

The Emergence, Maintenance and Defeat of Dominant Party Authoritarian Regimes

(DPARs)

by

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Date: March 31st, 2010

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of  
Political Science in the Graduate School  
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ABSTRACT

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is an investigation into the causes behind the emergence, maintenance and defeat of dominant authoritarian party regimes (DPARs). The emergence of these regimes during certain critical junctures in a country's history is attributed to the ability of charismatic leaders to co-opt political elites using electoral instruments and incentives under the banner of a single party. The presence of institutional mechanisms that can smooth the leadership transition process, provide rewards for elites to remain in the dominant party and increase the costs of elite defections are important explanatory factors in DPAR maintenance. DPARs also employ different strategies to co-opt and divide the opposition in order to reassert their political dominance. Intra regime splits are a necessary but not sufficient condition to weaken a DPAR. Institutional reform which further weakens a DPAR and increases the probability of future elite splits is introduced when the opposition can play a veto card. The mutually reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional reform explain the downfall of DPARs in Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay. The DPAR in Malaysia is at a critical juncture whereby an opposition veto which can possibly lead to institutional reform currently hangs in balance.

## **Dedication**

To my beloved wife, Ee Leng and to my parents.

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# 1. Dissertation Introduction

## *1.0 Introduction and Chapter Outline*

It may seem all too obvious to say that political scientists studying the phenomenon of regime transitions<sup>1</sup> require that such transitions occur before hypotheses and casual mechanisms associated with such transition processes can be generated and tested. Indeed, when such transitions occur, political scientists are often challenged to come up with explanations for these transition processes. But what might seem obvious now may not have been the case in another time period and context. Political scientists writing during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century would have been restricted to studying the processes associated with extending suffrage, as part of the slow march of democratization in what is now Western Europe, but would not have conceived of the possibility of a much speedier process of democratization as a result of decolonization after the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Lipset (1959) in his classic article identifying a positive correlation between a country's level of economic development and its democratic status, may not have imagined the explosion in the number of countries at all levels of development transitioning away from authoritarian or post-totalitarian regimes as part of the Third Wave of democratization. Even if it was possible to come up

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<sup>1</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) and Bratton and Walle (1997) define regimes as the rules of the game which determine the distribution of power which means that, for them, the introduction of multi-party elections in a authoritarian country where such elections were previously absent or had been suspended represents a regime transition. I prefer to define regime transition as an authoritarian government losing power. The reason for my definition will be made clear later in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, political science did not exist as a distinct academic discipline.

with different theoretical frameworks to study the processes associated with regime transitions, political scientists may not have felt the need to expend such effort, given the lack of empirical cases to test the validity of these frameworks.<sup>3</sup>

The rapid increase, since the early 1990s, in the number of countries that hold multi-party elections in an environment where the protection of political rights and civil liberties fall short of widely accepted democratic norms poses a particularly interesting problem for scholars studying regime transitions. Does the introduction of multi-party elections mark a regime transition, especially if the same party or leaders remain firmly in control of the government? Are these multiparty elections meaningless exercises, given that the likelihood of the incumbent being defeated remains very small, in most cases? Does the presence of these elections actually increase the longevity of some of these authoritarian regimes by providing them with a more efficient means to manage intra-elite conflicts, and co-opt and divide the opposition forces? Or do these elections provide the necessary platform on which anti-regime forces can come together to defeat the incumbent through the electoral route? In other words, can multi-party elections in the context of some of these regimes be rightly termed a 'mode of transition' by which democracy can be installed?

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<sup>3</sup> For example, very few scholars would have written about democratic experiments in sub-Saharan Africa or possible transition paths towards democracy in East Central Europe in the early 1980s. While I do not doubt the importance of deriving theoretical frameworks or definitions based on first principles, without the help of empirical cases, I have greater doubts as to whether some of the more influential scholarly studies on, let's say, the 'modes of transition' could have been conceived without the Latin America and South Europe cases.

The questions raised above cannot be easily or simplistically answered. Much would depend on the characteristics of the various regimes that continue to govern, often for long periods of time, despite the holding of regular multi-party elections whereby on the most part, widespread ballot stuffing and voter fraud are not as common as one may think. There is clearly a lot of diversity among these regimes. Multiparty elections held under less than free and fair conditions in Afghanistan or Jordan would lead to results that looked very different from similar elections held in Malaysia or Singapore. Furthermore, there is also a large number of countries where this phenomenon of holding multiparty elections with many imperfections can be observed. To illustrate, the latest 2010 Freedom House Report shows that 54% of countries are classified as either Partly Free (32%) or Not Free (22%). Among them, all of the Partly Free countries hold multi party elections, and well more than half, 69% to be exact, or 29 of the 42 Not Free countries also hold some sort of multiparty elections.

For theoretical and practical purposes, the task of studying the possibility of regime transitions in such countries should be broken down into individual regime subtypes. My own research interests lie in the study of parties that have stayed in power for a sustained period of time, in the context of regular multi-party elections under less than free and fair conditions. I call this particular regime subtype, following Greene (2007), dominant party authoritarian regimes (DPARs). The PRI in Mexico (1929 to 2000), the KMT in Taiwan (1949 to 2000), the BN in Malaysia (1957 to present) and the

PAP in Singapore (1965 to present) are some of the well-known parties that fall under this category of authoritarian regime.<sup>4</sup> How have these DPARs remained in power despite the presence of multiparty elections? How did some of them eventually fall out of power? Will the regime transition paths for existing DPARs follow that of those who have fallen out of power or will they take different paths?

The privileging of transitions from authoritarian regimes as part of the democratization process is not accidental. Like the authors of the influential study on transitions from authoritarian rule (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986), I share the normative view that 'the instauration and eventual consolidation of political democracy constitutes per se a desirable goal' (pp.3).<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that other types of regime transitions are less important to political scientists. The breakdown of democratic regimes and the subsequent transition to an authoritarian regime should be at least of equal importance to scholars holding the normative view that democracies are preferable to non-democracies. Linz and Stepan's (1978) volume on the breakdown of democratic regimes in Southern Europe and Latin America is a salient reminder of the fragility of democracies, especially in a context where such democracies are not

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<sup>4</sup> I use authoritarian to denote that, for the majority of the time in which these regimes were (and still are) in power, the protection of political rights and civil liberties and the conduct of elections fall short of widely accepted democratic standards. As a proxy, if the FH rating for a country where a dominant party regime has been (or still is) in power is not 'Free' for a majority of this duration, I consider this regime to be an authoritarian one. I recognize of course that even among the regimes which fall under this category, there are different levels of competitiveness in regard to multi-party elections.

<sup>5</sup> I am almost certain that this normative view that having democracy is better than not having democracy is the dominant view among political scientists.

consolidated.<sup>6</sup> However, given the different processes and underlying conditions associated with democratic breakdown on the one hand, and transitions from authoritarian rule on the other, it would require different research strategies to test, refine or amend existing hypotheses, as well as to tease out the comparative lessons of democratic breakdown versus authoritarian breakdown (Stepan, 1986).

Why am I privileging the study of DPARs over other authoritarian regime subtypes where less than free and fair multi-party elections are held? I propose the following reasons for my choice.

Firstly, there are distinct theoretical questions associated with the transition, democratization and democratic consolidation process, which a study of this specific regime type is well placed to answer (Schedler, 2002, 2006). For example, does this regime type provide a more stable path towards democratization and democratic consolidation compared to other non-democratic regime types? More than one scholar has used Taiwan (Simkins, 1999; Chu, 1999) as a prototypical example of the relationship between development and democracy posited by Lipset (1959), whereby rapid industrialization and increasing incomes led to a gradual opening up of democratic space and electoral competition, which eventually led to the long-standing incumbent regime losing, and the consolidation of democratic norms. Is there something about the

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<sup>6</sup> The question of transitions from one authoritarian regime to another should also be of theoretical interest to scholars, since the question of why the democratic path was not taken needs to be asked, but interestingly, there have been very little theoretical work done to address this question.



institutionalization of multiparty elections, even under less than free and fair conditions, that makes democratic consolidation more likely in the event that an incumbent regime loses power?

Or perhaps, contrary to Lipset, could this regime type constitute a stable equilibrium in which a non-democratic regime can confidently continue to exist despite growing incomes and a growing middle class? To put it another way, could these 'halfway houses' (Case, 1996) where multiparty elections take place albeit in less than free and fair conditions resist the demands for greater democratization? Is this type of regime more of a 'bridgehead' (Du Toit, 1999) that stands against a full transition to democratization rather than a bridge towards democratization and democratization consolidation? An in-depth study of this regime type is likely to shed light on some of these important theoretical questions associated with the process of regime transition, democratization and democratic consolidation (Mainwaring et al., 1992; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Diamond, 1999)

Secondly, the long periods of time in which these regimes have stayed in power increases the possible variance in some of the dependent variables of interest (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994) – electoral support for the DPAR, for example – and the independent variables of interest – changes to the institutional framework, the occurrence of elite splits, the rise and fall of opposition parties, leadership changes at the top, economic crises, just to name a few. The added variance increases the number of

observations from which different hypotheses can be tested. The fact that some of these regimes have already fallen out of power (Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal, Paraguay), some of them facing serious electoral challenges and may soon fall out of power (Malaysia), and many seem quite secure (Singapore, Egypt), also increases the number of observations of the dependent variable of interest – DPAR longevity.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, DPARs are not a relic of the past and nor are they likely to cease to exist even if all of the existing DPARs experience a regime transition. The authoritarian regime that currently governs Russia shows definite signs of becoming a DPAR. Thailand, under the rising influence of Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party, was showing signs of becoming a DPAR before a military coup in 2006 which brought down Thaksin' government. These new cases of DPARs allow theories regarding their emergence and possible breakdown to be tested and refined. In other words, any theories and hypotheses involving DPARs will still be relevant moving forward.

My research questions on DPARs can thus be summarized in the following manner: *how DPARs emerge, how they maintain their hold on power and how they eventually lose power.*

My focus on DPARs does not preclude me from comparing the findings from my thesis to other authoritarian regime types that fall under this larger category of countries

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<sup>7</sup> Contrast this, for example, to the lack of variance for monarchical regimes such as the ones in Jordan and Morocco since none of these regimes have fallen out of power through the electoral route.

that conduct less than free and fair multi-party elections. There is rich theoretical ground to be gained from comparing strategies used by DPARs to remain in power, to those used by monarchical regimes to do the same.<sup>8</sup> As such, I am situating my investigation in the larger literature on the study of authoritarian regimes in contemporary times. My research constitutes an important component of this growing literature which includes recent scholarly works associated with defining different types of non-democratic regimes (Chehabi and Linz, 1998; Geddes, 1999; Brooker, 2000; Hadenius and Toerell, 2007), the different longevities associated with different types of non-democratic regimes (Geddes, 1999 & 2003), different methods and strategies used by different types of non-democratic regimes to maintain power (Lust-Okar, 2005; Magaloni, 2006; Greene: 2007; Brownlee, 2007) and different outcomes associated with different institutional arrangements within these non-democratic regimes (Gandhi, 2008).

The rest of the chapter will proceed as follows. In Section 1.1, I will briefly discuss the evolution in our understanding and classification of non-democratic regimes. Political scientists have increasingly come to recognize the diversity of institutional tools and mechanisms used by these regimes to manage intra-elite and elite-masses interactions. Previous categorizations of non-democratic regimes, for example, totalitarian and authoritarian categories, are no longer theoretically useful. There is now a lively ongoing and growing debate, as reflected by the number of articles in political

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<sup>8</sup> I will raise these possibilities in the conclusion to my thesis.

science journals, on different methods in which one can classify non-democratic regimes, and how different classification schemes can be used to test different hypotheses. Disagreements over the rules of these classification schemes are partly driven by the rapid increase in the number of regimes that occupy the gray zone in between consolidated democracies and closed authoritarian countries. I use this section to also lay out some of the more recent classification schemes that recognize the diversity of non-democratic regimes. I then proceed, in Section 1.2, to outline my own criteria for categorizing a non-democratic regime as a DPAR, based on the discussion in Section 1.1.

In Section 1.3, I compare and contrast the elections as a 'mode of transition' approach in the study of regime transitions, to some of the more established ways of theorizing on different modes of regime transition. Here, I draw attention to the move away from the structural-functionalist approach in the study of democratization, the approach most associated with modernization theory. I highlight Rustow's (1970) seminal contribution in bringing politics back into the discussion with regard to democratic transitions, as well as O'Donnell and Schmitter's (1986) classic study which introduced the concept of 'negotiated pacts' into the transitology literature as part of their larger attempt to emphasize the contingent nature of the regime transition process. I also point out how others have recommended a middle path between the overly deterministic structural-functionalist approach and the overly voluntaristic actor oriented approach whereby institutions, the 'missing variable' (Snyder and Mahoney,

1999), play the mediating role between the two approaches. I then discuss the emergence of a new and very interesting debate regarding the study 'hybrid' regimes (Karl, 1995; Diamond, 2002) in which a new mode of democratic transition – democratization by elections – has been proposed. The edited volume by Lindberg (2009) captures much of the recent development of the role in which elections, however flawed, may possibly play as part of the process of transition and democratization, rather than signaling the end point of a transition, a point assumed by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986).

Finally, I synthesize the literature from both sets of discussions (classifying authoritarian regimes and the process of democratization) and propose my own research strategy in the study of DPARs in Section 1.4. To pre-empt the discussion somewhat, my research strategy avoids the structural-functionalist path that explains democratization and the lack of it to variables associated with the level of economic development (distribution and levels of income, education levels, and so on). My preferred research strategy gravitates towards inter-elite interactions within the ruling regime, as well as among opposition actors. However, these interactions do not occur in a totally voluntaristic nature where all outcomes are possible<sup>9</sup>, but are contingent on the institutional setting where these interactions take place. Specifically, I focus on the role

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<sup>9</sup> To be fair to O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), their study did not explicitly say that their voluntaristic approach will yield outcomes which are totally random. Rather, articles which have referred to their approach as symbolic of the voluntaristic approach in the study of regime transitions have labeled this approach as 'excessively voluntaristic' because of the absence of structural or institutional factors in constraining the range of possible outcomes.

of political parties, and institutional rules and regulations, in structuring the nature of conflicts within the incumbent regime, between the incumbent regime and opposition forces, and between the different opposition groups. I will then argue that the mediating influence of such institutional factors and mechanisms are crucial, together with some of the insights and models derived from the 'transitology' literature, incorporating some of the most recent methodological approaches, in explaining the emergence, perpetuation and the possible demise of DPARs.

I conclude this chapter by breaking down the rest of the thesis into the relevant chapters as dictated by my research methodology. I will also briefly state the main arguments and hypotheses of my thesis.

### ***1.1 Classifying Non-democratic Regimes***

The purpose of this section is not to add to the already crowded space of classification schemes for non-democratic regimes. What I hope to accomplish instead is to employ some of the definitions and criteria already being used to classify non-democratic regimes that hold some form of multiparty elections.

I begin this section by tracing the evolution in scholarly thinking and debate on the nature of non-democratic regimes. I want to draw attention to the many challenges associated with the origins, purposes and longevity of any classification scheme of non-democratic regimes. This discussion will put into context, the difficulties of defining the parameters of the type of regime I am interested in studying, namely the DPARs. My

goal is to develop a workable set of criteria for DPARs with the understanding that there will be borderline cases that may not (or may not yet) fulfill all the criteria I have established. With this in mind, let us begin the task of examining how the classification of non-democratic regimes has evolved.

It is easy, with the benefit of hindsight, to say that, of course we need to disaggregate non-democratic regimes into different categories. However, we are often confined, intellectually at least, to the circumstances of our times and the countries or geographical regions we find ourselves inhabiting. This is not to say that classification schemes derived from a single country or from a particular region are not useful contributions to the field. A classification scheme with well-defined parameters and characteristics derived from a single country has the potential of 'traveling' to other countries or regions. But there are inherent limitations to these approaches.

Linz (1964), for example, formulated the concept of an authoritarian regime using the case of Spain to distinguish it from the more totalitarian forms of non-democratic rule observed in communist USSR and the communist countries that were part of the Warsaw Pact. In an expanded discussion on non-democratic regimes, Linz (1975, 2000)<sup>10</sup> added the category of 'sultanistic regime'<sup>11</sup> as well as a number of authoritarian regimes subtypes – post-totalitarian, bureaucratic-military and

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<sup>10</sup> Republished in with a new forward 2000, page references refer to the 2000 publication.

<sup>11</sup> Weber (1968), who described sultanism as an extreme form of patriomanial rule, is credited with this term.

mobilization authoritarian. As an illustration of how changing political circumstances can influence the consistency of even the best scholars, Linz and Stepan (1996), in their study of the problems of democratic consolidation in Latin American, Southern and Eastern Europe, shifted post-totalitarianism into a separate category, and distinguished between hierarchical and non-hierarchical military regimes in discussing the different legacies left by these types of regimes and their impact on democratic consolidation. Linz (1975, 2000) and later Linz and Stepan (1996) also failed to account for regimes where opposition political parties regularly win some representation to the legislature in elections which are less than free and fair.<sup>12</sup>

O'Donnell's (1973)<sup>13</sup> seminal work on a particular authoritarian regime subtype, the bureaucratic-authoritarian (BA) regime, which was based on his study of Argentina from 1966 to 1973, demonstrated the ability of a typology to travel across time and

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<sup>12</sup> I cannot help but conclude that Linz and Stepan ignores such regimes for convenient reasons. After all, the non-democratic regimes which are the focus of their studies in Southern Europe, Latin America and later Eastern Europe did not hold elections or allow opposition parties to officially exist. Brazil from 1964 to 1985 is perhaps the only exception. This is not to say that they were not aware of cases such as Mexico where elections were regularly held but with little possibility of an opposition victory. They clearly were. See Linz (2000, 60). But such cases were probably seen as outliers that did not require their own separate category. This assertion reflects the times in which Linz was writing in – 'The borderline between non-democratic and democratic regimes is therefore a fairly rigid one that cannot be crossed by slow and imperceptible evolution but practically always requires a violent break, anti-constitutional acts, a military coup, a revolution, or foreign intervention' (pp.60). This is a proposition which is explicitly tested in Lindberg's (2009) edited volume, where elections, however flawed, allow for a gradual increase in the levels of democracy. Linz could not have imagined a situation where Pinochet would lose a plebiscite in 1988 or where Kenneth Kaunda would allow multiparty elections in 1991 which he mistakenly thought he would win or the gradual leveling of the electoral playing field in Mexico and Taiwan and Senegal that eventually led to the incumbent regimes there losing power.

<sup>13</sup> The original was in Spanish, reprinted in English in 1979, and reprinted again in 1988. My page references are from the 1988 version.



space, but also highlighted the dangers of conceptual stretching (Sartori, 1970; Collier and Mahon, 1993). According to O'Donnell, the BA emerges as a response to solve the problem of the mobilization of the popular sector that threatens the interest of the dominant classes. Only by the demobilization of the popular sector, often by means of harsh repression, can economic conditions be 'normalized' so that industrialization, modernization and capital accumulation can proceed (pp.31-32). What was originally used to describe the authoritarian regime in Argentina was then used to describe the regimes in Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. O'Donnell's decision not to focus on the military component of BA gave this concept the 'legs' to travel to other non-democratic regimes where the military's role was much less pronounced. Kitschelt et al (1999), for example, distinguished bureaucratic-authoritarian communism from national-accommodative and patrimonial communism as a theoretical framework for understanding how different communist legacies would affect party-citizen linkages post-communism. Im (1987) also tried to apply the same label to the Park regime in South Korea in the 1970s. Even though other scholars would question the applicability of the characteristics of the BA regime in the original cases O'Donnell put forth (see Remmer, 1989 and Schamis, 1991, as examples), it did not prevent him in his later works (see O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead's 1986 volume on Latin America) to extend this concept to almost all of the regimes in Latin America that were experiencing regime transitions.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, no one accused O'Donnell for egregious conceptual stretching in the same manner as

What gave O'Donnell's description of the BA-regime extra 'legs' to travel, if you will, was the liberty other scholars took in interpreting and defining for themselves the configuration of the different actors involved in a BA-regime, whether it was the civilian bureaucracy, the different groups within the military complex, larger enterprises both domestic and transnational, and different segments of the bourgeoisie. For the purpose of this thesis, however, O'Donnell's description of a BA-regime is missing a key element – the role of political parties. Political parties do not make an appearance in the BA-regime and as such, they are not included as one of the actors in the dominant classes (pp.33-34).<sup>15</sup>

This does not imply that political scientists totally ignored the role of political parties in non-democratic regimes. Huntington and Moore (1970) conceptualized authoritarian regimes as different subtypes within the one-party system. But while their conceptualization of the one-party authoritarian regimes was rooted in origins and goals of these regimes, (as opposed to the level of mobilization and political pluralism characteristics used by Linz (1975)), the individual categories themselves look very

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Lijphart's 'leap' to describe Indian as a consociational democracy (Lustick, 1997). This, in my opinion, is probably due to O'Donnell's restraint in not trying to expand this concept beyond the Latin American examples. Others, not O'Donnell, would commit the error of 'conceptual stretching' in applying this model beyond Latin America.

<sup>15</sup> The criticism that political parties have been left out of the equation makes another appearance in O'Donnell and Schmitter's project on regime transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe. See Bermeo's (1990) review.

similar to those employed by Linz. For example, their description of revolutionary one-party systems shares many characteristics of the high levels of mass mobilization seen in the totalitarian regimes described by Linz. Similarly, the established one party system that emerges from the revolutionary one-party systems also sounds similar to the post-totalitarian regimes described by Linz. The one aspect of Huntington and Moore's (1970) contribution that is of relevance to my thesis is their identification of the influence of other actors within the polity that can weaken the role of the party within the one-party state. When the party is weak, one or more of these actors (a charismatic leader, elements of the bureaucracy such as the military, or other oligarchic interests) can possibly eclipse the role of the party in non-democratic regimes. The presence of these actors, as we will discover in subsequent chapters, explains the non-emergence of dominant parties or inability of these parties to stay in power beyond the tenure of a single leader.

To begin the shift from the classification of non-democratic regimes where political parties (especially opposition political parties) and elections do not play a role, to one where opposition participation and the contestation of national elections figure in the discussion, we look to Sartori's (1976) still influential study on political parties and party systems. Sartori's differentiation of party systems based on the level and type of contestation allowed him to distinguish between one-party systems as typified by USSR, hegemonic party systems as typified by Mexico, and predominant party systems as

typified by Japan and India (pp.128). In hegemonic party systems, there are 'secondary parties' which 'cannot be entirely dismissed as pure and simple facades', but are 'licensed and permitted to exist only as subordinate parties' to the hegemonic party in power. Predominant party systems are classified as competitive party systems but with the key difference being the existence of a party that 'counts more' than all the other parties together (pp.124). Most importantly, for the purpose of this thesis, Sartori's classification of the level of dispersion of party systems is put forth as a *continuum*, rather than as distinct categories with well defined parameters. This means that in some cases, the 'borders' between the categories are permeable and escape easy classification, as we will soon see, in my attempt at including and excluding the regimes I consider as DPARs.

The impetus for changing the way in which scholars classified non-democratic regimes would be provided by the third wave of democratization that started in southern Europe in the 1970s, which spread to Latin and Central America (1980s), parts of East Asia (late 1980s and early 1990s), Eastern and Central Europe (1990s with the collapse of the USSR) and then to Africa (early 1990s), as multiparty elections were introduced in what were formerly one-party, military or personalistic regimes. As these regime transitions occurred, political scientists were faced with a new reality that non-democratic regimes could co-exist with multiparty elections, with different degrees of competitiveness, and that these regimes were no longer the exceptions that could be

ignored. As such, new theoretical frameworks and classification schemes were needed to study this 'new' phenomenon.<sup>16</sup>

The scholars associated with the influential transitions project led by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) were well aware that the transition from authoritarianism in Latin America and Southern Europe was not a teleological process that would end with the consolidation of democracy for all the countries, even with the instauration of multiparty elections.<sup>17</sup> They explicitly stated that a transition from authoritarianism could result in either a democracy, a liberalized authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*) ( pp.9). Indeed, Schmitter and Karl (1991), very soon after the publication of the four volume study, warned against the fallacy of 'electoralism' or 'the faith that merely holding elections will channel political action into peaceful contests among elites and accord public legitimacy to the winners no matter how they are conducted or what else constrains those who win them' (pp.78). Karl (1995) is also credited with coining the term 'hybrid regimes' which 'combine elements of both authoritarianism and democracy' (pp.73), a term that was used by other scholars

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<sup>16</sup> I use the quotation marks because of two reasons. Firstly, this is not really a new phenomenon in that regimes in Mexico, Malaysia, Singapore, Senegal, and to a certain extent, Taiwan, have held semi-competitive elections where the incumbent regime regularly wins with large majorities but where the opposition gains at least some level of representation. Diamond (2002, pp.23) makes this same point. Secondly, political scientists have long recognized the existence of such regimes but because they were relatively small in number, there was little need to develop classification schemes that took these regimes into account. Sartori (1976) was one of the few exceptions.

<sup>17</sup> O'Donnell restates this point in his reply to Carother's (2002) argument that transitologists were too naïve in assuming that the move from authoritarian rule would necessarily end in a consolidated democracy. Many scholars often forget that the title for O'Donnell and Schmitter's four volume project was transitions from authoritarianism rather than transitions to democracy.

to describe countries that did not demonstrate all the characteristics of a consolidated democracy but at the same time, were substantively different from the non-democratic political settings from which they emerged.<sup>18</sup>

As the number of countries<sup>19</sup> that occupied the gray zone between non-democratic regimes with no elections at the national level and consolidated liberal democracies grew, political scientists faced the new challenge of differentiating these regimes based on clearly identifiable criteria. One approach was to attribute certain democratic deficits exhibited in these hybrid regimes that led to a proliferation of 'democracy with adjectives' terms (Collier and Levitsky, 1997).<sup>20</sup> An alternative and more recent approach was to separate out the regimes that were clearly closer to the authoritarian spectrum in the democratic continuum. Here, the ability to conduct free and fair elections became the criterion used to differentiate between authoritarian and diminished democracy subtypes.

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<sup>18</sup> Again, like the word 'bureaucratic' used to describe BA regimes, the term 'hybrid' traveled well because it can be associated with different configurations of democratic and non-democratic practices even though Karl used this term to describe a specific form of hybrid regime that was emerging in Central America in the 1990s where 'gains in the electoral arena have not been accompanied by the establishment of civilian control over the military or the rule of law', where 'elections are often free and fair, yet important sectors remain politically and economically disenfranchised' and where 'in rural municipalities, local notables can interfere in the electoral process in a manner that systematically biases the outcome, distributes favors based on political loyalties, and actively encourages or discourages mass mobilization' (pp.80).

<sup>19</sup> If we take Schedler's (2002, Table 2, pp.47 adapted from Diamond, 2002, Table 2, pp.30-31) classification of electoral democracies and electoral authoritarian regimes as hybrid regimes, they would constitute the majority regime type (59.6%). Electoral democracies would constitute 21% of total regimes and electoral authoritarianism would constitute 38% of total regimes making electoral authoritarianism the most common regime type. Liberal democracies constitute 24% with closed authoritarian regimes constituting 17%.

<sup>20</sup> O'Donnell's delegative democracy (1994) and Zakaria's illiberal democracy (1997) are two of the more prominent diminished democracy subtypes.

Schedler (2002) was one of those who led the charge in calling for this differentiation and separating out, the more obviously authoritarian regimes by asking scholars to 'abandon misleading labels, and to take their non-democratic nature seriously' when referring to these regimes. Schedler's 'electoral authoritarian' term was used to differentiate regimes that were, in his opinion, non-democratic so as to differentiate these regimes from electoral democracies that, again, in his opinion, had free and fair elections but fell short of the standards of a liberal democracy based on non-electoral criteria. Schedler's (2002, 36) argument was that 'electoral authoritarian regimes neither practice democracy nor resort regularly to naked repression. By organizing periodic elections they try to obtain at least a semblance of democratic legitimacy, hoping to satisfy external as well as internal actors. At the same time, by placing those elections under tight authoritarian controls they try to cement their continued hold on power.'

The other term or typology that has jostled for the same space as Schedler's 'electoral authoritarianism' is Levitsky and Way's 'competitive authoritarianism' (2002). They are in agreement with Schedler in calling for differentiating between regimes that clearly fall on the authoritarian side of the spectrum, and those that are closer to the democratic side among the many hybrid regimes in the contemporary world. In 'competitive authoritarian regimes', 'although elections are regularly held and are generally free of massive fraud, incumbents routinely abuse state resources, deny the

opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters, and in some cases manipulate electoral results. Journalists, opposition politicians, and other government critics may be spied on, threatened, harassed, or arrested. Members of the opposition may be jailed, exiled, or – less frequently – even assaulted or murdered. Regimes characterized by such abuses cannot be called democratic’ (pp.58).

But Levitsky and Way went one step further than Schedler by distinguishing what they call ‘façade’ electoral regimes – ‘that is, regimes in which electoral institutions exist but yield no meaningful contestation for power<sup>21</sup> (2002, 54). In their view, these regimes should be classified as ‘full-scale authoritarian’ regimes. By taking this step, Levitsky and Way opened the door for the possibility for further differentiation among the non-democratic regimes that hold less than free and fair elections. Indeed, by acknowledging that ‘non-competitive electoral institutions may one day become competitive (as in Mexico)’ (pp.54), questions about gradations and transition processes within these non-democratic regimes are inevitably raised.

Diamond (2002) would take up the challenge of expanding the number of categories within the hybrid regimes beyond the distinction between electoral / competitive authoritarianism and electoral democracies. Schedler’s electoral authoritarian regimes are broken down in hegemonic authoritarian regime (Sartori, 1976) and competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way, 2002). Diamond also added

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<sup>21</sup> Such as Egypt, Singapore and Uzbekistan in the 1990s



an ‘ambiguous’ category that sits between competitive authoritarianism and electoral democracies, where independent observers disagree over how to classify them (2002, 26).

I reproduce below Diamond’s (2002, Table 2, 30-31) classification of regimes using his graded scale to illustrate the objections that such a classification scheme will inevitably encounter. Specifically, Diamond can be criticized for inconsistency in following his own standards, using arbitrary decisions and unclear criteria of putting countries in distinct categories.

**Table 1: Diamond’s Regime Typology (Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberty Scores in Brackets) <sup>22</sup>**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Liberal Democracy (FH &lt; 2)</i>	<i>Electoral Democracy (FH &gt; 2)</i>	<i>Ambiguous</i>	<i>Competitive Authoritarian</i>	<i>Hegemonic Authoritarian</i>
Post-Communism	8 Central and Eastern Europe countries 3 Baltic countries	Moldova (2,4) Serbia (3,3) Albania (3,4)	Armenia (4,4) Georgia (4,4) Macedonia (4,4) Ukraine (4,4)	Bosnia (5,4) Russia (5,5) Belarus (6,6)	Azerbaijan (6,5) Kazakhstan (6,5) Kyrgyzstan (6,5) Tajikistan (6,6) Uzbekistan (7,6)

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<sup>22</sup> The closed authoritarian regime type has been omitted. These are authoritarian regimes which do not allow for any form of multiparty elections.

**Table 1: Diamond's Regime Typology (Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberty Scores in Brackets) (continued)**

Latin America and the Caribbean	8 Caribbean countries Uruguay (1,1) Costa Rica (1,2) Panamá (1,2) Surinam (1,2) Bolivia (1,3) Perú (1,3) Chile (2,2) Dominican Republic (2,2) Guyana (2,2)	Argentina (2,3) El Salvador (2,3) Jamaica (2,3) México (2,3) Panamá (2,3) Brazil (3,3) Ecuador (3,3) Honduras (3,3) Nicaragua (3,3) Trinidad & Tobago (3,3) Guatemala (3,4)	Venezuela (3,5) Paraguay (4,3) Colombia (4,4)	Antigua & Barbuda (4,2) Haiti (6,6)	
Asia	Japan (1,1) Taiwan (1,2) Korea (2,2)	India (2,3) Mongolia (2,3) Philippines (2,3) Thailand (2,3) Bangladesh (3,4) Nepal (3,4) Sri Lanka (3,4)	Indonesia (3,4)	East Timor (5,3) Malaysia (5,5)	Singapore (5,5) Maldives (6,5) Cambodia (6,5) Pakistan (6,5)

**Table 1: Diamond's Regime Typology (Freedom House Political Rights and Civil Liberty Scores in Brackets) (continued)**

Africa	Cape Verde (1,2) Mauritius (1,2) Sao Tome and Principe (1,2) South Africa (1,2) Botswana (2,2)	Ghana (2,3) Mali (2,3) Namibia (2,3) Benin (3,2) Madagascar (2,4) Seychelles (3,4) Senegal (3,3) Malawi (4,3) Níger (4,4)	Mozambique (3,4) Tanzania (4,4) Nigeria (4,5) Djibouti (4,5) Sierra Leone (4,5) Zambia (5,4)	Lesotho (4,4) Central African Republic (4,5) Guinea-Bissau (4,5) Ivory Coast (5,4) Gabon (5,4) The Gambia (5,5) Togo (5,5) Ethiopia (5,6) Kenya (6,5) Cameroon (6,6) Zimbabwe (6,6)	Burkina Faso (4,4) Congo, Brazzaville (5,4) Comoros (6,4) Mauritania (5,5) Chad (6,5) Guinea (6,5) Uganda (6,5) Angola (6,6) Liberia (6,6) Equatorial Guinea (6,7)
Middle East and North Africa	Israel (1,3)		Turkey (4,5)	Lebanon (6,5) Iran (6,6) Yemen (6,6)	Kuwait (4,5) Jordan (5,5) Morocco (5,5) Algeria (5,6) Tunisia (6,5) Egypt (6,6)

Not surprisingly, differentiating between the categories of authoritarian regimes is particularly problematic. For example, Diamond differentiates competitive authoritarian regimes from hegemonic authoritarian regimes based on the percentage of seats won by the ruling or dominant party in the legislature or the percentage of presidential votes obtained by the winning candidate. 'In regimes where elections are largely an authoritarian façade, the ruling or dominant party wins almost all the seats'

(pp.29) and then proceeds to include Tanzania (which he classifies as an 'ambiguous' regime) together with Singapore, Egypt, Mauritania and Tunisia (which he classifies as 'hegemonic'). Instead of using legislative seats, he uses municipal seats returns to demonstrate that Cambodia is a hegemonic regime.<sup>23</sup>

This is not to say that we should throw the baby out with the bathwater. The significance and level of contestation and competition of elections, are clearly different between some of the 'electoral authoritarian' or 'competitive authoritarian' regimes. Most country or regional experts would attest to this. Elections are considerably more meaningful, and are taken much more seriously by the government, the opposition and the public in Malaysia compared to Singapore, even though both countries have very similar Freedom House scores. The opposition has gained control of individual state legislatures in the former while the opposition has never managed to win more than 10% of seats in the legislature in the latter. The emergence of the CPP in Cambodia as a DPAR is a more recent phenomenon given that opposition parties used to win a significant proportion of legislative seats in the early post-civil war elections in the 1990s. It would also be incorrect to conclude, as Levitsky and Way do, that elections are a mere façade in Egypt even though there was little doubt that Mubarak would win the 2005 presidential elections. This is because legislative elections in Egypt are competitive

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<sup>23</sup> This is but the tip of the iceberg in terms of criticizing Diamond's categorization of individual countries. Almost any country or regional expert would contest at least some of these categorizations based on their own understanding of authoritarianism and democracy.

and feature legitimate opposition candidates, many of whom are elected because they are known to be affiliated to the popular Muslim Brotherhood, which is banned from competing in its own name in elections. What is needed then are clearer and more transparent criteria to differentiate these non-democratic regimes, perhaps on more than one dimension. This, however, falls beyond the scope of my research interests.<sup>24</sup> The importance of Diamond's classification scheme, in the context of my thesis, is twofold: firstly, there are different gradations in terms of how non-democratic regimes that hold elections can be classified and secondly, that countries can move from one classification to another over time, either by regressing towards closed authoritarianism or progressing towards liberal democracy.

Another possible criticism of Schedler, Levitsky and Way, and Diamond, that is of relevance to my thesis, is they focus too much on the level of electoral competitiveness in their classification schemes but fail to account for the different institutional configurations among the various non-democratic regimes. In the rush to distinguish between electoral democracies and electoral authoritarianism, these scholars have ignored the work of earlier scholars in differentiating between military, personalistic / sultanistic / neo-patrimonial and one-party types of authoritarianism. Geddes' (1999) seminal contribution in categorizing a comprehensive set of authoritarian regimes

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<sup>24</sup> Wigle (2008) proposes mapping hybrid regimes along two dimensions – electoralism and constitutionalism – which results in four regime types – democratic, constitutional-oligarchic, electoral-autocratic, and authoritarian. I am sure that more dimensions will be identified by other scholars to further subdivide these categories.

(personalistic, military, one-party and combinations of these general types) and then measuring the survival rates of these types of regimes demonstrates the need for further disaggregation of authoritarian regimes based on who wields the power if we are to have a better understanding of how these regimes may lose power.<sup>25</sup> But one glaring omission in Geddes' classification scheme is her failure to account for the presence of elections in the different types of authoritarian regimes. Hegemonic party states that hold less than free and fair multiparty elections are put in the same category as one-party states which do not hold any elections and where opposition parties do not exist.

Hadenius and Teorell (2007) combined the earlier work of Geddes and the later work of Schedler, Levitsky and Way and Diamond, in a new classification scheme that incorporates both the level of competitiveness of elections as well as the configuration of power sharing among the elites in different authoritarian regimes. They modified Geddes' classification scheme by adding new categories and abolishing old ones. A monarchical category was added to reflect the regimes, mostly in the Middle East and in Morocco, where members of the royal family hold power and succession is determined by royal lineage.<sup>26</sup> The military category was maintained but the personalistic category was removed on the basis that every authoritarian regime had degrees of personalistic rule and as such did not deserve an individual category on its own. Finally, a new

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<sup>25</sup> I will discuss Geddes's work in relation to the games of transition in the next section on democratization.

<sup>26</sup> Succession by non-royal rulers in regimes like Syria and North Korea are not included in this category.

category called an 'electoral regime' was added. This category was further subdivided into no party, one-party and limited multiparty authoritarian regimes. The last category – limited multiparty authoritarian regimes - was further divided into dominant multiparty and traditional multiparty authoritarian regimes. While their survival analysis of the different types of authoritarian regimes did not result in significantly different findings from Geddes' earlier work – for example, the finding that military regimes were the most short-lived among all regime types – their innovation, in my opinion, was the usage of their classification scheme to calculate the probabilities of the likely transition paths to democracy that these regimes had taken. Using these probabilities, they then posited a most likely path of democratic transition that authoritarian regimes would take. Their conclusion was that the most likely path towards democracy is via the dominant multiparty-traditional multiparty path – that dominant parties would gradually lose their electoral dominance and subsequently lose power through the electoral path.

Hadenius and Teorell's (2007) classification scheme is vulnerable to any number of criticisms because they laid out their coding rules in a transparent manner and because they attempted to including all possible authoritarian regimes into this classification scheme. Levitsky and Way (2002) as well as Schedler (2002) avoided criticism by not doing either. Diamond, too, was clear in that his own classification

scheme did not have coding rules but 'offered more in an illustrative than a definitive spirit (2002, 28).

I shall point to only two challenges in their classification scheme that are related to my own attempt at defining what a DPAR is or is not. Firstly, their decision to abandon the personalistic / sultanistic category brings up the question of the extent to which a regime type can be categorized under a party (or military) type given the dominance of one ruler over the party (or the military). While it is true that personalism exists to a degree in many if not most authoritarian regimes, the extent to which other actors or institutions can act as a check on the worst excesses of a dictator was surely different under Mahathir in Malaysia compared to Mubotu in Zaire or Amin in Uganda or even Mugabe in Zimbabwe. This challenge is not a new one. Geddes (1999) overcame the problem by allowing the personalistic category to amalgamate with the military and one-party regime types. My challenge is to decide where the 'cut-off' point is in determining when the personalistic element overrides the party element in a regime. In addition, I also have to determine the extent to which these marginal cases may or may not add useful variance to the hypotheses I am trying to test.

The second challenge of interest in their classification scheme is determining the cut-off point for when a regime is considered dominant and when it turns into a



traditional multiparty authoritarian regime.<sup>27</sup> Hadenius and Toerell (2007) followed Geddes in using winning 2/3rds of the popular vote (for presidential elections) and seats (for parliamentary systems) to determine when a regime can be considered dominant and when it passes into the phase of being 'merely' a traditional multiparty authoritarian regime. Did these regimes in question lose some of their ability to manipulate the electoral process when they went below the 2/3rds threshold? Does the crossing of this threshold portend any substantive changes in the electoral process? What if the same regime crosses over the 2/3rds threshold in the subsequent election?<sup>28</sup>

The more perplexing challenge associated with using such thresholds is the question of length of time in power. Following Pempel's (1990) influential volume on dominant parties in advanced industrial democracies, and Giliomee and Simkins' (1999) volume on dominant parties in industrializing countries, the concept of dominance (or hegemony) should reflect some level of longevity of a ruling regime. Under Hadenius and Toerell's (2007) classification scheme, an authoritarian regime is considered dominant even if it wins only one election with more than 2/3rds of votes or seats.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The term 'traditional' here is misleading since there is nothing traditional among a multiparty authoritarian regime which is not dominant. It is a relatively modern phenomenon as opposed to the more traditional types of patrimonial rule found in pre-modern and largely agricultural societies described by Weber (1968).

<sup>28</sup> Roessler and Howard (2009) use 70% as the cut-off point to differentiate between hegemonic and competitive authoritarian regimes. Brownlee (2009) uses 75% as the cut-off point to make the same distinction. I will discuss this point as it pertains to my definition of DPARs later in this section.

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that the other classification schemes discussed so far suffers from similar problems. Time in power or the number of elections won is not considered in any of the aforementioned classification schemes.

Hence, some of the regimes that fall under their definition of dominance may not remain in that category if time in power or number of elections won is added as an additional criterion.

To recapitulate, the classification of non-democratic regimes has evolved from a historical context in which multiparty elections were an anomaly and hence, could be ignored, to the contemporary context whereby different gradations of multiparty electoral competitiveness among non-democratic regimes must be taken into account. At the same time, the linkages between the institutional arrangements that define who holds the power within these non-democratic regimes – whether it is a monarchical or non-monarchical ruler, the military, or the party in power and their different possible amalgamations – and their respective survival rates have also been the focus of scholarly attention.<sup>30</sup>

Armed with the knowledge of the classification schemes used by these scholars as well as their respective strengths and weaknesses, I now move on to my own criteria for determining whether or not an authoritarian regime can be classified as a DPAR.

## ***1.2 Defining and Classifying DPARs***

For the purpose of my thesis, I follow Diamond's (2002) regime classification scheme in recognizing that there are different gradations even among non-democratic

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<sup>30</sup> See Magaloni (2008) and Lindberg's (2009) edited volume as examples of the more recent work following Geddes' (1999) seminal contribution.

regimes which hold regular elections for national offices.<sup>31</sup> The presence of these graded categories is important for two reasons. Firstly, it illustrates the possibility that dominant rule can have different starting points within this spectrum. Secondly, it offers the possibility of transitions within this spectrum. For example, a country that started out with a dominant party in an electoral democracy may regress to a competitive or hegemonic authoritarian regime over time. Conversely, a country that started out as a hegemonic regime may, over time, shift into the competitive category on its way to becoming an electoral or liberal democracy or perhaps stop short of that.

With this classification scheme in hand, my task then is to extract the cases I am interested in – specifically, those non-democratic regimes that have remained in power over relatively long periods of time by regularly winning elections. Table 2 below, which shows Lindberg's (2009, 15) adaptation of Diamond's (2002) regime type classification, illustrates the possible paths towards greater democratization and autocratization which different regime types can take. It neatly summarizes my point – which is that dominant party regimes can be found among regime types and that these dominant party regimes in non-democratic settings – DPARS – can be established through multiple entry pathways.

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<sup>31</sup> Lindberg (2009) in his introduction to his edited volume uses the same classification scheme as Diamond with the additional visual representation that shifts away from and towards a liberal democracy as possible i.e. the process is not teleological.

**Table 2: Elections and Regimes: Multiple Paths and Outcomes<sup>32</sup>**

Hegemonic Authoritarian	Competitive Authoritarian	Ambiguous	Electoral Democracy	Liberal Democracy	
↑	↑	↑	↑	Regime Reproduction	Liberal Democracy
<i>Multiple Paths of Democratization</i>			Regime Reproduction	↓	Electoral Democracy
↓	↓	Regime Reproduction	↓	↓	Ambiguous
	Regime Reproduction	<i>Multiple Paths of Autocratization</i>			Competitive Authoritarian
Regime Reproduction	↓	↓	↓	↓	Hegemonic Authoritarian

Prior to setting out the criteria to identify the universe of relevant cases, the issue of nomenclature first needs to be addressed.

The regime type I am interested in has been called different things by different scholars. Sartori (1976) defines this regime type as a ‘hegemonic’ regime, as does Magaloni (2006). Huntington and Moore (1970) use the term one-party ‘dominant’ regime while Greene (2007) prefers the term ‘dominant party authoritarian regime’ (DPAR). To differentiate the regimes I am interested in - non-democratic regimes - from the regimes in which a single party has been dominant electorally in democratic contexts – what Pempel (1990) defines as ‘one-party dominant regimes’ – I prefer the terms hegemonic party regime (HPR) or dominant party authoritarian regime (DPAR).<sup>33</sup> At

<sup>32</sup> Adapted from Linberg (2002, 15, Figure 1.2)

<sup>33</sup> I find the exclusion of the term party in Magaloni’s hegemonic regime slightly puzzling and troubling given that the party plays a central role in sustaining the longevity of this regime type. As such, I include the

this juncture, I do not want to differentiate between the terms hegemonic and dominant.<sup>34</sup> As such, the terms hegemonic party regime (HPR) and dominant party authoritarian regime (DPAR) are used interchangeably in the context of my dissertation. However, since Diamond (2002) as well as Levitsky and Way (2002) distinguish between hegemonic authoritarian regimes and competitive authoritarian regimes, I will use the term dominant party authoritarian regime (DPAR) as a reflection of the fact that the regimes I am interested in can be found in both categories of authoritarian regimes – ‘hegemonic’ authoritarian regimes which often win in excess of 2/3rds of seats in the legislature and ‘competitive’ authoritarian regimes which may only win a bare majority of legislative seats. The term ‘dominant’ here is used to reflect length of time in power and success at winning multiple elections rather than the percentage of seats or votes won during a single election. The only exceptions are when referring to the terms a specific scholar uses in defining this regime type – Sartori’s or Magaloni’s hegemonic regimes, for example.

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word party under my definition just as Greene included the word party in his own definition of dominant party authoritarian regimes.

<sup>34</sup> Some scholars have tried to differentiate between the two terms to signify differences in the level of policy-control among these incumbent regimes. But these attempts have not been systematic or theoretically rigorous and have made comparisons between different regimes more confusing rather than theoretically helpful. To avoid this danger, I prefer not to distinguish between hegemonic and dominant and opt for a theoretically more transparent definition of this regime type.

The first criterion a potential DPAR has to fulfill is the holding of multiparty elections. The presence of multiparty elections signifies the presence of political parties apart from those of the incumbent regime. The fact that opposition political parties are allowed to exist, organize and compete in multiparty elections distinguishes DPARs from one-party or party state regimes where there is only one officially recognized political party.<sup>35</sup>

Sartori (1976, 66) distinguishes between these two regime types – one-party or party-state regimes and hegemonic party regimes – using a broader concept of ‘subsystem autonomy’ which includes ‘the party subsystem, the labor union subsystem, the pressure group subsystem’. In other words, social organizations that are not part of the state must have at least some level of autonomy in countries that are not one-party or party-state systems. The autonomy possessed by opposition political parties in hegemonic party regimes fits into Sartori’s conception of having some level of ‘subsystem autonomy’. This proves to be a helpful clarification because even though there might be a large degree of overlap between the party and the state in China and Malaysia or Mexico, the level of ‘subsystem autonomy’ is different in China compared to Malaysia and Mexico since opposition political parties are allowed in the latter two.

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<sup>35</sup> The underlying assumption here is that the opposition parties in these polities are ‘genuine’ in the sense that they are not ‘created’ by the incumbent regime or the president or the ruling monarch as a way of dissipating electoral support across different parties, all of whom are supportive of the president or the monarch. The recent Uzbekistan elections (December 2009) where all four political parties were pro-government parties and where no opposition parties contested would not be an example of genuine multiparty contests.

The second criterion a potential DPAR has to fulfill is that multiparty elections take place under conditions which are less than 'free and fair'. In other words, elections in these states 'must be both meaningful and unfair to sustain the dominant party equilibrium' (Levitsky and Way, 2002, 53). This description of elections that are less than 'free and fair' is indicative of some institutional manipulations which take place under these regimes.

My third criterion reflects the longevity characteristic of a DPAR, a distinction the previously mentioned classification schemes fail to make. This criterion requires that a regime must win a minimum of four consecutive multiparty legislative or presidential elections. Magaloni (2006) uses the criterion of 20 years in power to define her cases of hegemonic regimes but she is silent on the number of multiparty elections a regime has to win in order to be classified as a hegemonic regime. This is problematic in that a hegemonic regime could potentially be in power without elections for more than 20 years, and then lose its power after the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> multiparty elections. For example, the PDCI in Ivory Coast only won the legislative and presidential elections in 1990 and 1995, the former under Felix Houphouet-Boigny and the latter under Henri Konan Bedie. It subsequently lost the next legislative and presidential elections in 1999. Hence according to my third criterion, the PDCI should not be classified as a DPAR.

Greene's definition of what constitutes a DPAR in terms of its electoral dominance is clearer than Magaloni's. He states that the DPAR in question must have

been in power for at least 20 years or four consecutive elections. This captures Duverger's vague but insightful definition that 'A dominant party is that which public opinion believes to be dominant' (Duverger, 1964, 308-309). But Greene is silent as to whether the four consecutive electoral victories constitute legislative or presidential electoral victories. My criterion that a regime must win a minimum of four consecutive elections either at the legislative or presidential levels clarifies this requirement. Requiring a regime to win either four consecutive legislative or presidential elections avoids the possibility of a regime winning two staggered legislative and presidential elections being classified as a DPAR.

Winning two consecutive legislative elections and two presidential elections which are sandwiched between the two legislative elections during a period of 8 to 10 years does not reflect the same kind of electoral dominance a regime that wins either four consecutive legislative or presidential elections (or both) over a period of time covering 16 to 20 years has. As such, it makes sense to define winning four consecutive multiparty elections as winning four consecutive multiparty elections at either the legislative or presidential level.

Defining what 'winning' constitutes in presidential systems is straightforward enough. The candidate of the DPAR must win the office of the presidency even if it wins



by only a plurality of the vote instead of a majority.<sup>36</sup> Defining what ‘winning’ constitutes in parliamentary systems is not as straightforward. A DPAR would obviously be able to form a government in a parliamentary system if it won a majority of the seats in the legislature. But if it failed to win a majority of seats, and the other seats are divided among a fragmented opposition that may not be able to form a government which excludes the dominant party, then it is not so clear if it could be excluded from the government or even prevented from forming a minority government. Although the number of DPARs that operate in a parliamentary system is relatively small, as will be shown subsequently, it is still a definitional hurdle which needs to be addressed. Therefore, I define ‘winning’ in a parliamentary system to mean winning a majority of seats in the legislature because this ensures that the DPAR in question can form a government on its own.<sup>37</sup>

It would not make sense to include the period of time that a regime was in power, during which multiparty elections were absent. This is an error on the part of Magaloni (2006).<sup>38</sup> The rationale of only including the period of time in which a regime managed to win multiparty elections, as the period of time in which it was ‘dominant’ or ‘hegemonic’, should be clear enough. If the period of time that these regimes were in

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<sup>36</sup> The MMD in Zambia won the presidency with only a plurality of the vote in 2001, 2006 and 2009 and in Colorado party in Paraguay won the presidency with only a plurality of the vote in 1993, 1998 and 2003.

<sup>37</sup> This is an important criteria, as we shall see later, in differentiating the between the level of ‘dominance’ between dominant parties in democracies such as Japan, India, Sweden, Israel, and Italy.

<sup>38</sup> This is one of the reasons why her Table I.1 has a larger number of hegemonic parties than the more restricted set of DPARs under Greene’s own classification.

power without the holding of multiparty elections was included, it would not be possible to distinguish these parties from the one-party states where political competition is absent and where opposition parties are not allowed.<sup>39</sup>

My fourth criterion is that a potential DPAR has to experience a change in the Head of State or the Head of Government. Without a change in the Head of State (most presidential systems in the universe of relevant cases) or a change in the Head of Government (Prime Ministers in parliamentary systems in the universe of relevant cases) in the party regimes that may be classified as a DPARs, there is no way to tell, a priori, whether this regime is a dominant *party* authoritarian regime rather than one that is personalistic / sultanistic (Chehabi and Linz, 1998; Brooker, 2000) in that it is sustained by the leadership of one single individual.

The importance of a change in leadership within political parties as a mark of a strong party was recognized as far back as Huntington (1968, 409-412). Du Toit (1999, 194), writing about the prospect of dominant regimes emerging from Southern Africa recognized Huntington's contribution to this discussion in that strong parties are ones that 'outlive charismatic founding leaders, exhibit organizational linkages with interest formations in society that subordinate these associations to party leadership, and are

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<sup>39</sup> Some of the non-democratic regimes which have been in power for extended periods of time but who do not fulfill the 4 consecutive multiparty elections criteria include: KANU in Kenya, PDCI in Cote D'Ivoire and the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau

able to secure party allegiances which harness the ambitions of party activists without making the parties vulnerable to the opportunism of such individuals’.

It is possible, theoretically at least, for one to conceive of some sort of qualitative or quantitative measure that can capture the degree a party has been institutionalized and can survive in power with a change in the party leadership. However, there is no guarantee that these measures, whether qualitative or quantitative, can be operationalized, especially in the context of countries that are not liberal democracies, where data about political parties, especially of the regime’s party, is usually not easily available.

Just as how Przeworski et al. (2000) chose to err on the side of caution by classifying countries as democracies only after they had observed a change in government, I also choose to err on the side of caution by classifying a regime in power as a DPAR only after a change in the Head of State or Head of Government has been observed within the party *without* the party in question losing power.

That Greene and Magaloni would overlook this point is not surprising given that their main country of interest is Mexico, which institutionalized a mandatory transition in the PRI’s presidential candidate by setting a one term limit on the office of the presidency. Hence, the PRI has seen a change in the Head of Government every six years

since 1934.<sup>40</sup> Mexico has had 12 PRI Presidents since 1934 and PRI only lost this position to the PAN candidate, Vincente Fox, in the 2000 presidential elections.

The other regimes which political scientists usually put in the same category as Mexico, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Botswana and Taiwan, have also had peaceful transitions in the Head of Government or Head of State. The Barisan Nasional (BN) regime in Malaysia recently installed its sixth Prime Minister, since obtaining independence from the British in 1957. The PAP regime in Singapore has had three Prime Ministers since its separation from Malaysia. Botswana, which is a parliamentary republic, has had four Presidents<sup>41</sup> since independence. The KMT in Taiwan had four Presidents before losing the presidential elections in 2000 to the DPP candidate, Chen Sui Bian.

The case of Zimbabwe is a good illustration of an authoritarian regime that is more personalistic than party. Since its independence in 1980, Robert Mugabe has been the Head of Government of Zimbabwe as the Executive Prime Minister from 1980 to 1987, and the Head of State and the Head of Government as the President from 1987 to the time of writing.<sup>42</sup> He consolidated power firstly under the ZANU (PF) party and later under the ZANU PF party when ZANU (PF) merged with PF-ZAPU. While the

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<sup>40</sup> The Mexican presidents under the PNR, PRI predecessor held office for approximately two years each. However, from 1929 to 1934, the power behind the Mexican presidency was actually former president, Plutarco Calles.

<sup>41</sup> The Botswanan President is the Head of State as well as the Head of Government.

<sup>42</sup> March 2010.

degree of power that Mugabe wields in Zimbabwe may not be to the extent held by Mobutu in the country that was formerly called Zaire, this is perfectly consistent with the recognition that there are degrees of personalistic rule (Brooker, 2000, 130-132). To be sure, the line at which a party regime ends and a 'mildly' personalistic regime begins is not easy to define. But draw this line we must, because the 'test' of whether a party can survive in power is indicated by whether it can survive a transition in the Head of State or the Head of Government that takes place within the regime. And in the case of Zimbabwe, it is doubtful if the ZANU PF can remain in power if Mugabe is forced to step down as the Head of State and Head of ZANU PF or if and when he dies.

This is not to ignore the fact that there are many aspects of consolidating power in the person who is the Head of State or the Head of Government in some of these party regimes. For example, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, who was the Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003, consolidated power in the office of the executive or the Prime Minister's office leading to what scholars have termed executive dominance in the Malaysian state (Slater, 2003). There are also scholars and analysts who remark that the first Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, who was given the designation of Senior Minister in 1999 when he stepped down as the Prime Minister of Singapore and later, the designation of Minister Mentor in 2004 when his son, Lee Hsien Loong, became the third Prime Minister of Singapore, actually still holds de facto power in Singapore. Similarly, the passing of the torch from Heydar Aliyev to his son, Ilham Aliyev, in

Azerbaijan, may be considered by some as maintaining the hegemony of power within one family. However, in both cases, a change *has* taken place, and these new leaders have also led their respective parties to legislative victories. Hence, it seems arbitrary to conclude that a real transition in the Head of State or Head of Government had not taken place just because the transition involved a family member of a previous President or Prime Minister.<sup>43</sup>

Given the difficulty of determining who holds de facto power in a regime such as Singapore or Azerbaijan where a founding father still has a prominent role in the government, or the degree to which a Head of State or Head of Government has personalized power during his or her stay in power, the criterion I propose is a more transparent and simpler method of distinguishing between party regimes and those regimes which may be personalistic but masquerading under the party regime banner. The criterion restated, is as follows: If for the period of time in which an authoritarian regime is in power, there is no change in the Head of Government (for parliamentary systems) or Head of State (for presidential systems), this authoritarian regime cannot be considered a DPAR.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Sons of former Prime Ministers becoming Prime Ministers themselves are most common in Japan, for example and the dominance of Nehru's family in 'inheriting' the position of the Prime Minister of India at different junctures in India's history is another notable example. But it would not be accurate to say that either the LDP or the INC are personalistic or 'sultanistic' parties.

<sup>44</sup> Some of the non-democratic regimes which have been in power for extended periods of time but who do not fulfill the change in the HoS / HoG criteria include: Cambodia under Hun Seng's DPP, Cameroun under Paul Biya's RDPC, Equatorial Guinea under Teodoro Obian Nguema Mbasogo's PDGE, Ethiopia under Meles Zenawi's EPDRF, Gabon under Omar Bongo's PDG, Gambia under Sir Dawda Jawara's PPP and later

Using this criterion, the following regimes classified as hegemonic by Magaloni would not qualify as party regimes: Cameroon under Paul Biya's RDPC, Gambia under Sir Dawda Jawara's PPP and later under Yahya Jammeh's APRC and Zimbabwe under Mugabe's ZANU PF.

To summarize, the four criteria I have put forth to identify hegemonic party regimes are as follows:

- (i) There must be regular multiparty elections to distinguish this regime type from one-party or party state regimes
- (ii) These multiparty elections must take place under conditions which are less than 'free and fair' to distinguish this regime type from democratic regimes but where at least one opposition party is allowed to compete.
- (iii) A regime must have won a minimum of four consecutive legislative or presidential elections. For regimes operating under a parliamentary system, winning is defined as controlling a majority of seats in the legislature.
- (iv) A regime must experience a change in the Head of State (for presidential systems) or a Head of Government (for parliamentary systems) during the period of time in which is it considered hegemonic

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under Yahya Jammeh's ARPC, Guinea under Lansana Conte's PUP, Indonesia under Suharto's GOLKAR and Zimbabwe under Mugabe's ZANU-PF

Using these four criteria, the following 15 regimes are classified as DPARs:

- (i) YAP in Azerbaijan
- (ii) RPP in Djibouti
- (iii) NDP in Egypt
- (iv) PDG in Gabon<sup>45</sup>
- (v) PNC in Guyana
- (vi) BN / Alliance in Malaysia
- (vii) PRI in Mexico
- (viii) FRELIMO in Mozambique<sup>46</sup>
- (ix) ARN-PC in Paraguay
- (x) PS in Senegal
- (xi) PAP in Singapore
- (xii) CCM in Tanzania<sup>47</sup>
- (xiii) KMT in Taiwan
- (xiv) PSD / RCD in Tunisia
- (xv) MMD in Zambia<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The PDG fulfilled the transition in Head of State criterion in August 2009 when long time ruler Omar Bongo died in office and his son Ali Bongo successfully ran as the PDG candidate against considerable opposition including former leaders of the PDG who objected to Ali Bongo's candidacy.

<sup>46</sup> Mozambique has experienced a change in the Head of State when Armando Guebuza of FRELIMO replaced Joaquim Alberto Chissano of the same party as president in the 2004 presidential elections.

<sup>47</sup> The CCM in Tanzania has only won 3 consecutive multiparty legislative and presidential elections (1995, 2000, 2005) but will likely win the 2010 legislative and presidential elections.



The diversity of the DPARs becomes clear with their identification. They span different parts of the world – South East (Malaysia and Singapore) and East Asia (Taiwan), Southeastern Europe (Azerbaijan), sub-Saharan Africa (Gabon, Djibouti, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia), North Africa (Tunisia, Egypt), North (Mexico) and South America (Guyana and Paraguay). They also emerged from different contexts – decolonization, revolution, military coup, civil war and after the electoral defeat of a former authoritarian regime.

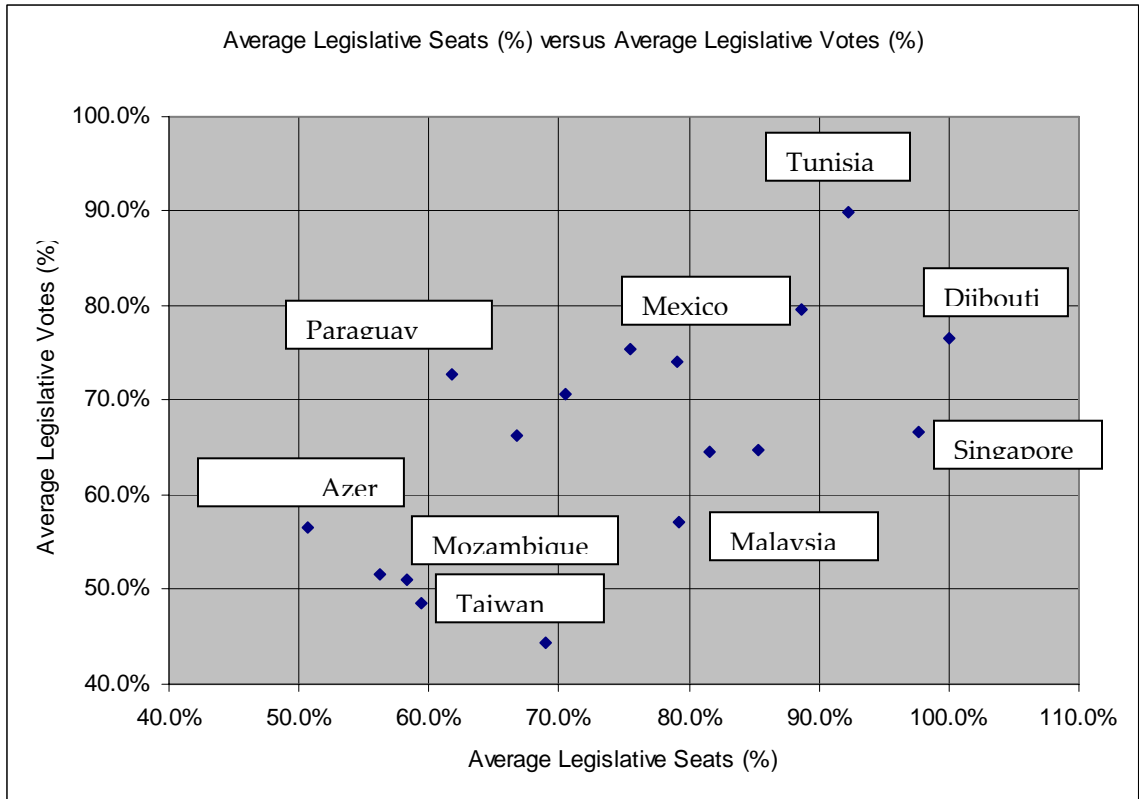
In addition, they also exhibit different levels of electoral dominance. Unlike other scholars who had to differentiate between hegemonic and competitive authoritarian regimes using arbitrary thresholds of electoral dominance (percentage of seats or votes won) for the purpose of statistical investigations in large N cross national studies, my interest, to reiterate, lies in non-democratic regimes that are dominant from the perspective of having maintained power by winning multiple elections, which means that these DPARs can exist anywhere along the spectrum of non-democratic regimes shown in Tables 1 and 2 above. This means that I can avoid the task of placing each of

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<sup>48</sup> Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP does not fulfill all four criteria set out – UNIP did not have multiparty elections until 1991 which it lost to Chiluba's MMD and there was no change in the Head of State under Kaunda. But the same cannot be said of the MMD after it won the first multiparty elections in Zambia post Kaunda's one party state under the UNIP because the MMD has resorted to less than free and fair means to win subsequent legislative and presidential elections in 1996, 2001 and 2006 and most recently a presidential election in 2008 when Levy Mwanawasa who replaced Frederick Chiluba died in a plane crash. As such, the MMD is classified as a hegemonic party regime.

these regimes under specific regime types in Tables 1 and 2 – a difficult task made more so when these countries may shift between the different gradations of non-democratic regimes. DPARs can exist anywhere along the spectrum of non-democratic regimes that hold multiparty elections, and the degree to which they are electorally dominant is reflected in the average percentage of seats / votes won by the respective regimes during their time in power. I show these figures in Figure 1 and Table 3 as an illustration of this point. The differences in the degree of electoral dominance of these regimes do not change the point that they still have to win elections on a regular basis. Hence, the question of how they manage to win these elections remains to be investigated, which is exactly what this thesis plans to do.

**Figure 1: Average Percentage of Legislative Votes and Seats won by respective DPAR**



**Table 3: Average Percentage of Legislative Votes and Seats won by respective Dominant Party Regimes**

DPArs				
No	Country	Party	Average Legislative Vote (%)	Average Legislative Seats (%)
1	Azerbaijan	YAP	56.6%	50.7%
2	Djibouti	RPP	76.6%	100.0%
3	Egypt	NDP	NA	68.0%
4	Guyana	PNC	70.8%	70.5%
5	Gabon	PDG	NA	69.4%
6	Malaysia	BN	57.1%	79.2%
7	Mexico	PRI	74.2%	79.1%
8	Mozambique	FRELIMO	51.6%	56.3%
9	Paraguay	ARN-PC	72.7%	61.8%
10	Senegal	PS	79.7%	88.6%
11	Singapore	PAP	66.6%	97.6%
12	Taiwan	KMT	48.5%	59.5%
13	Tanzania	CCM	64.8%	85.3%
14	Tunisia	PSD / RCD	89.9%	92.2%
15	Zambia	MMD	39.3%	66.2%
DPDRs (no transition in government yet)				
1	Botswana	BDP	64.5%	81.6%
2	Namibia	SWAPO	75.4%	75.5%
3	South Africa	ANC	66.2%	66.8%
DPDR (already experienced a transition)				
1	Japan	LDP	51.1%	58.3%

These DPArs also differ in terms of the degree to which civil liberties and political rights are respected and protected, and how these levels have evolved over time. Some DPArs became more respectful of these freedoms over time while others have taken the path towards authoritarianism after initially beginning their rule on more

solidly democratic foundations. This is reflected in Table 4 below which shows the Freedom House Ratings of a selected number of DPARs during their time in power.

Malaysia, for example, had relatively favorable FH scores in the early 1970s when it was categorized as a 'Free' country before experiencing a gradual decline in the protection of political rights and civil liberties to its current 'Partly Free' status. Taiwan, on the other hand, had poor FH ratings in the early 1970s but experienced a rapid improvement in its scores in the late 1980s as a result of political liberalization and institutional reform.

**Table 4: Freedom House Scores (Political Rights and Civil Liberties Combined) by selected DPARs and selected years**

Country	1972	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Egypt	12	10	10	8	9	12	11	11
Malaysia	5	7	7	8	9	9	10	8
Mexico	8	7	7	8	8	8	5	4
Mozambique	NA	12	14	13	12	7	7	7
Paraguay	10	10	10	10	7	7	7	6
Senegal	12	10	8	7	7	9	7	5
Singapore	10	10	10	9	8	10	10	9
Taiwan	11	11	11	10	6	6	3	2
Tanzania	12	12	12	12	11	10	8	7
Zambia	10	10	11	10	11	7	9	8

Note: Scores range from 2 to 14 with lower scores indicating higher levels of Political rights and Civil Liberties (Countries with scores of 5 and below are usually rated 'Free', countries with scores of 11 and above are usually rated 'Not Free', with the other countries in the 'Partly Free' category)

Here, let me be clear that my primary research interests involve regimes that fall under the non-democratic spectrum on the classification scheme. But because of the

possibility that long ruling regimes, currently classified as ambiguous, electoral democracies or even liberal democracies, may regress to become non-democratic regimes sometime in the future as a means of holding on to power, I make a case for including some regimes that fall outside the classification of non-democratic regimes. These regimes may fall short on one of the criteria I use to identify the cases of interest but I argue that they should also be investigated because these regimes may exhibit some similarities to the non-democratic cases in terms of how power is maintained and subsequently lost. Moreover, the presence of long ruling political parties in democratic settings raises the interesting possibility that a long ruling regime in a non-democratic setting could maintain its hold on power indefinitely even as it liberalizes into an electoral or liberal democracy.<sup>49</sup> For this reason, I include three additional cases of dominant regimes in democratic settings – Botswana, Namibia and South Africa – where the regimes in question have not yet lost power and it is possible that at some time in the future, these regimes may take steps towards greater authoritarianism when they are threatened electorally.

Finally, I make the case for including the LDP in Japan because it stands out as the classic model of a dominant party in an advanced industrialized economy in Pempel's (1990) influential study. All of the other dominant parties in his study (the

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<sup>49</sup> Indeed, parallels between the KMT in Taiwan and the LDP in Japan were made as Taiwan underwent a period of steady political liberalization in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Most scholars then did not anticipate that the KMT would lose power in the presidential elections in 2000.

Christian Democrats in Italy, the Social Democrats in Sweden and the Mapai / Labor party in Israel) had to share power with other parties in a coalition even though these parties were clearly the most dominant ones within the ruling coalition. The LDP, with the exception of a short period of time in 1994, was never forced to share power with other parties in a coalition government because it was almost always assured of winning a majority of legislative seats (in the lower house at least). The LDP also provides an example of how some of the DPARs may eventually liberalize sufficiently to fall out of the non-democratic regime type but still maintain their hold on power.

Having laid out my criteria for classifying an authoritarian regime as a DPAR and after identifying the universe of relevant cases, I now move on to a discussion of the evolution in thinking in regard to the 'modes of transition' from one regime type to another, specifically, from an authoritarian to a democratic regime.

### ***1.3 Modes of Transition***

In this section, I trace the development of different approaches in the study of regime transitions and democratization as a necessary step in developing and contextualizing my own research methodology, which will be outlined in section 1.4. I begin with a brief summary of the structuralist-functionalist approach which is most closely identified with modernization theory and the search of prerequisite conditions for democratization. I then move on to describe how the third wave of democratization and regime transitions, which involved countries at all income levels, forced scholars to

move away from the more deterministic models to more contingent approaches that focused on the interactions between different actors involved in the regime transition process. This led to the development of the 'modes of transition' literature, using mostly cases from Southern Europe and Latin America. The over-emphasis on purely contingent factors in the transition process and the eagerness of some transitologists to apply the same models to the post communist countries, led some scholars to call for approaches that combine both structure and contingency where institutional legacies and structures can help narrow the range of options and strategies faced by the main actors in the transition process. I then focus my attention on a new mode of transition that reflects the growing role of elections in non-democratic regimes, which is transition by elections. This is the approach I am most interested in given my research interests, which are, to repeat again, how non-democratic regimes regularly win elections and how they may possibly lose power through the electoral route. I conclude this section by highlighting how these different approaches may be helpful in structuring my thesis.

I will also use the discussion of these different approaches to clarify certain terms such as what is meant by regime (which is linked to when regime change happens), liberalization (as opposed to democratization) and transitions.

The structural-functionalist approach is built on the positive relationship between levels of economic development and democracy. The gradual process of democratization through the incorporation of an increasing number of groups in the



political process is associated with modernization and capitalist industrialization. Macrolevel structures – such as urbanization, increasing levels of education, a growing middle class – which are part and parcel of the industrialization process increases the demand for political incorporation and horizontal accountability that ultimately leads to the establishment of a political democracy with, more or less, universal suffrage.

This approach is inextricably linked to the work of Lipset (1959), who, by pointing out the correlations between various measures of industrialization and development – wealth, urbanization, literacy – in the democratic countries, led him and many other scholars following him, to conclude that democracy had the best chances of emerging only when the underlying social and economic conditions are receptive. With this, the ‘prerequisites of democracy’<sup>50</sup> and the ‘modernization thesis’ slowly gained a foothold among political scientists as well as policy makers.<sup>51</sup>

While the structural-functionalist approach gave political scientists a framework to compare the prospects for democratization on a cross national level by examining

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<sup>50</sup> Lipset has probably been unfairly credited with the ‘pre-requisites’ or ‘preconditions’ school of democratization since the title of his influential paper was ‘some social requisites of democracy’ rather than ‘prerequisites’. Rustow (1970, 342) also acknowledges this point. But because so many other scholars have used or referred to Lipset’s work as guiding their own in terms of thinking about the necessary conditions for democratization, that I felt that it was justified to credit the evolution of Lipset’s work to this particular school of thought.

<sup>51</sup> Moore’s (1966) influential work on the rise of the middle class or bourgeoisie and its positive effect on the development of democracy is often grouped under the structural-functionalist literature. I would prefer to categorize Moore’s work under the comparative historical analysis approach that pays attention to both structure as well as the sequencing of historical events that led to more favorable conditions for democracy to emerge. Moore’s approach is closer to the work of Rueschmeyer et al (1992) than to the more deterministic approaches of democratization associated with the structural-functionalist position. See Bollen and Jackman (1985) as an example of this approach.

data that was becoming more widely available on a cross national basis, this approach was criticized on two grounds. Firstly, it appeared to be overly deterministic because of the corollary that a country that has not reached a certain level of industrialization or development could not make the transition to democracy successfully and also that a country would inevitably democratize once it reached a certain level of industrialization. Secondly, this approach puts the process of democratization in a black box, so to speak. The dynamic processes associated with the transition to a democracy are ignored. The roles of actors and social groups in agitating for greater vertical and horizontal accountability from their respective governments and the extension of suffrage are conveniently put aside in favor of macro-structural variables.

Rustow's (1970) seminal article on the dynamic process of democratic transition would bring politics back into the discussion in the democratization literature.<sup>52</sup> Given the uncertainty involved in negotiating the parameters of political conflict, Rustow veered away from the more deterministic implications of the structural-functionalist literature. Indeed, he does 'not assume that the transition to democracy is a world-wide uniform process, that it always involves the same social classes, the same type of political issues, or even the same methods of solution...it also implies that, as among various countries that have made the transition, there may be many roads to democracy'

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<sup>52</sup> Rustow distinguishes his 'genetic' approach which focuses more on the negotiating of conflict among political actors from the more 'functionalist' approach put forth by Lipset which focuses more on social and economic conditions.

(pp.345). By breaking down the process of democratization into distinct phases - background (unity of the country), preparatory (the nature of the political struggle), decision (the rules governing the political struggle) and habituation (getting used to the rules) – Rustow provided a useful analytical framework for future scholars who preferred an alternative approach to the study of democratization. A small group of cases could be studied by examining the decisions by different actors at specific phases of the democratization process. Indeed, Rustow’s description of the decision phase, whereby actors would negotiate on the rules of the game in uncertain times of political conflict, was credited as having inspired much of the thinking behind O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986a, Chapter 4) ‘negotiated pacts’ that was presented as the ideal type of transition from authoritarian rule in Southern Europe and Latin America. Given the importance of O’Donnell and Schmitter’s seminal four volume contribution on the processes of regime transitions, I will spend a little more time in highlighting some of the more salient implications of their project.<sup>53</sup> Later, I will argue that some of their insights are still applicable in my own study of the persistence and breakdown of dominant party authoritarian regimes.

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<sup>53</sup> Of course, their project was not the first influential and ambitious cross national study to focus on the role of political actors in regime transitions. Linz and Stepan’s (1978) edited volume on the breakdown of democratic regimes in Europe and Latin America predates O’Donnell and Schmitter’s project but received less attention because later transitologists were more interested in adopting the insights from the countries which experienced transitions away from authoritarian regimes rather than investigating instances of transitions away from democratic regimes.

O'Donnell, Schmitter project was not just groundbreaking in terms of its attempt to bring together the insights and knowledge of so many scholars studying such a large sample of countries that had undergone similar experiences of transitions from authoritarian rule, but it was also ambitious in its attempt to identify common patterns among transition processes that were, 'embedded in situations where unexpected events, insufficient information, hurried and audacious choices, confusion about motives and interests, plasticity, and even in the definition of political identities, as well as the talents of specific individuals are frequently decisive in determining the outcomes' (pp.5).<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps the most lasting contribution<sup>55</sup> made by O'Donnell and Schmitter (in Tentative Conclusions) is their identification of the main actors involved in negotiating the terms of transition or 'pacting' during the transition process.<sup>56</sup> These transition processes usually begin with 'important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself, principally along the fluctuating cleavage between hard-liners and soft-liners' (pp.19). While O'Donnell and Schmitter made this observation mostly based on divisions within the military between the 'hardliners' – those who 'believe that the perpetuation of

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<sup>54</sup> Most scholars refer to O'Donnell and Schmitter's volume – Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies – when discussing the main findings of the four volume project. The other volumes are entitled Comparative Perspectives, Southern Europe and Latin America.

<sup>55</sup> It is certainly the contribution which most scholars make reference to.

<sup>56</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter defines transition as the 'interval between one political regime and another' ... 'Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative' (pp.6)

authoritarian rule is possible and desirable' – and 'softliners' – those who grow to believe that the regime 'will have to make use, in the foreseeable future, of some degree or some form of electoral legitimation' (pp.17) – this division among the authoritarian elite can easily be applied to other authoritarian regimes differentiating groups based on their willingness to allow a greater or smaller degree of political liberalization (which may or may not lead to elections). On the side of the opposition forces, the more 'moderate' factions or groups, some of whom are willing to negotiate terms of settlement with the 'soft-liners' in the authoritarian regime and thus more willing to compromise, are differentiated from the more extreme demands of the 'radicals'. A 'pacted' transition occurs when the 'soft-liners' and the 'moderates' agree on the terms of transition and the rules that will govern the installation of a new regime. O'Donnell and Schmitter view the 'pacted' transition as being the most favorable for the survival of democracy since the compromises that both sides have made will minimize the probability of potentially destabilizing demands that may have been made by either extreme.<sup>57</sup> While distinct sets of actors or groups within the ruling regime and among the opposition may not be easily identifiable, especially in the uncertainty of the transition phase, O'Donnell and Schmitter's framework allowed other scholars to categorize different modes of transition phase based on the relative strength of the

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<sup>57</sup> Given the legacies of mass mobilization on the left experienced by the countries in their sample, O'Donnell and Schmitter are pointing to the potentially destabilizing consequences of demands for large wealth or income transfers if the 'radicals' have more bargaining power than the 'moderates' among the opposition.

regime and the opposition, the relative unity of these actors and the political interests of and strategies available to these actors.

Karl and Schmitter (1991), for example, conceptualize four ideal modes of transition based two dimensions.<sup>58</sup> The distribution of power between the elites and the masses constitutes one dimension and the level of force used by the different actors constitutes the other. The 'pacting' mode is the result of an elite led process that is based on mutual compromise and without the use of force. The Spanish case would be the classic example of transition by pacting among the third wave.<sup>59</sup> Where the incumbent regime, even after the occurrence of an elite split, manages to retain more bargaining power than the opposition forces, much of the transition will be an 'imposition' whereby the incumbent regime can more or less dictate the terms of its exit. Paraguay appears to be the closest to this ideal mode of transition. Where the incumbent regime collapses and loses all hold on the reins of power, and where the opposition forces dictate the terms of transition without the use of force, a 'reform' mode of transition occurs. Karl and

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<sup>58</sup> I highlight Karl and Schmitter's work for a few reasons. Firstly, they were key members of the 'Transitions from Authoritarianism' project. Secondly, they were among the first scholars to attempt to extend the 'modes of transition' actor oriented framework from Southern Europe and Latin America to Eastern Europe. Thirdly, their attempt to compare the modes of transition in Southern Europe and Latin America to the post-communist countries would elicit strong objections from scholars who argue against such comparisons on methodological grounds. The third reason is especially important for my thesis in determining the theoretical and methodological reasons for using some of the insights derived from the 'modes of transition' literature (as well as for their rejection).

<sup>59</sup> The earlier pacts in Colombia in 1957 and Venezuela in 1958 are the only two clear cut examples of transition by pacting in Latin America. This is somewhat surprising given the prominence of the 'pacting' attributed to O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986).

Schmitter place Czechoslovakia and Poland under this model.<sup>60</sup> Finally, where a regime is overthrown by mass mobilization that involves the use of force from below, a 'revolution' mode of transition has occurred. Among the third wave countries, Romania seems to come closest to this mode. The 'idealized' nature of these modes of transition means that most countries do not fit nicely into these categories. The balance of power between the elites and the masses does not often tip decisively to one side or the other. Similarly, strategies of both force and compromise can be used by the elites and the masses alike. Hence, for some of the more complex cases, their placement in Karl and Schmitter's categories will be a judgment call that should and will be challenged by scholars who are more familiar with the dynamics of the transition process of individual countries.

Huntington (1991, Chapter 3) would also use divisions among, and relative strength of the different actors within the incumbent regime, and the opposition, to categorize the different 'modes of transition' among the third wave countries. 'Transformations' occurred when the reformers (the soft-liners) within the incumbent regime had more power than the standpatters (the hard-liners), and would go on to co-opt the moderates within the opposition to either govern with the reformers or agree to measures of liberalization and democratization as part of a process to alienate both the

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<sup>60</sup> Many would argue that the Polish process was close to the pact model than the reform from below mode of transition since the communist incumbents as well as representatives from the Solidarity movement shared power in an interim government for a short period of time.

radical extremists among the opposition as well as the standpatters within the incumbent regime.<sup>61</sup> 'Transplacements' occurred when the balance of power between the reformers in the incumbent regime and the reformers in the opposition was relatively equal, with each of them able to dominate the anti-democratic forces within their respective ranks. 'Replacements' occurred when the opposition as a whole had more power than the government, and when the moderates within the opposition had more power than the radical extremists.

The key concepts highlighted in the O'Donnell and Schmitter's 'transitions' project received close scrutiny, and a few common threads of criticism soon emerged. At the same time, in a related debate, certain scholars objected the attempts to use the concepts developed in the 'transitions' project in the context of Southern Europe and Latin America for the transition processes experienced by post-communist countries in 1989 and beyond. I shall discuss both threads and then draw out the relevant points which pertain to my thesis.

One common thread to emerge was O'Donnell and Schmitter's elite oriented approach that ignored or downplayed the role of mass mobilization, which played a crucial role in many cases, in starting the transition process (Levine, 1988; Waldrauch,

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<sup>61</sup> As a demonstration of actor oriented approaches can lead to different countries being placed in seemingly similar categories, Huntington would place Spain, the ideal example of a 'pacted transition' and of 'transformation' (the term used by Huntington), in the same category as Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru. Karl and Schmitter would have placed all these countries in their 'imposition' box while putting Spain under the 'pact' category.



2000). Indeed, some scholars argued that mass mobilization from below was not necessarily inimical to the transition process, and that elites from the incumbent, mostly right wing, regimes did not necessarily fear the electoral strength from the more radical elements on the left (Adler and Webster, 1995; Bermeo, 1997).<sup>62</sup> Along the same vein, others pointed out that the overly voluntaristic, actor oriented approach, ignored the other variables such as the political legacies of individual countries, the role of political parties<sup>63</sup>, and other institutional variables that constrain the political options open to the contending actors (Bermeo, 1990; Snyder and Mahoney, 1999).

The issue of different political and historical legacies between the countries in Southern Europe and Latin America on the one hand and the post-communist countries on the other would take center stage in the debate between Karl and Schmitter and Bunce about how well the concepts developed in the 'modes of transition' literature can travel to the post-communist countries. Bunce (1995a, 1995b, 1995c) argued that the differences in authoritarian regime types (military versus one-party state), revolutionary threats from the left (largely absent in the post-communist countries), the role of mass mobilization (figured more prominently in post-communist countries) and the dual political and economic transitions which post-communist countries had to undertake (as

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<sup>62</sup> Even though O'Donnell and Schmitter made it clear in their introduction (pp.3) that they were not attempting to come up with a general theory of democratization, it is clear, to me at least, that their conclusions about the nature of pacted transitions was a testable hypothesis - that the process of democratic consolidation would be the smoothest in countries that came closest to the ideal pacting type of regime transition.

<sup>63</sup> This is especially relevant for the cases of re-democratization in Southern Europe and Latin America.

opposed to the political dimension of transition process in Southern Europe and Latin America) made comparisons between the two sets of cases a difficult, if not largely fruitless, exercise, from a methodological perspective.<sup>64</sup> Karl and Schmitter (1991, 1994, 1995) responded by arguing that a comparison of the transition processes, even if the conclusions were to be questioned by experts who are more familiar with the post-communist countries, could yield theoretical insights.<sup>65</sup>

While I do not discount the methodological challenges associated with comparing the transition processes across regions that are so dissimilar in terms of the legacies of their respective authoritarian pasts, I see value in the actor oriented approach adopted by O'Donnell and Schmitter, and used subsequently, in its various forms, by other scholars, especially in the context of studying the rise and fall of dominant party authoritarian regimes.<sup>66</sup> The transition process, although fraught with uncertainty, must

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<sup>64</sup> Wiarda (2001) is far more critical than even Bunce towards the transitologists. He argues that since the transitologists did not even get their original cases right, including the pacted mode described in Spain, by ignoring the significant economic and cultural changes which had occurred prior to the transition, the 'modes of transition' actor oriented approach should not even be applied to the post-communist cases.

<sup>65</sup> 'Our practical inclination is to proceed for the moment as if the cases were comparable but to be prepared to abandon that assumption if and when inexplicable patterns emerge (Schmitter and Karl, 1991, 274).

<sup>66</sup> My reading of Bunce's (1995a, 1995b and 1995c) as well as McFaul's (2002) objections to the SE and LA transitologists stem largely from the tentative conclusion made by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986a) which is to favor 'pacted' transitions as the most favorable path to the instauration and consolidation of democracy. Bunce, and to a larger extent, McFaul, shows that the instauration and consolidation of democracy in the post-communist countries are much more favorable if the former *ancien regime* is excluded totally during the transition process and that mass mobilization was one of the few ways to ensure this exclusion. Where the balance of power was in favor of the *ancien regime* (or some faction of it), helped by the lack of mass mobilization, the results were usually inimical for democratization (Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Belarussia, the Caucus and the Central Asian states are some of the key examples).

involve some sort of bargaining<sup>67</sup> process over the rules of the game. Even if the previous regime had collapsed, the various opposition forces must come to the bargaining table, so to speak, to decide among themselves how the next government will be formed. It is during this bargaining process that the preferences of the different actors are revealed. And during this bargaining process, the relative strength of the contending groups will, to some extent, determine if the electoral regulations and constitutional safeguards are more favorable to forces that represent (or are sympathetic to) the former authoritarian regimes or the contending opposition forces. The same electoral regulations and constitutional safeguards (or the lack of) will naturally affect the instauration as well as the consolidation of democracy.<sup>68</sup>

In the context of building DPARs or causing their downfall, elections become the focal point in which these actors face similar strategic dilemmas.<sup>69</sup> How does the

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<sup>67</sup> I recognize that bargaining here does not necessarily mean coming together in a roundtable talk to discuss the terms of a political handover. The bargaining process here would include strategic decisions to have mass demonstrations to tip the balance of power in favor of opposition favors or to repress some of these mass demonstrations to tip the balance of power the other way.

<sup>68</sup> Munck and Leff (1997) steer clear of the methodological debate between Karl / Schmitter and Bunce by focusing on the bargaining process – They ‘argue that the mode of transition affects the form of post-transitional regime and politics through its influence on the pattern of elite competition, on the institutional rules crafted during the transition, and on key actors’ acceptance or rejection of the new rules of the game. A probabilistic connection between modes of transition and democratization can thus be spelled out. A given mode of transition is likely to increase the odds for the emergence of democracy if it generates a more or less balanced pattern of elite competition. And it is likely to increase the odds for consolidation of newly installed democracies if it facilitates the adoption of institutions suited to the management of elite conflict and the willingness of all major actors to accept the democratic rules of the game’ (pp.345). Welsh (1994) also focuses on the process of negotiating among the elites during the transition process in post-communist Europe.

<sup>69</sup> An important distinction here is that in contrast to the relatively short periods of regime transition experienced by the countries in SE, LA, Eastern and Central Europe and the states in the former USSR,

aspiring dominant party co-opt elites so that they will not leave the party to join the ranks of the opposition or be tempted to use non-electoral means to depose the incumbent regime? When does the aspiring dominant party decide to co-opt some of the more 'moderate' actors within the ranks of the opposition as part of a strategy to strengthen the incumbent regime as well as to marginalize the more 'radical' opposition groups?<sup>70</sup> What strategic options are available to the aspiring dominant party to create divisions among opposition groups? When do the contending opposition forces decide to cooperate to weaken or defeat the dominant party in the electoral arena? In other words, the actor-oriented model should not be abandoned just because countries or regions do not share the same historical legacies. The argument that regime-opposition and intra-opposition dynamics should be more important in the context of an existing electoral arena could be made, since the identity, preferences and strategies of the actors, as well as the institutional environments they operate are more well-defined.

The move to the electoral arena as the new realm of contestation presents new opportunities for scholars to study, in a more structured framework, the role of actors and the strategies available to them to prevent (on the part of the ruling regime) or

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transitions via elections in the context of hegemonic parties usually occur over a much longer time period, if at all.

<sup>70</sup> I use 'moderate' and 'radical' in inverted commas because certain opposition groups can be tagged with the label 'moderate' and 'radical' by the incumbent regime for electoral purposes even though the so-called 'radical' groups do not or are not likely to resort to non-electoral means to gain and then maintain power in the same way as some of the 'disloyal' opposition elements described by Linz and Stepan (1978).

initiate (on the part of the opposition) regime transitions. But instead of confining scholars to a purely actor-oriented voluntaristic approach<sup>71</sup>, elections in non-democracies opens up the possibility of using a ‘structurally-contingent’<sup>72</sup> approach, in terms of how election regulations (which includes electoral rules) and other institutional mechanisms, both formal and informal, constrain and influence the strategic options available to the elites within the incumbent regime, as well as the opposition. I will describe in greater detail the setup of my research design in my own ‘structurally-contingent’ approach in section 1.4.

Having described some of the changes in the approaches towards the study of democratization and regime transitions, and specifically focusing on the ‘modes of transition’ literature, I now turn to some of the definitional challenges associated with the terms ‘liberalization’, ‘democratization’ and ‘regime transitions’ by comparing the use of these terms in a non-democratic setting without elections, to one with elections.

O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) were clear in recognizing liberalization and democratization as two separate but often linked processes. Liberalization – ‘the process of redefining and extending rights’ (pp.7) – is distinguished from the process of democratization – ‘the processes whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles ..., or

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<sup>71</sup> Higley’s work comes closest to being stuck with this label. See Higley and Burton (1989) and Higley, Kullberg and Paklusi (1996) as examples.

<sup>72</sup> I credit Schmitter and Karl (1991) with this term.

expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations, ... or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation' (pp.8). Liberalization can occur without democratization – the result is a liberalized autocracy – and democratization can occur without significant liberalization – the result is a popular democracy (pp.13). But in all of the experiences of regime transition covered in their study, 'the attainment of political democracy was preceded by a significant, if unsteady, liberalization' (pp.10). The same can be said of the post-communist countries that quickly transitioned and consolidated into democracies – that none of them were examples of popular democracies whereby basic political and civil rights were somewhat circumscribed. In the Southern European and Latin American cases, liberalization and re-democratization went hand in hand, and the end of the transition process was signaled by founding elections that did not feature the same military powers that governed during the reign of the previous authoritarian regime. This meant that liberalization, democratization and the end of the transition process were relatively easy to distinguish.

This is not necessarily the case for non-democratic regimes that hold elections. While it may still make sense to define liberalization as the extension of political and civil rights, and democratization as the process of making the electoral process freer and fairer, these definitions become problematic when faced with certain political scenarios. For example, would it make sense to say that a country has made strides towards

liberalization or democratization (or both), if a previously authoritarian government is voted out of office without having made any significant changes in how rights are defined or the electoral process?<sup>73</sup> If we rely on continuous measures of democracy to evaluate democratization or liberalization (Freedom House ratings or Polity Scores, we would leave it to the country experts to decide if the democratic scores of these countries that have experienced a change in government deserve an increase. But if we are using a dichotomous measure of democracy which includes a minimalistic component that defines democracy as allowing for an alternation of power via the electoral path, we would then be forced to conclude that these countries have transitioned to democracies, even though the new government in power may resort to the same strategies to win elections and maintain power as their non-democratic successors.<sup>74</sup>

Another challenge associated with making the distinction between liberalization and democratization in the context of non-democratic regimes that hold elections is when a regime decides to reform the electoral system by making it increasingly free and fair without losing power. In some instances, the pace of electoral reform may be faster than similar increases in civil liberties. The Mexican experience in the late 1980s and early 1990s exemplifies this scenario. Even as Salinas made significant concessions to the PAN to make the electoral process more transparent, the PRI was still repressing PRD

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<sup>73</sup> This happened in Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania.

<sup>74</sup> The colored revolutions which produced a change in government in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia are two such examples.

activists, especially in the South. This Mexican scenario is very far from the plebiscitary autocracy and popular democracy or even the limited political democracy described by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 13). What if a non-democratic regime continues to remain in power after introducing political rights and civil liberties, as well as reforming the electoral regulations? It is conceivable that such a country would see significant improvements in its Freedom House ratings and Polity Scores, but not experience a change in government. The Taiwanese experience exemplifies this scenario. It achieved Polity scores in the democratic region starting in 1992 and was rated as 'Free' by Freedom House starting in 1996. However, the KMT remained firmly in power during this period. Would it be accurate to say that Taiwan had democratized, perhaps to a context like Japan, with a dominant party in power?

The preceding discussion on liberalization and democratization dovetails nicely into the challenges of defining regime and therefore regime transitions. Again, I turn to O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, Chapter 2, footnote 1), who define regime as 'the ensemble of patterns, explicit or not, that determines the forms and channels of access to principal governmental positions, the characteristics of the actors who are admitted and excluded from such access, and the resources or strategies that they can use to gain access'. According to this definition, the transition process begins when it is obvious that the previous 'forms and channels of access to principal government positions' cannot be maintained and need to be changed. The end of the transition process is usually marked



by the founding elections, which formalizes the procedures by which a new government under new rules of access is elected into power. The fact that, for the countries in Southern Europe and Latin America, changes in the rules of access to government positions coincided with the departure of actors associated with the previous authoritarian government meant that regime change was seen as incorporating both a departure of the previous government, as well as the introduction of new rules of access to government positions.

But what if the introduction of new rules of access to government positions through multiparty elections did not result in a change in the incumbent government? Bratton and Van de Walle (1997), in their study of 42 sub-Saharan countries in Africa, showed that many neopatrimonial rulers remained in power through the introduction of less than free and fair elections. They make a distinction between these regime transitions, which they define as 'flawed transitions', and the more genuine 'democratic transitions' which were characterized by the presence of free and fair elections.<sup>75</sup> Hence, using their definition, democratic transitions in Africa can occur even if the incumbent regime remains in power for as long as they win elections that are free and fair. Using this criterion and extending it outside Africa, Mexico would probably have made the

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<sup>75</sup> Bratton and Van de Walle definition of regimes and regime transitions are similar to O'Donnell and Schmitter. 'Political regimes are sets of political procedures – sometimes called the 'rules of the political game' – that determine the distribution of power. These rules prescribe who may engage in politics and how' (pp.9). 'A regime transition is a shift from one set of political procedures to another, from an old pattern of rule to a new one' (pp.10).

transition to democracy after the 1996 legislative elections and Taiwan would have made a similar transition after the 1995 presidential elections. In the rare cases whereby the opposition defeats the incumbent regime despite elections not being free and fair, a democratic transition would not have occurred.<sup>76</sup>

The issue of when a regime transition has occurred is especially important in the context of large-N statistical studies where regime transition is the main dependent variable of interest. This is because changing the classification of a few cases could mean the difference between finding a statistically significant relationship with a certain independent variable of interest, and regime transition. Toerell and Hadenius (2009) most recent investigation into the effect of elections on democratization demonstrates how one or two cases can influence their models in finding that elections are indeed a statistically significant and positive predictor of democratization.<sup>77</sup> Similarly challenges might exist for Przeworski et al's (2000) database, which covered the time span from 1945 to 1990, if this database was updated to the year 2000 or 2010. Their finding that

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<sup>76</sup> Of course, if elections were not free and fair, it is unlikely that the incumbent regime can be defeated. But theoretically, such a possibility cannot be discounted. For example, the incumbent regime may threaten and intimidate voters not to vote for the opposition but this strategy may create a surprising backlash that results in the incumbent's defeat. Or the incumbent regime may underestimate the level of cheating and bribery that it needs to win the elections thereby allowing the opposition to eke out a marginal victory. If Zimbabwe's 2008 presidential elections did not require a 2<sup>nd</sup> round run-off, Morgan Tsvangarai's vote total in the first round would have been sufficient to defeat Mugabe. Tsvangarai won the most number of votes (but not a majority) despite the intimidation tactics used by Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party. Of course, one could make the argument that Mugabe would probably have stuffed the ballots to ensure that Tsvangarai could not win the most number of votes if it was a plurality presidential election. Or he may have chosen not to recognize the results after that fact. But the point that the opposition can win despite not having free and fair elections remains. The defeat of Milosevic in 2000 in Serbia would be a more obvious example.

<sup>77</sup> In one model specification, elections in Uruguay in 1984 and Paraguay in 1989 were the difference makers. In another, Paraguay and Panama in 1990 were the difference makers.

countries can transition to democracies at different income levels but the probability of maintaining democracy increases with income levels, may be altered by the reclassification of some of these regime types.<sup>78</sup>

Since I am interested in the processes by which DPARs are created and lose power, my work is not directly affected by the challenges of classifying when a regime transition has occurred. In section 1.3, I described my own criteria in classifying a non-democratic regime as a dominant party authoritarian regime. Among the criteria I put forth is winning at least four successive presidential or legislative elections. If a non-democratic regime loses power before it wins its fourth successive presidential or legislative election, it fails to be included as a DPAR. The issue of the elections not being free and fair does not affect the regime's exclusion as a DPAR. Similarly, a DPAR loses its dominance only when it loses a presidential election in a presidential system or a legislative election in a parliamentary system. Hence, even if the electoral rules are changed sufficiently to allow for free and fair elections, the country in question will continue to be classified as being governed by the same regime type as long as there is no alternation in power.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Mexico, for example, under their coding rules, would be classified as a democracy from 1945. Taiwan would be classified as a democracy starting from 1989. Their coding rules are ill suited to classifying transitions to and from democracy after 1990 because of the increased number of 'electoral authoritarian' or competitive authoritarian' regimes.

<sup>79</sup> I hesitate to classifying a regime as no longer being hegemonic once free and fair elections have been installed since as long as the same party remains in power, it can presumably reverse some of the electoral reforms. In any case, my interest lies in when these hegemonic parties lose power. The installing of free and fair elections is important in terms of how it changes the strategies available to the incumbent regime and to

Since I am primarily interested in when a DPAR loses power and less so in defining when such a regime may or may not have democratized, I use the term regime to describe the party in power rather than to describe the ‘rules of the political game’ (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997, 9). I do so for three reasons – two methodological, one practical.

The first methodological reason is as follows – even though the ‘rules of the political game’ may have changed in the direction of freer and fairer elections, it cannot be assumed that the party in power will not reverse some, if not all, of these electoral reforms. The second methodological reason is as follows: If we understand regimes as rules of the political game, this usage calls into question whether each significant change in electoral regulations should be classified as a regime change. For example, if a non-democratic regime introduces electoral reform that allows all and any aspiring political parties to register and take part in elections when previously only parties which passed a certain threshold could be registered and take part in elections, does this mean that a regime transition has occurred? What if previously free and fair elections are replaced with electoral regulations that restrict political competition? Does this also mean that a

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the opposition parties but one cannot presume that just because free and fair elections have been installed, the incumbent regime is bound to lose power.

regime transition has occurred?<sup>80</sup> This could possibly lead to a series of not very fruitful discussions about how major a change in the rules of the political game must be, before it can be classified as a regime transition. The practical reason is as follows – given the popular usage of the term regime<sup>81</sup> as well as the use of this term by scholars<sup>82</sup> to describe the time in power for a political party, it would make the writing of my thesis infinitely clearer if I could use regime to refer to the rule of the DPAR in question.

My usage of the term regime also allows me to refer to changes in elections related institutions that are in the direction of making elections freer and fairer as electoral liberalization. Given the importance of elections in the making and undoing of DPARs, it is the electoral rules of the game that receive my primary attention, even though liberalization in other arenas such as freeing up the media and the courts, and allowing greater freedom to assemble and protest may be as important in weakening a hegemonic regimes hold on power.

With these definitional clarifications out of the way, I now proceed to outline my research methodology.

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<sup>80</sup> These are not hypothetical questions. The first scenario describes Mexico in 1977 and the second describes Malaysia after 1969.

<sup>81</sup> Regime change, as is used in the press, often refers to a change in government or leader rather than a change in the rules by which that government or leader maintains power.

<sup>82</sup> Scholars such as Magaloni (2006) and Greene (2007) refer to the PRI as a hegemonic party regime or a dominant party authoritarian regime respectively. Scholars such as Geddes (1999, 2003) classify the PRI regime to cover the period of time in which it was in power, from 1929 until 2000. The PRI regime did not end in 1996, when, arguably, the first free and fair election was conducted in Mexico. Similarly, the KMT regime did not end in 1995 in a largely free and fair presidential election but in 2000 when it lost the presidential elections.

## **1.4 Research methodology**

In this section, I present my research methodology and strategy as part of a process of synthesizing the evolution in theorizing on non-democratic regimes classification and transition. The increasing prominence of multiparty elections in non-democratic countries and the number of countries where incumbent parties or rulers have been defeated via the electoral path has opened up a new research agenda on whether ‘democratization by elections’ can stand the test of the ‘new mode of transition’ in the post Cold-War era or whether elections can be used as a means of perpetuating and consolidating the rule of non-democratic rulers.<sup>83</sup>

I start by demonstrating that having a disaggregated definitional framework of regime type allows for easier conceptualization of the different pathways towards the establishment of a DPAR.<sup>84</sup> This is especially important in the contemporary context since any aspiring autocrat knows that he must seek some sort of legitimacy through elections which allow for some level of opposition participation.<sup>85</sup> Conversely, popular leaders elected into office in free and fair elections may be tempted to hold on to power by manipulating electoral regulations or resorting to other non-electoral means, pushing them towards the establishment of a DPAR.

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<sup>83</sup> This is clearly the research question which Lindberg and his co-authors (2009) are attempting to take on.

<sup>84</sup> Previously discussed in Section 1.1 and summarized by Table 1.1 and Table 1.2.

<sup>85</sup> A military coup that leads to the suspension of civilian rule would obviate the need for elections but even military dictators who want to continue to rule would have to hold legitimizing elections eventually (Pakistan in 1999 and Guinea in 2008). In military coups where no one leader emerges as the potential autocrat, a return to the barracks and the resumption of multiparty electoral competition usually ensues (Thailand in 2006 and Bangladesh in 2007).

I then outline my approach towards the study of how DPARs are established, how they maintain power and how they may eventually lose power. Here, I will describe the methodological advantages of using a structurally-contingent approach that focuses on the role played by institutional mechanisms and political parties in managing elite conflict within the incumbent regime, between the incumbent regime and the opposition, and within the opposition. I argue that this approach is the most appropriate in giving some structure to the seemingly contingent actions of elite actors, both among the incumbent regime as well as among the opposition. I also discuss my approach vis-à-vis other contending approaches in the study of such regimes.

With my research methodology and strategy in hand, I break-down my investigation into its logical chapters – firstly, how DPARs are established; secondly, how they are maintained; and finally, how they may lose power. In the relevant chapters, I will outline how failed attempts at building dominant regimes, failed attempts at maintaining potentially dominant regimes, and the maintenance and breakdown of dominant party democratic regimes compare to the cases of successful DPARs, some of which have lost power, some of which are in danger of losing power and some of which are still firmly ensconced in power. I end with several tentative

conclusions<sup>86</sup> on the conditions under which DPARs may lose power and offer some thoughts on how my research agenda can be extended beyond my thesis.

O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), with their familiarity and deep knowledge of Latin America, were careful not to give that impression that a liberal or electoral democracy would be established after founding elections were reintroduced upon the completion of the transition from the authoritarian regimes. Hence their term '*democraduras*' or limited democracy (pp.13). But I suspect that even O'Donnell and Schmitter would not have imagined the proliferation of different forms of non-democratic rule through multiparty elections that emerged during the 1990s.<sup>87</sup>

Levitsky and Way (2002), based on their observations of these new cases of non-democratic regimes in the context of multiparty elections, describes three possible pathways to 'competitive authoritarianism'. The first path was when fully closed authoritarian regimes were forced to introduce multiparty elections as a result of internal pressures from below, changed external circumstances, or both (pp.60). The transition to multiparty elections in Africa during the 1990s constitutes the majority of cases taking this first path. The second path was a new authoritarian regime rising to power in the context of multiparty elections after the collapse of the previous

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<sup>86</sup> Borrowing from the title of O'Donnell and Schmitter's (1986) classic.

<sup>87</sup> My sense is that their conception of 'limited democracy' is closer to the oligarch two party rule (Colombia) or unequal political access which is caused by the massive economic inequalities was characteristic of much of Latin America rather than the monarchical regimes in North Africa and the Middle East or the hegemonic party regimes in Africa, South East Asia and the former Soviet Union.



authoritarian regime (pp.61). The countries in the former Soviet Union falls under this transition path. The third path was through a decay of a previously democratic regime (pp.61). Although Levitsky and Way were thinking of Peru under Fujimori and Venezuela under Chavez as examples of this third path, I would include cases of countries that once could have been categorized as electoral democracies adopting increasing undemocratic practices to win elections. Zambia, Malaysia and Singapore would fall under this expanded definition of the third path.

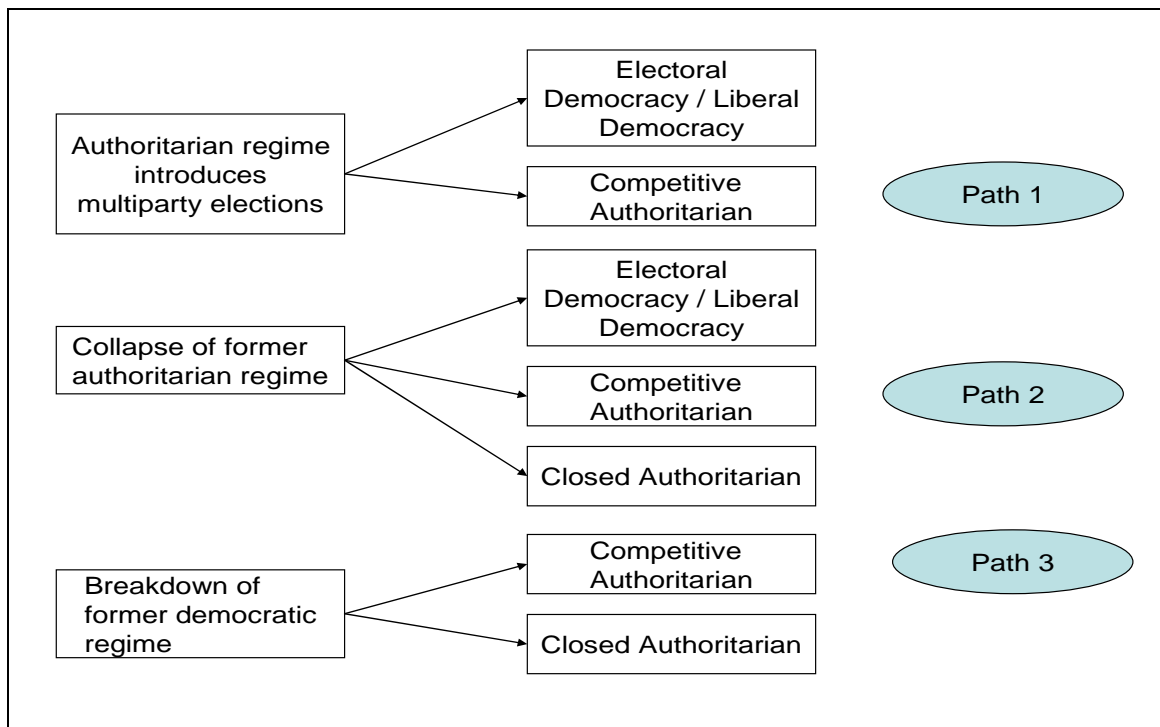
While these competitive authoritarian regimes can emerge via any of the three paths outlined above, not all transition outcomes result in competitive authoritarian regimes. An authoritarian regime which is compelled to introduce multiparty elections is not guaranteed of winning them. The breakdown of a previously closed authoritarian regime may result in an electoral democracy or a liberal democracy or for that matter another closed authoritarian regime, rather than a competitive authoritarian regime. The breakdown of a previously democratic regime may result in the formation of a new democratic regime<sup>88</sup> or a fully closed authoritarian regime.<sup>89</sup> Hence, the transition period in paths one to three can be seen as 'critical junctures' whereby competitive authoritarian regimes, of which DPARs are a subset, can be established (see Figure 2).

