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Signature:

Jiayun Elvin ONG

Date

Opposing Power: Opposition Coalition Formation in Singapore and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective

By

Elvin Ong
Doctor of Philosophy

Political Science

Richard Doner
Advisor

Jennifer Gandhi
Advisor

Adam Glynn
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

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Elvin Ong

B.B.M. Singapore Management University, 2010
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An abstract of

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

Why do opposition parties form pre-electoral coalitions when competing against authoritarian regimes in unfree and unfair elections? This dissertation argues that solutions to two distinct collective action problems motivate opposition coalition formation. First, opposition parties seek to negotiate and forge non-competition agreements to avoid multiple opposition candidates competing against the dominant incumbent. Such agreements eliminate the splitting of opposition votes. Second, opposition parties seek to campaign jointly to signal unity and ideological moderation. The aim is to encourage voters to turn out and vote strategically for coalition candidate(s) no matter their partisan background, thus maximizing vote share and the probability of electoral victory against the dominant incumbent autocrat.

The incentives and costs to solve these two collective action problems varies depending on the form of electoral campaigning that autocracies engage. *Ceteris paribus*, valence-based electoral campaigning is likely to induce bargaining over non-competition agreements only. Opposition leaders have no need to campaign jointly when voters perceive all opposition parties to be ideologically similar. Inducing cross-party strategic voting is not needed because it is not an issue. Spatial-based electoral campaigning, however, induces ideologically polarized opposition parties to form alliances with both non-competition agreements and joint coalition campaigns. Party leaders need to educate, persuade, and convince their supporters that pooling their votes through cross-party strategic voting represents their best chances of defeating the incumbent autocrat.

I test this theory of opposition coalition formation through multiple research methods in Singapore and Malaysia – two most similar, durable electoral authoritarian regimes in the world. Where opposition parties are ideologically similar, as in Singapore, opposition parties imitate warring factions. Approaching elections, they primarily focus on coordinating over non-competition agreements, and make feeble attempts at jointly signaling unity. Where opposition parties are ideologically distant, as in Malaysia, the desire to expand beyond their narrow constituencies and win heterogeneous districts strongly incentivize these niche parties to create alliances with both non-competition agreements and joint coalition campaigns. In short, different forms of opposition collective action spring from a delicate assessment of the balance between the perceived costs and benefits of inter-party cooperation.

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Theory and Methods	35
Chapter 3: How Autocracies Campaign: The Merger and Separation of Singapore and Malaysia, 1945-1965	74
Chapter 4: How Opposition Coalitions Campaign: Opposition Coordination and Signaling in Singapore and Malaysia, 1965-2015	116
Chapter 5: How Opposition Parties Communicate Internally: An Analysis of DAP's Party Newsletters	208
Chapter 6: Do Coalition Signaling Strategies Work? Survey Data Evidence from Malaysia	252
Chapter 7: Conclusion	291

List of Tables

	<u>Page</u>
<i>Chapter 2</i>	
Table 1: Survey experiment randomization rule and vignettes	72
Table 2: List of control variables between Singapore and Malaysia	73
<i>Chapter 3</i>	
Table 1: Demographics of British Malaya in 1931 by Race	85
Table 2: Demographics of British Malaya in 1947 by Race	86
Table 3: Singapore's Separation from Malaysia as a Critical Juncture	89
<i>Chapter 4</i>	
Table 1: Singapore's Recent Multiple Opposition Parties	127
Table 2: Interviews with Singapore Opposition Party Leaders	139
Table 3: Malaysia's Multiple Opposition Parties	155
Table 4: Average Number of Candidates Per Constituency Across Elections, 1974-1995	166
Table 5: Interviews with Malaysian Opposition Party Leaders	169
<i>Chapter 6</i>	
Table 1: Randomization Rule and Vignette	260
Table 2: List of Identified Asian Barometer Questions and Corresponding Hypotheses	272
<i>Chapter 7</i>	
Table 1: Conceptualization and Measurement of Opposition Pre-Electoral Coalitions In Electoral Autocracies	292

List of Figures

	<u>Page</u>
<i>Chapter 1</i>	
Figure 1: Regime Types in the World, 1972-2014	3
Figure 2: Opposition Parties Under Electoral Authoritarianism, 1975-2014	6
<i>Chapter 2</i>	
Figure 1: Absence of Collective Action over Candidate Placement	38
Figure 2: Presence of Collective Action Through a Non-Competition Agreement	39
Figure 3: A Model of Signaling Strategies in Opposition Pre-Electoral Coalitions	63
Figure 4: Mandarin Chinese and English Editions of The Rocket for August 2001	69
<i>Chapter 3:</i>	
Figure 1: Map of British Malaya	84
Figure 2: The Malaysian Solidarity Convention	109
Figure 3: Lee Kuan Yew speaking at the Malaysian Solidarity Convention	110
<i>Chapter 4</i>	
Figure 1: The PAP's Campaign Magazine for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC for the General Elections in 2015	119
Figure 2: The PAP's Campaign Magazine for Aljunied GRC for the General Elections in 2015	121
Figure 3: Position Scores for Singapore's Political Parties on Various Issues	130
Figure 4: Graph of Proportion of Multi-Cornered Contests Between 1968-2015	141
Figure 5: Party Positions in Malaysia	152
Figure 6: Newspaper clipping showing signing of joint declaration for a non-Competition agreement between PAS, NasMA, PSRM, and SDP	163
Figure 7: Newspaper comic showing Semangat '46's leading role in bringing Together Malaysia's opposition parties in approaching the 1990 General Election	165
Figure 8: Allocated districts in Malaysia for the 1999 General Elections	168
Figure 9 Allocated districts in Peninsular Malaysia for the 2013 General Elections	168
Figure 10: Screengrab from Pakatan Harapan's Coalition Agreement 2016	171
<i>Chapter 5</i>	
Figure 1: Cover page of the September 2012 Issue of the English Rocket	217
Figure 2: An audience member sizes up a Bersih T-shirt on a pile of The Rocket	217
Figure 3: Sample Page 2 of the February 2009 Issue of the English Rocket	219
Figure 4: Relative Proportions of the Types of Opposition-Related Articles in The Rocket	222
Figure 5: An Example of a Mixed "Negative Image" and "Justify Non-Cooperation" Article	223
Figure 6: An Example of a "Positive Image" Article	225
Figure 7: Cover page of The Rocket in January 2012	226

Figure 8: Interviews Featuring Nurul Izzah Anwar and Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud	227
Figure 9: Cover page of The Rocket in March 2013	229
Figure 10: Pakatan Rakyat’s 2-page manifesto leaflet	232
Figure 11: Centerfold of March 2013 issue of The Rocket	233
Figure 12: Pictorial of Pakatan Rakyat’s Common Manifesto	234
Figure 13: January 2017 and February 2018 cover pages of The Rocket (English)	242
Figure 14: The cover pages of 1990/Vol. 2 and 1990/Vol. 6 of The Rocket (English)	243
Figure 15: August 2017 and February/March 2018 cover pages of The Rocket (Chinese)	244
Figure 16: Examples of “Prospective Gains” and “Positive Rival” Articles	245
Figure 17: Columns by Liew Chin Tong and Teo Nie Ching	246
Figure 18: Article in May 2017 of The Rocket (Chinese)	249

Chapter 6

Figure 1: Average Treatment Effects of Common Policy Platform	262
Figure 2: Conditional Average Treatment Effects of Common Policy Platform	265
Figure 3: Coefficient Estimates and 95% Confidence Intervals for PR Voter	276
Figure 4: Photograph of Merdeka Center Presentation Slide	280

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. The Puzzles of Opposition Coalition Formation under Authoritarianism

The dueling rivalry between an authoritarian government and its opponents has been at the core of political science research for decades. At the height of the Cold War, American and British political scientists became primarily concerned with evaluating the hegemonic structure of dominant single-party regimes in the Soviet Union and the Third World, as well as the limited potential of opposition forces in these regimes (Dahl 1971, 1973; O'Donnell 1988; Schapiro 1972). These analyses sought to identify how power was exercised in those closed regimes, and whether and how such power was constrained by nascent opposition forces. Subsequently, the wave of protests and revolutions that these regimes confronted in the twilight years of the Cold War sparked new research agendas on the dynamics of social movements and the "Third Wave" of regime transition (Haggard and Kaufman 1997; Huntington 1993; Kuran 1991; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Rueschemeyer, Stevens, and Stevens 1992). These studies detailed the intricacies of elite-focused "pacted transitions," and appeared to converge on a general consensus that all regimes were headed towards "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (Fukuyama 1989).

Yet such optimism about the trajectory of human civilization and democratic governance was severely tempered when a group of scholars urged for a more careful conceptualization and empirical examination of regime types at the beginning of the 21st century (Carothers 2002; Diamond 2002; Geddes 1999; Levitsky and Way 2002). Like Dahl three decades before them, these scholars found that "mixed" regimes were the most common regime types in the world.

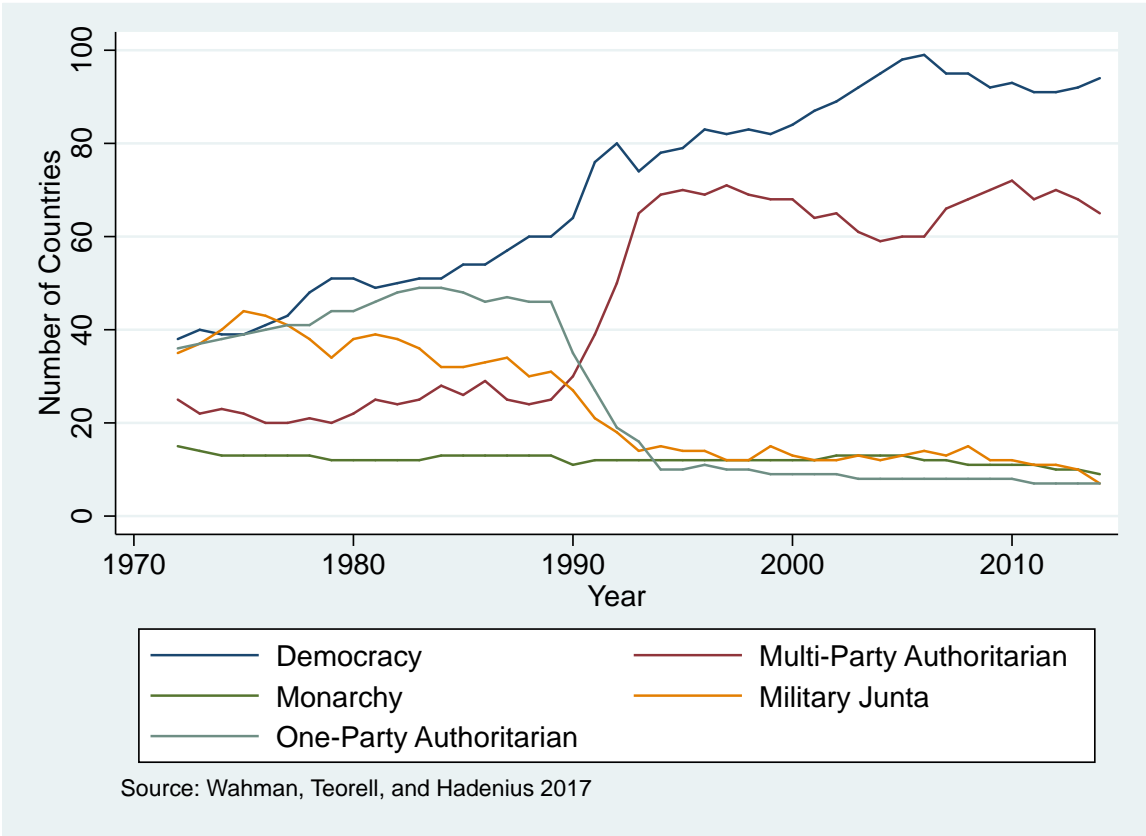
Yet, what exactly these “mixed” regimes were had shifted. Instead of pre-Cold-War “mixed” regimes that had dominant communist single-party states allowing moderate degrees of ideological contestation and local elections without opposition parties, post-Cold-War “mixed” regimes had dominant party states permitting opposition party formation and national multi-party elections (Gandhi 2015). However, while opposition forces were finally allowed to organize into parties, their electoral fortunes were severely constrained by the dominant incumbents through both crude and sophisticated forms of electoral manipulation, as well as old fashioned divide-and-rule strategies of repression and co-optation (Alvarez, Hall, and Hyde 2008; Birch 2011; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Lust 2004, 2005; Norris, Frank, and Martínez i Coma 2013, 2014; Posusney 2002; Schedler 2002a; Simpser 2013). This contemporary combination of unfree and unfair multi-party elections on the one hand, and the persistence of authoritarian governance on the other hand, lead political scientists to label such “mixed” regimes as “electoral authoritarian” or “competitive authoritarian” regimes (Levitsky and Way 2002; Morse 2012; Schedler 2006, 2013).

Autocrats in electoral authoritarian regimes¹ allow for and tolerate multi-party elections to the extent that it serves to buttress the regime’s durability in a variety of ways (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Ruling parties can use the opportunity to distribute patronage, signal dominance, identify and resolve grievances, and ridicule and divide the opposition (Lust 2005; Magaloni 2006; Miller 2015; Morgenbesser 2016). But elections can also potentially undercut or unseat the regime if the autocrat miscalculates his ruling party’s popularity. Opposition parties can use elections as a focal point to mobilize their supporters, especially during periods of economic crises, potentially leading to elite defection from, and electoral victories against the

¹ In the rest of this dissertation, I rely consistently on the overarching concept of electoral authoritarian regimes as defined by Schedler (2002, 2006).

dominant incumbent (Greene 2007; Lindberg 2009; Reuter and Gandhi 2011; Tucker 2007). The delicate balance of such elections between propping up the autocratic regime and undermining it has catalyzed a wave of research asking the conditions under which authoritarian elections impede or lead to democratization (Lindberg 2009; Levitsky and Way 2010; Donno 2013b; P. J. Schuler, Gueorguiev, and Cantu 2013; Bernhard, Edgell, and Lindberg 2016; van Ham and Seim 2017; Knutsen, Nygård, and Wig 2017; Morgenbesser and Pepinsky 2018).

Figure 1: Regime Types in the World, 1972-2014



Notwithstanding the debate over the causal effect of flawed elections on democratization, however, there is a general consensus that when opposition parties are able to cooperate with

each other and organize themselves into pre-electoral coalitions², they are more likely to maximize their vote share or seat share, thereby increasing their chances of defeating the dominant incumbent (Howard and Roessler 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2009; Donno 2013b; Wahman 2013; Ziegfeld and Tudor 2017). Indeed, “the most sincere genuine threat to authoritarian control of political opening is an opposition coalition” (Eisenstadt 2000, 13). Such coalitions have occurred in different regions across the post-Cold-War and post-colonial world. In Africa, the most famous opposition pre-electoral coalition was the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in Kenya in 2002 (Arriola 2013b; Kadima and Owuor 2006; Ndegwa 2003). The coalition’s Mwai Kibaki, won against the dominant Kenya African National Union’s (KANU) Uhuru Kenyatta with 61 to 31 percent of the votes, and prevailed with 125 out of 210 contested legislative seats. In post-Communist Eastern Europe, the triumphs of the Slovak Democratic Coalition in Slovakia in 1998, and the Social Democratic Party-Croatian Social Liberal Party coalition in Croatia in 2000, served as models for opposition party cooperation and subsequent opposition victories throughout the region (Bunce and Wolchik 2009, 2011). More recently, from 2005 to 2015, opposition parties in Venezuela deepened their cooperation progressively into an all-inclusive Democratic Unity pre-electoral coalition, resulting in an opposition majority in the legislature for the first time since Hugo Chávez took power in 1998 (Morales 2017).

At the same time, there is also general agreement in the literature that if parties fail to cooperate and coalesce into a coherent pre-electoral coalition, then dominant party rule is more likely to be entrenched (Riker 1976; Sartori 1976; Cox 1997; Magaloni 2006; Ziegfeld and Tudor 2017). Specifically, dominant party regimes and their leaders can win multi-party elections without a plurality of votes, as the rest of the votes are split between multiple

² Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms “pre-electoral coalition,” “opposition coalition,” and “opposition alliance” interchangeably.

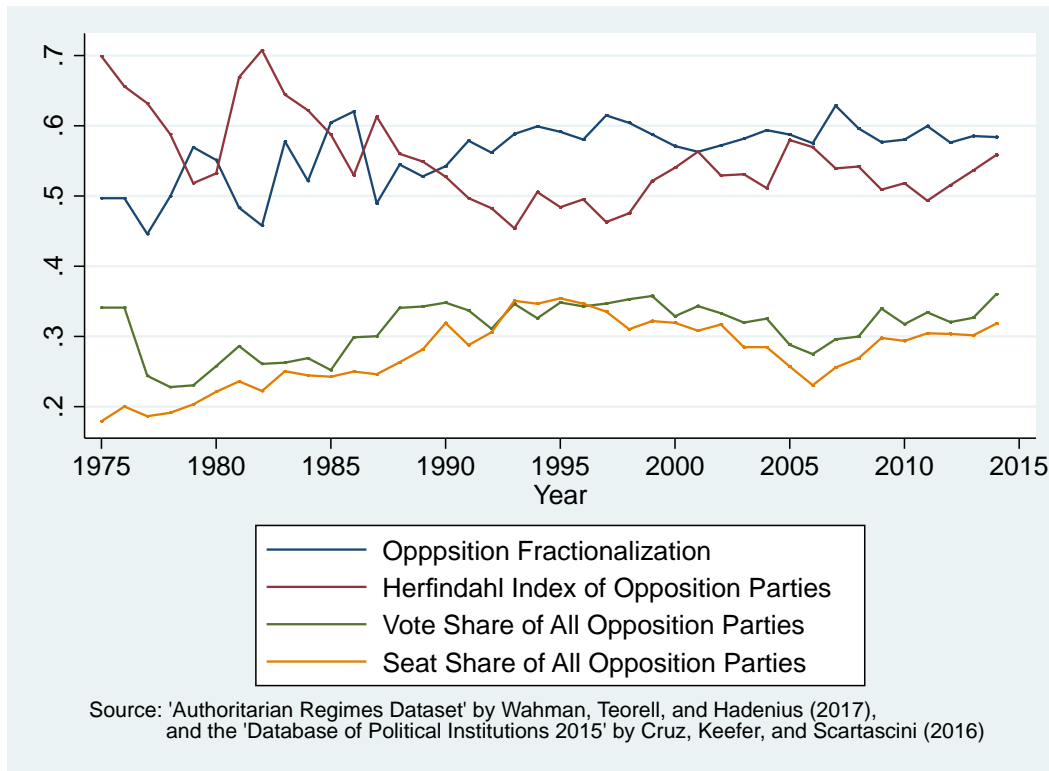
opposition party candidates. For instance, in the 1987 presidential elections in South Korea, junta successor Roh Tae Woo prevailed with only 37 percent of the vote, as the rest of the votes were split between his three opponents – Kim Young Sam, Kim Dae Jung, and Kim Jong Pil (Han 1988; Kim 1997; Park 2010). Similarly, Kenya's Daniel arap Moi was able to win the country's presidential elections in 1992 and 1997 with less than an outright majority of votes because the rest of the votes were split between at least three other major opposition candidates.

The illustrative cases of opposition inter-party cooperation failure in 1987 South Korea and 1990s Kenya, but spectacular successes in 2002 Kenya and Eastern Europe at the turn of the century, thus highlights the first of at least three puzzles in opposition coalition formation that motivates this entire dissertation. This first puzzle concerns the relative infrequency of opposition coalition formation. Gandhi and Reuter (2013, 140) found coalition formation in only 16% of 413 authoritarian elections from 1946 to 2006. Similarly, Wahman (2013, 28) found opposition coalitions in just over a quarter of 251 authoritarian elections between 1973 to 2004, while Howard and Roessler (2006) identified coalitions in just over one-fifth of 50 non-founding competitive authoritarian elections held between 1990 and 2002. If the benefits of coalition formation are so obvious – the increased probability of regime change, or the maximization of vote or seat share gained by opposition parties – then why are they so rare? Correspondingly, if opposition alliances do indeed form against all odds, then what are the causal conditions leading to their formation?

Understanding the conditions of opposition coalition formation is also important insofar as opposition parties in electoral autocracies underperform and remain fragmented over the last four decades. Figure 2 below tracks the performance of opposition parties in the legislatures of

all electoral authoritarian regimes from 1975 to 2014 (Wahman, Teorell, and Hadenius 2013; Cruz, Keefer, and Scartascini 2016).

Figure 2: Opposition Parties Under Electoral Authoritarianism, 1975-2014



The blue line tracks the degree of opposition fractionalization in these legislatures by measuring the probability that any two legislators from among the opposition parties will belong to different parties. The higher the measure, the more likely it is that any two opposition legislators belong to different parties. The red line, in addition, tracks the Herfindahl Index for all opposition parties in the legislature. The index is the sum of all the squared seat shares of political parties in the opposition. If the index is 1, then all opposition legislators come from only one party. The smaller the index, the more fragmented the opposition parties. The data from these two measures suggests that opposition parties have remained consistently fragmented. There is no significant

trend towards the merger of opposition parties. The measure of opposition fractionalization, in particular, reveals that there is more than an even chance that any two opposition legislators will belong to different parties, and that such a probability has stayed steady over time. Overall, this fragmentation contributes, in part, to the continued depressed performances of the opposition, as demonstrated by their consistently low combined vote and seat shares of less than 40 percent.

A second puzzle related to opposition alliances concerns their substantive ideological content. Scholars have long argued that polarized oppositions are unlikely to unite against the dictator (Golder 2006a; Greene 2007; Kraetzschmar 2011; Lust 2004; Riker 1976; D. Shehata 2010; Wahman 2015). This is the main explanation for the relative infrequency of opposition coalitions. The intuition is that polarized opposition parties cannot bear to work with their ideological rivals. For instance, a secular opposition party dedicated to protecting the freedoms of religious minorities simply cannot bring themselves to cooperate with an Islamic opposition party advocating for the formation of an Islamic state. They would rather remain ideologically pure and compete in elections on their own to the best of their abilities. In other words, polarized opposition parties care about competing against their ideological rivals as much as they care about defeating authoritarianism (Przeworski 1991, 67; Gandhi and Ong 2018).

Yet empirical reality reveals numerous opposition pre-electoral coalitions containing strange ideological bedfellows. Opposition coalitions in the three regions mentioned – in Kenya, in Slovakia and Croatia, and in Venezuela – were either multi-ethnic, or had multiple opposition parties from both extreme ends of the ideological spectrum. Even in places where the ideological divide seemed too deep to be bridged, such as in Middle East and North African (MENA) region between secular and Islamic opposition parties, close observers of local politics noted that temporary “tactical alliances” were possible, especially at the sub-national level (Browers 2007;

Durac 2011; Kraetzschmar 2011, 296; Ryan 2011). For instance, significant pre-electoral cooperation occurred between secular opposition parties and the Muslim Brotherhood in elections in Egypt in 1984, 1987, and 2005 (Kraetzschmar 2010; D. Shehata 2010, 83–89). How could opposition parties in these disparate countries and regions similarly overcome their deep ideological chasms and the numerous obstacles between them to form cohesive alliances? What are the conceptual, analytical, and empirical differences, if any, between temporary “tactical alliances” in particular and pre-electoral coalitions in general?

Understanding the substantive content of these coalitions potentially provides insights to demystify an opposition coalition’s broader contribution towards democratization and democratic consolidation in general. This is the third, and final, puzzle regarding opposition coalition formation. In the slow, long slog towards gradual liberalization and democratization within “protracted transitions” in electoral authoritarian regimes, opposition parties and their coalitions are one of the “specific collective actors that are doing the hard work of demanding, forging, and sustaining democracy,” and are therefore “usually key to democratization’s fate” (Eisenstadt 2000; Bermeo and Yashar 2016, 2; Schedler 2002b; Magaloni 2010). In particular, their political and policy agenda following electoral victory against the autocratic incumbent arguably catalyzes the subsequent democratic trajectory of the country. Still, what impact victorious opposition coalitions have on democratization remains largely a mystery. The little literature focused on the relationship between opposition coalitions and democratization in general finds a negative correlation – while opposition coalition formation may engender autocratic incumbent defeat, they do not lead to further democratization or democratic consolidation (Resnick 2013; Wahman 2013). In other words, while a regime may transit, it may not transform (Ndegwa 2003, 155–58). Mohamed Morsi’s and the Muslim Brotherhood’s limited

and ill-fated tenures in Egypt between 2011 and 2013 serve as a stark reminder of the precariousness of opposition victories. Why does opposition victory in electoral authoritarian regimes not necessarily lead to further democratization and liberalization? To what extent does the constraints of pre-electoral exigencies influence an opposition party or coalition's post-electoral governance priorities?

This dissertation seeks to develop and articulate a coherent analytical framework for understanding and explaining opposition party behavior and pre-electoral coalition formation under authoritarianism. I argue that in order to demystify the three puzzles – the rarity puzzle, the ideological puzzle, and the democratization puzzle – we need answer a fundamental question: How do opposition parties resolve the various collective action problems that they encounter when contesting in authoritarian elections? The short answer is this: Opposition pre-electoral coalitions are endogenous institutional structures that opposition parties design to solve the collective action problems that they confront. In making this argument throughout this dissertation, I strive to provide as generalizable a theoretical model of coalition formation as possible, while emphasizing a coalition's contingent manifestation in the empirical world. Unlike democracies with self-enforcing equilibriums where winners and losers adhere to a set of agreed upon norms and rules, political contestation under authoritarianism is relatively much more uncertain (Fearon 2011; Przeworski 2006; Schedler 2013). As the rest of this chapter reveals, this uncertainty oftentimes forces opposition elites and parties to take difficult actions within a severely constrained set of choices at different times and at different places.

A few caveats are in order before proceeding with the rest of this dissertation. First, I focus on opposition pre-electoral coalitions contesting against authoritarian regimes. Analyzing opposition pre-electoral coalitions in emerging and advanced democracies is different to the

extent that opposition parties do not encounter repression, are free to draw on various pools of financial and material resources from society, and are unrestricted in propagating their views in the free press.³ Party systems are also relatively more institutionalized. Stable party systems likely makes coalition formation easier and more frequent because parties develop reputations for cooperation over time (Gandhi and Reuter 2013). Moreover, the even playing field of free and fair elections also means that opposition parties and their coalitions are much more likely to have an even chance of electoral victory. Pre-electoral coalitions in democracies are thus likely to be perceived by voters as relatively much more credible as potential governing coalitions. As I shall explain in the rest of this dissertation, the credibility of opposition pre-electoral coalitions under authoritarianism are oftentimes suspect. This poses considerable challenges to both their formation and their reception.

Second, I concentrate my efforts on examining opposition pre-electoral coalition formation in parliamentary autocracies, rather than on presidential autocracies. The existing scholarship on opposition coalition formation under presidential authoritarianism generally emphasizes the bargaining process between opposition parties for selecting one opposition candidate to contest against the dictator (Arriola 2013b; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Kraetzschmar 2013; van de Walle 2006). The indivisible prize of being the one opposition candidate likely makes coalition formation relatively much more difficult as compared to parliamentary autocracies. Further, as I shall explain and justify in the subsequent chapters, examining opposition coalition formation under parliamentary autocracies allows me to distinguish between different forms of collective action problems that are resolved within a coalition.

³ For a review of this literature, see, at least Golder (2006a), Christiansen, Nielsen, and Pedersen (2014), Debus (2009), Ibenskas (2016), Kellam (2017), and Tillman (2015).

Third, while this dissertation provides a coherent theory and explanation of how and why opposition coalitions form, I cannot speculate on their causal effect in successfully toppling an autocratic regime. As noted earlier, current research finds that the relationship between opposition coalition formation and autocratic incumbent defeat is generally positive (Howard and Roessler 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2009; Donno 2013b; Wahman 2013; Ziegfeld and Tudor 2017). Yet, the causal link is probabilistic, and not deterministic (Wahman 2013). Nevertheless, I argue in this dissertation that opposition coalitions under authoritarianism do have a specific causal effect in affecting vote choice, which potentially influences an opposition coalition's chances of winning.

Fourth, and finally, I focus on opposition parties' strategic choices and behaviors approaching authoritarian elections, and set aside their roles and actions in the everyday life under dictatorship. While I acknowledge that their relationships with society, particularly civil society, in the everyday machinations of authoritarianism are important, elections represent the focal points through which opposition parties can potentially channel societal dissent to challenge the incumbent government. It is therefore crucial to understand why and how they behave before and during elections, how such behaviors may evolve over time, and consider what impact it may have on potential regime in particular, and democratization in general.

I now turn to survey the existing literature. In particular, I highlight the similarities that researchers have found in studying opposition parties, as well as detail the numerous obstacles towards coalition formation. I then assess some current explanations for coalition formation, particularly in presidential autocracies, and consider why they may be inadequate for a comprehensive understanding and analysis of opposition coalition formation across the world.

Thereafter, I share my argument in brief, and conclude with a final section that elaborates the substance and coherence of the chapters that constitute the rest of this dissertation.

2. The Challenges of Opposing Dominant Autocratic Incumbents

In general, political scientists have found it difficult to pin down the strategic behavior of opposition parties in electoral authoritarian regimes. Utilizing Mexico as a model of electoral authoritarianism, or rather a regime undergoing “protracted transition” as he preferred, Eisenstadt (2000) attempted to provide a simple and general classification of opposition parties by categorizing them as either (a) transition-seeking, (b) patronage seeking, or (c) anti-regime. Parties that were transition-seeking participated in authoritarian institutions such as elections and parliament, but attempted to reform them from within. Patronage seeking parties demanded short-term payoffs from the dominant incumbent in exchange for being a “loyal opposition,” but also had a long-term aim of gradual political liberalization. Anti-regime parties were extremists that sought to overthrow the regime from outside autocratic institutions primarily via protest mobilization. Albrecht (2010b, 20–24) also articulated very similar categories for the opposition parties in the MENA region. Nevertheless, this classification system proved less than useful not least because each individual opposition party was oftentimes a mix of types at any one point in time. Rigger’s (2000, 148) analysis of the Taiwanese opposition movement claimed that “all three types worked together in the Dangwai movement and its successor, the Democratic Progressive Party.” Additionally, even if opposition parties were of one type at one time, they could evolve into different types over time. For example, in their comprehensive study of opposition parties and strategies in Eastern Europe, Bunce and Wolchik (2011, 229) opined that:

“Because of their fluid political characteristics – given weak institutions, ever-changing rules of the political game, and the incomplete and often biased information about the “true” opinions of the public and the “true” state of the regime’s power – mixed regimes, especially where elections are rigged, present oppositions with a set of unusually diverse, difficult, and therefore divisive strategic choices. As our case studies in Part II pointed out, the opposition in each of our nine countries confronted these choices in every election, and they responded, not surprisingly in different ways at different times.”

Any attempt to develop an ex-ante general theoretical specification of the motivations and constraints of opposition parties must therefore necessarily begin with the general characteristics of a typical dominant incumbent in an electoral authoritarian regime. Through first understanding how dominant incumbents govern, then can we understand how opposition parties emerge, grow, and are positioned to contest against them. At least two features of dominant incumbents are particularly salient – ideology and resources.

In the first instance, dominant incumbents usually occupy the broad middle-section of a unidimensional ideological spectrum, to the extent that there exists ideological spatial competition even in authoritarian elections. In line with Downsian expectations, the regime generates policies and public goods that appeal to the vast majority of moderate median voters, thus pushing opposition parties to either end of the ideological spectrum (A. Downs 1957; Riker 1976; Greene 2002, 2007; Magaloni 2006). Substantively, the policies and public goods that the regime proposes and provides, and which opposition parties then organize themselves against, depends crucially on what exactly is the principal nature of the ideological cleavage within each

country. This ideological cleavage varies significantly across countries and regions. In post-Cold-War Latin America and Eastern Europe, the nature of ideological conflict remained generally marred in economic terms between the commanding heights of state-controlled Soviet-style socialism and the radical neoliberal policies of the West. Dominant incumbents seeking the ideological middle thus walked the tightrope between their revolutionary anti-Soviet origins on the one hand, and the need to implement pro-growth economic policies to build and cement their electoral legitimacy and coalitions on the other hand (S. Stokes 2001; Hale 2015). In the ethnically plural societies of Africa, ideological conflict reflects inter-ethnic conflict. Elections generally resemble “ethnic censuses” (Eifert, Miguel, and Posner 2010; Ferree 2006; Horowitz 2008; McLaughlin 2007; Posner 2004). Autocrats from the majority ethnic group rely on votes from their co-ethnics and circumscribed support from co-opted non-co-ethnic allies to secure victory, while sidelining other substantive issues (van de Walle 2003; Bogaards 2008; Bleck and van de Walle 2011).

To pay off and mobilize the large groups of elites and supporters in the ideological middle before and during elections, dominant autocratic incumbents thus require vast amounts of material and symbolic resources. Towards that end, they extract from and deploy the state (Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007; A. Grzymala-Busse 2008; Slater 2010; Slater and Fenner 2011). For fellow elites, autocrats can share material rents from state contracts and coffers, along with the selective invitation to participate in the legislature to negotiate policy concessions (Gandhi 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, 2007). For the masses, autocrats selectively distribute patronage through a “punishment regime,” rewarding those who acquiesce and punishing those who rebel (Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast 2003; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010; Blaydes 2011; S. Stokes et al. 2013). Ultimately, the longevity of an autocratic dominant ruling party

turns, in large part, on its ability to systematically organize the entire cyclical process of resource extraction and redeployment to secure the necessary control over state and society.

The twin dominance of autocratic incumbents – ideological and resources – mean that opposition parties typically find themselves marginalized and weak (Rakner and van de Walle 2009). Without the necessary resources to reward the upward mobility of its members, opposition parties can only recruit die-hard candidates and activists from the ideological fringes of society. Opposition parties in electoral authoritarian regimes thus become “niche” parties – emerging from and producing platforms that appeal to specific geographical regions, ethnic groups, or extreme ideological positions (Greene 2002, 2007, 2016; Wahman 2017; Bischof 2017). For example, while their mobilization and electoral strategies may differ significantly across time and across countries, Islamic opposition parties within the Middle East and North Africa generally first arise from niche sources of support from marginalized conservative social movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Albrecht 2010a, 2013; Wegner 2011; Wickham 2002, 2015).

The segmentation of opposition parties into niche parties that flank the dominant incumbent on either ends of a unidimensional ideological spectrum appears to be, therefore, the key stumbling block for opposition coalition formation. Opposition parties on the economic left, or that are representing the interests of one ethnic, religious, or geographical group, simply cannot work with their ideological rivals on the right, or those who represent the interests of other competing minority ethnic, religious, or geographical groups. Occupying the ideological middle is hence not just an electorally sound strategy for the dominant incumbent in Downsian terms, but is also a logical extension of a divide-and-rule strategy. Echoing this logic, Riker’s analysis of multipartyism in the Indian legislature noted how “Congress in the center has usually

been able to keep the opposite ends from combining against it” (Riker 1976, 104). Similar conclusions were also drawn from the lack of cooperation between the Islamists and secularists in Tunisia and Egypt (Haugbølle and Cavatorta 2011; D. Shehata 2010), and between the PAN and the PRD in Mexico (Magaloni 2006; Greene 2002, 2007).

In addition to being beholden to demands of their ideologically niche audiences and supporters, opposition parties also face at least three extra obstacles in coalition formation under authoritarianism. First, opposition parties encountering autocratic repression are oftentimes short-lived, appearing for one electoral cycle and disappearing before the next electoral cycle. The lack of a stable party system increases voter volatility, and undercuts strategic voting. Opposition voters do not know who or what are the leading opposition parties they should be voting for even if they desire to vote against the ruling regime (Rakner and van de Walle 2009; Resnick 2013; Wahman 2014, 2016, 2017). An unstable party system also undermines the reputations of party leaders to make reciprocal promises to each other over multiple electoral cycles. This, in turn, diminishes the ability of opposition party leaders to make credible commitments to each other (Axelrod 1984; Gandhi and Reuter 2013).

Second, as briefly discussed earlier, presidential systems impose significant challenges to opposition coalition formation. Opposition elites have to choose one single opposition candidate to contest against the regime – a bargaining process that is tremendously treacherous (van de Walle 2006). Moreover, the outsized power of executive office in presidential systems, particularly in Africa’s neopatrimonial autocracies, pressurizes the opposition in various ways. Not only does it limit opposition access to resources and organizational capability, it also generates severe credible commitment problems for opposition elites negotiating post-electoral concessions for pre-electoral coordination (Rakner and van de Walle 2009, 112–15; Gandhi

2014; Arriola 2013a, 2013b). Opposition elites cannot trust that their fellow ally will not exploit his executive powers to renege on his promises to share power or spoils if he prevails over the incumbent autocrat.

Third, and finally, the electoral system, particularly the single-non-transferable vote (SNTV) system, oftentimes present numerous collective action problems (Cox 1997, 238–50; Batto and Kim 2012; Buttorff 2015). Opposition parties must not only coordinate their candidate selection in particular districts, they also need to mobilize and instruct voters how to vote so that all opposition candidates have enough vote share to win against the ruling incumbent party's candidates. If opposition voters do not know how to vote and who to vote for, then their votes may potentially be wasted. In countries that use the SNTV, such as in Taiwan, Japan, and Jordan, resource asymmetry between the incumbent and the opposition mean that the former are simply more capable of overcoming these collective action challenges.

3. Existing Explanations of Opposition Coalition Formation

The severe obstacles to opposition coalitions in general appear to explain comprehensively why opposition pre-electoral coalition formation is so rare in autocratic regimes. But the elaboration of these obstacles does not explain why and how coalition formation occurs, and even if they occur, why they would occur among ideologically heterogeneous opposition parties. To my knowledge, there are only two existing theories of successful opposition coalition formation.

The first explanation is a pecuniary one. Arriola (2013a, 2013b) emphasizes the credible commitment problem in opposition coalition formation by initially contending that the core of coalition formation involves opposition elites coordinating behind one single opposition

candidate contesting against the autocratic regime's candidate in presidential elections. Coordination thus requires the leading opposition candidate, or the "coalition formateur" in Arriola's terms, to attempt to strike agreements with fellow opposition elites to get them to withdraw their candidacy. Whether such agreements succeed are highly contingent on the ability of the leading candidate to make credible promises to share power, rents, or spoils with these fellow opposition elites if he manages to successfully defeat the incumbent. In other words, the time inconsistency for his fellow allies between pre-electoral cost of withdrawing from being the opposition candidate versus the post-electoral materialization of rewards presents a severe credible commitment problem for the leading opposition candidate (North and Weingast 1989; Shepsle 1991). His fellow allies cannot trust that he will not renege on his pre-electoral promises if he wins during the elections. As mentioned earlier, this credible commitment problem is oftentimes made more severe due to the explicit outsized power of African presidents (Gandhi 2014). More powerful presidents mean more temptation to renege from their pre-electoral promises.

In subsequently examining and explaining why a multi-ethnic opposition coalition formed in Kenya in 2002 but not in Cameroon in 2004, Arriola (2013a, 2013b) argues that the Kenyan coalition formateur, Mwai Kibaki, had access to financial resources, whereas his Cameroonian counterpart did not. Mwai Kibaki could utilize the large amount of finances that he had amassed from donations from the liberalized private business sector to pay off his fellow elites to secure their withdrawal and endorsements. His fellow opposition elites did not have to rely on his non-credible promises to share rewards after the elections, but simply acquiesced with the pre-electoral payment. It also helped his cause that his fellow opposition elites were heavily in debt from earlier electoral campaigns. In Cameroon, in contrast, no single opposition leader

had an outsized financial advantage over the other. Both Fru Ndi and Ndam Njoya lacked the requisite resources to pay off each other or their supporters. Limited campaign donations from a small private business sector also could not tip one side against the other.

While Arriola's arguments and evidence correctly highlight the importance of both the coordination and the credible commitment problems, they are also highly contingent. Mwai Kibaki's fiscal advantage and consequent success in Kenya in 2002 was precipitated by liberalizing reforms in the banking sector imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank almost two decades earlier. Daniel arap Moi, the erstwhile dictator of Kenya had little choice but to consent to financial liberalization because the state was financially strapped and relied on external support for almost half of its budget (Arriola 2013b, 126–36). Financial liberalization thus created larger private businesses with private sources of funding that could tip their support towards Kibaki. In Cameroon, Paul Biya, dictator since 1982, was able to resist comprehensive structural reforms of the banking sector because of the availability of oil rents. This, combined with bilateral aid from France, gave him considerable leverage to maintain fiscal autonomy of the state (Arriola 2013b, 120–26). State control of capital meant a smaller private business sector beholden to the state and cash strapped opposition leaders.

Accordingly, while internally valid to the world of African presidential autocracies, it is unclear if Arriola's arguments are generalizable to other countries and regions. If Merico's PAN or PRD had a disproportionate access to finances over the other, would one of them have been able to pay off the other, despite their polarized ideologies, to coordinate behind one opposition presidential candidate and result in PRI defeat even earlier than in 2000? To what degree was the coalescing of opposition forces in the Philippines in 1986 that defeated Ferdinand Marcos a result of the availability of money to pay off each other? These counterfactual scenarios and

hypotheses are difficult to assess, but on initial consideration, highly unlikely. In general, an autocratic incumbent's control over political office and vast amounts of state and private resources makes weakly resourced opposition parties the norm, rather than the exception. Therefore, the key lessons from Arriola's arguments is not just the causal story of the availability of financial resources leading to coalition formation, but, more importantly, the opposition's seemingly inescapable intra-elite coordination and credible commitment problems when they attempt to find one single candidate to contest against the autocrat in a presidential election.

A second explanation for opposition coalition formation is also based on a close examination of African presidential autocracies. Nicolas van de Walle (2006) argues that opposition coalition formation are "tipping games" which involve rapid power transition from one coalition underpinning autocratic stability to another coalition securing opposition victory. Here, a coordination problem is also pervasive but works somewhat differently. He suggests that opposition coalition formation and victory is dependent on how many political actors contributing to the autocrat's coalition defect away from the autocrat to the opposition. If an autocrat requires the support of only two out of four political actors (A, B, C, D) to survive, then any one of the four defecting "need to be sure that at least two of the others are defecting before they will choose to defect. A will defect from the regime, if A believes that at least two of the other actors are also defecting" (van de Walle 2006, 85). Of course, the lack of information, the risk of repression, and the pervasiveness of preference falsification under authoritarianism means that regime defections are highly unlikely (Kuran 1991).

So under what circumstances will political actors in the autocrat's coalition shift allegiance to the opposition's banner? Van de Walle, like Wahman (2011), proposes an endogenous explanation. He argues that regime defection and subsequent "opposition cohesion

becomes more likely when an opposition victory appears more likely” (van de Walle 2006, 86). This perception of opposition victory and incumbent defeat is in turn influenced by a variety of factors such as political institutions, history and culture, ethnic fragmentation, socioeconomic development, as well as international factors such as international pressures for democracy and expatriate support for the opposition. Specifically, economic crises generally encourage regime defection, while sanctions from international institutions and election observers increases the costs of regime repression and emboldens the opposition (Donno 2013a, 2013b; Hyde and Marinov 2014; Reuter and Gandhi 2011; Levitsky and Way 2010). Ultimately, van de Walle (2006, 92) opines that opposition “cohesion is often the consequence of victory, rather than its cause.”

This endogenous model of opposition coalition formation and victory, while compelling, has its limitations, however. First, there are questions about its internal validity. Bunce and Wolchik’s treatise on opposition victories in Eastern Europe find that opposition cohesion and victory was no more likely even when the autocrat was more vulnerable (Bunce and Wolchik 2011, 215–46). Second, the model has makes at least two important assumptions about the behaviors and relationship between opposition elites and the masses. On the one hand, it assumes that both opposition elites and the masses have the same information about the regime’s vulnerability, and, agree about the validity of that information. On the other hand, it also assumes that everyone agrees on what to do with that information – to defect to a new opposition coalition. In other words, it assumes that elite defection to a new opposition coalition must entail that the masses “follow-their-leader” to defect to that same opposition coalition. Such assumptions are surely a very tall order under authoritarianism. As Bunce and Wolchik (2011, 244–45) write, and as Resnick (2013, 737–39) and Wahman (2016) concurs,

“...mixed regimes are fluid formations that send out contradictory and ever-changing signals. This means that it is very hard for citizens and opposition groups to read the strength of a mixed regime and to adjust their behavior accordingly. At the same time, regimes that straddle democracy and dictatorship provide very poor information about the extent of public support for the regime and opposition groups. The political “fog” in which everyone operates, therefore, means that electoral outcomes are unlikely to be driven by contrasting takes – and relatively consensual ones, at that – on the regime’s future... ...if citizens reject the regime, it does not automatically – or, indeed, even usually – follow that they will then embrace the opposition. As we have noted throughout this book, the inability of the opposition to win elections and the way the opposition had conducted itself often meant that citizens in mixed regimes disliked the opposition and doubted that it either could or should win office.”

In the final analysis, whether opposition elites can coordinate amongst themselves to find a single candidate or set of candidates, and whether voters can and will “follow-their-leaders” to defect and vote for the coalition’s agreed-upon candidates are the two primary collective action problems that poses serious, but not crippling, challenges to the endogenous model of opposition coalition formation. To the extent that endogeneity matters, what is more important is if we can identify theoretically the incentives and costs of coalition formation itself and understand how opposition parties balance between the two in an information-poor and resource-poor pre-electoral environment. Thus, any general analytical model of opposition pre-electoral coalition

must first start by clarifying these two pre-electoral collective action problems, and then specify how opposition party behavior may vary when conditions vary.

4. The Argument in Brief

Recognition of the opposition intra-elite collective action problem and the opposition elite-mass collective action problems are the basic building blocks of my argument. To reiterate more specifically, an *opposition intra-elite collective action problem* occurs when multiple opposition parties need to select candidates to contest against the autocratic regime. In presidential autocracies, this involves opposition elites selecting one single opposition candidate from amongst themselves to contest against the autocratic incumbent. In parliamentary autocracies, intra-elite collective action involves opposition parties negotiating with each other whose candidate should contest in which district in countries with district-based plurality systems, or whose candidate should take what position in a list of candidates in a proportional representation system. The intuition is maximize opposition vote share and prospects of victory by reducing the number of opposition candidates or sets of candidates competing against the autocrat (Cox 1997; Duverger 1954).

An *opposition elite-mass collective action problem* occurs when opposition elites and parties have resolved their candidate selection problem, but must now convince their supporters to campaign and vote for the agreed-upon coalition candidate(s). These voters may not wish to “follow-their-leader” to vote for the coalition candidate(s) for a variety of reasons. First, as mentioned, the coalition candidate(s) come from a different opposition party that they loathe ideologically. That opposition parties oftentimes come from niche ideological backgrounds suggests that this collective action problem is empirically pervasive. For instance, we can

imagine that the supporters of secular parties in Egypt be unlikely to support a presidential candidate from the Muslim Brotherhood, even if the leaders of the secular parties have agreed to withdraw their candidacy in favor of the Brotherhood's candidate. Second, as Bunce and Wolchik emphasize, even anti-regime voters who are inclined to vote for opposition parties may have a general dislike or mistrust of them. Because opposition parties in electoral autocracies have little experience in governing, voters are likely to be uncertain about the opposition's governance competencies as well as the exact policies that the alliance would implement if they were to win power. In other words, even if voters may want to vote against the incumbent autocrat, they may not know what they are voting for.

Having recognized these two collective action problems, this dissertation's primary argument is that opposition pre-electoral coalitions are *institutions designed by self-interested opposition parties to help opposition parties resolve the two intra-elite and elite-mass collective action problems*. Substantively, opposition pre-electoral coalitions consist of two distinct, but related, solutions. In the first instance, opposition parties in pre-electoral opposition coalitions bargain with each other to forge *non-competition agreements* – the selection of a single presidential candidate in executive elections, or the allocation of candidates across the electoral map or joint lists in legislative elections. The aim is to reduce the number of opposition candidates so that the opposition vote is not split to allow the dominant incumbent to be victorious with less than an outright majority of votes. In a parliamentary system with plurality single-member districts, we should therefore expect to observe only one opposition candidate from only one opposition party contesting against the dominant party's candidate.

Second, opposition parties negotiate with each other to develop and undertake *joint anti-regime coalition campaigns* to signal their unity and ideological moderation in attempts to

convince their own supporters and the supporters of their fellow allies to support the coalition candidate(s). These coalition campaigns may range from a common coalition logo to a common coalition name, public ceremonies where opposition elites endorse each other, or even a common policy platform. The goal is for these campaign strategies to act as substantive focal points to mobilize the masses to coalesce behind the coalition candidate(s) so that the agreed upon non-competition agreement is not forged in vain. A common manifesto used by all parties in the opposition alliance, for example, can detail the exact democratic institutional reforms that the alliance would implement if they were to win power. In so doing, the manifesto signals the compromises that the coalition's component parties have made with each other, increases confidence in the alliance's potential governance capabilities, and reduces uncertainty about the alliance's policy position.

The two solutions to the opposition's collective action problems are governed by subtly different theoretical logics. Bargaining over non-competition agreements resembles a classic bargaining problem (Cox 1997, 198–99). All political actors are better off if they coordinated with each other to split the pie (i.e. the various districts of an electoral map, or the number of candidates on a list, or who is the presidential candidate and his cabinet appointments), but differ in their relative assessments about how the pie should be split amongst everyone. Successful bargaining over non-competition agreements, therefore, depends on whether there are information asymmetries between the opposition parties, and the credibility of enforcing that agreement (Fearon 1995, 1998; Reiter 2003; Walter 2009). If opposition parties have clear information about their relative popularities, the resolve that they have, and have credibility that they are willing to honor the agreement, then non-competition agreements are more likely to be reached.

Developing joint coalition campaigns as substantive focal points to mobilize supporters, however, are dependent on the opposition leaders' calculation of their perceived benefits and costs. Opposition leaders will have to carefully weigh the benefits of increasing the vote share and chances of electoral victory of their party's candidates on the one hand against the costs of internal party revolt and the loss of support from their core voters on the other. Theoretically, we can hypothesize that if opposition leaders perceive that the vote-maximizing benefits of joint coalition campaigning are less than its costs, then they would not form an alliance with joint campaigns. They would stop at the water's edge of non-competition agreements only. Conversely, if they perceive that sending joint anti-regime signals are going to substantially increase their chances of electoral victory, then they will prioritize developing and undertaking joint coalition campaigns.

The perceived benefits and costs of developing and sending joint anti-regime signals are likely to vary significantly in form and in degree, depending on (a) how exactly the autocratic regime conducts its own electoral campaign, and (b) the strength of opposition party leaders. How the dominant incumbent autocrat campaigns directly affect how opposition parties grow, campaign, and position themselves ideologically. Where autocratic regimes campaign based on valence-based appeals, personality-based opposition parties have little choice but to follow suit. Yet, their strong ideological similarities mean that opposition voters are highly likely to vote for the opposition candidate regardless of his partisan affiliation. Because sending joint anti-regime signals are unlikely to significantly increase the vote share of their candidates, opposition leaders thus have little incentives to send these signals. They are much more likely to be put off by the costs of working with fellow opposition elites who may steal their limelight, or who may hinder their decision-making autonomy. Where autocratic regimes campaign by occupying the middle

of an ideological space, however, ideologically polarized opposition supporters mean that these opposition-inclined voters are less likely to want to vote for the opposition candidates from other alliance parties. In other words, the cross-party strategic voting problem is much more acute. In such a scenario, opposition leaders will encounter relatively stronger incentives to campaign jointly to encourage their supporters to at least “hold their noses” to vote for the candidates from other component parties in the alliance. Hence, the propensity to form alliances with joint electoral campaigns will be higher.

At the same time, strong incentives alone, although crucial, are not the only factor influencing coalition formation with joint anti-regime signals. Another critical condition is strong opposition leaders. If opposition leaders are in strong control over their respective parties, then they will be able to take independent, autonomous action to consider and engage in a broad range of cooperative strategies with other opposition parties regardless of their ideological positioning. Strong opposition leaders will also strive to mitigate the costs of internal party revolt and loss of mass support. We should expect to observe strong opposition leaders attempt to educate, persuade and convince both their party activists and supporters that short-term compromises to cooperate with their ideological rivals in opposition are more important in light of the enhanced prospects of defeating the authoritarian incumbent. To put it differently, strong opposition leaders will petition their supporters to prioritize prospective democratic victory over their narrow niche ideologies. Weak opposition leaders who are beholden to their party activists and supporters, however, will be unlikely to be able to forge joint anti-regime coalition campaigns even if the incentives to do so are strong. Wary of potentially being replaced by their internal party rivals and the desertion of their core supporters, they shy away from cooperating with their ideological rivals.

Ultimately, this analytical account suggests that opposition pre-electoral coalitions emerge endogenously in response to collective action problems as equilibrium institutions. This perspective is a rational choice interpretation of collective action based on new institutionalism, and also entails that there is a strong selection effect when we observe coalition formation in the empirical world (Aldrich 1995; Axelrod 1984; Diermeier and Krehbiel 2003; G. W. Downs, Roche, and Barsboom 1996; Riker 1980; Shepsle and Bonchek 1997). Opposition parties will form coalitions only when they can afford to, and when they perceive that its benefits outweigh its costs.

5. Implications for the Literature on Opposition Coalition Formation

Note that this conceptual formulation and theoretical framework is distinctly different from previous studies that emphasize the difficulty of polarized opposition parties cooperating with each other. Existing scholarship stresses that ideologically divergent opposition parties cannot form coalitions either because opposition elites cannot bear to work with each other or they assume that opposition voters will simply follow what their respective party leaders tell them to do. To put it another way, the default situation is that ideologically polarized opposition parties and their leaders cannot work with each other. But if leaders can somehow agree to cooperate, then opposition voters will simply follow in lockstep behind their leadership. As Greene (2007, 7) writes on the case of PRI-dominated Mexico, “Despite their mutual interest in democracy, opposition *elites* did not coordinate because they were ideologically polarized on economic policy around a comparatively centrist PRI.” Magaloni (2006, 26) follows Greene by writing, “defeating a hegemonic party requires mass coordination on the part of voters. Mass coordination is *almost automatic* when opposition party elites manage to form all-encompassing

opposition electoral fronts, as in Senegal in 2000 or in Kenya in 2002. When opposition party elites fail to unite, this form of mass coordination is harder to achieve.” I depart from these assumptions in at least two ways.

First, I propose that opposition elites in parliamentary autocracies bargaining with each other for a non-competition agreement do not care much about ideologies. Instead, what they do care about are maximizing the share of seats that they have negotiated for vis-à-vis their fellow allies, as well as the likelihood of their candidate winning in those seats against the dominant incumbent. The share of seats that parties allocate amongst themselves is a public signal of their relative strengths. To be more explicit, if opposition party A is able to negotiate for a larger share of seats to contest in as compared to party B, then it signals to the public that party A is the leading party of the opposition alliance. Such public signals may have subsequent effects in affecting overall support and vote choice. Party A may be able to recruit more supporters into its ranks, thus further bolstering its negotiating position as compared to party B in the future. Yet, being able to contest in a larger share of seats does not necessarily mean that it is able to win all those seats. Variation in incumbent support across electoral districts may mean that party B ends up with more elected candidates as compared to party A. The complex calculations and tradeoffs that opposition parties have to balance in the iterated process of seat negotiations leaves differences in ideologies on the backburner.

Second, and more importantly, I argue that ideological differences matter instead among the voters and party activists. Opposition leaders cannot take their mass supporters for granted. Internal party revolt and loss of mass support are real threats that can endanger the political fortunes of an opposition leader. When a weak opposition leader deviates too much from the ideal point of the party and its mass base, he or she is highly vulnerable to being replaced.

Therefore, we should expect weak opposition leaders to be consistently constrained by the demands of their extremist supporters (Greene 2002, 2007, 2016). Strong opposition leaders who are more immune to the demands of their core party activists and supporters, in contrast, will have greater autonomy in formulating intra-opposition cooperative strategies to defeat the autocrat. Yet, they will also want to take action to justify the necessity of coalition formation to their own supporters. If they lose more supporters from their own party than they gain from other parties, then their attempts at coalition formation will be for naught. We should expect that they shore up support by communicating to both their party activists and their mass support the prospective benefits of electoral victory, as well as try to paint their ideological rivals in a positive light. In this respect, we can view opposition parties with strong leaders as active agents in shaping their supporters' opinions rather than be shackled by them (Leon, Desai, and Tuğal 2015).

Consequently, to the extent that existing large-N cross national statistical analyses find an inverse relationship between ideological distance among opposition parties and the probability of coalition formation (Golder 2006a; Wahman 2011), the causal factor at "work" in reducing the propensity of opposition coalition is *not* ideological differences among opposition elites per se. It is more likely to be the case that most opposition leaders are weak and beholden to the extremist demands of their ideologically polarized niche supporters. Where there are strong autonomous opposition party leaders, we should predict the probability of coalition formation to increase as the ideological distance between parties increases. Growing ideological distance between opposition parties means stronger incentives for opposition leaders to solve a more acute cross-party strategic voting problem. They will more likely want to form alliances with joint campaigns to persuade their supporters to pool their votes against the autocrat.

Finally, the clarification of the twin collective action problems and their solutions calls for a re-analysis of the conceptual foundations and operationalization of opposition pre-electoral coalitions in these large-N cross-national datasets. These existing datasets rely on different conceptualizations of what is considered an opposition coalition but operationalize all different forms of cooperation in a single catch-all dichotomous category of “opposition coalitions.” For instance, Arriola (2013b, 8) defines opposition pre-electoral coalitions as “an electoral alliance in which politicians from different ethnic or regional groups endorse a single candidate for executive office,” a definition that is similar to what Wahman uses (2011, 2013). This definition sees coordination and endorsement as *both necessary* for inclusion as a pre-electoral coalition. In contrast, Gandhi and Reuter (2013) define opposition pre-electoral coalitions as “a public statement of mutual support or a division of electoral districts for each party to contest.” Their conceptualization views fulfilling *either* criteria as qualifying as an opposition alliance. More curiously, Howard and Roessler (2006, 371) define opposition coalitions as “multiple opposition groupings, parties, or candidates joined together to create a broad movement in opposition to the incumbent leader or party in power.” This definition is an expansive one, covering everything from electoral coordination to social movements. Hence, even when researchers claim they are testing the causes and effects of the same concept, their operationalization of “what counts” is different, potentially leading to divergent findings. Future cross-national datasets on opposition cooperation will have to rely on deep case-specific knowledge to identify if opposition parties engage in forging non-competition agreements only, if they add different types of joint anti-regime signaling mechanisms to their basic non-competition agreement, as well as the strength of opposition party leaders. This will then facilitate a more rigorous and robust examination of the causes and effects of opposition cooperation in electoral authoritarian regimes. I further address

the implications of my conceptual and analytical framework for the building of future large-N cross national datasets on opposition coalition formation in the conclusion.

6. The Dissertation Ahead

I now outline the rest of the dissertation. In Chapter 2, I elaborate on my theory of opposition coalition formation. I explicate the two collective action problems confronting opposition parties when contesting in parliamentary elections against a dominant ruling party helmed by an autocrat, and how opposition pre-electoral coalition formation entails developing solutions towards resolving both issues. I also explain the corresponding theoretical models that may be used towards studying these solutions, detailing how we should make sense of the various incentives and costs for opposition parties when developing these solutions. In focusing my analysis on parliamentary autocracies, I then generate hypotheses and observable implications about how opposition parties and their leaders should behave when they are ideologically polarized or similar to each other under different types of electoral environments. A final section then specifies the multiple research design solutions utilizing mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, and the utility of such an approach, that I intend to employ to test my arguments and hypotheses.

In Chapter 3, I begin a historical analysis of the critical juncture between Singapore and Malaysia, two most similar parliamentary autocracies. Despite emerging from very similar colonial experiences with almost identical political institutions, I detail how electoral politics have diverged in the immediate aftermath of Japanese occupation during World War 2. I explain how ideologically polarized contests over race and religion took hold under the context of emerging ethnic nationalism in Malaysia, while the demolition of the left-wing movement in

Singapore entrenched valence-based electoral politics in Singapore. The emergence of these two forms of autocrat electoral environments would form the soil in which subtly different opposition parties developed.

In Chapter 4, I conduct a controlled comparison of opposition coalition formation in Singapore and Malaysia. Specifically, I process trace how different types of opposition parties have grown in these two different electoral environments, compare and contrast their ideological similarities and differences, examine their divergent incentives and costs encountered in bargaining over non-competition agreements and in developing signaling mechanisms, and then compare the campaigning strategies that opposition parties across these two countries have undertaken. I detail across the two countries the very similar informal rules of bargaining over non-competition agreements, but the very different incentives towards developing joint anti-regime signaling mechanisms.

Chapter 5 takes my level of analysis to one step below the country-level to focus on the strategic behavior of an opposition party – the Democratic Action Party (DAP) of Malaysia. Through a simple content analysis of the DAP’s English newsletters in two separate four-year period, I demonstrate that an opposition party will communicate differently to its own supporters depending on whether it was in a coalition or not. Specifically, I document how the DAP makes positive statements about its coalition partner at the other polarized end of the ideological spectrum in approaching the general elections (as in 2013), but makes neutral or negative statements about that same party when they are not in a coalition (as in 2004). The DAP strives to make such positive statements in a bid to mitigate the costs of losing its own supporters when they form a coalition with their ideological rivals, thus shaping the opinions of the party’s mass support base as it goes along. Furthermore, this content analysis also aims to provide rich

empirical detail about how joint anti-regime coalition signaling mechanisms are transmitted through these newsletters, and how exactly common policy platforms are framed and articulated to signal opposition unity and ideological moderation.

Chapter 6 moves my level of analysis further down finally to the individual level. I describe and report the results of a survey experiment conducted on voters in Malaysia in approaching the upcoming general election due in 2018. The goal is to test if a signal of joint anti-regime unity such as a common policy platforms does indeed encourage voters to vote for coalition candidate(s) from an opposition party that they do not support. I commissioned a survey experiment where survey respondents are randomly assigned to listen to either of two vignettes. In the control vignette, respondents are told that opposition parties have developed a non-competition agreement, but continue to have policy disagreements. In the treatment vignette, respondents are told that opposition parties have both developed a non-competition agreement and also jointly negotiated a common policy platform which they plan to implement if the opposition coalition wins power. I report baseline results of the average treatment effect of a common policy platform on cross-party support, as well as conditional average treatment effects based on strength of partisan affiliation, and political knowledge. Finally, I further report the results of regression analyses on a comprehensive survey of Malaysians conducted in 2014, testing if voters of opposition parties do indeed differ in their political attitudes as compared to voters of the incumbent regime. This observational data can potentially give us some additional insights into the success of the opposition alliance's electoral campaign efforts.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation. I summarize the dissertation's most salient insights and discuss its contributions to the overall literature on opposition pre-electoral coalition formation under authoritarianism. I also suggest some possible paths for future research.

Chapter 2

Theory and Methods

“If there was hope, it must lie in the proles, because only there, in those swarming disregarded masses, eighty-five per cent of the population of Oceania, could the force to destroy the Party ever be generated... ..But the proles, if only they could somehow become conscious of their own strength, would have no need to conspire. They needed only to rise up and shake themselves like a horse shaking off flies. If they choose they could blow the Party to pieces tomorrow morning. Surely sooner or later it must occur to them to do it. And yet -!”

- <<1984>>, George Orwell.

1. Opposition Collective Action Problems and their Solutions in Parliamentary Autocracies

The central thesis of this dissertation is this: Opposition parties encounter collective action problems approaching authoritarian elections, and they build pre-electoral coalitions as institutional solutions to these problems. In both presidential and parliamentary autocracies, the twin collective action problems of intra-elite candidate selection and elite-mass mobilization exist. Yet, the relationship between the two problems vary subtly in the two different types of electoral systems. This then has important consequences for how we analyze subsequent opposition coalition formation.

In presidential autocracies, opposition parties must solve both collective action problems at the same time when they desire to form a pre-electoral coalition. Opposition elites and their parties must forge a non-competition agreement to coalesce behind a single national opposition coalition candidate for president. Then, they must have that one single candidate campaign in such a way as to appeal to the entire electorate to mobilize and vote against the regime.

Obviously, solving these two problems simultaneously at the national level is extremely costly for all opposition elites. Opposition elites contemplating withdrawing their own candidacy must explain to their party members and supporters why they are giving up a chance at seizing executive office and what compensation they have received in return for supporting another candidate. The leading opposition elite – the likely coalition formateur – must make credible promises to share power with fellow opposition elites who withdraw their candidacy, or offer them short-term inducements (Arriola 2013a, 2013b). Moreover, the opposition coalition candidate who is finally selected from one niche opposition party must somehow signal compromise to his or her own party's ideology to attract the supporters of other niche opposition parties in order to maximize his vote share against the autocrat. Conversely, the leaders of other niche opposition parties must convince their own supporters to cross party lines and vote for the unity candidate whom they may ideologically disdain.

