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Gender Differences in Leadership Style Preferences¹

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Abstract

Do men and women have distinct preferences for leadership styles in the political arena? Existing research in organizational behavior indicates that leadership styles in business settings differ between men and women. Specifically, male leaders tend to adopt a task-oriented approach focused on goal achievement, while female leaders lean toward a relationship-oriented style that emphasizes participatory decision-making. This study examines survey data from Japanese voters and elected officials to investigate whether these gender differences are mirrored in political preferences. The findings reveal that male voters value task-oriented leadership more than female voters, who show a greater preference for relationship-oriented leadership. Interestingly, similar patterns were observed among elected officials. However, when accounting for party affiliation, these gender differences disappeared, suggesting that gender-specific leadership preferences might be closely linked to partisan styles. This could be because political parties aim to attract more female voters by adopting leadership styles that align with the preferences of their female voters.

Keywords: Leadership style, legislative network, gender difference, elected official, Japan

JEL classification: J16, D72, D91

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Introduction

In Japan, women are significantly underrepresented in politics compared to men. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) data shows that only 15.7 percent of seats in the Diet—Japan’s national parliament—are held by women, as of 2023.² This gender disparity in elective offices is concerning, especially since women are said to hold political interests and preferences that differ from men (Dolan 2010; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Kahn 1994; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). Increasing the number of female representatives could pivot governmental policy trajectories by introducing a broader spectrum of perspectives and priorities into the legislature. Furthermore, given that men and women may have divergent views on the desired conduct of politicians in decision-making roles, enhancing the descriptive representation of women could precipitate significant shifts in legislative decision-making paradigms.

Organizational research suggests that within business entities, men and women often exhibit divergent leadership styles. Male leaders typically lean toward a *task-oriented style*, prioritizing goal achievement, whereas female leaders tend to gravitate toward a *relationship-oriented style*, emphasizing collaborative decision-making (Eagly and Johnson 1990). For instance, female managers and corporate board members are generally less hierarchical and more cooperative than their male peers (Konrad et al., 2008; Rosener, 1990). These observations align with findings from literature examining women in elective office.

Legislative studies indicate that men and women exhibit different behavioral patterns in group decision-making. Specifically, female legislators often prioritize power-sharing with colleagues and are inclined to adopt more cooperative or collaborative approaches with the legislature (Carey et

² <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking> (accessed on September 25, 2023).

al., 1998; Rosenthal, 1998; Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2013).³ In addition, when chairing state legislative committees, women tend to employ cooperative strategies more frequently than men to address conflicts (Rosenthal 2000). However, these observed gender-based differences may arise from the numerical dominance of male legislators. Such dominance affords them advantageous positions in cultivating legislative networks, compared to their female colleagues. This dynamic becomes particularly evident when forming legislative coalitions, a crucial step for advancing agendas and achieving legislative success. Faced with challenges in establishing these networks, female legislators may gravitate toward team-oriented strategies that underscore consensus building among political actors, irrespective of their personal inclinations.⁴

This study aims to see whether men and women have different perceptions and preferences regarding ideal political leadership styles, drawing upon survey data from Japanese voters and elected officials. The survey targeting elected officials also probed their legislative networks to examine whether any gender disparities exist in their legislative approaches. Empirical analyses reveal that,

³ Since men and women use different behavioral strategies in group decision making, the gender composition of a group can affect its decisions (Hannagan and Larimer 2010).

⁴ Notably, in Japan, female legislators often find themselves marginalized from central committees responsible for important legislative deliberations; consequently, they disproportionately allocate their efforts toward roles with diminished legislative influence, such as supporting public petitions (Ono 2015). However, a study examining the Mexican Chamber of Deputies suggests that women legislators are not necessarily marginalized within the legislature (Kerevel and Atkeson 2013). Similarly, Funk (2015) investigated women's leadership styles in Brazilian municipalities and found that the inclusivity of a mayor in decision-making hinges more on strategic choices than on the mayor's gender.

consistent with the findings of the organizational research, male voters tend to favor *task-oriented* political leaders more than their female counterparts. Conversely, female voters show a stronger preference for *relationship-oriented* leaders. A similar pattern emerges among the elected officials. However, these gender-specific differences become negligible when adjusted for party affiliations. Moreover, no gender difference was observed in the size and density of their legislative networks. Female politicians do not consistently establish broader or more intricate legislative networks compared to their male peers. These outcomes imply that gender-based leadership preferences may be subsumed within the broader partisan differences in the legislature. This could be attributed to political parties' strategies, where they align their leadership styles with preferences perceived to resonate with female voters. The findings also suggest that while voters might harbor gender biases about candidates, the cues offered by a candidate's party affiliation can temper the sway of such stereotypes during electoral evaluations.

