

Looking at the Stability and Transformation of the Japanese Postwar Party System

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I. Introduction

The Japanese political system of 1946-1996 has often been defined by the continuous rule for four decades of the conservative Liberal Democratic party (LDP), which had held a majority of seats in the Diet between its formation in 1955 until it lost its majority in the Upper House (House of Councilors) in 1989. Under the Japanese political milieu, the LDP has been in a position of semi-permanent governance since 1955 except for a few years in the mid-1990s.

The first questionable issue, here, is how the LDP had maintained its dominant position during that period and how one-party dominance system had sustained? How had electoral volatility affected the party system change? Can we expect a dramatic change in Japanese politics in near future? In relation to these questions, how can we apply the theories of comparative parties and party systems to 1946-1996 history of Japanese party politics.

This paper consists of three main parts. I will firstly overview the history of Japanese party politics. It is important to examine the stability of the 1955 party system and also durability of the ruling party in Japan. Secondly, I will discuss the

stability of party system. For this, I will review what are the main social cleavages in Japan and how these determine party composition. Lastly, I will examine the party system change in Japan, in terms of number of parties, electoral volatility, inter-area volatility, and intergenerational value change.

II. An Overview: The Changing Postwar Party System

1. The Pre-1955 Party System

Under the Occupation, the election of 1946 introduced a nearly new set of candidates to the voters. Not only the candidates but also the parties were new because the old politicians were purged out from the political scene. In the postwar two elections (1946 and 1947), under the leadership of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), the socialist parties created a coalition government and led Japanese politics. Internal conflicts on the nationalization of the coal mines and rising inflation caused defections from the JSP. The socialists lost control of the government after 1949 election. However, during this period, many constitutional and social reforms were made and implemented.¹⁾ After then, these reforms has been target of the conservatives. From 1949 to 1953, conservative coalition governments were formed. In 1949 the JSP were divided into two parties (the Right-wing Socialist Party and the Left-wing Socialist Party) after long factional strife. After the 1952 election, two socialist parties expanded votes and at last obtained about 30% of votes in 1955. Apprehended by the strength of the socialists, the conservatives attempted to unite the conservative forces. At last, the Liberal Democratic Party(LDP) was created by merging the Liberal Party, the Democratic Party, and the Labor Farmer Party. In response to this, the socialist groups also made a unified party, the Japan Socialist Party.

1) Kent E. Calder, *Crisis and Compensation: Public Policy and Political Stability in Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 485.

2. The 1955 Party System

In 1955, a merger of conservative parties on the one hand and Socialist parties on the other produced a *de facto two-party system* at the national level. In the first House election of 1958 held after the two mergers, the LDP and the JSP captured 453 of the 463 House seats won by political parties. The Japanese Communist party (JCP) obtained only one seat.

This two-party system lasted only two years. In January 1960, the JSP split two parts, with 40 of its moderate Diet members departing to create the Democratic Socialist party (DSP). During the 1960s, the JCP showed a strong electoral strength. It went from a single seat in the 1958 election to 3 seats in 1960, to 14 in 1969, and to 38 in 1972. Meanwhile, the lay religious organization, Soka Gakkai, had formed its own political party in 1964 — namely, the Komeito, or Clean Government party (CGP) — and it captured 25 seats in 1967 and 47 seats in 1969. Thus, by the 1960s, what seemed to be a “two-party system” consisting of the LDP and the JSP or a “one-and-one-half party system” quickly moved to *true multiparty status* as the DSP demonstrated its staying power and the JCP and CGP proved they could regularly win 20 to 50 House seats. By the mid-1970s, these five parties constituted permanent parts of the Japanese national political system.

There was defection in the ranks of the LDP in the summer of 1976. A young LDP Diet member, Kono Yohei, and five other members defected from the LDP and set up a new Diet level party, and named it the New Liberal Club (NLC). The NLC exploded 17 with 4.1% votes in the December 1976 election and touched off a Kono and NLC boom in the Japanese media. The NLC boom encouraged the establishment of other new parties in the 1977, 1979, 1980, 1983, and 1986 general elections. Japan now has a seemingly established multiparty system.

