



STRATEGIC USE OF EARLY ELECTIONS IN JAPAN: COMPARISON OF THE KOIZUMI AND ABE CABINETS*

STRATEGICZNE UŻYCIE PRZEDTERMINOWYCH WYBORÓW
W JAPONII: PORÓWNANIE GABINETÓW KOIZUMIEGO I ABE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to analyze political objectives and repercussions of the dissolutions of the House of Representatives by Prime Ministers Koizumi Jun'ichirō in 2005 and Abe Shinzō in 2014. In both cases dissolutions took place less than two years after the previous elections. The paper argues that the strengthened power of the heads of government after electoral and administrative reforms facilitated them to take advantage of Diet dissolution to overcome opposition by veto players. By appealing to the public Koizumi planned to privatize the Japan Post and Abe intended to postpone the consumption tax hike. In both cases the prime ministers used early elections to enhance their position in the ruling party. As a result, Koizumi managed to overcome pressure from postal employees and Abe gained leverage over Ministry of Finance (MOF) bureaucrats.

ABSTRAKT

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza politycznych celów i następstw rozwiązania parlamentu przez premierów Koizumiego Jun'ichirō w 2005 roku i Abe Shinzō w 2014 roku. W obu przypadkach rozwiązanie Izby Reprezentantów miało miejsce mniej niż dwa lata po poprzednich wyborach. Artykuł opisuje, na ile zwiększone uprawnienia szefów rządu po reformach systemu wyborczego i administracyjnej ułatwiły im skorzystanie z możliwości rozwiązania parlamentu w celu przewyższenia sprzeciwu graczy weto. Apelując do elektoratu, Koizumi planował sprywatyzować Poczta Japońską, zaś Abe przełożyć podwyżkę podatku konsumpcyjnego. W obu przypadkach premierzy posłużyli się przedterminowymi wyborami do parlamentu w celu wzmocnienia własnej pozycji w partii rządzącej. W rezultacie Koizumi zdołał przewyciężyć naciski ze strony pracowników poczty, zaś Abe uzyskał lepszy wpływ na burokratów z Ministerstwa Finansów.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to explain the institutional reforms in Japan with special emphasis on the use of prime ministers' competence to dissolve the Diet. Due to existence of strong veto players¹, in the past Japanese prime ministers could not easily exercise their right to call early elections. Yet, despite the risk associated with such political decision, Prime Ministers Koizumi Jun'ichirō in 2005 and Abe Shinzō in 2014 surprisingly dissolved the lower houses (House of Representatives) more than two years before the end of their terms. This article argues that the tactical usage of early elections by the heads of government in Japan was facilitated by electoral and administrative reforms. Due to the weakening of veto players, instead of being limited in the exercise of their right to dissolve the lower house, Japanese prime ministers started taking advantage of the very same right to bring into line ministers and backbenchers, just as in the Westminster model.

The competences of Japanese prime ministers have been analyzed by many researchers. As stressed by Hayao (1993, pp. 184–210), the prime ministers rarely set forth policy agendas, as they rather focused on the enactment of issues that had been submitted to them by the subgovernments. Being reactive leaders, they usually did not fully use their competences. According to Shinoda (2000, pp. 202–203), “the prime minister's effectiveness in pursuing his policies depends in part on various informal sources of power”, such as a strong base of support in the ruling party. As described by Takenaka (2006, pp. 4–7), due to electoral and administrative reforms, at the beginning of the 21st century the prime minister gained new competences to rule in a top-down manner. However, the indirect impact of institutional reforms on prime minister's ability to call early election has remained an understudied subject. Relying on the case studies and comparative methods, the following sections examine how in 2005 and 2014 the enhanced power of prime ministers vis-à-vis the members of their cabinets and

¹ Veto player can be defined as “an individual or collective actor whose agreement is required for a policy decision” (Tsebelis, 1995, p. 293).

influential politicians of the LDP facilitated orchestrating sudden Diet dissolutions despite the risk accompanying such bold moves. It is argued that contrary to situation in the pre-reform period, ministers and ruling party backbenchers lacked institutional instruments for discouraging the head of government from calling early elections.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISSOLUTION AS A PRIME MINISTER'S COMPETENCE IN JAPAN

Japanese prime minister's right to dissolve the House of Representatives is implicitly derived from Article 7 of Constitution, according to which the cabinet has the authority to advise the emperor on matters of state, including dissolution of the lower house. As pointed out by Shinoda (2000, p. 64), "At times, the LDP administration has dissolved the lower house to pursue more stable support in the lower house. Some prime ministers have taken this action to strengthen their power bases within the party". Unlike the House of Representatives, the House of Councilors, which is the upper house of the Japanese Diet, cannot be dissolved by the prime minister. Elections to the House of Councilors are held every three years when half of members are chosen for six-year long terms.

