

The evolution of the conservative mainstream in Japan

CHRISTIAN G. WINKLER

Abstract: The Liberal Democratic Party's conservative mainstream beginning with Yoshida Shigeru evidently was one of the most important political forces in the history of postwar Japan. But does it really deserve the label 'conservative', given that it is known above all for its pragmatic economic policy and cooperation with the US? This article traces the development of the mainstream's conservatism and finds that as times changed, so did the mainstream's conservatism. Actually, due to the exclusive focus on pragmatism, Yoshida's strong skepticism towards public opinion and his willingness to suppress unwanted expressions thereof has often been overlooked. In fact, only after 1960's *Anpo* (US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security) struggle, did the mainstream slowly but surely move towards a complete and emphatic embrace of liberal democracy. This highlights a significant shift in the mainstream's conservatism from the mere acceptance of democracy as a historical development to an affirmative conservation of the values and institutions of postwar Japan. In this sense, the development of the conservative mainstream is making a case for the validity of Mannheim and Huntington's theories on conservatism that emphasized its adaptability.

Keywords: political history of postwar Japan, history of political thought, conservative mainstream, conservatism

No other political party has dominated Japanese postwar politics as thoroughly and consistently as the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The single most powerful group within the party used to be the so-called conservative mainstream or *hoshu honryū*. This mainstream, led by the political heirs of Yoshida Shigeru, has generally been characterized as decisively unideological and pragmatic (Mikuriya 2007, p. 131, *Sentakū* 2008, p. 53). At the same time, conservatism in Japan is generally associated with ideological issues, such as the quest for constitutional reform, patriotic education or visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine (see Nakajima 2007, Hanaoka 2009), which hardly qualify as pragmatic and were never high on the mainstream's agenda. This paradox inevitably leads to the

question of whether the mainstream can actually be labeled conservative. This article explores this question by looking at the thought of the mainstream's leading figures beginning with Yoshida.

The findings suggest that the mainstream's thought had evolved throughout the decades. Without seeking to dismiss its pragmatism, this article argues that there was more to the mainstream's conservatism than pragmatism. In fact, there was no such thing as a single mainstream conservatism, but multiple conservatisms. While Yoshida himself in many ways was a representative of autonomous conservatism, i.e. a set of universally valid values, his successors slowly but surely moved in the direction of situational conservatism, i.e. the support for the liberal democratic postwar status quo. This important shift has been all but ignored, precisely because the mainstream's conservatism has generally been reduced to the pragmatic support for a free market economy and the alliance with the US. While there is no denying that those are important elements, it is necessary to understand that there is more to the mainstream's conservatism.

Introducing the mainstream

Before discussing the mainstream's conservatism, the object of research requires a concise introduction. After all, the term conservative mainstream is not frequently used any more these days. It is generally understood to refer to two of what used to be five major LDP factions, i.e. formerly powerful, internal groups (see Table 1). Those factions are the *Kōchikai* and the *Heisei Kenkyūkai* (formerly *Shūzankai*, *Nanokakai*, *Mokuyō Kurabu*, *Keiseikai*). Meanwhile, the *Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyūkai* (i.e. the Kishi-Fukuda-Abe-Mori-Machimura faction), the *Seisaku Kagaku Kenkyūkai* (i.e. the Kōno-Nakasone-Watanabe-Yamasaki faction) and the *Banchō Seisaku Kenkyūsho* (i.e. the Miki-Kōmoto-Kōmura faction) have generally been considered side-stream factions (Hirosawa 2005, p. 74). The two mainstream factions were founded by Yoshida Shigeru's most distinguished disciples, Ikeda Hayato and Satō Eisaku. Ikeda was succeeded by Maeo Shigesaburō, Ōhira Masayoshi, Suzuki Zenkō, Miyazawa Kiichi, Katō Kōichi, Tanigaki Sadakazu and Koga Makoto as *Kōchikai* chairman. Meanwhile, Tanaka Kakuei, Takeshita Noboru, Obuchi Keizō, Hashimoto Ryūtarō, Tsushima Yūji and Nukaga Fukushirō followed after Satō. Ikeda, Satō, Ōhira, Suzuki, Miyazawa, Tanaka, Takeshita, Obuchi and Hashimoto all served as prime minister at one point. Taken together, mainstream leaders occupied the highest post within the government's executive branch for three out of four decades from 1960 until 2000 (see Table 2). This pays testament to their formerly tight control over the party and their profound influence on postwar politics.

While rivalries and feuds among the leaders of the two mainstream factions and even among leading members of the same group have been a comparatively common occurrence, most mainstream leaders had a clear sense of the camp they belonged to, namely the Yoshida School.¹ Consequently, the common enemies

Table 1 Simplified overview of the major LDP factions 1955 to 2010

	Side-stream	Mainstream	Side-stream
1950	Miki Takeo	<i>Yoshida Shigeru</i>	Kishi Nobusuke
1955		<i>Ikeda Hayato</i>	
1960		<i>Mao Shigesaburō</i>	
1970		<i>Ōhira Masayoshi</i>	Fukuda Takeo
1980	Kōmoto Toshio	<i>Suzuki Zenkō</i>	
		<i>Miyazawa Kiichi</i>	
1990		<i>Katō Kōichi</i>	Abe Shintarō
		<i>Tanigaki Sadakazu</i>	Mitsudzuka Hiroshi
2000	Kōmura Masahiko	<i>Koga Makoto</i>	Mori Yoshirō
			Machimura Nobutaka
2010			

Source: based on Ishikawa (2004, p. 177)

Note

The names of mainstream leaders discussed in this article are shown in italics.

Table 2 Positions of mainstream leaders

Yoshida Shigeru: Prime Minister (1946–1947, 1948–1954)
Ikeda Hayato: Prime Minister (1960–1964)
Satō Eisaku: Prime Minister (1964–1972)
Maeo Shigesaburō: LDP Secretary General (1961–1964)
Tanaka Kakuei: Prime Minister (1972–1974)
Ōhira Masayoshi: Prime Minister (1978–1980)
Suzuki Zenkō: Prime Minister (1980–1982)
Takehita Noboru: Prime Minister (1987–1989)
Miyazawa Kiichi: Prime Minister (1991–1993)
Hashimoto Ryūtarō: Prime Minister (1996–1998)
Obuchi Keizō: Prime Minister (1998–2000)
Katō Kōichi: LDP Secretary General (1995–1998)
Koga Makoto: LDP Secretary General (2000–2001)

Note

Each mainstream leader's highest position in government or party hierarchy is listed above.

were Yoshida's rival Hatoyama Ichirō and/or Kishi Nobusuke as well as the side-stream factions chaired by his successors. Suzuki (1992, pp. 92–95) calls the Yoshida-led Liberal Party the 'mainstream of postwar conservatism', as opposed to 'pre-war politicians' like Hatoyama. After his reinstatement, Hatoyama succeeded Yoshida as PM in 1954, forcing the latter into retirement. Ōhira soberly remarked that this was a 'cruel and sad finale for Mr. Yoshida' (1979, p. 80). What followed were tough times for Ikeda, Ōhira's political mastermind and Yoshida's confidant. Ōhira himself notes that:

For the next four and a half years, Japanese politics was dominated by the old Democratic Party faction, in other words, the anti-Yoshida forces. These were dark days for Ikeda, who had been closely aligned with Yoshida, and in his position as head of the anti-[Hatoyama] faction he agonized over such critical political events as the Japan-Soviet negotiations and the Conservative Coalition. (Ōhira 1979, p. 140)

Miyazawa, who viewed himself as one of Yoshida's successors, also stated that the reinstated pre-war politicians led by Hatoyama and Kishi had completely different beliefs. He argues that the realization of their ideas would have amounted to a restoration of the pre-war system (Iokibe *et al.* 2006, pp. 96–98). While this was, as discussed below, a specific issue of the early postwar period, later mainstream leaders also directed criticism at the heirs of Hatoyama and Kishi, singling out the faction led by Kishi's heir Fukuda Takeo for its 'irresponsibility' (Katō and Koga 2005, p. 154).

