BRITISH COLONIAL LEGACIES AND DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL

By

EMILY PUKUMA

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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To Dzarnyi and Azilqwa
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<td>AFT</td>
<td>Accelerated Failure Time</td>
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<td>Akaike Information Criterion</td>
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<td>AMCJA</td>
<td>All Malaya Council of Joint Action</td>
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<td>ARPS</td>
<td>Aborigines Rights Protection Society</td>
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<td>AYA</td>
<td>Ashanti Youth Association</td>
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<td>CAC</td>
<td>Central Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>Export Processing Zone</td>
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<td>Gerakan Ra’ayat Malaysia</td>
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<td>HMG</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Government</td>
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<td>IFB</td>
<td>Independent Forward Bloc</td>
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<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>KMM</td>
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<td>MCP</td>
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<td>MMM</td>
<td>Mouvement Militant Mauricien</td>
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<td>MPAJA</td>
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<td>MRLA</td>
<td>Malayan Races Liberation Army</td>
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<td>NASSO</td>
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<td>NLM</td>
<td>National Liberation Movement</td>
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<td>NOC</td>
<td>National Operations Council</td>
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<td>NPP</td>
<td>Northern People’s Party</td>
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<td>PDA</td>
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<td>PM</td>
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<td>PMCJA</td>
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<td>PMIP</td>
<td>Pan-Malayan Islamic Party</td>
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<td>PMSD</td>
<td><em>Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate</em></td>
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<td>PPP</td>
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<td>Proportional representation</td>
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<td>PSM</td>
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<td>SMF</td>
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<td>TUC</td>
<td>Trade Union Council</td>
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<td>UCSCA</td>
<td>United Chinese School Committees’ Association</td>
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<td>UCSTA</td>
<td>United Chinese School Teachers’ Association</td>
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<td>UGCC</td>
<td>United Gold Coast Convention</td>
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<td>UGFC</td>
<td>United Ghana Farmers' Council</td>
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<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organization</td>
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<td>UMS</td>
<td>Unfederated Malay States</td>
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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

BRITISH COLONIAL LEGACIES AND DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL

By

Emily Pukuma

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Why do democratic institutions survive in some contexts and temporal periods but break down in others? What factors increase the risks of authoritarian reversal? While several scholars argue that British colonialism is conducive to later democratization, outcomes remain highly uneven across this population. This dissertation specifies various types of British colonial rule based on two dimensions of the historical experience, timing of self-governance and state development prior to Independence. Combinations of these components produce four types of British colonies: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian and Weak Authoritarian. I use these types to explore the relationship between colonial political institutions and democratic survival in the framework of a multi-method research design. This includes a statistical analysis of a dataset of British colonies which test the hypothesis that alternative colonial types produce different prospects for post-colonial democratic survival. I then use comparative historical analysis to trace the causal mechanisms linking colonialism to democratic survival in a representative case of each type. I argue that internal variations in the political structures of British colonialism
generate mixed legacies depending on the colony’s combination of values on the two typological factors.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Project Summary

In recent years, comparative politics has seen a turn toward using long-range
global history to find causal inference. My dissertation is inspired by this trend and
seeks to work toward overcoming the collective data deficit and conceptual ambiguity
that encumbers this type of work. It takes as its starting point that colonization affected
states at a formative period of history, conditioning their entrance into the modern state
system. As such, these initial inheritances inform several aspects of the post-colonial
experience including economic development, social fragmentation and cleavages, and
political power structures. My research examines how colonial histories established
particular political institutions and what effect these variations have in facilitating or
impeding post-colonial democracy.

In interrogating the link between contemporary democracy and historical roots,
however, scholars disagree on the best way to compare colonial legacies. Multiple
strategies are used, such as disaggregating by national colonizer, duration and timing of
colonization, European settlers, missionary influence, world region, or direct/indirect rule
(Bernhard et al. 2004; Olsson 2009; Hariri 2012; Woodberry 2012; Lankina and
Getachew 2012; Young 1994; Mamdani 1996; Lange 2009). Still others argue that
colonialism affected democratic outcomes indirectly by conditioning other factors such
as social fragmentation, underdevelopment, and state/society relations (Hadenius 1992;
Acemoglu et al. 2001; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). In short, the question of colonialism’s
influence remains central but unresolved in democracy studies.
The main impetus for this study is the variation in the outcome of democratic survival among former colonies of the British Empire. This research focuses on the British Empire exclusively, as opposed all former colonies, to unpack the consistent finding that British colonialism is conducive to democracy (Blondel 1972; Huntington 1984; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Lipset et al. 1993; Clague et al. 2001; Bernhard et al. 2004; Lee and Paine 2016). The expansive time and scope of British overseas domination suggests lasting impact in the colonies it touched, yet democratic outcomes in former British colonies vary. Among this set of 50 countries in the period 1951-2014, there have been 23 democratic breakdowns following 57 transitions, meaning that roughly one-third of transitions have ended in breakdown. A total of 42 former British colonies have made at least one democratic transition. Of these, 13 (roughly 1/3) have had one breakdown, two have had two breakdowns and two have had three breakdowns. This distribution suggests that the phenomenon of democratic breakdown is not driven by numerous breakdowns in only a few countries but is spread out across this population. This variation provides the central impetus for this study: why have democratic institutions in some former British colonies survived while others have not? My dissertation argues that important internal variations in the political structures of British colonialism, specifically timing of self-governance and state development, generate mixed legacies.

Given the variation in outcomes noted above, this dissertation challenges the appropriateness of treating experience with British colonial rule as a single conceptual category. It contends that this decision obscures important internal differences. This research limits its scope this population of cases to better unpack these internal
distinctions. Moreover, the sheer size of the British colonial project, which by 1933 covered 31.6 million square miles (24% of world’s land surface) and contained a population of nearly 500 million, or nearly ¼ of the world’s population, justifies this focus (Ledgister 1998, 45).

While I advocate for greater attention to variation of colonial experience within Empire, it does not follow that the British Empire cannot be understood as imparting a systematic effect on its colonies – it merely suggests that it had different effects depending on the nature of the colony. I argue that analytical categories which systematize internal diversity are necessary. As such, this dissertation leverages variation in colonial experience by building an original typology of British ruling structures, the first effort to do so. I disaggregate the colonial experience into two dimensions: timing of self-governance and state development prior to independence. Combinations of these components produce four distinct colonial types.

Because of the complexity of the colonial experience, case studies have generally been the chosen method of investigation (Brown 2000; Young 1994; Armitage 2000; Kohli 2004). This method is advantageous due to its capacity to grasp depth in a delimited time or space and draw out causal links, but it is limited in its ability to generalize across large populations. On the other hand, there are only a few studies that test the impact of colonialism in broader settings (Bernhard et al. 2004; Acemoglu et al. 2001; Grier 1999; Bollen 1979; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Lee and Paine 2016). While useful, these studies often reduce the colonial experience to one dimension.

To bridge these two approaches, I analyze my conceptual typology using a combination of methods. First, I use statistical analysis of a comprehensive dataset of
British colonies to test the hypotheses that alternative colonial types produce different prospects for post-colonial democratic survival. I find that as the level of self-governance and state development prior to independence jointly increase, the likelihood of democratic survival increases. In short, the probability of post-colonial durability varies based on a colony’s combination of values on these type typological factors, or colonial type.

A structured comparison of three primary cases complements this aggregate analysis. These comparative historical cases explore in greater depth the colonial legacy effects on democratic longevity over time. Given the challenges associated with establishing causality across a lengthy timeframe as is necessary in this study, tracing historical processes is an essential supplement to the cross-national analysis. I use the structured historical comparison to illuminate mechanisms linking colonial experience to democratization. I selected a case which corresponds to each of three of the typological categories. These include Malaysia, Ghana, and Mauritius.¹

**Colonialism and Democratic Survival: State of the Literature**

Colonization affected states at a formative period of history, conditioning their entrance into the modern state system. As such, colonial histories potentially inform several aspects of the post-colonial experience including democratic survival. Various strategies are used to compare these legacies.

¹ These correspond to the Strong Authoritarian, Weak Authoritarian and Weak Autonomy colonial types, respectively. Note that I include an in-depth case study for only three of the four types. I did not include a separate chapter for the Strong Autonomy colonies because these cases are either a) over-determined as advanced industrialized countries such as Australia or b) demonstrate the dynamics of a Weak Autonomy colony but fall into this category because the population size makes their per capita civil service appear to be artificially large such as the Bahamas. Indeed, this is the case with Mauritius; the in-depth case study makes clear why it is more appropriately coded as a Weak Autonomy Colony.
First, several studies argue that colonialism varied depending on world region. Young (1994) argues that Africa’s colonial experience was of a different character and intensity with detrimental effects on democratic outcomes. This theory is contested, however. Herbst (2000) contends that colonialism did not change everything in Africa but that leaders from this period responded in similar manners as pre-colonial and post-colonial rulers to challenges of political geography. Bernhard et al. (2004) show that the African region is negatively related to democratic survival, but this finding loses statistical significance when one controls for social fragmentation and economic development. The relationship between colonial experience, world region and democracy thus remains inconclusive.

Others suggest that colonialism affected factors often associated with democratic survival. First, scholars argue that social fragmentation and the politicization of ethnicity are products of colonial models. Arbitrary borders created highly heterogeneous post-colonial states which are suggested to generate political instability and thus hinder the prospects of democratic survival (Hadenius 1992). Further, colonial administrations effectively solidified, politicized and territorialized ethnic difference by giving fluid identities static and legally recognized status (Young 1994). These politicized sub-national identities interact with weak institutions to reinforce patronage networks and zero-sum competition among groups. These dynamics challenge democratic survival by raising the stakes of political victory and increasing the incentives to seek extra-constitutional means to power.

Additionally, several scholars suggest that colonial legacies relating to state/civil society relations affect the prospects of democracy (Bernhard et. al. 2004).
Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) propose that colonial systems often gave rulers the tools to suppress the lower classes, thus inhibiting post-colonial democratization. Mamdani (1996) contends that the colonial state created decentralized despotism by undermining popular control and institutional constraints on local authorities (43). By granting local rulers unchecked power grounded in cultural legitimacy, colonial states promoted the very antithesis of democratic rule, patterns of which continue into the post-colonial period.

Finally, several scholars argue that colonialism fostered underdevelopment (Young 1994; Acemoglu et al. 2001). Given that democracies have a greater probability of survival at higher levels of development, it follows that colonialism also inhibits democratic durability (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). Englebert (2009) suggests a nuanced argument for variation in African development, arguing that where post-colonial state institutions are incongruent with pre-colonial ones, there are greater relative pay-offs for adopting neo-patrimonial styles of rule rather than developmental ones. Where neo-patrimonial rather than developmental rule predominates, democratic survival should be less likely.

Further, several studies argue that colonial legacies vary by national colonizer. Several large-n studies find that British colonialism is positively related to democratic survival. They propose multiple potential explanations for this result. Woodberry (2012) emphasizes social preconditions for democratic survival. He highlights the religious roots of stable democracy, arguing that the presence of conversionary protestants,

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2 Note that these authors also contend that colonial actors facilitated democratization where they prevented a landed agrarian elite from repressing labour. These dynamics play out in the Mauritius case study.
associated with the British Empire, encouraged the creation of an active public sphere via the spread of mass literacy, mass printing and social movement organizations. These factors promote mass education which is consistently linked to the stability of democratic transitions (Bollen 1979; Gasiorowski and Power 1998).

Other scholars focus on political and institutional inheritances. First, some suggest that the more frequent adoption of parliamentary as opposed to presidential political systems in former British colonies promoted stable democracy (Wiseman 1990). Several former British colonies rejected the Westminster model, however. Second, Bernhard et al. (2004)’s cross-national study finds that British colonies outperform all others in terms of democratic survival only when one controls for social fragmentation and level of development. The authors attribute this more positive relationship to a legacy of strong state/society relations. The mechanism, however, is left unspecified and thus leaves room for further theoretical development. Given that there is wide variation among former British colonies in terms of democratic survival, moreover, this theory should be examined empirically within this population.

Third, some argue that the British better prepared their colonies for democracy by allowing for elections prior to independence (Weiner 1965; 1987; Lipset et al. 1993; Diamond 1998; Abernathy 2000, 406; Bilinski 2015; Lee and Paine 2016). As yet, Lee and Paine (2016) and Bilinski (2015) are the only studies that gather data and test this proposition. Bilinski (2015) argues that self-sustaining democracy is produced where colonies receive sufficiently long periods of colonial autonomy via a freely elected legislature or executive prior to independence. Because these opportunities are largely limited to the British Empire, this group of colonies tends to outperform others in terms
of democratic survival. This dissertation does not find evidence that this factor in isolation promotes democratic survival. It argues instead that this legacy is strong and enduring over time when paired with a degree of state development. When the interaction of self-government and state development prior to independence is viewed as a dual legacy, it exhibits significant determining effects on democratic survival across time.

Similarly, Lee and Paine (2016) argue that pre-independence democracy levels significantly determine post-colonial democratic status. Because these authors only measure this outcome one year after independence and after the end of the Cold War, however, their static measure of democratic outcomes fails to capture the vulnerability of many early democracies among former British colonies. By contrast, this dissertation measures the probability of democratic survival over time. By using this measure of the dependent variable, I find that the legacy of British colonial type has significant effects on the likelihood of democratic survival even among transitions made after the Cold War. This suggests that Lee and Paine’s (2016) finding that the British colonial legacy fades and that democracy levels converge across all colonies after the Cold War fails to account for the joint colonial advantage of self-government and state development prior to independence.

Weiner (1987) and La Porta et al. (1999) argue that the British legacy for democracy stems from the promotion of bureaucratic structures which were gradually transferred to colonial subjects. Treisman’s (2000, 418-427) study on perceptions of corruption reinforces this argument, demonstrating that the British left a prevailing ‘legal culture.’ Neither of these scholars test this mechanism as it relates to democratic
survival. This study does so using new historical data and finds that the size of the British colonial state varied extensively across empire. By examining this factor in conjunction with pre-independence self-government, I find that the joint legacy consistently bolsters democratic durability over time. My findings demonstrate, for example, that there are significant differences in the probability of democratic survival among colonies that enjoy both self-governance and state development and those that enjoy self-government but limited state development.

Lange (2009) is the only cross-national study that tests the impact of institutional variations within the group of former British colonies specifically. He examines these varied legacies in relation to post-colonial state development, arguing that direct rule resulted in stronger states with greater capacity after independence whereas indirect rule resulted in weak states with low capacity. While not the main explanatory variable, his large-n study includes a test for the effects of these institutional variations on average level of democratization. He finds a significant negative relationship with indirect rule, meaning that more indirect rule inhibits democracy. This dissertation builds in part off Lange (2009)’s broad concepts of direct and indirect rule but disaggregates their essential components and broadens the dichotomous typology to four distinct categories.

This dissertation addresses several notable gaps in the existing literature on British colonialism and democratic survival. First, while several scholars find that British colonialism is more conducive to post-colonial democracy than other colonial influences, there remains considerable debate on why this is the case. Only Lee and Paine (2016) and Bilinski (2015) test their hypothesized mechanism statistically. Neither of these
studies, however, test these propositions among British colonies specifically. Further, they only consider one dimension of the colonial experience. By limiting my scope to the British Empire, I can draw out multiple dimensions of the historical experience.

Second, numerous scholars examine the details of the colonial experience and its relationship to democracy in specific contexts or temporal periods (Austin 1970; Harper 1999; Diamond 1988; Bowman 1991). By and large, these delimited findings have not translated well to broader comparative work. This is partly because the concepts available to assess the impact of colonialism on subsequent outcomes remain either context specific or cursory. This dissertation addresses this challenge by creating an original conceptual typology to examine the relationship between British colonial political institutions and democratic survival.

Finally, the case study and large-n literatures on colonialism and democratic stability have thus far been largely separate. This dissertation uses multiple methods and collects original qualitative and quantitative data across several world regions and timeframes. In this way, this research bridges scholarship on colonialism and democracy that examines one or a few cases and those that look at broader comparisons.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Colonialism**

I follow Mahoney and Gerring (2007) in their working definition of colonialism to adjudicate what constitutes British colonial rule and what does not. These scholars define colonialism in a three-part manner: 1) a colonizer (the metropole) makes a successful claim of sovereignty over an overseas territory; 2) the colonizer exerts influence over the occupied territory through the creation of an administrative structure
that extracts resources and enforces regulations; and 3) it perceives the indigenous population as different and usually inferior in culture (as defined by race, ethnicity, religion, customs, and/or language) and denies this population full citizenship rights. This definition captures three crucial components of the colonial experience – loss of sovereignty, implanted administration and cultural re-ordering. These form the foundation of the colonial experience, and ascertaining patterns among these components is crucial for understanding post-colonial outcomes.

**Democratic Survival**

The dependent variable in this analysis is the duration (years) of a country’s democratic episode(s). The duration of the democratic episode is the number of country-years between transition and breakdown. Countries can experience multiple transitions and breakdowns. Because each episode for each country is independent, a single country may have multiple democratic episodes.³

My working definition of democracy is based on Dahl’s (1971) widely used definition of ‘polyarchy’ which highlights the requirements of equal political participation and free political competition. Breakdowns can occur for many potential reasons including civil war, military coup, bans on opposition participation, inhibiting electoral violence, non-constitutional extension of term limits, etc. When these events occur, a

³ By way of example, Nigeria has had three democratic transitions and two democratic breakdowns (i.e. three democratic episodes) during the period 1951-2012. Six country-years for Nigeria are coded for the duration of its first democratic episode (1960-1966), four country-years are included separately for its second democratic episode (1979-1983) and 13 country-years are included separately for its third (and on-going) democratic episode (1999-2012). The third episode is right-censored at 2012. Because there are countries with multiple episodes, I will cluster by country to account for the fact that it is a single country though its episodes are coded independently.
country no longer meets Dahl’s minimum criteria and is said to have undergone a breakdown and its democratic episode ends.

Dahl’s (1971) definition outlines a relatively minimalist set of necessary features for a country to be designated democratic. There are trade-offs to using a thin concept of democracy in that there is the possibility of qualitative differences between democracies that this minimal concept will not capture (Coppedge 2012). Nonetheless, I argue that this thin concept of democracy is helpful in this study because the central investigation is not concerned with the level of democracy but only with whether democratic institutions remain in place or are replaced. Setting the bar for democracy too high would unnecessarily restrict the sample, and the analysis would miss the nuances of an important subset of countries in the study of democratic survival, i.e. newly inaugurated regimes. In other words, this study is not concerned with how democratic a country is or with processes of consolidation but focuses on whether the institutions of democracy, as evaluated by a minimal criterion of necessary conditions, endure or break down over time.

**A Typology of British Colonial Institutions**

The primary explanatory variable in this study is British colonial type. This explanatory variable is understood in terms of a typology of colonial political institutions. For this analysis, the political institutions of interest are those below the British metropole through which autonomous power is exercised and distributed within the colony (Burroughs 1999). Political institutions are explained in terms of two components: the timing of self-governance, as either early or late, and level of state development, as either strong or weak.
Timing of self-governance reflects a distinction between self-governing colonies operating through representative assemblies and the more authoritarian colonial regimes which ruled from outside the population. This distinction specifies the degree to which the British deemed self-government as a legitimate possibility in the colony and the timing of its introduction relative to independence. State development identifies the degree to which the British invested and built up administrative institutions in the colony. This speaks generally to the capacity of the state to reach the population at-large, particularly into the periphery, and includes aspects such as taxation, public goods provision and the rule of law.

These two variables are cross-tabulated to produce four types of colonial political institutions: (1) Strong Autonomy, (2) Weak Autonomy, (3) Strong Authoritarian and (4) Weak Authoritarian Colony (Figure 1-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing of Self-Governance</th>
<th>Strong Development</th>
<th>Weak Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Strong Autonomy</td>
<td>Weak Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Strong Authoritarian</td>
<td>Weak Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1-1 Types of colonies in the British empire

Strong Autonomy colonies enjoyed both early self-governance and strong state development. Early self-government was reserved for European settlement populations, “who claimed self-rule as a birthright, proclaimed their allegiance to the ‘British connection’, and whose violent revolt (not least in the shadow of the American revolution) was almost unthinkable” (Darwin 2012, 191). In both large-scale and small-scale European settlements (the former referring to the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia and the latter to the Caribbean and Southern Africa), these
institutions were modeled after the metropole. This meant that the British incorporated early elected assemblies which were initially exclusive to land-owning males but later became more representative as the franchise expanded in the 20th century. While the British officially retained executive control via colonial governors, increasingly power tilted toward legislative assemblies (Darwin 2012, 195). As such, early on, political institutions were representative in form and comparatively exempt of Crown intervention.

From 1839, the large-scale settlements, as well as South Africa, were awarded ‘responsible government’ -- control of both the legislature and executive -- and from 1867 (Canada) obtained ‘Dominion’ status which provided semi-independent political status under the British Crown and full control over internal affairs within the colony (Darwin 2012, 196). Where European settlers remained a minority of the population, colonies enjoyed early restricted representative institutions, though the official grant of self-government came later. Further, there was frequently a back-and-forth between colonial authoritarianism and internal autonomy. British fear that settler oppression would ignite a rebellion that would require hasty British military intervention inspired greater colonizer authoritarianism (ibid, 198).

Beyond political institutions, Strong Autonomy colonies also enjoyed institutional transplantation in administrative, legal and judicial realms. These colonies utilized a single court system that extended throughout the colony and followed Common Law principles. The colonizers also invested extensively in a single bureaucratic system of professional civil servants who took the common entrance exam in London. Where white settlers were a majority, these institutions appeared throughout the colony. This
state capacity building also occurred to an extent where white settlers were a minority, though non-European areas received, on average, less investment.

Weak Autonomy colonies, as found in parts of the Caribbean, the Pacific and Southeast Asia, similarly enjoyed early introductions of representative government. The major difference between Weak Autonomy and Strong Autonomy colonies is that the former were located far from the metropole and/or had indigenous populations and existing institutions, and thus attracted slightly less investment in state institutions. For example, the Solomon Islands had a small population of white settlers as well as indigenes with existing political institutions. The British tended to collaborate with the local leaders and plantation elite in different spheres, conceding a timing of self-government 11 years before independence but also limited state build-up so as not to disrupt local systems of rule (Bennett 1987, 112). This meant that the island enjoyed relatively early opportunities for self-government but only limited state development prior to independence in 1978.

The Strong Authoritarian colonies, as found in Malaysia and Sri Lanka, experienced a high level of imperial authoritarianism with no self-government until late in the colonial period. In these colonies, the British colonizer established rule over non-European populations but did not settle in large numbers. The colonizer promoted a system where imperial officials remained remote from indigenous societies, an idea advanced as the necessary separation of modern, civilized European peoples from

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4 Note that the average state development in Weak Autonomy colonies (.18), measured by number of civil servants per capita, is higher than the average of Weak Administrative colonies (.09). Nonetheless, the average is still below the average state development in either Strong Autonomy (.81) or Strong Administrative (.46) colonies.
backward non-European peoples (Burroughs 1999, 183). The British ruled with a centralized authoritarian administration and exclusively occupied the highest positions on the bureaucratic ladder and all governing positions until late into the decolonization process.

These colonies also experienced relatively high levels of state development with relatively high local incorporation, however. The British did not incorporate locals to seek indigenous influence but rather, out of necessity, as large bureaucratic political institutions required staffing which the colonizer could not realistically accommodate. Thus, the British trained and incorporated indigenes into the lowest levels of administration and retained near exclusive control of the positions of real decision-making power.

Finally, the Weak Authoritarian colonies such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda received late opportunities for self-government and low levels of state development. These colonies had largely non-European populations which the colonizers viewed as the ‘backward other.’ The British invested very little in state institutions, choosing rather to grant extensive authority to local rules of indigenous institutions. This form of rule relied on the use of intermediary mechanisms of authority, also referred to as a bifurcated state (Mamdani 1996, 16). Essentially, two hierarchies of political authority existed simultaneously, one colonial and multiple local. The colonial apparatus still claimed sovereignty and required tribute and loyalty from native authorities, but colonial officials largely stayed outside local affairs. The British created only a small centralized state apparatus in the capital and staffed the administration with
predominately British civil servants until very late in the colonial period. Table 1-2 provides definitions of these types.

Table 1-1 Definitions of British colonial types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Autonomy Colonies</td>
<td>colonies where the British introduced permanent political and administrative institutional transplantation; European settlers formed a minority or majority settled population governed by representative assemblies, bureaucratic administration and English common law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Autonomy Colonies</td>
<td>colonies where the British conceded representative institutions to a minority group of white settlers but, because the colony had peripheral status in the Empire and/or existing local indigenous institutions to compete with, the British invested only minimally in state development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Authoritarian Colonies</td>
<td>colonies where the British constructed a complete administrative system from the central institutions to local peripheries in a well-integrated bureaucracy; the colonial system incorporated indigenous actors as civil servants but not as political leaders via representative institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Authoritarian Colonies</td>
<td>colonies where the British made minimal investments, meaning that they did not build a single administrative system and did not concede local democratic institutions until very late in the colonial period; rather, these colonies experienced colonial domination via the cooptation of intermediary collaborators between a colonial center and multiple local indigenous institutions throughout the territory, producing two hierarchies of authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Colonial Legacy Theory of Democratic Survival

This study seeks to fill a gap in the current literature on colonial legacies and democratic survival by examining data that captures variation within the British Empire.

Whereas several studies argue that the British colonial legacy is beneficial for post-colonial democratization, this study notes the wide variation of outcomes across this group. Why have some British colonies endured democratically while others have not?

I hypothesize that the type of British rule matters for post-colonial democratic outcomes.

Within the typology, I expect that colonies should fare better in their prospects for
democratic survival in descending order: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian, and Weak Authoritarian colonies.

Strong Autonomy colonies, which receive early concessions to self-governance and high levels of state development, enjoy the greatest prospects for democratic durability while Weak Authoritarian colonies, which receive only late concessions to self-governance and limited state development, suffer the greatest challenges to establishing enduring democracy after independence. Weak Autonomy colonies receive relatively early self-governance but limited state development, and Strong Authoritarian colonies enjoy only late opportunities for self-governance but strong state development. These intermediate categories experience prospects of democratic survival in-between the other two. I expect that Weak Autonomy colonies should fare slightly better in their prospects for democratic survival because while their state development was less than Strong Authoritarian colonies, they did tend to receive modest development, and this paired with early introductions of representative institutions should benefit post-colonial democracy more than the expansive state development that occurred in Strong Authoritarian colonies. Further, I expect that Strong Authoritarian colonies will be vulnerable to breakdown because as the state becomes strong when democratic institutions are weak, the state can be used to overturn democracy.

In short, I argue that historical factors continue to matter for democratic survival well into the post-colonial period. To better account for variations in outcomes both across and within empires, however, social scientists need to both move beyond one-

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5 Recall that the average state development in Weak Autonomy colonies (.18), measured by number of civil servants per capita, is higher than the average of Weak Administrative colonies (.09), though less than Strong Administrative colonies (.45).
dimensional analyses of this experience and generate better conceptual tools to describe and compare this historical experience across states. I argue that a combination of self-government as well as state development prior to independence proves beneficial for long-term democratic stability after the colonizer departs. This theory of British colonial types and democratic survival is elaborated in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 2
A COLONIAL LEGACY THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC SURVIVAL

This study asks why democratic institutions survive in some contexts and temporal periods but break down in others. Whereas several scholars suggest that the British colonial legacy is beneficial for post-colonial democratization, this study notes the wide variation of democratic outcomes across this group. Why have some British colonies endured democratically while others have not? I hypothesize that the type of rule that the British employed matters for post-colonial democratic outcomes.

This colonial theory of democratic survival hinges on two dimensions of colonial rule as specified in the typology, timing of self-governance and state development prior to independence, to explain the prospects for democratic survival in the post-colonial period. Longer periods of self-governance and greater state development should facilitate post-colonial democratic stability.

Values on the typological components have an indirect influence on democratic survival, however. They operate through their direct effects on three intervening variables including the extent to which colonial populations gain experience with democratic institutions, develop links between state and society, and enjoy administrative development. For example, where the British offer self-government and state development, the colonial population gains experience with democratic institutions, invests in administrative development throughout the territory, and, via the benefits of this investment, creates strong state-society links. At the other extreme, where the British offer neither self-government nor state development in the colony, experience with democratic institutions remains limited, neither the British nor the colonized population invest in administrative development, and, consequently, state-
society links remain weak. The characteristics of colonial political institutions thus set initial levels of these intervening variables.¹

Variations in the intervening variables, experience with democratic institutions, strength of state-society relations and level of administrative development, affect a democratic episode’s potential for survival as follows. First, as populations gain experience with democratic institutions, they also increasingly invest in them, making them gradually more coherent. With greater investment, moreover, the costs of overturning the institutions becomes greater as the fruits of investment would be lost. Populations thus make greater effort to secure their own investment by taking ownership of the endurance of institutions. As this occurs, institutions become more resilient against potential 'shocks' such as economic crises or conflict.

Second, administrative development speaks to the capacity of the state to reach the population at-large, particularly into the periphery. This includes aspects such as taxation, public goods provision and the rule of law. As administrative development increases, the capacity of the state also increases and adds to the uniformity of institutional processes throughout the polity.

Third, state/society links speaks to the formalization of networks between citizens of the polity and the state apparatus. Administrative development is necessary to generate the formalization of state-society links. If the administration of the state cannot reach much of its population, the formality of links between them remain weak. One can

¹ Note that levels of democratic experience, administrative development, and state-society links can also change after independence. The colonial theory hinges on initial levels at independence among these factors, which I argue alter the probability of democratic survival after the British left. The theory does not, however, make this argument deterministic by suggesting that levels set during the colonial period cannot change over time. These changes may be more or less difficult depending on the colonial political institutions, however.
have administrative development without strong state-society links, however. The reciprocal necessity is that the society must develop norms which compel them to work through and express political grievances through the institutions of the state. Where there exist strong incentives to work through non-institutional means, populations 'exit' the state. Where there are strong incentives to use institutions, however, populations generate norms to do so. Experience with democracy can also facilitate the generation of these norms which compel populations to use institutions even in times of decreased state capacity.

This theoretical framework is elaborated in Figure 2-1. It is followed by an outline of each of these steps in greater detail, beginning with a discussion of the characteristics of colonial political institutions and their effect on democratic experience, administrative development and state-society links. Finally, the theory chapter concludes with a discussion of the paths to democratic survival or breakdown for each of the four types.

Figure 2-1 Colonial theory of democratic survival
A Theory of British Colonial Types

The predominant explanatory variable in this research is type of British colonial institutions, formed via combination of timing of self-governance and state development offered to the colony prior to independence. I suggest that the consequences of these ruling strategies loom large for post-colonial democratization. Longer periods of self-governance and greater state development should facilitate post-colonial democratic stability. Thus, Strong Autonomy colonies, which enjoy early concessions to self-governance and high levels of state development, should experience increased prospects for democratic durability compared to other colonial types. Weak Authoritarian colonies, on the other hand, enjoy only late concessions to self-governance and limited state development. This type of colony should thus experience the greatest challenges to establishing an enduring democracy. Finally, Weak Autonomy colonies exhibit relatively early self-governance but limited state development, and Strong Authoritarian colonies enjoy only late opportunities for self-governance but strong state development. These middle categories should thus experience prospects of democratic survival in-between the other two. Where Weak Autonomy colonies have at least modest development by independence, I expect that their prospects of democratic survival will be slightly higher Strong Autonomy colonies.

Values on the typological components have an indirect influence on democratic survival. They operate through their direct effects on the extent to which colonial populations gain experience with democratic institutions, develop state/society links, and enjoy administrative development. For example, a Strong Autonomy colony is more likely to enjoy enduring democratic institutions because its population has long-term experience with operating this set of institutions, because its state/society
interactions have been formalized and thus offer identifiable channels of political grievance expression, and because its administrative development extends into the periphery, facilitating a responsive and capable state. Each of the theories associated with these intervening processes is discussed in turn.

**Democratic Institutional Experience**

I expect that, all else equal, longer experience with democratic institutions prior to independence is beneficial for post-colonial democratization. Experience with democratic institutions promotes greater efficiency in their operation, increases feelings of ownership of the political framework, and increases the costs associated with their overturning. Ultimately, longer periods of experience should promote the continuance of this set of institutions. As groups participate, they spend time, energy and resources to invest in activities to learn how to operate the institutions for their benefit. As more groups make the calculation to invest their resources in institutional learning, it becomes costlier to adopt a different system. Thus, as the number of groups who view investment as the most beneficial (or least costly) activity increases, institutional reversals become less likely.

By contrast, where institutions are new, experience with them is inherently limited. New institutions require that persons invest time and resources in learning to gain experience, but these initial investments are risky because the future of the institutions is uncertain. If it is unclear whether institutional learning and efficiency-building will pay off, groups will hesitate to make this initial investment. The upstart costs to democratic learning and investment are thus high. Without them, however, it is difficult to establish feelings of institutional ownership which ultimately help ensure long-term survival.
During the colonial period, these calculations to invest in democratic institutions are made within a broader framework of subjugation. Colonial Institutions are not ‘homegrown’ but they do avail one benefit: their continuance is less a product of local support than it is of colonial coercion. Thus, groups invest regardless of popular sentiment if there exists reason to believe that the colonizer will uphold the institutions. Thus, experience with democratic institutions prior to independence, available when colonies enjoyed early opportunities for self-governance, make it easier for populations to make this initial investment in democratic institutions. The consequences of this investment and experience, however, last long after the colonizer departs and make post-colonial democratic survival more likely.

The introduction of early self-government does not alone increase the probability of democratic survival. If the state cannot gather information about its citizenry or respond to its population, electoral experience alone is unlikely to cement democratic survival. This leads to the second intervening variable, administrative development.

**Administrative Development**

Administrative development is defined in terms of the size and capacity of the supporting bureaucracy. This factor speaks largely to state capability in terms of revenue collection, public goods provision, rule of law and infrastructural power. Where administrative development is high, institutions extend beyond the centralized apex of the state and into the grassroots of the society. Colonial rule takes several administrative forms depending on the character of the political institutions selected.

Where self-government is not offered and investment in the institutions of the state is minimal, administrative development is minimal. Centralized bureaucratic structures exist only in capitals and reach minimally outside this nest of power. In these
cases, the colonial ruler has limited interest in the activities of the periphery except in terms of its definitive subordination and stability. Rather, pre-existing institutions and rulers, such as chieftaincies, are used to maintain order in place of colonial bureaucracies.

Where self-government and state development co-exist in the political design, the colonizer creates more penetrative institutions and thus requires large supporting bureaucracies. Systems of direct taxation and land rights are set up to extract revenue and promote economic production even from the outskirts of the territory. These systems require capital, infrastructure, and manpower, thus necessitating a large administrative structure to oversee the colony.

The level of administrative development realized during the colonial period has important consequences for the prospects of democratic survival. Administrative capacity facilitates the state’s reach to its population to exchange information and provide collective goods. It also generates the infrastructure necessary for officials of the state to respond to the population. Without this infrastructure, the legibility of the population is much more limited because no reliable system exists to gather and analyze information about its citizenry. All else equal, I hypothesize that democratic survival is more likely when these administrative structures are available.

This variable operates indirectly on democratic survival, however. Whether democratic institutions will be retained after independence is dependent also on the experience and investment of the population in that regime type. Administration can and should facilitate this durability, but is more likely to do so where pre-existing experience with democracy is available. Where state development is high but self-government is
low, therefore, the state institutions can be utilized to undermine democracy rather than entrench it. However, if democratic institutions are sufficiently strong, then the strong state reinforces these institutions.

**State-Society Relations**

Finally, the third intervening variable is state-society relations. This variable speaks to the ways in which the population accesses the state and expresses political grievances. In other words, it describes the level of formalization of interactions, or the degree to which relations between the state and citizenry are mediated through institutional channels. High formalization suggests the existence of a regulatory framework for the state, for the society, and for relations between the two. Channels exist for political struggle which are built into the apparatus of the state. Low formalization suggests a distinct gap between the state and the citizenry where political struggles are necessarily held outside organized channels. Rather, informal networks tend to proliferate and populations remain largely outside the reach of the state.

In a minimally formalized colony, the state is largely external to the citizen as an “alien and predatory other” (Young 1994, 280). When states do try to control the periphery without a strong set of institutions, populations make use of exit strategies. Importantly, strong state/society interactions require the presence of an administrative system throughout the polity. When the citizenry exits rather than participates in institutions, it is often a result of the state’s limited capacity to provide public goods and services in exchange. In these cases, public goods provision is low, an especially destabilizing factor with security. Where administrative development is high, it serves to bring people into a stronger reciprocal relationship with the state. For example, public goods are offered by the state in exchange for taxes.
Strong state/society relations at independence are more likely where self-governance and state development are available. Self-governance and state development promote the greater formalization of interactions between the state and society because actors develop norms which encourage behavior that utilizes regulated institutions long before independence. The colonized population is permitted to create, run and participate in local institutions, and thereby develop through this process increased acceptance of these formalized channels of political interaction. When the British leave, norms have been inculcated over time and thus provide an expectation of continued use. Given the general structure of the theoretical framework noted above, I now provide a brief outline of the sequence of events linking colonial political institutions to democratic survival for each of the four colonial types.

**Strong Autonomy Colonies and Democratic Survival**

In Strong Autonomy colonies, the British collaborate with representatives of the settled population and gradually offer political institutions of self-government and invest in state development. Populations thus enjoy experience with democratic institutions, strong links between a formalized state and society and a single administration with the capacity to collect revenue, provide public goods and enforce the rule of law. The single political framework boasts a capable administrative system and formalized links between society and the state. Finally, a significant period of democratic institutional experience prior to independence allows the population to invest in and take ownership of institutions within a democratic framework. These institutional strengths provided the circumstances for democratic survival, even against exogenous shocks such as economic crisis or social conflict. Figure 2-2 presents a diagram of this sequence.
Weak Autonomy Colonies and Democratic Survival

Weak Autonomy colonies also gain early opportunities for self-government, though often restricted to small parts of the population, and limited state development. The social make-up of these colonies typically includes a very small white population and a large migrant population, interacting in a strict racial hierarchy. Over the course of the colonial era, a liberal-authoritarian political system develops where democratic institutions exist but for the sake of social order, the state is ready and willing to exercise autocratic force to discipline the population. The greatest challenge to stable democratic institutions among this group of British colonies stems thus less from limited experience with this institutional form, but from the restricted nature of access of social groups to political institutions at all. The fight for independence thus is characterized by a domestic struggle for political inclusion and social equality across groups\(^2\). When this

\(^2\) Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) argue that colonial systems often gave rulers the tools to suppress the lower classes, thus inhibiting post-colonial democratization. Where the British intervened against capital interests, however, to expand political and administrative institutions to the lower classes, democratization can take place. I take this a step further by arguing that the resulting democracy also becomes relatively stable.
process is successfully waged prior to independence, subsequent democratic institutions should be quite resilient against breakdown.

State development is also available in Weak Autonomy colonies but tends to be limited in scope because the extension of the government apparatus to the periphery demands mass resistance to overcome the embedded social hierarchy, particularly between the owners of capital and labor. Where the British eventually undermine capital in support of labor, previously limited participation in the structure of governance is extended to the broader population and formal institutions are expanded to periphery. This transformation leads to an extended self-government system and more formalized institutional channels which encourage even local level incorporation. As the broader society is incorporated into and begins to invest in the democratic institutions, their durability is also increased. Figure 2-3 presents a diagram of this sequence.

Figure 2-3 Weak autonomy colony – path to democratic survival

**Strong Authoritarian Colonies and Democratic Survival**

In Strong Authoritarian colonies, political institutions are authoritarian in form and hierarchical in structure. The British permit no self-government until late into the colonial
period, if at all. They do, however, build up the machinery of government, linking the center to the periphery with a centralized, territory-wide administration. This form of rule is extremely disruptive, transformative and intensive because pre-existing political systems are dismantled and replaced by colonial institutions. Because state development is so vast, local authorities are needed to run the lowest levels of the bureaucracy. These locals are generally excluded from promotion beyond minor administrative positions, maintaining a racial divide and reinforcing the notion that self-government is not a legitimate possibility. Nonetheless, the single hierarchy of colonial rule links officials in central, provincial, district, and local services through a formal chain of command (Cell 1999, 236). Finally, a centralized, colony-wide system of courts enforces the rule of law.

In this way, the colonial system is present, albeit often unevenly, throughout the whole territory. These colonies thus have a high level of administrative development, but limited experience with democratic institutions and only semi-formal channels of interaction between the state and society. Administrative development did provide the means for direct taxation and service provision which puts the peasant classes in contact with the state structure. In this way, administrative development should help post-colonial democratic durability.

However, experience with democratic institutions remains limited until after independence. Thus, while bureaucratic institutions exist prior to independence, the challenge to post-colonial democratization stems from a lack of popular or elite investment in the democratic institutions which might stabilize them from potential destabilizing shocks such as economic crises or security challenges. Where this
criterion is fulfilled post-independence, these colonies are more likely to endure democratically. Where it is not, however, democratic breakdown is likely. Figure 2-4 presents this sequence.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2-4** Strong authoritarian colony -- path to democratic breakdown

**Weak Authoritarian Colonies and Democratic Survival**

Finally, Weak Authoritarian colonies enjoy neither early self-government nor high investment in state development prior to independence. Consequently, experience with democratic institutions, administrative development and linkages between state and society remain low throughout the colonial period. Colonial political institutions feature a centralized colonial administration run by a minimal number of officials and limited bureaucracy. In place of strong formal institutions, personal rulers with informal networks of political loyalty undergirding power exist. Further, the civil services are comparatively small and incorporate few indigenes, leaving populations unprepared to govern through these institutions effectively after the colonizer’s departure. This limits the administrative reach of the state to provide public goods and services, and large portions of the population remain outside the central state functions. Thus,
administrative development and state-society relations remain weak throughout the colonial era and into independence (Hyden 1983).

Weak administrative colonies encourage the use of existing authority structures at the local level. British colonial officials collaborate with rulers of pre-existing systems by incorporating them into an authoritarian chain of command (Cell 1999). Rather than creating one political institution, the British favor the existence of two hierarchies of authority, one colonial and the others local. Local rulers hold positions of authority largely unchallenged by the colonial state and highly unaccountable to its population. At the same time, this decentralized structure formalizes and politicizes ethnic identities (Blanton 2001). These static identities interact with weak institutions in such a manner to reinforce informal patronage and clientelistic networks. When democratic institutions are introduced at independence, these states face great challenges due to a lack of formalized state-society relations, low levels of administrative capacity, and limited experience with democratic institutions. Rather, informal networks based on systems of neopatrimonialism predominate and suffuse political institutions. Moreover, because there is a lack of experience with democratic institutions prior to independence, there is limited investment in their continuation after the colonizer departs. Thus, late self-governance and limited state development reduce the prospects of democratic survival in the post-colonial period. Figure 2-5 presents a diagram of this sequence.³

³ While the diagram offers only a route to democratic breakdown, one must note that while these initial levels are important for understanding post-colonial prospects for survival, they are not determinate. There is a potential that, over time, levels of democratic experience, state-society links and administrative development could be bolstered and subsequent democratic transitions may have greater potential to be successful. Nonetheless, the initial levels of these variables at independence makes overcoming these challenges far more difficult for these colonies compared to other types of former British colonies.
This study seeks to fill a gap in the current literature on colonial legacies and democratic survival by examining data that captures variation within the British Empire. It asks why some British colonies endured democratically while others have not. Using an original typology of British colonies, I argue that a combination of self-government and state development prior to independence proves beneficial for long-term democratic stability after the colonizer departs. The most advantageous legacy is one where the British conceded early introductions of self-government and invested in state development throughout the colony. At the other extreme, the most disadvantageous legacy is one where the British offered only late opportunities for self-government and invested little in state development. While the introduction of self-government alone does not ensure democratic stability, if the state is modestly developed by independence, the potential for survival increases. Finally, boasting extensive state development without accompanying pre-independence self-government is harmful for democratic outcomes because these administrative strengths can be used to undermine democratic institutions.
Through the rest of the dissertation, I test the hypothesis that the type of rule that the British employed matters for post-colonial democratic outcomes. Through a statistical chapter of all former British colonies with at least one post-colonial democratic transition, I examine my expectation that colonies should fare better in their prospects for democratic survival in descending order: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Administrative, and Weak Administrative colonies. Then, using comparative historical analysis, I examine a series of case studies I demonstrate that each of these colonial types undergoes various outcomes corresponding to their colonial inheritances.
CHAPTER 3
A SURVIVAL ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRATIC BREAKDOWN IN FORMER BRITISH COLONIES

During the roughly 40-year period of mass decolonization of the British colonial empire that began in the 1940s, numerous countries across the world gained independence, many with electoral institutions in place in that moment. Several of these transitions to independent democracy broke down in places ranging from Nigeria to Malaysia to Grenada. Many more former colonies in the roughly 60 years since have followed similar courses of democratic transition and breakdown from Zambia to the Solomon Islands. In Sudan and Ghana, this process of transition and breakdown repeated itself three and four times, respectively. Yet, these cases of breakdown can be juxtaposed against Botswana, Mauritius and Jamaica where democratic institutions have survived for decades. These differences, not confined by time period or world region, beg the question: why do democratic institutions survive in some contexts and temporal periods but break down in others? This chapter explores this question by statistically analyzing aggregate data of 57 democratic transitions leading to 23 breakdowns in 42 former British colonies from 1951-2014. It argues that the causes of democratic breakdown remain driven by historical roots, particularly by the varied ruling structures of British colonization across the empire.

While there are no large-n studies that test democratic survival specifically on a sample of British colonies, several studies do suggest that British colonialism is positively related to democratic survival and put forward multiple explanations for this finding. Woodberry (2012) argues that the presence of conversionary Protestant missionaries, a variable associated with the spread of the British Empire, promoted mass education through the spread of mass literacy, printing and social movement
organizations. Because mass education is consistently linked to the stability of
democratic transitions (Bollen 1979; Gasiorowski and Power 1998), he concludes that
the presence of Protestant missionaries aided post-colonial democracy.

A second set of explanations focuses on institutional and political inheritances.
First, some suggest that the more frequent adoption of parliamentary as opposed to
presidential political systems in former British colonies promoted stable democracy,
though several former British colonies rejected the Westminster model (Wiseman 1990).
Further, some argue that the British better prepared their colonies for democracy by
allowing for elections prior to independence (Weiner 1965; 1987; Lipset et al. 1993;
Diamond 1998; Abernathy 2000, 406; Bilinski 2015; Lee and Paine 2016). As yet, Lee
and Paine (2016) and Bilinski (2015) are the only studies that have gathered data and
tested this proposition explicitly. Bilinski (2015) argues that self-sustaining democracy
was produced where colonies received sufficiently long periods of colonial autonomy via
a freely elected legislature or executive prior to independence. Because these
opportunities were largely limited to the British Empire, this group of colonies tends to
outperform others in terms of democratic survival. I suggest that Bilinski (2015) omits an
important variable in his explanation of the positive British legacy. By contrast, I argue
that that self-government prior to independence only enhances post-colonial democracy
when a degree of state development is also available. In short, the legacy of self-
government and state development prior to independence continues to exhibit
significant determining effects on democratic survival even after the end of the Cold
War.
Similarly, Lee and Paine (2016) argue that pre-independence democracy levels significantly determine post-colonial democratic status. However, because these authors only measure this outcome one year after independence and after the end of the Cold War, this static measure of democratic outcomes fails to capture the vulnerability of many early democracies. My data suggests that of the 30 former British colonies that experience democratic episodes at independence, 13 (43%) undergo breakdowns, seven (23%) of these within the first decade. By measuring democracy in terms of the probability of survival, rather than as a static indicator, this chapter can assess the risk of breakdown and predict time to failure.

Moreover, by using this measure of the dependent variable, I find that the legacy of the British colonial type has significant effects on the likelihood of democratic survival even among transitions made after the Cold War. This suggests that Lee and Paine’s (2016) finding that convergence in democracy levels across all colonies has eliminated the British colonial legacy after the Cold War fails to account for the legacy of state development. The joint colonial advantages of early self-government and state development remain significant in predicting democratic survival even for transitions made in the post-Cold War period. In short, for those British colonies that receive democratic institutions very late in the decolonization process, this legacy for democratic survival looks like colonies that did not receive these institutions at all prior to independence.

Fourth, Weiner (1987) argues that the British legacy for democracy stems from their promotion of bureaucratic structures that were gradually transferred to colonial subjects whom then gained experience with law-based institutions. This variable has not
been tested as it relates to democratic survival. This study does so using new historical data and finds that the size of the colonial state varied extensively across the empire. I find that state development bolsters post-colonial democratic durability when paired with pre-independence self-government. My findings demonstrate, for example, that there are significant differences in the probability of democratic survival among colonies that enjoy both self-governance and state development and those that enjoy state development but only late self-government.

Lange (2009) presents the only cross-national study that tests the impact of institutional variations within the group of former British colonies. While not the main dependent variable, his large-n study includes a test for the effects of direct versus indirect rule on the average level of democracy, finding a significant negative relationship between indirect rule and democracy. This chapter builds in part off Lange’s (2009) broad concepts of direct and indirect rule but disaggregates their essential components and broadens the dichotomous typology to four distinct categories. Further, instead of looking at the level of democracy, this study examines democratic survival.

This chapter addresses several gaps in the existing literature on British colonialism and democratic survival. First, while several scholars find that British colonialism is beneficial to democracy, there remains considerable debate and only limited large-n testing. Lee and Paine (2016) and Bilinski (2015) are the only two studies that test their hypothesized mechanism. Neither of these studies, however, tests these propositions among British colonies specifically, and they only consider one dimension of the colonial experience. By limiting my scope to the British Empire, I can draw out multiple dimensions of the historical experience and apply them to an original
conceptual typology. In comparing four British colonial types, I find that both Lee and Paine (2016) and Bilinski (2015) omit an important covariate, state development prior to independence. When considered jointly with self-government, the interaction consistently explains democratic outcomes over time, even for transitions made after the Cold War.

**Research Design**

This chapter tests the effects of colonial type on post-colonial democratic survival in former British colonies. Where many studies model colonial effects using cross-sectional data or panel studies, these techniques provide only static indicators of a country’s regime history (Lee & Paine 2016; Lange 2009; Woodberry 2012; Olsonn 2009). For example, Lee and Paine (2016) find that British colonialism has a positive legacy for democracy one year after independence but show that this legacy fades over time. While an important finding, the fact that British colonies seem to be more democratic at independence than other colonies tells us little about how much these early democratic regimes are at risk for breakdown. Indeed, this research design allows me to demonstrate that several types of British colonies had only extremely vulnerable democratic institutions at this juncture, making this British legacy for some of its colonies not much different than states with other colonizers. In short, my models allow me to examine not only whether a country is democratic at a particular time, but also how at risk the regime is for failure and its expected duration.¹ I use continuous-time event history analysis to model this process because these models provide a dynamic

¹ Note that my models do not provide information about level of democracy or consolidation processes, merely what its probability of survival or failure is at a given country-year after transition.
picture of how independent variables effect a hazard rate, meaning the instantaneous probability that democratic episodes will end. It allows me to examine precisely how ‘at risk’ a democracy is during a given country-year given its type of British colonial legacy.

Data and Measurement

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this analysis is the duration (years) of a country’s democratic episode(s), also referred to in the literature as a democratic spell. A democratic episode is defined as the period of democracy in a country’s history within the given period of analysis (1951-2014). Each democratic episode is coded independently. When a country makes a democratic transition, the country enters the dataset and remains until it experiences an event, i.e. a democratic breakdown, or is right-censored at 2014. The duration of the democratic episode is the number of country-years between transition and breakdown. Countries can experience multiple transitions and breakdowns. Because each episode for each country is independent, a single country may thus appear and disappear from the dataset according to its pattern of transition and breakdown.²

The data for the dependent variable comes predominately from Bernhard et al.’s (2001) original dataset on democratic durability from 1951-2005. I extended the dataset

² By way of example, Nigeria has had three democratic transitions and two democratic breakdowns (i.e. three democratic episodes) during the period 1951-2012. Six country-years for Nigeria are coded for the duration of its first democratic episode (1960-1966), four country-years are included separately for its second democratic episode (1979-1983) and 13 country-years are included separately for its third (and on-going) democratic episode (1999-2014). The third episode is right-censored at 2012. Because there are countries with multiple episodes, I will cluster by country to account for the fact that it is a single country though its episodes are coded independently.
using similar coding procedures to 2014. This is based on Dahl’s (1971) widely used definition of ‘polyarchy,’ which highlights the requirements of equal political participation and free political competition. This means that several exclusions are made even if the country has electoral institutions. For example, where internal wars or extensive civil disturbances co-exist with elections or where large amounts of violence are connected to the electoral process, these country-years are not included. Or for example, where elections are held but large numbers of political parties are banned from competition, these country-years are not coded as democratic. Breakdowns, or ‘events’, can occur for many possible reasons including civil war, coups d’état, bans on opposition participation, inhibiting electoral violence, non-constitutional extension of term limits, etc.

I do not distinguish among the different types of breakdown in my analysis. When these events occur, a country is determined to no longer meet Dahl’s minimum criteria, and the country-year is coded as undergoing a breakdown which ends that democratic episode for the country.

The dependent variable is dichotomous, capturing presence or absence of democracy. If the country meets Dahl’s minimum criteria, it is coded as democratic for that country-year. Given the use of years as the unit of analysis, I follow Bernhard et al. (2001)’s cutoff point for the coding of an initiation or termination of democracy. If a nation initiated or terminated democracy within the first three months of the year, the initiation is coded as occurring in the previous year. If the initiation or termination occurs past the first three months, it is coded as having occurred during that year. If a country

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3 I also added Cyprus which did not appear in the original dataset and altered five democratic episode coding: Malaysia now includes 1957-1959; Nigeria now includes 1999-2014, the Solomon Islands now includes 2004, Zambia now includes 2002-2013 as democratic, and Tanzania’s period of 1961-1962 was coded as non-democratic.
does not experience a transition to democracy at all, it is not coded as having a
democratic episode and essentially falls out of the dataset. Countries such as
Swaziland, for example, which have never transitioned to democracy, do not appear in
the data at all.\footnote{There are seven cases of this type, which though they meet the criteria of British colonies, have never
had a democratic transition and thus do not appear in the dataset. See Appendix A.} When a country experiences a democratic breakdown, the country-year
is coded as undergoing an ‘event.’ In extending Bernhard et al.’s original dataset from
2005-2014, I used the following sources: Polity IV, Freedom House, Democracy and
Dictatorship Dataset and country studies, where necessary. Ultimately, the dataset
includes 42 countries, 57 democratic transitions, 23 democratic breakdowns, and 1395
country-years (see Appendix A).

**Independent Variables**

The main explanatory variable of interest stems from the conceptual typology of
British colonial types. It takes two primary variables: timing of self-governance and state
development prior to independence. Countries are then coded into four colonial types
using combinations of the values on each of these variables (see Figure 3-1).

I measure timing of self-governance using the number of national elections held
in the colony prior to Independence during which at least half of the legislature is
elected by universal suffrage.\footnote{Note that because the settler colonies, the European transplant colonies that achieved by far the earliest
control of internal affairs as well as representative institutions, are penalized by the period of history
during which universal suffrage was globally non-existent, this requirement is dropped in these cases.
This includes Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States.} The variable ranges from zero elections to eight
elections prior to independence. In coding the dummy variable for the typology, I
created histograms of the variables’ frequency\(^6\) and used the inflection point of the overlaid normal curve as the threshold for early/late self-government and high/low state development (see Appendix B). I use more than three elections prior to independence as the cutoff for early self-governance.

While most models use the national elections variable, I do also include a measure of self-governance called Responsible Governance, which captures earlier, though more partial, forms of democratic institutional introduction. This is measured as the number of years before Independence that the colony utilized what British colonists referred to as Responsible Governance, meaning the holding of legislative elections with local parties/members and utilizing a member (executive) system with local participants. The latter category serves to ensure some local participation in executive governance decisions, or, in short, that the colonial Governor did not possess complete authoritarian command. This variable does not require universal suffrage in elections or even complete local control of the legislature or executive – merely a percentage of local participation determined by open-outcome elections. Most often, this was provided to white settlers well before other peoples. It is used, however, as a way of capturing the earliest local democratic politics (even if restricted) as a way of determining a timetable of precedence in the colony. Bilinski (2015) argues that open-outcome elections are the most important precedent for subsequent democratic stability. I use this variable both to examine Bilinski’s claim directly and to compare legacies of earlier exclusive introductions of democratic processes to later typically more inclusive ones.

\(^6\) Note that this value is the frequencies are calculated using values from the 42 British colonies, not from by country-years as appears in the descriptive statistics chart.
I measure the second typological variable, state development, using data concerning the size of the civil service as a percentage of the total population. I collected civil service data from the British Colonial Blue Books available at the UK National Archives for various years between 1937 and 1948. Where Blue Books were unavailable, I used census data or various civil service reports within the same range of dates. Population data came from the corresponding Blue Book with the civil service data or where this information was unavailable, from Kuczynski (1949). When coding strong or weak state development for the typology coding, I again used the inflection point of the normal curve on its histogram. Strong state development includes those colonies that had a value of .3 or above for the size of their civil service per capita.

After establishing thresholds for the two variables, I cross-tabulated their values for each country to code them in their respective types. Ultimately, the dataset includes 7 Strong Autonomy colonies (19%), 11 Weak Autonomy Colonies (30%), 5 Strong Authoritarian Colonies (14%) and 14 Weak Authoritarian Colonies (38%). Note that this variable is coded as a categorical variable, Type of British Colony, in the descriptive statistics but it features in the models as one dummy variable for each type. See the final list of coded countries in Appendix C.

Graph 8 shows the time-to-event estimates of each of the colonial types from 1951-2014, the period of this study. The horizontal lines along the x-axis represent the

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7 This is with the exception of Australia and South Africa which were granted dominion status much sooner. For these, data was collected within 10 years of these dates.

8 For a population of 100,000, this would indicate 300 civil servants.

9 Data is missing for Bangladesh, Botswana, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Note that because data is missing for three of the four colonies with the largest European settlement, results for models that include the civil service or colonial type variables cannot be driven by these outliers.
survival duration for that interval determined by the time-to-event, or democratic breakdown. Each vertical ‘dip’ in the step-wise curve represents a change in the cumulative probability of survival of the respective group, or colonial type. One can only roughly estimate point survival with this graph, but, for example, if a country falls into the Weak Authoritarian type, the country’s probability of surviving 10 years is roughly 45%. Comparatively, among Weak Autonomy colonies within the first 20 years, a country’s probability of surviving is roughly 88%. On the extreme, over 60 years, the probability of surviving in the High Autonomy type is 100%.\(^\text{10}\)

The main take-away of the graph is that the survival probability for Strong Autonomy colonies is much higher over time than any of the other types and that the Weak Authoritarian and Strong Authoritarian colonies have the lowest probability of survival, and Weak Autonomy colonies have survival probabilities somewhere in the middle. Keeping this in mind, I now run models to determine if any of these differences are statistically significant and whether the survival estimates hold when controlling for confounding variables.

**Additional Variables**

I include several additional variables to control for factors that have been associated with democratic breakdown in the literature. These fall into two categories: colonial and post-colonial explanations.

\(^\text{10}\) Note that each of these interpretations also includes countries that are censored at 2014, which may, of course still be surviving, but are right-censored because the analysis time stops.
Colonial Variables

I include three variables in later models that capture aspects of colonialism that have been argued to have had significant effects on post-colonial outcomes. First, I test the contention that British colonial settlement improves the prospects of democratic survival, a factor that has been argued to positively affect development by promoting the adoption of less extractive or authoritarian institutions (Acemoglu et al. 2001). Rather than employing the typically-used proxy for this cause, settler mortality, I include a direct measure of the number of settlers as a percentage of the total population. This data is collected from British census data taken in 1936 or as close as possible to this year (Kuczynski 1949). Second, I include a variable for time spent under colonial rule. Because several scholars have argued that the length of colonial rule affected prospects for democracy, I test this factor (Diamond 1988; Huntington 1984, 206; Hadenius 1992; Olsson 2009). This contention serves as a potential alternative explanation for democratic survival. It suggests that the colonial legacy stems from the length of time under colonial domination rather than the form of this rule. I use data on the duration of colonial rule based on Woodberry’s (2008) dates of Independence and colonization.

Third, Woodberry (2010) argues that Protestant colonial missionaries had a long-lasting legacy on democratization via their active role in spreading education and literacy. I include one of his variables to control for this possibility: ‘Protestant missionaries per 10,000 population in 1923.’ This argument emphasizes the social rather than institutional legacies of colonialism.

Fourth, Lange (2009) finds that among former British colonies, those that were indirectly ruled experienced less democracy after independence than those that were
directly ruled. While my size of civil service variable captures this idea to a small degree, Lange’s definition and theory move beyond state development and thus I include a measure of direct/indirect rule in some models. I operationalize the extent of indirect rule as the percentage of total colonial court cases heard in customary courts using Lange’s (2009) British colonialism dataset. The variable is measured in 1955, as close as possible to this year, or on the year prior to independence.

Finally, in models that compare colonial types, I include a variable for small states. This is a dummy variable for colonies with populations less than 500,000 during the year that the civil service size is measured. This variable is used to control for the possibility that some colonies are coded as having strong states artificially as a function of their small populations. Further, it is used to see whether small population size is the driving force behind post-colonial democratic survival.

**Post-Colonial Variables**

Several post-colonial variables are consistently used in studies of democratic survival. I include the level of development measured by logged real GDP per capita at constant 2011 national prices from Penn World Tables, version 9. Second, I include economic performance measured as GDP per capita growth (annual percentage) based on constant 2011 national prices, also calculated from Penn World Tables, version 9. Third, Huntington (1991) argues that countries that have experienced democratic regimes previously will be more likely to survive democratically in the future because actors experience political learning. I control for this by coding the total number of past democratic episodes that a country had prior to the current episode. Data comes from Bernhard et al. (2004) and is extended to 2014 using my extended democratic episode coding. Fourth, to control for the possible negative effects of presidentialism on
democratic survival (Linz 1994), I include a dichotomous measure in which a presidential system is coded 1 and any other system is coded 0. This data comes from Bernhard et al.’s (2001) dataset and extended from 1995 to 2014 using similar procedures. A country is considered presidential following Satori’s (1994: 84) definition: Presidential if (a) the head of state is popularly elected (b) cannot be discharged by a parliamentary vote and (c) heads the governments that he/she appoints. Fifth, since it has been argued that high levels of ethnic diversity make democratic consolidation difficult, I include an ethnic fractionalization index data from Alesina et al. (2003). Sixth, Fish (2001) suggests that Muslim majority countries are less likely to be democratic. I control for religious composition by creating a dummy variable for countries with significant Muslim populations. Therefore, I included a variable, which measures the % Muslim in a country in the year 1970. Data comes from Woodberry (2012).

Finally, I include two post-colonial time variables, which examine the possible diminishing effects of colonialism over time and the potential of periodization. Lee and Paine (2016) find that British colonialism has a positive legacy for democracy right after independence, which fades over time. I include two variables to control for this possibility. First, I include a variable for the number of years since independence. Data for Independence dates comes from Woodberry (2008). The second variable deals more explicitly with post-colonial periodization. Because Paine and Lee (2016) suggest that there is a post-Cold War periodization, I test whether transitions made after 1991

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11 I also collect data about ethnic exclusion from the Ethnic Power Relations dataset (Wimmer 2009). Because it is highly correlated with Ethnic Fractionalization and because it has significant amounts of missing observations for my dataset, I use only the fractionalization score.
were more likely to survive than those made in the period before. I created a new dummy variable to make this demarcation. Any country-year that is part of a post-1991 transition is labeled 1 whereas any country-year that is part of a pre-1991 transition, regardless of whether the episode breaks down or survives, is labeled 0. The descriptive statistics for all independent variables are presented in Table 3-1.

**Results**

I first constructed a base model with the full set of cases and observations to test the general propositions cited in the literature. Initially, I compared the AICs for each of the parametric models to find the most preferred (Appendix C). The preferred model is the Exponential, and indeed a Wald Test of the Weibull shows that one cannot reject the null hypothesis that $p=1$, or that the hazard is constant. However, theoretically, the literature on democratic survival suggests a ‘democratic consolidation’ effect, or that over time a democracy is more likely to survive, and so I ultimately selected the Weibull model, the second-most-preferred model and of which the Exponential Model is a unique case. The Weibull model allows for a baseline hazard that monotonically increases over time, as this would correspond to the literature’s suggestion of consolidation over time.

Note that I run all models using the Accelerated Failure Time specification, meaning that all models report time-to-failure coefficients and should be interpreted as follows: a positive sign indicates that as a given variable increases, democratic survival is enhanced, or the probability of democratic failure decreases. Accordingly, a negative coefficient indicates that as the variable increases, the expected duration decreases, or the probability of democratic breakdown rises.
The base model includes four covariates, including level of development, economic performance, post-colonial executive institutions and ethnic fractionalization.\textsuperscript{12} Results for the baseline hazard model are available in Table 3-2. They show that the level of development, economic performance and ethnic fractionalization are statistically significant. The economic covariates are positively related to democratic survival, meaning that as level of development and economic performance increase, democratic durability is enhanced, or the likelihood of democratic breakdown decreases. Ethnic fractionalization holds the opposite relationship; as fractionalization increases, the likelihood of breakdown increases. Finally, unexpectedly given the literature on executive institutions and democracy, parliamentary systems appear to face a slightly greater likelihood of breakdown than presidential systems among former British colonies.

After specifying the baseline hazard model, I test the proposition that self-governance prior to independence affects democratic survival. I expect that, all else being equal, longer periods of self-governance prior to independence strengthen post-colonial democracy. However, I expect that this legacy positively affects the probability of democratic survival only if it is paired with a degree of state development. The state must meet a minimum threshold of capacity to respond to its population for the pre-independence introduction of democratic institutions to exhibit a meaningful effect on post-colonial democratic survival.

