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Factionalism in Southeast Asia: Types, Causes, and Effects

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Abstract

In this article we present an overview of the arguments contained in the articles of this special issue. We first catalogue the varieties or types of factionalism present across Southeast Asia—namely, programmatic, clientelistic, and personalist/charismatic. We then explore the question of why the degree and type of factionalism varies across countries, across time, and across parties. We first focus on differences between factionalism in governing and opposition parties, arguing that factionalism across dominant and opposition parties differs in terms of the origin, type, and effect. We find that the more competitive the party system the more likely it is that factional patterns between the parties within a given polity will converge. We then review the relative power of socio-structural and institutional explanations of factionalism, and place the greatest weight on the role of patronage, party size, and the degree of party centralization. Finally, we turn our attention to common strategies for curbing factionalism across our cases and conclude by examining the consequences of factionalism.

Keywords

Southeast Asia, political parties, factions, factionalism, elections

Introduction

The articles in this special issue seek to contribute to a rich literature on intra-party factions and factionalism. This is a literature that has largely neglected party systems in

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Southeast Asia, though there is a robust literature on factionalism in East Asia (Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan) (see Bosco, 1994; Cheng and Womack, 1996; Cox and Rosenbluth, 1993; Cox et al., 1999; Cheng and Womack, 1996; Wang, 1996). As the articles in this collection demonstrate, Southeast Asia has much to offer the study of factionalism.

First, this is a region with a wide variety of parties and party systems. We have cases with dominant parties, cases where two parties regularly vie for power, and cases of multi-party free-for-alls. Political parties themselves range from highly cohesive and enduring cadre-based organisations to ephemeral alliances of convenience. This variation provides analytical leverage for evaluating some of the competing claims in the factionalism literature. Second, the Southeast Asia cases, with a few notable exceptions, are largely devoid of political parties that are organised around deep ideological divisions. In particular, the left-right dimension that so defines party politics in Europe and Latin American is largely absent in this Southeast Asian party systems. The articles in this issue explore what this lack of ideological conflict means for the types of factions that emerge, and the consequences of factional conflict. Finally, the region offers variation in regime type – from competitive authoritarian regimes with dominant parties to full democracies. Again, this variation provides an opportunity to explore how regime type, and particularly the presence or absence of a dominant party, shapes the degree and nature of factionalism.

In this conclusion, we draw out some of the themes and lessons from the country-focused studies of factionalism in this volume. In harmony with often controls access to material resources previous studies of factionalism, we define factions as *intra-party sub-units that are more or less organised, with a common identity or purpose, and which act as a distinct bloc to achieve their goals* (Belloni and Beller, 1978; Boucek, 2009; Harmel et al., 1995; Morgenstern, 2001). We catalogue the varieties or types of factionalism present across Southeast Asia. We then explore the question of why the degree and type of factionalism varies across countries, across time, and across parties. We first focus on differences between factionalism in governing and opposition parties, and then review the relative power of socio-structural and institutional explanations. We then turn our attention to common strategies for curbing factionalism across our cases. Finally, we conclude by examining the consequences of factionalism.

Types of Factionalism

One focus of the factionalism literature is describing and explaining variation in the types and patterns of party factions. The articles in this collection show a similar interest. They examine how factors such as social cleavages, ideology, electoral systems, bicameralism, and party organisational arrangements shape the type of factionalism that emerges within a given country. In the introductory article, the editors have rightly emphasised the role of party type in the emergence of factionalism. This makes analytical sense as historical-structural factors, such as the party's early struggles against colonialism and early socio-ethnic cleavages, have an impact on party formation and the

types of factions that emerge. Drawing on these chapters, we have identified three main types of factions in Southeast Asia organised along programmatic, clientelistic, and personalist/charismatic lines (Hanson, 2010: 73).¹

Programmatic factions refer to clearly defined or coherent party sub-units, which are more rational-legal in nature and oriented towards achieving substantive, clearly defined policy goals. These factions are relatively permanent and governed by more or less formal procedural rules. Clientelistic factions, by contrast, are built around patronage ties to various faction leaders within the party, with little interest in programmes or ideology. The factional ties are maintained through particularistic payoffs to loyal subordinates in the form of patronage. These factions tend to be less stable than programmatic factions and are dependent on access to resources for survival.

Finally, personalist factions are also common within Southeast Asian party politics. Personalist factions are typically led by a charismatic leader who often controls access to material resources or political careers. These personalist factions are similar to what Huntington called “projections of individual ambitions” which lack continuing organisation or mass support (2006: 413). In many respects, personalised factions look similar to clientelistic factions, and the two types can be difficult to distinguish empirically (Huntington, 2006). Similar to clientelistic factions, personalist factions can involve extensive intra-party competition for material rewards, patronage, and political offices. What distinguishes personalist factions from clientelistic factions is the importance of personal charisma and authority which is distinct from any material resources the faction may control. These factions, built around key personalities, tend to hold together as long as that leader is at the helm, but, unlike clientelistic factions, they cannot survive once that leader has gone.

