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Political party and party system institutionalization in Southeast Asia: lessons for democratic consolidation in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand

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Abstract Is a higher degree of party and party system institutionalization positivelycorrelated with the consolidation of democracy, defined here as the prevention ofdemocratic breakdown? In order to answer this question, it is useful to compare different levels and types of institutionalization in three Southeast Asian electoral democracies. Institutionalized party systems are characterized, according to Main-waring and Torcal, by 'stability of interparty competition.' Moreover, the distinction made by Levitsky ('value infusion' versus 'behavioural routinization') with referenceto the institutionalization of individual parties will be employed. The empirical research of this paper finds that most Indonesian parties are better institutionalizedthan those in the Philippines and Thailand with reference to 'value infusion.' In addition, the interparty competition is more stable in Indonesia. Therefore, the probability of a collapse of the party system in the Philippines and Thailand is much higher. This, in turn, renders the democracies in these countries more fragileand prone to political crises or even sudden breakdowns. The early organizational consolidation of social cleavages, such as in Indonesia, enhances institutionalization.A few of the most important parties are socially rooted and have strong linkages to civil and/or religious organizations. Furthermore, the relationship between central and local elites appears to be essential: strong bosses or cliques undermineinstitutionalization in the Philippines and in Thailand, respectively. However, in recent years there has also been a tendency towards convergence. There are signs of regression in Indonesia, such that the future of the party system is open to question. This article calls for caution with respect to the stated causal relation between institutionalization and democratic consolidation, and it questions some aspects ofthe concept.

Introduction

According to the mainstream political science literature, well-functioning political parties are essential for recruiting political elites, organizing opposition, resolving conflict by establishing channels of representation, providing accountability, and aggregating interests. They render possible a peaceful alternation of power, solidify democratic norms, facilitate adaptation and compromise and provide a sense of longevity: 'It is impossible, for example, to "throw the rascals out" if they cease to exist and equally impossible for voters to perform any kind of retrospective evaluation of parties if the political scene is continuously refabricated' (Lindberg 2007: 218). Meaningfully competitive parties may even integrate veto actors like the military and 'provide a check on ruling power, help ensure equity of re- sources for parties, and create more incentives for good governance and support for democracy' (Lai and Melkonian-Hoover 2005: 553). Political parties are an important link between civil society and state. Therefore, with reference to democratic consolidation, an analysis of the role of parties is useful.

In this article, I first define the term 'institutionalization' with reference to parties and party systems and outline the debate regarding the assumed causal relation between institutionalization and democratic consolidation. The conceptualization of the latter term is also discussed in this section. The second part deals with the most salient characteristics of parties and party systems in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand with reference to 'stability of interparty competition' and 'value infusion and behavioral routinization.' I focus on those

features deemed to be characteristic and pertinent. Finally, I answer two questions: what are the reasons for the different levels of institutionalization? And is the causal relation between institutionalization and democratization as unambiguous as insinuated by different authors? It is demonstrated that other factors have to be considered, thus transcending the reductionist institutionalization approach.

Institutionalization of parties and party systems

Institutions reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life (North 1990: 3f.). Institutionalization is the process whereby 'a practice or organization becomes well established and widely known, if not universally accepted' (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006: 206). In applying this notion to party systems, Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) identify different dimensions. More institutionalized systems, according to them, are more stable; that is, patterns of party competition manifest more regularly. In more institutionalized systems, parties have strong roots in society and the voter–party linkage is closer. Political actors see parties as a legitimate, necessary part of democratic politics, and party organizations are not dependent on charismatic leaders but have instead acquired an independent status. Weakly institutionalized party systems generate more uncertainty in electoral outcomes and are inimical to electoral accountability. In contrast, institutionalized party systems are stable and parties accept the rules of the game and each other as legitimate. This implies that there is, if at all, only a moderate polarization. A relatively stable party system fosters more effective programmatic representation, party labels provide better programmatic cues, and electoral volatility usually decreases and 'provides considerable structure to democratic politics' (Mainwaring and Zoco 2007: 157). In such a system the probability that anti-system politicians can become the head of government is lower. Mainwaring and Torcal do not always clearly differentiate between party and party system institutionalization. This is the reason why the distinction made by Levitsky ('value infusion' and 'behavioral routinization') with reference to the institutionalization of individual parties will be employed. 'Value infusion' encompasses rootedness, that is, linkages to civil and religious organizations as well as 'reification' and 'legitimation.' 'Behavioural routinization' includes stable patterns of organization as well as independence from particular financiers and from overly powerful charismatic leaders. Value infusion denotes a 'shift from the pursuit of particular objectives through an organization to the goal of perpetuating the organization per se' (Levitsky 1998: 79). Being a member of it becomes a source of personal satisfaction. Behavioral routinization points to intra-organizational patterns of behavior, that is, to entrenched forms of social interaction. Whereas value infusion facilitates adaptation to new political environments, routinization in many cases reduces adaptability because actors face difficulties in changing procedures and rules (Köllner 2003; Levitsky 1998: 84).
Competitive, institutionalized party systems are characterized by continuity among party alternatives and enhanced electoral accountability (Randall and Svåsand 2002: 7) or, in other words, by 'stability of interparty competition' (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006). It is generally assumed that parties fulfil their usual functions better when they and the party system as a whole are well-institutionalized and that a higher degree of institutionalization is positively correlated with the consolidation of democracy (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Randall and Svåsand 2002).

Consolidating democracy

The thesis on the relation between institutionalization and democratic consolidation warrants further explanation. First, the term 'consolidation' has to be explicated. Then, we need to

understand what kinds of regimes the three cases are and what exactly the above-mentioned relationship could be.

