

## Japan

### Vanderbilt

Japan is coded as non-democratic for the period from 1919 to 1945. Geddes provides no regime type coding. We code Japan from 1919 to 1931 as being “other” regime, specifically an oligarchy. By our rules, we do not code any SOLS changes during the period of oligarchy.<sup>1</sup> For the period from 1932 to 1945, we code a military regime and code no SOLS changes during this period as well.

Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Japan went through the Meiji Restoration. This was a period in which imperial rule was restored and power was wielded by the Meiji Oligarchy, a “privileged clique that exercised imperial power, sometimes despotically” (Library of Congress). Around the turn of the century, opposition against the Meiji rule increased and Japan experienced a “trend toward developing representative government” (Library of Congress). The Meiji era ended with the death of the emperor in 1912.

The 1920s were the years of “Taisho” Democracy” that had basic characteristics of a parliamentary regime with a two-party political regime (Library of Congress). The main parties were the Seiyukai and the Rikken Meiseito, who essentially alternated in power until 1932 (Library of Congress). By our coding rules, however, we do not consider Japan as a democracy. During this period, significant political power was wielded by the old oligarchic group of “elder statesmen” (*genro* in Japanese) who served as informal extra-constitutional advisors to the emperor and helped choose PM’s. Saionji was a particularly important *genro*.

Hara Takashi (FC-- Rikken Seiyukai (Friends of Constitutional Government)) was the first PM in our observation period (1918-1921). The Rikken Seiyukai relied for political support on the Zaibatsu, which were powerful groups of financial and industrial interests. Hara Takashi “a protégé of Saionji [a powerful leader of the Seiyukai] and a major influence in the prewar Seiyukai cabinets, had become the first commoner to serve as prime minister. He took advantage of long-standing relationships he had throughout the government, won the support of the surviving *genro* and the House of Peers, and brought into his cabinet as army minister Tanaka Giichi (1864-1929), who had a greater appreciation of favorable civil-military relations than his predecessors” (Library of Congress).

Following Hara’s assassination by a rightwing extremist, his foreign minister Yasuya Uchida became acting prime minister, and then Finance Minister Takahashi (also FC) assumed the PM role as a result of the wishes of the Seiyukai leadership, especially Saionji (Frédéric and Roth 2001; worldstatesmen.org). Neither is a SOLS change. While Takahashi was not explicitly Hara’s pre-designated successor, he was in Hara’s cabinet and was supported by the same group of people (the Seiyukai) as Hara. According to Connors (1987: 92) the FC made Takahashi President of the Party and the composition of the cabinet remained as it had been under Hara. However, Takahashi came to power in time of great rivalry within the Seiyukai. Individual party barons could buy support in the Diet and Takahashi had to resign when he was unable to get a rival faction under control (Sims 2001, 134). “The Seiyukai remained the major party, but it was deeply divided (Sims 2001, 134).”

After internal struggle regarding who should succeed Takahashi, the party asked the non-partisan Admiral Kato Tomobasuro (Mil), who had been minister of the Navy under Hara, to

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<sup>1</sup> In this oligarchic period in Japan, many non-pre-designated leaders with very similar SOLS composed of the same oligarchy (*Genro* in Japanese).

become the PM. Gordon (2009, 163) states that, “it is important to note that the practice of selecting party leaders to form cabinets was still not firmly established. Takahashi proved unable to contain factional struggles within his party, and in 1922 he resigned as prime minister.... Over the following two years, the three surviving oligarchs returned to the practice of selecting non-party prime ministers. In quick succession, they named two navy men and the president of the Privy Council to form supra-partisan, so-called transcendental cabinets with relatively weak ties to the political parties.” As Gordon suggested, there is a clear difference between Takahashi’s government, which was based on a political party (FC), and Kato’s government, which was not based on any political parties. Thus, Kato cannot be considered as a pre-designated successor. However, since Kato was still in the oligarchic period, we do not code a SOLS change with the entry of Kato.

Following the sudden death of Kato in 1923 and a short interim of Uchida (non-party), Admiral Yamamoto (Mil) became prime minister. The reason of this transition is Kayo’s sudden death, which implies that Kato did not appoint Yamamoto as his successor before his death.<sup>2</sup> While the transition from Kato (navy man) to Yamamoto (navy man) does not seem to be a pre-designated succession, we do not code a SOLS change with the entry of Yamamoto because of our oligarchy rules. Yamamoto resigned after a universal suffrage debate and an assassination attempt on the Prince Regent. Saionji, a genro and leader of the Seiyaku, chose Kiyoura (non-party) to succeed Yamamoto. The transition from Yamamoto to Kiyoura does not seem to be a pre-designated succession. By our oligarchy rules, however, we do not code SOLS change with the entry of Kiyoura.<sup>3</sup>

Kiyoura could not secure support of the Seiyukai (FC) like Kato had, a split occurred, and the Seiyukai lost votes (Sims 2001, 136). This meant that finally Kato Takkai, the leader of the Kenseikai (Con), became PM. Under Kato Takkai, the Kenseikai entered into coalition with the Seiyukai and the Kakushin Club (K) (Kakushin was later absorbed by the Seiyukai in 1925) but the government was clearly led by the Kenseikai, which formerly had been in the opposition (Sims 2001, 137). While this means that a representative of the competing party came to power, we do not code a SOLS change with the entry of Kato based on our oligarchy rules.

