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‘Competing Ideologies of Representation in Southeast Asia’

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Abstract: In both post-authoritarian and authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia there are continuing struggles over the forms and extent of political representation. Importantly, many of the same ideologies are present across these different categories of regime. Ideas of, and constituencies for, non-democratic representation exist in democratic societies and vice versa. Alongside democratic notions of representation, populist, localist and consensus rationales compete for support in the dynamic political economies of Southeast Asia. However, in contests to shape political representation, historical factors including legacies of the Cold War and structural impacts of global capitalist development are not favourable to the pursuit of interests through independent, collective action – especially cohesive social movements involving trade unions – that characterised the experiences of democratisation in Western Europe. This profoundly influences the complexion and levels of support for different ideologies of representation in the region.

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Introduction

The 2011 ‘Arab Spring’ invites reflections on uprisings against authoritarian rule starting a quarter of a century ago in Southeast Asia. Subsequent to the 1986 ‘People Power’ removal of Marcos in the Philippines, mass protests of ‘Black May’ precipitated the temporary end of military dictatorship in Thailand in 1992 and ‘*reformasi*’ halted over three decades of Suharto’s authoritarian rule in Indonesia. In all cases, significant new political space opened up, although not necessarily in ways consistent with procedural or substantive democracy.¹ Meanwhile, authoritarian regimes in Singapore and Malaysia have largely consolidated power,² while variously incorporating new avenues for political participation.³

What sort of political regimes emerged after Southeast Asia’s protest movements and why didn’t comparable movements surface elsewhere in the region? Answers may offer insights into factors likely to determine whether new political regimes in the Middle East do more than replace one system of elite rule for another; whether other authoritarian regimes under pressure survive; and whether neoliberalism, which contributed so much to unemployment and other concerns behind mass mobilisations,⁴ is arrested or entrenched.

Looking to Southeast Asia, though, history has been critical in shaping struggles over different trajectories of political regimes. Attempts to build new

democracies and to consolidate or refine authoritarian regimes have been conducted in a different setting from the democratisations of early industrialising countries in Western Europe, Britain and other established liberal democracies. The lingering effects of Cold War suppression of civil society organisation, coupled with the advent of globalised capitalist production compounding the difficulties of independent labour organisation in particular, have profoundly affected the nature of social forces and the political coalitions and alliances forged between them. Cohesive democratic social movements have been difficult to sustain in this context, notwithstanding periodic popular mobilisations in different parts of the region.

Crucially, struggles in Southeast Asia over the nature of political regimes and attendant institutions – including through mass mobilisations – have given expression to a range of ideologies. Indeed, it is argued here that political fragmentation of social forces, linked to historically-specific geopolitics and capitalist dynamics, has been conducive to non-democratic ideologies. This argument is advanced below with special focus on ideologies of political representation, which are fundamental define to any political regime. Select analyses of populist, localist and consensus ideologies of political representation within Southeast Asia are provided to show why People Power movements do not always lead to democratic forms of representation and how they have been avoided altogether in some cases.

Political Regimes: Analytical Frameworks

Among the most influential concepts available for evaluating political regime directions is that of the *‘hybrid regime,’* combining elements of both democracy and authoritarianism. The innovative aspect of hybrid regime literature is recognising that these regimes can be distinct and stable, not necessarily en route to fuller democratisation or outright authoritarianism.⁵ However, analytical use of this concept has often tended to constrain our understanding of regime dynamics and possibilities.

In particular, detailed descriptions and typologies of hybrid regimes have proliferated, with emphasis on evaluating the functional quality of political institutions against democratic criteria.⁶ Hybrid regimes have thus variously been characterised as ‘defective,’ ‘pseudo’ and ‘partial’ democracies.⁷ This betrays a persistent and problematic transition theory assumption that liberal democracy is the natural partner to modern economies and societies, despite Carothers’ declaration nearly a decade ago that the transition paradigm has ended.⁸ The result is more

description of what a regime is not and prescription about what it ought to be, and less description and explanation of what it is and why. More open investigation into the nature of political change and greater attention to its causes is required if developments in Southeast Asia following earlier bursts of People Power are to be understood, let alone rendered instructive for Arab Spring analyses.

Therefore, the approach here moves beyond consideration of how closely institutions mirror or depart from ideal regime types. Why regimes take the form they do is the fundamental issue. To be sure, contributions on this have been made by theorists seeking to explain how hybrid regimes are socially embedded, with historical and structural contexts of political institutions incorporated into analysis.⁹ However, the approach here differs in emphasising the importance of historically specific capitalist development for dynamic social conflicts and political coalitions – especially class coalitions – seeking to shape the political institutions mediating these conflicts. It is also distinguished by the importance attached to identifying and explaining the ideological basis of these coalitions, an under-explored dimension in the hybrid regime and broader democratisation literature.

At the heart of conflict in Southeast Asia over regime forms lie questions about political representation: who should participate in politics and how? Competing ideological positions are at stake here, reflecting different preferred social and political orders. In particular, the answers affect the nature and extent of the political space of civil society and the state, as well as their interrelationship. They also determine whether certain policy issues and debates, such as on structural inequalities inherent to capitalism, are incorporated into, or filtered out of, politics. Therefore, differences over representation have often separated social forces in Southeast Asia that were united in opposition to authoritarian rule. They have also been exploited by elites in remaining authoritarian regimes seeking to avert their own demise.

To be sure, the extent and nature of civil society has ebbed and flowed over the last century in Southeast Asia, including class-based organisations linked to nationalist, socialist and communist movements.¹⁰ This does not compare, though, with the deep historical roots of the political left crucial to earlier Western European democratisation. Here the agency of independent labour organisations was indispensable to universal suffrage and expanded political pluralism.¹¹ There was nothing natural about this role; it was the product of specific historical conditions. The European experience is not a yardstick of ‘normal’ political development.

Moreover, struggles in Southeast Asia over political representation in the last half century have been conducted in the context of legacies from Cold War suppression of independent civil societies and rapidly mounting economic globalisation,¹² a context decidedly unfavourable to the political Left.

While this hasn't played out identically throughout the region, a uniform lack of mediating structures linking civil society groups and formal political institutions is striking – especially in the case of independent organised labour. Export-oriented industrialisation and relatively large white collar and informal sectors have laid quite different social foundations for political development than those in liberal democracies established or consolidated under import-substitution and Keynesian economic policies.¹³

The consequence has been political fragmentation of social forces, regardless of the differing scales of civil societies within and across post-authoritarian and authoritarian societies in Southeast Asia. Non-governmental-organisations (NGOs) have proliferated, encompassing a wide range of service, monitoring and advocacy roles, often working closely with authorities. Most of these are single-issue oriented but some have broader horizons, including claims to representing the underprivileged. However, cohesive collective political action has only periodically surfaced – albeit in dramatic expressions of People Power social movements. Meanwhile, sustained alliances between working and middle classes in pursuit of social democratic agendas of redistribution and social justice, or indeed more radical visions, linked to political parties and other independent civil society organisations have been conspicuously absent.

Moreover, middle class political demands have increasingly tended to focus around notions of 'good governance.' These resonate with neoliberal reform agendas but not necessarily democratisation. Middle class campaigns are most concerted against corruption and other abuses of state power, while neglecting structural reforms to address social inequality. This emphasis has not just availed NGOs of funds from international aid agencies and international business, but resulted at times in middle class alliances with reactionary forces to jettison democratically elected governments in the Philippines and Thailand. In the absence of cohesive civil societies connecting class-based interests to political institutions, the urban and rural poor have often looked to various alternatives as fillips to democratic representation, including forms of populism.