Schedler (2001) distinguishes minimalist definitions ('preventing democratic breakdown') from maximalist versions ('organizing democracy' or 'deepening democracy') of democratic consolidation. The minimalist definition goes back, among others, to Juan Linz, who defined consolidation as a state of affairs 'in which none of the major political actors, parties or organized interests, forces or institutions, consider that there is an alternative to democratic processes to gain power . . . democracy must be seen as the "only game in town" (Linz 1990: 156). An example of the maximalist version is the model by Linz and Stepan (1996: 17), who conceptualize a democracy to be consolidated when, in addition to a functioning state, conditions exist for the development of a free and lively civil society and a relatively autonomous political society; when all major political actors are subjected 'to a rule of law that protects individual freedoms and associational life'; and when there is a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government and an institutionalized economic society. In a similarly ambitious way, Schneider and Schmitter (2004: 67f.) state that the consolidation of a democracy depends on whether all 'significant political parties' basically accept the existing constitution; whether elections have been regular, free and fair and their outcomes accepted by government and opposition; whether electoral volatility has diminished significantly; whether there has been at least one 'rotation-in-power' or significant shift in alliances of parties in power; whether elected officials and representatives are constrained in their behavior by non-elected veto groups within the country; and whether formal or informal agreement has been reached over the rules governing the formation and behavior of associations, the territorial division of competencies and the rules of ownership and access to mass media.

The problem with such demanding definitions is that the consolidation model may emerge 'as an omnibus concept, a garbage-can concept, a catch- all concept, lacking a core meaning' (Schedler 2001: 159). Often, consolidation is conceived of as a process, sometimes with an expected result ('liberal democracy'), sometimes with an indeterminate outcome. The term consolidation tends to imply a teleological model of transition whereby a fully fledged, liberal democracy will almost automatically be achieved after a certain period of time (see Carothers 2002; O'Donnell 2002). However, it should merely refer to expectations of regime continuity and not include other usages such as completing, organizing or deepening democracy.

With reference to the key question of this article, we can thus define the problem as follows: is the probability of democratic breakdown higher in any one of the three democracies under consideration because of a lower level of party and party system institutionalization?

But what kinds of democracies are these? The corpus of literature deals with intricate typologies of political systems and with hundreds of 'democracies with adjectives' (Collier and Levitsky 1997), including, among others, 'electoral' (Diamond 1999), 'delegative' (O'Donnell 1996) and 'defective' (Merkel 2004) democracy. Moreover, there are those who prefer to speak about 'hybrid regimes' that combine democratic and authoritarian features (Diamond 2002). In this article, the political systems of Thailand, the Philip- pines and Indonesia are defined as electoral democracies or polyarchies, which is essentially the same.1 According to Dahl (1989: 221) a polyarchy is defined by seven features: elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, the right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information, and associational autonomy. With such a minimalist definition, one avoids the trap of approaching the subject teleologically and overly ambitiously.

The three test cases: Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand

In this section, the stability of interparty competition shall be broadly assessed by way of tracing the main features of the development of the respective party systems. Then, following Levitsky,

two main indicators of party institutionalization will be distinguished: value infusion and behavioral routinization. The indicators of party system institutionalization usually preferred, such as fragmentation and volatility, will not be utilized here. In the Philippines, politicians repeatedly switch from one party to another, making it impossible to measure total electoral volatility (Croissant 2006: 357). In Thailand, it is more important to know the number of factions than to simply count party seats (Chambers 2005: 500). Electoral volatility is a very weak indicator if only single political parties – and not party families – are assessed. In Indonesia, for instance, a shift from one Islamic party to another may indicate a very moderate volatility in terms of identification with certain ideologies or policies.

Stability of interparty competition

In Indonesia, the underlying forces of the contemporary party system bear a striking resemblance to the constellation after the first free elections in 1955. Using bivariate and multiple regression techniques, King (2003), for instance, has shown that there was a continuity in the election results (1955 and 1999). He correlated support for major parties and found striking similarities at the district level. The results suggest that in spite of socio-economic shifts, fundamental loyalties to parties, essentially defined in terms of religion, have survived. The dynamics of party politics are thus still marked by aliran ('streams'); that is, some of the biggest political parties still have a mass base and are embedded in specific milieus.

The four most important parties, which obtained four-fifths of the total votes in 1955, grew out of and at the same time reshaped and politicized these streams (Feith 1962: 125ff.). The nationalist PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian Nationalist Party) represented many non-Muslims and those who were still set apart by an aristocratic Javanese culture and earned their living mainly as state employees and civil servants or were clients of them. The PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party) was probably the best-organized party, with loyal followers among abangan (nominal Muslim or syncretist) workers in urban and rural areas. The santri (orthodox Muslims) comprised modernists and traditionalists. The latter, under NU (Nahdatul Ulama, 'Renaissance' of ulama), consisted mostly of ulama (religious scholars) and their followers; the former, under the Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims), included urban intellectuals, traders and artisans on the Outer Islands.

Although elections were held only once in the 1950s, interparty competition seemed to be stable. But why did the parliamentary system with rooted and – in relation to the democratic Philippines at that time – quite well- institutionalized parties collapse after only a few years? At that time it was, among other things, politik aliran, that is, the politicization of primordial sentiments by political parties, that added to political polarization and the demise of democracy and, in particular, the party system. Major political actors no longer accorded legitimacy to parties.