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<sup>88</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> French Republic replacing the 4<sup>th</sup> would be an obvious example.

<sup>89</sup> Think of the many cases in Latin America after the second world war and of course, Spain, Portugal, Germany and Italy before the Second World War. Linz and Stepan's (1978) volume deals with these cases.

**Figure 2: Possible Pathways to Competitive Authoritarianism**



Given the importance of these critical junctures in the establishment of DPARs, I propose that an actor centered approach should be the starting point of any investigation into why such regimes may or may not be established. Such critical junctures share many of the characteristics of the transition periods described by O'Donnell and Schmitter in terms of the uncertainty about the end results. Even though the cases in O'Donnell and Schmitter's study resulted mostly in instauration of electoral democracies rather than DPARs, I argue that the same framework can be used in any period of transition whereby outcomes are uncertain. A priori, we could not tell, for example, that a DPAR would not replace the previous communist regime in the

countries in Eastern and Central Europe as well as the former Soviet Union after the fall of the Berlin Wall. All we could tell then was that these countries were undergoing some form of transition process.

And yet, as alluded to previously, actors' interactions during these critical junctures do not exist in a vacuum. The number of possible outcomes is usually constrained by a number of factors. The historical legacies of the previous regimes, the presence and organization of opposition forces, and the expectations about future outcomes on both sides, all act to structure the direction of the bargaining process and hence, narrow the choices open to the contending actors. I argue that certain factors, such as a strong association with a historical project – gaining independence from a colonizing power, a long history of contestation against the incumbent regime – or association with a potentially dominant voting block – the working class, unions – increases the likelihood of the emergence of a potential DPAR. But not all elites choose the option of creating political parties to further their electoral cause during these critical junctures. And not all parties that head into the founding elections with an apparent electoral advantage emerge with a dominant position. This obviously raises the question - why? My working hypothesis is that there must be institutional mechanisms that exist to manage inter-elite conflict so that a potentially dominant party or coalition can be built. These mechanisms may be internal to the groups or elites that eventually form the winning party – in other words, intra-party mechanisms, which include both formal and

informal mechanisms – or they may be external to the party, the most important of which are the electoral regulations that shape political competition. Where such mechanisms do not exist, potentially dominant parties are not established.

The focus on elite interactions is not something new. After all, O'Donnell and Schmitter's assertion that most of the causes of the breakdown of authoritarianism in their cases of interest were as a result of splits in the elite. I start with a similar assumption – that potentially dominant parties cannot be formed if there are serious elite splits among those who can form such parties. Where I differ from O'Donnell and Schmitter, taking Snyder and Mahoney's advice (1999), is that I focus on the role of institutional arrangements in managing intra-elite relations during these transition periods or critical junctures instead of adopting a purely voluntaristic approach in analyzing inter-elite interactions.

Upon winning the foundation elections, these potentially dominant parties must then rely on similar institutional mechanisms to manage two political challenges – firstly, the issue of how political succession can be institutionalized, whether formally or informally, as part of the process of maintaining electoral dominance and minimizing the potential for elite splits, and secondly, the issue of how to manage the opposition parties, either directly or indirectly. By direct methods, I mean explicit strategies taken to co-opt or divide opposition parties, and by indirect methods, I mean covert strategies to similarly co-opt or divide the opposition, manipulating the electoral regulations to

disadvantage the opposition and forcing the opposition to take electoral positions on the electoral margins. Potentially dominant parties that fail to manage either of these two political challenges will lose power before they can achieve the status of a DPAR, as defined earlier in Section 1.2.

Finally, I hypothesize that the weakening of already established DPARs is usually a result of inter-elite splits (Langston, 2002, 2006). The weakening of a once electorally dominant regime usually also coincides with institutional reform, as opposition parties take advantage of changing political circumstances to pressure the incumbent regime to move towards having freer and fairer elections, and the increase of the number of elected positions, especially at the sub-national level. This follows the logic of Schedler's (2002) nested games in his theory of democratization by elections wherein opposition parties engage the incumbent regime at two levels – firstly, in the electoral arena over the distribution of votes, and secondly, over the rules of the game which govern how votes are cast, counted and distributed. The ability of the opposition to defeat the weakened DPAR is dependent, once again, on some of the institutional mechanisms described earlier, including political incentives for the opposition to cooperate, whether the regime operates under a parliamentary or presidential system, and the positions on the political spectrum occupied by the different parties.

My approach to the study of DPARs is closest to the historical institutionalist approach taken by Brownlee (2007) in his investigation of authoritarian regimes in

Egypt, Malaysia, Iran and the Philippines. Brownlee argues that the authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Malaysia were better able to manage elite conflict because these conflicts were mediated within the context of hegemonic political parties, and this explains the longevity of both regimes. In the Philippines, on the other hand, Marcos' decision not to consolidate his rule using the institutional framework of a political party led to increasing inter-elite conflict that eventually resulted in Marcos' ouster after massive protests over the 'stolen' 1986 presidential election. In Iran, the decision not to create an official political party to represent the regime after the 1979 revolution resulted in ongoing elite conflicts that were often accentuated during legislative and presidential elections.<sup>90</sup>

My research strategy differs from Brownlee in several ways. Firstly, I examine a much larger number of cases (albeit much more briefly) in asking why potentially dominant parties emerge during critical junctures (and why they do not). Secondly, I address explicitly the issue of how institutional mechanisms are important in managing the potential conflicts that usually occur during a change in leadership in DPARs. Thirdly, I also address the issue of how these institutional mechanisms affect regime-opposition interactions, as well as interactions within the opposition, and how these interactions affect the dominant electoral position of these DPARs. Fourthly, I address the possible pathways by which these DPARs may lose power through changes in these

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<sup>90</sup> The controversy surrounding the recent 2009 presidential elections in Iran aptly demonstrates this point.

same institutional mechanisms. Hence, my approach provides more variance in the dependent variable of interest – the creation (or not), the maintenance (or not) and the breakdown (or not) of DPARs.

The historical-institutionalist approach I have chosen explicitly focuses on the variables associated with the political system – intra-party mechanisms and electoral regulations. There are, of course, other approaches that can be used to study the same phenomenon such as the economic dimension of DPAR creation, maintenance and breakdown, for example. A DPAR could possibly be created via the promise of distributing economic goods to an electorally dominant group, maintained through a complex system of patronage (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007) and the delivery of economic growth and industrialization, and dismantled because of changes in the economic structure of the country (Haggard and Kaufman, 1995), the inability to sustain expensive patronage networks and a series of economic setbacks and crises. While some of these economic factors are undoubtedly important in explaining the longevity of these DPARs – the PAP in Singapore would not be in its dominant position today had it failed to deliver significant economic growth, modernization and industrialization consistently – I argue that the political factors are much more important. DPARs can weather out economic crises and challenges because of their success, honed over the years, in

skillfully managing the electoral arena.<sup>91</sup> At the same time, DPARs may not be able to weather political storms in the context of serious elite splits even though they may be delivering healthy economic growth.

Another approach could be to look for external or international factors to explain why dominant parties fail to be established and why they fall. As diffusion effects spread and the international environment becomes less amenable to human rights abuses and repression of opposition actors, DPARs are prevented from being established or in cases where they are already established, such changes will hasten their fall. While I agree that external factors were important in hastening the downfall of some authoritarian regimes – the communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union – and for forcing authoritarian regimes to introduce multiparty elections, I argue that such factors are less important in determining whether free and fair elections are established. For the most part, international donors set a relatively low threshold for the quality of elections in many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example. They are able to tolerate the existence of many DPARs as long as some form of elections are held regularly. Hence, while these external factors are important in explaining the instauration of founding elections, they cannot prevent the emergence of potentially dominant party regimes. Moreover, while certain institutions

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<sup>91</sup> Winning a minimum of four elections over a twenty year period would usually entail winning one or more of these elections during an economic recession that is the result of a regular business cycle.



such as the EU or countries such as the US may indicate their preference for a government headed by someone else other than a well known autocrat – Milosevic in Serbia, for example – the responsibility of ousting such leaders and their parties ultimately lies in forces which exist within these countries. As such, I discount the utility of using an externally focused approach.

Yet another approach could be to investigate the role of social movements and their impact on the establishment and longevity of DPARs. Social movements that have gained significant mass-based support could potentially be transformed into political parties that could translate this support into a DPAR. Alternatively, social movements (or the lack of) can also have the effect of weakening or even bringing down a DPAR. I do not disagree with the first argument that social movements could be transformed into potentially dominant parties. Whether such transformations take place or not can still be analyzed using the lens of elite actions mediated by institutional mechanisms – whether there are electoral incentives, for example, for the elites who lead these social movements to transform them into political parties and whether the electoral system encourages elites to pool their strength under one political party or fragment into different political forces. I would say, in response to the second argument – that social movements can bring down a DPAR – that the protests and unrest that such social movements may generate still have to be mediated through opposition political parties and the electoral process.

There are good theoretical reasons why social mobilizations from below are not likely to depose DPARs and replace them with the opposition without going through the electoral route. Firstly, if the unpopular president of a DPAR is forced to step down because of mass mobilization, a new presidential election is likely to be conducted whereby another candidate from the DPAR will compete. DPARs are well institutionalized entities that can survive the departure of a single leader, which is not the case for personalistic leaders who can flee the country or military regimes who can return to the barracks in response to the pressure of mass demonstrations. Secondly, if the unpopular prime minister of a DPAR is forced to step down because of mass mobilization, he or she can be replaced with someone else from the same party. The DPAR, with its intra-party institutional mechanisms to manage inter-elite conflicts, is not likely to suffer massive defections in the event that its prime ministerial candidate has to be replaced. As such, the pressures resulting from mass mobilization still have to be channeled through the electoral arena which means that focus is back on the institutional mechanisms affecting the regime-opposition relationship and the relationship between the opposition parties in the electoral arena.<sup>92</sup> In other words, the internal structure of these DPARs and their reliance and ability to win elections on a regular basis actually helps insulate them from direct challenges from below.

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<sup>92</sup> To date, none of the countries which I have categorized as hegemonic party regimes have experienced a regime transition as a result of mobilization from below.

I choose not to use the large-N cross national statistical approach in my study of DPARs. While these studies can point us to some underlying conditions that can lead to the downfall of these regimes (Howard and Roessler, 2006), the relative vulnerability of different non-democratic regimes (Brownlee, 2009; Roessler and Howard, 2009) and the possible pathways of regime transition (Hadenius and Teorell 2007, Teorell and Hadenius, 2009), they cannot capture the complex inter elite interactions under different institutional mechanisms that often evolve over time. These independent variables are difficult to disaggregate into separate components and often have path dependent as well as interaction effects.<sup>93</sup>

Here, I want to make a research note on DPARs. Surprisingly, as we will see in Chapters 2 and 3, these regimes are not easily created. But once they are established, they are not easy to bring down. Due to their longevities, these cases should therefore provide richer ground to be ‘mined’ for empirical observations and theoretical implications compared to other non-democratic party regimes, which are considerably more susceptible to losing elections, especially in unfavorable circumstances.<sup>94</sup> On the contrary, it would require several electoral cycles, starting from when the DPAR is first seen as vulnerable, before it can be defeated, if at all. When such regimes face a serious

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<sup>93</sup> Even if they could be, the result would be too many configurations of independent variables without sufficient variance in the dependent variable of interest. And of course, the number of DPARs are also relatively small.

<sup>94</sup> These regimes are particularly vulnerable during a transition in leadership which provides the opportunity for the opposition to coordinate and unite.

electoral challenge, they can usually regroup themselves, by using their incumbent position to find new ways of regaining their dominant electoral position, including finding new ways of manipulating electoral regulations and using new ways to divide or co-opt or repress the opposition.

### ***1.5 Chapters Breakdown***

The way in which I have set up my research methodology and strategy should make the subsequent chapter outlines relatively straightforward.

In chapters two, three and four, I investigate cases whereby potentially winning positions / parties can be clearly identified during three transition periods or critical junctures – the period of decolonization in Africa and Asia, the period of re-democratization in Latin America and the period of transition in post-communist countries. My working hypothesis here is that the presence of certain institutional mechanisms that can manage inter-elite conflict within these potentially winning positions / parties increases the probability that a DPAR can be established.

In chapter five, I discuss the various elections related institutional mechanisms used by DPARs to increase the rewards to elites for staying within the party as well as to increase the costs of elite defection. A DPAR has to ensure that there is a minimal level of elite circulation in order to get rid of unpopular leaders as well as to provide incentives for ambitious elites to rise up in the leadership ranks of the party. At the same

time, costs of elite defection are increased by the careful manipulation of institutional mechanisms which boosts the electoral advantage enjoyed by the DPAR.

In chapter six, I discuss the institutional mechanisms used by the DPARs to manage the opposition as part of a strategy to maintain a dominant electoral position. These institutional mechanisms include the manipulation of electoral regulations to disadvantage the opposition, adopting positions which force the opposition to politically marginal positions, strategically allowing certain parties to participate in the electoral process but not others, explicitly or implicitly causing splits among the opposition parties and selectively co-opting opposition parties.

The possible pathways by which DPARs lose power are discussed in chapters seven and eight. I start with the same premise as O'Donnell and Schmitter – that a transition from a hegemonic party regime must involve of some sort of inter-elite split. But unlike the usually rapid transition processes resulting from elite splits in non electoral authoritarian regimes, the process of democratization by elections should take the path of a nested game (Schedler, 2002) whereby opposition parties pressure the DPAR, through a variety of channels, to introduce institutional reform.

In chapter seven, I provide the theoretical basis for why elite splits are a necessary condition for DPAR defeat. I highlight the mutually reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional reform and outline different paths in which these two combined factors can lead to DPAR defeat. I then demonstrate these mutually reinforcing effects

using evidence from Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay, all of them DPARs which have been defeated electorally.

In chapter eight, I explain the failure of previous elite splits to unseat the incumbent regime in Malaysia in terms of the opposition's inability to extract concessions of institutional reform from the regime. This resulted in the eventual co-optation of the elite defectors back into the fold of the incumbent. I then go on to argue that the conditions underlying the basis of opposition co-operation and regime-opposition dynamics after the 2008 general elections have made it harder for the opposition to be divided and co-opted. I speculate that a future critical juncture concerning the ability of the opposition to extract promises of institutional reform will be crucial in determining the longevity of the incumbent regime.

I end with a concluding chapter that makes some tentative conclusions in regard to the prospects of democratization in DPARs and outline possible extensions in my research project and interests. To somewhat pre-empt the final chapter, my careful investigation of the relevant cases in question have led me to the finding that DPARs are created and sustained by the careful and creative use of institutional mechanisms which minimize the likelihood of elite defections, divides and co-opts the opposition and boosts the electoral dominance of the incumbent regime. The in-depth examination of the intra-regime and regime-opposition dynamics in these cases uncovers the mistaken perception of an unchallenged and stagnant DPAR. These regimes recognize the

importance of using institutional mechanisms to their electoral advantage. They are particularly skilled at manipulating these mechanisms as part of a larger process of adapting to changing political circumstances. These DPARs are defeated when they no longer can prevent serious elite splits from occurring and are forced to make institutional reforms which reduce and, often eliminate, their previous electoral advantage due to institutional manipulations.

In making my parsimonious claim regarding the causes of DPAR creation, maintenance and defeat, I am not saying that other factors such as the state of a country's political economy, changes in the social structure and the increasing influence of civil society, just to name a few, do not possess any explanatory power in accounting for the variance in the dependent variables of interest. What I am saying is that the variables which I propose namely elite cohesion and institutional mechanisms are able to account for the greatest variance in the dependent variables of interest. Their explanatory power, I hope, will be evident in the following chapters.

## Chapter 2: Building Dominant Parties in Post-Colonial Asia and Africa

### 2.0 Chapter Outline

Academic interest in a particular authoritarian regime is always heightened when the regime in question falls out of power or is in danger of falling out of power. That interest is further piqued when such a regime transition raises the possibility of the installation of a democratic regime. The academic bias towards transitions which feature the replacement of an authoritarian regime by a democratic one is not unexpected given the widespread consensus among political scientists that democratic means of electing a government is generally preferred over authoritarian mechanism of rule.

<sup>1</sup> The possibility of regime transitions in DPARs should receive even more academic attention since the replacement of such regimes through the electoral path provide unique opportunities for scholars to study and test alternative theories regarding regime transition.<sup>2</sup>

The focus on conditions under which DPARs can lose power through the ballot box has, however, distracted scholars from answering a more basic question about these

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<sup>1</sup> This bias is reflected, for example, in the distribution of editorial focus among political science journals. There is a Journal of Democracy and Democratization but no Journal of Authoritarianism or Autocratization.

<sup>2</sup> Electoral returns (and sometimes even pre-elections survey data) in these DPARs can be used to test different hypotheses regarding the factors which drove the DPAR to an electoral defeat. Such opportunities would obviously not be available in closed authoritarian countries which do not hold elections or in cases which involve non-electoral paths of transition e.g. military coups in authoritarian countries which do hold elections.



DPARs – how were they created in the first place? The positions of political and electoral dominance occupied by some of the DPARs which are still in power (and during the height of power for those DPARs that have been defeated) can often give credence to the idea that it was the manifest destiny of these regimes to become as powerful and dominant as they are (or were). But such beliefs are not necessarily true. Charismatic leaders and their potentially dominant parties, emerging from similar underlying conditions in different countries during certain critical junctures in their respective histories, have taken many different paths. Even though many of these leaders and their parties occupied politically advantageous positions during these critical junctures which seemed to favor the building of a dominant party, only a small number of them were successful in converting this advantage into sustained political and electoral dominance.

The omission of any significant academic endeavors to answer the question of why dominant party regimes emerged in certain places but not others during similar critical junctures in their respective political histories is even more surprising in light of Pempel's (1990) edited volume on the emergence of dominant parties in developed democracies. In this volume, a number of scholars compared cases with similar underlying conditions and then drew out the causal mechanisms which explained why a dominant party emerged in one country but not the other.<sup>3</sup> It is my intention, then, in

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<sup>3</sup> Pontusson (1990), for example, explained the dominance of the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SDP) in terms of favorable underlying conditions such as the alignment of interests of labor and capital, its PR electoral system which fragmented its opponents, a larger share of unionization and the overlapping

Chapters 2 and 3, to take a first step in attempting to close this gap by teasing out the causal mechanisms associated with the creation (or not) of dominant party regimes during two important critical junctures.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, I will discuss the emergence of these regimes in the context of post-colonial countries in Asia and Africa. In the Chapter 3, I will discuss the emergence of these regimes after the transition from authoritarian rule in Latin America and post-communist Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union.

In both of these chapters, I will examine the actions of elite actors and the institutional environments which they were operating to account for the creation of dominant party regimes (as well as the cases in which they did not emerge). Specifically, I argue that the ability of political elites to unite using the electoral process during critical historical junctures increases the probability of building dominant parties. While the specific electoral incentives for elites to unite may differ from country to country, the information revealed through the electoral process was crucial in providing the motivation for these elites to join forces in the creation of these dominant parties. In

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between party and union membership, all of which were either not present or present in significantly lower levels in the UK which prevented the Labor Party from gaining the same kind of dominance as their counterparts in Sweden. In the same volume, Di Palma (1990) highlighted the difficulties associated with building dominant parties in the post-World War II developed countries in Europe while Otake (1990) investigated the political responses of the different parties to defense-related issues (most notably the relationship with the United States) in Japan and West Germany and how these responses led to a dominant party in Japan but not in West Germany.

<sup>4</sup> I avoid the classification of these party regimes into authoritarian or democratic regimes because it was not immediately clear in the transition to independence toward which trajectory these regimes were heading.

addition, I pay close attention to the effects of the sequencing of different types of elections (referendums, pre-independence elections for constitutional / constituent assemblies, provincial and local elections, post-independence elections and presidential versus legislative elections) in creating incentives as well as disincentives for elites to unite under a dominant party banner during these critical junctures. Here, I follow in the tradition of historical-institutionalists in highlighting the importance of path dependence, sequencing and tracing historical processes in the creation of dominant parties.

The sequencing of elections is particularly important during these critical junctures because of the paucity of available information pertaining to electoral support among the contending actors in the political arena and the voters. A favorable and strategic sequencing of elections, whether at the national or local level, can provide the necessary signals as well as incentives for elites to cooperate with one another in order to build a dominant party regime. An unfavorable sequencing of events and elections coupled with the influence of other institutional factors such as the electoral system and underlying social cleavages prevents a seemingly strong party, often with a charismatic leader or leaders, from consolidating political support and building a dominant party regime.

In each critical juncture, I start with the premise that it was possible for a dominant party or coalition of parties to be built by capitalizing on specific political

advantages. In post-colonial Asia and Africa, the elites who could claim to have played an instrumental role in freeing their country from colonial rule (either through negotiating for independence, fighting for it, or both) had the opportunity to assert their political dominance post-independence. In many of these countries, the ascendancies of these elites and the parties they represented were facilitated by the colonial rulers because they were seen as more moderate and hence, more willing to agree to the terms for achieving independence.<sup>5</sup> In Latin America, the elites who could claim to be instrumental in agitating for a transition from authoritarian rule (mostly by military regimes) had the opportunity to be dominant. In post-communist Europe and the former Soviet Union, the elites who could claim to be the first movers in opening up space for political participation in the move away from one-party communist rule had the opportunity to be dominant.

In situations where such elites could not be co-opted or failed to unite under a single banner, the opportunity to build a potentially dominant party or coalition of parties was quickly lost. In situations where the sequencing of elections and specific institutional mechanisms provided incentives for elites to unite, a potentially dominant party or coalition of parties was created.

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<sup>5</sup> In the British colonies, this would mostly consist of protecting the remaining commercial interest of British companies and the British government.

The emergence of DPARs is, however, not confined to these two critical junctures. To demonstrate the importance of institutional mechanisms in co-opting elites as part of a process to build a dominant party, I use the more contemporary examples of Vladimir Putin's United Russia and Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai parties. I save the discussion of the rise to power of both of these parties for Chapter 4.

I begin my discussion on the creation of dominant parties during and immediately after the transition process from colonial rule to independence in Asia and Africa.

## ***2.1 Analytical framework in post-colonial Asia and Africa***

Why was the Indian National Congress party able to leverage its position as the leader of the Indian independence movement behind its two iconic leaders – Gandhi and Nehru – to emerge as the dominant party in India from 1947 until it lost power in the 1977 elections while the Muslim League under its equally iconic leader, Muhammed Ali Jinnah, was unable to do the same? Why was the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) unable to capitalize on the legacy of Burma's founding father, Aung San, and consolidate its position as the dominant post-independence party? In contrast, the Alliance, the precursor to the BN, under Tunku Abdul Rahman, has been able to maintain its dominant position in Malaysian politics to this day. Why was Milton Obote unable to consolidate the power of his United National Congress party post-

independence while Jomo Kenyatta was able to consolidate KANU's position as the dominant party in Kenya during the same time period?

The historical origins of some of these dominant parties need to be examined in order to avoid the simplistic notion of historical determinism – that these parties were meant to be dominant because of certain underlying structural determinants. It would be far too easy to conclude, because of the longstanding dominance of some of these regimes (some of which are still in power to this day), that the nature of their authoritarian dominance meant that they were almost assured of remaining in power once their dominance was established in the transition to independence from colonial rule. This would come at the expense of ignoring the political challenges that many of these dominant party regimes had to face in their path towards achieving political dominance.

Table 5 provides a simple framework to contextualize the importance of elite unity and consolidation in the building of dominant parties in post-colonial Asia and Africa.<sup>6</sup> I categorize these countries using a three by two matrix. Favorable conditions for a party or a coalition of parties to exert its dominance exist when a group of elites, usually in a party or movement, led by one or two charismatic and nationally recognized leaders, are clearly identified as the main protagonists behind the efforts to

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<sup>6</sup> Like Karl and Schmitter (1991), my categorization of the countries in Table 2.1 in the respective boxes is subject to challenge from country or area experts who are far more familiar with the transition process to independence experienced by these countries. In addition, my definition of who constitutes the elites may also differ from other scholars.

gain independence from colonial rule. Elite consolidation through elections occurs when the position of these elites is confirmed through pre or post independence elections (or both). Dominant parties are also consolidated when the other elites that are identified during pre or post independence elections (or both) can be co-opted to join forces with the dominant party.

**Table 5: Importance of Elite Consolidation in Building Dominant Parties in Post-Colonial Asia and Africa**

		Elite consolidation through elections		
		Yes	Some	No
Potentially Dominant Position / Party?	Yes	Burkina Faso* <i>Cameroon</i> <i>Mali</i> * <i>South Africa</i> <i>Singapore</i> <i>Tanzania</i> <i>Zimbabwe</i>	Chad* Congo-Brazzaville* Gabon <i>India</i> <i>Kenya</i> <i>Malaysia</i> Rwanda* <i>Senegal</i> Somalia* <i>Zambia</i>	Bangladesh* <i>Botswana</i> Burma* <i>Cape Verde</i> Comoros* Pakistan* Cote D'Ivoire Ghana* Guinea* Guinea-Bissau* Indonesia* <i>Namibia</i> Madagascar <i>Malawi</i> Mauritania* <i>Mozambique</i> Niger* <i>Sao Tome and Principe</i> <i>Tunisia</i> Uganda*

**Table 5: Importance of Elite Consolidation in Building Dominant Parties in Post-Colonial Asia and Africa (Continued)**

Potentially Dominant Position / Party?	No	<i>Djibouti</i>	Mauritius	Benin* Burundi* Central Africa Republic* Congo (Zaire)* Equatorial Guinea Korea Lesotho Libya* Nigeria* Philippines Pakistan* Sierra Leone* Sudan* Togo
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*Countries in bold and italics denote dominant parties post-independence*

\* Indicates that the regime in power in period immediately after independence was deposed by a coup

My focus, naturally, is on the countries in the top half of Table 5 given my earlier proposition that parties that occupy a political advantageous position during the transition to independence are most likely to emerge as dominant parties. The political advantage enjoyed by these parties, however, may be short-lived if they cannot translate their political capital into an electoral dominance. They must not merely appear to be dominant in a post-independence period but must demonstrate their dominance in the electoral arena. This task, as we shall see in this chapter as well as in Chapter 3, is not as easy as it sounds, even for parties that appear to have the political momentum during the transition to independence. A party may wait too long before calling a national



election thereby losing the ability to capitalize on its hard earned political advantage arising from its role in negotiating or fighting for independence. Elite splits within the potentially dominant party may occur resulting in two or more equally matched parties endowed with similar political, financial and leadership resources. Marginal groups may resort to non-electoral means in order to achieve their political goals which often led to violence and political instability. This then became fertile ground for the military to step in and replace the potentially dominant party. Given these potential obstacles, it is no wonder that less than half (17) of the potentially dominant parties in the 38 countries listed in the top half of Table 5 managed to fulfill their promise of dominance in the post-independence period.

Figure 3 below lays out the possible paths towards the establishment of a dominant party under different pre and post independence conditions, as well as the possible paths towards the non-creation of dominant parties. It is an alternative to Table 5 in capturing the process of dominant party creation through elite consolidation and electoral performance. If the initial conditions are not favorable for the emergence of a dominant pre-independence party, it is very unlikely that a dominant party regime will emerge post-independence. This describes the countries in the bottom half of Table 5 of which Nigeria is a prime example.

If a dominant pre-independence party is able to demonstrate its electoral dominance by winning a pre-independence election to a national assembly or its

equivalent, the probability of this party maintaining its dominant status post-independence increases. In the countries where a pre-independence dominant party did not have the opportunity to demonstrate its electoral strength, the calling of a general election soon after independence is achieved should provide such an opportunity. The Indian National Congress (INC) and the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) both took this path towards establishing themselves as the dominant parties in their respective countries. Their experience is similar to many of the countries in the top right corner in Table 5. These parties did not need elections to increase elite cohesion because intra-regime divisions were not apparent in the post-independence context. The priorities of these parties were to capitalize on their respective positions as the initiators of the independence movement in the post-independence period. The failure to call an early general election meant losing valuable momentum associated with the independence movement, a strategic error which cost the Muslim League in Pakistan dearly, as we shall soon see.

**Figure 3: Paths to Dominant Party Regimes (DPRs) in Post-Colonial Asia and Africa**

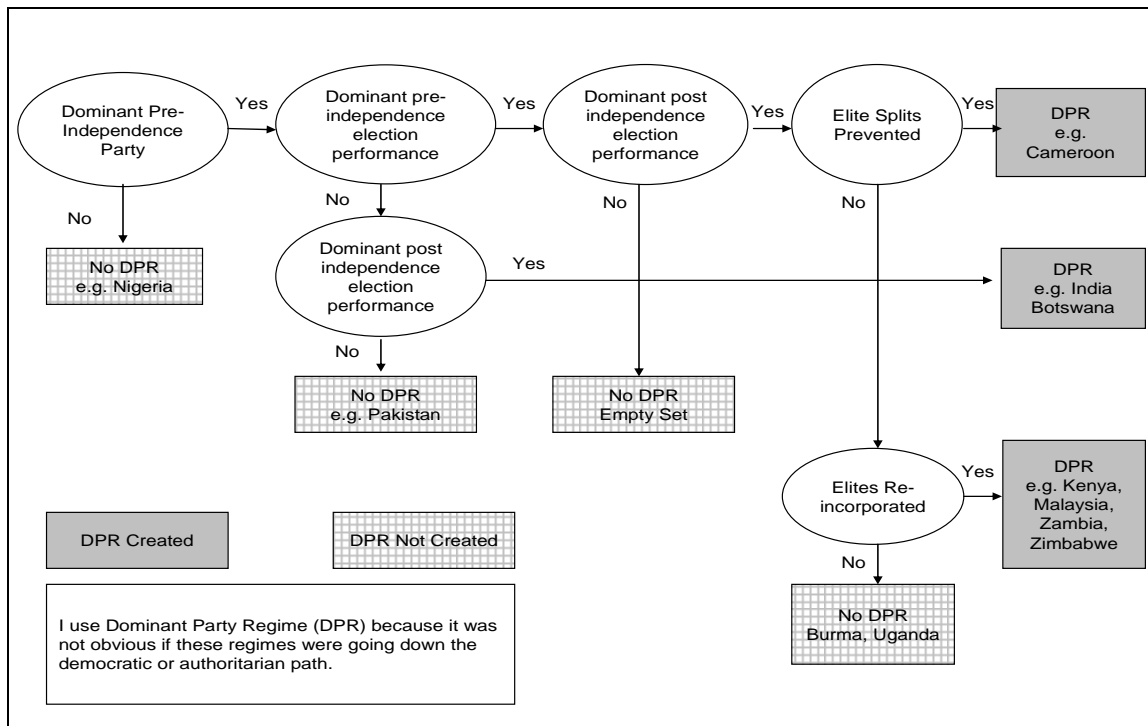


Figure 4 also highlights the importance of maintaining elite cohesion to sustain a dominant party regime. Elite consolidation through elections was especially important in maintaining the position of a dominant party or coalition in countries where potential elite defectors could count on the electoral support of one or more clearly identifiable groups. The presence of groups that could be easily mobilized along ethnic, regional or ideological lines of cleavages increased the probability of such elite defections. This was the challenge facing the potentially dominant parties in the top left corner of Table 5 because of the presence of salient lines cleavages within their ranks in the pre and post

independence period. The failure to prevent these elite defections and to later co-opt the defectors back to the regime resulted in the fall of a potentially dominant party regime.

The risk of such defections could have been minimized if the dominant party was able to demonstrate that remaining within the regime was the only way in which access to government positions and resources could be had. In other words, not only must it be shown that elections are the only game in town (to prevent non-electoral means of challenging the regime), but it must also be shown that the dominant party is the only party in town in terms of governing the country.

While Figure 4 presents a simple framework to understand the pathways to dominant party creation (or not), the importance of the interaction between elite cohesion and the electoral process can be better captured with a close comparison between different countries starting from similar positions but ending up with different outcomes in terms of dominant party creation.

In Section 2.2, I will illustrate the importance of the sequencing of elections in providing electoral incentives for elite cohesion and consolidation within the dominant party by comparing the experiences of Cameroon and Malaysia on the one hand as successful examples of dominant party creation and Pakistan on the other as an unsuccessful attempt to do the same.

In Section 2.3, I will illustrate the importance of using the electoral process as a means to marginalize elite defectors and to convince them to rejoin the dominant party.

The failure to co-opt these elite defectors back into the fold of the dominant party increases the likelihood of political instability and the emergence of the military as an important player in the political process which then increases the probability of a military coup. The co-optation of elite defectors allowed the regimes in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe to reassert their respective electoral dominance and political legitimacy while the failure to do the same in Uganda and Burma led to military coups that deposed the incumbent regimes.

## ***2.2 Sequencing of elections, Electoral Incentives and Elite Consolidation in the Creation of Dominant Parties – Cameroon and Malaysia versus Pakistan***

The governing parties in the immediate post-independence period in Cameroon, Malaysia<sup>7</sup> and Pakistan shared many similarities. The *Union Camerounaise* (UC), the Alliance coalition and the Muslim League were all key actors in the negotiation process that eventually led to the independence of Cameroon, Malaysia and Pakistan respectively. All three parties were led by charismatic leaders who were later recognized as founding fathers of their respective countries - Ahmadou Ahidjo in Cameroon, Tunku Abdul Rahman in Malaysia and Mohammed Ali Jinnah in Pakistan. All three countries had ethnically diverse populations with the potential of elite defections stemming from

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<sup>7</sup> For the sake of consistency, I have chosen to use Malaysia here. Malaysia, comprising of the states in Peninsular Malaysia and the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo, was only formed in 1963 (together with Singapore). Prior to 1963, Malaysia was known as Malaya which comprised of only the states in Peninsular Malaysia.

regional and ethnic cleavages. But while the UC and the Alliance were successful in maintaining elite cohesion and consolidating their respective positions of political and electoral dominance, the Muslim League failed to even win one post-independence general election. What could account for the different trajectories taken by the UC and the Alliance on the one hand and the Muslim League on the other? I explain the building of dominant parties in Cameroon and Malaysia in terms of the favorable sequencing of pre and post-independence elections and the presence of electoral incentives for elite consolidation. In Pakistan, the absence of pre-independence elections, the delay in the calling of national elections caused by the inability to find a consensus regarding a new constitution, and the calling of post-independence provincial elections before a national election, were important contributory factors in reducing the initial political advantage enjoyed by the Muslim League.

The pre-independence Territorial Assembly elections in 1960, which was won by Ahmadou Ahidjo's *Union Camerounaise* (UC) party, paved the way for the UC to establish itself as French Cameroon's<sup>8</sup> dominant party. Ahidjo was elected President through indirect parliamentary proceedings after Cameroon achieved its independence from France in January 1960. After his ascendance to the presidency, Ahidjo quickly moved to consolidate his power and the strength of his party by co-opting a number of

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<sup>8</sup> Eastern Cameroon was a French colony while Western Cameroon was a British colony.

opposition parties and leaders into the UC.<sup>9</sup> However, the UC's political and electoral dominance did not extend into the southern part of British Cameroon which voted in a plebiscite in 1961 to reunify with French Cameroon.<sup>10</sup> In this part of British Cameroon, John Ngu Foncha's Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) emerged as the largest party by narrowly defeating Dr. Emmanuel Endeley's Kamerun National Congress (KNC) with a margin of 2 seats in the pre-independence House of Assembly elections in 1959, largely a result of Foncha's campaign for reunification with French Cameroon. The results of the 1961 plebiscite in southern British Cameroon further strengthened the popularity of Foncha. Federal structures of government were soon put in place with the reunification of British Southern Cameroon, which became West Cameroon, and French Cameroon, which became East Cameroon. The latter, being the more populous of the two regions, received forty legislative seats in the federal legislature while the former received ten seats. Foncha, by virtue of his leadership of West Cameroon was named as the Vice President of the federation with Ahidjo retaining the presidency.

Knowing that he could not match Foncha's popularity in West Cameroon, Ahidjo did the next best thing, which was to co-opt the latter in his effort to create an all dominant party that spanned both units of the federation. He did this by consolidating the electoral strength of the UC and the KNDP, and by manipulating the legislative

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<sup>9</sup> The Mouvement d'Action Nationale Camerounaise (MANC) was one of the first opposition parties to merge with the UC in 1960. This was followed by the Front Populaire pour l'Unité et la Paix (FPUP) in 1961, whose leaders were quickly given positions in the federal government (LeVine, 1963, 105).

<sup>10</sup> The northern part of British Cameroon voted to join the Nigerian federation in the same plebiscite.

constituencies in their favor. Multi-member winner-takes-all constituencies (similar to the block vote electoral system practiced in Singapore) were created in the northern region where the UC was strong and single-member constituencies were maintained in the south to ‘stimulate vote splitting along ethnic lines’ (Mehler, 1999, 170). Using their respective incumbent positions and the favorable electoral system, the UC and KNDP would increase their electoral dominance in the first post-independence election in 1964. Both parties swept all of the seats in their respective regions, courtesy of the manipulated electoral system. Table 6 shows the increasing dominance of the UC and the KNDP over each successive election from 1956 to 1964. The UC’s share of seats in East Cameroon, for example, increased from 51% in 1960 to 100% in 1964 while the KNDP’s share of seats increased from 65% in 1960 to 100% in 1964.

**Table 6: Increasing electoral dominance of the UC and the KNDP (1956 to 1964)**

<i>Party / Year</i>	% of Votes			% of Seats		
	<i>1956</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1964</i>
UC	34.3	44.9	93.1	43	51	100
<i>Party / Year</i>	<i>1959</i>	<i>1961</i>	<i>1964</i>	<i>1959</i>	<i>1961</i>	<i>1964</i>
KNDP	53.4	54.9	76.1	54	65	100

Source: Mehler, 1999

Sensing that his party may be permanently cut-off from participating in the government, Dr. Endeley’s party, the renamed Cameroon People’s National Convention (CNPC), soon joined with the KNDP in talks to create a national governing party. The amalgamation of the UC, KNDP, the CNPC and a smaller opposition party in West



Cameroon, the Cameroon United Congress (CUC)<sup>11</sup>, under the banner of the Cameroon National Union (CNU) marked the creation of a dominant party regime in this country and was the prelude to the move towards a one-party state.

Even though the dominance of the CNU did not ensure that all representative elites would be incorporated under the banner of a single party (segments of the mostly Christian South would still have grievances at being dominated by northerners in the CNU), the defeat of the rebels representing a banned political party, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC), in the early 1970s and the incorporation of the English-speaking Cameroonian elites meant that Adjaho's CNU did not have to face the prospect of ethnic insurgencies or political instability that would plague many of the other one-party states in post-independence Africa.

The presence of pre-independence elections in French Cameroon led to the emergence of UC as the dominant party. It quickly consolidated its political strength in post-independence elections by co-opting opposition elites and manipulating electoral regulations. The pre-independence elections and the plebiscite allowed the emergence of a potentially dominant party in the part of British Cameroon that wanted to reunify with French Cameroon and the exclusion from the federation, the part of British Cameroon that wanted no part of such a union. If, for example, such a plebiscite had not been called but instead, the whole of British Cameroon was forced to join a larger

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<sup>11</sup> This party was formed as a result of an elite split within the KDNP in 1963 (LeVine, 1963, 97-99)

Cameroonian federation, it would probably not have been as easy to incorporate the elites in British Northern Cameroon to join forces in a nationally dominant party. Ahidjo's attempt to build a nationally dominant party regime was surely helped by the fact that Foncha was able to use the reunification issue to defeat Dr. Endely's party and the subsequent plebiscite that paved the way for British Southern Cameroon to re-unify with French Cameroon. Joining forces to create a national party to represent larger Cameroonian interests seemed like the natural next step to take after the fulfillment of the nationalist project of reunification undertaken by Foncha.

The favorable sequencing of pre-independence elections and plebiscites, the establishment of dominant parties in both units of the federation and the electoral incentives to merge into a single party explain the creation of a dominant party regime in Cameroon.

While the electoral incentives for elite cooperation in pre and post independence Malaysia were different from that of Cameroon, similar factors concerning the sequencing of elections and elite consolidation explain the creation of the Alliance coalition and its successor, the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition. The sequence of events that led to the unification of the elites representing their ethnically based parties within the Alliance coalition could be described as rather propitious. The first pre-independence elections of significance in what was then Malaya were the Kuala Lumpur municipal council elections in 1952. The Independence of Malaya Party (IMP),

established by former United Malay National Organization (UMNO) president, Onn Jaafar, espoused a non-ethnic approach to politics that could unite the country on its path towards independence. The setting of Kuala Lumpur, the-then capital city, with its multiethnic voting base and presumably more liberal urban constituents, was thought to advantage the IMP over the Malay-centric UMNO.

The surprise provided by these municipal elections, which would have repercussions on the political trajectory of the country, was the decision of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), then the most powerful Chinese political force, to join forces with UMNO in these elections. The MCA decision was unexpected given that the non-communal platform of the IMP had more favorable policy implications for the Chinese in Malaya compared to the more 'hardline' positions adopted by UMNO vis-à-vis citizenship rights, language policy and the 'special' positions of the Malays. Two alternative leadership-specific explanations were put forward as to why this unlikely Alliance took place. The first, proposed by Means (1976, 134), puts the focus on the rivalry between Onn Jaafar and the leader of the MCA, Tan Cheng Lock. According to Means, 'although Tan Cheng Lock could have supported a "non-communal" political party, he could never have been an enthusiastic supporter of such a party if it also would have given Dato Onn an unassailable position of political supremacy in Malaya. Indeed, the political and personal rivalry between Dato Onn and Tan Cheng Lok was a major feature of Malayan politics for a decade after the war'. Horowitz (1985, 401), on

the other hand, attributed the partnership between MCA and UMNO to the influential Kuala Lumpur leader of the MCA, H.S.Lee, who 'happened not to favor Onn's IMP'.<sup>12</sup>

Regardless, the alliance between the MCA and UMNO would pay immediate dividends as they won nine out of the twelve municipal seats at stake with the IMP winning only two seats (Means, 1976, 134). From its electoral success in Kuala Lumpur, the alliance between MCA and UMNO would soon spread to other municipal elections resulting in electoral victories in twenty six out of the thirty four seats it had contested (Horowitz, 1985, 401).

The dominance of the Alliance, which was joined by the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) in 1954, would be firmly cemented in the first national elections in 1955. Despite the overwhelming proportion of Malay voters in the electorate (84%) because many of the non-Malays were still not citizens as thus not eligible to vote, the MCA-UMNO partnerships in the previous municipal elections put in place a spirit of compromise among the top leaders in both parties. Out of the 52 single member constituencies, UMNO was only allocated 40 seats (77%) despite demands from the UMNO grassroots for 42 seats. MCA was allocated 12 seats and MIC two despite the fact that there were no Indian majority constituencies. This inter-ethnic strategy would pay off for the Alliance when it won 81% of the popular vote and 51 out of the 52 seats

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<sup>12</sup> H.S. Lee also immensely disliked the IMP leader in Kuala Lumpur, Thuraisingham, a Ceylon Tamil (personal communication with Horowitz, Donald L.)

(Means, 1976, Chapter 11). While other ethnic parties would emerge to 'flank' the Alliance in the first post-independence election in 1959, the Alliance would maintain its electoral dominance by winning 71% of seats. In the twelve post-independence elections since 1959, the Alliance and its successor, the BN, failed to win at least two-thirds of parliamentary seats only twice, once in 1969 and more recently in 2008.<sup>13</sup>

The fortuitous sequencing of the municipal elections in multiethnic Kuala Lumpur in 1952 before the national elections in 1955 demonstrated the electoral advantages of vote-pooling to the two parties – UMNO and MCA – that would later form the backbone of the Alliance and subsequently the BN coalition. If pre-independence national elections had been called before the KL municipal elections, the electoral incentives provided by vote-pooling may not have been as obvious, especially in a context where a majority of non-Malays were not yet citizens and therefore could not vote. UMNO may have been tempted to compete on its own especially if was facing flank Malay parties that could drive political competition and discourse to the ethnic extremes. The fact that this strategy of vote-pooling paid off in the 1955 pre-independence national elections as well as in the first post-independence elections in 1959, when a significant number of non-Malays had been granted citizenship and were registered as voters, meant that the electoral grounds for elite cohesion within the BN were quickly established.

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<sup>13</sup> I will discuss the impact of the 1969 and 2008 elections in Chapter 3, 4 and 8.

In contrast to the Cameroonian and Malaysian cases, the potentially dominant party in Pakistan, the Muslim League, did not have the opportunity to demonstrate its pre-independence electoral dominance because there were no national elections called prior to its separation from India. The leaders within the League simply asserted their political dominance on the basis of their role in negotiating for independence from the British and for the partition from India. The League's failure to call early post-independence national elections had the following debilitating consequences for the party which eventually resulted in its political demise.

Firstly, the League lost the opportunity to capitalize on the popularity of Pakistan's founding father and the leader of the League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Even though Jinnah died shortly after Pakistan's independence in 1947, it would have been more than conceivable for the League to leverage public sympathy and mourning into electoral gains if national elections had been called shortly after Jinnah's death. Secondly, the postponement of national elections meant that the composition of the League's leadership did not reflect the ethnic and regional distribution of the larger population. The fact that East Pakistan was grossly under represented among the leadership ranks of the League would result in some policy errors, most notably in the decision to make Urdu a national language at the expense of others, a decision that would later cost the League dearly in electoral terms. Thirdly, by not calling for early national elections, the League relieved itself from the much needed task of building a

strong party infrastructure with extensive ties to the grassroots. This meant that many of the advantages associated with incumbency such as constituency servicing, name recognition at the local level, elite-mass linkages, dispensation of patronage to voters, could not be enjoyed by the candidates of the League when the national elections were eventually called. In other words, the ability of the League to mobilize support for its candidates was not tested until it was far too late.

Fourthly, the longer the League waited to call national elections, the more leaders associated with the independence movement they lost and the higher the likelihood of intra-regime splits occurring. One such leader was Liaquat Ali, who took over the leadership of the League during the difficult and long-drawn process of negotiating the parameters of the new constitution. During this time, he managed 'cohesion at the center by the dint of his prestige and moderation, choosing his ministers with tact and by balancing the regional pressures' (Yusuf, 1999, 46). Ali's assassination in 1951 would deprive the Muslim League of yet another influential and possibly unifying national leader. The political elites, who had latched on to the League because of Jinnah's reputation and the position of the League as the founding party of the country, soon sensed the political weakness of governing party.

It is conceivable that some of the challenges faced by the Pakistani state, such as the geographical distance separating the two regions, the domination of the civil service and the military by the Punjabis from West Pakistan, and dissatisfaction in East Pakistan

arising from the early announcement of Urdu, a language not spoken there, as the national language, could have been managed if the League had converted its political capital into electoral advantage in an early post-independence national elections. Its leadership ranks would have included a larger number of East Pakistanis who may have been able to prevent the announcement of policies that were highly unpopular in East Pakistan.

Instead, in 1954, seven years after independence, a constitution still had not been finalized and this obviously made it more difficult to call for a national election.<sup>14</sup> What sealed the fate of the League was arguably its decision to allow for provincial elections to be held in East Pakistan before holding national elections. The League was probably overconfident in its ability to win a significant share of votes in these provincial elections. But with the loss of Jinnah and Ali and the unpopular decision to make Urdu the national language, it was not surprising that a coalition of regional parties, led by the Awami League, campaigning on an exclusively regional program, would sweep the 1954 provincial elections in East Pakistan. The Muslim League was reduced to a mere ten seats in these provincial elections (out of a total of 237 seats). The loss of prestige as a result of its disastrous performance in East Pakistan led to intra-party elite splits and the formation of new opposition parties in West Pakistan. By the time the first national

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<sup>14</sup> See Choudury (1956, 1959) for a detailed description of the creation of the 1956 Pakistani constitution.



elections were held in 1970, the various factions of the Muslim League were in no position to establish an electorally dominant position.<sup>15</sup>

How important was sequencing of elections in allowing for regionalist sentiments to take precedence over national issues? According to Afzal (1976, 243), 'A national election might have brought up a national outlook among at least some political parties, leading them to the development of more cohesive structures and programs; but such an opportunity was not to arise. Instead, the provincial elections that were held only exacerbated the fragmented state of the parties by focusing their attention on parochial and provincial issues'.<sup>16</sup> While early national elections would not have guaranteed the continued political dominance of the Muslim League, especially in East Pakistan, the electoral campaign would surely have transcended purely parochial concerns which could have translated some of the Muslim League's political capital into political representation on a national scale, including in East Pakistan. The result could have been the building of dominant coalitions between the Muslim League and strategic partners in East Pakistan in exchange for positions in the federal government instead of the emergence of a regionally focused dominant party in the form of the Awami League.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged as the largest party in West Pakistan after the 1970 general election.

<sup>16</sup> India, in comparison, completed its first post-independence elections in early 1952.

<sup>17</sup> The ability of the Awami League to win a large majority of parliamentary seats in East Pakistan, the more populous of the two regions, in the 1970 general elections meant that it would, on its own, form a governing

The post-independence provincial elections in East Pakistan had centrifugal effects in terms of increasing the salience of regional issues over national ones. In contrast, the municipal elections in pre-independence Malaysia had centripetal effects because they took place in a cosmopolitan environment with a voter composition that was much more reflective of the overall composition of the country's population. Conversely, a pre-independence national election that preceded these municipal elections would have had centrifugal effects because of the high number of ineligible non-Malay voters among the population. The sequencing and nature of pre and post independence elections at different levels of government in Malaysia (and the calling of a plebiscite in British Cameroon) and Bangladesh serve to highlight the importance of sequencing and electoral incentives for elite cooperation and consolidating in the effort to build a dominant party regime. The favorable sequencing of the 'right' kind of elections provided fertile conditions and the necessary electoral incentives for the consolidation of political elites in Cameroon and Malaysia and the creation of dominant party regimes in both countries. The failure to call for early national elections and the decision to allow provincial elections to take place in an area where the potentially

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majority. Such a scenario was of course unacceptable to the leaders in West Pakistan as well as the Punjabi majority army. It is thus not surprising that war eventually broke out between the two regions and resulted in the secession of East Pakistan, what is now present day Bangladesh.

dominant party was not popular resulted in the political demise of the once powerful Muslim League in Pakistan.

### ***2.3 Managing and Co-opting Elite Defectors – Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe versus Burma and Uganda***

In countries where a potentially dominant party manages to consolidate its political and electoral position by winning early post independence national elections, the greatest threat to its continued hold on power in the early post-independent period usually comes from within its own ranks.

Dominant post-independence parties that can prevent the occurrence of serious elite splits which result in the formation of new political parties by elite defectors are usually able to preserve their electoral dominance, especially if they are also able to institutionalize the succession process involving the head of state or head of government. The BDP in Botswana is one of the few long ruling parties in post-colonial Asia and Africa that has managed to avoid any serious elite splits (even though elite conflicts within the ruling party are fairly common and well publicized). This, coupled with the voluntary resignation of Botswana's founding father, Seretse Khama, which set the precedent for further presidential successions within the party, has allowed the BDP to win ten post-independence elections and thus remain in power to this day. The failure to prevent such elite splits from occurring may result in a defeat of an already established dominant party regime. Congress' defeat in the Indian parliamentary elections in 1977 *may* fall under this category. I say *may* because even though the

unified opposition Jana party won these elections comprised two parties which were formed as a result of splits from Congress (the BLD and the Congress-O), the unpopularity of Indira Gandhi's government, coming out of a 20 month declaration of emergency, was such that Congress would probably have been defeated even without the presence of these elite defector parties (Weiner, 1977).

If elite splits could result in the electoral defeat of an already established dominant party such as the Indian National Congress, their presence could have much more devastating consequences to the political ambitions of not yet established dominant parties. Such elite splits would take place within the post-independence ruling parties in Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Burma and Uganda. But while the former three regimes managed to minimize the electoral gains made by the elite defectors, the latter two regimes could not prevent the elite splits from causing significant political instability that eventually resulted in their removals via military coups.

In this section, I will examine the strategies used by the incumbent regimes in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe to marginalize elite defectors in the electoral arena and then use the electoral weaknesses of these elites to convince them to rejoin their former parties. The choice to reincorporate these former elites back into the ranks of the dominant party decreases the likelihood of these elite defectors to seek non-electoral ways of displacing the incumbent regime. The risk of political instability and violence is also minimized when these elite defectors are incorporated back into the ruling

government since it decreases their incentives to mobilize support from groups aligned to them to pressure the incumbent regime. The fall of the potentially dominant parties in Burma and Uganda is contrasted with the experience of the Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and is explained in terms of their respective failure to manage problems associated with elite defections, as well as their inability to convince all groups to participate in the electoral arena.

In the case of Kenya, pre-independence politics saw the splitting up of the nationalist movement into two rival parties – the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) led by Kenya's founding father, Jomo Kenyatta, representing the two largest ethnic groups – the Kikuyu and the Luo - and the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) representing the smaller ethnic groups of the Rift Valley and the coast. In the bi-cameral pre-independence elections in 1963, KANU emerged as the dominant party by winning 54% and 59% of the votes and 64% and 44% of the seats in the House of Representatives and Senate respectively. Not surprisingly, KADU emerged as the second largest party with 26% and 27% of the votes and 25% and 39% of the seats in the House of Representatives and Senate respectively. However, by encouraging defections from KADU, KANU was able to increase its share of seats to 81% and 66% in the House and Senate respectively by 1964 (Hartmann, 1999).

After independence, Kenyatta moved to consolidate his position by creating the office of the President and amending the constitution to return to a unitary form of

government. Without the local autonomy of a federal system and the veto power of a Senate, the remaining members of KADU joined KANU by the end of 1964 thereby creating a *de facto* single-party state. The expanded KANU would have taken a path similar to that described in the Cameroonian and Malaysian cases if not for the intra-party defeat of the radical KANU wing under Oginga Odinga who left KANU to form a new opposition party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU). But KPU's opposition to KANU was short-lived, as KANU passed a constitutional amendment requiring all defecting MPs to resign and seek re-election to their seats. This allowed KANU to brand the defecting MPs as part of an ethnically exclusive Luo movement. The result was that only nine out of twenty nine defecting MPs, virtually all Luos from Nyanza, managed to be re-elected to their respective seats in 1966. The already weakened KPU was then formally banned in 1969 as a result of ethnic unrest among Luo youth and the assassination of the Luo secretary general of KANU. Odinga and the other KANU leaders subsequently returned to KANU during the 1970s, thereby restoring its overwhelming political dominance.

By strategically marginalizing the elite defectors through the use of electoral regulations, KANU was able to restrict the appeal of the defectors to a minority of voters thereby limiting their potential electoral gains. Without the prospect of being able to defeat KANU and with the strong arm of the state bearing down on them, it was not surprising that the elite defectors would eventually rejoin the incumbent party regime.

In Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) faced a small, regional party in the African National Congress (ANC) in the only pre-independence and the first post-independence parliamentary elections. The UNIP, with the influence of the country's soon-to-be-founding father and its strong electoral support in the resource rich Copper Belt, emerged as the dominant party by winning 69% and 73% of the vote and 85% and 77% of the seats in the 1964 pre-independence and 1968 post-independence parliamentary elections, respectively. Kaunda was able to co-opt the ANC elites to join the UNIP in 1973 but was less successful in preventing intra-elite splits that would result in the formation of other opposition parties (Gertzel, Baylies and Szeftel, 1984, 20).

The first serious intra-elite split within the UNIP occurred in 1966, when Nalumino Mundia, one of the party's leading Lozi leaders, was expelled together with another Lozi minister. Mundia formed a new opposition party, the United Party (UP). The UP was not allowed to compete in the 1968 post-independence elections because it was banned after an outbreak of violence in the Copperbelt. A more serious challenge would emerge from within the ranks of the UNIP when Benjamin Kapwepwe, a senior Bemba politician that had risen to the ranks of Vice-President, resigned to form the United Progressive Party (UPP) in 1971. Again, Kapwepwe and the UPP did not have the opportunity to test its electoral strength as he, along with 122 UPP leaders, were arrested and imprisoned by Kaunda in 1972. Kaunda also took this opportunity to ban

the UPP and declare Zambia a one-party state. Kapwepwe was later released and allowed to rejoin the UNIP when the threat of an internal challenge to Kaunda's dominance was no longer imminent.<sup>18</sup> Even though Kaunda's UNIP was only partially successful in co-opting some of the opposition elites, notably those from the ANC, the intra-elite splits within the UNIP were not allowed to test their respective electoral strengths because of the repressive measures taken by Kaunda to severely curtail their ability to mobilize and organize.

Kaunda, like his counterparts in Kenya and Cameroon, clearly recognized the importance of co-opting opposition parties and elites as part of the process of creating a dominant party regime. While he was successful in co-opting the ANC, he was less successful in preventing intra-regime splits that resulted in the formation of new opposition parties. By not allowing these parties to test their electoral strength and later allowing these defectors to rejoin the party, Kaunda was able to prevent the rise of a sustained opposition to his political dominance.

The electoral dominance of Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party in the 1990s and the early 2000s somewhat masks the political uncertainties faced by the two nationalist movements led by Mugabe's ZANU and Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU in the 1960s all the way to the 1980s. ZANU was formed as a result of a split with ZAPU in 1963, but both

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<sup>18</sup> See Tordoff (1974) for a more detailed description of the events which led to the splits in the UNIP and the development of opposition political parties.



movements would ally themselves under the Patriotic Front (PF) banner in 1976. However, just prior to the 1980 pre-independence election, the PF, at the instigation of Mugabe, split into its original components. This election determined which of the two nationalist movements had greater support among the African population (since the electoral was split into the white and common electoral rolls). If both parties had managed to split the African vote more or less equally, post-independent Zimbabwe might have evolved into a two-party system with ZANU and ZAPU as the main protagonists.

However, ZANU, which was increasingly seen as a Shona-led organization (which formed the majority of the non-white population), was able to resoundingly defeat ZAPU, which was increasingly seen as an Ndebele-led organization (Herbst, 1990, 28). ZANU won 63% of the vote in the African roll and 69% of the seats allocated to the non-white population while ZAPU could only muster 24% of the vote in the African roll and 24% of the African seats (Baumhogger, 1999). ZANU was able to extend its electoral dominance in the first post-independence elections in 1985 by winning 77% of votes and 64% of seats while ZAPU saw its vote share decrease to 19% and its seat share decrease to 15% (Baumhogger, 1999). The polarized atmosphere of the 1985 election contributed to the increase in political violence in the mainly Ndebele-speaking Matabeleland provinces in the southwest which were also ZAPU's political strongholds. The failure of ZANU to extend its dominance into these provinces convinced it to revise its policy of

confrontation with ZAPU. At the same time, the electoral dominance of ZANU convinced ZAPU that its prospects of taking power through electoral means were limited at best. After protracted negotiations, both parties merged in 1987. The merged entity would dominate the presidential elections in 1990 and 1996 as well as the parliamentary elections in 1990 and 1995.

The ruling parties in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe faced their most serious political and electoral challenges from elite defectors rather than existing opposition parties. Of the three parties, Zimbabwe's ZANU was the most successful in using electoral means to assert its political dominance which then formed the basis for convincing the elite defectors, in this case, ZAPU, to rejoin the incumbent regime. Kenya's KANU also resorted to electoral means, but in this case, it was the manipulation of the electoral regulations that forced the elite defectors to resign from their parliamentary seats. Without the benefit of time and the ability to build a longer term opposition strategy, perhaps by co-opting some of the other non-Kikuyu tribes, the elite defectors were forced to defend their home ground and were only successful in the area where a majority of these defectors came from. While Zambia's UNIP did not use the electoral path to assert its dominance, it is possible that they could have done so without resorting to heavy handed repression against the elite defectors. By most accounts, Kaunda was still a popular founding father and president. But by later co-opting these

elite defectors back into the UNIP, he was able to prevent any future opposition from mobilizing around the leadership of one or more of these elite defectors.

Milton Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and Aung San's AFPFL, however, would not be able to replicate the success of their counterparts in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Uganda is a good illustration of the danger of failing to co-opt an elite defector who was instrumental in providing the necessary electoral support in the process of creating a post-independence dominant party. Obote's UPC, which had its stronghold in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, won fewer seats in the 1961 pre-independence election than its main competitors, the Democratic Party (DP) that was stronger in the southern parts of the country, despite winning a larger share of the popular vote.<sup>19</sup> The UPC regained its electoral advantage by winning the largest number of seats in the 1962 pre-independence election.<sup>20</sup> The UPC then formed a governing coalition with the Kabaka Yekka party, the dominant party among the Baganda, the largest ethnic group in Uganda. But this fragile alliance did not last. Obote resorted to repressive means against the Baganda and their influential King, Mutesa II, instead of trying to accommodate their increasing demands for greater autonomy. The escalation of the conflict between Obote and the Baganda would force Obote to become

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<sup>19</sup> The UPC won 35 seats with 49% of the popular vote while the DP won 44 seats with 41% of the popular vote (Schmidt, 1999).

<sup>20</sup> The UPC won 37 seats with 52% of the popular vote while the DP won 24 seats with 46% of the popular vote (Schmidt, 1999).

increasingly reliant on the army to repress not only the Bugunda but also anti-Obote forces within his own party (Glentworth and Hancock, 1973). This paved the way for Idi Amin to emerge as an important political player and Obote ally. Amin's power and influence later became a threat to Obote. When it seemed obvious to Amin that Obote was planning to remove him from his position as the head of the army, Amin overthrew Obote in a coup in 1971.

Obote's poor leadership in managing the post-independence elite conflicts within his own political party and with the Bagunda forced him to seek allies with military elites that eventually led to his own political downfall. In contrast to the African examples described above, Obote's move to install a one-party system in Uganda was not preceded by any serious attempts at uniting all or most of the political elites under a single party or coalition. Instead, he exacerbated the already existing conflicts. The UPC's lower levels of electoral support (compared to the governing parties in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe) meant that he needed the cooperation of the Bagundas in order to remain politically dominant. By choosing to ignore the electoral incentives of keeping the Bagundas in the governing coalition and by choosing to align himself with military elites, he probably sowed the seeds that led to his eventual downfall.

In the case of Burma, the failure of Aung San's Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) to sustain its position of political dominance can be attributed partly to its failure to maintain intra-regime unity and to co-opt a sufficient number of groups

from the periphery to contest within the electoral sphere. However, the efforts of the AFPFL to build a dominant party also had an inauspicious start when its charismatic leader and founding father, Aung San, who could have played a role of a unifying figure post independence, was tragically assassinated, together with members of his cabinet, in 1947, six months before Burma's independence. Still, given AFPFL's overwhelming victory in pre-independence Constitutional Assembly elections, held before Aung San's assassination, the AFPFL was able to form the first post-independence government, led by U Nu, who became Burma's first Prime Minister. The AFPFL would also go on to win a majority of seats in the post-independence elections in 1951 and 1956.

But AFPFL's electoral dominance was taking place in a context whereby actors who felt alienated by the political process were resorting to anti-electoral means to challenge the incumbent political elites. One such group was the Communists, who had been excluded from the channels of power after losing an internal power struggle within the AFPFL. The ensuing civil war between the state and the Communists, which took place between 1948 and 1952, decreased the ability of U Nu's government to extend its authority outside of Rangoon. Other such groups were the various ethnic minorities in the periphery such as the Karen, the Chins, the Shans and the Kachins who felt that their traditions of indigenous rule were being threatened by the process of state-formation of the newly independent nation. This led to ethnic insurgencies among these groups that

made the task of including them in the political process even more daunting (Taylor, 2009).<sup>21</sup>

In the midst of ethnic insurgencies and the war with the Communists that resulted in a decline in support for the AFPFL, its leaders became increasingly distrustful of each other as they fought over the spoils for the distribution to their factional supporters. The result was not only a split in the AFPFL but also the collapse of the government in 1958 threatening a 'Civil War among the anti-Communists' (Taylor, 2009, 250). U Nu's 'Clean AFPFL' faction, in a strategic maneuver to pre-empt a possible military coup, because Ba Swee's 'Stable AFPFL' faction was seen as having the army's backing, 'invited' General Ne Win to head a six month interim caretaker army government during the run-up to the 1960 election (Taylor, 2009, 252). While Ne Win would hand power back to U Nu's 'Clean AFPFL' party after its victory in the 1960 election, U Nu's continued problems in dealing with ethnic insurgents, some of whom were trying to secede from the Burmese state, paved the way for Ne Win to retake control of the government in 1962 when he overthrew U Nu's government in a military coup.<sup>22</sup>

Why were the incumbent regimes in Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe more successful in dealing with intra-regime splits compared to the regimes in Burma and

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<sup>21</sup> This is an updated version of Taylor's influential 1987 study of the Burmese state.

<sup>22</sup> The question of whether U Nu's decision to invite Ne Win to serve as the head of a military caretaker government forestalled the coup or whether it increased the legitimacy of Ne Win as political leader remains unanswered.

Uganda? I propose that the answer lies in the strategic choices made by the leaders of these regimes in dealing with the elite defectors. In the first group of countries, especially in Kenya and Zimbabwe, the incumbent regimes used the electoral mechanisms to demonstrate that the elite defectors did not have significant electoral support. The marginalization of these defectors in the electoral arena decreased the long-term incentives of remaining within the ranks of the opposition, with no realistic hope of gaining power. The incumbent regimes, with an eye on further consolidating their political standing and cementing their legitimacy to govern, were more than willing to accept the return of the prodigal sons back into the folds of the respective parties.<sup>23</sup>

The strategic error made on the part of the regime leaders in Burma and Uganda was to rely on a key military figure to shore up the political standing and legitimacy of their respective regimes in the face of elite defections and political instability instead of relying on the electoral arena. While it is not uncommon to use the instruments of the state, including the police and the army, to prevent the outbreak of violence (and to

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<sup>23</sup> While the leaders in all three countries managed to 'solve' the problem of elite defectors, they would have less success in managing a successful leadership transition process in the context of multiparty elections. The subsequent move to a one party state in Kenya and Zambia would deprive these leaders of opportunities to test their electoral popularity even though the continuation of multi-candidate one-party elections at the legislative level ensured a degree of elite circulation (See Chapter 5). While Jomo Kenyatta did pass on the presidency to Daniel Arap Moi, this was done without the validation of multi-party elections. Moi only managed to win the first two multiparty presidential elections (in 1992 and 1997) with a plurality of the vote in a divided field. His appointed successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of Jomo, failed to win the 2002 presidential elections when the main opposition parties united behind the candidacy of Mwai Kibaki. Kaunda returned multiparty elections to Zambia in 1991 but lost this presidential election in a spectacular fashion when his main rival, Frederick Chiluba emerged with 75% of the vote. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Mugabe's ZANU-PF looks increasingly unlikely to remain in power beyond the tenure of their leader.

repress the political opposition), the over-reliance on a single military leader as a political ally only increases the probability of an eventually military takeover. A military leader who is quickly promoted by the head of state or head of government as a means to buy-off his loyalty and also increase his legitimacy as a political player in the fight against elite defectors can often backfire because this leader can use his new found legitimacy and popularity against the very person who was responsible for his rise to power. The rise of Idi Amin in Uganda fits this description. A military leader who is invited to temporarily take control of a caretaker government, as Ne Win in Burma was, might also see his public legitimacy and standing increase. A military leader in this position may find it hard to cede control of the caretaker government, especially if the incumbent regime is not seen to have solved the problems of political instability caused by the elite defectors.

I recognize that the task of defining the degree of public legitimacy needed for a civilian regime to govern is a challenging one. The danger of tautology is ever present.<sup>24</sup> However, one cannot ignore the fact that if a civilian government brings a military leader into the political playing field, it runs the risk of decreasing its own legitimacy and conversely increases the legitimacy of the military. If the military option is viewed as a legitimate way of dealing with elite defectors and other political opponents by the

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<sup>24</sup> For example, a legitimate government is one which is seen by a majority of voters as having the legitimacy to govern.



civilian regime, it is not difficult to see why the larger voting public would subsequently view a military government as a legitimate form of maintaining political order and control, especially if the civilian regime is unable to solve the political problems associated with these elite defections. If, on the other hand, the incumbent civilian regime resorts to using political means, such as elections, to marginalize and then later re-incorporate these elite defectors, the probability of a military takeover that is seen as legitimate decreases significantly. Decalo (1998, 39) describes this mode of managing the civilian-military relationship as the 'legitimized modality' whereby 'civilian rule in the ideal sources of civil-military stability in that it attests to the internalization in the armed forces of the concept of civilian supremacy'.

The issue of civilian-military relations and the processes associated with the institutionalization of civilian control of the military is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis. My intention here is much more modest. I merely want to highlight the advantages of using the electoral arena to manage the problems posed by elite defectors to the incumbent regime as part of the larger, longer term process of building and maintaining a dominant party regime. If these elite defectors can be marginalized and defeated in the electoral arena and then later co-opted, the probability of a dominant party emerging increases significantly. If, on the other hand, military elites are

incorporated into the political scene as a means of defeating the elite defectors, the emergence of a dominant party regime becomes highly unlikely.<sup>25</sup>

## **2.4 The skillful leadership variable<sup>26</sup>**

Before I conclude this section on the building of dominant parties in the post-colonial countries in Africa and Asia, I would like to draw attention to a specific variable which escapes simple definition, classification and discussion in the political science literature which is the role of political leaders in maintaining political stability and civilian rule. The transition process from colonial rule to independence is fraught with uncertainties associated with the level of popular support which elites think they may have. Pre-independence elections help reduce this uncertainty but the decision on which elites to incorporate into the ruling party or coalition often falls on the leader that emerges during this transition process. While many of these leaders are often charismatic figures<sup>27</sup>, the astuteness that is necessary for the building of intra-party cohesiveness, deciding when or when not to incorporate or repress opposition elites,

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<sup>25</sup> The ruling coalition in Malaysia avoided the need to rely extensively on the military to put down the communist insurgency in the period immediately following the withdrawal of the Japanese forces at the end of the Second World War because the British armed forces and the colonial government was given the task of leading the counter-insurgency. See Thompson (1966), Stubbs (1989), Nagl (2002) for the details of the British led counter-insurgency efforts.

<sup>26</sup> Skill here is defined not necessarily in terms of the benevolence of an aspiring autocrat but the adeptness of an autocrat in managing political conflict as well as having the foresight to put in place certain institutional structures that allows for a peaceful succession to take place within the confines of the dominant party.

<sup>27</sup> One of the three sources of authority from which legitimacy is derived from, according to Weber. The two sources are the traditional and rational / legal sources of authority.

understanding and managing the institutions of the nascent state, and so on, are indispensable elements of maintaining a stable dominant party or coalition of parties.

Failures of leadership occur when these top leaders cannot manage elite disagreements resulting in political and social instability that cannot be easily resolved through the political process. At these junctures, the military is often called in as an ally of the leader and his regime. This is a double-edge sword since the military force that is called upon to solve the problems associated with political and social instability can use this period of political uncertainty to overthrow the very leader who called in the military. It is no accident that the three potentially dominant parties previously described (Uganda, Burma and Pakistan) could not solve their conflicts with other political elites through political channels and were subsequently deposed by military coups. If these leaders lacked the skills to manage elite conflicts, they would also likely lack the skills to manage civilian-military relationships.

Decalo (1998, 15) describes the importance of this leadership variable in explaining the few cases of stable civilian led regimes in post-colonial Africa in the following manner:

'The integrative leadership of many statesmen in this group (including the paternalistic Banda) stands out when compared to the lackluster performance of others on the continent. Leadership is an important political variable that has to be inputted in all equations relating to stability and instability in Africa. Leadership traits and skills

have little to do with issues of development, institutionalization, or structural “determinants” of stability or instability. Rather, they relate to behavioral and idiosyncratic traits of personality pure and simple: charisma, acumen, astuteness in juggling of personal ambitions, capability in balancing alliances and networks, awareness of invisible nuances. Some leaders have these traits, others do not. Those that possess them may surmount structural limitations and problems that destabilize other states with less capable leaders’.

Leadership abilities may explain the longevity of Nyerere in Tanzania or Kenyatta in Kenya and their respective parties compared to the shorter lived regimes of Nkrumah in Ghana and Obote in Uganda. However, skillful leadership often escapes the attention of political scientists either because of the preference to focus on measurable outcomes such as economic growth, inflation, unemployment, the avoidance of civil war or the ever-present danger of tautology in associating positive outcomes with good leadership – ‘Skillful leadership can lead to stable civilian governments in post-colonial contexts’ and ‘Civilian governments are stable because of the presence of skillful leadership’. Despite these limitations, I would argue that leadership can be analyzed beyond purely actor centric accounts by examining the institutions and best practices which are established as a result of skillful leadership.

Skillful leaders recognize the importance of institutions in their quest to build and later sustain dominant party regimes. These regimes are more likely to avoid the perils

of neo-patrimonial rule if leaders allow themselves to be checked somewhat by institutional arrangements which includes (i) holding regular elections to ensure a steady circulation of political elites, (ii) responding to subtle signals sent by the electorate during these elections, as uncompetitive as some of them may be, (iii) devolving some measure of power to the legislature and (iv) to factions within the dominant parties as a means of dividing the spoils of power, (v) giving the bureaucracy some measure of independence (vi) setting precedents and introducing rules to allow for a smooth succession plan to take place at the top and (vii) managing and taking advantage of electoral regulations to minimize the electoral consequences of possible missteps in leadership decisions.<sup>28</sup>

In this chapter and in Chapters 3 and 4, the failure of political elites to build dominant parties regimes is explained in terms of the inability of these elites to utilize various institutional mechanisms and structures to manage political conflict and co-opt political elites. Many of these elites, especially those emerging in the post-communist countries in Europe and the Soviet Union, failed to recognize and take advantage of the opportunity to build strong and possibly dominant parties in order to consolidate their support in the legislature. Their strategic errors will be contrasted with the decisions

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<sup>28</sup> This is the approach taken by Gandhi (2009) in her investigation of the impact of having different institutions on political and economic outcomes in dictatorships.

made by Putin in Russia and Thaksin in Thailand (see Chapter 4) to make full use of certain electoral regulations in order to build dominant parties.

## ***2.5 Steps to build a dominant party regime in a post-colonial setting***

I conclude this chapter by outlining the main steps involved in the creation of a dominant party regime in a post-colonial setting. These steps summarize the discussion in this chapter and can be seen as a brief guide, if you will, for increasing the probability for a dominant party regime to emerge during the transition to independence.

The establishment of a dominant party regime in a post-colonial setting is more likely if:

1. There is a charismatic leader who forms a party or organizes a movement that is credited with leading the country towards achieving independence
2. This party has the opportunity to demonstrate its electoral dominance in pre-independence elections
3. This party quickly calls a post-independence national election to capitalize on the popularity of the founding father and its position as the party responsible for negotiating for independence
4. Sequencing of national and sub-national elections which produces political competition with centripetal rather than centrifugal tendencies
5. There are electoral incentives for the elites within the regime to work with one another and not defect

6. The incumbent regime uses the electoral arena to marginalize and defeat elite defectors, if such defections cannot be prevented
7. The incumbent regime takes every opportunity to re-incorporate these defectors back into the ranks of the ruling party
8. The leader of the ruling party does not rely on military elites to solve political problems
9. The leader of the ruling party does not elevate any one military leader to a top government position
10. The leader of the ruling party sets a precedence of succession or institutionalizes a succession plan

If all or most of these steps are taken, it is more than likely that a dominant party will emerge in a country that has recently achieved independence from its colonial rulers.

## **Chapter 3: Building Dominant Parties in post-transition Latin America and post-communist Europe and the former Soviet Union**

### ***3.0 Analytical framework in post-transition Latin America***

It may seem misplaced to examine the possibility of dominant parties emerging in Latin America given its history of weakly institutionalized parties. However, if one is to take seriously the proposition that the transition period away from authoritarian rule is fraught with uncertainty, then one cannot, a priori, conclude that a dominant party or coalition could not have emerged during the transition period.

I frame my investigation in the following manner. Given that many of the unpopular military regimes were forced out of power or were able to extricate themselves from power through negotiations, I examine if any party or coalition was able to position itself to lead the opposition to the former authoritarian regime. Specifically, were there clearly identifiable elites representing their political parties, who took a firm anti-regime stance and could reap similar political rewards as those influential figures and parties which led their countries to independence from colonial rule in Asia and Africa? The presence or absence of such a party represents one of the dimensions which structure the analytical framework in this section. The other dimension is whether a country had an existing party system that was weak or weakened during military rule. The countries in post-transition Latin America are



categorized along these two dimensions for the purpose of the discussion in this section (Table 7 below).

**Table 7: Analytical Framework for post-transition Latin America<sup>1</sup>**

		Anti-Regime Coalition / Party	
		Yes	No
Legacy of Weak Party Systems	Yes	Brazil Nicaragua	Bolivia Ecuador Guatemala Panama Peru
	No	Chile	Argentina Colombia El Salvador Honduras Uruguay Venezuela

I theorize that an anti-regime party or coalition may have been able to take advantage of its opposition against the military regime and to emerge as a dominant player in the post-transition period. However, the removal of the previous military regime also potentially signified the removal of the very reason that unified the anti-regime party or coalition. In the post-transition political environment, an anti-regime party or coalition must have a reason not to fracture given that the task of removing the regime has been completed. The elites within the party or coalition may be united by their common position on a salient dimension of political competition (on the left or

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<sup>1</sup> Again, these categorizations stand to be corrected by area and country experts who are more familiar with the transition processes and party systems in the respective countries. However, I am fairly certain of the categorization of the only confirmatory case of a dominant party coalition which is post-Pinochet Chile.

right of a traditional economic dimension of political competition, for example) or they may remain united because of the presence of electoral incentives.

An anti-regime party or coalition operating in a country with a weak party system prior to the period of military rule would obviously have found it much more difficult to avoid internal fracturing after the transition from military rule. Patronage based forms of political competition are much more common in states with weak party systems compared to the greater prevalence of programmatic forms of political competition in states with relatively institutionalized parties. In states with weak party systems, the role played by electoral incentives in maintaining elite cohesion becomes even more important. Countries in the top left corner of Table 3.1 fall under this description. In a country with a legacy of a weak party system and where an anti-regime party or coalition is absent, a dominant party was not likely to emerge post-transition. This describes the countries in the top right corner of Table 7. In a country where political parties were fairly institutionalized before the transition to military rule and where these parties did not unite against the military regime, a dominant party post-military rule would only be likely if one of these parties was formerly dominant.<sup>2</sup> This describes the countries in bottom right corner of Table 7. Finally, a dominant party was very unlikely to emerge in a country with a weak party system which did not see the rise of an anti-regime party or coalition. The return to civilian rule and multiparty

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, the dominance of one of these parties could be the reason for the military takeover.

elections would have likely resulted in a return to political competition featuring fragmented parties which were weakly institutionalized and had relatively short life spans. The countries in the top right corner of Table 7 fit this description.

Since a dominant party was not likely to emerge from the countries in the top right corner of Table 7 (weak party system, no anti-regime party / coalition), I leave them out of the discussion and instead focus on countries in the other three boxes. Among the countries in the bottom right corner (relatively institutionalized parties, no anti-regime party / coalition), the absence of a dominant party emerging is explained in terms of a return to two party competition (Uruguay and Colombia), a pacting agreement to minimize the electoral dominance of a party on the left (Venezuela) and the decrease in the popularity and hence, mobilizing power of a populist leader and his party (Argentina). Among the countries in the top left corner (weak party system, anti-regime party / coalition), I explain the failure of the anti-regime party to maintain internal cohesion in terms of the heterogeneous composition of the party and an electoral system which encouraged intra-party competition. Finally, I explain the emergence and maintenance of a potentially dominant coalition in Chile (strong party system, anti-regime coalition) in terms of the favorable sequencing and nature of the 1988 referendum as well as the unexpected consequences of the electoral system that was designed with the intention of protecting the position of the outgoing military regime and its supporters.

**Figure 4: Possible paths towards building a DPR in post-transition Latin America**

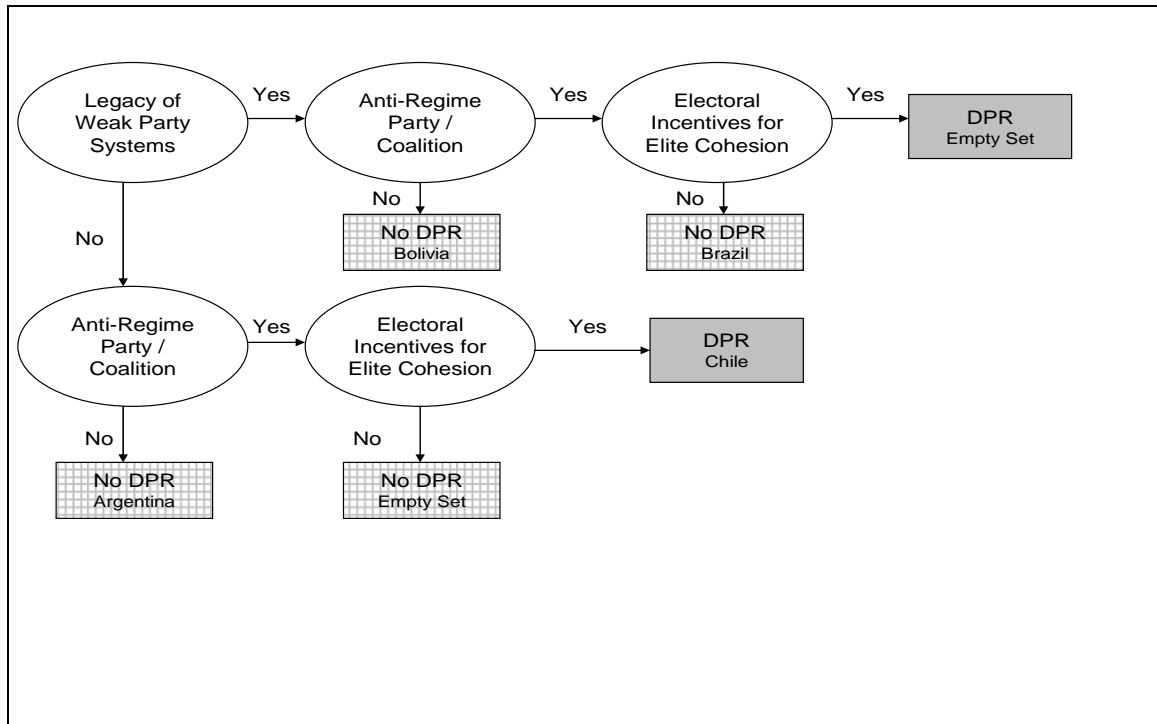


Figure 4 above outlines some of the dynamics in the transition from military rule in Latin America. It shows two possible paths that could have led to the creation of a dominant party / coalition. Both paths required an anti-regime party / coalition operating in the post-transition environment which featured electoral incentives for the anti-regime elites to remain united. An anti-regime opposition party operating in a country with a weak party system could have emerged as a dominant player post-transition but would have required very strong incentives for elite cooperation. None of the electoral systems used in the countries under this category, however, featured sufficient incentives to prevent the anti-regime elites from fragmenting. Among the

countries with a legacy of a strong party system, the only successful case of a potentially dominant party / coalition to emerge was the Concertacion coalition in Chile, bonded together by their anti-Pinochet experience and the electoral incentives provided by the unique binomial electoral system.

The emergence of a coalition of the major parties on the left and center of the political spectrum in Chile demonstrates the importance of the same kinds of explanatory variables highlighted in Section 2.2 of Chapter 2 – sequencing of elections and electoral incentives for elites to cooperate with one another.

### ***3.1 Relatively institutionalized parties, no anti-regime party / coalition – no dominant party / coalition***

In countries where the imprint of military rule was relatively light and the previous party system was relatively strong<sup>3</sup> and not drastically altered, the departure from military rule returned the country to its previous pattern of political competition. This outcome was more likely in cases whereby parties were represented by the left or were led by a populist leader who did not figure prominently in the transition to authoritarian rule. This decreased the need for some sort of negotiated pact during the transition from authoritarian rule to minimize the possibility of such a party or leader's return to power. Colombia and Uruguay exemplify this particular type of transition. The return to civilian rule restored the oligarchic pattern of two-party competition

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<sup>3</sup> Using Mainwaring and Scully's (1995) criteria to measure party system strength.

featuring the Liberals and the Conservatives in Colombia and the Blancos and Colorados in Uruguay.<sup>4</sup> In these countries, none of the oligarchic parties were tainted with the guilt of explicit association with the military regimes and hence, did not suffer any sustained negative electoral consequences that would allow the other party to claim the moral high ground and obtain a political advantage. Hence, a dominant party did not emerge after the transition from military rule.

In Venezuela and Argentina, however, there were parties on the left with records of mobilizing the masses for electoral purposes. *Accion Democratica* (AD), Venezuela's first institutionalized party with elite-mass linkages, won the 1947 pre-coup elections with 71% of the vote with 76% of the seats. With the departure of military dictator, Perez Jimenez, it was more than likely that the AD could once again re-exert its electoral dominance in the first post-coup election. However, the AD effectively cuffed their own hands by signing the Pact of Punto Fijo with two of the other major political parties, COPEI and the URD. Among the terms of the agreement was the decision for all three parties to participate in a coalition government regardless of who won the majority of seats. The AD also agreed to tone down its demands for radical redistribution policies. By depoliticizing many of the important economic issues and by working with the other parties with clearly different ideological leanings, the AD lost some of its mobilizational

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<sup>4</sup> Not coincidentally, these were also the two countries with the lowest levels of electoral volatility in South America using electoral data from 1970 to 1990 (Table 1.1, Mainwaring and Scully, 1995).

appeal and power (Karl, 1986). Furthermore, 'ideological and factional disputes cut deeply into AD's strength' (Kornblith and Levin, 1995, 46). From 1958 to 1988, AD never gave up its position as the largest party in congress but lost the presidency to COPEI twice, in 1968 and 1978.

In Argentina, the threat of the *Peronistas* taking power led to a series of military coups, the first of which took place in 1955. The third and final coup took place in 1976, resulting in a military regime that would rule until its collapse in 1983, in the aftermath of its humiliating defeat in the Falklands / Malvinas conflict. Nevertheless, the return to free and fair presidential elections did not produce a victory for the Justice Party (PJ), the party of the *Peronists*. Instead, Raul Alfonsin, representing the Radicals, the other main party in Argentine politics, defeated Italo Luder of the PJ with 49% of the popular vote. Why then did the specter of Peronists taking power fail to materialize? McGuire (1995, 221) explains this unprecedented outcome in the following manner:

*'First, deindustrialization during the period between 1976 and 1983 had eroded Peronism's traditional electoral base. Second, Alfonsin won support among the workers who remained, outpolling Luder in several industrial suburbs of Buenos Aires. Third, many center right voters apparently opted for Alfonsin, the proportion of the vote going to center right parties dropped from 21 percent in March 1973 to 2 percent in October 1983. Many on the center-right may have voted for Alfonsin as the candidate most likely to avoid a repeat of the 1976-1983 experience. Fourth, the UCR ran a better campaign than the PJ, whose image was tainted by*

*Luder's backroom nomination, by rumors of a "union-military" pact... Fifth, and most important, the UCR cultivated its image as the party concerned with formal democracy, tolerance and human rights whereas Peronism continued to portray itself as a party of nationalism, intransigence and populism.'*

The Argentine and Venezuelan experiences illustrate the difficulty of building a dominant party on the left in the context of strong contenders either in the center (the Radicals) or the right (COPEI) of the political spectrum. Fears of radical and potentially destabilizing mobilization on the left may convince a sufficient number of voters to switch their votes away from the left (Argentina) or convince the party on the left to moderate its own distribution demands (Venezuela).

The inability of *Peronism* to reassert its dominance in 1983 is also symptomatic of a common problem which all aspiring dominant parties led by strong, charismatic and often populist figures face. Their previous electoral dominance usually cannot be sustained after the death or departure of such figures from the political scene. Such parties lose a significant portion of their mobilizing capacity with their charismatic leaders. The presence of such populist figures may actually undermine the institutional strength of such parties, especially in the context of presidential elections, since the temptation is to rely on the mobilizing appeal of the figure rather than building up the institutional strength of the party as a necessary step of establishing elite-mass linkages that can be sustained after the death or departure of such a leader. Furthermore, without



establishing strong institutional mechanisms within the party structure, such parties are much more likely to experience fractures and intra-elite splits during the battle to succeed the charismatic and populist leader.<sup>5</sup>

### ***3.2 Weak party system, heterogeneous anti-regime party and electoral incentives for intra-party competition – the case of Brazil***

The Brazilian experience demonstrates the deleterious effects of military rule and a legacy of weak parties on the ability of the main opposition party that emerged during military rule from 1964 to 1985 to sustain its position as a dominant party. The Brazilian Democratic Movement party (MDB), an artificial creation of the military in an attempt to create a two-party system, was succeeded by the PMDB, as a result of attempts by the military junta to divide the opposition vote among different and newly created opposition parties. 'In the early 1980s, the PMDB appeared to have the potential to become a large mass-based party with a predominantly social-democratic orientation, despite its heterogeneous character (Mainwaring, 1995, 369). Its electoral profile was strengthened when many conservatives left the party to join some of the newly created parties in 1979. Thanks to its clearly identifiable position of opposing the military regime, the PMDB won the largest number of votes and a majority of seats in the lower house elections in 1986.

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<sup>5</sup> This is a problem that will be faced by Hugo Chavez (Venezuela), Vladimir Putin (Russia) and Evo Morales (Bolivia), who are among the more notable examples of populists and aspiring autocrats whose parties' dominance will likely be challenged with their respective departures from the political scene.

However, its strong electoral performance in 1986 was quickly rolled back in subsequent presidential and parliamentary elections in 1989 and 1990 respectively. Its identification with the 'inept Sarney government led to considerable erosion of support after the failure of the Cruzado Plan in the late 1986' (Mainwaring, 1995, 374). While other dominant parties with stronger levels of institutionalization might have weathered such economic storms, the heterogeneous composition of the PMDB, along with the usage of the open-list PR electoral system which encouraged intra-party competition<sup>6</sup>, led to intra-elite splits and a sharp drop in the level of popular support for the PMDB.<sup>7</sup> Mainwaring's description of the fate of the PMDB in the 1980s captures the challenges of building a dominant party under unfavorable institutional conditions:

*'For those who hoped that a more modern, effective party system was starting to emerge in the 1980s, the erosion of the PMDB was a disappointment. The electorate defeats the party suffered in 1988 and 1989 and the train of congressional representatives elected on the party ticket in 1986 tell only part of the story. Formerly strongest in the major cities and in the most developed regions of the country, the PMDB is now weakest in these regions, and is strongest in the interior and the less developed parts of the country. **By allowing a large ingression of former Arena and PDS politicians into the party, the PMDB facilitated its resounding***

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<sup>6</sup> The open-list PR electoral system weakened the political parties in Brazil because state interests control nominations, because parties cannot control the behavior of their deputies, and because high district magnitudes increase both inter and intra-party fragmentation (Ames, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Its vote share fell from 47.8% in 1986 to just 19.3% in 1990. Its presidential candidate only managed to obtain 6.4% of the popular vote in the 1989 presidential election (Lamounier and Neto, 2005).

*victory in the 1986 elections. In doing so, however, it became one of the most ideologically heterogeneous parties in the world, with major factions that ranged from the far left to the far right. Rather than being a symptom of success, excessive heterogeneity was the first sign of decay. The party could come to no agreements during the Constitutional Assembly. Because of the new conservative incursions and its own voracity for patronage, it failed to break with the Sarney government...As the party appropriated the state apparatus in patrimonial fashion, its linkages to society eroded. Individual citizens and organized groups alike repudiated their former channel for voting against military rule'* (Mainwaring, 1995, 383) (italics are mine)

The path taken by the anti-regime opposition party in Brazil demonstrates some of the earlier points regarding the difficulties associated with maintaining internal party cohesion in the post-transition period. The heterogeneous composition of the PMDB made it difficult to unite the elites based on a salient ideological dimension of political competition post-transition. The open list PR electoral system increased the probability of internal fracturing because it provided incentives for intra-party competition between candidates competing in the same multi-member district. These two factors - ideological heterogeneity and the electoral system - combined with the legacy of a weak party system, not surprisingly, resulted in the fracturing of the anti-regime party and returned Brazil to a fragmented and volatile system of party competition.

### **3.3 Strong parties united against the regime and institutional incentives for maintaining a winning coalition – the case of Chile**

Against this backdrop, the experience of the *Concertacion* coalition in Chile seems to stand out given the seemingly unfavorable circumstances for the emergence of a dominant party or coalition in post-transition Latin America. Why did Chile not return to the pre-Pinochet pattern of tri-polar political competition among parties on the right, center and left after the departure of the Pinochet regime? Why did the parties in the center and on the left unite to form *Concertacion*? How were they able to sustain this coalition beyond the first post-Pinochet election? The emergence of *Concertacion* as a winning coalition highlights the importance of the sequencing of elections and electoral design in uniting and sustaining an anti-regime coalition of parties.

The 1988 referendum on whether or not to renew Pinochet's mandate to rule for another eight years provided a rallying point for the anti-regime parties on the left and center to join forces. Pinochet had won a similar plebiscite in 1980 with 68.5% of voters voting 'Yes' and he expected to win again in 1988. The Concert of Parties for Democracy or *Concertacion* was formed with the specific purpose of mobilizing voters to vote 'No'. The major parties in the center and on the left – the Christian Democrats, the Radicals and the Socialists – together with a number of smaller parties would unite under the banner of *Concertacion*. While the common experience of persecution by the Pinochet regime had drawn the parties and leaders in the center and on the left closer together (Scully, 1995, 123), there was no guarantee that they would have formed a united

coalition if Pinochet had called for a legislative election using an electoral system that encouraged party fragmentation. Instead, *Concertacion* was allowed to run a strong grassroots campaign that resulted in 54% of voters voting “No” in the 1988 plebiscite.

Pinochet, however, did not depart quietly. He negotiated a number of institutional guarantees which included immunity from prosecution as well as maintaining the Senators he appointed to the upper house and safe guarding a share of copper revenues to be allocated for military expenditure. Nevertheless, the most important institutional legacy left by Pinochet, is arguably, the binomial vote electoral system. Under this electoral system, two representatives would be elected from a single constituency (District size = 2). But in order to win both seats, a party (or a coalition of parties running on a joint list) had to win twice as many votes as the second place party. For example, if the 2<sup>nd</sup> place party won 30% of the vote in a certain district, the 1<sup>st</sup> place party had to win at least 60% of the vote to win both seats. If it only won 50% of the vote, one seat would go to the party with the largest number of votes and the other seat would go to the party with the second highest number of votes. The purpose of introducing this electoral system was to guarantee that parties on the right, which were expected to win fewer votes than parties in the center and on the left combined, would gain a disproportionate number of seats.

While this electoral system worked in favor of the parties on the right (Rahat and Sznajder, 1998), as it was intended to<sup>8</sup>, it also had the effect of providing the necessary electoral incentives to maintain the *Concertacion* coalition. The binomial electoral system disadvantages smaller parties that have little chance of winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place on their own. Therefore, they have an electoral incentive to remain within the *Concertacion* coalition in order to negotiate for a more favorable seat allocation in exchange for its more widely dispersed voter base. For the larger parties, the incentive to remain within the *Concertacion* coalition were to prevent vote splitting that could give the parties on the right two seats in certain constituencies and increase its chances of winning two seats in a constituency by pooling votes from the center and from the left.

Finally, the issue of which party would contest the presidential elections was decided by organizing primary elections whereby voters could choose who of the top contenders from the largest parties within *Concertacion* would be fielded as their joint presidential candidate (Rabkin, 1996, 348). If the main contenders within *Concertacion* decide to test their respective electoral strength by running in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the presidential elections, which requires a majority victory to avoid a run-off, the schisms arising from these open contests would be hard to repair in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, especially if the top two candidates are also from *Concertacion*. This allowed Patricio Aylwin and Eduardo Frei from the Christian Democratic party to win the first two post-Pinochet

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<sup>8</sup> The parties on the right won 36% of the vote and 41% of seats in the 1993 election (Rabkin, 1996, 342)

presidential elections in 1990 and 1994 respectively, Ricardo Lagos from the left leaning Party for Democracy (PPD) to win the 2000 presidential election, and Michelle Bachelet of the Socialist party to win the 2006 presidential election.

The internal selection mechanism also gives the opportunity for the party of the winning presidential nominee to ask to contest in fewer legislative seats as a way of compensating the other parties within *Concertacion*. The Christian Democrats, for example, would only present candidates in 48 districts (out of 60) in the 1993 election when its candidate, Eduardo Frei was selected as the *Concertacion* candidate for the 1994 presidential election (Rabkin, 1996, 348).

The cooperation between the parties in the center and on the left within the framework of *Concertacion* also had a self-reinforcing component. While some scholars still argue that the pre-Pinochet tripartite pattern of political competition was reinstalled with the reintroduction of legislative and presidential elections in 1989 (Siavelis, 1997), there seems to be enough empirical and anecdotal evidence to show that the ideological differences between the center and the left have narrowed considerably in the post-Pinochet period of electoral competition (Montes, Mainwaring and Ortega, 2000; Aleman and Saeigh, 2005) The narrowing of ideological differences has no doubt been helped by the success of the Chilean economy and the demobilizing effects of the end of the Cold War. Both parties on the left – the PS and the PPD – are committed to free

markets and liberal democracy. The presence of the Communist Party, which is not part of *Concertacion*, prevents both these parties from making a move to the far left.

While *Concertacion* has never reached the level of political dominance of the Indian National Congress or Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, its emergence as a united political force after the transition from military rule is an key example in highlighting the importance of sequencing, electoral incentives and institutional design as part of my argument in explaining the rise of a dominant party or coalition.

The contrasting experiences of *Concertacion* in Chile and the PMDB in Brazil illustrate the difficulties associated with the creation and maintenance of an anti-regime party after the removal of the authoritarian regime. Without the existence of already institutionalized parties, a salient dimension of political competition and the necessary electoral incentives for elite cohesion, the anti-regime party or coalition is unlikely to avoid internal fracturing. This internal fracturing, as we shall see in the next section, was a fate that befell many of the anti-regime parties and movements that were successful in removing the incumbent regimes from power in post-communist countries in Europe and the former Soviet Union.

### ***3.4 Analytical Framework for post-communist Europe and the former Soviet Union***

The rapid transition from one-party communist rule in Eastern and Central Europe and the breakup of the Soviet Union was not anticipated by political scientists,



analysts, journalists, dissidents and the citizens of the respective countries.<sup>9</sup> The element of uncertainty during the transition processes in these countries was even higher than that experienced in Latin America. There were no recent historical record of elections to indicate the potential electoral strength of the contending parties<sup>10</sup>, there were no previous electoral systems to revert to, and almost all of these countries had to negotiate the challenging contours of a dual transition – political and economical. Given these uncertainties, one cannot discount the possibility that a dominant party regime could emerge after the transition to multi-party elections. I can conceive of two possible paths to building a dominant party regime that are worth exploring.

Firstly, a united opposition front, led by a charismatic leader, that could claim credit for the transition away from one-party rule, could translate this political capital into electoral strength, especially if elections were held shortly after the beginning of the transition period. Secondly, an incumbent party, led by opportunistic and politically astute leaders, could have begun to initiate the democratizing process themselves (reform from above) thereby allowing them to claim the moral high ground and blunt some of the negative mobilizing effects arising from anti-regime and anti-communist sentiments. By initiating reform from above, these incumbents could have also

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<sup>9</sup> See Kuran's (1991) excellent review essay on the surprising nature of the revolution in Eastern Europe.

<sup>10</sup> The last competitive elections in some of these countries took place shortly after World War II.

influenced the sequence of events and the rules of the game in their favor, including taking advantage of disorganized and fragmented opposition forces.

Once again, I return to an analytical framework that puts the spotlight on elite interactions. But unlike the military-led governments in the Latin American cases, most incumbent governments in Eastern Europe and in the post-Soviet states did not want to take the extrication option, not voluntarily at least. There were no barracks to return to. Instead, most of these regimes wanted to reassert their respective legitimacy to govern by winning multiparty elections. The more these incumbent governments could control and manipulate the conditions under which the transition to multiparty elections would take place, the higher the likelihood that they would win, at the very least, the first multiparty elections.

The degree of incumbent control forms one component of my analytical framework in Table 8 below. I classify the degree of incumbent control as 'High' where the incumbent government does not have to negotiate the terms of the transition process with any opposition actors. I classify the degree of incumbent control as 'Some' where the incumbent government has to negotiate with opposition actors with both sides making concessions. Where the incumbent government collapses or gives in to all of the demands of the opposition, the degree of control is classified as 'None'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> I distinguish between 'Some' and 'No' control by examining the expectations about the balance of power between both sides through the course of the RT talks. If it is clear that the balance of power has shifted decisively in favor of the opposition during the course of these talks, I classify the level of control as 'None'.

The other component of my analytical framework in Table 8 below is the degree of opposition unity. Where the opposition is able to mobilize and present a unified stand against the incumbent government in the first multiparty election, the degree of opposition unity is classified as 'Yes'. In cases where the opposition is fragmented and unable to mobilize against the incumbent government, the degree of opposition unity is classified as 'No'. The degree of opposition cohesion is evaluated using the first multiparty / multi-candidate election.<sup>12</sup>

Twenty-four post-communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are categorized according to the two components in Table 8. In cases whereby the opposition was fragmented and the incumbent had total control over the transition process, conditions were favorable for the incumbent government to build a dominant party regime. In cases whereby the opposition was united and where the incumbent government had collapsed, conditions were favorable for the emergence of an opposition led dominant party regime. In cases whereby the incumbent had some control of the transition process but where it also faced a united opposition stand in the

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Czechoslovakia would be a good example of this. Escalating protests over the killing of a student soon led to the regime caving in on itself. In the Polish case, both sides were uncertain of who had the upper hand, especially when it came to their respective electoral strength.

<sup>12</sup> I use multi-candidate in reference to the specific cases of Poland where partial legislative elections were held with candidates not being able to indicate the party they belonged to and to the specific cases of elections to the Soviet Supreme Council in some of the states in the former Soviet Union.

first multiparty election, the outcome was likely to be uncertain since neither side had sufficient information to gauge their respective bargaining and electoral strength.

**Table 8: Incumbent Control and Opposition Elite Cohesion in post-communist Europe and the former Soviet Union in the first multiparty elections<sup>13</sup>**

		Opposition Elite Cohesion	
		Yes	No
Incumbent Control over the transition process	High	Belarus	Romania <i>Serbia</i> <i>Kazakhstan</i> Kyrgyzstan <i>Tajikistan</i> Turkmenistan Ukraine Uzbekistan
	Some	Poland Hungary Bulgaria Slovenia	
	None	Latvia Lithuania Estonia <i>Croatia</i> Moldova <i>Armenia</i> Azerbaijan* Georgia*	Czechoslovakia Russia Bosnia

\*First presidents overthrown by military coup

*Italics: Possible DPARs*

<sup>13</sup> McFaul (2002) evaluates the likelihood of the emergence of a democracy based on the balance of power during the transition process. The challenge of this approach is to specify when exactly one attempts to evaluate the balance of power. For example, throughout the Roundtable Talks in Poland, it was not clear to both sides that the electorate would vote so heavily for the Solidarity linked candidates in the partial legislative elections in 1989. If one were to evaluate the balance of power based on the expectations of both sides during the course of the talks, one would have concluded that the balance of power between the communist regime and the Solidarity leaders were more or less equal, which is my evaluation in Table 2.4. See Osianski (1996) for a complete account of the RT talks in Poland.

Most of the first multiparty elections in these post-communist countries followed the pattern predicted in Table 8. The incumbent regimes in the top-right corner of Table 8 remained firmly in control of the transition process to multiparty elections. Faced with a demobilized public and a weak and fragmented opposition, it was not surprising that these incumbent regimes would go on to dominate the first multi-party elections, most of which were held under less than free and fair conditions.

Anti-regime forces in the bottom left corner of Table 8 exhibited a relatively high degree of elite cohesion in the run-up to the first multiparty elections. The rapidly collapsing legitimacy of the incumbent regimes in these countries made the subsequent opposition victory in the first multiparty elections almost a foregone conclusion.

However, there were some surprises too. The Polish communists, as hard as they tried to negotiate for favorable terms during the uncertain transition process, did not anticipate their humiliating defeat in the first multiparty elections. The unexpected victory of the opposition forces, consolidated under the Solidarity movement and its leaders, paved the way for the formation of an opposition led government.

I frame the following discussion by separating the countries in Table 8 into two groups, corresponding to the two earlier proposed paths towards the creation of a dominant party regime. The first group features countries in which a united anti-regime opposition managed to defeat the incumbent regime in the first multiparty elections. I examine if any of the anti-regime opposition parties in these countries were successful in

using the political momentum gained by defeating the former authoritarian incumbent to build a dominant party. My findings for the countries in this first group mirror the earlier findings in Section 2.2 in post-transition Latin America. Without the necessary electoral incentives and an ideological basis for elite unity, the anti-regime movements or parties could not avoid internal fracturing after the defeat of the incumbent regime.

The second group features countries in which the incumbent regime wins the first multiparty elections, often in convincing fashion. However, the subsequent paths taken in these countries were not towards the creation of dominant party regimes. In most of these countries, neo-patrimonial regimes emerged in the context of a weak party system and a demobilized public. Only in the countries in which regional and local independent elites could potentially offer up some opposition to the regime, were there tentative moves from neo-patrimonial rule towards the institutionalization of a dominant party.

Figure 5 below shows the many obstacles faced by the regimes and parties which win the first multiparty elections if they want to build a dominant party regime. The inability to prevent intra-regime elite splits explains the absence of a dominant party in many of these post-communist countries. Fracturing among the elites was especially prevalent among the anti-regime parties or movements which managed to defeat the incumbent regime in the first multiparty elections. The breakup of these anti-regime parties or movements once again demonstrates the difficulty of finding common ground

among the opposition forces once the objective of removing the incumbent regime from power has been achieved.

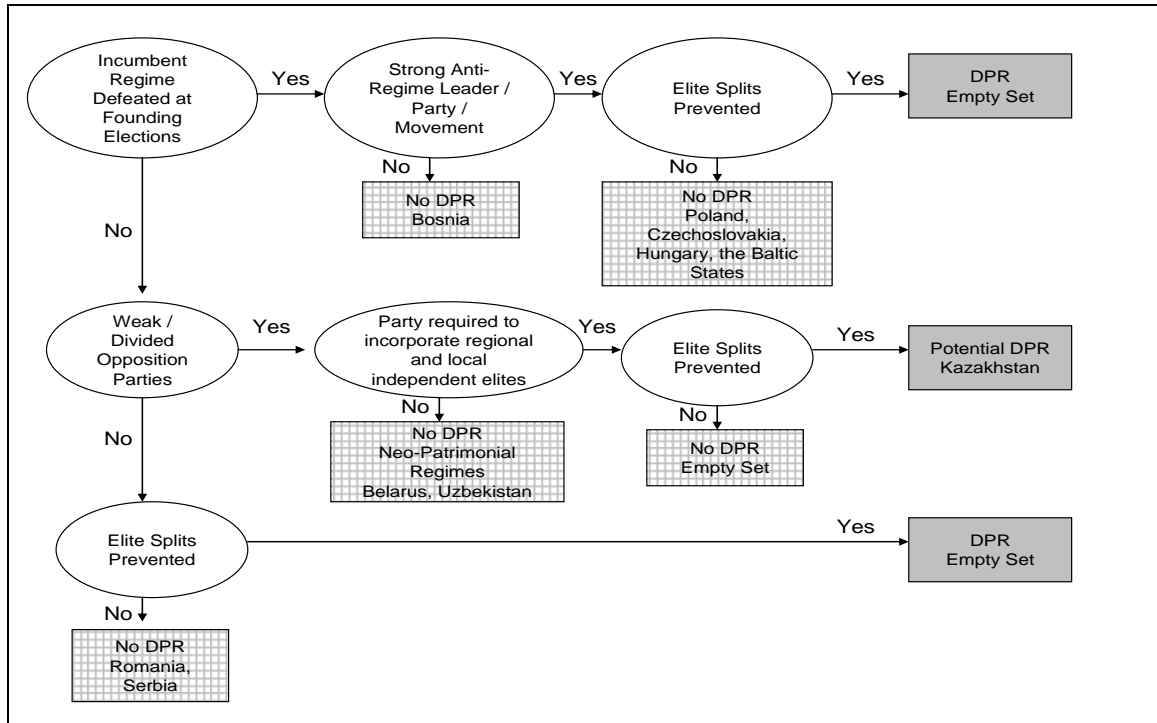
Incumbent regimes which manage to win the first multiparty elections should, in theory, be better placed to prevent elite splits from taking place. These regimes can more easily shift their position on the salient dimension of political competition. This new position then forms the ideological basis of elite unity. The two most common shifts were from a communist party to a reformed center left / social democratic party in the tradition left-right economic dimension of political competition (Bulgaria) and from a communist party to a nationalist party (Serbia).

