This article revisits the electoral emphasis of hybrid regime studies, arguing instead that the impact of elections is structured by variations in prior political institutions, particularly the dismantlement or maintenance of a ruling party. Duration tests on 136 regimes indicate that ruling parties reduce the chance of regime collapse, while “electoral autocracy” has no significant effect. A paired comparison of Malaysia and the Philippines then shows how variations in party institutions propelled divergent courses of authoritarian dominance and democratization. During the late 1980s and 1990s, Malaysia’s ruling party (UMNO) bound together otherwise fractious leaders, twice deflecting potent electoral challenges. By contrast, when Ferdinand Marcos abandoned the Nacionalista Party after 1972, he fueled the movement that would subsequently oust him. The efficacy of opposition parties Semangat ’46 and UNIDO was thus heavily imbricated with the institutions of the regimes they challenged and less contingent on short-term electoral politics.

**Keywords:** democratization, democracy, authoritarianism, autocracy, dictatorship, parties, institutions, elections, regime change, elites
The third wave of democratization left burgeoning democracies and resilient dictatorships in its wake. Scholarly response has been commensurately diverse, with many comparativists offering hybrid regime typologies that highlight the electoral features of twenty-first century autocracies. With an eye toward explaining the dynamics of why some regimes weathered the third wave while others fell, this article evaluates the analytic utility of hybrid regimes alongside alternative explanations. Using a cross-national dataset and intraregional paired comparison, I evaluate the impact of electoral practices and other institutional variables on regime survival. The collected evidence points away from a proximate focus on elections, opposition protest, and elite behavior at the eve of regime breakdown. Logistic regression tests of 136 regimes during 1975–2000 reveal no significant statistical impact of electoral autocracy on regime survival. Regime longevity depends instead on the profile of incumbent elites and the organizations through which they rule; regimes based on a single party provide the most resilient form of authoritarianism—regardless of whether they established multiparty elections and legislatures.

These results confirm the findings of Barbara Geddes but also pose new questions. If regime types are so influential, what explains the variation between ostensibly weaker personalistic regimes and their more robust party-based counterparts? Related, at what point and through what processes do these regimes collapse or continue? Geddes’s typology conceives regime types as an aggregate reflection of elite preferences and behavior. The result is a proximate narrative of change, much like those of her forerunners, in which rulers either initiate the transition or respond defensively to an impending crisis. Accordingly, she does not account for how institutions affect elite preferences years before the regime appears under strain or why such institutional affects may drive elites to enlist with otherwise beleaguered opposition movements. The contrasting experiences of Malaysia and the Philippines illuminate these issues and demonstrate the structural influence of institutions at ameliorating or exacerbating elite conflict.
The last quarter of the century was deemed a turbulent period for nondemocratic rulers. But, as reflected in the careers of Mahathir Mohamad and Ferdinand Marcos, not all autocrats fared poorly. During twenty-two years in power, Mahathir operated through his country’s founding party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). Malaysia thus presents a classic single-party regime, whose durability comports with the research of Geddes and additional statistical analysis presented in this article. However, the history of challenges during Mahathir’s tenure also reveals how UMNO mended intraelite rifts. The importance of this role becomes even more salient in light of the divergent path Marcos followed. Instead of retaining the Nacionalista Party, under whose banner he had first won the presidency in 1965, Marcos deactivated the party and tightened his circle of political associates. He thereby alienated long-time Nacionalista leaders and fueled an alliance of activists and elite defectors. This coalition—UNIDO—was formed in 1980 and had made substantial political inroads two years prior to the “snap election” of 1986. Whereas Philippine officers (and US senators) joined the anti-Marcos movement late in its maturation, aggrieved Nacionalistas like the Laurel brothers had realigned much earlier, due in large part to Marcos’s disregard for extant party institutions and the dispute management mechanisms they afforded him.

In combination with the statistical analysis of electoral autocracy, this comparison points to a need for revising short-term accounts based on electoral politics and elite behavior. Rather than viewing Marcos’s downfall as a result of opposition-driven “replacement” or the belated desertion of elites who saw the writing on the wall, the opposition’s success in 1986 is more properly seen as the culmination of an extended process of institutional decline and elite defection, catalyzed years earlier by the president’s pursuit of personal control over organizational continuity. Inversely, the resilience of Mahathir over five electoral cycles is more explicable in light of the redoubtable premier’s ultimate deference to UMNO and its capacity for resolving elite conflict. While his nepotism was notorious, particularly in his early years, it was
the imposed organizational checks on his personal prerogatives that helped Mahathir coax his rivals back and preempt a viable counterweight of insiders and oppositionists.

Institutional variations generated divergent trajectories: on one course, elites were bound together by party institutions and preserved their dominance; on the other, they defected and enabled opposition victory. These paths originated long before the drama of electoral politics was to unfold and garner international attention. Their analogues in current regimes provide an essential backdrop for gauging the impact of soft-liner behavior or the plebiscititarian ploys of electoral autocracies.

**Does Electoral Autocracy Engender Its Own Demise?**

Reflecting on the dramatic electoral defeats of dictators from Manila to Managua, Samuel Huntington suggested “that liberalized authoritarianism is not a stable equilibrium; the halfway house does not stand.”¹ Five years later one can observe autocrats in some five dozen states blending elections with repression. The resilience of these allegedly untenable systems has generated an array of epithets: “semi-authoritarian,” “electoral authoritarian,” “competitive authoritarian.”²³ Their authors aver that limited opportunities for competition do not represent a transition to democracy but that they may, under certain circumstances, eject dictators through the very venues of inclusion they fostered.⁴ But taxonomy has outpaced explanation and the question remains: Are electoral autocracies less stable than their exclusionary peers?⁵

Earlier answers divided between those, like Huntington, who thought liberalization fed democratization and those who saw it warding off more holistic changes.⁶ When looking at electoral performance across cases, one finds prima facie evidence for each view. In the region of Southeast Asia, for example, incumbent autocrats have lost power at least in part because of elections they themselves caused. Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos’s downfall is an iconic example, and one that seemingly demonstrates how “elections are the death of dictatorship.”⁷
But even as the ballot box appeared to turn upon Marcos, his counterpart in neighboring 
Malaysia, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, survived poll after poll, sometimes despite 
concerted opposition campaigns to break UMNO’s hegemony. Figure 1 illustrates the contrast 
in Marcos’s and Mahathir’s electoral fortunes during their respective tenures. It suggests that the 
identification of electoral autocracy cannot independently account for variations in how electoral 
autocrats fare. In this sense, the latest hybrid regime typologies may usefully describe the 
features of contemporary authoritarianism yet not address why rulers lose or secure their hold on 
power.
Figure 1 Regime Electoral Performance in Malaysia and the Philippines

The contrast between Malaysia and the Philippines carries elsewhere. From Peru to Ukraine, electoral defeats for dictators have become what military withdrawals were in the 1980s—a signal that power has shifted from self-appointed leaders to popularly supported movements. Alone, though, such elections portend neither democratization nor prolonged dictatorship. Rather than foreshadowing a regime’s destiny, they are more likely to reflect its history. Electoral performance ratifies rather than redistributes the power of incumbents and challengers. To glean what variables shape regime change and continuity, one must peer into the precursors of electoral politics and the inner processes of coalitional conflict. Prior institutionalist scholarship has done so, researching autocracy’s core instead of its visage.

