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DEMOCRATIZATION OF SINGAPORE FROM 1957-2004

by

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ABSTRACT

Economic development achieved through an authoritarian model of leadership allowed Singapore to become a strong state. Linkages to the West through Singapore's systematic industrialization and development policies build on aspects of Singapore's colonial legacy; under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, these connections powered the transformation of Singapore economically, socially, structurally, and technologically. On the other hand, Lee and his ruling People's Action Party (PAP) consistently limited the speed and extent of democratic progress in Singapore, including resisting the leverage that the thoroughgoing connections to the West might otherwise have given reformers and opponents in Singapore. This thesis examines how the evolution of the political system of Singapore, leadership, and PAP policies influenced the democratization process in Singapore; it finds key continuities in this development and also examines the potential for democratic change.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	average labor productivity
CMIO	Chinese, Malayan, Indian, and Others
EDB	Economic Development Board
GDP	gross domestic product
GRC	group member constituency
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MNC	Multi-National Companies
NCMP	Non-Constituency Member of Parliament
NMP	Nominal Member of Parliament
PAP	People's Action Party
PM	Prime Minister
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
MP	Member of Parliament
SDP	Singapore Democratic Party
SMC	Single Member Constituency
SPH	Singapore Press Holdings
UMNO	United Malayan National Organization
WP	Worker's Party

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Colonial legacies and economic stability have made democratization in Singapore possible, but government leadership and control have kept Singapore as an authoritarian state. Although British colonialism imparted limited democratic institutions to Singapore—the election office, the courts, and the taxing office—political leadership and People's Action Party (PAP) policy have limited rather than expanded these institutions. Singapore's first exposure to "Western linkage" came as a colonial legacy from British rule. In fact, Western linkage and leverage[1] were two variables that helped to convert Singapore to an economically strong country and were most likely influencing factors for the state's democratization process. The PAP became the only political party dominating Singaporean politics since independence in 1957, and Lee Quan Yew was its founding leader. Yet, Lee Kuan Yew's leadership as Singapore's first prime minister and the PAP policy hindered Western linkage and leverage and sustained a non-democratic governing pattern that allowed Lee and the PAP to remain in power.

This study assesses the history of Singapore from 1965 to 2004; specifically, it examines the practices of the People's Action Party and its leadership to compare the theoretical democratic institutions to the practical authoritarian governing behavior. The PAP has been the ruling party since Singapore and Malaysia jointly earned independence from Great Britain in 1957.[2] Initially, PAP came to power through a democratic process, but adoption of authoritarian tendencies allowed the party to maintain its power. Singapore became a "strong state" due to its economic development;[3] moreover, the rapid and strong

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[1] The Western linkage and leverage model is explained under the research design section of this chapter; Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War (Problems of International Politics)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 75.

[2] "Mr. LEE Kuan Yew," Prime Minister's Office of Singapore, last modified January 16, 2017, http://www.pmo.gov.sg/past-prime-minister/mr-lee-kuan-yew.

[3] Dan Slater, "Strong-State Democratization in Malaysia and Singapore," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (2012): 19–21, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2012.0021. In this article, Slater explains how Singapore is democratizing. Therefore, this study assumes that Singapore is democratizing. Although Singapore has not always shown the features of democratic transition since independence, for this study, it is assumed that Singapore has had some democratic features of government at some points in its history.

economic development of Singapore has allowed it to maintain political stability. As the first prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew relied on different models of authoritarian rule to ensure the prosperous, peaceful, and stable society to which he aspired for the country.[4] Throughout his decades in office, he also managed to avoid coups or the militarization of the political realm in Singapore. Of all the former British colonies in the region, however, Singapore remains one of the few states that have not fully democratized since independence; it remains a non-democratic state.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis asks: How have Western linkage and leverage affected Singapore's political evolution, and what were the influencing factors limiting the democratization process in Singapore from 1957 to 2004?

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study begins by exploring the continuum of political regimes, from democracy to stable authoritarianism, on the basis of Western linkage and leverage. Readings offer several definitions and explanations for democracy, which vary by societies and regions. Comparing the definitions of democracy and competitive authoritarianism to the political status quo of Singapore provides the theoretical background for this thesis. Furthermore, the study evaluates in-depth existing democratic elements of Singapore in relation to selected criteria from the various theories.

1. Definition of Democracy

Several academic definitions exist for democracy; therefore, a comparison of the most commonly used definitions in academic literature can assist in the selection of the most suitable definition for this thesis. Both Dorothy Maud Pickles and Bernard R. Crick explain that democracy is one of the most difficult forms of political systems to define and has no agreed-on definition. No government in the world could constantly provide or

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[4] Gordon P. Means explains how Singapore differs from authoritarian rule and how it has become a model of soft authoritarianism. Gordon P. Means, "Soft Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Singapore," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 4 (1996): 105–106, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1996.0065.

exercise a permanent level of democratic conditions at all times and under all conditions.[5] Pickles explains that several factors and conditions influence such changes in democracy: "age, sex, literacy, property, social status and sometimes color and religion." This swirl of influences creates different levels of democracy among societies and people.[6] Crick suggests that democracy really refers to liberty in which laws must be enacted to secure individual rights from the state.[7] Many authors argue that in modern democracy only a limited number of people often dominated by a handful of influential families, participate in politics. Therefore, democracy may be considered several things, according to Crick: it is a "system of government" representing a set of institutions for things like "universal suffrage, political parties, and uncorrupt elections, etc.," and it is also a "way of life"—a "philosophical and moral approach"—to facilitate actual democracy for the people.[8] Hence, the term refers to people's freedom and the individual's freedom to make political choices, which are key factors in a democracy.

2. Democratic Requirements and Elements

The measurement of a country's democracy assesses several minimal requirements. It is necessary, therefore, to select the most common measurement and criteria before conducting a survey of Singapore's democracy. To form a set of minimum requirements for a democracy, this study began by comparing the theories of Robert A. Dahl, Venelin Tsachevsky, and Charles Tilly. Dahl says that the democratic unit—the controlling body of a city or state—does not always fit within the framework of the theory.[9] Nevertheless, he identifies several distinct criteria, such as "elected officials; free, fair, and frequent elections; freedom of expression; associational autonomy; and inclusive citizenship,"[10] as

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[5] Dorothy Maud Pickles, *Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 1–28.

[6] Pickles, *Democracy,* 1–3.

[7] Bernard R. Crick, *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, England: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 14–24.

[8] Crick, *Democracy*, 14–24.

[9] Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 207–208.

[10] Robert A. Dahl, 85.

requirements for a democracy. Tilly argues about the criteria set by Dahl and identifies two drawbacks in their application.[11] First, he argues that Dahl has presented a set of democratic institutions, but they are not a constant measurement against which to compare all democracies. Tilly states that Dahl's requirements relate mostly to developing countries rather than developed countries such as Canada and the United States. Second, Tilly argues some of the requirements listed by Dahl overlap with each other, such as freedom of expression and associational autonomy.[12]

This thesis emphasizes that Dahl's study had been conducted mainly targeting Southeast Asian countries; therefore, it suits the Singapore scenario. Hence, in the case of developed democracies, some of the Dahl's requirements can be collapsed into fewer, broader elements as Tilly argues. In the case of Singapore and other developing countries, though, Dahl's requirements facilitate better analysis of democratization.

The comparison of Tilly's four different dimensions—the broad, equal, protected, and mutually binding—to measure the degree of political relationship between the state and its citizens provides a scope to measure the democracy.[13] The term *broad* explains the small segment of the population enjoying the broad spectrum of rights while the majority of the people are neglected. Second, *equal* refers to the measurement of equality among or within the different segments of the citizenry. Third, *protection* considers how much protection the people have from the state's arbitrary actions. Lastly, *mutually binding* explains to what degree a state is obliged to provide benefits without being manipulated by the state officials.[14] It should be noted that almost all these dimensions explained by Tilly also fall within one of the democratic elements of Dahl's definition. Therefore, this thesis considers that the equal right to vote, the political right to vote, free and fair elections, the right to expression, and protection are the best criteria for the democratic survey and assessment in this thesis.

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[11] Charles Tilly, *Democracy* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1–24.

[12] Tilly, 11.

[13] Tilly, 14–15.

[14] Tilly,.

Tsachevsky introduces the "Swiss Model," stating that Switzerland is one of the best "political system[s] of governance" for a democracy.[15] He says that the main characteristics of the "Swiss Model" are "referendum and neutrality."[16] Switzerland had 24 referenda during 2001–2014[17] and maintained its status as an armed neutral state in the heart of Europe.[18] The model does not undermine the other common principles: "Political pluralism, the rule of law, observance of the fundamental human rights and liberties, separation of powers, viable civil society—as explained by Dahl."[19] Further, Tsachevsky says that any solution of democratic governments does not produce cost and gains, but there should be a quantitative judgement.[20] Examples of things that can be quantitatively evaluated are the cost and gains for communication, negotiation, administrative and economic efficiency, etc. In Switzerland, the government serves the people but the democratic process does not aim to achieve economic or political gains. Under the principle of fundamental rights, Dahl explains that media freedom must be protected.[21] Similarly, according to Joseph Alois Schumpeter, every person has a right to know what is happening in his country under the "right to information."[22] A majority of Dahl's elements combined with some of Tilly's will constitute the evaluation of Singapore's Democracy.

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[15] Venelin Tsachevsky, *The Swiss Model: The Power of Democracy* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang, 2014), 59–147.

[16] Tsachevski, 59–147.

[17] TSsachevski, 105–108.

[18] Neils O. Buechi argues,"Switzerland's understanding of neutrality outlaws any participation in security or defense alliances during peacetime or war. Thus, neutrality in Swiss history has necessitated an autonomous security and defense policy and, hence, relatively strong armed forces." Neils O. Buechi, "The Future of Swiss Foreign and Security Policy: Increasing International Cooperation Is the Key to National Autonomy" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA, 2011), https://calhoun.nps.edu/ bitstream/handle/10945/10749/11Dec_Buechi.pdf?Sequence=1&isAllowed=y; Tsachevski, *The Swiss Model*, 149–161.

[19] Tsachevski, 11–15.

[20] Joseph Alois Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1–15.

[21] Schumpeter, 1–15.

[22] Schumpeter, 253–254, 262.

3.   Authoritarianism and Dictatorship

Milan W. Svolik and Juan J. Linz have both argued that "anti-democracy" is most common feature of governance by authoritarian rulers and dictators. Svolik asserts that authoritarian governments might have legislatures, parties, and elections; such regimes can be poor or rich, under military or civilian rule, and can last for days or decades.[23] Dictatorship or authoritarianism comes in response to challenges within the state and in politics. Svolik states that politics of this nature within a dictatorship create a form of rule, which is identified as authoritarian politics. Authoritarian rule is possible in most countries and takes various forms according to the country and its politics. Svolik explains that authoritarian politics is "always a ruthless and treacherous business."[24] The explanations given by both Linz and Svolik have similarities in their definitions. The authoritarian regime consists of a single ruler: a single person—the dictator—or a political party or Junta.[25] Linz adds that the government, at the expense of the needs of the people and society, mainly holds the political authority. To be sure, Tsachevsky insists this form of government is "dying in bed,"[26] although it seems to be pretty sprightly in Southeast Asia. Unlike a dictatorship, which can happen overnight, a stable authoritarian regime takes time to establish.[27] To survive, regimes that develop stable authoritarian politics need long-term relationships with their bureaucracies.

Authoritarian regimes always seek strong central power, allowing less political freedom for the people. In other words, a centralized authority, rather than a single person, holds the institution's decision-making authority.[28] As Andrew J. MacIntyre points out,

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[23] Milan W. Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19–20.

[24] Svolik, 13.

[25] Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder, CO: Rienner, 2009), 159–171 ; Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, 13–17.

[26] Tsachevsky, *The Swiss Model*, 13.

[27] Dan Slater, Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 47–52.

[28] Andrew J. MacIntyre, *The Power of Institutions: Political Architecture and Governance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1–16.

this issue is one of the most important existing contemporary issues of Southeast Asian politics.[29] For his analysis, however, he focuses on Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and a few other states rather than Singapore. He says Malaysia is a country that has the least dispersion of decision-making power within the state system. Chan Heng Chee and Jason Lim et al. have developed almost similar arguments on the Southeast Asian political models, noting how Malaysia and Singapore have both achieved one-party dominance since their independence.[30]

4. Competitive Authoritarianism

Competitive authoritarian regimes are mainly civilian regimes that enjoy supreme political power while having democratic institutions. The tendency of these governments is to use officials and bureaucrats to their advantage.[31] Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way further argue that those governments enforce their power to suppress opposition and remain in power; such regimes always take advantage of the democratic institutions to justify their action.[32] The political competition created is theoretically within the democratic framework but not practically fair to opponents or people. All of these features work to equate "competitive authoritarianism" with a hybrid regime as explained by different authors.[33] Hence, those regimes are consistent with the features of democratic and authoritarian types. The elections, civil liberties, and media freedom are manipulated in an unfair manner so that opponents are not encountering the fair playing fields on which to contest or oppose such regimes.[34]

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[29] MacIntyre, 1–16.

[30] Chan Heng Chee, *The Dynamics of One Party Dominance: The PAP at the Grass-Roots* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978); Jason Lim, Terence Lee, and Jack Tsen-Ta Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society,* 1965–2015 (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2016).

[31] Levitsky and Way, Competitive Authoritarianism, 5.

