**Karol Żakowski**

University of Lodz

# Interpersonal Connections Do Matter: Evolution of DPJ Factions

The article tackles the problem of factionalism in the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ, Minshutō). DPJ factions have often been considered as loose groups, only marginally related to intraparty power struggles. By analyzing their evolution, however, the article argues that they have become more important entities than they used to be in the 1990s. The continuing existence of intraparty groups attests their significant role in structuring competition for power in the DPJ, especially after the electoral victory in 2009.

## Introduction

A faction can be defined as a group of people who share a common origin, interests or membership in a political party (Uchida 1983, p. 156). Intraparty divisions have always been a characteristic feature of the Japanese political culture. While during the Cold War factionalism in the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP, Nihon Shakaitō) was based on clear ideological differences between intraparty groups, in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP, Jiyū Minshutō) it was founded to a greater extent on a pragmatic pursuit of political interests. The LDP has constituted a loose federation of factions rather than a coherent organization. Despite the fact that intraparty divisions weakened greatly in the 1990s, LDP factions have survived and still play some role, for example in the distribution of party posts and governmental portfolios or in LDP presidential elections.

Two main approaches can be distinguished in the studies of LDP factionalism. According to the cultural school, a tendency to establish informal

groups based on interpersonal connections resulted from traditional Japanese culture. Nakane Chie (2007, pp. 71–85) even coined the term of a "vertical society," that is a society that attached a great importance to the relations between patrons (*oyabun*) and clients (*kobun*). In this light, factionalism was deeply rooted in the minds of Japanese. The institutional school, in turn, argued that it was the political interests and institutional constraints that shaped intraparty politics in the LDP. As pointed out by Masaru Kohno (1997, pp. 91–115), the evolution of LDP factionalism was determined by rational choices of politicians who simply wanted to maximize their political gains in the institutional context of the Japanese electoral system.

Unlike the LDP, its main competitor – the DPJ – has had a much less institutionalized factional system. When the DPJ stayed in opposition, instead of governmental portfolio distribution, the biggest merit of factional membership for the rank-and-file lawmakers was access to high-level information directly from group bosses (Hayashi & Tsumura 2011, p. 166). As a result, factionalism in the DPJ did not draw much attention from researchers. One year before the alternation of power in 2009, Keio University Professor Kusano Atsushi published a book in which he claimed that groups in the DPJ started resembling their LDP counterparts since the election of Ozawa Ichirō as DPJ leader in 2006. Additionally, he did not exclude further changes in the DPJ factional system after a potential coming to power in the future (Kusano 2008, pp. 179–184). Inspired by Professor Kusano's predictions, I decided to examine how the DPJ factional system evolved since the establishment of the party in 1996 and whether it really changed under the Ozawa leadership and after the alternation of power in 2009.

The article is divided into four sections. In the first section I describe the evolution of LDP factions from 1955 until the beginning of the 21st century. I conclude that the role of LDP intraparty groups was redefined over time and adapted to the political interests of the lawmakers. In the following sections I analyze the changes in the DPJ factional system in three stages – until 2006, under the Ozawa faction dominance in 2006–2010, and since ousting Ozawa from the intraparty mainstream in 2010. I compare each of these stages with a similar period in LDP history.

I argue that while factional divisions have been by far less important in determining the behavior of DPJ politicians than their LDP counterparts, interpersonal connections did matter in structuring intraparty

struggles. In my analysis I try to bridge the gap between the cultural and purely institutional explanations of the evolution of political practices in Japan. After all, in a wide sense culture can be also treated as a kind of an institution, and regardless of the evolution of formal structures it keeps influencing the behavior of political actors.

## LDP Archetype of Factionalism

The LDP dominated the Japanese political scene in the postwar period. Since its creation in 1955 it has been ousted from power only two times – for 10 months in 1993–1994 and for 39 months in 2009–2012. LDP factions were a product of decades-long evolution. Initially, intraparty groups could be considered as a simple continuation of the existence of the parties that had merged to form the dominant party. Despite the lack of clear programs, separate groups possessed relatively pronounced ideological profiles that differentiated them from other factions. Until the end of the 1970s factional struggles, fuelled by both personal animosities and ideological differences, were extremely severe. In the 1980s, however, one powerful faction emerged, which triggered a restructuring of the factional system. The Tanaka-Takeshita group institutionalized inter-factional cooperation and put an end to violent intraparty struggles. This situation lasted until the defection of the Hata/Ozawa group from the faction-hegemon in 1992. The new electoral system that was enacted in 1994 eliminated one of the strongest incentives for factionalism. As a result, the LDP factions gradually lost their status of the main centers of intraparty competition.