However, even incumbent regimes that try to mobilize public support using an existing or newly created salient dimension of political competition cannot avoid losing its electoral dominance if the issue used to mobilization support loses some of its salience or becomes the source of elite conflict. The probability of elite splits increases if potential defectors can see opportunities to work with strong opposition parties in order to defeat the incumbent regime.

In the countries where the masses are demobilized, the opposition parties are weak or divided and where elite splits are prevented, there must still be the necessary incentives for the incumbent regime to build a dominant party. Without these incentives, the leader of the country would be tempted to use institutional mechanisms

to weaken the party system structure in order to increase his personal power. The result is the creation of neo-patrimonial rather than dominant party authoritarian regimes.

**Figure 5: Possible paths towards the build of a DPR in post-communist Europe and the former Soviet Union**



The following discussion, based on the patterns of political competition in both groups of countries, will highlight the difficulty of building a dominant party regime, even if the initial conditions seem favorable. In Section 3.5, I will discuss the experiences of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Baltic states. The anti-regime party won the first multiparty elections in each of these countries but would later fracture because of



the lack of institutional incentives for the elites to remain united.<sup>14</sup> In section 3.6, I will discuss the experiences of the countries in which the incumbent regime won the first multiparty elections. I separate the discussion into three sub-sections according to the three post-transition paths taken by the respective countries. In the first sub-section, I will discuss how elite splits in Bulgaria and Romania prevented the emergence of a dominant party. In the second sub-section, I will discuss how a demobilized public and a weak party system allowed neo-patrimonial rule to emerge in Belarus and Uzbekistan.<sup>15</sup> In the third sub-section, I will discuss the emergence of potential DPARs in Kazakhstan because of the recognition on the part of a neo-patrimonial leader that a strong party system is needed in order to incorporate regional and local independent elites and possibly smooth the succession process.<sup>16</sup>

I then move on to Section 3.7 where I discuss the rise of two potential DPARs that were led by charismatic leaders who mobilized public support using nationalist themes. Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Franco Tudjman in Croatia were both charismatic leaders of the respective nationalist movements in their countries. I will show that both leaders were cognizant of the need to incorporate other elites into their electoral coalition and that both were also aware of the possible electoral gains that could be made from manipulating institutional mechanisms. However, both of these

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<sup>14</sup> Moldova and Slovenia would also fall under this category.

<sup>15</sup> Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine would also fall under this category.

<sup>16</sup> Tajikistan and Azerbaijan would also fall under this category.

regimes would be defeated as a result of elite splits, the failure to put in place succession mechanisms and the growing unpopularity of the nationalist theme on which their support was originally derived from.

In Sections 3.8 and 3.9, I will discuss some of the challenges associated with the building of dominant party regimes in democratic as well as non-democratic settings. I summarize the main findings of this chapter in Section 3.10.

### ***3.5 Incumbent defeated, anti-regime opposition fractures – Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Baltic States***

It would not be inaccurate to say that, among all the anti-regime movements and parties in the countries where the incumbent was defeated in the first multiparty elections, Solidarity of Poland probably had the longest and most established track record as an opposition movement. Given its well known reputation as an anti-regime movement and given the initial popularity of its leader, Lech Walesa, one would have thought that the conditions for the emergence of a dominant party built around Solidarity and its leaders were quite favorable.<sup>17</sup> Instead, Solidarity broke apart soon after its surprising defeat of the incumbent regime in the first partial multiparty elections. How did a movement with such a long history suddenly collapse post-

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<sup>17</sup> The Solidarity movement, which had its roots in the attempts of dock workers in the shipyards of Gdansk to form an independent trade union in 1980, soon captured the imagination and the support of various anti-regime elements including the Catholic Church. Although repression by the regime forced the movement, which was led by Lech Walesa, underground, it nonetheless continued to recruit members and publish its newspapers. Linz and Stepan (1996, 263) described Solidarity as possessing, 'in Gramscian terms, hegemony in civil society'.

transition? Did the sequencing of elections and the electoral system play a part in fragmenting the opposition movement? To shed some light on the motivations of the main actors in designing the electoral institutions during the transition process, one would have to examine, in greater detail, the regime-opposition dynamics during the Roundtable talks. I examine these dynamics for Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and then discuss the impact of the Roundtable outcomes on the anti-regime opposition post-transition.

Of all the opposition groups that participated in the Roundtable talks during the transition process to multiparty elections<sup>18</sup>, Solidarity was by far the most established and possessed the highest organizational capacity. Vaclav Havel and the Civic Forum of Czechoslovakia would place a very distant second. But given Poland's position as the first-mover among countries in Eastern Europe in the transition process away from one-party communist rule, both sides involved in the Polish RT talks were unsure of each other's electoral strength. In addition, the leaders of Solidarity were hesitant about the extent to which the regime might reverse potential liberalizing measures if the electoral outcomes were not to their liking.

With hindsight, Solidarity breaking apart upon defeating the regime in the first multi-party elections could have been predicted. Yet, this outcome was not necessarily inevitable. A charismatic leader like Walesa could have used his reputation as the

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<sup>18</sup> RT talks took place in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, East Germany (GDR).

leading opposition figure to build a dominant governing coalition that could span a Christian center right, a pro-market and liberal center and a center left backed by Solidarity's trade union support.<sup>19</sup> But the institutional framework negotiated during the RT talks and the sequencing of elections thereafter produced conditions that increased the probability of elite splits and fragmentation within Solidarity.

One of the most contentious points in the Polish RT talks was the creation of the position of president and the manner in which this position was to be filled. The regime wanted to create a strong presidency but did not want to risk a popular election because it was aware that it would likely lose such an election, especially since it would not be able to field a candidate with the popularity and standing of Walesa. The regime's proposal was that the national assembly, or the Sejm, would elect the president together with a 'coalition of various other bodies' (Osiatynski, 1996, 53), most of which, presumably, were under the control of the regime. Since both sides had already agreed that only 35% of seats on the Sejm would be open for contestation in the first multi-candidate elections in 1989 (candidates were not allowed to use party labels), this would guarantee that the regime would be able to elect one of its own as president. Bronislaw Geremek, one of the key negotiators from Solidarity, objected strongly to this proposal.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The governing ANC coalition, for example, comprises the COSATU trade union and South Africa Communist Party and has managed to avoid COSATU and the SACP leaving the coalition despite the continued implementation of liberal, market-friendly policies.

<sup>20</sup> His response, paraphrased by Osiatynski (1996, 53) was that 'they would accept seeing democracy raped once, but not two and more times'.

The compromise was the creation of a Senate that was freely elected that would, together with the Sejm, elect the president. The regime acceded to this compromise because it thought that the 65% of the Sejm it controlled would prevent the opposition from winning enough seats to elect the president.

The results of the 1989 elections surprised both sides. Solidarity backed candidates won 99 out of 100 Senate seats and all 161 seats in the Sejm. This unexpected electoral landslide against the regime paved the way for the opposition to elect Walesa as president and allowed Solidarity's Tadeusz Mazowiecki to lead a coalition government.

The creation of a strong presidency as a safeguard against a loss of power by the regime and the unexpected election of Walesa as president in 1989 were the first steps towards the breakdown of Solidarity. The sequencing of presidential elections in 1990 before the 1991 parliamentary elections ended any future attempts at building a dominant party or coalition around the Solidarity movement. The Solidarity leaders could have built on the momentum from the 1989 elections by calling for fresh parliamentary elections in 1990 in which all of the Sejm seats were open for competition. Indeed, simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections in the fall of 1990 with Walesa running on a Solidarity ticket may have been more propitious for the formation of a more stable Solidarity-based party. But the Solidarity leaders decided to postpone

parliamentary elections to 1991 and instead called for a presidential election in 1990 (Linz and Stepan, 1996, 275).

This decision provided the platform for an elite split within Solidarity from which it would never recover. Walesa and Mazowiecki competed against one another in a crowded field. Walesa emerged with the largest number of votes, 40%, in the first round. Mazowiecki, came in third with 18% of the vote, losing to an unknown expatriate businessman, Stan Tyminski, who garnered 21% of the vote. Not unexpectedly, Walesa would defeat Tyminski in a convincing fashion in the second round, winning 74% of the vote. The 1991 parliamentary elections, conducted without any thresholds for the allocation of PR seats, featured 111 political parties out of which 29 won seats including the Polish Beer Lover's Party (with 3% of the vote and 3.5% of seats). The largest party to emerge from the Solidarity movement, the Democratic Union, led by Mazowiecki, could only win 12.3% of the vote and 13.5% of seats.<sup>21</sup> And yet, it still emerged as the largest party in the fragmented Sejm!

Would a dominant faction of Solidarity have emerged had the institutional framework, the electoral system and sequence of events been different? The use of a counterfactual is helpful at this juncture. If the communist regime had lengthened their cost-benefit analysis beyond the immediate period of the transition, it would have

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<sup>21</sup> Mazowiecki's ability to co-opt Solidarity elites into his Democratic Union was probably harmed by his own lackluster performance in the 1990 presidential election.

realized that a strong unelected presidency was an unsustainable institution to maintain in the context of multiparty elections. Walesa would have been the leading candidate in an eventual presidential election. With this in mind, it would have preferred a parliamentary system, perhaps using single member districts where their candidates, with better resources and greater name recognition than some of Solidarity's candidates, would have stood a better chance of emerging victorious.<sup>22</sup> Without the institution of a presidency, Solidarity would have been forced to call for fresh parliamentary elections, after the partial elections to the Sejm and the Senate in 1989. And Walesa might have been persuaded, at this time, to throw his support behind a Solidarity-backed party. He might even have considered standing as a candidate of this party in either a constituency or on the party list, depending on the electoral system employed.

I am not suggesting that a semi-presidential system prevented the emergence of a dominant party. Rather, I am suggesting that the institutional setting and the sequencing of elections made it particularly difficult for a Solidarity-backed dominant party to emerge. Having concurrent presidential and parliamentary elections, for example, would have generated more incentives for such a scenario to occur although it would not have guaranteed it. However, the interaction of creation of the presidency, the unexpected election results in 1989, the sequencing of presidential elections before parliamentary elections, the use of the list PR electoral system with no thresholds and

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<sup>22</sup> This can be the result of backward induction in a game theoretic situation with more than one time period.

perhaps as important, the inability of Walesa himself to recognize the importance of institution building, led to the fracturing of Solidarity and the fragmented nature of political party competition in the 1991 legislative elections, a situation that continued to plague the Polish political system and would be the focus of many subsequent constitutional debates.

In the previous chapter, in Section 2.4, I brought up the hard-to-pin-down issue of leadership in the context of elite incorporation and the building of dominant party regimes. In Walesa (as well as in some later examples in this chapter), his impact on the pattern of political competition in Poland was felt in his decision not to align himself to any party in his run for the presidency in 1990. His decision to rise above the pettiness of party politics and to appeal directly to the electorate, with his larger-than-life-image as the leader responsible for defeating the communist regime, was directly responsible for the elite split between himself and Mazowiecki the 1990 presidential election. After being elected president, his attempts at increasing his presidential powers and prerogatives led to clashes with his former Solidarity colleagues. A more politically astute leader would have recognized the importance of having strong support from the legislature in a semi-presidential system and would have chosen to align himself to a party so as to minimize the potential conflict with the legislature. Walesa could have avoided his many clashes with the legislative branch if he had sought the backing of Solidarity in his presidential campaign and in return, backed Solidarity, or at least the



faction of Solidarity that appeared the strongest, in subsequent legislative elections. But the institutions created during the RT talks and the sequencing of elections increased Walesa's personal power as well as his own estimation of his personal popularity.

Walesa realized only later the importance of having the support of his own party in the legislature and aligned himself with the Non-partisan Bloc for Support of Reforms (BBWR) in 1993. By this time, his numerous clashes with the government and the legislature had decreased his popularity significantly and the BBWR performed poorly in the 1993 parliamentary elections.

Given Solidarity's inability to form a dominant party, it should not be surprising that the anti-regime movement in Czechoslovakia also fragmented after achieving its goal of toppling the former regime. Indeed, even if the regime had not collapsed in Czechoslovakia a mere 10 days after the student led protests in Prague, the composition of the anti-regime opposition, which mirrored the federal structure of the state, made the emergence of a dominant party, that spanned what is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia, highly improbable.

As in Poland, decisions made by the leading figure in the anti-regime opposition, Vaclav Havel, played a key role in the fragmentation of what was originally a relatively united anti-regime opposition movement. Havel, the leader of the Civic Forum (OF), the successor to the Charter 77 civic initiative that was banned in 1977, allowed the Slovak arm of the Civic Forum to form its own separate movement, the Public Against Violence

(VPN). Even after the collapse of the regime, Havel chose not to form a political party that spanned both regions and would later, in a move that paralleled that of Walesa, disassociate himself from the Civic Forum (Linz and Stepan, 1996, 331-332). Havel later rued his decision not to seek political support across the two regions when he was not re-elected as the president of the federation because of an insufficient number of votes in the federal assembly, mostly because of the Slovak veto.

Despite Bunce's (1999) deterministic argument that the presence of 'subversive' elements in the form of the federal arrangements in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union inevitably led to their breakdown, this need not have been the case in Czechoslovakia. Again, the interaction of elite decisions, the institutional framework in which they operated, and the sequencing of events decreased the probability of the emergence of a pan-regional political party and thus hastened the breakup of the federation.

Calda (1996, 141) describes the poor preparation of the OF participants in the RT talks<sup>23</sup> that later led to the decision not to renegotiate the framework of the 1960 / 68 constitution which gave too much veto power to the individual legislative chambers of both regions. In Calda's (1996, 165) opinion, 'it can be safely stated that the breakup of Czechoslovakia was also due to the 1989 compromise'. However, Linz and Stepan (1996,

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<sup>23</sup> The OF was described as not being able to put forward names when the regime unexpectedly offered it a few cabinet positions in the government.

331) argue that Havel could have prevented the collapse of the federation by calling for elections to a Constituent Assembly which would then have been able to negotiate for a new constitution that might have provided sufficient incentives for Slovakia not to secede, even after the conclusion of the RT talk and collapse of the regime.<sup>24</sup> Again, the failure to recognize the importance of institutional arrangements – the need for constitutional changes and the need to build a pan regional party – on the part of the leaders of the anti-regime movement, especially in the person of Havel, explains at least in part the eventually fragmentation of the party system and the breakup of the federation after the terminating elections in 1992. In these elections, both Civic Forum and Public Against Violence won a plurality of the vote in their respective national assemblies. The inability of their respective leaders, Vaclav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar, to agree on a suitable federal arrangement later led to the dissolution of the federation despite the low support for such a breakup on the part of the citizens of both regions.

Shorn of the political momentum from defeating the former regime and not being able to capitalize on the dissolution of the federation that received only lukewarm public support, Civic Forum and Public Against Violence failed to maintain their electoral dominance in the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively. This was no doubt

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<sup>24</sup> One possible outcome may have been to require political parties to be registered and to have a presence in both regions rather than allow them to be regionally concentrated parties.

hastened by the elite splits within both parties that occurred shortly after the dissolution of the federation in 1993.

The discussion on Hungary will be necessarily brief. Sajo (1996) describes the unity and the preparedness of the opposition groups going into the RT talks with the regime. This group had already been involved in roundtable talks among themselves prior to the RT talks with the incumbent regime. Perhaps the most important concession the opposition groups managed to extract from the regime was the inclusion in a referendum to postpone the presidential elections after the parliamentary elections. The regime and the opposition groups felt certain that the regime's candidate, Imre Pozsgay, whose reformist credentials were already well-established, would almost certainly win a direct election, since the opposition could not rally around a leading figure, as it had in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The opposition then managed to mobilize enough support in the referendum for the postponement of presidential elections which meant that the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP), the renamed communists, could not capitalize on a Pozsgay presidency to boost its electoral chances.

Even then, the regime expected its electoral support to be higher than what it eventually turned out to be in the first multiparty elections in 1990. The regime was sufficiently confident about its electoral prospects that it pushed for a single member district electoral system, in order to take advantage of the higher name recognition of its candidates. The opposition, on the other hand, pushed for a more proportional system

to prevent the regime from benefiting from the majoritarian effects of the single member district system (Sajo, 1996). A compromise solution, featuring a complex system of single member districts and PR seats distributed using regional and national lists, was finally agreed upon.

In the end, the regime's overconfidence in its electoral strength was grossly misplaced. Internal battles within the regime that led to expulsion of much of the old guard by the Pozsgay-led reformist faction also resulted in a drastic reduction in the membership of the renamed Hungarian Socialist Party (Tokes, 1997, 121). The reformers also failed to co-opt 'the regime's own corporatist policy lobbies, civic groups, and reformist political opponents alike' (Tokes, 1997, 119). The HSP emerged in fourth place in the 1990 parliamentary elections, winning 11% of the vote and 9% of the seats. The Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) emerged as the largest party with 25% of the vote and 42% of the seats with the Alliance of Free Democrats (AFD) coming in second with 21% of the vote and 24% of the seats. Although the MDF and the AFD were part of the opposition roundtable, the weak performance of the HSP coupled with the MDF's performance meant that the MDF could form the government without the support of the AFD. The MDF eventually formed a right-leaning governing coalition with the Independent Smallholder's party (ISP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (CDPP), which had emerged as the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> largest parties respectively. Without the necessity of uniting against the former regime to form a coalitional government, the two

largest opposition parties that participated in the opposition roundtable talks – the MDF and the AFD, not surprisingly, splintered.<sup>25</sup>

In the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, the imposition of Soviet rule as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was never popular to begin with. The composition of the communist parties in the respective countries, which were heavily tilted towards the Russian minority initially, slowly expanded to incorporate more of the citizens of the respective titular nations. However, it did not prevent the outpouring of anti-Soviet and anti-Russian sentiment as the space for political participation increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These sentiments were especially strong in Latvia and Estonia, which had experienced a significant inflow of Russian migrants after the Second World War. Given the prevalence of such sentiments, the ruling communist parties in the Baltic countries stood little chance of winning free and fair multiparty elections even after many of them decided to embrace popular calls for independence from the Soviet federal structure.

Reformist organizations began to coalesce in each of the Baltic countries – the Sajudis in Lithuania and the Popular Front in Latvia and Estonia – which later mobilized anti-Soviet protests in the respective capital cities. The opening of political space post-perestroika paved the way for multi-candidate elections to the Soviet Supreme, the

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<sup>25</sup> The MDF's time in government, like many of the governments formed after the return to multiparty politics in Eastern and Central Europe, was short-lived. The MDF was unable to manage the difficulties associated with the transition to a free-market economic system. It subsequently lost the next parliamentary elections in 1994 to the HSP.

legislative bodies of the various republics within the Soviet Union. In these elections, candidates backed by the reformist organizations won a majority of seats to their country's Soviet Supreme. These candidates then supported the formation of transitional governments which were led by leaders of the respective reformist organizations.

The loyalty of the candidates backed by the reformist organizations was soon tested in the post-transition period. Many of these candidates did not belong to the reformist organizations but merely aligned themselves to the reformist cause, the most important of which was achieving independence from the Soviet Union. Once independence was achieved, there was no longer any reason for these candidates to remain loyal to the leaders of the reformist organizations, especially when it was becoming clear that these leaders were becoming increasingly unpopular as a result of the economic difficulties experienced by these countries in the post-transition period.

The following description of the challenge faced by the Sajudis in Lithuania, arguably the strongest of the reformist organizations in the Baltic states, in building a cohesive party structure, is particularly illuminating:

*'During the independence drive the leadership had opposed transforming the Sajudis from a popular front movement into a formal political party with branches and a cadre operating through the country, initially to assuage Moscow's fears about organizing an anti-Soviet party and later because Sajudis could not achieve the unity necessary to build a formal political*

*organization. Meanwhile, in the Seimas<sup>26</sup>, the functions ordinarily performed by political parties were taken over by parliamentary factions with sharply differing programs. And since most of the Supreme Council deputies had no formal party obligations, they felt free to leave factions and to vote as they pleased' (Krickus, 1997, 304).*

In other words, the inability of the reform organizations to establish themselves as political parties during the pre-independence elections to the Supreme Soviet made it increasingly unlikely that they would be able to maintain a sufficient level of party discipline after independence was achieved. Thus, it was not surprising that the transitional governments led by leaders of these reformist organizations suffered defections after independence and that the formerly united opposition fronts would also fragment after independence.

Perhaps what made it most difficult for these transitional governments to maintain their hold on power post-independence was the inability of their respective leaders to manage the transition to a free market economic system. All three Baltic states suffered severe drops in GDP during the transition period and the voting public, whether rightly or wrongly, held the government in power responsible for these economic difficulties. The growing unpopularity of Godmanis in Latvia and Landbergis in Lithuania, both of whom led the transitional governments and were identified as leaders of the Popular Front and the Sajudis respectively, resulted in poor electoral

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<sup>26</sup> The name of the post-independence Lithuanian legislature.



showings by both parties in the first post-independence multiparty elections in both countries. The Popular Front in Estonia suffered a similar fate.<sup>27</sup>

In this section, we find similar replications of the Brazilian post-transition experience discussed in section 3.2. The anti-regime movements or parties, many of which were formed during the transition period, could not avoid the fate of fracturing into different parts after the objective of defeating the incumbent regime had been achieved. What effect did the fracturing of these movements or parties have on the process of democratic consolidation in these countries? I leave that discussion to Section 3.8.

### ***3.6 Incumbent wins but obstacles to dominant party creation***

In this section, I discuss countries where the incumbent regime managed to win the first multiparty elections but subsequently, for various reasons, were not able or chose not to form dominant parties as a means of consolidating their hold on power. In 3.6.1, the reformed communist parties were not able to win the second post-transition elections because of elite splits and public mobilization. In 3.6.2, neo-patrimonial leaders managed to gain power during the transition process but preferred to consolidate power via personalistic means than use the institution of a dominant party to share power with

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<sup>27</sup> Of the three reformist movements, the Popular Front in Latvia experienced the worst decline in electoral support. It only managed to win 2.6% of the vote, below the 4% threshold that would have entitled it to claim a share of PR seats (Plakans, 1997, 262). The Popular Front in Estonia would captured 21.3% of the vote and 15 seats putting it in 3<sup>rd</sup> place (Raun, 1997, 351) while the Sajudis in Lithuania could only muster up 21% of the vote and 24 seats, putting it in a distance second to the reconstructed communists, the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, which won 68 seats with 42% of the vote (Krickus, 1997, 303).

other elites. In 3.6.3, we see the possible emergence of a dominant party when certain neo-patrimonial leaders were motivated to use institutional mechanisms to co-opt regional and local independent elites under the organization of a dominant party.

### **3.6.1 Reformed communist parties lose due to elite splits – Bulgaria and Romania**

At first glance, the ouster of two unpopular communist era leaders that had developed patrimonial (in the case of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania) and near-patrimonial (in the case of Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria) regimes seemed to present the remaining regime elites an opportunity to create a new dominant party apparatus, especially given the state of the fragmented (Romania) and weakly organized (Bulgaria) opposition. The emergence of Ion Iliescu and his National Salvation Front (NSF) in Romania and Petar Mladenov and the renamed Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in Bulgaria as reformists and reformist parties that distanced themselves from the legacies of the two unpopular dictators provided them with an electoral advantage going into the first multiparty elections. In these founding elections, the BSP won 47% of the vote and 53% of seats while the NSF won 66% of votes and 68% of seats. In addition, Iliescu won 85% of the presidential vote in Romania.

The apparent electoral dominance of both parties, however, masked underlying weaknesses left by the many years of patrimonial or near-patrimonial rule. The personalization of power in Romania under Ceausescu and in Bulgaria under Zhivkov had significantly weakened the institutional and organizational capacities of the

respective communist parties and transformed a professionalized bureaucracy into a corrupt and patronage seeking arm of government. The political elites that emerged from the shadows of the both dictators could not just simply transfer the resources and capacities of an existing communist party into their renamed and reconstituted successor parties. These resources and capacities did not exist, at least not in a fashion that was reflective of the initial electoral strength of both parties. Their initial electoral performance was more of a reflection on the fragmented and poorly organized opposition parties, also part and parcel of the legacy of patrimonial rule.

The internal cohesion of both regimes was challenged shortly after the founding elections. In Bulgaria, the massive street demonstrations which were instrumental in the events leading up to the ousting of Zhikov would be repeated in major cities, after it was revealed that Mladenov told his defense minister that “the best thing is to let the tanks come” upon receiving a hostile reception from a rally organized in December 1989 (Bell, 1997, 370). These protests and the lack of support for Mladenov from his colleagues in the BSP forced him to resign in July 1990, only a few months after the founding elections. The BSP could not find enough support internally and from the largest opposition party, the UDF, on a consensus candidate and was eventually forced to support the leader of the UDF, Zheliu Zhellev, as Mladenov’s replacement as President. Hurt by the Mladenov revelation and beset by internal factionalism, the BSP was narrowly defeated by the UDF in the 1991 parliamentary elections. The UDF’s margin of

victory would probably have been greater if not for the elite splits which occurred within its own ranks just prior to these elections.<sup>28</sup>

In Romania, a number of events led the weakening of Iliescu's political support and his eventual defeat in the presidential elections in 1996. Firstly, the opposition and various civil society groups would coalesce and unite under the banner of the Democratic Convention. Secondly, the effort by the NSF to establish a more dominant political position by using some of the same strategies and instruments employed by Ceausescu lead to sustained public protests by thousands of students, workers and intellectuals in Bucharest that increased tensions within the various NSF factions (Tismaneanu, 1997, 430). This eventually led to a serious intra-elite split within the NSF when Petre Roman, an influential leader within the regime, left to form his own party, the Democratic Party. Petre's party joined forces with the Democratic Convention in their attempt to defeat Iliescu in the 1996 presidential elections. Thirdly, the Romanian National Unity Party (RNUP) left Iliescu's ruling coalition, the Democratic National Salvation Front (DNSF), because of personal differences between the leaders of both parties. The RNUP later supported the opposition candidate, Emil Constantinescu, in the 1996 presidential election. Constantinescu went on to defeat Iliescu with 55% of the popular vote.

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<sup>28</sup> UDF (Movement) emerged as the largest party with 34% of the vote and 46% of the seats. The BSP won 33% of the vote and 44% of the seats. The UDF splinter parties – UDF (Center) and UDF (Liberals) failed to win any seats because it could not pass the 4% threshold. (Bell, 1997, 377)

The Bulgarian and Romanian cases illustrate the difficulty of building a dominant party regime out of the ashes of a communist party structure that was significantly weakened by many years of patrimonial rule. The reconstituted regime parties lacked an inner cohesion that was revealed shortly after the founding elections. Their inability to contain public protests and the rise of a united opposition revealed the underlying weak electoral support of these incumbent regimes. The seemingly favorable conditions for a dominant party regime to emerge as a result of the overthrow of the two patrimonial dictators turned out not to be favorable after all, when a deeper examination of the organizational capacities and mass-elite linkages of the respective regimes was conducted. The unwillingness of the BSP to support its leader, Mladenov, in Bulgaria when he was under much public pressure and the defection of Roman and the RNUP from the ruling party in Romania provided the final push to unseat these reformed communist parties.

### **3.6.2 Neo-patrimonial Rule, Weak Parties, Demobilized Public in Belarus and Uzbekistan**

In these countries, the transition environment featured a relatively demobilized public because of the absence of strong anti-regime sentiment and a weakly institutionalized regime party. In this context, individuals who were part of the ruling *nomenklatura* emerged and tried to shift towards a neo-patrimonial form of government without the apparatus of a ruling party. Many of them tried to weaken the party system structure by using patronage to co-opt independent candidates and elites. In some other

cases, the formation of pro-government pseudo parties that were dependent on the patronage dispensed by the neo-patrimonial leader was encouraged.

Of the countries in this group, Lukashenko in Belarus, followed closely by Karimov in Uzbekistan, had the most success in maintaining his personalized rule. I shall examine Lukashenko's rise to power in some detail because it illustrates the importance of how the sequencing of elections and the strategic manipulation of electoral regulations allowed Lukashenko to emasculate the legislature and thereby increase his own personal appeal and power. The Belarus example fits nicely into my argument about the importance of elections and institutions in elite incorporation and the creation of dominant parties because it demonstrates that the opposite outcome is also possible if the institutional structure allows for the dismantling of the party structure. In other words, a weak party system can be manufactured under existing institution rules, thereby allowing the emergence of neo-patrimonial rule.

Belarus held its first post-independence multiparty elections relatively late in the transition process. The Belarus Popular Front (BPF), the first to organize outside the Baltic states, failed to challenge the dominance of the Belarus Communist Party (BCP) in the 1990 election to the Supreme Soviet, winning only 26 of 360 seats (Mihalisko, 1997, 238). The anti-Soviet sentiment that was widespread in the Baltic states was absent in Belarus, which explains the failure of the BPF to make a significant electoral impact. The

public as well as the BCP were still largely in favor of remaining within the USSR.<sup>29</sup> But Kebich, Prime Minister from 1991 to 1994, was slowly consolidating his own power base and was already making moves to weaken the legislature, most probably in preparation for strengthening the presidency, which he was expecting to win.<sup>30</sup> Kebich used the failed coup attempt against Yelstin, who was never popular with the Minsk communists, as an opportunity to unseat Shushkevich, who as the incumbent president, was most likely to offer the most serious challenge to Kebich in a presidential election. With Shushkevich out of the way, Kebich then decided to call for a presidential election in 1994 which was followed by parliamentary elections in 1995.

Kebich's sequencing of presidential elections, which he was confident of winning, before parliamentary elections was an important part of the process of emasculating the legislature, a process which he himself had started by strengthening executive rule while he was Prime Minister. Kebich did not anticipate the rise of Lukashenko as a serious presidential contender and instead paid more attention to the candidate representing the BPF.

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<sup>29</sup> 'When last consulted, 83 percent of Belarusians had voted in favor of upholding the USSR in the all-Union plebiscite of March 1991, and until the present day, reliable opinion polls show majorities believing that the breakup of the USSR was a bad thing for Belarus (Mihalisko, 1997, 242)

<sup>30</sup> 'One of the most disturbing and portentous trends under Kebich was the executive's usurpation and his twenty-member Council of Ministers were in principle appointed individually by the Supreme Council, in practice they functioned in conditions of unaccountability...They accumulation of executive powers was abetted in addition by critical defects of the Soviet state system that remained in place in the first years of independence. The Supreme Council was a part-time body only, with just 70 out of 345 deputies working in the legislature on a full time, professional basis...And in view of parliament's all too evident paralysis and endless squabbling in the face of mounting economic despair, it is easy to understand why the parliamentary system itself stood on the verge of popular indictment' (Mihalisko, 1997, 252)

Lukashenko ran a highly effective populist campaign, firstly, by targeting the corrupt activities of Kebich while he was Prime Minister and secondly, by proposing an economic union with Russia, and thirdly, by highlighting his record of being the only deputy in the Soviet Supreme to vote against the Belavezha accords (which officially dissolved the Soviet Union and replaced it with the Commonwealth of Independent States). Lukashenko saw that the support for the Soviet Union and hence for closer ties with Russia was still popular among the voting public and that news about Kebich and his colleagues enriching themselves during many privatization exercises carried out during the transition period had left Kebich vulnerable to a populist candidate such as himself. Lukashenko emerged with the largest number of votes in the 1<sup>st</sup> round (45%) and then thrashed Kebich soundly in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round by winning 80% of the votes.

Lukashenko was not backed by any political party and neither did he attempt to create a political party as a means to mobilize public support for his candidacy in the 1994 presidential election. After winning the presidency, Lukashenko saw no need to align himself with the BCP especially given its association with the unpopular Kebich. In the context of a stronger and more professional legislature that had a higher degree of public legitimacy, it is more than likely that Lukashenko would have tried to create a new political party which would then be used as a vehicle to co-opt political elites and to recruit new leaders to support his presidency. However, the legislature's poor public standing left him with another more attractive option – which was to further weaken



and emasculate the legislature and the legislators so as to increase his own personal standing. Unlike some of the leaders of the social movements in Poland and the Czech Republic, for example, who failed to recognize the need for legislative support in the process of governing, Lukashenko realized the potential challenges to his personalized rule that could emerge from the legislature. Hence, he used, for his own purposes, an electoral regulation that was designed by the communists to weaken representation from the urban areas which were seen as more supportive of the opposition.

This rule stated that the election results in districts where voter turnout was below 50 percent of eligible voters would be invalidated. In devising this rule, the communist regime did not count on the possibility of a non-party populist candidate gaining control of the presidency and then using his position to weaken the parliament as a whole and not just opposition candidates running in urban districts. Lukashenko forced the out-going assembly to hold a simultaneous referendum together with the elections which included a proposition to give the president the right to dissolve parliament in event of a crisis. He then went all out to sabotage the parliamentary elections by creating conditions that significantly decreased voter turnout. These measures included: 'a media blackout on information and reports pertaining to candidates, platforms, and parties, the publication of newspaper editorials disparaging both Western parliamentarianism and the incumbent Supreme Council, and suggesting that presidential rule was the only way out of the current crisis and a delay in the release

of election-related government funds and a limit of \$50 for campaign expenditure' (Mihalisko, 1997, 263). On elections day, Lukashenko spoiled his own ballot for the parliamentary elections in front of television cameras, explaining that there was no one on it who was worth voting for. His tactics worked. Turnout was a respectable 65 percent of the electorate and all four referendum propositions proposed by Lukashenka were passed with overwhelming majorities. But most of these voters failed to cast a vote for the parliamentary districts resulting in only 18 districts (out of 260) meeting the turnout threshold. With only 101 additional seats filled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of parliamentary elections, the 119 newly elected legislators fell far short of the two-thirds quorum (174 out of 260) needed to form a constitutionally viable parliament. Only a last minute surge of voters in turnout in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of parliamentary elections saved Belarus from direct presidential rule. In the end only 198 out of 260 mandates were filled. Nevertheless, the damage had already been done. The public standing of the legislative branch of government, already weak to begin with, had been seriously damaged by the apparent unwillingness of the electorate to cast a vote for any candidate, despite turning out in significant numbers in the first round of the elections. Lukashenko could now afford to ignore the legislature and rule, almost by decree.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> He would go on to win two more presidential elections, which fell far short of internationally accepted norms, in 2001 (76% of the vote) and more recently in 2006 (83% of the vote).

If the Malaysian case is a key illustrative example in how the sequencing and location of elections provided the institutional incentives for the creation of a dominant party regime post-independence, then Belarus would be a key illustrative example of how institutional incentives and the timing of elections post-independence allowed for the dismantling of the party system and the introduction of personalized rule. Differences in the sequencing of elections and of certain institutional rules are the key explanatory variables for the divergent outcomes. The sequencing of presidential before parliamentary elections in Belarus allowed the populist Lukashenko to unexpectedly win the presidency. The voter turnout requirement, which was put in place to disadvantage the opposition in the urban areas, was used by Lukashenko to delegitimize the legislature. Without the fortuitous sequencing of elections and without the voter turnout requirement, Lukashenko may not have firstly, won the presidency, and secondly, emasculate the legislature on the way to establishing his neo-patrimonial rule.

President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan adopted a different approach towards managing the legislature as part of his larger goal of centralizing power. Karimov rose to the position of the first secretary of the republic's party prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and won the first presidential elections in 1991 convincingly with 86% of the vote against a partially co-opted faction of the then most influential opposition movement, Birlik. Like Lukashenko, Karimov faced internal opposition from within the ranks of the

communist *nomenklatura* including the influential Vice-President, Mirsaidov, who publicly supported a letter signed by 200 deputies in the Supreme Soviet who were critical of Karimov's increasingly dictatorial position (Fierman, 1997, 378). Karimov's response was to use his power to get rid of the position of the Vice President. Marisaidov was later arrested, charged and convicted of embezzlement and spent three years in jail.

But instead of consolidating his power under the banner of a single party, Karimov choose to become a non-partisan president and encouraged the creation of a number of government sanctioned political parties, all of which then competed to get Karimov to run as a presidential candidate for their party. In the three presidential elections held in Uzbekistan since 1991, Karimov ran under the banner of three different parties. Most recently, in the 2007 presidential elections, he won with 91% of the vote as a candidate of the Liberal Democratic Party. In the recent parliamentary elections at the end of December 2009 / January 2010, all of the 135 directly elected seats were won by the four officially sanctioned political parties, in a campaign where these parties were unreservedly criticizing each other while giving high praise and acclaim to Karimov.

What motivated Karimov to choose the option of allowing 'competition' between parties that were obviously supportive of him instead of consolidating his power behind a dominant party? Karimov had the latter option when he created the People's Democratic Party which was also the largest and most powerful party in Uzbekistan in

the early 1990s. Instead, he allowed different factions to develop within the PDP, out of which grew the government sanctioned pro-Karimov parties. By later stepping down as the head of the PDP and becoming a non-partisan president, he was sending a signal that he no longer wanted a dominant party to continue.

Karimov's decision to become a non-partisan president in 1996 coincided with a harsh crackdown on opposition activities. Even the partially co-opted and more 'moderate' faction of Birlik, which had been allowed to field a candidate against Karimov in the 1991 presidential election, was soon banned in 1993. By allowing more than one pro-government party to exist and not allowing one party to emerge dominant, Karimov established the veneer of holding 'competitive' multiparty elections without allowing genuine opposition participation. In addition, competition among the political elites in these pro-government parties for Karimov's approval and endorsement decreases the possibility that a leader or a group of leaders can emerge from a dominant party to unseat him. The distractions, so to speak, of inter-party competition increased Karimov's own power. In this regard, Karimov's strategy is not vastly different from that employed by the monarchical regimes in Morocco and Jordan. The heads of both countries, King Muhammed VI of Morocco and King Abdullah of Jordan, have to stand above politics, which prevents them from creating an 'official' party of the state or from openly appealing for support for only one party. But at the same time, both rulers recognize the importance of the legitimacy which multi-party elections create. As a

result, both rulers have encouraged a structure of political contestation where inter-party competition is high but also one where competition revolves largely around patronage opportunities from having access to state resources, which, not surprisingly, are very much in the control of the respective monarchs (Lust-Okar, 2005). Under such conditions, the focus on patronage opportunities fragments any potential opposition and increases the dependence of political elites on the instruments of the state that are in the hands of the all-powerful ruler.

Their strategies may differ but the end results are similar. Lukashenko fragmented potential opposition from the legislature by weakening it and later co-opted as many of the independent candidates, who now dominate the legislature, as necessary. Karimov fragmented potential opposition from the legislature by encouraging inter-party competition between various pro-government parties, all of which are dependent on him for patronage and access to state resources. Both have emerged as personalistic rulers without the backing of a dominant party. Both used institutional arrangements including the electoral system to consolidate their personal power.

The following passage by Hale (2006) is worth quoting in length because it very neatly sums up the potential dangers, to a neo-patrimonial ruler, of creating a dominant party with elected legislators whose votes are required for laws to be passed in the legislature:

*“While a party might help a president rule more authoritatively, the authority that the party itself would accrue through this process could make it a threat to the president’s personal power since it is likely to develop interests of its own that might one day contradict those of the president. Building a party that is based on anything more than pure loyalty to the president starts to create a reputation that benefits the party both in elections and in legislative bargains and that therefore becomes costly to contradict. There is also the risk that the party might groom leaders, perhaps a speaker of the parliament or the governor of a prominent region, who could come to rival the president.”*

### **3.6.3 A neo-patrimonial leader creating a potentially dominant party in Kazakhstan**

The presence of weakly institutionalized ruling parties, a weakly mobilized public and fragmented opposition parties allowed the emergence of neo-patrimonial leaders who presided over increasingly weakened legislatures and without the support of a dominant party. At the same time, there were some strategic and, perhaps, farsighted neo-patrimonial leaders who recognized the importance of consolidating their rule under a dominant party. These strategic leaders often recognized the importance of institutional design in expediting the creation of dominant parties. Kazakhstan is one such an example. The consolidation of pro-Nazarbaev support behind the Nur-Otan party in the 2007 parliamentary elections was a well thought out move that took place within the larger context of significant constitutional changes which

increased executive power and provided the necessary electoral incentives for the creation of a dominant party.

Nursultan Nazarbaev's path towards neo-patrimonial rule somewhat parallels that of Islam Karimov's in neighboring Uzbekistan. Like Karimov, Nazarbaev converted his position as the republic's communist party first secretary into the position of the president in 1990. His position as president was publicly legitimized through an uncontested presidential election in 1991. Like Karimov, who had to deal with the challenge of Islamic separatists, Nazarbaev had to manage the problem of Russian nationalistic movements on the part of the significant Russian minority which resided within his state (Olcott, 1997, 210). But unlike Karimov, who was successful in creating a dominant party, the PDP, before his subsequent decision to govern as a non-partisan president, Nazarbaev would have more difficulty in consolidating his power behind a dominant party. The three parties formed by Nazarbaev, the Socialist Party, which was supposed to inherit the membership of the Kazakhstan Community Party, the People's Congress, and the People's Unity Party (PUP), which Nazarbaev would subsequently lead, only won 19%, 5% and 4% of seats respectively in the 1994 legislative elections. The largest block of seats (35%) went to independent candidates (Olcott, 1997, 221). The inability of Nazarbaev to gain majority control of the parliament meant that 'the new parliament began not only to exhibit independence, but also to strengthen and consolidate itself as an institution' (Olcott, 1997, 222).



In the face of an increasingly intransigent parliament, Nazarbaev's administration chose to put up a weak resistance to a surprising decision by the judiciary over a voting violation, which would cast doubt on the legitimacy of the entire legislature. Nazarbaev then used his power to disband the parliament and impose direct presidential rule. He used the opportunity to hold a referendum that further increased his already considerable presidential powers.

Subsequent parliamentary elections in 1995, 1999 and 2004 saw most of the votes and seats distributed to various pro-Nazarbaev parties and a small number of non-partisan independent candidates, nearly all of whom were supportive of the president (Oka, 2009, 4-6). In the 2004 parliamentary elections, for example, the opposition only managed to obtain one seat, with the rest going to the pro-regime parties of Otan or Fatherland (42 seats); AIST, an election bloc consisting of the Civic Party and Agrarian Party (11 seats); Asar, which was headed by Nazarbaev's daughter Dariga (4 seats) and independents (18 seats) (O'Beachain, 2005, 768). Otan was clearly emerging as the dominant player among the pro-Nazarbaev parties, so much so that a presidential aide 'declared that Otan could now be considered the ruling party of Kazakhstan, due to the unique possibility to institutionalize a ruling party before the next parliamentary election' (O'Beachain, 2005, 769).

Nazarbaev's attempt at creating a dominant party, which began in the early 1990s, came to fruition in the 2007 parliamentary election. The presidential party, Nur

Otan, won all 98 of the directly elected parliamentary seats. The consolidation of the presidential party was carried out deliberately, methodically and strategically. It was not by accident that the main pro-president parties – Asar, the Agrarian party and the Civil Party – merged with Otan, then the largest pro-president party in 2006, to form Nur-Otan. The leaders of the respective parties were most likely informed of the impending electoral regulation changes that were introduced in 2007.

These changes were introduced ostensibly to allocate more power to the legislature, to promote more programmatic instead of personality based parties and to increase the chances that Kazakhstan would be allocated the rotating chair of the OSCE.<sup>32</sup> Instead, they had the effect of strengthening both the presidency and Nazarbaev's political party. The electoral system was changed from a mixed system (67 single member district seats and 10 PR seats with a 7% threshold) to a purely proportional system (98 PR seats with a 7% threshold). Not all of the pro-Nazarbaev parties, including the party headed by his daughter, would have made the 7% threshold if they had competed on their own. This was one of the main reasons for the merger of some of these pro-Nazarvaev parties before the 2007 parliamentary elections. The electoral laws were also changed to allow state and government officials to become members of and take up leadership positions in political parties. This meant that the previously non-partisan president could now officially take up the position of the

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<sup>32</sup> Kazakhstan took over the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010.

chairman of Nur Otan, further cementing its status as the president's party (Isaacs, 2008, 382). Finally, the constitution was amended so that the two-term limit for the position of the presidency was removed for Nazarbaev.

The high 7% threshold was introduced to weed out the smaller pro-Nazrbaev and opposition parties and more importantly, the independent candidates who managed to capture a small but significant share of seats. Under the new electoral system, independent candidates were no longer allowed. Nazarbaev probably did not expect that Nur-Otan would be the only party to cross the 7% threshold since the major opposition party, Ak Zhol, won 12% of the vote in the 2004 parliamentary elections. Most analysts were predicting that Ak Zhol, together with the newly formed All-National Social Democratic Party, would safely cross the 7% threshold (Isaacs, 2008, 383). It would have increased the perception that the 2007 parliamentary elections were somewhat free and fair had the opposition gained at least some representation, especially since Kazakhstan was later awarded with the chairmanship of the OSCE, its term starting in 2010.

Even if the opposition had won some representation to the parliament, they would not have challenged the electoral dominance of Nur-Otan. Nazarbaev clearly recognized the importance of institutional design in the creation of a dominant party and the role of such a party in ensuring the continuation of authoritarian rule under Nazarbaev's appointed successors. The creation of additional intra-party mechanisms

that allow for elite competition could pave the way for a relatively smooth succession process within the structure of Nur-Otan, an option which is not available in the neo-patrimonial structure of governance in countries like Belarus and Uzbekistan.<sup>33</sup>

Nazarbaev's example in Kazakhstan opens up the possibility that more authoritarian regimes in Central Asia and perhaps the Caucasus might follow his path of creating dominant parties as a means of prolonging authoritarian rule, rather than to risk the exigencies associated with neo-patrimonial rule especially given the challenges to overseeing a smooth transition from one authoritarian leader to another. One can only know for sure that the internal and external mechanisms put in place are sufficient to ensure continued electoral dominance when a smooth transition at the top is observed in one or more of these regimes.

### ***3.7: Charismatic leaders building DPARs using ethnic nationalism in Serbia and Croatia***

Of the post-communist countries in Europe and the former Soviet Union, Serbia and Croatia appeared to be the most likely candidates to feature the emergence of dominant party authoritarian regimes. The parties established by charismatic nationalist leaders dominated the early post-transition political landscape in both countries and seemed well on their way to consolidating their respective positions of political and

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<sup>33</sup> See Bowyer (2008) for an in-depth discussion on the healthy debates and lobbying which goes on in the legislature among MPs representing different regional interests as an indication that the legislature is not merely a rubber stamping institution but can have some real influence on policy making and political debate especially when the opposition manages to gain some representation.

electoral dominance. Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) were at the height of their popularity during the Balkan conflict, a conflict that was partly instigated by the very platform of nationalism that catapulted these two leaders and their respective parties to power.<sup>34</sup>

However, the cause for the rise of these parties also laid the foundation for their respective demises. Milosevic and Tudjman could not count on continued nationalistic mobilization as the basis of their electoral support, especially when the wars which they started became increasingly unpopular. Furthermore, whatever concessions they were forced to make to external players as a necessary step towards ending such conflicts left them open to attacks from the nationalist flanks within their own parties and from other even more nationalistic parties in their countries. The increasing unpopularity of these presidents made the cooperation among regime elites difficult to maintain and increased the probability of opposition unity, especially in the run-up to the elections where the respective regimes appeared particularly vulnerable.

The CDU was finally defeated when it failed to maintain its electoral dominance after Tudjman's death in 1999. The unpopular Milosevic and his SPS met a similar fate when they were defeated by a coalition of opposition forces, including a nationalist party that had been part of the Milosevic ruling coalition. I will briefly describe the

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<sup>34</sup> Bosnia was the other country involved in the Balkans conflict. But I leave out Bosnia from my discussion because unlike Serbia and Croatia, the largest ethnic group in Bosnia – the Bosniaks – did not comprise a majority of the population which meant that a dominant party based on ethnicity was very unlikely to begin with.

circumstances which led to the rise and subsequent falls of both regimes, thereby precluding them from the set of DPARs.

Milosevic's rise to popularity in 1989 was as a result of his vigorous defense of Serbian rights in Kosovo, a region in Serbia with an overwhelming Albanian majority and a Serbian minority. In May 1989, he was elected as President of Serbia by the Serbian national assembly. His popularity in Serbia was confirmed in a referendum in December in the same year, when 86% of Serbs expressed confidence in his presidency (Miller, 1997, 154).

As Milosevic saw various communist regimes fall in other parts of post-communist Europe, he knew that he had to find an alternative mode of mobilization in order to win electoral support in the inevitable transition towards multiparty politics. He skillfully manipulated and co-opted the leaders of the Serbian Resistance Movement and used them to mobilize public support against the incumbent communist leaders who were standing in his way. His support for this movement also helped him gain 'an aura of democracy' and support his claim that he was initiating an 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' (Miller, 1997, 154).

After the purge of many members of the old communist elite, Milosevic was able to remake the League of Communists into the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) which then went on to win an overwhelming majority of seats in the 1990 parliamentary of seats. Milosevic's mobilization of nationalist sentiment and his credit taking for his 'anti-

bureaucratic revolution coupled with the majoritarian effects of the single member district electoral system and a divided opposition allowed the SPS to win 78% of seats (194 out of 250) with only 47% of the popular vote. Milosevic himself won 63% of the vote in the presidential elections held in the same year against a divided field.

The relatively low electoral support for the SPS (especially compared to Milosevic's own share of the popular vote) already revealed its potential vulnerability, especially if Milosevic were to lose his popularity or be replaced by another nationalist leader. Most, if not all, of the DPARs listed in Chapter 1 obtained their legislative majorities though electoral support that surpassed the 50% mark. An electoral support of less than 50%, particularly when conditions were exceptionally favorable towards the aspiring dominant party and its leader, was a strong indication that Milosevic needed to co-opt additional elites and their parties to bolster the electoral strength of his own party.

The electoral vulnerability of the SPS was exposed in the 1992 parliamentary and presidential elections. Milosevic's waning popularity as a result of increasing Western pressure on his government decreased his electoral support to 56% in the presidential elections, again against a divided field. The share of vote obtained by the SPS decreased to 29%, but the majoritarian effects of the single member district electoral system enabled it to win 40% of seats. However, it had to form a coalition government together with the Serbian Radical Party (SRP), a nationalist party that would outflank the SPS

under the leadership of the ultranationalist, Vojislav Seselj. The SRP took away many of the votes that previously went to the SPS and won 29% of seats with 23% of total votes. But instead of trying to create the necessary electoral incentives or come up with side payments to keep the SRP within his ruling coalition, Milosevic attempted to replace Seselj's SRP with another ultranationalist party, the Serbian Unity Party (SUP), which was led by Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic, a paramilitary leader and war criminal (Miller, 1997, 169).

The inability of the SUP to take advantage of the SRP's loss of electoral support in the 1993 parliamentary elections meant that Milosevic had unnecessarily alienated an important ally in Seselj. Seselj then started having discussions with the other main opposition parties regarding the possibility of forming future electoral alliances. While the SPS regained some of the ground it lost in 1992 and won 123 seats (49%) with 37% of the vote in the 1993 parliamentary elections, again, against a divided opposition, the SUP failed to win any representation.

By this time, it was becoming obvious that the electoral fortunes of the SPS were dependent on the ability of Milosevic to maintain his hold on the presidency. The two term presidential limit meant that Milosevic had to step aside for the 1997 Serbian presidential election, which was eventually won by a Milosevic appointee, Milan Milutinovic, in a second 2<sup>nd</sup> round run-off. The first run-off was actually won by the opposition candidate, Seselj, but the results were annulled because turnout fell below



the constitutionally mandated 50%. Milutinovic's relatively weaker support was another sign of the need for Milosevic to stay in power for the SPS to remain in power as well. Milosevic maintained his hold on power by getting the Yugoslav assembly (which was now a federation between Serbia and Montenegro) to select him as the new Yugoslavian president (Birch, 2002).

Milosevic's reign finally came to an end in the Yugoslavian presidential elections in 2000<sup>35</sup> which he called almost a year before his term was to expire because he mistakenly thought that the divided opposition would not be able to unite against him. This assumption was not without basis given the Milosevic's experience in the 1990 and 1992 presidential elections against a divided opposition field. But the opposition, sensing the weakness of Milosevic in the aftermath of the failed war in Kosovo, finally managed to unite. They formed the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) and rallied support behind the candidacy of Vojislav Kostunica, a well-respected former professor with a reputation for being clean. While it was initially announced that Kostunica had won the elections, there was suspicion that the vote tally, which showed Kostunica winning slightly less than 50% of the vote, had been rigged since a majority of votes was needed to avoid a 2<sup>nd</sup> round run-off. This announcement led to a massive gathering of approximately 300,000 protestors in Belgrade. The subsequent announcement by the

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<sup>35</sup> Milosevic passed constitutional amendments requiring the presidency as well as the upper chamber of the Yugoslavian assembly to be directly elected.

Constitutional Court, that the results of the presidential election were annulled and that another presidential election did not need to be called until Milosevic's term ran out in the following year fueled further public protests, this time, numbering more than 700,000 people. The army chief, who had earlier voiced his support for Milosevic, soon made a u-turn when he saw the massive protests, and Milosevic had no choice but to announce his resignation. The election commission later released the official results showing Kostunica with 51.7% of the vote compared with the 38.2% won by Milosevic.

The challenge of an aspiring DPAR to maintain its hold on power beyond the rule of a charismatic founding leader – the challenge of a successful succession – also explains the eventual downfall of the HDZ in Croatia. The succession issue is a running theme that was brought up in Chapter 1 and will be brought up again later in this chapter as well as in subsequent chapters.

It was extremely unlikely that the communist party in Croatia would be able to maintain its hold on power in the transition to multiparty elections because of its links to the unpopular central government in Belgrade. The presence of a significant Serbian minority and the increasing tensions with Serbia paved the way for the emergence of a charismatic leader who formed a potentially dominant party by mobilizing nationalist and Croatian-centric sentiment and by agitating for national independence from the Yugoslav federation. Franco Tudjman, who utilized his considerable political and oratorical skills to emerge as the leading Croat, was also astute in his decision to open

up membership of the HDZ to any of the members of the Croatian League of Communists (SKH) so that the leadership and membership ranks of his party could be strengthened (Cohen, 1997, 77). His move paid almost immediate dividends when just prior to the 1990 parliamentary elections, approximately 27,000 party members left the SKH and joined the recently formed HDZ (Cohen, 1997, 78).

HDZ emerged as the dominant party by winning 58% of seats in the 1990 parliamentary elections, no doubt helped by the popularity of Tudjman and a majoritarian single member district electoral system that enabled his party to convert 40% of votes into 58% of seats. Tudjman was subsequently elected president by the parliament. The dominance of the HDZ increased when the leading opposition parties joined it in a government of national unity in August 1991 during the outbreak of war against Serbia. This coalition lasted until the spring of 1992 (Cohen, 1997, 85).

The electoral system was changed in the 1992 parliament elections, from the single member district two-round system, which would have provided electoral incentives for opposition coordination, to a mixed member system that featured party list PR seats as well as a single member district component, thereby decreasing the possibility of such coordination. Opposition division meant that the HDZ would win 90% of the single member district seats. Its 45% share of the party list vote translated into 52% of seats because some smaller parties failed to meet the 2% electoral threshold. In total, the HDZ won 61% of seats, a 2% increase from the 1990 results. In a result that

paralleled that in Serbia, Tudjman won 57% of the presidential vote in 1992, a clear demonstration that the HDZ was riding the coattails effect of a popular president.

The elite splits within the HDZ surrounding the issue of Bosnia which threatened to weaken the party also coincided with elite splits in two of the largest opposition parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Croatia Liberal Democratic Party (HSLD) (Kasapovic, 2000, 11). The manipulation of electoral rules helped the HDZ in winning almost 2/3rds of total seats in the 1995 parliamentary elections. The ruling regime, once again fearful of possible opposition cooperation, decreased the number of single member districts from 60 to 28. The number of PR list seats was increased to 80, but so was the electoral threshold (from 2% to 5%). Furthermore, a threshold for an alliance of two parties (8%) and for an alliance of three or more parties (11%) was introduced in a clear move to prevent alliances between smaller parties to win legislative representation. In addition, 12 seats representing the Croatian diaspora voters were also introduced. The small number of these eligible diaspora voters meant that they were disproportionately represented. The fact that HDZ won all 12 of these seats was not surprising, given that most of these diaspora voters consisted of Croatians in Bosnia (80%), who were obviously supportive of the HDZ's war against the Serbs and Bosniacs in Bosnia (Kasapovic, 1996, 272).<sup>36</sup> HDZ's total number of seats decreased

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<sup>36</sup> The dominant Croat party in Bosnia at that time was also named the HDZ and it, not surprisingly, had close ties with the HDZ leadership in Croatia.

slightly to 59%. However, its 45% share of the party list vote fell well short of the 61% of the popular vote won by Tudjman in the 1997 presidential elections.

In light of Tudjman's personal popularity, it was not surprising that the HDZ could not hold on to the presidency or its legislative majority in the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections, which were held less than a month after his death in December 1999. The factional fighting that erupted within the HDZ over who would succeed Tudjman probably hurt its electoral prospects. The HDZ cause was not helped by the uninspiring campaign of the HDZ candidate who was finally chosen, Mate Granic, who was the then foreign minister. Granic could only come in third in the 2000 presidential elections, winning 23% of the popular vote. The run-off, involving two opposition candidates was won by Stjepan Mesic, who had left the HDZ in the 1994 split and formed the Croatian Independent Democrats (HND), which later merged into the Croatian People's Party (HNS). A coalition of parties, led by the SDP and the HSLs, won the plurality of seats (48%) in the parliament and subsequently formed a coalition government with a block of four smaller parties. Like their counterpart, the SPS in Serbia, the HDZ could not maintain its hold on power beyond the rule of its charismatic leader and founder.

Could these parties have somehow maintained their respective electoral dominance beyond the tenures of their respective founding leaders? I argue that the conditions under which these parties rose to power were unfavorable for sustaining an

initially dominant party regime. Firstly, mobilization on the basis of nationalist sentiment, which was instrumental in the rapid rise in the popularity of both leaders, is difficult to maintain for a sustained period of time. In the cases of Serbia and Croatia, the prolonging of the Balkan conflict proved increasingly costly, economically and diplomatically. European and American pressures on both countries to end the conflict proved difficult to ignore given the possibility of economic sanctions and permanent exclusion from joining the EU. Furthermore, the success of both regimes in expelling minorities from their respective countries (Croats in Serbia and Serbs in Croatia) deprived them of a potential 'enemy from within' which could have served as the basis for a more sustained campaign platform of ethnic mobilization. In other words, they were victims of their own of their own success!

Secondly, even if the war efforts could have been sustained, the nature of war, which can galvanize early public support for the leader in question, is that it soon becomes unpopular. Civilian and military casualties, the loss of property, external sanctions and economic decline act as powerful levers to undermine long term support for war. The leaders are then forced to negotiate to end such conflicts. Such negotiations obviously involve bargaining and compromise on the part of the contending actors. The concessions that a leader makes exposes him to attacks from the opposition, which will usually accuse the leader of conceding too much to the other side. The ending of such

conflicts may undermine the nationalist appeal of the leader, whose popularity was built on the instigation of such conflicts in the first place.

Thirdly, the uncertainty of outcomes in such conflicts means that the possibility of military defeat cannot be discounted. Battles are lost, territories are conceded and military retreats are far from uncommon. The fall of the military regime in Argentina after its defeat in the Falklands / Malvinas conflict is a classic example of how incumbent regimes can be removed as a result of military defeats. In the case of Serbia, the inability of the regime to prevent Kosovo in 1999 from moving towards declaring independence did not unseat Milosevic but most certainly weakened his political position in the run-up to the 2000 presidential elections.<sup>37</sup>

Fourthly, splits within the elite often occur during a prolonged conflict, usually instigated by disagreements over whether to prolong or end the war. Ultranationalists within the party do not want to make any concessions to the enemy while the more pragmatic faction may push for making necessary compromises in order to end the conflict. One such example from Croatia is that of Stjepan Mesic (the winner of the 2000 presidential election), who left the HDZ because he thought that Tudjman had conceded too much territory in Bosnia to Milosevic in the Karadordevo agreement (Bellamy, 2002).

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<sup>37</sup> Learning from the Bosnian experience, NATO, led by the Americans led a devastating air campaign against Serbian targets in order to prevent ethnic genocide in Kosovo. Overwhelmed by NATO air power, Milosevic would beat a hasty retreat and cease the military campaign against the Albanians in Kosovo.

Fifthly, even the mobilization of nationalist sentiment could not mask the underlying weakness, in terms of electoral support, of the SPS and the HDZ respectively. Their share of the vote in the legislative elections fell far short of the electoral support given to Milosevic and Tudjman respectively. As mentioned previously, both parties failed to win more than 50% of votes in any of the legislative elections in which they emerged as the largest party. This level of electoral support compares unfavorably with the DPARs listed in Chapter 1, all of which regularly surpassed the 50% mark, often by large margins. Both parties could not count on the cushion of a high level of electoral support to buttress their falls when an external or internal shock weakened their political standing. The majoritarian nature of their respective electoral systems allowed both parties to gain a significant seat bonus in the founding elections but part of their electoral success was due to opposition fragmentation. The HDZ was the more successful of the two regimes in making regular changes to the electoral system in order to maintain a comfortable legislative majority as well as to divide the opposition, but the relatively low levels of electoral support meant that both parties were particularly vulnerable if and when the opposition managed to overcome their differences and unite together to defeat the incumbents.

These factors would converge in Croatia after Tudjman's death in 1999. Five years after the Dayton accords, with the prospect of talks to towards EU entry, the HDZ stood little chance of mobilizing sufficient electoral support based on nationalistic



sentiment, especially after the death of Tudjman. In the case of Serbia, the increasing unpopularity of Milosevic, brought about by the military setbacks in Kosovo, the 'stick' of continued alienation from the larger European community if Milosevic were to be re-elected and the emergence of a united opposition coalition was sufficient to unseat him in the 'bulldozer revolution' in the 2000 presidential elections. (Birch, 2002) Given these underlying conditions, even if Milosevic and Tudjman had managed to hold on to power, it is hard to conceive of a scenario whereby both parties could have remained in power after the departure of both leaders.

Rising to power by campaigning on a newly created dimension of political competition can pay great political dividends if this new issue can become politically salient thereby allowing the political entrepreneur and his party to capture the imagination as well as the votes of the masses. However, the danger here is that if the salience of this newly created dimension of political competition cannot be sustained, the leader may find the masses slowly turn against him and his party as the salience of this issue wanes. Try as he might to manipulate the institutional mechanisms under his control, the combined effects of a mobilized public, opposition cohesion and elite splits will often overwhelm such institutional advantages, especially when the power and standing of the potentially dominant authoritarian party regime has not been consolidated.

### **3.8 Building dominant parties in democratic settings**

The preceding discussions in Sections 3.5 and 3.6 examined the inability of parties or movements that captured the initial political advantage in the transition to post-communist multiparty elections to consolidate their respective positions of electoral dominance in subsequent elections. This failure was explained in terms of the interaction of a number of factors, including the inability of certain leaders to recognize the importance of seeking political party support and building strong parties, the inauspicious sequencing of presidential and parliamentary elections and the loss of a unifying cause after the transition was completed.

The difficulty of building a dominant party in the countries listed in Section 3.5 (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Baltic states) and in Section 3.6.1 (Bulgaria and Romania) is indicative of the more general challenges associated with building a dominant party in a democratic setting. One could easily argue that the post-transition conditions in almost all of these countries rapidly approached an equilibrium that would satisfy the Dahlian conditions of free participation and contestation of a polyarchy (Dahl, 1971). All parties were committed to democratic principles, and the proximity to Western Europe and the prospect of subsequent EU membership made it difficult for the incumbent regimes or new governments to repress opposition groups, to restrict the flow of information or to introduce unfair electoral regulations and practices.

The decision to use mostly proportional electoral systems as a result of the ‘veil of ignorance’ that characterized many of the roundtable negotiations also made it more unlikely that a legislative majority would be ‘manufactured’ during the founding elections.

Under these democratic conditions, perhaps it should be expected that dominant parties would not emerge. After all, the ‘uncommon’ nature of dominant parties in democratic settings<sup>38</sup> illustrates the low probability that such parties would emerge in the countries listed above. To use Di Palma’s (1990) essay title – ‘Establishing Party Dominance: It Aint’s Easy’! To replicate the Japanese and Italian examples of dominant parties in democratic settings, a party in a post-communist country would have had to identify a potentially dominant moderate position that it could occupy and hope that other parties position themselves on the far left or on the far right. However, it was far more likely for most of the former communist parties to reform themselves into center left social democratic parties (Bozoki and Ishiyama, 2002) and for moderate center right pro-market parties to compete with the reformed communists in the middle of the political spectrum. It was also unlikely that parties would choose a marginal position

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<sup>38</sup> To use the title of Pempel’s (1990) edited volume on the one party dominant regimes in Sweden, Israel, Italy and Japan.

based on a salient foreign policy issue such as European integration and subsequently allow a single pro-European party to emerge as a dominant party.<sup>39</sup>

Would dominant parties have helped in the process of democratic consolidation in these countries? One can make the argument that the presence of a dominant party may have provided some stability in what was otherwise a fragmented and unstable party system. The rapid rise and fall of the electoral fortunes of the myriad number of small parties, the sudden emergence of new parties led by new elites and the instability of various governing coalitions that plagued some of the legislatures in these new democracies could have been avoided if a dominant party had been present and had provided the necessary impetus for the institutionalization of a strong party system. Smaller parties and some elites may have been co-opted into the dominant party and other parties may have been incentivized to coalesce into identifiable groupings along the ideological spectrum to differentiate themselves from the dominant party. If a dominant party can hasten the process towards the institutionalization of a strong party system (as opposed to a fragmented and weak party system) and if a strong party system is associated with positive outcomes including hastening the process of democratic consolidation, then the absence of such parties in the aforementioned

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<sup>39</sup> The parallel here is the choice by the Japanese Socialist Party to object to post World War II US-Japan military alliance.

countries may not be such a good thing.<sup>40</sup> Of course, the institutionalization of a strong party system can exist in the context of three or four or five parties with their own core group of supporters in the electorate but such a system may take a long while to establish itself amidst the political circumstances that were characteristic of many of the post-communist countries. In these contexts, party fragmentation with a high electoral volatility was more likely to occur. Arian and Barnes (1974, 600) argue that a dominant party system is preferable to a fragmented political system on the basis that such a system offers up the prospect of greater political stability and gradual policy changes.

The impact of the fragmented nature of political competition on government policy in the group of aforementioned countries is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis. But I would argue that if some of the leaders in these countries had recognized the importance of building strong parties (here, I am thinking of Walesa and Havel in particular) and had taken steps to minimize elite fragmentation from their respective anti-regime movements, the result would undoubtedly have decreased electoral volatility and led to more stable governing coalitions. In this respect, the failure of some of these elites to overcome some of the initial unfavorable conditions (the sequencing of elections, the institutional legacies of the previous regime) towards the creation of strong and possibly dominant parties, can and should be seen as shortcomings on their part. As

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<sup>40</sup> See Mainwaring and Scully (1995) for a discussion of the negative outcomes associated with a poorly institutionalized party system.

I have argued previously and will continue to argue in subsequent sections and chapters, the interaction between elites and the institutional environment in which they operate are key factors in accounting for the emergence and non-emergence of dominant parties.

### ***3.9 Building Dominant Parties in Non-Democratic Settings***

It is not hard to see why dominant parties are more likely to emerge in non-democratic compared to democratic settings. In non-democratic settings, an aspiring autocrat can boost the electoral fortunes of his party through a number of non-democratic means from a 'menu of manipulation' (Schedler, 2002) which includes the manipulation of electoral regulations, the selective repression and co-optation of opposition candidates and parties, using and abusing the resources of the state, just to name a few.

And yet, the discussions in sections 3.6.2, 3.6.3 and 3.7 on the regimes that emerged in less than democratic settings showed that DPARs were not the likely outcome. Should this be a surprising finding? Not if we recognize that under certain institutional arrangements and political conditions, such as a demobilized public and weakly institutionalized parties, that it is far too easy for an aspiring dictator to concentrate power in his own hands to avoid the sacrifices and dangers of sharing power with a dominant party in the context of a less than subservient legislature. After all, this was the path taken by many African leaders in the post-colonial context,

especially where the legislature ceased to operate after the transition to a one-party state (Van de Walle and Bratton, 1997). Why share the spoils of office with a larger group of people when you can concentrate power in your own hands and distribute the spoils to a small coterie of loyal supporters? Lukashenko's neo-patrimonial rule in Belarus stands out as a case study on how to emasculate the legislature, de-legitimize political parties and consolidate presidential power.

The failure of potential DPARs to maintain their grips on power should not be that surprising either, especially if the conditions under which these parties came into power are properly understood. The relatively low levels of electoral support and the difficulty of sustaining nationalistic mobilization and costly wars account for the weak foundations of the regimes in Serbia and Croatia.

The failure of certain neo-patrimonial rulers to build a dominant party *should be surprising* if one considers the potential institutional advantages of having a dominant party. A dominant party is an institutional mechanism that can be used to great effect to share power with and co-opt elites in order to minimize the risk that these elites would coalesce to challenge and possibly overthrow the incumbent dictator. Having a dominant party becomes even more important when considering the all-important issue of succession in a non-democratic setting. Dictators cannot live or rule forever (even if many of them think otherwise). Presumably, all of them have thought about passing the baton of leadership to another person, possibly a family member, an heir or an anointed

successor from within the inner coterie of loyalists. The succession process is considerably more difficult to manage without the institutional arrangements of a dominant party. If the dictator suddenly dies, there is no guarantee that his heir or anointed successor can command the support of other elites whose loyalty to the dictator was premised on the perception of his political invulnerability. Having the apparatus of a dominant party opens up the option of slowly promoting one's appointed successor through the ranks of the party's leadership. The successor can gradually prove himself capable of leading the country. He can also gain the trust of the other elites within the party leadership and establish his own legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate through the process. This was the path taken by Lee Kuan Yew's eventually successor, Lee Hsien Loong, the current Prime Minister of Singapore. It also seems to be the path that Gamal Mubarak, the son of the current Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, is taking towards eventually succeeding his father.

Of course, not all leaders have the foresight of a Lee Kuan Yew or a Hosni Mubarak. The time horizon in the cost-benefit analysis for many dictators is restricted to the period when he is in power and not beyond. This is why the decisions of leaders like Nazarbaev to create a dominant party with the help of institutional mechanisms are worth studying. What motivated him to consolidate power behind Nur-Otan? Why not continue to use the strategy of divide and conquer by allowing different parties to



compete for his approval, the strategy currently employed by Karimov in neighboring Uzbekistan?

The study of the regimes in the former Soviet Union that fall into the non-democratic categorization is still at a relatively early stage. The importance of building a dominant party and the manipulation of electoral institutions to hasten such a process may become more apparent if and when some of these regimes and neo-patrimonial rulers are faced with the prospect of rising opposition mobilization and public discontent with government policies. The incentive to build a dominant party may also be provided when a neo-patrimonial ruler considers the succession problem or if an incumbent dictator is overthrown by a popular uprising, or by his fellow elites, and is replaced by a group of aspiring autocrats who decide to share power within the structure of a dominant party. It is still early days for many of these regimes but one thing is clear; these countries are potential cases to test my hypothesis that institutional mechanisms are a key explanatory variable in explaining the creation and maintenance of DPARs.

### ***3.10 Summary of chapter***

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the difficulty of building and maintaining dominant party regimes in both democratic and non democratic settings. The legacy of a weak party system, the failure to organize a unified anti-regime political party or coalition and the lack of institutional mechanisms to maintain such an anti-regime party

or coalition where they exist, accounts for the failure for a dominant party to emerge in post-transition Latin America. Only in Chile, where the sequencing of elections, the legacy of a relatively institutionalized party system and the presence of electoral incentives to unite parties on the center and the left against the parties on the right, did a dominant coalition emerge after the transition from military rule. But as a subsequent discussion will show, a serious elite defection would result in the failure of *Concertacion* to win the recent presidential election, after four successive victories since the fall of the Pinochet regime.

In the rapidly consolidating democracies of Eastern Europe, I found that the failure of elites to recognize the importance of building strong parties and maintain elite cohesion in order to create stable governing arrangements, prevented the emergence of dominant parties, even when initial conditions seemed favorable for the emergence of such parties. In many of these cases, the achievement of the very objective that unified the opposition movement – whether it was the transition from one-party communist rule or achieving independence from a federal arrangement – led to the fragmentation of these disparate forces. The lack of institutional and political incentives for these forces to remain together coupled with the above mentioned elite decisions also contributed to fragmentation in the party system.

Even in non-democratic settings, conditions were such that in countries where the masses were largely demobilized during the transition period and where parties,

including the incumbent regimes, were weakly institutionalized, ambitious dictators were able to consolidate their personal power and move towards an increasingly neo-patrimonial form of governance. In other cases, the building of initially dominant parties was premised on underlying conditions that could not be sustained, which enabled opposition forces to defeat these parties approximately 10 years after they first rose to power through multiparty elections.

Where dominant parties were created, I explain their emergence by the strategic use of institutional mechanisms including electoral regulations by incumbent leaders who recognized the value of building such parties.

I end this chapter by highlighting once again, the importance of succession as a crucial test in determining the longevity and stability of a DPAR. Only the YAP in Azerbaijan has successfully managed a transition in leadership from Herday Aliyev to his son Ilham in 2003. The extent to which intra party mechanisms can successfully manage the succession process will determine if elite splits, which are particularly likely to occur during such leadership changes, can be prevented. The longevity of these DPARs will be extended if the risks of such elite splits can be minimized.

## **Chapter 4: Building dominant parties in Russia and Thailand**

### ***4.0 Chapter outline***

The discussion in Chapters 2 & 3 highlighted the difficulty of building dominant party regimes during the critical junctures in a nation's history, whether it is during a transition from colonial rule, a transition from military to civilian rule or a transition from one-party communist rule to multiparty politics. The sequencing of elections has to be favorable (or perhaps just fortuitous) and the institutional mechanisms have to provide incentives for elite incorporation and cooperation. In addition, leaders have to recognize the importance of these institutions in aiding the co-optation of other elites, and they have to make astute decisions as to which elites they want to co-opt, repress and politically marginalize.

The emergence of such dominant party regimes, however, is not restricted to the critical junctures mentioned above. Astute politicians can take advantage of political circumstances to rise to power and make use of institutional mechanisms to build and consolidate the electoral dominance of their respective parties. The emergence of Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai and Vladimir Putin's United Russia are two recent prominent examples. Their emergence cannot be explained purely by the initial popularity of these leaders. Historical legacies and the influence of institutional mechanisms played important roles that cannot be ignored by any serious scholar of both regimes. I explain the rise of Thai Rak Thai under Thaksin as a result of a legacy of

weak parties, changes to the electoral system that were intended to strengthen political parties and Thaksin's recognition of the importance of co-opting regional elites under the new electoral system. In Russia, the many battles which his predecessor, Boris Yelstin, had with the Duma and the constant challenge of trying to buy the support of regional elites provided the lessons as well as incentives for Putin to create his own dominant party instead of governing as a non-partisan president like his predecessor. Once in power, he would move to change the electoral regulations to centralize power in the office of the federal executive and within the dominant power at the expense of local and regional autonomy.

The Russian and Thai experiences point to the possible emergence of a trend among aspiring autocrats in unconsolidated democracies and other hybrid regimes. Such aspiring autocrats are becoming more cognizant of the need to build strong ruling parties as a means of co-opting elites and consolidating power instead of just relying on populist policies, charismatic appeals and opposition repression. This increased awareness should then lead these aspiring autocrats to rely more on institutional mechanisms as a means of building strong ruling parties. A strong party provides the basis of legislative support for the aspiring autocrat, allows for a steady circulation of elites and decreases the incentives for elite splits. The more institutional mechanisms can be manipulated to the advantage of the dominant party, the less an aspiring autocrat has to rely on populism and repression and the uncertainties associated with these

strategies.<sup>1</sup> If opposition forces can learn from their counterparts in countries where the incumbent authoritarian regime was successfully unseated, it is also possible for aspiring autocrats to learn from some of the more successful examples of already established or newly emergent DPARs. In other words, the manipulation of the rules of the game should become more important over time for aspiring autocrats who want to build strong parties.

#### ***4.1 Rise of Thaksin and the Thai Rak Thai in Thailand***

The reversion to civilian rule in Thailand after the political crisis of 1992 was marked by a series of government coalitions that were all unable to complete their respective terms in office.<sup>2</sup> The experience of successive military coups, a well-entrenched system of political patronage in the rural countryside by local strongmen and parachuted well-resourced candidates from Bangkok, and the common practice of party switching contributed to a weakly institutionalized party system (Hicken, 2009). Elites switched political parties at the drop of a hat, depending on the government positions offered to them by different elites who were intending to form and lead a coalition government.

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<sup>1</sup> Economic populism, for example, might negatively affect a country's exchange rate or decrease future investment or increase the interest rates charged by overseas lenders. Repression might create political martyrs or cause a popular backlash against the regime.

<sup>2</sup> See Phongpaichit and Baker (2002, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition) for an excellent treatise on the impact of military rule on the politics of Thailand as well as the events and subsequent transition to civil rule in 1992.

The 1997 constitutional reforms which were passed amidst the backdrop of a serious economic crisis were designed to ‘reduce the influence of provincial politicians, increase the accountability of both elected officials and government bureaucrats, and promote stronger, more nationally oriented political parties’ (Hicken, 2006, 383). The requirement that a candidate had to be a member of a political party for at least 90 days was introduced to prevent the last-minute party switching tactic that was commonly employed. In addition, MPs who wanted to become cabinet ministers had to resign their seats. This increased the political stakes of joining the cabinet since these ministers could not ‘return’ to being MPs if the government which they belonged to collapsed.

The multi-member block vote electoral system was replaced by a mixed system of 400 single member districts and 100 national list PR seats that were allocated using a 5% threshold. The list PR seats with the somewhat high thresholds were introduced to encourage the strengthening of national parties that had widespread appeal and to promote more programmatic election campaigns, while the single member districts were introduced with the intention of encouraging the consolidation of political parties.

The biggest beneficiary of the changes in the electoral regulations was Thaksin’s Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party. The new electoral system provided the electoral incentives to move away from a personality-driven to more party-centered programmatically driven election campaign. Thaksin, through the TRT, cleverly combined his own personal appeal as a successful businessman with coherent redistributive policies such as the

provision of minimum health care schemes and funding for village development projects as part of a 'coherent *party* strategy for garnering electoral support' (Hicken, 2006, 395, his italics) (as opposed to the promises of personal patronage and reward during the more individual-centric campaigns before 2001).

The TRT would emerge as the largest party by winning 248 out of 500 seats in the 2001 elections and would gain a bare majority after co-opting a small party immediately after the elections. By 2002, Thaksin had co-opted another three parties, Seritham, New Aspiration and Chart Pattana in a 'grand coalition' under the TRT party banner (Kuhonta, 2008, 382), a new phenomenon in Thai politics.

By the 2005 general elections, the TRT had established its party label as an important electoral asset, a significant accomplishment given the failure of other political parties in the past, with the exception of the Democratic Party in Southern Thailand, to firmly attach its party label to something other than a leader's personality or patronage skills. Provincial elites who had previously preferred to be independent actors or were ambivalent about their political affiliations were now fighting among themselves to claim the TRT party label. This produced a virtuous cycle whereby higher mass support for the TRT resulted in more and more elites wanting to be associated with the TRT which then meant an increase in the electoral support and local resources of the party. The result was an even more dominating electoral performance in 2005 when the party won 61% of seats in the House of Representatives.



Would the TRT have managed to rise to power and then maintain its hold on power without the changes to the electoral regulations? Hicken (2006), using three counterfactual scenarios, argues that these changes were indeed necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for TRT's rise to and later consolidation of power. Firstly, Thaksin's wealth and popularity alone are not sufficient explanatory variables for TRT's electoral success since 'under the previous constitution, Thaksin served as head of the Palang Tham Party but was unable to hold the party together, and the party disintegrated under his watch' (p.397). Secondly, other politicians had attempted to build large parties by co-opting and merging with smaller parties and factions in order to create sustainable governing majorities. But each of these past attempts ended in failure 'regardless of the assets and capabilities of the party's leadership' (p.397). Thirdly, factions within the TRT that would almost certainly have left the ruling party under the old electoral system because they were passed over in the allocation of cabinet seats decided to stay on within the TRT because of its strong party label (p.398).

Even if one disagrees with the importance of the changes in the electoral institutions in accounting for Thaksin's rise to power, Kuhonta argues that they were crucial in explaining how Thakin 'was able to *cement* and *sustain* his hold on power' (2008, 377, his italics)

While the military coup in Thailand in 2006 put an end (at least temporarily) to Thaksin's aspirations to build a long lasting, electorally dominant political party that

would parallel the regimes in neighboring Malaysia and Singapore,<sup>3</sup> the experience of TRT clearly shows the importance of electoral institutions in shaping and allowing for the formation of an electorally dominant party. Indeed, one may argue that the changes introduced in the 1997 Constitution were almost too successful in terms of creating the incentives for the strengthening of political parties.<sup>4</sup>

## **4.2 The rise of Putin and United Russia**

One can find parallels between the emergence of United Russia as the dominant party in Russia's Duma and the rise of the Thai Rak Thai party in Thailand. Both parties were led by charismatic and popular leaders – Putin and Thaksin. Both parties emerged from a backdrop of a country that had recently experienced a serious economic crisis.<sup>5</sup> Both parties took advantage of a fragmented and weak party system to assert their electoral dominance. Both parties knew that they had to co-opt regional elites and local warlords in order to build a dominant party. But there was one key difference between

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<sup>3</sup> Thaksin mentioned at various occasions that he looked to the BN and the PAP in Malaysia and Singapore as examples he was trying to emulate.

<sup>4</sup> The overthrow of Thaksin by the military in 2006 raises the question of whether Thaksin could have created institutional mechanisms that could have prevented such a coup from happening. But the 2006 coup was unlike any other in contemporary Thai history. The period of relatively political stability and civilian rule from 1992 to 2006 prompted many people to think that the likelihood of another military takeover of the government in Thailand was very small. Thaksin himself was seen as someone with strong ties to the military by virtue of his background as a police officer and kinship ties. One theory which has gained currency among scholars and the Thai intelligentsia is that the monarchy took an active part in encouraging the military coup. This theory is one of the emerging strands of scholarship on Thai politics (See McCargo, 2005; Handley, 2006; Hewison, 2008). Whether or not Thaksin could have created institutional mechanisms which could have 'bought' the support of the Thai monarch (for example, by guaranteeing a smooth succession from the popular Bhumipol to his less popular son, Vajiralongkon) is beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> United Russia's predecessor, Unity, was formed in 1999, a year after Russia's financial crisis.

the institutional environments in which both parties were operating. Whereas Thaksin took advantage of the constitutional reforms in 1997 to rise to and later consolidate his power and that of TRT, Putin introduced political reforms that would strengthen United Russia's electoral dominance only *after* he won the presidency in 2000.

A constant feature of the Russian political landscape in the 1990s were the clashes between Yelstin and the Duma and the inability of a succession of Prime Ministers to either command majority support in the legislature or escape the fate of being fired by Yelstin. Yelstin capitalized on his personal popularity as a result of his defeat of the anti-reformist faction within the then ruling regime<sup>6</sup> to win the 1991 presidential elections, the first in Russia. Once in power, Yeltsin chose not to affiliate himself with any organized political movement but governed instead as a populist, radical democrat (Remington, 1997, 73). Despite his many clashes with the rebellious Duma, Yeltsin refused to go along with the attempts by the Kremlin to build a dominant party in the Duma that would be supportive of the president (Colton and McFaul, 2003, 47-51; Reuter and Remington, 2009, 502). Previous attempts by the Kremlin at creating presidential parties – Russia's Choice (1993) and Our Home is Russia – received limited success, partly because of Yelstin's unwillingness to embrace these parties as his own.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Yelstin's role in stopping the coup against Gorbachev in August 1991 – symbolically presented in his speech on a tank – catapulted his public support which then allowed him to capture 57% of the popular vote against a divided field in the 1991 presidential election.

<sup>7</sup> Russia's Choice and Our Home is Russia could only win 14% and 12% of legislative seats in the 1993 and 1995 parliamentary elections.

Yelstin's reluctance can be explained in terms of his fear of a Prime Minister leading a dominant party, even if it was his 'own' party, who could then gain the resources and public recognition necessary to challenge him. He was also probably fearful of possible political damage if he were to back a party that could not even win a third of the seats in parliament. This was a more than likely possibility since regional elites, with higher local name recognition and mobilization capabilities, and the Communist Party, still the party with the highest name recognition and resource advantages, would be hard to defeat in the single member district races.

Uncertainty over electoral outcomes increased in the run-up to the 1999 parliamentary and 2000 presidential elections. Yelstin could not run again because of the two-term limit. The Luzkhov-Primakov<sup>8</sup> alliance, which mobilized its considerable resources under the anti-Kremlin Fatherland-All Russia Party, was hoping to win enough support in the 1999 parliamentary elections to put it in a position to make a serious run at the presidency in 2000. At the same time, the Communist Party, with the largest number of deputies in the Duma, still commanded considerable resources and electoral support. It was in this context that the Kremlin decided to launch another political party, the Unity Block, not with the intention of securing presidential support in

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<sup>8</sup> Yuri Luzkhov was (and still is) the powerful and influential mayor of Moscow. Yevgeny Primakov had been recently sacked as Prime Minister and was one of the most popular political figures at that time.

the Duma but to act as a spoiler party against the Fatherland-All Russia party (Hale, 2004).

Given its failures in past attempts at creating a successful Kremlin-backed party, the organizers of Unity were understandably pessimistic about their electoral prospects. What they and the other Kremlin officials and insiders did not count on was that a series of terrorist attacks carried out by Chechen separatists would give the opportunity to the newly promoted Prime Minister and Yelstin's appointed successor, Vladimir Putin, to rapidly gain public prominence and popularity.<sup>9</sup> These bombings and the invasion of Dagestan by Chechen rebels gave the opportunity to Putin to launch an aggressive military campaign in the already besieged Chechnya. Putin's demonstration of his decisive leadership skills in the war against Chechnya was the main reason for his rapid rise in popularity (Hale, 2004, 179). Not surprisingly, Kremlin advisors exploited Putin's popularity by convincing him to show his support for Unity. Unity's campaign platform soon focused on its desire to obtain sufficient parliamentary representation to back a Putin-led government and subsequently, a Putin presidency. Even with Putin's support, Unity's electoral success in the 1999 elections – it emerged as the second largest party with 23% of the vote, far outdistancing Luzkhov's Fatherland-All Russia which only

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<sup>9</sup> There have been speculations that the apartment bombings in Moscow and two other Russian cities were actually planned by the Kremlin and not Chechen separatists.

managed to win 13% of the vote – took Kremlin officials and Yelstin by surprise (Hale, 2004, 181).

Putin then moved to consolidate his power after the 2000 presidential elections which he won with 53% of the vote against a fragmented field. Luzkhov's Fatherland-All Russia decided to merge with Unity to form United Russia in 2001 in order to bolster the prospects of a Putin-backed party to win a majority of seats in the 2003 parliamentary elections. Putin further signaled his intention not only to build a dominant party that would support his legislative initiatives but to reconfigure the entire party system. He did this by passing a series of election regulations in 2001 that were aimed at disadvantaging small, mostly regional, parties and which had the effect of limiting the participation of civic organizations in the electoral process. For example, one of the requirements for party registration stipulates that it must have at least 45 regional branches, each of which must have at least 100 members. This regulation produced a de facto ban on political parties that were regionally focused (Wilson, 2006, 317-318). The threshold for winning PR seats was also increased from 5% to 7%. In addition, the creation of political parties based on race or region or nationality or profession was explicitly prohibited (Wilson, 2006, 318).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The presence of such a provision gave a lot of arbitrary power to the election authorities who were in charge of the registration process. For example, a Christian-Democrat party's registration was rejected because of the presence of the word 'Christian' (Wilson, 2006, 327)

Putin's popularity, the incorporation of the elites from Luzkhov's Fatherland-All Russia party and changes in the electoral rules all combined to give United Russia 232 out of 450 seats, the first time that any party had won a majority of seats in the legislature since the introduction of multiparty elections. A further 78 deputies were convinced to join United Russia after the elections, giving it the all important 2/3rds majority that is needed to amend the constitution.

The consolidation and centralization of Putin's power was not yet complete. After the Beslan school hostage crisis in 2004, Putin introduced two significant electoral changes that took away power from local governors and prevented independent candidates from winning representation to the Duma. The first change was to replace the provision for direct elections for regional governors with presidential appointees who were subject to approval by the respective local legislatures. To incentivize these legislatures not to reject the presidential appointees, a further provision allowing the president to dismiss these legislatures and call for fresh elections was passed. Regional governors had been a constant problem for Yelstin because their autonomous power that was derived from their local organizational strength and mobilization capabilities meant that they could credibly extract payoffs from Yelstin in exchange for mobilizing votes on his behalf. Their independent source of power and legitimacy also meant that they could choose to disobey instructions from the Kremlin. While many of these regional governors had hopped on the Putin bandwagon and joined United Russia,

there were still a few holdouts. The introduction of this law produced almost total control over future governors of the respective provinces on the part of the federal executive.

The second significant change was the introduction of a pure list PR electoral system with a 7% threshold. The single member districts were removed because they had allowed powerful local elites to win representation to the Duma on the basis of local electoral support in the single member districts. 154 and 70 independent or non-partisan candidates won representation to the Duma in the 1999 and 2003 parliamentary elections, respectively. While many of these candidates could be easily co-opted to join political parties - and many of them chose United Russia after the 2003 parliamentary elections - the practice of providing side-payments to these local elites was expensive and probably, in Putin's view, unnecessary. These independent candidates stood in the way of Putin's grand plan of strengthening political parties - in particular, United Russia - and the party system in general. The removal of the single member districts meant that any aspiring candidate with an independent local support base needed to join United Russia (or some other party) in order to get elected. The balance of power thus shifted to the party leaders within United Russia who could decide the order in which a candidate is placed on the electoral list and thus removed the necessity of offering side payments after an election. The high 7% electoral threshold also meant that small regionally based parties would find it difficult to win enough votes to gain



representation to the Duma. Furthermore, the introduction of a provision that bans political parties contesting as an alliance meant that smaller opposition parties could not band together in order to cross the 7% threshold. It also made it difficult for some of the larger opposition parties to band together in an official and explicit alliance in order to signal their intention to present a united challenge to the dominance of United Russia.<sup>11</sup>

Putin's popularity, coupled with the consolidation of power in the federal executive as well as within the hierarchy of United Russia, allowed the dominant party to win 64% of the vote and 70% of seats in the 2007 parliamentary elections. Putin, learning from Yelstin's experience, understood the value of consolidating power and co-opting regional and local elites under the banner of a dominant party. The changes in the institutional mechanisms discussed above were key factors in helping Putin achieve his objective.

### ***4.3 Beyond Thailand and Russia***

The rise of TRT and United Russia from a political context of fragmented parties in semi-democracies raises the possibility that dominant parties can be created by ambitious and opportunistic populist leaders. It is likely these leaders will pay more attention to the role of institutional mechanisms in aiding the creation of these dominant parties, because legislatures in these countries, some of which have been in existence for

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<sup>11</sup> Moraski (2007) points out that getting rid of the SMDs may actually harm the electoral prospects of United Russia since it was the majoritarian effects of the SMDs that allowed it to win almost half of the SMD seats with only 38% of the popular vote. But the advantage of getting rid of challenges from independent candidates was too significant to ignore.

a period of time, can often stymie the policy intentions of the executive. More often than not, these leaders recognize the importance of controlling a legislative majority, in order to strengthen their control over the political process. As such, they would likely prefer to change certain institutional structures in order to enhance their ability to translate their personal popularity into legislative majorities.

One can make a further argument that a counterpart to the phenomenon of democratic diffusion and neighborhood contagion can take effect in such a way as to increase the likelihood of institutional manipulation in creating and sustaining dominant party regimes. It was no accident that Thaksin looked to his neighbors in Malaysia and Singapore (instead of to the Philippines, for example) as models for his Thai Rak Thai party. It is perhaps not coincidental that Nazarbaev, who faces the challenge of governing a large, multi-ethnic country with many regional and local elites, revised electoral regulations in Kazakhstan in ways that parallels the changes made by Putin. Like Putin, Nazarbaev, moved to a purely list PR electoral system with a 7% threshold. The populist leaders with revolutionary overtones in Venezuela and Bolivia have close ties and have used referendums in order to boost their personal legitimacy and increase executive power.

Hence, I expect more cases in which my hypothesis regarding the importance of institutional mechanisms in explaining the creation of dominant parties can be tested. Venezuela and Bolivia are two cases which come to mind.

Can institutional changes explain the creation of legislative majorities for the parties representing the populist leaders in these countries? What moves, if any, have these leaders made in order to consolidate power in the office of the executive as well as within the structures of their respective parties? What role have institutional mechanisms played in the co-optation of autonomous and opposition elites? Most importantly, have these dominant parties demonstrated their ability to survive beyond the tenure of the populist leaders who created them? Opportunities to test my theories in extensions to my thesis will be available as additional elections in these countries increase the number of observations and data points. This is indeed rich ground for theory testing.

## **Chapter 5 Maintaining Elite Cohesion**

### ***5.0 Chapter Outline***

The overwhelming electoral dominance of some of the longer established DPARs may give the impression that these regimes have never experienced any serious challenges in the electoral arena, or that the institutional environments in which they operate have remained largely unchanged. However, a closer examination of some of these DPARs will reveal that, instead of a static and stable system, many, if not most, of these regimes demonstrate a remarkable degree of flexibility in making institutional changes to adapt to changing political circumstances. While many of these regimes have used different instruments of the state to repress their political opponents and restrict the flow of information to the masses, and while some of them committed electoral fraud to maintain their positions of electoral dominance, it would be a mistake to think that the leaders of these regimes are oblivious to the importance of institutional mechanisms in helping them maintain their hold on power.

Repressive moves against opposition candidates and civil society agents, while useful from the perspective of depriving the opposition of key leaders, also have the potential to mobilize the masses against the regime. Overt electoral fraud may provide the opposition with the opportunity to drum up support for public demonstrations

against the regime, provoke civil unrest and even resort to non-electoral means to overthrow the incumbent regime.<sup>1</sup>

Institutional mechanisms, on the other hand, offer the opportunity to preserve the dominant electoral position of these DPARs while minimizing the risk of civil unrest and public demonstrations. The longer these mechanisms are institutionalized, the more they are seen as part of the electoral landscape by the opposition and more importantly, by the voters. While the opposition may complain, often vociferously, about the advantages that some of these mechanisms provide to the regime, they are not likely to gain considerable traction by using this as part of their campaign strategy and nor are they likely to be able to mobilize the masses on this basis. Technicalities in regard to electoral regulations, even if they might be important in structuring the rules of the electoral game, are not likely to inflame the passions of the voting public in the same way that a large scale corruption scandal or massive electoral fraud would.

It is likely that the importance of these institutional mechanisms will increase in the future as elections observation by domestic and foreign actors as well as the pressure from foreign donors and governments, increase the costs of overt acts of repression, such as the jailing and beating of opposition actors and committing large scale electoral fraud. The 'beauty', as it were, of these institutional mechanisms is that they make acts

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<sup>1</sup> See Kuntz and Thompson (2009) for a discussion on how stolen elections can lead popular uprisings which eventually leads to regime overthrow.

of repression, intimidation and committing electoral fraud become almost unnecessary. The regime is guaranteed of winning an election before the first vote is cast. The only uncertainty left is whether the opposition can make marginal improvements in its electoral position.

In this chapter and the next, I will demonstrate the importance of institutional mechanisms in maintaining the DPARs' hold on power and how the regimes have responded to different electoral challenges by the strategic manipulation of these mechanisms. While these institutional mechanisms cannot explain, by themselves, the reasons why these DPARs manage to win semi-competitive elections on a regular basis, they are nonetheless important factors in preserving the appearance of hegemony on the part of these regimes. Specifically, they can act as levers to increase the benefits of remaining within the party, increase the costs of elite defection by making it difficult for defectors to make any significant electoral impact and they can be used strategically to divide and co-opt the opposition.

The purposes and intended effects of these strategies are often inter-related. For example, the use of an institutional mechanism to increase a regime's legislative majority can also act to increase the costs of elite defection since it makes it harder for the defecting elite to defeat the incumbent. A strategy of dividing the opposition can result in an increased legislative or presidential majority if anti-regime voters fail to coordinate their votes and end up dividing them among the opposition candidates.

While I recognize the symbiotic relationship between these strategies and the different institutional mechanisms employed, I try, as far as possible, to highlight the importance of these mechanisms on two essential factors in explaining the maintenance of dominant regimes – maintaining elite cohesion and dividing the opposition.

In section 5.1, I describe the various strategies used by some of these regimes to create an environment in which the incentives are provided for elites to remain within the dominant party. Here, the role of various institutional mechanisms to ensure that there is a sufficient degree of elite circulation and competition will be examined.

In section 5.2, I describe the various strategies used by some of these regimes to increase their winning legislative majorities so as to raise the costs of elite defection. By winning large majorities in the legislature – often more than 2/3rds or 70% of total seats – these regimes are in fact sending out a strong signal that their dominant electoral cannot be challenged, from without, and perhaps more importantly, from within since potential elite defections may be the greatest threat to the incumbent regime given the characteristically weak and divided opposition parties within most, if not all, of these DPARs.

In section 5.2, I will describe, at length, the importance of one particular institutional mechanism – the apportionment of constituencies and the drawing of boundary lines in Malaysia, known as the delimitation exercise – in maintaining the balance of power within the complex coalitional politics of the BN and minimizing the

potential of elite defections. I do so because the coalitional structure of the BN seems, theoretically at least, more susceptible to elite defection compared to other DPARs. This is because the individual component parties can be 'extracted' from the BN, so to speak with less coordination problems since they are already well defined organizations in themselves. As the discussion in this section will reveal, coordinating such defections may not be as easy as one would imagine.

The discussion in this chapter will show exactly how difficult it is to overcome the institutional advantages possessed by a DPAR, many of which have come about because of strategic manipulations by the regime in question. However, this does not mean that such DPARs cannot lose their dominant electoral positions. I will discuss in Chapter 7, the conditions under which some of these institutional advantages can be reduced or reconfigured, which may then lead to an eventual electoral defeat. But before the possibility of regime breakdown and defeat can be discussed, the institutional mechanisms associated with maintaining elite cohesion and managing the opposition must be examined. I begin with a discussion involving the former.

### ***5.1 Intra-Elite Circulation to Maintain Elite Cohesion***

Given the diverse political circumstances from which these dominant party regimes emerged, one should not expect the use of the same type of institutional mechanisms to maintain elite cohesion within these regimes. Different elites representing different types of interest groups often require different co-optation



strategies. After they have been successfully co-opted, the regime has to consider putting in place, mechanisms that increase the benefits accruing to these elites for remaining in the party as well as to increase the costs associated with defecting. In this section, I examine the strategies used by various DPARs to maintain elite cohesion by raising the aforementioned benefits. Here I discuss the benefits of ensuring that there is a sufficient degree of intra-elite circulation. A higher rate of elite circulation increases the advantages of remaining within the party since it affords the possibility of upward mobility.<sup>2</sup>

The potential for elite defection from the regime is partly determined by the ability of current and aspiring elites to gain access to positions at different rungs of the leadership ladder within the party. In a system where there is little elite circulation, the potential for elite defections is higher given that ambitions to rise up in the leadership ranks have little chance of being fulfilled. Under such a system, aspiring elites may decide to join the ranks of the opposition because of the lack of entry opportunities into the ranks of the office holders within the regime party.

In light of this, astute leaders of these DPARs must ensure that elites lower down the leadership hierarchy have opportunities to rise up the totem pole and that elites at

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<sup>2</sup> While it is also possible that a higher circulation among the elites within the ruling party may increase the probability that one or more of the elites who have been eased out of their leadership positions may defect to the opposition, this probability can be reduced by either making side payments (in the form of other positions within the government or government linked institutions) or by establishing clear rules of intra-party competition which are accepted by all of the elites.

the top, including the head of the party, should be replaced regularly. These leaders can more credibly commit themselves to a process of elite renewal by introducing institutional mechanisms which lessen the uncertainty associated with such processes. The clearer the rules of engagement among the elites in the dominant party, the more likely it is that these elites will play by them instead of choosing the option to defect.

Such institutional mechanisms include introducing strict term limits, conducting multi-candidate elections in a one-party system, using the general elections as a proxy primary election, having intra-party elections and institutionalizing intra-party competition between formalized factions. I will discuss each mechanism in turn.

### **5.1.1 Mexico: Term Limits for Everyone**

Mexico's ability to avoid the phenomenon of presidential 'strongmen' that would plague much of post-colonial Africa, as well as the instability of presidential succession that would plague much of Latin America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, can be explained by the constitutional provisions that prevent presidents as well as legislative representatives from seeking re-election.<sup>3</sup> However, the implementation of this constitutional provision was not immune to challenges, especially during the early years of PNR / PRI rule. The Mexican congress abolished the one year presidential term limit in 1926 which allowed Alvaro Obregon, who was president from 1920 to 1924, to seek another term. The stable

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<sup>3</sup> The 1932 constitutional amendment increased the presidential term from 4 to 6 six years and banned former presidents from seeking non-consecutive terms in office. Legislators, however, could seek non-consecutive terms in office though in practice, few of them did.

and relatively peaceful presidential successions that were a hallmark of the PRI government from 1940 to 1994 may not have survived a second Obregon presidency had he not been assassinated shortly after his successful presidential campaign in 1928. Even after Obregon's death, the institutionalization of presidential succession was still in question. Plutarco Calles, Obregon's handpicked successor, who was president from 1924 to 1928 and also the founder of PNR, PRI's predecessor, retained significant power as the *jefe maximo* or political chieftain after Obregon's death. He had de facto power and installed a succession of puppet presidents who lasted an average of two years each. While legislative and presidential term limits were re-introduced in 1932, it was not until the presidency of Lazaro Cardenas that it was implemented and subsequently institutionalized.

Cardenas was installed by Calles in 1934, with Calles expecting Cardenas to play the role of another puppet president. But Calles did not anticipate that Cardenas would use his considerable political skills and backing among the labor and agricultural class to slowly shift the balance of power in his favor. After a successful purge of the pro-Callistas leaders within the regime and expelling Calles himself from the country, Cardenas moved to strengthen the powers of the president and the central government by weakening the influence of regional strongmen.<sup>4</sup> By the end of his six year

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<sup>4</sup> See Cothran (1994, Chapter 2) for a summary of the strategic maneuvers undertaken by Cardenas to consolidate presidential power.

presidential term in 1940, Cardenas' popularity had grown to such an extent that 'a petition was signed by a majority of state governors, many generals, and the secretary of the labor central, CTM, and presented to Cardenas, asking him to run for re-election' (Cothran, 1994, 43). Cardenas' decision not to seek re-election and his selection of a 'moderate' candidate for his successor (as opposed to an explicitly pro-business or an extremely pro-redistribution candidate) was arguably instrumental in setting the precedent for a successful transfer of presidential power. The convergence of an institutional mechanism – the constitutional provision prohibited re-election – and a farsighted leader – the leadership variable – ensured a steady circulation of elites at all levels.

The impact of having a steady circulation of elites, especially at the presidential level, on the stability of PRI rule should not be underestimated. All players entering into the electoral arena (and these were mostly PRI politicians in the early days of its rule) accept the premise of non re-election. Aspiring elites accept that if they cannot gain access to political office at a certain election, they could wait until the next round to try again, knowing that the incumbents cannot stay on. This minimizes inter-elite conflicts over access to political office.<sup>5</sup> Political party institutionalization is also strengthened

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to deny that intra-elite conflicts that spilled into the public arena did not occur. General Miguel Henriquez Guzman left the PRI to compete against Ruiz Cortines in the 1952 presidential elections. He won 16% of the popular vote but his party, the FPPM, was later accused of conducting an assault against a military target and was subsequently banned. Guzman would be co-opted back into the ranks of the ruling regime by the inducement of government positions for him as well as for his allies (Bruhn, 1997, 47).

since legislators, once elected, cannot be punished by their constituents for voting in favor of legislation that the party favors but which may disadvantage a majority of voters in a particular constituency. Outgoing legislators then look to the party leadership, and especially the president, for appointments to other government positions after the end of their respective terms while aspiring legislators are incentivized to show their party loyalty as part of the process of being nominated as party candidates (Weldon, 2004, 134).

One could argue that this is perhaps the most important legacy left behind by Cardenas. A passage in the preface to William Townsend's biography of Cardenas (1952, vii-viii) puts his contribution to Mexican politics in perspective:

*'He demonstrated what seemed impossible: that a president could retire, and refrain from trying to dictate the future of politics of the nation ... The peaceful transmission of the office of the presidency is the greatest single gift that he has given to Mexico. His mere presence is an assurance that there will be no revolution against the government in power, and no re-election. If that becomes a tradition, Cardenas will have permanently changed the character of Mexican politics'.*

### **5.1.2 Taiwan, Tanzania, Kenya: Multi-candidate elections in one-party states**

Very few countries, even authoritarian ones, would establish such strict term limits for its office holders in order to ensure a regular circulation of political elites. The Mexican example stands out because of its uniqueness at that point in time. Strict term

limits were far less common than the strategic use of multi-candidate one-party elections as a way to ensure elite circulation without conceding any electoral ground to an opposition party (or parties). Such a strategy would be employed in Malawi, Kenya, Taiwan, Tanzania and Zambia, to name a few. I shall compare the multi-candidate one-party elections in Kenya and Tanzania in single member districts followed by a discussion on one-party elections using the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) in Taiwan.

Multi-candidate one-party elections are attractive to DPARs for a number of reasons. Unpopular candidates, including cabinet ministers, have the potential of being voted out of office and replaced by other local elites (Hyden and Leys, 1972). It can create a sense of political participation among the voting public, provide the opportunity for the regime to test and demonstrate its mobilization strength, and stamp its political legitimacy at regular intervals. By having district based elections whereby local candidates are featured, local characteristics such as ethnic and clan representation can be taken into account. Since such multi-candidate elections do not apply to the position of the president and since explicit political attacks on the president is prohibited in most cases, the focus shifts from national policy issues to the particularistic issues at the local level. Elections are then much more about the delivery of constituency services and development instead of debates about issues at the national level. This increases the dependence of incumbents on state patronage as a means of maintaining their seats and

forces challengers to campaign on the basis of delivery of patronage rather than possible legislative performance.

Of course, all this talk of elite circulation in multi-candidate elections would be moot if the status as an incumbent MP proves to be a sufficient condition for maintaining political office. The ability to stay in office, especially if it is enhanced by selective vote buying or vote rigging, undermines the very legitimacy the electoral process was supposed to create. Voters slowly get disillusioned with the process which decreases turnout which may further increase the incumbent's advantage since a smaller number of voters is required to be mobilized or bought off to achieve an electoral victory.

Such fears, however, did not materialize. In fact, a close examination of the multi-candidate one-party elections in Kenya and Tanzania showed a surprisingly high failure rate among incumbents to retain their seats. In the Tanzanian elections in 1965, fifteen incumbent MPs and two cabinet ministers lost their seats. In 1970, only 43 out of 90 incumbents were successful in seeking re-election. In 1975, some 45% of incumbents who sought re-election were defeated as were three of the twelve incumbent cabinet ministers. In 1985, more than half of the incumbent MPs were defeated (Samoff, 1987, 159). In Kenya, incumbent retention was slightly higher but still, only an average of 60% of incumbent MPs managed to retain their respective seats (Barkan, 1987, 230).

These elections became, in effect, a referendum on the ability of incumbents to deliver constituency services and 'pork' in the form of development and dispensation of patronage. In some cases, cabinet ministers were judged even more harshly than regular MPs because of the perception that these more powerful political figures should be able to exploit their higher political offices to deliver more to their respective constituencies. Hence, the relatively high turnover rate during these elections fulfilled the regime's purpose of 'purging the least effective of its members and replacing them with new troops who would be more effective in carrying out supportive rules. Elections thus provided for the circulation of individual members of the rural petty bourgeoisie into and out of positions of power and for the recruitment of new members into the system' (Barkan, 1987, 228). Furthermore, 'the electoral process has permitted citizens to participate in the selection of their leaders in regularly and reasonably predictable ways and to reaffirm symbolically the political community' (Samoff, 1987, 149).

