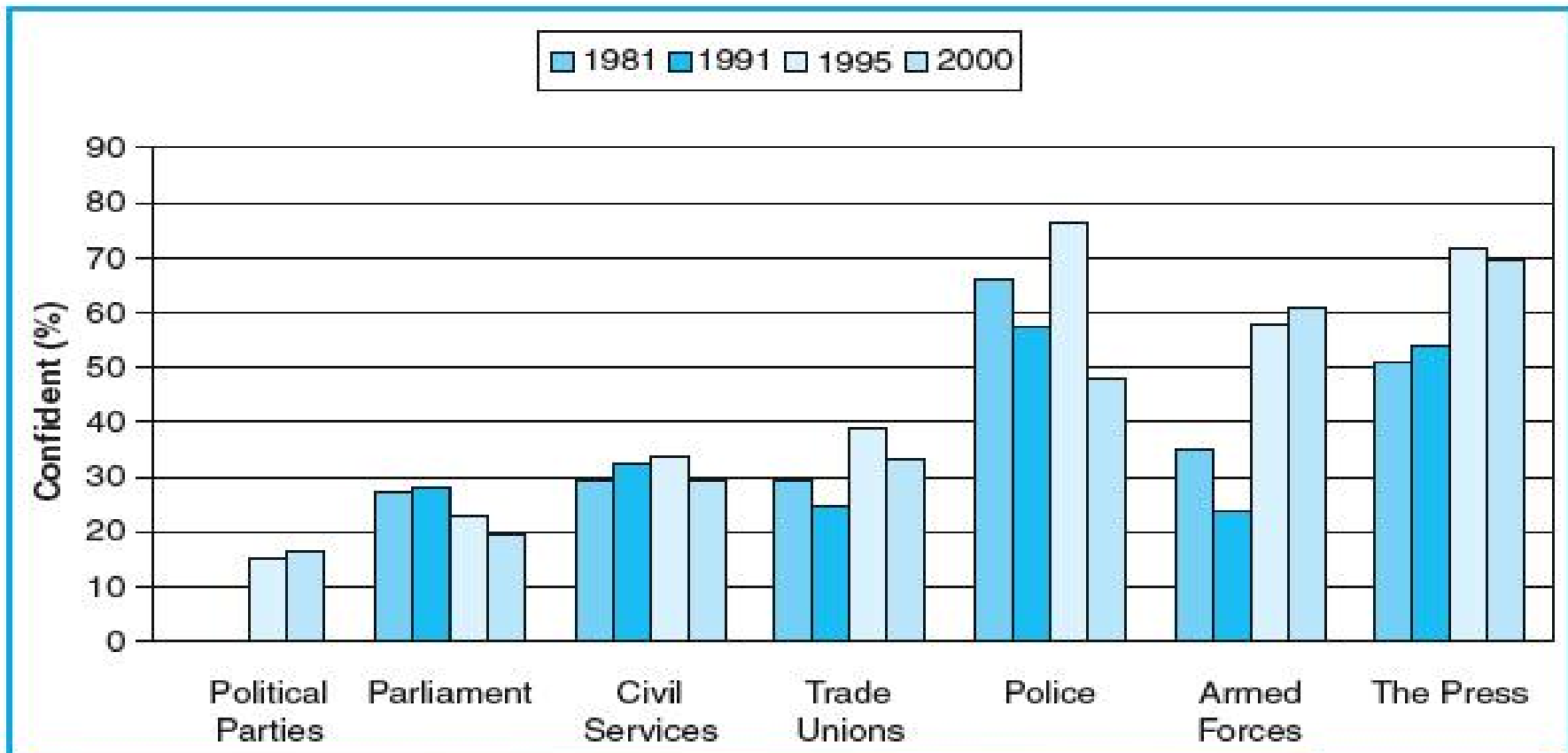
Note: EU data does not include Austria, Cyprus, or Ireland.

Source: European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association. European and World Values Surveys Four-Wave Integrated Data File, 1981–2004, v.20060423, 2006. Aggregate File Producers: Análisis Sociológicos Económicos y Políticos (ASEP) and JD Systems (JDS), Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands. Data Files Suppliers: Análisis Sociológicos Económicos y Políticos (ASEP) and JD Systems (JDS), Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands/Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA), Cologne, Germany.) Aggregate File Distributors: Análisis Sociológicos Económicos y Políticos (ASEP) and JD Systems (JDS), Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands/Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA) Cologne, Germany.