The former dominant party was created in 1955 as a result of a merger of two conservative parties – the Liberal Party (LP, Jiyūtō) and the Japanese Democratic Party (JDP, Nihon Minshutō). In reality, both the LP and the JDP constituted mixtures of groups that originated from smaller parties, so the LDP factional system initially comprised eight groups – four from the LP and four from the JDP. Despite the fact that the main reason for the existence of factions was the promotion of political interests of their members, not the realization of a distinct policy agenda, some differences in ideological leanings of separate groups were still visible. They were the legacy of programmatic diversity of the parties that had founded the LDP. For instance, the faction of Ikeda Hayato (prime minister in 1960–1964),

which originated from the LP, to a great extent focused on economic policy, and the faction led by Kishi Nobusuke (prime minister in 1957–1960), that originated from the JDP, attracted the parliamentarians who pursued the policy of remilitarization and Japan's greater activity in regional security affairs (Honzawa 1990, pp. 112–114).

In the first 25 years of the LDP's existence the factions vehemently competed for the post of party leader. In order to become a candidate, a politician had to collect a specified number of signatures from LDP lawmakers (at present 20, but in some periods it amounted even to 50), which was considered as a minimal size of a credible faction. Before each election, temporary alliances were formed between faction leaders. Those who supported the winner formed an intraparty mainstream and gained the strongest influence on the government. The losers, in turn, sometimes created an anti-mainstream and severely criticized the prime minister. In order not to incite defections, the new LDP leader often distributed cabinet posts proportionally to the size of all intraparty groups (Iseri 1988, pp. 85–108). Participation in the government worked as a glue that kept the LDP in one piece. Due to a relative balance in the size of separate factions, the non-mainstream groups were powerful enough to force the prime minister to resign whenever he lost public support. In such cases, they used their position in the party to appeal for the "refreshment" of party image, which usually ended in a change of intraparty alliances and a specific "artificial alternation of power" – exchange of the head of government without changing the ruling party (Wang 2001, pp. 332–333).

Over the years, ideological leanings of separate groups, which fuelled factional struggles, became less pronounced. It is not surprising, taking into account the fact those older politicians who remembered the existence of smaller parties before 1955 were gradually replaced with younger lawmakers who placed more emphasis on the program of the LDP as a whole. By the 1980s, the majority of LDP factions were bound together by interpersonal relations and common political interests of their members rather than distinct ideological leanings. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1980s a peculiar "general mainstream" was formed. The Tanaka faction (Takeshita faction since 1987) that grew to the size of more than 100 lawmakers became so powerful that it was able to arbitrarily choose prime ministers. Under these circumstances, changeable alliances no longer were a viable method of enforcing an "artificial alternation of power." Instead, the faction-hegemon created a stable forum for routine

communication between all intraparty groups. Regular meetings of secretary-generals of all LDP factions were institutionalized by Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru in 1987. They served as a place for the exchange of information and opinions on the current matters and as a forum that established general direction for policymaking (Nonaka 1989, p. 143). Intraparty harmony was maintained thanks to the fact that during cabinet reshuffles the prime minister respected recommendations for ministerial portfolios from all faction bosses (Iseri 1988, pp. 117–121).

The "general mainstream" ceased to exist in 1992, when Ozawa Ichirō lost the race for the leadership in the former Takeshita faction and defected from the LDP one year later together with more than 40 lawmakers. Without the faction-hegemon the LDP factional system was destabilized once more. Soon thereafter, in 1994, the factions were weakened by the revision of the electoral law and the overhaul of the principles of financing political parties. The reform introduced the system of state subsidies for political parties that strengthened the role played by central party organs in distributing funds to individual lawmakers. Furthermore, the replacement of middle-sized constituencies with a mixed system with domination of single-seat districts eliminated competition between LDP politicians in the same constituency (Lee 2006, pp. 138–140). As a result, the factions lost importance in managing political funds and mobilizing electoral support. The only function that retained some significance was competition for party and governmental posts. Even this role, however, was weakened by Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō who in 2001–2006 nominated the members of his cabinet on the basis of their skills and loyalty to the head of government, not seniority or factional membership (Uchiyama 2007, pp. 14–16). Under the administrations of Koizumi's successors the LDP to a great extent returned to the traditional decision-making mechanisms, but factions failed to regain their former position.