Towards identifying and explaining competing ideologies, institutions and support bases of representation in Southeast Asia, the conceptual approach here distinguishes between democratic, consensus, populist and localist representation. These are not always mutually exclusive categories but sufficiently different in emphasis to highlight major contrasting rationales for, and ways of institutionalising, representation. Before proceeding, the concept of ideology warrants clarification. The starting point for understanding ideology here is: ‘Any systematic set of practical or theoretical ideas which articulate the interests of a group.’¹⁴ As Gramsci observed, ideological positions are not simply determined by social class. Hence civil society becomes a sphere of fierce competition of ideas, the outcome of which is fundamental to political rule. However, this doesn’t mean social structure is neutral for the prospects of different ideologies; it lays the basis and sets the limits for prospective alliances and conflicts between groups over the appropriate design of a regime’s political institutions.

Democratic ideologies of representation emphasize that actors elected or appointed to represent people, sectors, ideas or interests should be either directly or indirectly accountable to fellow citizens. Representation is a means by which political conflict and competition is conducted, with intermediary groups from civil society such as political parties, interest groups and independent trade unions intrinsic to this process. Democratic representation is open to new forms of collective association outside the electoral arena, but it requires authorisation and accountability by those being represented.¹⁵

By contrast, *consensus* ideologies emphasize the problem-solving utility of incorporating stakeholders, interests and/or expertise into public policy processes for the effective functioning of economic, social or political governance. Processes of consultation or deliberation lay the basis of claims to representing the public interest and are privileged over political contestation in parliamentary institutions. *Populist* ideologies of representation emphasize direct links between ‘the people’ and the political elite and make claims to direct democracy on this basis. Accordingly, populism seeks to bypass or remove intermediary bodies linking citizens and government, placing it in tension with political pluralism. *Localist* ideologies of representation emphasize the political rights of discrete communities and identities based on geography, ethnicity, race, culture or religion.

The following is not a comprehensive analysis of struggles over political representation within different countries of Southeast Asia, nor indeed any one of the region's countries. Instead, the discussion selectively examines ideologies and institutions of representation in Southeast Asia to illustrate how and why non-democratic representation can be facilitated by reinforcement of the historically rooted fragmentation of social and political forces in the region. Political institutions are sites of struggle that reflect, and affect, the wider distribution of power in society and there is no inevitability about the outcome of this struggle. However, structural and historical factors have certainly increased the odds against broad coalitions embracing and seeking to institutionalize democratic representation.

Filling the Vacuum with Populism

In Thailand, collective political organisations to advance the interests of the socially and economically marginalised remain fragmented. The consequent gap in effective democratic representation of these social forces has at times been filled by non-democratic alternatives. Populism in particular has proved attractive for the poor desperately seeking redress from the unequal impacts of contemporary capitalism, especially in times of economic crisis. The Thai experiences also highlight how middle class concerns about good governance can trump support for democratic representation when class interests are at stake, leading even progressive elements of this class into temporary alliances with the most conservative forces.

It was against the backdrop of the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis, and espousing pro-poor measures, that business tycoon Thaksin Shinawatra and his *Thai Rak Thai* (Thais Love Thais) party secured Thailand's biggest ever election victory in 2001. Thaksin was re-elected in a landslide in 2005, by which time his rhetoric about the need for redistribution had translated into policies benefiting sections of the poor,¹⁶ especially small-scale farmers but also petty traders and the urban poor.¹⁷ Yet he and the *TRT* would ultimately be removed through military and constitutional coups supported by many NGOs and other civil society forces. In the process, competing versions of People Power and contrasting ideologies of representation were expressed in opposition to, and support of, Thaksin and the *TRT*. The roots of this conflict were laid during the Cold War and reinforced by the nature of capitalist development thereafter.

Under authoritarian rule in Thailand, trade unions were the target of a variety of strategies by the military to undermine their organisational capacities and impair prospects for any future political role. Meanwhile, a loose network of NGOs did surface in the early 1980s adopting a focus on local development problems. These developmental NGOs, often supported by international aid agencies, grew from about 40 in the early 1980s to in excess of 300 by the late 1990s. Eschewing strategies of mass mobilisation and class struggle, they generally limited their ambitions to tempering capitalist development by emphasising sustainable development and participatory democracy.¹⁸ Nevertheless, united in their desire to see an end to authoritarian rule, working class activists joined with the middle class in the daily demonstrations that peaked at 250,000 in May 1992, leading eventually to withdrawal of the King's support of the regime.¹⁹

Thereafter, though, it was NGOs rather than dedicated independent labour organisations that prospered under parliamentary politics. Thus, as Brown observes, 'working class organizations remain weak, fragmented and politically isolated.'²⁰ Structural factors haven't helped. By 2004, the industrial workforce still only accounted for eight per cent of the labour force, compared with 41 per cent for agrarian, 26 per cent informal and 15 per cent white-collar workers.²¹ For middle class developmental NGO activists, though, this structure has presented opportunities to take up causes on behalf of the rural poor in particular. By the late 1990s, NGO coalitions had become significant political actors. The Assembly of the Poor, for example, was able to block major government development projects displacing villagers or denying them access to vital resources.²²

Struggles over political representation under Thaksin can be traced to the 1997 Thai Constitution. Often referred to as the 'People's Constitution,' it engendered considerable democratic optimism for its explicit recognition of the rights to political participation and the range of vertical and horizontal accountability institutions it incorporated. The Constitution was also designed to create a strong and stable executive government between elections. Yet it was the outcome of a political compromise between conservative elites, or what McCargo labels 'network monarchy,'²³ and more liberal middle class social forces. As Hewison points out, royalist technocrats and liberal elite proponents of constitutional change argued that while participation must be permitted, it needs to be 'carefully managed to prevent its radicalization.'²⁴ This can be seen in the requirement that only candidates with

university degrees were eligible to contest for parliament; effectively barring the mass of workers and farmers from representing their own class in parliament.

Thaksin and *TRT* captured government campaigning against the austerity measures of the previous Chuan Leekpai government. *TRT*'s policies closely aligned to the interests of newly emerging elements of the domestic bourgeoisie hit hard by the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis and associated IMF reform programmes.²⁵ They also reached out to the traditionally neglected rural and urban poor through debt relief, village funds and other redistributive policies – as was necessary for electoral success under the 1997 Constitution. Collectively, *TRT*'s policies constituted a new social contract meant to improve the lot of the poor alongside the development of the domestic bourgeoisie.²⁶ In effect, a moderate dose of Keynesian economics was to provide the electoral basis for the consolidation and restructuring of Thai capitalism.

