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Autocracy and Consensus: Aspects of Hōjō Rule in Japan’s First Shogunate

Abstract

The Kamakura shogunate (1185–1333) is typically portrayed as the advent of autocratic rule by the Hōjō family, who dominated the regime’s administration, rendering the nominal ruler – the shogun – increasingly powerless. One of the most influential approaches to elucidate these developments is found in the work of the late Satō Shin’ichi. The historian postulated a three-staged process outlining the evolution of the Kamakura polity: that of a shogunal-patrimonial autocracy, an era of consultative governance, and finally, a new type of “autocratic” rule by the headship (tokusō) of the main Hōjō lineage. The final stage of ‘tokusō autocracy’ has been characterized by three core aspects: (1) institutionalization of the lineage chief’s personal council as the highest governing body, (2) tokusō hegemony over the wider Hōjō lineage group, and (3) creation of a personal network of vassals who occupied key positions in the shogunate administration. However, Satō’s research has to be seen within the wider context of his work, centered around two general concepts: arbitrary decision-making by a single entity (‘sensei’), and consensual decision-making by a collectivity (‘gōgi’). These two concepts should be interpreted as dichotomous ideal-typical constructs determinative of premodern historical polities. Consequently, this paper outlines the validity of such a conceptual framework for a transcultural approach to premodern political history, through the discussion of several key topics of shogunate history centered on the decline of direct shogunal rule and the emergence of council government.

Introduction

In the year 1180, Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199), warrior noble exiled to the Kantō region far to the east of the imperial capital of Kyoto, spearheaded a rebellion that, within years, saw him firmly established as the archipelago's supreme warrior leader. Yoritomo is regarded as the founder of what historians now call the Kamakura shogunate (1185–1333), the first shogunate government in history.¹ When mere decades later, however, the most powerful man in the Kyoto court – Retired Emperor Gotoba 後鳥羽天皇 (1180–1239, r. 1183–1198) – called for a crusade against the shogunate, his objective was not to defeat a shogunal successor. His objective was to oust a certain Hōjō Yoshitoki 北条義時 (1163–1224), Yoritomo's brother-in-law, from his position of authority in Kamakura. But Gotoba failed; it took another century, until the year 1333, when his descendant Godaigo 後醍醐天皇 (1288–1339, r. 1319–1339) was successful in overthrowing the Kamakura warrior government. One famous edict of the sovereign's leading general, his own son Moriyoshi 護良親王 (1308–1335), condemned a certain “lay monk Takatoki, descendant of Tokimasa, local official of Izu province.”² This contemptuous expression referred to Hōjō Takatoki 北条高時 (1303–1333), of the very same Hōjō lineage that Gotoba sought to remove from power a century before. For more than a century, the shogunate had remained firmly in the grasp of the Hōjō lineage.

What had happened that Yoritomo's legacy was quickly and decisively usurped by the Hōjō? This question has driven countless scholars to study the Kamakura shogunate and the Hōjō clan's rise to power. One of the most influential of these was historian Satō Shin'ichi: his ideas on the emergence of Hōjō rule, first published in 1955, have long achieved the status of paradigm.³ The quantity of research building on his ideas and terminology is ever-growing; but whereas modifications of and elaborations on his ideas are commonplace, an outright rejection of his propositions has been exceedingly rare.⁴ Nevertheless, an often-overlooked aspect of Satō's theories on Hōjō ascendancy is that

¹ Historians proposed several alternative founding dates; see, for example, TAKAHASHI Noriyuki, *Kamakura bakufu ron*, in: ŌTSU Tōru et al. (eds.), *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, 22 vols., vol. 6: Chūsei 1, Tokyo 2013, 97–128, esp. 99–101. Professor Kondo's paper in this volume also suggests a different date.

² Genkō 3(1333) 4/1 Ōtōnomiya Moriyoshi-shinnō ryōji, *Kamakura ibun doc.* 32075. Compiled in *Kamakura ibun*, ed. TAKEUCHI Rizō, 52 vols., 1971–1997 (CD-ROM edition 2008).

³ SATŌ Shin'ichi, *Kamakura bakufu seiji no senseika ni tsuite*, in: SATŌ (ed.), *Nihon chūseishi ronshū*, Tokyo 1990 (Orig. 1955), 67–111.

⁴ For example, HOSOKAWA Shigeo, *Kamakura bakufu tokusō sensei ron*, Tokyo 2000; HOSOKAWA Shigeo, *Kamakura bakufu no metsubō* (*Rekishi bunka raiburari* 316), Tokyo 2011, esp. 108–110; UWAYOKOTE Masataka, *Kamakura bakufu to kuge seiken*, in: ASAO Naohiro (ed.), *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, 26 vols., vol. 5: Chūsei 1, Tokyo 1975, 35–77, esp. 66. For a more critical reception, see Andrew E. GOBLE, *The Hōjō and Consultative Government*, in: Jeffrey P. MASS (ed.), *Court and Bakufu in Japan: Essays in Kamakura History*, Stanford/New Haven 1982, 168–190, who was clearly influenced by Uwayokote's ideas.

they have a firm place in the wider context of his work, where concepts of ‘autocratic’ and ‘consensual’ modes of governance are of central significance. I would argue that these more general concepts permit an abstraction suitable to transcultural approaches to history.

Consequently, this paper’s intent is two-fold: to serve as an introduction to these theoretical considerations on Hōjō governance, and to present several key topics of shogunate history, centered on the decline of direct shogunal rule and the emergence of council government, to exemplify the analytical approach.