[32] If a regime is in between the democracy and stable authoritarianism then it makes competitive authoritarianism or some time semi-democracy and liberal democracy as define by the other democratic intellectuals such as Linz and Tilly. Levitsky and Way, 5–6.

[33] Levitsky and Way, 5.

[34] Levitsky and Way, 10.

The features of competitive authoritarian regimes are the systematic violation of authority, the seeking of supreme power, the taking control of the legal sector, and the full control of access to resources.[35] In this scenario, the most likely option available to convert the regime to a democracy is an external influence. Those influences are created through Western linkage and leverage—pressure of the Western democracies—and are developed over the period of time.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

Application of Levitsky and Way's theory of how authoritarianism can give way to democracy due to Western linkage and leverage forms the main part of the research design. Figure 1 is a dynamic representation of competitive authoritarianism that shows the relationship of democracy, unstable authoritarianism, and stable authoritarianism under the influence of Western linkage and leverage.

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[35] Levitsky and Way, 7–13.
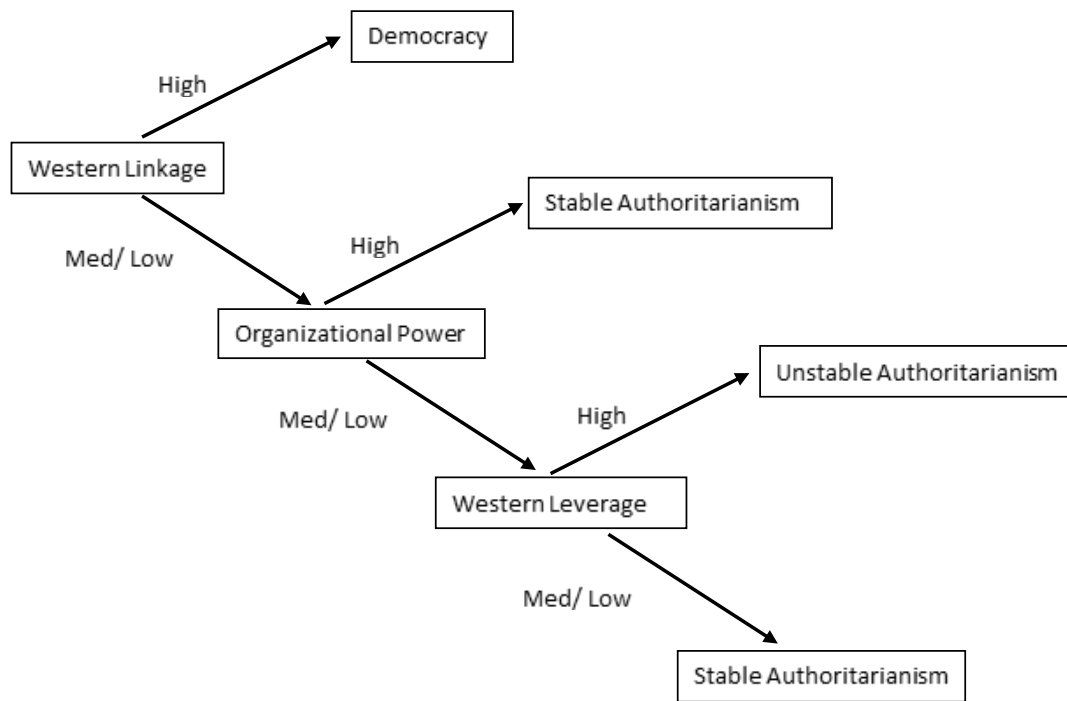
Figure 1.   Linkage, Organizational Power, and Regime Outcome.[36]

1.   Stability of the Authoritarianism

If a country has a high degree of Western linkage (i.e., a strong relationship with Western powers) then it will likely democratize, but if the linkage is low where the domestic organizational power increases then the country will convert to stable authoritarianism.[37] If the country's organizational power decreases and Western leverage (i.e., influence) is significant, then the country converts to unstable authoritarianism, which is favorable for democracy again. Linkage and leverage are referential variables contingent on the organizational power or stability of the regime. Therefore, Levitsky and Way's concept depicted in Figure 1 can be explained in a linear form as shown in Figure 2.

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[36] Source: Levitsky and Way, 72.

[37] Levitsky and Way, 72.

		Competitive Authoritarianism		

Democracy	Unstable Democracy	Unstable Authoritarianism	Stable Authoritarianism
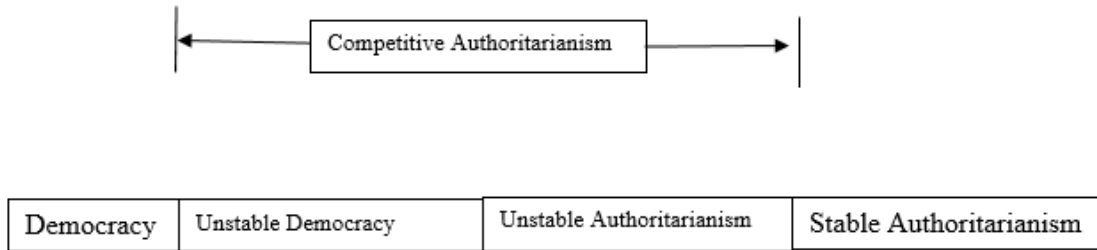
Figure 2.   Competitive Authoritarianism.[38]

Competitive authoritarianism exists on the continuum between democracy and stable authoritarianism. Specifically, the area from the midway point to stable authoritarianism is unstable authoritarianism while unstable democracy is located in the opposite direction from the midway point within the range of competitive authoritarianism. The following paragraphs consider the relationship between Western linkage and leverage and where competitive authoritarian regimes fall within this continuum.

a.   Western Linkage

Western linkage has positive and negative effects for regimes. On the positive side, linkage can develop to enhance a country's relationship with Western powers and increase the flow of Western investments. The negative effect of the Western linkage, by contrast, can threaten traditional society very quickly. As the economy improves due to Western linkage, it may encourage continued investment in a country and promote the flow of trade, but it may also encourage the flow of migrants into the state. There are multiple examples of colonial legacies coupling with western linkage to influence the course of democratization in independent countries, including the 1994 intervention in Haiti.[39]

b.   Western Leverage

The regime's vulnerability to external actors for democratization is explained under the rubric of Western linkage. There are three areas in which a regime gets vulnerable: size and strength of the economy and state power; Western foreign policy objectives and

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[38] Adapted from Levitsky and Way, 72.

[39] Levitsky and Way, 46–48.

countries' bargaining power; and the possibility of seeking the assistance of counter-hegemonic powers.[40] If the economy of a country is stable and if it can sustain economic progress on its own—from the availability of raw materials and technology—then it can withstand Western leverage. A good example is Russia or China, as in each case, state power is high and the economy is largely invulnerable to Western leverage.

Second, a country can resist Western leverage if that country has its own bargaining power such as having vital resources within the country. For example, Western powers can exert only moderate pressure on major energy producers. The last variable is aligning with hegemonic powers like China or Russia against Western leverage; in such situations, Western influence becomes minimal. Cameroon and Gabon, for example, supported by France and Russia have lent support to Belarus.[41] Therefore, Western leverage is one of the most important factors influencing the democratization process in any country.

2.   Evaluation of Democracy

Out of all the available measurements for democratization, the following five set up the analytical framework for this thesis.

The **equal right to vote** is the most important factor by which to evaluate a democracy. Dahl says the domain and scope of a democracy can be clearly identified by the right to vote.[42] For a state to become a democracy, it has to have a boundary to determine its citizens. Similar to Dahl, Tilly emphasizes "voting equality" or the "equal and effective opportunity to vote,"[43] which ensures that every person of age in the country should be able to vote to create a democratic government. This is the first right of a democratic nation.

The **political rights of the people** refers to the provision securing the political rights of the people. First, citizens have a right to hold office. Political freedom does not

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[40] Levitsky and Way, 41.

[41] Levitsky and Way, 41.

[42] Dahl, Democracy and Its Critics, 207.

[43] Tilly, *Democracy,* 9.

refer to the needs of the people but the rights of the people. Furthermore, there should be free competition for leadership—"free competition for free vote."[44] Tilly's "breadth and equity"[45] features also provide a broader explanation of political rights, in other words, "the rights of the people." The literature explains that a country needs more than one political party to become a democracy; it should have a minimum of two parties. Nevertheless, it should not have too many parties, because either having too few or too many political parties can threaten democracy. Second, political rights should be secured.[46] The people should have the right to form political parties or join with them at their own choice under any political ideology. The people's willingness to be represented by a political party, in turn, fulfills one of the democratic requirements of equal representation.[47] Depending on the circumstances, politically appointed leaders receive different levels of decision-making authority on behalf of the people. The people, however, may be willing to be involved in the decision-making process even after delegating full control.

The preservation of **free and fair elections** is one of the important requirements of a democratic government. Tilly explains that a democracy cannot exist if the "state lacks the capacity to establish a system and procedure to function free and fair election and put it to practice."[48] Dahl's explanation also has similarities with Tilly; Dahl states that people should also be able to remove elected officials under the free and fair election process.[49] Furthermore, he argues that people should be free to decide who should take decisions and governments should treat all citizens with equal fairness, including the elected members.

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[44] Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 271.

[45] Tilly says in *Democracy,* 14, "Breadth: A small segment of power enjoying extensive rights, the rest being largely excluded from the public politics. Equality: The great inequality among and within the categories of citizens."

[46] Tilly, *Democracy,* 14.

[47] Dahl, Democracy and Its Critics, 135–152.

[48] Tilly, *Democracy,* 15–16.

[49] Dahl, Democracy and Critics, 232–234.

The election process and voting reflects the level of democracy.[50] Moreover, Tilly says that election results provide a parameter by which to measure democracy.[51]

The **right to expression** provides every citizen the freedom to exchange his/her ideas and contribute equally within a given boundary—abiding by a legal framework or interstate agreements. Schumpeter states, "Consensus among the persons whose interests are significantly affected will be higher than it would be with any other feasible boundaries."[52] Dahl also states that this criterion reasserts the value of personal freedom. The freedom and self-determination of people are compulsory requirements within a given boundary. Dahl's explanation covers both equal rights and the freedom of expression together.

The **protection** that Tilly talks about is another important factor, though Dahl and Schumpeter never discuss this factor under democratic elements. The term "protection" refers to the mechanism to protect citizens from discrimination and abuse by the government in power.[53] Often political conflicts over a period create a situation of political discrimination. Much of the literature reviewed for this study found this as one of the features of authoritarianism. The lack of a legal framework and the existence of a moderately resistant political decision-making environment are signs of arbitrary actions by an authoritarian government.[54] Linz further says that in the absence of democracy, governments tends to punish personal enemies and, in the presence of a biased bureaucracy, will give undue rewards to their friends.

D.   OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter has introduced the context, reviewed relevant literature, and presented the research design. Chapter II offers a comprehensive history of Singapore's colonial heritage, its independence, and its

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[50] Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 1–15.

[51] Tilly, *Democracy,* 8.

[52] Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 1–15.

[53] Tilly, *Democracy,* 15.

[54] Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes, 167–169.

economic, social, and political evolution under the influence of Western linkage and leverage. Chapter III examines the democratic promise within Singapore politics and its conversion from an authoritarian ruling model to a stable authoritarian model. Furthermore, the chapter explains the behavior and actions of Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP government and their authoritarian ruling model. Chapter IV analyzes Singapore's governing model to determine how democratic institutions have survived within authoritarianism and provides recommendations on how Singapore can be democratized under the influence of Western linkage and leverage. Thereafter, the chapter provides the conclusion to the thesis.

II.   SINGAPORE FROM COLONIAL RULE TO 2004

Western linkage and leverage encouraged Singapore politics to be within the framework of democratization in many respects. British colonial rule in Singapore helped establish some democratic features like the election office and the first political party formed during the so-called second British colonial period following World War II. These features have been vital throughout Singapore's modern history, enabling Singapore's ruling model to remain open for democratization. After independence in 1957, the PAP regime retained its status as the single most powerful political party, with no challenging opposition. The regime drove the entire nation toward economic success using its overweening power in parliament and politics more broadly. This chapter explains how Singapore's colonial history and its journey to independence created certain economic and social changes that made Singapore amenable to Western linkage and leverage. Ultimately, these critical factors encouraged—and are still encouraging—the democratization process in Singapore.

The PAP formed democratically in 1954, and it dominated Singaporean politics through the support of the Chinese elites and economic progress. The majority of the members of the PAP were Chinese-educated settlers of the Malayan peninsula. The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) represented the Singapore Chinese at the Federal Assembly of Malaysia when both countries gained independence from British rule.[55] With the necessary political and administrative support from the MCA, the PAP was able to establish itself within Singapore, but later the two parties split. Nonetheless, the PAP had initiated its characteristic vison and a plan for the economic development when the split happened in 1965. Under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, PAP party policies became vital in Singapore's achieving strong economic progress. The PAP's winning super majority in the 1969 elections also became one reason to establish a strong government with a firm

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[55] As explained in Chapter III, the first political party of independent Singapore emerged as an integral part of the Malaysian Chinese Alliance. Singaporeans were not intended to become a sovereign state during Singapore's and Malaysia's impending independence from British rule in 1957. They were to become a single state under Malaysia, but that did not happen. Their politics, though, were centrally organized around the Malaysian political structure. The PAP also formed under same idea.

start. PAP had no options other than driving the country toward the people's expectations—at least at the start. This chapter traces the rise and development of the PAP, with an emphasis on its democratic potential.

