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POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND DISAGREEMENT AMONG CITIZENS IN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

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Patterns of interdependence among and between citizens add an additional level of complexity to a comparative analysis of democratic politics. In this article we examine communication and disagreement among citizens in Japan and the United States. We argue that a majoritarian bias in political communication operates in both settings, but it tends to perpetuate a system of one-party dominance in Japanese politics. Comparative studies of democratic citizenship have focused generally on the variation across national contexts in the political beliefs and values held by individuals. Our argument is that citizenship and the alternative cultures of democratic politics have *less* to do with the idiosyncratic beliefs and values that individuals carry with them and *more* to do with the contextually embedded nature of political communication. We address these issues using two community-based studies, one conducted in South Bend, Indiana, in 1984 and the other in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, in 1997.

Key words: networks; disagreement; communication; perception.

Much of what is important in democratic politics takes place in the dyadic communication synapses that occur between individual citizens. Individuals seldom act as independent processors of political information but rather as interdependent actors in a collective process of communication, deliberation, and influence (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Ikeda, 1997; Liu, Ikeda, and Wilson, 1998). These patterns of interdependence add an additional level of complexity to a comparative analysis of democratic politics. Quite simply, patterns of political communication are specific to particular political contexts, and hence they might vary across institutional and cultural settings. Comparative studies of democratic citizenship often focus on variation across national contexts in the values and beliefs held by

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individual citizens. Our argument is that citizenship and the alternative cultures of democratic politics have *less* to do with the idiosyncratic beliefs and values that citizens carry with them and *more* to do with the contextually embedded nature of political communication among citizens.

An important element in these patterns of interdependence relates to the incidence of political disagreement, and in this article we are concerned with the consequences of disagreement for the effectiveness of political communication among citizens. A great deal of common wisdom suggests that individual citizens tend to be surrounded by others who share their political preferences and viewpoints, but we argue that the level of political disagreement is frequently underestimated. This is important because, while political disagreement introduces citizens to alternative political viewpoints, preferences that encounter disagreement are less likely to be communicated accurately (Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, Levine, and Morgan, 1998). Thus, if people who hold minority preferences are more likely to encounter disagreement, their preferences are also less likely to be recognized, creating a bias that works against political minorities. Moreover, if the incidence and recognition of political disagreement vary across institutional and cultural settings, we are likely to see cross-national variation in the effectiveness of communication among citizens, with important implications for the perpetuation of political party dominance.

The analysis of this article addresses citizens and political communication within two different political systems—Japan and the United States. What is the frequency and effectiveness with which political disagreement is communicated among citizens? Are differential rates of exposure to political disagreement, as well as the differential rates at which individuals accurately recognize political disagreement, contingent on institutional differences in party systems? Are they the result of a culturally based hesitancy to confront or acknowledge disagreement? What are the implications for two-party politics and for the perpetuation of one-party dominant systems? We address these questions based on two community-based studies, one conducted in South Bend, Indiana, in 1984 and the other in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, in 1997.

CIVIC CAPACITY AND THE COMMUNICATION OF POLITICAL DISAGREEMENT

In his influential analysis of Italian politics, Robert Putnam (1993) focuses attention on the horizontal networks of communication that exist among citizens in democratic politics. These networks are important, he argues, because they bring citizens into recurrent and persistent relationships with one another, thereby enhancing the civic capacity of democratic electorates. According to Coleman (1988), structured patterns of social interaction convert social capital into human capital by taking the resources and skills present within larger

social collectivities and making them available to the individual members of these collectivities (also see Granovetter 1985). Within the context of democratic politics, individuals might draw on available social capital to avoid the substantial informational costs of democratic citizenship (Downs, 1957).

These insights regarding the civic potential of citizen communication build on the early and influential work of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, and McPhee. In their studies of opinion formation in election campaigns, they demonstrated that a vital ingredient of democratic politics is the fact that citizens act interdependently in reaching political decisions and forming political judgments (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944; Berelson et al., 1954). Citizens obtain information regarding political choices from one another, but within the boundaries of environmental availability, they are discriminating in the selection of information sources (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). In this context, how discriminating are they, and on what basis do they discriminate?

The analysis in this article focuses on the potential of political disagreement for inhibiting communication among citizens. If citizens are unable to tolerate disagreement, we might expect individuals to be clustered in politically homogeneous cells of like-minded citizens. Situations such as these are poorly suited for introducing individuals to new and different information (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 1992), and hence they are perhaps poorly suited for creating enhanced civic capacity. Alternatively, if citizens are unable or unlikely to *recognize* political disagreement, the effectiveness of political communication might be seriously undermined (Festinger, 1957, Huckfeldt et al., 1998), and the civic potential of communication among citizens might be seriously curtailed. Hence, the translation of social capital into human capital becomes problematic, depending on the exposure of citizens to disagreement as well as the ability of citizens to recognize disagreement when they encounter it (Axelrod, 1997; Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague, 2001).

Political disagreement within closely held networks of social relations is important because it forces individuals to reconsider their political opinions and viewpoints, thereby giving rise to higher levels of political flexibility and change (McPhee, 1963). At the same time, a number of factors serve to suppress and extinguish not only the incidence of political disagreement but also the subjective recognition of disagreement when it *does* occur. Therefore, it becomes important to understand the manner in which disagreement is subjectively experienced, perceived, and detected, and we are particularly interested in the factors that systematically give rise to misperception in the social communication of political information.

Misperception is particularly important because it has the potential to disguise the experience of political disagreement, creating a subjective reality that avoids the recognition of divergent viewpoints. The failure to recognize political disagreement may arise due to various factors: an effort to reduce cognitive

dissonance (Festinger, 1957); the intentional or unintentional communication of ambiguous political messages (MacKuen, 1990); inferential heuristics that sometimes misfire, thereby producing judgmental errors regarding the content of political messages (Huckfeldt et al., 1998). Moreover, patterns of political misperception may be structured by the larger distribution of preferences within an electorate, thereby creating a political bias in the communication of particular viewpoints (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995).

Relatively few studies focus on the misperception of disagreement because, to the extent that processes of social influence or self-selection are effective and influential, disagreement will fail to occur as anything other than a transient phenomenon. That is, everyone will end up being embedded in politically homogeneous microenvironments, due to either a process of social influence that brings individuals into agreement with one another, or to politically inspired self-selection that creates patterns of social relations that are contingent on political agreement. Alternatively, if influence and self-selection are *less* than deterministic processes, the persistence of political heterogeneity and disagreement enhances the opportunity for ongoing, collective processes of political deliberation.

In short, the dynamic flexibility of a democratic society depends on whether individuals experience political opinions and viewpoints that are different from their own. To the extent that people fail to come into contact with politically divergent preferences, or to the extent that they fail to recognize political disagreement, the democratic process of collective deliberation is compromised. Evidence from both the United States and Japan will demonstrate quite striking levels of political *heterogeneity* within communication networks. This article is centrally focused on the conditions that give rise to accurate judgments regarding the political viewpoints of others and, therefore, to conditions that enhance collective deliberation within democratic politics.