Gender and Leadership Styles

The traditional division of labor between men and women has profound implications for societal perceptions of gender roles, which in turn can influence behavior within families and organizations (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). Sociological theories on gender and power posit that, through the process of socialization, men and women come to adopt different roles. Women often internalize roles through caregiving within the family, while men are socialized to be task-oriented through their interactions in broader public arenas (Molm and Hedley 1992; Parsons 1951; Parsons and Bales 1955; Rosenthal 1998). Notably, female legislators are more likely than their male counterparts to identify as the primary caretakers within their families (Thomas 2002). These ingrained roles can delineate gendered behavior and set expectations about how male and female politicians should conduct themselves in office. This suggests that men and women might possess distinct archetypes of ideal political leaders. I thus propose the following hypothesis regarding gendered preferences in

leadership styles among voters:

***Hypothesis 1:** Female voters place a higher premium on relationship-oriented leadership styles compared to male voters, whereas male voters prioritize task-oriented leadership styles more than female voters do.*

The beliefs and behaviors of elected officials may also be affected by the gendered roles they adopt in their private lives. Numerous studies have sought to comprehend gendered differences in politics by analyzing the political behavior of men and women in elected office. Such research has highlighted significant disparities between male and female officials, both in terms of policy positions and their political approaches. Male politicians often exhibit a more individualistic and competitive stance in committees and legislatures, while female politicians tend to be more collaborative and consensus-driven (Duerst-Lahti 2002; Jeydel and Taylor 2003; Kuklinski et al. 1997; Rosenthal 1998; Thomas 1994). For instance, interviews with mayors from large American cities indicate that female mayors place a higher emphasis on collegiality and teamwork in their roles than their male counterparts (Rinehart 1991). Similarly, Carey, Niemi, and Powell (1998) found that female state legislators devote more time to cultivating legislative networks than male legislators. Likewise, female representatives in Brazil typically have legislative networks that are both denser and more diverse than those of their male peers (Wojcik and Mullenax 2017). Given these findings, I propose the following hypotheses regarding gender differences in the leadership styles of elected officials:

***Hypothesis 2:** Female politicians prioritize relationship-oriented leadership styles more than male politicians, while male politicians place a higher value on task-oriented leadership styles than their female counterparts.*

***Hypothesis 3:** Female politicians engage in discussions with a broader range of colleagues and do so more frequently than male politicians.*

Data and Variables in Empirical Model

I tested the hypotheses concerning gender-based differences in political leadership styles by

conducting two surveys in Japan: one targeting voters (referred to as the “popular survey”) and the other targeting electoral officials (referred to as the “elite survey”). The popular survey was an online two-wave panel survey conducted before and after the 2014 general election for the House of Representatives, which took place on December 14, 2014.⁵ The sample of voting-eligible adults was drawn by Rakuten Research, a prominent Japanese survey research company. The survey sampled nationally, adjusting the demographics to align with the population census in terms of age, region, and gender. The number of participants was 2,635 in the pre-election survey and 1,418 in the post-election survey.⁶ In the post-election survey, I queried respondents about their preferences regarding political leadership styles.⁷

The elite survey was carried out via mail from January to April 2015, targeting elected officials drawn from local politicians, specifically municipal assembly members, in Japan’s Tohoku region.⁸ In Japan, each municipality—whether city, town, or village, representing the lowest tier of

⁵ The pre-election survey ran for four days, from December 5 to 8, while the post-election survey spanned from December 19 to 22.

⁶ A total of 56,197 individuals were invited to participate in the popular survey. The sample was stratified based on the region of residence (prefecture), sex (male and female), and age group (20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s or above), following the popular census.