# Political Culture and Issue Cleavages

- Ethnic homogeneity vs. immigration
  - Japan is not completely homogenous
  - A few minority groups
    - High discrimination
    - Koreans- brought to Japan during the war as laborers
      - Still treated poorly today; a few become naturalized citizens
      - Citizenship does not come with birth
      - Demands of Japanese citizenship and impact if one chooses not to
    - Ainu
    - Burakumin
  - Few strong issue cleavages
  - New immigrants
    - Need for young workers
- Conformity
- Theory of Japaneseness





Feelings of Confidence in Various Social Institutions

FIGURE 11.7

Source: European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association. European and World Values Surveys Four-Wave Integrated Data File, 1981–2004, v.20060423, 2006. Aggregate File Producers: Análisis Sociológicos Económicos y Políticos (ASEP) and JD Systems (JDS), Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands. Data Files Suppliers: Análisis Sociológicos Económicos y Políticos (ASEP) and JD Systems (JDS), Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands/Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA), Cologne, Germany;) Aggregate File Distributors: Análisis Sociológicos Económicos y Políticos (ASEP) and JD Systems (JDS), Madrid, Spain/Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands/Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA) Cologne, Germany.

# Political Socialization

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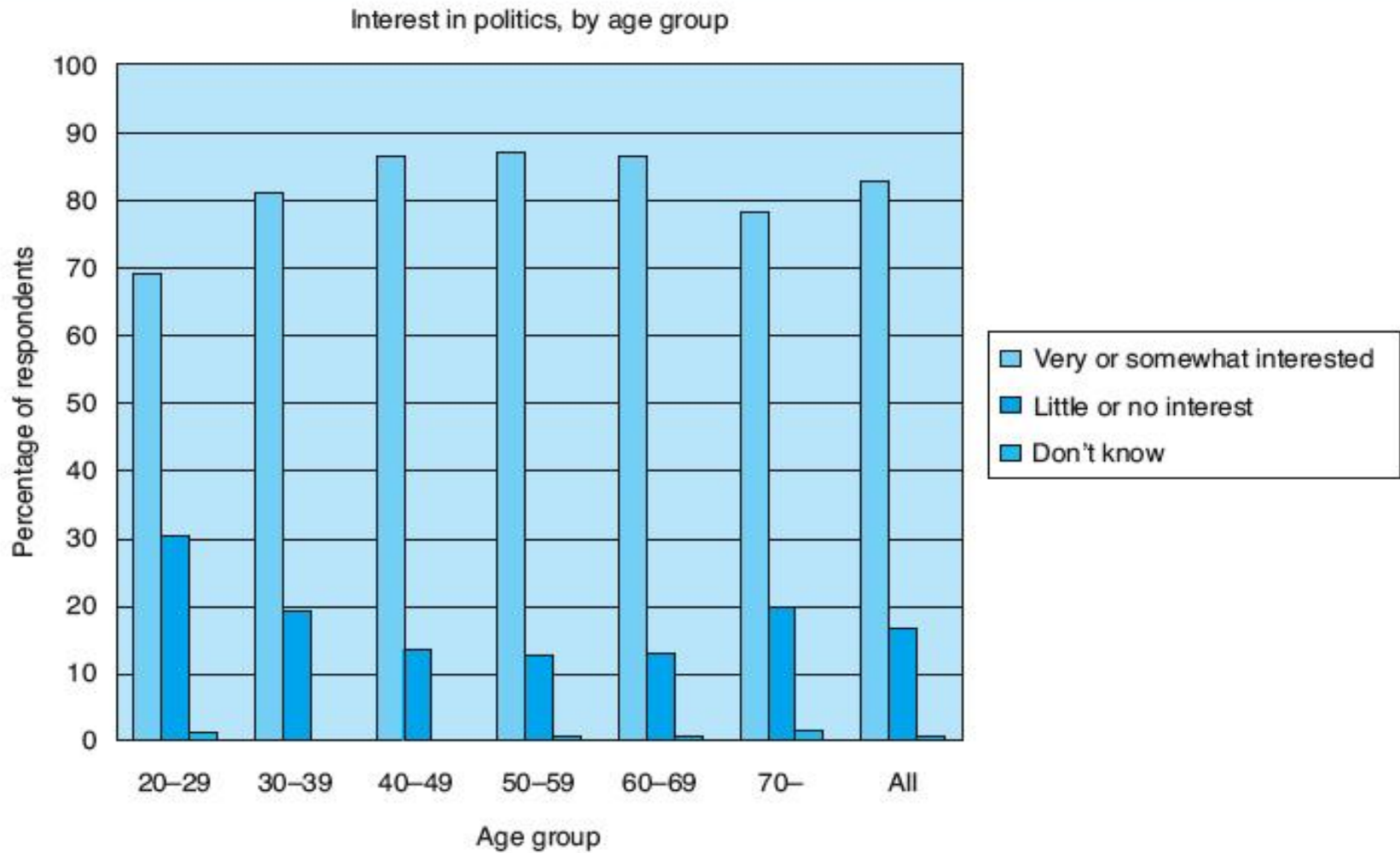
- The family
  - Urban society with nuclear families
  - Role of women
- Education
  - High achieving in math and science
  - “cram schools”
  - Good basic skills; university system in sad shape
    - Extremely difficult entrance exams, but little challenging coursework
    - Entry into workforce after four years unspoiled by liberal ideas
    - School refusal syndrome
    - Portrayal of war against China