Kato remained in office until his death in 1926. After Kato died, Saionji recommended Wakatsuki Reijiro as Kato’s successor and the Kenseikai quickly appointed him to their leader. This is not a SOLS change. Since Wakatsuki was the Vice President of the Kenseikai party at that time, it was a natural course that he succeeded to Kato in emergency. Connors (1987: 101) states that, “the path was clear. The Diet was still in session and the Kato Cabinet had not lost popular support.... The decision to recommend Vice-President Wakatsuki was therefore straightforward.” Thus, the transition from Kato (Kenseikai) to Wakatsuki (Kenseikai) seems to be a pre-designated succession. However, Wakatsuki disappointed his party and had to resign in 1927 over a financial crisis (Sims 2001, 144). He was succeeded by Tanaka Giichi of the Seiyukai. Although this means that power reverted back to the other main party at the time, this is not a SOLS change based on the oligarchy rules.

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<sup>2</sup> Although Kato’s and Yamamoto’s cabinets may indicate that there was some form of military government in place during this time, we were unable to find evidence that the military had actually taken over the government. Also, Yamamoto, when asked to resign in 1924, did so.

<sup>3</sup> We acknowledge that the Kiyoura’s SOLS might be different from Yamamoto’s SOLS. Kiyoura was the president of Privy Council and “Kiyoura filled his cabinet almost entirely with members of the House of Peers rather than House of Representatives” (Gordon 2009, 163). This suggests that Kiyoura’s SOLS may differ from previous governments which included the members of Lower House (Perez 1998, 138). However, we follow our oligarchy rules.

In 1927, the Seiyuhontu members joined with the Kenseikai to form the Rikken Minseiko (Constitutional People's government party) under the leadership of Yamaguchi (Sims 2001, 145). In 1928, Japan held its first general election under the new suffrage (which allowed males to vote). Vote buying was pervasive. Tanaka resigned in 1929 after he failed to punish the military officers involved in killing of a Manchurian warlord, despite his commitment to do so, and he lost credibility with the Emperor (Sims 2001, 148-149). Saionji then recommended Hamaguchi as new PM (Sims 2001, 149). Hamaguchi was affiliated with the more liberal Rikken Minseiko, the main competitor of the conservative Seiyukai. By our oligarchy rules, however, the entry of Hamaguchi is not a SOLS change.

Hamaguchi was shot in 1930 and eventually killed by an ultranationalist in 1931 (Sims 2001, 152). Foreign minister Shidehara became as an acting prime minister after Hamaguchi was mortally wounded and before he dies. Since Shidehara did not belong to any parties at that time, his SOLS is non-party. Connors (1987, 104) states that "On April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1931, under pressure from the Cabinet, Hamaguchi resigned as party president and Wakatsuki became leader of the Minseito. The following day the [Hamaguchi] Cabinet presented its resignation. . . . Since the cause of the Cabinet's resignation was not political but medical, . . . the Genro advised that it was correct that the mandate should go to the new Minseito President, Wakatsuki". This suggests that Hamaguchi resigned after appointing (or at least deciding) Wakatsuki as his successor. Thus, we consider the transition from Hamaguchi (Minseito) to Wakatsuki (Minseito) as a pre-designated succession.

Wakatsuki's Minseiko cabinet was short-lived as an economic crisis led to its collapse later in 1931 (Sims 2001, 154). Saionji then recommended the appointment of Seiyukai President Inukai Tsuyoshi (Sims, 159). With the entry of Inukai, power reverted back to Minseiko's competitor, the Seiyukai. By our oligarchy rules, this is not a SOLS change. At the time Inukai came to office the military had become increasingly powerful, as evidenced by its staging of the Manchurian incident in 1931. As the Library of Congress writes, "The Manchurian Incident of September 1931 did not fail, and it set the stage for the eventual military takeover of the Japanese government. [...] The civilian government in Tokyo was powerless to prevent these military happenings. [...] The Japanese system of party government finally met its demise with the May 15th Incident in 1932, when a group of junior naval officers and army cadets assassinated Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855-1932)." The party government was suspended and the military effectively took control (Sims 2001, 162).

After Inukai's assassination, Korekiyo Takahashi briefly became acting PM. This is not a SOLS change. However, shortly thereafter Saionji started to choose military men to head the government. Sims (2001, 161) suggests that he had to, because the military did not tolerate any more party politicians as PMs. We code a military regime starting with the first of these, Makoto Saito, who was initially intended as an interim leader, but ended up being the first of many military leaders and non-party leaders who were supported by the military (Sims 2001, 161). This is a SOLS change.