⁷ Given that not all respondents approached the survey questions with sincerity or attentiveness, I incorporated a screener question to identify inattentive respondents, drawing from methodologies described in Krosnick (1991) and Krosnick et al. (2002). Respondents who failed to adhere to the screener question’s instructions were subsequently excluded from the empirical analyses.

⁸ Though Fukushima Prefecture is located in the Tohoku region, it was omitted from the elite survey sample. This exclusion was due to the forced relocation of local elected officials (and

government—has an elected chief executive (mayor) and a unicameral decision-making body (municipal assembly). As stipulated by Article 93 of the Japanese Constitution, these local political positions are elected directly by the public. Assembly members in each municipality serve four-year terms. For my survey, I gathered data on these local politicians in municipal assemblies. The methodology involved randomly selecting two single-member electoral districts for the lower house at the national level within each prefecture of the Tohoku region, namely Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, and Yamagata. Subsequently, paper-based survey questionnaires were sent to the sitting members of the municipal assemblies in these chosen electoral districts. Out of a total of 96 municipalities included in this study, 1,664 assembly members were identified, of which 734 responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 44.1%.⁹ By focusing on the Tohoku region, I aimed to control for the numerous factors that vary from one region to another, while also enhancing the response rate of the elite survey.

The primary dependent variable in this study pertains to the preferences for political leadership styles, both among voters and elected officials. Both the popular and elite surveys posed an identical question about this preference. Respondents were prompted to rank the following four personality traits, in terms of their importance for successful politicians, from most critical to the least:

residents) from some municipalities following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant accident.

⁹ I found no significant difference in the composition of the respondents compared to the overall sample composition. In addition, local assembly members in the Tohoku region do not show significant difference from those in other regions regarding their gender and party affiliation. I believe that the results of my elite survey have a certain degree of generalizability to the entire country.

Visionary: Possesses a clear vision of the future (demonstrates foresight)

Persuasive: Can effectively articulate and convince others of their viewpoint

Mediator: Harmonizes differing opinions to resolve conflicts

Listener: Actively and attentively bears about varied opinions and perspectives

The first two traits, “visionary” and “persuasive,” align with masculine traits that underscore a task-oriented leadership style. In contrast, the latter two traits, “mediator” and “listener,” are associated with feminine traits, emphasizing a relationship-oriented leadership style. In both surveys, the four-point ranking answers were inverted to represent the degree of perceived importance in increasing order. Thus, the trait deemed most vital received a score of 4 points, and the least vital, 1 point.

The main independent variable in the empirical model is the respondent’s *sex*. This binary variable takes a value of zero for male respondents and one for female respondents. I anticipate distinct leadership preferences between men and women in politics. Specifically, women are expected to favor relation-oriented leadership styles (such as mediator and listener styles) more than men. In contrast, men are expected to favor task-oriented leadership styles (such as visionary and persuasive styles) more than women.

The empirical model also incorporates control variables to account for potential confounders at both the individual and regional levels. When analyzing the popular survey data, I employed the following control variables: *age*, *education*, *political interest*, *partisanship*, and *prefecture dummies*. The popular survey prompted respondents to rate their interest in politics on a four-point scale, ranging from “not at all interested” to “very interested.” The respondent’s educational attainment was categorized into five levels: junior high school, high school, two-year junior college, university, and graduate school. The popular survey also inquired about respondents’ long-term partisanship rather than their fluctuating party support. This partisanship is captured by a set of

dichotomous variables representing sustained allegiance to any of the major national political parties: the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Clean Government Party (CGP), and the Japan Communist Party (JCP). The reference category for these party dummy variables consists of independent and minor party supporters. Prefecture dummy variables were also included to control for average differences based on respondents' residential locations.

I analyzed the elite survey data, incorporating control variables in the empirical model: *age*, *seniority*, *party affiliation*, and *municipality dummies*. The respondent's age was represented by a categorical variable. In the elite survey, respondents were prompted to select from the following seven age groups: 25–29; 30–39; 40–49; 50–59; 60–69; 70–79, and ≥ 80 years.¹⁰ Seniority indicated the duration of a respondent's political career, measured by the number of years they served as a local assembly member. For party affiliation, a set of dichotomous variables was introduced to capture alignment with any of the major national political parties. Municipality dummy variables controlled for average differences among municipalities, considering factors such as assembly size and population.