Factionalism in Southeast Asia

While this typology of factions is useful, in reality, the cases in Southeast Asia often display mixtures of these types. The distinctions between factions can get especially muddy between clientelistic and personalistic factions. Furthermore, the type and degree of factionalism can also vary overtime.

As Table 1 shows, the larger dominant parties in Southeast Asia, such as Singapore’s PAP and Malaysia’s UMNO, have factions that demonstrate a mix of programmatic, personalistic, and clientelistic features. It is interesting to note the least factionalised systems are also those where there has been a dominant party in power. As Tan argues in the article on Singapore, the PAP was factionalised along programmatic and left-right ideological lines that led to a party split in 1961. However, the left-wing faction was effectively contained through a systematic institutionalist and party cadre approach, which involved the centralisation of candidate selection and the adoption of anti-party switching rules. Now, the hegemonic PAP displays low factionalism while, by contrast, the smaller opposition parties such as the Worker’s Party (WP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Singapore People’s Power (SPP), and National Solidary Party, each led by strong personalities, are vulnerable to factionalisation and party-switching.

Table 1. Types of Factionalism in Southeast Asia.

	Type of factionalism	Degree of factionalism	Electoral system (Lower Chamber)	Party system
Cambodia	Clientelistic	Low (hegemonic party) High (coalition parties) “complex factions”	CLPR	Hegemonic party system versus a dominant opposition coalition
Indonesia	Clientelistic + Programmatic	Medium (dominant party) Low (coalition parties)	OLPR	Dominant party versus mega-coalition of parties
Malaysia	Clientelistic + Programmatic	High (hegemonic party coalition) High (coalition parties)	SMDP	Dominant party system versus an opposition coalition
Myanmar	Programmatic	Low (dominant party) Low (small parties)	SMDP	Dominant party system
Philippines	Clientelistic	High	SMDP	Multi-party system
Singapore	Programmatic + Personalistic	Low (hegemonic party) Medium (small parties)	SMDP +GRC	Dominant party system
Thailand	Clientelistic	High (large and medium parties) Low (small parties)	Mixed-member	Multi-party system
Timor- Leste	Programmatic + Clientelistic	Low (dominant party) Low (medium parties) Factionalism is rare in FRETILIN and CNRT	CLPR	Dominant party system (FRETILIN opposition and CNRT-led government formed coalition in 2015)

Notes: CLPR: closed-list PR; OLPR: open-list PR; SMDP: single-member district plurality; GRC: group representation constituencies; mixed-member: combination of SMDP and CLPR.

Similar to the PAP's Marxist-Leninist organisational structure, the FRETILIN party in Timor-Leste also maintains a tightly centralised party organisation. The Marxist faction seized control of the leadership in 1977, purged nationalists and non-Marxists, and introduced a Leninist vanguard party system. The secretary-general, elected by the Central Committee, exerts strong control over the party and mirrors the PAP's cadre-party approach to centralising authority. However, while party centralisation brought elite unity in the PAP, a faction did emerge in FRETILIN in 2006 which challenged the leadership for being too autocratic. Shoesmith shows how FRETILIN stands apart from the other parties in Timor-Leste. Most Timorese parties have limited organisational capacity and have encouraged personalist politics and intra-party factionalism. As for FRETILIN's chief competitor, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), factionalism is currently low as the party is highly personalised under the charismatic leadership of Xanana Gusmão.

Malaysia also highlights the cyclical nature of programmatic and clientelistic factionalism in its two-level party system. As Ufen argues, factionalism in Malaysia is driven by policy space or the party's ability to initiate and/or select public policies. Most Malaysian parties are part of one of two large coalitions: the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition consisting of UMNO and a number of smaller parties, and the coalition of opposition parties under the Pakatan Rakyat's flag (PR) consisting of PKR, DAP, and PAS (renamed Pakatan Harapan since 2015). While factionalism in the smaller BN parties, MCA, Party Gerakan, and the MIC, are mostly clientelistic, factions in the larger parties can be driven by programmatic concerns. This is particularly true of PAS.