However, there was some serious changes in party system in 1993-94, including emergence of new parties and new coalitions.²⁾ In July 1993 House of Representatives election, the LDP gained only 223 seats, fewer than the 256 needed for a majority,

thus bringing to an end the party's 38-year rule.³⁾ At the same time, the JSP also got only 70 seats in that election, halving the number of seats it had held before the election. The LDP returned to power in June 1994 as part of a coalition government formed with the Social Democratic Party of Japan (former JSP until February 1991, renamed as Social Democratic Party(SDP) in January 1996) and the New Party Sakigake(Harbinger: NHP) formed by defectors from the LDP in June 1993. It was a shock that the conservatives united with the socialists.

The 1994 witnessed another major party. That is, the New Frontier Party(NFP, Shinshintō) was created by a merger of the Japan Renewal Party (JRP), Komeitō (Clean Government Party), Japan New Party (JNP), the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), and other parties (excluding the JCP). The NFP held 156 seats in 1996 and became the second major force. However, with October 20, 1996 election, the LDP

Table 1. House of Representatives Election Results, Votes %.

(1) The Pre-1955 Party System

Parties	1946	1947	1949	1952	1953	1955
Liberal Party II	24.4	26.7	43.9	47.9	—	—
Yoshida Liberal P	—	—	—	—	38.9	26.6
Hatoyama Liberal P	—	—	—	—	8.8	—
Democratic Party	—	—	—	—	—	36.6
Progressive/Reform P	18.7	25.4	15.7	18.2	17.9	—
Socialist Party	17.8	26.2	13.5	—	—	—
Right-Wing SP	—	—	—	11.4	13.5	13.9
Left-Wing SP	—	—	—	9.9	13.1	15.4
Communist Party	3.9	3.7	9.8	2.5	1.9	2.0
Others	35.2	17.9	17.2	10.2	5.9	5.7

2) This raises the question whether we should consider a new type of party system in Japan. But this is over the scope of this paper.

3) Akira Nakamura, "The Transformation of the Japanese Policy-Making Process: The LDP Governance at the Crossroads," *Governance* 3:2 (1990), pp. 219-233.

(2) The Post-1955 Party System

Parties	1958	1960	1963	1967	1969	1972	1976	1979
LDP	57.8	57.6	53.9	48.8	47.6	46.9	41.8	44.6
NLC	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.2	3.0
CGP	—	—	—	5.4	10.9	8.5	10.9	9.8
DSP	—	8.8	7.3	7.4	7.7	7.0	6.3	6.8
JSP	32.9	27.6	28.6	27.9	21.4	21.9	20.7	19.7
SDF	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.7
JCP	2.5	2.9	4.0	4.8	6.8	10.5	10.4	10.4
Others	6.7	3.2	4.9	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.8	5.0

Parties	1980	1983	1986	1990
LDP	47.9	45.8	49.4	46.1
NLC	3.0	2.4	1.8	—
CGP	9.0	10.1	9.4	8.0
DSP	6.6	7.3	6.4	4.8
JSP	19.3	19.5	17.2	24.4
SDF	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
JCP	9.8	9.3	8.8	8.0
Others	3.7	5.0	6.0	7.7

Source : Thomas T. Mackie and Richard Rose, *The International Almanac of Electoral History*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1991), pp. 276-97; Ronald J. Hrebenar, ed., *The Japanese Party System*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), p. 296.

- * LDP : The Liberal Democratic Party
- NLC : The New Liberal Club
- CGP : The Clean Government Party (Komeito)
- DSP : The Democratic Socialist Party
- JSP : The Japanese Socialist Party
- SDF : The Social Democratic Federation
- JCP : The Japanese Communist Party

came forward again, holding 239 seats from previous 211 seats. This victory led the LDP to form a cabinet alone (without coalition) with the help of independents and minor parties. On December 1996, former Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata and 12 Diet

Table 2. House of Representatives election results, seats (%)

Elections	LDP	NLC	JSP	SDF	DSP	CGP	JCP	Others	Total
1958	287	—	166	—	—	—	1	13	467
1960	296	—	145	—	17	—	3	6	467
1963	283	—	144	—	23	—	5	12	467
1967	277	—	140	—	30	25	5	9	486
1969	288	—	90	—	31	47	14	16	486
1972	271	—	118	—	19	29	38	16	491
1976	249	17	123	—	29	55	17	21	511
1979	248	4	107	2	35	57	39	19	511
1980	284	12	107	3	32	33	29	11	511
1983	250	8	112	3	38	58	26	16	511
1986	300	6	85	4	26	56	26	9	512
1990	275	—	136	4	14	45	16	22	512
1993	223	—	70	—	15	51	15	15	
1996	239	—	15(SDP) 52(DP)	—	—	— 156(NFP)	26	24	511

Source : Ronald J. Hrebemar, *The Japanese Party System* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), p. 296; Elections in Japan, <http://www.agora.stm.it/>.