The literature on hybrid regimes was preceded by a decade of scholarship that attempted to redress the voluntarist slant of Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter’s landmark transitions project. While noting the importance of strategic interaction for political change, comparativists situate elite and opposition behavior in a social or institutional context, thereby helping explain the preferences and power different actors brought to bear. Among the more salient advances in the field was a set of characteristics for distinguishing among autocracies based on the institutional profile of the ruling elite. Regimes with a basis in a dominant party were found to be especially robust, while personalized autocracies appeared susceptible to mass protest.

Geddes joined these two regime types with the military dictatorships of O’Donnell and Schmitter’s cases to form a tripartite typology. The resulting comparison of military, personal, and single-party regimes exposed general patterns: military regimes tended to have the shortest duration (average length of rule: 8.5 years); personalistic autocracies lasted longer (average lifespan: 15.0 years); and single-party regimes proved least likely to relinquish power (average longevity: 22.7 years). Geddes’s approach tended to treat institutions as an aggregate reflection
of elite behavior rather than as an independent influence on leaders’ preferences, thus retreating from one of the structuralists’ main contributions. Nonetheless, her expansive statistical testing systematically confirmed patterns that had long been postulated in the case study literature. Her test provides a basis for assessing the analytic utility of electoral autocracy above and beyond older authoritarian subtypes.

To determine whether prior institutional variables have retained their explanatory power, I tested the impact of electoral autocracy, along with the tripartite regime types and a conventional set of control variables (economic, regional, age), on the durability of 136 authoritarian regimes during the period 1975–2000. (The dataset covers a total of 1,647 country-years.) The dependent variable is the breakdown of a regime in a given year, measured by a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 when breakdown occurs; statistically significant positive coefficients mean less stability while negative coefficients indicate greater resilience. To measure whether or not the regime qualified as an electoral autocracy, I drew on the World Bank Database of Political Indicators and constructed a dummy variable that takes the value of 1 during a period when the regime has held limited multiparty elections for at least two consecutive years. I also added a number of cases that were previously omitted from Geddes’s dataset, including eleven monarchies and nine post-Soviet states. The three main regime types (military, personalist, single-party), as well as “monarchy” and a series of mixed types (military-personal, single-party hybrids, and so-called triple hybrids) are each measured as dummy variables. The omitted category is “personalistic”; coefficients indicate stability relative to that type. Data on GDP/capita and lagged GDP growth are taken from the Penn World Tables 6.2 (2006). Regional dummies and a set of age variables test the impact of geopolitical neighborhood and longevity. All control variables mimic the model used in Geddes (1999).
controls. Although the coefficient for limited elections was positive, pointing in the direction of instability, it was not statistically significant. Model 3 drops electoral autocracy and introduces the regime types. Military and single-party regime types proved statistically significant, reconfirming that military regimes tend to be less stable than personalist regimes, while single-party regimes are substantially more stable. Finally, Model 4 tested whether electoral autocracy is significantly related to breakdown when all the other variables are included. The coefficient remained positive and statistically insignificant. Results from a fixed effects model based on country were substantively equivalent, despite a reduction in sample size to 992 country-years.

These results do not show hybrid regimes exerting a salient influence over regime change outcomes. Instead, the literature’s prior conception of authoritarian subtypes—as operationalized and coded by Geddes—remains more significant in accounting for autocratic breakdown or durability. “Single-party regimes” remained the most robust type regardless of whether multiparty elections were introduced; party institutions bolstered the endurance of both liberalized and unliberalized authoritarian regimes.16 The findings point to the secondary nature of electoral contestation as an arena rather than an engine of regime change. Less institutionalized regimes may lose control of elections, but elections in themselves are not the trigger of that loss. On balance, the test of electoral autocracy and regime survival reaffirms the significance of political institutions even as it invites a cogent causal account of why parties buttress regimes.
Table 1  Electoral Autocracy, Authoritarian Subtypes, and Regime Breakdown (1975–2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
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<td>—</td>
<td>.169</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.250)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.271)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Military regime</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>1.248**</td>
<td>1.258**</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(.407)</td>
<td>(.407)</td>
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<td>Military-personal</td>
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<td>.265</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>(.420)</td>
<td>(.420)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party hybrid</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.460)</td>
<td>(.467)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single-party</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>-1.073**</td>
<td>-1.071**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.412)</td>
<td>(.411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple hybrid</td>
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<td>-.754</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.817)</td>
<td>(.824)</td>
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<td>Monarchy</td>
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<td>-1.188</td>
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<td>(.732)</td>
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<td>Per capita GDP_{ln}</td>
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<td>-.409*</td>
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<td>(.189)</td>
<td>(.191)</td>
<td>(.205)</td>
<td>(.210)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lagged GDP growth</td>
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<td>-.036*</td>
<td>-.035*</td>
<td>-.035*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.015)</td>
<td>(.015)</td>
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<td>(.015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>-2.374*</td>
<td>-2.383*</td>
<td>-1.494</td>
<td>-1.565</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.208)</td>
<td>(1.209)</td>
<td>(1.270)</td>
<td>(1.261)</td>
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<td>-1.445</td>
<td>-.904</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.201)</td>
<td>(1.203)</td>
<td>(1.256)</td>
<td>(1.261)</td>
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<td>Central/Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>-.431</td>
<td>-.431</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.243)</td>
<td>(1.244)</td>
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<td>(1.317)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East-N. Africa</td>
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<td>-3.229**</td>
<td>-2.598</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.234)</td>
<td>(1.235)</td>
<td>(1.334)</td>
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<td>South America</td>
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<td>-.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.214)</td>
<td>(1.215)</td>
<td>(1.274)</td>
<td>(1.277)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>-2.363</td>
<td>-2.371*</td>
<td>-1.416</td>
<td>-1.463</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(1.232)</td>
<td>(1.295)</td>
<td>(1.298)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of regime</td>
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<td>.015</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.061</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.071)</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.073)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age^2</td>
<td>-.0006</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
<td>(.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age^3</td>
<td>.000009</td>
<td>.000008</td>
<td>.00001</td>
<td>.00001</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.00003)</td>
<td>(.00003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.279</td>
<td>2.314</td>
<td>.430</td>
<td>.645</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(2.106)</td>
<td>(2.116)</td>
<td>(2.277)</td>
<td>(2.302)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>1647</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudo R^2</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cell entries are logistic regression coefficients; tests are two-tailed; standard errors are in parentheses; ** and * represent significance at the .01 and .05 levels, respectively.
Ruling Parties and Regime Cohesion