Autocracy and Consensus

Satō framed a sequence of three distinct political configurations, each characterized by either more autocratic or consensual modes of decision-making, to describe the evolutionary process of the Kamakura shogunate: (1) a ‘patrimonial’ monocracy by the shogun himself (*shōgun dokusai* 将軍独裁); (2) ‘consultative government’ by warrior elites who were the shogun’s subjects (*shikken seiji* 執権政治); and (3) autocratic rule by the head of the main Hōjō lineage (the *tokusō* 得宗; hence: *tokusō sensei* 得宗専制).⁵ For all intents and purposes, these three stages outline the convenient narrative of a monolithic, dictatorial regime that was supplanted by a consultative type of government, which, in turn, reflected the consensus of the powerful warriors of Kamakura. However, successive elimination of several of the most powerful warrior families shifted the balance of power increasingly towards the Hōjō family, who traditionally had monopolized access to the office of *shikken* 執権, the highest official presiding over the

⁵ Satō’s terminology is difficult to translate satisfactorily, especially since the fields of possible meanings for the terms *dokusai* and *sensei* are significantly overlapping. Earlier attempts included mainly: “shogunal authoritarianism,” “assembly rule under the early Hōjō regents,” and “Hōjō (Tokusō) authoritarianism”, in Paul VARLEY, *The Ōnin War: History of its Origins and Background, with a Selective Translation of The Chronicle of Ōnin*, New York/London 1967, 17; and “shogunal authoritarianism, consultative government, and Hōjō autocracy,” in GOBLE 1982, 169. However, the term *dokusai* literally means “to decide matters alone, by oneself” and is a common translation for the concept of dictatorship: a form of government which concentrates power in the hands of either a specific class, group or individual. Moreover, the Japanese term is more nuanced and can also be translated as despotism, autocracy, or tyranny, depending on context. *Sensei* (commonly found as *sensei seiji* in dictionaries) is typically employed to translate the concept of despotism—interpreted as an absolute and arbitrary regime of one or several ruling entities. It may encompass the idea of tyranny, but commonly refers to a type of ‘Oriental Despotism’ where divine or sacred qualities may be ascribed to the sovereign. Consequently, it is used as the translation of both Montesquieu’s usage of ‘despotism’ as well as Karl August Wittfogel’s ‘Oriental Despotism’. Literally, the term *sensei*, removed from such terminological discourse, describes “arbitrary, unrestricted rule.” The conceptual distinction of the terms *dokusai* and *sensei* (*seiji*) is a subject of scholarly debate; KATŌ Tetsurō, *Dokusai*, in: *Kaitei shinpan sekai hyakka jiten* (2007), accessed August 6th, 2019, <https://japanknowledge.com/psnl/display/?lid=102005243500>; YOSHIOKA Tomoya, *Sensei seiji*, in: *Kaitei shinpan sekai hyakka jiten* (2007), accessed August 6th, 2019, <https://japanknowledge.com/psnl/display/?lid=102005243500>.

shogunate's council.⁶ The Hōjō leader eventually came to exercise a type of authority no longer reliant on this office – a phenomenon Japanese research has labeled “*tokusō* autocracy.”⁷

Historian Kondō Shigekazu once commented on the advent of *tokusō* rule that “the *tokusō* had to become the shogun [in all but name].”⁸ In other words, the *tokusō*'s personal authority had to undergo a transformational process in order to be representative of the transpersonal shogunate authority. But did this mean that the Hōjō truly erected an autocratic regime of their own, or are there different implications at work here? Satō had defined three core aspects to this Hōjō domination: (1) the institutionalization of the lineage chief's personal council as the highest governing body, (2) *tokusō* hegemony over the entire Hōjō clan, and (3) the creation of a personal network of vassals (the *miuchibito* 御内人) who occupied key positions in the shogunate administration.⁹ Each of these three factors could easily fill a paper of its own; moreover, the last few decades have shown that especially the exact nature of Hōjō hegemony demands thorough reevaluation.¹⁰ Furthermore, the emergence of what de facto constituted dual vassalage in the form of these *miuchibito* housemen – of whom many concurrently were in a subordinate relationship to the shogun – is accompanied by implications touching upon the vastly more complex subject of social change within medieval (warrior) society in general.¹¹ One aspect remains: the institutionalization of the Hōjō leader's personal council. As initially stated, Satō's research was profoundly influenced by an approach to history centered around the relationship between the central ruling personage and its surrounding elites. He conceptualized these principles in two dichotomous terms: arbitrary decision-making by a single entity (‘*sensei*’ 専制, which may be roughly translated as ‘autocracy’),

⁶ *Shikken* is commonly translated as “shogunal regent,” although I do not think it's the most ideal analogy.

⁷ Whereas the translation of *sensei* as autocracy can be debated, it has been firmly established as its translation in the relevant scholarship; see, for example, translated in ISHII Susumu, *The Decline of the Kamakura Bakufu*, trans. by Jeffrey P. MASS and Hitomi TONOMURA, in: Marius B. JANSEN (ed.), *Warrior Rule in Japan*, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne 1995 (Orig. 1990), 44–90, here: 71.

⁸ KONDŌ Shigekazu, *Kamakura bakufu to kuge seiken*, in: KONDŌ, *Kamakura jidai seiji kōzō no kenkyū*, Tokyo 2016 (Orig. 2006), 497–542, here: 531. Note: quotations from scholarly literature in Japanese are translations by myself; in cases of direct quotations, I am indicating that I opted for a translation which stays as close as possible to the original phrase instead of paraphrasing.

⁹ SATŌ 1990 (1955), 67–69/81–82.

¹⁰ AKIYAMA Tetsuo, *Hōjō-shi ichimon to tokusō seiken*, in: *Nihonshi kenkyū* 458 (2000), 23–50, suggests a much greater degree of independence – and consequently, interdependence – of the various Hōjō lines. Compare with, for example, Satō 1990 (1955), 84–91, and OKUTOMI Takayuki, *Kamakura Hōjō-shi no kisoteki kenkyū*, Tokyo 1980, esp. 1–100.

¹¹ For an exemplary case study on *miuchibito*, see for example, HOSOKAWA Shigeo, *Kamakura bakufu to Sagami bushi. Miuchibito o chūshin ni*, in: SEKI Yukihiro (ed.), *Sagami bushidan*, Tokyo 2017, 52–66. For a summary of the general implications for the early medieval society, see FURUSAWA Naoto, *Kamakura bakufu to chūsei kokka. ‘Tokusō sensei’ ron no saikentō o chūshin ni*, in: *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 586 (1988), 80–91.