Existing research reveals that solving these two problems simultaneously at the national level for presidential autocracies is enormously difficult, but not impossible. Greene's (2007) and Magaloni's (2006, 175–226) analysis of Mexico's democratization process demonstrates the difficulty. In Mexico's presidential elections of 2000, there was a high probability of a coalition between the right-wing PAN and the left-wing PRD competing against the dominant incumbent PRI (Greene 2007, 219–27). This was primarily driven by voters' perceptions about the increasing vulnerability of the PRI electoral machine in 2000 as compared to previous elections (Magaloni 2006, 193–226). Yet, neither opposition leaders were willing to withdraw to select a joint unity opposition candidate, nor agree on any policy compromises. The cumulative costs of strategic withdrawal and ideological compromise was simply too high for either side. As Greene (2007, 27) writes,

“After months of trying to iron out a compromise, alliance negotiations stalled. Neither Cardenas nor Fox was willing to give up his candidacy and their policy differences could not be resolved to satisfaction. In the absence of commitments for more protectionist economic policy – commitments that PAN was not willing to make – the PRD preferred to let the alliance crumble.”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Arriola’s (2013b) treatise on Africa’s multiethnic pre-electoral coalitions highlights how access to finances allows for the coalition formateur to solve both problems simultaneously. He argues and demonstrates that the availability of financial resources allowed coalition formateurs to pay off other opposition leaders to make them withdraw their candidacy *and* secure their endorsement as a form of joint anti-regime unity.

1.1 Intra-Elite Collective Action Problems and Non-Competition Agreements in Parliamentary Autocracies

In parliamentary autocracies⁴, however, I argue that opposition parties need not solve both problems simultaneously. In the first instance, collective action over non-competition agreements in countries with single member district plurality systems entail inter-party bargaining over which party should field candidates to contest in which district against the autocratic incumbent. Because electoral office is divided into multiple pieces across the country’s electoral map, opposition parties can develop multiple ways to decide how to split the electoral map. The aim, ultimately, is to field only one opposition candidate in each district

⁴ In this dissertation, I consider parliamentary autocracies with single-member district plurality systems only. The coordination difficulties for parliamentary autocracies with other electoral systems such as the district proportional representation system or the district single-non-transferable vote system are largely the same. See, for example, Cox (1997, 238–50), Batto and Kim (2012), and Buttorf (2015).

against the ruling incumbent’s candidate. This potentially aggregates all potential opposition votes within each district, and maximizes the chances of the opposition candidates winning their respective districts. Multiple opposition candidates in each electoral district only serve to split the opposition votes, allowing the ruling party’s candidate in that district to win with less than an outright majority of votes – a logic not unlike that in presidential elections.

Figure 1: Absence of Collective Action over Candidate Placement

Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate

For example, let us assume that an opinion poll approaching an election in a hypothetical country indicated that the ruling incumbent party will have a national vote share of 40 percent, with

opposition parties A and B both having 30 percent vote share each. Let us further assume that these vote shares are distributed evenly throughout an entire country. In a presidential election, the leaders of opposition parties A and B have to decide who will withdraw and endorse each other's candidates against the autocrat – obviously a terribly vexing process. In a parliamentary autocracy, however, consider Figures 1 above and Figure 2 below. Each cell represents an electoral district. The labels in each cell represent the candidates selected by their respective parties to run in those districts.

Figure 2: Presence of Collective Action Through A Non-Competition Agreement

Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate
Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party A Candidate	Ruling Party Candidate Opposition Party B Candidate

In Figure 1, opposition parties A and B are unable to reach a mutually acceptable compromise over a non-competition agreement to split the districts. Both have 10 candidates contesting in all 10 districts in country X. Since opposition votes in each district is split 30 percent – 30 percent between the two party’s candidates, we can therefore expect the incumbent ruling party’s candidates to be victorious in all 10 districts with only a 40 percent national vote share. In short, a 40 percent national vote share for the incumbent produces a 100 percent legislative seat share.

In Figure 2, in contrast, opposition parties A and B agree to have a non-competition agreement between themselves. Each opposition party only has 5 candidates contesting in 5 districts. If we assume that the vote share for both parties are aggregated within each district, then all the 10 candidates of both party A and B will obtain vote shares of 60 percent, thus prevailing over the incumbent ruling party’s candidate with 40 percent vote share. Opposition parties A and B can each secure 5 seats or 50 percent of the legislature with 30 percent of the national vote share. The ruling incumbent that will have no seats, even with a 40 percent national vote share.

The benefits of coordinating over non-competition agreements in parliamentary autocracies are two-fold. First, the promise of within-district vote share maximization and its subsequent national-level implications for defeating the autocrat induces both opposition parties A and B to act collectively with each other. Second, non-competition agreements also entail resource optimization. An individual opposition party can more efficiently make use of its scarce resources in a smaller number of districts on a smaller number of candidates, thus maximizing their chances of winning in districts where they do indeed contest. If an opposition party spreads its resources too thinly across the electoral map or across too many candidates, then it may not

actually mobilize enough votes to secure victory. The focus should be to mobilize the most number of opposition votes in the most optimal number of districts or candidates that is possible to maximize vote share and seat share.

To be sure, there are also corresponding costs to a non-competition agreement. The primary cost is the cost of local dissent. Local candidates may resist the instructions of their leaders to withdraw from the respective districts that they had expected to be nominated in. They may decide to go ahead and contest on their own anyway. If opposition leaders are unable to get their local candidates in line with the non-competition agreement, any coalition will then only be in name and not in substance. For instance, when the United National Front for Change opposition coalition contested the Egyptian legislative elections in 2005, many local candidates ignored the instructions of their national leaders to withdraw from their respective districts (Kraetzschmar 2010, 108–11). They contested in the elections anyway using their own personalist campaigns and their own individual party label, ignoring their party leader's instructions to use the opposition coalition's common name, logo, and manifesto.

A secondary cost is the cost of any uneven distribution of the allocated districts. In the working example for Figures 1 and 2 described above, opposition parties A and B are able to split the districts equally. Now imagine a counterfactual scenario where opposition party A is only able to bargain to contest in 2 or 3 districts, with opposition party B contesting in the rest of the districts. Opposition party A then has to endure the cost of public perception that it is a “smaller” opposition party as compared to opposition party B. Even if it is willing to disregard this cost, there is the additional cost of losing out on any prospective rents and spoils in a future opposition coalition government. If the opposition coalition is able to topple the autocrat and form the next government, and if opposition party B wins more legislative seats than opposition

party A by virtue of it having contested in more districts, than it may relegate opposition party A to only a minor role in any coalition government. Therefore, the true value of this cost will depend on opposition parties' estimates of the probability of prospective electoral victory. Where opposition parties do not expect to be able to topple the autocrat, then the benefits of contesting in a smaller number of districts may outweigh its costs. If opposition parties anticipate electoral victory despite autocratic repression and electoral manipulation, then they will have strong incentives to bargain harder to obtain a larger share of districts to contest so as to reduce of the costs of uneven seat allocation (Gandhi and Ong 2018).

These two costs of forging non-competition agreements reveal why strong opposition leaders are so important. Strong opposition party leaders can quell dissent by paying off their party's withdrawn local candidates. Party leaders can compensate these withdrawn local candidates in the short-term with senior party positions, or promise them future government posts that come with rents. The degree to which opposition party leaders need to rely on material compensation to quell dissent depends on the degree to which local candidates are ideologically and personally loyal to the party and their national-level party leader. If the withdrawn local candidates are very loyal to their party and leader, then local dissent can easily be allayed over some soothing tea between the local candidate and the strong party leader. If the weak party leader commands negligible loyalty from the withdrawn local candidate, then the local candidate will more likely demand a large material payoff upfront. If the payoff is not forthcoming, the candidate can threaten to run against both the opposition party's and ruling party's candidates, thus spoiling the clean one-versus-one contest. At the worst, the renegade local candidate may even initiate a bidding war between the opposition party and the ruling party for the candidate's

acquiescence. Thus, strong party leaders can not only induce their local candidates to back down, but also back down at a lower cost.

Once again, note that successful bargaining over a non-competition agreement requires no consideration of any ideological orientation of the opposition parties at all. Deciding which parties should contest in which district only requires prior information about the opposition parties' relative popularities and the associated probabilities of winning in each district.

Opposition parties will always claim their rights to contest in districts where they perceive that they have the highest chances of winning. They will also almost always want to claim a larger share of districts to contest relative to their true strengths. In other words, they will oftentimes seek to misrepresent their relative strengths when bargaining with each other over the share of districts to contest. They never seek to misrepresent their ideologies to each other.

1.2 Elite-Mass Collective Action Problem and Joint Anti-Regime Signaling Mechanisms in Parliamentary Autocracies

But can opposition leaders assume that the vote shares of their party's candidates within each electoral district will be aggregated and maximized after they have negotiated a non-competition agreement with each other? Regardless of whether opposition leaders are strong or weak, I argue that opposition leaders cannot take their supporters for granted. There are several possible reasons why voters who are inclined to vote for the opposition will not necessarily want to vote for the opposition candidate who has been "assigned" to their district. First and foremost, opposition supporters who have strong partisan affiliation to their niche opposition parties will be very wary of voting for candidates from other opposition parties who are their immediate ideological rivals. For instance, we can imagine that long-standing supporters of an Islamic

opposition party that advocates for the imposition of Islamic law will be fairly reluctant to vote for candidates from a secular opposition party. Similarly, to re-invoke the case of PRI-dominated Mexico, we can imagine that PAN supporters will be unwilling to support subnational candidates for the legislature from the PRD. Although both parties are indeed in opposition to the dominant incumbent, a significant segment of opposition voters care about policy more than they care about defeating the dominant incumbent (Gandhi and Ong 2018). Therefore, to overcome the barrier of ideological differences among opposition voters, opposition party leaders must encourage their supporters to engage in strategic cross-party voting. As Magaloni (2006, 199) writes about PAN and PRD opposition voters potentially coordinating against the PRI,

“...In order to defeat the PRI, opposition voters need to put aside their ideological differences, strategically supporting the opposition party most likely to defeat the PRI. Ideological divisions can prevent the opposition from coordinating if most opposition votes rank the PRI second. In order for the opposition to be able to coordinate, most opposition voters must possess a preference ranking whereby any outcome is preferable to the PRI – there should be more “tactical” than “ideological” opposition voters.”

To win against the incumbent autocrat, therefore, opposition party A’s candidate must attract the vast majority of opposition party B’s supporters, and vice versa. In the earlier hypothetical example where opposition vote share is split 30 percent – 30 percent evenly between both parties, opposition party A’s candidate must win more than two-thirds of opposition party B’s supporters to win against the ruling incumbent. The converse is true for

party B's candidate. Seat and vote maximizing opposition party leaders will have little choice but to somehow try to encourage their supporters to vote strategically across parties – pool their votes behind the one opposition alliance candidate “assigned” to their district, regardless of his party identity, against the autocratic incumbent's candidate. They need to strive to educate, persuade and convince their supporters that prioritizing democratic change by voting for the alliance's candidate is in their best interest. Opposition voters should not stay at home, spoil their vote, or, worst still, vote for the incumbent. At the minimum, even if opposition supporters are reluctant to vote for a candidate from the opposition party that they disdain ideologically, party leaders should convince them to “hold their noses” to vote for that candidate anyway.

Meanwhile, more moderate opposition supporters, though less likely to be put off by ideological differences among opposition parties, may also be reluctant to vote for the alliance's candidates for other reasons. For instance, because opposition parties in electoral autocracies are, by definition, inexperienced in governing, moderate opposition supporters oftentimes doubt their prospective governance competencies. For example, these doubts include whether the opposition alliance, if it is victorious over the dominant autocratic incumbent, can manage the economy well, keep crime rates low, or protect the country against external enemies through robust national security and foreign policies. Sound economic management, in particular, is likely to be a most salient and important issue for moderate opposition voters, especially during times of economic crisis when dissatisfaction against the incumbent regime is likely to be highest (Pepinsky 2009a; Reuter and Gandhi 2011; Teorell and Wahman 2018). It is during such times of economic downturn when moderate voters are looking for alternatives to the incumbent regime and will most likely consider supporting opposition parties. If opposition parties and their coalition cannot somehow credibly signal their prospective governance competency, or at least

project some level of confidence of their economic management skills, then they run the risk of not being able to maximize their vote share against the incumbent, even when they have forged a non-competition agreement.

In addition, though opposition alliances can sometimes point to some measure of governance success as evidence of their governance competencies, such as successful administration of subnational governments at the state or local level, moderate opposition supporters may still have doubts over what kind of policies the alliance will implement should it be victorious. In other words, voters want to know what they are voting for, since they already know what they are voting against. This uncertainty over the policy position of an opposition alliance is particularly acute in parliamentary systems as compared to presidential systems (Bargsted and Kedar 2009). In presidential systems where a non-competition agreement among opposition parties results in a single opposition candidate, the policy position of a future opposition-controlled government is fairly clear. Voters will expect that the winning opposition candidate, now president, implement policies that his party has long advocated while giving minor attention to the policy demands of his or her coalition partners. This certainty over policy position will be even higher in countries where the powers of government are excessively concentrated in the presidency (Gandhi 2014). A successful opposition candidate can use the same extraordinary powers accorded to the former dictator to push through unpopular policies that his or her party has long craved, while reneging on the pre-electoral promises made to his or her coalition partners. In a parliamentary system with either proportional list or majoritarian district electoral systems, in contrast, voters oftentimes do not know which party in the opposition alliance will win the most number of seats and who will occupy executive office. Even if one opposition party successfully negotiates for a larger share of seats to contest as

compared to other parties in the coalition, there is no guarantee that the party will be able to win a larger share of seats when the results are revealed. The uncertainty over which party will occupy executive office in an opposition-controlled government exacerbates the problem of policy uncertainty, resulting in at least a significant portion of opposition-inclined voters to withhold their support.

These three problems – the strategic voting problem, the misgivings over governance capability problem, and especially the policy uncertainty problem – all contribute to opposition-inclined voters’ reluctance to vote for opposition alliance candidates in a parliamentary autocracy. It is difficult to specify theoretically *ex ante* which problem is a more important contributor than the other. We can only surmise that under conditions of economic depression, the issue of misgivings over governance abilities is likely to pose less of a problem as voters may be more willing to take a chance on an inexperienced opposition alliance as compared to a floundering autocrat. In this sense, the more policy-related concerns about ideological differences impeding strategic voting and policy uncertainty loom larger. Not only must opposition party leaders project at least some minimal proficiency in governance matters, they must coax their followers to at least “hold their noses” over policy differences and communicate clearly and simply the prospective policy position of the opposition alliance, should it win power. Only then can opposition parties be assured that their vote share and seat shares will be maximized against the incumbent autocrat.

So how do opposition leaders try to resolve all three issues? Much will depend on the campaign strategies that opposition parties undertake both by themselves to their own supporters, and as a part of the broader coalition. Internally, we should expect opposition leaders make effort to communicate to their own niche supporters about the need for short-term ideological

compromise in an opposition alliance. Leaders must at least clarify the prospective benefits of opposition victory, such as the realization of their niche policies as part of the governing alliance government. An Islamic opposition party, for instance, will want to tout the increased chances of implementing shariah law in certain parts of the country, or increased funding for mosques and religious programs. An economic leftist party leader will want to argue that the chances of imposing a national minimum wage is higher as part of the prospective opposition-controlled government, rather than an empty promise as part of a perpetual opposition. At the minimum, leaders must highlight the benefits of seat maximization at the subnational level if national government is out of reach. If opposition parties can potentially win control of subnational state governments through participating in an opposition alliance, then party leaders will want to tout the importance of holding state government as future platforms for attacking the autocrat at the national level. Moreover, we can expect that opposition leaders will also want to try to paint their fellow allies in a positive light by highlighting their commonalities, thus narrowing the perceived ideological differences between the parties. Such commonalities may include both secular and Islamic opposition leaders being repressed by the autocrat, or the similar positions that both parties have with regards to institutional reforms for more free and fair elections.

As members of a broader opposition alliance, opposition leaders can also adopt a number of campaign strategies. They can try to campaign using a common coalition name and a common coalition logo. We oftentimes observe such strategies because they are likely to be “low cost” – opposition parties and leaders do not have to make any painful ideological compromises or significantly dilute their party brand. Yet, although they help to signal the parties’ joint unity in opposing the regime, they are not very helpful in encouraging voters to engage in strategic voting, nor useful in projecting governance ability and policy position. Such rhetorical

symbolism can be easily dismissed as “cheap talk.” Other more useful strategies in the coalition “playbook” that have been observed involve campaigning using a common coalition manifesto (as in Tanzania in 2015)⁵, public endorsements by opposition leaders of the candidates from other parties (as in Kenya in 2002)(Arriola 2013b, 205), or openly declaring the prime ministerial candidate or cabinet positions of the prospective opposition-controlled government even before elections are held (as in Malaysia in 2018)⁶. These strategies are likely to be more costly, and therefore more rare. A common coalition manifesto may involve articulating certain compromise policy positions that opposition leaders may be unwilling to make. Endorsing candidates from an ideological rival in the opposition may tar the reputation of an opposition party leader. A party leader can be easily branded as a hypocrite by the autocrat or members of his own party for “selling out his principles.” Likewise, a pre-electoral pronouncement of the prospective prime ministerial candidate or cabinet positions of an opposition-controlled government requires intra-elite bargaining to manage the costly strategic withdrawal of claims to cabinet positions and alliance leadership.

Once again, we can see why the strength of an opposition leader matters even in deciding what coalition campaign strategies to undertake. Strong opposition leaders who have more independent decision-making power will have greater flexibility to decide on a coalition campaign strategy first before making the effort to legitimize the strategy to his or her own supporters. He or she will not need to frequently consult his or her supporters first about what campaign strategy is most appropriate and acceptable. The range of costly campaign strategies that party leaders can agree upon is also likely to be larger when opposition leaders are stronger.

⁵ “Manifestoes for Change? 12 observations on the CCM and Chadema documents.” Africa Research Institute. 30 September 2015. Last accessed at <https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/blog/manifestos-for-change/> on March 21, 2018.

⁶ “Mahathir Mohamad named opposition candidate for Malaysian PM” The Straits Times. 7 January 2018. Last accessed at <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/mahathir-named-opposition-candidate-for-pm> on March 21 2018.

Weak opposition party leaders who are vulnerable to being replaced by their party activists, on the other hand, will only be able to negotiate about the most appropriate coalition campaign strategy with one hand tied behind their back. Frequent consultations with the many members of his party will likely prolong negotiations, making agreement in the short pre-electoral campaign period more rare. Even if they may have autonomy to make a decision at the coalition level, the scope of strategies that a weak opposition leader is willing to contemplate is likely to be far narrower.

Yet, these campaign strategies are likely to be more convincing than mere names and logos precisely because they are relatively more costly and far more substantive (Fearon 1994, 1997; Weeks 2008; Wolford 2014; Quek 2016). Campaigning using a common coalition policy platform, for example, can act as a substantive focal point for opposition supporters to mobilize around, much like how a constitution acts as a focal point for citizens to collectively coordinate on rebelling against a regime that is curtailing their rights (Weingast 1997; Hale 2011; Mittal and Weingast 2013; Fearon 2011). A coalition manifesto that details the institutional reforms to the judiciary and election commission, proposes policies for economic growth, and articulates national defense and foreign policies clearly articulates the prospective policies that people are voting for. Pre-electoral announcement of a prime ministerial candidate is an alternative “focal point” strategy. A prime ministerial candidate who is charismatic and who has a track record of pursuing certain moderate policies inside or outside of government assures opposition voters what they are voting for. In the final analysis, these two campaign strategies “work” by directly reducing the policy uncertainty that opposition voters encounter.

To be sure, not all policies will be detailed in a common manifesto nor will a prime ministerial candidate or shadow cabinet embody and define all the policy positions of an

opposition alliance. Ideologically polarized opposition parties may be forced to leave some contentious policies “off the table” when negotiating over the precise terms of a manifesto. A secular opposition party may be forced by an Islamic opposition party not to articulate its position on religion. An ethnic-based opposition party may be told by its coalition partners that they do not want to sign on to a manifesto that discusses protections for particular ethnic groups. Leaving their niche contentious policies left “off the table” is the compromise that each component party will have to make for cooperating with other parties. Opposition party leaders will have to contend with its core activists who may be upset at the non-expression of the party’s core ideologies, and who are dismayed at their leaders working with their sworn ideological rivals. But, ultimately, strong opposition leaders paying this price of compromise will stand to benefit from attracting the votes of the supporters of other opposition parties. That is, supporters of opposition party B will be induced to vote strategically to support candidates from opposition party A when they observe that party A has adopted some compromise position either by no longer campaigning for their niche ideologies, or when party A endorses a compromise coalition candidate as prime minister. Vice versa, when opposition party B makes similar compromises, then the supporters of opposition party A will be induced to vote strategically for party B’s candidates. The “quid pro quo” of ideological compromises and moderation in these more substantive campaign strategies stimulates cross-party strategic voting for both polarized opposition parties at either ends of an ideological space.

This double-edged sword of costly and substantive coalition campaign strategies as providing a focal point for reducing policy uncertainty and for signaling ideological moderation to encourage strategic voting is congruent with existing analytical frameworks advanced by Greene (2002) and Magaloni (2006). Specifically, Greene (2002, 763) calls this dual-strategy the

“regime mobilizing strategy.” Opposition parties must both articulate their anti-regime position on a pro-/anti-regime cleavage, as well as express a moderate position on the society’s primary ideological cleavage, such as on an economic-left-right policy space, secular state - religious state policy space, or ethnic rights -pure meritocracy policy space. Yet, while he provided a general framework for understanding why this dual-strategy is an optimal strategy for opposition parties to engage in, the actual dynamics of crafting and campaigning using such a strategy was left unexplained. My clarification of the benefits and costs of various types of campaign strategies that opposition pre-electoral alliances can potentially employ adds theoretical meat to the current analytical bones.

2. Analyzing Non-Competition Agreements and Joint Anti-Regime Signaling Mechanisms

2.1 What Factors Influence Bargaining over Non-Competition Agreements

Coordination over non-competition agreements resembles a classic bargaining problem (Cox 1997, 198–99). All opposition parties are better off if they coordinated with each other to split the various districts of an electoral map in parliamentary autocracies, but differ in their relative assessments about how the electoral map should be split amongst everyone. Some parties may demand to contest in a larger number of constituencies than is proportionate to what they are perceived to deserve. Other parties may refuse to withdraw from particular districts for a variety of historical or local reasons. Fearon’s (1995) classic bargaining model of war is a useful basic model to use to begin studying this bargaining problem. To the extent that bargaining between opposition parties over district allocation is akin to inter-state bargaining over territorial conflict, the model articulates a simple set of variables most important in resolving conflict, generates precise observable implications, and has been useful for understanding a wide range of

problems in international security (see, for example, Cunningham 2011; Powell 2002; Reiter 2003, 2009; Walter 2009; Ramsay 2017). To be sure, this model is not the only bargaining model available to help us understand non-competition agreements. But its simplicity represents a useful first step through which to assess the existing literature and empirical world.

Recall that Fearon's (1995) initial puzzle was this: If war is very costly, why do states still go to war? Fearon suggests that there are at least three reasons why states fail to resolve their differences. First, state leaders have private information about their relative capabilities and have incentives to misrepresent such information to their adversaries. Hence, war occurs because of asymmetric information. Second, state leaders cannot accept a negotiated pact because of commitment problems. They fear that their adversaries will renege from an agreed ceasefire and take advantage of them. Third, states go to war because of issue indivisibility. Conflict occurs because there are no reasonable ways to split sacred territory (Hassner 2009).

A reformulation of Fearon's puzzle and theoretical expectations in the terms of opposition parties bargaining over non-competition agreements is this: If electoral contests with multiple opposition candidates is very costly for opposition parties – autocratic incumbent running away with victory with the splitting of opposition votes – why do they still fail to coordinate on allocating electoral districts? First, opposition leaders have private information about the relative strength of their party and the associated chances of winning. They may also have incentives to misrepresent such information to other opposition leaders. Hence, they will fail to coordinate due to asymmetric information about their relative strengths. Second, opposition parties cannot coordinate because of commitment problems. They fear that other opposition parties will renege on their promise to withdraw from the particular constituencies already agreed to, and somehow take advantage of a three-cornered contest. Third, opposition

leaders cannot coordinate because the single prize of electoral office is indivisible. The overwhelming powers associated with that prize make all offers to share rents pale in comparison.

The latter two problems are much diminished in parliamentary autocracies (E. Ong 2016). With many electoral districts to “trade” with each other, we expect opposition parties to reach non-competition agreements relatively easier than bargaining over the single indivisible prize of the being the sole opposition presidential candidate in executive elections in presidential autocracies. Furthermore, because non-competition agreements are only binding in the short campaign period before elections, not after, and because there is little to be gained from renegeing on these agreements, we expect credible commitment problems to not play a significant role in obstructing coordination. If opposition parties renege on withdrawing from certain constituencies and contest in them anyway, not only are they more likely to lose due to the splitting of opposition votes, they also waste precious campaign resources on losing candidates.

Indeed, the only factor that appears relatively unexplored in the literature on opposition coalition formation is asymmetric information about the relative strengths of the opposition parties, and the incentives of opposition parties to misrepresent their relative strengths to each other. This thread of reasoning suggests numerous observable implications and hypotheses about the bargaining process. First, we should expect opposition parties to try to estimate and assess their relative strengths vis-à-vis other opposition parties through various proxy measures. These measurements could include the party’s popularity in the various electoral districts gleaned from previous election results, the size of the party’s membership base, the number of political offices that it currently holds, the number of candidates that it can potentially field for elections, the perceived popularity of these potential candidates, the wealth of its leaders, or the popularity of

the party in most recent opinion polls, among many other possible indicators. Thereafter, if opposition parties do intend to misrepresent their relative strengths, we should expect parties to make public or private statements that exaggerate claims of the true level of these proxy indicators. For example, party leaders may argue that recent opinion polls of the constituents of its potential candidates suggest prospective strong support, which supersedes its poor polling results in the previous elections.

Second, in situations when the relative strength of opposition parties is unclear, such as when elections are first introduced or when new opposition parties enter the electoral arena, we should also expect that opposition leaders try to misrepresent the strength of their party to other opposition leaders. We should consequently expect bargaining to be a much longer process or even fail. Small parties in decline are also more likely to misrepresent their relative strength because they want to defend their previously large slice of the pie (Christensen 2000, 52).

Alternatively, when the relative strength of opposition parties are clear, such as when there are opinion polls or when results from previous elections clearly indicate the relative popularities of opposition parties, we should expect bargaining over non-competition agreements to be a shorter process, leading to successful district allocation and candidate selection. This logic also explains why two round majority presidential electoral systems frequently used in Africa are much more conducive to opposition coalition formation – the first round of electoral results acts as an opinion poll revealing the relative strengths of the multiple opposition candidates, thus minimizing any available leverage for misrepresenting relative strength, and thereby facilitating intra-elite coalescing behind one single coalition candidate (van de Walle 2006).

Third, because the benefits of and incentives for coordination over electoral district allocation are obvious and self-enforcing, we should expect that opposition parties consistently

desire to coordinate with each other before every election. Axelrod's (1984) thesis on the evolution of cooperation suggests that opposition parties, insofar as they survive and are the same players over time, can learn about the mutual benefits of coordinating in a reciprocal manner over time. In particular, learning over iterative election cycles entails opposition parties recognizing the costs of reneging or previous bargaining failures, accurately identifying the relative strengths of different opposition parties, and developing informal rules to reduce transaction costs spent on the bargaining process. These transaction costs can include, for example, the process, time and information needed for all parties to agree which districts are most desirable and viable to compete in. The informal rules endogenously generated over time can help reduce these transaction costs by setting the basic parameters of negotiation between opposition parties when they anticipate forthcoming elections.

It is crucial to reiterate here one important result from using the bargaining model of war to study non-competition agreements in parliamentary autocracies – ideologies do not matter. What matters is whether opposition leaders can get the best deal for their own parties relative to their true strength vis-à-vis other parties. Just like how two belligerent states engaged in intense conflict can successfully negotiate a compromise to end their war (Reiter 2009), so can two extremely polarized opposition parties and their leaders successfully negotiate a compromise to not contest against each other in electoral districts across the country.

2.2 What Factors Affect Joint Anti-Regime Coalition Campaigns?

Ideologies begin to matter, however, when opposition party leaders have to decide whether they want to deepen their cooperation beyond non-competition agreements to campaign together. Rather than making an ideology-free bargain amongst only themselves, opposition

leaders and their parties now have to consider the voters as a crucial third-party audience that is on the receiving end of their signaling efforts. That is, opposition party leaders now have to care about ideological differences amongst their own supporters. Given that engaging in these joint campaign strategies incur significant costs, under what conditions will opposition party leaders make the effort to send these signals of anti-regime unity and ideological compromise?

I propose a counter-intuitive argument. I propose that, *ceteris paribus*, where there are strong opposition party leaders, these party leaders are more likely to deepen their cooperation to engage in joint coalition campaigns as the ideological differences among their mass supporters increases. Paradoxically, where the ideological differences between opposition parties are large, the incentives to signal anti-regime unity and ideological compromise are larger. This is because opposition party leaders will recognize clearly the severity of the problem of mass ideological differences impeding cross-party strategic voting. In other words, even when they have negotiated a non-competition agreement placing only one opposition candidate in each electoral district, opposition party leaders will clearly acknowledge that the supporters of opposition party A may not support candidates from opposition party B, and vice versa. The more intense the strategic voting problem, the more incentives opposition party leaders have to cooperate to develop and campaign on joint coalition campaigns to maximize their vote share. This will ensure that their prior efforts of negotiating with each other for a non-competition agreement is not in vain. Hence, the more likely they will exert effort to try everything in the coalition campaign “playbook” to persuade and convince their own supporters to engage in cross-party strategic voting.

In contrast, when ideological differences between opposition parties are low, party labels are only weakly meaningful in terms of ideological or policy content. Opposition parties are

likely to share similar ideological outlooks to the left or to the right of the dominant incumbent to the extent that ideology matters at all. Opposition-inclined voters perceive opposition parties to be easily substitutable in terms of their degree of anti-incumbency. It does not quite matter opposition candidate(s) originate from which party, as long as they identify themselves as opposition inclined. Hence, we should expect that the supporters of an opposition party A are less likely to have ideological fears about voting for coalition candidates from opposition party B. We can hypothesize that the supporters of opposition parties will be very likely to maintain their support for the opposition candidate “assigned” to their district, even if the candidate originates from another opposition party that they did not initially support. In such a scenario, strong opposition party leaders will have negligible incentives to develop costly and substantive coalition campaign strategies. They will calculate that signals of joint anti-regime unity and ideological compromise are not likely to raise the vote shares of their own candidates nor greatly increase their chances of electoral victory. At best, they may dabble in campaigning together utilizing a common coalition logo and name in order to present some semblance of unity against the autocratic regime. But the high costs of campaigning using a common policy platform or a power-sharing agreement will deter them from deepening their cooperation. These other forms of pre-electoral campaigning are likely to tie their hands to some joint agreement which limits their decision-making autonomy.

I further contend that the extent of ideological differences between opposition parties is in turn a function of the type of electoral environment that the autocrat has structured. In valence-based electoral environments, voters compare and vote for parties and politicians based on perceived competency and credibility in delivering goods that are widely acknowledged to have positive value (D. Stokes 1992; Bleck and van de Walle 2013, 2011). Such goods can

include national level outcomes such as national economic growth, rising wages, or preserving and protecting the country's sovereignty in international disputes with foreign adversaries (Duch and Stevenson 2008; Nadeau, Lewis-Beck, and Bélanger 2013; Palmer and Whitten 2000). The ability to deliver subnational-level pork, as a portion of the national budget or some form of foreign direct investment, is also oftentimes favored by valence-focused voters (Malesky 2008; Jensen et al. 2014; Samford and Gómez 2014). In this environment, the ideologies that a party or politician espouses matters much less relative to its perceived ability to deliver the goods. To be sure, a political party may claim, for example, that its economically conservative pro-business orientation means that it is better positioned to attract foreign direct investment to generate economic growth. Yet, left-wing parties can counter such rhetoric by referring voters to the country's track record of low unemployment and sustained economic performance under its leadership with its preferred type of economic governance. In both types of campaign messaging, political parties are utilizing ideology in service of their valence perceptions and credentials.

Because autocratic dominant incumbents exercise control over the state, they have a natural advantage in voters' perceptions of their competency and credibility in delivering valence goods (Slater and Fenner 2011; Oliver and Ostwald n.d.; P. Schuler and Malesky n.d.). Indeed, some scholars even argue that authoritarian durability is partially contingent on the autocrat's ability to deliver economic performance (Reuter and Gandhi 2011; Hollyer, Rosendorff, and Vreeland 2015; Miller 2015). Opposition parties, on the other hand, having little or no track record in national governance, and therefore have greatly diminished perceptions of competency and credibility in supplying universally desirable national-level valence goods. Faced with such a situation, opposition parties have two choices: either they compete with the autocrat to provide clientelistic constituency-level goods to cultivate a geographically bounded subnational

electorate, such as populist opposition politicians emphasizing service delivery for the urban poor in Africa (Resnick 2011, 2012, 2014); or they can tout their ability to supply a national-level but marginally popular valence good – the opposition party functioning as a check against the excesses of an autocratic government. Under the former strategy, the opposition competes by first cultivating a core group of geographically bounded subnational constituents, and then try to gradually expand its geographical support (Rakner and van de Walle 2009, 117–18). Under the latter strategy, they strive to appeal to the democratic sensibilities of the entire electorate by warning about the evils of an autocracy.

In pursuing either type of electoral campaigning and mobilization strategy, however, a sine-qua-non condition is that the opposition party have charismatic politicians (Resnick 2012, 1358). These politicians are more likely to be able to mobilize and channel what meager resources they possess to cultivate direct linkages with voters. They are also more likely to be successful in persuading voters that excessive concentration of political power in the autocrat is harmful, and the opposition represents the best antidote to the ills of autocracy. As a result, we should expect that opposition parties are likely to be a product of factional loyalties coalescing around charismatic personalities (van de Walle 2003). These personality-based opposition parties are likely to share similar ideological outlooks even if there are any contentious ideological issues (Rakner and van de Walle 2009). Any ideological position that they profess are likely to be very similar to each other. After all, party formation in such valence-based environments is “driven not by ideology but by political careerism, competition over spoils, and personal traits” (Rakner and van de Walle 2009, 115). Ultimately, we should expect that opposition leaders in valence-based electoral environments care primarily about bargaining with each other for a non-competition agreement to reduce the number of opposition candidates in each electoral district.

They will not be induced to pursue deeper, more costly forms of cooperation with other opposition parties.

In spatial-based electoral environments, however, voters compare and vote for parties and politicians based on the perceived ideological position on a specific contentious issue. Positions can be taken on a wide range of social cleavages, such as which ethnic group or religion should be favored in the overall governance of the country, what the state's relationship with these ethnic or religious groups should be, or perhaps what kind of economic policies should be implemented (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; McLaughlin 2007; Mozaffar, Scarritt, and Galaich 2003; Posner 2004). Valence matters to the extent that parties and politicians campaigning for a particular ideological position must display at least some expertise and relevant credibility in advocating for such positions. For instance, the Islamic party advocating for the Islamic rule of law may have members who are Islamic religious teachers. An ethnic-based party advocating for policy concessions for a particular ethnic group should have leaders who are well-respected members of that ethnic group. A party advocating for leftist economic policies may have leaders, members, or supporters from workers' unions. Yet, the primary battle waged between opposition parties and the dominant autocratic incumbent is a contest of ideas, not a game of credentials.

As a result, the potential benefits from encouraging cross-party strategic voting to maximize vote share induces opposition leaders to make the necessary compromises with each other. Assuming that opposition leaders are sufficiently "strong" enough to pay the necessary costs for developing costly joint coalition campaigns, we can therefore expect opposition parties strive to bargain with each other for a non-competition agreement, *and* coordinate to develop substantive joint coalition campaigns – public commitments to common manifestoes, in

additional to campaigning using common coalition names, common coalition logos, or joint campaign endorsements of each other's candidates.

The causal argument explicated so far in this section is summarized in Figure 3 below.⁷

3. A Pragmatic Approach to Multiple Research Designs

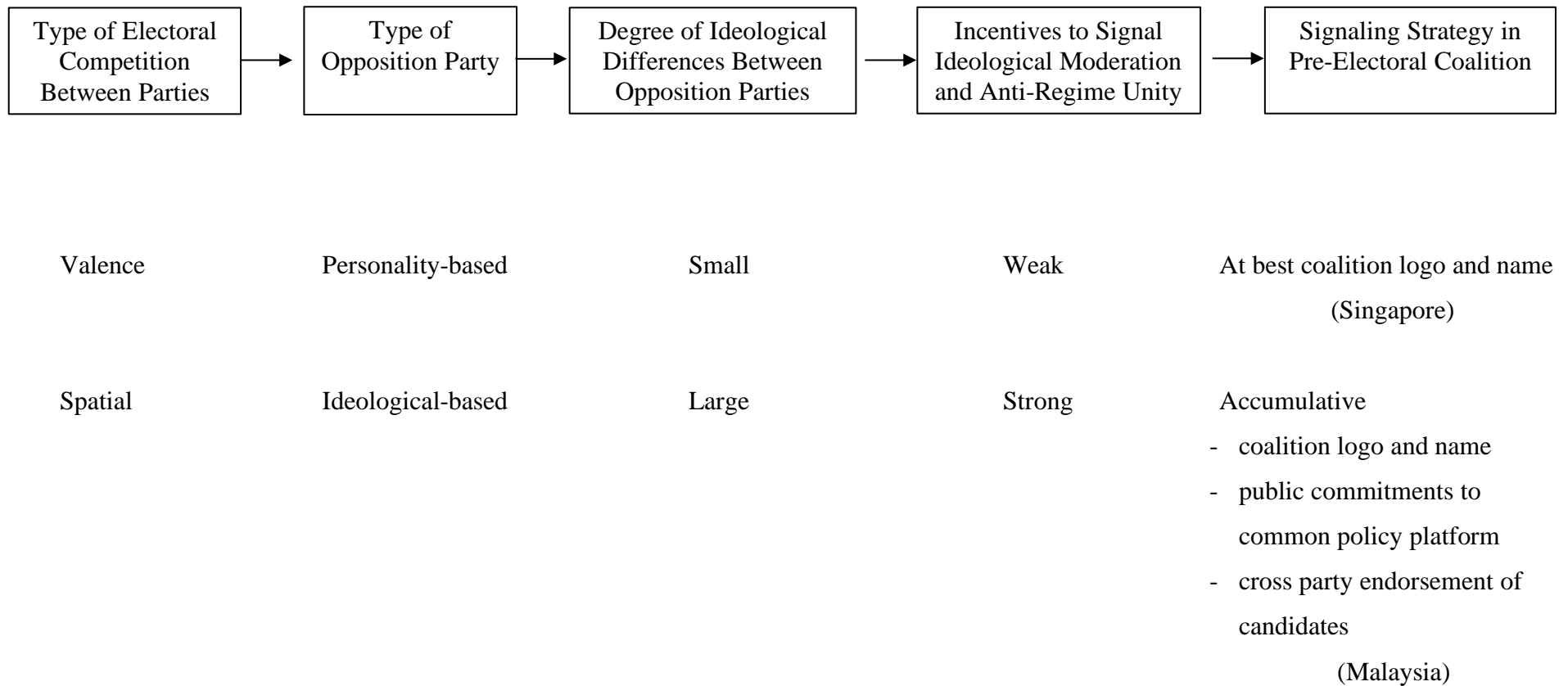
The theoretical framework articulated above specifies the varying conditions and causal pathways under which we should observe different types of opposition cooperation across different types of electoral authoritarian regimes, clarifies the behaviors of opposition party leaders when they form opposition pre-electoral alliances, as well as postulates how voters will react when they observe opposition coalition formation. That is, there are observable implications and hypotheses to be tested at multiple levels of analysis – at the cross-country level, at the party leader level, and at the voter level. The implication is that there is no one-size fits all research design solution. This dissertation thus adopts a more pragmatic approach by using different research design solutions to uncover empirical evidence to test the utility and veracity of the analytical and theoretical model proposed.

Chapter 3 and 4 – A Comparative Historical Analysis of Opposition Cooperation in Singapore and Malaysia

I first propose to undertake a comparative historical analysis of opposition cooperation in two most similar parliamentary autocracies – Singapore and Malaysia – over seven decades from 1945-2015. The dominant autocratic ruling parties in both countries grew from the most similar post-colonial conflicts with the British in the middle of the 20th century (Slater 2010, 2012).

⁷ For the methodological literature on causal mechanisms, see at least Goertz (2017, chapter 2), Groff (2017), Imai et al. (2011), Grzymala-Busse (2011), Gerring (2010), Falletti and Lynch (2008, 2009), and Mahoney (2001).

Figure 3: A Model of Signaling Strategies in Opposition Pre-Electoral Coalitions



Now, the most resilient dominant ruling parties in the world – the Barisan Nasional (BN) in Malaysia and the People’s Action Party (PAP) in Singapore – govern these two countries through strong states that penetrate deeply into all areas of society (Gomez 2016; E. Ong 2015; Slater 2012; Tremewan 1994; C. H. Wong, Chin, and Othman 2010). Both have one ethnic majority group with significant ethnic minorities, and first-past-the-post plurality electoral systems.⁸ Both also have open economies with significant linkages to Western powers, and large middle-classes (Kuhonta n.d.). Crucially, both countries have strong opposition party leaders, an important factor that increases the likelihood of observing opposition coalition formation with costly and substantive joint anti-regime campaigns. Finally, the availability of financial resources is also comparable in both countries. Both are in the top 10% of countries in the world for ease of doing business, and are in the 10th to 20th percentile for the ease of attaining credit. Table 1 in the appendix lists the most similar features between the two countries that potentially also serve as alternative explanations.⁹ Theoretically, these similarities suggest that opposition electoral strategies (i.e. the propensity and type of coalition formation) should be alike across both countries. Yet, I demonstrate that it is precisely the mode of hegemonic rule and the type of electoral competition that has greatly differed between the two countries that result in varying campaign strategies by opposition parties.

The cross-case comparison of these two countries and within-case process tracing in each country seeks to achieve two aims. First, I aim to test the hypothesis that, all else equal, opposition parties in both types of parliamentary autocracies are very likely to care about

⁸ Both Singapore and Malaysia have single-member districts. But in addition to such districts, Singapore added multi-member districts known as the Group Representative Constituencies (GRCs) in 1988. In these electoral districts, teams of candidates (usually 3-6 candidates) run under a common party label. Voters vote for a party with the names of the teams of candidates displayed beside the party symbol. The winning team under plurality rule takes all the seats. Thus, GRCs work exactly the same as single-member-districts with plurality voting rules. See Mutalib (2002), Tey (2008b), and Tan (2013) for more details.

⁹ To be clear, these control variables influence the probability of opposition coalitions but do not influence the forms of opposition coalitions. Their similarities suggest that both opposition parties in Malaysia and Singapore should be equally likely to form opposition coalitions.

bargaining over non-competition agreements, but differ in their relative incentives to develop joint coalition campaigns. Where opposition parties are ideologically distant in spatial-based electoral environments, as in Malaysia, they are more likely to develop costly and substantive joint coalition campaigns such as common manifestoes or cross-party endorsements of each other's candidates. Where opposition parties are ideologically similar in valence-based electoral environments, as in Singapore, they tend to only produce not substantive, but weak coalition signaling mechanisms such as a common coalition logo or name. Coalition manifestoes, cross-party endorsements, joint shadow cabinets or pronouncement of prime-ministerial candidates will be absent in the country.

The second objective of this comparative historical analysis is to generate both internal and external validity for my theoretical arguments. On the one hand, this cross-case comparison illustrates the maximum representational variation in my general independent variable of interest, that is, the nature of electoral competition, while maximizing control over alternative explanations (Slater and Ziblatt 2013). This allows for inferential leverage to the broader population of opposition party behavior in electoral authoritarian regimes around the world. On the other hand, I use within-case process tracing to assess if the stipulated general causal mechanism – the relative and varying incentives to signal ideological moderation and anti-regime unity – postulated is true (A. L. George and Bennett 2005; Bennett 2010; Collier 2011; Beach and Pedersen 2013; Bennett and Checkel 2015; Mahoney 2012; Falletti 2016; Fairfield and Charman 2017). I utilize multiple types of data – historical archival data from declassified British and American diplomatic cables, event data from newspaper archives, interview data from semi-structured interviews, election data, and the secondary literature such as biographies

and election reports – to make both dataset and causal process observations and inferences about the forms of opposition cooperative and non-cooperative behavior over time (Brady 2010).

At this point, it is important to re-clarify how such a cross-case comparison and within-case process tracing research design framework validates the theoretical model proposed in Figure 3. At the outset, it is crucial to recognize that the Figure 3 model is probabilistic, and not deterministic. That is, I am arguing that conditional upon the type of electoral environment, which structures the relative incentives to resolve the cross-party strategic voting problem, opposition parties are going to be less likely or more likely to develop costly and substantive anti-regime coalition campaigns. This probabilistic framework, following Dunning's (2017) critique of the determinism of qualitative comparative analysis, *does not see the electoral environment or incentives as either necessary or sufficient* to motivate varying forms of opposition alliance campaigns. To be more explicit, if having costly and substantive joint anti-regime coalition campaigns is variable A, and having a spatial based electoral environment is variable B, then I am seeking evidence to verify that the probability of A given B is high in Malaysia (i.e. $P(A|B)$) and the probability of A given not B is low in Singapore (i.e. $P(A|\neg B)$). The strong assumption of unit homogeneity that is typical of most similar paired qualitative comparisons relying on deterministic reasoning is not required here (Glynn and Ichino 2014; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 91).

Chapter 3 examines how the critical juncture of the post-World War II independence movements in both countries lead to the divergent of the nature of electoral competition between these two countries. In Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his dominant ruling People's Action Party (PAP) sought to govern a multi-racial and multi-religious society molded around the universal principles of meritocracy and pragmatism (Kausikan 1997; K. P. Tan 2008,

2012, 2017). In Malaysia, Prime Minister Tengku Abdul Rahman, leader of the United Malay's National Organization (UMNO), attempted to balance the competing demands of the various race-based political parties under the quasi-consociational structure of the Alliance that preserved Malay political dominance (Lijphart 1977; Saravanamuttu 2016). This conflicting logic of governance between Lee's PAP and Tengku's UMNO was a primary motivator for 1965's separation (Lau 1998a; Sopiee 1974).¹⁰ Opposition parties thus encountered, and continue to confront, different hegemonic autocratic incumbents (Abdullah 2017).

In Chapter 4, I detail how valence-based electoral competition in Singapore incentivized opposition parties to focus primarily on bargaining over non-competition agreements because of a negligible cross-party strategic voting problem. Where the ruling party brandished its ruthless pragmatism and incorruptibility in achieving economic progress for the country, Singaporean opposition parties can only rely primarily on non-ideological valence-based charismatic appeals to the marginalized poor in the country to mobilize anti-regime dissent (Oliver and Ostwald n.d.; E. Ong and Tim 2014; B. Wong and Huang 2010). Their similar ideological orientations meant that anti-PAP voters did not differentiate opposition parties according to their policy positions. In spatial-based electoral competition in Malaysia, in contrast, both intra-elite and elite-mass collective action problems are prevalent, therefore requiring coordinating over both non-competition agreements and joint coalition campaigns. Here, where the ruling party entrenched Malay and Islamic dominance while sharing power with ethnic minority leaders, Malaysian opposition parties adopted anti-regime pincers against the hegemonic ideological middle – the Democratic Action Party (DAP) appealing for policy concessions for minorities and a secular

¹⁰ To be sure, the historiography surrounding Singapore's separation from Malaysia continues to evolve with recent research as well as new biographies and auto-biographies of past politicians. Yet, it continues to be widely acknowledged that the differing ideological positions of Lee and Tengku on the role of race in politics was an important, if not the main, factor in motivating separation.

state on the left, and the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) mobilizing for Malay and Islamic supremacy, not just dominance, on the right (Noor 2014; K. M. Ong 2015).

Chapter 5 – Content Analysis of DAP's Party Newsletters

Recall that because forging substantive joint coalition campaigns is somewhat costly for opposition party leaders, we should expect that they make various efforts to mitigate these costs even if they are strong. In fact, they will want to shape the opinions of their supporters to rally behind the focal point of a common manifesto, a prime ministerial candidate, or a power-sharing shadow cabinet. Shaping the opinions of their supporters thus requires significant investments in intra-party communications. Party leaders will want to emphasize the self-interested benefits of cooperating with their ideological rivals, and cast their ideological rivals in a positive light to reduce the perceived anxieties of working with them. Alternatively, when two ideologically polarized opposition parties are not in a coalition with each other, we should expect intra-party communication to reflect the exact opposite. Opposition parties should articulate the self-interested reasons of not cooperating with their ideological rivals against the dictator, and attempt to disparage their ideological rivals by highlighting their ideological distance from themselves. We should also expect opposition parties attempt to maximize turnout from within their own pool of supporters by doubling down on their niche ideologies.

To test these observable implications about the varying forms of intra-party communications when opposition parties are in or outside of an alliance, I move the level of analysis to the party level by conducting a content analysis of the DAP's party newsletters, *The Rocket*, between 2000 to 2004, and between 2009 to 2013. In the earlier period, the DAP contested the general elections alone in 2004, independent of the Islamic party PAS. The two

parties did not form a coalition, and did not even pretend to do so. However, in the later period, DAP and PAS, alongside Party Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) formed a new pre-electoral coalition called the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) approaching the general elections in 2013. The three parties contested the elections together with a single common manifesto as well as a non-competition agreement. If variation in coalition formation truly resulted in varying internal communication to party supporters, then we should expect to find varying types and counts of articles across these two time periods. The earlier period should see more negative articles about PAS, and more articles justifying why an opposition coalition was not viable. The later period should see more positive articles about PAS, alongside more positive articles articulating the prospective benefits of coalition formation and short-term ideological compromise.

Figure 4: Mandarin Chinese and English Editions of The Rocket for August 2001



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he DAP's party newsletter, called "The Rocket" or "火箭报", is published almost every month in both English and Mandarin Chinese editions as shown in Figure 4. This reflects the distinct core supporters of the DAP – the English-language-educated middle-class Chinese and Indians in the urban areas of Malaysia, and the Chinese-language-educated Chinese in the semi-urban areas in the rest of the country. These newsletters are very reliable and valid indicators of intra-party communication given that their circulation is restricted to members and core supporters only. I detail further in Chapter 5 how these party newsletters are indeed important lines of communication from the DAP's leaders to their supporters, as well as how I code and categorize the articles across time.

Chapter 6 – Assessing the Causal Effect of Opposition Coalitions with Common Policy

Platforms

The final empirical chapter aims to assess voters' reaction to opposition coalition campaign strategies. Specifically, will opposition voters be more inclined to vote for candidates from other opposition parties when they observe their parties jointly campaigning together? Attempting to find out how and why voters' preference ranking of parties will change is quite impossible with observational data. In reality, opposition parties and their alliances mix and match a variety of campaign strategies across electoral districts that are all devoted to persuading voters to vote for them to vote against the incumbent. There is no "clean" way in which opposition parties randomly assign their campaign strategies to individual voters. Moreover, we can also only observe the final vote shares at the district level, which cannot tell us prospective vote choice at the individual level.

To circumvent the problem of using observational data, I further narrow my research question to ask if opposition voters will be more likely to engage in cross-party strategic voting when they are told that opposition parties are campaigning in an alliance using a common manifesto. I commissioned a survey experiment in Malaysia to answer this question. If coalition manifestoes do indeed function substantively as focal points around which opposition voters can mobilize and which also signal “qui-pro-quo” ideological compromise between opposition parties, then we should observe that opposition voters will be more likely to engage in cross party strategic voting when told that opposition parties are campaigning using a common manifesto, as compared to having no joint coalition campaign.

The survey experiment was conducted in two waves on a nationally representative sample of Malaysian adults in Peninsular Malaysia only by Merdeka Center, a reputable local polling firm.¹¹ The first wave was conducted in March 2017, while the second wave was fielded in June 2017. Of the combined total sample of 2,048 respondents, I focus on my empirical analysis on the 639 respondents that identified as supporters of opposition parties (i.e. DAP, PAS, PPBM, PKR, and Amanah).¹² These respondents were completely randomized to listen to one of two vignettes. In the control vignette, they were told that opposition parties have forged a non-competition agreement, but continue to have significant policy differences between them. In

¹¹ The Bornean states of Sabah and Sarawak were excluded because electoral politics in those states are more complex, with additional conflict over developmentalism and state-center relations. See at least Hazis (2012), and Weiss and Puyok (2017). Summary statistics of this total sample of respondents as well as the sample pool for the survey experiment are included in the appendix.

¹² **Q1A:** I am going to read to you a list of names of political parties contesting in the upcoming general elections. Among this list of political parties, can you tell me which party you feel closest to?

1. United Malays National Organization (UMNO)
2. Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)
3. Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)
4. Gerakan
5. Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM)
6. Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR)
7. Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS)
8. Democratic Action Party (DAP)
9. Amanah
10. Another party not listed here.
11. Prefer not to answer.

the treatment vignette, they were told that opposition parties have forged a non-competition agreement as well as a formal coalition with a common policy platform. Respondents were then asked how they would vote if the opposition candidate in their district is affiliated with an opposition party that they do not support. I report average treatment effects of the treatment vignette, as well as conditional average treatment effects based on the level of political knowledge and the strength of the partisan affiliation of opposition supporters.

Table 1: Survey experiment randomization rule and vignettes.

Control or treatment?	CONTROL	TREATMENT
Randomization rule	Telephone numbers that end with an EVEN number. 0, 2, 4, 6, 8.	Telephone numbers that end with an ODD number. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9.
Actual text to be read to the survey respondent	<p>In the upcoming general elections, there will be a lot of opposition parties fighting against the Barisan Nasional.</p> <p>Imagine that they agree to have an electoral pact with 1-on-1 fights against the BN candidate in all electoral districts.</p> <p>However, the opposition parties still have disagreements over many policy issues.</p>	<p>In the upcoming general elections, there will be a lot of opposition parties fighting against the Barisan Nasional.</p> <p>Imagine that they agree to have an electoral pact with 1-on-1 fights against the BN candidate in all electoral districts.</p> <p>In addition, the opposition parties have formed a formal coalition. This means that they have negotiated a common manifesto about economic management and good governance that they plan implement if they win power.</p>

Appendix

Table 2: List of control variables between Singapore and Malaysia

Control Variables	Singapore	Malaysia
Ethnic Fragmentation (Wahman 2011, 2015) ¹³	74% Chinese 13.6% Malay 9.2% Indian 3.3% Others (Singapore Census 2010)	67.4% Bumiputera/Malays 24.6% Chinese 7.3% Indians 0.7% Others (Malaysia Census 2010)
Electoral System (Cox 1997, Chapter 13; Golder 2006b Chapter 2) ¹⁴	1965-1988: Single member district with plurality voting. 1988-Present: Mix of single member districts, and multi-member districts with party plurality bloc voting. ¹⁵ Both effectively the same.	1963-Present: Single member district with plurality voting.
Availability of Financial Resources (Arriola 2013a) ¹⁶	World Bank Ease of Doing Business Rank 1 (out of 189 countries) World Bank Ease of Getting Credit Rank 19 (out of 189 countries)	World Bank Ease of Doing Business Rank 18 (out of 189 countries) World Bank Ease of Getting Credit Rank 28 (out of 189 countries)

¹³ Wahman (2011, 2015) argues that the higher the ethnic fragmentation of a country, the less likely opposition coalitions will form. Data of Singapore census from http://www.singstat.gov.sg/publications/publications-and-papers/cop2010/census10_stat_release1, last accessed February 10, 2016. Data of Malaysia census from

https://www.statistics.gov.my/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=117&bul_id=MDMxdHZjWtk1SjFzTzNkRXYzcVZjdz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZkiWdzQ4TihUUT09, last accessed February 10, 2016.

¹⁴ Cox (1997) argues that the type of electoral system, particularly the single-non-transferable vote system used in Japan and Taiwan, affects the extent to which opposition parties coordinate across electoral districts. Golder's (2006) typology of opposition coalitions is dependent on the different types of electoral systems. Also see footnotes 3, 4, and 5.

¹⁵ Singapore developed the "Group Representative Constituency" (GRC) system in 1988. In these electoral districts, teams of candidates (usually 3-6 candidates) run under a common party label. Voters vote for a party with the names of the teams of candidates displayed beside the party symbol. The winning team under plurality rule takes all the seats. As such, GRCs work exactly the same as single member districts with plurality voting rules. See Mutalib (2002), Tey (2008b), and Tan (2013) for more details.

¹⁶ Arriola (2013) argues that the greater ease to obtain financial resources, the more likely opposition coalitions will form. Data from the World Bank (<http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>), last accessed February 10, 2016.

Chapter 3

How Autocracies Campaign:

The Merger and Separation of Singapore and Malaysia, 1945-1965

“Malaysia and Singapore have long had authoritarian regimes that looked like no others in the world – except for each other... Similarly dominated for decades by a seemingly invincible ruling party, these two regimes also long seemed distinctive by virtue of being “hybrid regimes,” where elections at times appear meaningfully competitive yet meaningful amounts of power never change hands.”

- Slater (2012)

1. How Autocracies Campaign

A central message in this dissertation is that opposition pre-electoral coalitions form in autocratic regimes as endogenous institutional responses to the electoral environments that vote and seat maximizing opposition parties find themselves in. A core assumption within this message is that opposition parties can only work within the electoral environment that the autocrat has set up, and cannot themselves affect the rules of the game. Put simply, they are invited to play the electoral game within the autocrat’s rules. To be sure, this does not mean that opposition parties cannot use the little power that they have to negotiate with the autocrat for free and fair elections. For instance, opposition parties can sometimes threaten to boycott impending elections in a bid to force autocrats to enact some institutional reforms (Beaulieu 2014; Smith 2014; Chernykh and Svoboda 2015; Buttorff and Dion 2017). Yet, for the most part, weakly resourced opposition parties participate in authoritarian elections at the mercy of autocrats. Within the structure imposed, they have to try to find various tactics and strategies to best

challenge the autocrat at his own game. To understand why and how opposition pre-electoral coalitions form, then, we have to first understand autocratic electoral environments.

An autocratic electoral environment consists of at least two distinct components. On the one hand, there exists the plethora of biased electoral procedures and prejudiced state bureaucracies that govern and entrench unfree and unfair electoral competition. There has been a tremendous amount of research on the origins of, variation in, and effects of this unfair institutional structure (for example, see, Birch 2011; Donno and Roussias 2012; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Gehlbach and Simpser 2015; Greene 2007; Magaloni 2006; Norris, Frank, and Martínez i Coma 2014; Simpser 2013). The general consensus is that such a system helps autocrats secure domineering victories over their opponents. On the other hand, there are the specific informal linkages that bind a dominant ruling party to the voters. Most researchers agree that these linkages in autocratic regimes are typically patron-client relationships, where voters seek to gain private benefits or access public services through the ruling party's candidates (see, for example, Blaydes 2011; Cheeseman 2017; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Lust 2006; Pepinsky 2007). Because a dominant ruling party's chief advantage is their control over a resource-rich state, they can easily cultivate voter dependence on the party, and punish voters if they ever choose to vote for opposition parties (Diaz-Cayeros, Magaloni, and Weingast 2003; Slater and Fenner 2011).

Despite these general agreements about the formal and informal dimensions of autocratic electoral environments, however, there is considerable theoretical ambiguity about the extent to which ideology and policy preferences matter. Lust declares (2006, 459), for example, that electoral competition in autocratic regimes "is not over policy making. Many (and in some cases most) policy arenas are off-limits to parliamentarians, a fact which is not lost on either

parliamentarians or voters.” Yet there are numerous instances across the world whereby ideology and policy preferences arguably do appear to matter, in some cases quite significantly. In Mexico under the PRI, voters were able to distinguish and place the PRI and the other opposition parties on a left-right ideological spectrum on economic issues (Greene 2002, 2007; Magaloni 2006 especially chapter 6). There is little doubt that the PRI was relatively centrist in its policy positions, whereas the PAN was a right-wing conservative party and the PRD was a left-wing liberal party. Both PAN and PRD were thus only able to recruit party activists who were fervent ideologues. Even in Africa’s numerous authoritarian party systems, ideology and policy preferences matter to the extent that Islamic and secular opposition parties mobilize voters against the moderate dominant ruling party from either ends of a secular-religious divide. Similarly, Africa’s numerous ethnic-based opposition parties campaigned for their respective minor ethnic groups against an ethnic-based dominant ruling party (Lust 2005; D. Shehata 2010; S. S. Shehata 2012; Wickham 2002, 2015). It would not be a mischaracterization of these ruling and opposition political parties to suggest that they have at least some linkages to society by taking a consistent position on some contentious ideological or policy issue.

I provide an answer to this theoretical ambiguity by simply proposing that *electoral campaigns in autocratic regimes across the world vary in the degree to which ideology and policy preferences are salient*. This perspective of studying authoritarian electoral campaigns draws upon the same conceptual toolkit in the analysis of democratic electoral campaigns (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, 407–8). Where ideological differences and debates over policy issues (be they economic, religious, or ethnic) are less salient, then political parties campaign based on valence appeals. Where campaign rhetoric engages in significantly high levels of conflict over some type of ideological or policy differences, then political parties are absorbed in

spatial-based electoral competition. To be sure, autocratic regimes can oftentimes engage in both valence-based and spatial-based campaign discourse. But for the interests of theoretical parsimony and traction, I contend that autocratic engagement with ideological conflict can be more salient sometimes in certain places, and less salient at other times in other places.

To reiterate, in the predominantly valence type of electoral campaigning, political parties compete based on valence issues and appeals which, according to Stokes's (1963, 373) classical definition, refers to issues where there is broad societal agreement about. These issues include general societal peace and harmony, the efficient delivery of local public goods, a non-corrupt government that generates economic growth, or a strong national defense system. Parties disagree, however, "on which party, given possession of the government, is the more likely to bring it about." In other words, the question of *what* society wants has already been settled. Opposition parties thus try to compete with the dominant ruling party based on perceptions of *who* has more credibility or competency in "delivering the goods." These perceptions are driven by political parties campaigning on a "set of potential valence issues those on which their identification with positive symbols and their opponents' with negative symbols will be most to their advantage" (D. Stokes 1992, 146). For instance, political parties that campaign through valence appeals for economic prosperity can point to the remarkable number of economic experts that it has on its team and its track record of economic growth. Other parties that campaign on a platform of a strong national defense can refer to the existing legions of army commanders in its team, and its historical achievements in repelling "foreign invaders." In any case, this view of electoral politics has motivated contemporary research on the origins and effects of valence-based electoral politics in Africa (Bleck and van de Walle 2011, 2013; Resnick 2011, 2012).

In the spatial-based type of electoral competition, in contrast, political parties compete by taking positions along a unidimensional ideological or policy spectrum, as per Downs's (1957) classic spatial model. The strategic problem of political parties engaged in this kind of electoral competition is "one of finding the electorate's centre of gravity within a space defined by a series of policy dimensions" (D. Stokes 1992, 146). As discussed earlier in the Chapter 1 and 2, autocrats and their dominant ruling parties oftentimes position themselves in the middle of a unidimensional ideological spectrum because it is electorally advantageous for them to do so, given their access to state resources (Riker 1976; Greene 2002, 2007; Magaloni 2006). Pushed to the flanks of this unidimensional ideological spectrum, opposition parties contest vigorously against the dominant ruling party from either ends of the ideological spectrum on *what* is essentially good for the country.

To be clear, this distinction between valence and spatial types of electoral campaigning has some, but not complete, overlap with the conceptual notions of clientelistic versus programmatic citizen-politician linkages (Keefer 2004; Keefer and Vlaicu 2007; Kitschelt 2000; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Kitschelt and Kselman 2013; S. Stokes et al. 2013). The former set of concepts is a theory of electoral campaigning, whereas the latter set of concepts is a theory of electoral representation. Parties and politicians engaged in the clientelistic provision of private or club goods to a specific constituency of voters may well tend to campaign through valence appeals by saying that they, as compared to their opponents, have a much better track record of providing that those goods. Programmatic parties and politicians, however, can engage in either or both valence and spatial campaign strategies (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, 21–23). For instance, an Islamic party may campaign by saying that the country should be governed by Islamic values, and also that they are better placed than other Islamic parties to implement the

said values because they are more pious. Religious piety may be signaled through the number of mosque leaders that are in the party, the educational qualification of those mosque leaders, as well as the frugal life of party leaders. Similarly, an economically conservative party may appeal to the electorate by claiming that cutting taxes generates economic growth. The party is sure of such an ideological position and can better implement the policies necessary, as compared to other economically conservative parties, because of the overwhelming numbers of economic experts that are in their party or who endorse their party. A candidate from this party may also point to his record of military service to signal his patriotism, a quality that his opponent may be lacking.