SOURCES OF POLITICAL MISPERCEPTION

What are the sources of political misperception that occur during processes of social communication among citizens? We consider several different alternatives in this analysis.

Motivated Misperception

The motivational basis of political misperception is most frequently understood in terms of dissonance reduction by the receiver of a disagreeable message (Festinger, 1957). The receiver may be vaguely aware that the sender holds a disagreeable viewpoint, but since it would be personally troubling to acknowl-

edge the fact, the receiver selectively (and incorrectly) perceives an agreeable political message.

Thus, if individuals are motivated to misperceive political disagreement, we would expect the incidence of misperception to depend quite dramatically on whether two individuals share the same political opinion or viewpoint. A number of studies shed light on disagreement and motivated misperception among citizens in U.S. presidential election campaigns (Graber, 1988; Just et al., 1996; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). In general, these efforts suggest that political information that is inconsistent with one's attitude does *not* necessarily cause cognitive dissonance and its consequent ignorance of the information (selective exposure or perception). While people are more likely to recognize agreeable viewpoints accurately, Huckfeldt and Sprague show that they frequently recognize disagreement as well, and they sometimes systematically fail to recognize *agreement*. Just et al. (chap. 9) study the evaluation of dissonant information regarding presidential candidates. Voters had a difficult time ignoring such information, and they were likely to be persuaded unless they were able to construct counterarguments. The conclusion would seem to be that many citizens are able to cope with political disagreement, and they are not infinitely capable of rewriting reality in order to avoid the (supposed) discomfort of political disagreement (Huckfeldt et al., 1998). Hence, motivated misperception may be a less than fully compelling explanation for communication failures in democratic politics.

Ambiguity and Heuristic Failures

What other mechanisms might be responsible for systematic patterns of political misperception? Some highly opinionated citizens hold strong attitudes and beliefs regarding politics, and they communicate their opinions clearly and unambiguously. But other citizens are moderate, indifferent, or ambivalent in their views and send signals that are much more difficult to interpret. Still other citizens communicate intentionally obscure messages in order to avoid political confrontations with opinionated associates (MacKuen, 1990). Finally, few discussions resemble a formal debate, and a great deal of the social communication regarding politics is based on passing remarks and offhand comments. Thus, political communication among citizens is often surrounded by a cloud of ambiguity, and the formation of judgments in such uncertain circumstances may be enhanced through the use of heuristic devices (Kahneman and Tversky, 1973; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock, 1991).

What are the heuristic devices that are available? First, the receiver's own preferences might provide heuristic guidance in forming a judgment regarding the sender's preference: I am a supporter of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP); Hiroshi is a lot like me; he probably supports the JCP as well. Alterna-

tively, the receiver may use the imputed preferences of others as guidance: Most of the people I know are supporters of the JCP; Hiroshi is much like these other people; Hiroshi probably supports the JCP as well. Thus, individuals may generalize based both on their own preferences and on the preferences they perceive others as holding. In this way, judgments regarding the political preferences held by others are anchored in the very direct social experience of the people who are making the judgments.

These kinds of heuristic devices provide possible mechanisms for widely documented "false consensus" effects (Ross, Greene, and House, 1977; Marks and Miller, 1987). When a generalization is based on an individual's own preference, the inference will quite obviously fail under conditions of disagreement between the receiver and sender of a message, giving rise to a situation in which agreement is overestimated. False consensus could also be caused by motivational factors related to selective perception and dissonance reduction, but Krueger and Clement (1994) stress nonmotivational factors in their experiments focused on inference regarding another person's performance or personality (also see Alicke and Largo, 1995). Social network studies also support the importance of these nonmotivational inference mechanisms (Huckfeldt et al., 1998).

When two individuals hold different political preferences, it may be difficult to separate the effects of motivational and nonmotivational factors on misperception, because both sets of factors produce hypotheses of unrecognized disagreement, or false consensus. In contrast, generalizations based on imputed preferences in the surrounding social network might produce either a false consensus effect or a false *dissidence* effect. Even if Maki and Hiroshi are both supporters of the JCP, Maki may incorrectly infer that Hiroshi does *not* support the JCP based on her belief that none of her other associates support the JCP. In short, generalizations based on the surrounding distribution of preferences might yield either unrecognized agreement or unrecognized disagreement within the dyad (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Huckfeldt et al., 1998).

Macroenvironmental Inferences

We have argued that people form judgments regarding the political preferences of others based on their own very direct social experience—on their own preferences and on the imputed preferences of those who make up their networks of social relations. But do citizens also base these judgments on the distribution of preferences in the larger electorate? That is, do people take account of the larger political environment when they form judgments regarding the preferences of others, and does this create a majoritarian bias that systematically underestimates support for minority viewpoints?[1]

At least since the formulation of Durverger's sociological law, political scien-

tists have assumed that individuals form political judgments that are contingent on preference distributions in the larger political environment. In Duverger's formulation, individuals hesitate to support political parties if they believe that these parties will not receive sufficient support to win elections (Duverger, 1954; Riker, 1982). We are asking whether individuals form judgments regarding the preferences of others based on these same environmental preference distributions: Will one individual be less likely to think that another individual holds a particular preference when that preference is a relatively rare event in the larger political environment? Will Maki be less likely to recognize that Hiroshi supports the JCP due to the fact that the JCP is a minority party in Japan?

The implications are quite profound for political communication, for the recognition of minority viewpoints, and for the comparative analysis of political party systems. In the Japanese political system, voters choose between one major party and a number of minor parties (Richardson, 1997). In the U.S. political system, voters choose between two major parties and an occasional (and small) independent movement. What are the consequences of these alternative party systems for the vitality of political communication among citizens and for the accurate recognition of political disagreement across political systems?

POLITICAL MISPERCEPTION IN CROSS-NATIONAL CONTEXT

Social communication regarding politics is frequently ambiguous; people sometimes manipulate their communication strategies and practices, and hence the inferential devices that citizens use to interpret political messages become particularly important. This suggests that the recognition of disagreement among and between citizens—a process that is basic to political communication within democratic politics—may be variable across democratic systems. We are particularly interested in whether mechanisms of inference lead to variations in rates of political misperception between Japan and the United States.

Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) employ a distinction between "trust" and "assurance" to characterize behavioral differences between Americans and Japanese in patterns of social relations. They define trust as a belief that people in general can be relied on, while assurance is based on the particular incentive structures within which relationships are embedded. Hence, trust might be based on the imputed characteristics of an individual: sincerity, responsibility, honesty. In contrast, assurance would be based on the particular behavioral incentives of both parties in a relationship: Is it in an individual's interest to act in a way that is useful or harmful to another individual?

According to Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994), Americans tend to be trustful, while Japanese tend to base personal relationships on assurance. Indeed, Americans tend to score more highly on trust measures, and they are more likely to

trust strangers in trading, negotiation, and bargaining. In contrast, Japanese are more committed to closed relationships based on recurrent patterns of social interaction. In the words of an old Japanese proverb: "You should suppose that all strangers are thieves."