Statistical results with additional cases and a new variable for electoral autocracy are consistent with the notion that the earlier (prehybrid regime) subtypes of authoritarianism help account for regime breakdown and persistence, even when controlling for a set of common alternative explanatory variables. Single-party regimes consistently evince more durability than their personalistic counterparts—but why? What is there about single-party regimes that deters regime collapse? To what degree does the statistical correlation signal a causal relationship?

Geddes postulates that elite rifts between hard-liners and soft-liners typify the end of military regimes but that personalistic and single-party autocracies collapse in distinct ways. In the latter two types, elites have few prospects for a successful postregime career or livelihood; personalistic leaders may face imprisonment, exile, or execution; party apparatchiks, even in the best scenario, may suffer permanent marginality in national politics: “Thus, leadership struggles within single-party regimes usually do not result in transitions. The close allies of personalistic dictators have even less reason to desert the ship in normal times. If the ship goes down, they are likely to go with it.” In personalistic and single-party regimes, elites seem obliged to band together, not through the neopatrimonial institutions or party organizations, but for fear of what may befall them if the regime disintegrates. By generalizing about elite behavior based on a set of fixed preferences, Geddes reemploys the voluntarist tools of the transitions paradigm, the difference being that she identifies typical behavior patterns based on her regime subdivisions. Further, she ties leadership defections to the prospect of regime breakdown, thereby gauging internal dissent based on the system’s subsequent collapse.17 As in O’Donnell and Schmitter’s seminal work, her approach compresses the period of transition to the moment of breakdown and its immediate precursors. It also excludes from analysis the shifts in elite preferences and behaviors that may foster regime change. The sinking ship may be a consequence, not a trigger, of elite desertions.
By contrast with Geddes’s treatment, earlier literature conceived a more autonomous role for the institutions of single-party regimes. Instead of treating ruling parties as a reflection of the aggregate behavior of party politicians, scholars theorized that the organization molded the orientation of its constituents.18 “Party members are not altruists,” wrote Giovanni Sartori. “The power-seeking drives of politicians remain constant. What varies is the processing and the constraints that are brought to bear on such drives.”19 In a context where elite differences appear irresolvable, parties generate political influence, reduce individual insecurity, and assuage fears of prolonged disadvantage. Elites can envision their party bringing them medium- and long-term gains despite immediate setbacks; moreover, their overriding priority is to maintain a place in the decisionmaking process.20 The party thereby engenders long-term loyalty. When policy interests collide, leaders perceive the opportunity for the gradual reconciliation of otherwise competing factions. Rival factions benefit jointly rather than profiting at the expense of one another; the ruler benefits from the relative comity of his most influential associates; and the regime shows corresponding longevity.

This approach to single-party and other institutional variants of authoritarianism yields a distinct set of implications from those posited by Geddes. Rather than viewing elite behavior retrospectively through the prism of an unfolding political crisis that spurred action, an institutional approach considers elite behavior in light of the availability or absence of organizational inducements on leaders’ preferences. Institutional variations during “normal” (noncrisis) circumstances shape whether regime affiliates are likely to continue supporting the ruler or realign to the opposition’s side—even at a time when the challenger appears unlikely to oust the incumbent. Where parties hold the ruling coalition together, such influential partners tend not to emerge, opting instead to continue supporting a system that provides them influence over the national agenda. In the context of weakening parties, however, regime supporters realign. Driven by pragmatism as much as by principle, they back the opposition and pursue their
interests by challenging the status quo. Now filling the classic role of active and public soft-liners, such defectors enable potent counteralliances against the regime. Accounts of critical elections (and metaphors of sinking ships) thereby capture the climax of a longer drama, one in which institutional variations shape the opening acts. Regimes without the party institutions for managing their coalitions may become vulnerable to longtime challengers, whereas those that rule through parties can reap prolonged dominance. Hence, it is not only that elite attitudes vary between single-party and personalistic regimes, but that differences in institutional context help account for those behavioral contrasts and the political consequences they bear.

Although elites in all nonmilitary autocracies see the regime as the first guarantor of their interests and prosperity, the institutional difference between single-party and personalistic regimes distinguishes robust party-bound dictatorships from their less organized counterparts. Whereas a behavioral theory of regime variations and accompanying statistical tests depicts regime collapse as a rapid event driven by the immediate actions of incumbents and their associates, a more traditional institutional account locates divergent trajectories of regime persistence and change in an earlier moment when rulers utilized extant party institutions or dispensed with them. The remainder of this article chronicles party development in Malaysia under Mahathir and the Philippines under Marcos, showing why electoral performance and regime longevity varied so dramatically in these neighboring states. The divergence in their two regimes traces back to the continuation of UMNO in contrast to the dissolution of the Nacionalista Party. The United Malays National Organization in Malaysia brought elite cohesion within the regime and electoral control in the public arena. This pattern of institutionally bounded regime resilience manifested during the 1990 and 1999 elections, both of which involved potent opposition challenges but a dearth of elite allies. On the alternative path followed by the Philippines, elite rivalries were not contained within a party—because Marcos had disbanded both the Nacionalista and Liberal Parties—and they instead erupted. Disgruntled
elites defected and joined the opposition, dealing electoral defeats to the regime’s candidates. From that point, oppositionists succeeded in ousting Marcos and toppling his regime.

This paired comparison of Southeast Asian politics focuses on moments of strain, in which the incumbent ruler’s hold on power was shaken, if not broken. By contrast with peer studies that highlight the immediate balance of power during such crises, the following narratives draw attention to antecedent institutional processes that shaped the relevant power of elites and oppositionists. Thus, while treating the well-known electoral defeats of Malaysia’s opposition and the renowned victory of People Power, I embed these moments in a historical and institutional background that is both contextual and analytical, showing why commonly invoked variables of elite defection, opposition protest, and electoral performance were driven by the earlier contrast between maintenance and dismantlement of existing parties.