and consensual decision-making by a collectivity (‘*gōgi*’ 合議, or ‘consultation’).¹² These two concepts may be interpreted as dichotomous ideal-typical constructs, which are determinative of premodern historical polities.¹³ In practice, these ideal-types contrast the entirely unrestrained capacity of the ruler to enforce his political will on others on the one side with the collectivity of elites aspiring to participation in the formation of political will on the other – consequently restraining the theoretically limitless and arbitrary power of the central ruling entity.¹⁴ In other words, this approach facilitates the analysis of a premodern polity by means of a dichotomy between an ideal-typical monarchy (be it evaluated as an autocracy, despotism, or dictatorship) and an inherently consensual form of consultative governance. Incidentally, this notion of ‘consultation’ appears to be surprisingly reminiscent of recent discourse centering on the term ‘*Konsensuale Herrschaft*’ (consensual rule) in German-language research on medieval history, which typically is interpreted as interaction and cooperation within the ruling elite; however, consultation does not necessarily imply an equal balance of power – and therefore, equivalent agency in the decision-making process – between the constituent members of the ruling elite (which needs to be defined as either including the ruler himself or as being a distinct, antagonistic, group).¹⁵ Hence, ‘consultation’ may in theory include a system where members of a group might consult with each other, but only part of that group actually has the capacity to directly determine the specific content of the resulting decision. The weapon of choice employed in establishing a collectivity’s participation (or, in extreme forms, even domination) vis-à-vis an autocratic ruling figure might be described as ‘institutionalization’: the endeavor to introduce and establish ‘traditions’ of consultative gatherings and administrative organization as institutional organs of the

¹² SATŌ Shin’ichi, *Gōgi to sensei*, in: SATŌ (ed.), *Nihon chūseishi ronshū*, Tokyo 1990 (Orig. 1988), 313–325, esp. 314–315. Certainly, in light of *autocracy*’s prominence in contemporary politics, a different term, such as *monocracy*, might be less debatable.

¹³ SATŌ himself did not explicitly develop his ideas in the form of an abstract methodology; however, a thorough reading of his work strongly implies that these concepts represent ideal types. For a discussion of various ideal types, see Wolfgang J. MOMMSEN, *Ideal Type and Pure Type: Two Variants of Max Weber’s Ideal-typical Method*, in: MOMMSEN (ed.), *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber*, Cambridge/Malden, MA 1989 (Orig. 1986), 121–132.

¹⁴ SATŌ 1990 (1988), 314–315.

¹⁵ „Konsensuale Herrschaft wird in der Regel als Interaktion und Kooperation innerhalb der herrschenden Eliten interpretiert“; cf., Thomas ERTL, *Konsensuale Herrschaft als interkulturelles Konzept*, in: Matthias BECHER/Stephan CONERMANN/Linda DOHMEN (eds.), *Macht und Herrschaft transkulturell: Vormoderne Konfigurationen und Perspektiven der Forschung* (Macht und Herrschaft Vol. 1), Göttingen 2018, 123–143, esp. 129; see also Bernd SCHNEIDMÜLLER, *Konsensuale Herrschaft: Ein Essay über Formen und Konzepte politischer Ordnung im Mittelalter*, in: Paul-Joachim HEINIG et al. (eds.), *Reich, Regionen und Europa in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Peter Moraw*, Berlin 2000, 53–87.

polity; and moreover, the enshrinement of limitations of even the sovereign's authority in codes of law.¹⁶

It is now most peculiar that for a stipulated move towards autocracy (as expressed in Hōjō domination) the very institutionalization of a personal deliberative body is one of three determining factors. This is clearly indicative not of pure, but hybrid states between the two concepts actualized within social reality, which makes the ideal-typical approach appropriate. The following sections will elaborate on each distinct phase of Kamakura shogunate history, roughly corresponding to the outline postulated by Satō's three-staged paradigm.

The early Kamakura shogunate

Minamoto no Yoritomo laid the foundations of the Kamakura shogunate when he took up arms against his family's long-time rival Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118–1181). The Taira-leader came to dominate the imperial court in Kyoto after an altercation with his erstwhile ally, Retired Emperor Goshirakawa 後白河天皇 (1127–1192, r. 1155–1158).¹⁷ Kiyomori's grandson was the young reigning Emperor Antoku 安徳天皇 (1178–1185, r. 1180–1185). However, the old warrior aristocrat had earned his share of enemies in the ranks of the established courtly elite; especially Prince Mochihito 以仁王 (1151–1180), one of Goshirakawa's sons, resented Kiyomori, since Antoku's enthronement had allegedly deprived the prince of the throne. Unsurprisingly, Mochihito issued an edict condemning Kiyomori.¹⁸ Although the prince's insurgence soon cost him his life, his edict spread to several warrior chieftains – especially in the Eastern regions of Japan – who appropriated it as a means to impart rebellions of their own with an air of legitimacy. Minamoto no Yoritomo was the most successful of these Eastern warriors: he vanquished not only his eastern rivals, but also annihilated Kiyomori's descendants – including the child-sovereign Antoku – in the year 1185.¹⁹

¹⁶ The introductory chapter to SATŌ's later monography *Nihon no chūsei kokka* might present the most concise example of the resulting interplay; SATŌ Shin'ichi, *Nihon no chūsei kokka*, Tokyo 1983, 1–10.

¹⁷ The early medieval period saw the emergence of rule by the retired emperor, which can be explained as follows: "*Insei* [i. e., government by the retired emperor] does not refer to the continued exercise of power by a sovereign who had relinquished the throne, but rather to a state where the linear ascendant of the [reigning] sovereign presides over government. In other words, the authority of the sovereign does not lie within the Tenno personally, but is possessed by the sovereign's family;" KONDŌ 2016 (2006), 508.

¹⁸ The edict is only cited in the official shogunate chronicle, the 'Azuma Kagami'. Kiyomori is painted as a stereotypical tyrant defiant of the natural order of things, enemy of the secular and sacred; *Azuma kagami*, ed. KUROITA Katsumi/Kokushi Taikai Henshūkai (Shintei zōho kokushi taikai 32–33), 2 vols., Tokyo 1964–1965, Jishō 4 (1180) 4/27.

¹⁹ The authoritative study in English on the events of the so-called Genpei War remains Jeffrey P. MASS, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu. The Origins of Dual Government in Japan*, Stanford, CA 1999, esp. 13–132.