We might expect that the lack of trust in various social relationships would extend to political relationships as well. Japanese might be less willing than Americans to express political viewpoints beyond their most closely held social relationships. This would make it more difficult for direct and effective political communication to occur among citizens outside the assurance relationships, thereby increasing the level of political ambiguity in the expression of political viewpoints. In an alternative vocabulary, the lack of trust might inhibit the creation and accumulation of social capital with respect to politics (Putnam, 1993). Moreover, this increased ambiguity would, in turn, force individuals to rely more heavily on heuristic devices in assessing the likely political preferences of other individuals. Thus, when making a judgment regarding the nature of another person's political viewpoint, Japanese might depend more heavily on generalizations taken from personal experience.

Finally, institutional differences between Japan and the United States might also lead to differences in patterns of communication among citizens. In a competitive two-party election, one might flip a two-sided coin in predicting an associate's vote. Assuming the associate voted, such a decision rule would be correct approximately 50 percent of the time. In this way, two-party systems might enhance the likelihood of correctly predicting an associate's vote, even without forming an inference based on the distribution of party support in the political macroenvironment. In contrast, multiparty elections make it much more difficult to use such a simple decision-making rule effectively. Assuming that citizens are able to employ macroenvironmental preference distributions in forming expectations regarding the political viewpoints of others, such inferences will be much more difficult to form, and hence less useful, in an institutional context characterized by a multitude of small parties. This situation is only exacerbated in the Japanese context where many of these minor parties quite frequently join new and different coalitions, thereby transforming themselves into new parties.

One might argue that such an explanation simply misses the point: the crucial distinction may not lie among the various parties in Japanese politics, but rather between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and nearly all the other parties. Hence, macroenvironmental inferences might be formulated along this distinction. We believe that such an argument oversimplifies the Japanese political environment and the very important differences that exist among the various parties. At the very least, the fragmentation of non-LDP parties is likely to make it more difficult for political communication to occur among citizens who are opposed to the LDP.

These cross-national differences lead to a number of questions. First, is there a difference in the effect of dyadic disagreement on misperception in Japan and the United States? Are citizens of the two countries more or less likely to recognize and confront disagreement within their personal relationships?

Second, are there differences in the tendency to misperceive based on preference distributions within networks of social relations? Are Japanese or Americans more or less likely to infer that a particular associate holds a particular preference based on the perceived preferences of others in their social networks?

Finally, do preference distributions in the external political environment affect rates of misperception, and how does this vary between Japan and the United States? Are there institutional differences between Japan and the United States that help to explain differential rates of political misperception?

OBSERVATION, MEASUREMENT, AND METHOD

The analysis in this article focuses on the extent to which citizens perceive the preferences of their associates accurately and whether these levels of accuracy are different across two culturally dissimilar national settings—Japan and the United States. We employ social network data obtained through snowball samples in both the United States and Japan. These data sets provide objective (self-reported) data from both main respondents and their discussants. Hence, we are able to identify the existence of objectively defined disagreement between the main respondent and the discussant, as well as being able to analyze patterns of perceived agreement.

The Studies: Bunkyo in 1997 and South Bend in 1984

The Japanese survey was conducted in July 1997 based on a mail survey sent to a random sample of residents in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, taken from the official municipal voter list. This ward is located in the slightly northern part of central Tokyo with approximately 172,000 residents. The respondents were randomly assigned to three groups based on three different name generators for the identification of an egocentric network; the overall response rate for the main respondent sample was 33 percent.[2] The use of the different name generators produced no relevant differences for this analysis, and hence the three groups are combined into a single data set for purposes of this article. A second wave of interviews was conducted with discussants, once again based on mail surveys. Data for corresponding main respondents and discussants are matched and merged, and the resulting data set includes 402 dyads, based on interviews with 402 discussants and 253 main respondents. Thus, each resulting observation includes self-report data for the main respondent, self-report data

for the discussant, and the main respondent's perception regarding the political viewpoint of the discussant.

The 1984 South Bend survey of main respondents was conducted as a three-wave panel study during the course of the 1984 presidential election campaign. The initial rate of completions among successfully contacted respondents was 56 percent with a 17 percent refusal rate. During the final post-election interview, main respondents were asked to identify the three people with whom they "talked with most about the events of the past election year." The respondents were randomly sampled from 16 neighborhoods in the South Bend metropolitan area—a small urban area in northern Indiana. All post-election interviews were conducted over the phone during November and December, and a sample of discussants was similarly interviewed during January. As in the Japanese case, main respondents and discussants are matched and merged; the resulting data set includes 924 dyads, based on interviews with 920 discussants and 585 main respondents. Once again, each observation includes self-report data for the main respondent and the discussant, as well as the main respondent's perception regarding the political viewpoint of the discussant.[3]

The question naturally arises: Are these samples comparable—can they be compared? One sample was taken from a small urban area embedded in the American midwest. The other is taken from a comparably sized urban area embedded in one of the largest cities in the world. One sample was taken in 1984, within the context of a high stimulus national election. The other was taken in 1997, divorced from a national election campaign. One study was conducted over the phone, and the other through the mail, with attendant implications for the respective response rates.

In this context, we are certainly not able to make any claim that these samples are statistically representative of the national electorates in Japan and the United States. Indeed, our research strategy, to employ local samples, gave up any such pretense from the very beginning. However, there is little reason to suggest that the South Bend and Bunkyo respondents and networks are atypical or fundamentally biased. Moreover, our primary goal is not to make inferentially definitive statements regarding the differences among Japanese and U.S. citizens and networks. Rather, we are primarily interested in similarities rather than differences—in whether the same model of the communication process can be meaningfully employed for both samples. Hence, our research strategy is in some ways similar to that of Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) who employ nonrandomly selected subject pools in Japan and the United States to compare experimental findings between the two settings. This means that we are unable to make definitive statements regarding differences between the probabilistically average citizens of the two countries: the observed differences between the Bunkyo and South Bend respondents must be interpreted with caution.

Other Measurement Issues

Several measures are particularly important to the study. First, we are primarily concerned with systematic sources of political misperception and, therefore, in the accuracy with which main respondents perceive their discussants' political viewpoints. We carry out the analysis in terms of partisan orientations: The Japanese discussants and main respondents were provided with a list of Japanese political parties and asked "Which party do you support?" The American discussants and main respondents were asked "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" Similarly, the Japanese respondents are asked which party each of their discussants supports, and the American respondents are asked whether their discussants generally support candidates who are Democrats, Republicans, both, or neither. Hence, accuracy is based on correspondence between the main respondent's perception of the discussant and the discussant's self-report.[4] Similarly, agreement within the dyad is based on correspondence between the self-reported preferences of the main respondent and the discussant.