During the authoritarian New Order (1965–98) under Suharto, the remaining organizational structures were destroyed. Only three parties, Golkar, the Islamic PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party) and the secular, nationalist PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party) were legalized. The ruling party Golkar always obtained between 60 percent and 70 percent of the votes as a result of manipulation and repression. After the fall of Suharto, the party system was shaped by some of the same underlying conflicts, that is, between political Islam and secularism and between traditionalist and modernist Islam (see Table 1).2 Two of the four big parties of the 1950s have successors today. There is a continuation between the PNI and the PDI-P3 as well as between the NU and the PKB. The PKB is based on a large network of mostly rural, religious boarding schools (*pesantren*) and their charismatic principals, the kiai, and the PDI-P is a secular, nationalist

party thriving on the lasting charisma of former president Sukarno. The modernist camp that was once represented by Mayumi is now split into a few parties (PBB, PAN, PKS, and partly PPP), and after the brutal extinction in 1965–66, the PKI simply no longer exists. Golkar has taken up voters from different sources. To sum up, interparty competition is characterized by clear continuities when comparing the current situation with that in the 1950s. Recent surveys confirm these continuities (Lembaga Survei Indonesia 2007). This denotes the astounding stability of some core patterns of the party system despite the authoritarian backlashes.

Whereas in Indonesia basic structures could survive over a long period of time, interparty relations in the Philippines are marked by a history of dis- continuities. The party system that existed until 1972 was very different from the system that has existed since 1986, although formal political institutions in the two democratic periods are almost similar.

Table 1 Election results in Indonesia, 1999 and 2004 (DPR, largest parties)

Party	Votes in % (1999)	Seats (1999)	Votes in % (2004)	Seats (2004)
Golkar	22.5	120	21.6	128
PDI-P	33.8	153	18.5	109
PKB	12.6	51	10.6	52
PPP	10.7	58	8.2	58
PD	—	—	7.5	57
PK (2004: PKS)	1.4	7	7.3	45
PAN	7.1	34	6.4	52
PBB	1.9	13	2.6	11
PBR	—	—	2.4	13
PDS	—	—	2.1	12
Total	100	500	100	550

Notes: Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar), Functional Groups Party; Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan (PDI-P), Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle; Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa(PKB), National Awakening Party; Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), United Develop-ment Party; Partai Demokrat (PD), Democrat Party; Partai Keadilan (Justice Party), in 2004:Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), Justice and Prosperity Party; Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), National Mandate Party; Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB), Crescent and Star Party; Partai Bintang Reformasi (PBR), Star Party of Reform; Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS), Prosperity and Peace Party; the military automatically received thirty-eight seats in the period 1999–2004.
Source: Komisi Pemilihan Umum.

From 1907 until 1946 the NP (Nacionalista Party, founded in 1907) dominated Philippine politics. Power struggles arose among two factions in the party: between the followers of Quezon and those of Osmeña. From 1946 to 1972 a classic two-partyism – almost a copy of the US model – prevailed. The two contenders, the NP and the LP (Liberal Party, formerly a wing of the NP) were clientelistic elite parties. After 1972 and the announcement of martial law, elections were disallowed for six years. In 1978 manipulated elections for a rubber-stamp parliament were won by Marcos's KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, New Society Movement), which never reached the organizational density of Golkar which was supposedly one of the paragons of the Philippine president. Not before the early 1980s, when Marcos's power increasingly crumbled, could an opposition emerge. It was able to gain 61 out of 183 seats in slightly competitive elections. With the ouster of Mar- cos and the beginning of democratization in 1986, a polarization between followers of Marcos and of Corazon Aquino materialized for a short time. Nevertheless, since the parties of the Left boycotted the elections, political conflicts were moderate. Both camps were dominated by old elites, and in the following years the 'reform versus status quo' cleavage vanished almost completely.

Most parties in the Philippines are founded by presidential candidates. The concept of voting for a party – and not just for politicians – is still fairly uncommon in the Philippines. Even the notion of party government is generally absent (Teehankee 2006: 238). As a result, the party

Table 2 Seats in the House of Representatives of the Philippines (1987–2007; largest parties)

Party	1987	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
PDP-Laban[a]	43	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lakas ng Bansa (Nation's Power)	24	—	—	—	—	—	—
UNIDO (United Nationalist Democratic Organization)	19	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lakas NUCD (since 1998: Lakas NUCD-UMDP; since 2004: Lakas-CMD)[b]	—	43	100	111	82	93	70
LAMMP[c]	—	—	—	55	—	—	—
LDP[d]/Lakas	—	—	25	—	—	—	—
LP (Liberal Party)	16	—	—	15	21	34	16
NPC (Nationalist People's Coalition)	—	34	25	9	53	53	26
LDP	—	86	17	—	21	11	3
KAMPI[e]	—	—	—	—	—	—	47
Total	200	200	204	206 (+14 via party list)	206 (+20 via party list)	207 (+23 via party list)	219 (+21 via party list)

Notes:
[a]Partido Demokratiko Pilipino – Lakas ng Bayan (Philippines Democratic Party – National Struggle).
[b]Lakas National Union of Christian Democrats; Lakas – Christian Muslim Democrats.
[c]Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino, Struggle of the Nationalist Filipino Masses, comprising the LDP, NPC and PMP (Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Party of the Philippine Masses).
[d]Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Struggle for Democratic Filipinos.
[e]Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino, Partner of the Free Filipino.
Source: Hartmann *et al*. (2001: 222f.); Teehankee (2002: 165; 2006: 237); House of Representatives, accessed at http://www.congress.gov.ph/members/index.php?name=All, 5 January 2008.

landscape is labyrinthine (see Table 2). Scores of parties with almost similar but meaningless names compete in a highly complex electoral system every three years. This multipartism has in many instances even deteriorated the quality of political parties. The Lakas-NUCD-UMDP (since 2004, Lakas-CMD or, in short, Lakas) is a fusion of four parties. In 1992 Fidel Ramos, after not being nominated by the LDP as presidential candidate, engineered the fusion of the Partido Lakas ng Tao (People Power Party, Lakas) with the NUCD (founded in 1984) in order to secure registration with the legally prescribed number of party branches. The new party was defeated in the 1992 elections for the House of Representatives, but won the presidency. Afterwards, scores of MPs switched to Ramos's party. After the elections of 1998 Lakas controlled the majority in the House of Representatives, but it lost the presidency to Estrada. His coalition, the LAMMP, was quickly able to attract MPs from Lakas. Another case in point is the 2004 election. Lakas, despite having won presidential elections and the majority in the House of Representatives, soon began to crumble. The KAMPI had attracted thirty-five members by mid-August. Including those MPs with double memberships (Lakas-KAMPI and NPC-KAMPI), the total number of members was sixty-seven. In this case, it was the task of the KAMPI to counterbalance José de Venecia, the speaker of the House of Representatives. Parties with elaborated political platforms such as the Leftist Akbayan or Bayan Muna have gained access to the national parliament only because of the introduction of the party-list system in 1998. The major shortcomings of Philippine parties persist. With respect to 'stability of interparty competition,' the party system is hardly institutionalized.