Those comments suggest that mainstream leaders had a sense of themselves as a group and considered themselves successors of Yoshida Shigeru. What cannot

be immediately inferred from this observation is whether the conservative mainstream should actually be labeled conservative, though. Fortunately, the existing literature provides a few answers to that question. The definitions and perceptions of the mainstream obviously reflect the previously mentioned divide concerning conservatism. The majority of the available material on the topic emphasizes the pragmatic nature of the mainstream.²

Matsuno Raizō, a member of the Satō faction serving in various Cabinet positions during the 1950s and 1960s, argued that policies under mainstream prime ministers were based on concrete proposals and realism rather than ideology. The Yoshida Doctrine, i.e. a prosperous country equipped with only a light military force, may have been a guiding principle, yet there was no such thing as a ‘mainstream policy’ (quoted in *Sentakū* 2008, p. 53). Others have taken Matsuno’s definition even further. Former chief government spokesman Tanaka Rokusuke (1985, pp. 118–119) reduced the concept of the mainstream to ‘responsibility for the government’. This allowed him to include even Prime Ministers Kishi Nobusuke and Nakasone Yasuhiro in his list, despite both men being generally considered as part of the LDP’s side-stream, as discussed above. Faction chairman Koga Makoto and former LDP secretary general Katō Kōichi (2005, cited in Winkler 2010, p. 9) offered a similar sounding definition when writing that ‘[the conservative mainstream was a] group possessing the ability and consciousness to take responsibility for the management of the country’s politics’. Such statements have led many scholars to focus exclusively on the mainstream’s pragmatism. Tokyo University’s Mikuriya Takashi, for instance, noted that ‘the appearance of . . . Ikeda Hayato and Satō Eisaku marked the end of the era of political doctrine with its intense confrontations based on ideology’ (2007, p. 130). Ikeda’s basic policy was to prevent the occurrence of precisely those ideological confrontations by launching decisively unideological initiatives, like the famous doubling of the income plan (Mikuriya 2007, p. 131). For Kenneth Pyle:

Modern Japan’s conservative leaders were exemplars of the maxim that conservatism is the negation of ideology. They did not cling to any particular conservative theory. They did not vest their confidence in any general political or economic principle equally applicable to – and equally abstracted from – all societies. They did not begin with a grand design for refashioning the social order from top to bottom. Theirs was a conservatism of the concrete and particular. They invariably favored the pragmatic to the doctrinal approach.

(Pyle 2007, p. 47)

This pragmatic approach specifically entailed the aforementioned Yoshida Doctrine. According to Samuels, Yoshida and his heirs were ‘liberal internationalists’ utilizing a ‘non-military invisible hand . . . to guide a non-aggressive, low-cost postwar Japanese security policy’ (2007, p. 29, 31). Hirosawa (2005, p. 72) described the mainstream as an economically liberal group centered on politicians with backgrounds in bureaucracy. It possessed close ties to the financial world and

aimed at winning over the electorate with its economic growth policy. Moreover, it was supportive of the postwar regime and cooperation with America. Nakamura quotes the following definition provided by former LDP secretary general and mainstream representative Hori Shigeru:

It is about managing politics under the spirit of the new Constitution. Additionally, the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Mutual Security Assistance Treaty have become the framework for this new postwar Japan. To preserve and develop this framework is in short the consciousness of the [conservative] mainstream.

(Nakamura 2005, quoted in Winkler 2010, p. 8)

To summarize, the authors cited above all agree that the mainstream's guiding principle was its pragmatic acceptance of domestic and international postwar realities based on which it formulated policies without regard to ideology. Indeed, a brief glance at the history of postwar economic policy suggests that the mainstream was so successful because its leadership constantly adapted to the demands of changing times. While the side-stream tried to put controversial initiatives such as constitutional reform and a more independent, stronger military force (back) on the agenda, the mainstream kept its focus on economic policy.³ After Ikeda's income-doubling plan and strong economic growth throughout the 1960s, growth stalled during the following decade and negative side-effects of the economic miracle, e.g. over-concentration of people and companies in major cities and pollution, became apparent. As a result of progressive opposition victories in local and regional elections, the LDP adapted to the electorate's new priorities. Tanaka, employing classic Keynesian policy, declared 1972 'Year 1 of the Welfare [State]' and initiated his plan to remodel the Japanese archipelago through massive construction projects mainly in rural areas. By the end of the decade, the resulting high government expenditures and slowing economic growth had led to a rapidly growing budget deficit. To counter this trend, mainstream Prime Ministers Ōhira and Suzuki changed course and opted to embrace the position of small government, thereby laying the groundwork for the neoliberal reforms executed during the Nakasone era. This drastic shift from big to small government seems to suggest that the mainstream indeed operated in a very pragmatic manner, adjusting to meet the demands of the time.

However, this interpretation is challenged by those who have a completely different understanding of conservatism. Seasoned journalist Yayama Tarō, for instance, claims that Ikeda and Satō's political heirs had not 'even a single fragment of conservative spirit' inside them. He is particularly critical of later Satō faction leaders such as Takeshita or Nonaka Hiromu, whom he accuses of having 'forgotten the national interest', while conducting 'tributary diplomacy towards the People's Republic of China and North Korea'. Meanwhile, Yayama praises Yoshida, Ikeda and Satō for their alleged interest in 'revising the Constitution, having a normal military and the advancement of patriotic education' (2003,

pp. 52–53). In other words, his definition of conservatism and, correspondingly, of the mainstream is a classic example of the school of thought that links conservatism, not with pragmatism, but with the aforementioned ideological issues.

Those two lines of thought seemingly cannot be reconciled with each other, because they represent polar opposites. Therefore, the definitions proposed by the existing literature merely reflect the initial puzzle, but do not provide any clues hinting at how to solve it. What is more, while not incorrect, both suffer from the same fundamental weakness, i.e. a lack of cohesiveness. The pragmatic acceptance of postwar reality is hardly a unique trait of the conservative mainstream. The Japan Communist Party (JCP) dropping its long-standing, albeit unrealistic demand for the abolition of the emperor system in 2004 (Nakano 2004, p. 241) can be interpreted as a pragmatic acceptance of the consistently high support for the symbolic Tennō system as well, yet that does not automatically make the JCP a conservative party. Defining conservatism via the interest in constitutional reform and other major ideological issues is also problematic because they are not the exclusive concern of conservatives; after all, far right-wing activists (*uyoku*) too have been supportive of those initiatives.

Multiple conservatisms

Before we can analyze the mainstream's conservatism, it is mandatory to familiarize the reader with more general concepts of conservatism going beyond those two hardly convincing definitions. The quest for a unified, universal theory about conservative thought has been the equivalent of attempting to square the circle. Already more than six decades ago, R. J. White likened that quest to 'trying to [liquefy] the atmosphere' (1950, p. 1). This does not mean that no theories have been formulated at all. In fact, multiple theories were developed during the first half of the twentieth century. While remaining influential, they have not evolved since then. For the purpose of this article, an influential theory initially proposed by Mannheim in the 1920s and subsequently developed by Huntington three decades later has been selected because of its focus on how conservatism has dealt with changing times. This theme of change of course also happens to be of great significance to our analysis of the conservative mainstream's evolution. Since the same set of theories has recently been applied to an analysis of conservative intellectuals' thought (Winkler 2011), it also allows for a comparison between the mainstream's conservatism and that of intellectuals.