Second, we are interested in whether individuals generalize based on their perceptions of dominant political viewpoints within surrounding microenvironments of interpersonal relations. The core idea is that an individual's network of contacts creates an informational environment, and the individual forms opinions and judgments based on information supplied through this network. We are particularly interested in whether communication with particular discussants is distorted by perceptions regarding the larger network of associates; thus, we consider the residual network's effect on the informational flow that occurs within particular dyads. If Hiroshi has three associates, will he be less likely to recognize that Maki actually supports the JCP due to his perception that the other two associates support the LDP? In short, we are interested in political biases created by perceptions regarding the remaining network, and hence our residual network measure is based on main respondent perceptions. We expect that individuals will be more likely to recognize a discussant's viewpoint accurately if they perceive a higher proportion of the residual network to hold the same viewpoint as that reported by the particular discussant.

Third, for more than 40 years of postwar Japanese politics, the LDP has been the dominant political party, even after its defeat in 1993. When the LDP regained control in 1995, the opponent parties lost their chance to present a unified alternative, resulting in a continuation of the majority party vs. minority parties system. This situation is, of course, radically different from that of U.S. political parties, where there are two major parties and typically quite little in the way of minor party alternatives. Based on divergent distributions of macroenvironmental support, we would expect the major parties—the LDP,

the Democrats, the Republicans—to enjoy an inferential advantage in the collective processes of communication and deliberation. In contrast, and by definition, minor party support is a rare event in the larger environment, and even minor party supporters may not expect others to share their preferences.

AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT IN BUNKYO AND SOUTH BEND

The joint distributions of main respondent and discussant partisanship are shown in Table 1 for both the Bunkyo and South Bend samples. The top percentage within each cell shows the column percentage—the percentage of discussants holding particular partisan loyalties within each category of main discussant partisanship. The bottom percentage shows the total percentage—the percentage of all dyads in the table holding a particular combination of partisan loyalties.[5] While, this table provides information regarding patterns of

TABLE 1. Partisanship of Discussant by Partisanship of Main Respondent (The top number in each cell is the column percentage and the bottom number is the total percentage.)

Self-Reported Partisanship of the Discussant		Self-Reported Partisanship of Main Respondent		
		LDP	Independent	Other
A. Bunkyo Ward Sample				
LDP	column =	42.2%	14.8	25.2
	total =	8.7%	8.0	6.5
Independent		37.4	69.9	36.9
		7.7	37.6	9.4
Other		20.5	15.3	37.9
		4.2	8.2	9.7
Column *N*-size =		83	216	103
Total *N*-size = 402				
		Democrat	Independent	Republican
B. South Bend Sample				
Democrat	column =	56.6%	36.4	17.9
	total =	21.9%	11.4	5.4
Independent		35.1	34.9	28.9
		13.6	11.0	8.7
Republican		8.3	28.7	53.2
		3.2	9.0	16.0
Column *N*-size =		339	275	263
Total *N*-size = 877				

agreement and disagreement across partisan categories, one qualification should be noted. The "other" category for the Bunkyo sample does not distinguish between and among the various minor parties. We see that 37.9 percent of the Bunkyo main respondents who support minor parties have discussants who also support minor parties, but this does *not* mean that they necessarily support the *same* minor party. If we distinguish among the minor parties, this level of agreement is reduced substantially; only 22 percent of the respondents who support a minor party have a discussant who supports the same minor party. Subject to this qualification, the table shows several important things.

First, by summing the bottom percentages along the main diagonals, we obtain the percentage of the dyads in which the main respondent and the discussant hold the same partisan loyalties: 48.9 percent of the South Bend dyads and 56 percent of the Bunkyo dyads involve coincidental partisan viewpoints. (This level of agreement is reduced to 52 percent for the Bunkyo dyads if we distinguish among the minor parties.) Certainly these are not dramatically different levels of dyadic agreement in the aggregate. The problem is that such an aggregate comparison masks the fact that many of the Bunkyo main respondents and discussants *do not* have a party loyalty. Approximately one half of the main respondents do not report a partisan loyalty,[6] and 37.6 percent of the dyads involve both a main respondent and a discussant who do not report partisan loyalties. In contrast, 18.4 percent of the Bunkyo dyads involve (nonindependent) shared preferences, and this reduces to 14.4 percent if we distinguish among the minor parties. Quite clearly, this is dramatically lower than the comparable level of shared preferences among the South Bend dyads—37.9 percent.

Second, we see (perhaps) remarkably high levels of social interaction across partisan categories. For example, only 42.2 percent of the dyads with main respondents who are Liberal Democrats involve discussants who also support the LDP; only 56.6 percent of dyads with Democratic main respondents involve discussants who are Democrats; and only 53.2 percent of dyads with Republican main respondents involve discussants who are Republicans. As noted, only 37.9 percent of the dyads with main respondents who are minor party supporters involve discussants who are also minor party supporters, and only 22 percent of the minor party supporters have discussants who support the same minor party. The highest level of homogeneity arises within the Bunkyo independent category (69.9 percent), but approximately 50 percent of Japanese are independent, and therefore, this figure does not represent a particularly high level of political inbreeding.

A seemingly high proportion of both the South Bend and the Bunkyo respondents come into contact with divergent political viewpoints. Are these levels of disagreement unreasonably high? The answer to this question depends on the standard of judgment that is brought to the problem. Common wisdom in the social sciences often suggests that political homogeneity is induced by

conformity pressures within the closely held confines of small face-to-face groups, but accumulated evidence points in a different direction. Analyses of the 1984 South Bend data (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995) as well as 1992 American national data (Huckfeldt et al., 1998) show levels of presidential candidate agreement between nonspouse discussants and nonrelative discussants that vary from 57 percent to 67 percent across supporters of the major candidates. Similarly, in a separate 1998 Tokyo study, 50 percent of discussants and main respondents agree on party preference in the proportional vote for the House of Councilors election. Particularly in view of the fact that individuals tend to have multiple discussants, these data suggest that disagreement is not a rare event; hence the common wisdom is wrong.

COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS IN BUNKYO AND SOUTH BEND

How effectively are political preferences communicated between the discussion partners of the two samples? We have seen that discussants and main respondents frequently report divergent preferences, but does this objective reality penetrate the subjective awareness of the main respondents? The levels of accuracy with which main respondents perceive the partisanship of their discussants are shown for both the Bunkyo and South Bend samples in Table 2, jointly contingent on the self-reported party support of the main respondent

TABLE 2. Percent of Main Respondents Who Accurately Perceive Discussant's Partisanship

Self-Reported Partisanship of the discussant	Self-Reported Partisanship of Main Respondent		
	LDP	Independent	Other
A. Bunkyo Ward Sample			
LDP	82.9%	43.8	42.3
	(n = 35)	(32)	(26)
Independent	32.3	76.8	34.2
	(31)	(151)	(38)
Other	11.8	33.3	59.0
	(17)	(33)	(39)
	Democrat	Independent	Republican
B. South Bend Sample			
Democrat	77.6%	59.6	70.2
	(n = 192)	(99)	(47)
Independent	40.3	51.0	38.2
	(119)	(96)	(76)
Republican	39.3	55.7	75.0
	(28)	(79)	(140)

and the discussant. The overall levels of accuracy are quite comparable between the two studies: 57 percent accurate for the Bunkyo sample and 60 percent for the South Bend sample. At the same time, a careful examination of Table 2 reveals some important differences in the patterns of accuracy within the two samples.