Furthermore, I employed two types of dependent variables to examine potential gender differences in the political strategies adopted by elected officials. Both variables stemmed from the elite survey questions. The first pertains to the size of the respondents' legislative networks within their local assembly, and the second concerns their frequency of contact with colleagues. The elite survey gauged the legislative network's size by inquiring about the total number of colleagues with whom respondents routinely exchanged views and how many of those colleagues represented different political parties. Given the skewed nature of these measures, I applied the natural logarithm

¹⁰ I did not ask for the respondents' exact age in the elite survey to maintain anonymity.

after adding 1, ensuring zero-value observations were not excluded when formulating the dependent variables. For the frequency of contact, respondents were asked how often they communicated with colleagues through various means, such as phone calls or emails. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale, ranging from “very rarely (less than once a month)” to “very frequently (almost every day).” The independent variables in the empirical model, used to estimate these dependent variables, mirrored those employed in estimating leadership style preferences among elected officials: *sex*, *age*, *seniority*, *party affiliation*, and *municipality dummies*.

Table 1 Summary Statistics in Popular Survey

Dependent variable	Number of observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Leadership style					
Visionary	1,305	3.419	0.902	1	4
Persuasive	1,302	1.851	0.936	1	4
Mediator	1,305	2.090	0.892	1	4
Listener	1,306	2.642	1.031	1	4
Independent variable	Number of observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sex	1,306	0.508	0.500	0	1
Age	1,306	48.847	14.342	20	79
Education	1,268	3.148	0.895	1	4
Political interest	1,276	2.970	0.880	1	4
Partisanship					
LDP	1,099	0.297	0.457	0	1
DPJ	1,099	0.087	0.282	0	1
CGP	1,099	0.019	0.137	0	1
JCP	1,099	0.068	0.252	0	1

Tables 1 and 2 show the summary statistics for all variables derived from the popular and elite surveys, respectively. These tables highlight a significant gender discrepancy in representation among elected local officials. While only women comprised half of the respondents in the popular

survey, they represented only 7.6% in the elite survey. This reflects the reality that there are very few women in Japanese politics, with women holding a mere 9.5% of seats in municipal assemblies. The age distribution also varied notably between the two surveys: The average age of respondents in the popular survey was 48.8 years; by contrast, the elite survey participants were generally older, with 60.0% categorizing themselves within the 60-69 age group.¹¹

Table 2 Summary Statistics in Elite Survey

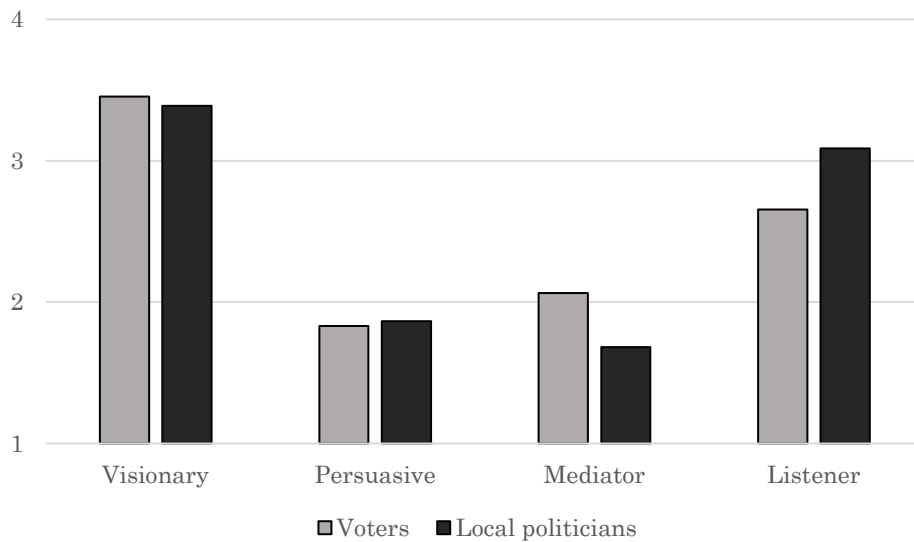
Dependent variable	Number of observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Leadership style					
Visionary	715	3.389	0.853	1	4
Persuasive	714	1.866	0.843	1	4
Mediator	712	1.683	0.780	1	4
Listener	714	3.088	0.879	1	4
Size of legislative network					
All inclusive	716	1.929	0.552	0	3.56
Across party lines	684	1.147	0.744	0	3.50
Frequency of contact	707	3.314	1.035	1	5
Independent variable	Number of observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sex	719	0.076	0.266	0	1
Age	717	4.778	0.857	1	7
Seniority	716	1.195	0.838	0	5.20
Party affiliation					
LDP	721	0.343	0.475	0	1
DPJ	721	0.044	0.206	0	1
CGP	721	0.037	0.190	0	1
JCP	721	0.064	0.245	0	1