\textsuperscript{12} Specifications with Past Experience with Democracy and Percentage Muslim were also examined. Likelihood ratio tests for both covariates suggested that the less specified models were preferred. In addition, Ethnic Exclusion and Ethnic Fractionalization are highly correlated. The latter is used because it has fewer missing observations and a likelihood ratio tests suggests that it provides significant additional information in the model and therefore should be included.
In the first model, I examine this proposition using the number of national elections prior to independence. The coding procedures for this variable are strict, as it requires that a) at least half of the legislature is elected with local participants, meaning locals possess a significant influence on subsequent internal governance decisions, and that b) universal suffrage is applied, meaning that participation is expansive. Therefore, I also test this hypothesis using an alternate measure of self-government prior to independence. I call this variable ‘responsible governance.’ It requires only that elections determine some local participation in the national legislature (i.e. non-appointed) and that the executive contains at least one local participant (even if non-elected). This juxtaposition is used to compare legacies of earlier exclusive introductions of democratic processes to later typically more inclusive ones. If the positive British legacy is primarily determined by the early introduction of open-elections, then responsible governance should positively and significantly affect subsequent democratic survival. If, however, the legacy is strongest only when greater periods of more inclusive democratic politics are introduced prior to independence, then the national elections variable should be positively and significantly related to democratic survival.

Next, I isolate and test the individual effect of the second typological covariate – state development. This is measured as the size of the civil service per capita. Again, I expect that all else being equal, state development is good for democratic survival. However, I expect this relationship to be dependent on the strength of democratic

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13 Note that I do not use the ethnic fractionalization variable in models that include the civil service variable, as several scholars argue that fractionalization is a good measure of the likelihoods that governments will have successfully introduced mass education in a single language (Wimmer 2016).
institutions prior to independence. Where democratic institutions are in place for longer periods prior to independence, high state development should enhance institutional durability. Where democratic institutions are relatively new prior to independence, I hypothesize that state strength will diminish democratic durability.

Because I expect that both self-government and state development prior to independence enhance the likelihood of democratic survival only when both are available, I test this hypothesis by using an interaction term in which I multiply self-government prior to independence by size of the civil service. I call this variable ‘Colonial Interaction.’ See Table 3-3 for results.

In Model 2, I compare early, more partial self-government with later, more complete introductions of democratic institutions. I find that the baseline model indicators continue to be significantly related to democratic survival but that the Self-government and Responsible Governance variables are not significant. This result suggests that, whether restricted or inclusive, the introduction of democratic institutions in a colony in isolation does not significantly increase the probability of democratic survival. This lack of effect is contrary to Bilinski’s (2015) finding that competitive oligarchy prior to democratization yields beneficial effects and draws into question Lee and Paine’s (2016) finding that the pre-independence level of democracy alone significantly determines the probability of post-colonial democratic survival, at least within the scope of former British colonies. The result is perhaps less surprising if one

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14 Note that I do not include size of the civil service in the model with the interaction because it is highly collinear with the interaction term. I do not include the other main effect (self-government prior to independence) either because a Likelihood Ratio Test suggests that the less specified regression is preferable. When I include self-government and the interaction term together in Model 5, the former is insignificant the latter remains significant at .05.
expects colonial self-governance to enhance post-colonial democracy, only when a degree of state capacity is also available.

In Model 3, I find that state development prior to independence does increase the probability of post-colonial democratic survival.\textsuperscript{15} This finding supports Weiner (1987) and La Porta’s et al. (1999) contentions that the positive British democratic legacy stems from the colonizers’ promotion of bureaucratic institutions in its colonies. It suggests that studies that emphasize the British legacy of electoral institutional introductions in isolation miss a key complement to elections – the state’s ability to reach and respond to its population. This finding is perhaps missing some nuance, however, and will be discussed in greater detail in relation to later models and post-estimation analysis.

I also examine the joint effect of state development and the introduction of democratic institutions using an interaction term. In Model 5, I find that the colonial interaction term is positive and significant. This suggests that the joint effect of state development and self-government prior to independence is beneficial for democratic survival. As self-government and state development jointly increase, the probability of democratic survival increases, and the converse is also true.

In the next set of models, I examine whether the colonial interaction continues to affect the probability of democratic survival while controlling for alternate colonial theories. I consider Lange’s (2009) proposition that indirect vs. direct rule accounts for

\textsuperscript{15} Note that the state development finding holds even when controlling for small states whose small populations may artificially increase their value on this variable because it is measured per capita. The finding also holds when I include an alternate measure of ethnic diversity, the ethnic exclusion variable. The latter results are not shown because they reduce the number of observations by over half.
differences between colonial officials’ domination via collaboration with regionally-based indigenous institutions (indirect) versus the construction of a complete system of colonial domination in which all parts, central and local, are incorporated under the same authority and organizational principles. Lange (2009) proxies this distinction using a measure of the percentage of all court cases that are held in customary (as opposed to common law) courts, and argues that indirect rule harms post-colonial democracy.

The state development variable, the size of the civil service, is certainly related to this proxy and is correlated at -.69, but captures more precisely the idea of bureaucratic institutional build-up during the colonial period. It is possible that Lange’s measure incorporates a range of potential explanatory factors that civil service size does not take into account (Doyle 1986; Fisher 1991; Hechter 2000; Newbury 2003). For example, indirectly ruled colonies were also more likely to receive concessions of self-governance much later than directly ruled colonies because of the resistance of decentralized power blocs that went along with indirect rule (see Chapter Five on Ghana).

Second, Acemoglu et al. (2001) argue that European settlement was indirectly beneficial for long-term development because Europeans set up less extractive and authoritarian institutions where they settled. Given that democracies have a higher probability of survival at higher levels of development, it follows that colonialism also inhibits democratic durability (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). I test the contention that European settlement improves the prospects of democratic survival by including a measure of the number of Europeans as a percentage of the total population at the height of empire, the mid-1930s.
Third, Woodberry (2012) argues that Protestant colonial missionaries had a long-lasting effect on democratization through their active role in spreading education and literacy. Therefore, I also include one of his variables, Protestant missionaries per 10,000 population in 1923, to control for this possibility. Finally, because several scholars have argued that length of colonial rule affected prospects for democracy, I test this factor (Diamond 1988; Hadenius 1992; Olsonn 2009). This contention suggests that the colonial legacy and its impact on democracy stems from the length of time under colonial domination as opposed to the form that this rule took.

I run each of these four factors alone, then against the colonial interaction term and finally with dummy variables for the colonial types. Using the colonial types as opposed to the colonial interaction is important because the former variable tells us little about the intermediary categories where self-government increases but state development decreases or vice versa. It weights the variables equally in terms of importance. In this last model, note that the Strong Autonomy colonial type (early self-governance and strong state development) is the comparison category. I hypothesize that, when controlling for my baseline factors as well as alternative colonial explanations, Strong Autonomy colonies should outperform all other types in terms of democratic survival. Further, I hypothesize that the expected durations of democratic episodes will decrease in comparison to Strong Autonomy colonies in the following order: Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian, Weak Authoritarian.

Table 3-4 shows the results for models with the alternate colonial variables. Lange’s (2009) proxy for indirect rule is not significantly related to the likelihood of
democratic survival.\textsuperscript{16} Duration of colonial rule is also not significant in any of the models. European settlement and Protestant missionaries significantly affect democratic survival. Interestingly, however, European settlement loses its significance once I include the British colonial types. Further, the variable for Protestant missionaries remains significant in each model; however, it is negatively related to democratic survival, meaning that more missionaries decreases the probability of survival. This is opposite to Woodberry’s (2012) finding.

Model 6 shows that the colonial interaction term is positively related to democratic survival even when controlling for alternative colonial explanations. Note also that this result holds even when I include the small state variable. The interaction term tells us little about the intermediary categories, but examining the colonial types in comparison to one another illuminates some of these dynamics.

Finally, Model 7 shows that when I include British colonial types, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian and Weak Authoritarian colonies significantly underperform against Strong Autonomy colonies, even when controlling for other colonial and post-colonial factors. Further, the size of the coefficients decrease in the following order: Weak Autonomy Colonies, Strong Authoritarian, and Weak Authoritarian colonies. This suggests, for example, that Strong Autonomy colonies increase the likelihood of democratic survival more relative to Strong Authoritarian colonies than they do compared to Weak Authoritarian colonies.

\textsuperscript{16} I do not show the results because the number of observations falls to 571, the colonial interaction term remains significant even when the indirect rule measure is in the model while indirect rule is not significant. This suggests that, even when controlling for the degree of indirect or direct rule, greater state development coupled with higher levels of self-government prior to independence significantly determine the probability of post-colonial democratic survival.
In the next set of models, I look at the possibility that these colonial legacy outcomes for democratic survival fade over time or exhibit a pre and post-Cold War periodization. Lee and Paine (2016) argue that there is a strong temporal element to the positive British colonial legacy. They find that while the British colonial legacy holds immediately after independence, it fades over time, most especially after 1991. I test for this possibility using two time indicators.

The first model includes a measure of the number of years since Independence. This variable captures a natural ‘fading’ phenomenon, suggesting that as time passes since the colonial period, the legacy diminishes. The second model includes a periodization indicator, which separates democratic episodes that begin before the end of the Cold War from those that start after it. Any country-year that is part of a post-1991 transition is labeled 1 whereas any country-year that is part of a pre-1991 transition, regardless of whether the episode breaks down or survives, is labeled 0. A positive coefficient suggests that democratic transitions made after the end of the Cold War have an increased probability of surviving. I run each of these time variables against both my colonial interaction term and my colonial type dummy variables. Table 3-5 shows the results.

Models 8 and 9 test the ‘fading legacy’ theory by including a variable for the number of years since independence. The variable is positive and significant, suggesting that there is a temporal element to the British colonial legacy. In other words, as countries get further from this historical period, the probability of democratic survival increases. At the same time, the colonial interaction term remains positive and significant. Thus, while the effects of the colonial period seem to be fading over time, a
‘head start’ in terms of democratic exposure and state development prior to independence still benefits democratic stability. We see this clearly in Model 9 where years since independence remains positive and significant, although Strong Autonomy colonies continue to significantly outperform the other colonial types. In short, despite the passage of time, the Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian and Weak Authoritarian colonies have failed to fully ‘catch up.’

Perhaps, however, the most important factor is less a natural fading of the colonial legacy but a kind of periodization. Huntington (1991) suggests that the international climate for democracy changed dramatically after the end of the Cold War, when the ideological battles between the United States and Soviet Union were largely settled. The Third Wave certainly provided a beneficial climate for mass democratic transitions, but did it also benefit democratic survival? The positive and significant post-Cold War variable in models 10 and 11 suggests that, indeed, democratic transitions made after the Cold War have an increased probability of survival compared to those made before the Cold War ended.

Nonetheless, the colonial interaction continues to significantly affect the probability of democratic survival, even when controlling for this periodization. This suggests again that time matters, but a positive starting point during colonialism continues to hold weight. Finally, in Model 11, Strong Autonomy colonies significantly outperform all other types of colonies even when controlling for this periodization. Further, the size of the coefficients follows the same pattern as before and decreases in size in the following order: Weak Autonomy Colonies, Strong Authoritarian, and Weak Authoritarian colonies.
These results reinforce the dependent relationship between state development and self-government prior to independence in explaining post-colonial democratic survival. When viewed in isolation, it appears that state development prior to independence increases the probability of democratic survival and that pre-independence self-government has no effect. When viewed jointly, however, greater self-government and state development consistently and significantly enhance democratic durability. This effect holds even for transitions made after the end of the Cold War.

Further, it is unlikely that state development is simply carrying the interaction term because comparisons of democratic survival probabilities across colonial types reveal that Weak Autonomy colonies with early self-government but more limited state development are expected to endure longer than Strong Authoritarian colonies with high state development but late self-government. If only state development was important, these intermediary categories would be reversed. In short, comparing the intermediary colonial types serves to reinforce the importance of viewing the British legacy as two dimensions. We can see the substantive effect of colonial type on the probability of democratic survival more intuitively using post-estimation techniques.

**Post-Estimation**

One of the benefits of survival analysis is that it allows you to predict failure times for various scenarios. In this case, I predict expected duration of post-colonial democracies. This is especially useful for interpreting the substantive meaning of results in the models that use colonial types above. The results in Table 3-6 are found using the Model 11 regression and varying the colonial type and period of examination. I set
all continuous control variables at their means and dichotomous variables at their modal values. The results show the mean survival time for each covariate combination.

Two patterns emerge from the results in Table 3-6. First, there are large differences between expected durations of democratic survival time across colonial types. If we look at the group of pre-Cold War transitions at a Level of Development of $1000 GDP per capita, Weak Autonomy colonies are expected to last an average of 79.7 years whereas Weak Authoritarian colonies are expected to last a mean of only 7.6 years under the same conditions. Strong Authoritarian colonies fare better but only slightly at 14.4 years. This trend across colonial types holds even during the post-Cold War period where Strong Autonomy colonies are expected to last much longer than the other colonial types, although Weak Autonomy colonies also appear to be very stable. Both Strong and Weak Authoritarian colonies have increased expected durations in the post-Cold War period, but are still less durable than either the Strong or Weak Autonomy colonies. In short, both time period and colonial type matter, but the differences in expected durations of democratic episodes across colonial types continue to vary widely even after the Cold War. This evidence suggests that Lee and Paine’s (2016) temporal findings hold among the full group of British colonies, but that one should not overlook the importance of differentiating among colonial types as a determinant of democratic survival.

\[17\] Values are as follows: Economic Performance =2.5, Ethnic Fractionalization =.41, Non-Presidential System, European Settlement = 9.8, Protestant Missionaries =1.9, Duration of Colonial Rule = 272; Not Small State

\[18\] Note that while the Strong Autonomy colonies consistently and significantly outperform the other colonial types and vice versa, the Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian and Weak Authoritarian colonies do not perform statistically different from one another. Nonetheless, their expected durations consistently trend down from Weak Autonomy to Strong Authoritarian to Weak Authoritarian.
It is also helpful to view these trends visually. Figure 3-3 shows a series of graphs, which depict comparisons of expected durations in years of each colonial type. Note that these graphs reflect the same covariate values used in Table 8 except Level of Development, which is set at $1000 GDP per capita for all graphs. The blue line shows the expected duration of democratic episodes made before the end of the Cold War, and the red line shows the expected duration of democratic transitions made after the end of the Cold War. Weak Autonomy colonies face a higher likelihood of survival than either Strong Authoritarian or Weak Authoritarian colonies, while Strong Authoritarian colonies compare favorably to Weak Authoritarian colonies in terms of expectations of survival. In all three types, the probability of survival is higher in the post-Cold War period, though this expectation is least pronounced among Weak Authoritarian colonies.

**Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I test a series of hypotheses that examine the relationship between British colonial types and the probability of democratic survival. First, I examine in isolation the individual effects of the typological components. In looking at the role of self-government prior to independence, I compare the timing of a more complete introduction of internally-directed democratic politics to earlier introductions of democratic institutions with restricted participation. In contrast to several recent studies on colonial legacies and post-colonial democracy, I do not find that either factor alone has a significant effect on democratic survival (Bilinski 2015; Lee & Paine 2016). I

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19 The survival function for Strong Autonomy colonies are not shown because its estimated duration is very high and the graph does not show much variation.
suggest that these studies miss a second component of the British colonial legacy – state development.

This is an important contrast to Lee and Paine’s (2016) theory of decolonization which argues that British colonies perform better on democracy measures after independence. When one looks at democratic survival over the long-term rather than at a static measure of democracy at independence, one sees that where elections are conceded during late colonialism, these early independence democracies are very vulnerable to breakdown. Indeed, according to my data, 43% of former British colonies that enjoy democratic elections during the first year of independence undergo breakdowns, more than half of these within the first decade. This lack of significance also helps explain why Lee and Paine (2016) find a temporal fading of the British colonial legacy. I suggest that pre-independence self-government must be paired with a degree of state development to make this institutional introduction meaningful prior to independence and durable afterward.

This chapter did not analyze self-government in isolation, however. British colonies experienced not only various timings of self-government but also diverse degrees of colonizer investment in the build-up of the state. Weiner (1987) and La Porta et al. (1999) contend that the positive British democratic legacy stems from the colonizers’ promotion of bureaucratic institutions in its colonies. I find that state development prior to independence does increase the probability of democratic survival. This finding holds even when controlling for small states which, given my per capita measure of the variable, might artificially exhibit large civil service sizes due to their small populations. This finding suggests that more colonial studies of democracy need
to account for or control for the size of the state available to independent populations. However, because I also find that Weak Autonomy colonies, with lower average state development but earlier opportunities for self-government, are expected to endure for longer periods than Strong Authoritarian colonies, with higher average state development but later self-government, I propose that this apparent relationship misses part of the story.

Next, I examine the joint effect of the typological covariates. When state development and self-government are both available to a colony before Independence, democratic survival is enhanced. This can be interpreted as follows: as self-governance and state development during the colonial period jointly increase, the risk of democratic breakdown decreases significantly. By contrast, where these variables jointly decrease, the risk of democratic breakdown increases.

Importantly, these findings hold even when one controls for alternative colonial variables. Lange (2009) argues that British direct and indirect rule affects post-colonial democracy. I do not find any evidence to support this argument. However, when I control for indirect/direct rule, the colonial interaction term remains positive and significant. In short, greater state development coupled with higher levels of self-government prior to independence significantly determine the probability of post-colonial democratic survival even when controlling for direct or indirect rule.

Woodberry (2012) argues that it was not the British so much as Protestant missionaries that enhanced democracy in the post-colonial period. While I do find significance for this variable, the expected coefficient direction is consistently reversed. My results suggest that more Protestant missionaries decreased the likelihood of
democratic survival. This finding perhaps captures an endogenous relationship if more missionaries were sent to places of greater need.

I find that European settlement is positively related to democratic survival but, when one controls for British Colonial Types, it loses its significance. Settler populations were often granted self-government before other groups and enjoyed greater colonial investment in the state apparatus. Therefore, the settler variable may be picking up some of this effect. When the Colonial Types are included, however, colonies with the joint legacies of self-government and state development significantly outperform colonies missing one or both attributes, even when controlling for white settlers.

Finally, I do not find any evidence for Olsonn’s (2009) argument that the length of colonial rule significantly affects a country’s prospects for democracy. In terms of post-colonial variables, I do find continued evidence that economic variables – particularly economic performance – significantly affect democratic survival. However, even when controlling for these factors, historical variables concerning the type of colonial rule continue to matter.

I include two post-colonial time variables to see whether the explanatory power of historical factors fades over time. I find that both the number of years since independence, which captures a natural diminishing of the colonial legacy over time, as well as the distinction between pre and post-Cold War democratic transitions are significant indicators of the likelihood of democratic survival. These findings reinforce Lee and Paine’s (2016) finding of a temporal element to the positive British colonial legacy. However, even when controlling for these time factors, the joint effect of self-government and state development prior to independence continues to significantly
affect democratic survival. Strong Autonomy types consistently outperform all other colonial types in likelihood of democratic survival.

When one compares expected durations of democracies in years across types, both in the pre and post-Cold War period, colonial types are less at risk for breakdown in the following order: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian and Weak Authoritarian colonies. For example, the expected duration of a democratic episode in a Weak Authoritarian colony increases from 7.6 to 41.4 years (at a $1000 GDP per capita) if it transitions after the end of the Cold War rather than before. However, the expected duration of a post-Cold War transition for a Weak Authoritarian Colony is 41 years, but for a Strong Authoritarian Colony, this increases to 78 years. In short, while there seems to be a fading or temporality to colonial type legacies, these historical variables continue to matter in enduring ways.

This chapter tests a series of hypotheses related to British colonial types and the probability of democratic survival. It finds that colonial period legacies continue to matter, even when controlling for other post-colonial factors. It argues that studies which look at the introduction of elections prior to independence fail to account for the importance of state development. When these variables are considered jointly, they significantly explain democratic survival over time. I argue that this is because the introduction of self-government prior to independence is less meaningful without at least a modest state to respond to the population. By contrast, if the colonizer builds a large state without simultaneously conceding self-government, these institutions can be used to override democracy. Thus, the most advantageous inheritance is one of early self-
government and high state development. Indeed, Strong Autonomy colonies consistently and significantly outperform all other British colonial types.

In short, despite a range of post-colonial changes, explanations of democratic survival still need to account for historical legacies. However, the colonial period spanned decades and sometime centuries, touched diverse populations and geographies across the globe, and created a range of institutional and social changes in its wake. As scholars consider the long-term effects of this period in cross-national studies, therefore, it is important to begin to treat this complex period in more than one dimension. This chapter has been an effort to do this. By limiting my scope to the British Empire, I could draw out multiple dimensions of the historical experience. Survival analysis of these typological components suggests that self-governance and state development prior to independence are jointly beneficial for democratic stability.

The case studies are better able to extract the dynamics of these relationships, particularly among the Weak Autonomy and Strong Authoritarian types. In short, however, the Malaysia case demonstrates that where state development alone is available prior to independence, it can be used to override democratic institutions. Further, where early self-government is available with modest state development as in Mauritius, democratic survival is enhanced. The comparative historical analyses of three case studies in the following chapters are used to pull out these nuances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing of Self-Governance</th>
<th>Level of State Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong Autonomy</th>
<th>Weak Autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong Authoritarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Weak Authoritarian</td>
<td></td>
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Figure 3-1 Types of colonies in the British empire
Figure 3-2 Kaplan-Meier survival estimates by colonial type

Table 3-1 Descriptive statistics for key variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>STDEV</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1132</td>
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<td>National Elections prior to Independence</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1395</td>
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<td>Responsible Governance prior to Indep.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
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<td>Size of Civil Service</td>
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<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Customary Court Cases</td>
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<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>1035</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colonial Police</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
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<td>European Settlement</td>
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<td>97.6</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>977</td>
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<td>Protestant Missionaries</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years Spent under Colonial Rule</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1395</td>
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<td>Small State</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.5</td>
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<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1395</td>
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<td>Ethnic Exclusion</td>
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<td>Level of Development</td>
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<td>12778</td>
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<td>1310</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td>Past Experience with Democracy</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1395</td>
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Table 3-2 Base model for democratic survival in British colonies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Robust Std. Err.</th>
</tr>
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<td>Level of Development</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Performance</td>
<td>0.09***</td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<td>Post-Colonial Executive Institutions</td>
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<td>Ethnic Fractionalization</td>
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<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.43</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p (duration parameter) 1.24
Log-pseudo Likelihood -39.73
Number of Democratic Spells 50
Number of Data Points (country-years as Democracy) 1310

*** P<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed tests

Note: Standard errors clustered on country code.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 4</th>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.14***</td>
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<td>0.63</td>
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<td>Self-Government prior to Independence</td>
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*** P<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed tests
Note: Standard errors clustered on country code.
### Table 3-4 Examining alternate colonial legacies and democratic survival

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*** P<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed tests
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*** P<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed tests

Note: Standard errors clustered on country code.
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*** P<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; two-tailed tests

Note: Standard errors clustered on country code.
Table 3-6 Expected duration in years of democracies of colonial types, post-colonial periods and levels of development

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Note: These estimates use model 11. All continuous variables are set at their means; dichotomous variables are set at their modal values.
Figure 3-3 Expected durations of democracy in years of colonial types across time
CHAPTER 4
FROM INDEPENDENCE TO DEMOCRATIC BREAKDOWN: POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN MALAYSIA

Malaysia gained independence in 1957. The British initially heralded the country as a model colony for its decolonization campaign as it underwent a peaceful negotiation of political transfer.¹ The ruling party (the Alliance) had successfully navigated the tense waters of a pluralist society by consolidating a coalition able to claim the support of Malaysia’s diverse population.² Yet, in 1969, Malaysia’s democracy faltered after an intense general election, giving way to communal violence followed by an authoritarian reversal. Why did Britain’s shining star of political stability succumb to violence and authoritarianism?

Common explanations of democratic breakdown, such as underdevelopment, economic crisis, and conflictive ethnic relations, fail to adequately explain the Malaysian case.³ In the year of breakdown, the Malaysian economy was comparatively developed and growing.⁴ While ethnic tension defined many of its contentious political debates, neither political exclusion nor economic deprivation explains the timing and nature of the post-election violence and the state’s authoritarian response. During decolonization, the

¹ Harper (1999), for example, writes: “Modern Malaya has often been perceived as a monument to colonial administrative and political arrangements. By the British it is seen as a model of successful decolonization. Its institutions, economic structure, and ethnic mosaic all have recognizable origins in the late colonial period” (2).

² The Malayan population in 1957 included 49.8% Malays, 37.2% Chinese and 11.3% Indians (Means 1970).


⁴ The real GDP per capita (2005 US $) in 1957 was $1,924 and by 1969, had risen to $2,773, impressive among post-colonial states at the time (Feenstra et al. 2015). Further, its 1956 rate of urbanization (26.5 % of population) and per capita income ($310 US) were the highest in Southeast Asia at the time (Pye 1960, 101).
Malays won substantial political and economic safeguards, and the state made several political concessions to non-Malays.\(^5\) Despite its auspicious start, Emerson’s (1967) prophecy that the country’s colonially-derived momentum would run out to expose civil strife and strongman rule came to fruition after 12 years of independence (278).

Malaysia represents a Strong Authoritarian colony, where the British conceded only late opportunities for self-government but invested in sizeable state development. This chapter contends that this type of colonial rule left a legacy of limited democratic experience, weak state-society links and high administrative development. I argue that, at Independence, the Malaysian state had the presence and capacity to act across the entire peninsula, but elites had not sufficiently invested in democratic institutions which would insulate the system from ‘shocks’ that might lead to breakdown. In Malaysia, this ‘shock’ came in 1969 as post-election civil conflict. The ruling party responded to the violence swiftly by overturning democratic institutions in their entirety. This chapter proceeds first by elaborating a general theory of the relationship between Strong Authoritarian colonies and democratic survival before discussing the historical trajectory of the Malaysian case.

**A Theory of Strong Authoritarian Colonies and Democratic Survival**

In Strong Authoritarian colonies, the British collaborate with a newly educated indigenous class by incorporating them into a large bureaucratic state but are very slow to concede opportunities for political participation and internally-directed democratic processes (Emerson 1937, 3). The consequences of this type of rule are limited

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\(^5\) The final Alliance constitutional compromise included a clause in the section guaranteeing Malay special privileges which noted: ‘Nothing in this article shall empower Parliament to restrict or control any trade or business just for the sake of creating quotas for Malays’ (Fernando 2002, 156).
democratic experience and weak state/society links but high administrative
development. This combination frequently results in democratic breakdown.

In Malaysia, the features and consequences of this colonial type manifested in a
particular way. First, even prior to World War II, the British were relatively active in
building a bureaucracy competitively staffed by the local population. As early as 1904,
there were roughly 1,400 Malays in the competitive Malay Administrative Service and by
1935, this number had more than tripled (Heussler 1981, 131-135). After the war, this
process accelerated rapidly both in terms of expansion of the bureaucracy and
increasing Malayanization of its employees. Between 1948 and 1959, the total size of
the service increased from 45,000 to 140,000 (Stubbs 1989, 263). By 1956, roughly
96% of all civil servant positions were held by Malayans (Annual Report 1956).

In contrast to administrative progress, the British conceded political
advancements much later. The British granted self-government with corresponding
elections only in 1955, two years before Independence. Within these two years, an
inter-communal party, the Alliance, won the anti-colonial struggle, swept the only
national election before independence, and negotiated a Constitution (Fernando 2002).
Though the Alliance left several of the most contentious issues unresolved, its elite
exhibited confidence that they had developed a winning formula for communal harmony,
namely, negotiation of communal issues in private, elite spaces.\(^6\) While the new national
leaders invested extensively in the operation of their inter-communal formula, this did

\(^6\) For example, The Alliance’s 1959 electoral campaign emphasized that its formula was responsible for
winning Independence (von Vorys 1975). In addition, even by 1969, the Alliance campaigned on a
message that “[they] are the only ones that could deliver, not just in terms of economic terms, prosperity,
in terms of racial harmony, [they] are the only ones that can guarantee that whatever happens, there will
be racial calm…” (Bob Reece Interview 11.25.2014).
not translate into investment in democracy and, in fact, the two goals often conflicted. The two objectives clashed most spectacularly in 1969 when the Alliance lost several electoral battles and post-election violence erupted. In response, state officials dismantled the democratic system and further insulated and protected the inter-communal bargaining formula.8

The second effect of limited self-government is the presence of weak state-society links. This chapter argues that contradictions in the Malaysian state system crafted during the late colonial period resulted in gaps between state actions and social grievances. The state system, which paralleled the structure of the dominant inter-communal coalition, embraced dual, antagonistic pressures because it garnered support among its communal parties by appealing to their aspirations at the mass level while also emphasizing an inter-communal pact above communal particularities at the elite level of leadership. These dual pressures were often at odds with one another, as appealing to one’s own communal group risked enflaming others, while compromising for the sake of inter-communal harmony risked a loss of confidence among one’s own group. In other words, the party’s structure encouraged mobilization along communal

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7 As we will see, evidence of this split commitment comes in part from the nature of the constitutional debates, where increasingly the contentious issues (language, education, citizenship and Malay special rights) were moved to higher, more private forums of the Alliance in the Executive Committee, beyond public debate and even full internal party debate.

8 The new Constitution in 1970 removed the contentious communal issues from public debate, as the Alliance leadership believed them to be the source of communal strife. In January 1971, Dr. Ismail, the Deputy Prime Minister, gave a speech to the Alliance members in Johore, noting: “Thus in the 1969 elections the sensitive issues of National Language and Special rights handicapped the Alliance generally and caused the bloodshed of May 13th. We therefore enshrined the issues in the Constitution as subjects that cannot be raised in any form by the Opposition. Thus the weakness of our partners is protected” (Dr. Ismail Papers (d), 189).
lines at the lower levels but discouraged it at the national level.\textsuperscript{9} When lower-level party leaders exploited these channels of mobilization, the national leadership either severely rebuked or removed them.\textsuperscript{10} By doing so, however, the Alliance leadership progressively severed links with social groups, insulating themselves and giving them a false sense of confidence that their elite-negotiated compromises had placated communal groups.\textsuperscript{11} Meanwhile, the Alliance’s compromises were increasingly unpopular among all communal groups.\textsuperscript{12} In short, as communal frustrations rose, the ruling elite closed off institutional channels for grievance expression. This state-society disconnect was manifested in the violent displays of communal frustration in 1969 and swift repressive state response. As the elites increasingly insulated themselves from civil society, the masses developed incentives to utilize non-institutional means of grievance expression (Milne and Mauzy 1978).

\textsuperscript{9} Bob Reece describes the Alliance structure as such: “…There were always tensions within the Alliance because that was the nature of the beast, the inevitable, because the constituent parties had different sectional interests but at some level, at the top level, somehow or other, they had to be compromised and that’s what Tunku Abdul Rahman always said he could do” (11.25.2014).

\textsuperscript{10} When Syed Nasir bin Syed Ismail, the first full-time director of the Language and Literature Department, aggressively expands the place of Malay as the national language and mobilizes this communal population around the cause in 1967, Tunku Abdul Rahmam, Prime Minister of Malaysia, strongly rebukes him and removes him from his department.

\textsuperscript{11} Von Vorys (1975) argues that the Alliance was unaware of the extent of popular discontent in the lead up to the 1969 election and that it often willingly ignored disconcerting evidences. For example, “when UMNO executive secretary Musa Hitam warned of serious PMIP threat in the northern states, he was reprimanded” (281). Bob Reece notes that “[The Alliance] were certainly complacent; there’s no doubt about that.” (Interview 11.25.2014).

\textsuperscript{12} The Chinese constituencies disliked the MCA’s compromises on education and language. For example, in 1960, the Minister of Education released a report that reconfigured the entire education system. The Parliament rapidly approved the report and enacted legislation, with MCA support. In the meantime, more than 100 representatives from Chinese civil society organizations met and rejected the conclusions of the report. Widespread riots and mass arrests followed. Meanwhile, throughout the 1960s, Malay interest groups such as teachers’ unions, national writers’ associations, and University lobbies grew anxious to finally solidify the primary and singular role for the Malay language in the polity (Ee 1997).
Finally, as a function of early efforts at administrative centralization before World War II\textsuperscript{13} and of a communist insurgency from 1948-1960, the British encouraged rapid and broad state-building in late-colonial Malaysia (Slater 2010, 85-90; Stubbs 1997). Because this development did not correspond with political advancement, however, colonial Malaya remained essentially authoritarian in nature. Thus, a class of educated administrators emerged, but they did not enjoy parallel experience in political affairs.\textsuperscript{14} This high administrative development produced a state capable of gathering and analyzing information about its population and providing public goods to it. Generally, I hypothesize that democratic survival is more likely when this potential is available. What the Malaysian case demonstrates, however, is that high administrative development if not coupled with strong state-society links and democratic experience can undermine democratic stability by providing elites with resources to revert rather than strengthen democratic processes. This sequence is presented in Figure 4-1.

\textsuperscript{13} British colonialism was most transformative in the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Malacca and Penang, areas first brought under British control as strategic trade outposts. After 1874, the British also expanded the legal-administrative apparatus from the coast to the interior, rationalized the traditional political system and invested in a group of English-educated Malay elite to run the expanding bureaucracy in the Federated Malay States (FMS) on a political basis almost indistinguishable from the Crown Colonies (Harper 1999; Emerson 1937). Finally, in 1909, Siam transferred the Unfederated Malay States (UMS) to Britain. In these states, the Sultans retained more significant formal powers, and the legal-administrative institutions were more diverse. However, these local differences increasingly resembled those of the Straits Settlements and FMS in a sort of institutional ‘puppeting.’ After the Second World War, the British brought all these territories under one political and administrative system (Stockwell 1979).

\textsuperscript{14} The first Malay political organizations included the Sahabat Pena out of Penang in the mid-1930s and the Kesatuan Melayu Meda (KMM) out of Kuala Lumpur in 1938. These organizations tended to emphasize cultural aspirations of a Malay bangsa and frequently were tied to Indonesia, but confronted the colonial state very little in terms of agitation for expanded representation. Within the Chinese and Indian communities, political organizations were largely connected to China and India and included the Kuomintang, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) in the late 1930s and the Central Indian Association of Malaya (CIAM) in 1937 (Harper 1999, 33).
Figure 4-1 Malaysia: strong authoritarian colony and democratic breakdown

Figure 4-1 suggests that a legacy of limited self-government and high state development prior to independence establishes limited democratic experience and state-society links but high administrative development. Unable to respond to challenges via the existing democratic framework, governing elites instead alter the rules of the game. I elaborate this argument through three sections which expand on the nature of the intervening causal processes: limited democratic experience seen through the condensed Independence struggle, weak state-society links exemplified in a case study of the politics of education, and high levels of administrative development during the post-World War II Emergency period. Finally, the chapter examines the dynamics of the 1969 electoral contest, the May 13 riots and government responses to them to show how these colonial era variables manifested to bring Malaysia’s 12-year democratic episode to an end.

**Condensed Independence Struggle and Limited Democratic Experience**

Malaysia underwent a condensed transition to independence after the Second World War. The British initially sought to guide a gradual course toward self-
government, emphasizing avenues for greater participation of all communities in the colony.\textsuperscript{15} Fueled by the Japanese occupation during the war, British efforts to undo Malay special privileges, and a communist insurgency, both Malays and non-Malays became politically mobilized and communal tensions between the groups were rife.\textsuperscript{16} Under such circumstances and in spite of British intentions in 1946 to guide the colony to self-government, this goal seemed distant (Harper 1999, 57). Nonetheless, the surprising emergence of an inter-communal national organization, the Alliance, in 1952 propelled events rapidly forward, and Malaya gained independence less than five years later. How did Malaya transform from a conservative, communally-divided colony to an Independent communally-integrated nation in such a short period of time? And what were the effects of this rapid transformation for post-colonial democratic survival?

This section details events surrounding Malayan Independence to demonstrate that while the new national leaders invested extensively in an inter-communal formula

\textsuperscript{15} The Malayan Union Constitution, designed by the British War Office during World War II, sought to demolish the sovereignty of some Malay states, reduce the sovereignty of the Malay Sultans, and get rid of the special position of the Malays, previously favored for government posts and educational opportunities (Stockwell 1979). These decisions were made in part after the Japanese defeated British forces in Malaya and Singapore in World War II, a fate which prompted heavy public criticism of colonial policies described as “having no roots in the life of the people of the country” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 3). It was also a function of the altered imperial situation after World War II in which the British initiated a “declared purpose of promoting self-government in Colonial territories” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 51).

\textsuperscript{16} Malays enjoyed considerable political privileges as a matter of British policy prior to the Japanese takeover (Tan Cheng Lock Papers Folio 20, TCL/20/1/1-6 February 1943 The Mixed Communities of Malaya by Sir George Waxwell.) Further, the Japanese occupation pitted Malays, who often collaborated with the Japanese, against the Chinese who were often the primary target of brutal policies (Kheng 2012). When the Japanese departed, the Chinese-led Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Party (MPAJA) initiated revenge policies against these collaborators, thus widening existing communal tensions and conflict (ibid). Finally, the communist insurgency reinforced Malay notions that the Chinese population was not loyal to the state and should not thus be granted citizenship. In this vein, President of the MCA, Tan Cheng Lock, admits that the precarious situation of the Chinese has been further complicated by the embarrassing insurrection of the MCP, for critics accuse the Chinese population of being complicit and cowardice for lack of help in the war against the communists (Tan Cheng Lock Papers Folio 21, Item 23: April 10, 1949 At Taiping and Ipoh on “the Chinese in Malaya”).
for managing the Malaysian state borne out of the anti-colonial struggle, this did not translate into investment in democratic processes. Instead, the two often conflicted. At Independence, the central question remained whether such a formula, which proved satisfactory when the colonial power remained a common enemy, would retain its effectiveness when freedom offered a wider range of political activities.

The state elites’ minimal investment in democratic processes manifests itself primarily in the Alliance’s confidence in its singular ability to ensure inter-communal harmony. The elite viewed the inter-communal formula as synonymous with democracy. The Alliance leadership rejected criticisms within the party and wrote-off criticisms from opposition parties (Morais 1972, 621). Indeed, the Alliance’s success in the Independence struggle convinced its leadership that their established mode of operation was necessary (Dr. Ismail Papers (b), 46). Initial success kept the coalition in power through elections for 12 years, but it would not prove to be a long-term solution.

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17 Tunku Abdul Rahman (the Tunku), the UMNO and Alliance leader, in the lead up to the 1955 elections, fends off UMNO members’ demands for more legislative seats by appealing to the need to maintain unity and exercise restraint in communal demands, less they jeopardize Malaya’s bid for independence (Sheppard 1995, 93). Further, Alliance leaders consistently use the British as a scapegoat for unresolved areas of communal concern. For example, in a speech by the MCA President (Tan Cheng Lock) at the Annual General Committee meeting of the Association on 15 January 1955, he puts the contested issue of education policy squarely on British shoulders: “Let us remember that in the case of Education, for instance, the present policy was not laid down by the Malays; it is, in actual fact, the creation of the British whose ideas were adopted by a hand-picked Committee and then by a fully-appointed Legislative Council. I am sure the Malays are no more anxious to destroy Chinese education and culture, and the contribution they can make to the future Malayan culture, than the Chinese would want to deny the other races in the country their own languages and culture” (Cheng Lock Papers (f), 20).

18 Von Vorys (1975) notes that the Alliance was deprived of a “convenient, common target which could distract from their own conflicts of interest” (144).

19 On November 14, 1966, Tun Dr. Ismail, Minister of Home Affairs, notes in an interview that democracy means compromise, and that the greatest democracy in the polity was practiced in the Alliance Directorate (Dr. Ismail Papers c, 128).

20 Harper (1999) argues that the Alliance won its late-colonial support “on credit,” by making promises to each of the communal groups which were to be fulfilled after Independence (350).
This section is divided into several parts. First, it provides an overview of pre-1945 political developments and the rise of nationalism after the Second World War. Then, it looks at the formation of the Alliance and the condensed struggle for Independence. Finally, it discusses the evolution of the Independence Constitution and Alliance Formula, noting the fundamental national issues that remained unresolved at Independence. Despite outward signs of communal cohesion, several indications of future crises lay beneath the Alliance façade. These internal crises would expose the tensions between adhering to the Alliance Formula versus accepting democracy.

**Pre-1945 Political Developments and Late Colonial Nationalisms**

It was not until after World War II that the British amalgamated the various administrative sections of Malaya into a single political entity. The British established protectorates in Penang and Malacca in 1786 and added Singapore in 1819 to together form the Straits Settlements in 1826. Between 1874 and 1888, they established control over Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang and administratively joined these states in 1895 to form the Federated Malay States (FMS). Finally, between 1909 and 1914, the British annexed Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu in the north and Johore in the south to form the Unfederated Malay States (Emerson 1937; Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, lii-liii).

The Governor of the Straits Settlements (also the High Commissioner for the Malay States) served as the highest authority in the colony. The supporting bureaucracy had two sections: an almost exclusively British Malayan Civil Service that occupied the highest offices and a Malay-dominated Administrative Service (Heussler 1981). There were, however, different degrees of colonial presence among the three parts of the peninsula. As a Crown Colony under the legal jurisdiction of the Imperial Parliament, the
Straits were most directly ruled and its population became British subjects. The FMS, though a protectorate, was after 1896 run almost indistinguishably from the Crown Colonies. Finally, in the northern UMS after 1909, each state had its own British Advisor responsible to the Governor but no coordinated administration prior to World War II. Despite this, each Unfederated Malay State developed a similar bureaucratic structure and adopted many of the FMS laws as State laws. While such a disjointed administrative structure prevented the formation of national political movements as well as calls for electoral representation, prior to World War II, the differences in colonial administrative presence across the States should not be overstated. As Lord Hailey remarked in 1943: “It is obvious that there are many advantages in the existing system,

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21 In 1874, the British introduced the Residential System was introduced, whereby the Malay Sultans agreed that they would accept a British Advisor to advise on matters other than Islam and Malay custom. In practice, the British officer essentially took over the states’ governments (Emerson 1937). By 1893, the British worked to secure a greater degree of administrative uniformity in the States including areas of justice, taxation and land settlement (Gullick 1992, 98). These changes corresponded with a weakening of the traditional Malay system of Sultans and their State Councils. Emerson (1937) describes this phenomenon as such: “Under the direction of the Resident-General a large and efficient central administration has been built up in which the Sultans had either no share or a share so small as not to be worth speaking of...If their actual powers are almost nil, they not only retain their high offices but are substantially guaranteed their possession of them (140).

22 Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 57; Gullick (1992) notes that this curious phenomenon evolved as a defense mechanism against further British intrusion in state affairs (162-163). The civil administration was suffused over the traditional aristocratic structure to form a brand of governance based on the dynamics of each particular state. The dual process of change and continuity was possible because “the new bureaucracy was built on the foundations of the traditional Malay system of government which it replaced. The personnel of the new civil service was drawn almost entirely from the old ruling class. This continuity was only possible because a younger generation of Malay aristocrats was educated for the new role in schools of European type” (ibid, 162).

23 Cheah 1988; Even in the most indirectly ruled states of the UMS, Emerson (1937) notes that the significant difference is not so much in the nature of the system or even in its particular legislation, which both resemble those of the FMS and Colony, but in the the legal right of the State’s Advisor and Legal Advisor to modify such enactments before introducing them to the State Council, whereby they could always make modifications as they saw fit (349).
which is practically one of direct official rule, under the façade of ‘advice’ to Malayan rulers.”

During the Japanese occupation of Malaya during the Second World War, the British worked to amalgamate the three administrative units for the first time. The War Office drew up a plan for the Malayan Union in 1942, which forced the Malay Sultans to surrender legal power, created a unitary Malayan state, and offered common citizenship for all races (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 48). Through this scheme, the British hoped to lay the groundwork for greater administrative efficiency and democratic progress facilitating self-rule, with an emphasis on participation of all the communities of Malaya.

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24 Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 48; This position of the British Resident as advisor was frequently described as a ‘façade’ because it provided “that the Sultan would accept a British Resident (FMS) or Advisor (UMS), whose advice had to be taken on all matters except those relating to Malay custom and Mohammedan religion” (Gullick 1992; Emerson 1937). In this way, the Malay Sultans had through previous treaties already largely given up their formal authority, though they retained legal sovereignty.

25 This military disaster is generally accepted as the point of the beginning of the end of British imperialism in Malaya, though the British would return after World War II and not grant official independence until August 1957 (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, li).

26 Sabah and Sarawak were not added until Malaya became the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. The Malayan Union scheme also did not include the amalgamation of Singapore partially because “its wealth gave it a preponderance in pre-war Malaya which was resented by other political units in the Peninsula and so created a barrier to closer union” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 42). These differences in status and wealth were exacerbated by the predominately Chinese population there, in contrast to the rest of the Malay states (ibid, 47). It remained separate until 1963 though it separated again in 1965.

27 The Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in a speech to the House of Commons on October 8, 1946 notes that the heterogeneous system was “clumsy and wasteful and encouraged separatism and difficulties of administration” (quoted from Tadin 1960, 62). This was deemed to be one of the primary difficulties in defending Malaya from the Japanese as well: “As a result of these complications in the administrative machine there was, at all levels, too often uncertainty and delay in reaching decisions” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 30). Concerning the decision to integrate immigrant populations in order to facilitate self-government, Lord Hailey argues: “Is it intended, for instance, that self-government shall take the form of a progressive relaxation of official control over the Sultans and their councils? That might be termed self-government, but unless we retained authority to prescribe and regulate their functions, it would mean something like autocratic rule in the hands of the Sultans and their Malay advisors. Such rights as the immigrant population might acquire would only be obtained on sufferance” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 48). For further discussion of these decisions, see: Harper 1999, 58; Means 1970, 52; Andaya 2001, 264-265.
After the Second World War, the British reoccupied Malaya and initiated the process of administrative and political amalgamation. This began with efforts to obtain “undisputed rights of jurisdiction throughout this area” by negotiating new treaties with each of the Malay Sultans to remove their legal independence (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 48). Accordingly, Sir Harold MacMichael, the British Commissioner-General for Southeast Asia, secured new treaties with the Malay Rulers with relatively minimal resistance.\(^{28}\) However, the British announced the formation of the Union in October 1945, there was massive Malay mobilization against it (Cheah 2002, 10-11; Tadin 1960, 62). Though the Sultans’ fate was protested in time, the Malay most vigorously opposed the implications that the immigrant Chinese and Indian populations were equal to the Malay.\(^{29}\) Indeed, the Malays directed much of their opposition at the Sultans themselves, who saw their signing of the MacMichael treaties as an act of betrayal.\(^{30}\)

\(^{28}\) This was perhaps because he wielded the threat of non-recognition or play on their fears of being labeled a Japanese collaborator. Indeed, Brigadier HC Willan was sent to interview each of the Sultans to prepare the groundwork for MacMichael’s mission. These interviews emphasized the Sultans’ roles during the Japanese occupation, their allegiance to the British and the credentials of those that ascended the throne during the Occupation (Stockwell 1995 CO vol. 1, 139-168); This was with the exception of the Sultan of Kedah. Rather than resistance, the Sultans did, however, submit memoranda, which expressed concern about immigration, citizenship and the protection of Malays (Stockwell 1995 CO vol. 1, 180-186; Smith 1995, 62). For further details on MacMichael’s mission, see Tan Chang Lock Papers (a) and Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 171-175).

\(^{29}\) Harper 1999, 85; HT Bourdillon notes: “To sum up, I think we must admit a genuine and fairly widespread Malay revulsion against the White Paper. I have no doubt the White Paper has been misunderstood, but that does not make the revulsion any less real. In almost all the reactions from popular bodies, as opposed to Sultans, it is citizenship which is attacked” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 200). Similar assessments appear in Brigadier AT Newboul’s account: “The Malayan Citizenship proposal has created far more heartburning than that for Union. This is on the score that no one can hazard a guess as to the number of aliens who will be automatically admitted to citizenship…” (Stockwell 1995 CO vol. 1, 189).

\(^{30}\) HT Bourdillon’s assessment of the situation in Malaya goes as follows: “On the contrary, we are told that the Sultans are the object of popular pressure. It is clear, that the White Paper made a direct impact on the more reflective Malays, whose responding protests were perfectly genuine though they varied in size and intensity from State to State” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 1, 200).
Malays thus gathered under a guise of Malay nationalism and *bangsa* (race).31 In May, Dato Onn bin Ja’afar formed UMNO, a Malay movement capable of organizing mass political action.32 Through this new political movement, Malays demanded that the British repeal the Malayan Union and invalidate the MacMichael treaties (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 221). Under mounting pressure, the British relented.33

Subsequently, a committee of British officials, Sultans and UMNO produced the Federation of Malaya in 1948 (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 259). The Constitution included a unitary system with a limited role for the Sultans in their respective states. It imposed very restrictive citizenship requirements for non-Malays and provided a preferential role for Malays in the political process by reserving 22 of the 100 seats in the Legislative Council (von Vorys 1975, 82). This time, opposition came from the non-Malay communities.34 The Chinese formed the All Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) on December 14, 1946. The Council organized a local and then a nationwide *hartal*, or a call to strike, on October 20, 1947 (Harper 1999, 91). The movement failed, but its

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31 For example, the prominent Malay newspaper, *Utusan Melayu*, declared on December 22, 1945: “Malaya belongs to the Malays. We don’t want the other races to be given the rights and privileges of the Malays” (quoted in Tadin 1960, 67).

32 Means (1970) argues that this rapid mobilization was possible owing to Malay integration into existing colonial institutions: “Malays in government service assumed leadership of the party, and through their position they were often able to use the administrative structure of the Malay States to accomplish the political mobilization of the Malays. Thus senior Malay government servants organized Malays working in the district offices, and they in turn secured the help of *penghulu* (village headmen) who recruited and propagandaed for UMNO at the grass roots level. In this way the traditional power structure of the Malay society was transformed into a mass political party” (100).

33 Heng (1988) argues that the British conceded to this movement partially because it could not risk alienating conservative Malay support at a time when the communist threat was escalating. See also Stockwell 1979 and Lau 1991.

34 The non-Malay response was partly against the nature of the Federation agreement and partly against the way it was formed (i.e. with only Malay representatives) (Tan Cheng Lock Papers (b)). British High Commissioner, Sir H Gurney, reports that the initial aim of the MCA was to increase racial harmony rather than end to emergency, per se (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 179-180)
organizational efforts coupled with the urging of the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, led Tan Cheng Lock to form the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) on February 27, 1949.\textsuperscript{35}

In 1949, despite the British Parliament’s stated commitment to Malayan Independence, these goals were severely complicated by communal hostilities and the outbreak of a communist insurgency.\textsuperscript{36} To promote inter-communal dialogue, Malcolm MacDonald initiated the Communities Liaison Committee (CLC), an informal body of community leaders brought together to discuss inter-communal differences (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 156-57). The Committee was based on the belief that confidential discussions among elite members of the ethnic communities would help to resolve outstanding issues and improve relations (Fernando 2012, 284). The issues of citizenship and Malay special rights proved to be the most controversial.\textsuperscript{37} Though the forum received little public attention at the time, Fernando (2012) argues that its \textit{modus}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 152; Tan Cheng Lock Papers (c); The British urgency for a Chinese political party stemmed from the need for increased Chinese partnership in combating the communist insurgency (Hing and Heng 2000).
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Andaya 2001, 274; Fernando 2009, 3; Sir Henry Gurney’s views concerning the Chinese population in Malaya suggest: that while the High Commissioner does not rule out the possibility of Chinese becoming ‘Malayans’ with the passage of years, he does not regard it as immediately practical…the conversion of the Chinese into Malayans is an unlikely development” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 155).
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Dato Onn worked considerably to get UMNO to accept the CLC’s citizenship proposals, which included recognition of the principle of jis soli. While the UMNO Executive Committee conceded, the branches were unwilling and finally at a General Assembly meeting on 20 May 1950, Onn and the UMNO Executive Committee resigned \textit{en masse} to force the issue (Tadin 1960, 84). The move was successful, but it marked only the first of Onn’s defiant acts (i.e. compromising on communal issues), which ultimately led him to resign from UMNO (ibid; Fernando 2012). The British position on this balance between communal aspirations remained tilted toward Malay interests as had previous policies. High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, describes this favoritism as such: “It is better that the British and the Malays should work to a common policy, been at the expense of legitimate Chinese interests, than that we should appear to support any Chinese political claims other than those which non-Malays will be entitled to make as Federal citizens. This is what we should mean by the ‘special position’ of the Malays” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 148).
\end{itemize}
*operandi* would have far reaching consequences (301). Indeed, private elite bargaining modeled after Committee procedures would become a principal feature of the Alliance structure (Tan Cheng Lock Papers (d)).

In short, although the British were committed to self-governance in Malaya after World War II, the security challenges and communal tensions presented severe obstacles.³⁸ Initially, thus, the British demanded non-communalism exemplified via Dato Onn’s Independence of Malaya Party (IMP),³⁹ arguing that UMNO and MCA visions of the nation were incompatible with a stable, inclusive democratic state.⁴⁰ This would change only with the formation of a surprising partnership, an event to which the discussion now turns.

³⁸ Andaya 2001, 264; In March 1948, Dr. William Lineham, civil servant and constitutional advisor for the Malayan Union remarked: “The prospects of the rise of a strong independence movement in Malaya, at any rate within the next generation or so, appears to be exceedingly remote. Such a movement would be impossible unless it received very substantial support from the Malays. In the present state of political affairs and in the state of affairs likely to develop in the future…the Malays may be expected to withhold that support” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 1). WL Blythe, Secretary of Chinese Affairs, reiterates a similar conclusion regarding the willingness of the Chinese to cooperate with the Malays to form a national movement (ibid, 2).

³⁹ Dato Onn, former President of UMNO and leader of the Malayan Union movement, in 1951 breaks with UMNO and starting the non-communal IMP, claiming that “his object is to free himself from the inactive and purely conservative elements in UMNO who have been obstructing his efforts to admit non-Malays into UMNO and who are in his view merely a dead weight in any political party” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 293).

⁴⁰ These preferences were expressed initially during of the IMP-UMNO split, High Commissioner Sir Gurney arguing against Tunku Abdul Rahman’s vision for independent Malaya as the new President of UMNO, which aimed at getting practical advantages for Malays as opposed to prioritizing Independence. Gurney notes that he “pointed out the obvious weaknesses of these ideas of how to make things still easier for the Malays at other people’s expense” (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 299). Later, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Lyttleton, and High Commissioner, Sir General Templer, were the most outspoken in these policy preferences. In 1951, Lyttleton argues that the Emergency must be the priority: “It is a mockery to give a man a vote when you can’t protect his life. Personally, I should like to keep my head on my shoulders before I thought of the polling booth” (quoted in Fernando 2009, 73). Templer also consistently dragged his feet on the question of self-government. His plans envisioned electoral reforms and holding town and municipal elections in 1953 first, State Council elections in Johore and the Straits Settlements in 1954 and in other states in 1955, and Federal Legislative Council elections from 1956-1958. 1960 was thus the earliest date envisioned for independence (Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 462; Fernando 2009, 39; Tan Cheng Lock Papers (d)).
The Alliance: Ad Hoc Partnership to National Party

The Alliance was born out of an *ad hoc* coalition between UMNO and MCA just before the 1952 Kuala Lumpur municipal elections. Emphasizing the importance of inter-racial harmony for a successful administration, the coalition won nine out of the 12 seats and 51% of the popular vote (Fernando 2009). The strategy’s success prompted UMNO and MCA to extend the partnership to the national level. Both parties’ leaderships agreed that their anti-colonial objectives relied on closer cooperation between all communities in Malaya, though both were also committed to retaining their communal identity. A National Directorate was charged with overseeing the Alliance’s activities, and UMNO-MCA liaison committees were then formed at the national, state and district levels in order to coordinate the activities of the coalition at all levels. Importantly, however, mobilization remained explicitly based on communal loyalties at the local levels (Fernando 2009, 27; 2002, 28). A common commitment to independence as well as their social status within their respective communities as English-educated professionals primarily unified the national leadership (ibid, 29).

While Party development was significant, it did not yet translate into support from the British who remained skeptical of the coalition’s communal character.

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41 There were initially negotiations for an IMP-MCA Alliance, owing to their partnership since the former’s creation (Tan Cheng Lock Papers (e). These fell apart when Dato Onn insisted that the MCA candidates run under the IMP flag (Fernando 2002). Fernando argues that the Alliance represented a compromise between extreme communalism and the ideal of non-communalism (29).

42 Thirty UMNO-MCA Liaison Committees were established by 1954 (Fernando 2009, 27).

43 The British High Commissioner, General Templer even tried to destroy the communal coalition by cutting off MCA revenue (von Vorys 1975, 111). He advocated a slow pace to self-government such that the Emergency could be resolved and that the non-communal IMP could take root and garner more electoral support (Fernando 2002, 46-47). Even after the 1953 KL municipal elections, the British conferred predominately with the IMP about the appropriate political steps. Both were high concerned with the UMNO-MCA Alliance because: “a) in it the UMNO is in fact subordinate to MCA; b) the MCA leaders are concerned almost exclusively with promoting Chinese interests; c) many of them are primarily
Nonetheless, the Alliance intensified its demands for independence. In August 1953, it set a determined stance that the Federal Legislative election should include a three-fifths majority of elected seats (Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 16). Unfortunately, at the time, the IMP still had twice as many members nominated in the Federal Elections Committee, and because it favored a more gradual movement to self-government, the Council agreed to a simple majority of elected seats (Smith 1995, 182-84). Under the direction of Tunku Abdul Rahman, leaders of the Alliance traveled to London to meet with the Secretary of State directly, to no avail (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 26-34; Fernando 2011, 499). On June 13, 1954, the Alliance members resigned their Council positions and organized large-scale demonstrations, forcing the High Commissioner to compromise out of fear that the civil administration would break down and damage the counter-insurgency. The stand-off had two significant effects: first, it radically accelerated the British’s more gradual plans for the devolution of power and second, it considerably advanced the Alliance’s status as a national movement (Fernando 2009, 35). The Alliance would hereafter set its own hastened pace toward Independence with minimal British obstruction.

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44 Fernando 2009, 53; This was indeed a reluctant move on the part of the British who found the Alliance methods in the affair to be “somewhat of dictatorship, and could hardly be described as methods worthy of persons whose ostensible aim is democratic self-government; they are a sad augury for the future if the Alliance should sweep into power” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 54). Moreover, at this juncture, the British still favored non-communalism (represented by the Party Negara, former IMP) and the Rulers, and feared that such a compromise would create rifts between the British and these interest groups (ibid, vol. 3, 66).

45 Fernando 2011, 499-500; The Emergency, heretofore a major impediment of British willingness to concede self-government, at this point is dropped as a precondition owing to the Alliance’s electoral and organizational successes (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 187-188).
The 1955 elections served as the first national election in Malayan history and the only one prior to Independence. With an election campaign promising independence within four years, Malayanization of the civil service and the setting up of an Independent Commission to review the Constitution, the Alliance won almost 80% of the popular vote and 51 of the 52 elected seats (46 out of 98 seats nominated). It speaks to the degree of consensus among the three coalition parties that they were able to transform the political playing field so extensively from a mere ad hoc arrangement in 1952 to Independence under a mass-based national movement in only three years. As the Alliance grew more confident, they became increasingly vocal in their demands for devolution of power (Fernando 2009, 145). The extent to which the Alliance Formula of inter-communal compromise had also been sanctioned is a matter I turn to in the next section.

The Constitutional Bargain and the Inter-Communal Contract

Up to the point of the Alliance’s 1955 electoral victory, the coalition had largely avoided the most contentious national issues, focusing on issues of anti-colonialism, independence, and safeguarding the rights and interests of every community (Fernando 2002). In the making of the Independence Constitution, however, the contested subjects of language, education, citizenship, and Malay privileges dominated the discussion and illuminated the central tensions both across and within the party. The evident difficulties of these issues also convinced its leaders of the necessity of their mode of dealing with

46 Note that citizenship laws were still strict. The electorate was 84% Malays, 11% Chinese and 4% Indian (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 145). Thus, whereas Malays make up roughly half of the population, they represented about five-sixths of the electorate. In addition, estimates suggest that approximately three-fourths or 600,000 eligible Chinese did not register to vote (Fernando 2002).

47 Before the national elections, the Indian party, MIC, joined the Alliance.
them: namely, negotiations within the top leadership and making private compromises away from public pressures.

At the Alliance’s request, an Independent Commission was formed to draw up the Constitution. Multiple stakeholders presented their requests to the Commission for consideration. The Alliance issued a joint memorandum, which outlined the principal agreements of UMNO, MCA, and MIC and left responsibility for the details to the Commission. On citizenship, they agreed to the principle of *jus soli*, or birthright citizenship, but not retroactively. On the special privileges for the Malays, they decided that these policies would be reviewed 15 years after independence. On language, the Alliance agreed to accept Malay as the national language and English as an official language for a maximum period of 10 years "or for such shorter period as the Legislature may decide" (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 315). Finally, the MCA and MIC

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48 Known as the Reid Commission, its members included: Lord Reid, an appellate Court judge from Britain, Sir Ivor Jennings (Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge), Justice Abdul Hamid (Pakistan), Justice B. Malik (India) and W.J. McKell (Australia) (Fernando 2002). The Alliance first rose this issue during the Federal Legislature crisis, but the British rejected the idea until the Alliance’s dominance was demonstrated in its electoral success in 1955 because it was strongly opposed by the Malay Rulers (Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 166-167).

49 Those born in Malaya prior to Independence would be entitled upon registration to become nationals so long as they met further requirements including being of good character, taking an oath of allegiance, having resided in Malaya for 5 out of the 7 years prior and having a simple knowledge of Malay (Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 313-314). Citizenship was a controversial decision as the Chinese announced their intention to submit a separate memorandum to the Commission advocating greater citizenship rights, to which numerous UMNO branches responded that jus soli was totally unacceptable to the Malays. Then, several Chinese leaders formed a Federation of Chinese organizations, which would rival the MCA and lobby H.M.G in London directly on the issue. The Alliance executive committee disciplined both sections of the parties, but the Alliance, still skittish of backlash, did not include citizenship in its election manifesto at all (ibid, 272-273).

50 For fear of negative reactions from the Malay communities, the time period was not published but conveyed orally to the Reid Commission (Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 321). The Special position of the Malays principle states that, in recognition of the fact that the Malays are the ‘original sons of the soil’ and by virtue of the treaties made between the British and the Rulers, the Constitution should guarantee their access to ‘a reasonable proportion of lands, posts in the public service, permits to engage in business of trade, where such permits are restricted and controlled by law, Government scholarships and such similar privileges according by the Government’ (ibid, 315).
presented an alternate position on language, advocating the use of Mandarin and Tamil in government business for a minimum period of 10 years (ibid, 315-316).

The Reid Commission’s report, released six months before Independence, caused significant uproar, especially over the communal issues (Fernando 2002, 147). Some of the most contentious decisions were re-evaluating the Malay special privileges in 15 years, removing Islam as the official religion, and providing for multilingualism in the legislature.\(^51\) As the terms of debate were now open to public scrutiny, the Alliance was forced to respond to criticisms outside and within their own parties.

The Alliance reacted not by holding debates within its General Assembly, however, but by setting up a special sub-committee to work out a new consensus, again emphasizing preference for discrete elite compromise.\(^52\) Ultimately, the 15-year timeframe for the review of Malay special privileges was changed to the vague: ‘from time to time’. A clause was added to protect non-Malay communities by restricting Malay special privileges to areas that would not encroach on their existing economic activities. Finally, English would remain an official language for 10 years. The Malay-centric nature of these resolutions was not lost on the non-Malay members, yet as Fernando (2002) describes: “It was quite clear to the MCA and MIC that there was little

\(^51\) Fernando 2002, 147; Commission member, Mr. Abdul Hamid, submitted a minority report which favored Malay-centric positions on citizenship, the special position of the Malays, language and religion (Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 350-352).

\(^52\) Von Vorys (1975) describes this preference as such: “The Alliance was developing a method of its own in settling inter-communal issues… The heads of the communal parties worked things out privately, informally, and secretly. Not that the members of this Directorate always agreed….But, the leadership of UMNO, MCA, and MIC agreed that to carry on negotiations in public on such communally sensitive issues as citizenship and Malay privileges would trap them in a rigid pattern and place the communities on a path of polarization which would inevitably lead to confrontation and communal violence. And, however democratic the means might be, the end would be neither a common nation nor a stable political system” (133).
they could do to alter UMNO’s proposals in view of the likely political implications for their UMNO colleagues and for the future of the Alliance (154-155). In other words, in the name of Independence, the non-Malay leaders kept quiet.\textsuperscript{53}

When the Constitution reached the Federal Legislature in July, however, an MCA leader broke ranks and strongly criticized the White Paper, arguing that the changes made to the Reid Commission Report were no longer a fair communal compromise (Fernando 2002, 183). The Alliance leadership did not receive this dissension well and forced the member to resign (ibid). The compromise, as negotiated in the Alliance sub-committee, was final, and its leadership construed any criticism as showing disloyalty both to the inter-communal Constitutional contract, the Alliance formula and the Independence struggle itself.

\textbf{Nature of the Bargain: The Alliance Formula}

Within the Alliance coalition, each of the racially exclusive parties claimed to be the legitimate representatives of their respective communities (Gagliano 1971, 5). Then, each party’s highest leadership positions alone asserted a monopoly over the process of integrating communal interests.\textsuperscript{54} Thus, each of the members of the Directorate was

\textsuperscript{53} Tunku Abdul Rahman, president of UMNO, also emphasized the primacy of Independence over constitutional agreement and noted during the Working Committee on revision of the Reid report that “if faced with a serious threat of revolt, he would have been ready to fall in with the idea that Merdeka should come first and consideration of the Reid Commission Report later”, citing Pakistan as a positive example of such a situation (Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 366). Despite the MCA and MIC’s capitulation to Malay-centric compromises, this did not necessarily translate into compromise among its constituent communities. For example, in May 1957, the Pan-Malayan Federation of Chinese Associations, which claimed to represent over 1000 Chinese organizations, denied that the MCA and the MIC were representative of the non-Malay population in Malaya and accused the Alliance of going back on its election promises, most especially regarding citizenship (ibid, 385-386).

