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Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia

Dan Slater

“The individual bureaucrat...is only a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march. The official is entrusted with specialized tasks and normally the mechanism cannot be put in motion or arrested by him, but only from the very top.”

Max Weber¹

“Contrary to the usual belief that I am a dictator, I actually work as a team.”

Mahathir Mohamad²

Democratic institutions have long enjoyed pride of place in comparative politics. By comparison, authoritarian institutions remain inadequately conceptualized, theorized, and investigated. To help narrow this gap, this article assesses the conceptual and theoretical implications of a puzzling phenomenon: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's growing personalization of power since the mid 1980s.

This phenomenon is particularly puzzling because Malaysia has long represented one of the most institutionalized party-states in the developing world, and personalization is typically seen as antithetical to institutionalization.³ While this conventional wisdom makes a great deal of sense in democracies, it is misleading in polities that exhibit significant authoritarian characteristics such as Malaysia.⁴ This distinction has important implications in understanding how and why authoritarian regimes change, remain stable, or collapse.

Since democratic and authoritarian institutions serve very different purposes, institutionalization has very different implications in democratic and authoritarian contexts. Democratic institutions fundamentally serve to provide stable patterns of popular representation. One way they accomplish this purpose is by constraining the chief executive's "despotic power," which in the terminology of Michael Mann is "the range of actions" that an individual leader "is empowered to take without routine, institutionalized negotiations" with other regime members.⁵ In democracies, therefore, personalization is antithetical to institutionalization by definition.

Democracies can either be institutionalized, if rules constrain the ruler, or personalized, if rulers ignore the rules.

Highly institutionalized authoritarian regimes also typically exhibit regularized succession mechanisms and collective decision-making procedures that curtail a ruler's personal power. But they are neither the sole nor the primary purposes of authoritarian institutions. Whereas democratic institutions serve to provide predictable patterns of representation, authoritarian institutions primarily serve to provide a stable basis for domination.⁶ The *raison d'être* of authoritarian institutions is not to constrain "despotic power," but to supply a regime with the "infrastructural power" necessary to implement its command over potential opposition in civil society and within the multiple layers of the state apparatus itself.⁷ While democratic institutions serve to keep the executive in check, authoritarian institutions serve to keep political opposition under wraps.

Personalization and institutionalization are thus not as antithetical in authoritarian regimes as in democracies. Despotic power (the power to decide) can become highly personalized, even as infrastructural power (the power to implement) remains highly institutionalized. Institutions to curtail the chief executive may falter while institutions to curtail political opposition remain formidable.

This reconceptualization of authoritarian institutions helps address a central theoretical puzzle. How can an aspiring autocrat personalize power in the face of powerful preexisting institutions?⁸ In other words, why would a bureaucratic "iron cage" fail to keep an autocratic "iron fist" in check? If political institutions are conceived as procedural checks on the executive, personalization can occur only when a regime's institutions are weak. But once authoritarian institutions are geared primarily toward extending a regime's infrastructural power, personalization might take place when a regime's key institutions are strong. Aspiring autocrats can not do their own dirty work; they need infrastructural power, embodied in regime organizations, to execute their commands. Therefore, in authoritarian regimes, high levels of infrastructural power facilitate the effective concentration of despotic power. Institutionalization along one dimension ironically abets deinstitutionalization along another.

Recent events in Malaysia provide strong evidence in support of this proposition. Because of its high antecedent level of institutionalization, Malaysia provides an ideal case to challenge the assumption that personalization signifies the underdevelopment of political institutions.⁹ Mahathir Mohamad has confounded this conventional wisdom by establishing highly personalized control over decision-making procedures in the Malaysian party-state. More specifically, Mahathir has used three mechanisms of personalization—packing, rigging, and circumventing—to transform what was long described as a semidemocratic single party regime into something more closely resembling personalized authoritarian rule.

Mahathir has personalized power as much by deploying Malaysia's authoritarian

institutions as by destroying its democratic ones, however. To the extent that institutions such as parliament, the judiciary, the cabinet, the bureaucracy, the sultans, the media, the police, and the ruling party (the United Malays National Organization, or UMNO) have historically served as democratic institutions—as procedural checks on despotic executive power—they have clearly been weakened.¹⁰ But to the extent that these institutions historically served as authoritarian institutions—as the party-state’s organizational basis for political control over potential opposition, including dissent from within the party-state itself—they have served as much as Mahathir’s accomplices as his victims.

Moreover, Malaysia’s political institutions have long acted, at least in part, as vehicles for top-down control. Even before Mahathir transformed Malaysia into a system of “pseudo-democracy” or “competitive authoritarianism” in the late 1990s, Malaysia was never considered fully democratic.¹¹ Rather, it was characterized by knowledgeable observers as a “quasi-democracy,” a “semidemocracy,” a “repressive-responsive regime,” or a system of “soft authoritarianism.”¹² The Malaysian party-state’s key institutions have therefore played a complex and dynamic combination of democratic and authoritarian roles for nearly five decades.

Thus, when Mahathir faced rising opposition to his increasingly personalized and authoritarian rule in 1998–99, he did not face the challenge in an institutional vacuum. Rather, he confronted it with the full assistance of a well-developed apparatus of party-state organizations that has exhibited a long institutional history of nipping opposition in the bud.¹³ Most important, Mahathir inherited a British colonial legacy of expansive emergency-style powers (most notoriously, the draconian Internal Security Act), as well as highly developed coercive organizations under tight hierarchical control, especially the federal police.¹⁴ If Mahathir chooses to crush rather than accommodate his personal rivals, he can count on formidable authoritarian institutions to carry out his orders. Only a brave or self-destructive few are willing to risk a confrontation with Mahathir’s infrastructural power by challenging his despotic power.

The resilience of Mahathir’s regime during the crisis of 1998–99 represented not simply a triumph of individual will, but also an impressive display of well-developed authoritarian institutions in synchronous motion. When Mahathir says “I actually work as a team,” he may be semantically incoherent, but he is substantively correct. As opposition to his leadership increased, Mahathir deployed an armada of institutions—the police, media, judiciary, bureaucracy, and party—to destroy his chief rival and quell rising demands for political *reformasi*.