## DPJ Factions in "Statu Nascendi"

Analogically to the LDP, the DPJ was created as a result of a merger of several smaller groups representing different ideological camps. The original DPJ was established in 1996 mainly by the parliamentarians from the Social Democratic Party (SDP, Shakai Minshutō) and the New Pioneers Party (NPP, Shintō Sakigake). In subsequent years the DPJ managed to

absorb other opposition groups. In 1998 the 'new' DPJ was created as a result of a merger with the Good Governance Party (GGP, Minseitō), New Fraternity Party (NFP, Shintō Yūai), and Democratic Reform Party (DRP, Minshu Kaikaku Rengō). The DPJ gained its ultimate form when it absorbed the Liberal Party (LP, Jiyūtō) in 2003.

Taking into account the origin of DPJ lawmakers, one could distinguish three ideological camps in this party – factions that derived from the leftist parties, from the LDP, and from the new conservative parties created in the 1990s. The first camp was composed of the groups led by Yokomichi Takahiro (former SDP), Kawabata Tatsuo (former NFP, former Democratic Socialist Party, Minshatō), and Kan Naoto (politicians from the former SDP and smaller leftist parties). All of them promoted welfare state policy, and the factions led by Yokomichi and Kawabata were supported by two of the most prominent former trade unions – Sōhyō and Dōmei respectively. Nevertheless, while the Yokomichi group opposed the revision of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, the Kawabata faction held a clearly rightist position in the sphere of defense policy.[1] It was caused by the fact that it represented the interests of the laborers of the arms industry, and thus it promoted the remilitarization of Japan.

Another ideological camp was composed of the groups led by Ozawa Ichirō (former LP), Hatoyama Yukio (former NPP and individual politicians from various conservative parties), and Hata Tsutomu (former GGP and individual politicians from other conservative parties). These factions originated from the LDP and had a middle-of-the-road or moderately rightist ideological profile. The right wing of the DPJ, in turn, was occupied by the groups led by Maehara Seiji and Noda Yoshihiko. The members of these factions had started their parliamentarian careers in such conservative parties that were created in the 1990s as the Japan New Party (JNP, Nihon Shintō). Many of them represented a neoliberal approach to economic policy. Maehara Seiji was a representative of the most hawkish politicians who supported an assertive policy towards China and North Korea (Itagaki 2008, pp. 15–27).

Just as the LDP, the DPJ resorted to several techniques to mitigate factional struggles. As an opposition party, the DPJ did not have access to governmental posts, but the role of intraparty groups in distributing

[1] Article 9 of Japanese Constitution prohibits the possession of armed forces. Despite this fact, Japan's Self-Defense Forces are one of the strongest conventional armies in the world.

party offices was evident. As indicated by Hamamoto (2011, pp. 47–56), while lower ranking posts were given according to the rule of seniority and skills, the highest posts were distributed in conformity with the factional key. Usually the offices were divided equally among all factions. Only in a few instances (mainstreams of Kan in 1999, Hatoyama in 2002, and Maehara in 2005) was the domination of the members of the winning factions visible on the level of party executives.

**Table 1.** Results of DPJ Presidential Elections in 1996–2005

| Date | Candidates | Number of Votes in Two Rounds | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| September 1996 | Kan Naoto and Hatoyama Yukio | | Collegial leadership, no competitors |
| September 1997 | Kan Naoto | | One candidate |
| April 1998 | Kan Naoto | | One candidate |
| January 1999 | Kan Naoto<br>Matsuzawa Shigefumi | 180<br>51 | |
| September 1999 | Hatoyama Yukio<br>Kan Naoto<br>Yokomichi Takahiro | 154–182<br>109–130<br>57 | |
| September 2000 | Hatoyama Yukio | | One candidate |
| September 2002 | Hatoyama Yukio<br>Kan Naoto<br>Noda Yoshihiko<br>Yokomichi Takahiro | 294–254<br>221–242<br>182<br>119 | Primaries |
| December 2002 | Kan Naoto<br>Okada Katsuya | 104<br>79 | |
| May 2004 | Okada Katsuya | | One candidate |
| September 2004 | Okada Katsuya | | One candidate |
| September 2005 | Maehara Seiji<br>Kan Naoto | 96<br>94 | |

Based on many sources, especially: Uekami 2013, p. 57.

