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**Political Party and Party System Institutionalisation
in Southeast Asia:
A Comparison of Indonesia, the Philippines,
and Thailand**

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Abstract

It is generally acknowledged that a higher degree of party and party system institutionalisation is positively correlated with the consolidation of democracy. It is, thus, useful to compare different levels and types of institutionalisation. In this article the distinction made by Levitsky ('value infusion' vs. 'behavioural routinisation') with reference to party institutionalisation will be employed. Moreover, institutionalised party systems are characterized, according to Mainwaring and Torcal, by 'stability of interparty competition'. The empirical research of this paper finds that the early organisational consolidation of social cleavages, such as in Indonesia, enhances institutionalisation. Furthermore, the relation between central and local elites appears to be essential: strong bosses or cliques undermine institutionalisation in the Philippines and in Thailand respectively. Most Indonesian parties are better institutionalised than those in the Philippines and Thailand with reference to 'value infusion'. In addition, the party system in Indonesia is better institutionalised in terms of 'stability of interparty competition'.

Key words: political party institutionalisation, party system institutionalisation, Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand

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Zusammenfassung

Die Institutionalisierung politischer Parteien und von Parteiensystemen in Südostasien: Ein Vergleich von Indonesien, den Philippinen und Thailand

Im Allgemeinen korreliert ein höherer Institutionalierungsgrad von politischen Parteien und Parteiensystemen positiv mit Prozessen der demokratischen Konsolidierung. Daher ist es sinnvoll, Form und Stärke der Institutionalisierung vergleichend zu analysieren. In diesem Artikel wird Parteieninstitutionalisierung im Sinne von Levitsky anhand der Faktoren „value infusion“ und „behavioural routinisation“ bestimmt. Die Institutionalisierung von Parteiensystemen wird gemäß Mainwaring und Torcal als „stability of interparty competition“ gefasst. Die Ergebnisse der empirischen Untersuchung zeigen, dass die frühe organisatorische Konsolidierung sozialer Spaltungen („cleavages“) wie in Indonesien Institutionalisierungsprozesse fördert. Außerdem ist die Beziehung zwischen nationalen und lokalen Eliten wichtig: Mächtige Bosse oder Cliques unterminieren die Institutionalisierung in den Philippinen und in Thailand. Die meisten indonesischen Parteien sind im Hinblick auf „value infusion“ besser institutionalisiert als jene in den Philippinen und Thailand. Außerdem ist das Parteiensystem in Indonesien besser institutionalisiert, was sich als höhere Stabilität des Parteienwettbewerbs zeigt.

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1. Introduction

According to Schmitter (1999: 477-478) parties should recruit persons to 'participate actively in campaigns' and nominate candidates for office (electoral structuration); they should 'provide most citizens with a stable and distinctive set of ideas and goals' which 'make them feel part of the process of collective choice' (symbolic integration); they 'should be capable of forming a government and of providing an internal structure to the legislative process' (governing function); and they ideally aggregate interests and passions, channel expectations and produce programs in a way satisfactory for most of the citizenry (aggregative function).

It is generally acknowledged that parties fulfill these functions better when they and the party system as a whole are well institutionalised (Randall/Svåsand 2002; Mainwaring and

Torcal 2006). It is assumed that a higher degree of institutionalisation is positively correlated with the consolidation of democracy. It is, thus, useful to compare levels of party and party system institutionalisation and to explore the reasons for the emergence of different types of institutionalisation.

In this article, I shall first define the term 'institutionalisation' with reference to parties and party systems. The second part encompasses a discussion of the most salient characteristics of parties and party systems in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

On this background, the final chapter will generate hypotheses on the relationship between the independent variables 'formal institutions' (system of government and electoral system), 'translation of social cleavages into the party system', 'strength of local elites' and the dependent variables 'institutionalisation of political parties' and 'institutionalisation of party systems'.

2. Institutionalisation of Parties and Party Systems

Institutions reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life (North 1990: 3f). Institutionalisation is the process whereby 'persistent and connected sets of formal and informal rules' (Keohane 1989: 3) increasingly shape expectations. In applying this notion to party systems Mainwaring and Torcal (2006: 206-207) identify different dimensions. More institutionalised systems, according to them, are more stable, that is, patterns of party competition manifest more regularly. In more institutionalised systems, parties have strong roots in society and the voter-party linkage is closer. Political actors see parties as a legitimate, necessary part of democratic politics, and party organisations are not dependent on charismatic leaders but have acquired an independent status. Weakly institutionalised party systems generate more uncertainty of electoral outcomes and are inimical to electoral accountability. In contrast, institutionalised party systems are stable and parties accept the rules of the game and each other as legitimate. This implies that there is, if at all, only a moderate polarisation. Mainwaring and Torcal do not clearly differentiate between party and party system institutionalization, whereas Randall and Svåsand (2002, 13-14) focus explicitly on party institutionalization. They propose four criteria for it: systemness (internal structural), value infusion (internal attitudinal), decisional autonomy (external structural) and reification (external attitudinal). Systemness means the 'increasing scope, density and regularity of the interactions that constitute the party as a structure' (Randall/Svåsand 2002: 14); 'value infusion' denotes the identification of party actors and supporters with and commitment to the party transcending self-interested incentives; decisional autonomy is the

result of freedom from interference; and the term 'reification' describes the establishment of a party in the public imagination.

In this article the distinction made by Levitsky ('value infusion' and 'behavioural routinisation') with reference to party institutionalisation will be employed. 'Value infusion' encompasses rootedness, i.e. linkages to civil and religious organisations as well as 'reification' and 'legitimation'. 'Behavioural routinisation' includes stable patterns of party competition and of organisation as well as independence from particular financiers and from overly powerful charismatic leaders. Value infusion denotes a '[...] shift from the pursuit of particular objectives *through* an organization to the goal of perpetuating the organization per se' (Levitsky 1998: 79). Being a member of it becomes a source of personal satisfaction. Behavioural routinisation points to intra-organisational patterns of behaviour, that is, to entrenched forms of social interaction. Whereas value infusion facilitates adaptation to new political environments, routinisation in many cases reduces adaptability because actors face difficulties in changing procedures and rules (Levitsky 1998: 84; Levitsky 2001; Köllner 2003).