Of the two party regimes, CCM in Tanzania institutionalized a much more thorough process of candidate selection and competition compared to the more haphazard process employed by KANU in Kenya. Aspiring candidates in Tanzania were vetted through an extensive process by a National Elections Committee whose composition was structured to represent a cross section of society.<sup>6</sup> The informal and formal rules governing the screening process and criteria for candidate eligibility were

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<sup>6</sup> See Mwansasu (1970) for a more extensive discussion of the candidate selection process.



regularly modified in response to changing political and social conditions (Samoff, 1987, 154). Unlike Kenya, which allowed more than two candidates to compete in the one-party elections, Tanzania restricted the number of candidates to just two. While the reduction in the number of candidates seemed to restrict voter choice, the institutionalization of the stringent candidate vetting process strengthened the party's internal mechanisms and raised the costs of political interference, especially on the part of the president, in the process. By putting in place these mechanisms, the president could maintain a 'hands-off' approach towards these elections thereby creating the perception that he was 'above' the politics of political competition at the local level. By taking the president out of the dynamics of local political competition, the status of elections as purely localized events without any national repercussions was firmly cemented.

The free-for-all pattern of multi-candidate political competition in Kenya opened the door for Daniel Arap Moi, Kenyatta's designated successor, to gradually increase the level of presidential interference to ensure that his preferred candidates emerged victorious. Moi's strategic maneuvers to diminish the hold on power by the Kikuyu economic, political and military elite were to find its way to the electoral arena which had the effect of undermining the referendum nature of these elections. The realization that these elections were not just about the delivery of constituency services, but part of a larger political process that had national significance, soon manifested in the

galvanizing of anti-regime sentiment amongst those who did not like the direction in which national politics and policies were heading.<sup>7</sup> While Moi's status as part of the minority Kalenjin tribe may have forced him to try to minimize the influence of his Kikuyu rivals for power, the popularity and status of the ruling party may not have been as damaged if he had minimized his neo-patrimonial ambitions. After all, Ali Mwinyi's status as a Zanzibari and a Muslim did not result in the weakening of the institutional structures of the CCM in post-Nyerere Tanzania (Samoff, 1987, 173). Here, the leadership variable and its interaction with institutional structures such as the candidate selection process, and in the case of Tanzania, the subsequent installation of a two-term presidential limit after the introduction of multi-party elections, worked in favor of CCM in Tanzania while putting Moi and KANU in a diminished electoral position when multiparty elections were introduced.

Multi-candidate local elections under the KMT in Taiwan fulfilled similar functions of local elite co-optation and regime legitimization through local political participation as the legislative elections in Kenya and Tanzania (Chao and Myers, 2000). But these local elections took on greater significance in Taiwan, especially during the early period of KMT's rule, because of the party's weak local presence. Chiang Kai Shek did not enjoy the political stature of the founding fathers of post-colonial Asia or Africa

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<sup>7</sup> The obvious losers from Moi's maneuvers were the Kikuyu elite which puts into context why Mwai Kibaki, one of Moi's vice-presidents and a Kikuyu leader, decided to challenge Moi in the 1992 and 1997 multi-party elections. Kibaki finally succeeded in defeating Moi's appointed successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, in the 2002 presidential elections.

and in fact, the leadership of the KMT, nearly all of whom were not born on the island of Taiwan, were seen as 'outsiders' or 'Mainlanders' who asserted their political rule over the majority Taiwanese or 'local' population. Hence, these local elections provided the opportunity for the KMT to slowly incorporate local Taiwanese leaders into its party structure as well as to provide the necessary electoral and financial incentives for local non-party elites to establish close ties with the party (Cheng, 1989; Chen, 1996).

The ability of the KMT to control the local factions was undoubtedly enhanced by the electoral system employed in these local elections. The adoption of the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV), whereby voters are given one vote to cast in multimember districts, increased the range of strategic options available to the KMT. Where certain candidates from local non-KMT factions pose a significant electoral challenge, the KMT can reach an electoral agreement by purposely under-nominating the number of party candidates so as not to compete with these factions. Where the strength of different local party factions cannot be easily ascertained, the KMT can allow these factions to compete head on since the multiple seats at stake means that the end result won't be a winner takes all scenario which means that these factions can gain at least some representation but perhaps not as much as they initially thought. It also allows the KMT to punish or reward different factions based on their party loyalties and willingness to cooperate with the KMT because of the KMT's ability to direct voters in its 'vote bank' – comprising mostly of military personnel and government servants – to

vote for certain preferred candidates (or not vote for certain disfavored candidates). The establishment of strong patron-client relationships between these local factions and the KMT leadership through the dispensation of government loans, operating licenses and the unofficial sanctioning of illegal activities such as underground dance clubs and casinos, act as important levers of KMT control over these local factions (Chen, 1996, 176).

The ability of the KMT to play a divide and conquer strategy among the local factions was further cemented by the prohibiting these local factions from operating beyond its county or city borders thereby minimizing the potential that an anti-KMT movement can be organized or mobilized at the national level. The importance of these local factions would only begin to diminish, and even then at a slow rate, after the KMT had managed to build up its own party cadre system and increased the proportion of Taiwanese members and leaders among its ranks.

The experience of the KMT in Taiwan highlights the importance of institutions, in this case the interaction between the electoral system and the party structure, in building and enhancing the electoral and mobilization strength of a dominant party that did not initially have widespread popular support.

### **5.1.3 Malaysia: Intra-Party Elections when incumbency rates are high**

What if incumbency rates in a DPAR are sufficiently high such that elite circulation is not likely to be maintained through multiparty elections? Whereas regimes

in one-party states can afford to let their incumbents lose in one-party multi-candidate elections, DPARs do not have such a luxury in the context of multiparty semi-competitive elections. If too many of their incumbents lose, the very dominance which under-girds the power of these regimes can be threatened. The option of forcing out incumbents who have held a political office for an extended period of time is less attractive because of the political uncertainty associated with such a move. The sidelined leader may decide to contest as an independent candidate or 'sabotage' the campaign of the regime's candidate if he or she is unhappy with the leadership's decision. This could have politically significant consequences especially if the ousted leader remains popular with the voters in his or her former constituency. One strategy adopted by some of the DPARs in order to deal with this problem is to hold intra-party elections as a means to ensure elite circulation.

This strategy is not without its share of political risks. Intra-party elections may sow the seeds for intra-elite struggles that can often find their way to the top of the leadership ranks thereby creating the conditions for a serious elite split within the dominant party. However, if the process is managed well and the negative effects of competition at the top can be minimized – by limiting the occurrence of such contests or by promising the losers side payments in the form of other government or political positions – such elections can be instrumental in ensuring a steady circulation of elites

whose political skills and resources can continually renew the ranks of party leadership at all levels.

The intra-party elections conducted by the individual parties within the BN coalition in Malaysia are a good case in point. Incumbent turnover among the BN office holders due to electoral defeats are rare because of the dominant electoral position of the ruling coalition.<sup>8</sup> Incumbent turnover within the BN is much more likely to occur as a result of voluntary retirement, not being selected by the party leadership to run again, being shifted from a parliamentary to a state seat (or vice versa). Given BN's electoral dominance, it should not be surprising that the arena of political competition shifted from multi-party national elections to intra-party elections. Competition for positions within a party's leadership hierarchy is commonplace among parties in consolidated democracies. Primaries are used to determine candidates who will run for office under the banner of either of the two dominant parties in the United States. Prime Ministers representing their parties in the United Kingdom often face challenges to their leadership from within the ranks of the MPs from his or her party. But such practices seem oddly out of place in the context of an authoritarian regime such as the DPAR in Malaysia.

One has to firstly understand that the structure and organization of intra-party elections within the various parties which are part of the BN coalition are part of a larger

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<sup>8</sup> On average, less than 10% of incumbent candidates who seek re-election are defeated.

and much more complex political system whereby the distribution of power between and within these parties is maintained based on agreements which were established at various critical junctures in the history of the ruling coalition.<sup>9</sup> While the balance of power between the parties is rarely changed, the balance of power within the parties is subject to a greater degree of uncertainty as a result of heated intra-party elections, especially within the ranks of the two largest component and hence, the two most important, parties within the BN namely, UMNO and MCA (also the two founding members of the Alliance).

A brief description of the structure of intra-party elections is needed at this juncture in order to establish the political offices at stake during these elections. The lowest organizational unit within the party is the branch which has a minimum membership requirement of approximately 50 people. An individual who aspires to extract spoils from one of these parties within the ruling coalition would not have much trouble establishing a branch and subsequently getting elected as the branch's leader. Branch leaders have the power to elect division leaders, a coveted and powerful position, especially within the UMNO hierarchy. Each division comprises of 35 to 150

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<sup>9</sup> These critical junctures and their impact on the distribution of power within the BN will be discussed in the relevant sections in this chapter.

branches depending on the geographical area of a division (Divisions covering a larger area have more branches).<sup>10</sup>

The division is arguably the most important organizational unit within a party because of its correspondence with the boundaries of a parliamentary seat (and the state seats within a parliamentary seat since the area covered by a state seat cannot be divided among two or more parliamentary seats). The number of divisions within a party is thus governed by the number of parliamentary seats in the country, which as we shall later see, changes after every decennial delimitation exercise. The leadership of a division is coveted because these office holders are well positioned to lobby to become candidates to an elected office, usually at the parliamentary level, or at the very least, at the state level. Since UMNO, courtesy of its dominant position within the ruling coalition, has the largest allocation of seats at the parliamentary and state levels, it is not surprising that the contests at the divisional level are also the most heated among all the BN parties. UMNO divisional leaders often leverage their influence on the delegates, who are eligible to vote in the national party elections, especially those within their division with access to patronage and non-elected government positions. Hence, even division

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<sup>10</sup> UMNO also have separate divisions or 'wings' for male members below the age of 35 (UMNO Youth), female members below the age of 35 (UMNO Puteri) and female members above the age of 35 (UMNO Wanita). Since most of the party's leadership comes from body of members who are not part of the above mentioned 'wings', I use 'he' as a reference to the elected leaders of UMNO. Similar structures exist for the other BN component parties – most of them have a women's wing and a youth wing.



contests in parliamentary seats which are not held by UMNO become the area for closely contested and often malicious intra-party elections.

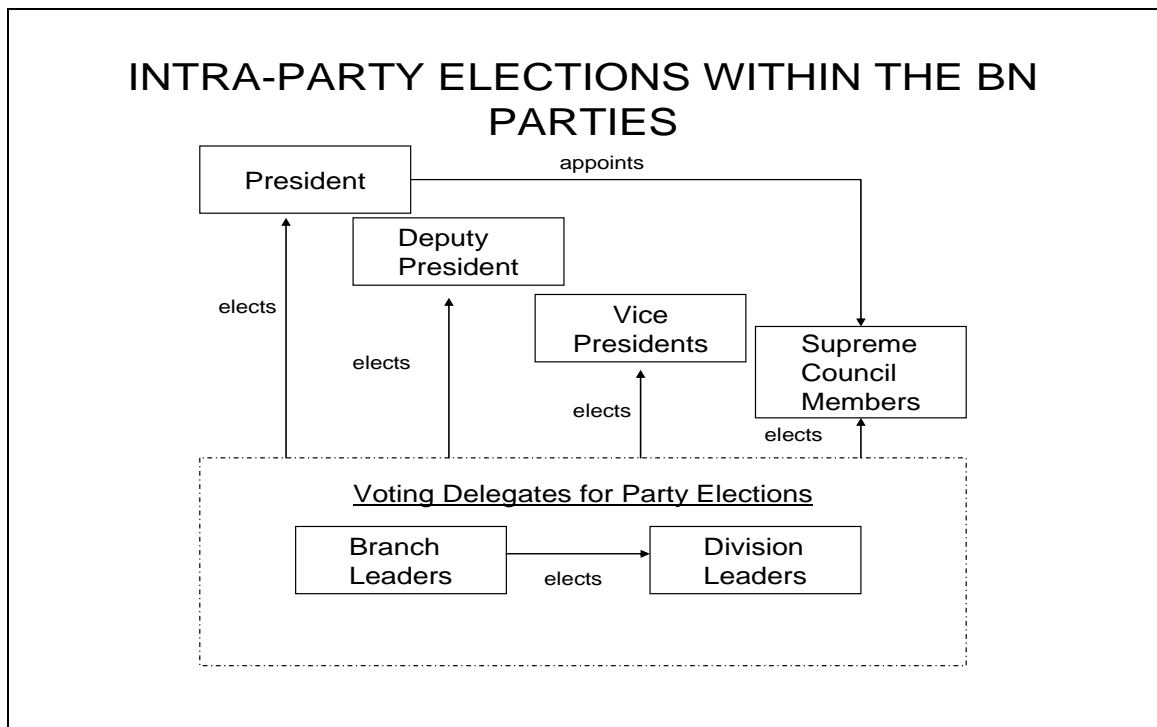
Each division sends its office holders at both division and branch levels to the party's national elections. Each branch is also eligible to send additional representatives of one per 50 branch members. These office holders and branch representatives make up the two thousand odd delegates who then go on to cast their votes for various positions within the party hierarchy at the national level. The positions at stake during these intra-party elections are, in order of decreasing importance, the president, deputy president, vice presidents and supreme council members<sup>11</sup>. Figure 6 below summarizes the structure of these intra-party elections within the individual component parties that comprise the ruling BN coalition.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Supreme council is the term used by UMNO. MCA and the other BN parties use the term central committee. They denote essentially the same position within the party hierarchy.

<sup>12</sup> The number of elected and appointed positions and the procedures governing the nominations process differs from party to party but these do not affect the basis structure of party elections outlined in Figure 5.1.

Figure 6: Structure of intra-party elections within the BN parties



The position of president and deputy president of UMNO are of greater political significance since the accepted convention within the party and within the larger BN coalitional framework is that these two office holders would also be the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia respectively. In other words, UMNO elections have the power to decide who become the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of the country. Given the political repercussions of these two offices within UMNO, the party leadership usually goes to great lengths to avoid contests for these positions although such attempts, as we shall later see, are not always successful.

In contrast, elections for the three vice-president positions and the twenty five elected supreme council positions are usually fiercely contested affairs. Accusations of vote buying including offers of government contracts and overseas holidays as well as vicious mud-slinging and slander are regular features of such contests. In fact, the uncertainty over outcomes in some of these contests have led many to observe that UMNO elections are more exciting and in many ways, of greater political significance, than the general elections in Malaysia.<sup>13</sup>

Broadly speaking, there are two main paths by which the circulation of political elites is expedited by the intra-party elections, especially within UMNO. A political elite who fails to gain access to national office becomes political vulnerable because his electoral weakness sends a strong signal to the party leadership that other more popular leaders can step into his shoes without incurring the risk of a grassroots backlash. Cabinet ministers or state cabinet members often find themselves being replaced by more electorally successful elites after these party elections.

The other renewal path occurs when the party leadership, usually the Prime Minister, attempts to weaken the political standing of a political rival or an elite who has fallen out of favor by removing him as a cabinet minister or a state cabinet member before the party elections. Since these intra-party elections, especially within UMNO, are often costly affairs, the removal from this high position of political office reduces the

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<sup>13</sup> That is up until the most recent election in 2008.

resource mobilization capacity of the political elite in question which then decreases his ability to garner sufficient number of votes to win a position in national office. Furthermore, by removing a political elite from his position of high office, the party leadership is sending a strong signal to the voting delegates that this person is no longer seen in a favorable light which decreases the incentive for delegates to vote for him. Delegates know that such a signal means that it is unlikely that this person would be given a cabinet position at the national or state even if he manages to win a position in national office because he cannot credibly promise the dispensation of patronage by virtue of his cabinet position post-election. In other words, pressures from below interacting with pressures from above act in cohesion to expedite the process of elite circulation.

Ensuring sufficient opportunities for elite circulation is especially important within UMNO because UMNO politicians hold a disproportionate number of government positions within BN's power sharing framework. Courtesy of its dominant position within the BN, UMNO politicians comprise approximately 60% of BN MPs, 70% of BN state assemblymen, 2/3rds of cabinet positions, 2/3rds of state cabinet positions and 10 chief minister (the equivalent of a governor) positions. National party elections act as a pressure release mechanism for the already existing factional tensions and struggles within the party. These elections are the closest thing to a 'free and fair' method of determining the popularity of the various leaders within UMNO. If the

electoral process within UMNO is rigged to the extent that there is a minimal amount of elite circulation, then it is possible that the consistently losing elites may use this issue as a means to solve its collective action problems to challenge the incumbent leadership with perhaps the threat of defecting from the party as a bloc. But in the context of relatively free and fair intra-party elections, even if the eventual losers may be unhappy with the result and the campaign tactics of their intra-party rivals, they would accept their losses as part and parcel of the rules of the game. From this perspective, one can see how the institutionalization of the rules governing intra-party elections decreases the probability of elite defection.

This is not to say that the component parties within the BN have always been successful in preventing elite defections. Two intense intra-elite battles which occurred at the end of the 1980s and the end of the 1990s did result in elite defections from within UMNO. The first elite defection occurred as a result of a closely contested UMNO election which split the party into two equally powerful factions led by Mahathir Mohamed, the then Prime Minister, and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who was once Malaysia's Finance Minister and one of the three candidates vying for the Prime Minister's position after the death of the country's third premier, Hussein Onn. The electoral setbacks faced by Tengku Razaleigh's party, Semangat 46 or S46, which he formed after his failed bid at the UMNO presidency, as well as his eventual return to UMNO, will be discussed in a later section in this chapter. The political consequences of

the second elite split, caused by the controversial sacking, conviction and subsequent imprisonment of Anwar Ibrahim, the then Deputy Prime Minister, during the Asian economic crisis in 1998 will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Mahathir, in the aftermath of his close win against Tengku Razaleigh, introduced an incumbent protection mechanism in the UMNO party electoral process, in order to prevent a repeat of a debilitating contest for the top post within UMNO. For each nomination received by a candidate for the position of president or deputy president, he would receive 10 bonus votes. Hence, an incumbent Prime Minister who receives 70% of division nominations would have an almost 800 vote lead on his rival (assuming that the other 30% goes to one rival candidate) entering into party elections where approximately 2500 votes will be cast by party delegates (Case, 1994). The political risk of nominating a candidate other than the incumbent Prime Minister at the division level is much higher than voting as a delegate for a rival candidate since the former has to be done in public while the latter is done via secret balloting. Hence, an incumbent Prime Minister and his Deputy, would have a vote advantage heading into any party election where they are being challenged.

The expectation that the bonus vote would work in favor of the incumbent was challenged, to an extent, in the 1993 UMNO elections. The 1993 Deputy President contest featured the rapidly rising Anwar Ibrahim and the then incumbent Ghafar Baba. The politically astute and charismatic Anwar 'steamrolled' Ghafar Baba when Anwar

captured so many nominations, that he took an almost unassailable lead courtesy of the bonus votes. In somewhat of an ironic fashion, Anwar's fast rise to the top of the party leadership, which was viewed with suspicion on the part of Mahathir, was hastened by the very rules introduced by Mahathir to protect the top two incumbents within the party leadership. In this sense, the bonus votes had the effect of protecting the more popular candidate, in this case Anwar, from being challenged! In the face of this unexpected result, the rules of the nominations game would once again be changed in the following UMNO election in 1998.

The bonus vote system was changed to a system with various threshold requirements for participation in the elections. An aspiring candidate is required to obtain a minimum number of division nominations to be eligible to contest the position in question. A 30%, 20%, 10% and 5% requirement was introduced for the positions of the president, deputy president, vice-president and supreme council members respectively. Since a division could nominate as many candidates as there were positions available for each contest, the 10% and 5% thresholds for one of the three Vice President and one of the 20 Supreme Council positions were not difficult to achieve. But because one division could only nominate a single candidate for the positions of the president and his deputy, the 20% and 30% thresholds were not easy to fulfill. A division leader and his followers could run the risk of being cut off from UMNO's patronage machine if they nominated someone else for the position of the presidency,

because of the power of the Prime Minister's office – enhanced over the many years of Mahathir's rule.<sup>14</sup>

There was a clear recognition on the part of Mahathir that rules do matter and that the power of the Prime Minister's office and personal charisma were not sufficient to prevent a contest at the top of the leadership hierarchy. At the same time, he also recognized that he could not afford to create an overly pro-incumbent environment for the contests outside the top two positions, which explains the lower thresholds for the vice-presidential and supreme council member positions.

The fact that only once in the six UMNO party elections post-1987 has there been a contest for one of the top two posts within the party (and this was for the deputy president's position) is probably a vindication of Mahathir's strategy of introducing these rules to avoid contestation at the top of the leadership hierarchy.<sup>15</sup>

Other parties within the BN also changed the rules governing access to the top positions within their party hierarchies after serious intra-elite battles. The MCA, the second largest component party within the BN, revised its party constitution in 2005 to limit the person holding the office of the president to a maximum of three terms or nine

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<sup>14</sup> In contrast to the top two positions, a division could afford to spread its electoral support among a more 'balanced' slate of candidates for the vice-president and supreme council member positions.

<sup>15</sup> The 1993 deputy president contest featured the rapidly rising Anwar Ibrahim and the then incumbent Ghafar Baba. The political astute and charismatic Anwar steamrolled Ghafar Baba by capturing so many division nominations that the latter was forced to withdraw his candidacy. In somewhat of an ironic fashion, Anwar's fast rise to the top of the party leadership, which was viewed with suspicion on the part of Mahathir, was hastened by the very rules introduced by Mahathir to protect the top two incumbents within the party leadership. In this sense, the bonus votes had the effect of protecting the more popular candidate, in this case Anwar, from being challenged!



years. This amendment was introduced after a particularly divisive battle among the top two office holders within the MCA featuring Ling Liong Sik, who was the then president, and his deputy, Lim Ah Lek. Both leaders were 'persuaded' by Mahathir to step down at the same time to make way for their preferred successors. The new president of MCA, Ong Ka Ting, then made an electoral pact with his deputy, Chan Kong Choy, whereby the latter promised to not contest against the former for the office of the president in exchange for the term limit amendment. While the prospects of a possible intra-elite split within the MCA leading to a formation of an opposition party was and still is very unlikely (a point of discussion in a later section), the introduction of term limits clearly demonstrates the recognition by the MCA leaders that the institutionalization of the rules of the game governing elections or succession, in this case, is an important mechanism for minimizing intra-elite conflict and for ensuring elite circulation.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, the use of intra-party elections as a way to ensure elite circulation and to minimize elite defections avoids the problems associated with having such elections within a single party in the context of a multiethnic electorate. If the BN comprised of just one party with roughly the same ethnic composition as the population, intra-party contests would almost certainly involve the mobilization of ethnic sentiment in a

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<sup>16</sup> The MCA would subsequently introduce similar term limits for their cabinet ministers at the national and state levels.

manner that would be destructive to the internal cohesion of the BN. By having separate elections within parties which are mostly ethnically homogenous in their membership compositions, the BN minimizes the salience of ethnic issues as a campaign strategy. In comparison, national party elections within KANU in Kenya, when Moi was in power, would most certainly have increased ethnic polarization and brought forth the underlying feelings of unhappiness among the marginalized Kikuyu elites and those who were displeased with the previous level of Kikuyu domination (Throup and Hornsby, 1998). On the contrary, the use of national party elections among the individual parties within the BN largely avoided such an outcome.

#### **5.1.4 Egypt: using general elections as primaries**

Not all DPARs are sufficiently well-institutionalized to allow for relatively free and fair party elections whereby the pattern of political competition among the elites can benefit from having such elections. The Kenyan example serves as a cautionary reminder. In some cases, intra party elections may not be the best method in which local elites can be incorporated into the dominant party. In such cases, elite defections during elections can actually work in favor of the dominant party as long as these 'defectors' can be co-opted back into the system. Under such circumstances, legislative elections effectively serve as party primaries. Parliamentary elections in Egypt come closest to this description.

Egypt only recently held its first multiparty elections for the position of the president. Not surprisingly, the 2005 presidential elections were conducted under circumstances that heavily favored the NDP incumbent, Hosni Mubarak, including restrictive conditions which prevented a candidate representing the popular Muslim Brotherhood from running (Sharp, 2005; Meital 2006).<sup>17</sup>

Nonetheless, Egypt has a much longer tradition of elections at the parliamentary level that extends back to the period where Sadat was in power.<sup>18</sup> While the conduct of these elections was far from free and fair, they allowed for the election of opposition candidates including those who were well-known affiliates of the banned Muslim Brotherhood, arguably the most popular opposition party in Egypt (if it were allowed to organize itself as an official political party). In each of these parliamentary elections, the ruling NDP was faced with the task of selecting the most suitable candidate to run in a particular district.<sup>19</sup> But for some reason, the NDP's selection process was not successful in terms of choosing the 'best' candidate. Many of its candidates were defeated by independent candidates who had failed to obtain the backing of the NDP during the

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<sup>17</sup> A candidate for the presidency would be required to obtain the endorsement of at least 250 members of the People's Assembly, the Advisory Council and the local councils. Parties would be allowed to submit a candidate on their behalf if they had been active for at least five years and their representatives held at least 5% of the seats in the People's Assembly and Advisory Council (Meital, 2006, 272). Since the Brotherhood is not recognized as a political party, the independent members of the People's Assembly which are affiliated to the Brotherhood cannot group together as a party to nominate a candidate from within its ranks.

<sup>18</sup> See Brownlee (2007) for a more extensive discussion on the history of elections in Egypt.

<sup>19</sup> Egypt employs a district based electoral system where two candidates, one of whom must be a worker or farmer, are elected from each of the 222 districts. Since the elections for the two type of candidates are held separately, it becomes, in effect, a first past the post electoral system, with a majority runoff provision.

selection process. Instead of choosing to punish these defectors and run the risk of them turning to the opposition, the NDP decided to use a co-optation strategy whereby most, if not all, of the successful defectors were accepted back into the party or recognized as NDP independents, if you will (Posusney, 2002; Blaydes, 2008). Since the NDP was in no danger of losing the all important post of the presidency and since its majority control of the parliament was never in danger, especially given the divisions within the opposition parties, it was able to effectively use the parliamentary elections to determine exactly which of its candidates had the most electoral support at the local level and then co-opt those who had defected from the party, to run as independents, back into the party.

This is not to say that Mubarak did not recognize the importance of electoral regulations in the building of a dominant party and consolidating his already significant hold on power. Mubarak, in a move that would be later repeated by Putin and Nazarbayez, introduced a list-PR electoral system with a high 8% threshold for the 1984 parliamentary elections as a way to prevent the election of independent candidates, many of whom were aligned to the Muslim Brotherhood. This would inevitably have strengthened party's control over the candidate selection and contestation process since potential defectors would not have the option of running as independents. However, this change was found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Constitutional Court because it denied the right for independents to seek public office (Makram-Ebeid, 1989). Thus, parliamentary elections in what were in effect single member districts as primary

elections were a second best option. It allowed some candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood, who ran as independents, to win office but also had the advantage of co-opting the most popular local elites who were aligned to the NDP. The successful co-optation of these NDP independents increased the control of the legislative to more than 70% of total seats on more than one occasion (Posusney, 2002).

As long as the NDP remains successful in co-opting these elite defectors and as long as the losing NDP candidates do not defect to the opposition, this strategy will continue to be successful from the perspective of co-opting elites as well as allowing for a steady circulation of elites within the ruling regime.<sup>20</sup>

### **5.1.5 Japan: Factions as ‘parties’ within a party**

Perhaps no other dominant party regime has been as successful as the LDP in Japan in institutionalizing intra-party factions as a means of ensuring elite circulation and incentivizing elites from leaving the party. The LDP, unlike most of the DPARs discussed earlier and in previous chapters, did not resort to restrictions on civil liberties and political rights to maintain its electoral dominance. However, the LDP, like many of the other DPARs, still had to manage the potential problem of elite defections and serious factional infighting. Interestingly, the same electoral system that would enhance the prospects of the creation and consolidation of factions within the LDP would also act

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<sup>20</sup> Such a strategy would not work in the Malaysian context for example. An UMNO defector who then defeats a candidate from another BN component party could not be accepted back into the ruling coalition because it will contravene the vote-pooling agreement between the BN parties.

in the dominant party's favor in terms of structuring factional competition within the larger electoral framework.<sup>21</sup> The SNTV electoral system, which has a long history of usage in Japan, and later adopted by Taiwan and Korea<sup>22</sup>, increases the likelihood of intra-party competition since candidates from the same party have to compete over the same pool of voters in multi-member districts (Grofman, 1999). In the context of elections featuring a dominant party regime, the length of time in which the dominant party in question is in power allows for the gradual consolidation of factions around different leaders with their respective support bases.<sup>23</sup> Over time, the personalization of SNTV contests increases the campaigning costs for the individual candidates but more so for the LDP candidates because they usually have to face multiple candidates from their own party in a multimember district, as opposed to the smaller parties that usually nominate a smaller number of candidates who also rely much more on the strength of their party labels to attract votes. The increasing campaigning costs create even more pressure for a candidate to align himself with a certain faction because faction leaders can often promise campaign funds to the candidates aligned to them (Fukui and Fukai, 1999).

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<sup>21</sup> The impact of the electoral system on the marginalization of the opposition parties will be discussed in a subsequent section.

<sup>22</sup> See Grofman et al (1999) for an excellent discussion on the effects of SNTV on political competition in these countries.

<sup>23</sup> Factions in other democratic countries where government turnovers are common are much more fluid since they can and usually will be reconfigured during transitions in power. The absence of SNTV also decreases the incentives for forming explicit factions since this may give the impression to the electorate that a party cannot govern as a cohesive unit.

Factions were institutionalized within the LDP soon after its establishment in 1955, 'each with its own head office, staff, campaign organization, sources of funds, and a sort of "shadow cabinet" for government and party posts' (Tetsuya, 1992, 165). The electoral incentives for such factional groups to form around powerful politicians who aspire to reach the position of Prime Minister was increased by the adoption of the electoral system to elect the LDP president – which is a majority run-off system whereby only LDP politicians who are also members of the Diet (lower house) are eligible to vote. Given this electoral system, it is easy to see why it is in the interest of these leading politicians to gather around themselves as many parliamentarians as possible in order to be elected as LDP president. The more parliamentarians within a faction, the more powerful that faction and the more likely that the leader of this faction will be elected as the LDP's president, and by virtue of the LDP's electorally dominant position, be made the country's Prime Minister. The electoral arena then, acts as an indirect primary in which candidates representing different factions contest against each other. The leader of the faction emerging with the largest number of parliamentarians then puts himself in a very favorable position to be selected as the country's Prime Minister.<sup>24</sup>

One may assume that the intense factional battles would naturally lead to a winner takes all result in which the successful LDP candidate who is chosen as its

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<sup>24</sup> Of course, the leader of the largest faction does not always become the Prime Minister because of the complex bargaining system in the 'smoke filled rooms' where such decisions are made and also because of the role of prominent behind the scenes 'kingmakers' within the party.

president and hence the country's Prime Minister would want to reward his faction's members by allocating to them as many cabinet positions as is necessary to maintain his position as LDP head. This was the approach adopted by many of the Prime Ministers in the early days of LDP rule but was soon changed because it led to many instable cabinets as a result of attempts by the losing factions to unseat the Prime Minister. As the LDP's electoral dominance waned over time, the threat of defection from a faction became more and more credible. To minimize this possibility and to increase the longevity of a Prime Minister and his cabinet, the LDP implemented rules to ensure that cabinet positions are allocated more or less in proportion to the strength of each individual faction (Junnosuke, 1992; Boissou, 2001).

The presence of factions within the LDP also makes it easier for individual defectors from the party, who ran as independents, or conservative independents who have their own local support base, to rejoin or join the party. These independents are quickly co-opted into one of the various factions within the party (Reed and Bolland, 1999). From this perspective, Japan is similar to Egypt in that parliamentary elections also act as primaries wherein independent candidates can throw their hats into the ring with the expectation that they will be asked to join the ranks of the dominant party.

Hence, over time, the LDP has demonstrated remarkable flexibility in adopting new rules and approaches in order to govern political competition among the different factions within its ranks, to allow for elite circulation at different levels of the party's



hierarchy, co-opt independent candidates and ensure an equitable distribution of cabinet positions as a way of minimizing the risk of an elite split. It was only when a compromise could not be found among the ranks of the LDP leaders over the issue of electoral reform prior to the 1993 general election that a serious intra-elite split would occur. This split eventually led to the LDP being ousted from power for a period of nine months, the first time since 1995 in which an LDP leader did not hold the office of the Prime Minister of Japan.

### **5.1.6 The leadership variable**

In this section, I have demonstrated the importance of institutional mechanisms in creating and maintaining an electoral infrastructure whereby elites are incentivized to remain within or join the dominant party because of the prospects of elite circulation. Different DPARs operating under different political circumstances use different institutional mechanisms in order to achieve this objective. Elite circulation ensures that there are sufficient opportunities for new elites to access the political system while the institutionalization of the rules of the game increases the probability that the losers within the dominant party will grudgingly accept the outcomes of political contests, whether they are intra-party elections or legislative elections which act as primaries for the dominant party in question.

However, one variable which concerns elite circulation but cannot be explained using institutional mechanisms is the leadership variable. This recurring theme that

cannot be 'rationally' explained, that is, why certain leaders of dominant party regimes choose to step down as the leaders of these parties, and more so when their popularity among the electorate is still relatively high. A single systematic and consistent explanatory factor such as age, education or background cannot be attributed for these leadership decisions. Perhaps the most that can be said is that these leaders demonstrated remarkable self-restraint and self-awareness in choosing to prioritize a stable succession of power over self-aggrandizement. In the end, after much discussion about historical legacies and political cleavages and so on, this may be all we can say in regard to why Nyerere decided to hand over the reins of power to Mwinyi while Hastings Banda choose to hold on to power when Malawi achieved its independence in 1964 till when he was defeated in the return to multiparty elections in 1994. Perhaps the same can be said of Lazaro Cardenas' decision not to seek an additional six year term as Mexico's President when his term ended in 1940, and of Lee Kuan Yew's decision to step down as the Prime Minister of Singapore in 1990.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the fact that there are no well defined institutional mechanisms that spell out the succession process at the top of the leadership hierarchy for most DPARs, and by

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<sup>25</sup> Although one may argue that Lee Kuan Yew never really diminished his hold on power since he became the Senior Minister after his resignation as Prime Minister and would subsequently be named Minister Mentor in 2004 when his successor, Goh Chok Tong, stepped down as Prime Minister and replaced Lee Kuan Yew as Senior Minister. Both positions – the position of Senior Minister and later that of Minister Mentor – were created to ensure that Lee still have a position within the government. Even in light of the fact that Goh was replaced by Lee Hsien Loong, the eldest son of Lee Kuan Yew, one cannot deny the degree in which Lee Kuan Yew had institutionalized the organizational structure and internal party mechanisms of his ruling People's Action Party (PAP). While the luster of the PAP may be somewhat dimmed after the passing of Lee Kuan Yew, one does not expect the hold of PAP's power to be seriously threatened.

extension, the head of government or the head of state, this does not mean that such mechanisms do not exist at the lower levels of leadership. As this section has demonstrated, such institutional mechanisms have been put in place by most DPARs to ensure that there is a sufficient degree of elite circulation.

Furthermore, the lack of formal succession mechanisms at the top does not preclude the use of other institutional mechanisms that increase the costs of elite defection. By decreasing the probability that an elite who defects from the party can make electoral gains outside the confines of the dominant party, these mechanisms act as the 'stick' for potential defecting elites as compared to the 'carrots' of elite circulation discussed in this section. It is to these 'sticks' that we turn to in the following section.

## ***5.2 Increasing electoral dominance using electoral regulations***

The previous section examined some of the institutional mechanisms used by various DPARs to provide positive incentives for political elites to remain within the ranks of their respective parties. While many leaders of these DPARs recognize the importance of these positive incentives, they are perhaps even more aware of the importance of establishing certain mechanisms to punish elite defectors. Former elites may suddenly find themselves facing the short end of the stick when the instruments of the state – false accusations, threats of arrests and imprisonment, police harassment, corruption investigations, defamatory lawsuits – are used against them. These threats obviously increase the cost of defection from the ruling party but some elites may still

elect to defect if they expect to be able to make a significant electoral impact contesting as an opposition candidate or as an opposition party, if a group of elites decide to defect together. DPAR leaders recognize this potential threat and as a result, most of them, in addition to using the repressive instruments of the state, would erect electoral barriers which make it much more difficult for potential defectors to have a significant electoral impact once they are outside the confines of the dominant party. This section will discuss the importance of these instruments in maintaining the electoral dominance of various DPARs.

Of course, the installation of these electoral barriers which tilt the electoral playing field in favor of the incumbent regime is carried out with the more general purpose of increasing the winning majority in each election. Introducing electoral mechanisms to disadvantage the opposition and to deter elite defections are often two sides of the same coin. But in some cases, as we shall shortly see, some of these electoral barriers are designed with the specific purpose of increasing the hurdles that have to be crossed in order to solve the collective action problem of a defecting group. In other words, the potential of some groups to defect is identified in advanced as being higher than that of other groups and the electoral barriers are then designed with this in mind.

### **5.2.1 Gerrymandering, Malapportionment and Seat Allocation in Malaysia**

Perhaps one of the most complex system of allocating power and positions within a DPAR exists in the BN coalition in Malaysia. Given the complexity of this

system, I shall expend a little more time in discussing interaction between gerrymandering, malapportionment and the allocation of seats and the roles which they play in increasing the electoral dominance of the BN as well as creating disincentives for elite defection.

In Chapter 2, I described the genesis of the Alliance coalition as a result of the fortuitous sequencing of municipal elections before the elections at the federal level, and the recognition on the part of ethnic elites with UMNO and MCA of the benefits of vote pooling. Contrary to the popular perception<sup>26</sup> that the ruling coalition's electoral dominance has not been challenged until recently, the path towards building the dominant BN coalition was not always a smooth one. The unexpected failure of the Alliance to obtain a two thirds parliamentary majority in Peninsular Malaysia in the 1969 general elections forced the ruling coalition to reconfigure its structure. The number of parties within the ruling coalition was increased as a result of the addition of a number of then opposition parties.<sup>27</sup> The reconfiguration of the ruling coalition, renamed the BN, and the subsequent constituency delimitation exercises, would firmly cement its electorally dominant position at the national and state levels, and would further increase the already dominant position of the largest component party within the BN, namely UMNO.

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<sup>26</sup> Here I am referring to scholars who may not be aware of the history of how the coalition was expanded beyond the initial three parties.

<sup>27</sup> I will discuss the specifics of the co-optation of these opposition parties in the next chapter.

It would be a mistake to attribute BN's electoral dominance purely as a result of the 'manufactured majority' or the 'seat bonus effect' of a first past the post (FPTP) in single member district (SMD) electoral system. While it is true that the BN would enjoy a seat bonus effect even if the delimitation exercise was conducted in a transparent manner under an independent Elections Commission (EC)<sup>28</sup>, I will demonstrate that the manipulation of the delimitation exercise has been instrumental in increasing the seat bonus effect enjoyed by the BN which also acts as a key component of the 'glue' that holds the ruling coalition together.

The gross levels of malapportionment that have remained part of the electoral landscape until today had its origins in how the boundary lines were drawn for the fifty-two constituencies at stake in the 1955 pre-independence legislative elections.

The boundary lines for these fifty-two constituencies were drawn by the Merthyr Commission without access to figures for the number of electors by state. It was 'obliged to work with total population statistics' instead (Rachagan 1993, 53). One of the terms given to the Merthyr Commission was that the rural constituencies could be as small as one half of the size of their more populous urban counterparts (Lee and Ong, 1987, 119) but since figures for the number of registered voters by constituency was not available to the Commission at the time when the boundary lines were drawn, the eventual constituencies featured gross malapportionment. The ratio of the largest to the smallest

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<sup>28</sup> This is, until the most recent general election in 2008.

constituency in terms of the number of registered voters in the 1955 Federal elections was 5.9 (46,221 voters to 7,835 voters), far exceeding the 2 to 1 ratio allowed for under the terms of the Merthyr Commission.

The Reid Commission, an independent commission tasked with the drafting of the constitution of the Federation of Malaya, recognized this 'grossly inadequate delimitation' (Rachagan, 1993, 54) and proceeded to limit 'disparities among constituencies to within 15 per cent above or below the average constituency electorate in each state' (Lim, 2002, 106). This 15 percent deviation was 'permitted to give due allowance for (a) the distribution of the different communities and (b) the differences in density of population and the means of communication' (Rachagan, 1993, 55).

But the stipulations set by the Reid Commission were never allowed to come into effect. The fifty-two constituencies in the 1955 Federal elections were simply divided into two constituencies each in the first post independence general election in 1959. The high level of malapportionment from the 1955 Federal elections was thus inherited in the 1959 general election.

The first post-independence delimitation exercise, finalized in 1960, would have resulted in a marked reduction in voter disparity among the new constituencies. But it was rejected by UMNO because it would have given greater electoral weight or importance in the next election in 1964 to urban non-Malay electors who had deserted

the Alliance for the opposition in 1959 (Lim, 2002, 108).<sup>29</sup> The independent minded election commission was subsequently removed from his position and the 15% deviation limit was also removed. Hence, the 1974 delimitation exercise, conducted after the difficult 1969 general elections whereby the then Alliance lost significant electoral ground among the non-Malay majority seats, did not feature any maximum deviation limits (as were the three subsequent delimitation exercises in 1984, 1994 and 2003). Not surprisingly, this delimitation exercise significantly increased the level of Malay over-representation as well as the level of malapportionment. Table 9 below shows the increase of Malay over-representation from approximately 1.8% in 1969 to 11.7% in 1974, a level that was more or less maintained in subsequent delimitation exercises.

**Table 9: Measuring Malay over-representation in parliamentary constituencies, Peninsular Malaysia**

Year	% Malay Majority Seats	% Malay Voters	Malay Over-Representation
1969	57.7%	55.9%	1.8%
1974	69.3%	57.6%	11.7%
1986	69.7%	55.4%	14.3%
1995	69.4%	56.6%	12.9%
2004	68.5%	57.3%	11.2%

Tables 10 and 11 provide an indication of the levels of malapportionment before and after each of the four post-independence delimitation exercises for Peninsular Malaysia.

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<sup>29</sup> UMNO would also have been disadvantaged since the non-Malay parties in the then Alliance would have a greater claim on these urban and mostly non-Malay seats.



**Table 10: Percentage of Constituencies which deviate from the Electoral Quota by more than 15%, Peninsular Malaysia, pre and post delimitation**

Year	Before Delimitation	After Delimitation
1974	46.2%	52.6%
1984	74.6%	62.1%
1994	67.4%	60.4%
2003	63.9%	64.8%

Source: Delimitation Exercise Reports of 1974, 1984, 1994 and 2003<sup>30</sup>

**Table 11: Malapportionment using the Loosemore-Hansby Index, Peninsular Malaysia, pre and post delimitation**

Year	PreDelimitation	PostDelimitation
1974	0.094	0.099
1984	0.146	0.112
1994	0.120	0.099
2003	0.113	0.124

Source: Delimitation Exercise Reports of 1974, 1984, 1994 and 2003<sup>31</sup>

Table 10 calculates the percentage of seats which deviate by the electoral quota – which is obtained by dividing the total number of voters by the total number of parliamentary constituencies – by more than 15%, the maximum limit set by the Reid Commission. The proportion of seats deviating by more than this limit, at an already high 46% before the 1974 delimitation exercise, actually increased to 53% post-delimitation, a reflection of the creation of a disproportionate number of under-

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<sup>30</sup> The figures for the 2003 delimitation exercise do not include the Putrajaya parliamentary constituency which at the time of the delimitation, only had 85 registered voters.

<sup>31</sup> The figures for the 2003 delimitation exercise do not include the Putrajaya parliamentary constituency which at the time of the delimitation, only had 85 registered voters.

populated Malay majority seats. The 1984 and 1994 decreased the percentage of seats deviating by this maximum limit, but not by much. The post-delimitation percentages were 62% and 60% respectively. The percentage deviating by more than 15% would increase to 64% of seats after the 2003 delimitation exercise.

Table 11 shows an alternative way of measuring malapportionment – the Loosemore-Hansby Index.<sup>32</sup> This measurement is an improvement on the maximum deviation measure in Table 5.2 in that it takes into account the extent to which each individual constituency deviates from the electoral quota instead of merely calculating if a seat deviates from the maximum limit or not. The LH-Index has an intuitive interpretation – it calculates the proportion of voters (or population) which needs to be shifted so that malapportionment can be reduced to zero (or achieving the one-man-one-vote principle). The LH-Index increased post-delimitation for the delimitation exercises in 1974 and 2003 and decreased post-delimitation for the delimitation exercises in 1984 and 1994, confirming the measurements in Table 5.2.

The LH-Index allows for levels of malapportionment to be compared across countries (Samuels and Snyder, 2001). The level of malapportionment in Peninsular Malaysia requires 10% to 12% of voters to be shifted (depending on the delimitation

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<sup>32</sup> The formula for malapportionment is the following:  $MAL = (1/2) \sum |S_i - V_i|$  where  $S_i$  is the percentage of all seats allocated to district  $i$ , and  $V_i$  is the percentage of overall population (or registered voters) belonging to district  $i$ .

exercise).<sup>33</sup> In comparison, the level of malapportionment in Australia, Canada, India, the United Kingdom and the United States, all of which employ single district electoral systems, were 2.5% (2007), 8% (2008), 7.7% (2004), 4.7% (2005) and 1.3% (2000) respectively. The level of malapportionment in Malaysia is clearly above those of democratic countries using a similar electoral system.

The electoral impact of the delimitation exercise can be examined by comparing the average seat bonus effect enjoyed by the BN over the past 12 general elections with the seat bonus effect of non-democratic countries using the same electoral system. The results are summarized in Table 12 below.

**Table 12: Seat Bonus in Non-Democratic countries using FPTP in SMD compared to Malaysia**

Country	Year	% Seats	% of Votes	Seat Bonus
Bangladesh	2008	76.7	49.0	27.7
Bhutan	2008	93.6	67.0	26.6
Gambia	2007	87.5	59.7	27.8
Kenya	2002	58.9	56.1	2.8
Madagascar	2002	66.0	34.3	31.7
Malawai	1999	48.4	47.3	1.1
Mongolia	2004	48.7	48.2	0.5
Pakistan	2008	31.6	30.6	1.0
Sierra Leone	2007	52.7	40.8	11.9
Tanzania	2005	88.8	70.0	18.8
Zambia	2006	48.7	38.4	10.3
Zimbabwe	2008	47.6	42.9	4.7
<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Avg</i>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>23.8</b>

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<sup>33</sup> Including the seats in Sabah and Sarawak, most of which have far fewer voters than the average seat in Peninsular Malaysia, would raise the malapportionment measure for Malaysia to approximately 0.16 i.e.16% of voters need to be shifted to get rid of malapportionment.

Source: Election Commission websites of the different countries

The BN's seat bonus is relatively high even when compared to non-democratic countries (countries which are rated as Partly Free and Not Free by Freedom House) as Table 5.4 above illustrates. Only four out of the twelve countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Gambia and Madagascar) have seat bonuses which are higher than Malaysia's twelve year average.

The source of this seat bonus can be revealed by breaking down the seat bonus enjoyed by the BN according to the type of constituency.

According to Table 12, the average seat bonus enjoyed by the BN was 23.8% over the past 12 general elections. But when the seat bonus effect is broken down by the type of ethnic constituency, a more nuanced picture appears. According to Table 13 below, the BN is actually disadvantaged by the seat bonus effect in the non-Malay majority constituencies (<30%Malay). On average, the BN wins 8.7% more votes than it does seats in this type of constituency compared to 30.3%, 27.6% and 20.3% in the <60%Malay, <70%Malay and >70%Malay constituency types. By minimizing the percentage of non-Malay majority seats and by privileging the creation of ethnically mixed seats (<60% Malay and <70%Malay)<sup>34</sup> and <70%Malay seats, the BN has, in effect, used the

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<sup>34</sup> Many of these seats are Malay majority in that Malay voters comprise more than 50% of voters.

delimitation exercise to increase the seat bonus effect it enjoys under the FPTP electoral system (Balasubramaniam, 2005, 2006; Brown, 2005).

**Table 13: BN's seat bonus by constituency type (ethnic composition), Peninsular Malaysia, 1959 to 2008**

Year	<30%Malay	<60%Mixed	<70%Mixed	>70%Malay
1959	-7.5%	29.7%	30.2%	12.3%
1964	21.6%	40.1%	39.4%	19.5%
1969	-24.2%	21.2%	20.5%	19.8%
1974	0.2%	36.9%	33.2%	32.2%
1978	-13.5%	33.6%	27.8%	30.7%
1982	13.2%	38.0%	35.7%	28.5%
1986	-26.3%	35.7%	28.8%	36.5%
1990	-32.2%	35.0%	29.9%	13.6%
1995	4.0%	28.1%	26.1%	17.5%
1999	1.5%	38.7%	33.9%	-6.0%
2004	-13.9%	30.0%	28.5%	28.8%
2008	-27.2%	-3.1%	-2.7%	10.2%
<b>Average</b>	<b>-8.7%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>

Source: Election Reports, 1959 to 2008

As was previously mentioned, the delimitation exercises benefited the BN but they have benefited UMNO more than the other component parties. This will be illustrated using the figures from Table 14 below which shows the percentage of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia that were contested and won by UMNO. It also shows the percentage of UMNO's winning constituencies as a proportion of the total number of parliament constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia.

**Table 14: Percentage of parliamentary constituencies contested and won by UMNO, Peninsular Malaysia, 1959 to 2008**

Year	% UMNO Contested Seats	% UMNO Won	% UMNO Winning Seats Out of Total Seats
1959	68.3%	74.6%	51.0%
1964	65.4%	86.8%	56.7%
1969	65.4%	77.9%	51.0%
1974	54.4%	100.0%	54.4%
1978	65.8%	92.0%	60.5%
1982	65.8%	93.3%	61.4%
1986	64.4%	98.8%	63.6%
1990	64.4%	82.4%	53.0%
1995	63.9%	85.9%	54.9%
1999	63.9%	65.2%	41.7%
2004	62.4%	93.2%	58.2%
2008	62.4%	63.1%	39.4%
Average	63.9%	84.4%	53.8%

Table 14 reveals a few noteworthy points. Firstly, UMNO contests on average, in more than three fifths of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. The only exception was in 1974 when it had to share parliamentary constituencies with PAS, the only time that another party that derives its support mostly from the Malay community, was in the BN coalition together with UMNO. After PAS left the ruling coalition in 1977, UMNO took over PAS' share of parliamentary constituencies and went back to contesting in more than 60% of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia.

The second noteworthy point is that UMNO wins an overwhelming proportion of constituencies which it contests in – an average of 84%. The only two instances in

which it won less than 70% of constituencies it contested in, were the 1999 and most recently, the 2008 general elections.

The third noteworthy point is that by itself, UMNO commanded the majority of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia, more than 50%, in all but two general elections. Again the exceptions were the 1999 and 2008 general elections.

Malapportionment explains, at least in part, all three points. Firstly, the creation of a disproportionate number of Malay majority constituencies, which UMNO can easily make the strongest claim to as the only Malay party in the BN (with the exception of 1974 when PAS was in the BN), ensures that UMNO can contest in a disproportionate number of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. Secondly, the flexibility of the rules governing the delimitation process means that the Election Commission has great latitude in choosing the specific areas in which these Malay majority constituencies can be created. In other words, not all Malay majority constituencies are alike. While many of them share a common feature in that they are usually smaller in size (in terms of the number of voters) compared to the non-Malay majority constituencies, many of them are often created in states or areas within a state where voting patterns tend to favor the BN, at least at the time of the delimitation exercise. The combination of these two delimitation strategies – the creation of a disproportionate number of Malay majority constituencies, mostly in favorable areas – explains how UMNO dominates

electoral politics within the BN coalition. By itself, during a 'normal' election year, it can perform well enough to win a majority of parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia.

This pattern of UMNO domination both, within and without the BN at the parliamentary level in Peninsular Malaysia, is also replicated at the state legislature level. A disproportionate number of Malay majority constituencies are created in the more ethnically heterogeneous states to increase the proportion of constituencies which UMNO can contest and also win. A consequence of this is that levels of malapportionment are higher in the states that are more ethnically heterogeneous.

**Figure 7: State Malapportionment versus Malay% in the state's electorate, 1974 to 2003, Peninsular Malaysia, state constituencies**

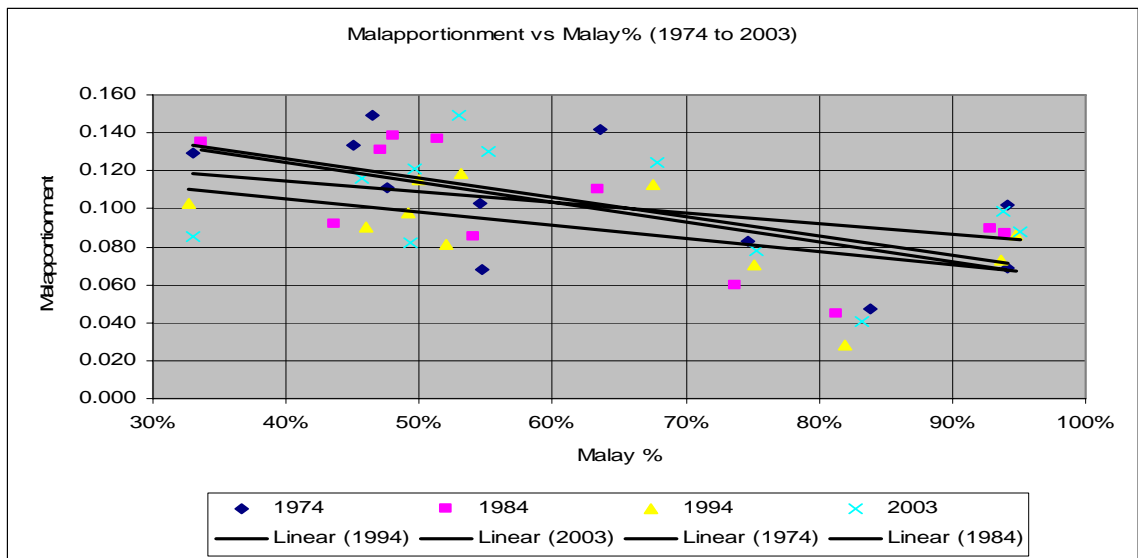


Figure 7 above shows a scatter graph of the level of malapportionment in a state using the number of voters in the state constituencies and the percentage of the Malay electorate in the state. The states that have a higher percentage of Malay voters (and are



thus more homogeneous) tend to have lower levels of malapportionment while those that are more ethnically heterogeneous tend to have higher levels of malapportionment.

**Table 15: Average % of state constituencies contested and won by UMNO, 1986 to 2004**

State	Malay Voters%	% UMNO Seats	% UMNO Won	% UMNO Winning Seats Out of Total Seats
Penang	33.2%	36.6%	95.3%	34.9%
Perak	44.7%	58.1%	97.3%	56.5%
Selangor	49.1%	62.7%	97.3%	61.1%
Negeri Sembilan	48.9%	64.4%	100.0%	64.4%
Melaka	53.3%	63.5%	100.0%	63.5%
Johor	53.2%	61.8%	100.0%	61.8%

Table 15 above is a reproduction of Table 14 using figures from five ethnically heterogeneous states in Peninsular Malaysia. The five states in question – Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor - are states where the Malays comprise less than 60% of the electorate. Penang is the only non-Malay majority state in Peninsular Malaysia. Table 5.7 shows many of the similar trends exhibited by Table 5.6. UMNO is able to contest in a share of seats that is higher than the share of the Malay voters in each state as a result of the creation of a disproportionate number of Malay majority constituencies via malapportionment. Similarly, by winning almost all the constituencies which it contests in, UMNO is able to consistently win more than half of the total constituencies at stake in all of these states with the exception of Penang where the Malay electorate is not the majority.

The delimitation exercise has traditionally been used to preserve high levels of malapportionment as a way to maintain UMNO, and hence, BN's electoral dominance. But the electoral setbacks experienced by UMNO in the state of Kedah in the 1999 general election would provide the necessary electoral incentives for *gerrymandering* to be used as a strategy for UMNO to win back some of the state seats it lost. The following is a brief summary of this strategy.<sup>35</sup>

In the 1999 general elections in the state of Kedah, the Malay opposition party, PAS, won eight out of the fifteen parliamentary seats.<sup>36</sup> PAS won their seats by an average of 52% of the popular vote while the seven parliamentary constituencies which were won by the BN were won by an average of 62% of the popular vote. This meant that there were excess votes from the winning BN constituencies that could be shifted to the constituencies that the BN lost without putting the winning constituencies at risk. All of the constituencies that PAS won were against UMNO while two out of the seven of the constituencies that the BN won featured MCA candidates. This meant that votes could be shifted from the winning BN constituencies with MCA candidates to the losing BN constituencies with UMNO candidates. The opportunity to shift votes from a constituency held by a non-Malay BN component party to a PAS held constituency had not been available in the previous delimitation exercise in 1984 and 1994 since PAS seats

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<sup>35</sup> A longer and more elaborate discussion of the effects of gerrymandering in the state of Kedah can be found in Ong and Welsh (2005)

<sup>36</sup> PAS best electoral performance in Kedah prior to 1999 was winning three out of twelve parliamentary constituencies in the 1969 general election.

were limited to the almost 100% Malay states of Kelantan and Terengganu, where all parliamentary seats were contested by UMNO. The 2003 delimitation exercise, coming on the heels of the 1999 general election, presented an opportunity to gerrymander in favor of UMNO to the possible detriment of a non-Malay BN component, namely MCA. The ethnic composition of the state of Kedah and of the winning BN constituencies increased the likelihood that gerrymandering would work in BN's favor. Kedah's electorate comprised 75% Malay voters, the rest being non-Malay voters. The average percentage of Malay voters in the winning and losing BN constituencies were 66% and 88% respectively. In other words, the winning BN constituencies had a higher percentage of non-Malay voters who could be shifted to the losing BN constituencies. The possibility that these non-Malay voters would vote for a PAS candidate was much less than Malay voters, if they were similarly transferred. Since the BN did not have two thirds control of the state legislature in Kedah, it could not change the state constitution to increase the number of state constituencies to regain an electoral advantage.<sup>37</sup> In other words, the creation of additional state constituencies as a means to regain an electoral advantage was not an option at the time of the 2003 delimitation exercise.

The combination of these factors created the right incentives and opportunity for the redrawing of boundary lines – gerrymandering – to redistribute excess votes from

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<sup>37</sup> The BN had won 24 out of 36 state constituencies in the 1999 general election but it subsequently lost a state constituency in a by-election – the state seat of Lunas in 2001 – prior to the 2003 delimitation exercise.

winning BN constituencies to losing BN constituencies. This was exactly what the Election Commission did in the 2003 delimitation exercise in the state of Kedah.

The 2003 delimitation exercise redrew boundaries in the state and parliamentary constituencies in Kedah without increasing the number of constituencies at both levels. The boundary lines were drawn mostly to affect changes at the parliamentary levels (where PAS won 8 out of 15 constituencies) rather than at the state levels (where PAS won only 12 out of 36 constituencies). In total, the boundary lines for the four losing BN constituencies (Pokok Sena, Kuala Kedah, Jerai [previously Yan] and Baling) were redrawn in BN's favor. Non-Malay voters as well as pro-BN Malay supporters from nearby constituencies were shifted into three of these constituencies (Pokok Sena, Kuala Kedah and Jerai) and pro-BN Malay supporters were shifted into one of these constituencies (Baling).

**Table 16: Political impact of the transfer of pro-BN votes into PAS constituencies, 2003 delimitation exercise<sup>38</sup>**

	1999 Results	Post 2003 Delimitation
Parliamentary Constituency	BN Majority	
Pokok Sena	-3211	1805
Kuala Kedah	-530	3067
Jerai (Yan in 1999)	-346	4887
Baling	-3043	1940

Source: Adapted from Table 12.6, Ong and Welsh, 2005, 339

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<sup>38</sup> The figures are estimates using state constituency returns. To accurately estimate the results post delimitation would require the use of 1999 parliamentary results at the polling station level. Since not all this data was available, the state constituency returns were used instead. The estimates using state constituency returns should not be too different from using polling station returns since the redrawing of the boundary lines involved the shifting of one state constituency from one parliamentary seat to another.

Table 16 compares the actual 1999 general election results in the four parliamentary constituencies most affected by the delimitation exercise and what the results would have been if the boundaries of the 2003 delimitation exercise was used. The 1999 general election results would have been reversed in all four parliamentary constituencies under the 2003 delimitation exercise boundaries. The BN, not PAS, would have won all four parliamentary constituencies.

That the delimitation exercise in Kedah was conducted purely to manufacture partisan gains was made the more obvious when the rural weightage consideration, the often used explanation as to why rural areas which were larger in area of coverage needed to have fewer voters, was ignored. A nearby state constituency (Kuala Kecil) was shifted from its previously more urban parliamentary constituency (Padang Serai) to a more rural parliamentary constituency (Baling). The end result was a rural parliamentary constituency (Baling) that had a larger number of voters (72,387) as well as a larger area of coverage (1,544km<sup>2</sup>) compared to a nearby semi-urban parliamentary constituency (Padang Serai) which had a smaller number of voters (51,778) and also a smaller area of coverage (352km<sup>2</sup>).

The enhancement of UMNO's political dominance through the careful manipulation of the delimitation exercise has increased the stability of the ruling BN coalition. UMNO's position as first among equals within the BN makes it almost

impossible for the other component parties to challenge its dominance. Without any formal mechanisms that allow for the non-UMNO component parties within the BN to issue a veto vote, one of the few remaining options left for these parties to extract concessions or bargains from UMNO or to protest against certain government policies that negatively affect the group(s) represented by a particular component party is to threaten to leave the ruling coalition. However, such threats are not credible since the BN's ability to govern at the national and at the state level will not be affected by the defection of a single non-UMNO component party. Furthermore, a component party that threatens to defect from the BN will inevitably face the challenge of internal collective action problems since there would be many leaders within the party that would not want to defect for fear of losing their government positions at the national and state levels. Even in states where the defection of all non-UMNO component parties could bring down the state government, the coordination of such a move would encounter even greater collective actions problems between and within these parties.<sup>39</sup>

The state of Penang is a good illustration of the inability of a non-UMNO component party to credibly threaten defection even under seemingly favorable circumstances. Penang is the only non-Malay majority state in Peninsular Malaysia which means that a non-Malay component party can, theoretically at least, govern this

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<sup>39</sup> It was probably these collective action problems which prevented Anwar, in September 2008, from co-opting a sufficient number of MPs and parties defecting from the ruling coalition and hence bring down the BN government. I will discuss this more extensively in Chapter 7.

state on its own. This was indeed the case after the 1969 general election whereby GERAKAN, formed by Lim Chong Eu - a former MCA president who had left the party when he clashed with the then Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman over the distribution of parliamentary seats to MCA, won enough seats in the state assembly to govern on its own. To ensure that GERAKAN could not govern on its own after it was co-opted to rejoin the ruling coalition (see discussion in Chapter 6), UMNO purposely divided the non-Malay majority state seats among MCA and GERAKAN, with itself receiving the largest allocation of state seats. UMNO was able to allocate to itself a larger share of mostly Malay majority seats because the delimitation exercises created a disproportionate number of these seats at the state level. What this meant, in political terms, was that MCA or GERAKAN, cannot, as individual parties, form the state government. At the same time, by virtue of being allocated the most number of constituencies, UMNO can carry out a credible threat of forming the state government with either one of the two non-Malay parties, MCA or GERAKAN. Due to the traditional rivalry between MCA and GERAKAN over the coveted position of Chief Minister of the only non-Malay majority state in Peninsular Malaysia, UMNO could rest assured that these two parties would not unite to form the state government without UMNO. UMNO, in effect, plays the role of king-maker in the state of Penang even though it is a non-Malay majority state.

UMNO allowed GERAKAN to hold on to this position despite the many attempts by the MCA to undermine GERAKAN's position in Penang, most famously when it tempted two GERAKAN state assembly representatives<sup>40</sup> to cross over to MCA after the 1999 general election, which resulted in MCA having more state assemblymen than GERAKAN. Nevertheless, UMNO stood firm in supporting GERAKAN's claim to the position of Chief Minister in Penang. Allowing GERAKAN to retain the position of Penang's Chief Minister suited UMNO's larger purpose of diffusing the power of the individual component parties. If MCA, in addition to having the second largest number of seats and cabinet allocations within the BN, also controlled the position of the Chief Minister of Penang, it may have posed a greater political threat to UMNO from within. This would also have increased the credibility of a threat to defect.

Table 17 below shows the allocation of state seats in Penang from 1982 to 2004 in order to illustrate the king-maker role which UMNO plays and the dependence of GERAKAN on UMNO to hold on to the Chief Minister's position.

**Table 17: Allocation of state constituencies by BN party, Penang, 1986 to 2004**

	1982	1986	1995 <sup>41</sup>	2004
UMNO	10 (37%)	12 (36%)	12 (36%)	15 (38%)
GERAKAN	8 (30%)	11 (33%)	11 (33%)	13 (33%)
MCA	8 (30%)	9 (27%)	9 (27%)	10 (24%)
MIC	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)
Total	27	33	33	40

<sup>40</sup> Lim Boo Chang and Lim Chien Aun of GERAKAN.

<sup>41</sup> Since the BN did not have control of 2/3rds of the state constituencies in Penang during the 1994 delimitation exercise.



Source: Elections Report 1982, 1986, 1995 and 2004

Finally, the strategic use of the delimitation exercise to over-represent the states of Sarawak and Sabah, and over-represent the Muslim-Bumiputera population within these states, has been electorally advantageous to the BN in two ways. Firstly, the relative political independence of the three regions – Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak – means that the political vulnerability of the BN in one region will often not translate into political vulnerability in the other two regions. The issues which are politically salient in one region will often not be as politically salient, if at all, in the other two regions. For example, if the BN faces a particularly serious electoral challenge in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak can act as political bulwarks or insurance policies for the BN.

Secondly, the ability to manipulate the delimitation process in both these states means that boundary lines are often drawn to advantage the parties and voters in both states most likely to support the pattern of dominance established by UMNO in Peninsular Malaysia – which is the establishment of a politically dominant Muslim Bumiputera party. In Sarawak's case, this would be the Muslim Bumiputera party of PBB<sup>42</sup> and in Sabah's case, this would be UMNO, after it inserted itself into this state's political arena in 1990.

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<sup>42</sup> Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB)

The following is a brief account of the first electoral advantage – the insurance policy advantage.

**Table 18: Percentage of constituencies won by the BN in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak (1969 to 2008), General Elections**

	Year	P.Malaysia	Sabah	Sarawak	Sabah & Sarawak
<b>1</b>	<b>1969</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>
2	1974	91.2%	100.0%	62.5%	77.5%
3	1978	82.5%	81.3%	95.8%	90.0%
4	1982	90.4%	62.5%	79.2%	72.5%
5	1986	84.8%	76.2%	91.7%	84.4%
<b>6</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>75.8%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>77.8%</b>	<b>58.3%</b>
7	1995	92.4%	57.1%	96.3%	79.2%
<b>8</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>93.9%</b>
9	2004	89.1%	96.2%	96.4%	96.3%
<b>10</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>51.5%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>96.8%</b>	<b>96.5%</b>

Source: Election Reports, 1969 to 2008

Years in bold are the years in which the ‘insurance policy’ was important

Table 18 above shows the percentage of parliamentary constituencies won by the BN in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak since 1969. The election results in 1969, 1990, 1999 and 2008 illustrate the point regarding the political independence and the insurance policy effects of the three regions. In 1969, the Alliance, the precursor to the BN, faced a serious electoral challenge in Peninsular Malaysia from the ethnic flank parties and failed to win two thirds of parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia. But the issues of political salience in Peninsular Malaysia did not affect the state of Sabah in

the same manner. The Sabah Alliance coalition (comprising of USNO and the SCA<sup>43</sup>) won all the parliamentary seats at stake. By gaining the support of a then opposition party in Sarawak (the SUPP<sup>44</sup>), the Alliance was able to regain a two thirds majority in the parliament which allowed it to amend the constitution in its favor (Means, 1976, 401-404).

Just prior to the 1990 general elections, the PBS<sup>45</sup>, the largest BN component party in Sabah, withdrew from the BN coalition. Since the withdrawal took place at the eleventh hour (Chin, 1994), the BN had not time to field its own candidates against the PBS in all the parliamentary constituencies. Thus, it only managed to win 7 out of 21 parliamentary constituencies (33%). However, the BN's setback in Sabah was not replicated in Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia where the BN managed to win 78% and 76% of parliamentary constituencies respectively. The presence of mostly regional parties in both Sarawak and Sabah (with the exception of UMNO in Sabah) shields the BN from the effects of possible defections in either state. Since politically salient issues in Sabah are not likely to reverberate in Sarawak and vice versa, this means that it is improbable that the BN will face a political challenge in both states at the same time.

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<sup>43</sup> USNO started out as a mainly Muslim Bumiputera party led by Tun Mustapha Harun, who controlled the state with an iron fist. After losing the leadership struggle in Sabah, Donald Stephens asked his mainly non-Muslim Bumiputera party, UNKO, to disband and join USNO. The Sabah Chinese Association (SCA), as its name indicates, represented the interests of the Chinese population in the state.

<sup>44</sup> The Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) was a multiethnic party with a mainly Chinese leadership but also had a number of prominent Iban leaders.

<sup>45</sup> PBS was seen as a Muslim-Bumiputera led party although it also tried to appeal to the Muslim Bumiputera voters using the issue of state rights as a rallying call.

In the 1999 and 2008 general elections, the BN once again faced serious electoral challenges in Peninsular Malaysia, the latter being more serious than the former. The BN managed to win only 71% and 52% of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia in 1999 and 2008, respectively. But at the same time, the serious electoral challenges in Peninsular Malaysia were not replicated in Sabah and Sarawak where the BN won 86% and 100% in 1999 and 96% and 97% in 2008. In both these elections, Sabah and Sarawak acted as an insurance policy for the BN, when it was being challenged in Peninsular Malaysia.

In addition to the insurance policy effect, the delimitation exercises also allowed UMNO to replicate its model of Malay political dominance, perfected in Peninsular Malaysia, in both these states. The following is a brief account of Muslim Bumiputera over-representation in Sarawak and Sabah.

The diverse ethnic composition of both Sabah and Sarawak seems to prevent any one ethnic group from dominating the electoral landscape in the same manner as UMNO in Peninsular Malaysia. But the delimitation exercise has allowed the BN to redraw constituency boundaries and create new constituencies that has over represented the voters and hence parties most likely to support the BN. In both Sabah and Sarawak, successive delimitation exercises have increased the proportion of constituencies where

the plurality or majority of voters is Muslim Bumiputera<sup>46</sup> (Jawan, 1994, Table 5.4, 154; Loh, 2003).

The Muslim Bumiputera population in both states has been the least willing to vote against the BN on the grounds of federal dominance<sup>47</sup> in these states. This is not surprising since the federal government, notably UMNO, have been instrumental in installing Chief Ministers in both states who are Muslim Bumiputera even though they do not represent the majority (and in Sarawak's case, the plurality) of voters in both states. The continued support of these parties (the PBB in the case of Sarawak; USNO, BERJAYA and later UMNO in Sabah) by Muslim Bumiputera voters in both states ensures the continuation of the practice of having a Chief Minister who is a Muslim Bumiputera<sup>48</sup>. Cognizant of the fact that the non-Muslim Bumiputera population has in the past and could, in the future vote, against the BN in large numbers, the strategy of

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<sup>46</sup> Bumiputera literally means 'sons of the soil' and it is a category used to distinguish the 'natives' from the other populations which are more recent immigrants to the region, most notably the Chinese population. In Sarawak, the Muslim Bumiputera group would comprise mostly the Malays and the Melanaus. In Sabah, this would include the Malays, the Bajaus, the Muruts and increasingly, during the 1990s, the many migrants from Indonesia and the Philippines who profess to be Muslims.

<sup>47</sup> Not only is Sabah and Sarawak separated from Peninsular Malaysia geographically (by the South China Sea specifically), both states are also less economically developed compared to the states in Peninsular Malaysia. Politicians and the population in both states are thus also wary of being dominated by the federal government that mostly comprise of leaders from Peninsular Malaysia. Voters in both states are willing to cast a vote against the BN because of the perception that the BN parties in both states are not standing up sufficient for state rights but the Muslim Bumiputera population is the least likely to cast a protest vote against federal encroachment because this encroachment, especially through the delimitation exercise, but also through other means such as allocation of funds and position within the federal government, sustains Muslim Bumiputera domination in the respective state governments in Sabah and Sarawak.

<sup>48</sup> For a period of time, from 1994 to 2005 the Chief Minister position in Sabah was rotated between the three main communities in Sabah – Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and the Chinese. The non-Muslim Bumiputer and Chinese communities held this position in five out of the eleven years. This rotation system was abolished in 2005 after a decisive BN victory in the 2004 state elections in Sabah.

over-representing the Muslim Bumiputera population through the strategic use of the delimitation exercise has strengthened the position of the Muslim Bumiputera parties in both Sabah and Sarawak. The consequence of Muslim Bumiputera over representation in both states is that it increases the overall domination of the BN at the state as well as at the national levels.

**Table 19: Over representation of Muslim Bumiputera voters, Sarawak, 1970 to 2006, state constituencies**

Ethnic Group	1970	1988	2001	2006
Muslim-Bumiputera	-1.5%	6.0%	10.2%	18.0%
Dayaks	12.5%	3.0%	2.6%	0.6%
Chinese	-11.0%	-14.0%	-12.6%	-18.4%

Source: 1970 data taken from Leigh, 1974, Appendix 3, 249; 1988 data taken from Jawan, 1994, Table 5.4, 154; 2001 and 2006 data taken from various newspaper reports before the state elections in 2001 and 2006

**Table 20: Over representation of Muslim Bumiputera voters, Sabah, 1994 to 2008, state constituencies**

Ethnic Group	1994	1999	2008
Muslim Bumiputera	1.3%	3.7%	8.4%
Non-Muslim Bumiputera	4.8%	1.9%	-1.6%
Chinese	-5.8%	-5.1%	-6.5%

Source: Data for 1994 and 1999 taken from Loh, 2003, Chapter 13, Table 13.3, Data for 2008 taken from [www.undi.info](http://www.undi.info)

Tables 19 and 20 above show the over representation of the Muslim Bumiputera in the Sarawak and Sabah state legislature respectively. The level of Muslim Bumiputera

over representation is calculated by comparing the percentage of constituencies where Muslim Bumiputera voters form the plurality or majority of voters with the percentage of Muslim Bumiputera voters in the electorate. The same procedure is used to calculate the level of Muslim Bumiputera over-representation in Sabah.

In Sarawak, the level of Muslim Bumiputera over representation has increased from -1.5% in the 1970 state elections to 6% after the 1987 delimitation exercise to 10.2% after the 1997 delimitation exercise and most recently to 18% after the 2005 delimitation exercise.

In Sabah, the level of Muslim Bumiputera over-representation increased from 1.3% in the 1994 state elections to 3.7% after the 1994 delimitation exercise to 8.4% after the 2005 delimitation exercise.<sup>49</sup>

The higher levels of Muslim Bumiputera over representation can be explained by the fact that the Muslim Bumiputera population in the Sarawak electorate is smaller than the Muslim Bumiputera population in the Sabah electorate. A higher level of over representation in Sarawak is needed to give the Muslim Bumiputera party in that state – the PBB – an electoral advantage in the state legislature. Another way of interpreting the lower level of Muslim Bumiputera over representation in Sabah is to say that the increase in the number of Muslim Bumiputera in the electorate in this state was a more

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<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, the ethnic composition of the state constituencies in Sabah prior to the 1994 Sabah state elections is not available. With earlier ethnic composition data at our disposal, it would have been easier to track how the increase in the number and percentage of the Muslim Bumiputera population from migration (legal or otherwise) changed the ethnic composition of the different state constituencies over time.

efficient strategy of achieving Muslim Bumiputera dominance compared to the delimitation of constituencies.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, the allocation of seats within the BN in both states would somewhat parallel that in Penang, in that seat allocation would be divided among parties representing the group most likely to defect from the BN.

**Table 21: Allocation of state constituencies by BN party, Sabah, 1994 to 2004<sup>51</sup>**

Party	1994	1999	2004
UMNO	31 (64.6%)	24 (50.0%)	32 (53.3%)
<i>AKAR BERSATU / AKAR</i>	7 (14.6%)	2 (4.2%)	
<i>PDS / UPKO</i>		12 (25.0%)	6 (10.0%)
<i>PBR</i>		2 (4.2%)	1 (1.7%)
<b>SAPP</b>	7 (14.6%)	5 (10.4%)	4 (6.7%)
<b>LDP</b>	3 (6.3%)	2 (4.2%)	3 (5.0%)
<b>MCA</b>		1 (2.1%)	1 (1.7%)
<i>PBS</i>			13 (21.7%)
Total	48	48	60

Source: Sabah Election Reports, 1994 to 2004

Note: Parties in italics are the non Muslim-Bumiputera parties, Parties in bold are Chinese parties

In the state of Sabah, UMNO had been content in allowing the Muslim Bumiputera led parties of USNO (1963 to 1976) and then later BERJAYA (1976 to 1985) control the state legislature. But state-federal relations in Sabah took a turn for the worse when the newly formed Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) defeated BERJAYA and USNO in the

<sup>50</sup> This was achieved by allowing many of the illegal immigrants from nearby Kalimantan, Indonesia and the Southern Philippines, most of whom are Muslim, to be registered as voters. Sabah is well known for the issuance of fake identity cards to these illegal immigrants which were then used to register them as voters.

<sup>51</sup> UPKO replaced PDS in 2004, PBS rejoined the BN prior to the 2004 state elections.



1985 Sabah state elections. Matters came to a head when the PBS, which had joined the BN after the 1986 Sabah state elections, unceremoniously left the BN just prior to the 1990 general elections. This prompted UMNO's entry into Sabah which ultimately led to the PBS losing control of the state legislature after the 1994 Sabah state elections which was won by the PBS by two seats. Nevertheless, PBS's attempts to form the state government collapsed after massive defections to UMNO and the BN.<sup>52</sup>

UMNO contested in 31 out of 48 state constituencies in the 1994 Sabah election. The acceptance of a number of PBS state assemblymen into UMNO and the BN forced UMNO to contest in a decreased number of state constituencies in the 1999 Sabah state election. However, UMNO still contested in half of the state constituencies (24 out of 48) in 1999 and more importantly, the rest of the constituencies were divided among a number of non-Muslim bumiputera parties (PDS and PBRs) and Chinese parties (SAPP, LDP and MCA).

The increase in the number of state constituencies in Sabah following the 2003 delimitation exercise from 48 constituencies to 60 constituencies allowed the BN more flexibility in the allocation of state constituencies after PBS rejoined the BN, prior to the 2004 general election and concurrent state elections in Sabah. UMNO increased the percentage of constituencies in which it contested (from 50% in 1999 to 53% in 2004) and the non-Muslim Bumiputera majority constituencies were divided among PBS, UPKO

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<sup>52</sup> I will discuss the dynamics of Sabah politics in more detail in the next chapter.

and PBRS while the Chinese majority constituencies were divided among SAPP, LDP and MCA.

Hence, even though the Muslim Bumiputera population has not comprised a majority of voters in Sabah historically, the allocation of constituencies in this state has ensured UMNO of its electorally dominant position by giving UMNO a majority of state constituencies and by dividing the other constituencies among different BN component parties. After the defection of PBS from the BN in 1990, UMNO would not allow itself to be put in a position whereby another non-Muslim Bumiputera party could win a majority of state constituencies in Sabah.

UMNO's position was no doubt helped by the creation of a disproportionate number of Muslim Bumiputera majority constituencies from the 1994 delimitation exercise (Table 21) as well as the sudden increase in the number of Muslim Bumiputera citizens and registered voters in Sabah.

**Table 22: Allocation of state constituencies by BN party, Sarawak, 1979 to 2005<sup>53</sup>**

Party	1979	1983	1987	1991	1996	2005
PBB	18 (37.5%)	20(41.7%)	23 (47.9%)	32 (57.1%)	30 (48.4%)	35 (49.3%)
SUPP	12 (25.0%)	12 (25.0%)	14 (29.2%)	17 (30.4%)	17 (27.4%)	19 (26.8%)
SNAP / SPDP	18 (37.5%)	16 (33.3%)	11 (22.9%)	7 (12.5%)	7 (11.3%)	8 (11.3%)
PBDS / PRS					8 (12.9%)	9 (12.7%)
Total	48	48	48	56	62	71

Source: Sarawak Election Reports, 1979 to 2005

A similar threat to that which exists in Sabah also exists in Sarawak. In Sarawak, the percentage of the non-Muslim Bumiputera population is even higher than that in Sabah. The Dayaks – comprising the Ibans, the Bidayuhs and a number of small tribes such as the Kayan, Kenyah, Penan, Kelabit and the Lun Bawang – form more than half the population in Sarawak. However, a combination of delimitation exercises that have over represented the number of Muslim Bumiputera constituencies (Table 19) as well as the allocation of state constituencies among the different BN component parties in Sarawak have ensured that the Dayak parties cannot form the government without the support of the dominant party in Sarawak, the PBB, which plays the same dominant role in Sarawak as UMNO does in Sabah and in Peninsular Malaysia.

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<sup>53</sup> PBDS rejoined the BN prior to the 1996 state elections, SNAP was replaced by SPDP and PBDS was replaced by PRS in 2005.

The PBB has slowly increased its share of state seats allocated to it within the bargaining framework of the BN coalition in Sarawak over time. In 1979, it was allocated the same number of state constituencies as SNAP, the largely Dayak based party that was the major opposition party in the 1970 and 1974 Sarawak state elections. But over time, the number of constituencies that were allocated to the PBB increased while the number of constituencies that were allocated to the Dayak parties within the BN decreased (Table 22). The PBB increased its proportion of state constituencies from 48% in 1987 to 57% in 1991 after the 1987 Sarawak delimitation exercise. While the PBB had to concede a small share of state constituencies after the acceptance of PBDS into the BN in Sarawak<sup>54</sup>, the 1995 delimitation exercise allowed the PBB to minimize this loss to 'merely' 48% of state constituencies. At the same time, the inclusion of PBDS into the BN in Sarawak split the Dayak allocation of constituencies among the two Dayak parties – SNAP and PBDS.<sup>55</sup> Along with the allocation of a small number of Dayak majority constituencies to the PBB as well as the SUPP, meant that the Dayaks, even though they comprise the majority of the population in Sarawak, cannot hope to take control of the state legislature by wresting control of a majority of the constituencies under one united Dayak based party.

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<sup>54</sup> The PBDS was in the unusual position of being the opposition party in Sarawak but staying with the BN at the federal level.

<sup>55</sup> Because of internal party fights, SNAP and PBDS were deregistered as reregistered as SPDP and PRS.

Hence, the non-Muslim political parties in both states cannot credibly defect from the ruling coalition because of over-representation of the Muslim majority seats as well as the difficulty of overcoming the within and between party collective actions problems associated with organizing a defection.

Finally, I end this in depth discussion on the manipulation of the delimitation exercise in Malaysia by highlighting its importance using the 2008 general election results. The most recent general election is particularly important in terms of understanding how the delimitation exercise protected the BN from losing a majority of parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia.

**Table 23: 2008 General election outcome if malapportionment between the states was eliminated**

State / Region	Original No of Seats	Reallocated Number of Seats	Original No of BN Seats	Reallocated Number of BN Seats
Peninsular Malaysia	165	187	85 (51.5%)	93 (49.7%)
Sabah	26	17	25 (96.2%)	16 (94.1%)
Sarawak	31	18	30 (96.8%)	17 (94.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>195 (63.1%)</b>	<b>126 (56.8%)</b>

Table 23 above shows how the results of the 2008 general election would have changed if constituencies were allocated between the states strictly in accordance to the number of voters. Sabah and Sarawak, two states where the BN has been electorally dominant in the past three general elections, would have been allocated a smaller

number of constituencies because of their smaller electorates. Peninsular Malaysia would have been allocated more constituencies and more importantly, many of the constituencies would have been allocated to states that were formerly under represented such as Penang, Kedah, Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan. While the BN would have won a larger number of parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia after this theoretical reallocation of constituencies<sup>56</sup>, it would have lost a majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. The percentage of constituencies won by the BN would have decreased from 51.5% to 49.7%.<sup>57</sup>

It would have been immensely significant if the BN had lost the majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia because of the understanding that whoever controls Peninsular Malaysia can also make the claim to rule the country at the national level. Consequentially, it would have increased the possibility that a critical number of MPs and parties in Sabah and Sarawak would have left the BN, given that the opposition parties would have held a majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. While the explanations as to why the opposition's attempt to invite a number of parties

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<sup>56</sup> Since we don't know the intra-state distribution of these constituencies. I assume that the BN would have won the same proportion of constituencies in each state. For example, if the BN won 15% of constituencies in Penang in the 2008 general election, it would also have won 15% of constituencies after the reallocation of constituencies between the states.

<sup>57</sup> This is probably an underestimation of the constituencies which the BN would have lost since it does not take into account the partisan bias which the BN gains from intra-state malapportionment.

and MPs from the two East Malaysian states failed are complex,<sup>58</sup> one notable factor was the fact that the opposition did not control a majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia.<sup>59</sup>

### **5.2.2 Gerrymandering and Malapportionment in Japan, Botswana and Zambia**

The strategic use of malapportionment to increase the electoral advantage of a dominant party regime is not unique to Malaysia. There is some evidence that such a practice was also employed in Japan under the LDP and to a certain degree, by the BDP in Botswana and the MMD in Zambia. The following is a brief account of how this practice played at least some part in increasing the electoral advantage enjoyed by the dominant parties in these respective countries.

Of the three, Japan stands out as the most obvious example of where malapportionment has provided the incumbent regime with a significant electoral advantage. Scheiner (2006, 57) states that 'Japan's SNTV/MMD electoral system was malapportioned, so that rural seats – where the LDP maintained its greatest support – received more seats per capita than urban areas did.'

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<sup>58</sup> The leader of the opposition coalition – Pakatan Rakyat - formed after the 2008 general election, Anwar Ibrahim announced that he would have enough MPs to crossover to the side of the opposition by Septemeber 16, 2008, failed to materialize.

<sup>59</sup> Some of the collective action problems would have been reduced if the BN component parties in Sabah and Sarawak had more confidence that the BN in Peninsular Malaysia had lost its legitimacy to govern since it no longer controlled the majority of parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia.

Horiuchi and Saito (2003) show that malapportionment in Japan, using the Loosemore-Hanbys Index<sup>60</sup>, which is a measure that indicates the proportion of voters who need to be shifted in order to achieve zero malapportionment, increased from 0.041 in 1947 to a high of 0.146 in 1972, caused by migration from rural to urban areas and the failure to reapportion seats or to redraw boundaries in light of these population movements. Even after three minor reapportionment exercises after 1972, the LH measure was still 0.131 in 1993, one year prior to the 1994 electoral reform. The level of malapportionment pre-1994 was comparable to Malaysia, which has an average malapportionment measure of 0.142 over the 12 post-independence elections.

While the over-representation of rural constituencies certainly favored the LDP, many have argued that this is not the only explanation for LDP's electoral dominance. The electoral advantage for the LDP would probably have decreased but it would still have won a majority or at least a plurality of seats if malapportionment had been decreased (Lijhpart, Pintor and Sone, 1986). Other factors, such as the fragmentation of the opposition parties, also play a role in accounting for the LDP's dominance. But it is clear that even though malapportionment is not the only reason for LDP's longevity, it certainly helped increased LDP's electoral dominance.

There is also some evidence that rural over-representation has increased the BDP's electoral dominance in Botswana even though it is not the only explanatory factor

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<sup>60</sup> The same measure is used by Samuels and Snyder (2001).



for its longevity. For example, the 2002 delimitation exercise which followed the 2001 census, was seen to favor the BDP. The constitution allows variations in population quota in recognition of geographical features such as deserts, forests, rivers and swamps, as well as means of communication, population density, tribal boundaries and community of interest but it appears that BDP strongholds such as Central District, North-East and Kgalagadi gained most from subdivision, whereas the same criteria were not applied to opposition strongholds such as Gaborone, Kanye and Ngwaketse (Lemon, 2007).

In the 2004 general elections in Botswana, for example, the average number of voters in the seats won by the BDP was 9444 compared to 10564 in the seats won by the opposition.<sup>61</sup> In addition, the correlation coefficient between BDP's vote share in a constituency and the no of voters in a constituency in the 2004 general election was also negative and statistically significant at the 5% level which means that the BDP performs better in constituencies that have a lower number of voters.

While this is not conclusive evidence that there was a conscious effort on the part of the Election Commission to delimit constituencies to benefit the BDP, there is no question that over-representation of rural constituencies which are more sparsely populated benefits the BDP more than it does the opposition parties. Of the ten

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<sup>61</sup> The difference in means between the no of voters in BDP constituencies versus opposition constituencies is statistically significant at the 10% level.

constituencies with the largest number of voters, the BDP only won six. Of the ten constituencies with the lowest number of voters, the BDP won eight.<sup>62</sup>

In Zambia, the incumbent DPAR, the MMD, has benefited not so much from strategic malapportionment but from the strategic postponement of delimiting constituencies. Prior to the 2001 general election, the Zambian Election Commission decided not to revise the constituency boundaries because of the late production of the 2000 census (Burnell, 2002, 1114). As a result, the province of Lusaka, where the opposition parties were expected to do well, was under-represented. Lusaka, with 15.6% of voters was allocated 8% of seats making it the most under represented province in Zambia.<sup>63</sup> The opposition won 11 out of 12 parliamentary constituencies in Lusaka in the 2001 general election.

Not only was there significant malapportionment between the provinces in Zambia which disadvantaged the opposition, there was also substantial malapportionment within the province of Lusaka that had the same effect. The smallest constituency in Lusaka had 8,718 registered voters<sup>64</sup> while the largest had 82,600 voters<sup>65</sup>.<sup>66</sup> In the 2006 general election, the MMD won the five smallest constituencies in Lusaka, with an average of 25,000 voters, while the largest opposition party, the PF, won

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<sup>62</sup> Based on the 2004 general election

<sup>63</sup> Using figures from the 2001 general election.

<sup>64</sup> Constituency 71 Fiera

<sup>65</sup> Constituency 79 Mandevu

<sup>66</sup> Using data from the 2006 general election.

the remaining 7 constituencies, with an average of 47,000 voters. In other words, the constituencies won by the opposition had 2.5 times the number of registered voters compared to the constituencies won by the MMD. Constituency boundaries have not yet been redrawn to reduce the discrepancies between the sizes of the constituencies.

The cases discussed in this section illustrate some of the more egregious examples of the use of malapportionment and to a lesser extent, gerrymandering, to add to the electoral advantages enjoyed by the incumbent regimes. It is possible that other examples of gerrymandering have escaped the attention of scholars because of limited publicly released electoral data at the sub-constituency level. While this kind of data may be collected and used by the election authorities in these countries for the purposes of gerrymandering and malapportionment, scholars and opposition politicians are not able to analyze the political effects of the redrawing of constituency boundary lines if such data is not given to them. If such data is released and can be obtained, further opportunities will be available to examine if gerrymandering and malapportionment were indeed used as electoral strategies on the part of the incumbent regimes.

### **5.2.3 Using the block votes in Singapore, Djibouti, Tunisia and Senegal**

There is perhaps no more effective institutional mechanism (that does not involve heavy handed acts of repression) to raise the electoral costs of defection than the block vote. The block vote is a plurality electoral system used in multi-member districts where the party with the largest number of votes wins ALL the seats in that district. The

use of the block vote is a particularly effective manner in which the electoral advantage is enjoyed by the DPAR in question since it is much harder for an already disadvantaged opposition to win a majority of votes in multimember districts which usually cover a relatively large area and include a relatively large number of voters. Hence, potential defectors must consider whether they have the ability not just to win a few single member district seats or a sufficient percentage of votes to qualify for PR seats but whether they can win a majority of votes in these large multimember districts. Furthermore, the presence of multimember districts increase the necessity to solve collective action problems on the part of defecting elites since they now have to consider whether they want to recruit elites from within the same multi-member constituency or from more than one multi-member constituency. It is easier to co-opt individual defecting elites competing in a single member districts since these elites may be able to hold on to their constituencies post-defection based on local support and constituency servicing. Considering that it is much harder to convince all of the elites from a single multi-member district to defect at the same time because of collective action problems, then it should also be more difficult for the one or two elites who decide to defect to expect the same kind of local support in a multi-member constituency since the credit for constituency servicing must be shared with the other constituency representatives.

Four DPARs use the block vote electoral system, either exclusively (Djibouti), together with an FPTP in SMD component (Singapore) or together with a small PR component (Senegal and Tunisia).

In Djibouti, the opposition to the People's Rally for Progress (RPP) has come largely from the Afar population, the second largest ethnic group in the country (approximately 20% of the population), many of whom feel dominated politically and economically by the larger Issa (approximately 33% of the population), which has provided the first as well as the current president (Schraeder, 1993).<sup>67</sup> The allocation of 37 out of the 65 seats in the legislature to the district of Djibouti, which is an Issa stronghold, means that the RPP is able to win control of legislature just by winning a plurality of votes in this district! The other districts elect 4, 6, 6 and 12 representatives respectively.<sup>68</sup>

The lack of ethnic composition data of the multi-member districts prevents me from ascertaining if the boundary lines for these districts have been drawn with the intention of diluting the Afar vote. The electoral record of the opposition parties hints at this possibility. In the four legislative elections which have taken place in Djibouti since 1992, the ruling party has won a majority in every single electoral district, giving them a 100% record in terms of the number of representatives elected. This was despite the fact

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<sup>67</sup> Hassan Gouled Apitodon (1977 to 1999) and Ismail Omar Guelleh (1999 to present)

<sup>68</sup> The lack of ethnic composition data at the mutli-member district level prevents me to

that the opposition Democratic Union Alliance won 38% of the popular vote in the 2003 legislative elections (Brass, 2008).

In Singapore, the block vote was first introduced in the 1988 elections. The multi-member districts are called Group Representative Constituencies or GRCs and the proportion of total parliamentary constituencies which are GRCs has been slowly increased over time. They were introduced after what was perceived to be an unexpectedly large drop in the PAP's vote share in the 1984 general election. After averaging 77% of the popular vote in the first four post-independence elections, the PAP's vote share suddenly dropped by 12.8% in the 1984 general elections. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's then Prime Minister, was worried that the PAP would be vulnerable to losing some of the more marginal single member districts if it were to experience another significant drop in its popular vote share. The introduction of the GRC's was a direct response to the PAP's 1984 general election performance (Mauzy and Milne, 2002, 145).

**Table 24: Number and percentage of GRC parliamentary constituencies, 1988 to 2006, Singapore**

Year	Single Member Districts (SMDs)	Group Representative Constituencies (GRCs)	% of GRCs
1988	42	39	48.1%
1991	21	60	74.1%
1997	9	74	89.2%
2001	9	75	89.3%

Source: Yeo, 2002, 208

According to Table 24 above, the GRCs which only constituted 48.1% of total parliamentary constituencies in 1998 now comprise of almost 90% of total constituencies.<sup>69</sup>

GRCs were introduced on the basis of ensuring minority representation since the electoral rules require that at least one candidate on the slate must be a non-Chinese but there is the suspicion that the GRCs were created to shield the PAP from swings in the Malay vote since the Malays are more likely to cast a vote for the opposition than the Chinese or Indians (Fetzer, 2006, 150).<sup>70</sup> The inclusion of Malay voters in a large GRC effectively dilutes their vote and decreases the potential swings in the Malay vote that would cause the PAP to lose a few constituencies where the Malay vote is relatively significant. As the PAP observed the efficacy of the GRCs, it was only natural that they would increase the proportion of constituencies allocated to the GRCs, at the expense of the SMDS, which has had the consequence of further increasing PAP's electoral dominance.

Even though the electoral system has gone through a few rounds of changes in Senegal under the PS party, the regime has always been cognizant of the usefulness of

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<sup>69</sup> The number of GRCs have not been altered since the 2001 election.

<sup>70</sup> Singapore's population breakdown is approximately 77% Chinese, 15% Malay, 7% Indian and 1% others. The PAP argued that the lack of majority-minority districts may result in a decrease in minority representation and that the GRC requirement of at least one minority candidate would ensure at least some minority representation.

the block vote in maintaining its electoral dominance. For example, from 1963 to 1973, the PS used 'a single, nationwide constituency with a plurality winner-take-all formula based on a party list' (Mozaffar and Vengroff, 2002, 605) which meant that, given PS's ability to capture a majority of the popular vote, all of the seats in the legislature went to the ruling party.

In the face of growing internal opposition and threats of boycott, the PS changed the electoral system to a national list PR system whereby seats are allocated according to the percentage of vote. The PS won 82% of votes and 83% of seats with the PDS winning the other 17 seats with 18% of the votes. Three parties, including the PS, were allowed to compete in these elections.

Fearing that a further swing in the vote against the PS would decrease its share of seats, the incumbent regime changed the electoral system before the next election in 1983. The number of seats was increased to 120 seats (from 100 seats), 60 from a national PR list and 60 using a plurality block vote in multi member districts. The PS would almost certainly win all of the seats at departmental level even if it might allow greater opposition representation at the PR list level. The PS increased its share of seats (from 83% to 93%) even though its share of votes decreased (from 82% to 76%). The same electoral system was used in the 1988 general election, and once again, the PS benefited from a significant seat bonus.



In the face of growing opposition protests, especially by the PDS, over charges of electoral fraud, the PS once again tweaked the electoral system prior to the 1993 election by increasing the number of national PR list seats by 10 from 60 to 70 and decreased the block vote plurality portion of seats by 10 from 60 to 50.

Finally, prior to the 1998 elections, 20 seats were added to the block vote portion of the electoral system mostly in the smaller regional centers, and not in the urban opposition strongholds. The PS won 18 of the 20 new seats (Mozaffar and Vengroff, 2002, 610)

**Table 25: Seat bonus enjoyed by the PS, Senegal, 1963 to 1998**

Year	No of Seats	Total Seats	% of Seats	% of Votes	Seat Bonus(S-V)
1963	100	100	100.0%	94.0%	6.0%
1968	100	100	100.0%	93.0%	7.0%
1973	100	100	100.0%	97.0%	3.0%
1978	83	100	83.0%	81.7%	1.3%
1983	111	120	92.5%	75.9%	16.6%
1988	103	120	85.8%	71.0%	14.8%
1993	84	120	70.0%	57.0%	13.0%
1998	93	140	66.4%	50.0%	16.4%

The effect of having a significant number of seats allocated by block vote meant that the PS could still win a majority of seats in the legislature even as its overall popular vote was decreasing over time. The block vote portion of the electoral system is a key explanatory factor for the seat bonus enjoyed by the PS in the 1983 elections all the way up to the 1998 elections (Table 25).

Tunisia is the final example of a DPAR that uses a block vote electoral system. Since the ruling RCD party is electorally dominant in the block vote multi-member constituencies (it won all these seats in the more recent elections in 2004), it has created a PR tier comprising 20% of constituencies which are allocated to the opposition parties in proportion of their national vote. The introduction of the PR tier was an effective way for the RCD to allow for a token level opposition representative because as long as it is assured of electoral dominance at the multi-member district level, it would effectively cap opposition representation using the PR tier (Posusney, 2002, 40-41).

### ***5.3 Concluding remarks***

Institutions clearly do matter in structuring intra-elite interactions within these DPARs. It is often not sufficient to resort to brute force or will of power to maintain elite cohesion and minimize the potential for elite defection. Other strategies are needed in order to reward elites to remain within the party and to punish them if they defect. By introducing formal institutional mechanisms governing intra-elite interactions, the leaders of these DPARs can avoid avoid the impression that they are making arbitrary decisions in choosing to reward some elites over others or in choosing to punish some elites over others.

My argument that the decisions by some of these DPAR leaders to ‘tie their own hands’ through the use of these institutional mechanisms to structure intra-elite conflict follows a similar logic used by Gandhi (2008) who argues that dictators devolve power

to other political elites through the use of legislatures as a means of making a credible commitment not to grab all the power for themselves. DPARs which are more successful in establishing such mechanisms that are accepted by the elites within the regime are thus more likely to avoid the problems associated with elite defections, which, as we have seen in Chapter 1, were instrumental in explaining the demise of authoritarian regimes in the third wave of democratization.

Having discussed the dynamics of intra-elite conflicts, I now turn to the equally important issue of regime-opposition and intra-opposition dynamics, and how understanding and managing these dynamics are important components of DPAR maintenance.

## **Chapter 6: Managing the Opposition**

### ***6.0 Chapter Outline***

In Chapter 5, I discussed the myriad of institutional mechanisms used by dominant party regimes to increase defection costs and incentivize elites to remain with the party. The focus on maintaining elite cohesion is not surprising because, in many of these countries, the strongest opposition to the regime often emerges from within. Chapter 7 shall illustrate that elite splits are likely to weaken a regime's electorally dominant position, and often feature as a necessary condition for a DPAR to eventually lose its stranglehold on power.

This is not to say that opposition parties are not important in these DPARs. While there are many instances and examples of opposition parties that seem more intent on fighting amongst themselves than against the incumbent regime, more often than not, the dominant party regimes take calculated steps in order to co-opt and divide these opposition parties.

Leaders of these DPARs can ill afford to ignore the political threat posed by opposition parties within their midst. Opposition political parties are an integral part of the political-institutional framework in authoritarian regimes that hold multiparty elections. As such, they have the ability to channel anti-regime sentiment in an organized manner into the electoral arena on a sustained basis. They can develop stable roots in society and establish grass root networks by forming local branches, providing

constituency services and organizing political activities. They can also strengthen their party label by reaching out to a voter base that is independent of the popularity of the individual candidates.<sup>1</sup> Since their respective party labels hold some meaning to voters, these opposition parties can attract community and business leaders to run as candidates under their party banners.<sup>2</sup> These leaders can populate the ranks of the opposition parties and provide the necessary insurance policy in the event that existing opposition party leaders are arrested, killed or otherwise prevented from standing as candidates. Opposition parties also have the potential to represent underlying social cleavages that can be mobilized when the incumbent regime is political vulnerable. During these times, the presence of opposition parties increases the possibility that the collective action problems associated with mobilizing anti-regime support can be solved. Instead of participating in potentially costly anti-regime demonstrations, which may be brutally stopped by the regime, voters can cast anti-regime votes at the ballot box.

DPARs would prefer that opposition parties remain weakly institutionalized, fragmented and unable to mount an effective electoral challenge, especially during periods when the regimes are politically vulnerable. These regimes are, of course, not powerless to influence the institutional environments which the opposition parties operate. Their political dominance gives them access to a whole 'menu of manipulation'

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, voters value the party label more than the positives or negatives related to an individual candidate's profile.

<sup>2</sup> Assuming that, for whatever reason, these elites cannot or do not run as candidates from the incumbent regime's party.

(Schedler, 2002) which includes not only some of the previously discussed institutional mechanisms designed to increase their electoral advantage, but also institutional mechanisms that are designed to co-opt or divide the opposition parties (or both). Hence, the very electoral arena which affords opposition parties legitimate access to the political system also provides opportunities for the regime in power to minimize the electoral threat of the opposition as a whole.

A DPAR favors one strategy above another depending on the underlying political circumstances and the institutional environment governing regime-opposition interactions. Sometimes, it is more strategic to co-opt the opposition. At other times, it is more strategic to divide the opposition, thereby negating the need to co-opt them. Strategies used to co-opt and to divide the opposition are not mutually exclusive. A co-opted opposition party can co-exist in a context in which the opposition as a whole is divided. Table 26 below presents a framework for categorizing the structure of regime-opposition dynamics among a selected group of dominant party regimes.

**Table 26: Co-opted and / or divided opposition in selected DPRs**

		Divided Opposition	
		Yes	No
Co-opted Opposition	Yes	Egypt Tunisia Mexico (post 1988) South Africa (give year) Japan (post-1993) Malaysia (1969) Senegal (1991)	Sarawak (SNAP v PBDS) Sabah (BERJAYA v USNO; BERJAYA v PBS)
	No	Singapore (pre-and post-independence) Peninsular Malaysia (pre-1990) Sabah and Sarawak (currently) Bostwana Zambia Tanzania Paraguay Namibia	Taiwan Mozambique (pre-2009)

There are a number of ways in which an opposition party can be co-opted by the incumbent regime, the most obvious of which is the inclusion of that party as part of the ruling government. The regime can also choose to only co-opt a few willing leaders from among the ranks of the opposition by offering them government positions, rather than incurring the higher costs associated with incorporating an entire opposition party into

its ranks.<sup>3</sup> Other less obvious strategies of co-optation may involve extracting informal agreements from certain opposition parties to not mobilize protests against the ruling regime in exchange for policy concessions or particularistic benefits.

Similarly, there are also different degrees of opposition division. In some cases, the regime may have so successfully divided the opposition that the opposition parties compete against one another over the same pool of anti-regime voters. In less serious cases, which do not result in head-to-head competition for votes, opposition parties might have policy disagreements that prevent them from cooperating with one another in the electoral arena.

The different degrees of opposition co-optation and divisions, and the related strategies will be explored more fully later in this chapter.

I divide the discussion on strategies of opposition co-optation and division into three sections. Firstly, in section 6.1, I discuss the cases in which the regime utilizes existing political cleavages that are based on ideological, ethnic, regional and / or social divides to co-opt a divided opposition. The political environment that the dominant party regimes of Malaysia and Japan found themselves in, after a particularly disastrous elections campaign in 1969 and 1993 respectively, necessitated a strategy of opposition co-optation. The divided nature of the opposition allowed these regimes to accomplish

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<sup>3</sup> Incorporating more leaders may mean that the regime has to offer up most posts to these leaders which may deprive their own leaders of these coveted positions. Or the regime may have to make costly policy concessions in order to co-opt an entire opposition party to join the ranks of the ruling government.



this task, thereby helping them to regain their respective positions of political and electoral dominance. The Socialist Party (PS) in Senegal also used a similar strategy of selective opposition co-optation to strengthen its electoral position and divide the opposition.

In the second section, Section 6.2, I discuss a rather unique strategy of opposition co-optation used by the regime in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, whereby an 'internal' opposition party was allowed to compete against the regime within the respective states, on the understanding that these parties would be incorporated into the ranks of the government post-election. In both cases, the opposition was 'united' in the sense that only one 'internal' opposition party that was allowed to exist and compete under this explicit agreement.

In the third section, Section 6.3, I examine the use of different institutional mechanisms that were designed with the intention of co-opting and dividing the opposition. These include: manipulating the structure of contestation (Lust-Okar, 2005) or the electoral system (Posusney, 2002) in order to co-opt the secular opposition and prevent them from co-operating with 'radical' or 'extremist' Islamic groups in Egypt and Tunisia; changing legislative regulations to allow for easier party or coalition switching in South Africa; changing the electoral system to create disincentives for opposition coordination in Mexico and Taiwan; and using the issue of electoral reform to divide the opposition in Mexico.

The fourth section, Section 6.4, features an extensive discussion on intra-opposition dynamics since the opposition usually comprises more than one party. These opposition parties have some freedom in deciding their respective election campaign strategies and the type of alliances that they want to form with each other. Here, I examine whether the institutional environment which the opposition competes in can explain their failure to pose a stronger electoral challenge to the regime. For example, to what extent does the electoral system punish or reward opposition parties which take politically extreme positions on the salient dimension of political competition? To what extent does the institutional environment affect intra-opposition unity and cohesion? What are the ideological and institutional variables which prevent the opposition parties from cooperating with one another? In countries where an aspiring dominant party regime fails to manipulate institutional mechanisms to cement its hold on power, the coming together of the opposition can potentially unseat the incumbent regime. In countries where such collective action problems cannot be solved by the opposition on a sustained basis, the incumbent regime usually manages to maintain its hold on power, even when it seems electorally vulnerable.

I end with Section 6.5, which is a summary of the main findings in this chapter.

## **6.1 Co-opting a divided opposition in Malaysia, Japan and Senegal**

### **6.1.1 Malaysia post-1969**

Perhaps the most important juncture in Malaysia's early post-independence history was the 1969 general elections. In this election, the ruling coalition was unable to capture a 2/3rds parliamentary majority. It had also lost its majority control of three state governments. The events which this election set in motion eventually resulted in the reconfiguration of the Alliance ruling coalition, which expanded into the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition in 1974.