\textsuperscript{54} For example, in the process of developing the Independence constitution, debates surrounding the Reid Constitution were removed from the General Assembly and compromised within the small forum of the Directorate, compromises which could not be legitimately challenged from outside this group (von Vorys 1975, 133). This latter phenomenon is evidenced by the MCA member who rejected the
expected to possess dual qualifications: an ability to politically organize their respective community and a capacity to retain the confidence of leaders across the communal parties. Within the Directorate, party leaders engaged in intense communal bargaining and made compromises.\textsuperscript{55} These debates were conducted privately and pragmatically, each member trying as much as possible to not concede more than what would be deemed acceptable to their community.\textsuperscript{56} This was a fine line to tow, but the Alliance regarded itself as the only organization capable of doing this.\textsuperscript{57} It considered itself a national institution above partisan politics.\textsuperscript{58} As much as possible, partisan conflicts should remain inside the coalition, and the party should avoid airing its private negotiations for public debate.\textsuperscript{59} This was the essence of the Alliance Formula.

\textsuperscript{55} The Directorate composed Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun (Dr.) Ismail of UMNO, Colonel (Sir) H.S. Lee and T'H. Tan initially then Tun Tan Siew Sin and T.H. Tan of MCA, and Tun V.T. Sambanthan of MIC (von Vorys 1975, 162).

\textsuperscript{56} For example, when in 1954 the education committee of the MCA meeting was reported in the Singapore Standard to have scrapped the national school plan and decided that Chinese should be an official language, Tan Cheng Lock and the MCA had to backtrack and rein in its Chinese education pressure groups to rectify its relationship with UMNO who was as a consequence responding to Malay uproar (Ee 1997, 150). In short, in a decision between supporting Chinese communal interests and maintaining a relationship with UMNO, MCA leaders chose the latter.

\textsuperscript{57} Tun Tan Siew’s remarks show this justification: “In a multi-racial society, however, there are problems which though read and thus require solution, are far better aired in private than in public. As our experience has indicated, if those burning issues with racial overtones are shouted about in 1956 from the housetops with each side trying to make political capital out of them at the expense of the party, I do not think the result would have been a peaceful Federation of Malaya after 1957. In fact, there might have been no independent Federation of Malaya at all and there might well have been a bloodbath. After all, it is commonsense to believe that such issues are best raised in a committee room rather than from a public platform” (Morais 1972, 331).

\textsuperscript{58} Gagliano 1971, 5; Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Dr. Ismail, notes in 1966 that the greatest democracy was practiced inside the Alliance Directorate (Dr Ismail Papers (c), 128).

\textsuperscript{59} For example, in the lead up to the 1964 national election, the PAP of Singapore campaigned on a platform of exposing and addressing communal problems, notably defining its campaign by a call for a ‘Malaysian Malaysia’ (Milne and Mauzy 1978, 72). The Alliance, by contrast, expressed consistent uneasiness with this open examination of communal differences for fear that it would mobilize its constituent groups against the inter-communal structure of the Alliance itself. This uneasiness with the
Several examples serve to demonstrate this preference for private negotiation of sensitive issues. When the Alliance issued its manifesto for the 1955 Federal Election, it only published an abridged version (Heng 1988, 200-202). It remained silent on contentious communal issues including citizenship and Malay special privileges, issues to which UMNO, MCA and MIC had privately committed (Fernando 2011, 500-501). This was not because its leadership had failed to make an agreement, but because they felt that airing the issues publicly would undermine their resolution. In another instance, the Alliance submitted its position on the time period for Malay privileges orally to the Reid Commission so as to avoid negative Malay reactions (Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 321). Later, in perhaps the most dramatic commitment to the Alliance Formula, a mere two years after the merger of Malaya and Singapore, the Tunku expelled Singapore when its leader, Lee Kuan Yew, consistently violated what was deemed to be acceptable actions concerning communal issues. Finally, the decision to move the

PAP’s method and style of party politics, most especially among the Malay ultras in UMNO, ultimately led Tunku to expel Singapore from the Federation (ibid, 71). Or, for example, the Tunku made a direct bid to the Chinese education union (UCSTA) in January 1955 to drop calls for Chinese to become an official language until after the elections in exchange for the Alliance working to repeal the Education Ordinance of 1952 (Ee 1997, 158-160).

60 Heng (1988) describes this calculation as such: “The public stand of the Alliance on citizenship was thus to avoid holding out any promises to non-Malays while at the same time reassuring them that the problem would receive serious consideration in the immediate future...The MCA leadership, however, knew that the UMNO national leaders had conceded far more to the non-Malay demands on citizenship than what had been made public. The Alliance position as expressed in its full Manifesto designed for limited circulation and the Tunku’s views in an election policy paper on citizenship make this point clear. The Alliance top leadership could afford to be less circumspect on the issue of citizenship in its comprehensive Manifesto, because it was protected by the restricted circulation of the document. In this document, the Alliance implicitly expressed its willingness to grant citizenship to the large majority of non-Malays resident in the country” (205).

61 Milne and Mauzy (1978) describe this conflict as such: “The PAP [the main political party in Singapore] believed in drawing attention to the existence of communal problems, analyzing them, and stressing the need of overcoming them if Malaysia were to survive. The Alliance, while believing that it was necessary to make general pronouncements on the desirability of racial harmony, feared that any extensive open examination of communal differences, for example, at university forums on politics, would only stir up trouble” (71).
entire MCA section on education into a private sub-committee served to shield it from the organized Chinese pressure groups.62

As the next section demonstrates, despite each of these efforts to remove inter-communal issues from public discourse, pressures from civil society continued to strain the Alliance structure in the lead-up to Independence and beyond. Given the contested nature of the debates and the strained structure of the Alliance framework, it is perhaps unsurprising that there were moments when the formula was violated. These types of internal challenges came from radical factions within each of the coalition parties, partly because the member parties’ structures provided both the incentive and means to mobilize the population by exploiting communal issues.63

Nonetheless, the Tunku was instrumental for a time in reinforcing the Alliance Formula and punishing violators (Fernando 2011; Clutterbuck 1985, 261; Sheppard 1995, 93). Despite breaches in the Alliance formula, the leadership remained confident in its approach, believing that its inter-communal elite bargaining formula guaranteed the survival of both the party and the nation.64 Thus, rather than altering the Formula,

62 “Tan Cheng Lock proposed that the MCACECC should establish a working subcommittee to reduce the necessity for calling full MCACECC meetings because open discussions ‘could sometimes be misrepresented and distortions could lead to misunderstanding’...Thus the Working Subcommittee was intended to pursue in a quiet manner issues brought by the UCSTA to the MCACECC” (Ee 1997, 168).

63 For example, Abdul Aziz bin Ishak, the first Minister of Agriculture of the Federation and one Vice president of UMNO deliberately championed the cause of rural Malays by promoting agricultural projects and institutions that undercut existing non-Malay ventures. Through these activities, he became something of a Malay folk hero until his violations of the Alliance Formula could no longer be tolerated and the Tunku removed him (von Vorys 1975, 171-183).

64 For example, Tun Dr. Ismail, prominent leader in UMNO, praises the singular ability of the Alliance formula to tackle the difficult communal issues: “In fact after a few weeks of dialogue, the UMNO MCA and MIC ceased to see the communal problems from the angles which each party had tried to put across to the others and they now looked at these problems as a challenge which the Alliance as a unity should find solutions to. As I saw this spirit emerge and expand, during the rest of the conference, I was convinced that whatever may happen in the future, this spirit of the Alliance would triumph over all obstacles” (Dr. Ismail Papers (b), 46).
Alliance leaders dug in deeper, further narrowing the group which could legitimately
decide policies related to communal issues. The result was a significant constraining
of the institutional channels for grievances expression. In short, this process of
increasing insulation from public pressures represented a commitment to the elite’s
mode of conflict resolution (the Alliance Formula) born out of the late-colonial period
rather than a commitment to democratic principles and processes.

Concluding Remarks

The Alliance leadership took the presence of a constitutional bargain as proof
that the Alliance Formula was a success, even if several communal issues remained
unresolved. In addition, at Independence, the Alliance enjoyed the appearance of
legitimacy stemming from their being both the engineers of independence and their
landslide victory in the only colonial election (Fernando 2009, 145). Nonetheless, this
support could not be taken for granted, as it required both vertical mobilization of
communal constituencies and loyalty among the leadership to retain legitimacy, two
necessities often at odds. It would thus partially be the leadership’s response to
pressures from below that would determine its fate and commitment to democracy.

Von Vorys (1975) describes this commitment as such: “the Alliance was developing a method of its
own in settling inter-communal issues. There were no projects of survey research to determine popular
views, nor any bureaucratic procedures. The heads of the communal parties worked things out privately,
informally, and secretly. Not that the members of this Directorate always agreed….But, the leadership of
UMNO, MCA, and MIC agreed that to carry on negotiations in public on such communally sensitive issues
as citizenship and Malay privileges would trap them in a rigid pattern and place the communities on a
path of polarization which would inevitably lead to confrontation and communal violence. And, however
democratic the means might be, the end would be neither a common nation nor a stable political system”
(133).

Dr. Ismail Papers (b), 46; In terms of outstanding communal issues, the clause ‘to be reviewed from
time to time’ seemingly left the special position of the Malays open to interpretation and alteration.
Further, the role of English as an official language was set to expire ten years after Independence. Both
issues would become central to conflict during the first decade of Independence.
In the next section, I detail how the institutions that might facilitate a back-and-forth relationship between state and society became increasingly closed off. I argue that the Alliance demonstrated a commitment to the Alliance Formula rather than a commitment to democratic channels of popular grievance expression and state response. The formation of these methods of elite negotiation in the late-colonial period set a precedent moving forward. In short, the method of resolving the inter-communal bargain became more central to elite notions of appropriate governance than did the maintenance of democratic principles. Such an attachment bodes poorly for democratic processes, which require responsiveness to social, political and economic pressures either before or after the polls. The limited experience with democratic politics outside the domain of an 'independence mandate' had not yet tested the Alliance in this manner, and the condensed Independence struggle had not yet resolved the most contentious issues the Alliance government would face. The next section examines the effects of this commitment to the Alliance Formula and the relationship between state and society.

**A Strong State and a Discouraged Society: A Case Study of the Politics of Education**

After Independence, questions loomed over how to implement the Constitutional compromises. The transition from serving as chief negotiator between Malaya and the British and among communal groups to chief executive put a great strain on the Alliance structure. Despite the Alliance’s steadfast confidence in the Constitutional bargain and the Alliance Formula, the decade demonstrated that its actions and negotiated
compromises not only failed to contain communalism but exacerbated tensions, as the coalition’s cultural and economic policies were unpopular among all groups.\textsuperscript{67}

This section illuminates the gaps sustained between the state and society in Malaysia by examining debates surrounding one of the communal issues that held paramount importance both before and after Independence: education.\textsuperscript{68} It argues that diverse pressures continually pushed the state to resolve perceived injustices in this field, ranging from protecting non-Malay rights of cultural expression by safeguarding vernacular languages to completing an agenda to make Malay the nation’s dominant identity of the nation. Under this pressure, the inter-communal Alliance Directorate further centralized and insulated itself under the facade of the Alliance Formula. At the same time, the national party leadership rebuked and removed those intermediaries that mobilized communities or responded to specific communal aspirations. This process progressively cut off the institutional, information-sharing channels between the state and society. Without these intermediaries, citizens were unable to realize change

\textsuperscript{67} For example, the 1967 National Language Act sought compromise between radical Malay and non-Malay aspirations but ultimately proved unwelcome to both communities (Mauzy 1985, 160). Further, Malays were increasingly aggrieved by what they saw as slow progress toward their economic progress relative to other communities, a promise of the Constitutional bargain as related to the ‘special rights of the Malays.’ This frustration is highlighted by Abdul Aziz bin Ishak, Minister of Agriculture of the Federation and one of three Vice Presidents of the UMNO party, who championed rural Malay economic opportunities, particularly by trying to eliminate the private middlemen in rice production and turning private rice mills into cooperatives (von Vorys 1975, 230). In the process, however, non-Malay communities were alienated and aggrieved by what they saw as Malay preference at their communities’ expense. A direct attack on Malay special rights became a central facet of some oppositions’ party platforms in 1969 (ibid, 259).

\textsuperscript{68} Ee (1997) argues that within the Chinese community, the cause of education became ‘suffused with a political struggle, the objective of which was to resist cultural domination while undergoing political integration (4). In the last decade of colonial rule, the British recognized the sensitivity surrounding this particular cultural struggle for political transition, nation-building and overall stability in Malaya: “After citizenship. Education policy is probably not only the most contentious subject in Malayan politics but also the one most likely to give rise to friction between the Malay and Chinese partners in the Alliance Government” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 283).
through formal networks. As frustrations with a non-responsive state mounted over the decade, the electorate finally sought redress first through the polls and then in post-election riots in 1969. Because this phenomenon was paired with the Alliance’s commitment to its own formula of governance above democratic processes, its response to the security challenge was a wholesale rejection of the democratic process, constraining political activities and further insulating the state.

I argue that where the institutions of political grievance expression are not present and/or accepted, neither the elites nor masses inculcate the norms to continue to work through them. Thus, upon Independence, elites were both unwilling, because of their overriding commitment to the Alliance Formula, and unable, owing to their progressive insulation from social grievances, to respond to diverse pressures from below. The discussion proceeds in four parts: post-war education policies, educational interest groups and the Alliance Formula, post-Independence debates, and the National Language Act of 1967.

Post-War Education Policies: Movement toward Independence

Prior to World War II, the British invested relatively little in Malayan education outside of the Straits Settlements.\textsuperscript{69} To the extent that the government did provide this public service, it was limited to the Malay population and included rudimentary vernacular primary schools in rural areas and English education for Malay aristocrats in urban centers, including one College.\textsuperscript{70} For the non-Malay populations, there were

\textsuperscript{69} Raffles College and the King Edward VII College of Medicine were the only post-secondary schools. Both were in Singapore (Lim 1967, 298).

\textsuperscript{70} British defended the relative neglect of non-Malay communities in this regard as such: “Even so, the Governments of Malaya tended, and with reason, to regard the bulk of the Chinese population as transient and consequently did not feel any compulsion to make special provision for either English or Chinese vernacular education for the children of this community” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 103-108). In
several estate-owned Indian schools for the laboring population, and a resilient system
of community-financed Chinese primary schools (O’Brien 1980). After 1945, the British
sought to replace these three distinct vernacular education systems (Malay, Chinese,
and Indian) with a common national system, with English as a common neutral
language. In addition, when the Emergency began in 1948, the British became
increasingly concerned with Chinese education and its connections to the communist
insurgency (Fennel 1968, 83). Meanwhile, Malay leaders from 1948 demanded that the
Malay language have a prominent role in this system. In either scenario, there was
little room for non-Malay schools, a policy that most directly impacted an autonomous,
expansive and growing Chinese school system. This was the immediate post-war
educational situation.

The British commissioned several education reports through the late 1940s and
early 1950s. Through this contentious process, the 1952 Education Ordinance finally

1905, the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar was established. It was intended to train sons of Malay
aristocrats for employment in the Malay Administrative Service (O’Brien 1980, 56; Seng 1975, 24).

71 Fennel 1968, 51; For the British, this was predominately a security imperative, as suggested in the
following memorandum from the CO Far East Department: “The different races of Malaya think of
themselves primarily as Malays, Chinese or Indians and only secondarily, if at all, as Malayans. No plans
for defence against communist aggression from without and subversion from within can have a full
chance of success so long as the people are thus left without a common outlook on fundamental
questions…The need is for schools, dedicated to promoting Malayan unity, in which children of all races
may grow up together, learning each his mother-tongue as a subject of study but being taught through the
medium of a common language. The common language must be the lingua franca of the country, English.
Only thus can racial exclusiveness, at present fostered by the vernacular system of education which
predominates in Malaya, be broken down” (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 132).

72 Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 284; Malays were concerned both for the cultural role of the Malay language as
well as extending educational facilities to Malays before allocating additional expenditure to the education
of non-Malays. This latter issue was a function of the group’s perceived economic underdevelopment
relative to non-Malays (Ee 1997, 50).

73 Of the 1105 Chinese schools in 1946, 27 were missionary schools and two were government run (Ee
1997, 32).

74 In 1950, the British produced the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) report suggesting that the use of
English be extended as a neutral language acceptable to all groups. Both UMNO and MCA rejected such
became the first post-war legislation (Ee 1997, 62). It committed the government to provide compulsory, free primary education in a system of new national schools that could use either Malay or English as the language of instruction. As a small concession to non-Malays, where there was demand from at least 15 students, the schools could offer courses in Tamil or Mandarin (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 106).

The Malays were not especially pleased with the report, its leading newspapers contending that the community wanted only one type of national school which used Malay as the medium of instruction (Fennel 1968, 250; 290-292). The Chinese community even more vigorously opposed the Ordinance.75 The Barnes Report and subsequent Education Ordinance encouraged Chinese teachers and community leaders to organize nationally for the first time, and they formed the United Chinese School Teachers’ Association (UCSTA) in December 1951. Education advocates argued that if the Chinese were to become partners in the Malayan nation, then the schools that they had heretofore sustained using their own resources should be incorporated into the national educational system. They envisioned a multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural country that embraced diversity as a source of interracial integration and national strength (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 108). The teachers’ union was also tied to a group of local businessmen through Management Committees (MCs).

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75 Fennel 1968, 248-250; In 1953, there were 52,500 Chinese studying in English schools compared to more than 234000 enrolled in Chinese schools. The influence and importance of Chinese education within this part of the non-Malay population was thus quite large (Ee 1997, 97).
These consisted of the Chinese schools’ benefactors who thus enjoyed wealth, prestige and influence in their communities. These advocates formed the United Chinese School Committees’ Association (UCSCA), a group whose membership overlapped with the state-level MCA representatives (Ee 1997, 101-106). The central debate over education was not so much whether a national system was necessary, but whether a single language should be the essential basis of this system (ibid, 4).

In terms of the Legislatures’ reactions, Malays were concerned far more with the availability of English, especially in rural areas, than the role of Malay (Fennel 1968, 255). By contrast, the MCA leadership initially shared Chinese education groups’ opposition to this narrow vision for education in the country, even joining the teachers and MCs of Chinese schools in opposing the policy two weeks before the Legislative Council vote. This support did not, however, translate into votes, and the 1952 Ordinance passed unanimously (Ee 1997, 63; 123; Fennel 1968, 258-260).

This disconnect between Chinese interest groups, specifically the influential UCSTA as an outspoken defender of Chinese cultural interests, and MCA action in the Legislative Council is indicative of early strains on the Alliance formula. Ultimately, financial difficulties rather than communal opposition forced the British to abandon the plan for national schools, and the education debate resumed (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 153-154). Both Malay and Chinese education advocates remained poised for a fight.

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76 Tan Siew Sin, later President of the MCA, contended that “the only regime which have insisted on unity through uniformity are [the] totalitarian regimes” (quoted in Ee 1997, 62).
Educational Interest Groups and the Alliance Formula

The MCA developed a relationship with organizations committed to Chinese education starting in November 1952 when national MCA delegates including their president, Tan Cheng Lock, attended a meeting in which the teachers (UCSTA), managers (UCSCA) and MCA delegates formed a joint committee to oppose the 1952 Education Ordinance (Ee 1997, 134). This historic meeting set the stage for making Chinese education interest groups and the MCA partners in the cause of defending Chinese education and culture. It also solidified the institutional links through which teachers, school managers, and local, state, and national party representatives could coordinate these efforts. In short, in this late-colonial period, the links between this set of social groups and the state via political representatives were institutionalized, making the coordination of activities and channels of information-sharing and political grievance expression were strong and clear. However, despite the unanimity with which the various groups opposed the 1952 Ordinance at this meeting, the MCA delegates in attendance failed to direct their colleagues in the Legislative Council to vote in accordance with the meeting’s resolutions. Two weeks later, not one Councilor spoke or voted against the Ordinance (ibid, 137).

In April 1953, the teachers, managers and MCA leaders met to form a Central Committee on Chinese Education. While the Chinese education organizations argued for a body independent of the political party, MCA leadership placed it under the party infrastructure as a subcommittee (MCACECC). Its leadership hoped to control these outspoken Chinese interest groups (Ee 1997, 139-143). With this decision, Chinese education organizations could exert influence on the MCA directly as members of one of its subcommittees, but the MCA ultimately controlled decisions on Chinese education as
it could veto any problematic resolutions (ibid, 143). As we will see, this relationship proved workable when the colonial government remained the main target of opposition, but broke down after the colonizer departed.

The MCA’s subsequent move to form a coalition with UMNO further constrained the Chinese education organizations’ public campaign, making it subject to the Alliance Formula methods of inter-communal compromise via private negotiation. While the UCSTA and UCSCA remained vocal in rallying support for Chinese education after the parties joined together, Tan Cheng Lock and the MCA came to prefer more discrete channels of negotiation on these issues among elites. For example, the *Singapore Standard* reported that an MCACECC meeting in 1954 resolved to reject the national school plan and moved to make Chinese an official language. Tan Cheng Lock received extensive backlash from Tunku Abdul Rahman doing so; the latter responding to public outcry from the Malay Teachers’ Association. The Tunku emphasized the necessity of discrete negotiation to keep controversial issues out of the public eye. He argued that Alliance leaders needed to keep communal interest groups with conflicting demands ‘at arms’ length’ to keep Independence the central issue (Ee 1997, 148-150). In short, the MCACECC’s publicized negotiations on such matters were an unacceptable breach of the Alliance Formula.

The event demonstrates early difficulties in the Alliance leadership’s joint tasks of balancing a working inter-communal relationship across parties and sustaining support among their communal bases. The Alliance’s central challenge was to simultaneously represent and constrain communal interests. Its leadership resolved to keep debates and commitments outside the public sphere. The Alliance parties needed to act more
discretely with communal interest groups, in this case the Malay and Chinese education organizations, lest they damage inter-communal compromise. At this juncture, Tan Cheng Lock thus proposed to move discussions further out of the public sphere by organizing an MCACECC subcommittee.\textsuperscript{77}

Fortunately for the Alliance, the British served as a convenient alternate target for communal frustration throughout the 1940s. Both the MCA and UMNO repeatedly redirected attention on the education issue away from the Alliance and against the colonial rulers, largely by emphasizing Independence as the paramount issue.\textsuperscript{78} In this spirit, in January 1955, the Tunku encouraged the UCSTA to drop calls to make Chinese an official language until after the first national election. In exchange, the Alliance would work to repeal the 1952 Education Ordinance (Ee 1997, 156-158). By accepting the bargain, the UCSTA made temporary concessions on communal issues to ensure progress toward Independence. In this way, the Alliance postponed any resolution of that issue.

After the Alliance won the only federal election prior to independence in 1955, the bargain between Chinese education organizations and the Alliance provided a

\textsuperscript{77} In proposing this move, Tan Cheng Lock notes that open discussions ‘could sometimes be misrepresented and distortions could lead to misunderstanding’ (quoted in Ee 1997, 168).

\textsuperscript{78} For example, in a speech to the MCA Annual General Committee in 1955, Tan Cheng Lock notes: “Let us remember that in the case of Education, for instance, the present policy was not laid down by the Malays; it is, in fact, the creation of the British whose ideas were adopted by a hand-picked Committee and then by a fully-appointed Legislative Council. I am sure the Malays are no more anxious to destroy Chinese education and culture, and the contribution they can make to the future Malayan culture, than the Chinese would want to deny the other races in the country their own languages and culture” (Tan Cheng Lock Papers, Folio 86. 15 January 1955. Speech by the MCA President at the Annual General Committee meeting of the Association at the Chinese Assembly Hall, Kuala Lumpur, 20). In another moment when Chinese and Malays condemned the implementation of the Razak Education Report in 1956, the Alliance directed its members that ‘direct criticisms of the Minister of Education and the government were to be avoided by attributing problems of implementation of the Report to ‘distortion…by certain expatriate officials in the Education Department that has incenses public opinion and caused annoyance” (quoted in Ee 1997, 192).
framework for a new approach to education, but it needed to be translated into a workable policy. The Alliance appointed a new Minister of Education, Dato Abdul Razak Hussein and commissioned an education report (Fennel 1968, 423). The Razak Committee concluded that, for the next 10 years, it would be financially impossible to create a national system based on one medium of instruction. Therefore, all four streams of primary schools would be integrated into the national system. This would include Standard Primary Schools that would use the national language and Standard-type Primary Schools that would use either Chinese or Tamil but include Malay and English as compulsory subjects. Both types of schools would receive public funds and use a common curriculum.\(^{79}\)

When the Legislative Council debated the report, Malays dismissed it as not going far enough to promote the Malay vernacular (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 284-285). Then, on June 4, the Alliance announced that all public examinations (including the Lower School Certificate Examination) would be given only in the official languages, a policy which underhandedly forced Chinese secondary schools to alter their medium of instruction to English so its students could prepare for exams outside their vernacular language.\(^{80}\) At this point, Chinese education advocates stopped supporting the legislation, arguing that its implementation was inconsistent with the spirit of the report.

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\(^{79}\) Fennel 1968, 435-442; The Report was far less clear about what to do in secondary schools. At the time, there were only Chinese secondary schools teaching toward their own exam and English schools teaching toward the Cambridge School Certificate (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 284).

\(^{80}\) Ee 1997, 180; Fennel 1968, 451-452; Language of examination was naturally tied to economic opportunities and social mobility, as state certificates provided access to higher education and job opportunities.
They then decided that the only solution was to re-introduce the issue of official language (Ee 1997, 180-186).

The MCA was right in the middle of these contrasting pressures. Unable to get UMNO to concede on the language issue, a dispute developed between national MCA leaders, who wanted to work within the Alliance’s agreed political limits, and the state-level MCA leaders, who wanted the MCA to fight for a better deal for Chinese education. Considering these developments, the state-level MCA leadership mobilized more than 1,000 representatives from 454 shetuan, or community networks, around the country in February and April 1957 to make its own demands on the Reid Report. In addition, the meeting decided to form a rival political party, the Federation of Chinese Guilds and Organizations (Ee 1997, 189). This direct challenge to the MCA’s right to represent the Chinese community ultimately broke down, but it demonstrated the real rift between national leaders and social groups.

Subsequently, the Reid Report = recommended the use of Chinese and Tamil as official languages for a period of 10 years or more. The Alliance, with MCA’s support, roundly opposed this, and the shetuan with accompanying MCA state leaders sent its own delegation to London (Stockwell 1995, vol. 3, 385-386). This move immediately came under fire from UMNO and MCA national leaders, who questioned Chinese state leaders’ loyalty to the country and accused them of trying to divide the Chinese

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81 The four major organizations consisted of the Federation of Selangor Chinese Guilds and Associations, the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, the Perak Assembly Hall and the UCSTA. MCA leaders led three out of four of these organizations (Ee 1997, 187-188).

82 The political organization broke down when the UCSTA decided to withdraw its support. This was not because the UCSTA did not align more closely with the shetuan’s political demands, but because it was concerned with the parallel outcome of the Education Report and felt that it could not politically distance itself from the MCA at the time (Ee 1997, 194-203).
community (Ee 1997, 202). Thus, in the immediate lead-up to Independence, the links between national leadership and intermediary district and state-level leaders (who dealt more directly with communal pressures from below) were severely strained, creating a wide gap between grassroots pressures and the governing leadership.

**Post-Independence Debates, 1957-1969**

Despite the Alliance’s electoral mandate to lead the country, internal crises raged through the MCA immediately after Independence. A schism had been forming throughout the constitutional negotiations between a conservative faction led by Tan Cheng Lock and a more progressive faction with deeper connections to Chinese education and workers’ organizations, including the *shetuan* (Ee 1997, 260-61). The latter accused the MCA of making too many concessions to UMNO, and the former defended the MCA for embracing a spirit of inter-communal compromise.\(^{83}\) The issues of education policy had not been resolved and Chinese civil society organizations remained active in calling for reforms.\(^{84}\)

In 1958, the conservative faction lost its charismatic leader when Tan Cheng Lock died. This event provided an opening for the progressive faction to assert its influence in the MCA. In the Annual Meeting of the MCA Central Committee in March 1958, members of the progressive faction won elections to the Presidency and other

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\(^{83}\) Recall that this latter group had organized a rival organization to the MCA in the debate over education in 1956 and citizenship in May 1957 (Ee 1997, 189, 252; Stockwell 1995 vol. 3, 385-386).

\(^{84}\) The issue of secondary school conversion was particularly tense. On November 14, 1957 students from 6 major Chinese secondary schools staged demonstrations to protest the implementation of age limits on school attendance. The Alliance government sent in riot police to break up the protests. On the 17th and 19th, more students protested in other schools, and again the riot police were sent in. As a result of these three days, 24 students were expelled. This served only to exacerbate the situation, and protests were staged at numerous other locations (Ee 1997, 250).
major posts (Ee 1997, 260). This electoral event was significant because these challengers represented a group of men “who were neither initiated into the political bargains which preceded independence nor were apparently prepared to abide by them. Indeed, the new MCA leadership saw little purpose and no virtue in exercising restraints” (von Vorys 1975, 163). This new leadership represented a direct threat to the Alliance Formula, and UMNO leaders distrusted them.85

Indeed, it was not long before the new MCA leadership confronted UMNO. On June 24, 1959, Lim Chong Eu, the new MCA President, wrote a private letter to the Tunku asking that the MCA be awarded 35 legislative seats in the 1959 election. He also asked that his agreement with Razak concerning the implementation of the requirement for all exams to be held in the official languages be delayed “until such time as Malay is fully developed and teaching facilities of Malay are adequately provided in all schools” (Ee 1997, 263). Most significantly, in a blatant disregard for the Alliance Formula, the MCA’s publicity chairman made these demands public, thus sparking an UMNO-MCA crisis.

The Tunku accused the MCA leadership of betraying the Alliance and announced that UMNO would contest all 104 Parliamentary seats in the upcoming election. Lim Chong Eu met with the Tunku several times to repair the damage but to no avail. Ultimately, Tan Siew Sin, leader of the conservative faction of MCA, undermined the MCA position altogether by contending that neither the Chinese education nor electoral seat allocation issues were important enough to break up the Alliance. The Tunku told

85 At the same time, UMNO was facing pressure from Malay education advocates to make greater progress on Malay secondary schools (Ee 1997, 262).
the MCA leadership that they could remain in the Alliance only if they allowed him to select their election candidates and if they agreed that the Alliance manifesto would have no specific statement on Chinese education (ibid, 264). This time the vote swung toward the more conservative faction under Tan Siew Sin. By 89 to 80, the MCA accepted these terms (von Vorys 1975, 165). In the process, many top MCA leaders from the defeated progressive faction resigned.

What this episode demonstrates is that the Alliance Formula could not be broken without severe repercussions. In 1961, Tan Siew Sin was elected MCA President. He proved to be a more loyal Alliance partner, his opening speech emphasizing that “the main task of the Association is not only to maintain the unity of the community, but to forge that unity into a greater unity of the Malayan nation itself…it must be accepted that the interests of the country as a whole have to be more important than the interests of any single community.” As will become apparent, while his loyalty to the Alliance Formula may have strengthened the MCA’s relationship with UMNO, it further frustrated the MCA’s relationship with its Chinese constituencies.

After the 1959 elections, Abdul Rahman Talib was named Minister of Education and set up a committee to review education policy once again (Talib Report 1959). Unlike the Razak Report, Chinese education organizations were not consulted despite their efforts to engage and participate (Ee 1997, 266). The report recommended that secondary education should all be in the national language (Malay) and all exams

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86 Morais 1972, 279-280; This was again reiterated in no uncertain terms at an MCA General Assembly meeting on November 10, 1962 when he argued: “We should not forget that while we owe a duty to the Chinese community whom we are supposed to represent, we also, in view of the multi-racial nature of our society, owe a duty to the Alliance, which has served this country well in the past and which will no doubt continue to serve it equally well, if not better, in the future” (ibid, 621).
should be in the official languages. Moreover, it declared that the objective of satisfying “the legitimate aspirations of each of the major cultural groups who have made their home in Malaya” was “incompatible with an education policy designed to create national consciousness and having the intention of making Malay the national language of the country” (Talib Report 1959, paras 17-20).

On November 5, more than 100 representatives from Chinese education organizations met and rejected the Talib Report. By that time, however, the Report had already been approved by Parliament less than a week after its publication (Ee 1997, 269-270). The MCA strenuously supported the Talib Report and did so without consultation with the UCSTA or UCSCA. The event sparked furious debate among Chinese secondary schools for more than a year until in 1961, the Alliance government took measures to silence one outspoken advocate of Chinese education, Lim Lian Geok, by revoking his citizenship (ibid, 270-274).

Despite resistance, the Talib Report sealed the fate of Chinese secondary education, as most could not continue without the government aid associated with conforming to the national school system (Ee 1997, 272). By the end of 1961, 54 of the 71 Chinese secondary schools had converted to English schools (ibid, 274). The MCA leadership had thus been instrumental in securing the legislation that served as a huge setback for Chinese education interest groups.

The Alliance did not initiate any new education policies for the next eight years. Meanwhile, however, public expenditure on education rose dramatically, by well over 30%. The number of primary schools increased from 4,214 to 4,367; enrollment increased from 789,267 to 1,215,590. In addition, 523 new secondary schools were
built, and enrollment increased from 72,586 to 416,389 (von Vorys 1975, 217). Despite these financial efforts, however, inter-communal relations remained tense. The gap between the English-educated leaders of MCA and the Chinese-educated working population widened, the former that seemingly failed to prioritize this anxiety and the latter that felt progressively alienated. This is evidenced from the fact that in 1964, Chinese voters increasingly voted against MCA in its contests with more chauvinist Chinese parties (von Vorys 1975, 161). Further, the Malay community was dissatisfied by what they saw as too slow a movement toward economic equality and cultural dominance. As we will see in the crisis over the National Language Act in 1967, this Malay and Chinese angst was ripe for political exploitation.

The Independence Constitution also failed to resolve the question of national language, central to the politics of education. It promised only that the status of English was set to be re-evaluated in 1967 (Fernando 2009, 154). Syed Nasir bin Syed Ismail,

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87 For example, many Malays were mobilized around an opposition party, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP), during the 1964 election when the Alliance admitted Singapore into the Federation. Because the addition largely included Chinese people, the PMIP campaigned on a message that the Alliance had betrayed Malay Islamic values and special privileges. The party won nine Parliamentary seats (von Vorys 1975, 160). During the 1964 election campaign, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore campaigned on a message of ‘Malaysian Malaysia’ calling for a nation that embraced equality of races in a direct challenge to the special rights of the Malays. This strategy sparked massive riots in Singapore and Penang (Clutterbuck 1985, 283). While tensions were high, outright violence was relatively rare; In the 1960s three major ‘racial’ incidents occurred; in Buket Mertajam (Province Wellesley) in 1964, in Kuala Lumpur in 1965, and in Penang in 1967 (Milne and Mauzy 1978, 77). Nonetheless, the short venture with Singapore inspired a Malaysian opposition party (the DAP has direct ideological roots in the PAP) which reinvigorated non-Malay rights (Vasil 1972, 13).

88 Bedlington (1978) argues that “the First Malaysia Plan, formulated in 1963, generated much economic development, but did little to correct inequities among ethnic groups apart from creating a handful of wealthy Malays. Most educated Malays climbed the ladder of socioeconomic success only in the public service. Yet politicization of Malays, including those resident in rural areas, proceeded steadily as the ruling Alliance (especially the UMNO segment) sought to expand its political base, a process that heightened economic expectations as well as increasing political consciousness…. (115-116). In short, as von Vorys (1975) notes: “the coalition of English educated administrators (and politicians) and Malay school teachers and other more communalist elements in UMNO – in fact, the intermediate leaders who were responsible for Malay mass-support for UMNO – was in peril” (145).
the first full-time director of the Language and Literature Department, led a faction within UMNO that had been anticipating this event. This group interpreted the Independence Constitution to mean that English would retain an official place for a maximum of 10 years, after which Malay would take its paramount position as the sole national language (von Vorys 1975, 200). In the run-up to the 10-year deadline, Syed Ismail initiated policies that determinedly championed the cause of the Malay language and mobilized numerous Malay advocates around it. These efforts continually provoked the non-Malay communities and reinvigorated efforts to secure their cultural role in the nation. For example, in 1966, the Selangor branch of the MCA passed a resolution, immediately supported by the Perak branch, calling on the national body to secure a more liberal use of Chinese for official purposes (Vasil 1972, 14).

As head of UMNO and the Alliance government, the director’s behavior put the Tunku in a precarious position. In particular, the Tunku tread carefully for fear that the MCA would lose its electoral support among non-Malays (von Vorys 1975, 205). On February 24, 1967, he led a National Language Bill in Parliament which made Malay the sole national and official language. It continued to allow translations of official documents into other languages, however. Further, the use of English could continue for official purposes ‘as necessary.’

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89 This included printing school textbooks in Malay, translating English books into Malay, initiating courses in Malay, conducting research on Malay cultural heritage, and expanding the administration of the Department. He also held large rallies which proclaimed the value of the Malay language for the nation and declared that the country would make the transition to Malay as its sole official language by 1967 (von Vorys 1975, 200-201).

90 Mauzy 1985, 160-161; The primacy of the manner through which the compromise had been reached in the directorate was a point recorded by Tan Siew Sin who noted in the Parliamentary debate: “It underlines once again, if further underlining is needed, the efficacy of the Alliance method of solving a difficult problem. We have always maintained that controversial issues are best resolved around a table in
criticized it and organized opposition rallies by the Malay teachers’ associations, national writers’ associations, and Malay student organizations against it. He also sent a letter to the Tunku criticizing him for his accommodationist stance. These actions were in clear violation of the Alliance Formula. The Tunku almost expelled Syed from the Party for disloyalty. Ultimately, he retained his ministry, though not his position in the UMNO Executive Council, after making a dramatic personal apology to the Tunku (von Vorys 1975, 210).

The episode represented once again the fine balance between inter-communal compromise and communal mobilization. Syed was simply an Alliance member who saw benefit from exploiting UMNO’s mobilizing capacity by appealing to sectional interests. When the Tunku disciplined him so as not to isolate the non-Malay contingents, however, he also further frustrated the Malays (Vasil 1972, 15). It was an issue the opposition Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PMIP) would use to their full advantage in the 1969 election as the already mobilized Malay educational interest groups would prove an easy target.92

**Concluding Remarks**

The Alliance coalition remained in a precarious position throughout the negotiations on education policy. They inherited a fragmented system of vernacular and English schools from the colonial period, and all communities consistently resisted

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91 Andaya (2001) argues that “In this context debates about behasa were not simply about language or even the primacy of the Malays: they concerned the very survival of Malay culture” (291).

92 Vasil (1972) argues that “this period had seen a significant revitalization of the PMIP and a substantial increase in its appeal among the Malay masses” (24).
efforts to coordinate and nationalize this system. Pressures from below broke the
tenuous hierarchical links within the Alliance party, creating dissension among the
middle level elites in UMNO and the MCA. In the MCA, this pressure was felt through a
wholesale rejection of the leadership in 1959 (Ee 1997, 260). In UMNO, it was felt
through a Minister of Language and Literature who saw an opportunity to mobilize
communal popular support (von Vorys 1975, 200-210). Dissension could not be
tolerated, and the Tunku severely rebuked and/or removed these members. This kept
the aggrieved communities from reaching representatives in the Alliance, who were
constrained in their capacity to respond by the Alliance Formula. In 1969, dissatisfied
voters turned to opposition parties to fight for their aspirations. When the results
provoked violence, the Alliance was quick to reinstate its mandate to rule, but with a
constrained opening for political activities.

**Extensive Administrative Development: Legacies of the Emergency**

After the Second World War, the British rapidly implemented a centralized and
expansive form of rule consistent in institutional form across the entire Malayan
peninsula. This included the introduction of a centralized and uniform bureaucratic
structure, the dramatic build-up of police and military personnel with intensive
intelligence gathering to make the population ‘legible,’ and the extension of social
services to broader segments of the population. Thus, what was a heterogeneous
institutional configuration during the early decades of colonial rule divided among the
FMS, UMS and Straits Settlements became a strong, knowledgeable state that touched
all segments of society, even in peripheral zones. This section assesses this
transformation in four ways - by looking at the expenditure and size of the security
forces, the extent of bureaucratic reach via direct taxation and intelligence gathering,
the provision of public goods, and the availability of infrastructure. The central argument of this section is that despite decades of institutional heterogeneity, the British eventually transformed the size, capacity and structure of the administration, leaving a legacy of a strong state apparatus. As we will see in the following section, this provided a useful resource for the Alliance elite to dismantle the democratic regime in 1969 with minimal resistance.

**Pre-World War II Political Design**

Prior to World War II, the British maintained heterogeneous institutions across Malaya with some areas of the peninsula administered under more centralized and expansive bureaucratic structures than others. The Unfederated Malay States (UMS) were the least centralized and retained the traditional structures of the Sultanate to a larger degree. Even though each Unfederated State had a separate administration, Rulers and their Councils in the UMS did adopt many of the same policies as were implemented in the FMS and Straits Settlements to stem British administrative encroachments, though this was done in a more ad hoc manner (Stockwell 1995, vol. 1, 57). In addition, because the Rulers in each state signed treaties requiring that they seek and take all advice of the British Advisor except in relation to Malay custom and religion, “when identical instructions [were] sent to all the Residents and Advisors identical action [was] taken in all States” (Emerson 1937, 54).

The Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States (FMS) were far more centralized and administratively developed under a British Governor and nominated Executive and Legislative Councils from 1909. From Federation in 1896, these areas

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93 Emerson 1937, 145; The key difference between these two administrative units was that each Sultan in each of the Federated States remained legally sovereign in the same way other Sultans did in the UMS.
were run almost indistinguishably and developed a common civil service, which included a Malay Administrative Service (MAS) for the lower bureaucratic positions and Malay Civil Service (MCS) for the senior positions (Heussler 1981, 112). After Federation, power shifted to a centralized system of legislation and governance in Kuala Lumpur (at the expense of the state Residents, Rulers and Councils) (Emerson 1937, 140). The position of each state still rested on the treaty with the Sultan as sovereign; however, his actual authority was seriously circumscribed by amalgamation (ibid). Each state had common services and functions including land policies, revenue collection, judicial systems, and school and labor registration (Thio 1969, 120-126).

**Bureaucratic Development**

In 1910, the British introduced a scheme to admit aristocratic Malays from across the peninsula into the lower division of the Civil Service (Khasnor 1984, 2). This service bred a ‘new elite,’ an English-educated Malay administrative class outside the realm of the traditional structure but in close connection with it, with whom the British collaborated to govern the colony. The service was restricted to Malays from the traditional aristocracy.\(^{94}\) They were groomed in the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar after 1909 (O’Brien 1980, 56). The large majority of these students came from the FMS, but a quota system meant that a select number of seats were reserved for the UMS as

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\(^{94}\) Overall then, the MAS was a protected service. Non-Malays could compete in the Straits service starting from 1933, but this same provision was not extended to non-Malays in the Malay states until nearer to Independence (Johan 1984, 112).
well (Khasnor 1984, 34). The school instructed the elites in both English and Malay. Once accepted into the Malay Administrative Service, there was a strict system of promotion, which, theoretically, allowed for mobility into the Malayan Civil Service as well, though practically the British retained the most senior positions (ibid, 86).

These minimal efforts only laid the bare bones for the impressive bureaucratic structure that existed by 1957. Indeed, prior to World War II, though the services had grown, it remained a rather limited apparatus, as evidenced in part by the fact that direct tax collections amounted to only one to two percent of total tax revenue in 1947 (Slater 2011, 68). This challenge was exacerbated in 1945 by the physical destruction and communal hostility associated with the legacy of the Japanese occupation (Cheah 2012; Stubbs 1989, 42-46). With the return of the British in 1945, the police force was dilapidated and had trouble establishing control over the Malayan countryside or ensuring personal security. These issues were made worse by the fact that the police service was comprised largely of Malays and had been utilized by the Japanese during the occupation to suppress predominately Chinese guerrillas (Stubbs 1989, 46). Moreover, the Malayan Civil Service was ill equipped and few spoke the necessary languages to reach the population (Stubbs 1997, 58).

In 1950, the colonial government determined that they needed new policies and resources to effectively combat the communist insurgency. At this point, the colonial government implemented a more political approach, termed the Briggs Plan (Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 216-221). This entailed first the massive resettlement of Chinese squatter

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95 Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 244; Stubbs (1989) notes that more than 600 murders were reported during the BMA period ending April 1946, and that kidnapping, extortion and piracy were common (15).
communities into New Villages. By 1954, 570,000 squatters and landowners had been resettled (Stubbs 1989, 102). The policy also included the corresponding expansion of public services, infrastructural and economic development, though the initial record of the Public Works Department in this regard was poor. Particularly, when Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Templer arrived as the new High Commissioner and Director of Operations in 1952 to take over the faltering counter-insurgency campaign, he set about a new course to defeat the communists centered on winning the hearts and minds of Malaya’s population (Stubbs 1989, 140-148). The essence of the campaign emphasized both punishing those who aided the guerillas and gaining the support of the people by addressing their grievances and bringing them under the Government’s administrative control, including the expansion of cultural, political and economic programs (ibid, 155). Accordingly, Templer centralized the Federal Government, upgraded the conditions of the Civil Service, and expanded the administrative and infrastructural capacity of the state to reach the most remote areas (ibid, 156-164). Between the period of 1948 and 1959, the total size of the bureaucracy (local, state and federal levels) grew from a mere 45,000 to 140,000 (ibid, 263). By 1960, there were roughly 20 civil servants per 1,000 persons, up from 11.5 a decade before (Evers 1987, 672).

In addition, these administrative positions were increasingly being filled by Malayans. Before 1948, Malays already held the lower levels of the administration, but after 1948, the process of Malayanization was accelerated further (Heussler 1981). In 1953, Templer provided for the first opening of the MCS to non-Malay applicants,

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96 By the end of 1951, just over 200 of the 360 resettlement centers had schools and many projects to provide basic water, drainage and sewage services were well behind schedule (Stubbs 1989, 106-107).
previously open only to British and Malays (Stubbs 1989, 160). By 1956, of a total 106,600 civil servants in the total service, Malays (61,000), Indians (29,000) and Chinese (13,000) held 103,000 of these posts (Annual Report 1956). The British continued to occupy the remaining 3,600 positions.

Security Forces: Police and Military

In the late 1940s, the communist insurgency broke out. At the time, there was a significant understaffing problem in the Malayan security forces (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 103). Early efforts to rectify this situation meant a rapid expansion but a poorly trained force, most especially lacking Chinese or Chinese-language speakers (Stubbs 1989, 72-73). These non-Chinese forces gained a reputation for brutality and further alienated the Chinese community (ibid, 73-76). The process of retraining, reorganization and expansion took place in two different phases. First, in a January 1949 report of the uprising, the British concluded that one of the major challenges was that the squatter communities, which made up a large segment of the population, were outside the processes of administration.97 Accordingly, the Briggs Resettlement Plan was introduced in 1950 to resettle the squatter communities and both protect them from communist raids and break up the Min Yuen’s hold within these populations,98 to

97 Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 152-153; In a report by Field Marshall Sir W Slim, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in Nov 1949, he reports “I did not realise before that very considerable portions of Malaya have not since the war, and in some cases before it, been under effective administration...Now, however, very large Chinese populations are settled in these areas. These Chinese are referred to as squatters but for all practical purposes they are permanent inhabitants in Malaya, and they have not been under an effective civil administration...in this note I have strayed considerably from the purely military aspect of the Malayan problem, but until it is recognized that the problem is by no means a military one, and that any military effort can only be subsidiary to and in support of a civil effort, we shall make no progress (Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 173-175).

98 During the communist insurrection, the MCP built up Min Yuen, or ‘masses organization’ in different states which were used to provide the MRLA units in the field with food, funds, information and recruits.
provide them with the services required to win their loyalty and to gather information to make the group more ‘legible’ (Stockwell 1995 vol. 2, 216-221). Such a plan required an incredible mobilization of state and law enforcement, however, and thus corresponded with an initial effort to coordinate the activities of the police and military under the civil administration.  

Second, when General Templer became High Commissioner in 1952, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Lyttelton, prioritized the reorganization and retraining of the police and Home Guard (Stubbs 1989, 156). Accordingly, Templer set about initiating a major expansion and centralization of the administrative arm of government. The consolidation of the coordinating structure provided an opportunity for the civil administration, police and army to meet regularly. In addition to increased coordination among civilian and security branches, efforts were also made to initiate a massive recruitment effort. During these counter-insurgency efforts, the Malayan police force grew from some 11,000 in 1947 to more than 73,000 in 1952.  

The military was also expanded and comprised nearly 30,000 personnel in early 1952 (Stubbs 1989, 159). Finally, a key component of the security build-up during this period which provided for Malayan state strength after Independence was the parallel expansion of an effective

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They infiltrated and worked among the squatters and were responsible for communications and propaganda (Stubbs 1989, 87).

99 To carry out the resettlement, the military was responsible for clearing the peninsula area by area from south to north, followed by the police and civil administration establishing effective control over each area (Stockwell 1995, vol. 2, 231).

100 Notably, at no point during the Emergency did the number of Chinese police exceed 2,000 (Stubbs 1989, 157).
intelligence-gathering organizations, including the Special Branch of the Police and Director of Intelligence (ibid, 159).

**Direct Taxation and Government Revenue**

Direct taxation serves as a useful indicator of state institutionalization because it necessitates huge collective action. Indeed, many post-colonial states still lack the administrative structure to impose an effective direct taxation scheme. In Malaya, the colonial regime built up this system during the late colonial period. In the late 1940s, the security situation and the Crown exerted pressure on Malaya to become self-financing. In December 1947, the Malayan administration introduced the Income Tax Legislation. The Malayan government used the newfound revenues from the Korean War boom in commodity prices to put in place a massive tax structure that had the potential to ensure relatively high levels of revenue throughout the Emergency and into the Independence period.\(^{101}\) From 1947-1953, the percentage of tax revenue from direct taxation rose from roughly 1% to 25% (Slater 2010, 68). Government revenues increased from M$235.5 million in 1948 to M$735.4 million in 1951 and remained around M$620 during the recession years of 1953-54 (Stubbs 1989, 164). It was also supported by the introduction, in 1951, of Malaya’s Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF). This was a compulsory contribution scheme that registered over 500,000 employees and 12,000 employers in the first year (Slater 2010, 90). Esman (1972) notes that by the early

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\(^{101}\) Stubbs describes the importance of the Korean War for Malaya as such: “The possibility that the fighting might be extended to other parts of East and South-East Asia, coupled with an increased demand for strategic raw materials stimulated by stepped up military requirements and the competitive stockpiling of key commodities, produced a dramatic rise in the price of nearly all commodities. Prices for the two pillars of the Malayan economy – rubber and tin – were catapulted to record heights. The resulting boom had important consequences for the financial position of the Malayan Government as well as for the prosperity of Malaysians in general. If not for the Korean War boom, the course of the Emergency would have been very different” (107).
1960s, the Malayan government could mobilize about 18% of GNP through taxation, a comparable figure to countries like France and the Netherlands (96).

**Public Services**

The growth of the bureaucracy was both fundamental to and a result of the colonial government’s investment in education. The role of the schools was pivotal both to gain support for the government (and remove support from the communists) and to generate the supply of human capital needed to fill the rapidly expanding bureaucratic apparatus. Overall government spending on education, for example, increased from $26.9 million in 1948 to $110.1 million in 1957, 38% of which funded Malay vernacular schools and 40% of which funded English schools (Ee 1997, 55). Funding for schools in New Villages specifically, settlements created in the 1950s during these final years of British rule, rose from M$33.9 million in 1950 to M$135 million in 1958 (Stubbs 1997, 66). In 1954, there were no New Villages with a population of more than 400, which were beyond easy walking distance of a school (Stubbs 1989, 170). At the same time, primary school enrollment in the New Villages increased from 39% in 1952 to 60% in 1954 (ibid, 171). The increase in government aid was matched with rising government control over schools, most especially to introduce textbooks with a more Malayan outlook (ibid).

The New Villages were targeted for other services as well, including the creation of an adequate water supply, roads of passable standards, sanitation and public health resources (Stubbs 1989, 169). For example, expenditure on health and medical facilities rose from $24.8 million to $49.4 million between 1950-1954 (ibid, 172). Static
dispensaries rose from 32 to 172 from 1951-54.\textsuperscript{102} Overall, economic conditions improved throughout the 1950s, so that spending on education, health, and social welfare increased substantially even after the boom in commodity prices had ended. As Stubbs (1989) notes: “This point was underlined in the years after the end of the Emergency when, although people were allowed to live wherever they chose, few New Villages were abandoned and residents only left their village if forced to do so in order to seek employment” (233).

The late colonial government placed the greatest emphasis on service provision and development of the New Villages because the Chinese population was the most vulnerable to communist recruitment and coercion. There were, however, calls for Malay rural development as well (Stubbs 1989, 178). Initially, the Government set up the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) in August 1950. Then, in 1953, Templer increased RIDA’s budget to $8 million and in 1954 made it a quasi-governmental corporation. Further, the government targeted Malay kampongs for increased road access and medical services (ibid, 178).

Nonetheless, because of the ongoing emergency, the pre-independence economic plans, epitomized in the First Five Year Plan of 1956, were cautious and focused on budget balancing and military spending. As such, even with military spending, Malaya’s budget projections remained enviable, for example calling for a deficit of M$149 million in 1956 but in fact securing a surplus of M$65 million (von Vorys 1975, 221). By 1959 with the Emergency winding down, the Alliance was finally able to

\textsuperscript{102} Despite impressive gains, one must note that there continued to be gaps in the reach of services. By 1958, 21% of New Villages still received no direct medical services at all (Stubbs 1989, 172).
balance fiscal responsibility with political exigency, meaning the reduction of income inequality between the Malays and non-Malays a priority. The Alliance took greater control of the planning process (ibid, 223). Because this politicization of economic planning was paired with a high level of technocratic know-how within the Economic Secretariat, however, the facilitation of private sector growth ran in parallel with an expansion of public service spending directed toward rural Malays.\(^{103}\) During this period, results were quite impressive overall, with GDP per capita rising at an average of 2.5% each year.\(^{104}\) At the same time, inter-communal redistribution made lesser gains, the income in Malay dominated industries increasing by 8% while the income of non-Malay dominated industries rising by 16% (ibid, 238). Thus, while Malaya inherited a strong economy manned by a knowledgeable and capable administrative staff, these advantages did not necessarily translate into political gains for the Alliance, as relative economic development remained unequal across communal groups.

**Transportation and Communications**

Transportation and communications plays a key role not only in facilitating economic development but also in providing necessary infrastructure for the institutionalization of links between the state and social actors, administrative control, and provision of public services, particularly those outside urban spaces. The (non) growth of these sectors thus provides an instructive glimpse into the extent to which the state can gather and share information with its citizenry. In that vein, colonial Malaya

\(^{103}\) von Vorys 1975, 224-225; For example, in the Second Five Year Development Plan (1961-65), the Federal Land Development Authority (FLDA) focused on assisting states with projects to reclaim large parts of the jungle and development new settlements (ibid, 231).

\(^{104}\) von Vorys 1975, 234; Some noticeable failures remained, in that unemployment in the rural sector rose from five percent in 1962 to 5.3% in 1967 (ibid, 236).
witnessed impressive growth in three areas: railway, road, and communications networks.

First, colonial Malaya saw three distinct phases of rail infrastructural development. By 1896 the mines were connected tin mines along the western coast with nearby coastal ports by short, state-owned and operated railways. From 1896-1909, connections among longer north-south lines linked the interior terminal points of the railways in the various mining districts. Between 1912 and 1931, the British built rails to open the East Coast. Thus, by 1931, the system integrated the entire Peninsula. In 1939, Malaya had 1,069 miles of line (Table 4-1). At this point, Malaya still had important administrative differences due to decentralization, especially in the UMS. However, as railways made spaces across the Peninsula more accessible, economic penetration also followed (Leinbach 1975, 275). This system of interconnected railways allowed for easier penetration of some of the most inhospitable and outlying areas, after World War II when the process of intensive political penetration kicked off.

Table 4-1 Pan-Malayan railway mileage, 1902-39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Miles</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>428</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>538</td>
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<td>1912</td>
<td>734</td>
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<td>1914</td>
<td>822</td>
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<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>876</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tilman 1964, 56
Road network expansion before and during the late-colonial period provides a second indicator of state access to the hinterland. Leinbach’s (1975) analysis suggests that the initial phase of road construction reflected an effort to link and exert administrative control over economic ventures, most especially tin. The first major road construction push came when mining locations were moved further inward from the coast starting in 1874, and then second when the administrative amalgamation of the FMS required increased inter-state connections after 1898 (ibid, 272). Then, from 1911 after the UMS had been integrated into the British colony, trunk networks were extended to the northern and eastern areas of the peninsula to facilitate economic and political expediency (ibid, 274). Initially, starting in 1911, rubber production followed patterns where road networks were already accessible, but as this industry expanded, it rushed transport expansion further to keep up with its economic needs (ibid, 276-277). A parallel political imperative between 1911 and 1939 to integrate state and district administrations supported the growth of “new routes [which] welded frontier administrative outposts to the main development cores” (ibid, 277). Finally, in the post-World War II phase, this expanded construction was linked to security imperatives as well as social and economic objectives specifically aimed at rural modernization. The accumulation of these phases of construction meant that by 1968, “there were few interior areas where no roads had penetrated” (ibid, 279). This rapid growth of secondary roads in the rural spaces was possible only because a trunk road system had already been established across the peninsula by 1950.\footnote{Between 1958 and 1968, 520 miles of internal village roads and feeder roads were built to link peripheral settlements to the main road network (Leinback 1975, 279).}
Finally, communication is a third important facilitator of government penetration into peripheral areas. Propaganda became a crucial part of the Emergency campaign after it turned toward political solutions beyond the military (Stubbs 1989, 180-184). Initially, the Government focused on printed word, and by 1951 the total of weekly and periodical publications exceeded five million copies (ibid, 180). Later, the colonial government focused on the expansion of radio propaganda via the Community Listening Service and by 1952 could make broadcasts from every state and Settlement (ibid, 181). This naturally corresponded to the need for greater popular access to radio, and by 1951, the number of listeners’ licenses more than tripled to 110,800 and the number of community receivers in traditional villages or kampongs, New Villages, estates and mines increased from 32 in 1949 to over 1,400 in 1953 (ibid, 181-182). Providing information to the population, especially in remote areas, is a key aspect of security generation but also of more broad-based political development. With a wide network of transportation and communications, the new Malayan state could invest in expansion rather than starting from scratch. A solid infrastructural base was thus one of the important legacies of the colonial period as it provided the independent Malayan state the means to gather information easily from its population, provide public services to it, and, as we will see, exercise authoritarian measures in 1969.

**Concluding Remarks**

Late colonialism had an important impact on the administrative uniformity and state capacity of British Malaya. A trained and expansive bureaucracy, infrastructure for revenue collection and public service provision, and transportation and communications sectors were made available throughout the peninsula. Further, the coercive apparatus of the state included well-trained personnel, knowledgeable about the population it
covered. These tools, built up during the late colonial period, were also coupled with a legacy of state advancement into the population. The Internal Security Act and the powers of Emergency were at the ready even after the communist insurgency officially ended in 1960. They were easy instruments to recall during the 1969 riots. The next section will demonstrate how the Alliance elites used the state apparatus to quickly dismantle the democratic regime when its uncertainties proved too great.

Riots and Repression: Democratic Breakdown in Malaysia

Through the 1960s, the Malayan population’s confidence in the Alliance began to wane. For several years, internal and external conflict which dominated the 1959 and 1964 elections obscured the extent of this frustration. When these challenges subsided and the voters assessed the domestic situation in 1969, however, frustrations with the Alliance’s interpretation of the constitutional contract became central (Vasil 1972, 9). This frustration did not, however, manifest itself in extra-institutional or anti-democratic activities, in the lead-up to the general election. Indeed, robust party competition and high levels of public participation within a generally free and fair climate characterized the five-week campaign period and Election Day. Beginning with the announcement of election results on May 10, however, “signs began to appear which suggested that this era of quiet satisfaction with and confidence in democracy was

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106 These conflicts included the Indonesian Confrontation in 1959 and the Singapore crisis in 1964 (Vasil 1972, 6-14).

107 This is with the minor exception of the Labour Party. The government detained several of its party leaders prior to the campaign period and the party consequently boycotted the general election altogether. Because of these minor disturbances, any anticipation of extra-institutional activity was expected to come from the communist left. These fears were heightened by an episode the day before the election in which a funeral procession for a Labour Party member killed by a police man paraded through the streets of Kuala Lumpur (Bob Reece Interview; von Vorys 1975, 286-288).
coming to an end” (Teik 1971, 9). The following days’ events included urban riots, the declaration of a State of Emergency, a moratorium on political activities, curtailment of civil liberties and dissolution of Parliament. In less than a week, a seemingly stable democratic system was entirely dismantled.

This section examines the dynamics of the 1969 electoral campaign, results, May 13th riots and government responses to show the manner through which several colonial era factors manifested themselves during these events. It argues that the Alliance coalition partners had lost touch with public frustrations over the decade since Independence because of a fundamental disconnect between social interest groups and the Alliance’s mode of operation via discrete elite negotiation. As the coalition poorly responded to communal grievances from the citizenry, several elite factions within the coalition parties brewed as well. As a function of the disconnect between social grievances and elite modes of governance, the Alliance Directorate seemed largely unaware of either the degree of popular frustrations or the extent to which internal party contests were ready to erupt. When the election results were announced, these crises exploded into urban riots and provided the chaotic context for radical Alliance factions to assert themselves. In a clear preference for the inter-communal contract and the Alliance Formula, the party leadership interpreted electoral challenges to the

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108 As discussed in the state/society section, in short, both Malays and non-Malays remained aggrieved by cultural compromises relating to language and education and by economic compromises relating to a constant rhetoric of redistribution but little progress toward communal inequality (von Vorys 1975, 266).

109 These internal quarrels were particularly rife in Sarawak, Selangor, Malacca, and Negri Sembilan (Vasil 1972, 9).

110 Alliance candidates spoke confidently of their prospects for a sweeping reelection in the lead up to election day (von Vorys 1975, 281-282).
established order as a product of and problem with the system itself and used the urban violence to justify moves to end democracy.\textsuperscript{111} Despite weak links between state and society and limited democratic experience, what the ruling party did have at its disposal was a strong and knowledgeable state including a loyal security force, extensive intelligence of the population, and a bureaucratic apparatus to enforce its vision of the state. Thus, late self-government and high state development resulted in the state’s unwillingness to uphold the democratic regime in the face of challenges from below with the capacity to carry out anti-democratic directives with relative ease.

\textbf{The Campaign}

The major contests of the 1969 electoral campaign concerned communal issues such as Malay special rights, the official language and education. These issues centered in opposition party platforms in various forms, but because the Alliance Formula removed these issues from public contention, the ruling coalition was restricted in its ability to respond to challenges. This section examines the platforms of the main political parties, detailing the lines of contestation.

The Democratic Action Party (DAP) ran a campaign appealing for a ‘Malaysian Malaysia.’\textsuperscript{112} It issued a manifesto (Setapak Declaration) calling for a free, democratic and socialist Malaysia based on racial equality and social and economic justice (The

\textsuperscript{111} In January 1971, Dr. Ismail, the Deputy Prime Minister, gave a speech to the Alliance members in Johore, noting: “Thus in the 1969 elections the sensitive issues of National Language and Special rights handicapped the Alliance generally and caused the bloodshed of May 13th (Dr. Ismail Papers (d), 189).

\textsuperscript{112} The concept was initially born out of the Malaysian Solidarity Movement instigated by Singapore’s People’s Action Party (PAP), a meeting of opposition parties which tried to form a coalition to contest the Alliance in 1964. When Singapore left the Federation in 1965, all PAP activities were banned. The DAP was formed on 19 March 1966, taking up the ideology if not the organization of the PAP platform. It was launched by the single PAP member that was elected in the 1964 Parliament, C.V. Devan Nair (Lau Dak Kee Interview).
Rocket. August 1967. Vol. 2 No. 8; 6-7, 12). Its dual platform called for an integrated multi-racial nation and a more just and equitable society via ‘democratic socialism’ and ‘cultural democracy.’ The DAP argued that the Alliance had abandoned the principles of the Constitution, which had recognized the multi-lingual and multi-cultural nature of the society. Much of its campaign centered specifically on the contention that the MCA had abandoned the Chinese by conceding too often to UMNO’s Malay-centric policies (Gagliano 1970, 11). The declaration was a clear attack on the special position of the Malays as advanced by the Independence compromise.

Though a self-proclaimed non-communal party, UMNO frequently criticized the DAP for being anti-Malay and the MCA called it communist (Dr. Chen Interview). Its leadership and membership composition reinforced these perceptions. Although English-educated professionals dominated its leadership, most candidates were bi-lingual (von Vorys 1975, 260-61). The party’s Central Executive Committee made candidate selections vigorously, emphasizing bilingualism to provide access to the

113 The Rocket. August 1967. Vol. 2 No. 8, 2; In terms of ‘cultural democracy’ the DAP Central Executive Committee issued a policy statement on June 1, 1968 stating: “what is basic and primary in the task of nation-building in our multi-racial society is the establishment in the national consciousness of the fundamental community of territorial and socio-economic interests which unites all Malaysians, whatever their race, colour or creed may be…Such a recognition would have helped to de-fuse language, education and culture as explosive political issues, and make it possible to view cultural diversity as a source of strength to the nation, and as a stimulus to collective cultural growth, rather than as a source of strife, disharmony and discord” (Who Lives 1969, 31).