* NFP (Shin Shinto) : New Frontier Party

DP (Minshuto) : Democratic Party (of Japan)

SDP (Shakai Minshuto) : Social Democratic Party

members resigned from the NFP and announced the formation of their own party, Taiyoto (The Taiyo Party). The growing internal conflict broke the NFP on December 1997. This allowed again the LDP to dominate Japanese politics.

III. The Stability of Party System

1. Social Cleavages

Over thirty years ago, in their now classic essay, S.M. Lipset and S. Rokkan(1967

and 1990) spelled out in some detail the historical linkages between social cleavages and party systems.⁴⁾ Their analysis focused on two successive revolutions in the modernization of Western Europe — the National Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The basic tenet of their social cleavage theory was that party systems were a reflection of a nation's pattern of social stratification and cleavage. They identified four segmented cleavages. It can be summarized as follows: (1) the conflict between the central nation—building dominant culture and the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject culture; (2) the conflict between the Nation-State and the Church; (3) the conflict between the landed interests and the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs; and (4) the class conflict between owners and employers on the one side and tenants, labors, and workers on the other. The former two of them are direct products of the National Revolution and the latter two of them are products of the Industrial Revolution. Their main themes were that the Western European party system could be interpreted as products of sequential interactions between these two fundamental processes of change and that the party system was “frozen” or “fixed” in the 1920s.

(1) Are the postwar party system locked into the past?

Within the context of frozen party system, one line of argument argued that there were some parallels between the two systems in terms of the mobility of party system. For instance, Pempel(1978) noted that the prewar party system was inflexible in its retention of ties to rural agricultural and urban commercial bases despite the rise of new social groups. Pempel also suggested that contemporary Japanese parties had the same problem of being “locked into past constituencies.”⁵⁾ Those “past

4) S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments,” in P. Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 101.

5) T. J. Pempel, “Political Parties and Social Change: The Japanese Experience,” in L. Maisel and J. Cooper, eds., *Political Parties: Development and Decay* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage,

constituencies” would have been the rural sectors for the LDP and the industrial labor unions for the socialists. But this view has no foundation because the prewar parties were effectively excluded from real political power. Sustained party control of Japanese government can be perceived as having begun only in the years since the end of World War II.

(2) Weak Social Cleavages

Among Lipset and Rokkan’s four types of social cleavages usually associated with voting behavior — regional or ethnic divisions, religious divisions, agrarian-industrial divisions, and class divisions —, Japan was basically exempt from the first two and has been so throughout the modern period.⁶⁾ Ethnic and religious homogeneity, in fact, has been utilized by the ruling group as a powerful instrument through which to cope with other cleavages. For example, in prewar Japan, the quasi-religious indoctrination into emperor worship and the ultra-nationalist ideology of racial superiority were exploited to diffuse the challenge of potential class cleavages.⁷⁾

In 1868 when Japan began to build a modern nation, the society was predominantly agrarian, with more than 80 percent of the population engaged in agriculture. The industrialization and bureaucratization of the Meiji government was initially opposed by the rural-based social movements but between 1900 and 1932, agrarian and industrial cleavages were skillfully avoided by creating two major conservative parties (the Seiyukai and the Minseito) which accommodate agrarian landed interests, businessmen, and bureaucratic interests. With the accelerating pace of industrialization and urbanization, local landed notables themselves often became businessmen and urbanites. Thus, the prewar Japanese political system seemed not to have reflected an

1978), pp. 311-312.

6) Scott C. Flanagan and Bradley Richardson, *Japanese Electoral Behavior: Social Cleavages, Social Networks, and Partisanship* (London: Sage, 1977), pp. 15-18.

7) Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japan*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

agrarian-industrial cleavage, even though the social basis for such a cleavage existed.

(3) Class Voting?