The 1969 general election saw a significant reduction in the number of multi-cornered fights, especially among the non-Malay opposition parties, which had previously divided the opposition vote and allowed the then Alliance to win a number of seats with just a plurality of the votes.<sup>4</sup> The three main non-Malay opposition parties,

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<sup>4</sup> The effect of multi-cornered contests featuring more than more than one opposition party has the effect of increasing the then Alliance (forerunner to the BN) party's chances of winning these constituencies. Firstly, in the cases where both or more of the opposition candidates are of the same ethnicity, they would end up splitting the opposition vote. Secondly, even in the cases where both or more of the opposition candidates are from different ethnic groups, the Alliance may still end up benefiting. For example, one possible strategy involved fielding PAS Malay candidates in non-Malay majority constituencies with a significant minority of Malay voters. PAS could take away some Malay votes from the Alliance which ends up benefiting the non-Malay opposition party contesting in these constituencies. But this strategy ignores the fact that some of the Malay would have voted for the non-Malay opposition party if PAS had not fielded a candidate. The appearance of a PAS candidate as a potential spoiler also provides fodder for the Alliance to use against the non-Malay opposition party. The Alliance would accuse these non-Malay parties of being in cahoots with PAS thereby making some non-Malay voters who would have otherwise vote for the non-Malay opposition party to vote for the Alliance instead (Vasil, 1972, 40-41). Thirdly, by fielding more than one opposition candidate, the impression is created that the opposition is fractured and disunited, as opposed to the Alliance, which has managed to unite the different component parties under its umbrella.

GERAKAN<sup>5</sup>, PPP and DAP were able to avoid putting candidates in the same constituencies in the 1969 elections. 'This agreement left Penang mostly to GERAKAN, split Selangor, and gave Negri Sembilan, Johor and Melaka to the DAP' (Mauzy and Milne, 1978, 162). PPP was the main non-Malay opposition party in Perak and was especially strong in Ipoh, the largest city in this state. However, since these electoral pacts did not involve the other three Malay-led opposition parties (PAS, Parti Rakyat<sup>6</sup> and UMCO), there were still 22 out of the 95 contested parliamentary constituencies where multi-cornered contests took place (23.2%).<sup>7</sup>

The events which unfolded after the 1969 elections showed that having an electoral pact to avoid multi-cornered contests is not sufficient to ensure the creation of an effective and viable long term opposition front to the Alliance. Even though the three main non-Malay parties had made significant electoral gains, especially in the states of Penang, Perak and Selangor (all of which were multiethnic states), the fact that each of these political parties derived their political strength from different states made these parties easy targets for the Alliance to co-opt in the process of creating the BN in 1974.

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<sup>5</sup> GERAKAN was the successor party to the UDP, which was formed by former MCA president, Lim Chong Eu. Even though GERAKAN was founded as a multiracial party, its appeal was mainly to the non-Malays in Penang.

<sup>6</sup> Parti Rakyat is a Malay led party that was part of the Socialist Front (SF). It contested under its own banner in 1969 because the Labor party had decided to boycott the election. UMCO was a small non-Malay party which contested only in the state of Negri Sembilan.

<sup>7</sup> It was hinted that PAS was contesting in some of the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies where the DAP was contesting to take away Malay votes from the Alliance but was denied by the DAP as well as PAS.

**Table 27: Distribution of state constituencies won by the Alliance and the three major non-Malay parties in Penang, Perak and Selangor, 1969 general election**

State	ALLIANCE	GERAKAN	DAP	PPP	Others	Total
Penang	4	<b>16</b>	3	0	1 <sup>8</sup>	24
Perak	19	2	6	<b>12</b>	1 <sup>9</sup>	40
Selangor	14	4	<b>9</b>	0	1 <sup>10</sup>	28

Source: Election Report 1969.

Table 27 above shows the number of state constituencies won by the Alliance and the three major non-Malay parties in the states of Penang, Perak and Selangor in the 1969 general election. GERAKAN was clearly the dominant party in Penang, winning 16 out of 24 state constituencies. PPP was dominant in Perak, winning 12 out of 40 state constituencies while DAP was the strongest opposition party in the state of Selangor with 9 out of the 28 state constituencies. The Alliance fell far short of a majority in Penang, was two state seats short in Perak and one state seat short in Selangor.

Enticing GERAKAN to join the ruling coalition was clearly the most important objective of the Alliance. By co-opting GERAKAN, the ruling coalition could govern Penang with GERAKAN's constituencies and have sufficient constituencies to control the state legislatures of Perak and Selangor. It was thus not surprising that GERAKAN was the first among the Peninsular Malaysia opposition parties to announce that it was joining the ruling coalition in February 1972 (Milne and Mauzy, 1978, 183). PPP, which

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<sup>8</sup> Parti Rakyat.

<sup>9</sup> PAS.

<sup>10</sup> Independent

wanted to protect its interests in the state of Perak, most notably over the control of the Ipoh Municipal Council, joined the ruling coalition in May 1972.

The use of a counterfactual is necessary at this point. Would GERAKAN and PPP have been so willing to join the ruling coalition had they been part of one larger non-Malay opposition party rather than their own individual parties?

There are many reasons to suggest that a single non-Malay party with a majority of state constituencies in Penang and half the state constituencies in Perak and Selangor would have resisted the Alliance advances more readily than three separate opposition parties. Firstly, the incentive to stay in the ranks of the opposition would have been increased since there was the potential to control not just one state legislature (which most likely would have been Penang) but three. Secondly, the price which a united non-Malay party could have extracted from the Alliance would have been higher than perhaps what the Alliance was willing to pay. With half the state constituencies in Selangor, it may even have demanded the position of the Chief Minister of that state, a Chinese majority state before the creation of Wilayah Persekutuan made Selangor a Malay plurality state!<sup>11</sup> Thirdly, a united non-Malay party might not have been as

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<sup>11</sup> Wilayah Persekutuan or the Federal Territories were created by carving this area out of the state of Selangor after the 1969 general election. As the name implies, this area would come under the administrative jurisdiction of the federal government. Since Wilayah Persekutan comprised a majority of non-Malays, this meant that the state of Selangor would no longer be a Malay majority state after the creation of Wilayah Persekutuan (Rachagan, 1993, 66). The equivalent in the US would be the creation of the District of Columbia (DC), except on a much larger scale since voters in Wilayah Persekutuan comprised 5% of the total voting population in Peninsular Malaysia compared to less than 1% for DC.

willing as GERAKAN and PPP to share power within the Alliance framework with the MCA and the MIC since it would have had to give up many more seats to this party on a national scale.<sup>12</sup>

There were two important political consequences as a result of GERAKAN and PPP joining the ruling coalition. The first was that it increased UMNO's dominance within the ruling coalition since the constituencies that had to be conceded to both these parties as a result of them joining the ruling coalition would come from the MCA rather than UMNO. The second important political consequence was that it took away the power base of the opposition from Penang and Perak. It took the DAP three election cycles before it could come close to achieving the kind of electoral gains made by GERAKAN and PPP in the states of Penang and Perak respectively.

There are many reasons why a merged entity comprising all three major non-Malay parties before the 1969 general election was not possible.<sup>13</sup> The origins of each party with their respective support base and corresponding strong personalities meant that the leaders of the respective parties could not agree on who would head such a merged entity. Furthermore, while all three parties were non-communal in their official

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<sup>12</sup> GERAKAN and PPP, on the other hand, could gain seats in states in which it was popular in exchange for seats in states in which it was less popular. A united non-Malay party would not have been able to reap similar rewards since its seats would have been distributed in most of the non-Malay majority states in Peninsular Malaysia.

<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it is unlikely that such a prospect was even imagined although there was some discussion that the MCA was investigating the possibility of merging with the DAP, GERAKAN and the PPP after the 1969 general election (Milne and Mauzy, 1978, 193).

ideology and party platforms, GERAKAN's non-communal position was probably stronger than DAP's.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that three non-Malay parties won representation at the parliamentary and state levels in the 1969 general election made it easier for the ruling coalition to use a divide and conquer strategy to co-opt two out of the three parties to join the ruling coalition. This strategy probably would not have worked if there was only one non-Malay flank party that had won all these parliamentary and state constituencies. Hence, opposition coordination, in terms of the allocation of constituencies to avoid multi-cornered contests, is only the first step that needs to be taken in order to defeat the ruling coalition. A united opposition coalition that could not be easily bought off by the BN is also needed. This was clearly demonstrated in the recent 2008 general elections whereby DAP replicated the electoral success achieved in 1969 by the non-Malay parties in the same three states. Because all these non-Malay majority constituencies were won by a single non-Malay party, the BN was not able to co-opt DAP into joining the ranks of the ruling coalition.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Syed Hussein Alatas one of GERAKAN's founding members was its president from 1968 to 1969. One of the key leaders of GERAKAN, Lim Chong Eu, was a former MCA president that had left the party and hence, had better relationships with the Alliance leaders compared with the DAP, whose positions as an opposition party were far more rigid and entrenched.

<sup>15</sup> Such a possibility was not even raised among the BN leaders.



### 6.1.2 Japan post-1993

A well-known example of how opposition divisions can be successfully exploited by a longstanding incumbent occurred in Japan after the 1993 elections, when the first non-LDP government since 1955 was formed by seven opposition parties, three of whom were led by former LDP leaders. The serious elite splits within the LDP that led to its electoral defeat were the result of the failure on the part of the Miyazawa government to introduce electoral reform and anti-corruption legislation prior to the 1993 elections (Scheiner, 2006; Christensen, 2000).

Morihiro Hosokawa, who would later lead the non-LDP government, left the LDP in 1992 and formed the Japan New Party (JNP) (Hrebendar, 2000, 90). Ichiro Ozawa, together with Tsutomu Hata, two powerful brokers in the LDP, left to form the Japan Renewal Party (JRP) or Shinseito in 1993 (Hrebendar, 2000, 90).<sup>16</sup> Another LDP power broker, Takemuar Mayoshi, formed the New Party Sakigake.

Even though the LDP failed to win a majority of seats in the 1993 elections, it still won the largest number of seats among all parties. The LDP would have stood a better chance of staying in power had it managed to co-opt one or two of the opposition parties, including those led by the LDP defectors, to join (or rejoin) it in order to form a

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<sup>16</sup> 'The significance of the departure of the Ozawa-Hata group was enormous... The only way the LDP would lose control of the Japanese national government appeared to be the party's self-destruction of splitting into smaller parts. The walkout of the Ozawa-Hata group reduced the LDP HR seats to fewer than a majority and a vote of no confidence against the Miyazawa government forced an HT general election in July 1993' (Hrebendar, 2000, 91)

governing majority. Ultimately, it was through the maneuverings of former LDP strongman and political operator, Ichiro Ozawa, that the seven party governing coalition, which did not include the LDP, was cobbled together.<sup>17</sup>

But there was no coherent political identity or ideology which united the fragile governing coalition whose parties spanned the ideological spectrum, with three conservative / reformist parties, the Socialists occupying the left wing and the centrist Democratic Socialist and Clean Government parties. Ozawa himself began to alienate some of the smaller political parties within this coalition by pushing ahead with the issue of electoral reform. He clearly wanted to reconfigure the political system into a two-party system and understood enough about electoral systems to know that a shift towards a FPTP SMD method of electing representatives would do much to achieve this end. Not surprisingly, the smaller parties within the governing coalition including the Socialists, who would have been negatively affected by a change to a majoritarian electoral system, protested and blocked the path towards electoral reform. The schisms within the fragile coalition grew over time, resulting in increased instability and

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<sup>17</sup> The part played by Ozawa in outmaneuvering the LDP is neatly captured by Christiansen's account (2000, 14): 'In the coalition negotiations that followed the election, Ozawa bested the LDP in negotiating strategy. The LDP could count on the support of some conservative independents; it needed to entice only one or two parties to become its coalition partner in order to have a parliamentary majority. The most likely candidates were the Japan New Party or the New Party Harbinger. Both were close to the LDP, and both had reasons to be reluctant about an alliance with Ozawa's Renewal Party. Ozawa, however, proposed that Hosokawa of the Japan New Party be the coalition's candidate for prime minister, thus securing the support of these parties in an anti-LDP coalition government.'

gridlock over policy decisions. Ozawa was forced to turn to some of the reformers within the LDP in order to find sufficient support to pass an electoral reform bill.

The short-lived coalition finally collapsed shortly after Tsutomu Hata replaced Hosokawa as Prime Minister. The electoral reform bill had passed and Ozawa could no longer hold the anti-LDP governing coalition together. Sensing an opportunity, the LDP proposed to form a government with the Socialists and the New Harbinger party by offering the position of the Prime Minister to Tomiichi Murayama of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP). When Murayama resigned in 1996, the LDP took back the Prime Minister's position. The LDP co-opted more defectors from the opposition parties in 1997, which increased its majority in the House of Representatives and restored some of its former electoral dominance (Hrebendar, 2000, 93).

Unlike the situation in post-1969 Malaysia, the opposition parties in post 1993 Japan were able to form a ruling coalition which excluded the LDP. However, the fragmented nature of the ruling coalition and the manner in which it was cobbled together already signaled its fragility. Hence, it collapsed only after a brief period in government and was replaced with an LDP government that was able to once again reassert its political dominance. This would last all the way until the 2009 general elections when a more stable opposition party that was slowly consolidated as a result of the 1994 electoral reforms managed to defeat the LDP (see Chapter 7).

The experience of the opposition's short term victory over the LDP holds an important lesson for parties seeking to defeat an incumbent dominant party regime. Even if a DPAR somehow is pressured into introducing electoral and political reform, which moves the country towards a freer and fairer electoral playing field, it is still possible for the DPAR in question to maintain its hold on power by co-opting parts of a divided opposition. One should not assume that a DPAR will be defeated by a single united opposition party, as a result of political liberalization. The political environment in which many of these DPARs currently operate, is usually one where the opposition is made up of a number of political parties, many of them with irreconcilable ideological differences. It is not uncommon to find deep rooted personal conflicts among the top leaders of the various opposition parties. Some of these leaders might even have stronger negative feelings towards each other than the leaders of the ruling party. In these types of political environments, the institutional incentives for opposition cooperation become even more important. These incentives are needed to prevent the incumbent regime from co-opting part of the fragmented opposition and to compensate for some of the personal enmities among the opposition leaders.

### **6.1.3 Senegal post-1990**

The PS in Senegal is also no stranger to the practice of co-opting opposition parties and leaders to participate in a government in an 'enlarged presidential majority' (EPM) (Beck, 1999, 198). Abdoulaye Wade, the leader of the main opposition party, the

PDS, and who later defeated Abdou Diouf in a run-off presidential election in 2001, was included in the formation of the first EPM government in 1991. Diouf's decision to reach out to the opposition, including agreeing to demands for electoral reforms, was seen as being motivated by his own desire to oversee greater political liberalization in Senegal, as well as pre-empting the possibility of the calling of a national conference similar to the one in Benin which was responsible for Mathieu Kerekou's removal as President.

It was conceivable that the opposition could have forced Diouf to concede to these electoral reforms without joining with government. However, the temptation to gain access to resources that comes with a cabinet appointment proved too great to resist for two of the opposition parties, the DPS and the PIT.<sup>18</sup> By co-opting these parties to join it in an EPM government, the PS successfully 'divided and silenced the opposition' by creating a rift 'between those parties that join the government and those that refuse to participate' (Beck, 1999, 214).

In all three countries, in Malaysia, in Japan and in Senegal, the dominant party regime made use of an already existing line of division within the opposition – regional in the case of Peninsular Malaysia in 1969, ideological in the case of Japan in 1994 and structural in the case of Senegal in 1991 and 1993 – to co-opt part of the opposition in order to strengthen their political positions (and in Japan's case to regain control of the

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<sup>18</sup> PIT was a small Marxist party, which broke ranks with the other opposition parties, which initially had stood united in rejecting the offer to join the EPM government (Beck, 1999, 199)

government). Not only were these regimes successful in reasserting their political dominance by co-opting some of these opposition parties, they also enjoyed the added benefit of further dividing the opposition forces.

## **6.2 'Internalized' Opposition in Sabah and Sarawak**

In Chapter 5, I highlighted the importance of Sabah and Sarawak, the two Malaysian states on the island of Borneo, in providing an insurance policy to the BN in the event of a serious electoral challenge in Peninsular Malaysia. The parliamentary over-representation of voters in both these states as a result of past delimitation exercises was particularly useful to the BN in light of its disastrous electoral performance in Peninsular Malaysia in the 2008 general elections.

The seemingly impregnable position of the BN that it currently enjoys in both these states was not always assured. The model of Malay-Muslim political dominance practiced by UMNO in Peninsular Malaysia which the federal government subsequently tried to impose in Sabah and Sarawak was met with resistance at different junctures in both states. The difficulty of implanting this model coupled with the relative autonomy enjoyed by the BN component parties in both these states necessitated the adoption of a different strategy on the part of the federal government – which was to allow an 'internalized' opposition within the structure of the ruling coalition at the state level while recognizing these internal opposition parties as part of the ruling coalition at the federal level.

Before I proceed with the explanation of this unique organization of intra-coalition competition in Sabah and Sarawak, a short background on the pattern of political competition in both these states is necessary.

The ethnic composition of both states made Malay or Muslim political domination an unlikely proposition. The Malays were a minority in Sabah (less than 1% of the population) as well as in Sarawak (17% of the population), according to the 1960 census. At the same time, the indigenous make-up of both states was far more diverse and fragmented compared to Peninsular Malaysia. The largest ethnic groups among the indigenous population were the Kadazandusuns (32%) in Sabah and the Ibans (31%) in Sarawak, according to the 1960 census. Since most Kadazandusuns were animists or Christians, it was not possible to conceive of a similar Peninsular Malaysia model of indigenous Muslim pattern of political domination.

Despite the lower salience of religion as a basis of ethnic division and the often blurry lines between the different ethnic groups, caused by a high proportion of inter-ethnic marriages, the pattern of political competition which emerged in both states was defined by the non-Muslim Bumiputera / Muslim Bumiputera cleavage. The mobilization of electoral support along this cleavage line and the consolidation of non-Muslim Bumiputera and Muslim Bumiputera as politically relevant ethnic groups (Posner, 2004) should have been anticipated since politicians can easily 'count heads' and subsequently identify the relevant group categorization that could win then the

most votes (Chandran, 2005). Consolidating the various fragmented ethnic groups into the larger, more encompassing categories of non-Muslim Bumiputera and Muslim Bumiputera provided them with a larger vote base. Moreover, similarities in cultural and linguistic backgrounds among some of these groups (Fearon, 2003) made it easier for the respective political entrepreneurs to mobilize support based on religious differences rather than on any other salient dimension of political competition. In Sarawak, for example, mobilization based on a wider Dayak identity on the part of opposition parties has resulted in some degree of success since 'the Ibans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu are commonly referred to as Dayaks, whose proximity may be defined in their socio-cultural similarities' (Jawan, 1994, 24). Together, these three ethnic groups within the larger Dayak rubric comprise 48% of the total population in Sarawak in 1950 (Jawan, 1994, 24), larger than any other single ethnic group in the state. In Sabah, Kadazandusun leaders were able to mobilize some of the smaller non-Muslim indigenous groups in order to establish a core voter base that, theoretically at least, comprised close to half of the voting population in 1960.

Differing post-independence political environments in both states were to lead to slightly different models of 'internalized' opposition. In Sarawak, the BN allowed a breakaway faction of SNAP, then the largest and only non-Muslim Bumiputera party in the BN coalition in this state, to compete as an opposition party in the state elections with the understanding that this breakaway party, the PBDS, would be allocated



positions within the federal government regardless of the outcome of the competition between SNAP and PBDS at the state level. PBDS was explicit about its intentions to replace SNAP as the dominant non-Muslim Bumiputera party in Sarawak and went out of its way to avoid competing with the PBB (the Muslim Bumiputera-led party) and the SUPP (the Chinese-led party) at the constituency level. In contrast, 'internalized' opposition parties in Sabah featured parties that wanted to replace the incumbent BN component party as the dominant party in the state, who would control the majority of seats and the position of the Chief Minister. BERJAYA played the role of the internal opposition party to USNO, the first post-independent dominant BN component party in Sabah and was successful in displacing it in the 1976 state elections. PBS would play a similar role in displacing BERJAYA as the dominant party in the 1985 Sabah state elections.

Figure 8: 'Internalized' Opposition in Sabah and Sarawak

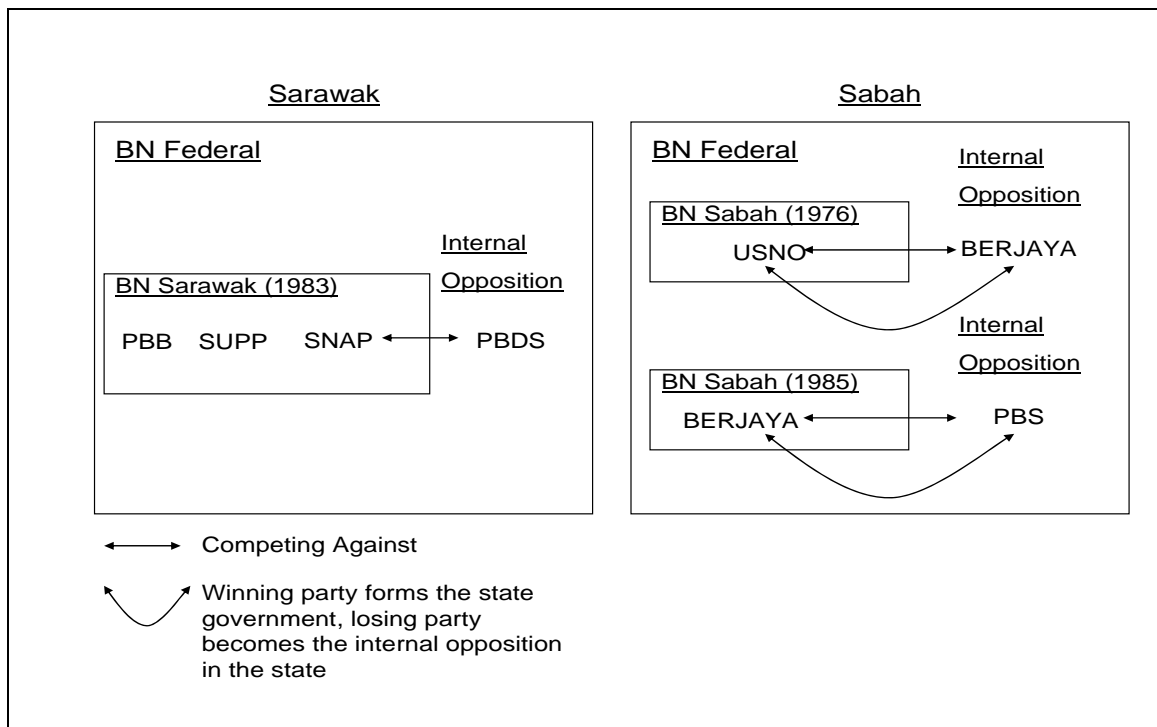


Figure 8 above shows the relationship between the internal opposition parties and the BN at the state and federal levels. All of the internal opposition parties compete in the state elections in the respective states with the understanding that they are part of the BN coalition at the federal level. In Sarawak, PBDS competed with SNAP at the state level in the 1983 state elections. The distribution of government positions at the state level was decided after these elections. Both SNAP and PBDS were given a number of positions in the state government in proportion to the number of state seats they each won. In Sabah, BERJAYA competed with USNO at the state level as the internal opposition party in 1976 and PBS competed with BERAJAYA at the state level as the

internal opposition party in 1985. The understanding in this state was that whichever party won the most number of state seats would control the state government and take over the leadership of the BN in Sabah with the losing party taking over the role as the internal opposition party.

I briefly discuss the circumstances which the internalized opposition in Sarawak emerged, and the political rationale for allowing this very unique model of 'opposition' co-optation before moving on to a similar discussion involving the 'opposition' parties in Sabah.

### **6.2.1 Internalized opposition in Sarawak**

Political competition along the Muslim / non-Muslim Bumiputera cleavage line began to take shape after the first Chief Minister in Sarawak, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, a Dayak and leader of the Dayak-based party, SNAP, was ignominiously expelled from his position in 1966 and subsequently replaced by Rahman Yaacob, a Muslim Melanau from the PBB, a party representing the interests of that same community in Sarawak.

Given that the Dayaks comprised a plurality or a majority in 28 out of the 48 state constituencies in the 1970 Sarawak state elections, it was theoretically possible for a united Dayak party behind the ousted Chief Minister, Ningkan, to capture all or most of these constituencies to form the state government. This explains why SNAP decided not to join the reconfigured ruling coalition in 1974, even as the other major parties in Sarawak – the PBB as well as the Chinese-led SUPP – threw in their lot with the BN.

This paved the way for SNAP to claim the position as the dominant and only Dayak-led party in Sarawak. The position of SNAP as the party representing the majority of the Dayaks was secured in the 1974 Sarawak state elections where it won 18 out of the 48 state constituencies, nearly all of them in Dayak plurality / majority areas (Jawan, 1994, 109). SNAP was the only opposition party left in the 1974 state elections and it fielded candidates in 47 out of the 48 state constituencies, most of them in head to head contests with the BN. PBB and SUPP divided the remaining constituencies by winning 18 and 12 respectively.

However, SNAP's tenure as the main opposition party in Sarawak was relatively short-lived. Its opposition status deprived it of valuable access to resources and positions at the state and federal level. Hence, it was not unexpected that it joined the BN in 1976 at the prompting of several BN leaders at the federal level. This did not please the PBB's Chief Minister 'because he feared that once in Barisan, SNAP could easily undermine his position in the government by allying with the Ibans from PBB' (Jawan, 1994, 114). SNAP leaders thought that they could join the BN from a position of strength since the 18 state constituencies it held at that time were equal to those held by the PBB. Nonetheless, its position in the state government as a potential challenger to the PBB was undermined by a serious split among its leadership ranks.

Leadership tussles within any political party are not uncommon. A serious leadership struggle within UMNO led to the formation of S46. Similarly, a leadership

struggle in SNAP, pitting a Chinese SNAP leader, James Wong, against a rising Dayak leader, Leo Moggie. This contest was won by the former, resulting in Moggie leaving SNAP to form another Dayak party, PDBS. Moggie's political rationale for forming this new party was to challenge SNAP 'over the leadership of the Dayak community' (Jawan, 1994, 133). The underlying message was clear - a Dayak is better placed to represent Dayak interests compared to a Chinese. But the longer term consequence was that the PBB, which had always feared a Dayak challenge to its dominance of state politics, could splinter the Dayak vote.

PBB's Chief Minister cleverly allowed the PBDS to put up candidates against SNAP at the state level and at the same time allowed the PBDS to be part of the BN at the Federal level as part of a 'BN3 Plus' formula (the plus referring to PBDS). At the same time, both PBB and SUPP opportunistically took advantage of the intra-Dayak contests to field their 'own' independent candidates who were successful in winning three state constituencies. These independent candidates who were backed by either PBB or SUPP subsequently joined either of these parties after their electoral victories (Jawan, 1994, 136). As a result of the intra-Dayak fights, the PPB and the SUPP increased their share of state constituencies from 18 to 20, and from 12 to 13, respectively. SNAP won 8 constituencies, while the PBDS won 7, meaning that the Dayak representation had fallen from 18 constituencies (out of 48) after the 1974 state elections to 15 after the 1983 state elections.

The decision by the BN to allow PBDS to compete as an internal opposition party was motivated by several inter-related factors. Firstly, it wanted to avoid a repeat of the potentially destabilizing consequences of the post-1974 experience whereby a very strong Dayak-based opposition party emerged to challenge the political dominance of the BN. Since the BN could not ascertain which of the two Dayak based parties would emerge with the larger number of seats in the 1983 Sarawak state elections, both SNAP and PBDS were allowed to compete, but with the understanding that both parties would remain within the BN coalition. The politically sensitive task of allocating state cabinet positions was left until the outcome of the 1983 elections was known.

Secondly, the BN, specifically the PBB, could use this opportunity to fragment the Dayak vote between the two Dayak parties, thereby weakening the overall bargaining position of the Dayaks within the party. Sending the signal that either party was acceptable to the BN increased the probability that the Dayak voters would split its support among the two parties – SNAP, because of its historical association with the first Dayak Chief Minister, Ningkan, and PBDS, because it was led by a new generation of well-educated and charismatic Dayak leaders.

Thirdly, the PBB as well as the SUPP, could take advantage of the politically fluid situation among the Dayaks to field their own independent candidates in some of the seats featuring both SNAP and PBDS. These independent candidates hoped to take advantage of the possible split in the Dayak vote to win these seats with only a plurality

of the vote based on their support among the non-Dayak voters.<sup>19</sup> These candidates were expected to join the party which funded their campaign if they managed to win their seats.

PBB's plan worked to perfection. The Dayak vote was evenly divided among the two Dayak based parties resulting in an almost even split in the number of state seats won by SNAP (8) and PBDS (7). The PBB was able to steal away two Dayak seats courtesy of victories by the two independent but PBB backed candidates who won with, as predicted, only a plurality of the vote.

From this perspective, the strategy of using an 'internal' opposition party allowed the BN to consolidate its hold on power in Sarawak and slowly institutionalize the model of Malay-Muslim domination in a state where this seemed almost impossible initially.

### **6.2.2 Internalized Opposition in Sabah – BERJAYA and PBS**

The basis of political competition in Sabah can be simplistically described as being similar to Sarawak in this regard – the contestation for the plurality non-Muslim Bumiputera population to assert political control of this state against the Muslim Bumiputera population. But the salience of the non-Muslim Bumiputera / Muslim Bumiputera line of cleavage only became politically relevant much later in Sabah

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<sup>19</sup> There are a sufficient number of these ethnically mixed seats with a Dayak plurality or majority but also a significant number of Malay / Melanau and Chinese voters.

because of the following two reasons. Firstly, an influential Kadazan leader, Donald Stephens and the leader of the non-Muslim Bumiputera party, UPKO, decided to disband his party and urged all of the party's state representatives to join the BN on the premise of 'Bumiputera unity' after failing to defeat the Muslim-Bumiputera party of Mustapha Harun, USNO in the 1967 state elections (Tilman, 1976, 498).

Without a leading non-Muslim Bumiputera politician that had the same stature as Stephens (or his counterpart, Ningkan in Sarawak) and without a viable non-Muslim Bumiputera party, mobilization possibilities along the Muslim Bumiputera / non-Muslim Bumiputera cleavage line were sufficient depressed. Furthermore, Sabah, under Mustapha's reign from 1968 to 1975, resembled a country that was ruled by a 'strongman-politician' (Migdal, 1988, 133-141) where any opposition was not to be tolerated. This was reflected in the 1971 Sabah state elections when all 32 constituencies were won, uncontested, by Mustapha's USNO.

What then could account for the acceptance, on the part of the BN at the federal level, to allow BERJAYA, a party created just prior to the 1976 Sabah state elections, to compete with the understanding that it would be an acceptable partner for the BN coalition? The BN's decision can be explained by Mustapha's increasing dictatorial and erratic behavior as Chief Minister. His policy of Islamization in the state including widespread allegations of forced conversions among the native population was very unpopular among the non-Muslim population. Allegations of 'living the good life'



overseas led to him being given the label of the 'Playboy Prince of Borneo' by an Australian tabloid, and he was continuously dogged by allegations of corruption over the allocation of timber concessions to his relatives (Tilman, 1976, 498). He was also getting increasingly unpopular with the federal government because of his support for the Muslims in the Southern Philippines which caused a strain in the KL-Manila relationship. The federal government was probably most disturbed by noises Mustapha was making about a possible Sabah secession (Tilman, 1976, 502).

Mustapha's unpopularity created an opportunity for a rival political party to challenge USNO. BERJAYA, which was formed by a coalition of Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese leaders, provided this challenge in the 1976 Sabah state election. BERJAYA managed to win 28 out of the 48 state constituencies at stake, winning in many of the Kadazan majority areas which gave UPKO significant support in 1967 Sabah state elections. What gave BERJAYA its final edge over USNO was its ability to win nearly all the Chinese plurality / majority constituencies, which UPKO had not managed to do in 1967 (Sin, 1979, 384). BERJAYA was helped by the lack of a strong Chinese based party in Sabah that could effectively monopolize the Chinese vote, which was the case with SUPP in Sarawak. This meant that BERJAYA could more effectively and credibly co-opt influential Chinese leaders to run under its ticket (Sin, 1979, 388).

The former leader of UPKO, Fuad Stephens, and now BERJAYA leader, who had converted to Islam, became the new Chief Minister of Sabah. His conversion to Islam

placated federal fears of being attacked in Peninsular Malaysia for allowing a non-Muslim to replace a Muslim as the head of government in Sabah. After replacing USNO as the dominant party in Sabah, BERJAYA joined the BN coalition. USNO would remain an opposition party in Sabah, but was part of the BN coalition at the federal level as a way of maintaining a check and balance on BERJAYA.

BERJAYA's electoral support in Sabah would slowly wane as Stephen's replacement as Chief Minister, Harris Salleh, a Muslim Bumiputera, replicated many of Mustapha's practices which had the effect of alienating large sections of the population in Sabah.<sup>20</sup>

Loh (2005, 82-84) describes the two prongs of policy making under Harris that contributed to his increasing unpopularity in Sabah. Firstly, his continuation of many of the Islamization policies that started under Mustapha would alienate the non-Muslim population. Secondly, his position of increasing subservience to the federal government allowed the growing opposition to Harris to mobilize on a federal-state axis of political competition that would broaden the anti-incumbent coalition. One of Harris' most controversial decisions involved the ceding of an island that belonged to Sabah, Labuan, to the federal government without compensation. This left him open to accusations that he was shortchanging the interests of the state, a combustible issue of contestation in a state that was always wary of encroachment by the federal government.

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<sup>20</sup> Stephens died in a plane crash soon after becoming Chief Minister in 1976.

The expulsion from BERJAYA, by Salleh, of Joseph Pairin Kitingan, the paramount leader (or *hugun siao*) of the Kadazan community led to the formation of the PBS, a Kadazan-led party with significant representation from the Chinese and to a lesser extent, the Muslim Bumiputera communities. In the 1985 Sabah state elections, the PBS, led by Pairing, managed to defeat BERJAYA by winning 25 out of 48 state constituencies. BERJAYA was reduced to only 6 state constituencies as it was defeated by USNO, the party it had deposed in the 1976 state elections, in 16 state constituencies. PBS received most of its support in the Kadazan and Chinese plurality constituencies, in many of the constituencies in which UPKO in 1967 and BERJAYA in 1976 were successful in capturing. USNO won most of its constituencies in the Muslim Bumiputera areas (Kalimuthu, 1986, 833).

With only a one seat majority in the state legislature, the PBS cleverly opened up the state as well as the party to include greater representation by the Chinese and the Muslim Bumiputeras, knowing that it needed the votes of the other communities to win a majority of state seats. For example, three Deputy Chief Minister positions were created that were filled by a representative from each of three main communities, and parallel positions were created at the party level by the creation of three Deputy President positions (Loh, 2005, 89). In other words, they were hoping to pool the votes of the various communities in Sabah within the party. The inclusiveness of the PBS explains why it was able to win an additional nine state constituencies (from 25 to 34) in

the 1986 Sabah state elections, which were called because Pairin felt that his single seat majority in the state legislature was not stable enough for him to continue to govern. The PBS would strengthen its position in the 1990 Sabah state elections when it won 36 out of 48 state constituencies (Chin, 1994, 906). Like BERJAYA before it, the PBS would join the BN coalition after defeating the incumbent party in the 1985 state elections.

While the BN preferred Salleh's BERJAYA to remain in power in Sabah given PBS's anti-federal rhetoric, it also recognized that PBS' popularity in the state was growing from strength to strength. Faced with a choice of PBS governing the state as an opposition party or as part of BN coalition, the BN leaders at the federal level choose the latter option.

The inability of the PBS to get along with the federal government eventually led its departure from the ruling coalition prior to the 1990 general elections. I will leave the discussion on the consequences of PBS' defection to Chapter 7 when I examine the issue of elite defections more generally. For this section, it is sufficient to highlight the consistency of the strategy adopted by the BN in both these states, which was to allow an 'internalized' opposition to exist within the BN framework as a means to prevent the emergence of a 'real' opposition party. In Sarawak, the BN wanted to weaken the electoral position of the Dayaks within the ruling government. In Sabah, at least in the case of BERJAYA, the BN wanted to replace an unpopular leader – Mustpaha Harun - who was seen as an increasingly unpredictable ally.

### ***6.3 Institutional design to divide the opposition***

DPARs are not restricted to exploiting existing cleavage lines in order to co-opt and / or divide the opposition. They can also manipulate the institutional environment in which political competition takes place in order to create new cleavage lines or exacerbate existing cleavage lines that have the effect of dividing opposition forces. In this section, I highlight various strategies employed by various regimes to disincentivize opposition parties from cooperating with one another, through the careful manipulation of institutional mechanisms.

They include: (i) providing incentives for more moderate opposition parties to play within the rules set by the regime, thereby preventing them from cooperating with the more radical opposition parties which are not allowed to compete in the electoral arena (at least not on the same terms as the legalized parties) (ii) introducing electoral reform as a means of meeting opposition demands but which are also structured to divide the opposition and finally (iii) changing the rules in order to make party switching easier.

This is not a comprehensive list of institutional mechanisms designed with the specific purpose of thwarting opposition cooperation. It is likely that many small changes in the rules of the electoral game and in the political-institutional framework do not receive the necessary attention from scholars. Regardless of how small these changes might be, cumulatively and over time, they often have the effect of creating the

expectation that opposition parties cannot or will not cooperate with one another. As new dominant party regimes emerge, consolidate and begin to face new electoral challenges, it is also conceivable that new institutional mechanisms will be used in order to achieve the very specific purpose of preventing the rise of a cohesive opposition.

### **6.3.1 Manipulating the ‘structure of contestation’ in Egypt and Tunisia**

The strongest and most credible threat to authoritarian rule in North Africa and the larger Arab world comes from Islamist parties and militant groups. Many of the militant Islamist groups in these countries view participation in the political arena as a non-starter since that would involve tacitly recognizing of the legitimacy of the ruling respective incumbent regime. Participation in the political arena may also decrease the credentials and militant reputations which such groups depend on for funding and recruitment.

Nevertheless, the opening up of the electoral arena that swept much of sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s, and which spilled over into North Africa, offered up electoral opportunities to Islamic groups to take advantage of their organizational strength, grass root networks and mobilizing capabilities. The use of Islam by these groups as a salient dimension of political contestation and voter mobilization was particularly effective when these Islamic leaders were contrasted with the secular (or at best, nominally Islamic) and often corrupt leaders of the incumbent regime. The Islamic orientation of these parties attracted austere and dedicated individuals whose rise in the

leadership ranks created a self-reinforcing cycle. Voters who were attracted to the purity of the Islamic appeal found their beliefs justified by the election of leaders whose reputations that were consistent with this appeal. These candidates and their parties were helped by the fact that they remained very much within the ranks of the opposition, and therefore were shielded from temptations associated with access to the corridors of power.<sup>21</sup>

On its own, the consolidation of anti-regime support behind a united Islamic party would already endanger the survival of one or more of the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world. The opening up of the electoral arena presented a legitimate channel whereby this goal could be achieved. The electoral victory achieved by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in the 1991 multiparty elections in Algeria sent shockwaves around the Arab world. The possibility that an Islamic party could cooperate with other anti-regime left-leaning parties, as well as parties representing non-Islamic minority groups, was particularly disturbing to the leaders of the DPARs in Egypt (Mubarak) and Tunisia (Ben Ali).

Consequently, the largest and most influential Islamic parties in these two countries – the Renaissance Party in Tunisia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt – were declared illegal and thus prohibited from participating in the legislative and presidential elections from the 1990s through to the 2000s. However, the decision to ban

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<sup>21</sup> Such a fate would befall, for example, the theocratic regime of post-1979 Iran.

these Islamic parties was not without risks, as these parties could have resorted to non-electoral means to remove the incumbent regime from power. Nevertheless, there were already such militant Islamic groups in Egypt who had no intention of joining the political process, even if they were allowed to. Hence, allowing the Brotherhood to contest in the multiparty elections would not have removed this threat. In fact, the presence of these militant groups gave the regime a good excuse for banning the Brotherhood. The more repressive political environment in Tunisia allowed for the banning of the Renaissance party without significantly increasing the risks of a militant anti-regime response. Thus, the banning of these parties, especially after the Algerian experience in 1991, was carried out without much hesitation on the part of both ruling regimes.

Another possible risk associated with the banning of these influential Islamic parties was that the remaining political parties that had official recognition might have decided to boycott the entire electoral process in protest of the treatment received by the aforementioned parties. This possibility would be increased for the parties which were aligned to, or had formal cooperative agreements with the Islamic parties. By boycotting the electoral process, these parties could have endangered the legitimacy on which the regimes were hoping these elections would help create. There were clearly incentives for the respective regimes to prevent the non-Islamic parties from boycotting the electoral



process. Both regimes took different strategies in order to co-opt some of these parties and prevent them from co-operating with the Islamic parties.

Of the two DPARs, the RCD in Tunisia used a more explicit institutional mechanism to provide electoral incentives for the non-Islamic opposition parties to participate in the electoral system. Candidates backed by the popular Renaissance party won enough votes to decrease the RCD's vote share to a 'mere' 81% in the 1989 elections before it was banned in 1991. Due to the use of the block vote, no opposition candidate won representation to the legislature. Without the participation of the Islamic party in the subsequent legislative elections in 1994, and with a weak opposition unlikely to win any representation in the multi-member districts (average district magnitude = 5.7), the RCD was afraid that the electoral process would be thoroughly de-legitimized.<sup>22</sup> To provide incentives for opposition participation, Ben Ali introduced a list-PR tier of 12 seats that would be allocated among the losing i.e. opposition parties. The number of seats was increased to nineteen percent of total legislative seats in the 1999 elections, a percentage which has been maintained to this day (Sadiki, 2002, 129).

These guaranteed seats were useful for a number of reasons. Firstly, it ensured some degree of opposition representation as a means of legitimizing the electoral process. Secondly, it prevented the opposition parties from opting out of the electoral

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<sup>22</sup> Even if the electoral system had been changed to FPTP in SMD, opposition weakness at the district level would probably not have resulted in any opposition victories.

process, since they knew they would be guaranteed at least some legislative seats. Thirdly, the allocation of the list-PR seats on a proportional basis among the losing parties increased the possibility of fragmentation among the participating opposition parties. This aspect of the electoral system and the guarantee of public funding for opposition parties resulted in a fragmented opposition, a situation which has lasted to this day. Fourthly, it allowed the regime to reward the less militant factions within some of the opposition parties with legal recognition and public funding, and punish the more militant factions by excluding them from the political process.

Such an opportunity presented itself in 1996 when the Movement of Socialist Democrats (MDS), once Tunisia's strongest opposition party before the arrival of the Renaissance party, split into two. The regime moved quickly to give legal recognition to the MDS faction that was seen as more moderate, while the more militant faction was repressed and not granted legal status (Angrist, 1999, 96). Consequently, there was a decrease in the electoral support for the moderate faction as they were seen to have 'sold out', an impression encouraged by the militant faction. This result obviously suited the interests of the RCD. In a sense, this may have been an unexpected bonus associated with the adoption of the list-PR guaranteed tier.

In Egypt, the regime adopted a different strategy to prevent the secular opposition from cooperating with the Muslim Brotherhood, the powerful Islamic opposition. The first multiparty legislative elections in 1984 under Mubarak's rule

featured a relatively robust contest in which the opposition parties won an unprecedented 13 percent of the total seats. More worrying for Mubarak was that all of these seats were won by an alliance featuring the New Wafd Party (NWP) and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Even though the MB was technically banned from contesting, it was still allowed to operate and mobilize on an unofficial capacity. Wanting to take advantage of the MB's organizational strength, the NWP entered into an alliance with it. Hence despite the obvious differences in ideology, a number of MB candidates were fielded under the NWP banner (Lust-Okar, 2005, 140).<sup>23</sup>

The opposition made further headway in the 1987 legislative elections. The NWP, this time contesting on its own, won 8% of seats. The Socialist Labor Party (SLP) and the Action Party (LSP), with the backing of the MB, under the slogan 'Islam is the solution' won 13% of seats giving the opposition more than 20% of total seats. From the perspective of the incumbent regime, 'the increasingly strong showing of the parties connected with the MB was unsettling' (Lust-Okar, 2005, 142).

The economic crisis experienced by Egypt in the late 1980s presented an opportunity for the opposition parties to negotiate for political liberalization and electoral reform. A decision by the Constitutional Court, which had declared that the implementation of the list PR-electoral system with its high 8% threshold was

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<sup>23</sup> The NWP, following the nationalist ideology of its predecessor and once influential Wafd Party, no doubt found the Islamic orientation of the MB somewhat troubling.

unconstitutional, resulted in the return of the FPTP SMD electoral system. However, the opposition could not extract sufficient guarantees from the regime that the next legislative elections would be conducted with anywhere near the free and fair standards that they were pushing for, including the legalization of the MB as a political party. As a result, all of the main opposition parties, including the NWP, the SLP and the AP (as well as the withdrawal of the MB support for any participating party), with the exception of the left-leaning NPUP, boycotted the 1990 elections. The threat of any further opposition headway was stemmed by their decision to boycott these elections. But the NDP was fearful of the threat that the boycott would lead to more popular demonstrations organized by the mobilizing power of the opposition forces, including a possible coalition between the NWP, the SLP and the AP (all backed by the force of the MB's organizational and electoral strength). Such a coalition could make an even bigger splash in the 1995 legislative elections, or it could further de-legitimize the process by sustaining its boycott. The NDP was clearly in a quandary. Introducing electoral reforms would further weaken it especially if the opposition remained relatively united. Accepting another boycott could mean the anti-regime sentiment spilling onto the street, notably in the form of popular demonstrations.

Mubarak instead chose the more politically strategic option of making moves to divide the secular opposition from the MB, as part of a process to entice or even force these parties back into the electoral arena, without the support of the MB. The regime

began to closely identify the MB with the more radical Islamic militants and terrorists, and passed legislation that broadened the definition of terrorism. This provided the necessary platform for the regime to carry out increasingly repressive measures against the associates of the MB, including the SLP. The association between militant groups and the MB was no doubt reinforced by the unwillingness of the leaders of the latter to condemn unconditionally the violent tactics of the former. All this while, the MB was continuing to voice its willingness to enter formally into the electoral arena as a registered and therefore legally recognized body.

The legal associates of the MB therefore faced a major quandary as these repressive actions were increased. 'They would face harsh sanctions if they mobilized popular unrest, challenging the regime or facilitating the radicals' ability to do so' (Lust-Okar, 2005, 148). Hence, 'against the backdrop of violence and volatility, secular included opponents chose to cooperate with the regime rather than mobilize the discontented populace, demanding greater reforms' (Lust-Okar, 2005, 148). The lines of division were further accentuated in the National Dialogue called by Mubarak in 1993 wherein he accentuated the costs i.e. the threat of repression and the benefits i.e. withdrawal of repression associated with working with the MB. The National Dialogue and the repressive actions taken by the regime against some of its secular opponents had the intended effect. The SLP, which had been in alliance with the MB in the 1987 elections, was not able to withstand the repression it faced and the internal dissension

that subsequently followed. It would see its cooperation with the MB decline and weaken significantly (Lust-Okar, 2005, 149).

An important point to note is the distinction between the repressive actions taken by the NDP against the secular associates of the MB, and the general repressive actions taken by DPARs against the opposition. Unlike the latter, non-Islamic opposition parties in question knew that repressive acts would cease if they stopped cooperating with the banned MB. In most DPARs, it is usually the largest opposition parties that are the target of government repression, and not the smaller parties which may be cooperating with their larger counterparts. Furthermore, in most DPARs, the promise that repression would be withdrawn or perhaps reduced to minimal levels is usually not conditioned upon the ceasing of inter-opposition cooperation. What made the Egyptian experience unique is that the regime utilized what Lust-Okar terms a divided 'structure of contestation' (Lust-Okar, 2005) whereby the largest opposition political organization, the MB, was banned but other secular parties were allowed to contest. The potentially divisive issue of ideology did not prevent the NWP, a nationalist party, and the SLP, a left-leaning party, from cooperating with the MB with the anticipation that the Brotherhood's strong grassroots presence would be beneficial from an electoral standpoint. It was not manipulation of the electoral system per se but rather, the use of electoral regulations to control the entry gateway into legitimate and recognized political participation that allowed the NDP to use repression as a way of dividing the

opposition forces. Ironically, it was the reversion back to the single member district electoral system (which Mubarak had tried to change in 1984) after 1987 that decreased the electoral incentives for the legalized opposition parties to cease their cooperation with the MB. The repressive actions of the NDP were no doubt the main contributing factor but it was probably helped by the recognition on the part of these legalized opposition parties that it was less important to have the backing of the MB in order to reach the 8% threshold. They could still win individual single member districts on their own (even though the backing of the MB would have been useful in certain districts).

One may expect similar strategies to be adopted in other emerging DPARs, for example the countries in Central Asia, if the threat of an increasingly popular secular or regional party working together with banned Islamic groups arises to threaten the electoral dominance of the current power holders.

### **6.3.2 Electoral reform as a means of dividing the opposition – Mexico and Senegal**

No other DPAR has seen as many changes in the rules and regulations governing elections as the PRI in Mexico. This is partly because of the length of time in which the PRI was in power (approximately 71 years from 1929 to 2000)<sup>24</sup> and partly because of the recognition on the part of the PRI very early on that electoral innovations are integral to regime maintenance, and an important strategy in managing elite-opposition relations.

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<sup>24</sup> In comparison, the second longest reigning DPAR in my data set, the Alliance / BN in Malaysia, has only been in power for a 'mere' 53 years (from 1957 until present day).

The early years of PRI rule were marked by tweaks in the rules governing the registering and establishment of new political parties. These adjustments were made with the intention of minimizing the incentives for elite defection, and to control the type of opposition party that could enter into the electoral arena (Bruhn, Levy and Zebadua, 2001, 87).

The overwhelming electoral dominance of the PRI in legislative elections - it was regularly winning in excess of 90% of total seats throughout the late 1940s and the 1950s - was threatening the legitimacy of the electoral process. The PRI took the voter mobilization exercise during each election very seriously since this exercise was often seen as a test of the underlying strength of the labor and peasant unions that comprised the corporatist system of regime control. Hence, it was particularly susceptible to threats of an opposition boycott. In order to prevent this from happening, the PRI introduced a party deputy system whereby opposition parties which received less than 20 seats (out of a total of 210 seats) were assigned five seats if they obtained more than 2.4% of the national vote and one more seat for every 0.5% beyond this threshold. As a result, opposition representation in the legislature increased from 3.4% in 1961 to 17.7% in 1964. The ceiling was raised to 25 seats and the threshold was decreased to 1.5% prior to the 1973 elections, which partly explains the small increase in opposition representation to 18.2% (Nohlen, 2005). Clearly, this electoral innovation could produce incentives for opposition fragmentation and it did not advantage the largest opposition party either,



which was the right learning PAN at that time. If PAN won more than 20 or 25 seats (roughly 10% of total seats), it would not be allocated any seats from the party deputy quota. At the same time, the relatively low threshold of 2.5% which was decreased to 1.5% later also created incentives for smaller parties to take part in the elections on their own instead of joining forces with PAN or another opposition party. However, PAN, unhappy that these electoral reforms only produced marginally better electoral outcomes for itself, protested by boycotting the 1976 presidential elections which deprived the PRI machine of an opportunity to mobilize and reward its voters.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of the PAN boycott and the negative repercussions associated with student uprisings around that time, the PRI introduced a series of wide ranging electoral and political reforms in 1977. The most significant of these, arguably, was the expansion of the number of deputies to 400, 300 of whom were elected in single member districts with the remaining 100 elected from five multi-member districts using proportional representation. Only parties which failed to win 60 or more single member districts was eligible to receive their proportional allocation from the 100 PR seats. A national threshold of 1.5% was maintained.

While these changes would result in an increase in the opposition's share of seats to a then historic high of 26%, the relative gain by the largest opposition party, PAN,

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<sup>25</sup> The institutionalization of these presidential elections also meant that various union leaders saw them as opportunities to receive party payouts from their voter mobilization exercises. Obviously, these were the political actors which were most upset and stood the most to lose from an opposition boycott of the presidential elections.

was much more muted. It won 10.8% of total seats in 1973 and saw its share of seats decrease to 8.4% in 1976, probably as a result of its decision not to field a presidential candidate. Under the new election rules, the PAN saw its seat share increase back to its 1973 levels. It experienced a decrease in its seat share to 9.5% in the 1985 elections. Evidently, this electoral innovation was designed with the intention of limiting PAN's gains and fragmenting the opposition.

PRI's superior resource advantage and mobilization capabilities meant that it was assured of winning almost all of the single member districts. This confidence was not misplaced as demonstrated by results in the 1979, 1982 and 1985 legislative elections in which the PRI won 99%, 99% and 97% of the 300 single member district seats, respectively.<sup>26</sup> Even in the unlikely event that PAN could win 60 legislative seats (15% of total seats) or more, it would not be able to benefit from the PR allocation which meant that the PRI would still control 60% of total legislative seats. The increase in the percentage and number of PR seats also maintained the necessary electoral incentives for various opposition parties to continue to contest in the elections separately. The PRI also gave legal recognition to the Communist Party of Mexico at this juncture, recognizing that its entry into the electoral arena would contribute to further opposition fragmentation. Prud'home (1998, 141) noted that the PRI could increase opposition fragmentation by strategically mobilizing votes for some of the smaller parties in order

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<sup>26</sup> The impact of the elite split within the PRI prior to the 1988 elections will be discussed in the next chapter.

to increase their vote share beyond the 1.5% threshold. This not only increased the fragmentation effect in the PR list portion of seats but also made these smaller parties beholden and somewhat dependent on the PRI.

The PRI showed a remarkably sophisticated understanding of how the electoral system could be subtly manipulated in order to maintain its hold on power by fragmenting the opposition parties while limiting the growth of the largest opposition party, and at the same time provide sufficient incentives for the opposition parties to continue to participate in and therefore legitimize the electoral process.

It recognized, for example, that the introduction of the PR tier would likely result in 'contamination effects' (Herron and Nishikawa, 2001) as opposition parties would field candidates in single member districts they had little hope of winning, with the intention of winning votes that could translate into seat allocations in PR tier. The incentive for existing opposition parties to coordinate to field a single candidate in the single member districts was therefore decreased. The presence of the list PR component with low thresholds also increased the incentives for new parties to participate in the electoral process which further fragmented the allocation of seats given to the opposition parties. The net effect was to create disincentives for the opposition parties to work together to defeat or at least weaken the incumbent party regime. Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2001), for example, argue that the mixed electoral system made it more

difficult for the two main opposition parties, the PAN and the PRD, to coordinate on an optimum electoral strategy to defeat the PRI.

The Cardenas split from the PRI and his strong performance in the 1988 presidential elections forced the PRI to resort to large scale voter fraud. But even as voter discontentment over allegations of massive vote rigging forced Salinas to agree to a series of electoral reforms, the PRI still tried to manipulate the process to maintain its hold on power.

PRI's unexpected electoral setback in 1988 resulted in its failure to control at least 2/3rds of total legislative seats (the percentage required to amend the constitution) for the first time in its electoral history (Klesner, 1993; Reding, 1988).<sup>27</sup> It suffered an unexpected number of losses in the single member district seats, and unlike in other more traditional mixed electoral system, it was not allocated any list-PR seats.<sup>28</sup> Not only was there pressure from the masses for electoral reform, the PRI itself was being disadvantaged by the electoral system. It was no longer capable of winning most of the single member district seats and yet its position as the largest party in the legislature made the PRI ineligible for the list-PR seats.

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<sup>27</sup> The PRI won a total of 260 seats or 52%, all of them from the SMD portion of the electoral system.

<sup>28</sup> The loss of 40 SMD seats (out of 300) would have acceptable in the context of any democratic country using FPTP in SMD but not in the context where the dominant party regime was used to losing at most 10 seats in a particularly bad year.

The PRI tried to manipulate not only the details of the subsequent electoral reforms that were introduced to advantage itself, but would also attempt to use the process as a means to divide the opposition.

The electoral reforms introduced after 1988 saw the adoption of a more conventional mixed PR system which allowed the PRI to gain its proportional share of seats on the PR list.<sup>29</sup> However, this mixed member system differed from the non-compensatory MMP electoral systems such as the one used in post-1994 Japan. The system adopted by Mexico post-1988 had a governability clause, which guaranteed that if no party won more than 50% of votes, the party with the plurality of votes would also have an absolute majority of seats (251 out of 500). The electoral system was again changed after the 1991 elections which assured that the party winning more than 35% of the vote would be guaranteed a majority of seats. Furthermore, for every percentage above 35% but below 60%, the winning party would get an additional two seats. In other words, 'if the post-1988 formula was majority-assuring, the 1991 version was supermajority-assuring' (Horcasitas and Weldon, 2001, 218).<sup>30</sup>

The 'governing majority clause' also created additional incentives for opposition fragmentation. Its peculiar structure meant that the smaller opposition parties could

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<sup>29</sup> This SMD and list-PR seats were not linked in the same manner as the German or the New Zealand MMP electoral system. The PR seats were allocated separately from a party's share of the SMD seats.

<sup>30</sup> This 'governability' clause was only abandoned in the electoral reforms introduced in 1994.

benefit more by taking away votes from the largest opposition party than from the PRI (Horcasitas and Weldon, 2001). The intuition behind this is quite simple. Assuming that the PRI would win the largest number of votes, any votes which the smaller opposition parties take away from the PRI would result in a decrease in the total number of PR seats that would be allocated to the non-PRI parties under the list-PR component. For example, whether the PRI wins 41% or 43% of the vote is immaterial since anything above 40% (and later 35%) would guarantee it a majority of seats. Whether the PRI wins 41% or 43% does not change the number of PR seats that are allocated to the non-PRI parties. However, if the 2% decrease was experienced by the largest non-PRI party, then the smaller parties that increased their vote share by the same amount would be allocated a larger number of PR seats.

The second electoral innovation introduced that decreased the incentives for opposition cooperation was the fused ballot. Instead of casting two votes, one for the district seat and another for the PR component, which is the common practice in almost all the countries which uses an MMP electoral system, a voter in Mexico could only cast one vote. The vote at the single member district level would also count as a vote for the PR list portion. This meant that there was less room for parties to bargain with one other and avoid multi-cornered contests at the district level and still be able to win votes at the tiered level. With a fused ballot, the incentives for entering the races at the district level

would obviously increase.<sup>31</sup> The requirement that any coalition of parties which fielded a single candidate at the presidential level must also field a single candidate at the single member district level would further decrease the incentives for opposition coordination.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, the PRI used a mix of electoral reform and pro-market and pro-liberalization policies to co-opt PAN. Concurrently, repressive measures were used selectively against leaders of the PRD in order to divide the opposition and suppress the emergence of a credible political threat on the left. Deprived of its 2/3rds majority in the legislature, the PRI was forced to look for willing partners to amend the constitution in order to pass certain crucial pieces of legislation. PAN seemed like the most obvious target since it not only controlled 20% of total legislative seats after the 1988 elections, it was also more agreeable to the introduction of neo-liberal policies which were favored by the Salinas administration, of which NAFTA was perhaps the most significant. Salinas also moved quickly to acknowledge the gubernatorial victories of PAN candidates in the north. At the same time, he made life difficult for PRD leaders and members by constantly intimidating and repressing them in the south and resorted to continued vote rigging there in order to win gubernatorial elections. This combination of

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<sup>31</sup> In moves that would somewhat parallel those in Mexico, electoral reforms in post-1992 Taiwan would involve the introduction of a list-PR tier (without the governability clause) as well as a fused ballot in the context of SNTV district elections (Hsieh, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> One could have imagined a scenario where the opposition parties may agree to back a single candidate at the presidential level but agree to compete with each other at the legislative level if not for the presence of this requirement.

tactics meant that it was relatively easy for the PRI to co-opt PAN's approval when the PRI introduced the electoral reforms that assured it of a governing majority even if it did not win a majority of votes.<sup>33</sup>

The PS in Senegal probably comes in a distant second in terms of introducing electoral innovations as a means of co-opting and dividing the opposition. The motivations behind the PS's seemingly counterintuitive institutional reforms which opened up more opportunities for the opposition to gain representation can be understood only by examining the manner in which these reforms were used to co-opt the opposition to accept the rules of the electoral game and hence remain in the electoral arena, to invite more opposition parties and candidates to enter into the electoral arena thereby dividing the opposition forces and finally, maintaining sufficient electoral provisions to minimize its electoral losses. Mozaffar and Vengroff's (2002) excellent summary of these electoral innovations, what they term a 'whole system approach', explains these changes in exactly these terms.

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<sup>33</sup> PAN's support of the PRI's pro-market reforms and its hesitance in speaking out against the PRI's repressive moves against the PRD probably increased the difficulty for the opposition to field a united candidate in the subsequent presidential elections in 1994. By the time the governability clause and the fused ballot were abolished in the 1994 electoral reforms, the inability of the main opposition parties to coordinate at the presidential as well as the legislative levels had already taken root.



**Table 28: Electoral innovations in Senegal, 1978 to 1998<sup>34</sup>**

Year	Purpose of reform	Electoral formula	Seats	Description
1968, 1973	National Assembly elections	Plurality, winner take all in one national constituency	100	Created de facto one party state
1978	National Assembly elections	Proportional by National List 100	100	Three parties occupying officially designated (left-center-right) ideological space
1983	National Assembly elections	Mixed (parallel)	120	60 seats by PR national list and 60 by (block) plurality in mostly multimember districts. Multiple Parties.
1993	Presidential elections	Two-round majority		Support of at least 25% of registered voters required for 1st round majority win
1993	National Assembly elections	Mixed (parallel)	120	70 seats by PR national list and 50 by (block) plurality in mostly multimember districts
1996	Rural and municipal council elections	Mixed (parallel)		Half of the seats by PR and half by (block) plurality winner take all
1996	Regional council elections	Mixed (parallel)		Half of the seats by PR and half by (block) plurality in Departments (three per region)
1998	Senate elections	PR list by region by special electoral college		3 seats representing overseas Senegalese and 12 appointed by the President
1998	National Assembly elections	Mixed (parallel)	140	70 seats by PR national list and 70 by (block) plurality in mostly multimember districts

<sup>34</sup> Taken from Mozaffar and Vengroff, 2002, 909

Table 28 above lists a number of electoral innovations introduced by the PS from 1978 to 1998. The pre-1978 electoral system used for the legislative elections was obviously unsustainable from the perspective of providing enough incentives to opposition parties to participate in multiparty elections. The fact that the PS was guaranteed to win at least the plurality of votes meant that the opposition could not hope to win a single seat to the legislature and hence could easily threaten not to legitimize the electoral process. The proportional list electoral system was introduced in conjunction with the decision to allow two official opposition parties, representing parties on the left and right of the PS, with the intention that the presumably low levels of electoral support for these parties would allow them to gain some level of legislative representation.<sup>35</sup>

The move to allow multiple parties to enter into the legislative arena in the 1983 elections involved the introduction of an electoral 'safeguard' for the incumbent regime in the form of 60 block vote multimember constituencies in addition to the 60 PR list seats. The PS, safe in the knowledge that it could win the plurality of votes in almost of all these multimember constituencies, was thus almost guaranteed a majority of seats before the casting of the first vote. It would win all 60 block vote seats and would probably win at least half of the PR seats at stake. The list-PR component, together with

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<sup>35</sup> This belief materialized when the opposition managed to win 17% of the vote and hence 17% of seats in the 1978 legislative elections.

the inclusion of the fused ballot (Mozaffar and Vengroff, 2002, 609-610) meant that opposition parties were incentivized to split the opposition votes in the multi-member seats in the hope of maximizing their vote share for the list-PR allocation.

The changes made prior to the 1993 elections – which included the introduction of the majority run-off requirement for presidential elections and the increase in the number of list-PR seats – were done in the context of political changes which were sweeping across the African continent. The opposition was hoping to replicate the experience of Benin in deposing the PS's Diouf through the calling of a national conference. Diouf's response was to initially co-opt the opposition to join his government of national unity and later agree to enact a series of changes to the electoral regulations that were designed to increase the level of transparency in the electoral process (Villalon, 1994). Diouf was clearly hoping that the possibility of a 2<sup>nd</sup> round and the increase in the number of list-PR seats would increase the number of opposition candidates in the presidential elections and the number of opposition parties in the legislative elections. Both assumptions turned out to be accurate.<sup>36</sup>

The subsequent introduction of elections at the level of the municipal and regional government was done with similar motivations in mind using a similar electoral system. Not surprisingly, the PS won control of most of the municipalities, and

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<sup>36</sup> The number of presidential candidates increased from three in 1988 and seven in 1993 and the number of opposition parties winning legislative seats increased from one in 1988 to five in 1993.

divided the opposition in many of the urban areas where they traditionally have received higher levels of support (Vengroff and Ndiaye, 1998).

Hence, even though the introduction of these institutional reforms allowed the opposition as a whole to increase its share of representation at the national and sub-national levels, the fragmentation of the opposition prevented the opposition from significantly threatening the political dominance of the PS and its president. The opposition would have to wait until the 2000 presidential elections and an intra-regime split before it could reap the full rewards of these institutional reforms (see Chapter 7).

The similarities between the strategies used by the PRI and the PS seem striking. Both parties introduced institutional reforms which were meant to co-opt as well as divide the opposition. Both introduced a PR-list component to the electoral system as a means of increasing the number of opposition parties as well as to divide them. Both introduced fused ballots to disincentivize opposition parties from coordinating candidates in the plurality seats component of the electoral system. Both parties benefited from a divided opposition at the presidential level, even as their majorities at the legislative levels were reduced as a result of institutional reform. While there were some differences, most notably the 2<sup>nd</sup> round run-off requirement in Senegal, it is clear that both parties exhibited a sophisticated understanding of the electoral process and its potential effects, including their strategic use in co-opting and dividing the opposition while maintaining its own electoral dominance.

### **6.3.3 Encouraging party switching by changing the rules of the game – South Africa**

In the case of South Africa, the combination of the close party list-PR electoral system coupled with the introduction of a series of 'floor crossing' laws had the combined effect of preventing serious elite splits within the ANC. At the same time, it allowed the ANC to take advantage of opposition fragmentation by co-opting certain opposition parties or members from opposition parties to gain control of provincial and municipal governments.

Floor crossing or the switching of political parties in South Africa was explicitly prohibited by the post-apartheid constitution as 'it was felt at the time that permitting representatives to change parties would disturb the electoral balance chosen by the electorate' (Faull, 2004, 1). Ironically, the constitutional amendments which were subsequently introduced to remove the prohibition of floor crossing were first proposed by opposition parties. The New National Party (NNP), Democratic Party (DP) and the Federal Alliance (FA) contested the municipal elections in 2000 under the newly formed Democratic Alliance (DA). But these parties, which had contested in the 1999 national and provincial elections as separate entities, 'were unable to extend their alliance from the local government sphere in national parliament and legislatures, without forfeiting their seats' (Booyen, 2006, 736).

Relations between the NNP and the DP would soon sour over leadership issues in the Western Cape provincial government, one of the two provinces that were under

opposition control.<sup>37</sup> The ANC saw the fracturing of the DA in Western Cape as an opportunity to gain control of this important provincial government. By offering the position of provincial premier to NNP's Van Schalkwyk, the ANC was able to successfully co-opt the NNP and form the provincial government in Western Cape. However, the NNP was not able to form similar alliances with the ANC at the municipal level, including in the important Cape Town municipal council (Mattes, 2002, 26), because it had contested the local elections under the DA banner. The passage of a series of constitutional amendments would remove the prohibitions of floor crossing and enabled NNP representatives to leave the DA – to rejoin the NNP or to join the ANC (Masemola, 2007, 5). The floor crossing amendments, as they were known, were designed to make it more difficult for ANC representatives to defect to other parties, while enabling representatives, especially from smaller parties, to defect to the ANC. One of the conditions of the floor-crossing laws stipulates that 'defections must represent not less than 10% of the total number of seats held by the party which the defector is leaving' (Masemola, 2007, 5). What this means in practice is that small parties, with less than 10 representatives at the national, provincial or municipal levels, could defect to other parties without seeking the cooperation of other representatives while

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<sup>37</sup> The other was the Kwa-Zulu Natal province that was governed by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) from 1999 to 2004.

ANC representatives would face much higher coordination problems in organizing 10% of representatives at any level to defect to another party.

The ANC was the clear beneficiary of the passage of the floor crossing laws even though the DA also gained from defections from the NNP and other micro-parties. The ANC emerged with a majority of seats in the provincial government in Western Cape (compared to only a plurality before the floor-crossings) and overtook the IFP with a plurality of seats in the KwaZulu Natal provincial government (Booyesen, 2006, 737).<sup>38</sup> The passing of the floor-crossing laws demonstrates the ability of a dominant party to alter electoral regulations in its favor, helped by a fragmented opposition.

The careful design of such party switching rules, which allowed smaller parties to cross over to the ANC making it easier for non-ANC representatives to switch parties, clearly showed an understanding that the rules of the game could be manipulated to the advantage of the dominant party while minimizing potential elite splits from its own ranks.

The fact that such changes could be instituted in what is commonly recognized as a democratic country (according to the Freedom House and Polity Scores) means that one cannot preclude the use of such mechanisms in other less democratic settings. Most of the DPARs discussed thus far do not have party crossing prohibitions, and their

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<sup>38</sup> The ANC refrained from taking control of the KwaZulu Natal provincial government because of fears of political violence. It would win a majority of provincial seats in this province in the 2004 general election.

incumbent positions allow them to offer attractive opportunities to individual MPs or parties from the opposition to join their ranks. As seen in section 6.1.1., this was the exact strategy used by the BN to regain its electoral dominance post-1969. We shall see in Chapter 7 that this was also the strategy used by the BN in order to regain control of the state governments of Sabah post-1995 and Perak post-2008.

Nevertheless, it is conceivable that such DPARs when faced with a real possibility of mass defections may be tempted to introduce such anti-hopping laws to prevent their own legislators from defecting to opposition parties, or declare themselves as independents.

#### ***6.4 Opposition dilemmas***

Not all opposition divisions are the result of carefully crafted institutional mechanisms on the part of a DPAR, and not all DPARs take explicit advantage of existing opposition divisions and cleavages. More often than not, these opposition parties only have themselves to blame for their poor electoral performance, their inability to build up their organizational capabilities, the failure to come up with concrete policy proposals that differentiate them from the ruling party and their propensity to focus on internal leadership battles that often lead to splits and further divisions among themselves. In this section of this chapter, I want to discuss briefly the internal as well as external dilemmas of any opposition party operating in an authoritarian political environment featuring a dominant party regime. While these



dilemmas arise independently of the institutional and political environment, the specific configuration of these structures no doubt influences intra- as well as inter-opposition dynamics. Hence, the institutional mechanisms which have featured so prominently in the discussion in this and preceding chapters cannot be ignored.

I begin with a discussion of internal dilemmas faced by an opposition party. These are the political challenges which any opposition party facing an incumbent dominant party has to contend with regardless of whether it is the only opposition party or if it operates in an environment which features more than one opposition party. I then proceed to discuss the external dilemmas faced by an opposition party when considering whether or not to work within the confines of an opposition coalition featuring one or more party. I conclude by examining how these internal and external dilemmas may interact, and posit a few scenarios as to how opposition cooperation may result. I illustrate each type of dilemma with an example from a DPAR.

#### **6.4.1 Internal dilemmas of an opposition party**

One of the most basic questions an opposition party operating in an authoritarian environment must face is whether to position itself as a moderate or radical party. In a sense, the moderate position which an opposition party can take is defined by its differentiation from the range of radical options available.

For example, a radical opposition party may view the ruling incumbent regime as having illegitimately obtained its position of political dominance. This may be due to

its position that a legitimate state can only be built using certain ideological or religious principles - a Communist state or an Islamic state are examples. Or, it may believe that the incumbent had engaged in massive voter fraud or rigged the election results in such a way as to discredit the electoral process. Taken to the extreme, this may result in the opposition party's leaving the electoral arena completely.

Taking such a radical position – not recognizing the legitimacy of the electoral process and the regime which controls it – is not without its electoral costs. Even if the opposition party in question decides to remain within the electoral arena, it may alienate many of the more moderate voters who may want to cast an anti-regime vote to maintain some sort of check and balance mechanism, but would not do so if the only opposition party was one which wants to reconfigure the total economic and political structure of the state. The Islamic parties in the Middle East and North Africa obviously come to mind here. Even though many of these parties do not explicitly adopt the use of military options to overthrow the incumbent regime, their inability to condemn such actions wholeheartedly often leaves them vulnerable to these exact accusations – that they are indeed disloyal opposition forces. The more secular minded anti-regime voters in these countries would obviously hesitate to cast a vote for such an opposition party.

Moreover, boycotting the electoral process because of a radical position may alienate voters to the extent that a party is not able to regain its previous electoral support should it decide to re-enter the electoral arena at a later stage. The experience of

the Barisan Sosialis (BS) in Singapore is an instructive example. The BS was formed as a result of the departure of some of the more left-leaning members of the ruling party, the PAP, as a result of ideological differences. The BS managed to win 13 out of 51 seats at stake in the 1963 pre-independence elections. Its 28% share of seats would never again be repeated by an opposition party in post-independence Singapore. The decision by the BS to protest against the inclusion of Singapore as part of Malaysia during the 1963 elections did not pay the anticipated electoral rewards. Most voters were keen on taking this path as a means of achieving independence from the British. But the BS persisted with its radical position by accusing the PAP government of being 'puppet authorities' that had led the country to a 'phony independence' (Mutalib, 2003, 105). The decision of the BS legislators not to take up their parliamentary seats in 1966 and resign instead as a sign that they did not recognize the legitimacy of the institution, led them to an inevitable boycott of the 1968 post-independence elections, which allowed the PAP to win all 58 seats at stake. Their strategy also led to the arrests of many of their leaders and supporters on the basis that they were using destabilizing strategies as a means of protesting against the regime. The fact that Singapore had been unceremoniously kicked out of Malaysia in 1965 did not dissuade the BS leaders from taking this course of action when a demonstration of solidarity with the PAP over the country's potentially vulnerable political and economic situation would have been more strategic and politically sensible. Hence, it was not unexpected that when the BS re-entered the

electoral arena in 1972, it was a shadow of its former self and could only win 4.5% of the popular vote (compared to the 33% it won in 1963) and failed to win a single parliamentary seat.

Adopting a radical position vis-à-vis the dominant regime does not necessarily have to involve not recognizing the political legitimacy of the ruling party. An opposition party may take a radical position by means of the strategies it employs to oppose the government. A radical position in such contexts often involves the use of potentially disruptive tactics such as mass protests or large scale strikes. The moderate position would then involve the use of more conventional channels of protests, in the political environment in these regimes, such as parliamentary debates, press statements and press conferences and organized gatherings which do not disrupt economic activity. The use of these disruptive tactics, especially when the incumbent regime is politically vulnerable, may force the government to resort to repressive measures to stop these disruptions, which may then result in mobilizing further anti-regime support. Beyond a certain tipping point, the radical option no longer is viewed as such but is perceived as an almost credible or mainstream tactical option.

In the absence of such opportunities, the adoption of a radical position may have the potentially destructive consequence of splitting the opposition party into moderate and radical factions. This was the experience of the Singapore Democratic Party, which had a successful outing, by Singapore standards, in the 1991 elections, winning 3 out of

the 40 contested seats (compared to just one out of 70 in 1988). The SDP was led by the rather uninspiring Chiam See Tong, still the MP for the Potong Pasir constituency at the time of writing, who was the paragon of a moderate opposition. Soon after the 1991 elections, Chiam positioned the SDP as a 'model opposition party' which 'would not oppose for the sake of opposition' but rather 'perform the role of check-and-balance on government actions' to ensure that 'there is no abuse of power' (Mutalib, 2003, 179). Chiam's affable, congenial and unassuming character stood in contrast to that of his fast rising protégée, Dr. Chee Soo Juan, who was then a lecturer in neuro-psychology at the National University of Singapore. An outspoken man by nature, it was not surprising that Chee's decision to join the SDP and his rapid rise to the position of Assistant-Secretary General was met by disapproval on the part of his academic bosses at NUS. He was ignominiously dismissed from his position at the university over the rather dubious claim that he had spent \$226 (Singapore dollars) of the university's funds to send his wife's PhD dissertation to a US university. In protest of this decision, he engaged in a hunger strike that was supported by most of the Executive Committee of the SDP. This apparently radical strategy did not meet the approval of Chiam who moved a motion within the Executive Committee to censure Chee's hunger strike. The alignment of the Executive Committee behind Chee resulted in a 13-0 defeat of Chiam's position and led to Chiam's resignation from the position of secretary-general. Chiam's decision to take the issue to the public arena forced the party to discipline and later sack him. Chiam and

his supporters went on to establish the Singapore People's Party (SPP) which receives the tacit support of the PAP.<sup>39</sup> Chee on the other hand, would continue with his more confrontational approach, by Singapore standards, in opposing the PAP. In return, he has been the subject of many defamation lawsuits, a strategy that PAP often uses to bankrupt opposition politicians, as well as to sanction foreign newspapers such as the Economist and the International Herald Tribune.

Closely related to the issue of differing opinions on how to oppose the incumbent regime, is the issue of the degree to which internal democracy is allowed within an opposition party, even as it strives for democracy in the larger polity. Ironically, the task of striving for external democracy may have to come with the suppression of internal democracy within the party. Unlike incumbent dominant parties, which can use the instruments of the state to prevent elite defections, an opposition party, already disadvantaged by its lack of resources and low electoral support, can ill afford costly public battles for the leadership of the party. Most voters who support an opposition party in these types of regimes do so based on the political positions taken by the party, or because their leading politicians can serve as checks and balances to the incumbent regime. The voting public is often not interested in the

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<sup>39</sup> The PAP could have easily incorporated his Potong Pasir constituency into a GRC (see Chapter 5) but chose not to do so in order to allow a token level of opposition representation.

internal party machinations within the opposition parties that are usually based on personality conflicts rather than serious ideological or policy considerations.

One could say that the structure of political competition in this type of regime protects the incumbent status of the opposition leaders. Politicians who somehow manage to win coveted legislative seats are quickly catapulted to the national stage since opposition legislators in most DPARs are relatively few and far between. This further increases the national profile of these leaders, making them difficult to unseat from within the party. The incumbent can always threaten to sabotage the campaign of any other party member in a district-based elections if he or she is not chosen to run again.

At the same time, the top leaders in these opposition parties are often the national face of their respective parties, making them very hard to displace. It is not uncommon for these top leaders to be given the label of 'Mr. Opposition' by virtue of their positions as the leaders of the their respective parties. The popularity of the party is then linked to its leader which means that any effort to unseat this leader from within would inevitably run the risk of incurring a significant electoral cost, by the standards of the opposition party. In presidential systems, the name recognition that has been garnered courtesy of past contests means that the top leader of a party should be the most favored candidate to run again in subsequent elections. Time and time again, this has been demonstrated in many of the elections in Africa where the phenomenon of

'big-man politics' is not just restricted to the incumbent authoritarian ruler but also his long-standing political rival from the ranks of the opposition.

The position of dominance of these leaders at the national level among the opposition is often reflected by their personal dominance within the party. They usually have an influential say on the candidates who are selected to run in district based elections or the position of candidates under a list-PR electoral system. This means that they can promote candidates who are seen to be aligned with them, thereby further consolidating their hold on power. Since opposition candidates in these regimes do not have the opportunity to gather significant personal resources and an independent power bases by virtue of government positions, they often find it hard to mount an internal challenge against the top leader. In more democratic settings, the leaders of opposition parties are often expected to step down after a poor electoral performance. In DPARs, however, the incumbents can blame poor electoral performances on excessive cheating by the ruling party.

Given these factors, it is not surprising that there is often a lack of democratic procedures and structures within the very opposition parties that are fighting for more democracy on the national stage. What this means is that any significant challenge from within is more than likely to lead to a serious intra-elite split among the opposition. I have described the rather unique case of the SDP in Singapore where its leaders managed to unite to oust one of its MPs, who then formed his own party and continues



to retain his electoral district. More common is the experience of a political upstart who unsuccessfully challenges the political dominance of the party leader from within and then leaves to form his own opposition party. This more or less describes the formation of the BCP from the ranks of the BNF, the largest opposition party in Botswana. In fact, the struggle over the leadership of the BNF occurred under what were seemingly positive political circumstances for the party. If such internal leadership challenges could occur when the opposition party in question was making significantly positive gains, then how much more likely are such leadership struggles under less than positive political circumstances?

In Botswana, Duvergerian pressures were slowly creating a two party system over time. The largest opposition party since the country's post-independence days, the BNF in 1994 was successful, for the first time in seven elections, in denying the incumbent BDP from winning a two thirds majority in the parliament. But instead of building on its electoral success in the run-up to the 1999 elections, a leadership battle within the party led to the formation of another opposition party, the BCP, which would have the predictable consequence of splitting up the pro-opposition vote. The opposition split is one of the main reasons why the seat bonus effect for the BDP increased in 1999 elections and thereafter (see Table 29 below).

**Table 29: Percentage of BDP seats, votes and seat bonus (1969 to 2009)**

Year	% of BDP Seats	% BDP Vote	Seat Bonus
1969	74.2	68.4	5.8
1974	87.5	76.6	10.9
1979	90.6	75.4	15.2
1984	85.3	67.9	17.4
1989	91.2	64.7	26.5
1994	65.0	54.4	10.6
1999	82.5	57.2	25.4
2004	77.2	51.7	25.5
2009	78.9	53.0	26.0

Source: Botswana Election Commission Reports, 1969 to 2004

The 1994 election in Botswana was described as a ‘watershed’ election (Molomo & Mokopakgosi, 2000) in that it was the first time in which the BDP failed to win two thirds of parliamentary seats. Its 26 seats (out of 40) fell one short. The BNF won the 13 seats, with a minor opposition party winning the remaining seat. However, any talk of the establishment of a two-party system was quickly quashed when a major split occurred in the BNF prior to the 1999 elections resulting in the formation of the BCP which consisted of a number of former BNF parliamentarians. The split in the BNF was described as ‘a clash of personalities and leadership styles’ (Mokopakgosi and Molomo, 2000) over the longstanding leadership of BNF leader, Kenneth Koma. Not surprisingly,

the split resulted in a rise in the number of multi-cornered contests featuring 2 and sometimes 3 opposition candidates in the 1999 and 2004 elections.<sup>40</sup>

What was significant about the split in the BNF was that the BCP took away pro-opposition votes from the BNF at a time when the BDP looked increasingly vulnerable. The BCP, given that it comprised of many ex-BNF leaders and members, would contest in many of the constituencies which the BNF was popular. The BCP even managed to capture a constituency – Okavango – from the BNF in the 1999 election. While BNF maintained its position as the largest opposition party with six seats, it would probably have won another three to six seats had the BCP not split the pro-opposition vote (Selolwane, 2002). In 2004, the BNF maintained its position as the largest opposition party with 12 seats (out of 57) compared to BCP's sole seat, but it could have won another five to twelve seats had the BCP not continued to split the pro-opposition vote (Lemon, 2007).

As predicted, the intra-elite split because of the internal perception that the incumbent BCP leader, Kenneth Koma, was becoming increasingly dictatorial, led to a serious electoral setback on the part of the BNF just at a time when opposition unity was required to maintain its political momentum against the dominant BDP.

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<sup>40</sup> Other than the BNF and the BCP, there were three smaller opposition parties (NDF, BAM, BPP) who also contested in the 1999 and 2004 elections.

The examples of the internal dilemmas discussed thus far highlight the difficult balancing act faced by the leaders of these opposition parties. Having the necessary political acumen to adopt the right mix of strategies at the right time, controlling the extent to which there is internal democracy within the party, allowing for some elite circulation and preparing for the possibility of a leadership succession are all part and parcel of the challenge of avoiding the one outcome that could be potentially destructive – a serious intra-elite split that results in the creation of a new opposition party. More often than not, such elite splits cannot be avoided because of some of the reasons discussed above. The experience of the BNF in Botswana is not unique. Most of the main opposition parties in the DPARs covered in this thesis has experienced intra-elite splits that resulted in the formation of one or more new opposition parties. Recently, just prior to the 2009 general elections in Mozambique, RENAMO – the party which one scholar labeled as the most successful opposition party in sub-Saharan Africa – experienced a serious intra-elite split which resulted in the formation of another opposition party, the MDM. As a result, RENAMO experienced a significant decline in its share of seats from 36% in 2004 to 20% in 2009. The MDM managed to only win 3% of the seats with the incumbent FRELIMO benefiting most from the intra-opposition fight. RENAMO's experience is not the first and nor will it be the last in terms of intra-elite splits within the main opposition parties competing in the context of a DPAR.

### **6.4.2 External dilemmas of an opposition party**

As if the internal dilemmas facing these opposition parties were not enough, these leaders also have to contend with the potentially thorny issue of working or cooperating with other opposition parties. It is rare to find DPARs which feature only one main opposition party because of the factors already discussed earlier in this chapter – the presence of ideological, religious, ethnic and regional lines of cleavages; the crafting of institutional mechanisms on the part of the incumbent regime; the inability to manage internal party dilemmas. Opposition parties often have to make calculated decisions during each election on whether or not to work with one or more of the other opposition parties. These decisions are part and parcel of what I term the external dilemmas of these opposition parties.

These decisions are dilemmas for the following reasons. Presumably, all of the opposition parties want to weaken the electoral dominance of the incumbent regime and may even harbor hopes of displacing the regime from power in the distant (and sometimes not too distant) future. However, these parties are uncertain as to the best strategy they can take collectively to achieve this outcome. While a united opposition often presents the best opportunity to make significant dents into the incumbent regime's electoral armor, the payoffs to each individual opposition party and their leaders may not be balanced. Given the uncertainty in payoffs, strategies and the expected outcomes, an individual opposition party may be better off not cooperating

with other opposition parties, even if cooperation were to result in better outcomes for the opposition as a whole. This, in a nutshell, sums up the external dilemmas of these opposition parties.

Nowhere is this external dilemmas better captured than in the decision on whether or not to field a single opposition presidential candidate in presidential DPARs. The opposition would evidently benefit from pooling together the anti-regime votes behind a single candidate. However, there is the predicament of deciding which candidate from which party is best placed to challenge the candidate from the DPAR in question. Without reliable polling data or the use of primaries, each of the main opposition parties can and will make the claim that their candidate is the most suitable choice. Under these conditions of uncertainty, each party is justified in wanting to field its own candidate even if this may lead to the regime's candidate winning the presidency by a plurality of votes. The two presidential victories achieved by Moi in Kenya, in 1992 and 1997 come to mind. Even when a clear contender emerges from within the ranks of the opposition, coordination among opposition forces behind a single presidential candidate may be hindered by the inability of the leading candidate to credibly commit to fulfill a pre-election pact of power sharing with the other opposition parties. The commitment problem is particularly difficult to overcome in the context whereby presidential powers are strong since this means that there are less

opportunities for the other opposition parties to 'punish' the candidate if he fails to deliver on his pre-election pacts (Gandhi and Reuter, 2008).

The inability to identify a clear front runner to challenge the incumbent regime seems to describe the experience of the Zambian opposition in 2001, 2006 and 2008 during the MMD era of political domination.<sup>41</sup>

Tables 30 and 31 below show the degree of party fragmentation in the 2001, 2006 and 2008 presidential elections, and the 2001 and 2006 parliamentary elections. The MMD presidential candidate, Levy Mwanawasa, won the 2001 presidential elections with only 29.1% of the popular vote, 2.9% more than his closest challenger from the UPND. The vulnerability of the MMD in the 2001 presidential elections was caused partly by the barring of the then incumbent, Frederick Chiluba, from standing for a third consecutive term. Many of the potential candidates from the MMD who were not chosen to stand left the party to form opposition parties that would be personal platforms for their own presidential ambitions including the ZRP, HP, FDD and the PF.

The fragmentation of the vote at the presidential level was mirrored in the legislature in the 2001 elections. Vote splitting by the opposition parties at the constituency level (where the average number of opposition candidates was 31) allowed

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<sup>41</sup> Coordination between the opposition parties may have been more likely if the MMD did not abolish the majority requirement for winning the presidential election in the 1<sup>st</sup> round in 1996. If the majority requirement had been maintained, it is very likely that the anti-MMD forces could have coalesced around the opposition candidate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of a presidential elections that would have taken place in 2001, 2006 and 2008.

the MMD to win almost half the constituencies despite only winning 28% of the popular vote. Six opposition parties managed to win representation to the legislature with the UPND winning the largest number of constituencies among the opposition parties (Table 31).

There were some signs of consolidation among the opposition parties in the 2006 elections. The UPND, UNIP and FDD agreed to form an electoral alliance and fielded candidates under a single banner, the UDA. This partly explains the decrease in the average number of candidates per constituency from 6.8 in 2001 to 3.8 in 2006. However, this alliance failed to emerge as the leading opposition coalition in the 2006 elections, partly because of the sudden death of Anderson Mazoka, the UPND candidate who almost defeated Mwanawasa in the 2001 elections (Larmer and Fraser, 2007, 619). The emergence of the PF as the second largest party in the legislature and the second largest vote getter in the presidential elections meant that political competition for the position of the largest opposition party was still up for grabs. The populist message of the PF presidential candidate, Michael Sata (Larmer and Fraser, 2007), helped the PF to win popular support at the national level, at the expense of the UDA coalition.

The inability to distinguish a clear front runner among the opposition candidates is consistent with Cox's hypothesis (1997) that opposition parties will not be able to coordinate if the ratio of the second to the first loser is close to one, as was the case in the 2006 presidential elections. It also explains why the PF was not able to convince the



UPND candidate to pull out of the 2008 presidential elections, called after Mwanawasa's death in a plane crash.

**Table 30: Presidential election results, 1991 to 2008, Zambia**

Party	1991	1996	2001	2006	2008
<b>MMD</b>	<b>75.8%</b>	<b>72.6%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>43.0%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>
UNIP	24.2%				
ZDC		12.7%			
NP		6.7%			
AZ		4.7%	0.6%		
MDP		3.3%			
UPND			27.2%	25.3% <sup>42</sup>	19.7%
FDD			13.2%		
UNIP			10.1%		
HP			8.1%	1.6%	0.8%
ZRP			4.9%		
PF			3.4%	29.4%	38.1%
NCC			2.2%		
SDP			0.6%		
NLD			0.0%		
APC				0.8%	

Source: Zambia Election Commission

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<sup>42</sup> UPND, FDD and UNIP formed an electoral alliance in the 2006 election at the presidential and parliamentary levels.

**Table 31: Parliamentary election results, 1991 to 2008, Zambia**

Party	1991	1996	2001	2006
MMD	83.0%	87.3%	46.0%	48.7%
UNIP	17.0%			
NP		3.3%		
AZ		1.3%		
ZDC		1.3%		
UPND			32.7%	17.3% <sup>43</sup>
UNIP			8.7%	
FDD			8.0%	
HP			2.7%	
ZRP			0.7%	
PF			0.7%	28.7%
ULP				1.3%
NDF				1.3%
Independents		6.7%	0.7%	3.3%
Avg Cand / Const	1.5	2.9	6.8	3.8

Source: Zambia Election Commission

In 2009, Sata's PF entered into an opposition alliance with the UPND with the understanding that their Alliance would field a single candidate for the next presidential elections. While the Alliance has garnered some recent electoral success, most notably in the defeat of the MMD in the Solwezi Central parliamentary by-election, it has yet to announce if its candidate for the next presidential elections will be the PF's Sata or the UPND's Hichilema. Such a dilemma would no doubt continue as the date of next parliamentary elections, due in 2011, draws nearer. Here, the seat allocation process

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<sup>43</sup> UPND, FDD and UNIP formed an electoral alliance in the 2006 election at the presidential and parliamentary levels.

as well as the individual electoral performance of both parties would likely influence the choice of the next presidential candidate from within this opposition Alliance.

Another possible dilemma faced by an opposition party when considering whether to join an opposition alliance or to work with another opposition party is the potential electoral costs associated with working with a party that is on the other side of the ideological, religious, ethnic or regional divide. If the preference ordering of the supporters of these individual parties is such that they would prefer voting for the regime than to vote for the party from the 'other side' of the political spectrum, the perceived shift in the ideological moorings of these opposition parties that are the result of inter-opposition cooperating may cause it to lose support among its core voters without any assurance that it can pick up any additional votes. Again, the example of secular, left leaning parties reaching across the aisle to Islamic parties is a good demonstration of this challenge.

The electoral setbacks experienced by the DAP in Malaysia as a result of it reaching across the aisle to work with the 'enemy' from the other side – the Islamic Party of Malaysia or PAS – in the 1999 elections is a concrete example of the electoral costs of associating with a party that is even less popular among many of the DAP's core supporters than the ruling BN coalition. While the DAP increased the number of parliamentary seats it held from 9 in 1995 to 10 in 1999, its decision to cooperate with PAS (as well as with the newly created Keadilan) most probably resulted in the defeats

of two of its most prominent leaders, Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh, in two non-Malay majority constituencies (Bukit Bendera and Jelutong respectively) which they were almost guaranteed of winning under normal electoral circumstances i.e. if they had not opened themselves to attacks from the non-Malay BN component parties over their decision to 'work with the devil', so to speak, in the form of PAS.

In light of these uncertain costs, payoffs and outcomes, it is not difficult to see why most opposition leaders prefer the security of maintaining independent political positions, safe in the knowledge that by doing so, they would not alienate their core supporters. Hence they would be able to maintain their ability to win their respective legislative seats and in the case of presidential systems, assure themselves of a possible future run at the presidency. To overcome these uncertainties and commitment problems, the opposition parties must somehow find credible instruments for which they can sanction each other in the event that an individual or a party decides to defect from the original 'articles of cooperation', so to speak.

### **6.4.3 Internal and external dilemmas for opposition parties**

Finally, under what circumstances do these internal and external dilemmas meet, and when they do, what are the possible cost-benefit calculations that have to be considered by the various opposition parties?

One obvious intersection between the internal and external dilemmas is the possibility of an elite split that is the result of the decision to cooperate with an

opposition party. The more radical faction within an opposition party may protest at the decision to work with the 'enemy from the other side' and may then decide to defect over this issue. Alternatively, the more moderate faction within an opposition party may protest at the decision not to take advantage of an opening in the political space, whereby working with the other side may yield the prospect of an electoral breakthrough. If the option for cooperating is rejected, the moderate faction may then decide to defect. This complex interplay between and within opposition parties obviously makes the issue of opposition cooperation even more challenging since a leader has to consider not only the external electoral implications but the internal issues of intra-party ideological conflicts.

In the event that the opposition parties in question are successful in preventing intra-elite splits after they agree join forces with each other, there is still the thorny issue of how power is to be distributed between the opposition parties. There are other inter and intra party considerations beyond the obvious challenge of deciding a presidential candidate under presidential systems. If these parties are to field a joint slate of candidates at the legislative level, for example, how will the seats be distributed between and within the parties? Not only do these party leaders have to navigate the tricky waters of seat allocation between the parties, they also have to keep in mind, especially in the context of district based electoral systems, that if certain leaders from within their own ranks are not given their choice seats (or positions on a PR list), these leaders may

then decide to defect! Here, defection is not caused by any ideological differences but rather premised on the more practical issue of the distribution of political power in the form of legislative seats. If a politician who has been excluded from competing as a result of compromises made between the leaders of the opposition parties thinks he has a decent chance of winning his district (or at least playing the role of a spoiler as a means of exacting revenge on his party), he may very well decide to defect.

A similar problem is faced by opposition leaders who were once part of the same party that had subsequently parted ways as a result of elite splits. If these parties were to merge, they will have to deal with the challenge of seat allocation as well as allocation of leadership posts at the party level. The second challenge can be avoided if the parties formed an alliance or a coalition instead of merging, but not the first. It is not uncommon to hear of opposition cooperation talks breaking down, not because the parties cannot agree to the adoption of a particular political platform but, because they could not agree on the distribution of seats and power within and between the parties.

These dilemmas are obviously influenced by the institutional environment in which these parties operate in. The institutional arrangement of a presidential versus non-presidential system obviously brings different challenges to the intra and inter-opposition party dynamics in terms of candidate selection and the distribution of power. The electoral system employed in legislative elections also influences the types of opposition alliances which are formed, and how seats and power are allocated within

the structure of these alliances. One also cannot discount the impact of other rules and regulations on opposition cooperation. A two-round presidential election system obviously presents more opportunities for the opposition to coordinate their efforts, and to engage in bargaining and trade-offs after the first round of elections. Whether or not these parties can present different slates of candidates at different levels of government (presidential, gubernatorial, national and local) will also impact the ability of the opposition parties to work together and to offer different positions at different levels to different candidates among their own ranks. Hence, even though the focus in this section, section 6.3, has been the leadership variable in terms of making decisions based on internal and external dilemmas, the importance of the institutional setting in shaping the decision making process of these opposition leaders cannot be ignored.

## ***6.5 Concluding remarks***

In this chapter, I set out to demonstrate that DPARs are not unsophisticated machines which rely purely on the brute force of state repression and media control in order to stifle and weaken the opposition. Rather, these regimes demonstrate a remarkable level of sophistication in employing various institutional mechanisms and taking advantage of existing cleavage lines in order to co-opt and divide the opposition forces. The more a regime understands the strategic use of these institutional mechanisms, the less it needs to rely on repressive measures.

Nevertheless, I recognize that not all opposition divisions are artificial creations of the incumbent regime. The institutional structure and the political environment which these opposition parties operate are usually not conducive to internal democracy. The lack of internal democracy increases the likelihood of intra-elite splits among these opposition parties. The internal and external dilemmas faced by opposition elites only make the task of maintaining elite cohesion and organizing a united opposition all the more complex. Without institutional mechanisms to keep these parties together, a sustained challenge against the incumbent regime is usually difficult to maintain.

The discussion in this chapter contextualizes the difficulties which opposition parties have to face if they are to pose a serious electoral challenge to the incumbent DPAR. These difficulties are made especially apparent when one considers that most of the opposition parties in these DPARs cannot foresee a situation in the near term that the DPAR's electoral strength can be significantly diminished, never mind the possibility of eventually displacing it from power. But as Chapter 7 will show, such pipe dreams can come true, and DPARs once thought to be impregnable can be brought down. The challenge is difficult but the experiences of opposition parties in Taiwan, Mexico, Senegal and Paraguay show that this goal can be achieved.



## **Chapter 7: Elite Defections, Institutional Reform and Regime Defeat in Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay**

### ***7.0 Chapter Overview***

At the apex of their political and electoral dominance, the DPARs of Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay exhibited an air of invulnerability and inevitability. Their leaders could not imagine the possibility of being defeated in the electoral arena, and voters could not imagine any other government ruling over them. The political stability and relatively high levels of economic growth provided by these regimes set these countries apart from their often more politically volatile and economically less developed neighbors. These regimes had vise-like grips over the instruments of the state, their careful manipulation of the institutional rules governing political competition and the weak electoral challenge posed by the often fragmented and poorly institutionalized opposition parties made these countries unlikely candidates for democratic transitions, even as their GDPs per capita continued to grow, their citizens became better educated and information became more easily obtainable.

Modernization theory is thus particularly ill-equipped to explain the existence, persistence, and I would argue, eventual breakdown of such regimes. Modernization theory, concocted in a global environment whereby the presence of multiparty elections was regarded as synonymous with the presence of a democracy, assumed that citizens would demand greater political accountability and political rights as they grew richer. Among the political rights demanded was the extension of the franchise where an

electoral framework was already in existence or the inauguration of such elections where they were absent. But either of these demands would be moot in the context of a DPAR, since universal franchise is already part of the existing electoral process.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, even if a DPAR liberalizes the political environment in which it operates, by, for example, decreasing the levels of repression directed against opposition parties and other anti-regime groups and actors, there is no guarantee that these concessions will necessarily result in its defeat. A DPAR can still use its incumbent status, the crafting of institutional mechanisms and the continued weakness of opposition parties to remain in power. There is no guarantee that such a regime will not have the same experience as Japan's LDP.

I argue that, instead of depending on the structural variables which form the basis of the modernization theory, a more fruitful approach would be to examine some possible pathways that could lead to a DPAR losing its electoral dominance. Specifically, I propose that *elite splits within the ruling regime are a necessary step in explaining how a DPAR may fall out of power.*

In the first section of this chapter, Section 7.1, I develop my argument as to why such intra-regime splits are a necessary condition to defeat the incumbent regime. I compare and contrast the political and electoral consequences of such splits within

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<sup>1</sup> I cannot think of a single DPAR in which a significant proportion of the working age population was forcibly disenfranchised because of registration requirements such as literacy, education, property or ancestry.

DPARs, with O'Donnell et al's (1986) observation that transitions from authoritarian rules in Latin America and Southern Europe were inevitably caused by an initial split within the elite ranks of the military regimes in question. I also highlight the potential dilemmas faced by elites who defect from the incumbent regime, dilemmas which were often not found in the context of the elite splits discussed by O'Donnell and his colleagues.

Incumbent regimes, potential elite defectors and the anti-regime opposition parties do not act or interact in an institutional vacuum. Their interactions in the political and electoral arena are governed by certain institutional mechanisms. A discussion of the political and electoral impact of elite splits and the ensuing dilemmas which these elites face is not complete without a thorough examination of the rules and regulations that shape the political arena in which they operate. I wish to emphasize here, as I did in the Chapter 1, that my approach is not merely an actor-centric descriptive approach but one that recognizes the importance of institutions in shaping and often limiting the range of options available to the political actors in question. The potentially self-reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional change cannot be ignored, a point which will be made clear later in this chapter, in section 7.2.

The theoretical discussion of the impact of elite splits and the institutional environment in which this takes place sets the backdrop for the subsequent discussions on the individual cases whereby such elite splits have occurred. In Section 7.3 of this

chapter, I discuss four cases, namely Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay, where intra-regime elite splits led to the DPARs in question losing power through the electoral path. In each of these cases, the mutually reinforcing impact of elite splits and institutional reform is highlighted as part of the process which a DPAR experiences a decline in its electoral support before finally losing power.

I save the discussion of an important test case for the theories outlined in this chapter for Chapter 8. There, I will explain the failure of past elite splits to displace the ruling coalition in Malaysia, using the same arguments that are developed in this chapter. Specifically, the inability of elite defectors to force the incumbent regime to introduce institutional reform allowed the BN coalition to manipulate the existing institutional structure and take advantage of opposition divisions to reassert its political dominance. I will also discuss the impact of the 2008 general elections in providing the necessary electoral incentives to sustain an opposition challenge, and possibly allow the opposition to force the incumbent regime to introduce some measures of institutional reform.

But for now, I begin with a theoretical discussion on the importance of elite splits and institutional reform and their mutually reinforcing effects in causing the defeat of DPARs.

### ***7.1 Elite splits: necessary but not sufficient condition***

Consider the following scenario. A long-ruling DPAR is beset by a number of serious economic challenges which results in an increasingly disgruntled public. The economy slides into recession. Sporadic demonstrations of public dissatisfaction break out in different parts of the country. Repressive measures undertaken by the regime to quell these protests create a backlash effect which mobilizes even more people to express their outrage over the government's handling of the economy and ill-treatment of their fellow citizens. In the midst of this, the regime is rocked by a series of high-profile corruption scandals involving some of its top leaders. Sensing weakness and vulnerability on the part of the regime, the opposition parties coalesce around the leadership of a single leader who takes the mantle of their presidential candidate or prime minister designate. This leader then goes on to rally the opposition forces to a historic defeat of the incumbent regime.

The scenario above sounds plausible, and yet it does not resemble the process by which the regimes which have been categorized as DPARs lost power. What may appear to be a plausible or even likely scenario proves to be more difficult in reality because of the presence of unfavorable underlying institutional and political conditions. There are just too many obstacles for these existing opposition parties to overcome in order to mount a serious electoral challenge to the incumbent regime.

Firstly, these opposition parties, deprived of financial and organizational resources, are often weakly institutionalized and have relatively poor linkages with the masses. Hence, even during a period when a regime is particularly vulnerable, it still possesses significant resources at its disposal which can then be used to mobilize a sufficient number of voters to minimize potential electoral losses.

Secondly, even if the opposition parties are able to narrow this resource and organization gap, the fragmented nature of these parties often prevents them from coordinating on an optimum strategy to weaken and defeat the incumbent regime. The propensity for elite conflicts that eventually lead to elite defection and the creation of one or more additional opposition parties was highlighted in the Chapter 7 as an opposition dilemma.

The personality conflicts which caused these fractures in the first place may not be easily resolved, even during times when it may be electorally advantageous to do so. In fact, the leaders of the contending opposition parties may perceive the regime's vulnerability as an opportunity for them to make individual gains rather than to maximize gains for the opposition as a whole. This problem becomes particularly acute when there is no clear cut leading opposition figure who can contend for the presidency, or a favored opposition party at the constituency level. The expectation that the incumbent regime's dominant electoral position can only be reduced rather than eviscerated provides an additional reason for these opposition parties to compete

against each other for the position of the leading opposition party. By establishing itself as the largest opposition party, its leader can lay claim to be the best candidate to take on the regime in the following presidential election or put itself in a position to be able to negotiate for a larger distribution of constituencies in the following legislative elections.

Thirdly, these opposition parties often have to take politically marginal positions in order to ensure their long term prospects of survival under these types of regimes. These parties are well aware of their inability to compete against the incumbent regime on the basis of financial and organizational resources. Their electoral advantage has to be found elsewhere. Appealing to a group of voters for whom a specific issue or dimension of political competition is particularly salient, and for whom the regime's position on this issue or dimension is highly incongruent with theirs, offers up the possibility of such an electoral advantage. If this group of voters feel very strongly about this issue or dimension, the possibility that their votes can be bought off with financial incentives or through threats of repression is decreased. Ethnic or religious minorities who have been persecuted by the regime or who feel that they have been unfairly disadvantaged by the economic and administrative policies of the regime are obvious target groups of opposition parties. Groups on the left, which feel that government policies have not been sufficiently redistributive, or groups on the right, which feel that government policies have been inconsistent with a larger nationalist / religious identity,

are other examples of groups that can be targeted by opposition parties.<sup>2</sup> However, by taking the lower cost (in terms of resources) path for mobilizing electoral support also comes with the potential long term costs of 'locking-in' these parties into more or less permanent positions on the ideological margin. The adoption of these marginal positions creates two potential problems for possible opposition cooperation. Firstly, it increases the likelihood of two or more opposition parties occupying ideologically incompatible positions. If this is the case, the opposition parties that hold these positions may find themselves being punished by their respective electoral bases for cooperating with a party (or parties) which holds contravening political views on the very issue which these voters care most about. Secondly, voters in the moderate middle or on the other side of the political spectrum may be strongly apprehensive about these parties that shifted their political positions to cooperate with the other political party (or parties). In other words, the decision to cooperate with the other opposition party is seen as a purely expedient political move rather than as a credible gesture of a future commitment to policy moderation.

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<sup>2</sup> Here, I am using an instrumentalist view of the emergence of opposition parties where political entrepreneurs can choose their optimum mobilization strategies among different groups of voters. Of course, in reality, the range of mobilization strategies on the part of these entrepreneurs is limited by their own background. It is unlikely that an entrepreneur from background A can be as effective as creating a party which appeals to voters from background B compared to an entrepreneur who shares the same background as voters B. More likely, opposition parties will be created by political entrepreneurs from the midst of the politically marginalized and aggrieved groups. The end result is the same – opposition parties created under these conditions often have differing ideologies which prevents them from cooperating with one another.



The factors outlined above make it extremely unlikely that opposition parties, on their own, would be able to defeat a DPAR. The degree to which each of the above factors affects the ability of the opposition to cooperate and mount a serious electoral challenge against the incumbent regime is different for each DPAR. In some DPARs, one or more factors may only be weakly present or not at all. For example, the financial and organization strength of some of the opposition parties or groups in Egypt (the MB), Malaysia (PAS) and Mexico (PAN) has obviously grown over time. In Botswana (until 1999) and in Mozambique (until 2009), there was only one major opposition party competing in the elections for an extended period of time. But more often than not, these limiting factors are all present to some degree and have interaction effects which add to the already significant obstacles for opposition cooperation.

How then do intra-regime elite splits or defections fit into this combustible mix of weakly institutionalized, fragmented, heavily personalized and ideologically incompatible groups of opposition parties? Why do I take the position that elite defections are a necessary condition for an incumbent regime's weakening and eventual loss of power? I propose three mechanisms by which elite defections can change the political dynamics within a DPAR, each largely corresponding to the three abovementioned reasons for opposition weakness and disunity.

Firstly, elite defectors often bring with them a significant cache of political resources that are not available to existing opposition parties. These elite defectors, who

most probably occupied high level positions within the regime, often have access to financial resources accumulated from their time in government. While these financial resources are probably not sufficient to match those of the elites remaining within the regime, they can be enough to narrow the existing resource gap. Moreover, these elite defectors also bring to the electoral arena a certain level of name recognition, reputational goodwill as well as their government experience, all of which are usually deficient among existing opposition leaders. These non-financial resources can make up for some of the organizational shortcomings that hamper existing opposition parties. The combination of financial and non-financial resources allow these elite defectors to pose a much greater electoral threat to the incumbent regime compared to any of the existing opposition leaders and their parties.