So what determines whether autocrats engage in either valence or spatial electoral campaigns when they organize multi-party elections? Bleck and van de Walle (2011, 2013) argue that there are both contemporary and historical factors at work. With regards to contemporary factors, they argue that political parties in emerging democracies are more likely to engage in valence-based appeals because weak institutionalization of political parties and party system undermine the credibility of any ideologically-based electoral promises. When party and party system volatility is high, voters cannot trust the electoral promises and also lack information to hold political parties to account. Voters therefore prefer to adjudicate between competing political candidates based on valence appeals on who can better deliver clientelistic goods (Keefer 2004; Keefer and Vlaicu 2007). Moreover, these contemporary incentives for valence-based appeals are also reinforced by the histories of African post-colonialism (Bleck and van de Walle 2013, 1400–1401). Nationalist movements against colonialism in the post-World War Two period in Africa tended to pit left-wing nationalists against right-wing colonial apologists. Dominant ruling parties or ethnic coalitions that emerged victorious out of these

nationalist anti-colonial struggles thus emphasized, and continue to emphasize, their historically-based valence appeals of obtaining and safeguarding the territorial sovereignty of the country against Western “foreign invaders.” Ideological and policy differences are generally unimportant because what matters is which political party can provide societal peace and stability.

Following Bleck and van de Walle and recent scholarly emphasis on the historical origins of party and party system development, I submit that *how electoral autocracies campaign today is primarily driven by how their dominant ruling parties were formed at the point of their genesis* (Brownlee 2007, 2008; Hicken and Kuhonta 2011, 2015; Lupu and Riedl 2013; Riedl 2014; Slater 2010; Mainwaring 2016). This causal argument works in two steps. During the initial turbulent politics of dominant party formation, political elites experiment with different types of organizational formation. Depending on their success or failures with mass mobilization and the associated electoral gains, successful movements or winning political parties learn quickly what type of campaigns and appeals best resonate with the electorate of that time, and settle on an electoral campaign formula that best maximizes their vote and seat share. If spatial electoral campaigns or mass mobilization based on some societal cleavage works, then political elites and their associated parties will coalesce around that particular logic. If valence appeals secure political victories, then that is what politicians will try all means to secure the necessary symbolic and material resources to be positively associated with the agreed-upon valence issue, while tarring their opponents with negative associations.

Second, as the victorious dominant ruling parties begin to secure their control over the resource-rich state, they deploy the state to implement policies that shape voter preferences accordingly to that particular winning electoral campaign formula (Abdullah 2017; Oliver and Ostwald n.d.; Slater and Fenner 2011). In other words, in contrast with Slater (2010, 19) who

argues that “a regime born as a protection pact may gradually lose its protective logic as the threats of yesterday fade into the distant past,” I argue that strong dominant ruling parties can, and oftentimes do, craft hegemonic ideologies that preserve and entrench their “protective logics”. Whether these attempts to “fool all of the people all of the time” are successful or not is an open empirical question. But what matters more is that nothing deters dominant ruling parties from leveraging from their “increasing returns” of autocratic rule to try to shape the spatial-based or valence-based electoral arena to their favor (Pierson 2000).

I illustrate this causal argument by examining the critical juncture of Singapore and Malaysia’s dynamics of merger and separation between 1945-1965. As the epigraph to this chapter notes, these two countries have long been ruled by highly institutionalized dominant ruling parties buttressed by strong states with some of the highest levels of infrastructural power in the world (H. Soifer and vom Hau 2008; Mann 2008; Slater 2012). These strong party and state institutions can be traced to their similar legacies as British colonies that experienced the traumatic Japanese invasion in World War Two, coupled with similarly endemic and unmanageable urban and communal conflict in the post-war decades that prompted the forging of elite “protection pacts” (Slater 2010). Where they have diverged, however, is in their type of electoral politics since their fateful split in 1965. There is little doubt that what has emerged since then has been valence-based electoral campaigns in Singapore, and spatial-based ethnic and religious electoral politics in Malaysia (Oliver and Ostwald n.d.; K. M. Ong 2015; Pepinsky 2009b, 2015).¹⁷ To understand how this divergence occurred and has persisted, I turn to assessing the critical juncture surrounding their split into two countries more than five decades ago.

¹⁷ This is not to dismiss the prevalence of patron-client machine politics in both Singapore and Malaysian politics. There is a large literature on this topic, particularly for Malaysia. For Malaysia, see at least Welsh (2016b) and Weiss (2014). For Singapore, see Ong (2015) and Welsh (2016a).

2. Contextual Background: British Colonialism in Peninsular Malaya Before World War Two

The Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 neatly demarcated the twin spheres of European influence in Southeast Asia. The Dutch would gain full control of the Dutch East Indies archipelago (modern day Indonesia) south of the Straits of Malacca, whereas the British would be granted control over the territories of Peninsular Malaya north of the Straits of Malacca. The trading ports of Singapore, Malacca, and Penang along the entire narrow trade route of the Straits of Malacca were particularly valuable to the British. These three coastal cities were soon re-organized to form the Straits Settlements in 1826 under the East India Company, and came under full direct control of the British colonial authorities in London as a Crown Colony in 1867 (Mills 1966; Turnbull 1972; Webster 2011). Subsequently, the Federated Malay States (FMS) agreement in 1895 granted the British significant administrative sovereignty over the states of Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang, whereas the British “protectorates” of Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Terengganu formed the Unfederated Malay States (UMS). Although all nine Malay states retained their respective traditional Malay Sultans, they were bound in governance matters by the “advice” of their respective appointed British residents and advisors, except in Malay and Islamic affairs (Lau 1991, 8–27).

Britain’s colonial interest in Peninsular Malaya was primarily due to its strategic importance in trade and the provision of certain raw materials. In the island city states of Penang and Singapore, the British found and governed the northern and southern entrances to the Straits of Malacca. In terms of trade, the Straits were a vital, indeed the primary, maritime trade route through which European-East Asian trade passed through in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To China, especially through British-controlled Hong Kong, flowed British-Indian

opium and European manufactures. Spices from the Dutch East Indies, rice, sugar, and timber from Siam, as well as silk, porcelain, and tea from China streamed in the opposite direction. Merchant ships carrying goods between the two continents, attracted by Singapore's free port status and the deep harbors of the two cities, docked to conduct more entrepôt trade, or simply for repair and relief from the monsoon winds. Indeed, "the Straits Settlements throughout their history were the most important centre of British trade with Further Asia" (Mills 1966, 189).

Malaya's importance to Britain grew beyond the island cities of Penang and Singapore, however, with the development of tin mining in the late nineteenth century on the mainland, and the spectacular growth of the rubber industry during and after World War I (Chai 1964; Drabble 1973; Huff 1992; L. K. Wong 1965; Yip 1969). Indeed, the British "realized that tin mining was the goose that invariably laid the golden eggs," and the first railways in Malaya were built primarily to transport tin from the mines to the nearest ports (Chai 1964, 20). In the main mining states of Perak and Selangor, state tax revenues, the majority of which came from tin mining, rose almost ten-fold in the twelve years from 1876 to 1888 (Chai 1964, 22). Before 1882, the leading producer of tin was Australia, with Malaya close behind in second. By 1883, Malaya had overtaken Australia by more than doubling its tin production (Chai 1964, 175). At the turn of the century, Malaya produced about half the world's tin, and tin duty contributed about 40 percent of the total revenues of the Federated Malay States (Chai 1964, 176). On the eve of the World War I, furthermore, Malaya was supplying about one-third of the world exports of rubber. In fact, rubber cultivation was so important to the British that all aspects with regards to its exports were to be determined by the colonial office in London rather than by the local authorities in Malaya. Fueled by its intense demand for raw materials in the inter-war period, American imports from Malaya in 1937, primarily in tin and rubber, was second only to what was imported from Canada



Figure 1: Map of British Malaya¹⁸

¹⁸ Reproduced from Butcher (1979). S.S. refers to the Straits Settlements. U.M.S. refers to the Unfederated Malay States. The states of Perak, Pahang, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan (in bold) formed the Federated Malay States.

(Rotter 1987, 55–57). As we shall see later, the Chinese fortunes founded in the tin and rubber industries would form the basis of a class of societal elites that lead Chinese political organization.

The Straits Settlements’ openness to trade, combined with mainland Malaya’s demand for cheap labor to work in the tin mines and rubber plantations, drove inward immigration into the entire Malaya, creating an intensely plural society (Chai 1964, chapter 3; Parmer 1960). Joining the local Malays were wealthy trade merchants from the Arabian peninsular, from western Indian regions such as Gujarat and Punjab, from southern Chinese provinces such as Guandong and Fujian, as well as from the surrounding Dutch East Indies archipelago. Poorer laborers arrived from China and India to escape famine and seek their fortunes, particularly from Guangdong, Fujian, and Southern India. Tables 1 and 2 detailing the pre- and post-World War II census of British Malay by race testifies to this incredible diversity of peoples.

Table 1: Demographics of British Malaya in 1931 by Race¹⁹

	Total Population	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Eurasians	Europeans	Other Malaysians	Others
Singapore	567,453	43,055	421,821	51,019	6,937	8,147	28,122	8,352
Straits Settlements (Singapore + Penang + Malacca)	1,114,015	250,864	663,518	132,277	11,292	10,003	34,452	11,609
British Malaya (FMS+UMS+SS)	4,385,346	1,644,173	1,709,392	624,009	16,043	17,768	317,848	56,113

¹⁹ Source: Vlieland (1931, 120–21).

Table 2: Demographics of British Malaya in 1947 by Race²⁰

	Total Population	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Eurasians	Europeans	Other Malaysians
Singapore	976,839	116,046	730,603	73,496	9,112	30,631	16,951
Federation of Malaya	4,922,821	2,427,853	1,884,647	535,092	10,062	16,836	48,331
Grand Total (Federation of Malaya + Singapore)	5,899,660	2,543,899	2,615,250	608,588	19,174	47,467	65,282

The last census before the outbreak of war was completed in 1931, and the first census immediately after the war concluded in 1947. The 1931 census estimated that British Malaya had a total of population of 4,385,346, while the 1947 census estimated the total population to be about 5,899,660. Of this almost 6 million colonial subjects, 43 percent were classified as Malays, 44 percent as Chinese, 10 percent as Indians, with the remaining being Eurasians, Europeans, or “Others” who defied racial classification. The proportions were a similar 37 percent, 39 percent, and 14 percent in 1931. Yet the colonial civil servants conducting these surveys were almost always wary of such simplistic and crude ethno-racial categorization of the population. It was as if they disbelieved and disavowed the very survey tools that they used. Vlieland (1931, 73–74), who oversaw the 1931 census, remarked that,

“It is, in fact, impossible to define the sense in which the term “Race” is used for census purposes; it is, in reality, a judicious blend, for practical ends, of the ideas of geographic and ethnographic origin, political allegiance, and racial and social

²⁰ Source: Del Tufo (1947, 132–33)

affinities and sympathies. The difficulty of achieving anything like a scientific or logically consistent classification is enhanced by the fact that most Oriental peoples have themselves no clear conception of race, and commonly regard religion as the most important, if not the determinant, element... .In such circumstances, we should be surprised, and possibly annoyed, to be told that a Madras Indian was British or Dravidian, when we wanted to know whether he was a Tamil or a Telegu; yet either of these answers might well be correct.”

When Del Tufo took up the challenge of conducting the census in 1947, he noted Vlieland’s remarks on “race” above, concurred with him that “the use of the term in this context should be abandoned,” and that he would strive to use the word “community” instead (Del Tufo 1947, 71).

Within these crude categories, moreover, the authorities were carefully cognizant of intra-ethnic differences. They first noted intra-ethnic differences by immigrant origins, such as the Malays from Aceh, Java, Menangkabau, or Palembang, the Chinese who were segregated into Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew, and Hainan, or the Indians who were Tamil, Telegu, Punjabi, Bengali, Hindustani, or Malayali (Vlieland 1931, 75–87; Del Tufo 1947, chapter 7). Yet, oftentimes even ethnicity did not neatly trace the population’s immigrant origins. Del Tufo (1947, 83) noted that “it is recorded, as a matter of interest and as illustrative of the differences between the conceptions of “community” and “race” referred to elsewhere, that at this census many Malay and Tamil females were shown as having been born in China.” Regardless, they also estimated certain intra-ethnic differences in birthplace and language competency (Del Tufo 1947, chapter 8 and 9). Out of the total population, 75 percent were estimated to be locally born in 1947. While 95 percent of Malays were estimated to be locally born, only some 63 percent of

Chinese were locally born, while only half of the Indians were locally born in the entire British Malaya. With regards to English literacy, the Indians were by far the best, having 110 persons per thousand who could read and write English, followed by 69 per thousand for the Chinese, and 25.5 per thousand for the Malays.

Just before and immediately after World War II, then, Malaya was a multi-ethnic immigrant society with significant intra-ethnic divisions along the timing of their immigration, the regions from which they emigrated from, in addition to language, wealth, and class cleavages. This rich soil of societal diversity thus formed the raw material through which societal elites experimented with to mold, organize, and form mass societal and political organizations in the post World War II period. Whether these organizations succeeded or failed as political machines would depend very much on the contingent circumstances surrounding the critical juncture of Singapore's merger and separation from Malaysia between 1961 to 1965.

3. Critical Juncture: Singapore's Merger and Separation from Malaysia, 1961-1965

A critical juncture is a relative short period of time in history where contingent causal forces combine to cause multiple cases to diverge into different institutional equilibriums with enduring legacies (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007, 348; Slater and Simmons 2010, 888; Collier and Munck 2017). The study of critical junctures is not just a call for a simple narrative of institutional divergence, however. Recent advances in the conceptual and theoretical clarification of critical junctures suggests that researchers must be able to specify the critical antecedents (Slater and Simmons 2010), the permissive and productive conditions (H. D. Soifer 2012), as well as "the main actors, their goals preferences, decisions" that formed the contingent actions producing "the genetic moments for institutional equilibria" (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). Of

course, researchers must also detail the mechanisms of reproduction that make the divergent institutional equilibria “stick” after the critical juncture (Mahoney 2000; Pierson 2000).

Table 3: Singapore’s Separation from Malaysia as a Critical Juncture

Critical antecedents	(1) The introduction of the Malayan Union and the separation of Peninsular Malaya and Singapore. (2) Ethnic-based mass organization through UMNO, MCA, and MIC.
Permissive condition	Gradual decolonization through introducing limited elections.
Productive conditions	(1) Similar non-communist commitment, (2) but ideological differences over the role of race between Malaysia’s Tunku Abdul Rahman and Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew.
Outcome	(1) Operation Coldstore in Singapore, (2) the PAP’s formation of the Malaysian Solidarity Council.
End of critical juncture	Separation of Singapore from Malaysia
Mechanisms of reproduction	Malaysia = Birth of Barisan Nasional, segregated schools, and the implementation of the New Economic Policy. Singapore = Compulsory conscription, integrated schools, national education programs, and ethnic quotas in public housing policies.
Consequences	Spatial-based ethnic and religious electoral politics in Malaysia. Valence-based credibility electoral politics in Singapore.

In this chapter, the “divergent institutional equilibria” outcome refers to the persistently divergent types of electoral campaigns that the dominant ruling parties in Singapore and Malaysia have mounted since their separation in 1965. I seek to explicate the origins of this divergent institutional equilibria in the sequence of events and all the causal conditions in the critical juncture of Singapore’s merger and separation with Malaysia between 1961 and 1965.

My primary argument is that the similar non-Communist commitments, but ideological differences about the role of race between Malaysia's Tunku Abdul Rahman and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew in the critical juncture between 1961 and 1965, lead to the entrenchment of spatial-based ethnic and religious electoral politics in Malaysia, and valence-based electoral politics in Singapore, over the subsequent five decades. Establishing this causal argument, however, requires first understanding the antecedent conditions in which these two men emerged and why they made the choices that they did during the short four years.

3.1 Critical Antecedents: The Malayan Union and the Emergence of UMNO, MCA, and MIC, 1945-1951

Critical antecedents are the “factors or conditions preceding a critical juncture that combine with causal forces during a critical juncture to produce long-term divergence in outcomes” (Slater and Simmons 2010, 889). In the post-World War Two period, the critical factor leading to the creation of ethnic-based organization of political parties in Peninsula Malaya was the introduction of the Malayan Union in 1946 by the British colonial authorities. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese surrender in August 1945 and the subsequent governance under the British Military Administration between September 1945 and March 1946, “the British wished to create conditions of freedom in the hope that political parties would emerge and achieve a balance of power among themselves” (Stockwell 1979, 42). This was in line with the prevailing sentiments for decolonization and self-determination at that time amongst the Western colonies which saw India's independence in 1947, Burma's independence in 1948, and Indonesian independence in 1949 (Hack 2001). Yet, reluctant recognition of the end of the British Empire east of Suez did not mean reckless relinquishing of His Majesty's precious

colonies. Instead, the plans for a post-war Malayan Union were minted in the Eastern Department of the Colonial Office supervised by the War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo (Stockwell 1979, 21–38). The objective for the creation of the Malayan Union was to centralize and rationalize the hitherto disparate British colonial administrations amongst the FMS, the UMS, and the Straits Settlements. It was envisioned that the Malayan Union's unitary state, governing Malaya under the direct oversight of His Majesty's government, would greatly facilitate the efficiency and effectiveness of post-war rehabilitation, foster the emergence of a united Malayan identity under a single constitution and common citizenship, and prepare the territory for future independent self-governance under a pro-British regime (Sopiee 1974, 16–19).

The introduction of the Malayan Union scheme had two significant effects in sowing the seeds of institutional divergence between Singapore and Peninsular Malaya. First, the Malayan Union excluded Singapore. Where previously Singapore was governed as part of the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements alongside Penang and Malacca under the direct control of the Colonial office, the Malayan Union purposefully omitted Singapore entirely. This exclusion was first justified on the grounds that Singapore's outward-facing *entrepôt* economy was significantly different from the Peninsular Malaya's inward-looking economy based on primary production. But, more importantly, Singapore's inclusion would also see the racial balance in the future unitary state tip in favor of the Chinese rather than the Malays (Lau 1998b, 2–4; Sopiee 1974, 19, especially fn. 26; Stockwell 2009, 14–15). British authorities thus sought to exclude Singapore to make the Malayan Union scheme more palatable for the nine Malay Sultans and their advisors, from whom the British needed assent. Singapore's artificially created separate political path from Peninsular Malaysia in the immediate aftermath of Japanese capitulation thus set the electoral

context in which post-War Singaporean political parties oftentimes campaigned on the popular platform of merger with Peninsular Malaya, and, as we shall see, motivated Lee Kuan Yew to seek merger as well.

Second, the Malayan Union's perceived effect of wresting sovereignty away from the Malay sultans and offering citizenship to Chinese and Indians under liberal rules catalyzed the formation of ethnic Malay-based political organization (Omar 2015, 53–70). Whatever the seemingly benevolent but obviously self-interested intentions of the British, they did not foresee the strident Malay-based opposition to the Malayan Union scheme when it was introduced publicly in January 1946. When the plans were finally published in a government White Paper that month, the proposals to wrest sovereign power away from the Malay sultans and vest them in the British Crown, and also extend equal citizenship to non-Malays, "hit the Malay population like political dynamite" and subsequently provoked a vociferous reaction from the Malays (Lau 1991, 130–35; Slater 2010, 77; Sopiae 1974, 21–22; Stockwell 1979, 60–86). "The vigour of the Malay opposition to the Malayan Union astounded all those convinced of Malay apathy," Stockwell (1979, 64) wrote. Sopiae (1974, 23) declared, "The Malays became a race awakened." Lau (1998b, 4) concurred, writing,

"The Malayan Union plan so struck at the core of the Malays' consciousness of Malaya being primarily a Malay country that not even Singapore's tactical exclusion was sufficient to soothe their revulsion at British bad faith and betrayal. The constitutional uproar it provoked was impassioned and threatened to undermine the very basis of British rule in Malaya."

Opposition to the Malayan Union rapidly gathered momentum behind Dato Onn bin Jaafar, leader of the Malay Peninsular Movement Johor, and his call for a Pan-Malayan Malay Congress. The Congress, a gathering of the leaders of numerous Malay associations throughout the country, was swiftly held on March 1, 1946. That day saw the establishment of the modern day ethnic Malay-based United Malays National Organization (UMNO), whose primary work was to struggle for the repeal of the Malayan Union, and to deter Chinese political power in any future governance arrangements through limiting the recognition of Chinese citizenship (Slater 2010, 77–79). Ultimately, UMNO crystalized its legitimacy as the primary organizational vehicle through which to represent both elite and mass Malay interests in post-War Malaya when Dato Onn dramatically managed to convince the nine Malay Sultans to boycott the inauguration of the Malayan Union on April 1, 1946, for which they had gathered in full ceremonial dress to attend (Stockwell 1979, 71). Indeed, Dato Onn was even heralded as “The Gandhi of Malaya” (Stockwell 1979, 86).

For the non-Malays in Peninsular Malaya such as Chinese and the Indians, the general consensus was that “they cared not whether there was a Union” (Sopiee 1974, 35) and that even the British “had not bargained for the general indifference of the non-Malays to the citizenship proposals and the promises of self-government” (Ampalavanar 1981, 78; Lau 1991, 125–30; Stockwell 1979, 63, especially fn. 128). It was not until late 1946 when the Chinese and the Indians began to try to galvanize mass support objecting against the new proposals for a *Federation* of Malaya (Lau 1991, 212–19; Sopiee 1974, 38–49). This new scheme, to be freshly negotiated between the British, UMNO, and representatives from the Malay Sultans, would replace the Malayan Union through reinstating the sovereignty of the Malay Sultans, preserve the special position of the Malays through various policy concessions, and, most importantly,

severely restrict non-Malay citizenship in the new Federation (H. G. Lee 2013, 175–78). Non-Malay mass mobilization by certain non-Malay elites against these negotiations, such as the well-respected Straits-born Chinese rubber tycoon Tan Cheng Lock, only occurred in late 1946 and 1947 through the All-Malayan Council for Joint Action (AMCJA). The Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), formed in August 1946 in part to fill the organizational vacuum amongst Indians in post-war Malaya and in part inspired by the Congress Party's struggle for Indian independence, joined the AMCJA against both the Malayan Union and the new Federation of Malaya negotiations (Ampalavanar 1981, chapter 4; Kailasam 2015, 6–10; Rajagopal and Fernando 2016). A *hartal*, a form of protest involving the stopping of work and closing of businesses originating from South Asia, was organized by the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce on October 20, 1947 (Sopiee 1974, 41). Yet, because of fragmentation within the leadership, poor organization, a lack of financial resources, and tactical mistakes made in attempting to bargain for a new deal with the British, “the leaders of the [A]MCJA were under no delusions about their failure to mobilize mass opposition” (Sopiee 1974, 39; Lau 1991, 240–49). The non-Malay elites' experiments to build a mass-based fully integrated multi-ethnic organization based on a common Malayan identity was akin to “grow[ing] a rubber tree in a swamp” (Sopiee 1974, 47).

Mass political organization among the Chinese only gained momentum with the formation of the MCA in February 1949. Competing historiographies of that period offered different accounts as to what the MCA was organized for and who drove it as the leading political organization for advancing Chinese interests. After all, Tan Cheng Lock had long called for unity amongst the Chinese by proposing a Malayan Chinese League in March 1948 (Soh 1960, 42–43; M. I. Tan 2015, 110–11). Nothing came out of that proposal. The dominant

narrative of the formation of the MCA, as advanced by Heng (1988) and Slater (2010, 90–92), appear to be that the outbreak of the Malayan Emergency in June 1948 wrought by the guerilla warfare of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) provided the impetus for Chinese elites, lead by Tan Cheng Lock, to engage in collective action to form a Chinese-based political *party*. In this account, both the British colonial authorities and fellow Malay elites like UMNO's Dato Onn encouraged MCA's formation because it would serve as an anti-communist bulwark against the communist insurrection.

Recent research by Tan Miau Ing (2015), however, verifies Tregonning's (1979, 59–66) more nuanced account. This alternative narrative suggests, that while the Malayan Emergency did indeed provide the main impetus for forming the MCA, its original leadership and its main organizational purpose was quite different. Specifically, Tan Miau Ing argues that Tan Cheng Lock was not the lead organizer of the MCA, and that the MCA was not formed with the intention of being a political party. Instead, H.S. Lee, the tin-miner and president of the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce of Malaya and the All-Malaya Chinese Miners Association was the lead organizer of the MCA, alongside the other fifteen Chinese members of the Federal Legislative and Executive Councils. Collective action to organize the MCA as the mass organization representing anti-Communist Chinese interests only materialized after H.S. Lee returned from his overseas travels in December 1948, having spent the year representing Malaya at international tin conferences. Subsequently, the MCA as a mass organization was primarily envisioned by H.S. Lee as a *social welfare organization*, and not a political party. A clue to this original purpose is the choice of the Chinese name of the MCA, which is 马华公会. “公会” is the direct translation of “civic society association.” “党” which is the direct translation of “political party,” was not used.

The MCA's social welfare work was primarily directed at the "New Villages" (Heng 1983, 303; F. K.-W. Loh 1988, 208–36; Soh 1960, 46; Tregonning 1979, 62). These were the Chinese settlements that the British colonial authorities had established to resettle Chinese rural squatters during the outbreak of the Malayan Emergency. The objective was to segregate the majority of the Chinese population away from the jungle-based MCP communist guerillas, and deprive the MCP of food, water, shelter, and co-ethnic sympathy. About half a million Chinese were resettled into about 440 New Villages within 2 years (Slater 2010, 87). Initially no more than "prison camps," the lack of public service provision such as schools, roads, water, and sanitation, "worsened rather than alleviated squatters' antagonism toward the state" (Slater 2010, 87–89). The MCA stepped into the public service vacuum by raising nearly four million Malayan dollars through regular sweepstakes lotteries, and spent on building houses, Chinese schools, recreational community halls, pharmacies, and even piped water needed by the New Villagers (Heng 1983, 303; Stubbs 1979, 84, especially fn. 37). The Chinese New Villagers thus began to recognize and build loyalty towards the MCA as an anti-communist welfare organization "concerned with the amelioration of social distress" (Heng 1983, 303). "New Villages became staunch bastions of the MCA," Tregonning (1979, 63) remarked. Roff (1965, 42–43) concluded that, "For the first two or three years of its existence, therefore, MCA was largely a *social-welfare body* [emphasis added], anxious to cooperate with the Government in all matters affecting the Chinese community."

In the final analysis, without the introduction of the Malayan Union and the outbreak of the Malayan Emergency, Singaporeans and Malaysians of various ethnic groups would have largely remained politically apathetic and internally divided. Contingent circumstances in the post-War War Two period drove their mass mobilization and organization into various ethnic-

based political organizations which, as we shall see in the following sections, combined with other conditions and causal forces to generate divergent forms of electoral politics.

3.2 Permissive Conditions: Expanding Political Competition Through Limited Elections, 1948-1961

Ethnic-based mass political organization would have been useless if those organizations had no institutionalized venue through which to compete for political power, and if they had not transformed themselves into electioneering machines. In post-World War Two Malaysia and Singapore, the gradual process of decolonization across both countries through the progressive introduction of limited elections was the permissive condition that allowed for the “loosening of constraints of agency and contingency” on the competition for political power (H. D. Soifer 2012, 1572). Specifically, the constraints on political elites and their associated organizational vehicles were relaxed with the introduction of elections at the municipal and then federal level for Malaya between 1952 and 1955, and through the steady expansion of universal suffrage for Singapore between 1948 and 1961. The British had hoped that such measured political liberalization would engender bottom-up political participation and foster nascent nationalism, which would then help Britain secure pro-British, non-Communist governments that were amenable to its own interests after both Malaysia and Singapore gained independence. As Stockwell (1984, 78) argues, “Nation-building was intended to prepare Malaya²¹ for self-government without endangering Britain’s considerable interests in the country.”

Because the Malayan Union scheme artificially separated Malayan politics and Singaporean politics, political parties in the two countries began to engage in significantly

²¹ British-controlled Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore was informally and generally grouped together as a single entity “Malaya” in the immediate post-War period.

different types of electoral competition when local elections were introduced. In Malaya, the introduction of local elections was promised in the preamble of the Federation of Malaya agreement that UMNO, the Sultans, and the British had re-negotiated to replace the Malayan Union, and which was subsequently promulgated in February 1, 1948. These local municipal and federal elections represented an expanding political opportunity space for local elites to organize and contest for political power through the pre-existing ethnic-based political organizations (UMNO and MCA in particular) forged from the antecedent fires of the Malayan Union controversy.

On the eve of local elections in 1952, UMNO, under the new leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahaman, had secured its position as the leading mass political organization, now political *party*, representing the Malay community throughout Peninsular Malaya. Dato Onn's attempts to re-shape UMNO into a multi-ethnic United *Malayan* National Organization with non-Malay members had so alienated him that few followers joined him when he quit as the President of UMNO to form the non-ethnic-based Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) (Fernando 1999, 125–26; Stockwell 1979, 171). The MCA, under the leadership of Tan Cheng Lock, had also begun to gradually reorganize itself as a political party in 1951 rather than a social-welfare organization (Fernando 1999, 126–27; Roff 1965, 43; Tregonning 1979, 65–66). British High Commissioner Gurney had a meeting of the minds with Tan Cheng Lock on the necessity “to transform the MCA into a well-organized political force” in order to further bond the Chinese together (Fernando 1999, 126). Yet Tan Cheng Lock himself was uncertain about the viability of the MCA as an ethnic-based political party – a reality that was orthogonal to his ideals of a fully integrated multi-ethnic party with a common Malayan identity. Indeed, he seemed to throw his support to Dato Onn's fully integrated multi-ethnic IMP by taking active participation in the

inauguration of the national and local branches of the IMP, and by encouraging MCA members to join IMP (Fernando 1999, 127; Soh 1960, 49).

In the run-up to the first ever Kuala Lumpur municipal elections in February 1952, there was intense jostling among the political parties over the sort of alliances that would form and the dimension of electoral competition that the country would take (Fernando 1999, 128–35). The IMP wanted to be a fully integrated multi-ethnic party that competed based on a common Malayan national identity, not multiple ethnic identities. Their demand to the MCA to contest under the IMP's logo and banner deterred the MCA leadership from formally joining them, even though many members of MCA were also members of IMP. Only the MIC accepted the IMP's condition of contesting under one party name and logo (Ampalavanar 1981, 185–86; Kailasam 2015, 12). Consequently, unbeknown to the national leaders of MCA and UMNO, the local leaders of Selangor MCA, H. S. Lee, and Kuala Lumpur UMNO, Datuk Yahya Abdul Razak, made an official announcement on January 8, 1952 to jointly contest the elections by coordinating their candidate selection and placement (Fernando 1999, 128–29; Heng 1983, 307, especially fn. 32; Roff 1965, 43; Tregonning 1979, 67–68). They soon reached agreement to field six Chinese candidates, five Malay candidates, and an Indian associate member, and to only allow one UMNO-MCA alliance candidate to contest in each electoral district. Subsequently, the elections saw the UMNO-MCA alliance win nine out of the twelve seats, with the IMP winning only two seats (both MIC members), and one independent candidate winning one seat. This winning formula was soon endorsed, albeit reluctantly, by the national leadership, and the newly-formed ethnic-based UMNO-MCA Alliance expanded rapidly throughout the country through numerous grassroots liaison committees and local branches (Fernando 1999, 135–37). The final

tally of all local elections in 1952 and 1953 saw the UMNO-MCA Alliance sweeping 94 out of 119 seats contested, while the IMP won only 3 seats.

The UMNO-MCA Alliance's joint success in electoral victories, the lack of any Indian representation in the Cabinet, and an increasingly tenuous relationship with Dato Onn induced the MIC to leave IMP and join the Alliance in late 1954 (Ampalavanar 1981, 186–92). The result was an electoral coalition based on a mutually exclusive ethnic-based and Malay-dominant partnership formalized as the Alliance Party. In the first ever national-level General Election in 1955, the Alliance, campaigning on a united platform of securing full independence from Britain, tasted overwhelming success by sweeping 51 out of the 52 seats available (Carnell 1955b; Tinker 1956). The 17 non-Malay Alliance candidates all won their seats. Dato Onn's avowedly multi-ethnic Party Negara, gathered from the ashes of the IMP, put up 33 candidates but failed to win any seats at all. This near perfect sweep by the Alliance “thus established the pattern of communally-based politics in Malaya for many years to come” (Lau 1998b, 5–6). Fernando (1999, 137) confirmed that “the results of these local elections established the Alliance as the leading political power and set a trend that the other parties, including the IMP (and later its successor, Party Negara), were unable to reverse.”

To be more explicit, the “trend” was that the electoral competition in Malaysia would henceforth occur on a unidimensional ideological space founded upon Malaysia's ethno-religious cleavages – whether Malaysia was a secular state with a united common national identity and equal rights for all ethnicities, or whether the country was a Malay-Muslim dominant society with special rights for the Malays. The Alliance put itself squarely in the middle of this ideological space by proposing that Malaysia was indeed a Malay-Muslim dominant society as demonstrated by the numerical and governing superiority of UMNO, but that it should also share

some governing power with other ethnic groups in a consociational manner, so as to preserve societal peace and stability (Lijphart 1977; Crouch 1996a; Milne and Mauzy 1999; Saravanamuttu 2016).

In Chinese-majority Singapore, in contrast, electoral competition gradually occurred on a *class*-based dimension, rather than an ethno-religious-based one. This was in part because mass electoral politics in the city state experienced stunted growth in its early years. The Malayan Union plan had induced “only subdued criticism from the newspapers” and no mass reaction to Singapore’s exclusion (Lau 1998b, 6). Local elections extended by the British authorities with limited suffrage organized in 1948 and 1951 were “not calculated to enthuse, and it did not” (Lau 1998b, 7). Of an estimated potential electorate of about a quarter of a million voters, only 20 percent made the effort to register to vote in 1951, and only about half of those who registered bothered to vote at all (Carnell 1954, 216–18; Yeo 1969, 116). The leading political party then, the Singapore Progressive Party, was a group of right-wing, English-educated elites with little mass following (Bellows 1967, 128). Although an anti-colonial left-wing labor movement was already actively agitating for independence and better working conditions in the immediate post-War period, they found the contest for political power via elections severely constricted, as only 6 out of 22 seats, and 9 out of 25 seats in the Legislative Council were open for electoral contest respectively in 1948 and 1951. As Bellows (1967, 127) concluded, “politics began in Singapore as a tight little game played by a small number of persons, largely English educated and more or less confined to the upper socioeconomic strata.”

Plural electoral competition with several political parties and mass participation only flourished in the 1955 elections for the 25 elected seats in the 32-seat Legislature organized under the newly promulgated Rendel Constitution (Carnell 1955a). The newly expanded

Legislature with a majority of elected seats, coupled with the expansion of the electorate from about 50,000 people to about 300,000 people, drew a large variety of ambitious societal elites organizing themselves into nascent political parties to compete for political power. The right-wing political parties, backed by rich businessmen from the numerous Chambers of Commerce, were identified as the Singapore Progressive Party, the Democratic Party, as well as the Singaporean offshoots of the UMNO-MCA Alliance Party. The left-wing parties, supported by the effervescent workers' unions, trade unions, and Chinese school student movements were David Marshall's Labor Front, and Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party (PAP). As a testament to the astonishing mass organizational strength of the predominantly Chinese-based left-wing labor and student movements, both the left-wing backed political parties emerged victorious in successive elections (Slater 2010, 230–36). The Labor Front emerged as the largest party in 1955, winning 10 out of 25 seats, while the PAP was the clear victor in the 1959 elections, winning 43 out of 51 legislative seats, after the left-wing switched allegiances to support the PAP.

At the eve of any serious discussions of merger between Singapore and Malaysia, then, electoral competition on a class-based left-right ideological dimension was the norm in Singapore, as compared to the norm of ethno-religious-based electoral competition in Peninsular Malaya. Both of these dimensions of electoral competition are still spatially-based, however. One can align political parties on a unidimensional ideological space based on whether they were economically conservative or socialist (as in Singapore), or whether they are support Malay-Islamic dominance, or advocate for the secular equality of ethnicities and religion (as in Malaysia). The breaking of Singapore's ideological space into purely valence-based politics, and

henceforth determine its divergence from Malaysia, was due to the specific causal forces that occurred during the contentious politics of merger and separation between the two countries.

3.3 The Critical Juncture: Merger and Separation of Malaysia and Singapore, 1961-1965

Specifically, I argue that two distinct causal factors, or productive conditions in Soifer's terms (2012, 1575–76), broke spatial-based electoral politics in Singapore, but entrenched it in Malaysia. First, the similar non-communist commitment of both Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and Malaysia's Tunku Abdul Rahman meant their joint pursuit of the eradication of leftist-communist forces in Singapore before Singapore's merger into Malaysia in September 1963. Although the violent communist threat from the Malayan Communist Party in Malaya had largely petered out in the second half of the 1950s, during which Malaysia successfully obtained independence from the British on August 31, 1957, both Lee and the Tunku were extremely wary of Singapore re-emerging as a "Second Cuba" due to the leftist-communist mass mobilizational capabilities in the city-state (Slater 2010, 233–36; Soviee 1974, 142–44; Stockwell 2009, 19; T. Y. Tan 2008, Ch. 2). This leftist-communist mass labor movement was headed by none other than Lim Chin Siong.²²

In 1955, the drive towards Singapore's independence pitted pro-left, anti-British students and workers against the conservative pro-British employers and English-educated elites. The charismatic Lim Chin Siong and his fellow left-wing leaders organized and galvanized students and workers to organize mass demonstrations and strikes, in order to obtain concessions to reduce societal inequities, and to "raise political consciousness "to fight for a free, independent and democratic Malaya"" (Thum 2017, 401). Lim was a founding member of the PAP and was one of PAP's first candidates in the 1955 general elections. At age 22, he won in the Bukit

²² For more on Lim Chin Siong, see Tan, Jomo, and Poh (2015).

Timah constituency with 52.5% of the vote in a four-way contest (Thum 2017, 396). Between his electoral victory in 1955 and his subsequent detention in 1956, Lim was a focal point for the Chinese community's mass associational movement, numerous labor movements, and Singapore's campaign for independence from the British (Thum 2017, 397–401). He was such a threat to the British-backed local government under Chief Minister Lim Yew Hock that they finally detained him without trial in 1956.

Lim's arrest and detention without trial from 1956 to 1959 dampened, but did not eviscerate the leftist-communist mass movement. His release in 1959 saw re-intensified conflict within the PAP between the English-educated conservatives lead by Lee Kuan Yew, and the Chinese-speaking mass activists lead by Lim Chin Siong. Intense disagreements emerged between these two factions over the transparency of political decision making by the Lee Kuan Yew led PAP government over legislation regarding Chinese education and the trade union movement, amongst other issues (Sopiee 1974, 151; Thum 2013, 8–13). The PAP felt the sting of this factional infighting after losing two by-elections to its opponents in 1961 in the Hong Lim and Anson constituencies. After Tunku publicly announced his intention to consider the merger of Singapore into Malaysia in May 1961, Lim Chin Siong and his followers finally broke away from the PAP to form the Barisan Socialis in July 1961. Overnight, the PAP lost 70 percent of its party members, saw its control over a similar proportion of its local branches evaporate, and barely retained its majority in the Legislature with a precariously thin margin of 26 out of 51 seats.

Lee and Tunku's convergence on their joint recognition of Lim Chin Siong's growing leftist threat in the middle of 1961 lead to the growing consensus that Singapore's merger into Malaysia was the only way to deal with the threat. This meeting of the minds between Lee Kuan

Yew and Tunku Adul Rahman is what Sopheie (1974, 129) dubs “the security theory on the formation of Malaysia.” For Tunku, having control over Singapore’s internal security apparatus through merger was a far better choice than risking Singapore’s eventual independence and prospective communist takeover. Moreover, the political costs of incorporating more than one million Singaporean Chinese into Malaysia could be mitigated by incorporating the Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak into the greater Federation so as to maintain overall Malay dominance (Sopheie 1974, 143), and by having a smaller number of representatives from Singapore in the Federal parliament than what would otherwise have been proportional to Singapore’s population size (T. Y. Tan 2008, 67). For Lee, merger with Malaysia would not just provide political support and justification to eliminate the leadership of the leftist-communists, it would also provide the impetus for an enlarged common market that would jumpstart industrialization, reduce unemployment, and generate economic growth, thus arresting the PAP’s declining popularity since its coming to power in 1959 (Sopheie 1974, 116–20).

In any case, after more than a year’s wrangling over the details of the merger in which numerous battles over the contentious topics of citizenship and taxes were fought, Lee and Tunku’s joint conclusion was that the leftist leadership of Singapore, including Lim Chin Siong and his associates, had to be brought to heel before merger occurred. This conclusion culminated in Operation Coldstore on February 3, 1963 (Poh, Chen, and Hong 2013; Ramakrishna 2015). Operation Coldstore “decapitated Singapore’s progressive left-wing movement” (Thum 2013, 4). The top 24 leaders of the Barisan Socialis were arrested, alongside about one hundred pro-Barisan activists and left wing leaders such as trade union leaders and university students (Lau 1998b, 30). Further arrests on April 1963, and also on the nomination day of the Singaporean elections in September 1963 itself “dealt an unsettling blow to the BS’s electoral machinery”

(Lau 1998b, 31). Despite the Barisan's best efforts in mobilizing the masses against the increasingly authoritarian PAP, the PAP managed to win 37 out of 51 seats (72.5%) on the back of 46.5% of total votes cast, while the Barisan only won 13 seats (28.3%) with 32.9% of the total vote share under the new leadership of Dr Lee Siew Choh (Lau 1998b, chapter 2). By then, merger between Singapore and Malaysia had already been completed on September 16, 1963.

Operation Coldstore thus marks the first key outcome of the critical juncture. The arrest of the leftist-communist leaders in Singapore was the most crucial element in breaking spatial-based electoral politics founded on class cleavages in the country. Without Operation Coldstore, Lim Chin Siong and his fellow left-wing leaders would have remained as leaders of the Barisan Socialis. With their strong mass support, they would very likely have posed a strong challenge to the PAP in subsequent general elections, either within Malaysia, or in independent Singapore. The Barisan Socialis would not have weakened in the late 1960s under the new leadership of Lee Siew Choh. As Trocki and Barr (2008, 13) stated in their assessment of the counterfactual, "The left-wing opposition represented in Barisan, had it survived, would certainly have meant a much stronger labor movement and a more solid presence of the Chinese-educated groups within Singapore. Had Dr Lee Siew Choh maintained a credible opposition presence, both in Parliament and in Singapore's civil society, the monolithic shutdown of public discourse might not have been possible."

The "monolithic shutdown" of class cleavages as the spatial-based mobilizing force in Singapore during Singapore's merger into Malaysia in 1963 left wide open the possibility of ethno-religious cleavages as the other potential type of spatial-based mobilizing factor, however. Singapore's ethnic heterogeneity amongst the Chinese, Malays, and Indians was ripe for the Alliance to exploit. Afterall, the Singapore Malay National Organization (SMNO), an offshoot of

UMNO, already had a toe-hold in Singapore with their control over the three Malay-majority electoral districts of the Southern Islands, Geylang Serai, and Kampong Kembangan from the 1959 Singapore general elections. In June 1963, the Singapore Alliance was inaugurated with a partnership formed between the conservative Singapore People's Alliance, the SMNO, the Singapore Malayan Chinese Association, and the Singapore Malayan Indian Congress – an almost exact replica of the Alliance in Peninsular Malaysia (Lau 1998b, 22). Yet, the Singapore Alliance lost all three seats as quickly as they had gained them in the subsequent September 1963 elections, and gained no other seats all. A confluence of factors such as a dilution of the Malay electorate due to urban resettlement policies, strong Chinese support for the PAP, and infighting within SMNO lead to the loss of all three seats (Rahim 2008, 102–5). Tunku Abdul Rahman's reaction to the Singapore Alliance's complete wipe out in 1963 was "one of shock and disbelief," which entailed "a shattering blow to the Tunku's personal prestige" (Fletcher 1969, 31–32; Lau 1998b, 65). As hard as it was to create a mass-based fully integrated multi-ethnic movement in Malaysia as Tan Cheng Lock found out, mutually exclusive ethnic-based mobilization in Singapore was a similarly thankless affair for Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Surprisingly, the PAP also tried to engage in ethnic mobilization by attempting to replace the MCA in the Alliance (Fletcher 1969, 32–39; Lau 1998b, chapter 4; Sopiee 1974, chapter 7)! In the April 1964 General Elections of the newly independent Malaysia, the PAP challenged the MCA directly by nominating candidates in nine predominantly urban Chinese electoral districts, thus breaking Lee Kuan Yew's pre-merger promise to the Tunku of not contesting in national-level elections in Peninsular Malaysia. The PAP's apparent objective, it appeared, was to attempt to build a national presence for future elections, and to win enough seats to provide leverage for PAP to join the Alliance. This is reflected in the party manifesto of the PAP for the 1964 General

Elections which is attached in Appendix A. Despite this maneuvering, however, the MCA emerged victorious, winning 27 seats to contribute to the Alliance's total tally of 89 seats out of a possible 104 parliamentary seats. The PAP's campaign to oust the MCA failed miserably after managing to win only one seat – a result that was met by the PAP leaders with “shock dismay” (Lau 1998b, 118–24). Since the PAP's plans to replace the MCA in the Alliance failed so utterly, Lee Kuan Yew's PAP soon began to champion an alternative vision of political governance in its subsequent bid for political power.

Between May 1964 and June 1965, inter-ethnic tensions between the Chinese and Malay gradually rose to such a point as to result in unmanageable violent conflict on the streets and open conflict between the PAP and the Alliance (Fletcher 1969, 40–44; Lau 1998b, chapter 5; Slater 2010, 118–19; Sophe 1974, 195–205). In a bid to try to hit back against the PAP for contesting in the elections in Peninsular Malaysia, radical Malays within UMNO began to stoke the fires of Malay and Chinese inter-ethnic distrust and rivalry by accusing the PAP of neglecting the plight of Malays in Singapore. Despite Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP's best efforts to reassure Singaporean Malays that their welfare were well looked after, there was no let up in the attacks by UMNO radicals. Inter-ethnic rivalry soon boiled over into three days of inter-ethnic rioting in July 1964, alongside more riots in September 1964. Overall, the two riots lead to three dozen killed, more than five hundred injured, and almost six thousand detained (Lau 1998b, chapter 6; Slater 2010, 119). A truce on all sides were finally agreed upon in late September 1964, which put further violent rhetoric and conflict on ice.

Subsequently, as Slater (2010, 118) aptly summarized, “while the Malayan and Singaporean leaderships shared a strong distaste for communism, they held radically different visions as to how communal peace should be preserved.” In March 1965, Lee Kuan Yew began

to promulgate the idea of a “Malaysian Malaysia”, where meritocratic governance was based on one common national identity with equal rights for all ethnicities – a vision that openly challenged and opposed the Alliance’s mode of Malay-Muslim dominant consociationalism (Sopiee 1974, 199–205; Ooi 2009, 43; Fletcher 1969, chapter 4). This ideological divergence over the role of ethnicity between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Lee Kuan Yew was thus the second causal force in the critical juncture of Singapore merger and separation with Malaysia. The outcome was an organization that sought to institutionalize the idea of a “Malaysian Malaysia” – the Malaysia Solidarity Convention (MSC), formed in May 1965.



Figure 2: The Malaysian Solidarity Convention²³

The MSC saw the PAP ally with the four other smaller parties – the United Democratic Party and the People’s Progressive Party, the Sarawak United People’s Party and the Machinda

²³ Source: National Archives of Singapore. Last accessed at <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/c3ae8cfa-1161-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad> on October 19, 2017.

Party – under one single large organizational umbrella. Despite the MSC’s avowed ideology of a fully integrated multi-ethnic “Malaysian Malaysia,” political leaders in UMNO and the Alliance saw the MSC as PAP’s strategic attempt to form a non-Malay anti-Alliance political bloc that threatened to displace the Alliance as the governing coalition of the country (Fletcher 1969, 49–51; Lau 1998b, 227–52; Sopiee 1974, 201–2). In turn, Lee Kuan Yew saw no choice but to finally organize and lead other opposition parties into a multi-ethnic united opposition front, since any slim hopes of negotiating an entry into the Alliance as a governing partner was extinguished. The Alliance itself was also beginning to try to unseat the PAP in future local elections in Singapore when it reorganized its local branch as the Alliance Party Singapura.



Figure 3: Lee Kuan Yew speaking at the Malaysian Solidarity Convention²⁴

²⁴ Source: National Archives of Singapore. Last accessed at <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/photographs/record-details/5fee173a-1162-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad> on October 19, 2017.

The formation of the MSC had the effect of further deepening the chasm between the Tunku and the Alliance's coalition of mutually exclusive ethnic-based political parties dominated by the Malay-Muslim UMNO on the one hand, and Lee Kuan Yew's vision of a fully integrated multi-ethnic society governed based on meritocracy and equal rights for all races on the other (Lau 1998b, 239–46; Soviee 1974, 200–202). The MSC poured fuel into the fire of Tunku's nascent thoughts of separating Singapore from Malaysia when it declared that (cited in Lau 1998b, 241),

“A Malaysian Malaysia is the antithesis of a Malay Malaysia, a Chinese Malaysia, a Dayak Malaysia, an Indian Malaysia or Kadazan Malaysia... the people of Malaysia did not vote for a non-democratic Malaysia. They did not vote for a Malaysia assuring hegemony to one community. Still less would they be prepared to fight for the preservation of so meaningless a Malaysia.”

By late June 1965, the Tunku had made his mind up. While recovering in a London hospital from a bout of shingles, he instructed his deputy Tun Razak to begin negotiations for separation (Lau 1998b, 257–65; Soviee 1974, 203–7). By July, all the legal negotiations for secession were complete, and by August 9, 1965, Singapore was out from Malaysia as an independent country on its own. As Fletcher (1969, 26) concluded, “The conflict of the ambitions, ideologies, and priorities of the key political organizations and leaders in Singapore and Malaya was the most complex and probably the most central factor in the dispute which led to the separation of Singapore from Malaysia.”

4. Conclusion

After the separation of Singapore and Malaysia, the autocratic regimes in both countries would go on to enact a series of institutional reforms and implement a range of public policies that would serve to reproduce entrenched valence electoral politics in the former, and spatial electoral politics in the latter. Their respective successful winning formulas at the dawn of the regime's power beckoned institutions and policies that entrenched the regime's strengths to the sorry disadvantage of their nascent opposition parties.

In Singapore, the primary enforcer of valence electoral politics was a series of legislation passed curtailing the critical impulses of the print, broadcast, and online media, by subjecting journalists and commentators to what Cherian George has termed as "calibrated coercion" (C. George 2007a, 2012; Kenyon, Marjoribanks, and Whiting 2014; Rajah 2012, especially chapter 4; Rodan 2004; Tey 2008a, 2014). The overall effect was to ensure that the government's valence-based hegemonic ideologies of pragmatism and elitism were broadcasted positively and effectively, such that voters come to instrumentally accept and normatively agree to the status quo of valence electoral politics (Barr 2006; Barr and Skrbiš 2009; Oliver and Ostwald n.d.; K. P. Tan 2007, 2008, 2009). Moreover, secondary mechanisms of reproducing valence politics were public policies governing the areas of education, housing, and trade unions. These policies forestalled any potential of class, religious, or ethnic based mobilization (Chong 2014; Chua 2000; Koh 2014; Lim 2013; Lim and Apple 2015; Ostwald 2014; Sim, Yu, and Han 2003; Vasoo and Lee 2001; Ye and Nylander 2015). For instance, fully integrated schools combined with compulsory national education programs mean that young Singaporeans socialize and develop ethnically heterogeneous friendship networks into adulthood, reducing the propensity for inter-ethnic rivalry and ethnic-based political mobilization (for an exception, see Ostwald, Ong, and

Gueorguiev 2017). The Ethnic Integration Policy implemented in public housing estates, which accommodate 80 percent of the population, established ethnic quotas for public housing neighborhoods and blocks, thus eradicating ethnic enclaves and the potential for ethnic-based political mobilization.

In Malaysia, in contrast, the Barisan Nasional's (successor to the Alliance Party) New Economic Policy, promulgated in 1970 after further ethnic riots in 1969, created affirmative action and channeled extensive government resources towards Bumiputera Malays in a wide range of economic arenas (Gomez and Saravanamuttu 2013). This entrenched and buttressed UMNO and BN's spatial-ideological model of Malay dominance amidst minority acceptance (Saravanamuttu 2016). Even the contentious politics in the era of the new online media continued to be based on this ethno-religious cleavage structure, and "did not upset the fundamental logic through which the Barisan Nasional (BN) regime has ruled since the 1970s" (Pepinsky 2013, 83). Furthermore, the continued segregation of public education in Malaysia into vernacular Chinese and Tamil schools, alongside national Malay schools, meant that childhood inter-ethnic contacts remained low, which translated into low inter-ethnic adult social network heterogeneity, and continued strained inter-ethnic relations (G. K. Brown 2007; Ostwald 2014).

Having assessed the critical juncture origins of Singapore and Malaysia's electoral politics, I now turn to examining the divergent ways in which opposition parties have attempted to best navigate these two distinct types of electoral environments. As I shall demonstrate, opposition parties across the two countries have developed significantly different strategies for cooperation in their bids to maximize their chances of defeating the two longest ruling dominant incumbents in the world.

MANIFESTO OF THE PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY

The P.A.P. is participating for the first time in the Malayan elections. This has constitutionally become possible since Malaysia. We have two objectives.

The first is a long term objective. It is to assist in the building of a united democratic and socialist Malaysia, based on the principles of social justice and non-communalism.

The objective will take many years of determined and dedicated struggle to achieve. The P.A.P. has shown within the limits of Singapore, that honest and effective leadership can slowly and steadily realise these objectives. In a small way Singapore has proved by deeds rather than by words what democracy and socialism can mean to the ordinary man in jobs, schooling for his children, social amenities and housing.

Only dynamic and imaginative social and economic policies designed to give a better life for the ordinary man, can conscribe and check the twin evils of communism and communalism.

Since the M.C.A. cannot rally the masses in urban areas, as the Tengku himself has admitted, the danger of a pro-Communist and anti-Malaysia party like the Socialist Front winning by default is considerable.

The second is the immediate objective to ensure that the Socialist Front does not benefit from the substantial protest votes against the M.C.A. An increase of votes for the Socialist Front would certainly be interpreted in Indonesia as support for Indonesia's "crush Malaysia" policy.

The Indonesians will use this to get America to write off Malaysia as an easy prey to Communism. America will then be more prepared to sacrifice Malaysia's interests to placate President Sukarno and so save Indonesia from Communism.

Already branches of Party Rakyat, which is an affiliate of the Socialist Front, have become centres of hidden arms and ammunition to be used on behalf of Indonesian aggression against Malaysia. Armed saboteurs and frogmen from Indonesia have smuggled their way into Singapore and Malaya. Whether these preparatory moves for what Sukarno has described as "revolutionary offensive" against Malaysia will be followed by more massive and dangerous forms of intervention will depend more immediately on the kind of performance put up by the anti-Malaysia Socialist Front in this elections. Every ballot paper cast in favour of the Socialist Front is one more bullet in the rifle of Indonesian confrontationists and their armed terrorists.

We must realise quickly that the Socialist Front, despite its facade of some respectable front men, is the advance guard of Indonesian Communist Party just as the PMIP is the beachhead in Malaya for Indonesian racialism. The Socialist Front and the P.M.I.P. though anti-Malaysia for different reasons and though manipulated by different Indonesian groups, are nevertheless jointly serving the interests of Indonesian expansionism in this region.

The U.M.N.O. can deal with the P.M.I.P. in the rural areas.

In the urban areas, because of the ineffectiveness of the M.C.A., the P.A.P. has to help in the battle against the anti-Malaysia Socialist Front. The task of the P.A.P. is to ensure that protest votes in urban areas do not become votes against Malaysia and for Sukarno.

²⁵ Source: *State and parliamentary elections, 1964: manifestos. Contesting political parties: The Alliance, People's Action Party, Pan Malayan Islamic Party, People's Progressive Party, Socialist Front, United Democratic Party, Negara*. Mimeograph. Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia, 1964.

In urban areas, people should vote for P.A.P. candidates. Where there are no P.A.P. candidates vote for pro-Malaysia-opposition party candidates. This would make clear to the Indonesians that such seats as the Socialist Front may win elsewhere are protest votes and not invitations to Indonesia to "liberate" Malaysia.

The defeat of anti-Malaysia candidates is vital for the peace and security of Malaysia.

Sukarno cannot crush Malaysia unless we allow him. Voting for the pro-Communist and anti-Malaysia Socialist Front is the surest way to help Sukarno. Then instead of a democratic and socialist country Malaysia will become part of Indonesia where guided democracy, persecution of racial minorities, and a diet of corn instead of rice, are the manifestations of a "revolution".

A rout of anti-Malaysia forces headed by the P.M.I.P. and the Socialist Front will be a political defeat for Indonesia's confrontation policy.

In Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore the anti-Malaysia elements were all defeated in elections.

What the people of Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore have done the people of the Federation can also do.

Defeat the traitors who want to wreck our nation. Unite and defend our nation and protect our prosperity and happiness in Malaysia.

Chapter 4

How Opposition Parties Campaign:

Opposition Coordination and Signaling in Singapore and Malaysia, 1965-2015

1. Introduction

A core argument of this dissertation is that different autocratic electoral campaign environments engender divergent forms of cooperation between opposition parties. If dominant incumbents in parliamentary autocracies engage in valence-based electoral campaigning, then opposition parties will likely focus primarily on coordinating among themselves for a non-competition agreement to select opposition candidates. They have negligible incentives in negotiating power-sharing or ideological compromises to try to signal opposition unity to the voters. At best, they may engage in cheap talk – campaign utilizing a common logo or common coalition name. If dominant autocrats primarily employ spatial-based electoral campaigns appealing to ethnic, religious, or left-right ideological cleavages in society, then opposition parties and leaders will be concerned about both collective action problems – bargaining over a non-competition agreement for selecting candidates, and developing substantive and costly joint coalition campaigns to signal ideological moderation and opposition unity to voters. They will have strong incentives to send costly signals of opposition unity to the voters to persuade voters to vote strategically against the autocrat.

This chapter details the empirical evidence from Singapore and Malaysia – two most similar parliamentary autocracies – to assess the causal process and hypotheses generated by this analytical framework (see Figure 3 in Chapter Two). I provide a range of qualitative and quantitative empirical evidence from my process tracing in both countries to demonstrate the

divergence in electoral context across the two countries, and to test whether there is indeed variation in the type of opposition parties formed, in the degree of ideological differences between the opposition parties, in the varying incentives to signal their ideological moderation and anti-regime unity, and in the eventual type of electoral campaign that opposition parties wage. The empirical evidence is marshaled from more than two dozen interviews with opposition politicians in the two countries, archival research at the Singapore National Archives, the secondary literature, past electoral results, and publicly available campaign materials stored online or at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

2. Non-competition agreements without joint coalition campaigns in Singapore

2.1 Personality-based opposition parties in a valence-focused electoral environment

The hegemonic ideologies of meritocracy and pragmatic elitism provides the valence-based societal context in which Singapore's political parties campaign during elections (Barr and Skrbis 2009; Chua 2017; Kausikan 1997; Oliver and Ostwald n.d.; K. P. Tan 2008, 2012; B. Wong and Huang 2010). "Good governance", according to local politicians, means delivering universally appreciated public goods such as economic growth, effective and efficient public services, societal peace and stability, and a robust foreign and security policy that can safeguard national interests. Therefore, politicians and political parties, the dominant incumbent People's Action Party (PAP) claims, must be compared and elected based on whether they have the integrity and capabilities to deliver good governance for a small, vulnerable city-state like Singapore. Contests over ideology were impractical and academic. As the former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who served as Prime Minister of Singapore between 1959 and 1990, explained to the *International Herald Tribune* during an interview in August 25, 2007,

“We are pragmatists. We don’t stick to any ideology. Does it work? Let’s try it and if it does work, fine, let’s continue it. If it doesn’t work, toss it out, try another one. We are not enamored with any ideology. Let the historians and the Ph.D. students work out their doctrines. I’m not interested in theories per se...
...We are ideology-free. What would make the place work, let’s do it.”²⁶

When campaigning during elections, therefore, the PAP consistently eschews promoting any form of ideology. Instead, it brandishes its prolific track record since 1959 in transforming Singapore “from Third World to First”²⁷, its achievements in upgrading the constituency’s public environment during its elected term, as well as the stellar professional and educational background of its individual candidates in campaign paraphernalia. Figure 1 shows a typical PAP campaign magazine printed for distribution in the Bishan-Toa Payoh Group Representative Constituency (GRC) for the 2015 General Elections.²⁸ It contains high resolution pictures of the estate, detailing how the PAP’s team in the constituency had “fulfilled its promises” in the past electoral term through estate upgrading, and the amount of financial support it had provided for the young, elderly, and poor. Further pictures show high-resolution mock renderings of prospective estate upgrades that voters can expect if they return the PAP to power.

²⁶ “Excerpts from an interview with Lee Kuan Yew.” International Herald Tribune. Last accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/29/world/asia/29iht-lee-excerpts.html> on December 6, 2017.

²⁷ This phrase was made popular when it emerged as the title of one of Lee Kuan Yew’s memoirs published in 2000. See Lee (2000).

²⁸ Singapore developed the “Group Representative Constituency” (GRC) system in 1988. In these electoral districts, teams of candidates (usually 3-6 candidates) run under a common party label. Voters vote for a party with the names of the teams of candidates displayed beside the party symbol. The winning team under plurality rule takes all the seats. As such, GRCs work exactly the same as single member districts with plurality voting rules. Districts with only legislative seat are termed “Single Member Constituencies” (SMC). See Mutalib (2002), Tey (2008b), and Tan (2013) for more details.

