

character and lack of urban and communal impact of the anti-French Resistance in the 1945–54 period, plus the worsening of the leftist threat *after* South Vietnam's post-1955 era of authoritarian Leviathans began, combined to preclude the emergence of a protection pact and robust political institutions. Finally, evidence from Burma echoes the lesson from South Vietnam that nationalist revolutions tend to splinter rather than unify elites, and suggests additionally that regional rebellions tend to build narrow elite coalitions and militarized authoritarian Leviathans. Subsequent military cohesion has sustained authoritarian rule in Burma, despite the absence of the sort of robust state and party institutions that have stabilized nondemocratic politics in Malaysia and Singapore – but only through levels of murderous military violence against fellow elites (e.g., Buddhist monks, university students) not witnessed in authoritarian Leviathans able to order power in multiple ways.

Chapter 9 concludes the book with some initial thoughts on the applicability of its arguments beyond Southeast Asia. Broadly analogous examples can be located from all three political trajectories, seemingly supporting the deductive intuitions upon which my causal framework was built. It also appears that fragmentation rather than domination or militarization has been the predominant postcolonial trajectory, affirming this book's stress on factionalism as the defining feature of politics. Elite collective action has been the exception rather than the rule, while the never-ending factionalism of unstable dictatorships and fragile democracies continues to characterize most of the postcolonial world. This does not mean that Madison's dream of democratic Leviathans is unattainable – it simply means that in most postcolonial settings, effective and democratic government were not secured simultaneously, and will have to be secured sequentially. The ultimate lesson of Southeast Asian political development is that state strength has been a product of robust mass politics, not authoritarian politics.⁷⁸ State-building in other postcolonial regions will seemingly require the revitalization of mass political engagement, not the reentrenchment of authoritarian regimes.

⁷⁸ Slater (2008a).

States and the Regimes That Run Them

Introduction

We are driven by a common desire to understand what makes for good governments and how to build them. Good governments are those that are (1) representative and accountable to the population they are meant to serve, and (2) effective – that is, capable of protecting the population from violence, ensuring security of property rights, and supplying other public goods that the populace needs and desires.

Margaret Levi¹

The state... is the vexed institution that is the ground of both our freedoms and our unfreedoms.

James Scott²

Few if any political challenges are as persistently portentous as those of democratization and state-building. Wherever citizens are denied the opportunity to remove government officials through competitive elections, they lack an important (if imperfect) institutional means for pressuring public authority to govern in ways commensurate with popular interests. Wherever the state is hamstrung by particularistic demands, or lacks infrastructural power, citizens chronically lack access to even the most basic public goods. It should thus come as no surprise that state-building and democratization have long represented core theoretical concerns in comparative politics.

This is a book about Southeast Asia – but not Southeast Asia alone. As an examination of states and regimes, it speaks to issues that engage the interest of scholars and practitioners working on every region of the postcolonial world. Given the importance of democratization and state-building in the shaping of “the West,” these topics continue to attract the attention of students of European and American political development as well. Before turning our focus to the specifics of Southeast Asia, therefore, it is important to ask what we know about

¹ Levi (2006): 5.

² Scott (1998): 7.

states and regimes in general. Only then can this book's arguments be properly situated and its theoretical contributions appropriately assessed.

We have learned a great deal about why authoritarian regimes do or do not democratize, and why states do or do not effectively assert authority. Yet the three most compelling theoretical literatures on the core themes of this book – those on (1) war and state-building, (2) democratic coalitions and transitions, and (3) authoritarian institutions – cannot better explain variation in state and regime institutions than my own framework centered on contentious politics and elite collective action. In arguing that states arise from war, democracy emerges from elite splits and cross-class coalitions, and dictatorships endure through powerful ruling parties, comparative scholars have placed elite collective action at the heart of their arguments – yet without recognizing the overlap. Our rightful concern with theorizing *different types of institutions* has blinded us to the fact that their strength can be predicated upon *similar types of coalitions*. One broad analytic purpose of this chapter is to show how elite collective action runs like a common thread through these distinct literatures in comparative politics.

In so doing, I highlight five surprising causal patterns that might prompt political scientists and sociologists to reconsider how state-building and democratization have occurred in other world regions. First, I show that *internal conflicts can make states* to a degree rarely recognized in the state-building literature – but only when they assume the threatening and challenging forms most likely to spur elite collective action in response. Second and relatedly, although successful nation-building is generally presumed to be useful if not essential for successful state-building – indeed, external war is often thought to make strong states by unifying the nation – Southeast Asia shows that *weak nations can produce surprisingly strong states*, and vice versa. Third, I question the focus of the democratization literature on class actors and economic factors in driving mass democratic mobilization, highlighting the central role of *emotive appeals to nationalist and religious sentiments and solidarities* in Southeast Asia's democratization struggles. Fourth, I argue that recent scholarship has overemphasized the importance of economic benefits and has underappreciated the significance of *shared perceptions of endemic threat* in holding authoritarian coalitions together. And fifth, I dispute the notions that strong ruling parties are necessarily the best backstops for authoritarian regimes, and that such institutions typically arise from revolutionary struggles. Instead, I see *counterrevolutionary party, military, and state institutions* as similarly conducive to authoritarian durability because of their shared capacity to order power and sustain elite collective action.

War and the State

Taxation and State Infrastructural Power

He who knows how to listen to [fiscal history's] message here discerns the thunder of world history more clearly than anywhere else.

Joseph Schumpeter³

³ Schumpeter (1954) [1918]: 7.

Taxation has generally been perceived as a *sine qua non* of statehood. Yet most states in the developing world exhibit tremendous difficulty at mobilizing domestic revenue, and some barely manage to collect taxes at all. The consequences of this widespread fiscal powerlessness have been enormous. Throughout much of the postcolonial world, states cannot extract enough revenue from their own populations to escape punishing cycles of unserviceable national debt. Lacking sufficient revenue as well as the knowledge of social conditions that often develops through the revenue collection process, these states often fail to provide even the most rudimentary social services, including basic physical protection from violence, hunger, and disease.

In short, revenue collection may not be a perfect barometer of state power; but it is the next best thing. As Margaret Levi puts it in political science's locus classicus on the subject: "The greater the revenue of the state, the more possible it is to extend rule. Revenue enhances the ability of rulers to elaborate the institutions of the state, to bring more people within the domain of those institutions, and to increase the number and variety of the collective goods provided through the state."⁴ Revenue is thus fundamental to the extension of what Michael Mann calls the state's "infrastructural power," or "the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm."⁵ Since taxation lies at the heart of state infrastructural power, this book will largely rely on revenue data to assess divergence in the capacity of Southeast Asian states.