A.   SINGAPORE UNDER COLONIAL RULE

Singapore had two major colonial rulers—Britain and Japan—during three colonial periods; British rule introduced most vital democratic elements to Singapore. Crown rule established of several democratic institutions and features, such as the election office, a political party, and voting rights, in Singapore. Both periods of British rule (1819–1941 and 1945–1957)[56] introduced several multinational industries to Singapore's manufacturing sector, making Singapore more commercialized. In this way, British rule provided a constructive jump-start to the Singapore economy, while the short-lived Japanese rule (1941–1945) was destructive and ruthless. Ultimately, colonial rule helped to establish economic progress and some democratic features in Singapore.

1.   First British Rule

The conditions created by the British rule enticed Western investors to initiate business and modernize education in Singapore, which enabled Singapore to maintain economic progress. In 1819, the British East Indian Company landed on the shores of Singapore and established Singapore as a trading post,[57] one of the foundational opportunities for Singapore to build its economy competitively in the region. Western multinational enterprises began manufacturing electrical goods, cables, and telephones in Singapore, which became some of Singapore's leading exports in 1930.[58] Two United Kingdom manufacturers, three engineering companies, and one major Western planning and construction company mainly held this manufacturing market in Singapore.[59]

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[56] British ruled Singapore from 1819 to 1957, but Japanese also occupied from 1941 to 1945. However, British domination continued until 1963.

[57] Singh, Understanding Singapore Politics, 12–13.

[58] W. G. Huff, The Economic Growth of Singapore: Trade and Development in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 262–4.

[59] Huff, The Economic Growth of Singapore, 263.

Moreover, the colonial rulers introduced educational institutions in Singapore, to which most of the elites sent their children.[60] Over the course of a century the British established more schools, modernized existing schools, and provided scholarships for secondary English-language schools. These advancements in industry and education constituted significant Western linkages to Singaporean society, enabling the country to navigate and negotiate in Western-dominated economies.

2. Japanese Rule

The educational, social, and economic progress set in motion by the British slowed or regressed under Japanese rule. The brutal Japanese occupation of Singapore from 1941 to1945 suppressed the elite Chinese population and, by extension, Singaporean society as whole.[61] The Japanese response to the Chinese population in Singapore, more so than to other ethnicities, was particularly brutal because the occupiers had historical rivalries with the Chinese. The Malayans in Singapore fared relatively better under the Japanese colonial administration.[62] On the other hand, the Japanese occupation in Asia dismantled the imperialism marked by colonial rule and sea power.[63] Japanization became a threat to British colonial powers and their elites in Singapore. Hence, Western firms that produced the majority of manufacturing products in Singapore were disrupted by Japanese rule and became less economically progressive in relation to the pre-WWII environment.[64] The Japanese also forced all schools to teach in the Japanese language, instead of teaching in Chinese and English, which had been established under the British rule.[65] The suppression

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[60] Barbara L. LePoer, ed., *Singapore, a country study* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991), 16, 32.

[61] LePoer, *Singapore,* 39–41.

[62] Kingsbury, "Singapore: The Corporate State," in *South-East Asia: A Political Profile* (South Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press, 2003), 331.

[63] Kingsbury, "Singapore: The Corporate State," 331.

[64] Huff, The Economic Growth of Singapore, 277–278.

[65] Malaysia and Singapore—both countries as one entity under colonial rule and before Singapore separated from Malaysia—experienced ethnic clashes during the post-war period that resulted in several changes to their social order due to the ethnic clashes created during Japanese rule; LePoer, *Singapore,* 40.

and language policy implemented by the Japanese compelled Singaporeans to form a "unified anti-Japanese military force" to resist Japanese pressure during their rule.

3. Second British Occupation

In 1945, Britain regained control of Singapore, and restored and expanded the Singaporean educational system and social conditions after WWII.[66] For instance, the six-year primary education system, introduced during the first period of British colonial rule was broadened to a ten-year system.[67] The British changed the official language in all the schools to any language preferred by the parents.[68] Furthermore, the United Malayan National Organization was formed in 1946 as an alliance of the Malayan Union, Malayan Communist Party (MCP)—the Malay Chinese voter base—and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC)—the Malay Indian voter base—to function as one political party within the Malaysian peninsula.[69] The MCP was operating in both Malaysia and Singapore and its central committee headquarters was located in Singapore.[70] In 1947, the economy had been reestablished and recovered rapidly; in 1949, the British had also reinstated trade and social services, as well as taking all necessary steps to maintain ethnic harmony among Chinese, Indians, and Malayans, which had been disturbed under Japanese colonial rule.[71]

c. *British Military Administration*

The British military administration's form of control after WWII motivated Singapore to form its own political party. At the end of WWII, the British military

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[66] LePoer, *Singapore,* 42.

[67] LePoer, 40–44.

[68] LePoer, 43.

[69] Based on the text of several authors, this thesis identifies that the UMNO was the primary political party organizing within both countries. B.N. Cham, "Colonialism and Communalism in Malaysia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 7, no. 2 (1977): 90, https://doi.org/10.1080/00472337785390141; Edwin Lee Siew Cheng, *Singapore: The Unexpected Nation* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), 2008), 22–46; LePoer, *Singapore,* 30–56; Thomas J Bellows, *The People's Action Party of Singapore: Emergence of a Dominant Party System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1973), 12–21.

[70] Cheng, Singapore: The Unexpected Nation, 40.

[71] LePoer, 42–43.

administration took control over Singapore and was able to restore several basic needs—gas, water, and electricity—to society.[72] The military administration, however, could not fully comply as society expected, and the administration became more corrupt. Its leadership's collaboration with Japanese profiteers to reap financial gains led to unpopular control with mismanagement and inefficiency. In protesting against British military rule, the Malayan Union rallied more than 60 trade unions and initiated trade actions against the rule.[73] The British military administration withdrew from Singapore in 1946, and Singapore became an independently governed colony under the British crown.[74]

d.   *Political Innovation*

The separation of Singapore from Malaysia under British rule paved the way for the creation of both the independent political party and the election system within Singapore. British colonial rule separated Singapore and Malaysia into two independent administrative bodies, both under crown control in 1945; therefore, Singapore had to form its first indigenous political party as a constituent segment under the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU).[75] The British accepted the MCP, however, which was founded in 1930 as a political party to quiet popular resistance.[76] In 1946, the MDU opted to form a multi-ethnic alliance party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), to accommodate Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnicities under one political umbrella.[77] Thereafter, the UMNO demanded the creation of a Malayan Federation as one political system for Singapore and Malaysia, to which the colonial rule acceded. In 1948, however, Singapore

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[72] LePoer, ,42–44

[73] LePoer, 44.

[74] LePoer, 42–44.

[75] The MDU later formed the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in 1946, Barbara L. LePoer, ed., *Singapore, A Country Study* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991), 44.

[76] Britain assumed the acceptance of MCP would support the separation of Singapore from Malaysia, as majority of Singaporeans are Chinese, LePoer, *Singapore…*, 44.

[77] The Chinese majority of Singapore and Malayan majority of Malaysia united through the creation of the UMNO alliance. Bilveer Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd, 2017), 17.

formed its first labor party and held its first general election as an independent colony.[78] Furthermore, British rulers created the moderate Progressive Party in Singapore and held Singapore's first-ever municipal election in 1949.[79] The formation of these political parties resulted in the creation of new political and election systems in Singapore during the second period of British colonial rule.

e. *Beginnings of Political Administration and Economic Progress*

The reconstruction of Singapore's political administration and the reestablishment of economic linkages with the West were significant results of post-WWII British control.[80] The establishment of its first political party in 1945—the Malayan Democratic Party—under Malaysian politics became the cornerstone of Singapore politics.[81] This start helped Singapore to establish its own civilian administration system within Singapore under the supervision of British rule. Singapore's economic development after WWII continued thanks to the preexisting linkages to the Western economy, and expanded with the trade of rubber and petroleum.[82] From 1950 onward, Western linkage took the lead in Singapore industry by strengthening economic progress, which showed annual development and saw new enterprises joining annually.[83] Although Japan's brief yet brutal rule caused Singapore to regress, the two periods of British colonial rule established economic, political, and social linkages to Western democratic powers, on which Singapore eventually built its own independence.

B. SINGAPORE'S INDEPENDENCE

Singapore had been able to form a political party, the PAP, to represent its own population, just one year before gaining independence. Singapore, however, did not receive

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[78] LePoer, *Singapore*, 45.

[79] The newly created Progressive Party won three seats out of six seats during the first municipal council election in Singapore, LePoer, *Singapore*, 45.

[80] LePoer, *Singapore*, 41–44.

[81] LePoer, 41–45.

[82] Huff, *The Economic,* 286.

[83] Huff, 286.

its constitutional independence from the British Crown until 1963. Singapore and Malaysia had a long-standing bond from sharing resources and developing linkages with the Chinese elites of both countries, which became a key contributory factor for the Singapore-Malaysia merger. Finally, the separation of the merger in 1965 allowed the PAP to emerge as a self-standing regime responsible for finding customized solutions for Singapore's economic development.

1.   The Formation of the PAP

The official inauguration of the People's Action Party took place in 1954 with 1,500 members.[84] By this time, Singaporean politics were establishing a left-wing party that could lobby all the unions to protest against British rule. The formative objectives of the PAP were successful; 90 percent of the trade unionists joined with them during the inaugural ceremony.[85] The majority of PAP members, as well as its leader Lee Kuan Yew, were educated Chinese elites who were pro-communist and anti-colonist.[86] The PAP proposed a united campaign with the Malaysians against British colonial rule to jointly receive independence for both Malaysia and Singapore in 1957.[87] Singapore was always comfortable to work with Malaysia due to both countries' long-standing economic links with Chinese elites. This relationship had facilitated the PAP to become strong at the beginning and, hence, they converted to being an exclusively political hope for the people.

In 1965, as PAP formed a government with a multi-ethnic alliance, the evolution of the PAP became instrumental in achieving the political sovereignty of Singapore. The PAP participated in its first election in 1955 in Singapore and won three out of the four seats, out of a possible 25 that were contested at the time; Lee won the poorest constituency in Singapore.[88] In the 1959 election, the fully elective legislative Assembly of Singapore

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[84] Diane K. Mauzy and R. S. Milne, *Singapore Politics Under the People's Action Party* (London: Routledge, 2002), 38–39.

[85] Mauzy and Milne, *Singapore Politics,* 39.

[86] LePoer, *Singapore,* 48.

[87] LePoer, 49.

[88] The Labor Party of the Singapore won the election, shocking the British rulers, and established a coalition government; LePoer, 49.

established the government under the PAP.[89] Lee became the first prime minister of Singapore in this Assembly. After the merger with Malaysia in 1963, the PAP expected to expand its power within the Malayan peninsula. Therefore, the PAP started to expand its party domination by propagating the democratic socialist idea supported by the populace that all ethnicities should be treated equally, which was a departure from traditional politics that formed exclusively around ethnicity or religious bases.[90] The PAP's action increased the popular support of the PAP, which became one of the reasons for the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965. Finally, Singapore became an independent and sovereign state in 1965 under the PAP government.

2.   Merging with Malaysia

The leadership of PAP and the political alliances of the Chinese elite communities throughout the peninsula created the political impetus for the merger of Singapore with Malaysia in 1963. Singapore never desired independence as a single nation from the British; Singapore joined with Malaysia to fight against the colonial regime, demanding a new Malayan nation.[91] Singaporean leaders—PAP leaders—also believed that if they did not merge with Malaysia, they would not experience economic progress.[92] Only the pro-communist wing of the PAP disagreed with the merger.[93] The linkage developed by the Chinese elites in Malaysia and Singapore—as the major portion of the economy of both countries was held in the hands of Chinese elites—had been a key factor in helping Singapore to become an integral part of Malaysia.[94] The elites believed the merger to be a

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[89] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 13.

[90] Singh, 14.

[91] Kingsbury, "Singapore: The Corporate State," 334.

[92] Kuan Yew Lee, *From First World to First: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings, 1998), 402–406.

[93] LePoer, *Singapore,* 53.

[94] UNMO-MCA had a coalition government just after the 1955 election; therefore, Chinese of both countries were interested in a merger because the ethnic identity of the Chinese in both countries was very strong and the Chinese were holding a major share of the economy of both countries as well. LePoer, *Singapore,* 49–50; James H. Liu et al., "Social Representations of History in Malaysia and Singapore: On the Relationship between National and Ethnic Identity," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 5, no. 1 (2002), https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839x.00091.

supportive measure for their business matters, because of the geographical position of Singapore.[95] The trading post that was established around the Singapore port by the colonial rulers was vital for the Malayan elites while the inland raw material supply became a key requirement for Singapore's elites. The Singapore and Malaysia merger happened after Singapore signed an agreement with Malaysia along with the people of Sabah and Sarawak.[96] The merger was effected amid fanfare on all sides in 1963.

A year after the signing of the merger agreement, Singapore had not received the expected linkage from Malaysia for its economic development. The merger was a response to the total release of Singapore from British Crown control in 1963.[97] There were three underlying reasons for the merger agreement with Malaysia: find possible solutions to enhance economic progress through linkage, address security concerns that could arise after British departure, and mitigate Singapore's insecurity about standing as an independent state. A major expectation for the merger agreement was to enhance the economic linkage, which both countries had enjoyed under the British rule and wished to expedite. The lack of an initial response to the agreement from Malaysia led the PAP to demand representation in the federal assembly in Malaysia.[98] Additionally, Singaporean Chinese, the majority contributors to Singapore's economy, grew increasingly unhappy with Malaysia's demands for higher revenue from Singapore after signing the agreement.[99] Finally, the weak economic linkage and political resistance became key reasons for the failure of the merger agreement.