**Regime Endurance in Malaysia: The Defeat of Semangat ’46**

Malaysia’s experience as a single-party regime predated the third wave of democratization and played a large role in its longest-ruling premier lasting through that era. The electoral dominance of UMNO began during experimental polls held by the British colonial administration. In the decades since statehood in 1957, the organization has trumped its opponents in no fewer than eleven national parliamentary elections. Consequently, the country’s premier has always come from UMNO. Mahathir Mohamad filled this post from 1981 to 2003, eluding his opponents during the very period of world history in which autocrats around the globe seemed to be falling. Challenges did emerge, but thanks to the institutional inducements of UMNO, they were sufficiently subdued that Mahathir averted regime change and the party preserved its hegemony over parliament. After surviving two rounds of elections against the opposition (in 1983 and 1986), Mahathir faced accusations from within UMNO that he was pursuing extravagant projects and lavishing favors on family members and close friends. These accusations were particularly
damaging as Malaysia weathered an extended recession and they culminated in an intraparty feud.\textsuperscript{21}

In February 1986, deputy prime minister Musa Hitam stepped down from his government post, citing personal differences with Mahathir: “When the prime minister accused me of attempting many times to kill him politically I said, ‘I cannot be your deputy. We’ve got a system. I have to be your backup. I will not be comfortable . . . I will not be able to do my job well when my boss says I’m trying to kill him [politically]. . .’ So I resigned.” Mahathir then replaced several senior members of his cabinet and filled Musa’s position with a lesser-known figure, Ghafar Baba. The cabinet shuffle amplified worries that Mahathir was concentrating his power; a countervailing faction soon coalesced. Trade and Industry minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, a longtime aspirant to the prime ministership, joined Musa to challenge Mahathir and Ghafar in the party’s triennial elections of 1987. Razaleigh and Musa criticized the prime minister for keeping Malaysia in an economic crisis, pursuing wasteful state-sponsored projects (like the creation of a Malaysian automobile), and permitting corrupt dealings among his friends. Razaleigh ran for the UMNO presidency in the party elections, while Musa fought to remain in the vice-presidency, a post he had retained even after leaving the cabinet. The race split UMNO’s voting members into Team A, led by Mahathir and Ghafar, and Team B, the faction of Razaleigh and Musa.\textsuperscript{22}

In the race for party president, Mahathir took a narrow majority of votes (761 to 718). Ghafar beat Musa by an even slimmer margin (739 to 699). Team A candidates performed similarly well in the races for UMNO’s governing board, the Supreme Council, winning seventeen of the available twenty-five seats. Mahathir had prevailed by distributing cabinet and party positions to undecided delegation leaders. Yet Team B fought on. Razaleigh resigned his posts the following week and Mahathir purged the cabinet of seven remaining Team B affiliates. The resulting discord threatened to rip UMNO apart, and Razaleigh and Musa claimed to have
“almost half of the nearly 1,500 most important UMNO activists” on their side. The burgeoning dissident movement did not expand further, though, and soon showed signs of contraction. Mahathir’s reelection rallied the rank and file around Team A. Many UMNO members opted to stick with the party and its valuable patronage networks. Early supporters of Razaleigh crept back to Mahathir, and all of the top Team A members remained steadfast in their loyalty to the premier. The ruling party’s centripetal pull not only drained Razaleigh’s cadre but also broke his provisional partnership with Musa. Even as Razaleigh tenaciously fought to pry UMNO from Mahathir’s grasp, Musa’s orientation became more ambiguous.\(^{23}\)

In the fall of 1988, a by-election signaled that the consequences of Musa’s estrangement could be dire for Mahathir’s party. Defying Team A, Musa ally Shahrir Ahmad resigned his UMNO seat in parliament and called a new election in Johor. Johor was not only Musa’s home state but also UMNO’s historic stronghold. Yet Shahrir trounced the Team A candidate by a margin of victory of over 12,000 votes, shocking UMNO and casting into doubt the state’s seventeen other seats in a future election. Johoreans had proved incredibly loyal to their native son and would doubtlessly follow Musa with even greater passion. Therefore, a full shift by Musa to the opposition threatened to have countrywide repercussions.\(^{24}\)

Much like what he had done in the wake of UMNO’s elections, Mahathir reached out to Musa and Razaleigh, announcing: “I would like to invite Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Musa Hitam to be members of my Cabinet as Ministers without portfolio. This is a sincere invitation . . . it’s a step towards mending the rift among the Malays and Umno members. . . . For the sake of unity, we are prepared to accept these two leaders into the Cabinet.” Musa initially declined, but he and Shahrir soon issued a six-point proposal for reconciling Mahathir’s offer with the demands of Musa’s supporters in Johor. The program would reinstate Team B officials to their posts as branch and divisional heads and included “the automatic acceptance of former UMNO members” into the party. UMNO’s supreme council accepted the proposal on the
condition that the forum’s participants would recognize the elected party leadership. In December, 1,300 Johoreans rejoined UMNO, and Musa publicly returned to the party on January 31, 1989. “Slowly but surely,” Musa reflected, “the [UMNO] leadership had taken a softer and softer line.” Through the party’s organs, Mahathir had wooed Musa and his partisans back before they could compete separately in the next parliamentary election.25

While Musa was negotiating to rejoin UMNO, Razaleigh had been organizing independently. Still hoping to defeat Mahathir, he composed a diverse counteralliance to challenge UMNO’s National Front across the country. Razaleigh’s principal affiliates were the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and the predominantly Chinese Democratic Action Party (DAP). Spanning both non-Malay and Islamist parties, this coordinated movement seemed poised to succeed where previous anti-UMNO efforts had failed, running candidates for 131 of the 180 seats in parliament. As Khoong Kim Khong describes, “For decades the ruling coalition had seemed quite unshakeable. However, in 1990, the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition appeared vulnerable.” On October 5, 1990, Mahathir dissolved parliament and called new elections for October 20–21. The period for campaigning lasted only nine days, once again disadvantaging the opposition. Final election results gave Semangat only eight victories, while UMNO took seventy-one seats (83 percent of those it contested). The outcome nearly halved Semangat’s already modest parliamentary bloc of fifteen post-1987 UMNO renegades. Meanwhile, UMNO’s National Front took 71 percent (127 of 180 seats), sustaining its supermajority, albeit with its lowest share of parliament in over twenty years.26

