

## CIVIL WAR NON-ONSETS THE CASE OF JAPAN

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### Abstract

In earlier work, we argued that the pattern of cross-national correlates of civil war onset can be best explained by interpreting several influential variables as indicators of state weakness. This argument was speculative, however, in that partial correlations from a statistical model using country-year data cannot rule out multiple possible mechanisms linking the explanatory variables to civil war onset. To explore mechanisms, we turned to narrative, and justified a procedure for case selection called "random narratives" as having advantages compared to the reliance on convenience samples. This paper, juxtaposing statistical expectations with historical narrative, illustrates what we can learn more generally about the causes of civil war even from Japan, a country that has not experienced a civil war in our period of study, and one of our randomly selected country cases. The narrative reveals that there have been deep grievances in the post WWII era resulting in several uprisings. These were efficiently cauterized and prevented from developing into insurgencies by a security state that had high information and great discipline in its non-use of violence. The narrative evidence is consistent with our interpretation of state weakness as an important variable for explaining cross-sectional and over-time variation in civil war onset. From this case study we cannot rule out that societal grievances are lower on average in Japan than in civil war-afflicted states, but we can rule out that there were no intensely held grievances capable of motivating violent rebellion in post-war Japan, particularly in the late 1940s and 1950s.

### I. Introduction

At least since the end of World War II, low per capita income has been powerfully associated with the likelihood of civil war. For the period 1945–2010, 62 civil wars began in country-years in the bottom quartile on income, and 51 in the next quartile. By contrast, 19 began in country years in the third quartile on income, and only two in the top fourth.<sup>1</sup> Relying on multivariate statistical analysis<sup>2</sup>, we offered an explanation for this correlation of country income and non-onset – viz., that high income was a proxy for a government that had the informational and police resources helping to provide the capability to nip insurgencies in their bud, before they could cause sufficient damage (1,000 deaths including at least 100 of those defending the state, among other criteria) to register as a civil war onset. We justified this interpretation of country income in part because it was consistent with the other correlates of civil war onset such as political instability, mountainous terrain, and large country size, all of which pointed to the difficulty of containing insurgencies as a major factor in their growth to civil war proportions.

Statistical methods, however, are not fully suitable for capturing the mechanisms linking explanatory and outcome variables. Thus, our interpretation of the statistical data was speculative. How best to add confidence to our interpretation? Narrative and formal theory are the complementary methods to provide greater confidence in a causal interpretation of a statistical relationship<sup>3</sup>. In this research program, our first step was to rely on narratives. However, the methodological question

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<sup>1</sup> The two are the UK's troubles in Northern Ireland (1969), which barely qualifies as a civil war by our coding criteria, and Russia's first war in Chechnya (1994), where Russia is not much over the line for the top quartile. These figures are based on an updated version of the data set used in Fearon and Laitin 2003, which extends the civil war codings through 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Fearon and Laitin 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Laitin 2002.

that needed to be addressed is how to choose what narratives are most relevant when the dataset has a large number of observations? (In our replication dataset, there were 6,610.)

To address this question, we defended a procedure that we have called “random narratives”<sup>4</sup>, arguing that justifications for alternative procedures are weak (a claim challenged in Lieberman 2005). The usual procedure for case selection -- a “convenience sample” -- takes advantage of the researcher’s prior knowledge or availability of data. This provides a considerable practical advantage over a random procedure which asks researchers to examine literatures about countries for which they have no expertise and for which they lack the language facility to read primary materials. But convenience samples tend to be highly non-representative, are more likely to be selected on the basis of consistency with theory, and typically do not force a critical look at the interpretation being offered.

Other selection criteria for case study analysis have been offered. Relying on a reading of J.S. Mill’s methodological writings, many comparativists have argued that we should choose cases which are similar in all respects save for the factor that is theoretically proposed as explanatory and the outcome of interest.<sup>5</sup> One problem with this approach is that it accepts a deterministic view of the social world. In reality, however, there will always be cases that don’t fit the theory. Note the few cases of rich countries that have experienced a civil war post 1945; they should hardly compel us to reject the possibility that the correlation between country income and civil war onsets is due to some causal relationship. Therefore, it will invariably be the case that the researcher, relying on this interpretation of Mill’s method, can choose the proper comparisons to support or reject any theory.

There have been other proposals as well for the choice of case examination. Many studies rely on intensive examination of cases “off the regression line” (what Lijphart 1971 calls “deviant case studies”) for purposes of theory generation, as they might provide new ideas for missing variables. Some comparativists press for the intensive exploration of “hard cases”, i.e. those that are alleged to provide unlikely conditions for the proposed theory to work (and similar to what Lijphart 1971 terms “crucial experiments”). Random selection, they might argue, could leave us only with easy cases. However, “hard” is typically a subjective metric and one essentially never observes papers or books reporting results where the theory in question fails on the “hard” case.

Rather than confront directly these methodological concerns, here we address an issue that worried us as we implemented the random narrative program, viz., maybe there is too little to learn from countries that have never had a civil war, and had no insurgent enemies challenging the regime. Indeed, we built into our random selection algorithm a stratified sample of cases that would select for us cases of onset and non-onset for all regions of the world. But how to write a narrative of a non-event? We address this challenge here for the case of Japan, as the random number generator chose Japan for one of our narratives. Here we reproduce our revised Japan narrative (originally drafted and posted on the web in 2005), and follow it with a more general discussion of what we learn about mechanisms through the study of non-events.

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<sup>4</sup> Fearon and Laitin 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Well-regarded implementations of this approach include Eckstein (1966) and Skocpol (1979). The classic and highly sophisticated statement of this so-called “method of difference” is Lijphart (1971) who recognizes the limitations of this approach and reminds readers of Mill’s objections to its use in political explanation. However, Lijphart largely ignores issues involving case selection, and in his discussion of single country studies (as an alternative to the comparative approach) at one point attributes scientific failure to bad luck in the choice of the case that was chosen for study.

Japan of course has had no civil war in the post World War II world. Our statistical model estimated (see Figure 1) over the course of forty-seven annual observations that it would have been highly unlikely for Japan to have experienced a civil war<sup>6</sup>. High GDP per capita (in the third quartile by 1960 and in the top quartile since 1970), and a stable democratic regime (along with other correlates) brought Japan's probability of civil war below the world average by 1967 and below the average for the region of West Europe, North America and Japan – the region with the lowest mean probability of civil war – by 1977. What can we learn more generally about the causes of civil war from a narrative of Japan's history in this peaceful era?

To address this question, our paper proceeds as follows. In section II, we provide some historical background on Japan relevant to domestic security. We use this material to discredit notions of a peaceful (or a warlike) political culture, notions that are sometimes used to account for a particular event. We can then get to more specific questions based on our yearly estimates. First we ask (in section III), given that Japan had more than twice the average world probability of civil war at the end of the American occupation, what then constrained the onset of a civil war? By our model, we should expect at least to see the makings of an insurgency. And if we had coded Japan as a new state (after occupation, and therefore with weak institutions), the predicted probability of any insurgency setting off a civil war would have been higher. What were the factors that held back a successful insurgency at the point of political transition? Second (and discussed in section IV), at a moment when Japan still had an above world average predicted probability for an insurgency in 1960, there was a massive wave of violent protest. However, there was only a single death attributed to this wave. We ask of this moment whether the factors we identify in our model are useful in accounting for the success of the state in cauterizing a potential insurgency. Third, we look (in section V) at two cases of violent confrontations with the state (the Narita airport protest of 1982) and society (Aum Shinriki? poison gas attack in the Tokyo subway system) in the period when our model shows a negligible chance of civil war. Do these events and the organizations that fostered them, we ask, suggest greater possibilities for large-scale civil conflict than our model envisages? And does the fact they were so nonviolently cauterized lend support to our interpretation of the statistical model, or point to alternative explanations?

We sum up our narrative in section VI. In it, we point out that country income and police effectiveness could not eliminate intense grievances, which have been expressed violently throughout the past half-century in Japan. However, the violent expression of grievances was powerfully limited in large part due to the efficient provision of social order – or repression -- that strong political and coercive institutions enabled. The narrative helps draw the link between country income which is easy to measure, and efficient repressive apparatus – a variable hard to measure as it is rarely observed if fully successful. Finally, in section VII, we return to the role of random narratives (and the information to be extracted from null cases) in understanding civil war onsets.

## II. History, Culture and Violence in Japan

There is no standard narrative linking Japanese history or culture to the propensity toward violence. In fact, the record shows stunning contradictions.

### *Japanese History: A Contradictory Set of Lessons*

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<sup>6</sup> To be more precise, the model predicts that there should have been 0.51 civil wars in Japan over the course of the fifty-five years of post World War II history, about one-half the world average at .95.