So the remained question arises as to how strongly class cleavage was in the prewar Japanese party system. Industrialization produced the non-agricultural population, engaging in commerce, manufacturing, and services or running a small family company. With the emergence of a "working class" and efforts to organize this class into a union movement, various socialist parties were formed but they were not major forces in the parliamentary level. The workers were still a small voting minority and also were controlled by the urban notables who supported the conservative parties. In rural districts, the lower-class people were hemmed in by community, kinship, family ties and values. In addition, communists and all left-wing socialists were the targets of ruthless suppression by the police as early as the 1920s. The Marxist ideology was regarded as a grave threat to the existing social order and the principle of the Japanese emperor system. That is, a class cleavage failed to affect the partisan alignment. In sum, agrarian-industrial and class cleavages did not look clear-cut and did not accompany partisan alignments as much as those of the Western European party system.

2. "Cultural Politics" Thesis

In contrast to social cleavage theory as a basis of party cleavage, there is a unique theory in Japanese politics literature. That is J. Watanuki's "cultural politics" theory.⁸⁾ According to J. Watanuki(1967), the central cleavage was basically a cleavage of values that were unrelated to class conflict but rooted in age and different levels of education.

8) Joji Watanuki, "Patterns of Politics in Present-Day Japan," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 77-100.

By comparing opinion polls on party support of the 1952 and 1958 election, Watanuki(1991) found an increase of support for the socialist party in various social strata – among women, youths, white-collar workers, and the highly educated.⁹⁾ The conflict of values and issues emerged during the Occupation. The LDP has supported the traditional values (for example, emperor worship, emphasis on hierarchy and harmony, and belief in a military strong nation of the prewar period). The JSP, in contrast, supported the modern values of the postwar era (for example, individualism, equality, and fear of military buildup and war) and posited itself as guardians of the ideals of “peace and democracy.” Thus, the “cultural politics” is a pattern of partisanship and voting behavior based on value cleavage. The younger and the more highly educated tends to support modern, postwar values, and consequently, to support the socialists.

IV. Party System Change

There are many arguments or factors for typologizing party systems. If undertaken on a world basis, the analysis of party systems would require a consideration of the number of parties, of their strength, of their place on the ideological spectrum, of the nature of their support, and of their organization and type of leadership (Blondel, 1990).¹⁰⁾ But I will consider how much the general theoretical debate of the Western European Party System fits Japan and how much unique the Japanese case is. Thus in the first place, social cleavage theory and its related topics, changes in number of parties, electoral volatility will be analyzed. In addition, post-materialism and value change debate will be included.

9) Joji Watanuki, “Social Structure and Voting Behavior,” in Scott C. Flanagan, et.al., *The Japanese Voter* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 58-60.

10) Jean Blondel, “Types of Party System,” in P.Mair, ed., *The Western European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 302.

1. Number of Parties

The number of parties is the most commonly identified element in classifying party system. Most scholars admit the number of parties as the parameters of party system change.¹¹⁾ Applying this criterion to the Japanese case, we can understand the 1955 party amalgamation as a system change because it produced a defacto two-party system within multipartism. New parties, in fact, changed the existing electoral landscape. We witnessed the rise of new parties in Japan through 1960s and 1970s. Main new parties were the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP, 1960), the Clean Government Party (CGP: The Komeito, 1967), the New Liberal Club (NLC, 1976-1986), and Social Democratic Federation (SDF, 1979). The DSP was the defection of a right-wing group of the JSP while the SDF was the defection of a left-wing group. The NLC was the defection of a young faction, composed of professionals, from the LDP. The new parties seemed to represent a variation with an existing conflict area whereas the creation of the CGP was another story. Whether the CGP meant a wholly new conflict area within the party system was not clear because it was based on the Buddhist lay organization. However, it was true that the main one- and-half party system had not been changed in spite of the creation of the new parties, of course including the small minor parties. Therefore, I think that the 1955 party system was still maintaining.