Nevertheless, balanced distribution of party portfolios was insufficient to keep factional struggles in check. As emphasized by Itagaki (2008,

pp. 76–77), just as in the case of the LDP, intraparty frictions in the DPJ escalated especially during presidential elections. In contrast to the dominant party, however, joint participation in power could not work as a glue that prevented the party from breaking apart. As a result, the DPJ elaborated a practice of avoiding official elections, not to provoke excessive tensions between separate groups. Ideological differences between DPJ factions were so fresh that the escalation of factional struggles could have led to disintegration of the whole party. As shown in Table 1, among 11 elections since the establishment of the original DPJ in 1996 until 2005 as many as five times there was no voting (there was only one candidate), and the primaries among rank-and-file party members were organized solely in 2002. In the rest of the instances only lawmakers and sometimes regional representatives had the right to vote. Under these circumstances, backstage deals between faction leaders were crucial in choosing a party president. As ideological divisions were still strong, alliances were usually kept within separate camps.[2]

## Domination of the Ozawa Faction

By the DPJ's tenth anniversary in 2006, its factional system had started gaining a mature form. The activity of intraparty groups was institutionalized. On the one hand, they still were much looser organizations than their LDP counterparts. They usually lacked separate offices and allowed overlapping membership in other intraparty groups. On the other hand, they evolved from mere casual gatherings of befriended politicians to more formalized structures. For example, they gained formal names and started holding more or less regular meetings. This evolution was probably accelerated by the absorption of the LP in 2003. As admitted by Matsuzaki Tetsuhisa, the group led by Ozawa Ichirō possessed more traits of an LDP faction than other DPJ groups.[3] When Ozawa became DPJ leader in 2006, he seemed to be as powerful as Tanaka Kakuei and Takeshita Noboru in the LDP in the 1980s.

[2] For example the candidature of Kan Naoto (DPJ leader in 1998–1999 and 2002–2004) was usually supported by the groups led by Yokomichi and Kawabata, the candidacy of Hatoyama Yukio (DPJ leader in 1999–2002) by the Hata faction, and the candidature of Maehara Seiji (DPJ leader in 2005–2006) by the Noda group.

[3] Author's interview with DPJ Member of House of Representatives Matsuzaki Tetsuhisa, Parliament of Japan, Tokyo, 20 April 2012.

Over the years the politicians who retired were replaced with younger lawmakers who did not remember the activity in smaller parties. As indicated by Uekami (2011, p. 80), the politicians who started their political careers in the unified DPJ dominated in the majority of factions in September 2009. The number of new lawmakers amounted to 19 among 42 in the Yokomichi faction, 55 among 68 in the Kan faction, 8 among 20 in the Hata faction, 12 among 20 in the Hatoyama faction, 34 among 69 in the Kawabata faction, 19 among 40 in the Ozawa faction, 12 among 17 in the Maehara faction, and as many as 18 among 21 in the Noda faction. Moreover, as much as 79.2% of the DPJ members of the House of Representatives in 2009 had never belonged to a different party than the DPJ during their parliamentary careers (in 2005 this percentage amounted to 62.8%) (Hamamoto 2011, p. 37). Just as their LDP counterparts, DPJ groups started focusing on the pragmatic representation of the interests of their members instead of pursuing distinct policy goals. This evolution is clearly visible through the analysis of the fading importance of programmatic differences during DPJ presidential elections. The solidarity of ideological groups weakened, which enabled entering into changeable alliances just as in the case of the LDP.

**Table 2.** Results of DPJ Presidential Elections in 2006–2009

| Date | Candidates | Number of Votes | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| April 2006 | Ozawa Ichirō<br>Kan Naoto | 119<br>72 | |
| September 2006 | Ozawa Ichirō | | One candidate |
| September 2008 | Ozawa Ichirō | | One candidate |
| May 2009 | Hatoyama Yukio<br>Okada Katsuya | 124<br>95 | |

Based on many sources, especially: Uekami 2013, p. 57.

In April 2006 Ozawa Ichirō became party leader as much thanks to the support from the Hatoyama and Hata factions, as thanks to cooperation with the leftist groups led by Yokomichi and Kawabata (Uekami 2011, p. 86). As shown in Table 2, he was re-elected two times as a sole candidate in September 2006 and September 2008. After becoming DPJ president, Ozawa created a forum for inter-factional cooperation. The so-called "troika" was composed of Ozawa, Acting President Kan Naoto, and Secretary-General Hatoyama Yukio. After the DPJ's victory in the election

to the House of Councilors in 2007 they were joined by the Chairperson of DPJ Caucus in the House of Councilors and Acting President Koshiishi Azuma (Itō 2008, p. 183). While this inner circle of power gathered only the representatives of the most influential groups, not secretary-generals of all the factions as had been the case in the LDP under the Takeshita administration, until 2010 it succeeded in mitigating intraparty frictions.