Elections in Johor had played a critical role in UMNO’s success. Semangat and the DAP won 36 percent of the vote in Johor compared to the National Front’s 62 percent, but the result was that all of Johor’s eighteen parliamentary seats went to the National Front. The sweep, despite the closeness of the vote count, underlines the importance of Musa’s return to UMNO with the Johor Malay Unity Forum. Given the opposition’s performance in 1990, Musa’s
continued separation from UMNO could have shifted as much as 10 percent of parliament into the opposition bloc from one state alone. Even that localized shift—leaving aside the potential national repercussions of a realignment by Musa—would have sheared away the National Front’s two-thirds majority. Yet instead of bringing defeat to UMNO, Musa’s state enabled the party to reassert its dominance. By delivering Johor, Musa and his followers brought UMNO national victory.27

Though Semangat candidates enjoyed scattered victories, continued political activity outside the National Front seemed futile. Razaleigh’s movement could not undermine UMNO media dominance or garner sufficient votes around the country. In May 1996, the would-be premier reconciled with Mahathir and brought most of Semangat’s estimated 200,000 followers back with him, in time for UMNO’s fiftieth anniversary.28

Regime Renewal: Mahathir Chooses His Successor

UMNO’s capacity to stem elite defections and thwart the opposition continued through the 1990s. After Semangat dissolved, Mahathir turned on his own deputy, Anwar Ibrahim. Perhaps seeing the makings of another Razaleigh—an alternate pole for elite and mass support—Mahathir stripped Anwar of his post, pushed him from UMNO, imprisoned his former aide, and crushed the reform movement that rallied to Anwar’s defense.

Following the 1995 parliamentary elections, Mahathir declared that party support for the leadership was an UMNO tradition and that neither he nor Anwar could be challenged. The move curtailed Anwar’s otherwise meteoric ascent toward UMNO’s top post. At the same time, Mahathir intimated that Anwar would eventually follow him, saying, “The successor to the president is the deputy prime minister.” The implication was that the time for succession had not arrived. Mahathir also banned campaigning for the highest posts in the party and used “bonus votes” and “no-contest resolutions” to prevent challenges to his leadership. Averting a second
leadership showdown like 1987, the seventy-year-old premier confined contestation to the lower ranks of the party and locked in the status quo until he chose to retire. Even these arrangements proved insufficient. In June 1998, after Anwar had begun fighting corruption within the party, Mahathir forced known Anwar supporters in Malaysia’s media to resign their posts. Perhaps sensing the other shoe was about to drop, scores of UMNO members of parliament (MPs) reaffirmed their loyalty to Mahathir. On September 2, Mahathir struck against Anwar politically and litigiously. The deputy premier was ousted from his post on charges of sexual misconduct. Following two highly politicized trials, he was sent to prison.  

Anwar’s imprisonment did not silence him. From jail he called for opening Malaysia’s political system beyond the UMNO oligarchy. Advocating reformasi (reformation), he rallied Malays and non-Malays to challenge the injustice of his trial and push for greater civil liberties in general. Khoo Boo Teik suggests that this coalition was unusually successful in bridging the traditional cleavages dividing UMNO’s opponents: “Reformasi had achieved a critical cross-cultural breakthrough which created novel possibilities of multiethnic alliances. . . . Within Reformasi, the ethnic divide blurred. Malaysia’s new or reinvented leaders of dissent became figures identified with a political standpoint, not the colour of their skin.” Reformasi’s institutional umbrella included over a dozen nongovernmental organizations, plus its constituent parties, and was labeled the Alternative Front (AF) because it posed a countrywide challenge to the UMNO-led National Front. When Mahathir called early elections in 1999, the AF took its program to the voters.

The Alternative Front galvanized discontent with Mahathir’s rule, but Anwar’s coalition performed considerably worse than Razaleigh’s alliance in 1990. While thousands of UMNO’s rank and file went over to the opposition, the party’s leadership remained steadfastly allied with Mahathir. Lacking elite allies who could otherwise have shifted influence from the ruling party to Reformasi, the former deputy premier was unable to leverage an insider position into an
effective push for systemic change. As in 1990, UMNO’s advantages in the areas of media and
government patronage proved decisive. During a whirlwind eight-day campaign period, ruling
party leaders pledged pay raises for government bureaucrats and new support for schools and
sports centers while portraying Anwar as an International Monetary Fund pawn and the provocer
of ethnic instability. State media and security forces vigorously suppressed the Alternative Front,
and the UMNO-compliant Electoral Commission disqualified nearly half a million pro-Anwar
voters. Although UMNO lost twenty-two seats, its representation dropping to seventy-two MPs,
the National Front won 148 of 193 seats (77 percent), easily sustaining its two-thirds majority.\(^{31}\)

After steering UMNO and Malaysia through five parliamentary elections, Mahathir
voluntarily stepped aside in fall 2003, bequeathing his premiership and UMNO presidency to
Abdullah Badawi. The indomitable “Dr. M” began to enjoy the celebrity of retirement, and
Malaysia’s single-party regime was rejuvenated. Elections on March 21, 2004, returned a 90
percent majority for the National Front; Anwar’s party took a single seat. While Reformasi
shared the fate of Semangat, UMNO perpetuated its hegemony.

**The Dissolution of Parties in the Philippines Under Marcos: Seeds of Opposition Success**

In 1972, twice-elected Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, curtailing
two and a half decades of fractious electoral democracy. Martial law effectively froze the
Philippines’ traditional two parties, the Liberal Party and the Nacionalista Party, from which
Marcos had run for the presidency in 1965 and 1969. The president’s decision to deactivate his
own party inaugurated a personalistic autocracy and boded poorly for his regime’s long-term
cohesion. This subversion of institutions seems perplexing given its ultimate consequences, yet it
is typical among powerful incumbents, who chafe at political constraints. Regime leaders are
often hostile to institutions, particularly parties, and undermine them when they prove
inconvenient. As Atul Kohli has remarked, “Those who are already in power . . . often view
institutions more as obstacles and less as facilitators of effective rule."¹³ Such was the case with Marcos after he inaugurated martial law. His bid to concentrate power brought immediate benefits; it sequestered political gadflies and tied the ruling circle tightly to him. Yet the decision to disband the Nacionalista Party actually fragmented the authority Marcos had sought to magnify. When he abandoned the party, Marcos planted the seeds of elite defections and electoral defeats. His disdain for party institutions at the inception of his dictatorship spawned the crisis that later toppled him.

