

JAPAN

Ainu

Activity: 1984-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The Hokkaido Ainu Association was formed in 1930 by the Ainu people and aimed to “organize the social action to cause the social change for respecting the human dignity of the Ainu people and improving their social condition by changing the social policy toward the Ainu people.” This included action aimed at land rights, as the Ainu people oppose the construction of a new water reservoir on their land.
- The first evidence for separatist mobilization in the post-WII period we found is in 1984, when Ainu separatists demanded a new statue to replace the racist aboriginal law of 1899, under which the Ainu are still governed by Japan. Since this appears to be the first report of post-1945 separatist action by the Ainu, the start date is pegged at 1984. News reports indicate that Ainu separatists remained active until at least 2002 (Minahan 1996, 2002; Lexis Nexis).
- On January 21, 2012, the Ainu Party was founded. The party aims to “to eliminate the discrimination that continues to exist today and restore the rights of indigenous peoples” (Ainu party). The Ainu Party calls for “the right to autonomy” according to the UN Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and has written it into party’s main policy (Ainu Party). In September 2007 United Nations General Assembly, Japan voted “yes” to the declaration which was adopted in the end. (UN 2007). The Ainu Party remained active as of 2020.
- In February 2019, during the setting process of the Ainu Policy Promotion Act, several independent Ainu organizations submitted demands to the Cabinet Secretary, which includes a call for Ainu’s rights to access lands and resources (Gayman 2022: 295-296).
- On this basis, we code the start date of the movement in 1984 and code it as ongoing as of 2020. While we found no evidence for separatist mobilization in 2003-2011, we code the movement as ongoing throughout these years based on the 10-years rule. [start date: 1984; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- In the early twentieth century, the Ainu advocated independence (Japan Today 2009). However, over the next half-century, the claim seems to have shifted towards more cultural and economic autonomy. This is confirmed by Minahan (2002), who states that the Ainu demand cultural and economic autonomy. Additional evidence is provided by the Ainu submission to the UN Working Group in 1989, where they demanded to be acknowledged as a minzoku, a Japanese word that could best be translated with “ethnic group”, “people”, or “nation”. Morris-Suzuki (1999) also states that the Ainu claim for self-determination is “clearly not a claim for political independence” but rather one for economic autonomy, representation, promotion of Ainu culture and language, the granting of land rights and an end to racial discrimination. The Ainu Party, formed in 2012, also advocates increased autonomy (Ainu Party). [1984-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The Ainu have sought to improve their land rights and political autonomy in Japan, where they primarily inhabit the Hokkaido Island. In 2016, at the Ainu Party convention, the Party claimed sovereignty over Iturup, Kunashir, Habomai, and Shitanjima according to UNDRIP. In June 2017, the Ainu Party organized a public event to call for a return of northern territory sovereignty to the Ainu people (Ainu Party). We code this claim using GIS data from GADM.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- We found no reports of separatist violence, hence a NVIOLSD classification. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The Ainu culture is believed to have become established across Hokkaido around the twelfth and thirteenth century. From the thirteenth and fourteenth century onwards, the Ainu were increasingly coming under pressure from the Japanese, who colonized their territory and made them retreat further northwards (Japan Today 2009; Minahan 2002; Minority Rights Group International).
- The dispute between Ainu and Japanese led to Ainu revolts and eventually turned into a war. The Ainu were defeated several times and ended up being enslaved by the Japanese. Mistreatment by the Japanese and unfamiliar diseases led to an extreme decline of the Ainu population in the first half of the nineteenth century (Minahan 2002; Minority Rights Group International).
- In the Meiji period (1868-1912) Hokkaido (Ezo) was unilaterally incorporated into Japan. The Ainu saw the imposition of direct administration, a legal abolishment of their land rights and massive programs to encourage Japanese settlements in Hokkaido. Furthermore, the Meiji period was also a time of forced assimilationist policies. The use of the Ainu language was banned from schools and many cultural practices such as traditional hunting and fishing or traditional hairstyles and clothes were prohibited (Japan Today 2009; Minahan 2002; Minority Rights Group International).
- A 1899 law, ironically called the Law for the Protection of the Primitive Peoples of Hokkaido, described the Ainu as an inferior race and placed the Ainu land under Japanese control. The Ainu were forced into less productive lands and many died from illness or starvation (Minahan 2007). The act further weakened the national identity of the Ainu and was another attempt to assimilate the indigenous group.