It has not been uncommon in the world for prime ministers to strategically choose the moment of dissolution of the parliament in order to gain advantage over the opposition parties. In addition, in such countries as the UK (at least until the passage of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act in 2011), the threat of calling early election has served as a convenient tool for bringing into line rebellious ministers and backbenchers (Schleiter & Issar, 2014, p. 181). As it was emphasized by Shinoda (2000, p. 71), while the right to dissolve the House of Representatives is a powerful tool that helps Japanese prime ministers to shape political landscape and prepare the ground for strategic policy initiatives, this authority cannot be exercised easily. In order to call early election, the head of government has to persuade to this drastic move the members of his/her cabinet and other influential ruling party members, as well as demonstrate to the public a credible reason for the dissolution. If not well prepared, instead of enhancing the prime minister's position, the dissolution of Diet may weaken the ruling party or even offer to the opposition parties an opportunity to grasp power.

In the post-war Japan all but one Houses of Representatives were dissolved. Only Prime Minister Miki Takeo failed to call early election in 1976 due to the

fact that majority of factions in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) openly challenged his authority and he lacked sufficient power base in the party to resort to this drastic move. As shown in Table 1, there have been different direct reasons for dissolving the Diet in Japan. In 1948 and 1955, it was a way of amending the state of minority government, in 1953, 1980, and 1993 – a choice of prime ministers who refused to resign after passage of no-confidence motions, in 1952, 1979, or 2005 – a method for changing balance of power in favor of the mainstream faction in the ruling party, and in 1990, 2000, or 2009 – simply a necessity due to upcoming end of term of the House of Representatives. As the head of government who does not dissolve the lower house can be perceived as weak, even Prime Minister Asō Tarō, who was very unpopular, called early election in July 2009, despite the fact that it was only two months before the end of the House of Representatives' term. The ruling party managed to improve its position in the Diet to the greatest extent due to dissolutions in 1955 (thanks to Prime Minister Hatoyama's popularity after ousting Yoshida Shigeru's Liberal Party from power), 1980 (as a result of "votes of compassion" after Prime Minister Ōhira's sudden death during the electoral campaign), 1986 (owing to Prime Minister Nakasone's popularity and high voter turnout during double elections to both houses), and 2005 (as a result of Koizumi's successful appeal to unaffiliated voters regarding privatization of Japan Post).

Without counting the dissolution of Diet forced upon Prime Minister Ōhira Masayoshi by no-confidence motion in 1980, the terms of lower houses in 2003–2005 and 2012–2014 were the shortest since establishment of the LDP in 1955. Both in 2005 and 2014, the dissolutions were intentionally decided by surprise to maximize the performance of the LDP in elections. They were also strategically applied by Prime Ministers Koizumi and Abe to strengthen their positions in the ruling party and thus enable pushing forward their policy agendas. For these reasons, the abovementioned two dissolutions can be used as case studies to examine to what extent electoral and administrative reforms facilitated prime ministers to take advantage of their right to call early elections in order to discipline veto players.

The new electoral law from 1994 introduced a mixed system based mostly on single-seat constituencies and state subventions for political parties. These changes weakened factionalism² and enhanced party leader's position in the LDP for two

² Traditionally, factions in the LDP have been unofficial intra-party groups centered around a leader who aspired for the post of party president. Faction boss could count on loyalty of faction

reasons. Firstly, as LDP candidates no longer competed each other in middle-sized constituencies, the electoral function of factions lost in importance. Secondly, as electoral funds were now distributed by central party organs, LDP president's and secretary general's influence on LDP parliament members increased immensely (Krauss & Pekkanen, 2011, pp. 130–131). Politicians whose careers no longer depended on factional bosses started being more loyal towards the party leader.