114 The DAP party newspaper professes that “It is unfortunate that the Alliance gives the impression that it is embarked on a policy of Malay-isation. The MCA acquiesced in this too. We in the DAP cannot agree that Malay-isation is compatible with the process of Malaysianisation” (The Rocket. August 1967. Vol. 2 No. 8, 3).

115 Recall that the Constitutional Contract was, specifically, the exchange of liberal citizenship laws for the non-Malays in return for Malay as the national language and privileges to this communal group in terms of economic development (von Vorys 1975, 133).

116 Its total membership in 1969 was 1,376, of which 1,042 were Chinese, 136 were Indian, and 181 were Malays. 1/3 of the party’s candidates were Indian and only 1 was Malay (von Vorys 1975, 260-261).
ruling elite (via English) as well as the Chinese electorate (Lau Dak Kee Interview). In terms of organization, the DAP had 63 branches throughout the peninsula (von Vorys 1975, 260). Finances were a constant problem, however, and most candidates contributed substantial resources to the party’s trust fund and paid their own deposits and campaigns (Lau Dak Kee Interview). Thus, the DAP could not operate on a national scale and appealed to a certain segment of the electorate, namely urban Chinese, but developed strong links to those constituents by appealing directly to their post-Independence economic and cultural frustrations.

Gerakan Ra’ayat Malaysia (GRM), inaugurated in March 1968, was the second non-communal party in 1969 (Vasil 1972, 17). More than the DAP, it made a concerted effort to attract Malays as well. Thus, while it emphasized racial equality, it made special mention of the economic position of the Malays and the need to assist this community (von Vorys 1975, 264). Gerakan’s party manifesto accused the Alliance foremost of failing on economic issues, especially to protect the working and rural classes (ibid, 269). Its leadership was evenly divided among the communities with seven Chinese, four Indian and three Malay candidates and included several of the former MCA leadership that had resigned after the 1959 crisis including Dr. Lim Chong Eu (ibid, 264). Its membership came largely from urban areas and was especially influential in Penang (ibid).

Third, Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Hemy formed the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) before the 1959 election. The PMIP became UMNO’s greatest competition for the Malay votes in the northeastern states of Kelantan, Trennganu and Perlis and had made significant gains in these states since Independence (von Vorys 1975, 303-304). The
party campaigned on a platform of Malay nationalism and Islamic orthodoxy, accusing UMNO of making too many concessions to the Chinese.\textsuperscript{117} Its main supporters were Muslim religious functionaries and Malay schoolteachers in rural areas.\textsuperscript{118} Though not strongly organized, the party gained significant cohesion from its unifying ideology. This message was evidently compelling as the party gained popular support between Independence and 1969 at a rate higher than any other opposition party.\textsuperscript{119}

Opposition parties sought not to unseat the Alliance altogether but rather to disrupt the compromise that held the party together by “dislodging particular communal and regional supports from under [it]” (Rudner 1970, 5). After prolonged negotiations, these parties agreed that their past disunity had worked to the advantage of the Alliance by splitting votes and that there was a need to prevent the Alliance from getting a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which it had been using to amend the constitution (Vasil 1972, 21). Thus, the opposition parties made a type of gentleman’s agreement whereby no party would contest in constituencies where another was already represented (Gagliano 1970, 11).

The Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) in the Alliance campaigned largely on a platform that it was futile to vote for the opposition. Its Party Chairman, Tan Siew Sin, argued as such: “the ordinary voter should…remember that while a bigger opposition is

\textsuperscript{117} During the campaign, the PMIP released several provocative pictures, one of the Minister of Education and his wife dressed in mandarin cloths and another of the Prime Minister eating with chopsticks with a roast suckling pig on the table (von Vorys 1975, 285).

\textsuperscript{118} Recall that the Malay Director of Language and Literature had organized protests among the Malay teachers’ associations, national writers’ associations, and Malay student organizations over the National Language Bill in 1967. These mobilized groups were a natural target for PMIP recruitment (Andaya 2001, 291).

\textsuperscript{119} See von Vorys (1975) table on page 305
all right in theory, in practice it means that those voters represented by opposition members will suffer, and suffer hideously, merely to enjoy the luxury of having someone there in Parliament, scolding the Government on their behalf’ (Slimming 1969, 12). In other words, if the opposition is elected and the MCA unrepresented, the Alliance would still have control of the government but the Chinese would effectively have no voice in it. UMNO reinforced this claim by consistently noting that the MCA was the only Chinese party with which it would work with.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, it denied opposition accusations that it served as a mere puppet to UMNO and accused the opposition of destroying Chinese unity (Morais 1972, 290).

The MCA was the most organized and financially stable of any political party in the contest.\textsuperscript{121} Despite a strong elite party structure, “all the comprehensive organizational blueprints did not facilitate access to the Chinese workers. The MCA presented a cohesive but small elite political group without much capacity for mass mobilization” (von Vorys 1975, 259). Indeed, most of its leaders came from the same social group – the English-educated Chinese business elite and professionals who were members of the guilds and Chambers of Commerce.\textsuperscript{122} This group shared economic and political interest but had little in common with Chinese workers and frequently lacked the cultural and linguistic ties to the majority Chinese-educated community (Ee

\textsuperscript{120} UMNO’s loyalty to the MCA was especially assertive during the 1964 election when Lee Kuan Yew’s PAP sought to undermine this partnership (von Vorys 1975, 165-171).

\textsuperscript{121} It contained 674 ward branches, 97 division branches, and 11 state branches led by the Central Working Committee at the apex. Its membership rose from 137,120 in 1965 to 208,542 in 1969 (von Vorys 1975, 257).

\textsuperscript{122} Twenty-nine of the MCA’s 33 parliamentary candidates in 1969 came from business or professional occupational backgrounds (von Vorys 1975, 261).
Because of this separation, they relied on the Chinese-educated local businessmen and the leaders of the shetuan who filled MCA posts at the state, district, and town levels. It was thus very harmful to their links with Chinese society when, as was detailed above in the evolution of education policy, the national MCA leadership progressively marginalized its constituents by cutting links with its state-level intermediaries.  

Meanwhile, UMNO was preoccupied with the gains of PMIP in the Malay-dominated northern states and sought to shore up its communal support through directed threats and development incentives (Vasil 1972, 24-29). By 1969, the party had 340,000 members who paid an annual fee and 6,000 district branches (von Vorys 1975, 253). There existed only tenuous structural links between the grassroots and the highest level of the party, however, as the party was increasingly centralized and constrained in acceptable discussion. Over the 1960s, the state-level party organization in particular had atrophied after the Directorate replaced state chairmen with liaison officers who came from the national rather than state ranks, and gave Tun Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister, more substantial control over coordinating the district branches (ibid, 254). Moreover, the Directorate exercised full authority by signing off on the selection of candidates and appointments to high offices. In selecting UMNO

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123 Ee (1997) argues that “The shetuan network provided the MCA not only with the most influential Chinese leaders at the local level but also the ready-made organizational bases for membership recruitment” (119).

124 Von Vorys (1975) notes of the National Executive Council: “Partially appointed, but largely elected by the General Assembly, it was at one time a forum of vigorous debates with only two limitations imposed on the conduct of its members; public disassociation with party policy and personal attacks on the party leadership were considered inexcusable. Lately though, it too felt severely constrained by the Prime Minister’s views and much of the discussion became perfunctory” (254).
representatives for parliamentary and state constituencies, many incumbents in 1969 were not re-nominated.\textsuperscript{125} This institutional over-centralization created obstacles to gauging social changes and grievances among Malays through this decade.

The Alliance campaigned with a relaxed confidence, perhaps even complacency, in 1969 (\textit{The Straits Times}, 10 May 1969, 1; Bob Reece Interview). Vasil (1972) argues that “they had no idea of the changed mood of the non-Malay electorate and their evaluation of their prospects in the elections was based negatively, as before, on the multiplicity of the opposition parties and the existing differences among them on a personal and policy level” (23). Given this optimism, the top leadership of the coalition largely ignored disconcerting evidences, including violence and provocations of its campaigners ranging from heckling at campaign rallies, to the murder of an UMNO worker in Penang, to the growing acceptance of PMIP and DAP charges against it (von Vorys 1975, 282). In short, throughout the campaign, the Alliance remained largely unaware of any need to re-strategize at the local level.\textsuperscript{126} It rather emphasized national unity and argued that it was the only party capable of this feat, as according to Tan Siew Sin “There is no doubt that the Alliance has passed this acid test with flying colours and that is why it has been so spectacularly successful in every election held in this country” (Morais 1972, 291).

The Alliance members also struggled to put forward a coherent political strategy. As noted, the party’s structure promoted dual pressures to appeal to each party’s

\textsuperscript{125} In Kelantan alone, UMNO nominated 16 new candidates (von Vorys 1975, 254-255).

\textsuperscript{126} For example, when Musa Hitam, UMNO executive secretary, brought warnings of a serious PMIP threat in Kelantan, he was reprimanded. In addition, when a lecturer at the University of Malaya shared a position paper which predicted only 14 seats for the MCA in the Lower House, his study was ignored (von Vorys 1975, 281).
individual communal constituency while avoiding enflaming other communities. The party could ignore communal sentiments among the masses at its own peril, but, as a coalition of communal parties, it could not make outright make appeals to any one community. Because the opposition was more united and organized than it had been in previous elections, the Alliance was forced to respond to the challenges of communal mobilization. In response, the coalition largely vacillated between two contrasting strategies: avoiding sensitive issues altogether and claiming to have simultaneously maximized the interests of all communities. Their common refrain was essentially that “we are the only ones that can deliver, not just in terms of economics and prosperity, in terms of actual harmony…we are the ones that bring the country together” (Bob Reece Interview). This idea was featured prominently in their manifesto, which charged opposition parties with enflaming racial politics to the detriment of the nation and the constitution.127

**May 10: Election Results**

Notably, the elections passed relatively smoothly, without extensive fraud or violence.128 The election results did not present any overwhelming intra-systemic power shift either. The Alliance suffered significant but not traumatic losses and reduced margins. The coalition retained a comfortable majority in Parliament with 66 out of 104 seats in West Malaysia, with contests in East Malaysia to take place a few weeks

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127 The manifesto was entitled: “A Better Deal for All” and charged: “Every opposition party without exception has sought to play on racial emotions. Some have done it crudely, others go about it in varying degrees of disguise. But each and everyone of these parties is in the control of its craven core of racial bigots” (quoted in von Vorys 1975, 267).

128 von Vorys 1975, 289-294; The Malay newspaper, Berita Harian, reported on a few minor skirmishes that were quickly contained by police (May 11, 1969, 1).
later. Moreover, the Alliance retained the confidence of large segments of the population, winning just under 50% of the popular vote (Vasil 1972, 36). On whole, the electoral results were like those from 1959 (see Table 4-2).

Table 4-2 Results of parliamentary elections in West Malaysia since independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>% of Voters</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>% of Voters</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>% of Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: von Vorys 1975, 297

Despite these facts, there were widespread perceptions that the results represented a power shift and an unstable one at that. It was the first time that the Alliance had lost its two-thirds Parliamentary majority, and the first time it had won less than 50% of the popular vote. Parliament had its largest opposition in the country’s history.

The most dramatic results were in fact the reverses that occurred in State Legislatures, where the Alliance won only 162 of the 282 available seats, or 57% (Table 129).

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129 This margin was down from 74 and 89 seats in 1959 and 1964, respectively (Vasil 1972, 36).

130 Malays saw the results as the beginning of the end of their privileges in government politics and administration in the country since Independence, and the non-Malays saw them as a step forward in establishing a truly Malaysian Malaysia (Vasil 1972, 36; von Vorys 1975, 294-95). Von Vorys (1975) describes the scene in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor generally as ‘volatile’. Non-Malays celebrated their victories but “the very thought of their success seemed deeply disturbing. Underneath all the ecstasy and bravado they were afraid” (308). Meanwhile, Malays in the KL urban enclaves were “appalled and perplexed…Quite unexpectedly their political future, even their personal security suddenly appeared very precarious indeed. They were simply terrified” (308-309).

131 The Alliance was so accustomed to governing with the power to easily amend the Constitution with its 2/3 majority that its leading members viewed any reduction of its odds was seen with great ‘apprehension’ (FEER VOL LXIV No. 19, May 8, 1969).

132 PMIP won 12 seats (up from 9), the DAP won 13 seats (up from 1), Gerakan won 8 seats and the PPP won 4 seats (Vasil 1972, 37).
While making gains back from 1964 losses in Trengganu, UMNO still lost heavily to the PMIP in the predominately Malay states of Kelantan and Kedah (Vasil 1972, 37). The Alliance suffered even heavier losses in the non-Malay states of Penang, Selangor and Perak. The common perception was that the MCA had lost its ability to speak for the Chinese population as MCA representation dropped dramatically from 27 to 13 seats in Parliament, and in nine of these 13 constituencies the Malays constituted at least 30% of the electorate (Vasil 1972, 46). In addition, the DAP, GRM, and PPP opposition parties together formed the largest Chinese contingent in Parliament (Rudner 1970, 16).

Table 4-3 Results of state elections in West Malaysia since independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1959</th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1969</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: von Vorys 1975, 298

Of great significance was the political deadlock (14-14) in Selangor, the birthplace of UMNO and location of the capital. There, UMNO returned almost all its seats but the MCA and MIC lost a combined 13 out of 15 contests in non-Malay constituencies (Vasil 1972, 37). A stalemate ensued with the seats divided evenly between the Alliance and the opposition. UMNO tried to persuade Gerakan to join them to form a government, but this never came to fruition.\(^\text{134}\)

\(^\text{133}\) The most dramatic defeat in terms of numbers took place in Penang where the Alliance won only 4 seats out of 24 (Vasil 1972, 37).

\(^\text{134}\) Goh Cheng Teik notes that the top leadership including Lim Chong Eu had decided to remain neutral and allow the Alliance to form the government by the 12th. The announcement was to be made on the 13th, but the story was held off that morning because the MCA announced its decision to not take any government posts. When the riots broke out that evening, the issue was mute. (Interview 10.14.14).
There are several indications that the Alliance, opposition and electorate were surprised by the electoral returns. The MCA itself expressed humiliation and suffered immediate attacks from contingents of its UMNO partner (*Berita Harian*, 13 May 1969, 1). Its leadership even voted to remove itself from cabinet posts.\(^{135}\)

Meanwhile, a radical faction (the ultras) in UMNO argued that the Tunku was responsible for these losses because of his unwavering commitment to the MCA.\(^{136}\) They called upon him to give up his power to name the Cabinet members (*Berita Harian*, 14 May 1969, 1). The Tunku’s own response was to announce that he was prepared to go if the people wanted change (*Straits Times*, 13 May 1969, 20; *Berita Harian*, 13 May 1969, 1). In short, official reactions tended to be quite dramatic and panicked.

**May 13 Riots**

Then, on May 11 and 12, opposition parties held several impromptu ‘victory parades’ in Kuala Lumpur.\(^{137}\) During these gatherings, non-Malays publically taunted

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\(^{135}\) Tun Tan Siew Sin announced on the afternoon of May 13th: “…Under the circumstances the MCA has no alternative but to refrain from participation in the Government in that no representative will accept any appointment in the Cabinet or in the Federal Government or in the executive councils of the respective State Assemblies…” (*The Straits Times*, May 14, 1969). Tun Razak commended this ‘bravery’ and reminded voters that that during the campaigning period, the Alliance has said that if the Chinese did not vote for MCA, there will be no Chinese representatives in the Government. He stressed that only MCA works towards the unity of Malaysians (*Berita Harian*, 14 May 1969, 1).

\(^{136}\) The ultras included Dr. Mahathir, Musa Hitam, Tunku Tazaleigh, Syed Nasir and Ja’afar Albar.

\(^{137}\) The Gerakan gathering on May 12 received a police permit, though the others were less official (Rahman 1969, 76).
the Malays shouting such phrases as: “'The sailing boat is leaking’, ‘Malays have fallen’, ‘Malays now no longer have power’, ‘Kuala Lumpur now belongs to the Chinese’ and ‘Malays may return to their villages’ (Teik 1971, 21). In response, UMNO organized its own gathering for May 13 to start at the Chief Minister Harun’s residence in Kampong Bahru at 7:30 p.m. By 6:30 p.m., there were between 4,000 and 5,000 Malays gathered at the residence. Soon after, a Malay evidently yelled out that Setapak had been attacked, setting off violence that then spread to several parts of the capital (Teik 1971, 22).

Official figures report 178 killed and more than 4,000 refugees, though others report much more. By 8:00 p.m. that evening, a curfew had been set in the capital. Riot police were immediately dispatched and the Royal Malay Regiment was deployed. Two thousand military and 3,600 police were deployed in Kuala Lumpur to restore law and order and over 2,000 arrests were made that evening alone (NOC Report 1969, 64; 67). Of note is that the violence associated with these events, though taking place in an important and symbolic urban center, was not of national scope.

**Government Response**

Late Tuesday evening, the Tunku addressed the nation in a heartfelt statement blaming the violence on communist elements and indicating that the situation was under control. Meanwhile, the ruling party reacted decisively. In a meeting between Tunku

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138 John Slimming (1969) argues that UMNO was already planning their own demonstration more than 24 hours before the Gerakan demonstration took place (19;26). This would suggest that it was not solely a response the provocations on the days before. This information remains unconfirmed, however.

139 NOC Report 1969; Slimming (1969) reports a figure closer to 800. Time (1969) reports a figure of approximately 600 killed and some 8000 refugees.

140 Rahman 1969, 90-91; Tun Razak echoed this claim of communist involvement, blaming these elements for blackmailing the people to vote for the opposition (Berita Harian 18 May 1969, 2). It was
Abdul Rahman, Tun Razak, Tun (Dr.) Ismail, Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun Sambanthan, a course of action was selected which included a State of Emergency on May 14 throughout the country, suspension of Parliament indefinitely on May 16, and postponement of the East Malaysian elections (Rahman 1969, 105; von Vorys 1975, 341). Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak was to rule the country by decree for the foreseeable future through the National Operations Council (NOC).

The DAP approached the government leadership to suggest that the country’s next steps should be an all-party venture; these calls were rejected (Berita Harian, 18 May 1969, 2). Instead, political activities were banned, the local press strictly censored and foreign press curfew passes revoked. The official Information Control Center would release all pertinent information to the public (Gagliano 1970, 20). As a function of the dearth of information, rumors ran wild (Bob Reece Interview). There were few incidents of violence, however, after the first few days of clashes. The NOC itself argues that it was only the government’s swift response that saved the country.

In addition to press censorship, various regulations curtailed the activities of organizations such as trade unions, peasant associations, student movements and other social groups that may have been inclined to support the opposition (Crouch 1996, 27). Finally, the Sedition Act, Internal Security Act, and Emergency provision, relics of the communist insurgency period were brought to the fore with the intentions of

\[\text{revealed later that there is no evidence that Communists were responsible for or even involved in the riots (NOC Report).}\]

\[\text{141 }\text{“It was only the firm and prompt action of the Government, together with the loyal support of the Armed Forces and the Police, which quickly brought the situation under control. Had it not been for the immediate preventive measures, there is no doubt that the whole country would have been plunged into a holocaust” (NOC Report 1969, iii).}\]
establishing law and order. Indeed, as the Minister of Home Affairs proclaimed:

“Democracy [was] dead in this country” (Dr. Ismail Papers).

After a few months, the Government announced that its decision to reconvene Parliament would be conditioned on several changes. The UMNO leadership had determined that the cause of the riots had been the unrestrained nature of electoral competition. The Malays had been provoked by what they perceived to be an overt attack on their special privileges (Teik 1971, 36). The leadership thus concluded that democracy could resume only if these political activities were permanently curbed. In short, on May 13, the elite had no faith that democracy could ensure stability. The rules of the game had to change so that the status quo would not again be shaken.

The NOC widely disseminated a national ideology, which removed any ambiguity about the inter-communal contract of 1957 (von Vorys 1975, 342-343). A new set of educational and economic policies were initiated as well as the prohibition of any public challenge, including Parliament itself, to the Constitution or any other ‘sensitive issue’

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142 Tunku Abdul Rahman notes the resemblance between the May 13th events and 1948, “what had happened during the election campaign and the rioting and arson now taking place in Kuala Lumpur indicated that there might well be a repetition of deep trouble as experienced in 1948, if no immediate action was taken” (Rahman 1969, 96).

143 Interview with Goh Cheng Teik. October 14, 2014; Teik 1970; The May 13th Tragedy: a report; Dr. Goh Cheng Teik (1970) terms this phenomenon the ‘crisis of confidence in democracy’ (9). Finally, some connected democracy to inter-communal violence, as Tun Razak’s description suggests: “Democracy is practiced in many countries in the world today. But each country must assess its own political and social environment realistically and evolve its own constitution, rules, conventions and practices. Malaysia possesses her own distinct characteristics based on her history and present racial composition. She must now find a solution to her problems – a solution that will provide a guarantee that in the future racial sensitivities will never again be provoked by the operation of normal democratic processes, e.g. election campaigns” (The May 13th Tragedy: a report, 80).

144 In January 1971, Dr. Ismail, the Deputy Prime Minister, gave a speech to the Alliance members in Johore, noting: “Thus in the 1969 elections the sensitive issues of National Language and Special rights handicapped the Alliance generally and caused the bloodshed of May 13th. We therefore enshrined the issues in the Constitution as subjects that cannot be raised in any form by the Opposition. Thus, the weakness of our partners is protected” (Dr. Ismail Papers (d), 189).
To pass these Constitutional amendments, however, the Alliance needed additional votes. According to Dr. Ismail’s 1970 speech:

The return to the parliamentary democracy will now depend entirely on the results of the general election in Sarawak and Sabah. If the Alliance fails to get the two-thirds majority necessary for approving amendments to the Constitution then we will have to negotiate with the opposition about support in our wish to isolate in the Constitution the several contentious communal problems. If they do not agree, then I do not see how we can recall Parliament (quoted from Alatas 1972, 272).

There was some opposition to the appropriateness of permanent changes to the Constitution. The DAP, for example, argued that the Constitutional bargain was made by a different generation and could not be binding on new ones and, more significantly, that the restrictions to free speech were undemocratic (von Vorys 1975, 420-422). The Alliance government outwardly rejected this view, and the opposition, disorganized and weakened by the period of strict authoritarian provisions, was in no place to seriously oppose them. Moreover, the Alliance made moves to extend its coalition by driving opposition members to defection.

UMNO also used this period of unrestrained power to shore up its own party position within the coalition by replacing its central leadership with more ‘Malay-centric’ members. An internal crisis within the party had been brewing throughout the 1960s between the ‘ultras’ and the leadership, the former arguing that UMNO had not done enough to promote the supremacy of Malay culture. In the aftermath of the 1969

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145 A contest between the Tunku and the ‘ultras’ was at least as old as the debate over Singapore’s admission into the Federation (Vasil 1972, 6-14). The ultra’s contention, from within UMNO, was that Singapore’s acceptance weakened the Malay position and upset the balance of power. The conflict was ultimately defused when Tunku made a near unilateral decision to expel Singapore, but the contrast between his moderate position and the extremist voices within UMNO would constantly resurface throughout the decade, as demonstrated, for example, by the incident over language policy (von Vorys 1975, 200-210).
elections, this internal crisis was again aired for public consumption. On July 4, Raja Mukhtaruddin Dazin, a lecturer at the University of Malaya, distributed a leaflet arguing that the election represented not just an electoral defeat but also a fundamental problem of democracy itself. The non-Malay communities had gained concessions from the Malays at Independence in terms of citizenship and a share of political power. Yet they were not satisfied, as evidenced through the radical politics of 1969. The leaflet urged extra-Constitutional provisions to continue indefinitely and democracy to be forsaken (Teik 1971, 17). On July 12, Dr. Mahathir, a member of the UMNO ultra group and casualty of the 1969 legislative elections, addressed the Malay Language Society at the University of Malaya and called for the Tunku's resignation (Gagliano 1970, 25). He also demanded the MCA's expulsion from the Alliance and Government for undermining the coalition. On July 17, more than 1,500 students gathered at the University of Malaya calling for the Tunku's resignation as well (Slimming 1969).

The Tunku and Dr. Mahathir subsequently exchanged several heated letters that were leaked to the press and widely circulated before being banned (Rahman 1969, 117-135). Only a few within UMNO were willing to stand behind Dr. Mahathir at this juncture, and he was expelled on July 12 from UMNO's central committee.  

Nonetheless, the Tunku was clearly also on his way out given the rising agitation among the Malay community for his withdrawal, and he retired in September 1970.  

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146 Gagliano 1970, 25; Dr. Mahathir would return to UMNO later and eventually become Malaysia’s fourth Prime Minister in 1981-2003.

147 University students were most outspoken about this hostility. In July and August 1969, a survey among 205 students found that only 23 associated Tunku Abdul Rahman with the Malaysian nation (von Vorys 1975, 382).
UMNO and the Alliance assured of their position, elections were returned, and the Constitution was amended.

Until May 1969, democracy went on without question in Malaysia. Because the Alliance was out of touch with the fundamental changes in the electorate since Independence, it was severely shaken by the unexpected reversals in the 1969 election. Inexperienced with processes of democratic turnover, the mere possibility of a power shift was taken as proof that the system itself was broken. Further, the links between state and society that would have made the government responsive to changes in the electorate were seriously constrained. The Alliance Formula allowed for only a minimal amount of popular consultation and failed to incorporate discussion of the communally sensitive issues beyond a small elite committee. The essence of the formula argued that only within the secret cadres of the ruling party could these issues be adequately handled. After a contentious campaign period, this view was evidently substantiated by urban riots. The government responded decisively, utilizing its strong coercive and administrative apparatus to restore order. Subsequent government actions curtailed the meaningful political playing field to ensure the pre-May 13th status quo. Thus, when the Alliance Formula and democratic principles conflicted most dramatically on May 13, the former were further solidified and the latter abandoned.

Concluding Remarks

Malaysia underwent a peaceful decolonization during which the leading national party consolidated a cohesive coalition of elites that could claim the support of each of

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148 This links could have taken the form of either providing an indication that the elite compromises of the 1960s had insufficiently addressed social grievances or, after realizing these frustrations through the election results, by convincing the ruling party to make changes over the next term.
the country’s communal groups. Nonetheless, Malaysia’s democratic experience faltered after an intense general election in 1969. Communal violence in Kuala Lumpur followed the announcement of the results, and elites responded by replacing the democratic regime. This chapter argues that one must look at the historical dynamics of late colonialism and decolonization for an explanation of these events.

Under British colonialism, Malaya experienced impressive state development including the integration of the local population into the administrative machinery of government, but only late opportunities for participation in internally-directed democratic politics. These features, associated with colonies of the Strong Authoritarian type, left a legacy of a comparatively effective administrative apparatus, but limited democratic experience and modest state-society links.

These features resulted in a ruling elite that had not invested in the processes and continuation of democratic institutions. They had instead interpreted a mandate to lead the country to Independence as an enduring confidence in their unique capacity to govern effectively, specifically through the Alliance Formula. Thus, they had embraced the authority of state power by election, but had not internalized the inherent potential that these same institutions could provide authority to those outside their coalition.

Moreover, the institutional links between the state and organizations of civil society remained weak, given the minimal integration of the latter during the late colonial period. When the Alliance leaders negotiated Independence in a condensed and restricted fashion, they inhibited the processes of public debate and integration. There remained significant distance between social pressures, especially on the communally sensitive issues, and the elite mode of transition and subsequent
governance. After Independence, an increasingly centralized party leadership consistently rejected and rebuked efforts by mid-level intermediaries to relay information from the masses to them. As a result, the masses turned first to alternative parties to relay their grievances and then, to some degree, to violence. The Alliance government blamed electoral politics as the source of instability. The challenge to post-colonial democratization in Malaysia came thus from a need to generate popular and elite investment in the democratic regime against potential destabilizing shocks.

Finally, late colonial administrative development was rapid and expansive. When the ruling party decided to dismantle democratic institutions and create authoritarian order in the polity, it had more than enough resources to do so. In 1969, the electoral results, though far from an electoral defeat, threatened the preeminent position of the ruling party. It had a strong and knowledgeable administration at its disposal and able to enforce its vision of the state as its disposal. When violence broke out in the capital, the ruling party used this opportunity to justify the alteration of the rules of the game. Urban violence was met with a state of emergency and consequent coercive actions. These restrictions ushered in an authoritarian reversal, ending the country's 12-year democratic episode. Leadership allowed Parliament to resume only after the Alliance had shored up its electoral support and amended the Constitution so that future competition and participation were seriously constrained.

This chapter argues that late opportunities for self-government and expansive state development are responsible for Malaysia's democratic breakdown because elites had not invested in the democratic system and the state did not have strong links to social organizations. Meanwhile, elites had a strong state, particularly security
apparatus, at their disposal. When an opposition challenged the ruling party in 1969, an elite unaccustomed to competition used the strong state at its disposal to undermine democracy.

Two potentially competing explanations rival this theory. First, the expansive state development in late-colonial Malaysia was largely established because of the communist insurgency. The British decision to invest heavily (and create the self-sustaining institutions in Malaysia to fund this project) did not take place before the conflict. This might mean that Malaysia is a unique case, and the real cause of later authoritarian reversal is the conflict and particularly the ideological element of the violence. Had the conflict been merely ethnic but not defined by communism, perhaps the British would not have invested in building up the colony’s state apparatus. In short, had not this particular kind of conflict arose at the historical juncture, perhaps Malaysia would have been a Weak Authoritarian colony instead.

This possibility highlights the idea that the British did not define ahead of time what approach they would take in a colony, but largely responded to factors on the ground. Despite this unsystematic approach, they did ultimately produce four distinct types of democracies at independence and while it was conflict that ultimately catalyzed British investment in Malaysia, it could have been something else, such as an economic incentive. What is important for my argument is that this rapid and expansive state development did occur during the colonial period, not why it happened in this way.

Second, and this is more of a challenge, perhaps the expansive state apparatus alone caused the authoritarian reversal. In other words, even if Malaysia had enjoyed an early introduction of self-government, its democracy would not have been able to
withstand the pressure from the ethnic riots in 1969 to create a more stable system through authoritarian measures. Unlike Mauritius, Malaysia did not develop a rotating system of coalitions but a single stable ruling coalition that elites invested heavily in securing from opposition competition. It is not clear that Malaysia’s ethnic composition, particularly with its large indigenous population, would have supported rotating coalitions or alternately a non-ethnically based party even if it had had more time under democracy prior to independence. It is possible that the ethnically-based ruling coalition would have further entrenched itself during decolonization rather than opened itself up for democratic competition and turnover.

This is a difficult counterfactual, but I would argue that with more electoral cycles prior to independence, space would have been made available for a more robust opposition to organize and develop while the colony was still under colonial rule. Had this occurred and the British protected a competitive space for the opposition (as it did for the National Liberation Movement in Ghana), the ruling coalition would have been forced during decolonization to be more responsive to social pressures. Had this taken place, upon independence, it would be more likely to continue to invest in competitive strategies of accountability to stay in power rather than resort to state coercion. With this counterfactual in mind, I turn to the Ghana case study.
CHAPTER 5
DEMOCRATIC BREAKDOWN IN NKRUMAH’S GHANA

Introduction

Ghana, known as the Gold Coast during the colonial period, served as Britain’s model African colony from 1946 to 1957 as progressive reforms guided the path toward Independence under a popularly elected nationalist party in a largely optimistic context. Indeed, post World War II reforms included the first African majority legislature and were initiated partly because the British deemed the Gold Coast to be the most politically advanced of the African dependencies, a ‘model colony’ ready for orderly and constitutional progress toward self-government. The Gold Coast did not exhibit the racial problems typically associated with colonies of white settlement such as Kenya or Zimbabwe. It had good mineral resources and was relatively prosperous from cocoa, bauxite, diamonds and gold. It also enjoyed significant reserves totaling nearly 200 million £ at Independence (Rooney, 2010, 21). The Gold Coast did not suffer from centrifugal ethnic conflicts, as, for example, Nigeria did, but had resolved these issues

1 In 1950, Governor Arden-Clarke condemns lawlessness and intimidation perpetuated by the CPP in the name of ‘Positive Action’ and says it damages the colony’s movement to self-rule and its role as a pioneer among colonies for peaceful decolonization: “This is a critical time for the Gold Coast. This country is being watched by the eyes of the world. The Gold Coast is about to make a great constitutional advance. The world is wondering if the plan now being considered is before its time. It is asking whether the people of the Gold Coast have the capacity and the determination to shoulder their new responsibilities and undertake their complex task of building up and carrying on a good government under a new constitution. It would indeed be a disaster to this country if the impression was given to the outside world that the exponents of ‘positive action’ are representative of the people of this country of that ‘positive action’ is an example of the methods of government that will be adopted under the new constitution….Since the beginning of 1948 this country has been suffering from hooliganism, intimidation and threats of violence. Attempts have been made to subvert all constituted authority, to separate the people from their Chiefs, to bring the Chiefs and Chieftainship into disrepute and now to coerce Government by unlawful strikes designed to bring hardship and suffering on the people” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 19 January 1950, 6-7).

2 PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 23 July 1946 – 24 July 1946; Martin Wight writes in his 1947 assessment of the Gold Coast legislative council: “the Gold Coast people find themselves the pioneers of political advance and the touchstone of political competence in Africa” (207).
through peaceful negotiation and election. Rather, a charismatic leader, Kwame Nkrumah, led a mass-based independence movement, which pushed for self-government and to which the British acquiesced after 1951. Finally, the colony’s human capital was comparatively high; in the coastal regions, it had the highest literacy rate in Africa at 30%. As Apter (1972) describes, “For Great Britain, the Gold Coast is the showpiece of successful institutional transfer. It is the model to which people in the Colonial Office point, as do others anxious to see Africans democratically govern themselves” (8). Given this auspicious start, why did Ghana’s democracy break down after only three years?

Despite the country’s enviable position, within the first few years of Independence, Nkrumah’s government had passed legislation that severely restricted political activities. The leadership of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) declared criticism of and opposition to the Government to be subversive and justified its repressive activities in the name of security, prosperity and national unity. Further, in

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3 The National Liberation Movement (NLM) in the Ashanti Region was by far the strongest of these ethnic opposition movements, and yet at its peak during the 1956 elections, it was able to win only 12 of the 21 Legislative seats within its own Region and zero seats outside it (Austin 1970). Moreover, it was prepared to accept a compromise position to constitutional debates before Independence (Allman 1993, 166).

4 After Nkrumah became Leader of the Government in 1951 (Prime Minister in 1952), Governor Sir Arden-Clark (1949-1957) cooperated extensively with him to facilitate the transition to freedom. There was a degree of friendship, admiration and paternalism in the relationship of these two key figures (Rooney 1988).

5 Apter 1972, 8; Note that functional literacy was well below 20% across the entire Gold Coast territory suggesting variation within the colony (Foster 1965, 171).


7 At the inauguration of the Republic of Ghana in the House in 1960, Nkrumah’s sessional address explicates the primacy of internal security for the regime: “The Government are determined to ensure that a sound base is provided for the modern and stable society which we are endeavoring to build for our people in Ghana. For that reason we will adopt a most ruthless attitude to stamp out all corrupt and
1959, Nkrumah officially fused the party and state, declaring: “Comrades, it is no idle boast when I say that…the Convention People’s Party is Ghana. Our Party not only provides the government but is the custodian which stands guard over the welfare of the people.” These activities culminated in the 1960 Republican Constitution which provided wide-ranging executive powers including the authority to appoint, dismiss and discipline members of the Public Service, dissolve the National Assembly, veto any Bill in whole or part, and give directive by ‘legislative instrument.’

The central question of this chapter asks what led such an auspicious democratic start to become repressive one-party rule. It argues that although it led in numerous areas of development on the continent, Ghana suffered from a colonial philosophy much like its neighbors in which the British permitted only late self-government via democratic elections and limited state development prior to Independence. I label this type of colony a Weak Authoritarian colony and argue that its legacy made democratic survival less likely.

**A Theory of Weak Authoritarian Colonies and Democratic Breakdown**

In Weak Authoritarian colonies, the British conceded only late opportunities for self-government and invested little in state development. At Independence, these colonies thus faced the challenges of limited democratic experience, low administrative development and few formalized state-society links. Instead, informal networks

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8 Africa Evening News, 16 June 1959

9 PRAAD RG 17/1/179 Republic (and Republican Constitution)(5/1/60-21/6/60). The Republican Constitution is also available in full in Austin (1970) Appendix C, pp.430-446.
dominated, hindering state effectiveness and undercutting the viability of democracy.

Figure 5-1 illustrates this sequence.

Figure 5-1 Ghana: weak authoritarian colony and democratic breakdown

In Ghana, the features and consequences of this type of colonial experience played out as follows. Despite a progressive constitution in 1946, riots catalyzed a series of further rapid constitutional reforms in 1948. In 1946, the British and the Gold Coast educated elite had led reforms with the intention to modernize political institutions in a gradual progression toward self-government.\(^\text{10}\) By 1948, however, the Gold Coast social scene was not what it had been during the 1920s when the Gold Coast elites welcomed and applauded gradual reforms as satisfactory (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63). After riots, the CPP emerged as a national party and a national party and demanded ‘Self-Government Now’ (Austin 1967, 545). When the party won an impressive victory in

\(^{10}\) Nana Anor Adjaye II reflects this attitude well: “For a hundred years we have passed through the stage of, first of all, "No Seats"; then, next, "Nominated Seats"; then thirdly, "Elected Seats"; then, forthly, "Unofficial Minority", and today, in one great bound, leaving a great many flights behind us, we have climbed on to the next but one or two steps in the rungs of the ladder of self-government” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 19 March 1945, 118-119).
partially direct elections in 1951, the British reasoned that the new nationalists would be the ‘solution to the crisis,’ and they advanced a plan for rapid decolonization (Crook 1986, 82). In this way, the longstanding early nationalists were sidelined, and six years later, Ghana became independent under the CPP commoners’ party.

Between 1951 and 1957, the Gold Coast held three national elections, two of which included direct elections in all regions of the country (1954 and 1956). Victorious in all three elections, the CPP governed alongside the British throughout the late-colonial period. Despite these successes, the CPP struggled to subsequently consolidate its authority while embracing democratic institutions.\(^{11}\) Governor Arden-Clarke (1958) described this period as ‘an atmosphere of perpetual crisis’ (35).

Three factors explain the CPP’s inability to consolidate its authority. First, up to this point, the administration of the colonial state had been small and largely staffed by overseas officers. The campaign to reform the civil service was a longstanding one, but it had been met with little actual progress until after 1951 (PRAAD ADM 5/3/82 1951). In 1949, the percentage of Africans in the total Civil Service was 10%, with less than 2% of them in the Senior Service (ibid). By 1954, this percentage had increased to 35% in the total Civil Service, although only 7% were in the Senior Service (ibid, Appendix 2). In short, less than three years before Independence, foreign officials still vastly dominated the state administration. As such, at Independence the Ghanaian service did not have enough experienced personnel in it who knew how to gather information about the population it was to govern.

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\(^{11}\) Austin (1967) argues that this is perhaps a function of the fact that the anti-colonial battle was won so easily, in less than 2 years from the formation of the CPP, the British had made a promise to grant the colony independence (554).
Second, the CPP’s limited experience with democracy exacerbated the problem of administrative weakness. The CPP was skilled at the electoral game, able to mobilize the masses on a national scale (Bob-Milliar 2014). Its challenges were more pronounced, however, in governance, responsiveness to society, and accountability in office. After gaining power, CPP officials were paradoxically both over-confident, in that they interpreted their electoral victory as a blank check for governing, and insecure, in that they viewed any criticism as an attack on the state itself. They consistently used the British presence as an excuse for anti-democratic behavior, a practice that continued even after the colonizer departed. Officials invested in the CPP’s survival, but were unwilling to stand up against it to preserve democratic principles. This manifested in three ways: excessive hostility toward opposition, internal party fractionalization, and cooptation of social groups and actors.

Finally, the CPP government’s lack of knowledge about the population coupled with its limited democratic experience meant it was only very loosely connected to society. Even after 1951, politics remained intensely local. On the one hand, the CPP was frequently skillful at recognizing and exploiting local disputes. On the other hand, neither its party organization nor its resources were adequate by themselves to win all three pre-Independence elections without an additional attribute: strategic distribution

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12 An example of this is the longstanding Brong-Ahafo/Asante dispute. In return for supporting the CPP as against the NLM, the ruling party granted this area its own region, passed on 20 March 1959 (PRAAD ADM 14/7/11 20 March 1959); Rathbone (2000) describes how this pattern was interwoven with contentious chieftaincy politics in which, particularly in the Akan areas, there were almost always disputes over secession, with numerous persons eligible for the stool but only one selected via popular support. This was accomplished by making promises to be fulfilled via patronage when on the stool and to stay in office, these promises needed to be fulfilled. Thus, both the campaign and the consequences of losing the battle over secession could be large at the local level and generate an out-group situation that promoted dissent. The CPP was able to exploit these local rivalries to its advantage.

13 This inadequacy is suggested by Austin’s 1961 anthropological examination of elections in far northern rural constituencies in Ghana. His detailed empirics suggest first that the politics surrounding national
of the spoils of public office. As Austin (1967) notes: “Having been elected to office in 1951 on what was then an irresistible programme of ‘self-government now,’ it was able to use its powers as a government to sharpen its appeal as a party. Thereafter, it could reward those who supported it and threaten its enemies with the withdrawal of government favour” (543). The CPP came to power on the back of promises, which party officials sought to fulfill frequently through patronage. Meanwhile, the predatory state exacerbated social chaos, as CPP actors enflamed local rivalries in a competition for state spoils.

In short, the CPP came to power with only limited experience with democratic institutions, weak formal links between the state and society, and low levels of administrative development. When the newly independent regime faced opposition from outside and within its own party, it responded aggressively, passing numerous laws that undermined political liberties and democratic competition and participation. Rapidly, the party structure and the state became indistinguishable. The CPP government was unable to respond to challenges via the existing democratic framework and instead altered the rules of the game to one-party rule. In the remainder of this chapter, this argument is elaborated through three sections which expand on the nature of the

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14 One of the most widely used sources of government funds came from the Cocoa Purchasing Company (PRAAD ADM 5/3/102 1 September 1956).

15 The most infamous of these was surely, “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things will be given unto you” (Nkrumah 1960, 2; Biney 2011, 3).
intervening causal processes in Ghana: limited democratic experience as a result of bypassing early nationalists in post-War Gold Coast, weak state-society links exemplified in a case study of the politics of chieftaincy, and low administrative development despite longstanding appeals for reform. Finally, the chapter examines the emergence of Ghana’s one-party state between 1957 and 1960 to demonstrate how these colonial era variables brought Ghana’s first democratic episode to an end.

**Bypassing Early Nationalists: Limited Democratic Experience in Post-War Gold Coast**

The British heralded the Gold Coast in 1947 as a pioneer among African colonies for its advanced political development.\(^{16}\) Between this period and independence, however, the British bypassed those with the longest political experience in favor of a national commoners’ party. The commoners’ party governed for three years of self-government before Independence. During this period, the government and opposition developed a hostile and violent relationship characterized by attack and counter-attack. This state of perpetual crisis set the stage for and defined CPP government officials’ political experience, conditioning their approaches to dissent and opposition politics after Independence. During this period, governing officials invested heavily in securing the vulnerable CPP from internal and external threats, rather than nurturing the institutions of democracy. After Independence, these tactics expanded until the party and state became indistinguishable.

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\(^{16}\) The Gold Coast’s role as an example for other colonies on the continent was emphasized repeatedly throughout decolonization. In 1946, both the message on behalf of His Majesty the King and the British Governor emphasize the importance and significance of this constitutional development not just for the Gold Coast, but as a model for other African colonies, the Governor noting: “make no mistake about it – we are being watched” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 July 23 – 24, 1946, 6).
This chapter illustrates this sequence of events in several parts. First, it provides an overview of pre-World War II political developments and the early nationalist activities of the Gold Coast educated elites. Then, it examines the rise of the nationalist commoner’s party and the Independence struggle. Third, it looks at the CPP in office to demonstrate the evolution of the party’s informal governance style. Finally, it examines the rise of an opposition and the nature of disputes over the Independence Constitution.

**Pre-World War II Political Developments: Bypassing Early Nationalists**

What is striking about Gold Coast political developments prior to World War II is that the educated elites, those most familiar with “the laborious, inadequate years of apprenticeship which [they] had been obliged to accept as members of the early legislative councils” did not inherit the state (Austin 1967, 555). Indeed, they were bypassed twice, first in the Guggisburg Constitution of 1925 by the chiefs and again in the 1951 election by the commoners’ party. Their development is nonetheless significant because 1) they waged the battles that were picked up by the CPP after the Second World War; 2) they formed the primary opposition to the CPP after 1951; and 3) although the Gold Coast was perhaps the most politically advanced among Weak Authoritarian colonies in 1946, it failed to capitalize on potential political experience because this small group was rapidly marginalized after 1948.\(^\text{17}\)

The Gold Coast educated elites gained influence with the colonial administration in 1897 when they formed the country’s first political movement, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS). For the next twenty years, they served as the spokesmen for the chiefs and people. The ARPS prioritized progressive integration into the existing

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\(^{17}\) Bob-Milliar (2014) refers to this group as the ‘Reactionary Lawyers.’
governing apparatus and protecting traditional domains from colonial encroachment rather than colonial overthrow.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, during the early twentieth century, the educated elites and chiefs largely cooperated.

The shared goals and methods of the educated early nationalists and chiefs conflicted in the early 1920s, however. Seeking greater integration into the colonial administration and especially the legislature, J.E. Casely Hayford formed the National Congress of British West Africa in 1919 (Holmes 1972, 423-435). When the Congress bypassed consultation with the chiefs prior to advocating reform,\textsuperscript{19} Governor Guggisburg and the favored chief at the time, Nana Sir Ofori Atta,\textsuperscript{20} drew up the Constitution of 1925 which entrenched chiefly authority at the expense of these elites.\textsuperscript{21} The Constitution created Provincial Councils which would “constitute the channels through which Government for the first time could become acquainted with the views of

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item The ARPS Constitution of 1907 puts down as its Objects and Aims: a) To inculcate to members the importance of continued loyalty to the British Crown and b) To be the medium of communication and right understanding between the Government and the people (NAGC CPC 1/2 Constitution of Gold Coast 1907).
\item It was less the aspirations of the Congress than their method that created a rift with the chiefs. The ARPS and Congress were jointly considering schemes for electoral changes between 1918 and 1921 but internal disagreements delayed their filing requests with Governor Guggisburg, and in 1920 the Congress petition bypassed the Governor and was sent direct to London (Holmes 1972, 428-29). It had been up until that point an unwritten rule that the early nationalists would consult with the chiefs before pushing for reforms or protesting against legislation by the colonial government. (NAGC CPC 1/7 Resolutions passed at the Conference of Natural Rulers with Executive Committee of the GCARPS held at Cape Coast in March 1926).
\item The split between the chiefs and intelligentsia in 1920 was also highly personalized between Nana Sir Ofori Atta, Omanhene of Akym Abuakwa, and J.E. Casely Hayford. The former contributed greatly to the war effort and became the favored colonial collaborator until he died in 1943. He was appointed to Legislative Council from 1916 and was made the first African member of the Governor’s Executive Council in 1942 (Holmes 1972, 421-25).
\item The Constitution was progressive, as it included the first elective element, but the method of election proved controversial. Only three municipal members were directly elected, and six were elected through the new Provincial Councils of Chiefs (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 March 6-19, 1945, 118-119.)
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\end{footnotesize}
the people as a whole" (Wight 1947, 48). This starkly rejected the role the educated Africans (ARPS) had played since 1897.22

For the next two decades, the educated elites variously selected from two paths of resistance: cooperate with the chiefs to push for gradual change within the colonial framework or work to have the Constitution repealed.23 Most of the educated elite selected the former option and embraced an admittedly conservative brand of politics. While relations were tense with the chiefs, they cooperated, brought grievances to the colonial rulers via the few elected chiefs on the legislative council, and sent joint delegations to London.24 In other words, this group of educated elites was neither anti-colonial nor anti-chieftaincy as they pragmatically accepted their subordinate position and worked toward gradual change.25

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22 In a petition to the House of Commons in 1934, the ARPS declare themselves the “duly constituted and sole authorized representatives of the Kings, Rulers and Chiefs of the GC” as provided by the formation of the ARPS in 1897 (NAGC CPC 1/18 Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society Petition (to the House of Commons) 1934).

23 In 1934, the Chiefs and intelligentsia jointly protest the colonial Waterworks and Sedition Bills. The ARPS refused to participate in their delegation, however, and sent their own contingent to London. When the Secretary of State for the Colonies refused to meet with the latter, as non-representative of the people of the Gold Coast, they stayed on for two years. By the time they return, not having accomplished much, the organization was in serious financial straits (NAGC CPC 1/163 GCARPS Delegation 1934).

24 Sedition and Waterworks Bills in the 1930s

25 This was for a number of reasons. Foremost, the Provincial system of the 1920s was such that the elite had to defer to the wishes and interests of their paramount chiefs, thus serving as a restraining influence on too radical demands for political change. The alternative was to accept a marginalized position of seemingly futile radical politics that the ARPS was currently occupying. Second, the educated elite not infrequently had ties to the traditional class. Thus, while Nana Ofori Atta was one of the principal architects of the Provincial system that had locked the elites outside of their position of power, J.B. Danquah was his nephew and there remained a sense of ambiguity about the proper relationship between these groups from this cross-over. Thus, the tension but also partnership of the chiefs and elites characterized the politics of the 1930s and 1940s out of both necessity and desire. It was through this partnership and three years of consultation that the constitutional proposals were drawn up with agreement of all factions on what to submit to the colonial government in 1944 (Holmes 1972, 830).
In this state of affairs, the chiefs and elites jointly petitioned the British for a revised Constitution during the interwar years (Holmes 1972, 818; Wight 1947, 199).

The 1946 Burns Constitution introduced an African unofficial majority (indirectly elected), brought the Ashanti and Colony regions together in one Legislature for the first time, and created the first Territorial Council in the North. While both the British and educated elites heralded the Burns Constitution as a landmark in Gold Coast history, chiefs continued to dominate African participation. Both the educated elites and chiefs initially approved this evolution, but the former soon became disenchanted.

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26 For example, member of the Legislative council, Nana Anor Adjaye II commends the progressive Constitution, noting: “Your Excellency, I desire first of all to thank Your Excellency for the new and epoch-making Constitution. It has, for one thing, inspired the peoples of this country with renewed confidence, making our hopes refreshed. In our destiny within the Empire, we conceive it our duty and prerogative to climb the steps of freedom which have been held out to us from on top. And for a hundred years we have been climbing the upward steps, unwearied, undaunted. For a hundred years we have passed through the stage of, first of all, “No Seats”; then, next, “Nominated Seats”; then thirdly, “Elected Seats”; then, fourthly, “Unofficial Minority”, and today, in one great bound, leaving a great many flights behind us, we have climbed on not to the next but one or two steps in the rungs of the ladder of self-government” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 March 19, 1945).

27 The new legislative council included 6 officials, 5 directly elected members for the municipalities (2 for Accra and 1 each for Cape Coast, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi), 13 indirectly elected members through the Provincial Councils in the Colony and Ashanti, 6 nominated members by the Governor and any extraordinary members appointed by the Governor. Thus, it was an African majority (24/30), but not a directly elected African majority (5/30). (PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 July 23-24, 1946).

28 Member of the Legislative Council, Mr. Moore, congratulates the advanced constitution, but simultaneously notes that it has come up short: There is no doubt that this Constitution is not all that could be desired, but it is certainly a long step forward in our political advance” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/47 23 July 23-24, 1946, 32). Part of the reason for this was that, under the leadership of Danquah, the chiefs and the elites were in a better relationship leading up to the July 1946 elections than they had been in since before the institutionalization of indirect rule via the provincial councils in the 1920s. Thus, when the elites approved of the indirect elections for the Legislative Council through the territorial councils, they perhaps naively believed that the chiefs would use part of their allotment to elect non-chiefs to these positions (Holmes 1972, 834). In July 1947, however, the Joint Provincial Council of the Colony elected only 2 non-chiefs for its 9 positions. The Ashanti Confederacy Council did a little better by electing 2 of its 4 seats to non-chiefs (ibid, 835). Thus, the power remained largely with the British Governor and, among the Africans, with the chiefs as the spokesmen of local opinion (PRAAD ADM 14/2/44 March 19, 1945; Wight 1947, 196).
It is within this political context that the educated elites formed the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in August 1947.29 This was the first post-1945 political organization, but it was itself the product of various political associations, societies, and movements from earlier decades.30 Its leadership thus included numerous personalities long experienced in nationalist agitation. The UGCC was notably an elite, not mass, organization. As a class, its leadership was largely reluctant to engage the potential of mass organization, if they were not totally unaware of it.31 They were educated in the British liberal tradition, were conservative both economically and politically, and quite often had familial ties to chiefs.32 As Richard Wright (1954) noted after an interview with J.B. Danquah: “He was of the old school. One did not speak for the masses; one told them what to do” (221). Thus, while the elite were the most experienced with the colonial-style political institutions, they were less familiar and even uncomfortable with popular politics.33 When mass unrest exploded after the Second World War, they were prepared to take their place as institutional heirs, but not to corral mass mobilization.

29 The stated goals at the first meeting of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in September 1947 were: (a) that the Convention is of the opinion that the contact of chiefs and Government is unconstitutional, and (b) that in consequence their position on the Legislative Council is anomalous” (Austin 1961, 280).

30 Among these the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society, the National Congress of British West Africa, the local Ratepayers’ Associations, the Gold Coast Youth Movement, the Kotoko Society, etc. (Austin 1961, 273).

31 Dr. Donkoh Fordwor makes this distinction by describing Danquah as “a patriot, not a politician” (Interview 7.20.2015).

32 For example, Dr. J.B. Danquah, the leader of the Gold Coast Youth Movement and founding member of the UGCC, was the younger brother of Nana Ofori Atta I, the colonial masters’ favored collaborator until his death in 1943, and the uncle of William Oforio Atta, the paramount chief’s son.

33 There had been direct election in the four municipalities (Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi) since the 1930s. These were largely the reason for the formation of the Ratepayers’ Societies. These were held with a severely restricted franchise, however, and did not extend outside the major urban centers. They were hardly the training grounds for the mass electoral politics that would take them by storm in the 1950s.
Thus, with its typical combination of resistance and restraint, the UGCC’s goal explicitly stated: “to ensure that by all legitimate constitutional means the direction and control of government should pass into the hands of the people and their chiefs in the shortest possible time” (Austin 1961, 280).

Prior to World War II, the Gold Coast witnessed the rise of a significant, but small group of educated nationalists. For five decades, these elites variously participated in and actively engaged with the colonial rulers as participants, intermediaries, and advocates of reform. By the end of the Second World War, their decades of experience placed them in potentially good standing as events catalyzed a movement toward self-government. However, this elite group thought and knew little of popular politics. Along with the British and traditional rulers, they failed to anticipate the mass mobilization of 1948.

**The Rise of a Commoner’s Nationalist Party and Independence Struggle**

When the UGCC began advocating more anti-colonial positions in 1947, the Gold Coast masses were not yet politically conscious but increasingly discontented with the economic and social situation – soaring prices, unemployment, and swollen shoot disease plundering the cocoa plant.\(^{34}\) These hardships and an expanding elementary-educated population served as a match waiting for a spark.\(^ {35}\) In 1948, a boycott on

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\(^{34}\) The 1930s had been characterized by a tumultuous pattern of unrest among cocoa farmers – a cocoa boom, then a crash in prices which sparked the formation of unions, ‘hold-ups’ and efforts to organize local companies for marketing and selling of cocoa (dominated by European merchant companies), another wave of high prices during which unrest subsides, and so on. In addition, in the 1940s, a swollen shoot disease was ravaging the cocoa plants, and the colonial government responded with a ‘cutting out’ policy. Swollen shoot disease affected a quarter of the total crop in 1948. The ‘cutting out’ policy was made compulsory in 1947 and the government sent labour gangs out to cut the trees whether or not the farmer conceded (Holmes 1972).

\(^{35}\) PRAAD ADM 14/2/49 September 16-22, 1947; Note that this is with the exception of the Northern Territories which stayed remarkably quiet while the status quo in the rest of the colony turned on its head.
imported goods in Accra coincided with an ex-servicemen’s march and turned into riots and looting (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63; PRAAD ADM 14/2/50 April 27 – May 7, 1948, 92). During a six-week State of Emergency, 29 people were killed and over 200 injured.

While the UGCC was not the architect of unrest, it took advantage by sending a cablegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies stating that civil government had broken down and that the Working Committee was prepared to take over an interim government. They demanded the removal of chiefs from national politics, introduction of mass electoral politics, and local participation in the instruments of government. The British soon detained the six leading party members.

The 1948 riots set in motion a series of rapid changes. First, the British called a constitutional committee to rectify the ‘outmoded’ political set-up (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63). Second, Kwame Nkrumah, who returned to the Gold Coast less than two months before the riots to become Secretary of the UGCC, soon became the largest beneficiary of the unrest. His ability to capitalize on and extend mass mobilization, specifically among the youth, women and ‘commoner’ class, soon drove a wedge between his supporters in

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36 The British accused the UGCC leadership of fomenting the chaos, but there is evidence that the leadership was at Saltpond at a meeting when the riots started and returned to Accra only after events had well-begun (Austin 1961, 283; PRAAD ADM 5/3/63. Appendix 14 Text of Long Telegram addressed to Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 29th February, 1948 (by the President of the UGCC).

37 Nkrumah also sent a shorter telegram in the same vein.

38 Akufo Addo, Ako Adjei, Ofori Atta, Danquah, Nkrumah and Obetsibi Lamptey

39 Of note is that the terms ‘youth’ or ‘youngmen’ are not strictly a reference to age in Ghanaian society. Historically, the term is a reference to the commoner, or non-royal class. Within traditional society, this group was also referred to as the ‘malcontents’, because they were the most active group without royal blood which sought to reign in chiefly overstep (Rathbone 2000, 24).
the UGCC and its leadership.\textsuperscript{40} The leadership deemed Nkrumah’s tactics too radical, lawless and counter-productive.\textsuperscript{41} Despite this tension, Nkrumah and the UGCC leadership continued in their uneasy relationship until mid-1949.\textsuperscript{42} During this period, Nkrumah furiously traveled and opened branches throughout the Colony and Ashanti,\textsuperscript{43} stirring up most especially the ‘youngmen,’ or commoners.\textsuperscript{44} Meanwhile, the educated elites were still waging their own battle against the chiefs and colonial masters, believing that the British represented the greatest challenge to taking their rightful place as heirs to the colonial institutions in an independent Gold Coast, as opposed to the

\textsuperscript{40} Milne (1999) describes the difference in approach between Nkrumah and the UGCC leadership: “Nkrumah traveled hundreds of miles in an old car, holding meetings, organizing local party branches and making speeches. Within six months over five hundred branches of the UGCC had been formed. The rapid build-up of support for the UGCC reflected the terrific pace at which Nkrumah worked…Nkrumah spoke in everyday, easy to understand language when explaining the UGCC’s aims and goals. His manner was so different from that of the business and professional leaders of the UGCC who were inclined to maintain a disdainful distance from the people, often speaking in academic terms” (37).

\textsuperscript{41} Austin 1961, 285-286; The disconnect between Nkrumah and the UGCC leadership is evident in the interviews of the Watson Commission into the Disturbances. Nkrumah welcomed responsibility for the protests and viewed them in line with his own advocated tactics. Indeed, Nkrumah wrote a plan of action for the Working Committee in February advocating the use of civil disobedience, expanded organization across the country and the formation of a shadow cabinet. The UGCC leadership roundly condemned the proposal (Austin 1961). The others disassociated themselves with the chaos, emphasized their preference for constitutional means of change, and only then reiterated their own calls for political change (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63).

\textsuperscript{42} Austin (1961) argues that the UGCC leadership hardly knew the extent of Nkrumah’s activities and whether or not it was in its favor, but did not expel him because they were afraid of what he would do without them (285).

\textsuperscript{43} Nkrumah opened 209 branches in August 1948, according to the UGCC (Austin 1961, 285).

\textsuperscript{44} At this stage, the press and literature generally refer to this group of party activists as the ‘verandah boys’ (Bob-Milliar 2014).
mass mobilizations. The educated elite continued to emphasize their preference for waging the battle on constitutional terms.

Ultimately, Nkrumah went too far after creating his own private newspaper, setting up the Ghana National College for the students expelled during the 1948 riots, and organizing the youth section into an umbrella organization, the Committee of Youth Organization (CYO). These crises finally led Nkrumah to split with the UGCC and form his own movement, the CPP. While the UGCC leadership feared the consequences of this departure for their political aspirations, they continued to cooperate with the British administration.

45 The second municipal member for Accra, Mr. Obetsebi Lamptey, argues against the colonial administration’s insinuation that the intelligentsia and UGCC are associated with communist links: “What we are fighting for is a constitutional structure that will pass power into the hands of the people and their Chiefs; a constitutional structure that will give us the right to govern ourselves and rule this country as we think fit; a constitutional structure that will give us a government responsible to the electorate, that will give us a government dependent on the will of the people; and the accusation of a desire to secede from Britain, which has been echoed in debates in the House of Lords is as wicked and malicious as it is unfounded…. No responsible statesman in this country has ever suggested secession from the British Crown. At any rate it is not part of the political programme of my Party – the United Gold Coast Convention” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/54 15 March 1949 – 14 April 1949, 171). On April 14, 1949, Dr. J.B. Danquah echoes a similar accusation of British complacency and the need for political reform: A caretaker Government must take care; a caretaker Government must prepare the way for and not obstruct or delay the coming of the heir into his inheritance. We feel that the failure of Africanization and the increasing numbers of Europeans taken on in the Senior Service is the evidence of an attempt to obstruct and choke the coming of self-government at its source; we feel that this kind of inflated budgetary expenditure will surely leave this country bankrupt before self-government comes. We feel strongly that the time has come to call a halt, to take stock and make an end of all new and hastily thought-out commitments. This is a time that tests and tries men’s hearts. This is a time when an inefficiency Government which has lost its grip must cease to tamper and to tinker with the destinies of a country the control and direction of which must soon pass out of their hands into the hands of the people and their Chiefs” (ibid, 191-192). Finally, Rev. Baeta argues that the single biggest stumbling block to achieving self-government was the State Councils, which “are very jealous of their own autonomy” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/57 8 Dec. 1949 – 14 Dec. 1949).

46 Dr. Danquah emphasizes the need to maintain a ‘sweet reasonableness’ when pushing the colonial government for more rapid political devolution: “There is, in my faith and hope, every reason to believe that if we keep to that sweet reasonableness that has so far characterized sane leadership in the Gold Coast today, this country, Ghana, will be the first African country to reach what the Governor called ‘full stature,’ full Dominion status” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/57 8 Dec. 1949 – 14 Dec. 1949, 90).

47 Austin 1970, 85; In a cunning political move, when Nkrumah formed the CPP, he adopted the word ‘Convention’ from the UGCC because it contributed to the smooth transition of the population he had already organized from one party to the other (the UGCC having been frequently shortened to ‘the Convention’ during the initial years of organization)(VCRAC Crabbe Interview; Fordwor Interview).
and the chiefs. Thus, when the British appointed the all-African Coussey Committee for Constitutional Reform, several UGCC leaders served. For more than six months, this group drew up Constitutional recommendations while Nkrumah actively mobilized the masses throughout the south.

The Coussey Constitutional Report was published on December 22, 1950. It provided for a unicameral legislature composed of a speaker, 34 representative members for the Colony, 19 for Ashanti, 19 for the Northern Territories and three for Southern Togoland. Two-thirds of the legislative members would be elected, either directly in the municipalities or via electoral colleges in the rural areas, the other one-third through the Territorial Councils. It also recommended the retention of three ex-officio members as cabinet ministers and six special interest members representing commercial and mining interests (two with votes) (PRAAD ADM 5/3/69 1949).

As many of its members participated in the Committee’s debates, the UGCC accepted the report’s recommendations, even if it came up short on several dimensions. Initially, Nkrumah declared the Constitution ‘bogus and fraudulent’ and called for a campaign of non-violent protest and civil disobedience termed ‘Positive Action’ (Austin 1970, 87). Nkrumah also hesitated, however, presenting an alternate

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48 PRAAD ADM 14/2/53 14 December 1948 – 16 December 1948

49 Nkrumah 1961, 18; Nkrumah’s target groups included most especially the youth societies in the Colony and Ashanti towns, as well as farmers, petty traders, drivers, artisans, school teachers, clerks and letter-writers (Austin 1970, 55).

50 It is worth noting that J.B. Danquah and other party members submitted a Minority Rider to the Report which disagreed with the areas where it came up short of self-government (ADM 14/2/58 19 January 1950). Nonetheless, as Rev Baeta notes in the Legislative Council, he commends the Committee for “[putting] down these recommendations without shame and without apology, but with commonsense and a sense of reality” (ADM 14/2/57 8 Dec. 1949 – 14 Dec. 1949)
constitution (short of self-rule) in November, and meeting with the Colonial Secretary and Governor before resolving any action. At this meeting, both Arden-Clarke and Saloway reported that Nkrumah was willing to wait until after the General Election to issue his demands, but that the CPP and TUC leadership was ‘enmeshed in the coils of its own propaganda’ and that they had no control over ‘their wild men.’ Even after this, two announcements that Positive Action had started were reported, but both times the party’s newspaper denied them (Austin 1970, 89). On January 6, the TUC forced the issue by declaring a general strike, and Nkrumah finally announced Positive Action two days later. This trajectory suggests that while Nkrumah had successfully mobilized social actors in a national movement, he did not yet control these forces.

