

Fiji

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Before Fiji became an independent state in 1970 it had been a British colony. Based on our coding rules, Fiji is coded mostly as democratic although it does experience spell of authoritarianism. Cheibub et al. (2010) do not code Fiji as parliamentary, presidential, or mixed but Archigos codes the PM as the effective ruler so we treat Fiji as a parliamentary democracy (see also “Constitution of the Republic”; Maclellan 2001). The period of 1970 until 1987 was dominated by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and his Fijian Alliance Party (FAP). 1987 was a tumultuous year for Fiji politics. In April, Bavadra came to power leading the first ethnically Indian coalition, which consisted of the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) and the National Federation Party (NFP). However, this success was short lived as Lt-Col. Stiveni Rabuka led a military coup against the Bavadra government on the 14th of May. The period starting with Rabuka’s coup is coded as non-democratic. Since Bavadra’s regime was in power for 31 days, we code this as a regular SOLS and the change to Rabuka’s government is coded as a SOLS change as well. Rabuka tried to install several ruling councils dominated by ethnic Fijians before he stepped down to Mara on December 6th.¹ Mara’s regime is called an interim regime by the U.S. Department of State but by our coding rules we code this as a regular government. It is difficult to determine whether Mara held power independently of Rabuka or whether Rabuka was in charge and Mara was more of a figure head. On the one hand, a source says that "By the end of 1987, Rabuka established an interim government with Ratu Mara as the interim prime minister and Ratu Penaia as the president. Despite handing over authority to a ‘civilian’ government, Rabuka continued as the minister for home affairs and in 1989, the constitutional review process restarted with the appointment of the Manuelli Committee, which documented the constitutional wishes of the Taukei Movement, the chiefs, and the army and largely ignored the submissions from the F.L.P. and the N.F.P. (Ramesh 2007)". Howard (1991, 341) confirms that Mara did come to power with Rabuka's approval and relied on the military and the old oligarchy for power. Howard explicitly states that "Circumstances had forced Rabuka to deal with Mara; he had not done so voluntarily. Moreover, Mara retained considerable power and clearly did not view himself as being relegated to the role of mere follower of Mara (Howard 1991, 343)." It seems that Rabuka only surrendered power to Mara because he was worried about the economic decline in the country and the tensions between the Taukei and the Mara loyalists. Mara agreed to return if he could get remove openly hostile Taukei from the cabinet. Howard also discusses pro-Mara and anti-Mara factions and portrays the time as if Mara was in power. He refers to Mara's foreign policy, economic policy etc. Rabuka is hardly mentioned in those sections. This is in line with Archigos coding of Mara as the effective leader and not Rabuka. Considering these facts and the fact that Mara in some sense is an unlikely figure head, given that he was himself a former PM and a very powerful politician, we consider the transition from Rabuka to Mara a SOLS change.

In 1990 Fiji saw the enactment of a new constitution and a slow return to somewhat democratic rule.² The 1992 elections were won by Rabuka, who had assumed the leadership over the Fijian Political Party (FPP). Rabuka’s election as a Prime Minister was initially supported by

¹ Mara and Rabuko seem to have different support bases and appeal (Teaiwa).

² Note that the constitution gave ethnic Fijians a majority of both parliamentary and senate seats and that the LFP-NFP coalition condemned the constitution.

the FLP, but Rabuka's coalition did not include FLP members. Moreover, renewed conflict led the FLP to boycott the government starting June 1993. Rabuka's entry to power is coded as a SOLS change. Following the 1994 elections, Rabuka built a coalition with the General Voter's Party (GVP) and an independent, which is coded as a minor SOLS change. The entry date is unclear, so I code the final day of the month of the elections: 28 February (Europa World Yearbook 2002, Department of State 2010, Cahoon 2010).

The elections of 1999 saw a change in government: Chaudhry built a coalition consisting of the FLP, FAP, and the Party of National Unity (PANU), which is coded as a SOLS change. However, the second government under a prime minister of Indian descent did not fare well either. In May of 2000 armed men under the leadership of civilian nationalist George Speight took Chaudhry and his government hostage. Speight installed Ratu Josefa Iloilo on the 27th of May, who governed for two days (SOLSchange30), before the military under leadership of Army chief Bainimarama declared martial law (Europa World Yearbook 2002, Department of State 2010, Cahoon 2010). Following two months of interim military rule (which is not marked by a SOLS change), the military selected Qarase (non-party) to lead a civilian interim government (Department of State 2010, Cahoon 2010). In August 2001, elections were held that were won by interim Prime Minister Qarase and his newly established Fijian United Party (FUP) (Department of State 2010). Because the interim government of Qarase acquired a mandate after the election and his government had a different SOLS from the pre-coup government, we code a SOLS change at the start of his interim government. Qarase's coalition was comprised of his FUP, Conservative Alliance/Matanitu Vanua (CA), Labour Unity (LU), and independents (Reuters 2003).

In 2006 new elections were won by the incumbent Qarase, but this time he invited the FLP into government, which is coded as a minor SOLS change coded at the entry date of the FUP/FLP coalition - Wednesday 24 May 2006 (Gaglioti 2006, Department of state 2010). Although it is true that the FLP remained as an opposition party, it became one of the cabinet members. The new government did not last long, however. Following increasing tensions between Qarase and Bainimarama over the coalition, Bainimarama overthrew the government in a coup (Department of State 2010). Jona Senilagakali was briefly interim PM. Bainimarama then installed Iloilo as president, who immediately granted Bainimarama amnesty and appointed him as Prime Minister of a supposedly interim government. The Bainimarama coup is coded as a SOLS change (Department of State 2010).

With regard to a sub-regime type for Bainimarama, it is unclear what sub-regime type we should code. This is mainly because of scarce information about Bainimarama to define his regime type. One option is to code it as either a military regime or a personalist regime (or hybrid of both). If we emphasize the fact that Bainimarama was a Commander of the Fiji Military Forces and he included some members of the military forces in his government, we should code a military regime. However, there is not enough information to code his sub-regime as a military regime with confidence.

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