Secondly, elite defectors can potentially act as a unifying force for the existing opposition parties. There are two mutually reinforcing mechanisms that make this outcome possible. An elite defector, especially one who can lay claim to the position of moral authority to explain the reason for defection, can quickly emerge as the leading opposition figure and presidential front runner (or prime minister designate in parliamentary systems). Hence, the bargaining problem of deciding which of the opposition leaders should be the opposition candidate is solved. The existing opposition leaders can set aside their personal objections against the selection of the 'other' if the 'other' is a new player in the game who is, by consensus, a clearly superior candidate to

lead the opposition. Furthermore, the emergence of a popular elite defector can provide a convenient excuse for existing opposition parties to work with their erstwhile 'enemies' from the other side of the political spectrum. The cause for opposition unison is the need to rally behind the leadership of the elite defector. This could potentially become a salient issue or dimension of political competition which temporarily displaces existing political dimensions that divide the opposition parties. The probability of a united opposition increases when elite defections take place amidst an economic or political crisis. The fluidity of the political environment during these times allows for the temporary emergence of other salient issues or dimensions of political competition. However, without the aforementioned elite defections, these issues or dimensions may not be 'activated'. From this perspective, elite defections act as the catalyst for the unification of anti-regime support with these elite defectors acting as the coalescing points for existing opposition parties and their support bases.

Thirdly and finally, elite defectors have more flexibility in choosing the political space they want to occupy. They can observe the space along existing dimensions of political competition and then choose the position likely to yield the most electoral support. They also have the option of creating new dimensions of political competition or increase the salience of existing ones in order to take advantage of the political space they can most likely occupy. The circumstances in which these elite defections take place and the issues that form the core factors in causing these defections, often guide these

elites to the most suitable and ideologically consistent positions among the existing or newly created dimensions of political competition. This kind of flexibility is not available to existing opposition parties because their positions in the ideological and political spectrum have already been established in past elections.

These three factors which advantage elite defectors, like their corresponding counterparts which limit the electoral reach of existing opposition parties, do not necessarily work in cohesion or mutually reinforcing ways. For example, elite defectors, having the flexibility to adopt an independent political position and enjoying a resource advantage over existing opposition parties, may then decide to take a political position on an existing or new dimension that precludes it from working with any of the existing opposition parties. The exact configuration of regime-elite defectors-existing opposition dynamics would depend on the existing configuration of elite-opposition dynamics, the cause of the elite defections as well as the salient dimensions of political competition.

The advantages enjoyed by elite defectors often translate into the ability to peel away a significant portion of the incumbent regime's voter base which would have otherwise been inaccessible to the existing opposition parties, even during times of political vulnerability on the part of the DPAR. The electoral dominance enjoyed by a DPAR almost always suffers a significant dent in the event of an elite split that results in

the formation of a new opposition party (or parties) led by these elite defectors.<sup>3</sup> But a loss in electoral support does not equate to a loss of power. The incumbent regime can still win a majority or a plurality of seats without losing the presidency or its legislative majority. In other words, the ability to extract vote share from the incumbent regime on the part of the elite defectors is not a sufficient condition for regime defeat, even though it is a necessary one. Other factors including institutional reform<sup>4</sup>, which will be discussed in the Section 7.2, also come into play as part of the process of regime weakening and defeat.

When elite defections interact with a favorable set of underlying factors, including a changed institutional environment, an incumbent DPAR can be defeated. I posit four possible paths in which elite defections form an integral part of the process of regime defeat. In the first two paths, the elite defectors do not cooperate with existing political parties. The elite defectors take away votes from the regime's main support base and extract a sufficient number of crossover votes from supporters of existing opposition parties to defeat the incumbent (Path 1). Alternatively, the electoral base of the incumbent party is split in such a way that the support enjoyed by existing

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<sup>3</sup> I recognize the potential for endogeneity here since only the most serious elite splits come to public attention which increases the likelihood that these elite defectors will form opposition parties. But at the same time, it is also possible that public elite splits result in the losing faction beating a hasty retreat to either political retirement or waiting to fight another day within the structure of the incumbent party.

<sup>4</sup> By institutional reform, I mean changes to the institutional environment which increase the level of political rights and civil liberties enjoyed by citizens, civil society groups and opposition political parties as well as electoral reforms which decrease the unevenness of the electoral playing field.

opposition parties is sufficient for them to defeat the ruling regime (Path 2). Of these two paths, the first is more likely, in light of the previous discussion on the electoral advantages enjoyed by elite defectors and the difficulties faced by existing opposition parties to unite. Nonetheless, the second path is not impossible. Institutional reform may decrease the advantages initially enjoyed by the elite defectors, and changes in the political environment over time may decrease the salience of certain ideological lines of division among the existing opposition parties. In other words, elite defectors stand the best chance of unseating an incumbent DPAR at the beginning of the process of institutional and political change while existing opposition parties stand a better chance of capitalizing on the consequences of elite defections later in the process of institutional reform, that often takes place as a reaction to these defections.

In the third and fourth paths, the elite defectors cooperate with the existing opposition parties and the pooling of anti-regime votes allows the united opposition to defeat the incumbent regime. The elite defectors can either form their own opposition party (Path 3) or shore up the ranks of one or more of the existing opposition parties (Path 4). Of the two options, elite defectors are more likely to choose the former for a number of reasons. Existing opposition elites may not want to give up their respective leadership positions (or be demoted) in order to receive the elite defectors. Some leaders and party supporters may also have misgivings about incorporating a former leader of the incumbent regime into the ranks of party leadership, especially if they have doubts

about the defectors' commitment to the opposition cause. The elite defectors may also prefer to establish their own party as a means of ensuring that all or most of the defectors are given leadership positions in the new party, an option which may not be possible if they joined the structure of an existing opposition party. One also cannot discount the advantages associated with forming a new opposition party to occupy a strategic position in the political space, a position previously unoccupied by any of the main opposition parties.

The possible path chosen from those outlined above takes into consideration the institutional and political environment which the elite defectors and existing opposition parties operate in. As I will make clear in Section 7.2, the interaction between elite defections and institutional reform increases the probability of a path being chosen over others. In other words, the contingent decisions made by the relevant opposition actors affect the manner in which the incumbent regime can be defeated but these decisions are often bounded by the existing institutional structures and mechanisms.

### **7.1.1 Dilemmas of elite defectors**

While one cannot deny the electoral advantages enjoyed by potential elite defectors, the process of starting and maintaining an opposition presence is not without its fair share of political challenges or dilemmas, as I like to call them. Firstly, as pointed out in the preceding discussion, the elite defectors have to decide whether or not to work with any of the existing opposition parties. They also have to consider the electoral

advantages and disadvantages of joining an existing opposition party, creating their own party and then working with one or more of the opposition parties or striking it out on their own. However, the decision on whether or not to cooperate with the existing opposition parties is not entirely up to the elite defectors. While they may have the upper hand in terms of resources and reputation, one or more of the existing opposition parties may have reservations in cooperating with the elite defectors for a number of reasons. Existing opposition parties may not want to be tainted by working with former leaders of the regime that was, and in most cases, still is responsible for repressing the opposition and perpetuating the institutional mechanisms that put the opposition at an electoral disadvantage. One of the dilemmas of the elite defectors, if they want to convince the opposition parties to cooperate with them, is to tread a fine line between justifying their previous participation in the activities of the incumbent regime and convincing the voting public (as well as the existing opposition parties) that they have ‘turned over a new leaf’, so to speak.

Since many of these elite splits occur very close to an election,<sup>5</sup> the immediate priorities facing these elite defectors usually have to do with elections strategy – whether or not to cooperate with existing opposition parties, finding a sufficient number of

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<sup>5</sup> There are a number of factors, many of which are not mutually exclusive, which can explain this phenomenon. Candidates who are not selected for the elections can then decide to defect prior to an election; economic or political crises which force the incumbent to seek a fresh electoral mandate often coincide with elite splits; electoral reform which may split the incumbent regime usually forms part of a larger process of political liberalization that includes a timetable for the calling of fresh elections under new rules and regulations; and so on.



candidates to contest in the legislative elections and figuring out which districts to field which candidates, raising as much financial and organizational resources as possible in order to fund the elections campaign and so on. The post-election period, assuming that the elite defectors have not managed to wrest power away from the incumbent regime, often features the more difficult and more mundane task of sustaining an opposition presence until the next election. These elite defectors may find that despite their national reputation and financial resources, the process of building a party organization may not be as easy as initially anticipated, especially if they defected without extracting a sufficient degree of organizational support, notably in terms of members, branch and grassroots networks, and physical infrastructure such as local branch offices and regional headquarters. It would not be a stretch to say that most of these elite defectors share the common experience of realizing that the rather unglamorous task of building up an opposition party's infrastructure and institutionalizing it at the local level is much more difficult than making speeches and issuing statements to attack the policies and positions of the incumbent regime during the heat of an elections campaign. The dilemma often is one of finding the right balance between using the right opportunities to attack the incumbent regime to retain its relevance as an opposition force and spending time to build up the institutional strength of the party so that they can be seen as credible contenders for power in the future, and not merely rabble rousing and disgruntled former regime elites.

Perhaps the greatest dilemma faced by these elite defectors is the decision to commit to stay within the ranks of the opposition and accept all the encumbrances that come with it or return to the fold of the incumbent regime. Elite defectors, after having grown accustomed to the trappings of power, may find themselves unwilling and unable to pay the long term costs of remaining in the opposition. Despite the advantage of having accumulated their fair, and often significant, share of resources from their time in government, these elites soon find that their personal resources are not sufficient to build a party infrastructure with the kind of organizational and mobilization capabilities that can challenge the electoral dominance of the incumbent regime. Deprived of access to state resources and patronage opportunities, many of these elite defectors find themselves having to face the unfamiliar situation of not being able to generate a sufficient revenue stream to fund their political activities and at the same time, maintain their personal upkeep.

From this perspective, it is not surprising that many elite defectors and the political parties established by them experience significant growing pains. Many of the lower echelon defectors, who have fewer personal resources and less important positions, will inevitably find their way back to their former party. The top elite defectors may be able to sustain their time in the ranks of the opposition for a longer period, especially if they win office to positions of prominence – the leader of the opposition in the national legislature, the governor of a state, the mayor of a large city or

municipality, for example. But the uncertainty of not knowing if and when the incumbent regime can be defeated forces all except the most committed of the elite defectors to consider returning to the fold of their former party.

The possibility of the incumbent regime's employing the necessary carrots and sticks cannot be discounted either. In order to entice some of the elite defectors to rejoin their former party, so as to fracture the unity among the elite defectors and weaken their newly-formed opposition party, the regime may promise government positions and / or threaten harassment, violence or imprisonment.

The sum impact of the numerous obstacles and dilemmas faced by these elite defectors reduces their long term potential to sustain an electoral challenge against the incumbent regime. While they may have some and possibly even significant electoral impact in the period immediately following their defection, their ability to build on this early momentum is predicated on whether they can solve some of the dilemmas outlined in this section. Their failure to do so would inevitably lead to the long term decline in electoral support for these elite defectors and their party, or their co-optation back into the ranks of the incumbent party regime.

### **7.1.2 Distinguishing between elite splits in DPARs and elite splits during the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of democratization**

Before I proceed to discuss the interactive effects of elite defections, regime weakening and institutional change, I would like to draw out some points of theoretical interest by comparing and contrasting the potential impact of intra-regime splits on

regime transitions in DPARs and among the countries which democratized during the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave (Huntington, 1991). This comparison is warranted because of the prominent role attributed to intra-regime splits in causing the eventual breakdown of the authoritarian regimes that paved the way for the installation or re-introduction of multiparty elections. The importance of such elite splits had already been highlighted in Chapter 1 in the context of the discussion surrounding O'Donnell et al's (1986) seminal work on regime transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe. By attributing the same kind of importance to intra-regime splits in the context of DPARs in this penultimate chapter, I hope to bring the discussion originally begun in the introductory chapter to a full circle.

My arguments of why an intra-regime split is a necessary condition to weaken and then remove the electoral dominance of the incumbent regime were laid out earlier. But the role of intra-regime splits in causing a regime transition cannot be conceptualized using the same framework as the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave regime transitions. The conceptual framework which emerged from the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave literature (O'Donnell et al, 1986; Huntington, 1991; Przeworski, 1991) theorized regime transitions as a process involving a moderate faction within the regime gaining the upper hand against a more hard-line faction that is resistant to political liberalization. This moderate faction then either introduces political reform from above without the need for opposition cooperation or, in the negotiated pact model, works with the moderate faction within

the opposition to introduce political and electoral reform. Most scholars use the installation or reintroduction of multiparty elections to mark the end of the transition period from authoritarian rule.

Among the third wave transitions whereby intra-regime splits featured prominently as one, if not the most important, casual mechanism, the defeated hard-line faction is usually forced to depart from the political scene. The hard-line military faction returns to the barracks. In contrast, elite defections in DPARs do not cause the immediate collapse of an incumbent regime. DPARs are far too institutionalized and resilient for this to occur. The faction which leaves the incumbent party regime are likely to be from the defeated faction, while the winning faction retains controls of the ruling party and hence the reins of power. In other words, the pre-existence of an electoral arena, which would figure into the cost-benefit analysis of the defecting elites, provides the option of remaining within the political arena. In these DPARs, intra-regime splits often do not result in the permanent alienation of any faction but rather increase the number of anti-opposition players and parties in the electoral arena. This is the first important distinction between the intra-regime splits experienced by DPARs and those experienced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave countries. This distinction points to the necessity of taking the electoral path towards regime transition since intra-regime splits do not lead to regime collapse, merely the weakening of the regime's electoral support.

The second distinction starts with questioning the assumption that elite defectors are political reformers on the basis of their decision to leave the incumbent regime. Elite defections may be motivated by disagreements over policy or ideological issues, and have nothing to do with issues related to democratization or political liberalization. The defections could also be the result of power struggles or personality conflicts. As such, it cannot be assumed that the elite defectors will work with existing opposition parties to force the regime to introduce political and institutional reform. Furthermore, these opposition forces may not be easily classified into moderate or extreme factions in the same manner as those that existed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave countries. While they may often occupy ideologically marginal and hence, 'extreme' positions, the fact that they compete in these multiparty elections demonstrate, at the very least, a minimal commitment to the form as well as the substance of multiparty elections. Hence we can assume that these existing opposition parties can agree on the need to introduce political reform as a means to level the electoral playing field. Nevertheless, what we cannot assume is that they will necessarily have the same ideas in regard to political and electoral reform. For example, an opposition party whose electoral support is concentrated in rural and often over-represented regions may not show the same commitment to electoral reform measures, which are aimed at following, as close as practically possible, the one-man-one-vote principle of equality, as compared to a party representing mostly urban and under represented constituents.

This second distinction means that the conceptual framework of a moderate faction within the regime working together with a moderate faction of the opposition, in order to introduce political liberalization as part of the process of regime transition, has to be abandoned. The elite defectors who could possibly be moderates in the sense of having a reformist outlook, and the opposition parties, while mostly agreeable to play within the rules of the electoral game, may still disagree, sometimes vehemently, on the specific issues of electoral reform.

The third distinction follows from the first two. Given that the contending elite factions are likely to stay in the political and electoral arena, and given that the labels of moderate and extreme factions within the regime and the opposition do not hold the same meaning in a DPAR, it should not be surprising that a negotiated pact is not the most likely path towards achieving a post-transition environment that is conducive for the creation and consolidation of democratic practices and norms. As I outlined previously, there are four separate paths by which a DPAR can be defeated, following an intra-regime elite split. The question of which of these four separate paths offers the most favorable condition for post-transition democratic consolidation can then be answered in the following manner: it is the path which is most likely to be associated with the institutionalization of political and electoral reform.

The importance of this point becomes clearer when considering that the process of political liberalization and institutional reform that forms part of the process that

results in the electoral defeat of the incumbent regime, can also be viewed as part of the process of democratic consolidation. While I have chosen to use the point at which an incumbent regime loses an election as the reference point for regime transition, the process of institutional reform that usually precedes these transition points cannot be ignored. As the case studies will demonstrate, these DPARs were not suddenly booted out of power via the ballot box. The process is one that is usually drawn out over a period of time. For example, the Colorado Party remained in power by winning elections over a 20 year period after the overthrow of Stroessner before it finally lost the 2009 presidential election. The slow weakening of the electoral positions of these regimes usually occurred against the backdrop of political liberalization and institutional reform. Therefore, regime transitions in DPARs cannot be discussed solely on the basis of intra-regime elite splits alone, but must include the kind of institutional reforms that have taken place in the lead-up to such transition points. With this in mind, I now turn to such a discussion in the following section.

## ***7.2 Elite Splits and Institutional Reform***

Having argued that intra-regime splits are a necessary condition for regime transition, I shall now discuss the mutually reinforcing relationship between intra-regime splits and institutional reform. It is not difficult to see the various ways in which institutional reform, which involves political liberalization and electoral reform, could increase the probability of elite defections. For example, political liberalization that



decreases the ability of the state to repress the opposition would also decrease the costs of defection from the incumbent regime. Likewise, electoral reform that increases the number of elected positions at different levels of government – national, state and local – also increases the number of political opportunities open to elite defectors. In other words, institutional reform increases the probability of elite defections by reducing the potential costs, and increases the potential benefits of leaving the incumbent regime.

The connection between elite defection and institutional reform may not be apparent since it is not obvious why institutional reform should be introduced as a response to elite defections. In fact, as the Malaysian experience described in the previous chapters has shown, the incumbent regime can be expected to take steps to further skew the institutional environment in its favor to prevent further elite defections. My argument is that there are certain conditions in which institutional reform can co-exist with elite splits. Firstly, the elite splits which threaten the electoral dominance of incumbent regimes may force them to resort to measures that degrade the legitimacy of the electoral process. Faced with the possibility of future opposition boycotts and the mobilization of public protests in reaction to these allegations, the incumbent regime may be forced to concede a certain degree of institutional reform.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the weakened electoral position of the incumbent regime, as a result of the elite defections,

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<sup>6</sup> This is the path described in Magaloni's (2006, Chapter 8) game theoretical setup which she uses to explain the motivation behind the regime's decision to introduce a series of political and electoral reforms.

may require them to seek the cooperation of the opposition in order to pass certain bills in the legislature. The loss of the regime's majority or supermajority position means that the opposition now has a bargaining tool they can use to push the regime to introduce institutional reform. In other words, elite splits, which weaken the electoral position of the incumbent regime, also have the potential to increase the costs, to the regime, of not introducing institutional reform, as a concession to the opposition parties as well as to placate the masses.<sup>7</sup>

If institutional reform can increase the probability of elite defections, and if election defections can increase the probability of institutional reform, then one can put forth the argument that both factors mutually reinforce each other. Institutional reform increases the probability of elite defections, which may then lead to more institutional reform. Elite defections increase the probability of institutional reform, which may then lead to future elite defections.

I also propose that institutional reforms increase the probability of a gradual decline in the electoral dominance of the incumbent regime. It should not be difficult to see why this is the case. Having committed itself to the process of institutional reform, the incumbent regime finds that the advantages that it previously enjoyed as a result of institutional control – access to state resources, ability to limit information flow,

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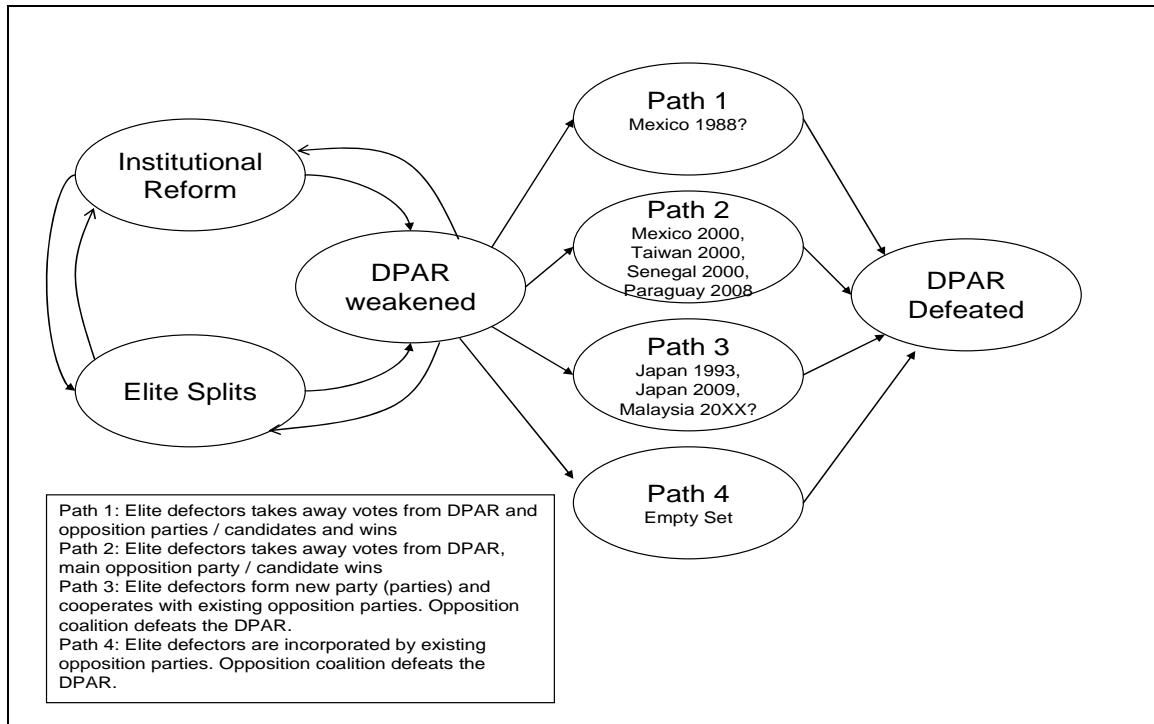
<sup>7</sup> One only needs to look at the examples put forth by Thompson and Kuntz (2004) and Kuntz and Thompson (2009) to find evidence of the masses mobilizing in response to large scale electoral fraud.

repression of opponents, manipulation of electoral regulations, voter fraud – are slowly depleted over time. The inability to resort to these institutional advantages becomes exposed during moments of incumbent vulnerability leading to larger than usual decreases in electoral support.

The mutually reinforcing relationship between institutional reform and elite splits and their respective impact on the electoral dominance of the incumbent regime often translates into a changed political environment whereby regime defeat, once thought impossible, becomes increasingly probable.

Figure 9 below summarizes the propositions put forward in Section 7.1 and Section 7.2. Institutional reform and elite splits exhibit mutually reinforcing effects, and both factors contribute to the weakening of the incumbent regime. The weakening of the electoral position of the incumbent regime further increases the probability of future intra-regime splits and institutional reform. The combined effects of institutional reform and elite splits then pave the way for one of the four possible paths that leads to the already weakened DPAR's defeat at the ballot box.

**Figure 9: Institutional Reform, Elite Splits and Pathways for DPAR defeat**



I am not proposing that the schema outlined in Figure 9 is a deterministic sequence of events that will inevitably result in a DPAR defeat. What I am proposing instead is that this is a probabilistic set of parsimonious conditions that will *most likely* lead to a DPAR defeat.

### 7.2.1 Causes of Elite Splits and Institutional Reform

Up to this point, I have remained silent on what may cause these intra-regime elite splits. I do not expect there to be a single factor that can account for these splits across all the DPARs where such splits have occurred. This should not be surprising, especially when we examine the factors that caused the breakdowns of the military

regimes in Southern Europe and Latin America during the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of democratic transitions. Some of the regimes fell because of military defeats (Argentina and Greece), some fell because of the heavy costs associated with maintaining foreign colonies (Portugal), some fell because of the death of a dictator, which resulted in elite splits (Spain), and some fell because they miscalculated their electoral support (Chile).<sup>8</sup> Even though some of these regimes share similar structures – bureaucratic authoritarianism, for example – the political environments in which they operated obviously differed. Some of the regimes were more likely to engage in military conflicts with their neighbors because of historical and geographical reasons, some were better prepared to deal with economic shocks, some had more sophisticated measures of elite circulation, and so on. If we do not expect a single underlying causal mechanism to explain the breakdown of military regimes, then we should not have the same expectation in regard to the causal mechanism that can explain intra-regime splits within these DPARs.

Hence one should not expect the same reasons to have the same importance in accounting for intra-regime splits in all of the DPARs where such splits have occurred. However, this does not mean that I cannot propose a few of the more likely reasons as to why elite splits occur. It would be tautological to say that these intra-regime splits are caused by conflicts between the top leaders within the regime. The more appropriate

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<sup>8</sup> These are of course very, very general statements that highlight the most important events associated with the breakdown of these military regimes. The actual process of regime breakdown involved many other mutually reinforcing factors where actors from above as well as from below often played key roles.

and relevant question to ask would be: what were the factors that caused these intra-regime conflicts to result in elite defections? The causes of intra-regime conflicts can be divided into two broad and sometimes overlapping categories. The first has to do with disagreement over policy issues, while the second has to do with personality-based conflicts.

Regime elites may disagree with one another over a whole range of policy related issues, on matters as diverse as economic policy (free trade, government spending, banking regulation), the distribution of power and resources at different levels (national versus sub-national), arms (defense versus education), social policy (migration, religion, gender), and so forth. Such disagreements among the regime elites are, because of the absence of public and press scrutiny, probably more common than one may think. But it usually takes a catalyst of some sort to increase the salience of such intra-regime conflicts to the level at which it spills over into the public arena. When the conflict reaches the attention of the public, the stakes are inevitably raised, which makes it harder for one of the factions to back down. During these junctures, the probability of elite splits is significantly heightened.

The catalyst for the escalation of intra-regime conflicts usually comes in the form of an unanticipated exogenous shock that results in a serious crisis. The sudden burst of an economic bubble, the sudden devaluation of a currency, a series of bank runs, an unexpected military conflict, and the revelation of corruption on a massive scale, are but

some of the possible events that can trigger a serious political or economic crisis. During these crisis moments, disagreements within the regime over the best strategy or policy to tackle the problems at hand are heightened. The probability that these conflicts will spill over to the public arena also increases commensurately.

The events leading up to the ouster of Anwar Ibrahim as Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister in 1997 is a good illustration of the catalyst effect of a crisis. Anwar adopted an IMF-like policy of raising interest rates and cutting government expenditure in order to stem the fall in the value of the local currency, the ringgit. Mahathir, the Prime Minister, preferred to take a more unorthodox approach. He famously blamed foreign speculators (including George Soros) for profiting from the run on the ringgit, and threatened to use regulatory measures to stop these speculative activities. Disagreement over the most suitable policy to manage this crisis developed into a political crisis featuring the top two UMNO leaders. Mahathir was to emerge victorious when he outmaneuvered Anwar politically, which then led to Anwar's sacking and imprisonment. Anwar's ignominious departure from UMNO led to the formation of a new party, Keadilan, which would play a prominent role in weakening the electoral dominance of the BN coalition, as we will see later.

Personality-based conflicts are common-place within the political arena regardless of the regime type. Most politicians have strong personalities, and many of them are supremely over-confident in their own abilities. It should not be surprising that

personality conflicts would take on a greater significance between politicians in the same party since they have to compete against one another to rise up the leadership ranks. This aspect of intra-party competition takes on even greater significance in the context of a DPAR because of the additional benefits of patronage and corruption, which accompany a rise in the ranks of party leadership, opportunities that may not be present to the same degree in consolidated democracies. In DPARs, intra-party conflicts involve not just personality clashes or competition over party posts, but have the added dimension of the promise of significant material rewards to the victors of these conflicts. Again, like the policy disagreements discussed earlier, these personality conflicts are quite common among the leaders of the DPARs. In fact, one can make the argument that personality-based conflicts are more common-place and apparent compared to policy disagreements, since most DPAR leaders do not seem to hold very strong ideological positions (other than to remain in power), which means that personal power and material benefits often trump policy issues.

These personality conflicts are most likely to spill over into the public arena when the position of the highest office holder is at stake. Presidential successions often provide the catalyst for intra-regime conflicts that lead to intra-regime splits. The candidates who are passed over by the party leadership, or who lose in internal party



primaries, may be sufficiently aggrieved<sup>9</sup> to leave the party and contest as candidates on their own, or with the support of existing opposition parties. Elections for the position of the top party post in parliamentary systems, which decide the prime minister, also have the same potential to split the regime elites. In view of this, it should not be surprising to observe the occurrence of intra-regime splits during periods of leadership transition at the top of the party hierarchy.

At the same time, I recognize that there is often a high degree of overlap between the policy and personality-based motivations for elite conflict within the incumbent regime. Disagreement over policy issues may be associated with personality attributes that make these leaders prefer one policy stance over another. The interaction effects between the two motivations for elite conflict are often heightened during times of crisis, especially if a leader tries to portray himself as the defender of larger public interests, while castigating the other leaders as trying to protect their own personal interests over those of the country. Policy disagreements in these contexts take on a good-versus-evil dimension that incorporates the personality dimension.

In the discussion in Section 7.2, I outlined the reasons elite defections increase the probability of institutional reform. Here, I also do not want to exclude the possibility that leaders of DPARs may decide to introduce reform in the absence of an elite split.

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<sup>9</sup> Especially if he or she thinks he is more popular than the candidate the party has chosen or if he thinks the internal party primaries have been rigged or if the margin of defeat in these primaries is relatively small.

One cannot discount the possibility that the leader of a DPAR may want to introduce political liberalization as a means to distinguish himself from his predecessor, to show his democratic credentials in order to boost his international standing, or a whole host of other possible motivating factors. However, such motivations from above, as I call them, do not occur in a political vacuum. There are often catalysts which provide the necessary incentives for these leaders to introduce institutional reform, including contagion effects from neighboring countries, pressure from donor countries, and a changing international environment that increasingly emphasizes the value of multi-party elections and a level electoral playing field, just to name a few.

The reasons which account for elite splits and institutional reform are summarized in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10: Reasons for elite splits and institutional reform**

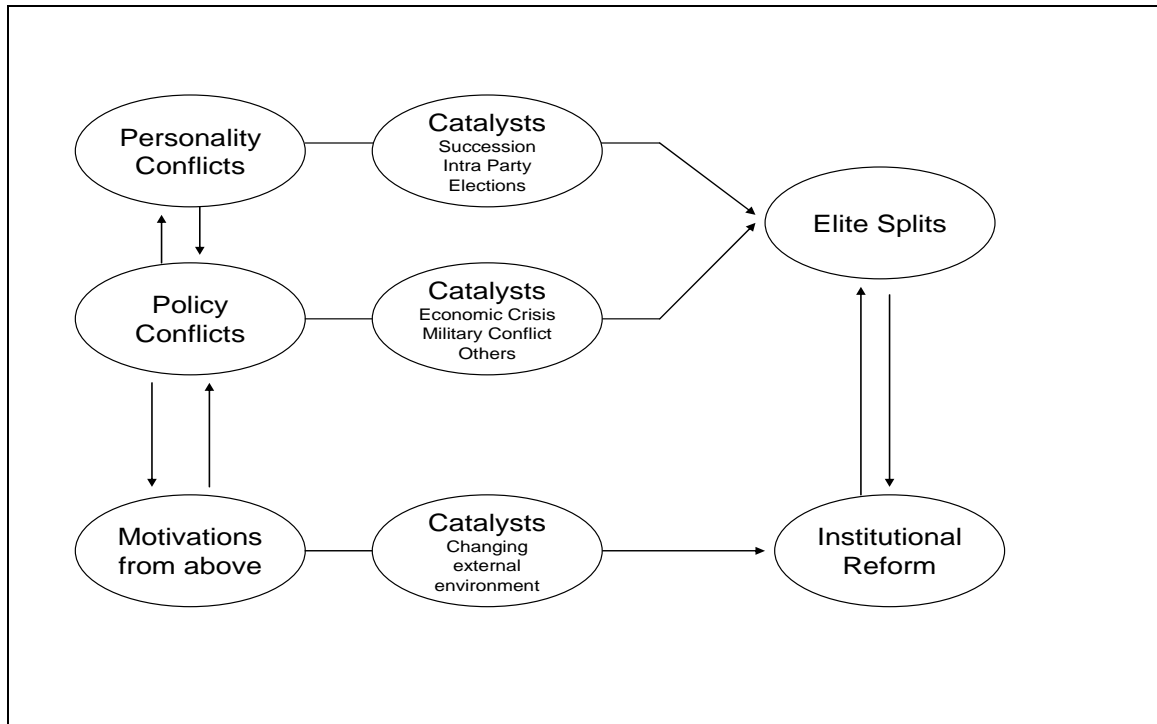


Figure 10 includes an additional point not previously discussed. I include the possibility of interaction effects between intra-regime policy conflicts, and motivations from above to introduce institutional reform, since a DPAR leader who wants to introduce such reform measures may encounter resistance from within the party. In such cases, if the leader in question persists in his efforts to introduce institutional reform, those opposing him from within his own party may decide to leave the party, or make moves to oust the party leader from his position.

In summary of Sections 7.1 and 7.2, I have put forth my arguments as to why intra-regime elite splits and institutional reform are key explanatory variables for regime

transitions in these DPARs. These arguments are consistent with the discussion in the previous chapters whereby DPAR creation and maintenance are explained in terms of the institutional mechanisms used by these regimes to ensure elite cohesion and disadvantage the opposition. If elite cohesion can no longer be guaranteed, and if the institutional mechanisms which provided the regime with an electoral advantage are slowly removed, then the possibility of regime transition is significantly increased.

With the analytical framework proposed in Figures 9 and 10 in mind, I examine the DPARs where such regime transitions have occurred - Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay.

### ***7.3 Regime Transitions in Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay***

The DPARs in Mexico (PRI), Taiwan (KMT), Senegal (PS) and Paraguay (Colorado) held the reins of power for 71, 51, 41 and 54 years, respectively. At the height of their respective political dominance, very few voters, opposition leaders and interested observers would have posited a credible scenario in which these regimes would lose power through the ballot box. And yet, they did, eventually. Candidates representing the PRI, the KMT and the PS all lost their presidential bids in the 2000, while the candidate representing the Colorado Party suffered the same fate in 2008.

The electoral defeats of these DPARs did not occur suddenly. They took place in a context in which these regimes were already experiencing a decline in electoral support. However, while the prospect of regime defeat was no longer thought of as

impossible, the odds of winning the presidency still favored the regime because of their incumbency statuses and the uncertain electoral strength of the opposition candidates. In this section, I shall demonstrate that the propositions put forth earlier regarding the importance of elite splits and institutional reform in causing regime downfalls are confirmed by each of these four cases. While the sequences of elite splits and institutional reforms were not the same in all of the cases, their mutually reinforcing effects in each were clearly demonstrated.

Table 32 summarizes the results of the transitional presidential elections in all four countries. Each of these presidential elections featured at least one candidate who was once a leader in the incumbent regime. As predicted, these candidates were successful in attracting a not inconsiderable amount of electoral support. In Mexico, Taiwan and Paraguay, the candidates from the main opposition parties (before the intra-regime split) won the presidency in their respective countries with a plurality of votes. In Senegal, the inability of the incumbent, Diouf, to win a majority of votes in the 1<sup>st</sup> round forced a 2<sup>nd</sup> round, in which the main opposition candidate, Wade, emerged victorious.

**Table 32: Transitional presidential elections in Mexico, Taiwan, Paraguay and Senegal**

Country (Year)	Winning Candidate (Party)(% of Votes)	Opposition Candidate (Party)(% of Votes)	Incumbent Party Candidate (Party)(% of Votes)	Candidate formerly from the incumbent Party (Party)(% of Votes)	Others (Party)(% of Votes)
Mexico (2000)	Vicente Fox (PAN)(42.5%)		Francisco Labastida (PRI)(36.1%)	Cuauhtemoc Cardenas (ApM)(16.6%)	3 Other Candidates (2.6%)
Taiwan (2000)	Chen Shui Bian (DPP)(39.3%)		Lien Chan (KMT)(23.1%)	James Soong (IND)(36.8%)	2 Other Candidates (0.7%)
Paraguay (2008)	Fernando Lugo (APC)(42.3%) <sup>10</sup>		Blanca Overlar (PC)(31.8%)	Lino Oviedo (UNACE)(22.8%)	3 Others (3.0%)
Senegal (2000)(1 <sup>st</sup> round)	Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)(30.8%)		Abdou Diouf (PS)(41.6%)	Moustapha Niasse (AFP)(16.8%) Djibo Leyti Kâ (URD)(7.1%)	4 Others (3.9%)
Senegal (2000)(2 <sup>nd</sup> round)	Abdoulaye Wade (PDS)(58.7%)		Abdou Diouf (PS)(41.3%)		

Source: <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/><sup>11</sup>

All four cases of regime transition took place following Path 2 in Figure 9 above, whereby intra-regime splits took away a sufficient number of votes from the regime to allow the main opposition candidate to win. Surprisingly, the path that was posited to be more likely, Path 1 - whereby the elite defector would extract a significant share of

<sup>10</sup> Including the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA)

<sup>11</sup> The website maintained by Adam Carr, a Melbourne based political scientist, is a well respected source of recent election statistics and has been used as a reference point for many academics as well as organizations such as IFES.

the incumbent regime's voters, and solicit enough anti-regime support from existing opposition voters - was not chosen.

Path 1 was most likely in the controversial 1998 presidential elections in Mexico. Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, the former PRI governor of Michoacan, and son of former Mexican president Lazaro Cardenas, left the party to compete in this presidential election under the banner of a coalition of parties on the left. The convergence of a number of factors provided the incentives for Cardenas to leave the PRI and contest the presidency. The Mexican debt crisis in the early 1980s had weakened the credibility of the PRI, and forced the Mexican government to undertake painful restructuring exercises that raised unemployment and reduced real wages (Levy and Szekely, 1987). The adoption of such neo-liberal policies, including seeking entry into GATT, was the 'last straw for the left wing of the PRI.' 'The traditional progressive, social-nationalist faction inside the PRI strongly objected to all the main elements of the De la Madrid plan: wage restrictions, cuts in government investment and social spending, privatization, repaying the debt, trade liberalization, and deregulation of foreign investment' (Bruhn, 1997, 75). The creation of *Corriente Democratica* (CD or Democratic Current) by three leading PRI politicians – Rodolfo Gonzalez Guevara, Porfiro Munez Ledo and Cardenas – gave voice to the internal opposition to these policies within PRI. The presence of neoliberal and leftist factions within the PRI was not created as a result of the Mexican debt crisis. But 'during the economic crisis the distance between the

leftist *priistas* and the national leadership increased' (Bruhn, 1997, 83). A series of public disagreements between the CD and De la Madrid culminated in the PRI National Assembly in 1987, whereby 'PRI leaders issued an ultimatum to the CD: shut up or get out' (Bruhn, 1997, 95). When Cardenas was expelled from PRI, and Carlos Salinas was named as the PRI presidential candidate, the stage was set for the 1988 presidential contest.

Cardenas was clearly the better of the two main opposition candidates (the other was PAN's Manuel Clouthier) because of his background and pedigree, as well as the circumstances under which he was sacked from the PRI. He was able to win almost twice as many votes as the PAN candidate (31% compared to 17%), but was unable to defeat Salinas who won 50% of the vote. Widespread allegations of massive electoral fraud led many to believe that Cardenas had in fact won more votes than Salinas (Reding, 1988). Hence, Path 1 might have been prevented from taking place (Figure 7.1).

In the Taiwanese case, the elite defector, James Soong, a very popular former provincial governor, left the KMT when he was not selected as its presidential candidate. By most accounts, he was more popular than Lien Chan, the candidate who had been handpicked by outgoing the president, Lee Teng Hui. But Soong was not able to win a sufficient number of anti-regime votes because he was seen as representing the pro-unification faction of KMT, which put him at the opposite ideological spectrum of the supporters of Chen Sui Bian, the popular former mayor of Taipei and the candidate



of the main opposition party, the DPP. Here, the ideological leanings of the elite defector prevented him from co-opting enough anti-regime votes.<sup>12</sup>

In the 2008 Paraguayan presidential elections, it was unlikely that General Lino Oviedo, a former leader of the Colorado party who had achieved some notoriety over allegations of massive corruption and the use of repressive tactics on members of the opposition, could win over a significant number of anti-regime voters. However, his populist image, as well as his personal resources, allowed him to steal enough support from the rural voters most likely to vote for Colorado (who also most likely had benefited from Oviedo's patronage in the past) to allow the opposition's candidate, Fernando Lugo, to emerge victorious.

Finally, neither of the elite defectors in the 2000 Senegalese presidential elections was as popular as the main opposition candidate, Wade. Wade challenged the PS president (Diouf and Senghor before him) in each of the previous four presidential elections in Senegal (from 1978 to 1993), and had even participated in the PS government in the past as part of Diouf's enlarged presidential majority initiative. The best that these two elite defectors could hope to do, was to win a sufficient number of votes to force a 2<sup>nd</sup> round election during which they could use their electoral support as a bargaining

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<sup>12</sup> Taiwan may have very well taken Path 2 had not for the allegations made against him after he was sacked from the DPP that he had appropriated large sums of money from the estate of former KMT leader, Chiang Ching Kuo. These allegations tainted his formerly clean image and probably cost him the presidential elections. After all, less than 3% separated Soong and Chen.

chip to extract promises of government positions from either of the two leading candidates.

Hence, different factors came into play in each of these cases, to decrease the probability of Path 1 taking place. In Mexico, it was electoral fraud (and perhaps PAN's unwillingness to back a candidate representing the left); in Taiwan, it was the ideological position of the elite defector; in Paraguay, it was the historical baggage of the populist former general; in Senegal, it was the long standing prominence of the leading opposition candidate. These factors do not negate the importance of elite splits in accounting for regime transitions, but illustrate that Path 2 was taken instead of Path 1.

It would be erroneous, however, to explain regime transitions in DPARs purely on the basis of elite splits. As theorized above, the mutually reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional reform cannot be ignored. The effects of which, in each of the four cases, are presented in the following discussion.

### **7.3.1 The defeat of Mexico's PRI**

Cuauhtémoc Cardenas was not the first PRI leader to leave the party to compete in the presidential elections. Two others, Juan Andrew Almazan and Miguel Henriquez Guzman had exited the ruling PRI to contest in the 1940 and 1952 presidential elections, respectively, against the officially endorsed PRI candidate (Langston, 2002). But unlike these two defectors, Cardenas was able to form his own political party, the PRD, after

his defeat in the 1988 presidential election.<sup>13</sup> Ironically earlier electoral reforms, which the PRI had introduced to avoid another presidential boycott on the part of the opposition, that were designed to limit the electoral prospects of PAN by making it easier for smaller parties to be established and win seats (see Chapter 5), made it easier for Cardenas to form the PRD a year after the 1988 presidential elections.

The emergence of a credible challenge from the center left in the form of the PRD<sup>14</sup> coupled with the presence of a longer standing challenge from the center right in the form of the PAN, meant that the PRI could no longer count on winning an average of 84.5% (from 1946 to 1988) of the popular vote in the presidential elections. The challenge from the left also decreased the PRI's share of legislative seats from 73% in 1985, to 52% in 1988. The creation of PRD meant that the PRI would continue to face a credible challenger on its left. One important consequence of this was the fact that PRI could no longer hope to win two-thirds of legislative seats.

Without two thirds majority, PRI was forced to co-opt the PAN to pass electoral reforms that would guarantee it a governing majority, even if its share of votes fell below 50% (see Chapter 5). The weakened electoral position of the PRI forced it to concede a series of further concessions to the opposition, the most important of which was the creation of an independent authority, the IFE, in charge of administrating the

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<sup>13</sup> Attempts by Almazan and Guzman to form their own parties were stopped by the PRI.

<sup>14</sup> Other parties on the left had existed before the PRD. But these parties were either too fragmented or seen as too radical to present a credible challenge to the dominance of the PRI (Bruhn, 1997, Chapter 2).

elections (Horcasitats and Weldon, 2001, 218). This meant that the massive electoral fraud which took place in 1988 could not be repeated again, should the PRI lose a presidential election. The weakening of the PRI's electoral position was further cemented by its failure to win a majority of legislative seats in the 1996 elections (although it still won the plurality of seats).

The creation of popularly elected mayoral positions, the most important of which was the mayor of Mexico City, and the creation of an independent IFE allowed the PRD to achieve victories at the municipal, gubernatorial and mayoral levels, most notably Cardenas' mayoral victory in Mexico City in 1997 (Eisenstadt, 2004, Chapter 7).

But even though the PRI's electoral dominance had been significantly weakened, it was still probable and perhaps even likely that it would continue to win future presidential elections, if the opposition continued to divide the anti-regime vote. Indeed, Ernesto Zedillo retained the presidency for the PRI in the 1994 elections with bare majority of the popular vote - 50.1%. Diego Fernandez de Cevallos of PAN would emerge as the leading challenger to PRI with 26.7% of the popular vote, while Cardenas saw his vote share decrease to 17.1%.<sup>15</sup>

How then was PAN's Vicente Fox able to win the 2000 presidential elections?

Two slightly different but not mutually exclusive explanations have been proposed by Magaloni (2006) and Greene (2007). Magaloni focuses on strategic

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<sup>15</sup> 6 other candidates polled 6.1% of the popular vote.

defections by PRD and even PRI supporters, who were willing to switch their vote to Fox, with the knowledge that the PAN candidate stood a credible chance of defeating the PRI candidate. In contrast, ideological differences in the 1994 presidential elections prevented the voters from coordinating and voting strategically to defeat the PRI. PRD supporters were more likely to switch their vote to the PRI candidate knowing that the PRD candidate was going to lose, rather than switch their vote to the PAN candidate.

Greene argued that Fox was able to break away from the policy preferences of the more extreme elites within PAN to capture the PAN nomination, and subsequently move to the political center in order to attract votes from both PRI as well as PRD supporters (Greene, 2007, Chapter 7). Both Magaloni and Greene use strategic defections to explain Fox's victory in the 2000 presidential elections, but both emphasize different mechanisms. For Magaloni, as information about Fox's potential chances at defeating PRI's Labastida became common knowledge, the probability of strategic defections among PRI and PRD voters increased. For Greene, the main explanatory factor behind these strategic defections was Fox's move towards the political center.

While the elite split which led to the creation of the PRD weakened the PRI, especially among left leaning voters, the ideological divisions between the PRD and PAN on the economic dimension prevented them from cooperating to defeat the PRI, even though such an alliance was seen as some as being a 'no-brainer' (Shirk, 2005, 158).

Only when voters were able to overcome these coordination dilemmas did the elite split, which occurred in 1988, finally result in the PRI losing the 2000 presidential election.

Mexico is perhaps the best illustration of the mutually reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional reform. The elite split in 1988 was not catalyzed by anything to do with institutional reform, but previous institutional reforms allowed for the creation of the PRD. The weakening of the electoral dominance of the PRI, as a result of the 1988 elite split, forced them to work with the opposition in order to introduce additional institutional reforms. These institutional reforms slowly leveled the electoral playing field, and gave access to opposition leaders to more and more elected executive positions, and legislative control at the sub-national levels. Access to such positions would not only allow opposition leaders such as Cardenas to remain in the national political spotlight, by winning the mayoralty elections in Mexico city, but also paved the way for former governors, such as Fox (who was formerly governor of Guanajuato), to use their experience and resources to make a serious bid for the position of president. Fox's ability to move to the political center after securing PAN's candidacy, and the ability of PRD voters to overcome the coordination problems<sup>16</sup> that had plagued the opposition in 1994, finally led to the defeat of the PRI in 2000.

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<sup>16</sup> No doubt aided by the numerous pre-election polls showing Fox as the leading opposition candidate. Such polls would not have been possible if institutional reform in the form of political liberalization had not taken place.

### **7.3.2 The defeat of Taiwan's KMT**

In Taiwan, the decision by James Soong to leave the KMT and contest as an independent candidate in the 2000 presidential elections was not the first serious elite split within the KMT. Such a split had already occurred soon after the transition to multiparty elections in 1989.

The presence of a potential political fault line within the KMT emerged with the succession of Lee Teng Hui, a Taiwanese (as opposed to a mainlander), as president of the ROC following Chiang Ching Kuo's death in 1988. The rise and consolidation of a non-mainstream faction within the KMT that was opposed to what they perceived as Lee's shift away from the longstanding policy of reunification with the mainland, and his overtures to the DPP in terms of political reform, is well documented (Rigger, 1999; Chen, 1996; Cheng and Tsu, 1996, Chao and Myers, 1998; Fell, 2005). Lee soon found himself needing to not only fend off the political attacks of the main opposition party, the DPP, but also the increasingly vocal objections from the non-mainstream faction within his own party, as a reaction to his decisions to introduce further institutional reforms.

Cheng and Tsu (1996) argue that after the DPP skillfully chose to mobilize on the Taiwanese independence versus unification with the mainland (TI-UM issue, henceforth) to take advantage of the growing wedge between the mainstream pro-Mainland and the more moderate mainstream faction within the KMT, an elite split

eventually occurred in the ruling party. The shift from emphasizing the democracy-authoritarian dimension of political competition to the TI-UM dimension was not without risk for the DPP. It would alienate some of the mainlanders within the DPP that were campaigning against the KMT for greater democratic freedoms, and mobilization based on class issues (Cheng and Tsu, 1996).<sup>17</sup> By highlighting their pro-independence credentials, the DPP was also in danger of alienating many moderate voters, most of whom supported a status quo policy position in regard to Taiwan-Mainland relations (Hsieh and Niou, 2005). In the end, the more moderate Formosan faction within the DPP allowed the more radical New Tide faction to introduce the Taiwan independence issue formally into the DPP's political agenda, in the 1991 DPP Party Congress, as a measure to prevent the New Tide faction from splitting away from the DPP.<sup>18</sup>

This gamble paid off in terms of exacerbating the split between the non-mainstream and mainstream factions in the KMT. When the mainstream faction in the KMT led by Lee Teng Hui refused to discipline the DPP for formally advocating Taiwanese independence<sup>19</sup>, this faction left the KMT to form the New Party (NP). The NP achieved some degree of electoral success, winning approximately 13% of votes and

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<sup>17</sup> The formation of the Labor Party in 1987 and the China Democratic Socialist Party (CDSP) in 1990 by DPP members who were alarmed by the DPP's increasing radical position on the independence issue are two notable examples (Fell, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> The issue of elite splits within the opposition party, discussed earlier in Chapter 6, came into play here but thankfully for the DPP, it was able to maintain elite cohesion by giving in to the demands of the more extreme faction.

<sup>19</sup> Lee clearly saw himself as someone who would actively seek to introduce greater political liberalization.



seats in 1995 and 1996 parliamentary elections (Fell, 2005, 174), mostly at the expense of the KMT, which saw its share of parliamentary seats fall from 59% in 1992 to 51% in 1991.<sup>20</sup>

While the appeal of the NP waned in subsequent elections, its ability to win a small but significant proportion of parliamentary seats set the stage for the more serious split within the KMT that would ultimately cost it the 2000 presidential elections. The split led to the establishment of the PFP, another 'purifier' party (Lucardie, 2000) that would position itself as a pro-unification party, led by James Soong, the popular former governor of the province of Taiwan. By winning 20% of seats in the 2001 legislative election, there was even talk of the PFP replacing the KMT 'as the dominant party on the right of Taiwanese politics' (Fell, 2005).

Is there proof that the participation of James Soong, who ran as an independent candidate in the 2000 presidential election, cost the KMT candidate, Lien Chan, the presidency? According to Niou and Paulino (2003, 727), 'Chen ... appears to be the Condorcet loser' and that survey data 'cannot definitively refute the claim that a divided KMT caused the party's loss of the presidency', providing some proof of the spoiler role that Soong played in the KMT's defeat. However, unlike the 2000 Mexican presidential elections, in which the availability of public information showing Cardenas clearly

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<sup>20</sup> The NP probably took away seats and votes from a number of independent candidates who 14 or 8.7% of parliamentary seats in the 1992 election.

trailing in third position created some incentives for strategic defections of PRD and PRI supporters to the PAN candidate, uncertainty and confusion over who the leading and trailing candidates were prevented strategic cooperation by KMT voters, who would have preferred either Lien or Soong over the DPP's candidate, Chen Shui Bian (Niou and Paulino, 2003, 735-736).

The Taiwanese case exhibits many of the same mutually reinforcing mechanisms between elite splits and institutional reform. One could make the case that the elite splits within the KMT in the early 1990s was partly caused by Lee Teng Hui's background (the fact that he was Taiwanese), his desires to introduce greater political liberalization and institutional reform, and the strategic manipulation of the TI-UM issue by the DPP. The formation of the flank party, the New Party (NP), by elite defectors from the KMT, inevitably took away pro-Mainland votes from the incumbent regime. At the same time, Lee could not afford to repress, or prevent the NP from carrying out its political activities, because he wanted to maintain his reformist credentials. Institutional reform became the point of contention that contributed to the elite split, and it also allowed the elite split to weaken the KMT.

During this period, the slow opening up of additional seats in the legislative assembly as a result of the deaths of the former office holders<sup>21</sup>, resulted in many of

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<sup>21</sup> These legislators were given these positions for life as a holdover from the KMT administration on the mainland before 1949.

these seats being won by the DPP, as well as the NP. Deprived of a legislative majority, Lee was then forced to seek the help of DPP legislators in order to pass a series of constitutional amendments, including the popular election of the president (Lin, 2002). Lee wanted popular elections for the position of the president because he knew he could increase his support among anti-regime voters, courtesy of his reformist credentials, and at the same time, he knew he could rely on the existing machinery of the KMT to turn out the vote for his presidential run. His strategy had its intended effect when he and his vice-presidential running mate, Lien Chan, won 54% of the vote in the first Taiwanese presidential elections in 1996. Unable to gain any traction on the TI-UM issue (since Lee was, after all, a Taiwanese and not a mainlander) or on the democratic-authoritarian dimension of political competition (Lee had introduced a series of constitutional and political reforms), the DPP's ticket could only win 21% of the vote. They were followed by two independent tickets comprising former KMT leaders who were aligned to the NP, which won 15% and 10% of the votes respectively.

The introduction of direct presidential elections, in conjunction with the introduction of executive elections at the mayoralty and provincial governor levels in 1994 sowed the seeds for the KMT's eventual defeat in the 2000 presidential elections. Chen Shui Bian, the victorious DPP presidential candidate in 2000, was the elected mayor of Taipei in 1994, courtesy of a KMT candidate, a vote split between the KMT incumbent, and a candidate representing the New Party (NP), the party formed by KMT

defectors in 1993. His high profile position as the mayor of Taiwan's largest city provided him with a national platform, which no doubt helped him in his 2000 presidential campaign. Here, one finds some parallels between the institutional reforms that allowed Chen to gain executive office and those that allowed Fox and Cardenas to do the same in Mexico.

I had earlier posited that elite splits that led to institutional reform would increase the probability of future elite splits. This proposition was demonstrated in person of James Soong. His election and subsequent tenure as the first (and only) provincial governor of Taiwan from 1994 to 1998<sup>22</sup> made Soong one of the most popular politicians in the country. Without his platform as the former provincial governor, Soong would certainly not have been as confident of his candidacy as an independent, nor would he have done as well as he did in the 2000 presidential elections.

The strategic gamble to use the TI-UM issue as the main dimension of political dimension paid off for the DPP when it prevented an elite split among its own leaders and caused such a split within the KMT instead. The institutional reforms that formed the background to this intra-regime split, and which would continue after the formation of the New Party by these elite defectors, paved the way for the election of Chen as the mayor of Taipei, and Soong as the provincial governor of Taiwan. Both played leading roles in defeating the KMT in the 2000 presidential elections. The close race to the finish

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<sup>22</sup> The post was removed in 1998 as part of a series of constitutional reforms.

between Chen and Soong, who were separated by less than 3% of the popular vote, with the KMT candidate finishing a distant third, showed that either way, the incumbent regime was destined to lose this election. The much anticipated regime transition in Taiwan took place with the eventual election of Chen as president in 2000.

### **7.3.3 The defeat of Senegal's PS**

Vengroff and Magala (2001) and Mozaffar and Vengroff (2002) explain the growing elite splits in the PS in Senegal, as a result of a series of institutional reforms that, over time, increased the fairness and transparency of elections at the local and national levels. But unlike in Mexico and Taiwan, where elite splits occurred well before the eventual loss of power by the ruling regime, the elite split in Senegal occurred only shortly before the PS lost the presidential elections in 2000.

The motivations for the institutional reforms introduced prior to the 2000 presidential elections were discussed in Chapter 6. The institutional reforms were successful from the perspective of preventing the opposition from coordinating on a single presidential candidate, and the plurality portion of the legislative seats. However, these institutional reforms also paved the way for the eventual intra-regime elite split that would eventually cost Diouf the presidency.

After winning an average of 76% of the popular vote in the previous four multiparty presidential elections, the PS incumbent, Abdou Diouf, only managed to win 41.6% of the popular vote, triggering a second round. Abdoulaye Wade, the leader of the

main opposition party, the PDS, who had competed against the PS candidate in the four previous presidential elections, emerged in second place with 30.8% of the popular vote. Two other candidates, both former leaders of the PS, Djibo Leyti Ka and Moustapha Niasse, won a combined 24.9% of the popular vote, likely from PS supporters. Ka had left the PS and formed a new party, the URD, which competed in the 1998 legislative elections. Niasse, sensing weakness in the PS, which had only won 50.4% of the popular vote in the 1998 legislative elections, left the PS and formed the AFP in 1999, in preparation for his run for the presidency in 2000.

In the second round, Niasse threw his support behind Wade who won with 58.7% of the popular vote. Abdou Diouf's votes in the second round hardly changed from his first round total – 41.3% compared to 41.6%. The presence of a second round allowed strategic defections by voters, who supported either of the two former PS leaders (Vengroff and Mangala, 2001, 159). It also allowed Wade to offer rewards to the one of the former PS leaders, Niasse, who had managed to obtain a higher share of the popular vote than Ka, the position of the Prime Minister in exchange for his support. It is likely that even in its relatively weakened position, Diouf would have won the presidency in the first round in 2000, had Ka and later Niasse not defected from the PS and mobilized their supporters to vote against Diouf.

Ironically, two institutional reforms which Diouf originally thought would give him the upper hand, worked against him in the 2000 presidential elections. The 2<sup>nd</sup>

round run-off requirement increased the number of opposition presidential candidates, but Diouf probably did not consider the possibility that an intra-regime split would deprive him of a first round majority, and that these elite defectors would be able to swing enough of their supporters to vote for the main opposition candidate, leading to Diouf's defeat.

Moreover, the introduction, in 1999, of the requirement that presidential candidates receiving less than 5% of the vote would forfeit their deposit, which was doubled from the 1993 levels, was only partially successful in achieving its purposes. The rule was originally introduced with the intention of dissuading minor opposition candidates from contesting and possibly taking away votes from Diouf, and more importantly, raising the costs for an elite defector to compete against Diouf. While the number of minor opposition candidates fell from six in 1993 to four in 2000, the rule was not sufficient to prevent the two elite defectors from contesting. Both of them cleared the 5% hurdle.<sup>23</sup>

The mutually reinforcing effects of these institutional reforms and the subsequent elite splits are summed up nicely by Mozaffar and Vengroff (2002, 601): 'In the short run, multiple-level electoral reforms preserve the ruling party in power while expanding opportunities for, but also fragmenting, the opposition. In the long run, they

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<sup>23</sup> However, unlike the parties that were formed as a result of elite splits in Mexico and Taiwan, the parties that were formed by the two former PS leaders were their own personal vehicles to maximize their respective influence and power rather than occupying a specific position on a well-defined dimension of political competition.

encourage splits within the ruling party and help the opposition develop increased ability to coalesce around a single opposition candidate, resulting in the defeat of the authoritarian incumbent and a democratic transfer of power through competitive elections.'

### **7.3.4 The defeat of Paraguay's Colorado**

The defeat of the Colorado Party in Paraguay in 2008 had its roots in the intra-regime conflict that resulted in the overthrow of long-standing dictator, Alfredo Stroessner in 1989. The military coup, which removed Stroessner, paved the way for the return to genuine multi-party elections in 1989. The previous electoral system, which formed part of the sham legislative elections that guaranteed 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of seats to the party with a plurality of the vote and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of seats to the officially recognized opposition parties, was replaced with a proportional system in multimember districts. The opposition parties clearly had more opportunities to gain substantive representation to the legislature under the changed political environment and the new electoral system, but they were also internally fragmented. As a result, the Colorado Party was still able to maintain control of the legislature despite sometimes having only a plurality of seats.

The post-Stroessner Colorado Party had obviously lost some of its dominance, politically and electorally speaking, after the coup and the introduction of multiparty elections. While vote buying and opposition intimidation would continue to temporarily boost its electoral position, the schisms between the *militantes* and the *tradicionalist*,



which Stroessner had so skillfully suppressed during his time in power (Nickson, 1988), would soon spill over into the electoral arena. Presidential primaries conducted within the Colorado Party, and aimed at preventing intra-regime splits, had the opposite effect of making public many of the elite maneuverings for power within the incumbent regime. From 1989 until 2008, the electoral battleground shifted two extremes: an increasingly factionalized Colorado facing a fragmented opposition, and a temporarily united Colorado facing a temporarily united opposition. These scenarios prevented the opposition from winning the presidency until the 2008 presidential elections, when the opposition, both from the left and from the right, united behind the candidacy of the left-leaning former priest, Fernando Lugo, and at the same time, an influential former Colorado Party leader, General Lino Oviedo split the pro-Colorado vote.

The factions within the ruling party had spilled over into the public arena as early as the 1993 presidential elections. In the Colorado Party primaries, one group, led by Luis Maria Argana, which 'drew its support from the party's rank-and-file and appeal in its rhetoric to the party's traditional values of state paternalism, party hegemony and strong-arm political leadership', clashed with a faction that comprised of a 'group of military officers closely tied to drug traffickers (led by General Oviedo), and businessmen who had made their fortunes by working on state contracts during the construction of the Itapu hydroelectric dam (led by Juan Carlos Wasmosy)' (Abent-Brun 1999). Wasmosy, with the help of Oviedo in a tainted primary, defeated Argana, and

would go on to win the presidential election in 1993 with the help of a divided opposition (Riquelme and Riquelme, 1997). But Wasmosy's government would quickly run into problems when a faction within the Colorado Party associated with Argana allied with the opposition parties in the legislature, leaving Wasmosy with a minority government in the legislature (Lambert, 2000).

However, the government was prevented from collapsing because Argana never took the next step of leaving the party. He would contest the presidential primaries again in 1998. Even though he was unsuccessful in his second bid, Argana was rewarded with the vice presidency and would have become the president after the impeachment of Raul Cubas, the winning candidate in 1998, had he not been assassinated in 1999 (Abente-Brun, 1999). Argana's acceptance of the position of vice presidency meant that the Colorado party was relatively united going into the 1998 presidential elections and was able to stave off the challenge of the main opposition contender<sup>24</sup> who only managed to win 44% of the votes (compared to the 55% won by the Cubas-Argana ticket<sup>25</sup>).

One could say, with the benefit of hindsight, that the faction struggles within the Colorado Party would finally lead to its defeat, if these struggles spilled out into the electoral arena, and the opposition responded by rallying support behind a single

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<sup>24</sup> Domingo Laino Figuerado was backed by the opposition coalition AD comprising the PLRA and the PEN.

<sup>25</sup> 2 other minor candidates won less than 1% of the vote combined.

opposition candidate. Such an opportunity did finally present itself in the 2008 presidential elections, almost 20 years after the overthrow of Stroessner

Firstly, Luís Castiglioni, the former Vice President, who was defeated by the eventual Colorado Party's candidate, Blanca Ovelar, in a primary election that many within the party regarded as fraudulent, refused to endorse Ovelar in the presidential election (Nickson, 2009). Secondly, the presidential elections also featured a former Colorado Party strongman, General Lino Oviedo, who had left the party in 2002 and subsequently formed his own political party, UNACE. Oviedo was unable to contest in the 2003 presidential election as he was in exile overseas. When he returned to Paraguay in 2004, he was detained by the police and was freed in 2007, clearing him to make a run for the 2008 presidential elections (Abent-Brun, 2009).<sup>26</sup> Oviedo's candidacy was no doubt helped by his significant financial resources, his image as a populist and the ability to win the support of voters who had benefited from his patronage while in government. Castiglioni's refusal to endorse Ovelar probably pushed some pro-Colorado voters to support Oviedo. In the end, the internal splits within the Colorado Party allowed Lugo to win the presidency with 42% of the vote (Nickson, 2009). Ovelar came in second with 32% of the vote, and Oviedo came in third, with a respectable 23%.

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<sup>26</sup> In light of the dominant role which Oviedo played in the post-Stroessner political landscape, one could even say that his decision to contest the 2008 presidential election, the first opportunity in which he was allowed to take advantage of after his overseas exile, was inevitable.

With the defeat of the Colorado party in 2008, and the PRI in 2000, the reign of two of the only DPARs in Latin America came to an end.

#### **7.4 Concluding Remarks**

The defeat of the long ruling regimes in Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay was inextricably linked to the presence of intra-regime elite splits, and a reformed institutional environment. Without these two factors, it is difficult to imagine how the electoral dominance of these regimes could have been challenged. Early elite splits and institutional reform may have been initially introduced into the political environment as a result of different external stimuli or catalysts, but once both phenomena are present, their mutually reinforcing effects in terms of weakening the regime in the longer term cannot be ignored. It would be erroneous to attribute the defeat of the KMT in 2000 purely to the intra-regime elite split that resulted in James Soong's independent bid for the presidency. His decision to leave the party cannot be understood without taking into account the earlier elite split within the KMT, which took place in the context of ongoing political liberalization and constitutional and electoral reform. Similarly, it would be inaccurate to attribute the defeat of the PRI in the same year purely to the liberalized political environment and the leveling of the electoral playing field. Such institutional reforms may not have taken place (or taken place as quickly as they did) without the pressures exerted from below and above, as the result of Cardenas' decision to leave PRI and make a bid for the presidency.

I began the theoretical discussion in this chapter by proposing that intra-regime elite splits are a necessary but insufficient condition for regime transition in DPARs. I then proceeded to highlight the importance of institutional reform and its interactive effects with elite splits. These mutually reinforcing effects were clearly demonstrated when examining the processes and events associated with the defeats of the DPARs in Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay. I end this chapter with the hypothesis – that elite splits and institutional reform, in addition to being necessary conditions, are together, also sufficient conditions for DPAR defeat. In other words, the presence of intra-regime elite splits and the institutionalization of institutional reform will eventually result in a DPAR losing power through the electoral route. I recognize that imposing the sufficient condition is a much stronger argument than merely making them necessary conditions. At the same time, I feel that this is a necessary part of trying to advance the theoretical debate, by making parsimonious hypotheses and then testing them.

The small number of cases whereby a DPAR has already lost power provides little variance to enable this hypothesis to be tested against other claims and cases, in a statistically rigorous fashion. Ideally, when the universe of cases is relatively small, as it is for regimes that fall under my classification of DPARs, one would want to use a small-N, case study approach by looking for cases in which there is variance in the dependent or independent variable(s) in order to test a theory. For example, to test my hypothesis, I

would want to examine DPARs that will fall out of power sometime in the near future, to see if these two factors - elite splits and institutional reform – were significant explanatory variables. Or, I would want to identify existing DPARs in which both elite splits and institutional reform have occurred, but the DPAR shows no sign of losing power.

The first option is not feasible in this thesis since none of the other identified DPARs have fallen out of power yet. The second option is also not possible since there are currently no existing DPARs whereby both elite splits and institutional reforms, which involve significant political liberalization and electoral reforms, have occurred.

Hence I propose the following alternative. Firstly, I look at examples of elite splits within a DPAR, and then examine the impact of the institutional structures in allowing these elite defectors and existing opposition parties to maintain a sustained opposition challenge. If the institutional structures were manipulated to minimize electoral challenge, then there is evidence that the inability of a viable opposition to significantly challenge, and subsequently defeat the DPAR, is due the presence of these institutions and the lack of institutional reforms. By employing this strategy, and by looking at instances of elite splits within the ruling coalition in Malaysia, I shall demonstrate the sufficiency of elite splits and institutional reform to explain eventual DPAR defeat. I turn to such a discussion in Chapter 8.

## **Chapter 8: Elite Defection and Opposition Maintenance in Malaysia**

### ***8.0 Chapter Outline***

The previous chapter illustrated how elite splits and institutional reform generate mutually reinforcing effects which eventually lead *to the defeat of a DPAR*. Both factors are necessary to cause the defeat of a DPAR. In this chapter, I test this theory by using the case of Malaysia. I will show that elite splits in the absence of institutional reform makes maintaining a sustained opposition challenge against the incumbent regime unlikely. I also propose that the conditions underlying the most recent opposition challenge as a result of the surprising 2008 general election results presents a unique opportunity for the opposition to extract concessions of institutional reform from the incumbent regime. The failure to extract any concessions may very well lead to another series of electoral manipulations on the part of the ruling coalition in order to reassert its political and electoral dominance.

The chapter will proceed as follows. In the first section, I will demonstrate how past failed experiences of elite defections fit into the arguments outlined earlier in Chapter 7. Specifically, while elite splits do lead to regime weakening, unless accompanied by continued pressure exerted on the part of the opposition parties and / or the masses to introduce institutional reform, such elite splits are unlikely to be sustained. This section is divided into four parts, each outlining why elite splits in the following cases could not be sustained: (i) In the state of Sabah (ii) In the state of

Sarawak (iii) Elite splits within UMNO that led to the creation of Semangat 46 prior to the 1990 general elections and (iv) Keadilan prior to the 1999 general elections<sup>1</sup>.

The second section is an in-depth discussion on how the 2008 general elections changed the regime-opposition and intra-opposition political dynamic. I argue that the institutional structure of the new opposition alliance, Pakatan Rakyat (henceforth, Pakatan), post-2008 makes its long term sustainability much more likely. Specifically, the fortuitous distribution of opposition seats both at the parliamentary and state levels, provided the necessary electoral and institutional incentives for the opposition to unite. I highlight, in particular, the important role played by the multi-ethnic Malay-led party, Keadilan, in bridging the gap between the opposition parties on opposite ends of the ethnic dimension of political competition, the non-Malay and secular DAP, and the largely Malay and Islamic party, PAS. The emergence of Keadilan would not have been possible if not for the sacking, conviction and incarceration of the former Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. The intra-UMNO elite split, which led to the formation of S46 in 1988, in some ways, paved the way for the creation of Keadilan, after another intra-UMNO elite split 10 years later in 1998.

In this second section, I will also compare Keadilan's internal structure and its political ideology with that of S46, its predecessor in some ways, and argue that

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of Keadilan in 1999, it was the opposition coalition, Barisan Alternatif (BA) which could not be sustained.



Keadilan is better positioned to occupy the moderate middle of the ethnic dimension of political competition than S46. These bridging parties are especially important among opposition parties operating in a multi-ethnic polity since, all else being equal, centrifugal tendencies and electoral incentives often push these parties to ideologically marginal positions. Without these bridging parties, especially in the context of a complex political landscape that often characterizes these multi-ethnic societies, these opposition parties are often unable to unite in order to defeat the incumbent authoritarian regime.

I explain the unexpected rise in the electoral fortunes of the opposition parties in 2008 in terms of the failure of BN coalition, specifically UMNO, to remain in the moderate middle along the ethnic dimension of political competition and its failure to recognize the salience of a new dimension of political competition, brought about by the intra-UMNO split in 1998, which was not based on ethnicity but on an anti-regime / pro-institutional reform agenda. I decompose the electoral backlash into three components – the non-Malay backlash, the *reformasi* backlash and the youth backlash. I propose that the configuration and ideological moorings of the new opposition coalition now pose a serious threat to displace the ruling coalition from its median position in the expanding political space.

I then show how a series of fortuitous by-elections after the 2008 general elections proved that the electoral gains made by the opposition parties could be

sustained, how these by-elections increased the level of intra-opposition cooperation and most importantly, how they demonstrated that the opposition coalition could gain from the very same vote pooling strategies that had previously benefited the BN in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. I point out how one particular by-election helped increase the national profile of a moderate PAS leader who could appeal to the non-Malays, a scenario that was unthinkable prior to the 2008 elections.

I conclude the second section by highlighting the importance of institutional reform in determining the future dynamics of regime-opposition competition. Specifically, I argue that the regime will once again try to use existing institutional mechanisms, most notably the upcoming delimitation exercise, to reassert its electoral dominance, while the opposition parties will try to do all within their power to prevent this from happening. If the opposition can use their existing veto power in the parliament – the BN cannot pass constitutional amendments without a 2/3rds majority – and if they can mobilize enough pressure from below, the BN may be forced to concede to some level of institutional reform that may end up weakening it in the long run. If the BN is able to regain a 2/3rds control of parliament – by causing defections from the opposition parties – and if they can exploit intra-opposition divisions, it will be able to successfully manipulate the delimitation process to gain an electoral advantage before the next general election. From this perspective, Malaysia presents an excellent case in

which I can test the strength of the arguments I have put forth in the previous chapters of my thesis.

In the third section, I compare the experience of building an opposition coalition structured around the party of an elite-defector in Malaysia with that in Japan. I explain the transition towards two-party competition in Japan in terms of the interaction between the elite splits prior to the 1993 and the subsequent 1994 electoral reform.

I end this chapter with a more general discussion on the importance of extracting guarantees of institutional reform from existing DPARs when elite splits make them electorally and politically vulnerable.

### ***8.1 Malaysia – why past elite splits failed to unseat the BN***

The image of an unchallenged ruling coalition in Malaysia is a mistaken one. While the ruling coalition has only once been deprived of a 2/3rds parliamentary majority before the 2008 general elections<sup>2</sup>, there have been numerous times in the country's electoral history when the opposition made considerable dents in its electoral armor. The electoral setbacks experienced by the ruling coalition were especially serious during the elections in which there were serious intra-regime splits that resulted in the formation of new opposition parties by elite defectors, or the departure of one of the parties from the ruling coalition. This has in fact occurred four times in Malaysia's post-

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<sup>2</sup> The then Alliance failed to win a 2/3rds parliamentary majority in the 1969 general elections but restored its 2/3rds control by co-opting a number of opposition parties to join it in an expanded ruling coalition.

independence history – the formation of GERAKAN by former MCA leader, Lim Chong Eu, prior to the 1969 general election; the formation of PERMAS by Abdul Rahman Yaacub, the former Chief Minister of Sarawak and its alliance with PBDS, which left the BN, prior to the 1987 Sarawak state elections; the formation of Semangat 46 by Tengku Razaleigh, former Finance Minister and UMNO leader, prior to the 1990 general elections; and most recently, the formation of Keadilan by the supporters of Anwar Ibrahim prior to the 1998 general elections. I explain the inability of these parties to sustain an electoral challenge against the BN in terms of their inability to work within the confines of the existing institutional structure, which was often manipulated by the BN to make such a task more unlikely in the medium to long run. Specifically, election results that failed to provide the necessary electoral incentives for the opposition parties to take a more centrist position, and the manipulation of the delimitation exercises put the opposition parties at a severe disadvantage.

The co-optation of GERAKAN back into the BN fold was explained in Chapter 5, in the context of the strategies used by the BN to maintain intra-elite cohesion, and in Chapter 6, in the context of the strategies used by the BN to co-opt a divided opposition.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> To recap, the BN took advantage of the fact that the support for each of the three major non-Malay parties in Peninsular Malaysia was concentrated in individual states to co-opt two of these parties, one of which was GERAKAN, after the 1969 general elections. Once within the ruling coalition, the BN used the delimitation exercises and the subsequent allocation of state constituencies to enable UMNO to play the role of kingmaker between GERAKAN and MCA in Penang, the only other non-Malay majority state in

The presence of intra-regime elite splits in Sabah and Sarawak was pointed out in both Chapters 5 and 6. In this section, I will explain in greater detail, the causes and consequences of these splits. I will argue that these elite defectors could not maintain their status in the opposition because of the institutional environment in which they were operating. I then move on to the more important discussion of the elite splits within UMNO prior to the 1990 and 1998 general elections. I propose that the institutional structure of Semangat 46 limited its potential to make headway into the politically significant ethnically heterogeneous seats. Finally, I argue that while the institutional structure of Keadilan made it more suited to the task of capturing such seats, the manipulation of electoral regulations by the BN prevented Keadilan from making such political inroads initially.

### **8.1.1 PBDS and PERMAS in Sarawak in 1987 and 1991**

A constant feature of Sarawak politics, which exist to this day, is the struggle on the part of the Dayak population (which together with the other smaller non-Muslim Bumiputera groups, form approximately half of the state's population) to regain control of the state government, and the efforts on the part of the Chinese and Muslim Bumiputera population to maintain control by dividing the Dayak votes and Dayak

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Peninsular Malaysia. This increased the costs of defection for GERAKAN by increasing its dependence on UMNO support in order to hold on to the position of Chief Minister in the state.

based parties. As long as the Dayak parties were at loggerheads with one another, and the Chinese and Muslim Bumiputera parties within the BN remained internally cohesive, this objective could be achieved. An intra-regime split within the PBB, the party representing the non-Muslim Bumiputera population and the strongest party within the BN coalition in the state would present the opportunity for a Dayak-based party, the PBDS, to attempt to shift the electoral balance in its favor.

The 1987 state elections in Sarawak featured the strongest challenge to the hegemony of the BN in this state since the 1970 state elections. A family squabble between the new Sarawak Chief Minister, Taib Mahmud, and his uncle, Rahman Yaacub, the former Chief Minister, resulted in the formation of PERMAS, a Muslim Bumiputera opposition party that allied itself to the PBDS, now firmly in the opposition camp.<sup>4</sup> Yacob was expecting to have the same kind of access to patronage, especially though the granting of timber concessions by the state, even though he had stepped down as Chief Minister in 1981. When his expectations were not met, he turned to the public arena to accuse his nephew of granting timber concessions to his own relatives and allies. The escalation of this feud was the main motivation behind Yaacub's decision to form PERMAS. It was a means for him to regain control of the state and the patronage opportunities that came along with it (Chin, 1996). The PBDS decided to create an

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<sup>4</sup> In the previous state elections in 1983, the PBDS had been given recognized as an opposition party at the state level but still part of the BN at the federal level. The rationale of this strategy – having an ‘internalized opposition’ was discussed in Chapter 6 as part of the larger discussion on strategies of opposition co-optation and division.

opposition alliance with PERMAS because of the opportunity to gain control of the state government without having to share positions or seats with another Dayak party (SNAP) and a Chinese-led party (SUPP).

Of the two parties in the opposition alliance, the PBDS achieved greater electoral success. It won 15 out of the 21 state constituencies it contested in, mostly in the non-Muslim Bumiputera majority areas. PERMAS finished with a disappointing five seats out of the 21 seats it contested in.<sup>5</sup> The inability of PERMAS to make a significant headway in the Muslim Bumiputera majority seats made it difficult for the opposition alliance to realize its ambition of forming a state government, especially since both parties were not expecting to win any of the Chinese majority seats. Still, the opposition alliance held 20 out of the 48 seats in the state legislature (40%), more than sufficient to deprive the BN government of a 2/3rds control, the threshold that must be crossed in order to amend the state constitution.

But the opposition lost this veto power soon after the elections when eight out of the fifteen PBDS representatives crossed over to join the BN. However, instead of joining SNAP, the Dayak party within the BN, most of these non-Muslim Bumiputera representatives chose to join the PBB, thereby further strengthening the position of the PBB in the state government. Most importantly, these crossovers allowed the BN in the state to carry out a delimitation exercise and amend the state constitution to increase the

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<sup>5</sup> The remaining seven seats, mostly in Chinese majority areas, were contested by DAP.

number of constituencies from 48 to 56. The Muslim Bumiputera and the Chinese parties were the main beneficiaries of this delimitation exercise as the number of Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese plurality / majority constituencies increased by six and three respectively (Chin, 1996, 518). This put a serious dent into the ability of the PBDS to win a sufficient number of seats to control the state government on its own. Its explicit adoption of a pro non-Muslim Bumiputera position decreased its appeal among the Chinese and Muslim-Bumiputera voters. At the same time, the willingness of Yaacob (whose fight against Taib was draining his own resource base) to continue funding PERMAS was increasingly questioned.

The fate of the opposition alliance was sealed after the 1991 Sarawak state elections. As a result of the delimitation exercise, the PBDS defections and the decreasing appeal of Yaacob's PERMAS, the opposition alliance was reduced to just seven state seats (out of 56). All seven were won by the PBDS. PERMAS was completely wiped out, thus effectively ending the political career of Yaacob. Knowing that it could not capture control of the state on its own, the PBDS applied to rejoin the BN in 1994, and was subsequently readmitted into the ruling coalition at the state and federal levels. In the meantime, the PBB took advantage of Dayak disunity to decrease the number of state seats allocated to the two Dayak parties within the ruling coalition. From a high of 17 state seats (out of 48) under SNAP's control in 1976, the Dayaks were reduced to a mere 13 state seats (out of 56) after the 1991 Sarawak state elections. SNAP was allowed



to retain the six seats it had won, and PBDS was allowed to retain the seven seats it had won.

The opposition alliance that was created as a result of the intra-regime split prior to the 1987 state elections was not sustainable for the following reasons. Firstly, for the alliance to have any chance of gaining control of the state government, PERMAS needed to be able to win a significant share of the Muslim Bumiputera vote, especially since both opposition parties could not count on winning a majority of the Chinese vote. But the Muslim Bumiputera voters, knowing that PBDS could easily win a majority of the Dayak majority seats by campaigning on an explicitly pro-Dayak platform, had little incentive to vote for PERMAS candidates, knowing that this could very well lead to an opposition government in which the PBDS held the largest number of seats and with this, the control of the state government. PERMAS was thus electorally disadvantaged from the start, despite the considerable financial resources and name recognition of the former Chief Minister, Yaacob. The electoral strength demonstrated by the PBDS in the 1987 state elections only confirmed such fears and would leave PERMAS in a difficult position moving forward. PERMAS needed to win more seats than the PBDS in order to convince the latter to shift to a more centrist political position. The unfavorable 1987 results made this task near impossible.

Secondly, the delimitation exercise that was conducted after the 1987 state elections basically ended any aspirations the PBDS might have had about winning

enough Dayak majority seats to form the state government on its own (or at best, with a few PERMAS seats). When PERMAS was wiped out, and the PBDS' representation in the Sarawak state legislator was significant reduced in the 1991 state elections, the writing was already on the wall for the PBDS leaders.

Thirdly, the PBDS leaders knew that the BN coalition in Sarawak had the necessary electoral and institutional incentives to accept it back into the BN fold. The PBB and SUPP could not afford to have a strong Dayak based party in the opposition or within its own ranks. Therefore, its optimal strategy was to readmit the PBDS into the BN, as a means of dividing the Dayak vote between SNAP and PBDS within the structure of the ruling coalition.<sup>6</sup>

Fourthly, the fact that PBDS and PERMAS were parties that only had a presence in Sarawak, meant that it had to put all its political fortunes in the basket that was Sarawak politics. Losses in one state could not be compensated by gains in another. Losing the potential to be part of a ruling coalition in one state could not be compensated by being part of an opposition coalition in another state. Without the potential of being part of the state government, the ability of the PBDS to remain as an opposition party was highly questionable, especially in light of the previous three factors.

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<sup>6</sup> In a similar fashion, the was not surprising that the ruling coalition reached out to GERAKAN in Penang and then later divided the non-Malay majority seats between GERAKAN and MCA.

As such, the institutional framework – the delimitation exercises, the nature of the opposition alliance, the internal dynamics within the BN in the state, the regional character of the opposition parties – made it improbable that a defecting party could maintain its role as an opposition party for a sustained period of time.

### **8.1.2 PBS in Sabah post-1990**

The basis of political competition in Sabah can be simplistically described as being similar to Sarawak in this regard – the contestation for the plurality non-Muslim Bumiputera population to assert political control of this state against the Muslim Bumiputera population. But unlike Sarawak, PBS in Sabah was successful in dethroning the BN incumbent for two reasons. Firstly, the Kadazans, the largest group among the non-Muslim Bumiputera population were successful in capturing a significant proportion of the Chinese support. Secondly, the opposition parties were able to mobilize support along non-ethnic lines by focusing on the unpopularity of the incumbent Chief Minister, and by making the federal-state relationship a salient point of contestation.

These two reasons explain why PBS was able to defeat BERJAYA in the Sabah state elections in 1985 and to later increase its governing majority in the 1986 state elections. However, the decision to mobilize support using the federal-state relationship as the main axis of political competition was not without its costs. It inevitably led to a rapid deterioration in the relationship between PBS government in Sabah and the

federal government in KL. Joseph Pairin Kitingan, the *hugun siao* or paramount leader of PBS, managed to successfully convert the federal-state issue into further political capital prior to the 1990 state elections where it increased its winning majority from 34 seats (out of 48) to 36 seats.

When a breakaway faction in UMNO, led by Tengku Razaleigh, led to formation of S46, PBS decided to leave the BN coalition and throw its support behind S46, with the hope it would be given a chance to reset the federal-state relationship, in the event that a new party or coalition came to power at the federal level. As will be described later, the challenge of S46 did not materialize in Peninsular Malaysia. PBS's gamble did not pay off, and it would suffer political and economic repercussions unleashed by the BN.

PBS's betrayal against the BN prior to the 1990 general election, when it pulled out of the BN coalition, prompted UMNO to enter state politics in Sabah, bringing its vast financial resources and support of the federal government. The BN channeled money, which would otherwise have been allocated through the state government, to the Federal Development Office in Sabah, bypassing PBS state government in the process (Loh, 2005, 98). In addition, development allocations under the Mid-Term Review of the 6<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan to Sabah were also cut (Economic Planning Unit, 1991, 49).

In the 1994 Sabah state elections, despite the presence of the UMNO political machine, PBS still managed to win 25 out of 48 state constituencies, giving it a two seat

majority over the BN. PBS would most certainly have won more seats if not for the padding of the electoral roll with illegal immigrants, a trend that had started as early as 1986 (see Appendix A). PBS won all 15 of the Muslim Bumiputera majority constituencies while UMNO won all 18 of the Muslim majority constituencies (Chin, 1994, 911). But PBS's former hold on the Chinese majority constituencies was dented by the defection of the highest ranking Chinese leader within PBS, Yong Teck Lee, who left PBS to form the SAPP, a Chinese party that would go on to win 3 out of the 7 Chinese majority state constituencies in the next Sabah state elections.

PBS would not be successful in its attempt to form the state government as a number of PBS Muslim and Chinese state assemblymen chose to defect to the BN, allegedly because they were given cash incentives (Loh, 2005, 100). As significant, was the decision by a number of PBS non-Muslim Bumiputera leaders to leave PBS, form their own Kadazan parties, and then apply to join the BN coalition. The 1994 state election was a political game-changer not only in terms of UMNO's entry into Sabah politics, but also for causing the fragmentation of the non-Muslim Bumiputera vote with the formation of a number of alternative non-Muslim Bumiputera parties.

Following the suspected padding of the electoral rolls with illegal immigrants who were then categorized as Muslim Bumiputera citizens, and the controversial post-1994 delimitation exercise in Sabah that increased the number of Muslim Bumiputera majority seats (Loh, 2005, 101-104), PBS could only retain 17 out of the 48 state

constituencies in the 1999 Sabah state election.<sup>7</sup> Knowing that it could no longer win a majority of state constituencies following the delimitation exercise and the increase in the number of non-Muslim Bumiputera voters, PBS applied to rejoin the BN and was readmitted in 2002.

PBS was able to put up a much more spirited fight compared to its counterparts in Sarawak. Its longer tenure as an opposition party was undoubtedly helped by its ability to gain control of the state government on its own. But the same institutional factors which worked against opposition in Sarawak would be used against PBS thereby undermining its efforts to maintain control of the state government. The following are the main reasons why PBS was unable to extract guarantees of institutional reform from the federal government and later sustain its position as an opposition party in the state of Sabah.

Firstly, it was powerless to convert its control of the state government to political capital, and extract promises of institutional reform from the federal government. Unfortunately for PBS, the formation of Semangat 46 in the 1990 general elections did not lead to the BN losing its 2/3rds control of parliament, an outcome which many had thought possible. If such an outcome had materialized, the opposition as a whole may have been powerful enough to extract certain concessions from the federal government,

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<sup>7</sup> Because the BN did not have two thirds control of the state legislature, it could only alter the boundaries of the existing constituencies but not increase the number of state constituencies. But the shift in the boundary lines was sufficient to alter the ethnic composition of many constituencies such that the number of Muslim Bumiputera state constituencies increased at the expense of non-Muslim Bumiputera state constituencies.

especially in the arena of electoral reforms. Without being part of an opposition coalition, which could play the veto card at the parliamentary level, PBS was powerless when the BN used its control of key institutions, notably the Immigration Department and the Election Commission, to artificially increase the number of Muslim Bumiputera voters by granting citizenship to illegal immigrants from nearby Indonesia and Southern Philippines, and consequently, redraw the boundary lines of the existing state seats to increase the number of Muslim Bumiputera majority seats at the expense of Chinese majority and non-Muslim Bumiputera majority seats.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, the fact that PBS did not have any political presence outside the state of Sabah meant that it, like the PBDS in Sarawak, could only focus on its political fortunes within this state.<sup>9</sup> Without the prospect of being part of the ruling coalition in the state, which was the only game in town, PBS' ability to maintain its status as an opposition party was increasingly in doubt, especially since its support among the non-Muslim Bumiputera voters would be put to the test with the presence of Kadazan led parties within the BN coalition after the defections in 1994.

The readmission of PBS back into the BN fold should be understood in light of the previous two factors. While PBS could no longer harbor any real intentions of

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<sup>8</sup> It would have been possible for the BN to do this even if it did not have 2/3rds control of parliament since the redrawing of boundary lines does not necessitate a change in either the state or federal constitution. But the BN may have been forced to negotiate with the opposition if it had needed to amend the constitution for other purposes.

<sup>9</sup> Its efforts to expand to Peninsular Malaysia in the 1995 general elections were unsuccessful, to put it mildly.

regaining control of the state government by winning only the non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese majority state seats after the 1994 delimitation exercise, it still held enough state seats to prevent the BN from completing a delimitation exercise that involved increasing the number of state seats in Sabah.<sup>10</sup> As such, the BN needed the cooperation of PBS in order to pass the 2003 delimitation exercise which involved significant increases in the number of parliamentary and state seats in Sabah.<sup>11</sup> The costs of readmitting PBS included the allocation of federal and state posts to its leaders, as well as taking away of some non-Muslim Bumiputera majority state constituencies from existing parties within the BN. But this was outweighed by the potential benefit of further increasing the number of Muslim Bumiputera constituencies. The allocation of state seats to PBS was a relatively minor cost to pay since it would involve taking away very few seats from UMNO, the dominant party within the BN coalition in Sabah.

The readmission of PBS back into Sabah also had the advantage of dividing the power of the non-Muslim Bumiputera within the BN coalition. The electoral incentives described here are similar to the situation in Sarawak where PBDS was readmitted into the BN in order to divide the power of the Dayak based parties within the BN. The readmission of PBS into the BN coalition in 2002 coincided with a decrease in the overall number of state seats allocated to the non-Muslim Bumiputera parties. In the 2004 Sabah

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<sup>10</sup> It would also have been challenging for the Election Commission to increase the number of parliamentary seats in Sabah without increasing the number of state seats at the same time.

<sup>11</sup> 5 parliamentary seats and 12 state seats were added in Sabah in 2003.



state elections, PBS, UPKO and PBRS, the non-Muslim Bumiputera led parties in Sabah were allocated 13, 6 and 1 state seat respectively, giving them a total of 20 seats (out of 60), far short of a majority and just 1 seat short of giving the three parties a potentially veto position of more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of total state seats.<sup>12</sup>

Unable to overcome these institutional disadvantages, the eventual return of PBS back into the BN fold, especially when it knew that the BN was open to its readmission, was thus not unexpected.

One important point regarding the co-optation of defector parties by the BN in Sabah and Sarawak should be noted before moving on the S46 – in addition to needing a 2/3rds majority in the respective state legislatures, the BN also recognized, very early on, the importance of having a large enough parliamentary buffer in the states of Sabah and Sarawak to protect it from losing a 2/3rds parliamentary majority in the event that it suffers another 1969-like electoral setback in Peninsular Malaysia. The leaders of the then Alliance coalition were forced to look for allies in the state of Sarawak in order to boost its parliamentary majority to the needed 2/3rds level in order to amend the constitution. The co-optation of these defector parties in both states would pay electoral dividends in the 2008 general elections when the BN was saved by its electoral

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<sup>12</sup> It would be naïve to think that the UMNO led BN coalition in Sabah did not think of this possibility when allocating the seats to the non-Muslim Bumiputera parties.

dominance in Sabah and Sarawak, after managing to win a bare majority of parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia.

### **8.1.3 Semangat 46 as the moderate Malay opposition party in 1990 and 1995**

One can make the argument that intra-regime elite splits in the states of Sabah and Sarawak, with approximately 10% of total parliamentary seats in each state, would not have threatened the overall electoral dominance of the BN coalition. For the incumbent regime to be seriously threatened, an intra-regime elite split had to occur within UMNO, the largest and most powerful party within the BN coalition. It would not be inaccurate to say that the stability of the BN coalition is anchored on the electoral performance of UMNO. If UMNO falls, so does the BN. Such an elite split did occur prior to the 1990 general elections. This set the stage for the creation of Semangat 46 and the unification of the opposition around two separate electoral blocks in order to challenge the BN's dominance by possibly depriving the ruling coalition of a 2/3rds parliamentary majority.

Prior to the leadership battle within UMNO that split it apart in 1987, the dominant party within the BN had been relatively free of serious fights for the position of the party's president. The fight for this post, and the position of the Prime Minister that comes with it, had always been somewhat limited since the incumbent party president and Prime Minister was expected to handpick the deputy who eventually replaces him. The first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was replaced

by his deputy, Tun Abdul Razak, who was replaced by his deputy, Hussein Onn, who was replaced by his deputy, Mahathir Mohamed. The transition process from one Prime Minister to the other was expedited by the disastrous 1969 general election results and the post-election riots (Tunku Abdul Rahman) and two deaths in office (Tun Abdul Razak and Hussein Onn). Mahathir, Malaysia's enigmatic fourth Prime Minister would have a much longer tenure and was much less willing to pass on the reins of power to an appointed successor.

Mahathir took over from Hussein Onn as Prime Minister in 1981 and quickly moved to strengthen his own position within UMNO by playing off his key rivals against one another. But he could not stave off a challenge from one of his main rivals for long. The intra-party elections provided the platform and the opportunity for Tengku Razaleigh to challenge Mahathir for the position of UMNO president in 1987. Razaleigh, a member of the Kelantan royal family, a former Finance Minister and one of the three contenders who could have replaced Hussein Onn as Prime Minister, was an UMNO heavyweight. He had previously contested, unsuccessfully, for the position of Deputy President of UMNO. Mahathir elected to support Razaleigh's rival, Musa Hitam<sup>13</sup> as his deputy, because Mahathir feared the political ambitions of Razaleigh. However, in the fiercely contested 1987 UMNO elections, Musa joined forces with

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<sup>13</sup> Musa Hitam was the third contender to replace Hussein Onn as Prime Minister.

Razaleigh as part of a joint ticket (Razaleigh as president, Musa as his deputy) to challenge Mahathir.

The ensuing contest was won by Mahathir by a very narrow margin. Mahathir won 51.5% of total votes cast by the 1479 delegates or a 43 vote margin (Hwang, 2003, 131). After his narrow victory and a series of legal maneuvers that culminated in the deregistration UMNO and its re-registration under a new name, UMNO Baru, Mahathir purged his cabinet of UMNO leaders who were aligned to Tengku Razaleigh. This forced Tengku Razaleigh to leave UMNO and form a new political party – Semangat 46 (S46) – together with a number of other UMNO leaders.

This new party, S46, soon started forming alliances with the various opposition parties, most notably PAS and DAP. Since the ideological differences between DAP and PAS were still too wide to bridge, it was not possible for all three parties to form a single coalition to face the BN. Instead, S46 formed a Malay alliance with PAS and two other smaller Muslim / Malay parties<sup>14</sup>, and a separate alliance with DAP and two other smaller non-Malay opposition parties.<sup>15</sup> The former was called Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (APU) or the Muslim Community Unity Movement and the latter was called Gagasan Rakyat (Gagasan, for short) or Malaysian People's Front. This two-pronged alliance was meant to unite the opposition, with S46 acting as the bridge that held

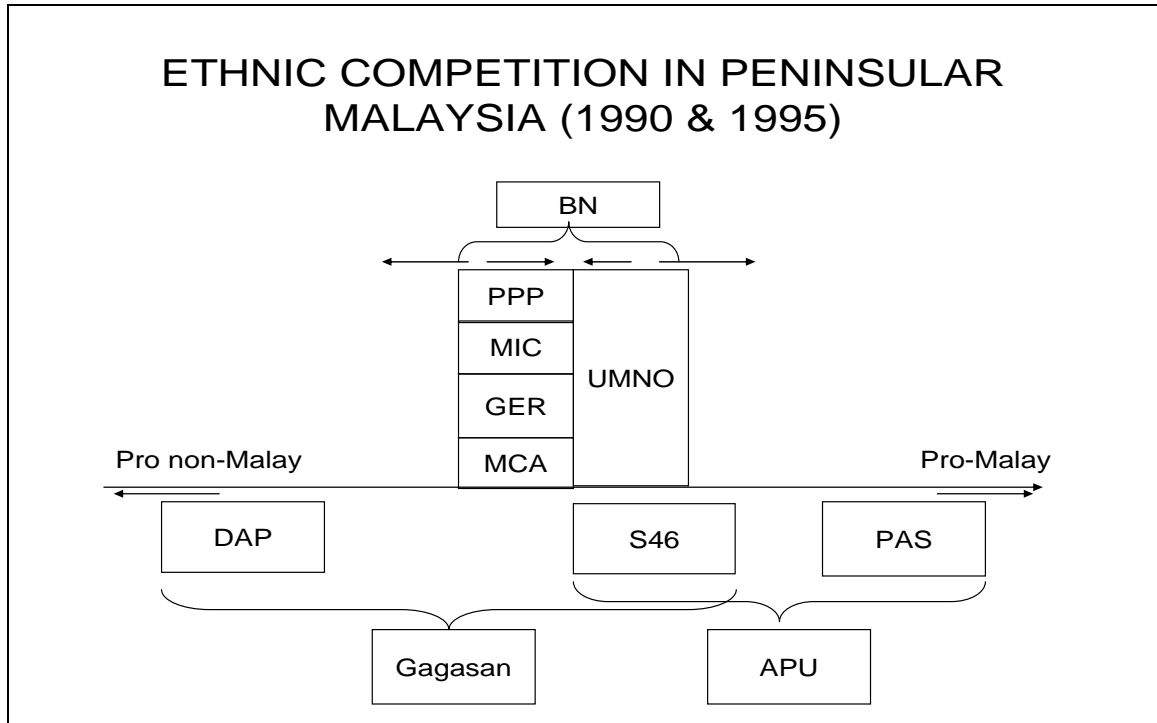
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<sup>14</sup> BERJASA and Hamim.

<sup>15</sup> PRM and the IPF.

together the two largest but ideologically incompatible opposition parties on either side of the ethnic divide, DAP and PAS (see Figure 11 below).

**Figure 11: Political competition along the ethnic dimension in Peninsular Malaysia, 1990 and 1995**



This was the first step in building an alternative coalition of opposition parties to challenge the BN. 'In spite of disparate ideologies, serious organizational weaknesses and image problems, Gagasan Rakyat was considered an unprecedented de facto multi-ethnic and multi-religious coalition in Peninsular Malaysia' (Jomo, 1996, 101). It had taken eight general elections to reach this stage of political competition whereby the opposition could claim to be putting up a united front (or fronts) against the BN.

This coalitional structure was supposed to bring electoral benefits to all of the major opposition parties. Within the APU, Semangat gained from being anchored to an already established Malay opposition party while PAS gained votes from some of the more moderate Malays who were apprehensive of 'PAS's strict interpretation the religion as exemplified by the Iranian example' (Khong, 1991, 9). Within the structure of Gagasan Rakyat, DAP was able to find a Malay opposition party in S46 to work with that did not prioritize the founding of an Islamic state and could possibly help DAP gain some much needed Malay votes in non-Malay majority constituencies with a significant number of Malay minority voters. By aligning itself to DAP, S46 put itself in a better position to negotiate to contest in the largest number of parliamentary constituencies and in doing so, allowed Tengku Razaleigh to lay claim the position of Prime Minister in waiting, should the opposition as a whole win enough seats to defeat the BN.

S46 contested in the largest number of parliamentary constituencies – 61 in total – among the three opposition parties. PAS, as part of its electoral pact with S46, conceded a number of Malay majority constituencies in the Malay majority states of Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu and some ethnically heterogeneous parliamentary constituencies in Perak, Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor. PAS contested in only 28 parliamentary constituencies in the 1990 general election, down from 87 in the 1986 general election. DAP competed in 41 parliamentary constituencies down from 54 in the 1986 general election. In other words, S46 was able to

convince both PAS and DAP to concede to it a number of seats that they had previously contested in.

Another important consequence of the electoral alliances formed by these opposition parties is that the number of multi-cornered contests featuring the major opposition parties dropped significantly. Out of the 132 contested parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia, only one featured a multi-cornered contest between one of the three main opposition parties compared to 25 such multi-cornered contests featuring PAS and DAP in the 1986 general election. The consequence of this arrangement was that the former practice of splitting the opposition vote between DAP and PAS was stopped. This arrangement continued, more or less intact, in the next four general elections even as the structure of the opposition coalitions changed (see Table 33 below)

**Table 33: Number of multi-cornered contests involving the major opposition parties, Peninsular Malaysia, 1978 to 2008**

Year	No of Multi-Cornered Contests
1978	27 / 114 (24%)
1982	30 / 114 (26%)
1986	25 / 132 (19%)
1990	1 / 132 (1%)
1995	11 / 144 (8%)
1999	0 / 144 (0%)
2004	5 / 165 (3%)
2008	0 / 165 (0%)

Source: Election Reports, 1978 to 2008

Unfortunately, the intended electoral benefits of this opposition alliance did not materialize, at least not in a manner that increased the prospects of an opposition takeover of the government. DAP did not suffer from its alliance with S46 but it failed to gain any ground. DAP won 18 parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia, a decrease of one constituency from its 1986 performance, but this was compensated by an increase of 8 state constituencies from 37 in 1986 to 45 in 1990 (Table 34 below). However, the increases in the state seats came almost exclusively in non-Malay majority constituencies, mostly in the state of Penang, which meant that DAP did not manage to gain a sufficient number of new Malay votes for it to win some of the more ethnically heterogeneous constituencies it contested in.

**Table 34: Number of parliamentary and state constituencies won by DAP, PAS and S46 in the 1990 general election, Peninsular Malaysia (1986 election results in parentheses)**

Party	Parliament	State
DAP	18 (19)	45 (37)
PAS	7 (1)	35 (15)
S46	8 (0)	17 (0)

Source: 1986 and 1990 Election Reports

PAS managed to regain control of the Kelantan state government, which was under BN control from 1977 to 1990, when it, together with S46, won all 39 state constituencies in this state, largely because Tengku Razaleigh was an immensely



popular politician in Kelantan.<sup>16</sup> Because of PAS' compromise with S46 (Khong, 1991, 10) whereby PAS would contest in a majority of the state constituencies in the Malay majority states northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu while S46 would compete in the majority of parliamentary constituencies in these states, PAS was given the position of Menteri Besar or Chief Minister in Kelantan. PAS picked up an additional parliamentary constituency in the neighboring state of Terengganu, but was unable to make any headway its attempt to win parliamentary seats in the other states in Peninsular Malaysia.

Most disappointing however, was S46's electoral performance. While it won eight parliamentary constituencies, all of them came from the Malay majority northern states of Kelantan (seven) and Terengganu (one). This meant that S46 was not able to break BN's stranglehold on the Malay majority constituencies in the more ethnically heterogeneous states such as Penang, Perak and Selangor. The promise of S46 was that it presented the first credible opportunity for a Malay party to defeat the BN, specifically UMNO, outside the four northern Malay majority states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and

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<sup>16</sup> His popularity can be demonstrated by the fact that even though he rejoined UMNO after the 1995 general election, he still managed to retain his parliamentary constituency of Gua Musang in the 1999 and 2008 general election where there were significant swings among the Malay electorate in the state of Kelantan.

Terengganu. It came close to defeating UMNO in only two of the forty-one parliamentary constituencies outside these four states.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the major schism within UMNO as a result of the departure of Tengku Razaleigh, the opposition as a whole and S46 in particular could not shift Malay support for the BN by a sufficient degree.

**Table 35: Estimated BN support by ethnic group, Peninsular Malaysia, 1986 and 1990**

	1986	1990	Change
Non-Malay BN%	42.1%	39.6%	-2.5%
Malay BN%	70.5%	65.9%	-4.6%

Source: EI Software (Gary King, 1997), Personal Analysis

Table 35 shows the estimated levels of BN support among non-Malay and Malay voters in Peninsular Malaysia using Gary King's (1997) ecological inference method. The level of BN support among the non-Malays dropped slightly from 42.1% in 1986 to 39.6% in 1990, reflecting the fact that DAP won a larger percentage of non-Malay votes in the Chinese majority state of Penang. While the Malay support for the BN dropped slightly from 70.5% in 1986 to 65.9% in 1990, representing a drop of 4.6%, this was still not significant enough of a drop for the Malay parties, specifically S46, to make a significant dent in UMNO's hold on the Malay majority constituencies as well as the mixed constituencies, especially outside the four northern Malay majority states.

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<sup>17</sup> It won 49.9% of the valid vote in Parit Buntar (67% Malay) in Perak, formerly a PAS stronghold, and 49.2% of the valid vote in Jelebu (60% Malay) in Negeri Sembilan, which was contested by a former UMNO cabinet minister, Rais Yatim.

S46's political weakness was significant in the larger scheme of opposition politics for another reason. S46's ability to play the role of referee between PAS and DAP was premised on the assumption that it could win more parliamentary constituencies than either PAS or DAP. If DAP won more constituencies than S46 (which it did in 1990), then the opposition coalition as a whole (APU and Gagasan put together) would be seen as one where the non-Malays were dominant. If PAS won more constituencies than S46 or DAP, this meant that the more extremist Malay party would be the largest party within the opposition coalition, an unacceptable position to the non-Malay leaders in DAP.

As it turned out, S46 won fewer parliamentary constituencies than DAP, and DAP retained its position as the largest opposition party in the federal parliament. Meanwhile, even though S46 won one more parliamentary constituency than PAS (eight to seven), PAS's dominance in the state legislature of Kelantan, where it had 26 state seats compared S46's 12, meant that PAS could ride roughshod over S46 in Tengku Razaleigh's home state. PAS in Kelantan, under the leadership of Nik Aziz, the newly selected Chief Minister, began a process of implementing a series of Islamic policies at the state level culminating in its passing of the Kelantan *hudud* bill (Islamic criminal law) in 1993, which included the punishment of certain criminal offences that were under federal jurisdiction or allowed punishments that exceeded the jurisdiction of the state *Syariah* courts (Noor, 2004, 500-506). PAS's insistence on pushing through this bill, even

though it was fully aware that the federal government would not allow it to be implemented (since criminal laws were still under federal jurisdiction), had serious consequences in terms of its image among the non-Muslim voters in Malaysia, and would come back to haunt the opposition as a whole, and DAP specifically, in the 1999 general election.

The 1990 general election placed S46 as the weakest among the three opposition parties, which cast doubt on its long term viability as an opposition party. How long would the former UMNO leaders who had left the party together with Tengku Razaleigh, fight the good fight in the opposition, deprived of the access to patronage and resources that UMNO once afforded them? Not for long, as it turned out. The 1995 general election, coming on the heels on an unprecedented economic boom and 'government efforts to liberalize, deregulate and de-emphasize the NEP' (Noor, 2004, 524) resulted in a significant emasculation of the opposition (Table 36 below). DAP, which had won 18 parliamentary constituencies and 45 state constituencies in the 1990 general election, only managed to win 9 parliamentary and 11 state constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia in the 1995 general election. S46 went from 8 parliamentary and 17 state constituencies in 1990 to 6 parliamentary and 12 state constituencies in 1995. PAS's losses were the most minimal. It held on to the 7 parliamentary constituencies it won in 1990 and lost only 2 state constituencies to give it 33 state constituencies, down from 35 in 1990.

**Table 36: Number of parliamentary and state constituencies won by DAP, PAS and S46 in the 1995 general election, Peninsular Malaysia (1990 election results in parentheses)**

Party	Parliament	State
DAP	9 (18)	11 (45)
PAS	7 (7)	33 (35)
S46	6 (8)	12 (17)

Source: 1990 and 1995 Election Reports

As a result of S46's inability to compete with UMNO, Tengku Razaleigh made the decision to dissolve the party and rejoin UMNO in 1996. With Tengku Razaleigh's return to the UMNO fold, the opposition alliances of APU and Gagasan Rakyat dissolved.

There was no doubt that the intra-elite split within UMNO resulted in the weakening of the BN's electoral position. Its share of parliamentary seats, as a result of the electoral gains made by S46 and PAS in the four northern Malay majority states and the defection of PBS in Sabah, decreased from 85% in 1986 to 71% in 1990. It lost control of two state legislatures – Kelantan and Sabah. It nearly lost control of the Penang state legislature. Nevertheless, it still maintained a 2/3rds control of the parliament, and thus did not need the cooperation of the opposition to pass constitutional amendments, which includes the article to increase the number of parliamentary seats after a delimitation exercise. In other words, the opposition did not manage to make sufficient electoral gains to provide it with a veto position. Deprived of this veto position, the

opposition could not prevent the passage of the 1995 delimitation exercise in Peninsular Malaysia and the earlier discussed 1994 delimitation exercise in Sabah.