We must remain as attentive to *how* states generate revenue as to *how much* revenue they generate, however. Different types of taxes entail different political implications and impacts. Assessing a state's *fiscal power* thus requires both quantitative and qualitative measurement. In quantitative terms, I measure fiscal power by the total tax revenue as a share of gross domestic product. More qualitatively, I consider a state's fiscal power to be a function of its shift from indirect means of extraction (i.e., trade and consumption taxes) toward direct forms of taxation (i.e., income and corporate taxes).⁶

The type of taxation is important, first, because direct taxes proved to be the biggest revenue earner of the twentieth century.⁷ Postcolonial states that impose them with some degree of effectiveness have an enormous fiscal advantage over those that cannot. Direct taxes also provide the best measure of a state's power to extract from economic elites. Income tax especially exhibits "the desirable property of being 'equitable,' as it could be collected with progressive rate structures."⁸ Given the highly skewed distribution of incomes that exists in the vast majority

⁴ Levi (1988): 2.

⁵ Mann (1988): 5.

⁶ This four-part typology of taxes – trade, consumption, income, and corporate – derives from Zee (1996).

⁷ Lieberman (2001): 515.

⁸ Ibid. Like many others, Hobson (1997) treats direct taxes as more progressive than indirect taxes by definition.

of developing countries,⁹ postcolonial states must ultimately impose significant taxes on upper groups if they hope to escape the vicious cycle between chronic dependence on externally derived revenues, and the fiscal crises that recur when such outside funds periodically dry up.

This book therefore paints the core challenge of postcolonial state-building as one of *asserting* the state's authority over societal elites, rather than *broadcasting* the state's authority across the broad expanses of national territory. Ever since state-led industrialization fostered the rapid growth of enormous "primate cities" throughout the developing world, societal elites have increasingly made their residence in national capitals, not in hard-to-reach hinterlands. Furthermore, the advent of the United Nations system in 1945 has given existing national borders "juridical" standing, relieving postcolonial states of much of their concern with actively administering their territorial periphery.¹⁰ Extending the state's writ beyond the capital city clearly remains problematic; but postcolonial states are more deeply incapacitated by their general inability to avoid "capture" by those closest to them than by their inability to impose control over those furthest away. *What matters most is not the length of the state's infrastructural reach, but the strength of its infrastructural grip.*

My analysis of state power also departs from existing literature in proposing new causal mechanisms linking taxation and regime type. Many political scientists and economic historians have argued that negotiations between rulers and wealth holders over taxation give rise to "fiscal contracts," in what has been described as "the interlocking iron triangle of revenue extraction, institutional development, and representative politics."¹¹ In Southeast Asia, however, this triangle has proven to be anything but iron. The two states with the most fiscal power in the region – Malaysia and Singapore – are the region's two most durable authoritarian regimes. Yet we lack theoretical guidance on how authoritarian regimes might manage to impose taxation without offering democratic political representation.

Fiscal power and authoritarian durability can prove highly compatible for two reasons. First, when states extract large amounts of revenue from the domestic economy, ruling regimes are the greatest beneficiaries. *It is regimes, after all, that run the state.* With more revenue at their disposal, authoritarian regimes enjoy greater capacity to co-opt potential dissent and to develop and bankroll organizations for social control. A state's infrastructural power provides the very institutional tools that authoritarian regimes need to suppress potential challenges. Strong states facilitate authoritarian consolidation as surely as they facilitate democratic consolidation.¹²

⁹ This ubiquity of inequality leaves me doubtful that variation in this factor might shed much explanatory light on variation in postcolonial political outcomes (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Boix 2003).

¹⁰ R. Jackson (1992).

¹¹ Vandewalle (1998): 20. North and Weingast (1989), Levi (1988), and Bates and Lien (1985) provide the classic arguments on fiscal contracts.

¹² Linz and Stepan (1996) rightly argue that stateness is a necessary condition for workable democracy. Levitsky and Way (forthcoming) provide one of the most explicit theoretical statements that strong states help sustain dictatorship. See also Slater (2008b).

This explains why authoritarian regimes might prove especially durable if they can impose direct taxes on societal elites. But why would upper economic groups be willing to pay taxes to a regime that accepts no democratic electoral controls on its behavior?¹³ The answer, I argue, is that economic elites will do so *if and only if they perceive unbridled mass mobilization as a more imminent threat to their persons, property, and privileges than a strong, centralized state.* And if these elites might support state centralization as a bulwark against political instability, might they not also support open-ended authoritarian rule for the same reason? Under conditions of endemic and unmanageable threat, upper groups become especially liable to provide authoritarian leaders with the resources they need, not only to assert state power, but to stabilize and sustain their regime.

Yet it is state officials, not economic elites, who drive the state-building process. *The bourgeoisie can beckon Leviathan, but not build it.* Hence the most important mechanism through which contentious politics facilitates state-building is by inciting elite collective action within the state apparatus itself. This typically begins with improved coordination and invigorated deployment of the state's coercive apparatus. Only when this proves insufficient for bridling contentious politics should we expect to see the political leadership undertaking the complex and controversial effort to reshape and retool the state's administrative institutions, including its tax-gathering apparatus. In the chapters to follow, we will repeatedly see outbreaks of contentious politics sparking new state efforts to build more cohesive and capable coercive institutions. It will only be where contentious politics assumes endemic and unmanageable forms that we will witness the rise of a highly extractive tax state, grounded in the construction of a newly empowered administrative Leviathan.

Can Internal Conflicts Make States?

For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest.

Thomas Paine

But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order."

Frederick Engels

A benchmark assumption of the literature on state formation is that fiscal power tends to increase amid the presence or imminent threat of political violence. However, the consensus is that extractive capacity grows in response to international rather than domestic conflict. As Charles Tilly famously put it in his mammoth edited volume on state formation in Western Europe: "War made the

¹³ Barzel (2002) suggests that economic elites will only accept the rise of a strong state after devising a vehicle for their own collective action (i.e., a parliament), to prevent predation. I argue that in times of unmanageable mass threat, economic elites might provide resources to public authorities out of desperation, and be forced to hope for the best where state predation is concerned.

state, and the state made war."¹⁴ This view that international warfare stimulated state-building by forcing monarchs to step up revenue collection to meet the rising costs of modern military conflict stands as conventional wisdom in most prominent studies of European fiscal history.¹⁵