In May 2009 Ozawa had to resign due to an illegal donations scandal that had been disclosed in March 2009.[4] Nevertheless, he was immediately nominated as DPJ acting president by Hatoyama Yukio who became the new party leader. Hatoyama relied heavily on Ozawa's experience in conducting electoral campaigns before the August 2009 general election. Following the electoral victory, Ozawa was appointed as DPJ secretary-general. Prime Minister Hatoyama vested to him most of his own prerogatives as a DPJ leader, even the management of the legislative process after the submission of bill projects to the Diet. Ozawa became a real power broker and a "shadow shogun" behind the government. The secret of his influence was the fact that he gained the loyalty from most of the newly elected first-term DPJ lawmakers. As a result, the number of members of the Ozawa faction in a broad sense amounted to 150 parliamentarians (Liu 2009, p. 106). As such, Ozawa led an even larger group than the faction-hegemon in the LDP in the 1980s. Hatoyama's reliance on Ozawa resembled the dual structure of power from the 1980s, when successive prime ministers were dependent on the support from Tanaka Kakuei and Takeshita Noboru.

Factional membership proved important in allocating governmental posts after the alternation of power in 2009. The Ozawa – Hatoyama duo made sure that all intraparty groups would be satisfied with the distribution of spoils. In September 2009 a relative balance was kept in the allocation of posts to separate factions. Only the Noda group did not receive a ministerial office, but it can be explained by its small size and by the fact that it gained relatively more vice-ministerial posts than other factions (Noda himself became vice minister of finance).

[4] It was revealed that in 2003–2006 Ozawa's organization Rikuzankai had received 35 million yen through fictitious organizations from the Nishimatsu Kensetsu construction company, probably in return for assistance in winning a bid for dam construction in Iwate Prefecture.

## Escalation of Factional Struggles

Despite Hatoyama's will to maintain intraparty harmony, he was harshly criticized by other groups for his alliance with Ozawa Ichirō. Eventually, the prime minister stepped down from office in June 2010. Among other reasons, he cited the illegal donation scandals, in which both he and Ozawa were involved.[5] Concurrently, Ozawa resigned from the post of DPJ secretary-general. DPJ presidential election in June 2010 ended in a change of balance of power in the ruling party. Ozawa Ichirō tried to keep the control over the party by supporting the candidature of Tarutoko Shinji, but he was defeated by Kan Naoto. As a result, a new mainstream composed of Kan, Maehara, and Noda factions emerged.

Due to the fact that since 2009 the power itself became a sufficient factor to keep intraparty groups together, the DPJ started regularly conducting competitive elections for the post of party leader. As shown in Table 3, in none of the three elections in 2010–2012 did the DPJ resort to previously common practice of resolving intraparty competition through backstage deals between faction bosses. It is not insignificant that it would have been unsuitable for a ruling party to choose its leader, who concurrently served as prime minister, through behind the scenes compromises. Nevertheless, holding official elections among the lawmakers, and even the primaries among the rank-and-file members, did not weaken the role of factional struggles in this process. All three prime ministers from the DPJ were faction bosses and they owed their position mainly to the alliances with other faction leaders. The democratization of elections brought a side effect – it incited factional struggles. Harsh competition between the mainstream and anti-mainstream camp to some extent resembled the situation in the LDP. What is important, ideological factors played less and less a significant role in forming intraparty alliances. For example, Kan's leftist groups cooperated with the most rightist factions led by Maehara and Noda.

The escalation of factional struggles coincided with emergence of new factions in the DPJ. After Ozawa's resignation as secretary-general in June 2010, his control over the first-term DPJ lawmakers diminished greatly. In October 2010 Tarutoko Shinji created a separate group that recruited

[5] In 2009 it was revealed that it was Hatoyama's mother – daughter of the founder of Bridgestone – that gave illegal donations to her son.