Table 1. Dissolutions of the House of Representatives in Post-War Japan

Date of dissolution	Prime Minister	Reason of dissolution	Ruling party result
12.1948	Yoshida Shigeru	Minority government	
08.1952	Yoshida Shigeru	Intra-party struggles	-24
03.1953	Yoshida Shigeru	No-confidence motion	-41
01.1955	Hatoyama Ichirō	Minority government	+65
04.1958	Kishi Nobusuke		-12
10.1960	Ikeda Hayato		+9
10.1963	Ikeda Hayato		-13
12.1966	Satō Eisaku		-6
12.1969	Satō Eisaku		+11
11.1972	Tanaka Kakuei		-17
09.1979	Ōhira Masayoshi	Intra-party struggles	-1
05.1980	Ōhira Masayoshi	No-confidence motion	+36
11.1983	Nakasone Yasuhiro		-34
06.1986	Nakasone Yasuhiro		+50
01.1990	Kaifu Toshiki	Approaching end of term	-25
06.1993	Miyazawa Kiichi	No-confidence motion	-52
09.1996	Hashimoto Ryūtarō		+16
06.2000	Mori Yoshirō	Approaching end of term	-6
10.2003	Koizumi Jun'ichirō		+4
08.2005	Koizumi Jun'ichirō	Intra-party struggles	+59
07.2009	Asō Tarō	Approaching end of term	-117
11.2012	Noda Yoshihiko	Agreement with opposition	-251
11.2014	Abe Shinzō		-3
09.2017	Abe Shinzō		-7

Ruling party results in comparison with the results of previous elections, not situation immediately before dissolutions.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

members in exchange for financial and electoral support as well as assistance in their political careers (Satō & Matsuzaki, 1986, pp. 56–66).

The administrative reforms that entered into force in 2001, in turn, enhanced the position of prime ministers and their institutional backing. As a result of the central government reform, the Cabinet Office (Naikaku-fu), staffed by a larger number of civil servants, was established instead of the Prime Minister's Office and several agencies. The new organ gained a status superior to all ministries and was accorded the power to order them to provide the head of government with information (Neary, 2002, p. 127; Woodall, 2014, p. 176). Moreover, Article 4 of the revised Cabinet Law clarified that the prime minister held the right to propose new policies during cabinet meetings, while Article 12 enabled the Cabinet Secretariat to take the lead in preparing and coordinating "important policies" (*jūyō seisaku*). In addition, posts of ministers of state for special missions (*tokumei tantō daijin*) were established in the Cabinet Office, and the maximum number of prime minister's special advisors (*naikaku sōri daijin hosakan*) was raised from three to five (Żakowski, Bochorodycz, & Socha, 2018, pp. 19–20).

The new institutional tools indirectly facilitated strategic usage by the prime minister of his/her right to dissolve the House of Representatives. Being confident in their powers, Koizumi Jun'ichirō in 2005 and Abe Shinzō in 2014 unexpectedly called early elections to further enhance prime minister's position against veto players.

STRATEGIC USE OF THE 2005 ELECTION

Koizumi Jun'ichirō (2001–2006) can be considered as one of the most popular, longest-serving, and strongest prime ministers in post-war history of Japan. He not only took a full advantage of the new instruments of power introduced by the electoral and administrative reforms, but also maintained high popularity among the public, which helped him to strengthen his position in the ruling party. Koizumi knew how to approach the media – in order for his thoughts to be conveyed directly to the public, he made short statements full of catchy slogans (Uchiyama, 2007, p. 9). He announced that he would reform the LDP even if he had to destroy it (Iijima, 2006, p. 8). Koizumi used his enhanced power to further neoliberal policy and cut budget expenses for public works projects. Nevertheless, his most important goal was to privatize Japan Post.

In order to achieve this aim, Koizumi had to deal with two types of powerful veto players in the ruling party – factions (*habatsu*) and postal parliamentary

tribe (*yūsei zoku*)³. The LDP traditionally possessed strong connections with the Postal Services Agency (renamed Japan Post in 2003). In return for protection of the privileges of postal employees, the politicians of the dominant party received electoral support. Koizumi was aware of the fact that in some constituencies postal workers could provide as many as 10 thousand organizational votes (Koizumi & Matsuzawa, 1999, p. 211). In addition, Japan Post supervised the largest personal savings system in the world, which provided generous funds for big infrastructural projects.