2. Electoral volatility

The concept of party system change is not a simple and straight-forward one. Party

11) Some refuses the number of parties as an element of party system. J. Lapalombara and M. Weiner(1966: 36) simply dropped the numerical base on the assumption that it did not lead to sufficiently meaningful insights. And some (Blondel, 1990) used the electoral turnouts in order to determine the classes of party systems. See Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).

system changes in the levels of the government, party organization, and the electorate. To measure the relative distribution of electoral strength among the competing parties, M. Pedersen(1979) presented a formula of *electoral volatility*.¹²⁾ In Pedersen's case, total volatility is defined as the cumulative gains of all winning parties in the system. By contrast, Mair's conception of *inter-area volatility* is defined as the cumulative gains of all winning areas in the system (Mair, 1983).¹³⁾ The areas are defined in terms of an approximation to the dominant opposition in each party system. I think that we should consider both methods. As Mair said in his article, with respect to the extent and duration of change, Pedersen's electoral volatility is useful in that it stresses the relative change from one election to the next and facilitates the identification of high-volatility elections.

Pedersen(1990: 198) defined electoral volatility as the net change within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers. Following Pedersen's formula, I calculated the electoral volatility of the Japanese party system using the election results of the House of Representatives. To compare the Japanese electoral volatility with those of European industrial countries presented by Pedersen, I followed the periodization method of his analysis. Japan showed a decreasing pattern (28.8% → 7.1% → 5.6%) in the scores of electoral volatility. These scores are shown in the Table 3. Based on this score, at first glance, we can interpret that the Japanese party system is similar to the German and the French party system, more concretely falling between them, in that it has a high level of volatility and high standard deviations.

12) Mogens N. Pedersen, "The Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility," *European Journal of Political Research* 7:1 (1979), pp. 1-26; Partially reprinted as Electoral Volatility in Western Europe, 1948-1977, in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 195-207

13) Peter Mair, adaptation and Control: Towards an Understanding of Party and Party System Change, in Hans Daalder and Peter Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change* (Sage Publications, 1983), pp. 405-29; Partially reprinted as "parameters of Change" in Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 208-217.

However, it should be noted that the tremendously high volatility (28.8%) in the period of 1948-59 was affected by the creation of two major parties (the LDP and JSP) in 1955.¹⁴⁾ For instance, in 1958 election, the two major parties obtained 90.7% of the total votes. At the same election year, the electoral volatility reached 46.6%, which was virtually twice as much as those of the previous elections. Thus, I think if we want to see a general pattern of electoral volatility of the Japanese party system, we should look at the volatility of the post-1960s.

Then, we might expect a different pattern if we prolong the research period. When I considered from 1970 to 1990, I obtained 5.1%, 3.8%, and 5.0% of volatility for 1970s, 1980s, and 1990 respectively. Considering the recent election results of Japan, we find that volatility has tended to decrease over time with an exception of the 1990 election. And this pattern becomes similar to those of Austria, Belgium, Ireland, and Italy rather than France and Germany. This result may mean that the Japanese party system could become more and more stable. Again the system itself could be institutionalized with a limited conflict among existing parties.

3. Inter-area volatility

Peter Mair(1990) addressed three different kinds of parameters of party system change.¹⁵⁾ Those are the location of change, the extent of change, and the duration of change. He, in the first place, distinguishes a change in “tendencies” or “political conflict areas” from a change in parties and creates the notion of “inter-area volatility” and “within-area change.” The notion of the location of change is the question of

14) It may be an artificial result, resulting from the calculation method. When I calculated the votes of new parties, I did not refer to the votes of the mother party. Over 90% of the total votes which two major parties won in 1958 are considered independently and thus increased volatility score that year. This, in turn, increased the periodic volatility score.

15) Peter Mair, “Parameters of Change,” in P. Mair, ed., *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 208-217.

Table 3. The Volatility of Party Systems, 1948~77: Average Net Gains Compared Across Time and Countries (%).

Country\Period	1948~59	1960~69	1970-77	Nat'l Ave.	No.of Elec.
Switzerland	1.9	3.7	6.4	4.0	6
United Kingdom	4.4	5.2	7.9	5.9	8
Finland	4.4	6.9	9.1	6.8	8
Sweden	4.8	4.3	6.6	5.2	9
Netherlands	6.3	7.9	12.7	9.1	8
Austria	4.1	3.9	3.1	3.7	8
Belgium	7.9	10.3	5.5	7.9	9
Ireland	10.9	6.8	5.0	7.9	8
Italy	10.3	8.0	6.8	8.4	6
Norway	3.4	5.2	17.1	8.1	7
Denmark	5.5	8.9	18.7	11.0	12
Germany	15.2	9.5	4.9	9.8	7
France	21.8	11.9	10.6	16.8	7
Period Average	7.8	7.3	9.2	8.1	
No. of Elections	36	34	33		
Japan	28.8	7.1	5.6	16.7	11