Factionalism in early UMNO may be traced to programmatic differences over whether to make it a multi-ethnic party. In later years, UMNO's factionalism was driven more by clientelism as the businessmen in the party fought over party spoils and party strategy while distributing money to secure plump party posts. More recently, in 2015 Prime Minister Najib Razak's 1MDB scandal led to a split in the party and the emergence of the new Malaysian United Indigenous Party (PPBM). In contrast to the more secular UMNO, the opposition party, PAS, has built its appeal on the central place of Islam. PAS's history is full of programmatic factional conflict. In the 1980s, the rise of the "Young Turks" faction took over PAS leadership in 1982 and rebelled against the ethnic Malay chauvinism of their predecessors. Another example of programmatic factionalism centred around PAS's co-operation with the Chinese-based DAP. A faction of urban, educated reformers within PAS urged the party to tone down its demands for an Islamic state in order to form a coalition with the DAP. However, the more conservative Islamist PAS faction disliked the reforms and voted out all reformers in the party congress of 2015. The conflicts between PAS and DAP over the implementation of the sharia law eventually led to PAS's split from PR and the break-up of the coalition on 16 June 2015.²

Similar to other dominant party systems in the region, the major parties in Myanmar such as the military-backed the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and the National League of Democracy (NLD) have low levels of programmatic factionalism. While the USDP is factionalised between hardliners and softliners, these factions have been contained through regular purges. The NLD, led by Aung San Suu Kyi

(ASSK), has some programmatically based factions (i.e. ethnic and ideological differences), but these have so far been brought in line by ASSK's personal charisma and leadership. However, given the international pressure on ASSK to act on the current Rohingya crisis, it is unclear whether her leadership alone can hold the NLD together in the next election.

The dominant Cambodian People's Party (CPP) also has a low level of factionalism, undergirded by a strong Marxist-Leninist-based cadre organisation. Factions in the CPP have been contained by Hun Sen's strong leadership and access to state resources. Shaped by a socialist legacy, the CPP has consolidated power more effectively than the smaller opposition parties in Cambodia. In contrast, the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP), an alliance of the Sam Rainsy and Human Rights parties, has been highly factionalised since its formation in 2012. Unlike the CPP, the CNRP lacks a coherent ideology and is united only based on its members' anti-CPP positions.

In contrast to the dominant party systems in Singapore, Malaysia, and Cambodia, clientelistic and personalistic factions characterise parties in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. As Fionna and Tomsa's work shows, factionalism in Indonesia is driven by competition for patronage. After the fall of Suharto, an oligarchy of old elites and newly influential figures emerged to capture the new democratic institutions. Within Golkar and the PPP, factional conflicts were often over patronage distribution and leadership contests between rival clientelistic networks. In the run-up to the 2016 local elections, intense factional conflicts nearly derailed Golkar's preparations. On the other hand, the smaller, personalistic parties are divided along leadership and access over resources. As the leadership position in these parties is not up for contest, factional conflicts are often over gaining the party leader's favour and dispensation of patronage and second-tier positions.

In the Philippines, intra-party factionalism is pervasive in the highly personalist and clientelistic Filipino party system. Teehankee argues that the high factionalism in the Philippines is both a cause and an effect of the under-institutionalisation of its parties. In his article, he traces the under-institutionalisation of the Philippine party system to clientelist interactions between Filipino politicians, their American colonial patrons, and local clans. Factionalism has evolved over time from the post-war two-party system to a post-authoritarian multi-party system with candidate-centred coalitions of provincial bosses and political machines that are anchored in clientelistic and parochial inducements rather than on issues, ideologies, and policy platforms.

Similarly, personalistic and clientelist factionalism has plagued Thai parties. The pre-existence of informal cliques encouraged personalistic politics and the formation of parties built around personalities with patronage and vote-canvassing networks. Parties do not reflect substantial social divisions but rather cliques and individuals within the ruling elite class (Hicken, 2006; McCargo, 1997; Ockey, 1994). As Chambers and Waitoolkiat show in their article, factionalism is entrenched by its incentive structure – politicians enjoy increasing returns from belonging to cliques and suffer electorally if they are excluded. Their historical institutionalist approach helps to explain why factional groups based on personality-clientelistic networks are more durable than party ties.

In conclusion, we observe all three types of factionalism in the Southeast Asian cases under study. But what explains why some types of factions are more prominent in some countries or parties than in others? And, more broadly, what explains why factionalism is endemic in some countries/parties and less-pronounced in others? In the next two sections, we explore factors that shape the type and degree of factionalism, starting with differences between governing and opposition parties.