If Europe's powerful states arose in response to geopolitical threats, it stands to reason that the postcolonial world is littered with weak states because of the relative rarity of cross-border military conflict since 1945. This reasoning dominates current thinking on state weakness in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁶ Scholars specializing in Latin America and the Middle East have challenged this consensus; yet their analytic focus either remains exclusively on cross-border war,¹⁷ or provides no systematic answers for how different types of conflicts might have divergent political effects.¹⁸ We are thus left pondering the question Miguel Angel Centeno pointedly raises, but ultimately cannot answer: Has the postcolonial world mostly had "the 'wrong' kinds of wars?"¹⁹

Given the greater prevalence of internal than external conflict in the post-1945 era, it behooves scholars to consider whether civil wars can make states in the same way foreign wars evidently did in Europe. Such inquiry seems especially overdue when one considers the recognition by seminal political theorists that the state serves not only to combat foreign enemies, but to contain social conflict – a point around which thinkers as disparate as Paine and Engels could agree. Even a scholar as associated with an "externalist" understanding of state formation as Tilly defines "statemaking" as the process of "attacking and checking competitors and challengers *within* the territory claimed by the state."²⁰ As an empirical matter, Tilly did not portray variation in these internal practices as vital to divergence in European state forms. In defining these early states as protection rackets, Tilly treated such processes as universal, not uneven.²¹ Yet as a theoretical matter, Tilly offers reason to suspect that variation in states' struggles to extend internal protection might help explain divergence in postcolonial state power.

Scattered bits of theoretical argumentation and empirical research suggest that internal conflicts can have an impact on state-building, but these are yet to be woven into any coherent theoretical statement. This book aims to advance this literature by suggesting that *only some types of internal conflicts build states because only some types of internal conflict inspire elite collective action in response.*

¹⁴ Tilly (1975): 42.

¹⁵ See Ertman (1997), Tilly (1992), Downing (1992), and Mann (1988).

¹⁶ For instance, see Herbst (2000).

¹⁷ Barnett (1992) and Gongora (1997).

¹⁸ Centeno (2002, 1997) and Lopez-Alves (2000).

¹⁹ Centeno (1997): 1591–92.

²⁰ Tilly (1992): 96. Emphasis added. Thanks to Jason Brownlee for his suggestions on this front.

²¹ Tilly (1985). The same can be said of North, Wallis, and Weingast's (2009) argument that political order arises from elite efforts to curb social violence – an insight with which this author is in complete agreement. Yet much as Tilly treats all states as similarly racket-based by nature, North, Wallis, and Weingast treat all "natural states" as similarly violent by nature. In contrast, I argue that variation in the causal factor that North et al. treat as universal (types of violence) explains variation in an outcome that Tilly treats as universal (states as protection rackets). Thanks to Sofia Fenner for her helpful thoughts on North et al.'s arguments and their points of overlap and tension with my own.

The most sophisticated theoretical statement in support of the notion that internal conflict can build strong states was written three decades ago by Michael Hechter and William Brustein. As noted in Chapter 1, these authors suggest that elites are unlikely to "jointly surrender their power to a strong state" unless "they live in a politically divided society in which the weaker group can make a credible threat to change the rules of the game."²² Absent credible internal threats, economic elites will vigorously resist paying direct taxes to state authorities, and will attempt to handle any challenges to their status primarily through their own sources of social control, with only minimal assistance from a bare-bones state apparatus.²³ Low-conflict polities tend to be marked by "elite rigidity" and "unrestricted self-dealing" between state officials and economic elites, with each side making only minimally challenging demands of the other.²⁴

Although Hechter and Brustein targeted their argument at scholars placing an "unwarranted emphasis on the exogenous determinants of initial state formation in western European history,"²⁵ they did not suggest that geopolitical conflicts had been unimportant in the European context. Rather, they offered the corrective that internal conflict could serve as a *functional equivalent* for international warfare. This is the perspective adopted here. By arguing that internal conflicts can make states, this book does not reject the finding that external wars can do the same. In the postcolonial world as in Europe, different types of conflicts can strengthen the state – but this causal effect depends on whether conflicts spark increased elite collective action in self-defense.

Unfortunately, Hechter and Brustein's analysis has been largely overlooked by contemporary scholars of the postcolonial world. An exception is Carmenza Gallo, who employs the Hechter-Brustein model to explain why the Bolivian state intermittently succeeded in imposing taxes on the country's tin-mining elite. "The need a privileged class has for an organization to help it pursue its interests and preserve its privileged position is directly dependent on the opposition that these objectives encounter among the other classes," Gallo argues. "Or, to put it differently, class conflicts. . . induce an upper class to organize itself in the defense of its interests."²⁶ This usefully points our attention toward contentious politics as a causal influence on fiscal power. Yet Gallo's analysis raises as many questions as it answers. Is class conflict the only type of contentious politics that can lead to expansion in the state's fiscal power? If so, why did most Latin American states remain captured by upper groups, even after the emergence of powerful leftist movements during the Cold War? Do economic elites always organize to defend their interests by calling forth a more powerful Leviathan, or might they find other, lower-cost means of preserving their positions? Does ethnic conflict have different effects than class conflict on relations between states and societal elites?

Given the lack of empirical variation that Gallo captures in her one-country study, her analysis provides little guidance in addressing these puzzles. Even

²² Hechter and Brustein (1980): 1090.

²³ On resistance to state-building by societal "strongmen," see Migdal (1988).

²⁴ Lachmann (2000): 164–65.

²⁵ Hechter and Brustein (1980): 1063.

²⁶ Gallo (1991): 12.

when specialists on Latin America *do* make a determined effort to trace state capacity to different types of social conflict, they are hamstrung by the region's lack of variation in fiscal power. Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando Lopez-Alves' recent studies of war and state-building in Latin America search hard for systematic causal patterns linking types of wars to types of states. Yet they ultimately find no evidence that war's effect on the state might fundamentally depend on what type of war it is (e.g., external, internal, class, communal, regional, factional).²⁷

To date, several scholars of Southeast Asian politics have produced empirical studies of internal conflict and state-building, and have made initial efforts to inform broader theoretical frameworks. In a volume edited with Paul Rich, Richard Stubbs suggests that postcolonial states have sometimes grown stronger through the process of quelling domestic insurgencies.²⁸ Yet Rich and Stubbs' explanation for why some counterinsurgent states become stronger than others – those adopting a “political” approach strengthen, while those taking a “military” approach weaken – is unsatisfying on several counts. First, scholars should “at the very least abandon false dichotomies such as ‘the economic’ vs. ‘the military’ approach to counter-insurgency,”²⁹ as Karl Jackson has argued, because state responses invariably combine elements of both.