However, the 1997 Constitution was so effective in facilitating greater political party – and especially government executive – strength that Thaksin and the *TRT* had the capacity through the state to challenge vested elite interests. Systems of patronage integral to the network monarchy and given effect through such institutions as the military and the Privy Council could be bypassed or subordinated. Thaksin used appointments to the military and substituted police forces for military personnel in some operations in Southern Thailand, for example, to try and shift the balance of power within the state.²⁷ Vast business interests of the Crown Property Bureau – the entity that controlled the economic assets of the monarchy – were also among those threatened.²⁸

Moreover, as the scale and breadth of the *TRT*'s popular redistributive policies increased, so too did the strength of the reaction from established elites. In this context, 'Thaksin went from modernist reformer championing businessmen in the face of economic crises, to populist championing the poor against an old elite.'²⁹ *TRT* Ministers thus faded from public view as Thaksin dominated all public pronouncements, peppered with escalating references to, and identification with, 'the people.' Face-to-face meetings with the poor also replaced engagement with NGOs and civil society organisations advocating on their behalf, including the Assembly of the Poor and state enterprise labour leaders whose advice and proposals he had rejected.³⁰

Thaksin pronounced in late 2003 that 'I check the feeling of the people all the time.'³¹ Significant elements of the middle class were thus also being bypassed as

Thaksin usurped their self-appointed roles as defenders of the poor. Thaksin's authoritarian tendencies also became more manifest as opponents and critics challenged his exercise of state power, which he rationalised with populist rhetoric. Thaksin asserted, for example, that 'working for the people' had priority over the operations of parliament, human rights and the checks and balances introduced through the 1997 Constitution. Parliamentary opposition involving adversarial politics was denounced because it 'may be a betrayal of our social contract to the people.'³²

Shortly after Thaksin's and *TRT*'s 2005 re-election, corruption allegations surfaced, leading to anti-government demonstrations by a complex of urban social forces that were tacitly backed by the network monarchy. Sondhi Limthongkul, a media mogul and former backer of Thaksin, was a key leader of this People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), or 'Yellow Shirts,' but some 40 NGOs and civil society organisations were also involved.³³ The grievances ranged beyond the governance questions and expressions of support for the monarchy so central to conservatives to concerns about Free Trade Agreements, privatisation and authoritarianism.³⁴ Thaksin responded by calling yet another election for April 2006, boycotted by major opposition parties. The *TRT* landslide election result was subsequently annulled by the Constitutional Court, which ordered new polls. However, before new elections took place, a military coup in September 2006 removed Thaksin and the *TRT*.³⁵

Subsequently, growing opposition to the coup and the military tutelage of politics saw anti-coup and pro-Thaksin groups come together to form the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), or 'Red Shirts,' supported by workers and small farmers. In the complex ensuing, and ultimately violent, struggle between the Red and Yellow Shirts, the Red-Shirt aligned People's Power Party (PPP), *TRT*'s successor, would have its election victory nullified after the Constitutional Court dissolved the PPP in December 2008. Thereafter, class conflict became even more manifest. Some NGO and civil society leaders labelled UDD mobilisations around issues of inequality, injustice and class struggle as left wing or even communist.³⁶ Their preference was for a politics focused on local-level issues such as corruption and related governance matters.³⁷ Significantly, the organisational implications of this position lead not in the direction of broad-based collective action to represent the poor.

Conservative and middle class elitism were crucial factors in the Yellow versus Red Shirt polarisation over political representation. Sondhi, for example, asserted that ‘most people outside the middle class lack sufficient knowledge to understand how power can be used.’³⁸ Political scientist and Yellow Shirt supporter, Anek Laothamatas, also contended that rural voters had simply become clients of a national boss in place of a local one, reproducing traditional patron-client relationships and mentality.³⁹ Additionally, though, Thai elitism draws on a romantic communitarian ideology of localism (*thongthinniyom*). This emphasizes the virtues of rural subsistence for villagers and the need to ensure the moral capacities of local communities to cope with the challenges of a global market economy.⁴⁰ Public intellectual Prawet Wasi’s pronouncements on this have been especially influential on developmental NGOs, much of whose work is predicated on the subsistence producer ideal and is endorsed or supported by royalist organisations.⁴¹ According to Prawet, because ‘the people still cannot think more of the public interest than themselves and their cronies,’⁴² local communities need nurturing by the middle class whose educated lifestyle requires rational calculation.

Through the 2007 Constitution, drafted predominantly by traditional monarchy-linked bureaucratic and military elites, the previous aims of strengthening political parties and executive powers were reversed in favour of reinforcing horizontal accountability mechanisms – especially through greater judicial powers over politics.⁴³ As a further safeguard against democratic representation exerting too much influence, a committee comprised exclusively of judges and heads of independent agencies now appoints 74 of the 150 Senate seats; and all senators are required to hold a university degree.⁴⁴

Subsequently, when elections were held under the new constitution in December 2007, the pro-Thaksin People’s Power Party (PPP) won government. However, in December 2008 the constitutional court dissolved the PPP and, after some parliamentary manoeuvring, the pro-royalist technocratic Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Democratic Party was installed as Prime Minister without a general election. Red Shirt mobilisation against the government led to occupation of areas of central Bangkok and a brutal military crackdown authorised by the Abhisit government. In the ensuing violence between March and May 2010, 92 people were killed and nearly 2,000 injured.⁴⁵ However, Abhisit’s attempt to settle the contention through a general

election in July 2011 saw the Red Shirt-backed Pheu Thai Party, led by Thaksin's sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, take an outright majority and form government.

The experience of Thailand highlights not just how a political vacuum left by the absence of class-based organisations can be fertile ground for populist representation. It also reveals how many middle class NGOs and civil society organisations, including even progressive groups, can be vulnerable to forming alliances with conservative forces in a period of acute class antagonisms. Notwithstanding the complexity of these contexts and the political choices to be made, the ideological and organisational limits to single-issue advocacy groups in particular are evident.⁴⁶ Mass class-based representation is not part of the logic of their work. Indeed, it is seen as threatening to it.

Parallels are acute with the Philippines, where wealthy former movie star Joseph Estrada won a landslide presidential election in 1998 espousing pro-poor measures and anti-elite rhetoric.⁴⁷ Ironically, Estrada's neoliberal privatisation and deregulation programme implemented to yield private rents to particular interests was among the long list of alleged power abuses by him. Ultimately, People Power 2 in January 2001 followed corruption allegations, and related impeachment charges, concerning Estrada, his family and associates in an illegal lottery. In contrast to People Power 1 in 1986, though, the middle class and its organisations, including prominent leftist groups like *Akbayan* and *Bayan Muna*, were integral to street demonstrations that combined with efforts of business elites and the Church hierarchy in the coup to remove Estrada.⁴⁸

To be sure, Estrada's critics and opponents comprised a contradictory range of interests and groups. Yet the abiding importance of 'good governance' contained differences. However, an unsuccessful People Power 3 four months later by Manila's urban squatters and others amongst the poorest in Philippines to reinstate Estrada underlined just how important class was to divergent positions the president. For many middle class activists, Church leaders and academics, People Power 3 supporters were misguided victims of a morally deficient culture of clientelism.⁴⁹ As Hutchison argues though, such analyses underestimate the extent to which the poor attempted to assert political demands and rights through support for populist representation, as opposed to having been captured or subjugated by a patron.⁵⁰ From the poor's perspective, Estrada's corruption was not exceptional for a Philippine

politician; his prosecution was more to do with the threat he posed to privileged interests.⁵¹

Given that the paucity of effective class-based organisations championing the lot of the poor seems unlikely to be redressed in the foreseeable future, further episodes of populist electoral triumph are very possible. As Thompson warns, 'Renewed populism may be the consequence of the probable failure of reform.'⁵² Intensified inequalities associated with capitalist development do not necessarily favour coalitions supportive of democratic representation.