¹¹ The underrepresentation of the younger generation in public office is a widespread issue across the country; fewer than 10% of elected officials in Japan are under the age of 40. This generational imbalance in representation significantly influences policy outcomes (McClellan 2021).

Empirical Results

I begin by showing the average importance scores for various leadership styles among both voters and elected officials. Figure 1 compares the preferences for each leadership style between these two groups at an aggregated level. The data reveals a significant disparity in the average importance scores attributed to the mediator and listener styles by voters and elected officials. Specifically, voters value the listener style less than elected officials, while placing greater emphasis on the mediator style. These differences are statistically significant at the 1% level. However, both voters and elected officials assign greater value to the visionary and listener styles than to the persuasive and mediator styles. This implies that, in Japan, task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles are perceived to be of nearly equal significance for political actors.

Figure 1 Average Importance of Leadership Styles among Voters and Elected Officials



Next, I examined the differences between men and women regarding their leadership style preferences by analyzing individual-level data through a series of ordered logistic regressions.¹²

¹² The ordered logistic regressions are appropriate for a dependent variable that is ordinal from one

Table 3 shows the results of this regression analysis. The findings indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female voters concerning their visionary style preferences. However, notable differences emerged for the other three leadership styles—persuasive, mediator, and listener. The coefficient estimates for voter gender are statistically significant for those styles, even when controlling for potentially confounding factors beyond gender. Specifically, women assign higher scores to the mediator and listener styles than men, but they rate the persuasive style lower. Thus, male and female voters differ in how they value political leadership styles. Aligning with Hypothesis 1, the results demonstrate that female voters value politicians who exhibit relation-oriented leadership styles more than their male counterparts. Moreover, this trend remains largely consistent when considering only survey respondents who actually participated in the 2015 national election.

The results presented in Table 3 also indicate that voters' leadership style preferences differ by age. Older voters tend to value the visionary and listener styles, whereas younger voters lean toward the persuasive and mediator styles. This suggests that elderly voters do not uniformly prioritize relation-oriented leadership styles. Intriguingly, there are also distinct preferences among different partisans groups. Compared to independent voters, long-term supporters of the LDP show a stronger preference for task-oriented leadership styles over relation-oriented ones. Conversely, long-term supporters of the CGP—a primary coalition partner of the LDP since October 1999—tend to devalue the visionary style, which is categorized as a task-oriented leadership style. This pattern hints at a complementary relationship between the two parties in bolstering government support.

(the least important) to four (the most important).