But until his triumph, Yoritomo was a rebel in the eyes of the court – recourse to Mochihito’s edict was hardly legitimate in light of an enthroned sovereign’s authority. He nonetheless cited this document as the grounds for his arrogation of provincial and local administrative infrastructure to consolidate his power-base, despite the writ never bestowing such authority upon its recipients; accordingly, it is certainly appropriate to speak of Yoritomo’s early sphere of influence as a rebel kingdom.²⁰ Jeffrey P. Mass summarized the warrior’s situation as follows: “Yoritomo’s hope was to defeat the Taira and restore imperial authority, and to that extent his war aims were entirely traditional. What was fresh was that he would seek to accomplish his aims through the instrument of a private regional lordship. In the event, his objectives and means proved contradictory, since disengagement of the east constituted a historic first step toward repudiation of the center.”²¹

Yoritomo’s usurpation of the provincial administration – and thus of functions that were traditionally the court’s prerogative – was a consequence of his factual domination over the region.²² But the opportunity for reconciliation with Goshirakawa arose in the tenth month of 1183: over the following years, negotiations with the court successively legitimized and expanded the warlord’s influence beyond the geographical boundaries of the east, while at the same time firmly installing his authority within the classical polity’s framework.²³ Possibly the most well-known, and debated, result of this dialog is the appropriation of exclusive appointment rights to provincial and local warrior officials directly subordinate to Yoritomo’s regime – often interpreted as ratifying the delegation of the government’s military responsibilities to the fledgling warrior government.²⁴ Despite the Kamakura shogunate’s roots in the domain of a rebellious warlord, its subsequent incorporation into the symbolic framework of the Kyoto polity firmly established it as a semi-independent realm. In other words, the warrior government concurrently served as the constituent part of the court polity in charge of military affairs, while retaining its character as a primarily regional (eastern) government.²⁵

²⁰ Azuma kagami, Jishō 4 (1180) 8/19.

²¹ Jeffrey P. MASS, *The Early Bakufu and Feudalism*, in: Jeffrey P. MASS (ed.), *Court and Bakufu in Japan: Essays in Kamakura History*, Stanford/New Haven 1982, 123–142, here: 124–125.

²² KONDŌ 2016 (2006), 500.

²³ *IBID.*, 500–502. Some scholarship suggests that Yoritomo, in fact, needed this association with the courtly center, since his own personage could not provide the sufficient traditional authority to unite all warriors below him; see, for example, FURUSAWA 1988, 81–82.

²⁴ Azuma kagami, Bunji 1 (1185) 11/28; Jeffrey P. MASS, *The Kamakura Bakufu*, in: Marius B. JANSEN (ed.), *Warrior Rule in Japan*, Cambridge/New York/Melbourne 1995 (Orig. 1990), 1–43, here: 14–15; SATŌ 1990 (1988), 318.

²⁵ Refer to the paper by Prof. KONDŌ in this book for a discussion of the relationship between court and shogunate.

Yoritomo subsequently joined the ranks of the higher court aristocracy (the *kugyō* 公卿) and his personal army served as the court's military.²⁶ The institutions established for the supervision of his substantial following in the budding city of Kamakura, his chosen capital, were modelled after the pattern of aristocratic household administrations. These were staffed primarily by lower-ranked members of the court aristocracy who were enticed by the prospects of a tangible career; however, it was Yoritomo himself who autocratically wielded virtually unlimited decision-making authority. The resulting hierarchy can be characterized as one-dimensionally centered around the warrior aristocrat, who was aided by a staff of primarily central court elites, not of provincial warriors; accordingly, Satō defined this first stage as a polity in which “the great Eastern warrior *gokenin* [御家人 vassals of the shogun] who had been instrumental in the creation of the Kamakura shogunate were completely excluded from the center of political activity.”²⁷

The road to Hōjō rule: crisis of shogunal succession and *shikken* government

Yoritomo, though, passed away in 1199, leaving his first son Yoriie 源頼家 (1182–1204) as successor. Whether Yoriie lacked his father's political acumen or fell victim to an emerging power struggle within the shogunate is open to interpretation; however, he was soon aided by a council of thirteen elders, comprised of leading court-bureaucrats and the most influential warriors, undermining Yoriie's authority over judicial arbitration.²⁸ Notwithstanding the intricacies of this council's inception, it can be evaluated as the first curtailment of unimpeded shogunal autocracy.

In 1203, Yoriie was ousted from his position in the wake of a conflict between his grandfather Hōjō Tokimasa 北条時政 (1138–1215) and the Hiki family 比企氏, who Yoriie had married into. He was succeeded by his younger brother Sanetomo 源実朝

²⁶ UWAYOKOTE 1975, 36–40. The imperial court aristocracy is organized into a complex system of ranks and offices. The top three court ranks constitute the higher aristocracy, the fourth and fifth the lower. Technically, sixth to ninth ranks also exist, but these ‘rank-and-file’ elites do not possess audience rights with the monarch; accordingly, they are excluded from the court aristocracy. After having being reinstated as a member of the aristocracy, Yoritomo was promoted to the junior second court rank in 1185; Kugyō Bunin, Genryaku 2 (1185).

²⁷ SATŌ 1990 (1955), 67. *Gokenin* is the historical term for ‘vassals’ of the lord of Kamakura (i.e., the shogun). However, UWAYOKOTE stressed that especially the powerful warrior chieftains, while acknowledging Yoritomo as their overlord, retained a high degree of independence. Therefore, whereas they might be removed from the center of power, this does not necessarily mean they were without influence of their own; UWAYOKOTE 1975, 44.

²⁸ Azuma kagami, Shōji 4 (1199) 4/12; UWAYOKOTE 1975, 51. However, it has been pointed out there were no decrees identifiable as collectively issued by this body; Paul VARLEY, *The Hōjō Family and Succession to Power*, in: Jeffrey P. MASS (ed.), *Court and Bakufu in Japan: Essays in Kamakura History*, Stanford/New Haven 1982, 143–167, here: 148. Moreover, the council would disband soon after the death of two of its members.

(1192–1219). Allegedly his own mother, Hōjō Masako 北条政子 (1157–1225), was a driving force behind the incident, which must have had general support by the other powerful *gokenin*.²⁹ Sanetomo was eleven years old when he was proclaimed shogun by the imperial court. His grandfather Tokimasa, old confidant and father-in-law of Yoritomo, served as the government's de facto leader. But in 1205, a rift emerged between Tokimasa and his two children, Masako and her brother Yoshitoki: accused of conspiracy, the Hōjō elder would spend his remaining years in exile and the siblings took over the reins of the Kamakura government.³⁰

Evaluating these developments is not without difficulty: on the one hand, Jeffrey P. Mass suggested that Yoshitoki was incapable of acceding to his father's dominant position, since Tokimasa's authority was not institutionalized (i.e., derived from an office), but predominantly personal in nature.³¹ On the other hand, Uwayokote Masataka argued that Masako had supplanted the personal authority of her husband after Yoritomo's death, in effect rendering her son, the new shogun Sanetomo, powerless.³² If we accept both arguments, this led to the creation of a dual government of sorts: Masako represented the personal authority of the lord of Kamakura vis-à-vis the *gokenin*, and her brother managed the transpersonal government institutions. Although this does not entirely rule out doubts on whether an evaluation of Sanetomo as being completely dominated by his mother over the whole period is entirely accurate, the resulting state of affairs might – somewhat awkwardly – be labeled a 'dual autocracy'.³³

