

Fiji

Rice

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).

Upon Fiji's independence from Great Britain in 1970, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, a member of the Fijian Alliance Party (FAP) became Prime Minister. He remained in power until 1987, however, it should be noted that the Indian-led opposition (as opposed to the ethnic Fijians) won a majority of seats in Parliament in 1977, but did not form a government because of concerns that ethnic Fijians would not accept Indo-Fijian leadership (United States Department of State 2010). In April 1987, a coalition under the leadership of Dr. Timoci Bavadra, a member of the Fijian Labour Party (FLP) gained the majority, and Bavadra became Prime Minister leading the first ethnically Indian coalition, which consisted of the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) and the National Federation Party (NFP). This is a SOLS change. Bavadra was apparently elected with support from the Indo-Fijian community, and his government was the first Indian majority government in Fiji (United States Department of State 2010).

One month and one day after he became Prime Minister (on May 14, 1987), Bavadra was overthrown in a military coup led by Sitiveni Rabuka. This is a SOLS change. Rabuka remained in power (even staging a second coup in September after he was unsatisfied with the progress being made) until December 5, when he resigned as head of state. In October, Rabuka's military government declared Fiji to be a republic and revoked the 1970 constitution. This move resulted in Fiji being expelled from the Commonwealth of Nations and official non-recognition of the Rabuka regime by foreign powers (United States Department of State 2010).

On December 5, Rabuka stepped down and Mara was named "interim" Prime Minister once again. 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 Manueli 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 (p.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 Rabuka (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 agree 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.

A new constitution was created in 1990, which stated that the majority of seats in both houses of the legislature had to be reserved for ethnic Fijians (United States Department of State 2010). Under the new constitution, elections were held in 1993, and Rabuka (who had since resigned from the military) became Prime Minister. Rabuka was at that point a member of the FPP-SVT (Fijian Political Party/Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa). This is 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: February 28 (Europa World Yearbook 2002, Department of State 2010, Cahoon, 2010). The constitution was reviewed in 1995, and was changed to allow more political rights for Indo-Fijians, with a multi-party cabinet. Upon approval of this constitution, Fiji was readmitted to the Commonwealth.

The first elections held under the new constitution were held in 1999. Mahendra Chaudhry, a member of the FLP, formed a coalition with the FAP and the Party of National Unity (PANU) to form a government. This is a SOLS change. One year later, on May 19, 2000, Chaudhry and most of Parliament were taken hostage by a group of ethnic-Fijian nationalists. The Nationalists installed Ratu Josefa Iloilo on the 27th of May, who governed for two days (SOLSCchange30), before the military under leadership of Army chief Bainimarama declared martial law (Europa World Yearbook 2002, Department of State 2010, Cahoon, 2010). Later, on July 4, the military made Laisenia Qarase, a nonpartisan former banker, Prime Minister of the interim government. The hostage crisis ended later in July, but Qarase continued in office until new parliamentary elections were held in August. Qarase's newly formed Fijian United Party (FUP-SDL) won the elections and Qarase officially became Prime Minister. Qarase's coalition was comprised of his FUP, Conservative Alliance/Matanitu Vanua (CA), Labour Unity (LU), and independents, (Reuters 2003). We have chosen to code the SOLS change as the date when Qarase initially entered office.

In 2006 new elections were won by the incumbent Qarase, but this time he invited the FLP into government. This is considered 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 a cabinet member. On December 5, Bainimarama again staged a coup and seized executive authority, dismissing Qarase. This is a SOLS change. Bainimarama was the actual individual controlling Fiji at this point, though he would not become Prime Minister until January 5, 2007. Though listed as an interim leader, Bainimarama remains in office until the present day. I have coded Senilagakali's assumption of office as the SOLS change associated with the coup, because

the date is correct, and there was a change of power on that day (it just wasn't necessarily to Senilagakali).

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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