Consensus Representation in Singapore

Whereas in the Philippines and Thailand different versions of People Power have been decisive in the fall and/or return of authoritarianism, it has played no role in Singapore. However, the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) has been concerned that new social forces, interests and conflicts associated with capitalist development might result in gains for independent civil society and political opposition. It has thus created avenues for political participation within parliamentary and extra-parliamentary spheres. Functional and elitist conceptions of representation, proffered over a rights-based democratic politics, are integral to this.

This direction is linked to the consolidation and expansion of state capitalism, which has enhanced the power of technocratic elites predisposed towards bureaucratic and administrative techniques of political control and governance. Consequently, emphasis on *consultation* is meant not just to limit the boundaries and conduct of political conflict, it also reflects a technocratic view of politics as principally a problem-solving, rather than normative, exercise that can usefully harness relevant information and expertise.

Importantly, civil society wasn't always emasculated. Indeed, the PAP came to power with self-government in 1959 through an alliance of leftist and nationalist forces controlling trade unions and student, cultural and ethnic organisations, on the one hand, and right-wing middle-class nationalists on the other. Inherent tensions in this marriage of convenience became unmanageable in office and by July 1961 a breakaway faction formed the *Barisan Sosialis* (BS) or Socialist Front, stripping the PAP of grass-root networks and mass mobilisation capacity.

In response, the ruling party and state were effectively merged. This facilitated the development of grassroots para-political institutions and state-owned media

through which PAP ideology was disseminated, while the state-sponsored and PAP-affiliated National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) emerged as pivotal to the ruling party's policy implementation and electoral support mobilisation. Meanwhile, independent civil society organisations critical of the PAP, especially independent labour organisations, were all but extinguished.

The social foundations for consensus representation were not complete, though, until a particular form of state capitalism took root. This started with public housing that generated not just electoral support but the capacity of the PAP state for social and political engineering.⁵³ Initial state economic roles supporting industrialisation extended to direct investments by government-linked companies (GLCs) that dramatically escalated, diversified and internationalised as the economy grew. Opportunities for the domestic bourgeoisie have thus been heavily conditioned by, and dependent on, articulation with state capitalism. Meanwhile, much of the city-state's middle class is either employed in government departments, statutory bodies, GLCs or indirectly derives its livelihood from servicing state capitalism through the provision of commercial, legal or other professional services.

The net effect of Singapore's brand of state capitalism is limited space for independent economic and social bases that could be harnessed by critics and opponents of the PAP. This structural relationship helps explain not just the effectiveness of repressive legislation and the limits to electoral politics as opposition parties are denied organic social bases, but also the growing propensity for, and vulnerability to, various forms of PAP state political and ideological co-option. The institutionalisation of consensus representation is a key aspect of core element of such co-option.

According to Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister between 1989 and 2004: 'What a plural society like ours needs is a tradition of government which emphasises consensus instead of division, that includes rather than excludes, and that tries to maximise the participation of the population in the national effort, instead of minimizing it.'⁵⁴ This is also considered functional for elite rule, a point current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was explicit about: 'In a rapidly changing environment, much of the valuable up-to-date information is held by people at the frontline. Policy makers must draw on this knowledge to understand realities on the ground, and reach better solutions'.⁵⁵

The first major such initiative in consensus representation was the Feedback Unit, established in 1985 and renamed Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry@Home (REACH) in 2006. REACH's direction is broadly set by a Supervisory Panel, whose head is appointed by the government and is invariably a current PAP MP, as are many others on the Panel. The omission of opposition politicians and independent civil society activists is precisely because the idea is to foster a political 'consensus,' not competition. REACH's extensive mechanisms of consultation atomise and/or compartmentalise constituencies, militating against the formation of political coalitions beyond specific sectoral or policy issues. One way this is done is through individualised participation, absent of intermediary groups; in effect, individuals represent themselves. Another is by constructing the social categories to be represented or by working closely with preferred existing groups.

Online consultation channels, which account for the vast bulk of the feedback, have been especially significant in promoting individual forms of participation. These include: e-consultation papers (eCPs) published by government departments and agencies and seeking either targeted or open expressions of views through SMS and email; e-Townhall webchats to engage citizens following major government policy announcements; the Discussion Corner which takes place on the REACH website and often requesting people's responses to certain facts, arguments or issues that REACH has effectively defined as a problem; the General Feedback channel, where citizens are linked to relevant government departments that subsequently reply directly to the participant rather than engage in any a public debate.

In-person engagement includes Dialogue Sessions, which are generally small and informal, involving pre-policy and post-policy consultations chaired by two Supervisory Panel members. In principle open to the general public, in practice this is largely through invitations to 'strategic partners': 'organisations the Unit works with to widen and deepen its reach to the people.'⁵⁶ This has involved groups already with a record of working co-operatively with the ruling party. There is also Policy Study Workgroups (PSW), chaired by people from the private or social sector, appointed by the Supervisory Panel, that undertake policy studies and submit proposals to government at annual conferences.

A separate category of meetings that is less policy-driven is the Tea Sessions, chaired by a PAP MP and one other Supervisory Panel member. They are broken up into one or other of 14 discrete groups of Singaporeans, including students, youths,

women, professionals, ethnic communities, 'heartlanders', small and medium enterprises, and multinational corporations. Observations from participants themselves suggest that this compartmentalisation of issues conditions discussions in the Dialogue and Tea Sessions.⁵⁷

Clearly, state-sponsored consultation through REACH is designed to steer political participation towards the limited exercise of helping to improve or implement PAP government policy. In this respect, it is possible to point to some positive outcomes.⁵⁸ However, the way in which different groups and individuals are consulted militates against the formation of political coalitions around, and indeed beyond, specific sectoral or policy issues. That is the greater political significance of REACH.

The other major institution promoting consensus representation is the Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP), introduced in 1990. NMPs involve the most concerted attempt to challenge to the authority of democratic representation in favour of functionalist and elitist alternatives. Embryonic civil society organisations have also been targeted in an effort to discourage both their maturation as independent organisations and limit their potential to form coalitions amongst themselves. This initiative demonstrates that the PAP recognizes that new social forces, interests and conflicts associated with rapid capitalist expansion require a political accommodation.

NMPs are appointed by the President for terms of up to two-and-half years on the advice of a Special Select Committee appointed by Parliament. They cannot vote on money bills, bills to alter the Constitution, or motions of no confidence in the government but can speak on these issues and vote and speak on any other bills and motions. Legislation altering the Constitution providing for NMPs referred to 'independent and non-partisan views' in the selection criteria.⁵⁹ However, Prime Minister Goh made mention not only of the value of incorporating talented people with special expertise in the professions, commerce, industry, social services, cultural domains but also of sections of society currently under-represented in Parliament.

Since 1990, there have been 76 NMP appointments. One striking theme is a sustained bias towards people from the professions and academia. In addition to being appointed in their own right, academics and professionals have often been appointed as notional representatives of women, ethnic minorities or as champions of environmentalism or social welfare. In this way, the link between formal educational

credentials and public policy expertise is reinforced at the same time as functional groups are politically incorporated.