After the start of Positive Action, the Colonial Government issued a State of Emergency, declared a curfew in the major towns, and arrested the TUC and CPP leadership variously for sedition and illegal striking. The UGCC and chiefs condemned the CPP’s radical actions, believing that the British coercive response proved that their

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51 NAGT NRG 8/5/28 November 20, 1949; Note that the resolution was like the Minority Rider issued by the UGCC members of the Coussey Committee. It included ex-officio member of Cabinet and Governor’s power of veto.

52 In the end, certain sections of the CPP declared Positive Action twice, each time the Party newspaper denying it, before the TUC forced the issue on January 6 (Arden-Clarke 1958, 32; Saloway 1955).

53 Noting Nkrumah’s hesitation to take extra-constitutional measures at this early point in his political career is helpful for foreshadowing some of the events to take place when Nkrumah becomes leader of the Independent Ghana. While several scholars are quick to attribute all dictatorial measures to Nkrumah’s persona and agency, this would again be an incomplete assessment (Omari 1970). My colonial legacy argument does not discount the possibility of agency and indeed recognizes that Nkrumah was a unique and charismatic personality whose presence shaped much of Ghana’s pre and post-Independent history. It emphasizes rather that even this larger-than-life character acted within and among structural incentives, constraints and relationships. Whereas he was not immune to the strategic calculations associated with dealing with a colonial ruler, he would not be immune to the different though no less important strategic assessments of dealing with political opposition and party members in the post-colonial period. He did not singularly drive CPP politics even when the party was at its strongest – 1949-51.
more moderate course of reform was the right approach. Both the British and the UGCC remained largely unaware of how advanced the mobilization of Gold Coast society was at the time.

The youth especially were ready to hear the CPP call to action. Voluntary local CPP activists (known as verandah boys) set up party branches, issued propaganda and mobilized their local communities (Bob-Milliar 2014; KB Asante Interview). The election that followed entailed both colonial acquiescence to the CPP and the popular rejection of the traditional rulers and educated elite. According to Austin (1970):

By 1950, the protagonists of the Burns constitution had been displaced so effectively that earlier arguments for and against indirect rule, for and against the chiefs and the intelligentsia, were no longer heard: they belonged to a seemingly vanished colonial order when the unofficials

54 See for example: Nana Sir Tsibu Darku IX, Second Provincial Member for the Western Province, Council motion affirming: 1) “That this Council deprecates the grave disorders and acts of violence in certain parts of the country which a political group has brought about by its so-called ‘weapon’ of positive action, employing strikes, boycotts, non-co-operation and other acts of lawlessness to coerce the Government and other constituted authorities into accepting certain political views; 2) That this Council denounces the various acts committed and encouraged by such irresponsible groups as inimical to the peace and security of the country; 3) That this Council records its high appreciation of the stand made by a great majority of the people who, realizing the futility of such lawless acts in the political and industrial fields, have refused to participate in them and have stood firm against the intimidations of those who have set their hearts upon disruption of the country’s peace and security; 4) That in the opinion of this Council the illegal strike is unjustified and that this Council endorses Government’s announcements in this regard; and 5) That this Council highly appreciates and strongly supports the emergency measures taken by Government to deal with the situation and urges Government to take all necessary steps to prevent further outbreaks of violence and other acts of lawlessness, and to restore and maintain the normal life of the community in all parts of the country” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 19 January 1950, 9); Mr. Nii Amaa Olennu, nominated member, seconds the motion, declaring that all want self-government now, but this must be fought for by legal and constitutional means, as “Our greatest achievements in politics have all been won that way…” (ibid, 11-12).

55 Both Mr. Addai, the Municipal member for Kumasi, and Mr. Agyeman, the fourth Ashanti Member, note that the youth have been misled into violence, and while they agree with the ultimate goal of self-rule, they strongly condemn these methods of agitation” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 19 January 1950, 16-17). Their arguments suggest an interpretation of events as the product of a few radicals stirring up trouble rather than a distinct social movement calling in a sense for more revolutionary activities.

56 The term ‘verandah boys’ was used by the UGCC elite and its allies to characterize the CPP’s ‘youth’ as hooligans. The term was a reference to the usually “criminal groups of disaffected youngsters” engaged in pimping or theft during WWII, who slept under roadside verandahs of trading houses. Though carrying a negative connotation when used by the UGCC, CPP activists soon embraced the appropriated the title to mean commoner or youth (Rathbone 2000, 24).
quarreled among themselves and the officials ruled the country. Now, power was to be handed over in large measure to new leaders who had hitherto played no part in national politics (91).

While the election had numerous flaws, there was fairly widespread support for the CPP.\(^5^7\) The CPP capitalized primarily on widespread localized grievances, be they disputes against chiefs, farmers and workers’ frustrations, or unemployed youth, etc. They even took advantage of their leadership’s prison terms by celebrating them when they were released as ‘Prison Graduates’ (Austin 1970, 114-115). Finally, CPP propaganda included an emotional appeal, speaking of African pride against the imperialists as well as unity of the Common Man against the chiefly agents of colonial rule (ibid, 131).

The CPP’s victory is as significant as the UGCC’s inability or unwillingness to exploit mass discontent, as the CPP did. The UGCC’s first strategic error was to miscalculate the extent to which the British were willing to let these areas of discontent grow after 1948 without using coercion (Crook 1986). To the UGCC’s credit, this was perhaps not an obvious shift – they had spent the better part of two decades towing a conservative line of reform precisely because its more radical tactics had been counterproductive.\(^5^8\) That being said, the CPP leadership and membership, born later and with none of the experience of the educated elites, proved less hesitant and indeed rejected all warnings that their radical protests would prove counter-productive (“September 15, 1949”).

\(^5^7\) Austin 1970, 141-146; These include low registration (40% in the Colony and Ashanti together), minimal understanding of electoral procedure, and limited turnout (ibid, 113)

\(^5^8\) Recall Casely Hayford’s National Congress deputation to England which resulted in the entrenchment of indirect rule policies and a split with the chiefs that took Danquah nearly twenty years to repair.
The elites’ second grave error was their limited understanding of popular politics. By 1950, the intelligentsia and chiefs were cooperating after three decades of tense relations, both having mutual fears about the youngmen coming to power (Austin 1961, 286-295). They remained hopeful of their electoral chances given that 18 seats were designated for the Territorial Councils and their potential influence with the 21 Northern seats. While the difference in the CPP vs. UGCC campaign messages were not all that much different (self-government now vs. self-government in the shortest possible time) – their tactics were dissimilar (Fordwor Interview). The UGCC relied almost exclusively on their partnership with the chiefs (Rathbone 2000; Austin 1970, 145).

Ultimately, the CPP won a resounding victory with 29 of the 33 electoral college (rural) seats and all five of the municipal seats (Austin 1970, 141). Notably, Nkrumah was elected despite being in prison at the time. There were also 18 territorial seats, six representatives of the European Chambers and Mines, and three ex-officio members, only small minorities of whom were sympathetic to the CPP (ibid, 147). Nonetheless, when the British asked the CPP to form a government, it had a working majority (34/65) to do so.

Though clearly dominating the political scene in 1950, the CPP organization was still undeveloped.\(^5^9\) Nonetheless, the British interpreted this as the beginning of a smooth process of political institutional transfer (Arden-Clarke 1958). In 1951, the CPP appeared to have a lot to offer much in terms of overcoming many of the challenges that

\(^{59}\) Austin (1970) describes this stage of party development as such: “The nationalist party was still inchoate in 1951. The 1949-50 struggle had been too short – its election victory too easily gained – to shape the party into an adequate instrument of control, and nothing was clear in practice as to the relationship between its various sections. Nkrumah had been made Life Chairman, but he had yet to adopt the role of ‘unique Leader’ (163).
plagued its neighbors: lack of national unity, politicized ethnic divisions, strong local autocratic forces that undermine elected elements, etc. What then explains Ghana’s authoritarian reversal? I argue that the answer lies in one important feature -- despite its late-colonial ‘social and political revolution,’ Ghana still faced the challenges associated with a legacy of a divided administration with few local participants. Those participants that had existed among the educated elites were bypassed by electoral failure and then marginalized once the CPP took office. Thus, for the group that did come to power, internal divisions became apparent before three years had elapsed after the CPP’s 1951 electoral victory.

**The CPP in Power: Evolution of an Informal Governance Style**

In 1951, the CPP formed the Government with Nkrumah as its Leader of Government Business. This began a period of official apprenticeship, as the CPP held a small executive majority and substantial legislative minority. In general, it was a rocky transition for the inexperienced nationalist leaders more familiar with anti-colonial opposition than operating the ‘colonial’ government (Austin 1970, 154). The CPP government needed to find a careful balance between fueling and curtailing the mobilized expression of colonial dissatisfaction among its supporters so that while it facilitated the final push for independence, it did not turn it against the party. In this section, I describe some of these issues in the realm of internal (CPP) fractionalization and external (opposition) challenges. This period came to define many CPP methods of constraining opposition and disciplining internal challengers, a style of governance and

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60 This position was renamed Prime Minister in 1952 (PRAAD ADM 14/2/70 March 7, 1952 – April 18, 1952).
usage of state institutions to consolidate party power that would persist after Independence.

**Internal Divisions in the CPP**

As a first action in office, Nkrumah sought to move the CPP’s activities from violent ‘Positive’ to gradual ‘Tactical’ Action to slow down the revolution. When he did this, there was a split in the CPP between the revolutionary socialists and those satisfied with being the dominant partner in the colonial administration. Other controversies included widespread rumors and allegations of corruption and bribery in the government as well as criticisms over the close relationship between Nkrumah and Governor Arden-Clarke. These top-level divisions resulted in a series of expulsions and resignations from the party executive in 1951. In 1952, a fresh round of internal

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61 On March 12, 1952 in the Legislative Assembly, Nkrumah defends Tactical Action: "Here, I must once more define what I mean by Tactical Action for those who have not yet comprehended the tactics and strategy of our party in the struggle for self-government. Tactical Action, Mr. Speaker, is based on the idea that power depends on carrying out definite tasks within the existing political framework, that is, adapting the tactics of the party to the needs of a given situation. Tactical Action and Positive Action are diametrically opposed; otherwise you call it revolution. Do you stand for Revolution? Or Evolution?" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/70 March 7, 1952 – April 18, 1952, 774).

62 Austin 1970, 166; Kwesi Lamptey moves that the Legislative Assembly approve the setting up of a Committee to investigate corruption in the Government in 1952, citing several foreign newspapers in his claim (PRAAD ADM 14/2/72 June 17, 1952, 272-273). The subsequent Korsah Commission Report is published in 1954, but between 1951 and 1952 rumors circulated freely (PRAAD ADM 5/3/94 1954). Austin (1970) describes the scene as such: "The refusal of CPP ministers to live in the bungalows provided for them in the outskirts of Accra, the large houses which they built and drew rent allowance for in town, the flamboyant style of living of many of the party members, stories of the need to buy contracts from ministers and ministerial secretaries, and the failure of an Anti-Bribery and Corruption Committee were produced as evidence of the distance the party’s leaders had travelled from the early days of 1949" (165).

party revolts pitted the radicals against the loyalists over the question of the timetable for self-government.\textsuperscript{64}

These initial programmatic controversies were just the beginning, however. Threats started to appear resulting from the plethora of local and regional differences. These local rivalries which Nkrumah and the verandah boys had previously exploited to corral popular discontent against the colonial administration were now a central weakness for the CPP, which in practice depended “on the ability of the leaders to bind together a vast collection of local (often conflicting) loyalties” (Austin 1970, 175-76). A series of local and regional reforms in the march to independence sparked a growing volume of interests brought forward by members of parliament, constituency secretaries, local youth associations, and then opposition parties.

The first of these controversies was over the 1953 Van Lare Commission, tasked with defining electoral constituencies.\textsuperscript{65} The most forceful opposition to its report came from the Ashanti Region where the report recommended 21 seats, an increase in number by two, but a decrease in the percentage of the newly expanded legislature. Opposition among MPs from Ashanti was less about ethnic antagonism than about a perception of a loss of power for their region. When the Ashanti members demanded 30 seats, the motion was defeated, but the issue was hardly resolved.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{64} Kurankyi Taylor, de Graft Johnson, Cecil Forde, Eric Heymann, Anthony Woode and Turkson Ocran (ibid, 168).

\textsuperscript{65} Allman 1993, 22-23; PRAAD ADM 14/2/80 3 November 1953 – 18 November 1953

\textsuperscript{66} The motion failed in the Legislative Assembly on 17 November 1953 with 13 Ayes and 37 Noes (PRAAD ADM 14/2/80 3 November 1953 – 18 November 1953, 574).
The second crisis came from the nomination of CPP candidates for the 1954 election. Local conflicts the CPP had exploited in the 1951 election reemerged in 1954, and constituencies split into warring camps. While conflict remained local, the national party executive had centralized its own authority and decided to select all candidates (as opposed to the local constituency executives nominating one or two potential candidates and forwarding them to the national headquarters in Accra). When Nkrumah announced the names of the 104 nominees and issued a warning that all others should stand down, numerous CPP ‘rebels’ persisted in running. A week later, the CPP formally expelled 81 candidates at Subin Valley, Kumasi (ibid, 225). Many expelled members then ran as independents. In all, there were nearly as many Independents in 1954 (160) as there were candidates of the parties (163).

There are a few explanations for this lack of party discipline. First, with few real opponents, the CPP had essentially already won its struggle. The British had conceded independence, and opposition parties had not yet emerged. Under such circumstances, it was difficult to enforce party discipline. Second, the fortunes of CPP government officials had changed dramatically in three years. For example, instead of riding in buses, they drove American saloon cars, and thus many local leaders wanted a piece of the government cake (Austin 1970, 212; PRAAD ADM 14/2/68 December 7, 1951). These events exposed the weakness of the mass party, built on the shoulders of anti-colonialism, but not well institutionalized.

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67 For the CPP alone, 1005 claimants for party nominations were received for only 104 constituency elections (Austin 1970, 217). Austin (1970) argues that the National Executive Committee was also divided and that final decisions were almost certainly made by Nkrumah, Gbedemah, Botsio and a small group of advisers (221).
Opposition Politics

Meanwhile, the challenges in the national party presented an opportunity for opposition movements that did not exist in 1951. First, the UGCC, discredited by its total failure in the 1951 elections, started a new party in May 1952 called the Ghana Congress Party (GCP). Those who had been expelled or resigned from the CPP after 1951 joined the educated elites (Allman 1993, 34-36). This was naturally an uneasy partnership as the former CPP members, ideologically, were far more radical (ibid). Beyond criticizing the increasing adulation of Nkrumah, the GCP found it difficult to find an alternate program to the CPP’s demand for self-government.

Second, the Northern Territories developed its own party called the Northern People’s Party (NPP). Despite challenges from late administrative and political development, the Northern Territories articulated a singular set of interests in 1954 predominately under the unity of their ‘non-southern-ness.’ In addition, the Northern Territories were far less developed than the South, prompting great anxiety about the British departure as it might mean their subjugation to the South. The 1954 manifesto

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68 See, for example, the Accra Evening News (CPP Paper) on 19 June 1954 which praises Nkrumah as “Man of Destiny, Star of Africa, Hope of Millions of down-trodden Blacks, Deliverer or Ghana, Iron Boy, Great Leader of Street Boys, personable and handsome Boy from Nzima...” (quoted in Austin 1970, 282).

69 This is echoed by Nkrumah’s own assertion that ‘Until Independence, there is only one political platform – that is, independence – and I happen to be occupying it’ (Arden-Clarke 1958, 37).

70 The Northern Territories were only created as a single entity as late as 1901, developed their own regional Territorial Council in 1946, were not brought into national politics until 1951, and had no singular ethnic group that formed a cohesive bond among its smaller communities.

71 Landouceur 1979 argues: “Essentially, however, Northern regionalism had its origins in the growing awareness on the part of certain groups of Northerners of the great differences and disparities between their region and the rest of the country” (248). Note that the NPP’s 1954 campaign slogan was ‘North for the northerners’ (Austin 1970, 229).

72 On behalf of the Northern Territories Council, the Council Chairman forwarded a letter to the Coussey Committee stating: “The decision is that it is too soon a time that we should have Self-Government; but we will ask Government to double the help they are giving us, so that we can come in line with the
emphasized the need to grant special programs and funding to the North such that it may ‘catch up’ to its southern neighbors (Austin 1970, 230). Finally, there was extensive attachment to traditional institutions in the North and thus fears that the CPP’s local and regional government reforms would undercut these positions of power.\textsuperscript{73} This attachment meant also that the natural social base of the CPP (commoners) was a disadvantage in the North where traditional hierarchies of power remained entrenched (Bob-Milliar 2014).

Finally, the Moslem Association Party (MAP), initially out of Kumasi, found support among the ‘zongo’ (settler) communities of the main towns in 1954. Though the name denotes religious orientation, the party’s impetus turned more on its members’ immigrant status and their need for protection from an aggressive local nationalist party (Allman 1991; Austin 1970, 189). Nonetheless, the MAP used Islam as a point of unity in the urban settler communities.\textsuperscript{74} It brought with it distinctly militant tactics which would serve as a reference point for a stronger, more broad-based regional movement after the 1954 election (Allman 1991, 21). Finally, the Togoland Congress formed in the East

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\textsuperscript{73} In 1955, the Northern Territorial Council expressed its concerns to the Constitutional Advisor, Sir Frederick Bourne, as such: “We have reasons to believe that recent legislation passed on traditional affairs clearly indicate that it is the intention of the present Government to annihilate chieftaincy from the Constitution and administration of a self-governing Gold Coast. We, therefore, affirm our contention that to have disregard for chieftaincy in this country will only spell disaster” (NAGT NRG 8/5/57).

\textsuperscript{74} In 1954, Muslims made up between 10-15\% of the Gold Coast population, and spanned large parts of the northern rural territories as well as made up significant voting blocks in southern urban centers (Allman 1991, 2). Despite Islam’s longer influence across the northern territories, however, the MAP would grow out of and compete in the southern urban centers in settler neighborhoods primarily.
and rallied the Ewes under the call for an Ewe homeland and reunification with the neighboring French trust territory (Austin 1970, 189).

The one binding feature of the opposition members was that they were fiercely anti-Nkrumah and anti-CPP from the start. Accusations of dictatorship and totalitarian tendencies resounded through the late-colonial period and into independence. Likewise, the CPP’s response to opposition criticism and campaigning was to aggressively accuse it of sedition, treason, and generally trying to discredit all their activities.

Ultimately, in the 1954 election, the CPP won handsomely, securing 72 seats in the 104-seat legislature and 55% of the votes. Thus, the British and CPP Government

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75 For example, in the process of drawing up the 1953 Constitution, representative William Ofori Atta condemns the ‘secret negotiations’ and favoritism between Governor Arden-Clarke and Nkrumah: “…I was to issue a warning that by disregarding the intelligence of the country and bargaining in secret with single leaders to make them extremely popular, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient is a sure way to totalitarianism.” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/70 March 7, 1952 – April 18, 1952, 744).

76 This sort of language is evident in, for example, a debate in the House in 1952 over Danquah’s motion to formally recognize an Opposition. In the course of this debate, Mr. Inkumsah speaking for the Government notes that the supposed reason for the opposition is to criticize, but is actually to ‘unseat the preset Government…Thus, in order to achieve their ulterior motive, the promoters of this sinister move have endeavored day and night, through a serious house to house campaign, propaganda, and all forms of solicitations in the shape and semblance of a careful but cunning coercion of certain members, to secure an appreciable number of persons to form the much talked of, and would-be, Opposition. Other representatives noted that the opposition was ‘inspired by the devil’ and that it had no place in the country, at least until it had achieved self-government. The logic goes that any good citizen would hold implicit faith in the elected national leader. On this notion, the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mr. Casely-Hayford, argues that an Opposition inside the Assembly is warranted, even if the present one is not constructive, but any opposition politics outside of the House is ‘dangerous’ because it tries to ‘distort and twist the policy of the Government’ in the remotest villages where the Government cannot properly respond to its vindictive attacks. Finally, Mr. Krobo Edusei argues that the Opposition is conspiring against the government and should be brought up on formal charges as such. As we will see shortly, these were not merely idle words; they were backed by Government action leading up to and particularly after 1954. (PRAAD ADM 14/2/72 July 4, 1952, 472-490).

77 The Independents won 22% of the popular vote and 11 seats. The NPP won 15 seats. The Togoland Congress won 4 seats in its stronghold, and the MAP only one seat and the GCP, one seat (Austin 1970, 243).
prepared to move to Independence. But the opposition had been competitive, and the nationalist movement had shown cracks in its armor. In this context, a new, unexpected opposition party emerged which exposed these vulnerabilities, played on the CPP’s weaknesses and exerted grievances of its own to put the entire national project in jeopardy.

**Debating the Independence Constitution: Violence and Decentralization**

Though the CPP won a majority of seats in the 1954 elections, grievances were rife. The CPP and opposition engaged in a violent campaign over the shape of the new nation (Allman 1993; Austin 1961). Between 1954 and 1957, a bitter national contest between the CPP and opposition parties demonstrated the very real divisions across groups in the colony as well as the CPP’s weak capacity to contain local chaos. Under the backdrop of a national debate over a federal vs. unitary constitution, both the CPP and opposition actively engaged in fomenting intimidation, violence and the exploitation local rivalries to gather support. In this dispute, each side increasingly distrusted the other. The CPP passed legislation, advocated policies, made declarations, and gave warnings, which appeared to attack the existence of an opposition altogether, although they made official declarations of a commitment to democracy. Meanwhile, the opposition increasingly pursued extra-constitutional means to exert its position.

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78 On July 10, 1953, the Gold Coast Legislature passes a Motion on Constitutional Reform calling for Her Majesty’s Government to introduce an Act of Independence in the UK Parliament declaring the Gold Coast a sovereign and independent State within the Commonwealth (PRAAD ADM 5/4/105).

79 For example, Nkrumah, on the discussion in the Legislative Assembly in 1954, notes the valuable role of an opposition in developing procedures and conventions of parliamentary democracy: “We are fully conscious of the value of informed and constructive criticism and are determined to do everything possible to establish in this Assembly the procedures and conventions of parliamentary democracy, which must include a properly organized opposition” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/81 2 February – 12 March 1954, 122).
Whereas the opposition to this point had been dispersed and weak, the CPP rebellions represented a weakness in the alliance of the youngmen. Ashanti was particularly susceptible to anti-CPP sentiment owing to the combination of disagreements over nominations, as well as designation of constituencies (Austin 1970, 258). Historically, however, the youngmen were not a sufficient force unto themselves to prompt mobilizations, and the national scene remained quiet in June and July 1954. In August, however, the opposition sprang to life when the CPP introduced the Cocoa Duty and Development Funds (Amendment) Bill (PRAAD ADM 14/2/82 August 10, 1954). The Bill fixed the price of cocoa for farmers well below the world price and allocated the profit to development projects. Non-CPP legislative members deplored the act, arguing that it exploited cocoa farmers and set the price far too low (Austin 1970, 254). Outside the Legislature, a major backlash came from Ashanti where the cocoa issue affected not just farmers but also labourers, transport workers, marketers, brokers, traders, and shop owners (Allman 1991, 38; Austin 1970, 255). Cocoa thus

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80 This was in part backed up by popular sentiment, as over 41% of the Ashanti electorate had voted in 1954 against the CPP and more than 1/5 for the CPP rebels (Austin 1970, 257).

81 The Kumasi branch of the AYA met at the Kumasi State Council Hall on August 25, 1954 to debate the Cocoa Duty issue, and during the course of the discussion, forcefully removed Krobo Edusei, Osei Bonsu and John Baidoo, CPP Assembly members who had voted for the Bill (Austin 1970, 258); By July 21, 1955, two fully separate branches of the AYA were operating, one in support of the CPP, the other in support of the NLM (NAGK ARG 2/10/2).

82 Allman 1991, 48; Without bringing in allies from other segments of society, the youngmen lacked the economic resources and political and cultural legitimacy to lead in Ashanti. For a longer discussion on the historical role of youngmen in Ashanti society, see Allman 1993, 28-36.

83 Note that the price of cocoa was fixed to the same as the previous year, even though at the time the world price was skyrocketing (Austin 1970, 254).
served as a catalyst for youngmen who organized and led the widespread mobilization in Ashanti.\textsuperscript{84}

The youngmen thus combined economic and political grievances and expressed both in terms of Ashanti nationalism. The NLM was officially launched in Kumasi on September 19, 1954.\textsuperscript{85} By October, it attracted both Ashanti chiefs as well as the educated elite, who provided financial resources and political legitimacy to the movement.\textsuperscript{86} Despite the chiefs’ historic competition with the youngmen, their collaboration came from what was perceived to be the CPP’s ongoing onslaught against chieftaincy since 1951, particularly via local government reform (Austin 1970, 260; Rathbone 2000). The elite were a willing partner because the CPP had disinherited them from their rightful place as institutional heirs. While the elites gave the movement an articulate message and set of aims, the youngmen organized, agitated and fomented chaos among the Ashanti masses.\textsuperscript{87}

The youngmen laid out the Movement’s grievances in its appeal to the Asanteman Council on October 19, 1954, stating that: a) the Cocoa Duty and Development Fund Ordinance of 1954 disregards the farmers’ interests; b) the ‘hush

\textsuperscript{84} The Kumasi branch of the AYA met at the Kumasi State Council Hall on August 25, 1954 to debate the Cocoa Duty issue, and during the course of the discussion, forcefully removed Krobo Edusei, Osei Bonsu and John Baidoo, CPP Assembly members who had voted for the Bill (Austin 1970, 258); By July 21. 1955, two fully separate branches of the AYA were operating, one in support of the CPP, the other in support of the NLM (NAGK ARG 2/10/2).

\textsuperscript{85} Symbolically, Ashanti youngmen announced the Movement at the site where Nkrumah had expelled the CPP rebels before the election (Subin Valley).

\textsuperscript{86} Allman 1993, 42; Note that not all the youngmen in Ashanti were prepared to join with the traditional rulers, their political experiences largely putting them in opposition to this group. However, there was enough recognition that the chiefs offered a potent symbol of Ashanti unity, a necessary tool if you were going to pitch the cocoa issue in terms of Ashanti interests (Austin 1970, 259).

\textsuperscript{87} Allman 1993, 63; This was accomplished by appealing “for support in the name of the Asantehene, the Golden Stool, Ashanti interests, Ashanti history, and Ashanti rights” (Austin 1970, 265).
hush’ attitude of Government to farmers’ reactions to the Cocoa Duty is a ‘dictatorial tendency’ which could drive the country into a communist state; c) the CPP has a ‘deliberate policy of insulting, vilifying and discrediting the traditional rulers and elders; d) ‘party loyalty and not efficiency and ability has become the chief criterion of filling important and responsible offices.’ Corruption and bribery run rampant; and e) there is no permanent solution except for a federal constitution (NAGK ARG 2/2/4). Three days later, the Asanteman Council sent a telegram from to the Governor demanding a federal constitution and a special Commission to examine the issue (NAGK ARG 2/2/4; NAGK ARG 2/2/4/6). After October, Kumasi was rife with assaults on CPP supporters, demonstrations, violence, and destruction of property for the next three years.  

Then, the violent Ashanti movement partnered with other opposition parties (NPP, MAP, GCP, TC), causing the British to hesitate, “no longer sure where the balance of power lay in the colony,” and concede discussions on the federal issue (Austin 1970, 250; NAGK ARG 2/2/4/51). Repeated attempts were made to bring both sides together between 1954 and 1956, but the opposition declined to participate.

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88 Austin (1970) describes the scene as follows: “The newly elected government was taken completely by surprise. Yet many of the CPP members in Ashanti resisted the appeal of the new party with the result that, by the end of 1954, a violent conflict developed in Ashanti between rival gangs which struggled against each other wherever the CPP or the NLM was unable to established a local stronghold of single-party rule. As the quarrel deepened, the colonial administration was drawn into the dispute, to find itself in the uncomfortable position of a referee obliged to interfere in a contest in which the participants declined to recognize any rules” (250).

89 These efforts included including Nkrumah’s initial outreach to the Asantehene, Nkrumah’s Select Committee of 1954, the British-organized Bourne Committee of 1955, the Achimota Conference of 1956 and numerous debates in the Legislative Assembly (PRAAD ADM 14/2/84 15 February – 6 April 1955; ADM 5/4/130 1956; PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955). The Asantehene refused to meet with the Bourne Commission as well, as it was a waste time, seeing as how the State Council (Ashanti) Amendment Bill had already been passed so there was nothing further to discuss until it was revoked. They argued that the Bourne mission had been obstructed by the passage of this Bill (NAGK ARG 2/2/112/70); The Asantehene also refuse to attend Nkrumah’s Achimota Conference on the same grounds. They reasoned that participation would be counterproductive as it would ‘rubberstamp’ whatever Nkrumah wrote (ibid).
because they felt that such discussions were fruitless and would be unproductive.\textsuperscript{90}

Without opposition participation, each Committee concluded that a federal system was deemed ‘unsuitable and unworkable as far as the Gold Coast was concerned.’\textsuperscript{91} As a compromise, the committees recommended the establishment of Regional Assemblies.\textsuperscript{92} The NLM and its allies consistently rejected these concessions, arguing that only a fully representative Constituent Assembly could deliver a fair constitution (Austin 1970, 305).

Meanwhile, while Nkrumah and the CPP worked to reconcile with the opposition on the national stage, they simultaneously sought to undermine opposition efforts in Ashanti. This took several forms. First, the Ashanti Region was by no means homogenous and there was opportunity to court groups that saw Ashanti nationalism as

\textsuperscript{90} On 5 April 1955, Nkrumah introduces a motion in the Legislative Assembly for a Select Committee on Federal System and Bicameral Legislature. The Opposition rejects the motion on the grounds that it neglects to include the provision for a Constituent Assembly as the appropriate means by which to debate these two issues and that it sidesteps a vital part of the Opposition’s demands by trying to convert the Legislative Assembly into what amounts to a Constituent Assembly. They then proceed to walk out of the House (PRAAD ADM 14/2/84 15 February – 6 April 1955, 1874); When the Select Committee Report is subsequently debated in the Assembly on 8 August 1955, the Opposition again walk out (PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 26 July – 12 August 1955); In terms of the Bourne Commission, the NLM and its allies declined to discuss with Bourne because “the recent State Councils (Ashanti) Amendment Bill directly attacked the heritage and culture of Ashanti and pro tanto stultified my mission” (PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955, 3). The State Councils Ordinance allowed for chiefs to appeal directly to the Government in disputes against other chiefs and thereby by-pass the established mode of traditional conflict resolution via the State Council or Asanteman Council. In effect, the Cabinet and Nkrumah would be the final arbiter in stool disputes. It was seen as a direct attack on the institution of chieftaincy and an attempt to “establish dictatorship in this country.” Legislative Assemblyman, Mr. Kusi, bemoans: “When traditional custom is destroyed and the people have no custom and no culture whereby to model their way of life, the only form of government that could be established in this country would be that of Russia. In fact, the Government has a list of people whom it will execute when independence is achieved. I am one, the Asantehene is another ---”(PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 26 July – 12 August 1955, 588; NAGK ARG 2/2/112/39 1955, 7).

\textsuperscript{91} PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 1955, 360; Sir Frederick Bourne notes that “The “Proposals” are based on a revolt against excessive centralization: this can surely be corrected by less drastic administrative changes than those so far recommended by the NLM” (PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955, 3).

\textsuperscript{92} Regional Assemblies were to have specific responsibilities in the fields of development, agriculture, communications, works, housing, education and health (PRAAD ADM 5/3/100 1955).
inimical to their interests. Second, the CPP made appeals to the population to support Independence (PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 May 15 – 22, 1956; Austin 1970, 284). Finally, the CPP appealed to local interests and exploited local conflicts. It is perhaps telling that the national efforts at reconciliation were paired with potentially counter-productive maneuvering at the local level. Exploiting local conflicts involved enflaming them, and with each move, the NLM and its allies were more convinced of the CPP’s dictatorial tendencies. These efforts are nonetheless suggestive of the CPP’s evolving governance style. On the one hand, they made public efforts to reconcile with an opposition that severely distrusted it, by initiating forums for national discussion. On the other hand, they worked to shore up party support via informal and personal networks by exploiting local conflicts. At a minimum, both the CPP and the opposition turned a blind eye toward, their supporters’ use of violence in local spaces to facilitate this process, if not indeed they did not utilize it.

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93 Note that the Ashanti comprised only 45% of the population in their own capital, Kumasi, in 1955 (Austin 1970, 286). For example, the Brong-Ahafo group provided such an opportunity, historically conquered by the Ashanti and in contest with the Brong chiefs over authority and lands (ibid, 294; PRAAD ADM 5/3/127). The CPP strategically began to support their cause and made promises in this vein. The State Council (Amendment) Ordinance of 1955 went some way in this, as it gave the Brong chiefs an outlet of appeal in disputes that bypassed the Asantehene (Austin 1970, 296). At the CPP-initiated Achimota Conference in 1955, moreover, the Committee recommended that when Regional Assemblies were set up, the Brong-Ahafo should have their own regional assembly (PRAAD ADM 5/4/130). These strategies ultimately culminated in the creation of a separate Brong-Ahafo Region in 1959 (PRAAD ADM 14/7/11 19 February – 20 March 1959).

94 As Austin (1970) notes: “…Ashanti was itself a federation of many points of power, distributed in part hierarchically, in part territorially, within which paramount chiefs quarreled with their subordinates, rival royal houses were divided over succession claims, and neighboring chiefdoms challenged each other in the law courts over land and boundary rights. There was a rich field of opportunity in these disputes not only for the CPP but for the participants themselves” (292).
Ultimately, the British forced the issue by holding a third general election in 1956. The election was to be a mandate on independence based on Constitutional proposals submitted to the House (PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 May 15 – 22, 1956). The CPP ran candidates in every constituency and based its campaign largely on the strength of its record in government and the claim that a vote for the NLM or its allies meant a vote for imperialism. The Opposition, by contrast, hoped that each of its coalition parties would carry their respective region and campaigned for federalism and against CPP dictatorship. Despite these national overtures, there remained the necessity to play on local interests and rivalries in the constituencies.

Ultimately, the CPP won 71 of the 104 seats and 57% of the popular vote. Even after this electoral defeat, however, the Opposition continued to reject the CPP bid for independence, arguing that a legitimate constitution had not been agreed upon and that the election results supported their calls for federation because the CPP failed to win a reasonable majority in each of the Regions (PRAAD ADM 14/2/89 July 30 – September 19, 1956). This was perhaps a reasonable interpretation or perhaps a desperate

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95 The CPP made several last appeals, via Nkrumah and then by sending Kojo Botsio to London, to avoid such an outcome, to no avail (Austin 1970, 308-309).

96 This appeal runs something like Krobo Edusei’s comment: “If you vote for the red cockerel you vote for Kwame Nkrumah’s Constitution; if you vote for the black card, which is the NLM, you sabotage self-government for the next twenty years. And the country will be doomed forever” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 15 May – 22 May 1956, 142).

97 Austin 1970, 324-25; Dr. Busia notes that the NLM and its allies, should they happen to lose the election in what would be a national disaster, “are prepared to meet it as such and to take all steps IN and OUT of the Legislative Assembly to mitigate the evil” (Ashanti Pioneer, 14 July 1956, quoted in Austin 1970, 328).

98 This is indicated across the board by the fact that 205 of the 225 candidates were from the local constituency where they contested (Austin 1970, 324).

99 Austin 1970, 348-349; Austin (1970) calculates that roughly 50% of those registered actually cast votes, and that roughly 35% of the adult population voted in 1956 (347).
attempt to continue the fight. Regardless, the CPP perceived such overtures to be proof of the opposition’s purely destructive objectives.

Despite these objections, on August 3, 1956, the Prime Minister put the Motion for Gold Coast Independence before the Assembly.\(^{100}\) In January 1957, the parties finally agreed on a constitution that was essentially the same as the proposals put forth by the Bourne Report (PRAAD RG 17/1/59; Austin 1970, 357). With a Constitution approved, Ghana became independent on March 6, 1957.

**Concluding Remarks**

The British heralded the Gold Coast in 1947 as a pioneer among African colonies for its advanced political development. Its 1946 Constitution provided for the first African-majority legislature, and it became the first colony to gain its independence on the African continent in 1957. During events, however, the educated elites with the longest experience in training, education, and participation in lobbying through formal channels for political reforms were bypassed for control of the state. Rather, a mass party emerged after World War II and inherited the state apparatus. The CPP spent its first years of power in apprenticeship and the following three governing under self-government. This limited experience of governing under democratic institutions meant that the CPP organization suffered from both internal defection and external opposition. It also relied on informal processes to gain and maintain power, such as distributing parts of the state to loyal supporters, exploiting local jealousies and rivalries, and fomenting chaos in the countryside.

\(^{100}\) The Opposition walked out of the Assembly during Nkrumah’s motion for independence (PRAAD ADM 14/2/89 30 July – 19 September 1956).
Meanwhile, a hostile relationship developed between the CPP government, new to both democratic and administrative roles, and the opposition, experienced in these roles but bitter in their failure to secure them. The period of self-government (1954-57) was characterized by attack and counter-attack throughout much of the country but predominately in the Ashanti Region. While the colonial and CPP government kept these conflicts from escalating to a national scale, this state of perpetual crisis set the stage for and defined the governing experience of the CPP officials. Their views of dissent and opposition politics conditioned their initiation of policies after Independence in what we will see gradually escalates to a one-party state. We now turn to the late-colonial development of a predatory state and its weak links society.

A Predatory State and Chaotic Society: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Late-Colonial Gold Coast

Ghana has a long history of social organizing via clubs, councils, movements, and unions, starting from around the turn of the twentieth century. Before 1948, these social organizations remained small, elite-centric and largely located in the municipal areas of Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi, Cape Coast, and Kumasi (Holmes 1972, 782). Holmes (1972) describes their limited effectiveness as such: "Because circumstances were unfavorable to the achievement of their [anti-colonial] objective, the methods adopted by them frequently seemed ineffectual, compromised, bizarre, opportunistic and even ill-chosen" (412). Beyond intermittent protests against specific colonial measures, broad political consciousness did not follow these elite organizations until after World War II in Ashanti and the Colony and even later in the Northern

101 Several examples include the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), National Congress of West Africa, The West African Youth League and the Gold Coast Youth Movement.
Territories. Nor did elites make concerted efforts to mobilize from below, preferring rather to lobby within the context of the colonial system for their concerns including increased wages for civil servants, subsides for municipal improvement, and elite electoral representation (ibid, 416-417). While political/social organizations were weak prior to World War II, they were nonetheless more advanced than other African countries at the time (Wight 1947, 207). It was partially for this reason that the British conceded a comparably advanced constitution in 1946 with the first African-majority legislature (Austin 1970, 7).

This basic background needs to be juxtaposed against the post-1951 development of a corrupt and predatory state that came to define relations between state and society in the early Independence period. How and why did this evolution transpire? How did violence and extra-constitutional activities become the dominant manner by which social groups challenged the behavior of the state instead of legally sanctioned channels of opposition? This section argues that the CPP government and civil organizations experienced continuously escalated tensions until the former set out on a course to gradually eliminate or coopt the latter.

While these dynamics characterized relations between the state and multiple types of organizations, evidence of this phenomenon is illustrated by a case study of one such institution: chieftaincy. I review the evolution of relations between the state and chieftaincy as a case study of state/society relations, by demonstrating three aspects. First, the countryside was in a chaotic state at Independence owing to the

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102 Austin 1970, 7; Kimble 1963, 29; Examples include the Income Tax of 1931, Sedition and Waterworks Bills of 1934, cocoa hold-ups in the 1930s, etc.
parties’ role in exploiting and enflaming local rivalries. Second, the CPP did this partially by distributing state goods to loyal parties so that both the CPP and social groups came to see the state itself as a good to be disbursed. Meanwhile, the CPP came increasingly to identify the party as the state and thus viewed party dissension against the party and the entire national project as the same thing. Third, the CPP was skillful at generating institutional change by legally manipulating its composition without involving legislative bodies.

This section examines these features in the context of a battle between the CPP state and the institutions of traditional rule. The case study is used to illustrate the evolution of the predatory nature of the state regarding one major aspect of Gold Coast (then Ghana) society. The argument is not so much that hostility toward chiefs was somehow an inappropriate position for the nationalists to hold; indeed, one could note that it was not uncommon in colonial contexts for nationalist forces to oppose traditional systems and see them as competitors for power (Migdal 1988). The contention is rather that the manner through which the nationalists attacked and relegated chieftaincy to a shell of its former self is illustrative of the state’s (the CPP’s) predatory relationship with social groups. Its manner of gaining and winning electoral support centered around coercion and cooptation of local actors and groups. After 1951, the state was frequently the prize, the promise and the means by which the CPP used these tactics. The specific case of chieftaincy provides useful evidence because it is present across the country and became a core component of the uneasy transition from a colonial to independent state.
This section is laid out in four parts. First, it provides a brief historical background on the evolution of chieftaincy in Gold Coast politics starting with the turn of the century and extending to the birth of the nationalist movement in 1949. Second, it describes the initial clashes between a fast-growing nationalist movement and conservative traditional institutions during the former’s initial bid for power between 1949 and 1951. Third, it looks at the dynamics of state relations with this core social institution after the CPP came to power from 1951 to independence in 1957. Finally, it discusses some of the legacies of this war against chiefs over the relations between state and society and the emergence of a one-party state. It argues that, in the absence of formalized institutions to facilitate information-sharing between state officials and social groups, relations between the state, increasingly synonymous with the CPP party, and society were progressively characterized by cooptation, predation, and coercion via informal institutions.

**Nationalism and Sidelining Chieftaincy**

The role of traditional authorities changed under the colonial administration, a process that was completed in the early twentieth century when the British brought the Ashanti and Northern Territories under their control (Rathbone 2000; Kimble 1963). From 1897 when the British clashed with local elites and chiefs over attempts to legislate land, the two groups partnered to combat imperial overstep, a situation that persisted for roughly 20 years (Holmes 1972). By the end of World War I, however, “the growing professionalism of the British Civil Service, the hardening of more systemic racism, and the British predilection for working with chiefs had gradually excluded the coastal elite from such roles” (Rathbone 2000, 14). At the same time, segments of the educated elites became more anti-colonial and opposed anyone who supported the
system of alien rule as it stood. As elites and chiefs began to compete for influence, events reachws a head in the early 1920s when the National Congress of British West Africa attempted to sidestep the traditional authorities in their calls for greater administrative integration (Holmes 1972, 428). At this juncture, the British made a strategic decision to back the chiefs as the more likely keepers of the colonial status quo and further entrenched their role in the colonial administration (Rathbone 2000, 14). The 1925 Constitution thus provided for the election of three municipal members and six Provincial Council of Chiefs members (Kimble 1963, 396-97; Wight 1947). Colonial members and traditional authorities in the Legislature now outnumbered the educated elites. In addition, the British passed a series of laws that further defined and expanded the influence of the chiefs to tax, administer, and legislate their local spaces via Native Administration and Territorial Councils (Kimble 1963).

For the next 20 years, many, though not all, educated elites strategically chose to work with as opposed to against the chiefs, partnering and lobbying where interests aligned to influence colonial decision-making (Holmes 1972, 464). Because the chiefs had a stronger position in the partnership, they followed a particularly conservative agenda. The elites thus campaigned for progressive development with an emphasis on increased availability of education and African participation in the administration, a situation that remained unchanged through World War II.103

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103 While Governor Guggisberg was infamous for introducing the Provincial Councils Scheme, he was also responsible for a great deal of progressive legislation in the way of education, development, and administration. Thus, while the political opportunities bypassed the educated elites, there were progressively more of them being created and gradually more opportunities for their participation in the lower levels of government.
In 1948, riots rocked the Gold Coast and the colonial government appointed the Watson Commission to investigate the sources of unrest (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63). The Commission concluded that the expansive role of chiefs in politics was “dying on its feet” and that the 1946 Burns Constitution was ‘outmoded at birth’ (Rathbone 2000, 19). The Commission’s interviews documented popular hostility to chiefs who had overstepped their authority (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63).

After the riots, Nkrumah began to mobilize a group of commoners first under the UGCC and then the CPP. The CPP’s members and leadership were of a different social category than the formerly predominant educated elite. Foremost, these new nationalists had none of the connections to chiefly stools, a symbolic indicator of who is the traditional ruler, that had helped to keep some of the educated elite at bay since the 1920s. Further, their membership came from the Gold Coast ‘youth,’ a group of people with longstanding significance in local politics as those who keep chiefly authority in check. Due to these factors, they were especially opposed to any continued dominance of the chiefs. Beyond the Watson Commission, the new nationalists began to advocate for anti-colonial reform, notably in their new newspaper, the Accra Evening News. In it, instead of referring to the Gold Coast “people and its chiefs” as had been the longstanding practice in Gold Coast politics, this new group

104 Austin 1970; A ‘stool’ is Akan terminology and refers to a real ‘throne’ upon which a chief sits and is used as a synonym for the chief’s office and the state over which he presides. Thus, when a chief comes to office, he/she is ‘enstooled’ and when he leaves office, he/she is ‘destooled’ (Rathbone 2000, 13).

105 Naturally, chiefs viewed this activity in a negative light and referred to this group as the ‘malcontents’ and ‘agitators’. When the CPP was born, they were known as the ‘verandah boys’. (Rathbone 2000, 23; see also Allman 1993, 28-36 for discussion on the history of ‘youngmen’).

106 In what would become an oft-repeated phrase, on January 5, 1950, an editorial in the Accra Evening News noted: “…Chiefs in league with the imperialists who obstruct our path…will one day run away and leave their Stools” (Accra Evening News)
referred to ‘workers’ or ‘masses’ (Rathbone 2000, 22). In short, the chiefs were on the wrong side of the growing nationalist movement.

For six months in 1950, the educated elite and some chiefs participated in the Cousseyy Commission to design a new Constitution (Rathbone 2000). Meanwhile, Nkruumah’s mass movement expanded by opening new branches throughout the southern part of the colony and increasingly confronting the chiefs (Austin 1967, 545-548). In September 1950, the CPP held a national rally and concluded that the chiefs’ involvement in national politics was no longer appropriate. In October, the Joint Territorial Council responded by discussing the possibility of banning the CPP nationally (Accra Evening News, August, 25 – October 25, 1950). At the local level, the CPP confronted chiefs by engaging in local disputes. Rathbone (2000) notes, “the local representation of the national political struggle frequently reasserted older cleavages. Almost inevitably these reflected the tensions between the old, chief-dominated Native Authorities and sections of commoners” (25). In these disputes, chiefs fought back and often formed a renewed alliance with representatives of the UGCC to reassert their authority. Further, the Accra Evening News began to publish reports that specifically supported one side or another in contests over stools, or symbolic indicators of traditional power in a territory (ibid, 27).

These activities were to set the stage for the 1951 election and the CPP in government. They suggest not just hostility toward the institution of chieftaincy, though this is party of the nationalist movement as well, but a particular type of confrontation

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107 For example, in June 1950, it was alleged that chiefs in the Northern Territory were trying to crush the CPP branch recently opened in Tamale (Rathbone 2000, 25).
that involved intimate knowledge of local disputes and actors with the potential to be quite violent if not monitored by a higher authority. As we will see, because the institutions of the party and the state failed to provide the formal means to monitor these confrontations, and because the CPP often had an incentive to exploit these divisions, it fomented local chaos via chieftaincy disputes to gain support from segments of society.

**The CPP Governance Style and the War on Chiefs**

After 1951, the CPP went through a period of government apprenticeship, having gained a substantial minority of the Legislative Assembly seats in the general election and a majority in the Executive Council (Austin 1970, 154). At this time, the newly elected representatives had little experience in governing and only minimal education (Bob-Milliar 2014, 296). The party was plagued by waves of dismissals and resignations and rumors of corruption. Meanwhile, the party witnessed a large and rapid expansion of the rank-and-file, and entered a period of increased public spending as it sought to deliver promises made during the campaign and prepare the country for Independence (ibid). Spending focused on Africanization of the civil service, expansion of education and reorganization of the local government (Austin 1970, 154-157).

Local government reform in particular had a large impact on the role of chiefs, who were now only to perform ‘customary functions’ via the pre-existing traditional councils (ADM 5/3/123 1951). In August 1951, the Legislative Assembly passed a bill to create modern local councils (Rathbone 2000, 30). Legislators focused on curtailing of many of the chiefs’ long-held powers at the local level, and creating an Upper House for the chiefs at the national level, which they rejected. Chiefs lost effective control over one of their most powerful resources, land, which now could not be distributed by a chief without consent of the local council (ibid, 31). Further, revenue from lands and courts
would no longer go to the traditional authorities but directly to local treasuries (ibid, 31-32). As these sources of revenue were transferred, the traditional councils effectively became dependent on local councils for an annual grant. As one concession to these far-reaching reforms, the chiefs were guaranteed a third of the seats on the local councils, as the Territorial Councils would appoint the holders of these seats themselves (ibid, 32). Between 1951 and 1954, newly elected councils and chiefs constantly clashed over their areas of authority and, in particular, over the distribution of revenue between the councils (ibid, 44-45).

As major policy changes altered the fundamental source of authority at the local level, the CPP also worked to extend its network of support further into rural areas. Thus, the CPP utilized formal institutional changes as well as informal strategies to win local support and sideline chiefs, specifically by backing dissident groups in the countryside where hostile groups resided. Rathbone (2000) describes the scene and the potential for CPP exploitation as such: “virtually every chieftaincy, virtually every stool, was in reality a tense political cockpit. Obviously, the fault-lines of dissent differed from place to place. But squabbles and sometimes very dangerous confrontations were the essence of chieftaincy politics” (34). In other words, the CPP had ample opportunity to destool a disloyal chief, or depose him from office, and replace him by supporting and funding local dissidents. This is not to suggest that the CPP created local disputes where none existed. Rather, it armed existing dissidents against rival chiefs. These maneuvers frequently had nothing to do with national political issues, but “the divisive quality of stool politics was [nonetheless] a potentially effective recruiting sergeant for a new political party” (ibid, 37; Austin 1961).
The courts served as a second component of local government reform, an institution that was not well regulated by the colonial government (Kimble 1963). The Korsah Committee issued a detailed report in 1951 that outlined the violations, inefficiency, and general organizational disarray of courts in rural areas (Rathbone 2000, 50-51). Despite the report’s battery of available evidence and extensive proposals for reform, the CPP government did not propose legislation to implement any of its recommendations. It was unlikely that this was due to budget issues, as the CPP had increased its spending in other areas during this period using high cocoa prices (Austin 1970, 157-161). Rather, Rathbone (2000) argues that the CPP had little incentive to do so, since it was easier and less costly to simply replace existing personnel with CPP supporters. The Minister of Local Government, who had legal authority to approve or oppose appointments made by local councils or appoint or remove members to sit on court panels, facilitated this process. (ibid, 52-53). This procedure is important because it foreshadows government methods used after 1957 when the CPP favored executive action over fully-debated legislation to achieve a goal with minimal confrontation. This was not unconstitutional, yet the impact was to consolidate CPP authority without subjecting the government to full public scrutiny and opposition (ibid, 85).

A chief’s response to these activities, however, cannot be assumed. Chiefs had numerous reasons to support the CPP if only to protect themselves in the government’s war against traditional institutions. Beyond this, politics in the countryside remained inherently local, with the focus tending to be on proximate disputes rather than national gestures. As Austin (1961) describes the 1954 election in two rural Northern constituencies: “An able candidate can use local rivalries from personal jealousies and
long-standing rivalries between lineages” (13). Thus, one chief might support the CPP to gain the party’s support in the destoolment of a rival chief and his council, or support the CPP to protect himself from local efforts to destool him, or to gain developmental resources from the state.\footnote{Austin (1961) describes the mentality of the electorate in a rural northern constituency in 1954 as such: “Thus the successful candidate must try and live up to his campaign promises: he is regarded by many of his constituents as an investment, and he will be asked for jobs and scholarships or for help in local disputes often far beyond his capacity to satisfy all those who, having helped him to become an Assembly member, now expected something in return” (14-15).}

Finally, one might support the CPP (or the NLM) because of local coercion and violence from one side or the other (Rathbone 2000, 79). The most vocal chiefly opponents of CPP government frequently paid dearly for this resistance.\footnote{For example, the Akyem Abuakwa district, home to several key members of the UGCC including J.B. Danquah, Akuffo-Addo and Ofori Atta, was stripped of developmental goods, its chiefs threatened with destoolment and its people incited to revolt against its chiefly leadership. Meanwhile, the Okyenhene was almost neurotic in opposing CPP support in his district, even allegedly supporting forces to go out and harangue voters known to support the CPP and refusing to allow a CPP branch to be established in the district (Rathbone 2000, 38-43).} When the NLM emerged in the Ashanti Region after the 1954 election, the Asantehene and numerous smaller chiefs supported it (Allman 1993, 55). The CPP retaliated by passing the State Council (Amendment) Ordinance in August 1955. This allowed lesser chiefs to appeal their cases against higher chiefs directly to the government, thus bypassing the traditional hierarchy in the region and granting the government more discretion to support CPP-loyalist chiefs in disputes against non-CPP rivals (PRAAD ADM 14/2/85 July 26 – August 12, 1955).

Finally, the CPP cleverly used legal avenues to influence the composition and orientation of chieftaincy institutions. During the years of decolonization, the chiefs sought to secure their future through constitutional protections. The CPP consistently...
denied these efforts or left them unresolved. For example, in debates over the 1954 Constitution, the Asanteman Council and the Joint Provincial Council sent a joint response to the Government’s White Paper for constitutional change. In it, they requested a House of Chiefs at the national level, a statutory role for the chiefs’ territorial councils and the formal recognition of traditional authorities as essential elements of local administration (Rathbone 2000, 59).

Nkrumah visited both territorial councils in June 1953 (Rathbone 2000, 60). At their meeting, the groups agreed that chiefs should be kept out of national politics by ensuring that appeals from the territorial councils be forwarded to an impartial committee, and that the CPP appoint a commission of inquiry to examine the question of an Upper House. Both agreements were to be fulfilled after the 1954 election, but the CPP never acted on either proposal.

In short, the CPP sought to assuage outspoken rivals when necessary by appealing to them for patience but never fulfilling promises. For example, the chiefs secured the creation of Regional Assemblies and regional Houses of Chiefs in the Independence Constitution, but the CPP argued that the formal plans should remain unspecified until after the British departed. After Independence, the CPP government rapidly dismantled them.110 Finally, it is perhaps also telling that the oft-repeated phrase that chiefs shall not be involved in ‘party politics’ applied only to chiefs who supported parties other than the CPP (Rathbone 2000, 62; NAGK ARG 2/10/2/57; PRAAD RG

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110 Foreshadowing Nkrumah’s intentions, his declarations in the Cabinet in 1954 suggest frustration with chiefs’ continued lobbying for constitutional ‘safeguards,’ arguing that no safeguards would be necessary “if they simply performed their functions in a manner acceptable to their subjects” (quoted in Rathbone 2000, 62). Indeed, in the legislative debate over the fate of the Regional Assemblies in 1958, Nkrumah reveals his long-held intention not to honor this concession, declaring their establishment a ‘rape on mother Ghana’ (PRAAD ADM 14/7/9 3 November – 19 December 1958, 16).
17/1/13). This tendency foreshadowed the CPP’s later view that the state and party were one and the same, loyalty to the latter also implying loyalty to the former.

In short, in relating to chieftaincy, the CPP exhibits several strategies that are suggestive of the way the party, and thus the state, interacted with society more broadly. First, one of the CPP’s primary strategies during and after elections, was to capitalize on stool disputes between chiefs by supporting the dissident group against a non-CPP-supporting chief or vice versa. Second, after 1951, the CPP garnered more support by strategically dispersing state resources to partners at the local level and withholding developmental goods to non-supporters. Third, where this strategy was not effective, the CPP removed legal titles of paramountcy from non-loyal chiefs to provoke local dissension. This would facilitate the destoolment and replacement of the chief with a more loyal partner, with paramount status subsequently reestablished. In this way, the CPP manipulated the composition of the institution to assure loyalty to the party, and thus the state. In other words, the CPP utilized the state to maintain its influence against potential opposition (in this case chiefs) by using strategies of cooptation, predation and coercion. These became important tools of the state after Independence as well.

**Legacies of Nationalism for Post-Independence Chieftaincy**

The politics of late-colonial chieftaincy left a legacy of rural chaos by 1957. Because of the escalation of local conflict through attack and counter-attack, rural disputes were rife throughout the late-colonial and early independence period. When the CPP strategically supported one chief against another in a local dispute, this support undermined and marginalized the unsupported chief’s supporters. Because CPP support was also frequently tied to patronage for the winners, the losers were bitter, promoting a cycle of coercion and conflict (Rathbone 2000).
In other cases, the new local council clashed with traditional institutions over the authority each held and how much money should be allocated to the latter’s activities (Rathbone 2000, 44-45). The result was that neither institution was effective in providing local governance. Finally, NLM and CPP supporters perpetrated violence in the countryside without either party’s oversight. This was because the state, as we will see in the next section, remained small and its knowledge of and control over peripheral areas limited. Thus, violence tended to go unchecked and conditioned a politics of retribution and revenge (ibid, 102).

The CPP used the strategic disbursement of state resources to support loyalists and punish dissenters. The Jibowu Commission suggests evidence of several cases where CPP officials used the state to distribute patronage (PRAAD ADM 5/3/102 1956). In this way, the CPP used the state to control specific social actors and communities. This set up a relationship of private, informal, distribution between the state and society.

Beyond the chaotic realities of a state not yet in control of its population, territory, and officials, the case study of relations between the state and chieftaincy foreshadow the manner through which the CPP would seek to control social interest groups after Independence. One significant point is that the CPP frequently manipulated situations on the ground instead of introducing and debating legislation. For example, despite ample evidence of the need to reform the courts, the CPP government never attempted to do this via legislation. Rather, it set up several commissions of enquiry and in the meantime filled the courts with party supporters. Second, the CPP often saw itself as synonymous with the state (Austin 1970, 31). This is illustrated in its rhetoric on the chiefs’ involvement in party politics – a phrase directed toward non-CPP chiefs only.
Finally, the CPP made promises to interest groups to placate them without any real intention of fulfilling the promises. This tactic was effective in putting off the chiefs’ demands for constitutional safeguards through the Houses of Chiefs as well as regional safeguards through Regional Assemblies.

**Limited State Development Despite Longstanding Calls for Reform**

In weak authoritarian colonies, it is common for the most fervent and longstanding demands of early nationalists in their struggles against colonial occupiers to be over access to and integration in the administrative apparatus. In the Gold Coast, early anti-colonial activities focused not on overthrowing the foreign regime, as much as encouraging greater local incorporation into its institutions (Holmes 1972; Kimble 1963). This contest centered on expansion of education and training opportunities as well as local incorporation into the civil service and access to promotion once within its ranks (‘Africanization’) (Wight 1947,176). These priorities frequently jockeyed back and forth for primary importance. Sometimes there were periods when advancements in opportunities for education outpaced avenues for climbing the bureaucratic ladder. At other times, rapid administrative administrative expansion juxtaposed uneasily with a limited pool of sufficiently qualified applicants (Kimble 1963, 123).

Nonetheless, the colonizer limited both opportunities and thus these issues centered as points of contention until the last moments of colonial overrule. Unlike in India, Ceylon or Malaya, for example, the British never introduced competitive examinations for the civil service in the Gold Coast. Thereby, entry points into the service were few, and where the colonized did enter, the British limited promotion opportunities above the lower ranks until the Second World War (Justice Crabbe
Interview). This was Governor Guggisburg’s ambitious policy in the 1920s to Africanize the civil service, a program that he ultimately abandoned (Kimble 1963, 122-124).

Further, a Junior and Senior Service largely separated African from European public servants. Less than a decade before independence, there were only 98 Africans out of a total of 1300 senior appointments in the Gold Coast (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63). Instead, the colonial administration preferred to work through existing traditional institutions at the local level to maintain law and order, provide revenue, and organize community-level development (Holmes 1972).

The civil service remained small at independence as a result of late opportunities for training and integration into the colonial apparatus. While a small group of elites with advanced education who were highly qualified and proficient served in the colonial administration, this group was limited and too small to retain its professional character when faced with the direct political interference of the CPP after Independence (Interviews with Justice Crabbe). At Independence, a process of integrating the state and party began in earnest. The CPP achieved this via cooptation and/or coercion at all levels of the polity. Increasingly, officials utilized the state as a private source of wealth, accumulation, power, and impunity.

Moreover, because the state (and party) had limited knowledge of the population outside a few urban centers, it became increasingly paranoid about activities against it. When the CPP had weakened the opposition to near extinction in 1960, it turned increasingly against its own ranks (Fordwor 2010, 92-112; Omari 1970). The last six years of the CPP regime were marked by accusations of treason, conspiracy, assassination attempts, detentions, exiles, and, in 1966, a coup d’état (Bretton 1966).
This section argues that the CPP, despite its ability to canvas sufficient votes to claim a mandate to lead the Gold Coast to independence, knew little about its population and territory. These challenges spanned the country, with outbreaks of violence, disorder and corresponding state repression after 1957. The CPP also coopted or disbanded organizations they viewed as opposed to the centralized party state, including traditional rulers, regional assemblies, and local government institutions, as well as civil society groups and the civil service itself (Austin 1970). This administrative development is outlined in five sections as follows: pre-1946 Political Design, Bureaucratic Development, Direct Taxation and Government Revenue, Public Services, and Transportation and Communications. It sets the scene for a discussion of the resulting challenges associated with a limited administrative apparatus for maintaining democratic institutions after Independence.

**Pre-1946 Political Design**

Compared to its African neighbors, the Gold Coast had early contact with Europeans along its coastal areas. As early as 1554, British ships arrived on the coast, though the British government did not assume control of these trade settlements formally until 1821 (Fordwor 2010). In 1874, Britain proclaimed the southern coast as a separate Gold Coast Colony with its own Governor, Executive and Legislative Council (Kimble 1963, 302; de Smith 1957, 848). This process included the new presence of British District Commissioners, courts and indirect taxation. Even so, these changes primarily affected the small class of local merchants, traders, and lawyers. The great majority of conflicts and daily affairs continued to be mediated under traditional structures of justice, tax, and chiefly authority.
After an armed resistance in the late 1800s, the Ashanti Region was finally annexed to Britain in 1901 when it became a separate Protectorate under the authority of the Governor (Kimble 1963, 323). It was not joined administratively with the Colony until 1946. In 1901, the Northern Region was also annexed to the British Crown as a Protectorate by negotiating individual treaties with chiefs throughout the area. It would remain a separate legal entity until as late as 1951, when it was finally brought under the legislative instruments of the Gold Coast.

By the early 1900s, the British had brought the entire territory of the Gold Coast under its control, although they administered the three regions separately as the Colony, Ashanti, and Northern Territories. It was not until 1951, a mere six years before Independence, that the colonial rulers completed the administrative unity. This meant that while the three territories were under the authority of the same Governor and covered under the budget of the Colony, their legislative and judicial instruments remained distinct. As a result, the populations in these territories did not share a common sense of nationhood until after World War II (Holmes 1972, 12).

The Colony and Ashanti, via increased communications, transportation, and trade, created an uneasy though fruitful partnership against the colonial regime throughout the 1920s and 1930s. This culminated in their agreement to create a common legislature in the early 1940s after Gold Coast nationalist, J.B. Danquah, successfully persuaded them to do so (ibid, 825). By contrast, the Northern Territories were slow to develop a sense of regional autonomy because of the predominance of subsistence agriculture and their lack of communications and transportation. When the
realities of integration into a wider Gold Coast became inescapable, its leaders and residents embraced a regional identity of “non-Southernness” (Ladouceur 1979).

In short, the administrative institutions remained heterogeneous and their degree of intensity across the regions distinct until the late stages of colonialism. No common legislation existed across the colony until the 1950s, except for the final executive authority of the Crown via the Governor after 1901. Government intervention in people’s lives remained localized. Finally, protests of colonial rule were fewer the greater the distance from the coast.

**Bureaucratic Development**

The regions also experienced different opportunities for integration into the colonial bureaucracy. The Gold Coast Colony, where colonial imposition occurred first, made the most longstanding and pronounced calls for administrative reform and integration. These agitations started as early as 1850, when missionaries facilitated the creation of a small group of educated Africans (Kimble 1963, 93). At that time, the British brought a handful of coastal Africans into public service as clerks, cashiers, and justices, largely depending on the whims of the Governor (Kimble 1963, 65-68). Despite a few successes, the colonizer remained distrustful and resentful toward the integration of educated locals until much later (Kimble 1963, 87-93).