In this article, I shall focus on the level of institutionalisation of single parties. Based on that I will draw conclusions on the institutionalisation of the respective party systems in general. Competitive, institutionalised party systems are characterised by continuity among party alternatives and enhanced electoral accountability (Randall/Svåsand 2002: 7) or, in other words, by 'stability of interparty competition' (Mainwaring/Torcal 2006).¹

The Three Cases

Political parties can fulfill their main functions much better in political systems where political rights and civil liberties are sufficiently heeded and guaranteed. In Southeast Asia only Indonesia, Thailand, East Timor, and the Philippines are, according to data by Freedom House, BTI ('political transformation') or Polity IV, more or less working democracies (see table 1).² East Timor is excluded in this article because parties and the parliament were created for the first time just a few years ago and elections have been held just once.

¹ Indicators of party system institutionalisation usually preferred such as fragmentation and volatility will not be utilised here. In the Philippines politicians repeatedly switch from one party to another, making it impossible to measure total electoral volatility (Croissant 2006: 357). In Thailand it is more important to know the number of factions than to simply count party seats. See: Chambers (2005: 500): 'While the effective number of parliamentary parties in the lower house has hovered around six from 1979-2001, the corresponding effective number of parliamentary factions for that period has been 21.17.'

² This judgement is based on the assumption that Thailand will reintroduce the core institutions of democracy in the foreseeable future.

Table 1: Indices of Democratisation in Southeast Asia

Country	Degree of Freedom* (2002)	Degree of Freedom* (2006)	BTI** (2006)	Polity IV*** (2003)
Brunei	7 and 5 (not free)	6 and 5 (not free)	-	-
Indonesia	3 and 4 (partly free)	2 and 3 (free)	6.30 and 5.79	Democracy, 7
Cambodia	6 and 5 (not free)	6 and 5 (not free)	4.10 and 4.57	Anocracy, 2
Laos	7 and 7 (not free)	7 and 6 (not free)	2.83 and 3.86	Autocracy, -7
Malaysia	5 and 5 (partly free)	4 and 4 (partly free)	5.07 and 7.11	Anocracy, 3
Myanmar	7 and 7 (not free)	7 and 7 (not free)	1.65 and 2.11	Autocracy, -7
East Timor	5 and 3 (partly free)	3 and 3 (partly free)	-	Democracy, 6
Philippines	2 and 3 (free)	3 and 3 (partly free)	6.95 and 5.86	Democracy, 8
Singapore	5 and 5 (partly free)	5 and 4 (partly free)	5.35 and 9.21	Anocracy, -2
Thailand	2 and 3 (free)	3 and 3 (partly free)	6.85 and 7.68	Democracy, 9
Vietnam	7 and 6 (not free)	7 and 5 (not free)	3.10 and 5.57	Autocracy, -7

Notes: * 'Political rights' and 'civil liberties' according to *Freedom House* on a scale from 1-7.

** 'Political transformation' and 'economic transformation' according to the *Bertelsmann Transformation Index* on a scale from 1 to 10 (the score for 'political transformation' is obtained by calculating the mean value of the ratings for the following criteria: stateness, political participation, rule of law, stability of democratic institutions, political and social integration; the score for 'economic transformation' is obtained by calculating the mean value of the ratings for: level of socio-economic development, organisation of the market and competition, currency and price stability, private property, welfare regime, economic performance, sustainability).

*** 'Governance' is a combined measurement of 'executive recruitment', 'executive constraints', and 'political competition' on a scale from -10 to 10 (-10 to -6: autocracies; -5 to 5: anocracies (with democratic and authoritarian traits); 5 to 10: democracies). See: www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/country_reports/, accessed 9.11.2006.

3. Indonesia: The Heritage of Social Roots

After gaining national independence in 1945, a parliamentary democracy was introduced in Indonesia. At that time two Islamic and two secular parties received together four-fifths of the votes.³ The party system was characterised by a polarised pluralism with a marginalised Communist party. After the emasculation of parties and parliaments under Sukarno during Guided Democracy (1957-65), the highly authoritarian New Order regime under Suharto constructed a three-party system with regime party Golkar as hegemon. Since the fall of Su-

³ PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian Nationalist Party): 22.3%; Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims): 20.9%; NU (Nahdatul Ulama, Renaissance of Islamic Scholars): 18.4%; PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, Indonesian Communist Party): 16.4%.

harto in 1998, more than 200 political parties were newly established. 48 and 24 of them were allowed to take part in national elections in 1999 and 2004 respectively.

The underlying forces of the contemporary party system bear a striking resemblance to the constellation after the first free elections in 1955.⁴ Now, among the ten largest parties (see table 2) six are Islamic and four secular. The most important cleavage structuring the party system as a whole is still the one dividing secular and Islamic, among the latter, in addition, the one between moderate and Islamist parties (Hadiwinata 2006; Johnson Tan 2006; Sherlock 2005; Ananta/Arifin/Suryadinata 2004; Kompas 2004). The degree of institutionalisation of these ten parties is uneven and depends among other things on their rootedness in specific milieus and their recent history, i.e. whether they already have existed under the New Order regime (1965-98). At that time only three parties, Golkar, PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party) and PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, Indonesian Democratic Party) were legalised. The former regime vehicle Golkar is strongly institutionalised. It has always obtained between 60% and 70% of the votes as a result of manipulation and repression. Golkar still has a huge apparatus, a large membership and widespread clientelist networks.⁵ The party dominates particularly in large parts of the Outer Islands because of its organisational superiority, its well-established connections to local and regional elites in the military, administration and among businessmen, and its abundant financial means. Moreover, despite pervasive corruption and misuse of power over decades, Golkar was able to present itself as a pragmatic, modernising force which brought development (*pembangunan*) even to remote villages.