Another veto player were LDP factions, particularly those who gathered a lot of members of the postal tribe. The factions' role in electoral campaigns and provision of funds to individual politicians had been already eroded as a result of the electoral reform. To weaken these intra-party groups even further, Koizumi ignored faction bosses' recommendations during formation of his cabinet. Instead, he appointed as ministers a relatively large number of women, unaffiliated LDP parliamentarians, and private-sector specialists. Moreover, he gave ministerial portfolios to many young politicians, thus ignoring the seniority system (Uchiyama, 2007, p. 15).

Koizumi wanted to privatize the Japan Post and establish separate companies for different types of its services (savings, insurance, post offices, and postal services). The prime minister patiently waited to realize his plans until he had strengthened his position in the government and ruling party after the third LDP presidential election victory in September 2003. The draft of the reform was prepared independently of the bureaucrats and parliamentary tribes by the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy – an important decision-making body that was established as a result of the administrative reform. Koizumi had to make minor concessions to the postal parliamentary tribe, but at the end of June 2005, the Japan Post privatization bill was eventually authorized by the LDP General Council (Takenaka, 2006, pp. 204–226). The decision was made by a majority vote, which was against the unwritten tradition of unanimity.

While the privatization bill was passed in the House of Representatives in July 2005, one month later it was rejected by the House of Councilors. In order to discipline ruling party members, Koizumi dissolved the lower house. This move was aimed at gaining two-thirds of seats necessary to overrule the veto of the

³ Parliamentary tribes (*zoku giin*) signify unofficial groups of members of parliament who specialize in a given legislative field. They often represent the interests of a distinctive economy sector (Yuasa, 1986, pp. 10–16).

upper house that cannot be dissolved. The decision on early election surprised both Koizumi's opponents in the LDP and the opposition parties. As stressed by the prime minister: "This dissolution is, so to speak, a 'Postal Dissolution'. I want to clearly ask all the people (through the election) whether (they are) for or against postal privatization" (Kajimoto, 2005).

Koizumi expelled from the party all of the parliamentarians who had voted against the bill, and he endorsed in their constituencies competing candidates. Historically, internal divisions in the LDP weakened that party. This time, however, Koizumi skillfully imposed on the media the main topic of electoral campaign. The election became a referendum on Japan Post privatization, and media's attention focused on reporting duels between pro-reform candidates and anti-reform conservative politicians in separate constituencies. Under these circumstances, the voice of LDP's main opponent, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), could be hardly heard by voters.

Koizumi's strategy proved successful. Unaffiliated voters, who usually preferred to choose the DPJ, were persuaded by the prime minister's appeal for neoliberal reforms. The LDP gained as many as 296 out of 480 seats in the House of Representatives, which together with the votes of its coalition partner Kōmeitō sufficed to pass the privatization bill (Uchiyama, 2007, pp. 94–102). The dissolution of the House of Representatives was strategically used by Koizumi to undermine the position of traditional veto players and change the balance of power in the LDP. The electoral victory strengthened Koizumi's position *vis-à-vis* both the postal tribe and factions. About 80 first-term LDP lawmakers entered the Diet. They were baptized by the media as "Koizumi children", as many of them would not have been able to gain parliamentary seats without the support from the popular prime minister. This group of first-term politicians who in majority remained loyal towards the head of government further diluted the influence of faction bosses and parliamentary tribes on decision-making process.

Koizumi's decision to dissolve the lower house was exceptional in several ways. Traditionally, intra-party splits weakened the LDP, and prime ministers tried to avoid early elections unless they were forced to dissolve the Diet due to passage of no-confidence motions or the upcoming end of the term of House of Representatives. This time, however, Koizumi made his bold decision despite the fact that he did not really have to do that in order to remain in power. It is the new institutional tools provided by the electoral and administrative reforms that enabled him to challenge the power of veto players by appealing to the public.