Source : Morgens N. Pedersen, "The Dynamics of European Party System: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility," *European Journal of Political Research*, 7:1 (1979), pp. 1-26; The data of Japan comes from Thomas T. Mackie and Richard Rose, *the International Almanac of Electoral History*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1991), pp. 276-97.

whether the change takes place largely within conflict areas or between conflict areas. To focus on conflict areas seems appropriate in understanding the persistence or change of the basic political cleavages.

In order to see the persistence or change of the ideological cleavage, I calculated inter- area volatility suggested by P. Mair. As shown in Table 4 (Refer to Table 1.), I divided the Japanese parties into three groups (the Right parties, the Left parties, and other parties) along the ideological cleavage line and then obtained composite scores

Table 4. Total Volatility and Inter-area Volatility, 1946~1990.

Parties	1946	1947	1949	1952	1953	1955	1958	1960	1963
Right Parties	43.1	52.1	59.6	66.1	65.6	63.2	57.8	57.6	53.9
Left Parties	21.7	29.9	23.3	23.8	28.5	31.3	35.4	39.3	39.9
Others	35.2	17.9	17.2	10.2	5.9	5.7	6.7	3.2	4.9
Inter-area TNC		35.5	13.8	14.0	9.6	5.3	10.4	7.6	6.0
Inter-area Volatility		17.8	6.9	7.0	4.8	2.7	5.2	3.8	3.0
Electoral TNC		35.9	42.4	41.4	59.0	51.9	93.2	18.2	10.3
Total Volatility		18.0	21.2	20.7	29.5	26.0	46.6	9.1	5.2

Parties (%)	1967	1969	1972	1976	1979	1980	1983	1986	1990
Right Parties	54.2	58.5	55.4	56.9	57.4	59.9	58.3	60.6	54.1
Left Parties	40.1	35.9	39.4	37.4	37.6	36.4	36.8	33.2	38.0
Others	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.8	5.0	3.7	5.0	6.0	7.7
Inter-area TNC	1.4	8.8	6.8	4.0	1.5	4.9	3.3	6.9	13.0
Inter-area Volatility	0.7	4.4	3.4	2.0	0.8	2.5	1.7	3.5	6.5
Electoral TNC	12.6	15.8	8.2	14.2	8.1	6.6	6.5	9.7	10.0
Total Volatility	6.3	7.6	4.1	7.1	4.1	3.3	3.3	4.9	5.0

* Inter-area TNC : Inter-area Total Net Change and this is the Sum of the absolute values of (group votes % of the present election - group votes % of the previous election)

** Inter-area Volatility: (Inter-area TNC)/2.

of the groups.¹⁶⁾

From Table 4, we can notice that while the elections of 1947, 1958, 1969, and 1990 were relatively volatile in ideological dimension, the inter-area volatility, by and large, tends to decrease until 1983.¹⁷⁾ In the 1947 election, many minor parties declined and votes were concentrated to the progressive/reform party, liberal party,

16) It should be noted that the NLC and CGP were considered the Right parties while the DSP and SDF were considered the Left parties. They are often classified as center parties.

17) This table does not show the electoral result for the period 1993 and 1996. So the electoral volatility will be different. This is one of the main problems in this paper.

socialist party, and communist party. This electoral realignment led to high inter-area volatility. In 1958, as a result of party realignment of 1955, we can think two factors. The first is that two ideologically confronted major parties (the LDP and JSP) won over 90% of total votes in the election. The second factor resulted from the increase in electoral strength of the JSP. In the election of 1969, the Clean Government Party doubled the votes percentage compared with the 1967 election while the JSP lost their large votes. The increasing pattern after the 1986 election reflects the electoral success and failure of the two major parties. We can conclude, however, that the increase in inter-area volatility means the real increase in ideological tension. The reason is that the recent change in party vote has been affected by government performance and "cultural politics."