Both the South Bend and the Bunkyo main respondents are typically quite accurate (75 percent or higher) in identifying their discussants' partisan viewpoints when the discussant and the main respondent share the same preference. The only exceptions occur among the Bunkyo main respondents who support a minor party (59 percent accurate), and the South Bend respondents who are independent (51 percent accurate). Main respondents are *less* likely to recognize discussant preferences accurately when there is self-reported partisan disagreement within the dyad, and this pattern is particularly pronounced for the Bunkyo ward sample. This can be seen by concentrating on the cells that lie off the main diagonals. Accuracy levels vary from 38 to 70 percent in South Bend, and from 12 percent to 44 percent in Bunkyo ward.

Sample size limitations keep us from expanding the Table 2 analysis to consider the accuracy with which the supporters of the particular Japanese minor parties evaluate the particular preferences of their discussants, but we can consider the accuracy with which particular minor party preferences are perceived by the sample as a whole. Thus, in Table 3, we cross-tabulate the Bunkyo main respondents' perceptions of the discussants' party preferences by the discussants' self-reported preferences. The table shows particularly low levels of accuracy (18 percent to 44 percent) in recognizing minority party support.

In summary, these results support several arguments. First, less popular

TABLE 3. Main Respondent's Perception of Discussant's Partisanship by Self-Reported Partisanship of the Discussant (For Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo.)

		Self-Reported Partisanship of the Discussant						
		LDP	NFP	DPJ	SDP	JCP	IND	Total
Main	LDP	58.1	29.4	28.1	33.3	19.4	23.2	31.8
Respondent	NFP	1.1	17.6	0.0	0.0	3.2	4.1	3.5
Perception	DPJ	10.8	11.8	31.2	0.0	0.0	2.7	7.0
Regarding	SDP	3.2	5.9	6.2	44.4	0.0	2.3	3.7
Discussant	JCP	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.9	4.6	6.2
	IND	24.7	35.3	34.4	22.2	35.5	63.2	47.8
	N =	93	17	32	9	31	220	402

LDP = Liberal Democratic Party; NFP = New Frontier Party; DPJ = Democratic Party of Japan; SDP = Social Democratic Party; JCP = Japanese Communist Party; IND = independent, don't know.

preferences appear to be recognized less accurately than more popular preferences: Liberal Democrats, Democrats, and Republicans are more likely to be recognized than supporters of a minor Japanese party. Second, main respondents are more likely to recognize the preferences of the people with whom they agree; this pattern is especially pronounced among the Bunkyo respondents.

Finally, the overall ability of the Bunkyo respondents to make accurate judgments regarding discussant preferences is comparable to the accuracy of the South Bend respondents, but their accuracy depends on the ability of Bunkyo independents to identify their independent discussants. Indeed, the level of mutual recognition among independents is much higher in the Bunkyo sample than it is in the South Bend sample. It is not immediately clear why the Bunkyo independents are so accurate. In recent years, approximately 50 percent of Japanese respondents typically report being independent, and the Bunkyo data set is not exceptional: 47.8 percent of the main respondents report independence. Does this mean that "independent" is a useful, macroenvonmentally based expectation in predicting party support among Japanese?[7] Alternatively, are independents typically surrounded by other independents, and does the process of generalization based on personal experience thereby yield enhanced levels of accuracy? In short, while these results are suggestive, they are open to alternative interpretations, and we turn to a more extensive analysis of the factors affecting communication among the South Bend and Bunkyo respondents.

GENERALIZATION BIASES IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

What are the factors that enhance and inhibit the ability of citizens to make accurate judgments regarding the political preferences of others, and how do these factors vary across different systems? This is really just another way of asking how patterns of political communication and deliberation are contingent on the social contexts and institutions of different democratic political systems. In the analyses that follow, we are particularly interested in three factors: the extent to which disagreement within social dyads inhibits the effective communication of political preferences; the extent to which individual judgments about particular discussants are derived from generalizations based on perceived preference distributions in larger networks of association; and the extent to which political preferences communicate more effectively if they are more widespread in the external political environment.

Two identical models are estimated in Table 4, one for the Bunkyo sample and the other for the South Bend sample. Both are logit models with binary dependent variables measuring the individual's accuracy in making judgments regarding the political preferences of particular discussants. Each model includes the same set of explanatory variables: (1) a dummy coded variable for

TABLE 4. Accuracy of the Main Respondent's Judgment Regarding Discussant's Partisan Loyalty by Dyadic Agreement and by Perceived Agreement in Residual Network

	Coefficient	*t* Value	
A. Bunkyo Ward Sample			
Constant	−1.37	−5.98	$N = 358$
Dyadic Agreement	1.70	6.42	$\chi^2 = 102$ with 4 d.f. ($p = .00$)
Network Agreement	1.62	4.74	Pseudo $R^2 = .26$
Spouse	.94	2.43	
Other Relative	−.20	−.68	
B. South Bend Sample			
Constant	−.47	−3.51	$N = 862$
Dyadic Agreement	.46	2.94	$\chi^2 = 90$ with 4 d.f. ($p = .00$)
Network Agreement	1.70	7.51	Pseudo $R^2 = .10$
Spouse	−.08	−.43	
Other Relative	.10	.53	

Notes: Estimates are corrected for clustering on the main respondent.

Dyadic Agreement: 1 = main respondent and discussant report the same partisan loyalty; 0 = main respondent and discussant report different partisan loyalties.

Network Agreement: proportion of residual network that is perceived by the main respondent to hold the same partisan loyalty as the discussant in the dyad.

whether the respondent and the discussant report the same party loyalty, (2) a dummy coded variable for whether the discussant is a spouse, (3) a dummy coded variable for whether the discussant is some other nonspousal relative, and (4) the proportion of the remaining network that is perceived to hold the same party loyalty as that reported by the particular discussant.

Both of the agreement variables distinguish among the minor parties. The main respondent and the discussant are not defined to be in agreement unless they report supporting the same particular party. Agreement in the residual network distinguishes among the minor parties as well, based on the main respondent's perceptions of (at most) two other discussants, thereby taking on values of 0, .5, or 1. If Maki's first discussant reports being a supporter of the Japanese Communist Party, and she perceives that her second and third discussants are both supporters of the JCP, the variable is set to 1. At the other extreme, if she perceives that neither of them support the JCP, the variable is set to 0. In short, this measure indexes the extent to which the discussant holds a preference that the main respondent perceives to be present among other associates.