# Political Socialization

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- Mass media
  - Play a highly visible role in public life
  - Television media
  - “press club”
- Transforming political culture
  - Role of issues/policy in politics
  - Koizumi

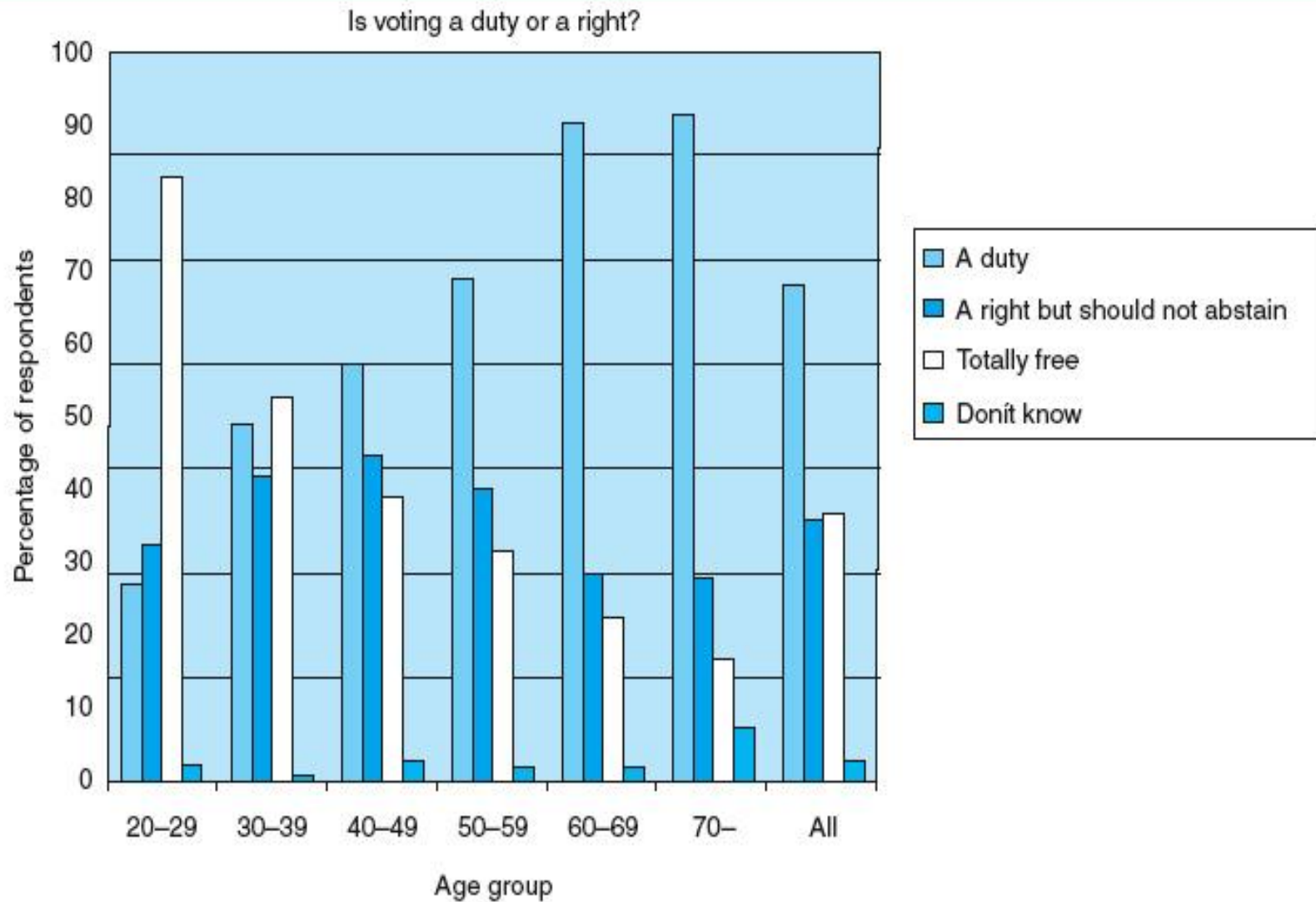




Attitudes Toward Politics

FIGURE 11.8A

Source: Akarui Senkyo Suishin Kyokai, 2001. "Dai 19 kai sangi-in tsujo senkyo no jittai," <http://www.akaruisenkyo.or.jp/search/19/19qa.html>



Attitudes Toward Politics

FIGURE 11.8B

Source: Akarui Senkyo Suishin Kyokai, 2001. "Dai 19 kai sangi-in tsujo senkyo no jittai," <http://www.akaruisenkyo.or.jp/search/19/19qa.html>

# The Policymaking Process

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- Japan: parliamentary democracy with both houses of the Diet directly elected; with a prime minister and a cabinet chosen by the Lower House.
  - Tends to leave proposal of laws to the Cabinet and the Diet reserves the right to accept or reject or amend the proposals.
  - Cabinet delegates to bureaucracy the drafting of legislation

# The Policymaking Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law

---

- Members of either house may submit legislation
  - Member bills are almost always exercises in grandstanding



# The Policymaking Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law- Typical Path

---