In Thailand, political party activities began after the Second World War but were soon ended by the coup in 1947. In 1951, after a short period of pseudo-parliamentary rule, political parties were banned. Following another short parliamentary phase from 1955 to 1957, political parties were again forbidden, first under Field Marshal Sarit, then under Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat, until 1969. In 1971, the next coup and ban on parties followed. Other than the Democrat Party, 'no party had much institutional continuity prior to the 1970s' (Ockey 2005: 745). Political parties only flourished in 1975–76 and played a central, though somewhat limited, role in the semi- democratic regime of the 1980s. Only with the democratization in 1992 did they truly take center stage.

At face value, there was a certain continuity in the 1990s. In the elections of September 1992, July 1995, and November 1996 electoral volatility was, in comparison with other young democracies, moderate. But even this fragile stability withered in the wake of the constitutional amendments of 1997 (Case 2001: 534ff.). With his new party, the Thai Rak Thai ('Thais Love Thais,' TRT), media mogul and billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra won (McCargo and Pathmanand 2005: 70ff.) 248 out of 500 seats in the House of Representatives in the January 2001 polls and was able to gradually enlarge his majority (see Table 3). The vacuum of deinstitutionalized party systems is filled by 'pluto' populism (Phongpaichit and Baker 2002; Thompson 2007), not Peronist populism; that is, organized labour is eschewed. The best examples are Thaksin as well as Estrada and Fernando Poe in the Philippines. Thaksin arose as a populist leader, even in a parliamentary system. He and Estrada were able to totally undermine the already shaky ground of partisan politics.

Table 3 Seats in the Thai House of Representatives (1992–2007; largest parties)

	1992	1995	1996	2001	2005	2007
Total	360	391	393	500	500	480
New Aspiration Party	51	57	125	36	[a]	–
Democrat Party	79	86	123	128	96	165
National Development Party (Chart Pattana)	60	53	52	29	[a]	9[b]
Thai Nation (Chart Thai)	77	92	39	41	25	37
Social Action Party	22	22	20	1	—	—
Moral Force (Palang Dharma)	47	23	1	—	—	—
Thai Citizen Party	3	18	18	—	—	—
Thais Love Thais (Thai Rak Thai)	—	—	—	248	377	—
People's Power Party	—	—	—	—	—	233
For the Motherland (Puea Pandin)	—	—	—	—	—	24

Notes:
[a] Fusion with Thai Rak Thai.
[b] Thais United National Development Party: a merger of Thais United and the National Development Party.
Source: Chambers (2006); Orathai (2002); Election Commission of Thailand, accessed atwww.ect.go.th

Before Thaksin, the party system was weakly institutionalized with respect to the stability of interparty competition. Under him, alternatives vanished almost completely. The fragility of the Thai party system was made all the more evident in 2006 when the military toppled him amidst mass demonstrations. Elections which had earlier been boycotted by the opposition parties were then annulled by the Constitutional Court. It also ordered the dissolution of the TRT. One hundred and eleven senior party executives of the TRT were banned from electoral politics for five years. Parties had to start from scratch, under martial law. Momentarily, the People's Power Party (Palang Prachachon or PPP) has replaced the TRT.

Value infusion and behavioral routinization

At the background of this sketch of party systems, one can start to measure the institutionalization of individual parties by the degree of value infusion as indicated by rootedness: linkages to civil and religious organizations. More- over, the other factor, behavioral routinization, denotes stable patterns of organization as well as independence from powerful financiers and charismatic leaders.

Thai parties are poorly institutionalized with reference to these indicators (Bünte 2000; Ockey 2003; Orathai 2002; Thornton 2003). A number of par- ties were established and won seats, but quickly vanished; examples include Palang Dharma, the Social Action Party, the Thai Citizen Party, and, recently, the Chart Pattana Party and the New Aspiration Party. Social cleavages are only rudimentarily represented in the parliament (Ockey 2005). Exceptions are, for instance, regional cleavages: the Democrat Party has a stronghold in the south, whilst the New Aspiration Party achieved their best results in the north-east of the country. The polarization between 'angels' and 'devils,' that is, between the pro-democratic and status quo-oriented parties of 1992, no longer plays a role.

Generally, parties are only shallowly rooted and are organizationally weak, in particular outside Bangkok. The linkage between politicians and voters is provided by local political cliques (phuak, phakphuak) via vote canvassers (hua khanaen) (Nelson 2001: 315ff.). The phuak are informal groupings and consist of headmen, members of the local administration, and councillors. They may cover the whole province or just parts of it. Some- times individuals or families form the core of the phuak; sometimes different groups control the territory. MPs belong to the phuak or are selected as their leaders. These local elites – powerful local political-bureaucratic and business alliances – gained importance in the 1980s and 1990s and achieved 'a significant degree of autonomy from Bangkok politics' (Heryanto and Hadiz 2005: 269f.; Phongpaichit and Baker 2000: 332ff.). In many cases, these local and regional patronage networks weaken the central party leadership and '[i]ntra-party factions, led by regional personages, have provided the lion's share of party financing and have dominated candidate nomination decisions' (Chambers 2006: 309).