Mannheim's main interest was eighteenth-century German conservatism. A key characteristic of (German) conservatism at that time was its criticism of 'the bourgeois-modern experience of [property]' (Mannheim 1986, p. 89). Conservatives argued that genuine property was not an easily tradable commodity, but inalienable in the sense that property came with certain rights and honors in the pre-industrialized, feudal society, e.g. hunting rights or a voice in the state, which could not be transferred, even if the property was sold (Mannheim 1986, p. 89).

This led Huntington to conclude that conservatism for Mannheim was ‘indissolubly . . . associated with feudalism, status, the *ancien régime*, landed interests, medievalism, and nobility’ (1957, p. 454). However, Mannheim also stressed conservatism’s ability to adapt. Unlike traditionalism which constituted merely ‘clinging to old ways’ and hence was ‘not tied . . . to political or any other types of conservatism’ (Mannheim 1986, p. 73), (political) conservatism was not against change *per se*, because ‘conservative action is action . . . oriented to a complex of meanings which contains different objective contents in different epochs, in different historical phases, and which is always changing’ (Mannheim 1986, p. 76). In other words, Mannheim’s claim that eighteenth-century conservatism in Germany was attached to the pre-industrial society does not mean that conservatism has upheld that particular position ever since. After all, the historical context has changed greatly since then and therefore conservatism could be expected to adapt to those changing times. In fact, Nolte (2001) wrote a concise synopsis outlining the adaptation to the realities of postwar Germany by conservative intellectuals.

Huntington himself took the focus on adaptability even further, by emphasizing that real conservatism was ‘situational’, i.e. ‘only relevant in a particular type of historical situation’ requiring ‘a passionate affirmation of the value of existing institutions’ (1957, pp. 455, 472–473). When writing those lines, Huntington had liberal and democratic American institutions in mind. Their defense was required in the particular situation of the Cold War and the threat posed to them by Soviet-style communism (Huntington 1957, p. 473). He dismissed aristocratic conservatism and autonomous conservatism, i.e. a set of universally valid values, as ‘reactionism’ and an ‘antiquarian longing for a society which is past’, respectively (Huntington 1957, pp. 460, 470–473).

The major weakness of this set of theories is easy to see. In the absence of any universally valid values, conservatism is reduced to a defense of the existing status quo, irrespective of that status quo’s ideological nature. While acknowledging conservatism’s ability to adjust to changing times, Nolte (2001, p. 565), for instance, has argued that conservatism does indeed possess fixed points, namely a skeptical anthropological view of man, an opposition to liberal individualism and a fear of modern times’ progressive dynamics. By suggesting that such fixed points exist in the conservative universe, he makes a case for the autonomous conservatism rejected by Huntington. The latter of course argued that no autonomous conservative tradition existed, at least not in America. Instead, he claimed that liberal institutions could be best conserved and defended by liberals. While it is difficult to condense the huge variety of liberal thought into a single theoretical concept, liberals believe in the individual’s supreme value as well as his natural claim to universally valid freedom and rights (Scruton 2007, pp. 394–395). Moreover, they generally take a progressive view on history, believing in the perfectibility of man. In other words, liberalism espouses ideas that are polar opposites of the aforementioned fixed points. This highlights the fundamental conundrum embedded in the theory: the label ‘conservatism’ is attached to two polar opposites.

How does this set of theories relate to the inquiry at hand? Based on the review of existing literature, defining the mainstream as conservative in an aristocratic, i.e. reactionary sense, seems out of question. The same could be assumed about autonomous conservatism. Meanwhile, situational conservatism seems to be a better fit, in that it implies an adaptation to the existing status quo. That being said, one qualification has to be made in this context. After all, to Huntington a key element of conservatism was its situational, temporary nature, whereas the conservative mainstream had blossomed for several decades.

To solve the aforementioned puzzle, this article analyzes the thoughts of mainstream leaders as expressed in primary and secondary sources. We shall limit our inquiry to Yoshida, Ikeda, Satō, Maeo, Ōhira, Suzuki, Miyazawa, Tanaka and Takeshita. This selection is similar to Nakamura's (2005, p. 163) categorization that lists Miyazawa as the last mainstream Prime Minister. Later leaders of the two factions have not been included because since the 1990s it has become increasingly complicated to identify the mainstream clearly. The factions' organizational and ideological fragmentation as well as their steadily declining role has made it difficult to clearly distinguish between main- and side-stream in a traditional way. Precisely because it did not fit with those realities of present-day politics any more, some have suggested that it was time to stop using the term 'conservative mainstream' altogether (*Sentakū* 2008, p. 54). Pyle provided another reason for refraining from the term's usage when talking about the last decade or two, by writing that the conclusion of the Cold War had turned the mainstream's fundamental policy, the Yoshida Doctrine, into a 'dead letter' (2007, p. 372). Therefore, it is prudent to limit the inquiry to a time when the mainstream was still clearly identifiable as such.

The evolution of the mainstream's conservatism

By using Huntington's three concepts of conservatism as a blue-print, this article examines the thoughts of the aforementioned politicians. Based on the literature review, one could assume that mainstream leaders had accepted the postwar status quo without reservations, in other words represent a position that is close to the conservatism defined by Mannheim and Huntington, except that, as already mentioned above, it was not necessarily limited to one particular situation. As we shall see below, this is certainly true, yet it only marks the end point of a significant, yet widely overlooked, development.

Acceptance of the new constitutional framework

As a first step, this article analyzes mainstream leaders' views concerning constitutional reform.⁴ As mentioned above, the amendment of the supreme law, in particular Article 9, has been cited as one key point of interest indicating a conservative position. However, our interest is not in Article 9 or the supreme law

per se, but rather in the political framework of the postwar period that the constitution has stood for. An aristocratic conservative, in other words a reactionary, will certainly not accept the postwar regime, but will rather seek a restoration of the emperor-centric pre-war system based on the Meiji Constitution of 1889. An autonomous conservative will not join this call for restoration, but still might find fault with the liberal individualism postulated in Chapter 3 of the constitution. Meanwhile, situational conservatism is certain to adjust to the new status quo. Not only because the constitution represents the existing status quo, but also because the liberal and democratic institutions Huntington wanted to be defended also happen to be central parts of the supreme law, which, with several notable exceptions, was drafted by the American occupation authorities in 1946.⁵

The question whether this constitution that the Americans had ‘forced upon’ a weakened Japan should be revised became a major issue during the following decade. After the end of the occupation period in 1952, Yoshida’s rival Hatoyama Ichirō as well as other pre-war period politicians, such as convicted A-class war criminal Kishi Nobusuke, sought to revive their careers and returned to the Liberal Party which had been led by Yoshida since the American occupation authorities had purged Hatoyama in 1946.⁶ Apart from personal animosities, the returnees and the Yoshida-led postwar politicians had different policy priorities (Iokibe *et al.* 2006, p. 98). Whereas Yoshida had focused on economic policy and the security alliance with the US, Hatoyama called for constitutional reform, a potent, more independent Japanese military force and the normalization of Japan’s relations to the Soviet Union. Consequently, the quest for constitutional reform became a priority after Hatoyama succeeded Yoshida as Prime Minister in 1954. In the same year, the Liberal Party’s commission on the constitution chaired by Kishi put forth its constitutional reform draft. The document showed clear reactionary tendencies: it proposed the restoration of some of the emperor’s former powers, e.g. declaration of a state of emergency, war and peace, stipulated that fundamental human rights could be restricted by law and demanded that the people always had to be loyal to the nation (Watanabe 2002, pp. 504–505). As Neumann (1982, p. 19) correctly observed, the Liberal Party draft constituted a ‘renewed orientation toward the ideals of the Meiji Constitution’. Those strong reactionary sentiments are not unlike the aristocratic conservatism described by Huntington.