- On the one hand, there are in Japanese history long periods of peace. Subsequent to the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in the early 17th century, a loyal warrior caste, the samurai, provided a centuries-long stability. These samurai helped preserve low levels of violence and a regime (the *bakufu*) that remained in full control over society. The merchant classes, revolutionary in other societies, showed little interest in freeing themselves from feudal restraints. On the other hand, territorial consolidation in Japan beginning in the 16th century was fraught with guerilla insurgencies instigated by villages in mountain valleys. Meanwhile sea-faring pirates (*wako*), militarized Buddhists and several peripheral regions (in Kyushu and Shikoku) give Japanese history a bloody leitmotif (Ferejohn and Rosenbluth, n.d.). In the 19th century, those providing order during the Tokugawa peace undermined it. Lower level samurai, whose stipends were cut due to an economic downturn that reduced revenues from the estates that supported them, and the increasing cost of urban living, were restive, and especially angry with the weak national response to the western threat. These samurai groups were as a consequence "not infrequently attacking Bakufu officials and foreigners, sometimes with fatal results"<sup>7</sup>.

- On the one hand, the Japanese peasantry, because it was more heavily taxed to support the enormous urban populations of nobles that grew steadily through the Tokugawa period, induced waves of protest especially over the bad harvests in the 1830s and again in the 1860s. On the other hand, the peasantry was insufficiently violent to challenge the rule of the *bakufu* or to make a revolution<sup>8</sup>.

- On the one hand, the Meiji overthrow of the Tokugawa regime does not earn the classification of a social revolution largely because it did not induce mass mobilization with an armed peasantry taking advantage of a political revolution to violently overturn the social structure<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, this was an era of extended warfare. The Correlates of War data archive lists an extrastate war (# 356) following the resistance of several clans to the opening of Japan to the West (the Shimoneski War of 1863-64); the Meiji Restoration itself, coded as an intrastate war of 1868 (# 588); and the several wars of the samurai against the new regime, which the COW team reduces to the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877 (intrastate # 607).<sup>10</sup> Indeed, downgrading this series of events as a "restoration" underplays the risks that the Meiji plotters took that could well have exploded into a blood bath, and is consistent with COW coding these events meeting the criteria of war. As Sims<sup>11</sup> analyzes the period, "it is hard to explain the [samurai coming from Choshu and Satsuma] willingness to embark upon a civil war of which the outcome was highly uncertain." And dangerous. On 27 January, 1868, shortly after the coup d'état overthrowing the shogun, the Tokugawa vassals in Osaka, angered by the riots in Edo provoked by the Satsuma agents, mobilized troops towards Kyoto, and these troops were blocked by Satsuma and Choshu troops at the famous battle of Toba-Fushimi, leading to three days of fighting. The rebel troops were victorious. The Shogun Yoshinobu left his palace for Edo and in February, the Osaka Castle, the Tokugawa stronghold in central Japan, surrendered. On April 6, the shogun agreed to the surrender of his castle, warships and arms in return for a truce. Low-level military action continued. Edo castle was surrendered on 3 May, but Tokugawa resistance continued, and then in the summer an alliance of more than 30 *han* in the northeast rebelled and it took till December before its pacification. In Hokkaido (the northern island)

<sup>7</sup> Sims 2001, 5, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Sims 2001, 5, 8

<sup>9</sup> Skocpol 1979.

<sup>10</sup> The COW war list is available at [http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/WarData\\_NEW/WarList\\_NEW.pdf](http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/WarData_NEW/WarList_NEW.pdf). Criteria for war type (extrastate, intrastate, nonstate, and interstate) are explained in their website.

<sup>11</sup> Sims 2001, 10.

Tokugawa forces held out through June 1869. In Choshu there was also unrest, in part caused by the irregular military units (*shotai*) that were in conflict with their upper-samurai commanders. In 1870, armed opposition by shotai units and simultaneous peasant uprisings had to be suppressed by Choshu forces. One of the leaders of Choshu's renovators was Hirozawa Saneomi, who was assassinated by an extremist in early 1871. Even with violent unrest, reform was faster in Choshu, and conflict between it and less-advanced Satsuma increased. There continued in the post-Meiji period to be a series of rural uprisings, bordering on social revolution. And in January 1877 in Satsuma, in response to the government attempt to disarm the province, a social revolution might well have transpired. Saigo, Satsuma's military leader, had about 30,000 troops and the rebellion lasted nine months. But it was put down, and the civil war was short<sup>12</sup>. It is difficult to see in all this unrest and violence grounds for Japan as a model of nonviolent political evolution as suggested by the term "restoration".

- On the one hand, once the Meiji oligarchs assumed power, they centralized the state with only minimal opposition from the regions. On the other hand, by one estimate, there were 86 peasant uprisings in 1868, 110 in 1869, 65 in 1870, 52 in 1871 and 30 in 1872. In these threatening times (with the added fear that the Satsuma/Choshu civil war might spread) the han leaders sought to borrow or tax so as to buy more up-to-date weapons to fight their own peasants. Indeed, the aristocratic lords' acceptance of Meiji centralization was in large part due to their fear of a spreading peasant-based social revolution<sup>13</sup>.

- On the one hand, the Meiji government successfully and relatively peacefully established constitutional rule. Yet, on the other hand, terror was perpetually present. In the wake of the Japan/Russia war of 1904, many in Japan saw the peace treaty as a betrayal, given their exultation in Japanese victories. They got neither an indemnity nor the northern half of Sakhalien, despite the recognition of Japan's driving the Russians out of Korea and southern Manchuria. A rally at Hibiya Park was planned by a group of nationalists who formed a Joint Council of Fellow Activists on the Peace Question. On the day of the proposed rally, the police closed the park, and the activists broke down the gates, leading to three days of riots, with seventeen killed. There was no serious political opposition to exploit this massacre and challenge the cabinet since the party system was managed by the Meiji elder statesmen<sup>14</sup>.

In May 1910 the government uncovered a plot to assassinate the Emperor, in the so-called Taijyaku Jiken (High Treason Incident). Heavy police repression followed, with left-wing groups held responsible. This tended to drive radicalism underground but in no way eliminated it<sup>15</sup>.

In 1918 rice riots began, involving 38 cities and hundreds of towns and villages, with 700,000 protestors, mostly in the lower classes as a result of a war boom in manufacturing leading to heavy inflation (especially for rice). The rioters had the tacit support of the police. The government jailed many protestors and censured the media, but organized massive pay-outs from the imperial household to the indigent, which were recorded as contributions from the large integrated industrial firms (the *zaibatsu*). The political class reformed the cabinet and with a renewed consensus among them were able to cauterize the social unrest. But again, these riots almost got out of hand<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Sims 2001, pp. 10, 14, 17, 22-3, 37.

<sup>13</sup> Sims 2001, p. 28-9.

<sup>14</sup> Sims 2001, 89.

<sup>15</sup> Sims 2001, 98.

<sup>16</sup> Sims 2001, 120ff.

Facing economic crisis in the wake of the American depression, the government tried in the early 1930s to reduce military budgets. But the army openly opposed cuts, fearing the implications of increasing Chinese nationalism. Lt.-Col. Hashimoto Kingoro founded one of many nationalist societies and planned a coup d'état in 1931 (the "March plot"), a plan that involved bombing the Prime Minister's residence. After toying with supporting this plan, General Ugaki Kazushige ordered its termination. Instead of the plot, the officers set off an explosion on the South Manchurian Railway outside of Mukden, which they blamed on the Chinese and strategically exploited to put the Japanese army into emergency operations. When the government still dithered, Hashimoto conceived an "October Plot" to assassinate the entire cabinet, which never reached fruition. The Prime Minister was nonetheless assassinated in May 1932, the third major public figure to be assassinated in 1932, with all three killings carried out by nationalistic students<sup>17</sup>. With discontent and disagreement within the army against civilian restraint, on February 26, 1936 about 100 lieutenants and a few captains connected to ordinary soldiers who stood against the "fascistic" imperial tendencies of the higher officers planned a coup d'état. It achieved some notable success, but then the navy entered on the side of the state and the emperor too backed the government. This insurrection revealed a deep division within the army<sup>18</sup>. As Berger<sup>19</sup> recognizes, Japanese militarism exerted itself through political assassinations, attempted coups d'état, and engineered military emergencies abroad.