The loyalty and compliance of these institutions were not evidently based on widespread affection for the prime minister. Rather, they appeared to be based primarily on the logic of obedience in a tightly defined institutional hierarchy, in which top officials hold the effective capacity to recognize cooperation and defection and to reward and punish them accordingly. Although a majority of government officials

evinced dissatisfaction with Mahathir's strong-fisted approach, they did not disobey his orders, as often happens when political institutions lack strongly established channels of hierarchical control.¹⁵ Faced with dire consequences for noncompliance, the cogs in the party-state continued obediently to work in their place.

In sum, Mahathir has used the mechanisms of packing, rigging, and circumventing to accumulate despotic power without significantly undermining his regime's infrastructural power. Institutions no longer fetter the executive, but they continue to choke off political opposition. To say that Mahathir's regime is either personalized or institutionalized but not both is to get only half the story right. In a regime with significant recourse to authoritarian controls, the relationship between despotic power and infrastructural power is positive-sum rather than zero-sum. Autocrats can monopolize despotic power without squandering infrastructural power, as in Malaysia from 1987 to 1997. Mahathir's growing personalization of power during the recent political crisis was predicated on the strong backing he received from Malaysia's highly institutionalized political organizations. This institutional framework is valuable for comparative research on authoritarian institutions and democratic transitions. High levels of infrastructural power not only foster a regime's personalization, but also appear to increase its resilience in the face of pressures for democratization. When underlying political organizations remain capable and coherent, authoritarian regimes can become more personalized without becoming more brittle, contrary to theoretical expectations that personalization makes authoritarian regimes more vulnerable to collapse.¹⁶

Institutions in an Authoritarian Setting

Unlike democracies, authoritarian regimes can be highly personalized and highly institutionalized at the same time. A democracy that fails to curtail despotic decision-making power can not be called institutionalized in any meaningful way, but an authoritarian regime that lacks institutions for curtailing the executive might still exhibit powerful institutions for curtailing dissent. Before the positive-sum relationship between personalization and institutionalization in authoritarian settings can be recognized or the causal impact of authoritarian institutions on democratic transitions determined, the critical distinction between these two very different types of institutions must be appreciated.

Studies of political institutionalization typically encompass both despotic and infrastructural power, yet they fail to note that two distinct dimensions are being measured. For instance, Barbara Geddes defines an authoritarian regime as being institutionalized under a ruling party, rather than personalized, if "the party has some influence over policy, controls most access to political power and government jobs,

and has functioning local-level organizations.”¹⁷ Autocratic personal rule is replaced by oligarchic party rule when the ruling party manages to impose constraints on the leader’s despotic power and to extend its organizational tentacles to the grass-roots level.

Combining two distinct historical processes under a single concept, however, leaves little conceptual guidance in assessing regimes that have undergone one without the other. Even if it can be safely assumed that such political procedures and organizations have historically become institutionalized in tandem, it should not necessarily be assumed that they become deinstitutionalized in tandem as well. For example, in a regime such as the institutionalized single party regime Geddes describes, an aspiring autocrat might gradually usurp the ruling party’s influence in making authoritative policy and personnel decisions. Could it be safely assumed that the party’s “functioning local-level organizations” would cease to function effectively as a result? Evidence from Malaysia will show that Mahathir Mohamad has appropriated effective decision-making power from a ruling party that continues to bestride the Malaysian polity like an organizational colossus. Yet there is no adequate conceptual framework even to describe regimes that become highly personalized along one dimension while remaining highly institutionalized along another.

Selection bias appears to be the main culprit. Most studies of institutionalization focus on cases where either weak political organizations are correlated with personalized decision making, or strong political organizations coincide with routinized decision-making procedures. Studies of personal rule have derived mostly from sub-Saharan Africa, where states have indeed tended to lack infrastructural power.¹⁸

The African Autocrat faces limitations on his rule, but they are the limitations of resources and organizational capability—not of discretionary power. His power is limited by the relative “under-development” of the ruling apparatus available to him, by limited finances, personnel, equipment, technology, and materiel, as well as by the limited skills and abilities of his officials. But his discretionary power to direct this apparatus is—in principle—unlimited.¹⁹

Why must an autocrat with such unlimited despotic power be saddled with such limited infrastructural power? Why must states with highly developed political organizations not be governed autocratically? The failure to distinguish between despotic and infrastructural power obscures how personalization and institutionalization might go hand in hand in authoritarian regimes.

How should political scientists cope with this conceptual complexity? One solution is to drop capable political organizations from the definition of institutionalization altogether and limit attention to the regularization of decision-making procedures. Geddes ultimately chooses this parsimonious option, discarding her earlier approach and defining institutionalization strictly by how regimes make decisions, not by how they implement them.²⁰

The problem with this approach is that the organized execution of leadership decisions is simply too important to ignore, especially in an authoritarian setting. Among America's key political institutions, a litany of procedures is designed to curtail executive despotism: presidential term limits, advice and consent, judicial review, and federalism. But in authoritarian regimes (or unconsolidated democracies, for that matter), the most durable and consequential institutions are typically organizations. In Turkish, Indonesian, and Pakistani politics, for example, military forces, even when they are not playing a leading, day-to-day decision-making role, are more important than the regimes' official decision-making procedures.

It is therefore necessary to incorporate both despotic and infrastructural power into the institutional typology of authoritarian regimes. The most common institutional typology—military, single party, and personal—can capture how despotic power is organized, since militaries, ruling parties, and individual leaders can all ostensibly make authoritative decisions.²¹ But it can not capture how infrastructural power is organized, because personal rule says nothing about which organizations carry out the leadership's orders. To encapsulate the key institutions of any authoritarian regime, it is necessary not only to inquire about who decides, but also about who executes. This approach generates a new, four-part typology (see Table 1).²² This new typology most obviously differs from other frameworks in excluding personal rule as a distinct regime type, while including personalization as a procedural attribute of varying force in both party-backed and military-backed regimes. In a modern authoritarian regime, even a leader who enjoys significant charismatic or traditional legitimacy must ultimately depend on his regime's organizational apparatus to distribute selective rewards to loyalists and impose selective punishments on rivals.