Ever since gaining independence in 1946, the Philippines had been characterized by flawed but competitive elections between candidates from the Nacionalista and Liberal Parties. On September 23, 1972, Marcos declared martial law and indefinitely suspended this two-party system. The president muzzled the country’s media, imprisoned his most effective foes, and established a new network of military and political affiliates that were personally loyal to him. With these moves, Marcos deactivated the very organization, the Nacionalista Party (NP), that had first carried him to the presidency. For Marcos, the NP had been a bridge to power rather than a political instrument; it was at least as dispensable during the martial law period as the Liberal Party he had abandoned earlier in his career. Ensconced as an autocratic chief executive with no need for a future electoral nomination, Marcos swapped party politics for a personal network; he and the first lady formed the hub. Their closest family and friends extended the network and Marcos’s cousin, Major Fabian Ver, was given control over the armed forces. In addition to employing family members in many top government posts, Marcos attracted a broad set of former party politicians who relied on the president as their new chief patron. The outer ring of material allegiance included Liberal and Nacionalista politicians as well as key business leaders.³³

As Marcos won new loyalists he alienated prior affiliates. His particular form of nepotism, unregulated as it was by traditional party lines, irked aspiring politicians seeking
advancement. Even while serving his earlier elected terms, Marcos had offended high-ranking NP politicians like the influential Salvador and José Laurel. “[Marcos] did not pass state patronage around as incumbent presidents usually did but concentrated it in the hands of his family and friends,” Mark Thompson points out, thereby “turning the NP (Nacionalista Party) into the [de facto] MP (Marcos Party).” In fact, Marcos dispensed with the NP completely. As Marcos’s defense minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, explained, Marcos feared that the continued operation of the NP would have allowed senior leaders like the Laurels to challenge him from within the party. Despite assurances to some top Nacionalista figures that he was just setting aside the NP so it could reawaken at some later date, the party never regained its position in Philippine politics. Nor was the NP’s formal rival, the Liberal Party, any more successful at surviving the martial law period. While some Liberal leaders, such as Benigno Aquino Jr., remained staunch opponents of Marcos, they failed to translate their broad support in the capital Manila into electoral victory when parliamentary elections resumed in 1978.34

Marcos effectively replaced the Nacionalista Party and the Liberal Party with his New Society Movement (abbreviated KBL, Kilusan Bagong Lipunan). The KBL was a loose cluster of politicians, a poor imitation of even its local predecessors much less its regional peers like UMNO. Unlike prior Philippine parties—which at least provided mechanisms for internal competition and advancement—the KBL reflected the narrow factional solidarity of Marcos’s patronage network. Enrile recounted the president’s intentional divisiveness: “As a practical politician what [Marcos] did was to organize a party represented by people who were more or less sympathetic to him and to his political thinking and policies. In effect he said, ‘Let’s draw the line. Those who are with me, let them come and join this new political group. Those who are against [me], let them stay out.’” The former assistant to the KBL secretary-general described party caucuses as managed affairs: “A lot of those meetings were sort of scripted. . . . The meetings or caucuses ran in the direction that Marcos wanted.” A long-time opposition leader
described the climate as “dictatorial,” adding, “Marcos did not brook dissent.” Rather than integrating leaders through a common organization, Marcos was polarizing them.  

The inauguration of the KBL reinforced Marcos’s penchant for cronyism and further distanced him from career politicians who might otherwise have backed his regime. Leaders like Salvador and José Laurel fell out with Marcos because they feared marginalization. Enrile depicted the Laurels’ dispute with Marcos as one of personal relations: “The Laurels felt that they were the Mr. Nacionalistas and here is a newcomer from another party, who happened to become president of the country, lording it over them. And so they did not like that.” José Laurel Jr. may have reflected the feeling of many disgruntled elites with his comment, “I am fighting Marcos because I have an investment in him. I was hoping to collect but I have waited long enough.” Such opportunist elite were not existential foes of the regime; they were more concerned about political self-preservation than democratization. Their concerns broadly resembled the criticisms Team B lodged against Mahathir in Malaysia. However, unlike Musa, Laurel could not use a ruling party to redress his group’s grievances. Instead, the group turned to the public arena of elections.  

Laurel had initially aligned with Marcos and even won a seat as a KBL candidate in 1978. But the veteran Nacionalista then supported a local-level anti-Marcos campaign and formally broke from Marcos’s party. In February 1980, Laurel resigned from the New Society Movement and caucused with the legislature’s non-KBL bloc. He declared, “Henceforth, I shall take my place in the ranks of the Opposition into which the Nacionalista Party and other political groups not affiliated with the KBL have been converted. If, as reported, the KBL has been accredited as a political party, it is necessary for me to sever all relations therewith, and to resume exclusive representation of the Nacionalista Party.” Laurel threw his weight behind a new anti-Marcos coalition. He recalled, “The Liberals and Nacionalistas agreed to join forces. We
formed a council of leaders . . . composed of the heads of the various opposition groups.” Laurel and his fellows from the NP were soon recognized as a “major part of the opposition.”

The nascent alliance of former Marcos partisans and long-time regime opponents formalized its organization on August 29, 1980. Eight organizations, including the Laurels’ Nacionalista Party faction, called for the “termination of the Marcos dictatorship” and the “dismantling of martial rule,” declaring, “Never in our history have so many Filipinos been arbitrarily arrested, detained and tortured—many of them vanishing without a trace—than during this repressive and repugnant regime.” In addition to the Laurel brothers and other Nacionalistas, signatories included former president Diosdado Macapagal of the Liberal Party and prominent Liberal leader Gerardo Roxas, son of the late Manuel Roxas. Benigno Aquino endorsed the declaration from his hospital bed in the United States, where he was recuperating after heart surgery. The collected leaders advocated national elections to “establish a truly democratic and representative system of government.” Twelve opposition groups seeking to restore constitutional democracy then joined together as the United Nationalist Democratic Opposition (UNIDO).

UNIDO gave outcasts from the Marcos autocracy a channel for dissent. Erstwhile KBL congressman Antonio Cuenco, who lost in 1978 due to lack of support from Marcos, commented on how the Laurels’ break from Marcos encouraged others to realign and oppose the president: “We were disorganized in the beginning. . . . We thought everything was hopeless until some brave souls, like . . . the Laurels, who regretted their association with Marcos very much . . . became very active.” Many others shared this view, and in its formative stage, UNIDO benefited from its explicitly moderate approach to change. “We [could not] support Marcos; [nor could] we support a violent upheaval in the country,” oppositionist Pimentel reflected, “so we tried to provide a third [option]—an alternative to forces that were banging against each other.”
UNIDO’s progress was modest in its first years. Marcos formally ended martial law in January 1981 but then held a flagrantly stilted presidential election that UNIDO boycotted. Laurel and Aquino struggled to gain ground against Marcos while competing with the radical left for popular support. After living in exile in the United States for years, Aquino opted to return to Manila in August 1983. On arrival, he was shot and killed on the tarmac by an assassin linked to President Marcos. Already widely respected for his early opposition to Marcos, Aquino’s stature reached mythic proportions after his death. Attendance at his funeral was unprecedented, greater than “at the Pope’s visit, MacArthur’s sentimental return [at the end of World War II], and Magsaysay’s funeral.” The assassination was an “eye opener” for Filipinos, concentrating attention on the regime’s deterioration and brutality. “It jarred the sensibilities of the people,” reflected Enrile. “Many people felt that the country was no longer safe, that nobody was safe.” Marcos’s opponent turned Aquino’s fate into a rallying cry: “After the death of Ninoy we were able to galvanize the opposition. . . . We used that as a campaign issue. ‘Justice for Ninoy.’”