**Table 3.** Results of DPJ Presidential Elections in 2010–2012

| Date | Candidates | Number of Votes in Two Rounds | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| June 2010 | Kan Naoto<br>Tarutoko Shinji | 291<br>129 | |
| September 2010 | Kan Naoto<br>Ozawa Ichirō | 721<br>491 | Primaries |
| August 2011 | Noda Yoshihiko<br>Kaieda Banri<br>Maehara Seiji<br>Kano Michihiko<br>Mabuchi Sumio | 102–215<br>143–177<br>74<br>52<br>24 | |
| September 2012 | Noda Yoshihiko<br>Haraguchi Kazuhiro<br>Akamatsu Hirotaka<br>Kano Michihiko | 818<br>154<br>123<br>113 | Primaries |
| December 2012 | Kaieda Banri<br>Mabuchi Sumio | 90<br>54 | |

Based on many sources, especially: Uekami 2013, p. 57.

about 30 young parliamentarians who stayed in good relations with the Ozawa and Hatoyama factions. A similar group was established in December 2010 by Hirano Hirofumi. Other new factions emerged in the spring of 2011. They were led by Genba Kōichirō, Nagashima Akihisa, Haraguchi Kazuhiro, and Ozawa Sakihito. It is symptomatic that many of the bosses of these new groups were the graduates of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management – an elite postgraduate school whose mission was to educate future Japanese politicians. As emphasized by Idei (2012, p. 35), the former students of this school were characterized by high ambitions and strong individualism. They aimed at being leaders rather than followers, so they eagerly entered the political vacuum that was left after Ozawa's degradation.

Due to the fact that in June 2010 Kan became DPJ leader only for the rest of the two-year term that had been started in 2008 by Ozawa, in September 2010 he had to once more face the challenge from the anti-mainstream politicians. This time, not only lawmakers, but also regional representatives and rank-and-file party members had the right to vote. Despite the unresolved illegal donations scandal, Ozawa Ichirō decided to run himself instead of supporting another politician whom he could control from behind the scenes. Ozawa demanded the prime min-

ister to take responsibility for the DPJ's defeat in election to the House of Councilors in July 2010.[6] However, Kan Naoto managed to win, mainly thanks to the criticism of Ozawa's corruption practices. While he gained much more votes than Ozawa among rank-and-file party members (249 to 51 votes in 300 single-seat constituencies), he was only slightly more popular among regional representatives (60 to 40 votes), and parliamentarians (412 to 400 – each lawmaker had two votes) (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2011, pp. 22–24).

The next stage of competition between the mainstream and anti-mainstream began only several weeks after the tragic earthquake and tsunami that devastated the northeastern region of Japan on 11 March 2011. Immediately after the cataclysm the Ozawa and Hatoyama factions weakened their criticism of the prime minister, but factional struggles started once more in April 2011. Anti-mainstream politicians accused Prime Minister Kan of his inaptitude in coping with the accident in the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. They even announced they would support a no-confidence motion against the government, submitted by the opposition parties. Eventually, Ozawa's followers decided to vote against the motion at the beginning of June 2011, but only due to the fact that Kan Naoto promised to step down from office as soon as he dealt with the crisis situation after the earthquake. The prime minister kept his word and resigned in August 2011 (Zakowski 2015, pp. 127–129).

In the next election, which was organized exclusively among lawmakers, as many as five candidates competed for the post of DPJ leader. Two of them – Noda Yoshihiko and Maehara Seiji – were the representatives of the intraparty mainstream. Although the first round was won by a politician supported by Ozawa – Kaieda Banri from the Hatoyama faction – he was defeated in the second round by Noda Yoshihiko by a margin of 215 to 177 votes (Ōshita 2011, pp. 103–106). As a result, previous mainstream groups kept power in the DPJ. Factional frictions attained climax in June 2012, when despite protests from DPJ backbenchers Noda passed a consumption tax hike bill in the House of Representatives. Ozawa, who voted against the bill, defected from the ruling party together with nearly

[6] The House of Councilors is the upper house of the Japanese Diet. Every three years half of its members are elected for a six-year-long term. As a result of the electoral defeat in July 2010, the DPJ lost the majority of votes in the upper house, which considerably hindered decision-making process.

50 lawmakers, and in July 2012 he established a party named People's Life First (PLF, Kokumin no Seikatsu ga Daiichi). Deprived of the main opponent, Noda was easily reelected as DPJ leader in September 2012, when a record number of five candidates ran in the DPJ presidential election. However, soon thereafter the DPJ suffered a crushing defeat in the lower house election, which forced Noda to resign. In December 2012 Kaieda Banri defeated Mabuchi Sumio and became new party leader.