To establish the analytic value of this new typology, however, it is critical to show that these two types of institutions diverge not only conceptually, but also empirically. If high levels of infrastructural power always coincide with strong constraints on

Table 1 Institutional Typology of Authoritarian Regimes

	<u>Despotic Power</u> (Who Decides?)		
	<u>Party</u>	<u>Oligarchic Machine</u>	<u>Autocratic Bossism</u>
<u>Infrastructural Power</u> (Who Executes?)	<u>Military</u>	Junta	Strongman

Machine: Malaysia (1957-98), Singapore, Vietnam, China (1976-present)

Bossism: Malaysia (1998-present), China (Mao), Kenya (Moi), Zimbabwe (Mugabe)

Junta: Burma, Thailand (pre-1988), South Korea (pre-1987), Brazil (pre-1985)

Strongman: Indonesia (Suharto), Philippines (Marcos), Pakistan (Musharraf), Nigeria (Abacha)

despotic power, there is no reason to replace the existing tripartite institutional typology with the four-part version in Table 1. It will only have sacrificed parsimony with no compensating increase in analytic power. In contemporary Malaysia powerful regime organizations have not prevented the prime minister from monopolizing the effective power to make authoritative decisions. To the contrary, the existence of such highly institutionalized organizations has given Mahathir Mohamad the institutional muscle he needs to keep political opposition in check.

Mechanisms of Personalization

How might an authoritarian ruler usurp effective decision-making power from an institutionalized collectivity that put him in power?²³ Conventional theory holds that personalization tends to occur in the early stages of a regime, before solid institutions take root.²⁴ It can grasp Lenin and Mao, who built loyal political organizations from scratch through personal charisma, but not Stalin and Ceaușescu (or in a less totalitarian vein Mahathir, Moi, and Mubarak), who turned inherited organizations to their own purposes.

Malaysia thus presents a serious theoretical puzzle, because it is a clear instance of postinstitutional personalization. Its party system and state apparatus had been highly institutionalized for decades—both in the sense of oligarchic decision-making procedures and coherent, capable organizations—before Mahathir became prime minister in 1981. Michael Leigh neatly sums up the antecedent potency of Malaysia's ruling institutions and their subsequent domination by Mahathir.

Probably the most enduring consequence of the Mahathir era has been a deliberate and decisive weakening of Malaysia's institutions, including the judiciary, the royalty, the independent civil service, the parliament, the electoral system and now UMNO, the core party of power....The institutions of governance are much weaker, and rulership has been personalized in a way that is without precedence in Malaysia. Much of the past strength of Malaysia, by contrast with its neighbours, was in the endurance of institutions that comfortably accommodated changes of leaders over time.²⁵

Leigh is not the only Malaysia-based scholar to conclude that Mahathir's iron fist has overpowered Malaysia's preexisting iron cage of political institutions. Ho Khai Leong argues that "the present office of the Prime Minister is a matrix of autocracy. The constitutional processes and institutions that act as checks to prevent the Prime Minister from gaining dictatorial control over the nation are incapable of functioning effectively." More specifically, "under the Mahathir administration, the Cabinet is no longer used as a forum, but rather as a rubber-stamp institution that gives legitimacy to government policies."²⁶ Khoo Boo Teik has similarly noted that there has been a centralization, "in some cases even a personalisation, of power...at the expense of

the independence of key institutions.” Chandra Muzaffar concurs that the “most disastrous” aspect of Mahathir’s twenty years of rule has been “the emasculation of independent institutions like the judiciary, the police, parliament, universities and the media.” He adds: “That’s been the great tragedy of his rule—the overwhelming dominance of one man.”²⁷

However, these scholars are simply arguing that despotic power has gone from highly constrained to highly concentrated. Autocracy has displaced oligarchy. They are not arguing that the leadership is losing institutional control over active and potential opposition. It is therefore partially misleading to say, as these observers do, that institutions such as UMNO, the judiciary, and the media have been weakened or emasculated. As democratic constraints on executive power, these institutions are indeed shadows of their former selves. But as authoritarian mechanisms for rewarding loyalty and punishing opposition to the regime, they remain robust.

Mahathir has indeed managed to debase Malaysia’s preexisting procedures for executive constraint, but not, as theory would predict, because they were especially weak to begin with. He has managed to personalize power because his institutionalized command over the party-state apparatus has permitted him to overpower or intimidate any individuals and institutions that stood in his way. One can not fully understand the newfound weakness of Malaysia’s institutions at fulfilling the core democratic function of curtailing the executive without first comprehending their long-standing and continuing potency at fulfilling their core authoritarian function of curtailing political opposition. How can aspiring autocrats personalize decision-making power in the face of preexisting procedural constraints? They have three mechanisms at their disposal: packing, rigging, and circumventing.

Packing Packing is the appointment of personal loyalists to top party and government posts while purging rivals, thereby converting institutional constraints into institutional weapons. Authoritarian institutionalization implies not only high levels of command and control within regime organizations, but also the extension and elaboration of these organizations to impose political control over society. Where such apparatuses of control predate a ruler’s rise to power, an aspiring autocrat’s prime objective is to commandeer them for his own purposes. This goal is most effectively accomplished through the packing of these organizations with the ruler’s loyalists.

With a wide array of procedural prerogatives to make personnel appointments, Mahathir has gradually managed to gain personal domination over his regime’s most potent organizations. He began to undertake this packing strategy most forcefully in 1987. As the result of a split within UMNO, Tengku Razaleigh nearly won control over Mahathir’s positions as the party’s president and the nation’s prime minister. In response, “Mahathir purged his cabinet of Razaleigh’s remaining supporters, who included three senior ministers and four deputy ministers, even though all of them had won party posts during the UMNO elections.”²⁸ These purged leaders subse-

quently went to court to appeal Mahathir's narrow victory in the leadership vote and their subsequent expulsion from UMNO. "The Supreme Court rejected the appeal in August 1988, but not before Mahathir had impaired the independence of the judiciary by securing the removal first of the Lord President, Salleh Abbas, on the grounds of judicial misconduct, and then of five Supreme Court judges who had risen to Salleh's defense."²⁹

In short, to help him pack the cabinet and UMNO's supreme council, Mahathir needed to pack the judiciary. The effects have been significant. "Before 1987, we had a very good legal system," notes one political analyst. "Now you see judges driving around in big Mercedes with tinted windows and 'Hakim Negara' (Federal Judge) in big letters. They all belong to Mahathir now."³⁰ Mahathir has thus used the packing strategy to transform the Malaysian judiciary from one of the more respected and independent legal bodies in Asia into a powerful fist at the end of his executive arm. Rather than curtail Mahathir's despotic power, the judiciary now primarily serves to enhance his regime's infrastructural power.