More fundamentally, this emphasis on political-economic as opposed to military responses does not answer the big question so much as it rephrases it: Why do some states manage to devise effective political strategies for containing mass insurgency, while others flounder politically and lash out militarily? This theoretical puzzle takes empirical form within the Rich and Stubbs volume itself, as one chapter lauds Malaysia's effective state response to domestic insurgency, while an adjacent chapter remarks on the Philippine state's continued ineffectiveness in the face of growing insurgent violence.³⁰ I address this empirical divergence directly and in depth in the chapters to come.

The most ambitious efforts to trace variation in Southeast Asian states' power vis-à-vis societal elites to the intensity of contentious politics come from David Brown and Donald Crone. Brown's analysis is especially valuable for present purposes, as he directly connects state-building to elite collective action. “Within a dominant class,” Brown argues, “elite cohesion arises firstly from the concern of class members to preserve their common economic interests against *threats from below*.” Although elite collective action can take various forms, “*the state* provides the organizational basis whereby the whole system is stabilized, and the

²⁷ Centeno (2002, 1997); Lopez-Alves (2000). Centeno seems convinced that such variation should exist, but he does not find it. When contrasting internal and external conflict, Centeno first insists, “The distinction between these two types of conflict is critical,” insofar as their “consequences may be radically different.” Yet he concludes soon thereafter: “the type of war appears to make an insignificant difference on its effects” (Centeno 2002: 34).

²⁸ Rich and Stubbs (1997).

²⁹ K. Jackson (1985): 4. His definition of “economic” responses to insurgency mirrors what Rich and Stubbs call “political” responses.

³⁰ Stubbs (1997) and Abinales (1997).

fractional tensions within the dominant class are resolved or contained.”³¹ Crone recognizes that threats from below cannot be assumed, and vary across cases. He echoes Brown – and foreshadows the analysis here – in suggesting that elite factionalism will prevail in nonthreatening times, and that broader elite collective action is nearly impossible absent shared perceptions of threat:

Political leaders require motivation to oppose the interests of important actors among the elite. . . . A threat to the stability of the system, and especially to the ability of the current regime to maintain itself in power, is an extreme motivation for state elites to take some action. Mere political opposition (where that is tolerated) is unlikely to provoke a crisis mentality, but severe rioting or insurgency movements, for example, put the regime in a crisis that may threaten its continued existence.³²

As with the other studies mentioned here, however, Crone's framework does not systematically consider how different types of conflict might have different effects on the state. This is why Crone's argument fails to apprehend much of the variation *within Southeast Asia itself*. For instance, states in the Philippines, South Vietnam, and Burma have all clearly faced severe episodes of domestic insurgency. Yet none of these states responded with sustained efforts to develop institutional capacity, as Malaysia and Singapore did. South Vietnam even collapsed entirely as a sovereign entity.

The key to unraveling the puzzle of divergence in state power in Southeast Asia is the same key that helps solve the puzzle of regional divergence in authoritarian durability: the different *types* of contentious politics that rocked the region after 1945. If any type of internal conflict is “the wrong kind” for state-building, it is *regional* rebellions, because they are especially likely to drive a political wedge between civilian and military elites rather than bringing them together, and to elicit a purely military as opposed to an administrative response. And neither class nor communal conflict alone appears sufficient to galvanize state officials and upper economic groups into deemphasizing their factional interests for the sake of broader elite interests. What Roger Gould calls “the intertwining of class and community”³³ in severe episodes of urban unrest seems to be what triggers the causal chain from contentious politics to growth in the state's infrastructural power.

Different Conflicts, Different Coalitions

Crises . . . fostered an atmosphere of desperate experimentation that helped leaders to discover policies that joined former antagonists in a partnership. They also created an atmosphere in which it was easier for leaders to sell a realignment to their followers.

Gregory Luebbert³⁴

A common spiritual enemy can also produce the most remarkable agreements.

Carl Schmitt³⁵

³¹ Brown (1993): 123, 124. Emphasis added.

³² Crone (1993): 58.

³³ Gould (1995): 10.

³⁴ Luebbert (1991): 312.

³⁵ Schmitt (1985) [1923]: 75.

State infrastructural power and authoritarian durability both ultimately rest on elite coalitions supporting the increased concentration of public authority. Why do some authoritarian regimes have more success at assembling such coalitions than others? Specifically, why are some regimes more successful than others at extracting tax payments and political financing from economic elites? Why do middle classes display greater unwillingness to join popular sectors in mobilizing against some authoritarian regimes than others? Why do religious authorities and nationalist icons actively legitimize some authoritarian regimes, but not all? And why do state officials in only some authoritarian settings set aside factional agendas and reliably play their formally defined roles, providing political leaders with the infrastructural power necessary to sustain stable domination?

These elite groups only surrender these strategic resources to an authoritarian Leviathan – granting it with a preponderance of coercive, remunerative, and symbolic power that makes its position hegemonic – when they perceive contentious politics as a more endemic threat to their core interests than state predation. The trick is to specify the type of conflict that is likely to have such a political effect without succumbing to post hoc reasoning: viz., measuring the seriousness of conflict by the seriousness of the response. One must go beyond Luebbert's invocation of crises as transformative moments, and specify *what kind* of crisis is most likely to induce elite collective action among "former antagonists." It is more important *how* conflict takes place than *how much* conflict takes place. Specifically, protection pacts only arise when a mass movement with revolutionary aims penetrates the urban sphere, threatening to explode a communal powder keg in the process.

What drives these theoretical expectations? First, I expect urban conflict to be perceived as more *physically threatening* than rural conflict. This is because even the most rusticated postcolonial landowners tend to own urban property as well, where they can safely reside during outbreaks of purely rural unrest.³⁶ Second, urban conflict should be perceived as more *administratively challenging* than rural conflict. To understand why, it is useful to consider James Scott's explication of "patron-client relations," or the vertical exchanges of loyalty and dependency that define most pre-industrial polities.³⁷ These ties should be more difficult to elaborate on an all-encompassing basis in cities than in the countryside. The logic, to invoke Scott's more recent work, is one of "legibility."³⁸ Postcolonial societal strongmen can construct local near-monopolies of force and political knowledge in the *gemeinschaft* of the village or hinterlands town; but the chaotic *gesellschaft* of the postcolonial city, choked with unregistered migrants from multiple rural provinces, will tend to be far more "illegible" to the most powerful elites residing there. The implication is that rural elites enjoy a greater arsenal of weapons for social control than urban elites, and will be less willing to cede control and

surrender resources to central state authorities in the face of contentious mass mobilization.

This is especially true if class conflict remains class conflict alone, and does not spill over into communal violence. Societal elites have less difficulty managing threats from below when those threats derive from the same ethnic or religious community, because shared language and belief systems improve legibility. Only when mass mobilization arises from groups over which societal elites have weak or nonexistent social control will it tend to strengthen the central state at the expense of splintered, self-serving societal elites.