Repercussions of an Institutional Vacuum: Elite Defections and the Ouster of Marcos

Professing a program of nonviolent reform, UNIDO provided a moderate alternative to the torpid KBL on the one hand and radical communists on the other. This strategy bore fruit when Marcos recognized UNIDO as the Philippines’ dominant opposition party, thereby granting the movement an official capacity to observe elections. In April 1984, three members of the regime-allied Commission on Elections (COMELEC) determined that UNIDO had “gained the widest public . . . [and had] the capability of a political organization to wage a bona fide nationwide campaign as shown . . . by the number of political parties which have joined forces with them, with candidates in all regions known and identified with the opposition.” The formal designation allowed UNIDO to follow the vote-counting and certification process, an advance that provided
Laurel and his partners the kind of structural leverage their predecessors in the Manila 1978 races had lacked.  

While UNIDO was strengthening its political challenge to Marcos, Philippine military leaders were also plotting change. General Fidel Ramos and Defense Minister Enrile were appalled at how Marcos had corrupted the country’s military, appointing Ilocanos and family friends to top posts but passing over Western-trained career military men like Ramos. Bristling at the president’s cronyism, Ramos and Enrile began planning to retake the military and overthrow the regime. Their organization, Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), would eventually depend on the opposition for support in accomplishing its goal.

UNIDO contested the 1984 parliamentary elections in force. In metropolitan Manila, where the opposition had been shut out in 1978, UNIDO won fifteen of the city’s twenty-two seats. As Laurel recalled, “Our campaign line [was] ‘If you want to punish the administration for what it did to Ninoy [Benigno Aquino], vote for the Opposition!’” The support of Corazón Aquino, Benigno Aquino’s widow, and her children played an important role in this strategy, as did the group’s use of election monitoring: “Namfrel [National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections] was really effective in Metro Manila and it played a major role in keeping the elections in the city fairly clean.” According to one major election report,

The lackluster performance of the KBL in Metro Manila came despite the “overkill campaign strategy” launched with the full backing of the president and the First Lady. . . . NAMFREL provided the organizational machinery for the electorate themselves to get involved in the electoral process and to protect the sanctity of the ballot so that the people’s collective will could prevail over election frauds, intimidation and other dirty tactics.

Final results gave UNIDO 60 seats out of 183 contested (parliament included an additional seventeen MPs appointed by the president). Success had vindicated pragmatism. With just under one-third of the seats in parliament, the coalition of moderates lacked the numbers to pass an
impeachment motion against the president, but UNIDO had proven that even under authoritarianism, elections could become tools for promoting pluralism. The movement’s next goal was to challenge the president’s own post.\textsuperscript{43}

Presidential elections were not scheduled until 1987, but on US television in late 1985, Marcos announced, “I am ready to call a snap election perhaps earlier than eight months, perhaps in three months or less than that.” The confident president went on to address his skeptics in America, “You are all invited to come, and we will invite members of the American Congress to please come and just see what is happening here.”\textsuperscript{44}

The opposition’s long-awaited goal—a contestable presidential election—now hung within reach. Supporters of Laurel and Corazón Aquino realized that only a united front would defeat challenger Marcos. Although Laurel had been pursuing the presidency for years, his initial affiliation with the regime impaired his national standing. By contrast, Corazón Aquino symbolized the loss many Filipinos had suffered and stood in the stead of her late husband, an original opponent of martial law and the dictatorship’s most prominent casualty. The opposition therefore nominated Aquino as their presidential candidate and Laurel as her vice-presidential running mate.\textsuperscript{45}

On February 7, 1986, election day, Marcos responded to the outpouring of enthusiasm for the Aquino-Laurel ticket with extensive cheating, including the removal of millions of voters from the polling stations’ lists. Were it not for the assemblage of elite defectors and opposition activists, the Philippine elections of 1986 might have followed the pattern of Manila in 1978—or Malaysia in 1990 and 1999. But Aquino and Laurel’s movement contested Marcos’s electoral malfeasance. Namfrel estimated that 4.89 million votes were affected by regime-sponsored disenfranchisement and judged conditions in a majority of precincts as “abusive” or “intolerable.” Visiting US senator Richard Lugar supported Namfrel’s accusations that counting
by the official Commission on Elections was manipulated to favor Marcos: “The results of the count of Friday night [February 7] were managed and the results aborted by government officials.”

Namfrel conducted a “quick count,” tallying votes from the 74 percent of precincts it was able to cover. The following day, the organization declared Aquino had won with 51.7 percent, or 7.91 million votes to Marcos’s 7.38 million. The KBL-controlled National Assembly soon announced Marcos the victor with 53.7 percent, or 10.8 million votes to Aquino’s 9.3 million. COMELEC and media tallies supported the assembly’s results, which came from 97 percent of precincts, an area much larger than that of Namfrel’s quick count. Yet the limitations on Namfrel coverage were themselves a product of regime interference, and Marcos made statistically incredible gains in his own bailiwicks, conceivably building a “reservoir” of votes to compensate for his weak showing elsewhere. While the actual result may not be determinable, the closeness of the race in the presence of extensive and well-documented attempts by Marcos’s agents to steal the election tipped it in Aquino’s favor. Namfrel officials designated Aquino as the rightful victor. Despite what it acknowledged as “spurious results” in some areas, Namfrel concluded that its quick count provided “a more accurate reflection of the will of the people” than the assembly’s count. Cardinal Jaime Sin also endorsed the opposition’s results, declaring: “The people have spoken or have tried to. Despite the obstacles thrown in the way of speaking freely, we, the bishops, believe that on the basis on our assessment as pastors of the recently conducted polls, what they attempted to say is clear enough.”