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[95] Bellows, The People's Action Party of Singapore, 42–45.

[96] LePoer, *Singapore,* 55.

[97] Josef Silverstein and Nancy M. Fletcher, "The Separation of Singapore from Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 29, no. 4 (1970): 5–6, https://doi.org/10.2307/2943165.

[98] PAP made demands for its own representation, rejecting the MCA's representation on behalf of PAP in the Assembly as a single political entity that represents the entire Chinese population of the Malayan Peninsula. Bellows, *The People's Action Party of Singapore,* 53–54.

[99] LePoer, *Singapore,* 56.

3. Separation from Malaysia and Sovereignty

The increased political tensions between both countries led to Singapore's separation from Malaysia.[100] Indeed, Lee accused Malaysian leader Abdul Rahman one year after the agreement signed of being a "traitor" for not carrying out the merger agreement's promised actions.[101] The political tensions between the PAP and UMNO were growing. The PAP's demand for representation within the federal assembly of Malaysia was rejected by the MCA and the UMNO.[102] This misunderstanding between the political leadership and political parties became a key factor for the separation. Finally, in 1965, the leader of the UMNO, Abdul Rahman, decided to separate from Singapore and obtained a unanimous vote (126–0) in parliament to support the decision—without the presence of any representation of Singapore.[103] Malaysia's decision marked the beginning of Singapore as a sovereign and independent state from 1965; hence, Singapore decided to stand on its own in 1965.

C. THE PAP STATE

Lee Kuan Yew converted Singapore to one of the most successful nations in the world. In the 1970s, American multinational companies invested large amounts of money in Singapore for their electronic and other industries. The PAP government and Lee made all possible attempts[104] to attract foreign investors to Singapore; they even received Japanese investment, too. Between 1960 and 1990, under the leadership of Lee, Singapore experienced its highest economic growth.[105] W.G. Huff elaborates that the "engine of

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[100] LePoer, 56–57.

[101] Michael D. Barr, "Lee Kuan Yew in Malaysia: A Reappraisal of Lee Kuan Yew's Role in the Separation of Singapore from Malaysia," *Asian Studies Review* 21, no. 1 (1997): 1–2, https://doi.org/10.1080/03147539708713138.

[102] MCA was representing the PAP in the Assembly as it represented the entire Chinese population in the Malayan Peninsula. Bellows, *The People's Action Party of Singapore*, 53–54.

[103] LePoer, *Singapore,* 57.

[104] "There are books to teach you how to build a house, how to repair engines, how to write a book. But I have not seen a book on how to build a nation out of a desperate collection of immigrants from China, British India, and Dutch East Indies, or how to make a living for its people when its former economic role as the entrepôt of the region is becoming defunct." Kuan Yew Lee, *From Third World to First: Singapore and the Asian Economic Boom* (New York: Harper Business, 2011), 3.

[105] W. G. Huff, "Patterns in the Economic Development of Singapore," *Journal of Developing Areas* 21, no. 3 (April 1987): 305–325, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4191564.

growth" during this period happened due to three changes: first, diversification of the economy through manufacturing and services; second, growth of new public entrepreneurs and multinational enterprises; and third, government commitment to and highly effective planning for, economic development.[106] Singapore's manufacturing share increased from 16.6 percent in 1960 to 20.3 percent in 1967, and finance and business increased by 1.5 percent during the same period.[107] Hence, the policies introduced by the leadership and the PAP government became more recognized among the people of Singapore. The Western investments and presence of multinational enterprises in Singapore are good examples of how linkage became very visible in the initial several years after Singapore's independence.

Lee said that he had three concerns regarding Singapore's development: one, to "get international recognition for Singapore;" two, to defend the peace of the land; then, lastly and importantly, to improve the economy. He successfully transformed Singapore into a better state as well as a stronger country in the region, both politically and economically. Lee established the Economic Development Board (EDB) under his direct control to look into matters of economic development, especially to attract foreign investors.[108] The strategy of Lee was to attract European and American multinational companies to invest in Singapore. Finally, Singapore had investments from a considerable number of American multinational companies and they brought advanced technology in large scale operations that also created many jobs in Singapore.[109] Lee added that American multinational companies attract foreign investors by establishing infrastructure, equity in participation in industry, and good labor relations.[110] These investments further reinforced the linkage as well as the leverage that ensured the PAP government continued with the same policies. Thereby Lee was able to win the hearts and minds of the people as

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[106] Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore,* 301–304, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4191564.

[107] Huff, 302–303.

[108] Lee, From First World to First, 49–69.

[109] Lee, 57; Huff, The Economic Growth of Singapore, 309.

[110] Lee, From First World to First,61.

his strategy could establish a wealthy society. Hence, he is considered as the father of the Nation by the people of Singapore.

1.   Democratic Control of Military

Lee Kuan Yew was instrumental in maintaining good civil-military relations, which helped Singapore avoid military coups. Singapore has a Citizen Army, which is formed from the best people out of the entire male population, who get military training as a compulsory requirement. The PAP government recruits the best student cadets to the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), and they receive further specialized training abroad in their fields of talent. These talented and well-trained military personnel have an option of transferring to the national administrative sector for their own betterment, which in turns helps the country's development process. All military personnel have better opportunities to advance their talents and the government does its best to keep the military up-to-date with necessary developments in parallel to the other regional armies. Hence, the PAP government has been able to maintain appropriate democratic civilian control over its military in Singapore; Lee has also ensured the development of the military with necessary resources to make them professional as a bureaucratic institution under his control. This professionalization has created job security both for military members who rise in the ranks during their career and for those who transition to the civilian sector.[111]

2.   Civil Service

Effective control of the civil service has also been one of the PAP's key factors in its governing system. The biggest challenge for the PAP government in 1969 was the fact that the loyalty of the civil servants was to the other political parties operating under the Malayan Federation.[112] To produce better results, the government implemented reforms to the structure and procedures that civil servants had been practicing. Therefore, one of

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[111] Army officers are given relevant education on other general subjects as well as on military matters to prepare them to hold private sector and government jobs when they retire from the active service. Muthiah Alagappa. *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 276–293.

[112] Singh, Understanding Singapore Politics, 44.

the successes of the PAP regime was that it created trusted and efficient bureaucratic institutions through the reformation. The reformation of the civil service aimed to develop a strong bureaucratic relationship between the PAP government and its function. After the reform, the public sector attracted the most qualified and effective people who would also be loyal to the government. Further, the government changed the recruitment process and promotions schemes by converting to a merit-based system.[113] The government had full control over the civil servants and bureaucratic institutions through this reformation process. These innovations have enabled the PAP government to continue with their political aim of economic development and minimize the resistance of bureaucratic institutions.

D.   SOCIAL POLICY

The modernization of society amid Western linkage and leverage became one of the crucial factors that the PAP government has addressed effectively. Unification of society under one concept that makes all equal under the term "Singaporean" became very challenging within the multicultural environment. The PAP government's multilingualism policy under the social engineering program offered a successful solution to unify the country. Society became more dynamic and democratic through the linkage and leverage of multinational industries and prolonged exposure to people and ideas from the democratic West.

Housing became one of the issues emerging from urbanization due to the Western linkage developed within the society. The PAP government introduced a housing program as a solution for the needs of the society.[114] The establishment of the Housing Development Board in 1960 resulted in the rapid clearance of slums and the resettlement of squatters, which had become demands of the modern society.[115] This change was a result of economic prosperity; therefore, liberalized culture became common in Singapore and people became independent like those living in modern developed democracies.

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[113] Singh, 45.

[114] Cheng, Singapore: The Unexpected Nation, 323–342.

[115] LePoer, *Singapore,* 75–76.

Hence, as explained by Dahl, the society of new generation became modernized with the features of a modern dynamic society, which consists of characteristics similar to the society in a democracy.[116] This social change began a "new life" for most of the people, and the youth culture reflected its similarities to Western counterparts.[117]

E. THE MIDDLE-CLASS EXPANSION

The rise of the middle class happened due to the Western linkage, which increased the democratic demands of the people and kept the PAP government under threat. The incremental growth of the middle class in Singapore was observed during the first industrialization process of the PAP government.[118] Western linkage was continually appearing within Singapore society. Though the PAP government spurred economic progress, the expansion of the middle class posed a threat to the government. Middle-class demands on government policies and related to the cost-of-living became a critical factor for the opposition to win several constituencies.[119] The demand for social and organizational change became notable among the other democratic features of Singapore's middle class. In response to the expansion of the middle class and its demands, opposition parties became stronger than ever in the 1991 elections. Therefore, the middle class and its demands shackled the PAP government and its leaders. The PAP, however, regained the super majority in the following election, applying its political force to the opposition's voter base.[120]

The middle class was frustrated by some government policies, such as strict control of chewing gum and the high cost of living.[121] In 1991, the opposition parties had four

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[116] Dahl, Democracy and Its Critics, 244–264.

[117] Jason Lim, Terence Lee, and Jack Tsen-Ta Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society, 1965–2015* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2016), 189–191; Cheng, *Singapore: The Unexpected Nation,* 349.

[118] Cheng, 348.

[119] William Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia: Democracy or Less,* (Norfolk, VA: Biddles Ltd., 2012), 93–94.

[120] ELD, "Singapore Elections."

[121] Case, Politics in Southeast Asia, *93.*

members—out of 40 contests—in Parliament, the best results ever.[122] The PAP became alarmed and started to threaten the voters of the failed constituencies, as well as the bureaucrats of those constituencies, for supporting the opposition candidates.[123] William Case explains that the PAP threatened those voters, saying that if they did not "support the government they will be suspended from the housing program."[124] The voters were frightened of losing these government privileges.[125] In response, the government established ministerial listening campaigns to meet people and acquire firsthand information.[126]

1.   Multilingualism

The language of learning became English in most public schools; therefore, most Singaporeans are bilingual.[127] Thus, every Singaporean of any ethnic group can speak one common language—English—and share their ideas through this common language. This bilingual program instituted by the PAP became very successful and enabled the PAP to win the hearts and minds of every ethnic group and retain its strong power within Singapore politics.[128]

The PAP government conducted a broader "Social Engineering Program" to unite the multiethnic groups within Singapore. It took nearly a decade and a half to see the results.[129] This program was one of the main reasons why Singapore was able to maintain such social harmony and order. Though this concept has maintained social harmony, it has strengthened the trust of the people in the PAP regime to continue as the non-threatening governing party with a super majority within Parliament.

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[122] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics,* 136–137.

[123] Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia,* 94.

[124] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 100.

[125] Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia,* 94.

[126] Case, 91.

[127] LePoer, *Singapore,* 89.

[128] Cheng, Singapore: The Unexpected Nation, 304–318.

[129] "Social Engineering Program" was the name given by the PAP government for their efforts to maintain harmony among the various ethnic groups. Cheng, *Singapore: The Unexpected Nation,* 304–318.

2. Unified Singapore

The PAP government established stable sovereignty by unifying Singapore under a single national identity among a population composed of the major ethnicities of Chinese, Malayans, and Indians. Singapore, although having a dominant ethnic Chinese majority, since independence has been able to maintain very good ethnic harmony among other ethnic communities, unlike Malaysia.[130] The PAP constitutionally declared that Malayans and Indians would have equal status with the Chinese majority in all aspects of their day-to-day life.[131] The PAP government has maintained a heathy and successful ethnic harmony through appropriate government policies.[132] For instance, public holidays were calendared equally among all the religious groups.[133]

The ruling Chinese elites of PAP had the task of constructing a unified national identity that was unique to Singapore society.[134] The government of Singapore has ensured that each ethnic group enjoys equal rights in electoral politics, education, the military, and public ceremonies considered as national events.[135] Later, in 1989, the PAP merged the three major ethnicities existing in Singapore into one entity, designated by academic circles as "CMIO"—"Chinese," "Malay," "Indians," and "Other"—which allowed all

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[130] Gerald P. Gartford and Meredith L. Weiss each explain that Malaysia had two major ethnic classes after independence, but there were no major ethnic clashes in Singapore after independence. Gerald P. Gartford, "Crisis in Malaysia," *Current History (pre-1989)* 57, no. 000340 (December 1969): 349–354, http://libproxy. nps.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com /docview/202917249?accountid=12702. Meredith L. Weiss, *Protest and Possibilities Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford, CA : Stanford University Press, 2006), 81–82. http://libproxy.nps.edu/ login?url= https://search.proquest.com/docview/202917249?accountid=12702.

[131] Kuan-Hsing Chen, "Culture, Multiracialism and National Identity in Singapore," in *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), 189.

[132] Chen, "Culture, Multiracialism and National Identity," 190.

[133] Chen, 190.

[134] Ruling elites of Malaysia were Malayans, but the economy was held mainly in the hands of Chinese elites. In Singapore ruling Chinese elites held the economy as well. Jason Lim, Terence Lee, and Jack Tsen-Ta Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society, 1965–2015* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2016), 57.

[135] Singapore's constitution provides a bill of rights not rights for a specific culture or language. All languages and ethnicities are treated equally, no preference or priority is given to one party. The PAP is a multiethnic alliance. Kevin Tan and Li-ann Thio, *Evolution of a Revolution: Forty Years of the Singapore Constitution* (London: Routledge-Cavendish, 2009), 193–257.LePoer, *Singapore,* 88–89.