Whereas class cleavages can often be salved with clever elite combinations of repression and accommodation, furthermore, communal cleavages tend to be perceived as comparatively immutable. Since deep communal divisions represent a seemingly permanent political challenge, fears of communal strife should make societal elites especially willing to provide resources to a permanent protector. It was not by accident that Schmitt saw "the most remarkable agreements" emerging historically as a collective response to a perceived "spiritual enemy."

The particular historical circumstances of the postcolonial world compound this general causal logic. The worldwide wave of democratic breakdowns between the 1950s and the early 1970s occurred against the backdrop of the global Cold War at its hottest. Communism was a widely feared ideology for a broad cross-section of postcolonial elites. But the decline of communism as a revolutionary ideology by the 1980s left the Left in a far less threatening pose, from Latin America to Africa to Asia. In cases where authoritarian Leviathans emerged to combat *communism* but not *communalism* – Chile and South Korea leap to mind – dictatorship lost whatever credible protective logic it once had with the Cold War's end. By contrast, authoritarian Leviathans forged to snuff out not just class but communal strife experienced the 1990s' global upsurge in ethnic conflict as a new lease on life, rather than a death knell.

My argument that ethnic divisions can prove surprisingly conducive for political order resonates with leading works on identity politics and taxation. As Evan Lieberman has argued in the South African case, shared perceptions of an impoverished and threatening racial other can foster increased elite willingness to bankroll the state in collective self-defense. Where such endemic racial discord was absent, as in Brazil, elites remained regionally fragmented, and Leviathan failed to draw provincial wealth toward the political center.³⁹ Kiren Aziz Chaudhry has contrarily emphasized the importance for direct taxation of ascriptive distance between state officials and economic elites, which allowed the state in Yemen but not Saudi Arabia to avoid capture by the local bourgeoisie.⁴⁰ In both instances, wide-ranging and active elite support for state-building projects has been predicated on elite perceptions of the state as a necessary bulwark against perceived communal foes.

³⁶ In the prewar era, rural elites were almost certainly more deeply rooted to the land, and might have been more directly threatened by rural than urban violence (as Luebbert [1991] implies).

³⁷ Scott (1972).

³⁸ Scott (1998).

³⁹ Lieberman (2003) stresses the causal significance of constitution-making processes rather than social conflicts in shaping these divergent taxation outcomes in Brazil and South Africa, however. See Slater and Simmons (2010) for a fuller discussion.

⁴⁰ Chaudhry (1997).

This contradicts the conventional and seemingly commonsensical notion that strong states are predicated upon strong nations.⁴¹ Even more than the absence of warfare, the absence of nationalism has been presumed to be a hindrance to post-colonial state-building. Indeed, it is largely through the strengthening of national consciousness that cross-border wars are expected to strengthen the power of centralized states. Yet Southeast Asian countries marked by stronger ethnic than nationalist identifications (Malaysia and Singapore) have produced especially strong states, while those countries where nation-building before World War II was most effective at muting identity cleavages (Thailand and the Philippines) have ironically seen much weaker postwar state-building efforts. This is not to say that communal heterogeneity presents no real barrier to state consolidation – it is to say that such diversity can serve as a structural opportunity, and not simply as an insuperable obstacle, to the emergence of capable central authority.⁴²

In sum, endemic and unmanageable contentious class politics can strengthen Leviathans by pressuring economic elites to pay more taxes in exchange for invigorated state protection, and by providing state officials with leverage to impose formal institutional hierarchies over factions within the state apparatus itself.⁴³ When such conflicts occur under conditions of relative political pluralism, they discredit democracy among middle classes and communal elites as well, with powerful repercussions for authoritarian durability – the question to which I now turn.

Democratization and Authoritarianism

Coalitional Foundations of Political Regimes

The fate of classes is more frequently determined by the needs of society than the fate of society is determined by the needs of classes. . . . [T]he chances of classes in a struggle will depend on their ability to win support from outside their own membership, which again will depend upon their fulfillment of tasks set by interests wider than their own.

Karl Polanyi⁴⁴

Ever since Barrington Moore unveiled his sweeping historical argument regarding “the social origins of dictatorship and democracy,” political scientists and sociologists have tried to determine which classes and what coalitions are responsible for originating and sustaining political regimes.⁴⁵ A “voluntarist” literature emerged in response to this “structuralist” canon, arguing that contingent splits within a regime rather than structural shifts in society offered the best explanation

for democratic transitions.⁴⁶ For all their differences, these two bodies of thought share a fundamentally coalitional approach to politics, portraying elite collective action as highly conducive for authoritarian durability. If protection pacts solidify elite collective action, they should impede both the *internal regime splits* emphasized by voluntarists and the *cross-class coalitions* stressed by many structuralists. The framework here thus aims to reconcile structuralist and voluntarist perspectives in a novel way.

In terms of the structuralist literature, this book picks up on two lines of critique leveled against “the Moore hypothesis”: namely, that a powerful bourgeoisie was a necessary condition for democracy because of its role in breaking the social hegemony of reactionary landed elites. This thesis has come under fire from within the structuralist camp for understating the importance of working-class mobilization for the instauration of democracy.⁴⁷ New research in the political economy tradition similarly portrays democratic transitions as the triumph of redistribution-seeking masses over anti-redistributive elites.⁴⁸

This book concurs that mass mobilization is a major, often essential, stimulant to authoritarian collapse. Yet a shared weakness of these works is their tendency to portray democratic mobilization as the product of one class attacking another, rather than the fluorescence of a *cross-class coalition*. As Polanyi argued above, single classes rarely shape history on their own, but require the assistance of other classes to force political change – especially when change involves the kind of collective action witnessed in democratic revolutions, when hundreds of thousands of citizens come together to bring an authoritarian regime to its knees.

A few authors have transcended the “carrying class” model of democratization and highlighted the role of cross-class coalitions in shaping regimes. An early example was Gregory Luebbert, who explained Europe’s interwar regime divergence as an outcome of varying cross-class responses to the eruption of mass politics.⁴⁹ In the very different context of postwar Central America, Deborah Yashar similarly argues that cross-class coalitions emerged during “democratizing moments” when mass mobilization and elite divisions arose simultaneously.⁵⁰ What thus appears necessary as a complement to mass mobilization is either the sort of elite divisions that Yashar emphasizes, or the sort of active middle-class support for democracy that Luebbert highlights. Where pro-authoritarian collective action can be sustained among such upper groups, democratic transition becomes practically unthinkable. Although structuralist, my coalitional argument is consistent with the core insight of the voluntarist literature: “there is no transition whose beginning is not the consequence – direct or indirect – of important divisions within the authoritarian regime itself.”⁵¹

⁴¹ See, especially, Herbst (2000) and Centeno (2002).