Concessions and restrictions

- In 1997, a court case initiated the first significant legislation to protect and promote the Ainu language, culture and tradition. The Act on the Encouragement of Ainu Culture and the Diffusion and Enlightenment of Knowledge on Ainu Tradition (or the Ainu Culture Promotion Act) recognized that, in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Ainu are an ethnic minority with a distinctive culture. Several “concrete measures” (Minority

- Rights Group International; Tanaka 2004) followed this recognition of the Ainu as an ethnic minority, which is why we code a cultural rights concession. [1997: cultural rights concession]
- Japan's House of Representatives and House of Councilors unanimously adopted the 'Resolution to Recognize the Ainu as an Indigenous People' in June 2008, which led to the Ainu being officially recognized by the government as an indigenous people in Japan (World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples; Ainu Policy Promotion Headquarters). After that, the Japanese government set up an advisory council including Ainu representatives (the majority of representatives is non-Ainu, however) (Maruyama 2013). One of the measures emerging from this was the construction of the National Ainu Museum and Park (Ainu Policy Promotion Headquarters). Overall, the 2008 recognition is seen as an important step forward for bringing Ainu culture out of Hokkaido to elsewhere in Japan (Komai 2022), and "helped to overcome administrative and legal red tape that restricted Ainu access to natural resources necessary for traditional practices and arts" (Maruyama 2013: 206). We code the recognition as an indigenous people as a cultural rights concession. [2008: cultural rights concession]
 - In 2019, the Act on the Promotion of Measures to Realize a Society That Will Respect the Pride of the Ainu (or the Ainu Policy Promotion Act) was promulgated. This legislation (again) recognized the Ainu as the indigenous people of Japan, outlaws discrimination based on their ethnicity (Article 4), and mandates national and local governments to start educational and publicity campaigns to improve the public's understanding of the Ainu (Article 5) (Gayman 2022; Tsunemoto 2019; Kanpou 2019; Ainu Policy Promotion Headquarters). While a concession, this change is difficult to view as a cultural rights or autonomy concession.

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

NA

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Ainu
<i>Scenario</i>	No match/1:1/No match
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Ainu
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	74001000

Power access

- EPR codes the Ainu as discriminated in 1985-1996, and as irrelevant in all other years. The Ainu Culture Promotion Act, passed on 8 May, 1997 (Nuttall 2005: 19) and enacted 1 July, 1997 (Siddle 2002 <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/law-ainu.html>), has recognized the right of the right of the Ainu people to enjoy their distinct culture and tradition and represented an embrace of Ainu culture. After that, Law for the Protection of the Primitive Peoples of Hokkaido set in 1899 was repealed. This represents a removal of explicit discrimination of Ainu group. Therefore, 1997

is coded as “discriminated” according to the first of January rule, and 1998 to 2020 as “powerless”. [1997: discriminated] [1998-2020: powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.0002]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 58), the Ainu are mostly located on Hokkaido. Minahan does not give more detailed figures. The Ainu Association of Hokkaido (2006) provides information on the population share of ethnic Ainu for each sub-prefecture of Hokkaido. In no sub-prefecture do the Ainu constitute a majority. The largest share of Ainu is in the sub-prefecture of Hiddaka (31.7%), whereas in most other sub-prefecture, the Ainu make up less than 10% of the local population. Thus, we code them as not concentrated. [not concentrated]

Kin

- No kin according to EPR. Minahan (2002: 58) mentions approximately 10,000 Ainu in Russia. We do not code ethnic kin since the Ainu community in Russia is too small. [no kin]