These tendencies continued throughout the 1950s. Without Yoshida and Satō, who had opposed the merger, the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party merged to form the LDP. With Hatoyama at the helm, the new party set up its own commission on the constitution immediately after its foundation in November 1955. It took the commission a decade to submit its final report in 1964. Afterwards, it went dormant for almost two decades. One reason for this significant turn of events is the rise of the mainstream. Its representatives did not share Hatoyama’s and Kishi’s obsession with the issue. One cannot deny Yayama’s claim that Yoshida had stated that the constitution should be revised at *some point in the*

future (Tominomori 2006, p. 78), yet during his tenure as Prime Minister, he relied on re-interpretation rather than revision. He solved the problem of re-armament by simply changing the interpretation of the constitution's Article 9, instead of pushing for the more controversial and complicated solution of amending the supreme law (Watanabe 2002, pp. 420–422). Moreover, instead of proposing a constitutional amendment restricting fundamental human rights or demanding obedience to the state from the people, he chose to operate within the new constitutional status quo and merely changed specific laws to achieve his goals, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

The acceptance and embrace of the new constitution by mainstream leaders became even more evident in the 1960s and 1970s. Ikeda, who received the report of the commission on the constitution as Prime Minister in 1964, showed no interest in pursuing the issue of an amendment. Despite the fact that constitutional reform thereafter remained an integral part of the LDP's party charter, mainstream leaders busied themselves expressing their support for the existing supreme law. Satō observed that the constitution had become 'the people's flesh and blood' (Tominomori 2006, p. 209). During the 1965 election campaign, he emphasized that he would 'protect the peace constitution' (Tominomori 2006, p. 210). In 1968, Satō's successor Tanaka (1968, p. 35), then LDP secretary general, observed that the people had come to accept the liberal democratic postwar regime and promised his readership that, unlike the Socialists, the LDP would not touch the foundation of that regime, i.e. the constitution, but 'calmly watch over it'. Similarly, Miyazawa (1965, p. 66), who was known as one of the most ardent defenders of the constitution within the LDP, noted that support for the constitution was much greater among conservatives than among socialists. On another occasion, he reminded his readership that the constitutional framework had been working so well that he could not understand why it should be altered (Miyazawa 1995, p. 87). Ōhira praised the constitution as 'a glimpse of the blue sky during the bad weather of the war's aftermath' and 'a piece of art' (quoted in Fukunaga 2008, p. 49). Later, he clashed with Hatoyama's confidant Miki Bukichi, telling him that constitutional reform 'would be next to impossible to implement' (Ōhira 1979, p. 82). Suzuki, who succeeded Ōhira as *Kōchikai* chairman and Prime Minister, also praised the constitution as a success story that had allowed Japan to become a free country and prosper economically. Moreover, he argued that the 'peace constitution' should be upheld to prevent the renewed rise of militarism (Suzuki 2004, pp. 118–119).

Those statements suggest that the mainstream, unlike Kishi or Hatoyama, had adapted to the postwar constitution and did not actively pursue the quest of amending it. From this observation, we can infer that the mainstream's conservatism was much closer to what Huntington referred to as situational conservatism, i.e. the acceptance of the existing liberal and democratic status quo, than to Kishi's aristocratic, i.e. reactionary, conservatism or the autonomous

conservatism of intellectuals who have to this day kept criticizing the constitution as a rational, progressive ideological import forced upon Japan by the US (Winkler 2011).

From skeptical acceptance to affirmative embrace of liberal democracy

The fact that the mainstream was protective of the constitution or at least showed no intention of studying the possibility of amending it speaks to its leaders' general support for the postwar regime. Against the backdrop of strong public support for the supreme law in general and Article 9 specifically, it could be argued, however, that this support was merely the result of the often cited pragmatism. Therefore, it is mandatory to take a closer look at the mainstream's positions on the key values embedded in the constitution. By examining its leaders' views on democracy and rights as well as the symbolic emperor system, we should be able to get a better idea of the mainstream's conservatism. Democracy, enjoyment of fundamental human rights and the symbolic Tennō system are key elements of the constitution and indeed the postwar regime. Therefore an affirmative embrace of those elements would suggest that mainstream leaders had indeed accepted the liberal democratic postwar status quo and, in that sense, were situational conservatives, to use Huntington's categorization. Meanwhile, conservatism of the autonomous and aristocratic kind could hardly be expected to view those pillars of the postwar regime in a positive light. For example, conservative intellectuals, who have to be regarded as autonomous conservatives, have kept questioning postwar democracy's mode of operation and *raison d'être*, as Winkler (2011) has shown. Aristocratic conservatism is expected to seek a restoration of the authoritarian pre-war system centered on the imperial institution.

As already suggested by the reactionary tendencies of the Liberal Party's constitutional reform draft, Hatoyama and Kishi clearly fall into the third category. Kishi's authoritarian deposition was acknowledged even by his allies. Ishibashi Tanzan, his predecessor as Prime Minister, for instance, was alerted by Kishi's 'bureaucratic authoritarianism' (Nakamura 2005, p. 70). Similarly, Ōtake referred to him as a 'representative of the pre-war Tennō system's bureaucratic nationalism' (1996, p. 80) or, to use Huntington's term, aristocratic conservatism. The most famous manifestation of this old school of thought was the crackdown on the demonstrations against the *Anpo* revision in 1960. To suppress the approximately 300,000 demonstrators who had taken to the streets of Nagata-chō, Prime Minister Kishi employed not only the police but also far-right wing activists and mobsters. Moreover, he had planned on calling upon the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to disband the demonstrations by force, a move that did not materialize because of the then Defense Agency chief Akagi's objection. Kishi eventually succeeded in revising the *Anpo*, but he paid with his job for the questionable means he chose to achieve his goal (Ishikawa 2004, p. 89, Nakamura 2005, pp. 74–75).

From what we have learned so far about the mainstream's acceptance of the postwar constitution, one would expect that its representatives had not supported such an authoritarian course of action. However, this hypothesis does not hold up under closer examination of the historical facts. By the time Yoshida's lengthy term as Prime Minister came to an end and Hatoyama finally succeeded his rival, a series of initiatives, whose main objective was to suppress or silence organized labor, collectively known as 'reverse course' (*gyaku kōsu*) had already begun. In his last years in office, Yoshida had commenced the reverse course by introducing a new police law (1952) and the electricity strike control act (1953) (Stockwin 1999, pp. 49–50). Moreover, he had, albeit unsuccessfully, lobbied General Headquarters (GHQ) to outlaw the JCP in 1951. In 1960, he advised Kishi to call upon the SDF to disband the demonstrations (Hara 2005, p. 234). According to Ōtake (1986, p. 302), this was the result of Yoshida's deep-rooted skepticism towards direct democracy and public opinion. A brief glimpse at Yoshida's memoirs is sufficient to confirm this assessment. The leftist opposition is alternately accused of trying to bring about a communist revolution by force or compared with the powerful military cliques (*gunbatsu*) of the pre-war period (Nara 2007, pp. 147, 182). Yoshida goes on to defend the reverse course, e.g. 1952's police law, as having been without alternative against the backdrop of 'communist disturbances' caused by unions abusing the rights they were granted by an initially 'too indulgent' occupation regime (Nara 2007, pp. 144–147).