As the results of Table 4 show, both agreement variables produce discernible effects for both samples. Both the South Bend respondents and the Bunkyo respondents are more likely to make accurate judgments regarding discussant

preferences if they agree with the discussant's self-reported preference. They are also more likely to be accurate if the discussant's self-reported preference is perceived to be more widespread within their networks of association.[8] In addition, the spousal variable shows a discernible effect for the Bunkyo sample, indicating that accuracy is higher among spouses in comparison with other network dyads.

The magnitudes of the agreement effects are shown in Table 5, where the predicted probabilities of accurate perception are displayed as a function of both (1) objectively defined agreement within the dyad and (2) the main respondent's perception regarding the residual network.[9] Thus, both the South Bend respondents and the Bunkyo respondents are more likely to make accurate judgments if they perceive that others hold a preference coinciding with the self-reported preference of the discussant. Both sets of respondents are also more likely to be accurate if their own self-reported preferences coincide with the discussants' self-reported preferences.

While the effects of the residual networks are quite comparable across the two samples, the effect of dyadic disagreement is much stronger among the Bunkyo respondents. Dyadic disagreement reduces the probability of accurate perception between 7 and 12 points among the South Bend respondents, but between 32 and 40 points among the Bunkyo respondents. In contrast, residual network composition produces an effect on accuracy that varies from 28 points

TABLE 5. Predicted Probabilities of Accurate Perception for Bunkyo and South Bend Samples. (By dyadic agreement and agreement in residual network. For nonrelative dyads.)

Do the Discussant and the Main Respondent Report the Same Party Preference?	Proportion of Residual Net Perceived to Hold the Preference Reported by the Discussant	Accuracy Probability
A. Bunkyo Ward sample		
yes	all (1)	.89
yes	none (0)	.61
no	all (1)	.57
no	none (0)	.21
B. South Bend Sample		
yes	all (1)	.84
yes	none (0)	.50
no	all (1)	.77
no	none (0)	.38

Source: Table 4 model estimates.

to 36 points among the Bunkyo respondents, and from 34 points to 39 points among the South Bend respondents.

Taking account of the spousal effect among the Bunkyo respondents increases the probability of accurate perception. For example, in comparison to the second row of Table 5A, where there is agreement within the dyad but perceived divergence in the remainder of the network, the probability of accurate perception is .78 among spouses—an increase of .17 over the .61 probability of accurate perception among non-relatives that is shown in the table.

What do these results suggest? First, both sets of respondents appear to generalize on the basis of their residual networks, and the importance of this generalization is relatively constant across the two samples. In contrast, the effects of dyadic disagreement are much more pronounced among the Bunkyo sample, and disagreement may thus have very different consequences in Bunkyo than it does in South Bend. Indeed, there is little evidence here to suggest that the South Bend residents are hesitant to address disagreement within their networks of association. In contrast, political disagreement takes on a heightened significance among the Bunkyo respondents, seriously obscuring the accurate communication of political preferences.

Moreover, the differential effect of dyadic disagreement is consistent with the differential spousal effect. Based on the work of Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994), we might expect that Japanese would be less willing to express political opinions beyond their most closely held relationships, particularly when these opinions involve disagreement. And that is what these results appear to demonstrate.

MAJORITARIAN BIASES AND MACROENVIRONMENTAL INFERENCES

We have seen (in Tables 2 and 3) that some preferences are perceived more accurately than others. Among the South Bend respondents, Democrats and Republicans are most likely to be perceived accurately, and independents are least likely to be perceived accurately. Among the Bunkyo respondents, the independents and Liberal Democrats are most likely to be perceived accurately, and supporters of the minor parties are least likely to be perceived accurately. Although these patterns of effects are seemingly divergent—particularly with respect to the perception of political independents—we believe both patterns can be understood in terms of the advantages that accrue to more popular political preferences.

First, people who hold widespread beliefs and loyalties are more likely to encounter others who hold the same beliefs and loyalties. This is not to say that people do not exercise discretion in choosing their associates, but numerically dominant groups operate at a significant stochastic advantage in the process of network construction (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). Thus, politically popular

preferences are more likely to be perceived accurately because people who hold these preferences are more likely to associate with people who hold the same preferences. As we have seen, the probability of accurate perception is enhanced by political agreement.

Second, and quite apart from the likelihood of agreement within dyadic relationships, politically dominant preferences are also more widespread within the remainder of individuals' social networks. In general, within their networks of social relations, the Bunkyo respondents are more likely to encounter supporters of the LDP than supporters of the JCP. Thus, when they generalize on the basis of these networks, they may not recognize that a particular individual supports the JCP or some other minority party.

Finally, citizens may fail to recognize particular preferences because the preferences are not widespread in the larger political environment. For example, many Japanese recognize that relatively few people vote for the JCP, and therefore, they might not expect one of their associates to support the JCP. Indeed, such a process is not limited to Japan, and Huckfeldt et al. (1998) show that a national sample of Americans are less likely to recognize Perot supporters in the 1992 election.

One problem in evaluating the importance of macroenvironmental inference is that minority standing may produce communication difficulties for political parties and viewpoints at a variety of levels. For example, if Hiroshi supports an unpopular political cause, (1) he is more likely to encounter particular individuals who disagree; (2) he is more likely to be embedded in a larger network of social relations with people who do not support the same cause; and (3) he is more likely to believe that relatively few people in the larger environment hold the same political preference. Any or all of these factors might cause Hiroshi to miss the fact that one of his associates does, in fact, support the same unpopular cause. Thus, in evaluating whether people invoke macroenvironmental inferences in reaching judgments regarding other people's political preferences, we must also take account these other factors.

The models in Table 6 are extensions of the Table 4 models that include the political preferences of the discussants as well as the preferences of the main respondents. Party loyalties are dummy coded, with independents serving as the baseline excluded category. We include a single category of minority party support among the Bunkyo respondents due to the minimal number of supporters for each of the minor parties. As the table shows, the previously demonstrated effects of disagreement in the dyad and the residual network are substantially maintained. The main exception is that within the South Bend sample, dyadic disagreement produces a marginal t value, and therefore a marginally discernible effect.

What does the table show regarding the consequences of particular partisan loyalties? First, the party loyalties of the main respondents fail to produce

TABLE 6. Accuracy of the Main Respondent's Judgment Regarding Discussant's Partisan Loyalty by Dyadic Agreement, Perceived Agreement in Residual Network, Partisan Loyalty of Main Respondent, and Partisan Loyalty of Discussant

	Coefficient	*t* Value	
A. Bunkyo Ward Sample			
Constant	−1.94	−5.37	
Dyadic Agreement	2.02	6.61	N = 358
Network Agreement	1.73	4.81	χ^2 = 109 with 8 d.f. (p = .00)
Main Resp. Supports			Pseudo R^2 = .29
LDP	−.16	−.37	
Minor Party	.15	.38	
Discussant Supports			
LDP	1.31	3.88	
Minor Party	.38	1.01	
Spouse	.95	2.37	
Other Relative	−.27	−.87	
B. South Bend Sample			
Constant	−1.01	−5.31	
Dyadic Agreement	.31	1.90	N = 862
Network Agreement	1.64	7.72	χ^2 = 117 with 8 d.f. (p = .00)
Main Resp. Supports			Pseudo R^2 = .12
Democrats	.04	.18	
Republicans	.25	1.28	
Discussant Supports			
Democrats	.96	5.26	
Republicans	.66	3.30	
Spouse	−.02	−.11	
Other Relative	.07	.36	

Notes: Estimates are corrected for clustering on the main respondent.