Singaporeans to be represented under one common name.[136] The government's careful management of interracial issues has led Singapore to maintain a peaceful society.[137] The efforts of the PAP to represent every ethnic group equally have supported the PAP and enabled the party to retain its status as a strong single political party.

F.   ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Economic transformation, particularly in the manufacturing sector, has provided both leverage and linkage with the world's democracies while making democratization more or less inevitable in the Singaporean case. For one thing, those democratic institutions that had been functioning during the colonial rule were, in turn, indispensable to PAP's policy of economic development.

1.   City Development

Singapore's famous shopping city called "Maxwell Road" provides one indicator of the city-state's economic development.[138] Maxwell Road's downtown is home to skyrise buildings, foreign investors' office complexes, and trading buildings from every sector. Most of the multistoried offices, shopping malls, and apartment buildings in the Singapore city were built between 1970 and 1973.[139] Similarly, Clyde Terrace Market expanded even beyond the land perimeter through construction into the sea, which also took place in the same era.[140] These rapid developments needed several linkages with the Western powers. EDB, under Lee's leadership, appointed the most effective intellectuals who had been educated in Western countries to deal with these entrepreneurs.[141] The PAP government facilitated these investors by developing "well-planned industrial estates" and creating advanced and modern trading cities. The city development took place mainly due

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[136] Nirmala PuruShotam, *Negotiating Language, Constructing Race: Disciplining Difference in Singapore* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), 12.

[137] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 123–124.

[138] Cheng, Singapore: The Unexpected Nation, 323.

[139] Cheng, 324.

[140] Cheng.

[141] Lee, From Third World to First, 67.

to the rapid investments by Western powers, such as investors of America and Europe.[142] These developments further strengthened the Western linkage and attracted more investors.

2.   Industrialization

The manufacturing industries established in Singapore by developed and industrialized countries influenced people to form a modern society, which has the potential, at least, to develop internal pressure toward democratization. The highest and most rapid labor population growth seen in Singaporean history occurred from 1957 to 1970, at a rate of 4.4 percent, which included minimal migratory surplus.[143] The census report says that in 1957, Singapore had close to a half-million labor population and it increased to just over one million in 1970, but in 1990 it was 1.5 million.[144] Manufacturing employment in 1967 was close to 60,000; in 1973 it was 200,000, and it was 350,000 in 1990. Hence, this rapid labor population growth was a contributing factor reducing the unemployment rate. However, the unemployment rate increased with the relative decline in the agricultural sector due to urbanization as well as the fall in demand for rickshaw pullers due to motorized transport.[145]

This rapid labor force growth had been addressed through the industrialization process of Singapore because it was one of the main concerns of Lee as well.[146] His intention was to have all the skilled jobs filled by Singaporeans. Therefore, a substantial segment of the professional class became visible, expanding the middle class.[147] The average income and wages of Singapore's citizens became competitive within the

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[142] Hewlett-Packard and Texas Instruments from the United States and Rollei-Werke from Germany are a few examples. Lee, 61.

[143] Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore,* 292–293.

[144] W. G. Huff, "Patterns in the Economic Development of Singapore," *Journal of Developing Areas* 21, no. 3 (April 1987): 308–309, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4191564; and Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore,* 292–293.

[145] Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore,* 169.

[146]"My third and biggest headache was the economy—how to make a living for our people?" After Lee Kuan Yew became the prime minister in 1959, he and his cabinet knew that the only solution for Singapore to survive was industrialization. Lee, *From First World...,* 7–50; and Huff, *The Economic Growth of Singapore,* 169.

[147] Huff, 170.

region.[148] Singapore's industrialization also helped foreign investors to dominate the manufacturing export industries.[149] Hence, investors' domination and the people's exposure to working within the Western environment became conductive to Western linkage.

Furthermore, the strong Western linkage allowed Singapore to overcome labor issues. Industrial wages in Singapore were highly competitive; for instance, the average pay per day in the Bata factory in Singapore was $1.36, whereas in China the same factory payed only $0.70.[150] Huff states that Singaporean wages were close to wages of highly industrialized countries like the United Kingdom. This labor competition forced Singaporeans to advance their education, while only the most vital labor was recruited from the developed countries.[151] Singapore was broadly approaching the international economy through highly skilled labor, becoming an economy based on human capital.[152] People have to work hard to produce more than the expected target of investors. This factor has enabled Singapore to continue the same economic progress while becoming the strongest economic country in the region. Therefore, Singapore became more stable as its economy grew, and investors were also happy with the progress.

3.   Managing Migrant Labor

Mass immigration of labor took place in Singapore during this era; however, those laborers were controlled for non-skilled jobs as much as possible or were minimally allowed for skilled jobs.[153] A major part of immigrant labor was utilized for hawking, rickshaw driving, and domestic services, freeing the homegrown labor force to pursue highly skilled and professional jobs.[154] Labor productivity is one of the main contributory

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[148] Huff.

[149] Huff, 320.

[150] Huff, 171.

[151] Huff, 170–171.

[152] Huff, 172.

[153] Huff, 173.

[154] Huff.

factors for economic growth; the PAP government established the Basic Economic Conversion Department under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew to retain and redeploy redundant workers soon after the total withdrawal of the British.[155] Therefore, the PAP was able to fill the skilled and unskilled labor requirements required with the economic progress.

The people of Singapore were highly motivated through competitive wages and employment opportunities. The skilled labor market and the economy were carefully and appropriately managed by the government to maintain stability.[156] Steady gross domestic product (GDP) of Singapore was on average around 6.5 percent up to 2000; however, it started to decline from 2001 and dropped to just over 4.5 percent in 2004.[157] The main factor that could have been contributed to this decline in GDP was average labor productivity (ALP). The ALP was effectively managed by the PAP up to 2000, but it was declining from nearly 3.5 percent in 2000 to 2.5 percent in 2008.[158]

4. The International Factor

Multinational manufacturing and trading companies began to pressure the regime to maintain economic progress in Singapore since 2000. The GDP growth rate of Singapore was at 7.3 percent in 2000, but it dropped to 5.2 in 2006, recording the lowest ever figure.[159] The size of Singapore's foreign direct investment (FDI) was $5.4 billion in 2006, which was relatively high within the region.[160] With Singapore's GDP growth rate in decline, however, the government of Singapore took measures to increase labor

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[155] Lee, From Third World to First, 53.

[156] Jonathan Rigg, "Singapore and the Recession of 1985," *Asian Survey* 28, no. 3 (1988): 49–51, https://doi/org.10.1525/as.1988.28.3.01p0149s.

[157] Khuong M. Vu, "Sources of Singapore's Economic Growth, 1965–2008-Trends, Patterns and Policy Implications," *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (December 2011): 319–320, https://doi/org.10.1355/ae28-3c.

[158] Figure 3 of the article on the "GDP and the ALP Growth Trends: Singapore vs. Hong Kong" explains the variation of GDP and ALP in Singapore. Vu, "Sources of Economic Growth," 320.

[159] Vu, "Sources of Singapore's Economic Growth," 326.

[160] Diana C. Robertson, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Different Stages of Economic Development: Singapore, Turkey, and Ethiopia," *Journal of Business Ethics* 88, no. S4 (2009): 620, 625, doi: 10.1007/s10551-009-0311-x.

productivity. Other factors affecting GDP growth rate were that Singapore created minimal barriers for foreign investors, and its business laws rigorously enforced equality for both local and foreign investors. Therefore, it is confirmed that Singapore is being pressured to maintain its economic development under the declining rate of the GDP. Singapore's leading manufacturing market shareholders are from the United States, such as ABB-Global Digital Solution Center, Emerson, and Siemens USA are a few of them.[161]

The base of the Singaporean economy has four basic categories: trade, transportation and communication, banking and financial services, and social services.[162] Further, Huff says that presently the main base of the Singaporean economy is services-based development in the areas of information technology (IT), finance, business, and communications. Twenty percent of the GDP of the country is held by the manufacturing sector, which includes product and services.[163] Further, having such large multinational companies has converted Singapore into an interdependent nation. This scenario, however, has expanded the linkage and leverage of the regime with Western investors and, after 2000, the regime drifted into the most unstable authoritarianism, conditions that are highly favorable for democratization.

G.   CONCLUSION

Singapore has had only one strong political party, the PAP, since the country gained its independence. The economic development and social changes have been the two interdependent variables that have influenced the country's ruling model. The ruling party, PAP, has become stronger and stronger with the economic success of the country. The stability created by the economic development of the Singapore enabled its transformation into a strong state under a strong political vision. In turn, the PAP earned popular support along with the country's economic progress.

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[161] "Economic Development Board," Singapore Government, last modified September 26, 2018, https://www.edb.gov.sg/en/news-and-resources/resources.html.

[162] Huff, "Patterns in Economic Development," 315.

[163] "Economic Development Board," Government of Singapore, last modified August 2, 2018, https://www.edb.gov.sg/en/our-industries/consumer-businesses.html.

Singapore's linkage with Western powers that had been developing from the time of colonial rule gave the country the strength to build and maintain democratic institutions. The multinational companies that have been investing within the Singapore have acquired a major portion of the Singapore's economy. Since 2000, the PAP regime has faced two major issues challenging its supreme authority, which was built upon the economic progress of recent history. First, the resignation of Lee in 2001 from politics and then the unexpected decline in FDI challenged the PAP regime and its supreme authority. The party leadership had to accept some of the changes such as a change in their policies and governing behaviors to attract Western investors. Thereby, Western linkage and Western leverage have been highly influential not only on the regime and the society but on the democratic ruling model.

The main objective of Lee Kuan Yew and his PAP government was to establish an economic development plan facilitated by the Western linkage. He was very strong on taking the initiative and setting up a plan for such economic development. The success of the economic development program further enhanced the Singaporeans' trust in Lee and the PAP as their best choice for a regime.

At the same time, Lee's strategy to attract more Western investors became more successful. Several Western investors introduced industrialization and enabled Singapore to become industrialized. The Economic Development Board played a vital role in creating a strategy to attract investors. Selecting officers based on relevant education and qualification to coordinate with select Western countries is one good example of how Lee created successful economic and structural linkage with the Western powers. As a result of his strategy and policies, political opposition was drastically reduced and the average income in Singapore increased, further progressing Singapore's economy. Lee Kuan Yew and his PAP government proved successful at establishing Singapore as a strong, prosperous—but not necessarily democratic—state.

III.   RULING MODEL AND SINGAPORE POLITICS

Democratization in Singapore has not progressed far, even under the influence of Western linkage and leverage, because the regime's power was relatively very high from the start—and its interest in advancing democratization past a certain point has been relatively low. Though linkage and leverage have remained present, the strong leadership and political power of the PAP government have minimized their significance. The PAP government, which operated as the sole political party, maintained supreme power within the parliament and has remained in power since independence. In this way, the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew and the power of the PAP government has threatened or at least hindered democratization, even as they created rapid and stable economic progress, converting Singapore to a strong state.[164]

Although the PAP government's strategy and performance solidified its strength as a political party and regime, its resulting dominance became destructive to the democratization process. Lee's leadership and the PAP's policy developed a super-majority within Parliament and because the people were content with the economic outcome of this political dominance, they initially had little motivation to change the situation. Lee's influence and his leadership became key factors for such political supremacy and may bode poorly for Singapore's democracy. Hence, this chapter explores the four basic topics of Singapore's political system, leadership transition, ruling model, and regime after Lee Kuan Yew to discuss how Lee's leadership and PAP party policy came to impede democracy in Singapore.

A.   POLITICAL SYSTEM

This section provides information on Singapore's political beginnings as a democratic parliamentary system and its transformation to the single party dominant government. The PAP's domination with a super majority has suppressed representation of the opposition to a minimum.

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[164] As explained in the Chapter I, linkage is minimized in the presence of strong political power.

1.   Parliamentary System

In theory, Singapore follows the Westminster parliamentary system; in practice, it deviates from this format in significant ways.[165] In the Westminster system, which consists of simple plurality or a "first-past-the-post" electoral system,[166] each voter is allowed to vote for one candidate and whoever receives the most votes among all candidates will win.[167] According to Bilveer Singh, the strict party discipline of the PAP and its full domination in the parliament unbalance the equilibrium in decision-making. In 1968, Singapore had 58 constituencies with 65 elected candidates, but in 2001, it had 115 elected candidates from only 24 constituencies.[168]

The Singapore Election Department website further indicates that the parliament consists of three types of candidates: elected parliament members (MP), non-constituency MPs (NCMP) and Nominated MPs (NMP). The elected MPs come from single-member constituencies (SMC)—only one elected candidate from a constituency—and group representation constituencies (GRC)—multiple candidates will be elected from one constituency. These changes and variations to the Westminster system indicate that Singapore is not fully aligned with the Westminster democratic model.[169] The changing nature of the electoral system and candidature nomination from a single constituency has created a unique parliamentary system in Singapore.

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[165] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 22.

[166] Duncan Watts, *A Glossary of UK Government and Politics* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 4–7.

[167] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 22.

[168] "Singapore Elections Department - Parliamentary Elections Results," Elections Department Singapore, last modified August 13, 2018, http://www.eld.gov.sg/homepage.html.

[169] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 22–23.