Mahathir also responded to the crisis by packing the most important post in the cabinet with his most trustworthy loyalist of all: himself. From the UMNO split in 1987 until after the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim in 1998, Mahathir retained the portfolio of home minister, thus granting himself effective control over the real muscle in Malaysia's party-state, the police. Mahathir's personal stranglehold over this highly effective and repressive police force was a major reason why social pressures for political reform were snuffed out after Anwar Ibrahim's removal from office in September 1998. For now, the key point is that packing allows a leader to personalize decision-making authority without necessarily weakening the capacity of the organizations in question to execute his commands. Indeed, the more well-established the institution is, the greater are the chances its cogs will remain fixed regardless of who is guiding the mechanism.

Rigging Rigging is the strategic modification of institutional rules and procedures to forestall competition for leadership positions. Packing provides an ideal mechanism for denying challengers access to the organizational bases of regime strength, but it has no direct effect on the procedures through which the leadership might be challenged. In Malaysia, the only road to power leads directly through UMNO, the ruling party. Since the party and state apparatuses have become tightly intertwined over more than forty years of single party hegemony, whoever controls UMNO effectively controls the state. Historically, UMNO has been notable for its democratic intraparty competition, even as it acted in highly authoritarian ways in the wider polity. Having nearly been toppled by such democratic intraparty competition in 1987, Mahathir used his dominance of the packed UMNO supreme council to systematically rig UMNO's internal election procedures. In short, "Mahathir remade UMNO itself. He changed the party's constitution to make it difficult to challenge

incumbents. Mahathir, who stands for re-election every three years, has ever since run unopposed.”³¹

This rigging of UMNO procedures gathered pace in the mid 1990s, as Mahathir increasingly feared a possible leadership challenge from his popular deputy, Anwar Ibrahim. While Anwar enjoyed substantial grass-roots support within UMNO, he had difficulty gaining a foothold in UMNO’s supreme council and the cabinet. Yet Mahathir’s dominance of UMNO in the supreme council and cabinet could not protect him from a floor vote at an UMNO general assembly meeting like the one Razaleigh’s supporters called and nearly won in 1987.

Hence Mahathir’s need for procedural rigging. A detailed overview of the procedural changes has been provided elsewhere, but the basic rigging strategy is worth outlining briefly.³² Mahathir introduced an array of bonus votes, no contest resolutions, and bans on campaigning for top party posts to ensure both his and Anwar’s continued incumbency as UMNO president and vice-president. Including Anwar in this protective net secured the support of his faction for many of these resolutions, without permitting Anwar to resolve his deeper political problem, his lack of representation on the supreme council. When Mahathir chose to sack Anwar on unsubstantiated charges of sexual misconduct in 1998, he only needed the approval of the supreme council, where his own loyalists had been effectively packed, and not the UMNO general assembly, where Anwar’s support more closely rivaled Mahathir’s.

UMNO procedures have clearly been rigged to facilitate Mahathir’s personal domination of Malaysia’s hegemonic political organization. But has UMNO lost organizational coherence or infrastructural power over society as a result? In the sense that UMNO lost substantial support in the 1999 general election, largely due to public outrage over Anwar’s dismissal and vilification, it has indeed been weakened. Yet it still utterly dominates the ruling coalition and still enjoys the kind of mass membership, territorial comprehensiveness, and grass-roots intelligence network that it has developed over more than four decades in power. As unchallenged UMNO leader, Mahathir is the main beneficiary of “the party’s formidable electoral machinery,” which “reaches down to the smallest villages. UMNO stations one officer to monitor each 10 households in most rural areas.”³³ Mahathir’s rigging of party procedures might have worn the machinery some, but it has certainly not eliminated UMNO’s infrastructural power at the grass roots altogether.

Circumventing Circumventing is the creation of alternative policy channels to divert influence and resources away from rivals in mainline government departments and toward loyalists in packed institutions. Any aspiring autocrat is likely to enjoy more success at packing some regime organizations than others. When confronted with organizations that are too politically risky or intractable to pack, he can use the mechanism of circumvention as a fallback option. This approach aims to ensure that authoritative channels for policy implementation and patronage distribution flow

through organizations controlled by the autocrat's loyalists, rather than his rivals. In short, circumvention privileges packed organizations over unpacked ones.

Mahathir has deployed such a strategy by systematically diverting decision-making authority on nearly all major policy issues to the prime minister's department, the most packed organization in the Malaysian government by definition and design. Under Mahathir's watch, the prime minister's department has evolved into the regime's nerve center for distributing payments to loyalists and delivering punishments to rivals. Specifically, Mahathir has circumvented mainline economic departments like the finance ministry—controlled from 1993 to 1998 by Anwar Ibrahim—to manage Malaysia's privatization agenda through the prime minister's department. Since privatization has been "the major form of patronage during the 1990s" for the UMNO-led regime, Mahathir's direct control over this process has been fundamental in his seizure of personalized decision-making authority.³⁴

Might this type of deinstitutionalization of decision-making procedures translate into the deinstitutionalization of decision-executing organizations? While the packing and rigging of institutions has no clear negative effect on an authoritarian regime's infrastructural power, it is trickier to assess the possible impact of circumvention. Packing implies commandeering the power of an existing institution for personal purposes; circumvention either requires the creation of entirely new organizations or requires existing organizations to take on entirely new tasks. Circumvention thus implies the squandering of at least a portion of a regime's institutional inheritance. The big question is whether such institutional fraying can be expected to increase the chances of a regime's collapse and subsequent political transition.

Bossism in Bloom

"Bureaucracy has been and is a power instrument of the first order—for the one who controls the bureaucratic apparatus."³⁵ Mahathir Mohamad exerted increasingly autocratic control over the Malaysian political system by the mid 1990s. Key events during Malaysia's dual political and economic crises of 1997–99 provide even stronger evidence that Mahathir managed to personalize decision-making authority and to do so by turning the UMNO party-state's powerful authoritarian institutions to his personal advantage. Mahathir's regime proved easily capable of surviving the financial and political crisis, in spite of its growing personalization. The regime hung together rather than breaking apart. Specifically, it hung together behind Mahathir's strategy of resolving the crisis primarily through repression rather than accommodation of dissent. The absolute loyalty of the police and other institutions of political control to Mahathir made the regime more effective rather than less in foreclosing opportunities for resistance. It not only made the regime more personalized, but also forestalled any prospect for a transition to a more democratic order.