The escalation of factional struggles was reflected in distribution of governmental portfolios. In the Kan cabinet almost all factions besides the Ozawa group received equally two posts each. This discrimination of the biggest faction indicated the prime minister's will to separate anti-mainstream politicians from power after a harsh competition between Kan Naoto and Ozawa Ichirō in the DPJ presidential election. By contrast, Noda Yoshihiko declared in September 2011 that his cabinet would be based on "party harmony" and ensured a strong representation of the Ozawa faction in the government (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2011, p. 13). As was already mentioned, this conciliatory posture did not last long because of the VAT hike policy. Moreover, during a government reshuffle in January 2012 Noda had to dismiss the only cabinet members from the Ozawa faction due to censure motions against them passed by the opposition parties in the House of Councilors one month earlier (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2012, pp. 88–91).

Increased intraparty competition compelled faction bosses to further institutionalize the activity of their groups. Since 2010 several groups, such as those led by Maehara Seiji and Hatoyama Yukio, have started holding regular meetings on Thursdays at noon. The Noda faction had introduced this LDP-like tradition even earlier. Parallel meetings made it more difficult for one politician to engage in the activity of several groups at one time (Kuboniwa 2012, p. 139). DPJ politicians went one step further in imitating LDP structures in April 2014. Hosono Gōshi, who created a new faction named Jiseikai, for the first time stipulated a clear prohibition for his followers to concurrently belong to different intraparty groups (Sankei Shinbun 2014). This revolutionary decision seems to indicate that after the electoral defeat in 2012 many DPJ politicians started seeking an institutional model for their party in the LDP, whose factional politics they used to criticize.

## Conclusions

Factionalism has been a controversial issue in the DPJ. Over the years the politicians of this party had criticized the factional politics of the LDP and tried to pretend that this problem did not concern their party. Indeed, there were several differences between the factional systems of both parties, such as a tolerance for overlapping membership, which would have been unthinkable in the LDP. We cannot forget that the DPJ was established after the electoral system reform, and thus it would be difficult to compare the role of its factions with the functions performed by the LDP factions during the Cold War period.

Nevertheless, just as in the LDP we can distinguish several stages of the evolution of the DPJ's factional system. In the initial period DPJ groups could be considered as mere continuations of the existence of former small parties under a different form. Over the years, however, their ideological leanings weakened considerably. Thanks to this process, instead of realizing their programmatic visions, intraparty groups could to a greater extent focus on representing political interests of their members. Faction bosses used their subordinates to increase their own chances in DPJ presidential elections, and lower ranking lawmakers could count on access to information, and, to some degree, on assistance in applying for party and governmental offices. When Ozawa Ichirō became party leader in 2006, the situation was ripe for him to strengthen his position in the DPJ through an alliance with the ideologically most remote Yokomichi group. The historic alternation of power in 2009 even enhanced Ozawa's hegemony by providing him with cohorts of relatively loyal first-term lawmakers. Nevertheless, the dominance of the Ozawa faction lasted much shorter than the one of the Tanaka – Takeshita group in the LDP. Ozawa and Hatoyama's illegal donation scandals compelled the leaders of all other factions to ally against the former mainstream groups. Subsequently, the factional system was destabilized by severe intraparty struggles. Eventually, Ozawa concluded he was unable to regain power and defected from the DPJ. Concurrently, new intraparty groups were established by the ambitious young politicians.

This series of events proves that despite the weakening of factionalism after the electoral system reform, interpersonal connections continue to play an important role in structuring competition for power in the DPJ. Hosono's decision to prohibit his followers from overlapping membership

in different groups seems to indicate that the next generation of DPJ leaders holds an affirmative stance on factionalism. After all, it would be difficult to completely reject the need for maintaining some kind of patron – client ties, which are deeply embedded in the Japanese political culture.

## Acknowledgements

This article is a result of research conducted as a part of a project financed by the Polish National Science Centre based on decision DEC-2011/01/B/HS5/00863.

## References

Hamamoto, Sh 2011, "Minshutō ni okeru Yakushoku Haibun no Seidoka" [Institutionalization of Post Distribution in the DPJ] in Uekami, T & Tsutsumi, H (eds.), *Minshutō no Soshiki to Seisaku* [DPJ's Organization and Policy], Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, Tokyo, pp. 29–69.

Hayashi, Y & Tsumura, K 2011, *Kokkai Giin no Shigoto* [The Work of Member of Parliament], Chūō Kōron Shinsha, Tokyo.

Honzawa, J 1990, *Jimintō Habatsu* [LDP Factions], Piipurusha, Tokyo.