This very brief review shows clearly the problem of explaining a country's average level of violence by an appeal to national culture. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, Berger<sup>20</sup> points out, ideologues across the political spectrum argued over the precise content of *Nihonjinron* ("theory of Japaneseness"). From this debate, some common premises emerged. Most participants in the national dialogue pointed to the facts of Japanese homogeneity, of a country never invaded by foreigners, and tried to use these facts to explain why Japan experienced a far less bloody history than the countries of Western Europe. Outside analysts listened to this debate with a sense of irony. Until their defeat in World War II, Japanese of most political stripes saw their country as exemplified by *bushido*, or the warrior spirit, which they believed would help Japan defeat the weak and morally corrupt West. This is not necessarily a contradiction. However, a national myth that celebrates both warriors *and* peaceful accommodation can be employed to account for civil war onsets when conditions only weakly support them as well as the absence of civil war when conditions are propitious for them.

### *Japanese Culture: An Equally Equivocal Model*

A cultural historian of Japan prefaces the post World War II edition of his 1936 monograph<sup>21</sup> by noting similar contradictory pulls in Japanese culture. "There is evidence in past history that the Japanese people are, despite the rigid structure of their society," Samson writes, "by no means incapable of revolt against what they deem oppression. The record of agrarian risings and religious martyrdoms in the feudal period shows that they have not always submitted tamely to authority. Indeed their story tells perhaps as much of turbulence as of docility, and their fatalism has found expression not only in patient acceptance of misfortune but also in reckless disregard for life itself...The very fact that social pressure has in the past been so severe and unrelenting raises a presumption that, once the course of events removes that pressure, their reactions will be strong if not violent." This is a cultural theory of the Japanese that can account for both violence and its suppression.

17 Sims 2001, 154-60.

18 Sims 2001, 195.

19 Berger 1993, 132.

20 Berger 1993, 144-45.

21 Sansom 1962, vii.

What about the Confucian tradition in Japan? This has been heralded by several analysts seeking to account for the astounding social order and low crime rates that mark contemporary Japanese society. On the one hand, Japan has far fewer murder and rape cases per capita than does US or West Germany, states with similar levels of economic development. On the other hand, compared to other societies with Confucian traditions, Japan has far less murder than China and far less rape than South Korea (both with far more poverty), and this shows that Confucianism does not fully explain the level of societal order.<sup>22</sup>

What about the unique notion of *kokutai*, implying “the Japanese state possessed a unique (almost tribalistic) character based on the special position of the Emperor and the unbroken imperial line?” On the one hand, it could be argued that this elite compact on what the state represents enables a strong state capable of fostering a stable order because the entire political elite agree that any time there is a threat to that state, even coming from citizens of it, the political class should not exploit internal fissures but should unify against the threat. On the other hand, the symbol of *kokutai* is sometimes more like a tool justifying repression than a norm of obedience. In 1925, for example, the Diet passed the Peace Preservation Law, with up to 10 years’ imprisonment for organizations seeking to threaten the established order. Indeed the government faced real dangers in that era: the Japanese Communist Party formed; an anarchist plot to kill General Fukuda Masataro was uncovered; and an assassination attempt on the Regent was foiled. By raising the notion of *kokutai* into the political arena (it had been a rare constitutional term), the political class was using it as a weapon against enemies, and not as an agreed upon norm. The introduction of the Peace Preservation Law that openly appealed to *kokutai* induced not cultural compliance, but rather massive demonstrations against this “evil” law.<sup>23</sup>

And what about cultural unity? On the one hand, cultural homogeneity has been theorized as a condition lowering the probability of a spiraling of everyday violence<sup>24</sup>. Japan’s incredible homogeneity (with an index of ethnic fractionalization that puts it as less ethnically mixed than 95 percent of the countries in the world) should favor the maintenance of local order in society. From the point of view of this fractionalization index, the 600,000 Koreans and 300,000 former outcastes (*burakumin*), both of whom are hidden minorities, are too small to imply a potential for violent unrest.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, when one compares countries at similar levels of economic development, it is not the case that more cultural homogenous states have been consistently much less likely to have civil war<sup>26</sup>. In other words, there are many cases of civil war onsets in countries that are relatively ethnically homogeneous – for example, Korea saw civil war just after World War II (in the south) even though it is even more homogeneous than Japan. Cultural homogeneity could have been a factor in Japan’s peaceful post-1945 experience, but it surely didn’t guarantee peace.

In the post World War II reckoning of Japan’s violent potential, a group of distinguished American social scientists reached similarly equivocal results. Talcott Parsons<sup>27</sup>, for example,

<sup>22</sup> These data are from Hechter and Kanazawa (1993, 462-3) from 1979 and 1988. Their source is the International Criminal Police Organization.

<sup>23</sup> Sims 2001, xix, 123, 139.

<sup>24</sup> Fearon and Laitin 1996.

<sup>25</sup> On ethnic fractionalization, we use the Fearon/Laitin replication dataset “repdata.dta”

[See <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/publicdata/publicdata.html>], Japan’s score for ethnic fractionalization (on a scale from 0, with full homogeneity, to 1, with full heterogeneity) is .015465, which is in the 5th percentile for all countries in the dataset in 1990.

<sup>26</sup> Fearon and Laitin 2003

<sup>27</sup> Parsons 1946, 105-09.

traced contradictory paths. For him, there were three possible routes for Japan in the future: (1) reversion to a pre-industrial agrarian society, and the possibility of a return of ultra nationalism with external war; (2) communist revolution that would liquidate traditional patterns and induce internal war; and (3) continuing trends since the Meiji Restoration, putting limits on a nationalistic-militaristic revival, moving toward western democracy. Parsons feared that if the US allowed Japan to stew in its own juices, it would force the population back to the rural areas, which could not support them economically and “almost certainly the masses would be seething with unrest,” especially given the fact of a weak middle class that would offer no resistance to a militaristic-nationalistic wave. Because of demilitarization, he foresaw a small, well-organized group (probably communists) that could seize power. Here, he concluded, “Japan’s underlying authoritarianism would not disappear but would reappear in another form...” For Parsons, as for other contributors to that volume, Japan’s future, even with cultural dispositions that are authoritarian, could entail a western-like democracy, and therefore Japan’s peace and stability were not fully determined by its past and culture; the future was far more open-ended.

And a final contradiction leads up to our analysis of the post World War II era. On the one hand, Japan has had no postwar insurgency. On the other hand, between 1945 and 1989, eight politicians were killed or injured in attacks. Between 1969 and 1989, more than 200 bombing attacks were reported. From 1978-90, Japanese society was victim to some 700 guerilla attacks, relying on such techniques as arson and Molotov cocktails. In 1991 the Japan Red Army (JRA) headquarters settled in Syria to secure international contacts for its revolutionary agenda<sup>28</sup>.

In sum, Japanese history is filled with violence, rebellion, and instability, showing no uniform disposition to peace. Therefore, we should be wary of explanations for the absence of post World War II civil war onsets that rely on notions of *kokutai* or other long-term cultural norms.

### III. Non-Onset Post-Occupation

Our model expects an above-average probability of a successful insurgency in Japan in the immediate postwar period up until 1964, yet none occurred. How can this be explained? To answer this question, we draw three lines of argument. First, while recognizing that an above average probability of a civil war onset is still quite low, we need to explain why there was no onset despite conditions favoring one. Second, the early years of occupation were scary and chaotic, suggesting that our model is correctly picking up factors associated with a higher risk of large-scale civil conflict. Third, the overall strategy of transitional authority in the office of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) – and the commitment of the US to the stability of the transitional government that it fostered – best accounts for the containment of violence far below civil war levels.

If we consider the comparison to other military occupations in recent times (Israel in Gaza and the West Bank; the US in Iraq) the postwar non-onset in Japan should seem non-obvious and thereby requiring an explanation. Many observers have been struck by the apparently low level of social antagonism there was towards the occupiers in this case. Consider the following memory<sup>29</sup>. On August 30, 1945 Arthur Coladarci was in the advance group into Atsugi,

<sup>28</sup> Katzenstein 1996, 59.

<sup>29</sup> Toshio 1982, 33.



the training ground for kamikaze pilots. He secured his own transport, and was the first American to enter Yokohama. He recalled to Toshio: "I was scared. In fact, terrified..." However, once he found a group of Japanese, and told them (through one man who knew some English) that he was lost, they were all kind and considerate. On that day, and throughout the American occupation, Americans did not have to hide behind tanks, afraid of the population. The population was docile.

Not even the communists could stir up the population sufficiently to incite an insurgency. In the prewar years, the Peace Preservation Laws and Imperial Ordinances banned the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), and its leaders were in jail or in exile. The communists began to lose vote share, as explained by one observer, due to "the inherent nature of the movement and the revulsion of the Japanese people against its tactic of violent action under foreign attack." After their failure at the polls, he observes, communist efforts to organize general strikes, taking control over unions, and use of mass violence, were uniformly unsuccessful<sup>30</sup>. SCAP, however, played an important role in their decline. It blocked a communist organized General Strike scheduled for February 1, 1947, with US military police standing up against an estimated two million angry workers. This show of American power took the wind out of the movement, and docile company unions were soon able to replace the communists in most firms. The communists faced a sharper decline in the 1952 elections due to "strong public revulsion against the Party's 'fire-bottle' tactics" [that was itself induced by SCAP repression] and it was compelled by unyielding American power to transform itself into a "peaceful" and "lovable" party<sup>31</sup>.