The most heavily 'represented' single category of NMPs has involved the business sector, mainly senior past or present figures from within peak employer and business bodies. Singapore's increasing exposure to economic globalisation has brought continuing challenges for the private sector. The consolidation and expansion of GLCs has not been without its critics from the local business community either. As the PAP has more vigorously embraced economic globalisation in recent decades, material inequalities have also widened significantly in Singapore. Increasingly exorbitant ministerial and senior civil servant salaries justified in elitist terms have only compounded working class resentment about rising inequalities. Generous representation of the NTUC in NMP appointments is thus a symbolic statement to counteract the idea of NTUC impotence.

The number of NMP appointments from embryonic civil society organisations has not been high, but their strategic significance has. Thus, the appointment of orthopaedic surgeon Kanwaljit Soin was a conspicuous attempt to encourage activists within the moderate but independent feminist Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) towards direct engagement within a PAP-controlled institution. Similarly, Braema Mathiapparanam, foundation President of Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), which advocates on behalf of foreign domestic labour, was also appointed. The Nature Society of Singapore (NSS) has also been recognised through the appointment of orthopaedic surgeon Geh Min – the first female president of the NSS. Like AWARE and TWC2, while not a radical organisation, NSS's independence and comparative activism from the late 1980s posed a question about the adequacy of existing structures of political cooption on issues of potential appeal to Singapore's expanding middle class.

The other attempted co-option of an independent organisation has involved the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP), established in 1991 out of frustration with Mendaki – the officially sanctioned council representing ethnic Malays and controlled by Malay PAP MPs. The PAP tolerance of AMP independence is in part a function of ruling party preference for problems of socio-economic disadvantage being viewed through an ethnic rather than a class prism. AMP Chairman Imram bin Mohamed was among the 1994 NMP appointments, a move attempting to reinforce this ethnic framework.

While an evaluation of the full impact of consensus representation is beyond the scope of this essay, it clearly has appeal to sections of the professional middle class in particular and more generally promotes modes of political engagement that reinforce political fragmentation unhelpful for political coalition building. Yet, as the 2011 election results also reveal, with forty per cent of voters rejecting the PAP, consensus representation has not been able to completely absorb and neutralise public concerns about the accentuating inequalities of capitalist development.

Challenging Ethnic Localism

In contrast with Singapore, the authoritarian ruling *Barisan Nasional (BN)* government in Malaysia has not averted People Power. The 1998-1999 *reformasi* movement was short-lived and unsuccessful, but it gave expression to a comparatively vibrant civil society. Subsequent street demonstrations and opposition political coalitions forged prior to the 2008 general election also underline the continuing potential of independent collective action in Malaysia. Moreover, substantial 2008 opposition electoral gains followed a campaign with the most concerted attempt yet to challenge a core ideological and institutional foundation of the regime – ethnic-based political representation. The question is whether this challenge further galvanises or splinters civil society forces in a push for more democratic representation?

Since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP), capitalist development has been integral to ethnic Malay power. Thus, the centrepiece of affirmative action to improve Malays' socio-economic position was the promotion of a *Bumiputera* domestic bourgeoisie. As a corollary, the extent and power of Malay professional bureaucrats was greatly expanded through the public sector and GLCs.⁶⁰ However, as inequalities generated by capitalism have become more acute and state power abuses more evident, the rationale for ethnic-based political representation has come under more scrutiny. Yet the civil society through which this scrutiny is conducted is shaped by a history unfavourable to strong class-based organisations.

Trade unions were influential in immediate post-War politics, notably when the Malayan Communist Party-affiliated Pan Malayan Federation of Trade Unions was at its peak.⁶¹ Even then, though, membership was predominantly ethnic Chinese, organised along communal lines, with little ethnic Malay involvement – a pattern related to the ethnic division of labour fostered under colonial capitalism.

Subsequently, radical unions were repressed and apolitical unions sponsored by the British through anti-communist middle-class English-educated ethnic Indian leaders.⁶² The sustained repression of the leftist Labour Party and ultimately its deregistration in 1972 was another blow to developing broad working class political representation. And while capitalist industrialisation in recent decades boosted the ethnic Malay proletariat, Malays remain least represented by unions – the Malaysian Trades Union Congress represented just 10 per cent of the Malaysian workforce in 2010.⁶³

Although their numbers are not on the scale as in the Philippines and Thailand, NGOs have also dominated civil society in Malaysia. By the 1990s this broadly comprised two elements: ethno-religious organisations largely reflecting the NEP agenda; and urban-based organisations led by middle-class non-Malays, often pursuing single-issue agendas of consumer rights, human rights and good governance.

It was through *reformasi* that these elements came together.⁶⁴ The sacking and imprisonment of Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim radicalised many Islamic organisations and also heightened internal tensions to the dominant party in the *BN*, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), creating political opportunities for critics of the ruling party and regime.⁶⁵ Thus, in the mass demonstrations that ensued during 1998-1999, calls for the repeal of legislation restricting media and civil liberties, attacks on corruption, cronyism and nepotism, and demands for Islamic solutions to the moral decay underlying the governance malaise combined. However, the electoral coalition emerging from this movement, *Barisan Alternatif* (*BA* or Alternative Front), was out pointed by *BN* at the 1999 and 2004 polls. For many non-Malay voters, *reformasi* was viewed as principally a Malay-Islamic movement.⁶⁶

By the 2008 election, though, some of the initial overtures in cross-ethnic political coalitions found more fertile ground as the contradictions of capitalism under the NEP manifested in declining economic performance, growing material disparities within and between ethnic categories, inadequacies and political biases in regulatory, legal and other institutions, and religious insensitivities. Links between NGOs and opposition parties had also deepened.⁶⁷ In November 2007, around 40,000 assembled in central Kuala Lumpur to demand electoral reform following revelations of previous vote-rigging and condemning the Election Commission for political partisanship. This was organised by the *Bersih* Coalition (Coalition for Free and Fair Elections) and

involved cooperation between various human rights NGOs and opposition parties, marking a new level of cross-ethnic participation.⁶⁸

Despite a subsequent police ban on public rallies, within weeks 30,000 people responded to a call to the streets by the Hindu Rights Action Front (HINDRAF). HINDRAF's concerns included the demolition of Hindu temples, but structural discrimination and socio-economic marginalisation is especially acute for ethnic Indians. Authorities deployed 5,000 riot police and water cannons to disperse the crowd, arrested at least 240 people and detained organisers under the Internal Security Act.⁶⁹

Crucially, Anwar articulated a clear alternative to the *BN*'s ethnic politics, in contrast with the *reformasi* experience, that helped win over larger numbers of non-Malays. As *de facto* leader of *Parti Keadilan Rakyat* (*PKR* or People's Justice Party), he called for the *NEP*'s end and announced his party's New Economic Agenda, under which social need, not ethnicity, was the guiding principle of resource allocation. Furthermore, by endorsing the HINDRAF struggle, Anwar defied the 'prevailing Malay-Muslim sentiment which treated HINDRAF challenge as a threat to the dominance of Islam.'⁷⁰ This demonstration of an ethnic-Malay leader standing up for the rights of the most marginalised non-Malays powerfully symbolised a different conception of political representation. Ethnic concerns did not require ethnic representation.⁷¹