McCargo distinguishes between real, authentic and actual parties. 'Real' parties are marked by 'mass membership, sophisticated administrative structure, local branches, representative leadership, ideological cohesion and concrete policy platforms' (McCargo 1997: 115). He states that mass bureaucratic parties of this type have never been created successfully in Thailand. 'Authentic' parties are dominated by personalities and are characterized by the huge influence of money. Some scholars argue that they are appropriate to the socio-economic order of Thailand and refer to the role of factions, of regional groupings and the links to the business sector. 'Actual' parties are 'uneasy composites of both the "real" and the "authentic"' (McCargo 1997: 121f.). Examples of 'authentic parties' are Samakkhi Tham, Social Action and Chart Thai. The latter was founded in 1974 as a 'law and order' party. In 1991–92 it supported Suchinda and his suppression of popular protests. The structure is not unlike that of parties of notables:

> Chart Thai describes itself as a 'family' rather than an institution
> .. . This informal nature influences all aspects of the Party's structure and decision-making . . . There is no real election for candidates by the party members. In fact, the party believes that if the branches deter- mined candidates, there would be conflict within the party. (Thornton 2003: 414)

Examples of 'actual' parties are New Aspiration, the Democrats and Palang Dharma. The latter was established in 1988 by Major General Cham- long, at that time the governor of Bangkok, and was completely focused on him as a charismatic leader. Chamlong stood as a devout ascetic

for 'clean' politics and succeeded in recruiting highly motivated members of the Santi Asoke sect.

The Democrat Party, founded in 1946, is the only one with a long tradition. It was actively involved in the student protests in 1973 and backed, although hesitantly, the demonstrations against General Suchinda at the beginning of the 1990s. At the height of the Asian crisis it advocated a neo-liberal economic policy close to IMF formulae. It still maintains a major base in the south, and possesses strong backing among the urban middle class. Regular replacement of party leaders hints at a lively intraparty democratic culture. The Democrat Party is the best-institutionalized party in Thailand.

In addition to his classification of parties, as outlined above, McCargo foresaw the rise of electoral-professional parties (Panebianco 1988). He was later vindicated by the rise of the TRT. Such parties are dominated by professional politicians who work together with media, marketing and advertising specialists. The leadership is personalized, the party is linked directly to voters and the membership is small. The parties are funded by interest groups and campaign around particular issues. They use polling and focus groups and are not particularly interested in formal membership and party structures; and they are not based on ideologies, but rather on certain marketable issues (McCargo and Pathmanand 2005: 78). The TRT was financed almost exclusively by Thaksin and his wife. The party, which paid its MPs additional salaries, won almost half of the seats in 2001 and more than three-quarters of the mandate in 2005. Nonetheless, it was not well institutionalized. In 2004, the TRT claimed a membership of some 15 million, yet party organization was rudimentary. In contrast to the Democrat Party, which had 193 branches in 400 constituencies, the TRT comprised just twelve regional coordination centers (Phongpaichit and Baker 2004: 191). In addition, the party was undermined by factionalism. In 2006 it consisted of twelve factions. The biggest of them consisted of sixty to seventy representatives led by Sanoh Thienthong, who had come from the New Aspiration Party. The TRT was also special in so far as it was actually two parties in one with a dual structure consisting of an electoral-professional part in Bangkok and a rural network part operating in the countryside.

What most Thai parties have in common is that they are feebly institutionalized in terms of value infusion and behavioral routinization. The same is true of Philippine parties. Today, in comparison to the time prior to 1972, they are 'less the unified patronage parties of old than coalitions of factions and smaller parties kept tenuously together by patronage and pork barrel politics' (Abinales and Amoroso 2005: 239).

The two-partyism of the pre-Marcos period was fluid in so far as politicians frequently switched from one party to the other. Hopping from the NP to the LP or vice versa, sometimes repeatedly, was a widespread phenomenon. The two parties had almost the same vaguely formulated platforms and thus were instruments for presidents and cliques, but did not reflect societal cleavages. Consequently, the elites did not face challenges to their rule. After 1986, that is after the destruction of the Nacionalistas and the Liberals, a plethora of new parties was established because a reversion to the pre-Marcos era was impossible:

> Politicians were powerful within their realms (provinces, cities, and municipalities), but their ties to the national state were no longer coursed through a single patronage machine. Instead, a mélange of small parties with constantly shifting memberships created short-lived, election- based alliances. (Abinales and Amoroso 2005: 239)

The largest political parties in the Philippines today are still characterized by a lack of meaningful platforms, by a high frequency of party switching and factionalism, as well as by numerous dissolutions and re-emergences (Arlegue and Coronel 2003; Rocamora 2000; Teehankee 2006). An important reason for party switching and the shift from one coalition to another are porkbarrels, that is, special financial resources controlled by the president (as

Countryside Development Funds and Congressional Initiative Allocations). They can be used inter alia for the more or less legal maintenance of networks. Only 40 percent of the expenses from the presidential development funds trickle down to the local level; the remainder are lost on the way through party and administrative coffers (Arlegue and Coronel 2003: 225). Moreover, the president has the capability to deliver around 100,000 jobs. Another rea- son for the weak institutionalization of parties is the enormous campaign expenses. Parties are financed by their MPs, their candidates, and sponsors. Most parties are established in Manila and serve as electoral vehicles. However, they generally do not exist for a long time, and the central executive's control of the party apparatus is much weaker because the

> organizational structure of Philippine parties is generally defined by parochial, clientelistic networks centering upon individual parliamentarians, whose affiliation to the national party is rather loose
> .. . [L]egislators and candidates enjoy a remarkable degree of independence and autonomy from their parties. (Croissant 2003: 81f.)

Family networks often displace parties as channels of political recruitment. The major parties are still under the control of a few dozen of these dynasties (Aquino, Cojuangco, Osmeña, Romualdez, Marcos, Lopez, Enrile, etc.), supplemented only by some professionals as well as TV, movie and sports stars.