Main Respondent Supports (party): 1 = main respondent identifies with (party); 0 = otherwise; baseline condition is independent.

Discussant Supports (party): 1 = discussant identifies with (party); 0 = otherwise; baseline condition is independent.

discernible effects, either for the South Bend respondents or for the Bunkyo respondents. Rather, the preferences of the discussants produce the effects, and thus we are not dealing with a cognition problem that can be explained simply on the basis of the main respondent. The important point is not that people with particular preferences do a better or worse job of perceiving acccurately but that various preferences are more or less likely to be perceived accurately.

Second, and within this general context, all the coefficients for all the political loyalties of the discussants are positively signed, and while not all the effects

are statistically discernible, there is no evidence here to suggest that the baseline condition of political independence communicates well. This is the case even for the Bunkyo sample, among whom political independence is the modal category. This may simply mean that political independents are more likely to communicate a set of indifferent political messages, which ambiguously portray the discussant's political preferences (Huckfeldt et al., 1998). In other words, it is often the case that *any* preference communicates more clearly than *no* preference, and hence the inferential advantage of majority status is offset by the lack of a clear political signal coming from the Bunkyo independents. We now see that the higher level of mutual recognition that occurs among Bunkyo independents in Table 2 is probably due to personal experience—to the heightened likelihood of encountering independents within dyads and networks of association.

What are the magnitudes of these differences? Table 7 shows that the Bunkyo respondents are between 4 and 22 points less likely to recognize a minor party supporter than they are to recognize a supporter of the LDP, and they are between 9 and 28 points more likely to recognize a supporter of the LDP than an independent. In contrast, the South Bend respondents are about equally likely to recognize supporters of the Democratic and Republican parties, and they are between 15 and 24 points more likely to recognize a Democratic self-identifier than an independent. Recall once again that these effects take account of disagreement within the dyad and within the residual network. Indeed, Table 7 shows that the effects of disagreement within dyads and residual networks are still substantial, independent of the discussants' particular party loyalties.

Are some incorrect perceptions more serious than others? We do not discriminate among the various incorrect perceptions; the misperception of a JCP supporter as an independent is treated in the same manner as the misperception of a JCP supporter as a supporter of the LDP. We believe this is an appropriate measurement procedure relative to our theoretical and substantive purposes. The primary focus of this analysis is not the ideological or political locations of the parties relative to one another. Rather, we are concerned with the consequences of political disagreement, political heterogeneity, and majority-minority standing on the effectiveness with which particular political preferences are communicated. In this context, relative to the communication and reinforcement of particular party preferences, the important issue is whether the particular preferences are recognized. Important differences exist among and within the minor parties, and a primary difficulty of the LDP opposition is that it is fractured among a variety of minor parties. Our analysis suggests that the problem is self-perpetuating, in part because none of the minor parties are large enough to sustain the effective communication of party support.

Moreover, and as we have previously noted, the Japanese independents are

TABLE 7. Predicted Probabilities of Accurate Perception for Bunkyo and South Bend Samples. (By dyadic agreement, agreement in residual network, and discussant party preference. For nonrelative dyads.)

Do the Discussant and the Main Respondent Report the Same Party Preference?	Proportion of Residual Net Perceived to Hold the Preference Reported by the Fiscussant?	Discussant's Reported Party Preference	Accuracy Probability
A. Bunkyo Ward Sample			
yes	all	LDP	.96
yes	none	LDP	.82
no	all	LDP	.76
no	none	LDP	.36
yes	all	other	.92
yes	none	other	.68
no	all	other	.54
no	none	other	.17
yes	all	indep./none	.87
yes	none	indep./none	.54
no	all	indep./none	.46
no	none	indep./none	.13
B. South Bend Sample			
yes	all	Democrat	.86
yes	none	Democrat	.56
no	all	Democrat	.82
no	none	Democrat	.48
yes	all	Republican	.83
yes	none	Republican	.48
no	all	Republican	.78
no	none	Republican	.40
yes	all	indep./none	.71
yes	none	indep./none	.32
no	all	indep./none	.64
no	none	indep./none	.26

Source: Table 6 model estimates.

particularly heterogeneous, making the construction of relative misperception measures even more problematic. In summary, while the relative level of misperception constitutes an interesting and worthwhile topic, it is tangential to the purpose of this article and is beyond the boundaries of the current effort.

We see a pattern of cumulative disadvantages for minor parties. First, their supporters are more likely to realize disagreement within dyadic social encounters. Second, their supporters tend to be outnumbered within the social networks of other citizens. And finally, based on lower levels of support in the external political environment, people do not expect to encounter others who

are supporters of the minor parties. What are the consequences for the collective processes of political communication and deliberation?

CONCLUSION

A continuing concern in empirical democratic theory is that patterns of communication and deliberation among citizens might be compromised routinely by individually and structurally induced conformity within networks of social interaction. Limited opportunities for social interaction create politically homogeneous patterns of social interaction: individuals are regularly located in social settings where people generally share the same political viewpoints. At the same time, people select associates in ways that tend to heighten levels of political homogeneity even further. Hence, according to this argument, citizens tend to be located in politically homogeneous social cells that limit opportunities for political disagreement and exposure to alternative viewpoints. While such an argument may very well provide an adequate representation of the constraints that operate on communication and deliberation in some settings (Huckfeldt and Kohfeld, 1989), it does not explain patterns of political interaction among either the South Bend or the Bunkyo samples. In both instances, individuals are quite likely to come into contact with people who hold divergent political preferences.

This does not mean that the opportunities and constraints operating on patterns of citizen communication are the same in the United States and Japan, or that they are the same with respect to the communication of all preferences. We have seen potentially important differences between the Bunkyo respondents and the South Bend respondents, as well as potentially important patterns of variation across political preferences. First, at the level of dyadic encounters, the Bunkyo citizens are less likely to recognize the existence of disagreement. While disagreement serves to reduce levels of accurate perception among both groups of respondents, the effect of disagreement is enhanced among the Bunkyo respondents. Many of the Bunkyo respondents do recognize the existence of disagreement, and the relative frequency of *perceived* disagreement is very comparable between the two samples—46 percent of the South Bend dyads and 44 percent of the Bunkyo dyads involve perceived disagreement. But a primary source of the perceived disagreement among the Bunkyo respondents is among the supporters of the minor parties who are, in reality, very unlikely to have discussants who hold the same political preferences.