- Ministry drafts legislation and submits it to Cabinet; Cabinet acts on it (accept, reject, or amend). If it is to go on, the Cabinet will send it to the Diet. Diet may do whatever it wishes to the bill.
- Normal legislation must be passed identically in both houses unless the Lower House can override (2/3's vote) an Upper House objection.
  - Never happened

# The Policymaking Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law- Typical Path

---

- If the bill is the annual budget, a treaty needing ratification, then only the Lower House need pass it. Upper House may delay it but not hold it up indefinitely.
- Any bill passed by the Diet becomes the law of the land.
- Final steps involve implementation: the bureaucracy
- Elections allow the public to respond the performance of the government in power.

# The Policymaking Process: The Bureaucracy

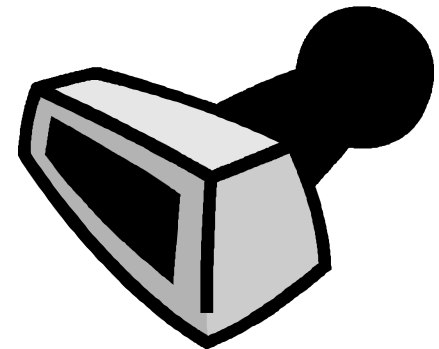
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- Very competent bureaucracy
  - Best and the brightest
  - Long hours; little pay
  - Prestige suffered in the 1990s
- Heavily involved in the policy-making process but not dominant given the parliamentary system
- Why do they do it?
  - Devotion to public service; prestige; potential for early retirement and a second more lucrative career
  - Amakudari
  - Compensation loaded on the back end
- Bureaucrat bashing