By 1997 only Mahathir's deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, still presented a check on his political preeminence. Mahathir's position suddenly became more tenuous, however, when the Asian financial crisis spread from Thailand to its Southeast Asian neighbors. As the Malaysian *ringgit* and stock market plumbed new depths, Mahathir feared that he would be unable to rescue his political supporters in the corporate sector, who were suddenly buried under unserviceable mountains of private debt. This personal corporate clientele had been cultivated throughout the 1990s by an extensive privatization program, managed through the prime minister's department by Mahathir and his long-time associate, Daim Zainuddin. Mahathir wanted to ensure that he and Daim, and not Anwar, would make the final decisions on which corporate figures received state assistance. But Anwar was still perched atop the finance ministry and seemed more concerned than Mahathir about the restoration of foreign investor confidence, even if it meant letting some well-connected businessmen fail.

To ensure uninterrupted personal control over the distribution of state resources, Mahathir deployed a circumvention maneuver, creating an ad hoc National Economic Action Council to counter Anwar's finance ministry. As always, this circumvention entailed the privileging of an ally as well as the weakening of a rival, as Daim, Malaysia's "virtual finance minister," was appointed to lead the council.³⁶ Mahathir also used his direct control over a variety of discretionary funds to prepare strategic bailouts for key allies in the corporate sector. These assets included the national pensions fund, a savings account for Muslim pilgrims to Mecca, and, most important, the national oil company, Petronas, which also falls directly under the Malaysian prime minister's control. With an estimated \$25 billion in cash as of November 1998, Petronas had more reserves on hand than the Malaysian central bank.³⁷

By circumventing the finance ministry, Mahathir was sending Anwar a strong message not to intervene in his bailouts of leading corporate figures. But in March 1998 Anwar insisted on an independent audit of a Petronas-funded rescue of Konsortium Perkapalan Berhad (KPB), a heavily indebted shipping concern. Anwar's intervention was particularly bold because the bailout aimed to use \$420 million in Petronas funds to wipe out the private debts of KPB's chief executive, Mirzan Mahathir, the prime minister's oldest son. When the bailout went through, one UMNO official lamented: "I thought such things could only happen in Indonesia or some African country."³⁸

Once Anwar's objection to the Petronas-Mirzan bailout made his loyalty to Mahathir suspect, the prime minister stepped up his strategy of circumventing Anwar's finance ministry by diverting authority to ad hoc, packed executive agencies. In June 1998 Mahathir created a special cabinet post for Daim, minister of special functions under the aegis of the prime minister's department. On economic policy Mahathir's packing and circumventing tactics had redirected day-to-day decision-

making power from his chief rival to the hands of his chief loyalist. He thus maintained a tight grip on the institutional circuits through which patronage flowed.

Politically, Mahathir's efforts to weaken Anwar gathered steam as well. In July 1998, just six weeks before Anwar's eventual sacking, Mahathir engineered the replacement of the editors-in-chief of two of Malaysia's leading newspapers, as well as the director of operations at one of Malaysia's top television stations. All were reportedly close to Anwar. This replacement of rivals with loyalists in the mainstream media qualifies as an instance of packing a regime organization, because the press in Malaysia is far from independent of the government. The Malaysian press can best be thought of as the main propaganda apparatus for the UMNO party-state or as a semiprivatized appendage of the information ministry. All the mainstream papers are owned by corporate proxies for UMNO and its coalition partners, and the home minister has *carte blanche* to ban or curtail independent media outlets under the Printing and Publications Act. Said one of Anwar's associates in response to the dismissal of his top supporters in the press: "Their removal is the biggest setback Anwar has had since he became deputy PM."³⁹

With Anwar's allies in the press removed, Mahathir had a free hand to destroy Anwar through a *Blitzkrieg*-like campaign of character assassination. As home minister and overseer of the police, Mahathir announced in September 1998 that Anwar would be sacked due to homosexual conduct discovered by the police's special branch investigative unit. A special meeting of the UMNO supreme council promptly executed the prime minister's command. As Anwar himself described the session: "The president of the party opened the meeting by suggesting that I have to be expelled from the party before giving me the floor. What do you expect the supreme council members to do? If they disagree, they will be expelled too."⁴⁰

Once Anwar was officially removed, Mahathir packed and rigged Malaysia's economic policymaking institutions to limit the financial fallout. Realizing that Anwar's dismissal would cause a collapse in investor confidence, Mahathir announced new capital controls, thus preventing foreign investors from speculating against the Malaysian *ringgit* or repatriating funds from the sale of their Malaysian stocks. With this breathing space, Mahathir moved to force down interest rates to ease the debt burden on well-connected companies. Since lending rates are officially determined in Malaysia by an independent central bank, Mahathir replaced the market-friendly bank governor with the director-general of the economic planning unit, the main economic arm of the prime minister's department.

Mahathir then not merely packed Anwar's former posts with loyal deputies, but took over some himself. For months after Anwar's dismissal Mahathir added to his posts as prime minister and home minister Anwar's duties as finance minister. Mahathir also effectively named himself deputy prime minister by refusing to name a replacement for Anwar, thus putting Malaysia in danger of a succession crisis for

the first time in its history. "What happens if the PM dies or falls sick?" asked one senior UMNO official. "It's irresponsible not to have a successor. It could result in political instability."⁴¹

In response to such criticism, Mahathir brazenly displayed his autocratic colors. After announcing to UMNO's supreme council that he would not name a new deputy as promised, over one month after Anwar's sacking, he declared: "It is not within the jurisdiction of the supreme council. It is my right to appoint a deputy prime minister, what are his qualifications and so on. I don't have to refer to anybody on this matter. That is my prerogative."⁴² Mahathir's packed cabinet put up no resistance. One senior minister bluntly confirmed Mahathir's absolute discretion to sack Anwar unilaterally and to prevent the party elite from collectively selecting a new vice-president: "As the chief executive, the Prime Minister has 100% authority to hire and fire and we are there at his pleasure."⁴³

Having seized all the main institutional reins of the regime, Mahathir mobilized a phalanx of regime organizations—the media, the police, the judiciary, and the UMNO-dominated bureaucracy—to prevent Anwar and his supporters from challenging his leadership. Despite Anwar's popularity, knowledgeable observers of Malaysian politics knew he had little chance against Malaysia's formidable political institutions. "Anwar has no political space outside," said Shamsul A. B. "That's why he has not raised his voice against UMNO. He knows the only way he can come back to politics is through the party."⁴⁴ Jomo K. S. agreed: "Anwar is popular on the ground, but organizationally he is weak."⁴⁵ And Singapore's senior minister Lee Kuan Yew—a man quite familiar with the paramount importance of powerful authoritarian institutions—expressed confidence that Mahathir would prevail. "I am prepared to wager five to one. I am not saying Anwar Ibrahim has not got a following. What I am saying is that there are institutional checks and balances and systems that will not allow civil order to be upset."⁴⁶

These systems of control included the progovernment media, which began a one-sided campaign of character assassination against Anwar, presenting the accusations against the fallen heir apparent as fact. Given the ownership structure of the media and the home minister's prerogative to rescind publication licenses at will, Mahathir could be confident that the press would not stray too far from the official line. Multiple independent publications have indeed been banned since 1998, and the main opposition party has seen its permission to print its own newspaper reduced from two issues per week to two issues per month.