⁴² Inverting Wedeen’s (2008) argument that nationalism can emerge in the absence of a strong state, I argue that strong states do not require the existence of a strong nation.

⁴³ Darden (2008) has intriguingly argued that informal practices such as blackmail can preserve institutional hierarchies as well. Yet if blackmail were sufficient to craft lasting political order, the postcolonial world would look far more orderly than it does.

⁴⁴ Polanyi (1944): 159.

⁴⁵ B. Moore (1966). See Mahoney (2003a) for the best review of this research tradition.

⁴⁶ Rustow (1970) gave birth to this “transitology” literature, and O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) gave it new life.

⁴⁷ See Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens (1992), R. Collier (1999), Bermeo (1997), and Wood (2000).

⁴⁸ Boix (2003), Acemoglu and Robinson (2006).

⁴⁹ Luebbert (1991).

⁵⁰ Yashar (1997): 15–17.

⁵¹ O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986): 19.

My stress on cross-class coalitions should help explain why I discount the role of popular sectors in bolstering authoritarian Leviathans, even as I depict their role as fundamental in inspiring their creation and as vital in ushering in their destruction. It is ultimately the collective action of elites that makes authoritarianism durable, and the defection of elites that makes democratization possible.⁵² A democratic uprising from below makes authoritarian collapse far more likely, but only when it enjoys or can secure sanction and support from some segment of a fragmented elite stratum.

Communal Elites and Democratic Mobilization

[A] real threat from the citizens requires the juxtaposition of many unlikely factors: the masses need to solve the collective-action problem necessary to organize themselves, they need to find the momentum to turn their organization into an effective force against the regime, and the elites – who are controlling the state apparatus – should be unable to use the military to effectively suppress the uprising.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson⁵³

[Democracy and liberty] are only possible where they are backed up by the determined will of a nation not to be ruled like a flock of sheep.

Max Weber⁵⁴

It is on the sources and not the significance of democratic mobilization that the regimes literature proves deficient. Most scholarly attention focuses on the role of *social classes* and their purportedly objective *economic interests* in driving mass protest. This book counters that a class-rationalist perspective exhibits major analytic problems as a lens for understanding democratic mobilization, both logically and empirically. First, class itself cannot logically explain the kind of *cross-class* coalition that seems so important in securing democratic change. Again, Polanyi gets it right: "There is no magic in class interest which would secure to members of one class the support of members of other classes. Yet such support is an everyday occurrence."⁵⁵

Democratic revolutions are far from "an everyday occurrence." But they occur more frequently than a purely rational-choice account of democratic mobilization seems capable of allowing.⁵⁶ The trouble is immediately visible in Acemoglu and Robinson's depiction of democratic mobilization above as requiring "the juxtaposition of many unlikely factors." To be more precise, democratic mobilization requires a combination of causal factors that their redistributive model ignores. Democratic revolutions rarely look like class warfare, but like a sudden flowering of cross-class cooperation. Given the personal risks and interpersonal

⁵² Since I consider "middle classes" to qualify as elites in postcolonial settings, this formulation is less elite centered than it might initially sound.

⁵³ Acemoglu and Robinson (2006): 25.

⁵⁴ Cited in Kurzman (2006: 127). Emphasis in original.

⁵⁵ Polanyi (1944): 160.

⁵⁶ Rationalist accounts of mass protest often stress "focal points" or "tipping mechanisms" as solutions to collective action problems (e.g., Tucker 2007). Yet such arguments still do not satisfactorily solve the intrinsic free-rider problem introduced by Olson (1965).

dynamics intrinsic to anti-authoritarian protest, one might more broadly critique individualistic rational-actor models as ill suited for the explanatory task. As Mara Loveman argues, "rational choice models are particularly *unhelpful* for explaining participation in collective action in situations involving high levels of risk or contexts of extreme instability and unpredictability."⁵⁷

The culturalist literature on social movements proves a far more fruitful starting point. Unlike most rational-actor models, arguments in this vein begin with the notion that "individuals share prior bonds with others that make solidaristic behavior a reasonable expectation."⁵⁸ Yet the puzzle of collective action pertains to broad coalitions *against* dictatorship as much as to broad coalitions *supporting* dictatorship; the shift from narrowly factional to broadly organized politics remains anything but automatic. Much as protection pacts provide the best explanation for *pro-regime* collective action, the ability of communal elites to mobilize religious and nationalist communities through emotive appeals to shared identities helps unravel the puzzle of *anti-regime* collective action.⁵⁹

Chapter 7's empirical discussion of democratic revolutions and authoritarian crackdowns in Southeast Asia will lend credence to Weber's culturalist insight above. *Much as it can take a state to preserve authoritarianism, it can take a nation to tear it down.* This depends upon the support of communal elites, who possess especially strong credentials to mobilize cross-class democratic protest through nationalist and religious appeals. Like other types of elites, however, they do not become structurally available to democratizing coalitions unless a protection pact is absent or has withered away.

Provision vs. Protection in Authoritarian Coalitions

The notion that authoritarianism (in some form) is aggravated (somehow) by conditions of (some kind of) threat actually has a long and venerable history. . . . authoritarians prove to be relentlessly sociotropic boundary maintainers, norm enforcers, and cheerleaders for authority whose classic defensive stances are activated by the experience or perception of threat to those boundaries, norms, and authorities.

Karen Stenner⁶⁰

[P]olitical and military leaders judge the risks of democracy by looking at how ordinary people use the freedoms that democracy affords.

Nancy Bermeo⁶¹

The question then becomes: Why do cross-class alliances turn against authoritarian regimes in some settings, but not others? I see the macrostructural stability

⁵⁷ Loveman (1998): 480. Emphasis in original. The reader should of course not infer authorial hostility to rationalist arguments entirely. My argument on the political origins and attitudinal microfoundations of authoritarian Leviathans fundamentally depends on a rationalist logic.

⁵⁸ Polletta and Jasper (2001): 289.

⁵⁹ For more on this theoretical argument, including a historical framework for how communal elites gain or lose political autonomy from authoritarian regimes in the first place, see Slater (2009).

⁶⁰ Stenner (2005): 26, 32.