Figure 1: The PAP's Campaign Magazine for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC for the General Elections in 2015.²⁹



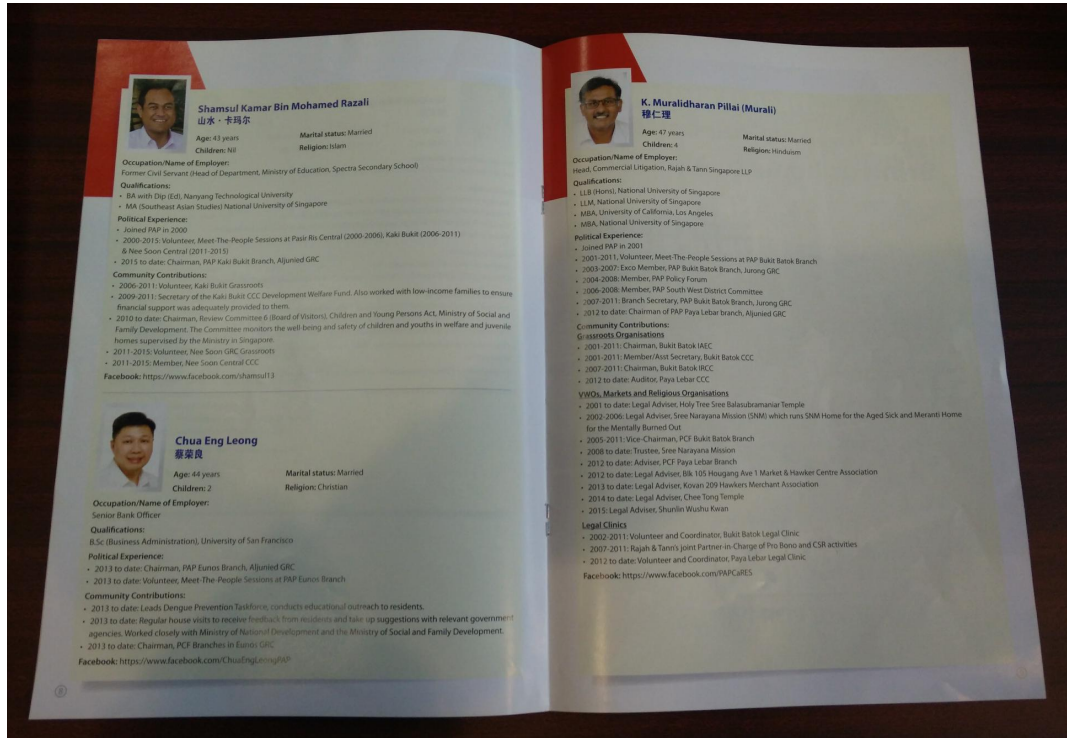
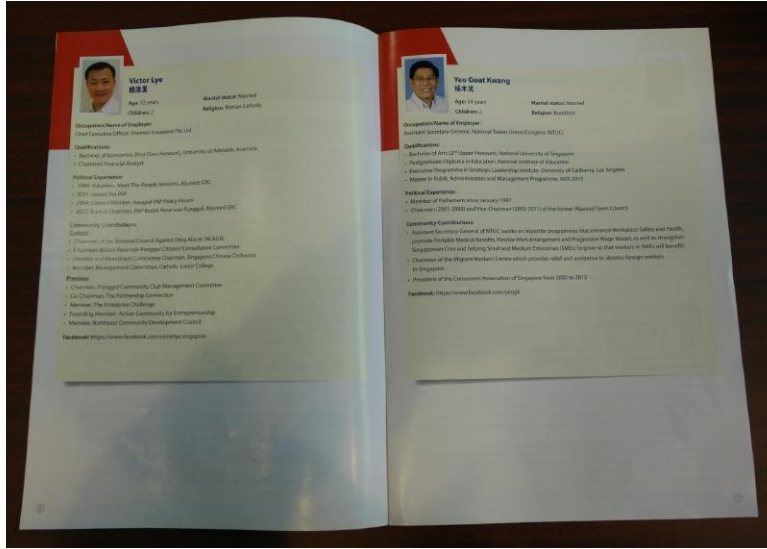
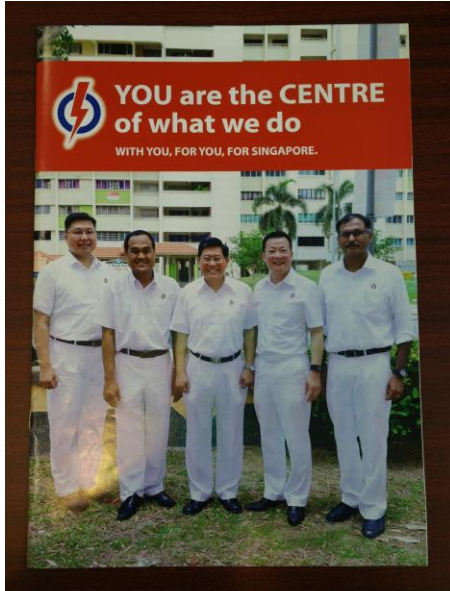
²⁹ Source: "Singapore General Election, 2015: Collection of Election Printed Materials." The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. LO, JQ1063, A95S61.

This particular emphasis on public housing estate upgrading is not a random electoral strategy. About 80 percent of the population of Singapore live in such public housing estates, a product of the Singapore Housing and Development Board (HDB) that was set up in 1960. At that time, it was injected with sweeping powers to acquire land, resettle displaced persons, and to plan, design, and build new housing estates for a city that was overwhelming over-crowded at its urban core and spilling out into semi-urban, unregulated squatter settlements (K. S. Loh 2013). The massive national housing program that emerged housed entire generations of Singaporeans in vastly improved standardized high-rise apartment blocks with proper sanitation facilities. The heavily subsidized program generated tremendous political legitimacy for the PAP through the tremendous enhancements in public health and order, and also by creating a nation of homeowners tied to the state (Chua 1997, 2000, 2003, 2017, chapter 4). As Chua (1997, xi) declares,

“high-quality public housing is the single most important tangible material benefit derived from the impressive national macroeconomic growth over the past three and a half decades... a foundation stone upon which the single-party dominant government of the People’s Action Party (PAP), which has ruled Singapore since its political independence in 1965, builds its legitimacy among Singaporeans.”

Therefore, that the PAP showcases successful estate upgrading and promises future upgrading during electoral campaigns to exhibit its prowess for “good governance” is no surprise. It is simply the localized constituency-focused portion of the overall package publicly appreciated valence goods. Moreover, voters are also warned specifically that the state controls the funding and planning of such upgrading. If the opposition wins in any constituency, then

Figure 2: The PAP's Campaign Magazine for Aljunied GRC for the General Elections in 2015.³⁰



³⁰ Source: "Singapore General Election, 2015: Collection of Election Printed Materials." The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. LO, JQ1063, A95S61.

voters should expect that their constituency's upgrading plans are shoved "to the back of the queue" when funding is being processed (Mauzy and Milne 2002, 93–95 and 151). Through the restriction of such localized upgrading in the interim, voters will "pay a price, the hard way," and will have "five years to live and repent" for choosing the opposition.³¹

Figure 2 is another typical PAP campaign magazine used in the 2015 general elections, this time for Aljunied GRC. Because Aljunied is a GRC controlled by the opposition Workers' Party (WP), the PAP team cannot take credit for any form of local estate upgrading implemented in the immediate prior term of office. Therefore, its alternative strategy is to detail the complete biography of the PAP's candidates – their age, marital status, number of children, religion, their employment, educational qualifications, political experience, and track records of community service. By brandishing these valence-focused credentials, the PAP team signals its better ability to "deliver the goods," in contrast to the less stellar opposition team.

In Appendix A, I have included scanned copies of abstracts of PAP's campaign manifesto and two PAP campaign leaflets used in the 1976 General Elections. They are reprinted and scanned with permission from Gerardine Donough, author of an honors thesis on the 1976 General Elections in Singapore. They show that the PAP's 1976 national campaign manifesto emphasized universally valuable valence goods such as supporting "industrial progress," "orderly increases in wages," "improve public transport," or "achieve a higher quality of education in schools." Constituency focused campaign materials in 1976, like in 2015, also spent a large amount of space detailing the educational qualifications and professional experience of the candidates, as well as highlighting the estate upgrading promises that were fulfilled and that would be forthcoming in the next 5 years.

³¹ Oon, Jeffrey. "Aljunied voters will regret choosing WP: MM Lee" Yahoo! Newsroom. 30 April, 2011. Last accessed at <https://sg.news.yahoo.com/aljunied-voters-will-regret-choosing-wp--mm-lee.html> on December 21, 2017.

Within this valence-based autocratic electoral environment, Singapore's opposition parties have eschewed campaigning on ideologies. Instead, they have consistently sought to appeal to voters by offering another valence good – an opposition effective at “checking and balancing” the dominant government through robust debates in parliament. To propagate and achieve this scantily appreciated campaign offering, opposition parties have little choice but to emphasize the valence credentials of their charismatic opposition leaders (Ibrahim and Ong 2016, chapter 4). Singaporean opposition parties have thus largely grown and developed around charismatic opposition leaders over the last five decades. As Tan and Lee (2011, 17) put it, “Election battles were thus no longer about the pro-communists versus the moderates as was the case in the 1960s, but between personalities and modalities.”

The oldest opposition party, the Workers' Party (WP), was founded in 1957 by David Marshall, Singapore's first Chief Minister under limited self-government between 1956 and 1957. Marshall's larger than life personality contributed to his subsequent electoral victory in a by-election in 1961, but he was unable to grow and expand the party beyond a small group of Chinese trade unionists (K. Tan 2008 chapter 13). He eventually quit the party in 1963. Lawyer J. B. Jeyaretnam took up the leadership mantle in 1971, and finally secured electoral victory ten years later in 1981 in another by-election. His straight-talking manner earned him the ire of PAP leaders, and he soon found himself disqualified from Parliament after he was found guilty of misreporting party accounts in 1986. The WP's third leader emerged in the 1991 General Elections, when Low Thia Kiang, a Teochew-speaking former Chinese teacher won in the Hougang SMC. After taking over the leadership of the WP in 2001, he was able to gradually expand the party's leadership team by including former policewoman turned polytechnic lecturer Sylvia Lim, and through recruiting other high-calibre individuals to contest in subsequent

elections. In a party-produced documentary³² promoting the 60th anniversary of WP's founding released in late 2017, almost the entire 50 minutes was spent on promoting the personalities of WP's numerous prominent party leaders. No time was spent articulating WP's ideology.

Where the WP does articulate its economic or social agenda, it is in its lengthy print publications. Appendix B, which is a reprinted and scanned copy of extracts from the Workers' Party's manifesto for the 1976 General Elections, shows that the party adopted a left of center position on economic and political issues, advocating for free healthcare, free education, a nationalized transport system, and a minimum wage. Its most recent manifesto for the 2015 general elections campaigns for similar policies.³³ More recently, it has also produced two policy papers – one on managing population and immigration, and one on redundancy insurance – beyond its usual manifesto during the election period.³⁴ From these papers, we can infer that where economics is concerned, the WP is again consistently to the left of center – advocating for a stronger social safety net, greater regulatory measures to allow families to have better work-life balance, limiting foreign worker immigration, and still for a national minimum wage. On social issues, however, the WP is more conservative, staying silent on divisive topics such as the role of race and religion in society, and on LGBTQ issues.

Beyond the WP, the next two most prominent parties in the last three decades are the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) and the Singapore People's Party (SPP). The SDP was originally founded by Chiam See Tong in 1980 (Loke 2014). Chiam was a former teacher and lawyer who had first contested as an independent candidate in the general elections of 1976. He

³² See "Walking with Singapore: Road to 2011." Last accessed at <https://youtu.be/78K6A9pnaek> on December 6, 2017.

³³ See WP's 2015 manifesto "Empower Your Future." Last accessed <http://wpge2015.s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/29111924/Manifesto-2015-Official-online-version.pdf> on December 6, 2017.

³⁴ See "A Dynamic Population for a Sustainable Singapore" and "Redundancy Insurance: The Workers' Party Proposal for a Resilient 21st Century Workforce" at <http://wpge2015.s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/18005439/wp-population-policy-paper-feb-2013.pdf> and <http://wpge2015.s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/11203623/WP-Redundancy-Insurance-FINAL-30112016.pdf> respectively. Last accessed on December 6, 2017.

became only the second fully elected opposition member of parliament, after J.B. Jeyaretnam's victory in 1981, in post-independent Singapore after winning in the 1984 general elections. Under Chiam's leadership, the SDP began to attract more notable candidates to run in elections, most notably university lecturer Dr Chee Soon Juan. Dr Chee was fielded in the 1992 Marine Parade GRC by-election in a team of four SDP candidates against the then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's PAP team. Dr Chee's candidature generated significant controversy both before and after the by-election. He gained significant prominence before the elections because his education and professional credentials rivaled the PAP's highly-educated candidates. After the election, he was sacked by the National University of Singapore for misusing of research funds, which he then proceeded to protest against by staging a five-day hunger strike.

In any case, the highly charged events surrounding Dr Chee's hunger strike soon developed into an internal schism between Chiam See Tong and other members of the SDP. Chiam See Tong left the SDP in 1993 after falling out with the party's central executive committee, and joined the SPP in 1996.³⁵ The SDP's leadership mantle passed to Dr Chee Soon Juan. Under two separate charismatic leaders now, the SPP and the SDP both continued to evolve narrowly around the both of them. For the SPP, there is no evidence that the party has developed any coherent party ideology. Instead, the party is currently focused on leadership succession, after Chiam suffered two debilitating strokes and a hip injury. The SDP, for its part, has begun to articulate a coherent set of ideological agenda more recently. It produced a slew of alternative policy programs in the run up to the 2015 general elections, most of which also indicated that it is left on economic issues.³⁶ The party advocates for a minimum wage, for a single-payer universal healthcare system, reinstating the estate tax, raising the income tax rate for

³⁵ For Dr Chee Soon Juan's version of events of Chiam See Tong's exit, see Chee (2012), Chapter 9.

³⁶ See the various policies on healthcare, housing etc on http://yoursdp.org/publ/sdp_39_s_alternatives/23, last accessed December 6, 2017.

the top 1% of income earners, and for increasing social spending on education and welfare, amongst other policies. Yet the party, like the WP, is also conservative on social issues, opting to advocate no policies on the state's status quo relationship with race, religion, or LGBTQ issues.

To be sure, Chiam See Tong did take pains to try to expand the SPP by forming the Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA) in 2001, together with the National Solidarity Party (NSP), the Singapore Justice Party (SJP), and the Singapore Malay National Organization (PKMS). On the surface, the SDA appeared to be Singapore's second³⁷ ever pre-electoral coalition: the component parties campaigned using the common name and logo of the SDA, produced a common manifesto, and ran only one or a team of opposition candidates in each electoral district. For the 2001 general elections, it fielded 13 candidates – the most out of all the other opposition parties – more than SDP's 11 and WP's 2 candidates.

Yet, at least two reasons undermine SDA's anti-regime credentials. First, the alliance included neither the WP or the SDP – the two most prominent opposition parties. The WP, under Low Thia Kiang's leadership, refused to join because it thought that it would have a better chance of winning outside of the alliance. The SDP did not join because of continued animosity between the two parties over Chiam's exit in 1994. Second, interviews with opposition leaders suggested that the SDA was more of an alliance of convenience than one dedicated to electoral victory.³⁸ Separately, each component party were very minor parties to the SDP and WP. If they had contested separately, they would have drawn support from only a minor pool of anti-PAP protest votes. Under the SDA, however, they all had some electioneering benefits to gain from each other. From Chiam, the other component parties and candidates of the SDA gained more

³⁷ The first opposition pre-electoral coalition was the Joint Opposition Council formed to contest in the 1976 elections. It consisted of the Barisan Socialist, the United Front, the PKMS, and the Justice Party. Yet, again, the largest opposition party, the WP, was not included in the coalition. Their common manifesto is attached in Appendix C.

³⁸ SG008, SG009 Interviews. Both locations: Singapore.

Table 1: Singapore's Recent Multiple Opposition Parties

Opposition Party	Year Founded	Prominent Leader(s)	Best Electoral Performance³⁹	Ideology (If Any)
Workers' Party (WP)	1957	David Marshall J. B. Jeyaretnam Low Thia Kiang Sylvia Lim	After GE 2011 and BE 2013, 7 fully elected MPs, and 2 non-constituency MPs.	Economic - Left of center. Social – Right of center.
Singapore Democratic Party (SDP)	1980	Chee Soon Juan Paul Tambyah	After GE 1991, 3 fully elected MPs.	Economic – Left. Social – Left.
Singapore People's Party (SPP)	1994	Chiam See Tong Lina Chiam	After GE 2011, 1 non-constituency MP.	Unclear
National Solidarity Party (NSP)	1987	Sebastian Teo	Nil	Unclear
Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA)	2001	Chiam See Tong Desmond Lim	After GE 2001, 1 fully elected MP, and 1 non-constituency MP.	Unclear
Reform Party (RP)	2008	Desmond Lim	Nil	Unclear
Singaporeans First (SingFirst)	2014	Tan Jee Say	Nil	Advocates reducing immigration rates into Singapore.
People's Power Party (PPP)	2015	Goh Meng Seng	Nil	Unclear

³⁹ GE refers to general election. BE refers to by-election. MP refers to Member of Parliament.

prominence because he had, by that time, been a fully elected Member of Parliament for Potong Pasir SMC for 17 years. From NSP and PKMS, Chiam's SPP gained organizational strength and Malay candidates to help contest in the larger GRCs that had ethnic quotas for minority candidates. Unfortunately, the SDA ceased being a major opposition party after the NSP withdrew from the alliance 2007, and when Chiam pulled the SPP out in 2011. The SDA now only consists of SJP and PKMS.

The other more recent minor opposition parties in Singapore are the Reform Party (RP), the Singaporeans First Party (SingFirst), and the People's Power Party (PPP). All were formed by opposition elites who had either joined other parties initially but fell out with the party leadership, or who had gained some prominence on their own. Kenneth Jeyaretnam was the son of J.B. Jeyaretnam. The elder Jeyaretnam founded the Reform Party in 2008 after he left the WP in 2001. His unfortunate passing just 3 months later saw his Cambridge-educated son, a hedge fund manager, take over the party's leadership in 2009. SingFirst was set up by Tan Jee Say, a former senior civil servant in 2014, after he left the SDP to contest in the 2011 presidential elections. As a former Principal Private Secretary to former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Tan's entry into opposition politics signaled a rare dissent and split from the country's hitherto monolithic political establishment. Goh Meng Seng, formerly a central executive member of the WP and Secretary General of the NSP, formed the PPP in 2015 after he left the NSP in 2011.

Beyond the WP and the SDP, it is generally unclear what the ideologies of all these other opposition parties are. None have produced comprehensive manifestoes to coherently articulate their ideologies on a range of issues recently. As Weiss (2016, 869) opined,

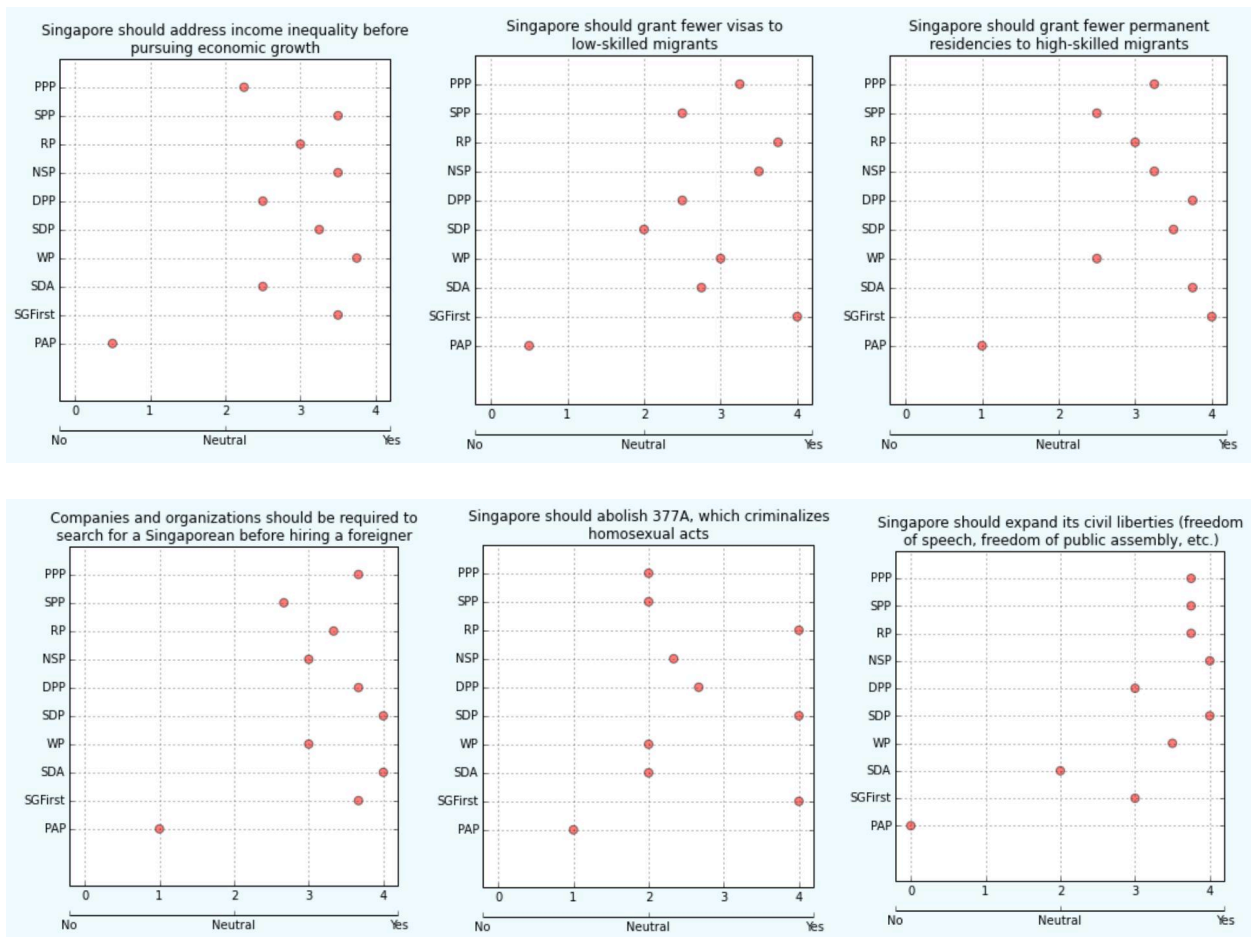
“Arguably only the WP – the sole opposition party to win seats in 2011 or 2015 – and the long-established but currently less successful SDP can claim to be meaningfully institutionalized. Other opposition parties are either heavily personality oriented (SPP, Reform Party), even if not new to the scene, or generally inchoate.”

For instance, consider the National Solidarity Party. For the 2015 General Election campaign, it fielded 12 candidates, the second largest number of opposition candidates, behind the WP’s 28 candidates. Yet its manifesto, in stark contrast to the WP’s 46 page tome, was a mere 6 page power-point slide. It is included in Appendix D. On the second slide, it claimed that “There is no need for a wordy manifesto as the critical issues facing the country and Singaporeans are clear.” It then went on to contend that, if elected, the party would (1) fight to protect Singaporeans jobs, (2) correct the PAP’s population policy, (3) return Singaporeans’ government-mandated retirement savings in the Central Provident Fund, and (4) reduce inequality by amending the government’s current housing policy. There were no elaborations on these four points beyond their one-paragraph explanations.

To the extent that opposition politicians articulate their ideologies and policy positions in campaign speeches rather than documenting them in hard-to-read manifestoes, even a rudimentary analysis of these speeches found little ideological differences between opposition parties. For the 2015 General Election, researchers from the local Yale-NUS College, scrutinized the campaign speeches of the PAP and opposition parties on 15 important topics. Economic issues, such as the tax rate for top income earners and establishing a minimum wage, were covered. Social issues examined included their respective stances on foreign immigration, and

the abolishment of legislative laws that criminalized homosexual acts. Even the parties' positions on political questions, such as whether Singapore should expand its protection for civil liberties, were examined. The researchers then scored parties "on a scale of 0-4 for their agreement with each question. 0 stood for no, 1 for a qualified no, 2 for neutral, 3 for qualified yes, and 4 for yes."

Figure 3: Position Scores for Singapore's Political Parties on Various Issues⁴⁰



⁴⁰ "About Us" *Electionaire*. Last accessed at <http://www.electionaire.info/about> on December 7, 2017.

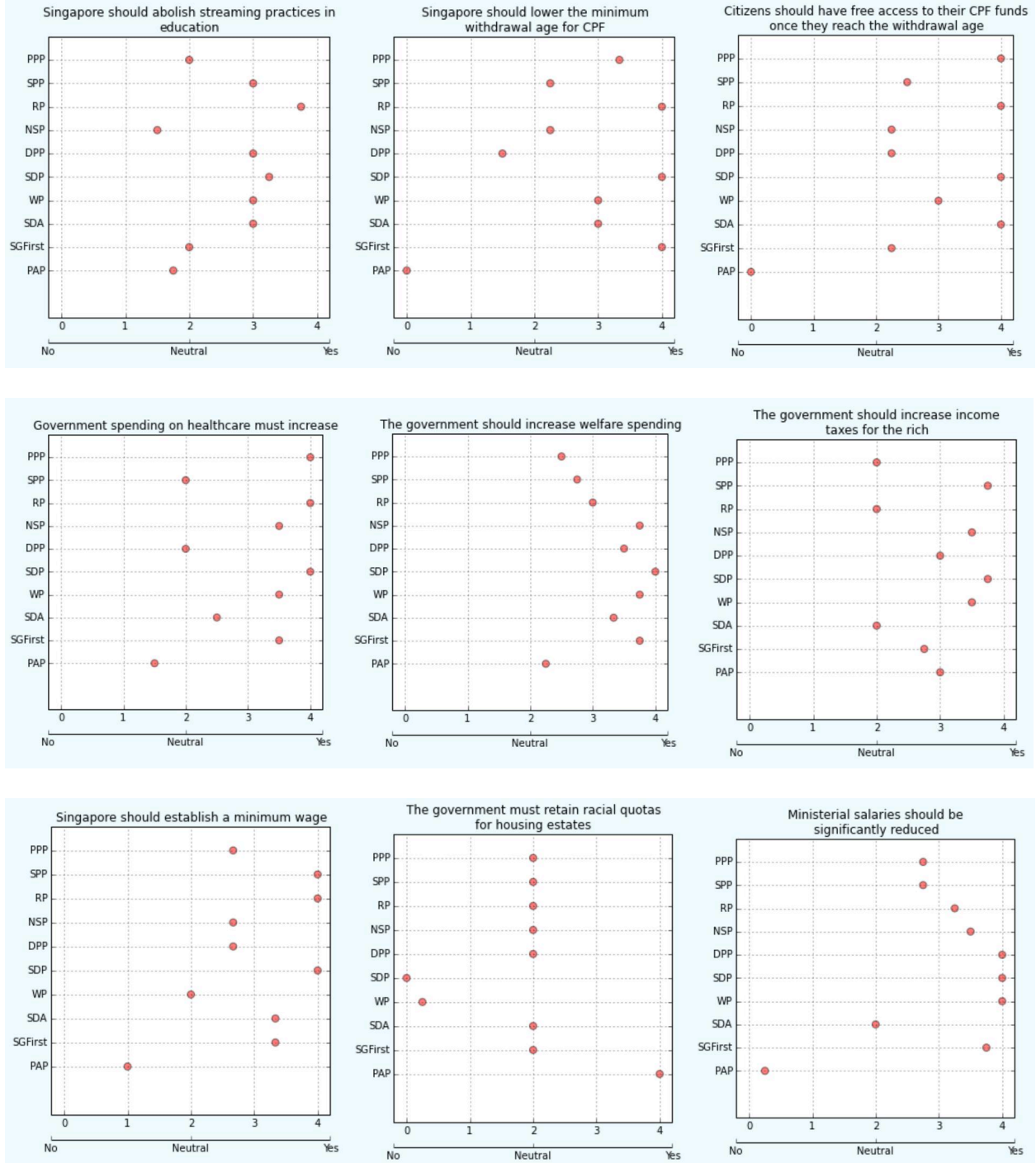


Figure 3 above shows the scores that all political parties received for their positions on the various issues. Either a quick glance at or a close examination of the scores will reveal similar conclusions – First, on almost all of the issues, the opposition parties adopt very similar

positions to each other, never deviating more than 2 points away from each other. The only two issues that opposition parties appear to have more than 2 points away from each other are on the questions of whether Singapore should adopt streaming practices in education, and whether Singapore should lower the minimum withdrawal age for the Central Provident Fund. Both of these issues were not central to the election (T. Lee and Tan 2016; Weiss, Loke, and Choa 2016). Second, on almost all issues again, the ruling dominant PAP generally took opposite positions to the rest of the opposition parties. The only issues in which the PAP's positions appeared to be similar to the opposition were whether Singapore should abolish streaming in education, and whether Singapore should increase income taxes for the rich. While the former topic was not a salient issue, there is general consensus in recent years that higher taxes were inevitable because welfare spending had to increase in light of an aging population (Low and Vadaketh 2014; E. Ong and Tim 2014). Higher taxes on the rich, as compared to a more regressive tax like a consumption tax, is arguably a more popular position to take.

Beyond examining the opposition's published manifestoes, policy papers, and political rhetoric, interviews with opposition leaders themselves revealed that many of them also thought that opposition parties in Singapore were ideologically similar. This was in no small part due to the ruling party's control of the campaign narrative in the media, which effectively forced opposition parties to campaign on their valence credentials, rather than on policy issues. Of the eleven party leaders from seven opposition parties that I interviewed during the course of my fieldwork between July 2016 to July 2017, nine of them concurred that opposition parties in Singapore were all ideologically similar to each other.⁴¹ Opposition leader B put it most bluntly,

⁴¹ SG004, SG005, SG007, SG008, SG009, SG010, SG011, SG012, SG013 Interviews. All locations: Singapore.

“In Singapore, the opposition parties have no branding. There is no ideology. There is no philosophy. They are all the same. There is no differentiation between them.”⁴²

Finally, declassified diplomatic reports from the American and British embassies, copies of which are stored at the National Archives of Singapore⁴³, provide evidence of the ideological vacuum in Singapore’s opposition parties. According to these reports, opposition campaigning in general was generally vague and inconsistent, mere weak scattershots at the autocratic styles of the PAP, rather than deliberate, focused attacks on its median policy positions. They verify the overall assessment that opposition parties in Singapore, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, were either ideologically immature, or very much ideologically similar to each other, if they had any policy program at all.

In 1970, five by-elections were held on the pretext of the PAP attempting to induct new “talent” into parliament (Josey 1972, 46–56). Two candidates from the newly formed United National Front (UNF) contested in these by-elections. Three PAP candidates were elected without contest. The UNF’s founding manifesto is attached in Appendix E. Despite this, however, the British High Commission’s assessment of the campaign noted that “The UNF had no coherent policy and merely served as a focus for discontent with the PAP’s politics.”⁴⁴ The American Embassy agreed in their own report, concluding that “The UNF is a rather incongruous grouping of two extremist Malay and one conservative Chinese political party,

⁴² SG011. Location: Singapore.

⁴³ The National Archives of Singapore has, for some time now, stored copies of important documents related to Singapore from overseas archives. The original source of these declassified diplomatic reports from the American and British embassies are the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, and the U.K. Archives.

⁴⁴ “The stability of Singapore.” Memorandum from British High Commission. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NAB1504, FCO 24/881, Blip 00023). Original source: U.K. National Archives.

whose members seem to have little in common except their hatred of Lee Kuan Yew and his People's Action Party.”⁴⁵

Subsequently, in assessing the 1972 general elections, the reporting officer from the American Embassy in Singapore wrote in a telegram to the Department of State that:

“People's Action Party (PAP) rolls on toward certain victory against lackluster opposition. Voter interest is minimal. This is not surprising considering blandness of opposition party platforms and mediocrity of opposition candidates... Most election issues are standard among opposition parties. All advocate free or decreased public utility rates, housing board rents... Opposition would also abolish or revise internal security act... Other major targets of opposition attack include: national service, defense spending...”⁴⁶

Their British counterparts concurred. In his comprehensive report to back to London, Acting British High Commissioner made the following remarks about the opposition's non-existent policy proposals for the same 1972 general elections:

“The opposition parties attacked the PAP for being harsh and undemocratic and the familiar bogeys of national service, foreign economic exploitation, the Internal Security Act and the Employment Act were all given an airing... The opposition parties failed to develop any major issues into a concerted attack on

⁴⁵ “The United National Front.” A-217. Airgram from the American Embassy in Singapore to the Department of State. Source: National Archives of Singapore. (NA3230, Bliip 199). Original source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

⁴⁶ “Singapore elections.” Telegram from American Embassy in Singapore to Secretary of State in Washington, DC. Source: National Archives of Singapore (D2015090031, Accession no. 2441). Original source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

the PAP or to present credible alternative policies... the opposition parties presented no credible alternative and owed much of their support to protest votes against the style rather than the politics of the PAP Government...”⁴⁷

Fast forward to the 1980 general election, a pre-electoral report prepared by the British High Commission suggested that:

“The various opposition parties have again proved that they are their own worse enemies. Instead of presenting coherent platforms of their own, they have relied on inconsistent and largely ineffectual attacks on the government, and have made little attempt to coordinate their positions...”⁴⁸

Appendix F demonstrates these “inconsistent and largely ineffectual attacks.” They showcase two sets of opposition parties’ campaign materials from the archives – one from the Barisan Socialis, and one from the United People’s Front (UPF). The two parties were amongst seven opposition parties that contested against the PAP. The UPF fielded the most number of candidates with 14, while the Barisan Socialis fielded only 4, on account of its declining strength after its crippling boycott of elections in 1968. Both sets of documents show that the opposition parties aimed to appeal to the voters’ general grievances against the autocratic methods of the PAP government, and specifically, the autocratic methods of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Yet, whenever the parties ventured into more substantive territories with regards to economic or

⁴⁷ “Singapore General Election 1972” Report from the British High Commission. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NAB1423, Accession no. FCO24/1463, FCO 24/1464). Original source: U.K. National Archives.

⁴⁸ “Singapore Election: Eve of the Poll.” Report from the British High Commission. Source: National Archives of Singapore (D2014030078, Blip 0009-0016). Original source: U.K. National Archives.

foreign policy, the appeals were a grab-bag mix of abolishing or amending seemingly unjust laws. Another report detailing a British High Commission officer's meeting with Harbans Singh, leader of the UPF, produced the following assessment:

“It is almost impossible to say what the politics of the UPF are, as so many of Harbans Singh's claims were mutually exclusive, and wildly extravagant... It was impossible to pin Harbans Singh down on internal politics for Singapore – other than the abolition of most taxes, charges, rents etc. This was because, he said, the UPF would not need distinct internal or economic policies for Singapore when they had taken over Malaysia and kicked Hussein Onn out... A brief glance at the various UPF manifesto sheets (attached) will give an accurate picture of Harbans Singh's style, and make it clear why any detailed analysis of his political philosophy would be a complete waste of time.”⁴⁹

2.2 Low incentives but high costs to develop joint coalition campaign signals

Opposition party ideological uncertainty and similarity mean that voters who continue to vote for such parties in autocratic elections are staunch anti-autocrats. No amount of threats of autocratic repression will undermine their belief that the ruling party must be taken down a notch at the very least, or thrown out altogether. As long as a political party identifies themselves as “opposition” inclined, then these voters will turn out to vote for that party, no matter its ideological basis. Correspondingly, when voters do not discriminate between opposition parties, opposition parties encounter little to no cross-party strategic voting problem. Party leaders can be

⁴⁹ “United People's Front.” Report from the British High Commission. Source: National Archives of Singapore (D2014030078, Blip 0018-0029). Original source: U.K. National Archives.

assured that their candidates' votes will be maximized so long as they avoid contesting against each other in the same electoral districts.

All eleven opposition leaders interviewed in Singapore said that they foresaw no explicit benefit to their electoral fortunes if they formed an opposition coalition with substantive joint coalition campaigns.⁵⁰ They repeatedly reiterated that there was no need for any pre-electoral coalition between the opposition parties because “there was no use for it.” To their mind, the manifestoes of all the opposition parties “were all the same.”⁵¹ Furthermore, party leaders dithered over whether such a move would actually increase their vote share and increase their chances of winning extra constituencies against the PAP. All assumed that they would be able to maximize their vote share so long as they did not split the opposition votes by fielding multiple opposition candidates in each electoral district. The idea of attracting the votes of the supporters of other opposition parties did not cross their mind. Opposition party leader C declared,

“I can tell you this. If I can make the guarantee that if we come together in an alliance we will win, then everyone will come. I cannot. The pull factor is not strong enough.”⁵²

If the “pull factors” were weak, then the “push factors” were undoubtedly strong. Throughout my interviews opposition leaders repeatedly referred to the personal costs of coalition formation – the reduced autonomy to make decisions when they need to work with other opposition leaders with whom they have personality differences.⁵³ For instance, as

⁵⁰ SG004, SG005, SG006, SG007, SG008, SG009, SG010, SG011, SG012, SG013, SG014 Interviews. All locations: Singapore.

⁵¹ SG010. Location: Singapore.

⁵² SG009. Location: Singapore.

⁵³ SG004, SG005, SG006, SG007, SG008, SG009, SG010, SG011, SG012, SG013, SG014 Interviews. All locations: Singapore.

mentioned earlier, a rift occurred between Chee Soon Juan and Chiam See Tong who were both in the SDP in 1993. Chiam See Tong then left the SDP and established the SPP. Since then, both parties have refused to work with each other, with both sides citing “past political baggage” for their irreconcilable differences. Opposition leader A claimed for all opposition parties in general,

“Going into the next general election, I do not think you are going to see any substantive significant change in terms of the opposition forming up.... They got their own constituencies.... But then the big difference is in terms of how XXX and YYY⁵⁴ can get along.... You still got to talk to that guy. You have to work with him. Is that worth all the trouble? Worth all the effort? That kind of situation. And when you think about it, it does not really matter.”⁵⁵

To be sure, opposition leaders have experimented with relatively weaker signals of opposition unity over the decades. In 1976, the four party Joint Opposition Council (JOC) alliance produced a common manifesto (included in Appendix C). In it, the JOC called for numerous policy changes such as the reduction of various taxes, the release of political detainees, and the revocation of the Internal Security Act. Yet beyond the mere release of this manifesto, the component parties undermined themselves by not following through with other forms of anti-regime joint campaigns (Donough 1977, chapter 3 and 4). The parties retained their respective party logos and campaigned using them. They also campaigned separately in the districts where they contested. Moreover, the JOC also did not include the largest opposition party at that time, the WP. Thus, the common

⁵⁴ The identities of specific politicians have been anonymized as agreed with the interviewee.

⁵⁵ SG004. Location: Singapore.

Table 2: Interviews with Singapore Opposition Party Leaders

No.	Code	Opposition Party Leader	Gender	Age	Race	Ideologically Similar? ¹	No Benefit? ²	High Cost? ³	Informal Rule? ⁴	Misrepresent? ⁵
1	SG004	A	M	55	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
2	SG005	D	F	54	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
3	SG006	E	M		Indian	0	1	1	0	1
4	SG007	F	M	67	Malay	1	1	1	1	1
5	SG008	G	M	61	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
6	SG009	C	M	47	Chinese	1	1	1	0	1
7	SG010	H	M	63	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
8	SG011	B	M	52	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
9	SG012	I	M	49	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
10	SG013	J	M	32	Chinese	1	1	1	1	1
11	SG014	K	M	40	Chinese	0	1	1	1	1

Note: All interviews were conducted in Singapore between July 2016 to July 2017 for about 1 hour each. Interviewees were canvassed through snowball sampling. I first started with a few personal contacts before asking for subsequent referrals to other opposition party leaders. Due to the sensitive nature of the interviews, I agreed to conceal their identities and party membership, as per the rules of the Institutional Review Board. Before each interview, I explained the nature of my research project, and obtained their verbal consent to quote them.

Coding Rules:

¹ Did the interviewee say that opposition parties in Singapore were ideologically similar to each other? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

² Did the interviewee say that there was little to no benefit of forming a pre-electoral coalition with anti-regime signals such as a common policy platform? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

³ Did the interviewee say that there were very high costs to forming a pre-electoral coalition with anti-regime signals such as a common policy platform? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

⁴ Did the interviewee articulate the informal rule for bargaining between opposition parties over the allocation of different electoral districts for opposition parties to contest (i.e. parties that had contested in the district previously had first dibs)? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

⁵ Did the interviewee agree that opposition parties oftentimes attempted to misrepresent their relative strengths? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

policy platform lacked costly ideological compromises and credibility as a signal to mobilize all opposition supporters.

More recently for the 2015 General Elections, five out of the eight opposition parties contesting the elections tried to mobilize supporters with a badge with the phrase “Vote for Change.”⁵⁶ Yet, the parties did not follow up by campaigning with the slogan at all. It generated no attention beyond the initial mention of its existence at a press conference. As expected, it did little to galvanize support, and the PAP won the elections with its best vote share since 2001.

2.3 Learning to bargaining over non-competition agreements

If opposition leaders in Singapore foresaw no benefits to deep cooperation, they, nevertheless, have almost always understood and appreciated the logic of forging non-competition agreements to resolve the strategic entry collective action problem when contesting against the dominant PAP (Ibrahim and Ong 2016, 71–72). Figure 4 below shows the proportion of contested districts with more than one opposition candidate in every election from 1968 to 2015. The figure demonstrates that, except for general elections in 1972, opposition parties agreed to avoid competing against each other for the vast majority of districts that were contested.⁵⁷ Between 1976 to 2015, only 8.3% of contested districts had more than one opposition candidate. Disregarding independent candidates that oftentimes forced these multi-cornered contests, only 5.4% of contested districts had more than one opposition candidate.

⁵⁶ Channel News Asia. 26 August 2015. “‘Vote for Change’ badge launched as symbol of opposition unity.” Last accessed on April 24, 2017 at <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/vote-for-change-badge-launched-as-symbol-of-opposition-unity-8238484>

⁵⁷ Note that these are figures based on the total number of districts that opposition parties contested in. Oftentimes, districts were not contested. For instance, in 1980 and 2001, nearly half of all districts available were not contested. For GRCs, I counted each team of candidates as a single candidate because victory continued to rely on the first-past-the-post plurality rule for the entire team.

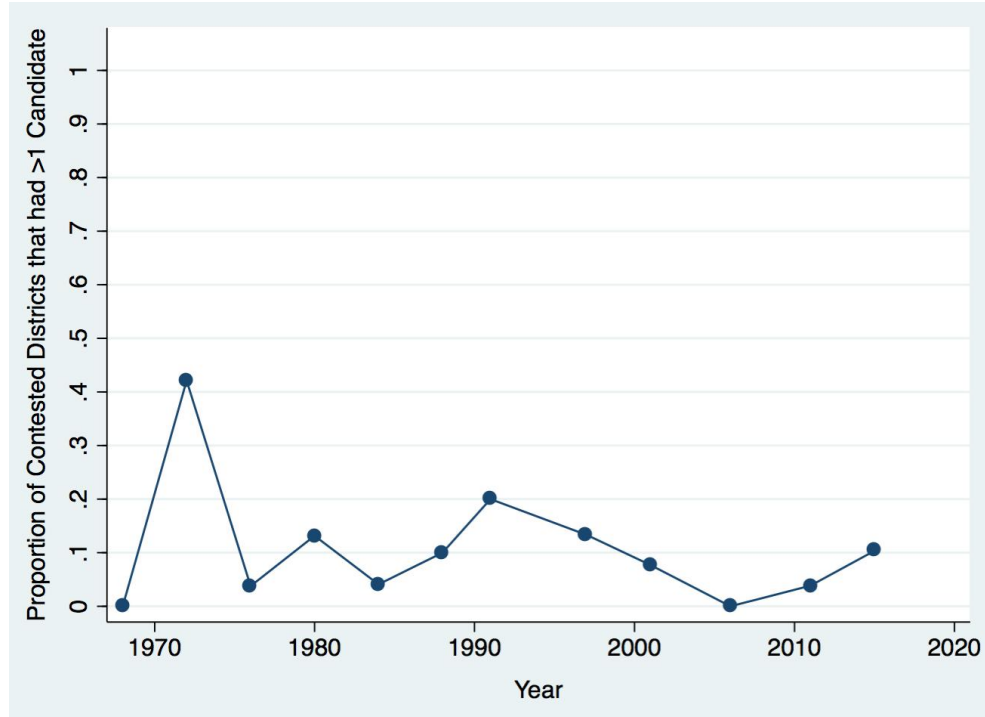


Figure 4: Graph of Proportion of Multi-Cornered Contests Between 1968-2015

(Source: Data from Elections Department website)

The general election in 1972 was an exception because they were the first truly competitive elections in post-independent Singapore (Josey 1972). When Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965, opposition parties objected to the separation and boycotted the first general elections in 1968 to delegitimize the PAP government. In approaching the 1972 general elections, opposition parties reconsidered their boycott. With PAP's complete dominance of political power in the country, they had been cast into the political wilderness. Eager to correct their earlier mistake and to use the opportunity to broadcast their message of democratic reform to the rest of the population, opposition parties jumped into the fray. Unfortunately, since no single opposition party had won any seats in 1968, there was no publicly available information

about how strong each party was. Therefore, all had maximum incentives to misrepresent their weaknesses by making superficial claims that boosted their party's publicly perceived strength to contest more electoral districts. For instance, both the WP and the UNF publicly announced that their respective parties were making preparations to contest in all constituencies against the PAP.⁵⁸ The People's Front declared that they would field candidates in about half of all the available constituencies.⁵⁹

Close observers of domestic politics were not convinced by such boastful claims. Further declassified political reports from the American and British embassies suggest that these political parties were much weaker than they claimed to be in public. An American embassy airgram summarizing the notes of a meeting between an American diplomat and leaders of the UNF concluded that "the UNF has no significant popular support at present and has no prospect of gaining support under present conditions" in late 1969.⁶⁰ Another airgram analyzing the Barisan Socialis (BS) noted that active membership had declined from 5,000 in the early 1960s to only about 700.⁶¹ The recantation of its previous leader Lim Chin Siong and the ineffective leadership of its new leader Lee Siew Choh had greatly diminished what little influence it had amongst the Singaporean public. As for the Chinese-based People's Front (PF), it was "the most active" among all opposition parties. But in truth, the influence of the party only extended to "yet another pressure group within Singapore agitating for closer ties with Mother China."⁶² Summarizing these sentiments, a lengthy report analyzing all opposition parties described them as "lackluster," "desperate," "woefully lacking in political experience," with "small, weak shoe-

⁵⁸ The Straits Times. 23 September 1971. "Workers' Party to contest all 58 seats." and The Straits Times. 25 October 1971. "UNF to contest all the 65 seats: Vetrivelu."

⁵⁹ New Nation. 15 June 1972. "People's Front hits at UNF leaders."

⁶⁰ "The United National Front." A-217. Airgram from the American Embassy in Singapore to the Department of State. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NA3230, Blip 199). Original source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

⁶¹ "The Extreme Left Wing in Singapore." A-57 Airgram from the American Embassy in Singapore to the Department of State. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NAB1100, Blip 159). Original Source: U.S. National Archives and Record Administration.

⁶² "13/109: The People's Front Party." Report from the British High Commission. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NAB 1423, FCO 24/1463). Original Source: UK National Archives.

string operations” that were “merely a phenomenon of an election year whose permanence is highly suspect; all of them could conceivably disappear following the next election.”⁶³

Despite their self-aggrandizement, opposition parties did make strong efforts to forge a non-competition agreement (Josey 1972, 60–99). The People’s Front appealed to other opposition parties not to contest in their 20 “stronghold” districts, so as “to avoid splitting the anti-PAP votes.”⁶⁴ They explicitly stated, “What we want is a one by one straight fight with the PAP.”⁶⁵ The People’s Front even signed a non-competition agreement with the WP.⁶⁶ Yet, despite the incentives to bargain and coordinate with each other on the allocation of districts, the countervailing incentives to misrepresent their true strength in the first competitive general elections proved difficult to resist. The intransigence was reflected in the numerous rounds of negotiations, where the WP accused Dr Lee Siew Choh’s Barisan Socialis “of adopting a ‘take it or leave it’ attitude.”⁶⁷ The People’s Front criticized the UNF leaders for being “a bunch of publicity seekers.”⁶⁸ Ultimately, 24 out of 57 districts contested saw three-cornered contests. The public was not convinced by this display of opposition infighting, and the PAP won a clean-sweep of all the contested seats.

Since 1972, Singaporean opposition leaders have been much more cognizant of the negative consequences of not engaging in collective coordination. In the most recent general elections in 2015, bargaining over the allocation of 29 contested districts among 8 opposition parties was resolved over two meetings in a little more than a month, with only one small district the subject of conflict. My interviews with the opposition party leaders also revealed several

⁶³ Parliamentary elections approaching in Singapore.” A136 Airgram from the American Embassy in Singapore to the Department of State. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NAB1100, Blip 166). Original Source: U.S. National Archives and Record Administration.

⁶⁴ The Straits Times. 11 February 1971. “It won’t work, say the other Opposition parties.”

⁶⁵ The Straits Times. 10 February 1972. “Lay off our 20 wards plea by the Front.”

⁶⁶ The Straits Times. 6 August 1972. “Opposition move to avoid splitting of votes: People’s Front and Worker’s Party sign electoral pact.”

⁶⁷ The Straits Times. 13 June 1972. “Parties fail to form a common front: outlook dim and Dr Lee is blamed.”

⁶⁸ New Nation. 15 June 1972. “People’s Front hits at UNF leaders.”

findings. At the outset, they all confirmed that the logic and benefit of coordinating over district allocation against the PAP was clear. No one wanted multi-cornered contests where opposition parties would split the votes away from each other to deny a victory for themselves.

Furthermore, opposition party leaders implicitly understand that time and resources spent in the bargaining process is time and resources wasted. Those same time and resources in the short electoral campaign window can be better utilized to mount attacks against the ruling PAP.

To reduce the “transaction costs” spent negotiating over district allocation among so many parties, therefore, opposition parties have developed and observed an informal rule over 12 cycles of general elections. The informal rule is this: If party A had contested in a particular district against the PAP in the previous election, then they had first dibs in staking a claim to contest in that particular district for the next election.⁶⁹ This rule applied for all parties unless a separate party B could create a justifiable reason why they themselves should be allowed to contest instead. Debate then raged among opposing opposition leaders about what was a justifiable reason. New parties seeking to stake their claims in districts previously contested by other parties oftentimes misrepresented their strength in their relatively new-found popularities.⁷⁰ Dying parties seeking to protect their districts from being contested by other expanding opposition parties would point to their longevity, the number and quality of potential candidates that they could field, or their long-standing grassroots activities in that particular district to bolster their claims of popular support. As a key opposition leader A confirmed,

“You start off first with having to look big and muscular. Everybody huffing and puffing themselves up to look bigger than they actually are. Some will blink.

⁶⁹ SG004, SG005, SG007, SG008, SG010, SG011, SG012, SG013, SG014 Interviews. All locations: Singapore.

⁷⁰ SG004, SG005, SG006, SG007, SG008, SG009, SG010, SG011, SG012, SG013, SG014 Interviews. All locations: Singapore.

Some won't. Then in the end, if we can agree we agree. If not, three-cornered fight. More often than not, you know someone will blink and then the game of chicken will come to an end.”⁷¹

To be sure, disputes oftentimes arose due to autocratic meddling rather than intra opposition intransigence. This occurs through gerrymandering. In Singapore, the Prime Minister has the prerogative to decide when to convene the Electoral Boundaries Review Commission (EBRC) before every general election. He also has the prerogative to decide which government bureaucrats sit on the Commission. The Commission then works and reports to the Prime Minister, working under the terms of reference provided specifically by the Prime Minister himself. There is no transparency in the Commission's proceedings about why certain electoral boundaries change, why certain constituencies are deleted while other new constituencies are created, other than some public hand-waving about “population and demographic shifts.”⁷² It is no surprise that Singapore's score on the delimitation of district boundaries is a miserly 14 out of 100 in the expert-coded Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index, the joint second lowest score in the world alongside the United States (Norris et al. 2017). The large sizes of the multi-member districts in the “GRC system” implemented in 1988 also aids gerrymandering (N. Tan 2013). As such, because the boundaries of electoral districts change in every election, opposition parties cannot coordinate their district allocation strategy in anticipation of forthcoming elections, but must wait until the exact boundaries of the new constituencies are released in the EBRC report.

⁷¹ SG004. Location: Singapore.

⁷² In a news article, the former head of the Elections Department, Mr Lee Seng Lup said that reasons for constituency changes and non-changes include “population shifts,” “not to disturb the voters too much,” and claimed that “whatever you do... cynics will cast doubt.” See The Straits Times. 25 December 2017. “ELD marks 70 years of ensuring fair elections.” Last accessed at <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/eld-marks-70-years-of-ensuring-fair-elections> on December 26, 2017. For a more explicit but still unsatisfactory account of “population shifts,” see The Straits Times. 24 July 2015. “how the Electoral Boundaries Review Committee arrived at its report.” Last accessed at <http://www.straitstimes.com/politics/how-the-electoral-boundaries-review-committee-arrived-at-its-report> on December 26, 2017.

Most importantly, though, the implicit informal rule of “first dibs” by the opposition party that contested previously in a district is oftentimes upended.

For example, consider the dispute between the NSP and the WP over which party would contest in Marine Parade GRC and MacPherson SMC for the 2015 General Elections (E. Ong 2016).⁷³ In the previous 2011 General Elections, NSP had contested in the five-member Marine Parade GRC, while WP had contested in the adjacent single-member Joo Chiat SMC. For 2015, however, Joo Chiat SMC was inexplicably absorbed into Marine Parade GRC and completely deleted off the electoral map, while MacPherson SMC was carved out of Marine Parade to be a single-member district on its own. By virtue of the fact that the WP had contested in Joo Chiat SMC in 2011, they seized the opportunity to claim that it had legitimacy to contest in both Marine Parade GRC and MacPherson SMC in 2015. Incredulous at this “territorial grab,” the NSP tried to negotiate some sort of a settlement in two all-party negotiations. Yet, the WP rebuffed their approaches and did not attend the second meeting at all.

At first, it appeared that the NSP recognized the futility of trying to get the WP to withdraw from Marine Parade and MacPherson. The NSP announced on August 10, 2015 that they would not contest in both constituencies. After all, it was fairly obvious that the WP was by far the “stronger” opposition party. It was the largest opposition party in parliament at that point, having 7 fully elected Members of Parliament and 2 non-constituency Members of Parliament. The NSP had no seats, and in fact, had no parliamentary presence at all since its establishment in 1987, save for a single non-constituency Member of Parliament between 2001 and 2006. Yet, nine days later, the NSP reneged on its own decision. They declared that they would give up

⁷³ For the exact boundaries, see “The Report of the Electoral Boundaries Review Committee, 2015.” Last accessed at <http://www.eld.gov.sg/pdf/White%20Paper%20on%20the%20Report%20of%20the%20Electoral%20Boundaries%20Review%20Committee%202015.pdf> on December 26, 2017.

contesting in Marine Parade, but would contest in MacPherson SMC anyway “because the WP is too arrogant.”⁷⁴ The NSP betrayed its status as a dying party when its candidate said,

“Everyone was surprised (by our decision to contest in MacPherson). Even experts thought we wouldn’t enter a three-corner fight. But this is life and death. If we keep backing down, residents and the general population will think we are very weak. An MP cannot be weak – how are you supposed to speak up for residents if you are weak?”⁷⁵

Subsequently, in justifying its decision, the acting secretary general Lim Tean attempted to misrepresent his party’s relative strength vis-à-vis the WP, by emphasizing other indicators of the strength of his party. He referred to his party’s popularity from its previous electoral result, its internal discipline, and leadership amongst the opposition:

“I believe to a very large extent we have avoided multi-cornered fights, but for MacPherson we had to do it... We did very well in the last GE (general election) and we have already made a huge concession to WP there... That decision to contest in MacPherson was made a few weeks ago, and we’ve never departed from that decision. NSP has been the most active party promoting opposition unity. We initiated talks to avoid three-cornered fights.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ TODAY. 4 September 2015. “Tin Pei Ling’s new status as a mum is a weakness: Cheo.”

⁷⁵ TODAY. 4 September 2015. “Tin Pei Ling’s new status as a mum is a weakness: Cheo.”

⁷⁶ Channelnewsasia. 1 September 2015. “We had to enter a 3-cornered fight in MacPherson, say NSP leaders.” Last accessed at <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/we-had-to-enter-a-3-cornered-fight-in-macpherson-say-nsp-leaders-8252754> on December 26, 2017.

In the end, the results in MacPherson SMC verified the relative strengths of the two opposition parties. While the PAP romped away with victory with 65.6% of the votes, the WP's candidate earned a credible 33.6% vote share, and the NSP candidate polled less than 1%. Not only did the NSP waste precious time and resources, its candidate also lost his US\$10,000 deposit.

To conclude, Singapore's valence-based autocratic electoral environment has conditioned and limited the growth of its opposition parties around charismatic personalities. Because Singaporean voters demand for valence-based credentials from its political candidates, the ideological bases of opposition parties are circumscribed. If any ideologies and policy positions exist at all, the parties largely have similar left-of-center economic and social policies. And because voters perceive opposition parties to be generally substitutable, opposition party leaders encounter minimal incentives and high costs to any deep forms of inter-party cooperation, such as a common policy platform or joint campaigns with a common coalition name and logo for all opposition parties. Instead, they focus their energies on bargaining and coordinating with each other to avoid multi-cornered contests in order to maximize their vote shares within those districts that they contest in. Bargaining between opposition parties is generally successful, aided by an informal rule that opposition parties developed over the decades. Infrequent instances of bargaining failures occurred when information about the relative strengths of opposition parties were missing, such as during the first ever competitive elections in 1972, or when old and dying opposition parties had incentives to misrepresent their relative strengths. Autocratic gerrymandering impaired the bargaining process and also fostered bargaining failures.

3. Non-competition agreements and precarious joint coalition campaigns in Malaysia

3.1 Ideologically niche and polarized opposition parties in a spatial-based electoral environment

Unlike opposition parties in Singapore that compete against the dominant PAP by emphasizing their charismatic leaders, Malaysian opposition parties are more ideological in terms of their party membership and their mass support bases (Crouch 1996a; K. M. Ong 2015; Saravanamuttu 2016). This has affected how they campaign during elections to appeal to their own supporters, to moderate regime supporters, as well as to anti-regime supporters who may loathe them ideologically. In this section, I first briefly delineate the origins of Malaysia's main opposition parties up till 2015, and explain the degree and extent to which they are ideologically polarized from each other.

After Malaysia's divorce with Singapore in 1965, the Alliance – comprising of UMNO, MCA, and MIC – now encountered both old and new foes. The Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS) is an Islamic party formed in November 1951 under the blessings of UMNO's original leader Dato Onn, and UMNO's head of religious affairs bureau, Haji Ahmad Faud (Mohamed 1994; Noor 2004, 2014). Dato Onn's fluctuating relationship with UMNO due to his attempts to allow non-Malay membership into the party lead to PAS's own vexing political status. Because many PAS members were also UMNO members, the majority of PAS members felt inclined to support UMNO politically. Yet, Dato Onn's subsequent departure from UMNO to form the IMP lead to "dual loyalties" (Mohamed 1994, 34; Noor 2014, 42). PAS party members felt loyalty to Dato Onn himself, but were reluctant to support his agenda of a fully integrated multi-ethnic party. In the end, Haji Ahmad Faud's departure to Dato Onn's newly formed Parti Negara, alongside other leaders' exit back to UMNO, lead to a consolidation of PAS's Islamic base around a core group of conservative Islamists.

PAS's subsequent leaders in the form of Dr Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Mohammad Asri Muda, Yusof Rawa, Fadzil Noor, Abdul Hadi Awang, while each imbuing their own

interpretation and orientation of Islam into the party, have all never wavered from PAS's stated objective of transforming Malaysia into an Islamic state governed by Islamic principles and law. For PAS, UMNO's moderate stance in sharing power with the MCA and the MIC, and also in creating the Federation of Malaysia through the inclusion of Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak, meant that UMNO was not "Islamic enough." Indeed, the party focused its campaign cavalry in the 1964 and 1969 General Elections on two particular dimensions. First, the party argued that Malaysia's new constitution "was nothing but a sham since it had not lead to the adoption of specifically "Islamic principles of administration"" (Mohamed 1994, 91). Second, the party also focused its attacks on the new UMNO president and Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, "whom they derided as a 'secular, Westernised' elite and aristocrat" (Noor 2014, 61). It warned Malay-Muslim voters that the real choice in the elections was either "God or the Tunku" (Drummond and Hawkins 1970, 324).

Additionally, PAS party membership to this day still remains closed to non-Muslims. Non-Muslims can only join the PAS Supporters Club – a PAS-affiliated organization with no official influence. Although PAS's leadership is technically headed by its large 37-member central working committee which is elected by its party members⁷⁷, this committee is overshadowed by the Syura Council, an unelected group of 17 Muslim ulama clerics, who directly oversee the committee's work and may overturn decisions made by the committee.⁷⁸ The Syura Council is headed by PAS's "spiritual leader," who at various times wields equal or more influence than the PAS president himself. In this way, then, PAS entrenched itself as Malaysia's sole Islamic opposition party – an ideologically niche party in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic

⁷⁷ See List of PAS Central Working Committee Members 2017-2019 at <https://pas.org.my/info/pimpinan/ajk-pas-pusat/11354-senarai-pimpinan-pas-pusat-sesi-2017-2019>, last accessed 29 December 2017.

⁷⁸ The term "ulama" refers to a learned Muslim teacher of Islam who has received his education directly from a line of teachers traced back to Prophet Muhammad himself. See List of PAS Syura Council Members 2015-2020 at <https://pas.org.my/info/pimpinan/majlis-syura/7085-senarai-majlis-syura-ulamak-sesi-2015-2020>, last accessed 29 December 2017.

country. As we shall see in the rest of the sections, however, PAS has found it convenient to vary and re-frame its emphasis on its stated objectives, depending on its intended audience, at different times throughout the past five decades.

The other important new opposition party that emerged after 1965 was Democratic Action Party (DAP). The DAP was formed in October 1965 from the ashes of the PAP's ill-fated decision to contest in the 1964 General Elections in Malaysia. Devan Nair, the sole winner of a parliamentary seat in those elections, became the leader of the DAP after Singapore's expulsion. Lim Kit Siang, Nair's political secretary, took over as Secretary-General of the DAP in 1969, and would remain as the DAP's leader for the next 30 years. Lim's son, Lim Guan Eng, took over as the party's Secretary-General in 2004. The younger Lim is still party leader, and current Chief Minister of the Penang State Government.

The DAP was founded on, and still adheres to, a niche ideology of a non-communal, secular, and democratic socialist Malaysia. Its founding manifesto is attached in Appendix G, in which it declares that the party is "irrevocably committed to the ideal of a free, democratic and socialist Malaysia, based on the principles of racial equality..." This declaration echoes the declaration of the PAP-lead and ill-fated Malaysian Solidarity Convention in 1964. As a result, the DAP finds itself diametrically opposed to ethnic-based political parties such as the UMNO, MCA, MIC, as well as the power-sharing, but UMNO-dominant, Alliance arrangement. For the DAP, no one race has superior claims of "ownership" of Malaysia, nor can any single religion claim to govern Malaysia based on its own principles.

Unsurprisingly, the DAP's party membership and mass support base are overwhelmingly non-Malay. Of DAP's current 36 Members of Parliament, there is 1 Malay, 6 Indians, 28

Chinese, and 1 of mixed parentage.⁷⁹ Of its 95 elected representatives in state assemblies, there is 1 Malay, 14 Indians, and 80 Chinese.⁸⁰ An “ethnic count” of the combined national total reveals that the DAP’s fully elected representatives consist of 82% Chinese, 15% Indians, and 3% Others. This is highly skewed proportion, considering that Malaysia is 67% Bumiputera/Malay, 25% Chinese, 7% Indians.⁸¹ The DAP’s 30-strong central executive committee is also highly skewed, with 23 Chinese in this top leadership committee.⁸²

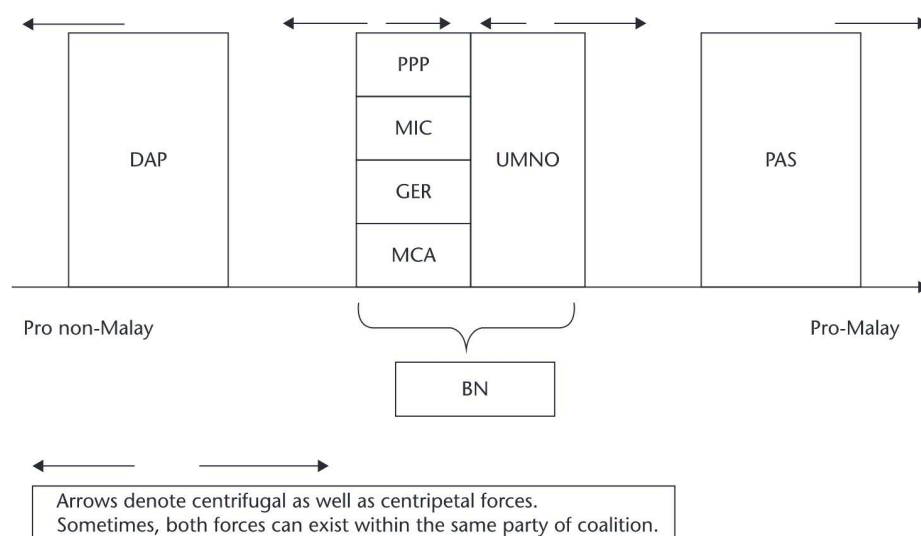


Figure 5: Party Positions in Malaysia⁸³

⁷⁹ See DAP’s list of Members of Parliament at <https://dapmalaysia.org/en/about-us/elected-representatives/parliament/>, last accessed on 29 December 2017.

⁸⁰ My count of the DAP’s listed State Assembly representatives at <https://dapmalaysia.org/en/about-us/elected-representatives/state-assemblies/>, last accessed on 29 December 2017.

⁸¹ See Department of Statistics Malaysia, Census 2010 “Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristic Report 2010” last accessed at https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemeByCat&cat=117&bul_id=MDMxdHZjWTk1SjFzTzNkRXYzcVZjd09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZkiWdzQ4TihUUT09 on 29 December 2017.

⁸² See The Star Online. 12 November 2017. “DAP finalizes CEC lineup.” Last accessed at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/11/12/dap-finalises-cec-lineup/> on 29 December 2017.

⁸³ Source: K. M. Ong (2015, 23). PPP refers to the People’s Progressive Party, a component party of the BN with no elected seats. GER refers to Gerakan. For more on the People’s Progressive Party, see Vasil (1971, chapter 6). Gerakan, also known as Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, was formed in 1968 from remnants of the United Democratic Party. The party controlled the Penang state government from 1969 to 2008. For more on Gerakan, see Khor and Khoo (2008). For more on the United Democratic Party, see Vasil (1971, chapter 7).