The Anwar affair also made Mahathir's personal domination of the nation's police force perfectly plain. As home minister, Mahathir claimed that police investigators had been telling him about Anwar's sexual misconduct for years, but since he had not initially believed the allegations, charges had never been pressed. In this clumsy attempt to appear magnanimous, Mahathir inadvertently admitted that his personal protection was sufficient to place any of his loyalists above the law. When the direc-

tor of the police's special branch was called to testify at Anwar's trial on corruption charges stemming from the sexual allegations, he admitted that the investigation into Anwar's private life, Operation Solid Grip, had been terminated in August 1997. At that time, Mahathir had been quoted in the local press as saying that the rumors of Anwar's sexual misconduct were "slandorous, politically motivated," and "too absurd to believe." The special branch officer made his rationale for initially ceasing the criminal investigation perfectly clear: "We have to respect the decision of the PM and that was the reason why I did not propose to scrutinise the case."⁴⁷

Yet the Malaysian police also provide the clearest evidence that personal domination over the decision-making procedures in an authoritarian regime does not necessarily imply a lack of capacity in a regime's organizations for political control. To the contrary, the Malaysian police's institutionalized loyalty to the prime minister helped ensure its coherence and effectiveness in suppressing both the elite defection and popular dissent that inevitably arose when the most popular politician in the country was summarily dismissed and disgraced. Violent crackdowns on peaceful demonstrations quickly become the norm, and detention of Mahathir's opponents (including Anwar sympathizers within UMNO) under the Internal Security Act became so routine that the Kamunting Prison for detainees became colloquially known as the "Mahathir Marriott."⁴⁸ The infamous image of Anwar's black eye, courtesy of a severe police beating in solitary confinement while being held under the Internal Security Act, serves as ample testimony to the tactics Malaysian police use against perceived enemies of Mahathir's regime. After a report by Malaysia's state-appointed human rights commission criticized the police for their violent suppression of the *reformasi* movement, Mahathir appointed a new human rights commissioner, the former attorney-general who had helped him impeach six justices and pack the judiciary in 1988.⁴⁹

While the police followed Mahathir's orders and maintained stability on the streets, Malaysia's packed judiciary carried out Mahathir's political death sentence against Anwar in the courts. Two trials on corruption and sexual misconduct charges duly delivered a combined sentence of fifteen years in prison for Anwar, in spite of disturbing irregularities in the trials' proceedings. The only people to admit having illicit sexual relations with Anwar did so while being held in solitary confinement under the Internal Security Act, and each later retracted his confessions and detailed the police's physical and psychological abuse. When Anwar's lawyers noticed that the condominium where Anwar was alleged to have performed these trysts had not even been built when the trysts allegedly took place, the trial judge allowed the prosecution to alter the dates on the indictment.⁵⁰ Mahathir has since rewarded the attorney-general who prosecuted the Anwar case with a seat on the supreme court.

Malaysia's potent party-state organizations were then deployed to ensure that the opposition would have no chance of removing Mahathir from office through

Malaysia's "competitive authoritarian" institutions. By holding elections before the end of 1999, the regime claimed the right to leave all 680,000 voters registered in that calendar year off the electoral rolls, recognizing that the lion's share of new voters would side with the opposition if given the chance. UMNO wound up losing twenty seats in the election, in spite of a typically one-sided media campaign and unprecedented reports of electoral fraud, including the widespread use of "phantom voters."⁵¹ When a judge ruled that such electoral abuses in one district were so severe as to demand a revote, UMNO officials prepared to make future court challenges to election results unconstitutional.⁵² The judgment of the electoral commission—packed, unsurprisingly, with prime ministerial appointees—is heretofore to be taken as the final word.

In sum, Mahathir has packed, rigged, and circumvented institutions to purge and incarcerate his personal rival, suppress popular demands for political reform, steer the national economic product toward his most loyal supporters, and secure the electoral survival of his authoritarian regime. Authoritarian rule in Malaysia is more personalized, but no less resilient. Nevertheless, the days of Mahathir's regime, like all personalized regimes, are clearly numbered. Eventually, the septuagenarian will have to exit the stage, either voluntarily or otherwise.⁵³ What arises in his place will depend to a great degree on how he leaves the scene.⁵⁴ However, one theoretical point should be abundantly clear: authoritarian regimes with coherent and capable party-state organizations are structurally vulnerable to processes of personalization, contrary to the common assumption that personalization feeds off of institutional weakness. The structural opportunity for future UMNO leaders to manipulate institutional means for personal ends, as Mahathir has done, should not be underestimated. As long as control over UMNO continues to ensure control over Malaysia's highly developed state apparatus, UMNO, in Weber's terms, is a power instrument of the first order for the one who controls UMNO.

Summary and Implications

Malaysia demonstrates several theoretical arguments. First, in Malaysia after 1998 authoritative decisions derive from the will of an autocratic individual, not the deliberations of an oligarchic collective. Malaysia challenges the assumption that personalization signifies weak institutionalization. In authoritarian regimes, personalization can arise amid strong institutions as well as weak ones. Most important, Malaysia is noteworthy for having had one of the most institutionalized party-states in the developing world for decades before Mahathir began monopolizing decision-making authority in the mid 1980s.

Evidence from Malaysia also supports a second theoretical point: highly institutionalized authoritarian organizations facilitate the personalization of power. Leaders

like Mahathir, who was fortunate enough to inherit highly effective and disciplined party-state organizations from his predecessors, enjoy personal power of an altogether different magnitude than leaders like Congo's Laurent Kabila, who inherited only the institutional ruins bequeathed by Mobutu Sese Seko. In terms of decision-making procedures, both Mahathir and Kabila have presided over personalized regimes. But in terms of available, capable organizations to execute their commands, their regimes could hardly have been more different. When Mahathir needed the support of Malaysia's authoritarian institutions in late 1998, they dutifully turned their considerable institutional firepower against Anwar Ibrahim and his supporters. By contrast, Kabila's personal guard turned their firepower against Kabila himself.