As administrative responsibilities, costs and health concerns for overseas officers increased, the British turned to Africans to fill vacant posts (Kimble 1963, 94). In 1883, of the 43 high-level posts, Africans filled nine including seven District Commissioners (ibid). Africans’ fortunes were reversed by the turn of the century when the British increased the qualifications required for integration to meet the demands of an increasingly complex administration (ibid, 97-98). As this happened, those Africans who
held senior posts slowly dropped out for various reasons, and the colonizer made no effort to replace them (ibid, 99). In short, the educational/training system failed to keep pace with changing administrative demands, meaning that incorporation into the system retrogressed just as expectations among a local elite expanded. The British brought Europeans to fill these administrative needs. In 1908, the senior service had grown to 274 officers, of which only five were African (Kimble 1963, 100). Africans resented limited opportunities for their advancement once in the service.\footnote{One of the outspoken advocates of more egalitarian processes of recruitment and promotion was Casely Hayford’s National Congress of British West Africa (Holmes 1972).}

In this context, Africans made demands for increasing integration after World War I. Governor Guggisburg came to the Gold Coast in 1920 hoping to address the issue of Africanization as well as broad-based development. In 1921, he proposed a plan to the Legislative Council that called for the gradual replacement of at least 50% of the existing European staff in the service (Kimble 1963, 107). In addition, he proposed to reorganize the service to provide a clear path for training and promotion. The plan officially set forth a 20-year goal to increase the total service to 558, of which 229 (40%) would be Africans.\footnote{This included any section of the administration expect justices and political officials, a point of contention in the Legislature but one which was in line with Governor Guggisburg’s political reforms in terms of promoting the role of traditional institutions and authorities at the expense of the educated elite (Kimble 1963, 122).} When the economy slumped during the depression, however, the Governor abandoned the ambitious plan and by 1948, only 98 Africans served in the Senior Service out of a staff of over 1,300 (7.5%) (PRAAD ADM 5/3/63). Africanization remained a cornerstone of Gold Coast demands through independence.\footnote{By way of example, an editorial in the CPP’s party paper in mid-1953 calls for the ambition to cater for ourselves should begin to realize itself now, now, now” (Accra Evening News, July 2, 1953).}
Despite several committees on Africanization in 1941 and 1943, the colonizer only re-examined the issue after World War II when nationalist agitation for self-government intensified (Arden-Clarke 1958; PRAAD ADM 14/2/59 February 28 – March 3, 1950). In 1951, a Commission on the Civil Service reported that Africanization of the civil service was the single most important factor in the transition to Independence. The report blamed the weak educational system, the rigid structure of promotion, and the rapid expansion of the civil service for the disappointing progress. It further bemoaned the fact that there were an insufficient number of Gold Coast graduates with the proper education, and existing civil servants did not have enough training to take over the European posts (PRAAD ADM 5/3/138).

In 1954, a Public Service Commission published a report on the progress of Africanization which noted that between 1949 and 1954, the total size of the establishment increased from 1,663 to 2,560 and the percentage of these positions held by Africans from 10% to 35% (PRAAD ADM 5/3/82). In terms of Senior Establishment Officers, the number of Africans increased from 32 in 1949 to 180 in 1954. By 1956, a year before Independence, there were 9,178 (76%) Africans and 2,828 (24%) Europeans in the total civil service (junior and senior appointments). This transformation was a function of both a rapid Africanizing of the service after self-government was conceded in 1954, the increasing number of vacancies left by early European retirements, and the growth of the overall service as the government expanded public service provisions.\(^{114}\)

\(^{114}\) PRAAD ADM 7/7/6; PRAAD ADM 8/3/30; PRAAD ADM 8/2/35; Government expenditure rose by roughly 73% between 1953-1957, due largely to the expansion of the social services (PRAAD ADM 7/6/6 4-5).
In short, Ghana experienced long-term agitation for integration into the colonial administrative apparatus. Despite successive promises, it was not until after the British laid a path to self-government in 1951 that these promises began to be fulfilled. The result was that political advancement far outpaced administrative development, a function of long-term colonial reluctance or neglect to concede opportunities to Africans (Saloway 1955, 473; Apter 1972, 281).

**Direct Taxation and Government Revenue**

The development of a direct taxation system in the Gold Coast under colonial rule was highly controversial and the British abandoned several attempts to generate public revenue in this way. The British introduced a general poll tax in the early 1850s, but it led to extensive tension (Kimble 1963, 169-189). In the coastal towns, several other attempts were made through the late nineteenth century, but all faced protests and were abandoned. Rather, the British utilized customs duties on trade (Kimble 1963, 307-312). Thus, by 1938, 98% of tax revenue came from indirect taxes, largely import and export duties (Crook 1986, 86).

The British finally introduced legislation successfully in 1943 (Kimble 1963, 327). In 1945, the first year of assessment, the colonizer made 3,068 assessments. By 1949, they made 5,310 assessments (PRAAD ADM 14/2/59 February 28 – March 3, 1950; PRAAD ADM 5/1/209, 9). The Philipson Report notes that in 1951, more than 85% of this income tax was derived from Companies Tax and that traders paid two-thirds of the total tax recovered from individuals. Moreover, the indigenous population contribution to direct taxation was less than 1%, as “the Income Tax Department is not organized as yet to bring within its ambit the indigenous community except in obvious cases” (PRAAD ADM 5/3/77, 59).
During these post-war years, the British felt pressured to expand public services and create a steady stream of government revenue, and thus needed to increase sources of taxation and improve the structures used to collect it (PRAAD ADM 14/2/49 September 16 – 22, 1947). Despite these pressures and calls for reform, by 1957, Ghana still only brought in roughly 10% from direct taxes as a percentage of total revenue (PRAAD ADM 7/6/6, VI). The largest amount of revenue was generated to fund the development plan from 1951-59 that came from the export of cocoa – which, in 1960, made up 58.8% of exports (Austin 1970, 5).

**Public Services: Education**

As noted above, the Ghanaian’s campaign for greater education and Africanization of the civil service were heavily intertwined. Up to the late 1920s, missionary activities in the Colony led educational development in the Colony and Ashanti (Foster 1965). In 1891, there were roughly 139 elementary schools servicing some 5,000 students, but only three of these were Government Schools (Kimble 1963, 78). By 1919, there were still only 19 Government Schools (ibid). Further, educational opportunities were unequal across the regions. In 1919, the Colony had 186 schools, Ashanti 23, and the Northern Territories only four (ibid, 84).

Secondary schools suffered even further challenges and were frequently too poorly financed to sustain activities – the first government secondary school opened after World War II (ibid, 85-86). Governor Guggisburg’s development plans in the 1920s included an expansion of the educational system. Achimota, a Government-run secondary school opened in 1927 was a keystone of this expansion. By 1943 it enrolled 98 pupils (PRAAD ADM 5/3/48). By the 1930s, there were 18 Government Schools as
well as 241 assisted schools, only five of which were in the Northern Territories (Foster 1965, 121).

The 1920s expansion of the primary school system meant that many students attended a few years of school but were unqualified or, due to space constraints, unable to take advantage of the limited opportunities beyond Standard VII (16 years old) (PRAAD ADM 14/2/48 March 18 – 28, 1947). This group of elementary-school dropouts became the central activists and leadership of the CPP after 1949 (Austin 1970, 17). In 1948, the year of the riots, there were 286,688 students in primary school, though the large majority of them stopped after infant junior courses (11 years) (Austin 1970, 14; PRAAD ADM 14/2/50 April 27 – May 7, 1948). Of these, less than one-third attended government or government-assisted schools (PRAAD ADM 5/1/204, 9). Moreover, there were only five government and grant-based secondary institutions, and 19 non-assisted ones (ibid, 10).

Government-directed educational expansion took of only after the British conceded self-government in the 1950s (Foster 1965). Even though the Gold Coast had developed the most extensive education system on the continent outside of the Union of South Africa, functional literacy when self-government began remained well below 20 percent (Foster 1965, 171). By Independence, there were a total of 3,571 primary schools, 1,131 middle schools and 60 secondary schools in all of Ghana (Foster 1965, 187-191).

As a percentage of the total school-age children, these facilities enrolled just less than 40% nationwide in 1960 (Table 5-1). Note the wide discrepancies across regions, ranging from a low of 11% in the Northern Territories to a high of nearly 60% in Accra.
(ibid). This illustrates the long-term colonial attention to urban areas compared with their relative neglect of the rural areas outside the state’s reach. The lack of educational opportunity and relative underdevelopment of the Northern Territories became a central point of contention as Ghana advanced toward self-government.\textsuperscript{115}

**Transportation and Communications**

As mentioned, the cocoa industry dominated the Gold Coast economy from the 1880s through independence. By the 1920s, there were thousands of small-scale local cocoa farmers, brokers, creditors and debtors, as well as a handful of foreign firms and marketing organizations. By and large, locals dominated the farming community while foreigners dominated the marketing and trade fields (Holmes 1972, 31). By 1939-40, the Gold Coast exported over 250,000 tons of cocoa per year (ibid, 34). The industry fluctuated massively, however, depending on global markets and changes in production due to local conditions.\textsuperscript{116}

The expansion of this cash crop as well as mining (timber and gold) required more efficient systems of transport in the late 1800s, and the first practical step toward achieving this infrastructural expansion occurred in 1893-94 when a preliminary survey...

\textsuperscript{115} In the debates in the Legislative Council over the Ewart Commission Report on Education, representative of the Northern Territories, Tali-Ni, argues that limited educational opportunities was a central point of concern in this debate: "...the government should be based on the will of the people. That is quite right, but it is equally true that if Government should be based on the will of the people, the people must know what they want. They must also be able to pass an intelligent judgment when an issue is presented to them. I feel that an ignorant and indifferent electorate cannot be the basis of a sound democracy. Those of you who have been up to the north can bear me out on that statement. We lag greatly behind the people of Ashanti and the Colony in education, so what we really want you to ask for us is more and more education – we want to be seen in the colleges, that is, more and more scholarships for us, so that we might also come up to a very reasonable standard of education. If we were to permit popular elections in the north, we feel that it would lead to wholesale corruption, intimidation and even the sale of ballot papers and what is more, the people would not be able to elect worthy representatives. That again is due to lack of education" (PRAAD ADM 14/2/58 19 January 1950, 182).

\textsuperscript{116} For example it decreased from 85\% of all exports in the mid-1920s to a mere 29\% during World War II (Holmes 1972, 35).
was completed (Kimble 1963, 28). When prices for these goods on the international market were high, transportation expanded. For example, between 1919 and 1925, the total mileage of drivable roads increased from 1,300 to 4,374 miles (PRAAD ADM 5/3/24, 54). During this time (1921), cocoa made up 75% of domestically produced exports in the colony (Austin 1970, 5). During the final phase of colonialism between 1946 and 1960, drivable road networks increased from 8,114 miles to 19,236 miles (Austin 1970, 5).

Railway transport also expanded, though it never went further than Kumasi in the Ashanti Region, some 168 miles from the coast (PRAAD ADM 5/3/24). The inadequate development of railways, combined with very limited road networks kept inhabitants of the Northern Territories outside the reach of transport until after Independence. Railway construction ceased to expand in the 1930s so that ultimately railway networks covered only about 600 miles in total (Holmes 1972, 380).

Finally, communications systems also increased across the colony. A postal system was introduced in 1888 and included 61 post offices as well as 46 telegraph offices by 1907 (Kimble 1963, 31-32). As noted, because the Northern Territories lay largely outside these primary economic opportunities, it remained largely isolated in the lead-up to Independence. By contrast, a grid of rail and road networks which could be used to transport goods and people connected the Colony and Ashanti.

As with other colonies of this type, however, there remained significant challenges in reaching rural populations outside the main networks that connected the few major towns. Thus, the coastal towns of Sekondi/Takoradi, Cape Coast, and Accra as well as the Ashanti regional capital of Kumasi served as meeting points for the
exchange of economic goods via these lines of transport and communication. However outside of the metropoles, movement and communication remained challenging and, inevitably, local (Austin 1961). In 1957, despite relatively high urbanization rates compared to other colonies on the continent, roughly 85% of the population lived outside the major towns (Austin 1970, 5; PRAAD ADM 7/7/6).

**Concluding Remarks**

Limited administrative capacity meant that the CPP had minimal knowledge of its population, particularly in the peripheral areas. Though elected as a nationalist movement, its major constituencies were in the urban spaces, whereas rural support tended to come from exploitation of local conflicts (Austin 1970). Even in 1956, the formal connections between the central government in Accra and local constituencies were quite limited. As such, the leadership was never quite sure of its support or of the grievances that might turn people against it (Austin 1967). A dramatically altered domestic scene had surprised the government several times already in its short reign, in the expulsion of nearly 100 CPP rebels as well as the NLM’s rapid emergence in national politics. The latter wreaked havoc in the Ashanti Region to a point when CPP officials were essentially exiled from the region (A.B. Akosa Interview).

Moreover, the CPP’s rapid rise to power transpired more through the ad hoc and often uncontrollable activities of verandah boys than through well-organized and far-reaching institutions. Lines of communication and transportation as well as availability of educational resources remained problematic. Finally, sources of revenue were volatile, coming primarily from cocoa exports with a new, but extremely limited taxation apparatus.
In effect, political institutional transition occurred at the same time as administrative expansion, leading to a situation whereby at Independence, the hitherto professional public service was gradually politicized and compromised. Despite lip service to the non-political nature of the civil service, because the CPP increasingly saw itself as synonymous with the state, loyalty to the latter meant active loyalty to the former.\textsuperscript{117}

The CPP’s rapid rise to power on the back of local chaos, its limited knowledge of the population, and the constantly changing domestic field of opposition led to the party’s increasing paranoia after Independence. In many ways, the CPP’s own insecurity and methods of state coercion to prevent poorly understood forces from overtaking it were evident prior to 1957. But their most egregious manifestations were constrained by the need to cooperate with an unruly opposition lest the British withdraw their promise of independence. I no turn to the dynamics of the gradual destruction of democracy in Ghana’s newly independent country.

**Independence and the Emergence of a One-Party State**

At Ghana’s independence, the British were optimistic about the future of democracy in the country.\textsuperscript{118} While the opposition had failed to win a federal constitution and the process of decolonization had been domestically violent and contentious, they were largely satisfied with (or resigned to accept) concessions for the creation of

\textsuperscript{117} Justice Crabbe describes a process whereby between 1957 and 1960 there was a persistent assault on the independence of the Public Service which was characterized by intimidation and indoctrination (Interview).

\textsuperscript{118} Governor Sir Arden-Clarke notes that “he did not think that there was any real desire for a real dictatorship in Ghana, or that there was anyone there who would, or could, make an effective dictator” (1958, 36). Moreover, the African continent was closely watching the triumph of the nationalists (Milne 2000, 77-78).
Regional Assemblies and Houses of Chiefs. When March 6 approached, the country was relatively calm, the opposition had gained no real territorial stronghold that might support secession, and the country enjoyed a strong economic position bolstered by high cocoa prices (Austin 1970, 364; 367-68). Nonetheless, the CPP was not satisfied to operate on the assumption that the country had developed enough unity to support inter-party competition. Within a few short months, the CPP government began a process of gradually dismantling the Constitution and constraining the realm of political activity. This process culminated in the Republican Constitution in 1960, which granted extensive unchecked powers to the executive (PRAAD RG 17/1/179). Why did the model colony derail its democratic institutions so shortly after independence? Why was a dominant party with national support and three electoral victories under its belt anxious to clear the political space of any competition and participation?

This section outlines this gradual erosion of multi-party politics by an increasingly coercive state, constraining the available space for legitimate political activity, and strengthening the CPP party structure. The CPP justified these measures as necessary to rapidly develop and unify the nation, and to generate security. I will discuss each of these political maneuvers in turn.

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119 There existed some limited calls for secession, particularly from the Asante Youth Association (AYA) after the election and after the Colonial Office issued a grant of independence (Allman 1993, 162-163). Beyond this, the opposition's last-ditch efforts to object to independence under a unitary constitution were less aggressive and included arguing that the general election vote breakdown reflected a need for federalism and walking out of the Parliament during the motion for Independence (PRAAD ADM 14/2/89 30 July – 19 September 1956, 140). When the Secretary of State for the Colonies left the Gold Coast in 1957 after the final constitutional talks, he expressed pleasure to find that there was underlying unity and a wide measure of agreement (Allman 1993, 177).

120 On August 29, 1957, Prime Minister Nkrumah gave a speech on Economic Development, Democracy and Internal Stability. In it he argues that the economics goals of the country are such for rapid advancement in a few years what other countries have taken hundreds of years to accomplish, notes that there are many cases of countries which have sacrificed democracy in the name of economic development (and vice versa) and that stability regardless must be the priority (PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 20-30
This chapter argues that three factors are essential for understanding this course of democratic breakdown. First, limited self-government prior to independence meant that the CPP government was inexperienced in utilizing democratic institutions. As in the pre-independence period, CPP officials were anxious to protect power because they were unsure how long it would last (Austin 1970, 362; 416-17). The rise of the NLM and regional opposition parties had demonstrated the volatility of democratic politics. Although the CPP had inherited the state from the colonizer, its officials continued to jealously guard their newfound positions of power.\textsuperscript{121} In addition, there was a strong tendency to treat the party and the state as synonymous and electoral victory as a mandate for any action the party thought necessary.\textsuperscript{122} Correspondingly, the CPP

\textsuperscript{121} One of the first moves of the new CPP government was aimed at consolidating its hold in the regions, which had hitherto proved problematic as it offered the opposition room to maneuver. In an alarming similarity to colonial-style administration, the Government appointed all CPP party members (not administrators) to the positions of Regional Commissioners. Indeed, they also unconstitutionally expanded the number of regions (appointing Brong-Ahafo its own Commissioner though no Region yet formally existed). Austin (1970) describes this as: “The fusion of party and government power was thus demonstrated as clearly as it could be at local and regional level: the party boss sat in the former colonial commissioner’s office, and presided over an administrative hierarchy arranged much as in colonial times, which he now placed at the service of the party” (378). Further, the Minister of Finance, K.A. Gbedemah, defended this unconstitutional maneuver on the grounds of administrative efficiency: “I am to say that the Government are very conscious of the fact that this country is governed by a Constitution and every step that the Government take will be within the spirit and letter of the Constitution. But the Government are faced with certain administrative problems which are not envisaged in the Constitution and therefore any action to make the running of the administration easy will also be within the spirit of the Constitution” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/2 23 April – 12 July, 1957, 468).

\textsuperscript{122} For example, in justifying the introduction of the Preventive Detention Bill which gave the Government the authority to detain persons up to five years without trial, Mr. R.O. Amuako-Atta, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Communications, argues that the Bill is justified in that it will bring calm to the country, “as it meets the wishes of the majority of the people in this country” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 1 July – 5 September 1958, 440). By which, given the fact that the Bill was introduced under a Certificate of Urgency and was thus fast-tracked through Parliament with less than one day in total of deliberation, that the CPP’s electoral majority provided it with a unquestionable confidence in all its activities (Justice Crabbe Interview).
viewed behaviors and words that opposed party activities as illegitimate, seditious, and unpatriotic.\textsuperscript{123} They confronted such activities with harsh security provisions and restrictions on political activities, measures that may have been contemplated previously, if the colonial ruler had not acted as a moderating force.\textsuperscript{124}

Second, despite Ghana’s long history of organization via clubs, societies, and movements, etc., these groups tended to be urban-based and elite-centric.\textsuperscript{125} By contrast, rural spaces remained generally unconnected to the state and broader social organizing (Austin 1961, 3). The national party sought to exploit local disputes to mobilize supporters. Apparent especially in the NLM/CPP contests, these parties did not have much control over the activities of local activists (Allman 1993; Austin 1970). In other words, the national parties fanned the flames of local rivalries, but offered no means to tame them.\textsuperscript{126} By Independence, the countryside was in a chaotic state and

\textsuperscript{123} In the Legislative Councils of 1956 over the Government’s Constitutional Proposals, Mr. Krobo Edusei argues: “If you vote for the red cockerel, you vote for Kwame Nkrumah’s Constitution; if you vote for the black card, which is the NLM, you sabotage self-government for the next twenty years. And the country will be doomed forever” (PRAAD ADM 14/2/88 15 May – 22 May 1956, 142).

\textsuperscript{124} Examples of this are numerous: When the conflict with the NLM reached an irreconcilable point, the Secretary of State for the Colonies forced a third general election though the CPP vigorously opposed it; when the CPP passed the State Councils (Amendment) legislation in 1955 which gave the state discretion in chiefly disputes above the paramount chiefs, the Colonial Secretary and other colonial officials worked for its repeal; and when the CPP was split between a radical minority that called for its immediate unilateral declaration of independence vs. a more moderate group which sought to negotiate a peaceful transition to independence via Tactical Action, Governor Arden-Clarke supported Nkrumah and the latter group, providing them with leverage to defeat and expel the party radicals (Allman 1993; Austin 1970).

\textsuperscript{125} Holmes (1972) offers a detailed breakdown of these pre-WWI organizations.

\textsuperscript{126} One example of this phenomenon in the CPP was the over 100 CPP rebels who refused to accept the central committee’s decision to reject their nominations in favor of other candidates. 81 of these rebels still ran as independents in the 1954 election (Austin 1970, 225).
remained unconnected to institutions of the state.\textsuperscript{127} After Independence, the CPP government dealt with this chaos via harsh legislation to rid the country of security challenges.

Finally, the colonial state remained quite small even in 1957 and African integration into these institutions was minimal.\textsuperscript{128} This meant that the government had only a limited reach into peripheral spaces. While the colonial civil service was of high and professional quality, its small size made it difficult to manage an expanding bureaucracy after independence. Rather, the CPP gradually engaged in a persistent assault on the independence of the Public Service Commission and other public institutions (Justice Crabbe Interview). Further, it began to coopt social organizations and control them through the central party apparatus. Finally, with few institutionalized checks and balances having been established up to this point, the rapidly expanding administration was turned into a private source of wealth and power. Several of these tendencies were evident prior to independence, but corruption became rampant afterward (PRAAD ADM 5/3/94; PRAAD ADM 5/3/102 1956; KB Asante Interview; PRAAD ADM 5/3/184; PRAAD ADM 5/3/115).

In short, because of its democratic inexperience, weak state-society links, and administrative limitations, the CPP gradually disassembled the democratic regime by further centralizing the party, converging it with state institutions, coopting social organizations, and restricting the space for political competition and participation. These

\textsuperscript{127} Rathbone 2000; One broader manifestation of this was the difficult and contentious transition from traditional local governance to a more modern system of local governance. This process, initiated by the CPP after 1951, remained in a volatile state at Independence (Arden-Clarke 1958).

\textsuperscript{128} On the eve of Independence, there were only a total of 2785 civil service officers, 43% of whom were overseas officers (Austin 1970, 8).
activities culminated in the Republican Constitution of 1960 that provided for extensive executive authority. Now I will walk through the post-Independence sequence of events, which ended in the destruction of Ghana’s first democratic institutions and the emergence of a one-party state.

**Constraining the Opposition**

Within the first few years of independence, the CPP passed several pieces of legislation that effectively curtailed opposition activity. First, the CPP passed the Deportation Act in August 1957 (PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 August 20-30, 1957). The Bill provided for the deportation of any individual whose presence in the country “is not considered to be conducive to the public good.”\(^ {129}\) This provided for the removal of any person without trial. The CPP government used it extensively against the leaders and members of the MAP as they tended to live in settler communities in urban centers and had roots in neighboring countries (Allman 1991). In December 1957, the CPP introduced the Avoidance of Discrimination Bill to “prohibit organizations using or engaging in tribal, regional, racial or religious propaganda to the detriment of any other community, or securing the election of persons on account of their tribal, regional, or religious affiliations.”\(^ {130}\) This piece of legislation appeared to be in line with the CPP’s narrative of national unity, but also effectively undermined lines of support for a potential

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\(^ {129}\) PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 20-30 August, 1957, 70; Leaders and members of the MAP were the most affected by this Act, as they tended to live in settler communities in urban centers and had roots in neighboring countries (Allman 1991).

\(^ {130}\) PRAAD ADM 14/7/4 13 November – 19 December 1957, 485; The Avoidance of Discrimination Act had precursors in a 1954 motion in the Legislative Assembly which condemns all sectional, regional and religious parties with specific reference to the MAP and NPP, though the actual banning of such parties is not carried through until 1958 (PRAAD ADM 14/2/82 27 July – 13 August 1954).
opposition, owing to their historical association with Ashanti (NLM), Muslims (MAP), the Northern Territories (NPP) and Togoland (TC).

The CPP government also engaged in a continuing onslaught against non-CPP chiefs to deprive the opposition of its local support. These efforts were aimed most especially at constituencies in the Ashanti Region. The CPP set up several Commissions of Inquiry in 1957 to investigate the activities of State Councils in several of the most notorious opposition localities including Akim Abuakwa, Kumasi, and Asanteman Councils. When the reports were released, each of these councils was found guilty of misconduct. In addition, in 1958 a series of chiefdoms suffered ups and downs in their statuses as paramount chiefs. When the government granted or withdrew recognition in this way, this gave local pro-CPP groups the opportunity to destool, or overthrow, those chiefs who had brought government disapproval. After a pro-CPP chief replaced the destooled chief, the CPP would return the state’s status as paramount (Austin 1970, 377-78). By this process, the CPP replaced every pro-NLM chief in Ashanti (ibid, 378). In this way, the CPP persuaded (intimidated) the local population to support the CPP or at the very least, less actively oppose it. The effectiveness of this strategy is highlighted by the results of local election defeats suffered by the opposition in 1958, including Kumasi itself, along with a series of defections of northern parliamentarians to the CPP (Austin 1970, 384-85).

By 1958, the relationship between Opposition and Government had deteriorated to the extent that three full days of Parliamentary debate were filled with each side hurling insults at the other. The opposition argued that the government was guilty of intimidating Chiefs and Opposition members, overtaking the judiciary, intimidating non-
CPP supporters, using the police for ill purposes, discriminating in Government activity by recognizing pro-CPP chiefs and not recognizing non-CPP chiefs, and deporting persons without proper trial (PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 July 1 – September 5, 1958). The Government responded by defending the Government’s responsibility to maintain law and order and noting that “there is a limit to everything, especially when Members of the Opposition go round and seek to undermine the foundation of our Independence and to undermine democracy…there is a limit, even to democracy” (ibid, 98-99). By 1960, though the opposition still nominally existed, it was “reduced to no more than a token force” (Austin 1970 395).

**Shoring up Security**

Nkrumah used security concerns to justify state expansion after Independence. First, the CPP government passed a series of measures to deal with security challenges that effectively bypassed the judicial system and frequently targeted individual opposition members. Coming out of a tumultuous decolonization with the emergence of the aggressive and often violent NLM, the CPP remained apprehensive and hostile despite the ultimately peaceful transfer of power.\(^{131}\) Up to this point, however, the colonial government had possessed the authority to constrain such opponents. The CPP faced three primary sources of opposition: a new opposition movement in Accra called the Ga Standfast Association, a

\(^{131}\) In August 1957 following the debate over the Deportation Act, Nkrumah made a speech condemning subservice opposition: “But if we are to achieve this objective and make economic progress the House must realize that we must have a much greater degree of self-discipline than we have had up till now. The Government are determined to deal firmly and effectively with any individual or group who indulges in subversive activities calculated to undermine or coerce the Government in any shape or form. Internal security is essential if we are to have either prosperity or democracy” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/3 20-30 August 1957, 321-322).
recent opposition movement in the Ewe Togoland area which was angry because of its integration into Ghana, and some continuing tension in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region (Austin 1970, 373).

The CPP utilized a series of new laws to combat these and other perceived threats. First, between April and July 1957, the Ministry of Interior, Krobo Edusei, introduced motions to combat lawlessness in parts of the Trans-Volta/Togoland, suspend the Kumasi and Accra Councils, and deport non-citizens without trial (PRAAD ADM 14/7/2 April 23 – July 12, 1957). Then, the CPP government passed into law the Emergency Powers Bill on December 2. Edusei emphasized that this bill was necessary to create internal security as an essential assurance for the Government to carry out its plans for industrial development. The Minister acknowledged that the issues of security in Accra, Volta, and Kumasi had since quieted down but that:

Nevertheless, the Government believes that there are still those in the country who, if the opportunity offered, would be ready to resort to force…. The Government do not claim that a state of emergency now exists or even that one is likely to occur in the foreseeable future. They would, however, be neglecting their duty to the country if they abandoned at this stage, the powers necessary to deal swiftly with any recurrence of civil disorder such as we have seen in recent years (PRAAD ADM 14/7/4 November 13 – December 19, 1957, 178).

Less than one month later, on December 30, Edusei declared a Local State of Emergency in Kumasi (PRAAD ADM 14/7/5 February 18 – March 19, 1958).

In July 1958, the CPP passed the most notorious and far-reaching legislation: the Preventive Detention Act (PDA). The Prime Minister himself introduced it in the House under a certificate of urgency (Justice Crabbe Interview). By this time, the CPP had grown impatient with the judicial procedures that slowed its ability to maintain security
and deemed them inadequate.\footnote{KB Asante Interview; Of no
text is that fact that the legislation was initially drafted to include Advisory
Committees, which would be composed of three persons appointed by the Governor-General to hear
evidence within the initial period of detention. The Committees were ultimately rejected by the Cabinet
and removed (PRAAD ADM 13/1/27 Cabinet Minutes. January – December 1958).}
The PDA allowed the government to detain a person for five years without appeal for conduct prejudicial to the defense and security of the state (PRAAD ADM 13/1/27 Cabinet Minutes. January – December 1958). The Prime Minister justified the introduction of the Bill on the grounds that there were significant internal and external threats seeking to destroy the Government because of its rapid success and world influence.\footnote{In the Parliamentary debates, he argues that “In less than two years of independence, Ghana has already achieved considerable world influence. Ghana has achieved considerable world influence. Ghana has achieved that influence primarily because we are regarded as a country in the forefront of the movement for the independence of the whole of the African Continent. For that very reason there are many forces in the world today who would like to see us fail. Past experience has shown us that there are some people of influence in the world who have persistently pursued a policy of misrepresenting Ghana with the idea of attempting to show that Africans cannot rule themselves, and that therefore, in the interest of Africans themselves, colonialism should continue...We have to accept the fact that at present there are in this country a number of people who, if they cannot succeed by lawful democratic means, are perfectly prepared to resort to violence and terrorism. It is true that their efforts in this respect have been up till now ineffective” (ADM 14/7/8 1 July – 5 September 1958, 407-409).}
Other CPP officials echoed this claim that the state must “consolidate its achievements (ADM 14/7/8 July 1 – September 5, 1958, 417).” The Prime Minister then argued that the only people who need to worry about the Bill are those who perpetuate violence and terrorism against the state. Finally, the CPP argued that sometimes democracy could only be preserved by undemocratic means and that the bill must therefore be viewed in accordance with its long-term objectives (PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 July 1 – September 5, 1958, 497). In November 1958, the Minister of Interior noted that his intentions to combat the conspiracy against the CPP state in a harsh fashion remained in line with long-term objectives to establish “a modern, progressive, unitary State.”\footnote{“I have myself taken over the portfolio of the Interior because of the difficulties which we are at present experiencing and which we may continue to experience for some little time. These difficulties arise out of}
Regardless of intention, the PDA had far-reaching effects. In November 1958 alone, the government detained 38 persons without trial (Austin 1970, 381). The PDA targeted opposition in Parliament, which by 1960 had been reduced from 32 to 16; three in detention, one exiled and 12 joined the CPP (ibid, 386). Having largely eliminated the opposition, after 1960, the PDA targeted members of the CPP.\footnote{Austin 1967; Nkrumah himself notes this failure in 1961 when he acknowledges that the Party itself needed to be purged of unsavory elements. This was not limited to the rank-and-file, but infiltrated even the top leadership of the Party (Milne 2000, 121).}

Finally, in October 1959, the Sedition and Treason Bills were revised from their introduction in 1947 to broaden their scope and make their penalties more severe (PRAAD ADM 14/7/14 October 27 – December 16, 1959). The sum of these measures, particularly in the PDA, was that Ghana was essentially under martial law by 1960. At its sole discretion, the central government could detain and deport persons without trial or evidence.

**Strengthening the Party and Expanding its Network**

The CPP faced major challenges because of its limited administrative reach and lack of knowledge of the population. This challenge tended to fuel its insecurities and drove it to enhance its coercive powers against the population and opposition. In addition, the CPP took a predatory approach to consolidating its hold over society,
specifically by strengthening, centralizing and converging the party structure with the state and incorporating social organizations under the party umbrella.

The CPP accomplished this in part by incorporating several auxiliary institutions into its fold. First, the government gave the United Ghana Farmers’ Council (UGFC) statutory recognition before liquidating the Cocoa Purchasing Company (CPC) in April 1957 and putting its functions under the former. Because the ties between the UGFC and the CPP government were explicit and direct, “in essence, the CPP obtained full and direct control over the purchasing of cocoa, the foundation of Asante’s economy” (Allman 1993, 1987). Then, The Industrial Relations Act created a centralized structure that replaced the former Trades Union Council (TUC) and brought many national unions under CPP control. Further, a National Cooperative Council created by the CPP replaced the heretofore independent Alliance of Cooperatives. Finally, the party strengthened its Women’s Section, Youth Movement, and Builders’ Brigade, bringing them closer to the CPP main body (Austin 1970, 382). These efforts to bring social organizations directly under CPP control covered each of the major power blocks in Ghana at the time including youth, women, and farming and trade, especially related to cocoa.

However, it was not enough for the CPP to bring these organizations under its fold. It also had to generate goodwill, and it did this by distributing state spoils. As Austin describes:

Evidence not only of the intention, but of the ability, of the CPP to enforce its authority lay all about the electorate – in the recently acquired fleet of white Fiat cars bought for its officers by the TUC, in the lorries which carried groups of uniformed Builders’ Brigaders across the constituencies, in the procession of large cars which accompanied the District Commissioners and CPP members of parliament from polling booth to
polling booth, in the activities of the constituency agents who urged electors to ‘vote red’ for the letters YES and for Nkrumah, and the Fool of propaganda leaflets and posters which appeared during the weeks before the first day’s polling (Austin 1970, 388).

The CPP also used a propaganda campaign to demonstrate state and party power among the people. Nkru mah and the CPP supported the Ghana Young Pioneer Movement that served as a group of ‘vanguard activists.’ Supported by political power, the activists lived and worked with the people, explaining the Party’s policies and objectives in a program of public education. The National Association of Socialist Students Organizations (NASSO) initially trained activists until they were brought under the CPP Central Committee. These groups took on the CPP-designated task of bringing up the level of political education among activists and increasing the Party loyalty. (Milne 2000, 119).

Second, in centralizing the party and state, the CPP eliminated the Regional Assemblies, even though the CPP had conceded the creation of Regional Assemblies to the NLM and its allies in the lead up to independence. Their actual formation, however, was deferred until after Independence as recommended by a Commission. In April 1958, the Report of the Regional Constitutional Commission made detailed recommendations for the Assemblies to exercise a range of powers. Before introducing the legislation to the House, however, the Government’s Statement on the Report seriously restricted the suggested authority and essentially made the Assemblies advisory bodies. When the House passed the legislation in this form, the opposition boycotted the Assemblies’ elections (Austin 1970, 378-79). The Assemblies were thus filled with pro-CPP members. Thus, when the CPP passed the Constitutional (Repeal of
Restrictions) Bill reducing the requirements for amending the constitution, the CPP abolished the assemblies altogether by commanding the elected members to vote for the institution’s dissolution.

Further, the CPP waged an assault on the independence of the Public Service. Justice Crabbe describes this process as using political indoctrination and regimentation to pervert the neutral and professional characteristics of the administration. He notes that the CPP leadership utilized intimidation, threats of victimization, and unwarranted interference to try to control the Service, which undermined its dignity, integrity and morale (Justice Crabbe Interview). Meanwhile, Nkrumah accused the Service of disloyalty to the Government to justify this process.

Finally, the CPP consolidated its control and an effective end to Ghana’s first democratic episode in adopting the Republican Constitution in 1960. The new Constitution provided the Executive with the authority to appoint, dismiss and discipline

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136 Prime Minister Nkrumah argues that the process of amending the Constitution is far too cumbersome, most especially in terms of gaining support from chiefs and regional assemblies (PRAAD ADM 14/7/9 3 November – 19 December 1958).

137 Austin 1970, 380; The course of this plan is outlined in detail in the Executive Cabinet minutes (PRAAD ADM 13/1/27 Cabinet Minutes. January – December 1958). Moreover, the Legislative Minutes suggest that the Prime Minister at least had very little intention of maintaining his promise of Regional Assemblies after Independence: “I said that the Opposition committed a rape on mother Ghana by forcing these Regional Assemblies upon the country. We had to accept them. It was the lot of the CPP to have an x-ray of the stomach of the ‘woman’ that had been raped. When we examined the stomach of the ‘woman’ we found within it a leprous baby; so we said we did not want it and that was why the Opposition did not contest the elections. They know – And that was why they did not contest the Regional Assemblies elections. In fact, I meant what I said then. The Regional Assemblies are of no purpose at all to the country. Let them go” (PRAAD ADM 14/7/9 3 November – 19 December 1958, 16).

138 In a Broadcast Speech on 30 June 1959, Nkrumah announced that the Government would be cracking down on perceived anti-CPP activities in the Civil Service: “It is our intention to tighten up the regulations and to wipe out the disloyal elements in the civil service, even if by doing so we suffer some temporary dislocation of the service. It is the Government’s view that the defections in our civil service must be tackled vigorously and that now is the time to do so as we embark upon our Second Development Plan. For disloyal civil servants are no better than saboteurs and it is therefore better to make some sacrifice now at the beginning of our herculean task, than to allow things to drift until a situation has been created which will be hard indeed to remedy” (PRAAD RG 17/1/138, 17-18).
members of the Public Service, dissolve the National Assembly, veto any Bill in whole or in part, and give directive via legislative instrument (PRAAD RG 17/1/179). After 1960, the Opposition was non-existent, the CPP dominated the unicameral assembly and Nkrumah served as President with the extensive authority given by the new Constitution. The attack against disloyal elements continued, but as the opposition disappeared, the tools of detection and intimidation turned against the CPP itself. Within a few years, both the party and the state were in disarray and Nkrumah himself was increasingly the target of assassination attempts (Rooney 2010, 322-347). The situation remained like this until 1966 when a coup d’état toppled Nkrumah.

**Concluding Remarks**

Ghana represents a Weak Authoritarian Colony in which colonial rulers conceded self-government only very late and invested little in state development, consistently refusing to integrate local actors into the governing administration. The consequences of these colonial policies for independent Ghana were limited administrative development, weak state-society links, and minimal experience with democratic institutions. The CPP’s minimal experience with democratic politics made it excessively uncomfortable with opposition politics. When the newly independent regime faced challengers from outside and within its own party, it responded aggressively, passing numerous laws that undermined political liberties and democratic competition and participation. Though these tendencies were evident during the late colonial period, the CPP’s electoral successes in some ways masked them, and the presence of the colonial government made several of its most conspicuous manifestations less
apparent.\textsuperscript{139} Because CPP officials had invested heavily in the party structure but not in
democratic institutions, energies went into consolidating the former until the difference
between the party and state were indistinguishable.\textsuperscript{140} The party structure targeted
perceived external and internal threats – jailing, repressing or eliminating those who
demonstrated opposition to it – at the expense of democracy. CPP leaders often
acknowledged this trade-off explicitly, arguing that long-term goals of progress,
modernity, unity, security and even democracy often entailed short-term sacrifices of
democratic principles.\textsuperscript{141} CPP officials demonstrated little willingness to confront the
party in favor of democratic principles until the party began to turn in on itself, well after
Ghana had become a one-party state (KB Asante interview).

Second, the state could make very little sense of the population frequently
outside its grasp. In the absence of this knowledge, Nkrumah’s nationalist party built its
popular appeal by exploiting local rivalries and coopting social organizations, and then
integrating them directly into the party structure. Under this platform, the state expanded
greatly and became predatory, distributing patronage to its supporters and dispensing
punishments to its enemies.\textsuperscript{142} These activities came to define state-society

\textsuperscript{139} For example, the Colonial Office essentially forced a third general election on the CPP despite its
unwillingness to concede this victory to the opposition (Austin 1970, 308-309).

\textsuperscript{140} In 1959, Kwame Nkrumah gave a Speech on the 10th Anniversary of the CPP, declaring: “Comrades,
it is no idle boast when I say that…the Convention People’s Party is Ghana. Our party not only provides
the government but is the custodian which stands guard over the welfare of the people” (Africa Evening

\textsuperscript{141} For example, in the legislative debate over the introduction of the Preventive Detention Act, both the
Minister of Information and Broadcasting and of Local Government argue that undemocratic means are
often necessary to preserve democracy (PRAAD ADM 14/7/8 14 July 1958 pp. 497-514).

\textsuperscript{142} PRAAD ADM 5/3/184; PRAAD ADM 5/3/115; The largest prize went to the Brong peoples who
benefited from a particularly intense struggle in Ashanti. They gained an entire Region in 1959 because of
their support for the CPP, a promise made in the late-colonial period (PRAAD ADM 14/7/11 19 February
relationships to the detriment of the development of formal channels for the expression of political grievance and state responsiveness to them. By 1960, the government passed a new Constitution with expansive executive discretion and powers, a limited space for opposition, and a coopted judiciary, civil service and civil society. Ghana’s first democratic episode thus came to an end via the gradual erosion of its core elements.

This chapter argues that Ghana’s combination of late self-governance and weak state development resulted in democratic breakdown only three years after independence. The theory is structural and thus does not provide much space for the role of agency. However, one cannot study this period of Ghanaian history without encountering strong opinions about the figure of Kwame Nkrumah. His charisma and vision of African nationalism and freedom from the colonial yoke made him something of a mythical figure. In this way, it is perhaps less the lack of democratic experience and more the overwhelming primacy of Nkrumah’s personal and national project that supported the rapid dismantling of democratic competition. Had not Nkrumah loomed so large in the decolonization process, perhaps a more moderate ruling party and opposition would have evolved.

To address this concern, one can compare the early independence years to a later period of Ghanaian history. From the 1980s through much of the 1990s, the figure of J.J. Rawlings dominated the political scene. These periods share unique parallels in charismatic leadership. Both espoused expansive programs of national development. Further, while Nkrumah in rhetoric supported democracy, Rawlings adamantly opposed multi-party politics and holds one of the worst human rights records of Ghana’s regimes since independence. Yet under Rawlings, Ghana transitioned to a democratic system
that has now endured for nearly 30 years. This suggests that structural factors can drive
the role of agency in determining the stability of democratic institutions.

Table 5-1 Percentage of child population, by regions, now attending school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Children of School Age</th>
<th>Number of Children of School Age at Present in School</th>
<th>Percentage of School-Age Children in Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>327620</td>
<td>132660</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>105970</td>
<td>63170</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>273160</td>
<td>136010</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>194850</td>
<td>89630</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>270940</td>
<td>132000</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong-Ahafo</td>
<td>140440</td>
<td>44700</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>276760</td>
<td>32380</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Foster 1965, 189
CHAPTER 6
ANTI-INDEPENDENCE TO DEMOCRATIC STABILITY: WHY MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY SURVIVES IN MAURITIUS

Introduction

Since Independence in 1968, Mauritius has maintained the multiparty democratic system that evolved during the final decades of its colonial period. Mauritius stands as an anomaly and a paradox of stable democratic political development among former British colonies. It is an anomaly because it is geographically situated in a region of the world where authoritarian reversals have historically been all too common.¹ It is as a paradox because many of its domestic characteristics at Independence are expected to undermine democratic stability.

At independence, a small French elite basically controlled Mauritius’ mono-crop economy based almost entirely on sugar and controlled to a significant extent by a small French elite. As such, the island state rides the economic rollercoaster that resource dependence entails.² In the latter half of the 1970s, a decrease in sugar prices caused a severe economic crisis. An overpopulation problem exacerbated the crisis and unemployment reached

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¹ According to the data used in the statistical chapter of this dissertation, of the 16 former British colonies on the continent that transitions to democracy at least once, 56% have had at least one democratic breakdown in the post-colonial period and only a mere 12% made successful transitions prior to the end of the Cold War. This is the highest percentage of breakdowns of any world region among colonies with a shared history of British colonialism.

² Jensen and Wantchekon 2004; These economic vulnerabilities were laid out as early as 1909 in the Report of the Mauritius Royal Commission which wrote: “But while there are many reasons why Mauritius should be a sugar-growing colony, this excessive concentration of its resources upon one industry exposes it to serious difficulties and even dangers. It makes the colony entirely dependent upon the world price of sugar, over which it has no control; it prevents any chance of depression in one local industry being balanced by the prosperity of others, and it causes the finances of the Government to be almost entirely dependent upon a single fluctuating and uncertain factor” (MNA CCCR 1909, 8).
nearly 30% by the 1980s. While the ruling party created a rudimentary welfare state after independence to deal with such crises, it produced an educated class but no corresponding development or economic opportunities beyond sugar (Naipaul 1972, 262). A small ethnic minority with a history of resisting democratization controlled much of this mono-crop economy, its role in the ruling coalition at independence served as a potentially destabilizing force, particularly when an opposition party advocated a leftist economic platform. This class dynamic suggests that the ruling party was motivated to resist democratic turnover.

Further, Mauritius faces the potential instability often associated with politicized ethnicity. Mauritius has no indigenes; its population is the product of centuries of immigration from Europe, Africa, Southeast and East Asia and includes Indians, Chinese, Creoles, and French, also distinguished by religion into Christian, Muslim, and Hindu groups (Bowman 1991, 43). Each wave of immigration dramatically changed the demographic composition of the island. Minority protections became a central issue of Mauritian politics and its independence struggle. Nearly half of the population voted against Independence because they feared that the most numerous ethnic community, the Hindus,

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3 Brautigan 1997, 51; See the Minister of Finance, Paul Bérenger’s, report on the State of the Economy presented to the Legislature in July 1982 (MNL MLD 14 July 1982, 700). V.S. Naipaul (1972) famously describes the political consequences of this unemployment and population crisis as such: “The rain, the bush, the cheap houses, the poor clothes, the mixture of races, the umbrellaed groups who have come out to watch: the hysterical scene is yet so intimate: adults fighting in front of children, the squalor of the overcrowded barracoone: the politics of the powerless” (265).

4 Indeed, the postponement of general elections of 1972, though achieved through constitutional means, reflects the ruling coalition’s desire to hold onto power (MNL MLD 11 November 1969 The Constitution of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill).
would become political dominant. These fears sparked a series of ethnic riots during decolonization; Hindu-Creole riots occurred in 1964 and 1965 and Creole-Muslim riots broke out in the capital city a mere six weeks before Independence (MNL MLD February 27, 1968). Further, an on-going challenge of positively incorporating Creoles into Mauritian society – referred to locally since 1993 as le malaise Creole – erupted into riots in 1999 (Boswell 2006; Miles 1999, 211; 218).

Roughly 22 languages are spoken on the island, making for dizzying linguistic diversity that compounds the issues (Bowman 1991, 83). English is the official language and medium of instruction, French the dominant language of the media, Kreol the lingua franca and various Indian and Chinese dialects represent the cultural heritage of the several immigrant communities. The official status of various languages as well as their role in the education system remains controversial (Miles 1999).

This small island-nation is frequently cited as one of only two African nations enjoying an uninterrupted democratic episode since Independence and has featured disproportionately in debates on African democracy and governance. Some explanations for this success include political culture (Miles 1999), market-oriented economic growth (World Bank 1989; Bowman 1991), and state expansion (Lange 2010). Miles (1999) argues that a unique history of sequential colonialism on an uninhabited island meant that no community could

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5 These fears are expressed throughout, for example, legislative debates in 1956 on constitutional development and the nature of the electoral system as the colony moves toward internal self-government. See, for example, Dr. de Chazal’s response to the Secretary of State’s proposal for proportional representation with a single transferable vote: “But, Sir, we cannot exchange the hegemony of the whites for the hegemony of the Hindus! What progress would this represent for this Island?” (MNL MLD April 10, 1956, 7).
claim indigeneity, which fostered plurality over assimilation. Additionally, two distinct metropolitan models (French and British) served as resources for various communities to check others in the creation of nation and encouraged subsequent coalition governance. By contrast, Brautigam (1997) emphasizes economic growth as a key causal factor in democratic consolidation. She argues that programs of Fabian socialism combined with export-led growth promoted economic growth and democratic consolidation in Mauritius. Finally, Lange (2010) argues that colonial policies of state expansion after World War II solidified dense associational ties which formalized networks between state and society and promoted democracy on the island.

This chapter addresses each of these three explanations. While Miles’s (1999) emphasis on political culture is reiterated often in Mauritian public discourse, a question remains as to why coalitions have become the central means of politicking on the island. Though not an indigenous community, the Hindus are in the majority and presented a potential threat to ethnic peace as their increasing role in politics after World War II led to the active and violent anti-independence movement of minority groups. Miles’s explanation of democracy fails to account for why this tumultuous transition to independence spawned coalition-building governments. This chapter digs deeply into the history of the independence transition period to understand why the key ingredients of Mauritian politics ultimately became coalition building and consensus making.

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6 Former Prime Minister Bérenger notes in reference to state action against the MMM in the 1970s that they never feared real repression as “Mauritius is Mauritius” (Interview).
Second, Brautigam (1997) correctly notes that economic growth has facilitated certain stabilizing elements in Mauritius politics, such as a large social service sector. These economic gains, however, began only in the 1980s and thus fail to explain why democracy in Mauritius survived the economic decline and unemployment periods of the 1970s. This chapter focuses precisely on the historical record of the most tumultuous period of post-colonial Mauritius prior to economic growth – 1968-1982 – and asks why democracy survived despite economic and political crisis.

Finally, Lange (2010) argues that state expansion during the colonial period accounts for Mauritius’s democratic success after independence. This chapter concurs in part with this finding, noting that, relative to its size, the Mauritian state is modest in its capacity to reach and respond to the population. A comparison of this late-colonial state build-up with Malaysia, however, illuminates several problems with viewing this factor in isolation. First, the British built up the Malaysian state in response to an insurgency and thus invested heavily in security personnel, resources and intelligence and administration in addition to infrastructure and public services. In Mauritius, post-WWII state expansion entailed largely public services, particularly primary education, in response to a larger, more inclusive electorate. The Malaysian case illuminates the problems associated with a strong state that can be used to undermine democratic institutions. By comparison, the more modest Mauritian state posed less of a threat to electoral politics. Moreover, a crucial difference between Malaysia and Mauritius is that early concessions to broad-based democratic self-governance accompanied state expansion in the latter case but not the former.
This meant that state expansion in Mauritius was not simply to build capacity but also increased inclusion of social actors and the formalized networks of political participation and communication with the state.

In short, this chapter explores the Mauritian paradox by focusing on the most tumultuous period of the country’s history, between 1968 and 1982, when the features, which regularly catalyze authoritarian regression, failed to shake the country’s multiparty democratic system. These 13 years saw two General Elections and the formation of a popular leftist, revolutionary party which directly challenged the economic interests of a small but powerful sugar plantation elite by mobilizing the masses along class lines. These tensions reached a potential breaking point in 1982 when this leftist party won all 60 directly-elected legislative seats, nearly completely excluding the former ruling party from the formal political process. This event is noteworthy not only because of its dramatic and wholesale change of power but also because it transpired under calm and peaceful conditions. Mauritian democracy reached a pivotal potential breaking point but survived and even thrived in this transition. This chapter asks why Mauritian democracy has been so resilient despite its disadvantaged start. It argues that a colonial legacy of long self-rule prior to Independence, strong state-society links and moderate administrative apparatus are responsible for its democratic stability.

**Theory of Weak Autonomy Colony and Democratic Survival**

Mauritius is what I identify as a Weak Autonomy Colony. Europeans only minimally settled this type of colony, yet the entire system became a European import. The social make-up of these colonies included a very small white
population and a large migrant population, interacting in a strict racial hierarchy. Over the course of the colonial era, a liberal-authoritarian political system developed. The state played a role in providing basic social services such as education and health care as well as securing and maintaining the rule of law. One could lobby state authorities through existing government channels. For the sake of social order, however, the state was ready and willing to exercise autocratic force to discipline the population, especially labor. The greatest challenge to stable democracy among this group of British colonies stems thus not from a lack of democratic institutions, but from the restricted access that social groups have to them. A domestic struggle for political inclusion and social equality characterized the fight for independence in these colonies. When lower classes successfully waged this battle prior to independence, however, democratic institutions became resilient against breakdown.

In colonial Mauritius, then, the colonizers conceded democratic institutions early, but the extension of these institutions to the periphery and popular experience with them required mass resistance to overcome the embedded social hierarchy. The plantation elite, who stood to lose the most from broad-based participation, posed the greatest threat to the formation of an inclusive democratic system. It was not until after World War II that the labor movement, under the guidance of the Labour Party, finally achieved this access, first through trade union strikes and then through political mobilization and organization. It won these gains because of colonial intervention and despite strong resistance.

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7 Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) argue convincingly that agrarian landed elites who practice labor-repressive agriculture are the most hostile to democracy.
from the plantation elite.\(^8\) When this happened, previously limited participation in the structure of governance slowly expanded to the broader population and formal institutions increasingly reached into the periphery. This transformation led to an inclusive system of self-government with only limited voter literacy requirements in 1948 and full universal franchise by 1958, 20 and 10 years prior to independence, respectively.

The extension of broad-based democratic participation well before independence allowed numerous social groups to invest in these institutions. The dominant oligarchy’s stranglehold on political power receded as participation devolved to the masses. Although class struggles gave way to a communal campaign during the 1950s and 1960s, Mauritians waged these contests primarily through the ballot box, so decolonization debates centered on the ideal electoral system. As Mauritians tediously but peacefully resolved these negotiations, actors accepted the resultant institutions and invested in learning how to compete through them. Moreover, political parties invested in organizational development and generating effective links with the electorate. The late-colonial government built a strong media and educational system to facilitate these processes. Thus, Mauritians gained democratic experience throughout the last two decades of colonization.

\(^8\) Note that the crucial role of British interventionist policies to prevent labor repression and facilitate the growth and organization of trade unions mirrors Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) argument about transitions to democracy. Because the transition to democracy occurred prior to industrialization in Mauritius, this colonial intervention was necessary for the growth of democratic institutions. This case study concurs with this finding and suggests that even after the creation of democratic institutions in Mauritius, the British role in establishing strong trade unions with strong links to the state also played a pivotal role in stabilizing democracy after the colonizer departed.
In short, because the greatest threat to democratic survival, the plantation elite, lost its political power (though not economic power) prior to the British departure, democratic breakdown after independence became less likely. Instead, the masses and elites gained democratic experience through a gradual process of democratization. The state strengthened in the process of extending participation, generating a relatively capable though not overwhelming administrative structure. Finally, state-society links increased through investment in associational ties to achieve greater social equality. This chapter argues that these three developments of the late colonial period made Mauritius, as a Weak Autonomy Colony, resilient against democratic breakdown despite post-colonial periods of economic and political turmoil. Figure 6-1 presents a diagram of this sequence.

Figure 6-1 Mauritius: weak autonomy colony and democratic survival

This chapter elaborates this argument through three sections which expand on the nature of the intervening causal processes in Mauritius: broad-based democratic experience as a result of the politically equalizing features of the decolonization process; strong state-society links exemplified by influential
and growing unions active in the domestic battle for a fair social contract; and the
development of a moderate state apparatus to protect the social contract after
the colonial power departed. Finally, the chapter examines the tenacity of
Mauritian democratic institutions despite over a decade of intense political and
economic turmoil during the 1970s to demonstrate how these aspects of the
colonial legacy secured the country’s democratic future.

Gradual Decolonization: Expanding Democratic Experience and the Politics of Coalition

The initial transfer of political power from an economic oligarchy to mass
politics in Mauritius occurred during the colonial period. Mass economic protests
prior to World War II led to significant reforms that extended participation in the
electoral process to the non-European population (simple literacy test required)
in 1948 and brought universal suffrage by 1958. In addition, by 1948, more than
half of the legislators were elected, not nominated for the seats they held,
meaning that electoral success began to translate into real governmental
influence. The majority population thus had a stake in democratic governance,
despite resistance from Franco-Mauritian sugar plantation owners.

Decolonization was, admittedly, a tedious process of political maneuvering
that included periods of supportive expansion as well as moments of colonial
resistance. The gradual process lasted roughly 20 years and included a series of
Constitutional and electoral advances that brought all actors into the fold of
national politics. Though heated and divisive, Mauritians waged the fight for
independence in an inclusive, electoral manner and forced everyone to invest in
a system of democratic competition. Decolonization included the development of
political parties as well as the institutions of governance based on democratic outcomes.

The Labour Party, the most outspoken party advocating Independence, formed in 1936, over 30 years prior to independence. It won the large majority of elected legislative seats in 1948 and 1953, but did not control the legislature until 1959 when the Constitution eliminated nominated seats. The Labour Party invested early in creating party institutions and mobilizing the masses behind their campaign messages in order to compete within the established political system. Their goals included expanding the existing government institutions through constitutional change, electoral reform, and education. The Party utilized education (literacy campaigns), associational networks linked with cultural systems (baitkas) and economic structures (trade unions) to mobilize the masses against colonial domination and economic exploitation. Their investments in the electoral process strengthened the Party’s commitment to a democratic form of political struggle well before the colonial power departed.

The Mauritian state gradually expanded to local and rural areas for 20 years prior to independence, and consistent elections with an expanded franchise brought all classes and communal groups into the democratic process. Though the 1967 electoral campaign was rife with communal and personal attacks, all parties accepted the narrow results. Despite the fact that they had spent the last several decades fighting against each other politically, the Labour Party reached out to the Parti Maurcien Social Démocrate (PMSD) opposition to form a coalition government just after Independence (MNL MLD 11 November 1969, 4667). This highly criticized move gave birth to the leftist Mouvement
Militant Mauricien (MMM) opposition party in 1969. While initially condemned, in retrospect some MMM leaders acknowledge that in the short term the coalition reduced the heightened communal tensions and ultimately assisted the MMM in successfully making the shift from communal to class politics (Bérenger Interview). The practice of coalition formation became a norm in post-colonial Mauritius, helping to mitigate ethnic and religious cleavages.

This section walks through the dynamics of gradual decolonization and democratization in Mauritius. It begins with a discussion of early restricted forms of democracy, which set the institutional precedents for political debate into the independence period. It then highlights the process of constitutional and electoral reform leading up to independence in 1968, noting the most central debates and how unique compromises unfolded. Finally, it discusses the politics of party formation and institutionalization, as well as the creation of partnerships and formation of ideologies that became central after the colonial powers departed. Through these gradual transitions and expansions of the democratic space, Mauritian communities eased into the institutional, ideological, and experiential aspects of democracy, which aided the institutions’ resilience during the political and economic crises of the 1970s.

**Early Restricted Democracy**

Democracy came early to the Mauritian island, albeit in a very restricted form. French settlers colonized the island in 1721, running large sugar plantations with African slave labor throughout the century. Beginning in 1790, the French settlers enjoyed self-government. The first elected assembly took its place that year and held responsibilities that included passing legislation,
establishing a constitution, and selecting two representatives to the National Assembly in France (Dukhira 2002).

In 1810, the British took control of the island in the Napoleonic Wars, but the original settlers remained and only a few British administrators came to the island. Moreover, the British Governor, Robert Townshend Farquhar, granted very favorable terms to the French settlers by agreeing to 'preserve their Religion, Laws and Custom" (Simmons 1982, 16). This allowed the French to retain their language and culture, although official government business was conducted in English and the court system was gradually Anglicized (Dukhira 2002). In 1825, a new Constitution was put into place that stripped the French settlers of their self-government, creating a colonial non-elected Council of Government presided over by a Governor, who had the sole authority to introduce bills and veto legislation passed by the Council (Dukhira 2002; Ramsurrun 2007, 3-5).

Despite the denial of elected leadership, the Franco-Mauritian sugar planters wielded extensive power through their control of the economy. With exclusive ownership of the island’s main revenue source, the settlers could bring all activities on the island to a halt. The British colonial government was largely subservient to their demands when they chose to wield this threat (Simmons 1982, 18-19).

In 1849, the British set up the first Municipal Council in Port Louis, an entirely elected body of local (French) residents with advisory responsibilities (Dukhira 2002). In 1886, the Council of Government introduced an elected
minority and held the island’s first General Elections. The electoral was restricted by strict property and literacy qualifications, allowing only roughly two percent of the population to participate. At this time, only one non-white was elected to the Council, a pattern of white plantocracy dominance that lasted until 1936 (Ramsurrun 2007, 5). Despite several movements calling for more representative government, Franco-Mauritians fiercely resisted these efforts. As a result, the 1885 Constitution remained in place until 1948 with minor revision.

Thus, through this combination of economic power and political organization, the Franco-Mauritian settlers ruled Mauritius via economic oligarchy for approximately a century before the Indian and lowers classes agitated for greater political inclusion after World War II. Despite the restricted nature of this system, its presence introduced a democratic system early and set a precedence

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9 Simmons 1982, 21; The Council of Government now comprised the Governor, nine nominated and ten elected members. The Constitution of 1885 is available in full in Ramsurrun 2007, 21-34.

10 These early efforts for greater inclusion were always led by Creole elites and did not envision Indian integration. They included the Action Liberale in 1911, Retrocession Movement from 1919-1936, and Revisionist Movement in 1923 (for details, see Simmons 1982). In reference to Creole calls for responsible government in the early 1900s, an opinion piece in The Standard newspaper argues: “In our opinion so long as the class feelings which exist at present shall not have greatly diminished, it will not be safe to grant responsible government to this Colony. Responsible government will at present place the whole power in the hands of one class only, and experiences have taught many of us, that that class will use it without due regard to the interest or requirements of the other classes” (The Standard May 22, 1905). This similar thread of analysis is furthered in the Mauritius Report of the Royal Commission, which argues that the present Constitution is indeed unrepresentative but that reform (i.e. adding a more substantial elected element) would be harmful rather than beneficial because: “Owing to the nature of [the Asiatic] community – its unfamiliarity with the representative institutions of the West, its ignorance of English or French, and, speaking generally, its traditions, lack of education and of concern for matters politic – the creation of a body which would fairly and completely represent the desires and aspirations of the inhabitants of Mauritius obviously is, and for many years must be, impossible” (MNA CCCR 1909).

11 Simmons 1982, 26-34; Ramsurrun 2007, 5-8; In 1935, a Coloured delegation led by Dr. Edgar Laurent won concessions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies for an increase in the number of unofficial members on the Council of Government from six to nine and for 2 unofficial members to be appointed to the Executive Council (Ramsurrun 2007, 7).
for later debates. When the other communities vied for participation in the politics of the island, they always oriented their calls toward integration into the existing institutions, though in an expanded form.

**The Birth of the Labour Party**

The Indian community took longer to fully participate in the island’s political, social and economic life. This community arrived as indentured servants from 1836 - 1907, and by 1861 comprised roughly two-thirds of the population (Simmons 1982, 35-36). Throughout the 1800s, some gained access to their own plots of land and formed a class of small planters.\(^\text{12}\) Meanwhile, the majority worked as laborers and lived on the sugar estates. They remained generally isolated from broader social and political systems on the island with their own language, religion and economic activities.\(^\text{13}\) The first Indo-Mauritian won election in the Municipal Elections in Port Louis in 1896, and the first Indo-Mauritians were nominated to the Council of Government via nomination in 1911, and then again in 1921; two others were elected in 1926 (Ramsurrun 2007, 9-11). The elected Indians were landowners and professionals, however, and had little in common with Indian laborers. Thus, these early integrations failed to spark greater involvement of the majority community (ibid, 11).

\(^{12}\) By the 1930s, roughly half of sugar cultivation was controlled by 21 plantations and the other half cultivated by small-holders with generally less than 5 arpent plots (Simmons 1982, 8).

\(^{13}\) While integration with the broader political and social Mauritian scene was not part of the activities of Indians during this period, there was significant organization that took place within Indian communities, as they purchased marginal lands and became small planters during the ‘grand morcellement’, established independent villages on the outskirts of villages and constructed temples and built baitkas (meeting places) amongst themselves (Ramsurrun 2007, 9). These activities would facilitate the community’s broader organizational efforts after WWII.
Finally, a growing educated Indo-Mauritian middle class – who studied in London and Paris in the 1920s and returned as trained doctors, lawyers, and teachers, etc., - bridged the gap between the elite and laborers. This new generation of nationalists entered the Mauritian political scene in the late 1930s and started the first broad-based battles for a more inclusive polity. The first protests channeled growing discontent among the estate labourers and organizing the working classes. As we will see, the story of constitutional progress and party development in Mauritius is tied deeply to labor unrest.

Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, an Indo-Mauritian intellectual and future Prime Minister, inspired the Labour Party. After medical study in London, he returned to Mauritius in 1935, the year corresponding to the centenary celebration for Indian Immigration, and published ‘Sons of Immigrants.’ This was a political manifesto that analyzed the history of Indians in Mauritius and called for a mass movement to attain the economic emancipation of Indian laborers via universal suffrage and Constitutional change. Ramgoolam partnered with Dr. Maurice Curé to found the Labour Party shortly after the centenary celebration. In 1940, they founded its newspaper, The Advance, which circulated widely among the island’s workers. The Party emphasized both class and community and brought both Creoles and Indians together with calls for political inclusion via universal suffrage.

14 “Surely those who contribute to the prosperity and happiness of this island should in the nature of things share in the Government! There is no shadow of doubt that the Governor should approach without further delay the Imperial Government in London with a view to the revision of the present Constitution on a more equitable basis. It is high time that the workers of this colony were given a wider franchise, so that instead of being compelled to perish in passive acquiescence they might have a say in the government of their country” (Ramsurrun 2007, 48-51).
The Party led a series of estate riots in 1937. Laborers and small planters came together to make political demands including constitutional reform and expansion of the franchise, as well as economic demands for higher wages and a fair price for sugar.\textsuperscript{15} The first strikes took place on several estates and in Port Louis, but after violence broke out between workers and armed factory managers, confrontations spread island wide. The British called for a Commission of Enquiry, which found that the immediate cause of the unrest was economic but that political discontent was also present. This was a cumulative effect of the Labour Party’s campaign and the general rise in the standard of living of Indian inhabitants.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite these conclusions, the Governor and Council of Government favored labor reform and delayed constitutional reform.\textsuperscript{17} Meanwhile, the trade union movement and the Labour Party organization grew. By 1938, some 20,000 people assembled for a Labour Party meeting (Simmons 1982, 70). A second set of riots broke out in 1943\textsuperscript{18} that was followed by a revival of trade union

\textsuperscript{15} MNA CCCR 1937, 107; Small planters objected to a system of having to sell their cane to only one factory, reducing competition and decreasing the price paid for their cane as well as dissatisfaction with the decreased price for their Uba, a heartier variety of sugar cane that the small planters tended to use more than estates. Labourers complained that their wages were too low and that they were treated poorly at the hands of their sirdars (ibid, 19).