Correspondingly, we can now locate the two major opposition parties together with UMNO and its partners along Malaysia's principal ideological cleavage – how political power in the country should be distributed amongst the country's multiple ethnic groups. Figure 5, developed by current DAP Member of Parliament Ong Kian Ming, illustrates how the two parties position themselves at polarized ends of this ideological spectrum against the Barisan Nasional (the successor of the Alliance after 1969). As expected, the DAP is generally pro-non-Malay, consistently campaigning on the platform that Malaysia is a secular state, and must judiciously protect the socio-political rights of non-Malay ethnic and non-Muslim religious minorities. PAS is unapologetically pro-Malay, maintaining that Malaysia is an Islamic state, and must strive to implement Islamic law in the country.

This situation of a PAS-DAP polarized opposition was not constant throughout the 1965 to 2015 period. For one, PAS itself was not even part of the opposition between 1972 to 1977. In those five years, PAS was, in fact, a component party of the BN. At that time, the BN was reborn as the successor to the Alliance after inter-ethnic riots the Malays and the Chinese erupted on 13 May 1969. PAS joined BN because Tun Abdul Razak, the new leader of UMNO, promised developmental aid to Kelantan (PAS's stronghold) as well as cabinet positions in exchange for reduced inflammatory Islamic rhetoric from PAS (Mohamed 1994, 116–29; Noor 2014, 82–85). The objective was to have as large a consociational coalition government as possible in order to resolve inter-ethnic disputes within the government at the elite level, while preserving mass inter-ethnic peace. Regardless, PAS was expelled from the BN in late 1977 after an irreconcilable conflict between PAS and UMNO emerged over the leadership and management of Kelantan (Mohamed 1994, 129–48; Noor 2014, 92–94). Henceforth from the 1978 general elections onwards, “the opposition was now effectively polarized between PAS on the Malay

side and the DAP on the non-Malay side, each seeking totally incompatible ethnic demands” (Ramanathan and Mohamad Hamdan 1988, 17)

Second, there are two other important opposition parties within the 1965 to 2015 period that appear orthogonal to the overall picture of a polarized opposition. They are Semangat '46 and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR). Both parties were formed by ex-UMNO leaders who challenged the UMNO leadership, namely Dr Mahathir Mohamad, lost, and then split with the dominant ruling party.

In the case of Semangat '46, it was formed in 1989 after Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, Mahathir's Minister for Trade and Industry, failed to oust Mahathir as UMNO's leader in 1987 (James 1988; Mauzy 1988; Means 1990; Nathan 1990). Mahathir then moved swiftly to remove Tengku Razaleigh's "Team B" faction of fellow UMNO leaders completely from the Cabinet, which resulted in their subsequent escape to Semangat '46. The PKR was formed in 1999 under somewhat similar circumstances on the back of the Reformasi movement (Slater 2003; Weiss 2006). Anwar Ibrahim, Mahathir's protégé and heir apparent, was sacked by UMNO after he expressed disagreement with his mentor over his handling of the Asian Financial Crisis. His subsequent arrest and abuse in jail on charges of adultery and sodomy galvanized mass street protests by a broad range of civil society organizations. These protests then morphed into an electoral movement when Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Anwar's wife, set up PKR to institutionalize and transform mass dissent into electoral seats.

The birth story of both Semangat '46 and PKR thus different significantly from PAS and the DAP. The former two parties were both born from a momentary split in the dominant ruling

Table 3: Malaysia's Multiple Opposition Parties

Opposition Party	Year Founded	Recent Prominent Leader(s)	Ideology (If Any)	Recent Electoral Performances ⁸⁴		
				General Election Year	No. of Parliamentary Seats Won	State Governments Won
Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS)	1951	Abul Hadi Awang Nik Aziz Nik Mat Fadzil Noor Yusof Rawa	Islamic conservative party	2013 2008 2004 1999 1995 1990	21 23 6 27 7 7	Kelantan Kelantan Kelantan Kelantan + Terrenganu Kelantan Kelantan
Democratic Action Party	1967	Lim Kit Siang Lim Guan Eng	Secular social democratic party	2013 2008 2004 1999 1995 1990	38 28 12 10 9 20	Penang Penang Nil Nil Nil Nil
Parti Keadilan Rakyat	1999	Anwar Ibrahim Wan Azizah Wan Ismail	UMNO without corruption	2013 2008 2004 1999	30 31 1 5	Selangor Nil Nil Nil
Semangat '46	1988	Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah	UMNO without corruption	1995 1990	6 8	Nil Nil

⁸⁴ Source: Weiss (2013a), Moten and Mokhtar (2006), Wong(2005), and Singh (1997)

party, in contrast to the organic but stunted growth of the latter two parties from the soil of Malaysian society itself. This explains why whereas PAS and DAP had polarized ideological roots at either flanks of the BN, both Semangat '46 and PKR straddled the ideological middle. In fact, both parties campaigned on a relatively simple message – they were UMNO without the corruption. In other words, both Semangat '46 and PKR believe in continuing the BN's form of UMNO-dominant ethnic politics with power-sharing with ethnic minority parties (the principal ideological cleavage in Malaysian society), but that they could do a better job of implementing economic reforms in the country in order to get rid of autocratic corruption and cronyism that was stifling the country. As Weiss (2006, 130–42) writes of PKR's target audience,

“Reformasi protestors demanded protection for civil liberties and repeal of the ISA. They decried constraints on the media and the judiciary and lambasted what was called KKN (an Indonesian acronym for *korupsi, kolusi, dan nepotisme*, usually translated in Malaysia as “corruption, cronyism, and nepotism”)...

Although Keadilan (PKR) was multiracial, its primary target was middle-class, middle-of-the-road Malays, particularly from UMNO – people who supported the Reformasi movement and the call for justice, democracy, and an end to BN dominance but did not feel comfortable voting for PAS.”

Similarly, in by-elections contested between Semangat '46 and UMNO in 1988 and 1989, observers of Semangat '46's campaign issues noted the following:

“...Shahrir and UMNO '46 (Semangat '46) campaign centered on one issue: Mahathir's dictatorial leadership style. Recent events, such as the split in UMNO and the Prime Minister's refusal to revive the de-registered party, the constitutional amendments curbing judicial power, the suspension and dismissal of the Lord President and the suspension of the five Supreme Court judges were attributed to Mahathir's growing authoritarianism.” (S. Chee 1989, 215)

“In its earlier successful by-election campaign in Johor Baru, the Semangat '46 group had campaigned against Dr Mahathir's leadership traits, while also stressing the idealism of youth and inter-ethnic co-operation mobilized against corruption, patronage, and entrenched power brokers.” (Means 1990, 185)

In any case, the theoretical point is this – when opposition parties split from the dominant ruling party in a spatial-based electoral environment, they do not challenge the incumbent on the country's principal ideological cleavage. In fact, they are quite likely to propose policies that mirror the incumbent regime's moderate position on that principal ideological cleavage. Furthermore, they attempt to articulate and emphasize an anti-regime cleavage of anti-corruption and general economic reforms. Both rhetoric tactics are then combined into a coherent electoral strategy in order to attract median voters who are moderate regime supporters, thus undermining the incumbent regime's support base. As we shall see, this particular electoral campaign strategy will have important consequences for how opposition coalitions comprising of polarized and splinter opposition parties forge, articulate, and emphasize signals demonstrating their anti-regime unity and ideological moderation.

3.2 Learning to bargain over non-competition agreements in Malaysia

The first post-1965 electoral test against the dominant ruling Alliance came in a by-election in Serdang, Selangor in December 1968. Absent credible information about the relative strengths of the new opposition parties, both the newly-formed DAP and Gerakan⁸⁵ contested against the Alliance candidate. In the end, the Alliance candidate won with only a slim majority of 607 votes. The second-best DAP candidate had 5,928 votes, and the Gerakan candidate who had 1,330 votes (Drummond and Hawkins 1970, 321). This defeat, due to a lack of a non-competition agreement between DAP and Gerakan, was a harsh lesson for opposition party leaders. They soon agreed not to contest against each other in the 1969 general elections (G. Brown 2004, 97; Drummond and Hawkins 1970, 321–22; Saravanamuttu 2016, 98–99). When Goh Hock Guan, then Secretary-General of the DAP announced the non-competition agreement with Gerakan for the 1969 parliamentary elections, he referred to the earlier loss in Serdang and said,

“The experience we have got from this election has been bitter enough, and I believe we will never again fight among ourselves and allow the Alliance to sit on our corpses.”⁸⁶

The 1969 non-competition agreement among the DAP, Gerakan, as well as the PPP was a moderate success. By some calculations, the agreement led to the non-Malay opposition parties winning at least two, but probably five or six more seats as compared to the 1964

⁸⁵ See footnote 58 for more on Gerakan.

⁸⁶ The Straits Times. 22 February 1969. “DAP and GRM announce pact to contest the General Election.”

elections, specifically due to the reduction in the number of candidates (Ratnam and Milne 1970, 210). While all component parties of the ruling Alliance lost seats, the Chinese MCA component was the hardest hit, having won only 13 parliamentary seats, down from 27 parliamentary seats in 1964 (Drummond and Hawkins 1970, 331). The results were more stunning at the state level. Gerakan won control of the state assembly in Penang, and also won half of the state seats in Selangor and Perak alongside DAP and PPP. Even PAS made gains in Perlis, Terengganu, and Kedah. Regrettably, this result was widely interpreted as the non-Malays abandoning the UMNO-Malay-dominant consociational arrangement between UMNO, MCA, and MIC, thus posing as a direct threat to the Malay dominance of political power (Saravanamuttu 2016, 91–105; Slater 2010, 116–24). Open street violence occurred between the Malays and the Chinese on 13 May 1969. Consequently, normal parliamentary process was suspended, an all-powerful National Operations Council was promulgated, and the Alliance transformed itself into the Barisan Nasional by co-opting Gerakan, PPP, and PAS into its fold in the name of peace and stability.

Between 1970 and 1977, the DAP was the sole major opposition party.⁸⁷ The twin opposition pincers of PAS and DAP only re-emerged when PAS was expelled from the BN in late 1977, and then contested against the BN in the 1978 General Elections. This was the first time where prospects of a non-competition agreement between the two opposition parties might arise. Yet, surprisingly, this was not the strategy that they took. Instead, it appeared that any secret “unholy alliance” between the DAP and PAS consisted of them *increasing* the number of opposition candidates by placing two opposition candidates in each electoral district (Mauzy

⁸⁷ The Social Justice Party, or Pekemas, is relatively smaller, with only one parliamentary seat in 1977.

1979, 290)!⁸⁸ The logic was this: In electoral districts where Malays formed the majority, PAS's entry may help split the Malay votes between the PAS candidate and the UMNO candidate. The DAP candidate can then potentially prevail if it can secure the overwhelming majority of the non-Malay votes and the votes of liberal minded Malay voters. In electoral districts where non-Malays formed the majority, DAP's entry may help to split the non-Malay votes between the DAP candidate and the MCA/MIC candidate. The PAS candidate can then potentially win if it can secure the overwhelming majority of the Malay votes, and the votes of some open-minded non-Malays. Nevertheless, such a strategy, if it was used at all, did not appear to help either parties much. While the DAP increased its number of parliamentary seats from 9 to 16, it fared less well than expected in the state-level races (Mauzy 1979, 286). PAS was the worst hit. Its number of parliamentary seats declined from 13 to 9, and its own president lost his parliamentary electoral contest in Kedah. PAS was also totally routed in Kelantan, its traditional home base, where it could only secure two parliamentary seats and two state seats for the entire state. Its election manifesto was derided as "a hotchpotch of vague promises and grandiose projections for the future" (Noor 2014, 96).

It thus appears incredulous that PAS and DAP would repeat the same strategy of fielding two opposition candidates in multiple electoral districts again in the 1982 elections (Mauzy 1983; Mukerjee 1982)! Both parties contested in 30 parliamentary constituencies and 64 state constituencies against the BN, thereby forcing a "triangular" contest. This proportion was not insignificant to either party. For the DAP, it represented more than half of the 51 parliamentary seats that it contested in Peninsular Malaysia, and exactly half of the state seats where it had fielded candidates. It meant over one-third of PAS's parliamentary seats contested, and just

⁸⁸ The viability of such an electoral strategy has also been raised recently in approaching the 2018 general elections on some occasions. I recall encountering this idea twice during seminars at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in late 2017. Yet ISEAS researchers that I spoke to all dismissed such a strategy. See also "Port Klang By-Election." Diplomatic Report by the British High Commission. 5 December 1979. Source: National Archives of Singapore, NAB 2045, FCO 15/2496, Blip 00002-00005. Original Source: UK.. National Archives.

under one-third of their state seats where it had candidates. Despite numerous claims by the BN that this was evidence of the two parties working together to split the ethnic votes, both parties strongly denied any instances of collusion. In any case, the result was even worse than in 1978. PAS retained its number of parliamentary seats at 5, while the DAP got crushed to only 6 parliamentary seats.

Absent any overt evidence about why such an electoral strategy was used in the 1978 and 1982 general elections, if it was deliberate at all, I can only speculate that it was the logic of the declining PAS leader Asri Muda. By the early 1980s party members were disenchanted with the erstwhile leader who had lead PAS unsuccessfully into and out of the BN coalition government. A new group of young conservative ulama clerics who were galvanized by the Iranian Revolution of 1979 soon took over the leadership of the party immediately after the end of the 1982 elections.

Although this new group, lead by new party president Ustaz Yusof Rawa, and supported by Tuan Guru Nik Aziz Nik Mat, Ustaz Fadhil Noor, and Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang, were stridently Islamic in their outlook, they were also political realists. They recognized that multi-cornered contests in the past two cycles of elections had not yielded any better results for their party, and that a change in electoral strategy was needed. Hence, PAS finally worked towards forming an opposition coalition with a non-competition agreement with joint campaigns for the first time in approaching the 1986 general elections (Drummond 1987; Noor 2014, 135; Rachagan 1987; Ramanathan and Mohamad 1988).

As this was their first attempt at forming a coalition, the process was not smooth sailing. My review of newspaper clippings kept at the Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies in Kuala Lumpur on this period of opposition coalition building revealed that opposition parties had

conflicts over several issues.⁸⁹ First, there was the question of how the opposition parties like the DAP, the Parti Socialis Rakyat Malaysia (PSRM), the Socialist Democratic Party (SDP), and the newly formed Parti Nasionalis Malaysia (NASMA) could accept PAS's public goal of transforming Malaysia into an Islamic state without eroding their own secular and moderate support base. On this question, the DAP was the most conflicted because its core supporters were overwhelmingly non-Malay. Any hint of cooperation with PAS, even in the form of a non-competition agreement, might send its supporters fleeing back to the MCA and Gerakan. In a newspaper article published in The Star on 14 July 1986, Mr Lee Lam Thye, a DAP leader, was reported to have the following position:

“...He said the “rank and file of the DAP” would not mind the party joining the Opposition front “so long as the party held firmly to its principles and objectives.” “They would not mind if the party’s conditions – which are against the setting up of an Islamic State and having a Muslim leadership – are accepted by the parties forming the front.” Mr Lee said the members would object if the DAP is to sacrifice its basic beliefs and objectives by joining the Opposition front.”⁹⁰

The above quote thus reveals the costly internal revolt that the DAP's leaders would have to encounter should they agree to cooperate with PAS. Second, even if the opposition parties could somehow accept cooperating with PAS while rejecting its goal of an Islamic State, there was still

⁸⁹ A listing of the newspaper clippings kept at the Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies can be found at <http://www.malaysian-chinese.net/library/clipping/>, last accessed January 4, 2018. I spent about two weeks in October 2016 primarily reviewing the files P39.10, P39.10.1, and P39.10.2 which were concerned with opposition coalition formation in the 1980s.

⁹⁰ “DAP likely to stay out of the front.” The Star. 14 July 1986.

the question of what the exact form of cooperation is acceptable. If a non-competition agreement was to be forged, then opposition parties would have to begin bargaining with each other over the exact distribution of electoral districts. If a joint manifesto was to be launched, then parties had to coordinate on the exact language to be used to attempt to circumvent or render vague PAS's commitment to an Islamic State.



Figure 6: Newspaper clipping showing signing of joint declaration for a non-competition agreement between PAS, NasMA, PSRM, and SDP⁹¹

⁹¹ "Reduced to Polls Pact." The Star. 15 July 1986. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

The result was a stunted birth of Malaysia's first attempt at a united opposition coalition – the DAP did not join the opposition front, and the rest of the parties only managed to sign a vague joint declaration for a non-competition agreement. In fact, when nomination day came around, there emerged 8 parliamentary constituencies and 13 state seats in which the opposition parties found themselves facing each other alongside the BN candidate. The visible declaration of joint opposition unity in developing a non-competition agreement was not realized in reality. For its part, when faced with the real prospect of building an opposition coalition for the first time, the DAP could not even surmount the first hurdle of convincing its own party members.

The DAP's insistence of not associating with the newly rejuvenated and radicalized PAS proved to be a wise move. Its number of parliamentary seats increased from 6 to 24, while its number of state seats more than tripled from 12 to 37. This was its best ever results (Drummond 1987; Rachagan 1987; Ramanathan and Mohamad 1988, 50–56). For PAS however, it was a disaster. The party won only 1 parliamentary seat and saw its state assembly seats decline from 18 to 15. PAS's performance was "regarded as its worst general election performance over the last twenty-seven years of its existence" (Ramanathan and Mohamad 1988, 60). These historically poor results were attributed to PAS's contradictory actions. On the one hand, PAS campaigned on a platform of establishing an Islamic state. On the other hand, it actively formed an opposition front with other more minor non-Muslim parties and attempted to reach out to non-Malay-Muslim supporters for the first time by establishing a Chinese Consultative Committee. Such a new move apparently confused supporters despite its best efforts to explain the political logic to them. A nation-wide drive to "explain to PAS members and supporters the concept of the front" and to avoid "misunderstanding" was futile.⁹²

⁹² See "PAS drive to explain role in Opposition Front." *The Star*. 18 July 1986. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

The 1990 general elections presented another opportunity for opposition parties to forge an opposition coalition, with a primary focus on a non-competition agreement. This time around, the process was somewhat smoother. Semangat '46's emergence as a political party positioning itself in the ideological middle meant that (a) both the DAP and PAS could claim that it was working with the moderate Semangat '46 and not the other ideological extremist rival, and (b) Semangat '46 could act as a broker for the allocation of seats between opposition parties. Despite numerous reports that all parties were intransigent in the electoral districts that they wanted to contest in, the elections eventually saw only one single parliamentary district that had a three-cornered triangular contest between PAS, the DAP, and the BN candidate.⁹³ In all other districts the parties managed to avoid contesting against each other.

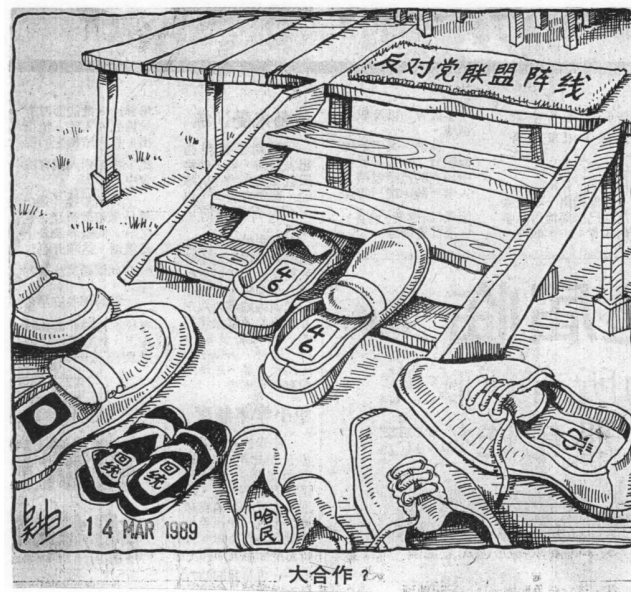


Figure 7: Newspaper comic showing Semangat '46's leading role in bringing together Malaysia's opposition parties in approaching the 1990 general elections⁹⁴

⁹³ For more regarding the bargaining process over the non-competition agreement, see "PAS and DAP set to fight despite pact." New Straits Times. 10 October 1990. "Opposition still undecided over seat allocation." New Straits Times. 9 October 1990. "Semangat and PAS yet to agree on seat allocation." The Star. 8 October 1990. All source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

⁹⁴ Nanyang Siang Pau. 14 March 1989, page 39. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10. The Chinese words underneath the comic read "Big Cooperation?" The comic shows the front door of a typical Malaysian village house built on stilts to protect against frequent floods. The Chinese words on the doormat read "United Opposition Front". Semangat 46 is represented by the shoes

Table 4 below summarizes the forgoing discussion about how opposition parties in Malaysia gradually learnt to form non-competition agreements with each other over successive cycles of elections.

Table 4: Average Number of Candidates Per Constituency Across Elections, 1974-1995⁹⁵

General Election Year	No. of Parliamentary seats	Average number of candidates per contested parliamentary seat (excluding independents)	No. of State seats	Average number of candidates per contested State seats (excluding independents)
1974	154	2.32	408	2.04
1978	154	2.32	276	2.56
1982	154	2.50	312	2.46
1986	177	2.18	351	2.26
1990	132*	2.01	351	2.01
1995	192	2.06	394	2.14

If opposition parties successfully implement a non-competition agreement, then we should expect the average number of candidates per contested electoral district be 2 – one candidate from the dominant ruling party, and one candidate from an opposition party. As we can see, when the DAP was the sole major opposition party in 1974, smaller, declining opposition parties attempted to fight against their irrelevance by forcing some multi-cornered contests. In 1978 and 1982, after PAS was expelled from the BN, both PAS and DAP reasoned, to their detriment, that forcing triangular contests may potentially be advantageous to both parties. Hence, we observe

with the “46” label, while PAS is represented by the shoes with its moon logo on the left, and DAP is represented by the formal shoes with its rocket logo on the right. The other two smaller pairs of flip flops represent smaller parties in the form of Berjasa and Hamim, both smaller Islamic parties relative to PAS.

⁹⁵ I assume that all independents caused multi-cornered contests. For 1974-1986, author’s calculation from NSTP Research and Information Services (1990). For 1990, parliamentary seats by author’s calculation from Business Times, 12 October 1990. “PAS-DAP ties show up in opposition front.” *Parliamentary seats for Peninsular Malaysia only. State seats by author’s calculation from Khong (1991). For 1995, author’s calculations from Gomez (1996, 15-16)

the increase in the average number of candidates per contested constituency in the 1978 and 1982 general elections. A near perfect non-competition agreement was finally realized in 1990 when Semangat '46 successfully brokered talks between all the opposition parties.

Since 1990, an informal rule has emerged over the years to reduce the “transaction costs” spent on the bargaining process between DAP, PAS, and any other major opposition party. The rule is this: Non-Malay/Bumiputera-majority districts will be allocated to the Chinese-based DAP, districts with a high-proportion of Malay/Bumiputera voters will be allocated to the Malay-Muslim-based PAS, while mixed districts will be allocated to any centrist and multi-ethnic party. All parties maximized their electoral viability against the BN when their respective ideologies matched the local demographics of the districts.

Figure 8 and 9 below illustrates this rule applied in the 1999 and 2013 general elections. Figure 8 shows the allocated electoral districts across all parliamentary seats in the entire country. Each vertical bar represents an electoral district, and all districts are arranged from having the lowest proportion of Malay voters to the highest proportion of Malay voters. We can infer that, for the most part, the DAP contests in parliamentary seats where Malays are not a majority. The PKR, the moderate splinter party from UMNO, contests in ethnically heterogeneous districts, while PAS contests primarily in districts that are overwhelmingly Malay. Figure 9 repeats the same story. It focuses on parliamentary districts in Peninsular Malaysia only, and uses the proportion of bumiputera voters as the scale in which to sort the vertical bars representing each electoral district. It demonstrates that the Chinese-based DAP contested almost exclusively in districts where there were less than 40% of Bumiputera voters, whereas PAS competed in most of the districts where the Bumiputera majority was very high. There was substantial variation in where the centrist PKR contested, however, because the multi-ethnic

PKR could allocate its candidates to a large range of districts that were perceived to be ethnically heterogeneous.

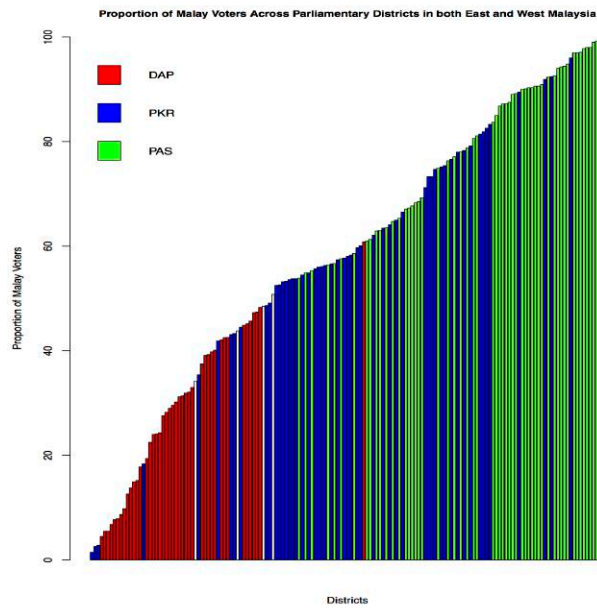


Figure 8: Allocated districts in Malaysia for the 1999 General Elections⁹⁶

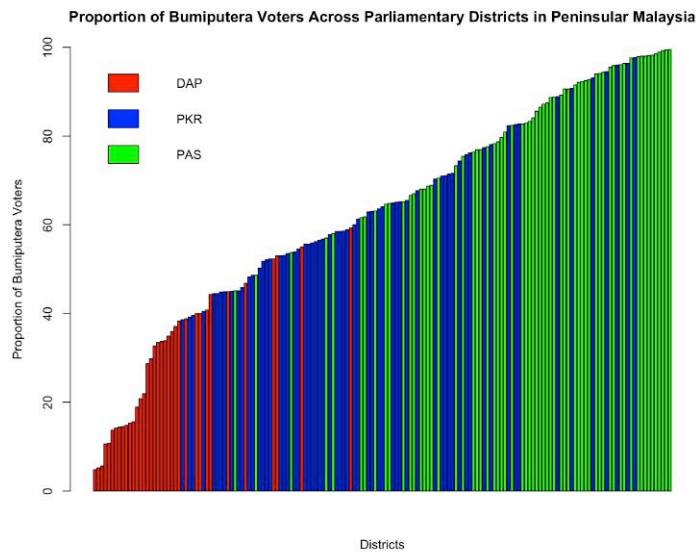


Figure 9: Allocated districts in Peninsular Malaysia for the 2013 General Elections⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Data shared with me by Li Zheng Hao, an undergraduate student at the National Taiwan University in a personal email on September 7, 2016. He had collected the data from newspaper clippings at the Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies for his own undergraduate research thesis.

My interviews with 16 opposition leaders in Malaysia also confirmed the application of the informal rule.⁹⁸

Table 5: Interviews with Malaysian Opposition Party Leaders

No.	Code	Opposition Party Leader	Gender	Race	Informal Rule? ¹	Benefit? ²
1	MY009	W	M	Chinese	1	0
2	MY010	O	M	Chinese	1	1
3	MY011	K	M	Malay	1	1
4	MY012	Y	F	Chinese	0	1
5	MY013	D	M	Malay	1	1
6	MY014	T	M	Chinese	1	1
7	MY015	Q	F	Chinese	0	1
8	MY016	A	M	Chinese	1	1
9	MY017	H	M	Malay	1	1
10	MY018	L	M	Chinese	1	1
11	MY019	N	F	Malay	1	1
13	MY020	S	M	Malay	1	0
14	MY021	C	M	Chinese	1	1
15	MY022	M	M	Malay	1	0
16	MY023	R	M	Indian	0	0

Note: All interviews were conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia between August 2016 to May 2017 for about 1 hour each. As with the Singaporean interviewees, interviewees were canvassed through snowball sampling, verbal informed consent was obtained, and IRB rules were observed to conceal their identities and party membership.

Coding Rules:

¹ Did the interviewee say that bargaining over the non-competition agreement utilized the informal rule of allocating districts based on the ethnic demographic of the electoral district? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

² Did the interviewee say that there were large benefits of forming a pre-electoral coalition with anti-regime signals such as a common policy platform? 1 for yes. 0 otherwise.

⁹⁷ Data from Pepinsky (2015).

⁹⁸ MY009, MY010, MY011, MY013, MY014, MY017, MY018, MY019, MY020, MY021, MY022. All locations: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

An overwhelming majority of interviewees agreed that developing a non-competition agreement was beneficial for all the opposition parties involved, and that the bargaining process was primarily based on the ethnic demographics in that particular district. Moreover, there was little dispute over district allocation between DAP and PAS because the districts that they were interested in contesting had little overlap with each other. Instead, both parties had to spend the most time negotiating with PKR. These negotiations were difficult but surmountable, however, because there were so many electoral districts to trade with each other.

As an example, opposition leader K said the following in response to this informal rule and within the overall context of PAS's increased radicalization in August 2016,

“I mean in general, even though there are exceptions to the rule, the general guideline is where it is about 45-55 percent Malays, that's where Keadilan (PKR) will contest. 45-60, or closer to 50-60 percent, that's where Keadilan will contest in that band. The ones from 45 below is DAP. And the ones 60 and above is PAS. That's the general idea.... There is no point putting PAS where there is area where there is high [proportion of] non-Malay voters because it has been proven that the non-Malays will not vote for PAS anymore.”⁹⁹

The final piece of evidence about the strong self-interested benefits of forging non-competition agreements between opposition parties in an opposition coalition despite its attendant costs is from a coalition document itself. Figure 10 below shows a screengrab from the coalition agreement of the latest opposition coalition formed in Malaysia in 2016, known as Pakatan Harapan, formed by the DAP, PKR, and Amanah (a splinter party from PAS). The

⁹⁹ MY011. Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

coalition documents lists seven clauses in relation to the functioning of the opposition coalition in matters such as joint decision making, how to solve disputes, as well as the common policies of the coalition.¹⁰⁰ Clause 5, in particular, explicates how the parties should approach their participation in the general elections. Not only is developing a non-competition agreement to avoid multi-cornered contests is a critically important part of the coalition building process, it is also in the self-interest of the various opposition parties.

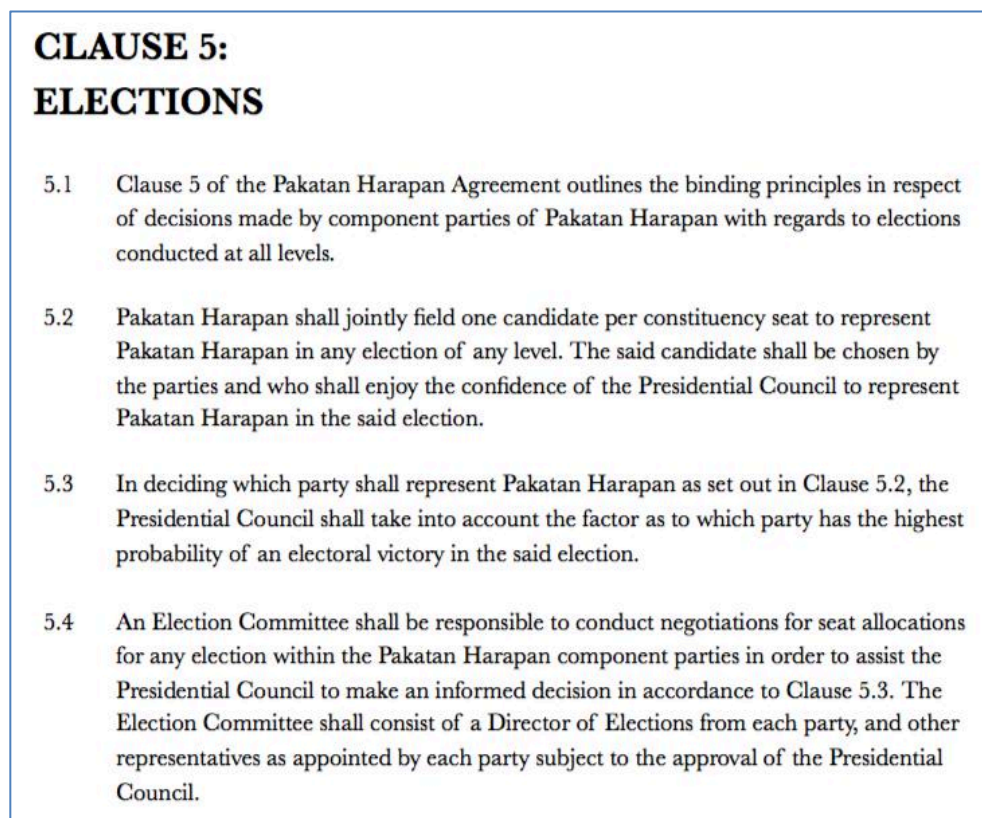


Figure 10: Screenshot from Pakatan Harapan's Coalition Agreement 2016

¹⁰⁰ Coalition Agreement Pakatan Harapan 2016. Last accessed at <http://pakatanharapan.my/EN.pdf> on January 5, 2017.

3.3 The precariousness of strong incentives and high costs to costly and substantive joint coalition campaigns

Ideologically polarized opposition parties may find that it is relatively easier to justify to their own supporters that cooperation with their ideological rivals to forge non-competition agreements is in their self-interest, as compared to deeper forms of cooperation such as developing costly and substantive joint coalition campaigns. After all, the bargaining process over non-competition agreements can be held between opposition leaders behind closed doors. Such agreements also isolate the campaigns of opposition parties within the geographical boundaries of the districts that they are contesting in. Finally, the logic and benefits of avoiding opposition vote-splitting is also fairly visible and obvious. Further cooperation beyond non-competition agreements, however, would require those niche opposition parties to somehow *publicly* coordinate their electoral campaigns. Opposition party leaders may decide to organize joint campaign events during which they endorse the other party's candidates, whereas previously they would never have been near each other. Party leaders may also potentially issue joint statements, campaign using a common slogan, common coalition name, or even a common coalition logo. These explicitly public forms of cooperation could potentially raise heckles among a niche opposition party's own activists and supporters who may question and challenge the party's leadership. For some factions of supporters, ideological purity may be more important than electoral victory. Moreover, whether such coordinated campaigns can indeed increase opposition vote share and increase their own party's chances of electoral victory is sometimes uncertain, to say the least.

Yet, despite the deep ideological reluctance of their activists and supporters, the leaders of both DAP and PAS have almost always noted the strong incentives for further costly, deep

cooperation between the two parties, beyond mere non-competition agreements. These sentiments was widely acknowledged and corroborated in my interviews with opposition leaders.¹⁰¹ Both sides recognize that they needed and continue to need to campaign with each other in order to maximize their own vote share and the number of seats that they win against the dominant incumbent. For instance, a key leader from the DAP remarked,

“In the case of DAP, I think the top leaders are very clear where we should go. If you follow Kit Siang’s [long-time DAP leader] writing, it is very clear that he understands the problem. The problem is that we will never win alone. Therefore, we need coalition partners. We need strong coalition partners in order to win together.”¹⁰²

A key former leader in PAS also echoed a similar logic that they could only maximize their vote share and seat share if they cooperated with their ideological rivals in a coalition,

“PAS must be reminded that it was only when they are in coalition with others that they have a chance to increase their vote share... Well, you know very well that there is a lot of commonality and differences. And whether it is difficult or easy will really have to depend on leadership. And leadership that are more focused on winning an election very close to the seat of power will really want to

¹⁰¹ MY010, MY011, MY012, MY013, MY014, MY015, MY016, MY018, MY019, MY021. All locations: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

¹⁰² MY018. Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

ensure that their chances are not jeopardized by bickering and wrangling over policy matters.”¹⁰³

The two quotes reveal that it is typically the “strong” leaders of Malaysian opposition parties who set the overall direction of their parties, rather than being consistently constrained by their party base. In Malaysia, opposition party leaders from the PKR, DAP, and PAS are not only revered by their party activists, they also wield formal powers that can make their party members fall in line. The key formal power that an opposition party leader wields is the *sura watikah*. It is basically a document that a candidate for election must present on nomination day to certify that he or she has formally obtained the permission of the party to contest under the party’s name. Only the party leader can formally issue the certification document to the party’s candidate. All candidates must have such a document. Hence, if aspiring party activists and members wish to be nominated, they had better be in the good books of the party leader who can threaten to withhold the certification document come election time. If the party leader wants to undermine an intra-party competitor to his leadership status, he can either withhold the certification document, or issue another certification document to another party member to force a three-way contest in a bid to “sabotage” this internal rival.

Yet, that even strong opposition party leaders had to delicately balance between pandering to their core supporters on the one hand, and working jointly with their ideological rivals on the other hand, can be observed over the iterative cycles of elections, especially since 1990 onwards. Both the DAP and PAS were initially cautious in their approach to each other, eschewing direct and deep cooperation between themselves. Over the years, nevertheless, an apparent TIT-FOR-TAT logic emerged (Axelrod 1984). When PAS became too aggressive in its

¹⁰³ MY013. Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Islamic agenda after significant electoral gains, DAP immediately broke off all contact with them. When PAS became more conciliatory after suffering significant electoral defeats, then the DAP was willing to mend ties and campaign with their ideological rival. Hence, while the episodic forming and fracturing of Malaysian opposition coalitions over at least two decades may seem bizarre to outside observers, the TIT-FOR-TAT strategy that both parties learnt to play over the long run is a rational strategy that promises to maximize benefits for the both of them.

In approaching the 1990 general elections, the supporters of both PAS and the DAP appeared to be generally opposed to the idea of a single united opposition coalition, despite the gentle coaxing of Tengku Razaleigh's Semangat '46, as well from their respective party leaders. "The members and supporters of both parties are strongly against any such "unholy alliance" but their leaders obviously feel that political expediency demands covert collaboration between the two" declared an op-ed in the Business Times.¹⁰⁴ Crouch (1996b, 117) concurred, suggesting that both parties "found it difficult to join together in a formal alliance without undermining their own credibility among their existing supporters."

Specifically, for PAS, an op-ed in the New Straits Times noted that "Some PAS leaders are eager to keep clear of the DAP because the issue is beginning to become a liability. Their stand on Islam is being questioned because of the relationship with the DAP via Semangat '46"¹⁰⁵ The same op-ed noted that a radical PAS group calling itself Al-Islah was recently formed because it "opposes cooperation with Semangat '46." The group even threatened to contest against PAS's own candidates should PAS forge a national-level coalition with the other

¹⁰⁴ "PAS-DAP ties show up in opposition front." Business Times. 12 October 1990. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

¹⁰⁵ "Strange bedfellows trying to stay together." New Straits Times. 15 April 1990. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

opposition parties. The DAP was not spared. In addition to internal pressure from its supporters, it was subject to consistent attacks from Gerakan (now firmly part of BN) in Penang, who claimed that the DAP's association with Semangat '46 and with PAS meant that the DAP also supported the formation of an Islamic state.¹⁰⁶ As evidence, Gerakan pointed to posters produced by those parties which urged voters to support the formation of an Islamic government in Malaysia.

Ultimately, DAP and PAS leaders found a compromise. PAS formed an opposition coalition called Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (APU / United Ummah Front) with Semangat '46, as well as other minor Islamic opposition parties Berjasa and Hamim. The parties campaigned together in the Eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia, such as in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu, where most of their candidates stood. Through campaigning with the more moderate Semangat '46, PAS sought to "tone down its image of an extremist, fundamentalist party," and to "help to soften its image and make it more acceptable to people whose understanding of the "true teachings" of Islam was not adequate" (Khong 1991, 9). Beyond campaigning together under a common coalition name, however, there was no common coalition logo, and no common policy platform (Khong 1991, 9). The only compromise that PAS made was to drop all references to forming an Islamic state from its own election manifesto (von der Mehden 1991, 166).¹⁰⁷

For the DAP, any direct relationship with PAS in the early 1990s was far too costly for its leaders and supporters to contemplate. Hence, it sought to soften its image through a separate coalition called the Gagasan Rakyat (GR / People's Might) with Semangat '46. As Khoong

¹⁰⁶ "Zhen Ming Fan Dui Dang Zhen Xian Mu Di Jian Hui Jiao Zhen Fu" Guang Hua. 8 August 1990. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

¹⁰⁷ "Opposition under Razaleigh's spell." New Straits Times. 9 October 1990. Source: Center for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Newspaper clippings collection, P39.10.

(1991, 11) describes, the precise purpose of the DAP's alliance with Semangat '46 was also to send a signal of opposition moderation and compromise in order to win Malay votes:

“The alliance with a Malay party might also help the [DAP] party to secure more Malay votes in the mixed constituencies... ..the party hoped that its image as an extremist, chauvinistic Chinese party – due to its long campaign for equal rights for the Chinese and other minority communities – would be shed in the larger coalition led by a Malay party.”

With two coalitions – GR on the left and APU on the right – the opposition contested as a partially wedded whole (von der Mehden 1991, 166–67). The DAP performed reasonably, winning 20 parliamentary seats. PAS benefitted most from the coalition, winning 7 parliamentary seats, up from only 1 seat in 1986. Its alliance with Semangat '46 at the state level also saw the two parties win all the state seats in Kelantan, denying UMNO any seats in the state for the first time ever.

In the aftermath of PAS's victory at the state-level in Kelantan, “PAS began the process of restructuring Kelantan immediately” (Noor 2014, 144). This meant implementing its vision of Islamic governance onto the state. There was a ban on public events allowing the intermingling of men and women. State bills on *hudud* laws, a form of Islamic criminal punishment, were drafted and promulgated despite the best efforts of Semangat '46 to dissuade the PAS leadership. These actions demonstrated that PAS's pre-electoral promises of ideological moderation through its removal of all mentions of Islamic state from its manifesto and through its alliance with Semangat '46 were convenient campaign theatre meant to increase vote share. It appeared that

the party thought that it could easily renege from its promises without the attendant audience costs.

PAS's Islamization of Kelantan was far too radical for the DAP to be considered associating with it in any way (see upcoming Chapter 5 for an analysis of how DAP communicated to its supporters with regards to its relationship with PAS during this period). Through its cooperative relationship with Semangat '46, it was consistently under rhetorical attack by the MCA and Gerakan for supporting PAS's *hudud* and Islamization policies. In January 1995, the DAP broke away from the Gagasan Rakyat, leading to its disintegration (Gomez 1996, 5). The 1995 general elections thus saw only half of an opposition coalition – the now-stumbling APU propped up by a declining Semangat '46 and PAS. Moreover, there was no common policy platform. PAS and Semangat '46 both issued their own manifestoes, with PAS promising government reforms “based on religious tenets” and Semangat '46 “presenting itself as a “Malay party”” (Gomez 1996, 21). The DAP swung back to its non-Malay secular base by once again championing for a “Malaysian Malaysia.”

Without the Gagasan Rakyat, DAP's electoral performance declined tremendously. Its number of parliamentary seats were slashed to less than half from 20 to 9, while its state assembly seats share were reduced from 45 to a miserly 11 seats. Both Semangat '46 and PAS fared worse, securing only 6 and 7 parliamentary seats respectively. Both of these latter parties secured Kelantan again, however, with minimal gains in state assemblies in Kedah and Terengganu.

The opposition parties' second bite at the opposition coalition cherry was in approaching the 1999 general elections. By October 1996, Semangat '46 had already disbanded with most of the party returning to UMNO's fold. In 1999, nevertheless, the DAP and PAS were again

brought together in the middle by PKR, a party formed by ousted UMNO deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar's expulsion from UMNO had prompted thousands of anti-government protestors to turn out onto the streets and galvanized opposition parties to form the Barisan Alternatif (BA) coalition (Weiss 2006, 127–61). This time around, the BA saw a much deeper form of cooperation between all parties. Not only did the top leaders of DAP, PAS and PKR campaign together, they also launched a common manifesto which all parties signed on to. BA's anti-regime common policy platform downplayed PAS's goal of an Islamic state and the DAP's aim of a non-communalist Malaysia, but emphasized a generally liberal platform of human rights, social justice, rule of law, judicial independence, term limits for the Prime Minister, and other similar themes (Felker 2000, 52–53; J. C. Y. Liow 2004, 367–68; Mutalib 2000, 68; Weiss 2006, 142). In particular, Case (2001, 44–46) noted certain peculiarities of the common policy platform that the BA put out,

“They [Barisan Alternative] also produced a common manifesto – ‘Toward a Just Malaysia’ – which, while far more substantive than that of the BN, was most notable for what it left out. Specifically, there was no mention of the PAS's commitment to an Islamic state or the DAP's call for a Malaysian Malaysia. Instead, the PAS symbol of a full moon was coupled informally with the DAP's rocket, producing a popular refrain of “rocket to the moon.””

This deliberate avoidance of key campaign terminologies that were dear to the ideological hearts of both the DAP and PAS thus signaled the “quid-pro-quo” ideological compromise that both parties sought to portray to voters. Rhetoric was met with some

theatre, additionally, when senior PAS leaders began courting urban voters by hosting meals at plush hotels “bedecked in coat and tie” (Noor 2014, 157–58).

Overall, the 1999 elections were perceived to be somewhat successful for the opposition BA and a bitter blow to BN. Even though the BN maintained a two-third majority in parliament, its vote share dropped 10 percent, and it lost 22 of the 166 parliamentary seats that it previously held (Felker 2000; Mutalib 2000). PAS fared the best, almost quadrupling the number of its parliamentary seats to 27, tripling the number of state assembly seats that it had, and winning control over the state assemblies of Kelantan and Terengganu. The DAP, unfortunately, was slaughtered. While it maintained its miserly 11 state assembly seats and increased its number of parliamentary seats from 7 to 11, all of its three top leaders – Lim Kit Siang, Karpal Singh, and Chen Man Hin – lost.

The next few years after 1999 was a replay of the events in the early 1990s. PAS again grew more assertive in its Islamization policies based on its vastly increased political influence. The party immediately began drafting hudud laws for Terengganu, banned mixed swimming pools, unisex hair salons, and nightclubs (Noor 2014, 164). After the death of PAS’s relatively moderate president Fadzil Noor, DAP withdrew from the BA, leading to its collapse.

Conveniently, though, another opposition coalition known as the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) emerged from the same three parties of DAP, PAS, and PKR in 2013. The PR governed as a coalition government in the states of Selangor, Penang, Kelantan, and briefly Perak, after riding on a tsunami of political dissent in 2008 where the BN lost its two-thirds majority in parliament for the first time in history. In the run up to the general elections in 2013, the PR coalition produced a slew of common policy documents such as yearly alternative budgets, an “Orange Book” adopted in a joint coalition convention in 2010 which set out the reform priorities of a

potential national coalition government within the first 100 days, as well as a comprehensive common election manifesto (C. Lee 2013). Candidates from the alliance also campaigned jointly in public events throughout the country, with their party leaders repeatedly standing on the same stage to urge voters to vote for all the coalition's candidates. They utilized the entire "playbook" of joint coalition campaign strategies, short of formally nominating a prime ministerial candidate or a future cabinet in the event of opposition victory. Eventually, the PR won an absolute majority of the total vote share in the 2013 general elections, but did not win a majority of seats in parliament due to malapportionment and gerrymandering (Ostwald 2013). The PR collapsed in 2015 after PAS again sought to implement hudud, the Islamic criminal law, in Kelantan, which antagonized and forced the DAP to withdraw from the coalition (Izzuddin 2015).

In the final analysis, the three instances of coalition-building among Malaysian opposition parties in 1990, 1999, and 2013 reflected the delicate tradeoffs that opposition leaders had to make between the benefits and costs of building an opposition pre-electoral coalition with costly ideological compromise. It was only after repeated iterations of general elections that ideologically distant opposition parties were able to forge some form of policy compromises to signal to opposition voters collective unity and ideological moderation. Voters received that signal and generally rewarded the opposition parties with significantly increased seat share nationally as compared to when the individual opposition parties competed on their own. Yet, after elections, ideological compromise was not beneficial. Ideologically niche opposition parties returned to pandering to their party base, resulting in coalition fracture.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the causal chain connecting the electoral environments in which opposition parties find themselves in and the subsequent electoral strategies that they play in contesting against the dominant incumbent, and in striving to forge cooperative relationships with each other. Opposition parties recognize that the autocratic regime's control of the mass media and state bureaucracy mean that they can create and sustain hegemonic ideologies that pliant citizens subscribe to. In attempting to play the electoral game according to the formal and informal rules that the autocrat has created, opposition parties thus have little choice but to campaign on issues that the autocrat has created. This, in turn, shapes how opposition parties emerge and grow.

Different types of opposition parties campaigning in different kinds of electoral environments then encounter varying incentives to play subtly different strategies in two distinct types of cooperative games with their potential allies. In both valence and spatial based types of electoral environments, there are strong self-enforcing incentives for inter-party bargaining and coordination over the allocation of electoral districts to contest. Bargaining is generally successful when opposition parties learn quickly about the benefits of such cooperation, when there is clear information about the relative strengths of each other, and when there exists a moderate intermediary that can broker talks. Bargaining failures occur when there is unclear information about relative strengths which typically occur when elections are first held, when new parties emerge, or when small dying parties aim to misrepresent their declining popularities. Under valence-type electoral campaigning, however, opposition leaders encounter high costs and little incentives to forge deeper forms of cooperation beyond non-competition agreements. Their strategy, therefore, is to not cooperate to send any costly common coalition signals. The spatial-type of electoral campaigning provides both strong incentives and high costs to opposition

leaders to send costly common coalition signals. This cooperative dilemma that they encounter in sending costly coalition signals induces them to play the TIT-FOR-TAT strategy to maximize payoffs and reduce the costs that they have to pay over the long run.

In the next chapter, I move my analytical lens further down below the country-level to specifically examine an opposition party's communication strategy. If my analytical framework holds, I should expect to observe that the secular DAP varies its communication to its own supporters differently when its top leaders make different decisions on whether to form an "unholy alliance" with PAS over the decades.

APPENDIX A

THE PAP AND THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Goals adopted at a PAP cadres' conference in October 1972:

Political

1. To educate the public on the need for continued vigilance against the threat of external political manipulation, using professionals, academics, political parties and mass media;
2. To propagate the principle, often overlooked in both rich and poor countries, that wealth is created by effort, skills and organisation, and that frivolous and irresponsible attitudes towards work should be sternly discouraged;
3. To promote the better care of children and higher quality of family life through small families;
4. To improve standards of social behaviour, such as proper queuing at bus stops, avoidance of disorderly conduct in public, noise nuisance, and all other inconsiderate or crude conduct;

Economic

5. To support industrial progress with an adequate supply of workers with the requisite technical skills, through improved technical education, formal apprenticeship schemes and cognate measures;
6. To provide for orderly increases in wages supported by improved productivity;
7. To continue further studies of the location of hawker centres in each constituency in consultation with the Member of Parliament, so as to find equitable and workable solutions;
8. To improve public transport, both buses and taxis, and reduce congestion, especially in the city areas, at peak periods through encouraging people to use buses or taxis in the main city area;
9. To control any increase in the number of taxi licences, so as to protect the livelihood of taxi drivers;

¹⁰⁸ Appendix A, B, C source: Donough, Gerardine. 1977. "The 1976 Singapore General Election." BA Honours Thesis in History, Department of History, University of Singapore. Deposited at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. Closed Stacks. LO Collection, JQ729 D68.



PAP ELECTION MESSAGE TO VOTERS

MESSAGE TO VOTERS IN RIVER VALLEY CONSTITUENCY

In the last 17 years since the PAP came into power, River Valley Constituency has gone through a rapid transformation. Not only are there modern hotels, shopping centres, office buildings, apartments and warehouses, but, extensive environmental improvement schemes have also been incorporated. Roads, drainage, sewerage and landscaped pedestrian malls have been implemented.

All these developments and improvements are tangible proof of the progressive and dynamic leadership of the PAP Government and of its ability in bringing about a transformation for the better not only of the River Valley Constituency but of Singapore as a whole. The PAP is a Government that does not believe in empty promises nor does it indulge in slogan chanting. It believes in pragmatic appraisals of the situation for the stability, prosperity and well-being of Singapore.

The next 5 years will be crucial for Singapore. The expected world economic recovery experienced in the beginning of 1976 has now slowed down. There are uncertainties in achieving the rapid economic recovery of the industrialised countries such as USA, EEC and Japan. This will directly affect our future economic growth rate. The post Vietnam era and the uncertain security situation in South East Asia give us cause for concern. We must therefore face the problem squarely. The PAP Government can provide the stable and dynamic leadership that will steer the country through this period of uncertainty as it has done in the past, and also a plan in the long term for the future of the country through the provision of proper training for our people and employment opportunities for all. An improvement in the quality of life can be expected for all in Singapore if there is a strong, hardworking and honest Government to plan for the future and work together with you.



I have been serving you in River Valley as your Member of Parliament since 1972. Most of you know me as I have made numerous constituency tours over the years. For the new constituents previously at Queenstown, Stamford and Tanglin, let me serve you with my actions, deeds and not words.

Vote for me as your PAP candidate for River Valley so that we can have a stable and secure future not only in terms of employment but also an improved environment in which to work and live.

Tan Eng Liang

TAN ENG LIANG

Born: Singapore, 24 June 1937
Married: 1 son and twin daughters

EDUCATED:

Raffles Institution
University of Malaya, Singapore
Oxford University, Oxford, England

QUALIFICATIONS:

B.Sc. (Hons) Class I, University of Malaya
D.Phil., Oxford University, England
F.R.I.C. (Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry)

AWARDS:

Faculty of Science Prize (1960 and 1961),
University of Malaya, Singapore
Gold Medal (1961), Royal Institute of Chemistry
(Malayan Branch)
Rhodes Scholarship, Oxford University, England
(1961 - 1964)
University Blue, University of Singapore (1962)
Half-Blue, Oxford University, England
(1962 - 1964)
Colombo Plan Fellowship to Australia (1971)
Public Service Star (BBM), Singapore (1971)

SPORTS

ACTIVITIES:

Represented Singapore in water-polo at Olympic
Games, Melbourne (1955); Asian Games,
Tokyo (1958); SEAP Games, Kuala Lumpur
(1965); Asian Games, Bangkok (1966).

APPOINTMENT:

Member, Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee
(Malayan Region) (1964 - 1976)
Member, Board of Governors, Singapore
Polytechnic (1967 - 1975)
Member, Science Council of Singapore
(1968 - 1975)
Member, Court, University of Singapore
(1968 - 1972)
Deputy Chairman, Singapore Manufacturers'
Association (1972)
Deputy Chairman, Singapore Institute of Standards
and Industrial Research (SISIR) (1973 - 1975)
Member, Board of Directors, Housing & Urban
Development Co (Pte) Ltd (1974 to date)
Member, Board of Directors, NTUC Travel
Services (Pte) Ltd (1974 to date)
Chairman, Singapore Sports Council (1975 to date)
Chairman, Urban Redevelopment Authority
(1974 to date)
Member of Parliament (River Valley) (1972 to date)

PROFESSIONAL

EMPLOYMENT:

Lecturer, Department of Chemistry, University
Singapore (1964 - 1966)
Director of Research, Gold Coin (Pte) Ltd
Singapore, (1966 - 1975)
Senior Minister of State, Ministry of National
Development (June 1975 to date)
Minister in charge of Singapore Polytechnic and
Ngee Ann Technical College (April 1976 to date)

Message to the Citizens of Kuo Chuan Constituency

Dear Fellow Citizens,

You very kindly elected me as your Member of Parliament in the 1972 General Elections and I am once again the People's Action Party's Candidate for the Constituency of Kuo Chuan in the forth-coming general elections.

The PAP has been faithfully fulfilling all its Election promises and pledges to the people at successive Election campaigns since 1959 and we have overfulfilled the promises and pledges we made to the people during the 1972 General Elections. Today, Singapore is the healthiest, cleanest and the least corrupt nation in this part of the world. The PAP's record and achievements in Housing, Education, Health, Economic and Social Reconstruction are second to none.

Today, every school-going child can find a place in school. There are full employment opportunities for every able-bodied person who wants to work. There are ample facilities for excellence and achievement in work. The environment in which our people live, work and play has improved yearly.

We now come back to you for a fresh mandate for another 5 years.

The next 5 years facing the people are going to be uncertain years, both in matters involving national security and continued economic development. The effects of world inflation and economic recession are still with us and there is once again the prospect of further oil price increases. Skilled planning and hard dedicated work must go into the formulation and implementation of the strategy to overcome the impending economic and security problems. Based on our performance from 1959 to 1976, only the PAP can provide the dedication and the ability to meet these problems.

We have never fooled the people. We have never failed the people. When the nation faced severe problems of unemployment in the 1960's we told the people the hard facts and galvanised the people into greater effort and work. Earlier still

in the 1950's we organised the people and combated the violence and disruption let loose by the Communists. We are proud to say that the people's response to the PAP's call for hard concerted work and discipline has been tremendous. So much so that we have become an example to other developing countries of the world. Singapore today represents the non-communist alternative to quick economic development in the developing world.

In the forthcoming elections, the old political forces and parties of disruption and social tension would be rearing their heads again. I appeal to you to vote solidly for the PAP once again so that we could meet the challenges and give another tremendous push to the next phase of Singapore's economic and social development.

At the 1972 General Elections, I had told you that the following projects in Toa Payoh Town were in the pipe-line:

- (1) A creche
- (2) A Post-office
- (3) A library
- (4) A Sports Complex

All the above projects have been completed and the new projects for Kuo Chuan Constituency for the next 5 years are as follows:—

- (1) New Link Road from Thomson Road to Avenue 6, Ang Mio Kio at a cost of \$15,152,000/-.
- (2) HUDC — Middle Income Housing at Braddell Rise — 288 units of flats and 150 units of walkups and car-parks at a cost of \$29,000,000/-

The problems of the future would again be ones of greater sophistication in industrial and management skills and social organisation. It would require the energies of a dedicated government and the entire people of Singapore to solve these problems. "We have not been found wanting in the past." We shall deliver the goods in the future as well.

Please vote P.A.P.

Yours sincerely,

P. SELVADURAI

Source: Original PAP campaign leaflets of two constituencies.

APPENDIX C

The Party is TOWARDS A CARING SOCIETY

PROGRAMME OF THE WORKERS' PARTY 1976
(Extracts from the Workers' Party booklet Towards a Caring Society)

The basic philosophy of the Party can be stated simply as - the Workers' Party believes in people.

The Party believes most strongly that the cornerstone of democratic socialism is that power in all forms should be accountable. The Party is alarmed at the growing tendency of the agencies of power to act outside the limits of their power and at the helplessness of our citizens at the hands of the agencies.

ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

There is a great need for the improvement of the real standards of living - personal, social and environmental - of our working population and the Workers' Party will ensure that capital, whether foreign or local, is made more fully aware of the national need by stricter control over investments. Multi-national companies have come to stay and the Workers' Party whilst continuing to provide inducements and sufficient safeguards for the investment of foreign capital in Singapore will ensure that they do not make profits at the expense of our workers. ... The Party's keynote with our neighbours will be economic co-operation and not economic competition.

The Party will strive to bring about a shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of the working class and to give the workers a say in the management of industries and services.

LABOUR AND WAGES

The Party is committed to improving the terms and conditions under which labour is employed so as to provide security of employment and better conditions of service.

The Party is committed to repealing the Employment Act and to replace it with suitable legislation and to amend the Industrial Relations Act.

The Party will implement a study of the wage structure now prevailing and consider introducing legislation to provide for a minimum wage.

The Party will free the Trade Unions from control by the Government or Government sponsored bodies.

DEFENCE believes that our universities have a significant role to play in inculcating the qualities essential for the Party is of the view that in the present day context of relations between nations the present expenditure on defence is wasteful and unnecessary.

The Party advocates close collaboration on Defence matters with Malaysia and will work towards a pact providing for non-aggression and joint defence of both countries to supplement the ANZUK pact. The Party believes that this should be the first step towards other regional defence arrangements within the frame work of ASEAN.

On national service, whilst the Party can and does see the advantages of getting our youths together to make them conscious of their duties to society and to build them into a cohesive whole, the Party believes that the present system is wasteful of the one resource the country has which is our young people. The Party believes that the system can be altered to advantage by channelling the energies of our youth into compulsory community service after the basic military training to inculcate the quality of and need for discipline. A start has already been made in getting our national service boys to do police duties and the Party believes that there are other areas of community service where they can be usefully employed.

The Party, however, sees the need for being ready at all times to meet any threat to the society from within or without and the Party believes that it will in the main be from within. The Party therefore advocates the maintenance of an efficient regular army to meet any threat to our society and to help in the maintenance of peace.

EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

... the Party believes that not only must education in schools be absolutely free without a charge of any kind but also that the working class must be helped to see that their children are able to take the maximum advantage of the opportunities offered.

The Party recognises that in a multi-racial society like Singapore, adequate recognition must be given to the mother tongues of the major races that make up the multi-racial society. The Party ... will ... raise the standard of vernacular Primary Schools to the same level as that of English Primary Schools and give them parity of treatment so that every parent may be encouraged to educate his child in his mother tongue or vernacular language of his choice.

In the secondary stream, the Party will ensure that each child is bi-lingual.

The Party believes that our universities have a significant role to play in inculcating the qualities essential for the full development of the human personality and the Party will remove the strait jacket in which our universities have been placed by this Government. The Party will abolish Suitability Certificates.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Party will... The Party believes that ASEAN can be developed to play a more positive role than at present and that it should be expanded to include the countries of Indo-China. The cornerstone of the Party's thinking on foreign affairs is regional co-operation and it advocates a common policy on foreign affairs in the region. The Party, ... supports and will continue to give active support to efforts to turn this region into a zone of peace that will be guaranteed by the great powers. We shall avoid being committed to any block (sic) or camp in world politics outside the region and will strive to maintain peaceful relations with all countries pursuing a policy of non-alignment.

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Party is... The first priority of the Party is to bring the Executive under the law and to make it more fully accountable to the people who have put it there. Parliamentary democracy does not consist only of the electorate voting an Executive into power every five years. The Party is alarmed at the concentration of power in the hands of single Ministers and the Executive without challenge or recourse to an independent tribunal. The Party will implement legislation to reduce the concentration of power and provide for appeal from Executive decisions to an independent tribunal.

The Party will cut out all luxury spending by the Government for prestige and will actively pursue a policy of reducing expenditure at all levels of Government. The Workers' Party will channel funds thus saved into helping our needy and disabled.

LAW AND JUSTICE

The Party will repeal the provision in the Constitution introduced by the PAP government to enable the Prime Minister to appoint a Judge of the Supreme Court for a fixed period.

The Party will re-introduce trial by jury for the most serious crimes. The Party believes that not the least of the merits in the jury system is the participation of citizens in the administration of justice.

PERSONAL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

We are committed to restoring to the individual what have been termed his inalienable rights, the freedom to speak his mind and the freedom of association, to exercise such rights within the framework of the law as opposed to the present dictatorial and arbitrary policies of the present Government.

The Party will enact a new Constitution and entrench the basic liberties of the individual to prevent the Executive from removing the liberties without a referendum of the electorate.

The Party will review the present policy on Detention without trial.

The Party believes, ..., that the time has not come when we can do without giving the Executive some power to detain persons without trial where the Executive is satisfied that the persons constitute a threat to society. The power must, however, be subject to stringent scrutiny to prevent it being abused. The Party will amend the laws to provide safeguards against possible abuses of this power.

The Party will consider the Immigration and Citizenship scheme to cover these needs.

The Party is opposed to the present policy of granting permanent residence with a view to eventual citizenship to those who have the necessary monies to lend the Government. The Party will review the present policy on immigration and the granting of citizenship which has rendered countless persons stateless in Singapore and introduce a more humanitarian approach to the whole question.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Housing

Whilst the Party recognises the great progress that has been made in public housing, we are concerned at the high rentals and charges of all kinds that are being made on the occupants.

The Party will reduce the stamp fee that is now payable on purchase of houses particularly for houses within the range of middle class incomes and will extend the use of deposits with the CPF for purchase of houses from the private sector.

Transport

The Party will ... nationalise the whole of the public transport system in the Republic and provide an efficient cheap and comfortable public transport subsidised with public moneys if need be.

Health

The Party is committed to immediate repeal of the charges that are now being levied at Government hospitals and clinics regardless of the capacity to pay of those seeking treatment. The Party will take active steps to introduce a free health service for all citizens without any discrimination based on wealth.

Taxation and Land Acquisition

There is an immediate need for raising the minimum chargeable income and for increasing the reliefs and allowances. The Party will review the fees now payable for various services rendered to the public with a view to reducing them.