Consistent with this interpretation of docility in the face of American power, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was established itself as a "party which was basically safe and competent." Sims<sup>32</sup> attributes LDP success to the facts that crime and drug use remained relatively low, as did divorce rates, thus allowing ordinary Japanese to feel that their society was still quite stable<sup>33</sup>.

This conventional account of popular docility during the American occupation stands in some tension with our institutional explanation for insurgency and civil war. After all, the American invasion undermined the reigning Japanese government, which our theory implies should provide a propitious moment for an insurgency to succeed. A closer look at the evidence, however, calls into question the conventional account of immediate calm and order. In fact, the postwar peace that emerged teetered on chaos. Harry Emerson Wildes was a political advisor to SCAP, and left in frustration (later writing an exposé of it for the *American Political Science Review*) due to SCAP's failure to eradicate the hoodlums (*gurentai*) who "controlled" the streets. He complained that political bullies (*soshi*) imitated the military lords of old (*ronin*) by forming terrorist gangs in the name of protecting the emperor. Rather than a banner of democratization that SCAP was entrusted to unfurl, Japan in Wildes' eyes was a massive but decentralized congeries of bullies, blackmailers, and clubs<sup>34</sup>.

Impressive revisionist research by Roehner<sup>35</sup> makes a far more radical claim. His evidence demonstrates that the notion of a broad acceptance of the American occupation that was docilely accepted by the Japanese population is an historical myth, nurtured by General

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<sup>30</sup> Napier 1952, 1, 63.

<sup>31</sup> Passin 1962, 394.

<sup>32</sup> Sims 2001, 342.

<sup>33</sup> Sims 2001, 342.

<sup>34</sup> Wildes 1948, 1157-59.

<sup>35</sup> Roehner 2009.

MacArthur and staff to serve SCAP's claim to legitimate domination. Despite the unaccounted for disappearance of most internal SCAP reports, Roehner was able to track down internal documents of SCAP housed in three continents. In one report, published by the "Public Safety Division" of General Headquarters of the SCAP, the numbers of offenses against occupation forces for the eight months April–November 1946 were reported as follows: 3800, 3200, 2700, 2600, 2700, 2400, 2100, and 1700. In other internal (to SCAP) reports on incidents, violent anti-occupation organizations occasionally get notice: e.g. in February 1946, the Black Dragon organization was reported to have set up a plot against General Headquarters, leading American armored cars and troops to patrol the streets of Tokyo; in April 1946, an attempted plot by a group of Japanese under Hideo Tokayama to assassinate General MacArthur was discovered; ex-army and navy personnel formed an "Iwate Prefecture Reclamation Unit" that was uncovered by the U.S. counter-intelligence corps. These represent only those incidents that got leaked from SCAP's near water-tight censorship regime.

The Communists too, despite becoming lovable in later years, presented a challenge to the postwar peace. In the occupation period there were several violent incidents that were traced to JCP instigation. On January 21, 1946 the party led 2,000 of Tokyo's hungry to raid foodstuffs from the Itabashi Government Supply Depot. On 7 April 1946, a mob entered the Prime Minister's residence. On 12 May 1948, another mob entered the imperial grounds. In early May 1949 due to an industrial dispute yet another mob seized a railroad company's offices; and in June 1949 lay-offs induced communists to instigate forcible action that brought on the police. In Taira on 30 June 1949 after police ordered removal of a communist signboard that interfered with traffic, the JCP (and leftist Koreans) seized the police station, hoisted a red flag, and for four hours refused eviction. Simultaneously mobs demonstrated at the district assembly, at the police station, and at a Tokyo Steel factory. The communist-led League of Koreans in Japan got into a violent confrontation with the more moderate Korean Republic Association of Japan. On 31 July 1949, and 15 August 1949, and finally on 20 August 1949 skirmishes became violent "and the League was dissolved as a terroristic organization," its principal members purged, its properties seized<sup>36</sup>.

MacArthur feared the Communist influence from the early days of his mission and even five years into it, on May 30, 1950, he was on tenterhooks. On that day, the JCP held a rally near the Imperial Palace, and some American soldiers were mingling about, taking photos. Someone started a scuffle that lasted a few minutes, and a handful of Americans received minor injuries. Immediately, eight Communists were arrested and brought before an Occupation court. One defendant received ten years at hard labor, one seven, and the rest five years. On June 3, the JCP sent an open letter to MacArthur condemning the process. MacArthur was outraged, and demanded that Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida "remove and exclude...from public service" the 24-members of the Central Committee of the JCP, referring to the action as "mass violence". When the JCP protested, MacArthur ordered Yoshida to fire the editors of the JCP newspaper Akahata, not yet being able (due to freedom of press) to shut it down; but he did on June 26 (and had the police raid Communist cells throughout the country), a day after the Korean War began. With anti-communist purges, some 22,000 Japanese lost their jobs<sup>37</sup>.

The Communists remained threatening to authorities even after MacArthur's purge. Three days after Japan regained independence in 1952 and on the heels of Prime Minister Yoshida's

<sup>36</sup> *Napier 1952, 63.*

<sup>37</sup> *Toshio 1982, 248.*

attempt to pass the Anti-subversive Activities Law, the Japanese Communists staged a “Bloody May Day”. Some 20,000 unionists, inspired by JCP, tried to storm the Imperial Palace plaza, with a rock-throwing melee. There were about 1,400 injuries, 759 of them police<sup>38</sup>.

Inter-ethnic relations were also on a powder keg in the early postwar years. Consider David Conde, who had served in the Civil Education and Information Section of SCAP and was disgruntled due to SCAP’s adopting the ultra-nationalist Japanese view of the Koreans). He became a Reuter’s correspondent. “Today prejudice,” he wrote, “is mounting against the more than half-million Koreans remaining in Japan<sup>39</sup>. Fanned by rumors, newspaper attacks, and Diet speeches, long-smoldering hatreds [for example, amid the earthquake of 1923, a mass killing of a reported 2,613 Koreans by police or police-instigated mobs]<sup>40</sup> have been inflamed against these former subject-people...In the books of right-wing extremists they are marked as victims on that day of ‘freedom’ when the Occupation Army leaves Japan.” Politicians and police were implicated. In the Diet, Saburo Shiikuma, a Progressive Party member from Hokkaido stated, “The actions of these Koreans and Formosans make the blood in our veins, in our misery of defeat, boil...” The police-sanctioned Stall-Keepers Associations excluded Koreans from the retail business, and the police were enforcing this by patrolling markets with revolvers. The law reinforced these prejudices. In the first years of occupation, nearly one million Koreans departed from Japan. Yet there were severe restrictions on how much money and valuables could be repatriated, so those who left were often compelled to leave their possessions. Those who stayed were too poor to leave and too angry to remain quiescent.

The sparks were visible. On July 19, 1946, in an armed incident at Shibuya Station in Tokyo, instigated by the Japanese police, five persons (mostly Formosan stall owners, but called black-marketers) were killed. *Mainichi* (a leading newspaper), reported on July 26th, 1946 that an armed gang of fourteen “non-Japanese nationals” was going around the county, robbing and plundering. A Committee for Protecting Korean Rights issued a statement listing sixteen violent acts perpetrated against Koreans, most by the Japanese police. Among them were the deaths of 272 Korean repatriates, who died of starvation, lack of medicine, and police brutality at the Sasebo Detention Camp in the summer of 1946<sup>41</sup>.

What factors help explain why these many sparks did not catch fire? Consistent with our observation that most large-scale civil violence since 1945 has come in the form of insurgencies that emerge out of or base themselves in rural areas, these would-be rebels were urban, without a rural base to grow an insurgency. And they had an exit option [you mean, to go back to Korea?]. Civil wars are not likely to be spawned by migrant groups without a regional (and rural) base<sup>42</sup>.

Another factor, possibly overriding, was that SCAP had immense authority to decimate any opposition. In effect, the US occupation implies that “state capabilities” in Japan for this early period are underestimated for these years by the income figures alone.

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38 Packard 1966. 25.

39 Conde. 1947. 41-5

40 The figure on the numbers of Koreans killed is from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1923\\_Great\\_Kant%C5%8D\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1923_Great_Kant%C5%8D_earthquake) [downloaded July 1, 2013]. This massacre does not count as a civil war onset; our criteria require a death threshold to be met on both sides of a violent conflict.