Table 3 Gender Differences in Preferred Leadership Styles among Voters

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Visionary	Persuasive	Mediator	Listener	Visionary	Persuasive	Mediator	Listener
Sex	-0.046 (0.123)	-0.700*** (0.114)	0.306*** (0.110)	0.356*** (0.109)	0.045 (0.137)	-0.680*** (0.125)	0.246** (0.120)	0.355*** (0.119)
Age	0.019*** (0.004)	-0.021*** (0.004)	-0.012*** (0.004)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.019*** (0.005)	-0.023*** (0.004)	-0.012*** (0.004)	0.014*** (0.004)
Education level	0.178** (0.071)	-0.024 (0.065)	-0.036 (0.062)	-0.076 (0.062)	0.138* (0.079)	-0.011 (0.072)	0.004 (0.068)	-0.096 (0.068)
Political interest	0.214*** (0.074)	0.021 (0.069)	-0.092 (0.066)	-0.129* (0.067)	0.248*** (0.083)	0.045 (0.076)	-0.093 (0.073)	-0.143* (0.074)
Partisanship (long-term party support)								
LDP					0.065 (0.158)	0.382*** (0.138)	-0.075 (0.137)	-0.326** (0.132)
DPJ					-0.133 (0.253)	0.071 (0.229)	0.377* (0.216)	-0.164 (0.211)
CGP					-1.199** (0.473)	0.734 (0.455)	0.424 (0.436)	0.531 (0.513)
JCP					-0.472* (0.248)	0.106 (0.253)	-0.050 (0.233)	0.211 (0.237)
Thresholds								
(1)	-0.424 (0.452)	-1.389*** (0.428)	-1.717*** (0.417)	-1.750*** (0.407)	-0.547 (0.517)	-1.004** (0.471)	-1.667*** (0.464)	-1.998*** (0.450)
(2)	0.738* (0.445)	-0.055 (0.427)	0.129 (0.415)	-0.655 (0.406)	0.620 (0.509)	0.329 (0.470)	0.226 (0.461)	-0.865* (0.447)
(3)	1.872*** (0.447)	1.734*** (0.436)	1.973*** (0.423)	1.072*** (0.406)	1.805*** (0.510)	2.125*** (0.481)	2.174*** (0.473)	0.938** (0.447)
N	1243	1240	1243	1244	1064	1062	1064	1065

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Prefecture dummies are not shown because of space constraints.

Table 4 displays results derived from the survey data of elected officials. It reveals that leadership style preferences among elected officials also vary between male and female representatives. Female officials tend to value the mediator and listener styles more highly, while assigning lower value to the visionary and persuasive styles. This suggests that female representatives have a stronger inclination toward relation-oriented leadership styles as opposed to task-oriented

ones. However, the coefficient estimates associated with respondent gender are either statistically insignificant or only marginally significant at the 10% level. More importantly, when accounting for the respondent's party affiliation, these estimates become entirely insignificant. Thus, the data does not support Hypothesis 2, which posited gender-based differences in leadership style preferences among elected officials.

Table 4 Gender Differences in Preferred Leadership Styles among Elected Officials

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Visionary	Persuasive	Mediator	Listener	Visionary	Persuasive	Mediator	Listener
Sex	-0.583*	-0.358	0.552*	0.525*	-0.287	-0.323	0.498	0.253
	(0.302)	(0.305)	(0.302)	(0.308)	(0.324)	(0.321)	(0.321)	(0.323)
Age	0.072	0.257**	0.084	-0.264**	0.073	0.247**	0.116	-0.252**
	(0.114)	(0.105)	(0.108)	(0.104)	(0.116)	(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.106)
Seniority	-0.322	-0.069	-0.220	-0.043	-0.417	-0.043	-0.206	0.023
	(0.295)	(0.278)	(0.271)	(0.283)	(0.301)	(0.283)	(0.276)	(0.289)
Seniority2	0.081	0.019	0.058	0.027	0.118	0.012	0.054	-0.005
	(0.085)	(0.080)	(0.075)	(0.083)	(0.086)	(0.082)	(0.076)	(0.084)
Party affiliation								
LDP					0.114	-0.120	0.069	0.163
					(0.209)	(0.193)	(0.197)	(0.191)
DPJ					0.419	0.134	-0.203	0.017
					(0.466)	(0.409)	(0.440)	(0.400)
CGP					-0.688	-1.002**	1.457***	1.017**
					(0.428)	(0.443)	(0.417)	(0.432)
JCP					-0.893**	0.017	-0.147	1.190***
					(0.347)	(0.334)	(0.363)	(0.380)
Thresholds								
(1)	-2.963***	-0.027	0.386	-3.810***	-2.993***	-0.073	0.488	-3.568***
	(0.786)	(0.708)	(0.753)	(0.771)	(0.796)	(0.715)	(0.766)	(0.786)
(2)	-1.809**	2.015***	2.524***	-2.682***	-1.852**	1.999***	2.678***	-2.447***
	(0.773)	(0.712)	(0.761)	(0.761)	(0.784)	(0.719)	(0.775)	(0.777)
(3)	-0.105	3.756***	4.220***	-0.375	-0.110	3.709***	4.378***	-0.080
	(0.768)	(0.732)	(0.787)	(0.752)	(0.779)	(0.738)	(0.802)	(0.769)
N	693	693	691	692	681	681	679	680