Labor unrest, however, was not the only use of democratic freedom of speech that irked Yoshida and which he thought to suppress. A devoted royalist (for details see below), Yoshida would not tolerate public criticism of the emperor and therefore, albeit unsuccessfully, had lobbied GHQ to retain the crimes of high treason and *lèse-majesté* (Hara 2005, pp. 128–129). His deep distrust of public opinion also showed in his view on the so-called ship-building scandal (*zōsen gigoku*) of 1954. After his protégé Satō had been implicated in said scandal, Yoshida ordered his justice minister to shoot down the case and promptly came under fire for exerting undue influence on the investigation (Hara 2005, pp. 223–224). Yoshida, however, charged that the investigation and the public criticism of his role in it, was not only 'unfair', but also a 'threat to the development of democratic government' (Nara 2007, pp. 80–82).

As Ōtake (1986, pp. 299–301) correctly observed, Yoshida was no reactionary, in that he had accepted GHQ's postwar reforms in principle. However, his words and actions show that he was still very wary of, and at times thought to suppress, expressions of direct democracy and public opinion, e.g. people making use of their newly gained freedom of expression, assembly and strike. The difference to reactionaries such as Kishi is that Yoshida did not seek to remedy the situation by proposing a reactionary constitutional amendment, but rather by working within the existing framework. Instead of a radical reactionary reform of the supreme law, he chose to change specific laws in order to achieve specific needs, i.e. outlawing strikes in important industries. While not reactionary, Yoshida's positions

on democracy and rights hardly seem to qualify as manifestations of situational conservatism. Instead, they are comparable to the critical stance on democracy taken by autonomous conservatism based on a skeptical anthropological view of men. This position of course is similar to the one conservative intellectuals have upheld to this very day (Winkler 2011).

In the following years, the mainstream slowly but surely moved away from this skeptical anthropological view of man. The anti-communist rhetoric remained a consistent feature of mainstream leaders' writings (e.g. Tanaka 1968), yet this rhetoric was not followed up with initiatives comparable to the authoritarian measures of the reverse course throughout the 1950s. Like Yoshida, Ikeda and Satō had supported Kishi's hard-line policies against the demonstrators of 1960, arguably because they wanted to protect a key piece of their mentor's legacy, i.e. the *Anpo*. However, already in the 1950s, Ikeda had expressed his reservations about the merger of the two conservative parties, because he 'seemed to be worried that if the united conservative forces should back a mistaken policy there would be nothing to counterbalance them' (Ōhira 1979, p. 82). Moreover, in 1958, Ikeda and his top advisers, (later Prime Ministers) Ōhira and Miyazawa clashed with Kishi over the latter's eventually unsuccessful attempt to enact the controversial revision of the Police Execution of Duties Law (*keisatsukan shokumu shikkō hō*) (Itō 1985, p. 60, Fukunaga 2008, pp. 83–84). As Miyazawa bluntly put it, no matter what, he could not bear Kishi's attitude as symbolized by his handling of this initiative (Iokibe *et al.* 2006, p. 112). Under the influence of his advisers, Ikeda promptly promised an end to state-sponsored violence and single-party deliberations in the Diet, after he succeeded Kishi as Prime Minister in 1960 (Itō 1985, p. 130). Similarly, Kishi's brother Satō opted to pursue a political agenda and style different from his brother's. This may sound strange, given that some of the most violent student protests happened during his lengthy term in office (1964–1972). However, as Tominomori (2006, p. 211) correctly pointed out, Satō did not tighten security legislation, the sole exception being the Law for Temporary Measures concerning University Management (*daigaku no unei ni kansuru rinji socchi hō*). Moreover, on numerous occasions Satō had made his affirmative view on democracy abundantly clear. Shortly after the war, he wrote that '[t]he masses are the wisest. What do the masses wish for, what do they think? [In order to understand that], it is most important to live among them' (quoted in Tominomori 2006, pp. 208–209). After becoming Prime Minister, he referred to the democratic postwar constitution as 'the people's blood and flesh', emphasizing that he, unlike his brother, had no intention to amend it (Fukunaga 2008, p. 125).

In the cases of Maeo, Ōhira, Suzuki and Miyazawa, the affirmative acceptance of liberal democracy and fundamental human rights is even more pronounced. Already in the late 1950s, Ōhira made the case for more democracy when he wrote that:

As long as it serves as a substitute for civil war, intense political strife has to be welcomed. The opposition is a preliminary government, the people's opposition party stationed at the people's government. A powerful government is saved from corruption by a strong opposition.

(Fukunaga 2008, p. 73)

Miyazawa, too, feared the negative effects on democracy of Kishi's authoritarian ways. He warned that many people, in particular younger Japanese, at that time felt that the government was no longer their own, but rather an opposing entity dominated by a small number of individuals who held onto the reins of powers (Fukunaga 2008, p. 86). Citing the influence of J. S. Mill, he stressed it was important to tolerate others' opinions, even if they were radical and differed from one's own views (Miyazawa 1995, p. 151). Maeo (1974, pp. 92–94) stated that a conservative party first and foremost had to conserve parliamentarianism and liberalism. Against the backdrop of the power struggle between the Tanaka-Ōhira camp and the Fukuda faction inside the LDP during the post-Satō years, he called on his own party to become more 'democratic, open and rational'.

In their writings, later mainstream leaders also expressed their strong affirmation of liberal individualism and utilitarianism. Maeo (1976, p. 40), for instance, wrote that 'the essential responsibility of the state is to create an environment in which as many people as possible can attain . . . happiness'. This sounds very much like the liberal principle of utilitarianism put forth by Jeremy Bentham ('the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people') which is also reflected in the constitution's Article 13.⁷ In the 1980s, Miyazawa (1985, p. 6) made a similar point in a speech given to members of his faction. Under the watch of their mainstream predecessors Japan had become 'practically the freest country in the world'. He explicitly lauded the combination of political freedom and prosperity the Japanese people had gained during the four decades that had passed since 1945. While Miyazawa acknowledged the potential moral pitfalls of growing wealth, he remained committed to the concept of political freedom for everyone: 'The *Kōchikai* is often called dovish. If that is to mean that our basic principle and political philosophy are freedom and being liberal, then indeed, that is one of the *Kōchikai*'s traditions' (1985, pp. 7, 11). Miyazawa's aim was to create an environment that enabled the people individually to create their own life plans, instead of living under the collectivist *ichioku isshin* ('one hundred million people, one mind') slogan that had been propagated prior to 1945 (Miyazawa 1995, p. 154). Suzuki too regarded the liberal democratic postwar regime as liberation of the people who had been suppressed until 1945. He praised the resulting freedom and equality for freeing the Japanese people's energies (Suzuki 2004, pp. 56–57). A critical mind could argue that such assertions could easily be made at a time when labor unrest had long become a thing of the past (Laborsta Internet 2010). However, it is important to note that Ōhira and Miyazawa had already stood up

for fundamental human rights in the late 1950s and in 1960 by opposing the heavy-handed measures of the reverse course and the crack-down on the Anpo demonstrations.