Unemployment benefits and pensions

The Party will embark on a study to provide a form of national insurance for all citizens that will enable workers thrown out of work to draw unemployment benefits and for payment of old age pensions to all possessing capital below a fixed sum. The Party will consider the extension of the present CPF scheme to cover these needs.

Dear Vote

should know what the Workers' Party is fighting for. We have no doubt that a lot of ambitious people will be hurt by the Government benches. You will remember that in the 1975 election, the opposition parties were other jobs.

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the industry, not just for the other people who depend on it but for the whole of our country. We will continue to work for the participation of all our citizens towards the realization of this goal. We want everybody to play his or her part towards achieving this goal. Most of our people are tired and hungry. It is time to stand with the people. Our people have been pushed around by the Government for so long. It is time for the Government who claim they care the answers to everything and the people's feelings and feelings are of all growth. Our people are tired and hungry. It is time for the people to stand with the people.

THE PARTY

We have been reduced to work and free

We are prepared and ready to work

especially in the working class



Government. AN OPEN LETTER TO THE VOTERS
FROM THE WORKERS' PARTY OF SINGAPORE

Dear Voter,

The Workers' Party is contesting the elections and it is important that you, the voter, should know what the Workers' Party is fighting for. We have no doubt that a lot of scurrilous abuse will be hurled by this Government and the P.A.P. at the Opposition parties. Already guns have been fired from the Government benches. You will remember that in the 1972 elections the Opposition parties were all branded as enemies of the people - stooges in the pay of foreigners - besides the other abuses that were hurled at the Opposition parties and their leaders.

It is therefore very important that every voter should know what the Workers' Party is fighting for and equally important that the voter should not believe everything that is said by this Government or the P.A.P. about the Workers' Party without attempting to find out if it is true. The last elections showed the depths to which this Government and the P.A.P. would sink in order to win the elections by deliberate falsehoods and calculated abuse.

THE FIGHT

What then is the Workers' Party fighting for. The Workers' Party is fighting for a happier life for all our citizens rich or poor and to live in dignity befitting human beings. What does this mean in terms of everyday living. It means:-

- (1) That every citizen should be entitled as of right to the basic needs that make for a happy life regardless of whether he or she is able to pay for the basic needs or not; That every citizen, rich or poor, has a decent home, adequate medical care and attention, enough to eat, proper clothing and that the children are educated and helped to take advantage of the opportunities that are provided for their education. That life for our citizens does not become a burden with constant worry about how to live with the minimum comforts on wages that are not enough.
- (2) That our citizens are enabled to lead peaceful lives without fear of arbitrary arrest and restrictions on the exercise of their rights to allow their full development as whole men and women. That our citizens are not punished or denied privileges because they speak their minds freely.
- (3) That our people are treated with dignity and respect befitting human beings, with compassion and kindness in their misfortunes and problems.
- (4) That all are treated equally under the law so that there are no privileges for the few when the many are denied the privileges.

We want to make Singapore a happier place to live in for all - not just for those with the money, not just for the clever people with brains but for all - including the poor, the sick and the not so clever people. This may seem a pious hope but it will remain a pious hope unless we are all prepared to work for the realisation of this hope. The Workers' Party would like to see the participation of all our citizens towards the realisation of this hope. We want every citizen to play his or her part towards achieving this hope. Make no mistake, the fight in Singapore today is between a handful, however brilliant they may be, and the people and the Workers' Party is proud to stand with the people. Our people have been pushed around by this Government far too long by the clever men who think they know the answers to everything and the people's feelings and suffering are of no account. Decisions are taken in the name of the people without any consultation with the people affected by the decisions,

EVIL IN SOCIETY

We have been reduced to serfs - not free men any more - and the Workers' Party wishes to break this bondage that allows an elected Government to keep the people in bondage.

We are ashamed and angry that our workers are treated in the way that they are treated at the moment without any security of employment, that they are inadequately paid; exposed to danger in their working places; forced to work for long periods so as to go on living; and dependant entirely upon the employers for whatever they can get.

Source: Original Workers' Party campaign leaflet.

JOINT OPPOSITION COUNCIL MANIFESTO

We are ashamed and angry that the trade unions have been put into chains by this Government, that the so-called trade union leaders are but mere puppets of the Government.

We are ashamed and angry at the way that our handicapped citizens have been shamefully neglected by this Government.

We are ashamed and angry that this Government should be so inhumane as to refuse to admit patients into hospitals except when they are dangerously ill, unless a deposit is first made.

We are ashamed and angry that the poor do not get the medical treatment they need.

We are ashamed and angry that a lot of our children are going to school hungry and without proper rest and nourishment so that they are unable to learn. How can they learn if they have to work to help their parents to earn a living when they are not at school.

We are ashamed and angry that children over 12 are driven to seek work in order to support their parents.

We are ashamed and angry at an education system that separates the poor children from the rich and condemns them to a second class education.

We are ashamed and angry that this Government shows a total disregard for human feelings - at inhuman immigration laws that keep families apart and at compulsory sterilisation.

We are ashamed and angry at the injustices done to our citizens in their name, that farmers who have known no other livelihood are not paid adequate compensation when they are evicted after promises by the Government that they would receive specified compensation.

We are ashamed and angry that the only answer of the Government to our criminals in society is brutal and savage punishment.

We are ashamed and angry at the taxes and fees collected by this Government from our poor citizens already overburdened with the problems of keeping alive on meagre incomes.

We are ashamed and angry at the widening disparity of wealth in our society - whilst for the majority of our people life is a struggle a minority flaunt their wealth in extravagant spending and pursuit of pleasure.

A government that only measures the worth of an individual in terms of money - whether he is economically productive or not - is a government that says by its policies that the weak must go to the wall and of this we are thoroughly ashamed. We do not agree with the oft-quoted statement of the Prime Minister that nothing can be free. We regard it as a solemn duty of society to take care of the poor, the aged, the sick and the maimed in its midst. That the well-to-do should pay for the less well-to-do. That the basic needs are provided free to those unable to pay.

ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE?

Are we enemies of the people in wanting to fight for these things for our people. If you believe this Government, we are. You, the voter, will have to decide. This Government will have you worship them at their feet and to thank them for whatever benefit they give you as though you were recipients of charity but the Workers' Party say to you that these things are yours rightfully. You are entitled to them and you should stand up and ask for them. For too long you have lived in servitude and the trouble is that if you live too long in servitude you will become resigned and allow yourself to be treated as people who do not matter by a few clever men. This elections will decide whether you are going to stand up and claim what is rightfully yours or whether you are going to continue in subjection to this Government. If you do not stand up now and strike a blow for yourself it will become virtually impossible to do it next time. The result will be the defeat of the people and we will be remembered as a people who were too frightened to do something for themselves.

FOR A CARING SOCIETY

— THE WORKERS' PARTY

Source: Original Workers' Party campaign leaflet.

JOINT OPPOSITION COUNCIL MANIFESTO

告 選 民 書

在行動黨法西斯的鐵蹄下，人民的基本權利與自由全被剝奪殆盡，工人被殘酷剝削，小販和德士司機被無理迫害，生活費不斷高漲，人民的負擔越來越重。

雖然，在表面上新加坡可以說是一個比較繁榮的城市，然而，絕大多數人民還是極端貧困，在重重苛捐什稅的壓迫下，生活苦不堪言。

爲了更好的暴露行動黨的欺騙和虛偽性，進一步的爲人民服務，社陣，統一陣綫，馬來民族機構已成立一個反對黨聯委會，並擬訂一個共同的鬥爭綱領，以加強在競選與其他方面的合作。最近，正義黨也加入我們反對黨聯委會的陣營了。

我們呼呀人民全力支持我們，在這次大選中投我們一票！

我們必須阻止行動黨的暢所欲言和無理的迫害！

團結起來，擊敗行動黨！

投票支持社陣、統一陣綫、馬來民族機構和正義黨！

OUR CALL TO THE PEOPLE

Under PAP rule, the peoples' basic democratic rights and freedoms have all been trampled underfoot. Workers are heavily exploited, Hawkers and taxi-drivers are persecuted. The people are overburden with heavy taxes and an ever rising cost of living.

Although Singapore appears comparatively prosperous, the vast majority of the people still find difficulties to make both ends meet. Many people live in dire poverty.

In order that we may better expose PAP deceptions and hypocrisy and better serve the people, the Barisan Socialis, the United Front and the Singapore Malay National Organisation (PKMS) have formed a Joint Opposition Council to strengthen co-operation in the elections and other activities. We have a common platform as the object of our struggles.

Recently, the Justice Party has also joined the Joint Opposition Council. We call on the people to support us, vote for us. We must stop PAP bullying and repressions! Unite and Defeat the PAPI Vote for Barisan Socialis, United Front, PKMS and Justice Party.

Dibawah pemerintahan PAP, hak demokratik ra'ayat dan kebebasan kesemuanya telah di-injak dibawah kakinya. Pekerja2 dengan hebat telah diperalatkan nya, penjaga2 dan pemandu2 tekai telah dihukum-nya. Ra'ayat dibebankan dengan cukai yang berat dan sarahidup sentiasa meninggi.

Dalam Singapore semuanya dengan kemewahan, gelengan yang sangat besar dari ra'ayat maseh mendapati banyak kesulitan berusaha untuk hidup dengan hemat supaya mencukupi. Sunggoh mengerikan ramai yang hidup dalam kemelaratan.

Dalam melaksanakan susunan yang lebih baik kami boleh mengusir kepura2an dan penipuan PAP dan berkhidmat kepada ra'ayat, maka itu Barisan Socialis, Barisan Bersatu, Pertubohan Kebangsaan Melayu (PKMS) telah pun menubuhkan sebuah Majlis Pembangkang Bersama untuk menguatkan kerjasama dalam pilihan raya dan kegiatan2 yang lain. Kami juga mempunyai rencana bersama untuk maksud perjuangan kami.

Baru-baru ini, Partai Keadilan juga telah beserta dalam Majlis Pembangkang Bersama. Kami berharap bahwa ra'ayat akan menyokong kami undi-lah kami. Kita pasti berhentian ke-kejaman PAP dan penindasan-nya. Bersatu dan mengalahkan PAP.

Undi-lah Barisan Socialis, Barisan Bersatu, Pertubohan Kebangsaan Melayu dan Partai Keadilan.

பொது மக்களுக்கு

நங்கள் அன்பு வேண்டுகோள் !

ம.ச.க. ஆட்சியின் மூலமாக அடிப்படை உரிமைகள் உரிமைகள் எல்லாவற்றையும் மீறியும் மனிதனை மனிதனாகக் காணாமல் செய்து கொண்டுள்ளது. அவர்களுக்கான சர்க்கரின் வசூலான கடுமையான வசூல்களும் கடுமையான வசூல்களும் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன. படுவணர்வரின் மூலம், உயர்நீதிமன்றத்தின் மூலம் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன.

இப்போது சிங்கப்பூர் மனிதனை மனிதனாகக் காணாமல் செய்து கொண்டுள்ளது. ம.ச.க. ஆட்சியின் மூலம் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன. ம.ச.க. ஆட்சியின் மூலம் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன. ம.ச.க. ஆட்சியின் மூலம் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன. ம.ச.க. ஆட்சியின் மூலம் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன.

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ஒன்றுபட்டு ம.ச.க.வை வீழ்த்துவோம்! உங்கள் உரிமைகளை மீறாதவர்களை மனிதனாகக் காணாமல் செய்து கொண்டுள்ளது. ம.ச.க. ஆட்சியின் மூலம் மனிதனை மனிதனாகப் படுத்திவிடுகின்றன.

馬來民族機構



P.K.M.S.

社陣



BARISAN SOSIALIS

統一陣綫



UNITED FRONT

Barisan Sos... 社陣、統一陣綫、馬來民族機構和正義黨
反對黨聯委會共同綱領

- 一、 建立民主、平等、進步的社會。
- 二、 恢復集會、結社、言論、出版等自由。
- 三、 立即無條件釋放全部政治犯，廢除內部安全法令。
- 四、 取消不合理與反工人的勞工法令，如僱傭法令與工業關係法令。
- 五、 廢除國民服役。
- 六、 放鬆公民權條例。
- 七、 實行中小學免費教育，取消大學入學准證。
- 八、 免除診療所醫藥費，減低留院費。
- 九、 停止迫害德士司機和小販。
- 十、 減輕組屋租金。
- 十一、 減低水電費。
- 十二、 減少路稅。
- 十三、 檢討所得稅務。
- 十四、 男女真正平等。
- 十五、 援助農民和漁民。
- 十六、 促進民族資本，重新檢討一切經濟優惠。
- 十七、 重新檢討城重建計劃。
- 十八、 取消長堤限制與促進新馬重歸統一。
- 十九、 建立一個真正獨立不結盟政策。

JOINT OPPOSITION COUNCIL

BARISAN SOSIALIS - UNITED FRONT - P.K.M.S. & - JUSTICE PARTY
We jointly stand for:

1. A democratic, equal and progressive society.
2. Restoration of the fundamental democratic rights and freedoms of the people, e.g. freedom of speech, publication, association and assembly.
3. Immediate and unconditional release of all political detainees and revocation of the Internal Security Act.
4. Revocation of unjust anti-worker laws like the Employment Act, Industrial Relations Act.
5. Abolition of Conscription & "National Service".
6. Relaxation of Citizenship regulations.
7. Free primary and secondary education and abolition of "Suitability Certificates".
8. Free out-patient treatment and reduction of hospital charges.
9. No persecution of taxi-drivers, hawkers and the people.
10. Reduction of rentals of H.D.B. flats.
11. Reduction of light and water rates.
12. Reduction of road taxes.
13. Review of Income Tax laws.
14. Genuine equality for women.
15. Assistance to farmers and fishermen.
16. Promotion of national capital and a review of all economic priorities.
17. Review of urban renewal priority.
18. Lifting of causeway restrictions as a step towards ultimate re-unification.
19. A genuinely independent non-aligned foreign policy.

Source: Original Joint Opposition Council campaign leaflet.

馬來民族机构



P.K.M.S.

正义党



JUSTICE PARTY

Majlis Pembangkang Bersama

Barisan Sosialis, Berisan Bersatu, P.K.M.S. & Parti Keadilan

Kami berpendirian yang sama untuk:-

1. Demokratis, persamaan dan masyarakat yang progresif.
2. Pembentokkan kembali hak democratic yang tulin dan kebebasan untuk ra'ayat, seperti kebebasan untuk berucap, penerbitan, persatuan dan perhimpunan.
3. Membebaskan semua tahanan politik dengan segera tanpa syarat dan pembatalan Akta Keselamatan Dalam Negeri.
4. Pembatalan undang2 yang bertentangan dengan kaum pekerja seperti Akta Pekerjaan, Akta Perhubungan Perusahaan.
5. Pembubaran Kerahan dan Perkhidmatan Negara.
6. Kelongaran peraturan kewarganegaraan.
7. Pelajaran percuma bagi sekolah rendah dan menengah dan pembubaran sijil kepututan.
8. Rawatan percuma bagi pesakit2 luar dan pengurangan mengenai pembayaran dirumah sakit.
9. Tidak ada penghukuman keatas pemandu2 teksi, penjaja2 dan ra'ayat.
10. Pengurangan mengenai wang sewa rumah pangsa. (H.D.B. Flats)
11. Pengurangan mengenai harga ayer dan lampu.
12. Pengurangan mengenai cukai jalanraya.
13. Pemeriksaan semula mengenai undang2 cukai pendapatan.
14. Persamaan yang tulin untuk wanita.
15. Bantuan pada petani2 dan nelayan2.
16. Memajukan untuk pemodal2 kebangsaan dan pemeriksaan semula mengenai semua keutamaan2 ekenomi.
17. Pemeriksaan semula mengenai keutamaan pembaruan perbandaran.
18. Pembatalan pembatasan di-tambah Johor sebagai satu langkah kearah percantuman semula.
19. Kemerdekaan yang tulin tanpa mengikat sebarang penjanjian pakatan tentera.


சீர்தர உரிமைகளைக் கோரிய

சீர்தர உரிமைகளைக் கோரிய - மி.கே.சி.எம். - சீர்தர உரிமை

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Source: Original Joint Opposition Council campaign leaflet.

Appendix D – 2015 General Election Campaign Manifesto of the National Solidarity Party



Singaporeans Deserve Better!
National Solidarity Party
国民团结党 Parti Perpaduan Nasional தேசிய ஒருமைப்பாட்டுக் கட்சி

NSP ELECTION MANIFESTO 2015

"The standard of living of the average Singaporean has continued to decline in the last 4 years after the General Elections of 2011. The relentless rising cost of living punishes the lower and middle income group, the poor and the elderly, young people starting out in life and working people struggling to make ends meet.

For the General Elections of 2015 which will take place on 11 September 2015, the National Solidarity Party will be making the case to the people of Singapore that they deserve better than what the PAP Government has given them and the country for the past 5 decade. There is no need for a wordy manifesto as the critical issues facing the country and Singaporeans are clear. The National Solidarity Party will fight to be the voice of the people in Parliament to provide robust debate on national issues and push for changes in the following 4 (four) critical areas;

I . Protection of Singapore Jobs

The great influx of cheap foreign labour has displaced many lower and middle income Singaporeans from their jobs .

This cannot continue and the NSP will fight in Parliament for every Singaporean to be given top priority in the engagement of workforce.

It is not fair for Singaporeans to be discarded by their employers in favour of cheaper foreign labour. There must be quotas imposed on Foreign PMETs seeking employment in Singapore.

II Over-Population

The NSP is against the White Paper which proposes that the population be increased to 6.9 million within 15 years. The Singapore of today is already overcrowded and infrastructure strained. We shall make the call in Parliament for a more considered study as to the optimal population size for Singapore in both sociological and economic terms. The NSP proposes that Singapore should only start growing its population gradually when its infrastructure is ready. The disastrous mistake of the past decade with regard to population growth without proper infrastructure planning must be avoided. To increase our Total Fertility Rate, hopeful parents should be provided with a comprehensive security net for their children up to age 18.

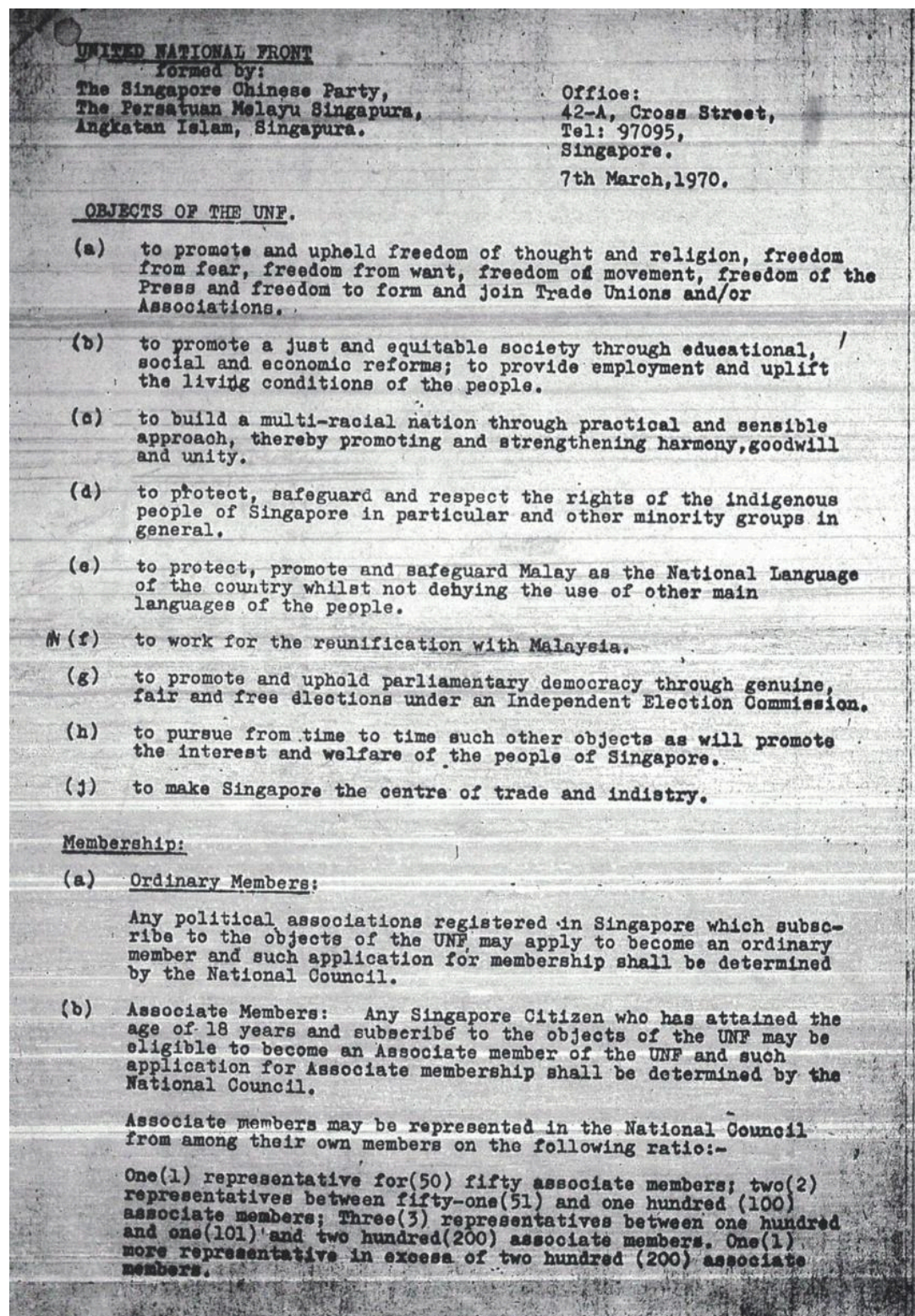
III Return of CPF Personal Life Savings

The Government has already broken its promise to Singaporeans to return their CPF Personal Life Savings at age 55. The reason given for withholding the return is that some squander their CPF Savings on an inappropriate lifestyle . This reason does not justify the withholding of Singaporeans' life savings as the numbers who squander away their life savings are small and certainly less than 5 % of all account holders. For these people , the National Solidarity Party proposes that their family members be entitled to put up the case that the person's CPF Life Savings should be withheld in light of his problematic spending tendency. This is similar to the steps that family members can take if they are aware that the person could be a problematic gambler. As for the other CPF account holders, their life savings must be returned to them as originally promised.

IV Danger of Widening Inequality Gap

Singapore today has one of the highest inequality gaps in the world. This threatens social cohesion and National Unity. There is an urgent need to narrow the widening inequality gap and the National Solidarity Party proposes that one significant means which would narrow this gap is to allow Singaporeans living in non-private property to be able to buy an HDB apartment at cost plus and also be entitled to buy another HDB apartment in the resale market. This should be done before the immigration of foreigners into Singapore is allowed in significant numbers as these immigrants would invariably push up the cost of housing.

Appendix E – The United National Front's Founding Objects¹⁰⁹



¹⁰⁹ "United National Front." Report from the British High Commission to Southeast Pacific Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Source: National Archives of Singapore (NAB1504, FCO24/878, Blip 009). Original source: U.K. National Archives.

Appendix F – 1980 General Election Campaign Materials of the Barisan Socialis and the United People’s Front¹¹⁰

BARISAN SOSIALIS
社會主義陣線

VOTE FOR BARISAN SOSIALIS

The Barisan Sosialis is an anti-imperialist party. We struggle for the fundamental interests of the oppressed and exploited workers and broad masses of the people.

In our struggles against oppression and exploitation over the years, we have repeatedly exposed the hypocrisy, deceptions and evil machinations of the reactionary PAP on the one hand, and raised the political consciousness of the people on the other.

Because we stand firm, speak up fearlessly and struggle unceasingly in defence of the people's vital interests, the PAP has always regarded the Barisan Sosialis as a thorn in its flesh and has repeatedly carried out fascist suppressions against our party.

Vast numbers of our party leaders and cadres have been arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial. Leaders like Dr. Lim Hock Siew, Dr. Poh Soo Kai, Lee Tee Tong, Chia Thye Poh and many others are still languishing in prison. Many others have been deported.

But all the fascist suppressions by the PAP have not cowed us. On the contrary, they have only made us more determined in our struggle to oppose oppression and exploitation on the one side, and to serve the people on the other.

In the general elections, the Barisan Sosialis has decided to contest a token number of 4 Constituencies; they are Kuo Chuan, Toa Payoh, Khe Bong, Boon Teck.

We hope the people will support us and vote for us!

Let us all join in this struggle for democracy, justice, equality and social progress.

Pursuing policies which serve the interests of foreign multinational corporations and their hangers-on, the PAP rules Singapore today with an iron hand.

The people are denied their basic democratic rights and freedoms. They are subjected to increasing harassments, open threats and intimidations. They are evicted from their homes and businesses. They are regimented into doing things according to the whims and fancies of PAP bureaucrats. They are overburdened with heavy taxes and an ever rising cost of living. Everywhere resentment and opposition to the PAP is mounting.

We call on the people to unite and support us, vote for us.
Unite and defeat the PAP one party rule.
Vote for Barisan Sosialis.

VOTE BARISAN

¹¹⁰ “Barisan Sosialis: Dr Lee Siew Choh” and “United People’s Front” Reports from the British High Commission. Source: National Archives of Singapore (D2014030078, Blip 0018-0029). Original source: U.K. National Archives.



UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT

Friday, 8th August, 1980.

THE UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT (UPF) MANIFESTO

"FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY"

CHAPTER 1 - THE LAWS OF SINGAPORE

The UPF being a socialist party will look into all aspects of the livelihood and welfare of the people of Singapore so that there will be no exploitation of man by man. Our motto is Freedom, Justice and Equality. Although the People's Action Party (PAP) claims to be a Socialist, it is in fact a fascist party blatantly violating human rights and Lee Kuan Yew and his henchmen will go the way of the regimes of Hitler, Mussolini and the Shah of Iran, etc.

The UPF will announce their Manifesto in stages and by subjects. We begin the Chapter 1 with our Manifesto on:-

THE LAWS OF SINGAPORE

- 1) The UPF will abolish all fascist and unjust laws inter alia the hated Internal Security Act, Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act and Vandalism Act, etc., which are used by Lee Kuan Yew to detain his political opponents, etc., and also to curtail political liberties so that he can continue his hated rule.
- 2) Caning will be abolished as this is a cruel form of punishment.
- 3) Hanging for drug trafficking will be abolished.
- 4) Unreasonable and harsh punishments will be abolished.
- 5) Appeals to the Privy Council will be abolished and in its stead a Commonwealth Court of Appeal will be established with eminent Judges and Jurists from Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Singapore, etc., who will preside over the Commonwealth Court.
- 6) No statements made to a Police Officer can be used in evidence at the trial of an accused person as the Police have been misusing and abusing their power.
- 7) No foreign lawyers will be allowed to practice in Singapore privately.
- 8) Private legal practice will be abolished in Singapore. The People's Legal Aid Department will be set up. Expert lawyers will be hired by the Government if and when necessary. Everybody will get legal aid in civil and criminal cases. Under the PAP regime only the rich can engage Queens Counsel (QC) but under the UPF everybody will be given equal legal representation.
- 9) Jury trials will be re-instated.
- 10) The deposit for election for a candidate will be reduced to \$250.00 and at least 3 months notice will be given before the date of General Election and one month for by-election.
- 11) The Land Acquisition Act will be amended drastically so that land-owners are not deprived of their lands by the Government under the pretext of public development whereas in fact the Government buys land at rock-bottom prices and sells at sky-high prices.
- 12) The Housing & Development Act will be amended to help the poor and middle class people from high prices, rental and conservancy charges, etc. and the oppressive rules made thereof will be amended.
- 13) The UPF will always uphold the Principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations.
- 14) In the case of controversial laws e.g. whether hanging and gambling, etc. should be abolished in toto. Parliament and the people of Singapore

The following are brief life-sketches of the Second Batch of the Candidates of the United People's Front (UPF) for the General Election

4) UPF Candidate for Electoral Division of GEM SERAN

GOH SIEW LUAN - Businesswoman - 28 years - Married - Has children.

Born in Singapore. Educated at River Valley School. Partner in a Furniture Construction Company. Joined the United People's Front (UPF) and did not join any other political party previously. Can read and write Mandarin and some English. Can also speak Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese and some Malay. Is interested in the welfare of the women and children in particular. Very kind and helpful to people. Has not stood for election previously.

5) UPF Candidate for Electoral Division of GEYLANG WEST

LONG BIN ABDULLAH - Malay Physician and Businessman - 52 years - Married. Has children.

Educated in Malay and English. An Official of Khairat Kematian Mutubbah Muslim, Sims Drive, Singapore. Member of School Committee of Boon Keng Primary School. Member of the Sub-Residents' Committee, Welfare (Zone B) Geylang West, Singapore. A politician for over 25 years and used to help the People's Action Party (PAP) in Kampong Kembangan in the 1963 General Election, etc. Has a wide knowledge in social work, doing a lot of free service for the people of Singapore. Wants a change of Government as PAP is making the people's lives more miserable harder and harder, giving no freedom of speech to the people of Singapore thus causing religion and culture to be affected and believes that United People's Front (UPF) will allviate the hardships of the people. Can also speak some Hokkien. Has not stood for election previously.

The following are our objects for standing in the election:-

- a) We wish to change the present lives of the people who have been suffering for the last twenty-one (21) years under the PAP blood-sucking regime who are making the lives of the people harder and harder and day by day their sorrowful plights are increasing all due to the regime of Lee Kuan Yew who is supposed to be the so-called hero of PAP. Lee Kuan Yew who is a rich man does not feel the poverty of the people himself and their sufferings and due to this Lee Kuan Yew who does not consider the income of the people, the people's housing problems, taxi-fares and robbing the income of the hawkers by making stiff rules, etc., increasing the bus fares, increasing the rents of the flats, PUB charges and other taxes. With regards to marriage, this is also causing a headache to the people. Why should there be Work Permit? If one has to get married with a person outside this country; this rule is causing hardship to the citizen. Why a citizen of Singapore having baby born outside Singapore could not be treated as a citizen of Singapore. Why should it be compulsory for National Service in Singapore. Is it to declare war with another country and if so which country? The stupid PAP cannot answer this question.
- b) If the people of Singapore are still not awake as to what the regime of Lee Kuan Yew have done for the last 21 years making the people restless and giving no freedom of speech and to the Press and to the politicians and causing religion and culture to be affected and under the control of the government and so many other examples of misusing and abusing of power. This is the time for the people to overthrow the regime of Lee Kuan Yew by the General Election of 1980
- c) We, the United People's Front (UPF) promise to the people that when we are returned in the election we will get rid of the laws which are causing hardships to the people for the last 21 years and make heaven on earth for them in Singapore. Vote for UPF for the welfare of the people of Singapore. May God bless the UPF and annihilate the PAP.

Friday 1st August 1980

On 1st October, 1980, the UPF issued a statement on women hoping that it will be an eye-opener for the male chauvinists who have been lording it over the women since time immemorial and the UPF coined the adage that, "most men are bad while most women are good".

While not a single male has disagreed with our said statement, the Business Times wrote an editorial on 2nd October, 1980 under the heading, "Nonsensical View on Women". We presume it was written by a male chauvinist pig and wish to show this person/s some elementary facts which they have failed to see as they lost their head/s when told the unpalatable truth and were unmasked before the world.

Our statement that most men are bad while most women are good is based on the facts as in all bad habits, nearly all the culprits are men and only a handful of them are women. In fact in some bad categories there are no women at all, e.g.:-

- a) Mass Murderers:- Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Tojo, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, etc., (All men).
- b) Tyrants:- Shah of Iran, Augusto Pinochet of Chile, Lee Kuan Yew, etc. (All men).
- c) Criminals:- murderers, treason, rapists (all men), robbers, thieves, forgers, smugglers, cheats, conspirators, swindlers, impersonators, outraging modesty (all men), assaulting, etc.
- d) Other vices:- gamblers, drinkers and drunkards, smokers, peeping toms (all men) bottom pinchers (all men) etc.

While a few thousand men are in the Singapore Prisons, only a few of the prisoners are women although the population of Singapore is 50% each.

From the above analysis it will be clear as a crystal that nearly all the crimes from mass murderers to the misdemeanours are committed by men. We have also come to the conclusion that just as, "behind every great man there is a woman" similarly, "behind every bad woman there is a man".

It is not our concept that fat men should be represented by fat men or that fools should be represented in Parliament to speak for the fools but we said that most men are bad and most women are good. It is a matter of good and bad among men and women and we are only stating the facts and have nothing against the men. In fact, this statement is written by the men in the UPF and confirmed by the women in the UPF. We believe that our statement was misunderstood or deliberately twisted by the Business Times and which is a disgrace to journalism.

Upon further consideration, we are of the opinion that our statement, that "most men are bad while most women are good" was too mild and should have been, "most men are rascals while most women are angels".

We have to finally state that we are not saying all this just to get the women's votes but the gospel truth which men will deny at their peril.

We repeat that the UPF has more confidence in women than men and we are even prepared to field more women candidates than men in the coming General Election in Singapore and not that women should occupy parliamentary seats in roughly the same proportion as there are women and men in the electorate. We believe the men have also made a mess of the world.

(20) UPF Candidate for Electoral Division of KEBUN BARU

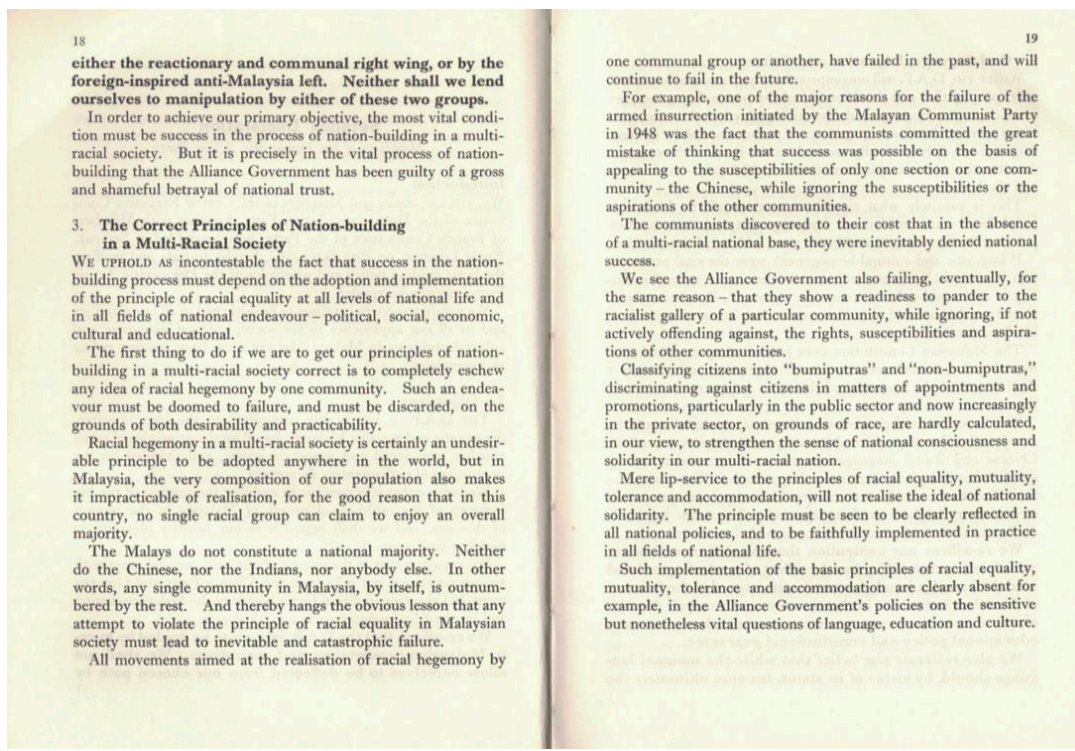
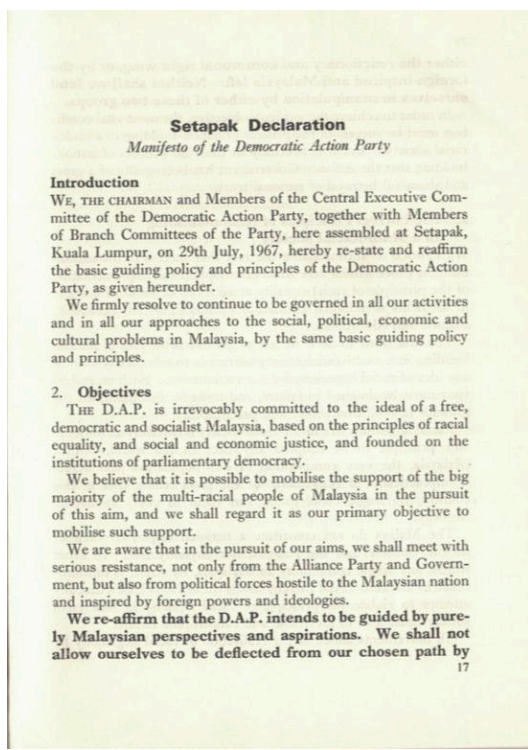
JALMAH BINTI ABU SAMAH-UPF Political -25 years -Married with 1 child Worker.

Born in Singapore. Educated in Malay and English at Sembawang Malay School and Monk's Hill Secondary School. Was a Machine Operator for seven (7) years. Was a member of Singapore Indian Association. Interested in games and sports. Formerly her mother (Timah Bte Ghani) was a member of PAP women's section.

Never joined any political party and never stood for election before.

Is interested in the welfare of the poor people and the women and children of Singapore in particular. Intends to help the factory workers who are being exploited and victimised by the employers and PAP government. Will help girls to get decent jobs and not be bargirls, prostitutes, social escorts, etc.

Appendix G – The DAP’s Self-Declared Party Manifesto in 1967¹¹¹



¹¹¹ Source: Democratic Action Party. 1969. *Who Lives If Malaysia Dies? A selection from the speeches and writings of DAP leaders - C.V. Devan Nair, Lim Kit Siang, Nor Jetty, Goh Hock Guan, Chen Man Hin and others.* Selangor, Malaysia: Rajiv Printers.

4. On Language, Education and Culture

WHILE THE D.A.P. will uncompromisingly champion the acceptance, propagation and development of the national language, we cannot accept a language and education policy based on the erroneous premise that the propagation and permanence of the national language can only be finally secured on the basis of the eventual deculturation of two major communities in Malaysia – the Chinese and the Indians.

This is precisely what significant sections of the Malaysian people read into the National Language Act and the education policy of the Government and in our view, with ample justification.

If linguistic and cultural homogeneity were the vital precondition of national existence and consolidation, then several multilingual and multi-cultural nations in the world, like Switzerland, Canada or India could never have come into being or succeeded, let alone survived.

The Malaysian Constitution does indeed recognise the multilingual and multi-cultural character of the nation, and guarantees the free use of the languages of the other major communities in the nation.

This constitutional guarantee is, however, rendered sterile by an educational policy which does not permit the free use of the Chinese and Tamil languages as media of instruction and of examination in national-type secondary schools. This restriction must lead to the steady deterioration of levels of attainment and of proficiency in these two languages, as well as to the inevitable decline in their usage and to their eventual elimination.

We re-affirm our contention that the Alliance Government's education policy has the effect of rendering null and void the constitutional guarantee with regard to the free use of the other languages in the country, and we shall deem it as one of our objectives to secure a correspondence between educational policy and constitutional guarantee.

We also reiterate our belief that while the national language should, by virtue of its status, become ultimately the

chief language of administration in the country, this should not preclude the use for necessary official purposes, of the Chinese and Tamil languages, in addition to the English language. This would contribute to the fitness of things, as well as to the purposes of rational and intelligent administration.

5. The Removal of Economic and Educational Imbalance as the Correct Means to Achieve National Integration in a Multi-racial Society

COMMUNAL DIVISIONS and dissensions are, at bottom, engendered and aggravated by economic causes. The intelligent and effective way of dissolving communal barriers, and transcending communal sentiments in our multi-racial society, and to expedite the process of national integration, would be to implement a policy aimed at the eradication of the existing economic imbalance between the communities.

This imbalance reflects the slower pace of socio-economic processes in the rural areas, and the disparity as between rural incomes and productivity on the one hand, and urban incomes and productivity on the other.

These are phenomena which are not peculiar to Malaysia among the developing countries. Similar social, economic and cultural disparities as between rural and urban areas also confront other developing countries.

What renders the problem more acute and dangerous for Malaysia, however, is the fact that class divisions in our country appear very often to coincide with communal divisions.

The rural peasantry are largely Malays while the bourgeoisie in the towns and the professional classes are largely non-Malays. This fact has been effectively exploited in the past, and continues to be so exploited, by communal-minded politicians who play on Malay sentiments of insecurity and backwardness in order to justify the political dominance which they exercise in the name of Malays, but which in fact they really exercise for the minority

social class which they represent – that sordid, selfish and curious amalgam of a social class, for whom the best description so far coined is – the “feudal-compradore” class, and their hangers-on, which constitute the Alliance leadership.

In point of fact, the coincidence of class divisions with communal divisions is not as straightforward and as general as it would appear at first sight. No doubt, certain communal politicians find it convenient to give the impression to the Malays that the “haves” are all non-Malays. This is simply not true, for the vast majority of Malaysians of Chinese and Indian origin are workers and wage-earners of various categories.

The truth is that the fraternity of Malaysian “have-nots” are to be found in urban as well as rural areas, and embraces Malaysians of all communities and religions. This is the truth which the communal politicians deliberately ignore, for it upsets the neat and plausible theories which they habitually hawk as their stock-in-trade in order to justify themselves to their followers. But it is a truth which national-minded democratic socialists must incessantly drive home, in order to help expedite the process of national integration on the basis of the common economic interests of the have-nots of all races.

However, the economic and educational imbalance as between the urban and rural areas does lend itself rather easily to being clothed in a communal garb, and it must be part of any enlightened socio-economic policy to remove this imbalance.

The DAP charges the Alliance Government with not doing anything significant towards this end. Indeed, one of the most striking commentaries on Alliance failure in this respect is the fact that the great majority of Malay students in our university do Malay language and religious studies, whereas the crying need is surely for more and more Malays to become qualified in the modern disciplines of science, medicine, technology, economics, etc., so that Malays may be able to compete on equal terms with their fellow-Malaysians of Chinese or Indian origin, who are not in the habit of sending their offspring to centres of higher learning

in order to become experts in Buddhism or the Bible or the Bhagavad Gita.

But apart from occasional lip-service, the Alliance leadership has been gravely delinquent in regard to the positive encouragement of Malay students to qualify themselves in the more productive and sophisticated disciplines of modern knowledge.

Again, with regard to the improvement of the rural economy, one would have thought that the primary end in view would be the raising of the per capita income of the Malay peasantry, while the means employed would have been radical land reform measures to eradicate crude exploitation of the peasantry by landowners and middlemen and the introduction of modern techniques of agricultural production.

Instead of this, the emphasis has been on the provision of an expensive and outwardly imposing infrastructure in the rural areas which has largely succeeded thus far only in enriching a few entrepreneurs, middlemen and a favoured elite among the Malays.

The constitutional provision affording certain special rights to the Malays has been used, not with a view to raising the general standards of living in the rural areas, but for the creation of an elite Malay capitalist class who have proved just as rapacious as any 19th century capitalist, but far less efficient in their operations than the 20th century expects of its entrepreneurs.

The crucial criticism, however, is that it is impossible to see how the per capita income and the standards of life of the Malay peasantry can be significantly raised by the creation of an elite group of Malay capitalists, who operate in conjunction with an elite group of Chinese compradores and tycoons.

Lest it be charged that we oppose Malay participation in business and commercial fields, we might declare categorically that we welcome the equalisation of opportunities for Malays to participate in all fields of national life.

Our contention is simply that no major onslaught can be made

against peasant poverty in the rural areas by creating a few rich Malays, any more than the social and economic problems of the Chinese and Indian workers in the urban areas can be solved by enrolling a few more members in the "Compradores Club," or the even more restricted club of the big business tycoons, both presided over by the M.C.A.

Problems of general social and economic development in urban as well as in rural areas can only be tackled on the basis of the application of more meaningful economic policies, aimed at improving the lot of the many, and not of enhancing the gains of the few.

6. International Perspectives of Malaysia

THE FIRST THING for Malaysians to understand and appreciate, as we look at the rest of the world, and particularly at the rest of Asia, is that we are a very small nation, by any standards, with a population of about 9 million people.

Indeed, the only nation smaller than us in this part of the world is Singapore. For the rest, we are surrounded by larger countries with far bigger populations and resources.

One of our closest neighbours in South-east Asia is Indonesia, with more than a hundred million people, whose recent political and military confrontation we managed to meet and survive, not on our own, but because of the protective British defence umbrella spread over us and Singapore.

A second stark and naked fact that we have to face is that this British defence umbrella, which we have taken all along for granted, and behind which we had confidently sheltered, is now in the process of rapid contraction, leading to eventual total withdrawal. The grim fact is that by the mid-seventies, present British plans envisage the complete withdrawal of the British military presence in Malaysia and Singapore.

This means that as a small nation, living in an extremely troubled and unsettled part of the world, surrounded by huge neighbours with far larger standing armies, Malaysia must increasingly depend on her own more slender resources, for both internal and external

defence. We must swim alone in a hostile sea full of predatory sharks and man-eating piranhas.

The fact that both Malaysia and Singapore are relatively better off economically than any other country in Asia (apart from Japan), and provide a better living for their people, does not make our problems of survival as small, but separate and distinct political entities in the years ahead, any easier.

It is dangerous to be small, defenceless, but relatively affluent if you are surrounded by larger countries with bigger and hungrier populations. Historically, such a situation has always provided the classic recipe for aggression.

One of the strongest indictments of the lack of foresight of the Alliance leadership has been its proved inability to envisage and prepare for the dangerous defence vacuum that would be created if and when the British do decide to effect a total military withdrawal, as they have already decided to do.

There was no appreciation over the last decade that the process of decolonisation in Asia and Africa had finally and irrevocably deprived Britain of her status and role as a world power, and left her as yet another small European nation, far more interested in her survival in Europe as a member of an European economic fraternity, than in any kind of presence in distant South-east Asia.

In spite of this, British public opinion might have been persuaded into continuing British defence commitments in this part of the world over a longer period, at least until such time as Malaysia could have safely secured alternative defence arrangements, if the Alliance government had not gone about trying to twist the tail of the aged British lion in a fit of juvenile heroics.

Alliance backbenchers indulged in anti-British tirades in Parliament, while the Alliance government itself, obviously playing up to a thoughtless gallery, slapped down on a whole range of Commonwealth preferences.

The stupidities of the Alliance government have finally come home to roost, in the shape of the recently published British

defence White Paper, and we had to witness the humiliating spectacle of the two Alliance Government leaders visiting London, and appealing to the very same people they had only lately insulted and reviled, to retain their military presence in the country.

Be that as it may, Malaysia must now seek to survive in a rapidly changing world, and particularly in a South-east Asia in which the potential dangers and threats to our national survival and territorial integrity are likely to be aggravated, rather than diminished, in the years ahead.

Since we are neither a super-power nor even a medium-sized one, it is clear that we are too small to defend ourselves, and that we must seek alternative defence arrangements for ourselves in conjunction with friendly powers, and look for whatever international guarantees and co-operation we can obtain to safeguard our national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

If public confidence, which has already been rudely shaken, is to be maintained, it is imperative that the government be seen to be working intelligently and diligently towards credible and dependable arrangements to ensure national defence and security.

It is in this new context that the DAP hopes that the governments of Singapore and Malaysia will finally see it as the better part of wisdom, to cease their perpetual feuds and interminable squabbles, and to establish new relations of trust, confidence and co-operation to ensure their common economic democratic development and prosperity, defence and survival.

7. Certain Vital Conditions for Malaysian National Survival in an Unstable South-east Asia

IT IS NOT always true that small nations cannot hold their own, either militarily or politically, in the international power game. Several small nations have distinguished themselves in history by showing a capacity for national survival and progress out of all

proportion to their geographical size or to the size of their population.

They have done so, invariably, because they enjoyed three vital prerequisites of survival: One, a firm sense of national unity, identity and solidarity; two, a highly skilled and dedicated population; and three, social and economic discipline.

We do not see any reason why, given the right political leadership, Malaysia cannot acquire all these attributes so clearly necessary to ensure our continuance and survival as a nation. It is our contention that the present policies of the Alliance government are gravely inimical to the national attainment of the vital attributes.

The first prerequisite of a firm sense of national unity, identity and solidarity can only be established if the principle of racial equality is faithfully observed and implemented in all fields of national life. We shall struggle for this.

The second prerequisite of a highly skilled and educated population can be obtained through the implementation of a modern and dynamic policy of education. The DAP shall strive to achieve such an education policy.

The third prerequisite of social and economic discipline in the national life can be secured by the following measures. One, the formulation and implementation of social and fiscal policies to ensure a fairer distribution of the national wealth. Two, a more scrupulous adherence to the principles and practice of social justice. Three, more realistic planning for economic diversification, and agricultural and industrial expansion, involving the enthusiastic involvement and participation of all sections of the population, and four, the creation of an incorruptible and efficient government administrative machinery. All these measures the DAP shall persistently strive for.

8. On the Use and Abuse of the Internal Security Act

ONE OF THE unpleasant facts of life that we have to live with is that the general situation in South-east Asia being what it is, Malaysia

will continue to face grave threats to her security from the activities of the agents and instruments of foreign powers, hostile to our national existence.

The threat of subversion is very real, as the period of Indonesian confrontation so clearly showed, and as the existence of foreign-inspired communist activities in the country continues to show.

In the circumstances, the DAP, as a sober and realistic party, cannot share the enthusiasm of well-meaning but nevertheless starry-eyed and unrealistic persons, who call for the total repeal of the Internal Security Act.

We recognise that it must be one of the paramount concerns of any Malaysian Government, including a DAP Government, to protect the security and integrity of the nation against the forces of foreign-inspired subversion.

We therefore support, in principle, the need for internal security legislation. We must nevertheless urge the utmost public vigilance in regard to the exercise of the powers vested in the government by the Internal Security Act.

We cannot afford to be blind to the fact that it is not beyond the capacity of the Alliance Government to abuse the provisions of the Internal Security Act for partisan and other purposes, which have nothing to do with the legitimate concern for the maintenance of internal security.

Some examples which come to mind are: 1. the retention by the government of emergency labour laws promulgated in the name of meeting the dangers of Indonesian confrontation, long after that confrontation had ended, and 2. the continuance of the requirement for suitability certificates for admission to higher centres of learning, despite the fact that experience has shown that no real security need exists for such a requirement.

The DAP therefore calls for the abolition of the requirement for suitability certificates as being both unnecessary and humiliating, and for the prevention of other abuses committed in the name of the maintenance of internal security.

9. Conclusion — A Choice of National Destiny
Regarded against a broad historical background and perspective, Malaysia must be seen as undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny.

For a stage has been reached in which intelligent Malaysians can discern, on the one hand, the possibility of integration of a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious people in a wider, all-embracing Malaysia-centred identity and consciousness, and on the other hand, the equal possibility of the failure to effect such an integral transformation with the inevitable consequences of national discord, dissension and disintegration.

The choice is there, and it is imperative. In the final analysis, it must be the people as a whole who have to make this choice of destiny — either to take the road which leads to an integral national transformation, or the alternative road leading to eventual national decay and disintegration.

We have faith that if this choice of destiny is placed before them in frankness and honesty, Malaysians of all races and creeds will make the right choice.

All that the Alliance leaders have contributed in this direction so far have been a fungus of outdated and reactionary political, social and economic nostrums and notions, a medley of communal and contradictory slogans and panaceas.

The politics of the Alliance have been the politics of communal segmentation and division. We see it as the primary duty of all Malaysians, who desire the survival of their country, to counter the segmenting and dividing politics of the Alliance with the politics of creative and dynamic multi-racial integration at all levels — political, social, economic and cultural.

Those who are communalists in mind and spirit can never hope to contribute to the nation-building process.

Only those Malaysians can take up this process, who have effected the integral transformation in their own minds and spirits, and who therefore possess a creative and harmonising spirit of national construction. Otherwise, everything must welter in a general confusion and discord out of which it will be impossible to build a greater harmonic life of the nation.

It is to this sacred task of creative and constructive nation-building that we in the DAP dedicate ourselves.

Chapter 5

How Opposition Parties Communicate Internally:

An Analysis of DAP's Party Newsletters

1. Selling the Coalition: The Problem of Convincing Supporters

In the previous two chapters of this dissertation, I focused on a cross-national comparison of electoral campaigns between two most similar parliamentary autocracies. I detailed the critical juncture which led to the separation of Singapore and Malaysia, arguing that deep-seated disagreements concerning future governance for the two respective countries led to their inevitable divorce. These different visions of pragmatic meritocracy on the one hand versus Malay-dominant ethnic consociationalism on the other hand rapidly manifested themselves in the two government's policies and conduct towards economic development and political dominance after 1965. The different modalities in which electoral campaigns are conducted is a key expression of this divergence between the two countries. Unsurprisingly, opposition parties encountering these vastly dissimilar electoral environments grew from very different ideological soils, and therefore had varying incentives to forge different kinds of cooperation with each other, even when they had the common aim of maximizing vote shares against the dominant incumbent.

The foregoing analysis reveals that it is the Malaysian opposition parties who have a much harder time trying to forge opposition alliances with ideologically polarized opposition parties, as compared to their Singaporean counterparts. Even as Malaysian opposition leaders had strong incentives to jointly develop costly and substantive coalition campaigns encourage cross-party strategic voting, they are also extremely mindful of the need to persuade their

supporters to get on board with the coalition. If the party leaders could not manage to convince their supporters that it is worthwhile supporting all candidates from the coalition regardless of their partisan affiliation, then their electoral performance suffered. In the 1980s, for instance, PAS's first attempts at joint campaigns with minor non-Malay opposition parties "created confusion among its followers" (Ramanathan and Mohamad Hamdan 1988, 60). Its rhetorical claims of being an Islamic party devoted to the transformation of Malaysia into an Islamic state did not square with its overt actions of cooperation with non-Malay-Muslim opposition parties dedicated to a secular country. Similarly, for the DAP, its first-time alliance with PAS in the 1999 elections was so alarming to its core voters that they refused to vote for the party's long-time leaders Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh. Both DAP party leaders lost their parliamentary seats even as PAS made historic gains. Evidently, "some DAP branches blamed the party's alliance with PAS to be a major cause for the ouster of its key leaders" (Mutalib 2000, 78).

The most crucial corollary for all of these observations is that we should expect opposition party leaders learn from the failures of initial coalition formation, and therefore communicate in certain ways to their activists and supporters in order to educate, persuade, and convince them of the necessity of coalition formation. But how does an opposition party do this? To be more precise, even as an opposition party leader agrees to campaign jointly with other opposition party leaders to expand their party's appeal to other opposition-inclined voters, what sort of communication strategies will they engage for their own supporters to maintain the support of their own party? Furthermore, how does the party leader also sell the coalition to his or her own supporters to persuade them to engage in cross-party strategic voting (i.e. "holding their noses" to vote for candidates from the other opposition parties)? This chapter seeks to provide the theoretical guide and empirical evidence to answer these questions.

In the abstract, if opposition parties indeed seek to sell the coalition to their own supporters, I propose that we can expect to observe at least three different kinds of communication strategies between the opposition party leaders and their own supporters¹¹². First, party leaders will want to communicate to their own supporters that the party has not abandoned its core ideological commitments even as it cooperates with its ideological rivals. The purpose is to reassure them about the party leader's continued loyalty to the party's cause, so as to reduce internal party dissent and rebellion. For example, the party can continue to reiterate its commitment to its ideological base through performing symbolic ceremonies – DAP leaders can continue attending annual fund raising dinners for Chinese schools, while PAS leaders will maintain their weekly preaching at local mosques. I term this sort of communication strategy the “ideological commitment” strategy. In general, we should expect that party leaders engage in this form of communication almost all of the time across all opposition parties.

Second, party leaders will want to remind its supporters that insofar as overall opposition victory means being part of a new government, the party can implement policies that are widely desired by all opposition supporters as well as by their own supporters. I term this communication strategy the “prospective gains” strategy. Generic policy benefits that benefit all opposition supporters can take a variety of forms, such as economic reform to reduce corruption or privatization to generate economic growth, and political reform to establish free and fair elections or to reduce media censorship. Some prospective policy benefits may be materially rewarding for the pocketbooks of some opposition supporters (e.g. increased cash handouts for low income families), while other proposed reforms to the judiciary or election commission appeal to their commitment to regime change and democratization. Regardless, an opposition

¹¹² Throughout this chapter, I refer to the “supporters” of the opposition parties to mean both its internal party activists, and its mass supporters who have partisan attachments to it.

party will want to stress the alliance's prospective gains for democratic change and liberalizing reforms despite the short-term ideological compromise of working with their ideological rivals.

But perhaps more dear to the hearts and minds of any particular opposition party's core supporters are the specific policies tied to an opposition party's niche ideological goals. The DAP, for instance, as a primarily Chinese-backed opposition party, frequently encounters pressure from its core supporters to help fund and expand Chinese vernacular schools. Even more importantly, parents, students and educators from Chinese vernacular schools have long lobbied the Malaysian federal government to recognize the Unified Exam Certification (UEC). The UEC is a standardized test implemented by at least 60 independent private Chinese vernacular schools throughout the country. Students can use their test results for entry into universities around the world, including Singaporean, Taiwanese, American, and British universities. They are, however, not recognized by public universities nor by the civil service in Malaysia. To convince these Chinese supporters to vote for the coalition's candidates therefore, DAP leaders can emphasize its continued commitment to expand Chinese-medium schools and to recognize the UEC, but only if it successfully becomes part of the next government as part of a coalition of opposition parties.

Third, and finally, party leaders can try to paint a more positive picture of their ideological rivals. A dominant incumbent oftentimes tries to divide the opposition by emphasizing their differences, particularly through selective institutional co-optation or through control of the mass media (Lust 2004, 2005). By stressing the positive attributes of their fellow allies in the opposition coalition as well as the ideological compromises that their allies have made, party leaders can narrow the perceived ideological differences between the two opposition parties to less than what the dominant incumbent may make it out to be. This can help to

convince their own supporters that any ideological compromises that they may make through the coalition are smaller than what they may perceive.

Specifically, narrower perceived ideological differences and smaller perceived ideological compromises works to encourage an opposition party’s supporters to back the alliance through two mechanisms. First, an opposition party’s supporters will be more likely to forgive their leader for making compromises with their ideological rival. Second, they should reason that the coalition is worth supporting so long as there is a quid pro quo of ideological compromises on both sides and that the ideological compromises that they themselves have to make are not too large. Regardless of the mechanism, however, I term this communication strategy the “positive rival” strategy.

Table 1 below summarizes the type, form, and purpose of the three communication strategies hypothesized.

Type of Communication Strategy	Potential Form	Purpose
Ideological Commitment	Everyday symbolic public ceremonies and rhetoric	Signal commitment to a party’s niche ideologies to reassure commitment and reduce intra-party dissent
Prospective Gains	Campaign rhetoric emphasizing prospective policy goals, implementation, and achievement	Persuade supporters to support inter-temporal bargain in the alliance: short-term ideological compromise for long-term gains.
Positive Rival	Everyday rhetoric and images depicting positive achievements of alliance and fellow ally	Narrow perceived ideological differences with fellow ally to reduce degree of apparent ideological compromises in the alliance.

Table 1: Types of Communication Strategies for an Opposition Party in an Opposition Alliance Towards its Own Supporters

In the rest of this chapter, I provide empirical evidence from two different research designs to test if opposition parties and leaders do indeed engage in these different types of communication strategies. I first conduct a content analysis of the DAP's party newsletter "The Rocket" between 2001 to 2004, and between 2010 to 2013. In a media environment where newspapers and television channels are largely pro-BN, the DAP's party newsletter has become a crucial communication channel to its own supporters. The articles in this newsletter should then reflect the type and variation in intra-party communication strategies over time. Second, I further examine the contents of "The Rocket" between January 2017 and February 2018. The formation of the new Pakatan Harapan (PH) opposition alliance comprising of both new and old opposition parties brought a new set of challenges for DAP leaders to overcome in approaching the 2018 Malaysian general elections. Yet, the PH coalition appears to be one of the most cohesive and comprehensive coalitions ever. This second set of evidence from an all new coalition serves as a robustness check for my findings from the earlier periods.

2. Testing Communication Strategies Through Examining DAP's Party Newsletters

2.1 The 2001-2013 Empirical Context and Research Design

If the DAP's The Rocket newsletters truly reflected the party leaders' attempts at communicating to its own supporters, then we should expect variation in the types of communication over time, depending on whether the party was in coalition with PAS or not. When the party is in a coalition with PAS or PKR, we should expect that the frequencies of articles signaling the "prospective gains" and "positive rival" strategies to be high. The party should try its best to demonstrate to its supporters the gains to be made from contesting the elections together with other opposition parties in an alliance, and should also try to portray its

ideological rival in a positive manner. For example, we should expect The Rocket devote multiple pages towards publicizing the coalition's common manifesto which detail its prospective plans for institutional reform should regime change occur.

The counterfactual is this: when the party is not in a coalition with PAS, we should expect that the frequencies exhibiting the two strategies to be low or almost non-existent. We should expect to observe that The Rocket pay scant attention to the coalition manifesto, or at best only devote a couple of pages towards publicizing it. It should also not seek to feature politicians from other opposition parties nor portray them in a positive manner. Indeed, the party may even potentially disparage its ideological rival, PAS, criticizing its extremism even as they both do battle against the autocratic incumbent. The party may even go further by justifying its non-cooperation with PAS. It will want to list out the multiple reasons for non-cooperation, such as their irreconcilable differences over ideology despite their common enemy. I label these two latter communication strategies the "negative image" and the "justify non-cooperation" strategies. Finally, I do not expect the frequency of "ideological commitment" to vary because party leaders should want to demonstrate their ideological purity consistently, whether they were in a coalition or not.

To test these hypotheses and observable implications, I examine the DAP's The Rocket newsletters in the period between 2001 up until the March 2004 General Elections, and from 2010 until the May 2013 General Elections. The primary reason is simply the fact that the two four-year periods represent the most contrast in the relations between PAS and the DAP. In the first four-year period beginning from 2001, the DAP broke off from the Barisan Alternatif electoral alliance due to PAS's intransigence in attempting to implement hudud law in Kelantan and Terengganu, the subnational states that it governed. Approaching the 2004 elections, both

opposition parties wanted nothing to do with each other (J. Liow 2005; Moten and Mokhtar 2006; C. H. Wong 2005). In fact, “the DAP put itself at the forefront of efforts to oppose the PAS platform of institutionalizing an Islamic state” (J. Liow 2005, 922). We should therefore expect no attempts in the Rocket portraying any benefits of working with its ideological rival and almost no positive images of them. Articles painting PAS in a negative image or justifying the DAP’s non-cooperation with PAS should be relatively high.

In contrast, the Pakatan Rakyat opposition alliance during the latter four-year period beginning in 2010 was the second time in which the opposition parties fully coalesced in the post-1965 history of Malaysian politics (Case 2014; Pepinsky 2015; Weiss 2013a; Saravanamuttu, Lee, and Mohamed Nawab 2015; Weiss 2014). We should therefore expect that opposition party leaders learn from their mistakes during the first iteration of opposition cooperation under the Barisan Alternatif in 1999 and try to convince its supporters that working with PAS is potentially beneficial. The DAP, in particular, would have been particularly scarred by its experience in 1999, since its top three leaders all lost their legislative seats. If its leaders are cognizant of the potential loss of support when it is ever found cooperating too closely with PAS again, the party should then take measures to stem the resistance from its supporters, and strive to educate, persuade, and convince them of the necessity of an alliance. As a prominent DAP leader in its central executive committee revealed to me in an interview,

“The most important element for the DAP is that there is still a massive phobia of PAS. We sort of learnt our lesson, rightly or wrongly from 1999, when the association with PAS resulted in the backlash particularly among the Chinese voters. And that being our core base, we have to be extra careful... We are so

fearful of the repeat of 1999. We lost a lot. Almost wiped out. Left with 9 seats. Kit Siang and Karpal lost. So it was something that is always at the back of our heads...”¹¹³

A secondary, but equally important, reason for examining specifically DAP’s The Rocket newsletters is that the newsletter is most likely a very reliable indicator for intra-party communication. By law, The Rocket, as a party-political publication cannot be sold to the public. It can only be sold and distributed to the party’s members. That is why the front page of every newsletter contains a small disclaimer: “For Members Only” (see top left corner of Figure 1 sample below). Once published, copies of The Rocket are primarily distributed to party branches throughout Malaysia, and to party members’ residences. Despite the restriction on public sales, furthermore, the DAP almost always sells the newsletter for a nominal fee of RM\$2.00 (US\$0.50) alongside other campaign paraphernalia whenever it organizes public seminars, rallies, or fund-raising dinners either on its own or with other organizations. The audience at such events are typically pro-opposition: they have chosen to attend such events to be further educated or to show their support (in spirit or in kind) for the opposition’s activities. In at least two DAP fund-raising events that I attended, one on 12 October 2016 organized with Bersih (see Figure 2), and one on 5 May 2017, the newsletters were displayed prominently for sale alongside other paraphernalia. Sales of The Rocket to these pro-opposition and pro-DAP audience members were brisk.