Although the *BN* was returned to government in 2008, it did so against a substantial voter backlash giving it just over half the votes cast, and the first ever loss of its two-third parliamentary seat majority needed for constitutional reforms. *BN* also lost government in five states, the previous worst performance being two. Opposition party seats in federal parliament rose from 10 per cent to over 30 per cent. Significantly, the most multi-ethnic of the opposition parties, *PKR*, attracted the highest votes but *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* (*PAS* or Pan Malaysian Islamic Party) and the Democratic Action Party (*DAP*) also made major gains. The largest ethnic vote swings to the opposition were estimated to have been by ethnic Indians (35 per cent), ethnic Chinese (30 per cent) and ethnic Malays (5 per cent).⁷² The new electoral coalition of opposition parties under *Pakatan Rakyat* (*PR* or People's Alliance) achieved what Maznah describes as an 'optimum multiethnic consensus.'⁷³

Hardest hit *BN* party members were precisely those whose rationale was to capture votes of minority ethnic constituencies: the Malayan Chinese Association

(MCA), *Gerakan*, and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). Under the *BN* ‘consociationalism’ formula for determining which parties contest what seats, ethnic composition of the electorate is principally determinant. Hence, UMNO contests Malay majority constituencies, MCA or *Gerakan* Chinese majority constituencies and a certain number of contests are reserved for MIC where there is significant ethnic Indian constituency. Broadly, Federal and State government appointments of Senators and local councillors also reflect this pattern of political representation.⁷⁴

However, the abysmal performance of MIC, MCA and *Gerakan* at the polls has upset the logic and stability of consociationalism. The inability of the MIC to retain the votes of ethnic Indians, for example, led to Prime Minister Najib launching the new *BN*-sympathetic ethnic-Indian-based Malaysian *Makkal Sakti* (People Power) Party. He also warned Malaysia’s ethnic Chinese community that if they don’t vote for the MCA they lose representation in government.⁷⁵ Yet, given the lack of influence by the MCA (and MIC and *Gerakan*) within the *BN*, the threat may fall on deaf electoral ears. Meanwhile, Najib has recast the ruling coalition’s ideological appeal to non-Malays with his 1Malaysia propaganda campaign, whose main slogan is ‘People First. Performance Now.’

For the *PR*, though, progressing non-ethnic politics and representation is no simple task. To be sure, there have been significant rhetorical and practical reinforcements of this ideal. Anwar, for example, directly confronted racist notions of Malay supremacy that recently resurfaced as part of the defence of the NEP. Asserting that most people living under poverty are ethnic Malays, he proclaimed: ‘What type of Malay supremacy is this? We should instead abolish the question of ethnicity and solve the problem of poverty. Those that will benefit are of course the poor; the Malays and Bumiputera in the villages, Indians in the estates and Chinese in towns. That is what we should focus on.’⁷⁶

Some policy initiatives and commitments by *PR* state governments have also been encouraging, including: Perak’s *PAS* Chief Minister Mahamad Nizar Jamalludin’s allocation of state land to nine independent Chinese schools; pledges by Penang’s DAP Chief Minister, Lim Eng Guan, to support Islamic religious schools with state funds;⁷⁷ a proposal by Selangor’s *PR* Chief Minister, Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, to open up some tertiary institute entrance at the hitherto Malay exclusive Universiti Teknologi MARA as well as to appoint a non-Malay to a temporary

position in a state GLC. However, the last two initiatives, in particular, aroused concerted opposition and effective resistance from vested interests.⁷⁸

Within *PR* itself, though, a multi-ethnic – let alone a genuinely non-ethnic – concept of political representation is also far from asserting itself as the ascendant ideological framework. In effect, the process of determining seat contest allocation at the 2008 election was not fundamentally different from *BN*'s: *PAS* stood in ethnic Malay majority electorates; the *DAP* in ethnic Chinese majority electorates; and *PKR* in the most ethnically mixed electorates. As difficult and protracted negotiations over which electorates respective *PR* parties would contest in the 2011 Sarawak state election revealed, breaking from that mould will not be easy. Friction mainly centred around *DAP* reluctance to concede ethnic-Chinese dominated electorates for the *PKR* to contest. *PKR* Vice President Tian Chua argued that, as a multi-racial party, *PKR* needed to maintain a minimum presence in Chinese-majority urban areas.⁷⁹

Furthermore, following the 2008 election relations between *PR* and *HINDRAF* have soured, the latter contending working class Indian issues have been neglected by *PR*. Yet *HINDRAF*'s solution might not help realise the goal of transcending communalism. In December 2010, the *HINDRAF*-affiliated Human Rights Party (HRP) issued an ultimatum to the *PR* leadership to allow it straight contests with the *BN* in 15 parliamentary seats and 38 state seats in the next general election or face the prospect of three-cornered contests. The seats it nominated not only contained significant ethnic Indian composition but also were predominantly *PR* held. 'MIC is given at least nine parliament seats and 20 state assembly seats on a silver platter. Why can't we be allocated some, too?' asked HRP pro-tem secretary-general P. Uthayakumar.⁸⁰

For this and other stances, *HINDRAF* and *HPR* have been accused of seeking not to combat inequality in general but to extract comparable affirmative action for Indians as for Malays under the NEP, notably from the *Parti Sosialis Malaysia* (Socialist Party of Malaysia).⁸¹ Yet these stances are borne out of a context within which there is a dearth of cohesive working class organisations to link up with. There is also a degree of unease from certain middle class-led NGOs about the style and content of *HINDRAF* demands – some of which could only be addressed through explicit redistributive programmes that the middle class has been equally ambivalent about in other parts of Southeast Asia. This is not to say that class-based issues are always eclipsed where social justice agendas are advocated -- whether within political

parties or movements like Bersih – but their prospects are highly contingent given the absence of a class-oriented programme and class-based representation.

As differences over ways to combat prevailing ideologies of ethnic political representation play out, recourse to street demonstrations is likely to continue to play an important role – either as a supplement to, or substitute for, existing forms of political representation. And official intimidation appears unlikely to quell such activity either, including the arrest of Uthayakumar and 108 other demonstrators at an HPR anti-racism rally in Kuala Lumpur during February 2011, and of 18 people demonstrating for a minimum wage and against high living costs in May. Indeed, against the background of the 2011 Sarawak state election, a *Bersih 2.0 March for Democracy* was held on 9 July to restate the case for free and fair elections, despite it being declared illegal by authorities. Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein even declared wearing yellow t-shirts supporting the rally illegal.⁸² The 10,000 protesters who attended the rally were confronted with water cannon, tear gas and other intimidation, with more than 1,600 arrests. Amnesty International called the response ‘the worst campaign of repression in the country for years.’⁸³ This over-reaction suggests the *BN* is mindful of how quickly and unexpectedly the Arab Spring unfolded.

Conclusion

This select examination of innovations in, and struggles over, political representation in Southeast Asia highlights the importance of understanding not just the extent of civil society forces involved but also the complexion of those forces. Dynamic alliances and conflicts between different interests in civil society can both produce People Power and damage the prospects of democratic representation. Competing versions of People Power are also possible, reflecting significant differences in class interest contributing to contrasting degrees of receptiveness to democratic, populist, consensus and localist ideologies and institutions of political representation.