Less institutionalised are those parties like PPP and PDI-P (before 1998: PDI) which played the role as token or at times half-opposition in the New Order regime. The PDI, less so PPP, was able to recreate itself during the final years of the Suharto regime as a real challenge to the powerholders. In 1996 it was forcefully split and thereby neutralised by the government. But PDI and PPP, in contrast to Golkar, were never allowed to set up branches down to the local level. Without support from the New Order elites they had to fight with financial problems. PDI-P, with large followings among Christians and secularists, is still identified with Sukarno, the immensely popular and charismatic first president of Indonesia whose peculiar worldview – a strange mix of old patrimonial Javanese, socialist, and fiercely anti-colonial nationalist ideas – serves as one pillar of the party's programmatic platform. Today his daughter Megawati embodies this Sukarnoist tradition.

⁴ This is in detail demonstrated by King (2003).

⁵ On Golkar see: Tomsa 2006b.

Table 2: Election Results 1999 and 2004 (DPR, only the ten largest parties)

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

Notes: The 1st Chamber, the House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR), comprises 550 members elected with a proportional system in multi-member constituencies. The 2nd Chamber, the People's Congress (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR), consists of the DPR members and 132 representatives of the provinces. The latter are elected with a majority system in multi-member constituencies and are not allowed to belong to political parties.

Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar), Functional Groups Party; Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan (PDI-P), Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle; Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), National Awakening Party; Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP), United Development Party; Partai Demokrat (PD), Democrat Party; Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS), Justice and Prosperity Party; Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), National Mandate Party; Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB), Crescent and Star Party; Partai Bintang Reformasi (PBR), Star Party of Reform; Partai Damai Sejahtera (PDS), Prosperity and Peace Party; the military received automatically 38 seats from 1999-2004.

Source: KPU.

Islamic and Islamist parties have arguably stronger social roots, in particular those with links to mass organisations and social milieus where people with similar backgrounds, outlooks and lifestyles tend to have almost similar political preferences.

PKB, the party of the fourth Indonesian president, Abdurrahman Wahid, evolved out of the largest mass organisation, the – according to its own figures – 40 million members strong, traditionalist Islamic NU (Nahdatul Ulama, 'renaissance of *ulama*'). NU and PKB are not identical. During elections for example, a whole range of 'NU parties' take part. Only a strong minority of NU members actually vote for PKB, but the connections between NU and PKB in terms of general outlook, leadership personnel and political visions is obvious. NU, founded at the beginning of the 20th century, participated as political party in the first national elections in 1955 and was one of the four strongest forces in the parliament. The *ulama* of NU (and in PKB) are often owners and principals of Muslim boarding schools (*pesantren*), most of them located in rural Central and East Java. They belong to a religious milieu which

grew over centuries and is characterised by strong loyalties between teachers, students and the neighboring population. The enduring networks build an ideal base for political mobilisation. PKB as an organisation – in particular with regards to Max Weber's bureaucracy concept – is relatively loosely structured. Because of the association with a specific social milieu, usually referred to as 'traditionalist', the degree of institutionalisation is high: PKB stands good chances to stay on for a long time. Identification of followers is large; the party is through NU permanently active even in rural areas of Java.

The other Muslim party with clear connections to an Islamic mass organisation is PAN, the antagonist of PKB. PAN is linked to the urban, modernist Islamic organisation Muhammadiyah, founded even before NU and with a mass membership of some 35 million – again according to their own data. PAN is more professional than PKB since in their leadership numerous Western-educated intellectuals like former chairman Amien Rais dominate.

Two parties of a new type are Partai Demokrat (Democrat Party) of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the Justice and Prosperity Party, PKS. Both of them do not have predecessors in the 1950s or the New Order. PKS is an efficiently organised, Islamist cadre party. Breach of party discipline concerning moral behaviour or corruption are severely punished. Cadres are mostly young, well-educated men, and the party combines in a unique way Western management techniques and Islamist indoctrination.⁶ In contrast to them, Partai Demokrat is almost completely dependent on Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. PD was set up as a vehicle for the first direct presidential elections. PD has no real platform, is loosely structured and will perhaps just survive as long as Susilo stays in office.

The big political parties have constructed election and party laws with an eye to their own interests. They banned individual or non-party candidatures at all levels. Regional parties are not allowed, with Aceh as the only exception. The whole system of proportional representation strengthens the hold of central party leaderships. According to Law 23/2003, only political parties or coalitions of political parties that obtained 3 percent of the seats in the parliament or 5 percent of the votes in the 2004 parliamentary elections are allowed to nominate pairs of candidates for the presidential elections. In 2009 the minimum will be 15 percent of the seats and 20 percent of the votes.

In most parties crucial decisions are made by some core executive members, usually loyal to one charismatic leader. Usually, regulations on how to conduct party congresses are unclear and are prone to manipulation (Notosusanto 2005). Almost all parties have their power cen-

⁶ Interviews in Jakarta with Zulkiflimansyah (PKS), 6.10.2005, and Hidayat Nur Wahid (PKS), 10.10.2005.

tre in Jakarta and chastise recalcitrant members. A means to do so is recalling⁷ parliamentarians, that is to terminate their mandate and replace them. Furthermore, Megawati still has the right to decide in vital matters without consulting the executive council. The last congress in Bali in 2005 was characterised by the sole candidacy of Megawati and limited time for debating her accountability speech. Party critics were systematically silenced even ahead of the convention.⁸ In the PKB the Advisory Board (Dewan Syuro) stands in many respects above the executive council (Dewan Tanfidz). Even the candidates for the Dewan Tanfidz have to get the acknowledgement of the Dewan Syuro beforehand (Notosusanto 2005).

Numerous cases of corruption in district, provincial and national parliaments have been revealed. The financing of parties in general is dubious, many of them rely for campaigning on unknown financiers, and regulations to control these external cash flows are seldom enforced. Membership fees are mostly insignificant as is public funding. Entrepreneurs can presumably dictate (or 'influence') the stance of parties on specific issues. In recent years some businessmen have even become party chiefs, for example Yusuf Kalla (Golkar) and Sutrisno Bachir (PAN).