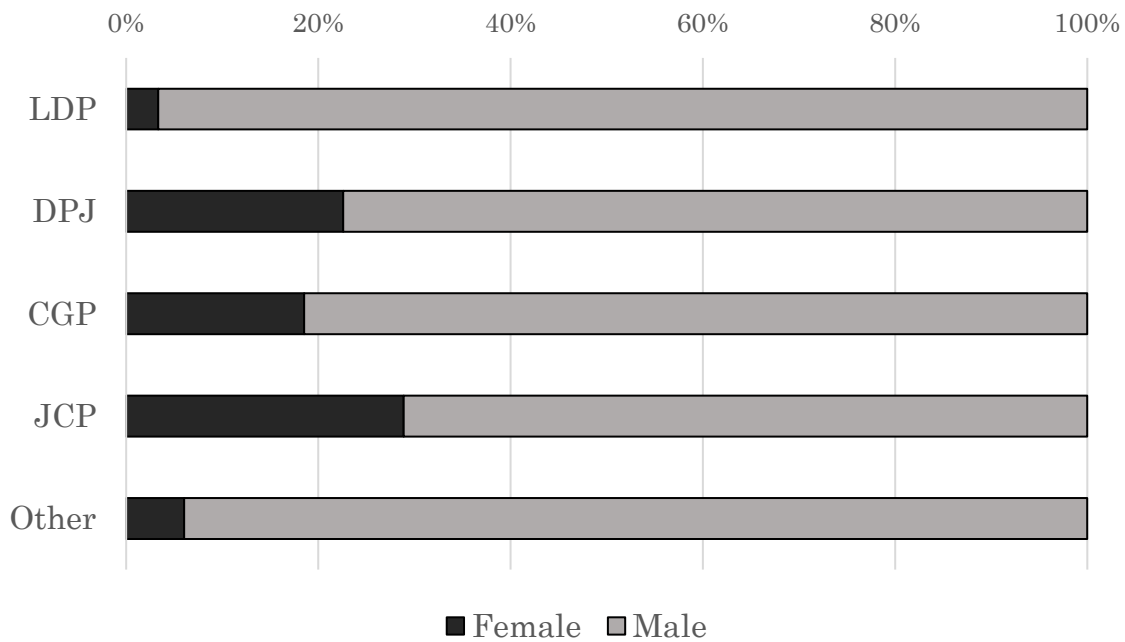
* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Municipality dummies are not presented in this table.

These results indicate that the differences in leadership style preferences among elected officials are largely aligned with partisan distinctions. Among representatives in local assemblies, those affiliated with the CGP and JCP tend to emphasize the significance of relation-oriented

leadership styles. This tendency is not merely due to female representatives being overrepresented in these two parties. Figure 2 displays the proportion of female representatives within each party. For instance, the DPJ has a similar proportion of female representatives as the CGP and JCP, yet the leadership style preferences are distinct between them.

Figure 2 Share of Female Assembly Members by Political Party



The data in Table 4 also reveals that a representative’s age is inversely correlated with the valuation of the listener style, but it positively influences the evaluation of the persuasive style’s importance. Interestingly, the duration of a representative’s tenure shows no statistically significant effect on leadership style preference. This is surprising since one might expect representatives with lengthier careers to exert more influence in legislative decision-making. This outcome suggests that elected officials’ leadership style preferences remain consistent throughout their political careers.

Finally, I explored the political strategies of elected officials by analyzing the extent of a representative’s legislative network and the frequency of their interactions with legislative peers. The regression results for these two dependent variables are shown in Tables 5 and 6, respectively. The

former relies on OLS regressions, while the latter employs an ordered logistic regression model because the frequency of contact is gauged using a five-point scale.

Table 5 Gender Differences in Size of Legislative Network

	Total number of contacts		Number of contacts across party lines	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Sex	-0.190** (0.079)	-0.083 (0.079)	-0.089 (0.106)	-0.111 (0.110)
Age	0.010 (0.027)	0.005 (0.027)	-0.057 (0.037)	-0.053 (0.038)
Seniority	0.193*** (0.069)	0.162** (0.068)	0.126 (0.095)	0.118 (0.096)
Seniority2	-0.034* (0.020)	-0.021 (0.019)	-0.019 (0.027)	-0.018 (0.027)
Party affiliation				
LDP		0.107** (0.048)		0.009 (0.067)
DPJ		-0.037 (0.106)		0.084 (0.149)
CGP		-0.240** (0.104)		0.102 (0.144)
JCP		-0.400*** (0.088)		0.054 (0.123)
Constant	1.724*** (0.190)	1.779*** (0.185)	0.799*** (0.260)	0.776*** (0.263)
N	698	685	667	656

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Municipality dummies are not presented in this table because of space constraints.