2.   Election System

Singapore's election system has diverged from its British colonial origins, becoming a GRC to maintain PAP supremacy. Singapore has two main types of elections: Presidential and Parliamentary, which deviates from the British Westminster system.[170]

> The Parliamentary election includes the general elections and by-elections. The Parliament has a term of 5-years but may be dissolved at any time before the expiry of its 5-year term by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. The general election must be held within 3 months of the dissolution of the Parliament. By-elections are held when the seat in Parliament for a Single Member Constituency (SMC) is vacated or when all Members of Parliament (MPs) for a Group Representation Constituency (GRC) vacate their seats.[171]

The creation of a GRC shows how the PAP has manipulated the democratic election system handed down from the British. The nature of the GRC ensures the PAP's victory in elections in that it creates unfair competitive advantage against the opposition by creating more representative positions just prior to elections. Opposition parties cannot organize and propose more representative candidates in a short period of time, whereas the PAP has planned for such a contingency.

The presidential election was introduced to Singapore politics in 1991; the office was previously a nominal appointment by the parliament.[172] Article 20 (1) of the constitution indicates that the president of Singapore has a six-year term with no limit on re-election; however, article 19 B guarantees that one ethnicity shall not hold the presidency for more than five consecutive terms.[173] The change to a public election for president was simply a democratic gesture with no real democratic impact because it is the prime minister who holds the executive power within the Parliamentary System in Singapore.

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[170] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections Department - Parliamentary Elections Results"

[171] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections."

[172] Tan and Thio, *Evolution of a Revoution,* 167.

[173] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections."

The PAP's supremacy as the single strong governing party has prevented opposition parties from exercising any real power, which has negatively influenced democracy. During the period from 1969 to 2001, with the exception of the 1972 election, the PAP was the strongest and most domineering party in the parliament, while the opposition had a minimal number of elected members, as Table 1 illustrates.[174]

Table 1.   Parliamentary Election Results of Singapore[175]

Parliamentary Election	PAP Seats	PAP's Vote Share (%)	Opposition Seats	NCMP Seats	Total Seats
1963	38	-	13*	-	51
1968	58	86.7	-	-	58
1972	65	70.4	-	-	65
1976	69	74.1	-	-	69
1980	75	77.7	-	-	75
1984	77	64.8	01	-	78
1988	80	63.2	01	2	81 + 2
1991	77	61.0	04	-	81
1997	81	65.0	2	1	83 + 1
2001	82	75.3	2	1	83 + 1
2006	82	66.6	2	1	84 + 1
2011	81	60.1	6	3	87 + 3
2015	83	69.9	6	3	89 + 3

*By this time, there was a political coalition with Malaysia and some British-backed political alliances.

The PAP introduced the NCMP system after 1984 to maintain the nominal balancing of opposition within the parliament.[176] Those non-constituency parliament members chosen from a party or parties did not belong to the governing party.[177] Introduction of this system enabled Singapore to create a theoretically balanced democratic parliament. Moreover, it may have been a driving factor for encouraging Western economic linkage.

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[174] Elections Department Singapore.

[175] Source: Elections Department Singapore.

[176] Singh, Understanding Singapore Politics, 23.

[177] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections."

The NCMP system was meant to fulfill democratic requirements without enforcing them practically. However, in the 1991 election, the NCMP system threatened the government because opposition domination increased to a record number; the PAP was not happy with this rising pattern of the opposition. Hence, Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP applied a new strategy to win.[178] William Case states that the government made a sudden and surprising change to the electoral system after 1991 (Table 1), using the strategy of adding more group representative constituencies than in previous elections.[179]

The new strategy of the government reduced the opposition representation to one seat in the 1997 election, but the opposition had three seats in 1991. The PAP's strength and domination in the parliament enable the party to gain approval for such an electoral change with no resistance, facilitating one of the PAP's most successful victories against the opposition parties.[180] Therefore, Case further argues that Singapore has some features of "pseudo-and semi democracies of new order," like certain other Southeast Asian countries.[181] These new strategies have enabled the PAP to dominate the parliament with a super-majority.

B.   LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

The PAP has experienced leadership transition, but has managed to continue with roughly the same form of governing model until 2004. Lee Kuan Yew served as the first prime minister of Singapore until 1990.[182] His successor was Goh Chok Tong, who served from 1990 to 2004.[183] Lee Hsien Loong—Lee Kuan Yew's son—is now the third prime

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[178] Case, Politics in Southeast Asia, 94.

[179] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections."

[180] Case, Politics in Southeast Asia, 94.

[181] Malaysia in the 1970s and Indonesia the 1980s were pseudo- and semi-democracies of the new order. Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia,* 95.

[182] "Past Prime Ministers," Prime Minister's Office of Singapore, last modified August 6, 2018, https://www.pmo.gov.sg/past-prime-ministers.

[183] Beng-Huat Chua, *Liberalism Disavowed* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017),160-161

minister of Singapore.[184] After stepping down, the elder Lee continued to serve in the parliament as senior minister and the minister mentor until 2001.[185]

Goh Chok Tong was a more open-minded and liberal leader than Lee Kuan Yew, but Goh's government continued as an authoritarian regime. As prime minister, Goh perpetuated the same features of authoritarianism that Lee Kuan Yew's government exercised.[186] The initial statements of Goh redefined the PAP government policy as a "trusteeship with a more consultative, participatory and a more human side of government to create a more gracious society and a kinder and gentle nation."[187] He acted under the influence of linkage and leverage, and allowed the opposition a potential to gain legitimacy.[188] Yet, he returned to the authoritarian strategies of the PAP government, due to the significance of Lee Kuan Yew's presence in the parliament, and had successful runs in the 1997 and 2001 elections.

Lee Hsien Loong is the eldest son of Lee Kuan Yew and he has also maintained the success of the PAP. The highest number of elected opposition members appeared in the parliament (six out of 90 seats), however, became possible under Lee Hsien Loong's government, which is a good indication that Singapore is becoming more democratic (Table 1). Previously, Singapore never had more than two or three opposition seats in the parliament. Therefore, the variation of the ruling model after 2011 is significant (Table 1). The new regime is under the strong influence of linkage and leverage.

C.   RULING MODEL

The ruling model of the PAP government exhibits a combination of democratic and nondemocratic behaviors. The suppression of political rights, the rights of the people, the

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[184] Chua, 163–164.

[185] Singh, *Understanding Singapore Politics*, 100.

[186] Jason Lim, Terence Lee, and Jack Tsen-Ta Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society, 1965–2015* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2016), 42–43.

[187] Chua, Liberalism Disavowed, 161.

[188] Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society,* 42–43.

media and the right of expression have been practiced while minority rights were also exercised, making Singapore an example to the region.

1.   Political Rights

The contradictory definition of the governing process within the constitution helped the PAP government's monopolization of legal procedure, which, in turn, has restricted political rights. The Singapore courts tend to defer to the political agendas of those who appointed them.[189] The government makes the judicial appointments, creating political bias in the nominees, which leads to monopolization of power by the government.[190] For example, Lee Kuan Yew appointed his longtime friend and family lawyer Lai Kew Chai as a High Court Bench; later, the U.S. State Department and the Human Rights organization Asia Watch made accusations of the political prejudice of the court system, which substantiated this politicization.[191] Lai Kew Chai's nomination became controversial within Singapore's legal fraternity as he had not been practicing law for more than 20 years and was doing business in Singapore. The case of *Ranjeevan v. Public Prosecutor* (1998) explained the confrontation with the execution and protection of constitutional provisions regarding the necessary privileges of a person to seek counsel before or after he is arrested; but the court declined to provide such an ancillary right to Ranjeevan in his case, stating that:

> Any proposition to broaden the scope of the rights accorded to the accused should be addressed in the political and legislative arena. The Judiciary, whose duty is to ensure that the intention of Parliament as reflected in the Constitution and other legislation is adhered to, is an inappropriate forum.[192]

Further Beng-Huat Chua says that Article 9(3) of the constitution contains the provisions for such an instance but the court remained rigid on their original decision,

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[189] Lim, Lee, and Lee, 18.

[190] Damien Kingsbury, "Singapore: The Corporate State," in *South-East Asia: A Political Profile* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2003), 347.

[191] Kingsbury, "Singapore: The Corporate State," 347.

[192] Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society*, 21.

which in turn had been one of the instances that explained how the judicial system was biased toward the PAP.[193] Therefore, this evidence proved how the PAP government steered the legal system and monopolized it under the umbrella of a polyarchal system.

2.   Civil Liberties

The unclear interpretation of the people's rights in the constitution and legal system has led the Singaporean population to accept the government's viewpoint rather than expressing opposing ideas. The enforcement of the Society Act and the Internal Security Act overrule some of the liberties and freedoms provided to the people of Singapore by the constitution.[194] The Civil Society Act restricts people from constructing coalitions of oppositional or antigovernment forces.[195] The *Jayarathnam Johua Benjamin V. Lee Kuan Yew* case in 1992, explains that right to freedom of speech allowed by Article 14(1) (a) does not protect all speech. Because in another section of the same article, article 14(2) (a) says that the right conferred by article 14(1) (a) does not facilitate for any civilian to violate, defame or incite against the parliament.[196] Therefore, article 14(2) (a) has empowered parliament to limit many civil rights and force the consensus of the people in the PAP.

a.   *Local Media*

The government of Singapore has always possessed strict control over all media agencies. Almost all the radio and television networks have been state-owned enterprises while government-associated elites have owned several newspaper organizations.[197] The media corporation of Singapore (Mediacorp)—government owned broadcasting and television cooperation—and the publicly owned television channel, which is highly commercialized in nature, have held total domination over the all-telecasting channels

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[193] Lim, Lee, and Lee.

[194] Chua, *Liberalism Disavowed,* 67.

[195] Chua, 67–68.

[196] Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society*, 18.

[197] Chua, *Liberalism Disavowed,* 38–39.

within Singapore.[198] Later, Mediacorp took the control of the Singaporean publicly owned newspaper, *Today*. The newspaper organizations are not under government control but have been strictly censored through government agencies and laws. The Singapore news industry is controlled by Singapore Press Holding (SPH), which is not a government-owned company; however, the management board of SPH has "special management shares with special voting rights" nominated by the Ministry of Information and Arts.[199]

Another example of how the Singapore government keeps control of the news agencies is its practice of arresting editors or writers under the Internal Security Act. There is abundant evidence of such actions by the PAP government, but two examples soon after the enactment of Internal Security Act in 1971 are particularly well known. First, there was the arrest of Shamsuddin Tung Tao Chang, the editor-in-chief of the Muslim-Chinese newspaper, which later merged with the SPH. The other example was the arrest of Ly Singko, senior editorial writer of the Mandarin newspaper.[200] Both were accused of publishing and expressing anti-government ideas. Information control has been one of the key policies of the PAP government, which continued throughout the period of economic development.[201]

b. *International Media*

The government has been highly sensitive to international media agencies as well. Furthermore, local writers, who are strictly censored, have been discouraged from writing articles for these international publications. The government particularly believes that

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[198] Cherian George, *Freedom from the Press: Journalism and State Power in Singapore* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012), xii; Gordon P. Means, "Soft Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Singapore," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 4 (1996):109-112, https://doi/org.10.1353/jod.1996.0065.

[199] Case, *Politics in Southeast Asia,* 90.

[200] Shamsuddin Tung Tao Chang was the editor-in-chief of the *Nanyang Siang Pau* (南洋商), a *Chinese Daily Journal of Commerce*, which published in English at founding, was first published on September 6, 1923. Later it was merged with several other newspaper organizations, including the Malaysian Newspaper Company and finally it merged with the Singapore Press Holding Company. Chua, *Liberalism Disavowed;* National Library Board, Singapore, "Nanyang Siang Pau Infopedia," accessed August 20, 2018, http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2017-01-10_095946.html.

[201] Garry Rodan, "Asian Crisis, Transparency and the International Media in Singapore," *Pacific Review* 13, no. 2 (2000): 222, https://doi/org.10.1080/095127400363569.

international publications will impede economic progress. As reported on the Research Gate website, "Most repressive of all is the Internal Security Act, bequeathed by the British and still in active use today."[202] The article notes that the Singaporean government sued the *International Herald Tribune* in 1987 for publishing the article "Dynastic Politics" by Philip Christopher,[203] a visiting lecturer at the National University of Singapore.

In 1977, two Singaporean writers were detained for writing article in "Far Easter *Economic Review*, a Hong Kong-based weekly publication.[204] Cherian George calls the Singaporean government's actions "dictatorial" as regards mass media and information flows.[205] Indeed, the government's prime objective has been to keep the media under control without hampering the economic progress.

3.   Multiracialism

The PAP government has also effectively controlled the performing arts and theater to protect the Singaporean culture through a "multiracial model" and to achieve its political interests. The strict censorship enforced by the PAP illustrates their desire to protect a multiracial model that allows interaction between different ethnic groups.[206] The enactment of the Internal Security Act has ensured the protection of the social unity themes, multiracialism, and the culture of Singapore since 1976.[207] The dominant television broadcasting company, the Media Corporation of Singapore, has followed government agenda and has broadcast their programming in both English and Chinese.[208] George also states that most of the censoring methods of the government have restricted editors and

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[202] "Media and Democracy in Malaysia," Research Gate, last modified March 20, 2013, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285522247_Media_and_Democracy_in_Malaysia.

[203] Means, "Soft Authoritarianism," 103–104.

[204] George, *Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation,* 37.

[205] George.

[206] Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society*, 78.

[207] George, *Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation,* 37.

[208] Media Corporation of Singapore had two channels running for both languages for the same programs, that is channel 5 for English and channel 8 for Mandarin. Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society*, 78.

journalists as well as autonomy within their profession.[209] His survey found that editors and newsroom supervisors are influenced by external politics, with political authorities exercising the most significant limits.[210] The government's behind-the-scene influence has been a critical factor in gearing the media toward the official political interests.