Government and Opposition Parties

To what extent does ruling party status shape intra-party factionalism? To begin with, from the set of countries covered in the issue, it does not appear that factionalism is systematically more common in governing or opposition parties. As the articles in this issue demonstrate, factionalism can be a feature of both ruling parties and those in the opposition. In Thailand, the ruling Thai Rak Thai party, though more cohesive than its predecessors, was none the less marked by several factions, which presented a constant challenge for Prime Minister Thaksin Shinwatra. Likewise, factionalism within the ruling United Malay National Organisation has been a defining feature of the party since its founding, and several times has brought the party to the brink of crisis. Opposition parties throughout the region have also struggled to manage factional conflict. Factionalism within opposition party alliances in Cambodia have hampered the ability of those parties to effectively challenge the ruling CPP.³ In Malaysia, factional divisions have regularly riven the opposition PAS party.

Despite the fact that factionalism is found in parties both in and out of power, the articles in this issue suggest that factionalism within ruling and opposition parties may manifest in different ways – particularly in dominant party regimes where the opposition has not regularly held power and does not anticipate coming to power in the near term. Specifically, factionalism across dominant and opposition parties differs in terms of the origin, type, and effect.

Let's start with dominant parties. While there are exceptions to this pattern, the factions within ruling parties tend to reflect the way dominant parties are built and maintained. In the early days of many ruling parties, factional conflict reflects ideological or programmatic divisions within the party. For example, see Tan's article on the early divisions within the PAP party, Ufen's discussion about conflict between inclusive and exclusive visions for UMNO at its founding, or Peou's article on the origins of factionalism within the ruling CPP. However, as dominant parties solidify their hold on power, other types of factionalism become more prominent. The political monopoly enjoyed by dominant parties attracts office seekers to the party. These bandwagoning political pragmatists tend to value the resources of power above policy considerations, and as more of these office seekers join the party, factional conflicts over the distribution of government positions and patronage can result. In a similar way, moves by ruling parties to co-opt nascent challengers heighten the competition for resources within the party which can result in greater factional conflict. Thus, over time, conflict over patronage supplants programmatic conflict as the main factional fault line within dominant parties.⁴

However, while factional conflict over the distribution of patronage is common in many dominant parties, dominant parties generally have the resources to manage and contain factional conflict. Indeed, one of the main benefits of establishing a ruling party organisation in semi-democratic contexts is to provide a vehicle for the distribution of patronage to competing factions (Gandhi, 2010). Sufficient resources distributed among party elite can, in short, ameliorate the destabilising effects of factionalism. By contrast, a decline in resources, for example as the result of an economic crisis, can fan the flames of factional conflict. For example, the 1997 Asian financial crisis helped spark factional conflict within the ruling parties of both Indonesia and Malaysia.

One should note that in competitive authoritarian regimes dominant party leaders also possess other tools, including coercion, that they can wield to keep party factions in line. Lee Kuan Yew, Mahathir, and Hun Sen each used their control of the party, legal, and security systems to quell intra-party challenges, keep factions quiescent, and, in some cases, expel obstreperous factions from the party altogether.

Factional conflict looks different within opposition parties fighting for representation in dominant party contexts. Opposition party factions often arise as would-be challengers join forces to better compete with the ruling party. These alliances of convenience bring together groups with diverse constituencies, different ideologies, and competing personalities, which form the basis of party factions. Lacking access to the volume of patronage enjoyed by the dominant party, factional conflict revolves around competing programmatic visions for the party, and struggles between personalities for positions within the party. Without the glue of patronage to bind an opposition party together, factionalised opposition parties are generally more fragile than dominant parties.⁵ The articles in this issue detail several examples of factional conflict overwhelming opposition parties.

Perhaps the clearest example from the countries in Southeast Asia is the case of Cambodia (see Peou's article). In recent years, the largest opposition party was the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP). The party was formed in 2012 by the merging of two existing opposition parties – the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) with its namesake at the helm, and the Human Rights Party (HRP) headed by Kem Sokha. The CNRP was conceived as an alliance of groups who wanted to see Hun Sen removed from power. However, beyond electoral co-operation, little was done to create an institutionalised, united political party. The two merging parties had a history of mutual hostility, grounded mainly in conflict between the party leaders, and the merger of the two parties simply reproduced those divisions in the form of two internal party factions.

Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) has also been riven with programmatic factional conflict. In the 1980s, party members were divided over whether to make Malay chauvinism or Islam the party's focus. In more recent years, conflict has emerged between Islamic hardliners who want the party to be a strong and consistent voice for Islamic law, and moderates, who seek to move the party in a more accommodational direction. Malaysia has also been home to numerous attempts by opposition parties to build formal party alliances to better compete with the ruling Barisan Nasional alliance. Not surprisingly, these alliances have consistently foundered on the rocks of factional conflict. For

example, in 2008, the three largest opposition parties, Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), headed by Anwar Ibrahim, the Chinese-based Democratic Action Party (DAP), and PAS formed the Pakatan Rakyat alliance. The alliance proved a stiff challenge to the dominant party in 2008 and 2013, but programmatic differences between alliance partners, particularly between PAS and DAP, ultimately brought about a collapse of the alliance in 2015.