41 Conde 1947. 42.

42 Laitin 2009.

To illustrate, MacArthur was given instructions that left one political adviser dumbfounded: "This was heady authority. Never before in the history of the United States had such enormous and absolute power been placed in the hands of a single individual"<sup>43</sup>. MacArthur quickly reconstituted conservative authority, more-or-less leaving the structure of the imperial armed services intact<sup>44</sup>. SCAP spoke with a single voice. It sent to the government clear policy directives, e.g. to release political prisoners (including communists), removing the Home Minister, the enfranchising of women, the encouragement of labor unions, the trying of war criminals, and the banning of some 200,000 purged officials.<sup>45</sup> The constitutional provisions originally sent down by SCAP were so liberal that the Shidehara cabinet was unwilling to adopt it. General Whitney responded with the threat that adopting SCAP recommendations was the only way the emperor could be protected from trial<sup>46</sup>. The strategy of transferring power to a regime and putting the full weight of the occupation's power (in contrast with the ambiguity of the South Korean occupation led by General Hodge, one in which a civil war onset subsequently took place) yielded short-term peace when structural conditions were challenging. The absence of large-scale civil conflict in Japan in the ten or so years after 1945 is plausibly due to the addition to state coherence and capabilities provided by US forces and occupation rule. Arguably this would not have been sufficient had there been more widespread and deeper popular antagonism to the occupiers – the pre-revisionist take probably has some merit. But without the occupation support to state capabilities, the evidence on the levels of disorder, opposition, and violence that were seen even with the occupation suggests that a Korean path, in which one insurgency passed the civil war threshold, would have been considerably more likely.<sup>47</sup>

#### IV. The Crisis of 1960 When Japan Remains Vulnerable to Insurgency

In 1960, Japan's predicted annual probability for a civil war onset was nearly three percent, about 50 percent higher than the world average for any year in our dataset. In that year, the Americans were putting diplomatic pressure on Japan to renew their security treaty, even though the domestic political environment in Japan made this a touchy issue. The issue highlighted a polarization between left and right, creating a new "tactics of 'struggle,' of 'direct action,' and extra-parliamentary pressure that began to replace those of negotiation, compromise, and discussion." In analyzing this trend, various American and Chinese observers saw the subsequent protests as the beginning of a communist revolution<sup>48</sup>. And when President Eisenhower's celebratory trip to herald the new treaty was cancelled amidst security threats, Packard<sup>49</sup> relays "alarmist reports of a Japan on the eve of revolution." To be sure, Packard calls these reports "nonsense", but given our task here we should take them seriously, mainly to ask what factors made such predictions so wrong.

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<sup>43</sup> Toshio 1984. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Berger 1993. 133.

<sup>44</sup> Berger 1993. 133.

<sup>45</sup> For a provisional list of SCAP instructions to the Japanese government, see Bertrand Roehner (2007) "Some Examples of Scapins (SCAP Instructions to the Japanese Government) 1 September 1945– 31 March 1952"

[<http://www.lpth.jussieu.fr/~roehner/ocj2.pdf>], downloaded July 2, 2013. *Civil War Non-Onset: Japan*. Fearon and Laitin, p. 18

<sup>46</sup> Sims 2001. 238–65.

<sup>47</sup> We discuss the constraints to maintaining peace during occupation in our Korea random narrative

[<http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/Random%20Narratives/KoreasRN1.5.pdf>]. We note, relying on Lee 1975, that Korea was strategically unimportant in the US's global conflict with the Soviet Union. Consequently, Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, commander of the United States forces in Korea, was accorded very limited resources. A series of protests escalated to a rebellion on Cheju Island, and then spread to the southern cities of Yosu and Suncheon when the army mutinied. Here is a comparable case of institutional weakness under conditions of occupation associated with a civil war onset.

<sup>48</sup> Passin 1962. 391. 393.

<sup>49</sup> Packard 1966. 3.

Discontent surely was widespread in Japan's first major internal crisis after the end of the occupation. An analysis of voting for the Japanese Socialist Party noted "the arena of discontent, within which revolutionary ideas have their play, has been growing." More to the point, the type of protest that resulted from this discontent was seen to be different from that in other industrial countries, as "in part it has the tone of an under-developed country—assertive nationalism and occasionally even racialism, the feeling of a struggle for 'true' national independence"<sup>50</sup>.

The security treaty was the perfect issue for a previously disheartened and divided left. In a sense, a long-term consequence of the US commitment to regime stability (helping to explain why there was no rebellion at the transfer of power) was a sense of resentment by those who were locked out of power. Relations with the US, and the security treaty with it, was thus an issue that polarized the Japanese left and right, enabling remnants of the radical left to form a loosely structured "People's Council." It was sufficiently organized to marginalize the democratic moderates in the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP); yet, without clear leadership, the Council could not take responsibility for the violence that ensued, nor to direct it<sup>51</sup>. And there was a constituency ready to be mobilized. In Packard's accounting, there were 223 demonstrations in Tokyo alone involving a total of 961,000 people from April 1959 through July 1960. Demonstrators came to rallies in groups, such as workers with factory locals, and students with members of their department.

On November 27, 1959 the first major salvo was unleashed.<sup>52</sup> The People's Council organized a "storming of the Diet", the third of its kind since World War II. Already about ten "united action" drives were organized against the treaty revision in 1959, but all were duds. Then "hot head students", who had been expelled from the JCP, pushed for a more radical effort, namely a siege of the Diet. Meanwhile, the government was pushing for a January (1960) signing of the treaty in Washington. Radicals were enraged by the inexorable move toward signing. Also, a Vietnam reparation issue (in which the radicals opposed giving Japan's reparations only to the South Vietnamese government) was hot on the agenda. Given this confluence of issues, some 80,000 demonstrated in Tokyo alone, and a half million throughout Japan. Five thousand policemen were in the Diet vicinity, with barricades and armored cars. But when the police permitted JSP Diet members into the congressional compound, a mass of demonstrators slipped through, and started snake dancing and vandalizing property. The general chaos signaled a turning point in the anti-treaty movement.

Following November 27, a series of anti-police actions were taken by radical students, members of the radical student union (*Zengakuren*). On January 15, the students tried to barricade the airport to stop Prime Minister's Kishi Nobusuke's flight to Washington to sign the treaty, but the police knocked down the barricades and dragged the students out. One student died from the injuries sustained. But Kishi was able to fly out without incident.

Despite the arrests of key leaders after the January 16 airport siege, on February 25, the movement tried again to invade the Diet, provoking clashes with the police. However, the unity of the left was short-lived. The People's Council leadership struggled against the "Trotskyite" extremism of the student leaders. A moderate JCP delegation to the student union convention in March was refused admission, again showing tensions within the movement.

<sup>50</sup> *Passin* 1962. 392, 395.

<sup>51</sup> *Packard* 1962. 131-2.

<sup>52</sup> *The following description of the events of 1960 relies primarily on Packard (1966. 156-317).*

An April 26 deadline for lower house approval of the treaty helped set the policy agenda (which was not met due to JSP opposition and LDP foot-dragging in the face of harsh debate) as well as the agenda for protest. Amid the debates, the People's Council agreed to a peaceful demonstration on April 26, and this was quite successful in bringing out large crowds. On that day, however, Zengakuren had 4,000 students organized to charge against the main Diet gate, throwing stones and meeting police clubs. Eighty-three police and forty-one students were injured in the resulting melee.

Prime Minister Kishi was compelled by circumstance to seek extension of the Diet session, and this was met with the rapid disapproval of the JSP, whose leaders staged a mass sit-in, leading to skirmishes in the hallways between socialists and LDP parliamentarians. The People's Council quickly mobilized 15,000 demonstrators. Tied to the extension of the session vote, unbeknownst to the JSP, was the actual treaty vote. With the JSP Diet-members engaged in protest, the Chairman of the relevant Diet committee cleverly got a positive vote on the treaty. When the committee recommendation was sent to the floor at 11PM, the socialists locked arms, blocked entry, and refused to move. In response, the Speaker ordered 500 police officers to break up the blockade, and Socialist MPs were dragged out of the House in what Japanese call "uprooting" (gobönuki). The speaker took his seat, with only LDP members present, and the treaty was approved after midnight. The JSP declared the passage null and void and began boycotting the Diet.

On May 20, 1960, Zengakuren students attacked the Prime Minister's official residence and surrounded his home (with 10,000 protesters, some throwing mud, stones, shoes and bottles at police; at the official residence some scaled the wall and others broke down the main gate). Meanwhile, the People's Council mobilized 20,000 picketing the Diet.

President Eisenhower's ceremonial visit, scheduled for June 19th, got implicated in the treaty issue as the treaty was scheduled to take effect the day Ike was to arrive. The broader international context also played directly into Japanese domestic politics. The U2 incident (in which the Soviets shot down an American spy plane) reactivated US/USSR hostility that sucked the blood out of the summit-induced "Spirit of Camp David". The Cold War was refrozen. Furthermore, the White House decided to make the Japan trip part of a presidential cavalcade that included Taiwan, Okinawa and South Korea, thus turning Japan into an unwilling pawn in the Cold War.