4. Intergenerational Value Change

One counter-argument of Lipset and Rokkan's piece is that in a longer perspective, the social cleavage model also contains a dynamic element. The decline of party cleavages is generally accompanied by parallel changes in public values. Voters who are two or three generations removed from the issue conflicts which precipitated the original alignments would show little further commitment to those issues as they are resolved or lose their relevance.

The contributors to Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies (Dalton, et. al., 1984) evidenced a generational decline in class voting.¹⁸⁾ Post-war generations are less concerned with economic issues and less likely to adopt a class-based framework in orientating themselves into politics. Ronald Inglehart(1977) has identified a new-issue agenda, signifying a division of the populations of advanced industrial societies along the lines of age and education.¹⁹⁾ He found that growing

18) Russell J. Dalton, Scott C. Flanagan, and Paul Allen Back (eds.), *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

affluence in advanced industrial societies is associated with a decline in the salience of economic issues and a rise in the salience of non-economic value issues (post-materialism). However, whether a new social value will ultimately replace or in some way be integrated into the present left-right party dimension is still unclear. Although disagreement exists as to how extensive or pervasive this postmaterial transformation is among the youth, research has largely centered on European societies.

A major concern of studies of postmaterialism among the Japanese has been the degree to which the Japanese pattern fulfills essential postmaterial expectations. Nobutaka Ike(1973) proposed that the growing individuation among the Japanese youth reflects not only the attraction of a self-realization orientation but also by materialism's ability to undermine the stability of traditional collective loyalties.²⁰⁾ Scott C. Flanagan(1979 and 1982), in the similar vein, finds a more thoroughgoing intergenerational value shift that is especially evident among the more highly educated.²¹⁾ Flanagan(1982) challenges Inglehart' view of post-materialism by distinguishing personal values from public values.²²⁾ In Flanagan's view, while college-educated youth may ordinarily prefer nonmaterialism, they still have a strong desire for the

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- 19) Ronald Inglehart, "The silent revolution in Europe: intergenerational change in post-industrial societies," *American Political Science Review* 65, pp. 991-1017; *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).
 - 20) Nobutaka Ike, "Economic growth and intergenerational change in Japan," *American Political Science Review* 67 (January 1973), pp. 1194-1203; *A Theory of Japanese Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978).
 - 21) Scott C. Flanagan, "Value change and partisan change in Japan: the silent revolution revisited," *Comparative politics* 11 (April 1979), pp. 253-278; "Changing values in advanced industrial societies: Inglehart's silent revolution from the perspective of Japanese findings," *Comparative Political Studies* 14 (January 1982), pp. 403-444; "Measuring value change in advanced industrial societies: a rejoinder to Inglehart," *Comparative Political Studies* 15 (April 1982), pp. 99-128.
 - 22) Scott C. Flanagan, "Changing Values in Advanced Industrial Societies: Inglehart's Silent Revolution from the Perspective of Japanese Findings," *Comparative Political Studies*, 14:4, January 1982, pp. 403-444.

increased affluence. Within a continuum defined by materialism and non-materialism, the public value also fluctuates throughout the life cycle. To the contrary, the personal values are more stable. According to him, the impact of pre- and postwar socialization experiences divided the Japanese inter-generationally along an authoritarian (traditional) – libertarian (modern) continuum.²³⁾ This view is evident in Table 5 and 6. Table 5 does not periodize the age group commonly but shows that the youth have non-material values. Table 6 shows that value priorities of the Japanese are changing from authoritative values to libertarian values over time.

Table 5. Percentage Non-materialists by Age Cohort over a Ten-Year Period: Comparison of the 1967 and 1976 election.

Cohort Age (1967)	15–19	20–24	25–49	50 and over
	66%	38%	24%	33%
	(80)	(76)	(460)	(186)
Cohort Age (1976)	25–29	30–34	35–59	60 and over
	36%	32%	28%	36%
	(171)	(181)	(729)	(190)

Source : Scott C. Flanagan, "Changing Values in Advanced Industrial Societies," *Comparative Political Studies* 14:4, January 1982, p. 421.

Note : Figures in parentheses are the number of cases on which percentage are based.

Table 6. Japanese Value Priorities, 1930~1978(%).

Value Type	1930	1953	1958	1963	1968	1973	1978
Authoritative	53	39	29	24	23	16	18
Acquisitive	25	21	20	21	20	17	16
Libertarian	14	32	45	49	52	52	61
DK–NA	8	8	6	6	5	5	5

Source : Research Committee on the Study of the Japanese National Character, Recited from Flanagan, *ibid.*, 1982, p. 426.