It should be noted that the initial years of the military regime saw unrest as some factions went on a rampage against former PM's, including Saionji, and members of the imperial court. While participants were punished the civilian leadership had bowed to the military and the military was effectively in control (Library of Congress). Furthermore, there were initially two factions within the military that vied for political control: the fascist leaning Kodoha and the planned economy Toseiha factions. However, following a failed coup attempt of the Kodoha

faction in 1936, the Toseiha faction would remain in firm control of the Japanese military as well as Japanese politics (Flath 2005; worldstatesmen.org; Library of Congress).

Since the military was in charge of Japan before it lost independence as a result of its defeat, we code a SOLS change upon Japan's independence in 1952 when civilians take over the government. The elections of 1952 were characterized by a struggle between two members of the Liberal Party (LP), Yoshida and Hatoyama, and the struggle was ultimately decided in favor of Yoshida (Scalapino 1952; Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge). Following elections forced by a vote of no confidence backed by Hatoyama conservatives within the liberal party, Yoshida's party is referred to as Yoshida Liberals (YL) (Calder 1988, 84). Yoshida remained in power until December 9, 1954 when Hatoyama, at that time leader of the Democratic Party (DP) overtakes Yoshida's party in elections. (His government was informally supported by the YL and the Socialist Party (SP).) This is a SOLS change. On November 22, 1955, Yoshida and Hatoyama put aside their rivalry and merge the DP and YL into the LDP that would rule until 1993, mostly on its own (Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge; Inter Parline). We code this as a minor SOLS change. However, in the period from 26 December 1983 until 22 July 1986 the LDP enters in a coalition with the NLC (Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge). The NLC had only 8 members in parliament and was not needed for a majority at the time, its entry and exit have nonetheless been coded as minor SOLS changes.

Following a vote of no confidence against the ruling LDP, Hosokawa of the Japan New Party (JNP) became prime minister in August of 1993 in coalition with a number of other parties (SHIN, SDP, KOME, DSP, SAKI, and SHAM). Hosokawa's entry is a SOLS change. His government was short-lived, however, and it was replaced by an even shorter lived coalition government led by Hata Tsutomu of the Renewal Party (KAIS) in April 1994, which lasted for only two months. The other parties in the coalition were KOME and SAKI. The fall of Hata's government brought a return to power of the LDP in coalition with the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and the small Sakigaki (SAKI), with LDP as the largest party and Murayama of the JSP at the head of the coalition. As such the year 1994 has 2 SOLS changes. Upon the early retirement of Murayama, the coalition endorsed LDP president and minister Hashimoto to become the new prime minister. (Shinoda 1998; Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge) Based on the coding rules, I coded this as a SOLS change since the PM's party changed. Note, however, that there were no new elections and the composition of the coalition did not change; the JSP, or SDJP, and the SAKI remained in the coalition but the LDP was still the biggest party in the coalition. Following the October 1996 elections, Hashimoto's LDP stayed in power. There is some disagreement about whether this was a minority government (Shinoda 1998, parlgov.com) or a coalition government. Our designated main sources, the EJPR (Shiratori 1997) lists SDJP and SAKI in the cabinet. This is explained in a footnote (p. 430) that says that while these parties helped "form the second Hashimoto coalition cabinet, they decided not to send any ministers into the cabinet". Since we go with EJPR, we code no minor SOLS change here.

Hashimoto was succeeded by Obuchi of the LDP in 1998, (Uriu 1998) who in 1999 brought two parties into his coalition: the Liberal Party (LP) and the New Komeito. (Uriu 2000). Since Obuchi is from the same party, his entry into office is not a SOLS change. The LP joins in January 14 and then Komeito joins in October 5; both are coded as minor SOLS change (Oct 5 1999). The year 2000 saw a rapid succession of LDP leaders, when Obuchi suffered a stroke and he was succeeded by interim prime minister Aoki and later prime minister Mori. Neither is a major SOLS change. Moreover, the LP left the coalition April 1 of 2000 and was later replaced by the Conservative Party (Lincoln 2001), therefore I coded April 1 of 2000 as the date for the

minor SOLS change. Following elections in 2003, the LDP's minor coalition partner, the conservative party, merged with the LDP after being reduced to four seats ("Japan's Liberal" 2003). There is no minor SOLS change as the NCP did not leave the coalition but rather merged with LDP. Thus Koizumi really keeps the same support base. New Komeito would remain in coalition with the LDP beyond the end data of this dataset, but is renamed to Komei-Clean Government Party in 2004. ("New Responsibilities" 2003, "Komeito must" 2009, Métraux 2007)

In 2006, Koizumi resigned and was replaced by Shinzo Abe (no SOLS change). Abe was replaced by Yasuo Fukuda in sept. 2007. Fukuda in turn passed power on to Taro Aso, with the same coalition (no SOLS change).

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