Moreover, there are indications that the rootedness in social milieus is slowly eroding (Ufen 2006). During the presidential elections in 2004 a trend towards personalisation (Mujani/Liddle 2006) due to the impact of the mass media, and detraditionalisation was evident. Nevertheless, because of processes like Islamisation and the politicisation of religious issues, some of these tendencies seem to be counterbalanced; that means traditionalist milieus are replaced by no less politicised modernist ones.

The first direct elections of regional heads (governors, district chiefs, and mayors) which started in 2005, have strengthened the local and regional leaderships in relation to the national party executive, but at the same time have weakened local and regional party leaders in comparison to the candidates. Most of them did not have a strong party background but were chosen among independent civil servants or businessmen despite the fact that parties had the right to nominate (Rinakit 2005; Mietzner 2007). At this level candidates opted for those parties offering them the best conditions. Clientelist structures, more often than not on a pure monetary base, predominated (Hadiz 2004).

Nonetheless, a medium to high degree of party and party system institutionalisation is achieved in Indonesia, where the party system is characterised by relatively clear cleavages. Many parties are rooted in social milieus. These linkages provide a comparatively strong in-

⁷ Article 12 of the Law No. 31/2002 on political parties states that party members who are elected legislative members can be dismissed from the legislative body if they lose their membership in their respective political parties.

⁸ Interview with Sukowaluyo (PDI-P), 4.10.2005. See also: Gerakan Pembaruan PDI Perjuangan 2005.

fusion of values and foster, in spite of recent counter-tendencies, a fair routinisation. There is a marked continuity among party alternatives reaching back to the 1950s.

4. The Philippines: The Power of Political Clans

Even if most Indonesian political parties are badly organised and have weak platforms, their level of institutionalisation is high in comparison to most parties in the Philippines and Thailand because of linkages to mass organisation and/or social milieus.

The largest political parties in the Philippines are characterised by a lack of meaningful platforms, by a high frequency of party-switching, short-term coalition-building, factionalism, as well as numerous dissolutions and re-emergences (Rocamora 1998 and 2000; Teehankee 2002 and 2006; Arlegue/Coronel 2003). The parties are mostly inactive in between elections, membership figures are low as are levels of organisation. The Omnibus Election Code even allows parties to nominate non-members as candidates.

There is no general party law in the Philippines. Parties have to present financial reports only during elections, and violations are seldom penalised since the election commission COMELEC has limited enforcement capacities. Not unlike Indonesia, parties have to establish branches in most regions, but again, these regulations are rarely implemented. In 2001, 24 national parties existed, and in addition 162 parties were registered for the party-list elections.

As a result of it, the party landscape is labyrinthine. Scores of parties with almost similar, but meaningless names compete in a highly complex election system every three years. The majority of them are just a few years old – the Liberal Party, founded in 1946, is the only exception.

One of the main reasons for this fluidity is the specific social structure, that is, the predominance of families or clans, who skillfully transferred their wealth and power based on haciendas into the urban financial and industrial spheres (Hutchcroft/Rocamora 2002). The major parties are still under the control of a few dozen of these dynasties, only supplemented by some professionals as well as TV, movie and sport stars.⁹

From 1907 until 1946 the Nacionalista Party (NP, founded in 1907) dominated Philippine politics. Power struggles arose among two factions in the party: between followers of Quezon and those of Osmeña. After independence in 1946, a two-party system took shape. The

⁹ Cp. Rocamora 2000: 'Philippine political parties cannot be understood outside of their development in relation to the Philippines' presidential form of government, the nature of local-central government relations and elections. Most importantly, they are best understood in relation to political factions and political clans.'

two contenders, NP and LP (Liberal Party, formerly a wing of NP) were clientelistic elite parties. After 1972 and the announcement of martial law, elections were disallowed for six years. Manipulated elections in 1978 for a rubber-stamp parliament were won by Marcos's KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, New Society Movement) which never reached the organisational density of Golkar in Indonesia, which was supposedly one of the paragons of the Philippine president. Not before the early 1980s, when Marcos's power increasingly crumbled, could an opposition emerge. It was able to gain 61 out of 183 seats in slightly competitive elections.¹⁰

With the ouster of Marcos and the beginning of democratisation in 1986, for a short time a polarisation materialised between followers of Marcos and of Corazon Aquino. Since the parties of the left boycotted the elections, political conflicts were moderate. Both camps were dominated by old elites and in the following years the 'reform versus status quo' cleavage vanished almost completely. Parties with elaborated political platforms such as the leftist Akbayan or Bayan Muna have gained access to the national parliament only because of the introduction of the party-list system in 1998.

Usually, elections and political parties in the Philippines are analyzed with reference to patron-client models (see for instance: Landé 1996). According to that approach politics is essentially based on dyadic, vertically-oriented, and unequal relations between patrons and clients. That applies to internal party structures and to the relationship between parliamentarians and electors. This theoretical framework is being criticised in recent years because dominance is reified. Critics underline that parties function in many ways more like political machines, and they stress that the underlying consensus model of patron-client relations does not take into account the sheer violence: Sidel (1999) for instance speaks of 'bosses' and compares them with warlords and mafiosi. Election campaigning for example is characterised by a relatively high incidence of violence.

Most parties in the Philippines are founded by presidential candidates. The LDP under Aquino (who was herself not a party member), Laban ng Masang Pilipino (LAMP) under Estrada, and Lakas under Ramos and Macapagal-Arroyo tended to attract members of other parties after election victories. Lakas-NUCD-UMDP-KAMPI (since 2001: Lakas-CMD; or shortly: Lakas) is a fusion of four parties. In 1992 Fidel Ramos, after not being nominated by the LDP as presidential candidate, engineered the fusion of Partido Lakas Tao (Lakas) with the NUCD (founded in 1984) in order to secure registration with the legally prescribed

¹⁰ Before 1986, opposition parties were allowed to organise only in specific regions. That was one of the reasons for the development of a multi-party system after the ouster of Marcos in 1986 (Rüland 2003, 472). According to Choi (2001) this multipartism is mainly the result of the decision to limit the tenure of the presidency. This is the decisive institutional difference between the current and the pre-Marcos government system.

number of party branches. The new party was defeated in the 1992 elections for the House of Representatives, but won the presidency. Afterwards, scores of MPs switched to Ramos's party.