In sum, while factionalism is present in both ruling and non-ruling parties in the cases under study, the more pronounced and permanent the power imbalance between government and opposition parties, the greater the divergence in the pattern of factionalism we see in government compared to opposition parties. The inverse is also true. Competition and coalitions tend to reduce the differences in factional patterns between government and opposition parties. The more competitive the party system the more likely it is that factional patterns between the parties within a given polity will converge. This is particularly true if there is a regular turnover of parties in power, meaning that all major parties enjoy periodic access to the resources of government, while also spending time trying to woo voters as the opposition. Likewise, where coalitions and power sharing are the norms, factional differences across parties appear to be less pronounced.

Causes of Factionalism

There is no consensus in the literature on the causes or sources of factionalism. As the contributors in this special issue have shown, many factors contribute to the rise of factions at the systemic and intra-party levels. At the systemic level, factionalism can result from regime type, the incentive structure of the electoral system, the degree of competitiveness of the party system, the nature of the party organisation, or the social structure (Belloni and Beller, 1978; Cox and Rosenbluth, 1993; Lundell, 2004; Morgenstern, 2001; Owens, 2003; Sieberer, 2006).⁶ Within the party, a party's leadership selection and candidate selection method, and party organisational structure, can also affect the rise of factions (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Rahat and Hazan, 2001).

In their introductory article, Chambers and Ufen identify institutional, political economy, and historical legacies as key causal factors explaining factionalism in the region. Indeed, the articles in this special issue demonstrate how a country's factional pattern is a product of historical paths and processes, such as the history of independence struggles and the legacies of colonial control. The history of each case is of course unique, but, taken as a whole, this collection of articles provides an opportunity to evaluate some of the prominent explanations of factionalism that appear in the existing literature. A number of studies have examined the causes of party factionalism – either within a single case or across a number of cases.⁷ We can break potential causal factors into two broad categories: socio-structural and institutional.

Socio-Structural Explanations

One line of argument traces party factionalism to societal cleavages. The greater the number of groups in society, and more specifically the greater the diversity of groups that

are represented within a given party, the more likely parties are to be factionalised.⁸ A related argument links the depth of social divides or the degree of polarisation between groups to the level of factionalism. Southeast Asia offers some evidence in support of this argument. Societal divisions over the role of Islam in politics and society split members of PAS in Malaysia and, to a lesser extent, PAN in Indonesia. Similarly, social divisions fed the factionalism that plagued the early PAP party in Singapore. However, apart from these exceptions, the country cases point to other factors as more important drivers of factionalism.

One of those explanations is patronage and clientelism. The articles on Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand, each trace the prevalence of factionalism to the struggle over patronage resources as factions and each try and tilt the distribution of resources in their favour. Relatedly, systems where clientelism and personalism dominate electoral politics seem to be more prone to factionalism. The logic of this argument is straightforward. Where the personal characteristics of candidates (be they money, family ties, or personal fame) or clientelistic ties between candidates and voters are the norms of electoral politics, politicians are more likely to develop support bases that are outside of their political party, and this, in turn, drives lower levels of party cohesion. However, some caution is warranted. From the case studies, it is difficult to determine the direction of causation. Does competition over patronage cause party factionalism, or are battles over patronage simply manifestations of intra-party divisions? Both possibilities appear plausible.

Institutions

Much of the literature on party factions considers the role of institutions. In this section, we describe several of these institutional-focused explanations and review the extent to which they are consistent with the case descriptions in this issue.

First, there are a set of institutional explanations which we ignore either because they do not apply to countries in the region or because we lack sufficient variation to be able to draw any inferences. For example, some scholars have pointed to party electoral rules that govern internal candidate selection or rules governing public financing of election campaigning as potential factors (Köllner and Basedau, 2005). However, few parties in Southeast Asia hold elections to select candidates, with no variation in electoral system type. (We discuss the effect of internal party elections as distinct from the type of election below.) Likewise, public financing for parties and campaigning remains minimal or non-existent across the region. Another potential variable identified in the existing literature is federalism, but with only one federal state – Malaysia – there is not enough variation to warrant any conclusions.

Of the remaining possible institutional variables, two appear to carry the most causal weight across the Southeast Asian cases discussed in this issue: party size and the degree of party centralisation.