The analysis of Takeshita and in particular Tanaka's thought is more complicated. That is because most accounts agree that the only two fixed points in Tanaka's universe were money and power. Citing Tanaka's 'extremely unclear political ideas', Tominomori (2006, p. 202) calls him a 'type of politician [completely] dedicated to the pursuit of power'. Hayano (1995, p. 289) ends his book on Tanaka by concluding that in the eyes of the former Prime Minister, the postwar spirit was nothing more than 'a materialist political spirit'. And, indeed, Tanaka's writings focus primarily on how to satisfy the electorate's hunger for material wealth.⁸ Fortunately, a few documents detailing his views on postwar democracy exist too. In a piece written in 1968, Tanaka (1968, p. 35), then LDP secretary general, observed that the people had come to accept the liberal democratic postwar regime and promised his readership that, unlike the Socialists, the LDP would not seek to alter, but 'calmly watch over' the constitution which constitutes the foundation of that regime. Likewise, Tanaka's heir Takeshita (1991, p. 240) expressed his belief that conservatives had to uphold liberty and democracy.

From those comments we can infer that early mainstream leaders, especially Yoshida, shared a skeptical anthropological view of men with postwar conservative intellectuals, and because of this strong skepticism towards public opinion relied on a comparatively authoritarian style of politics. While this style was not unlike that employed by Kishi, early mainstream leaders had no intention of turning back the clock and (partially) restoring the authoritarian pre-war system by revising the constitution. Instead, Yoshida opted to reform specific laws to crack down on organized labor when he saw fit. The mainstream therefore had not always been as affirmative of democracy as the retrospective may suggest. In fact, it seems that there was a process that saw it moving away from an authoritarian stance, reminiscent of what Huntington called autonomous conservatism, towards an acceptance and embrace of liberal democratic institutions in line with Mannheim's and Huntington's model. This shift once again demonstrates the conundrum of the term 'conservatism'. As previously mentioned, on the one hand, there is Yoshida's strong skepticism towards public opinion, on the other hand, Ōhira, Miyazawa, Maeo and Suzuki's emphatic affirmation of liberal individualism that is completely lacking the skepticism that in many ways still influenced Yoshida's decision-making. Both positions could be called conservatism, yet the latter, i.e. Huntington's situational conservatism, is basically classic liberalism.

The mainstream and the symbolic emperor system

The other key element of the postwar constitution which will be examined here is the symbolic emperor system. By reducing the emperor to a symbol that, according to the constitution's Article 3, does 'not have powers related to government',

the fathers of postwar Japan's supreme law stripped the imperial institution of the significant powers it had been equipped with by the Meiji Constitution of 1889. Situational conservatism is expected to accept the emperor's new, symbolic role in the democratic postwar society, whereas aristocratic conservatism is likely to demand that the Tennō's position should be strengthened again. The constitutional amendment proposed by the Liberal Party is a prime example of this latter, reactionary tendency. It dismissed the term 'symbol' as 'inappropriate' and suggested that some of its former powers should be returned to the institution (Winkler 2010, p. 182). This resistance to the postwar regime a decade after 1945 is very much akin to Huntington's description of the aristocratic conservative who turned into a 'reactionary, i.e. a critic of existing society who wishes to recreate in the future an ideal which he assumes to have existed in the past' (1957, p. 460).

Given what has been said above about the mainstream's support for postwar democracy, one could expect that it has accepted the symbolic emperor system, too. That being said, as explained above, Yoshida, the mainstream's founding father, was not as emphatic about liberal postwar democracy as his political heirs due to his strong skepticism towards public opinion and direct democracy. He supported the democratic postwar reforms not out of conviction, but because they were part of 'the flow of time' (Ōtake 1986, p. 299). Consequently, before 1945 Yoshida did not despise the military because he had been a convinced democrat. Instead, he feared the effects the military's rule and aggressive expansion policy might have on the emperor system (Hara 2005, p. 233). The consensus is that Yoshida was a devoted royalist. A glimpse at his memoirs is sufficient to confirm this notion. To Yoshida, 'respecting the royal family [was a] moral duty and has formed the foundation of social order. Hence, democracy in Japan must be based on this idea and spirit.' Moreover, he argued that the 'imperial household should continue to remain active as the spiritual and moral center of all sectors of society, including politics, religion and culture' (Nara 2007, p. 251). Those positions may sound reactionary, but it is important to note that Yoshida disagreed with the position of the radicalized pre-war military and scholars like Uesugi Shinkichi who considered the emperor a transcendent monarch and sovereign of the national polity (*tennō shuken setsu*). In Yoshida's opinion, the emperor had been a symbol that ruled but never governed throughout Japan's long history (Nara 2007, pp. 114, 253). While this interpretation of imperial history is questionable,⁹ it confirms Ōtake's (1986, p. 313) assessment that Yoshida was a convinced royalist, but certainly not in a radicalized militaristic sense. In fact, he was quite critical of the last period of the pre-war era during which the sovereign interpretation was prevalent. In his memoirs, he noted that 'the spirit of [the Meiji Constitution] had, unfortunately, become distorted with the passage of time, leading to the national calamity with which the nation was faced' (Nara 2007, p. 114). At the same time, however, Yoshida had no sympathy for any discussions pertaining to the emperor's war responsibility specifically, or criticism directed at the imperial

house in general, as his unsuccessful attempts at lobbying GHQ to retain the crimes of high treason and *lèse-majesté* suggest. Moreover, questioning his devotion to the Tennō was unacceptable. In his memoirs, he scolded critics who had raised the topic, as a 'sorry lot uninformed about the history of our own nation' (Nara 2007, p. 251). Those views are quite consistent with Yoshida's stance on democracy and rights in that he had come to accept the new system in principle, yet at the same time his skepticism towards parts of that new status quo, e.g. freely voiced public opinion, remained strong. Put differently, the general acceptance of the new status quo distinguishes Yoshida as a representative of situational conservatism; however, he still maintained the skeptical anthropological view of man which is a distinctive feature of autonomous conservatism.

The subsequent move away from Yoshida's strong royalist devotion among mainstream leaders shows many parallels to the gradual embrace of liberal democracy and rights discussed above. As Mikuriya (2007, p. 131) observed, Satō still shared Yoshida's devotion to the emperor; however, even he did not go near as far as Yoshida who had even asked GHQ to retain the crime of *lèse-majesté*. While Yoshida filled many pages of his memoirs by describing his devotion to and the importance of the emperor and the imperial institution, later mainstream leaders have had comparatively little to say about the Tennō. Maeo (1981, pp. 165–181), for instance, discusses the 'human emperor' (*ningen tennō*) in one of his books. However, unlike Yoshida, his topic is not the sanctity of the imperial institution, but rather the human side of the Shōwa Emperor. Miyazawa called him a 'very splendid person' (1995, p. 169). The few comments made by later mainstream leaders about the Tennō and the imperial institution clearly lack the royalist devotion that was so prevalent in Yoshida's writings.

This development is consistent with their views on democracy and rights. In fact, it provides further proof that the mainstream's conservatism has evolved. Yoshida's skepticism towards unwanted expressions of public opinion, e.g. by those questioning the imperial institution, is much more akin to autonomous, if not aristocratic conservatism than situational conservatism. This becomes particularly evident when considering his unsuccessful demands to uphold the crime of *lèse-majesté* which essentially means that the institution's sanctity and inviolability stipulated by the Meiji Constitution's Article 3 should remain untouched. That being said, unlike the reactionaries led by Hatoyama and Kishi, Yoshida did not seek to restore some of the emperor's former power nor did he question the use of the new term 'symbol' as prescribed in the constitution's Article 1; instead, he accepted the new symbolic role of the Tennō in principle. Later mainstream leaders still occasionally found praise for the Shōwa Emperor, but they were not avid royalists like Yoshida. Therefore, they did not seek to reinstate the crime of *lèse-majesté*. This suggests that they have had no reservations about the symbolic emperor system and accordingly fully embraced it. This development highlights once more the significant shift from autonomous to situational conservatism.