After the elections of 1998 Lakas controlled the majority in the House of Representatives,¹¹ but lost the presidency to Estrada. His coalition LAMMP (Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino, Struggle of the Nationalist Filipino Masses, comprising LDP, NPC and PMP, Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Party of the Philippine Masses) was quickly able to attract MPs from Lakas.

Another case in point was the election in 2004 (see table 3). Lakas, despite having won presidential elections and the majority in the House of Representatives, soon began to crumble. KAMPI (Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino) had until mid-August attracted 35 members. Together with those MPs with double memberships ('Lakas-KAMPI' and 'NPC-KAMPI') the number was 67. In this case, it was the task of KAMPI to counterbalance José de Venecia, the speaker of the House of Representatives.¹²

The concept of voting for a party – and not just for politicians – is still fairly unknown in the Philippines. Even the notion of party government is generally absent:

Presidential administrations are largely autonomous from political parties. (...) political parties are more dependent on the government (in the form of patronage and government appointments), than the government is dependent on the support of political parties (Teehankee 2006: 238).

Multiple party memberships indicate the weak loyalty of politicians to parties. The most prominent example is President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a founding member of KAMPI, who was a candidate for Lakas-NUCD, and is honorary chairwoman of the Liberal Party, once the vehicle of her father, the former president.

An important reason for party-switching and the shift from one coalition to another are *pork barrels*, i.e. special financial resources controlled by the president (as *Countryside Development Funds* and *Congressional Initiative Allocations*). They can be used inter alia for the more or less legal maintenance of networks. Only 40% of the expenses from the presidential development funds trickle down to the local level; the remainder is lost on the way through party and administrative instances (Arlegue/Coronel 2003: 225). Moreover, the president has the capability to deliver around 100,000 jobs.

¹¹ In 1998 Lakas-NUCD received 111 seats, LAMMP 55, die LP 15, die NPC 9 and other parties and independent candidates 16 seats. In addition, 14 mandates were distributed via the party-list.

¹² Vgl.: D. Velasco: 'As Bad as it Gets: Political Parties Making a Mockery of Democratic Institutions'; www.ipd.ph/features/2Q_2004/as_bad_as_it_gets.html (accessed 5.9.2006).

Table 3: Seats in the House of Representatives 2001 and 2004

Party or Coalition	Seats 2001	Party or Coalition	Seats 2004
People Power Coalition (PPC)		K-4 (Koalisyon ng Katapatan at Karanasan sa Kinabukasan, Coalition of Truth and Experience for Tomorrow)	
Lakas NUCD-UMDP	86	Lakas-CMD	93
LP (Liberal Party)	20	LP	34
		NPC (some of them are now members of K-4)	54
Force of the Masses (Puwersa ng Masa, PnM)		KNP (Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, Coalition of United Filipinos)	
NPC (Nationalist People's Coalition)	54		
LDP (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Struggle for Democratic Filipinos)	21	LDP	11
Others	28		20
Total	209 (+15 via party list)		212 (+24 via party list)

Note: The 1st Chamber, the House of Representatives, consists of maximally 265 members. Since 1998 they are determined with a segmented system: 212 MPs are elected for a term of three years in single-member constituencies with a plurality system, the others (at most 53) on a party-list, that is a proportional system. The 2nd Chamber, the Senate, consists of 24 members, half of whom are directly voted into office with a plurality system every three years (the whole country as one constituency).

Sources: www.electionguide.org/election.php?ID=226 (accessed 6.4.2006); www.fes.org.ph/el_ph.htm (accessed 6.4.2006).

Most parties are managed in Manila and are not supposed to exist for a long time. The presidential candidate and some national political leaders determine the selection of candidates. Parties, prior to the polls, are political machines. They are often established or activated by presidential candidates. In the parliament they serve as interest organisations of MPs seeking easy access to financial sources. Since the president does not control an efficient party machinery, he or she is dependent on local elites when it comes to voter mobilisation (Teehankee 2006: 250). Campaigning is focused on the candidates, not on the parties.

Another reason for the weak institutionalisation of parties are the enormous campaign expenses. Parties are financed by their MPs, their candidates, and sponsors, most of whom are Chinese. The party apparatus is financially ill-equipped in between elections. The congresses of Lakas, for example, could not take place every two years as stated in official party regulations because of a lack of financial resources. Rocamora (2000) states that two years after the 1998 elections LAMMP did not have a party constitution, officers or a headquarters. Consequently, the party fell apart after a short time.

In terms of value infusion and behavioural routinisation Philippine parties are feebly institutionalised. Since Lakas-CMD, LDP and LP meanwhile have existed for a few years, a certain routinisation could become effective in the future. Nevertheless, major shortcomings of Phil-

ippine parties persist. The party system is with reference to 'stability of interparty competition' hardly institutionalised.

5. Thailand: Local Networks, Factions, and 'Democratic Authoritarianism'¹³

In Thailand political party activities began after World War II but were soon ended by the coup in 1947. In 1951, after a short period of pseudo-parliamentary rule, political parties were banned. Following a short parliamentary phase from 1955-57 political parties again were forbidden under Field Marshal Sarit, then under Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat until 1969. In 1971, the next coup and ban on parties followed. Political parties only flourished in 1975/76 and played a central, though somewhat limited role in the semi-democratic regime of the 1980s. Only with the democratisation in 1992 did they take centre stage.

Thai parties are like those in the Philippines: poorly institutionalised (McCargo 1997; Bünte 2000; Orathai 2002; Thornton 2003; Ockey 2003). A number of parties were established, won seats, but quickly vanished: examples are Palang Dharma, Social Action Party, Thai Citizen Party, and recently Chart Pattana Party and New Aspiration Party. Social cleavages are only rudimentarily represented in the parliament (Ockey 2005). Exceptions are, for instance, regional cleavages: the Democrat Party has a stronghold in the South, whilst the New Aspiration Party achieved their best results in the Northeast of the country. The polarisation between 'angels' and 'devils', i.e. between pro-democratic and status quo-oriented parties in 1992 no longer plays a role.