Table 6 Gender Differences in Contact Frequency

	Contact frequency	
	(1)	(2)
Sex	0.088 (0.314)	0.378 (0.337)
Age	0.001 (0.101)	-0.013 (0.102)
Seniority	0.264 (0.259)	0.200 (0.262)
Seniority2	-0.005 (0.073)	0.019 (0.074)
Party affiliation		
LDP		0.342* (0.185)
DPJ		-0.226 (0.415)
CGP		-0.291 (0.407)
JCP		-0.779** (0.351)
Thresholds		
(1)	-3.904*** (0.818)	-3.957*** (0.849)
(2)	-2.557*** (0.806)	-2.604*** (0.837)
(3)	-0.292 (0.801)	-0.333 (0.832)
(4)	1.407* (0.801)	1.392* (0.833)
N	687	676

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Municipality dummies are not presented in this table because of space constraints.

The results in Table 5 indicate that female representatives tend to have smaller networks compared to their male counterparts, with the legislative network size being 19% smaller for female members than for male members. However, this gender disparity vanishes when controlling for party affiliation. Moreover, there is no statistically significant difference between the sizes of male and female legislative networks within party lines. Similarly, while Table 6 suggests that female representatives contact their colleagues more frequently than male representatives, this difference is not statistically significant. Hence, contrary to the expectation set by Hypothesis 3, the data implies that there is minimal difference between male and female representatives' political strategies in Japan's local assemblies.

Conclusion

Numerous studies conducted in the United States have shown that men and women display marked differences in their political approaches when holding elected office. These studies indicate that, while male politicians often lean toward individualistic and task-oriented behaviors, female politicians more commonly engage in collaborative and relation-oriented behavior. It is possible this gender disparity emerges because women legislators are in a disadvantaged position relative to their male counterparts, and not necessarily due to inherent beliefs about gendered leadership roles. Moreover, these U.S.-centered findings might not directly translate to Japan, given that gender perceptions can be deeply rooted in culture.

In this research, I aimed to examine whether Japanese men and women exhibit distinct patterns in political leadership styles. This was achieved by analyzing survey data from both voters and elected officials. The empirical results reveal that male and female voters have different expectations of political actors' leadership behaviors. Specifically, Japanese female voters value relation-oriented leadership styles more than their male counterparts and are less inclined toward task-oriented leadership styles. This implies that Japanese voters have gendered leadership

perceptions, paralleling those observed in Americans.

However, this gender-based differentiation is absent among Japanese elected officials. Data from local politicians suggests that while female officials might initially seem to favor relation-oriented leadership more than their male counterparts, this discrepancy vanishes once party affiliation is factored in. In addition, there is no discernible differences in their legislative strategies based on gender. It was observed that female representatives in local assemblies do not necessarily maintain more extensive or denser legislative networks than male representatives. Significant differences did emerge along party lines, suggesting that gendered leadership styles among elected officials might have evolved into partisan distinctions. This could be a result of parties strategically adopting certain leadership styles to appeal more to either male or female voters. A deeper dive is necessary to unravel the intricacies behind these findings.

In this study, I employed unique surveys to discern gender disparities in preferred leadership styles among voters and elected officials. The results are rooted in voters' and elected officials' subjective assessments of desired leadership styles in politicians. However, they do not explicitly reflect voters' choices during elections. In exploring gender differences in self-reported legislative activities, the goal was to pinpoint the leadership styles elected officials embrace. Yet, there is a possibility that their real-time actions might diverge from their self-reports. Especially, the actual intricacies of legislative networks could vary between genders, with female politicians potentially underreporting the complexity of their networks. A more comprehensive grasp of the leadership style disparities between genders necessitates additional analysis using objective metrics, such as content analysis of legislative speeches, while also considering the uneven playing field that exists between male and female politicians.

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