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Okinawans

Activity: 1972-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The island of Okinawa was occupied by the United States after the Second World War. The Ryukyu independence movement emerged in 1945 in opposition to allied occupation and advocated an independent state or unification with the mainland. In November 1969 President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato signed an agreement to return Okinawa to Japan as the Okinawa Prefecture in 1972 (Hewitt and Cheetham 2000; Howell 1996; Minahan 2002). Based on this, we code the start date in 1945. However, the movement is only coded from 1972, the year Okinawa was transferred back to Japan. Prior activity was non-violent. U.S. military presence has remained ever since and fuelled continued demands for an independent state as “the only real way to free ourselves from the American bases” (New York Times 2013). The movement is ongoing (e.g. Mc Cormack 2016; The Guardian 2014). [start date: 1945; end date: ongoing]
 - o Additional information: Significant events in recent years include protests in 2016 in the context of a case of rape (BBC 2017) and in 2018 against the planned relocation of a U.S military base (Kyodo News 2018; Spectrum News 2019). Another significant is a 2019 referendum, in which more than 70% of voters voted against Henoko base, a new military base (The Guardian 2019).

Dominant claim

- Prior to the First World War, the movement’s demands aimed at more autonomy and linguistic rights. However, as discrimination increased and the military hierarchy took control, the Okinawans became more radical and formed the Okinawa Independence Party in the 1930s. Until the party’s suppression in the late 1930s, it openly advocated secession. Independence remained on the agenda also after the Second World War when in 1950 the governor of the island (Oshiro Shikiya) presented a plan for an independent Okinawa (Minahan 2002).
- The independence claim has remained active ever since. After Okinawa was ceded back to Japan, nationalists of the Ryukyu Independence Party (The Kariyushi Club) proposed the establishment of an independent Republic of the Ryukus in the early 1970s (Hewitt and Cheetham 2000; Minahan 2002; Kariyushi Club). Another organisation, the Association of Comprehensive Studies for Independence of the Lew Chewans (ACSIL), made independence claim as of 2022 (see ACSIL website). The independence claim is confirmed by several sources including the Guardian (2014) and the New York Times (2013), which both call the nationalist Okinawa agitation an “independence movement”.
- At the same time, there have also been claims for autonomy. For instance, in his 2014 campaign for the Okinawan governorship, Onaga Takeshi made claims for increased autonomy, particularly with regards to the issue of the US military base (Jin 2016). In the 2018 gubernatorial election, Denny Tamaki, who ended up winning, used the slogan that “Uchina no koto ha Uchinanchu ga kimeru”, which means “let Uchinanchu decide about Ryukyuan/Okinawan matters” (ABE 2022).
- It is not fully clear which claim is dominant. According to a 2011 poll, only 5% favored independence, 20% increased autonomy, and the rest the status quo. However, we code the dominant claim made by the SDM, which remains ambiguous. Therefore, we code the more radical claim. [1972-2020: independence claim]

Independence claims

- As noted above, there have been consistent politically significant calls for an independent Okinawa, even if this claim competes with autonomy claims. This also applies to the period before Okinawa was returned to Japan. [start date: 1945; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Okinawans, i.e., the Republic of Ryukyu (also: State of Okinawa), consists of the islands between the south of Japan and north of Taiwan (Roth 2015: 358–59). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database (GADM 2019).

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- We found no separatist violence and thus code the entire movement as NVIOLSD. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- Initially autonomous, Okinawa entered into a tributary relationship with China from the fourteenth century onwards. In 1879 Okinawa and the other southern Ryukyus were forcibly annexed by Japanese troops and became a Japanese prefecture. Okinawan culture and language were banned by a policy of forced assimilation into Japanese culture. Japanese replaced the Ryukyu dialects and by the 1900s the Okinawans considered themselves to be Japanese (Hewitt and Cheetham 2000; Minahan 2002; The Guardian 2014).
- A movement for autonomy and linguistic rights emerged after the First World War but as discrimination increased and the military hierarchy took control, the Okinawans became more radical and formed the Okinawa Independence Party in the 1930s. Until the party's suppression in the late 1930s, it openly advocated secession. By the end of the 1930s most Okinawan leaders were imprisoned or killed and the island, in preparation for war, was heavily fortified (Minahan 2002).
- American troops invaded Okinawa in early 1945 following a devastating battle that had killed over a third of the Okinawan population and led to the destruction of 94% of all buildings in the capital of Naha. The US military occupied the island and established military bases. The 1951 peace treaty granted the US "the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation, and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of these islands." An independence movement emerged in opposition to allied occupation and advocated an independent state or unification with the mainland. A petition calling for reunification with the mainland collected almost 200,000 signatures (Hewitt and Cheetham 2000; Minahan 2002).
- In 1968, Okinawa elected its first chief executive and was granted considerable autonomy (Minahan 2002; Tanji 2007: 90). Hence we code a prior autonomy concession in 1968. [1968: autonomy concession]
- In November 1969 President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Eisaku Sato signed an agreement to return Okinawa to Japan as the Okinawa Prefecture in 1972 (Hewitt and Cheetham 2000;