Either way, Sanetomo never received the chance to step out of the shadow of his mother: he was assassinated in 1219.³⁴ The young shogun had remained childless. Retired Emperor Gotoba (1180–1239, r. 1183–1198), saw an opportunity to challenge the 'leaderless' east: he refused to uphold an earlier agreement with Masako. Originally, he had acceded to promising one of his sons as a successor to Sanetomo, if the Kamakura

²⁹ According to the Azuma kagami, Masako convinced him to abdicate and become a lay monk. His younger brother Sanetomo was quickly decided on as his successor; see Azuma kagami, Kennin 3 (1203) 9/2 to 9/10 for an account of the events; UWAYOKOTE 1975, 52.

³⁰ Azuma kagami, Genkyū 2 (1205), the sixth to intercalary seventh month, esp. the entries 6/21, 6/22, 6/23, 7/8, i7/19, and i7/20. Even after these conflicts, politically motivated armed confrontations continued: the Wada family 和田氏 was destroyed in 1213, followed by the Chiba 千葉氏, Miura 三浦氏, and the Nagoe 名越氏 (a branch-line of the Hōjō). Since it was always the Hōjō that came to be the victor of these conflicts, one might be tempted to brush over the particular circumstances surrounding each incident and perceive them as mere stepping stones to the rise of the Hōjō tokusō lineage. Refer to VARLEY 1982; MASS 1995 (1990); and ISHII 1995 (1990) for some English-language overviews of Kamakura shogunate history.

³¹ MASS 1995 (1990), 22.

³² UWAYOKOTE 1975, 51–53, 61–63.

³³ IBID., 61–63.

³⁴ Azuma kagami, Kenpō 7 (1219) 1/27.

leader remained without an heir.³⁵ The shogunate elites welcomed the infant Mitora 三寅 (the future shogun Yoritsune 九条頼経, 1218–1256), son of longtime shogunate ally and influential court aristocrat Kujō Michiie 九条道家 (1193–1252) as shogun-designate instead.³⁶ Meanwhile, Gotoba prepared for war. His call to arms during the fifth month of 1221 did not deny the eastern polity's *raison d'être* – it stated the defeat of one specific man as his primary objective: Hōjō Yoshitoki.³⁷ However, Gotoba did neither find sufficient support within the court aristocracy nor within the ranks of the larger provincial warrior elite and conceded defeat after mere days.³⁸ The conflict known as Jōkyū no ran 承久の乱 (Jōkyū Disturbance, named after the era it occurred in) should not be evaluated as a clash between two governments, but rather as the strictly *personal* crusade of Retired Emperor Gotoba.³⁹ The shogunate reaction was equally limited in scope and refrained from attacking the court's integrity at large: it were mostly Gotoba, his son Juntoku 順徳天皇 (1197–1242, r. 1210–1221), and their direct associates who would be banished from the capital and stripped of their lands and posts.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the incident created a dangerous precedent for shogunate involvement in matters of imperial succession.⁴¹ Hōjō Yoshitoki passed away in 1224. Yet again, the 'Azuma kagami' ascribes Masako an important role in preserving the unity of the Kamakura warriors, as it was she who prevented a rift within the Hōjō by proclaiming her nephew Yasutoki 北条泰時 (1183–1242) as her brother's successor to the family headship.⁴² Masako herself passed away in the summer of 1225. Near the end of the same year, the *hyōjōshū* 評定衆 (the legislative shogunate council) convened for the first time.⁴³ The timing of this inaugurating session is conspicuous: it took place on the 21st day of the 12th month in Karoku 1 (1225), exactly the day after Mitora's coming-of-age ceremony (which qualified him to be appointed to rank and title) and before the child – now bearing the name Yoritsune – was inducted as shogun by the imperial court.⁴⁴ With the shogunate being headed by a child, the capacity for adjudication became the sole prerogative of the council under Yasutoki's guidance. This, by itself, was not a new development: his ascendants had handled government

³⁵ Azuma kagami, Kenpō 7 (1219) i2/12.

³⁶ Azuma kagami, Jōkyū 1 (1219) 7/19.

³⁷ Jōkyū 3 (1221) 5/15 Kansenshi an, Kamakura ibun doc. 2746.

³⁸ Azuma kagami, Jōkyū 3 (1221) 6/15.

³⁹ UWAYOKOTE 1975, 56.

⁴⁰ Cameron G. HURST, The Kōbu Polity: Court-Bakufu Relations in Kamakura Japan, in: Jeffrey P. MASS (ed.), Court and Bakufu in Japan: Essays in Kamakura History, Stanford/New Haven 1982, 3–28, here: 17.

⁴¹ *IBID.*, esp. 16–22. Refer also to the paper by Prof. KONDŌ Shigekazu in this same volume for further shogunate involvement in imperial succession.

⁴² Azuma kagami, Gennin 1 (1224) 7/17 and i7/7.

⁴³ Azuma kagami, Karoku 1 (1225) 12/21.

⁴⁴ Azuma kagami, Karoku 2 (1226) 2/13. The decree is dated Karoku 2 (1226) 1/27. Children take on a different personal name once they formally reach adulthood.

affairs in the name of the shogun during Sanetomo's childhood, as well as before Yoritune's appointment to office. But Yasutoki continued to issue documents in his own name *parallel* to those of the shogunal household administration. This signified a clear evolution of his position from being merely a shogunal representative to an institution of its own. This marked the birth of the office of *shikken*.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the Hōjō leader was responsible for the compilation and promulgation of a code of laws, the 'Goseibai shikimoku' 御成敗式目 in 1232, which was a sign of the shogunate government's growing political maturity.⁴⁶ The institution of written law may also be viewed as an impediment preventing the resurgence of inherently arbitrary shogunal monarchy.⁴⁷ This sequence of events signified not only "the birth of a shogun who had been stripped of his legislative authority," but also institutionalized the *shikken*-office as a constituent element of shogunate polity.⁴⁸ It is notable that these events transpired shortly after the death of the most revered (and arguably most powerful) personages in the shogunate – Hōjō Yoshitoki, Masako, and the elder statesman Ōe no Hiromoto 大江広元 (1148–1225), the main architect of Yoritomo's administration – which had disrupted the established power structures.