While the authors in this issue do describe cases of factionalism within small parties, in general, the number of factions is positively related to party size. Larger parties

contain more diversity than smaller parties, *ceteris paribus*. Large parties are essentially alliances between groups of actors who agree to co-operate under a single party banner to achieve shared goals related to office and policy-seeking. But while these allied groups may have some interests in common, they will also diverge in important ways – making large parties more prone to factionalism than smaller parties.⁹ Thailand is a case in point. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a common strategy was for parties to attempt to capture a legislative plurality via factional acquisition – inducing factions from other parties to jump ship. The larger the party, the larger the number of factions and the more pronounced the factional conflict within the party. In fact, factional conflict was a major cause of government instability over the period.

In addition to party size, the other institutional explanation that appears to carry a lot of weight across these cases is the degree of party centralisation. By party centralisation we mean the extent to which authority is centralised in the hands of a few top party leaders. Two types of centralisation are particularly relevant: control of nominations and control of resources. Where central party leaders exercise strict control over access to the party label and position on the party ticket factionalism is minimal. There are two reasons for this. First, party leaders are able to use their control of the party ticket to exclude groups that might undermine party cohesion. Second, leaders' control over nominations induces party members to toe the party line. Similarly, when party leaders control resources for campaigning and access to government resources factionalism is less pronounced. On the other hand, factionalism is more likely where central party leaders cannot fully control access to the ballot, where politicians can access resources without going through party leaders, and where candidates rely on their own personal resources for campaigning.

As we look across the region, factionalism is low where party leaders exercise the strongest control over access to resources and the party label. Shoesmith notes that the low level of factionalism in FRETILIN is a direct result of Timor-Leste's use of closed-list proportional representation. Closed-list PR has allowed party leaders to exclude potential factions from the party ticket altogether. Likewise, in Singapore and Cambodia, control of party nominations has been a tool that party leaders have regularly used to combat factionalism.

By contrast, the internal primary process in Malaysia's UMNO has been a breeding ground for party factionalism for decades. The intra-party competition such primaries produce encouraged the creation of party factions to fight for leadership posts and resources for faction members. Intra-party competition has also contributed to growing factional conflict within Indonesia, where the shift to open-list PR undermined party cohesion and led to a shift towards candidate-centred campaigning. In the Philippines, the high degree of factionalism reflects the fact that elections are extremely candidate-centred and party leaders have at times lacked strong control over their party label.

Thus, there appears to be ample support for the party centralisation argument. However, we might worry about the possibility that the institutions themselves are endogenous to party factionalism. That is, it is not weak/decentralised institutions that produce factionalism, but rather deeply factionalised parties that choose weak/

decentralised institutions. The cases of within-party change are particularly useful for untangling the nature of this relationship. In Singapore, for example, one of Lee Kuan Yew's most potent weapons in his battle against factions in the early PAP was control over nominations. The adoption of a cadre party model and the strict control over who become party nominees were specifically chosen to combat rampant factionalism and allowed party leaders to engineer a high degree of party cohesion. In Thailand, the relative weakness of party leaders and the prevalence of candidate-centred campaigning contributed to endemic factionalism throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, as Chambers and Waitoolkiat discuss, institutional reforms in 1997, specifically the addition of a national party list and restrictions on party switching, gave more power to party leaders. In addition, once in power, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra centralised the control of government resources within the ruling party, and specifically within the office of the Prime Minister. The result of these reforms was a reduction in the severity of factional conflict (though not necessarily in the number of factions).

Finally, we find only mixed support for two other institutional arguments. First, presidentialism is often linked to weaker parties and greater levels of factionalism. While this is consistent with what we observe in the Philippines, other presidential countries in the region have lower levels of factionalism (Timor-Leste and to some degree Indonesia), while the factionalism in some parliamentary regimes (Thailand) rivals the Philippines. Second, scholars have argued that restrictions on party switching could affect factionalism, though there is disagreement over the nature of the effect. One version of the argument holds that restrictions on party switching or on the formation of new parties increase factionalism by forcing groups with divergent interests to remain in the party. On the other hand, restrictions on party switching may induce politicians to invest more in building the party while providing more power to party leaders. The evidence from the Southeast Asia cases does little to settle this disagreement. Fiona and Tomsa argue that hurdles to forming new parties in Indonesia have deepened factionalism within at least some of Indonesia's parties, while Chambers and Waitoolkiat find that restrictions on party switching have helped ameliorate factionalism in Thailand.

Strategies to Contain Factionalism

In the Institutions section, we saw that party leaders have pursued a variety of different strategies to reduce or contain factionalism. We explore some of these strategies in more detail in this section. These strategies can take many forms and include appeals to ideology, placing more power in the hands of central party leaders, and relying on resources to secure loyalty.