STRATEGIC USE OF THE 2014 ELECTION

Just as Koizumi, also Prime Minister Abe Shinzō used his power to call early election in order to improve his position in the LDP and further his policy agenda. It is postponement of VAT hike that was used by Abe as a pretext for dissolving the lower house, but in reality reasons for this move were more complex. Most likely, the head of Japanese government wanted to conduct a “preemptive strike” against the opposition parties while they were still divided, and while the public still believed in the effectiveness of the government’s economic policy.

Prime Minister Abe supplemented earlier administrative reforms with new institutional changes that further enhanced his position *vis-à-vis* veto players. In December 2013, he established the National Security Council (Kokka Anzen Hoshō Kaigi), and in May 2014, the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs (Naikaku Jinji Kyoku). The former, composed of the prime minister as chairperson, the chief cabinet secretary, as well as ministers of foreign affairs and defense, was to establish basic policies on foreign and security matters (Sunohara, 2014). The latter, in turn, enabled the prime minister and his direct entourage to grasp control over distribution of as many as 600 high-ranking posts in civil service (Makihara, 2016, pp. 101–109). The new institutions improved the Cabinet Office’s policy coordination capacities, thus strengthening the head of government’s position towards other cabinet members. As a result, it became even easier for the prime minister to impose his policy agenda on ruling party politicians than during the Koizumi era.

The bill on VAT hike had been passed by the House of Representatives in June 2012 and by the House of Councilors in August 2012. The consumption tax was to be increased in two stages: to 8% (from 5%) in April 2014, and to 10% in October 2015. The bill was a fruit of a compromise between the DPJ, that was the ruling party at that time, as well as two opposition parties – the LDP and Kōmeitō – whose agreement was necessary due to lack of governing coalition’s majority in the upper house. In exchange, Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko promised to dissolve the lower house, which he indeed did in November 2012, thus paving the way for LDP’s return to power. What is important, the VAT hike bill contained a clause according to which sufficient economic growth rate should be attained to proceed with the reform. While it was only a non-binding condition, the clause left a possibility of postponing the tax increase in case of sudden deterioration of economic situation (Żakowski, 2015, pp. 175–185).

While Koizumi was a member of the financial parliamentary tribe (*zaisei zoku*) in the LDP, Abe's decision to postpone VAT hike met with strong dissatisfaction from this influential group. VAT hike had been long promoted by the MOF which perceived it as a tool for balancing the budget in the face of a record-high public debt that exceeded 200% of GDP. On the other side was the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), which favored achieving high economic growth rate rather than maximizing tax revenues. Both ministries boasted strong connections with influential LDP politicians from the financial as well as commerce and industry parliamentary tribes, respectively.

As the LDP voted for the VAT hike bill, it was natural that after returning to power at the end of 2012, Prime Minister Abe confirmed that the first stage of tax increase would proceed as scheduled. However, the problem resurfaced after two years, when the government was to judge whether to implement the increase to 10% in October 2015 as planned. Immediately after returning to power, Abe announced his economic policy – so-called “Abenomics” – that relied on three “arrows”: monetary easing, fiscal stimulus, and reforms aimed at invigorating Japanese economy. As Abe prioritized achieving high GDP growth rate and overcoming deflation over balancing budget expenses, his agenda fitted the goals of METI rather than MOF. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand why he decided to postpone the second stage of consumption tax increase until April 2017 as soon as in November 2014 it became evident that Japan's GDP contracted the second quarter in a row. What was less understandable for the public, however, was the fact that at the same time Abe called early election. After all, on the contrary to situation in 2005, thanks to the economic growth clause from the 2012 bill, the prime minister had been already authorized to make such decision at his discretion. As such, he was not forced to dissolve the Diet by any rebellious backbenchers who refused to cooperate during legislative process. The prime minister simply stated: “This is the ‘Abenomics’ dissolution [...]. I'd like to ask the public whether my economics policies are wrong or right, or if there is any other choice” (Aoki, 2014).