The inability to extract concessions for institutional reform and the inability of S46 to make significant electoral headway in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies outside the four northern Malay majority states, led to the reincorporation of Tengku Razaleigh's party back into UMNO and hence, the disintegration of the opposition alliances established in 1990.

This is not to say that the intra-regime elite split within UMNO did not leave any political or electoral impact. The emergence of S46 showed the opposition that a united opposition coalition which included both DAP and PAS was possible. Both sides could potentially benefit from having a moderate Malay party stand between them to take on the BN in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies that were mostly found outside the four northern Malay majority states. S46 filled this role in the 1990 general elections, but its tenure as an opposition party was relatively short. The place of S46 as the moderate Malay party was taken up by Keadilan, which was created as a result of a second serious intra-regime elite split within UMNO prior to the 1999 general elections. Keadilan built on the experience of S46, and took it a step further. Not only did Keadilan position itself differently on the ethnic spectrum – as a moderate multiethnic but Malay led opposition party, it also introduced a new dimension of political competition – the governance / anti-corruption / human rights dimension. Most significantly, it succeeded

where S46 failed – in uniting DAP and PAS under the banner of a single opposition coalition.

#### **8.1.4 Keadilan as a multiethnic Malay-led party in 1999**

Keadilan (Party Keadilan Nasional, in full, or the National Justice Party) was formed as a result of the arrest, prosecution and incarceration of the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, amidst the turmoil of the Asian economic crisis. The composition of this new party was as diverse as the motivations of the different supporters of the *reformasi* movement, which was sparked by the persecution and prosecution of Anwar. The membership and leadership of Keadilan, unlike that of S46, was not drawn exclusively from the ranks of UMNO defectors but drew heavily from different civil society agents (Weiss, 2006, Chapter 5). The composition of Keadilan's leadership and membership was genuinely multiracial. As a result of drawing many civil society leaders into its fold, Keadilan was able to credibly campaign on 'the same issues these activists had championed before: clean and accountable governance, social justice, multiracialism, enhanced democratic freedoms, and economic redistribution' (Weiss, 2006, 143).

The establishment of Keadilan as a political party was followed by the formation of Barisan Alternatif (BA) or the Alternative Coalition which comprised DAP, PAS, Keadilan and the smallest member of the coalition, the Malaysian People's Party (PRM) prior to the 1999 general election. For the first time in Malaysia's political history, the

opposition parties were joined in a single coalition to challenge the dominant electoral position of the BN.

This strategy was not without risk for DAP as well as for PAS. Unlike DAP's alliance with S46 under the umbrella of Gagasan Rakyat in the 1990 general election, which allowed DAP to deflect the accusation that it was collaborating with PAS, and therefore guilty of aiding and abetting PAS' efforts to established an Islamic state, the BA would offer DAP no such excuse. DAP, by joining PAS in this united opposition coalition, was taking the risk of alienating many of its non-Malay supporters, especially those who saw the *reformasi* movement as a largely Malay movement. In preparation for the political attacks that would inevitably come from the non-Malay BN component parties, DAP had to state and restate its uncompromising stand against PAS's proposal to set up an Islamic state (Lim, 2001).

Similarly, PAS too was opening itself up to possible attacks that it was compromising its stand on setting up an Islamic state by collaborating with the secular leftists of DAP and PRM (Noor, 2004, 633).

However, these seemingly incompatible differences were finally put aside in favor of taking advantage of the anti-BN sentiment, in the hope that this second attempt at installing an opposition front, this time united behind one banner, would be more successful than the first. The parties in the newly formed opposition coalition were clearly hoping to capitalize on the widespread dissatisfaction against the BN as a result



of the Asian economic crisis and feelings of public sympathy for Anwar (Weiss, 2000; Case, 2001). The BA was hoping to deny the BN its 2/3rds parliamentary majority by winning both non-Malay and Malay majority constituencies, as well as making a dent in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies through vote-pooling.

Once again, for the opposition coalition to be successful, Keadilan needed to achieve the electoral goals that S46 fell short of in the 1990 general election. It needed to win more parliamentary constituencies than either DAP or PAS so that it could play the bridging role of referee and moderator credibly and effectively. And it could only do so if it won a majority of the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies that it was contesting.

On paper, Keadilan was better suited than S46 to make electoral gains in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies that had been dominated by the BN. Firstly, the Malay swing against the BN in the urban constituencies in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan was expected to be significant as a result of the *reformasi* movement. There was very little indication that the internal schism in UMNO caused by the Mahathir-Tengku Razaleigh contest affected mass public sentiment against UMNO in the same manner as that which was exhibited during the height of the *reformasi* movement. Secondly, the multiracial character of Keadilan should have made it more attractive to non-Malay voters, especially if a non-Malay Keadilan candidate was fielded against a Malay UMNO candidate. Thirdly, Keadilan was campaigning explicitly on a non-ethnic axis of competition that emphasized democratic rights and good governance, which

should have attracted both non-Malays and Malays who were disillusioned with the ethnic basis of political competition in Malaysia.

**Table 37: Number of parliamentary and state constituencies contested and won by the opposition, Peninsular Malaysia, 1999 general election**

Party	Parliament		State	
	Contested	<i>Won</i>	Contested	Won
PAS	59 (41.0%)	<b>27 (64.3%)</b>	238 (59.9%)	98 (86.7%)
DAP	38 (26.4%)	<b>10 (23.8%)</b>	89 (22.4%)	11 (9.7%)
Keadilan	43 (29.9%)	<b>5 (11.9%)</b>	67 (16.9%)	4 (3.5%)
PRM	4 (2.8%)	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	3 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	144 (100.0%)	<b>42 (100.0%)</b>	394 (100.0%)	113 (100.0%)

Source: 1999 Election Report (percentages of constituencies in parentheses)

These theoretical advantages however did not translate into significant electoral gains. Keadilan was not able to win a single parliamentary constituency in the state of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan, the scene of many *reformasi* related protests and demonstrations (Table 37 above). Keadilan only managed to win five parliamentary constituencies. Three of these constituencies were located in the state of Kelantan and another was located in the state of Terengganu. Unlike Tengku Razaleigh's S46, which could claim to have some level of local support in both these states, it could be said that Keadilan won these constituencies because of PAS's generosity in its allocation of these constituencies to Keadilan. Without sufficient resources or grassroots networks, Keadilan

was totally dependent on PAS in both these states.<sup>18</sup> Keadilan's remaining parliamentary constituency was Anwar Ibrahim's constituency of Permatang Pauh in Penang, which was contested and won by his wife and president of Keadilan, Wan Azizah.

The main electoral beneficiary of the anti-BN sentiments was inarguably PAS. It won a total of 27 parliamentary constituencies which included two constituencies outside its traditional base of the four northern Malay majority states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu.<sup>19</sup> For the first time since 1959, the leader of the opposition came from a Malay opposition party. In addition to winning the largest number of parliamentary constituencies in its history, PAS also gained control of the Terengganu state legislature by winning 28 out of the 32 state constituencies in this state.<sup>20</sup>

While DAP picked up three additional parliamentary constituencies (from seven in 1995 to ten in 1999), the results were nonetheless highly disappointing. Under normal political circumstances, a serious economic crisis such as the one in 1998 should have led to a non-Malay backlash against the BN. But the expected non-Malay backlash did not materialize, especially in the non-Malay majority constituencies. DAP won 19 out of the 40 non-Malay majority parliamentary constituencies (48%) in the 1986 general elections, which took place after a serious economic contraction in 1985. In comparison, DAP won only 10 out of the 46 non-Malay majority constituencies (21%) in the 1999 general

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<sup>18</sup> This should not be that surprising given that Keadilan had only been recently formed and its de facto leader, Anwar Ibrahim, was incarcerated.

<sup>19</sup> Both these constituencies – Parit Buntar and Parit – are located in the state of Perak.

<sup>20</sup> PAS had governed this state from 1959 to 1964

elections, a year after an even more serious economic contraction. To accentuate this point further, two very prominent DAP leaders lost in constituencies where the non-Malays comprised 85% and 79% of the electorate respectively<sup>21</sup>. DAP was invariably hurt by its alliance with PAS under the united opposition coalition, the BA. The fears of DAP leaders of a non-Malay backlash against DAP for its cooperation with PAS had been realized.

**Table 38: Changes in ethnic support for the BN, Peninsular Malaysia, 1995 and 1999 general election**

	1995	1999	Change (1999 – 1995)
Malay BN support	70.7%	53.4%	-17.3%
Non-Malay BN support	60.5%	58.8%	-1.7%

Source: 1995 and 1999 Election Reports, Personal Analysis (King, 1997)

The ethnic bias of the anti-BN swing can be seen in the change in the estimated ethnic support for the BN from 1995 to 1999 (Table 38 above). The Malay vote swung by an estimated 17% while the non-Malay support for the BN only decreased by an estimated 2%. The fact that the non-Malay vote, more or less, stayed with the BN meant that the benefits of vote pooling once again favored the BN. The anticipated benefits from vote pooling as a result of having an opposition coalition once again failed to

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<sup>21</sup> Lim Kit Siang lost in the parliamentary constituency of Bukit Bendera (85% non-Malay) and Karpal Singh lost in the parliamentary constituency of Jelutong (79% non-Malay).

materialize, partly because of the decision of the Election Commission not to allow 680,000 newly registered voters to be included on the electoral roll in the 1999 general election. Presumably, many of the non-Malay voters would have cast their vote in favor of the opposition, especially in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan. Under certain favorable but not unrealistic assumptions about the distribution and voting patterns of these 680,000 excluded voters, I estimate that the opposition would have gained an additional fourteen parliamentary seats (7% of total seats), mostly in the ethnically heterogeneous seats in heavily urbanized Wilayah Persekutuan and Selangor (See Appendix B). While this would not have been sufficient to deny the BN a 2/3rds parliamentary majority, the beneficiaries of these newly registered voters would have been Keadilan and PAS leaders in these ethnically heterogeneous seats, and their presence in the leadership ranks of the opposition may have been sufficient to prevent a lurch to the political / religious right on the part of PAS which, as we shall soon see, soon brought at end to this second attempt at forming and sustaining an opposition coalition.

The non-Malay fears of voting for the opposition parties in the BA were probably accentuated by the perception that PAS was the dominant party within the opposition coalition. Unlike the 1990 general election, whereby S46 was seen as the dominant Malay party, PAS contested in the most seats in the 1999 general election. Although Keadilan and DAP contested in more parliamentary constituencies combined (one of the

conditions stipulated by DAP as necessary to check PAS), this subtle point was probably lost on many of the non-Malay voters who were afraid that the anticipated Malay swing against the BN could lead to PAS possibly gaining control of the federal government, and then proceeding to install an Iranian-like Islamic state.

PAS' dominance and Keadilan's inability to play the role of the referee between DAP and PAS once again manifested itself when the Terengganu state government, under the PAS Chief Minister, Hadi Awang, who was (and still is) also the president of PAS and the leader of the opposition, insisted on passing a *hudud* bill that was similar to the one passed by the Kelantan state government in 1993. This naturally created a schism between PAS and DAP, still recovering from the fact that it lost out on potential gains in the non-Malay electorate in the 1999 general election due to its association with PAS under the BA coalition. Hadi's interpretation of the Malay anti-BN swing as a mandate for PAS to carry out its vision of implementing an Islamic state would lead to a contest between PAS and UMNO to out-Islamize one another. Naturally, this put DAP in an increasingly conflicted and precarious position within the opposition coalition. On the one hand, it wanted to shore up the opposition coalition and moderate the political position of PAS. On the other, DAP continued to suffer backlash from their core supporters because of its association with PAS in the opposition coalition.

The attacks on the US on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, were the straw that broke the camel's back for DAP. DAP leaders figured that as worldwide fears against Islamic

extremism grew, the BN would inevitably find a way to link that phenomenon with the rise of PAS's power in Peninsular Malaysia. Just prior to the Sarawak state elections in September 2001, DAP announced that it was leaving the BA. The opposition coalition had lasted just 22 months.

Once again, the intra-regime elite split within UMNO would weaken the BN electorally. Its share of parliamentary seats had decreased from 84% in 1995 to 77% in 1999. The loss of the Terengganu legislature and the emergence of PAS as the leader of the opposition, the first time in which the leader of a Malay party had held this position, put UMNO in an uncomfortable position. However, in a repeat of S46's performance in the 1990 general election, Keadilan was not able to make any significant headway into the ethnically heterogeneous seats, which was needed for the opposition to gain more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of parliamentary seats and emerge as a veto player. Keadilan's failure to do so meant that it was unable to consolidate its own position and have any sort of political credibility as the opposition party that could bridge the ideological differences between PAS and DAP. Keadilan and DAP's electoral setbacks meant no institutional reforms could be extracted from the BN. The opposition's inability to deny the BN a 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s parliamentary majority meant that the BN could manipulate the delimitation process in 2003 to regain its electoral dominance (See discussion in Chapter 5).

While the opposition's second attempt at building a coalition that could credibly present itself as an alternative to the BN failed, there were some important precedents

established that would be later prove to be important in the opposition's third attempt at building a united opposition after the 2008 general election (to be discussed in section 8.2).

Firstly the BA showed that it was capable of winning a larger percentage of the Malay vote outside the four northern Malay majority states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu.

**Table 39: Comparison of S46 and PAS' performance in 1990 versus Keadilan and PAS' performance in 1999 outside 4 northern Peninsular Malaysia states**

	# of S46 / Keadilan and PAS seats where the BN won less than 56% of the popular vote	Average % of popular vote for S46 / Keadilan and PAS
1990	4/51 (7.8%)	34.7%
1999	24/62 (38.7%)	39.8%

Source: 1990 and 1999 general election reports

According to Table 39 above, PAS and Keadilan managed to increase their share of the popular vote from 34.7% in 1990 to 39.8% in 1999 in the parliamentary constituencies they contested in outside the 4 northern Peninsular Malaysia states. More importantly, PAS and Keadilan managed to decrease the margin of the BN's victory in many of these parliamentary constituencies. The BN failed to obtain more than 56% of the popular vote in almost 40% (24/62) of the parliamentary constituencies outside the four northern Peninsular Malaysia states where it competed against PAS or Keadilan.



There were only four such parliamentary constituencies (or 8%) when the BN faced S46 and PAS in these constituencies in 1990. Keadilan and PAS showed that it was possible to take on the BN, specifically UMNO, in many of the Malay majority constituencies outside the areas where existing anti-BN sentiment was strong. The BN's electoral dominance in these constituencies was no longer indisputable. This would prove to be important in the 2008 general election.

Secondly, the emergence of Keadilan as a Malay-led multiracial party paved the way for a new model of vote pooling to emerge, so that Malay and non-Malay votes could be pooled within a single party, which could and would field both Malay and non-Malay candidates. Even though Keadilan failed in its attempt to win a sufficient number of parliamentary constituencies to enable it to play an effective mediating role between DAP and PAS<sup>22</sup>, the model of a Malay-led multiracial party set an important precedent for this moderate party in the 2008 general election.

Thirdly, the 1999 general election showed that there were electoral gains to be made from mobilizing on a non-ethnic dimension of political competition. It would be a misconception to conclude that the gains made by PAS in the 1999 general elections were due to its flank attack against the BN that was based purely on the ethnic dimension of political competition. The Malay anger directed against the BN was not triggered by any policy decisions made by the BN or UMNO to move to the political

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<sup>22</sup> Which ultimately led to the departure of DAP from the BA in 2001.

center, and hence making the ruling coalition susceptible to accusations of selling out Malay interests to the non-Malays, or that it was not pursuing goals that were consistent with Islamic ideology. The Malays voted against the BN because the opposition was able to funnel disenchantment against the ruling coalition that was based on a whole host of factors besides ethnicity, including the abuse of human rights most symbolically represented by the treatment of Anwar, and corruption allegations on the part of the BN perceived as partly responsible for the economic crisis. As will be described in greater detail in section 8.2, this dimension of political competition would once again be relevant in the 2008 general election, especially among those who had been most mobilized to vote against the BN by the *reformasi* movement.

This dimension of political competition was temporarily subdued in the 2004 general election, when Abdullah Badawi, who had taken over Mahathir Mohamed as Prime Minister, successfully co-opted many elements of the *reformasi* movement. As a result, the BN coalition won a historic number of parliamentary constituencies (Wong, 2005). The BN won 147 out of 165 parliamentary constituencies (89%) in Peninsular Malaysia, up from 102 out of 144 parliamentary constituencies (71%) in 1999. The BN also regained control of the Terengganu state legislature, aided partly by the surge in the newly registered voters in this state, and came within two state constituencies of capturing the Kelantan state legislature, by winning 21 out of 45 state constituencies.

Including the seats in Sabah and Sarawak, the BN's share of parliamentary seats was increased to 199 out of 219 seats or 91% of total parliamentary seats (from 77% in 1999).

**Table 40: Number of parliamentary and state constituencies contested and won by the opposition, Peninsular Malaysia, 2004 general election**

Party	Parliament		State	
	Contested	Won	Contested	Won
PAS	83 (50.3%)	6 (33.3%)	258 (58.0%)	35 (70.0%)
DAP	37 (22.4%)	11 (61.1%)	98 (22.0%)	15 (30.0%)
Keadilan <sup>23</sup>	48 (29.1%)	1 (5.6%)	103 (23.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Total <sup>24</sup>	168	18	459	40

Source: 2004 Election Report (percentages of constituencies in parentheses)

DAP regained its position as the largest opposition party by winning 11 parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia while PAS saw its number of parliamentary seats decrease from 27 in 1999 to just 6 in 2004. Keadilan barely managed to hold on Anwar Ibrahim's constituency of Permatang Pauh, the only parliamentary constituency it won.<sup>25</sup> Not surprisingly, the number of state constituencies won by the opposition also decreased significantly from 113 constituencies in 1999 to a mere 40 in 2004 (see Table 40).

The opposition, in disarray, would regroup after the historic 2008 general election, in its third attempt at forming an opposition coalition to challenge the BN.

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<sup>23</sup> Keadilan merged with PRM in 2003 and was renamed Party Keadilan Rakyat (PKR).

<sup>24</sup> There were a small number of multi-cornered contests featuring PAS, DAP and PKR at the parliamentary and state levels.

<sup>25</sup> Wan Azizah, Anwar's wife, retained this constituency by a margin of 590 votes after winning it by 9000 votes in 1999.

## **8.2 Opposition Emergence in 2008**

In Section 8.1, I discussed the inability of the opposition in Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia to maintain a sustained opposition challenge against the BN in terms of their respective failures to force the BN to introduce institutional reform, and the configuration of regime-opposition and intra-opposition dynamics, which made readmission an attractive option for the elite defectors. The two failed attempts at forming a united opposition coalition in Peninsular Malaysia would be politically significant in paving the way for a third and more successful attempt at sustaining an opposition coalition. Such an opportunity availed itself after the 2008 general elections.

Both of the previous attempts to build and sustain an opposition coalition failed because the party that stood in the middle of these opposition coalitions (the Malay S46 in 1990 and the Malay led Keadilan in 1999) could not make any headway in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. As long as the BN maintained its electoral dominance in these ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, it would not be threatened by any opposition coalition. In other words, the BN was relying on its electoral advantage in being more successful in pooling non-Malay and Malay votes in these constituencies compared to any opposition coalition that may emerge. The seemingly irreconcilable ideologies between the two main opposition parties on the Malay and non-Malay flanks, namely PAS and DAP, would remain the greatest obstacle to any opposition coalition's ability to vote pool in these ethnically heterogeneous

constituencies. The results of the 2008 general election significantly changed this electoral calculus.

In this section, I will show that the previous two failed attempts at creating a credible opposition coalition against the BN set the stage for the viability of the opposition in these ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. By winning the largest number of parliamentary seats, most of them in ethnically heterogeneous areas, Keadilan emerged as the moderate party that could hold the middle ground between PAS and DAP. Furthermore, PAS' electoral success in many ethnically heterogeneous constituencies also helped tone down its insistence on establishing an Islamic state, and instead turned its focus to common areas of cooperation with the other opposition parties, such as human rights, electoral reform and improving governance.

The number of parliamentary seats won by the opposition (Keadilan, DAP and PAS) was the reverse of that at the state seat level (PAS, DAP and Keadilan). PAS emerged with the largest number of states seats and was the dominant party in the states of Kelantan and Kedah, while DAP took control of the Penang state legislature and was the dominant party in the state of Perak. Keadilan won the most number of seats in the state of Selangor (see Table 41 and Table 42 below). The distribution of state seats among the opposition parties was important not just because it gave each party control of at least one state and access to the important position of Chief Minister of that state, they were also configured in such a way that if any one of the opposition parties

pulled out of the newly formed coalition, it could be deprived of government positions in the states in which that party was were *not* dominant. In other words, the co-optation of one of the three main opposition parties by the BN was made much more difficult, in contrast to the post-1969 scenario. This will be made clear when the exact distribution of the state seats is discussed later in section 8.2.1.

I will then contrast the institutional structure of Keadilan with that of S46, and argue that not only was it better positioned to win the ethnically heterogeneous seats, thereby allowing it to play the bridging role between DAP and PAS, but that strategic moves made by Anwar Ibrahim between 2004 and 2008 improved his party's chances of reaping the potential electoral rewards should the BN make strategic errors.

The historic electoral gains made by the opposition in the 2008 general elections cannot be understood without reference to the strategic errors made by the ruling coalition in moving away from the political center. Not only was the BN, specifically UMNO, overly assured of its political standing, prompting it to lurch to the pro-Malay end of the ethnic spectrum, it was also complacent in not recognizing the emergence of a second and more importantly cross-ethnic axis of political competition as a result of the *reformasi* movement in 1999, which focuses on issues of human rights and good governance rather than on matters of ethnic distribution and Islamic rights. Significantly, the BN's inability to recognize the increasing strength of Keadilan as an alternative to UMNO among the non-Malays, and its alienation of the non-Malay

community after the 2004 general election, led to a significant backlash among non-Malay voters. In many ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, non-Malay voters found that Keadilan and in some cases, PAS, to be the more moderate parties in comparison to UMNO.

Here, I will briefly outline the main explanatory factors that accounted for the large decline in BN's electoral support in Peninsular Malaysia based on the two axes of political competition outlined above. I then decompose the BN backlash into separate components – (i) non-Malay voters, (ii) *reformasi* minded voters (iii) young voters.

I will also demonstrate that the electoral success of the opposition in the 2008 general elections was not a one-off event but could be sustained post-2008. Fortunately, a series of by-elections in the following year allowed the opposition to put its electoral support to the test. I argue that these by-elections had the effect of strengthening the opposition alliance, not just in terms of their cooperation on the ground during the campaigning period, but also in terms of proving that there were electoral dividends to be gained by the pooling of Malay and non-Malay votes. In other words, by adopting a more centrist position on the ethnic dimension of political competition, the opposition alliance could replicate what was originally BN's electoral advantage in ethnically heterogeneous seats.

The institutional configuration of the current opposition coalition – the fortuitous distribution of parliamentary and state seats among the opposition parties, the electoral

incentives of moving to the center provided by winning a significant number of ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, the rise of Keadilan, the emergence of a second non-ethnic axis of political competition, the strengthening of intra-opposition cooperation through a series of by-elections and the favorable distribution of generational support are important factors which account for the relative stability and long term sustainability of the opposition coalition.

However, the potential of the opposition to play its veto card, now that it holds more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of seats in the parliament, will be tested in the context of the next delimitation exercise, due to start in 2011. The BN will no doubt try to regain a 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s majority in the parliament by resorting to its tried and tested method of co-opting individual opposition MPs (now that co-opting one or more of the opposition parties is no longer viable) while the opposition will use all of its resources to prevent this from happening. The outcome of this institutional battle may well affect the probability of a BN defeat in the near future. If the hypotheses I presented in the Chapter 7 is to be proven correct, the possible extraction of concessions in the form of institutional reform will hasten the downfall of the BN. If institutional reform is absent, the BN will be able to regain its electoral dominance, leaving the opposition to attempt once again to play what Schedler (2002) describes as a two level nested game of contesting the elections, and the rules and regulations governing the conduct of these elections. I will conclude this section on the recent resurgence of the opposition in Malaysia by outlining two



possible paths that the incumbent regime can take based on opposition success or failure in extracting concessions of institutional reform. One path will probably lead to further regime weakening, while the other will allow the incumbent regime to reassert its electoral dominance.

### **8.2.1 Fortuitous distribution of opposition seats post-2008**

While the BN has faced significant electoral challenges in past elections, most notably the elections held in 1969, 1990 and 1999, the 2008 general election was unquestionably the worst electoral setback suffered by the BN in Malaysia's electoral history. By only winning 140 out of 222 parliamentary constituencies (64%), the BN failed to capture the all important two thirds parliamentary majority needed to amend the constitution. And in contrast to the post-1969 political setting, whereby the ruling coalition made up for its failure to obtain a two thirds majority in Peninsular Malaysia by co-opting opposition parties in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak, the BN has had to govern since March 2008 with less than a two thirds parliamentary majority.

In Peninsular Malaysia, the BN only marginally beat out the opposition parties in the number of parliamentary seats won (85 to 80). It would most certainly have won less than half of the parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia if the states the opposition did well in were not under-represented in those seats, as a result of malapportionment (see Appendix C). The BN was spared from governing with a narrow parliamentary majority by virtue of its dominating performance in the East Malaysian states of Sabah

and Sarawak where it won 25 out of 26 and 30 out of 31 parliamentary constituencies respectively.

**Table 41: Number of parliamentary constituencies contested and won by opposition parties by state, Peninsular Malaysia, 2008 general election**

State	PAS		Keadilan		DAP		Total	
	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W
Perlis	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
Kedah	8	6	7	5	0	0	15	11
Kelantan	11	9 <sup>26</sup>	3	3	0	0	14	12
Terengganu	6	1	2	0	0	0	8	1
Penang	2	0	4	4	7	7	13	11
Perak	6	2	12	3	6	6	24	11
Pahang	6	0	6	2	2	0	14	2
Selangor	7	4	11	9	4	4	22	17
WP <sup>27</sup>	2	1	5	4	5	5	12	10
Negeri Sembilan	3	0	3	1	2	2	8	3
Melaka	1	0	3	0	2	1	6	1
Johor	11	0	9 <sup>28</sup>	0	6	1	26	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: Election Report 2008

C = Contested, W = Won

The distribution of parliamentary constituencies between the opposition parties was as important as the number of parliamentary constituencies won by the opposition (Table 41 above). Keadilan emerged as the largest opposition party with 31 parliamentary constituencies, followed by DAP with 28 parliamentary constituencies<sup>29</sup>, and finally PAS with 23 parliamentary constituencies. The significance of Keadilan's

<sup>26</sup> Including Ibrahim Ali who contested under the PAS banner but later declared himself as an independent.

<sup>27</sup> Wilayah Persekutuan including WP Putrajaya but not including WP Labuan

<sup>28</sup> Includes 1 PRM candidate.

<sup>29</sup> DAP won 1 parliamentary constituency each in the East Malaysia states of Sabah and Sarawak.

winning the largest number of parliamentary constituencies among the opposition parties is that it could now play the role of mediator between PAS and DAP, a role S46 could not play in 1990 and Keadilan itself could not play in 1999. Holding the largest number of parliamentary constituencies among the opposition parties also meant that the leader of the opposition would be from Keadilan. This proved to be even more significant when Anwar Ibrahim assumed the role of the leader of Keadilan, and of the opposition as a whole, after a by-election victory in his home constituency of Permatang Pauh.<sup>30</sup> The composition of the opposition MPs, after the 2008 general election, presented a snapshot of what the federal government would look like under the opposition coalition. The largest party would be a Malay led party headed by the Prime Minister designate who commands the support of both Malays and non-Malays, with DAP and PAS dividing the power at the federal level more or less equally.

The 2008 general election was also significant in that, unlike the 1999 general election, both PAS and Keadilan were able to win parliamentary constituencies outside the four northern Malay majority states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu. In the 1999 general election, PAS and Keadilan won a total of 32 parliamentary constituencies, only 3 of which were outside the four northern Malay majority states. In contrast, in the 2008 general election, both these parties won more parliamentary

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<sup>30</sup> His wife, Wan Azizah, contested in this constituency in the 2008 general election because Anwar was still not eligible to run for political office. Wan Azizah resigned her position as the Member of Parliament for this constituency in July, 2008, to trigger a by-election that was won by Anwar with an increased majority.

constituencies outside the four northern states (30) than within (24). For the first time in Malaysia's political history, Malay candidates from the opposition were elected as MPs in the state of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan respectively. In fact, a total of 10 Malay opposition MPs were elected from these two states, 6 from Keadilan and 4 from PAS.

Many of the electoral victories achieved by PAS and PKR in the state of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan were in constituencies that had experienced large declines in BN support in the 1999 general election. What pushed these constituencies over the edge in the 2008 general election was the non-Malay swing against the BN which did not materialize in the 1999 general election.

Opposition gains were not limited to the increase in the number of parliamentary constituencies won. The opposition also managed to gain control of four state legislatures, in addition to the Kelantan state legislature which was already under opposition control prior to the 2008 general election.

**Table 42: Number of state constituencies contested and won by the opposition parties by state, Peninsular Malaysia, 2008 general election**

State	PAS		DAP		Keadilan		Total	
	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W
Perlis	12	1	0	0	3	0	15	1
<b><i>Kedah</i></b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>
<b><i>Kelantan</i></b>	<b>40</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>38</b>
Terengganu	27	8	0	0	5	0	32	8
<b><i>Penang</i></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>29</b>
<b><i>Perak</i></b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>31</b>
Pahang	22	2	7	2	13	0	42	4
<b><i>Selangor</i></b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21<sup>31</sup></b>	<b>15</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>36</b>
Negeri Sembilan	13	1	11	10	12	4	36	15
Melaka	13	0	8	5	7	0	28	5
Johor	33	2	12	4	12 <sup>32</sup>	0	57	6
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>229</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>195</b>

Source: Election Report 2008 (State in bold and italics under opposition control)

C = Contested, W = Won

By winning majorities in the state legislatures of Kedah, Kelantan, Penang, Perak and Selangor, the opposition found itself in the position of controlling 5 out of the 11 state legislatures in Peninsular Malaysia (Table 42).

<sup>31</sup> Includes one uncontested constituency that would have been contested by Keadilan had its candidate shown up on nomination day.

<sup>32</sup> Includes two PRM candidates.

As significant as winning control of these five state legislatures is the distribution of state constituencies within these five state legislatures among the different opposition parties.

In the state of Kedah, where the opposition won 22 out of 36 state constituencies (61%), PAS is clearly the dominant party within the opposition, with 16 out of the 22 (72%) opposition state constituencies.

In the non-Malay majority state of Penang, where the opposition won 29 out of 40 state constituencies (73%), DAP is the dominant party within the opposition, with 19 out of the 29 (66%) opposition state constituencies.

In the state of Perak, where the opposition won 31 out of 59 (53%) state constituencies, giving it a narrow 3 constituency majority, DAP emerged as the largest opposition party with 18 state constituencies (58%). As the party with the most number of state constituencies among the opposition parties, DAP should have had the opportunity to form the state government with a DAP leader as the Chief Minister of the state. However, the Perak state constitution stipulates that only a Malay state representative can hold the position of Chief Minister. After presenting three possible candidates for the position of Chief Minister, one from each of the three opposition parties (PAS, Keadilan, DAP), the *sultan* or the monarch of the state of Perak, whose approval is needed to form the state government, decided that the PAS candidate was the most suitable choice for Chief Minister. This unexpected turn of events in the state of

Perak would later prove to be important in cementing political ties between DAP and PAS, a dependency which was unimaginable six years ago when DAP left the BA because of irreconcilable differences over the Islamic-state issue.

In the state of Selangor, the opposition won 36 out of 56 state constituencies (64%). Keadilan emerged as the largest opposition party with 15 state constituencies, followed by DAP with 13 and finally PAS with 8. Keadilan provides the Malay Chief Minister as well as the leadership in this state, the richest in Malaysia in terms of GDP.

In other words, each party within the opposition had its share of the political spoils at the state level. Even though Keadilan is the largest opposition party in parliament, it is dominant only in one state, Selangor. PAS, even though it has the smallest number of parliamentary constituencies among the three opposition parties, is dominant in two states (Kelantan and Kedah) and provides the Chief Minister because of fortuitous circumstances in another state (Perak). DAP is dominant in the state of Penang but also has a significant number of state representatives in two other states (Perak and Selangor).

Moreover, the distribution of state constituencies among the different opposition parties in four of these states (Kedah, Penang, Perak and Selangor) was such that no one single opposition party could form the state government without the support of at least one other opposition party. For example, DAP in Penang, won 19 out of 40 state constituencies, 2 short of a majority to form the state government, which meant that it

needed Keadilan to form the state government in Penang. In the same manner, PAS with only 16 out of the 36 state constituencies needed Keadilan's 5 state constituencies to form the state government in Kedah.

Furthermore, the distribution of state constituencies was such that it was not possible for any opposition party to be excluded from the opposition alliance in a manner that would allow opposition governments to be established in all 5 opposition majority state legislatures. For example, DAP did not need the support of PAS in Penang since PAS only won one state seat there. But PAS's six constituencies in Perak were needed by DAP and Keadilan to form the state government there, and PAS's eight constituencies in Selangor were needed by DAP and Keadilan to obtain a majority in the state legislature.

While the impetus to form an opposition coalition after the 2008 general election would have been provided by the results at the parliamentary level alone, the necessity of requiring inter opposition cooperation to form the state governments in four states with opposition majorities in the state legislature made this course of action inevitable.

The 2008 general election results were not only historic in terms of the electoral ground gained by the opposition. It was also historic because of the distribution of constituencies at the state and parliamentary levels which made opposition cooperation a necessity.



Previous attempts of opposition cooperation in 1990 and 1999 set the ground for the establishment of the opposition coalition in 2008. The key in understanding the long term viability of this new opposition coalition lies in the role that Keadilan must play in holding the middle ground. This will be discussed next.

### **8.2.2 The strategic moves of Keadilan post-2004**

After the 2004 general election, Keadilan's existence as a political party was in doubt. It had barely held on to its sole parliamentary constituency, Permatang Pauh, the home constituency of its de facto leader, Anwar Ibrahim, who was still in prison. It failed to secure even one state constituency. How then did Keadilan go from its position of holding one parliamentary constituency in 2004 to the largest opposition party with 31 parliamentary constituencies in 2008, and holding the position of the Chief Minister of the richest state in Malaysia?

Opposition political parties, specifically those formed as a result of elite splits in the ruling party or coalition, are especially dependent on the personalities who formed them. Opposition parties that have been in existence of longer periods of time are usually better institutionalized, have survived changes in their political leadership and also have well established grass root networks. This was certainly the case with DAP and PAS, the two mainstays of the opposition scene in Malaysian politics. S46, formed as a result of an internal split within UMNO, was dependent on Tengku Razaleigh's leadership, and without any ideological moorings besides the fact that it was anti-

UMNO, faded into the annals of Malaysian political history when its leader decided to rejoin UMNO after the 1995 general election. After the 2004 general election, Keadilan found difficulty moving beyond its image as a party whose main *raison d'être* was to free its *de facto* leader, Anwar Ibrahim, from prison. Its lack of political capacity in terms of fund raising, attracting capable leaders and establishing widespread grass root networks contributed to its weak bargaining position vis-à-vis PAS when it came to constituency allocation.

However, Keadilan's position within the opposition coalition, the BA, which comprised of itself<sup>33</sup> and PAS (after the departure of DAP from the coalition in 2002), and its relevance in the larger public sphere would be restored when Anwar Ibrahim was freed from prison in September 2004.<sup>34</sup> With Anwar's release from prison, he was now free to rebuild Keadilan's reputation and influence as a political party. Furthermore, there was little willingness among the leadership in UMNO to invite this prodigal son back into UMNO's fold. In any case, it is unlikely that Anwar would have seriously contemplated a return to UMNO given his fierce criticisms of the abuses of

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<sup>33</sup> Keadilan had merged with the small Malay led but multiracial party, PRM, in 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Anwar was supposed to serve concurrent 6 and 9 year jail sentences for convictions of corruption and sodomy but the sodomy conviction was overturned by a panel of three judges representing the Federal Court of Malaysia, the highest court in the country. With a reduced sentence from the corruption charge due to good behavior on the part of Anwar, he was freed from jail in September 2008.

human rights and widespread corruption perpetuated by the BN, led by UMNO, during the *reformasi* period and even while he was incarcerated.<sup>35</sup>

The 1999 general election results showed that it was possible to mobilize a Malay vote swing against the BN, including in the urban areas and ethnically heterogeneous constituencies in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan, on a non-ethnic dimension of political competition, using the themes of human rights and good governance, both areas in which the BN was perceived to be relatively weak. But the 1999 results also showed that the non-Malay voters would not be as easily swayed to vote against the BN using the same dimension of political competition. To reach out to the non-Malay voters, Anwar made the bold announcement that he would abolish the NEP and replace it with a more equitable system that would benefit the poor among all the ethnic groups in Malaysia.<sup>36</sup> The intention of this policy announcement was two pronged. Firstly, it would make Keadilan more attractive as a political party to the non-Malays compared to the UMNO-dominated BN. Secondly, by associating the mismanagement of the NEP with corruption and cronyism in the BN, Anwar could appeal to the Malay *reformasi*

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<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Anwar's appointments to positions including the Chair of the Washington-based Foundation for the Future and the Honorary President of the London-based Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability was premised on his position as an opposition politician in Malaysia.

<sup>36</sup> Poverty eradication was one of the two main prongs of the NEP when it was first established in 1970 but this prong of the NEP was superseded by the first prong which was to restructure society so that no one ethnic group was to be identified with certain occupations. This first prong of the NEP was interpreted to mean that more Malays should be involved in the economy which was then seen as a largely Chinese dominated sphere.

voters who were dissatisfied with the high levels of corruption and mismanagement that were still plaguing the ranks of the BN.

This was not a new strategy in Malaysian politics. DAP, for example, had been campaigning on a similar platform for most of its political existence. The difference this time was that Anwar was advocating this policy as the Malay leader of a Malay-majority party. Keadilan was the right vehicle to propose this policy since it could better withstand the accusation that it was proposing a policy that was inimical to the economic interests of the Malays, and it was better placed than PAS to benefit from non-Malay votes since the constituencies that it contested in were more ethnically heterogeneous.

Anwar's release from prison also put Keadilan in a better position to bargain for constituencies with the other opposition parties. Unlike S46, which contested in the largest number of parliamentary constituencies in 1990, Keadilan was very much seen as the junior partner to PAS in the 1999 general elections. This was made even more apparent in the 2004 general election, when the opposition parties had to renegotiate the allocation of parliamentary constituencies after the 2003 delimitation exercise (Table 43 below).

**Table 43: Distribution of parliament and state constituencies among Keadilan, PAS and DAP, Peninsular Malaysia, 1999 to 2008 general elections<sup>37</sup>**

Party	1999		2004		2008	
	Parl	State	Parl	State	Parl	State
Keadilan	43 (30%)	67 (17%)	48 (29%)	103 (23%)	66 (40%)	125 (28%)
PAS	59 (42%)	238 (60%)	83 (50%)	258 (58%)	65 (39%)	229 (51%)
DAP	38 (26%)	89 (23%)	37 (22%)	98 (22%)	34 (21%)	92 (21%)
Total	144	395	165	445	165	445

Source: Election Reports, 1999 to 2008 (Percentage of Constituencies in Parentheses)

After the 2003 delimitation exercise, PAS used its position as the largest opposition party to negotiate for a large increase in the number of parliamentary seats which it would contest. In the 2004 general election, PAS competed in slightly more than half of the parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia (83 out of 165), representing an 8% increase from 1999. The dominance of PAS made it impossible for DAP even to contemplate rejoining the BA, since its promise to prevent PAS from competing in more than half of the parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia would have rung hollow. While Keadilan increased its share of constituencies at the state level, from 17% to 23%, it was clearly playing second fiddle to PAS within the BA.

This situation changed considerably in the 2008 general election. Keadilan managed to increase significantly the number of parliamentary and state constituencies that it would contest, probably because of Anwar's ability to negotiate for concessions from PAS as well as from DAP. Keadilan increased its share of parliamentary

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<sup>37</sup> The percentages may add up to more than 100% because of a small number of multi-cornered contests.

constituencies from 29% in 2004 to 40% in 2008. It also contested in one more parliamentary constituency than PAS, a symbolic gesture that Keadilan, and not PAS, would be the dominant party among the opposition, at least at the parliamentary level. Most of these concessions came from PAS, which sacrificed eighteen parliamentary constituencies, while DAP sacrificed three.

PAS still contested in the largest number of state constituencies, but Keadilan managed to increase its share of state constituencies from 23% in 2004 to 28% in 2008. If Keadilan had not managed to negotiate for a greater share of parliamentary constituencies in the 2008 general election, it probably would not have won the largest number of constituencies among the opposition parties. If either DAP or PAS had assumed the position of the leader of the opposition instead of Keadilan, the balance of power within the opposition parties would not have been conducive for the durability of an opposition coalition. DAP would have continued its tradition for pushing for greater equality between the non-Malays and Malays, while PAS may have gone back to its default position of wanting to establish an Islamic state.

How then did Keadilan manage to extract these concessions from PAS and DAP, two parties which were, for all intents and purposes, and by any measure, much stronger than itself? Keadilan concentrated most of its efforts in requesting to contest in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies that were won by the BN by large majorities in the 2004 general election. This is the type of constituency that Keadilan is supposed to be

best positioned to capture, given its profile as a Malay-led multiracial party. The average ethnic composition of the parliamentary constituencies that Keadilan requested and managed to obtain was 59% Malay, 30% Chinese and 9% Indian and 1% Others, an average very similar to the overall ethnic composition of the electorate at the national level – 59% Malay, 32% Chinese, 8% Indian and 1% Others.

Furthermore, the fact that these constituencies were in areas that the conceding opposition parties had little chance to capture made it easier for them, specifically PAS, to sacrifice. The average level of BN support in the 2004 general election in the parliamentary constituencies requested by Keadilan prior to the 2008 general election was 67.6%.<sup>38</sup>

Another significant but often unnoticed development that had taken place within Keadilan that would prove to be important for the 2008 general election was the rise in the number of non-Malay Keadilan candidates at the state and parliamentary levels. While Keadilan was formed as a Malay-led multiracial party, with its top leadership comprising a significant minority of non-Malays, this was not reflected among the candidates fielded by Keadilan in the 1999 general elections.

**Table 44: Ethnic composition of Keadilan candidates at the parliamentary and state level, Peninsular Malaysia, 1999 to 2008 general elections**

	1999	2004	2008

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<sup>38</sup> The average in Peninsular Malaysia for the 2004 general election was 64.7%.

Race	Parl	State	Parl	State	Parl	State
Malay	39 (91%)	58 (92%)	34 (74%)	73 (76%)	48 (74%)	85 (70%)
Chinese	2 (5%)	3 (5%)	8 (17%)	17 (18%)	11 (17%)	22 (18%)
Indian	2 (5%)	2 (3%)	4 (9%)	6 (6%)	6 (9%)	14 (12%)
Total	43 (100%)	63 (100%)	46 (100%)	96 (100%)	65 (100%)	121 (100%)

Source: Election Reports 1999 to 2008

In the 1999 general election, less than 10% of the candidates fielded by Keadilan at the parliamentary and state levels were non-Malays - Chinese and Indians (Table 44 above). In the 2004 general elections, buoyed by an infusion of new non-Malay leaders<sup>39</sup>, the percentage of non-Malay candidates in Keadilan increased to approximately a quarter of candidates at the parliamentary and state levels (26% and 24% respectively). The non-Malay representation was maintained at the parliamentary level in the 2008 general election but increased by 6% at the state level (from 24% to 30%) mostly as a result of a larger number of Indian candidates.

By fielding more non-Malay candidates, Keadilan was able to reflect its multi-racial philosophy, as well as its multi-racial leadership. By fielding a majority of Malay candidates, it was able to preserve its image as a Malay-led albeit multiracial party. The delicate balance between preserving the public image of Keadilan as a Malay majority and Malay led party on the one hand, and a multiracial party on the other, was a challenge the Keadilan leadership, led by Anwar, was and is conscious of.

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<sup>39</sup> Including some PRM leaders after the merger between it and Keadilan in 2002.



Keadilan's assertion that it needed to field a larger number of non-Malay candidates to reflect its multiracial image was probably effectual in extracting ethnically heterogeneous constituencies away from PAS and DAP. It was also probably helpful in attracting non-Malay votes for Keadilan, which had eluded Keadilan in the 1999 general election.

Keadilan's success in winning ethnically heterogeneous constituencies in the 2008 general election was reflected in the ethnic composition of its successful parliamentary candidates. Of the 31 successful Keadilan candidates at the parliamentary level, 20 were Malays (65%), 6 were Chinese (19%) and 5 were Indian (16%).

### **8.2.3 Keadilan versus S46**

In the context of two large opposition parties that occupied the two ethnic flanks, there was always room for a moderate Malay party to emerge to contest against the BN in the middle of the electoral spectrum and by doing so, unite the two opposition flank parties. S46 was the first attempt in Malaysia's political history to fill this political void. Keadilan was the second attempt. Why then did Keadilan succeed where S46 had failed? Dissecting the political motivations behind these two parties is important for understanding Keadilan's electoral success and its long term viability as the largest opposition party within the opposition coalition.

Firstly, the leadership of S46 was comprised mainly of UMNO leaders who had left the party after the internal power struggle between Tengku Razaleigh and Mahathir

Mohamed (Singh, 1991). Indeed its name – the Spirit of 1946 – was intended to portray the party as embodying the original spirit in which UMNO was formed, to defend the rights of the Malays against the proposal of the Malayan Union that would have granted citizenship and equal rights to most, if not all, of the non-Malays that were then residing and working in Malaysia (Means, 1976). The circumstances under which S46 was formed and the composition of its leadership meant that the ideological moorings of S46 as an opposition party that could distinguish itself from UMNO were never strong to begin with.

In fact, Singh (1991, 719) observed that ‘Both UMNO and S46 were opposing sides of the same UMNO coin. Much of the dispute between the two groups related to the ground rules with regard to party elections and the political rights of those who had challenged the incumbent leadership. Semangat 46 was also not so much against the system of patronage as practiced in UMNO Baru, as it was opposed to the system being used to limit political participation within the party.’

This decreased S46’s ability to create and capitalize on possible voter disaffection, especially among Malay voters, against the manner in which the BN, specifically UMNO, had abused its power and allowed its leaders to reap financial rewards from corrupt practices, such as the favorable allocation of government contracts to crony companies (Gomez and Jomo, 1999). After all, many of the S46 leaders, some of whom were cabinet ministers, were probably guilty of the same transgressions.

After failing to make a significant electoral dent in 1990 and 1995, it was not surprising that many of the S46 leaders who had been deprived of access to government resources and the material rewards that come with positions in government, slowly drifted back to UMNO.

In contrast, very few top leaders within UMNO followed Anwar Ibrahim out of UMNO when he was unceremoniously sacked in 1998. The experience of the S46 leaders had shown UMNO leaders that the prospects of political survival outside the dominant party in Malaysia were limited. Only a small number of mainly lower-echelon UMNO leaders who were committed Anwar loyalists left the party.<sup>40</sup> The limited number of high level UMNO defections meant that the leadership vacuum within the newly formed Keadilan had to be filled by other personalities. Into this vacuum stepped activists and leaders from diverse backgrounds including Muslim organizations such as Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), which Anwar had once led, and other advocacy groups (human rights, workers' rights, migrants' rights) (Weiss, 2006). The fact that these leaders were not originally from UMNO negated the option of returning to UMNO's fold. While some of the lower echelon UMNO leaders who followed Anwar out of UMNO eventually returned to UMNO's fold, the presence of many non-UMNO

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<sup>40</sup> Even the then UMNO Youth leader, Zahid Hamidi, who was seen to be close Anwar and had spoken out against crony capitalism at the 1998 UMNO General Assembly would remain within the fold of UMNO.

leaders within Keadilan would sustain the party, even as Anwar remained incarcerated during the 1999 and 2004 general election campaigns.

The conditions under which Anwar was expelled and the circumstances in which the *reformasi* movement emerged provided Keadilan with a basis for challenging the BN while Anwar was incarcerated and even after his release in 2004. Anwar cleverly and strategically co-opted the message of speaking out against cronyism, corruption and nepotism, which was emerging in Indonesia's own *reformasi* movement in 1998<sup>41</sup> in light of the many companies with political connections that were being bailed out by the government, including a shipping company that was owned by one of Mahathir's sons. Whether Anwar was opportunistic in using the examples of these companies to attack Mahathir or whether he really felt that the country's resources and finances were mismanaged during the economic crisis is anyone's guess. But unlike Tengku Razaleigh, who had left UMNO after he lost the internal presidential elections, Anwar's sacking from UMNO allowed him to take the moral high ground, by claiming that he was sacked due to his insistence that crony capitalists with connections to the BN should not be bailed out using national resources. Anwar's prosecution and subsequent conviction on charges of corruption and sodomy made him the focus of how human rights could and was being abused in Malaysia. Anwar's case created a second dimension of political competition, especially among the Malays, surrounding the issues of the abuse of

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<sup>41</sup> This was known by its abbreviated acronym, KKN, in Indonesia.

human rights and crony capitalism within the BN, which could not and did not arise when Tengku Razaleigh formed S46 in 1990.

Secondly, unlike S46, which was very much a Malay party, Keadilan was formed as Malay-led multiracial party. This meant that its leadership as well as its membership, from the very start, comprised mainly of Malays but would have a significant number of non-Malays. This was partly due to the fact that many non-Malays including the aforementioned NGO activists publicly declared their support for Anwar after his sacking from UMNO and were key actors in the events leading up for the formation of Keadilan. The failure of S46 to gain any significant ground in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies could have figured in the decision making calculus of Anwar and the leaders who formed Keadilan, to create a different party that could challenge the BN in these types of constituencies. A Malay led party with leaders, candidates and members from all races would be better placed to gain ground in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies compared to a moderate but exclusively Malay party.

The multi-ethnic character of Keadilan was especially important in enabling Keadilan to, slowly over time, force DAP to concede a number of ethnically heterogeneous constituencies for the non-Malay leaders in Keadilan to compete in. For example, seven of the parliamentary constituencies that Keadilan won in the 2008

general elections were contested by DAP in 1990.<sup>42</sup> Had DAP not conceded these constituencies to Keadilan, it would not have emerged as the largest opposition party in the 2008 general election.

Thirdly, unlike S46, Keadilan was very much a political party that had its base in the urban areas outside the four Malay majority northern states in Peninsular Malaysia. Since *reformasi* was very much a political movement that was mobilized in the urban areas in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan, it is thus not surprising that Keadilan would also have its strongest grass root networks in these areas.

A comparison of the distribution of the parliamentary constituencies that S46 and Keadilan competed in illustrates this point.

**Table 45: Number and percentage of parliamentary constituencies in which S46 and Keadilan competed, 1990 and 2008 general elections, northern versus non-northern states**

Party	4 northern states	Outside 4 northern States	Total
S46 (1990)	20 (33%)	41 (67%)	61
Keadilan (2008)	13 (20%)	53 (80%)	66

Source: 1990 and 2008 Election Reports.

Even though S46 and Keadilan competed in a similar number of parliamentary constituencies in the 1990 and 2008 general elections respectively (61 versus 66), the

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<sup>42</sup> These constituencies were Nibong Tebal, Bayan Baru (Penang), Sungai Siput, Gopeng (Perak), Selayang, Hulu Langat (Selangor), Teluk Kemang (Negeri Sembilan)

geographical distribution of these seats was not similar. According to Table 45 above, 33% of the S46's parliamentary constituencies were in the four northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu compared to only 20% for Keadilan. This meant that Keadilan could not depend on the security of winning parliamentary constituencies in the four Malay majority northern states. Indeed, the fact that Keadilan won four out of its five parliamentary constituencies in the PAS stronghold states of Kelantan and Terengganu in the 1999 elections was already a warning that it should not be overly dependent on winning constituencies in PAS areas. It was thus natural for Keadilan power base to gravitate towards the states of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan, the scene of the many vocal demonstrations during the *reformasi* movement where it narrowly missed out on winning a few marginal constituencies in the 1999 general elections. Thus, Keadilan was better placed to make electoral gains in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan compared to S46 whose founder, Tengku Razaleigh, was firmly ensconced in his home state of Kelantan.

These three main differences between Keadilan and S46 – the reasons they were formed, the ethnic compositions of both parties and the locations of their respective power bases – enabled Keadilan, through Anwar Ibrahim, to define a different basis of political competition and reap the subsequent electoral rewards.

The conditions under which Keadilan was formed in 1999 allowed it to channel a new-found dissatisfaction among Malay voters, especially those in the urban areas, on

the basis of human rights abuses and corruption on the part of the BN government, which had previously not been directed at a prominent leader in the Malay community.

The multi-ethnic nature of Keadilan put it in a better position to extract concessions from PAS and DAP, in the form of ethnically heterogeneous constituencies that it would go on to win in the 2008 general elections. This characteristic of Keadilan also put it in a better position to advocate policies such as abolishing the NEP and replacing it with a more populist policy, with the intention of gaining non-Malay support and minimizing potential Malay backlash.

Finally, the power base on Keadilan in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan put it in an advantageous position to continue mobilizing opposition to the BN in both these areas, and to benefit from the eventual backlash against the BN that started in 1999 and culminated in the 2008 general election.

The evolution of the character and institutional make-up of the bridging party, from S46 to Keadilan, highlights the importance of studying intra-opposition dynamics within these DPARs. In the context of a fragmented opposition, the opposition usually goes through a number of attempts to form separate opposition alliances or a more encompassing opposition coalition. Each attempt most likely involves different political circumstances, main actors, ideological positions and bargaining strategies. Sustaining these opposition alliances or coalitions is then predicated on the ability of these parties to reach a stable equilibrium with their respective institutional structures. Achieving this



equilibrium often involves trials and errors, and stops and starts, as the Malaysian experience demonstrates. The case of Keadilan shows that it is possible for opposition parties operating in the context of DPARs to adapt their own institutional structures and ideological positions in order to strengthen the opposition as a whole, should there come a time when the incumbent regime is electorally vulnerable.

However, the unexpected electoral rewards reaped by Keadilan and the other main opposition parties would not have been possible without the strategic errors made by the BN which resulted in the serious voter backlash that was the 2008 general election. Keadilan's move to strengthen its position in the center of the ethnic dimension of political dimension and its continued attempts to increase the salience of the non-ethnic dimension of political competition could only pay electoral dividends if the BN moved away from the center on both dimensions of political competition. This was exactly what the BN did after its historic 2004 general elections. The strategic errors made by the BN that moved it away from the median position will be discussed next.

#### **8.2.4 Understanding and Decomposing the BN backlash**

In this section, I will briefly summarize some of the strategic errors made by the Badawi administration that led to its disastrous performance in the 2008 general elections. I then break down the BN backlash into three components in order to show electoral evidence of the perceived shifts in the BN's position on the two relevant dimensions of political competition.

The lofty promises made by Abdullah Badawi, Malaysia's 5<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister, prior to the 2004 general elections created unrealistically high expectations for his new administration. The political odds were against him to significantly reduce corruption, especially within his own party, because of the deep institutionalization of patronage and expectations of government contracts among its leaders in the cabinet all the way down to the leaders at the branch level. His other reform related promises to improve the delivery of government services and to revamp the police force seemed less difficult, from a political perspective at least, to implement. Even if the initial expectations were unrealistically high, the large mandate of 91% of total parliamentary seats delivered to Badawi and his administration put him in a good position to fulfill at least some of his pre-election promises.

What most voters did not anticipate was that not only would Badawi squander his massive political capital by not fulfilling any of his pre-election promises, but that he would allow the voicing and proliferation of ethnically exclusive, and some would say, extremist views from within the ranks of his own party. With the opposition effectively emasculated in parliament, a number of leaders at the national as well as the rank-and-file level soon turned their attention towards the non-Malay component parties within the BN. The leaders of the non-Malay component parties were criticized by various UMNO leaders for marginalizing the Malay voters in the non-Malay majority state of Penang and for being too vocal in trying to renegotiate the parameters of the pro-Malay

New Economic Policy (NEP). This inevitably alienated many non-Malay voters. Badawi would push the ruling coalition further away from the centrist position on the ethnic dimension of political competition, a position which the BN had traditionally occupied, by failing to resolve the politically sensitive issue of supposed 'deathbed' religious conversions by non-Malays, and repressing and detaining a number of Indian social activists.

Badawi undermined his own reformist credentials by not only failing to deliver on any of his pre-election promises, but moved the ruling coalition away from the reform position by failing to address allegations of abuses of power and corruption from within the ranks of his administration, as well as his own family.

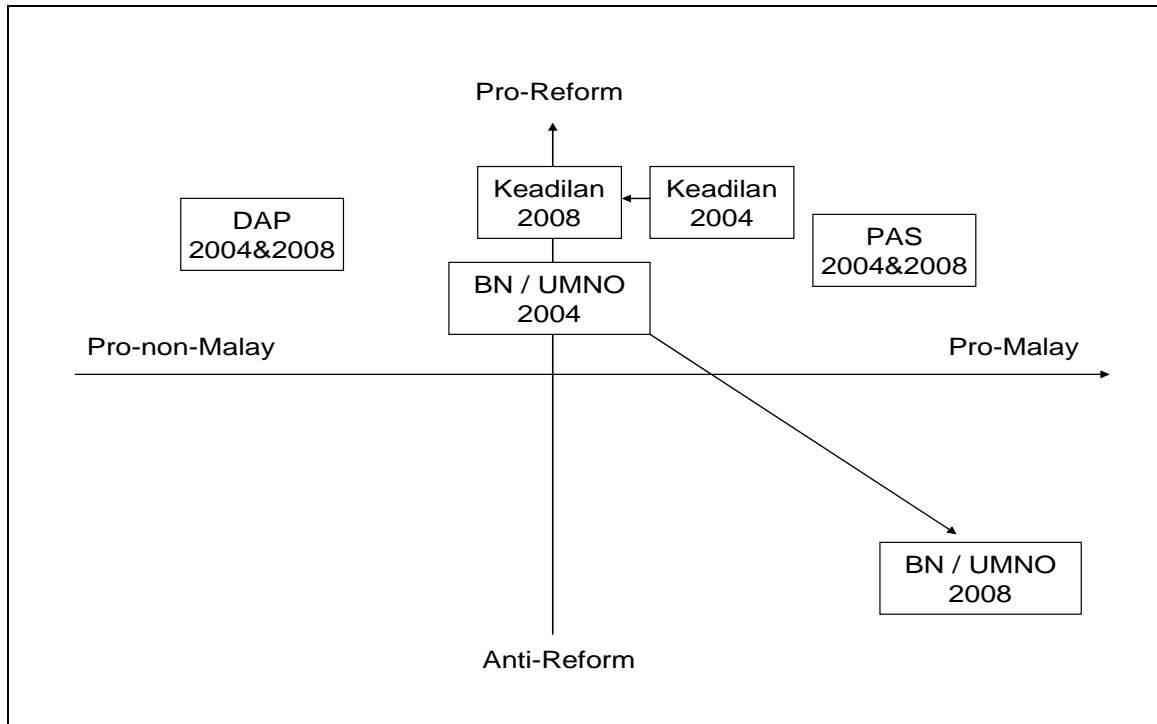
The sum of Badawi's actions and inactions resulted in moving the position of the BN coalition from a centrist position on the ethnic dimension of political competition and increased the perception that the incumbent regime was structurally unable to reform itself (see Figure 12).

Table 46 below lists a series of key events which no doubt influenced the public's perception that the BN had moved away from the position it had occupied in the run-up to the 2008 general elections.<sup>43</sup> A more detailed account of the individual events is available in Appendix D.

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<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, there was no available survey data which I could use to test these propositions. I will, however, use available electoral returns at the constituency and sub-constituency levels to show that many

**Figure 12: BN / UMNO moving away from its centrist point in 2004 to a more marginal position in 2008**



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voters did think that the BN, under Badawi, had significantly shifted its position on these two dimensions of political competition.

**Table 46: Key events which moved the BN away from its centrist position**

Becoming more ethnically exclusive	Failures of Reform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Live proceedings of the UMNO General Assembly on TV showed many of the delegates attacking the non-Malay parties and leaders within the BN for questioning the basis of the pro-Malay New Economic Policy (NEP)</li> <li>- Symbolic gesture of raising of a Malay dagger (<i>keris</i>) which many non-Malays saw as equivalent to a physical threat</li> <li>- The PM's son-in-law criticized the Chinese GERAKAN Chief Minister in Penang for marginalizing the Malays in the state</li> <li>- Failure to address complications arising from deceased non-Malay spouses who were supposed to have had deathbed conversions to Islam and whose bodies were subsequently 'confiscated' by Islamic authorities so that they could be given an Islamic burial</li> <li>- Harsh government crackdown on Indian activists who were seeking financial damages from the British government as a means of highlighting the plight of the Indian poor in Malaysia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two corruption cases against two high profile personalities (an UMNO leader and a corporate leader) were subsequently dropped</li> <li>- Ignored key recommendations of the commission he established to make the police force more accountable to the public</li> <li>- Rapid rise in the political stature of the PM's son-in-law led to a widespread perception of abuses of power</li> <li>- Accusations of financial improprieties surrounding military contracts and a sensational sex / murder scandal involving a close aide of the Deputy Prime Minister</li> <li>- Failure to act when video evidence surfaced showing possible judicial tampering by a prominent lawyer</li> <li>- Failure to respond to opposition organized public demonstrations to increase the transparency of the electoral process</li> <li>-</li> </ul>

I breakdown the BN backlash into three specific components – ethnic backlash, *reformasi* backlash and youth backlash - for the following reasons. Firstly, the earlier account of disgruntled non-Malay voters can be tested by estimating changes in the level of BN support from 2004 to 2008 among the three main ethnic groups in Malaysia. BN's electoral support among the non-Malays – the Chinese and Indians – should drop by a larger amount than its support among the Malay voters. Secondly, if my proposition that the salience of the second dimension of political competition – the non-ethnic, governance and human rights focused dimension – is accurate, then a significant proportion of voters who voted against or were unhappy with the BN in the 1999 general elections, should cast an anti-BN vote in 2008 due to Badawi's failure to deliver on his *reformasi* type promises, made as part of the 2004 election campaign. Thirdly, the ability of the new opposition coalition to seek continued traction on this new dimension of political competition, and credibility as the new moderate coalition along the ethnic dimension of political competition, is largely contingent on whether or not it can attract the support a majority of younger voters. My attempt to evaluate differences in generational support for the BN is thus a first step towards testing a more generalized generational replacement hypothesis that younger voters' voting preferences are more malleable during times of political flux than their older counterparts. A more favorable level of support among younger voters obviously augurs well for the opposition coalition.

Firstly, we examine the change in BN's popular vote share by race. BN's share of the popular vote in Peninsular Malaysia fell from 64% in 2004 to a shade under 50% in 2008, representing a drop of 14%. When the BN support in Peninsular Malaysia is decomposed into its support among Malay and non-Malay voters (Table 47 below), it becomes apparent that the fall in the BN support among non-Malays from 2004 to 2008 was far greater than the decline among the Malays. The BN support among non-Malays fell by 26% to approximately 38% compared to a fall of about 5% among the Malay voters. Malay support for the BN did not fall to the levels experienced in the 1999 general election when the BN was facing the full force of the Malay backlash as a result of the *reformasi* movement. The results show evidence of a very strong and one might say, unprecedented, BN backlash among non-Malay voters.

**Table 47: Estimated Malay and non-Malay BN support, Peninsular Malaysia, 1990 to 2008 general elections**

	1990	1995	1999	2004	2008
Malay BN support	66%	71%	53%	64%	59%
Non-Malay BN support	40%	61%	59%	64%	38%
Changes in Malay BN support		+5%	-18%	+11%	-5%
Changes in Non-Malay BN support		+21%	-2%	+5%	-26%

Sources: Election and Newspaper Reports 1990 to 2008, Personal Analysis using King (1997)

The unprecedented fall in the level of BN support among non-Malays can be explained in terms of the unexpected BN backlash among these voters in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. In previous elections, the non-Malay backlash against the BN, due to economic conditions, unpopular social policies or repression against non-Malay opposition leaders, was mainly confined to non-Malay majority seats whereby the non-Malay voters would vote for DAP over MCA or GERAKAN or less frequently, MIC. In the 2008 general elections, a significant number of non-Malay voters in these ethnically heterogeneous constituencies opted to vote for Keadilan and to a lesser extent PAS, over a BN candidate. The degree of the non-Malay backlash in some of these seats was made apparent when these voters preferred to cast a vote in favor of a Malay Keadilan or PAS candidate, over a Chinese or Indian BN candidate!

The precipitous decline in the level of BN support in the non-Malay majority and the ethnically heterogeneous is illustrated graphically in Figure 13 below.



**Figure 13: BN support against percentage of Malay voters in a parliamentary constituency, Peninsular Malaysia, 2004 and 2008 general elections**

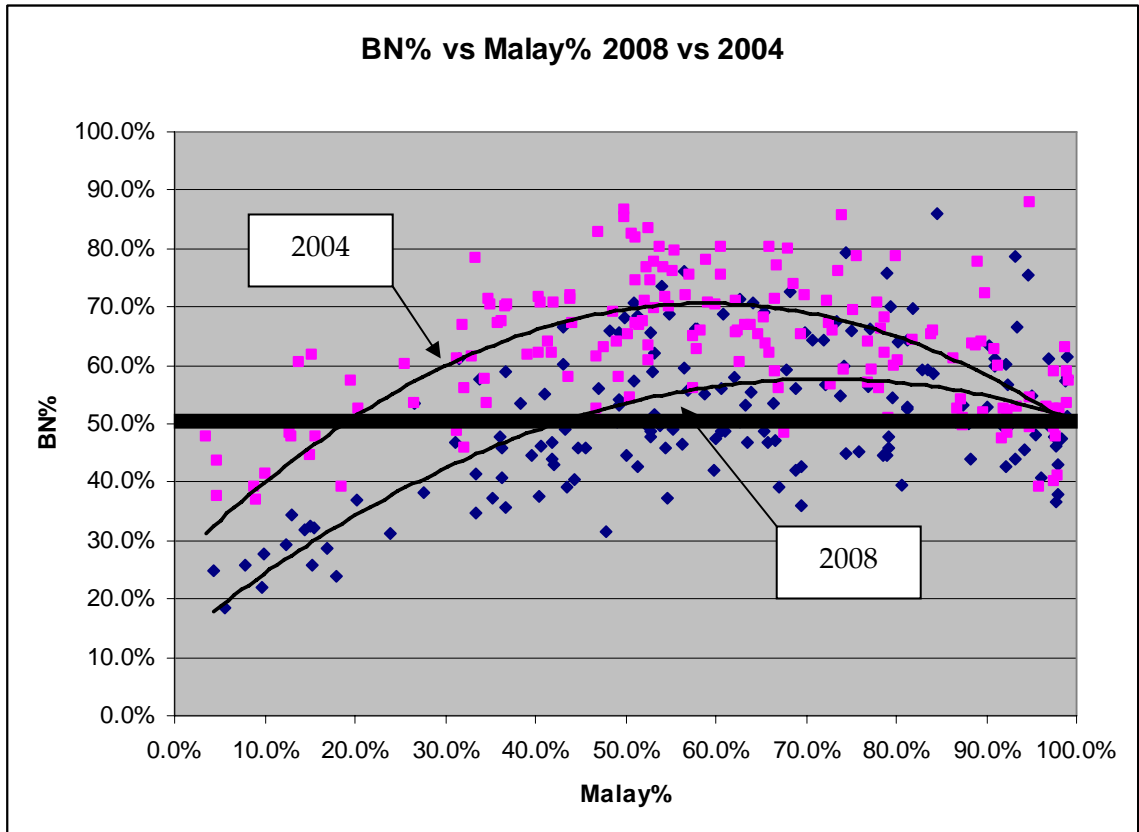


Figure 13 above plots the vote share of the BN individual constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia on the vertical axis against their corresponding share of Malay voters on the horizontal axis. A least square regression line drawn through the data points usually reveals a U-shaped relationship between the dependent (BN vote share) and independent (percentage of Malay voters) variables. The level of BN support is lowest in the ethnically heterogeneous seats at either end of the graph. There are usually more points below the 50% mark on the left hand side of the graph because the number

of non-Malay majority seats won by the opposition, namely DAP, is usually higher than the number of Malay majority seats won by the opposition, namely PAS.<sup>44</sup> When the level of BN support falls, it is usually by a larger amount at the extremes, leaving most of the seats in the middle part of the graph comfortably above the 50% mark. In other words, even if the BN loses seats at the margins, its electoral dominance is more or less guaranteed by its ability to win almost all of the ethnically heterogeneous seats. This changed in the 2008 general elections because of the across the board non-Malay backlash against the BN. This is shown by the large number of data points below the 50% BN support mark in the middle of the graph.

It is perhaps not overly remarkable that the non-Malay support for the BN fell in the non-Malay majority constituencies, given the inability of Badawi's administration to manage the growing non-Malay discontent arising from the incidents described in the previous section. After all, the non-Malay backlash against the BN, as a result of perceived UMNO aggression towards the non-Malays prior to the 1990 general election, allowed DAP to win 19 parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia, and come within two state constituencies of winning control of the Penang state legislature. What was different about the 2008 general election was the fact that the non-Malay backlash against the BN occurred not only in the non-Malay majority constituencies contested by DAP but also in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies contested by PAS and

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<sup>44</sup> There are exceptions of course, namely the 1999 general election.

Keadilan. This is evident when the change in non-Malay support in the seats contested by Keadilan and PAS compared to the seats contested by DAP is examined (Table 48 below).

**Table 48: Average and change in average Malay and non-Malay BN support in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies won by the opposition parties, Peninsular Malaysia, 2008 versus 2004 general election**

Party	Malay BN support	Non-Malay BN support	Change in Malay BN support (2004 vs. 2008)	Change in non-Malay BN support (2004 vs. 2008)
DAP	73.1%	23.8%	-6.3%	-24.7%
Keadilan	54.6%	33.4%	-5.9%	-40.4%
PAS	48.4%	35.6%	-5.5%	-46.8%

Sources: Precinct results, 2004 and 2008 general elections, Personal Analysis using King (1997)

Table 48 above shows the average, and average change, in the Malay and non-Malay support for the BN in parliamentary seats won by the opposition parties in Peninsular Malaysia where no one ethnic group comprised more than 80% of the electorate and where the BN was the incumbent going into the 2008 general elections. There were 49 parliamentary constituencies in total that fit this criterion but because of data limitations, I only produce the calculations for 47 of these constituencies.

Table 48 confirms the earlier point made. In the seats won by DAP, non-Malay support for the BN was limited to a mere 23.8%. The BN support among the Malays in these constituencies remained at a relatively high level of 74.1%. The surprise in Table 48 is that the non-Malay support for the BN in the Keadilan and PAS seats was reduced to

less than 40%. In other words, a majority of the non-Malays in these ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, where they constitute a significant voting block, voted for a Malay-led opposition party, in the case of Keadilan, and for an Islamic opposition party, in the case of PAS.

The unprecedented nature of this kind of non-Malay support for both of these opposition parties needs to be put into context. Non-Malay voters punished DAP for being in the same coalition as PAS in the 1999 general elections, in two Chinese majority seats in Penang<sup>45</sup> that featured two of the most prominent DAP leaders<sup>46</sup>. The BN was actually saved by the non-Malay vote in a number of Malay majority constituencies<sup>47</sup> in the 1999 general elections. The BN, and specifically UMNO, would have never thought that its actions, which alienated the non-Malays before the 2008 general election, would cause such a huge backlash in the constituencies contested by Keadilan and PAS, whose committed stance to establish an Islamic state had always made voting for PAS especially difficult for most non-Malay voters.

This all changed in the 2008 general elections. Non-Malay voters plumped for Chinese Keadilan candidates over Chinese MCA candidates in a number of seats. They also preferred Malay Keadilan and PAS candidates over UMNO candidates. Most remarkably, they voted for Malay Keadilan and PAS candidates over Chinese MCA and

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<sup>45</sup> Bukit Bendera and Jelutong

<sup>46</sup> Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh

<sup>47</sup> Gombak, Shah Alam and Bandar Tun Razak

Indian MIC candidates! (See Appendix E for details of the change in the level of BN support by race by seat, a detailed discussion of the dynamics in individual mixed seats and a discussion of the massive drop in Indian support for the BN)

By showing their willingness to vote for PAS and Keadilan Malay candidates, sometimes over non-Malay BN candidates, there is a strong indication that both these parties have replaced UMNO, at least in the 2008 general elections, for many of the non-Malay voters as the more moderate parties.

The election of PAS MPs in many of these ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, many of them on the basis of the non-Malay backlash against the BN, also led to the emergence of more moderate voices within PAS that would temper some of the more extreme PAS MPs who were elected in constituencies that are 80% or 90% Malay.<sup>48</sup>

I now examine the BN backlash that was a result of the perceived failure on the part of the Badawi to deliver on his promises of reform made prior to the 2004 general elections. The intuition behind my reasoning is as follows: If a significant number of

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<sup>48</sup> Two PAS MPs stand out as notable examples. The first, Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad, was elected in the Kuala Selangor constituency (61% Malay), by winning 42% of the Malay vote and 68% of the non-Malay vote. Dr. Dzulkefly already had a reputation for being a moderate PAS leader before the 2008 general election. After his election, Dr. Dzulkefly would play the role of mediator over minor conflicts between some of DAP and PAS leaders in the state of Selangor. The second, Khalid Samad, was elected in the Shah Alam constituencies (69% Malay), by winning 55% of the Malay vote and 67% of the non-Malay vote. One of his first acts as MP was to visit a Catholic church in his constituency to thank the non-Malays who had voted for him. He was the first Malay MP from any party to appear in a public forum in a church in Peninsular Malaysia. Both these PAS leaders were well aware of the benefits of vote pooling and understood that maintaining a moderate position would be crucial in helping them hold on to the non-Malay voters in their respective constituencies.

voters voted against the BN in 1999 based on the newly emerging governance / anti-corruption / reform axis of political competition, and if these voters shifted their support back to the BN in 2004 because of Badawi's reform promises, I should find some evidence of the same voters shifting their support back to the BN when it was clear that Badawi had no intentions of carrying out his election promises.

I test this *reformasi* effect using a proxy variable – the distribution of the 680,000 voters who registered but were not allowed to vote in the 1999 general elections. Since these were the voters who were mostly to have been incentivized to register prior to the 1999 general election because they wanted to demonstrate their unhappiness at the regime by casting an anti-BN vote, I would expect that the seats in which they registered to vote would also experience the highest fall in BN support, after controlling for other explanatory variables. I used data from the 2003 delimitation exercise, which includes the 680,000 voters from 1999, to estimate the distribution of these 680,000 voters. I then ran a regression with the change in the level of BN support from 2004 to 2008 as the dependent variable and the percentage increase in the number of voters by constituency as a result of the addition of the 680,000 voters, together with two control variables. The regression results show that the percentage increase in the number of the previously excluded voters in 1999 is indeed a positive and significant predictor of changes in the level of BN support from 2004 to 2008 (see Appendix F for the details of the regression).

The continued salience of the *reformasi* factor is significant because it allowed the opposition, namely PAS and Keadilan, to win back a significant number of voters, many of them Malay, who had switched their vote back to the BN in 2004 because of Badawi's reform promises. If the salience of the *reformasi* related issues such as reducing corruption and improving governance was not significant in the 2008 general election, PAS and Keadilan would not have won back many of the Malay majority constituencies in Kedah and Kelantan, constituencies they had won in 1999 and subsequently lost in 2004 because of Badawi's reform promises. It was also unlikely that PAS and Keadilan would have won many of the ethnically heterogeneous seats in the urban areas in Penang, Perak, Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan if not for the continued presence of the *reformasi* factor. If this had been the case, DAP would have been much more electorally dominant compared to Keadilan and PAS, and this would probably have changed the intra-opposition dynamic at the parliamentary and state levels, for the worse, I would argue.

I have categorized the third and final component of the BN backlash as the youth backlash. In developed democracies where voter surveys are plentiful and reliable, one can easily estimate differences in party support among voters of different age groups. In Malaysia, where voter surveys are much less common and reliable, estimating differences in generational support is much more challenging. However, the manner in

which votes are tabulated in Malaysia presents us with a unique opportunity to use the electoral returns to estimate voting patterns by age group.

Vote tabulation is done at the precinct level in Malaysia, also the unit in which the actual process of casting a vote takes place. Voters in each precinct are segregated into different polling streams according to the age of the respective voter. The earlier polling streams are made up of older voters, with the average age of the voter decreasing as the polling stream increases. So for example, in a precinct with three polling streams, the first polling stream would comprise voters above 55 years of age, the second polling stream would comprise voters from 35 to 55 years of age and the third and final polling stream would comprise voters below the age of 35. The difference in the voting patterns of different generations of voters, if any, can be ascertained by comparing the electoral returns from the different polling streams.

In an analysis of a limited number of polling stream electoral returns in the 1999 general elections, Welsh (2004, 151) found strong evidence that the BN was facing a Malay youth deficit as a result of the *reformasi* movement, but that there was no evidence of this among the non-Malay, specifically the Chinese voters.

Using electoral returns from the 2004 and 2008 general elections in individual polling streams at the precinct level from three states (Kedah, Perak and Selangor), I ran a number of significance tests to compare differences in generational voting between these two elections. I found the following: (i) that there were differences in generational



support for the BN in both elections – younger voters tended to support the opposition in larger numbers (ii) that the backlash against the BN – the decrease in the level of support for the BN from 2004 to 2008 – was larger among younger voters compared to older voters (iii) the youth deficit experienced by the BN was largest among the non-Malay voters in the 2008 general election. (See Appendix G for the details of the hypotheses which were tested and the results)

What does this all mean in regard to the future prospects of the opposition?

If the youth deficit faced by the BN has been a regular feature of Malaysian politics since the first post independence elections, then it should not significantly affect the future prospects of the opposition, as long as the proportion of voters by generation remains the same. The results simply show that younger voters are more likely to swing their vote against the BN during an election when the underlying political circumstances are not in BN's favor and would swing back to the BN when the underlying circumstances have resolved themselves. For example, the large Malay youth deficit faced by the BN in the 1999 general election would be replaced by a smaller Malay youth deficit in 2004 when the salience of the *reformasi* issues had decreased over time.

On the other hand, if the BN youth deficit is a relatively new phenomenon that started with the 1999 general election, then the opposition's longer term prospects of dismantling the BN's electoral dominance, at least in Peninsular Malaysia, are more positive. This would be the case because older voters who are more likely to support the

BN and continue doing so would be replaced by middle aged and younger voters who are more likely to vote for the opposition.

The equivalent discussion in the United States would be an increasing electoral advantage for the Democrats in the United States as older more conservative voters are being replaced by successive generations who are more moderate on social issues such as abortion and gay marriage, and would therefore be less likely to vote for the Republican party based solely on these social issues (Fisher, 2008).

Similarly, one could make the case that the *reformasi* movement caused a significant generational divide to occur, especially among Malay voters, and that this was replicated by a similar BN youth backlash among the non-Malay voters in 2008. If this pattern holds, the opposition may be helped in the long term by older and more pro-BN voters being replaced by middle aged and younger voters who are less likely to find the BN in the moderate middle, on ethnic issues or issues of human rights, corruption and good governance.

It is too early to tell with data only from the 2004 and 2008 general elections and some analysis from the 1999 general election (Welsh, 2004, 151), but the continuation of the youth deficit faced by the BN in most of the by-elections that have taken place after the 2008 general election seems to support the latter replacement theory. Younger non-Malay voters have shown their greater preference in voting for the Malay-led and Malay opposition parties – Keadilan and PAS – compared to the older voters. If this older

generation of voters is slowly replaced by younger non-Malay voters for whom PAS is no longer the more extremist Malay party, then the BN will continue to have difficulty in winning back the younger non-Malay vote. Similarly, if the salience of the issues on the non-ethnic dimension – human rights and governance – continues to remain strong for the middle aged and younger Malay voters, and they replace the older generation of more pro-BN older voters, the opposition coalition will be a more attractive voting option for these voters compared to the BN.

Breaking down the components of the BN backlash in the 2008 general elections has yielded the following findings: (i) the BN's electoral setbacks in many of the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies was caused by a significant drop in its support among the non-Malays and a smaller drop in its support among the Malays (ii) many non-Malay voters in these ethnically heterogeneous constituencies preferred Keadilan and PAS candidates to BN candidates (even if they were non-Malay BN candidates) (iii) voters who were most mobilized and affected by the *reformasi* events in 1999 punished the BN for its failure to deliver on the governance / anti-corruption / reform dimension of political competition (iv) the increased youth deficit experienced by the BN may be a sign of the slow shifting of underlying voting patterns that seems to favor the opposition in the medium to long term.

### **8.2.5 Electoral Incentives in Unexpected By-Elections**

One major question surrounding the viability of the new opposition coalition, Pakatan Rakyat, after the 2008 general elections was whether voters, both Malay and non-Malay, would continue to support and vote for the opposition parties, now that they were a coalition of commitment rather than a coalition of convenience (Horowitz, 1985, 367). It could be the case that non-Malay voters were casting their vote against the BN rather than for the opposition, and that once DAP was back in a formal coalition with PAS, they would once again go back to voting for the BN. On the part of the Malay voters, it could also be the case that once PAS and Keadilan joined forces with DAP, who had not received a significant proportion of the Malay vote even in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies they won, they would likewise turn back to the BN. Furthermore, the increase in the number of non-Malay opposition parliamentarians, as well as the powerful position of DAP in the state legislatures of Penang, Perak and Selangor, may threaten the Malay voters and prompt many of them to switch their votes back to the BN.

While it is still too early to tell if the 2008 elections constituted a 'critical' elections (Key, 1955) that would lead to a realignment of the position of the respective political parties (Key, 1959; Sundquist, 1983; Mayhew, 2000; Carmines and Wagner, 2006), a series of unexpected by-elections following the March 2008 general election put the electoral viability of the newly formed opposition coalition to the test. Pakatan Rakyat

was to find out if voters were simply punishing the BN in a one shot game or if a significant number of these voters would continue to support the opposition post-2008.

Nine by-elections, eight of them in Peninsular Malaysia, have taken place since the general elections in March 2008. Pakatan won all but one of the by-elections in Peninsular Malaysia and, by doing so, consolidated its position as a long-term alternative to the BN. All but one of the by-elections in Peninsular Malaysia, which were triggered by resignations and deaths, were in constituencies that Pakatan was the incumbent or stood a good chance of winning. These by-election victories proved that the electoral gains made in the 2008 general election could be sustained after the formation of a new opposition coalition comprising all three main opposition parties. Because of the ethnic configurations of the different constituencies where these by-elections took place, Pakatan was able to show that it could hold on to its share of the Malay vote and benefit from the continued support for the opposition among the non-Malay voters. In one particular parliamentary by-election in Bukit Gantang, a popular PAS candidate won the constituency with an increased margin on the back of a surge in support among the non-Malay voters, demonstrating that a moderate PAS candidate could benefit from vote-pooling and appealing to non-Malay voters. The results of these nine by-elections and the ethnic composition of each seat are summarized in Table 49 below.

**Table 49: Summary of the by-election results since the March 2008 general election, Malaysia**

No	Constituency Name	Constituency Type	Ethnic Composition	Incumbent	Winner
1	Permatang Pauh	Parliament	69%M, 25%C, 6%I	Keadilan	Keadilan
2	Kuala Terengganu	Parliament	88%M, 11%C, 1%I	BN-UMNO	PAS
3	Bukit Gantang	Parliament	64%M, 27%C, 9%I	PAS	PAS
4	Batang Ai	State	95% Iban, 4%C, 1% M	BN-PRS	BN-PRS
5	Bukit Selambau	State	50%M, 19%C, 30%I, 1%O	Keadilan	Keadilan
6	Penanti	State	73%M, 24%C, 3%I	Keadilan	Keadilan
7	Manek Urai	State	99%M, 1%O	PAS	PAS
8	Permatang Pasir	State	72%M, 26%C, 1%I, 1%O	PAS	PAS
9	Bagan Pinang <sup>49</sup>	State	66%M, 11%C, 20%I, 3%O	BN-UMNO	BN-UMNO

M = Malay, C = Chinese, I = Indian, O = Others

A more detailed discussion on the dynamics of the individual by-elections can be found in Appendix H. Here, I will only discuss the backdrop, results and political consequences of what was arguably the most important by-election out of all eight

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<sup>49</sup> The BN finally stemmed the tide of by-election losses in Peninsular Malaysia by retaining the Bagan Pinang state constituency in a by-election in September 2009 with an increased majority (from 2533 to 5435 votes). The fielding of a popular former Chief Minister by UMNO was the main reason for the large increase in the margin of victory. The question of whether the BN can replicate this result in other ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, especially in the Pakatan controlled states of Penang and Selangor and in Perak, which was formerly under Pakatan's control, remains unanswered.

contests, which is the by-election in the parliamentary seat of Bukit Gantang in the state of Perak.

The Bukit Gantang parliamentary by-election was particularly significant because it was held soon after the Pakatan controlled Perak state government was brought down by the BN.<sup>50</sup> The death of the PAS incumbent in Bukit Gantang, not long after the BN's takeover of the Perak state legislature, allowed PAS the opportunity to have what was in effect a referendum on the means by which control of the Perak state legislature was wrested from Pakatan. The decision by PAS to field its ousted Chief Minister, Nizar Jamaluddin, as the candidate for the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency only strengthened the referendum nature of the by-election in this constituency.

In the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency, which is a Malay majority constituency with a significant number of non-Malay voters (63% Malay, 27% Chinese, 9% Indian, 1% Others), the ousted Chief Minister from PAS more than doubled his

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<sup>50</sup> Pakatan held a three seat majority in the Perak state legislature after the March 2008 general election (31 seats to 28 seats). In a move which took many by surprise, the BN was able to co-opt three Pakatan state assembly representatives (two from Keadilan and one from DAP) into declare themselves as independents and throw their support behind the BN in the establishment of a BN government in this state. The decision by these three Pakatan representatives to declare their support for the BN brought about a serious constitutional crisis in the state of Perak. The Pakatan Chief Minister from PAS, who had been selected to take up this position almost by accident (see section 8.2.1), sought an audience with the Sultan of Perak in an effort to dissolve the state assembly and call for fresh statewide elections. The BN also sought an audience with the Sultan to have its own Chief Minister sworn in on the basis that it now had the support of a majority of the state legislators in Perak. While the Sultan agreed to install the BN representative as the new Chief Minister, the issue of who is the legitimate Chief Minister in the state of Perak had to go through a lengthy arbitration process which went all the way to the Federal Court, the highest court in the land, which ultimately decided in favor of the newly installed BN Chief Minister.

party's winning majority from the 2008 general election. He increased the winning majority from 1566 votes in 2008 to 3126 in the 2009 by-election. He won 53.8% of the valid vote, up from 50.9% in 2008. What is more significant than the doubling of PAS's majority in the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency, is the manner in which this majority was doubled.

**Table 50: Estimated Malay and non-Malay BN support in Bukit Gatang, 1999 to 2009**

Year	Malay BN support	Non-Malay BN support	Winning Majority
1999	51%	71%	5101 (BN-UMNO)
2004	51%	84%	8888 (BN-GERAKAN)
2008	53%	35%	1566 (PAS)
2009	58%	22%	2789 (PAS)

Source: Precinct Data for the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency, 1999 to 2009, Personal Analysis (King, 1997)

Once again, I estimate the Malay and non-Malay support using King's (1997) method on the electoral returns and ethnic composition data at the precinct level. The estimates are summarized in Table 50. The results show that PAS won this constituency in the 2008 general election by limiting the percentage of BN Malay support to 53% and by reducing BN's non-Malay support to 35%. What is surprising about the 2009 by-election is that the Malay support for the BN actually increased from 53% in 2008 to 58% in 2009 but this was negated by a drop of 13% in the level of BN support among the non-



Malays. In other words, even more non-Malays opted to vote for the PAS candidate compared to the 2008 general election.

The increase in the Malay support for the BN could have been caused by several factors. Firstly, UMNO was effective in painting the former Pakatan led state government in Perak as one that was dominated by the non-Malays in DAP (DAP held 18 out of the 31 state constituencies won by the opposition). The PAS Chief Minister was criticized as being a puppet of two powerful DAP figures in the state government who happened to be relatives.<sup>51</sup> Secondly, the BN received a small bounce from the recent installation of Najib as the new Prime Minister, replacing the unpopular Badawi.

The decrease in the level of non-Malay support for the BN can be explained by the tremendous unpopularity of the BN's takeover of the Perak state government. The new Perak state government was disproportionately Malay. 27 out of the 28 BN state legislators (not including the three defectors from Pakatan) were Malays. In addition, the deposed Pakatan government was in the process of carrying out popular measures among the non-Malays, including granting permanent land titles to replace the temporary occupancy licenses (TOLs) whose regular renewal was not guaranteed and thus a source of constant complaints among the non-Malays.

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<sup>51</sup> The cousins, Ngeh Koo Ham and Nga Kor Ming were both lawyers from Sitiawan, Perak, and were also both exco members in the state government. Ngeh had been one of the three candidates whose names were proposed as possible Chief Minister candidates representing Pakatan.

The Malay versus non-Malay divide over the events in Perak can be seen in the results of a Merdeka Center survey conducted after BN's takeover of the state government. Only 59% of Malays somewhat or strongly agreed that fresh state elections should be called to decide a new government in Perak while 85% and 88% of Chinese and Indian voters supported fresh state elections.<sup>52</sup>

The Bukit Gantang by-election result further confirmed that Pakatan could co-opt BN's winning formula in constituencies with a similar ethnic composition. Previously, the BN could count on a larger reservoir of non-Malay support in these Malay majority constituencies to swing the results in its favor, in the event that the Malay vote was split. During and after the March 2008 general election, this formula has instead worked in favor of the opposition. By positioning itself as the more moderate Malay / Malay-led opposition parties, PAS and Keadilan have managed to secure the majority of the non-Malay vote. At the same time, they have managed to hold on to a significant proportion of the Malay vote using a combination of PAS's Islamic appeal among the more conservative Malays, and Anwar's personal appeal and continued attacks on the BN along the non-ethnic dimension of political competition. Perhaps as

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<sup>52</sup> Merdeka Center Survey, 8 February 2009, 'Perak State Opinion Survey', pp.10.  
[http://www.merdeka.org/v2/download/Microsoft%20PowerPoint%20-%20Perak\\_Crisis\\_Poll\\_-\\_Survey\\_Findings\\_\(English\).pdf](http://www.merdeka.org/v2/download/Microsoft%20PowerPoint%20-%20Perak_Crisis_Poll_-_Survey_Findings_(English).pdf)

significant was the emergence of a popular and moderate PAS leader in the person of the ousted Chief Minister, Nizar, who could appeal to the non-Malay voters.<sup>53</sup>

### **8.2.6 Future paths – the importance of institutional reform**

At the time of writing<sup>54</sup>, the opposition coalition, Pakatan Rakyat is nearing its two year anniversary. The favorable distribution of parliamentary and state seats after the 2008 general elections forms the backbone of intra-opposition cooperation within the coalition. Attempts by UMNO to entice PAS with offers of inter-party talks on issues concerning Malay rights and Islam failed to materialize. Key national leaders within PAS were well aware of the negative political consequences associated with accepting UMNO's offer, including the possible alienation of their new found support among the non-Malay voters. The by-election victories, most notably PAS' win in Bukit Gantang, clearly demonstrated the benefits of vote-pooling to the Islamic party.

The opposition coalition is also taking steps to institutionalize intra-opposition cooperation by, for example, seeking to register Pakatan Rakyat as an officially recognized party so that all of its candidates can contest under a common symbol in the same manner as the BN.<sup>55</sup> Not surprisingly, the BN takeover of the Perak state

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<sup>53</sup> As a result of his sudden rise to fame and his newfound popularity among the non-Malays nationwide, Nizar was frequently asked to speak in Chinese majority areas in the subsequent by-elections, a phenomenon that would have raised many eyebrows among the opposition as well as among the voters in a pre-2008 context.

<sup>54</sup> March, 2010

<sup>55</sup> In the post-2008 by-elections, opposition candidates registered as candidates of the individual component parties. Registering Pakatan Rakyat as an officially recognized party would enable future opposition

government had the effect of increasing the level of Pakatan unity, especially among PAS and DAP leaders in that state. The ongoing trial of Anwar Ibrahim, who is alleged to have sodomized one of his special assistants, acts as another rallying point for the opposition.

Predictably, the opposition coalition has undergone its fair share of growing pains. In addition to the previously mentioned attempts by UMNO to lure PAS into inter-party talks, which obviously raised concerns among DAP and Keadilan leaders, there were also differences over policy issues within the states controlled by Pakatan. Disagreements between PAS and DAP leaders in the states of Kedah and Perak over ethnic / religious issues spilled over into the public arena.<sup>56</sup> Keadilan, the weakest link within the opposition coalition, because of its relatively short history as a political party, continues to experience defections and resignations at the parliamentary and state levels.<sup>57</sup>

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candidates to register as candidates of the opposition coalition in the same manner as how BN candidates from the individual component parties register themselves as BN candidates and use the BN symbol in the official election papers and in the campaign materials.

<sup>56</sup> In the state of Selangor, a PAS member of the state government wanted to ban the sale of beer in convenience stores which met with the disapproval of DAP member of the state government in charge of local affairs. In the state of Kedah, a DAP leader threatened to leave the opposition coalition because the PAS-led state government threatened to shut down an abattoir used for killing pigs.

<sup>57</sup> At the time of writing (March 2010), two Keadilan representatives resigned their state seats because of personal and performance related issues (Keadilan won the ensuing by-elections in both areas), four Keadilan state representatives left the party and declared themselves as independents (two in Perak, one in Kedah, one in Selangor) and three Keadilan MPs recently declared themselves as independents with perhaps more to follow later in the month.

I argue that a critical juncture will be reached in the next year or so that will influence the future direction of political competition in Malaysia. While the opposition has remained fairly united and exhibits no signs yet of breaking apart as a coalition, there is no guarantee that individual MPs and state assembly representatives will not be co-opted and bought off by the BN. The BN takeover of the Perak state government in early 2009 was facilitated by the defection of three Pakatan state representatives (two from Keadilan and one from DAP). The legislative majorities enjoyed by the opposition coalition in the states they currently control are too large for the BN to repeat the Perak feat.<sup>58</sup>

It is more than likely that the BN will provide the necessary inducements for individual MPs to resign from their respective opposition parties and presumably cast their support in favor of the BN when it is time to amend the constitution at the federal level. Already, three Keadilan MPs (at the time of writing) have resigned from their parties and declared themselves as independents. It would require the defection of another eight MPs in order for the BN to regain a 2/3rds control of parliament (assuming that the defectors support the BN even though they declare themselves as independents). Regaining a 2/3rds control of the parliament is especially important to the BN when the time to pass another delimitation exercise arrives. Such an exercise

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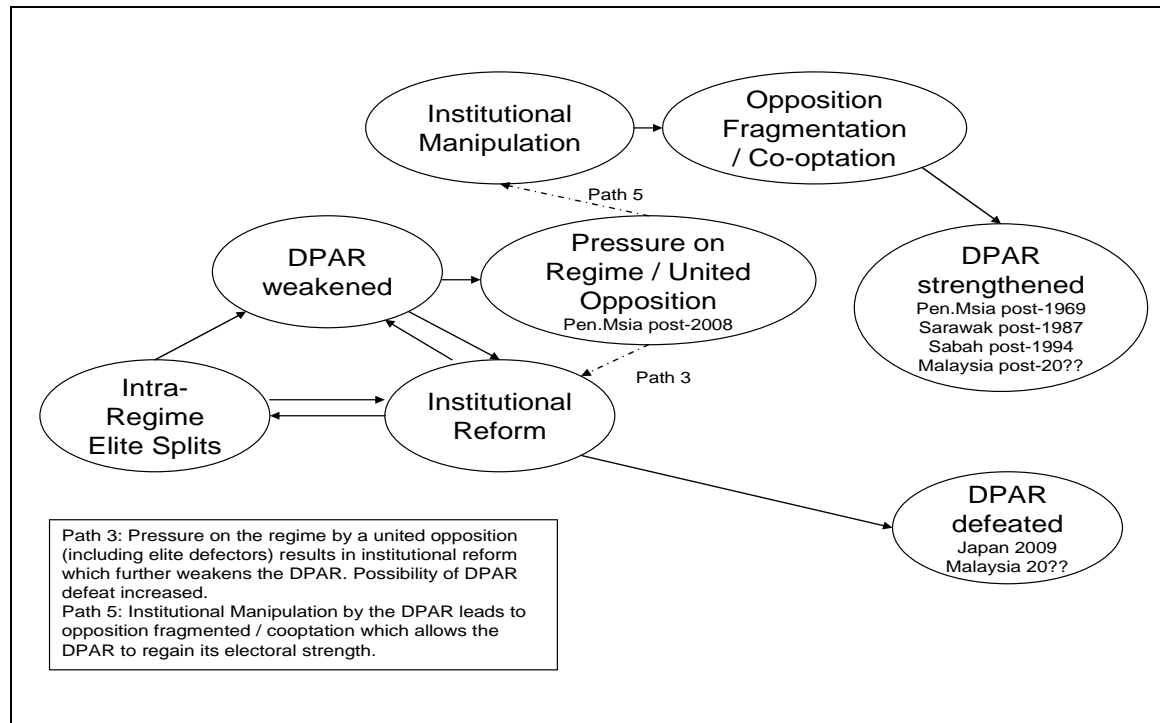
<sup>58</sup> Co-opting opposition representatives to prevent the formation of an opposition state government was also carried out after the Sabah state elections in 1994.

requires amending the constitution, in the likely event that the BN wants to make use of this exercise to regain its electoral dominance. It could easily do this by increasing the number of parliamentary seats in the states where its electoral support is still high, or by altering the boundary lines of existing seats in its favor.

If the opposition coalition manages to retain a blocking 1/3<sup>rd</sup> veto power at the parliamentary level and at the state level in six states (Kelantan, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan), it could perhaps extract certain promises of institutional reform from the BN. Although unlikely, the re-introduction of elections at the municipal levels, promises to increase the transparency of the delimitation process, and making voting compulsory for all eligible voters are all examples of institutional reform that would help the cause of the opposition in the medium to long run. It would put into motion some of the mutually reinforcing mechanisms associated with elite splits and institutional reform which may lead to the eventual defeat of the BN coalition. If the BN manages to prevent the opposition from extracting these promises, and if it manages to regain a 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s control of the parliament, it would undoubtedly use the delimitation exercise (due to start next year, 2011) as a tool to regain its electoral advantage. These two possible paths are shown in Figure 14 below. The institutional reform path would take the country along Path 3 while the reassertion of electoral dominance by the co-optation of opposition representatives and subsequent institutional manipulation would

take the country down the familiar path (Path 5) of strengthening the electoral position of the BN.

**Figure 14: Elite splits, institutional reform and institutional manipulation in Malaysia**



As such, the dynamics of political competition in Malaysia makes it an almost perfect case to test my proposition that elite splits and institutional reform are necessary and sufficient conditions for DPAR defeat. The fact that a specific institutional mechanism, in this case the delimitation exercise, a true and tried method of electoral manipulation, will likely take center stage in the political tussle between the incumbent regime and the opposition coalition, only increases the applicability of Malaysia as a test case.

### ***8.3 Comparisons with the LDP in Japan***

Before I move on to draw comparative lessons from the Malaysian case, I first want to discuss the process by which the LDP was defeated, firstly in the 1993 general elections and then more recently, in the 2009 general elections. I bring up the case of the LDP in Japan to show the mutually reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional reform in the context of a parliamentary system with a dominant party (albeit one that is in a democratic rather than authoritarian setting). It shows how electoral reform can provide the necessary incentives for the consolidation of a previously fragmented and divided opposition under a single banner. I then compare the importance of institutional reform in both Malaysia and Japan in explaining regime defeat.

The importance of elite splits in causing the downfall of the LDP government in Japan in the 1993 general elections has already been outlined in Chapter 5. The fragmented and ideologically diverse nature of the individual parties that constituted the coalition government partly explains why it lasted a mere 10 months (Scheiner, 2006; Christensen, 2000). However, significant electoral reforms, which had caused the elite splits within the LDP in the first place and which also explain the subsequent split in the short lived opposition coalition, were introduced in 1994 during the tenure of the non-LDP government.

The level of malapportionment that allocated a disproportionate share of seats to the rural areas, which the LDP traditionally performed well, was reduced significantly



with the introduction of single member districts (and a list-PR tier) and capping the maximum disparity between the largest and smallest constituency at a three to one ratio. The Loosemore-Hansby (LH) Index, a popular measure of malapportionment, dropped from 0.131 in 1993 to 0.078 in 1996 as a result of the 1994 electoral reforms (Horiuchi and Saito, 2003).<sup>59</sup> The decrease in rural malapportionment removed one of the important electoral advantages enjoyed by the LDP.

The second important consequence of the 1994 electoral reforms was to create Duvergerian pressures for the creation of a two party system. The larger number of SMD seats (300) compared to the list-PR seats (200 seats at first but subsequently reduced to 180) and the non-compensatory nature of the list-PR seats meant that there were greater electoral incentives and pressures from below to coordinate on a single candidate among the opposition parties. The elite splits prior to the 1993 general elections and the subsequent co-optation by the LDP of one of the main opposition parties provided the necessary push for the realignment of the entire party system in Japan.

The result was the gradual consolidation of all the main opposition forces behind the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). There were already significant indicators that Japan was moving to a two party system as early as the 2003 general elections. Even though

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<sup>59</sup> Unlike the calculation method used by Samuels and Snyder (2001), Horiuchi and Saito's calculation of the LH Index does not take into account the list-PR tier.

the LDP had bounced back from the historic low of the 1993 elections – it won 62% of parliamentary seats in the 2005 general elections – the change in the underlying configuration of the party system caused by the electoral reforms in 1994 was sufficient to convince Reed to make the following remark in 2007 – ‘The LDP is almost guaranteed to lose seats in the next two general elections because they will be defending the results of Koizumi’s two “miracle” victories...It will take two more miracles just to hold on to the same number of seats. I am betting against any more miracles and expect to see some serious debates within the LDP. I would not be surprised to see a DPJ government within the next three elections’ (Reed, 2007, 15). Reed’s prognostication would materialize as early as the 2009 general elections.

The DPJ won 308 out of 408 seats in the September 2009 general elections, the first time in Japan’s electoral history that the LDP had not won a plurality of seats. The DPJ and its allies would go on to form the government, one that would obviously be more stable than the coalition of seven opposition parties that briefly governed for ten months in 1993 to 1994.

The experience of the opposition in Japan finds some parallels among their counterparts in Malaysia. In both countries, intra-regime splits led to the formation of opposition coalitions that were built partly around the parties created by the elite defectors. In the Japanese case, the opposition coalition was clearly more successful in that it was able to prevent the LDP from forming a coalition government after the 1993

general elections. However, they were beset by ideological differences and internal fragmentation that allowed the LDP to co-opt some of them in order to consolidate its own electoral position. A similar strategy has been used by the ruling coalition numerous times in Malaysia's political history, as the discussion in this chapter has shown. In fact, the BN continues to pursue this strategy, although the increasingly unlikely prospect of co-opting one of the major opposition parties has forced it to focus on co-opting individual representatives instead.

Institutional incentives that were created as a result of electoral reform provided the basis for the consolidation of the opposition forces behind a single party in Japan. Similar electoral and institutional incentives albeit without the presence of electoral reform provided the basis on which a new and more stable opposition coalition was built after the 2008 general elections in Malaysia. If similar institutional reforms are introduced in Malaysia, for example in the form of strict malapportionment limits or compulsory registration and voting, it is likely that these institutional incentives will only increase since the number of ethnically heterogeneous seats in the grossly underrepresented urban areas would increase significantly. In parliamentary systems, institutional reforms at the legislative level obviously take on added significance since it structures and influences intra-opposition dynamics much more than in a presidential system.

If institutional reform does take place in Malaysia, it is more than likely that it will provide the impetus for further consolidation of the opposition, a decrease in the electoral advantages enjoyed by the incumbent regime and probably its eventual defeat. But such institutional reform would not have taken place in Japan without the presence of intra-regime splits. And the opposition in Malaysia may not have been as cohesive and united as it is now without the presence of a bridging party that was formed as a result of an intra-regime elite split in 1998.

#### **8.4. Comparative lessons**

Finally, what comparative lessons can we now draw from the extensive discussion regarding the emergence and consolidation of the opposition coalition in Malaysia after the 2008 general elections and the brief discussion of the LDP experience in Japan?

Firstly, they accentuate the importance of intra-regime elite splits in weakening the incumbent regime and providing the opportunity for institutional reform to take place.

Secondly, they highlight the importance of having the necessary institutional and electoral incentives in order to unite an otherwise fragmented and diverse opposition. The key role that many of the elite defectors play in the formation of these opposition coalitions only further underscores the importance of intra-regime elite splits in maintaining a sustained electoral challenge against the incumbent regime.

Thirdly, it often takes a skilful and / or charismatic opposition leader who can unite the disparate forces that comprise the opposition. The importance of a figure like Ichiro Ozawa or Anwar Ibrahim in forming the necessary alliances within the opposition in order to piece together a workable framework for an opposition coalition cannot be discounted. Such actors can also skillfully manipulate new issue dimensions to weaken the political standing of the incumbent regime. In this sense, the opposition parties are not totally powerless actors in their fight against the seemingly invulnerable incumbent regime. Of course, once these patterns of competition and alliance structures are put in place, the contingent actions of individual actors become less significant over time. From this perspective, contingency may matter more at the beginning, and structure will have its intended effects over time.

A similar level of political skill, charisma and perhaps, strategic errors on the part of the BN, will be needed if the opposition coalition is to extract concessions of reform from the BN coalition. Only time will tell (in the next two years to be precise).

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion and Extensions**

### ***9.0 Chapter outline***

In the previous eight chapters, I have systematically presented my arguments on the reasons for the creation (and non creation) of dominant party regimes, on the various strategies used by DPARs to maintain their electoral dominance and on the importance of elite splits and institutional reform in causing the downfall of a DPAR. I now summarize the main arguments from each stage of dominant party creation, maintenance and downfall in this concluding chapter. I then present some of the post-thesis extensions which I will explore as part of my longer term academic endeavors.

### ***9.1 Summary of main arguments***

The first point in regard to dominant party creation is simply this – they are not likely! Chapters 2 and 3 have shown that even when circumstances during critical junctures appear to be favorable for the emergence of such parties, there are a number of obstacles that can prevent their creation. Charismatic leaders and founding fathers fail to take full advantage of their political positions by not calling for early elections, by unnecessarily alienating elite allies, by mistakenly providing political legitimacy to military ‘allies’ who then depose them, by not using electoral channels to marginalize and subsequently co-opt elite defectors, and by not recognizing the importance of creating a dominant party as a means to govern effectively and increase the likelihood of a smooth leadership transition. The relative importance of each of these obstacles to

dominant party creation depends on the configuration of the relationship between the elites, before and after these critical junctures. At these junctures, the sequencing of elections and other structural factors such as the electoral system, the salient dimension(s) of political competition, historical legacies and the number of groups come into play. These structural factors interact with contingent factors, most important of which are the decisions that individual leaders make.

In circumstances whereby structural factors work with contingent factors in a manner that enhances centripetal forces, the likelihood of dominant party emergence increases. For example, the fortuitous timing of local elections before national elections (Malaysia) and of a plebiscite before a legislative elections (Chile), the presence of electoral incentives post-elections for elite cohesion (pre and post-independent Malaysia and post-Pinochet Chile), and the inter-elite dynamics (close elite relationships between Alliance leaders in Selangor in Malaysia; cohesiveness between the Center and the Left, built through opposing the Pinochet regime in Chile together) can account for the rise of dominant governing coalitions in Malaysia and Chile.

In circumstances whereby structural and contingent factors enhance centrifugal forces, political party fragmentation is the likely outcome. A legacy of a weakly institutionalized party system, a proportional electoral system with low thresholds and the presence of ideologically divided elites usually point to the proliferation of political

parties post-transition instead of the consolidation of power behind an emerging dominant party.

Surprisingly, the presence of weak anti-regime opposition forces does not necessarily lead to the creation of dominant party regimes post-transition. The absence of a mobilized anti-regime public may actually allow an aspiring dictator to create a neo-patrimonial regime rather than a dominant party authoritarian regime. Lukashenko's Belarus is a demonstration of how contingency – the unexpected rise of a populist and previously unknown insider – can interact with existing structural conditions – the turnout provision in legislative elections – in such a manner as to weaken the existing party system, thereby allowing the emergence of a neo-patrimonial regime.