23) Flanagan, 1979, p. 259.

In fact, whether there is a clear distinction between the public values and personal values is not clear. R. Inglehart(1982) maintained, however, that a distinction between the two value domains does not exist. He countered that, if anything, the public dimension incorporates personal values.²⁴⁾ Donald J. Calista(1984) found that the relationship between the public and personal value domains was quite interactive.²⁵⁾ In any case, three scholars agreed to the view that intergenerational value change has been taking place in Japan. Unfortunately, I couldn't find data showing the relationship between party choice and age group. This line of research seems missing in the literature.²⁶⁾

V. The Future of the LDP Dominance and Party System

We have seen that social cleavages has been relatively pretty weak in Japan and that party vote in the postwar era was influenced by value cleavage, not by class cleavage. We also have seen that volatility has decreased over time and thus facilitated the stability of one-party dominant mutipartism. In fact, the LDP so far dominated the Japanese society except the few years of 1990s. Can we expect the sustained dominance of the LDP?²⁷⁾ Is there no future in the opposition? The issue of

24) Ronald Inglehart, "Changing Values in Japan and West," *Comparative Political Studies*, 14:4, January 1982, pp. 445-479.

25) Donald J. Calista, "Postmaterialism and Value Convergence: Value Priorities of Japanese Compared with Their Perceptions of American Values," *Comparative Political Studies*, 16:4, January 1984, pp. 529-555.

26) The only study I found was the 1960 election result brokendown by age group. See Joji Watanuki, *Politics in Postwar Japanese Society* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1977), p. 81.

27) Refer to the LDP dominance literature. For example, T. J. Pempel, ed. *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) and Scott C. Flanagan, "Competing Explanations for the Persistence of One Party Dominance in Japan", Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science

a leftist coalition government to replace the single-party rule of the LDP prevailed throughout the late 1970s and the 1980s. However, the discussion turned in the early 1980s to the issue of the grand rightist coalition or the question of which opposition parties could join with the LDP and assist the conservatives in ruling Japan.

At last, when the LDP joined with the NLC in December 1983 to form a coalition government, it opened a new era of Japanese politics that many people had been anticipating since the 1976 election. In the 1983 House of Representatives election, the LDP won only 250 seats out of 511 total – a shortfall of 6 seats from a pure majority. Shocked by the electoral loss, to manage the Diet effectively, the LDP attracted 9 conservative independents to join the party and again accepted the NLC into the government.²⁸⁾

Based on the election results of 1983 and 1990, we can ask the question of durability of the ruling party. In the 1950s and 60s, Japanese elections were dominated by position issues that divided the electorate into fixed camps and had a stabilizing effect of voting choices. Since the early 1970s, elections have increasingly been dominated by valence issues, such as corruption, pollution and the state of the economy, which have largely converted elections into referendums on the performance of the ruling party, leading to larger vote swings as these issues alternatively favor or penalize the LDP. For instance, political events from the mid-1960s to mid-70s favored the socialists, with the growing concern for pollution and quality of life issues, the rise of citizens movements and the Lockheed corruption scandal. In contrast, events from the mid-70s to mid-80s favored the LDP, with the focus on administrative reform, U.S.-Japan trade relations and economic performance.

With this line, voter volatility has eroded the LDP's support base and also arguably, broke the JSP into the Democratic Party of Japan (DP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) in pursuing the short – term image – making of parties and candidates. The

Association, Palmer House, Chicago, Illinois, April 9-11, 1992.

28) Ronald J. Brebenar, ed., *The Japanese Party System* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), p. 8.

result of party reshuffle in mid 1990s makes us difficult to form a consistent interpretation with historical perspective. However, the future of the Japanese party system seems not that difficult to predict. The strong socialist lines were broken. So it could be absurd to conjecture a complete restructuring of Japanese politics with a return to the "1955 (two-party) system." It is more likely that a series of coalition governments between the LDP and various centrist or ideologically weak socialist parties is possible in the 1990s. We have seen that the LDP still skillfully has led the politics and a one-party dominant regime has maintained. There will be some changes in party system including electoral volatility and number of parties in addition to issue-based voting.

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