Personalization amid strong organizations thus appears to have very different implications for authoritarian durability than personalization amid weak ones. Evidence from Malaysia strongly suggests that authoritarian regimes can become more personalized without becoming less resilient. To state this hypothesis even more boldly, variation in authoritarian regimes' infrastructural power is the key to explaining variation in their durability. Party-backed authoritarian regimes appear to be exceptionally resilient because parties provide ideal organizational mechanisms for the coordinated execution of decisions, not necessarily their collective formulation. They also appear to be systematically more likely than military-backed regimes to curtail and control dissent through the development of national organizations of political control.⁵⁵

Thus, a different causal mechanism links authoritarian institutions to democratization than the one Geddes suggests. Her game-theoretic model imputes variations in regime durability from the bargaining incentives confronting different types of regimes in times of crisis. She ascribes the relative durability of party-backed regimes largely to the incentives party elites face under crisis conditions to unite, as tactical decision makers, behind a strategy of coopting potential opponents.

Because the dominant strategy of the ruling coalition in single-party regimes is to coopt potential opposition, single-party regimes tend to respond to crisis by granting modest increases in meaningful political participation, increasing opposition representation in the legislature, and granting some opposition demands for institutional changes....This strategy only works sometimes, but it works often enough to extend the average lifetime of single-party regimes.⁵⁶

This general explanation of single party durability is echoed by many Malaysians, who often explain the UMNO regime's durability as a result of its commitment to regular, semidemocratic elections that serve as a pressure valve for political opposition. Ascribing the regime's resilience to its relative responsiveness would have been a hard argument to dispute before 1998, but this explanation sits less well with recent evidence. Malaysia's party-state did not respond to the political crisis of 1998 by softening its stance toward its opponents, as Geddes would predict, but rather by becoming increasingly authoritarian. Such state violence and repression might have

sounded the death knell for a less organizationally capable regime, but in Malaysia, where authoritarian organizations have a decades-long institutional memory, increased state repression served as a winning strategy.⁵⁷

Nor does Malaysia appear to be an outlier in this regard. In the past several years alone, party-backed regimes that have loosened controls on the opposition while permitting freer and fairer elections have been removed from office in Mexico, Taiwan, and Senegal. Meanwhile, party-backed regimes that have combined semicompetitive elections with continuing illiberal repression of the opposition have persevered in such countries as Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, and Egypt. Single party regimes might be particularly durable because of the way they organize repression, not representation. This hypothesis gains further *prima facie* plausibility from those single party regimes that have completely eschewed the façade of electoralism in the past decade. Cuba, China, Laos, Vietnam, and North Korea have proven surprisingly resilient. In short, the world's remaining single party regimes seem to share a stronger common commitment to coercing their opponents than to coopting them.⁵⁸ Authoritarian regimes seem most likely to persevere when their institutions exhibit sufficient infrastructural power to curtail opposition by punishing opponents and rewarding loyalists in pinpoint fashion. It seems less important whether authoritative decisions represent the product of collective deliberation or individual will.

NOTES

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1. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 228.

2. Thomas Fuller, "Malaysia Unrest: 'We Are Prepared to Handle It,'" *International Herald Tribune*, Sept. 23, 1998.

3. Malaysia has exhibited an atypically "strong, centralized, directive government" since before independence in 1957 and "has experienced politics characterized by extraordinary continuity" ever since. See Richard Stubbs, "The Malayan Emergency and the Development of the Malaysian State," in Paul B. Rich and Richard Stubbs, eds., *The Counter-Insurgent State: Guerrilla Warfare and State Building in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 67; Harold Crouch, *Government and Society in Malaysia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 32.

4. I define authoritarian regimes broadly. They include any regime in which "incumbents routinely abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters, and in some cases manipulate electoral results." See Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (April 2002), 52, and other articles in this issue on "elections without democracy."

5. Mann defines despotic power in terms of the state's autonomy from civil society. I extend Mann's concept beyond power relationships between state and society to those within the state itself. See Michael Mann, *States, War, and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 5.
6. Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski, "Dictatorial Institutions and the Survival of Dictators," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 2001; Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Gregory Kasza, *The Conscripted Society: Administered Mass Organizations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
7. This term is also Mann's. It refers to "the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm." Mann, p. 5. Yet a regime can overcome societal resistance only if it has first generated compliance within the state apparatus. I therefore include the organizational coherence of state institutions in my definition of infrastructural power.
8. As Michael Coppedge has suggested, "this phenomenon is not unknown, but it is untheorized." Discussant's comment at the American Political Science Association annual conference, San Francisco, August 30, 2001.
9. A single case can strongly impugn a hypothesis by showing that it fails to hold where it should be most expected to hold. See Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, vol. 7 (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1975).
10. While UMNO rules through a multiethnic coalition, the *Barisan Nasional* (BN) or National Front, its position within the coalition is so hegemonic that Malaysia is essentially a single party regime. To simplify matters somewhat for nonspecialists, I refer to UMNO rather than to the BN throughout.
11. William Case, "Malaysia's Resilient Pseudodemocracy," *Journal of Democracy*, 12 (January 2001), 43–57; Levitsky and Way, p. 51.
12. See Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Malaysia: Quasi-Democracy in a Divided Society," in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Politics in Developing Countries*, vol. 3 (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989); William Case, "Semi-Democracy in Malaysia: Withstanding the Pressures for Regime Change," *Pacific Affairs*, 66 (Summer 1993), 183–205; Crouch, ch. 13; Gordon P. Means, "Soft Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Singapore," *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (October 1996), 103–17.
13. Crouch, ch. 5.
14. Stubbs traces the Malaysian state's impressive coercive capacity to the British-led emergency operation against leftists from 1948 to 1960. "By the end of the Emergency the Malayan government had built up a substantial and relatively efficient security apparatus. The police had become a sizeable organisation and the Special Branch had gained a deserved reputation as an intelligence-gathering organisation." See Stubbs, p. 67. This security apparatus continued to play an active role in curbing dissent during the interregnum between British rule and Mahathir's ascendancy to the prime ministry. "Between 1960 and 1981, 3,102 people were detained at one time or another under the ISA." See Crouch, p. 80.
15. Meredith Weiss, "What Will Become of *Reformasi*? Ethnicity and Changing Political Norms in Malaysia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 21 (December 1999), 432, suggests that perhaps 80 percent of ethnic Malays in the civil service did not support Mahathir's handling of the political crisis.
16. Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know About Democratization after Twenty Years?," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2 (1999), 115–44; Barbara Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown: Empirical Test of a Game Theoretic Argument," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, September 1999.
17. Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown," p. 16. For a definition of institutionalization in unconsolidated democracies that mirrors this dual emphasis on procedures and organizations, see Scott Mainwaring, "Party Systems in the Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy*, 9 (July 1998), 70.
18. The same can be said for non-African cases of sultanism and neopatrimonialism, such as the