As the idea that the opposition had rightfully won the election took hold among the populace, the contest moved to the streets. Aquino and Laurel’s movement first declared victory on February 8, 1986. Ramos and Enrile then broke away from the president, only to find themselves under siege by the military’s remaining loyalist factions. Eventually, Aquino’s supporters helped extricate the would-be coup leaders and siphoned further military support for
Marcos; repressive agents ordered to disperse the crowds gradually joined them instead. The domestic opposition had won the day over Marcos’s agents—his main foreign patron then followed suit. Four days after the polls closed, US president Ronald Reagan had responded noncommittally to the accusations of electoral tampering made by fellow Republicans, including Lugar, saying, “Well, I think that we are concerned about the violence that was evident there and the possibility of fraud, although it could have been that all of that was occurring on both sides.” Not until the dust had settled on February 24, over two weeks after People Power had announced its victory, did Reagan agree that Marcos had to go. On the evening of February 25, Marcos flew into exile aboard a US helicopter. The KBL disappeared from parliamentary life. Marcos’s elected successors have since striven, with varying success, to mold the remnants of the Philippine party system into instruments of authority.48

**Conclusion**

This article has situated elite behavior, electoral processes, and associated regime outcomes in a longer institutional trajectory of party maintenance or dismantlement. It accounts for why, at crucial moments in national politics, actors pursued the options they did and what resources they brought to bear—in the lexicon of transition studies, why soft-liners were outspoken in the Philippines but subdued in Malaysia. By expanding the period of analysis, it places more proximate variables of opposition protest and electoral strategy in a longer history during which rulers either exploited available party organizations or disposed of them. The contrast of durable single-party rule in Malaysia and short-lived personalistic autocracy in the Philippines reveals influential antecedents for our understanding of authoritarian regime types, whether conceived in terms of hybrid typologies or more traditional classifications.

With regard to the latest regime types, such as electoral authoritarianism and competitive authoritarianism, both the regression analysis and the case study comparison shows that elections
were secondary to the organizational context governing elite relations within the regime. The maintenance or disintegration of ruling parties proved influential for subsequent regime outcomes, while the presence of limited elections was ancillary. Malaysia’s rulers have survived multiple rounds of elections, often against stiff competition. By contrast, the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines fell after only two rounds of parliamentary and presidential polls—not because of those elections themselves, but because of the underlying political instability that yielded elite defections and electoral defeats. An institutional theory thus provided explanatory leverage over political change and continuity. Elections do not destabilize; regimes that have neglected the institutions for managing elite conflict destabilize their own elections. In turn, this finding offers a fresh opportunity for wedding new typologies to extant theories, particularly when the maintenance and demise of hybrid regimes may depend less on the elections they hold than on the coalitions they hold together.

The contrast between a resilient, institutionally bound coalition in Malaysia and fractious, centrifugal leadership in the Philippines also holds implications for earlier authoritarian subtypes. Although the analysis in this article confirms Geddes’s supposition about the relative longevity of military, personalistic, and single-party autocracies, it excavates an additional set of problems as well. Political behavior may often be reactive and crisis-driven; as economic downturns, public protests, or international pressure hit a regime, leaders may weight their prospects in a new order and look for an exit. These calculations differentiate single-party politicians from personal cronies in the typology of Geddes. The comparative history of Malaysia under Mahathir and the Philippines under Marcos shows that such tactical orientations are a small part—and often the penultimate phase—in a longer process through which institutions structure the preferences of ruling elites toward defection or reaffiliation. Additionally, party institutions may deter elites from exiting a regime under strain, as Malaysia was in 1990 and 1999. By tracing the consequences of institutional variance for elite behavior and the subsequent ramifications on
regime continuity and change, this article has shown that elite cleavages remain a salient variable in all major forms of authoritarianism (not just military regimes), but that the distal causes of such cleavages are to be found in political institutions and the ways self-interested incumbents utilize or discard them.

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**Notes**

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2 Ibid., p. 137.


8 On the limits of elections by themselves to bring change in Southeast Asia, see William Case, “Southeast Asia’s Hybrid Regimes: When Do Voters Change Them?” Journal of East Asian Studies 5


13 Thorsten Beck, George Clarke, Alberto Groff, Philip Keefer, and Patrick Walsh, "New Tools in Comparative Political Economy: The Database of Political Institutions," *World Bank Economic Review* 15, no. 1 (2001). Note that studies based on Freedom House or Polity data do not capture discrete changes within regimes, including the shift to multipartyism. The Database of Political Institutions (DPI) provides more traction on this problem because it better disaggregates theorized causes—the array of political institutions—from outcomes that may be conflated with levels of political and civic freedom. Covering 1975 to 2000, the database includes a seven-point scale of legislative and executive electoral competitiveness: 1 = no legislature, 2 = unelected legislature/executive, 3 = elected legislature/executive, one candidate/post, 4 = one party, multiple candidates, 5 = multiple parties are legal but only one party won seats, 6 = multiple parties did win seats but the largest party received more than 75 percent of the
seats, 7 = largest party got less than 75 percent. The DPI’s independent data on multipartyism cut across Geddes’s regime types and are not endogenous to the outcomes of breakdown or continuity. Regime years that measured 1–4 in the DPI index were coded as not having multiparty elections. Those that received a score of 5–7 were coded as holding multiparty elections. Philip Keefer, Database of Political Institutions: Changes and Variable Definitions (New York: World Bank, 2002).

14 Alan Heston, Robert Summers and Bettina Aten, Penn World Table Version 6.2 (Philadelphia: Center for International Comparisons of Production, Income and Prices at the University of Pennsylvania, 2006); Geddes, “Authoritarian Breakdown.”

15 I also performed pairwise correlation tests on the elections and regime breakdown variable. There was no significant correlation between the two variables. Military and single-party regimes were each significantly correlated with the dependent variable.

16 Variables measuring economic performance were also significant, pointing again to the need to incorporate socioeconomic development in causal narratives of regime change and continuity.


20 This perspective draws on David Waldner’s influential distinction between “high intensity” and “low intensity” elite conflict. David Waldner, State Building and Late Development (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 29.


24 Japan Economic Newswire, August 26, 1988; The Economist, October 13, 1990.


28 Khoo Boo Teik, “Malaysia: Challenges and Upsets in Politics and Other


35 Interview with Enrile; interview with Gabriel Claudio, former assistant to the secretary-general of KBL, Manila, May 26, 2003; interview with Aquilino Pimentel, senator, leader in UNIDO, Manila, May 21, 2003.
Interview with Enrile; Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle*, p. 103.


39 Interview with Antonio Cuenco, former KBL cardholder and UNIDO member, Manila, May 20, 2003; interview with Pimentel.


42 Overholt, “The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos,” p. 1152.


Interview with Laurel.