# The Policymaking Process

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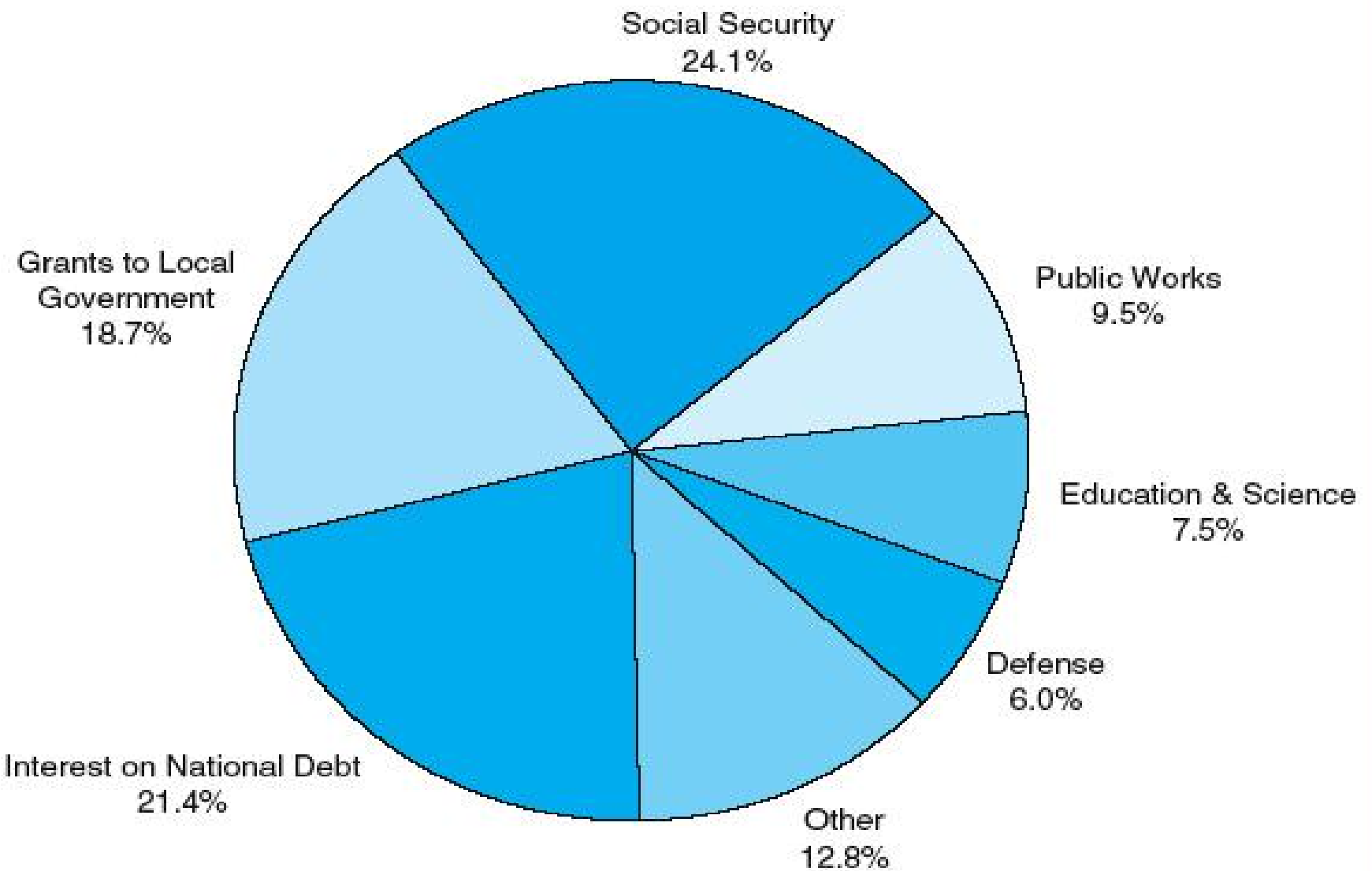
- The Diet: Rubber Stamp or Sovereign?
  - Weak and ineffective?
  - Majority party, LDP, intraparty conflict resolved
  - No need for conflict within Diet; not necessarily weak



# Policy Performance

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- Industrial policy and the economic miracle
- Trade policy
- Security and foreign policy
- Environmental pollution policy
- Welfare policy: health care and pensions
- Policy implications of political reform



Japan's General Account Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2004

FIGURE 11.9

Source: Keizai Koho Center, *Japan 2005: An International Comparison* (Tokyo: Keizai Koho Center, Japan Institute for Social and Economic Affairs, 2005) 35.

# Concluding Thoughts About Japanese Politics

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- The most important lesson is that the Japanese policy process has been, and continues to be, supremely political – even if, on the surface, it seems that an insulated army of smart bureaucrats is calling the shots.