Philippines under Marcos, which have attracted more theoretical attention than highly institutionalized authoritarian regimes such as Malaysia's. See H. E. Chehabi and Juan J. Linz, eds., *Sultanistic Regimes* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Richard Snyder, "Explaining Transitions from Neopatrimonial Dictatorships," *Comparative Politics*, 24 (July 1992), 379–99.

19. Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 78.

20. Geddes, "What Do We Know?," pp. 121–22.

21. Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown"; Geddes, "What Do We Know?"; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Paul Brooker, *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

22. Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown," operationalizes the party-personal, party-military, and military-personal divides, which correspond to my machine-bossism, party-military, and junta-strongman divides. My typology mainly differs in arranging her variables along two dimensions rather than one. My typology is more focused but less ambitious than Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), which encompasses issues of regime ideology and the extent of regime domination, not just that domination's institutional form.

23. Chehabi and Linz, eds., pp. 34–37, recognize the tendency for authoritarian institutions to "decay" as long-serving leaders turn "sultanistic," but they do not discuss how institutions might be actively destroyed rather than passively "decay," as dictators manipulate certain institutions to destroy others.

24. Samuel P. Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems," in Samuel P. Huntington and Clement H. Moore, eds., *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society: The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 7; Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown," p. 6; and Mainwaring, p. 69.

25. Michael Leigh, "Malaysia: 1961 and 2001," paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, March 2001, p. 7.

26. Ho Khai Leong, "Aggrandizement of Prime Minister's Power: The Transformation of the Office of the Prime Minister in Malaysia," *Internationales Asienforum*, 23 (1992), 243, 236.

27. Both quoted in Simon Martin, "Mahathir Still Firmly in Control on 20th Anniversary," *Agence-France Press*, July 15, 2001.

28. Edmund Terence Gomez, *Political Business: Corporate Involvement of Malaysian Political Parties* (Kuala Lumpur: Vinlin Press, 1994), p. 62.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

30. Confidential interview, Kuala Lumpur, 1998.

31. Jim Erickson and Assif Shameen, "Mounting Pressure," *Asiaweek*, Mar. 27, 1998.

32. William Case, "The 1996 UMNO Party Election: 'Two for the Show,'" *Pacific Affairs*, 70 (Fall 1997), 393–411; Hari Singh, "Tradition, UMNO and Political Succession in Malaysia," *Third World Quarterly*, 19 (April 1997), 241–54.

33. Simon Elegant and S. Jayasankaran, "Juggernaut," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Nov. 25, 1999.

34. Case, "The 1996 UMNO Party Election," p. 399.

35. Max Weber, in Gerth and Mills, p. 228.

36. Erickson and Shameen.

37. Choong Tet Sieu and Arjuna Ranawana, "Filling Up at Petronas," *Asiaweek*, Nov. 13, 1998.

38. "The Bailout Business," *Asiaweek*, Mar. 27, 1998.

39. Assif Shameen and Zoher Abdoolcarim, "Fading from the Picture?," *Asiaweek*, Aug. 21, 1998.

40. Eddie Toh, "Anwar Not Ruling Out Switching to Opposition Party PAS," *Business Times* (Singapore), Sept. 5, 1998.

41. S. Jayasankaran and Murray Hiebert, "The Ringmaster," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Oct. 15, 1998.
42. "Left Vacant," *The Star*, Oct. 7, 1998.
43. Charles Chan, "A Case of Swollen Ego, Says Rafidah," *The Star*, Sept. 16, 1998. This unconditional support came from a minister who has repeatedly lost grass-roots elections for the top women's post in UMNO, only to be resurrected by Mahathir's discretionary offers of seats in the cabinet and supreme council.
44. Choong Tet Sieu and Arjuna Ranawana, "A Case of Order and Disorder," *Asiaweek*, Oct. 16, 1998.
45. Ibid.
46. "Crackdown," *Asiaweek*, Oct. 2, 1998.
47. Eddie Toh, "Probe Stopped after PM's Statement," *Business Times* (Singapore), Nov. 10, 1998.
48. Anthony Spaeth, "He's the Boss," *Time International*, Sept. 14, 1998.
49. K. Kabilan, "Police Responsible for Rights Abuses: Suhakam," *Malaysiakini*, Aug. 20, 2001.
50. For a complete transcript of the trial, see *The Anwar Ibrahim Judgment* (Kuala Lumpur: Malayan Law Journal, 1999).
51. See Meredith Weiss, "The 1999 Malaysian General Elections: Issues, Insults, and Irregularities," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, San Diego, March 2000.
52. K. Kabilan and Ng Boon Hooi, "Electoral Roll Amendment a Danger to Citizens Rights," *Malaysiakini*, July 20, 2001.
53. As one Malaysian columnist suggested to me: "The only way this man is leaving office is horizontally." Confidential interview, Kuala Lumpur, July 2001.
54. It is too soon to tell whether Mahathir will make good on his recent promise (delivered in June 2002) to step down in October 2003. More certain is that the decision will be Mahathir's to make.
55. Malaysia has not taken the totalitarian route of mobilizing functional groups into "administered mass organizations." See Kasza, esp. ch. 1. But given the national power and presence of UMNO, the federal police, and state organizations in general, such extreme measures have hardly proven necessary to keep opposition in check.
56. Geddes, "Authoritarian Breakdown," pp. 16–17.
57. As the inspector-general of police put it when the *reformasi* protests started to swell: "From our experience in the '50s and '60s, we know what we are dealing with...." "Police Outlaw All 'Reformation Meetings,'" *The Star*, Sept. 23, 1998.
58. Focusing on authoritarian institutions as instruments of cooptation is important, but incomplete. Gandhi and Przeworski, p. 3. Authoritarian regimes need strong institutions to serve as instruments of coercion as well.