Now, how should we interpret this emergence of council government under Yasutoki's leadership, whose regime has to be regarded as archetypical of *shikken* government? Satō himself summarized his ideas as follows: "Although incorporating an inherent enmity between the *shikken* Hōjō-lineage and those *gokenin* constituting the powerful landholding class in the east, it [i.e., *shikken* government] certainly symbolized one large step towards the realization of warrior government by the warrior class itself, which overcame the dictatorial rule of the shogun."⁴⁹ As expressed best by this quote, central to Satō's concept of *shikken* government is the notion that a mode of arbitrary rule by a single supreme authority (i.e., the shogunal autocracy) gave way to the participation of a wider group (i.e., the shogun's subordinate *gokenin*) in regards to the formulation of political will. By definition, this does not require for this wider group to be *unified* in either its specific composition or objective; however, this heterogeneity bears potential for conflict precisely because it does not necessarily involve every single (powerful)

⁴⁵ GOMI Fumihiko, *Shōgun, shikken, tokusō: ando to rihi*, in: ISHII Susumu (ed.), *Chūsei no hito to seiji*, Tokyo 1988, 311–340, esp. 316. GOMI emphasized the role of the early Hōjō leaders strictly as representatives of the shogun and his patrimonial administration, and not as judicial authorities in their own right.

⁴⁶ Azuma kagami, Jōei 1 (1232) 5/14, 8/10, 9/11.

⁴⁷ GOMI 1988, 323.

⁴⁸ *IBID.*, 323.

⁴⁹ Satō 1990 (1955), 68.

constituent member of the group equally, although it does require the (tacit) support of the majority.⁵⁰

Kondō has argued that this development was inevitable: “*shikken* government was the most suitable government form for a society whose most pressing political issue was the arbitration of law(suits).”⁵¹ After all, this task clashed with the inherent role of the lord in a lord-retainer relationship: the shogun, as a warrior leader, could only expect loyalty and service because he guaranteed the safety of his followers’ well-being (and, in extension, economic security) against external threats, and he guaranteed this precisely because he was the recipient of their service. During war, conflicts between warriors could just be solved by joining opposing sides and the subsequent use of military force. But social configurations during peacetime did typically not provide for that option – especially not when the parties involved in a quarrel were potentially subjects of the same lord. It is suffice to say that the act of arbitrating cases – which inevitably would be to the detriment of one of the parties involved – fundamentally went against this principle: fair adjudication, which demanded the neutrality of the judge, always incorporated the potential for a loyal vassal to be found guilty.⁵² Consequently, the Kamakura shogunate had arguably *no other choice* than to eventually inhibit the autocratic position of its overlord in matters of judicial authority. This development was the consequence of an inherent conflict between the political functions of shogun and *shikken*, or rather, “between two modes of rule: one based on lord-retainer-ties and the other on territorial state authority.”⁵³

Concentration of power and *tokusō* rule

Yasutoki, the founding father of *shikken* government, passed away in 1242. His ailing grandson Tsunetoki 北条経時 (1224–1246) succeeded him as *shikken*. A few years later, Tsunetoki transmitted the office to his brother Tokiyori 北条時頼 (1227–1263) after an “informal gathering” of several leading shogunate figures at his residence.⁵⁴ Opposed to

⁵⁰ See also ERTL 2018, 129 for a similar notion.

⁵¹ KONDŌ Shigekazu, Kamakura jidai no seiji kōzō to shakai, in: KONDŌ, Kamakura jidai seiji kōzō no kenkyū, Tokyo 2016, 13–72, here: 16.

⁵² IBID., 15–16, for an overview. See also his following two chapters in the same book: KONDŌ Shigekazu, Monjo yōshiki ni miru Kamakura bakufu kenryoku no tenkai: kudashibumi no henshitsu, in: KONDŌ, Kamakura jidai seiji kōzō no kenkyū, Tokyo 2016 (Orig. 1981), 75–108; KONDŌ Shigekazu, Honryō ando to tōchigyōchi ando, in: KONDŌ, Kamakura jidai seiji kōzō no kenkyū, Tokyo 2016 (Orig. 1992), 109–142.

⁵³ SATŌ 1990 (1988), 319. SATŌ had first proposed the notion of two dimensions to shogunal rule in an earlier paper. One should note that this concept presumes both an *inherently* personal as well as transpersonal dimension; SATŌ Shin’ichi, Muromachi *bakufu* ron, in: SATŌ (ed.), Nihon chūseishi ronshū, Tokyo 1990 (Orig. 1963), 115–164, esp. 117–120.

⁵⁴ Azuma kagami, Kangen 4 (1246) 3/23.

Tokiyori, nineteen years old, were Shogun Yoritsugu 九条頼嗣 (1239–1256, age seven) and his retired father Yoritsune (age twenty-eight), who had ceded the position to his son two years earlier. Tokiyori's government is often regarded as a watershed: shogunate-internal strife in 1246 (the Miya Sōdō 宮騒動, or Palace Disturbance) drove Yoritsune into exile to Kyoto and purged several members of the Nagoe, an influential branch of the Hōjō clan.⁵⁵ The following year saw the escalation of yet another conflict between Tokiyori and the Miura family, long-term allies of the Hōjō.⁵⁶ In 1252, a messenger arrived in Kyoto, requesting the nomination of an imperial prince to replace Yoritsugu – not the last time the shogun were to be deposed by his own vassals.⁵⁷

In 1256, Tokiyori, plagued by illness, became a lay monk. He was motivated by the wish to designate his son Tokimune 北条時宗 (1251–1284) as head of the Hōjō main branch as soon as possible and appointed his cousin Nagatoki 北条長時 (1230–1264) as his immediate successor to the office of *shikken*.⁵⁸ But his condition improved and he returned to being the dominant decision-maker in shogunate politics, although his cousin remained in office. Ample evidence indicates that Tokiyori was involved in a variety of government matters even in retirement: for example, his wishes carried great weight in the selection of personal attendants and guards of the shogunal palace.⁵⁹ He also appears to have been regularly approached personally with matters requiring government decisions, which Tokiyori usually ordered to be brought to the attention of the *hyōjōshū* for deliberation. Unfortunately, we cannot fathom how much the results of these sessions were reflective of his personal wishes.⁶⁰ Hence, Tokiyori's rule showed first signs of superseding the office of *shikken* by a distinctively personal type of authority, with his cousin serving as his direct representative and caretaker of his heir Tokimune. The tradition of the Hōjō leader monopolizing the office of *shikken* for multiple generations had blurred the boundaries between his personal and transpersonal authority – this is often cited as one defining element of 'tokusō autocracy'.⁶¹

However, as initially mentioned, one constituent element of this autocratic rule is the institutionalization of the lineage chief's personal supporting council as the highest

⁵⁵ Azuma kagami, Kangen 4 (1246) i4/18 until 5/25; discussions on how to proceed took place during the sixth month; Yoritsune would arrive in the capital on 7/28.