Ideological approaches to containing factional conflict were more common in early period of party politics in the region. Shared ideologies bound parties together and kept factionalism minimal in the cases of FRETILIN in Timor-Leste, the NLD in Myanmar, and the CPP in Cambodia.¹⁰ However, ideological strategies tend to fade over time and are less evident in contemporary parties in Southeast Asia.

Current parties in Southeast Asia are more likely to rely on leadership and institutionalist strategies to contain factionalism. For example, as discussed above, Singapore's PAP adopted a cadre party approach by centralising authority over candidate selection and the distribution of office appointments to ensure elite cohesion. Leaders in Malaysia and Cambodia have displayed no qualms in expelling their rivals from the party in a humiliating fashion or using (abusing) the rule of law to prosecute and sack challengers from within their parties.

As the scholarship on parties and party system institutionalisation has shown, parties in Southeast Asia are "fiefdoms of the party leaders and their close associates and party switching is often symptomatic of this pervasive personalism" (Carothers, 2006: 46). To combat this, most countries, excluding Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, have adopted antiparty switching or defection laws (laws against crossing the floor) in national constitutions to reduce factionalism (Harmel et al., 1995). In Singapore, Article 46 states that "the seat of a Member of Parliament shall become vacant – if he ceases to be a member of, or is expelled from or resigns from, the political party for which he stood in the election." This clause was strategically included by Lee Kuan Yew to counter rampant party switching in the pre-independence days. In Timor-Leste, a similar loyalty clause was enshrined in Article 16 in the Constitution following its decolonisation from Indonesia.¹¹ Ironically, the effort to prevent factionalism in Timor-Leste have been criticised as undemocratic.¹² While anti-defection laws promote party unity and encourage investment in parties by candidates, Fionna and Tomsa argue that restrictions on party switching could also exacerbate factional conflicts in Indonesia.¹³

Other institutionalist approaches to managing factional conflict include introducing national or internal party regulations regarding party financing or installing electoral thresholds. Electoral thresholds refer to the minimum share of the vote which a candidate or political party needs to achieve before they become entitled to any representation in the legislature. In post-Suharto Indonesia, a low electoral threshold led to a proliferation of small parties. Factional disputes within those parties often led to party switching. In 2014, lawmakers amended laws to increase the threshold and require parties to invest in considerable organisational infrastructure. Each party has to have chapters in 100 per cent of all provinces, 75 per cent of districts/municipalities in the province, and 50 per cent of sub-districts in the districts/municipalities. This has made it costly for factions to jump ship and form their own party. Other electoral engineering efforts include eliminating the block vote rule, adding party lists, and regulations regarding party financing in Thailand (Hicken, 2006, 2013). Overtime, these reforms had the effect of discouraging disaffected factions from leaving parties and in lowering the effective number of parties.

However, not all attempts in stabilising party systems through institutional means have been successful. In the Philippines, the Political Development Party Act (PPDA) has been proposed five times in Filipino Congress since 2002. This bill seeks to institutionalise parties by addressing reform issues such as campaign finance reform, state subsidies to political parties, a ban on party switching, and strengthening citizen-party linkages. Each attempt to pass PPDA has met with failure – blocked by politicians with

vested interests in the existing system of personalistic and clientelistic factional politics.

In addition to institutionalist approaches, leaders in Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia have also turned to incentives or a resource-based approaches to buy loyalty and maintain elite cohesion. For example, Thaksin Shinawatra's TRT Party revolutionised national politics by appealing to poor rural voters while also building a personal network of loyal cronies that dominated electoral politics in 2001 and 2005 (Chachavalpongpun, 2011; McCargo, 1997; Phatharathananunth, 2008). Hicken has argued that institutional reforms aided Thaksin's rise to power and altered Thailand's political-institutional landscape in fundamental ways. The reforms provided new opportunities and incentives for Thaksin to create a national party and new tools with which he could manage factional divisions within the ruling Thai Rak Thai party (Hicken, 2006, 2013). Similarly, in the Philippines, Teehankee has shown how party leaders have turned to resources to maintain loyalty and prevent defection.

Finally, parties have also turned to formal and informal intra-party conflict resolution mechanisms to reduce factional conflicts (e.g. the PPBM in Malaysia). These conflict resolution mechanisms are more effective and sustainable when resources are available. However, economic downturn or the loss of political power can revive factional conflicts and power struggles.