Multiple party memberships indicate the weak loyalty of politicians to parties. The parties are mostly inactive between elections, and membership figures are low, as are levels of organization. The Omnibus Election Code even allows parties to nominate non-members as candidates. Most parties are managed in Manila and are not intended to exist for a long time. The presidential candidate and some national political leaders determine the selection of candidates. Parties, prior to the polls, are political machines. In the parliament they serve as the interest organizations of MPs seeking easy access to financial sources. Since the president does not control an efficient party machinery, he or she is dependent on local elites when it comes to voter mobilization (Teehankee 2006: 250). Campaigning is focused on the candidates, not on the parties. The party apparatus is financially ill-equipped between elections. The congresses of Lakas, for example, could not take place every two years as stipulated in official party regulations because of a lack of financial resources. Rocamora (2000) states that two years after the 1998 elections the LAMMP did not have a party constitution, officers or headquarters. Consequently, the party fell apart after a short time.

The focus on presidential candidates, the ephemerality of political parties in general, the weak linkages to social and religious organizations, and the inchoate translation of social cleavages into the party system prevent parties from engaging in the difficult task of devising intricate programmes. Several parties even hire the same group of consultants to write their party platforms (Hicken 2006: 38). There is no general party law in the Philippines. Parties have to present financial reports only during elections, and violations are seldom penalized since the election commission COMELEC has limited enforcement capacities. Parties have to establish branches in most regions, but again these regulations are rarely implemented.

Seen against this background, the state of political parties in Indonesia is much better. Many of the big parties in Indonesia are rooted, have substantial linkages to civil and religious organizations and are reified in the public mind. At present, among the ten largest parties, six are Islamic and four secular. The most important cleavage structuring the party system as a whole is still that dividing secular and Islamic parties, and among the latter, in addition, that between moderate Islamic and Islamist parties (Ananta et al. 2004; Johnson Tan 2006; Sherlock 2005). The degree of institutionalization of these ten parties is uneven and depends, among other things, on their rootedness in specific milieus and their recent history, that is, whether they had already existed under the New Order regime (1965–98). The PDI- P, with a large

following of Christians and secularists, is still identified with Sukarno, the immensely popular and charismatic first president of Indonesia whose peculiar worldview – a strange mix of old patrimonial Javanese, socialist and fiercely anti-colonial nationalist ideas – serves as one pillar of the party's programmatic platform. Today, his daughter Megawati embodies this Sukarnoist tradition.

Islamic and Islamist parties have arguably stronger social roots, in particular those with links to mass organizations and social milieus where people with similar backgrounds, outlooks and lifestyles tend to have almost similar political preferences. The PKB, the party of the fourth Indonesian president, Abdurrahman Wahid, evolved out of the largest mass organization, the – according to its own figures – 40 million-member, traditionalist Islamic NU. The NU and the PKB are not identical. During elections, for example, a whole range of 'NU parties' take part. Only a strong minority of NU members actually votes for the PKB, but the connections between the NU and the PKB in terms of general outlook, leadership personnel and political visions is obvious. The ulama of the NU (and the PKB) are of- ten owners and principals of Muslim boarding schools (pesantren), most of them located in rural Central and East Java. The other Muslim party with clear connections to an Islamic mass organization is PAN, the antagonist of the PKB. The PAN is linked to the urban, modernist Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, founded even before the NU and with a mass membership of allegedly some 35 million.

However, this overall optimistic view on Indonesian parties has to be qualified. In comparison to the 1950s, there are clear indications of a de-alignment of Indonesian parties in spite of the notable aliran persistence (Ufen 2008). After 1998, parties are more dominated by charismatic leaders, and factionalization is a recurrent problem. Intraparty authoritarianism and personalism is obvious. 'Money politics' with bought candidacies, MPs acting as brokers for private companies, businessmen taking over party chairmanships, and billionaire financiers determining policies behind the scenes are far more pronounced today. Because of a general devaluation of ideologies, political platforms are generally poor. Parties cooperate in grand coalitions, avoid the formation of an organized opposition and collude in tolerating corruption. The financing of parties in general is dubious: many of them rely for campaigning on unknown financiers, and regulations to control these external cash flows are seldom enforced. Membership fees are mostly insignificant, as is public funding. In recent years some businessmen have even become party chiefs, for example Yusuf Kalla (Golkar) and Sutrisno Bachir (PAN). In most parties crucial decisions are made by some of the core executive members, who are usually loyal to one charismatic leader. Usually, regulations on how to conduct party congresses are unclear and are prone to manipulation (Notosusanto 2005). Almost all parties have their power center in Jakarta and chastise recalcitrant members. One means of doing so is recalling parliamentarians, that is, terminating their mandate and replacing them.

During the presidential elections in 2004 a trend towards personalization (Mujani and Liddle 2007) due to the impact of the mass media was evident. The Partai Demokrat (Democrat Party), for instance, which is almost completely dependent on Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was set up as a vehicle for the first direct presidential elections. Furthermore, the first direct elections of regional heads (governors, district chiefs and mayors), the pilkada, which started in 2005, have weakened local and regional party leaders in comparison to the candidates, because many of the latter did not have a strong party background but were chosen among independent civil servants or businessmen (Mietzner 2008; Rinakit 2005).