The overall scene in Japan in this political context was tense. Taking cognizance of this tension, the JSP leadership and many moderates privately urged Eisenhower to cancel the trip. When Press Secretary James Hagerty arrived as an advance man on June 10, he met a demonstration at the airport of about 8-10,000. The crowd enveloped and mauled his limousine while singing the Communist "*Internationale*". A Marine helicopter to rescue Hagerty was pelted with rocks, but eventually the crowd dissipated.

June 15, 1960 was a day of bloodshed, despite the fact that Prime Minister Kishi tried to reconcile with the leader of the Socialists. But the Security police told Kishi it could not assure the president's safety. In light of the security fears, the police created a link with organized crime to mobilize over 30,000 militias from gangster groups, and right-wing nationalist armies to

create a so-called “partnership for peace”<sup>53</sup>. Yet the Socialists and Communists tried to pull back on the confrontation, and leaders mooted the idea of giving like a warm welcome, and then going after the government of Kishi. Zengakuren members, however, chose violence. On that day, some 70,000 were demonstrating at the Diet, and police had (of their own) 5,000. Wire cutters were used to challenge the South Gate, and stones were thrown at police inside the gate. A cadre from a rightist group called Renovation Action Corps drove a truck into the midst of the marchers. The South Gate went down, and in a pitched confrontation, a young student was crushed to death. Well past midnight protesters burned police trucks that were abandoned while strewn with rocks and broken placards. The police began using tear-gas, and used clubs on peacefully demonstrating professors (who later sued for attempted murder and abuse of authority leading to injury and won \$17,500 in damages from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government) as well as reporters and bystanders. The demonstration was broken up at 4:30AM, with hundreds hurt and one dead. As a result of these confrontations, Kishi dropped plans to have the Upper House approve the treaty that day.

Though they had firearms, the police shot no bullets and far more of them were injured than demonstrators. They were courteous to the arrested students as well. The rest of the story is peaceful. A massive crowd of 330,000 stood vigil at the Diet on June 18, and the treaty was approved, but there was no violence. After getting the necessary changes in domestic law to fulfill Japan’s obligations in the treaty, Kishi resigned, and this defused the crisis.

But violence was not fully abated, as it now came from the political right. Small ultra-patriotic groups formed. The police estimated 400 ultranationalist organizations with a total membership of 100,000 in 1960. Even during the treaty crisis, there were several right wing attacks: an 18-year old tried to assassinate Kishi on May 25th; a 17 year old tried to wreck Zengakuren headquarters on June 28; a bottle of ammonia was thrown at socialist leader Asanuma Inejir? on May 26; a stabbing of another socialist leader (Kawakami Jōtarō) on June 17; and the stabbing of former Prime Minister Kishi on July 15. Then came rumors of several “terrorist plots” from the right, and Asanuma was assassinated on October 12, 1960. The murderer stabbed him during a TV debate; the killer then committed suicide and became a martyr of the right. Thirteen ultranationalists planned to kill the Prime Minister and take over the government in a planned attack scheduled for December 1961.

How was all this violence contained? It should first be noted that however polarized and potentially violent, these demonstrations were largely in Tokyo with the rest of the country both moderate and apathetic. By 1960, GDP per capita had nearly doubled since the end of the occupation. Japan had already become a mass society of consumers, which one student of the protests reported was an “objective situation” of a “leisure society” that is far from the world the socialists were then decrying<sup>54</sup>. This is a “contentment” interpretation of GDP/cap. But, as we will elaborate in our general conclusion, the efficient organization of domestic security, enough to prevent the escalation of violence through the inadvertent creation of martyrs, is also a reflection of a country with a high GDP/cap.

## V. Crisis Events in Japan when Japan is no longer Vulnerable

By the 1980s, our model predicts a negligible probability that there would be a successful armed

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54 *Passin 1962, 402.*

rebel group in Japan. Yet there have remained deep grievances in Japanese society, leading sometimes to ugly violence challenging the security of the state. From 1965 through 1982, a wide variety of grievances within Japanese society congealed around a protest against the construction of a modern airport in Narita, culminating in some violence and death. And in 1995, a quasi-political quasi-religious organization Aum Shinrikō, whose members were alienated from secular Japanese society, terrorized society with a gas attack in the Tokyo subway that killed twelve and injured some 6,000 people. These cases show first that grievances and alienation can be powerful but they need not, if conditions are not welcoming to insurgents, lead to civil war. Second, the cases show how a coherent and capable police force can keep violent protest in bounds so that it does not escalate into civil war. Japan's strong state, one in which the police and the military developed a "comprehensive view of security," has been immensely successful in defusing protest<sup>55</sup>, a point we develop more fully in Section VI.

### *The Narita Airport Saga*

The Narita airport protest of 1982 gathered farmers, anarchists, and peace-niks (who claimed the airport was for military purposes) against the state in what some saw as the beginnings of "a rebellion." Left-wing student union (Zengakuren) leaders had been searching for models of revolution, and the large-scale coal miners' strike against layoffs in the Miike mine in March 1960 became that model just at the time of the anti-Security Treaty campaign<sup>56</sup>. The right moment arrived for the Zengakuren in 1965 with the anger that erupted amongst the peasantry when an airport at Tomisato was first proposed by the LDP<sup>57</sup>.

Most of the anti-Narita protest activities involved building blockades to stop land surveys, buying from farmers tiny plots of land and refusing to sell them to the airport authority, symbolic activities like the pouring of urine and excrement on police (by a 90 year old woman), and the construction of tunnels and trenches for purposes of guerrilla warfare. In 1971, militants wielding bamboo spears killed three police who were engaged in a forced land expropriation; in 1977 a militant student was killed by a plastic gas grenade. In the spring of 1978 the movement made a last-ditch effort to prevent the airport opening. The government mobilized 14,000 riot police, who faced stones, Molotov cocktails, slingshots and steel arrows. Militants crawled through sewers to sneak into the control tower and smash equipment, and were shot at by police revolvers.

The government responded to these violent provocations with an effort carefully managed to emasculate the movement. First, the government offered generous compensation terms to the 360 households of displaced farmers and induced first the most prestigious former landlord of the town to accept those terms. Government officials could then watch as a cascade of farmers bolted from the protest movement to accept a similar deal. To be sure, there were holdouts, those who felt betrayed by the LDP (whom they had supported for decades), and these holdouts increasingly made alliance with radical student groups. This alliance of holdout farmers and radical students caused much grief, but the people in whose name the battle lines were drawn were not visibly on the side of the insurgents.<sup>58</sup>

Second, Japanese police did everything possible to avoid creating martyrs. In the final battle over the control tower in 1978, police bullets did not kill any militants, and the police quietly

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<sup>55</sup> Katzenstein 1996.

<sup>56</sup> Hwasoo 1975, 202.

<sup>57</sup> Apter and Sawa 1984, 2, 5.

<sup>58</sup> See Apter and Sawo (1984, 44) who put a different spin on the compensation packages.



allowed the movement a tactical victory. However, the airport authority quietly rebuilt the tower and increased security for it. The inaugural flight the following month was celebrated without popular protest. Indeed, even the leader of the protest movement, Tomon? Issaku, knew that there would be little escalation, as he “believed that the government was afraid that if farmers died this would be a political disaster of such magnitude that the entire project would have to be called off”<sup>59</sup>. The Japanese security forces understood well the costs of insurgent escalation, and had the organizational coherence to avoid those costs. This kind of restraint stands in sharp contrast to the often heavy-handed attacks by police and armed forces responding to protest or nascent insurgencies in countries with less administratively capable states (and marked by lower per capita income).

### *Aum Shinrikō*

Aum Shinrikō’s origins were in a yoga and meditation group founded by Asahara Shōkō in Tokyo in 1984. It is one of the “new” new religions of Japan, popular in the 1980s among the young and urban. By 1995, it had some 10,000 adherents, with about 1,200 of them becoming ascetics. As early as 1988 it was involved in criminal activities. It had a hierarchical structure, each adherent with a rank, with strong penalties for defection. For example, in 1994 an adherent was deemed to be a spy, given truth drugs, and killed on Asahara’s orders; another adherent was killed by hanging him upside down, in an attempt to save his soul.

Asahara ran for office in 1990 but was defeated handily, and moved to the world of spiritual leadership. In June 1994 he formed an “alternative government” that was theocratic. However, he moved more to a nonpolitical orientation on the side of the “good” directly confronting “evil” in the world. His attacks never had a serious political message. Registered as a religious organization in Japan, Aum’s preferred world was a religiously based ascetic one, not a political one aiming to improve the world.