4. Protection of Minorities

Recognition of minority interests was effectively considered within Singapore's constitution, which protects the right of each citizen. Even though Singapore follows the Westminster parliamentary system, it has a written constitution that has been in effect since August 1965.[211] The Singapore constitution explains the various forms of fundamental liberties—such as the individual's liberty, rights in respect to education, and freedom of religion—which are protected under Part IV.[212] It further guarantees the equal treatment and protection of any person in article 12(1).[213] Also, article 16 (10) prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, descent, or place of birth.[214] The constitution provides special provisions for the fundamental rights of minorities under article 152; also the constitution provides for various institutions to protect minorities.[215] According to Minority Rights Group International, Singapore's government shows a very positive approach to minorities and their protection.[216] It further says that Singapore's constitution and government policies are adequate to treat minorities as compared to other countries in the world. Judicial balancing also serves to protect

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[209] George, *Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation,* 37.

[210] Author identified in his survey conducted among the 447 SPH and Mediacorp journalists that their autonomy in the publication was influenced by external politics 41% and internal culture and the politics 21.4%. George, *Singapore: The Air-Conditioned Nation,* 37.

[211] "Constitution of the Republic of Singapore - Singapore Statutes Online," Home - Singapore Statutes Online, accessed August 25, 2018, https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/CONS1963.

[212] Tan and Thio, *Evolution of a Revolution,* 239.

[213] Tan and Thio.

[214] Tan and Thio.

[215] Tan and Thio*n, 240–241.

[216] "Singapore," Minority Rights Group, accessed August 25, 2018, http://minorityrights.org/country/singapore/.

minorities, their district identities and interests.[217] Therefore, individual rights and minority rights provide equal opportunity within Singapore and ensure that everyone is treated equally in terms of political and voting rights.

D.   REGIME AFTER LEE KUAN YEW

The parliament under Lee Hsien Loong's leadership became more democratic than it had been during previous regimes. The strength of the opposition parties in the parliament provided a democratic start. The PAP under Lee Kuan Yew, though, had no opposition until 1981.[218] The first opposition party member was not elected to the parliament until the 1984 parliamentary election.[219] J. B. Jeyaretnam became the first opposition member of the Singapore Parliament and he represented Worker's Party (WP) from the Anson electorate.[220] Thereafter, the 1991 general election was the next turning point in Singapore's parliamentary elections when four members for the parliament came from the opposition parties—three from the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) and one from the WP.[221] The next milestone was when six members of the opposition won seats in the 2011 parliamentary election, which was followed by the opposition securing their highest number of seats ever in the 2015 election.[222] Presently Singapore's parliament consists of 90 total seats from 29 constituencies.[223] The PAP government contested parliamentary elections with ten or more uncontested constituencies, but in the 2015 election all constituencies had more than two contested political parties.[224] All these features are very

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[217] Article 152 of the constitution explained the government obligation to minorities and their rights, constitutional provision covers the right of all ethnicities to use their own language in Singapore. Tan and Thio, *Evolution of a Revolution,* 241.

[218] Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society*, 41.

[219] Lim, Lee, and Lee.

[220] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections Department - Parliamentary Elections Results."

[221] Elections Department Singapore.

[222] The death of Lee Kuan Yew happened on March 23, 2015; he was out of the politics since 2011. Lim, Lee, and Lee, *Singapore: Negotiating State and Society*, 40–48; ELD, "Singapore Elections."

[223] Elections Department Singapore, "Singapore Elections Department

[224] Elections Department Singapore.

unique in the nature of Singapore's politics. The considerable representation of the opposition in the parliament after 2011 explains the increase in the democratic functioning of Singapore's parliament.

E.   CONCLUSION

Singapore's government has mainly focused on achieving its objective of economic development at the expense of facilitating human liberties; hence, the PAP government had many non-democratic features. As Levitsky warns, authoritarian governments pursue their goals without paying much attention to the practical application of their policies toward humanity, including human rights and civil liberties.[225] Lee Kuan Yew's strategy was to maximize human capital to achieve the political objective of economic progress. He and his government primarily accelerated the process of industrialization through human skills.

The PAP regime under Lee Kuan Yew became authoritarian, and Goh Chok Tong continued as an authoritarian because of Lee Kuan Yew's influence as the senior minister within the parliament until 2004. The actions of the leadership and party policy developed to achieve a super majority within the parliament and dominated politics as the data in Table 1 earlier illustrated.[226] Although Western linkage and leverage existed during colonial rule, which led to the creation of some democratic institutions such as the election office, political rights, and civil liberties, the PAP's domination suppressed the efficiency of these institutions. Sudden changes in the election system just before the polling date and strict control of the information flow are examples of the PAP's strategy to maintain domination within the political sphere. The PAP government's manipulation of the political process always took place under the cover of democratic institutions. The PAP's strategy was to allow Western linkage and leverage to exert an influence while the government's political stability and power within the country enabled it to negotiate those democratic pressures without sacrificing domination.

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[225] Levitsky, *Competitive Authoritarianism,* 74–83.

[226] Linkage and leverage effect is explained in Chapter I.

The PAP government's supremacy and the authoritative leadership of Lee Kuan Yew ensure there was no resistance in the parliament. Therefore, developing even a minor resistance within the parliament was considered a loss for PAP domination. The continued and consecutive success the party enjoyed during several parliamentary elections developed into a pattern that they had to follow to maintain supreme power. Holding supremacy and not allowing the opposition to rise erodes democratic elements, as evidenced by PAP's non-democratic approach to elections, the media, and the legal system. The party took control of every governing element and converted it to a central command structure. The development of such a situation created patrimonial bureaucracies and a feudal authoritative structure to resist democratic progress. Moreover, through careful control of information flows out of the country, the government also reduced the potential threat posed to the ruling model by the Western linkage. No one can find actual facts or figures about the Singapore regime. Because the government has controlled information and media links to the outside world, Western countries did not see the need to apply leverage.

IV. ANALYSIS, RECOMMENDATION, AND CONCLUSION

Singapore is democratized in theory, but practically speaking, it is a stable authoritarian country. Singapore was given several democratic features under colonial rule that enabled the country to function theoretically within the democratic framework. The government continues to claim to uphold democratic institutions while operating within a central command governing structure—an authoritarian model. The PAP government has been enjoying its unrivaled power within Singapore politics since 1969. Over this period, this nature of Singapore politics has become ingrained within the culture, and society has grown accustomed to it, but there may be change with the new generation. Western linkage and leverage are still low in relation to the PAP's power within the political realm. Since 2004, though, there seems to have been slight improvements in terms of the opposition's representation in Parliament and with regard to media freedom, but it has not been enough to challenge or threaten the authoritarian government. It has, however, caused what was a stable authoritarian regime to shift to an unstable one. This thesis has argued that the slightest reduction in authoritarian rule multiplies the effects of the democratization process due to Western linkage and leverage. The PAP government has more than 50 years' experience in manipulating these democratic institutions and maintaining authoritarian rule. The next few elections will indicate whether Singapore is moving toward democracy or back to stable authoritarianism (refer to Figure 2). As the PAP shifts to its fourth generation of leadership, opposition domination and leadership transition will potentially impact the continuation of authoritarian rule in Singapore.

Although Singapore's economic and political history is unique and was established under authoritarian rule, its competitive authoritarian rule may have an important prescriptive value for other developing countries. The formation of the PAP was initiated by educated young Chinese elites in Singapore. At the time of its independence, Singapore's Chinese population dominated the economy. The initial strength of the PAP was the strength of the Chinese elites and a majority of the Chinese population of the Malayan peninsula was settled in Singapore. These factors resulted in PAP's domination until it achieved full control with a super majority as a democratically appointed

government in 1969. While these factors transformed the PAP government into a strong political party, Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP policy of economic development became very successful along with passage of time. Lee's initiatives of organizing the government and the party policy of the PAP government led the country to achieve a stable economic development. The industrialization through foreign investment and the government's emphasis on people improving productivity played a key role in the PAP party policy. These led the PAP government to secure a stable authoritarian regime. The PAP never wanted to lose its authority at any cost. The party has not wanted to see its power reduced; as an example, the PAP grew alarmed and changed its election strategy after seeing a slight increase in the number of opposition candidates who won seats—a total of four—in the 1991 parliamentary election. Later, under Lee Kuan Yew's leadership and the PAP's policy, the opposition was never allowed to rise. Hence, his authoritarian regime is unique among the regimes available in the world, and it is destructive for the civil liberties and human rights.

A. EVOLUTION OF AUTHORITARIANISM

The ruling model of the PAP became an authoritarian one along with its domination in parliament and it economic achievement in 1969 (refer to Figure 3). The stable form of authoritarianism shifted to an unstable form, though, with the rise of the opposition after the 2011 elections and the minimal liberalization of Lee Husien Long's government.

1. Authoritarianism

There are particular features of the ruling model of the PAP government that make it comparable to authoritarian rule. First, Levitsky and Linz identify that most authoritarian regimes have a single political party dominating the government.[227] Media control and censorship is done entirely through a central command mechanism in Singapore, while the PAP government manipulates the legal system to apply very rigid mechanisms to control

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[227] Linz argues that a single political party exercises its power, organizing power and linking with the societies influencing their beliefs, and pursues their goals without paying much attention to the political process. Juan J Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder, CO: Rienner, 2009), 159–171. However, Levitsky says that when organizational power—regime power—is strong then it becomes a more stable authoritarian regime.

people, forcing them to accept government policies at the expense of humanitarian practices. Through such practices, the PAP has implemented an authoritarian model of rule since the party took control of the parliament with a super majority in the 1969 election up to now.

2.   Stable Authoritarianism

The strength of the PAP government referentially became more significant than the Western linkage, ensuring a stable authoritarianism. The government held a very strong position within Singapore politics, and Lee Kuan Yew provided strong leadership with a central command authority. Parliament and its committees, such as the Economic Development Board, as well as the legal system and the media were kept under his direct control. These features made Singapore organizationally very strong. When organizational power solidifies to neutralize the influence of Western linkage, stable authoritarianism results. Singapore's Western linkage has several colonial legacies. The new industries that have invested in Singapore had some colonial legacies as well, and they are making good profits due to the productivity of the labor force. At the same time, investors did not get actual information about the non-democratic behavior of the PAP government as the government had strict control of the information flow and the media. The PAP regime has always manipulated things within the democratic framework, such as controlling the media either through government ownership of most of the media agencies, or by appointing the board of directors of private media agencies. Hence, the government has consistently managed the information flow within the democratic framework.

Western powers may have been prevented from receiving vital information about the government's behavior, but investors were satisfied with their business progress. By obtaining a super majority in the 1968 elections and achieving economic progress a year after their domination, the PAP government was able to become a stable authoritarian regime, as illustrated in Figure 3. Hence, the aforementioned evidence has proved that the authoritarianism practiced by the PAP government became stable due to the systematic handling of the Western leverage.

B.   POSSIBLE CHANGE

Singapore has had to democratize because its economy is interdependent with the Western democracies and institutions. Singapore society is also Westernizing through technological advancements and social media. Nevertheless, Singapore's constitution itself has been a democratic instrument that requires democratization to uphold and protect it. Hence, there are two possibilities available within Singapore to form a democratic government. First, change is required to the existing political regime—the PAP—and the other is to change the ruling model, the demand for which is an emerging social trend.
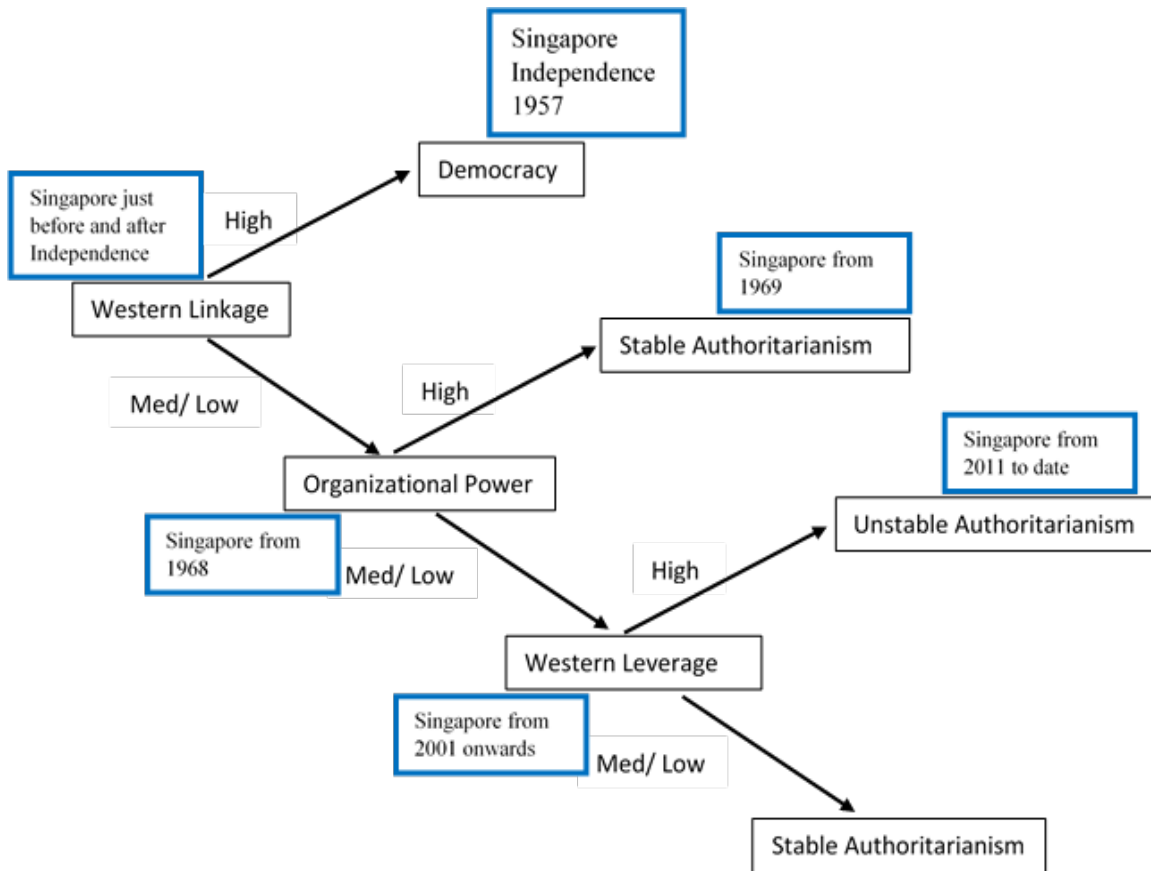

Figure 3.   Influence of Western Linkage and Leverage in Relation to the Authoritarianism in Singapore.[228]

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[228] Adapted from Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism,* 72.