⁶¹ Bermeo (2003): 4.

of authoritarian regimes resting on the same microfoundations that political psychologists such as Stenner have pinpointed as the source of individuals' authoritarian predispositions: "the experience or perception of threat." This insight has occasionally informed comparativists' understanding of non-democracies, as when Robert Kaufman notes the role of shared threat perceptions in dampening elite opposition to authoritarian rule in Latin America:

The "threat from below" – activated during periods of political-economic crisis – is the lowest common denominator and the most important bond of cohesion within bureaucratic-authoritarian coalitions. In the context of antipopulist or counterrevolutionary fear, broad exclusionary policies have been accepted at least initially not only by the armed forces and "big business," but also by many white-collar, professional, and local entrepreneurial groups that otherwise suffer considerably from most aspects of bureaucratic-authoritarian rule.⁶²

If shared elite foreboding of renewed mass mobilization is "the most important bond of cohesion" for authoritarian Leviathans, regime durability should vary with the perceived severity of such threats. Eva Bellin goes furthest in incorporating this notion into her theory of authoritarian durability.⁶³ Her primary argument is that industrialization has generally failed to generate elite support for democratization in the postcolonial world because the state tends to play such a large role in guiding late development. State sponsorship makes elites highly dependent on authoritarian rulers for the contracts and licenses that make their enterprises viable. Meanwhile, mass politics threatens to introduce newly organized threats to property rights and the overall investment climate. Bellin thus attributes democratic diffidence among postcolonial capitalists not only to their dependence on the state, but also to their fear of chaos amid any political transition. Authoritarian durability arises from elite perceptions that the regime is both a good *provider* and a good *protector*.

Capitalists' perceived need for protection is more pronounced under conditions of late development, Bellin argues, because democratization can no longer be tempered by restrictions on universal suffrage. Yet this gives us little guidance in explaining variation in levels of elite trepidation toward democratization *within the postcolonial world itself*. All postcolonial elites know that democratization entails granting immediate universal suffrage to a society marked by generalized poverty. Their willingness to open these political floodgates, I submit, cannot be explained by their level of dependence on state patronage. Rather, as Bermeo's formulation above implies, upper groups' perceptions of *prospective* threat under a future democratic regime are shaped by *retrospective* consideration of how mass politics looked before an authoritarian Leviathan was established. Where patterns of contentious politics fostered the creation of protection pacts, authoritarian regimes enjoy the coalitional foundations to withstand even severe economic crises, which sharply curtail the state's capacity to meet the material interests of economic elites. This book thus sees the capacity of authoritarian regimes to

protect upper groups from any shared fears of mass unrest as the best predictor of authoritarian durability. *A protection pact is sturdier than a provision pact.*

Why does protection serve as a stronger basis for authoritarian coalitions than provision? First, no regime has ever been a perfect purveyor of patronage. Resources are always limited – unlike elites' material wants – so ruling groups distribute selective benefits that bring some groups in and leave others out. State sponsorship might enhance the political loyalty of the regime's biggest beneficiaries; but what about those fractions of the upper class that remain outside the regime's charmed inner circle? Nor does it logically follow that *state* sponsorship always fosters *regime* loyalty among its recipients, who might expect to receive even more patronage under a new political leadership it helps to install. In sum, state sponsorship can cultivate loyal class *fractions*, but fear of renewed unrest and instability can cultivate loyal upper *classes*, writ large.

Another reason to suspect that protection trumps provision is that economic elites are by no means the only type of elites whose support underpins authoritarian durability. Military officers have the greatest capacity of all to bring a regime down by refusing to use force against a democratic opposition. But if regime loyalty derives from state sponsorship, how can we explain defection by these *state personnel*, whose very livelihood depends on the continuation of that sponsorship? Once again, the key points are that threats can unify elites in a way that patronage cannot, and that elites' need for state largesse will not necessarily cement their attachment to a particular regime.

Nor is the uniting effect of a credible threat of renewed mass unrest limited to economic elites and state officials. Middle classes and communal elites should find unbridled contentious class politics to be similarly threatening to their basic interests. As a coalitional currency in the hands of an authoritarian Leviathan, therefore, fear has two main advantages over patronage: (1) fear is indivisible, whereas state sponsorship of one elite faction leaves fewer resources for others; and (2) fear can generate broad support for authoritarian rule among groups whose interests transcend the material (i.e., religious elites), and who are hard to reach with targeted state patronage (i.e., urban middle classes).

A focus on the role of patronage alone in sustaining authoritarian rule suffers from another shortcoming as well. Such a perspective assumes that authoritarian durability can be sustained with particular *policies*, regardless of the capacity of underlying *institutions* to implement policies efficiently.⁶⁴ Yet a regime that enjoys access to a state with significant fiscal power has more capacity to keep patronage flowing than a regime that does not.⁶⁵ Similarly, a regime organized into a

⁶⁴ On the institutional requirements of difficult economic policies, see Doner, Ritchie, and Slater (2005) and Hamilton-Hart (2002). See Pepinsky (2008) for an argument that variation in economic policies rather than institutional capacity best explains divergence in authoritarian durability, with an emphasis on Indonesia and Malaysia.

⁶⁵ As Thachil and Herring (2008: 451) adroitly argue: "The problem with patronage-based systems is one of aggregation: there is never enough to go around, or there is serious fiscal crisis if attempts are made to ensure patronage trickles down." While agreeing with this point in general, this book also stresses how variation in state fiscal power produces variation in regimes' ability to deliver patronage widely without rendering themselves vulnerable to fiscal crisis.

⁶² Kaufman (1986): 86–87.

⁶³ Bellin (2002): 1999.

cohesive ruling party will be better able to manage the “insatiable wants” of leading figures and their personal networks, dampening the factional disputes that inevitably arise over the distribution of patronage. Regimes that appear to rest on “remunerative power” alone thus often rely on effective state and party institutions to keep resources flowing in a targeted way to those figures whose support is vital to regime survival. Variation in the strength of these regime institutions, as with state institutions, is best explained by variation in counterrevolutionary elite responses to the divergent threats posed by contentious politics.

Political Institutions and Authoritarian Durability

One of the reasons regime transitions have proved so theoretically intractable is that different kinds of authoritarianism differ from each other as much as they differ from democracy.

Barbara Geddes⁶⁶

[T]he nightmare of all founders is that their organizational creation will walk away from them.

John Padgett and Christopher Ansell⁶⁷

It has long been recognized that stable and effective democracy rests upon workable states and parties. Only recently have scholars evinced a similar recognition of the role of party and – to a far lesser extent – state institutions in shaping the stability and duration of authoritarian regimes. This book is squarely situated within this emerging institutionalist consensus. Yet it aims to build upon it with new perspectives on the relatively neglected importance of state institutions for authoritarian durability; the counterrevolutionary origins of robust ruling parties; and the importance of elite collective action in sustaining not only single-party regimes, but military regimes as well.