Leaders of such neo-patrimonial regimes may, however, decide later that forming a dominant party may be in their best interests in terms of co-opting regional and local independent elites, ensuring a smooth leadership transition process and maintaining authoritarian rule. Nazarbaev in Kazakhstan appears to be moving in this direction.

In the event that a party regime is successful in translating a politically advantageous position into an electorally dominant one, it still has to negotiate the difficult challenge of managing a leadership transition. Replacing the top leader is a necessary step to ensure the longevity of the party regime for two reasons. Firstly, a successful replacement at the top acts as a check against the tendency for a long-ruling



leader to increase his own personal power at the expense of weakening the dominant party's institutional strengths. Secondly, the ability of a ruling party to win elections under a different leader shows that its dominant electoral position can be perpetuated without the popularity of a founding father figure. The leadership turnover test here proves the dominance of the *party* rather than of any individual leader.<sup>1</sup> Regimes that fail to or have not passed this leadership turnover test cannot be categorized as dominant *party* regimes.<sup>2</sup>

However, if these dominant party regimes manage a successful transition of leadership at the top (which includes being led to a successful electoral victory by the new leader), the probability that such regimes will stay on in power for a long period of time increases significantly. Elites within the regime will be incentivized not to defect, since the precedent of elite circulation, even at the top leadership position, has been established. Aspiring elites will want to join the dominant party since it is the only game in town in terms of accessing government positions and state resources. A dominant party regime that finds itself relying less on the popularity of a founding father figure to maintain its electoral dominance will also find itself relying more on institutional

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<sup>1</sup> In a sense, the one-turnover requirement to demonstrate that the regime in question is actually a dominant *party* regime shares some similarity with Przeworski et al's (2000) requirement that there must be at least one turnover in the ruling regime for a country to be considered a democracy. The first turnover requirement confirms that the party remains above the individual. The second turnover requirement confirms that the rules of the democratic game remain above any incumbent ruler or party.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the post-independence regimes in Africa failed to pass this test – Malawi, Zimbabwe, the Gambia, just to name a few.

mechanisms to boost its electoral advantage, especially since these mechanisms are expected to outlast the tenure of any individual leader, regardless of how popular he may be.

These mechanisms can be used not only to ensure a certain level of elite circulation and increase the electoral advantage enjoyed by the incumbent regime, but also to co-opt and divide the opposition forces. If the opposition parties can be incentivized to compete against each other, even to the extent of fighting to see which of them are better candidates to join the ruling party or coalition, the task of maintaining electoral dominance is already half completed. The ability of an incumbent regime to manipulate these institutional mechanisms is increased in a context of low (or non-existing) checks and balances within the system. As such, we should see a more flagrant abuse of institutional mechanisms on the part of dominant party regimes operating in non-democratic countries. This would explain why dominant party authoritarian regimes (DPARs) are much more electorally and politically dominant compared to dominant party democratic regimes (DPDRs). DPARs rarely win less than half of the popular vote and half of the legislative seats at stake. In fact, most of them regularly win supermajorities which allow them to amend the constitution without requiring the cooperation of the opposition. DPDRs, on the other hand, often win only a plurality of the popular vote, which, depending on the electoral system employed, does not always translate to majority control of the legislature.

The supermajorities enjoyed by the DPARs usually means that these regimes cannot be defeated within one electoral cycle. The fragmented opposition, which generally exists in these regimes, rather than campaigning with the expectation of taking over the government, typically aims to reduce the legislative supermajorities of these DPARs (from let's say, 75%, to a mere 60%, for example). In the event that the opposition is successful in reducing a DPAR's legislative supermajority, the regime in question can take measures to prevent a further slide in its electoral position. If the cause of the electoral slide is an unpopular DPAR leader, he can be replaced. If the fall in support is due to an elite defection, some of these elites can be incentivized to rejoin the ruling party, failing which new allies can be found among the ranks of the opposition. The electoral system and other aspects of the rules of the electoral game can be manipulated to make opposition co-optation easier or harder, to restore some of the lost electoral dominance previously enjoyed by the incumbent regime. In other words, the institutional mechanisms which provided the electoral advantages initially enjoyed by a DPAR can also be used by the same DPAR to regain its dominant electoral position in the aftermath of a significant political challenge.

The option of institutional manipulation on the part of a DPAR can only be removed when a DPAR is forced to tie its own hands by the introduction of significant institutional reform. I argued, in Chapters 7 and 8, that the probability of institutional reforms is considerably increased when the opposition occupies a veto position. In the

same chapters, I argued that this veto position can only be reached when a serious elite split occurs within the ruling regime. I also highlighted the importance of the mutually reinforcing effects of elite splits and institutional reform in leading to the electoral defeat of a DPAR. These mutually reinforcing effects were demonstrated in the defeats of the DPARs in Mexico, Taiwan, Senegal and Paraguay, as well as in the defeat of the DPDR in Japan.

The necessity and insufficiency of elite splits as a means for the opposition to occupy a veto position was illustrated using examples from different historical junctures in Malaysia. The electoral and political incentives for opposition cooperation and cohesion after the 2008 general elections in Malaysia was contrasted with earlier opposition attempts to maintain a sustained and united opposition challenge against the ruling coalition. The ability of the BN coalition to remain in power was discussed by examining the possible outcomes in the ongoing nested game, whereby the opposition is attempting to use its veto position to force the ruling coalition to introduce institutional reform while the ruling coalition is trying to desperately to deprive the opposition of its veto position, so that it can once again resort to institutional manipulation to regain its electoral dominance. The outcome of this nested game presents a perfect opportunity for me to test my hypothesis which is, if institutional reform is introduced in Malaysia, the defeat of the ruling coalition should follow closely. Conversely, the failure of the

opposition to prevent the ruling coalition from further institutional manipulations will lead to the reassertion of the political and electoral dominance of the latter.

I began my investigation into DPARs by examining the conditions under which elite co-optation and cooperation could be achieved as a necessary first step in the creation of a dominant party regime. I then argued that the careful manipulation of institutional mechanisms, especially in the context of non-democratic countries, increased the longevity of these dominant party regimes. I came full circle by arguing that two of the main building blocks of DPAR creation and maintenance – elite cohesion and institutional manipulation – must be taken away before a DPAR can be defeated in the electoral arena.

## ***9.2 Possible post-thesis extensions***

I can think of four areas of theoretical relevance in which I can continue my post-thesis investigation into the phenomenon of interest, that is, DPARs.

Firstly, I want to test my hypotheses regarding dominant party emergence by examining the rise of potentially dominant party regimes. To what extent do the party regimes associated with Morales in Bolivia, Zenawi in Ethiopia, the Rajapaksa brothers in Sri Lanka, and Chavez in Venezuela, Saleh in Yemen, all of which have the potential to become dominant party authoritarian regimes, rely on institutional mechanisms to achieve and maintain their political and electoral dominance? What institutional mechanisms are used by these regimes to co-opt other elites and fragment the

opposition forces? How much of these regimes' electoral dominance can be accounted for by institutional manipulations compared to the other strategies adopted by these regimes, including the repression of the opposition and restrictions on the flow of information? If the regimes that are able to maintain their electoral dominance are also the ones that manipulated institutional mechanisms to the greatest extent, then I can be more confident of my theoretical assertions.

Secondly, I want to pay close attention to the critical junctures of leadership transition among already established and potential DPARs. Based on my description of DPARs as having better institutionalized methods of ensuring smooth leadership transitions, I would expect an established DPAR to experience fewer disruptions during such a transition compared to a DPAR that is not yet established. In other words, if Chavez manages to hold on to power in Venezuela, the passing of the torch from Chavez to his appointed successor will exhibit greater political and electoral uncertainty compared to when Lee Hsien Loong in Singapore passes on the mantle to the next prime minister.

However, this does not mean that one should not expect any political uncertainty at all during such transitions among established DPARs. The probability of significant disruptions during these transitions is greatly reduced in DPARs, but disruptions, especially in the form of elite splits, can still occur. If such an elite split does occur, probably because one or more of the elites are unhappy with the prospect of being

passed over for the position of the top leader in the regime, my hypotheses that such elite splits will not displace the ruling regime in the election immediately following such a split can be put to the test.

If such an elite split occurs and the consequence is that the incumbent regime is weakened electorally but not defeated, then my hypotheses regarding electoral and political incentives for opposition cohesion, the presence of an opposition veto and the introduction of institutional reform can also be put to the test. I can compare the regime-opposition and intra-opposition dynamics with similar dynamics in already defeated DPARs and undefeated DPARs that have experienced such intra-regime splits. Although it is still early days, the formation of Congress of the People (COPE) in South Africa in 2008, as a result of an elite split within the ANC, and its subsequent growing pains, can form the basis of an interesting comparative study with the rise of Keadilan in Malaysia.

COPE was formed by a group of ANC leaders, led by former Minister of Defense Mosioua Lekota, who were allied to former President Thabo Mbeki. They left the party when Mbeki was ousted as the ANC's leader by the enigmatic Jacob Zuma in internal party elections. The party was expected to challenge ANC's electoral stranglehold among the majority Black population in the 2009 general elections but its 7.4% of the popular vote was a disappointment to many of its leaders. The formation of COPE did, however, deprive the ANC of a 2/3rds parliamentary majority and it will be interesting

to see if Zuma, a Zulu himself, is successful in convincing the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) to join the ANC in order to boost its parliamentary majority to beyond a 2/3rds majority. At the same time, COPE is still trying to figure out how it should work with the Democratic Alliance (DA), currently the largest opposition party (with 16.7% of the vote) and also the governing party in the Western Cape Province.<sup>3</sup> COPE obviously wants to eventually gain the position of the leader of the opposition, as part of a longer term process to replace the ANC, but the DA will not willingly cede this leadership position to COPE.

In Namibia, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RPD) party, formed as a result of an elite split within SWAPO, the ruling party since the country's independence from South Africa, may be better positioned to consolidate the various opposition forces to challenge the incumbent in future elections. RPD successfully emerged as the largest opposition party in the recent 2009 general elections, albeit with only 10.9% of the popular vote, compared to the 75.3% obtained by SWAPO.

The possibility of elite splits in other DPARs will continue to provide interesting comparative case studies which will allow me to test and perhaps refine the hypotheses put forth in this chapter.

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<sup>3</sup> The Democratic Alliance offered a position in the state government in Western Cape to COPE but the leaders of COPE declined, preferring to adopt a wait-and-see strategy.



Finally, I am interested in exploring the process of post-transition democratic consolidation in countries with defeated DPARs. How do the defeated parties respond to losing power? Do they fracture without the ability to access government resources, or are they able to play the role of a loyal opposition? How do the former opposition parties respond to being in power? Do they continue with similar acts of abuses of power practiced by the former dominant party regime? Or are the safeguards installed during the process of institutional reforms strong enough to prevent these abuses of power from taking place under the new government? Taiwan and, to a lesser extent Mexico, have already gone through the process of democratic consolidation.<sup>4</sup> The former dominant party regimes have come to terms with losing power with the expectation that they can regain power through the electoral arena, albeit without the advantage of a dominant electoral and political position (Friedman and Wong, 2008). Senegal, on the other hand, under the presidency of Wade, shows signs of regressing to a DPAR. It is still too early ascertain if Paraguay is on its way to consolidating and institutionalizing democratic practices. As more DPARs fall in the future, the variance with regard to the process of democratic consolidation among these post-transition countries will provide me with opportunities to come up with and test new hypotheses and also refine old ones.

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<sup>4</sup> See Mainwaring et al (1992), Linz and Stepan (1996) and Diamond (1999) for different takes on the problems associated with defining democratic consolidation and the challenges associated with achieving democratic consolidation.

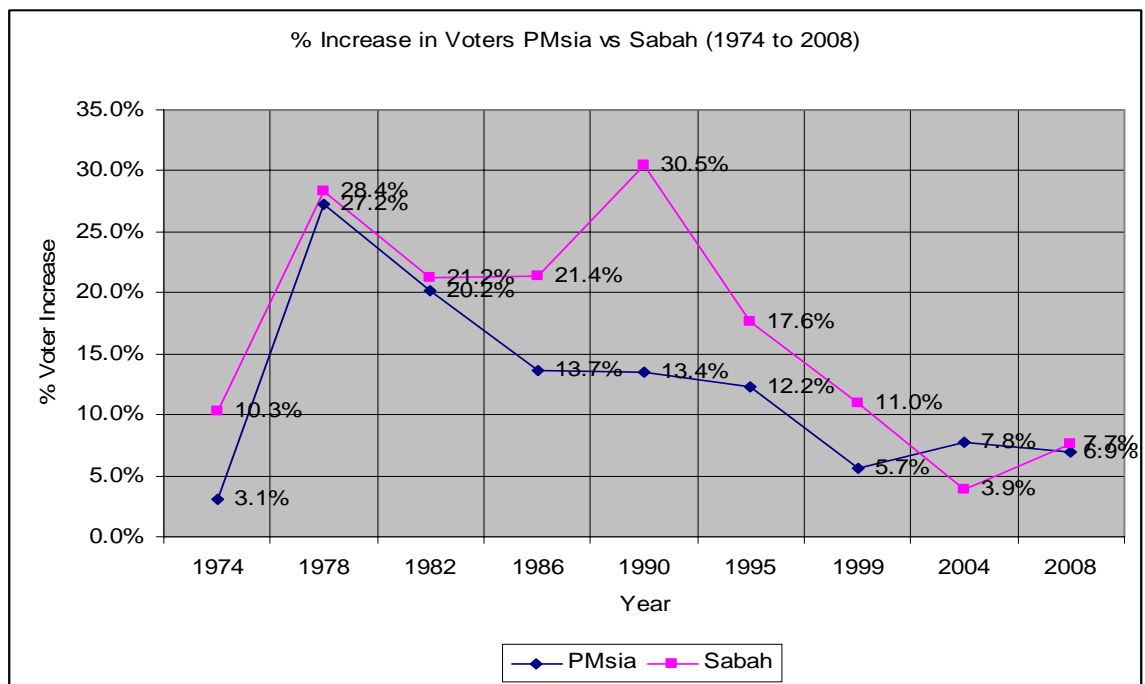
While this page marks the end of my doctoral thesis, my larger academic journey, I feel, has just begun.

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## Appendix A: Electoral Impact of Voter Increase in Sabah from 1986 to 1994

This appendix examines the increase in the number of voters in the state of Sabah spanning the period from 1985 to 1994. The rise of the PBS, the largely Kadazan led party in Sabah in 1985, was discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 in the context of rising state-federal tensions as a result of PBS's newfound dominance after the 1985 state elections. It was during this period that the number of Muslim Bumiputera on the electoral roll in this state started increasing disproportionately.

**Figure 15: Comparing the percentage increase in the number of voters, Peninsular Malaysia versus Sabah (1974 to 2008)**



Source: Election Reports, 1974 to 2008

Figure 15 above compares the percentage increase in the number of voters in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah from 1974 to 2008. This percentage increase started diverging in 1986 when the number of voters in Sabah increased by 21.4% compared to 13.7% in Peninsular Malaysia. This divergence reach 30.5% in the period between the 1986 and the 1990 general elections (compared to only 13.4 in Peninsular Malaysia), which was also the period of time when PBS became dominant in the state of Sabah. This percentage increase slowed to 17.6% in the period between the 1990 and 1995 general election which was still higher than the 12.2% experienced in Peninsular Malaysia.

It was also during this period of time from 1985 to 1995 when the number of illegal immigrants from nearby southern Philippines and Kalimantan in Indonesia to Sabah started increasing, attracted by the economic opportunities in the state. According to the 1991 census, the first year in which such figures were provided, non-Malaysian citizens comprised 25% or a quarter of the population in Sabah (Leete, 1996, Table 6.1, 124).

The presence of this large group of mostly Muslim non-citizens in the state of Sabah provided a too-good-to-be-missed opportunity to change the ethnic makeup of the voting population in this state. The motivating factor here, on the part of the BN, was the ascendancy of the PBS as a political force in this state. The process of providing these illegal immigrants with fake identity cards, which were then used to register the same

illegal immigrants as voters is a well acknowledged and well documented problem in Sabah.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 51: Average and percentage increase in the number of voters in the Muslim Bumiputera, Non-Muslim Bumiputer and Chinese majority constituencies, 1986 to 1994, state constituencies in Sabah**

Type of Constituency	Increase in the No of Voters	% Increase in the No of Voters
<i>Muslim Bumiputera</i>	<b>4426</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
Non-Muslim Bumiputera	2124	27.5%
Chinese	3082	27.8%

Source: Election Reports, Sabah, 1986 to 1994

Table 51 above shows that the percentage increases in the number of voters from 1986 to 1994 in the Muslim Bumiputera constituencies was almost twice that of the Non-Muslim Bumiputera and Chinese majority constituencies. This is further proof that the large numbers of Muslim Bumiputera voters, many of them illegal immigrants, were put on the electoral roll to increase the number and percentage of Muslim Bumiputera voters.

This large increase in the number of Muslim Bumiputera voters partly explains why the PBS only managed to win a two seat majority in the 1994 Sabah state elections.

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<sup>1</sup> Mutalib MD most famously provided detailed documentation on this process in his self published 1999 book entitled 'IC Palsu: Merampas Hak Anak Sabah' (translation: 'Fake Identity Cards: Robbing the rights of the sons of Sabah').

**Table 52: Regression Analysis in the effect of the percentage increase in the number of voters from 1986 to 1994 on the performance of the PBS in the Sabah state elections**

Independent Variable	1994 vs. 1990	1994 vs. 1986
<i>Percentage Increase in the number of voters</i>	<b>-0.365*</b>	<b>-0.208**</b>
Difference in the number of candidates	-0.158	-0.004
Muslim Bumiputera population	-0.335**	0.114

Dependent variable is the change in PBS support from 1986 to 1994 and from 1990 to 1994

\* Significant at the 5% level, \*\* Significant at the 10% level

Table 52 above shows the regression results with changes in the vote share of the PBS from 1986 to 1994 and 1990 to 1994 as the dependent variables against the percentage increase in the number of voters from 1986 to 1994 and from 1990 to 1994 as the key independent variable of interest.

The percentage increase in the number of voters is significant at the 5% and 10% level respectively in both regressions and has the expected negative sign which indicates that a higher percentage increase in the number of voters from 1990 to 1994 and from 1986 to 1994 decreased the level of support for the PBS.

Using the 1994 vs. 1990 results, a 1% increase in the number of voters in Sabah from 1990 to 1994 is responsible for a 3.65% decrease in the percentage of the support obtained by the PBS, all other factors held constant.

Accusations regarding the continued registration of illegal immigrants as phantom voters by the PBS would continue into the 1999 Sabah state elections (Moten, 1999, 805-806).

Despite these protests, the Election Commission was reluctant to add to scrub these phantom voters from the electoral rolls, an action it was more than willing to undertake after the 1969 general election.

While the hands of the Election Commission may have been tied in terms of determining which of the voters had registered using fake identity cards, a more independent and empowered Election Commission committed to protecting the integrity of the electoral rolls would have been more concerned with a sudden rise in the number of registered voters in the time period identified and taken steps to investigate this phenomenon.

The situation in Sabah was unique in that there was a large pool of illegal immigrants, many of whom would claim a Muslim Bumiputera identity, that the BN could tap to not only include on the electoral roll but also skew the overall ethnic composition of the electoral. Originally the non-Muslim Bumiputera population comprised the plurality of voters, but eventually the Muslim Bumiputera population comprised the majority of voters. The emergence of the PBS as a party which challenged the BN at the state level in Sabah in 1985 provided the impetus to start registering these

voters. PBS's departure from the BN prior to the 1990 general elections provided further motivation to increase further the number of these phantom voters in the electoral roll.

Even with this sudden increase in the number of voters in Sabah from 1985 onwards, the PBS still managed to win 25 out of 48 state seats in the 1994 state elections. Subsequent defections from the PBS prevented the PBS from forming the state government. In the 1999 state elections in Sabah, PBS would still manage to win 17 out of the 48 state seats at stake. It is more than likely that the PBS could have maintained its hold in the state of Sabah had the registration of a large number of illegal immigrants as voters not taken place. Just as PAS managed to maintain control the Kelantan state government, the PBS could have done the same in Sabah.



## **Appendix B: Electoral Impact of the Exclusion of 680,000 voters in the 1999 General Elections**

The 1999 general election featured the formation of the united opposition coalition for a first time in Malaysia's electoral history. The formation of the Barisan Alternatif (BA) comprising the DAP, PAS and the newly formed Keadilan, were hoping to capitalize on the widespread dissatisfaction against the BN as a result of the Asian economic crisis of 1997 / 1998 which led to the political crisis that resulted in the sacking of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, and his subsequent conviction over charges of corruption and sodomy (Weiss, 2000; Ahmad et al, 2000). The BA was hoping to deny the BN their two thirds hold on the federal parliament by winning both non-Malay and Malay majority constituencies as well as making a dent in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies through vote-pooling. In the end, while PAS made significant inroads into the Malay majority constituencies in the four northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu, none of the opposition parties made any significant headway in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. An important reason as to why the BA failed to make any headway in these constituencies, especially in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan, the site of many demonstrations against the BN, was because a sizeable number of newly registered voters were not included in the electoral roll.

The *reformasi* movement, as the popular uprising against the BN was popularly known, mobilized many previously politically apathetic citizens to take to the streets as

well as to register themselves on the electoral roll. Approximately 680,000 voters registered themselves during the yearly voter registration exercise conducted by the Election Commission in the months of April and May of 1999 (Lim, 2005, 272-273). But these 680,000 newly registered voters were not put on the electoral rolls in the 1999 general election because the Election Commission could not process their records in time. This decision on the part of the Election Commission most probably cost the opposition a number of constituencies which it would have otherwise won with the inclusion of these newly registered voters.

If these 680,000 registered voters had been allowed to vote in the 1999 general election, the number of voters in Peninsular Malaysia would have increased by 8.5%, a not insignificant number. If these voters were uniformly distributed across all 144 parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia, the average number of voters in each parliamentary constituency (which number approximately 55,000 voters in 1999) would have increased by approximately 4700 voters.

The common consensus was that a disproportionate number of these newly registered voters would have voted for the opposition (Lim, 2005, 273) because they were motivated to register as a result of the political events leading up to the 1999 general election. But what has been missing thus far is an estimation of how many constituencies these additional 680,000 voters would have swung had they been allowed to vote in 1999. I attempt to estimate the effect of this exclusion in this appendix.

Firstly, I estimate the distribution of these 680,000 voters in Peninsular Malaysia. This estimation can be obtained using figures from the 2003 delimitation exercise. The 2003 delimitation exercise was conducted using the electoral roll figures which included the 680,000 voters and excludes the voters who were registered after the introduction of a year round voter registration system in July 2002 (Ong, 2005, 312).

Secondly, after these 680,000 votes have been distributed among the 144 parliamentary seats in Peninsular Malaysia, a few plausible scenarios in regard to how these voters would have voted are put proposed. As mentioned above, a reasonable assumption would be that the level of BN support among these voters would fall short of the 50% mark. In other words, more of these voters would vote for the opposition rather than the BN. The electoral outcomes in each of the 144 parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia are re-examined under three scenarios where the level of BN support among the distributed 680,000 voters is 30%, 35% and 40% respectively (Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 respectively).

**Table 53: Distribution of additional and total parliamentary seats won by the opposition parties under Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 in Peninsular Malaysia, 1999 general election**

Party	Actual seats	Additional seats			Total New Seats		
		Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
PAS	27	5	4	4	32	31	31
Keadilan	5	7	6	3	12	11	8
DAP	10	2	1	1	12	11	11
Total	42	14	11	8	56	53	50

Table 53 above shows the additional number of parliamentary constituencies which the three main opposition parties would have won in Peninsular Malaysia. Under the most favorable scenario to the opposition – Scenario 1- the opposition parties would have won at additional 14 parliamentary constituencies and under the least favorable scenario – Scenario 3 – the opposition parties would have won an additional 8 parliamentary constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia.

**Table 54: Number and percentage of seats won by the BN under Scenarios 1,2 and 3, Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysia, 1999 general election**

	Actual	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
P. Malaysia	102 (70.8%)	88 (61.1%)	91 (63.2%)	94 (65.3%)
Malaysia	148 (76.7%)	134 (69.4%)	137 (71.0%)	140 (72.5%)

Under any of the three Scenarios, the BN would have been denied a two thirds majority in Peninsular Malaysia, if the 680,000 voters had been allowed to vote in the 1999 general election, although, the change would not have been sufficient to deny the

BN a two thirds majority in Malaysia as a whole because of the electoral dominance of the BN in Sabah and Sarawak in the same election (Table 54 above).

The main beneficiaries of these additional voters would have been Keadilan, followed by PAS and lastly the DAP. This is because Keadilan contested in a number of constituencies which it lost by small margins and which also would have experienced the largest increase in the number of new voters. DAP would have benefited least from the additional voters since the two seats which it lost by small margins – Bukit Bendera and Jelutong in Penang, were seats which did not see large increases in the number of new voters.

**Table 55: Seats which would have changed hands from BN to the opposition under Scenario 1, 2 and 3, Peninsular Malaysia, 1999 general election**

State	Code	Seat Name	Scenario1	Scenario2	Scenario3	Type of Seat
Pahang	P77	Jerantut	PAS	0	0	MM
Pahang	P80	Pekan	PAS	PAS	PAS	MM
Pahang	P84	Temerloh	PAS	PAS	PAS	MM
Selangor	P86	Sabak Bernam	Keadilan	0	0	MM
Selangor	P91	Gombak	PAS	PAS	PAS	MM
Selangor	P92	Ampang Jaya	Keadilan	Keadilan	0	Mixed
Selangor	P93	Hulu Langat	Keadilan	Keadilan	Keadilan	Mixed
Selangor	P96	Serdang	DAP	DAP	DAP	Mixed
Selangor	P97	Subang	Keadilan	Keadilan	0	Mixed
Selangor	P98	Shah Alam	Keadilan	Keadilan	Keadilan	Mixed
Selangor	P99	Kapar	PAS	PAS	PAS	Mixed
Wilayah Persekutuan	P109	Lembah Pantai	Keadilan	Keadilan	0	Mixed

**Table 55: Seats which would have changed hands from BN to the opposition under Scenario 1, 2 and 3, Peninsular Malaysia, 1999 general election (continued)**

Wilayah Persekutuan	P112	Bandar Tun Razak	Keadilan	Keadilan	Keadilan	Mixed
Negeri Sembilan	P118	Rasah	DAP	0	0	Mixed

Note: MM = Malay majority (Malay > 60%), Mixed = No one ethnic group above 60%

As important as the number of additional parliamentary constituencies which the opposition would have won if the 680,000 newly registered voters had been allowed to vote is the make-up of the constituencies which the opposition would have won. Table 55 above lists the parliamentary constituencies that would have changed hands under the three scenarios. Under Scenario 1, ten out of the fourteen parliamentary constituencies are in the urbanized state of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan and nine out of the fourteen parliamentary constituencies are ethnically heterogeneous or mixed constituencies, where no one ethnic group comprises more than 60% of voters.

The impact of the additional constituencies which the opposition would have won under Scenario 1 extends beyond adding to the opposition tally in terms of the number of parliamentary constituencies.

Firstly, winning these additional constituencies would have strengthen the electoral basis of the then newly formed Barisan Alternatif (BA) or the Alternative Front which was to pool the votes of opposition-inclined voters from the different ethnic

groups and hence break the BN's stranglehold on the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. Winning the nine ethnically heterogeneous constituencies in Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan and Negeri Sembilan would have boosted the electoral returns to the BA as a result of vote pooling.

Secondly, the ability of Keadilan to win parliamentary constituencies outside Anwar Ibrahim's home constituency of Permatang Pauh and the four other constituencies in Kelantan and Terengganu that were allocated<sup>1</sup> to it by PAS would have strengthened its bargaining vis-à-vis the Islamic party. Keadilan's role within the BA was to act as a referee and adjudicator between the DAP and PAS (more on this in the next chapter), and this role was contingent on Keadilan's ability to win a sufficient number of parliamentary constituencies for it to stand on its own. Instead, Keadilan's marginal losses in many of the parliamentary constituencies in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan left it in a position where it was largely ignored by PAS. A politically stronger Keadilan would have no doubt been in a better position to convince PAS not to go ahead with its attempt to pass the *hudud* legislation in 2001 in the state of Terengganu, which it controlled after the 1999 general election, against the strong objections of the DAP.<sup>2</sup> The impasse between the DAP and PAS eventually led to the

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<sup>1</sup> The implication here is that PAS would have won in these constituencies and merely conceded these constituencies for Keadilan to claim victory in these constituencies.

<sup>2</sup> *Hudud* legislation is a set of Islamic laws which metes out punishments for certain crimes including adultery, stealing, and apostasy. The punishments for these crimes including stoning for adulterers and apostates, and the removing of a hand for thieves. PAS had previously passed these laws in the Kelantan state

DAP leaving the BA after the 9/11 attacks in the United States and just prior to the Sarawak state elections in 2001.

Thirdly, the election of two PAS candidates<sup>3</sup> from the Gombak and Kapar parliamentary constituencies, who are known as political moderates may have allowed them to play a greater role in moderating the demands of PAS after the 1999 general election.

Hence, while the exclusion of the 680,000 voters from the 1999 general election electoral roll did not significantly affect the overall general election results, at least from the point of view of denying the BN a two-thirds majority in the parliament, the more significant political impact was denying the BA from winning a sizeable number of ethnically mixed constituencies in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan, as well as preventing Keadilan and a few moderate PAS leaders from playing the role of referee between the DAP and PAS.

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legislature in 1993 knowing that it would not be implemented because these punishments contravened the federal constitution. PAS passed these laws to try to outflank UMNO by portraying itself as the more Islamic party of the two. But by trying to outflank UMNO on Islamic issues, PAS would also alienate the DAP because of its uncompromising stance against the implementation of the *hudud* Islamic laws.

<sup>3</sup> The two PAS candidates who would have been elected are Dr. Hatta Ramli (Gombak) and Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad (Kapar). Dr. Dzulkefly would later be elected as an MP in an ethnically heterogeneous constituency (Kuala Selangor) in the 2008 general election and is one of the moderating voices within PAS.



## Appendix C: Effects of Malapportionment on the 2008 General Election Results

The 2008 general election is particularly important in terms of understanding how the 2003 delimitation exercise protected the BN because of the failure of the ruling coalition to obtain a 2/3rds parliamentary majority.

**Table 56: 2008 general election if malapportionment between the states was eliminated**

State / Region	Original No of Seats	Reallocated Number of Seats	Original No of BN Seats	Reallocated Number of BN Seats
Peninsular Malaysia	165	187	85 (51.5%)	93 (49.7%)
Sabah	26	17	25 (96.2%)	16 (94.1%)
Sarawak	31	18	30 (96.8%)	17 (94.4%)
Total	222	222	195 (63.1%)	126 (56.8%)

Table 56 above shows how the results of the 2008 general election would have changed if constituencies were allocated between the states strictly in accordance to the number of voters – in other words, following the one-man-one-vote principle. Sabah and Sarawak would have been allocated a smaller number of parliamentary constituencies. Peninsular Malaysia would have been allocated more constituencies and more importantly, many of the constituencies would have been allocated to states that were formerly under represented such as Penang, Kedah, Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan. While the BN would have won a larger number of parliamentary constituencies in

Peninsular Malaysia after this theoretical reallocation of constituencies<sup>1</sup>, it would have lost a majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. The percentage of constituencies won by the BN would have decreased from 51.5% to 49.7%.<sup>2</sup>

It would have been immensely significant if the BN had lost the majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia because of the understanding that whichever party or coalition wins the majority of seats in Peninsular Malaysia can also make the claim to govern at the national level. More importantly, it would have increased the possibility that a significant number of MPs and parties in Sabah and Sarawak would have left the BN coalition if that the opposition parties held a majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. While explanations as to why the opposition's subsequent attempts to invite a significant number of parties and MPs from the two East Malaysian states failed are beyond this appendix<sup>3</sup>, one significant factor was that the opposition did not control a majority of constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia.

In the 2008 general election, the 'insurance' provided by the BN parties in Sabah and Sarawak became more apparent than any other time in Malaysia's electoral history.

The BN in Peninsular Malaysia won a bare majority of constituencies (51.5%) but

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<sup>1</sup> Since we don't know the intra-state distribution of these constituencies. I assume that the BN would have won the same proportion of constituencies in each state. For example, if the BN won 15% of constituencies in Penang in the 2008 general election, it would also have won 15% of constituencies after the reallocation of constituencies between the states.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably an underestimation of the constituencies which the BN would have lost since it does not take into account the partisan bias which the BN gains from intra-state malapportionment.

<sup>3</sup> The leader of the opposition coalition – Pakatan Rakyat - formed after the 2008 general election, Anwar Ibrahim announced that he would have enough MPs to crossover to the side of the opposition by Septemeber 16, 2008, failed to materialize.

managed to win all but two of the 57 parliamentary constituencies at stake in Sabah and Sarawak. But this need not have been the case if not for the role of malapportionment in both states and the inclusion of a large number of illegal voters on the electoral roll in Sabah (See Appendix A).

## Appendix D: Understanding the BN backlash

To understand the backlash against the BN in 2008, one needs to understand the circumstances under which the BN achieved its historic parliamentary majority in the 2004 general election where it won 91% of total seats.

Abdullah Badawi, Malaysia's 5<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister, who replaced Mahathir at the end of 2003, campaigned under a reform agenda of his own in the 2004 general election. His skilful co-optation of the *reformasi* agenda most notably in combating corruption placated many of the Malay voters who had voted for the opposition in the 1999 general election. The effectiveness of his campaign was no doubt helped by his own image as an UMNO leader that had not been tainted by accusations of corruption. Prior to the 2004 general election, two high profile arrests were made on grounds of corruption – a businessman who was known to have close ties with Mahathir<sup>1</sup> and an UMNO minister from Sabah<sup>2</sup>. It raised public expectations that more arrests would follow after the 2004 general election.

Badawi also announced, prior to the 2004 general election, that he was forming a Royal Commission of Inquiry into reforming the police force (Moten and Mokhtar, 2006, 335). The public opinion of the police force, already low because of the perception that the police are inefficient and corrupt, took a further dive when it was revealed that the

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Chia, the former head of Perwaja, a national steel maker.

<sup>2</sup> Kasitah Gadam was the Land and Cooperatives Minister when he was charged.

Chief Inspector of the Police had beaten up Anwar while he was under police custody in 1998. This announcement was packaged as part of a larger series of reforms that Badawi would undertake in order to increase the efficiency of the civil service as well as to reduce the level of corruption within its ranks.

These symbolic announcements and strategic moves were aimed squarely at addressing the issues of crony capitalism, corruption and to a lesser extent, the human rights abuses that had sparked the *reformasi* movement prior to the 1999 general election. Survey results prior to the 2004 general election indicated that these announcements were having their intended effect. According to a survey commissioned by the Star, the largest English newspaper in Malaysia, 84% of respondents agree with the statement that Badawi was a leader who is intent of battling corruption. In addition, 76% of respondents agreed with the statement that Badawi was a leader who is honest and clean. With this second dimension of political competition effectively neutralized by Badawi's image and policy announcements, the BN romped to a historic electoral victory in the 2004 general election winning 199 out of 219 (91%) parliamentary constituencies in Malaysia.

Badawi's administration made a series of political miscalculations that would ultimately end up costing the BN in the 2008 general election. These mistakes can be grouped under two broad categories. The first category of mistakes has to do with not

delivering on the reform agenda that was promised in the 2004 general election. The following is a summary of the mistakes made under the first category.

Firstly, after the two high profile arrests before the 2004 general election under corruption charges, no other prominent politician or businessman was investigated and subsequently charged for corruption. The UMNO leader who was charged for the 2004 general election was never convicted nor acquitted during the four years in between the 2004 and 2008 general election.<sup>3</sup> The businessman linked to Mahathir was acquitted in 2007.<sup>4</sup> In other words, after a campaign promising on cracking down on corruption, it was business as usual within the BN and specifically UMNO after the 2004 general election.

Secondly, the astounding rise in the political career of Badawi's son-in-law, Khairy Jamaluddin, from his position as a political aide to Badawi while Badawi was still the Deputy Prime Minister, to the Deputy UMNO Youth chief, left Badawi open to criticisms of nepotism. In addition, Khairy's reputation the most powerful 28 year old in Malaysia because of his reputation as Badawi's main advisor led to many rumors of corruption involving Khairy's role as a 'fixer' (Chin and Wong, 2009, 77).

Thirdly, Badawi's deputy, Najib Tun Razak, who later replaced Badawi as the 6<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Malaysia, in March 2009 was not spared from being tainted by

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<sup>3</sup> Kasitah Gaddam was eventually acquitted in August, 2009. Charges against Eric Chia were

<sup>4</sup> Eric Chia died of a heart attack in 2008.

scandal. A close associated of Najib, Abdul Razak Baginda, who was known as the middle man for Najib in handling Malaysian defense contracts when Najib was the Defense Minister, was implicated in a headline grabbing murder of a Mongolian model. She was accused of blackmailing Baginda for a share of commissions he had received from these defense contracts. It was alleged that Baginda was not willing to accept her demands and requested two military personnel who were attached to the Defense Ministry to prevent her from harassing him any further. They complied by kidnapping her, shooting her in the head and blowing her body up with C4 explosives. Baginda was incarcerated during the period of the trial and this scandal was later used by the opposition to attack Najib and indirectly, Badawi.

Fourthly, a scandal involving the judiciary captured the attention of the public. A video recording was obtained by two opposition leaders from Keadilan. This video featured a prominent Indian lawyer speaking to someone on the phone, presumably a senior Judge. The conversation revolved around the issue of influencing the composition of the Federal Court, the highest court in the land. A Royal Commission of Inquiry into what had become known the VK Lingam Video scandal was formed but no substantive actions were taken after the completion of this royal commission, at least not in time for the 2008 general election that was held in March.<sup>5</sup> This scandal prompted a march

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<sup>5</sup> A Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) bill was passed in December 2008 to create a commission that would oversee the appointment of senior judges but was criticized as still concentrating too much power in the hands of the executive who still controlled the composition of the commission. For a critique of the bill,

organized by the Malaysian Bar Council, the association which all lawyers belong to, which was attended by over 2000 lawyers, most of them dressed in suits, walking to the Federal Court in Putrajaya, the administrative capital of Malaysia (Chin and Wong, 2009, 79).

Fifthly, after forming the Royal Commission of Inquiry to look into reforming the police force prior to the 2004 general election, Badawi's administration decided not to implement one of the key proposals of the Royal Commission which was the setting up of an Independent Policy Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) that would have had wide ranging powers to investigate reports of corruption and abuse of powers by the police force.<sup>6</sup>

Sixthly, as a reminder that the *reformasi* spirit was well and alive among the electorate, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (BERSIH), a civil society organization with strong links to the opposition parties, organized a massive rally in downtown Kuala Lumpur, which attracted an estimated 50,000 people, to pressure Badawi to reform the electoral system including the removal of phantom voters from the electoral roll.

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see the comments of Ambiga Sreenevasan, the former president of the Bar Council:  
[http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/members\\_opinions\\_and\\_comments/bar\\_councils\\_comments\\_on\\_the\\_judicial\\_appointments\\_commission\\_bill\\_2008.html](http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/members_opinions_and_comments/bar_councils_comments_on_the_judicial_appointments_commission_bill_2008.html) (Accessed August 16, 2009)

<sup>6</sup> Instead a watered down Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC) that did not have wide ranging powers of investigation was proposed but the bill to establish this commission was only passed in March 2009, prior to Badawi stepping down as Prime Minister.



BERSIH was particularly successful at creating awareness of its cause among voters in Selangor. According to a Merdeka Center survey report, 'more people in Selangor were aware of the rally held by BERSIH (76%) than nationwide (45%).' In addition, 66% of respondents in Selangor supported BERSIH's demand for free and fair elections.<sup>7</sup>

These six issues are united by one commonality which is that they all concern the governance / anti-corruption / clean government aspect of Badawi's campaign promises before the 2004 general election. Badawi's response to every single one of these issues was to ignore them. He made the mistake of thinking that issues which resonated during the *reformasi* movement and which he had so successfully co-opted as part of his 2004 general election campaign were no longer salient.

The second category of missteps under the Badawi administration was to allow UMNO to appear to be even more religiously and ethnically extreme than PAS thereby giving the non-Malay voters a reason to vote for PAS and PKR over the BN. The overwhelming victory achieved by the BN had given Badawi the false impression that he could afford not to rein in the more extremist elements within UMNO.

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<sup>7</sup> Merdeka Center, 'Selangor Voter Opinion Poll 2007', pp.58, <http://www.merdeka.org/v2/download/Selangor%20Voter%20Opinion%20Poll%20Nov%2007%20-%20NSTP.pdf> (Access August 19, 2009)

The feelings of UMNO leaders and delegates towards the non-Malays including the non-Malay component parties within the BN was exposed when the proceedings of UMNO's annual general assembly were telecast live over ASTRO, a popular satellite television provider. With PAS's sound defeat in the 2004 general election, the focus of many of the delegates and speakers in the 2006 UMNO general assembly turned to the demands that had been made by some of the non-Malay BN component parties including possibly re-examining the basis of the New Economic Policy (NEP). A much quoted example of the kind of language that was being used included the following statement made by an UMNO delegate from Melaka: 'The non-Malays are challenging the Malays more seriously now... UMNO is willing to risk lives and bathe in blood in defense of race and religion. Don't play with fire. If they mess with our rights, we will mess with theirs'.<sup>8</sup> The fact that UMNO leaders tried to play down the tone of the language used by some of the delegates by saying that this was in fact a normal occurrence during the general assembly probably did not assuage the non-Malays who were listening to this language broadcast live for the very first time. Significantly, while Badawi tried to make up for this in his closing speech to the general assembly by focusing on the shared commonalities between UMNO and the other BN component parties, he did not reprimand those who had used language that disturbed many of the

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<sup>8</sup> Leslie Lau, November 28, 2006, 'Non-Malays still troubled by UMNO keris waving act', Straits Times Singapore.

non-Malays. The tone of the general assembly was captured by a photo of the UMNO Youth leader, Hishamuddin Hussein, letting out a primordial scream with a Malay dagger in his hand. This picture was later used by the opposition parties in the non-Malay majority constituencies as a symbol of UMNO's own extremism (Figure 16 below).

**Figure 16: Widely circulated picture of former UMNO Youth chief with a traditional Malay dagger**



Another well publicized example of UMNO taking a position that alienated many of the non-Malay voters was Khairy Jamaluddin's direct criticism of GERAKAN, the BN component party that held the position of the Chief Minister of Penang, the only Chinese majority state in Peninsular Malaysia. Khairy criticized GERAKAN and its Chief Minister by saying that the Malays in Penang had been marginalized and had not seen significant economic progress under GERAKAN's tenure in that state. This

criticism was exacerbated when an UMNO Youth division in Penang unfurled banners that protested the leadership of the GERAKAN Chief Minister in that state. UMNO's attacks on GERAKAN and the tepid response of GERAKAN's Chief Minister contributed to a growing perception among the non-Malays that UMNO, bereft of the need to fend off challenges from PAS, was being increasingly critical of the non-Malay leaders within the BN and by extension, the non-Malays themselves.

The BN was also inept in handling a number of religious conversion issues involving non-Malays that took place during the Badawi administration. There were numerous reported cases of the Islamic authorities seizing the bodies of deceased non-Malays on the grounds that these non-Malays had earlier converted to Islam, much to the surprise of their spouses. In another high profile conversion case where an Indian husband had converted to Islam to claim the custody of his children, the High Court ruled that the Hindu mother could have custody of her children but that she would have to bring them up as Muslims. In response to the issues raised by these religious conversion cases involving non-Malays, a coalition of concerned civil society groups formed Article 11, taking its name from Article 11 of the Federal Constitution which safeguards the freedom of religion in Malaysia. This coalition organized a series of forums across the country to raise awareness in regard to the conversions of spouses and minors among non-Malays but was met with protests from conservative Muslim groups (which included members and second echelon leaders from UMNO, PAS and Keadilan).

These forums had to be stopped when the police would not guarantee that the forums would not be disrupted by protestors. This decision prompted many non-Malays to question the double standards practiced by the police – to allow these protests to carry on in a context where public protests are generally met with retaliatory actions on the part of the police while not protecting the right of the groups involved in Article 11 to conduct their forums which were taking place in private settings.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the government's harsh crackdown on the leaders of Hindraf, a newly formed coalition of Hindu non governmental organizations, provoked a strong negative reaction from the Indian community. In August 2007, Hindraf leaders planned a massive rally in downtown Kuala Lumpur to submit a petition to the British High Commission as a part of a class action suit filed on behalf of Malaysian Indians at the Royal Courts of Justice in London to sue the British government for bringing Indians into then Malay as indentured laborers, for exploiting them and for failing to protect their rights in the Federal Constitution when granting independence to Malaya. In the aftermath of this rally, in which an estimated 30,000 people took to the streets of Kuala Lumpur, five of Hindraf's leaders were detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA), which allows the government to detain a person indefinitely without trial. The harsh crackdown on the organizers of the Hindraf rally was contrasted with the kid-gloves treatment received by the mostly Malay protestors against the Article 11 forums.

By failing to control the element within UMNO who were taking an increasingly aggressive stand on Malay rights and speaking out against non-Malays including the non-Malay leaders within the BN, the Badawi administration was risking a potential backlash from the non-Malays against UMNO for unnecessarily moving to a flank position in regard to the ethnic dimension of political competition.

The Badawi administration's decision not to take a pro-active position in addressing the underlying concerns among the non-Malays in regard to the issue of the conversion of deceased spouses and minors created the impression that in the arena of religious competition, UMNO was actually more extreme than PAS, especially since UMNO was seen as having more power to act (or not to act, depending on the context) in this arena.

The political miscalculations on the part of the Badawi administration probably stemmed from a certain amount of arrogance as a result of winning 91% of parliamentary seats in the 2004 general election. Without a significant external enemy in the opposition, political competition turned inward within the BN, with UMNO wanting to assert its already assured position of dominance within the ruling coalition.

Badawi's administration was anticipating that the BN would not repeat its 2004 performance when it called for fresh elections in 2008. But it was also anticipating that these electoral losses would be minimal and be mainly in the non-Malay constituencies which usually swing to the opposition, namely DAP, after displays of UMNO

aggression. The underlying assumption was that the non-Malays, after their consistent support of the BN in the 1999 general election, would never contemplate voting for Keadilan and PAS in large numbers in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. Another underlying assumption was that the issues raised by the *reformasi* movement in 1999 was no longer salient among the Malays and that Badawi's non-deliverance on the axis of competition involving the reduction of corruption and the improvement of governance would not cost the BN a significant number of Malay votes. Both assumptions turned out to be wrong. The non-Malays abandoned the BN in droves. The Malay support fell as well but by a smaller margin. The remnants of the *reformasi* movement came back to haunt the BN. The younger non-Malay voters, who had mostly voted for the BN in the 1999 general elections, now joined the younger Malay voters in casting an anti-regime vote. Each of these components – the racial backlash, the *reformasi* backlash and the generational backlash – cost the BN a two-thirds majority in the parliament and the control of five state governments in the 2008 general elections.

## Appendix E: Decomposing the BN backlash by Race

Table 57 to 59 below show the level of Malay and non-Malay support for the BN in the individual constituencies separated out by party (Keadilan, PAS and DAP). A few vignettes from selected constituencies will then be used to illustrate the non-Malay vote swings to Keadilan and PAS.

**Table 57: Change in Malay and non-Malay BN support in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies won by Keadilan, Peninsular Malaysia, 2008 versus 2004 general elections**

State	Constituency	Malay BN% 2008	NonMalay BN% 2008	Change MalayBN% 2004 vs. 2008	Change NonMalay BN% 2004 vs. 2008
Kedah	Kuala Kedah	45.0%	42.2%	-4.9%	-48.8%
Kedah	Merbok	53.8%	29.2%	-2.9%	-55.5%
Kedah	Sungai Petani	52.1%	25.7%	-5.2%	-54.5%
Kedah	Padang Serai	50.0%	22.3%	4.9%	-55.2%
Kedah	Kulim Bandar Baharu	52.9%	14.7%	-6.2%	-45.7%
Penang	Nibong Tebal	75.0%	20.7%	0.1%	-25.3%
Penang	Bayan Baru	43.7%	33.6%	-27.8%	-40.8%
Penang	Balik Pulau	60.1%	29.7%	-12.3%	-41.3%
Perak	Bagan Serai	46.4%	40.3%	-2.9%	-44.6%
Perak	Sungai Siput	63.9%	32.7%	-2.3%	-26.7%
Perak	Gopeng	64.3%	26.7%	-13.8%	-30.4%
Pahang	Kuantan	45.2%	48.4%	-4.1%	-37.7%
Selangor	Ulu Selangor	55.9%	41.7%	-2.7%	-36.4%
Selangor	Selayang	59.1%	37.3%	-4.6%	-44.4%
Selangor	Gombak	48.2%	33.7%	-5.0%	-51.2%
Selangor	Ampang	53.8%	36.2%	-20.1%	-31.1%
Selangor	Kelana Jaya	52.4%	37.5%	-0.9%	-45.8%
Selangor	PJ Selatan	51.2%	39.0%	-15.1%	-36.4%
Selangor	Subang	57.8%	29.8%	5.2%	-46.7%
Selangor	Kapar	57.3%	27.2%	-0.3%	-35.0%



**Table 57: Change in Malay and non-Malay BN support in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies won by Keadilan, Peninsular Malaysia, 2008 versus 2004 general elections (continued)**

Selangor	Kuala Langat	61.5%	32.6%	-8.3%	-44.3%
WPKL	Batu	54.9%	26.3%	-8.1%	-33.8%
WPKL	Wangsa Maju	56.6%	40.0%	6.0%	-40.7%
WPKL	Lembah Pantai	52.8%	37.0%	-7.7%	-45.3%
WPKL	Bandar Tun Razak	48.9%	42.3%	-7.7%	-36.2%
NSembilan	Teluk Kemang	58.9%	34.7%	-7.2%	-17.4%

Source: 2004 and 2008 Polling Station Results, Personal Analysis (King 1997)

**Table 58: Change in Malay and non-Malay BN support in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies won by PAS, Peninsular Malaysia, 2004 versus 2008 general elections**

State	Constituency	Malay BN% 2008	NonMalay BN% 2008	Change MalayBN% 2004 vs. 2008	Change NonMalay BN% 2004 vs. 2008
Kedah	Pokok Sena	43.4%	45.4%	-6.1%	-45.6%
Kedah	Jerai	50.6%	36.2%	-2.2%	-55.5%
Perak	Parit Buntar	41.6%	33.7%	-6.1%	-43.0%
Perak	Bukit Gantang	52.7%	36.1%	1.6%	-48.3%
Selangor	Kuala Selangor	58.4%	31.6%	-7.8%	-52.5%
Selangor	Ulu Langat	59.8%	32.9%	-4.4%	-40.5%
Selangor	Shah Alam	44.6%	33.2%	-9.1%	-50.0%
Selangor	Kota Raja	36.1%	27.7%	-6.8%	-41.3%
WPKL	Titiwangsa	48.4%	43.5%	-8.3%	-44.8%

Source: 2004 and 2008 Polling Station Results, Personal Analysis (King 1997)

**Table 59: Change in Malay and non-Malay BN support in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies won by DAP, Peninsular Malaysia, 2004 versus 2008 general elections**

State	Constituency	Malay BN% 2008	NonMalay BN% 2008	Change MalayBN% 2004 vs. 2008	Change NonMalay BN% 2004 vs. 2008
Penang	Batu Kawan	75.1%	27.2%	-0.5%	-20.2%
Perak	Taiping	63.7%	19.4%	-7.7%	-14.4%
Perak	Beruas	78.2%	32.3%	-4.5%	-13.3%
Perak	Telok Intan	70.9%	33.9%	1.2%	-12.6%
Selangor	Serdang	64.4%	20.1%	-15.8%	-29.3%
Selangor	Puchong	66.5%	18.8%	13.7%	-35.0%
Selangor	PJ Utara	65.9%	26.0%	-19.8%	-32.7%
WPKL	Segambut	73.0%	18.8%	-15.6%	-42.3%
NSembilan	Seremban	77.2%	24.4%	-10.0%	-22.0%
NSembilan	Rasah	79.4%	22.2%	-12.0%	-17.7%
Melaka	Kota Melaka	79.5%	21.9%	-7.5%	-9.2%
Johor	Bakri	82.8%	20.6%	3.0%	-48.0%

I use three constituencies From Tables 57 to 59 to illustrate the unprecedented swing in the non-Malay vote against the BN which proved to be decisive in enabling PAS and PKR to win a record number of ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. The non-Malay vote was decisive in that the BN managed to hold on to a majority of the Malay support but lost these constituencies because of the non-Malay vote swing against the ruling coalition.

Wangsa Maju is a parliamentary constituency in Wilayah Persekutuan, not far from downtown Kuala Lumpur. It is very much an urban constituency that is ethnically heterogeneous but with a small Malay majority (53% Malay, 38% Chinese, 8% Indian,

1% Others). The parliamentary contest in the 2008 general election featured two Chinese candidates, one from MCA and one from Keadilan. Under normal circumstances, this would be the kind of constituency that the BN would win by large margins. It would win the majority of the Malay and the non-Malay vote. In this particular election, the normal calculus of voting did not prevail. The Chinese Keadilan candidate managed to limit the Malay support for the Chinese MCA candidate to 57% and won the constituency by a mere 150 votes (0.4% majority) by winning 60% of the non-Malay vote, reducing BN's share of the non-Malay vote in this constituency by 41% (Table 57 above).

That non-Malay voters would vote for an opposition Chinese candidate over a BN Chinese candidate in large numbers in an ethnically heterogeneous constituency like Wangsa Maju should be surprising considering the BN's record in winning a majority of the non-Malay votes in this kind of constituency. One should also consider the fact that a majority of the non-Malay voters in Wangsa Maju voted for a Chinese candidate belonging to a Malay-led party (Keadilan) over a Chinese candidate from a Chinese component party (MCA) in the BN. The non-Malay dissatisfaction against the BN clearly trumped racial considerations in this constituency.

There was one other Malay majority constituency, Padang Serai (Malay 53%, Chinese 24%, Indian 23%), which featured two non-Malay candidates – an opposition Indian candidate from Keadilan and a Chinese candidate from MCA – where the non-

Malay vote was decisive. In this constituency, the Malay support for the BN was an estimated 50% but the non-Malay support for the BN fell by 55% to a mere 22%.

More surprising than the non-Malay vote proving to be decisive in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies featuring two non-Malay candidates was the finding that the non-Malay vote also proved to be decisive in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies featuring two Malay candidates.

Jerai, known as Yan, is a Malay majority constituency in Kedah with a significant minority of non-Malay voters – 79% Malay, 14 Chinese, 6% Indian, 1% Others. It was one of the constituencies in Kedah which was affected by gerrymandering in the 2003 delimitation exercise when a significant number of non-Malay voters were brought into this area (which was held by PAS). Before the delimitation exercise, the Malay composition of this seat was 89%. The non-Malay vote was brought into this constituency as a means of providing electoral cover for the BN in the event of another Malay backlash against the BN similar to the one experienced in 1999. The underlying assumption was that a significant majority of the non-Malay voters would choose the UMNO candidate over the PAS candidate because of the perceived ideological divide between PAS and the non-Malay voters.

The non-Malay vote did prove to be decisive in the 2008 general election in Jerai but in a manner which was contrary to the expectations of the BN. The BN managed to hold on to a small majority among the Malay voters in Jerai (51%) but could only

manage to win 36% of the non-Malay vote. The non-Malay support for the BN dropped by a massive 56% in Jerai from the 2004 to the 2008 general election.

In addition to Jerai, there were eight other Malay majority parliamentary constituencies which featured an UMNO candidate and a Malay PAS or Keadilan candidate where the BN managed to win a majority of the Malay vote but lost the constituency because of a decisive non-Malay vote swing. These constituencies are Merbok (63% Malay), Sungai Petani (58% Malay), Kulim Bandar Baharu (67% Malay), Balik Pulau (59% Malay), Kuala Selangor (60% Malay), Ampang (55% Malay), Hulu Langat (52% Malay) and Kuala Langat (52% Malay).

Most surprising, however, was the finding that non-Malay voters were decisive in a Malay majority constituency featuring a non-Malay BN candidate and a Malay opposition candidate.

Hulu Selangor is a semi-urban parliamentary constituency which is ethnically heterogeneous with a slight Malay majority (51% Malay, 29% Chinese, 29% Indian, 1% Others) in the state of Selangor. The parliamentary contest in 2008 featured an Indian MIC candidate from the BN and a Malay opposition candidate from Keadilan. The opposition candidate managed to limit the BN's share of the Malay vote to 56% and won the constituency by winning 58% of the non-Malay vote. The non-Malay support for the BN in this constituency decreased by 36%.

This was the only Malay majority parliamentary constituency featuring a non-Malay BN candidate contesting against a Malay opposition candidate from PAS or Keadilan where the non-Malay vote was decisive in delivering an opposition win. But there were three similar constituencies where more non-Malay voters voted for the Malay opposition candidate than the non-Malay BN candidate (Kuantan in Pahang, Kota Raja in Selangor and Bandar Tun Razak in Wilayah Persekutuan). The difference was that the Malay vote for the opposition candidates in these constituencies also surpassed the 50% mark.

When the backlash against the BN is examined at the constituency level and decomposed into its support among the Malay and non-Malay voters, a better understanding of the non-Malay voter backlash is obtained. Not only did non-Malay voters swing against the BN in non-Malay majority constituencies, but they also voted against the BN in many of the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies. One would not have predicted this phenomenon using voting patterns in the past and prior notions of which party constituted the moderate middle in Malaysia's political spectrum.

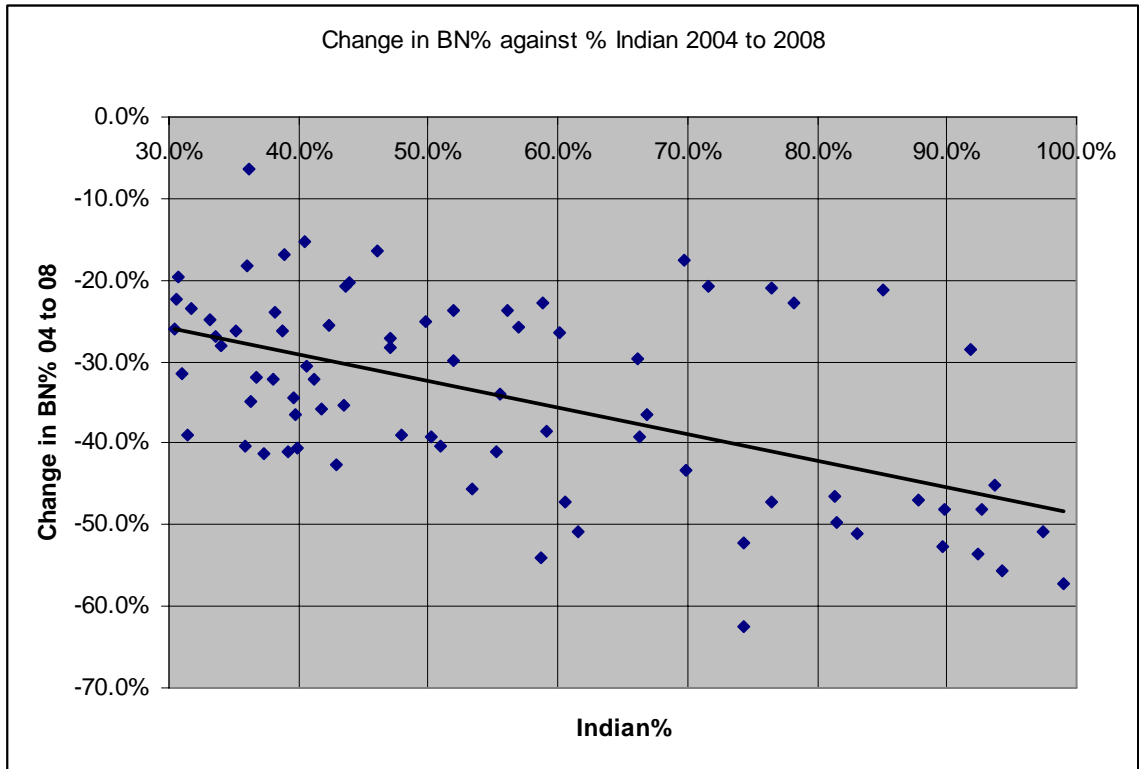
#### *The Indian backlash*

Estimating the level of support for the BN among the Indian voters as a separate component from the larger non-Malay category has always been challenging using data at the constituency level because of the relatively few parliamentary constituencies where the Indian voters constitute a significant enough proportion of voters. King's

(1997) method often yields unstable or inaccurate results because of this reason. Given this restriction, I examine instead, the precinct electoral returns to evaluate changes in the level of BN support among Indian voters.

The Indian voting population in Peninsular Malaysia is concentrated in a handful of constituencies in the west coast states of Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. I selected the precincts where the Indian voting population was more than 30% from the constituencies where the Indian voting population comprised more than 20% of the electorate. There were nine such constituencies and within these nine constituencies, there were 78 precincts where the Indian voters comprised more than 30% of the electorate.

**Figure 17: Change in BN support against percentage of Indian voters, selected precincts in Peninsular Malaysia, 2004 to 2008 general elections**



Source: 2004 and 2008 Precinct Data, Personal Analysis

Figure 17 above shows the relationship between the change in the level of BN support from 2004 to 2008 and the percentage of Indian voters by precinct. As the trendline shows, there is a very strong and negative correlation between the change in the level of BN support and the percentage of Indian voters in a precinct. This is consistent with the consensus among political analysts that there was a strong backlash among the Indian voters against the BN because of the detention of a number of Hindraf leaders under the Internal Security Act (ISA) as well as the failure of the Badawi



administration to resolve cases involving religious conversions many of them affecting the Indian community.

The average level of BN support in these 79 precincts was 69.4% in 2004. In 2008, it had dropped to 35.1% representing a fall of almost 34%. Of course, some of this fall was probably due a fall in the level of Chinese support for the BN (and to a lesser extent among Malay voters). But it is very likely that the opposition would not have won the number of constituencies that it did with only a swing in the Chinese vote. The BN lost in eight out of these nine constituencies where the Indian voters formed a significant proportion of the electorate. The combination of the Indian and Chinese vote swing against the BN was what delivered a record number of parliamentary constituencies to the opposition, including many in the ethnically heterogeneous constituencies where a significant number of Indian voters are found.

The extent to which the Indian vote swing ended up costing the BN can be seen in the record number of constituencies lost by the MIC, the Indian party within the BN.

**Table 60: Number of parliamentary constituencies contested and won by MIC, Peninsular Malaysia, 1974 to 2008 general elections**

Year	Contested	Won	%
1974	4	4	100.0%
1978	4	3	75.0%
1982	4	4	100.0%
1986	6	6	100.0%
1990	6	6	100.0%
1995	7	7	100.0%
1999	7	7	100.0%
2004	9	9	100.0%
2008	9	3	33.3%

Source: Election Reports 1974 to 2008

The MIC, from 1974 to 2004, had only lost one parliamentary constituency, giving it 46 out of a possible 47 (98%) parliamentary constituencies (Table 60). While Indian voters in Chinese majority constituencies featuring contests between MCA or GERAKAN on the one hand and the DAP on the other, have been willing to vote for the opposition, they have been less willing to support the opposition in the constituencies which featured the MIC. This changed in the 2008 general election when the Indian voters abandoned the MIC in droves including in many of the constituencies contested by the MIC. The MIC lost six out of the nine parliamentary constituencies it contested in, including losing 3 constituencies to Malay opposition candidates.

## Appendix F: Decomposing the BN *Reformasi* backlash

I hypothesize that the fall in the Malay support which the BN suffered from 2004 to 2008 was partly due to the remnants' from *reformasi* movement in 1999. These are the voters, many of them Malay, who would have been disappointed by Badawi's failure to deliver on his promises to reduce corruption and improve governance as part of his own reform agenda. To test this hypothesis, I use the distribution of the 680,000 registered but ineligible voters from the 1999 general election as a proxy for the strength of the *reformasi* remnants' effect. Using data from the 2003 delimitation exercise, I calculated the percentage increase in the number of voters by parliamentary constituency arising from the addition of the 680,000 voters who were registered but not added onto the electoral roll in the 1999 general election. These were the voters who were most motivated by the *reformasi* movement and hence would have the greatest motivation to vote against the Badawi administration for failing to live up to his reform campaign promises after the 2004 general election. The dependent variable for my test is the change in the level of BN support by parliamentary constituency from 2004 to 2008. In addition to the proxy variable for the *reformasi* remnants' effect, I include the percentage of Malay voters in each parliamentary constituency and a dummy for constituencies in Terengganu because of the suspiciously high increase in the number of voters in Terengganu from 1999 to 2004. The results are summarized in Table 61 below.

**Table 61: Testing the *Reformasi* Remnants' Hypothesis**

Independent Variable	Standardized Beta	T-Statistic
Reformasi 'Remnant' proxy	-0.265 *** (0.0265)	-4.099
Malay %	0.133 *** (0.021)	6.205
Dummy for Terengganu	0.073 *** (0.024)	3.016

Dependent variable: Change in BN support by parliamentary constituency, 2004 to 2008  
\*\*\* Significant at the 1% level

The *reformasi* remnants' proxy has the right sign and is significant at the 1% level. A 1% increase in the percentage of *reformasi* voters in a constituency decreases the percentage of BN support from 2004 to 2008 by 2.65%.

The percentage of Malay voters is a positive and significant predictor of the change in BN support. The higher the percentage of Malay voters in a constituency, the lower the decrease in the level of BN support. This is consistent with the finding that the decrease in the level of BN support is higher among the non-Malay voters than for the non-Malay voters (See Appendix E).

The Terengganu dummy is positive and significant at the 1% level showing that the above average increase in the number of voters in Terengganu from 1999 to 2004 limited the decrease in the BN support from 2004 to 2008.

The *reformasi* remnants' factor is significant because it allowed the opposition, namely PAS and Keadilan, to win back a significant number of voters, many of them Malay, who had switched their vote back to the BN in 2004 because of Badawi's reform promises. If the salience of the *reformasi* related issues such as reducing corruption and

improving governance was not significant in the 2008 general election, PAS and Keadilan would not have won back many of the Malay majority constituencies in Kedah and Kelantan, constituencies which they had won in 1999 and subsequently lost in 2004 because of Badawi's reform promises.

Without the momentum created by the *reformasi* movement, the non-Malay voter backlash against the BN would not have been reciprocated by a smaller Malay voter backlash against the BN, especially in the urbanized areas in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan. Without *reformasi* in 1999, a repeat of the 1990 general elections, where a large non-Malay backlash resulted in the DAP winning many of the non-Malay majority constituencies but where PAS and S46 could not gain significant ground outside Kelantan and Terengganu would have been more likely in the 2008 general election. If this was the case, then the emergence of a credible opposition coalition against the BN would have been in doubt since DAP would have been the largest opposition party in the parliament and not Keadilan.

## **Appendix G: Decomposing the BN backlash by Age**

The final piece of the backlash experienced by the BN in the 2008 general election can be described as the youth backlash. While changes in the patterns of ethnic voting, particularly among the non-Malays, is responsible in explaining much of the decrease in BN's support in Peninsular Malaysia, the degree of backlash experienced by the BN varies among the different age groups.

An analysis of the polling streams shows that the level of BN support among older voters is consistently higher than that among middle-aged and younger voters. These differences were accentuated in the 2008 general election. Significantly, the level of BN support fell most among the younger voters and fell least among the older voters. While this does not provide a long enough time series to make conclusive statements about the voting patterns of a Malaysian voter over his or her life cycle, the greater willingness among the younger generation of voters to vote for the opposition may be indicative of the opposition's future advantage in successfully continuing to reap benefits from vote-pooling.

The manner in which voting is carried out in Malaysia presents a unique opportunity to analyze voting by different age groups. The collection of data at the precinct level increases the sample size and allows for the estimation of ethnic voting patterns at the constituency level. In addition, voters at the precinct level are also segregated into different polling streams according to the age of the respective voter.

The earlier polling streams are made up of older voters with the average age of the voter decreasing as the polling stream increases. So for example, in a precinct with three polling streams, the first polling stream comprises of voters above 55 years of age, the second polling stream comprises of voters from 35 to 55 years of age and the third and final polling stream comprises of voters below the age of 35. The difference in the voting patterns of different generations of voters, if any, can be ascertained by comparing the electoral returns from the different polling streams.

In an analysis of a limited number of polling stream electoral returns in the 1999 general elections, Welsh (2004, 151) found strong evidence that the BN was experiencing a Malay youth deficit as a result of the *reformasi* movement but that there was no evidence of this among the non-Malay, specifically the Chinese voters.

In my own analysis of generational voting patterns, I am interested in testing the following hypotheses.

Firstly, if the BN experienced a Malay youth deficit in the 1999 general election, I expect that not all of this would have been clawed back in the 2004 general election. Similar to the *reformasi* remnants' backlash described in another Appendix (Appendix E), I expect there to be some continuation of the Malay youth backlash against the BN in the 2004 general election in that the Malay youth would show a lower level of support among the BN compared to the older Malay voters. I also expect there to be a smaller youth backlash among the non-Malay voters. Some of the non-Malay youth backlash

would have been caused by the addition of some of the non-Malay voters among the 680,000 voters who were excluded from the 1999 general election but this backlash would be smaller compared to the Malay youth backlash.

Hypothesis I: The BN received a lower level of support among younger voters in the 2004 general election

Hypothesis IA: The BN generation gap is higher among Malay voters compared to non-Malay voters in the 2004 general election

Secondly, I expect there to be a continuation of the BN backlash among the younger voters in the 2008 general election. At the same time, I expect the non-Malay youth backlash against the BN to be stronger than the Malay youth backlash. The common perception of the 1999 general election was that the *reformasi* movement caused a large swing against the BN among the Malays but especially among the younger Malay voters who were more likely to be influenced by the *reformasi* message than their older counterparts. Similarly, the perceived persecution by the BN of the Indian Hindraf activists and the racial rhetoric projected by UMNO would have incensed the non-Malay youth voters more than their older counterparts hence causing a bigger backlash against the BN among these voters.

Hypothesis II: The BN received a lower level of support among younger voters in the 2008 general election



Hypothesis IIA: The BN generation gap is higher among non-Malay voters compared to Malay voters in the 2008 general election

Thirdly, I expect the BN youth backlash to be higher in 2008 compared to 2004 because younger voters are more likely to vote against the BN because of Badawi's inability to deliver on his reform promises made prior to the 2004 general election.

Hypothesis III: The BN youth backlash is higher in 2008 compared to 2004.

Hypothesis IIIA: The BN youth backlash among non-Malay voters is higher in 2008 compared to 2004.

To test both hypotheses, I compiled and compared the voting patterns of all precincts with 3 and 4 polling streams in the states of Kedah, Penang and Selangor for the 2004 and 2008 general election.<sup>1</sup> I label the electoral returns from the first polling stream as those representing 'older' voters, from the second polling streams as those representing 'middle-aged' voters and finally those from the third (and fourth) polling streams as those representing 'younger' voters.

I choose these three states because of their respective ethnic make-up.<sup>2</sup> Kedah is primarily a Malay majority state (75% of the voting population) with a small but significant non-Malay voting population (comprising the other 25%). Penang is a Chinese majority state (55% of the voting population) with a significant Malay voting

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<sup>1</sup> For a full description of my methodology, please see the Appendix on Malaysian Election Data

<sup>2</sup> And also because I had the data for all of the polling streams in both 2004 and 2008 general elections, which is not the case for most of the other states.

population (35%). Selangor is a classic ethnically heterogeneous state with a small Malay majority (51% Malays, 35% Chinese and 14% Indian). By grouping the generational voting data at the state level, instead of at the national level, I am able to conduct a much more focused comparison of generational voting, broken down by the ethnicity of voters, and examine how much they are affected by state wide factors.

**Table 62: Comparison of differences in BN support among different generation of voters, Kedah, 2004 and 2008 general elections**

Year	Older Voters	Middle Aged Voters	Younger Voters	Older – Younger Voters	N
2004 <sup>3</sup>	62.2%	60.6%	56.3%	5.9%	255
2008 <sup>4</sup>	50.7%	47.4%	43.4%	7.3%	339
Diff	-11.4%	-13.2%	-12.9%	+1.4%	

**Table 63: Comparison of differences in BN support among different generation of voters, Penang, 2004 and 2008 general elections**

Year	Older Voters	Middle Aged Voters	Younger Voters	Older – Younger Voters	N
2004 <sup>5</sup>	60.8%	58.3%	55.2%	5.6%	169
2008 <sup>6</sup>	45.6%	40.0%	35.2%	10.4%	182
Diff	-15.2%	-18.3%	-20.0%	+4.8%	

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<sup>3</sup> The difference in level of BN support between Older Voters and Middle Aged voters and between Middle Aged and Younger Voters is significant at the 1% level.

<sup>4</sup> The difference in level of BN support between Older Voters and Middle Aged voters and between Middle Aged and Younger Voters is significant at the 1% level.

<sup>5</sup> The difference in level of BN support between Older Voters and Middle Aged voters and between Middle Aged and Younger Voters is significant at the 1% level.

<sup>6</sup> The difference in level of BN support between Older Voters and Middle Aged voters and between Middle Aged and Younger Voters is significant at the 1% level.

**Table 64: Comparison of differences in BN support among different generation of voters, Selangor, 2004 and 2008 general elections**

Year	Older Voters	Middle Aged Voters	Younger Voters	Older – Younger Voters	N
2004 <sup>7</sup>	68.9%	66.9%	66.1%	2.8%	277
2008 <sup>8</sup>	51.9%	45.5%	44.0%	7.9%	417
Difference	-16.9%	-21.5%	-22.1%	+5.1%	

Tables 62 to 64 above shows strong support for Hypothesis I and II which is that the BN received lower levels of support among younger voters compared to their older counterparts. The differences in all three states are statistically significant at the 1% level. For example, the difference in the level of support for the BN among older and younger voters was 5.9%, 5.6% and 2.8% in Kedah, Penang and Selangor respectively in the 2004 general election.

There is also strong support for Hypothesis III which is that the youth backlash against the BN was stronger in the 2008 general election compared to the 2004 general election. For example, the difference in the level of support for the BN among older and younger voters was 7.3%, 10.4% and 7.9% in Kedah, Penang and Selangor representing an increase of 1.4%, 4.8% and 5.1% respectively. In other words, the level of BN support in 2008 decreased by the largest margins among the younger voters in all three states.

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<sup>7</sup> The difference in level of BN support between Older Voters and Middle Aged voters and between Middle Aged and Younger Voters is significant at the 1% level.

<sup>8</sup> The difference in level of BN support between Older Voters and Middle Aged voters and between Middle Aged and Younger Voters is significant at the 1% level.

**Table 65: Comparison of differences in BN support among different generations of Malay and non-Malay voters, Kedah, 2004 and 2008 general elections**

	Year	Older Voters	Middle Aged Voters	Younger Voters	Older – Younger Voters	N
Malay Majority Streams	2004	56.3%	55.8%	50.1%	6.2%	173
	2008	51.6%	49.2%	44.7%	6.9%	245
	Diff	-4.7%	-6.7%	-5.3%	+0.7%	
Non Malay Majority Streams	2004	76.4%	72.2%	72.4%	4.0%	51
	2008	43.4%	37.7%	35.0%	8.4%	50
	Diff	-33.0%	-34.5%	-37.4%	+4.4%	

**Table 66: Comparison of differences in BN support among different generations of Malay and non-Malay voters, Penang 2004 and 2008 general elections**

	Year	Older Voters	Middle Aged Voters	Younger Voters	Older – Younger Voters	N
Malay Majority Streams	2004	65.2%	63.6%	58.2%	7.0%	42
	2008	63.0%	58.9%	54.1%	8.9%	49
	Diff	-2.2%	-4.7%	-4.1%	+1.9%	
Non Malay Majority Streams	2004	54.7%	51.4%	48.8%	5.9%	87
	2008	34.1%	27.6%	22.3%	11.8%	92
	Diff	-20.6%	-23.9%	-26.5%	+5.9%	

**Table 67: Comparison of differences in BN support among different generations of Malay and non-Malay voters, Selangor, 2004 and 2008 general elections**

	Year	Older Voters	Middle Aged Voters	Younger Voters	Older – Younger Voters	N
Malay Majority Streams	2004	67.2%	63.7%	61.1%	6.1%	97
	2008	60.7%	53.5%	52.1%	8.6%	154
	Diff	-6.5%	-10.2%	-9.0%	+2.5%	
Non Malay Majority Streams	2004	67.9%	67.9%	68.8%	-0.9%	92
	2008	41.6%	35.5%	33.9%	7.7%	131
	Diff	-26.3%	-32.4%	-34.9%	+8.6%	

Table 65 to Table 67 above, decomposes the generational voting into the Malay majority and non-Malay majority streams.<sup>9</sup> These tables show strong support for Hypothesis IA, Hypothesis IIA and Hypothesis IIIA.

The BN youth deficit is indeed higher in Malay majority streams compared to non-Malay majority streams in the 2004 general election. The difference in the level of BN support between the older and younger voters in the Malay majority polling streams was 6.2%, 7.0% and 6.1% in Kedah, Penang and Selangor respectively in the 2004 general election compared to 4.0%, 5.9% and -0.9% in the non-Malay majority polling streams in the same elections. This confirms Hypothesis IA in all three states.

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<sup>9</sup> For Penang and Selangor, polling streams with more than 70% Malay voters were classified as Malay majority and those with less than 30% Malay voters were classified as non-Malay majority. For Kedah, because of the smaller number of non-Malay voters in the state, polling streams with less than 50% Malay voters were classified as non-Malay majority. Malay majority polling streams remained those which had more than 70% Malay voters.

The BN youth deficit is higher in the non-Malay majority streams in the 2008 general election in two out of the three states. The difference in the level of BN support between older and younger voters in non-Malay majority polling streams was 8.4%, 11.8% and 7.7% in Kedah, Penang and Selangor respectively in the 2008 general election compared to 6.9%, 8.9% and 8.6% for the Malay majority polling streams. This confirms Hypothesis IIA in Kedah and Penang but not for Selangor.

Finally, the BN youth deficit increased by a larger amount in the non-Malay majority polling streams in the 2008 general election compared to the Malay majority polling streams. This generation gap increased by 4.4%, 5.9% and 8.6% in the non-Malay majority polling streams in Kedah, Penang and Selangor respectively while the increase was only 0.7%, 1.9% and 2.5% in the Malay majority polling streams. This confirms Hypothesis IIIA in all three states.

What does this all mean in regard to the future prospects of the opposition?

If the youth deficit faced by the BN has been a regular feature of Malaysian politics since the first post independence elections, then it should not significantly affect the future prospects of the opposition as long as the proportion of voters by generation remains the same. The results in Tables F.4 to F.6 simply shows that younger voters are much more likely to swing their vote against the BN during an election where the underlying political circumstances are not in BN's favor and would simply swing back to the BN when the underlying circumstances have resolved themselves. For example,

the large Malay youth deficit faced the BN in the 1999 general election would be replaced by a smaller Malay youth deficit in 2004 when the salience of the reformasi issues have been decreased over time.

On the other hand, if the BN youth deficit is a relatively new phenomenon which started with the 1999 general election, then the opposition's longer term prospects of dismantling the BN's electoral dominance, at least in Peninsular Malaysia, are more positive. This is because older voters who are more likely to support the BN and to continue supporting the BN will be replaced by middle aged and especially younger voters who are more likely to vote for the opposition.

The equivalent discussion in the United States would be an increasing electoral advantage for the Democrats in the United States as older more conservative voters are being replaced by successive generations who are more moderate on social issues such as abortion and gay marriage and would therefore be less likely to vote for the Republican party based solely on these social issues (Fisher, 2008).

Similarly, one could make the case that the *reformasi* movement caused a significant generational divide to occur, especially among the Malay voters, and that this was replicated by a similar BN youth backlash among the non-Malay voters in 2008. If this pattern holds, the opposition may be helped in the long term by older and more pro-BN voters being replaced by middle age and younger voters who are less likely to

find the BN in the moderate middle when it comes to ethnic issues or when it comes to issues of human rights, corruption and good governance.

It is too early to tell with data only from the 2004 and 2008 general elections and some analysis from the 1999 general election (Welsh, 2004, 151) but the continuation of the youth deficit faced by the BN in most of the by-elections which have occurred after the 2008 general election seems to support the latter replacement theory. Younger non-Malay voters have shown their greater preference in voting for the Malay led and Malay opposition parties – Keadilan and PAS – compared to the older voters. If this older generation of voters is slowly replaced by younger non-Malay voters for whom PAS is no longer the more extremist Malay party, then the BN would continue to have difficulty in winning back the younger non-Malay vote. Similarly, if the salience of the issues on the non-ethnic dimension – human rights and governance – continues to remain strong for the middle aged and younger Malay voters and they replace the older generation of more pro-BN older voters, the opposition coalition would be a more attractive voting option for these voters compared to the BN.



## **Appendix H: By Elections in Malaysia post-2008GE**

Nine by-elections, eight of them in Peninsular Malaysia, have taken place since the general elections in March 2008. Pakatan Rakyat (Pakatan, henceforth), the opposition coalition formed after the 2008 general elections, won all seven by-elections in Peninsular Malaysia. By doing so, Pakatan consolidated its position as a viable long term alternative to the BN. The opposition coalition was fortunate in that all the by-elections in Peninsular Malaysia that were triggered by resignations and deaths took place in constituencies in which Pakatan parties were the incumbent or stood a good chance of winning. These by-election victories proved that the electoral gains made in the 2008 elections could be sustained after the formation of the new opposition coalition. Because of the ethnic configuration of the different constituencies where these by-elections took place, Pakatan was able to show that it could hold on to its share of the Malay vote and benefit from the continued support among the non-Malay voters. In one particular parliamentary by-election, a popular PAS candidate won the constituency with an increased margin with the help of a surge in support among the non-Malay voters, demonstrating that a moderate PAS candidate could benefit from vote-pooling and appealing to non-Malay voters.

The first by-election after the March 2008 general election occurred in August 2008 in the parliamentary constituency of Permatang Pauh in Penang. This by-election was triggered by the resignation of the two-time incumbent MP in this constituency,

Wan Azizah, who is also the head of Keadilan and the wife of Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar, who was not eligible to contest in the 2008 general election, could now re-enter the political arena formally, after his five year prohibition to participate in political activities ended in April 2008. Running in this parliamentary constituency, a constituency which Anwar had held from 1982 until 1998, when he was still in UMNO, allowed him to officially claim the position of the leader of the opposition in the federal parliament.

It was expected that Anwar would easily win this by-election in his home constituency. The BN was hoping that it could decrease Anwar's margin of victory so as to damage his credibility among the larger Malay electorate. If there were signs that the voters in this 69% Malay majority constituency were losing faith in Anwar and Pakatan, then questions regarding the long term viability of the opposition coalition would be raised.

Anwar passed this first test for Pakatan by winning a larger majority in this by-election. His wife, Wan Azizah, had won this constituency by 13,388 votes in the 2008 general election. Anwar increased the majority by 2,283 votes to 15,671. He won 66.8% of the valid vote compared to the 64.2% achieved by Wan Azizah in 2008. Anwar increased his majority by increasing his share of the Malay and non-Malay vote from 59% to 61% and from 77% to 78% respectively.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Personal analysis using polling station results from the 2008 general election and the subsequent by-election in Permatang Pauh.

Anwar returned to parliament for the first time in more than ten years and took over the position of the leader of the opposition, traditionally given to the leader of the opposition party with the largest number of parliamentary constituencies, which at that point in time, was Keadilan.

The second by-election after the March general election took place in January 2009 in the parliamentary constituency of Kuala Terengganu, when the BN incumbent died of a heart attack while playing badminton. This constituency was won by PAS by 14,448 votes in the opposition sweep in Terengganu in the 1999 general election. The BN subsequently won this seat back in 2004 by 1,933 votes and retained it with a slim 628 vote margin in the 2008 general election.

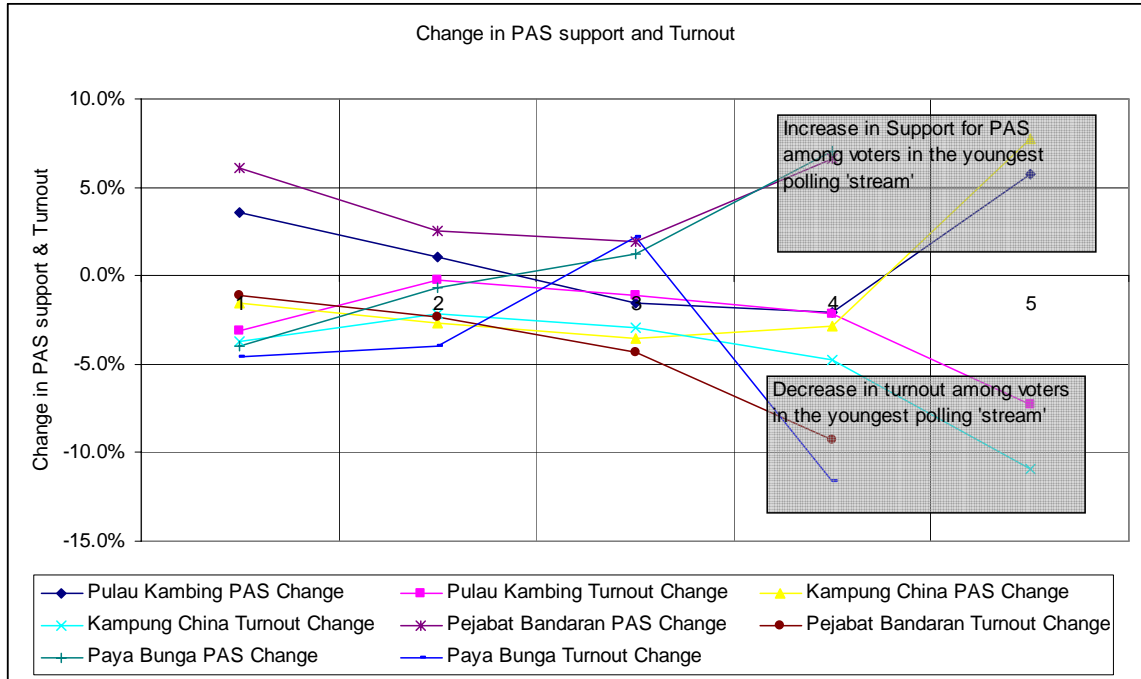
The contest featured an UMNO candidate competing against a PAS candidate. This by-election put DAP's partnership with PAS within Pakatan to test. This was the first time DAP would campaign for a PAS candidate since it left the BA in 2001. The Kuala Terengganu parliamentary constituency has a small number of non-Malay, mostly Chinese, voters who comprised approximately 12% of the voting population. PAS was banking on the DAP to swing the Chinese votes their way since the Chinese vote may prove to be decisive in the event that the Malay vote was split.

PAS was successful in recapturing this constituency by 2,630 votes by increasing its share of the Malay vote in Kuala Terengganu, proving that its association with DAP did not harm its electoral prospects among the Malay voters. However, the anticipated

Chinese vote swing towards PAS did not materialize even though the political speeches given by the DAP leaders were well received in the Chinese majority areas. Two reasons were proposed as to why this anticipated Chinese vote swing did not materialize. Firstly, the state of Terengganu was still under the control of the BN. The Chinese voters feared that they would be punished by BN the state government if they swung their vote against PAS. Secondly, the by-election was held one week before the Chinese New Year holidays which meant that a larger number of Chinese voters who were working and living outside the Kuala Terengganu constituency did not want to return to Kuala Terengganu for the by-election since many of them were already planning to return the following week.

This hurt PAS more than it would hurt UMNO since Chinese voters working and living outside the constituency were mostly younger voters who were expected to be more willing to vote for PAS. The fact that they were working and living outside this constituency also meant that they would suffer less if the anticipated reprisals against the Chinese voters, had they swung their vote towards PAS, were to occur.

**Figure 18: Change in PAS support and turnout by polling streams in Chinese majority precincts**



Source: Election Results by Polling Stream, Kuala Terengganu by-election

The negative impact of a lower turnout among the younger Chinese voters on PAS can be seen in Figure 18 above. Figure 18 shows the change in the level of support of PAS and the change in turnout from the 2008 general election to the 2009 by-election in the polling streams with more than 50% non-Malay voters.

Figure 18 shows that the support for PAS increased by the largest amount in the younger polling streams, namely streams four and five. But these were also the streams which experienced the highest fall in turnout. For example, in stream five in the Kampung Cina precinct, which is 78% Chinese, the level of support for PAS increased

by 8%, from 39% to 47%. In other words, PAS almost split the Chinese vote in this particular stream. But the turnout in this stream also fell by 11%. If a larger number of younger voters in the Chinese majority streams had turned out to vote, it is very likely that PAS would have won a majority of the votes in these streams. Hence, even though the overall level of Chinese support for PAS did not increase, the greater willingness among the younger Chinese voters to support PAS was an encouraging sign for the party.

More importantly, PAS had managed to recapture this constituency from UMNO with the help of a small but decisive swing in the Malay vote towards PAS.

The third, fourth and fifth by-elections were held concurrently on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2009. The parliamentary constituency of Bukit Gantang in Perak was vacated when the PAS incumbent passed away. The state constituency of Bukit Selambau in Kedah was vacated when the incumbent Keadilan Indian state assemblyman resigned for personal reasons.<sup>2</sup> The state constituency of Batang Ai in Sarawak was vacated when the incumbent BN candidate from PRS, an Iban party, passed away.

The concurrent by-elections in these three constituencies were significant for a few reasons. Firstly, they were held only four days after Najib Tun Razak was sworn in as Malaysia's 6<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister replacing the unpopular Abdullah Badawi. If these by-

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<sup>2</sup> It was alleged that the state assemblyman had secretly married his wife's sister without divorcing his wife and this made him vulnerable to being 'bought' over by the BN.

elections were held earlier, they would have clashed with UMNO's internal party elections, which featured heated factional battles within the UMNO leadership. Holding the by-elections before or during these crucial internal party elections would have most certainly disadvantaged the BN as UMNO leaders would have been too busy competing against each other instead of focusing their efforts on winning the by-elections, especially the Bukit Gantang parliamentary and the Bukit Selambau state constituencies in Peninsular Malaysia. The BN and specifically UMNO were hoping that by holding the by-elections after the UMNO general assembly and after the installation of a new Prime Minister, the ruling coalition could receive an electoral boost in support among the voters.

Secondly, the by-elections were being held not longer after the Pakatan controlled Perak state government was brought down by the BN. Pakatan held a three seat majority in the Perak state legislature after the March 2008 general election (31 seats to 28 seats). In a move which took many by surprise, the BN was able to invite three Pakatan state assembly representatives (two from Keadilan and one from DAP) to declare themselves as independents and throw their support behind the BN in the establishment of a BN government in this state. The decision by these three Pakatan representatives to declare their support for the BN brought about a serious constitutional crisis in the state of Perak. The Pakatan Chief Minister from PAS, who had been selected to take up this position almost by accident (see discussion in Chapter 7),

sought an audience with the Sultan of Perak in an effort to dissolve the state assembly and call for fresh statewide elections. The BN also sought an audience with the Sultan to have its own Chief Minister sworn in on the basis that it now had the support of a majority of the state legislators in Perak. The Sultan subsequently agreed to install the BN representative as the new Chief Minister.

The passing of the PAS incumbent in Bukit Gantang not long after the BN's takeover of the Perak state legislature gave PAS the opportunity to hold what was in effect a referendum on the means by which control of the Perak state legislature was wrested from Pakatan. The decision by PAS to field its ousted Chief Minister, Nizar Jamaluddin, as the candidate for the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency only strengthened the referendum nature of the by-election in this constituency.

Thirdly, the by-election in the Bukit Selambau state constituency, one of the few in Kedah with a significant number of Indian voters, provided an opportunity for Pakatan to test if it still had the support of a majority of Indian voters. Najib, upon being installed as Prime Minister, promptly freed a number of ISA detainees including three whom were associated with the Hindraf movement, in the hope that this move will win back some of the Indian vote which had deserted the BN in droves in the 2008 general election. A win for the BN in this constituency would have signaled that the Indian vote was returning to the BN, which if turned out to be true, would have indicated that the



opposition could not hold on to other constituencies with a significant number of Indian voters.

The focus on April 7<sup>th</sup>, when all three by-elections were held concurrently, was clearly on the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency in Perak, followed by the Bukit Selambau state constituency in Kedah and lastly on the Iban majority state constituency in Batang Ai, a constituency which the BN was expected retain by a comfortable margin.

In the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency, which is a Malay majority constituency with a significant number of non-Malay voters (63% Malay, 27% Chinese, 9% Indian, 1% Others), the ousted Chief Minister from PAS more than doubled his party's winning majority from the 2008 general election. He increased the winning majority from 1566 votes in 2008 to 3126 in the 2009 by-election. He won 53.8% of the valid vote, up from 50.9% in 2008.

What is more significant than the double of PAS's majority is the manner in which PAS doubled its majority in the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency.

**Table 68: Estimated Malay and non-Malay BN support, Bukit Gantang, 1999 to 2009**

Year	Malay BN support	Non-Malay BN support	Winning Majority
1999	51%	71%	5101 (BN-UMNO)
2004	51%	84%	8888 (BN-GERAKAN)
2008	53%	35%	1566 (PAS)
2009	58%	22%	2789 (PAS)

Source: Precinct Data for the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency, 1999 to 2009, Personal Analysis (King, 1997)

Once again, I estimate the Malay and non-Malay support using King's (1997) method on the electoral returns and ethnic composition data at the precinct level. The estimates are summarized in table 68. Table 68 shows that PAS won this constituency in the 2008 general election by limiting the percentage of BN Malay support to 53% and by reducing BN's non-Malay support to 35%. What is surprising about the 2009 estimates is that the Malay support for the BN actually increased from 53% in 2008 to 58% in 2009 but that this was negated by a drop of 13% in the level of BN support among the non-Malays. In other words, even more non-Malays opted to vote for the PAS candidate compared to the 2008 general election.

The increase in the Malay support for the BN could have been caused by several factors. Firstly, UMNO was probably effective in painting the former Pakatan led state government in Perak as one that was dominated by the non-Malays in the DAP (The DAP held 18 out of the 31 state constituencies won by the opposition). The PAS Chief

Minister was criticized as being a puppet of two powerful DAP figures in the state government who happened to be relatives.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, the BN probably received a small electoral boost from the recent installation of Najib as the new Prime Minister, replacing the unpopular Badawi.

The decrease in the level of non-Malay support for the BN could be explained by the tremendous unpopularity of the BN's takeover of the Perak state government. The new Perak state government was disproportionately Malay. 27 out of the 28 BN state legislators (not including the three defectors from Pakatan) were Malays. The deposed Pakatan state government was also in the process of carrying out popular measures among the non-Malays including granting permanent land titles to replace the temporary occupancy licenses (TOLs) whose regular renewal was not guaranteed and thus a source of constant complaints among the non-Malays.

The Malay versus non-Malay divide over the events in Perak can be observed in the results of a Merdeka Center survey conducted after BN's takeover of the state government. Only 59% of Malays somewhat or strongly agreed that there fresh state

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<sup>3</sup> The cousins, Ngeh Koo Ham and Nga Kor Ming were both lawyers from Sitiawan, Perak, and were also both exco members in the state government. Ngeh had been one of the three candidates whose names were proposed as possible Chief Minister candidates representing Pakatan.

elections should be called to decide a new government in Perak while 85% and 88% of Chinese and Indian voters supported fresh state elections.<sup>4</sup>

The Bukit Gantang by-election result further confirms that Pakatan has co-opted BN's winning formula in constituencies which a similar ethnic composition. Previously, the BN could count on a larger reservoir of non-Malay support in these Malay majority constituencies to swing the results in its favor in the event that the Malay vote is split. During and after the March 2008 general election, this formula has instead worked in favor of the opposition. By positioning itself as the more moderate Malay / Malay-led opposition parties, PAS and Keadilan have managed to secure the majority of the non-Malay vote. At the same time, they have managed to hold on to a significant proportion of the Malay vote using a combination of PAS's Islamic appeal among the more conservative Malays, Anwar's personal appeal and continued attacks on the BN along the non-ethnic dimension of political competition. Perhaps as significant was the emergence of a popular and moderate PAS leader in the person of the ousted Chief Minister, Nizar, who could appeal to the non-Malay voters.

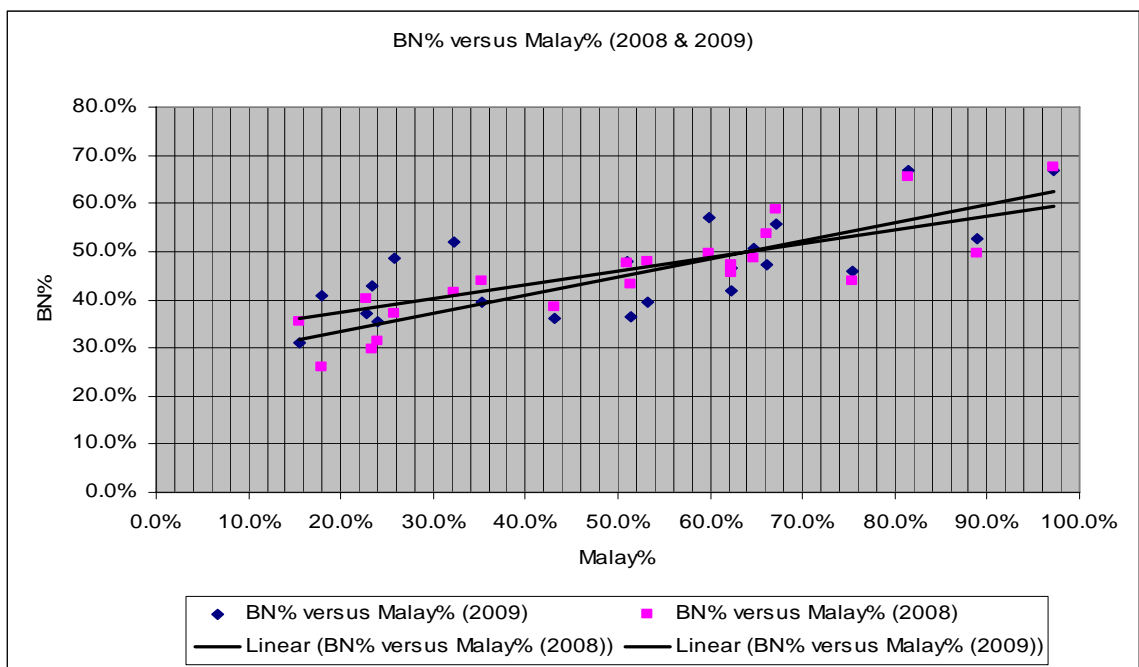
The Bukit Selambau state constituency in Kedah is an ethnically heterogeneous constituency with a slight Malay majority (50% Malay, 19% Chinese, 30% Indian, 1% Others). The Indian Keadilan candidate who was facing an Indian MIC candidate also

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<sup>4</sup> Merdeka Center Survey, 8 February 2009, 'Perak State Opinion Survey', pp.10.  
[http://www.merdeka.org/v2/download/Microsoft%20PowerPoint%20-%20Perak\\_Crisis\\_Poll\\_-\\_Survey\\_Findings\\_\(English\).pdf](http://www.merdeka.org/v2/download/Microsoft%20PowerPoint%20-%20Perak_Crisis_Poll_-_Survey_Findings_(English).pdf)

managed to increase the party's majority from 2362 votes in 2008 to 2403 votes in this by-election. But his share of the popular vote actually fell slightly from 54.9% in 2008 to 52.2% because of the presence of 13 independent candidates contesting in this by-election, a record in Malaysia. Among the 13 independent candidates were 5 Indian candidates, some of whom were suspected of being planted by the BN to attract pro-opposition votes away from the Keadilan candidate.

**Figure 19: BN support versus % of Malay voters, Bukit Selambau, 2008 general election and 2009 by-election**



Source: Precinct Electoral Returns, Bukit Selambau, 2008 General Election and 2009 By-Election

Because I did not have access to the same fine grained data as for the Bukit Gantang parliamentary constituency, I could not estimate the level of Malay and non-

Malay BN support in the Bukit Selambau state constituency in the 2009 by-election. However, Figure 19 above, which is a graph showing the correlation between the level of BN support at the precinct level and the percentage of Malay voters in respective precincts, provides strong evidence that the Keadilan candidate won this constituency with the same formula used in Bukit Gantang – which is that it won a larger majority of the non-Malay vote while holding on to a significant number of Malay votes. The 2009 by-election results appear very similar to the 2008 general election results whereby the opposition candidate won approximately 40% of the Malay vote and 72% of the non-Malay vote. Keadilan's victory was a confirmation that the Indian vote particularly had not gone back to the BN despite Najib's decision to free three out of the five Hindraf detainees upon taking office as Prime Minister.

In the third by-election on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in Batang Ai, the only one to have taken place in Sarawak since the March 2008 general election, the BN managed to more than double its previous majority of 806 by winning by a 1854 majority. The BN increased its share of the popular vote from 56.3% to 64.9%. The prevalence and effectiveness of vote buying in Sabah and Sarawak compared to Peninsular Malaysia is well documented (Aeria, 2005, 132 to 133) especially in the context of a by-election and could partly explain the increase in BN's majority. In any case, it was a stark reminder to Pakatan that despite making significant electoral inroads in Peninsular Malaysia, it had yet to do the same in the East Malaysia state of Sabah and Sarawak.

The ability of the opposition to increase its majority in the two by-elections in Peninsular Malaysia, one year after the March 2008 general election, showed that the support for the opposition was still strong, especially among the non-Malays. In addition, the results showed that the opposition's co-optation of BN's winning formula in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies that had worked so well in the 2008 general election was still producing the desired results. As long as vote pooling continued to work in the opposition's favor, there was little incentive for the Pakatan parties, specifically PAS, to push its Islamic state agenda. In other words, electoral incentives, as predicted by Horowitz (1985) would continue to unite the different parties with differing ideological commitments in the opposition coalition.

The sixth post March 2008 by-election took place in the state constituency of Penanti (Malay 73%, Chinese 24%, Indian 3%), which is located in the parliamentary constituency of Permatang Pauh, Anwar's parliamentary constituency in Penang. Not surprisingly, the opposition was strongly favored to win this constituency. The Keadilan incumbent, Mohammad Fairus Khairuddin, who was also the Deputy Chief Minister of Penang, had resigned over allegations that he was being investigated for corruption in his role in approving an illegal mining operation.

This by-election was unique in that the BN decided not to field a candidate on the grounds that the resignation of the Keadilan incumbent was manufactured and because of this, the by-election was a waste of taxpayer's money. As a result, the

Keadilan candidate, Mansur Othman, who later took over the position of Deputy Chief Minister, easily defeated the three independent candidates who stood against him on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008. He won 85.2% of the vote (compared to 59% in the 2008 general election) and increased Keadilan's majority to 5558 (compared to 2219 in the 2008 general election). The decision by the BN not to field a candidate in a by-election was surprising since the BN almost never allows a constituency to go uncontested, whether it is a by-election or a general election, even though it is a constituency where the opposition is expected to win. The BN decided not to contest this constituency probably because it did not want to legitimize yet another by-elections victory for the opposition coalition, which would make it the fifth consecutive by-election victory for Pakatan in Peninsular Malaysia since the 2008 general election.

The seventh by-election took place on July 14, 2009, in Manek Urai, a rural constituency in the state of Kelantan that was overwhelmingly Malay (99%). The PAS incumbent had died of a heart attack and the contest here would feature a close race between UMNO and PAS. PAS was expected to retain this constituency, which it had won with 57.5% of the popular vote and a 1352 majority. UMNO, surprisingly, managed to reduce PAS's margin to a mere 65 votes.

Different reasons were put forth as to why PAS's 2008 general election majority was so significantly reduced including disunity within PAS after a fiercely contested internal elections for the position of PAS's Deputy President. The contest for PAS



Deputy President was won by the incumbent, Nasharuddin Mat Isa, who was seen as being more receptive to working with UMNO rather than strengthening inter-opposition ties with the Pakatan coalition. It is too early to conclude, based on the Manek Urai by-election, if the BN has managed to claw back some of the Malay vote which it lost in the 2008 general election.

The eighth by-election took place in state constituency of Permatang Pasir, located within Anwar's parliamentary constituency of Permatang Pauh. Malays comprised 72% of the electoral with the Chinese making up most of the non-Malay voters. The opposition candidate from PAS had won this constituency with a 5433 majority in the 2008 general election and was a three term incumbent when he passed away from a heart attack in July, 2009. The by-election would once again feature a contest between PAS and UMNO, the fourth since March 2008. The margin of victory in absolute terms was reduced to 4551 votes because of lower turnout but did not change by much in percentage terms (49% majority in 2008 compared to 47% in 2009). According to my estimates using polling stream data, the percentage of Malay support for the BN increased slightly from 35% in 2008 to 38% in the by-election while the percentage of non-Malay (read: Chinese) support for the BN fell from 29% in 2004 to 23% in the by-election.

The campaign rhetoric used by the BN in this by-election would mirror its previous by-election campaign strategy which was label Anwar as someone was selling

out the rights of the Malays and that the Malay voters in Penang were being neglected by a DAP led state government. This further cemented the impression among the non-Malays that the UMNO-led BN coalition was shifting increasingly to the political right. The swing in the non-Malay vote in favor of the PAS, a scenario that many would not have thought possible before the 2008 general elections, confirmed the non-Malays' evaluation of PAS as being the more moderate and hence more acceptable party compared to UMNO.

**Table 69: Summary of the by-election results since the March 2008 general election**

No	Constituency Name	Constituency Type	Ethnic Composition	Incumbent	Winner
1	Permatang Pauh	Parliament	69%M, 25%C, 6%I	Keadilan	Keadilan
2	Kuala Terengganu	Parliament	88%M, 11%C, 1%I	BN-UMNO	PAS
3	Bukit Gantang	Parliament	64%M, 27%C, 9%I	PAS	PAS
4	Batang Ai	State	95% Iban, 4%C, 1% M	BN-PRS	BN-PRS
5	Bukit Selambau	State	50%M, 19%C, 30%I, 1%O	Keadilan	Keadilan
6	Penanti	State	73%M, 24%C, 3%I	Keadilan	Keadilan
7	Manek Urai	State	99%M, 1%O	PAS	PAS
8	Permatang Pasir	State	72%M, 26%C, 1%I, 1%O	PAS	PAS
9	Bagan Pinang <sup>5</sup>	State	66%M, 11%C, 20%I, 3%O	BN-UMNO	BN-UMNO

<sup>5</sup> The BN finally stemmed the tide of by-election losses in Peninsular Malaysia by retaining the Bagan Pinang state constituency in a by-election in September 2009 with an increased majority (from 2533 to 5435 votes). The fielding of a popular former Chief Minister by UMNO was the main reason for the large increase

M = Malay, C = Chinese, I = Indian, O = Others

By winning eight consecutive by-elections in Peninsular Malaysia, including wresting a Malay majority constituency from UMNO (Kuala Terengganu), the opposition coalition has proven that the electoral gains it made in the 2008 general election was not a one off protest vote cast by the voters but could be sustained.

Importantly, PAS showed that it was not harmed by being in the same coalition as the DAP and that it could gain by increasing its share of the non-Malay, specifically Chinese vote, in a constituency like Bukit Gantang, without losing too much ground among Malay voters. In other words, PAS rather than the BN benefited from the effects of vote pooling.

Keadilan's win in the ethnically heterogeneous constituency of Bukit Selambau in Kedah also showed that it could continued to benefit from the positive effects of vote pooling by winning a majority of the non-Malay vote and holding on the a significant proportion of the Malay vote.

In other words, PAS and Keadilan seems to have cemented their positions as the more moderate of the Malay or the Malay led parties in comparison to UMNO's position within the BN at least to the non-Malays.

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in the margin of victory. The question of whether the BN can replicate this result in other ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, especially in the Pakatan controlled states of Penang and Selangor and in Perak, which was formerly under Pakatan's control, remains unanswered.

The BN finally stemmed the tide of by-election losses in Peninsular Malaysia by retaining the Bagan Pinang state constituency in a by-election in September 2009 with an increased majority (from 2533 to 5435 votes). The fielding of a popular former Chief Minister by UMNO was the main reason for the large increase in the margin of victory. The question of whether the BN can replicate this result in other ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, especially in the Pakatan controlled states of Penang and Selangor and in Perak, which was formerly under Pakatan's control, remains unanswered.

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## Biography

Kian Ming, Ong graduated with a BSc in Economics (First Class Honors) from the London School of Economics (LSE) and an MPhil in Economics from the University of Cambridge. Upon graduation, he went on to work for the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in the Kuala Lumpur office as an associate consultant for two years. Sensing that his passions were not in the field of management consultancy but in contributing to the larger 'public good', he then worked for two politically affiliated think tanks. He witnessed a first hand demonstration of the art of institutional manipulation while working for these two think tanks. He came to Duke to embark on his Phd in Political Science in 2004, five months after his marriage. It has been a wonderfully challenging six years. He and his wife will return to Malaysia after his graduation.