⁵⁶ Azuma kagami, Hōji 1 (1247) 6/5.

⁵⁷ Azuma kagami, Kenchō 4 (1252) 2/20.

⁵⁸ Azuma kagami, Kōgen 1 (1256) 11/22.

⁵⁹ See for example NIHARA Yoshitaka, Shikken Tokiyori, Nagatoki-ki no bakusei un'ei ni tsuite, in: Hōsei shigaku 79 (2013), 47–60.

⁶⁰ IBID., 52–57.

⁶¹ SATŌ 1990 (1955), 73. Interestingly, this conforms to sociologist Edward SHILS definition of a 'tradition': according to SHILS, it requires at least three generations (e. g., transmissions of office) for something to be perceivable as a tradition. See Edward SHILS, Tradition, Chicago 1981, 12–16, and esp. 15.

governing body: the later Kamakura period saw the emergence of the *yoriai* 寄合, a supreme council which is commonly believed to have evolved out of “informal gatherings” at the residence of the Hōjō leader. Especially the ‘Azuma kagami’ mentions many of these meetings, usually in the wake of political upheavals or in face of important political decisions. The earliest mention in sources is commonly dated Kangen 4 (1246) 6/10. The entry describes five men convening in the aftermath of the Palace Disturbance.⁶² Although in varying configurations, typical participants of these meetings were: (a) *tokusō*; (b) *shikken*; (c) *rensho* (連署 co-signatory: the deputy *shikken*); (d) the eldest member of the Hōjō; and, especially later, (e) the steward of the *tokusō* household administration (*uchikanrei* 内管領) and one or two of his deputies; lastly, also (f) the father-in-law or maternal grandfather of the *tokusō*.⁶³ In other words, the constituent members represented a combination of top shogunate officials, who typically were closely related to the Hōjō *tokusō* lineage, and – most notably – representatives of his personal household. The first instance of an appointment to an office (called *yorიაishū* 寄合衆) associated with this practice in extant sources is dated on the fifth month of 1289; accordingly, we can conclude that these informal conventions were institutionalized in the form of a new supreme council by this year at the latest.⁶⁴ This process established an elite – grouped around the personal entity of the *tokusō* – representative of both personal as well as transpersonal aspects of the shogunate government within an inherently transpersonal system of governing institutions.⁶⁵

Especially the presence of the *tokusō* household officials in this council is noteworthy: when Hōjō Tokimune, Tokiyori’s successor, unexpectedly passed away in 1284, his son Sadatoki 北条貞時 (1271–1311) became the new leader of the Hōjō. Although the youth was instantly appointed *shikken*, an uneasy alliance between his maternal grandfather Adachi Yasumori 安達泰盛 (1231–1285) and his steward Taira no Yoritsuna 平頼綱 (?–1293), dictated the shogunate’s policies.⁶⁶ Factions centered around the two men clashed during an armed conflict known as Shimotsuki Sōdō 霜月騒動 (lit.: Disturbance of the Eleventh Month) in 1285, although there is considerable debate concerning the deeper implications of the incident.⁶⁷ Having emerged victorious, Yoritsuna came to be the

⁶² Azuma Kagami, Kangen 4 (1246) 6/10.

⁶³ Some of these positions typically overlapped, and all of them were also occupying positions of authority within either the shogunate council or the top-echelon of the shogunal household administration; see OKUTOMI 1980, 170–189, for a detailed analysis of their composition.

⁶⁴ Kamakura nendaiki, Shōan 3 (1301), biographic note of Hōjō Tokimura.

⁶⁵ HOSOKAWA 2000, 160–161.

⁶⁶ Kamakura nendaiki, Kōan 7 (1284), biographic note of Hōjō Sadatoki.

⁶⁷ The conflict is likely strongly related to the politics of Adachi Yasumori: key questions are (1) whether to consider Yasumori as the last defender of shogunal authority or the architect of institutionalization of *tokusō* rule; and (2) whether the two parties reflected only a personal power struggle or were manifestations

dominant figure in the Kamakura administration's top echelon, although the extent of his actual influence is not entirely clear.⁶⁸ In either case, he appears to have been influential enough to arrange for the replacement of Shogun Koreyasu 惟康親王 (1264–1326), who was succeeded by a son of Retired Emperor Gosaga 後嵯峨天皇 (1220–1272, r. 1242–1246). Some scholars suggest that this, perhaps, hinted at an alliance with the ruling monarch at court, aimed to strengthen the steward's position in the shogunate.⁶⁹ But in 1293, Yoritsuna was accused of treason and killed by his lord Sadatoki.⁷⁰ One of Sadatoki's first political maneuvers as the new central figure of authority of the shogunate was the abolishment of the shogunal courts of law, which were replaced by six officials reporting to him personally.⁷¹ The courts were reinstated in the tenth month of 1294, but Sadatoki reserved for himself the right to issue judgments in "important cases."⁷² Even so, Sadatoki's attempts to change the established government traditions continued: in 1297, he abolished the court of appeals (*ossokata* 越訴方) – just to reinstate the institution the year after.⁷³ In 1300, the court of appeals was again replaced by a council of five personal vassals; and yet again, this decision was promptly reversed: Sadatoki's adopted brother Munekata 北条宗方 (1278–1305) was designated head of the reinstated court of appeals.⁷⁴ Many scholars claim that this sequence of events should be evaluated as a manifestation of the autocrat's failed attempts at institutionalizing the concentration of power on his own personage; however, it is highly likely that Sadatoki was not only encountering resistance from within the general shogunate elite, but also from within the *yoriai*, in theory his personal advisory body.⁷⁵ He ultimately failed at uniting the interests of a majority of the elites in Kamakura; after Munekata violently died in 1305, the Hōjō leader appears to have retreated from governance affairs.⁷⁶

Historical records do not consider his son Takatoki, the last *tokusō*, a powerful ruler: when he decided to resign from the *shikken* office in 1326, it was between his steward Nagasaki

of a subliminal division between *gokenin* and *miuchibito* interests; GOMI 1988, 328–335; ISHII 1995(1990), 66–68; MURAI Shōsuke, *Shikken seiji no henshitsu*, in: *Nihonshi kenkyū* 261 (1984), 1–28, here: 27; OKUTOMI 1980, 224–232; SATŌ 1983, 155.