Howell 1996). Given Japan's unitary structure, this means a reduction in autonomy. According to Stronach (1995: 65), Okinawa "has been assimilated into Japan through a centralized mass media, unitary governance, centralized education, [and] economic unity." [1969: autonomy restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- In 1993, the dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party and a new coalition government under Morihiro Hosokawa placed decentralization on the political agenda. In 1995, the Law for Promoting Decentralization was enacted by Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi. The law itself did not specify concrete measures that would devolve power but only laid out three general key objectives (see Barrett 2000: 34). The law established the Committee for the Promotion of Decentralization in order to supervise decentralization policies and is considered a "serious effort to promote decentralization" (Horie 1996: 65) that led to "devolution of substantial power" (Kamo 2000: 118). We code an autonomy concession while noting that devolution mostly concerns administrative matters and the government retained the power to intervene in local affairs (Kamo 2000: 111). [1993: autonomy concession]
- In July 1999, the 1947 Local Autonomy Act was amended. In the amended law, the relationship between the central and local governments was framed as "an equal and cooperative relationship" instead of a superior relationship in the older version. Most notably, the amended act gave prefectures more autonomy in a range of areas including welfare, city planning and public entity. Okinawa has had the status of a prefecture ever since its re-integration into Japan in 1972. We code a concession though it should be noted that regional autonomy remained limited (McCormack 2016; Tsuji 2018; Wikipedia). [1999: autonomy concession]
- In 2016, a conflict emerged between Okinawa and the central government over who can decide on the construction of new buildings in U.S. military bases (The Diplomat 2015; McCormack 2016; Tsuji 2018: 62). The high court sided with the central government (Anadolu Agency 2016). We do not code a restriction because Okinawa did not lose a right that it previously unambiguously had had.

Regional autonomy

- The constitution of 1947 guarantees local self-government including directly elected governors, mayors and assembly members and a wide range of functions and fiscal responsibilities (Furukawa 2003). However, we only code autonomy if there is a regional government above the local level. There is a growing number of studies arguing that prefectures have enjoyed increased autonomy in recent years (Jacobs 2003: 617 – also see above). However, Japan remains a unitary state where devolution is mostly administrative in nature (Kamo 2000: 111). Therefore, we do not code the Okinawans as autonomous.

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- Okinawa was returned to Japan in 1972, implying a host change. [1972: host change (new)]
- With this, Okinawa lost its autonomy (see above). [1972: abolishment of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Okinawans
<i>Scenario</i>	No match/1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Okinawans
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	74005000

Power access

- We follow EPR and apply the 1973 codes to 1972 (in EPR, the Okinawans are irrelevant in 1972). [powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR and apply the 1973 codes to 1972 (in EPR, the Okinawans are irrelevant in 1972). [1972-1996: 0.008; 1997-2020: 0.01]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 58), the Okinawans are “concentrated in the Ryuku Islands”. In the Prefecture of Ryuku Islands (Okinawa Prefecture), the Okinawans make up 96% of the local population (in 2002). This amounts to around 1.3 million Okinawans, which is more than 50 per cent of the around 1.42 million Okinawans in the whole country in that same year. [concentrated]

Kin

- EPR does not code ethnic kin. Minahan (2002: 1457) mentions Okinawan communities in the western part of the United States (Hawaii). According to the Japan Times, the number of people with Okinawan background in Hawaii does not exceed 100,000. [no kin]

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