Generally, parties are only shallowly rooted and organisationally weak outside of Bangkok. The linkage between politicians and voters is provided by local political cliques (*phuak*, *phakphuak*) via vote canvassers (*hua khanaen*) (Nelson 2001: 315ff).¹⁴ The *phuak* are informal groupings and consist of headmen, members of the local administration, and councillors. They may cover the whole province or just parts of it. Sometimes single persons or families form the core of the *phuak*, sometimes different groups control the territory. MPs belong to *phuak* or are selected as their leaders. These local elites gained importance in particular in the 1980s and 1990s:

[...] the 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of powerful local political-bureaucratic and business alliances, along with a significant degree of autonomy from Bangkok

¹³ This term was coined by Thitinan Pongsudhirak (2003).

¹⁴ With reference to Nelson (2001) the term *phuak* is preferred since the concept of 'godfathers' (*chao pho*) tends to be ill-defined. 'Godfathers', conceived of as local strongmen engaged in criminal activities, do not represent the typical politician. See on this also the recent case study by Nishizaki (2005).

politics. Like the local bosses of the Philippines, these were to take instrumental control over local machineries of power (Heryanto/Hadiz 2005: 269f).

In many cases, these local and regional patronage networks weaken the central party leadership and cause widespread factionalism:

Parties have been extremely decentralised, especially in terms of finance and constitutional regulation. Intra-party factions, led by regional personages, have provided the lion's share of party financing and have dominated candidate nomination decisions (Chambers 2006, 309).

The level of party institutionalisation in Thailand is generally low. Nevertheless, huge differences between parties exist. Chart Thai, founded in 1974, for example, is considered to be a 'law and order' party. In 1991/92 it supported Suchinda and his suppression of popular protests. The structure is not unlike that of parties of notables:

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

The Palang Dharma Party was established in 1988 by Major General Chamlong, at that time the governor of Bangkok, and was completely focused on him as a charismatic leader. Chamlong stood as a devout ascetic for 'clean' and succeeded in recruiting highly motivated members of the Santi Asoke sect. The factionalism in the party between 'Believers' and 'Careerists' rested upon differences of outlook – unlike in most other Thai parties. The decline of the party was effected inter alia by Chamlong's resistance to routinise his charismatic domination (McCargo 1997: 125ff).

The Democrat Party was founded in 1946 and is therefore the only one with a long tradition. It was the first party able to serve for a full legislative period until 2001. It was actively involved in the student protests in 1973 and backed, although hesitantly, the demonstrations against General Suchinda at the beginning of the 1990s. At the height of the Asian crisis it maintained a neoliberal economic policy close to IMF formulae. It still maintains a major base in the South, and possesses a strong backing among the urban middle class. Regular replacement of party leaders hints at a lively intra-party democratic culture. The Democrat Party is the best institutionalised in Thailand and tries to establish branches in all constituencies (McCargo 1997: 122ff).

The weak institutionalisation has motivated the institution of large-scale constitutional amendments in 1997 (Case 2001: 534ff; Chantornvong 2002). Members of parliament who become ministers have to abdicate their mandate, and the number of ministries was limited to 36. A candidature is allowed if a person has been for at least 90 days a member of the party for which he runs as a candidate. Since the Prime Minister can dissolve the parliament 45 days in advance of elections, he has the opportunity to prevent unsatisfied members of his own party from becoming candidates for the opposition. Thus, the predominance of the ruling party is consolidated. Moreover, the creation of single-member constituencies disadvantaged smaller parties because more money has to be 'invested' (Albritton 2006: 142; Chambers 2006: 320). The Organic Law on Political Parties and the Organic Law on Elections, both a result of the constitutional amendments of 1997, entailed clear regulations on the decision-making in and the financing of political parties. Furthermore, it buttresses the power of the election commission which now has the chance to enforce a rerun of voting in individual constituencies.

The constitutional amendments were conceived as a means to work against the typical instability and high fragmentation of the Thai party system. However, after the elections of 2001 and 2005 these reforms are to be assessed ambivalently. Media mogul and billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra won with his new party Thai Rak Thai ('Thais love Thais', TRT) (McCargo/Pathmanand 2005: 70ff) 248 out of 500 seats in the House of Representatives in the January 2001 polls (see table 4).

According to Nelson (2004: 368), the TRT is a professional but at the same time traditional Thai, *ad hoc*-founded leader party with a populist orientation whose members are administered like the customers of a company without having the right to participate in decision-making processes. TRT is a typical example for Thai parties since it has been established just 2½ years prior to the elections and because it is almost completely controlled by one person: Thaksin Shinawatra. He succeeded for the reason that he 'bought' numerous politicians and local bosses.¹⁵ His feat has been made easier by the reform of election laws, especially by the construction of single-member constituencies which benefits wealthy parties. The TRT fits well into the model of business-firm parties (Hopkin/Paolucci 1999). These are market oriented, they 'sell' their 'policy products', have more or less direct control of the media, use mass communication expertise, and are often dominated by one person. One only has to consider the striking parallels between Thaksin and Berlusconi.

¹⁵ The 'purchase' of parliamentarians was facilitated by the Election Commission, which did not implement the regulation dictating that switching to other parties automatically entails the nullification of the mandate.

Table 4: Seats in the House of Representatives (1996, 2001 and 2005)

Party	Seats					
	1996		2001		2005	
	(393)	%	(500)	%	(500)	%
New Aspiration Party	125	31.8	36	7.2	*	*
Democrat Party	123	31.3	128	25.6	96	19.2
Chart Pattana	52	13.2	29	5.8	*	*
Chart Thai	39	9.9	41	8.2	25	5.0
Social Action Party	20	5.1	1	0.2	-	-
Thai Citizen Party	18	4.6	0	0.0	-	-
Mahachon	-	-	-	-	2	0.4
Thai Rak Thai	-	-	248	49.6	377	75.4

Notes: The 500 members of the 1st Chamber are elected under the terms of a segmented system: 400 of them according to a majority system in single-member constituencies, 100 with a proportional party-list system. The 200 members of the 2nd Chamber, the Senate, are not allowed to be party-members and are elected for six years in a relative majority system in single- and multi-member constituencies (depending on their size).

