



Party Politics and Decentralization in Japan and France: When the Opposition Governs (Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies)

Koichi Nakano

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Decentralization is a curious policy for a central government to pursue. If politics is essentially about the struggle for power, why would anyone want to give away the power that one struggled for and won? This book argues that it is precisely party competition in search of power that propels decentralization.

Koichi Nakano develops his core argument through in-depth, qualitative research on the politics of reform in France and Japan. Introducing the concept of oppositional policy, he traces the process through which parties in opposition reinvent their ideologies and policy platforms in an attempt to present themselves as the voice of the governed, broaden popular support through the advocacy of enhanced democratic control of government, and proceed to implement some of these oppositional policies after capturing power. This book, thus, takes the role of political parties in the democratic process seriously - parties take up certain issues and espouse certain solutions actively as weapons in the power struggle both on the electoral front and in the policy process. Party competition is not merely a formal condition of democracy; it is also a mechanism with substantive policy impact on its evolution.

Party Politics and Decentralization in Japan and France will be of interest to students of Japanese and French politics and comparative politics in general.

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