1.   Regime Change

The regime under Lee Hsien Loong from 2004 to present has become more vulnerable to Western leverage and linkage. As stated by Levitsky, when the organizational power of government declines and leverage increases, unstable authoritarianism emerges.[229] This instability becomes an opportunity for democratization in a country. Singapore's authoritarian behavior has been declining under Lee Hsien Loong. The lessened control of media and legal aspects within the new regime of the PAP implies a shift to unstable authoritarianism, which is a good sign for the democratization process. Yet, the continued single-party domination in the politics and the central command structure remain a challenge. The PAP's political domination raises one question about Singapore politics: will the traditional political behavior in Singapore acclimate to change at least within the next ten years?

2.   Social Change

Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP created economic progress and social development, which, in turn, reinforced the people's acceptance of the authoritarian methods responsible for their sustainment. The PAP's more than 50 years of authoritarian rule converted society and it values, always measuring things in relation to economic prosperity or gains and social comfort. Hence, the public worries less about politics and political conditions unless they see a threat to their social comfort. In turn, the PAP government did its best to maintain such conditions to keep the population happy. The improvement in living conditions and the modernization and sophistication of daily life provided by advanced technology are just a few examples. The Singaporean people have always liked to use new technology and equipment; however, sometimes this tendency may have had a circular effect on the regime as well. Lee Hsien Loong has had to release Internet and Facebook restrictions due to such an effect. The government strategy is still working, though, and continues to follow the authoritarian model. The natural changes taking place in the society will come very slowly

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[229] Levitsky and Way, 72–77

unless external factors, such as Western linkage and leverage, influence the authoritarian transition of the PAP.

C. DEMOCRATIC EVALUATION

Singapore is fulfilling several democratic requirements in theory while keeping actual democracy at bay. Democratic requirements provide the measure of a government's or governing model's democratic behavior. "Equal right to vote, political rights of the people, free and fair elections, right to express, and protection" are the best selected requirements by which to evaluate the democracy of Singapore. The evaluation of the PAP ruling model and the governing system of Singapore against those elements will measure the true nature of the democracy in Singapore. Nonetheless, the PAP government, to ensure the sustainability of its regime, manipulates these democratic elements to its advantage. Therefore, this testing process further confirms that the PAP government manipulates the democratic elements to its advantage and to sustain its power.

1. Right to Vote

In Singapore's first election, under British rule in 1948, only the select elite had the right to vote; the legislative council had only six elected members out of 22 members.[230] The first major accomplishment of voting rights was the general election in 1949 when all seats were elected.[231] In 1969, Singapore had its own parliament under the PAP government, which was Singapore's first achievement as a sovereign state and the citizens' right to vote. To present, Singapore has held several general elections for its national assembly. All citizens 21 years or older holding a National Registration Identity Card have the right to vote. The question that remains is whether the right to vote exists primarily as a theoretical democratic element or as a practical facilitation of democratic freedom. The PAP government's political pressure on citizens to discourage them from voting for

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[230] Singapore had its first general election for six members of the legislative council. Voting rights were established to nominate members for the council, and British nationals who had been residing in Singapore more than a year were eligible to contest (that is, 25 people representing nearly 1 million people). Barbra L. LePoer, ed., *Singapore, A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1991), 44–45.

[231] LePoer, *Singapore,* 45.

opposing parties deviates from democratic freedom. This behavior appeared after the 1997 election. Threatening and imposing pressure on voters during the election campaign was a form of suppressing people's right to select their own representatives. Therefore, the right to vote is not a democratic feature available under the PAP regime. During recent elections the incidence of voter suppression decreased somewhat; since 2011, there have been nine opposition members in the parliament, which is evidence of reduced voter suppression that allowed more opposition members to join the parliament.[232]

2.   Political Rights of the People

After colonial rulers' reconstruction of Singapore's administrative system, it facilitated the people of Singapore exercising their political right through forming the first-ever political party, Malayan Democratic Party in 1945. Thereafter, Singaporeans formed their own political party, the PAP, in 1954. Dahl and Tilly argue that there are two aspects of political rights: provision and securing of people's right to hold office.[233] In Singapore, the "right of the people to be elected"[234] exists in theory, but election results have proved that it is not a democratic freedom in practice. The "protection of political rights" also exists in theory and is provided for legislatively, but in practice it is not visible.[235] The fact that PAP was uncontested in every election during the first several elections and faced several electorates until 2001 suggests that the political right of the people has been suppressed. Having only one strong political party and the continuation of its rule with few opposition members in the parliament has given the PAP full control and enabled the party to manipulate the political rights of the people.

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[232] The PAP government had zero opposition members most of the time and had only four members only at the 1991 election. However, there had been six elected and three nominated (totaling nine members present) since 2011. The information is in reference to Table 1, in Chapter III.

[233] Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, 207–209; Tilly, *Democracy* ,13–15.

[234] Dahl.

[235] Dahl.

3. Free and Fair Elections

The election office is an important element of democracy, and it was established under colonial rule. Singapore experienced its first legislative elections in 1955 and it first presidential elections in 1991.[236] The president of Singapore holds several powers, like proposing an annual budget to the parliament, which deviates from the British system. Therefore, the election system is a mixture of presidential and parliamentarian systems. Singapore has Single Member Constituency, and Group Member Constituency within the electorates, and Non-Constituency Members and Nominated Members are nominated to the parliament. And, although elections in Singapore seem very methodical, free, and fair from the outside, the PAP has organized elections skillfully, changing the election systems at the last moment to ensure the opposition does not have time to change its strategy to win. Similarly, PAP's changing the electoral constituency boundaries and converting the electoral system from Single Member Constituency to Group Member Constituency just before the elections is evidence that the election office also does not function freely as a democratic institution.

The election office never rejected or opposed such strategic moves by the PAP government, hinting that the governing party influences the office. Whereas these non-democratic strategies might typically meet resistance from voters, the majority of Singapore's citizens were content with the PAP's economic policies and country's progress. Therefore, they were either disinterested or fearful to directly challenge or oppose the PAP's political strategy. Yet, the younger generation of Singaporeans is now looking for democratic change along with the new policies of the present regime.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the new generation comes of age in Singapore and the liberalized nature of Lee Husien Long's government continues, Singaporeans will have greater expectations for strengthening the democratization process of Singapore. Hence, this thesis proposes the

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[236] As explained in Chapter III, the election office was also manipulated by the PAP for their advantage. However, the formation of the election office and its role resemble a democratic institution.

following recommendations under two underlining factors: international and external perspectives on the democratization of Singapore.

1.   International Perspective

International actors must pay more attention to Singapore's media control policy; they should influence the PAP regime to avoid such policy implementation. This new regime is the best time for the international community or Western powers to use their leverage to pressure Singapore to stop media control. Singapore has had a tendency of controlling media strictly; the regime under Lee Kuan Yew initiated such control and it has continued, but Lee Hsien Loong's regime has shown some loosening of media control. Therefore, the present regime in Singapore is most likely the right time for the international community to push Singapore for liberalizing the media.

Lee Hsien Loong is proposing a parliamentary reformation; hence, this is again the right time for Western powers to use their leverage to encourage the present government to reform the constitution and to avoid such authoritarian regimes. The reformation should focus on the areas that the PAP had mutilated to establish authoritarian rule. Such reforms should include liberalizing the legal and bureaucratic institutions to avoid the continued manipulation of these institutions in future. Further, the long-standing pattern of a central command structure should be dismantled and liberalized to the people's advantage.

More non-governmental organizations or humanitarian organizations that monitor human rights and civil liberties should be established within Singapore. Those organizations must use leverage to establish their officers in Singapore. If this is not possible, these organizations must provide more reports on the government's authoritarian behavior and its efforts at voter suppression. Elections must be monitored closely and the entire world must be made aware of what is happening during elections in Singapore and during pre- and post-election situations. Humanitarian organizations must fund and educate social organizations and existing political parties in Singapore on the democratic way of doing things. The correct influence exerted on the correct people could provide better results from elections as well as in their aftermath.

2.   Internal Perspective

The Singapore government, opposition parties, and society have some responsibility to convert Singapore into a democracy. Protecting the democratic constitution and the interests of the economic stakeholders are vital to protecting democracy. Therefore, this thesis proposes the following recommendations to realize the democratization process in Singapore.

Singapore should discard the Internal Security Act during the parliament reformation. The Internal Security Act is the most vital and dangerous component of Singapore politics that has converted the PAP government to an authoritarian model. The removal of the act can partially paralyze the PAP's authoritarianism. The PAP government is mainly hanging on to the Internal Security Act to maintain its central command structure. This is very possible along with the parliamentary reformation proposed by Lee Hsien Loong.

Singapore should hold a referendum/plebiscite to alter the election process: the prime minister of Singapore should be elected while the president should be appointed by the parliament. The existing process is the other way around, in which the president is elected and the prime minister is appointed by the parliament. The change to the political system would make a prime minister of Singapore directly liable to the entire population and enable the prime minister to represent the people of the country rather than representing a constituency to lead the country. Under such reforms, the possibility of having a prime minister and parliament from two different parties becomes high, which is a positive feature of a democratic government.

The literature review and thesis analysis recommend that the people of Singapore should vote to replace the existing prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, in the next election with a more democratically minded person. Singapore's regime is at a critical juncture and the country needs this change. Appointing a new prime minister who has a democratic or liberal mindset could easily promote the democratization process in Singapore. Furthermore, the improvement in the opposition's representation in parliament since 2011

provides more strength to a new, more liberal-minded prime minister in Singapore so that the democratization process can be established, destabilizing the authoritarian model.

Singapore's government should uphold three important democratic values—promotion of efficient civil servants, elimination of corruption, and protection of minority rights—which the government needs to maintain in the future, as these values are vital for modern developing democracies. Lee Kuan Yew's first priority, it must be recalled, was to develop human capital to create a competitive advantage. Less financial corruption within the bureaucracy and protection of minority rights are very good values of the governing system that must be protected in the future government system.

E. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The most vital area for future studies would be in the field of political science. Research could include conducting a survey study on how to introduce a political system best suited for Singapore to satisfy the needs of the economic, political, and social factors and avoid the continuation of the authoritarian model. This survey can answer questions about the possibilities for changing the governing patterns of Singapore and the type of political system that will provide a government that is more democratic. These are only a few suggestions that one could study as thesis questions. A future study might also take the form of a survey to recommend structural changes to Singapore politics.

F. CONCLUSION

This thesis traces the evolution of Singapore politics and influencing factors to the democratization process. The evolution of Singapore politics started with democratic elements and through the democratic process. Singapore politics became authoritarian in nature with the country's independence and it became a stable authoritarian type after the PAP gained a super majority in the parliament in 1969. The PAP government continued as a stable authoritarian regime throughout recent history to date. Therefore, social changes and economic conditions became the causal factors of Singapore's regime type while Lee Kuan Yew and PAP party policy became the root cause of it. Nonetheless, the nature of the authoritarian regime in Singapore has shown significant change in its model since 2011, after receiving nine opposition members into its parliament. The new regime under Lee

Hsien Loong has shown incremental liberalization with his policies loosening controls on the media. In retrospect, the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew and PAP policy became the most destructive factors that eroded the democratization process in Singapore. Therefore, the most influential factors affecting the democratization process of Singapore are social and economic factors, which have had both positive and negative effects due to the root causes of Lee Kuan Yew and PAP policy.

Finally, the evidence proves that the PAP government became a stable authoritarian regime due to two factors: the influence of the majority of the Chinese Malayan community and rapid economic progress. The Chinese population and Chinese-educated representation in the PAP government, including Lee Quan Yew, played a vital role in converting the PAP government to a stable authoritarian model. The unexpected success of the economic program became the other factor enabling the PAP to become an authoritarian regime. Although the people of Singapore had a long-standing expectation of having a higher standard of living, they had lacked a plan or program to achieve such economic progress. Finally, Lee Kuan Yew's leadership allowed the country to achieve such success, which, in turn, enabled the PAP to become the strongest party in Singapore's political sphere. If the PAP had not achieved such economic progress, the country would have developed a much different political climate and economic capacity. Yet, since the 2011 election, the amber light is on in Singapore politics, and the next couple of elections will surely prove to the international community where Singapore is heading.

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