* Fusion with Thai Rak Thai.

Sources: Orathai 2002; Chambers 2006.

The government is no longer prisoner of provincial politicians, the bureaucracy and the military (Nelson 2004: 373). According to Chambers (2005: 514), the relation between Thaksin and the party's faction is one between a principal and agents, whereas formerly the factions would play the role of principals.

But Thaksin's success is not just based on his enormous wealth. For the first time in Thailand a party ran with clearly defined – critics would say populist – promises and gave campaigning a programmatic dimension.¹⁶

Thai Rak Thai is dominantly financed by Thaksin and his wife. According to figures of the ECT (Election Commission of Thailand) she has donated 240 million Baht in 2000. TRT, which pays their MPs additional salaries, has won more than three quarters of the mandates in 2005. Nonetheless, it is not well institutionalised. It comprises at the moment 12 factions. The biggest of them consists of 60-70 representatives led by Snoh Thienthong from the New Aspiration Party. Snoh was taken in with his retinue of provincial bosses by Thaksin in 2000. In the meantime, the size of the party has become problematic since Thaksin faces difficulties in tying up the heterogeneous alliance of factions.¹⁷ According to Chambers (2005: 502),

¹⁶ Thaksin campaigned with nationalist slogans and a comparatively concrete program. He promised to provide one million Baht for each of the 78,000 villages, a three-year debt moratorium for farmers, and cheap health care.

¹⁷ On the apportionment of cabinet posts to individual factions: Chambers (2006: 299).

parties tend to have a maximum threshold of seats after which they break apart. Since it is the primary goal of parties to secure the greatest number of ministerial posts, there is a point where not all factions can be satisfied. In Thailand, the plateau is between eighty and ninety. In 2004 TRT claimed a membership of some 15 million, yet party organisation was rudimentary. In contrast to the Democrat Party, which had 193 branches in 400 election constituencies, TRT comprised just 12 regional coordination centers (Phongpaichit/Baker 2004: 191).

The fragility of the Thai party system was all the more evident in 2006 when Thaksin stepped down after mass demonstrations lasting for weeks. National elections were boycotted by opposition parties and later annulled by the Constitutional Court.

In sum, Thai parties in general are organisationally and programmatically, that is, in terms of behavioural routinisation and value infusion, weak. They hardly exist below the national level. People vote for influential leaders, not for parties or their representatives. Local leaders are powerful, and parties are characterised by a high degree of factionalism. TRT is the curious exception with some strengths engendered by money and populist policy initiatives. However, most of the main weaknesses of Thai parties also apply to TRT. The party system was before Thaksin regarding the stability of interparty competition weakly institutionalised. Under Thaksin alternatives vanished almost completely.

6. The Causes for Variations in Party and Party System Institutionalisation

Regarding the dimensions of party and party system institutionalisation mentioned at the beginning of this article almost all Southeast Asian parties are weakly institutionalised, in particular with reference to their behavioural routinisation. Indonesia is exceptional in that the patterns of competition are relatively regular and a few of the big parties are rooted in society.¹⁸ Patterns of party competition manifest regularly, and the voter-party linkage is stronger. It is highly probable that the major dynamics of inter-party politics will remain the same for a long time. Despite pronounced struggles between party factions, which led in some cases to the emergence of new groupings, parties are established in the public mind as representatives of specific streams (*aliran*) or milieus. Fundamental reconfigurations are hardly conceivable. In contrast, a party system as such is almost non-existent in the Philippines and Thailand. The TRT or Lakas, to name only two of the most successful parties, may easily fall apart.

But what accounts for the different levels of institutionalisation? Two interdependent factors seem to be of particular importance. Firstly, the early political mobilisation and the resulting

¹⁸ See also: Aspinall (2005: 123).

translation of social cleavages into the party system (see table 5). In the case of Indonesia, political parties and mass organisations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama arose long before independence. These highly politicised, mostly anti-colonial, nationalist organisations were socially entrenched and capable of mobilising large parts of the population. The early institutionalisation of societal cleavages entailed after independence the crystallisation of a party system with relatively stable patterns of competition. Secondly, the strength of local elites. These are still fractured and relatively weak in Indonesia. Causes for that are, besides the above mentioned early mobilisation and translation of cleavages into the party system, inter alia the heritage of New Order centralism, and particularly the lack of a strong locally-based bourgeoisie. In contrast, institutionalisation is hampered in Thailand and the Philippines by the existence of highly influential local and regional elites, whereas in Indonesia strong countervailing civil society forces alleviate local strongmen rule.¹⁹ Whilst in the Philippines military, administrative and economic elites were able to dominate parties since their inception, in Indonesia politicians with lower and middle class backgrounds are more capable of rising through the ranks of party organisations. In Thailand, strong local elites arose in the 1980s along with the establishment of a semi-democracy with competitive elections. In contrast to the Philippines, these elites emerged relatively late and in a parliamentary system with a centralised bureaucracy where local executive powers are wielded by civilian bureaucrats. The local elites dominated multi-member constituencies and were thus able to take control of factions, parties, and ministries in Bangkok in fluid coalition governments (Sidel 1999: 150f). Although Thaksin was able to hold sway over these local elites, party system institutionalisation was blocked by a de facto one-party rule.

For Sidel, the emergence of bosses is essentially dependent on a specific sequencing, i.e. the imposition of formal electoral democratic institutions upon an underdeveloped state apparatus at an early phase of capitalist development.²⁰ From the beginning, strong local elites have captured political parties as power bases. Elected officials have gained executive control over local state agencies. If we translate this assumption of Sidel into the analysis of political parties, we witness in the Philippines and in Thailand (again: Thaksin's resurrection of the political centre is a new development with unforeseeable consequences) the subordination of the national party apparatus to local and regional leaders with disastrous effects on

¹⁹ See also: Sidel 2004.