⁶⁸ According to some research, Yoritsuna was only capable of exercising direct control over the *miuchibito*, the housemen of the *tokusō*, but not over the wider *gokenin* population; YASHIBA Yoshimi, *Tokusō sensei ni kansuru ichikōsatsu: 'Taira no Yoritsuna seiken' o chūshin ni*, in: *Shinjodai shigaku* 20 (2003), 112–131, esp. 121–122.

⁶⁹ *IBID.*, 123–128.

⁷⁰ ISHII 1995 (1990), 71.

⁷¹ *Kamakura nendaiki*, Einin 1–2 (1293–1294).

⁷² *IBID.*, same entry as above; also, Einin 3 (1294).

⁷³ *IBID.*, Einin 5 (1297); Einin 6 (1298).

⁷⁴ *IBID.*, Shōan 2 (1300); see also ISHII 1995 (1990), 72–73; HOSOKAWA 2000, 287–289.

⁷⁵ See, for example, MURAI 1984, 22–23; HOSOKAWA 2000, 291–297.

⁷⁶ See HOSOKAWA 2000, 265–305, for an extensive discussion of Sadatoki's regime.

Takatsuna 長崎高綱 (?–1333) and Takatoki's grandfather Adachi Tokiaki 安達時顯 (?–1333) to decide on a successor. Tokiaki favored his own nephew, but Takatsuna championed another member of the Hōjō, Kanesawa Sadaaki 金沢貞顕 (1278–1333), who had former experience in the shogunate's top administrative offices. In the end, Sadaaki was appointed *shikken* on the twenty-third day of the third month, but renounced the office a month later. He apparently feared the wrath of Takatoki's mother, since Tokiaki had supported Takatoki's younger brother instead.⁷⁷ Several *shikken* succeeded Sadatoki, but it was mostly a matter between the close associates of *tokusō* Takatoki, even though they originally were only supposed to function as offering counsel to the Hōjō clan headship, to decide on even the highest offices.⁷⁸

Conclusion

Satō Shin'ichi originally argued that there were three distinct evolutionary steps by which to describe the Kamakura shogunate's political evolution: he outlined an encroachment of shogunal autocracy by *gokenin* consensus, represented by the institutionalization of council rule under the Hōjō *shikken*. But the end of the Minamoto lineage and consecutive replacements of the shoguns, which resulted in minors nominally leading the shogunate for a significant span of Kamakura history, decisively tipped the balance in favor of the council government's leaders. After many political struggles, a return to direct shogunal rule had become virtually impossible. Although hardly a return to a *monocratic* form of autocracy, the mid to late Kamakura period was characterized by the emergence of a more personal aspect of *shikken* rule, which ultimately manifested itself in institutionalization of a new, and smaller, supreme council: the *yoriai*. The Hōjō leader served as the personal focal point around which this council was formed; however, it was not necessarily the *tokusō* himself who exercised supreme power. We have to assume that not only the personal configurations within this council itself, but also a complex web of power relationships that were incorporating the wider shogunate elites were factors at play in the formation of government authority. Therefore, whereas the Hōjō might have succeeded at dismantling the political influence of the shogun, it remains questionable whether they ever succeeded at replacing it with a 'pure' autocracy of their own design. Certainly, the political elite institutionalized in the shogunate's *hyōjōshū* council – no matter their exact composition – was never intended to encompass the entire *gokenin* class, and not even the totality of the central shogunate elite; however, at the very least this

⁷⁷ Hōryaku kanki, ed. Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai (Gunsho ruijū 26), rev. 3rd Edition, Tokyo 1960 (1st Edition 1929), 1–65, here: 55.

⁷⁸ HOSOKAWA 2000, 317–328.

council rule must have been implicitly supported by the majority. It is doubtful whether the same can be said of the *yoriai*, which was significantly more exclusive, and whose inception did not render the *hyōjōshū* obsolete. What both these assemblies do have in common is that they institutionalized a mode of consultative decision-making – in other words, the requirement of establishing a consensus between at least a certain part of the ruling elite – firmly within the shogunate polity. The difference was the type of association with the respective person at the top of its hierarchy: the *yoriai* was organized by more personal criteria than the *hyōjōshū* council, whereas the relationship between the *shikken* and the council members was of a transpersonal nature.

Returning to the initially stated dichotomy between arbitrary, personal decision-making and consultation centered around consensus, we can interpret both the *yoriai* – and consequently the era of *tokusō* rule – and *shikken* government as being part of a long era of consensual governance. The marked difference is that due to its smaller scope and more personal association between its members, a ruler could dominate an institution such as the *yoriai*, should his personal aptitude allow for the overcoming – or unification – of the particular interests of its constituent members (and if we account for what the case of Taira no Yoritsuna suggests, this person may very well be *any* constituent member of the group).

Utilizing ideal-typical concepts as derived from Satō's dichotomous construction of arbitrary decision-making by a single entity ('*sensei*', or 'autocracy'), and consensual decision-making by a collectivity ('*gōgi*', or 'consultation'), we can describe historical processes as constantly being in a hybrid state, located somewhere on an axis between two polar opposites. Still, any analysis exclusively based around a single set of criteria is insufficient to adequately reflect the gradual changes within, and complex structures of, a political field.⁷⁹ Only in combination with other analytical tools, such as further dichotomous sets of ideal types (e.g., personal and transpersonal concepts), it is possible to establish a set of criteria that permits a more accurate description and – most importantly – comparison of the manifold manifestations of premodern governance in history.

⁷⁹ The dichotomy of autocratic vs. consensual modes of governance as employed by Satō has been criticized as inadequate before; see, for example, SHIMOMURA Shōtarō, *Kamakura bakufu fūkeihō to shōgun, shikken, tokusō*, in: *Nihon rekishi* 732 (2009), 85–94, esp. 92–93.

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