Conclusion: The Effects of Factionalism

The current literature is divided on the effects of factionalism (Belloni and Beller, 1978; Boucek, 2009; Harmel et al., 1995).¹⁴ For example, Boucek has identified factionalism as either co-operative, competitive, or degenerative (2009). While factions can serve integrative functions within parties (Köllner, 2004), most scholars view factionalism as detrimental to the integrity and cohesiveness of parties. Unlike factionalism in Japan's LDP, which fosters party cohesion, factionalism in Southeast Asia is generally viewed as an undesirable, anti-party feature that encourages corruption, vote-buying, and graft. Traditionally, factionalism is also viewed as pathological as it obstructs truly representative government, and reduces the ability of people to affect policy through electoral politics.¹⁵ Extreme factionalism undermines party labels and may make it difficult for voters to distinguish between competing parties. Factionalism can also breed cynicism on the part of voters and damage the moral authority and legitimacy of parties and whole party systems.

Party factionalism can also pose a problem for governance. Entrenched party factions serve as *de facto* veto players, increasing the costs of policymaking. In coalition-based party systems such as in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, factionalism can also lead to fragility and party splits. This was evident most recently in Golkar's decision to leave the Prabowo-led opposition coalition and join the government coalition after the election of new party chairman Setya Novanto. In Thailand, factional conflicts contributed to the downfall of a number of governments in the 1980s and 1990s. In the Philippines, personalist factions led to two-party splits in the Nacionalista Party in 1922 and 1933, three

splits in the Liberal Party in 1948, 1984, and 2005, and two splits in 1988 and 2013 in the PDP-Laban. The lack of political consistency and unbridled party switching in the Philippines has reinforced the notion among voters that parties were neither robust or meaningfully differentiated (Montinola, 1999: 136).

Ultimately, a number of authors in this collection argue that party factionalism is associated with poorly functioning democracies and may undermine support for democracy altogether. For example, the lack of effective strategies to contain personalist factions in the Philippines and Myanmar have fostered autocratic tendencies in leaders such as Rodrigo Duterte and Aung San Suu Kyi. Yet it is also important to note that attempts to combat factions have also been associated with turns towards less democratic politics in some cases. In Singapore, the elimination of left-wing faction in the PAP contributed to its five decades of uninterrupted rule. Similarly, in Cambodia, the low degree of factionalism in the CCP and consolidation of Hun Sen's power went hand in hand with the banning of the opposition CNRP party in the upcoming election. In short, while factional conflict is a challenge for democratic/semi-democratic politics, care must be taken to be sure that the cure is not worse than the disease.

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Notes

1. Here we are following Kitschelt's typology of party organisations (1995).
2. The reformers formed the AMANAH party and joined a coalition with other opposition parties.
3. This is not to suggest that factionalism is the primary obstacle preventing opposition parties from unseating the ruling CPP.
4. Sometimes patronage conflicts also take on a personal element, as in the conflict between the Mahathir and Anwar factions within UMNO.
5. In some cases, dominant parties may also actively work to promote factionalism within the opposition as part of a divide and conquer strategy.
6. Cox and Rosenbluth find that the rise of "institutionalised factions" is a result of the competitive structure among them, rules for selecting party leaders and candidate selection and SNTV electoral systems (1993).
7. See (Köllner and Basedau, 2005; Tesi, 2011) for a review.
8. Note that the effect of social heterogeneity on factionalism will depend on the institutional context – for example, the restrictiveness of the electoral system and incentives to form large, national parties.

9. By extension, then, institutions that incentivise the formation of larger parties (e.g. low restrictive electoral systems and centralised control of national resources) should also be associated with greater factionalism.
10. This is in line with the finding in the broader literature that party ideology and organisational models play a role in shaping how politicians and parties behave (Huntington and Moore, 1970; Panebianco, 1988).
11. The constitution for Timor-Leste's Article 16 states that "A Member of Parliament elected to the National Parliament on a list presented by a political party or a coalition of parties and who, after his or her election, transfers himself or herself to another party or is dismissed by his or her party in accordance with the internal procedures of the latter, shall forfeit their seat." <http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/102084773>
12. The tenuous coalition between FRETILIN and the CNRT in Timor-Leste recently collapsed in August 2017 as CNRT leader, Gusmão resigned as party chair and pulled out of the alliance (Kingsbury, 2017).
13. Article 16.3 of Law 2/2011 in the Indonesian Constitution states: "In the event that the member of the political party dismissed is a member of the people's house of representatives, dismissal from the political party membership shall be followed by dismissal from the membership in the people's house of representatives in accordance to the prevailing laws." http://www.flevin.com/id/Igso/translations/JICA%20Mirror/english/4778_UU_12_2011_e.html
14. Boucek's work has reviewed how factionalism and intra-party politics can have an impact on income distribution; party coalition strategies under minority government; legislative politics and government formation; party government and committee action in the US Congress; and legislative gridlock and party policy shifts; and government reshuffles (2009).
15. Key has said that factional politics are "issueless politics[...] ill-designed to meet the necessities of self-government" (Benedict, 2006: 69; Key and Heard, 1984).

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