The spring of 1995 brought many other violent episodes, some of which were linked to Aum. For example, the head of the National Police Agency was shot outside his apartment. An Aum leader was murdered by a Korean resident belonging to a gangster organization. And on the day Asahara was finally captured, a letter bomb was posted to the Tokyo Governor’s office. In this context, the poison gas attack later that year – in which the nerve gas sarin was deposited in the Tokyo Subway System and in which thirteen people died and thousands more affected – was conjectured to be an ad hoc action to disrupt impending police raids on Aum, especially in light of police detainment of Aum officials due to one of its earlier attacks, and thus a “defense” of Aum’s religious mission against threats by the state. While politically unsettling to Japanese authorities, these acts seemed not to be a strategy to fulfill some larger political goal.

Given Japan’s extraordinary system of police surveillance (on which we elaborate shortly), how did Aum succeed in its violent assaults on its rivals and innocent civilians? Katzenstein<sup>60</sup> suggests that the police constructed a vision of its mission coming out of the Cold War that the major threat to Japanese security was from the political left. There was in consequence an anti-left bias in its procedures. The police were especially careful not to infiltrate religious organizations that were thought to be on the side of conservatism and order. Thus the police kept careful

<sup>59</sup> *Apter and Sawo 1984, 101.*

<sup>60</sup> *Katzenstein 1996, 71-2.*

watch on leftist radicals, but were lax when it came to semi-fascist religious organizations, despite years of right wing extortion, gas attacks, and assassination attempts. After the hideous gassing, the government considered proscribing Aum under the Anti-Subversive Activities Law, passed in 1952 to deal with the communist threat. This draconian act had never been used on a Japanese group. However, once Asahara was in prison, there was no need to ban all spiritual practices of Aum as the 1952 law would have allowed the police to do. The government nonetheless stripped Aum of its protected status under the Religious Corporations Law and declared it bankrupt, with assets seized to pay victims. Eventually that law was modified to build in safeguards against terrorist groups getting protection under its provisions. While the 1995 attacks represent police failure (due in part to ideological blindness), its handling of the aftermath reflects careful learning without overreaction.

## VI. Narrative Summation

Our model gives Japan a non-negligible probability of civil war (about twice the world average) at the time of transition from the American occupation to Japanese self-rule. To account for why there was no onset, we emphasized here the nature of the American occupation in committing large-scale force to back the new regime. There was a clear and credible threat of major US intervention should there be an insurgency against the transferred authority. Thus our model overpredicts civil war due to Japan's low GDP in 1953. If GDP is a proxy for state strength, as we interpret it, then Japan's low GDP/capita reflects measurement error, since US security protection gave Japan added state strength. Our model misses the "international relations" component of state strength, in which a foreign power adds strength to its client by protecting that client's incumbents. To be sure, it is hard to code on credibility of threat by foreign powers. We might compare post-occupation Japan to the US in Latin America in the Alliance for Progress era, where a US intervention threat to protect incumbent regimes did not uniformly have same effect that it had in Japan. Clearly foreign support to the transition government in Japan deterred potential insurgents, but general conditions under which this will work remains to be examined.

Similar considerations apply the question of whether the Japanese case goes against the general pattern concerning susceptibility to civil war in new states. If we had coded Japan as a "new state" in 1953, its predicted probability for civil war onset would have been even higher. But under conditions where the metropole (or in this case, the occupying power) commits to the integrity of the state and regime to which it has transferred power (as did the European powers for much of Africa in the early 1960s), the civil war inducing commitment problem is more easily resolved.<sup>61</sup>

In examining the entire post World War II period in Japan, it was not for lack of grievances or for insurgent entrepreneurs that Japan survived the half-century without facing an insurgency capable of setting-off a civil war. There can be no doubt that the economic miracle of postwar Japan played a significant role, as exemplified by the state's ability to compensate those people who paid a heavy cost for economic modernization, such as the displaced farmers due to airport construction. But as we have shown, economic success did not eradicate political entrepreneurs with revolutionary goals who sought to employ the standard tactics of insurgency. How was proto-insurgency cauterized?

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<sup>61</sup> *The probability of a new state facing a civil war is shown to decrease to the extent that the metropole assures the government to which it has transferred power of its support. See Fearon and Laitin (2008) for an elaboration.*

A plausible explanation for the cauterization of radical insurgency, and one consistent with our theory, is in the organization and procedures of the post-war Japanese security system and especially the police<sup>62</sup>. To be sure, there are historical traditions that support this impressive system of surveillance and security. In the rural areas, the practice of *isson ikka* (one village acting as a family) through the promotion of cooperatives and landlord provision of aid to tenants, can be seen as a system of mutual surveillance that worked to forestall rebellion<sup>63</sup>. But the post-war system of surveillance has a modern organizational foundation, as described by Hechter and Kanazawa<sup>64</sup>. They point to two organizational innovations in post-war Japan that help sustain order in society. The first they refer to as “dependence”. Consider the school system, where there are virtually no opportunities for students to transfer from one school (where they are doing poorly) to another. There is little investment in adult education, so if you don’t succeed at first, there are few second chances. (The key is to keep them uncertain about their prospects long enough to forestall a mass of young and angry losers). And finally, the schools link their students directly to employers. All these practices make Japanese youth highly dependent on the particular school in which they attend, and the consequences of developing a bad reputation in school are life-long. Similarly with firms which are also reluctant to accept transfers from competing firms. A high percentage of Japanese workers, Hechter and Kanazawa report, even during the period of miraculous development, were dissatisfied with their condition, but still not likely to leave their firms, on which they were highly dependent.

The second organizational foundation for social order in post-war Japan is the institutionalization of visibility. In the schools, there are no study halls, no free periods, and little independent work. Compared to the west, the week is longer as is the school year. In firms there is high visibility between workers and their supervisors at all times. Visibility is even more effective in the neighborhoods, as *chokai* (neighborhood associations) vigilantly oversee a range of activities, even fire prevention and traffic safety. They specialize in crime prevention and snooping on youths. Even modern households, Hechter and Kanazawa report, have such thin walls that parents can oversee (and overhear) their children as part of everyday life. This makes surveillance even within the family much easier.

This organization of surveillance (as reported by Katzenstein<sup>65</sup>) pervades the system of comprehensive security within the National Police Agency (NPA). Even though organized in a centralized bureaucratic manner,<sup>66</sup> the police remain close to society. In 1984, almost half the respondents in a national survey reported a direct contact with a police employee during the previous year. This is largely due to the local police boxes in which some 40 percent of Japan’s total police force then worked. These police were required to make semi-annual visits to each household and business in the box’s district. Greater than 80 percent of the survey respondents claimed to know the location of their nearest box, and about one-third of them knew personally the policeman who manned that box.

As the country became more urbanized, the box gave way to programs of “community relations.” Also, the police have a system of crime prevention associations that are managed from every police station in the country, mostly run with volunteer labor. The police also have special

62 *Japan’s security system, the links between education and job opportunity, and the degrees of surveillance have lost much of their force in the 21st century; but we hold that it is an accurate account of the period covered by our dataset.*

63 Sims 2001, 171.

64 Hechter and Kanazawa 1993.

65 Katzenstein 1996.

66 *The NPA has become a modern, hierarchical and stable bureaucracy. It operates in political secrecy (e.g. budget of Tokyo’s Metropolitan Police Department is a state secret). The NPA has gone from a low status agency in 1965 to one that competes with MOF and MITI for top Tokyo University graduates (Katzenstein 1996, 62–3).*

offices in more than 90 percent of the schools, and in many workplaces. There are close links between police and the 5,000 private firms that employed 220,000 officers. And there are equally close links to the self-policing members of organized crime. Organized crime works with police to limit drug trading and importation of sex-workers.

Complementary to the impressive system of surveillance, the officers in charge of Japan's security have learned how to "apply force without violence"<sup>67</sup>. Japan's modern history is replete with stories of heroic police restraint not to kill civilians. In February 1972 several student radicals took a hostage, and the police organized to save him in a ten hour siege. Police were under instructions, despite rifles and 2,000 rounds of ammunition held by the radicals, not to use their pistols, at least not until a radical killed a policeman. Over the course of the siege, the police fired only fifteen rounds. Two police and one TV cameraman were killed; but the hostage was saved and no radicals were killed. The police did not want to create martyrs<sup>68</sup>.

The ratios of injuries incurred by the police to those whom the police are seeking to control are high. As early as "Bloody May Day" of 1952, when some 20,000 unionists, inspired by JCP, tried to storm the Imperial Palace plaza in a rock-throwing melee, the police bore the brunt of the violence. On that day, there were about 1,400 injuries, 54 percent to the police. On May 20, 1960, when Zengakuren students attacked the Prime Minister's official residence and surrounded his home (with 10,000 protesters throwing mud, stones, shoes and bottles), 69 percent of the injuries were incurred by the police<sup>69</sup>.