The two largest parties today, Golkar and the PDI-P, provide particular evidence of the trend towards 'money politics' and clientelism. The PDI- P, banned as the only real opposition party (then as the PDI) in the last years of the New Order, has lost most of its reform vigour. The Megawati government (2001–04) had a dubious track record because military reforms were delayed and the heavy-handed policy on regions such as Aceh and Papua even intensified. Golkar, in the New Order period the ruling party and an assemblage of so-called functional

groups, is more a clientelist machine than a platform-based 'classical' party (Tomsa 2006). Nonetheless, a fair degree of party and party system institutionalization has been achieved in Indonesia, where the party system is characterized by clearly visible cleavages. Many parties are rooted in social milieus. These linkages provide a comparatively strong infusion of values and foster, in spite of recent counter-tendencies, a fair routinization. There is an evident continuity among party alternatives reaching back to the 1950s. This is in marked contrast to the Philippines and Thailand. In the Philippines, the post-1986 system is not reminiscent of that of the pre-Marcos period and has shifted continuously. In Thailand, the party system has collapsed just recently. Previously, it had evolved from 2001 onwards into a system dominated by one party, the TRT, thus reversing the weak tendency towards a stabilization of interparty competition that was evident in the 1990s. For voters, the fluid configurations in the Philippines and Thailand have generally provided neither policy preference predictability nor clear and stable expectations about the behavior of political actors.

As to the institutionalization of individual parties, most Indonesian parties are socially rooted and better linked to different kinds of civil society and religious organizations. Even in terms of behavioral routinization, their track record is better than that of their counterparts in the other two countries.

Causes of institutionalization

The structure and performance of political parties has to be seen against the background of other structural and institutional factors (Stockton 2001: 117). This will be made clearer with an analysis of the interdependent factors that are of particular importance for the different levels of institutionalization.

One crucial factor is the early political mobilization and the resulting translation of social cleavages into the party system. In the case of Indonesia, political parties and mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama arose long before independence. These highly politicized, mostly anti-colonial, nationalist organizations were socially entrenched and capable of mobilizing large parts of the population. In Thailand, the national elite were able to retain their power unimpeded by colonial rulers so that the ensuing 'bureaucratic polity' would, for a long time, stave off extra-bureaucratic forces such as political parties. In Indonesia the early institutionalization of societal cleavages after independence enabled the crystallization of a party system with relatively stable patterns of competition.

Another factor is the strength of local elites. This is still fractured and relatively weak in Indonesia. Reasons for this, besides the above-mentioned early mobilization and translation of cleavages into the party system, are the heritage of New Order centralism and, particularly, the lack of a strong locally based bourgeoisie. Institutionalization is hampered in Thailand and the Philippines by the existence of highly influential local and regional elites, whereas in Indonesia strong countervailing civil society forces alleviate local strongmen rule (Sidel 2004). Whilst in the Philippines military, administrative and economic elites have been able to dominate parties since their inception (Hutchcroft and Rocamora 2002), in Indonesia politicians with lower- and middle-class backgrounds are more capable of rising through the ranks of party organizations. In Thailand, strong local elites arose in the 1980s, along with the establishment of a semi-democracy with competitive elections. In contrast to the Philippines, these elites emerged relatively late and in a parliamentary system with a centralized bureaucracy where local executive powers are wielded by civilian bureaucrats. The local elites dominated multi-member constituencies and were thus able to take control of factions, parties, and ministries in Bangkok in fluid coalition governments (Sidel 1999: 150f.). Although Thaksin was able to hold sway over these local elites, party system institutionalization was blocked by a de facto one-party rule.

For Sidel, the emergence of bosses is essentially dependent on a specific sequencing, that is, the imposition of formal electoral democratic institutions upon an underdeveloped state apparatus at an early phase of capitalist development (Sidel 1999: 13). From the beginning, strong local elites have captured political parties as power bases. Elected officials have gained executive control over local state agencies. If we translate Sidel's assumption into the analysis of political parties, we witness in the Philippines and in Thailand the subordination of the national party apparatus to local and regional leaders with disastrous effects on party and party system institutionalization. In contrast, in Indonesia local mafias have so far been quickly subordinated to centralized national (party-)state apparatuses.4

At the national level another important deinstitutionalizing factor is a close relationship between capital and the political class. In Indonesia a marked de-alignment process has arguably been caused by the 'rise of capital,' that is, a growing symbiosis of entrepreneurs and politicians. In the 1950s, Dutch companies controlled most capital-intensive sections of the economy. The ethnic Chinese and indigenous (pribumi) businessmen were too weak to exercise much influence on governments (Feith 1962: 105). They arose as a powerful class in the New Order and are now increasingly able to influence political parties. This domination is still not fully developed, whereas it has been typical in the Philippines from the beginning and in Thailand at least since the 1980s.

Other reasons for the hampering of party institutionalization in the three countries are eroding traditional relationships and the rise of the mass media. According to Manacsa (1999: 202ff.), in the Philippines after 1986 political parties and the party system have changed inter alia because of the weakening of traditional patron–client bonds as well as the rise of powerful TV newscasters and entertainment stars. The family clans still dominate the political landscape, but now they have begun to compete with celebrities and professionals. In Thailand, the TRT was the direct offshoot of Thaksin's media empire. In Indonesia, the spread of mass education and the mass media together with the globalization of Islam have weakened the old religious establishment and elevated new Muslim leaders, many of whom are without a deep religious knowledge.

It is more difficult to assess the impact of formal institutions. With reference to their five case studies (India, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand), Rüland et al. (2005: 271) state that the party system reflected in the legislature 'is primarily an expression of the extent to which societal cleavages are transformed into political parties but also of the electoral system,' whereas in most cases there is no clear causal link between the system of government and party cohesion. Arguably, in Thailand and the Philip- pines the role of local elites is, among other things, more important because of the election system. But even the effects of electoral systems in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines are, I would argue, of limited importance. The multipartyism in Indonesia, for example, is not simply the result of but also at least as much the cause of the proportional system. According to neo-institutionalists, institutions are endogenous; that is, 'their form and their functioning depend on the conditions under which they emerge and endure' (Przeworski 2004: 527). The choice of the proportional representation system after independence and again in 1998–99 was due to the high number of relevant political actors. The introduction of a majority system, in contrast, seems to be more probable if there are just two major players. Besides, the limited influence of presidentialism and parliamentarianism can be deducted cautiously from the somewhat similar deficiencies of political parties and the party systems in Thailand and the Philippines. This is not to fully deny the significance of formal institutional factors. The design of proportional representation in Indonesia, for example, strengthens political parties, in particular their central executives in Jakarta. Indonesian parliamentarians have a much weaker power base than in the Philippines and Thailand, where congressmen and MPs are elected directly with a majority system. The direct election of regional heads in Indonesia since 2005 may, in the long run, change at least the standing of local elites. The thesis that proportional representation tends to buttress the

institutionalization of parties is at least partly vindicated by experiences in Indonesia and in the Philippines (with the party list).