Idei, Y 2012, *Ranru no Hata. Matsushita Seikeijuku no Kenkyū* [Tattered Flag. Research on the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management], Asuka Shinsha, Tokyo.

Iseri, H 1988, *Habatsu Saihensei* [Reorganization of Factions], Chūō Kōronsha, Tokyo.

Itagaki, E 2008, *Minshutō Habatsu Kōsōshi* [History of Struggle between DPJ Factions], Kyōei Shobō, Tokyo.

Itō, A 2008, *Minshutō. Yabō to Yagō no Mekanizumu* [DPJ. The Mechanism of Ambition and Collusion], Shinchōsha, Tokyo.

Kohno, M 1997, *Japan's Postwar Party Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Kuboniwa, S 2012, "Seiji Shudō" [Political Leadership], in Fujimoto, K (ed.), *Minshutō Seikenron* [The Discourse on the DPJ Government], Gakubunsha, Tokyo, pp. 114–148.

Kusano, A 2008, *Seiken Kōtai no Hōsoku* [The Rule of Alternation of Power], Kadokawa Shoten, Tokyo.

Lee, K 2006, *Ilbon-ui Jeongdang-gwa Jeongdang Jeongchi* [Japanese Parties and Party Politics], Doseo Chulpan Maebong, Seoul.

Liu, D 2009, *Jiushan Youjifu. Riben Minzhudang Zhengzhi de Kaimu* [Hatoyama Yukio. The Opening of the DPJ Rule], Dongfang Chubanshe, Beijing.

Nakane, Ch 2007, *Tate Shakai no Ningen Kankei* [Interpersonal Relations of Vertical Society], Kōdansha, Tokyo.

Nonaka, N 1989, *Jimintō Seiji no Owari* [The End of LDP Politics], Chikuma Shobō, Tokyo.

Ōshita, E 2011, *Shitatakana Dojō. Noda Yoshihiko Kenkyū* [Tough Loach. Research on Noda Yoshihiko], Seishisha, Tokyo.

Sankei Shinbun, April 8, 2014, "Minshu Hosono-Shi ga Habatsu Tachiage, Jiki Daihyōsen e Fuseki. Tōnai Kōsō ga Gekika" [Mr. Hosono from the DPJ Establishes a Faction, Preparation for the Next Presidential Election. Intensification of Intraparty Struggles], viewed August 25, 2014, http://sankei.jp.msn.com/politics/news/140408/stt14040800580000-n3.htm.

Uchida, K 1983, *Habatsu. Seiken Kōsō no Omote to Ura* [Factions. Official and Concealed Side of Struggle for Power], Kōdansha, Tokyo.

Uekami, T 2011, "Senkyo Seido Kaikaku to Minshutō Daihyō Senshutsu Katei ni okeru Funsō Kanri" [Reform of Electoral System and Management of Struggles in DPJ Presidential Elections], in Uekami T & Tsutsumi H (eds.), *Minshutō no Soshiki to Seisaku* [DPJ's Organization and Policy], Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, Tokyo, pp. 71–98.

Uekami, T 2013, "Seiken Kōtaiki ni okeru Shidōshazō – Jimintō Sōsai to Minshutō Daihyō no Purofairu to sono Henyō" [Image of Leader in the Period of Alternation of Power – Evolution of the Profile of LDP and DPJ Presidents], in Iio, J (ed.), *Seiken Kōtai to Seitō Seiji. Rekishi no Naka no Nihon Seiji 6* [Alternation of Power and Party Politics. Japanese Politics in History 6], Chūō Kōron Shinsha, Tokyo, pp. 45–73

Uchiyama, Y 2007, *Koizumi Seiken* [Koizumi Government], Chūō Kōron Shinsha, Tokyo.

Wang, Zh 2001, *Zhanhou Riben Zhengdang Zhengzhi* [Postwar Party Politics in Japan], Renmin Chubanshe, Beijing.

Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2011, *Bōkoku no Saishō. Kantei Kinō Teishi no 180 Nichi* [Prime Minister of a Ruined Country. 180 Days of Suspension of Kantei's Functions], Shinchōsha, Tokyo.

Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2012, *Minshu Gakai. Seikai Daikonmei e no 300 Nichi* [Collapse of the DPJ. 300 Days Towards a Great Confusion of the Political World], Shinchōsha, Tokyo.

Zakowski, K 2015, *Decision-Making Reform in Japan: The DPJ's Failed Attempt at a Politician-Led Government*, Routledge, London and New York.