An especially important theme across Southeast Asia is the influence of consensus representation ideologies among the middle class. Although the above analysis concentrated on how this has developed in Singapore, consensus representation is present in varying degrees and forms in authoritarian and post-authoritarian regimes. In the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, for example, community-based participation has been a feature of World Bank-driven poverty reduction programmes. However, these modes of participation favour targeted and

often administratively defined communities and a technocratic conception of politics. Avenues for representing or addressing conflicts rooted in social cleavages are eschewed in favour of different cleavages that divert attention from class relationships, such as between local and national groups, between different ethnic groups, and between users and providers of public services such as irrigation.⁸⁴

Often, then, consensus and localist ideologies of representation are articulated with each other, though this is always a function of the specific dynamic coalitions of interests competing to define political institutions. As the Indonesian experience of political decentralisation in the last decade demonstrates, localist ideologies can also be harnessed to crude forms of predatory power and interest that fundamentally violate the sorts of rational, technocratic governance embraced by many in the middle class.⁸⁵ Similarly, religion rather than Weberian rationality is ideologically incorporated within separatist movements seeking localist political representation in Mindanao in the Philippines, Southern Thailand and Aceh in Indonesia.

Importantly, certain forms of democratic representation can also be used to obstruct the prospects of cohesive class-based organisations in Southeast Asia. Following People Power 1 in the Philippines, for example, established oligarchs and their political allies understood democratic participation had to be accommodated but they sought to minimize the prospect of radical reform. What transpired included the introduction of party-lists for the House of Representatives, which preserves 20 per cent of seats for marginalised social sectors. This has facilitated a political pluralism characterised by a continued disaggregation of interests and policy issues among the challengers to traditional political parties who end up competing with each other.⁸⁶ The party-list system also offers NGOs an opportunity for validation as stand-alone entities, which many take in preference to broader alliance building.

The key point is that competing attempts in Southeast Asia to privilege one or other notion of political representation, or to articulate these in particular ways, have been deeply affected by legacies of past conflicts and the continuing impacts of capitalist development. These factors have seriously limited the capacity of class-based organisations to play decisive roles in the formation of coalitions that determine ascendant ideologies and institutions of representation. In this context, ideologies indifferent to systemic economic, social and political inequalities can find institutional expression in various alternatives to democratic political representation and, indeed, through innovations in democratic representation itself. For this reason, protracted

struggle over preferred forms of political representation often follows momentous episodes of People Power – whether in Southeast Asia or elsewhere.

Notes

¹ K Jayasuriya & G Rodan, 'Beyond hybrid regimes: more participation, less contestation in Southeast Asia', *Democratization*, 14(5), 2007, pp 773-794; W Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia: Democracy or Less*, Richmond: Curzon, 2002.

² D Slater, *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

³ Jayasuriya & Rodan, 'Beyond hybrid regimes'.

⁴ W Armbrust, 'A revolution against neoliberalism? *Aljazeera.net*, 24 February 2011, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/02/201122414315249621.html>, accessed 18 May 2011.

⁵ T Carothers, 'The end of the transition paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1), 2002, pp 17-33; S Levitsky and L A Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010; F Volpi, 'Pseudo-democracy in the Muslim world', *Third World Quarterly*, 25(6), 2004, pp 1061-1078.

⁶ See, for example, M Wigell, 'Mapping "hybrid regimes": types and concepts in comparative politics', *Democratization*, 15(2), 2008, pp 230-250.

⁷ For a review of this literature see G Rodan and K Jayasuriya, 'Hybrid Regimes – a Social Foundations Approach', in J Haynes (ed), *Routledge Handbook of Democratization*, London: Routledge, 2011 (forthcoming).

⁸ T Carothers, 'The end of the transition paradigm.'

⁹ See, for example, Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism* and M Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003.

¹⁰ K Hewison & G Rodan, 'The Ebb and Flow of Civil Society and the Decline of the Left in Southeast Asia', in G. Rodan (ed), *Political Oppositions in Industrialising Asia*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp 40-71.

¹¹ Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

¹² G Rodan & K Jayasuriya, 'Capitalist development, regime transitions and new forms of authoritarianism in Asia', *Pacific Review*, 22(1), 2009, pp 23-48.

¹³ F C Deyo, 'Southeast Asian industrial labour: structural demobilisation and political transformation', in G Rodan, K Hewison & R Robison (eds), *The Political Economy of Southeast Asia: Markets, Power and Contestation*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp 283-304.

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- ¹⁴ A Gamble, *An Introduction to Modern Social and Political Thought*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987, p.257.
- ¹⁵ See P P Houtzager & A G Lavalley, 'Civil society's claims to political representation in Brazil', *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 45(1), 2010, pp 1-29; R B Collier & S Handlin, *Reorganizing Popular Politics: Participation and the New Interest Regime in Latin America*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009.
- ¹⁶ Pasuk Phongpaichit & C Baker, 'Thaksin's populism', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 38(1), 2008, pp 62-83.
- ¹⁷ Some sections of the poor didn't fare so well from Thaksin's policies, such as the hill peoples of Northern Thailand and Southern Malay Muslims, the latter subjected instead to human rights abuses by state authorities. See International Crisis Group, Thailand's Emergency Decree: No Solution, *Asia Report*, 105, 18 November 2005.
- ¹⁸ M K Connors, *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*, Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2007, pp 215-218.
- ¹⁹ Hewison argues that this withdrawal was out of concern that the military was not sufficiently unified to ensure maintenance of the established order. See K Hewison, 'Of Regimes, State and Pluralities: Thai politics enters the 1990s', in K Hewison, R Robison & G Rodan (eds), *Southeast Asia in the 1990s: Authoritarianism, Democracy & Capitalism*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993, p 184.
- ²⁰ A Brown, *Labour, Politics and the State in Industrializing Thailand*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p 134.
- ²¹ Pasuk & Baker, 'Thaksin's populism', p 71.
- ²² Pasuk Phongpaichit & C Baker, 'Pluto-populism in Thailand: business remaking politics', November 2003, pp 3-4 at <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/papers.htm>, accessed 20 February 2011.
- ²³ D McCargo, 'Network monarchy and legitimacy crises in Thailand', *The Pacific Review*, 18(4), 2005, pp 499-519.
- ²⁴ K Hewison, 'Constitutions, regimes and power in Thailand', *Democratization*, 14(5), p 933.
- ²⁵ K Jayasuriya & K Hewison, 'The anti-politics of good governance: from global social policy to a global populism?' *Critical Asian Studies*, 36(4), 2004, pp 571-91.
- ²⁶ K Hewison, 'Crafting Thailand's new social contract', *The Pacific Review*, 17(4), 2004, pp 503-522.
- ²⁷ J Glassman, "'The provinces elect governments, Bangkok overthrows them": urbanity, class and post-democracy in Thailand', *Urban Studies*, 47(6), 2010, pp 1311-1312.
- ²⁸ P Handley, *The King Never Smiles. A Biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, pp.419-420; K Hewison, 'Constitutions, regimes and power', p 937-938.