\textsuperscript{16} Dr. Reynolds Rohan reports to the Commission that the that the source of unrest is political rather than economic, that the Indians “lack the proper men through whom the Indians can express their grievances”. They have inadequate political representation because the Constitution dates from 1886 and has not fundamentally changed though the population since has become more heterogeneous and the Indians in particular are beginning to evolve into an educated class but have difficulty in obtaining election to government given the outdated system (ibid, 104; 194).

\textsuperscript{17} Simmons 1982, 69; The Governor and Council decides to not address constitutional issues but recognizes the need to do so, the former noting on April 12, 1938 that “with an electorate of less than 10,000 in a population of over 400,000, the vast majority of the colony has no elected representative” (Ramsurun 2007, 55).

\textsuperscript{18} Laborers staged a series of marches on Port Louis to protest low wages and shortages of food and clothing (MNA CCCR 1943 Report of the Commission of Enquiry, 12). Despite a series of official reports including the 1943 Commission, no steps had been taken at this time by either the
organization between 1944 and 1948.\textsuperscript{19} Unions initially worked together through the vehicle of the Labour Party, but were notably segregated by community, based on the type of union – dockworkers and artisans tending to be Creole, while estate workers were more likely to be Indian.

At the same time as trade unions expanded, a parallel Hindu cultural revival led by Basdeo Bissoondoyal took place. It emphasized education for Indian workers so that they could pass the literacy requirement to vote in the 1948 elections and to strengthen their position vis-à-vis estate managers (Simmons 1982, 82-86). Although community demarcated the memberships of specific unions, the divisions in Mauritian politics ran along class lines until after 1948.

**Constitutional Reform, 1938-1948**

While the Labour Party organized trade unions, Dr. Ramgoolam used his new membership in the Council in 1940 to push for changes to the island’s political system. This corresponded with a change in Governor after the war to one more sympathetic to the political agitators. Governor Donald Mackenzie-Kennedy saw the outdated 1886 constitution as having the primary responsibility for the social and economic grievances on the island (Simmons 1982, 92). He proposed a draft constitution, which included a 32-member Legislative Council (renamed from Council of Government) that included 16 elected members (MNL Labour Department or the Government to correct economic or political charges (Simmons 1982, 78-79).

\textsuperscript{19} Trade unions finally grew in institutional organization and strength, based primarily on Ken Baker’s use to the existing social organizations among Hindus, the baitkas (Simmons 1982, 82-86). After Baker died, however, the Labour Party was taken over by Rozemont, under whose direction it thrived, but largely as a Creole organization (ibid, 86).
Suffrage would be extended to adult males over 21 who met some property and education qualifications. These changes would integrate the Indian small planters, but not include the lower classes.\textsuperscript{20}

The British appointed two Constitutional Consultative Committees, one in 1945 and one a year later, prior to and following the Governor’s proposals. For the first time, thanks to the outspoken Labour Party and Bissoondoyal’s education campaigns, the debate centered around universal suffrage.\textsuperscript{21} Speakers for the Coloured and Franco-Mauritian communities rejected a universal male franchise and pushed for salary and property and education qualifications. They justified these restrictive qualifications by expressing fears of racial domination by the Indian community.\textsuperscript{22} Meanwhile, the Indian members argued that an extended franchise was necessary to address economic grievances brought on

\textsuperscript{20} The Governor explicitly rejects universal suffrage, stating: “Suggestions have been made also for adult suffrage. That should be the aim in the long run and through the extension of education we may achieve that aim at no very distant date. Adult suffrage at this stage would lead to confusion and chaos. I have provided for a common electoral roll and a broadening of the franchise” (MNL MLD February 13, 1945, 1535).

\textsuperscript{21} Note that the debate was over male adult suffrage as the Indians opposed the extension of the franchise to women at this time, Ramgoolam noting that the workers are not opposed to female suffrage but only the extension of this suffrage without also extended suffrage to the working class, because it would serve only the upper class at this time (Ramsurrun 2006, 151).

\textsuperscript{22} For example, one member notes: “There is no doubt that the economic and cultural rights and interests of the aforementioned minorities more than counterbalance those of the majority. We are, therefore strongly of the opinion that any constitution which might result in the more or less complete political elimination of those minorities could produce nothing but widespread discontent, racial antagonism and economic chaos” (Ramsurrun 2007, 162). And again, Dr. Laurent (coloured) argues that Mauritian politics is unfortunately but realistically communal in nature. He fears, most especially, that the Indians act and will vote communally and unfairly ‘swamp’ the other communities and that this should be guarded against (ibid, 206-211). Finally, the Conservative Party writes a letter to the Governor saying, “In conclusion, we consider that: (a) in view of the political, economic and social conditions of the Colony, the introduction of universal suffrage would be a new cause of dissension and would aggravate class and racial antagonism; (b) being given the Indian nationalistic tendencies which have become apparent, universal suffrage might open the door to external interference in the affairs of the Colony; (c) the fact that there is unanimous agreement in Mauritius that the Colony is not yet ripe for responsible Government should lead to the logical conclusion that the Colony is not yet ripe for universal suffrage” (Ramsurrun 2006, 215-216).
by class exclusion, not communal sentiment. While these debates primarily took place within the Consultative Committees among legislative members, the island’s myriad newspapers also played an active role in facilitating popular discussions on the issues. Further, the Hindus held meeting throughout the colony to promote the vote.

Ultimately, the British extended the franchise in 1947. The Constitution dropped property and formal schooling requirements, but retained a simple language test. Accordingly, 1948 was the first year where elected seats made up more than half of the Mauritian legislature with five multi-member constituencies electing representatives to 19 of 34 seats. This was the first of five pre-independence elections where elected seats predominated (Bowman 1991, 33; Simmons 1982, 100).

Mr. Seeneevassen argues for an extended franchise to the working class, emphasizing that the Indians are dissatisfied because of economic issues, rather than some communal sentiment or desire to make the colony more like India (Ramsurrun 2007, 222). Dr. Ramgoolam echoes this sentiment, arguing that “It is only through the exercise of unfettered political power that the people will be able to deal effectively with the grievances that have reached almost the breaking point. Unless the people have a direct say in the government of the Island, all the reforms that you have proposed during your stay in this Colony and all the social measures that you will be undertaking after your return from England would be meaningless and of no avail unless the people for whom they are intended in the first place have a direct voice in the implementation of those plans” (ibid, 234).

Simmons 1982, 92; 99; Ramsurrun 2006, 42-43; For example, the Advance (Labour Party newspaper) writes: “In these circumstances the old and never changing privileged class will welcome the Governor’s revised plan with open arms, because that will enable it to continue to reign supreme over the bread and butter of the vast majority of the population for another fifty years, unless a new war were to knock it out of reckoning for all times. The working class on the other hand is amazed to see that for the toilers of the land there is no prospect of achieving political freedom unless it be by repeated strikes and bloodshed. Their way to progress and better days seems to be closed for years to come” (Ramsurrun 2007, 284). To which Le Cernéen, a conservative paper responds that the Advance advocates communist ideas by advocating for adult male suffrage (ibid).

Women and men over 21 had to prove that they could write simple sentences in any one of the languages used on the island to vote. For a full copy of the 1947 Constitution, see Ramsurrun 2006, 338-355.
Class to Communal Politics, 1948-1956

Following the new Constitution, the next near decade was marked by the surge in the organization of political parties to represent and advocate for specific groups, the expression of grievances at the national level, and the organization of populations who learned to govern and to debate via their national legislature. As noted, 1948 was the first election with at least half of the legislature made up of elected seats. The franchise increased six-fold from 12,000 before 1948 to 71,806 for the election (Simmons 1982, 104). The literacy requirements encouraged Bissoondoyal to expand his educational campaign amongst Indian workers, and he continued to open schools, prepare workers to pass the literacy test and organize registration drives.

Ultimately, the Labour Party returned only four members, but 11 Hindus and seven Creoles were returned, so the election was called a success as it brought in members outside of the sugar oligarchy. No Muslims won seats (ibid, 107-109). Despite the Hindu’s electoral success, the Governor appointed the Old Guard Creole and Franco-Mauritians, who had not supported the new constitution nor even stood for election in 1948. As such, the conservative nominations along with two elected conservatives could combine to block any progressive measures advocated by the elected majority (Simmons 1982, 109-110). Angered by the betrayal of the Government, Dr. Ramgoolam continued to push for universal suffrage and responsible governance.26

26 On December 12, 1952, Dr. Ramgoolam introduces a motion to the Council asking the Secretary of State for the Colonies to issue an amendment to the Constitution to introduce universal suffrage and responsible Government, arguing that “We begin on the basis that the political expression of the people cannot be achieved under a system of restricted franchise; that restricted franchise stultifies the political development of the country and eventually leads to friction and bitterness among those who have been deprived of the rights enjoyed by others”
While most candidates ran as independents in the 1948 election, party
machineries soon after started to take form through Council debates and
politics. The Labour Party slowly transformed into a Hindu organization led by
Indo-Mauritian intellectuals, which pushed for social and economic reform as well
as constitutional change (Simmons 1982, 112). Ramgoolam expanded his role
as the outspoken Hindu representative and began to ‘collect’ Guy Rozemont’s
followers first in the Legislative Council and then popularly among the working-
class electorate. The Ralliement Mauricien (RM), a Creole, Franco-Mauritian
and Muslim organization emerged in 1952 in direct response to the Hindu
organization (ibid, 116). By 1956, a rudimentary two-party system had taken root.

While national politics developed, the British began to develop local
politics to create a link between the people and national government. First,
Governor Mackenzie created positions for three civil commissioners throughout
the island. Then, he established village councils, 40 by 1947 and 86 by 1951.
The first elections for these posts took place in 1952 (Simmons 1982, 121-122).
When the Legislature approved elections for village councils, it also enlarged the
Municipal Council and provided for the direct election of two-thirds of the three

(MNL MLD December 12, 1952, 8). This motion was opposed by the conservative elements of
the Council, Dr. de Chazal arguing that race and communalism were too strong for responsible
government to succeed at this time, that local government was still in its infancy and that only one
political party had yet developed enough to compete (ibid, 27).

27 The Labour Party of course existed and ran candidates for the election, but its organization was
at this time still weak and succeeded largely by the charisma of its President, Guy Rozemont
(Simmons 1982, 103; 105).

28 Simmons 1982, 113; Note that Ramgoolam gained his political credibility and position prior to
and outside of the Labour Party organization. It became his vehicle for the Independence
movement only around 1957, though the Party had been founded nearly 20 years before. He
rather capitalized on his position and popularity among the Indian intelligentsia, and specifically
within the Legislative Council, before reaching out to the laborers (Sutton 2007, 240).
Town Councils. These latter elections mirrored the dynamics of national politics and integrated the two-party system.

In 1953, the Labour Party campaigned for increased benefits for workers, universal adult suffrage and responsible government including a ministerial system. Ralliement Mauricien, by contrast, fiercely opposed a ministerial system and denounced economic plans for nationalizing the sugar industry (Simmons 1982, 117). On a conservative platform, RM won only two of the 19 elected seats (ibid). Despite the resounding Labour victory, the Governor again nominated 12 conservatives and secured their influence until 1959 (ibid, 124). This second betrayal made the Labour Party uncompromising in its demand for Constitutional reform.

In response, Governor Scott approached each community in 1954 with a new constitutional proposal for a Legislative Council with 12 nominated and 24 elected members from eight, three-member constituencies. Further, the Legislative Council would elect two-thirds of the Executive Council. Finally, at a Conference in London in July 1955, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alan Lennox-Boyd, met with eight Mauritian politicians and reached an informal agreement for 25 elected and 12 nominated members in the Legislative Council, as well as nine unofficial members in the Executive Council, selected by the Governor in consultation with the leader the of the majority party (MNL MLD June

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29 Port Louis

30 Simmons 1982, 126; Dr. Chan Low (1995) argues that the British proposed this solution to give the majority party a sense of being the government but to circumscribe its powers by retaining a nominated element (10).
The most intense Council debates centered on the electoral system and progress toward self-government. Lennox-Boyd proposed proportional representation (PR) with a single transferable vote in combination with universal suffrage. The *Parti Mauricien* (formerly *Ralliemont Mauricien*) accepted the proposal but the Labour Party rejected it. Members of the former argued that anything other than proportional representation would create a political system dominated by the Hindus and exacerbate the fears of the other communities. Further, several suggested that the country did not yet have enough experience for self-government. Mr. Mohamed argued that even with PR, the Muslims would be unable to obtain representation and therefore advocated for a separate communal register. Mr. Bissoondoyal, champion of the Hindu workers, argued

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31 Lennox-Boyd argued that the present electoral system does not “enable the state of feeling in the Colony to be clearly reflected in the Legislature or that it provides adequate safeguard for minority groups.” As such, he proposes a system of proportional representation with a single transferable vote. He argues that this change becomes necessary in particular because of the introduction of universal suffrage in the coming 1958 election, arguing that PR and universal suffrage should be viewed as two pieces of an integrated plan (MNL MLD 10 April 1956, 3).

32 Dr. de Chazal notes: “But, Sir we cannot exchange the hegemony of the whites for the hegemony of the Hindus!...Sir, we cannot go on living in the suspicion and fear which the Governor in his dispatch to the Secretary of State has so well described. There is suspicion and fear to-day in this Colony. Fear of oppression, fear for our children and their future, genuine fear. The House is well aware of the number of people who are leaving this colony terrified at what the future has in reserve for their children...” (MNL MLD 10 April 1956, 7-8). Dr. Millien argues that the Labour Party, dominated as it is by Hindus, would be assured and irreversible majority guaranteed by the Constitution if their proposals for an electoral system were accepted” (MNL MLD 17 April 1956, 17).

33 Mr. Sauzier argues that he is opposed to increasing the responsibility of ministers because “it is [his] view that we have not got now in Mauritius a sufficient number of public men of proved experience, ability and knowledge to fill nine posts of ministers” (MNL MLD 24 April 1956, 21).

34 “Sir, it has been and is still the view of one and all that with the present electoral system, the minority communities have no chance whatsoever of having their own representatives sitting in this Council to defend their interests” (MNL MLD 10 April 1956, 29).
that the others’ fears of his community were a disguise for class prejudice.\textsuperscript{35} The Labour Party members took up this argument as well, noting that they the Hindus were simply Mauritians interested in national unity and calling for a more equitable economic system which required a more inclusive political structure.\textsuperscript{36} Further, other Labour Party members rejected the PR system, arguing that it would be difficult to understand, lack the people’s confidence and encourage communal voting,\textsuperscript{37} and inhibit the growth of a party system.\textsuperscript{38} In short, the Parti Mauricien (PM) largely debated the system as a communal issue, and the Labour Party focused the discussion on class. As the decade progressed and PM

\textsuperscript{35} He argues that: “[The whites] have asked for public fountains, for schools covered with straw, for minimum wages, for fodder. That is called swamping and on the other side what has the minority done?...If you ask us to forget the past, we are ready to do so, but we expect that you should say to others to ignore the future where you fear perhaps to come down by a millionth of an inch from the level where you are now. It is always a sort of on-way traffic – all the instructions to one community, persuasions to one community and the other one has all the liberties” (MNL MLD 17 April 1956, 29).

\textsuperscript{36} Mr. Boolell in particular defends the Hindu community, noting that “There are the Indo-Mauritians or Hindus who are at the lowest rung of the ladder. They are the people who are the poorest of all the communities in this Island. They are the people who had been enslaved until today; they are the people who are the most poorly dressed, and who are the worst fed and worst housed...What do these poor people want? The only problem they have can be summed up in a few words They want an opportunity to educate their children. They want adequate wages to be able to live at least as decently as human beings and they want to have some proper houses to live in and in many cases they want to be supplied with drinking water...” (MNL MLD 24 April 1956, 39).

\textsuperscript{37} Mr Seeneevassen notes: “It is communal and those who claim P.R. mean to make it work communally and that is contrary to the party principle and that is detrimental to the party principle and that will break up the party and those who insist on it must expect that the members of the Labour Party will fight hard and will never give in” (MNL MLD 15 May 1956, 51).

\textsuperscript{38} Dr. Ramgoolam argues that “We agree that in a democracy there must be ample provision which will give effective opportunity to communal minorities to make themselves heard, but we would not be justified in allowing them to make a mockery of democracy by assuming a dominant position in the State by virtue of some complicated machinery of voting. We want to give security to every communal minority. For that a democratic machinery which has answered the purpose elsewhere without a hitch, in other parts of the Commonwealth, must be applied here. That is the solution, not P.R.” (MNL MLD 15 May 1956, 24).
successfully made alliances with minority groups, issues became increasingly framed in communal terms.

Ultimately, the nominated members combined with the Parti Mauricien members to support the proposed Constitution, which was narrowly approved by the Legislature with a vote of 15 to 14. Only four elected members supported the motion (MNL MLD May 15, 1956, 29). The Labour Party was outraged and decided to boycott elections to the Executive Council in September (MNA CCCR 1957). The wide publicity of these debates, however, meant that outrage spread throughout the island. Unwilling to support a move with such widespread discontent, Governor Scott arranged another meeting of party representatives in London and proportional representation was abandoned (Simmons 1982, 131).

This was one of several instances when the British facilitated a more inclusive system by undermining the conservative elements in Mauritian society.

With PR removed from the table, the shape and size of electoral constituencies became the central issue. The British appointed an Electoral Commission, the Trustram-Eve Commission, in July 1957 to study whether Labour’s suggestion of 40 single-member districts would be workable.\(^\text{39}\) If found infeasible, the Commission would draw up the Parti Mauricien’s proposal for eleven three-member constituencies (MNA CCCR Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1958, Appendix A). Both the Labour Party and Parti Mauricien representatives repeated their respective arguments that one or the other electoral constituencies

\(^{39}\) By ‘feasible’, it was stipulated that (a) each main section of the population should have adequate opportunity to secure representation in the Legislative Council corresponding to its population, (b) each constituency should have reasonable boundaries and (c) the boundaries can be expected to be maintained for some years (MNA CCCR Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1958).
would not allow minorities equal opportunity for election or would lead to an over-
representation of minorities and fail to adequately reflect public opinion (ibid,
Appendix B, 17; 18). For the first time, however, Razack Mohammed broke the
Muslim alliance with the *Parti Mauricien*, advocating for separate electoral rolls
and reserved seats.\(^{40}\) He spoke on behalf of the Muslim Constitutional Reform
Committee, suggesting that not only did the Muslims break from the *Parti
Mauricien* on this issue, but that the group also was organized politically as a
separate entity.

The Committee reported its findings in 1958, arguing that 40 single-
member constituencies were feasible to allow three main groups – Hindus,
Muslims and General Population – adequate representation if combined with the
Governor’s nominations of ‘best losers.’\(^{41}\) Despite objections from the *Parti
Mauricien*, the Secretary of State approved both the system of single-member
constituencies and the Commission’s recommended electoral map.\(^{42}\) This served

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\(^{40}\) Mr. Mohamed argues: “It is absolutely necessary for all sections to satisfy their primary
communal susceptibilities before they can lend a hand to the major work of nation-building. All the
other sections have indeed satisfied these desires and it is only after the glut in this desire they
now feel inclined to turn to the much-vaulted Mauritianism or the party system. The Muslims as a
community are as eager as any other section to put their shoulders to the task of nation-building
but only after these initial desires have been fulfilled” (ibid, Appendix B, 18).

\(^{41}\) MNA CCCR Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1958, 47; The best loser system reserves seats for
defeated candidates using a formula to ensure ethnic representation while also respecting
elected party balance. In terms of ethnic referents, it designates: Hindus, Muslims, Chinese and
General Population, the latter category including Creoles and Franco-Mauritians

\(^{42}\) Mr. Koenig argues that the Commission was a failure because it did not follow the conclusions
of the London Agreement in that “If we are to apply the principles of the London Agreement we
should not have a system which should be based on race or religion but a system of voting which
should facilitate the development of election on grounds of political principle and party” (MNL
MLD 1958, 162). Note that Razack Mohamed supports the conclusions of the Commission
despite initial skepticism from the Muslim community (ibid, 194).
as a second moment where the Colonial Government pushed through reform opposed by the conservative party.

**Class to Communal Politics through the 1950s**

Between 1953 and 1959, however, a significant change took place within the Labour Party. Particularly after Rozemont’s death in 1956, Creoles became disenchanted with the organization. Without Rozemont, the new Labour Party leadership failed to reinforce the relationship between the urban unions and the party. At the same time, although the Party president remained a Creole, Guy Forget, Indian intellectuals and specifically Dr. Ramgoolam became more influential (Simmons 1982, 134).

Further, groups outside the Labour Party that were specifically focused on Hindu issues grew in number and extremity through the decade. During this time, the Legislative Council had only one Indian who was not part of the Labour Party, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal. He was outspoken in his criticisms of the new Indian intellectual leadership, arguing that they had lost touch with the workers (Simmons 1982, 135). As early as 1951, Bissoondoyal claimed leadership of a new party, the Independent Forward Bloc (IFB). By 1958, it had grown sufficiently in strength and membership to officially announce its party status. The party, though emphasizing workers’ rights, also took up a specifically Hindu cultural revival platform, meaning that neither Creoles nor Indian Muslims joined.

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43 In contrast to Dr. Ramgoolam, Bissoondoyal remained outside the official political circles. He was educated in Calcutta and taught there briefly before returning to Mauritius as a learned professor and Hindu missionary. He spent much effort reinvigorating a Hindu renaissance, emphasizing Hindi language and Hindu cultural awareness through grassroots prayer meetings, speeches and rallies and the Zamana newspaper (Sutton 2007, 240).
The Muslims, under the guidance of Razack Mohammed, also moved to independent action through the decade. Initially part of the *Parti Mauricien* alliance of minorities, they felt increasingly disenchanted with their positions. In addition, Mohammed began to understand that leaving his allegiance ‘open’ could be used as leverage against the two main parties. In 1958, Mohammed struck a deal with the Labour Party – the latter would not run any Muslim candidates in its areas of support and Comité d'Action Muselman (CAM) would persuade voters to support Labour candidates in other areas (Simmons 1982, 137). Finally, the *Parti Mauricien* made a strange alliance with the Independent Forward Bloc (IFB), uniting to defeat the Labour Party (ibid, 138). Thus, although the two main parties had fractured since the previous election, the coalition formation reinforced the two-party competition.

The 1959 elections were a victory for the Labour-CAM alliance, as the former won 23 of the 40 seats and the latter won six. This success suggested a degree of party discipline as Labour supporters had taken heed of instructions to return CAM candidates in support of the alliance. It also reinforced the fruitfulness of allying with another group, as both CAM and the Labour Party benefitted from the agreement. These coalitions would become more commonplace with each subsequent election. The *Parti Mauricien* won three seats and the IFB won six (Simmons 1982, 139). Finally, the Governor’s

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44 Recall that the Muslims take up a different platform from the *Parti Mauricien* during the Electoral Commission’s work in 1957 (MNA CCCR Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1958, 18). Mohammed later attributes the falling out to the *Parti Mauricien’s* refusal to support reserved seats for communities and a communal franchise for communities (MNL MLD 19 November 1963, 107).
selection of ‘best losers’ improved the Sino-Mauritian and Parti Mauricien place on the Council but did not endanger Labour’s majority.

The Indo-Mauritian successes, however, also catalyzed the burgeoning presence of Gaëtan Duval, an outspoken Creole who won a by-election in Curepipe and would in the next decade become known as ‘King of the Creoles.’ He appealed to communal interests, arguing against Hindu domination and for the ‘general population’ to protect their interests together (Simmons 1982, 141-142). His extremist rhetoric in the by-election set the tone for the coming decade and the emergence of an anti-independence movement based on communal fears and agitations.

**Constitutional Reform and the Anti-Independence Movement, 1959-1968**

With the Labour Party soundly at the helm and the Colonial Government apparently ready to facilitate political progress, Mauritius should have been ripe for an easy transition to Independence in the 1960s. Yet, demographic and economic issues conspired to promote conflict rather than cooperation. This conflict took communal form and, for the first time in Mauritius’ history, turned violent.

In the early 1960s, two cyclones devastated the sugar industry, shattering the economy as a whole, because it was still so highly dependent on this one resource.\(^{45}\) The Labour Government put its development plans on hold for reconstruction. In addition, during the 1940s, the island eradicated malaria and enjoyed a sudden drop in mortality rates. This success in combination with high

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\(^{45}\) Simmons 1982, 146; Sugar accounted for more than 1/3 of the gross national product in 1958 (MNA CCCR Meade 1960, 42).
birth rates meant that during the 1940s and 1950s, the population exploded (MNA CCCR Titmuss 1960, 2). Between 1944 and 1958, the population increased by 46%. Forty-four percent of the population was under 15 years of age by 1957 (Simmons 1982, 145). This combination of factors created a serious unemployment problem. The Titmuss Report issued in 1961 noted that “without drastic action, there will be further reductions in living standards and unemployment on a scale so large that no one in Mauritius will be able to question its existence. The administration of public assistance will break down under the strain and impossible burdens will be thrown on the budget” (MNA CCCR Titmuss 1960, 14). Further, the Meade Commission, appointed to study economic and social structures, reported that in what was the upcoming 15-year period at the time, the number of people seeking employment was expected to increase by roughly 54% (MNA CCCR Meade 1960, 57). The report concluded: “The economic future of Mauritius is determined by its population problem. The review which we have made of this problem has convinced us that unless resolute measures are taken to solve it, Mauritius will be faced with a catastrophic situation (ibid, 37).” Despite these ominous findings, the Legislative Council only ‘took note’ of the Reports and failed to act in any meaningful way until 1966.46 The Labour Party ignored the warnings in part because they believed them to be distractions from the priority of independence.

46 The Government provided financial assistance to the Department of Health for family planning (Simmons 1982, 146).
Constitutional Reform of 1961

The Labour Party ignored economic realities to fully focus on constitutional talks. Mauritian politicians gathered in London in 1961 to discuss the new constitution (MNA CCCR 1960/61). The Parti Mauricien advocated association with the United Kingdom instead of Independence, also asking for separate communal rolls for each minority, thus re-opening the discussion on electoral systems.\(^{47}\) Meanwhile, Mohammed and CAM pushed strongly for separate electoral rolls, but downplayed the independence issue to maintain their tenuous alliance with Labour (Simmons 1982, 150-151). Bissoondoyal and the Independent Forward Bloc was also concerned largely with safeguards rather than independence, proposing a three-member tribunal to protect individual rights.\(^{48}\) The Labour Party, then, was the only party to call for independence.

Despite opposition, the Colonial Office was committed to moving Mauritius toward self-government.\(^{49}\) As such, Governor Macleod proposed a two-stage plan. First, Ramgoolam, as leader of the majority party, would become chief minister. The governor would be obliged to consult the chief minister in appointing Executive Council members and in distributing portfolios.\(^{50}\) After the 1963 election, the British would grant external self-government with the Governor

\(^{47}\) Simmons (1982) argues that this move was likely made to court the Muslim community (150).

\(^{48}\) This suggestion led to the creation of an ombudsman in 1968 (ibid, 151).

\(^{49}\) The Governor notes: “The proposals are based on the assumption that constitutional advance in Mauritius towards internal self-government is inevitable and desirable” (MNA CCCR 1960/61, 5).

\(^{50}\) Mauritius had had a ministerial system since 1959 (Simmons 1982, 184).
retaining only decision-making power only over defense and external affairs in consultation with the Premier (former chief minister) (MNA CCCR 1960/61, 5).

1963 Elections

With much at stake, fear became a significant factor in the 1963 elections as several candidates employed protection gangs to intimidate voters and rivals (Simmons 1982, 153). The Labour Party responded to the emergence of the IFB by selecting candidates from lower castes to fend off charges that it was a high-caste party (Simmons 1982, 154). The Parti Mauricien ran an explicitly communal campaign, targeting urban Creole and Franco-Mauritian voters and urging them to save Mauritius from Hindu domination. The IFB ran a campaign in the countryside against an extravagant and unjust Labour government. Finally, Labour ran a campaign generally on issues such as wresting economic power from the Franco-Mauritians and the government’s record of helping workers. Independence played a role, but not a large one in this campaign (Simmons 1982, 155).

The Labour Party lost four seats from the previous election, making it four shy of a majority. CAM won four seats, losing one from 1959; IFB won seven, increasing its total by one; and the Parti Mauricien returned eight members, an increase of five. Though hardly a defeat for the Labour Party, they had lost some ground due to Duval’s successes in courting Creole votes. The Parti Mauricien’s communal appeal had been successful, but it would never be enough to secure control without forming alliances with other groups.

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51 The Labour Party did not help itself against these charges when it used blatant gerrymandering to include more Hindu voters in the Municipal and Town Council areas (Simmons 1982, 154).
Despite the bitter campaign, the Colonial Office insisted that a coalition of government be formed with representatives of every party. This included six ministers from the Labour Party, three from Parti Mauricien, two from the IFB, and two from CAM.52 Meanwhile, in response to Duval’s communalism, a strictly Hindu communal party, the All-Mauritius Hindu Congress, formed in December 1964. Its leaders preached Hindu supremacy first, demanding government posts in proportion to their percentage of the population, and democracy within the Hindu community second. They attacked Ramgoolam and Labour as having sold out to the British and white capitalists (Simmons 1982, 160).

Both the Congress and Parti Mauricien attacked one another and mobilized their respective communities. Their speeches became militaristic. Increasingly, party thugs threatened action, and after violence broke out following a Parti Mauricien and then Labour rally, tensions spread throughout the island. On May 10, several people died in the ensuing violence, and the police arrested 98. The Governor declared a state of emergency and asked for British troops. While the total death toll was not large, the communal nature of the violence created intense fear. Further, the inability of the police to control violence or lessen tensions reiterated the already widespread belief in their inefficiency.

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52 Simmons 1982, 158; Note that the IFB was not offered any seats by the Labour, but only via the Colonial Office’s insistence, thus reinforcing the divisions among Hindus. Mr. S. Bissoondoyal bemoans the move: “As regards the number of votes that we were given at the poll, our performance was not poorer than that of the Parti Mauricien; but we have been dealt with as an unwanted guest. I do not want to raise this issue at this hour but because outside there is rumour that the Independent Forward Bloc has identified itself with the Labour Party I make it very clear that we keep our identity and we shall keep it forever in the Cabinet so long as I shall be in the Government and outside the Cabinet and in the country so long as I shall be living” (MNL MLD 19 November 1963, 81).
(Simmons 1982, 160-163). After the events, the All-Government Coalition found it impossible to work together and broke apart after only a year and a half.

**1965 London Constitutional Talks**

The violence and Government breakdown did not deter the British, however, and they proceeded with plans to move Mauritius forward politically. They called for a Constitutional Conference in the fall of 1965 to determine the final status of the colony. In addition to deciding between Independence and Association, once again the major issues were the constituencies and the electoral system (MNA CCCR 1965).

The *Parti Mauricien* remained the main advocate of association, emphasizing the island’s dependence on sugar, small size and economic vulnerability. They cautioned against the political dangers of independence in a multi-communal place like Mauritius where Hindu domination would lead to extreme communalism and a one-party state. The *Parti* also called for a party-list electoral system (MNA CCCR 1965, 3). The Labour Party called for independence, retention of the best loser system to safeguard minorities, and reorganization to 20 three-member constituencies.\(^5\) CAM advocated a transitional period of 10-15 years between self-government and the determination of the island’s final status and called for a quota system in which 11 seats of 60 would be set aside for Muslims (Simmons 1982, 165). Finally, the

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\(^5\) MNA CCCR 1965, 12; The Banwell Commission’s suggestion for eight ‘best loser’ seats, adopted formally in 1967, remains in place to this day in Mauritius. It reserves eight seats for defeated candidates using a formula to ensure ethnic representation while also respecting elected party balance. In terms of ethnic referents, it designates: Hindus, Muslims, Chinese and General Population, the latter category including Creoles and Franco-Mauritians (Miles 2014, 209).
IFB supported a system of correctives for minority groups and an electoral system with seven four-member and three six-member constituencies (ibid, 164).

The British opted for independence in September 1965. The Secretary of State put forward a plan of action to establish a constitution and hold a general election. If after six months, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution asking for independence by a simple majority, he would grant independence by the end of 1966 (MNA CCCR 1965, 4). Finally, unable to decide the electoral system question, he called for a further Commission to study the matter.

**Shifting Alliances, Independence and Riots**

The last 23 months of decolonization focused almost exclusively on the coming general election where Britain (though it had not advocated association) gave Mauritians the choice about whether to become an independent nation or to remain a colony. Duval, confident in the continued support of the Creoles, Chinese and Franco-Mauritians, dropped communal appeals to draw the support of some Hindus and Muslims. Meanwhile, Labour reached out to the new Congress/IFB alliance, unwittingly giving the Parti Mauricien an advantage (Simmons 1982, 175).

During 1966, the Banwell Commission completed its work and reported in May of that year, recommending 20 three-member constituencies, two seats for Rodrigues, an outer island that is a territory of Mauritius, and eight best loser ‘corrective’ seats. 54 Ironically, the Labour Party rejected the Commission’s report

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54 The best loser seats guarantee up to eight seats for two nonelected candidates from each of the four constitutionally recognized ethnic or religious communities (Hindu, Muslim, Chinese, and “general population). These seats are distributed among the political parties according to their proportional representation in parliament (Miles 1999, 8). The Banwell Commission rejected any further protections for minorities beyond the existing best loser system, arguing that “We do not, however, think that legitimate aspirations should include mathematically exact representation of
as imperialistic\textsuperscript{55} and the \textit{Parti Mauricien} accepted it.\textsuperscript{56} After a few adjustments to the corrective procedure, both parties agreed. The Labour Party, however, was nervous about proceeding with elections at this juncture, given the looming economic crisis, high unemployment, and general dissatisfaction with government. Ultimately, Ramgoolam successfully delayed the elections until mid-1967.

The election was largely a referendum on independence and Labour’s record in office. Two parties fought the contest: the \textit{Parti Mauricien Social Democrat} (PMSD) and the Independence Alliance made up of Labour, CAM and IFB.\textsuperscript{57} The PMSD was centralized, well-funded and organized, but largely centered around Duval himself. They sold association as a means to facilitate easy emigration to Britain and access to the Common Market once Britain joined.

\begin{quote}
 communal groups in the Assembly, still less one secured by reservation. We consider that the electoral system should rather afford reasonable prospects for the election of candidates from the smaller communities in the ordinary electoral process, and that it should also ensure that the number of members of the Assembly drawn from these communities will not fall below a reasonable level.” (MNA CCCR Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1966, 7).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{55} Dr. Ramgoolam argues that the main objection to the recommendations was the size of the Legislature: “We would have thought that the very nature of our multi-racial society should have influenced the to give a larger number of seats so that a wider representation of all the various interests would have found a place in the new Assembly. Instead they thought a larger number of seats would be too much as far as funds are concerned, as if stability, peace and harmony can be weighed in terms of money. These concepts are outmoded as the people advocating them are backward and unrealistic in their approach” (MNL MLD 7 June 1966, 979). Simmons (1982) argues that this is likely because Ramgoolam was trying to keep the fragile Labour/CAM/IFB/Congress alliance together and tried to use the commission’s findings as a rallying point (177).

\textsuperscript{56} Mr. Koenig argues that the debate on electoral form has lasted too long already and thus, because it is obvious that all parties in Mauritius will never agree that they should defer to the neutral arbiter, the UK Government (MNL MLD 7 June 1966, 999). Further, Mr. Duval charges that the Commission’s intention was to get rid of communalism and therefore anyone who does not support their recommendations is obviously in favor of communalism (ibid, 1068).

\textsuperscript{57} The \textit{Parti Mauricien} changed its name just prior to the election campaign.
Further, they argued that it was the Labour policies that had caused unemployment and debt.

By contrast, Labour ran a more informal and decentralized campaign. Though they scheduled some 20 national meetings, much of the campaigning took place in intimate private sessions, which provided opportunities to address the interests of specific smaller groups without attracting widespread media and public attention. Ramgoolam and Labour blamed the Colonial Office for any failures during their time in Government. They called association with the British continued colonialism (Simmons 1982, 182-184).

During the voting, skirmishes broke out between Duval and Mohammed’s party thugs in Port Louis. By evening the Special Mobile Force controlled the streets. Despite this violence, the election went forward and PMSD won Port Louis, but lost much of the rest of the island. The result was an Independence Party victory of 39 seats to 23. Party discipline was extremely high, most people voting for three members of a single party. At the same time, most Hindu areas went to the Independence Party and most Franco-Mauritian and Creole votes went to PMSD. The Muslim areas were divided between the two parties (Simmons 1982, 184-187).

On August 22, the Legislature passed a resolution for independence (MNL MLD August 22, 1967, 856). Just months before the official independence, riots swept through Port Louis. In October, the Government fired some 10,000 relief workers who had been hired just prior to the election. Seventy-three were

58 Multi-member constituencies and the use of party symbols facilitated this trend, as it helped to ensure that illiterates would naturally vote for the three candidates of a single party rather than three candidates of a specific community.
arrested before police restored order to the capital. In January, fighting again broke out in the capital, this time between Muslims and Creoles. The fighting started between two gangs but quickly spread. The British declared a State of Emergency on January 22 and called in British troops. The riots lasted ten days, left 35 dead and hundreds wounded (MNL MLD February 27, 1968). Mauritius received its independence under these ominous circumstances on March 12 with British troops still on the island (Simmons 1982, 186-189).

**Concluding Remarks**

Constitutional progress in Mauritius was thus a slow and tedious process. A Constitution from the 1880s, which provided a political role predominately for Franco-Mauritians and a few upper class Creoles and Hindus, was not amended until after World War II. The first year the Mauritians elected more than half of the legislature was in 1948, with the support of the Colonial regime. This marked the first in a series of efforts over the next 20 years to move the colony toward greater political inclusion and ultimately independence.

Much of the initial reform efforts came from workers and unions. Class was the dominant cleavage of Mauritian politics, and the Franco-Mauritian sugar barons had a vested interest in limiting democracy and access to power. Over the next two decades, the main lines of contestation included the franchise, the electoral system, the shape and size of constituencies, and finally, the issue of independence or association. By 1948 electoral support translated into real governmental influence, however, this gradual process of reform took place via electoral competition. These 20 years of battle were waged in an inclusive and electoral manner and forced groups to invest in a system of democratic
competition, including political parties. Mauritians learned the process through five elections prior to independence.

The Mauritius democratic experience set a precedence for shifting alliances and coalitions, formed largely tactically rather than from exclusive communal or class-based divisions. The need for alliances can be explained in part by an electoral system that favored a two-party system starting in 1948. Such favoritism, however, did not inhibit the emergence of new parties but instead forced splinter parties to join up with the larger established parties. For example, CAM was formed to protect Muslim interests, but depending on the issues, it aligned itself first with the Parti Mauricien then later with the Labour Party. Similarly, the IFB formed to protect Hindu workers against what they saw to be an exclusively high-caste Hindu Labour Party. The IFB thus initially aligned with the Parti Mauricien in 1958. In 1967, however, it aligned with the Labour Party. Further, the Labour Party was founded by a Creole and once dominated by this community’s working class. By the 1960s, however, it had become a Hindu party and the Parti Mauricien was led by the “King of the Creoles.” Finally, as we will see in the post-independence section, Labour and the PMSD would align immediately after Independence under a platform of shared interests.

This pattern of coalition formation and breakdown is in part challenging, as ideological platforms seem to be ever shifting. In another sense, however, it is stabilizing in a multi-ethnic society, as no one group is ever permanently shut out of the island’s political system even though one community holds numerical dominance. However, this is a lesson learned only via experience with democratic elections, however. As such, Mauritius benefited from 20 years of
meaningful democratic elections prior to independence. It was a period that taught political leaders and voters alike that despite intense fears of communal domination during decolonization, the reality was a much more fluid political scene. Communal populations did not necessarily determine success. Also important were strategic calculations, compromises and cooperation. As we will see, these experiences played a crucial role in 1982 when the Labour Party, the ruling party since Independence, was defeated en masse.

**A Mobilized Society and Responsive State: A Case Study of the Politics of Trade Unions**

Mauritius is a plantation colony with sugar as its primary economic activity. For much of its history, the economy depended on this sole cash crop and was thus subject to the whims of the market. Much of its political history as well was tied to the sugar economy and breaking down the rigid, exclusive structure of power it facilitates. Because economic and political grievances are so closely intertwined in these circumstances, it follows that trade unions serve as one of the major outlets through which much of society exercises political weight. The successful organization of trade unions is by no means assured, however, against an economically dominant elite.

This section traces a brief history of trade unionism on the island and its role in political activism. What this section argues is that trade unions have become a formalized avenue for the expression of grievances, which reliably connects social actors with the state, forming a predictable communication system which overall serves to deescalate potential turmoil. Ultimately, several labor disturbances and British interventions on behalf of labor served to break down the rigid hierarchy and link the working classes to the state in an ongoing
and meaningful way. The availability and effectiveness of these institutions to connect society to the state helped to promote a responsive state that, in turn, facilitated democratic survival.

In Mauritius, whenever the state moves too far in favor of unapologetic capitalism, trade unions mark the fundamental institutions through which political grievances are channeled to the government. In these moments, the pervasive conflicts are based on class rather than community. These include the late 1930s during the depression, in the 1940s with the Labour Party, shortly after Independence with the emergence of the MMM opposition party, and during the 1970s under the MMM’s continued guidance. These years are punctuated by intense communal conflict. During the 1960s, there was intense conflict between Creoles and Indians. This fact did not prevent Creole or Hindu workers from joining the MMM in 1969, however, when the Labour/PMSD coalition was perceived to have become a vehicle for elite interests only.

In short, after a series of strikes and violence during the late 1930s and early 1940s, Mauritius adopted legislation and institutions to protect workers through trade union organization and collective bargaining rights. Institutions such as a Labour Department and courts were formed along with formalized procedures for more effective grievance expression, which replaced a dilapidated and ineffective system. The British supported these measures and enforced the new regulations until workers gained confidence about utilizing these formal channels instead of illegally striking. During the late-colonial period of Mauritian history, then, British interventionist policies facilitated the institutionalization of formal channels linking the society with the state.
Plantation Economy, a Brief History

The French colonized Mauritius in 1721 and subsequently brought in nearly 101,000 slaves over the next century (Allen 2008, 153). From 1810, the British took control of the island and subsequently transformed it into a sugar-dominated plantation colony. After 1830, sugar regularly accounted for nearly 90% of the colony’s export earnings (ibid, 152). After the British abolished slavery in 1834, former slaves abandoned the sugar estates in mass. The plantation owners filled this labor gap with nearly 300,000 Indians arriving over the next century. By 1861, Indians represented two-thirds of the island’s population (Benedict 1961, 9). Between 1839 and 1847, the sugar estates faced economic problems which forced many to subdivide and sell small plots of land to the Indian or Creole population, a process known as the petit morcellement (Allen 2008, 162). Another capital crisis occurred around 1875, triggering the grand morcellement. As a result, Indo-Mauritians owned roughly 45% of all land planted with sugar cane by the early 1920s, and produced roughly one-quarter of the colony’s sugar (ibid, 164). This created a class of small planters who would eventually form a middle class of civil servants, educated professionals, and farmers (Meisenhelder 1997, 279-280). In addition, as Indo-Mauritians gained access to small plots of land, many moved off estate housing and formed roughly 150 villages throughout the island (Lange 2003, 408).

At Independence, the structure of the economy looked much the same. The island had not diversified, and sugar therefore still constituted roughly 93% of domestic exports and 35% of gross national product (Mannick 1979, 63; MNA CCCR Meade 1960, 2). Of this, 21 large plantations produced 62% of the total
crop and thousands of small planters produced the rest. As the predominate economic activity on the island, the sugar industry employed about 70,000 workers and accounted for roughly 30% of the labor force (Mannick 1979, 82). In the lead up to independence, however, the industry had little room to expand in terms of employment. This was particularly problematic because the island suffered an overpopulation crisis during this time as well.59

Estate laborers as well as dockworkers are crucial to the export industry. While their numbers are large, they have been historically weak in organization and power. However, beginning in the mid-1920s events occurred that began to alter this balance of power through the emergence of trade unions.

**Emergence of Trade Unions, 1922-1945**

The riots of 1937 were the first moment of mass participation on the island, and they served to catalyze labor’s organization (MNA CCCR 1937, 171). Prior to this event, elites of Indian and Creole background had been acquiring professional degrees and trying to break into the Legislative and Municipal Council (Simmons 1982, 52). These professionals paid little attention to the workers or small planters, however, and benefited from a political system that effectively barred lower classes from access to the state. Strikes in 1938 and 1943 which included petitions, sit-ins, mass marches, and strikes, that

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59 In a study of the Mauritian economic situation in 1960, J.E. Meade writes: “In fifteen years time the number of persons seeking work will be 50% greater than it now is; it is not to be expected that the sugar industry which accounts for more than a third of the economic productive employment in the rest of the economy must be increased by some 75% over the next fifteen years if a serious decline in the standard of living per head of the population is to be avoided” (MNA CCCR Meade 1960, 39).
sometimes erupted in violence, finally made the elites and colonial government take notice (Lange 2010, 2).

The general hardship of the worldwide depression in the 1930s fueled workers’ organization. Wages suffered as sugar prices fell and a corrupt and unjust system of wage payment exacerbated these difficulties (MNA CCCR 1937, 3). After submitting several unanswered petitions and receiving no assistance from the inefficient Poor Law Office, laborers’ demands for a better standard of living and some participation in government turned violent (Simmons 1982, 54-55).

Economic hardship hit the small planters as well. Middlemen frequently took a large cut from their already limited profit margin, so that even in the best of circumstances, small planters were barely able to pay their yearly debts (Simmons 1982, 56). Perhaps most importantly, neither workers nor small planters had any legal outlets to protect their interests in the 1930s. Unions and associations were illegal and the protector of immigrants was largely disinterested in taking their claims forward.60

Dr. Maurice Curé was the first Mauritian that attempted to organize workers from both rural estates and urban spaces. In 1924, he organized a march on Government House to demand clean water in one area (Simmons 1982, 58). He ran for elections to the Legislative Council in 1926 and 1931 and the Municipal Council in 1924, but his calls for improved labor conditions met with little support among an exclusively upper class electorate (ibid, 59). In 1934, he

60 MNA CCCR 1937, 4; Trade union legislation had been introduced to the Council of Government in 1926 at the request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but after its first reading disappeared (ibid, 169).
won a by-election for the Council of Government and quickly made his reputation calling for trade legislation and an extended franchise (MNA CCCR 1937, 169-170). Non-coincidentally, he lost his seat a mere two years later. In 1936, he organized a march of unemployed workers in Port Louis, sent petitions directly to the Governor and Secretary of State for the Colonies, and began organizing the Labour Party, founded to ‘assure the representation of workers in Mauritius’ (ibid, 59). But for the next few of years, the Colonial Government dismissed these efforts.

The same year, Curé founded the Société de Bienfaisance des Travailleurs, a nonpolitical workers’ benevolent society. It became an organization with dues-paying members that worked alongside the Labour party. By the summer of 1936, the Labour Party and Société claimed some 4000 members and held weekly meetings (Simmons 1982, 61).

On July 30, 1937, laborers on the Rich Fund Estate walked out (MNA CCCR 1937, 9). A week later, 800 laborers and small planters marched to Port Louis to see the Protector of Immigrants (ibid, 14). The Protector of Immigrants’ representatives received several of the leaders, but only made vague promises to examine the issue (ibid, 16). Meanwhile, on the estates, laborers set fires, overturned trucks, and prevented others from going to work (ibid, 20-21). When the inexperienced police force did little to quell the conflict, the estate managers armed themselves, sparking violence (ibid, 23-27). On one estate, four people were killed and ten others wounded. News of the violence spread and catalyzed greater conflict across the island. Though unrest continued throughout the crop season, it slowly dissipated.
The British appointed a Commission of Enquiry in 1937. The laborers complained of low wages and poor treatment at the hands of job contractors and *sirdars*, or leaders of Indian immigrant laborers employed by sugar estates as intermediaries between estate owners and workers (MNA CCCR 1937, 198). The small planters complained of unjustly reduced prices for their cane and corrupt middlemen (ibid, 196-197). Their report concluded that the small planters and laborers were justified in their complaints and recommended that trade unions be legalized, that a Director of Labour and Department of Labour be created to set and enforce standards on estates, that estates be periodically checked for compliance, and that middlemen be required to keep books with specific information to reduce corruption (ibid, 173-179). The Commission also heard witnesses express political discontent, specifically that “the cause of the unrest was the lack of proper men through whom the Indians could voice their grievances” due to a lack of representation in the Council of Government (ibid, 104).

Governor Clifford’s response to the confrontations was to prioritize the improvement of relations between labor and employers. He set up a new Labour Department with a formal system for settling labor disputes (Simmons 1982, 69-70). He appointed six labor inspectors and introduced the 1938 Labour Ordinance that set minimum standards for health and wages of workers. Further, the Industrial Association Ordinance of 1938 legalized trade unionism (MNA CCCR 1943, 7-8).

By 1939, the Department of Labour registered 48 Associations with 11,540 members (ibid, 8). In addition, in 1939 and 1940, there were a total of 582
men-days lost by agricultural laborers through industrial disputes were settled through these institutions (ibid, 9). While there were many disputes, they were all resolved via the intervention of the Department of Labour or through Conciliation Boards. Moreover, activities such as cane burning and other illegal acts of sabotage nearly disappeared. This suggests that workers embraced the available formal channels to express grievances.

Nonetheless, progress remained slow. Disappointed with ongoing low wages and a shortage of foodstuffs, laborers organized several marches from the various estates to Port Louis (ibid, 11). These efforts led to a series of negotiations and agreements on specific estates that increased wages (Simmons 1982, 78). However, negotiations were unsuccessful on one estate and disturbances followed. During a confrontation with the police, three people were killed and 16 others were injured (MNA MLD 1943, 18-23). The Colonial Office called a second Commission of Enquiry, which found that the laborers’ complaints were again justified owing to little improvement on the estates despite legislation after 1937 (ibid, 24).

Emboldened by their success, the Labour Party continued to organize and grow. While political progress seemed more remote in 1938, the beginnings of an organized voice for labor provided hope for better conditions and relations in the future. Further, the Governor was determined both to facilitate communication between laborers and employers and to protect estates from destructive behavior (Simmons 1982, 69).
Trade Unions, 1945-1948

The largest advances in trade union formation took place between 1945 and 1948. Unions formed on a countrywide basis and became politically influential. In part, the British helped this process along in 1945, by sending Ken Baker, a union advisor from England. He urged more precise legislation to protect reprisals against laborers who filed complaints, built a stronger Labour department, and helped existing industrial associations grow into full trade unions. He made it a priority to ensure that laborers felt comfortable using these institutional channels without fear of retribution so that they would not need to resort to illegal or informal means of expressing grievances (Simmons 1982, 82).

To assure that these connections were successful, he used existing cultural institutions to educate the laborers, in particular, the Indian associations, or *baitkas*.61

By 1945, there were two main unions: the Mauritius Agricultural Labourers’ Association and the Engineering and Technical Workers Union (ETWU) (Simmons 1982, 83). The ETWU included roughly 4,000 members by 1946 and organized a legal, disciplined strike in the south. In that same year, the Agricultural Union had over 12,000 members (ibid, 85). By 1947, both unions were affiliated with a trade union council, had improved internal organization, and had established negotiation procedures that trade union representatives approved.

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61 *Baitkas* are traditional associations which organize Hindus along religion, caste or ethnic group and serve as meeting places in the villages (Benedict 1961, 147-148).
Even with the departure of Ken Baker, the unions remained strong and coordinated over the next decade, playing a major role in the political campaign for greater participation. Between 1950 and 1964, the number of unions increased from 25 to 80 and membership from 18,207 to 47,304 (Lange 2003, 416). A Report on Mauritius finds that by 1966, two years before independence, there were 95 unions, with the Plantation Workers’ Union having the largest membership at 17,567 members (MNA CCCR Report on Mauritius, 1966).

**Concluding Remarks**

A small Franco-Mauritian oligarchy controlled power exclusively for much of Mauritian colonial history to the detriment of Creole and Indian workers. Despite several efforts to alter the rigid structure of power, the workers’ plight remained much the same until roughly World War II. Starting in the 1930s, labor began to organize. Maurice Curé formed both a workers’ association and the Labour Party in the mid-1930s. He used these organizations to educate and mobilize the working-class population to collectively push for greater economic and political protections and rights. Though the organizations filed petitions and campaigned for workers’ rights via existing institutional channels such as the Protector of Immigrants, they soon abandoned these efforts as weak and ineffective means to express grievances. The workers’ association and the Labour Party resorted to illegal strikes and sabotage on the sugar estates in 1937, 1938 and 1943.

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62 Rozemont became president of the Labour Party and ETWU in 1946 and brought the memberships together to strengthen the party (Simmons 1982, 85).
Finally, though political advances remained largely unthinkable during this period, British interventionist policies supported greater economic protections for the working class via stronger relations between state and societal actors. The British created a Labour Department to establish a formalized avenue for workers to file complaints. A British trade union expert helped to organize the first Mauritian unions, provided advice on collective bargaining, and increased communication between rural and urban areas and the state through the creation of institutions such as the Conciliation Boards.

As the workers utilized these institutions successfully, their confidence grew in the institutions’ ability to affect positive change through them, rather than turning to strikes and violence.63 This is evidenced both by the growing number of trade unions and the number of trade union members between 1947 and 1968 from roughly 13,500 to 48,500 (Lange 2010, 6). Finally, the Government issued new legislation and enforced it to protect workers’ rights to minimum standards and wages as well as collective bargaining organizations.

In short, after a series of strikes and violence during the late 1930s and early 1940s, Mauritius adopted legislation and institutions to increase the flow of information and resources between the state and social groups, specifically those tied to labor. Not only did the colonial state create institutions, but also it enforced new rules and regulations in a meaningful way. As a result, social groups gained confidence in them. In addition, labor continued to organize to make effective use of these institutional channels as opposed to mobilizing to support illegal action.

63 Lange (2003) notes that nearly 3000 labor disputes were settled per year through these new state institutional channels between 1947 and 1967 (410).
Thus, through British interventionist policies during the last two decades of the colonial period, formal institutional channels provided stronger links between the society and state. As we will see in the post-independence section, these existing links helped to stabilize an otherwise tumultuous economic situation in the 1970s which threatened potential democratic breakdown.

**Moderate Administrative Development: Legacies of Restricted Colonial Investment**

Finally, during the late colonial period, administrative institutions expanded and included a national primary educational system, a health care apparatus, an independent court system, and increased infrastructure. All this facilitated the state’s reach into society. This reach allowed the government to better understand and respond to the population. Thus, Mauritius did not suffer from a lack of capacity as was common in other contexts of the developing world, particularly among its African neighbors.

At the same time, Mauritius did not have an overly extensive state and certain areas were much stronger than others. Education, for example, was a product of early colonial investment for elite Franco-Mauritians and Creoles and expanded greatly among Indian workers through cultural associations after World War II. The education system continues to struggle from the use of a multiplicity of languages, however, as well as highly restrictive opportunities for advancement beyond the primary level. In addition, the small police force was largely ineffective at coping with the island’s riots up through Independence.64 Finally, though it developed a general welfare system during the late colonial

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64 Note that Mauritius does not have its own military.
period, Mauritius remained highly dependent on sugar profits for its maintenance at Independence. The Mauritian economy did not successfully diversify to open additional avenues of revenue until decades later.

As such, the Mauritian state contrasts sharply with Malaysia in that it serves as a capable organization for information gathering and providing services for the population, but is significantly weaker in terms of security tools and public goods provision. As we will see in the post-independence section on democratic survival, these aspects are crucial for understanding elite decision-making when the ruling elite faced power uncertainties during the 1970s. Ultimately, parliamentary politics, rather than brute force was the deciding factor in their fate.

This section discusses several aspects of administrative development in Mauritius to demonstrate the state’s moderate capacity. It argues that the Mauritian state at independence was generally capable of responding to social needs but was not an overwhelming force that could operate outside of the bounds of public opinion. This section outlines this administrative development in five parts: pre-1946 Political Design, Bureaucratic Development, Direct Taxation and Government Revenue, Public Services, and Transportation and Communications.

Pre-World War II Political Design

When the Dutch initially founded Mauritius in 1598, it was an uninhabited island (Bowman 1991, 9-10). The Dutch never successfully settled the island, and in 1715, the French founded a colony that lasted until 1810. This period included the settlement of thousands of Frenchmen as well as the importation of tens of thousands of African slaves (ibid, 17-18). In 1810, the British captured the
island, not so much with the intent to settle it but to reduce problems of piracy that had been affecting their passing ships (ibid, 17). The British ruled the island until its independence in 1968.

The British abolished slavery in 1835, and the French plantation owners turned to Indian indentured servants to replace their labor source. A net of 300,000 Indians and several thousand Chinese made their home in Mauritius over the next five decades, the former becoming by 1900 roughly two-thirds of the population (Bowman 1991, 21). By Independence, the once uninhabited island was home to peoples hailing from three different continents and practicing four major world religions.

The political and administrative institutions remained small and centralized from the period of French settlement. From 1790, the French established a constitution and formal institutions of law and representation for the settlers (Dukhira 2002, 10). Of note, because the British never settled the island and preserved French cultural influences, the Catholic Church and French language endured and made the British colony very French in character (Bowman 1991, 17). In addition, the French legal system was run by local Franco-Mauritians and included a Supreme Court and ten District Courts by 1850 (Lange 2003, 405). While this set of institutions thus had long duration, it was exclusively used by and for the Franco-Mauritians alone.

Similarly, a centralized political system with a legislature has a long history in Mauritius. Under the French, the settlers received autonomy to govern the colony. The British, however, removed these representative institutions. The Constitution of 1825 set up the colony’s first Council of Government under British
rule; it included appointed whites, as did the enlarged body from 1831 (Bowman 1991, 27). In 1850, the Municipal Council in Port-Louis became the first body with an elected element under British rule, but the restricted franchise made it accessible only to Franco-Mauritian land-owners (Dukhira 2002).

From 1885 to 1947, the Constitution included ten elected representatives, nine appointed civilians and eight colonial officials who served on the Legislative Council (Bowman 1991, 28). Restrictive electoral laws meant that the Franco-Mauritians still dominated the elected component of the institution. Of the 365,000 inhabitants of the island, only 12,000 qualified to vote (Dukhira 2002).

In addition, the Governor and Executive Council retained authority to veto any laws passed by the council. In short, while the French and British introduced centralized institutions early in the colonial period, only a small portion of the population had access to them. This exclusiveness would change only with a tedious period of political agitation after World War II, where the debates centered primarily on who should control and participate in the existing institutions.

**Bureaucratic Development**

Likewise, the British introduced the structures of state administration in the mid-1800s, though their reach and obligations to society were also restricted. Specifically, they functioned for the benefit of the small landed Franco-Mauritian class (Meisenhelder 1997). Lange (2003) notes that of the 4,000 non-military state positions in 1900 (roughly 1% of the population), 93% were staffed by Mauritians (404). This is indeed significantly different from Ghana where in 1954, Ghanaians made up only 35% of the civil service (PRAAD ADM 5/3/82 1954).
However, one must note that Franco-Mauritians and a few *gen de couleurs* filled most of these positions. Indo-Mauritians filled only 28% in 1901, though they made up 70% of the population (Benedict 1961). Thus, the administrative apparatus, much like the political system, remained ethnically singular and elitist until several decades later.

During an economic downturn in the 1870s, some Franco-Mauritian plantation owners sold small parcels of land to Creoles and Indians to access immediate capital in a process of *grand morcellement*. Because of this, Mauritius developed a small class of Indians and Creoles who subsequently became civil servants and educated professionals through the 1900s. In this way, the ethnic composition of the civil service did become more inclusive at an earlier date than other plantation societies. However, even though the ethnic composition of the civil service diversified, it remained an elite organization, and consequently the reach of the state did not follow suit until labor mobilized in the 1940s.

From the 1940s, the size of the colonial state expanded. Between 1947 and 1967 the number of nonmilitary state employees increased seven times to 28,000, and the number of official-level positions increased nearly five times to 1,300 in 1967 (Lange 2003, 411). In addition, the composition of the civil service itself diversified after workers organized to demand rights in the 1940s. By 1952, Indo-Mauritians filled 53% of the civil service positions (Benedict 1961). The British introduced a Ministerial System in 1958, ten years before Independence. Mauritius experienced difficulties like other colonial territories in this expansion, particularly because the increased workload fell to a relatively new set of administrators (MNA CCCR Meade 1960, 225-226).
Security Forces: Police and Military

Because Mauritius has no army, the National Police Force maintains order and includes the Special Mobile Forces (SMF), a paramilitary outfit created in 1960 less than one-third the size of the police force post-independence. In 1965, the police included 41 officers and 1,583 persons of other ranks (MNA CCCR 1966 Report on Mauritius). Both the SMF and regular police force have historically been professional, non-partisan bodies in Mauritius (Miles 1999, 6). While non-political, they are not overwhelmingly strong either. Mauritius required external support from British troops to contain riots for a period of three years (1965) and again for six weeks (1968) prior to Independence (Bowman 1991, 39; 41).

In short, while the police force provides generally sufficient size and strength during peacetime, it is not a particularly adept organization when it comes to imposing brute force. A mobilized society runs the risk of overwhelming it. This is in stark contrast to Malaysia, where the police and military forces have exceptional strength, resources, and intelligence-gathering tools. When confronted with riots, the Malaysian ruling elite could use these security resources to subvert democratic institutions.

Direct Taxation and Government Revenue

Given the structure of the Mauritian economy, it is perhaps not surprising that tax revenues come primarily from excises on sugar as well as from the sale of business licenses and commercial fees for sugar planters and merchants (Frankema 2011, 141). Colonial Mauritius did, however, introduce direct taxation before World War II. Already by 1938, this source constituted 7% of total
government revenue (ibid). A 1966 Colonial Report suggests that direct taxes increased by roughly 40% from 1939 to 1966, constituting roughly 23% of total government revenue (MNA CCCR 1966 Report on Mauritius). By 1967, the state’s revenue was roughly 25% of GNP (Lange 2003, 411).

While the Mauritian state had a sufficient system for collecting revenue, it continued to rely heavily on taxes from the sugar industry. As such, Franco-Mauritian plantation owners retained a check on questions of redistribution of wealth through social services, etc. Indeed, Ramgoolam presented an economic strategy in 1971, which called for the use of capital from the sugar industry to pay for development, and specifically, the creation of new jobs (Lempert 1987, 82). Fortunately for the government, sugar prices were high at the time (ibid). As we will see in the analysis of the post-independence period, the Indo-Mauritian political elite worked out a deal with the economically strong Franco-Mauritian plantation owners to maintain a balance between redistribution and limited government involvement in the industry.

Public Services – Education

The Mauritian educational system is modeled after the British system, emphasizing standardized exams at specific junctures that determine access to further opportunities (Bowman 1991, 56). Primary education has been free since the 1940s, and secondary education was made free after independence in 1976 (ibid, 55). Access to secondary schools is highly competitive, however, and, even after it became free, only about half of students continue past primary (ibid). Nonetheless, in 1960, 52% of the population was literate, and by 1976, eight years after independence, this figure had increased to 80% (Lempert 1987, 78).
Between 1955-1959, the Labour government increased government expenditure significantly. More than 70% of this total increase went to education, health and public assistance. Education expenditure increased by roughly 50% from 12.1 to 18.6 million Rupees (MNA CCCR 1960 Meade, 170). In 1966, 223 Government-Aided Primary Schools provided free education to 131,365 students. There are an additional 117 primary and secondary schools registered which do not receive aid but provide education for an additional 5,579 students (MNA CCCR 1966 Report on Mauritius, 63).

The French settlers founded the first secondary school, Royal College in Curepipe, in 1806 (Simmons 1982, 17). Initially an institution for only Franco-Mauritian students, by 1924, Indo-Mauritians made up 160 of the 397 students (ibid, 42). Despite these early beginnings, opportunities for secondary school remained largely restrictive at independence. As mentioned, secondary school enrollment is determined on a competitive basis; these schools are less subsidized and thus less accessible across the colony. In 1960, there were 107,000 primary school places in Government and Aided schools, but only 18,500 places available in secondary schools (MNA CCCR 1960 Titmuss, 4-5).

There were three Government secondary schools and eight ‘approved’ secondary schools that received a Government subsidy in 1960. Because opportunities to continue education beyond primary were so restricted, roughly 80% of secondary pupils attended unaided schools, however, which were frequently limited in funding, resources, and quality (MNA CCCR 1960 Titmuss, 4-5). Between 1955-1959, the number of students in private secondary schools more than doubled from 7,082 to 14,694 while the number of pupils in
government or aided secondary schools rose by only 600 (MNA CCCR 1960 Meade, 216).

In short, the number of students and schools increased dramatically in the latter part of the 1950s after the introduction of free primary education. Secondary education did not similarly expand, however, so a very small percentage of students move beyond the primary level. To meet this demand, there was a dramatic increase in the number of private secondary schools (MNA CCCR 1960 Meade, 216). These institutions suffered challenges in performance because they lacked funding and resources. Finally, the Meade Report notes that in 1960, only 360 out of 7,022 candidates, or 5%, passed the Junior Scholarship Examination for entry into secondary school, suggesting that not only were opportunities limited for advancement limited, but that few obtained the necessary grade and skills for entry (ibid, 215). By 1966, the status of secondary schools had not changed much. There were 143 secondary schools in total, only four of which were Government, 13 grant-aided and 126 private non-funded schools (MNA CCCR 1966 Report on Mauritius, 64). These schools served a total of 34,788 students (ibid).

As of 1966, there were no institutions offering post-secondary education in Mauritius though legislation the year prior officially sanctioned the creation of a University (MNA CCCR 1966 Report on Mauritius, 65). The University of Mauritius was formally inaugurated in 1972. However, in 1966, there were roughly 1,300 Mauritian students attending institutions of higher education in the United Kingdom (ibid).
In addition to limited opportunities beyond primary school, a significant challenge to education in Mauritius stems from the language question. In 1941, any language could be used as the medium of instruction through Standard V – Creole, French, English, Hindi, Urdu and Tamil – and schools taught English and French as courses (MNA CCCR 1943 Report on Education in Mauritius, 11-12). Mauritians schools above Standard VI, however, used English exclusively. This difficult transition due to the insufficient dominance of the English language helps explain the small percentage of students able to pass the exam to enter secondary school.