The fortifying effect of robust ruling parties on authoritarian regimes is well established.⁶⁸ There are two main reasons why parties count. First, they are ideal mechanisms for organizing mass participation.⁶⁹ Second – and of more consequence here – ruling parties can help order elite politics as well. By channeling elite support to the ruling regime and channeling benefits of state power to elite backers, ruling parties serve as ideal mechanisms for preventing elite defection.⁷⁰ In other words, parties fortify authoritarian regimes in large measure because they serve as institutional vehicles for elite collective action. The finding that single-party regimes systematically outlast military regimes has been attributed to ruling parties’ presumptive superiority to ruling armies as facilitators of elite collective action in defense of dictatorship.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Geddes (1999): 121.

⁶⁷ Padgett and Ansell (1993): 1260.

⁶⁸ Recent works include Geddes (1999), Slater (2003), B. Smith (2005), Brownlee (2007), Gandhi and Przeworski (2007), and Levitsky and Way (forthcoming).

⁶⁹ Huntington (1968) is of course the classic argument to this effect.

⁷⁰ Brownlee (2007).

⁷¹ Geddes (1999).

This consensus on the importance of ruling parties is not wrong, but it is incomplete. Its first shortcoming is that it understates the role of *the state* in shaping authoritarian durability.⁷² Where states are well organized and effectively extractive, ruling parties gain more political mileage by colonizing the state apparatus with party appointees. Where states are disorganized and weak, party membership confers fewer tangible privileges. This suggests that strong *party-state complexes* rather than parties alone serve as the sturdiest institutional foundation for durable authoritarianism.⁷³ When dissident politicians get expelled from the ruling party in such systems, they are relegated to “the political wilderness.” One often hears this phrase in discussions of elite politics in Malaysia and Singapore. When leading politicians have gotten sacked in more disordered political systems such as Thailand and the Philippines, they have typically enjoyed alternative routes to the political summit. *Where power is not ordered, there is no political wilderness.*

A second shortcoming of most current institutionalist research is that it cannot tell us why party and military regimes exhibit so much *intra-type* variation in durability.⁷⁴ It is a valuable insight to recognize that party regimes systematically outlast military regimes; but it is no stopping point. Ruling parties are generally, but by no means universally, more cohesive than ruling militaries. If we adjust our target of inquiry to the elite collective action that authoritarian institutions facilitate, rather than the institutional types themselves, we might discover common sources of durability in military-led and party-led authoritarian regimes alike.

In sum, authoritarian regimes vary dramatically in their institutional foundations, as Geddes argues above – but those institutions have coalitional foundations that exhibit independent causal significance. Indeed, where an authoritarian leadership lacks broad elite support at the onset of its rule, it is unlikely to take the political risks inherent in building stronger states and parties in the first place. When broad elite support is lacking, the founders’ nightmare invoked by Padgett and Ansell becomes especially vivid – a newly formed institution will tend to organize a leadership’s rivals as well as its allies, and potentially take on a regime-subverting life of its own. And it is only when unmanageable and endemic forms of contentious politics loom on the political landscape that elites are likely to eschew factional interests and forge broader patterns of elite collective action to begin with.

⁷² Whereas Greene (2007) stresses the importance of state *size* in sustaining authoritarianism, my argument stresses state *strength*. As Owen (2004: 36, 37) notes: “the huge size of the bureaucracy in most Middle East and Third World countries has been taken as a sign of a very strong state”; but in most cases, “the state’s apparent coherence was more a matter of presentation than reality.”

⁷³ Also see Levitsky and Way (forthcoming) and Slater (2008b). On the role of powerful party and state institutions in driving more equitable development outcomes in Malaysia than Thailand, see Kuhonta (2003).

⁷⁴ B. Smith (2005) provides the best argument for *intra-party* variation. My framework aims to build upon his by offering an explanation that is at once more parsimonious (setting aside Smith’s stress on resource endowments) and more precise (sharply distinguishing the effects of elite vs. mass opposition, which Smith at times comes close to conflating).

This provides a novel explanation for *the origins* of strong ruling parties. Contrary to Samuel Huntington's classic and subsequently unchallenged argument that intense revolutionary struggles yield especially durable parties,⁷⁵ this book suggests that *counterrevolutionary* parties should prove particularly robust as sources of enduring elite collective action.⁷⁶ Revolutionary parties tend to fragment once their shared enemy is vanquished – especially when that enemy is a departed colonial power, as in Burma and Indonesia.⁷⁷ Counterrevolutionary parties retain their deepest source of institutional cohesion so long as the authoritarian Leviathan continues to be perceived as a powerful protector against the endemic enemy of radical mass mobilization. Elites' historical memories and evolving perceptions of the threat of contentious politics best explain the strength not only of ruling parties, but of authoritarian institutions more generally.

Conclusion

By situating this book's arguments in major literatures on war and state-building, democratic coalitions and transitions, and authoritarian institutions, this chapter has aimed both to assess the most important rival explanations and to clarify its most novel theoretical claims. The chapters to follow present empirical evidence from seven Southeast Asian cases that (1) internal conflict can make the state; (2) weak nations can facilitate and not just stymie state-building; (3) communal elites and identity politics are key drivers of democratic mobilization; (4) protection sustains dictatorships more reliably than provision; and (5) the strongest authoritarian institutions are born in counterrevolution rather than revolution. These arguments all derive from a causal framework centering on contentious politics as the strongest shaper of elite collective action, which in turn shapes the institutional strength and durability of authoritarian Leviathans. How well these theoretical claims stand up beyond the Southeast Asian context will be the primary concern of this book's concluding chapter. Until then, I focus my attentions on the region where my causal arguments were born and first developed: Southeast Asia.

⁷⁵ Huntington (1968, 1970).

⁷⁶ Brownlee (2007) provides a compelling argument that ruling parties can also be strengthened by decisive factional victories at their origin point. For a similar logic on state-building, see Vu (2004). Yet I submit that the *transcendence* of factions trumps the *triumph* of any single faction as an enduring source of party cohesion.

⁷⁷ To the extent that regimes resting on revolutionary parties exhibit impressive duration, I hypothesize that this occurs either because nationalist revolutions wedded communal elites to the regime and made them unavailable to lead any democratic opposition, as in post-1975 Vietnam (Slater 2009); or because subsequent outbreaks of anti-regime contention led these historically revolutionary regimes to undergo a counterrevolutionary "turn," as in post-1958 Mexico and post-1989 China (Slater and N. Smith 2009).

PART II

CONTENTIOUS POLITICS AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF ORDER