Patience and caution complement heroic restraint. It took the Japanese authorities fifteen years before they authorized removal of anti-Narita symbols in the heart of the airport, so as avoid provoking radical groups into new mobilizations. The police arrested Osamu Maruoka fifteen years after his attack on Tel Aviv's airport, again to show restraint until the passions dissipated. But the patience is buttressed with a willingness to compromise on big questions to reduce short-term violence. For example, according to Katzenstein's informants, Japan had in the 1990s about 150,000 Korean residents who are sympathetic with the policies of North Korea. These Koreans ran the legal pinball business, and from this business, some 600 million to 1.8 billion dollars were transferred from Japan to North Korea each year, abetting North Korea's defense goals. However, the Japanese government voted against sanctions leveled against North Korea in 1994 "because it feared violent protests and perhaps acts of terrorism"<sup>70</sup>.

This analysis of incredible institutional patience suggests a Weberian notion of state strength as the mechanism. If a bureaucracy has a functionally distinct structure that is integrated through interagency committees, then when crisis hits each branch must coordinate its proposed reaction with other branches of state service. This structure militates against any one branch taking rash action of responding to threat with maximal force that might quickly backfire. This structure militates against quick and angry over-reactions to crisis. Part of what GDP is measuring may well be a bureaucratic structure preventing violence promoting over-reaction to proto insurgency.

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67 Katzenstein 1996, 90.

68 Katzenstein 1966, 88. *The small number of weapons in private hands is extraordinary in Japan, which has the longest and most rigorous system of civilian gun control going back to 1588, under the rule of Hideyoshi Toyotomi. See "The Law Library of Congress: Firearms-Control Legislation and Policy; Japan" <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/firearms-control/japan.php> (downloaded July 15, 2013) for data on the ever-tightening regulations of gun ownership, and implications for police restraint.*

69 Packard 1966, 25, 251.

70 Katzenstein 1996, 88, 96-7.

Consistent with the global empirical patterns identified by our statistical model, there has been no successful insurgency in postwar Japan. The narrative of this case allowed us to elaborate on the interpretation we gave to explanatory factors in the statistical model. First, when Japan was most vulnerable to civil war insurgency, in the immediate post-occupation years, insurgency was avoided in large part because of the power by an occupying state unchallenged in its management of the transition, and committed to the security of the regime to which it passed sovereignty. In a sense, the relatively low GDP/cap in the postwar years was a poor measure of state strength, because a good deal of state strength (in the capacity to deter potential rebels) came from an external source, a factor not measured in our model.

Second, in the later years in which our model shows that there should be no expectation of insurgency, there is nonetheless evidence of deeply felt grievances and alienation in the society. Proto-insurgency organizations were in part the expression of those grievances<sup>71</sup>. This helps illustrate why a census of grievances would yield poor predictions as to which countries are most susceptible to civil wars, and why "contentment" interpretations of the link between high GDP/cap and low probability of civil war are not convincing in this case.

Recent research has claimed to find measures of group-level grievances that correlate with civil war onsets (Cederman et al, forthcoming). Certainly a single case study cannot rule out the possibility that cross-national variation in grievance levels bears some association with civil war risk, since we are not coding and comparing grievance levels in Japan to those in other countries that had civil wars. Perhaps average "grievances" would be judged to be even greater in places where insurgents were able to build a mass rebellion?<sup>72</sup>

However, we claim from this narrative that contrary to what might be assumed about a culturally pacific Japan, surely the result of hindsight bias, there were plausibly a lot of highly aggrieved individuals and politically mobilized people in Japan in the 40s, 50s, and 60s, willing and interested in action outside of regular electoral politics. While this doesn't prove that some measure of "grievances" wouldn't correlate with conflict propensity, the observed dynamics are nonetheless quite consistent with our theoretical story -- namely, highly aggrieved groups that nonetheless get nowhere in face of a state with a very capable coercive apparatus.

Third, although increasing country wealth and economic opportunity certainly played a role in lowering the recruitment base for an insurgency that sought to address widely felt grievances, the modern system of surveillance coupled with an impressive police apparatus played a powerful role in nipping insurgency in its bud.

## VII. Random Narratives and the Information from Non-onsets

Substantively, our random narrative added confidence that a simple enumeration of grievances would be a weak predictor for a civil war onset and that the quality of surveillance of the society by the government would be a strong predictor. Both of these findings are consistent with the interpretation we provided for civil war onsets in Fearon and Laitin 2003. Moreover, we were able to describe some mechanisms -- patience; resources for compensation to victims; and bureaucratic organization -- by which institutional strength and capabilities translated into the cauterization of proto-insurgencies.

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<sup>71</sup> We would also caution against claims that "legitimacy" of the regime deterred insurgency. After all, had there been a popular insurgency in the wake of SCAP's withdrawal or in the conflict over the US Security Treaty, analysts would surely have pointed to the illegitimate (and foreign) imposition of a constitution by an occupying power.

<sup>72</sup> Cederman et al's typical claim is not about the relationship between broad or average levels of grievance in a country and civil war risk, but rather that particularly aggrieved groups are the ones more likely to be involved in civil wars.

Methodologically, this narrative supports our contention that cases “on the regression line” and ones that do not exhibit the outcome to be explained may yield high returns for explanation. By some accounts, Japan would be considered a “most likely case” (or “easy case”) to support our theory and thus not offer a challenging narrative that would yield insights into mechanisms. Yet by focusing on grievances that did not escalate into large scale violent confrontations between militias and the state, we were able to observe how proto-insurgencies can be stunted, and the qualities of institutions that are able to do this. Finally, because Japan never went into our thinking about interpreting our statistical findings, it serves as an “out of sample” case that adds confidence that our interpretation of the cases that most informed our thinking – that is, those that would have been included in a convenience sample, which were mostly ill-governed regimes that could not cauterize proto-rebellions – was not idiosyncratic. We therefore have added confidence in a procedure dictating a random selection of cases to complement the statistical analysis of time series/cross national outcomes.

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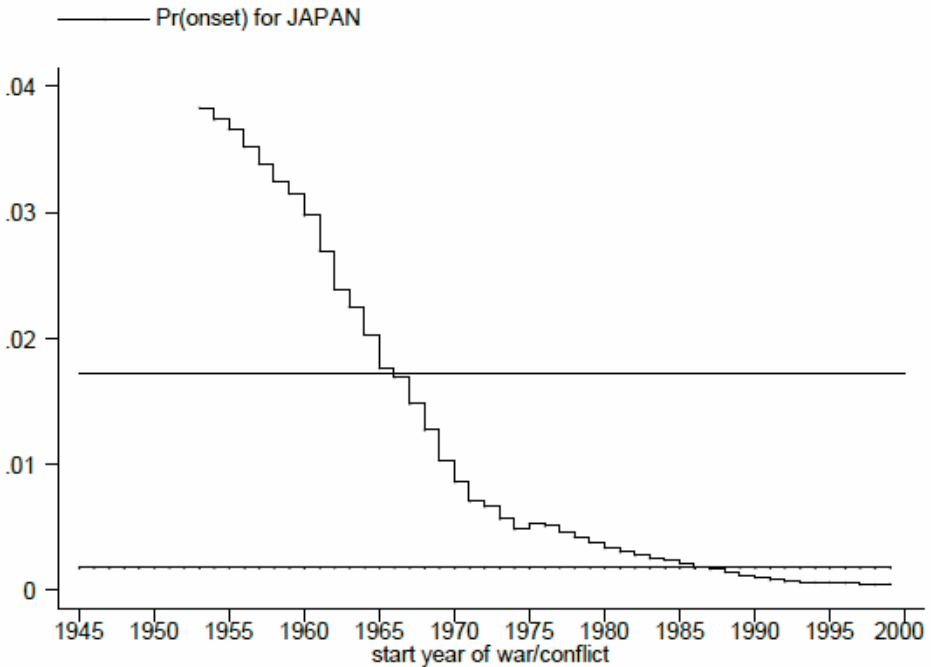
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**Figure 1**



Note: This figure computes the probability of a civil war onset, based on a logit model as described in Fearon and Laitin (2008, 766). The higher horizontal line is the average probability of an onset in any given year for all countries in the West plus Japan. The lower horizontal line is the average probability of an onset for any given year for all country/years in the dataset. The program inserts a tick on the x axis for any year in which there was an onset; there are no ticks for post-war Japan. In generating the predicted probability for Japan, we estimated the model without the observations from Japan. Therefore, Japan's experience is not being used in this analysis to shape the predictions for Japan.