²⁰ 'Most distinctive and decisive, however, was the subordination of this relatively underdeveloped state apparatus to elected officials by the American colonial regime; this contrasted sharply with the bureaucratisation and insulation of colonial states elsewhere in the region and combined with the onset of 'primitive accumulation' to facilitate the emergence of bossism in the Philippines in the early twentieth century' (Sidel 1999: 13).

party and party system institutionalisation. In contrast, in Indonesia local mafias were quickly subordinated to centralised national (party-)state apparatuses.

Table 5: Variations in Party and Party System Institutionalisation

	System of Government/ Electoral System (1st Chamber)	Translation of Social Cleavages into the Party System	Strength of Local Elites	Institutionalisation of Political Parties: value infusion/ behavioural routinisation	Institutionalisation of Party System: stability of interparty competition
Indonesia (1949-57)	parliamentarian/proportional representation	strong	low to medium	high/medium	low to medium
Indonesia after 1998	presidential (until 2004 semi- presidential)/proportional representation	medium to strong	weak, but strengthening	high/medium	medium to high
Philippines (1946-72)	presidential/plurality	weak	strong	low to medium/ low to medium	low to medium
Philippines after 1986	presidential/segmented since 1998 (mainly plurality)	weak	strong	low/low	low
Thailand	parliamentarian/segmented since 2001 (mainly plurality)	weak	since the 1980s strong, weakened under Thaksin	low/low to medium	low

It is more difficult to assess the impact of formal institutions. With reference to their five case studies (India, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand) Rüländ, Jürgenmeyer, Nelson and Ziegenhain (2005: 271) state that the party system reflected in the legislature 'is primarily an expression of the extent to which societal cleavages are transformed into political parties but also of the electoral system' whereas there is in most cases no clear causal link between the system of government and party cohesion.

But even the effects of electoral systems in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines are, I would argue, of limited importance.²¹ The multipartism in Indonesia, for example, is not simply the result but at least as much the cause of the proportional system. According to neo-institutionalists, institutions are endogenous, i.e. '[...] their form and their functioning depend on the conditions under which they emerge and endure' (Przeworski 2004: 527). The choice of the proportional representation system after independence and again in 1998/99 was due to the high number of relevant political actors. The introduction of a majority system, in contrast, seems to be more probable if there are just two major players (Nohlen 2004, 408 and 415ff).

This is not to fully deny the significance of formal institutional factors. The design of proportional representation in Indonesia for example strengthens political parties, in particular their central executives in Jakarta. Parliamentarians have a much weaker power base than in

²¹ Nelson (2007: 133) is equally pessimistic in discussing institutional changes in Thailand.

the Philippines and Thailand where congressmen and MPs are elected directly with a majority system. The direct election of regional heads in Indonesia since 2005 may, in the long run, change at least the standing of local elites. The thesis that proportional representation tends to buttress the institutionalisation of parties is at least partly vindicated by experiences in Indonesia and in the Philippines (with the party-list). Besides, the limited influence of presidentialism and parliamentarianism can be deducted cautiously from the somewhat similar deficiencies of political parties and the party systems in Thailand and the Philippines.

Current parties and party systems in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines can be further compared to those in Indonesia in the 1950s, in the Philippines from 1946-72, and in Malaysia. Indonesia in the 1950s was a parliamentary democracy with proportional representation where social cleavages were strongly translated into the party system. Besides the still salient cleavages between secularists and followers of political Islam and between traditionalist and modernist Muslims there were others, at least as marked conflict lines. On the one hand between Java and the Outer Islands, on the other hand, between capital and labor, the latter being represented by the Communist Party (PKI), one of the four big parties at that time. Administrative centralisation in the 1950s was much more evident, prompting from 1956 onwards violent regionalist movements. To sum up, institutionalisation of political parties and the party system was not unlike today, but the formal institutional setting (electoral regime, system of government, administrative centre-periphery relations) was quite different. This suggests that the cleavage structure and its translation into the party system have had and still have the most significant impact on the level of institutionalisation whereas formal institutions function as weak intervening variables.

Interestingly, in the Philippines formal political institutions in the two democratic periods are almost similar. Political parties and the party systems in both periods were weakly institutionalised with respect to rootedness, but the outward appearance of the party systems were different. From 1946-72 a classic two-partism – almost a copy of the US American model – prevailed, whilst today a fluid multipartism is characteristic. With two dominating parties (NP and LP) the party system was with reference to ‘continuity among party alternatives’ better institutionalised as it is today. But the two-partism was fluid insofar as politicians frequently switched from one party to the other. Hopping from the NP to the LP or vice versa, sometimes for a few times consecutively, was a widespread phenomenon. The two parties had the same shallow platforms and thus were instruments for presidents and cliques, but did not reflect societal cleavages. Consequently, the elites did not face challenges to their rule. After 1972 Marcos succeeded in destroying the NP and in building his own vehicle, the KBL. After 1986 at least one new cleavage structured the emerging party system to a certain degree, namely the divide between reformers and reactionary pro-Marcos forces.

Because of new parties built under Marcos and of new cleavages, the two-party system of the 1950s could not materialise again.

The third interesting test case is Malaysia.²² The level of institutionalisation of parties and the party system is very high in comparison to the other Southeast Asian countries, local elites are weak, and social cleavages are strongly translated into the party system. All these variables are reminiscent of Indonesia now, but formal institutions (parliamentarianism and plurality voting) are completely different.

In sum, a high degree of party and party system institutionalisation is dependent on the effective translation of social cleavages into the party system. This again is contingent upon the power of local elites. Formal institutional factors should not be overestimated. Whereas it can be assumed that an electoral system based on proportional representation enhances the translation of social cleavages and party institutionalisation, it is by far not a necessary relation.

²² I am referring to West Malaysia for the situation in East Malaysia is more complex.

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