Contemporary Mauritius remains much the same. English now serves as the medium of instruction in all schools, with French as a required subject and Arabic, Urdu, Chinese, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Marathi as electives (in schools requested) (Miles 2014, 205; Bowman 1991, 56-57). Because almost all students do not hear or use English outside of school, the result is that English is often understood and written, but it is not widely spoken (Miles 2014, 222). In addition, many of the Creole and Indian students do not use French outside of the classroom, meaning that during school hours they essentially learn two foreign languages, neither of which are reinforced outside this formal context.

Further, students spend a large amount of time learning at least three languages in school with the result that they master few and have more limited time available for other subjects. Despite the recognition that this system severely handicaps educational success, the issue of language is politically and

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65 The Meade Report writes: “We do not believe we exaggerate when we say that the greatest handicap to successful education in Mauritius is that imposed by the multiplicity of languages in use” (MNA CCCR 1960 Meade, 208).
socially fraught, as it is closely tied to the perceived status and power of a community (MNA CCCR 1960 Meade, 210).

**Transportation and Communication**

Finally, Mauritius is a small island of only 720 square miles. Sugar plantations cover much of its topography and therefore economic incentives long encouraged colonial investment in networks for transporting cane to the ports. By 1966, Mauritius had 824 miles of road, 79% of which was tarred (MNA CCCR 1966 Report on Mauritius). In addition, during the late colonial period, there was a fair amount of investment in public transport, particularly from urban areas to sugar estates for workers. In 1966, there were 1,270 taxis as well as a public fleet of 545 buses serving 177,613 passengers daily. In short, by independence, the transportation system was robust and facilitated movement throughout most of the island (ibid).

**Concluding Remarks**

The institutions of the Mauritian state have endured in various forms for much of the colonial period. For most of its history, however, a small part of the island’s total population controlled these institutions. Post-World War II agitations centered on access to the existing structures and expanding their purpose to serve all communities rather than how to build these institutions from scratch.

While the Mauritian state was certainly centralized and established in form, however, its expansions after World War II were far more modest than those that took place in Malaysia. Notably, the security apparatus required external support to cope with riots and strikes leading up to Independence. The Mauritian police force was professional by Independence, but not overwhelming
in its strength. In addition, education expansion in the 1950s and 1960s focused heavily on primary schools. This left little resources for a concomitant expansion of secondary education. Educational advancement beyond primary remains a highly competitive endeavor. Finally, at the time of Independence, the Mauritian administration could collect revenue but remained highly dependent on a single source, sugar. The plantation owners, while having lost much of their exclusive political control by this time, remained highly influential because of their control of this revenue source.

The next section discusses the results of this combination of democratic experience, strong state-society links, and modest administrative development for democratic survival in the post-colonial period. The capable but modest size of the Mauritian state plays a key role in bolstering the role of electoral politics as opposed to brute force to gain and maintain power in the country. The importance of this factor is discussed within the context of a highly tumultuous political period of Mauritian post-independence history, when the ruling elite had strong incentives to maintain a grip on power but lacked the resources to obtain the desired electoral outcomes.

**The 1982 Elections: Democratic Survival despite a Complete Power Shift**

In the decade before Independence, Mauritius faced a population explosion and corresponding employment crisis. The population grew so quickly from the 1940s that the Mauritian Government projected it would need to increase the number of jobs by 9% per year to keep pace with population growth (Lempert 1987, 81). Further, the island depended on a single crop which made up 97% of its exports in 1963 and could not absorb more workers (ibid).
lead up to Independence, communal tensions and political reform dominated the government’s activities. As such, the Labour government put on hold efforts to cope with the projected economic crisis.

Ramgoolam presented an economic strategy in 1971, which called for the use of capital from the sugar industry to pay for development, and specifically, to diversify the economy to create new jobs (Lempert 1987, 82; Meisenhelder 1997, 283). In the short term, the Ramgoolam government benefitted from high sugar prices. They were thus able to increase capital domestically without relying heavily on foreign loans (ibid). By mid-decade, however, sugar prices fell and the government still had intense employment demands and welfare commitments. The Labour Government lost support and in its place, the socialist *Militant Mouvement Mauricien* (MMM) made gains. Not only did the MMM directly attack the governing party (now three decades in power) but it also threatened the economic control of its more capitalist-oriented elite.

This section looks at the dynamics of these confrontations through two tumultuous elections, 1976 when the MMM made significant gains at Labour’s expense, forcing it into a reluctant post-election coalition, and 1982 when the MMM/PSM opposition coalition swept all 60 directly-elected legislative seats.\(^6\) These two elections represent moments of extreme political and economic turmoil and democratic vulnerability. Yet, Mauritian democracy survived and even flourished in these moments. This section thus looks at a non-event and asks why democracy did not break down.

\(^6\) Note that all coalition, except for 1976, were made before the election. The 1976 election is also unique in that it was the only election fought as not between 2 coalitions, but as a three-party race (Kadima and Kasenally 2006).
The central argument of this chapter is that this relative endurance is in part a function of the inculcation of democratic norms, experience, and investment during the late colonial period. I use the initially radical anti-parliamentary MMM as a case study of this transition. Initially opposed to the electoral system, slowly they re-oriented the organization and goals to meet the requirements of successful competition within it, as opposed to outside it, while still maintaining a leftist ideological orientation.

Throughout this decade, parties and coalitions fragmented and came together with dizzying frequency. No past deed, it seemed, could inhibit a future merger if it looked strategic. While party discipline has thus been lacking in Mauritius, this cycle also has left the door open for exit and reentry at any time, making the stakes of democratic loss less devastating. I argue that this practice of strategic cooperation has had a stabilizing force in Mauritian democracy. This practice became commonplace by the year of Independence because by then, during the 20 years of decolonization, several iterations of coalition formation and breakup had taken place.

Meanwhile, strong associational networks throughout society interacted with the state through institutional means, thus decreasing the population’s incentives to work outside formalized channels. Given the economic crisis and structure of the Mauritian economy, trade union interactions with the state were especially critical during these years. Through the most tumultuous period during 1970 and 1971, however, the trade unions continued to operate within the letter of the law. With the support of the court system and a gradual decline in political obstruction, they ended up stronger.
Finally, the state enjoyed a degree of administrative capacity that connected it to the population but could not be used to overwhelm popular sentiment. As the tide of public disapproval in the government rose, space opened for a new party with fresh ideas. The MMM initially preached radical tactics but after an electoral win, revised its strategy and invested in the democratic process. While the state met radical politics with some force, repressive measures subsided quickly and have subsequently been absent in Mauritian politics. Instead, political and economic elites dealt with class politics striking a deal whereby the economic elite enjoyed relative freedom from state intervention, while the working class received the benefits of a modern welfare state. With this consensus in place, the state has become an administrator in maintaining this balance.

This section is structured as follows: first, it sets the background of the early Independence years under Prime Minister Ramgoolam. It describes the government’s political and economic approaches as well as the fast rise of the MMM and the government’s responses to its radical behavior and trade union mobilization. Then, it illustrates the economic crisis and political adjustment leading up to the 1976 elections. It discusses the MMM’s changing tone and tactics without sacrificing its ideology, as well as the Labour Government’s efforts to stay in power. Finally, it covers the 1982 elections where power shifted in full to the opposition, but where the democratic process prevailed.

**Ramgoolam Era: 1968-76**

Though several reports (Titmuss, Luce and Meade) warned the Labour Government of the impending economic crisis during the last decade of colonial
rule, Independence and communal tensions largely dominated the political sphere. Thus, the Labour Government faced daunting economic challenges from the moment of Independence. Unemployment was at an all-time high and the economy remained dominated by an already labor-saturated sugar industry. The Ramgoolam Government sought to build a modern welfare capitalist state and needed to find the resources to do so. While sugar taxes were the obvious choice, the government did not raise taxes until it had secured the market (and healthy profits) for the exports, through skilled negotiations with the Europeans. This served to soften the blow of increased redistribution (Meisenhelder 1997, 284-285).

In addition to economic challenges, the Labour Party faced numerous political difficulties. Foremost, economic challenges easily became fuel for the opposition. In October 1969, Ramgoolam and the PMSD joined together to

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67 Meisenhelder 1997, 281-282; Note that many of the economic proposals in Labour's Development Plan stemmed from recommendations in the 1960 Meade Report (MNA CCCR 1960 Meade). The Governor-General in the Opening of the Fourth Session of Parliament in 1970 outlines the socialist aims of the Government of National Unity: "My Ministers are aware that in their pursuit of the objective of establishing a socialist pattern of society, it is essential to secure the full participation of the people at all levels in the Government…” (MNL MLD 26 November 1970, 1495). Being the primary economic activity at the time of Independence, much of the Government’s energy continued to focus on securing revenue from the sugar industry by supporting its profit potential in the private sphere and building a public partnership with it. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gaëtan Duval, speaks to these efforts in 1971: “But the one thing that has not been said but which should be said, because we are debating a vote of no-confidence, is this: nobody has told us what was the principal problem and what is still the principal problem of Mauritius and how has Government tackled it. The principal problem of Mauritius has always been, before the days of independence, after the days of independence, the crucial problem of how to sell our sugar. And whether this Government has succeeded or not must be judged by its success especially in that sphere. What have we seen? We have seen that, along with other colleagues of the Commonwealth, we have succeeded in obtaining a guarantee that our sugar will be sold in the Common Market and further, that Mauritius has obtained a further guarantee from France, that it will be treated as a special case among the other countries…is not that a diplomatic victory?” (MNL MLD 12 December 1971, 2312).

68 Mr. Foondun bemoans the economic situation in the Legislative Assembly: "Can a trade thrive in a country where there is mass unemployment, where workers are receiving only Rs 12 or Rs
form the Government of National Unity. This agreement entailed the expansion of the cabinet from ten to 21, Gaëtan Duval as the foreign affairs minister, and the delay of elections until 1976. Labour and PMSD were certainly unusual bedfellows, having spent the previous several decades in intense conflict with one another. The coalition has variously been attributed to Ramgoolam’s pragmatism, Labour’s upper class Hindus seeking capitalist-oriented allies, and Ramgoolam’s desire to heal the nation through political cooperation. Miles (2013) notes that the move underscores the unspoken deal between the Franco-Mauritian economic elite and the Indo-Mauritian political elite where the latter would create a generous welfare state for its constituents and in exchange allow the island’s sugar industry to remain in the hands of the former.

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69 Dr. Ramgoolam discusses the motivation and discussions behind the coalition in the Legislature: “The very idea of a Government of National Unity was mooted for many months, and we went through many ups and downs until it became possible for me to announce it, with the consent of my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, on my return from the United States, France and India a few weeks ago. While abroad and in an atmosphere in which the love of one’s country is uppermost and its future of greatest concern, I and my hon. Friend opposite came nearer and nearer to the proposal of a grant coalition, based on trust, mutual understanding and friendship. There had been no haggling or discussion of any detail, but love of our patrimony and of our people illumined our hearts and we decided that in order to create a decent and civilized society for each and every Mauritian within our life time we should merge our differences and come together” (MNL MLD 18 November 1969, 4715.)

70 The text of the debates on The Constitution of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill (No XLV of 1969) can be found at MNL MLD 18 November 1969, 4715.

71 Though the Labour Party members publically supported the Government of National Unity, evidently they voiced objections and discomfort with it, particularly Duval’s history of anti-Hindu rhetoric, privately (Cuttaree 2011, 121).

72 Bowman 1991, 70; Simmons 1982, 191-192; Bérenger Interview; de L'Estrac Interview; Dr. Ramgoolam argues that the economic challenges require the cooperation of a national body to tackle: “The vast problems facing us are difficult and arduous, and the largest fund of goodwill generated by men of vision participating in a Government of national unity will certainly contribute to our salvation” (MNL MLD 18 November 1969, 4718). Mr. Ringadoo echoes this sentiment, suggesting that a coalition is the way of moving beyond the two bitter camps of pro-independence and anti-independence (ibid, 4828-4829).
Whatever the motivation, the coalition and its accompanying constitutional amendments fueled deep resentment among the opposition, workers and youth. As Paul Bérenger describes: “Everybody was fed up, those who fought for independence against the others felt betrayed, those who had fought against independence felt betrayed. Everybody felt betrayed. Couldn’t understand. The change was too abrupt from denouncing each other to joining hands” (Interview). Many accused the Labour Party of selling out to the white capitalists or of anti-democratic behavior. In 1971, the opposition even introduced a Vote of No Confidence in the Government, though the motion ultimately failed (MNL MLD 7 December 1971, 2169).

This resentment was particularly acute among the un(der)employed youth who bore the brunt of the burden for the economic crisis. In 1972, of all unemployed, half were 34 years old or younger and 40% were under 24. Eighty percent of the unemployed were first-time job seekers (Lempert 1987, 83).

73 Mr. Bissoondoyal, leader of the IFB and member of the Independence Party along with the Labour Party, argues that the coalition is a betrayal to the people who voted for them, arguing that “This is the darkest day of our history and this does not come from the enemy, it comes from so-called friends. We have fought to bring a better light to the country so that the simplest man, the poorest man could have hope, so that there could be some degree of security for him in this country. Now, all this hope vanishes and the one who will be more crooked than his neighbor will be more successful” (MNL MLD 18 November 1969, 4731).

74 Mr. G. Gangaram accuses: “Sir it is not the Labour Party which is governing this country, it is the sugar magnates who are governing this country. There is a doubt everywhere in the minds of the people. All of them are saying quite clearly that it is not the Labour Party which is governing the country, but the sugar magnates. And what happens? The sugar magnates govern this country, and it is not out of place therefore to say that socialism is giving place to neo-colonialism and when neo-colonialism is having its way here, there is no hope that we are going to have social justice” (MNL MLD 26 November 1970, 1857).

75 Mr. L. Jugnauth, future Prime Minister, argues that he supports the idea of a coalition government but opposes the extension of the life of the present parliament without consulting the people directly (MNL MLD 18 November 1969, 4789).
Paul Bérenger, Dev Virahsawmy and Jooneed Jeerooburkhan courted this discontented group with the creation of the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM), a radical movement of young, educated, idealistic radicals that sought to “change everything” and were heavily influenced by Frantz Fanon (Bérenger Interview). In the wake of the 1960s communal clashes, the movement prioritized creating unity across the different communities, proposing to do so through socialist change and political reform (Bérenger Interview; Bowman 1991, 71-72; Cuttaree 2011, 117).

The party even attacked parliamentary democracy itself. Bérenger argues that the members felt at the time that parliamentary democracy was a ‘farce,’ because they believed money and communal feeling decided elections (Bérenger Interview). The MMM leadership advocated for a system of direct democracy instead (ibid). The Government of National Unity’s move to postpone elections in 1969 enflamed these feelings (ibid).

In addition to communal unity, the MMM wanted to change the political cleavage from communal to class.⁷⁷ In this way, the movement emulated notions associated with the early Labour Party, arguing that the Creole dockerworkers and Hindu labourers had common interests against the Franco-Mauritian ‘sugar barons,’ and now in the late 1960s, also against the growing Hindu state bourgeoisie (Erickson 1986, 130). The MMM charged that the Labour Party had failed to adequately represent the workers and called for changes, including the

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⁷⁶ Bérenger accuses the politicians of the 1960s of using ‘intellectual political terrorism’ to turn populations against one another for political gain (Interview).

⁷⁷ Bérenger notes that the theme for the movement was: Let us replace race warfare with class warfare” (Interview).
nationalization of the sugar industry, higher wages, and redistribution of income (Meisenhelder 1997, 282; Cuttaree 2011, 123). It organized dock, transport and sugar workers through the trade unions (Bowman 1991, 72; Cuttaree 2011, 123). While utilizing the existing union structures, the MMM also introduced forms of direct democracy within them, making decisions based on assemblies and voting out the professional union leaders who they felt had failed them (Bérenger Interview). These changes emboldened the workers, helping them feel that they “now had a grip on their own destiny” (ibid).

The MMM emerged quickly and with a vengeance. As early as 1969, it organized a series of demonstrations, the largest against the visit of Princess Alexandria, which led to the arrest of several MMM supporters and leaders (Cuttaree 2011, 119-120). In 1970, the MMM surprised even itself by winning a by-election in Triolet, Ramgoolam’s home constituency, with 70% of the vote (Bowman 1991, 72; Cuttaree 2011, 126-127). The electoral victory emboldened the MMM (Bérenger Interview).

After 1971, the MMM focused on trade union action. Throughout the fall, the MMM supported strikes across all the major economic sectors including transport, sugar, docks, public service and electricity (Bowman 1991, 72; Cuttaree 2011, 129). The highly disruptive strikes created shortages in imports as well as delays in sugar exports. They also encouraged confrontations between the MMM and the PMSD (Bowman 1991, 72-73; Cuttaree 2011, 133-134). The Government responded with arrests, bans on strikes and censorship (Cuttaree 2011, 129). Bérenger notes that the Government’s response helped
the MMM cause, making them martyrs at the hands of a repressive government (Interview).

The MMM was also youthful; their average leader was just 24 years of age (Latham-Koenig 1984, 167). This contrasted sharply with the aging leadership of the Labour Party, many of whom had been central in politics well before Independence. With the dramatic demographic changes, this large youth population found the Labour Party out of touch with its realities (Bowman 1991, 70).

With growing political instability and economic disruption, at the end of 1971, the Government declared a state of emergency, suspending 12 unions, arresting numerous union leaders and shutting down the MMM newspaper. In 1972, the Government arrested Bérenger and Virahsawmy and held the MMM leaders prisoner for a year, accusing them of using trade unions to undermine

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78 Bowman 1991, 73; Cuttaree 2011, 133-135; The Prime Minister issued a motion for a State of Emergency in the Parliament on 22 December 1971: “This resolution, Sir, is in accordance with the provisions of section 19(8) of the Constitution of Mauritius. In view of the emergency situation caused by general strikes in various sectors of the economy and the threat to law and order, it was deemed expedient to proclaim a state of emergency in the interests of the country. This measure became necessary because of a deterioration of the situation, and of the hardships and sufferings caused to the whole population. Hon. Members are aware that our stocks of essential commodities are being depleted very fast and it was, therefore, reluctantly decided that the only way of restoring a measure of security and ensuring a smooth return to normal conditions was to declare a state of public emergency” (MNL MLD 22 December 1971, 2528).

79 Bérenger notes that even though they were supposed to be locked up 24 hours, every night the local police would free them to play cards and plot in the corridor because as he describes “Mauritius is Mauritius” and “Ramgoolam was anything but a classical dictator” (Interview).
the Government. While the opposition accused the Government of dictatorial practices, the latter defended its actions on the grounds of saving democracy.

Toward the end of 1973, the coalition government fell apart. Progressive members of the Labour Party opposed government actions against trade unions and the MMM while PMSD members, notably Duval, pushed for more aggressive action. In addition, the PMSD strongly opposed increased taxes on sugar to subsidize public expenditures (Meisenhelder 1997, 284).

The Labour Party with CAM, the only coalition partner that remained, faced an opposition of four parties, which collectively held 34 seats in the

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80 Cuttaree 2011, 135; Mr. Jagatsingh defends the Government’s actions in 1971, arguing: “[The MMM] have said that they are going to use the unions to overthrow the Government, and today the second Member for Rodrigues comes and says that, because of political interference we are facing these difficulties, Mr. Speaker, the problem in the field of trade unions has now become a highly explosive and political problem. This is known by everybody. They are trying to use the unions to create unrest, to sabotage the economy and to disrupt all the work that we are trying to do” (MNL MLD 17 December 1971, 2496-2497); Mr. Duval argues that as early as 1968, “Béreger said exactly what he would do: and he did not believe in elections. He would try to organize the trade unions and youth movements and in the end, with the help of the trade unions – ‘La triple alliance’ – the youth movements and the towns, he would take power” (MNL MLD 21 December 1971, 2573).

81 Prime Minister Ramgoolam defends the Bill, arguing that “All that we are asking is that certain laws be for the time being, set aside because this is necessary for the safeguard of the workers, of the people of Mauritius and for the safety of the state. We cannot stand idle and see the democracy for which we have all worked destroyed for all time” (MNL MLD 22 December 1971, 2586). Nearly one year later, when the Prime Minister calls for an extension of the State of Emergency, he argues that: “The Government wishes to recall that the events which led to the imposition of a State of Emergency were part of a carefully planned attempt to seize power by a political movement which openly declared that parliamentary democracy is a farce” (MNL MLD 16 November 1972, 2125). By contrast, Mr. R. Jeetah condemns the Government overreach and argues that no emergency exists to justify the power grab: “But, I think that speakers who have preceded me have made it clear that the situation is now returning to normal. So, there is no threat to peace, no threat to order, no threat to good government. So, it has been proved by the Members from the Government benches that it is not essential that we should have emergency laws at present” (MNL MLD 12 December 1971, 2582).

82 Bérenger notes that some MMM leaders had been in discussion with one wing of the Labour Party since 1971 trying to find a common path forward but talks had failed to materialize into a partnership (Interview).

83 Bowman 1991, 73; Of note, the Vice President and Minister of Labour both resigned from the Party, government and parliament (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 207).
legislature. Shortly after, the Government lifted its restrictive laws, allowing trade unions to again organize and the MMM’s newspaper to publish (Bowman 1991, 74). In addition, the legislature approved several policies, which extended benefits to the working classes including subsides on rice, flour, and fertilizer for small scale farmers (Brautigam 1997, 50).

Finally, sugar prices dropped sharply after 1976 and a cyclone hit in February 1975, devastating one-third of the sugar crop (Bowman 1991, 74). Unemployment skyrocketed to nearly 20% and the cost of maintaining the new social welfare programs led to higher deficits and debt. The situation was deteriorating, and the Government reluctantly scheduled the general elections of December 1976.

The 1976 Elections

The Labour Party and CAM ran again as the Independence Party coalition. They campaigned on their record in government – providing political stability against the radical upheaval of the MMM, economic growth, job creation (60,000 jobs since Independence), and the development of an Export Processing Zone in 1971. The coalition emphasized its ideology of pairing a modest welfare state with a mixed economy (Bowman 1991, 75). In addition, to bridge the generation gap between the Party’s leadership and the young population, the Party promised free secondary and university education and decreased the

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84 Bowman 1991 77; Between 1972 and 1979, spending on social welfare services increased more than 500% (Brautigam 1997, 50).

85 There were discussions prior to the campaign between the MMM and Labour Party for an electoral alliance, but these failed to materialize (Cuttaree 2011, 157).

86 Latham-Koenig 1984, 171; By 1976, the EPZ had 85 factories employing some 17,000 people (Shillington 1991, 89).
minimum voting age to 18 years. This added some 70,000 new voters to the rolls (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 209).

Meanwhile, the MMM ran a campaign rejecting capitalism and calling for socialism. They accused the Labour Government of using the state to protect elitist interests. The MMM called for the nationalization of key industries including sugar, docks, banks, and insurance companies (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 207). They emphasized class differences and maintained a cross-communal appeal. To demonstrate their commitment to all communities including the Hindus, the MMM indicated that it would elect a Hindu, Aneerood Jugnauth, as Prime Minister if they won. 87 While still radical, the MMM ran a more moderate campaign than its previous activities might have suggested; as Bérenger notes, the leadership was ‘brought down to earth’ and persuaded by the incentives of electoral politics (Bérenger Interview).

Finally, the PMSD painted the MMM as a destructive Marxist party and accused the Labour Party as having become too bureaucratic (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 210). It proposed boosting the private sector to increase economic development by growing tourism, trading with South Africa, and securing high sugar prices (Bowman 1991, 75).

The MMM made huge electoral strides in its first general election, winning 40% of the vote and 34 seats. Because the MMM had retained a revolutionary stance, however, it failed to convince the Hindu intelligentsia and propertied

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87 Jugnauth was chosen in part because he came from the largest Hindu class and the small planter background so he could carry the rural Hindu vote and in part because he could reassure the older generation as an older, politically experienced, and respected barrister (Bérenger Interview). He became chairman of the central committee of the MMM, but let the daily running of it to Bérenger (Shillington 1991, 87; Cuttaree 2011, 131;174).
middle class (Shillington 1991, 89). The Independence Party won 37% of the vote and 28 seats, and the PMSD won 16% of the vote and eight seats (Bowman 1991, 76).

Several factors account for the MMM’s success. First, the MMM’s young leadership appealed to the large youth population. There were nearly 200,000 new voters in 1976, 70,000 of them between the ages of 18 and 21. The generational gap was thus a crucial factor in the elections (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 211). Religion was also significant. The Muslim bloc abandoned the Labour Party/CAM alliance en masse, disillusioned by the bourgeois nature of its Government and lack of minority support. These voters supported the MMM, hoping for the creation of a more just and equal society that would help the community (ibid; Bowman 1991, 79).

Ultimately, the Independence Party and PMSD joined together to form a coalition government after Ramgoolam failed to reach an agreement with Bérenger and the MMM. The next five years of governing, however, were a challenge as the economy fell into crisis, unemployment hit 20%, reserves fell drastically from 1975 to 1979, public debt increased and social welfare programs became a huge strain on the budget (Bowman 1991, 77). The Labour Government turned to the IMF/World Bank for loans to support the staggering economy. The conditions placed by the international organizations resulted in cutbacks in public spending, wage restraints, reductions in food subsidies and decreases to the sugar levy (Meisenhelder 1977, 286-87; Brautigam 1997, 50).

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88 Shillington 1991, 91; Cuttaree (2011) notes that Bérenger supported the coalition but that Anerood Jugnauth opposed it, arguing that no true socialists existed in the Labour Party (159).
What became clear were the scope of Mauritius’s dependence on sugar and the power of capital to dictate terms in its politics. High sugar profits had allowed the Labour Government to respond to lower class grievances in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but during the mid-decade recession, the government was unable to respond to popular demands in the same way (Lempert 1987, 84). The recession thus curtailed the power of the state for independent action – to collect and spend revenue as it chose.

The Labour Party suffered its own internal turmoil as its left wing accused it of abandoning the working class and broke away to form the *Parti Socialiste Mauricien* (PSM) (Mukonowshuro 1991, 212). Harish Boodhoo led this movement challenging Labour’s policies, first from within the Party itself (Bowman 1991, 77). He rallied the poorer, rural Hindus in a style of Hindu nationalism reminiscent of the Bissoondoyal days.

Further, the Government suffered the political fallout of an already organized working class, thanks to a long history of trade unionism and the more recent efforts of the opposition MMM to reignite these groups. By 1976, the MMM had captured control of all the main trade unions as well as the umbrella trade union body, the National Federation of Unions. A long history of trade union organization stemming from the 1930s made these groups a significant political force in Mauritius after Independence. As a result of the MMM’s efforts to mobilize these groups into political activity, they continued to pressure the Government to change economic policies and support workers (Mukonowshuro 1991, 212).
In 1979 when the Labour Government went to the IMF/World Bank for support, the MMM organized another general strike. More than 70,000 sugar workers participated; together with other workers, they brought the economy to a halt. The Government briefly arrested several strike leaders but quickly backtracked and negotiated an end to the strike (Bowman 1991, 78). At this juncture, the government was unable to respond adequately to the demands of the suffering lower and middle classes, and lacked a state security apparatus that was strong enough to impose its power. Therefore, the Labour Government was forced to face the population in elections again in 1982.

The 1982 Elections

The MMM campaigned in an alliance with the PSM, a leftist breakaway party from Labour headed by a populist Indian, Harish Boodhoo (Latham-Koenig 1984, 166). While the MMM’s most militant leftist members criticized this move, it helped to entice at least some of the Hindu community into the fold, and avoid charges that the party was anti-Hindu (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 213; Cuttaree 2011, 168). To attract middle class Hindus and Creoles, the alliance also toned down some of its radical rhetoric, but still maintained a socialist stance with the slogan: “For a Socialism with a Human Face” (Cuttaree 2011, 173). It emphasized policy proposals such as a minimum wage, job creation, increased welfare benefits, and the nationalization of key sectors. Instead of nationalizing the entire sugar industry, however, the MMM campaigned to nationalize just five of the 20 privately owned sugar plantations (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 213).

The Labour Party maintained its 1982 coalition with the PMSD and ran as the Grand Alliance. Though maintaining its coalition with PMSD, the Labour
leadership tried to move the Party back to the left. It created a youth wing, the Mauritrian Youth Labour League (MYLL) to try to capture some of the youth support from the MMM (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 212-213). Finally, the Alliance ran on its record in office.

In a stunning victory, the MMM/PSM coalition won 62% of the votes and all 60 of the directly-elected seats in the Legislature (two seats for the outer island of Rodrigues were won by its own party). Ramgoolam lost in his own constituency (Latham-Koenig 1984, 166). Via the eight best loser seats, Labour and PMSD each gained just two seats.

Despite the complete transfer of power, the elections remained peaceful throughout. They represented a strong endorsement of the democratic process in Mauritius, where a younger, untested group promising new ideas and fresh hope replaced an aging party. Moreover, the main political cleavage seemed to have swung firmly back toward class rather than communal politics, as the MMM/PSM had a strong base in all communities (Bowman 1991, 81). Further, the Government committed to the democratic process by introducing a motion to make it compulsory to hold general elections every five years and hold by-elections to fill vacancies in the Legislative Assembly (MNL MLD 25 June 1982, 83).

When the MMM/PSM swept Parliament, its leaders and supporters believed that Mauritius was on track for five years or more of pure socialism (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 214-215). Yet, the Government discovered quickly that the road was less certain than anticipated. Only a few days into office, the MMM/PSM Government had to dismiss 21,000 workers who had been recruited
prior to the election, causing unemployment to spike to 30% (Cuttaree 2011, 182; Brautigan 1997, 51). Struck by the reality of the economic situation in 1982 – mounting foreign debts, growing unemployment, zero economic growth, lack of investment, and a slump in tourism, etc., Paul Bérenger, the new Finance Minister, was forced to go back on the party’s socialist promises. In his statement on the state of the economy, he emphasized the economy’s vulnerability and the Government’s lack of policy options except to follow through on the IMF standby agreement negotiated by the previous Government.

Bérenger proposed to accept IMF/World Bank loans, subject to conditions such as decreasing government expenditure, cuts in subsides including those for rice and flour, two staple commodities, and a check on wages and salaries, etc. (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 215). The new budget also proposed a sales tax and a reduction of the export tax on sugar (Cuttaree 2011, 188-189). When the Legislature debated the budget, divisions within the governing coalition appeared. In particular, Harish Boodhoo and several PSM members as well as the Prime Minister expressed opposition to certain aspects of the IMF’s conditions, the latter strongly opposing to the reduction in subsides on rice and flour (ibid, 190). Bérenger tried to force the issue on rice and flour by resigning, though he returned after one day (ibid, 190-191).

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89 As Bérenger notes, the MMM/PSM Government was ‘on its knees’, unable to do otherwise than to move forward with the already accepted IMF agreements (Interview).

90 Cuttaree 2011, 185; “Mauritius is an open economy, and we are not France. We are an open economy and, to all open economy, with a vulnerable Export Processing Zone, a vulnerable tourist industry – not to speak of other sectors of the economy” (MNL MLD 14 July 1982, 700).
The budget proved to be only the beginning of the Government’s internal crisis. The PSM and MMM continued to be at loggerheads, exacerbated by Vice President Harish Boodhoo’s continued attacks on Bérenger for siding with the ‘capitalist enemy.’ Boodhoo started to run a campaign against him publically through the PSM newspaper, *Le Socialiste* (Cuttaree 2011, 195). In response, the MMM Central Committee and Politburo demanded the dismissal of PSM Ministers (ibid, 191). Prime Minister Jugnauth initially agreed, but quickly backtracked (ibid, 192).

In the controversy, Bérenger resigned from the cabinet a second time taking 12 MMM ministers with him in March 1983. Jugnauth formed a new cabinet and launched his own party, the *Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien* (MSM) and the MMM became the official opposition in Parliament (Mukonowenshuro 1991, 216). A few months later, Jugnauth dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections in August. The MMM/PSM single-party government lasted a mere 14 months.

In yet another example of coalition formation with the unlikeliest of members, the Labour Party, MSM and PMSD ran as an alliance in the 1983 elections. The coalition formed even though Jugnauth had spent most of his career on the opposite side of the political spectrum. Ramgoolam and Boodhoo had been expelled from the Labour Party, and Jugnauth and Ramgoolam had both accused Duval of his right-wing association with the ‘sugar barons’ and violent anti-Hindu rhetoric. Communalism became a central feature in the 1983
campaign, with Boodhoo as a flagrant offender. Ultimately, the coalition won 41 of the 62 elected seats in Parliament seats and formed a Government (Latham-Koenig 1984, 166-167). In this way, the MMM was ousted a mere 18 months after it came to power in an unprecedented sweep of the entire elected legislature.

**Concluding Remarks**

Economic crisis and political turmoil defined Mauritius’s first 13 years of independence. To create unity after a bitter decolonization process, the two main pre-independence opposing parties came together to form a government. This left their supporters feeling betrayed as well as creating a vacuum that was filled by a new radical, socialist party with the intent to disrupt all the rules. The MMM organized trade union strikes in every industry, preached class warfare and denounced parliamentary democracy. It also entered the political contest in 1970, however, and surprised even itself when it succeeded. From that point, it practiced legal means of fighting for workers’ rights and prepared for power via electoral institutions.

Meanwhile, the government reacted by calling a state of emergency, censoring newspapers, and banning political activity. Popular sympathy for the opposition and disagreements within the governing coalition made government repression a short-lived affair. Though the country reeled from the economic crisis and the governing party’s record remained in question in 1976, the general elections of that year were never in question. The radical opposition received the

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91 Bérenger notes that the 1983 elections were even more communal than the 1967 elections had been (Interview).
most seats but, by law, it did not form the Government. The MMM graciously accepted this result and played opposition politics until 1982 when it dramatically swept the entire Parliament along with a breakaway faction of the Labour Party. But the new Government coalition broke up after only 14 months in power, and new elections brought the Labour Party along with old alliances back into power.

Thus, much like the twenty years of decolonization from the 1948 elections to Independence, coalition formation and breakup moved at a fast pace in Mauritius. Yet, this process has historically served to move the line of cleavage from class to communal politics, and then to class again. No one cleavage dominates for too long before a new party takes up the other cause. Further, no individual or party is ever excluded from re-negotiating a partnership if it seems strategic in that moment. This makes for unlikely bedfellows and likely helps facilitate the rapidity of coalition breakup, but it also makes for cyclical competition. It encourages political reinvention in response to popular demands, a skill learned among Mauritian politicians and voters through years of democratic experience starting well before Independence.

In addition, the economic crisis of the 1970s served to strengthen associational networks already in place prior to independence. Trade unions, in particular, had a strong presence and played an active role in catalyzing and encouraging a more inclusive political system during decolonization. These institutions retained formal channels of communication with the state and a system of accepted operating procedure. When the state failed to sufficiently protect workers from economic hardship, the MMM used these organizations to force greater responsiveness.
Finally, though the early post-independence government did use some repression to ride out the radical politics of the MMM, this practice disappeared by 1973 and the regular cycle of elections returned. This occurred despite increased incentives for the governing party to avoid facing the electorate in 1976. The Government did not have the resources to sustain this type of repression against popular demands as their early efforts served merely to bolster popular support for the opposition.

Thus, post-independence politics in Mauritius has been tumultuous and not short of incentives to undermine democracy. Yet, democratic institutions have endured and perhaps strengthened as they survived difficult periods. Mauritians have embraced the rules of the game and have invested in strategically playing them without fearing that they might be permanently shut out. Moreover, the system of rotating coalitions provides opportunities for all communities to participate.

**Concluding Remarks**

Since 1968, Mauritian democracy has not only survived but thrived. Despite numerous conditions generally associated with democratic breakdown - economic recession, dependence on a single commodity, population explosion, high inequality, communal conflict, and a radical socialist movement that initially sought to dismantle the entire system - the new country weathered these crises. After the political rollercoaster of the 1970s and early 1980s, there is little question that Mauritian democracy will continue as the Government successfully diversified the economy and the country reached middle-income status. This chapter analyzes Mauritian democracy during some of the most difficult periods.
of the country’s independence. It began with the coalition of enemies in 1969, through the emergence of an anti-system opposition movement and aggressive lower class mobilization in the early 1970s, and then moved through the 1976 and 1982 elections where the opposition made such significant gains that they replaced the party in power in a complete sweep of directly-elected legislative seats. If Mauritian democracy were to break down, it would likely have been during these tumultuous years. Yet, the institutions of democracy survived.

This chapter argues that Mauritius’s status as a Weak Autonomy Colony explains this unexpected phenomenon. First, Mauritius enjoyed 20 years of meaningful legislative elections prior to independence that encouraged Mauritians to invest in democratic politics. Although the political institutions in Mauritius go back centuries, they remained highly restrictive through most of its history. From the late 1930s, however, the Indian and Creole working classes began organizing and agitating for a more inclusive system. This agitation did not call for the creation of a democratic system but for expanding access to it. A domestic struggle for political inclusion and social equality thus marked the late colonial period. Despite deep resistance from the plantation elite, with the help of British intervention, labor won access to the political institutions. This transformation led to an inclusive system of self-government with a franchise that had a minimal literacy requirement by 1948, and a full universal franchise by 1958. With these constitutional changes, a significant portion of the population participated in five elections prior to independence. Throughout this period, various parties and coalitions formed, fragmented and remade themselves to
strategically compete in elections. By independence, then, parties and coalitions had become an established part of Mauritian politics for two decades.

This chapter argues that, though highly complex, the pattern of coalition formation and breakdown became a stabilizing force in Mauritian democracy. Through experience, Mauritian politicians and voters learned that misfortune in one election did not exclude opportunity in future elections. This is evidenced by the MMM’s decision not to join a coalition with the Labour Party after the 1976 elections and to resign *en masse* and become the opposition in 1982. The MMM leadership focused on opposition politics and turned its attention to the next election. This calculation could only be made if the party felt confident that the next election would be held and that competition would be free.\(^9^2\)

Second, Mauritius developed deep associational networks with formalized channels to express grievances to the state during the colonial period. Particularly through trade unions, the Labour Party organized these associations of workers across communities to push for economic and political justice. When the plantation elite resisted these calls for change, the British intervened with legislation and personnel to boost the capacity, organization and negotiating strength of these associations after the strikes of the late 1930s and early 1940s strikes. These interventions not only created institutions and formalized procedures, but enforced rules so that workers’ became more confident that their voices were heard and their cases fairly adjudicated. This is demonstrated in the post-independence strikes of the 1970s. The MMM, though revolutionary in its

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\(^9^2\) Bérenger notes that the 1983 elections were even more communal than the 1967 elections had been (Interview).
rhetoric and in its calls for change, organized trade unions to stage legal strikes (Bérenger Interview). Their tactics were highly destructive because they brought the economy to a halt but they were not illegal. This suggests that by independence, the formal channels for grievance expression were largely accepted, creating formalized links between the society and state.

Finally, Mauritius developed a capable though not overbearing state apparatus to secure and protect the social contract between the elite and lower classes after the colonial power departed. One of Mauritius’s major challenges during the colonial period was social and economic stratification. When the legislature extended the franchise, the majority Hindu population naturally inherited the institutions of the state. The Franco-Mauritians, however, remained the economic elite, controlling most of the country’s sugar. During the decolonization process, these groups negotiated a compromise that allowed for minimal intervention in the sugar industry while also creating a modern welfare state to protect the lower classes (Miles 2013). This compromise was only meaningful, however, if the administration could carry it out. Thus, the presence of a centralized and capable state, expanded during the late-colonial period, was essential for Mauritian political stability. By Independence, the Mauritian state could extract revenue and provide meaningful social services in exchange.

Equally important, the state never became an overbearing tool that could be mobilized to undermine democratic institutions. The political and economic elite remained co-dependent, which inhibited some abuses, and the existence of an organized society could also be used to check the powers of the state. When the workers and youth felt betrayed by the alliance of Labour and the PMSD in
1969, they successfully mobilized against it. While Mauritius had moments where the state exhibited strength to maintain public order – declaring a state of emergency, and censoring and jailing the most outspoken opposition leaders – these moments were brief and could not be supported long term. As Bérenger notes, as early as 1971, the MMM felt confident that they could compete fairly in electoral politics as these repressive state measures had already been curtailed (Interview). Ramgoolam’s Government knew that, if it were to retain power, it had to respond to the public rather than use force to contain it. This recognition made the Mauritian governing elite’s handling of moments of turmoil throughout the 1970s distinct from that of Malaysian elite in 1969.

Thus, through a combination of broad-based democratic experience before Independence, strong links between the society and state and a capable though not overwhelming administrative apparatus, democratic institutions in Mauritius have survived despite moments of extreme economic and political turmoil. The Mauritian economy grew considerably after the early 1980s, and the threat of democratic breakdown decreased accordingly.

This chapter argues that Mauritius’s combination of early self-governance and modest state development resulted in democratic survival. The Mauritius empirics provide a useful opportunity to think about the specific effect of the early introduction of restricted electoral institutions in the 1800s versus the later more inclusive democratic institutions after World War II. During the late 1930s, the Labour Party organized to compete within the given political system. It emphasized participation but never questioned the form of the institutions, as if all parties had already accepted democracy and focused their energy on
strategically competing in this system. Perhaps then the early introduction of elections, even if restrictive, caused democratic stability.

It is useful to think about a hypothetical situation in which Mauritius still experienced the early introduction of restricted electoral politics but did not endure a long decolonization process with five election cycles. In this scenario, I would argue that if the introduction of mass politics had occurred concurrently with independence, there would have likely been more significant communal conflict. Without the British intermediary to essentially force the economic oligarchy to accept democratic competition with broad-based participation, this transition would have been more challenging. Without the threat of British action, this economic elite may have used more resources to ensure its power, potentially resulting in violence.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

Overview of Project

This dissertation asks why democratic institutions survive in some contexts and temporal periods but break down in others. It is inspired by the consistent finding that British colonialism is conducive to democracy (Blondel 1972; Huntington 1984; Bollen and Jackman 1985; Lipset et al. 1993; Clague et al. 2001; Bernhard et al. 2004; Lee and Paine 2016). While several studies examine the British legacy compared to other colonizers, none look specifically at variation in democratic outcomes within this population. This project analyzes 23 democratic breakdowns after 57 transitions in 42 former British colonies from 1951-2014. It focuses on this Empire exclusively to unpack the finding that British colonialism benefited post-colonial democracy.

Given this variation in democratic outcomes, this research challenges the appropriates of treating experience with British colonial rule as a single conceptual category. I argue that this practice obscures important internal differences. Instead, I leverage variation in colonial experience by building an original typology of British ruling structures, the first effort to do so. The typology includes data on two colonial dimensions: timing of self-governance and level of state development. After introducing a new conceptual typology, I collect and analyze new historical data. I argue that internal variations in the political structures of British colonialism generate mixed legacies depending on the colony’s combination of values on the two typological factors.
The current literature on British colonialism and democratic survival has several gaps. First, because of the complexity of the colonial experience, scholars generally use case studies as the method of investigation. This method is advantageous to draw out causal links in delimited time periods and spaces, but it is limited in its ability to generalize across large populations. Second, while several scholars find that British colonialism is more conducive to post-colonial democracy than other colonial influences, there remains considerable debate and only limited large-n testing for why this is the case. Lee and Paine (2016) and Bilinski (2015) are the only two studies that test their hypothesized mechanisms, pre-independence democracy level and colonial autonomy, respectively. Neither of these studies, however, test these propositions among British colonies specifically. Further, they suffer conceptually in that they consider only one dimension of the colonial experience. By limiting my scope to the British Empire, I can examine multiple dimensions of the historical experience.

To bridge these two approaches, this project analyzes data from a new conceptual typology of British colonies using a multi-method research design that includes both comparative historical analysis of three countries on two continents and statistical analysis of an original dataset of all democratic episodes in former British colonies from 1951-2014. First, the statistical analysis tests the hypothesis that alternative colonial types produce different prospects for post-colonial democratic stability. Results demonstrate varied likelihoods of democratic survival based on colonial type in descending order: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian and Weak Authoritarian.
Second, this aggregate analysis is complemented by structured case comparisons to explore in greater depth the colonial legacy effects on democracy over time. I use comparative historical analysis to highlight mechanisms linking colonial experience to democracy. I selected a case to correspond to three of the typological categories (Malaysia, Ghana and Mauritius), then conducted interviews and archival research in each country. The comparative historical analysis argues that timing of self-government and level of state development prior to independence condition three post-colonial factors – democratic experience, state-society links and administrative development - which, in turn, directly affect the stability of post-colonial democracy. It argues that where these three features are present, democratic survival is enhanced, and where they are absent, democratic breakdown is more likely.

**Theory of British Colonial Types and Democratic Survival**

This dissertation highlights the importance of the colonial period in understanding post-independence democratic survival in former British colonies. It examines the hypothesis that differences in the type of British colonial rule effects the likelihood of democratic survival. Specifically, it argues that longer periods of self-governance and greater state development prior to independence facilitate post-colonial democratic stability.

On average, then, I argue that colonies fare better in their prospects for democratic survival in descending order: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian, and Weak Authoritarian. Strong Autonomy colonies, which are granted early concessions to self-governance and high levels of state development, enjoy the greatest prospects for democratic durability while Weak
Authoritarian colonies, which receive only late concessions to self-governance and limited state development, suffer the greatest challenges to establishing enduring democracy after independence. Finally, Weak Autonomy colonies exhibit relatively early self-governance but limited state development, and Strong Authoritarian colonies enjoy only late opportunities for self-governance but strong state development. These intermediate categories experience prospects of democratic survival in-between the two extremes. Generally, Weak Autonomy colonies should fair slightly better in their prospects for democratic survival than Strong Authoritarian colonies because while their state development was considerably less than either Strong Authoritarian colonies, they did at times receive modest development. This paired with early introductions of representative institutions benefits post-colonial democracy. Further, where state development is extensive without corresponding democratic experience, as in Strong Authoritarian colonies, the state can be used to undermine rather than entrench democracy.

The comparative historical analysis shows that self-governance and state development affect post-colonial democracy by conditioning initial levels of three intervening variables. These include democratic experience, state/society links and administrative development. The mechanism linking each intervening variable to democratic survival operates in the following manner. Experience with democracy promotes greater efficiency in institutional operation, expands feelings of ownership of the political framework, and increases the costs associated with overturning it. As groups participate in democratic institutions, by organizing political parties and interest group lobbies, for example, they spend...
time, energy and resources to invest in competitive activities to learn how to
operate the institutions for their benefit. It follows that longer periods of
democratic experience should thus result in larger investment in the continuance
of this set of institutions. Experience with democratic institutions prior to
independence, available when colonies enjoyed early opportunities for self-
governance, made it easier for populations to make this initial investment in
democratic institutions.

The second intervening variable is the level of administrative development
realized during the colonial period. Administrative development provides the state
with the capacity to reach out to its population and provide collective goods to it.
It also generates the infrastructure necessary for officials of the state to respond
to the population, first by gathering information about the citizenry and then by
distributing public goods to it. Administration can and should facilitate this
durability, but will only do so where pre-existing experience with democracy is
available. Where state development is high but self-government is low, therefore,
the state institutions can be used to undermine democracy rather than entrench
it.

Finally, the third intervening variable is the strength of state/society links,
deefined as the level of formality and predictability of institutions through which the
population accesses the state and expresses political grievances. Where
institutional channels of communication exist between the state and society and
where the rules of these information exchanges are enforced and reliable, social
groups are more likely to express demands through these formalized channels
instead of operating outside of the state.
This dissertation argues that strong state/society relations at independence are more likely where both self-governance and state development are available. This is because the combination of democratic experience and administrative development facilitates strong links between society and the state. Self-governance prior to independence creates electoral institutions and encourages democratic experience that over time forces political accountability. State development, by contrast, provides the administration that provides the state with the ability respond to popular grievances. Once democratic institutions provide a degree of accountability and the state can respond to grievances, it is more likely that the state will create the necessary institutions that connect society to the state so that groups can reliably and predictably communicate popular demands. Strong state/society links provide the means for the social actors to access the state, communicate with it and exchange information. This process requires institutional channels for grievance expression, social organization to accumulate demands, rule enforcement to provide predictability and efficiency in the process such that social actors can reliably use these institutional channels of information exchange successfully.

Self-governance and state development thus allow for the greater formalization of interactions between the state and society because actors develop norms and expectations which encourage behavior that utilizes regulated institutions long before independence. The colonized population creates, controls and participates in these institutions, thereby increasing their acceptance and reliance on this form of political interaction. When the British
leave, norms have been inculcated over time and thus provide an expectation of continued use.

In short, this dissertation argues that a combination of self-government as well as state development prior to independence is important for long-term democratic stability after the colonizer departs. Indeed, the most advantageous inheritance is one of early self-government and high state development. In isolation, these dimensions cannot fully account for outcomes, but when these variables are considered jointly, they significantly explain democratic survival over time. I argue that this is because the introduction of self-government prior to independence is less meaningful without at least a modest state to respond to the population. By contrast, if the colonizer builds a large state without simultaneously conceding self-government, these institutions can be used to override democracy. Finally, an absence of both self-government and state development is the most disadvantageous of legacies, because the colony lacks democratic experience, links between society and the state and administrative capacity.

Summary of Project’s Findings

Survival Analysis

While several scholars argue that British colonialism is conducive to later democratization, there remains considerable debate and only limited large-n testing for why this is the case. After collecting historical data on the number of national elections and per capita size of the civil service prior to independence for 42 British colonies, this dissertation tests a series of hypotheses concerning the relative probability of democratic survival across the four colonial types. It uses
Event History Analysis of an original dataset of 57 democratic episodes from 1951-2014.

First, I examine the individual effects of national elections and civil service size prior to independence on democratic survival. Results suggest that the number of national elections prior to independence does not in isolation increase the probability of democratic survival. However, when I consider this factor in combination with the size of the civil service, it does significantly enhance democratic prospects. This finding holds across time and when controlling for numerous colonial and postcolonial variables. This finding contrasts with recent studies which emphasize pre-independence elections in British colonies alone (Bilinski 2015; Lee and Paine 2016) and suggests that this factor should be viewed together with state development. Viewing the British colonial legacy with multiple dimensions is thus important for understanding postcolonial democratic survival.

I also test several alternative colonial explanations of postcolonial democracy. First, I do not find that the distinction between direct and indirect rule has any bearing on the probability of democratic survival once you control for the joint effect of selfgovernment and state development prior to independence. Second, I do find that the presence of protestant missionaries affects democratic durability, but, in contrast to Woodberry (2012), I find that the effect is negative. Third, the presence of European settlers increases the probability of democratic survival, but this factor loses its significance when one includes the joint effect of selfgovernment and state development prior to independence. By itself, the settler variable might be picking up some of the impact of early opportunities for
self-government and thus be spurious. Fourth, I do not find any evidence that the length of colonial rule effects democratic survival. This reinforces the idea that it is the type of rule rather than its duration that is most important for post-colonial democracy. Finally, even when controlling for post-colonial variables and alternative colonial explanations, the joint effect of self-government and state development prior to independence increases the probability of democratic survival. Further, the Strong Autonomy colonial type significantly outperforms all other types.

Additionally, I included two time variables to test whether these legacies for democratic survival are enduring. I find that there is a fading or temporality to these institutional legacies as the colonial period becomes more distant. Further, democratic transitions made before the end of the Cold War are more vulnerable to breakdown than those made after 1991. Yet, the joint effect of self-government and state development prior to independence continues to affect the probability of democratic survival. The type of rule also continues to matter in enduring ways, with the Strong Autonomy colonies significantly outperforming others. In short, this dissertation finds that the causes of democratic breakdown remain driven by historical roots, particularly by the varied ruling structures of British colonization across empire.

I use post-estimation techniques to compare the expected durations of democratic episodes across types of colonies. I find that democratic transitions made both before and after the end of the Cold War are expected to survive longer in the following order: Strong Autonomy, Weak Autonomy, Strong Authoritarian, and Weak Authoritarian. While this pattern holds, the expected
duration of a democratic episode increases for each type if the transition to
democracy is made after the end of the Cold War. Thus, while type of British
colony continues to matter for post-colonial democracy in enduring ways, this
legacy is gradually declining.

This chapter demonstrates that colonial legacies continue to matter for
democratic survival, even when controlling for other post-colonial factors. It
argues that one must also account for the level of state development as well as
self-government prior to independence. When these variables are considered
jointly rather than in isolation, they more robustly explain patterns of democratic
survival. This argument is reinforced by the finding that Strong Autonomy
colonies consistently outperform all other British colonial types, even Weak
Autonomy colonies which share the legacy of pre-independence self-government
and Strong Authoritarian colonies which share the legacy of high state
development. In short, despite a range of post-colonial changes, explanations of
democratic survival still need to account for historical legacies.

**Comparative Historical Analysis**

I use comparative historical analysis of three types of British colonies to
examine the mechanisms linking timing of self-government and level of state
development prior to independence to democratic survival. Ghana represents a
Weak Authoritarian colony where the British invested little in state development
and allowed self-government only a few years prior to independence. By
contrast, Malaysia is a Strong Authoritarian colony where the British built a strong
state but conceded only late opportunities for self-government. Finally, Mauritius
exhibits the dynamics of a Weak Autonomy colony where the British allowed self-
government well before independence but established only a moderate state apparatus. The following are summaries of the arguments for each.

**Democratic Breakdown in Malaysia**

Malaysia was initially heralded as a model case of decolonization through peaceful negotiation, but the country’s democracy faltered after the intense General Election in 1969 and communal violence gave way to the democratic regime’s end. This dissertation argues that Malaysia’s history as a Strong Authoritarian colony explains its democratic breakdown. Malaysia received only very late opportunities for self-government, holding its first national election in 1954 only three years before independence, but inherited a very strong state. This form of rule disrupted existing governance structures and replaced them with a single institutional hierarchy linking administrators in central, district and local offices together via a formal chain of command. Malaysia’s experience as a Strong Authoritarian colony occurred most extensively after WWII such that by Independence in 1957, the entire territory had undergone extensive administrative development.

Despite extensive administrative development, however, the British resisted granting legislative authority to the local population. Thus, while the colonizers trained civil servants, they did not promote future legislators. Rather, the British withheld representative institutions and the electoral processes that undergird them until very late. Independence and the introduction of democratic institutions came only a few years apart.

The central argument of the Malaysia case study is that a legacy of limited self-government and extensive state development prior to independence allowed
for limited democratic experience and modest state-society links, but an efficient administrative apparatus at the transition to Independence. The Malaysia case study demonstrates that administrative capacity, uniformity and availability are not sufficient for democratic survival, however. If not coupled with strong state-society relations and democratic experience, they can be used to revert rather than strengthen democratic processes.

An abbreviated decolonization meant that political leaders and the electorate gained limited democratic experience prior to independence. This resulted in an over-confident ruling party unable to respond to diverse pressures from below given the constrained institutional channels between state and society. In addition, however, late colonialism also left an extensive administrative apparatus. When in 1969, the state confronted electoral uncertainties and internal security challenges, the governing elites responded by overturning the democratic regime on whole.

Crucially, at Independence, Malaysia had a gap between institutions and society. The Malaysian elite negotiated Independence in an abbreviated and elitist fashion, the entire process lasting less than five years and including only one general election (which was essentially a referendum on Independence). During this short process, moreover, nationalist elites largely inhibited processes of public debate and integration. There remained significant gaps between social pressures, especially on the communally sensitive issues, and the elite mode of transition and subsequent governance. A limited period of self-government prior to Independence, moreover, meant that the elite had accepted a mandate to govern without embracing the uncertainties that stem from elections and without
establishing a reciprocal relationship with the population. I argue that the central challenge to post-colonial democratization in Malaysia stemmed from a need to generate popular and elite investment in the democratic regime against potential destabilizing shocks.

**Democratic Breakdown in Ghana**

Though Ghana experienced a democratic breakdown like Malaysia, the dynamics of this event differed as a function of its type of British rule. Nkrumah’s government had within the first few years of Independence passed legislation that severely restricted political activities. The CPP leadership declared criticism of and opposition to the Government to be subversive and justified its repressive activities in the name of security, prosperity and national unity. Further, in 1959, Nkrumah officially fused the party and state, and in 1960 established a Republican Constitution which gave wide-ranging powers to the executive.

This chapter argues that Ghana’s democratic breakdown was the result of its history as a Weak Authoritarian Colony in which colonial rulers conceded self-government only very late and invested minimally in state development. The consequences of these colonial policies for independent Ghana were limited administrative development, weak state-society links, and minimal experience with democratic institutions.

The British introduced electoral politics in Ghana six years prior to independence. The colony held two fully direct elections within this period, and thus participation and competition in electoral politics was relatively new. The ruling party’s (CPP) minimal experience with democratic politics made it excessively uncomfortable with opposition politics. When the government faced
challengers from outside and within its own party, it responded aggressively, passing numerous laws which sought to undermine political liberties and democratic competition and participation. Further, because the CPP’s officials invested heavily in the party structure but not in democratic institutions, they focused on consolidating the former until the difference between the party and state were indistinguishable. The party responded to external and internal threats by jailing, repressing or eliminating those who demonstrated opposition to it. CPP leaders justified these actions by arguing that long-term goals of progress, modernity, unity, security and even democracy often entailed short-term sacrifices of democratic principles.

Second, the small post-colonial state knew little about the population frequently outside its grasp. In the absence of this knowledge, Nkrumah’s nationalist party built its popular appeal by exploiting local rivalries and coopting social organizations and integrating them directly into the party structure. Under this platform, the state expanded greatly and a predatory state developed which distributed patronage to its supporters and dispensed punishments to its enemies. These activities came to define state-society relations to the detriment of the development of formal channels of political grievance expression and state responsiveness. Ultimately, Ghana’s first democratic episode came to an end via the gradual erosion of its core elements.

**Democratic Survival in Mauritius**

Finally, in contrast to Ghana and Malaysia, Mauritius has maintained the multiparty democratic system that evolved during its terminal decades of colonialism. This case study focuses on the most tumultuous period of Mauritian
history, where the features which regularly catalyze authoritarian regression failed to shake Mauritius’s multiparty democratic system: 1969-1982. These 13 years saw two General Elections and the formation of a popular leftist, revolutionary party which directly challenged the entrenched economic interests of a small but powerful plantation elite by mobilizing the masses along class lines.

This chapter argues that Mauritian democracy survived because of its colonial legacy as a Weak Autonomy Colony in which it enjoyed a long period of self-government prior to Independence and moderate state development that could not be used to forcibly override institutions. In colonial Mauritius, democratic institutions were long available, but only with restricted access. The extension of these institutions to the periphery and popular experience with them demanded mass resistance to overcome the embedded social hierarchy. The plantation elite, posed the greatest threat to the formation of an inclusive democratic system.¹ It was not until after World War II that the labor movement, under the guidance of the Labour Party, finally achieved this access, first through trade union strikes and then through political mobilization and organization. When this happened, participation in the political system expanded and formal institutions extended to the periphery. This transformation led to a long system of self-government and more formalized institutional channels for social groups to reach the state.

¹ See Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992) for an explanation of why landed agrarian classes resist democratization.
As democratic institutions incorporated the broader society, the elite and population began to invest in them. Moreover, because the greatest threat to democratic survival, the plantation elite, had lost its power, democratic breakdown after independence became less likely. Instead, the population and elites gained democratic experience through a gradual process of decolonization, the relationship between state and society was strengthened through the formalization of networks of information exchange with the state even to the periphery, and the state enjoyed moderate though not extensive administrative reach. This chapter argues that these three developments of the late colonial period made Mauritius resilient against democratic break down.

This extension of democratic processes during the colonial period provided formalized channels of political grievance expression, whereby the population at-large could access the state through institutionalized processes. In addition, the state was forced to respond to social grievances because it lacked the brute force to repress social groups and evade electoral outcomes over the long term. Since 1982, Mauritian democracy has endured a series of rotating and unstable governing coalitions where programs matter relatively little and personalities loom large. Nonetheless, this system endures and the democratic institutions are never really under threat of removal. The electoral game is heated, but it is not viewed as zero sum.

The juxtaposition of Malaysia, Ghana and Mauritius highlight the importance of the historical roots of democracy. Mauritius underwent two decades of democratic institutional development prior to Independence. The colonial power undermined the resistant forces to democracy and, by
Independence, all social groups had learned to play the electoral game. This has not made elections in Mauritius any less intense, but it has made them the accepted route to power. By contrast, Malaysia’s abbreviated transition lasted less than five years and included only one election, essentially a referendum on Independence. A secretive coalition negotiated the decolonization process outside the public’s view and incorporated its views only partially into what would become the country’s national institutions. This coalition accepted with Independence a mandate to rule indefinitely and while this took the form of democratic politics for nearly a decade, when it was seriously challenged at the polls, the party leadership resorted to authoritarian rule. Finally, Ghana lacked both a long period of self-governance and colonial investment in state development prior to Independence. The colonial power introduced electoral institutions only six years before independence and only two elections included direct elections. This short timeframe meant that the ruling party’s elites had invested in its own competitive organization but not in the democratic process and institutions that brought it to power. Lack of experience with democratic politics encouraged the ruling party to respond aggressively to opposition outside and within it. Within three years, the ruling party had created a one-party state with unrestrained executive powers.

**Contribution of Dissertation**

This dissertation builds off a recent turn in comparative politics toward using long-range global history to find causal inference. This effort presents several challenges including a deficit of collective data and conceptual ambiguity. There are high individual costs associated with collecting qualitative and
quantitative historical data because it is scarce, hard to locate, frequently incommensurable across sources or simply unavailable. Despite these challenges, studies of contemporary social, economic and political outcomes often suggest the importance of historical periods. This has particularly been the case with the study of democracy in the developing world where many states inherited modern political institutions directly from their colonizers.

This research contributes to the study of democracy and colonialism in several ways. First, one of the challenges to using long-range global history is that of conceptual ambiguity and incommensurability. Case studies examining colonial legacies benefit from being able to stick closely to the historical record. By doing so, however, they often introduce several variables that do not always translate well across a larger population of cases.

By contrast, large-n studies of colonial legacies use variables that can be compared across a larger group of cases, but often become one-dimensional such as national colonizer, duration or timing of colonization, presence of European settlers, missionary influence, world region or direct/indirect rule (Bernhard et al. 2004; Olsson 2009; Hariri 2012; Woodberry 2012; Lankina and Getachew 2012; Young 1994; Mamdani 1996; Lange 2009). This dissertation addresses this conceptual challenge by disaggregating the complex phenomenon of ‘British colonialism’ into a set of manageable, meaningful and comparable components to examine its impact on contemporary political regimes. I introduce an original conceptual typology of British colonies that includes two major dimensions of this historical period.
Second, studies with long historical timeframes are often inhibited by shortages of available data. This dissertation contributes to the collective effort of data availability by gathering original data on two dimensions of the colonial experience including the number of national elections prior to independence and the size of the civil service. Because the British Empire spanned roughly ¼ of the world’s surface, this includes historical information for developing countries across the globe.

Finally, this research brings together scholarship on colonial legacies and democracy that examine one or a few cases and those that look at broader comparisons. The use of multiple methods and collection of original qualitative and quantitative data across several world regions and timeframes helps to bridge the gap between these two heretofore largely separate methodological literatures on colonialism and democratic stability.

In short, this research argues that despite a range of post-colonial changes, historical legacies continue to influence democratic survival. As scholars consider the long-term effects of the colonial period, it is important to begin to treat this complex period on more than one dimension. By paying attention to concept development, historical data collection and bridging methodologies, this research contributes to the collective effort to more fruitfully engage history in the examination of contemporary phenomenon.
APPENDIX A
DEMONCRATIC EPISODES IN FORMER BRITISH COLONIES, 1951-2014

1. Antigua and Barbuda: 1981-2014
2. Australia: 1951-2014
8. Brunei Darussalam: --
12. Egypt: --
21. Jordan: --
23. Lesotho: 2002-2014
26. Maldives: --
27. Malta: 1964-2014
30. New Zealand: 1951-2014
32. Pakistan: --
34. St. Lucia: 1979-2014
38. Singapore: --
41. South Africa: 1994-2014
42. Sri Lanka: 1951-1983
44. Tanzania: 2011-2014
45. Trinidad and Tobago: 1962-2014
47. United States: 1951-2014
48. Yemen: --
50. Zimbabwe: --
APPENDIX B
TYPOLOGY DIMENSIONS HISTOGRAMS

Self-Governance Histogram

State Development Histogram


APPENDIX C

DISTRIBUTION OF BRITISH COLONIAL TYPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Autonomy</th>
<th>Weak Autonomy</th>
<th>Strong Authoritarian</th>
<th>Weak Authoritarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td></td>
<td>Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td></td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zambia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Missing Cases: Bangladesh, Botswana, Canada, New Zealand, United States

*Types generated from cross-tabulation of country values for National Elections prior to Independence (3) and Size of Civil Service (.3) using histogram coding

*Note that while the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Malta and Mauritius are coded here as Strong Autonomy colonies, they are also Small States in terms of population, and thus could potentially exhibit the characteristics of Weak Autonomy colonies as well. This is discussed with greater nuance in the Mauritius chapter.
APPENDIX D  
AIC VALUES FOR WEIBULL MODELS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>AIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exponential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weibull</td>
<td>87.331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gompertz</td>
<td>88.362</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lognormal</td>
<td>89.168</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loglogistic</td>
<td>89.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized gamma</td>
<td>88.399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=1309
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emily Pukuma received a B.A. in international politics at Juniata College in 2009. She obtained her PhD in political science, with a specialization in comparative politics and political methodology, from the University of Florida in 2017. Her research interests include colonial legacies and democracy. Her dissertation is a study of democratic survival and British colonial legacies.