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- ²⁹ Pasuk & Baker, 'Thaksin's populism', p 66.
- ³⁰ This included privatisation policies, which Thaksin implemented against labour leaders' wishes.
- ³¹ Quoted in Pasuk Phongpaichit & C Baker, *Thaksin: The Business of Politics in Thailand*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2004, p 170
- ³² Quoted in *ibid.*, p 15.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p 41.
- ³⁴ O Pye & W Schaffar, 'The 2006 anti-Thaksin movement in Thailand: an analysis', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 38(1), pp 38-61.
- ³⁵ G J Ungpakorn, *A Coup for the Rich: Thailand's political crisis*, Bangkok: Workers Democracy Publishing, 2007.
- ³⁶ K Hewison, 'Rebellion, repression and the red shirts', *East Asia Forum Quarterly*, 2(2), 2010, pp 14-17.
- ³⁷ Jacques-Chai Chomthongdi & Chaninda Chanyapate, 'Aftermath of the battle: picking up the pieces', *Focus on Global South*, 25 May 2010, available at <http://www.focusweb.org/content/aftermath-battle-picking-pieces>, accessed 26 May 2010.
- ³⁸ Pasuk & Baker, 'Thaksin's populism', p 78.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ See K Hewison, 'Resisting globalization: a study of localism in Thailand', *The Pacific Review*, 13(2), 2000, pp 279-296.
- ⁴¹ Glassman, 'The provinces elect governments', p 1315.
- ⁴² Quoted in Connors, *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*, p 223.
- ⁴³ B Dressel, 'Thailand's elusive quest for a workable constitution, 1997-2007', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 31(2), 2009, p 303.
- ⁴⁴ This requirement has been relaxed for the House of Representatives, but clearly the Senate now becomes a more likely force for blocking initiatives by an elected government.
- ⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, 'Thailand: The Calm Before Another Storm? *Asia Briefing*, 121, 11 April 2011.
- ⁴⁶ Kengkij Kitirianglarp & K Hewison, 'Social movements and political opposition in contemporary Thailand', *The Pacific Review*, 22(4), 2009, pp 471-472.
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- ⁴⁸ N Quimpo, *Contested Democracy and the Left in the Philippines After Marcos*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, 2008, p 143.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51; and Committee on the Evangelization of Culture of the Province of the Society of Jesus, *Ehem! A Manual for Deepening Involvement in Combating Corruption*, Davao City, Philippines: Ateneo de Davao University, 2003.

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- ⁵¹ J Hutchison, 'Poverty of politics in the Philippines', in Rodan, Hewison & Robison (eds), *The Political Economy of Southeast Asia*, p 63.
- ⁵² M R Thompson, 'After populism: the presidential election campaign in the Philippines', in Y Kasuya and N Quimpo, (eds), *The Politics of Change in the Philippines*, Manila: Anvil Press, 2010, p 212. See also M R Thompson, 'Reformism vs. populism in the Philippines', *Journal of Democracy*, 21(4), 2010, pp 21-22.
- ⁵³ C Tremewan, *The Political Economy of Social Control in Singapore*, London: Macmillan, 1994; Chua Beng-Huat, *Political Legitimacy and Housing: Stakeholding in Singapore*, London: Routledge, 1997.
- ⁵⁴ Goh Chok Tong, 'A Nation of Excellence', Address at the Alumni International Singapore, 1 December 1986, Singapore, Ministry of Communications and Information, p 7. Goh appears here to be inferring ethnic plurality rather than political plurality.
- ⁵⁵ Lee Hsien Loong, 'Speech by Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Administrative Services Dinner and Promotion Ceremony', 29 March 1999, Mandarin Hotel, Singapore, at http://www.singapore21.org.sg/speeches_290399.html, accessed 4 October 2006.
- ⁵⁶ Feedback Unit, *Building Bridges: The Story of Feedback Unit*, Singapore: Feedback Unit, Ministry of Community Development and Sports, 2004, p 35-37.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., p 10.
- ⁵⁸ See G Rodan and K Jayasuriya, 'The technocratic politics of administrative participation: case studies of Singapore and Vietnam', *Democratization*, 14(3), 2007, pp 802-05.
- ⁵⁹ Quoted in Ho Khai Leong, *The Politics of Policy-Making in Singapore*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 90.
- ⁶⁰ See Khoo Boo Teik, *Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance in the Public Sector: Malaysian Experiences*, Democracy, Governance & Human Rights Programme Paper, No. 20, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, December 2005.
- ⁶¹ D Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia*, London: Routledge, 1994, p 222.
- ⁶² K S Jomo & P Todd, *Trade Unions and the State in Peninsula Malaysia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp 88-103.
- ⁶³ H Crouch, 'Malaysia: neither authoritarian nor democratic' in K Hewison, R Robison & G Rodan (eds), *Southeast Asia in the 1990s*, p 148; J Kathaiah, 'No Government will Bother About MTUC', *Malaysiakini*, 29 December 2010 <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/151890>, accessed 30 December 2010.

⁶⁴ This was not the first time such a coalition formed. The Anwar-led Malaysia Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) Anti-Societies Act movement during 1981-1982 included NGOs.

⁶⁵ F Loh, 'Procedural democracy, participatory democracy and regional networking: the multi-terrain struggle for democracy in Southeast Asia', *Inter-Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 2008, p 131-132.

⁶⁶ M L Weiss, *Protest and Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, pp 127-61.

⁶⁷ M L Weiss, 'Edging towards a new politics in Malaysia: civil society at the gate?', *Asian Survey*, 49(4), 2009, pp 754-756.

⁶⁸ W Case, 'Transition from single-party dominance? New data from Malaysia', *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 10(1), p 106-109.

⁶⁹ Maznah Mohamad, 'Malaysia – democracy and the end of ethnic politics?', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 62(4), 2008, p 444.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p 452.

⁷¹ Ibid., p 455.

⁷² Ibid., p 447.

⁷³ Ibid., p 443.

⁷⁴ Khoo, *Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance*, pp 33, 38.

⁷⁵ 'Chinese must choose – vote MCA or else no gov't posts', *malaysiakini*, 30 April 2011, at <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/162902>, accessed 5 May 2011.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani, 'Umno is scared of us, says Anwar', *Malaysian Insider*, 29 November 2010, at <http://lite.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/umno-is-scared-of-us-says-anwar>, accessed 3 December 2010.

⁷⁷ Maznah, 'Malaysia – democracy and the end of ethnic politics?', p 455.

⁷⁸ T Yeoh, 'The Pakatan Rakyat Selangor state administration: present and future challenges on the road to reform', *The Round Table*, 99(407), pp 187-8.

⁷⁹ Kuek Ser Kuang Keng, 'PKR needs Chinese-majority seats too', *malaysiakini*, 29 March 2011, at <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/159941>, accessed 8 April.

⁸⁰ Aidilqa Razak, 'HRP to Pakatan: Give us 15 parliamentary seats', *malaysiakini*, 19 December 2010, at <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/151207>, accessed 21 December 2010.

⁸¹ See, for example, Jeyakumar Devaraj, 'Why the Hindraf approach is misguided', *Aliran*, January 2008, at <http://aliran.com/394.html>, accessed 11 August 2010.

⁸² See Wong Choon Mei, 'Arab Spring or T-shirt revolution, it has arrived in Malaysia', *Malaysia Chronicle*, 30 June 2011, at http://www.malaysia-chronicle.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=14942:arab-spring-or-t-shir-revolution-it-has-arrived-in-malaysia&Itemid=2, accessed 30 June 2011.

⁸³ *The Economist*, 'Taken to the cleaners: political affray in Malaysia', 14 July 2011, p. 46.

⁸⁴ Jayasuriya & Rodan, 'Beyond hybrid regimes', pp 783-5.

⁸⁵ See V Hadiz, *Localising Power in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: A Southeast Asia Perspective*, Stanford: Stanford university Press, 2010.

⁸⁶ See J Aceron, 'It's the (non-) system, stupid! Explaining "mal-development" of parties in the Philippines', in *Reforming the Philippine Political Party System: ideas and initiatives, debates and dynamics*, Manila: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2009, pp 1-22.