How important are cultural differences in the failure to recognize political disagreement accurately? This article shows that the effect of dyadic disagreement on the accuracy of perception is higher among the Bunkyo respondents than it is among the South Bend respondents, even after other factors are taken into account. Why is this the case? Two different interpretations stand out as likely explanations. First, we have already addressed the argument of

Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) that levels of generalized trust (as opposed to assurance) are higher in the United States than in Japan. (Also see Yamagishi, 1998.) If free and open political communication depends on generalized trust in social relations, this particular cultural attribute might explain the enhanced effect of dyadic disagreement among the Bunkyo respondents.

An alternative cultural explanation for the same phenomenon is based on differences in levels of collectivism and individualism. Some analysts have argued that Japan possesses a collectivist culture in which the goals of the individual are sacrificed to the goals of the group, while the United States possesses an individualist culture in which the goals of the individual are paramount (Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Others have challenged the credibility of this argument (see Matsumoto, 1999, and Takano and Osaka, 1999), but it is quite widely accepted by the media and within popular culture. That is, many Japanese and Americans may have come to think of themselves in these terms and construct conforming behavioral expectations regardless of whether the characterizations are in fact accurate.

If Japanese view themselves and their culture in collectivist terms, they may be less likely to expect political disagreement in social relations. Alternatively, if Americans think of themselves in individualistic terms, they may be more likely to expect political disagreement in social relations. We offer no final word on these alternative explanations, except to observe that the larger effect due to disagreement persists among the Bunkyo respondents even after taking into account the distributions of preferences within communication networks and within the larger population.

Second, we see a pronounced pattern of majoritarian bias, which operates through multiple mechanisms for both samples. The end result of this bias is that minority preferences are less likely to be communicated effectively (perceived accurately), and the bias operates at several different levels: within dyads, within larger networks of association, and within the larger political environment.

At the level of dyads, people who hold minority preferences are less likely to associate with individuals who share the same preference, and hence their preferences are less likely to be perceived accurately in dyadic interactions. This pattern is particularly pronounced among the Bunkyo respondents, but Huckfeldt et al. (1998) offer additional evidence with respect to the U.S. case.

At the level of broader and more inclusive networks of social relations, minority preferences are also less likely to be represented. Based on these recurrent patterns of social interaction, individuals develop generalized expectations regarding the preferences of particular individuals. Thus, because individuals are less likely to encounter minority preferences within their networks of social relations, they do not expect to encounter them within particular dyadic relationships—even when a particular associate might actually hold the preference.

At the macroenvironment level, many individuals develop generalized expec-

tations regarding the incidence of particular viewpoints, and form an environmentally derived inference regarding the likelihood that associates will hold various partisan loyalties. Once again, the bias lies in the direction of *not* expecting to encounter minority viewpoints.

With two exceptions, the basic contours of this majoritarian bias appear to operate in much the same way across the two samples. First, the unwillingness of the Bunkyo respondents to acknowledge disagreement within dyads serves to magnify the majoritarian bias. Supporters of the LDP are much more likely than supporters of other parties to have associates who share their partisan loyalty; hence, their partisan preferences are more likely to communicate effectively. Second, the large number of minor Japanese parties means that the LDP is the only partisan alternative in the Japanese party system that enjoys an advantage in terms of a macroenvironmentally derived inference. The fractured political opposition in Japan means that support for the various opposition parties does not communicate well, and, therefore, Japanese citizens regularly underestimate support for the various opposition parties. This means that architects of democratic institutions are faced with a dilemma in the creation of institutions aimed at furthering democratic deliberation. On the one hand, a multiparty system proliferates the number of choices available, thereby opening up a more variegated political discussion. On the other hand, the proliferation of parties creates an obstacle to the effective communication of party support among and between citizens. Hence, the problem is self-perpetuating because none of these minor parties is large enough to sustain the effective communication of its message.

A final difference in deliberation patterns among the Bunkyo and South Bend samples relates to the incidence of politically independent orientations among the respondents. In the aggregate, the Bunkyo respondents are more likely than the South Bend respondents to recognize independent discussants. But this is *not* because independent orientations communicate effectively (Huckfeldt et al., 1998). After we take account of agreement within the dyad and the network, independent orientations are among the *least* effectively communicated orientations for both samples, and the effectiveness of deliberation appears to be attenuated by independent orientations.

In summary, this article demonstrates clear points of divergence between patterns of collective deliberation in Bunkyo and South Bend: an unwillingness to confront disagreement within the Bunkyo dyads; a two-party system that enhances the likelihood of effectively communicated partisan preferences in South Bend; a higher level of partisan independence among the Bunkyo respondents that serves to inhibit effective political communication. But these points of divergence are anchored in a process that is quite similar across the two systems, and it is the identification of this shared process that serves to illuminate the important differences between these two democratic systems.

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NOTES

1. Framed in this way, we might conceive the problem as one of Bayesian reasoning. In forming a judgment regarding the ambiguous political preferences of others, individuals may rely on their own personally collected sample data—the distribution of preferences in their immediate social surroundings. The question thus becomes, are they also able to take account of prior information, where the prior is defined in terms of information taken from the distribution of preferences in the external environment (Huckfeldt et al., 1998)? Indeed, an influential literature on Bayesian reasoning suggests that individuals often rely on their own individually collected sample data while they disregard the prior (Kahneman and Tversky, 1973).
2. The first group was asked about their spouse and two other people who were important to them. The second group was asked about the three people with whom they were frequently in contact. The third group was also asked about the three people with whom they were frequently in contact, but a different method of contact was used to interview the discussants. The response rates for the three groups were 30.7% ($n = 181$); 32.4% ($n = 158$); 34.9% ($n = 170$). Interviews were subsequently conducted with 150 discussants for the first group of main respondents, 134 discussants for the second group, and 118 for the third group. Other analyses show little difference across the name generators, and hence they are combined into a single data set for these analyses.
3. In four instances, the same discussant was named by two different main respondents. More detailed information on the study is available in Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995).
4. For the South Bend respondents, perceptions of "don't know," "both," and "neither" are defined to be accurate if the discussant does not identify with one of the major parties. For the Bunkyo respondents, perceptions of "don't know" and "independent" are both defined to be accurate if the discussant reports either "independent" or "don't know."
5. The small numbers of main respondents (24) and discussants (15) who report that they do not know which party they support are combined with the independents.
6. This level of independence is consistent with other national surveys of the Japanese electorate.
7. Japanese "independents" are a mixture of very different citizens (Tanaka, 1997): low knowledge, disinterested citizens as well as highly interested but politically alienated citizens. (Also see Richardson, 1997, chap. 2.) We have no direct way for distinguishing these citizens in the present analysis. Indeed, if we could eliminate the politically disinterested citizens, we might expect levels of accuracy to be further enhanced among the independents.
8. The models of Tables 4 and 6 are corrected for clustering on main respondents—for the appearance of the same main respondent in multiple dyads (Rogers, 1993).
9. The relationship between the respondent and the discussant is held constant at nonrelative.

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