¹¹³ MY014 Interview. Location: Kuala Lumpur. Date: October 4, 2016.



Figure 1: Cover page of the September 2012 Issue of the English Rocket



Figure 2: An Audience Member Sizes up a Bersih T-shirt on a pile of The Rocket

The third reason for examining the trove of DAP newsletters is the availability of data. Near comprehensive archives of both editions of *The Rocket* from 1980 to 2015 were made privately available to me from the archives at the DAP headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. These were reviewed and catalogued over several visits from August 2016 to January 2017. Yet, these archives were incomplete, as the DAP did not always retain copies of their own party newsletters. After supplementing those copies with copies stored at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore in January and February 2018, I was able to then compile a complete listing of all the issues of both the English and Mandarin Chinese *Rocket* in both periods, in which I could then read systematically from cover to cover. PKR did not keep copies of their own *Suara Keadilan* newsletters, while I was unable to find and gain access to PAS's *Harakah Daily*. Although both PKR and PAS's newsletters had online versions, I learnt from interviews with key politicians from these parties that the online versions differed significantly from hardcopy versions that they had distributed in the past.

Each issue of *The Rocket* typically consists of about 20 to 35 pages of articles. Every issue generally begins with a column on Page 2 by the National Publicity Secretary of the DAP, Tony Pua, alongside a column by the DAP's Secretary General Lim Guan Eng (see Figure 3 below). There are also frequent columns by the DAP's long-time leader Lim Kit Siang as well as the party's International Secretary and Political Education Director Liew Chin Tong. These are then followed by a large variety of articles covering a wide range of topics criticizing the government. There would be harsh critiques of the government's policies on education, the management of the economy, and even on its foreign policy, just to name a few. Members of Parliament would also frequently contribute articles also on a variety of issues ranging from local governance to national concerns about judicial independence or corruption. Moreover, the

newsletter would also oftentimes feature interviews of the DAP's existing political officeholders, profiling Members of Parliament or State Assemblypersons on their period of political awakening, reflecting on their political journeys, and contemplating the challenges for the party. Finally, The Rocket oftentimes features events that the party organizes throughout the country, such as state conventions and celebrations of religious festival.



EDITORIAL

Give us back our Highways!

government will take any action."

Pua said members of the public who use the highway may be able to sue the company or even the government for specific performance, to compel the parties to follow the agreement.

The terms as per the contract on possibility of the Government taking over the concession. Readers who are corporate lawyers would probably be better placed to add further comments.

Under Clause 25.4 on Expropriation:

Notwithstanding any provision in this Agreement, the Government may [ex-terminate] this Agreement by expropriation of the Concession Company or expropriation of the Concession at any time by giving (3) months written notice to the Concession Company if it considers that such expropriation is in the national interest.



And in the event of expropriation, the terms of compensation is as follows under 26.3.2:

(a) the amount (if any) by which the Value of the Construction Works exceeds the aggregate of the amounts paid or the liabilities and obligations assumed by the Government pursuant to Clause 26.1 and all amounts as at the date of compulsory purchase or acquisition owing to the Government by the Concession Company;

(b) the amount equal to:

- the amount of interest which would have accrued on the moneys invested in or lent to the Concession Company by shareholders of the Concession Company as if the interest had accrued on such amounts from the relevant dates of payment to the Government on an accrual basis of 12%; less
- any net dividends or interest received by the shareholders of the Concession Company.



SG'S DESK

Support Pakatan Rakyat in fighting the Economic Recession

DAP urges all Malaysians to support Pakatan Rakyat national agenda of fighting the economic recession by having good governance, reducing the petrol price to RM 1.20 per liter and a RM50 billion economic stimulus package.

We need the people's support to determine the direction of the national agenda of having CAT governance based on competency, accountability and transparency to fight corruption.

And that Malaysians must empower themselves to demand a government that is people-centric, democratic and ethical based on the principles of freedom, justice, truth, social welfare, and adherence to moral precepts.

By the middle of January, the price of oil dropped below USD 35 per barrel. When the price of oil was USD 35 per barrel on 01/10/2008, the price of petrol was 1.20 per liter. It is only fair that the government further reduce the price of petrol by 60 cents from the present RM 1.80 per liter to reflect the current market price.

The people should also support the RM50 billion economic stimulus package proposed to save Malaysian jobs and businesses that Malaysians can see, touch and feel the difference comprising as follows:

1. RM 6,000 annual oil bonus to all families earning less than RM 6,000 a month or RM 3,000 annual bonus to bachelor earning less than RM 3,000 a month will cost RM 35 billion or a mere one-third of Petronas last year's gross profits of RM 107 billion;
2. Progressive reduction of corporate tax rate from the present 25% to 17% which will cost RM 13 billion;
3. Daily revision of petrol prices to take into account of changes in the international price of oil;
4. Immediate reduction in gas prices as well as electricity tariffs, which was increased by 20% for businesses when the price of oil was USD 124 per barrel to reflect in the drop to around USD 50 per barrel; and
5. An additional RM 2 billion wireless project to make all the major towns and cities in Malaysia wifi so that as many Malaysians as possible can be connected to the Internet.

TONY PUA
National Publicity Secretary

CORRECTION

In the last issue, we wrongly stated that James Wong was the DAP MP for PJ Utara, when in fact he was the MP for Kampar from 1990-1995. We apologise for the error.

Figure 3: Sample Page 2 of the February 2009 Issue of the English Rocket

The National Publicity Secretary is the key party member who has overall political responsibility for the content of The Rocket, and is also a member of the DAP's central executive committee, the party's top decision-making body. The role is appointed after the central executive committee is elected from the top 20 vote-getters by the party's pool of delegates. Besides Tony Pua, who was the national publicity secretary for the four year period between 2010 to 2013, Ronnie Liu, former state assemblyman for Selangor and former state executive councilor was the national publicity secretary in the four year period between 2001 and 2004. Although the National Publicity Secretary oversees the publication, the everyday work of publishing the newsletter is delegated to a team of editors and journalists overseen by an Editor-in-Chief. At any one time, there are between one to ten full-time journalists, translators, and photographers hired and paid by the party working on the publication.

Informal conversations with the full-time journalists hired by the DAP revealed that the English and Mandarin Chinese Rocket maintained separate editorial teams writing and publishing different sets of articles oriented towards different audiences. The English Rocket's target audience was primarily urban, upper-middle class Chinese and Indian Malaysians with at least undergraduate education, while the Mandarin Chinese Rocket's readers were primarily urban and semi-urban lower-middle class Chinese Malaysians with high school or some vocational education. Because there was a translator whose job was to translate articles between Mandarin Chinese and English, there were more than a few articles with similar content. When pressed if there was any systematic differences in the content and tone of the articles between the two different versions of the Rocket due to the different types of audiences, the editors and journalists maintained that they were unaware of any such differences, and that if there were any, they were not deliberate efforts by the editors and journalists.

A significant challenge that I had to confront was the inconsistency of the data. For the first four-year period beginning 2001, there were only 10 issues of the English Rocket and 9 issues of the Mandarin Chinese version published. In the second four-year period beginning 2010, there were 39 English issues and 37 Mandarin Chinese issues of the Rocket, resulting in 76 issues in total. This is four times as many issues as in the earlier period. The reason is that it was only in 2009, after its unexpected victories in 2008 “tsunami” elections, that the DAP managed to expand its support staff to publish regular monthly issues of both the English and Mandarin Chinese newsletters. Before 2009, issues were inconsistently produced and printed – sometimes once every two months as it was in 2006 and 2007, but sometimes almost none at all as it was with only one issue in 2003 and two issues in 2002. The crucial years of 1998 and 1999 had only 2 issues per year for the English Rocket, and 6 issues in total for the Mandarin Chinese Rocket. These inconsistencies and scarce publications in the early 2000s and late 1990s reflected the organizational weakness of a financially strapped ethnic minority opposition party.

To circumvent this problem of the uneven observations of data, I sought to hand-code the *relative proportions* of the different types of opposition-related articles. To be more specific, I first read through an entire issue of The Rocket to identify specifically the articles that mentioned either PAS, PKR or the Pakatan Rakyat opposition coalition. These articles could be entirely about other opposition parties and the opposition coalition, or be primarily about DAP politicians or events but mentioned these other opposition parties in some significant manner. Amongst this subsample of articles, I then determined whether they were of the “prospective gains”, “positive rival”, “negative image” or “justify non-cooperation” types of articles by reading its substantive content. If the article was considered to be one of any of the four categories, it was coded 1 for that particular category. If the article was a mix of two communication strategies, then I coded

0.5 for the two categories. Articles that mentioned the opposition but were in none of the categories above were coded as “others.” After determining the categories that each article belonged to, I could then determine the relative proportions of the types of opposition-related articles in each year.

2.2 Results and Discussion

I read and hand-coded 196 opposition-related articles in 49 issues of *The Rocket* published in English in the two four-year periods of 2001-2004 and 2010-2013. Figure 4 below shows the relative proportions of the articles on opposition parties across the eight years.

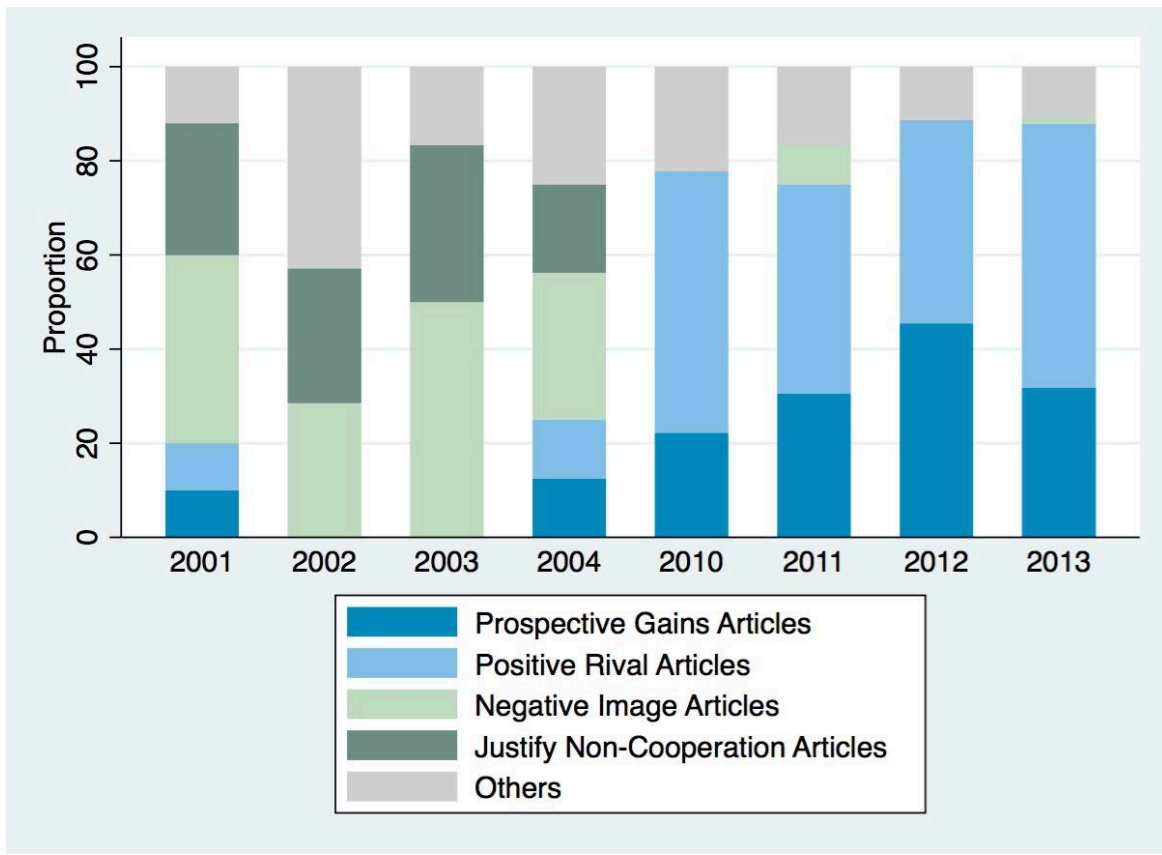


Figure 4: Relative Proportions of the Types of Opposition-Related Articles in *The Rocket*

The results confirm the hypothesis that the DAP varied their communication strategy to their own supporters depending on whether they were in a coalition with PAS and PKR or not. They revealed that the DAP generally portrayed PAS in a negative manner between 2001 and 2004. In those years at the beginning of the 21st century, two-thirds of all the opposition-related articles were either “negative image” articles or “justify non-cooperation” articles, with at least half of the articles being in either category in each year. In contrast, only 3.5 out of 149 articles between 2010 and 2013 were negative. Over 80 percent of all opposition-related articles in this latter four-year period portrayed PAS, or PKR, or the Pakatan Rakyat coalition in a positive manner.

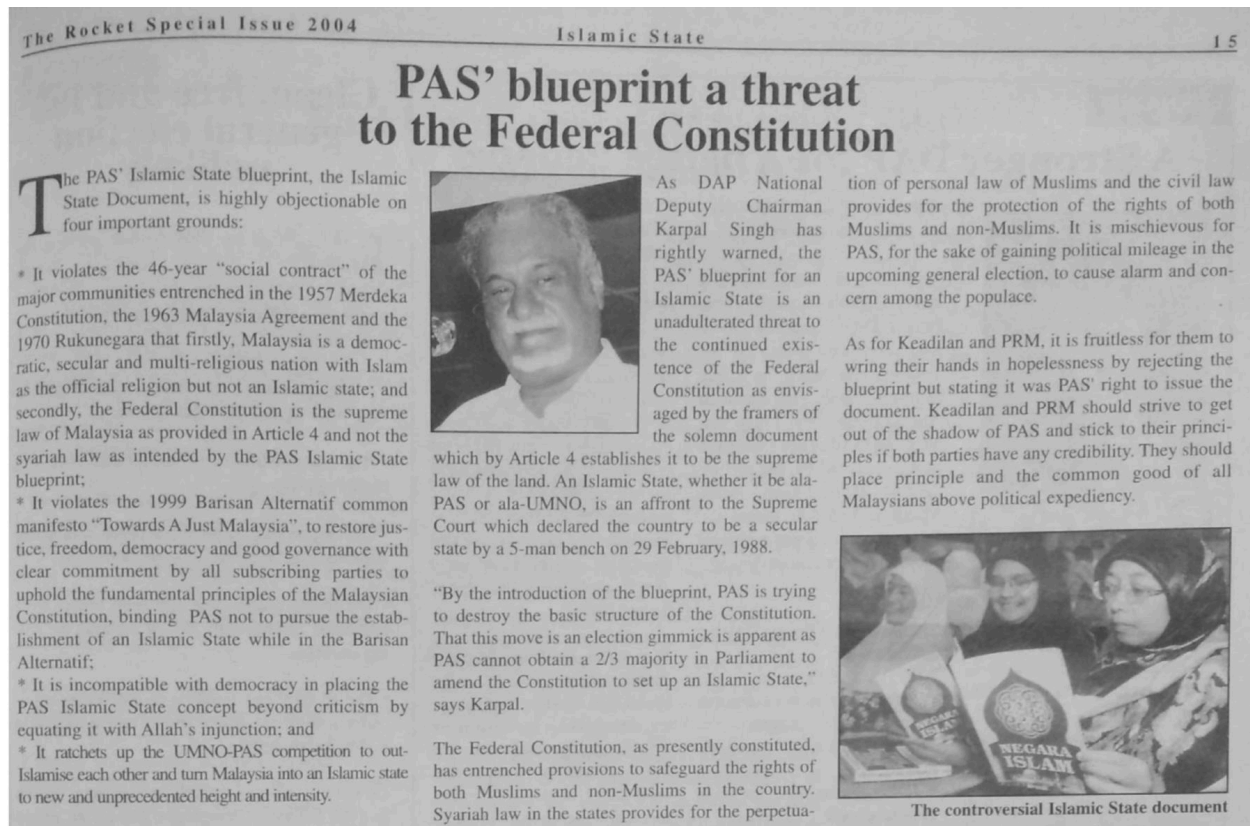


Figure 5: An Example of a Mixed “Negative Image” and “Justify Non-Cooperation” Article

An example of an opposition-related article that portrayed PAS negatively and justified the DAP's non-cooperation with them is the article reproduced in Figure 5 titled "PAS' blueprint a threat to the Federal Constitution." The article summarizes a statement put out by the DAP's National Deputy Chairman Karpal Singh which criticizes PAS's "Islamic State" document that was released in November 2003. In that document, PAS clarified and reiterated its position that implementing shariah and hudud laws to be the essential foundations of an Islamic state, and that all other laws and democratic institutions were to be subsumed under it (Liow 2009, 89–91). As Karpal Singh's statement highlights, PAS's document "violates the 46-year "social contract" of the major communities," "violates the 1999 Barisan Alternatif common manifesto," and "is an unadulterated threat to the continued existence of the Federal Constitution." He charged PAS for "trying to destroy the basic structure of the Constitution," and chided the other opposition parties Keadilan and PRM "to get out of the shadows of PAS and stick to their principles if both parties have any credibility."

To be sure, PAS's release of the document at that time was a desperate measure. In September 2001, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, then Prime Minister of Malaysia, had abruptly declared Malaysia to already be an "Islamic state." This declaration sought to undermine the entire reason d'être of PAS – if Malaysia was already an Islamic state, then PAS's constant claims to be the one true party that would establish Malaysia as an Islamic state would be without basis and completely irrelevant (Liow 2009, 81–96). PAS had little choice but to release a series of memos and this final document in order to re-establish its ideological foundations and win back its core base of pious Malay-Muslim voters in light of the impending general elections in March 2004. Yet, the DAP was completely unsympathetic to PAS's conundrum. It derided the party for being an extremist party, out of touch with multi-ethnic and multi-religious Malaysia.

Fast forward nine years later, Karpal Singh would make another statement that was carried in *The Rocket* which marked a 180 degree turn from his initial position about the threat of PAS and its ideologies. The article, published in January 2013, summarized Karpal Singh's speech at the DAP's national congress held in December 2012. The report noted that Singh, now DAP Chairperson, "stressed that PAS is an important friend in Pakatan Rakyat" and that despite their differences, PAS was "a solid party with ideology and principles." He justified his change in stance by suggesting that "If we do not change with the times, the times will change us." Evidently, the critical difference this time was that PAS was part of the broader Pakatan Rakyat (PR) alliance with the DAP and PKR. As a coalition, PR had already been governing the subnational states of Penang and Selangor since 2008. With the upcoming general elections in May 2013, Karpal thought it reasonable for him to reiterate to DAP members that it was crucial for them to view PAS in a positive manner, so that the coalition could win.



Figure 6: An Example of a "Positive Image" Article

“Positive image” articles did not stop simply at DAP leaders’ declarations of the good intentions of their fellow opposition “friends” and the overall coalition. The Rocket oftentimes featured interviews with politicians from other opposition parties to highlight the commonalities between all of them, thus narrowing the perceived ideological differences between the parties.



Figure 7: Cover page of The Rocket in January 2012

For example, Figure 7 shows the cover page of The Rocket in January 2012 featuring three prominent female politicians from all the respective component parties of PR as “The Bold and The Beautiful.” In the center is Teo Nie Ching, at that time the Member of Parliament for

Serdang, a district in the outskirts of the capital city Kuala Lumpur (KL). On the right is Nurul Izzah Anwar from PKR, daughter of the formerly jailed Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Member of Parliament of Lembah Pantai, also a district on the outskirts of KL. Finally, on the left, is Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud, Deputy Chief of the women's wing of PAS, and Member of Parliament for Kota Raja, similarly just outside of KL.



Figure 8: Interviews Featuring Nurul Izzah Anwar and Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud

A careful reading of the substantive content of their respective interviews reveals that The Rocket carefully used women's issues as a foil to allow the respective Members of Parliament to highlight current deficiencies in existing public policies for women, their similar commitment to pressurizing the incumbent government to reform, and to publicize their policy priorities as they could govern as a coalition. In the interview with Nurul Izzah Anwar, she

highlighted how she “pushed very hard for the amendment of 60 days maternity leave to 90 days” and that “the Women, Family, and Community Development Ministry is not doing enough to address the needs of the fairer sex.” She proposed increasing the Ministry’s budget and implementing more effective programs such as the “MyKasih” programs that provides points for poor households to purchase groceries. Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud similarly emphasized enhancing child-caring initiatives such as building childcare centers “in areas where it is close to the commercial centres and factories for the convenience of the parents.” Her pet priority, however, was strengthening the existing Malaysian shariah courts system insofar as there would be better enforcement of women-related Muslim marriage laws such as alimony payments from divorce procedures.

While it is apparent that these different female politicians from different opposition parties emphasized varying policy priorities, their respective agendas were all linked together in a common theme and purpose – reforming existing bureaucracies, legislation, and public policies to empower women. That the DAP is willing to devote multiple pages in its own party newsletter that is ostensibly circulated only to its own supporters reflects not just the strong relationships between the parties, but also its somewhat risky strategy in positively portraying their fellow allies by highlighting thematic commonalities across all opposition parties in the coalition. One can imagine that more than a few devoted Chinese or Indian supporters of the DAP to be turned off by such interviews. For them, any talk of strengthening the shariah courts system would be sacrilegious to their secular worldview and commitment to a multi-religious country. Yet DAP’s investment in this potentially costly strategy also partly reflects its own calculation that these devoted supporters may still ultimately support the party regardless of such features, and that there are more benefits to be gained from appealing to all its supporters to engage in strategic

cross-party voting. We can expect more moderate supporters of the DAP who may be concerned about women's issues and female empowerment to be more willing and likely to vote for PKR and PAS candidates after reading these articles.



Figure 9: Cover Page of The Rocket in March 2013

Besides positively portraying their fellow opposition allies, opposition-related articles in The Rocket also actively promoted the prospective gains that opposition supporters would enjoy

if the PR coalition was victorious over BN. In the run up to the general elections, the coalition manifesto becomes the substantive focal point which highlights these prospective gains. As the cover page of the January 2013 edition of *The Rocket* revealed, the DAP made sure that it effectively communicated these important prospective gains that were contained in the manifesto if the entire PR coalition defeated the BN. The cover page publicized the recently launched PR election manifesto, highlighting key initiatives for Malaysians to enjoy cheaper consumer goods such as cars, houses and cars, feel safer through reduced crime and corruption, be more economically secure with enhanced welfare and education, as well as more liberal policies on women, elder, and diversity.

Before examining how *The Rocket* substantively covers the election manifesto, it is worthwhile to revisit what the manifesto itself contains and how it is presented. Pakatan Rakyat's 2013 general election manifesto itself¹¹⁴ is a 35-page document detailing the coalition's policy promises ranging from education reform to policies to promote economic growth as well as political reforms to the judiciary, Attorney General's Chambers, election commission, as well as the anti-corruption agency. Substantively, it includes policies that are dear to the core supporters of all the component parties, particularly the most ideologically polarized PAS and DAP. For the DAP, it includes recognition of the UEC, the Malaysian Unified Exam Certification organized by Chinese vernacular schools but not recognized by the national government discussed earlier. It also recognizes the guarantee of the freedom of religion as stated in Malaysia's constitution. For PAS supporters, moreover, the manifesto also includes recognizing Islam as the official religion of Malaysia, and enhanced allocation of funds for state-level Islamic religious departments.

¹¹⁴ Last accessed at <https://limkitsiang.com/docs/ENG-Manifesto-BOOK.pdf> on March 2, 2018.

Most significantly, however, PR's election manifesto does not clarify the coalition's position on at least two most controversial issues – (1) reforms to the existing affirmative action policies in education and industry for Malays and bumiputeras, and (2) reforms to the existing Islamic court system administering shariah laws for Muslims that exist parallel to the civil court system. That the coalition has decided to strategically leave these issues “off the table” signals their contentious nature as well as the reluctance and inability of the component parties to come to a consensus on any particular position. In all likelihood, they have decided that there is no “good” position to take that is different from the BN's existing position, and that the optimal strategy is to not discuss these issues at all.

Nevertheless, regardless of the substantive content of the alliance's manifesto and its simplistic language in articulating PR's policy positions, the 35-page document itself is a dry read. Although a more politically knowledgeable and sophisticated voter will find it relatively easier to understand and process how these policies directly translate into benefits for themselves, a typical median voter with only high school education will find it fairly difficult to do the same. Political scientists have long known that the high cognitive complexity and low salience of any proposed institutional reforms are a significant barrier to institutional change (Capoccia 2016, 1111–14; Culpepper 2011; Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Similarly, we should expect that opposition voters to encounter the same barriers when trying to understand how regime change most directly benefit themselves.

For its part, the PR opposition alliance appears to be aware of the problem of simplifying the election manifesto enough to the extent that a typical voter with little education will be able to understand what he or she is voting for. Alongside the 35-page manifesto, the PR

simultaneously released a 2-page “leaflet,” putting all its proposed programs in bullet points.¹¹⁵

The language was further simplified into vague terms for more technically sophisticated ideas such as “reform Islamic and religious institutions” and “Reform Parliament.” Obviously, PR’s programs were obviously more sophisticated than these simple bullet points. But the leaflet’s ultra simplified format made it far easier for distribution and less daunting for voters to read.

MANIFESTO RAKYAT

THE PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING

- Lower oil prices
- Lower electricity charges
- Lower water charges
- Abolish tolls
- Abolish monopolies
- Lower car prices
- 150,000 affordable and comfortable housing
- National Housing Corporation: investing RM5 billion in the first year and RM2 billion a year after to build affordable and comfortable housing

THE FRATERNITY OF THE PEOPLE

- Respect the position of Islam as the official religion and guaranteeing the freedom of religion as enshrined in the Federal Constitution
- Elevate culture as a positive foundation of community
- Malaysian Women's Contribution Fund: contribution of RM50 per month for wives who qualify, and husbands will be obliged to provide toward a contribution fund proportionate to their income (between RM10 to RM100 per month).
- Senior Citizens' Bonus Scheme (60 years and above): RM1,000 Bonus each year
- Uphold the national language, ensure the rights of mother-tongue languages, and improve the command of English
- Additional assistance of RM300 per student each year for the 1,854 people's religious schools, national-type Chinese and Tamil schools (SJK), private Chinese, Tamil, Iban, Kadazan and mission schools.

PAKATAN HARAPAN RAKYAT

THE PEOPLE'S ECONOMY

- 1 million new job opportunities for the people by gradually reducing dependence on foreign labour
- Minimum wage of RM1,100 per month; RM2 billion facilitation fund to facilitate minimum wage
- People's Pioneer Scheme: train 1 million school leavers without higher education to uplift their skills in technical fields, combining employment opportunities with periodic certification of skills.
- 5 technical universities and 25 new vocational schools to be built
- Education reform to drive the economy
- Cultivate smart partnership of trade unions, employers and government
- SMEs and innovation to drive the national economy – RM500 million national innovation fund, SMI financing and incentives reshuffle
- Tax adjustment to promote equity - income band will be broadened so that the 26% tax rate will be payable for taxable income exceeding RM400,000 as compared to RM250,000 at present
- Sustainable economy – halt Lynas operations, review implementation phases of RAPID, reform all existing legislation related to logging, and will regulate logging activities
- Defend military veterans' economy and welfare – RM500 million for Military Veterans' Small Entrepreneur Fund, increase government contribution to the Armed Forces Fund Board (AFFB) from 15% to 20% (managed separately from pension funds), Soldiers' Dividend will remunerate non-pensionable veterans to the amount of RM2,000 per year
- Making taxi entrepreneurs viable by giving permits directly to taxi drivers
- R&D investments to reach 5% of GDP
- Public transport – the lifeline of the national economy – free public transport for differently-abled people, integrated plan involving MRT and buses in the Klang Valley, RM2 billion to double the number of buses and bus routes, initiate steps towards building the first inter-city high speed rail system in Southeast Asia
- Break monopolies to encourage competition – Anti-Monopoly Commission, Public Contracts Commission to evaluate public agreements like IPP and unfair concessions, break up monopolies in communications, essential foods, pharmaceuticals, civil aviation and other key sectors, dissolve 1MDB, open tenders, disposal and handover of government holdings in selected government-linked companies (GLCs) via management buy-out (MBO) to produce more viable entrepreneurs

PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT

- Reform Islamic and religious institutions
- New remuneration and service packages for civil servants
- Clean, fair and transparent elections
- Reform the judiciary, Attorney General's Chambers, MACC and PDRM
- Reform Parliament
- Media freedom and restore trust in media practitioners
- Abolish UUCA and ensure academic freedom
- Abolish legislation that is “anti-rakyat”
- Corruption Elimination Policy (DEBARAN) – restructure the MACC to focus on big corruption cases that involve the public interest, tighten corruption-related legislation

Figure 10: Pakatan Rakyat’s 2-page manifesto leaflet

DAP’s The Rocket enters the picture by further simplifying the coalition manifesto’s multiple messages. In addition to featuring the numerous speeches of the leaders of other

¹¹⁵ Last accessed <https://limkitsiang.com/docs/ENG-Manifesto-LEAFLET.pdf> on March 2, 2018

opposition parties praising the manifesto, the rest of the March 2013 edition contained pictorials highlighting certain important initiatives in the manifesto. The centerfold of the March 2013 edition, as shown in Figure 11 below, for example, contrasts the “Anguish under BN” with the “Love” from the Pakatan Rakyat manifesto. It highlights almost all the economic benefits promised under the coalition manifesto, such as abolishing road tolls, as well as reducing petrol, electricity, and water bills through direct subsidies. Even more spectacularly, it also emphasized, through a center word bubble and bold font, on the promise that PR aims for all households to have a minimum wage of about RM\$4,000 per month (or USD\$1,000). Screenshots of pages 22 and 23 in Figure 12 is further evidence of how the publication’s editors and journalists have strategized to best communicate and engage its party members through a combination of bold fonts and pictures.

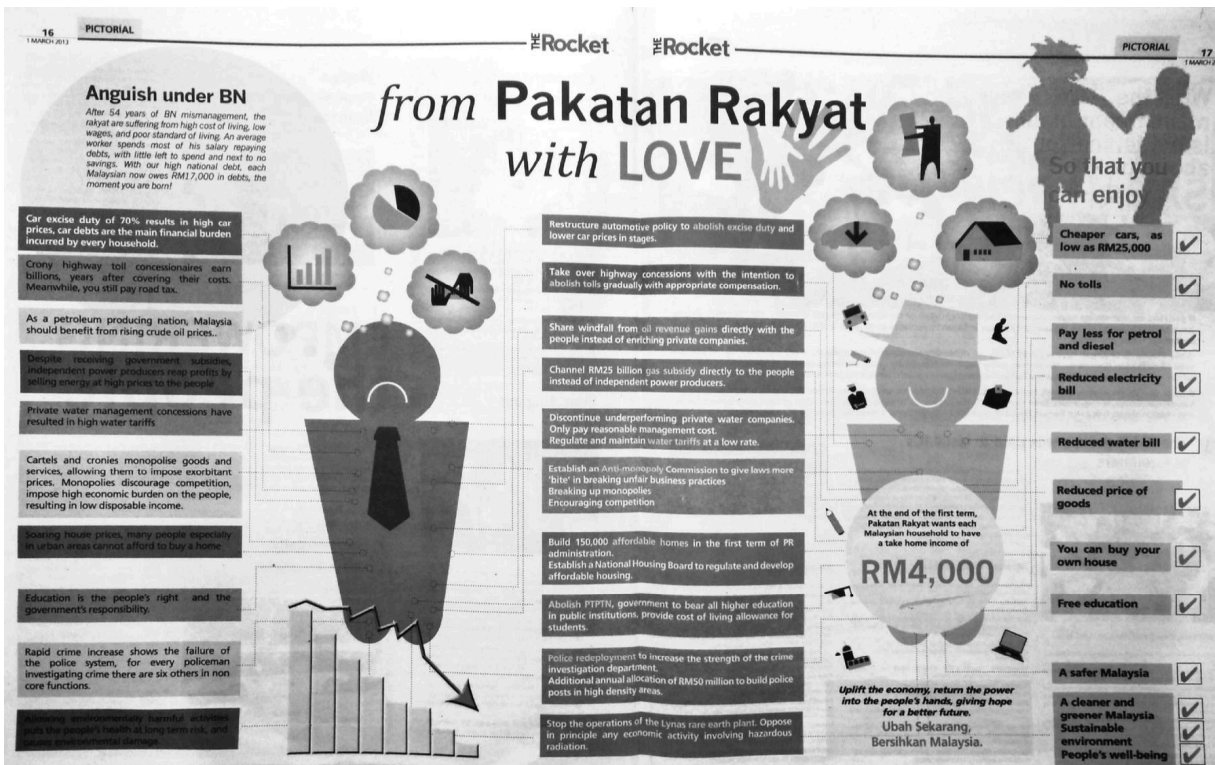


Figure 11: Centerfold of March 2013 issue of The Rocket



Figure 12: Pictorial of Pakatan Rakyat’s Common Manifesto

Ultimately, the plethora of evidence from The Rocket suggests that the DAP is very invested in rhetorically and visually simplifying the prospective gains to be made from the opposition coalition’s victory by dedicating a large number of articles and pages towards publicizing it. They also want their fellow allies from other opposition parties to be perceived as ideologically moderate and reasonable allies. Ultimately, through these twin strategies, it seeks to persuade and convince its supporters that (a) all opposition parties in the coalition actually have multiple points of policy agreements despite their ideological differences that have been left “off the table”, (b) that there are substantive material and policy benefits to be gained if the coalition succeeds in toppling the incumbent autocrat, and (c) towards that end, its supporters must maintain its support for the DAP and also engage in cross-party strategic voting – vote for candidates from the Pakatan Rakyat alliance regardless of their partisan affiliation.

2.3 Potential Robustness Checks

Critically reading and hand-coding large volumes of text is a time-consuming and potentially hazardous research methodology. For example, there may be concerns about researcher bias in reading, interpreting, and hand-coding the 196 opposition-related articles that I have examined. That is, I may be coding articles into categories that are congruent with my hypothesis. Automated text analysis may help to reduce researcher bias and decrease the time required for processing large volumes of text. Unfortunately, it is also hard to ignore its potential drawbacks (Grimmer and Stewart 2013). First, the text must be machine-readable and pre-processed. That alone is a tough challenge for DAP's articles because OCR software that I have tried consistently produce large errors in the text. Moreover, it also ignores the pictorial setting in which the text is contextually set in, such as in Figure 11 and Figure 12. Understanding these pictorial settings are critical, as they shed light into what exactly how, why, and what the party intended to convey to its supporters beyond a mere repetition of its known talking points. Second, both unsupervised and supervised automated text processing methods still require significant time and resources for validation at multiple steps throughout the text processing procedure. They are likely to be most helpful when processing an extremely large text copora, such as thousands or millions of articles. The time spent critically reading 196 opposition-related articles is likely to be slightly more with only minimally more benefits to be gained from reducing researcher bias.

Still, given the concerns about researcher bias, there may be alternative methods for increasing the robustness of my findings. For instance, I can consider employ other researchers to serve as coders. At the minimum, I can employ a research assistant, train the assistant to hand-code a handful of articles before leaving him or her to repeat the entire hand-coding process. A

comparison of differences between our coding of the dataset would then serve as an additional robustness check on the accuracy of the relative proportions of the different types of opposition-related articles. Unfortunately, such a process is also costly, still time consuming, and also provides only a marginal improvement for reducing researcher bias. An alternative methodology is to employ crowd-sourced text analysis (Benoit et al. 2016). Once the articles are scanned into an OCR-reader and cleaned, I could potentially use a platform like CrowdFlower to enlist the assistance of thousands of coders around the world to judge the appropriate category of particular articles. The chief advantage of this second method over the first one would be a completely transparent and reproducible dataset and analytical process that can be used by any other researchers if they desired to verify the findings. Yet, to engage in this robustness check would still require a considerable amount of monies to pay coders, as well as time to scan and clean the text, and to set up the platform for text analysis.

Beyond employing additional researchers, I can also potentially use an alternative but parallel dataset to validate my arguments, claims, and findings. Given that informal conversations with the DAP journalists suggest that there is no distinct differences between the English and Mandarin Chinese versions of The Rocket, we should expect to observe similar proportions of negative and positive opposition-related articles in the Mandarin Chinese version across the two four-year periods of 2001-2004 and 2010-2013. If that is indeed the finding, then the results will further buttress my hypotheses that an opposition party communicates differently to its own supporters depending on whether they were in a coalition with another opposition party or not. Unfortunately, time constraints did not allow me to perform this particular robustness check. Significantly more time would be needed to carefully read through the

Mandarin Chinese articles to hand-code them into the appropriate categories of communication strategies. I intend to begin this robustness check as soon as time allows for it.

3. Reading The Rocket's View of Pakatan Harapan

3.1 The 2015-2018 Empirical Context and Research Design

One final strategy for a robustness check is to examine opposition-related articles again in The Rocket for a different coalition. In mid-2015, PR officially collapsed after PAS withdrew its membership, once again citing ideological differences with the DAP. This left the DAP and the PKR as individual parties on their own. In late 2015, a group of dissident PAS leaders quit from their party to form Parti Amanah Negara or Amanah, for short. The new party advocated a progressive Islamic agenda, one more focused on the liberal ideals of Islam rather than fixated on the implementation of shariah and hudud laws. In 2016, another new party, called Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia, or Bersatu for short, was formed. This party was formed by a splinter group from UMNO itself. It was formed after the current Prime Minister Najib Razak unceremoniously sacked multiple cabinet ministers, including his Deputy Prime Minister and the Attorney-General, for protesting against his alleged involvement in a multi-billion dollar corruption scandal in the state investment fund 1MDB.¹¹⁶ It is currently headed by Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, the former Deputy Prime Minister, as well as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia for the 22 years from 1981 to 2003. Together, the four parties – DAP, PKR, Amanah, and Bersatu – formed the Pakatan Harapan (PH) alliance in December 2016.

¹¹⁶ For an overview of the controversy, see, "Malaysia's 1MDB decoded: How Millions Went Missing" Wall Street Journal. November 22, 2015. Last accessed at <http://graphics.wsj.com/1mdb-decoded/> on March 22, 2018.

The 93-year old Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's entry into the ranks of the opposition brings a different set of challenges for the party leaders and supporters of the DAP and PKR, as compared to their former alliance with PAS. Now, DAP's and PKR's leaders no longer had to contend with their supporters' aversion to an Islamic state as advocated by PAS. Instead, they had to contend with Tun Dr Mahathir's past reputation as (a) a Malay chauvinist who advocated for Malay rights, and (b) an autocrat who jailed his political opponents, restricted civil rights, and personalized Malaysia's hitherto democratic institutions (Milne and Mauzy 1999; Slater 2003; Welsh 2004). Even worse, in early January 2018, the PH alliance announced Tun Dr Mahathir as its Prime Minister-designate, should it win the 2018 general elections. This was the first time ever that an opposition alliance in Malaysia had formally announced its candidate for Prime Minister even before the elections.

Mahathir's reputation as the ethnic leader of the Malays is well known and more likely to be somewhat acceptable, since he was leader of UMNO for 22 years implementing pro-Malay policies as the Prime Minister, and since Malays were the largest ethnic group in the country. It was his authoritarianism that was much more distasteful. In his 22 years as Prime Minister, one of his most memorable acts of authoritarianism was Operation Lalang – a major crackdown by the Malaysian police detaining 107 Malaysians without trial on October 27, 1987 ostensibly to preserve public order amidst simmering inter-ethnic tensions between the Malays and the Chinese (Lee 2008). Among those arrested were current and former DAP leaders Lim Kit Siang, Lim Guan Eng and Karpal Singh, Amanah leader Mohamad Sabu, as well as Yunus Ali, husband of Bersih¹¹⁷ chairwoman Maria Chin Abdullah. The other momentous event during his tenure was the Reformasi mass movement, which was sparked when he sacked, jailed and tortured his

¹¹⁷ Bersih is a prominent non-governmental organization dedicated to advocating for free and fair elections in Malaysia. For more on Bersih, see Khoo (2014b).

deputy Anwar Ibrahim in 1998 (Weiss 2006). PKR, as a political party, was born as the primary electioneering vehicle channeling the mass grievances of the Reformasi era to contest against a Mahathir-lead UMNO-dominant Barisan Nasional. In short, the entire reason d’être of PKR’s existence was anti-Mahathirism. That these sworn enemies would form a pre-electoral coalition to contest against the Najib-lead BN in the 2018 general elections is not just a curious case of strange bedfellows. It is bizarre empirical case of the often-cited quote, “In politics, there are no permanent enemies, and no permanent friends, only permanent interests.”

Recent events and interviews with DAP and PKR party leaders revealed that there was indeed significant resistance within both parties to working with Mahathir’s Bersatu party. In the states of Perak and Malacca, DAP activists including a Member of Parliament, three state assemblymen, and branch leaders quit the party because they were unhappy with their party’s new alliance with Tun Dr Mahathir.¹¹⁸ My interviews in early March 2018 with both DAP and PKR party leaders suggested that the party leaders were indeed aware of internal party resistance, but have tried various ways to communicate to their own supporters to justify cooperation with Bersatu and to reduce intra-party dissent. A DAP state assemblyman in Selangor and central executive committee member of the DAP recalled the temporary surge of resistance among DAP supporters, saying,

“We do have problems with our supporters. Some of the supporters were quite resistant in January. But as the time goes by they have started to accept it... Our supporters, your base, said “I don’t like the idea.” But after a month, things die

¹¹⁸ “In Perak, 38 leave DAP for PCM over discontent with Dr M alliance.” Malay Mail Online. March 3, 2018. Last accessed <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/in-perak-38-leave-dap-for-pcm-over-discontent-with-dr-m-alliance> on March 23, 2018. “DAP reeling after four Malacca lawmakers quit.” The Straits Times. February 14, 2017. Last accessed at <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/dap-reeling-after-four-malacca-lawmakers-quit> on March 23, 2018.

down. And people reflect back, “Oh yah, (with) Mahathir we can win. We can win.””¹¹⁹

Similarly, a PKR Member of Parliament and a member of its leadership team revealed to me,

“The resentment from PKR should be the highest because the party is formed because of the victimization by Mahathir. We used to have this problem where people cannot accept Mahathir. So it takes a good few months to calm things down and for the parties to work together. And Anwar actually came out with statements to pacify and ask everyone to look at the bigger picture. So the whole thing is about looking at the bigger picture... So what we should do is put down our differences to save the country. That is our message to our people. The biggest is Anwar who can put down this 20 years of victimization and really move forward. Then people say, “Even if Anwar can accept Mahathir, why not we?””¹²⁰

Thus, within this context of mass supporter resistance towards Tun Dr Mahathir’s leadership of the PH alliance as well as the pro-Malay policies of his party Bersatu (Wan Jan 2018), I read just slightly over a year’s worth of *The Rocket* from January 2017 to February 2018 to uncover how the DAP’s party leaders attempt to communicate to their own supporters about the newly founded coalition. In total, there were 24 issues of *The Rocket* in both English and

¹¹⁹ DAP interview. March 8, 2018. Location: Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

¹²⁰ PKR interview. March 15, 2018. Location: PKR Headquarters, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Mandarin Chinese in this period.¹²¹ This time, though I continue to search “prospective gains” as well as “positive rival” articles, I read them carefully to identify the specific discourse that they use, instead of just utilizing a simple count of the number of different types of articles. A more detailed reading of these articles should better lay bare the specific rhetorical strategies of the party leaders, potentially similar to, or in addition to the “prospective gains” and “positive rival” strategies that I have hypothesized.

3.2 The Rocket on Pakatan Harapan - January 2017 to February 2018

One of the first indicators of the communication strategy of the DAP’s party leaders through *The Rocket* is to observe the pictorial on the cover pages. The cover pages are meant to highlight the key articles in the issue, and also to attract prospective supporters to purchase a copy of the newsletter when they otherwise would not do so. Across the 24 issues of *The Rocket* in both English and Mandarin Chinese editions, 11 cover pages featured some picture or graphic portraying either the PH coalition leaders or Tun Dr Mahathir himself.

The cover pages of January 2017 and February 2018 are particularly noteworthy. Recall that those two months were just one month after significant events in PH’s coalition building process – in December 2016, Bersatu publicly signed a non-competition agreement with the three earlier component parties of PH, and in January 2018, PH formally announced the Tun Dr Mahathir would be its candidate for Prime Minister should it be successful in winning the national government from the BN. In the January 2017 edition of *The Rocket*, therefore, the cover title was “Welcome 2017: New Alliances, New Beginnings” with a collage of prominent photos in the background. These photos included a photo of a September 2016 reconciliation greeting between Tun Dr Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim when the latter was in court, photos of

¹²¹ A senior party activist from the DAP passed these issues to me at minimal cost in early March 2018.

Tun Dr Mahathir attending the DAP annual convention and the PH convention in late 2016, as well as his attendance at the Bersih rally in November 2016. The February 2018 cover page was equally glaring, with an oversized photo of Tun Dr Mahathir with a Malaysian flag in the background looming over the smaller photos of Anwar Ibrahim (de-facto PKR leader), Dr Wan Azizah (PKR leader and Anwar's wife), Lim Guan Eng (DAP leader), and Mohamad Sabu (Amanah leader).



Figure 13: January 2017 and February 2018 cover pages of The Rocket (English)

That The Rocket would actively portray Tun Dr Mahathir in such a manner testifies to the DAP's party leaders' resolve and risk-taking in trying to persuade and convince their supporters to back the coalition. Recall that for his 22 years as Prime Minister, the DAP was in

complete opposition to everything that Tun Dr Mahathir stood for – UMNO’s advocacy of Malay supremacy versus DAP’s fight for a Malaysian Malaysia, and UMNO’s authoritarianism versus DAP’s democracy. For example, contrast those two 2017 and 2018 cover pages with the two cover pages of The Rocket in 1990 in Figure 14 below. In 1990, the autocratic Tun Dr Mahathir was apparently “set to cheat” in the upcoming elections that year, prompting DAP’s then-leader Lim Kit Siang to challenge Mahathir to a televised debate.



Figure 14: The cover pages of 1990/Vol. 2 and 1990/Vol. 6 of The Rocket (English)

For what it is worth, the Mandarin Chinese version of The Rocket was no different, featuring PH leaders prominently on its front cover as shown in Figure 15 below.



Figure 15: August 2017 and February/March 2018 cover pages of The Rocket (Chinese)

The second indicator within The Rocket reflecting the DAP's communication strategy are the columns written by its stable of politicians, especially those in the central executive committee of the party. These typically include Lim Guan Eng, the DAP's secretary general, Liew Chin Tong, the DAP Political Education Director, Tony Pua, the DAP National Publicity Secretary, Teo Nie Ching, International Secretary and Editor of the Mandarin Chinese edition of The Rocket, and Ong Kian Ming, the DAP Assistant Political Education Director. A majority of these articles, about 70 percent of them, were written to directly attack the BN's policies. In the other columns, as expected, these columns repeatedly emphasized the prospective gains that would be achieved if the PH prevailed against the corrupt government of current Prime Minister Najib Razak. These columns oftentimes featured alongside articles written by the DAP's stable

of journalists, as well as articles reprinted from pro-opposition news outlets such as Malaysiakini. Overall, they provided a healthy mix of “prospective gains” and “positive rival” articles. For instance, Figure 16 below features a collage of a column written by Ong Kian Ming clarifying why a PH-controlled government can abolish the unpopular goods and service tax, and 2 short news articles to portray Tun Dr Mahathir in a positive light. The last article titled “Anwar defends Dr M” is particularly interesting. It notes how many voters including “Anwar’s hardcore supporters in the Otai Reformasi group have voiced their displeasure with Mahathir’s presence among the opposition.” Yet, even Anwar, leader of PKR and the former sacked deputy of Mahathir was willing compromise and even defend his former patron.



Figure 16: Examples of “Prospective Gains” and “Positive Rival” Articles

Beyond mere “prospective gains” and “positive rival” articles that generally aim to persuade supporters that the PH alliance works, there are a small portion of articles and columns written with a significant audience in mind. Although they form a minority of all columns and articles, they are substantively important – they are columns reacting to what these politicians perceive to be doubts about the viability of the PH coalition’s prospective success in overthrowing the BN government, and voter grievances about working with Tun Dr Mahathir. In their own ways, the politicians attempt to address these concerns and seek to persuade voters that the PH alliance remains their best bet. Figure 16 below showcases two examples: an English column by Liew Chin Tong published in February 2018, and a Chinese column by Teo Nie Ching published in January 2018.

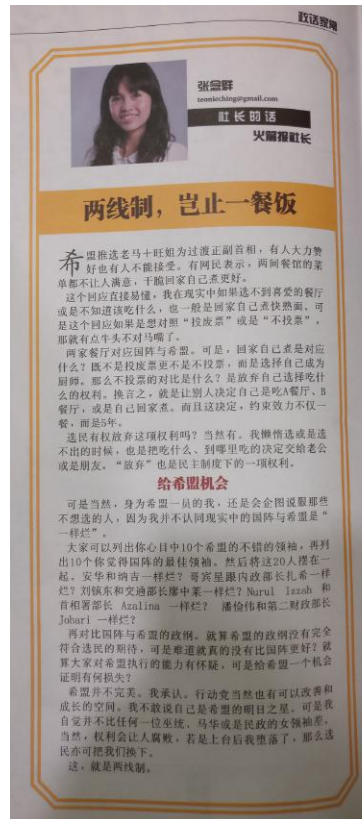


Figure 17: Columns by Liew Chin Tong and Teo Nie Ching

Liew's column, in particular, is written as a piece of analysis against "political analysts and politicians (who) do not bother to understand the electoral and demographic dynamics of what will decide the next general election." Apparently, these opinion makers were casting doubt on PH's ability to induce Malay voters to vote for candidates from the alliance's component parties, thus undermining the alliance's potential for success. Evidently, doubts about the PH coalition's ability to overthrow the BN regime would undermine turnout and support among both Malay and non-Malay voters. Liew argued that such a prognosis misrepresents empirical reality. There are two reasons why. First, "in Malay-majority (ethnically) mixed seats, non-Malay voters are more likely to vote for Harapan candidates than UMNO or PAS." Thus, he was confident about non-Malay support. Second, "current anti-establishment sentiment among Malay voters" would see a significant segment of UMNO and PAS supporters switch to PH. Hence, if PH can convince at least half of the Malay voters to vote for PH candidates in the BN's 40 most competitive seats in Peninsular Malaysia, then victory would be assured.

Teo's column, similarly, is an attempt at voters' doubts about the PH coalition's appeal and viability. In her first line, she acknowledges that there are divergent opinions among DAP's supporters as to the appointment of Tun Dr Mahathir and Dr Wan Azizah as candidates for Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively. There are some supporters, she admits, who do not approve of such an arrangement. She further acknowledges a trending online metaphor among the Chinese community that reflected such a criticism: If the menus from two competing restaurants (BN and PH) do not appeal to the customer, then one would be better off returning home to have a home-cooked meal. Having a home-cooked meal, in the context of this metaphor, was similar to urging voters to not turn out to vote, or to spoil their votes. She also makes two arguments against this metaphor. First, she reasons that having a home-cooked meal was not

analogous to not turning out or spoiling one's vote. Rather, it was analogous to allowing some other people to choose what meal one was going to have for the next 5 years. Second, she argued that it was simply not true to say that both the BN and the PH were equally bad options. Either in terms of the quality of its leadership or its manifesto, PH was obviously a better choice than BN. Finally, she closed her column by acknowledging two facts – (1) She conceded that PH was imperfect and needed improvement, and (2) if a future PH-controlled government was found to be lacking, then the electorate was free to vote PH out.

Perhaps the most direct article that I found written to pre-empt and address DAP voter grievances about working with Mahathir was an article published in the May 2017 Mandarin Chinese edition of *The Rocket* (see Figure 18 below). Although Bersatu had signed a non-competition agreement with the three component parties of Pakatan Harapan in December 2016, it was only in March 2017 that Bersatu formally joined the PH coalition as a full member to form a four-party alliance. In the aftermath of the formalization of the coalition then, it appeared that the DAP felt the need to justify the cooperation with Tun Dr Mahathir. The article was titled, in Chinese, “Coming Together in One Fighting Alliance, Saving the Country is the Priority.” It then provides comprehensive answers to five questions, “Why must Pakatan Harapan cooperate with Bersatu?”, “What is Mahathir's role in prevailing over the current government?”, “Is the DAP abandoning its existing struggles?”, “Is the DAP going to ignore all the past misdeeds of Mahathir?” and “Who is going to be the DAP's choice of bring the Prime Minister?” That these questions are asked and answered is crucial because they reflect exactly the internal costs that party leaders encounter when they cooperate with other opposition parties – doubts about the viability of the new coalition, misgivings about the party leaders' continued ideological

commitment to the party's founding niche ideologies, and dissent over the new ally's current or past policies.



Figure 18: Article in May 2017 of The Rocket (Chinese)

On the first crucial question, the article responded by saying that the only objective or working with Tun Dr Mahathir's Bersatu was to help save the country from the current Prime Minister Najib's disastrous economic management and corruption and to put it back on the right path. Hence, the DAP resolved to “temporary set aside past grievances to cooperate with Mahathir.” On the second question, the article noted that Tun Dr Mahathir's reputation as the ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia and the ex-leader of UMNO had tremendous influence in the Malay

community, which would help induce more Malay support for the PH coalition to prevail over the current government. On the third question of whether the DAP was abandoning its principles, the article reiterated that it had never wavered in its existing policy commitments, such as providing extra funding to Chinese vernacular schools, as well as providing extra welfare for poverty relief. Finally, on the whether the DAP was going to ignore the past misdeeds of Mahathir, the article replied that the DAP's stance was always consistent – that if it controlled the national government, it would set up Royal Commissions of Inquiries to investigate and fully report on past corruption scandals in Malaysian history.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical guide and the empirical evidence for understanding how opposition party leaders varied their communication strategies to their own supporters whether their parties were in a pre-electoral coalition or not. When they decided not to cooperate with other opposition parties, they spoke negatively of their ideological rivals, justifying the party's non-cooperation with them. If, however, the party leaders decided to ally with their erstwhile ideological opponents to defeat the dominant autocratic incumbent, then they would exert significant effort to persuade and convince their supporters to both maintain their support for the party, and also to encourage them to engage in cross-party strategic voting for other component parties in the alliance. As revealed in this chapter, even when strong party leaders had significant autonomy and flexibility in pursuing intra-elite opposition cooperation, they could not take their own supporters for granted, but had to actively attempt to “sell the coalition” to them. This chapter thus complements the earlier empirical chapters by examining

intra-party communication to a party's own supporters, in addition to studying how coalitions formulate and jointly pursue on costly and substantive campaigns for a more generic audience.

In the next chapter, I turn to another level of analysis by examining how voters may react to an opposition coalition's electoral campaign. If jointly undertaking costly and substantive campaigns actually work for opposition parties, then we should expect that opposition-inclined voters make certain choices with regards to their prospective vote choice or express a pattern of opinions towards certain regime-related issues.

Chapter 6

Do Coalition Signaling Strategies Work?

Survey Data Evidence from Malaysia

1. What about Voters?

In the previous chapters, I tested my theory of the twin collective action problems of opposition coalition formation by examining cross-national and cross-time variation in opposition party behaviors. Specifically, I have focused on the actions and rhetoric of opposition elites, as they aim to persuade, assuage, and mollify the concerns and resistance of their party's members, activists, and mass supporters, as well as those of the median voters and supporters of the other opposition parties. Key to my theory, however, is the voters' response to the opposition elite's efforts to cooperate. If my arguments are correct, we should expect to observe opposition-inclined voters close ranks to vote strategically for the coalition candidates regardless of which opposition party they are from, when they observe costly and substantive joint opposition coalition campaigns. What sort of survey data can be used to test if opposition-inclined voters will be more likely to vote for the coalition candidate(s) when exposed to displays of opposition unity and ideological compromise?

In the ideal world, assessing the causal effect of opposition coalition campaigns requires experimental data testing voters' exposure to different types of coalition campaigns (e.g. a common coalition logo versus naming a consensus prime ministerial candidate), estimating the causal effect of each type of signal on prospective vote choice, comparing the treatment effects of the varying signals, and estimating precisely the causal mechanism linking coalition signal to voter support. There are several challenges to such experiments, nevertheless, not least the large

financial costs involved that is required to obtain large enough sample sizes for multiple experiments and multiple comparisons to detect what may potentially be small but substantive effects. In the following section, I highlight these challenges and discuss how I commissioned Merdeka Center to field a survey experiment that is limited in scope, but nonetheless enlightening for helping us understand voter reaction to opposition coalition anti-regime signals. In particular, I designed, commissioned, and present the results of a survey experiment assessing the treatment effect of an opposition coalition's common policy platform on voter support for an opposition candidate who comes from a party that they do not support. I also report conditional average treatment effects based on a voter's degree of partisan affiliation and his level of political knowledge.

I then use additional observational data as a secondary source of data to test my theory. I model, conduct, and present the results for simple statistical regressions on survey data for Malaysia recently made available in August 2017 by the Asian Barometer¹²² project headquartered in the Center for East Asian Democratic Studies at the National Taiwan University. It is part of the Global Barometer network of survey programs, which include the Eurasia Barometer, the Afrobarometer, the Arab Barometer, and the Latinobarometro. The project, advised by long-time academic of Malaysia politics Bridget Welsh, commissioned Merdeka Center¹²³, a reputable local polling firm, to field a battery of questions on a representative sample of Malaysian adult citizens in late 2014 based on the March 2013 electoral rolls. My statistical regressions focus on attempting to distinguish the differences in political opinions towards regime-related issues between Pakatan Rakyat versus non-Pakatan Rakyat voters.

¹²² See <http://www.asianbarometer.org/>.

¹²³ See <http://www.merdeka.org/>.

2. Estimating the Causal Effect of a Common Policy Platform Through a Survey

Experiment

2.1 Estimating the Causal Effect of Opposition Coalition Campaigns

Opposition alliances, as this dissertation argues, are meant to solve the intra-elite collective action problem of strategic entry, as well as the elite-mass collective action problem of vote aggregation and maximization behind the chosen coalition candidates. Will opposition voters set aside their ideological differences among themselves and close ranks to vote for the opposition coalition candidate? For them to do so, they will want to observe some form of anti-regime unity among opposition elites and their parties alongside some costly compromises that the elites and parties make to each other. While it may be relatively easier to exhibit anti-regime unity through joint campaigns using a common alliance name and logo, more costly compromises such as a common policy platform or a pre-arranged cabinet power-sharing agreement are relatively more difficult to develop and exhibit, not least because they involve larger direct and indirect costs that opposition party leaders have to bear.

Ideally, one can estimate the causal effect of opposition coalition campaigns by comparing a control group of voters with different treatment groups that are exposed to different types and combinations of campaigns. For instance, a control group that can be told that opposition parties have only developed a non-competition agreement amongst themselves with no further forms of cooperation. This group can then be compared against multiple treatment arms – ones with joint coalition campaigns alone (common name, logo, common policy platform, or cabinet power-sharing agreements), and ones with joint coalition campaigns in combination with each other. This task would be problematic enough on its own. But an

additional challenge is the need to measure changes in the voter's potential vote choice when they encounter candidates from different component parties of the coalition in their electoral district. For example, we would need to measure a DAP supporter's propensity to vote for a DAP candidate, versus a PKR candidate, versus a PAS candidate, as well as a PKR supporter's propensity to vote for a DAP candidate, versus a PKR candidate, versus a PAS candidate, and then finally a PAS supporter's propensity to vote a DAP candidate, versus a PKR candidate, versus a PAS candidate. Suffice to say, creating a large enough pool of survey respondents to conduct such multiple comparisons would be a significant logistical and financial challenge.

The empirical context in Malaysia also changed significantly at the time of my survey experiment. Instead of the straightforward DAP-PKR-PAS Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition alliance that contested together in the 2013 general elections. PR had collapsed with the withdrawal of PAS. By early 2017 which was during the time of the survey experiment, a new four-party alliance called Pakatan Harapan had risen comprising the old opposition parties in DAP and PKR, and the new opposition parties in Amanah and Bersatu. All had agreed to a non-competition agreement to not field candidates to contest against each other in the upcoming general elections, but none had decided how to campaign jointly with each other. Attempting to estimate cross-party strategic voting for this new four-party alliance as compared to a three-party coalition would be much more difficult.

Nevertheless, I designed and commissioned a survey experiment that was much more limited in scope, but which could still provide us with some insights into the causal effect of opposition campaigns. In view of the continued salience of worsening economic conditions and corruption issues in 2017, I reasoned that voters for the upcoming 2018 general elections would be most interested to see an opposition coalition's plan for economic management and good

governance if they managed to prevail against the BN.¹²⁴ I therefore created only one treatment group which contained a vignette telling voters that opposition parties had developed a common manifesto that contained plans for economic management and good governance that they would implement should the opposition coalition win power. Alternative treatment vignettes were contemplated but not implemented. For instance, a potential treatment vignette of opposition parties coming together to agree on a cabinet power-sharing agreement with specific cabinet portfolio allocation would be scarcely believable, as such a scenario has never occurred before in Malaysian politics. Telling voters that the opposition coalition would campaign using a common coalition name would be unlikely to yield a treatment effect, as previous coalitions had already campaigned using such a method. Suggesting to respondents that the PH coalition had nominated certain politicians as candidates for Prime Minister would also be scarcely believable and unnecessarily polarizing, because such a campaign method had never been tried before, and because the treatment effect would likely vary significantly depending on the identity of the candidate proposed. Because past opposition coalitions, the Barisan Alternatif in 1999 and the Pakatan Rakyat in 2013, had both issued common manifestoes before, respondents are much more likely to be familiar with and believe the idea of the PH coalition campaigning on a common policy platform.

To overcome the problem of identifying cross-party strategic voting as my dependent variable, I simply asked the respondents how they would vote if the opposition candidate in their district was not from a party that they supported. The intuition is that I am most interested in the opposition voter's commitment to strategic voting – voting for a candidate from a component

¹²⁴ In the Asian Barometer survey fielded in late 2014, of the 890 respondents who voted in the last general elections, almost one-third said that "Inflation/Price Hike" was "the most important problem facing this country that the government should address." 8.8% listed "Corruption" as the most important problem. At a seminar organized on November 28, 2017 by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Merdeka Center shared that "Fighting corruption" was the number one most important issue that voters thought needed attention from the government. This is likely due to the continued salience of the 1MDB corruption and money laundering scandal.

party in the opposition alliance that they do not support rather than for the incumbent autocrat.

Correspondingly, I assume that an opposition supporter of party A would be very highly likely to vote for candidates from party A. Regardless, the aim is to test the following hypothesis:

H1: If opposition parties develop a coalition with a common policy platform, then opposition supporters will be more likely to support candidates from other opposition parties whom they do not support, as compared to the absence of a common policy platform.

Beyond this initial hypothesis, we should also expect that the treatment effect of a common policy platform vary among different subgroups of opposition supporters. First, we should expect that the strength of partisan affiliation to an opposition party condition the effect of a common policy platform in persuading opposition supporters to engage in cross-party voting. As I have argued earlier, opposition supporters who have strong party affiliation, such as members of opposition parties, will be much more difficult to be persuaded as compared to supporters with weak party affiliation (Greene 2007, 2016). Party members are more likely to be committed to a party's core ideologies and are less likely to be persuaded by mere mention of their party signaling anti-regime unity and ideological compromises through campaigning with a common manifesto with other opposition parties. They will have to be cajoled and persuaded by the party leaders' intra-party communication strategies as I detailed in the previous chapter. We can expect that more moderate opposition-inclined supporters, on the other hand, would be more likely to engage in cross-party strategic. This is because their inhibitions of voting for candidates from other parties are by default lower, and because the articulation of a common manifesto

about economic management and good governance likely increases their confidence in the governance capabilities of the opposition coalition. These arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

H2: Moderate opposition supporters with weak party affiliation will be more likely to support candidates from other opposition parties in the presence of a common policy platform, as compared to opposition supporters with strong party affiliation.

Second, we should expect that voters who follow news about opposition coalitions to be more informed and more politically sophisticated. In the abstract, we should expect these more politically informed voters to be more likely to know what a common manifesto actually is, and have a better understanding that the coalition's manifesto is a plan that builds their confidence in the governance capabilities of the coalition (Keefer 2004, 2013; Keefer and Vlaicu 2007; Pepinsky, Liddle, and Mujani 2012). Hence, they should be more likely to be persuaded by the anti-regime unity and ideological moderation exhibited in opposition common policy platforms. Voters who do not follow the news, conversely, are likely to be less informed and are less likely to be persuaded by the mere mention of a common policy platform. They are less likely to even know what a manifesto means, and would be unclear about the policy implications of having an opposition manifesto at all. Mere mention of a manifesto would be unlikely to shift their attitudes towards voting for candidates from other parties that they do not support. This logic results in the following hypothesis:

H3: Opposition supporters who follow news will be more likely to support candidates from other opposition parties in the presence of a common policy platform, as compared to opposition supporters who do not follow the news.