In fact, opposite to situation in 2005, the head of government chose for the main electoral campaign topic a policy over which the public and opposition parties were not excessively polarized. After all, people usually do not like tax hikes, and consumption tax increase had been particularly unpopular ever since introduction of VAT in 1988. As a result, instead of proposing alternatives for Abenomics, the opposition focused rather on analyzing seriousness of Japan's economic situation (Noble, 2016, pp. 159–160). As indicated by Pekkanen, Reed,

and Scheiner (2016, pp. 265–278), the Diet dissolution ended in a “bait-and-switch” election that was framed as a referendum on a much more convenient topic for Abe than his controversial nationalist agenda on security policy or constitutional revision. In addition, the snap election was a method for renewing the mandate for the Abe cabinet after a scandal with two female ministers. In October 2014, Justice Minister Matsushima Midori and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Obuchi Yūko had to resign due to accusations over violation of election campaign law in the first case and misuse of political funds in the latter (Aoki & Yoshida, 2014). Despite minor decrease in government’s popularity, Abe knew that the LDP could not lose election due to lack of cooperation between opposition parties.

To ensure unanimity of the cabinet and party leadership, before postponing VAT hike Abe first persuaded to his policy two prominent members of the LDP financial tribe – Vice Premier and Minister of Finance Asō Tarō (former prime minister) as well as LDP Secretary General Tanigaki Sadakazu (who as LDP president in 2012 had been one of the main authors of the agreement on VAT hike bill with the DPJ). The former tried to persuade Abe not to cite consumption tax increase postponement as the reason for Diet dissolution, and the latter publicly expressed his opinion that such decision would cause the risk of losing the ability to cover the costs of social security system (Yamaguchi, 2017, pp. 139–174). A crucial supporter of VAT hike postponement, in turn, was Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide who together with Abe ensured that bureaucrats from MOF in the Kantei would be counterbalanced with METI staffers. For example, Prime Minister’s Secretary Imai Takaya, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister Hasegawa Eiichi, or Chief Cabinet Secretary’s Secretary Kadomatsu Takashi originated from METI (Shimizu, 2014, p. 22). Thanks to the enhanced powers of the Kantei and the Cabinet Secretariat, Abe could effectively play METI off against MOF as well as ensure unanimity of cabinet members. Eventually, none of influential LDP politicians overtly objected the government’s policy agenda.

The parliamentary election ended in a landslide victory of the LDP that gained 291 seats. It was two seats less than before dissolution (and three seats less than in 2012), but as the total number of seats was lowered from 480 to 475, it could be said that the ruling party performed even better than in 2012. Moreover, LDP’s coalition partner Kōmeitō managed to increase the number of seats from 31 to 35. While the main opposition party, DPJ, also increased its number of seats (from 62 to 73), it was far too little to endanger the dominant position of

the LDP. As a result, any voices of discontent in the ruling party against Abe's leadership were effectively nipped in the bud. The prime minister even replaced House of Representatives Speaker Ibuki Bunmei, who expressed doubts about the need for dissolving the lower house, with Machimura Nobutaka – Abe's former factional boss (Makihara, 2016, pp. 201–208). Just as Koizumi, Abe thus managed to enhance his support base in the LDP.

CONCLUSIONS

Both in 2005 and 2014, the electoral campaigns were dominated by policy agendas imposed by the prime ministers who decided about sudden dissolutions of the House of Representatives. Electoral and administrative reforms provided the heads of government with the tools for containing opposition against their plans from within the cabinet or the ruling party. Institutional changes not only made backbenchers more dependent on central party leadership in terms of finances and electoral support, but also enhanced policy-drafting abilities of prime ministers.

On the other hand, the reforms did not make significant changes to the legislative process that was still largely under the control of backbenchers. In order to discipline traditional veto players – parliamentary tribes and factions – prime ministers have to rely on such indirect methods as dissolution of the House of Representatives. As the example of privatization of Japan Post has shown, this prerogative of the head of government could be successfully used even to blackmail members of the House of Councilors that cannot be dissolved. Thanks to stronger control over ministers and factions, the prime ministers gained a freer hand in deciding about strategic use of Diet dissolution. Learning from Koizumi, Abe applied the same strategy despite lack of as evident reason for dissolution as his predecessor. Backed by a powerful Cabinet Secretariat led by Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga, the prime minister easily overcame opposition from MOF and influential members of the financial tribe. As such, the less constrained usage of Diet dissolution supplemented other new instruments of power possessed by the head of government. Nevertheless, the easiness of relying on this method still depends on prime minister's popularity among the public and his/her skills in exercising top-down leadership.

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