Conclusion

Regarding the dimensions of party and party system institutionalization, almost all Southeast Asian parties are weakly institutionalized, particularly with reference to their behavioral routinization. Indonesia is an exception in that the patterns of competition are relatively regular and a few of the large parties are to a certain extent still rooted in society. So far, patterns of party competition have manifested regularly and the voter–party linkage has been quite strong. Despite pronounced struggles between party factions and clearly visible tendencies towards de-alignment, parties are still established in the public mind as representatives of specific streams (aliran) or milieus. In contrast, a stable party system does not exist in the Philippines or Thailand. But what does that tell us about the relation between institutionalization and democratic consolidation? Is a reversal to authoritarianism less likely in Indonesia than in the Philippines or Thailand? Cautiously, the question can be answered in the affirmative. The probability that a better-institutionalized party system is positively correlated with a less-fragile democratic regime is

high, and the three test cases support the hypothesis.

For Aspinall (2005), the 2004 polls marked the end of Indonesia's political transition. Tomsa (2006) concludes that the polity at present can safely be labelled an 'electoral democracy.' Webber (2006) sees Indonesia as a 'patrimonial democracy' which has developed many attributes of a consolidated democracy. Although corruption is pervasive, the rule of law weak, and the government's effective capacity to govern limited, he expects a push in a more liberal direction. Indonesia is now arguably, with reference to the Freedom House ratings for political rights and civil liberties, the most democratic country in Southeast Asia. In the Philippines, the political situation is as volatile as ever. People Power Two and Three, a spate of political killings, the state of emergency in February 2006, successive impeachment bids against Arroyo, and coup attempts by the military are testimony to the fragile state of its democracy.[5] In Thailand, the most recent Freedom House ratings for political rights declined from 3 to 7 and those for civil liberties from 3 to 4. The military coup against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the abrogation of the Constitution, the dissolution of parliament and the Constitutional Court, and the ensuing collapse of the party system indicate the striking frailty of the polity.

In the Philippines as well as in Thailand, the weakness of the party system was a major factor in these crises. Thaksin was toppled after he had easily overwhelmed a range of clientelist parties and had begun to destroy core institutions of the electoral democracy. In the Philippines, politics is determined by fights among clans and is, thus, extremely unpredictable. In obvious contrast, major shifts in the structure of the Indonesian party system are far less probable. But, again, this may change in the long run, because some of the patterns buttressing political parties in Indonesia are increasingly being undermined.

Moreover, the stated causal mechanism linking institutionalization and democratic consolidation is weaker than is often assumed. One of the best- rooted parties in Indonesia today has a dubious past and is prone to de- fend the privileges of New Order elites (Golkar); another demonstrates a shallow commitment to the multi-religious compromise enshrined in the constitution (PKS). Could it be that the institutionalization of political parties in specific configurations even obstructs democratic consolidation? Mainwaring (1997) has stated that greater institutionalization is not always better because it may lead to the ossification of party structures. In like manner, Johnson Tan (2006) rightly notes that the rootedness of Indonesian parties at times even heightens social conflicts. And Brownlee (2007: 218f.) has observed that

parties often play a vital role in facilitating the maintenance of electoral authoritarian regimes. Accordingly, political parties in electoral democracies may strengthen the impact of questionable features of the regime, for instance clientelism and 'money politics.' The originally formulated and in the political science corpus often repeated statement regarding the aforementioned causal mechanism has thus to be qualified.

In this vein, Schedler (2001: 161) warns against the confusion of the consolidation of 'partial regimes' with that of democracy as a whole, for 'a democracy may be secure against reversals even if its party system is still inchoate and fluid; and conversely, a democracy may break down even if its party system is highly institutionalized.' Political parties as major actors in the political society are only one component of democratic consolidation. If one looks at the whole political system, a low number of veto actors and, particularly, a military controlled by civil authorities are beneficial. And if other 'partial regimes' are included in the analysis, it is probable that a consolidated rechtsstaat, an advantageous social structure, the absence of political violence and fierce class struggle, and an efficient and uncorrupted state administration all buttress directly or indirectly the democraticness of political parties and the party system.

In addition, the study of underlying structural causes of institutionalization processes reveals that a high degree of party and party system institutionalization is dependent on the effective translation of social cleavages into the party system. This, again, is contingent upon the power of local elites, the impact of huge entrepreneurs on party activities, and formal institutional factors, although the latter should not be overestimated.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Thailand has been categorized as an electoral democracy for most of the timesince 1992 and can be classified as such after the elections in December 2007.
2 See Baswedan (2004); Johnson Tan (2006); King (2003); Sherlock (2005).
3 On the full names of political parties for all three countries see Tables 1–3.
4 Mainwaring and Zoco (2007: 171f.) also see timing and sequence of the formationof democratic regimes and parties as critical explanatory variables.
5 To be sure, the toppling of Abdurrahman Wahid in 2001 by the People's Congressalso indicated major weaknesses of the political system. But since then impeach- ment procedures have been newly defined so that the once-volatile relation be-tween the presidency and the legislature has been stabilized.

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