2.2 Survey Experiment Design and Estimation Method

The telephone survey experiment was conducted in two waves on a nationally representative sample of Malaysian adults in Peninsular Malaysia by Merdeka Center, a reputable local polling firm.¹²⁵ The first wave was conducted in March 2017, while the second wave was fielded in June 2017. Of the combined total sample of 2,048 respondents, I focus on my empirical analysis on the 639 respondents that self-identified as supporters of opposition parties (i.e. DAP, PKR, PAS, Bersatu, and Amanah).¹²⁶ I included PAS supporters because at the time of the survey experiment, there remained a possibility that PAS would join the PH coalition. Of these respondents that self-identified as feeling close to these declared opposition parties, 329 respondents (51.5%) received the control vignette, whereas 310 respondents (48.5%) received the treatment vignette. The appendix provides Tables A1, A2, and A3 detailing the summary statistics of the combined total sample, of the opposition supporters only, and a balance table of

¹²⁵ The Bornean states of Sabah and Sarawak were excluded because electoral politics in those states are more complex, with additional conflict over developmentalism and state-center relations. See at least Hazis (2012), and Weiss and Puyok (2017). Bersatu and Amanah are new opposition parties. Amanah is a moderate Islamist party formed in 2015 from a split from PAS. Bersatu was formed in 2016 as a result of a split in UMNO.

¹²⁶ **Q1A:** I am going to read to you a list of names of political parties contesting in the upcoming general elections. Among this list of political parties, can you tell me which party you feel closest to?

12. United Malays National Organization (UMNO)
13. Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)
14. Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)
15. Gerakan
16. Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM)
17. Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR)
18. Parti Islam se-Malaysia (PAS)
19. Democratic Action Party (DAP)
20. Amanah
21. Another party not listed here.
22. Prefer not to answer.

available covariates across control and treatment groups. The balance table reveals that the control and treatment groups are statistically similar to each other.

Table 1: Randomization Rule and Vignettes

Control or treatment?	CONTROL	TREATMENT
Randomization rule	Telephone numbers that end with an EVEN number. 0, 2, 4, 6, 8.	Telephone numbers that end with an ODD number. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9.
Actual text to be read to the survey respondent	In the upcoming general elections, there will be a lot of opposition parties fighting against the Barisan Nasional. Imagine that they agree to have an electoral pact with 1-on-1 fights against the BN candidate in all electoral districts. However, the opposition parties still have disagreements over many policy issues.	In the upcoming general elections, there will be a lot of opposition parties fighting against the Barisan Nasional. Imagine that they agree to have an electoral pact with 1-on-1 fights against the BN candidate in all electoral districts. In addition, the opposition parties have formed a formal coalition. This means that they have negotiated a common manifesto about economic management and good governance that they plan implement if they win power.

Table 1 above details the randomization rule and vignettes provided to the control and treatment groups. The vignettes provided to the respondents were designed to prime respondents to think about their voting behavior when provided with varying information about coalition behavior among opposition parties. Both control and treatment groups were told to imagine that opposition parties have managed to develop a non-competition agreement, colloquially known as “1-on-1 fights against the BN.” Respondents in the control group, however, were told that the opposition parties continued to have disagreements over many policy issues, while respondents

in the treatment group were told that opposition parties have successfully negotiated a common manifesto that they plan to implement if they win. Unfortunately, potential respondent fatigue in a telephone survey limited the length of the treatment vignette. After the vignette was read, respondents from both groups were asked the following question with the available options as potential answers:

Question: Now, imagine if the opposition candidate in your district comes from an opposition party that is different from the opposition party that you support, will you:

1. Still vote for the opposition candidate.
2. Change to vote for the ruling party.
3. Do not turn out to vote at all.
4. Prefer not to answer.

My main interest is simply an estimate of the treatment effect of the treatment vignette on the respondent's propensity to choose option 1 in the main question. This can be estimated by regressing the outcome on the treatment, as expressed by the following formula:

$$\text{Vote for opposition candidate}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{Treatment}_i + \beta_2 \cdot X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where i refers to the individual respondent; Treatment_i is a dichotomous indicator variable coded 1 if respondents were in the treatment group; $\text{Vote for opposition candidate}_i$ is a dichotomous indicator variable coded 1 if respondents answered option (1) "Still vote for the opposition

candidate” and 0 otherwise; X_i stands for various covariates; and the β_1 coefficient captures the average treatment effect of the treatment vignette. In the results that I present below, I use standard ordinary-least-squares regression to estimate the treatment effect for ease of interpretation of the coefficients even though the dependent variable is dichotomous. Robustness checks using logistic regressions revealed no difference in the interpretation of the results.

2.3 Results and Discussion

Figure 2 below reveals the average treatment effect of the treatment vignette on the proportion of respondents who selected option 1 in response to the question. All the results shown include controlling for three covariates specified in the pre-analysis plan (i.e. Malay ethnicity, rural voters, and income). The result for the combined sample includes controlling for the two different waves of survey implemented. Standard errors are clustered by state. Confidence intervals shown are 90% confidence intervals. Full results in the form of regression tables are presented in the appendix in table A4.

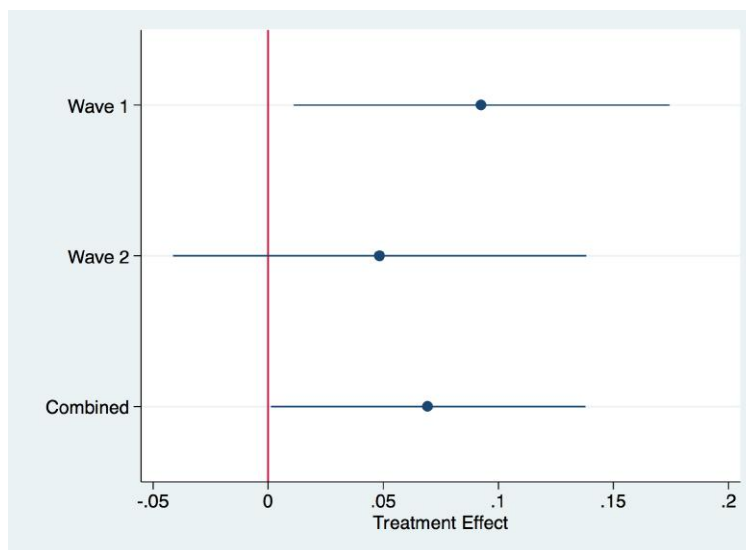


Figure 1: Average Treatment Effects of Common Policy Platform

This combined sample result confirms that a joint coalition campaign based on a common policy platform within an opposition pre-electoral coalition increases the support for opposition candidates by almost 7% amongst opposition supporters, after controlling for covariates, as compared to the persistence of policy disagreements between opposition parties. When respondents were told that opposition parties had formed a non-competition agreement but still had policy disagreements with each other, the baseline proportion of respondents who said that they would engage in cross-party strategic voting is 51.4%. But if respondents were told that opposition parties had both formed a non-competition agreement and a coalition that specifically meant campaigning on a joint policy platform, then the propensity of cross-party strategic voting, without controlling for covariates, increased to 56.5%.

This result of an average treatment effect of 7% increase in cross-party strategic voting among opposition supporters appears to be relatively modest on its own, but substantively significant when viewed in light of the most recent election results. In the latest general elections in 2013, the DAP, PKR, and PAS formed an opposition PEC known as Pakatan Rakyat with a common manifesto. The DAP won 38 seats, PKR won 30 seats, and PAS won 21 seats for a total of 89 seats for the entire PR opposition alliance, versus the BN's 133 seats. If the three parties had *not* contested as a united coalition with a common manifesto, the DAP would have lost 2 seats, PKR would have lost 5 seats, and PAS would have lost 7 seats, resulting in a total of only 75 seats.¹²⁷ The opposition alliance still be able to deny the dominant BN a two-thirds majority of the legislature, but only by the slender margin of a single seat. To my knowledge, this is the first estimate of the effect of an opposition alliance's joint campaign in an electoral autocracy.

¹²⁷ This assumes that the core opposition supporters constitute 31.2% of voters across all electoral districts (as inferred from the survey results), and that the 7% decrease in support only occurs among these opposition voters. The number of seats potentially lost is calculated from final election results last accessed at <http://www.undi.info> on June 8, 2017.

I surmise that this estimate of a 7% increase in strategic voting is likely to be a lower bound estimate for two reasons. First, my treatment vignette included only two sentences about forming a formal coalition with a common manifesto concerning economic management and good governance. In reality, opposition coalitions will produce complex manifestoes on a whole range of policy issues that they disseminate through various platforms. In 2013, the PR opposition alliance developed a 35-page manifesto detailing political, economic, and social policies and reforms that it planned to implement if it won power. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the PR's manifesto was distributed through a 2-page leaflet as well as repackaged using bright colors and graphics to the DAP's core supporters. We should therefore expect that the actual impact of a common policy platform on opposition supporters be far larger than 7%. Second, only 31.2% of survey respondents identified themselves as supporters of opposition parties. This is likely to be a low estimate if we consider a respondent's disincentive to identify themselves as opposition party supporters due to social desirability bias in an electoral autocracy, and also considering the fact that the PR parties garnered a 51% vote share in 2013. These survey respondents who did not identify themselves as opposition supporters are likely to be more moderate opposition supporters, and as I reveal below, who may be more receptive to opposition common policy platforms.

To test H2 and H3 concerning the impact of a common policy platform on different groups of voters, the survey experiment included pre-treatment questions asking respondents about their membership in an opposition party¹²⁸, as well as whether they followed news about recent developments amongst Malaysian opposition parties attempting to form an opposition

¹²⁸ **Q1C.** For this party that you have chosen that you feel close to, are you a current member of the party?

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Prefer not to answer.

coalition¹²⁹. I used party membership as a proxy for the strength of the respondent's partisan affiliation to his or her opposition party, and whether they followed news about the opposition alliance as a proxy for their political knowledge and sophistication. Respondents were coded 1 if they said that they were a current member of the party and 0 otherwise, and were coded 1 if they said they followed any amount of news and 0 otherwise.

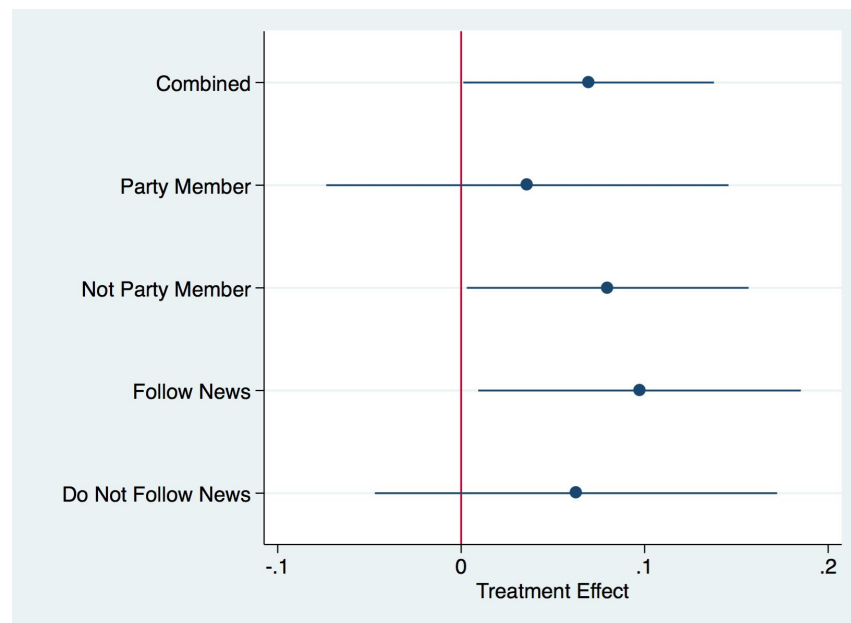


Figure 2: Conditional Average Treatment Effects of Common Policy Platform

The results of the subgroup analyses are shown in Figure 3 above. As per the previous analysis, the results shown including controlling for three covariates (i.e. Malay ethnicity, rural voters, income, and wave). Standard errors are clustered by state. Confidence intervals shown are 90% confidence intervals. The results confirm my hypotheses about the conditional average

¹²⁹ Q2. Have you closely followed any news about the recent efforts to form an opposition coalition in the upcoming general election?

1. No, I have not followed any news.
2. Yes, I have followed some news.
3. Yes, I have followed most news.
4. Yes, I have followed all news.
5. Prefer not to answer.

treatment effect of common policy platforms. As expected, respondents who are not party members were almost 8% more likely to vote for the opposition candidate from another opposition party that they do not support when provided with the treatment vignette, whereas respondents who had higher levels of political knowledge and sophistication were almost 10% more likely to do so. In contrast, respondents who self-declared as members of an opposition party as well as those who confessed that they did not follow any news about opposition coalition formation were unmoved by the treatment vignette. For them, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that an opposition alliance campaigning of a common policy platform had no impact on their propensity to engage in cross-party strategic voting.

Again, to the best of my knowledge, these findings are the first set of results in the political science literature that reveals variation in opposition support within autocratic regimes between radical and moderate opposition supporters, and between opposition supporters with varying levels of political knowledge and sophistication. The finding that ideologically-committed radical opposition supporters are obstinate in their reluctance to support candidates from other opposition parties confirms previous analyses suggesting that it is these core activists who are holding weak opposition leaders back from inter-party cooperation (Greene 2002, 2007, 2016). It also partially verifies the theory that opposition leaders who engage in inter-party cooperation may encounter costly dissent from defiant supporters. Even strong party leaders will very likely have to expend additional resources on these core supporters to persuade them to maintain their support for the party and its leadership, and also to get them on board to vote strategically for other component parties in the alliance.

That opposition supporters with no knowledge of coalition formation dynamics are unmoved by the idea of a common policy platform also attests to the importance of media

control in autocratic regimes. It is well known that autocratic regimes almost always seek to regulate and control the main mainstream media (C. George 2006, 2007b, 2012). The overt imperative is to mute anti-regime dissent to forestall opposition collective action and revolutionary bandwagons (Kuran 1991). These findings demonstrate that media control very likely diminishes political knowledge and sophistication, resulting in diminished support for opposition collective action, even among self-declared opposition supporters.

As explained earlier, due to the lack of power, my experimental design cannot uncover the conditional average treatment effect of the treatment vignette for the supporters of different opposition parties. We also do not know if their receptivity to a common policy platform will change if they are asked to vote for candidates from different opposition parties. Future research with larger sample sizes will have to be conducted to more precisely test the effect of joint coalition campaigns on different pairs of opposition party supporters, such as a DAP supporter being asked to vote for a candidate from PAS, as compared to a candidate from PKR, Bersatu, or Amanah.

Finally, I have not discussed the impact of the treatment vignette on pro-regime supporters. It remains theoretically unclear why pro-regime supporters would increase or switch their support to the opposition because of a common policy platform or other signaling mechanisms. One possible theory is that a common policy platform increases voter confidence that the fundamental institutional structures of society will not change even as voters seek a change in the ruling party. It may also boost the pro-regime supporter's confidence in the governance capabilities of the opposition coalition. From this perspective then, a common policy platform promises prospective societal stability in the midst of political uncertainty. Whether such a theory holds requires further theoretical examination and empirical testing.

3. Testing Opposition Voter Opinion Through Asian Barometer Survey Data

3.1 Introducing the Dataset, the Context, the Questions, and the Hypotheses

The results of the survey experiment, while precise and enlightening, can tell us only so much. It cannot allow us to make inferences about the political opinions of opposition supporters. Shedding light on the public opinions of these voters could potentially tell us what motivated them to vote for the opposition alliance within the context of the overall electoral campaign mounted by an opposition alliance. I now turn to analyzing the survey data from the Asian Barometer survey on Malaysia which was only recently made publicly available in August 2017.

There were a total of 1,207 adult citizen respondents in the latest wave of the Asian Barometer survey on Malaysia which was conducted by the Merdeka Center in face-to-face interviews between October to November 2014. This was more than a year since Malaysia held its May 2013 general elections, where the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition coalition, comprising of the DAP, PAS, and PKR, garnered 51% of the vote share but only 40% of the parliamentary seats (Case 2014; Weiss 2013a). The dominant ruling Barisan Nasional's (BN) gross malapportionment of the electoral districts ensured that it was able to form a majority government with less than a majority of the vote share (Ostwald 2013). Out of a total of 1,207 respondents, I am most interested in the 890 respondents who revealed that they voted in this particular election.

During the 2013 general elections, “economic issues, not communal interests, clearly predominated” (Weiss 2013a, 1140). A final pre-electoral poll conducted by Merdeka Center found that 25% of voters, the highest proportion, thought that the most important issues that they

would have liked to see discussed in the upcoming general elections were “economic concerns.”¹³⁰ 9% of voters, the second highest proportion of voters wanted to see discussions on “politics, national administration, and leadership.” About 58% of voters saw the country as “moving to the right direction” and 61% expressed “satisfaction” with the performance of the Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak. Yet, while both the BN and the PR attempted to advertise the benefits of their very similar economic policies, PR focused on attacking corruption and government wastage, whereas the BN focused on the benefits of government handouts. Beyond purely economic issues, moreover, the PR opposition alliance also rode on a wave of anti-regime sentiment galvanized by Bersih, the civil society coalition committed to electoral and political reform (Khoo 2014a, 2016). Bersih organized major street protests in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur in 2007, 2011, and 2012, demanding electoral reforms such as a clean electoral roll, free and fair access to media, as well as an end to the endemic corruption in the country.¹³¹ The last protests in 2012 were particularly important because the police cracked down on the protest with tear gas and water cannons on one of the largest protest crowds ever gathered in Malaysian history. Seizing the opportunity, candidates from the PR opposition alliance appealed to voters by emphasizing various demands for anti-regime reforms such as changing electoral rules to make elections more free and fair and eliminating corruption, even as they de-emphasized ethnic and religious issues such as Malay versus non-Malay rights, and intensifying Islamization in the country (Saravanamuttu, Lee, and Mohamed Nawab 2015). As local scholars would claim, in their terms, the PR used the “new politics” rhetoric of participatory democracy, social justice,

¹³⁰ “Public Opinion Survey 2013: Peninsular Malaysia Voter Survey, May 3, 2013.” Last accessed at <http://www.merdeka.org/v2/download/Survey%20Release%20May%203%202013.pdf> on January 23, 2018.

¹³¹ Note that at the point of fielding the survey, the 1MDB corruption and money laundering scandal involving Prime Minister Najib had not yet broken. We should therefore expect the issue of corruption to be less salient than now. For more about the scandal, see the Wall Street Journal’s series of articles at <http://www.wsj.com/specialcoverage/malaysia-controversy>, last accessed January 23, 2018.

and reformism, as opposed to the “old politics” of inter-ethnic rivalries and authoritarianism (Loh and Saravanamuttu 2003).

In another survey fielded by Merdeka Center conducted in October 2014, one which overlapped with the time period of the Asian Barometer survey, only 41% of voters now saw the country as “moving in the direct direction.”¹³² “Economic concerns” as the number one problem that people faced in the country now rose to a staggering 71% of the respondents, leaving “political issues” lagging at a mere 4%. The Prime Minister’s “satisfaction” rating now stood at only 45% of respondents. These sagging numbers were a reflection of the rising inflation in the country after a regressive goods and services tax was introduced in October 2013, and after fuel prices were increased in September 2013 and October 2014.

These polls tell us about the most salient concerns which loomed large during the election and during the conduct of the Asian Barometer survey. Yet, they cannot help us distinguish between the differences in opinions on regime-related issues between opposition and non-opposition voters. I therefore leverage the Asian Barometer survey to test the differences in answers to various questions between PR and BN voters. If PR’s anti-regime campaign strategies in the 2013 general elections had any lasting effect in shaping the views of its supporters, then we should expect that PR voters exhibit stronger anti-regime opinions towards regime-related political and economic issues than BN voters. Unfortunately, the survey did not ask any questions about ethnic and religious issues such as Malay/bumiputera rights and Islamic law, so we cannot test the differences in opinion on these issues between PR and BN voters.

Table 2 below shows the 10 questions that I identified from the Asian Barometer which are directly related to the anti-regime issues mentioned. These questions were distributed in

¹³² See “Public Opinion Survey 2014: Peninsular Malaysia Voter Survey, 1st October – 26th October 2014.” Last accessed <http://merdeka.org/v4/index.php/downloads/category/2-researches?download=149:10c-national-poll-2014-approval-rating-and-top-issue> on January 23, 2018.

various different sections throughout the survey's battery of 187 questions and had different types of response formats. I organized them into four broad anti-regime issue categories which I expect opposition voters should have stronger opinions about – media freedom, electoral rules, corruption, and the overall level of democracy. The corresponding hypotheses for each question that I wish to test is then listed. We should expect PR voters to have stronger anti-regime opinions about these regime-related issues than BN voters on a majority of these questions.

3.2 Testing the Hypotheses

Of the 890 respondents who revealed that they voted in the 2013 general elections, 149 respondents revealed that they voted for a candidate from one of the component parties of the PR opposition alliance, and 517 respondents said that they voted for one of the component parties of the dominant ruling BN coalition. That only 16.7 percent of respondents were willing to reveal that they voted for a party from PR demonstrates the degree of social desirability bias inherent within the survey instrument. It suggests that any differences that we observe between PR versus BN voters is likely to be severely underestimated.

Nevertheless, I created a dichotomous dummy variable in which PR voters are coded as 1, and all other respondents are coded as 0. This forms my key independent variable.

Table 2: List of Identified Asian Barometer Questions and Corresponding Hypotheses

Category	Questions	Responses Available	Hypotheses
Media Freedom	Statement 1: The media should have the right to publish news and ideas without government control. Statement 2: The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that may be politically destabilizing.	Which of the following statements do you agree with most? Choose the first or second statement.	PR voters will be more likely to agree that the media should have the right to publish without government intervention, as compared to non-PR voters.
	Political parties or candidates in our country have equal access to the mass media during the election period.	Strongly agree. Somewhat agree. Somewhat disagree. Strongly disagree.	PR voters will be more likely to disagree that political parties or candidates have equal access to mass media during the election period, as compared to non-PR voters.
Electoral Rules	I'm going to name a number of institutions. For each one, please tell me how much trust do you have in them? - The Election Commission.	A great deal of trust. Quite a lot of trust. Not very much trust. None at all.	PR voters will be more likely to say that they have less trust in the election commission than non-PR voters.
	On the whole, how free and fair would you say the last national election was?	Completely free and fair. Free and fair, but with minor problems. Free and fair, with major problems. Not free or fair.	PR voters will be more likely to say that the elections had major problems or were not free and fair, as compared to non-PR voters.
Corruption	How often do you think government leaders break the law or abuse their power?	Always. Most of the time. Sometimes. Rarely.	PR voters will be more likely to think that government leaders always or mostly break the law or abuse their powers as compared to

			non-PR voters.
	How widespread do you think corruption and bribe-taking are in the national government? Would you say...	Hardly anyone is involved. Not a lot of officials are corrupt. Most officials are corrupt. Almost everyone is corrupt.	PR voters will be more likely to believe that most or almost all government officials are corrupt, as compared to non-PR voters.
	In your opinion, is the government working to crack down on corruption and root out bribery?	It is doing its best. It is doing something. It is not doing much. Doing nothing.	PR voters will be more likely to believe that the government is not doing much or doing nothing to crack down on corruption, as compared to non-PR voters.
Overall Level of Democracy	On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy works in Malaysia? Are you...	Very satisfied. Fairly satisfied. Not very satisfied. Not at all satisfied.	PR voters will be more likely to be not very or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works, as compared to non-PR voters.
	In your opinion, how much of a democracy is Malaysia?	A full democracy. A democracy, but with minor problems. A democracy, but with major problems. Not a democracy.	PR voters will be more likely to say that Malaysia is a democracy with major problems or not a democracy, as compared to non-PR voters.
	Here is a scale: 1 means completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic. Where would you place our country under the present government?	Choose 1 (Completely Undemocratic) to 10 (Completely Democratic).	PR voters will be more likely to say that the present government is more undemocratic than non-PR voters.

I then rescaled a list of control variables which could potentially explain attitudes towards political and economic reform issues, such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, urban or rural locality, household income, education level, degree of using the internet in political engagement, and the level of trust in the Prime Minister. The summary statistics of all these variables are listed in Table A6 in the Appendix. Recent research suggests that that the voter's ethnicity and his urban or rural locality, in particular, continues to strongly predict BN and PR vote shares in elections (Ng et al. 2015; Pepinsky 2009, 2015). We can also expect that the level of trust in Prime Minister Najib to be highly correlated with BN and PR vote shares. Controlling for these variables will allow us to determine if partisan identity alone is associated with stronger support for anti-regime reform attitudes on these regime-related issues.

For the coding of the dependent variable for the various questions, I created dichotomous outcome dummy indicators for the first 9 questions, and inversed the scale for the last question. The overall intuition is that we should expect positive coefficients for being a PR voter if the hypotheses are correct. For the first question asking respondents to choose whether they agree more with a statement that emphasizes media freedom without government control versus a statement justifying government intervention, I coded 1 if the respondent agreed with the first statement and 0 if he agreed with the second statement. For the second question on whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement that political parties and candidates had equal media access during elections, I coded 1 if the respondent disagreed with the statement, and 0 if the respondent agreed with the statement.

For the third question asking respondents about their trust in the election commission, I coded 1 if the respondents said that they either had “not very much trust” in the election commission, or “None at all”, and 0 if the respondents said that they had “A great deal of trust”

or “Quite a lot of trust.” Responses to the fourth question on the conduct of the elections was coded 1 if respondents thought that the elections were “Not free and fair” or “Free and fair, but with major problems,” and 1 if they thought that the elections were “Completely free and fair” or “Free and fair, but with minor problems.”

With regards to the questions on corruption, I coded 1 if respondents thought that government leaders always or mostly break the law and abuse their powers, 0 otherwise. 1 if the respondents said that all or most government officials are corrupt, 0 otherwise. Subsequently, I coded 1 if the respondents said that the government was not working or not doing enough to root out corruption, and 0 otherwise.

Finally, for the last set of questions on democracy, I created dichotomous dummy variables for only two of the three questions. For the question on the respondent’s satisfaction with democracy, I coded 1 if the respondents said that they were not satisfied with the way democracy worked in Malaysia, and 0 otherwise. I also coded 1 if the respondent said that Malaysia was not a democracy, or that it was a democracy with major problems, with 0 otherwise. On the last question asking respondents to rate the degree of democracy of the country under the present government on a 10-point scale, I inversed the scale, giving the score of 0 for “Completely Democratic” and 10 for “Completely Undemocratic.”

Again, even though the dependent variables for the first nine questions are dichotomous outcomes, I use ordinary-least-squares regression, which is substantively similar to a logistic regression, for ease of interpretation of the results.¹³³ Figure 1 below shows the results for the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals for the independent variable of being a PR voter, after controlling for all control variables and with robust standard errors. The full set of results with and without control variables are listed in Tables A7, A8, A9, and A10 in the appendix.

¹³³ I also use OLS regression for the last question. Robustness checks using logistic regression revealed substantively similar results.

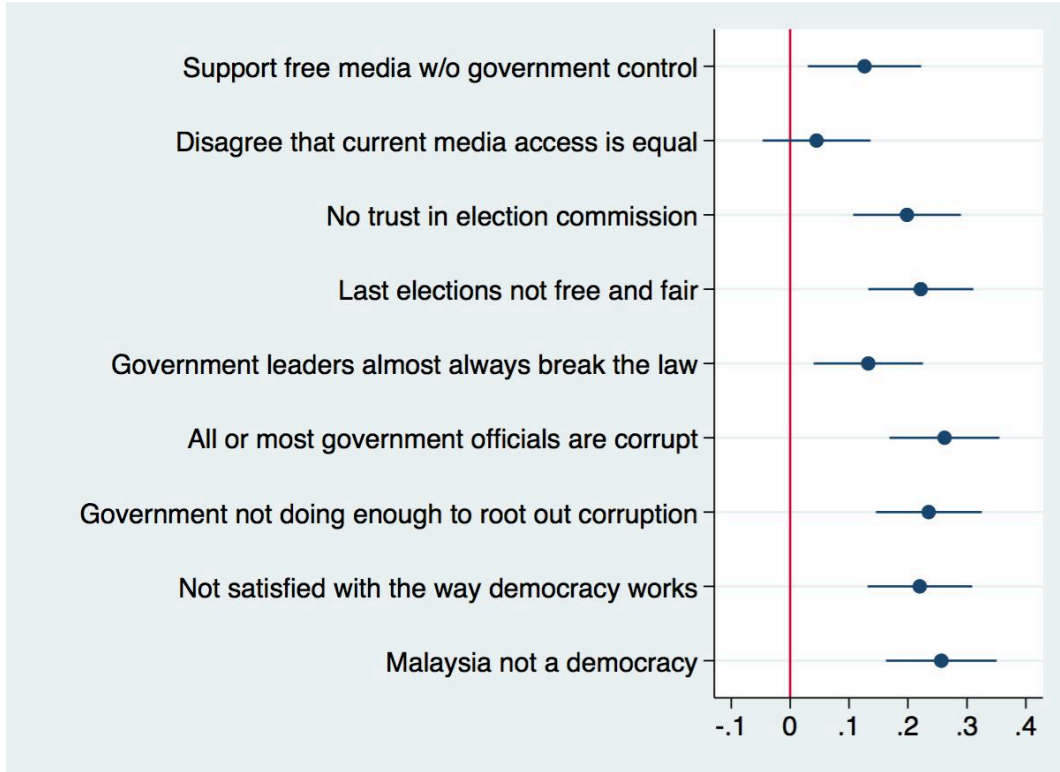


Figure 3: Coefficient Estimates and 95% Confidence Intervals for PR Voter

The consistency in the results are remarkable. They demonstrate that across numerous anti-regime issues ranging from media freedom, the conduct of elections, corruption, to the degree of democracy in the country, PR voters held consistently stronger anti-regime views as compared to BN voters.

On the issue of media freedom, PR voters are 12.6% more likely to agree that the media must be free of government control, after controlling for important demographic variables. On the issue about whether political parties had equal media access during elections, we could not reject the null hypothesis that there were no differences between PR and non-PR voters. The lack of a statistically significant difference may be due to a lack of specification of what “media”

means. Respondents may infer that “media” includes both mainstream media such as newspapers and the television, as well as social media such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. The prevalence of social media campaigning used by both PR and BN parties and the widespread access to such forms of campaigning may have created the impression that the status quo was one of equal media access (J. C. Liow and Pasuni 2011; Pepinsky 2013; Weiss 2013b). In reality, while social media may have had a more balanced presentation of pro- and anti-regime views, “old media” like newspapers and television were still primarily dominated by pro-BN news due to the BN’s extensive control over the companies behind these news outlets.

For the questions asking respondents about their opinions on the electoral process, the results showed that PR voters had stronger opinions on both issues as compared to non-PR voters. They were almost 20% more likely to have no trust in the election commission and were 22.2% more likely to say that the elections conducted were not conducted freely and fairly, as compared to non-PR voters.

On corruption, PR voters, even after controlling for important demographic variables, were 13.3% more likely to think that government leaders consistently broke laws and abused their powers, 26.2% more likely to believe that almost the entire government was corrupt, and 23.5% more likely to think that the government was completely uninterested in, or simply not doing enough to combat corruption in the country.

The results were once again very consistent for questions on democracy. After controlling for important demographic characteristics, PR voters were 22% more likely to say that they were not satisfied with the way democracy worked in the country, and 25.7% more likely to say that Malaysia was not a democracy or was a democracy with major problems. When asked to assess the current level of democracy in Malaysia under the present government for the

last question, the PR voter was also likely to rate Malaysia as 1.1 point more undemocratic on a 10-point scale, as compared to BN voters. This is almost half of the standard deviation of the range of responses on the 10-point scale.

3.3 Discussion

Recall that spatial-based elections in electoral autocracies occur in two ideological dimensions (Greene 2002, 2007; Magaloni 2006). The first dimension is based primarily on the country's most salient societal cleavage. This cleavage can vary from country to country, such as a class-based economic left-right cleavage, or inter-ethnic or inter-religious rivalry. Dominant ruling parties typically park themselves in the ideological center of this first dimension, thus pushing opposition parties to the ideological margins. Yet, opposition parties and leaders that desire to cooperate with each other need not necessarily despair about their polarized ideological bases. They can exhibit their unity by campaigning jointly on a second ideological dimension – the pro- or anti-regime dimension. Opposition alliances can downplay their differences in the first dimension, and appeal rhetorically to voters on the second dimension. This typically involves demands for the regime to enact reforms to make the elections more free and fair or promises to enact anti-regime reforms to “clean up the house” if the opposition seizes power.

What can we make of the consistency of the results on the strong relationship between being a PR voter and having stronger opinions on anti-regime issues? On the one hand, these results to be entirely obvious and not surprising – we should expect that Malaysians who have voted for PR to have these stronger anti-regime political opinions as compared to those who have voted for the BN. On the other hand, that these results are consistently substantively and statistically significantly across almost all questions, after controlling for important demographic

characteristics, and after more than one year since the general elections, suggest that there is an unusually strong relationship between the partisan identity of being an opposition supporter, and commitment to overthrowing the autocratic incumbent and reforming the regime. Hence, these results may be orthogonal to the theory that opposition leaders encounter strong internal resistance when they cooperate with other opposition parties and leaders. Their supporters' strong commitment to democracy may mean that they will almost always be willing to "hold their noses" to vote strategically for the coalition's candidates in order to increase the chances of democratic change, regardless of the opposition candidate's partisan affiliation.

Unfortunately, that this survey was conducted more than a year after the 2013 general election cannot allow us to infer if it was the respondents' strong anti-regime attitudes that drove their vote choice for the opposition which then persisted after the election, or if it was the strong anti-regime campaign mounted by the opposition alliance that shaped their opinion. One way of circumventing this problem is to use survey data from before the elections to assess the political opinions of opposition supporters before the electoral campaign. Yet, because the data is not panel data from the same pool of respondents, the inferences that we can make from new data is likely to be limited as well.

To be sure, *these results do not actually show how voters actually weigh the different dimensions* when casting their vote. They only show that PR voters are significantly different from BN voters on the second pro-/anti-regime dimension. Is there any existing empirical evidence indicating on how Malaysians weigh each dimension when casting their vote? On November 28, 2017, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore organized a seminar for Merdeka Center to share the results of a poll that they had recently completed about the upcoming 2018 general elections. Prior to sharing their latest survey results, they mentioned

that they had recently conducted focus groups in early 2017 amongst Malay, Chinese and Indian voters, asking them about how they weighed different groups of issues that directly affected their vote choice.

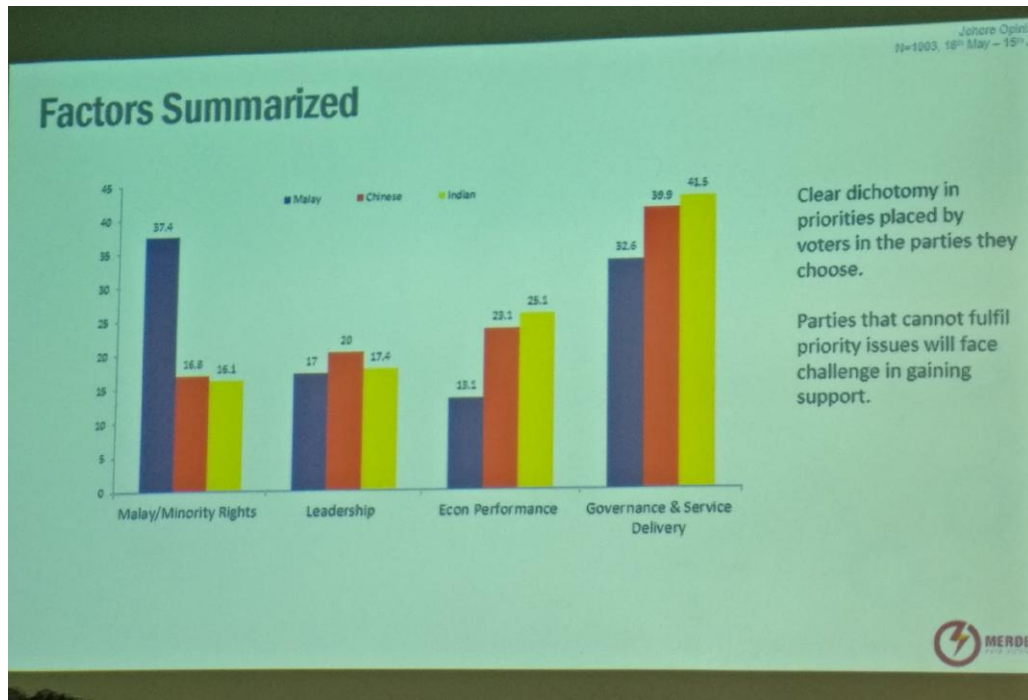


Figure 4: Photograph of Merdeka Center Presentation Slide

Figure 5 above shows the results. Merdeka Center found that Malay voters were most concerned about how politicians addressed the issue of Malay versus minority rights – the predominant social cleavage since the country’s post-World War II independence. They weighted this issue group at 37.4% contributing to their vote choice, in contrast to the second-placed governance and service delivery at 32.6%. In contrast, how Chinese and Indian voters weighed their vote choice was quite differently. The issues of Malay versus minority rights were weighed at only 16.8% and 16.1% for the two ethnic groups respectively. They were much more concerned about governance and service delivery, weighing those issues at 39.9% (Chinese) and

41.5% (Indians). Furthermore, even economic performance and leadership issues outweighed contests over Malay and minority rights.

From these findings, it is therefore unsurprising that the BN continues to underscore the Malay versus minority rights “ethnic issue” during electoral campaigns by saying that an opposition win will spell the end of Malay special rights in the country. Correspondingly, it is also unsurprising that the BN continues to receive the vast majority of Malay support. They are simply playing to the gallery. For the PR, it is also fairly telling that by highlighting anti-regime issues such as poor leadership, poor governance, and poor economic management of the country, they appeal to the vast majority of Chinese and Indian voters (Lian and Appudurai 2011; Liow and Pasuni 2011; Khalid and Loh 2016). While Malay support for the PR continues to be slim relative to the BN, it was and is critical to the opposition’s fate in capturing important subnational state governments such as Selangor and Penang, and in their overall quest to overthrow the BN.

When we combine Merdeka Center’s findings with my findings about the strong anti-regime commitment of PR voters, the overall picture of an opposition alliance generally shaping and being shaped by its mass supporter base emerges. Chinese, Indian, and some Malay voters demand more attention to effective governance and economic performance. Candidates from PR component parties engage in anti-regime rhetoric to appeal to these voters. These voters vote for PR, and have stronger views on these anti-regime issues as compared to BN voters.

4. Conclusion

Strong opposition party leaders form opposition pre-electoral coalitions to solve collective action problems with the ultimate aim of defeating the dictator. They require mass

support from the public to vote for them against the dictator, even under conditions of repression from state security forces, media censorship, and possible prospective punishment if the opposition fails in its bid to unseat the incumbent. Opposition parties cannot possibly hope to alter the dominant incumbent's control of the state and the conduct of impending elections. The best thing that opposition coalitions can possibly do that is within their own control is to forge cohesive alliances with substantive joint campaigns among all parties, so as to exhibit their anti-regime unity and ideological compromises.

This chapter has provided survey evidence data from Malaysia - one of the most robust electoral authoritarian regimes in the post-colonial and post-World War II era, and one fraught with inter-ethnic and inter-religious societal conflict, as is typical with many other developing countries in the world. The data shows that opposition voters do indeed respond to the anti-regime campaign rhetoric of the opposition parties. They are more likely to close ranks behind the selected coalition candidate even if that candidate is not from an opposition party that they support, and are likely to express stronger opinions on anti-regime issues ranging from media freedom to corruption. This is generally good news for the opposition. In the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I summarize what are the key lessons we can learn from this dissertation, assess how contribution it has made to the existing literature, and ask what extensions to the research agenda on opposition coalitions are possible.

Appendix

Table A1. Summary Statistics of Full Sample of Two Waves of Survey Experiment

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
UMNO	2048	0.260	0.439	0	1
BN	2048	0.314	0.464	0	1
No Party	2048	0.374	0.484	0	1
Malay	2048	0.609	0.488	0	1
Islam	2048	0.612	0.487	0	1
Female	2048	0.496	0.500	0	1
Rural	2048	0.368	0.482	0	1
Age*	2048	5.556	2.387	1	9
Education**	2048	3.548	1.040	0	4
Income***	2048	3.818	3.060	0	10

Notes:

* Age is rescaled from “21-25 years old” to 1 at the youngest, to “61 and above” to 9 at the oldest.

* Education is rescaled from “No Education” to 0 at the minimum, to “Degree and above” to 4 at the maximum.

*** Income is rescaled from “No Income” to 0 at the minimum, to “Above RM\$10,000 per month” to 10 at the maximum.

Table A2. Summary Statistics of Survey Experiment Sample (Opposition Supporters Only)

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Malay	639	0.557	0.497	0	1
Islam	639	0.559	0.497	0	1
Female	639	0.374	0.484	0	1
Rural	639	0.297	0.457	0	1
Age*	639	5.280	2.345	1	9
Education**	639	2.664	0.975	0	4
Income***	639	4.260	3.092	0	10

Note: *Age, ** Education, and ***Income are rescaled to the same as Appendix Table A6.

Table A3: Balance Table (N=639)

Demographic	Control Group	Treatment Group	P-value of difference in means or proportions test (95% CI)
Female	0.380	0.368	0.750
Malay	0.532	0.584	0.186
Muslims	0.532	0.587	0.160
Rural	0.289	0.306	0.625
Age*	5.347	5.210	0.462
Education**	2.638	2.690	0.501
Income***	4.295	4.223	0.768
N	329	310	

Note: *Age, ** Education, and ***Income are rescaled to the same as Appendix Table A6.

Table A4. Main Regression Results for Figure 2

Dependent Variable: Vote for Opposition Candidate			
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Combined
Treatment	0.0927* (0.0455)	0.0484 (0.0500)	0.0695* (0.0386)
Malay	-0.3202*** (0.0481)	-0.3354*** (0.0254)	-0.3275*** (0.0267)
Rural	-0.0297 (0.0709)	0.0006 (0.0718)	-0.0162 (0.0588)
Income	0.0101 (0.0083)	0.0204** (0.0082)	0.0151** (0.0055)
Wave			0.0398 (0.0234)
Constant	0.6161*** (0.0538)	0.6330*** (0.0623)	0.607*** (0.0492)
R-squared	0.1163	0.1312	0.1225
N	303	336	639

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A5. Main Regression Results for Figure 3

Dependent Variable: Vote for Opposition Candidate					
	Combined	Party Member Only	Non-Party Member Only	Follow News Only	Do not Follow News Only
Treatment	0.0695* (0.0386)	0.0361 (0.0619)	0.0799* (0.0434)	0.0972* (0.0496)	0.0626 (0.0619)
Malay	-0.3275*** (0.0267)	-0.4921*** (0.0996)	-0.3115*** (0.0299)	-0.3089*** (0.0326)	-0.3541*** (0.0387)
Rural	-0.0162 (0.0588)	0.0355 (0.0684)	-0.0330 (0.0695)	-0.0352 (0.0662)	0.0112 (0.0819)
Income	0.0151** (0.0055)	0.0212** (0.0133)	0.0149** (0.0056)	0.0196** (0.0066)	-0.0027 (0.0130)
Wave	0.0398 (0.0234)	-0.0007 (0.0746)	0.0502 (0.0289)	0.0642 (0.0445)	0.0043 (0.0509)
Constant	0.607*** (0.0492)	0.7613*** (0.0884)	0.5877*** (0.0479)	0.6272*** (0.0681)	0.5909*** (0.0759)
R-squared	0.1225	0.1377	0.1193	0.1358	0.1257
N	639	125	514	392	247

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A6. Summary Statistics of Asian Barometer Respondents Who Voted in 2013**Elections**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Vote PR	890	0.167	0.374	0	1
Age	890	46.906	13.903	22	86
Male	890	0.501	0.500	0	1
Malay	890	0.502	0.500	0	1
Muslim	890	0.574	0.495	0	1
Urban	890	0.564	0.496	0	1
Income*	890	2.844	1.169	1	5
Education**	890	1.907	0.614	1	3
Internet Use***	890	1.265	1.887	0	5
PM Trust****	890	0.749	0.434	0	1

Notes:

* Income has been scaled from 1 to 5 depending on the quintile in which the respondent self-reported their income.

** Education has been scaled from 1 to 3 depending on whether respondents completed some form of elementary school = 1, whether respondents completed some form of secondary school = 2, and whether respondents completed some form of university = 3.

*** The actual question was “Q51. How often do you use the Internet including social media networks to find information about politics and government?” The outcome was scaled according to the response: 0 = Practically never. 1 = A few times a year. 2 = A few times a month. 3 = Once or twice a week. 4 = Several times a week. 5 = Everyday.

**** The actual question was “Q7. I am going to name a number of institutions. For each one, please tell me how much trust do you have in them? – The Prime Minister.” The outcome was dichotomized into a dummy variable: 1 = “A Great Deal of Trust” or “Quite a Lot of Trust.” 0 = “Not very much trust” or “None at all” or “Do not understand the question” or “Can’t choose” or “Decline to answer”

Table A7. Regression Results for Questions on Media Freedom

	DV: Agree with media without government control		DV: Disagree that political parties and candidates had equal media access	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
PR Voter	0.202*** (0.046)	0.126*** (0.049)	0.124*** (0.044)	0.045 (0.047)
Age		-0.000 (0.001)		0.002 (0.001)
Male		0.025 (0.034)		0.049 (0.033)
Malay		-0.075 (0.066)		-0.111 (0.068)
Muslim		-0.065 (0.067)		0.105 (0.068)
Urban		0.039 (0.036)		0.008 (0.035)
Income		0.003 (0.016)		0.015 (0.016)
Education		-0.009 (0.033)		0.041 (0.034)
Internet Use		0.031*** (0.010)		0.008 (0.010)
PM Trust		-0.106** (0.042)		-0.154*** (0.042)
Constant	0.358*** (0.018)	0.469*** (0.113)	0.308*** (0.017)	0.199* (0.114)
R-squared	0.024	0.076	0.010	0.045
N	845	845	855	855

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A8. Regression Results for Questions on Electoral Rules

	DV: No or not much trust in election commission		DV: Last elections not free and fair, or has major problems	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
PR Voter	0.369*** (0.044)	0.198*** (0.047)	0.379*** (0.044)	0.222*** (0.045)
Age		0.000 (0.001)		-0.002 (0.001)
Male		-0.007 (0.027)		0.031 (0.026)
Malay		0.056 (0.042)		-0.035 (0.046)
Muslim		-0.092** (0.044)		0.028 (0.047)
Urban		0.009 (0.028)		0.050* (0.026)
Income		-0.005 (0.013)		-0.009 (0.012)
Education		0.022 (0.027)		-0.024 (0.025)
Internet Use		-0.005 (0.008)		0.016* (0.008)
PM Trust		-0.433*** (0.041)		-0.382*** (0.040)
Constant	0.211 (0.015)	0.560*** (0.094)	0.163*** (0.014)	0.566*** (0.086)
R-squared	0.096	0.256	0.115	0.276
N	853	853	866	866

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A9. Regression Results for Questions on Corruption

	DV: Government leaders always or mostly break the law and abuse their powers		DV: All or most government officials are corrupt		DV: Government not working or not doing enough to root out corruption	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
PR Voter	0.189*** (0.044)	0.133*** (0.047)	0.344*** (0.045)	0.262*** (0.047)	0.353*** (0.044)	0.235*** (0.046)
Age		-0.005*** (0.001)		0.001 (0.001)		-0.002** (0.001)
Male		-0.029 (0.035)		-0.059* (0.031)		0.041 (0.026)
Malay		0.088 (0.071)		-0.001 (0.060)		-0.005 (0.047)
Muslim		-0.050 (0.072)		-0.023 (0.060)		-0.019 (0.047)
Urban		0.013 (0.037)		0.050 (0.034)		0.004 (0.027)
Income		-0.009 (0.017)		0.008 (0.014)		0.016 (0.013)
Education		0.000 (0.035)		0.007 (0.031)		0.010 (0.026)
Internet Use		-0.005 (0.010)		0.013 (0.009)		-0.009 (0.008)
PM Trust		-0.177*** (0.041)		-0.188*** (0.042)		-0.277*** (0.040)
Constant	0.466*** (0.019)	0.881*** (0.113)	0.223*** (0.016)	0.317*** (0.102)	0.154*** (0.013)	0.422*** (0.093)
R-squared	0.021	0.067	0.084	0.128	0.104	0.199
N	831	831	812	812	860	860

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A10. Regression Results for Questions on Democracy

	DV: Not satisfied with the way democracy works		DV: Malaysia not a democracy or has major problems		DV: Degree to which Malaysia is undemocratic	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
PR Voter	0.358*** (0.043)	0.220*** (0.045)	0.376*** (0.044)	0.257*** (0.048)	1.682*** (0.210)	1.094*** (0.224)
Age		-0.004*** (0.001)		-0.002 (0.001)		-0.022*** (0.006)
Male		-0.018 (0.029)		0.044 (0.029)		0.137 (0.146)
Malay		0.042 (0.053)		0.084* (0.047)		-0.334 (0.302)
Muslim		-0.047 (0.053)		-0.081 (0.047)		-0.362 (0.295)
Urban		-0.017 (0.030)		0.031 (0.030)		0.365** (0.169)
Income		0.008 (0.013)		-0.005 (0.014)		0.022 (0.068)
Education		0.027 (0.028)		0.003 (0.029)		0.007 (0.150)
Internet Use		0.005 (0.009)		0.010 (0.009)		0.037 (0.042)
PM Trust		-0.339*** (0.040)		-0.264*** (0.041)		-1.162*** (0.178)
Constant	0.229*** (0.016)	0.652*** (0.100)	0.190*** (0.015)	0.455*** (0.096)	4.386*** (0.082)	6.376*** (0.495)
R-squared	0.089	0.221	0.106	0.189	0.073	0.190
N	863	863	846	846	871	871

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Chapter 7

Conclusion

1. Summary of Arguments

It is important to recall that the existing political science literature does not use consistent definitions or measurements of opposition alliance formation. Some scholars, like Howard and Roessler (2006), Kraetzschmar (2013), as well as Bunce and Wolchik (2011), include opposition parties cooperating with civil society organizations and movements as a necessary part of coalition formation when contesting against electoral autocrats. Other scholars, in contrast, focus on opposition parties only, but differ on the conditions that necessitate inclusion in the concept. Arriola (2013) and Wahman (2011, 2013) sees both inter-party candidate coordination and cross-party “endorsements” as both necessary for qualification as an opposition pre-electoral alliance, while Gandhi and Reuter (2013) view fulfilling either conditions as justifying inclusion.

In order to surmount the potential analytical problems associated with inconsistent definitions and conceptual stretching, this dissertation has first provided a number of significant conceptual clarifications and operationalization guidelines beyond the existing literature that can better ground future research on opposition pre-electoral coalition formation in electoral autocracies. Specifically, I have argued that political scientists should not simply view opposition pre-electoral coalitions as either the presence or absence of inter-party cooperation. Instead, they are institutions designed by self-interested opposition parties to solve two distinct collective action problems that they encounter – the intra-elite candidate collective action problem, and the elite-mass collective action problem. Non-competition agreements are negotiated and formulated to solve the former problem, whereas joint coalition campaigns are mounted to solve the latter

problem. Both non-competition agreements and joint coalition campaigns manifest empirically in a variety of forms, depending on the varying electoral systems and environments that opposition parties encounter. Table 1 below reflects the different levels of conceptualization and various indicators as inspired by Adcock and Collier (2001).

Background Concept	Opposition Inter-Party Cooperation / Opposition Pre-Electoral Coalitions	
Systematized Concept	Non-Competition Agreements	Joint Coalition Campaigns
Indicators	Selection of one opposition presidential candidate to compete against the autocrat; Developing joint lists or slates of opposition candidates to compete against the ruling party's list or slate; Allocating different districts for different opposition parties to field only one or a team of candidates to contest against the ruling party's candidate or team.	Coalition logos; Coalition name; Coalition manifesto; Post-electoral power-sharing agreement; Cross-party endorsements of candidates; Pre-electoral nomination of a prime ministerial candidate in parliamentary systems; Joint coalition campaign events such as public campaign speeches

Table 1: Conceptualization and Measurement of Opposition Pre-Electoral Coalitions in Electoral Autocracies.

Second, I have articulated simple theoretical models to study the conditions under which non-competition agreements and joint coalition campaigns may develop, with an emphasis on the latter. I argue that opposition party leaders strive to develop joint coalition campaigns particularly because they are concerned about the circumscribed viability of their own parties when cross-party strategic voting is limited. Moreover, voters inclined to vote for the opposition alliance may be reluctant to do so not just because of ideological differences, but also because

they are uncertain about the governance capabilities of the alliance, as well as the policy position of a future opposition-controlled government. Paradoxically, when the opposition parties are ideologically similar to each other, as in the case where there are valence-based electoral environments, then the problem of cross-party strategic voting is limited. Opposition inclined voters will treat opposition parties as easily substitutable, and party leaders have no urgent need to campaign jointly to solve a non-existent problem. Where opposition parties are ideologically different, however, party leaders are more likely to engage in joint coalition campaigns because they will have relatively more incentives to do so. When as the ideological differences between opposition parties grow, the problem of cross-party strategic voting is relatively more intense. Party leaders will now have to actively persuade their supporters to both maintain support for their own party, and at least “hold their noses” to vote for candidates from other parties in the coalition. In other words, party leaders must get their supporters to prioritize prospective longer-term democratic change over short-term ideological compromises.

This counterintuitive argument about the effect of ideological differences between opposition parties is conditional upon opposition parties having strong opposition party leaders. When and where opposition party leaders are strong, they will have greater autonomy and flexibility to consider and engage in a broader range of inter-party cooperative strategies with other strong opposition party leaders, even when their parties are ideologically polarized. They will not be beholden to the narrow ideological commitments of their core party activists and supporters. Indeed, strong opposition party leaders may even actively shape the opinions of their party members and supporters by communicating specifically to them the benefits of coalition formation and the positive images of their rivals. This helps party leaders to reduce internal dissent and reduce the probability of intra-party challenges to their leadership. Even strong party

leaders cannot take their mass base for granted, but must strive to get them to turn out for both the party and for other component parties in the alliance against the autocrat. Weak party leaders who are obligated to the niche policy demands of their core supporters, which is what most of the literature assumes to be the default situation, will be less likely to be able to engage in joint coalition campaigns even as the incentives for it grow as ideological differences increases (Greene 2002, 2007, 2016; Magaloni 2006).

The empirical evidence marshaled in this dissertation from a variety of research design methodologies in Singapore and Malaysia demonstrate that the leaders of ideologically polarized opposition parties do indeed recognize the dual problems of the splitting of the opposition vote among too many opposition candidates as well as the problem of cross-party strategic voting. Accordingly, they take action to find and implement corresponding solutions. In particular, they undertake joint coalition campaigns to encourage cross-party strategic voting through signaling their anti-regime unity, increasing confidence in the alliance's governance capabilities, and reducing uncertainty about the policy position of a future opposition-controlled government. They also strive to sell the coalition to their own supporters by reminding them about the prospective benefits of an opposition-controlled government and by enhancing the positive images of their fellow allies. Experimental survey evidence reveals that opposition-inclined voters do indeed respond to joint coalition campaigns, contingent on the strength of their partisanship as well as their levels of political knowledge and sophistication. Observational survey data shows that there is a strong relationship between being an opposition supporter and one's strong anti-regime opinions about regime-related issues. However, whether one's political attitudes drives vote choice or whether the opposition's electoral campaign shapes political attitudes is inconclusive.

2. Limits of Current Analyses and Future Research

Although I have provided a clarification of the definition and operationalization guidelines of opposition pre-electoral coalitions, the question remains how a researcher should approach coding the variable if they continue to wish to treat coalition formation as a categorical variable. Should the researcher see the presence of both the non-competition agreement and joint coalition campaigns as jointly necessary and sufficient for coding an opposition alliance? Or should the researcher see the presence of either one of the two components as sufficient for coding the presence of an opposition alliance? One possible simple answer, as advocated by Collier and Adcock (1999), is that scholars must make pragmatic choices about which systematized concept of the alliance they are interested in studying and what indicators they should look for depending on the research task at hand as well as the empirical context in which they are working on. If scholars seek to examine an opposition coalition's impact on opposition turnout and subsequent democratization, then they are more likely to want to define an opposition alliance more narrowly as having both non-competition agreements and joint coalition campaigns. If researchers want to more closely examine the conditions under which opposition parties cooperate, then they will want to distinguish which particular systematized concept they are focusing on. As they argue, "as theory, goals, and context evolve, choices about concepts may evolve" (Collier and Adcock 1999, 539).

An alternative answer, is to set aside the concept of opposition pre-electoral coalitions, but focus on the broader conceptual framework of opposition inter-party cooperation, just like how sovereign states may engage in inter-state cooperation. In studies of inter-state cooperation in international relations, the norm is not to treat cooperation as a categorical variable – ask whether states cooperate or not. Instead, the norm is to treat inter-state cooperation as a concept

with different dimensions of variation resulting in different “depths” of cooperation (for example, see, Downs, Rocke, and Barsoom 1996; Goldstein, Rivers, and Tomz 2007; Kucik and Reinhardt 2008). The different dimensions of variation in international cooperation include their membership, scope, centralization, control, and flexibility (Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001). Note that all these dimensions of variation are ordinal variables, not categorical. If international institutions score higher on these dimensions – that is if cooperation involves more members, a broader scope of issues, a greater degree of centralization of power, a wider group of countries exerting control, and a greater amount of flexibility – then the resultant inter-state cooperation is said to be deep and strong. Similarly, researchers can also potentially treat opposition inter-party cooperation as an ordinal variable, with the number and types of cooperation that they engage in as additive to the overall depth of cooperation. For instance, if opposition parties engage in non-competition agreements only, then the depth and degree of cooperation can be coded as low and weak. If, however, opposition parties campaigned jointly using the full “playbook” of joint coalition campaign strategies in addition to forming non-competition agreements, then opposition cooperation can be said to be deep and strong. Generally, we can infer that the depth and strength of inter-party cooperation increases the more tightly opposition parties publicly bind themselves together.

Whether researchers choose to approach opposition coalition formation as a categorical or ordinal variable does not distract this dissertation’s theoretical proposition that opposition coalition formation, or opposition inter-party cooperation for that matter, is conditional upon the strength of the leaders of opposition parties as well as the degree of ideological differences between the supporters (not leaders) of the parties. This theory is intended to apply generally to all instances of opposition cooperation in electoral autocracies across the world, beyond the

cross-national comparisons between Singapore and Malaysia undertaken in this dissertation. My next research agenda is to build a new large-N cross national dataset of opposition cooperation in post-Cold-War electoral autocracies in order to further test the global scope of this theory. I envision including new measures of the strength of the party leader as well as for the degree of ideological differences between opposition parties. The strength of the party leader may be measured by the length of his or her tenure as party leader, by the frequency and type of intra-party election procedures, and by the formal powers granted to him or her by the party's constitution or by electoral procedures. Differences in the constitutions of various parties can serve as a proxy measure for the degree of ideological differences.

This new cross-national dataset is also potentially useful for studying an opposition coalition's impact on the probability of electoral turnover as well as prospective democratization. Existing studies utilizing a categorical approach towards measuring opposition coalitions sees them as fostering political liberalization and electoral turnover, but not necessarily contributing towards democratic consolidation (Howard and Roessler 2006; Wahman 2013; Resnick 2013). A dataset examining opposition cooperation as an ordinal variable may explain this puzzle – there are only very few instances of deep and strong pre-electoral inter-party cooperation which can result in strong, consensual opposition-controlled coalition governments after elections. Such governments are more likely to exhibit resolve and capacity to implement pro-democratic institutional reforms. When and where inter-party cooperation is shallow and weak, which is more likely to be the case, opposition victory may exacerbate existing societal cleavages and portend protracted conflict over institutional arrangements, neither of which contribute to democratic consolidation (Slater 2013).

Beyond a new large-N cross-national dataset, another future research agenda would be to design better survey experiments to investigate the causal effect of joint opposition coalition campaigns. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the survey experiment currently presented in this dissertation examines the average treatment effect of only one type of joint coalition campaign on a generic question on cross-party strategic voting. With a larger budget to increase the sample size of opposition voters, a conjoint experiment that combines and randomizes multiple types of joint coalition campaigns can provide us with better causal inferences about which particular aspects of joint coalition campaigns might motivate voters to engage in cross-party strategic voting (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014; Sen 2017; Bansak, Hainmueller, and Yamamoto 2018). I anticipate the conjoint experiment asking voters to consider the different combination scenarios under which they would assess the presence or absence of common coalition names, coalition logos, manifestoes, a single prime ministerial candidate, and joint campaign events such as public speeches. Asking how respondents would vote when provided with these combinations of joint coalition campaigns can better reflect the complex multi-dimensionality of electoral campaigns, potentially allowing us to distinguish between how coalition campaigns signal ideological compromise, governance capabilities, and policy positions.

Finally, any future research agenda may also wish to probe the assumptions behind my arguments. One key assumption of my arguments is that autocrats remain unmoved in the face of opposition cooperation. In other words, they will do nothing in reaction to opposition collective action. This is likely if autocrats have an overpowering grip on political power and are confident about their continued incumbency. Collective action among minor and very weak opposition parties are unlikely to challenge them in any significant way. More vulnerable autocrats,

however, can choose to divide-and-rule the opposition with selective inducements, or reposition themselves along the prevailing ideological spectrum (Greene 2008; Lust 2005). Greene (2008), for instance, argues that when polarized opposition parties engage in pincer-like collective action against the dominant incumbent in the ideological center, ruling parties can abandon the ideological center in a bid to undercut voter support for opposition parties. Indeed, this appears to be what is happening in Malaysia. After the BN survived the 2013 electoral contest from the DAP-PKR-PAS Pakatan Rakyat coalition, it swiftly moved to the ideological right by seeking closer relations with PAS. This lead PAS to reiterate its calls for an Islamic State, thus fracturing the PR alliance. Whether opposition parties can resist such co-optation or react quick enough to respond to ideological repositioning is likely to be contingent on the internal dynamics of opposition parties, amongst other factors.

A second assumption that has remained unexamined in this dissertation is the distributional concerns in the respective bargaining and signaling models proposed. The uneven allocation of costs and benefits across opposition parties, whether real or perceived, could raise further obstacles to cooperation. To reiterate a potential challenge raised in Chapter 2, a smaller party that receives a smaller share of electoral districts to contest in, or whose leader is not nominated as a deputy prime ministerial candidate of a future opposition-controlled government, may decide that fighting on their own outside of a coalition is better than being humiliated inside it. As Przeworski (1991, 67) suggested, “the struggle for democracy always takes place on two fronts: against the authoritarian regime for democracy and against one’s allies for the best place under democracy.” If opposition parties and their leaders prioritize relative gains against their potential allies rather than absolute gains via displacing the incumbent autocrat, then we should observe more protracted struggles when bargaining over candidate allocation across districts, or

when negotiating for ideological compromises in common policy platforms (Powell 1991; Morales 2017).

3. Conclusion

The end of authoritarianism occurs in a variety of ways. Violent, popular revolutionary mass uprisings may force a dictator to realize that the end for them is near, thus forcing them to escape in ignominy. Military generals may, ironically, simply decide not to follow a dictator's commands anymore, preferring instead to take directions from a more amenable civilian regime. Dictators may die. Ruling parties may decay. And monarchs may abdicate. Dominant regimes may even decide that democratization is in their own self-interest (Slater and Wong 2013).

The equilibrium stability of electoral autocracies, however, makes them particularly resistant to defeat (Geddes 1999; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). Opposition forces, organized into political parties, oftentimes become the only organized institutional means through which to challenge such dominant regimes (Bermeo and Yashar 2016). Understanding how opposition leaders relate to their supporters within and across their parties when contesting in different types of autocratic elections is a necessary first step in thinking about how electoral authoritarianism can be eroded. If we can appreciate what opposition parties actually do when we speak about opposition coalition formation, then we can better comprehend whether, how, and why opposition collective action merely makes a dent in the autocrat's armor or can ultimately unseat him from his throne.

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