From autonomous to situational conservatism

Taken together, those observations show that the mainstream's conservatism has indeed evolved. While he was no aristocratic, i.e. reactionary, conservative like Kishi, Yoshida was a classic representative of autonomous conservatism. His skeptical anthropological view of men and the limits he wanted to be placed on the expression of liberal individual rights clearly identify him as such. Be it public criticism directed at the revered Tennō or the demonstrations against the Anpo revision and the Kishi administration in 1960, Yoshida viewed those expressions of public opinion as nothing more than 'communist disturbances'. Ōtake (1986, p. 299) was certainly right when he noted that Yoshida was not a devoted democrat, but rather viewed democracy as an inevitable development. After 1960, the mainstream's skepticism towards public opinion, the liberal democratic postwar regime and its institutions slowly but surely turned from mere acceptance to an affirmative embrace. This development very much resembles what Huntington called situational conservatism.

Naturally, this begs the question of why the controversial positions highlighting Yoshida's autonomous conservative leanings have been erased from public memory. Hara (2005, p. 235) points out that his sins were quickly forgiven and forgotten, because ever since he became a diplomat in the pre-war period he had consistently been in favor of close ties with the US. Not only was he opposed to the war against the US, but he also tried to end the conflict quickly. Moreover, he was thought to understand democracy. However, there is another, arguably more important reason: the two key features of the Yoshida Doctrine, i.e. the national security alliance with the US that allowed Japan to maintain a light military and instead focus on economic growth policy, have become his lasting legacy, or what Pyle (2007, p. 374) correctly referred to as a 'grand strategy', at least until the end of the Cold War. Meanwhile, Yoshida's skeptical anthropological view of men and consequent critical stance on public opinion and direct democracy, his preference for public safety over freedom of speech and assembly as well as his deep reverence for the imperial institution have proven to be less durable. As explained above, the reverse course came to an end in 1960 and worshipping of the Tennō by high-ranking politicians has long become a thing of the past, too. Therefore, the shelf-life of those more controversial positions taken by Yoshida was comparatively short-lived and hence they have since been forgotten or neglected. This is part of his successors' joint legacy. While upholding the principles of the Yoshida Doctrine, they opted to break away from his authoritarian style of politics, instead affirmatively embracing the liberal democratic postwar regime.

Conclusion: the evolution of the mainstream's conservatism and its legacy

Our initial question was whether the conservative mainstream should be regarded as conservative. Based on the analysis conducted above, we can conclude that the

answer to that question greatly depends on which definition of conservatism is employed. If, following the reasoning of Mannheim and Huntington, one understands conservatism as an acceptance of the existing status quo, the mainstream certainly deserves the conservative label. However, if one defines conservatism as an autonomous, universally valid set of ideas that include a critical anthropological view of man and resistance to liberal individualism and progressivism, then Yoshida may qualify as conservative, but certainly not later mainstream leaders. This is a result of the fact that the existing status quo, whose acceptance and defense Huntington has identified as 'genuine conservatism', was liberal, democratic and arguably progressive in its nature. Autonomous conservatives such as most conservative intellectuals obviously do not regard the liberal individualism and progressivism inherent in this status quo as conservative. Instead, they have consistently attacked the constitution and the postwar regime as an alien ideology forced upon Japan by the US, propagating excessive liberal individualism and progressivism (Winkler 2011). Precisely for this reason, Yayama and many conservative intellectuals are highly critical of later mainstream leaders, but less so of Yoshida, who still shared some elements of their autonomous conservatism.

This striking contrast between the mainstream's situational conservatism and intellectuals' autonomous conservatism serves as another reminder of just how complicated it is to speak of 'conservatism' without qualifying the type and carrier of said 'conservatism'. The acceptance and later the affirmative, at times even passionate, embrace of the mainly US-made foundations of the postwar regime is very much in line with the situational conservatism Mannheim and Huntington had in mind. However, Japanese conservatism also highlights the limits of this set of theories. As Winkler (2011) observes, the continued existence of a consistent, autonomous conservatism that, without being reactionary, refuses to acknowledge the constitution as a genuine, desirable status quo and hence has retreated to the position of vocal critic of liberal, democratic and progressive postwar society shows that (autonomous) conservatism does not necessarily have to adapt to changing times.

Against the backdrop of post-Cold War changes within the LDP's factional make-up, the mainstream factions' decline, culminating in the *Katō no Ran*¹⁰ in late 2000, and Hashimoto's loss to Koizumi at the LDP presidential election in the following year, as well as the party's crushing defeats at the 2007 and 2009 national elections, it makes little sense to speak of the conservative mainstream in relation to present-day events. That being said, those recent developments do not negate the significant role the mainstream had played in shaping postwar politics for several decades. While the Yoshida Doctrine is generally regarded as the mainstream's lasting legacy, post-Cold War realities have severely battered what used to be a 'permanent strategy' (see Pyle 2007 or Samuels 2007). The mainstream's legacy is not limited to the Yoshida Doctrine, though. No example is more instructive here than the quest for constitutional reform. In the 1950s, the debate about an amendment guided by Hatoyama and Kishi was comparatively

reactionary in nature (see Winkler 2010, pp. 180–189). The Liberal Party’s draft, which thought to restore some of the emperor’s former powers and obliged the people to be loyal to the state, is just one example for this trend. Meanwhile, similar sounding stipulations are nowhere to be found in the more recent amendment proposals which have been published since the 1980s. In fact, the symbolic emperor system (stipulated in the supreme law’s chapter 1) and the inherence, inviolability and universality of fundamental human rights (as expressed in Articles 11–13 and 97 of the constitution) are hardly challenged any more in those more recent drafts (Winkler 2010, pp. 146, 157–162). This significant shift towards an embrace of the liberal, democratic values of the postwar constitution is certainly not exclusively the result of the mainstream’s lengthy dominance over Japanese politics. However, the mainstream’s affirmative acceptance of the postwar status quo, outlined above, and the conscious decision to uphold the constitution, while ignoring calls to revive the quest for an amendment, no doubt contributed to this development. In retrospect, this affirmation may be considered a matter of course by many, yet if one recalls the reactionary tendencies of the 1950s, the mainstream’s affirmative embrace certainly helped establish and solidify the liberal, democratic postwar regime. In this sense, the conservative mainstream has proven Mannheim’s and Huntington’s theory about conservatism to be correct.

Notes

1. The rivalries between Ikeda and Satō in the 1960s, Ōhira, Miyazawa and Maeo in the 1970s as well as Katō and Obuchi in the 1990s are just the most famous examples.
2. A similar overview can be found in Winkler (2010, pp. 8–9), even though the focus of that publication is primarily on constitutional reform.
3. Those initiatives were most forcefully articulated by the *Seirankai*, a group of up to thirty LDP parliamentarians (associated primarily with side-stream factions) led by Ishihara Shintarō (currently the governor of Tokyo) in the 1970s. It unsuccessfully rebelled against Tanaka and demanded a return to the principles of the early LDP under Hatoyama and Kishi (Kawachi 2009, pp. 9, 19).
4. Similar ideas, albeit with a different focus and in a far less detailed fashion, have been expressed in Winkler (2010, pp. 6–13).
5. The most famous example is the so-called ‘Ashida amendments’ made to Article 9.
6. Strictly speaking, Kishi was not a pre-war politician, but a bureaucrat. However, he served in important Cabinet positions before and throughout the war.
7. Article 13 stipulates that ‘[the people’s] right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs’ (Hook and McCormack 2001, p. 191).
8. No doubt the most famous publication was 1972’s *Nihon rettō kaizōron* (*Building a new Japan: a plan for remodeling the Japanese archipelago*) in which he laid out his plan to remodel the Japanese archipelago through massive construction projects such as new railways and highways, especially in rural areas.
9. Yoshida’s views are questionable because there were times in Japanese history when the Emperor did exercise direct rule (*shinsei*). Under foreign influences, emperors in fact not only ruled but

- also governed during the *ritsuryō* period (seventh to tenth centuries). Arguably the same is true for the pre-war period under the Meiji Constitution's framework (Winkler 2010, pp. 26–28).
10. A revolt by the then Kōchikai chairman Katō Kōichi that aimed to force the resignation of the then Prime Minister and fellow LDP member Mori. Katō did not succeed, because only a few LDP members followed his call to vote with the opposition in a no-confidence vote against Mori (Ishikawa 2004, pp. 202–203).

References

- Fukunaga, Fumio, 2008. *Ōhira Masayoshi: 'Sengo hoshu' to wa nani ka*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronshinsha.
- Hanaoka, Nobuaki, 2009. *Hoshu no rekka wa naze okita no ka*. Tokyo: Sankei Shinbunsha.
- Hara, Yoshihisa, 2005. *Yoshida Shigeru: Sonnō no seijika*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Hayano, Tōru, 1995. *Tanaka Kakuei to 'senjo' no seihin*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha.
- Hirosawa, Takayuki, 2005. *Gendai nihon seijishi*. Kyoto: Kōyō Shobō.
- Hook, Glenn D. and McComarck, Gavan, 2001. *Japan's contested constitution: documents and analysis*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Huntington, Samuel, 1957. Conservatism as an ideology. *American Political Science Review*, (51), 454–473.
- Iokibe, Makoto, Itō, Motoshige and Yakushiji, Katsuyuki, 2006. *Miyazawa Kiichi: hoshu honryū no kiseki*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha.
- Ishikawa, Masumi, 2004. *Sengo seijishi*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Itō, Masaya, 1985. *Ikeda Hayato to sono jidai*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha.
- Katō, Kōichi and Koga, Makoto, 2005. Shinchūha to yobeba yobe – 'yūsei, Yasukuni, taichū gaikō no daimachigai'. *Gendai*, 39 (9), 146–154.
- Kawachi, Takashi, 2009. *Chi no seiji: seirankai to iu monogatari*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha.
- Laborsta Internet, 2010. *Japan statistics by country – Japan – strikes and lockouts*. <http://laborsta.ilo.org/> [Accessed 15 April 2010].
- Maeo, Shigesaburō, 1974. *Matsurigoto no kokoro*. Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha.
- Maeo, Shigesaburō, 1976. *Gendai seiji no kadai*. Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha.
- Maeo, Shigesaburō, 1981. *Seijika no banjōji*. Tokyo: Risōsha.
- Mannheim, Karl, 1986. *Conservatism: a contribution to the sociology of knowledge*. London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Mikuriya, Takashi, 2007. Yoshida rosen no shōri kara Ozawa o meguru araso made: sengo hoshu seiji katachi no shisōteki keifu. *Chūō Kōron*, 122 (2), 126–135.
- Miyazawa, Kiichi, 1965. Hoshushugi no shinkankaku. *Economist*, 43 (17), 65–69.
- Miyazawa, Kiichi, 1985. Hoshu honryū no taigi – 'Sengo hiteiron' o hitei suru. *Asahi Journal*, 27 (42), 6–12.
- Miyazawa, Kiichi, 1995. *Shin hoshu sengen*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha.
- Nakajima, Takeshi, 2007. Shisō to monogatari o ushinatta hoshu to uyoku: 'kaiken moe' 'Yasukuni moe' danpenteki na nekyō o koeyo. *Ronza*, (146), 47–54.
- Nakamura, Masanori, 2005. *Sengoshi*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Nakano, Masashi, 2004. *Josei tennōron*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha.
- Nara, Hiroshi, 2007. *Yoshida Shigeru: last Meiji man*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Neumann, Reinhard, 1982. *Änderung und Wandlung der japanischen Verfassung*. Köln, Berlin, Bonn and München: Carl Heymanns Verlag.
- Nolte, Paul, 2001. Konservatismus in Deutschland: Geschichte und Zukunft? *Merkur*, (627), 559–571.
- Ōhira, Masayoshi, 1979. *Brush strokes: moments from my life*. Tokyo: Foreign Press Center Japan.
- Ōtake, Hideo, 1986. *Adenauaa to Yoshida Shigeru*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha.

- Ōtake, Hideo, 1996. *Sengo nihon no ideorogī tairitsu*. Tokyo: San-ichi Shobō.
- Pyle, Kenneth B., 2007. *Japan rising: the resurgence of Japanese power and purpose*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Samuels, Richard J., 2007. *Securing Japan: Tokyo's grand strategy and the future of East Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Scruton, Roger, 2007. *The Palgrave Macmillan dictionary of political thought*. 3rd edn. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sentaku*, 2008. 'Hoshu honryū' no kawa o hagu. *Sentaku*, 34 (4), 53–54.
- Stockwin, J. A. A., 1999. *Governing Japan: divided politics in a major economy*. 3rd edn. Oxford and Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Suzuki, Zenkō, 1992. *Gekidō no nihon seiji o kataru*. Morioka: Iwate Hōsō.
- Suzuki, Zenkō, 2004. *Moto shushō Suzuki Zenkō kaikoroku*. Morioka: Iwate Nippōsha.
- Takeshita, Noboru, 1991. *Shōgen hoshu seiken*. Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha.
- Tanaka, Kakuei, 1968. Kenpō mondai wa shizuka ni mimamoru. *Jiyū*, 10 (5), 33–35.
- Tanaka, Rokusuke, 1985. *Hoshu honryū no chokugen*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha.
- Tominomori, Eiji, 2006. *Sengo hoshutōshi*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Watanabe, Osamu, 2002. *Kenpō 'kaisei' no sōten – shiryō de yomu kaikenron no rekishi*. Tokyo: Junpōsha.
- White, R. J., 1950. *The British political tradition IV: the Conservative tradition*. London: Nicholas Kaye.
- Winkler, Christian G., 2010. *The quest for Japan's new constitution: an analysis of visions and constitutional reform proposals 1980–2009*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Winkler, Christian G., 2011. Consistent conservatism in changing times: an analysis of Japanese conservative intellectuals' thought. *Social Science Japan Journal*.
- Yayama, Tarō, 2003. Hoshu Honryū wa docchi da – Koizumi Jimin vs Kan – Ozawa Minshu. *Shokun*, 35 (11), 50–60.

Christian Winkler is Senior Research Fellow in the Social Science Section at the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo. His publications include *The quest for Japan's new 'constitution': an analysis of visions and constitutional revision proposals 1980–2009* (Routledge, 2010) and, with Axel Klein, *Analyse politische Systeme: Japan* (Wochenschau Verlag, 2011). He can be reached by email at: winkler@dijtokyo.org